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The History of the Kamitomizaka Church of Christ in Tokyo, Japan

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HISTORY
OF THE
CHURCH IN JAPAN

PREFACE

I have tried in writing the following history of the Church of Christ at Kamitomizaka in Tokyo and the history of my life to express the great glory and the wonderful favor of the Heavenly Father.

Whenever I reflect on my past, my heart is filled with thanks for the Lord Jesus Christ who saved such a sinful man as I. I had been a very sinful man, as you will see in my life history, because I planned to revenge the person who had killed my father. Jesus Christ saved me to make me a peaceful man and to live as a "peace maker" in this world. I wish to express my hearty thanks to American brethren who have for a long time helped our church work. I also thank many Japanese Christians who through the hard times of the past labored with us, helping each other in the work of Christ.

May 20, 1952

Yunosuke Hiratsuka

FOREWORD

The 1905 issue of the "Japan Missionary", monthly report of the Kamitomisaka work, edited by my late husband, William J. Bishop, carried the following article:

"Ten years ago, 1894, Brother J. M. McCaleb baptized a young man, Yunosuke Hiratsuka. A few months ago that young man came to us desiring to work for the master in any way open to him. He is now my fellow-worker in Koishikawa ward. He comes to my house and we study the Bible and prepare sermons together. He is an earnest student, a prayerful preacher. My prayer is that we may be the younger Paul and Barnabas".

Mr. Bishop's prayer was answered. These two worked together many years. If Mr. Bishop were living on earth today, he would be happy, with me, to express our appreciation of this history of the Kamitomisaka Church, and autobiography written by Brother Yunosuke Hiratsuka.

Clara Bishop
August 31, 1952

It gives me pleasure to speak a word on behalf of the Kamitomisaka Church. This was the oldest of our churches in Japan. It was established by the lamented E. Snodgrass, who was a pioneer missionary in Japan. This congregation stood for more than a half of a century, until it was merged with the Zoshigaya Church in 1943 as a memorial to his work.

Brother Yunosuke Hiratsuka was a faithful preacher of the same for forty years and is well qualified to write its history. He was one of my early converts and has been a tower of strength for Christ. May his light still shine for years to come. May the members remain

faithful to the truth which they have been taught; and their good influence be felt throughout Japan.

This is my good wish and prayer.

J. M. McCaleb
September 12, 1952

One of the most lovable and effective Japanese preachers, and yet one of the most humble known to me is the author of this booklet. I am glad Bro. Hiratsuki has given us the story of his long and useful life and a history of the Kamitomizaka Church.

We are not surprised to learn that when young Hiratsuka came to California he associated with a denominational group for at that time there were no New Testament churches in that area. However his experiences helped to fit him for effective work later.

It will be noted that Bro. Hiratsuka limits his narrative to September 1943, the time of his retirement and the merger of the Kamitomizaka and Zoshigaya congregations during World War II. Of course he and we rejoice in the greater success of the work in Japan since the close of the war. Japan is an open door indeed and the harvest is ripe.

I trust this book will have a wide reading and will accomplish much good.

Clarence G. Vincent
September 15, 1952

The History of
Kamitimizaka Church of Christ
in
Tokyo, Japan

The Mission Work on Daimon Street

Our first American Missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. E. Snodgrass, came to Japan in 1887 with other missionaries. He rented a Japanese house at Daimon Street, Koishikawa, Tokyo and began to preach the gospel of Christ. At the same time he opened Sunday school work. At that time Miss Wairick and some other women missionaries were helping the work. Mr. and Mrs. J. M. McCaleb came to Japan in April, 1892. They joined the work with Mr. Snodgrass. At that time the Christian work was more difficult than in later years. Some Japanese, who did not know what Christianity is, were strongly against the work. But the missionaries worked in the Christian love and faith. By and by, several Japanese brethren were added to the Church. These brethren were: Yoichiro Tanaka, Naohachi Asano and Tomijiro Hosogai. They helped the work with some other members.

Time passed on and Brother and Sister Snodgrass returned to America in March 1893, leaving the work to Brother McCaleb and other brethren. After three years, they came back to Japan. They came back with the new hope to build a church house, and they began to build it at Kamitimizaka-machi, which is only ten blocks from Daimon Street, Koishikawa-ward, Tokyo.

The Kamitimizaka Church Was Built Up

The new building was finished at Kamitimizaka in December of 1896. In that new chapel, the brethren had the Lord's Supper on

the first Sunday of January (6th) 1897. During those days Brother Naohachi Asano, Yoichiro Tanaka and some others helped the work of the church.

Mr. and Mrs. William J. Bishop came to Japan in 1899, and worked with them. However, Mrs. Bishop lost her health and died. Her body was buried in Aoyama cemetery, Tokyo. Brother Bishop went back to America, and he returned to Japan with Mrs. Clara Bishop in October 1902. Mr. and Mrs. Snodgrass who had worked in Japan for fifteen years, from 1887 to 1902, returned to America in 1902, leaving the work to Mr. and Mrs. Bishop. Brother Bishop began to preach the gospel at Kamitimizaka Church of Christ in 1902. Brother Tomeji Yokoo, who was baptized by Brother McCaleb, Brother Masuno, who was preaching there at that time, and some other brethren were helping in the work of the church.

There was a private school for poor children which was named "Jikie-Gakko". Mrs. Hana Kuwabara was a teacher in that school.

Mr. Yunosuke Hiratsuka, who was baptized by Mr. J. M. McCaleb in 1895, and was in California for six years, came to the Kamitimizaka Church in October 1903 by the introduction of Mr. McCaleb, and he began to help Mr. Bishop in that church.

Mr. S. Abe, Mr. K. Kishi, Mr. K. Takahashi and some other brethren were added to the church. These brethren became good Christians and helped the work.

Miss Remington came to Japan and began an English Bible class in the chapel in 1905. However, she lost her health and went back to America in November of that year.

Brother Bishop had a special prayer meeting in the chapel

Brother Bishop preached every Sunday evening, after Mrs. Bishop had her English Bible Class. Mr. Hiratsuka preached every Sunday morning in Japanese. The members and many inquirers were there to worship God and study Christianity.

Mr. Ikutaro Kamikura, principal of a primary school, came to the church early on the morning of September 1, 1906. He asked Mr. Hiratsuka about Christianity, and he was baptized by him, after they had for many hours, a good conversation about the teaching, without eating or drinking, until that evening.

Mr. Bishop printed the "Missionary Messenger" and other tracts. The first was sent to America and the tracts were distributed among the Japanese people.

The Sunday School was opened in November 1907. Brother T. Chiba, Brother S. Uemita and Mrs. K. Kato taught the children. By and by, this school was increased, having seventy or eighty children every Sunday morning. It was continued many years, until the awful war started, December 1941.

Mr. and Mrs. Bishop went to America in 1909, for their rest for one year, leaving the work to Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Klingman, who worked there nicely until their coming back in 1911. During that time Mrs. Klingman began a woman's meeting with Mrs. Kato, Mrs. Yokoo and some other sister.

In 1910 Mr. Hiratsuka began to work in his native country, the state of Ibaraki, to preach the gospel to his native village. It continued for many years, until Mr. O. D. Bixler built the Nagasawa church in 1921. He visited there many times every year, and taught them the gospel, visiting the people in those villages, sometimes staying for one week or ten days at one place.

