

## Complementary Missions: Anglican and Catholic Missions in the Ryukyus 1843-1862

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琉球王国は西方教会宣教師の活動地だったが、19世紀中期の20年間は後に日本で継続した布教を理解する上で関心をひく幕開けの時期であり、また信徒への政治的・宗教的態度、同教会内部の相互関係、さらには同時代における宣教師の思想と実践がうかがえる点で見逃せないものでもある。琉球での布教は日本の開国に伴い中断されたが、その実践は西方教会の布教、欧日関係史双方の見地からみて興味深い。

For twenty years in the mid-nineteenth century, the Kingdom of the Ryukyus was the site for missionary activity by Western Christian churches. The history of these missions not only forms an interesting prologue to subsequent missions in Japan but is also of interest for what it can tell us about Western political and religious attitudes to the region, about the inter-relationships between the Western powers, and about missionary thought and practice in the period. Though these missions were abandoned with the opening of Japan, what happened (and what didn't happen) in the Ryukyus forms an interesting chapter in the history of both Western missions and Western-Japan relations.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The Kingdom of the Ryukyus had attracted some small merchant and missionary activity in the seventeenth century from both Catholic and Protestant countries. Though a limited permanent base in the kingdom was established by the British, the Ryukyus were considered as merely a stepping stone between other parts of Asia and Japan. The seclusion orders introduced by the Tokugawas in mainland Japan were mirrored by the actions of Satsuma Han in the Ryukyus. In 1624, all foreigners were forbidden to enter the Ryukyus and in 1636 two Catholic priests who had attempted to go through the Ryukyus to Japan were arrested, tortured, and executed in Nagasaki. From this date until the 1790's all contact between the Ryukyus and the West was effectively severed. This period of over one hundred and fifty years of isolation ended with the arrival of HMS Providence in Naha in 1797. The visit was a harbinger of others to come.<sup>2</sup>

### An Awakening Interest: The Ryukyus and the West to the 1840's

While nominally independent, the Ryukyus in the Nineteenth Century were very far from being free to act as they chose on the international stage. Investitures of Ryukyu Kings had theoretically to be confirmed by the Emperors of China and the Ryukyus were formally considered to be a tributary state in relationship to

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the research for this article was conducted using the archives of the *Société des missions étrangères* in Paris and the *Church Missionary Society* (housed at the University of Birmingham). The latter was consulted using microfilm copy. I would like to thank the archivist of the MEP (Father Moussay) for granting permission to use the society's archives.

<sup>2</sup> The best single volume history of the Ryukyus in English is George H. Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People* (revised edition) Boston: Tuttle, 2000.

China. However, at least since the definitive occupation of the Ryukyus by Satsuma Han in 1609, the real power over the Ryukyus had not rested with China. Satsuma Han allowed the outward signs of Ryukyuan independence to survive with an elaborate system of court ranks and ceremonies at the royal palace of Shuri.<sup>3</sup> Behind this façade, Satsuma Han rigorously controlled the trade and external contacts of the kingdom. The connection with China was more apparent than real, the connection with Satsuma Han was more real than apparent. This confusion as to the exact nature of the Ryukyuan State was deliberately maintained by Satsuma. Though Ryukyuan ambassadors did visit Japan, they did so not as overt dependants of Satsuma but as visiting dignitaries paying tribute to the Japanese court. This was in part to maintain the legalities of the seclusion orders and in part to disguise the fact that the Ryukyus were not under the direct formal control of the central Tokugawa Shogunate but had their access to them mediated through Satsuma. For both of these reasons and because of the uncertain attitude of the Chinese, Satsuma went to often-elaborate lengths to disguise the true nature of economic and political control in the Ryukyus. It was also true that Satsuma control only extended in any direct form to the central areas of the Ryukyu kingdom. The many peripheral zones of this extended island kingdom were largely untouched by Satsuma influence directly and continued as if this influence was not there.

This deliberate obfuscation of the nature and locus of power not unreasonably confused the first Europeans to have contact with the Ryukyus in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Nor did their confusion end there. If the nature of Ryukyuan politics was unclear, so too was the nature of Ryukyuan culture. Mirroring the linguistic confusion of the sixteenth century missionaries to Japan, those in the nineteenth century were unsure of the linguistic relationship between the Ryukyus and Japan. Their initial enthusiasm to learn 'Japanese' as it was spoken in the Ryukyus was subsequently tempered by the realisation that the language of the islands was to all intents and purposes a different one from that of Japan, even from the notoriously aberrant Satsuma ben spoken in that area. If the politics and culture of the Ryukyus were areas of uncertainty for the Europeans, what was crystal clear to them was the geographic importance of the island kingdom.

The European powers (and the United States) were primarily interested in the Ryukyus not for themselves but as a waystation on the route to Japan. The Loochoo Naval Mission (LNM) was, in some ways, an exception to this general statement as will be shown in this article. However, even they were often quite frank about their view that the Ryukyus were largely deserving of British interest because of their hoped for ability to ease access to mainland Japan. With the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe in 1815 and the associated conflicts, such as the War of 1812, there was renewed interest in the expansion of global trade and in ways to control this trade for national advantage. While this was a global process, with the 1840's most especially the focus of attention became increasingly the area of the Pacific Ocean. In the Pacific Ocean area, not only were the western European powers involved but also the Russians and most obviously the United States. The United States' acquisition of California and settlement of the border issues between them and British controlled western Canada gave them a massive Pacific Ocean littoral. It was

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<sup>3</sup> See Mitsugi Matsuda, *The Government of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, 1609-1872*. Okinawa: Yui Shuppan, 2001.

not long before their ships were exploring trade and other possibilities on the islands of the Pacific and on the western shores of that ocean as well.<sup>4</sup>

