

Dockor från The Door of Hope Mission, Shanghai

utdrag ur artikel från:

CHINA'S DOOR OF HOPE MISSION DOLLS

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In the 19th century, foreign powers were trying to exploit China. Many European countries as well as Japan and Russia had been trying to separate China into spheres of influence and gain exclusive trading rights. The American interests wanted access to the country's resources. This led to the famous "Boxer Rebellion" 1898-1901. The Chinese empress supported the "Boxer" uprising, which hoped to close China to all foreign influence. During this time anti-foreign feelings were directed at missionaries...

... attacked and slaughtered western missionaries and Chinese who had been converted to Christianity. Missionaries were forced to retreat to Shanghai for protection...

...Amid this backdrop of Chinese struggle for Confucian tradition and the resistance to entry to the modern world, some missionaries' interest turned to the plight of Chinese women. Missionary women were shocked by the custom of early betrothal of young women, the binding of women's feet, the kidnapping and slavery of girls and young women, the buying and selling of women as slaves and worse, as concubines and prostitutes, and the practice of killing unwanted female babies. Outraged by these conditions, five women of various Protestant backgrounds—an Episcopalian, a Baptist, a Methodist and a Presbyterian together with a China Mission woman—decided to open a mission to provide a safe haven for destitute young girls. These girls could not read or write; they had no skills. Shanghai police brought many girls to the mission. Girls as young as 5 years old were received there, and the mission also accepted young children who needed care...

...The Door of Hope Mission in Shanghai first opened in 1901. A Protestant mission, it was not associated with any specific denomination and received little financial support from churches. Instead, it received its primary funding from charitable groups such as the

Shanghai Rotary Club and the American Women's Club, as well as the Shanghai Municipal Council and donations from residents of Shanghai. The Mission began in a single rented house but grew to include five separate "homes"—The Receiving Home, First Year Home, Industrial Home, Children's Refuge, Love School and Hospital; here, anywhere from 125 to 200 girls were sheltered. Most girls stayed about two years, gaining self-esteem and skills that would make them self-supporting. Some chose to stay and help other girls; others went on to pursue their futures...

...During their first year in the mission, young women were taught to dress the Door of Hope Mission dolls. They were paid for dressing the wooden dolls, but more importantly, in the process they also learned to appreciate and be proud of their Chinese heritage. The dolls were designed to be dressed in the traditional costumes of the Chinese people. The doll heads were carved of pear wood by local carvers and attached to cloth bodies, which were stuffed with cotton. Some dolls came with carved hands, others with no hands at all. After 1914, some of the dolls had feet or shoes of carved wood. The heads were simply painted with color added only to the hair, eyes, brows and lips. Since they were individually carved, no two are exactly alike; each head is unique. Their costumes were completely made by hand in tiny, carefully executed stitches. Most of the clothing could be removed, and the dolls were authentically dressed in white cotton underwear before adding the outer garments. The dolls measured 12 inches or more for an adult, around 8 inches for a child and 6½ inches for a baby or other small child. The early dolls are usually a little taller than their later counterparts. By most counts there are 25 recognized models representing a varied cross section of Chinese life...

...Manufacture and sale of these dolls, as well as other knitted and embroidered articles of apparel and household goods, greatly contributed to the mission's income and kept it open. In 1940 Kimport dolls, an importer of foreign dolls, advertised 20 various Door of Hope Dolls. When Chinese communists came into power in 1949, the Door of Hope Mission moved to Taipei and doll production declined...