

Review: Lottie Moon and the Silent Bell

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Lottie Moon and the Silent Bell

By Rosalie Hall Hunt (Courier)

Long-time Baptists likely have heard the name “Lottie Moon” spoken in reverent tones. Many have given to the missions offering that bears the name of the woman who served in China from 1873 to 1912. Some know she suggested collecting funds for foreign missions, but who was this woman really? In *Lottie Moon and the Silent Bell*, Rosalie Hall Hunt offers a selection of vignettes that profile the missionary sometimes described as “a Baptist saint.”

As a “missionary kid” in the country herself, Hunt draws not only from historical documents written in both English and Chinese, but also from stories older friends told her. Set in the years just prior to Lottie Moon’s death, three young girls—Marion, Rachel and Edith Newton—visit “Aunt Lottie,” as MK’s call their parents’ colleagues, and listen to her stories just as they did in real life.



The girls already knew Charlotte Digges Moon was born into a prominent Virginia family and grew up on Viewmont plantation. She received an

education equal to the boys in her family, including a degree from the female counterpart of the University of Virginia and one of the first master's degrees granted a woman in the South.

She also possessed a mischievous streak. With a twinkle in her eye, Aunt Lottie relates her April Fool's prank at Hollins Institute when she secretly silenced the bell that signaled every activity from wake-up to lights out. She explains how God not only saved her when she was a religious skeptic, but also called her to serve in China, something possible only later for a single woman.

Aunt Lottie shares about the Chinese being afraid of her as a "foreign devil" until she entices the children with her cookies, which they and later their parents couldn't resist. As she learned the language and shared Bible stories, the petite—4 foot 7 inches or maybe shorter—missionary explains she became known instead as "the heavenly book visitor."

The nine engaging stories Lottie tells detail her opening schools for girls, allowing their brothers to attend provided the sisters' feet were unbound and adopting Chinese customs. She describes moving into the interior, sleeping on the traditional kang (bed-stove), telling women and children about Christ with men listening from a distance and writing countless letters home. She relates enduring loneliness, urging missionary furloughs, sharing food with widows, and facing famine and fighting—which stopped one day while the respected missionary passed by. Each account presents glimpses into Lottie Moon's heart and her love for the Chinese people.

Written for older children, the fascinating narratives will also appeal to teens and adults. Generous photographs and maps add interest. Each chapter concludes with "the rest of the story" that provides context and ends with an extra-credit section suggesting ways to dig deeper into Lottie Moon's life and the historical period. Aunt Lottie's cookie recipe is a tasty bonus.

As Rosalie Hall Hunt does in her other biographies, the retired missionary brings Lottie Moon to life by offering insights into her struggles, secrets, successes and spirit. In so doing, she strengthens Lottie Moon's legacy as a woman who followed God's call and gave her all.

As Lottie sailed home to America, she slipped into her heavenly home on Christmas Eve 1912, in Kobe Harbor, Japan, singing her favorite hymn, "Jesus loves me, this I know." May we be so faithful.

*Kathy Robinson Hillman, former president
Texas WMU and Baptist General Convention of Texas
Waco*