CONVERT BUT NOT CONVERTED: THE WESTERN LIVES OF AMERICAN MISSIONARY WOMEN IN CHINA (1860-1920)

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By

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Kate Roberts Hearn was buried in a Shanghai cemetery in 1891, a short four years after her acceptance into the Women’s Missionary Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1873, Charlotte “Lottie” Moon left for a new life in China as a single missionary woman. She served in that country for nearly 40 years, dying aboard ship on a final return voyage to the United States. Both women left their American homes expecting to convert the people of an alien land to Christianity. They also arrived in China prepared to maintain their Western rituals and comforts, which effectively separated them from the Chinese and cultivated a sense of the “Other.” In this way, missionary women came to convert, but were not converted themselves.

Missionary communities, specifically missionary women, vigorously sought to maintain domestic and work lifestyles anchored in Western culture. The rise of “domesticity” in the nineteenth century gave women an influential role as a graceful redeemer, able to transform “heathens” by demonstrating civilized values of a Christian home, complete with Western elements of cleanliness, companionable marriage, and the paraphernalia of Victorian life, such as pianos in the parlor. On a simpler level, the domesticity of missionaries represented a preservation of the familiar and the home left behind. Sent to evangelize to the women and children, missionary women were expected to accept the Chinese into their Christian world, while at the same time they built home lives that effectively excluded them.
This thesis examines the life of a missionary woman at the turn of the nineteenth century. By following the arc of her life—including the life stages of marriage, home life, vocation, and death—the contradictions inherent in missionary service, especially the maintenance of Western traditions, are illuminated.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the late nineteenth century, the majority of Western Protestant missionaries in China lived in compounds that were located within a Chinese community but separate from the local population. Replicating life back home, missionaries furnished their homes with pianos and weighty furniture, and wore the voluminous Victorian dress indicative of a Westerner. They came to convert “heathens” to Christianity, but maintained transplanted lifestyles, complete with leather shoes, milk, and picnics on the 4th of July. For most individuals and families, tidy Christian homes were enclosed by walled compounds that sheltered a Western world and, at the same time, excluded the smells, sounds, and crowds of the cities or villages outside the walls.

Missionary women, who managed the home life of a missionary family and evangelized to women and children, helped ease the charge of cultural imperialism with interpretations of the “Christian home” and “women’s work for women.” In the home, missionary wives with children were, by necessity, focused on creating a Christian environment without the supportive structure of government, school, or church. The theory of maintaining the domestic example of a “Christian home,” a model that converts could, in theory, emulate, was both an expectation and a reality. The interpretation of “women’s work” addressed the need of converting women in societies like China, where segregation of the male and female spheres was the norm. Women missionaries could access other women, providing newly converted Christian women as wives for male converts, and perpetuating a Christian home.
This thesis seeks to illuminate how nineteenth-century Protestant missionary women in China strived to maintain their Western traditions so as to both include and exclude the population that they sought to convert. They included the Chinese people by modeling Christianity, which meant sharing Western values and lifestyle. At the same time, maintaining a Western lifestyle effectively excluded the native population, positioning the Chinese as the outsiders or “Other,” while maintaining the missionaries’ superiority, even though these Christian Westerners were situating themselves as the physical outsiders. By 1890, women were 60 percent of the missionary service. Their service was fueled by the sanctity of domesticity, which positioned women as the essence of virtue with the power to transform: "Diffused beyond her home, woman's nurture and refinement carried the miraculous potential to conquer and redeem the entire world."¹

The contradictions inherent in proselytizing in a foreign land, including the desire to maintain Western values and the presumption of superiority, even while evangelizing to the needy, will be examined in this thesis through the arc of a missionary woman’s life—commencing with her induction into the service and following through life stages, including, marriage (although some women remained single), home life and children, work and play, and finally, death. Victorian missionary women had prescribed roles and were expected to persuade through their goodness and self-sacrifice.

She may go on a foreign mission; but she will there find a retired spot, where, away from the public gaze, she may wear out, or lay down a valuable life. She may promote the interests of a Sabbath School, or be an angel of mercy to the poor and afflicted—she may seek in various ways to increase the spirit of benevolence, and the zeal for the cause of missions, and she may labor for the salvation of souls. But her

work is to be done by the whisper of her still and gentle voice, by the silent step of her unwearied feet, and by the power of her uniform and consistent example.²

As this quote eloquently articulates, the expanded role of women in alien lands was expected to reflect the decorum of the age, the purity of the fairer sex, and women’s softer subservient role.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The Protestant missionary movement in China coincided, not coincidentally, with outcomes of foreign incursions into Asia. In the nineteenth century, China and traders, diplomats, and missionaries from England, France, France, and the United States had a tumultuous relationship that involved merchants, the Manchu rulers of the Qing Dynasty, internal Chinese political uprisings, wars, and treaties. Missionaries felt the xenophobia of the population, dealt with the cultural consequences and weathered them, or, in some cases, lost their lives in the resulting confrontations. The Opium Wars, fought in the first half of the eighteenth century, were a result of the British East India Company’s trade in opium, a drug that was ravaging Chinese society. Finding that there was a lack of interest in traditional British goods, the company corrected the imbalance by trading opium. When the Chinese attempted to abolish the trade, the British fought back—twice (1839-1842, 1856-1860)—and won concessions both times. After the First Opium War, the Treaty of Nanking established five “treaty ports,” including the port city of Shanghai, where foreign merchants and missionaries did not answer to Chinese jurisdiction. The Treaty of Tientsin (1858), which

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stated early reparations of the Second Opium War, provided an additional nine treaty ports and allowed missionary incursions beyond the treaty ports into the interior of China.

Nationalistic fervor and anti-foreign sentiments rose again during the Boxer Rebellion (1898-1901). Despite the turmoil of the uprising, an 1890 meeting of 446 Protestant missionaries (approximately 30 percent of the total number of missionaries) at the China Mission Conference in Shanghai had a decidedly optimistic tone, and overlooked the warnings of xenophobia and the existence of subversive secret societies in Chinese society, including the “The Fists of Righteous Harmony,” otherwise known as the “Boxers.” Protestant missionaries were complacent about the topic of Chinese unrest, attributing the Boxer Rebellion to resentment of Catholicism and a drought: “Throughout late 1899 and early 1900 missionaries were suggesting that the Boxer trouble would be ended by a ‘cooling rain’. Yet, non-Chinese settlements in the areas in and around Peking (Beijing) and in rural areas in the central region were affected by mob violence which often targeted missionaries. Ultimately the Boxer Rebellion failed, defeated by an alliance of foreign troops.

A re-emergence of the country’s anger at the corruption of the ruling Qing Dynasty and the unjust rule of the Manchus, led to the Chinese Revolution of 1911. The revolution also represented frustration at continued foreign interference in Chinese affairs. Inspired by the ideas of Sun Yat-sen, the revolution officially began with an uprising in October 1911, and by March 1912, the Republic of China officially replaced the Qing Dynasty.


Contemporary scholars note that China’s political movement forward retained its anti-foreign sentiment: “Moreover, the continuing association of missionaries with Western imperialism in the eyes of many Chinese eventually led, in the 1920s, to a nationalist anti-Christian movement, which formed part of the background to the rise of communism.”

As was seen with the Boxer Rebellion, missionaries often overlooked the mortal risk involved with the anti-foreign activities of the 1911 Revolution. In an October 17, 1911 postcard communication from Magnolia Arnold Hearn (wife of Methodist Episcopal missionary Rev. T. A. Hearn) to her stepson at Vanderbilt University, Roberts A. Hearn, disturbances in China was readily dismissed: “don’t be disturbed on our account by reports of trouble in China. We trust it will soon be settled.”

Outcomes of the Chinese national uprisings at the beginning of the twentieth century forced Chinese recognition of the imperative to modernize. This made missionary efforts at education more valuable and allowed a slow increase in Christian conversions: from 1900-1920, Protestants grew from 96,000 to 366,000; Catholics numbered one million in 1907.

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION

Among the many of Protestant denominations which had missions in China during the nineteenth century, was the evangelical group named the China Inland Mission (CIM). In 1905, twenty-five percent of the approximately 3,000 Protestant missionaries in China were


6 Postcard from “mama” to Mr. R.A. Hearn, dated Shanghai, China, October 17, 1911. Private Collection of Thomas Muir Hearn.

with the CIM, and those individuals represented various churches, including Methodists, Baptists, and Quakers. Members of the CIM differed from other missionaries in that they were required to live as the Chinese did, including adopting Chinese dress. Founded by James Hudson Taylor, the CIM was formed after he had a "Heavenly Vision" while home in Brighton, England, in 1865: "A million a month in China are dying without god," he saw in his mind's eye, as the waves at Brighton dissolved into millions of souls "lying in Christless graves." Instead of focusing on building church congregations, members of the CIM itinerated or traveled from village to village in the interior of China and preached where heathen souls were plentiful. The CIM records provide unique details of the quotidian life of missionary women and, in this thesis, serve as an interesting counterpoint to life in the mainstream Protestant missions.

CHAPTER TWO
BECOMING A MISSIONARY

Prior to and during the Civil War, missionary service had looked towards the American frontier and to groups who lacked Christianity—slaves, freedmen, and Native Americans. After the war, missionary work looked beyond the shores of the United States to non-Christian societies such as China. The stage had been set earlier, but women’s involvement in missionary work opened up in the postbellum years for a variety of reasons. It is commonly stated that there were a high number of educated women in both the North and former Confederate states with freshly-honed skills from war-time duties aiding in relief work, as well as the domestic responsibilities of managing home and land. Missionary service offered these women an opportunity to remain true to the defined woman’s sphere of home and hearth, yet still expand their role and their world.

The missionary boards capitalized on the war experience by bringing a patriotic tone to recruitment and support. Historian Lisa Joy Pruitt, suggests that this messaging also served to justify the missionary leadership’s broadening acceptance of women. In a report to the Executive Committee, a leader of the America Baptist Missionary Union confirmed women’s new skills and suggested that the missionary service was the appropriate place for them to be utilized.

After the illustrations furnished in our Civil War of woman's ability to render useful service on a generous scale, it can hardly be expected that such ability will easily fall back into its old channels of usefulness, and do as little as formerly in so great an enterprise as the world's evangelization. Woman has learned her power for good, and her aspirations are towards a higher plane of activity and a larger participation in the executive forth-puttings of this age. May not the hand of God be in all this? And may not these developments be prophetic of His purpose to employ female agency in a
larger measure for the benefit of the degraded millions of women and children in pagan lands? ¹

After the war, modernity began to take hold through a changing workforce and growing professionalism. The emerging complexity of the United States government, improvements in industry, and a shift with men leaving their shops to work in manufacturing and trade (leaving management of home and property to their wives) contributed to modifications in the previously delineated women’s sphere. The early formation of the Woman’s Union Missionary Society (WUMS) in 1861 swelled to approximately 20 denomination-specific societies after the war. In 1868, the Congregationalists organized a woman’s society, quickly followed by the Women’s Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was later known at the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS); and then societies for the Baptists, Presbyterians, and others.² The women’s missionary boards reported to the larger parent boards, but functioned as fundraisers and recruiters. They successfully informed women about the plight, the need, and the work of missionaries through magazine articles and speaking engagements dedicated to motivating women to become part of the movement as financial contributors (no matter how small the amount) or as missionaries. One of the primary goals of the boards was to fund single women as missionaries, especially needed since parent boards preferred married couples. The


² Pruitt, Looking-Glass, 166.
women’s boards were quite successful, and were able to "engage the earnest, systematic cooperation of . . . women . . . in sending out and supporting unmarried female missionaries and teachers to heathen women."³ The need of Victorian women to participate in larger causes was harnessed, and the women’s boards raised a substantial amount of funds. In an 1886 report, the service of the Methodist’s women’s society (WFMS) was recognized as a successful movement by some of the male leaders: “It is every way desirable that our godly women be encouraged to a continuance of their zeal, and that to this end our preachers and people everywhere should cooperate with them as their other duties will allow.”⁴

Many missionary women were initially involved through the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM), which began in Chicago in 1866 with the support of the popular evangelist Dwight Moody. Conceived as a college experience with prayer meetings, the SVM mission meetings were an influential missionary recruitment tool; it played a role in half of the early twentieth century recruits.⁵ But even before the turn of the century, the number of women missionaries had overtaken men; by 1893, women were 57 percent of the missionary force.⁶


⁴ Mrs. F.A. Butler, ed. “Women’s Missionary Advocate,” History of the Women’s Foreign Missionary Society, (M.E. Church, South, Smith & Lamar, Agents, 1904), 129.


The profile of a missionary woman began with her educational background, at least an intermittent education that she received while she helped with household concerns. Lake Erie Seminary, DePauw University, Chicago Training School (missionary prep), Chicago Woman's Medical College, University of North Carolina, and Columbia University are some of the institutions that appear in missionary biographies. Most women would be from rural parts of the country and up to 25 percent could be considered farm girls, with another substantial number the offspring of clergymen or missionaries. Many of the women selected for service were teachers, perhaps simply Sunday school teachers, who found the redemption in missionary work more compelling. While missionary work was not the realm of the wealthy altruist, it was populated with dutiful middle class women, who might be the eldest daughters of fathers with small businesses and mothers who encouraged a vocation.\(^7\) Women also entered when fate took a hand: of the collected statistics of the women of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM), 17 percent had lost both parents and 51 percent had lost one.\(^8\)

It should be noted that less-educated working class women did find a home with the Chinese Inland Mission (CIM), which began under Englishman Hudson Taylor in 1865 with a North American chapter founded in 1888. The mission to serve was similar to other denominations, it attracted individuals willing to go into uncharted lands and reach millions. But the circumstances and living conditions of missionaries in the CIM could be quite


\(^8\) Ibid., 40.
different from the mainline denominations, aspects of which will be discussed in later chapters.

Young women choosing a missionary life stated their intent in words similar to Nellie M. Chaney, who had a "desire to live a holy life and help others do the same,"[^9] or Mable Craig who had “a desire to put myself in the way of making the most of my life.”[^10] Henrietta Hall Shuck was influenced by the writings of early missionary Ann Judson and claimed that “a deep and abiding yearning for their souls and a conviction that God pointed me thither cause me to decide.”[^11] The Reverend Jeremiah Jeter confirms Henrietta’s conviction at an early age "to emulate the examples of the devoted and excellent women, whose labors and sufferings in the missionary enterprise, have awakened, throughout the Christian world, so lively an interest, and so deep a sympathy.”[^12] Mary Jarman, a nurse in Jacksonville, Florida, stated that interviewing with the missionary society would leave her “inspired and blessed by contact with those who have surrendered their lives to the service of God and Humanity.”[^13]

Protestant women of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were immersed in the


[^13]: Mary Jarman to Mr. Hounshall, March 17, 1917. Walter A. Hearn Biographical File. Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, NJ.
evangelistic enthusiasm required of a Christian woman; many women interested in the missionary field had cultivated that interest for years prior to joining.

The end of the Civil War is a marker for the female missionary experience, it served to opened doors for women who were often already well versed in the need to save souls, specifically the souls of women in the Orient. Missionary memoirs and evangelical publications had been declaring the supposed degradation and isolation of women in the Far and Middle East since early in the nineteenth century. Religious women related to the call for “woman’s work for woman,” which declared that only Christian women would be able to reach the hidden wives and daughters of the Orient, and that only Christian women could pull them out of their depraved existence.14 In 1834, an issue of the *American Baptist Missionary Magazine* admonished all of China for its wicked heart: "Nowhere has Satan a seat on the earth to be compared in extent with that which he holds in seeming triumph . . . in the . . . so-called 'celestial empire."15 Early missionary women, such as Ann Hasseltine Judson and Henrietta Shuck wrote memoirs that painted negative pictures of the “depraved hearts,” and “wretched idolaters” found in Asia. Correspondingly, the missionary societies looked for candidates that demonstrated commitment, good health, and a strong constitution. Hudson Taylor of the CIM looked specifically for missionaries that could live in the “cesspools and riots of inland China” and had the conviction to save souls. Early pioneers were influential in motivating young women to join the missionary service for the gratification of serving and


the opportunity to embark on one of the most attainable female adventures of the nineteenth century.

