

# Faithful Unto Death

By ROBERT E. BROWN, M.D., Superintendent Methodist Hospital, Wuhu, Anhwei, China

**An account of the martyrdom of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Stam at the hands of Chinese Communists**

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Smith, of The Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission in Central China, were stationed at Nanning at the time Mr. and Mrs. Stam were captured. It was the report of the fall of Tsincheng and the approach of the Communists that they decided to go to Wuhu. Several days elapsed before any word of the Stam tragedy reached the city. This gives some idea of the speed with which the Communists travel when attacking.

It has been reported that "Red" spies were in the City of Wuhu, looking for our Brother Smith, since the Communists were greatly increased over his escape from their hands last summer in this troubled land, that great grace shall be upon them.—D. M.

**The capture of Rev. and Mrs. John C. Stam and their baby, Helen Priscilla, is an exposition of the mind and method of the Communists as they are operating in China today.**

The events as reported by eyewitnesses are as follows: On December 6th, the Communists made a surprise attack and entered the town of Tsincheng about noon. After looting, the Communists carried off the Stam family and a considerable number of one wealthy Chinese in Tsincheng was promised his freedom on payment of \$40,000. After making payment of this amount, he still was not released, but taken away by the Communists.

They left Tsincheng early on the morning of the 11th and marched rapidly for fifty li to Miaosheo, arriving there before noon. This city they occupied. The Stams were left at the post office while the town was being taken. The postmaster offered them fruit and tea. Mrs. Stam ate something, but Mr. Stam took advantage of the moment to write a letter which he left with the postmaster. Someone asked Mr. Stam where they were being taken. He replied, "We are going to heaven." Evidently they had overheard the Communists say that they were to be killed. They were placed in a large home which had been looted. Mr. Stam was tied to the end of the bed so that it was impossible for him to lie down. Mrs. Stam and the baby were allowed to use the bed.



Pastor Lo  
The brave Chinese pastor who rescued little Helen Priscilla Stam, and cared for her after the execution of her parents

The next morning they were led through the streets, and the poor people of the town who had not fled to the mountains were called to witness the execution of the foreigners. It is reported that they walked with unshaken courage and calm assurance, probably conscious of Another walk-

ing with them up the hill. At the head of the main street on a hill, the Communist officer addressed the crowd, explaining that the foreigners were hurting China by helping Chiang Kai-shek and the present Nanking government, as demonstrated by using the people's money to build new roads throughout the country, therefore they should be killed. When they ordered Mr. Stam to kneel down for the knife, a number of people, including some non-Christians were daring enough to speak in behalf of the American missionary and his wife. They were rewarded by kicks and curses. One Christian shopkeeper fell on his knees before the execu-

tion, for it no doubt meant the death of this innocent man. Mr. Stam was ordered to kneel at which time he began speaking to the crowd. What he said is not known, but it was probably a Christian testimony. While he was speaking, the executioner cut his throat. Mrs. Stam was then made to kneel and her head was almost severed from her body from behind. This occurred about ten in the morning. At one o'clock government troops arrived outside the city and firing began. Sporadic firing between the Communists and the soldiers continued until four p. m. without any change in position. The Communists did little firing, evidently being short of ammunition. The fighting could clearly be seen by those on the mountain top. The Communists were still in possession of the city but withdrew during the night.

### Loung Service

Mr. Lo, a Chinese pastor, was taken captive by the Communists on their arrival in Miaosheo but was released when they learned that he had arrived only the day before. He then fled with most of the townspeople to the mountains and only later learned that two foreigners had been killed by the Communists. On the next morning, Sunday, he came down from the mountains to investigate and see if he could be of any help.

