

***WOMEN'S WORK FOR WOMEN:
WOMEN MISSIONARIES IN 19TH CENTURY CHINA***

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ABSTRACT

Three young Australians, Annie Gordon and Nellie and Topsy Saunders, with eight English and Irish missionaries and family members, died in a massacre of British Anglican missionaries at Huashan, Fujian Province, China, on 1 August 1895. The Huashan Massacre was the most serious attack on British missionaries prior to the horrors of the Boxer Rebellion a few years later when thousands of Chinese Christians and more than two hundred foreign men, women and children of the missionary community were killed.

The murder of the three women filled the Australian and overseas press at the time but their story is barely known today. They chose a life of humanitarian service abroad rather than conform to the conservative and gender-biased world of the Australian 19th century evangelical Christian tradition.

The paper focuses on their lives in the Gutian (Kucheng) and Ping Nang Districts of Fujian Province China from late 1892 to mid-1895. It considers the setting of their work, both geographical and economic, their on-the-job training, including language and socialization, and touches on the role and leadership provided by the CMS/CEZMS mission 'mother', Mrs. Louisa Smyly Stewart.

The difficulties the missionaries encountered travelling as single women and their reactions to the food, housing and environment, the education of women and children and basic medical work are outlined from their own letters. The paper also discusses their personal relationships with other women, with European males and with their Chinese servants and clients as well as their perception of themselves as women, Australians, and evangelical Christians.

In addition to Nellie, Topsy and Annie, references are also made to another Australian, Amy Oxley, granddaughter of the explorer John Oxley and the famous Sydney parson, the Rev. Samuel Marsden. Amy was the first Australian woman to go to China after the murders. Another single woman missionary mentioned is Elsie Marshall, CEZMS, England, who was a very close friend of Topsy Saunders. Other women missionaries, Australian, British, and American, are mentioned in context.

WOMEN'S WORK FOR WOMEN: WOMEN MISSIONARIES IN 19TH CENTURY CHINA

Gutian City (also known as Kucheng, Kutien, Ku T'ien), the chief city of the Gutian administrative district of Fujian (Fukien) Province, was located in a densely populated upland valley surrounded by steep mountains.¹ The town was located about 90 kilometres northwest of Fuzhou (Foochow) and about forty kilometres northwards from the junction of the Gutian River with the Min River at the town of Shuikou.² The journey up the Min River from Fuzhou to Shuikou by small riverboats usually took about three days but could take more than a week in difficult weather and was altogether impossible when typhoons rolled in. From Shuikou to Gutian, single file along narrow footpaths, took a full day and sometimes even longer.³ It was a demanding environment geographically and climatically for the local people but especially so for the missionaries. Fujian Province made heavy personal demands upon them, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The Rev. Robert Stewart, Superintendent Missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) who was also the Fujian Province Corresponding Secretary of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMS), had oversight of Gutian and Ping Nang Districts with millions of people and thousands of villages and towns all of which could only be reached by foot.⁴ Stewart was the only British male missionary and single women carried out the bulk of the Anglican Church's missionary work in Fujian Province.⁵

Stewart was married to Louisa Smyly and together they had seven living children at the time of their death in 1895 suggesting at least some romantic moments. Robert Stewart's proposal of marriage to Louisa was utterly prosaic.⁶ He told her of his CMS appointment to China asking, 'Would you like to be a missionary?' followed by 'would you go to China?' to which she replied, 'Yes, I should' and finally the question, 'Will you go with me?'⁷ They arrived in Fuzhou in September 1876, not long after their marriage. In 1882 they returned to Britain after Robert contracted amoebic dysentery.⁸ They went back to

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- 1 There were three Protestant missionary societies in Gutian District in 1895. The British Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMS) worked as a single mission under the overall superintendence of the Rev. Robert Stewart, an independently funded missionary of the CMS. Robert and Louisa Stewart were the main driving force in the CMS invitation to the CEZMS, a mission of single women working among women, to come to Fujian. The third mission was the American Methodist Episcopal Church (North) Mission. At the time of the Huashan Massacre, the sole American missionary was Dr James J Gregory.
 - 2 The original site of Gutian is now under a large hydroelectric lake.
 - 3 With modern highways, the time of travel from Fuzhou to Gutian is less than three hours.
 - 4 *The Age*, Melbourne, 7 August 1895. Stewart was a Dublin University (Trinity College) law graduate and member of a well-to-do Anglo-Irish family. He was independently supported as a missionary.
 - 5 At the time of the massacre, the only other male foreigner was Dr. James J Gregory of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission, located within the town limits of Gutian. The British Anglican mission was located outside the town, on the other side of the Gutian River.
 - 6 Louisa Smyly was a younger daughter of a very distinguished Anglo-Irish family in Dublin.
 - 7 Eugene Stock, Reports Memorial Service, Kucheng Martyrs, Exeter Hall, 13 August 1895 *Church Missionary Gleaner*, London September 1895. Reports Memorial Service, Kucheng Martyrs, Exeter Hall, 13 August 1895.
 - 8 By this stage the couple had at least three sons and possibly their first daughter: Arthur Dudley born 8 October 1877; Philip Smyly, born 27 March 1879; James Robert born 7 January 1881 and probably Mildred Eleanor, born 4 September 1882. Three more children were born in Britain, Kathleen Louisa, born 29 April 1884, Herbert Norman, 1 August 1889, (died 2 August 1895 from wounds received at Huasang), Evan George, 27 March 1892, and the baby, apparently born in China, Hilda Sylvia, 24 June 1894, died of trauma, Foochow, 10 August 1895.

Fuzhou in 1887 and Robert briefly worked at Gutian with the Rev. William Banister until ill health again forced them to return to Britain, this time for further five year period of recuperation.⁹

In 1892 Stewart agreed to accompany Eugene Stock, the lay Editorial Secretary of the CMS, on a deputation to Australasia. His first sermon in Melbourne captured the imagination of the Saunders sisters and their mother. They immediately offered to the CMS mission in Fujian Province.¹⁰ They had responded just as impulsively to George Grubb's appeal for missionaries two years or so earlier but at that stage thought they would go with the CEZMS to India.¹¹ The Church Missionary Association of Victoria was formed during the Stock-Stewart visit and the local supporters were well aware of the Saunders' inexperience but accepted them upon the urging of Stock and Stewart.¹² They were certainly not, as Semple suggests about the single women recruited by the English China Inland Mission (CIM), 'unattractive' nor was that odd observation true of most of the women among the more than one hundred Australians who went to China with the CMS and CIM between 1890 and 1900.¹³

The acceptance of the Saunders by the Church Missionary Association of Victoria was contrary to the general principle of the Church Missionary Society that its single women missionaries should not be less than twenty-five years of age. It also ignored the Society's requirement that women undergo a course of training to prepare them for missionary service (See Appendix 1). The CMA of New South Wales, also formed in 1892 but with a local auxiliary history of nearly seventy years, had closer links with CMS in London and was well aware of the training requirements of the society (See Appendix 2).

Because of the residual effects of pietism as expressed in several generations of missionary writings, there has been a long tendency to ignore the normality of most missionaries. Gutian District was self-sufficient in food and basic necessities but the missionaries still hankered after quite mundane things.¹⁴ Sweets, or 'lollies', were items of deep emotional value to the expatriate 'British' community.¹⁵ Missionaries had to make other small adjustments.

9 Watson, Mary E, (1896), *Robert and Louisa Stewart in Life and in Death*, London, Marshall Bros, p 27. See the description of Stewart's illness by his friend, Rev. J S Collins, 'Reminiscences of Rev. R W Stewart', pp 57-59 in *The Dublin University Missionary Magazine*, 17 October 1895, Memorial Number, 'Massacre of Rev. Robert Stewart and family and companions in China.'

10 Stock, Eugene, (1896), Foreword to Watson 1896, op cit.

11 Millard, E C, (1893), *The Same Lord: An Account of the Mission Tour of the Rev. George C Grubb, MA, in Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand*, London, E Marlborough and Co.

12 Church Missionary Association of Victoria (CMSV) formed 1892. Not to be confused with the Church Missionary Society of Victoria (CMAV) formed 1859. Although the CMS name is used the CMSV had no connection with the CMS. It was originally a diocesan board of mission, founded in 1851 and adopted the CMS name because many of its founders had links to the CMSE. See Welch, Ian (1980), *Pariahs and Outcasts, Christian Missions to the Chinese in Australia*, MA (unpublished, Monash University and Welch, Ian, (2003), *Alien Son: The Life and Times of Cheok Hong CHEONG, 1851-1928*, PhD unpublished, Australian National University.

13 Semple, op cit, p 201. See Appendix 2.

14 The potential impact of foreign commercial activity on the people of Fujian Province needs to be seen in the context of the growth of the population during the first half of the 19th century. Ho Ping-ti suggests that the population was 300 million in 1800 and 430 million by 1850. Ho Ping-ti, (1998), 'In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Reenvisioning the Qing','' pp 123 –155 in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol 57 No 1, February 1998, pp 123 and 145. The connection between population growth and Chinese overseas emigration has been discussed in many places. In relation to Australia, the standard work is Wang Sing-wu, (1978), *The Organisation of Chinese Emigration, 1848-1888, with special reference to Chinese Immigration to Australia*, San Francisco, Chinese Materials Centre Inc. The issue is referred to in Welch, Ian (1980), *Pariahs and Outcasts, Christian Missions to the Chinese in Australia*, MA, Monash University.

15 'Lollies', an abbreviation of 'lollypops', is used in Australia for any form of sweets or candy. Amy Oxley, CMS, New South Wales, wrote to relatives in Victoria that she intended, like other missionaries, to import groceries from Australia. Amy Oxley, 'The Godown', Foo Chow, February 19th 1896. See Welch, Ian and Ellen Hope, (200), *Letters from China: Amy Oxley, Australian Missionary Nurse, 1895-1903*, (ebook, forthcoming).

Imagine us eating rice and milk for breakfast, and thoroughly enjoying it! Of course we had other things, such as eggs and bread, but we had tea instead of coffee. Now, if there is one thing on this earth that used to make me feel ill, it was tea for breakfast.¹⁶

Many everyday items Australians considered normal were available but western-style groceries were expensive and generally hard to come by.

Food: Almost the same as at home only buffalo milk and butter which is pure white in colour and something like very nice lard. Vegetables in season, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, potatoes.
Fruit: oranges and tasteless bananas. Most of the missionaries send home for groceries and I will do the same. Things are too dear out here.¹⁷

Europeans in China, whether British, American, or Australian, remained Europeans. 'Their attitudes towards the Chinese could be complex and contradictory, entangled . . . in the [foreigners] sense of superiority as well as their own cultural and gender identity.'¹⁸ Although many adopted Chinese costume missionaries were well aware that they did not become Chinese simply by adopting outward Chinese customs.¹⁹ In the Treaty Ports, in particular, the foreign expatriate community encouraged the maintenance of European modes of conduct even if the morality of many businesspeople left a good deal to be desired as far as the missionaries were concerned.