Women were motivated to rally together against the common atrocities ascribed to Chinese women: footbinding, arranged marriages, multiple wives and concubines, the low status of women and female children and the related infanticide. The Chinese social framework was based on Confucianism, which held that men were next to heaven and woman subordinate. Similarly, Buddhism saw women as impure who, with luck, would be reborn in their next lifetime as men. The atrocities committed against the women of China were further exposed through the missionary magazines that reached beyond the missionaries to their supporters in the United States. Magazines like *Heathen Woman’s Friend* and *Light and Life for Heathen Women* confirmed the deficits of Chinese society by highlighting its lack of appreciation for the Western values of timeliness, accuracy, and politeness, in addition to the physical brutality of bound feet. Improving the life of women in China was a challenge that American women could assume within the mores of their world. At the same time “in the hands of nineteenth-century religious women, old observations were given both a new gloss and a new currency, reflecting anxieties and assumptions about women's place among the American middle class.”

Burgeoning feminism, growing professionalism, the idea that women had a life beyond their home—all of these themes are mixed in the missionary story of the 1800’s. Missionary society magazines, some with a circulation of 25,000, primed these sentiments by

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underscoring the expanded world and enhanced lives of missionaries, and women’s ability to serve beyond the known domestic sphere. A preliminary step to independence is to make the interior of the cage larger and alter the view, which is essentially what the missionary women did by maintaining the dominance of their domestic sphere yet expanding the reach to the so-called heathen women and moving the location to foreign lands lacking Christ, lands like China.

Western women were seen as the repositories of civilized culture and their presence in heathen societies—whether as teachers, doctors or administrators—would not only elevate heathen women and children to Western standards (and ultimately their cultures), but would offer heathen women (some in seclusion) education and Christian salvation. Thus, the elasticity of missionary work encouraged extended roles for women, allowing women to define themselves as agents within and beyond the domestic sphere.18

But women’s missionary work was a vocation not a profession. It maintained the women’s domestic sphere—a key element of the Victorian age—yet allowed for expression of service. Words such as abnegation, self-denial, self-sacrifice were commonly used to describe missionary women who were seen as sacrificing their extended family and the comforts of home in order to bring Christ to those who required salvation. As Hunter notes, women had to "go clothe their ambition in a garb which did no violence to their sense of feminine Christian virtue."19 This ambition was an opportunity for women who had been confined to traditional roles, yet appreciated the parameters of their domesticity.


DOMESTICITY AND THE “OTHER”

The nineteenth century saw many influences on women and their roles. A major practical and surprisingly philosophical work was Catharine Beecher’s *Treatise on Domestic Economy*, first published in 1841. (Beecher was the sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin.*) This publication took a sensible and complete approach to all aspects of domestic life. In this century, families had begun to disperse—daughters might not live next to their mothers, and men might move their families for a better job. The woman’s role in this shifting landscape was less distinct, but Beecher’s *Treatise* helped define the role of woman and family in easily digestible and somewhat elastic terminology. In it Beecher supplied everyday directions to running a household, from cooking a meal to setting the table to childcare. The popular British tomes on those subjects relied on the presence of servants, which had become outmoded for the majority of American households, so the guidance in *Treatise* resonated with its American audience. Selling for 50 cents, *Treatise* was a success. Utilized in Massachusetts public schools and reprinted numerous times; the book made Beecher one of the best-known women in the United States.20

But Beecher also placed a value on domesticity that echoed through the remainder of the century—she very clearly located the home and the mother as the core of Christian living, and established a view that somewhat reconciled the inequity between the genders (both acknowledged and unacknowledged), the new opportunities for men, and the more limited women’s domestic sphere. The domestic sphere and its relative isolation from the rest of society was key to minimizing conflict and self-destructive behavior in society as a whole;

domesticity was a politically expedient strategy. At the same time, the domestic sphere awarded women responsibility for molding character and “exhibiting to the world the beneficent influences of Christianity, when carried into every social, civil, and political institution.”\(^2^1\) The domestic sphere became an instrument of global expansion.

The missionary service used domesticity as an enticement and as a foundation, with a central belief that proclaiming Christianity was amplified through the redemptive power of the mother and the home. The restrictive area of family and household matters became the most expansive area—shared equally by all men and women, all classes, and all nations. Home was an equalizer and mothers were the models and teachers. For missionary women this meant that they demonstrated Christian values through Western culture and family life, that they were inspirational models of wives and mothers, nurturing their family. Amy Kaplan points out that if domesticity is aligned with image of the nation, then domesticity also defines what is in opposition—anything or anyone that is outside of that domestic sphere.\(^2^2\) That includes the Chinese people, and the Chinese culture.

Wrapped up in domesticity and Western culture, is the theme of the “Other,” where outsiders (in this case, the Chinese) are viewed as inferior and weak. “Do women, as much as men, render the Orient as Other?”\(^2^3\) Shirley Foster, a scholar from England, poses this


\(^{2^2}\) Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” 581.

question against the backdrop of Orientalism as an identifier of European or Western superiority over non-European cultures or the “Other.” She argues that women were able to offer another viewpoint, one that was not hegemonic in nature because of their unique engagement with the Orient: their access to the female-only harem or compounds and “their gendered sense of selfhood, conditioned by factors such as the position of Western women within marriage and the nature of European domestic life.”  

24 These women were looking at the world from the vantage point of the “Other” in a male dominated system. But Foster also notes that women had a role in the hegemonic activities of the colonial and post-colonial powers, although their voices added a new note that could augment or contest the discourse.

In China, women missionaries played roles that acknowledged their subordination to men (Protestant women were not ordained, nor could they vote in church or missionary society meetings), but recognized that the subordination endured by Chinese women was of a much more distasteful magnitude. This allowed women to rally around the plight of Chinese wives and daughters. At the same time, missionary lifestyles and families were models; they represented the best of Christianity, which happened to represent core Western values. The companionable relationship between husband and wife, the upbringing of the children, the use of knives and forks at mealtime, and the cleanliness of the house and yard—these constituted the domestic bliss of Western Christianity, and, by that definition, were the opposite of the peasant lifestyle of a nineteenth-century Chinese family.

By demonstrating and living a Christian lifestyle, missionary women were thought to be instilling moral character and breeding refinement, in keeping with Beecher’s Treatise.

24 Ibid., 7.
The details of domesticity had expanded beyond America and were now the means to bring Christianity to China. Possibly placating the known secondary status of Western women was the generally held belief that Christianity was responsible for the elevated status of Western women, especially when compared to the subjugation of Chinese women, and that it was appropriate and even necessary to share the holy word that could raise women up and improve their lives.\(^{25}\) Accepting their own status allowed Western women to raise the status of other women—at least within the confines of nineteenth century social conventions. But the Christian lifestyle of the missionaries was also vulnerable, at risk of flagging under the weight of a heathen culture; it required protection. This was accomplished by firmly embedding Western culture into the missionary home, including assuming more control and involvement with the care of children and household to avoid unfamiliar traditions and unsanitary habits of local nannies and teachers. In addition, Western furniture and home goods were used, often purchased from Montgomery Wards (the American mail-order store), and everyday rituals, like the family dinner, were maintained with vigilance. Lacking an extended family, men and boys might take on domestic tasks, like sewing or helping in the kitchen, which blurred the lines between male and female spheres, but also extended the domestic realm beyond women.

In this way missionary lifestyles maintained a Western flavor. These same compounds would be made open to the Chinese women to demonstrate Christianity, despite the risk of inviting in filth and disease. Eva Jane Price, stationed in the interior of China in 1889, understood her duty to the local population and let them into her home: “she frequently

went to great lengths to merge her public role as missionary with her private role as mother and wife. By regularly allowing visitors, Price believed she was encouraging acceptance of difference on both her part and theirs.\textsuperscript{26} A gracious demonstration of a Christian lifestyle was central to Price’s understanding of her missionary role, partially because it allowed her to also fulfill her role as wife and mother. But for Price and other missionaries, the cost of demonstrating Christianity was not cheap; there was a general unease about allowing the “Other” into one’s home and the real possibility of death from contracted diseases. Most missionary parents, including Eva Jane Price, suffered through the death of one or more children on Chinese soil.

**CANDIDATE PROFILES**

Some brief profiles of young missionaries entering into the missionary service provide additional context to the environment and the characteristics of a missionary candidate. The following candidates span from the 1834 to 1917, beginning with Henrietta Hall Shuck, who was a role model for future missionary women.

**Henrietta Hall Shuck**

The young Henrietta Hall from Kilmarnock, Virginia, professed an interest in missionary work at a young age. Born in 1817, her mother died when she was 14, and about that time (1831) Shuck had traumatic conversion experience at a camp meeting where she heard about the "horrors of damnation and bliss of redemption."\textsuperscript{27} A conversion experience


\textsuperscript{27} Gimelli, “'Borne upon the Wings of Faith,” 226.
was required of future missionaries; according to Jane Hunter, because it "convinced them of God's sovereignty and their own debt of servitude." In 1834, Shuck applied to the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions but was rejected, most likely because of her single status and her youth. But, like many missionaries, a suitable spouse appeared and Shuck was married to Jehu Lewis Shuck by the end of 1834. The couple reached Macao, China in 1936, and moved to Hong Kong in 1842. As an early missionary writer—Shuck supplied many of the negative images of China and the Chinese in her book *Scenes in China*—confirming the need to help the Chinese people find salvation. Price was ultimately very influential in guiding many women into the Christian life of a missionary.

**Mary Jarman**

In 1917, Mary Jarman of Jacksonville, Florida was 34 years old and preparing to become a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. A graduate of Women’s College of Greensboro, North Carolina with an A.B. degree from the University of North Carolina, Jarman later completed graduate work at Columbia University in New York City and graduated from a Nurses Training School in Jacksonville, FL. She eventually moved to China and helped establish a Chinese Nurse Training School at Union Hospital at Huchow. Although Jarman was a mature candidate for the missionary service, she still hesitated about placement in China. In a letter of March 1917 to Mr. Hounshell, who was probably an official of the Mission Board, she speaks of her activities while vacationing at her brother’s home. In her letter she notes going rowing, riding horseback, and playing Flinch, a card

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game. She goes into some detail describing the virtues of her brother, sister-in-law, and nephew who is “fairly goodlooking,” but this chatter was simply a prelude to more serious concerns:

I only digressed while telling you about my vacation and I suspect that we both know why China seems a long way from Florida. Yet if you need a nurse in China and if I am eligible, I am willing to undertake it—that is if you have no one else who is eligible and available. But why China? Didn’t you say that the language was very difficult? Was it you who told me that every province of China had a different dialect and that there was no spelling in Chinese but that every separate word had a different symbol?

Jarman notes her interest in Japan because she enjoys Japanese painting, but that “Of China I know practically nothing.” She then indicates that she will go for an interview and “it is a privilege and an opportunity that will not come again.”

Although a document from the Mission Board states that she has “no definite Christian work,” Jarman sailed from Vancouver to China on the “Empress of Russia” on August 2, 1917. By December 1918, 35-year old Jarman was married to a veteran missionary in Shanghai, the 55-year old Reverend Thomas Alexander Hearn.

Mrs. James Gregory and Mrs. A. G. Hearn

Just as women could apply and be accepted into the missionary service, men often applied on behalf of themselves and their wives. In 1888, Dr. James J. Gregory contacted the

30 Mary Jarman to Mr. Hounshell, March 17, 1917, Walter A. Hearn Biographical File, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, NJ.

31 Mary Jarman, notes about, undated, Walter A. Hearn Biographical File, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, NJ.
Corresponding Secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Missionary Society about his and his wife’s application for the field:

My wife is desirous of going to a field where she can also continue her work of teaching and also assist in spreading Christian enlightenment. We flatter ourselves that we are peculiarly adapted to this noble work and are anxious to see it go forward with vigor. We will forward our likenesses as soon as we get some taken. Have none now and no photographer within 16 miles, overland.  

By 1889, Dr. Gregory and his wife were in Nanking, waiting to be moved to a permanent location.

In 1901, Alfred Gilliam (A.G.), Hearn, M.D. wrote the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church South to request an appointment based on his application to the society of more than two years before. His circumstances had changed, with a move, a marriage to Anna Lois Davidson, and a baby: “Since I first made my application to the Board I have married and have a baby boy. My wife is a consecrated Christian and is deeply interested in Mission work. We are in fine health.” Notes taken on the letter indicate the society’s consideration of the wife, determining that she spent 1.5 years at the Bible Institute of Chicago, took a summer course, and “had a year’s experience as City-Missionary.” The missionary board’s two-year delay in accepting Dr. A. G. Hearn and wife’s application might have been exacerbated by a less than positive reference from Dr. A.G. Hearn from Reverend J. R. Moore, from Hearn’s hometown of Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Rev. Moore made


33 Alfred Gilliam Hearn, M.D. to Board of Missions Methodist Episcopal Church South, April 8, 1901, Walter A. Hearn Biographical File, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, NJ.
disparaging remarks about Hearn’s religious convictions: “I do not know him well enough to hazard an opinion as to his fitness for a medical missionary.”\textsuperscript{34} A second letter from Dr. Moore expresses doubt about Dr. A.G. Hearn’s religious zeal: “He has a fine reputation as a physician, but he does not impress me as a man who would make very great effort in winning souls.”\textsuperscript{35} Possibly being married improved Hearn’s candidacy, because he, his wife, and son were sent to China prior to the birth of his second son in 1903.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{34} J.R. Moore to Drs. Laubuth & Pritchett, February 20, 1899, Walter A. Hearn Biographical File, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, NJ.

\textsuperscript{35} J.R. Moore to Dr. Pritchett, D.D., May 16, 1899, Walter A. Hearn Biographical File, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, NJ.

\textsuperscript{36} Dr. A. G. Hearn’s passport application of 1905 lists three children: Alfred G. Hearn born in New York on March 17, 1901; Knox M. Hearn, born in Huchow, China, March 3, 1903, and infant son (unnamed) born on April 12, 1905. Alfred Gilliam Hearn, Passport Application (Legation of the United States at Peking), issued June 1905.
CHAPTER THREE

MARRIED OR SINGLE

The issue of women in the missionary service had been debated by the missionary boards throughout the nineteenth century. Even 1898, when women missionaries were in the majority, officials questioned sending women because of the many complications they presumably posed:

Women are liable to certain functional disorders, which are readily provoked by the disturbance of their emotions, in consequence of the break-up of home associations, the long voyage, the entire change of surrounding on reaching their destination, the effect of a strange climate, the study of a difficult language and the enforced sedentary life while engaged in study.¹

These words were in an address by a long-time China missionary with the CIM, Dr. Arthur W. Douthwaite, who blatantly painted a picture of women as the weaker sex, less suitable for missionary work than the men. Luckily for both genders, women were allowed to become missionaries, although on a different path than the men—women were not ordained preachers and they could not vote in business aspects of the missionary service, two issues that were not changed until well into the twentieth century.

MARRIED WOMEN

For women, the primary route to missionary work was as the wife of a missionary. Not only did this occur naturally with couples that were already married, but it was actually desired and promoted by the missionary boards to the individual unmarried candidates. One minister noted that women were relevant because they were “even less trouble and expense

¹ Dr. A. W. Douthwaite, "Relation of the Marriage Question to Missionary Work," address delivered in London, 1898, in CIM/SOAS, item 8516, 4-5; quoted in Austin, China’s Millions, 231.
than a man. Indeed I believe ladies are the cheapest missionaries the Board sends out.”