This was a dangerous thing to do as the Communists had only withdrawn to the hills, and it was expected that they might return at any time. Upon arriving on the streets, the people confirmed the report that the two missionaries had been killed, but he learned that the baby was still alive. With considerable difficulty he inquired the whereabouts of the child, as the people were afraid to give information. Finally

an old lady pointed in the direction of a house. On coming to the house, he heard the infant crying and found it after traversing many courtyards and rooms. It had been there alone without food or care for over twenty-four hours. He took the child out and found a Chinese mother among the group of sympathetic people. She volunteered to nurse the baby.

He then went to look for the bodies and found them still lying exposed except for a few handfuls of grass which had been laid over them by someone. At this time the government troops entered the town. When that two foreigners were there and that their bodies were outside, he gave orders that the local officials should be responsible and provide coffins and see that they were properly cared for. However, all local officials and people of responsibility had fled the city and were still in the mountains, so after some time the Chinese pastor offered to see that the bodies were placed in coffins. He went to a coffin shop and purchased two coffins and had them carried to where the bodies where located. He bought some cloth in which to wrap the bodies, there being no opportunity to have clothes made. He washed the faces and stitched the wounds as best he could and placed them in the coffins.

### Loyal Witnessing

At this time Mr. Lo spoke to the assembled crowd, telling them the Stams had come not for themselves but to tell our people of God's love and that they had laid down their lives to bring this message of salvation. He ended with an exhortation to the people to accept Christ. There were two other Christians in the group, who with the Chinese pastor then offered prayer. There were many expressions of sympathy from the bystanders. Some were weeping, others cursing the Communists for what they had done.

Some Chinese people were also killed in Miaosheo, but it is the cus-

tom of the Communists to disfigure the bodies of the Chinese and injure them, so they cannot be recognized. This is doubtless done so it is possible to continue to demand ransom even after the victims are dead. As is usual in such cases, the perpetrators of this outrage were not from the local people but were one of the scattered bands of Communists who had been driven out of Kiangsi into Chekiang and were then attacked by the Chinese troops and fled into the mountains of southern Anhwei. There were between two and three thousand, mostly young men of high

and started on the long walk of forty miles to Kihshien, the nearest large city toward Wuhu. They carried Helen Priscilla with their own baby in rice baskets. Mothers along the way volunteered to nurse the baby. On arrival at Kihshien, the pastor's wife found a tin of powdered milk in a Chinese store which she purchased. Her own baby had been born two years before at The Wuhu General Hospital, and while she was a patient there, she had learned how to prepare powdered milk for infant feeding. With this knowledge she put the little orphan on a regular three-hour schedule of powdered milk in the proportions in which she had been taught. It was then taken by sedan chair to Suancheng where it was received by Rev. Geo. Birch and brought to Wuhu by train. It arrived in Wuhu Friday, December 14th, having been in the sole care of Chinese friends for nearly a week. It returned to Wuhu just three months and four days after its birth. Soon after its arrival the baby was seen by Dr. Robert E. Brown and other members of the staff of the Wuhu General Hospital. It was in perfect health and smiled from its little crib all unconscious of the sorrow in its life.

It is the first tragedy of this kind that has come in this district for many years. Our hearts have been bowed in grief at the loss of these beloved fellow-workers, but through our tears we see in faith the blood of the martyrs becoming the seed of a more spiritual church. Pray for us that we may carry on the work for which they gave their lives.

The Stams' picture by courtesy of the Moody Bible Institute.

These two pages greatly reduced in size from the Alliance Weekly are but a sample of its many wide missionary news.

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C. L. Eicher



"The Miracle Baby"  
Helen Priscilla Stam, in a rice basket, just as she was brought into the C. I. M. compound at Suancheng, after days of cruel captivity. She is dressed in the same clothing in which her mother left her when she was led away to martyrdom.

The Chinese pastor again turned his attention to the baby and found that Mrs. Stam had made provision for the little one to the best of her ability, hoping that someone would save it. A ten-dollar bill was found wrapped in a piece of paper among clean rags in between the baby's blankets. On the table there was an empty powdered milk tin, a little sugar and some crackers.

The pastor gathered his family