All missionaries had to spend their first year learning the local Chinese dialect.²⁰ It was a key task for the single women whose employment was centred on itinerating in the villages of inland China. Amy Oxley wrote:

Language: It is difficult and I do need the grace of God to learn it. I have a teacher, Ding Sing Ang, and I study between four and five hours a day. No one does more without in the end breaking down. It makes me feel very tired and not inclined for letter writing.²¹

The vast majority of the population of Fujian Province and virtually all the women and children had not seen foreigners before their villages were 'invaded' by missionaries.²² As Christian evangelistic activity spread throughout inland China after 1860 missionaries found rural society to be profoundly conservative and in the case of women, almost totally uninformed about life beyond the confines of the local village. Nellie Saunders told the Rev. E J Barnett, Secretary of the Church Missionary Association

16 Topsy Saunders, c 19 December 1893, in Berry, op cit, p 32.

17 Amy Oxley to Isabel Hope, 'Darriwill', Victoria, 19 February 1896.

18 Chin, Carole C, (2003), 'Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,' pp 327-354 in *Diplomatic History*, Vol 27 Issue 3, June 2003, p 327.

19 American missionary Hattie Yates Cody to sister Helen, 9 August 1895, cited in Chin op cit, p 327.

20 Topsy Saunders, c 19 December 1893, in Berry, op cit, p 32. The impact of this simple fact can be seen in Brotchie's accounts of Australian women missionaries of the China Inland Mission. They all served their careers in the same basic dialect areas, primarily Kiangsu Province. Brotchie, Phillip, (2003), *The Importance of the contribution of Australians to the penetration of China by the China Inland Mission in the period 1888-1953*, with particular reference to the work of Australian Women Missionaries, PhD unpublished, Deakin University.

21 Amy Oxley to Isabel Hope, 'Darriwill', Victoria, 19 February 1896.

22 Welch, Ian, ed, (2005), Rev. Robert Stewart and Mrs. Louisa Stewart, Letters from China, Church Missionary Society, Fujian Province, 1876-1895, (ebook, forthcoming). Stewart quotes the Rev. Llewellyn Lloyd, CMS missionary, Fujian Province: 'This was the first time a foreigner had been there, and the news soon spread. The first old man we met, holding up both hands in astonishment, exclaimed, 'Why, some of them arrive at the age of fifty or sixty years, do they?' This was a compliment to my supposedly gray hair! He was more dumbfounded still to hear I was only thirty. The villagers treated us with marked courtesy, and not once did one hear an objectionable expression. Politeness like this is not unusual in remote places away from the high roads.'

of Victoria that: 'the men, who travel about a good deal, had seen foreigners before, and had heard the Jesus doctrine, but the women had not, so were very shy at first.'²³

Foreign Protestant missionaries arrived in increasing numbers after the Treaty of Tientsin (1858) was interpreted by mission agencies, incorrectly in the view of British diplomats, as giving them free access to the interior of China.²⁴ Growing recognition of the need for ministry of women to women in the 1880s and 1890s resulted in a new level of reporting of Chinese society, particularly through extensive missionary publishing activities. The primary objective of the foreign missions was the conversion of the heathen and whatever they did, including providing elementary schooling for boys and girls, special training for adult women and basic medical services for women and children, was subordinate to that goal.²⁵ Women missionaries were strongly attached to the ideology of 'women's sphere', i.e., that home and family matters were the centre of conventional female life.²⁶ Their focus on the home reflected social conservatism in European cultures but equally respected Chinese values that inhibited women taking up an open-air preaching ministry, whether in the streets or in public preaching places.

Western awareness of China, from perhaps the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century, centred on decorative arts and architecture, producing 'Chinoiserie' effects and moving progressively into respect for China's artistic culture.²⁷ By the mid-nineteenth century a more analytical approach emerged as male generated missionary literature laid the intellectual foundations of the modern 'Asian Studies' movement.

The arrival of European women added the writings of single women missionaries now highlighted as part of contemporary gender studies.²⁸ The process by which many middle class women emerged from the closet of domesticity in the 19th century and became the majority of missionaries at home and abroad

23 Nellie Saunders to Rev. E J Barnett, from Hwa Sang (Huashan), 24 June 1895, in *The Weekly Times*, Melbourne, 10 August 1895.

24 The Treaty of Tientsin was not interpreted by the British Government or its diplomatic service to authorise missionaries to live anywhere in China. The access granted to foreigners was intended to facilitate commerce, not evangelisation. There are good accounts of the kind of cultural challenges that arose when missionaries arrived in new locations in a pamphlet published by the Rev. Robert Stewart to his friends in the United Kingdom seeking funds for his network of day schools. Robert W Stewart, 28 August 1893, Dublin attached to letter to Wigram, CMS London, 31 May 1894. CMS East Asia Archives Microfilm 1915, National Library of Australia, Reel 244. See Welch, Ian, Ed, (2005), Rev. Robert Stewart and Mrs. Louisa Stewart, *Letters from China, Church Missionary Society, Fujian Province, 1876-1895*, (ebook, forthcoming).

25 The same issue is reported from Canada. Gewurtz, Margo Spelsman, "*The Cinderella of Mission Work: Canadian Missionaries and Educational Modernization in North Henan, 1890-1925*", Toronto, York University.

26 White, Ann, (1988), 'Counting the Cost of Faith: America's Early Female Missionaries,' pp 19-30 in *Church History*, Vol 57 No 1, March 1988, p 19. A contemporary insight into the relationship between home, women and conversion is Robert, Dana L, (2004), 'Women in World Mission: Controversies and Challenges from a North American Perspective,' pp 50-61 in *International Review of Mission*, Vol 93 No 68, January 2004.

27 For two helpful discussions of the impact of Chinoiserie, see David Porter, (1996), 'Writing China: Legitimacy and Representation 1606-1773,' pp 98-122 in *Comparative Literature Studies* Vol 33 No 1. Hsia, Adrian, (1998), *The Vision of China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Hong Kong, Chinese University Press.

28 Hunter, Jane, (1984), *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in turn-of-the-century China*, New Haven, Yale University Press.

and leaders in social reform at home has been the subject of many studies in recent years.²⁹ By the 1890s, nearly two-thirds of missionaries in China were single women. Their stories opened new considerations to the meeting of East and West. Archdeacon Richard Wolfe of Fuzhou, the senior CMS missionary in Fujian province, was insistent on the 'headship' of males, and his views were shared by most of his colleagues but they appreciated, as did almost all missionary societies by the 1880s, that only women could be effective in evangelizing and working with women.³⁰ Two decades later the CMS Committee wrote:

As you are aware, the Committee have recently in many ways demonstrated their view of the immense importance of women's work in the Mission Field. They hold that no mission is completely worked until the equal evangelism of the sexes is possible.³¹

A person, anonymously labelled 'Anglo-Chinaman' wrote a contemptuous reference to the 'new woman.'

I have lived for several years in [China], not in a missionary capacity, and have had many opportunities of gauging the feelings of the Chinese towards missionaries in general, and more particularly towards female missionaries. To put it bluntly, female missionaries are looked upon by the Chinese as ladies whose virtue is not exactly above suspicion. To the Chinese mind (which does not know of 'the new woman') the idea of respectable women going about the country and pushing into strange houses is inconceivable—to say nothing of celibate men and women living in the constant intercourse of a mission.³²

Other writers were equally critical of missionaries, male and female, among them Ernest George 'Chinese' Morrison, an Australian journalist who became the London *Times* China correspondent and an adviser to Chinese President Yuan Shih-kai.³³ A reviewer of Morrison's 'An Australian in China'³⁴ commented:

29 Three Anglo-American examples of women and missionary work are: Davins, Delia, (1992), 'British Women Missionaries in Nineteenth Century China,' pp 257-271 in *Women's History Review*, Vol 1 No 2, 1992. Rowbotham, Judith, (2000), 'Soldiers of Christ?' Images of Female Missionaries in late Nineteenth-Century Britain: Issues of Heroism and Martyrdom', pp 82 ff in *Gender and History*, Vol 12, Issue 1, April 2000. Semple, Rhonda Anne, (2003), *Missionary Women: Gender, Professionalism, and the Victorian Idea of Christian Missions*, Rochester, NY, Boydell Press. Australian writing is less prolific but include Howe, Renate, (2001), 'The Australian Student Christian Movement and Women's Activism in the Asia-Pacific Region, 1890s-1920s', pp 311-323 in *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol 16 No 36, 2001. Johnston, Anna, (2003), *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; Allen, Margaret, (2000), 'White Already to Harvest': South Australian Women Missionaries in India,' pp 92-107 in *Feminist Review*, Vol 65 No 1, Summer 2000. Gooden, Rosalind M, (2004), *Five Barley Loaves: An icon for Australasian Baptist Missionary Work*. Paper Presented to the First ANU Missionary Conference, 2004; Grimshaw, Patricia, and Elizabeth Nelson, (2001), ' Empire, 'the Civilising Mission' and Indigenous Christian Women in Colonial Victoria,' pp 295-309 in *Australian Feminist Studies*, Vol 16 No 36, 2001. A recent Australian addition is O'Brien, Anne, (2005), *God's Willing Workers: women and religion in Australia*, Sydney, University of New South Wales Press. This is only a sample selection and the writer apologises to those omitted for no other reason than space.

30 For many conservative Christians, most notably in the United States, the issue of 'headship' in church, family and society is grounded in interpretations of the Bible and reinforced by tradition. The arguments are too complex for discussion here. It continues to be influential in the Christian Church. See the discussion in Robert, op cit.

31 Note from Instructions to Missionaries Committee, 5 July 1898. CMS East Asia Archives Microfilm 1915, National Library of Australia, Reel 235. This reflected the contribution of Louisa Stewart who, through her husband, was instrumental in the creation of a Women's Committee as an advisory body to the Fujian Sub-Conference in 1894. In October 1898 a Circular on Women's Work was sent by the Women's Department of CMS to all CMS women missionaries.

32 *The Saturday Review*, London, 17 August 1895, p 208.

33 The standard history of Morrison is Pearl, Cyril, (1968), *Morrison of Peking*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson. Morrison's family were Presbyterians who, among other things, contributed to the education of Australia's leading Chinese, Cheok Hong CHEONG. Welch, Ian (1980), *Pariahs and Outcasts, Christian Missions to the Chinese in Australia*, MA, Monash University. Welch, Ian, (2003), *Alien Son: The Life and Times of Cheok Hong CHEONG, 1851-1928*, PhD unpublished, Australian National University. See also Welch, Ian, (1995), 'The Chinese Question: The Church, Conversion and the

Mr. Morrison is not an admirer of missionary work in China, and has some excellent stories to tell of the faults and failings of some of the weaker brethren. On the this question generally, it is again to be remarked, he adopts the superficial view of a passer-by, and repeats the opinions which are current among the quidnuncs on the Shanghai bund, who know about as little of the subject as he himself was able to gather.³⁵

Most critics of missions had no personal knowledge of the activities of itinerating women missionaries and still less of the attitudes of the Chinese among whom they worked. The truth was that women missionaries could not 'push into' homes, but were invited and treated with courtesy.³⁶ Chinese natural courtesy was no doubt stimulated by the entertainment value of a foreign guest.³⁷

Among the Australians who first went to China in the late 1880s and early 1890s were Ada B Nisbet (1889) and in 1891, Emilie Stevens. Both women were Tasmanians and were financially supported by the Missionary Committee of the Tasmanian Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA).³⁸ Later in 1891 a Queenslander, Annie Gordon, joined Ada and Nisbet as workers with the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, a body formed in in 1880 from earlier British Zenana (women for women) societies.