Missionary wives did not usually receive a separate salary, but married male missionaries were compensated at a higher level than single men or single women. Leaders of the Chinese Inland Mission (CIM) even took time to decide the future roles of the female candidates that they rejected. After accepting two sisters from Iowa, Emma and Effie Randall, the missionary board decided to deny entrance to a third sister, Mattie Randall, noting on her application that she “…should give her life to China by becoming house-keeper for Effie's mother [her aunt] and releasing her [Effie] for a service on the field.”

Aside from the cheap labor, missionary leaders did recognize that women could manage the difficulties of the field. Rufus Anderson of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the leading administrator of the missionary service, was fairly generous, recognizing that “wives endure ‘hardness’ quite as well as their husbands, and sometimes with more faith and patience.” Anderson states, quite bluntly, a key reason to send couples as missionaries: "powerful law of nature, which is operative alike in all countries and climates and among all conditions and classes of people, producing the

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\[2\] Welter, “She Hath Done What She Could,” 117.

\[3\] Austin, China’s Millions, 320.

\[4\] Rufus Anderson, Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the ABCFM (Boston, 1863): 272, quoted in Welter, “She Hath Done What She Could,” 626.
family state." The Protestant missions had staked out their ground, and it was in direct contrast to the monastic approach of the Catholic Church.

In general, it was understood that a wife was necessary for man’s companionship, comfort, and sexual fulfillment. There was an underlying concern that a single man would be tempted and seek comfort with a native woman, possibly ending in marriage. That was to be avoided, so the missionary leadership assumed a matchmaker role. Absalom Sydenstricker, the missionary father of author Pearl Buck, entered the Southern Presbyterian missionary service in 1879. At the time he was single, but it is apparent that marriage was recommended to him. Since he was without current prospects, Sydenstricker was guided to a potential contender for the role of his wife.

So here was another problem that I had not taken into consideration. Fortunately Dr. Wilson, our Secretary was fully in favor of missionaries going out married. The only difficulty was where was the young missionary lady? However, my attention was soon directed to a young lady, a graduate of a girls' seminary in Kentucky, who also had foreign missionary work in mind. Thus this problem was solved in a very happy way.6

Sydenstricker married that young lady, Carie Stulting, in 1880, and later that year moved with her to Shanghai. His cavalier attitude toward marriage proved to be an indicator


of the secondary importance he placed on wife and family. Unfortunately, many arranged missionary marriages were less than perfect, as has been noted by Alvyn Austin in writing the history of the CIM: "The deepest, darkest family secret of the China Inland Mission (and, sadly, every other China mission) was the number of unhappy marriages . . .".

Two-thirds of the married women sent by the ABCFM were married the same year they sailed for their new foreign home. The Sydenstricker’s married prior to leaving the United States, but other couples met and married in China. Annual conferences or regular gatherings of missionaries were popular wedding locations, as indicated by an 1890 double wedding that included Reverend Thomas Alexander (T.A.) Hearn and Kate R. Roberts.

On the evening of the first day of the Conference a double wedding among the missionaries took place. Rev. T.A. Hearn, of the China Mission, was married to Miss Kate R. Roberts, and Rev. C.B. Moseley, of the Japanese Mission, to Miss Ada Reagan. The ladies had been missionaries of the Woman’s Society.

Rev. T.A. Hearn met Kate Roberts during his studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. She preceded him to China as a member of the Women’s Missionary Society, which had accepted her as a candidate in 1887. They married soon after Rev. T. A. Hearn’s arrival in the country as an evangelist for the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Another pair of missionaries, Thomas J. Hudson and Mary A. Aulick, met and quickly courted after they had each settled in China. They were both in their late 20’s in 1895, when they began serving for the Gospel Mission, a movement that required direct

7 Austin, China’s Millions, 233.
8 Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility, 42.
support by individual congregations in the United States instead of the general missionary service. Meeting each other in November 1897 must have been enjoyable, as well as timely, since Hudson proposed, by letter, only nine days after their first meeting.  

Hudson and Aulick were not stationed close to each other, which would have been common placement practice if they had been engaged prior to reaching China. The CIM, in particular, placed single men and single women at locations that were separated by at least an hour’s traveling time. 11 Nevertheless, the engagement was kept short. It was a mere four months and two face-to-face meetings before Hudson and Aulick were married in March 1989. Both were mature individuals and had been in their station for almost two years when they met, which meant that they had possibly contemplated a future spouse. Aulick, suffering from the isolation of her situation, understood the importance of the married state and recognized the traits she needed in a husband: “…I would gladly share this life with another to have one I could call my own if I knew the one who would always remain faithful. A devoted and affectionate husband is a treasure worth possessing.” 12 Over these few months of courtship, Hudson and Aulick wrote a combined thirty-six letters where they became acquainted and decided on a future together.


11 Austin, China’s Millions, 198.

12 Aulick to Hudson (November 25, 1897), quoted in Harper, “They Twain Shall be One Flesh,” 410.
If a man was a widower, the Mission Board was known to facilitate a new marriage; such was the desire of the mission board to have missionaries present as families. Illustrating this is Rev. T.A. Hearn and his three consecutive wives and families. On July 11, 1891, Rev. T.A. Hearn’s wife, Kate Roberts Hearn, gave birth to Roberts Alfred Hearn. Later that month, Kate Hearn died, most likely from complications of childbirth, and was buried in the mission lot in the Shanghai cemetery. Rev. T.A. Hearn sailed back to the United States two years later and then in 1894, married a teacher from Sherman, Texas, Magnolia Arnold. After returning to the United States to attend another Methodist Episcopal educational institution, Drew University, Rev. T. A. Hearn and Magnolia returned to China. His second son, Walter Anderson Hearn was born on April 14, 1895. This missionary family resided in China for 23 years, with only occasional furloughs back to the United States. The two sons, Roberts and Walter Hearn, lived in China until they were teenagers, when they were sent back to live in the United States. Magnolia Hearn died in Shanghai at 10:00 a.m. on January 30, 1917 of a stroke (paralysis) and heart failure and was buried in the Pashinjao Cemetery in Shanghai.13

After the death of his second wife, Rev. T. A. Hearn remained in China. At age 55, Rev. T.A. Hearn married 36 year-old Mary Jarman (profiled earlier in this paper) in Shanghai on December 14, 1918.14 Three of their children were born in China and the youngest was

13 “Report of the Death of an American Citizens,” National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group: R59-Entry 205; Box Number: 4649; Box Description: 1910-1929 China Various Case Files

born upon their return to Rev. T.A. Hearn’s hometown of Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Rev. T. A. Hearn was 67 when his third wife died at age 49 in 1931.

The ABCFM began making the case for wives to accompany men as early as 1815 in its official magazine, the *Panoplist*. The principles that it outlined were adopted by the various denominations as the basis of their policies and used throughout the nineteenth century as the rationale for sending married women. Five reasons were cited that outlined the need for missionary wives. First was the fact that ministers in the United States needed wives, so missionaries did as well—no further explanation appeared to be required. Next was the need to demonstrate the reality of a Christian family and true relationships. Related to this was the third reason, that children of missionaries were the missionaries of the future. The missionary service considered native converts and their children unlikely candidates for the missionary service since they lacked the appropriate (Western) upbringing. The fourth reason to allow wives into the service was to glorify women and their domesticity. Women and women’s work—house and home—was appreciated by Christians. The sanctity of the heart of the home—the mother—could only be demonstrated by missionary women and their families. The final comment rested on an argument put forth by prior missionary leaders (male), who thought it prudent to have married men in the field.

The issue of a ensuring that a woman was relatively healthy and could, most likely, bear children was an ongoing concern to the missionary service. Childbirth in the 1800’s was

15 The children of Mary Jarman Hearn and Rev. T. A. Hearn were Alexander M., James Andrew (who also is mentioned as Andrew H. and as Sanderson in Rev. T. A. Hearn’s obituary), Mary E., and Thomas A. 1930 United States Federal Census of Arkadelphia City, Clark County, Arkansas.

a health risk, and the local unsanitary conditions meant that disease and other threats were around every corner. Unfortunately, medical care was not easily found. Attrition costs related to health and death for the missionary service (not to mention the missionaries themselves) were expensive, and needed to be avoided at the time of candidates’ selection.\textsuperscript{17} At first the missionary boards relied on information provided by the candidate, family doctors and others as a component of the application, but a more documented approach evolved. By the early twentieth century formal medical reports were provided to attest to the health, and future health, of a candidate.

In 1923, Walter Anderson Hearn, son of China missionary Rev. T.A. Hearn, applied to the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Walter Hearn’s wife, Olive Withrow Hearn, also applied. Both submitted a Medical Examiner’s Report to the Medical Advisory Committee of the mission board, completed, interestingly enough, by Walter’s half-brother, Roberts Alfred (R.A.) Hearn, M.D. Westerners had an ongoing concern about living in the hot and humid environments found in foreign parts of the world, which was reflected in the report’s question of “What climate in your judgment is best suited to the constitution of applicant?” The response found on both Walter and Olive Hearn’s forms is “I find no physical reason why applicant could not continue to enjoy good health in any climate.”

For Olive, the form includes clinical details related to the breach delivery of a child and the subsequent death of the infant. The answer to the question of “Was there serious

trouble in labor?” was “Breech delivery. Child died within 2 hours from cerebral hemorrhage due to injury received during delivery. Recovery of applicant uncomplicated.” Dr. R.A. Hearn provides additional narrative that supports the mother’s health and possibility of future children: “The unfortunate termination of applicant’s one pregnancy was purely an ‘obstetrical accident.’ The child (a boy) was normal in every respect—as is also the applicant. There exists no contra-indication to subsequent pregnancy.” Walter Hearn did not fare quite as well; the missionary board recommended that he have his appendix removed. Mr. and Mrs. Hearn were approved for duty and left for China in 1923.

Victorian standards made marriage and all the elements of wedded bliss—companionship, children, and home—central to an individual and community happiness. Even women who experienced an early commitment to Christianity and the missionary cause were willing to enter into marriage and the vows it demanded, in order to serve. Women aligned with the concept of domesticity, accepting (or publicly stating) the importance of family, the mother’s role, and the authority of the husband. They also aligned, knowingly or not, with expansionary trends of the growing United States. Janet Lee wrote that the community of women “. . . used Victorian code of feminine respectability and domestic

18 Medical Examiner’s Report of Olive Withrow Hearn, April 21, 1923; Medical Examiner’s Report to the Medical Advisory Committee of the Board of Missions of the M. E. church, South, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, N.J.

19 Medical Examiner’s Report of Walter Anderson Hearn, April 21, 1923; Medical Examiner’s Report to the Medical Advisory Committee of the Board of Missions of the M. E. Church, South, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, N.J.

20 Harper, “They Twain Shall be One Flesh,” 422.
service in its devotional and colonial ends, while also providing the context for the questions of this code.”

In essence, missionary women were able to use their central role in the home as wife and mother to expand their horizons through service as missionaries. This is exhibited in the very act of leaving the family home for an alien culture and in the nature of missionary vocational work.

Missionary Henrietta Shuck went to China as an evangelical woman that believed fulfillment came from marriage, motherhood, and her Christian duties. She accepted a subordinate role to her husband, but assumed a new role as wife where she would embody Christian domesticity and model a wholesome family lifestyle (primarily a Western lifestyle where husband and wife were companions) to local Chinese men and women. Even if women accepted this subordinate role, it was frequently emphasized by men in their lives. For Henrietta Shuck this came in the form of correspondence from her father that reminded her of her husband’s authority over her and guided her to turn to the Bible for clarity in her responsibilities as a wife. Women often traded the authority of their fathers for the authority their husbands.

Marriage also was an expectation and a source of tension in the missionary communities. The dynamics of individuals at the mission, including the division of labor and relationships, changed when an individual married. One mission site would feel the loss of labor from one less evangelist and/or homemake, especially if the marriage was between

21 Lee, “Between Subordination and She-Tiger,” 622.

22 Gimelli, “‘Borne upon the Wings of Faith,’” 233.
individuals, each from a different denomination. Heartfelt concerns and alarm about the repercussions a wedding might bring to their community made colleagues of Thomas Hudson and Mary Aulick bold in voicing their concerns about the courtship: “Certain missionaries claimed that Tom had a ‘low opinion’ of women and they apparently mentioned it to Aulick on several occasions.” But Aulick continued to voice her intent to marry Hudson. Deciding to travel to Shanghai for an official ceremony, Hudson and Aulick were actually married en route by an American consul they met in Chinkiang. But their married life in China was short, as Tom met with ill health; after only two wedded years, they returned to the United States.

SINGLE WOMEN

Married women with their domestic duties were able to only partially fulfill their evangelical duties. This was especially true when children entered the picture. After the Civil War, single women, who previously had been considered too much of a risk, began to be actively recruited into the missionary service. Supporting them were the married women who requested help with the overwhelming amount of evangelizing work in China. At the same time, many in the missionary community viewed single women as rivals, and characterized these women as “ready to snatch the extra man made available when a wife succumbed to cholera or dysentery.” For single women who yearned to go beyond their home life and had been freed by the death of a parent or an economic improvement, or were searching for a secure alternative to marriage, missionary work offered opportunity. What was once

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23 Harper, “They Twain Shall be One Flesh,” 415.

improper became a necessity, and the missionary boards began recruiting individuals who would not be burdened with running a missionary household. These women would focus solely on their role in bringing Christianity to the women and children of China.

With the installation of a new leader, the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention began to allow single women in its fold in 1872. Many other mission boards opened their ranks about the same time. This move affirmed leaderships’ recognition that bringing Christianity to China and other foreign countries necessitated reaching native women—individuals who influenced the children and the home. Missionaries ultimately sought to turn Chinese homes into Christian homes, so that Christianity could take root. Heathen mothers and daughters had power over the family and the community, but these instrumental women were in communities closed to male missionaries; Christian women were the passports into the women-only enclaves. An 1881 report of the Presbyterian Board underscored the acknowledgment of the role of women in religion: "Women everywhere represent the stronger element in the religious faith of the community whether that faith be true or false." Combined with the fact that only men could be ordained and the reality that running a household was a time-consuming job for missionary wives; the need to add unencumbered women evangelists to the cause becomes apparent. Hunter frames it nicely: "Gender taboos barred the female half of the population from the preaching of men, and all

25 Harper, “They Twain Shall be One Flesh,” 408.

26 Reports of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church USA (1881), 12, quoted in Welter, “She Hath Done What She Could,” 631.
agreed that without reaching the women, who were the wives and mothers of converts, the entire work was in jeopardy.\textsuperscript{27}

When recruiting a single woman, the missionary boards had a general expectation that she would remain unmarried for five years, a minimum term of service. If this agreement was broken early and the woman married, she would receive a reprimand and was expected to reimburse the society for travel and other expenses. The China Inland Mission (CIM), required women to remain unmarried for two years, seemingly because of the perceived high death rates of women, especially death during from childbirth—a real possibility in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{28} Missionary boards approached the recruitment and placement of single women quite differently from that of men. While men were encouraged to embrace the trappings of family life, and supported with higher salaries; single women were expected to distance themselves. Indeed, as has been discussed, women were penalized if they moved towards a traditional familial relationship prior to the conclusion of their initial term of service. The professionalization of missionary work mirrored the professionalization of working Western women—modernity opened the door for women, but in a different manner and with different expectations. "Where marriage and the security and respectability of family life positively re-enforced male professionalism in the missionary field, therefore, women's professionalism was determined by 'distancing of themselves from their roles as wives and daughters."\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} Hunter, \textit{The Gospel of Gentility}, 11.

\textsuperscript{28} Austin, \textit{China's Millions}, 198.