Mr. and Mrs. Bishop came back from America in May 1911, and resumed the work at Kamitimizaka Church. Many came to Mrs. Bishop's

Bible Class. Mr. Bishop preached earnestly every Sunday evening in English. At the same time, Mrs. Bishop had her woman's meeting with Mrs. Kato, Mrs. Hiratsuka and other sisters, every other week. And Mr. Hirosuke Ishiguro helped Mrs. Yokoo's work until he built up Otsuka Church of Christ in Koishikawa-ku by the help of Mr. Bishop.

In January 1913, Mr. Bishop went to America because he had serious illness. Before he left Japan, he appointed three elders in Kamitomizaka. These three elders were: Y. Hiratsuka, T. Yokoo and I. Kamikura. The ceremony was held at the house of Mr. Bishop on January 19, 1913.

After Mr. Bishop went to America, he entered hospital at Monrovia, California. He had many good doctors there in this hospital, but was called up to Heaven, at last, on April 4, in that year. We had a memorial meeting for him, thanking deeply for his great work in Japan.

In that meeting, Brother McCaleb said:

"Brother Bishop was born in Tennessee. When he graduated from Nashville Bible School he came to Japan. It was August 1899. At that time, I had been seven years in Japan already. Since that time, Brother Bishop worked very hard from the gospel for thirteen years in Japan. He did not have a strong body, but he had a strong will. He did not live in a fine house while some others had nice homes, but he built many spiritual houses in Japan. I want to read Revelation 21:14. 'The wall of the City had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of twelve apostles of the Lamb.'"

Six other Japanese friends made their hearty speeches, expressing their thanks for his good Christian work in Japan for thirteen years. Many other friends, who lived in different parts

of Japan, sent their letters to the church, expressing their great thanks and praising the late lamented William J. Bishop. We sent a letter to Mrs. Bishop in America expressing our deep sympathy to her.

Mrs. Bishop left Japan, with her three daughters in April in that year, 1913, before Brother Bishop died, but he passed away before she reached America. She requested Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Vincent who came to Japan in November 1911 to assist in the work. Before she left we had a farewell meeting for her. Many church members and her friends came to that meeting and thanked her for her work; especially, the church sisters thanked her for the women's meeting which she had so earnestly conducted.

Brother and Sister C. G. Vincent began the work at Kamitomizaka Church in April 1913. He preached in English every Sunday evening very earnestly, and Mrs. Vincent had women's meeting every other week with Mrs. Kato as helper.

Mr. Vincent and Y. Hiratsuka took an evangelistic trip to Ibarski-ken in March 1915. Mr. Vincent was the first missionary who preached the gospel in that state. We visited several villages and he baptized two young men who became good Christian workers later. They were Dr. Takashi Hiratsuka and Brother Ryushi Ebine.

After we returned from the country, Mr. Vincent preached every Sunday evening, while Mr. Hiratsuka preached in the morning, and young people and others were baptized by him. Mrs. Vincent lost her health and two doctors advised her to go back to America. They determined to leave Japan soon. So, we had a large farewell meeting for them on June 7, 1916. Kamitomizaka Church gave them a letter of thanks in which we thanked God very deeply for their good work. Mr. Vincent, in that meeting left us such words: "The

evangelistic work is very necessary at present. So, the brethren must be earnest for His work, bearing tribulation, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

They left Japan on June 9, 1916. Brother McCaleb, other missionaries and Brother Otoshige Fujimori, and many members of Kamitonzaka Church went to Yokohama to say "Farewell" to them. We prayed God for their safe voyage.

After their return to America, the work in Kamitonzaka Church of Christ was continued nicely by the three elders. Faithful church members, like H. Kawano, C. Iwai, Dr. T. Hiratsuka, T. Matsuyoto, and some others helped the work. Mrs. Clara Bishop and C. G. Vincent, both then in America, were helping our church work, having much interest for the work. They helped us very much with the churches in America for a long time, until the terrible war which started in 1941. We church members should never forget the great favor which they did for us. We had a thanksgiving memorial meeting, twenty years after the church was established. It was held on February 10, 1917. There were gathered many members and they thanked the Lord.

Miss Sarah Andrews had an English Bible class from early in 1916 to June 1917 at the Kamitonzaka Church, until she moved to her work at Okitsu, Shizuoka-ken. Miss Andrews arrived in Japan, January 10, 1916. Brother E. A. Rhodes had that class from January 1919 to the time when he moved to Omiya, Ibaraki-ken in 1920. Brother Harry Fox had his place in the church and he continued it until he moved to Tanagura, Fukushima-ken in June 1923. Miss Clara Kennedy taught it nicely for a long time. Many good Christians were added to the church through these efforts.

Y. Hiratsuka continued to work in the country, Ibaraki-ken, visiting many times every year. However, Brother and Sister O. D. Bixler built a church house in Nagasawa, Shioda-mura, Ibaraki-ken

in 1921, and they did a good work.

On September 1, 1923, there was a large earthquake in the eastern part of Japan. It was a terrible one. It happened at noon, and it continued for several days. It caused a great conflagration and thousands of houses were destroyed and many thousands of people died in Tokyo. But, by the grace of God, our church brethren were safe and our church building was only damaged. At that time, the American churches sent us relief money so kindly, through Mrs. Bishop and Brother Vincent, for the suffering people.

The church building became dangerous so, we began to rebuild it in March 1924. It was finished in June of that year. At the same time, we built a good Sunday school building for children. Brother T. Chiba served, well, in erecting these buildings. American churches helped very much through the kindness of Brother Vincent and Mrs. Bishop. When it was finished, we had a dedication ceremony on June 15, 1924. Many brethren attended and thanked God.

We began to work with new hope for the glory of God in that new building. Every Sunday morning and evening, Y. Hiratsuka preached regularly, but when he preached to other churches like Kichijoji, Zoshigaya and some other churches, our elders took his place. Many members were added to the church.

The Sunday school work was conducted by good teachers: Brother H. Matsudaira, Brother T. Kawano, Michio, Masunori, Yoshi of Hiratsuka's family, and Miss Tanaka, Miss Yokoo, Miss Kawano and others.

The deacons: H. Kawano, C. Iwai and Dr. T. Hiratsuka, T. Matsumoto, and some others helped the church work very nicely, while Mrs. Nozaki, Mrs. Yokoo, Mrs. Hiratsuka and others were working among women.

On October 1, 1921, we received a letter from the elders of

Abilene Christian College Church, asking us to send a letter from churches of Christ in Japan to the Peace Conference which was held in America, to express our great hope for its success. The churches, Kamitomizaka, Zoshigaya, Kichijoji, Sawara in Chiba-ken and others, had a conference and we sent the letters to the President, Mr. Harding, and the Japanese Ambassador in America, Mr. Kato, the following words in those letters: "Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

Time passed on, and the thirty years passed away after the church was built at Kamitomizaka. So, we had a thanksgiving memorial meeting on November 3, 1928. In that meeting Brother J. M. McCaleb said in his speech this: "I remember that just when I entered the Bible School in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1898, there was held a farewell meeting for the missionaries who were going to Japan. They were Brother and Mrs. Snodgrass. After four years passed on, I called on them at Tsukiji in Tokyo! I remember very well, when I attended the mission on Daimon Street, Koishikawa-ward on April 17, 1892, I found Miss Wairick was teaching Sunday School children with some Japanese helpers. We had the Lord's Supper with a few members. Brother Yoichiro Tanaka, a good Christian carpenter, helped Brother Snodgrass very well to build the chapel at Kamitomizaka in 1896. He died many years ago, but Mrs. Tanaka is here as a healthy old sister even though she is seventy years old. Brother Grow in Kentucky contributed \$600.00 to this chapel building. Brother and Sister Snodgrass had gone back to Kentucky in 1902 after they worked for fifteen years in Japan. And I have had an interest in their work since I came to Japan."