Like the Americans, the Europeans were interested in trading opportunities and, for some of them at least, possible territorial acquisitions. Refitting and refuelling needs and the relentless pursuit of the maritime natural resources of the area brought traders and whaling ships to many remote areas of the Pacific. Western whalers first permanently settled the Bonin Islands (now the Ogasawara Islands) in the nineteenth century. Alongside these mercantile and political concerns, there was also a creation or resurgence of Christian missionary activity in this period on a global basis but with a particular interest in the Pacific. While the Americans and the Europeans were following along similar lines in their increasing interest in the Pacific and the Far East for economic, political, and religious reasons, the interests of the different countries were as often likely to be competitive as convergent. National interest and self-perception of a shared 'westernness' could come into conflict. However, and in terms of the nineteenth century as a whole, this was not the case for France and the United Kingdom during this period.<sup>5</sup> Louis-Phillipe of France believed that his country shared many common interests with monarchist Britain, an idea with which Queen Victoria concurred. The initial explorations of the Ryukyus were conducted in this phase of Anglo-French entente. The proclamation of the new empire of Napoleon III in 1851, coming as it did as a sequel to the revolution of 1848, was less popular with the British monarchy though not with the British government. Viscount Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary in Lord John Russell's Cabinet, was prompt to express his 'entire approbation' of the new emperor's capture of power. Palmerston was to be a dominant figure in British politics until his death in 1865 and this warm entente with France was to continue even beyond that, in fact until the collapse of the French Empire in 1870. In a variety of areas, based on shared interests and perhaps shared temperaments, Britain and France were to co-operate quite closely rather than compete. One of the many facets of this co-operation was their shared policy towards the Ryukyus and Japan.

With the partial exception of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), which was created in 1701 to furnish chaplains for expatriate British communities, and the Society for the Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which was founded in 1699 and largely concentrated on the British Isles themselves and North America, the various British Protestant communities were slow to become involved in direct mission work. The SPCK did begin to support the activities of Danish Lutheran missionaries in southern India in the 1720's but this was only a small harbinger of what was to come a few decades later. Beginning in the 1790's and picking up steam as the nineteenth century progressed, there was an explosion of British Protestant missionary activity.<sup>6</sup> The Evangelical Revival not

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<sup>4</sup> A good general survey of this expansion in the Pacific remains: Ernest S. Dodge, *Islands and Empires: Western Impact on the Pacific and East Asia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1976.

<sup>5</sup> For an overview see: Llewellyn Woodward, *The Age of Reform 1815-1870*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> A recent summary of the British missionary movement in the nineteenth century is: T. Thomas 'Foreign Missions and Missionaries in Victorian Britain' in *Religion in Victorian Britain: Culture and Empire*, John Wolffe (ed.). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. See also Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton (eds.), *Missionary Encounters:*

only gave new impetus to existing dissenting sects in Britain but also led to a strong movement in the Church of England itself, part of which resulted in the creation of Methodism. While the Evangelical Revival effected theology and practice in the various Protestant denominations in the British Isles, it also led directly to a missionary impulse that sought to spread these ideas outside of Britain. In the 1790's alone the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) was founded in 1792, the London Missionary Society (LMS) was founded in 1795, and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) was founded in 1799. While the BMS followed the lead of the SPCK and focused its early endeavours in India, the LMS made an early effort to send missionaries to the Pacific. By the 1820's their missionaries could be found in Tahiti, Tonga, and the Society Islands (Hawaii).<sup>7</sup> They had also joined in missionary efforts in South Africa, India, and even China. Gradually the British Protestant missionary map of the Pacific was being filled in.

Following the visit of HMS Providence to Naha in 1797, there had been a series of visits from British Navy ships to the Ryukyus. Among these navy visits, one was particularly important: the arrival of HMS Alceste and HMS Lyra in 1816. From this visit, two books were written in English (by the captain of the Lyra and the surgeon on the Alceste) which made the Ryukyus much more widely known to the British reading public.<sup>8</sup> Also serving on this mission was a young lieutenant, Herbert Clifford. In the years that followed, Lieutenant Clifford (now retired to Ireland) had become deeply influenced by the Evangelical Revival and began to agitate among former and serving Royal Navy officers for the formation of a religious mission to the Ryukyus. No existing missionary society being willing to undertake the task, in 1843 Lieutenant Clifford with a small group of supporters founded the Loochoo Naval Mission (LNM) to begin missionary activity in the Ryukyus with the eventual idea of extending this work to Japan. In May 1846, the first LNM missionary (Bernard Jean Bettelheim) arrived in Naha harbour aboard HMS Starling.

Among the Catholic nations of Europe, the French had been the leaders in missionary activity in the eighteenth century - excluding, of course, the continued Portuguese and Spanish missionary efforts in Central and South America. The French Revolution beginning in 1789 had brought this to a grinding halt. With the end of the revolutionary period, the Church in France gradually rebuilt its structures such that, by the middle of the century, missionary activity was once again becoming a prominent part of Catholic Church activity in France.<sup>9</sup> The leading French missionary Society, the Société des Missions Etrangères de Paris (MEP) was founded in 1663 with a particular focus on missionary activity in Asia and the Middle East. It was abolished during the French Revolution in 1791 but was re-established in 1815. Its work had always been of particular interest to the French governments and

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*Sources and Issues* Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996, and Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> For a recent introduction see: Tom Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail*. London: Vintage, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Basil Hall, *Account of a Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Corea and the Great Loo-Choo Island*, and John M'Leod, *Voyage of His Majesty's Ship Alceste to China, Corea, and the Island of Lewchew with an Account of her Shipwreck*.

