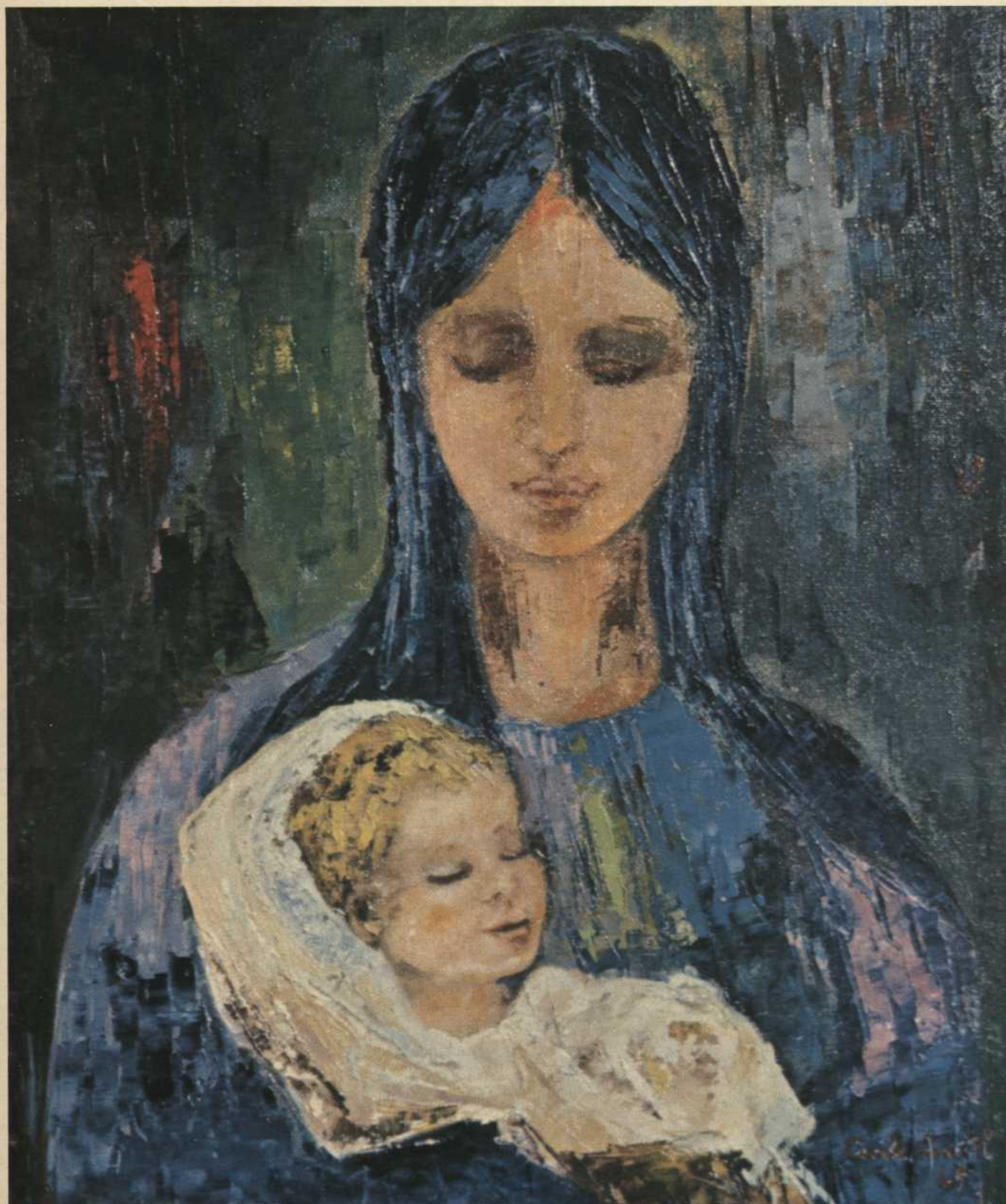




Mother and Child. 1969 Oil painting by Sister Cécile Anctil, M. I. C.

THE PRECURSOR

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1920 MAY 1970

In May 1920 Sister Mary of the Holy Spirit inaugurated her press apostolate by the launching of a missionary magazine Le Précurseur. She wanted it to be a voice reminding Canadians of the mission cause and of the duty of every Christian to share directly or indirectly the riches of salvation with non-believers everywhere. The following excerpt from one of her letters throws light on her plans of apostolate:

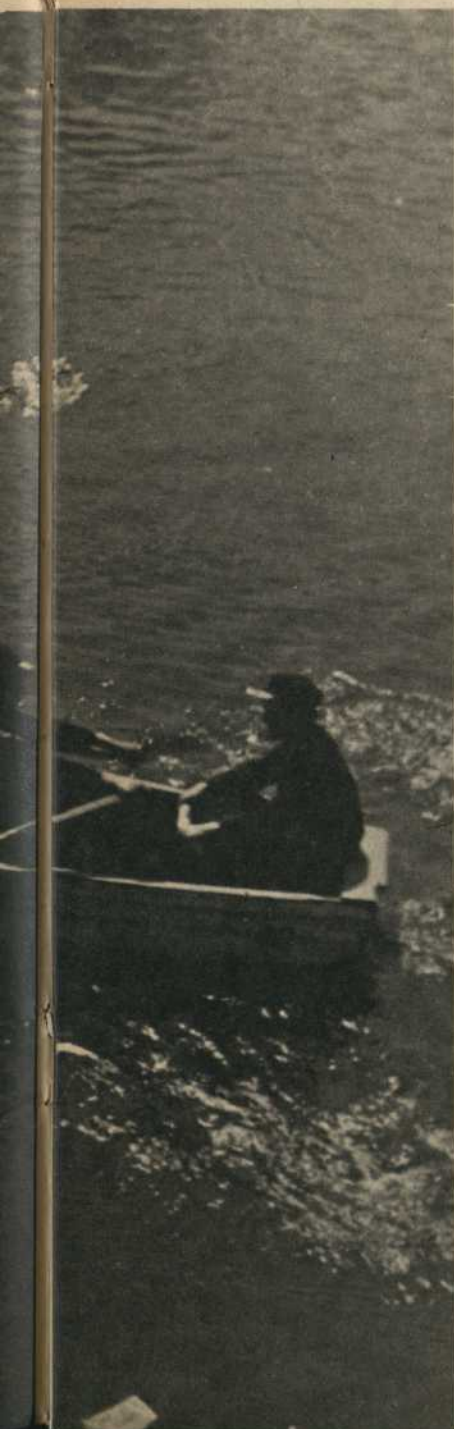
"... At the present time, the sisters of the Motherhouse and of our little missions are working hard for the circulation of our bulletin, Le Précurseur, which we hope will contribute in creating an apostolic movement in our homeland, and in rousing numerous missionary vocations. Oh, if only it could inspire young girls with the spirit of sacrifice! ... It is not exactly the small number of aspirants that we ought to deplore, but the lack of pluck and energy to persevere. Many cherish the ideal of saving souls but only if the cost is not too high in sacrifice ..."

