ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE REV. WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D. D., L. H. D.

Author of “Corea! Without and Within,” “Corea! The Hermit Nation” On April 11th, 1927

Chairman:Rev.H.D.Appenzeller

The Chairman: It is a very unusual and peculiar honor which we have to-day in having Dr. W. E. Griffis speak to us who are members of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Dr. Griffis has been an honorary member of this society since its beginning twenty seven years ago, and his connection with Korea I need not at this time and place indicate to you.

Dr. Griffis has kindly consented to speak on some things that he has been intimately associated with, some reminiscences of the Old and impressions of the New Japan.

Dr. Griffis was in Japan from 1870 to 1874 and returned there in 1926, and is giving his impressions now in the year 1927.

It is, if I may mention it, a personal pleasure and honor to be able to present Dr. Griffis, not only for the scholar that he is, but as an honored personal friend, the biographer of our father, as it so chanced, my own father being an officer of the Royal Asiatic Society at the time when Dr. Griffis was made an honorary member.

Dr. Griffis—I am afraid, friends, I shall have to be a little egotistical this afternoon. I think it may give an air of sincerity and truth to acknowledge frankly the part Providence has allowed me to have in the life of the Far East.

It is very interesting for us Americans—though I suppose we are not all Americans here to day—to realize that the tea which our grandfathers especially loved was the thing that directed American attention to the Far East. My grand- [page 2] father was super-cargo in the ship which brought the herb from China to Philiadelphia.

It is a remarkable fact that nearly all our. American historians have been in or near Boston, where I had the honor of living for some years. Yet Philadelphia had something to do as well as Boston with the making of American history. The tea ships which helped to bring on the misunderstanding between the mother country and the colonies came first to Philadelphia. I hope none of the ancestors of the young gentlemen who boarded the British ships and knocked the tea over-board will object to this historic statement. The ships came to Philadelphia first, and the Philadelphia mercants, of whom my grandfather was one, declined to have the tea, while they were expected to pay taxes to England without representation in parliament Because of this, the ships sailed away to Boston. There a group of young fellows, many rowdies, some respectable people, boarded the ships at night, and threw the tea into the harbour. One of the young men participating was chided by his mother, next morning, when she found a lot of tea in his shoes. That incident was one of those things that no decent man could approve of at that time, though now it is glorified. It is like one of the incidents we read off in Holy Scripture which if we are orthodox, we believe were ordered by Divine Providence.

I am inclined to think that my grandfather was on one of those tea ships. His son also followed the sea until he married and settled down# My brother fought in the navy during the Civil War. He enlisted as an ordinary fireman at a time when there were sixty applicants for one vacancy when our navy went to South America and we thought we were going to have wan Later he became an engineer in the Union blockading ships. So you see, the older I get, I see somethings more clearly. While I do not deny the authority of the human will I discern “a divinity that shapes our ends rough hew them how we will.” We see God not only in general history but in our own history.

After the Civil War taking off my soldier clothes I went to Rutgers College, at New Brunswick, N. Y. There I found [page 3] two men from Japan whose kinsman’s name should be written in grold. He, their uncle Yokoi Heishiro, had secured a Bible from China and began Christianity in his native land, dying a martyr’s death by assassination. He was also the means of securing citizenship for the outcast Etas, and of bringing to the Emperor’s notice the Christians and of his giving them toleration.

I think I ought to proclaim that I am the only foreigner who saw that band of 150 Christians dressed in criminal red robes. They had been brought up from the southern part of Japan and sent to the cold regions of northern Japan to be kept there for years in a mountain crater in the province of Kaga. The men were roped together and though a pitiable company none recanted or denied their Lord.