\textsuperscript{29} Georgina H. Endfield and David J. Nash. “‘Happy Is the Bride the Rain Falls on’: Climate, Health and 'The Woman Question' in Nineteenth-Century Missionary Documentation.” \textit{Transactions of the
Single men entering the missionary service came from a variety of backgrounds. But single women missionaries often had similar demographics—they were from a large family and were old enough to be labeled a spinster. Religious commitment was real, attested to by a woman’s voluntary relocation away from parents and siblings and the known world to an exotic region where marriage prospects were few. Evangelizing for Christ was a self-sacrificing and life-long commitment.\textsuperscript{30} Prior to the Civil War, single women were problematic for the missionary service because of perceptions about women’s fragile health, questions about future care (who would be responsible if they were ill), and the complicated issue of living conditions. Since Victorian principles did not approve of women living alone or in an environment with a man who was not a relative (such as living with a married couple), and the Chinese culture found it culturally distasteful for a woman to live outside of her family, believing it to be evidence of a fallen woman—sending single women to distant locations was avoided. Yet, by the late 1860’s, after the formation of several women’s missionary societies, these concerns were outweighed by the need for additional troops dedicated to the spread of Christianity.

Without challenging the primacy of their parents and their home, single women were now able to find “conditional freedom.” It was conditional for many reasons: modesty, local social norms, and strong ties to home, which could require a single missionary woman to return home to care for sick or elderly relatives. But the opportunity to manage their own lives within accepted Victorian constraints was enough motivation needed for a woman to

\textsuperscript{30} Rabe, \textit{The Home Base}, 97.
enter the missionary service. The Protestant movement embraced domesticity, and in doing so it self-consciously distanced itself from celibate Catholicism; but that didn’t prevent the corps of single women sent by the various denominations from being known as “Protestant nuns” who sacrificed both body and soul to God.\footnote{Cassidy, “Bringing the ‘New Woman’ to the Mission Site,” 178.}

The approximately 20 women’s missionary societies operating by 1890 helped recruit and support female missionaries. The societies successfully engaged all women, both missionaries and contributors to the cause, as evangelists for Christianity. By appealing to a Midwestern housewife and a New England teacher, the societies were able to outpace the fundraising ability of the parent missionary boards, which remained in male control. The nineteenth century also saw the rise of a middle class with more disposable income, a feature that benefited charitable contributions to missionary work. New funds flowing into the women’s societies were used to campaign on behalf of single female missionaries; the married women missionaries remained dependent on their husbands’ status and salary.

Reflecting the self-denial and sacrifices that infused Victorian womanhood and the psyche of female missionaries, the women’s societies were quite frugal, with low salaries and the expectation of thrifty living from the women sent to China and countries. Hunter appropriately terms this the "institutional appropriation of Christian feminine self-sacrifice."\footnote{Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility, 84.} In retrospect, this stinginess exploited women, but in the late nineteenth century missionary service was an advancement that provided a degree of self-determination for women. Was this feminism? Certainly the leaders of the parent missionary societies were
concerned about women’s autonomy, which explains why it kept leadership ranks closed to women. But women at the time were primarily concerned about expansion of purpose within their conventional domestic role, as well as their efforts to limit the degradation of Chinese women by ridding them of the indignities of suppression, such as footbinding, concubinage, and low status. Modernity was moving ahead and "The entry of women into the exotic and hazardous field of missions revealed a growing, if unexpressed, feminism in the ranks of the contemporary church."\(^{33}\)

Married women, although supportive of the need for additional assistance, resented the tension brought by single female missionaries. In some cases this was because the vocation of a single female missionary outshined the more domesticated duties of a wife and mother: “The full-time, unhampered commitment to mission work made by single women impressed married women as itself an indication of ability. Married women experienced their own divided mandate as diminished competence.”\(^{34}\) More likely was a frustration at the lack of attention paid to the efforts of missionary wives by the women’s societies, who focused on bringing unmarried women into the field, but ignored the needs of married women with both domestic and vocational obligations. The concept of domesticity, with the mother at the center, appeared to be contrary to the support of single women (who were required to remain unmarried for a specified period of time). Hunter notes that to missionaries like Sarah Goodrich, the missionary boards were “abdicating responsibility for the influence of the


\(^{34}\) Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility, 103.
American family on Chinese society; without the influence of American homes, the Protestant endeavor would be no different from the sterile efforts of Catholicism.”

Instead of support for motherhood, there was tangible monetary support of spinsterhood.

At first single women were housed with married couples. But, this arrangement led to confusion for all involved: "The missionary wife had been irritated when she was regarded as the missionary's cook; the single woman missionary was horrified to be considered his polygamous second wife." Moving to China led to shifting living arrangements for the unmarried women, until the missionary service created “ladies houses” as women’s only communities. Housing two or more women, these homes imbued the single female missionaries with a new domesticity that might represent multiple generations, and adapted to the occasional traveler. Since female missionaries focused their evangelistic activities towards women and children, they cultivated a “family” with the mother (the missionary) at the center. The community within the ladies’ house was supportive, helping each other overcome the disadvantage of not having spouses, and acting as each other’s family.

Such cultural expectations helped construct and support a rich women's culture that accepted same-sex pairings, intense female friendships, and women who preferred the companionship of other women.

Self-determination took many forms. For missionary women, it permitted the creation of an entirely separate woman’s sphere with more relaxed Victorian constraints.

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37 Lee, “Between Subordination and She-Tiger,” 626.
Victorian propriety that dictated a chaperone for a woman when in the company of a man was modified when it came to Chinese men. To Westerners, the local men looked strange and were considered quite effeminate and harmless. Chinese men also had an interesting perception of Western women: "If American women did not think of Chinese men as quite men Chinese men more than returned the favor." Western women were viewed a large and manly, which gave them more freedom than would otherwise be expected of a woman, certainly much more than a Chinese woman. In particular, missionary women were able to move in public and could be in the presence of a Chinese man without an escort—it was not uncommon for a missionary to travel with a male Chinese attendant or translator, but she would still require a separate chaperone if visiting with a male missionary. The missionary boards integrated gender separation in their planning, including, as previously mentioned, requiring single missionary men and women to live at least one day’s travel apart.

For women, the foreign location and culture permitted an actual physical extension of the women’s sphere—they could move and interact with the local people at will, or at least according to new parameters. Since female missionaries living together effectively functioned as the heads of households, taught Chinese women and children, and also managed educational institutions, they shouldered an administrative role that improved their position with the Chinese men. But climbing in status did not always translate to acceptance. In a memoir by Anna Seward Pruitt, who went to China in 1887 and returned to the United

States in 1936, she recalls the writings of a well-known missionary, Lottie Moon, discussing encounters with the Chinese: "Mrs. Sun and I usually turn our faces to the south part of the city. We meet numbers of people. By Chinese etiquette the men ought not to look at me for I am a woman. But they do, since I am a foreigner. It doesn't matter about being polite to a devil, you know." This freedom and heightened position actually served as another marker that divided the women missionaries from the native culture or the “other.” This privileged status reinforced the American women's sense of themselves as representatives of the center, coming to teach those at the periphery, but not to learn from them.

Although single women in this case were identified as the “other” by married missionaries and Chinese alike, living in communal women’s homes gave a familial quality to their lifestyle, complete with domestic details, diversions, and friendships. This quality tempered the feeling of being an outsider. Missionary Lulu Golisch enjoyed her home in China: "We have a fine piano from America and [I] was a wallflower before I came but I keep it going quite lively now Sundays and out of study hour other days . . . We have some fine times together." Together, single female missionaries were self-sufficient, maintained the stability of a home, yet retained a separate women’s sphere. Although modified, single women still modeled domesticity.

39 Pruitt, Up from Zero, 34.

40 Carol. C. Chin, "Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." Diplomatic History 27, no.3 (June 2003): 332.

Since missionary women spent a large amount of time with Chinese women, who might be servants, nannies, or students, it is not surprising that friendships arose. These were cause for controversy, with arguments about the wisdom of bringing a Chinese woman into a Western environment, stating that it would cause envy and trouble for the woman with her Chinese family and community. Nevertheless, friendships were made. Hunter notes that the relationship between Jessie Ankeny and her language tutor, Ding Miduang (Eleanor), although clearly very personal, still yielded a flippant and callous commentary by Ankeny: "They say that old maids must have something for pet. I guess I have chosen her in preference to cat or dog or bird or teddy bear." Even emotional involvement did not prevent Ankeny from viewing Ding as the “other” or the alien. Ankeny’s description is even more wounding; she doesn’t see her friend as a person, but as an animal or a toy. Christianity implies Western and Western is not Chinese.

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CHAPTER FOUR
DEMONSTRATING CHRISTIANITY

When missionaries arrived in China during the nineteenth century, they undoubtedly were assaulted by unique sights and foreign smells, some quite unpleasant to Western senses. A rather florid account effectively illustrates the confusing experience: "heathenism seem always in sight and sound, its temples and shrines obtruding themselves upon one on every hand and its discordant cries and chants permeating the air one breathed."¹ A complicated Chinese social structure and a lack of city services, combined with fundamentally different customs, meant dead bodies were not removed except by relatives, excessive garbage and sewage in the streets, and human waste used as fertilizer.² The distinctive features of the Chinese people and unexpected cultural norms took missionaries by surprise, although they saw the opportunity for future Christian conversions. A missionary writing in 1891 described the individuals she saw as “…some men half naked, children nearly nude, women nursing their babies with not even a handkerchief to cover their breasts, an occasional boy with a hen or a basket of eggs to sell (which we do not buy of course on Sunday), some dirty lousy fellows but with souls to be saved."³ Postcards home featured photos of the poverty-stricken people, including blind beggars and men with donkey carts.

¹ Henry Frost, “Memoirs,” 348, as quoted in Austin, China’s Millions, 336; Frost, the North American home director, was one CIM member who did not whole-heartedly engage in the Chinese lifestyle. He did not use chopsticks or learn Chinese.

² Barr, To China with Love, 12.

But there also was sympathy for the Chinese, as exemplified by missionary women who, planning on distributing Christmas presents, spent time replacing the blond hair on dolls with black hair.⁴

China was their new home, and the Christian domestic life led by missionaries needed to fulfill many requirements. It needed to demonstrate a positive or companionable relationship between husband and wife, it had to exemplify cleanliness and order, and the Christian home must protect residents from the external chaos. Home was a setting that the missionaries could control, where they could maintain a lifestyle of their own. For women,

⁴ Welter, “She Hath Done What She Could,” 637.
the home or the walled compound was central to their lives. They managed home life—the morning breakfast, a bible reading with local women, language lessons, piano practice for the children, evening entertainment, and evening prayers—women set the stage and managed the schedule. Home and the lifestyle became even more important when children were involved. The drive to inculcate Western sensibilities in sons and daughters was overwhelming: "If missionary mothers wanted their children to be American, they had to see to it that they recreated America around them."\(^5\)

**DRESS**

The nineteenth century was a time of full-length, high-neck clothing for most Westerners. In addition to skin and hair color, and general features, the clothing worn by the majority of missionaries caused quite a stir in Chinese communities.

The first missionaries were attired in the approved styles of their time; the women in wide hoop-skirts, voluminous flounces, and coal-scuttle bonnets; the men in tight-fitting trousers and lofty "plug hats." Can we picture the consternation of the Chinese at such an apparition? Their eyes had never beheld human beings clad otherwise than in the simple, form concealing garments of the East. The pale faces, blue eyes, and light hair of these strange creatures were sufficiently fearful without their awe inspiring outer adornment. In sharp contrast to Chinese ideals of behavior, their gait was undignified and their motions abrupt. What could they be but devils? A demon can take any shape.\(^6\)

These comments from the memoirs of Anna Seward Pruitt capture the awkwardness imposed by Westerners’ strange appearance. The missionaries dressed differently, had strange features, walked with heavy steps, and knew enough of Chinese superstitions to understand that the local people imposed a spiritual characterization on them. Pruitt repeats


the common refrain noted earlier by Lottie Moon—that Westerners were seen as “devils.” To most, maintaining a Christian household required maintaining Western customs, so a majority of missionary denominations clung to their familiar dress styles. But missionaries were still distinguishable from diplomats or other Westerners in China: "Most are in Western clothing, the men in suits and leather boots, and the women in corsets and bustle dresses that would have been fashionable a decade earlier in London." As missionaries doing God’s work, they were freed from the demands of style; fashion became a hobby, a seamstress’ challenge to turn worn clothes into updated attire.

The missionaries attached to the China Inland Mission (CIM) went against the traditional Western tide and immediately adopted Chinese clothing upon arrival, as had been dictated by Hudson Taylor, leader of the CIM during the first voyage to China. Nicknamed the “pigtail mission” because the men wore their hair in a long braid or queue, CIM men even donned a hat with a fake braid until their hair grew long enough to braid. Both men and women wore simple Chinese gowns and shoes with paper soles, differing from other missionaries in Chinese dress by the plainness and privation of their clothing. "The everyday costume of the CIM was more humble, as befitted their social station in England. Their cotton gowns, thin in summer and wadded in winter, and thick paper-soled boots made them look like poor teachers." Just as the CIM men adopted a queue, the women styled their hair in the Chinese fashion, but adorned their heads with Western hats and bonnets. Clothing for women were the pants favored by the local women, "blue trousers, a silk pair for best

7 Austin, China’s Millions, 1.
occasions and cotton for everyday wear, with a black apron wrapped over itself at the back."\(^8\)

The missionaries of the CIM were reinventing themselves and building a ministry devoid of Western symbols to enhance their reach into remote areas beyond the original Treaty Ports, to influence native people with the words of Christ.

Some missionaries from other denominations made concessions in dress to adapt to the warm climate and others decided a change of clothes was desirable to blend into the culture. But even then, Western sensibilities were accommodated—men might wear a pith helmet and women cut their hair, but both men and women might adopt the more comfortable Chinese attire.

I had, as I thought, eschewed all foreign articles of attire, going bare-headed and looking as much like a Chinese woman as big nose, big feet, and light hair would permit, but still my long robe of fine cotton cloth was quite different from their homespun short garments and my umbrella now and then proved more interesting than the difference between the true God and the temple idols.\(^9\)

Chinese clothing allowed itinerating among the population to become more seamless, avoiding the many questions tied to Western dress and style. Lottie Moon and her colleagues adopted Chinese dress for that very reason:

About this time Mrs. Crawford, Miss Moon, and Mr. Pruitt felt constrained to put on Chinese clothing when they worked among country people unwonted to the sight of Westerners, to whom the sight of the foreign garb was a matter for endless curiosity if not for fear and hatred. It made their progress among the people much easier and saved time of answering many foolish questions, as, "How do you get into this garment?" "How much cloth does it take?" or "How do you catch your fleas when your sleeves are so tight?" It also made them much less formidable to mules and donkeys on the road, and to the village dogs that barked vociferously at sight of foreign garments and sound of leather-soled shoes. Miss Moon also found that her

\(^8\) Austin, *China's Millions*, 121-122.

\(^9\) Luella Miner to family, 6 February 1888, ABCFM, as quoted in Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*, 19.
pupils were not as self-conscious, timid, and reserved toward her when she wore garments like theirs, as they were when she dressed in her American-made frocks.\textsuperscript{10} Moon was an extraordinary example of an independent woman; she continued to forge further into the interior to teach the gospel. Similarly, her adoption of Chinese clothes was more committed:

She wore a plain Chinese coat and gown, embroidered satin shoes whose soles were made from layer after layer of pasteboard laboriously stitched together by the hands of patient women. The pasteboard was made from fragments of garments too worn to be patched. These rags, laid flat, and spread generously with flour paste took the place of leather for many purposes, but alas, were far from waterproof.\textsuperscript{11}

Shoes of paper were a source of some discussion among missionaries. Since the majority of Chinese could not read, it was thought that the paper used in soles of the shoes might be the bible tracts missionaries distributed to the people. With the wonderful homophone of souls/soles, there is beauty in the idea that missionaries tended their flock in many ways.

