

だろう。生前の先生のお顔と、serious-minded という言葉を思い出しながら、そんな気がしてならない。

Robert Grant's Different Worlds

Alden E. Matthews

My introduction to the worlds of Robert Grant began in 1952, our first year as missionaries in Japan. Robert and Jean had returned to the U. S. on furlough after their first five years of service at The Doshisha. Since their house would be empty for a year we were assigned to live in it for our first year of language study. Through that house, its small garden, Otsui San (who stayed to help us over our first hurdles), and the neighborhood, we began to explore Robert's worlds.

The walls of his pleasant study on the first floor just off the front *genkan* were lined with shelves which were full of Robert's books—books on literature, American and British; books on history, Japanese and American; books on culture, east and west; books on religions; modern western novels; and English translations from Japanese. It was in that room that we first encountered Natsume Soseki's "Botchan" and the fascinating Makioka sisters. It was from Robert's books that we began to glimpse what Endo Shusaku would later call the "swamp" of Japanese culture and Benda San would label *Nihonkyo* (Japanese religiosity).

The next year, when the Grants were back from furlough and we

were living just around the corner in what had been "the Thurber house", we were patiently led further by Robert himself into his world of ideas. It was a welcome relief to put down the Naganuma language books for a while to converse with Robert about the two contrasting cultures he appreciated so deeply. Like anyone with a specialty he knows and loves, he was an interesting guide for the two neophytes trying to grope their way along his trail. In later years we continued, whenever opportunities arose, to discuss the impact of Christian ideas in Japan, or what he thought of as a "sell-out to Buddhist ideas" taking place among "Christians" in the United States, or the ideology and motivation of the student radicals.

The world of ideas was very real for Robert, and very important to him. It was a world in which he felt at home and relatively secure; because for him the basic directions and general layout were firm and clear. He knew his way around.

Another of Robert's worlds which we began to sense that first year was the world of nature. Having lived in Maine ourselves it was not hard to imagine what that rugged country had meant to him, but it was in the small Asukai-cho garden that we began to experience the exhilarating combination of confinement and liberation a Japanese garden can give: in this case through simultaneous identification with the microcosm of nature within the garden walls and the macrocosm afforded by the peaks of *Daimonji Yama* and *Hieizan* to the east and north. Robert was way ahead of us in his ability to derive satisfaction from these two dimensions of his natural setting.

Robert loved to take selected friends and visitors on tours of his favorite temple gardens, and his vacation trips into the countryside

or the inland sea meant a great deal to him. He was so happy to finally have a cottage in the beautiful natural setting of Lake Nojiri. During his last summer there, in spite of the limitations of the medical regimen following his first heart attack the previous winter, Robert gave many hours to photographing the varied aspects of Nojiri summer life with his movie camera. During his daily rowing exercise he must have taken as much pleasure in the lake, sky, and mountains as in the thought of physical benefits to his heart.

So it was not strange that Robert's last moments in this life were spent working in his garden or that trees, grass, and bushes should have been the setting from which his spirit was taken.

Another world in which Robert lived with robust energy and deep commitment was the world of friends. His relationships in the *Asukai-cho* neighborhood were much more than superficial acquaintances. He knew the children by name and he knew their parents. He was in their houses and they in his. His students at The Doshisha and Kyoto University were more to him than students; they were personal friends whose growth in mind and spirit was of real concern. After Jean's death it was a former student, Kyoko, who became his wife to share his final years. His fellow teachers, missionary colleagues, or the people in church administrative offices in Boston, New York, or Tokyo were friends to whom he often opened himself as a person in humorously critical, but basically supportive, letters regarding details of bureaucratic administration.

One could not be impersonal with Robert. He was truly interested in other people and knew how to draw them out as human beings. He carried on an active correspondence with a number of ministers

in supporting churches and regularly visited them on furloughs. What stimulating reading "The Collected Letters of Robert Grant" would make!

Whatever the nature of the relationship, and I'm sure it varied, there are hosts of people on both sides of the Pacific today who feel keenly that in Robert Grant they have gained and lost a true friend. No, not lost: his friendship remains a reality.

The fourth of Robert's worlds which must be mentioned is the world of faith. One is reminded of The Epistle to the Romans: — of the faith of Abraham, and of Paul. It was his faith that brought Robert to Japan and kept him here for nearly thirty years. Faith and love. Faith in God and love for man led Robert and Jean to Japan in 1947 as the first new missionaries of any denomination to arrive after World War II. Robert had been a conscientious objector during the war and felt a special calling to be an instrument of reconciliation. In all things he was deeply committed to his "mission" to witness to his faith as a Christian in the real world of men and women and children.

Robert's faith was firm, yet not closed. He enjoyed the thrust and parry of earnest religious discussion, but was able to hear other differing views with understanding and respect. Conversations with him about faith came very close to the true dialogue we usually find so illusive.

Perhaps it was because for him faith was so colored by love and respect that Robert was able to maintain firm convictions about his roles as professional teacher of literature and professional Christian, holding them together with integrity while remaining open toward

differing convictions held by others. The depth of his own missionary commitment came out again for me in our last conversation two days before he died, but his personal philosophy of faith in action was most clearly put into words in a letter written earlier.

“I think there are only two *valid* reasons for a mission board to support a missionary as a teacher in a school:

- 1) to assist the school in carrying out its Christian program—and I mean a conscious, intentional, active Christian program;
- 2) to give a missionary a base from which to conduct his own conscious, intentional, active Christian program as an individual.”

Thanks be to God that The American Board, at first, and then the United Church Board for World Ministries, which it later became, *did* support Robert as a missionary teacher; and thanks be to God that The Doshisha provided him a missionary base. God grant that his efforts may continue, through their positive influence, to assist The Doshisha in its Christian program in the years to come.

In Memorium : Robert H. Grant

Esther L. Hibbard

In many respects Robert Grant reminded me of the poet Browning, not only because of his literary calling but also because of his exuberance. When I first met him in 1947 he was in his prime—hand-