

Is Science Happy?

(About some beliefs in Japan)



Have you ever seen the Happy Cat? It's a little toy made of china waving its paw. It's supposed to bring happiness to people who own it. But how could a toy affect someone's life and bring happiness to it! I don't think it's possible.

There is a new 'religion' - it's called Happy Science. It was invented by a Japanese scientist. He wrote more than a hundred books to explain his beliefs. But how could a religion invented by a man and not from God make us happy! I don't think it's possible.

Both Happy Cat and Happy Science originate from Japan. That reminded me of a man who was very closely connected to that country even though he was not Japanese. He lived in Russia in the 19-th century and studied in a Theology Academy. When he was 24 there was an announcement inviting a graduate to serve as chief priest of the Russian Embassy church in Japan. The young man felt a sudden interest to that foreign country and completed the application form. He got the position and chose to serve as a monk rather than as a married priest. So he was tonsured and ordained as a priest. His monk's name was Nicholas.

Nicholas spent the winter of 1861 in preparing for his mission. In June he arrived in Japan. At that time he didn't know that for the rest of his life he would go back to Russia only twice for a very short period of time.

Nicholas devoted all his life to serve the Japanese people and bring the Orthodox faith to them. His principal task was the translation of the Bible and other essential books. In his early days of studying Japanese, Nicholas would go with the Japanese children to school and sit in the back and learn as best as he could with them. Indeed at one point the perplexed teachers put up a sign at the door, 'the bearded foreigner is not allowed.'!"

Nicholas wrote at the time: *“Translation is the core of missionary work.... In Japan, where people like reading and respect the printed word so much, we must first of all provide the faithful and those who are about to be baptized with books printed in their mother tongue.”*



Nicholas worked very hard and became one of the foremost scholars of the Japanese language.

Takama Sawabe, son of a samurai, was baptized, becoming the first person to embrace Orthodoxy in Japan. Later he was ordained an Orthodox priest. He was given the Christian name Paul.

Nicholas admired the virtues of Japanese people and wanted to learn everything about their culture. Some aspects of samurai’s philosophy as loyalty, devotion and self-sacrifice are really close to Christianity. The similarity between Christianity and philosophy of samurai was the key to understanding Orthodoxy by Japanese people.

These are the words of a samurai Dôgen, who lived in the 13-th century:

“A truly righteous man does good deeds without letting his beneficiary know of his deeds. He does good deeds freely and does not expect that in the future someone will recognize his deeds. A monk must have resolve far greater than this. In treating all sentient beings, he must not discriminate between those who are close to him and those who are scarcely known to him



NICHOLAS (KASATKIN),
ARCHBISHOP OF JAPAN
*(In Memory of the 100th Anniversary
of His Blessed Repose)*

Nicholas was a kind of samurai, whose indomitable will and labour over 50 years built the church of Japan. He founded schools for those who were about to be baptized and the faithful. He opened a college of Theology for the Japanese clergy in 1878. Besides theological courses, Japanese, Chinese and Russian were taught there to prepare for the eventual translation of all the Holy Scriptures. The Orthodox Mission moved to Tokyo, where the number of Orthodox faithful reached a thousand. Soon more than 250 communities were formed, and churches were built.



In 1884 he began the construction of a beautiful cathedral in Tokyo. It was completed and consecrated in 1891, and dedicated to Christ's Holy Resurrection. However, it soon became known among the people as "Nikolai-do" ("Nicholas's house"), a name it bears to this day.

Nicholas was the first saint of the Japanese Orthodox Church. In 1970, he was canonized as Equal-to-the-Apostles, Archbishop of Japan, St. Nicholas. His feast day is February 16-th. May his prayers be with us always!

St. Nicholas was a really Happy Man because he served the Wisdom which comes from above and that is the only way we can be happy. No creature and no science would be able to make us happy if we didn't live in harmony with God.

Sources: symeonsjournal.blogspot.com, samurai-archives.com