

# Chapter 1

## IN THE BEGINNING...There was Light

*Petrus and Dr. Susie Rijnhart*

When I think back to the 19th century and the first beginnings of that little mission among the Thibetan mountains it is to know that its successes and joys, its failures and sorrows were involved with the age, the Victorian Age, in which it began. Victorian society was based upon complex manners, its' rigid beliefs in right and wrong, the religious fervors and changes rung in on the frontiers, the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution and the glorious visions of the American Dream. The beginnings of the missionary movements that encompassed the earth in the middle of the 19th century led men and women, to believe that their interpretations of that Dream, could change the world - and nothing would stop them. They were right - the vast changes begun could not be stopped as the actors and actresses began to cross the stage...

The first in line was a young man, son of a major in the Dutch army, born in Rotterdam, and just having finished at a Netherlands war college in the 1880s, was living the life of a continental soldier student. He was transformed by a conversion experience with a complete surrender to Christ; and, being of a warm and generous nature, as well as a man of complete dedication, he was seized with this passion to be a pilgrim.

Reaching for an outlet for this passion he went to Canada and entered Charles T. Paul's<sup>1</sup>, School of Languages, to study English. His linguistic ability must have been phenomenal for in six months he spoke English like an Anglo-Saxon before audiences. His acquaintance with C.T. Paul led Mr. Paul to call him a great soul. Those who knew him best felt "that on the head of Petrus Rijnhart rested invisible hands of consecration to adventure which none but a specially chosen knight of the Lord could so ardently conceive and so willingly embrace." Powerful words, but indicative of the extravagance of the language of that Age. He decided to go to Thibet as a missionary, "to invade the

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Charles T. Paul, "Opening the Great Closed Land; Petrus Rijnhart: Pilgrim and Pioneer of Tibet", World Call, Feb. 1920,

impossible, to penetrate the inaccessible, to beat a path 'beyond the beyond'."

This land of Thibet had assimilated the Buddhist beliefs into its own pantheon of good and evil spirits. Up into modern times the inaccessible nature of the immense peaks and deep valleys and the fiercely independent peoples allowed them to develop an impenetrable isolation closed against all foreigners. It came to be called The Forbidden Land. For political reasons, the Chinese government, who since 1708 had exercised a tribute-bearing protectorate, had demanded that the Lassa Thibetans close their borders to the south to any incursion by the British from India. The Thibetan rulers were glad to seal those passes simply to be able to live in peace. The Chinese-Thibetan border on their eastern frontier had always been somewhat vague and shifting; the Chinese and Thibetan populations merging and coalescing with little hindrance. This was the area that Petrus had chosen to enter. He was following his guiding star, Abbe Huc's Souvenirs d'un Voyage dan la Tartarie et le Thibet,<sup>2</sup> a story of Huc and Gabet, two Lazarist Fathers who crossed southern Mongolia via northwest China to enter Thibet through Kansu province. They reached Lassa in 1846. Huc's vivid description of the regions and tribes they passed through stirred Petrus to duplicate their journey. He knew God was sending him there.

I can see him leaving Toronto on foot in the summer of 1889, walking off in the sunlight, leaving C.T. Paul to watch him setting out for Chicago 512 miles away and then to Kansas City another 500 miles. In the custom of the time he solicited no money, but he spoke in the YMCA in Kansas City and enough money was donated to take him by train to San Francisco and across the Pacific to Shanghai. There he served in the C.I.M. (China Inland Mission) Language School so that he could learn Chinese. Two thousand miles to his goal - it was 600 miles to Hankow, 400 miles by the Han River in a houseboat to Pancheng, 200 miles by mule and cart overland into Shensi province to its capital, Hsi-ngan-fu, the capitol of Kansu on the uppermost reaches of the Hwang Ho. He stopped there for nine months to study Chinese and now colloquial Thibetan. Going out to preach, he asked questions all the time to understand the people to whom he had dedicated his life. Then he went with a Chinese traveling servant who spoke Thibetan,

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<sup>2</sup> Regis Evariste Huc, Souvenirs d'un Voyage dan la Tartarie et le Thibet 2 Vols, 1851. 3rd Vol. 1854. Trans & Ed. of The Folio Soc., Ltd: Great Britain. Eng. title: R.E. Huc, Lamas of the Western Heavens.

traveling 120 miles of wild country filled with robbers and wolves between the Hwang and Hsi-ning rivers to the great monastery town of Kumbum. So this intrepid traveler in northeastern Tibet from August 1889 to 1892 had traveled 12,000 miles from Toronto to find his first goal. His travels had taught him, but had not dimmed his spirit.

