

Dolls of the World

Dolls have always been there.

Proof of this is found in the excavations in South America, the Subcontinent, Japan, Italy, Greece, and other sites all over the world. Made out of a number of materials like wood, wax, clay, cloth etc., they were not only a toy but used also as religious symbols and cult items for example as miniaturized images of persons.

Even today they are used by many people as fetish. Today, the experts are not sure what was the first purpose of the dolls; as a toy, out of which the cult figure developed or the cult figure which became a toy.

Over and above their value as toys with educational value, dolls are realistic documentation of past and present times and therefore important source of our knowledge about the games, life, living and work conditions and economy. They are important cultural carriers.

Dr Senta Siller established different projects in Pakistan, Cameroun, Colombia, etc., in which small but long-term progress was made towards development of rural areas, help towards self-sustained development, discouragement of urbanization by way of income generating projects in the rural areas through production of certain types of handicraft items. Dolls are manufactured here lovingly and clothed in traditional dresses and accessories. Fabric design and types of clothing are revived and take an important place in daily life.

Dolls from Pakistan

The women project established by Dr Siller in 1993 in the pakistani province of Punjab, which has in the meanwhile also added a men centre, has 120 women members and it is generating income. The women here work not on full-time basis but in a traditional way so that family and field work is not compromised and festivals of different types, common in villages, can be celebrated as usual. The village Thatta Ghulamka Dhiroka has about 1200 residents. The villagers established the NGO Anjuman-e-Falah-e-Aama in 1991, which co-operates with the DGFK e.V. (German Society for Promotion of Culture). The Anjuman itself co-operates with six further projects in the country.

Dolls from Cameroon

Three co-operatives (Akwatinuigha, Akaankang, HandiCraft CAT) are functioning since 1998 in Bamenda, the capital of the North-West Province in Cameroon, which is located near the border to Nigeria. Also this NGO co-operates with the DGFK, Germany. Bamenda has about 60000 residents living on seven hills, who speak eight different languages. Apart from the men of CAT, over 100 women manufacture a variety of handicrafts.

Dolls from Colombia

The co-operative Tant Mejor was established in 1999 in Saboya and it works in the meanwhile with three other initiatives. Saboya has about 6000 residents near Chiquinquira, the capital of Departamento Boyaca, north of Bogota. Also this NGO enjoys cooperation of the DGFK. Over 100 women are engaged in the manufacture of handicraft items.