Some persons tried to dissuade the foundress from an enterprise they judged inopportune and promised to failure, but she firmly held her ground. Thanks to her dynamism and her spirit of initiative the magazine prospered to reach its Golden Jubilee. May it keep on being a herald of Christ in our homes for long years to come.

THE JAPANESE AS CLAUDEL



SAW THEM



During the year 1970, more particularly, the eyes of the world will be focused on Japan and its fabulous World Fair. During his stay in this country, in 1921, Paul Claudel's eyes were also focused on Japan and on the Japanese.

Poet of the universal, Claudel drew profound inspiration from his diplomatic journeys through many lands. Today when we possess the means of getting more easily acquainted with diverse civilizations and appreciating them at their true value, it should be easier for us to understand the spirit which animated him.

Both China and Japan left a deep impression on Claudel. In his writings on the Far East, he has manifested a thorough understanding of what is best and most "interior" in Asian art and thought. At the same time, he has enriched our sensitivity and our culture with new images and symbols. More particularly, he has communicated to Westerners in his "Glimpses of the Japanese Soul" a Japan totally different from Loti's imaginative and artificial portrayal. He has, moreover, made known to us the Buddhist religious mentality with all that within its contents may be effortlessly adapted to Gothic Christianity.

At present, as André Blanc has so aptly remarked in his book on Claudel, we tend to find the French poet lacking in appreciation for the civilizations of the Far East. We should not forget that he belonged to an epoch when Europeans had no idea of drawing any lessons from foreign civilizations. But, on certain points, Claudel is more modern than Loti who was apparently aware only of surface values, of channels of thought he did not attempt to elucidate. For his part, Claudel never stopped at the picturesque, never gave second thought to merely exotic attitudes. In his memoirs he declares, "I have tried . . . to understand all the countries I passed through . . . the enrichment they brought, the knowledge they enabled me

to acquire." Thus he defined his positive attitude. This may further be ascertained by the perusal of his book *Connaissance de l'Est*, and the excerpt from *L'Oiseau Noir dans le Soleil Levant* — "A Glimpse of the Japanese Soul". He does not, however, relinquish anything of his Latin and Catholic culture, the two of which he considered firmly linked.

These two traits can easily be retraced in his discourse to groups of Nikko students. First of all, he endeavoured to make them understand the mental orientation of a Frenchman. "The best means of reaching into the French mind is the French language. French is the most perfect product as well as the most perfect document of our national tradition. It has been the chief means of construction of a people composed of twenty different races." Then, he goes on to say, "France may be ethnically different but, from a geographical point of view, it is one and indivisible." A little further on, he points out the importance of literature and spoken language which are both earmarked by a passion for exactness. He then mentions the providential role played by France, situated as it was at the crossroads of a continent's interests. He repeatedly urged Japanese students to situate themselves within the plan of Providence, to place their country in the "line" willed by the Author of the great history of mankind.

After this introduction, the students knew in what manner Claudel considered them. "Pilgrim of the world" he was nevertheless surprised to find in Japan, "A land which, unlike so many others in America and Europe, was not a mere agricultural or industrial exploitation". He loved and admired Japan as may be inferred from a letter he wrote in 1955, to the students of his friend, Professor Miyajima:

I firmly believe in the noble destiny awaiting Japan, a land which I have loved and admired from my earliest years. The whole world has set great hopes on Japan. On the threshold of huge Asia, it is called upon to be, not its conqueror, but its beacon light ... (*Etudes*, Dec. 1961, p. 350)

He was ever on the alert, intent in discovering Japanese tradition, but he was very tactful about it, convinced as he was that "music begins only where noise has subsided". Through signs and images he captured the Japanese attitude facing life, although he admitted being powerless to find the right words to explain it as he would have liked to. He considered this attitude as a kind of reverence, of respect, of feeling for a presence which exacts ceremony and precaution. Japan he called "Land of the *kami*, that is to say land of the gods. Later, when speaking again on this land of the *kami*, he added, "God has in store still more glorious destinies when the blood of martyrs so generously shed of yore will fructify and bear the light, *Lumen Christi*, to all Asian peoples".

The description of Japan which Claudel gave in his talk to the young Japanese students became, as it were, a hymn to the Creator. He took up again a theme beloved of him who was called the "sainted poet of his times", Hitomaro — "In Japan, man need not pray, for the soil itself is divine". Claudel believed that for the Japanese, creation is above all "the work of God".

The French poet's sympathy for the art and civilization of Japan is evident throughout these pages. Even Buddhism for which he at first felt a kind of horror at the period when he wrote *Connaissance de l'Est*, appeared to him in Japan under a more favourable light. He goes so far as to affirm that in Japan the supernatural is nothing-else but nature. Keen insights into nature, and joy springing from the contemplation of its beauty were revealed in many an aspect of Japanese life. Japanese patriotism seemed to him something of a "state of communion with the land, of profound recollection before the figure it presents to us".

In the land of the Rising Sun, art also is marked by nature. Japanese paintings rarely represent man, but mainly what is "most fragile and ephemeral, the fluttering of a butterfly's wings, a flower bud about to open, a leaf about to be blown away by the wind". Claudel admits that, barbarians that we are, we too often fail to appreciate these priceless *kakemono* (hanging scrolls). We feel a need for surprise, amusement perhaps ... We scarcely ever pause to contemplate the unfolding of a bud. There are thousands, in the West, who have never seen a butterfly emerge from its cocoon, unless perhaps on a TV screen or in the pages of a book ... And yet nothing can replace the direct contact with nature to keep alive the capacity for wonder, the spirit of contemplation which have always constituted fundamental conditions for the birth of art and poetry. Claudel further discovered that interests in perceptive experience were not confined to the higher classes of society. Even the houses of the poor had their modest *tokonoma* of sorts, a simple alcove decorated by some little flower or some oddly twisted twig or branch appealing to persons of taste and sensitivity.



How could the French poet have overlooked the traditional Japanese politeness with its set of gracious and charming rules? Their absolute and almost religious courtesy of manners pleased and enchanted him.

In closing his "rapid psychological sketch" of Japanese life, Claudel quoted a fact which manifests how the religious sentiment special to Japan corresponds to that of mankind in general. A man whose whole life had been dedicated to the service of the destitute, of the outcasts of society, lived in a world of prostitutes and beggars in one of the worst slum districts of the city of Kobe. Having embraced the Christian faith, he literally lived up to the teachings of the Gospel which bid us not only love but respect every human being as a temple of God. Is not such a Christian sentiment a thoroughly Japanese sentiment?