At that time, Brother Vincent and Mrs. Bishop sent letters to us. Those letters gave us great courage for the work of the

church, and many members rose up to do their services for the Lord, since we had that meeting. The elders, the deacons and Sunday school teachers were working earnestly and members were added to the church.

We built a kindergarten in March 1930. And Miss Fujita and Miss Otsuka taught it for five years. After that, Miss Chioko Hiratsuka, Miss Y. Iesai and some others were teaching those children. There were many kindergarten children.

When some Sunday School teachers were obliged to leave their work in the church, thank God, we had others to take their place in the work. These Brothers were: T. Kawano, M. Hiratsuka, Mrs. Nozaki, Miss Takamura, Miss Yuri Hiratsuka and some others were teaching there. Miss Clara Kennedy taught the Bible in the young people's class. She worked earnestly for many years. Brother H. Kogo and Brother B. Nakano helped the church work as deacons.

Before Brother McGaleb left Japan in October 1941, he transferred all the responsibility of Zoshigaya Church to Y. Hiratsuka. He had responsibility for the two churches. The war between Japan and America unfortunately happened, to our great grief, in December 1941. The church work became very hard, not only with persecution we received but also without any correspondence between the two countries. But the church members were coming to the church to have the Lord's Supper every Sunday.

Y. Hiratsuka was obliged to work with the two churches. It was too hard and impossible for him. After about two years, he and other elders had a conference with members of the two churches in September 1943. They determined to unite the Kamitomizaka Church and Zoshigaya Church, giving it the name of "Toshima Zoshigaya Church of Christ". Also, we made a conference to have Mr. Suematsu Saito as minister of that new church instead of Y. Hiratsuka. He

had worked for forty years from October 1903 to September 1943.

He was seventy years old and his health was poor.

So, he retired from that work, leaving it to the present minister, Mr. S. Saito. And with his memories of work for forty years, he is thanking very much for the grace of God, and the American brethren who helped our work in Kamitonizaka Church of Christ, Koishikawa, Tokyo, Japan. Especially, we thank deeply and heartily Mrs. Clara Bishop and Brother C. G. Vincent who helped our church for a long time, even though they had returned to America.

We must not forget about the great help of Brother Otoshige Fujimori of the Church of Christ in Chiba-ken. Brother C. Fujimori and Y. Hiratsuka helped each other and the churches since 1903. Brother Fujimori is still healthy and is working among Churches of Christ in Japan.

Yunosuke Hiratsuka

The Autobiography
of
Yunosuke HIRATSUKA
Evangelist
of
The Kamitomizaka Church of Christ
in
Tokyo, Japan;

My Family and Birth

My ancestor belonged to the "Sumurai (knight)" rank, which was the middle class in feudal Japan.

The stone monument of the ancestor, named Wakasano-kami Hiratsuka, of my family is established on a hill back of my old home. And it is shown by this stone that the ancestor lived there about three hundred years ago. I was born on October 27, 1873 at Nagasawa, Shioda-mura, Naka-County, Ibaraki-prefecture, Japan which is about eighty miles northeast of Tokyo.

My father was a medicine doctor in that country and at the same time he had a private school in his house. He was a devoted Buddhist, praying to an idol named "Kanzeon Bosatsu". He prayed every morning and evening, using one hour each time. My mother was a good and wise woman, and from her own family came Seishisai AIZAWA who was one of the most famous scholars at that time.

Education in My Young Age

I was the only boy among three sisters; two of them being older and one younger than myself. I was the favored child in my family and my father was trying to educate me very strictly in righteousness, following Confucianism. When I became only seven or eight years old, my father and my older sister, as she was a teacher in that school, tried to teach me "Rongo", which is the holy and high book in Confucianism. So, I became a boy who thought deeply about things. One evening when I looked up into the sky and saw numberless stars and the beautiful and wonderful view of it all, I wondered and had this question: "Where did these stars come from, and can we count them, or not?" Of course, nobody could answer me. In the teaching of Confucianism, there is

"The Heaven", even though Confucius did not teach "The Heaven" as a personalized One or as meaning The Supreme Being. So, when I was ten years old, I was searching for some religion.

The Death of My Father

When I was twelve years old, a very terrible thing happened in my family. My father was killed by a robber. This said matter happened at midnight of August 18, 1865. And my life was thrown into the valley of death with my family. After that, my poor mother, a widow who was forty-two years old, was obliged to support her family. I determined to find the enemy and avenge him! So, I began to learn fencing, and at the same time, I was searching for the enemy, looking everywhere for him. Of course, many policeman were also searching for that guilty man. But all in vain. He was never arrested.

In this way many years passed. My older sister married a young medicine doctor who helped my old mother very well. So then, I decided to go up to Tokyo and learn more about the Confucian teaching. I asked my mother about this plan who gave me her consent at once. She was always a good mother to lead her children carefully into the righteous way, managing her family with wisdom and was highly respected in the village.

Went Up to Tokyo

My late father had good friends in Ibaraki-prefecture. One of those friends was Mr. Kyo NEOTO who had deep sympathy with me. I visited him one day and asked him to introduce me to his friends in Tokyo, telling him about my desire to go up to Tokyo to study. He agreed to my plan and introduced me to Mr. H. NOMURA, who was an attendant in the TOKUGAWA family, and he introduced me to Mr. T.

OKUSHI, who was an attendant in the same family in Tokyo. Mr. OKUSHI knew me very well when I was in Nomura's home, and had much sympathy for my unhappy life. So he began to help me in several ways in my life.

The Work In the Police Station

I got a position to serve in the Imperial Palace as a policeman and I began to work there earnestly. It was in April of 1893. At that time, it was said that to serve the Imperial Palace was a noble work because the emperor was the highest man in Japan, a god according to Shintoism. Of course, I respected him sincerely in my heart. At first I was satisfied with my daily services. But, by and by, I began to feel some dissatisfaction because the lives of those people in the police station were not so noble as the ones in society. Time passed on for one year, and I began to try to be satisfied by the Confucian teaching but it did not satisfy me.

The Hope to Go to America

So then, I thought, some day, to go to America where there would be many good things to satisfy human desire, materially and spiritually. Then I thought that if I would go to America, I must first learn English. Soon after that determination, I found a good private English school at Kanda-ward where an American English teacher was teaching. So, I entered that school and began to study English. There I learned that the young American teacher, named J. M. McCaleb, was a missionary who would also teach Christianity to us. In truth, I did not care so much about Christianity, not knowing anything at all about that teaching. However, I felt kindly toward him.

I began to learn willingly about the Christian teaching from

him. He told me about the Heavenly Father, the son of God who saves us from our sinful state, and how that all things in the sky and on the earth were created by Him. It was a very wonderful teaching to my soul, and, thank God, the dissatisfaction in my heart was taken away. The question of the stars in the sky was cleared up and the light shone into my heart. My unhappy life became so pleasant, having been opened by the gospel which came from above indeed!