<sup>9</sup> A good one-volume overview of French Catholic Missions until the 1950's is Bernard Vaulx, *Histoire des Missions Catholiques Françaises*. Paris: Fayard, 1951.

at various times it received financial and other support from the government.<sup>10</sup> While this connection with the government did not definitively shape the policies adopted by the MEP, it certainly predisposed the society to work closely with the government wherever possible and to expect some measure of support in its overseas missions from them. The reinstated French monarchy had close ties with the Catholic Church. Louis-Philippe, who ruled France from 1830 to 1848, was very interested in the work of the society and was instrumental in encouraging the Pope to establish a new Apostolic Vicariate for Korea in 1832, which also included the Ryukyus, which was assigned by the Papacy to the MEP. With the execution of the first MEP missionaries in Korea in 1839 the society temporarily withdrew from Korea but reopened the work of the Apostolic Vicariate in 1843 by assigning two priests (Father Napoléon Libois and Father Théodore Forcade) to the Ryukyus. In March 1846, the Ryukyus were included in the new Apostolic Vicariate of Japan established by Pope Gregory XVI. Father Libois never went to the Ryukyus and remained as a missionary in Macao. In April 1844, Father Forcade arrived with a Chinese catechist (Augustin Ho) aboard the French corvette *Alcmène* in the port of Naha.<sup>11</sup>

### The First Missionary Encounter 1844-1848

Father Forcade was the only missionary in the Ryukyus for two years; Father Pierre-Marie Le Turdu joined him in May 1846, the day after the arrival of Dr Bettelheim. During those two years, he was also the only resident westerner in the Kingdom of the Ryukyus. In fact, he was the only westerner ever to have been resident there. This in itself made him an object of curiosity to many of the ordinary people of Naha and of distrust to government officials. From the beginning of his stay in the Ryukyus, life was to be quite circumscribed for him with many trials and complications. The captain of the *Alcmène* negotiated a place of residence for Father Forcade with the Governor of Naha, a disused Buddhist temple. This official, after protestations that he could not understand Chinese, made it clear that he intended to restrict Father Forcade and the French mission solely to this building without permission to walk outside it and especially to walk into Naha itself. The reason given being that 'the people were not used to seeing strangers and were afraid'.<sup>12</sup> This ruling was immediately challenged by the French officers walking around the town where the ordinary people seemed curious and unafraid. The government officials continued to appear at regular intervals to forbid any further explorations and the French continued to walk around and explore the town. This game of cat and mouse, though it often seems rather humorous in retrospect, indicates the French willingness to override the authority of the Ryukyuan government officials and the latter's continuing uncertainty as to their own ability to control the foreigners. Not that this stopped the government's continued efforts to assert

<sup>10</sup> For a history of the society through the nineteenth century see: Georges Goyau. *Les prêtres des missions étrangères*. Paris: Grasset, 1932.

<sup>11</sup> Father Forcade was born in March 1816 in Versailles. Following his work in the Ryukyus and China, he resigned from the society in 1852. He went on to become a Bishop in Guadeloupe and in Nevers and finally became Archbishop of Aix in 1873. He died in 1885.

<sup>12</sup> Manuscript of Father Forcade in the MEP archives. This was published in 1885 in *Les Missions Catholiques* under the title *Le premier missionnaire catholique du Japon au XIX e siècle*.

control (often by the promulgation of regulations clearly designed as irritants) nor the French officers' refusal to accept such regulations. In some ways it was a microcosm of Western interactions with Japan in the 1840's and 1850's.

Clearly, the Ryukyuan authorities were reluctant to accept the long-term stay of Father Forcade and Augustin Ho, and were completely unwilling to accept Father Forcade as a missionary. Despite this reluctance, and because of their unwillingness to state their refusal in unambiguous terms, the French captain insisted that they should remain behind in the Ryukyus. However, he referred to them as 'interpreters' not as missionaries. This conciliatory move was sufficient, though barely, to allow them to remain. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, their goods having been unloaded and transported to the temple, the two were left behind as the *Alcmène* sailed with the promise that the French fleet under Admiral Cécille would return shortly to continue negotiations for a commercial treaty with the Kingdom of the Ryukyus.<sup>13</sup> For Father Forcade it was to be a long and frustrating wait.

From the beginning, the Ryukyuan officials continued to put obstacles in their path. On their excursions, when they were reluctantly permitted to walk about, government officials accompanied them. Any knowledge of Chinese was denied by the government, which consequently rendered Augustin Ho useless as a translator or go between. Permission to engage in missionary work was denied and so was permission to study the language of the Ryukyus. After a while, some assistance was given with this but Father Forcade remained unaware for a long while of the exact relationship between the languages of Japan and the Ryukyus. The brief visit of two British ships in June and August 1845 was some relief, as the British Captain (Sir Edward Bulcher) gave them some money to keep them going until the arrival of Admiral Cécille and the French fleet. Father Forcade remained constantly watched; in fact he believed that his position became increasingly worse rather than better. His repeated requests to the government for a language teacher, books, and the right to preach were turned down on each occasion. His appeal to the supposed freedom of access of Christianity to China indicates his continued uncertainty as to the nature of power in the Ryukyus. Needless to say it was an appeal which left the Ryukyuan authorities cold and no doubt somewhat bemused. Finally, after two years, Admiral Cécille arrived bringing with him Father Le Turdu.<sup>14</sup> Though his ship was preceded by one day by the arrival of a British ship bringing the missionary Bernard Bettelheim. Initially, Father Forcade seems to have considered Bettelheim not as a missionary but as merely a doctor, and a 'so called' one at that, sent by a 'philanthropic society'.<sup>15</sup> Bernard Bettelheim was indeed a doctor, but he was also in his own mind very much a missionary and it didn't take him long to begin to set out to prove this point.

Bernard Bettelheim was a very different kind of missionary than Father Forcade or indeed any of the MEP priests who would follow him. Their upbringing

<sup>13</sup> See Meron Medzini, *French Policy in Japan During the Closing Years of the Tokugawa Regime*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University, 1971, and Richard Sims, *French Policy Towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan*. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998, for more information on Franco-Japanese Treaty negotiations.