I first got acquainted with the country called Japan when on my father’s knees. I saw Commodore Perry’s flagship, the Susquehanna. It was launched from the dock alongside my father’s coal yard. I certainly wondered where that beautiful ship was going. In I860, when I was still a youth, I saw the first Japanese. They were members of the embassy sent by the famous premier under the Shogun Li Kamon no Kami, to ratify the treaty made by Townsend Harris. I made up my mind when I saw those men that they were gentlemen. They were no roughnecks. They were dressed in the Japanese Samurai costume, and carried long swords. When I saw those men riding up Walnut Street I felt that they were men of culture. Later on, when our civil war was over, and I went to college, there came there two Japanese boys who had been over 200 days crossing the oceans. They were brought up to the Rev. John Mason Ferris’ office and thence to the college. Dr. Ferris asked them what brought them to the U. S. A. and they answered immediately : We came to learn how to make big cannon so that we will not be conquered by Russia.” Russia had shortly before seized the island of Tsushima, and at that time the indignation against Russia was great. This was before Sir Harry Parkes led his fleet of twelve British ships and at the instigation of Katsu Iwa, invited the Russians to leave, which they [page 4] did. These boys had seen in Nagasaki a British gunboat fire a salute. The concussion was so great that it knocked the roof off a fisherman’s house. So they wanted to come to America to learn how to ward off the impending danger of invasion by Russia. They came to U. S. A., to Rutger’s College and Dr. Ferris took them around to every student boarding house in town to get board for these young gentlemen. But in those days the Irish ladies ruled the roost and they gave unanimous notice that if those “nagers were taken in they would lave.” Finally they came to a boarding house kept by the widow of a missionary to India and a maiden lady of some sixty summers where I with others had our meals. They were very nervous about taking in two strangers. They prayed over it and they found out before twenty-four hours had passed that these new boarders were perfect gentlemen.

There came a hundred Japanese students to New Brunswick sent by a great missionary who for seven years at Nagasaki was praying and working for these young men. In later years they became, nearly all of them, governors or high officials. He had his pupils trained in the idea that they must send young men to America to be educated, and that they must bring out from the U. S. A. and Europe skilled men in every line of human endeavor to build anew the Japanese realm, or as the Japanese phrased it in the Imperial “Charter Oath” of 1868, “to relay the foundations of the Empire.” These pilgrims for knowledge were directed by Verbeck, and they all came to New Brunswick first We had one hundred there at one time, but we distributed them and almost forced them to go to Yale, and Harvard, to Cornell and other places, so that they would not at all times be talking Japanese.

In 1870 when I reached Japan, there were 280 petty clans in power in Japan. Some were large and rich like Satsuma, Higo, Hogen, Echigen, Kaga, etc. down to the petty little daimios. There was a guard house at every frontier. It was like mediaeval Europe. I was to go to one of these daimios located nearly 200 miles in a direct line from Tokyo. It was on that trip, going to Fukui, that I saw the 150 exiled Chris- [page 5]tians from near Nagasaki, driven like animals to the north, even to Kaga.

When I came to Tokyo the great British Empire’s re-presentative, the great German Empire’s representative, and the French representative had all got a nervous chill, because the American secretary, Mr. Houston, had been murdered. They all started down to Yokohama, with cavalry, infantry and artillery, to get under the guns of the warships. Even Mr. Charles E. Delong, the American minister, wrote to Washington to send out 25 soldiers to guard the legation. When he was writing this request, which he read to me, I said to him : “Mr. DeLong, I am going into the interior of Japan, where I may not see a white man for three years. All I will take is a little revolver. In the interior, where the people are subjects of one prince, I am sure I shall be treated well.”

When I got to Fukui I found they had six armed men to guard me, but after I had been there a month and I could see Japanese civilization in one of the best districts, I asked the Daimio to take these men away, because I did not want the people to think I was afraid of them, because I was not. Any man who bad been under General Grant would not be likely to fear plain men. The armed guard were taken away. I filled my pocket with pieces of lump sugar, and gave freely to the children, with the result that I had a defence like a ring of fire around me. I do not deny that I was in danger sometimes. But as a rule the Japanese of the better kind, the majority, fully appreciated what one who came from America was trying to do for them.