Supporters and contributors of the missionary service recognized the sacrifice made by missionaries—including a popular image of missionaries foregoing the pleasures of home and family. At the same time, some missionaries acknowledged that even their most frugal living was far above the daily deprivation experienced by a Chinese peasant. The adoption of Chinese dress and customs might have helped assuage Western guilt, but many missionaries found they could not sustain the change: "In many cases the young missionary, anxious to identify himself with his Chinese parishioners, adopted native dress and moved into a Chinese house. Almost always he gave it up."\textsuperscript{12}

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\textsuperscript{10} Pruitt, \textit{Up from Zero}, 43.
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\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 44.
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\textsuperscript{12} Varg, \textit{Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats}, 34.
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Adopting native dress was difficult in many ways, but principally because of the entrenched belief that it was paramount to live a Christian life, and that life had Western trappings—from the companionable relationship between husband and wife, to the leather shoes on a missionary’s feet. With this distinction, the Chinese remained in the role of the “Other.” In Postcard Photograph 2 of Rev. T.A. Hearn and family, the formal Victorian clothes of the missionaries, including Rev. Hearn’s suit with collared shirt and tie, are distinct from the padded garb of the Chinese workmen. Viewing the Chinese as the “Other” was not particularly troubling to the vast majority of Westerners who had a core belief that Caucasians were superior; especially Americans who also trusted in their exceptionalism: "...all assumed that their expansion into China would transform that country for the better, in part because they believed in America's God-given mission to civilize and Christianize the rest of the world, in part because they were convinced of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race."13

13 Chin, "Beneficent Imperialists," 331.
Segments within the missionary societies were skeptical of the individuals that adopted Chinese dress. Members of the CIM, who were present at a General Missionary Conference in Shanghai in 1890, faced criticism that went beyond outward appearances:

But Chinese dress too often means a Chinese house, pure and simple, and native furniture, native utensils, native food. These, when necessity requires, may be cheerfully endured for a time, but to be voluntarily chosen as a permanent order of things implies either a very imperative call of duty or a great lack of prudence.\(^{14}\)

This sideswipe on Christian dedication echoed a Western tendency to view the reasoning behind the adoption of native dress as anti-Western and therefore counter-productive to Christian conversion. Mary Gaunt, an Australian traveler of the early 1900s, felt that Westerners were obliged to illustrate the value of Western culture for the Chinese:

It is so easy to sink to the level of the people, to become as Chinese as the Chinese themselves. Personally, I think it is a mistake to conform to Chinese customs. The missionaries are there to preach the better customs of the West, and there must be no lowering of the standard.\(^{15}\)

An opium merchant from England felt that imitation was shallow, insincere form of flattery: "to wear the clothes of the poor and eat their food may be nearer to formal condescension than to true sympathy."\(^{16}\)

Many missionary women, because easing the plight of Chinese women (perceived to be treated as lowly and abused servants of men) was a component of their call to the vocation, felt that their Western clothes and their physiques—different colored hair, large

\(^{14}\) The Chinese Recorder, 551.


noses, and oversized noisy feet that were quite opposite from Chinese women—allowed them to move through China with the confidence of men. This was useful, especially since Chinese women were bound by strict societal rules that restricted their movements and the Western women did not want similar boundaries. In general, there was an exceptionalist belief that Western clothes supported their superior role and that the converse would also hold true, that wearing Chinese dress would diminish them in the eyes of the local population.

HOME AND DOMESTICITY

Settling into a new life in China was daunting for the newly arrived missionaries. The shock of China’s chaotic city life strengthened Mrs. S.L. Keen’s desire for a refuge: "I had heard that Peking was the dirtiest city in the world, but my imagination could not conceive the true picture and the actual odors." 17 This meant she looked forward to her retreat all the more: "... missionary compounds, with their trees and breathing spaces, clean, comfortable homes, and the dear English language, were oases in the desert to unintelligible jargon and filth." Obtaining this oasis was not easy, since the Chinese were wary of renting or selling property to foreigners. But properties were obtained, and were often walled compounds built in the Chinese style—with walls to the outside and family life facing inward.

Eva Price’s compound was fairly large, with multiple buildings on two acres of land, all enclosed by a wall. This was not uncommon in China, but Westerners were accustomed to properties that opened to the outside world, instead of the reverse. Despite the strangeness, the security of a walled home life was immediately apparent. "The whole premises cover about two acres but many of the rooms need repairs and are not used now. It is all enclosed

by a high wall with only the one outer gate, so we are pretty well shut in. I have been outside the gate only three times since we came."  

It was common for Chinese women to stay in the seclusion of their home, so it wasn’t strange to the local people that missionary women seldom left their homes. Because it was accepted culturally, missionary women like Price coped with their new reality, although they missed the outward views that they had enjoyed in the homes they left behind.

Practical reasons mitigated the entrapment of walled compounds. Foreigners in China were a source of great curiosity and were subjected to frequent interruptions for public viewing. A traveler in China stated dismay at the filth she saw and the constant stares of the inhabitants: "Stopping for a meal or for the night meant an almost complete lack of privacy, as villagers crowded round poking holes in the paper windows to get a view of the foreigners eating, washing, preparing for bed, and the like, the whole mass pressing in for a closer view…"  

The Chinese viewed the travelers and missionaries as the “Other,” people to be observed but not embraced. By inhabiting sheltered homes, away from the daily life of a city, the missionaries blocked the stares and reversed the status of “Other” to the individuals outside the walls. Eva Jane Price was confined (figuratively and literally), but she was enclosed in a world that she could make her own. "This domestic enclosure, in order to be endurable for her, needed to be thought of in broad terms—not as a simple family space, but as a world unto itself. Instead of shutting out the world, the compound created one."  

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20 Ashton, “Compound Walls,” 84.
description can be extended to the majority of missionary living situations—when possible, missionaries created (or recreated) the world they desired—and for most that meant a world that approximated Western living.

Inside a missionary home were familiar pieces of furniture, china, and silver. Many arrived at great cost and after a long journey.

In furnishings, food, bric-a-brac, and styles of dress, they made little compromise with the Chinese environment. Instead, at great cost in Chinese labor, they transported beds, stoves, pianos, and endless cartons from Montgomery Ward's up tortuous rivers and across mountain ranges to reproduce American homelife in China.\(^{21}\)

A postcard photograph sent to R.A. Hearn from his father in China clearly shows a Victorian interior, complete with an ornate fireplace mantel; Western chairs and potted plants (see Postcard Photograph 3). On the back of the card, the Rev. T.A. Hearn writes “This is a portion of our parlor with the folding doors opened into the dining room, taken with Walter’s new camera. See your pennant?”\(^{22}\)


This short note confirms the Western sensibilities at the turn of the century, it confirms the Victorian taste in interior design; introduces modernity with the mention of the camera, which only started general sales in the late 1880s; and reaffirms the closeness of family with the wall pennant that states “Branham & Hughes,” the Tennessee school attended by R.A. Hearn. Missionaries held tight to their cultural roots, even as they moved into alien spaces.

When relocating for months at a time, perhaps during a summer reprieve at a mountain resort, many household belongings would travel with the missionary family. Mattresses would be hauled by donkey and by boat, and even a summer picnic would require appropriate plates and utensils. "Women's dependence on the goods of their home culture, and on linen rather than oilcloth as the means to insure their family's proper training, became, if anything, more urgent because they were in China."23 The simple outward symbols of civilization, meaning Western civilization, supported efforts to demonstrate Christianity as a civilizing faith, and help missionaries retain their ties to their heritage or background.

There were practical reasons for containment in the home. Disease was rampant in China, with many people, including missionaries, succumbing to a variety of diseases, including dysentery, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and cancer. Missionary compounds were barriers to the lack of sanitation and basic healthcare practices of China (and much of world) in the nineteenth century. So, as noted by Hunter, this exclusion allowed an inclusion relative to the Christian (and Western) way of life: "The walls that encircled mission compounds not only kept nurturing family life in, but also kept the harsh sights and rank smells, the disease and the crowds, out."24

Members of the China Inland Mission (CIM), who lived directly among the peasant population, had a slightly higher death rate, including deaths from suicides.25 Other missionaries looked skeptically upon the self-denial of the CIM lifestyle, including Eva Price who hosted a missionary who later died: “…they lived just about as the poorer Chinese do. I feel sure if she had taken better care of herself and lived in a more homelike way with good nourishing food, she could have stood it much longer here.”26

The domesticity of missionary women and the sanctity of the home was a controlled space in an otherwise uncontrollable environment, or, as Hunter eloquently positions this concept: "Domestic ideology emerged in China partly as a defensive mechanism to ensure that American home values would be preserved and recreated amidst the chaos of

24 Ibid., 107.


26 Eva Jane Price letter, China Journal 1889-1900: An American Missionary Family during the Boxer Rebellion, 60, as quoted in Austin, China’s Millions, 274.
barbarism."  


30 Gimelli, "'Borne upon the Wings of Faith,'" 240.
In writing about reaching a picnic, Mrs. Jonathan Rosalind Goforth, relates her tale of reaching a group picnic by donkey:

The Lotus Hills were reached safely and we could see through the trees the rest of the party far up the hill. By this time, I had become elated at riding successfully so far. Just as we were coming to a small rivulet, I turned slightly and called to my husband, close behind, ‘Look, Jonathan; see how well I ride. I will soon be able to compete with the children.’ At that instant the donkey gave a sudden spring, and I found myself sitting in the middle of the stream! No more need be said except that my return journey that day was made in a more dignified mode of travel, by chair.31

Mentioning physical activities—tennis, hiking, donkey riding—was an expansion of the traditional Victorian woman’s role of dainty and domestic. Away from the embrace of home expectations, missionary women participated in new ways and notified families and friends of their changing roles from the safety of a letter.32

In addition to writing home about activities, missionaries would reinforce their own domesticity and civilization by distinguishing between them from the Chinese customs and habits. In sending a family photograph (postcard) to their son in the United States, the family members of Rev. T.A. Hearn go undescribed but the servants do not: “This needs no explanation. The three Chinese whom you do not know are our boatmen. The lau-dah [captain] spoiled his face by lifting his hand just at the wrong time.”33 The photograph itself


33 Magnolia Arnold Hearn to her stepson, Roberts A. Hearn, postcard, circa 1911, Private Collection of Col. Thomas Muir Hearn. This postcard is unsigned and undated, but appears to be in the handwriting of Magnolia Hearn.
(see Postcard Photograph 2) underscores the vast difference in dress and general appearance between the missionaries and the Chinese.

Missionary homes—with their Western, furniture, photographs, teacups, and milk and butter—and the walled compounds that directly separated the local people and the missionary interlopers, mitigated the effect of “demonstrating Christianity.” Chinese converts or potential converts did not seem interested in adopting the Western styles of the missionary home. In effect, as Hunter states, the home "...symbolized a domesticity too defensive to be inspiration."34 The standards and style of home life between the Chinese and the missionaries was, in most cases, radically different, and only the most Westernized of Chinese would be comfortable in a missionary home. There were missionaries who adopted aspects of a Chinese lifestyle, like those from the CIM or an activist like Lottie Moon. But even those individuals reserved elements of Western life, perhaps simple items like a preferred hairstyle or the use of an umbrella. Lifestyle and culture were difficult to shed. In 1952, an anonymous missionary discussed the pleasure of sharing life with the Chinese, but also points out that living on the Chinese income of a prospective convert would be difficult for missionaries with children: "The advantages of living in the same sort of way, in the same context, and of sharing your leisure hours in the same conversation and amusements, are enormous. I am also satisfied that it is almost always impossible for families."35 This statement reflected a reality that had existed since missionary families first reached China. If Christianity meant Western domesticity, then missionary families were obligated to demonstrate their familiar lifestyles.


At the same time, these lifestyles helped them maintain connections to the United States and retain their home identity, which became even more important when missionary families included children.

**CHILDREN**

The children of missionaries were central in establishing Christian domesticity. Although Chinese women served as nannies and servants, there was a basic mistrust that kept missionary wives attentive to childcare needs in lieu of evangelizing. The influence of Chinese servants and playmates was not generally appreciated by missionaries—Henrietta Shuck disliked the fact that her son considered Chinese his first language. Other missionary wives did not want their children adopting what they considered Chinese traits of deceit and imperiousness. Maintaining a distance—keeping missionary children apart from Chinese playmates and servants—both at home and in school was a means to teach appreciated Western traits: "...the problems of cultivating a Christian character of modesty and independence in an atmosphere of Chinese subservience and flatter." Chinese were still the “Other” when it came to the children of missionaries, children who were still considered superior.

Missionary schools, exclusive to the foreign population of British, American, and other expatriates, were established in a variety of locations. Generally children would attend these schools until ages 12-14 when they would return to home country to finish their education. Roberts Alfred Hearn (R.A. Hearn), the son of Rev. T.A. Hearn, traveled by boat from Shanghai to a boarding school at the China Inland Mission Boy’s School in Chefoo.

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The school was established for the children of foreign missionaries and had a curriculum based on the British education system. After leaving Chefoo at around age 14, R.A. Hearn attended Branham & Hughes School in Nashville, Tennessee, eventually receiving an M.D. from Columbia University in New York in 1920-1921.\(^{37}\)

Just as in many other professions, missionaries often followed in their father’s footsteps. Despite leaving the China in his teenage years, R.A. Hearn’s half-brother, Walter Anderson Hearn, (Rev. W.A. Hearn) returned to China in 1923 to begin life as a missionary. Like his brother, Rev. W.A. Hearn went to school in Chefoo then returned to the United States, where he attended various schools and earned a graduate degree in divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York. His application to the Board of Missions in 1922 included a supportive reference from his missionary father, who wrote that his son’s Christian character is “Far above the ordinary. He has always been a good boy & has never given me a moment’s concern” and that he “reached the high water mark of faith and character before he became 10 years old.”\(^{38}\) The Hearn boys’ separation from their parents at such a young age was not uncommon; parting with her children was considered the sad lament of a missionary mother. But this lament firmly confirmed the inherent contradiction that preserved the distance between missionary children and the Chinese people, and yet continued to lure individuals into missionary service in successive generations.


\(^{38}\) Thomas. A. Hearn to the Board of Missions, Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Referral for Mr. Walter Hearn, March 28, 1922, Walter A. Hearn Biographical File, Archives of the Methodist Church, Madison, NJ.
Although the missionary boards frowned on adoption of Chinese children, some missionary women found the needs of the impoverished people too compelling. Especially for single women, adoption provided an immediate family. The distinction between missionary and Chinese became blurred with adoption, confusing the landscape that the missionary service had carved out in China and the rationale between educational and evangelistic activities: "importance of Chinese children being raised in Chinese Christian homes, the dominant mission practice emphasized how necessary it was for these children to learn to fit into their culture, a clear difference between introducing Christianity and Americanizing their converts." Some children would be placed with Chinese families, probably bible women or other converts, but occasionally there were direct adoptions by missionaries.

Methodist Episcopal missionary Gertrude Howe arrived in China in 1872. She was a single woman, but over her more than 30 year tenure in China, she adopted four Chinese girls, one of whom, K'ang Cheng, also called Ida Kahn, became a well-known American educated physician and missionary. Howe faced censure from the missionary board for this destabilizing act, having, probably unknowingly, tapped into the Pandora’s box of separation from the “Other” and the accompanying concern of race, and an immediate issue of Chinese immigration to the United States "...the issue of adoption involved the transgressing of boundaries set up by American missionaries to segregate themselves from the Chinese among

whom they worked." Howe was not welcome in some missionary homes or resort retreats, and even when the Bishop generously built her a new home in 1907; it was outside the main mission compound. Nevertheless, Howe, most admirably, contributed to the missionary service throughout her life.