Upon taking leave of the Nikko students, Paul Claudel declared, "there is no country on earth where such close union exists between man and nature". He went on to say, borrowing the words of the national anthem, that he hoped "peaceful union would endure for countless ages like moss clinging to the rocks". Does not Claudel's wish fully harmonize with the theme of the 1970 World Fair, "Progress and harmony for mankind?"

Gabrielle Ouimet, M.I.C.



SCHOLASTICS TELL ALL ABOUT SCHOLASTICS

The March-April issue of the "Precursor" published an interview with Suzette, Pauline, Michelle, and Nicole, M.I.C. novices. The May-June issue presents another interview, this time with a group of M.I.C. students: Sr. Elmire, 32, theology; Sr. Denise, 33, pastoral theology; Sr. Gisèle, 35, linguistics; Sr. Nicole, 22, dietetics; Sr. Lucie, 23, dietetics. How do they consider their role in the mission? What is their opinion of the lay apostolate? Of life commitment? Of their studies as a missionary preparation? Have they realized personal fulfillment?

The Precursor: What is your idea of missionary life? Does it consist in direct apostolate in foreign lands? Why have you entered a specifically missionary Congregation, since all Christians are bound to be missionaries?

Sr. Elmire: To be a missionary signifies "to bear witness to Christ". Baptism is my starting point. To be baptized means to be an apostle, and

apostle is a synonym of missionary. Hence, since every baptized person is bound to be a missionary, the mission concerns each and every one.

The Precursor: How then do you explain your entry in a missionary Congregation?

Sr. Elmire: Being a Missionary Sister of the Immaculate Conception, my vocation as a baptized person im-

plies a special dimension. I am called upon to live my Christian witnessing in a particular fashion, in non-christian or dechristianized countries.

Sr. Denise: You mean in foreign lands . . .
Sr. Elmire: Not necessarily. But, I must be totally committed to my missionary vocation which should assume a concrete form throughout the world. The Church has acknowledged this particular charism when it sanctioned my vows. I am in the service of the Church, and I will have adequately realized my vocation and responded to the Lord's call only when I have been fully incorporated within the human mass in order to "announce the good news of salvation".

Sr. Gisèle: We students are eager to leave . . .

Sr. Denise: We must keep in mind that although all Christians are missionaries, all cannot leave for foreign lands. But all Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception want to leave as soon as possible.

Sr. Elmire: Of course this is our calling, the response to the why of our consecration, of our profession.

The Precursor: At the beginnings of the Congregation, the Sisters had to meet the exigencies of their time. There were several good reasons for keeping certain sisters on the homefront. These reasons no longer exist.

Sr. Lucie: An early departure would give new incentive to our daily life.

Sr. Gisèle: Maybe. Still, I'm inclined to think that young religious have not clearly grasped what they have committed themselves to. They are perhaps not fully aware of the exigencies of missionary life.

Sr. Nicole: The young ardently wish to serve the Church . . .

Sr. Lucie: and to serve others. We must not forget the sufferings of all men.

Sr. Elmire: I consider this a humanitarian point of view. The essence of our vocation remains our Christian witnessing.

Sr. Lucie: But, this witnessing assumes the form of a service, does it not?

Sr. Elmire: Of course. The only important thing, however, is to carry the Message of Christ and to quicken, through missionary animation, the interest of Christians in the homeland to the needs of their brothers everywhere.

The Precursor: In your opinion, what is the difference between lay missionaries and religious missionaries?

Sr. Denise: I think this difference exists on the level of personal call. Each Christian has his own original manner, according to his charisms, aptitudes, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, of responding to the exigencies of his faith. As we have already noted, although each baptized person is a missionary, his apostolic desires are manifest-

Sister Lucie



Sister Elmire



Sister Nicole



Sister Denise



Sister Gisèle





Coffee-break; détente and fraternal interchange.

Doing research work at the library is serious business.



ed in diverse degrees. According to his ideals and distinctive vocation, he must choose between the lay apostolate and the religious missionary life.

Sr. Elmire: Let us not disregard the eschatological sign. The consecrated person is a sign.

Sr. Denise: I believe that the main point for every Christian is to help spread the Kingdom. Each is a witness of Christ in his own way. The lay missionary lives the Christian values of justice and love in a service exteriorly identical to the missionary religious. There exists, however, a profound divergence. The religious commits herself for life, not merely for a few years.

Sr. Nicole: Single lay missionaries or missionary couples seldom do commit themselves to the mission for more than three or four years. They cannot completely disengage themselves from familial or sociological exigencies

Collaborating in the preparation of a menu or in writing a term paper on theology...



for a longer period, to serve the mission better.

Sr. Elmire: Lay missionaries who give a few years to missionary activities in emerging countries are often carried away by philanthropic motives. For them, it becomes a sort of humanitarian adventure. They need to feel they are helping others.

Sr. Denise: For my part, I worked as a lay missionary for a few years before I entered. I can honestly say that I spent myself without stint, but I felt dissatisfied. It seemed to me that I was missing the main point. Religious life binds me closer to Christ. Why should missionary religious life not be an evident sign that I'm trying to live up to what I say? I think this is a radical choice which requires a lot, but which rouses enthusiasm. This, of course, is my personal opinion. You are free to refute it if you like.

Sr. Elmire: In my classes at Montreal University. I have made friends with some classmates of mine. Apparently, we live the same kind of life as students. Still, I do think I'm being a witness in a way they cannot hope to be.

The Precursor: Sr. Denise, may I ask whether religious life has answered your requirements?

Sr. Denise: In a formal way, it has, but I'll admit that I expected more.

The Precursor: What do you think is missing? Formation?

Sr. Denise: Well, I sometimes wonder whether we are not professionals of the mission?

The Precursor: Maybe we should examine ourselves on this point... Evidently, prolonged theological studies, for instance, do require a lot of courage and perseverance, as does religious life itself. Is religious missionary life still justifiable in our twentieth century? The young seem to resent it strongly today. How about it?

Sr. Gisèle: The young today give or refuse to give. They are capable of life

commitment and of total dedication.

The Precursor: In your opinion, then, the perpetual vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience are still justifiable in 1970?

Sr. Gisèle: I believe they are. The young choose religious life in order to meet Someone.

Sr. Lucie: I'm 23 and I'm all in favour of life commitment. When I entered the novitiate, I centered my life on Christ, and stability is the normal outcome of a meeting with the Lord who requires total dedication.

The Precursor: Did you think so, three or four years ago, when you were still Miss Lucie?

Sr. Lucie: Definitely!

Sr. Nicole: I think that today's young people lean towards the positive in all things.

Sr. Gisèle: They are in quest of genuine values in a dynamic congregation. Teenagers love to be up and doing.

Sr. Denise: They don't enter to live up to values, but they'll discover Christ through such values as fraternity, for instance.

Sr. Lucie: I think that the young are ready to accept a renewed donation of themselves, but they'll accept life commitment by "living" the spiritual values that have been tried and proved best, even those that are traditional.