<sup>14</sup> Father Pierre-Marie Le Turdu was born in August 1821 at Quentin. Following his service in the Ryukyus, he was a missionary in China. He died in July 1861 at Canton having served as a chaplain on a hospital ship for British troops engaged in the Canton expedition.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Father Forcade to MEP May 1846.

and training followed along the conventional lines for French Catholic priests and they acted accordingly. Bettelheim was born into a Jewish family in Pressburg (now Bratislava) in 1811 and, allegedly, had been destined for the Rabbinate. However, he left home early and began to teach and study in various schools around Europe. He gained a degree in Medicine in Padua in 1836 and thereafter continued his peregrinations. Following spells of duty as a military medical officer in Egypt and Turkey, he converted to Christianity and moved to London. In London, he had difficulty in finding his place, though he did find a wife who was the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer. He experienced some difficulties in being accepted by the Church of England, and refusal of his request to be ordained in that church. Finally, he was accepted by the new LNM as their first missionary, though he went as an unordained medical missionary rather than as the clergyman that he wished to be.<sup>16</sup> Though this lack of ordination continued to irk him, it in no way impeded his determination to act as a missionary and as a British missionary at that.

As Bettelheim settled in at Naha, Admiral Cécille began the long delayed negotiations with the Ryukyuan government for a trading agreement comparable to that with China.<sup>17</sup> He also wished to discuss the complaint that the Ryukyuan government had addressed to China concerning the presence of Father Forcade in Naha. Given the professed ignorance of the Ryukyuan of Chinese, their complaint was perhaps somewhat embarrassing for them but, whatever was the case, it was then politely ignored in subsequent negotiations. The customary round of obfuscations ensued, which lasted for six weeks, with the end result that no trade treaty was signed. On July 15<sup>th</sup>, Admiral Cécille prepared to sail for Korea via Japan. The French government was threatening retaliatory action for the deaths of the three MEP missionaries in 1839 and Cécille was going to investigate.<sup>18</sup> This was also in part intended as a warning to the Ryukyuan and the Japanese. If Cécille had been experiencing difficulties with the Ryukyuan government, he had also been in something of a quandary in his dealings with Bettelheim.

Bettelheim had wasted no time in introducing himself to Fathers Forcade and Le Turdu and in fact seems to have gone out of his way to be polite, expressing the hope that differences of religion would not prevent them living happily next to each other. Forcade was somewhat disparaging of Bettelheim for bringing his wife and children, they constituted 'too much luggage for this country' as he noted, and thought the man himself to be not a bad man but boisterous and indiscreet.<sup>19</sup> Bettelheim also attempted to enlist Forcade's support in gaining an invitation for dinner aboard Admiral Célinne's flagship, which the priest studiously ignored. Forcade also noted, not without pleasure it would seem, Bettelheim's difficulties with the authorities and their rejection of his medical services. However, Bettelheim did succeed in gaining an invitation from Admiral Cécille where, according to Forcade, he made something of a negative impact and exhibited a marked predilection to extensively sample the Admiral's supply of wines.<sup>20</sup> This behaviour

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Bettelheim to LNM 26 January 1846: 'Nothing can be more awkward than for a missionary of a Church society to go out unordained'. It was to be a recurrent complaint from Bettelheim.

<sup>17</sup> The Lagrené Treaty of 1844, which extended French trading rights and permitted freedom of practice for Christianity.

<sup>18</sup> Monsignor Imbert and Fathers Chastan and Maubant.

<sup>19</sup> Journal of Father Forcade 5<sup>th</sup> May 1846.

<sup>20</sup> Journal of Father Forcade 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1846.

goes unreported by Bettelheim himself and, given that it appears to be both at second hand and that it was used by Father Forcade as an example of the consequences of Protestantism, can be perhaps dismissed. Father Le Turdu's comments on his experiences with Bettelheim at this time seem somewhat more balanced, even though Bettelheim did ask for wine he asked for books as well.<sup>21</sup> Largely because he had clearly arrived without a sufficiency of either and, while the Admiral was still in port, perhaps hoped that the priests could augment his supply of both. A not unreasonable hope as Father Le Turdu did indeed provide him with some wine in early July, though not with any books!

The generosity was in fact very far from one way. Bettelheim issued a standing invitation to Sunday dinner to both of the priests, which was somewhat priggishly rejected with the comment that the rules of the MEP did not permit it.<sup>22</sup> Bettelheim's wife sent cakes, which seemingly the rules did permit, and he himself sent a present of some books (the Gospel of St John in Japanese and a book in English on the Tribes of Israel). In fact, it seems that Bettelheim was a little overwhelming for the priests and perhaps especially for the young Father Le Turdu, who was left alone after the departure of Father Forcade on the Admiral's flagship. His present of books was distrusted ('most Protestant Bibles have falsified passages') and his efforts to prove 'as the only Englishman and the representative of his nation ... to the people of Loochoo that France and the United Kingdom are friends' was also somewhat quizzically received.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps this scepticism was justified as, in his writings for the LNM, Bettelheim was less enthusiastic about the Franco-British alliance noting that 'If England continue in her supineness' the Ryukyus would go the same way as Tahiti and Cochin China in other words becoming French protectorates.<sup>24</sup> He zealously urged the supporters of the LNM to prevent this eventuality. This complexity of inter-missionary relationships only deepened over time and it became apparent that Bettelheim's 'double bookkeeping' was not the only problem.

By November 1847, Bettelheim had commenced preaching in public to an astonished though unreceptive audience. This alarmed the Ryukyuan officials greatly, especially as Father Forcade had never preached in public, a tradition that Father Le Turdu continued. Bettelheim's preaching in the streets and markets was restricted by the authorities and audiences discouraged, so he then 'had recourse to throwing portions of Scripture and Hymns, in rolls, over into the yards of houses, scattering them in schools and temples and private houses'.<sup>25</sup> These were all collected and dutifully returned by the police. His request to Father Le Turdu to put up a sign for his hospital was also a failure; Le Turdu couldn't read it and consequently had no wish to be seen as a 'propagator of heresy'.<sup>26</sup> Both Bettelheim and Le Turdu had some hopes of converting the other; rather typically one favoured active theological disputes while the other favoured prayer. Predictably, neither was successful.

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<sup>21</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 6<sup>th</sup> July 1846.

<sup>22</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 30<sup>th</sup> June 1846.

