

GERTRUDE HOWE, IDA KAHN AND MARY STONE



Dr. Ida Kahn



Gertrude Howe



Dr. Mary Stone

First Female Chinese Doctors and Their Teacher

The intertwined lives of Gertrude Howe, Ida Kahn and Mary Stone enhanced their zeal and capacity for mission, as well as the impact of their work, primarily in education and health in various parts of China.

Gertrude Howe attended the University of Michigan and in 1872 went to Kiukiang, China. In 1873, she founded what became the Rulison Girls' High School. In 1883, she established a girls' school in Chungking. Fluent in Chinese, she tutored students and in 1892 took five Chinese students to the University of Michigan. Two were among the first Chinese women to become medical doctors, Ida Kahn and Mary Stone.

Ida Kahn, born Kang Cheng, became Gertrude Howe's adopted daughter. Upon graduation from Michigan, Kang and Mary Stone, born Shi Meiyu, together returned to China, working in Jiujiang as medical missionaries. They treated more than 2,000 patients in the first 10 months. In 1901, they established the Elizabeth Skelton Danforth Hospital. Kahn also set up a hospital in Nanchang.

Mary Stone received encouragement for mission early in life. Impressed by American medical missionaries, Stone's father envisioned she should become a doctor. Later, after she returned to China from the University of Michigan, she demonstrated impressive productivity. The hospital in Jiujiang where she and Kahn served, treated 5,000 patients per month. Stone also supervised the training of more than 500 Chinese nurses and translated training books.

Stone left the Methodist church in 1920, but continued her passion for mission, establishing the Shanghai Bethel Mission with Jennie Hughes, an American missionary. In less than ten years, Bethel Mission developed a hospital, primary and secondary schools, an evangelistic training department and an orphanage. Recognizing the importance of carrying out mission work by the Chinese, Stone cofounded the Chinese Missionary Society in 1918.