Petrus was an individualist, a dynamo of aggressive energy, an establisher of new precedents and a blazer of new trails, but in the Victorian words of that day, also a tender and winsome man. Through his tact and medical knowledge he won the friendship of the k'anpo or abbot of the Kumbum monastery. He must have been an extraordinary man to have won the confidence of the lamas so that they did not object to his distributing tracts, teaching Christianity. He also made trips among the robber tribe of Panak'a of the Kokonor and then southwest toward the Ts'aidam desert. With determination and courage, travelers, officials from Lassa, and nomadic chiefs heard from the white teacher with the new doctrine and healing medicine.

He had to return to Holland on personal matters but was back in Toronto in the winter of 1893. The Toronto Globe published an interview describing his experiences with the lamas, so that he was invited to speak in Ontario and the United States. He presented the call of Thibet, announced that he would accept workers, but solicited no funds. One worker he found was Dr. Susie Carson, who became a medical missionary and his wife. What joy he must have felt to find a doctor and a helpmate all in one!

One other remarkable outcome of his travels: With his Bible open upon his mule's back, Petrus had itinerated over the hills of Amdo. He worked his way through the scriptures to the same position in beliefs of that body of Christians called Campbellites, now Disciples of Christ: the question of baptism by immersion, the unity of all Christians and the dependence upon scripture alone for guidance. Dr. Susie followed him in these convictions. So upon arriving in San Francisco and hearing his determined speech he won their support and in the autumn of 1894 they united with a congregation of that church. Now they were equipped with essentials and had a Thibetan Council from that church to back them in their mission.

Petrus and Dr. Susie expected to set up their home and a medical station in Luser, the trading village next to the lamasery in Kumbum. Petrus determined to follow Huc's trail. Dr. Susie took up the story then in her own book<sup>3</sup> and declared that he was right. He had

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Susie C. Rijnhart, With Tibetans in Tent and Temple. Intro, by CT. Paul, NY: Fleming H. Revell Co.1901.

encountered no resistance to his travel into the interior among the nomads. His intense longing to evangelize the Thibetans was deepened by the interest shown both in his teaching of Christ and his medical efforts. With Dr. Susie now they expected to enhance that effort.

Lusar was also a good site from the topological standpoint as it was situated at the juncture of several important highways: one to China; another to Mongolia; and the other, the great caravan route, coming from Ta shen lu, leading to Lassa. It was also a cosmopolitan center of population: Mongols, Chinese, and Turkestani Mohammedans, as well as Thibetans. These latter were divided into two: the T'ufan, or 'agricultural barbarians' who have a large admixture of Chinese blood, and the Si-fan or 'western barbarians' who are of pure Thibetan stock. These lead a nomadic life, responsible to the Chinese Amban at Sining, to whom they pay tribute.

Their trip came at an unsettled time of the war between Japan and czarist Russia. The route of their trip was the same but going up the Yangtze the steamer was now manned by English officers traveling with security. There were signs of military activity on every hand in Hankow and Dr. Susie was alert to all the activity and sights around her. Passage to Fancheng was in a houseboat, going by sail if there was a wind or being pulled by trackers if not. Ashore people crowded them to handle their clothing, ask questions and exclaim at the size of their feet! They were particularly curious about those of Dr. Susie, in a country where girls' feet were painfully bound from birth.

Welcomed in Fancheng by Scandinavian missionaries they left there in carts for the overland trip, drawn by mules or horses and later in Mongolia by oxen or camels. They reached Shinan (Xian), which Dr. Susie was interested in learning was the old imperial capital of China and now of the present province of Shensi. They crossed an antique bridge of stately stone. Continuing on their way they passed through Lancheo, capital of Kansu, and soon reached the Great Wall of China, now dilapidated and worn down by the rain of centuries.

Dr. Susie was a valiant, hard-working person, determined not to be daunted by any difficulty. Many another woman has gone out like her as a missionary wife, even many as well-prepared as she, to do their own missionary tasks. Yet not many have faced the very unusual people and lands that she went to in that early year. She mentioned the celebrations of the Chinese New Year and the hospitality of the friendly missionaries. She must have felt nervous along the way as they passed the ruined villages left devastated by the Mohammedan rebellion of 1861-74 and wondered why they had not been rebuilt. Little did she imagine her own future at that time. Turning from that devastation and horror to the civilized as they sighted the walls of Sining and entered

the gates in time for afternoon tea at the missionaries' home. Another part of the tale is to note that there are reasons for making this journey during the winter cold as it is the hibernating season for the majority of China's inhabitants, the verminous! *How civilized part of this tale is and how primitive other parts!*

Petrus left Dr. Susie in Sining planning to go ahead to Lushan to arrange housing, but she became impatient and packed up to follow him. Everything was in confusion just as she expected and she was delighted to have the long journey behind her.

