

Heroes of Faith: Stars from the East

Pandita Ramabai

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Biography

- Born in an ashram to a hindu family in 1858 in karnataka
- Her father
 - was a renowned Brahmin Scholar
 - Lifelong searcher of One true God
 - Orthodox in his beliefs and practices
 - Strongly believed that women should be allowed to study Sanskrit and have access to hindu scriptures

Biography

- Her ashram ran out of money
- Family became bankrupt and led to wandering for survival reciting the hindu scriptures at pilgrimage sites
- Ramabai had her early schooling from her mother, who taught her Bhagvata purana, astronomy, botany and physiology
- Her parents and sister starved to death during the great famine 1874-76

Biography

- She and her brother wandered throughout India suffering extreme physical hardship and hunger and reached Calcutta in 1878
- There her exceptional knowledge of sanskrit astonished scholars and she was awarded the 2 titles
 - Pandita – a wise person
 - Saraswati – goddess of learning

Biography

- Disillusioned by hindu scriptures that legitimized oppression of women, especially of lower castes.
- Began to champion for woman's rights and education and soon she became renowned
- Married someone who was from a lower caste
- They both, for some time, were involved in Brahma Samaj, a group that seeks to integrate teachings of different religions.
- It was at that time she began to read a bengali version of the Gospel of Luke, given to her by a baptist missionary, while they were in Assam.

Biography

- This was the beginning of her process of conversion to Christianity
- She faced oppositions from her husband, who eventually died of cholera within 18 months of marriage.
- She provoked deep resentment from the orthodox section of the hindu society
- As a widow she refused to take on menial tasks and be isolated from the public world.

Biography

- Championed for woman's rights:
 - Spoke before the Education Commission of England, her speech came to attention of Queen Victoria
 - Started women's reform organizations in Bombay and Pune
 - Published many books on women's rights including Morals for women, The high caste Hindu woman

Biography

- Her visit to at a Catholic community establishment in England-another turning point
 - Took care of downtrodden women
 - Learned English
 - Revelation that Jesus is truly the Divine Saviour and no one but Him could only uplift the downtrodden women of India
 - Her and her daughter got baptized

Biography

- Traveled to US and England on speaking assignments
- Started Mukti Mission, a community of women from different backgrounds
 - A christian community, strictly following the teachings of Jesus
 - Holy spirit revival broke out from 1905-1907 similar to the one in Azusa street in Los Angeles

Biography

- Studied Bible with great care
- Prayer life was regular and disciplined
- She always strived to not abandon her Indian roots and culture while devoting her life to Christ.
- She was instrumental in translating the Bible into Marathi language
- Died in 1912

Lessons from her life

- Deep personal relationship with christ
- Daily discipline of prayer
- Continuous study of God's word
- Leading of the holy spirit
- Important mentors in her life
- Generous and giving spirit
- Excellent communication

Lessons from her life

- Sensitive to the endemic sins of the society and did something to alleviate them
- Deep compassion for the marginalized
- Importance of retaining the original identity
 - Engaging the lost in their own cultural identity
 - To focus on the offense of the cross rather offense of the community
- Translated the Bible from hebrew and greek to Marathi
- Trust God to work through every believer