

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper

HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF
BUDDHISTS.

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It will be a surprise to many to know that there is a strong Buddhist revival going on in the Japanese empire. The church has been stirred up by the invasion of the missionaries, and with-

in recent years Buddhist papers have been organized, and the Japanese press is full of articles about religious matters. A movement was started some time ago for the establishment of a Buddhist theological course in the Imperial University at Tokyo, and some of the priests would like to make it the state religion. They even talk of sending missionaries to the United States, and also to the Asiatic countries, including China and Corea and India. Last spring a famous Buddhist of Ceylon visited Japan and described the backward condition of the faith in India, whereupon some of the richest of the Buddhists took a famous image of Buddha, which was celebrated throughout Japan, and shipped it off to India, in order that it might be put in the Temple of Buddha Gaya, on the site where the founder of the religion had his great fight with the evil ones and conquered. This statue was 700 years old, and it was a work of fine art. One of the Buddhist archbishops of Japan went with it, and when he got there the high priest of the temple refused to let the image be put in. He had several thousand men about him, and he was ready to enforce his refusal with bloodshed. This matter has created great excitement among the Buddhists of Japan, and some of them insist that the Hindoo priest must be dismissed, and they want the government to take up the matter. The Buddhists intended the sending of the statue to be the beginning of a revival of Buddhism in India, and they will not probably let the matter rest as it is.

HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF BUDDHISTS.

It will be surprising to many to know the vast number of Buddhists there are in the world. It is, you know, the chief religion of Siam, Burmah, Japan, Corea, and it has millions of followers in China and India. There are in Japan 72,000 Buddhist temples, and in the city of Kioto which is about as big as Washington, there are 3,500 temples which are devoted to this religion. Some of the most gorgeous temples of the world are the wonderful structures in which Buddha is worshipped at Bangkok in Siam, and I saw at Rangoon in Burmah the famous structure known as the Golden Pagoda,

which is said to rest over several of the actual hairs which came from Buddha's head. It is a mountain of gold, or rather, of brick and stone plastered over with gold leaf. It is built upon a mighty platform, and its base is about a quarter of a mile in circumference, and these terraces of gold go upward in bell-like stories to a height greater than that of any church spire or any structure in this country, excepting the Washington monument. It has a base of fourteen acres, and on its top there is a great golden umbrella, to the ribs of which jewels are hung. The whole of this vast structure is plated with gold as fine as any ever put into an American tooth. It is hundreds of years old, and it has been plated again and again, and there are, undoubtedly, millions of metal mixed with the brick and plaster of which it is made. One king of Burmah vowed that he would give his weight in gold to this monument if Buddha would grant him something that he wanted. Buddha accepted the proposition. At least, his wish became true, and when he hopped on the imperial scales it is said that he registered 170 pounds. The vow cost him just about \$45,000 in gold leaf. Well, this great monument is now being regilded, and a small fortune is being put into its restoration. I visited temples in China which contained thousands of little gold Buddhas, and there is one at Nanking which I saw last spring in which there were 10,000 gods under one roof. Some of them were very small gods, but the priests told me that they actually numbered 10,000, and all were plated with gold leaf. During my stay in Siam some years ago, I visited one temple devoted to Buddha, a part of which was carpeted with woven silver, and I found a very lively monastery in Corea in which there were hundreds of monks. Throughout the whole eastern world the finest of the temples and the fattest of the priests are those of the Buddhist religion, and though the faith may be sleeping, it is by no means dead. I do not know whether it is due to their religion or not, but the Buddhists of the east are, in most respects, kind and gentle one toward another. The Japanese people are the soul of refinement, and you see many old faces which you would not object to having among your ancestral portraits. A great deal has been written about the young girls of Japan. The old women are to me quite as charming, and I have seen old couples whose gray hair and wrinkles shone with the beauty of the kindly souls within them.

JAPAN'S NEW BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

Perhaps the finest and costliest church that is being erected in the world today is the Higashi Hongwanji Temple, which is now being built in Kioto. It has been a long time under construction, but it is rapidly approaching completion, and when it is finished it will have cost, all told, something like \$8,000,000. Think of that! Eight million dollars for a church! I don't believe we have one in the United States that has cost as much, and I know we have none that have been built in such a curious way. A large part of it has been the work of charity. The carpenters, the carvers and other artists have come from all parts of

the country, and have worked a certain number of weeks for the temple for nothing. It has been about fifteen years in building, and when I first saw it six years ago there were forty acres of sheds about it in which hundreds of carpenters were cutting up great logs, which had been imported from the Island of Formosa, into boards and hundreds of carvers were turning other logs into real works of fine art. Everything was done by hand, and immense beams, such as would be a load for a team of Norman horses, were being carried up on to the top of the structure by women and men. A road about fifteen feet wide had been built upon a scaffolding, making an inclined plane running clear to the roof of the structure, and a hundred or so men would catch hold of one of these logs and carry it up on their backs. There was then, and there is still, an immense scaffolding about the temple made of thousands of poles tied together with ropes, and these poles were of all sizes, from that of a fishing rod up to a telegraph pole. They looked very insecure to me, but I was told that they were perfectly safe, and all of the scaffolding used by the Japanese is made in this way. Think of building a structure costing millions of dollars without derricks or machinery of any kind, and you can know what these Japanese are doing there. Their temple will last for ages, and there are temples in Japan which are many centuries old.

ROPES OF HUMAN HAIR.

When I visited this temple six years ago the logs were being dragged about from one place to another with great cables of brownish black in which, here and there, you could see threads of white. The ropes looked very curious to me, and I asked what they were. I was told that they were made of the hair of women who had cut off their locks and given them for this purpose as an offering to Buddha. I was shown a vast amount of such rope, and 200,000 women cut off their hair to make the ropes for the building of this temple. This hair was of all kinds. Here the fine, silky locks of the maiden were braided into the silvery strands of the old woman, and a section of the rope showed ends of iron gray, snow white, and jet black. Some of the cables were as big around as your leg, and there were other ropes no thicker than a clothesline. These ropes have now been all collected together. They are wrapped up in great coils on the portico which runs round the temple, and they will be kept as one of its treasures. Not long ago a section of the rope was sent to the National Museum at Washington, and it may now be seen in one of the cases of that institution.

SOME FAMOUS BUDDHAS.

I found other new temples building in different parts of Japan, and I saw magnificent statues of Buddha being made here and there. At Kobe I saw one which had just been completed, and which could not have cost much less than \$100,000. It is just outside of the temple of Nofukuji, and it is an immense-bronze image as tall as a four-story house, and eighty-five feet in diameter about the waist. It is so tall that if you stood on its shoulders, you could barely reach to the top of its ears, and the length of the face is eight and one-half feet. Each of its eyes is a yard wide, and its thumbs are two feet in circum-