Nellie and Topsy Saunders arrived in Fuzhou in November 1893 as the first missionaries of the Church Missionary Society of Victoria, although like other Australians, they would have been seconded to the CEZMS.³⁹ Although they were not consulted, their future location had been discussed by the 'Sub-Conference', i.e., the all-male governing body of the Church Missionary Society in Fujian acting on advice from the subordinate Women's Committee.⁴⁰ The Sub-Conference decided that the Saunders' would work with Miss Goldie of the CMS at Lo Nguong, a coastal location north of Fuzhou.⁴¹ Their decision to go instead to Gutian with the Stewarts was regarded by the Rev. John Martin as a blatant

Chinese in Nineteenth Century Australia', Paper presented at a conference, Studying Christianity in Australia, Macquarie University, Sydney, 12 July 1995. Welch, Ian (1995), 'The Anglican Chinese Mission in Victoria, Australia, 1860-1898', *St Mark's Review*, No 161, Autumn 1995, pp 26-30. Welch, Ian (1997), 'Cheok Hong Cheong: 1851-1928', *St Mark's Review*, No 171, Spring 1997, pp 23-26. Welch, Ian, (2004), 'Cheok Hong Cheong and the Cultural Fabrication of Identity, 1851-1928,' Paper presented at a Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Australian National University, Canberra, 29 June – 2 July 2004.

- 34 Morrison, G E., (1895). *An Australian in China: being the narrative of a quiet journey across China to Burma*, London, Horace Cox.
- 35 *The Saturday Review*, London, 14 September 1895, p 349. *The Bulletin*, Sydney, Saturday, 24 August 1895. The Journal prided itself on its anti-religious, anti-monarchist social criticism. See Rolfe, Patricia, (1980), *The Journalistic Javelin, An Illustrated History of The Bulletin, 1880-1980*, Sydney, Wildcat Press. Although often quoted as 'the bushman's bible' and drawn upon as a major reference source in Australian history, the publishing runs suggest that it was primarily a Sydney paper, with a peak print run of 20,000 copies in 1881 and an average print of around 15,000.
- 36 Constance Florence Gordon-Cumming, whose meanderings during the 19th century included the present site of Canberra, noted during her tour of China in 1879-1880 that the presence of foreigners resulted in invitations to visit people in their homes were civil and frequent. Gordon-Cumming, Constance Frederica, (1886), *Wanderings in China*, Edinburgh, W Blackwood & Sons, pages 104 and 109.
- 37 *Ibid*, pp 104;109.
- 38 Mrs. George Fagg (nee Cooper) was the driving force behind the YWCA missionary committee in Tasmania. As Margaret Cooper she served as a missionary with the Female Education Society where she was instrumental in the conversion of Mrs. Ahok, a famous figure in Fujian Christian history in Fuzhou. See an account of Mrs. Ahok in Burton, Margaret E, (1912), *Notable Women of Modern China*, New York, Fleming H. Revell. Project Gutenberg EBook #14492).
- 39 See Appendix 2 for a list of Australian and New Zealand women who served in China to c 1901.
- 40 Fujian Province was a little unusual in having a subordinate Women's Committee in which wives and single women missionaries focused on specific issues relating to women's work. All decisions were subject to the endorsement of the Sub-Conference. Robert and Louisa Stewart were leaders in establishing the committee.
- 41 There are a number of CEZMS women for whom first names have not been identified as progress continues in reading the CEZMS archives. The usual custom in 19th century society was that the older sister was always Miss Saunders whilst the second and later girls were known as Miss Topsy, etc.

rejection of the Conference's authority.⁴² It is possible that Stock, well aware of their naivety and inexperience, advised the sisters that Gutian, under Robert and Louisa Stewart's guardianship, was the better place for them.⁴³ A determining factor in their future location, with the CEZMS, was the definite preference of Nellie and Topsy for Chinese dress, something Miss Goldie of the CMS would not have permitted.⁴⁴ The Stewarts strongly supported the wearing of Chinese costume. What might seem at first sight a minor issue was a continuing source of tension between Anglican missionaries in Fujian.

Topsy, Nellie and the other young Australians shared the deep conversion experience reported again and again in the biographies of 19th century evangelical missionaries.⁴⁵ There was a continuum between conversion and subsequent lifestyle. This centred on personal 'holiness' or 'pietism' and missionary work.⁴⁶ A downside of the holiness movement, incidentally, was the tendency to seek to impose narrow moral boundaries on society as a whole, a trend known in Australia as 'wowsersism.' In the case of Nellie and Topsy Stewart, holiness meant giving up young people's parties and dancing. Nellie went a step further. A talented pianist, she resolved that she would only play sacred music. The missionary work arose as people tried to share their conversion experience and changed life-style with others. For some this generated concern for the relief of poverty and suffering at home while for others the drive was to convert the 'heathen' abroad.

The impact of an early Keswick type 'holiness' convention held at Brighton, England, in May 1875 was as influential on the future direction of Louisa Stewart's life as her original conversion.⁴⁷ The Saunders came under the influence of the Australian element of the Keswick movement through the Rev. H B Macartney, a prominent figure in both the British and Australian Keswick movement and the leading Victorian evangelical figure of the 1890s.⁴⁸

Despite the responsibilities of marriage, an ailing husband, and a divided family with her three older boys in England Louisa Stewart was an active missionary.⁴⁹ Elsie Marshall of the CEZMS wrote to her father:

42 Rev. John Martin, 26 December 1893, CMS East Asia Archives Microfilm 1915, National Library of Australia, Reel 244. Miss Goldie, from Bath, England, was the sister of Mrs. Martin. Stock, Eugene, (1899), *The History of the Church Missionary Society*, London, Church Missionary Society, Vol III, p 368. When Martin's wife died, Miss Goldie and Martin returned with the children to Bath, England.

43 See discussion of Stock and Stewart's visit to Australia and New Zealand in 1892 in Welch, Ian, (2004), Nellie, Topsy and Annie, A Paper presented at the First ANU Missionary Conference, Canberra, October 2004: online at http://rspas.anu.edu.au/pah/TransTasman/papers/Welch_Ian.pdf

44 Australian missionaries in China were almost all committed to the wearing of Chinese dress in preference to European costume, believing that it reduced barriers between people of different cultures. The strong influence of the Rev. Dr. James Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission was felt throughout Victorian evangelical circles. Nearly half of CIM Australian missionaries were from Victoria and about a half of these were Anglicans who shared their views with

45 A very good account of the conversion process among 19th century evangelicals is found in Flynt, Wayne and Gerald W Berkley, (1997), *Taking Christianity to China: Alabama Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom*, Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press. See also White, op cit, p 20.

46 'Holiness' is an important strand of conservative evangelical theology but too complex to explore further in this paper.

47 The importance of conversion among women evangelicals, as well as the impact of Keswick and the 'holiness' movement among Anglican evangelicals is discussed in Mathers, Helen, (2001), 'The Evangelical Spirituality of a Victorian Feminist: Josephine Butler, 1828-1906,' pp 282-312 in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol 32 No 2, April 2001. A brief summary of the origins of the Keswick movement is at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Higher_Life_movement.

48 Personal communication from Dr Robin Ryan, Historian, St James' Anglican Church, Caulfield, 17 June 2004.

49 'Since mission policy [often] required the parents to send the child home for education . . . the mother's life was a series of tearful partings, . . . The Missionary's Farewell'. Welter, Barbara, (1978), 'She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth Century America,' pp 624-638 in *American Quarterly*, Vol 20, No 3, Special Issue: Women and Religion, winter 1978, p 629.

Mrs. Stewart is indefatigable; she teaches her own children and the third class in the boys' school every day, and now the women's school is being built up so fast; it is just close to us in the compound, and Mrs. Stewart will have the charge of that too.⁵⁰

During the family's lengthy periods of leave in Britain Louisa helped in building an interest in China within the YWCA movement in Ireland.⁵¹ Her influence, inspired by the philanthropic activities of her mother in Ireland and supported by money solicited from family and friends, created a large network of village primary schools for poor children across Fujian Province.⁵² Louisa was normally elected chairperson of the CMS Fujian Women's Committee, an arrangement that was so successful that the creation of women's committees in all missions was mandated by the CMS.

By 1897 the CMS/CEZMS had 42 single women missionaries in Fujian Province, an increase of twenty-five percent over the previous year.⁵³ A number of the women were recruited from Ireland, and several, Irish and Australian, were sponsored by Young Women's Christian Association missionary committees.⁵⁴ Nellie held Louisa Smyly Stewart in some awe. 'One or two of the people here are unusually clever and gifted. Mrs. Stewart, of course, heads this list—no one here can hold a candle to her in any way—and she is by far the best Chinese speaker we have.'⁵⁵ The Rev. H S Phillips described Louisa as having: 'a peculiarly sympathetic nature, which made her a real mother in Ku-cheng; she seemed so essentially to make her own the troubles of another.'⁵⁶ Louisa Stewart took the inexperienced Saunders sisters into her home as a mother figure and chaperone.⁵⁷ Nellie said that Mrs. Stewart was: 'one of the very sweetest women you ever saw.'⁵⁸

Her influence on her husband was strong although hidden behind the 19th century domestic conventions of male family headship. Stewart was described by a CMS medical missionary, Dr. Birdwood Van Sommeren Taylor, as the 'one man in whom they [CEZMS ladies] have confidence' but the male-focussed assessment ignores the role that Louisa played in Stewart's commitment to women.⁵⁹ Archdeacon Wolfe, the senior CMS missionary in Fujian, thought nothing of intervening in CEZMS affairs although he had no direct authority over the CEZMS women. On one occasion, he told the British Consul in Fuzhou that he should not issue internal passports to women missionaries who wore Chinese

50 Marshall, op cit, p 121.

51 Young Women's Christian Association of Ireland, *Annual Report 1887*, Dublin.

52 Macfee, K J and F I Codrington, (1927), *Eastern Schools and Schoolgirls*, London, Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, p 78. See Smyly, 1976, op cit. A list of Irish subscribers to Stewart's Day Schools in Fujian Province is given in the attachments to a pamphlet published by the Rev. Robert Stewart to his friends in the United Kingdom seeking funds for his network of day schools. Robert W Stewart, 28 August 1893, Dublin attached to letter to Wigram, CMS London, 31 May 1894. CMS East Asia Archives Microfilm 1915, National Library of Australia, Reel 244. The money raised for the schools was remitted to Louisa's sister in Dublin and forwarded direct to the Stewarts in Gutian. The money did not go through the CMS financial system. Stewart gave an audited statement to the Fujian CMS Sub-Conference each year.