Baptism by J. M. McCaleb

In the next week, he told me about baptism. So, I determined to be baptized on the next Sunday morning. I went to church on Mitoshiro Street in Kanda, and I was baptized by him. It was on a Sunday in the summer of 1895. Brother McCaleb was, at that time, a young missionary, and I was a young man, also. He came to Japan in April in 1892.

A Happy Man

I became a very happy man through the change in my heart. I stopped worldly, sinful practices. And, in truth, one of those changes was to forgive that enemy who killed my dear father. Indeed, it was a most wonderful change in my heart. Thank God, it came from the teaching of Christ:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said; Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may become Sons of your Father who is in Heaven,"
Matthew 5:43-45.

The Preparation to Go to U. S.

After that I was studying English more earnestly, to go to America. However, I came to think one day that I needed money for the journey! And I knew that I could not get money enough in my present work, so I thought it was better to change my work to earn

more money. At last, I learned that the best way was to work in a bank and save the money. Mr. K. Okushi had many friends in Tokyo. One day I told him about my hope to go to America and to change my position to get enough money for it. He was, at first, surprised very much. But when I told him about it exactly, he understood it very well. He introduced me to the Mitsui Bank which was one of the largest banks in Japan. So, I entered into it and worked earnestly for about one year. However, my savings were still not enough. I then visited my mother in my native country, and told her about my hope; especially about my future life to study good things in America. Then my good mother agreed to it willingly and gave me some money which she got by selling a part of her rice field. I thanked her very much for it. I came back to Tokyo again, leaving the old mother in the country. I prayed for God's good blessing upon her.

Six Years in America

The voyage to San Francisco from Yokohama began on December 1, 1897. The name of the ship was "The Pekin" which belonged to a Chinese ship company. On the morning of that day, I started from Mr. Okushi's home and went to the Yokohama wharf where my dear friends were waiting for me to say their "Farewell". The Okushi family and those good friends of mine said to me, "Study the truth and come back safely again to Japan." The ship departed from the wharf at three o'clock on that day, and began her long voyage to San Francisco, leaving Yokohama and Mt. Fuji which could be seen above the white cloud in the sky. During the voyage we experienced several things. After three days, a big tempest came, a strong wind was blowing and the waves were so high that the ship became like a leaf on the water in the great Pacific ocean, rolling herself to and fro and up and down on the high waves. After two days

the wind stopped and the ocean became very calm, and the ship was sailing very smoothly. We saw many whales and some other sea animals which were wavering on the surface of the waves. Sometimes we looked upon a very impressive sunrise in the morning that shone so beautifully upon the golden waves. The sunset in the evening was also glorious. And at night, the moon shone so clearly upon the silver waves.

Arrived at San Francisco

After we sailed for twenty-six days, the ship entered the Bay of San Francisco through the Golden Gate. Next morning, we got up early, and went up on the deck of the ship and looked over the city. The street cars were running on the hills of the city and many ships were sounding their whistles on the bay. "Oh," I exclaimed, "This is the country that I wished to see so much for many years." I thanked God and prayed for His guidance in the future. We landed on the next day and I went to a Japanese Y.M.C.A. which was managed by Dr. E. A. Sturge who was the leader of the Presbyterian churches on the Pacific Coast. The members welcomed me very kindly and I had many good friends soon. One of those friends was Mr. Tomijoro Hosogai who was baptized by Brother E. Snodgrass, the first missionary of the Kamitomisaka Church in Tokyo. He was an assistant to Dr. Sturge as a Japanese interpreter.

The Bible Study and the Family Work

The next week, I began to attend Dr. Sturge's Bible Class, and at the same time, I began to work for a family to earn my living. It was a very interesting thing to know how I got work in that family. One day, my friend told me that a good old lady came this morning who wanted a good school boy in her family to work only for two hours in the morning and two in the evening. For the rest of

the day he would be free. He said to me, "Will you go to her?" I learned that this family had moved to this city recently from Spokane, a city far to the north, that her husband, Dr. F. B. Cherington, had been the president of a college of that state, and that now he was a minister of a big Congregational church in this city. So, I thanked him, and decided to work in her family. On the next day I went to her house and I met Dr. and Mrs. Cherington and three young boys. They were very kind to me, as if I were their brother. I stayed there for three years. I continued to attend the Bible class of Dr. Sturge for one year, and I attended the services on every Sunday morning and evening, and the several other kinds of religious meetings also. Brother Hosogai and the other friends were very good to study Christianity together and to help each other.

Public Schools in San Francisco

In the next year, 1899, I entered a grammar school in that city. In the year 1900, I entered a high school, and studied as well as I could. At the same time, I attended the religious services. I went to the American M.E.C.M. when great preachers came and I enjoyed their good speeches. In one of those meetings, I remember very well, a preacher said, "Who can create life in an egg? A man can make an egg shell, the yolk and white material in it, but nobody can make its life, but the Creator."

The Three Years in San Francisco

During those three years from 1898 to 1900 when I stayed in San Francisco, there were many good and bad things to record. One day, my friend said to me, "Have you seen Chinatown where there are so many bad things?" "Oh, no," said I. "Not yet." "Then you can go with me this evening," he said. We went to see it. We saw many wicked things there: drinkers, gamblers and other bad

things just like the city of Vanity Fair in "Pilgrim's Progress." After we had given a glance at that Vanity City, we came back to the Y.M.C.A. which was our lovely and peaceful place. On our way back, the friend told me a sad story which had happened only one year before. A young earnest Christian named Okuno, an only son of Mr. Masatsuna OKUNO, preached one evening in Chinatown to save these poor Japanese young people from that evil life. When he was preaching about the love of Christ, some bad men came to him and struck Mr. OKUNO very hard. He was wounded and was brought back to the Y.M.C.A. by his friends but he died in a few days. It was said that his death was like Stephen's martyrdom. His father was a famous attendant upon Prince Arisugawa and a teacher of Japanese language for an American missionary. By and by, he became an excellent Christian believer among the elder Christians in Japan.

Loosing Health and Hosogai's Kindness

I had been studying in my high school with a hope to enter the Stanford University in 1901, however, I always had interest in the study of Christianity. So I continued to study very hard for two years and at last my body was very tired, and I was obliged to rest both from my school and from church services. When I was in my room in the Y.M.C.A., Brother Hosogai came to see me with a Japanese doctor. The doctor examined me and said, "You must go back to Japan because your health is so bad." I was so deeply disappointed that every action in my daily life was stopped except one: I prayed God for His help.

On the next day Brother Hosogai came to my room again and said, "You must not be discouraged. Come with me to Dr. Sturge's home and let him examine you." So, we went to his home and asked him to examine my body. Then he agreed to it willingly, and examined me carefully. (Dr. Sturge had two titles: M. D. and Ph. D.) After

he examined me he said, "It is not so bad, but it is better for you to move to some other section from this smokey and foggy place." His work gave me great hope, leading me up from the "valley of death" to a new life.