The Precursor: Do you think it possible for you to reach personal fulfillment within community life?

Sr. Lucie: Certainly. If I had not hoped to reach this fulfillment, I would not have entered. What is fulfillment if not being true to oneself and true to others, developing one's capacities to the full...

The Precursor: Putting the question again, I insist on the term "community life".

Sr. Lucie: I consider religious life in its main outline as an assembly of baptized persons, living in communion with Christ, and who manifest this communion in fraternity and ser-

vice first among themselves, then among all men. Community life lived in such a perspective can surely bring fulfillment.

The Precursor: In your opinion, is your life as a student a preparation to the mission?

Sr. Nicole: Yes, if I adopt the definition of mission given in *Ad Gentes* "proclaiming the Word, the Good News, is the very mission of the Church". The Good News may be proclaimed in more ways than one: by witnessing, for instance. My presence in the student milieu introduces me into the world of the university in which I share the condition and way of life of other students. This is far from being an easy thing to do... Our presence itself must be a witnessing to the Church. There is no question here of delivering long sermons. Ours must be a "silent" presence.

The Precursor: Do you think that learning to prepare menus adequately prepares you for mission life?

Sr. Nicole: Why not? Professional training as a dietitian will prove valuable in the missions. What about it, Sr. Lucie.

Sr. Lucie: I am in full agreement with you. For my part, my presence in a student milieu has helped me examine myself on my religious life. This may seem paradoxical, but it really is not. I have to live up to my obligations. *Noblesse oblige!*

Sr. Nicole: Adaptation to the student milieu prepares me to adaptation in a foreign mission milieu.

Sr. Lucie: I have the impression that the students are not interested in understanding us... We must take steps to meet them on their own level.

Sr. Gisèle: Student life is an immediate preparation to the mission from a dual point of view: psychological and professional.

The Precursor: In closing, I might say that all that is human should rouse the interest of the missionary religious, and student life is surely a very human thing.



CHANGING TIMES AND YOU

The only way to find out what Malawians think is to ask Malawians. And that's what MONI did. First we went to the grass roots of the country — to the villages to ask the men and women there what they thought. Then we compared these answers with responses from fifty young men and ladies of Cambridge and post-Cambridge levels in the towns. This article tells the results.

Selected from MONI, October 1968

WHAT MALAWIANS WANT IN A WIFE

Stop! Before you read past this paragraph, answer these two questions for yourself. What three qualities do you think are most necessary in a good wife? What do you admire in your own mother?

After you have thought about your answer, compare your ideas with those that were told to us.

The Voice of the Village

The most beautiful picture of the wife as a mother came from the people in the villages. The woman's role was expressed this way: "She must bear children to continue the work given her by God." About 12% of the village people said that this was most necessary in a wife. (None of the town people gave this answer directly, although some took it for granted when they said she must love and care for her children.)

From the village, too, came the highest praise of one's own mother. "She is like God on earth; she loves me more than many others." And the greatest agreement among the people (36%) was that a good wife loves and cares for her children.

Very high on the list of requirements for a wife was obedience. "Without obedience there is no loyalty and without loyalty there is no love," explained one man. And 28% of the villagers replied that a wife should obey her husband; another 20% mentioned that she should have good manners and 16% added that she should keep the customs. Certainly, the people in the heart of the country came out highest in this healthy respect for tradition.

Next on the list came the wife's care of the home. In this section of concern, food came first, followed by hard work in second place, and care of the family clothes third.

Town Talk

It will come as a shock to many ladies that the town men clearly preferred brains to beauty. A startling 45% (the highest percentage of agreement among the men) demanded education or intelligence or both from an ideal wife.

Beauty, on the contrary, was low on the list of requirements. Only 13% desired a beautiful wife, and 5% actually required that the wife NOT be beautiful.

Town men tended to put her love of husband over her love of children. And what kind of love do these men desire? One man put it perfectly when he replied, "The strong love that never changes".

Town men were the strongest on hospitality. About 23% said she must welcome visitors. Some said that she must be a good conversationalist. Another remarked, "She must exchange views of wisdom and interest with her husband and his friends."

These men (15% of them) wanted a thrifty wife as well. One man said, "She should advise her husband when he spends too much money".

Woman's view

The ladies, unlike the men, didn't bother about beauty or brains. Their main point was the home, for a full 50% listed love of the husband and another half mentioned care of the home.

They tended to be more precise in their directions. Several mentioned giving the husband a welcome when he is coming home. They added, "The good wife knows what he likes. She makes him happy so that he doesn't have to go to hotels or bars". And a few added, "Always when the woman is pleasant in the house, the husband is not shy to bring visitors".

The town women (24% of them) stressed cooking, but with a modern emphasis. One said, "She must cook a balanced diet so that she can prevent scurvy and protein deficiencies". Two suggested, "She should go to domestic science classes to learn better cooking and sewing".

What character traits do the women think most important? The most popular ones were: kindness, consideration, cheerfulness, understanding, honesty, and charm. The perfect wife, according to one, "takes things the way they come, and in difficulties is sympathetic".

The Challenge of Change

Any woman reading this will have realized that more demands are being made on her as the years pass. They all come down to one challenge, however, the challenge of love. And whether in town or in village, a real woman knows how to meet this challenge.



Photo: Paweck

WHAT MALAWIANS WANT IN A HUSBAND

The perfect husband? Well, he would have the faithfulness of the sun that rises every morning, the fruitfulness of rain, the steadiness of the rich warm earth, the energy of fire, and the laughter of the teasing wind that plays through the trees.

He would have the strength of the lion, the cunning of the spider, the swiftness of the hare, and the protective instinct of the watchdog. He would have...

But why go on? Such a creature, of course cannot exist anywhere. But people everywhere like to sit down and imagine the best possible sort of person, and Malawians are no exception.

We asked people two questions: What three qualities do you think are most important in a husband? What do you admire most in your own father? In most cases, the answers for the two questions matched rather well. This is because most of us form our idea of a good husband from the good things we have seen in our own fathers at home.

Grass roots

From the villages came the most basic and important answers of all. One man went straight to the heart of things when he said, "If it weren't for my father, I wouldn't have been born". The same person thought that the most important role of the husband was to continue to make people. Certainly, the husband is rightly placed here as the ancestor of many and the cornerstone of family.

The majority of village people were concerned about the down-to-earth things that a husband must do each day. Most (55%) said that he must work hard to support his family; 30% said that he must not drink beer; and 25% insisted that he teach the children good manners, and, if possible, send them to school. Only a few (15%) mentioned that he must love his family, and 20% said that he must be faithful.

Men about Town

The men in the town agreed with the rural men on basic issues. A little more than 50% of the Cambridge group stressed that a man must work hard to support his family, and 20% said that he must not be a daily drinker of beer, because if he were, he would not be able to spend his money on his family. Only 7% mentioned teaching the children good manners.