A young lama, Ishinima, agreed to teach them Tibetan, if they would not let it be known. He was afraid someone would accuse him before the 'sung kuan', the disciplinarian of the lamasery, for being too familiar with foreigners. So there was still suspicion and hesitation.

There is a strong demand in the Christians' belief that we worship a personal God who is a jealous god demanding that there be no other god before Him, a God who does not simply demand belief but One Who Loves Us. Loves us so much that He sent His Son to live among us and to die for us - that is a very strong and compelling stance which differs drastically from most other ideas of religion. Believing this devotedly, Petrus and Dr. Susie set their wills to do their work.

If we could see their living quarters how strange they would seem: Tibetan 3-story houses <sup>4</sup> acc/to Charley Peterson "were packed earth walls, the floors supported by log rafters with small pieces of wood inlaid into clay packed smooth". Walls were of poles packed into stones and mud packed into a base larger at bottom at 3 or 4' tapered to 1' at top. Windows and doors were framed 'with wood as the wall went up. Straw was added for strengthening. The roof was flat but sloped for rain run-off. Inside walls were made of sun-dried mud bricks mixed with straw, like adobe. The house consisted usually of a ground floor where cattle and donkeys are kept, a second floor for living quarters reached by a ladder of a tree trunk notched with steps, which could be pulled up at night for safety. The top of this floor may have a storage room and a threshing area.

In the living quarters would be a packed mud fire box without a chimney, burning whatever was available, including cow chips, charcoal, etc, whatever the family could afford. This fire box extended down the room to furnish a warm sitting platform and bedding area where one can keep quite cozy for the night. An open hole would hold a cooking pot. Here the family would sit sipping hot, buttered tea with friends to gossip. If there was a formal visit then the guests would come offering the traditional silk scarf as a greeting gift and join them on the

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<sup>4</sup> BATANG and beyond, Charley Peterson, rev. 1 Aug 96.

platform - perhaps to discuss this strange new faith and argue the fine points of ethics and logic.

Little did the Rijnharts think that in a few months that the abbot of the monastery would send for them to find sanctuary in the lamasery as the rebellious Turkish Mohammedans were again on the rampage. "Legions of the infuriated, bloodthirsty rebels would fill the pass with only the massing of the Mohammedans here to check the advance of the army,"<sup>5</sup> preventing them from sweeping down on Lusar and Kumbum. But coming they were and Petrus and Dr. Susie were glad to accept the sanctuary within the lamasery. Graphic details in her book give the horrors of the war with the massacre of the innocents, and later, the beheading of 1000 leaders of the insurrection! Rijnhart's saw the abbott's invitation as a divine call to pursue their opportunity to open a Bible school while under his protection and acceptance of friendship.

A friendship developed between Petrus and a lama, Mina Fuyeh, who became very interested in the Good News. He even talked of the scriptures he read to other lamas and to pilgrims. He was eager to learn everything about the history and geography of the world as Petrus told it. Though he had an open mind, typical of the Oriental he saw no reason to become a Christian. Rather he preferred to assimilate these new ideas into his pantheon of beliefs than to accept it as the only Truth. *I can see them now sipping their buttered tea and arguing firmly, each for his own beliefs.* Yet Mina Fuyeh did feel a real admiration and respect for Petrus.

Dr. Susie wonders if the similarity between Thibetan Buddhist rituals and Catholicism could be due to early contact with Nestorian missionaries of the early 7th C. or later friars of the 14th or 18th C. There is a legend that Tsong K'aba, the great Buddhist reformer of the 14th C., had a visitor from the West. Resemblances were noted by Huc and related by Dr. Susie. Chap VI notes that "In every religion, however absurd and degraded from the Christian viewpoint there is some feeble acknowledgement of and groping after the one great God to whom all men and nations are alike dear: Even in the worship of idols there (are) to him who has the willing ear and the understanding heart 'painful cries of the soul, torn from its center and separated from its object'."<sup>6</sup> This book of Dr. Susie's became the textbook at the College of Missions for inspiration and for knowledge of Thibetan customs and life.