<sup>23</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 6<sup>th</sup> July 1846.

<sup>24</sup> Letter of Bettelheim to LNM 12<sup>th</sup> January 1850.

<sup>25</sup> Letter of Bettelheim to LNM 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1848.

<sup>26</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 8<sup>th</sup> July 1846.

The arrival of a second MEP priest (Father Matthieu Adnet)<sup>27</sup> in late 1846 had not interrupted the cautious coexistence between the two missions, though none of this seems to have been reported to the LNM. When Bettelheim claimed to have been robbed of 600 piastres, he persuaded Father Le Turdu to co-author a letter of complaint to the governor partly so that it could be 'seen that [they] were not enemies'.<sup>28</sup> In a similar vein, when Bettelheim visited the Catholic mission to see Father Adnet who had been sick since his arrival in the Ryukyus, he expressed his regret to Father Le Turdu that he did not preach in public. Bettelheim noted that, if he did preach publicly, this would be seen as 'showing the union which exists' between the two missions;<sup>29</sup> perhaps a good enough reason for Father Le Turdu to not do so. Father Adnet's illness brought Bettelheim on a few occasions to the Catholic mission to give medication to the sick priest and to check his condition, even though he explicitly denied making these visits in his reports to the LNM. Despite all efforts, Father Adnet died in July 1848 and Bettelheim attended the funeral. Though Father Le Turdu makes no comment, Bettelheim reported to the LNM that the funeral was a 'disgusting exhibition' and an 'abomination'.<sup>30</sup> Clearly, if he had expressed these sentiments to Father Le Turdu the strained amity between them would not have lasted. Father Le Turdu was unwilling to face the rigours of the mission again alone and requested that Father Libois (who had been intended for the Ryukyus for years) should leave Macao and come to Naha. When this didn't happen, he left the Ryukyus himself for Hong Kong in an effort to persuade Father Libois or at least to get the new Bishop Forcade to assign someone else to the mission<sup>31</sup>. In both areas he was unsuccessful and there were to be no more MEP missionaries in the Ryukyus until 1855. Bettelheim was left as the sole missionary in Naha.

### **Bettelheim's Kingdom: 1848-1855**

The departure of the MEP mission, whatever were his true feelings towards Father Le Turdu, may have left Bettelheim bereft of European company (except for his family) but it certainly did nothing to contain his sense of purpose. In his dealings with the people and with the government he became increasingly forthright, if not aggressive. When people fled from him, as they seem often to have done from both personal fear and government pressure, he pursued them into their houses. In one instance he notes that he even broke a hole in the wall of a house so that he could force his way in. Whereupon he notes that 'I was little moved with the cries of the women or the frightened screams of the children, but seated myself in the first room I could get access to and began to preach'.<sup>32</sup> This type of behaviour and his increasingly difficult general conduct led the Ryukyuan government to write to the Chinese authorities to get them to ask the British to remove Bettelheim. This was the same procedure that they had followed with respect to the MEP mission, though

<sup>27</sup> Father Mathieu Adnet was born in December 1813. The Ryukyus were his first missionary location.

<sup>28</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 1848, p.368.

<sup>29</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 1848, p.360.

<sup>30</sup> Appeal of Bettelheim to LNM, 1849.

<sup>31</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 24<sup>th</sup> February 1848.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Bettelheim, N.D. 1850.

in this instance their chagrin was more clearly justified. This met with no response. In February 1849, HMS *Mariner* visited Naha and the government took the opportunity to request Bettelheim's removal. Bettelheim himself translated this document for the chief British officer (Captain Matheson). Bettelheim, predictably, refused to leave with HMS *Mariner* and Matheson refused to take him against his will, as he believed that he had done nothing wrong. The Ryukyuan officials then gave Matheson a formal letter of complaint addressed to the British government. Not to be outdone, Bettelheim then wrote directly to Lord Palmerston and the British Parliament requesting regular naval visits to protect him.<sup>33</sup> The 'Bettelheim Affair' had moved on to the international stage, much to Bettelheim's personal satisfaction.

Extraordinary as it may seem; the position of Bettelheim was not ignored or treated with condescension. This was so for a variety of reasons. The Ryukyus were viewed as a potentially important trading area and as a wedge to open the Japanese market to Western trade. Even though Admiral Cécille had been flatly turned down in his search for a trade treaty, the Western powers had certainly not given up and, in their desire to remove Bettelheim, the Ryukyuan authorities had hinted at the possibility of a neutral trading zone being established in Naha. In August 1849, Palmerston despatched a letter to the Ryukyuan government once again outlining the virtues of trade and stating that 'the British Government viewed Doctor Bettelheim with interest, and would regard with displeasure any attempt on the part of the Loo-Chooans to repel him by a system of annoyance and persecution'.<sup>34</sup> This letter was delivered aboard yet another Royal Navy ship. This letter should not be dismissed as a mere pro-forma matter. In January 1850, Palmerston had ordered a blockade of the Greek coast in the defence of the supposed claims of a British citizen against the Greek government (the 'Don Pacifico Affair'); in 1861 a British naval expedition accompanied the French attack on Mexico again in pursuit of trading claims; and, much nearer to the Ryukyus, the death of a French missionary in China in 1856 and the 'Arrow Incident' prompted a war with China (the Canton Expedition) leading to the destruction of the Emperor's Summer Palace outside Beijing along with various concessions from China which had already ceded Hong Kong to Britain in 1842 after another trading dispute. The British Government, and especially Lord Palmerston, were quite capable of naval and military action in pursuance of trade and for the protection of isolated nationals. Bettelheim was initiating a potentially very dangerous situation.