Left the Doctor's Family

On the next day I called at Dr. Cherington's and told Mrs. Cherington about the matter and asked her to let me leave her home, thanking them for every kindness. Dr. and Mrs. Cherington and the three young men were surprised very much but they gave me their hearty "Good-bye," and we parted. However, I shall never forget their kindness which they showed me, during the time I stayed in their home. I learned many good things from the family. Dr. Cherington gave me some good English books, and a Bible, writing his name in it. My dear and kind Bro. Hosogai advised me to move to the Salinas Mission, which was managed by J. K. Inazawa, saying that Salinas was about 100 miles south of San Francisco and that it was a good town with pure air. So, I determined to move there and asked him to write to Mr. Inazawa. After a few days the answer came to us, saying, "Come soon, we welcome Mr. Hiratsuka, willingly."

The Three Years at Salinas

From Jan. 1901 to July 1903

The Christmas in 1900 had passed away and the New Year 1901 came. I started for Salinas on January 2, leaving Brother Hosogai and other friends in San Francisco. It was a great change in my life, to stop my schooling and go to a mission. Mr. Kenichi, the minister, welcomed me very kindly with the members in that mission.

A good room in the upstairs of the mission house was given to me. I was seated on a chair in the room and looked over the mountains in the Salinas Valley which had some snow on the peaks and I saw many beautiful flowers in the yard just below my window. So I

knew that Salinas was a warm and quiet town throughout the year and that it was a good place for my health.

After a few days doctor came to see me by Mr. Inazawa's kindness, and he examined me and gave me some medicine, saying, "Your sickness is not so bad. You can be cured in a few weeks." Just as the doctor said, I became much better in a month and was well after two months.

When I became quite well Mr. Inazawa asked me to assist him in that mission because he was establishing another mission at Watsonville near Salinas. My work in the mission was to serve in the Sunday morning with the members, to help some people who came from other places and to visit those Japanese who were settling at places surrounding the mission. So, I began to work in that mission, believing that it was the providence of God. It was in March 1901. In places surrounding this town, there were some Japanese farmers who were planting beets, because there was a big sugar refinery in this town. It was said that this company was one of the largest in the world. They were also planting strawberries and potatoes. I visited those families to comfort them, reading to them the Bible and praying for God's blessing upon them.

It was a very interesting and good experience for me to serve in the mission and to visit our families and talk about the gospel with them. Sometimes, I helped young men who were disappointed in their hopes by reason of worldly problems and give courage to them. During the time I stayed at Salinas Mission, Mr. Inazawa and I translated "Studies in Four Gospels" which was written by Jesse L. Hurlbut, New York, from English into Japanese. Dr. E. A. Sturge, superintendent of Presbyterian Japanese Mission Work in California

wrote this preface to it:

"This little book which has been translated into Japanese by J. K. Inazawa and Y. Hiratsuka, is one of the best helps to gospel study that has ever fallen into my hands; and my prayer is that it may prove to be an inestimable blessing to many. There is no other line of study that can equal this in importance, and there is certainly no other that will be followed by so rich a reward.

Better than the gold of Ophir
Is the precious gospel mine;
And the purpose of this volume
Is to make its treasures thine.

This is but a chart to show you
Where the hidden wealth to find;
And the tools you need to aid you
Are the open heart and mind.

There is yet a hidden treasure,
Buried in a certain field;
And to every earnest seeker
Will these riches be revealed.

Seek the peaces here suggested,
Telling where the treasures lie;
Dig! And you will find a fortune,
That will fully satisfy.

My Decision to Return to Japan

One day, I thought about returning to Japan, because Mr. Okushi wrote me a letter telling me that the Okushi family was waiting very much for my coming back home. I had spent about six years already in California but I could not yet enter any college because I had an illness in San Francisco. The Lord led me to this Mission here and used me for His work and gave me some good experiences in gospel work. I decided to return to my own country and to follow His guidance. I made known this determination to Mr. Inazawa and got his consent. So then, I began to make preparation for my return to Japan.

A Farewell Meeting for Me

The members of the Salinas Mission and the friends of that town, and some of the families at the places near by had a great farewell meeting for me. It was a Sunday afternoon in July 1903, and about one hundred people were there in that meeting. After we prayed to God, Mr. Inazawa thanked me for my services in the Mission work and gave me a letter of thanks with some money from the Mission. Many friends made, also, good farewell speeches. I thanked them for their kind words and the gift. We had a big dinner which was prepared by those sisters with whom I studied the Bible.

On the next morning I started for San Francisco with a friend. Mr. Inazawa and others came to see me off at the Salinas Station. We left Salinas, saying, "Farewell" to each other.

From San Francisco to Hawaii

When I reached San Francisco, I met my dear Bro. Hosogai and the other friends there at the Japanese Y.M.C.A. on Heaght Street. Soon I visited Dr. Sturge, who welcomed me heartily. After that, I visited other friends. I took a ship for Japan. I sailed on the "American Maru" which left in July 1903. It was in an afternoon. Dr. Sturge, Brother Hosogai and many other friends came to San Francisco Bay to say "Farewell" to me. By and by the saip began slowly to leave the shore and friends prayed for me and a safe voyage for the ship.

We sailed for one week and the voyage was very easy. We were talking to each other very pleasantly, looking upon the endlets ocean. The ship stopped for one day at Hawaii. We went ashore and looked over the island. We saw many beautiful flowers and evergreens everywhere in that island which is called "Evergreen Island."

In the early morning of the next day, our ship began her long voyage on the Pacific Ocean. During the two weeks, sometimes we had a heavy sea, but comparatively, it was a peaceful voyage. Sometimes we saw numberless flying fish which were flying across the high waves, doubtless to escape from the dolphin, their natural enemy. It was very pleasant to see the sunrise in the morning and the setting sun in the evening, which seemed as if it were the Kingdom of God in the sky.

Arrival at Yokohama

After we had a smooth and happy voyage, we arrived, at noon on an August day, 1903. At Yokohama many people were gathered to welcome us. I found Okushi's family, my relatives, and my old friends there. I was invited to the Okushi's family in Tokyo and I rejoiced very much because I was back in the land of Japan. I thanked the Heavenly Father by His Son, Jesus Christ, for the grace which He had given me in America and the safe voyage home. That prayer was offered in my room of the Okushi house secretly, because Mr. Okushi and his family did not believe in Christ. Not only did they not believe in Him, but they were against that religion because they believed in Shintoism. However, Mr. Okushi believed in me, saying to his friends: "I do not like Christianity, but I like Yunosuke HIRATSUKA."

Our Marriage

Soon after my arrival Mr. Okushi wanted me to marry his first daughter Hanako OKUSHI who had been waiting six years for me. I told her about my Christian faith and she agreed willingly. After a few days from that, our marriage ceremony was held in her home. Many guests were there to attend the Shinto ceremony. It was August 23, 1903. Soon after we married, I began to teach my wife the Bible.

Visiting Old Home

In the next month, September, we visited our relatives and old friends in Tokyo. And we visited my old mother who was waiting for us at my native village in Ibaraki-ken. We rejoiced and thanked God when we met together with my old mother, relatives and friends. The village people made a welcome meeting for us. Many people came to see me and to hear about the news of America. Many of them asked about the civilization of America. I told them that Christianity was the foundation of the true civilization of that country. At that time, many school boys were there, listening very attentively to my speech. When I visited the same village a few years ago, I found some people who had attended that meeting about forty-seven years before and they were still talking about my speech.