There are two kinds of missionaries in outlook on Christian

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<sup>5</sup> Rijnhart, Loc cit. Chap. III, IV, V, VI.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., P. 111, Quoted from Vinot.

purpose in mission: the itinerant missionary, and the builder missionary. The first feels the urgent need to continually go on to new fields, anxious that no one be missed in spreading the Good News of the Word. The other sees the difficulties the new Christian has and feels just as strongly the need to dig down and plant roots to build the Christian community so that new Christians may grow and support each other within the neighborhoods alien to Christian life.

Petrus and Dr. Susie were definitely itinerators. “But how often there comes to the Christian the stirring of the eagle’s nest! We had from the beginning felt called especially for itinerating work, the work of looking out for new fields and preparing the way for other laborers, that...the sowers of the Word might come to dark Thibet to scatter the seed unto a glorious harvest.”<sup>7</sup> They moved to nearby Tankar in early 1896. In October a Capt. M.S. Welby of the 18th Hussara visited from India via Ladak and northern Thibet. Petrus later accompanied him to Peking as interpreter. In his absence Dr. Susie continued her work with women and as a doctor.

She had a very distinguished guest coming out of Thibet: Sven Hedin, Ph.D., from a tour of scientific exploration, being Swedish, speaking both English and Mongolian. He authored a number of books, including *Through Asia*, telling of his visit to the home of the Rijnharts. Indicating his high esteem he was called ‘amban’ by the Mongols. Peculiarly, his passport was of the missionary type and not official so the ‘ting’, the town official, refused to recognize him?”<sup>7a</sup>

June 30, 1891 - A son, Charles Carson Rijnhart, was born, and his care and growth was much remarked. Now Rijnharts made a trip among the Koko-nor nomads. Their baby and two mechanical marvels, a bicycle and a sewing machine brought hordes of visitors! Dr. Susie’s fame as a medical doctor and Petrus’ preaching and teaching became quite well-known by the constant visitors and was spread into the surrounding areas. They also distributed at least 2000 gospels.

During three years at Kumbum and Lusa, Lassa was much in their thoughts. A focus of their interest and concern, they thought, read, and dreamed of it. Their hope and faith was that they could preach the Gospel in every nomad encampment and finally in Lassa. They would undertake the journey, meet the difficulties, preach the first sermon and perhaps never return to be able to tell the tale. They had felt from the beginning to be called to do the pioneer work. They had traveled among the Tanguts of the Koko-nor, preaching, teaching, doctoring,

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., P. 138, Sven Hedin, *Through Asia* 2 vols., Harper & Bros., Vol. II, pp 1156-7.

<sup>7a</sup> Ibid. pp 1156-7

and distributing scriptures. “We were willing to be thrust into other unknown and distant fields. There was absolutely nothing inviting in such an undertaking, but every vestige of fear was gradually removed...the terror of passes, rivers, arid wastes, and death-dealing winds...” LASSA HO!<sup>8</sup>

Their first real problem was that the Sining Aban refused them any passport or official letter. They had friendly help and no interference, but not even an official escort. Surely they knew that beyond friendly faces there would be no help and very dangerous men! Would a bribe have helped? Their bold belief in their mission was all they felt they needed. Many other staunch Christians have refused to give bribes. They took a small caravan so as not to excite greed or suspicion, to be more manageable, and enough food for two years. How excitedly they made preparations! How beautiful their faith and hopes! Down through the ages this was all that was needed for pilgrims to take with them. Dr. Susie tells many tales of these people of the grassy plains, both Thibetan and Mongol, nomad and farmer. Then the tales of mountain passes, rainstorms producing raging streams, snowstorms, and quicksand... fill the imagination of the reader as well as this author who has witnessed these sights, has felt the same anxiety, but was quieted by the care of parents who had an armed escort and stout traveling companions. Some of the small group of hired servants robbed and left them as they ranged further and further from the familiar country of their homeland.

They felt some effect from the high altitudes, but not seriously. Charles, for some reason, had been teething so much that eight teeth appeared at one time. He seemed to have managed this then, suddenly, he was dead - no warning, August 22, 1898. Devastated, they considered what to do, and determined that no animal nor individual should desecrate his resting place they lined a small box and buried him with a great rock over his grave.

