

**Week 15:
Missionary
Medicine**

Abi and Aimee

Rama V. Baru- 'Women Missionaries in Medical Care and Institution Building in India

- Women who were trained as doctors and nurses in Britain were denied access to jobs and therefore travelled to India as missionaries to work.
- The women created a good relationship with elites in the colonies meaning they were provided with donations and 'legitimacy' which allowed them to expand and treat the poor which was their initial aim
- Dispensaries and the expansion of medical training by female missionaries
- Funding issues after the partition of India due to funds being redirected therefore causing many missionary hospitals to close
- The development of profit achieving institutions in 1970s-90s led to missionary hospitals having to compete for patients because patient charges were on par with much bigger corporate hospitals

Quote- 'After independence [of India] the work hierarchy mirrored gender inequalities in the public institutions' p.234.

Megan Vaughan- 'The Great Dispensary in the Sky: Mission Medicine'

- For many Africans, any encounter with biomedicine rather than alternative healing practices was solely a Christian version introduced by missionaries with the main aim of removing evil from the body
- Medicine used as a Western 'display of superiority' for example with cataract surgery and removal of large tumors which were publicly shown to prove how good their medicine was
- Language barriers were seen to have represented Africans 'simple faith' and 'ignorance' due to blanket medical terms that were used
- 'Mission babies' were used as poster faces, symbolic of the missionary medicine from the West therefore encouraging more missionaries to go to Africa
- WWII increased funding for mothers and babies creating the narrative of 'good' and 'bad babies'

Quote- 'For medical missionaries, the healing of the body had always to take second place to the winning of the soul and the fight against the 'evils' of African society' p.59.

David Hardiman- 'The Birth of Medical Missionary Medical Society in Nineteenth Century China'

- This chapter analyses the conception of missionary movements prior to the Opium War with limited Chinese to Western trade.
- These Protestant missionaries aimed to de-isolate Chinese from Western advancement caused by Chinese government. Canton was the only port used for Western trade.
- These missionary efforts, initially by Catholics and then Protestants, were inspired by introducing the Christian Gospel to the Chinese.
- Noteworthy methods brought to China included the Smallpox vaccine in 1805, cataract treatment, opium poisoning treatment, tumor removals, these of which conflicted with the Chinese holistic approach to medicine.
- The distribution of missionary tracts were always under threat from the Chinese authority
- The Napier incident hindered British missionary relations with Canton's governor, suspending British trading rights before he died of malaria. Religious tracts no longer able to be printed.
- Pamphlets created by missionaries highlighting the desired 'free and friendly intercourse with Europeans'
- Plans created for a missionary hospital in Canton for eye diseases, gaining 300 patients after only a few weeks, and a focus on separating labour from and gospel.
- The society was formed under the American board with the aim of spreading Christianity to the Chinese, aiding the hospital.

Quote- 'Thus convinced that the spread of Christianity was inextricably bound with the spread of all forms of knowledge, the missionaries were committed to conveying both religious and non - religious scientific, historical, etc. - truths' p. 75.

Esme Cleall: 'Discourses of Sickness and the Rise of Medical Missions'

- Africa 'constructed' as the sick/suffering nation, language and 'spectacle of heathenism'.
- Disease became linked to environment and climate through language, with British cities viewed as physically sick due to industry and Africa viewed as the 'natural home' for cholera.
- Religious aspect to these views, with the New Testament linking disease to sin and punishment. Some missionaries read difference between 'actual' and 'metaphorical' sickness, in contrast to many who spoke in crude somatic terms.
- Fear was directed onto the indigenous population by Victorian missionaries who would describe the scenes as horrors and spectacles, 'absurd and sinful', with Rev. Bacon writing that their suffering was not solely linked to the disease itself, but also to lack of Christian faith, blindness linked to darkness and sin.
- Leprosy treated in a similar way, 'pollution' and 'sin', sin being the 'leprosy of the soul'.
- Missionary writing on disease complicated the construction of ethnic difference due to discussion of illness over race, 'leper identity', with Europeans, ill or otherwise, not written about in this way. Disease was related to culture, Chinese foot-binding for example.
- Missionaries became more frequently deployed with medical training from 1860s promoting gospel.

Quote- 'By equating indigenous African and Indian bodies with suffering, and metaphorically linking 'heathenism', sin and disability, the body was depicted as a site through which missionaries could work.' p.85.

Rosemary Fitzgerald: The Call for Women Medical Missionaries for India

- The emergence of women medical missionaries was striking, claimed to enter 'the most inaccessible stronghold of heathenism, the home', previously being excluded due to denial of ordination, marriage and motherhood taking priority.
- Creators of the home, women were seen to offer lessons to indigenous societies. The call was initially addressed to those who had no specific home ties.
- India was deemed the noblest but also most difficult missionary field, and the vast amount of male missionaries were failing to preach their message to the women of India, deemed reflective of the slow progress of Christianity in India. There were other factors such as 'purdah', which prohibited females from being present amongst male preachers.
- Missionary rhetoric painted Indian women to be 'depressed, debased, and neglected' victims of tyranny, as well as being presented as the 'almighty power' of the land. Women in zenana were regarded as pillars of the home, encouraging British powers to deploy female missionaries 'wielding the crochet-needle and the school book'.
- However, only a small amount of Indians appreciated or valued Western culture, challenging the scheme, shunning medical assistance for their own indigenous healing methods in childbirth.
- Very many women visited and accepted treatment from dispensaries, reflecting poorly on the West.

Quote- 'It was conceded that "to plant the home of God's Church in foreign lands...women are needed. Therefore, women must go"'. p.179.