I was one year in Fukui, and I saw what no other foreigner saw, the farewell given by the Daimio signifying the death and burial of feudalism. One morning I was invited to come to the Castle and there I saw two thousand men, the flower of the feudal system, dressed in silk, with family crests, swords and with all the marks of a privileged class. Every man was a gentleman, with his sword ready to commit hankiri if so ordered. The Daimio made a farewell speech explaining the great changes that had come over the country [page 6] and the necessity of uniting all power under the rule of the Mikado.

The number of Samurai in all Japan was four hundred and fifty thousand. With their families, they numbered about two millions. For centuries they had lived off the public crib. And now they were to be given four years salary in cash and three in bonds. After that, they would go out like the merchants, mechanics and farmers and find their own living. Most of them were made policemen and petty officers, but a great many, after the first year or two,—for they knew nothing of the use of money—were more or less genteel paupers. I had my jinrikisha pulled by one of these men who bad come down to that occupation.

The next day when the Daimio left to go to Tokyo and be a private gentleman, I think almost every man, woman and child in Fukui was out in the public street—the very old or sick people on the futons or quilts, crying as if their hearts would break. The common people could not understand what was going on. Twelve thousand men and boys walked ten miles in company with their Daimio who went on to Tokyo to be quiescent, for a while, but eventually to become a member of the new nobility.

I was pretty lonely after my chief friend went away. When the theoretical map of the future education of Japan—which had been worked out almost entirely by Dr. Verbeck, the missionary, who put nearly all the progressive ideas into the heads of his pupils, when he was at Nagasaki—was adopted, he left out one thing, and that was the training of the hands, or technological learning.

In my earlier life I did not want to be a dry goods clerk, or an office secretary, I wished to be a mechanic, and the master of a trade, so I learned that of the jeweler. This may seem conceit, but I tell it, because I saw the need of manual education. The Japanese needed to be educated in applied science to train their hands to build their own ships, and their own railways. In Manchuria recently I could see the advantage of the people learning to use their bands to meet the new needs of the nation. I worked out the scheme of [page 7] a Technological School. In it there were to be four departments : chemistry, physics, engineering and the higher mathematics and surveying. In the government at this time there were but four departments: State, Treasury, War and Imperial Household.

My letter reached Tokyo on the very day that the Supreme Council decreed the Department of Education and appointed a very able man, a statesman, as its head ； he immediately sent for me to come to Tokyo. He did not know much in detail about education, but he had great energy and ability. When I showed his letter to the authorities at Fukui they agreed to let me off from my three-year contract. I set out in the middle of winter. In my journey I was very glad to get off the highlands, and on sea-shore level. I saw on that day two new things, the telegraph pole, and the jinriksha, which latter was invented by an American missionary named Jonathan Goble. I could write a book on what the American missionaries contributed to the civilization and prosperity of Japan even before their first church was formed. In March, 1872, the first church was organized. Among other good things in the churches is the music. Every time I hear the wonderful singing I am delighted. Last Sunday at the Congregational church in Seoul I heard also the music by a string quartette. I think nothing I have ever heard melted my soul like that

The beginner of modern music in Japan was Mrs. James H. Ballagh of the Reformed Church in America. Dr. Hepburn and Rev. Dr. Syle were well acquainted with the possiblilities of the Japanese throat for they had labored in China. They had begun making a compromise system that would somewhat resemble our music while keeping the best in the Japanese score. But Mrs. Ballagh believed that the Japanese throat could master our scale. She first drilled one little fellow in the “Do-re-mi,” etc. When one boy learned others wanted to win success also. So she taught them four hymns sung in our favorite tunes. Then she invited Dr. Hepburn and others to hear them sing. The would-be critics could hardly believe their own ears. That was the beginning of the modern reconstruction of music in Japan, Korea and [page 8] probably China. Jonathan Goble, as we have said invented the jinrikisha. He bad a sick wife. He took the picture of a perambulator found in Godoy’s Magazine to a Japanese black-smith, and together they designed and completed a jinrikisha. It was not quite as handsome as those they have in Manchuria ; but finally it evolved into the comfortable carriage that has rolled around the world. I have seen it in many countries.