But the town men were more demanding in other ways. Almost half of them replied that the good husband must be a devout religious man. More than 35% said that he must have a loving interest in his wife and family, and another 35% added that he must be kind-hearted and love his wife.

These chaps want a husband to be intelligent and realistic so that he will be able to solve the problems of the family. They want him to be generous, sociable, and sympathetic. They do NOT want him to be short-tempered or to disagree with the wife in front of the children. About 15% mentioned that the husband must be faithful to the wife, and 5% said that he should never beat or insult her.

Woman's View

The woman's view was typically feminine. About 25% agreed with the men that the husband should be a responsible man and support the family. Only 5% mentioned the problem of beer, but except for these items, it is clear that the women's concern lay elsewhere.

Briefly, the difference may be put like this: the men stress labour; women stress love. A full 50% of the women declared that the man must love his wife and children. The ladies tend to use stronger expressions like "undivided love" and "understanding" and "trust".

The women were more haunted by the fear of divorce than the men. More than 40% insisted that the husband must be faithful and honest with his wife. They were very strong in their way of saying this.

An interesting trend

If we take all three groups of answers into consideration, it is clear that the husband is still thought of as the father of children, the decision-maker, and the wage-earner.

But an interesting development is taking place now. As one town man put it; "The husband must not feel superior to his wife because husband and wife are equal". A town woman said it the woman's way; "The husband must know that the wife is not a slave; they are equal". And two men went so far as to remark that the husband must share ideas with his wife.

These last ideas were not uppermost in the minds of most of the Malawians interviewed. But like other signs of the changing times, they have begun to appear in the minds of a few. They will certainly grow and spread as Malawi itself grows and develops.



Photo: *Vivante Afrique*

MISSIONARY SPIRITUALITY

Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you . . .
Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is
the fruit of your womb.

Luke 1: 28-43

Hail, full of grace! This is the only title used by the angel in greeting Mary, daughter of Israel, chosen to give birth to the Word. God did not see fit to bestow any other ornament upon her who accepted to become the mother of His only begotten Son. Her humble life pattern was not altered. Nothing in the line of sumptuous dwellings, luxurious garments, leisure, social promotion set her apart from her compatriots. What she received belonged to a higher order — a plenitude of grace which penetrated her entire being.

FULL OF GRACE. These two simple words imply hidden grandeur, acceptance of a sorrow-laden mission. They designate Mary as the mediatrix chosen by the Father for the salvation of the world. She is full of grace because of the Redemption. However, these words which signify the plenitude of divine life within her, demand heroic acquiescence and resignation on her part. "With regard to the redemption, liberation, and salvation of the universe, the words Mary is about to utter are decisive" (St. Bernard).

THE LORD IS WITH YOU . . . and with us all. Hence, he is called Emmanuel, "god in our midst". It was this glad message of salvation which upheld the hope of the Chosen People. The joy proper to the messianic epoch stems from the salvific presence of God among his own, presence given to the world in and through Mary.

Sanctifying grace which through her comes down to us, is given to her in such abundance that the traces of the initial sin disappear from her soul. Never will she feel even the shadow of an evil desire, never will temptation reach out to her. The Evil One will always flee at her approach, for he knows she comes to crush his head.

HAIL, FULL



OF GRACE!

by Reverend Jean-Charles Valin



THE LORD IS WITH YOU. This can also be said of every baptized person. Such is the intimacy between him and Christ, that Saint Paul could affirm, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me". This extension of divine action within our being, this assuming of our humble life by his own, this sort of substitution from one to the other is a mystery of love to which we find ourselves committed. We must not, of course, neglect our earthly tasks, but we must not run the risk of becoming totally absorbed therein. Our efforts must ever tend to promote within ourselves the growth of Christ Jesus, as Saint Paul reminded the Christians entrusted to his care.

OF ALL WOMEN YOU ARE THE MOST BLESSED. Mary does not give to the world a mere celestial messenger, but the Eternal High Priest, infinitely superior to the priests of the Old Testament, the Supreme Pontiff, the only one really capable of exercising mediation between heaven and earth, and entitled to unite these two worlds hitherto separated by sin. Mary is not only the guardian of the royal priesthood with which her son was invested on the day of his Incarnation, she also cooperates in its constitution.

MARY SET OUT . . . AND WENT AS QUICKLY AS SHE COULD . . . INTO ZACHARIAH'S HOUSE AND GREETED ELIZABETH. "At that time", that is in the days of her Annunciation, shortly after the visit of the angel, Mary quickly went to her cousin's house. "She did not doubt the angel's message, did not hesitate in her belief of this news, did not question the reality of the example given, but went in all joyfulness to fulfill what she affectionately considered to be her duty" (Saint Ambrose). Mary carried the good news of salvation. Her faith and her joy burst forth into the song of the *Magnificat*: "He has come to the help of Israel, his servant, mindful of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors . . . and to his descendants forever."

Through his baptism, every Christian is a carrier of the good news which he is bound to proclaim by the testimony of his words and deeds. This is where the Christian life assumes its missionary dimension. "We have found the Lord," said Andrew to his brother Simon, and he led the latter to Jesus. Thus must the baptized person lead others to Christ. Thanks to his openness to others, he announces that the Kingdom of God has already come into our midst, he carries the proclamation of authentic hope.

"LA TUNA" WON 5 FLASHES

On Saturday, April 20, a group of students were invited to present an interesting programme on the Taipei TV. It consisted in a keen competition between the Hsinchu Language School and the local secondary school.

The programme somehow put me in mind of the Montreal TV broadcasts. During the first half-hour, competitor soloists performed dances, songs, etc. The rest of the hour was taken up by two groups, each presenting three numbers. A jury of five persons approved by flashing lights. Five successive flashes meant complete success, a feat very rarely achieved, I was told.

You are perhaps wondering whence came the invitation to appear on TV. Recently, two animators visited our school to inquire into the feasibility of having our group participate with another local group. They listened with pleasure to a few songs sung by sisters belonging to various nationalities, and arranged an appropriate TV programme to be presented on the 19th. Doubts about the success of such a venture persisted, but the general atmosphere was optimistic.

The students immediately set to work preparing their programme: first number *La Tuna*, a Spanish song with accompaniment of castanets, triangles, and guitars; next on the list was a popular Chinese patriotic song *Wan Li Chang*; the third number was performed by two Jesuit scholastics, students at the Language School; the fourth and last number was a piece of Hawaiian music with guitar accompaniment.

On the appointed date, T.TV sent a bus to fetch the three groups of participants: twenty young girls between the ages of 13-16, all students enrolled at Ju Yi Nyu Jung School; two Jesuit scholastics from the men's section of the Hsinchu Language School; a group of sisters from the women's section of said school.