Christian domesticity required a family lifestyle. A husband and wife, after committing to service, would soon find that children modified their focus. This was especially true for the missionary woman who embodied the Victorian qualities of a nurturing guardian angel, responsible for a child’s well-being and a Christian (Western) upbringing. As noted previously, some women went against missionary board rules, such as Gertrude Howe, and raised adopted Chinese children. But even Howe, like the Hearn family, eventually confirmed the perceived need and desirability of Western roots, and sent her children back to the United States to complete their education.

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40 Ibid., 126.
CHAPTER FIVE

WORK AND PLAY

VOCATION

Whether married or single, Western missionary women went to China moved by the plight of the Chinese women they had read about in magazines like *Heathen Woman’s Friend* or in the lectures of furloughed missionaries. Chinese women were segregated, uneducated, unhealthy, physically tortured, and subordinate to men—all issues that Western women could mitigate, either through their financial contributions or through missionary service. There was both an obligation and an opportunity for Victorian women to change conditions in China: "the unspeakable conditions of physical suffering constitute both our call and our opportunity to minister."¹ In particular, the seclusion of women and their lack of education provided an opportunity for the various missionary boards to rally female forces and infiltrate the secluded world of Oriental mothers and daughters.

But there was initial suspicion and confusion from both the missionaries and the Chinese. The missionaries found that the elite members of Chinese society were not interested in participating in missionary efforts. Hunter notes that "Missionaries recruited Chinese from the margins of their society not by choice but by necessity. Most Chinese, particularly members of the gentry, were overtly hostile to the foreign presence during the entire nineteenth century."² Of course the huge Chinese population provided enormous


opportunities to bring Christianity forward, but the cultural differences required careful navigation and explanation. In one example a missionary woman confined with a magistrate’s wife answers questions from the wife who is, in turn, receiving them from her husband in the next room. The questions indicate the confusion about the missionary’s purpose: "Why had we come? Were we going to do trade? Had we brought anything to sell? Who had sent us? Were we going to rent a house? How long were we going to stay? Had our queen sent us to China?" This confusion produced by the appearance of the missionaries was also a source of opportunity; Christianity and women’s education were concepts that often came with side benefits of food, shelter, and advancement. Missionaries offered relief from the relentless struggle of Chinese women in the lower classes of society.

Although missionaries did not make a concerted effort to understand the cultural aspects of Chinese family interactions, they did come to recognize some of the pleasures of a native woman’s life. Anna Seward Pruitt’s memoirs comment on the good and the bad she saw in the life of a Chinese woman:

The life of the Chinese woman has always been anything but attractive to the western eye. There is privation and hardship, often accompanied by injustice and cruelty at the hands of mother-in-law or husband. Even the blessing of work is often made painful and difficult by bound feet. Yet there is zest in cooking and sewing, making shoes for the family, fashioning wonderful tiger hats for the babies, the social amenities of the riverside washings, and the harvest-time activities on the threshing-floor.

Reaching out to these women provided Western women with purpose and direction. For married women, especially those with children, there was less time to tend to the needs of the

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native population; they had to be satisfied with the “evangelical domesticity” form of service by demonstrating Christianity through their lifestyle. But housework and child care was sometimes a poor second to the more aspirational and direct action that initially brought them to a missionary life. Not surprisingly, mothers often became active teachers and evangelists after children left the home.

Americans expressed amazing confidence in bringing Christianity to China. Driving missionary service was the certainty of Western culture’s superiority, which was a Christian culture, and the absolute belief that it could be cultivated in foreign societies who were ripe for civilization: "uncivilized heathens and eager pupils, a duality arising from the paradox in Americans' own national identity as both an exceptional and an exportable civilization."5 This dichotomy was not an obvious concern because American exceptionalism mixed with evangelistic enthusiasm was tempered with a key underlying belief that the Chinese remained the “Other.” This was particularly true for the missionary women who seemed to have innocently rationalized their outsider (“Other”) or subservient role to missionary men through the perpetuation of their view of the Chinese as people to be saved and elevated, who then became the “Other” who were not equal to missionaries (male or female) or other Westerners.

The fact that missionary women were relegated to the background by the missionary service was a source of some consternation. Author Pearl Buck, who, as the daughter of missionaries, observed many society meetings, resented the lack of presence and power of the women in the missionary corps:

5 Chin, “Beneficent Imperialists,” 331.
They all knitted those women while their men gave reports and passed laws of the church and made prayers. Their hard fingers flew while they had to remain mute. Into these stitches went what curbed desires and stubborn wills and plans! They would have burst without that vent.⁶

Missionary boards only offered token representation for women at large conferences. In this they mirrored the gender approach of the Western world in that century: "The reconstitution in China of the male domination of Protestant churches in the United States should not be surprising." Even though they had expanded their worlds through service in alien lands, missionary women remained entrenched in the patriarchal Christian community and the domestic values of the Victorian age—subordinate to men and grounded in the feminine activities of home life, dutifully demonstrating the motherly virtues of order, comfort, and beauty.

The nineteenth century saw the maintenance of social divides even as the definition of separate female and male spheres were stretched with the "...permeability of the border that separates the spheres, demonstrating that the private feminized space of the home both infused and bolstered the public male arena of the market and that the sentimental values attached to maternal influence were used to sanction women's entry into the wider civic realm from which those same values theoretically excluded them."⁷ Christian domesticity represented by missionary women provided broader opportunities yet preserved the dominion of men. But because of those very opportunities to contribute through teaching and positive demonstration of a civilized life, the subordinate position of the ladies of the missionary


service was less relevant to them, overshadowed by what they could do to advance their
Christian mission.

Household Evangelism

Evangelism for a missionary woman took a variety of forms. She might
establish Sunday schools, bible readings, and prayer meetings in her own home, or venture
into the homes of local women for individualized preaching. These female forms of “intimate
evangelism,” where there was personalized attention to the prospective convert, offered a
moral power to missionary women that pushed them into unfamiliar territory:

Using one's home as a tool to convert the local population to Christianity added yet
another complicated dimension to missionary wedlock. In their quest to find
'meaningful work' for themselves, early female missionaries used their homes for
functions ranging from domiciles and schools to outposts of Western civilization and
mission points for woman-to-woman evangelism.\(^8\)

Missionary Eva Jane Price found that the Chinese women in her home were far less
interested in the words of the Bible than they were by Western paraphernalia of home life,
including her sewing machine. Nevertheless, she conscientiously maintained a household that
conveyed “Christian love” and “truth.”\(^9\) Both obligated to help less privileged sisters and
maintain a comfortable home for their family, missionary wives and mothers intended to be
an inspirational model to the Chinese women. This was the ideal, but home life for many
missionaries sometimes became a retreat that protected familiar Western domesticity and,
more precisely, family members from the influence of the “Other,” or the local people.
Chinese women might be invited into a missionary home, but there was apprehension that

\(^8\) Harper, “They Twain Shall be One Flesh,” 5.

disease and ill manners would sneak in as well. The domesticity lesson for the Chinese women was blunted whenever missionary women retreated back to the home compound due to personal reticence, childcare concerns, or to shield their family from unfamiliar local customs or poor hygiene.

Language was an immediate issue for the missionaries. In the mid-1800s, the missionary service had language exams, with a lower standard for women. Some male missionaries made the language study their vocation, resulting in the translation of the Bible and subsequent dissemination of Bible tracts to the general population; unfortunately, many Chinese people were unable to read. Language tutors were generally hired by the missionaries, and it was said to take two years to gain an adequate degree of fluency.

Language skills of women in the missionary service were a secondary issue, since it was the men who were to lead the effort to convert the population. Missionary Henrietta Shuck gained some language proficiency despite being initially dissuaded from language training by her husband, who may have thought it was too difficult for her to learn; a common nineteenth century perception.¹⁰

Educating for God and Domesticity

Male missionaries of the China Inland Mission (CIM), who traveled into remote destinations, penetrated communities through “teashop evangelism.” A missionary, sometimes traveling with a native preacher (often serving as interpreter) would cover a new region until they became a familiar sight at local gathering spots, including shrines and teashops. This itinerant preaching would lead to the establishment of an outpost and the

¹⁰ Gimelli, “‘Borne upon the Wings of Faith,” 235.
The subsequent arrival of the missionary's wife. Missionary women of the CIM would travel to the homes of local women and then teach using resources designed to overcome the language barrier: "This intensive house-to-house visiting was called 'gossiping the gospel,' as the women used simple devices such as 'the wordless book' and a five-finger mantra to interest the women at their own level and thereby teach the rudiments of Christianity along with sewing and hygiene."\(^{11}\) The five-finger mantra reduced Christianity into "one true God," which was counted on the thumb, and on through the other fingers with "God loves me," "God can forgive sin," "God keeps us in peace," and "God leads us at last to heaven." The wordless book followed a similar format, but used colors to symbolize the Christian path, with black for "sin," red for "Jesus’ sacrifice," white for "sanctification," and gold for "heaven."\(^{12}\)

Missionary women from most denominations were central to the establishment of schools for girls and women. Teaching fitted into the image of domesticity set forth by influential nineteenth century author Catharine Beecher, who wrote that teaching was the "road to honourable independence, and extensive usefulness, where she need not outstep the proscribed boundaries of feminine modesty."\(^{13}\) Since Chinese society deprived its women of many advantages considered essential to a Westerner, especially education, they were ready

\(^{11}\) Austin, *China's Millions*, 5.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 5-6.

\(^{13}\) Catharine Beecher, *Suggestions Respecting Improvement in Education, Presented to the Trustees of the Hartford Female Seminary, and Published at Their Request* (Hartford, CT: Packard and Butler, 1892), 52, as quoted in Pruitt, *Looking Glass*, 94.
to participate and learn, and possibly convert. Missionary women found an expansive outlet in teaching that still maintained the Victorian conventions of domesticity and femininity.

But until the missionaries came, no Chinese ever thought of a girl going to school. Girls kept house and reared the children. When Mrs. Hartwell opened a school for girls on the North Street Compound, several Christians and one non-Christian had the temerity to entrust their daughters to this foreigner for the worse-than-useless purpose of teaching their girls to read.¹⁴

The establishment of a missionary school was a solution to the problems of a Chinese girl’s low value and meager living standards. "Thus it was Chinese poverty, not interest in Christianity, that provided the missionaries with an entree into Chinese education."¹⁵

But gender differences infringed on the establishment of girl’s schools. Very often a school could not be opened until a boys’ school was established. Resources, usually scarce, were disproportionately distributed, with boys receiving a larger share, including more space. But this was minor compared to the achievement of opening a girls’ school where there had been none before. It was believed that education differentiated the elevated status of Western women from the lowly rank of their Chinese sisters. With education came authority, a characteristic that provided mothers with influence, an attribute that missionary women wanted to cultivate in their female pupils—the future Christian matriarchs of China.

Schools were operated on a familiar Western model: "missionary women sought to replicate their own experiences in the lives of girls and young women in the "Orient."¹⁶ At the same time, Western superiority was maintained through a domestic educational schedule

¹⁴ Pruitt, Up from Zero, 30-31.


¹⁶ Pruitt, Up from Zero, 91.
that included learning English as well as mastering the use of a knife and fork instead of chopsticks. Girls were not necessarily taught to lead, but prepared to become good wives and mothers that kept a Christian home: "In the lesson they taught Chinese women, missionaries advanced a conservative platform of physical cleanliness, moral self-control, and domestic and social compliance."\(^{17}\) A Christian education was not intended to emancipate women. Even women being allowed on bicycles concerned Laura Haygood, principal of the Methodist McTyeire Girls' School in Shanghai, who felt that only a complete Christian environment could adequately support autonomous women and that it would be a mistake "to remove materially the social restrictions that surround the women of China, except where there may be, in a certain sense, a Christian community into which they may be set free."\(^{18}\) Until the family and embracing community were Christian, a missionary education would limit its goals for students. Not to be overlooked is the fact that missionaries were imbued with authority by the act of teaching and grooming Chinese girls for achievement within their home social structure. Education was positive, but the intensity was at a level that placed missionaries in a superior role. Maintaining distance from the “Other” necessitated an educational and social gap between teacher (missionary) and student (Chinese).

Schools introduced aspects of the American educational system through activities like sports and domestic science. The former broadened a Chinese girl’s experience, while the latter prepared her for her future life as a wife. Education balanced between empowerment and guidance, recognizing the girls became wives, and that mothers-in-law


\(^{18}\) Graham, “Exercising Control,” 45.
held a higher position in the family hierarchy. To fit into their culture, educated girls and women could not appear superior to a powerful matriarch. According to some accounts, girls could be so hungry for education that the missionaries took measures to limit study time:

“… missionaries in some schools were assigned the task of keeping girls at the table for at least half an hour rather than permitting them to eat quickly and hurry away to study; American women missionaries also prevented girls from rising long before dawn to prepare their days’ lessons.”19

Language and sewing, as well as the importance of obedience, were the lessons of the day, but the schools supported other advances important to the Christian woman’s mission. A Methodist school in Peking only admitted girls without bound feet. Because room and board were enticements for poor families, the unbinding of the feet was not contested. But unbound feet made a girl less desirable for marriage, so the missionaries took an active role in finding suitable Christian matches for their Chinese students.20

**Bible Women**

With a language barrier and an enormous number of “heathens” to convert, missionaries recruited individual Chinese men and women to serve as preachers and bible women respectively (see Postcard Photograph 4 and Postcard Photograph 5). Bible women were recruited from the local community and were often widows with little income. To prepare bible women for their task, missionaries treated them as students who needed to learn English, commit to Christianity, know the Bible, and become skilled in the domestic arts demanded of a good Christian wife and mother. As Hunter eloquently points out, “The fragile


20 Ibid., 38.
flower of domestic refinement could not blossom in truly heathen soil." Since bible women were or would be wives and mothers, it was important to groom them to perpetuate a Christian home. “Their destiny was to serve as helpmates and spiritual companions to their Christian husbands (who were often teachers or pastors themselves), to raise good Christian children, and to provide living examples of clean, loving, Christian homes.”


The education of bible women crossed paths with the education of children. This served all parties—children and bible women received an education otherwise unavailable to them. Missionaries educated the crucial female population that would lead Christian households: students would receive room and board, and bible women would be supported through menial positions in the missionary household or the school. Anna Seward Pruitt comments in her memoirs on the opening of a school for bible women and children.

At the time that theological training for men was begun in Tengchow, Miss Willeford was asked by the Mission to open in Laichow a Training School for Bible Women. This made it possible for uneducated, but Christian, wives of preachers to grow into efficient helpmates for their husbands. The wives often brought their children. Miss Willeford soon found herself head of a kindergarten for the little folks as well as the director of a Bible school for their mothers.23

In Pruitt’s narrative she notes the importance of teaching women how to be support their husbands through domestic skills, as “helpmates,” echoing the spirit of domesticity that permeated missionary culture. Bible women also had to overcome the cultural taboo of women in public. As evangelists, these women had to find the courage to join into foreign efforts of preaching and conversion in public spaces. Missionaries attributed this bravery to the bible woman’s new found Christianity.