Dr. Hepburn, who left a practice in New York City of $ 11,000 a year to be a missionary at $ 1,000 a year, after long labor, completed the Japanese dictionary. A Japanese gentleman told me that all the subsequent Japanese dictionaries are “only second editions of Hepburn.” I was often in his dispensary, the first in Japan. Of all the pitiable sights, the most pitiful were those of babies with their eyes eaten out by smallpox. I think three out of every five Japanese in those days were pitted. When I went to Fukui I was at first innocent enough to think that babies wearing yellow caps followed some new fashion. I found that a baby with a yellow cap had smallpox.

Dr. Samuel R. Brown organized the first missionary school in China, and taught there for twelve years. Then he accepted a call to a Church near Auburn, N. Y. He came out at fifty to be a missionary in Japan. He taught such beautiful English to his pupils that they became notably accurate. He sent a collection of about twenty essays written by his lads to London for the professors there to give judgment These professors unanimously refused to believe that the essays were written by Japanese. Dr. Brown made the first Japanese gramar. He told me once that he had been hunting for months for a future tense. One day he saw a Japanese carpenter look up at the sky and heard the sentence “ame furimasho”—”It will probably rain.” He rushed into the house and told his wife. In this way bit by bit he discovered idioms and made the first grammar.

Dr. Brown introduced photography. The money for the apparatus was presented to him by the people at Ithaca, N. Y. in the Church which later I had the honor to serve for ten [page 9] years. Let me repeat an interesting volume could be made on the work done by Christian missionaries before the anti-Christian edicts were taken down.

On that morning early in January 1871 on my way to Tokyo I found that two natives had been relieved of their heads and below them from the pillory there hung long icicles of blood.

When I tell such things as these, as I have occasionally told them, I have had young Japanese born since 1900 who indignantly deny the truth in them. But my eyesight was pretty good. I saw the place also where they as a regular thing burned certain women, murderesses, who had tired of their husbands. I have also seen places where they crucified men on the bamboo cross. They tied the hands and feet to the cross and left the victim for several days, and then after the last day of agony they felt constrained to follow the example in Jerusalem—they ran a long lance through the body, avoiding a vital part, and the man would soon die. All those horrible things have passed away.

I think I ought to tell how it eame to pass that foreigners were killed or assassinated, and how the new government at Tokyo put a stop to this business. Some of you may have read Lafcadio Hearn’s article on Jiujitsu (or jujutsu) which art, by the way, I had the honor of first describing in the Mikado’s Empire. Jiujitsu is used not only in the physical sense but also in diplomacy. For example, when the government wanted to disarm nearly a half million Samurai,—who did not believe you could have any order in society without the sword,—the men in the government in Tokyo who had been educated by the missionary Verbeck, had other ideas. Instead of issuing an edict that 450,000 of the most influential men in the kingdom should take off their cherished heirloom: they gave the privilege of wearing a sword to the farmer and to members of other classes if they wanted to. When the order came to Fukui, we had twenty administrative officers where five would have been plenty. These men having lost their offices and distinctive badge of rank and honor rushed home to kill Mitsuoka, the agent of the government, but he, very [page 10] wisely, stayed out of town for a week or two till things cooled off. When the last two English teachers in the University were nearly cut to pieces, I helped to nurse them back to health again. It was determined by the new government that the killing business should stop. They sent men around to examine the swords of every Samurai man and boy in Tokyo. Sometimes five or six dignified government officers, would come and see if there was any blood on the sword of a boy. Finally, they found the two men who were the as sassins. Instead of allowing them to die in the old-fashioned way in a silk-lined enclosure, with two high officers of the Government present as inspectors, and having a friend behind cut off their head, and get in the newspapers next day, with great fame and glory and then have flowers put on the tomb for two or three years as if you were a grand hero, these ruffians had their heads removed on the common execution ground where the felons, robbers, and thieves were put to death. That ended the pleasure and honor of taking off the heads of foreigners.