Visiting Brother McCaleb

When we finished visiting in the country, we came up to Tokyo and stayed in the home of Mr. Okushi. I wanted to see Bro. J. M. McCaleb who baptized me nine years before. After I searched for him for several days I learned he lived in Tsukiji, and, one day, I visited him at his home. I knocked on the door and a child came to the door. I told him that I was Y. Hiratsuka. Soon, the father came out and looked at me, but he did not recognize me. However, when I explained to him about my baptism by him, and that I had come back from America recently, he understood very well. He was very glad to see me. He introduced me to Mrs. McCaleb and his children who rejoiced to see one who had lately come back from America. After we had some conversation over old and new things, he told me that there was a church of Christ on Kanitomizaka-Street in Koishikawa-ward, and that Brother and Sister W. J. Bishop were the missionaries. He advised me to go to that church the next

week. I thanked him for his advice, and left him, promising to go the next Sunday.

Attending the Kamitimizaka Church

On the next Sunday morning, in October 1903, I got up early in the morning and I walked to the Kamitimizaka Church which was about five miles from Mr. Okushi's house. There were no street cars then, so I was obliged to walk. When I reached the church the English Bible class was being taught by Brother Bishop. As soon as he saw me, he came to me and said, "Are you Brother Hiratsuka?" "Yes, Sir," I replied, "I am." We shook hands. He gave me a seat to attend that Bible class. When the Bible class was finished and the morning worship was opened, he asked me to lead the prayer. So I prayed after I read the following passage,

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:13,14)

The preaching was done by a preacher whose name I do not recall and we had the Lord's Supper. After the service was over, Brother Bishop introduced me to the church which welcomed me very sincerely.

Visiting Brother Bishop's Home

On the next Monday evening, Brother Bishop invited me to his home which was on Myogatani Street, Koishikawa-ward. So, I visited him at his home. He introduced me to Mrs. Bishop. After a while she went upstairs with her baby child, Margaret, saying, "My baby, let us go to your bed, because your father and Brother Hiratsuka are going to talk about an important matter." After that Brother Bishop asked me about my life in San Francisco and the evangelistic work at the Salinas Mission. He asked me, "Will you come to the

Kamitomizaka Church and help the church work?" "Willingly," I answered, "It is a great favor of God, if I can help your work." And we prayed together to God, kneeling on the floor of that room. It was one Monday evening in October 1903. Brother Bishop taught me many important Bible facts and principles for which I am most thankful. He taught me "the way of God more perfectly."

Preaching at Kamitomizaka Church

On the next Sunday morning, I went up to the Kamitomizaka church. I preached to the church after Brother Bishop's Bible class was over. We had the Lord's Supper. In the next afternoon, I called on some members and inquirers, and taught them the truth. In the Sunday evening, I interpreted the English preaching of Brother Bishop into Japanese. Brother J. M. McCaleb sometimes preached in the Sunday morning service.

At that time those missionaries and Brother TANAKA'S family, Brother YOKOO'S and some others were attending the meetings which were held cheerfully and pleasantly. In the Bible class there were some promising young men who became good Christians afterwards. In this way, the year of 1903 passed.

Many Members Added

The New Year of 1904 came and we began our New Year with a great desire to do our best. Brother Bishop printed the "Missionary Messenger" and some tracts which we distributed among the people. We began to have a prayer meeting Wednesday evening every week. At that time we did not have any electric lights in our church building. We used kerosene lamps to light the room, but the spiritual light was burning very brilliantly through the words which were preached very earnestly by Brother Bishop and others. Some good, faithful young men and other inquirers were baptized by him. Some of them were Brother S. Abe, who was a high officer of

ing Brother McCaleb alone in Japan.

The New House

A new house for Hiratsuka was built at Kamitomizaka in 1907. We moved to that new house. It was very convenient to live there because it was on the church lot.

Exchange of Pulpits

In June, 1909, Brother McCaleb returned to America for his one year vacation. Brother C. C. Klingman who came to Japan in 1908 and I exchanged pulpits, Sunday evenings. I preached at Zoshigaya Church and he to Kamitomizaka. He was a fine preacher and a good singer who sang so well that the people, who were passing by the church, stopped and listened to his sweet voice.

The Baptism of My Old Mother

Whenever I visited my native country, Ibaraki-ken, I taught the gospel to my relatives and village people. Of course, my old mother had had chances to hear the gospel for many years. On September 6, 1909, when I visited my old home at Nagasawa, my niece-in-law, Tsuru HIRATSUKA, my mother, Mrs. Senko HIRATSUKA and the mother of my niece wanted to be baptized. So, we went down to a brook which flows below the Hiratsuka's house and I baptized them in that brook. These were the first baptisms in Shioda community. My mother was sixty-seven years old. She often said, "How wonderful it is to look upon the beautiful sky of the sunset. Is there not someone in that sky? So noble, so high and magnificent it is!" Also she said, "The gods in Japan were once common people, but the God of Christianity is the Highest and the One True God." On October 13, 1909, my elder brother-in-law, Soan HIRATSUKA was baptized in Tokyo. He was the father of Makoto HIRATSUKA and Dr. Takashi HIRATSUKA.

The Death of My Mother

The next year, my mother died on July 13, 1910. We had a Christian funeral service at Shioda-mura, Ibaraki-ken. Brother Otoshige FUJIMORI conducted that ceremony and preached to the many people who attended, about two hundred. All of them heard a gospel message. In his sermon he told them about the future life. She had been a good mother to us. She believed in Christ and was baptized by her son. Her body was buried in a tomb at Nagasawa, where her late husband was buried. Later on, a grandson, Makoto HIHATSUKA and I put up a memorial stone on it, showing that she was a Christian. She was the first Christian lady in that village.

A Letter From Brother Bishop

Brother Bishop who had gone to America for one year's rest in 1909 wrote me a letter on June 17, 1910. He said, "You have been doing the work of an elder for several years, (I Tim. 5:17) ruling and laboring in the word and teaching. I want you to be an elder in the Kamitomizaka Church." And, also, he wanted Brother T. Yokoo and Brother I. Kamikura to be elders.

Elders Appointed

Brother Bishop and Sister Bishop came back from America, and they worked for two years. On January 19, 1913, a ceremony appointing elders of the Kamitomizaka Church of Christ was held by Brother Bishop at his house, all members of that church being present.

That ceremony was conducted by him. At first Brother H. Ishiguro read Acts 14:21-23; I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 6:5-6. And Brother Bishop prayed and placed his hand on Yunosuke HIHATSUKA, saying, "By the authority of Jesus Christ, I appoint you to be an elder of the Kamitomizaka Church of Christ. Amen." Then Brother Bishop did the same with Tomeji YOKOO, and the third, with Kutarō KAMIKURA. And all of us prayed together. And the meet-

ing was dismissed. That ceremony was held very solemnly. All present were filled with the spirit of reverence.

Returning of Brother Bishop and His Family

Brother Bishop had not been so well since he returned to Japan in 1911, so he determined to go back to America for rest and treatment.

On January 22, 1913, he left Japan, leaving his family in Tokyo. He entered a hospital in California. However, his illness became worse. Mrs. Bishop was obliged to go to him. So Mrs. Bishop, with her three daughters, left Japan on April 5, 1913. We had a farewell meeting for them. It was held on April 4, 1913, at the Kamitomizaka Church. All members of the church and her friends were there. We gave her a letter of thanks in which we expressed our gratitude for her work in Japan. On the next day all of us went to Yokohama to say "Farewell". On that evening, soon after we had returned from Yokohama to the church, we had a special prayer meeting for her and him.