We reached the T.TV studio towards ten in the forenoon. Mrs. Pou, our gracious hostess, led us to a spacious comfortable studio on the second floor. The studio personnel gave us a warm welcome. A Chinese singer, the honour guest, an expert in the Louis Armstrong style of song, arrived a few minutes later. Groups of guests filled the audition hall, and rehearsals began.

Participants in the first part of the programme had their initial trial performance: a Chinese dancing girl, two singers, a ballerina, a venerable old man who played a sort of plaintive ballad on his two-string violin, and finally the two groups from our Language School.

The director made us enter, bow to the audience, applaud the other team, answer the following questions: What is your name? Where do you come from? How many years have you spent at the Language School? We felt like children being coached for a school play!

We were put on the air by 1:20 p.m. You may be sure we all watched the flashes of light from the jury box as the other groups performed: three, then four; never five.

During the second part of the performance, results were given out as follows:

- Dance by the Ju Yi Nyu Yung students: four flashes.
 - Chinese song by a group of sisters: four flashes.
 - Guitar piece by the scholastics: three flashes.
 - Solo by a student of the same group: four flashes.
 - *La Tuna*, Spanish song by the sisters' group: five flashes.
- Total of points for the two teams: twelve.



Sisters Juan, Raphaella, Pilar, Maria, Christina, and Huguette on the Taipei TV screen.

Jerry Martinson, s.j., (California) and Max Guefler, s.j., (Austria), students at the Hsinchu Language School, play Hawaiian music on Taipei TV.



Sister Huguette, M.I.C., Canadian, and Sister Christina, H.H.S., Mexican, during the TV broadcast.

Before we left, two large gift boxes were offered our groups in remembrance of the day. Besides, we received an envelope containing 1200.00 N.T. dollars (about 30.00 Canadian dollars), more than enough to pay our trip three times over! We were moreover provided with the un hoped-for opportunity of entering 500,000 Taiwanese homes in 10 minutes...

What was the popular reaction to our TV appearance? On the very next day we received a good number of congratulatory letters and the local people let us know how much they had appreciated the programme. Hundreds of students whom we daily meet on our way to and from school

now stop to greet us with friendly smiles. The Jesuit Father in charge here, has been having numerous callers ever since our T.V. broadcast. This has proved to be a deep source of encouragement for him as he has but one goal: to reach the masses to make contact with the man on the street.

For my part, I am convinced that radio and television may prove a choice place of encounter between technique, science, and faith. These modern means being mirrors of the world and of each man in the world, may also become mirrors of God.

Huguette Chapdelaine, M. I. C.

ALPINIA NUTANS



How would you like to receive as a birthday gift, a box of candied ginger? If your birthday falls in winter you would surely appreciate the calories these sweets contain. But, perhaps you would prefer a bouquet of *Alpinia Nutans* or wild ginger flowers. I remember how pleased our Hong Kong novices were whenever they were offered bouquets of these colourful blooms whose pleasant scent filled the house with fragrance.

This plant, belonging to the family Zingiberaceae, is probably native to India and Malaysia. Cultivated today on a broad scale in southern China, in Hong Kong, and on the Stanley peninsula, it was already known during the Middle Ages being utilized almost as much as pepper. Marco Polo introduced it into Europe.

The grayish rhizomes of *Alpinia Nutans* produce stems some of which, covered with sheaths of lance-shaped smooth leaves, are sterile; fertile stems are much shorter and are covered with scales terminated by an inflorescence. The flowers are borne in compact spikes subtended by bracts. Pink *Alpinia Nutans* as well as *Alpinia Japonica* blooms in April; *Alpinia Galanga* blooms in June, while pink *Alpinia Colcasaba*, *Alpinia Formosana*, and *Alpinia Stachioda* all bloom in May.

Various uses of *Alpinia Nutans*

During World War II, internees in Stanley Camp ingeniously turned to account *Alpinia Nutans* or wild ginger. Its strongly flavoured seeds, ground or grated, rendered the rice gruel less insipid. Diced green rhizomes mixed with rice flour made the bread more palatable. Ginger leaves dried in the sun were used as a tobacco, appreciated for its agreeable flavour.



Ginger roots boiled in sugar are used in the confection of delicious sweets and preserves. Ground rhizomes, minced, boiled, sweetened, and allowed to ferment produce wine with a pungent bouquet.

The principal constituents of ginger rhizomes are starch, an oleoresin, and a pale yellow essential oil called "ginger oil". Ginger is used in medicine as fluid extract, tincture, oleoresin, and powder, or as a constituent of various compounds. Taken internally it is supposed to relieve dyspepsia and other complaints.

Ginger plants possess not only tonic properties and pungent flavour, but bright lovely flowers. A bouquet of *Alpinia* placed in a room lends it a refreshing Oriental aspect.

Aline Dumas, M.I.C.



HOW CYRION FOUND ANACIA



"Charité s'il vous plait", haven of refuge for the flotsam of Haitian towns and cities, provides help and security for a good number of aged and infirm people. Each guest has a long history of misfortune and pain to tell.

Recently, towards ten, one morning, a new patient was admitted to the registration office. I noticed that his left leg having been amputated, he walked with difficulty. He produced a document written by the pastor of Holy Family parish requiring assistance for his protégé, Cyrion, who was supposed to have no living relative.

That same afternoon, another cripple, a woman, sought admittance. Strange coincidence, she also was an amputee. One of our generous benefactors had written, recommending her to our attention.

When time came for registration, I asked Cyrion the customary questions:

"Your name?"

"Cyrion."

"Your birthplace?"

"Bergeau."

"Your age?"

"Seventy."

"Your mother's name?"

"Marilia."

"Are any members of your family still living?"

"No, they are all dead."

A similar questionnaire was put to Anacia:

"Your name?"

"Anacia."

"Your birthplace?"

"Bergeau."

"Your mother's name?"

"Marilia."

I could not help being puzzled. "Haven't you a brother called Cyrion?" I asked.

"I had a brother by that name..."

"Where is he now?"

"I don't know; I haven't heard from him for the last fifty years. After Mother died, he followed Father to Les Cayes, while I went to live with my godmother in Cuba. I was nineteen at the time, and I never heard from Cyrion again."