The Japanese got ahead of the European Governments by the exercise of jiujitsu. They have been careful of their diplomacy in the last thirty or forty years. I have sometimes seen five or six American or British sailors in Yokohama attempt to “paint the town red.” The Japanese policeman would remonstrate with them. But if they would not desist in about five minutes he would have them all on the ground, their wrists tied with a rope and they on their way to the police station. It was a job very beautifully done. The stronger the fellow who tries to tackle a man expert in jiujitsu, the more likely he is himself all the worse for his weight I have seen it so often myself that I wonder at the marvelous art.

Now I crossed the country in winter from Fukui to Tokyo over the mountains deep in snow so that if I tumbled off the path I had to be pulled out I reached the Tokaido. Then I wondered if the experience of my father off the coast of Africa was true. He told me that, after some months among the Africans, the first time he saw a white woman he thought [page 11] she was an angel. I wondered if I should have the same ex- perience. Soon there came driving up from Yokohama an Englishman with a very homely looking woman, and I declare I thought my father must have had a very pitiful experience, but when I came to Yokohama and was entertained by Mrs. Ballagh and her little golden haired, blue eyed girls of seven and eleven, I must confess I began to sympathize with my father and understand his feelings. Because, with all due respect to our friends here, I think any of us who see the same kind of people all the time the sight becomes monotonous. So when one sees charming specimens from his own land he is very apt to think as I do. Perhaps vice versa, the natives of this country think along the same lines. I am not entering into metaphysics. (Laughter).

Let me say that I have known the Japanese now for many years. I saw my first Nipponese in 1860. I have known the handsome ones and the ugly ones—certainly those that are ugly in temper. I am thankful to God if I have been delivered from the prejudice that if a man is different in color of skin, therefore he may not be just as good or better. When I study history and realize how much we have borrowed from Japan with profit (and I think we can borrow more yet) my hope and prayer is that the two civilizations will be joined together with the best elements in each. According to the law of nature also I hope the best will cast out the worst and at least they will not take the worst from us.

Let me confess that it must be a little hard for a Japanese, or a Korean or a Chinese to come and see all of our civilization, the slums, and the vile things—the things we fight against—as well as the good things ; and yet I believe, after a perspective of over sixty years, that most of the Japanese and Chinese see what is good in our civilization. The only thing I mourn, as a Christian and a man, is that our people do not oftener take the students and visitors from other nations into their households. I do not see why we ought not to take in a Chinese or a Korean into our homes and show them what Christian homes are. At the same time you must remember that the average person who has not had [page 12] your experience, cannot feel as we do. I remember one day a Japanese came to see me in Schenectady, and went to one of my own church members, a godly woman. She slammed the door in his face.

To make a long story short I came to Tokyo and had the great honor of living for a while in Dr. Verbeck’s house. I never knew a man who so penetrated the oriental mind. Be- fore other foreigners of all kinds and grades that came between 1870 and 1900 arrived, Verbeck was their friend and adviser. I have seen the whole cabinet come in at one time, when a small German man-of-war fleeing from a French battleship had taken refuge in the harbor of Yokohama. The French commander sent notice that unless the German ship came out in five hours, they would attack it. The German sent a courier to Tokyo. In came the Prime Minister, with his cabinet, and told his troubles to Dr. Verbeck who could speak Dutch, German, French and English, and when he talked Japanese those in another room who heard him could not tell his voice from that of a native. He had four volumes on international law in his library, English, French, German and American. He showed the law to the prime minister and explained that every vessel of an enemy that sought shelter in a neutral port could stay twenty-four hours ； and also that no foreign ship, alien or hostile, had a right to fire a hostile gun except at the end of the three league limit He said he was a man of peace, but he gave his opinion that if the French battleship opened fire, the Japanese fort in the harbor should bombard the French. On learning of the stand taken by the Japanese authorities, the French battleship left.