53 Statistical Table in *The Chinese Recorder*, August 1897, p 365.

54 Irish YWCA members worked with CMS, CEZMS, the Female Education Society, the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission, the China Inland Mission, the Presbyterian Zenana Mission, the Medical Mission, the British Syrian Schools, the North West America Mission, the Mission to Lepers, the South American Mission and many others. Young Women's Christian Association, *Annual Report, 1893*, Dublin, pp 28-29. Several CEZMS workers from Australia were sponsored by the Missions Committee of the Hobart YWCA but all records were lost in the 1930s. Barnes, Irene H, (c1896), *Behind the Great Wall: The Story of the C E Z M S Work and Workers in China*, London, Marshall Bros, p 167.

55 Nellie Saunders in Berry, op cit, p 194.

56 Rev. Hugh Stowell Phillips, op cit, November 1895, p 528.

57 Turner, H F, (c 1896), *His Witnesses Ku-cheng, August 1, 1895*. London, Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co, Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, p 14.

58 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 98.

59 Dr B Van Sommeren Taylor to Baring Gould, CMS London, CMS East Asia Archives Microfilm 1915, National Library of Australia, Reel 244.

dress, the preference of CEZMS women.⁶⁰ It is not surprising that the correspondence between Fujian and London reveals considerable tension between Stewart and Wolfe.

The key role of single women Anglican missionaries in Fujian Province is shown in the accompanying table.

Table 2
Protestant Mission Statistics
Fujian, 1895

Mission	Missionaries		Chinese	Members
	Male	Wives	Single	
American Board (Congregational)	16	8	2	1102
American Reformed (Presbyterian)	7	8	7	1187
English Presbyterian	10	6	7	1251
UK CMS/CEZMS (Anglican)	13	7	39	6540
UK London Missy Soc (Congregl)	4	3	6	2034
US Methodist Episcopal	9	6	13	4898

Source: *The Chinese Recorder*, November 1896, p 530)

In most missions older women usually cared for younger (as well as more experienced for less experienced) and the women shared rooms when travelling together. Shared accommodation was unavoidable because there was rarely an alternative but it was also a safeguard against unwanted approaches from males. A non-missionary traveler, Constance Gordon-Cumming wrote of a stay in a village inn:

Very often the only sleeping room of a village hotel is a loft to which access is obtained by a rickety ladder. It is so low in the roof that an average sized man cannot stand upright . . . every corner from which a glimpse of the foreigner can be obtained is eagerly secured, and every detail of washing, dressing, praying, eating, is a subject of keen interest to the spectators.⁶¹

The work undertaken by the CMS and CEZMS missionaries in Fujian Province involved constant itinerating, i.e., making visits to village after village seeking opportunities to talk about the Christian faith and seeking to recommend that faith through acts of community service, notably simple medical services. Everything needed had to be carried, including their beds. Topsy Saunders reported:

You would laugh to see the caravan going along, consisting of two chairs, and four ragged coolies, a *dang-dang* (load man) and our own coolie; it seems quite a regiment to take with one, but it can't be helped, because going out for a week we have to take so many things, and among them our beds.⁶²

Itineration involved long and difficult travel by footpath, single file, as there were no roads of any kind. Travellers in Gutian District rarely exceeded 500 metres or so in an hour compared to normal walking speed of about five kilometres an hour on level ground. Nellie reported that the distance from Gutian to Sek Chek Du was twenty kilometres and that she preferred to walk rather than endure a sedan chair.⁶³ The motion of a sedan chair, as it swung sideways on the long carrying pole encouraged travel sickness. The passenger's forward and backward tilting position motion as the bearers moved up and

60 Copy of Memorandum sent to Rev. W Banister by Miss Burroughs and Miss Newcombe, Monday Eve, 18th January 1896, CMS East Asia Archives Microfilm 1915, National Library of Australia.

61 Gordon-Cumming, op cit, p 104.

62 Topsy Saunders in Berry, op cit, p 92.

63 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 159. The distance is confirmed by Stewart, *The Age*, Melbourne, 18 June 1895.

down the steep mountain paths and discomfort was as bad.⁶⁴ If the chair was open to avoid claustrophobia and the humidity associated with a closed sedan chair there was a risk of over-exposure to the sun.

May 1894—We started this morning, at 8 a.m., for Gang Ka, where we have just now arrived, at 1.30 p.m. It was beautiful coming along the road this morning, if one can call the narrow path a road. In some places it was so narrow that the chair filled the whole width, and just then we were sure to meet a string of men carrying tea, and great would be the exclamations in passing. We admire the way they crawl over the most awful places with the chair swinging over a paddy field a good way below. You would laugh to see the caravan going along, consisting of two chairs, and four ragged coolies, a dang-dang (load man) and our own coolie; it seems quite a regiment to take with one, but it can't be helped, because going out for a week we have to take so many things, and among them our beds.⁶⁵

Their letters show that they were far from the feeble and fainting women of so much of 19th century literature. Topsy wrote:

We started this morning, at 8 a.m., for Gang Ka, where we have just now arrived, at 1.30 p.m. It was beautiful coming along the road this morning, if one can call the narrow path a road. In some places it was so narrow that the chair filled the whole width, and just then we were sure to meet a string of men carrying tea, and great would be the exclamations in passing. We admire the way they crawl over the most awful places with the chair swinging over a paddy field a good way below.⁶⁶

Upon arrival the women waited to be invited into a house by someone attracted by their foreignness—and that was inevitable. It did not matter very much whether the missionary was in the street or in a house—everyone wanted to observe foreigners at close quarters. Once invited into a home, the women of the family cared for the foreign women as best they could but were rarely able to stop neighbours crowding into the house not so much to listen as simply to stare at the remarkable sight. Annie Gordon wrote:

In itinerating from village to village there is a great deal to try and discourage one, but the encouragements are greater. Sometimes the people will crowd in and shout and scream at the top of their voices so that it is utterly impossible to make oneself heard. Sometimes the men and boys will not go away and let us talk to the women . . . In other places the people welcome you, but will listen to anything but the doctrines of Jesus Christ, and this is harder to bear than anything else.⁶⁷

Every missionary in China sooner or later mentioned the inveterate curiosity of the Chinese:

Just about noon we passed through one village, rather a large one, and immediately there was a crowd around us—men, women, and children—whose curiosity was something astonishing. Frances was with us, and Mrs. Stewart, and they talked to them. I had on my thick woolen gloves, and presently I pulled one off, which was greeted with a chorus of admiration. I presented it to one lady to try on, which she did with great satisfaction. We could only grin at them, but they seemed very pleased with us. One thing one has to remember is this, that in China you must not have a waist. They think an Englishwoman's figure is nothing more or less than shocking. It is much the

64 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 77.

65 Berry, op cit, p 99.

66 Topsy Saunders in Berry, op cit, p 99.

67 Turner c 1896, op cit, p 52.

same to them as if we were to see a lady parading the street in tights; so you must wear your things very loose.⁶⁸

The local people had no hesitation in submitting their female visitors to intense questioning, frequently of a very personal nature centering on the eccentricity of being single and living away from home and parents.

How old are you? Where are your parents? How many children have you? What makes your face so white? Why are your feet not bound? How much did your dress cost? Who made it?⁶⁹

Both the Saunders sisters commented about their reception as they moved around the countryside.

It's quite polite to ask every one you meet where they are going, and they all ask us where we come from, where going, what to do, how old we are, and anything else they happen to think of which may be of personal interest, but they are all such nice, friendly people, I do love them so; it's just lovely going about in the country. Every one is always so glad to see us; of course they stare and make remarks, but that can hardly be wondered at, and we are treated much better by these heathen than many so-called Christians treat them.⁷⁰

Robert Stewart described Topsy's work at Sek Chek Du, with her close friend, Elsie Marshall: 'She has women's classes, girls' and boys' schools, a little dispensary and any amount of visiting; people coming to her and she going to them.'⁷¹ There is no suggestion of any pressure applied by the young women that constituted 'pushing' their values and views on unwilling listeners. Amy Oxley wrote to her cousin Isabel Hope in Victoria that:

5 A.M. Fine, sun rising, hot. 8 a.m. very hot but we must start. Miss Searle⁷² and I are off to Murai Dea. First thing I find two of the coolies are poor miserable opium smokers. They assure us they can carry and I assure them that this hot day I cannot walk. We start and have come to the first stop just outside the village wall. There are 13 very sparsely dressed boys around my chair, when we do stop we sometimes long for fresh air. I often have to pray about this matter, sometimes a feeling comes over me that I cannot bear to be stared at. There they stand and look at you over from head to foot and look and look. It is an opportunity to 'Tell the Story' but alas sometimes one is so weary, and alas sometimes one feels as if no words would come.⁷³

The missionaries were troubled by the circumstances of Chinese women but realised that they could not challenge cultural traditions head on. Nellie Saunders wrote:

In the background we saw a most wretched object in the shape of a daughter-in-law—I mean one of those wretched creatures who are engaged when babies, and who come to live in their future

68 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, pp 40-41. See also comments by Rev. Llewellyn Lloyd, CMS Missionary, Fujian, during a visit to a small coastal village of A-Cai. 'The people crowded round me, and I resigned myself to my fate. I knew what was coming . . . it is a very real trial to me to be overhauled and mauled by a crowd on a hot June morning, and to answer with perfect equanimity a thousand questions, each more extraordinary than the one before; to have every garment priced and felt by every hand that can reach it . . .' cited in Welch, Ian, ed, (2005), *Rev. Robert Stewart and Mrs. Louisa Stewart, Letters from China, Church Missionary Society, Fujian Province, 1876-1895*. (Robert Stewart was the superintending missionary at Gutian).

69 Hook, Marion, (c1900) *'Save Some': CEZMS Work in Fuh-Kien*, London, Church of England Zenana Missionary Society/Marshall Bros, p 27.

70 Berry, op cit, p 100.

71 Rev. Robert Stewart to Rev. E J Barnett, Melbourne, *The Age*, Melbourne, 7 August 1895. Unlike Nellie, who made language study her first priority, the younger Topsy wanted to get out and about and to pick up the language through daily contact. Topsy's health was a constant concern and there is some indication that she feared she might be sent home before achieving her dream of being a successful evangelist.