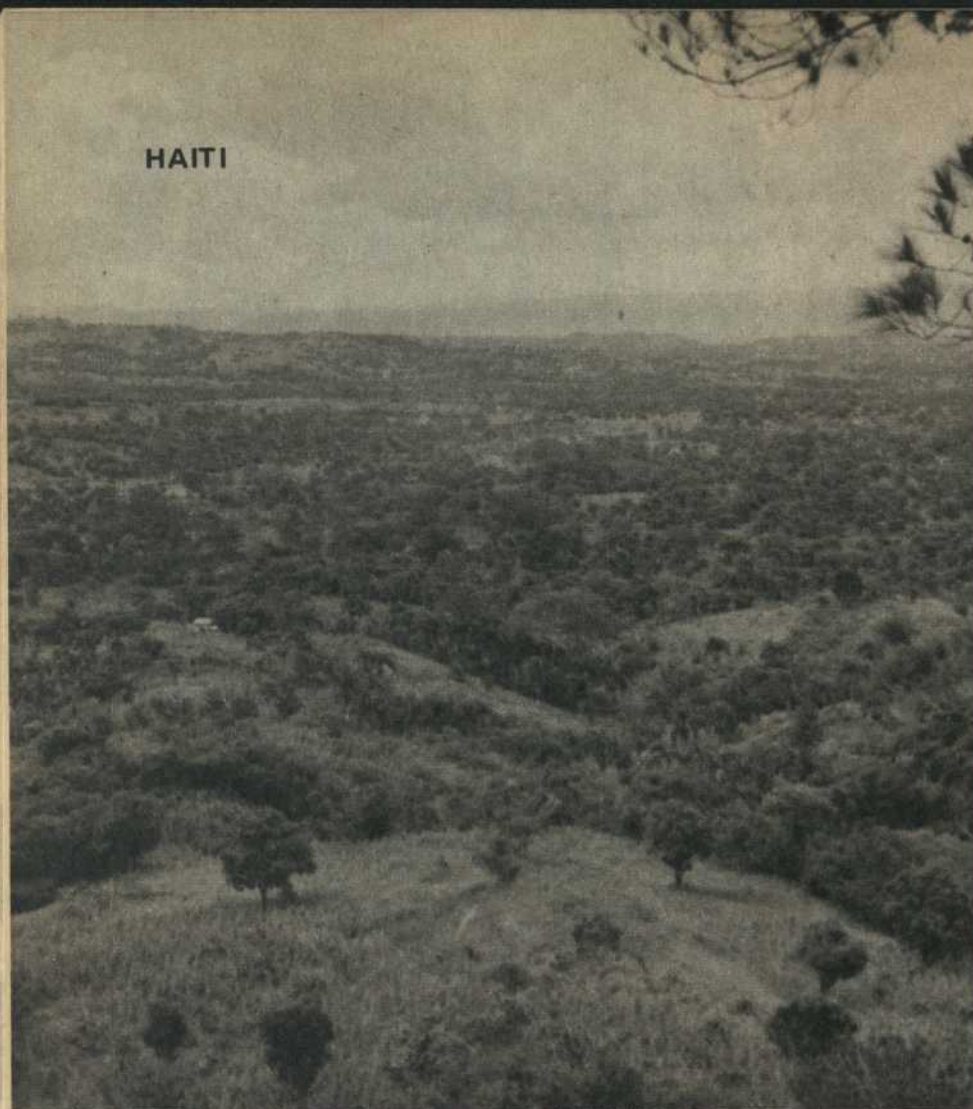
You can easily imagine the poor woman's surprise when she heard that her long-lost brother had just been admitted to the refuge.

I had Cyrion called to meet his sister. After the first moment of surprise, they fell into each other's arms, thanking God for His infinite love.

Cyrion never misses his daily visit to Anacia. Both are happy to be able to make up for their many years of separation.

Jeanne Bédard, M.I.C.

HAITI



ORGANIZED





LEISURE IN HINCHE

For several months, the parochial team at Hinche had been devising plans to organize leisure activities for young and not so young. Everything had to be done from scratch as nothing in the nature of communal entertainment as yet existed in this town.

The team responsible for this initiative was made up of three Scheut Fathers, two Brothers, four Haitian Sisters of saint Joseph of Cluny, and four Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

None of us knew where to find the means of setting up a service

of leisure. We had no financial resources to back us up, no building which might be used as quarters, and not much time in which to elaborate the project, which, at first sight, seemed to be unsolvable.

Little by little, however, and as if by magic the plan began to take



shape. We received modest donations of musical instruments, games, books, music recordings...

Three classrooms were transformed into one large hall where boys and girls of all social classes might find wholesome entertainment during their leisure hours. The project snowballed once the good people of Hinche understood its social significance.

On August 2, took place the inauguration of the "Hinche Leisure Centre 1968" under the presidency of Reverend Jean Noet, director of youth movements in this region.

At the Centre, our young people were elated to find placed at their disposal games of ping pong, volleyball, parchesi, cards; a library stocked with interesting books; a record library; an harmonium, no longer in its green years, but still serviceable; flutes, mouth organs, etc. The youth of Hinche took the Centre by storm and its walls reechoed with their gaiety.

There is no longer any leisure problem in Hinche. Tastes have been catered to and the young have found a wholesome outlet for their exuberant spirits. The Centre has become a meeting place where views may be exchanged, and helpful projects launched. May it prove to be a workshop for the apprenticeship of true liberty and a broadening of horizons.

Antoinette Raynault, M. I. C.

HUE AND CRY AGAINST THE ZEBU

Excerpt from newssheet *Lumière*

Among certain southern tribes, the zebu is held as an object of almost religious veneration. The Malagasy in general, so prize this animal that they have some eighty words to describe him. He figures in sundry ceremonies, in sickness, in wealth, in the sending of good wishes, even in funeral ceremonies. Whenever

sacrifice is to be offered to appease the spirits, the zebu bears the cost as if he could add something to the intercession of human beings.

Why should the ox rather than any other animal be judged worthy of providing a sacrifice offering? It seems that a fat hen or a plump turkey would do just as well. The Baras, Manja's Masi-koros (tribal names), are suppos-

ed to know why the zebu is the one animal worthy of figuring in sacrificial rites, and they are fond of relating the following legend.

Once upon a time, back in the hoary past, the animals rebelled against death which unfailingly cut short their life upon earth, without warning or explanation. The principal leaders of the herds had a summit meeting to discuss this annoying problem. Realizing

how powerless they were to solve it by themselves, they decided to contact the *zanahary* (creator). Surely, he could obtain the cessation of this calamity or at least provide, through his mediation, a way to lessen the evil with which they were threatened.

The *zanahary* gravely listened to their complaints, but being a very busy man, he asked them to have all their herds wait in front of the council hall until he would be at liberty to join them. Meanwhile, he secretly gave orders to have a large tub filled with a certain whitish foaming liquid carried inside the council chamber. One of the leaders among the zebras was appointed usher, and told to keep watch outside, until the arrival of the *zanahary*.

But, tired of waiting, the restless oxen began to turn lyre-horned heads towards green pastures beyond the council hall. One by one, then in groups, they finally took French leave, torn as they were with hunger. The usher alone remained at his post, stamping and grunting with displeasure. Once in a while he poked his nose in a crack at the door and tried to guess by smelling the big tub's contents. He was on the verge of giving in to the temptation of having a lick, for he also was very hungry, when the *zanahary* stamped in. "Where are your companions?" he snorted. The usher humbly made excuses, explaining how hungry they were and how tempting looked the grass in the valley.

The *zanahary* grudgingly admitted these excuses and agreed to hold a meeting the following day. "And you had better all be there, or death will

overtake you faster than ever," he admonished the quaking zebu.