Fortunately, largely as a result of Bettelheim's erratic behaviour, the situation was to be slowly defused. In October 1850, HMS *Reynard* visited Naha under the command of Captain Cracroft. On board was Bishop Smith, the Bishop of Victoria (Hong Kong) who had been requested by the LNM to investigate Bettelheim's situation. In writing directly to Lord Palmerston, Bettelheim had ignored the LNM much to their displeasure, the LNM governing committee noting that Doctor Bettelheim had 'so far forgotten his duty as to write directly' to Lord Palmerston.<sup>35</sup> Their delegation of Bishop Smith was intended to clarify their 'unpleasant misunderstanding with Doctor Bettelheim'.<sup>36</sup> Bettelheim was initially extremely

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<sup>33</sup> Captain Matheson conveyed this letter directly to London.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in the Sixth Annual Report of the LNM in 1851.

<sup>35</sup> LNM to the Foreign Office 8<sup>th</sup> June 1850.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from LNM to Bishop Smith of Victoria N.D., 1850.

pleased with the visit writing that it was 'all owing to the nobility and power of England. What other power on earth would have sent a steamer to look after a forgotten missionary?'<sup>37</sup> The Bishop and Captain Cracroft seemed to have been swayed by Bettelheim's advocacy of his position but there were some doubts in their minds. They did, however, convey yet another petition for the removal of Bettelheim from the Ryukyuan authorities to the British government. This petition was not well received, Palmerston having thought the matter settled, and his reply reiterated his earlier letter this time noting that 'less friendly visits' by the British Navy would result if there were further mistreatment of Bettelheim. Despite this seeming ascendancy, Bettelheim's star was already beginning to wane.

The British Commissioner in Hong Kong (Bonham) was increasingly disturbed by the reports that he was hearing from Naha and dispatched T.I. Meadows to the Ryukyus to make sure that the British Government's messages were being conveyed in an accurate manner. He was not pleased with what he found and he wrote of the imprudent and dictatorial manner of Bettelheim, advocating caution in his support by the British Government. Bettelheim's enthusiasm for the visit of the Bishop of Victoria had decidedly waned as he realised that this would mean some form of episcopal oversight of his mission.<sup>38</sup> The Bishop disagreed with Bettelheim about the need for British Government interference in the Ryukyus, which for Bettelheim both validated his position and gave him the visible support of naval power to continue with it.<sup>39</sup> He wanted to keep the Bishop out of Ryukyuan affairs, so that he alone could be the representative of British and Anglican interests. He was also in dispute with the LNM itself for their 'interference' in his mission and for not meeting his financial claims on them. Clearly, Bettelheim had moved into a position where he believed that the mission was his alone and that the LNM (and the Bishop of Victoria) had no right to intervene. In December 1851, Lord Palmerston resigned as Foreign Secretary to be replaced by Earl Granville though he was to be Foreign Secretary and then Prime Minister in later Cabinets. Temporarily, Bettelheim had lost his best advocate. But he was already in hot pursuit of another.

In October 1850, Bettelheim threatened to resign from the LNM if they continued to intervene and if they refused to pay him the money he claimed.<sup>40</sup> Despite this threat, or perhaps because it was not entirely an unwelcome one, the issue was not resolved so Bettelheim once again went over the head of the LNM governing committee and wrote to Lord Manchester (a leading churchman and patron of the LNM) to present his case.<sup>41</sup> Bettelheim argued that the LNM 'referring to the Bishop in any communication to the English Government is a death blow to this mission' and that he had 'a great objection to any Bishop assuming jurisdiction beyond his diocese'.<sup>42</sup> In other words, Bettelheim wished to handle all matters ecclesiastical and political himself. He complained of his treatment by the LNM committee in terms of debts, late delivery of requested items, and their desire to control the affairs of the mission. He also strongly objected to their criticism of his

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Bettelheim to LNM 9<sup>th</sup> October 1850.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from Bettelheim to LNM October 1850.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Bettelheim to LNM 8<sup>th</sup> July 1851.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from Bettelheim to LNM October 1850.

<sup>41</sup> Summary of the situation in LNM Records 18<sup>th</sup> July 1851.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from Bettelheim to LNM 8<sup>th</sup> July 1851.

actions, he himself attributing them to 'Christian zeal not a want of prudence'. He withdrew his threatened resignation however and awaited results. The LNM was faced with a dilemma, without Bettelheim there was no mission; with him there was no LNM mission.

The LNM decided to reach some conclusion on the financial matters and to try to find another missionary to work alongside (or replace?) Bettelheim. Bettelheim's accounting, somewhat idiosyncratic as it was, was subjected to extremely detailed scrutiny. The missionary claimed that £453. 5s 7.5d was owing to him and the committee disputed this. Eventually, they delegated Bishop Smith to visit Naha and settle matters. While this visit can have hardly been welcome to the missionary, it did result in the Bishop deciding that the LNM did indeed owe Bettelheim money, though only £184 9s 4.5d.<sup>43</sup> Bettelheim accepted the cash straight away from the Bishop though he is unlikely to have felt that the settlement was a fair one. Finding another missionary for the LNM was a far more intractable problem. Two earlier candidates had later changed their minds and there was still a dearth of missionary applicants in the United Kingdom as a whole.<sup>44</sup> A suitable candidate was found in 1851, George Harmon Moreton, but he was unable to be sent to the Ryukyus until 1853.

Moreton's task was not an easy one. His former work with the London City Mission was presumed to give him a firm basis in the strictly missionary and evangelical aspects of his task but dealing with the Ryukyu mission meant more than that, it meant dealing with Bettelheim. By Moreton's arrival in 1854, Bettelheim had made it clear that he wanted 'complete autonomy' for the mission and that he rejected both the Bishop and the LNM committee. He tried to enlist Moreton's support in this but, naturally enough, he was disappointed in his efforts. The LNM committee had prepared Moreton for some of the problems, but had persuaded him to agree to work with Bettelheim. Soon after his arrival, he communicated to the LNM committee that this was not possible. He found Bettelheim to be overbearing both in his dealings with himself and in his dealings with the Ryukyus.<sup>45</sup> Bettelheim's 'direct methods' now included the possession of two fierce dogs which accompanied him and the constant 'brandishing of a [riding] crop' which frightened the locals. Bettelheim was still intending to leave but also intending to return as well. If he didn't return he promised to send another missionary personally to take his place in his mission. He was very unhelpful in poor Moreton's efforts at learning the language and threatened to take 'his' dictionary with him thus presenting Moreton with the task of redoing all the language work that Bettelheim had done. Moreton, who had poor health, was further worn down by all this. The LNM committee was facing major problems in raising funds and so Bettelheim's financial requests could not be met even if they agreed to their probity.