One more little anecdote about Dr. Verbeck. For some weeks after the new government was formed the treasury was actually bulging with plenty of money. The great question came up : Shall we invest the money we have in our treasury in an army and navy to defend ourselves against European aggression—the Russians had not then, as we know, given up their policy of taking what they pleased from Asia—or shall we build a national railway from Awomori to Nagasaki ？ Okubo the peace leader, was in favor of a [page 13] policy of development to unite the nation. He wanted the railway built, even if it paid no dividends for a thousand years. I to, later assassinated by a Korean, as Okubo was by native reactionaries, was also in favor of internal developments. The military officers wanted the money spent in having a large army and navy. The rival parties had it hot and heavy during three weeks. Then after a seven hour’s discussion they asked Verbeck’s opinion. He said, “Gentlemen, peace is the hope of the Christian, and the desire of the good men of every land and age ; but war is the history of mankind. I know you very well. I advise you to have a strong navy and a strong army, and while you are having your sailors drilled on the battleships, and while you are having your sailors trained, open schools so that every soldier and sailor will be an educated man.” That opinion unified opponents. They all went away agreeing as one man.

We know to-day that the Japanese are far ahead of other nations in having their children in school. We have in America about twelve million negroes, and we have Indians. Indians, who in my day were scalping, murderous creatures, to-day are in Christian schools. There are hundreds of negro ministers and tens of thousands in the churches. Of course we in America have a great mass of mixed origin so we cannot compete with the Japanese. They have only one kind of people and they have autocratic power.

When people ask me what impresses me most on my return to Japan after half a century, I reply: It is not what I see ; it is what I do not see. A great deal of the old Japanese life, the brutality, cruelty and inequality have gone. Instead of the people being divided into classes I find now the classes are melted together. I cannot tell a Samurai unless I find out in conversation that I am talking with one. If that is not democracy, or certainly one phase of it, I do not know what democracy is.

I confess that my feelings were hurt when our Congress selected the Japanese as the one people to be kept out of the United States. The Japanese may keep out the foreigner in general and be careful of leasing land, but I do not think the [page 14] Japanese would select out any one people for exclusion. We Americans all know that if there is any peculiar, strange, or idiotic thing done it is always just before a presidential election.

I hope you will excuse me if coming back, after fifty-seven years, and seeing so many improvements I want to give all the honor I can to the missionaries, to the teachers, and to the noble-minded Japanese. What impresses me more than anything else is : “What hath God wrought ?” I see human means, human energies, sacrificing women and men, but it seems to me I never saw so clearly before in my life, how God moves among the nations, and that if we follow Him we will make no mistake.

So I end my rather rambling remarks, this afternoon, by very sincerely giving Him all the glory. I never saw my grandfather who had been in China and always talked about the Chinese in a favorable way, but I am very thankful for an heredity that helped to overcome mere prejudice, and for an incentive to fair judgment whether given through ancestors or in any other way because though some may think that the more we know of each other the more we are inclined to fight, I do not believe that I believe the more we know of the excellencies and the infirmities of the Japanese and Koreans, the more we will appreciate them for such knowledge helps us to know ourselves.

Although I may not live to see its fruits, I believe that what will soon be going on at Washington, in the disarmament conference, will come to fruition in blessing to the world. I should not wonder if my great grandchildren should see a warless world, and the amount of money now spent on armaments be devoted to some worthwhile purpose. Japan would not then have to feed ten per cent of the people in Tokyo during winter. I think much of want and suffering will be done away with in a long reign of peace.

May God bless you all as missionaries and friends. You have my sympathy and prayers and I want to thank you for the honor of speaking to you this afternoon. (Applause).