

21 May

Memory Verse

What manner of man is this, that **even the winds and the sea obey him!** Matthew 8:27

Something to read

Have you ever wondered about those round blue plaques you occasionally notice on buildings? They tell you that someone famous was born or maybe lived or worked in that building. If you look out for them you can sometimes find them in surprising places and if you spot one, it is always worth reading. For instance...

On the wall of Boots the Chemist shop in the Yorkshire town of Barnsley there are *two* blue plaques. One of them I can't read because it is in Chinese! The other one says "James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) founder of the China Inland Mission was born on this site."



It was on **21st May** 1832 that Hudson Taylor was born. His parents were Christians and his father earned a living as a dispensing Chemist. Despite his upbringing, young Hudson Taylor was not a Christian as a young man and wandered far away from the things his parents had taught him as a child. However, browsing for something to read one day in his father's library, he came across a tract or booklet that mentioned "the finished work of Christ." He asked himself, "What was finished?" He knew the answer for he had been well taught: "A full and perfect atonement and satisfaction for sin. The debt was paid for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Next he wondered, "If the whole work was finished and the whole debt was paid, what is there left for me to do?" He wrote later, "And with this dawned the joyful conviction, as light was flashed into my soul by the Holy Spirit, that there was nothing in the world to be done but to fall down on one's knees and, accepting this Saviour and his salvation, praise him for evermore."

Little did he know that at that very time, although absent from home, his mother had been praying most earnestly for him that he would be saved!

Feeling God's call to go to China he began to study the language and to try to prepare himself physically for what he knew would be an ordeal. The Chinese Evangelization Society paid for his medical training at the London Hospital and under the auspices of the society he sailed to Shanghai in 1853. He was 21.

China was in the middle of a civil war. The ruling dynasty, the Manchu *Qing* dynasty, were fighting the Hakka *Taiping* rebels. The whole situation was complicated by the fact that the Taiping espoused a heresy based on a distortion of Christian ideas. Their leader called himself the younger brother of Christ. Suffering from poor health and appalled by the unself-sacrificing attitude of some other missionaries Hudson Taylor struggled on in dangerous circumstances making preaching tours, providing medical treatment for the poor Chinese and wondering if he could move into Taiping held territory to preach to the rebels. However the rebels were defeated and, although they were now no longer a danger to him, he had not reached them with the gospel.

In 1856 he teamed up with a Scottish missionary, William Burns (a Gaelic speaker, associated with friends of Dr John Macdonald – see 13th May's lesson) and together they set out on a thousand mile journey to the city of Swatow. Hudson Taylor had felt the cold badly when he first arrived in China. Now, as together they struggled in land, he was prostrated with the heat and unsanitary conditions. Taylor and Burns worked together in Swatow until their medical supplies began to run low. Taylor went back to Shanghai for more. The Chinese Evangelization Society wrote to him.

They had run out of funds and could no longer pay him. It was a good thing he had adopted Chinese clothes and food – they cost much less! His medical supplies, when he arrived in Shanghai had been destroyed by fire and then Burns was arrested and sent to prison in Canton. A letter of support arrived from George Müller the founder of the orphanage at Bristol, encouraging Taylor to go on with his work and trust in God to provide the funds. At Ningbo, 134 miles from Shanghai a missionary doctor, William Parker, a friend of Hudson Taylor's had settled. Here Hudson Taylor met Maria Dyer who later became his wife.

Hudson Taylor worked incredibly hard in China in very difficult conditions and by 1860 his health had broken down. He and Maria returned to England to enable him to recover but China was still the focus of his energies. While in England he founded the China Inland Mission. To work with this mission, missionaries had to agree to wear Chinese clothes and hair styles and to depend on God for their financial day to day support. Sixteen missionaries took up the challenge and returned with the Taylors to China.

The Taylor family – now with four children moved to Yangchow where they experienced perhaps the most terrible event of their lives. The compound where they lived was attacked and looted, and the Taylor family and the missionaries with them only just escaped with their lives. The family moved again and eventually the children were sent “home” to England with their devoted governess. But the Taylors carried on with the work of evangelism deep inside China.

When Mrs Taylor died in 1870 Hudson Taylor suffered another terrible blow. He became so ill himself that another trip home was needed but he returned once more to the work in China.

By the time of his death, Hudson Taylor had seen his little band of missionaries grow to over 800 and they were serving in every province of China. Far from been a detested foreigner in China, he had earned the love and respect of the Chinese people.

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Here is Hudson Taylor's name in Chinese characters. If you can print the page you might like to colour in the top set of characters. The bottom set is for you to try to copy.

Something to learn to do

Hudson Taylor tried to live like a Chinese person in order to win the Chinese for Christ. Here is an experiment you can do to get an understanding of how that feels. Chinese and Japanese people traditionally use chopsticks to eat, not a knife and fork.¹ I have included a basic instruction sheet in today's optional resources file.²

Map Work

Finding places on the map of China can be quite difficult as there is more than one way of transliterating the Chinese characters. However, you could have a look and see if you can find the places mentioned in the story of Hudson Taylor. Perhaps more interesting would be to trace the route taken across the Gobi Desert later on by Alice Mildred Cable (1878-1952) a missionary with the China Inland Mission who travelled this very remote region with two other ladies in the 1920s, following the old Silk Road through western China and Mongolia, preaching the gospel as they went. Trace their path over the desert from Lanchow (*Lanzhou*) to Kanchow (*Jiaquan, Gansu*) to Hami to Manass (*Manas County*). I have put the modern names in brackets – can you find them?

Another China Inland Mission couple, John and Betty Stam, were martyred in 1934 by Communist soldiers. Their tiny baby daughter, Helen, was left behind in the house where they had been held captive. She was found by a Chinese pastor and his wife who made a six day journey to take the baby to the nearest China Inland Mission missionaries and from there she was taken to her grandparents who were also missionaries. You might like to find out more about their story.³ Another missionary to China features in the lesson for 2nd December.

1 You can learn how to do it here – and you do not even need any chopsticks. Grab a couple of pencils and have a go!
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Bns2m5Bg4M>

2 Permission sought from admin@chopstickchronicles.com 10/03/21

3 You can read the inspiring story of the Stams here: <http://vancechristie.com/2014/12/03/triumph-tragedy-martyrdom-john-betty-stam> .