Fortunately, in the end the mercurial Bettelheim did decide to leave and to leave his dictionary behind. His decision was helped by the gift of \$275 by Commodore Perry and his men when they stopped in Naha following the successful negotiation of a treaty with the Japanese Shogunal government.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Letter from Bishop of Victoria to LNM quoted in LNM Records 18<sup>th</sup> July 1851.

<sup>44</sup> See Thomas (1997) for missionary volunteer numbers and their changes during the nineteenth century.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from Moreton to LNM 7<sup>th</sup> June 1854.

<sup>46</sup> Bettelheim did not go on to China but to the United States. He was finally ordained (as a Presbyterian) in 1860. He was a major and a surgeon in the American Civil War on the

Bettelheim's departure eased Moreton's situation immeasurably as did the new treaty. Suddenly, the Ryukyuan government turned to being helpful and even provided Moreton with four 'government literary assistants' for his language learning. However, at the same time, the treaty also invalidated what had been one of the major premises of the Loochoo Mission which was that it was 'the only avenue to Japan ... [the Loochoo Mission] under God, not only is established and countenanced by two Western powers but blessed and owned of God'.<sup>47</sup> With the new treaty, the first comment was invalidated and it would seem that the two Western powers (the United Kingdom and the United States) would no longer attach that much importance to the Ryukyus. Moreton had arrived not to continue a mission but to close it. He did so reluctantly but his health had failed and he could not continue. The failing funds of the LNM and the difficulty of finding missionary candidates meant that he was not replaced. The balance of the LNM funds were given to the CMS for missionary work in Japan in 1861 and the LNM was terminated. Moreton's most pressing stated reason for the continuance of the LNM mission centred on the fact that 'Rome had come' to the Ryukyus and that 'three Jesuits' were now installed on the islands.<sup>48</sup> Despite the Protestant call to arms which Moreton wrote to the LNM, it would seem that in practice his attitude was somewhat different just as was the case with Bettelheim. Father Girard, who spoke good English, was a frequent visitor to the Moretons' and Father Furet tried to help by giving medical assistance to the ailing Moreton.<sup>49</sup> Overall, it would seem that a good relationship existed between the two missions not that this was apparent from Moreton's public plea. Even this plea however was not enough to arouse the consciences of LNM subscribers. The 'three Jesuits' were, in fact, missionaries from the MEP but they too had their eyes not on the Ryukyus but on Japan.

### The Final Stage of the Missions: 1855-1862

Paradoxically, the final stage of the missions in the Ryukyus was its busiest. The new mission was the idea of Father Libois, though it appears that his decision was prompted by concerns to prepare missionaries for Japan rather than by any consideration of Father Le Turdu's heartfelt appeals in 1848 on the termination of the first Ryukyu mission. The three priests whose arrival was noted by Moreton (Fathers Furet, Girard, and Mermet) were the largest group ever to arrive in the Ryukyus but they were not the vanguard of a renewed effort at evangelisation of the islands.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, they believed that the Ryukyus would be the 'gate through which religion would be introduced to Japan' and the gate was now at least half-open. Their primary interest was in opening the gate the rest of the way and in using Western governmental power if necessary to do so. Le Turdu, who had been so optimistic about the possibility of missionary work in the Ryukyus was now in

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Union side. After the war, he ran a drugstore in Illinois and then moved to Missouri where he died in February 1870.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from Bettelheim to LNM 8<sup>th</sup> November 1853.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from Moreton to LNM 10<sup>th</sup> November 1854.

<sup>49</sup> Mémoires, Archives MEP G. 106.

<sup>50</sup> Father Louis-Théodore Furet was born in November 1816. Following his service in the Ryukyus and Japan, he quit the MEP in 1869 and returned to France. He worked as a priest for the rest of his life in the Diocese of Laval and died in January 1900.

China and was to die in 1862 while acting as a chaplain on Canton Expedition sent out by the governments of Lord Palmerston and Napoleon III to punish the Chinese. Father Mermet stayed in the Ryukyus for only one year to study Japanese, which he then used as official interpreter for Baron Gros in the negotiation of the French treaty with the Shogunal government in 1858. He then opened the first mission in Hakodate in Hokkaido and assisted the French government in various other ways. As a reward, he was awarded the Cross of a Knight of the Legion of Honour by the French government. He left the MEP in 1864 and worked for the rest of his life in Japan as a teacher and translator, dying in 1871.<sup>51</sup> Father Girard stayed in the Ryukyus until the Franco-Japanese Treaty was signed when he moved to Tokyo and served as the interpreter for the French Minister Duchesne de Bellecourt. Following an unsuccessful visit to France where he tried to get Napoleon III to intervene more directly in Japanese religious affairs, he returned to Japan from Shanghai aboard a French man-of-war in 1863 which landed 200 soldiers in the port to enforce the obligations of the treaty. He died in 1867 in the parish that he had founded in Yokohama.<sup>52</sup>

Two other MEP priests made short stays in the Ryukyus to study Japanese and to prepare for entry to the Japanese mission. Father Mounicou, who had served as chaplain on a French exploratory voyage to northern Japan and Korea on the ship 'Constantine', went on from Naha to various places in Japan eventually founding the church in Kobe where he died in 1871.<sup>53</sup> Finally, Father Petitjean who studied in the Ryukyus for two years from 1860 to 1862 and then went on to build the church in Nagasaki eventually dying in 1884 after helping to create a formal church structure for Japan and the more than 30,000 Catholics who now lived there.<sup>54</sup> The only MEP priest who showed some measure of commitment to the Ryukyus themselves was Father Furet who served on the mission from 1855 to its closure in 1862. Even his commitment though was less than full hearted.