Bible women received a “vernacular education,” learning elements that were pertinent to their home life and future social roles. Missionaries believed that too much Westernization would leave the Chinese students unable to relate to their local social structure, thus impairing their future ability to cultivate Christian followers. At the same time, missionary women with domestic responsibilities understood that the education of Chinese women could advantageous to them if and when the Christian Chinese woman assumed a

servant role in the household. Not only were missionary wives more confident with a trained Christian housekeeper or nanny, but this allowed the wives freedom for evangelistic duties in the community.\(^24\) The desire and commitment to Christianity was also a rationalization missionary societies used to keep salaries low. In this way, Christianity had no apparent financial benefits or accompanying creature comforts: "In the broadest sense, mission policy deliberately sought to avoid any association between Christian conversion and material rewards."\(^25\) Whether or not the lack of liberal financial remuneration was driven by social domestic concerns or was a simple economizing measure, it was a recognized issue relatively early (1869) when the American board and other missionary societies enforced a wage-fixing agreement. Unfortunately, converting to Christianity often led to less family support, which meant that the missionary society or the missionaries in that region shouldered some obligation to financially support converts. This was usually done through a job placement.

Bible women and Chinese pastors were, in many ways, the components that eventually brought Christianity to China. Missionaries could count a very limited number of converts, but over time, with the converted leading the way, Chinese Christians grew in number. By 1920, there were an estimated 800,000 Protestant converts.\(^26\) In 1949, there were approximately 1 million converts, a number that grew exponentially after bans against

\(^{24}\) West, “The Role of the Woman Missionary,” 2.

\(^{25}\) Harris, 332.

Christianity were lifted in 1978; by 2001 there were an estimated 40-50 million Protestant Christians.  

VACATION

The hot, humid summers found in much of China and the concomitant breakouts of malaria, cholera, and other diseases, made restful breaks essential for the missionaries. Originally, the various societies would bring their missionaries home periodically to reconnect with family and friends, lecture and fundraise, and recuperate from illness and diseases like malaria: "Home furloughs at approximately seven-year intervals helped to restore health, but sometimes the furloughs had to be extended to two or three years before the missionary was well enough to return to China." The mission boards resisted the initial requests for summer retreats, but after many entreaties—"church at home must choose between paying such expenses, or paying funeral expenses"—they capitulated and provided funding for the establishment of retreats.

Kenneth Scott Latourette, author of the seminal 1929 publication, A History of Christian Missions in China, notes how resorts served to bond the missionaries together:

The consolidation of Protestantism in China was facilitated by the summer resorts which after 1900 came into prominence. At Peitaiho on the coast north of Tientsin not far from where the Great Wall touches the sea, in the mountain valley of Kuling just south of Kiukiang, on hill sites at Mokanshan in Chekiang, Chikungshan in Hupeh, Kuliang near Foochow, and in a number of less frequented places, missionaries and their families took refuge from the summer’s heat. In the larger centers missionaries of many different boards rested, played, worked, and worshiped

27 Austin, China’s Millions, 28.


together for a month or more in each year, and conferences for study and inspiration became the order of the day.\textsuperscript{30}

In addition to bonding and socializing, missionaries were escaping the heat, the strangeness of life in China, and the burden of being stared at and perceived as the “Other.” During their summer sojourn of two or three months, there would be picnics, 4\textsuperscript{th} of July parades, parties, tennis matches, and swimming; all the familiar traditions from home.

Resorts were established in places of health and beauty. As has been noted, "The European's oldest measure of protection in the tropics, however, was altitude."\textsuperscript{31} For the missionaries, and other expatriates, not only altitude was desirable, but also the cool water and fresh breezes of the seaside—locations that provided a respite from daily life. In her memoirs, Mrs. Jonathan Rosalind Goforth provided a glorified description of how one resort was founded: "As the missionary gazed upon the scene, there came to him the inspiration that later brought blessing and relief to multitudes: 'What an ideal place for a health resort.'"\textsuperscript{32}

Mountain or beach, resorts allowed the missionaries to mix with other men and women from shared cultural backgrounds. Large houses were built in the European style and necessities like mattresses, linens, and dinnerware traveled with the vacationers to complete the perfect retreat from their life and duties in China. Goods needed upon arrival at the resort could be purchased from local stores or door-to-door vendors who supplied necessities like fresh vegetables or as well as more extravagant baubles: “The shoe man, the lace man, the dish


\textsuperscript{31} Endfield, “Happy is the Bride,” 379.

\textsuperscript{32} Goforth, \textit{Climbing}, “Beautiful Peitaiho” chapter.
man with yellow and blue china and the famous Thousand Flowers pattern, the man with sheets of silk wadding for bed spreads, light as a feather; the barber, the fruit man, the flower man.\textsuperscript{33} Life at the resorts was a re-creation of Western living, but with unique characteristics, such as sedan chairs and pagoda-shaped pepper boxes.

Resorts communities were often shared by missionaries, diplomats and government officials, and merchants—forming nineteenth and early twentieth century European enclaves. Even today, the resort of Kuling, one of the most famous in its day, bears street names identifying past inhabitants: roads with names like Cambridge, Cardiff, Pennsylvania, and Harvard.\textsuperscript{34} The British government’s territory of Weihaiwei in Shandong Province is an example of the efforts made to Westernize resort communities. From 1898 to 1930 the area was administered by the British who felt that recreating the cleanliness and ambiance of home was essential to attract Westerners there for rest and recreation. Improved sanitation was paramount, so efforts were made to turn the chaotic and odiferous village into a pleasant and welcoming resort.

By late 1899, a newly established municipal council had achieved sanitary improvements to the town; hawkers and stall keepers were restricted to particular areas, an unsanitary abattoir had been closed, and some houses demolished to widen and pave the main streets which soon, if not already, were to bear British names.\textsuperscript{35}


\textsuperscript{34} Johnston, \textit{Near to Heaven}, 55.

Leaving the confusion of Chinese village and city life behind for the clarity and cleanliness of mountain or beach air was important and characterized the Godliness that missionaries sought to bring to China. Mrs. Jonathan Rosalind Goforth looked forward to the clean air ahead when describing her journey via sedan chair to the resort of Peitaiho on the coast 200 miles west of Peking:

Frequently after traveling through scenes such as I have endeavored to picture, changing with every step of our rapid-pacing chair-bearers, a sudden, sharp turn of the road would bring us into a village street where uncovered cesspools abounded by the roadside, causing us to cover our faces and hold our breath in horror till again in GOD's unpolluted air.\textsuperscript{36}

The sedan chair that Goforth traveled in was common transportation in the late nineteenth century. They were preferred method of travel to the mountain resort of Kuling where it took four bearers, at a cost of $.78 per bearer, to carry one adult up the mountain. Small children were accommodated in a basket hooked to a pole carried by a coolie (servant).\textsuperscript{37}

Resorts in Profile

Missionaries founded Mokanshan Summer Resort in the mountains approximately 120 miles from Shanghai via the Yangtze River. Site of mountain springs, legend has it that a swordsmith came to the mountain (722-481 B.C.) to craft a sword and temper it in the spring. The site is named after the swordsmith’s wife, Mo Ye.\textsuperscript{38} The first homes were rented from the resident farmers, but eventually land was purchased and homes of local grey stone were built, many by architects of Western-style buildings in Shanghai. Mokanshan had a

\textsuperscript{36} Goforth, *Climbing*, “Beautiful Peitaiho” chapter.

\textsuperscript{37} Johnston, *Near to Heaven*, 57.

respectable infrastructure: “It had electricity and telephones, a post and telegraph office, butchers, bakers, and grocery stores carrying good imported from the west (and carried up the mountainside on native backs). It even had its own cemetery.”

By 1925, the resort had two churches, a swimming pool, and seven tennis courts. There were 160 houses by 1932, representing primarily American residents, but also British, German, French, Russian, and some houses owned by wealthy Chinese. The arrival of the communist party in 1949 effectively ended missionary life in Mokanshan.

At the 1908 Mokanshan Summer Resort Association annual meeting, discussion ensued about improving the telephone system, budgeting more for road work, and working to obtain faster steam transportation to and from Shanghai. Safety was also discussed, with the comment that “stricter agreements with caretakers have had fewer cases of house-breaking

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40 Ibid., 13.
and theft before it. It has been difficult to enforce previous proclamations against opium dens, gambling resorts and wine shop disorders in the territory adjacent the foreign community.”

The meeting also noted: “The interests of recreation and sports have not been neglected. Two large tennis courts, belonging to Mr. Hearn [assumed to be Rev. T.A. Hearn who was known to visit Mokanshon] have been rented and put in fine condition and a third one has recently been finished and is now in use.”

Arriving in Mokanshan must have been a welcome relief from both the heat and the demands of missionary life. In several communications to his son, Rev. T.A. Hearn commented on an upcoming furlough or a furlough delayed. In August of 1909, he sent his son R.A. Hearn, a photo postcard of Mokanshan where he circled the houses that belonged to them. (See Postcard Photograph 6).

In 1895, the resort of Kuling (now known as Lushan or Mt. Lushan) was founded by missionary Edward Selby Little in an area that had been known for its tea trade. There were some missionaries already there, but Little had the foresight to see a larger enterprise: "The torrid heat of the Kiukiang summer, which in the opinion of many old and well traveled residents, exceeds in malignant intensity that of almost any other place in China, necessitated some place of refuge to which the exhausted suffered might repair. Nature seems to provide antidotes to its own poisons, and in this case has set down lofty and cooling mountains.”

Interestingly, Little named the resort for its refreshing, “cooling” or “Kuling” atmosphere to

41 The North China Herald and Supreme Court & Consular Gazette, July 4, 1908, vol. 88.

42 Postcard from “Papa” to Mr. R.A. Hearn, Sept. 20, 1909, Private Collection of Thomas Muir Hearn.

appeal to foreigner looking for a pleasant holiday. Although the land and development negotiations were extremely complicated, Kuling eventually became the most popular resort of the time, complete with churches, a swimming pool, and tennis courts. Little himself noted the powerful impact it had on the missionary contingent: "Wonderful were the cures to have already wrought a change thither as if by magic. It is safe to say scores of lives have already been preserved, as failing health being restored for some whom were even compelled to return home, who found it possible to continue on in the field.

Missionary Absalom Sydenstricker, father of author Pearl Buck, built a house in Kuling in the early 1900s and traveled there for vacation until his death in 1931 while at the resort. His wife Cari, who died ten year before Sydenstricker, also passed away while in Kuling.

Exclusive not Inclusive

In the early twentieth century some well-known Chinese frequented the resorts, including the famous, like Chiang Kai-shek; and the infamous, like the Shanghai gangster Du Yuesheng. But the resorts were originally founded so that the Chinese primarily played a subservient role as servants and shopkeepers. In Kuling, ordinances prevented Chinese land ownership in the valley of Kuling, although surrounding the resort were Chinese communities. The vacationers made the rules related to taxes (usually in their favor) and ordinances that protected favored pastimes, such as bird hunting. The rules even went so far as to prevent Chinese guests of the missionaries. Gertrude Howe was not allowed to bring her adopted daughters: "the other Missionaries fled for much-needed rest to beautiful Kuling [a


mountain resort for missionaries] . . . where Chinese residents were not tolerated." Instead of attending, Howe made separate plans and rented a house in the foothills where she could freely take her children.

Reverting to home traditions meant the exclusion of the native population. But this missionary racism was not accepted by all missionaries. In 1890, missionary Luella Miner, disliked the segregation and wrote about her positive experience with the Chinese people:

It seems strange to be so cut off from all of our Chinese friends... To me their love and friendship means very much, taking a place which in some respects cannot be filled by intercourse with foreigners. Some missionaries seem to work with the Chinese at arm’s length as it were, and are a little inclined to criticize those of us who treat them fully as equals and let them see that we regard them as personal friends, but these are the exception. In a way I think that the Chinese feel that they have a special claim upon us unmarried missionaries. They realize that we have no cares or affections that can hinder us from entering fully into their joys and sorrows.

Miner recognized that her lack of family obligations has allowed her to enter more fully into Chinese society. She wrote that “For those who have the diversions of family life, or who are very fond of society, going to the Hills for a long stay may be very restful and beneficial, but for me it is not.” Miner continued to map her own path in China, and did not participate in the summer missionary retreats.

The letters of Eva Jane Price offer one of the most poignant illustrations of the segregation between the missionaries and the Chinese, and the incredible sense of isolation of the “Other,” whether Westerner or Chinese. She eloquently describes her discomfort with the


47 Luella Miner to family, 15 June 1890, SCUO, Special Collections, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR, quoted in Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility, 189.

48 Luella Miner to father, 30 September 1892, SCUO, Special Collections, University of Oregon Library, Eugene, OR, quoted in Hunter, The Gospel of Gentility, 190.
local population, and the local people’s interest in her and her family. Both parties found methods to release their distress at the perceived infringement, although the system did not resolve the separation and sense of isolation. Writing from a summer compound in Yu Tao Ho in 1891, Price notes her location as “Peeking Place.”

Dear Home Folks,
That is 'peeking' you will notice and not Peking, which is the capital of this famous land. I will tell you why I call it 'Peeking.' We are out here in a valley in the foothills of the mountains expecting to stay three or four months. We are living in an old mill and the buildings form three sides of the compound with no other outside wall. We ventured on cutting a small window through the wall of the room we occupy, which gives us an opportunity to look on the outside world, the first chance of that kind we have had in China.49

The window to the outside also allowed others to peer into her house. Price copes by pretending to not to notice, although when eating at the table she is sure to sit with her back to the window. Her Christian domestic duty dictated that she invite the outside people into her Western world, but she did so reluctantly; she maintained the walls of separation, but opened, quite literally, a window. Sadly, Price was one of the missionaries killed during the Boxer Rebellion. Her sad end was chronicled by a Chinese convert who lived in the Price compound, Fei Ch’i-hao, who saw her during her exodus through a "field of sorghum higher than my head."50


CHAPTER SIX
UNTIL DEATH DO US PART

Life in the missions could be easy, with an excess of servants; and difficult, with matters of life and death a daily occurrence. Reports from missionaries often contained news of deaths, which were softened by religious commentaries on both the sadness and beauty of dying.

MOURING THE CHILDREN

A painful element of missionary life was the death of a child. Although it was generally a more frequent occurrence through the early twentieth century, losing a child in a foreign land, without an extended family, was even more mournful. In some cases, disease would sweep through a population:

The summer of 1902 was one of excessive heat and cholera raged in all the cities. Missionaries' children were attending schools of the China Inland Mission in Chefoo. An epidemic broke out there in early July that in three short days caused the deaths of one-fourth of all the students in the boys' school.¹

Missionary Anna Seward Pruitt tenderly remembers her children in her memoirs: “Of the six children that came to brighten our home, two were laid to rest on Mt. Hope in Tengchow. Our oldest son, John, is buried in the lot in Ohio, where lie five generations of the Seward family.”² Missionary Eva Jane Price buried one son in China, had a daughter that died with her during the Boxer Rebellion, and then soon after, a remaining son died in the United States. Virtually every missionary family left a child’s gravestone in their provisional home, including the parents of Pearl Buck, who buried three children in China.

¹ Pruitt, Up from Zero, 66.
² Ibid., 8.
MISSIONARY MEMORIALS

Rev. T.A. Hearn and his family experienced birth and death early during their sojourn in China. On July 11, 1891, Kate Roberts Hearn gave birth to Roberts Alfred Hearn. Later that month, Kate Hearn died. Her death was chronicled by Laura Askew Haygood who taught at the Clopton and McTyeire Schools in Shanghai.

You will perhaps have heard, before this letter reaches you, the sorrowful news of the death of Kate Roberts Hearn in the morning of July 20th, leaving a baby boy nine days old. I have rarely ever known death come under circumstances more pathetic. She had been so happy over the coming of her baby. For a few days she seemed to be doing fairly well, when fever appeared, and with it one of the heated terms which we often have in Shanghai in July. For several days we were very anxious about her, but to her and to her husband it seemed almost impossible that she should die—they were so happy, and there seemed so much need for her. On Sunday afternoon there came a chill, followed by a quick rising of the fever, her temperature reaching 109, and life was quickly burned out. Everything that skill could suggest or love and tenderness execute was done in vain. Just before she lost consciousness she said to me, "I think I am going. It is all right; but I don't want to go—I don't want to leave the baby and Tom." We know, too, that it is "all right," but our hearts have been very sad. The baby is very well and promises to be a strong, healthy child. Mr. Hearn hopes to be able to keep it with him. She died at Mr. Hill's, in Shanghai. . . .