From Petrus’ diary: “Today we started with broken hearts, leaving the body of our precious one behind in regions of eternal snow, where the mother of the Yangtze Kiang flows tranquilly past. His grave is on the western bank of one of the southern branches of the Mur-ussu, at the foot of the Dang La mountains, a little over two hours north of the mineral springs and about ten hours travel from the nearest ‘kopa’ encampment in the Lassa district under Nag’chuka.”<sup>9</sup> Could one find that tiny grave in all that vastness?

His mother cried from a broken heart “...could it be possible

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 194-6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 252-3.

that the very joy of our life...amid the desolation and isolation of Thibet- the child of our love should be snatched from us...the jewel itself had been taken for a brighter setting...the little flower blooming on the bleak and barren Dang La had been plucked and transplanted on the Mountains Delectable to bask and bloom forever in the sunshine of God's Love. What a void in our hearts!"<sup>10</sup> The pouring out of the desolation and love is what many missionary parents have known. Yet these good people never faltered in their trek -Lassa!

Then began the inevitable confrontations with the ingrained hostility to foreigners by the Thibetans and their governing officials. They were now too far from friends and the officials who leniently allowed them to leave without papers - they knew there would be trouble! Did they believe that their God would take care of them even in this situation? The Oriental is all too willing to give the answer that the Westerner wants to hear! No longer could the good will Petrus had engendered protect them. So the following events are no surprise. What is surprising is that they had come so far - even into the district of Lassa. That they had is probably due to their sensitivity and knowledge of Thibetans as well as the watch care of their God. Yet they had no legal permission to be there.

As they were accosted by nomad chiefs and village officials it was to realize that they were under surveillance. The area Nagch'uk'a government officials probably had them spied upon. Petrus, though, wisely dealt with each minor confrontation by stating he would only deal with the 'ponbo' or high official. There were efforts to stop them but they used evasive tactics which the Tibetans admired as they used these same themselves. Finally they arrived at the Ponbo Ch'empo's area and he came with his retinue, to pitch his tent nearby. Negotiations proceeded with much drinking of buttered tea and presentations of the traditional 'khata' scarf as a gift, by which Mr. Rijnhart showed he understood the customs of Thibet. They were astounded that a 'peling' (foreigner) knew their customs so well. Yet negotiations did not allow for any closer incursions to Lassa. The Ponbo knew too well that nothing could prevent his own demise if he allowed anything other.

Finally Petrus and Dr. Susie, knowing they were virtually under tent arrest, not being allowed to mingle with the people, decided to make one final appeal. This was that they be allowed to stay for the winter, or be allowed to go to China via Ta-chienlu. They did not want to be forced to return as they had come. The Ponbo refused. So the Rijnharts refused to meet with him.

Then he sent his 'kao-yeh', secretary, and a 'Thibetanized

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 248.

Chinaman' to ask under what conditions they would leave for Tachien-lu. They asked for fresh horses plus two extra and three men for escort. This was granted. Since forced, though, probably the escort had no desire to give loyalty.

Meanwhile the one faithful servant who remained to them had only come this far in order to return to his home in Ladak to the south. He was refused permission, but with the Rijnharts' blessing he planned to start with them and then secretly to leave during the night for his home.

Their trail, with ever-increasing difficulties, continues. Petrus and Dr. Susie journey through high mountains of grandeur over narrow, rocky trails, fording swift and dangerous rivers, over steep passes through bitter ice and deep snows. The guides treacherously had turned far south of Tasha Gombe, their immediate destination, only to leave them after robbers had driven off all their horses but one old nag. Alone, with only what they themselves and their nag could carry, finally Dr. Susie was too sick to continue. Leaving her behind to rest, Petrus left to go to a nearby village. "He followed a little path around the rocks that obstructed our way the day before, until out of sight, and 'I never saw him again'!"<sup>11</sup>

Alone! Dr. Susie waited for two nights before trying to help herself. Persuading help from nomads across the river, she learned that the whole country was in an uproar because the abbot of the lamasery had been beheaded. So she found it hard to bargain for help. She managed to engage men and yak for five days. Brave, brave woman! Yet she used her wits and knowledge to find her way alone with only Thibetan men to accompany her. This tale is of such courage with her wisdom pushed to extremes and only her Faith to keep her!

