

**In the Hearts of Children**  
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*“We who desire peace must write it in the hearts of children.”*

So runs the inscription over the gateway of an American kindergarten built in France. And so begins the introduction to the book *Dolls of Friendship* by Sidney Gulick, the founder of an organization called the Committee on World Friendship Among Children.

The book was originally published in 1929. Upon returning to the United States after living in Japan for 25 years, Mr. Gulick wanted to find a way to foster better understanding between the two cultures. He determined the best way to accomplish this was to form ties among the youth.

He wrote:

If world friendliness is to be achieved, the children of the nations must know each other better. Children are naturally friendly. They are interested in the things that other children say and do. Unfortunately, this natural attitude often changes as they grow older, partly because of prejudices instilled by their elders, partly because no opportunity is given for the expression of the friendly thoughts they have for establishing normal contact with children of other races and countries.

To help cultivate those contacts, he initiated the Doll Messengers of Friendship program. In response to committee notices sent around the United States, nearly 13,000 dolls were collected and shipped to Japan. To bring the project alive for the participating children, each doll was accompanied with a ticket and passport, as well as a letter of friendship for the young recipients in Japan. Schools, churches and youth groups around America got involved, studying Japanese culture, forming friendship message committees and holding farewell receptions for the goodwill doll ambassadors.

The Doll Messengers of Friendship were welcomed with great enthusiasm and warmth in Japan. And they were kept in the schools as a cherished symbol of peace.

But when World War II arrived, the hatred and evil of war forced the messengers into silence. Many of the dolls were confiscated and destroyed, but some went into hiding. So while the message was drowned out by the bombs, it was not destroyed.

Indeed, 300 of the original dolls have been rediscovered and documented in a recently published second edition, by Mr. Gulick's grandson, Sidney Gulick III, who teaches mathematics at Maryland University.

He got interested in his grandfather's work when officials invited his family to the opening of a doll museum in Japan in 1986.

During that trip he discovered that these old dolls continue to be treasured from generation to generation for the fond memories of friendship and goodwill they symbolize.

He also realized that his grandfather's goal to promote world friendliness was advanced with a simple, but powerful notion: that peace can be written in the hearts of children.

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