When he had gone, the harassed animal who by now felt the pangs of hunger in earnest, decided it would do no harm to lap up a few mouthfuls from the mysterious tub. "Mmmm . . ." The concoction was so delicious that he soon gulped the whole tubful. After carefully closing the door, as if nothing had happened, he took up his stand as usher.

He was still faithfully standing guard when, the following morning, the zebras again gathered in front of the council hall. While awaiting their would-be saviour, under the shade of tall trees, they twitted the usher who had to remain in the broiling sunshine, near the door. But, the wily beast soliloquized, "Let them laugh their heads off, I'm the only one who drank all of the medicine intended to ward off death." And he paraded with an insolent gait in front of the closed door.

Suddenly, the *zanahary* appeared, bounded up the steps, pulled open the doors, and turning towards the herd thundered, "Not only did you fail to wait for me yesterday, but you drank all the medicine I had prepared for you. Now, I want to know where that medicine went." The startled zebras looked inquiringly at the *zanahary*, then at one another. Thoroughly alarmed, the usher started to fidget. A serpent suddenly emerged from a crack in the wall and cried, "He is the guilty one! I saw him drink." The usher gnashed his teeth in fury and was sorely tempted to crush the noxious reptile under his hoofs. He dared not do so however, while the *zanahary's* gaze pierced him through and through. Presently, he heard his sentence

pronounced, "I have no more medicine for you. But I will give you some advice. You deserve punishment. Every time one among you feels sick or comes close to death, sacrifice a zebu and eat its flesh."

This suggestion was immediately complied with. And so it happens that even today the advice of the *zanahary* is faithfully followed whenever illness, misfortune, or death threatens the Malagasy.





The zebu, noble animal.



CHINESE WOMEN—

Before the republic, women were so little respected that they sometimes went nameless for life and had to obey their fathers, their husbands, and their sons.

Women of free China stand proudly on their own feet today — the equals of men. The process of their emancipation has been one of the most rapid and dramatic in world history. Until half a century ago, the women of China usually were regarded as the accessories of men. Girls had to obey their fathers, wives their husbands, and widows their sons. Women could not own anything besides their personal effects. An empress or empress dowager might occasionally attempt to steer the ship of state from behind the scenes. But in all its long history, China has had only one female ruler — Empress Wu — who reigned over the Middle Kingdom from 690 to 705. In literature, there was a small handful of successful women prose writers and poets.

The emancipation of women in China began after the founding of the Republic in 1912. Even then, progress was slow until 1924, when the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) declared in its platform that "there is no restriction of sex in political activities". After that, an increasing number of women began to attend colleges and enter the professions.

Women had to struggle for their rights in many countries. Chinese women had no need of becoming suffragettes. They were assured of full and equal rights under the Constitution promulgated in 1947. This is more than a matter of franchise. A number of seats are reserved for women in parliamentary bodies at all levels.

In the Republic of China today, women enjoy total equality with men. They have free choice in schooling, employment, and marriage. Of the 138,600 college students at the end of June, 1968, about a third were women. There are women employees in every occupation. They work as judges, attorneys, administrators, diplomats, journalists, writers, teachers, entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, doctors of medicine, military and police officers. There is no discriminatory treatment of female employees. Many of them continue their careers after marriage.

In sharp contrast with these new freedoms, the women of ancient China had to face restrictions of all sorts from the moment of their birth. Many of these misogynistic customs came into effect during the Chou dynasty (1122-256 B.C.). When the wife of an official or scholar became pregnant, she was confined to a maternity ward a couple of months before the expected date of delivery. When the wife began to suffer labor pains, her husband went to the ward — not to see her — but to ask the midwife how things were going.

A bow was hung on the left side of the maternity ward if the baby was a boy and a kerchief on the right side if it was a girl. Ordinary people who could not afford such displays merely laid boy babies on the bed and girls on the floor. During the period of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.) and of the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C.-25 A.D.) girl babies often were abandoned or drowned. The government punished such

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

conduct in the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368). However, infanticide was not brought to an end until establishment of the Republic of China.

Boys and girls could play together until they were six years old. Beginning in the seventh year, they were segregated, and not allowed even to chat with each other. Men and women never sat at the same table for meals. If a family had only one table, the women ate after the men. This custom still survives in rural Taiwan and Korea.

In sex segregation any physical contact was taboo. An article to be given to a member of the opposite sex had to be laid down and not passed directly. Men and women of well-to-do families did not share the same bathroom or use water drawn from the same well. Women appearing in public had to veil their faces and walk on the left side of the road. When going out at night, a woman carried a candle.

From their tenth year, girls were forbidden to leave the house except on errands for their elders. They were required to get up at the cock's first crowing. Except in the families of high-ranking officials and scholars, girls rarely learned to read and write and cipher. In ordinary families, girls learned needlework, weaving, and sericulture from their mothers and sisters.

Marriages were always arranged by parents or elders, through matchmakers. In many cases, the betrothed did not see each other until the wedding ceremony.

If the daughter of a well-to-do family was engaged before the age of fifteen, a "hairdressing ceremony" was held on the fifteenth birthday. Her hair was bound up and fastened with a foot-long ivory hairpin. The bun was tied with a five-color ribbon. The hairpin symbolized chastity and the ribbon her engagement. After the ceremony, girls were not allowed to

enter the private chamber of others and especially not of men. The ribbon was removed by the bridegroom after the marriage. If an engaged girl died before her marriage, she was buried as a member of her fiancé's family.

Upon engagement, girls of well-to-do families received three months of pre-marital lessons in their clan's ancestral halls or at the house of the head of the clan. Matrons from among the older and most virtuous women of the clan were instructors. In addition to household matters, emphasis was placed on the cultivation of the "three obediences" — obey father, husband, and sons after death of the husband — and the "four virtues" — chastity, modesty in speech, neatness of appearance, and good needlework and cooking. A widow could not remarry.

Bridal lessons were concluded with ancestral worship. All the sacrifices had to be of marine products, implying that the brides-to-be would be as submissive to their husbands and elders as water to the life with which it teems. Brides of ordinary families were taught by parents and elders.

In Taiwan today, most urban girls marry husbands of their choice. Arranged marriages are still common in rural areas. However, the betrothed usually know each other. Bridal lessons are taught by mothers and sisters, with emphasis on home economics and child care. The "four virtues" are still considered important. The "three obediences" have gradually lost their former hold with the rise of sexual equality and personal freedom. Fathers and husbands are respected, but many modern Chinese women are the *de facto* heads of their families. They also play a vital role in the political modernization, economic development, and social advancement of their country.

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MISSIONARY INTENTIONS:

- May: That fruitful collaboration may exist among all who preach the Gospel in mission lands.
- June: That all institutes destined to help the missions may know continued progress.

To communicate with the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

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