72 Miss Minna Searle, CMSV, Tasmania, Australia. Arrived in China 1896. Retired 1921..

73 Amy Oxley, from Deng Doi, 17 May 1899.

husband's house. I never saw anything so wretched as she was—never. You wouldn't believe that people with hearts could allow a girl as ill as she looked to work and go about. Her face was a sort of green colour, with an expression of utterly hopeless misery on it; her tiny bound feet looked large when compared with the thinness of the skin that appeared above them through her battered clothes. She is dying, I am sure. They all know it, too, quite well, and say that they are going to wait till she dies, and then get another girl for the man. Isn't it dreadful?⁷⁴

Annie Gordon mentioned a woman whose husband, an opium eater, used to drag her out of church services by her hair, beat her, and burn her Christian books, remarking that nobody would intervene in an argument between husband and wife.⁷⁵ Nellie Saunders commented on the way in which Chinese names reflected the status of women:

One of them is named Lek Muoi, which means 'sixth little sister.' He is a great broad shouldered strapping creature, and to be calling him Lek Muoi seems the height of absurdity. The reason of this peculiarly inappropriate title is this—that when a little boy is born the parents wish to keep him from evil as much as possible, so they frequently give the boys some absurd name like that, so that the evil spirits will be deceived, and won't try to hurt the youngster, or worse than that, take him away. They think the spirits don't like girls, so very often they are called 'Muoi' which means little sister. One of the Kuniongs' men is called Mo Miang, which means 'no name,' and another man who comes sometimes—a nice man he is, too—is called 'stupid old woman.'⁷⁶

The interest of local people was encouraging to the foreign missionaries but it always involved a total lack of privacy. Nellie Saunders wrote, 'It was very nice in that awful heat to have a room to oneself and be able to undress properly.'⁷⁷ For single women of modest, even prudish, backgrounds the fears and strains can only be imagined.

Sounds of stealthy footsteps creeping up to the door and window and as I turn to look I can see through the holes in the door and wall bright eyes peeping through. To me one of the trials of itinerating. I do love to shut myself up in an eyetight room when meal time, bed time, getting up time comes. I could not help smiling once when I opened the door there was a general scatter and some one was so scared. They dropped their Lui Leng (lighted fire basket)⁷⁸ in their hurry and there lay the old basket and on the ground was scattered the bright red hot pieces of charcoal.⁷⁹

Although a bedroom provided at least a notional kind of isolation it was far from ideal.

I wonder what you would have thought of our one room. I will try and tell you what it is like. Mount a perpendicular ladder, bend your body and creep through the doorway, now stand up, but be very careful, as there is only a small place to stand in, about 8 ft long and two feet broad. The other six feet of roof is slanting and you will constantly forget and bump your head against the tiles through which the bitterly cold snowy wind is blowing. We put the boards on the tressles (sic), our inch thick mattresses on top of them. To protect us a little from the wind I tied a sheet to the rafters. A narrow table was placed next the bed, the other side two stools and you may say there was no more room.⁸⁰

74 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 126.

75 Turner c 1896, op cit, p 51.

76 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, pp 118-119.

77 Nellie Saunders in Berry, op cit, p 258.

78 These were small charcoal burning braziers that Chinese women placed under the outer clothing to provide warmth during the cold months of the year. They were in universal use in China. They were carried from house to house and even into church during services.

79 Amy Oxley to Mrs. Marianne Hope, from Pokan, 11 January 1899.

80 Amy Oxley to Mrs. Margaret Saumarez Smith, Sydney, 19 March 1900.

The kindness of the ordinary people is a recurring theme:

My dear dirty old coolies took such a paternal interest in me. When we stopped for them to have their dinner, one came to me with some awful-looking cakes and presented them to me with his fingers; I said I had had my dinner, so he took them away and really looked quite grieved, and then disappeared into a shop and brought me some tea, which I was rather glad to get, but discovered afterwards that it had been poured out of a teapot from which the other coolie was drinking, but one smiles at these details!⁸¹

In May 1894, during a break from Gutian, Elsie Marshall and Topsy Saunders hired a sampan to travel on the Min River. It illustrates how safe the single women missionaries felt that they were willing to undertake this adventure especially given the prevalence of river piracy.⁸² It is further evidence that the Chinese were not offended by the meanderings of the foreign women who showed little concern about being entirely in the hands of Chinese, whether it was boatmen, carriers, or innkeepers.

I thought of you as I was sitting there; if you could only have seen the spectacle! I was sitting on a rock with a paper of sandwiches on my lap, my chair in the background, and three of the most desperate looking opium smoking villains you ever beheld for company. How is it that we can and do travel alone through the loneliest places without the least fear, and they never touch us? Oh! It was strange, with those dirty old things, the only human beings within call, on the loneliest road you ever beheld; but the moonlight was strong enough to keep them falling into the ditch, and I did not even feel nervous—never thought about it much till afterwards.⁸³

There were real risks as Miss E M Lee, of the CEZMS wrote:

Reflections on the experiences of some of my friends at the hands of river thieves occupied me for some time. One lady had been roused from her slumbers just in time to take a farewell glance at some of her trousseau as it was travelling through the open cabin window on a boathook; and too late came her pathetic appeal to her husband to rescue the precious garments. The boat of another friend, a frequent sufferer from the cleverness of thieves—only recently had been lightened by the removal of the basket containing his entire wardrobe, books, paper and wathc. Yet other friends, after successfully repulsing two determined attacks made by thieves in one night, at the third assault tried, but in vain, to pop a bottle of lemonade at their tormentors, hoping that the noise so made might suggest a more deadly weapon and frighten them off. At last, driven to desperation, my friends threw a bottle, corked as it was, into the thieves boat and so vanquished them.⁸⁴

Europeans in the Treaty Ports had a greater fear of what the Chinese *might* do than missionaries inland.⁸⁵ Chinese' Morrison also gave credit to the Chinese:

He had no Chinese, had no interpreter, and had for companions only low-caste coolies, and he made the journey in Chinese dress, with a pigtail fastened inside his hat, and without arms. His very interesting book of travel notes will help Australian readers to get rid of many false impressions. He says himself: "I went to China possessed with the strong racial antipathy to the Chinese common to my countrymen, but that feeling has long since given way to one of lively

81 Topsy Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 263.

82 The Min River was freer of river pirates than the Yangtse where the potential 'pickings' were much richer. The river steamers usually had weapons in every first class cabin, just in case. See Harris, Walter Burton, (1891), 'The Riots in China. The Current Hostility of the Chinese towards Foreigners,' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1891

83 Nellie Saunders in Berry, op cit, pp 146-147.

84 Lee, E M, (nd), 'My Experiences as a Lady Missionary in China, pp 230-236 and 376-380 in *Wide World Magazine*. (n.d.) p 232.

85 Gordon-Cumming, op cit, p 99. 'At every group of houses we passed, people came out to interview us and invite us to enter: all were most civil.'

sympathy and gratitude, and I shall always look back with pleasure to this journey, during which I experienced, while traversing provinces as wide as European kingdoms, uniform kindness and hospitality, and the most charming courtesy. In my case, at least, the Chinese did not forget their precept, 'Deal gently with the stranger from afar.'⁸⁶

There was a widespread belief in the 19th century in the 'weaknesses' of women that often, indirectly but efficiently, implied the sexual risks believed were being taken by women missionaries.⁸⁷ One of the earliest reports in the Australian press of the Huashan massacre mentioned that the Vegetarians 'subjected the female victims to revolting (i.e., sexual) cruelties'⁸⁸ while another claimed that the women were violated, i.e., sexually assaulted.⁸⁹ Both claims were untrue. Eugene Stock was especially critical of Australian reports about the manner in which the women died in the Huashan Massacre of 1 August 1895.⁹⁰ In a mass protest meeting of foreign residents of Shanghai a few days later a speaker referred to the deaths of 'refined and delicate ladies' and the 'beautiful children.'⁹¹

Itineration would not have been possible had there been constant and overt hostility towards foreigners and missionaries in particular. Elsie Marshall declared: 'How wonderful it is that we can trust ourselves without the least fear to those chair-bearers, perhaps for a whole day; we would not think of trusting oneself like that in London.'⁹² One of the Irish YWCA recruits to CEZMS wrote:

We arrived at the village, which is built right on the mountain-side, about 8 p.m., and as there was no chapel or catechist living there, the coolies put down our chairs outside the village. The first time a thing of this sort occurs you feel rather a peculiar sensation, that is, at least, if you are possessed of those troublesome things called nerves. Here you are in a strange place, not knowing what to do or where to go; you cannot ask for one particular person, as probably all have the same surname—in the meantime a crowd of boys gathers around you.⁹³

Despite the massacre single women of the CMS and CEZMS continued to itinerate with only their Chinese servants to look after them:

Last week two [foreign] community gentlemen came in to call. They were sailing about and seeing our house came in. One said to me: 'Don't you feel very lonely here?' 'No.' 'Are you not afraid to travel about by yourself?' And when I told him that the coolies as a rule were most kind and thoughtful and never said a bad word to me he was surprised and said, 'Well, they are much better than our own English people, because it would not be safe for you to travel alone with them.'⁹⁴

86 *The Bulletin*, Sydney, Saturday, 24 August 1895.

87 The issue of sexuality in the missionary workforce is glossed over in most missionary histories. It was, it seems, quite genuinely suppressed and misdemeanours, if such they are called, were apparently rare. See discussion in Lennox, William G, (1933), *The Health and Turnover of Missionaries*, New York, The Foreign Missions Committee.

88 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 August 1895.

89 *The Age*, Melbourne, 5 August 1895.

90 Some examples of the hyperbole include: 'Men and women, young ladies belonging to the Zenana and other missions, were butchered in the most atrocious fashion, and in some cases with most savage cruelty.' 'The eyes of the children who did not share their parents' fate were gouged out by the murderers.' *The Age*, Melbourne, 6 August 1895. 'Miss Harriet and Miss Elizabeth Saunders, two ladies of the Zenana Society Mission, who were from Melbourne, were literally hacked to pieces with spears and swords while trying to escape.' *The Age*, Melbourne, 7 August 1895. 'The four children of the Rev. Dr. Stewart were impaled on the spears of the murderers.' *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 August 1895.

91 Hykes, Rev. J, p 111 in 'The Gutian Massacre, *Supplement to the North China Herald and S C & C Gazette*, Shanghai, 9 August 1895.

92 *Ibid*, p 129.

93 Hessie Newcombe cited in Turner c 1896, op cit, p 25.

94 Amy Oxley to Isabel Hope, from Deng Doi, Fujian Province, 7 May 1898.

The sense of personal safety was not limited to the British women.⁹⁵ The overwhelming body of evidence highlights the everyday patience, kindness, tolerance and acceptance of the Chinese people when not being deliberately stirred into anti-foreign actions. An American wrote:

These are peculiar surroundings for a lone woman, twenty miles from the habitation of our kind. I feel safer here than I would in an equally rough place in America. The Chinese will do nothing to disturb me . . . Here I am, far removed from friends and among Chinese travelers and other inn people, yet I am secure. This carter is a stranger to me, although known to other members of our Mission. He brings in my baggage, calls for water for me, pays my bills, calls me in the morning, and is entirely responsible and to be depended on to get me to my journey's end.⁹⁶

Providing transport was a major source of employment in a country region where the human back was the main energy source. In addition to chair carriers there were coolies to carry baskets of food, clothing, bedding, tracts and books, etc.