Dr. Susie had a revolver that Petrus had left with her, which became necessary through her worst ordeal. Two guides were given her whom she soon knew would try to rob and murder her. Only eternal vigilance, even lying awake at night, saved her. She finally found a protector, a 'Chinaman' outside of Jyekundo, and could relax. Along the way she had finally disguised herself as a Thibetan man, which was successful. Her 'Chinaman' not only arranged safe guides and transportation, but obtained a passport for her from the Rashi lama. This not only was honored by travelers but allowed her entrance to the town of Jyekundo. There she found a room in the home of a Mongol who helped her in interviews with the abbot of the lamasery. Having told him the fate of her husband and demanded an investigation, she also obtained from him help for a safe passage. A recent murder of a

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

French explorer, Duttreil de Rhins, caused a lot of trouble but she was able to use this so that the abbot was glad to see her on her way safely.

The passport stated: "This foreign lady, traveling to Ta-chien-lu, by the supreme order of the above great person, the chief of every place through which her way leads must diligently see to it that she is provided with escort to accompany her. The lady has no horse. She arrived at Jedo on the first of the ninth moon; and leaves on the tenth of the tenth moon. Passport and 'ula' given by Three chiefs to Sze Chuan Kansa."<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Susie must have really had a chuckle over the trouble he had to take, but after all her hardships and sorrows it was welcome. *'Ula' is the requirement to provide relays of transport, usually a horse or mules, but sometimes a person to carry her. The final 50 miles she walked as her horse was too footsore. Imagine that figure trudging along leading her horse, herself so weary, over the many passes.*

There was always the biting wind off the high peaks, the struggle through the snow and ice with the endurance to overcome the high altitudes. There was the high wind blowing dust into one's eyes, or the monsoon rains and the continual watch-care for wild beasts and wilder men. Many times people did try to impede her, misdirect her off the Great Caravan Trail so she would be vulnerable to robbers, and some of her guides again were unscrupulous. Only her knowledge of Thibetan and Chinese, her disguises, and her adamant courage that her Faith gave her was to save her. Perhaps her willingness, also, to suffer hardships and to live as a native saved her. Her best help were Chinese and her final escorts were Chinese brothers. They saw her into Tachien-lu to the home of the Turners of the China Inland Mission (CIM). She speaks for the first time in English since Petrus disappeared around the mountain path; has her first bath in weeks and one does wonder anew at how she survived! What strength her faith gave her; what courage and spirit she had! How could I or any other, have failed to rally to that Call she and Petrus had heard to those remote people, or failed to follow their brave spirits!

"I longed to be a Flame of the Fire continually glowing in the service of God and building Christ's Kingdom to my latest, my dying moments."<sup>13</sup> Petrus had several times stated that his one burning ambition was to be of service in evangelizing Thibet- whether by his life or by his death, it did not matter. Both his life and his death did serve. Dr. Susie said it gave her strength to remember his consecration. "God doeth all things well - the sacrifice was not too great." That his

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 355.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 395. Quote from David Brainerd.

life ended in martyrdom is a fact. Only by faith did he behold from the heights of Nagchaka-150 miles away- the golden dome of Lassa. His sepulcher was the restless Tsa-chu, the upper waters of the mighty Mekong bursting through the Thibetan gorges via Siam to the sea. The dauntless Dutchman's dream did not die with him. Such was his epitaph.

Dr. Susie wearily trudged with bleeding feet onto the dirty streets of Ta-chien-lu in 1899. The astonishment at this Thibetan man speaking English changed to wonderment at this sole womanly survivor of a happy family and of the long and dangerous trails. Dr. Susie recuperated for several months and awaited word from the investigations promised of Petrus' disappearance and death. The Dutch and British consulates also promised investigations but nothing came of them. Their friend and teacher, "I-shi-ni-ma" from Kumbum made the trip down and leaned the name of the murderer but he was never found; probably long gone.

Dr. Susie returned to tell her tales of her husband's call and dream, of their son's life and death, and, finally, of Petrus' disappearance and death. She was listened to avidly and many missionary societies wanted to help. But it was the FCMS (Foreign Christian Missionary Society) of the Christian Church to whom Dr. Susie turned with all the yearning of her heart. They organized her work, taking her in with joy and hoped the same hope of bringing Thibet to Christ. Another doctor and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Shelton, were found to go with her and they were appointed to go with blessings in 1903. Returning to Ta-chien-lu was going home for Dr. Susie. The CIM missionaries, including Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Tuner, their son Kenneth, and John Moyes, became the first friends of the new mission. Moyes met them with news of living quarters and a room for a dispensary. John Moyes, this friend, later confided to Dr. Shelton, that "when he met her...in dirty, sheepskin clothes and black from exposure...he knew she was the one to be his wife." Friendship did ripen into love. John Moyes' admiration for her courage and devotion became a love to cherish her the rest of her life.