A Sad News From America

Soon after she left Yokohama, Brother C. C. Klingman, who had returned to America, cabled us that Brother Bishop had died in his hospital at Monrovia, California. We were surprised very much about that awful sad news. We had a memorial meeting for him on April 10, 1913. In that meeting, Brother J. M. McCaleb made a speech. Six other Japanese friends made talks, expressing their thanks for his good Christian work in Japan for thirteen years. We did not wireless Mrs. Bishop the sad news, allowing her father and Brother Klingman to tell her on her arrival.

Brother and Sister Vincent at Kamitomizaka Church

When Mrs. Bishop went back to America, she left the work to Bro-

ther C. G. Vincent as the missionary of the Kamitomioka Church of Christ. So we had a welcome meeting for them. In that meeting there were Brother O. Fujimori, Brother H. Hori and many other friends who made welcome speeches.

Brother Vincent, after he had read Psalms 133, told us this: "Before Mrs. Bishop left Japan, she told me, 'There was not any trouble at all in this church while we worked there,' so, let us all work together cheerfully as brothers and sisters always for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior."

So we had great rejoicing.

Visiting the Country with Brother Vincent

I had been preaching the gospel in my native country for some years. I suggested to Brother Vincent that he go with me on an evangelistic tour into my country and he gladly consented. So on March 29, 1915, we left Tokyo by train and reach Iwazaki which is about 100 miles from Tokyo to the northeast. We had a meeting that evening, in a farmer's big house, who let us use it willingly. There were about three hundred people who came to hear the gospel. Brother Vincent preached about Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, showing stereopticon slides of the life of Christ. He preached in English and I interpreted it into Japanese. It seemed to them very wonderful to hear the English language because it was the first time that they ever heard any English and also because he was the first foreigner in that village. Some of them thanked him very much. We left that house and we lodged in the village inn.

The next morning we started from there and walked on about two miles north to another village, Yamagata, where a primary school principal, Mr. Nogami, one of my old friends, was waiting for us. He prepared for the meeting on that evening at his school. We had a blessed meeting there Brother Vincent showing the lantern slides

of Christ, preached to those people who looked on and listened very carefully. On the next morning Brother Vincent preached again about the parable of Christ of Matthew 21:33-46, to those parents of the school children.

In the afternoon the young men, who were earnest to welcome us, guided us to a little garden where some plum trees were blooming beautifully. After we looked at it and were leaving Yamagata, we thanked them for their kindness. We again walked the country road for two miles and reached Nagasawa which is my native village. We soon had a meeting for the people who were waiting for us. Brother Vincent preached the truth, showing the slides as he did the night before. There were several relatives of the Hiratsuka family present. After the meeting was over, we had a good rest that night. We were very tired.

On the next morning we had a special meeting to thank God, and Brother Vincent talked about the Saviour and true baptism. Many listened attentively, and Takashi HIRATSUKA and Mr. R. EBINE, two boys about fifteen years of age, determined to be baptized at once. So, we went to a brook which runs very beautifully in front of my old home and Brother Vincent baptized them in that water. It was April 2, 1915. And later Dr. Takashi HIRATSUKA became a good helper in the Kamitomizaka Church. He was a good physician. Bro. EBINE became a good Christian worker in the country, too.

On that afternoon Brother Shibata came to guide us to another village, Kitahiogo, which is one mile south of Nagasawa. When we preached there that evening, there were about two hundred people in a big farmer's house to hear the good news. So, Brother Vincent preached to them, using the slides. It was a very wonderful thing to them, indeed. They looked and listened very attentively to his teaching. After we had the blessed meeting we stopped at an inn

at that village for the night.

On the next day, April 3, 1915, we returned to Tokyo, thanking the Lord for the blessings of that evangelistic effort. It was thirty-seven years ago from 1952. It was the first preaching done by a missionary from America in that area. Many missionaries have worked there since.

Brother and Sister Vincent Return to America

After we had returned from the country, Brother Vincent preached every Sunday evening to the young students who were attending the meeting very earnestly and some of them were baptized by him. Mrs. Vincent had women's meetings and Mrs. Kato helped her very well. Their good work continued until June of 1916.

Mrs. Vincent lost her health and was obliged to go back to rest in America. They decided upon the advice of two doctors to leave Japan soon. So, we had a large farewell meeting on June 7, 1916. Members of the Kamitomisaka Church and Zoshigaya Church, Takahagi Church, Brother Fujimori and some country brethren from Ibaraki-prefecture came together and expressed their hearty thanks for their good work in Japan. We, the Kamitomisaka Church, gave them a letter in which we thanked them very deeply for their work. And Brother Vincent in that meeting left us these words:

"The evangelistic work is very necessary at present, so the brethren must be earnest in this work, bearing tribulation, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."

And then they left Japan on June 9, 1916. We, Brother McCaleb and other missionaries, Brother Fujimori and many brethren from the church went to Yokohama to see them off and say "Farewell".

The Work in the Country

The work in the country, Ibaraki-ken, was continued nicely. And I visited there once every other month for many years, and baptized

several good brethren. It was continued until Brother O. D. Bixler built a church house at Nagasawa in 1921.

Mary Missionaries Helped the Kamitimizaka Church Work

We must not forget that Brother J. M. McCaleb helped our work in the Kamitimizaka Church for a long time, and I helped his work at Zoshigaya Church, so we helped each other in the work through the years, until he returned to America in October 1941. He returned to America leaving the work at Zoshigaya Church in our hands.

And we must not forget the great help of the following missionaries: Miss Sarah Andrews who came to Japan in January 1916 and had a Bible class at our church from April 1917 to June 1918, until she moved to Okotsu, Shizuoka-ken where she began her work.

Then Brother E. A. Rhodes had the Bible class in our church from September, 1919 to January, 1920, until he started a church at Omiya, Ibaraki-ken and moved there.

Then Brother Harry Fox had the Bible class from January 1920 to June 1923 until he built a church at Tanagura Fukushima.

And also Miss Clara Kennedy had the Bible class for a long time. She also taught us singing and improved our song service.

A Large Earthquake and the New Chapel

There happened a terrible earthquake in Japan on September 1, 1923. Thousands of houses were destroyed in Tokyo. But the damage of our church was not very bad, apparently. However, after one year we had to rebuild it. So we built the new chapel in 1924, and at the same time, we built a good Bible school building also. When they were finished, we had a dedication meeting in June 1924. American churches helped us very much financially at that time, through the kindness of Mrs. Bishop and Brother Vincent.

The Thirtieth Anniversary Service

We had the thirtieth anniversary service on November 3, 1928, since the Kamitomizaka Church was established in 1898. Many brethren came to praise God for his favor during the thirty years.

Brother Vincent and Mrs. Bishop wrote us letters from America which gave us much encouragement.

Some Inquirers to the Gospel

During our work in Kamitomizaka Church for many years, there were many inquirers who came to the church with problems. I will tell about two cases.

One Sunday evening a lady who seemed as one who has some great anxiety in her life came to our meeting. She listened very carefully to the gospel of God. After the meeting was over she asked Mrs. Hiratsuka, saying, "May I ask something of the minister?" "Oh, yes," she answered, "You can ask anything you like." Then she told us about her suffering which she had, saying, "I lived in Formosa with my husband and two children, but I left him and came up to Tokyo because he had a woman as his concubine. I am a Christian, so I can not live with such a sinful man. We have two children, he has the first and I took the younger, a baby girl." Hearing the story, Mrs. Hiratsuka and I comforted her, telling her that the living Christ would be a comforter to her, and we told her also about the Church of Christ.