The servant who carries my load and does everything for me has turned out well, so he is a comfort. I don't profess to be good enough to say the flesh does not shrink from not having an English companion when I am itinerating⁹⁷. . . I don't often feel lonely, for . . . the people are so sweet.⁹⁸

A striking feature of the life of single women missionaries was the camaraderie between women from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences. A deep friendship grew between Topsy Saunders, a fatherless 'paddock-girl' of colonial middle-class background and uncertain family income and Elsie Marshall, the daughter of an English university educated parish clergyman:

Next term Elsie and I have a scheme, yet quite immature, that we shall go and live at Gang-Ka, as that is such a good centre, and have a sort of station-class. I would teach Romanised [Chinese written in Roman characters⁹⁹] to the women, and take my teacher and study.¹⁰⁰ We would have our loft done up. It is not settled yet, and can't be till we get back, but we are both longing to do it; there is so much better an opportunity out in the country of picking up the language and getting to know the people.¹⁰¹

A close relationship between persons of the same sex raises the possibility of lesbian relationships. Had there been the slightest hint of sexual intimacy between the women Louisa Stewart and other women

95 In the 1890s, persons born in the colonies of British settlement, such as the Australasian colonies, were British subjects. Although very aware of their Australian origins, the three young women went on British documents, under British diplomatic and consular protection, and were part of and identified with, a British Anglican mission and thought of themselves as 'English' or 'British'.

96 Mary Porter Gamewell, *The Chinese Recorder*, January 1896, p 10, cited in Chinop cit, p 347.

97 Missionaries would settle in a district centre such as Gutian, or in a village such as Dong Gio or Sek Chek Du, visiting smaller villages, rarely staying more than one or two days. Through this process, missions built up a network of village congregations, schools, leper villages, orphanages and medical clinics. Chinese supervised by foreign missionaries normally staffed the smaller centres. The role of single women in itinerant ministry and in supervision of Chinese male staff is an indication of the central role they played in evangelism and administration.

98 Marshall c 1903, op cit, p 193.

99 Flora Codrington of the CEZMS gave the credit for the introduction of Romanised Chinese education to the Rev. Robert Stewart. Barnes, op cit, p 59.

100 The role of Chinese Christian women in connection with the Fujian missions of the CMS and CEZMS forms part of the information in the letters of Nellie and Topsy Saunders and Elsie Marshall, as well as books discussing the CEZMS in China is discussed in a separate chapter on the role of women. For a more general discussion see Kwok Pui-lan, 'Chinese Women and Protestant Christianity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,' pp 194-208 in Bays, Daniel, (1996), *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, Stanford, Stanford University Press. t.

101 Berry, op cit, p 110.

missionaries would have stepped in to separate the two people involved.¹⁰² The absence of sexually intimate relationships from the archives is to be expected as sexual relations outside male-female marriage was unacceptable among the deeply religious women, whatever their innermost feelings. As Jane Hunter notes, there was always the equally unacceptable possibility of close relationships between European and Chinese women.¹⁰³

A perpetual cultural gap resulted from the western preoccupation with time.¹⁰⁴ It took missionaries only a short time to find that the Chinese were not concerned with clock-time.

Although we ourselves have to up before 4 a.m., and had our breakfast, and arranged everything for an early start, we may possibly have to wait long for the men. At last they appear, and we say something about the lateness of the hour, and urge them to set off at once; but they will calmly say they have had no breakfast, and are going to get it! Again they appear, and once more our spirits rise; but some of the number have no sandals and have gone to buy them! Our head man comes next, and asks for part of the payment in advance, as the exchange is so low in the village we are about to visit, and it will be better to let them have a dollar or two before setting out. After all these delays, we at length really do start, but it may be nearly eight o'clock.¹⁰⁵

The Chinese employed by missionary travelers were far from cowed and were always prepared to renegotiate their employment. Coolies often stopped when it rained, or was too hot, or because they simply decided to stop, irrespective of any urging by missionaries anxious to keep a schedule. It was not unusual to go some distance, having negotiated a price at the start, and have the coolies put down the chair or the burdens and try renegotiation. 'Last night we were at Po Kan and the coolies there promised us they would carry us day by day for 25 cents the day. Morning came and we were up early but it looked rainy and the coolies would not start.'¹⁰⁶ Arguments were many but there is no instance in the CMS/CEZMS archives examined so far where the missionaries were abandoned by their chair coolies.

In the morning I said we would go first to a Christian's house. He wanted us to teach his wife. Well, we started off and got some distance along the road when I found we were not going the right way. The coolies put us down and said they could not go. I said you must I had promised the man. I think for more than half an hour we talked. One flew off along the road very angry but the others called him back. Finally they turned our chairs round.¹⁰⁷

Riverboat crews enthusiastically pursued the same kind of on-the-go industrial negotiations. Times of departure were always uncertain. Boats hired for the exclusive use of foreigners were frequently double-booked with unauthorized passengers, including pigs and other livestock. Captains often refused to move in rough weather without extra remuneration. Travel by boat could be hazardous because of the river thieves who were frequent and audacious, although personal assaults on European women were as rare as on land.

102 See the discussion in Hunter, Jane, op cit. In his discussion of reasons for resignation from American missionary societies, Lennox did not find much to suggest much immorality among missionaries. Lennox, William G, (1933), *The Health and Turnover of Missionaries*, New York, The Foreign Missions Committee.

103 Hunter, Jane op cit. See discussion in Ch 6.

104 See discussion in Smith, Arthur H, (1894), *Chinese Characteristics*, New York, Fleming H Revell. Smith devoted a chapter to 'The Disregard of Time.' Smith's books were widely read in English-speaking countries and helped to shape 19th century views of China and the Chinese. Another very influential work, also by a missionary, was: Williams, S Wells, (1859), *The Middle Kingdom: A Survey of the Chinese Empire and Its Inhabitants*, (2 vols), New York, reprinted 1966.

105 Hook, op cit, p 22.

106 Amy Oxley to Eliza Hassall, 11 January 1899.

107 Amy Oxley to Isabel Hope.

It took time to adjust to local food.¹⁰⁸ The missionaries were well aware of the need not to refuse hospitality. Nellie's references to food included a derisory remark about local noodles:

We went into a Chinese inn, and on a table in one of the back rooms we had our bowls and chopsticks put, and we each had a bowl of the most disgusting stuff, like long strings of vermicelli [noodles], only made of Chinese flour, and tasting very much like bad paste. This, with some doubtful-looking cakes, and a drink of condensed milk—which was the only thing Mrs. Stewart had brought with her in the chair—was our mid-day meal! Oh! I forgot, we each had an orange after.¹⁰⁹

Elsie Marshall was initially willing to go with the local cuisine. In December 1894 she wrote:

When I am alone in boats or sometimes in the country, I have my meals in native style, it is so much simpler not to have the trouble of knives, forks, bread, etc. I buy something as an accompaniment of rice, borrow bowls and chop-sticks and buy rice from the boat-people. It's grand.

A few months later, she had apparently changed her mind:

I have come to the conclusion that the hardest part of a missionary's life is having to eat. I would give anything if we had not bodies that need to be fed, or if I could live on Chinese food, but I never feel up to work on it, so I know it is not right to do it entirely. It is a bother to have to take one's food about. My servant has just walked in with a cock screaming to ask if it will do for my dinner. He little knows how it hurts my feelings.¹¹⁰

There were other occasions when the missionaries sought to avoid eating at all, even at the risk of giving offence:

There was a Chinese feast, and we were asked to go, but I did not go. For one thing I was extremely hungry, and I knew I could not eat their things without being sick afterwards.¹¹¹

It is necessary to balance occasional European reservations about the Chinese with the fear of foreigners held by many Chinese. Some Chinese thought that patting a child on the head might place the child under the evil control of the head-patter. The traditional fear of kidnapping was reinforced by the enthusiasm of missionaries for 'rescuing' children and placing them in orphanages.¹¹² Elsie Marshall reported:

This afternoon I paid a visit to a village . . . as I walked up the little path to the village, a woman who was standing out with her babies turned and ran away, calling all her children after her, she and all the children were frightened of me.¹¹³

Missionary literature led many foreign readers to assume that the Chinese cared less about their children than Europeans. Child abandonment, infanticide and abortion are long standing practices in

108 This was universal among missionaries in China. Frank Burden of Adelaide, in the first Australian party of the China Inland Mission, wrote home: 'The Chinese food which that gave us . . . was anything but tempting to anyone not educated up to it.' Frank Burden to 'Lou', (sister) 6 February 1891. (Courtesy Mr Frank Burden, grandson)

109 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 41.

110 Turner, op cit, p 43.

111 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 59.

112 Cohen, Paul A, (1961), 'The Anti-Christian Tradition in China, pp 169-180 in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol 20 No 2, (February 1961). See his more comprehensive classic work: Cohen, Paul A, (1963), *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Anti-Foreignism, 1860-1870*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

113 Marshall, op cit, p 153.

China, as they are in most countries.¹¹⁴ One account about China draws on official and other papers to illustrate the attempts made to prevent such practices.¹¹⁵ It has been suggested that Fujian Province has traditionally had a much higher rate of child abandonment than other parts of China but there is no certain way of measuring the truth of this claim. Constance Gordon-Cumming repeated what was told to her, presumably by missionaries, that 30 per cent of female children in Fujian were killed at birth.¹¹⁶

Chinese peasant mothers were generally ignorant of anything outside their own village except what was shared by the women from the stories, true or otherwise, told by men. Nellie Saunders did not make the common mistake of blaming a lack of women's education on sinful and heathen beliefs. She was in no doubt about who was responsible for the ignorance of women:

Chinese men think women can't do anything; their own women are so helpless and incapable that I don't wonder, but it is the men who make them so.¹¹⁷

A famous Chinese poet¹¹⁸ wrote:

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- 114 For a contemporary account of child welfare issues in today's China see Johnson, Kay Ann, Amy Klatzhim (editor), (2004), *Wanting a Daughter, Needing a Son: Abandonment, Adoption, and Orphanage Care in China*, St Paul Minn, Yeong and Yeong. There is a website dedicated to American families adopting children from Gutian Children's Home.
- 115 De Harlez, C, (1892), 'Infanticide in China, According to Chinese Documents,' *Dublin Review*, 1892, pp 117-143. Australian infanticide is discussed in Kocimbas, Jan, (2001), 'Azaria's Antecedents: Stereotyping Infanticide in late nineteenth-Century Australia,' pp 138-160 in *Gender & History*, Vol 13, No 1, April 2001. See also Johnson, Kay, (1993), 'Chinese Orphanages: Saving China's Abandoned girls, pp 61-78 in *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No 30, July 1993.
- 116 Gordon-Cumming, op cit, p 136. See discussion of the gender imbalance of modern China: 'China Grapples with Legacy of its 'Missing Girls. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5953508/>. See the important discussion in Holmgren, J, (1981), 'Myth, Fantasy or Scholarship: Images of the Status of Women in Traditional China,' pp 147-170 in *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No 6, July 1981, pp 158ff.
- 117 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 272.
- 118 Fu Hsuan 3rd Century AD.