Missionary deaths were leveraged to diminish fear and establish trust in missionary service. Death was so distant from an individual’s home country that it earned a certain prominence, and that prominence required an approach that mitigated grief, instilled honor and gratitude, and reinforced missionary beliefs in the salvation of Christianity and the underlying foundation of domesticity.

No matter how brief her labors, or how unrewarding her time in missionary life, the woman could be counted on to expire with the hope that her passing would not

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discourage newcomers to the field, and with a heartfelt statement that she was glad that she had come to Africa, or Ceylon, or India, even if only to die there.\textsuperscript{4}

Not only was it important for missionary supporters to believe in the righteous cause that often ended in death, but the missionaries themselves had to believe in the salvation that death brought and the good they brought while they were on earth.

Letters, memoirs, magazines, and obituaries all marked the passing of missionary colleagues in a similar fashion. Emotions around the deathbed scene resonated with themes of reunion and redemption, which held meaning for both participants and magazine or obituary readers (missionary service contributors). Death also was a specific focus of the times: "The emotional catharsis of the death bed scene is one of the characteristic features of Victorian writing more generally."\textsuperscript{5} Haygood again wrote about Kate Hearn’s death, and placed emphasis on the presence of God for the dead and the living: “She passed into the light—he was left in the darkness—yet God was with him as with her—and he knew it.”\textsuperscript{6}

Kate Hearn was buried in the mission lot in the Shanghai cemetery; her husband, Rev. T.A. Hearn, dutifully maintained Christian domesticity and remarried twice after her death.

But not every account relayed the goodness of missionary death. In some cases, the climate and the proximity of disease painted a picture of China as a foul land that caused pain for missionary interlopers:

Mrs. Pruitt and Mrs. Halcomb both died before the move to Hwanghsien could be made. The work of opening that station was turned over to four young people who arrived in 1884, Rev. J. M. Joiner and his wife, Mary Eager Joiner, with Rev. and

\textsuperscript{4} Welter, “She Hath Done What She Could,” 630.

\textsuperscript{5} Haggis, “Imperial Emotions,” 698.

\textsuperscript{6} Haygood, \textit{Life and Letters}, 509.
Mrs. E. E. Davault. Mr. Davault developed tuberculosis from the severity of the climate for which his American garments were inadequate. Mr. Joiner also broke down, and in the fall of 1887 Mr. Davault was dead and the Joiners on their way back to America. Mrs. Davault sought a milder climate for her infant son.  

Death was a fact of life for the missionaries; how it was communicated provides clues to the author’s mindset. This matter-of-fact passage clearly blames the climate and location for illness and death. Other comments on missionary deaths from the Vegetarians (precursors to the Boxers) highlight both the quasi-humanity of the Chinese and Victorian prudishness:

Some of the Vegetarians were inclined to spare them but were ordered by their leader to carry out their orders. Had they been able to escape into the brushwood round, there seems little doubt they might have been saved. The great misfortune was that only two were dressed. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart, I learned from Kathleen Stewart, were not dressed.

This strange commentary acknowledges both the possible compassion of some of the attackers and shame on behalf of the unclothed dead; grief for the deceased was reserved for a different passage.

Memorials and obituaries of female missionaries emphasized different aspects of their life undertaking. In the memorials found in *Heathen Woman’s Friend*, the magazine of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, classified women into different types, according to the role they played in the missionary


service, and then fashioned obituaries that stressed the personal characteristic supportive of
the Christian message. Contributing women (women funding the service) were cast as
women that transcended their homemaker role to support the missionaries who brought
Christ to heathens; missionary women, who actually ventured far from home, would be
remembered for their domestic skills and feminine refinement; foreign converts were quickly
provided with the ultimate proof of conversion, a deathbed profession of faith that directly
led to salvation. In fact, obituaries were sometimes renamed “Promotions,” as in “promotion
into heaven.”

The deaths of two different individuals illustrate the use of memorials to frame the
missionary message—the death of Mrs. Phebe Elizabeth Potter Wentworth and Mrs. Mary
Jarman Hearn. Although an accomplished teacher in China, Mrs. Phebe Elizabeth Potter
Wentworth, was honored in her memorial because of her children:

It is one of the richest compensations for her loss that she leaves six robust children
to take her place in society and the Church. May these so live that in the great day she
may be able to approach the great white throne with, 'Here am I and those which thou
has given me.'

Mary Jarman Hearn, another example, was Rev. T.A. Hearn’s third wife. His second
wife, Magnolia Hearn died in Shanghai on January 30, 1917 of a stroke (paralysis) and heart

9 Anne Blue Wills, “‘Memorial Stones’: The Geography of Womanhood in Heathen Woman's
Friend, 1869-1879.” Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation 7, no. 2 (Summer 1997):

10 “Mrs. Wentworth,” Heathen Woman’s Friend (August 1874):702, quoted in Wills, “Memorial
Stones,” 255.
failure. She had been a missionary wife for 23 years. One year later, on December 14, 1918, Rev. T.A. Hearn, then age 55, married 36 year-old Mary Jarman in Shanghai. They had three children who were born in China and one upon their return to Rev. T.A. Hearn’s home in Arkadelphia, Arkansas in 1923. Rev. T. A. Hearn was 67 when Mary Jarman Hearn died at age 49 in 1931 while institutionalized for an unknown illness at the Arkansas State Hospital for Nervous Diseases in Little Rock City, Arkansas. Her local obituary recognized her as a woman of brilliance and goodness:

She has been ill for several months and her husband was with her when the end came. The deceased was one of Arkadelphia’s most brilliant women, and with her husband for eight years was a missionary of the Methodist Church in China, where she did much good to that nation in a religious way.

In this passage, Mary Jarman Hearn’s husband is recognized as the missionary and she is credited with doing “much good,” subtly underscoring the gender hierarchy of the times. As women, including missionary women, achieved a more professional status, and as illness and

11 “Report of the Death of an American Citizens,” National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group: R59-Entry 205; Box Number: 4649; Box Description: 1910-1929 China Various Case Files Not Included in Alphabetical Listing


13 The children of Mary Jarman Hearn and Rev. T. A. Hearn were Alexander M., James Andrew (who also is mentioned as Andrew H. and as Sanderson in Rev. T. A. Hearn’s obituary), Mary E., and Thomas A. 1930 United States Federal Census of Arkadelphia City, Clark County, Arkansas.

14 Mary Jarman Hearn also appears on a 1930 Census conducted at the Arkansas State Hospital for Nervous Diseases, which is assumed to be the “Little Rock Hospital” cited in her obituary. 1930 United States Census, Arkansas State Hospital for nervous Diseases, Little Rock City, Pulaski County, Arkansas; obituary found in Richter, Wendy, ed. Clark County, Arkansas: Past and Present (Arkadelphia, Arkansas: Clark County Historical Association, 1992).
death were reduced through better sanitation and health practices, the need for flowery tributes of self-sacrificed diminished.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} Cassidy, “Bringing the ‘New Woman’ to the Mission Site,” 195.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Nineteenth-century women became missionaries for a variety of reasons: some sought an expanded world or were moved by the plight of Chinese women, others dutifully followed their missionary husbands, while some were called to spread Christianity. American missionary women shared roots in the domesticity that placed them at the center of the home and pronounced them self-sacrificing. This hallowed domesticity raised women’s status while maintaining the gender hierarchy with men in the dominant role. This shared foundation exhibited itself in Westernization that missionaries brought to China, or as sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross observed in 1911: “…what the missionary was teaching was not so much the gospel but Western ideas of right and wrong.”

Examination of the actions and achievements of Charlotte “Lottie” Moon, one of the most famous female American missionaries of the time, offers insights into how the missionary woman narrative was shaped by the intermingled themes of domesticity, Westernization, and the concept of the “Other.” Lottie Moon was not the missionary society’s perfect candidate—she was fiercely independent, actively lobbied on behalf of women in the missionary society, and preached the Gospel directly to both the women and men of China. Yet the Southern Baptist church appropriated Lottie’s turn-of-the-century life to fit a motivational fundraising story for the twentieth century. “When she [Lottie Moon] died in 1912 after nearly forty years in China, she left an estate of approximately $250 and a

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1 Varg, Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats, 75.
battered trunk of personal effects. She also left a shining name, a spotless record, and a sterling idea for fundraising.\(^2\)

Lottie Moon, born in 1840, was a privileged child of Virginia gentry. Educated and adventurous, she was interested in missionary service early, but as a single woman, she was not asked to serve. When the Foreign Mission Board recognized that women could aid fundraising and evangelistic efforts, it began to allow single women to travel abroad. One of the first single women to accept the challenge was Moon’s younger sister Edmonia, who left in 1872 as the assistant to husband and wife missionaries Tarleton Perry Crawford and Martha Foster Crawford. One year later, Lottie Moon traveled to China, settling in Tengchow in the Northern Province of Shandong, where she worked, with only a few departures, for forty years.

Much is made of the fact that Moon was once engaged to Howell Toy, her professor at the Albermarle Female Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia (he subsequently served as a missionary in Japan and then became a Harvard professor). But that romance was less significant that the fact that she served in China as a single woman, often working alone, for the majority of her life. Modeling domesticity and a Christian lifestyle was a contradictory affair for Moon. She adopted native clothing and lived as the Chinese did when itinerating, but her home compound of “Little Crossroads” was quite Westernized: “She transformed her Tengchow house to a Virginia miniature where missionary guests loved to relax. She took cleanliness and all possible precautions along with her when living in vermin-infested, pig-

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sty condition as she traveled among the villages." Unlike the members of the China Inland Mission who followed the founder’s dictate and wore Chinese clothing (a convention that was often abandoned), Moon’s embrace of Chinese dress and manners stemmed from her personal need to be accepted as she preached: "Miss Moon left the comforts of the home at the Little Crossroads, dressed, ate, and lived in a manner to arouse as little suggestion of foreignism as possible." Moon did what she felt was required to bring the words of the Bible to the people of China, and that, perhaps, provided more authenticity to the actions; but she readily returned to Western norms in her own home.

Moon was sent to China, as were other female missionaries, to foster Christianity in the realm of Chinese women and children—the accepted “woman’s mission to woman” that was followed by the various denominations when they ministered overseas. Even before she left for China, Moon had chafed under the “prohibition against women seeming to teach, preach, or exercise authority over men.” She wanted, and she appropriated, the honor of preaching about the savior to women, children, and men, through her personal evangelism in the countryside, helped by her increasing grasp of Chinese language and customs: “She simply lived among the people as teacher and friend. She sat on a stone or pile of straw at the threshing floor of the village and chatted with the women as they came to prepare their grains.” In time, her preaching engaged anyone who would listen, man or woman. An avid

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4 Pruitt, *Up from Zero*, 44.


6 Ibid., 150.
writer, Moon wrote home about lack of funding, eventually suggesting that the women in the societies begin to collect contributions at Christmastime to fund female missionaries. The Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU), founded in 1888 as an auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, began that practice, but it was not until several years after Lottie Moon’s 1912 death (conveniently on Christmas eve) that the annual fundraiser was named “The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.”

Fundraising success led to ongoing adjustments to the growing myth of Lottie Moon, as noted by historian Elizabeth Flowers: “Southern Baptist women actively shaped, reshaped, and fought over the ‘real Lottie Moon’ because she affirmed their greatest hopes and aspirations, sometimes emphasizing traditional roles and other times challenging them.” Moon was first seen as a model of a domestic Victorian woman—self-sacrificing and attuned to the needs of others. She was a martyr for Christianity, even considered Christ-like in her death, which was popularly described as death from malnutrition: “Missionaries realized that she [Moon] had ceased to eat, in order to assure food for her Chinese sisters in the compound.” This theme of the compassionate nurturer echoes the elevated domestic status of nineteenth-century Christian women, while moderating Moon’s more autonomous lifestyle and dynamic evangelization activities.

After World War II, a transformed image of Moon was advanced by the Southern Baptists that better reflected the needs of a prosperous economy. Her roots as an obedient, 


genteel woman were emphasized and reinforced by citing her endeavors that emphasized the order of the times. Once again, Moon’s contradictions are on view:

Conforming to Chinese dress and lifestyle, she founded a church that attracted more than 100 members. Writing home, she urged other women to join her in evangelizing the Chinese people. On the other hand, when Moon did return to the United States on furlough, she embodied the Southern lady, following the gendered etiquette of addressing audiences of women only.⁹

Although her persona was used to support twentieth century concerns, Moon rejected the idea of the Chinese as the “Other” when she assimilated into Chinese life. But she re-embraced that concept on her rare return to the United States, when she abandoned Chinese dress and mannerisms and re-adopted Victorian appearance and protocols, including only speaking publicly to other women. In doing so, she effectively supported the Western concept of women as subservient to men (especially in the religious hierarchy) and accepted the woman’s role of outsider or “Other.” But Moon might not have considered this as a cost or betrayal to her sense of equality, because missionary service allowed her to savor an expanded and independent life of her own choosing in China.

Moon’s myth, at this point in time, confirmed individual prosperity and clarified the call to serve as having two components. First, was a call to abandon the personal comforts of one’s heritage in order to serve God—something that happened to a notable few, including individuals like Moon. Second was the call to support, or to put it more bluntly, contribute monetarily to the missionary service. Members of the broader Christian community were expected to provide financial support, but not to abdicate their affluence; it was understood that they were the chosen people and the Chinese and other unfortunates were the “Other.”

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After 1979, with the rise of both feminism and conservatism, Moon’s image became more divisive: “…pitting some women’s revolutionary “she-preacher” against others’ domesticated “cookie lady.””\(^\text{10}\) Regardless of the new scuffle, the use of Lottie Moon’s image had been incredibly successful for the WMU: in 1923/1924 the Christmas Offering raised $49,000, and by 2009 more than 3 billion dollars had been raised for the Southern Baptists missionary service.\(^\text{11}\) Lottie Moon had served the church well.

In the narrative of the nineteenth-century missionary women, foundational concepts that equate Christianity with Western values and lifestyle abound, overwhelming the individual variations of daily life found in a religious compound, a children’s school, or a mountain resort. Missionary Eva Jane Price, who brutally lost her life in China, understood the myriad issues implicit in her missionary role:

Prices' understanding of her role as a missionary was complex and sophisticated. She understood that she had been sent to evangelize in her own right in addition to being sent as a helper for her husband, but she also recognized contradictions in those dual roles. Price was determined in her belief that keeping the western-style home life was in itself an important part of her mission.\(^\text{12}\)

The missionaries’ efforts to educate the population, and abolish footbinding and other structures that maintained the lowly, submissive role of women, are considered some of their more tangible achievements. For missionary women like Kate Hearn, Magnolia Arnold Hearn, Mary Jarman Hearn, Henrietta Hall Shuck, Mary Aulick, Eva Jane Price, and even Lottie Moon, their work spreading Christianity inherently involved concepts of Western


\(^{12}\) Ashton, “Compound Walls,” 88.
living, including cleanliness, companionable marriage, and domestic ideals. The superiority of Christians was assumed, and for missionary women who were the keepers of the domestic throne, their Western lifestyle was tied to their Christianity, it was an integral part of who they were and where they came from, and it kept them separate from the Chinese “Other.” These missionary women were, according to historian Carol C. Chin, the “emissaries of beneficent imperialism, they came to bestow civilization on China, not to be transformed themselves.” The tour of a missionary woman’s life—from when she commenced her journey, to her marital choice, to her home and dress, to her work and play, and through to her death—illustrates how she came to convert but not to be converted.

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