



## Miss S. Taylor – 1924 (Edition 1)

Miss Sybil R. Taylor was commended by assemblies in Auckland and Hunterville and went out to Mr and Mrs Rawson at Coimbatore India in July 1924. There she learned the Urdu language to be able to teach the many Indians of the Moslem religion. She had little scope for her nursing training in the following year and learnt Tamil with girls in the day-school. While at Hyderabad in 1926 to sit her Urdu exams she worked for six weeks in the government hospital during which time she had 21 maternity cases on her own and helped at 130 others. She continued at Coimbatore in 1927 and then joined Dr Charlotte Pring in the hospital at Narsapur in 1928. She learnt Telugu while helping in the dispensary and passed her final language exams in 1930. She was able to make use of both Urdu and Telugu while visiting in Koyyalagudem and became intimately acquainted with the problems of travel on crowded trains, bullock “bandys”, Indian buses, flooded rivers and roads that have been ravaged by floods and used for every possible purpose.

At Amalapuram in 1931 Miss Taylor launched out on houseboat evangelism, an occupation that engaged her for the following 40 years. Together with a team of Indian Christian women, she visited every village within walking distance of the canal. They went from house to house speaking to the women, distributing literature and preaching to them in the streets. The boat provided them with a home and a point of contact with the people and they moved along the canal when any particular area had been covered. They were not always cordially welcomed and in 1934 while based at Tadepalligudem, because of a misunderstanding they were insulted with terrible language. Though they did not know what Telugu swear words were the local people said that ten thousand insults were heaped upon them. The rest of the people listened well the next day because they had not retaliated. Systematically all the canals were visited, the “crew” usually consisting of a boatman, a cook, two Indian sisters and Miss Taylor.

In 1936 she attended the Centenary Conference at Narsapur commemorating the arrival of Messrs Bowden and Beer and their wives when they came out to Godavari with the returning Anthony Norris Groves. A hundred years earlier there was not one Christian in the Delta. At the conference 5,000 believers attended the meetings. During 1938 she relieved at the Narsapur hospital and the following year returned to the houseboat. In 1944 she found many opportunities in the jungle areas often camping out with a group of workers. For four years from 1945 she stayed in New Zealand to care for her parents returning to the Godavari in 1949.

Throughout the 1950's Miss Taylor experienced great times of interest. In some villages regular Bible study and prayer was conducted in caste women's homes some daily and some twice a week. In one home where a young man had been thrown out because he accepted Christ some years previously, a breaking of bread meeting was being held. Visiting every canal on the West Godavari they found it took four years to cover the area, so villages, some of which had populations of 15,000 people, were not being very frequently contacted.

From 1957 to 1960 she either relieved Miss Pat Heads in the leprosy clinics or helped her in them and rejoiced to see the number of people who heard the gospel while waiting for their treatment. In 1961 she was back on the houseboat with continued interest. Even the local engineer helped when repairs had to be made to the boat

in 1963 and Mr Stewart Collings was there to repair the woodwork. However the days were uncertain and in 1964 the boat was stoned four times and a yelling crowd of students smashed shutters. At that time they were based at Koyyalagudem. They proved that despite the unrest, the fact that the houseboat was accessible to the villages and the people meant that they had better contacts with them. Miss Jessie Anderson was Miss Taylor's co-worker in those years and in 1969 they stayed longer in each place in order to be a greater help to groups of people in different villages. In November of that year they were subject to a cyclone with winds of up to 200 miles an hour. Tremendous damage was done in the whole area. The houseboat broke its moorings and sank and the Christian friends gathered up bits of wreckage the next day from a wide area. It was decided later that the houseboat could not be repaired satisfactorily so it was converted into a barge for the transport of produce and fuel to the leprosy hospital at Narsapur.

In 1970 Miss Taylor shifted to Nidadavol and took up residence in the old Crawford Tilsley property. In 1971-72 she had cataract operations, She has for the last four years been engaged in leprosy work together with Miss Heads. 1974 marked the 50th anniversary of her going to India. A truly significant milestone in the life of a gracious Christian.

[Source entry has three photos: one uncaptioned photo of Miss Taylor, "'Home" for so many years', and 'Photo taken inside the houseboat']