How sad it is to be a woman!
Nothing on earth is held so cheap.
Boys stand leaning at the door
Like Gods fallen out of Heaven.
Their hearts brave the Four Oceans,
The wind and dust of a thousand miles.
No one is glad when a girl is born:
By her the family sets no store.
Then she grows up, she hides in her room
Afraid to look a man in the face.
No one cries when she leaves her home--
Sudden as clouds when the rain stops.
She bows her head and composes her face,
Her teeth are pressed on her red lips:
She bows and kneels countless times.
She must humble herself even to the servants.
His love is distant as the stars in Heaven,
Yet the sunflower bends toward the sun.
Their hearts more sundered than water and fire--
A hundred evils are heaped upon her.
Her face will follow the years' changes:
Her lord will find new pleasures.
They that were once like substance and shadow

The education of women and girls was not pursued as strongly as that of boys not because of any unwillingness to run schools for girls but chiefly because of the inability of most Chinese families to afford to pay for education beyond the brightest of the male children.¹¹⁹ Girls' education, while important in most better-off families, came second to more immediate concerns.¹²⁰ Most women, whether Christian or not, were promised in marriage as babies or children and their parents were often reluctant to spend money on someone going to another family.

The work of the foreign women was appreciated by the Chinese who sent their children to Christian institutions. In 1892 a letter in traditional Chinese style arrived in London. It was from Li Sie Mi, a Chinese Anglican catechist, later an ordained minister.

Since I was appointed to the office of superintendent I have seen how all the Christians in every place have increased in knowledge of the truth and edification. There are many women who are Christians, both old and young, who beg the English Church to appoint lady teachers to reside in the Ping Nang district, who will direct and conduct the work amongst the women, and visit all the congregations, and instruct them (the women) in the Word of God and teach them to pray.¹²¹

The response, whether in direct response or not, was the arrival of the Queenslander, Annie Gordon. Topsy Saunders told her mother not to expect a letter from Nellie because:

Nellie went to Dong Gio on Wednesday, and has not turned up yet. The coolie was sent up for her on Monday, but he returned without her this morning, as she has decided to stay on with Annie Gordon, and go to a place called Dong Kau, the extreme station of the Church Missionary Society in this district. A house for the mission has just been bought there, and they have been visited by

119 Holmgren op cit, pp 154 ff.

120 Amy Oxley was awarded one of the highest honours of the Chinese Republic when, about 1915 or so, she was awarded the Order of the Golden Grain.

121 Barnes, op cit, p 169.

Mr. Bannister and Mr. Stewart, but never before by the Kuniongs. They are to stay there until Saturday next, and return to Dong Gio for Sunday, as there is a Hiong Hoi, that is, a meeting for all the Christians around the district. Mr. Stewart is to be there, too, to lead the meeting, preach, and have Communion service for the people.¹²²

The education of older, married women centred on the training of Biblewomen.¹²³ Once again the main driving force in CMS/CEZMS was Louisa Smyly Stewart.¹²⁴ The concept of Biblewomen first emerged in England where working class women were trained to go into the homes of poor families where middle class women were unwelcome.¹²⁵ The Chinese trainee Biblewomen were taught to read and write in romanised Chinese.

Now, if you get the Romanised, which every one can have (only some of these people are dead set against it), you can see exactly how to pronounce the character, and then somebody can tell you the English, and there you are. You never forget that, but how can you remember a hieroglyphic of which you can't remember the sound, and never knew the meaning? My teacher waxes eloquent on the subject. He says it is not of the slightest use to read on and on till you nearly turn into an automaton. (He did not say exactly these words, Chinese teachers are a wee scrap like automatons themselves). He wants very much to learn Romanised. Topsy has taught him a little, and when we get on a bit we will teach him some more.¹²⁶

Miss Gough, the first CEZMS missionary to Fujian, (1883) reported that she gave four hours a week to training Biblewomen in Fuzhou.¹²⁷ Not all the trainees became Biblewomen. Perhaps a third gained an appointment. Most returned to their homes where their new skills had an influence on their own children and those of nearby families.¹²⁸

The 'Station Class' was an innovative evangelistic and training tool introduced in 1893 at Sa Yong by Flora Codrington, (who survived the Huashan massacre).¹²⁹

What is a Station Class? A question often asked me. Well! We owe the idea to our American sisters, and the plan of getting women enquirers together for a period of three months to 'teach the outlines of Gospel truth and then send them back to their own homes to be voluntary workers among their own people', has been tried with marked success in Southern Fuh-kien and other parts of China by lady missionaries of various societies.¹³⁰

Nellie outlined the origins of the station-class concept at Gutian and how important the model had proved in reducing the fear of foreigners that was so common and widespread in China:

122 Topsy Saunders, March 1894, Berry, op cit, p 75.

123 See discussion of Chinese women and Christianity by Kwok Pui-lan, 'Chinese Women and Protestant Christianity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,' pp 194-208 in Bays, op cit, p 197.

124 Barnes, op cit, p 43.

125 Davins, op cit, p 260.

126 Nellie Saunders, Berry, op cit, p 74.

127 Barnes, op cit, p 44.

128 Barnes, op cit, pp 51-53. 19th century Australian women missionaries in China were, with few exceptions such as doctors or nurses, educated to middle secondary school standard. American women tended to be graduates of female academies, notably Mount Holyoke. White op cit, p 24. The Australians were conservative evangelicals focused on conversion and allowing a changed life to bear fruit in society rather than creating societal change through higher education. The broad tag of 'cultural imperialism' has been inappropriately thrown at all Christian missions whereas it properly belongs, if used at all, to those who sought to change the totality of the societies, mainly through higher education. White op cit, p 29.

129 Missionaries of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission in Fujian developed the original concept. China was a beneficiary of the link between general improvement of believers and higher education. See Robert, Dana L, (1996), 'The Methodist Struggle over Higher Education in Fuzhou, China, 1877-1883, pp 173-189 in *Methodist History* (April 1996).

130 Barnes, op cit, p 54.

Miss Codrington had been having a station class, or rather a series of them. For a station class, you get from twelve to sixteen young women and feed them for three months, getting them either to live in the house with you or renting one next door. They make nothing by it, so as to offer as little outside attraction as possible, so that those that come, will come, as far as we can tell, solely for the purpose of being taught the doctrine. They may bring one baby—no more—and they just get their rice, and their chairs paid in and home again. Mrs. Stewart says it shows how God has worked here in opening the way for missionaries to work, because a few years ago you could not get any women at all to come and live like that, or any way approaching to it, for love or money. The suspicion and dread of foreigners has decreased so much. It means a most unusual amount of trust, when the Chinese men will allow their young wives to come and live in the Kuniongs' house for three consecutive months; but the fact that they do it, shows God's power over the 'unruly wills of men,' does it not?¹³¹

Topsy Saunders description of a station-class at Sek Chek Du was published in Australia in Macartney's influential missionary newsletter, *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*:

There is much need for a 'Station Class,' the people are simply longing for one. 8 is the number—there are reasons for the limit—but we could have quite 20. I must explain. A 'Station Class' only lasts three months; there is work to be done, and books to be read, with an examination at the end. We go round, look out suitable women, take their names, selected the few best fitted afterwards to lend a helping hand, and call them in when the time comes.¹³²

Marion Hook, explained how married women obtained permission to attend:

It is not so difficult as it would be in England, for many members of a Chinese family live together, often three and four generations under one roof, and in large houses even as many as one hundred persons. Thus there is always a relative who will undertake to care for the husband and children and cook and food, and so set the wife and mother free.¹³³

Flora Codrington provided details of the curriculum:

What can women learn in three months? . . . Not very much, truly of head knowledge, but enough to teach them about God, to convince them of their need of a Saviour, to lead them to JESUS, and to enable them to point others to the Saviour they have found. We begin with the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, the Hundred Texts, and other Scripture teaching follows.¹³⁴

Another of the CEZMS missionaries, Miss Strong, referred to footbinding and the encouragement given to the Biblewomen trainees to abandon the practice, a painful process but viewed, as it came to be universally in China in the 20th century, as a relic of an archaic social order and, overall, the repression of women:

Another matter . . . is that so many of the women, while in school, learn to unbind their feet. We do not make unbinding a compulsory matter, but rather seek to show them that it is a Christian duty to do so. And we find that the very act of giving it up, for conscience sake, this custom (so dear to the heart of a Chinese woman) has a bracing effect on her own character, and cannot fail to render her influence more telling upon others. When a woman or girl whose feet have been bound a long time is going to set them free, she has generally to lie down for three weeks or so before she is able to stand upon them in their altered circumstances. If the bones are broken, the foot never recovers

131 Nellie Saunders to Mrs. Eliza Saunders, January 1895, Berry, op cit, pp 183-184.

132 *The Missionary, At Home and Abroad*, Vol XXII, No 23, September 1895, pp 353-354.

133 Hook, op cit, p 30.

134 Barnes, op cit, p 54.

completely; and, as this is very often the case, they have generally to be bound in a certain degree, but in a very different way. The feet soon become much larger, and the shoes worn are quite another shape.¹³⁵

By 1894 Topsy Saunders had learned enough Chinese to start 'teaching.'

I had my first class this morning; it was nice, six dear little boys. I taught them some Gospel catechism, a text out of a series arranged with a view of giving the whole Gospel, and began them with Romanised.¹³⁶ They are so quick; we got on grandly together. I do love them so. Tomorrow I am going to have a class before church of little heathen children; the ones today were from our school, and are all the children of Christians.¹³⁷

Apart from general visiting and preaching, or opening village schools, the Gutian mission provided basic medical services, which, like the schools, were primarily a means to making contact with the local people and were rarely viewed as an end in themselves. Topsy Saunders was using the medical skills she had gained during a brief training course for missionaries at the Melbourne Hospital later enriched by working with the American Methodist missionary doctor, J J Gregory, in Gutian.¹³⁸ By May 1894, Topsy had joined forces with Elsie Marshall. She wrote to her mother:

It was eleven before we got upstairs, and then only for a few minutes, because a patient arrived on the scene to be doctored, i.e., a baby that had fallen down and scratched itself, and what with dirt and flies was pretty bad. However, we fixed it up, greatly to every one's admiration. We asked for water to wash it with, and one small boy went and got us a large tub; another brought a bucket of water; another a large bowl of hot water; all this for a (103) sore the size of half-a-crown on the baby's face; really it was so funny we couldn't help laughing. However, I hope it will get better; they have such faith in our medicines.¹³⁹

Most missionaries, while critical, linked dirt to poverty just as they would have done at home where the criticism would have been class-based, rather than racial.¹⁴⁰

The life and work of single women missionaries such as those described in this paper parallels that of idealistic people in our own time. A writer, reflecting after the initial shock of the Huashan Massacre had faded somewhat, declared:

Missionary work . . . is an expression of a spirit so deep, devoted, and determined; it is enforced by the sympathy and support of such large numbers, that it cannot be snuffed out with a sneer or dismissed with an epigram. Looked at simply as one among the great human enterprises, missionary effort must strike the curious and impartial observer as a great and influential movement.¹⁴¹

The 19th century missionary represented a set of values that continues, if in less overtly religious forms, in today's international aid programs. For the women described in this paper, and the thousands more who engaged in medical, educational and welfare work in 'home' missions, idealism generated a need to serve others, primarily through evangelism but more broadly by trying to fix problem issues in

135 Ibid, p 51.

136 The use of Romanised Chinese alphabet was a particular enthusiasm of Stewart. See *The Dublin University Missionary Magazine*, 17 October 1895, Memorial Number, 'Massacre of Rev. Robert Stewart and family and companions in China', p 15.