She was baptized afterwards, and became a faithful Christian. She became a good midwife after two years from that time. She sent her daughter to a girl's medical college and by and by, she became a good doctor. We had good gospel meetings in her family for many years and converted some people to Christ through her Christian influence. She is a very happy Christian lady now. Her Christian influence has been very strong among her friends and in her neighbor-

hood. Her name is Mrs. Tsutae TAKAHASHI.

One Sunday evening a young man attended our service. After the meeting was over he told me that he had been very heavily laden, so he was going to kill himself. He showed us some poison, taking it from his pocket. Hearing his determination, I took that poison away quickly from his hand. And he was saved from a rash act. Later, I baptized him.

The Death of Mrs. Hiratsuka

Mrs. Hanako HIRATSUKA died on August 21, 1939. She lived well her life as a Christian woman. She helped our church work quietly but strongly and she helped her husband to educate their children. All church members and missionaries loved her. She was thankful always to the Lord, saying: "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." (Psalms 84:10)

Her character was very beautiful. Whenever she had some suffering, she never complained of the trouble, but she behaved herself like a cheerful, smiling woman. The first part of her given name, Hana, means a beautiful flower. Indeed, everybody who knew her loved her like a living flower. Many Japanese friends and American missionaries gave me sympathetic words. Mrs. Clara Bishop, Brother G. G. Vincent and Brother J. F. Cox of Abilene, Texas, wrote letters to express their sympathy. These letters gave great encouragement to my soul at that time.

The Education of My Family

Mrs. Hiratsuka and I prayed to the Lord and began to educate our children to be true Christians. We had been given seven children, that is, four sons and three daughters. One of the daughters died when she was a baby. The rest of them graduated from univer-

sities, except one daughter who was educated in a kindergarten-teacher school.

The first son, Michio, who graduated from the Faculty of Law of Tokyo Imperial University, is working in the government office as an official and has a happy family with his good wife and four children at Tokyo.

The second son, Masunori, graduated from the Faculty of Education of the Tokyo Imperial University, and then entered graduate school of that University. He is now a professor of education at Kyushu (Imperial) University. He has a good wife and four girls. He went to the States after the war as one of the national leaders in Japan, to visit universities and colleges in America.

The third son, Yoshio, who graduated from the Faculty of Pure Science of Kyoto Imperial University, is working for an electric company as a specialist. He has also a good wife and three boys.

The fourth son, Masakazu, who graduated from the Faculty of Letters of St. Paul University at Tokyo, was a teacher in the high school which is all my sons' alma mater. He was obliged to go into the army in the late war as a transport officer and he was killed on the field in 1944. He was a good Christian and served our church work well as a leader among young men for a long time.

My second daughter, Chie-ko served in the kindergarten in Kami-tomizaka Church after she graduated from a teacher-training school, for five years. She then married. Her husband is Dr. Takashi TOKIOKA, graduated from the Faculty of Pure Science of Kyoto Imperial University. Now he is a lecturer of Seto Marine Biological Laboratory of Kyoto University. He asked to be baptized into Christ, which I did, some years ago. They have two happy children in their family.

My youngest daughter, Yuri-ko, graduated from the Tokyo Women's College and she taught in a high school in Seinan Gakuin at Fukuoka City for some years. She married Mr. Bunkichi IWAHASHI who graduated from the Literary Course of Hiroshima University. Mr. Iwahashi was a student of my second son, Masunori, when he was a professor of education at Hiroshima Normal College. He studied education in Louisiana State University for one year as a selected student sent abroad by the Japanese government to study in the United States. He was baptized by Brother C. G. Vincent in Bedford, Indiana, in August 1950. It was a great and good opportunity to be baptized by Brother Vincent, after he learned the true baptism from him. He is now one of the staff of the National Institute for the Educational Research.

All of them, except Michio's wife, and Chie-ko's husband, were Bible school teachers for many years. And I am so glad that all of them without exception are members of the church.

The influence of the missionaries was large. They helped us to educate our children directly or indirectly. The Hiratsukas always thank them for it. We thank, also, our Japanese friends who helped us to train our children to be faithful Christians. I am so thankful to have over twenty-five Christians among relatives besides them.

My Help for the Missionary Work

During my service with Kamitimizaka Church for forty years, I helped the other missionaries in their different places. Whenever they called me, I went to their places in Tokyo or elsewhere to help them. Here is the list:

Bro. J. M. McCaleb, Zoshigaya, Tokyo

Miss Sarah Andrews, Okitsu and Shizuoka

Bro. E. A. Rhodes, Omiya, Ibaraki-ken

Bro. O. D. Bixler, Shioda-mura, Ibaraki-ken

Bro. Harry Fox, Tanagura, Fukushima-ken

Miss Ewing, Shizuoka

Miss Lilly Cypert, Kichijoji and Tanashi, Tokyo

Bro. Herman Fox, Daigo, Ibaraki-ken

Bro. Morhead, Ota, Ibaraki-ken

Miss Clara Kennedy, Tokyo

When I was absent, our elders and deacons preached and edified the church.

Two Churches Were United

Before Brother McCaleb left Japan in October 1941, he transferred all responsibility of the Zoshigaya Church to me. So, I was obliged to work for two churches. The war unfortunately started, to our great grief, in December 1941. We continued the work for two years in that way. However, we elders had a conference with the members of the two churches in September 1943. It was decided to unite those two churches, Kamitimizaka and Zoshigaya, naming it "Toshima Zoshigaya Church of Christ". And we had a conference, also, to have Brother Suematsu LAITO as minister of that church.

Retired from the Church Work

I served for forty years, from October 1903 to September 1943, in Kamitimizaka Church. This long service was due to the grace of God and the help of American Christians, the missionaries and my brethren. I retired, becoming seventy years old, and built a little house at Miwa, Tsurukawa-mura, Minamitama-gun, Tokyo and lived there till I removed to the present place, where I am living in a new room which American brethren gave me as their gift of love in Christ. Brother C. G. Vincent, Mrs. Clara Bishop and Brother James F. Cox exerted themselves in making this room possible. The room is attached to the house of my son-in-law, Bunkichi IWAHASHI. And I

am now living comfortably with him and his wife, my youngest daughter, Yuri-ko. They are giving me good care in my old age. I am always thankful to the brethren in America who made the room possible.

Thanking God

Living in the nice new room, I reflect on my past life, and my heart is filled with great thanks to God, and at the same time I feel that this favor came to me through the American missionaries who served in the gospel work in Japan and also through brethren who live in America.

I had a great question, looking up to the sky and seeing the numberless stars when I was a boy, but this question disappeared long since because I believe the word: "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3)

Not only that, but I did believe in Christ who also taught us how a man should live in this world. I believe Christ did arise from the dead. So I am a happy man, believing these things and trusting in the promise of God.

I will be seventy-nine years old October 27 and I intend to serve God as long as He gives me life in this world, praying always for the world peace through Christian love as Christ taught us and making known the love of Christ to friends and others who visit me. Amen.

Yunosuke HIRATSUKA

c/o Bunkichi IWAHASHI