Shortly after his arrival at Naha he tried to go to Nagasaki and Hakodate but without success, the same fate met his later attempt in 1856. Obviously, he would have to stay in the Ryukyus until it was possible to go on to Japan. Though his time there was not easy, he called the Ryukyuan system of dealing with the missionaries 'torture by politeness and sweetness', it was far easier than had been the case for previous missionaries.<sup>55</sup> Language training and assistance was freely offered by the Ryukyuan authorities in both Chinese and Japanese. This most probably represented less a change of heart than a change of policy under the directions of Satsuma Han. The Daimyo of Satsuma (Shimazu Nariakira) had come to the idea that trade with the West could enrich Satsuma and perhaps help it in its long-term struggle to overthrow the Tokugawa. In March 1858, the MEP mission was approached by an unofficial envoy of the Satsumas with the commission for purchasing a steam warship to be used in the Ryukyus. The negotiations were terminated with the death of Shimazu Nariakira and the succession of Shimazu

<sup>51</sup> Notice biographique [659] Archives of MEP.

<sup>52</sup> Notice biographique [558] Archives of MEP.

<sup>53</sup> Notice biographique [559] Archives of MEP.

<sup>54</sup> Notice biographique [779] Archives of MEP.

<sup>55</sup> See: Vie de Louis Furet (1816-1900) in Patrick Beillevaire, *Un missionnaire aux îles ryûkyû et au japon à la veille de la restauration de meiji: Louis Furet*. Paris: Archives des missions étrangères, 1999.

Hisamitsu who was more hostile to contacts with the West. When negotiations were resumed it was to be with Thomas Glover of Nagasaki and, in fact, was to lay the beginnings of his fortunes.

Father Furet was not idle during his stay in the Ryukyus. He studied Japanese and Loo-Chooan and wrote a number of letters that were subsequently published.<sup>56</sup> These letters gave the French reading public a more detailed knowledge of the islands than they had possessed before. However, despite his interest in Ryukyuan history and customs, his purpose was still to continue on to Japan and he persisted in his efforts to do so. Finally, in October 1862, the long awaited French naval vessel (the Duplex) arrived. Fathers Furet and Petitjean lingered a few more days in the Ryukyus in order to give linguistic assistance to the emissaries of the Netherlands in formalising their trade treaty with the Ryukyus. Ironically, after all of the efforts of France and Britain to gain a treaty with the Ryukyus, one was now being signed with a Western power though the events in Japan had largely rendered it irrelevant. On October 12 1862, the two MEP missionaries left Naha for Yokohama, thus effectively closing the MEP mission. With their departure, missionary activities ceased in the Kingdom of the Ryukyus. Within a few years the kingdom itself disappeared to become Okinawa Prefecture.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from the nearly twenty years of missionary activity in the Ryukyus? Obviously, in terms of numbers the missionaries made little impact. Moreton claimed that Bettelheim had made four converts, not including the somewhat mysterious Satchi Hama whom Bettelheim claimed as both the first convert and the first martyr for the Christian faith in the islands.<sup>58</sup> The MEP appears to have been even less effective. Not that they showed much interest in a more active apostolate in the islands. However, the Ryukyu missions are interesting and instructive in a number of ways.

The LNM suffered from a chronic lack of funding which severely hampered its chances for success. However, in choosing to make it a medical mission, the LNM was ahead of its time in anticipating what would be a dominant theme in Protestant mission societies later in the century.<sup>59</sup> Their other major problem lay in the personality of the missionary that they chose. Bettelheim, though a very talented man, clearly had a temperament which made him difficult for others to deal with, whether Ryukyuan or Westerners. In not fully understanding the power relationships in the Ryukyus, the situation was further exacerbated. However, the personality of Bettelheim was perhaps a blessing in disguise. In attempting to have British naval power asserted in the area he came close to being the pretext for Britain assuming a measure of control of the Ryukyus, which would have had incalculable effects on the subsequent history of the region. Opposition to this did

<sup>56</sup> Louis Furet, *Lettres à M. Léon de Rosny*. Paris: Maisonneuve, 1860.

<sup>57</sup> See Kerr (2000) chapters 8 & 9.

<sup>58</sup> Bettelheim makes numerous references to the conversion and death of Satchi Hama which were used for fund raising purposes by the LNM. The exact circumstances surrounding the death of this man are unclear.

<sup>59</sup> See Andrew F Walls *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997. Chapter 16.

not come from the LNM itself, which it would seem would have viewed this action with favour, but was largely a result of the negative reassessment of Bettelheim by the authorities.<sup>60</sup> A more stable missionary might have led to a very different result. A final note of interest about the missions in the Ryukyus is the apparent dichotomy between the theological antagonism expressed by both Bettelheim and Moreton to the LNM (and by the MEP missionaries in a slightly subtler manner) and the facts of their interactions in reality. While this could be interpreted as an awareness of the greater strength of common European culture over doctrinal differences, it is also an indication of the problems of transferring such differences from Europe to Asia. Curiously enough, Father Le Turdu seems to have been at least somewhat aware of this.<sup>61</sup> However, more introspection on the part of both LNM and most of the MEP missionaries might have led them to begin to confront these issues and thus make a more important contribution to ideas of mission practice than they did. This problem would have to wait for a number of years until the lack of comprehension of the relevance of these disputes in the context of Japan would lead to their rejection by many Japanese Christians (such as Uchimura Kanzo) and the formation of the influential 'Non-Church' movement.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The LNM repeatedly favourably mentioned the annexation of New Zealand as a consequence of missionary activity in their public reports. Clearly some at the LNM believed this was a viable option for the Ryukyus as well.

<sup>61</sup> Journal of Father Le Turdu 10<sup>th</sup> July 1846.

<sup>62</sup> See: Yasuo Furuya (ed.), *A History of Japanese Theology*. Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1997; Mark R. Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1998.