137 Topsy Saunders, March 1894, Berry, op cit, p 74.

138 Berry, op cit, p 95.

139 Berry, op cit, p 103.

140 Topsy Saunders, January 1895, Berry, op cit p 179-181.

141 *The Saturday Review*, 11 December 1895, p 827.

society. Such lives cannot be measured by any society in which a person's value is measured by the income that is earned from their efforts. Dana L Robert sums up:

Despite the paternalism and cultural bias of many Western missionaries over the decades, the historic support for the human rights of women and children has nevertheless been one of the major achievements of Christian missions.¹⁴²

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Arrangements for Training Lady Candidates for Missionary Work.

1. All candidates for Missionary work, unless under exceptional circumstances, are required, on acceptance, to undergo a period of training, the length of which will be determined by the Candidates Committee, who do not as a rule entertain applications from ladies under 22 years of age. By arrangements with Mrs. Pennefather, ladies who have been accepted as Probationers, may be sent to the Mildmay Training Home, 'The Willows,' Stoke Newington, N. [London].
2. The first term after the commencement of training is regarded as a *testing* period; if the Probationer is, during this time, deemed to be, from whatever cause, unsuited to the work of the Society, the course of training is not proceeded with.
3. The General course at 'The Willows' embraces the following subjects:—
 - (a) Holy Scripture, Articles and Formularies of the Church of England, Church History, etc.
 - (b) *India, China, Japan, etc.*, their History, Geography, Climate and Religions.
 - (c) One or more of the languages of the Mission-field.
 - (d) Missionary Enterprise in the East, especially among women.
 - (e) Ambulance Lectures, [First Aid].
 - (f) The peculiarities of life, work, health, etc., in tropical climates, and the moral responsibilities of Missionaries amidst heathen and worldly surroundings.

These subjects vary, of course, from year to year according to circumstances, and they are in addition to the ordinary course of teaching at the Home, which includes Housekeeping, Drawing, Book-keeping, Tonic Sol-fa, Theory of Music, Training Lessons, Mission Work, etc.

4. The Committee do not undertake to give such Medical Training as will enable the Missionary to become a qualified practitioner. But, where it is deemed, and where a class of not less than six can be formed, a course of Elementary Medical Training can be had at an inclusive charge of £75 per annum, in connection with Mildmay. In cases where special arrangements have to be made for Medical, Nursing, or other training elsewhere, the cost may sometimes be in excess of this.
5. Those who enter for the General Training at 'The Willows' and remain longer than one year, can have some experience in Nursing, Surgery work, and Dispensing.
6. Periodical visits are paid to the Candidates under training by members of the Candidates Committee; and periodical reports are forwarded by those responsible for the training, for the information of the Committee.
7. The Committee wish it to be clearly understood that, in accepting any lady as a Probationer, to enter the Training course, they do not pledge themselves to send her out to the Mission-field, unless at the end of the course, she is, in their opinion, likely to prove an efficient Missionary, and unless a favourable medical report is given to the Society's professional advisers.
8. It is expected as a rule that the Probationer or her friends meet the cost of training, which for the General course at 'The Willows' is £55 per annum, to be paid in advance in three equal portions (one at the commencement of each term) to the Lady Superintendent. This course commences in

September, and commonly occupies one year.

In addition to the £55 per annum there are extra expenses, such as:—

Money for books (10s to 12s per annum).

Personal Expenses, e.g. laundress, travelling, and holiday expenses.

Pew-rent (30s per annum).

Medical assistance if needed.

Extra lessons if required, e.g., riding, dispensing, etc.

Probationers are also required to take with them to 'The Willows' 3 pairs of sheets, 6 towels, 3 pillow-cases, and a plain dress for the districts, not to be worn in the house.

9. The Society does not, as a rule, send Lady Missionaries to India; the work there, with a few exceptions, being undertaken by the Zenana Societies.
10. The Committee, though receiving offers of service for a particular part of the Mission-field, prefer that the Candidate should be willing to leave her location to them.

Communications on this subject should be addressed, in the first instance, to the Rev. F E WIGRAM, Church Missionary House, Salisbury Square, E C.

Subsequent correspondence is in the hands of the Secretary of the Ladies' Candidates Committee, BROPHY, C M House.

FRED E WIGRAM
Hon Secretary, CMS.

CHURCH MISSIONARY HOUSE
SALISBURY SQUARE, FLEET STREET, EC

**TRAINING FOR SINGLE WOMEN MISSIONARIES
NEW SOUTH WALES**

TRAINING HOME, Sydney, NSW

1892-1902

'Cluden', Frederic Street, Ashfield.

Provided by E M Hassell,¹⁴³

(lady candidates) New South Wales.

(CMANSW Report, 69th Year, 1893).

Miss Latham (New Zealand)
Rose Bachlor 1893, CEZMSA, Victoria. (To India) Accepted CMANSW
1896.
Mary Harrison Served with CMANSW in Palestine.
Amy Oxley 1896 CMANSW, Fujian Province, China
Amy Wilkes 1894 CMANSW, Egypt (Later Mrs. (Dr) S M Zwemer,
Bahrein).
Ada Price Illness prevented overseas service.
Alice Phillips. 1894 CMANSW, Persia

**Marsden Training Home
Lady Superintendent, Miss Hassall**

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*UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH
WALES¹⁴⁴*

Established February 14th 1892

To provide a Home where young ladies wishing to fit themselves for missionary work in the Foreign Field may reside, and avail themselves of the Course of Studies and Lectures provided free of charge by the Association. These are given during the Residence of the Candidates according to arrangements and the length of time that they remain in the Home.

Lectures by Clergymen and others are given on:

Old and New Testament; Church History; Christian Evidences; Prayer Book;
Mission Fields;
Home Studies; Mission Geography; Bible Readings; Object Lessons; Bible
Studies; Music

Papers by Candidates on Missions once a month at a Gleaners Union Meeting held in the Home.

Addresses at Public Meetings of Gleaners towards close of Residence.

143 Miss Hassall was the daughter of Rev. Thomas Hassall, founder of Sunday Schools in Australia, and a grand-daughter of Rev. Samuel Marsden. In 1892 Miss Hassell 'placed her own home "Cluden" in Frederic Street, Ashfield, at the disposal of the CMANSW Committee as a Training Home for women candidates. Johnstone, S M, (1925), *A History of the Church Missionary Society in Australia and New Zealand*, Sydney, Church Missionary Society, p 251.

144 See Appendix 1 for the Church Missionary Association (London), *Arrangements for Training Lady Candidates for Missionary Work*, London, November, on which the Marsden Training Home curriculum and rules were based.

If required and when attainable a Three Months Course of Medical Lectures on Obstetric Nursing by: Fees to the Doctor: £3.3.0. Examination by Four Doctors for Diploma.
Ambulance Lectures
Lectures on Elementary Dispensing
Visits to Prince Alfred "Casualty Ward."

Fees payable for Board quarterly in advance to Lady Superintendent according to Private Arrangement. Not exceeding 15/- a week but in some cases without any charges.

Pew rent, £1.1.0 a year.

Plain cooking and washing and household duties taught. Grey uniform worn by candidates.

Two Terms during the year. One to commence on August 1st to the Second Friday in December, with an interval of a week at Michaelmas. The other term to commence on the first Saturday in February and close on June 30th with an interval of ten days at Easter.

CMA, NSW, Sixty-Ninth Annual Report, 1893, pp 7-8

The Marsden Training Home, for which we cannot be too truly thankful, is answering this purpose admirably. The thanks of the Committee are most cordially given to those gentlemen, who, notwithstanding many other pressing duties, have made time for the courses of lectures which were delivered during the year. As the House is now full, Hassall is adding more rooms, and on their completion at an early date, will be able to receive two additional candidates. This provision will not come too soon for already fresh candidates are applying for admission to the Home.

CMA, NSW, Sixty-Ninth Annual Report, 1895, pp 7-8

MARSDEN TRAINING HOME FOR LADY CANDIDATES
FREDERIC STREET, ASHFIELD
HON. SUPERINTENDENT, Mss HASSALL

The Home is kindly provided by Hassall for the training of the lady candidates of the NSW CMA but candidates from related Associations in the other Colonies will be received upon terms which may be ascertained from Hassall.

The Candidates undergo training for the first term in 1895, from the 1st February to the 28th June, were Latham (sent for training by the New Zealand CMA Committee) and Rose Bachlor.

Mary Harrison left in December for a year's training as a nurse in the Prince Alfred Hospital, by the kind permission of its Committee. We trust she will finish her studies in the Home after she leaves the Hospital.

The second term commenced on August the 2nd, when Leila Bibb entered on probation, and Isabel Sutor returned after an absence of nine months through illness.

The course of training for this term comprised lectures on the following subjects:—Old Testament, by the Rev. Canon Moreton; the Rev. B Schleicher finished his course on Church History; the Rev. Henry Martin lectured on the New Testament; Lectures on the Prayer-Book by the Rev. M. Archdall and Rev. R Noake, and also by the latter, Christian Evidences; and "Moule's Christian Doctrine," by the Rev. E Stanley Wilkinson. We desire to offer our thanks to these gentlemen for this valuable help in the training of the candidates.

The home work included studies in the New Testament, the Acts, and Revelations, Bible Readings, Missionary Geography, Open-air Addresses, District Visiting, Mother's Meetings, Gleaner's Union Meetings, Bible Classes for "Island Boys," and Hospital Nursing Instruction.

On March 12, Mrs. R Clark (Punjab) kindly gave a Missionary address to the candidates and Mrs Fagg, from Hobart, gave an interesting Bible Reading on March 26th.

Johnstone, S M, (1925), *A History of the Church Missionary Society in Australia and New Zealand*, Sydney, Church Missionary Society. p 251.

In 1903, owing to advancing years rendering it impossible for Hassall to continue the superintendency of the Home, it was closed, and arrangements were made whereby the women candidates of the Association were trained, as at present, in Diocesan Deaconess Institute in Newtown.

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Johnstone, S M, (1925), *A History of the Church Missionary Society in Australia and New Zealand*, Sydney, Church Missionary Society. p 251.

In Victoria, most of the women candidates were at first training in the Missionary Training Home in East Melbourne which was interdenominational in principle. Honorary lecturers were also appointed, and devoted much of their time in giving regular instruction to the trainees. The lectures were delivered at the CMA Offices. Among the first of such lecturers were the Revs. D M Berry, F Webb, W G Hindley (now Archdeacon), W McKie, H B Macartney, G H Smith, S C Kent, W C Sadlier (now Bishop of Nelson, N.Z.).

In 1902 Victorian women candidates began to be sent to St Hilda's Training Home in Fitzroy, which, through the munificence of Mr. and Mrs. James Griffiths, was removed in 1907 to the present buildings in East Melbourne. Here special lectures were given to CMA candidates by Canon Sadlier and the Revs. A C Kellaway, W R Cooling, W McKie, and S C Kent.