

Real Life Stories
James Hudson Taylor



James Hudson Taylor was born at Barnsley, Yorkshire, England, May 21, 1832, and died at Changsha, China, June 3, 1905. His father was a very capable Methodist preacher, and his mother had a sweet and patient spirit. Hudson Taylor was blessed in that he was the combination of the ability of his father and the gentle disposition of his mother. He was converted through the reading of a tract at the age of fifteen, and not long afterward passed through a remarkable experience, at which time he dedicated himself to God for whatever service might be appointed. Unknown to himself, his father, who had been deeply interested in China, had prayed that his son might go to that land as a missionary. Very early, through the reading of Walter Henry Medhurst's *China* (London 1838), the Lord, answering the prayers of his father, the Taiping Rebellion, and the workings of the Holy Spirit, the thoughts of Hudson were directed to that country.

Hudson left for China on September 19, 1853, and from 1854 to 1860 his time was spent in Shanghai, Swatow, and Ningpo, working sometimes in company with older missionaries of other societies and especially with William Chalmers Burns of the English Presbyterian Mission. In time he became an independent worker, trusting God to supply his need. His experiences of God's faithfulness in meeting his own personal needs and the needs of a hospital at Ningpo, of which he had taken charge, had much to do with the founding of China Inland Mission. While at Ningpo he married Miss Maria Dyer, daughter of the Reverend Samuel Dyer of the London Missionary Society.

In 1866 Hudson was invalided and had to return to England where he made the decision to found the China Inland Mission. During the 5 years in England he and the Reverend Frederick Foster Gough of the Church Missionary Society completed the revision of a version of the New Testament in the colloquial of Ningpo for the British and Foreign Bible Society.



Being of the same mind as Karl Gützlaff and William Burns, Hudson was convinced that Chinese clothing should be worn when engaged in missionary work in that land. He oversaw the sending of the first group of five missionaries who left England October 3rd 1865, arriving in China four months later on February 6th 1866. He then sent another three before going out himself with a group of 16 missionaries apart from Hudson, his wife Maria, and their 4 children. This group became known as the Lammermuir party. They left England May 26th 1866.

The Lammermuir Party

China Inland Mission was founded on the Biblical teachings of faith and prayer, that is, no appeals for funds were made. Instead, a reliance upon God is practiced to move people through prayer alone. They broke with the normal ideology in that they recruited missionaries from the working class as well as single women.

Ever praying and seeking ways to win others to the work in China, the Lord used Hudson to organize the departure of the popular 'Cambridge Seven' in 1886. In 1889, when speaking at the Shanghai Missionary Conference, he made an appeal for one thousand to join the Chinese missions over the next five years. This was not just individuals who were willing to go, for there was preparation before going and on the field. Those who felt exercised to go first undertook a six month course initial training which covered the Chinese language, geography, government, etiquette, religion, and the communication of the Gospel. Those who were capable were sent to an inland station where they were supervised by a senior missionary. After two years, if successful, they became junior missionaries, and after five years took responsibility for a station. Experienced missionaries were appointed over a number of districts within a province.

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Hudson spent 51 years in China and the society that he began was responsible for bringing over 800 missionaries to the country who began 125 schools and directly resulted in 18,000 professions of faith in Christ, as well as the establishment of more than 300 stations of work with more than 500 local helpers in all eighteen provinces.

From the founding of the mission in 1865 Taylor's time became increasingly occupied as general director of a growing work. His duties necessitated extensive journeys in China and frequent visits to the home country. In 1888 a wider ministry was commenced through the formation of a home center in North America. This arose through Taylor's presence at the North field Convention.



The increasing strain from this great work caused numerous threatened breakdowns of his health. Hudson, though far from strong as a child, manifested remarkable recuperative powers. In 1900 however, at the New York Conference, the first serious signs of failing health began to manifest themselves. Having already associated Dixon Edward Hoste with himself in the directorate of the mission, he slowly resigned his great responsibilities, still seeking to assist the work as consulting director while living quietly in retirement in Switzerland.

Early in 1905 Taylor determined, though extremely feeble, to pay another visit to China. After visiting various centers, he reached Changsha where he suddenly and peacefully passed from his labors. His remains were interred at Chinkiang by the side of his first wife and those of his children who had died in China.

As a Bible student Taylor was unique. Holding firmly to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and putting them to daily test in his life and work, he became a helpful and remarkable expositor, his Bible readings being greatly appreciated at the various conventions held in Europe and North America.

Hudson was a gifted leader and careful organizer. Convinced of his duty, every detail was carefully thought out, and when determined an action was the will of God, no subsequent difficulty or opposition was allowed to daunt him. He labored night and day, resting only when exhausted nature compelled him. No day, however, was entered upon without a period of quiet prayer and Bible study. James Hudson Taylor was, in the words of Prof. Gustav Warneck, "A man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, of entire surrender to God and his call, of great self-denial, heartfelt compassion, rare power in prayer, marvelous organizing faculty, energetic initiative, indefatigable perseverance, and of astonishing influence with men, and withal of childlike humility."

Historian Ruth Tucker summarized the theme of his life when she wrote: "No other missionary in the nineteen centuries since the Apostle Paul has had a wider vision and has carried out a more systematized plan of evangelizing a broad geographical area than Hudson Taylor".

. . . . Gleaned from various internet sources.