

**From the Pages of Three Ladies:
Canadian Women Missionaries in Republican China**

Deborah Shulman

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of

History

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ABSTRACT

From the Pages of Three Ladies:
Canadian Women Missionaries in Republican China

Deborah Shulman

This thesis focuses on three courageous Canadian women who served as United Church of Canada missionaries in China in the first half of the 20th century. Drawing principally on their diaries and letters, the thesis examines the China experiences and impressions of Margaret Helen Brown (1887-1978) who spent 39 years in China as an educator and editor, primarily in Henan and Shanghai; Mary Letitia Lamb (1879-1960) who spent 20 years in China as an educator and evangelist, primarily in Sichuan; and Victoria Cheung (1897-1966) who spent 43 years as a medical missionary in Guangdong. Each of the women was involved in a different sector of mission work, and together the three represent the types of missionary work undertaken by Canadian Protestant women missionaries in China.

The thesis begins with an historical and historiographical review of the arrival and experiences of Westerners in China. Beginning with a macrocosmic review of Westerners in China, it then successively examines Christian missionaries, Canadian missionaries, and Canadian women missionaries in China, setting the stage for the microcosmic study of the three Canadian women missionaries. The subsequent three main chapters each focus on an individual woman. The first part of each chapter provides a biographical sketch of the woman. The second and third parts bring the voice of each woman to the reader, as she describes her experiences in China and her impressions of China. The fourth part is an analytical discussion of each woman's narrative. The

final chapter provides a comparative analysis of and historical perspectives on the experiences and impressions of these three Canadian women missionaries in China.

The thesis concludes that the diaries and letters of these women are particularly valuable as sources of Chinese social history. The three women appear to be representative of many Westerners who have wished to "help" the Chinese people. They were women who were well-suited to foreign missionary work, and their unique experiences tend to reflect the type of work in which they were each involved. While the geographic location in which they lived affected their impressions of China, it had less impact upon their missionary work. These women shared the belief that their work, as Western women missionaries, would help Chinese women to fill the "void" in their lives caused by the experiences which all Chinese had endured during these decades. It appears that each of the three women benefited from her China experiences: that Canadians and Canadian policy makers profited from their input, and that individual Chinese women's lives were changed to varying degrees by women's missionary work. Each in their own way, these women affected the course of modern Chinese history.

The thesis is based primarily on the letters and diaries of the three women, which are collected in the holdings of the United Church of Canada Archives, located at Victoria University, University of Toronto. The thesis also draws on biographical files, photographs and finding aids which were made available at the Archives. Selected maps, photographs and extracts from letters and diaries are included in the appendices.

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PREFACE

In part, this is the story of three Canadian women who spent most of their adult lives in China. It is also an analytical document which discusses the history of modern China, and the interrelationship of that history and the three women. I have tried to combine narrative and historical methodologies in order to bring the years which these women spent in China to the pages of this text. As well, this combination of methodologies has enabled me to use and comment upon personal correspondence as a historical source. The sources for this paper are almost exclusively the diaries and letters written by these three Western women while they lived in China during the first half of the twentieth century.

Where to start is the problem, because nothing begins when it begins and nothing's over when it's over, and everything needs a preface: a preface, a postscript, a chart of simultaneous events. History is a construct, she tells her students. Any point of entry is possible and all choices are arbitrary. Still there are definite moments, moments we can use as references, because they break our sense of continuity, they change the direction of time. We can look at these events and we can say that after them things were never the same again. They provide beginnings for us and endings too . . .

Margaret Atwood, *The Robber Bride*

In any discussion of these women and their lives in China, it is virtually impossible to determine the extent to which and when their presence "impacted upon" China.¹ Did their presence end when they were forcibly evicted from China, or when in the case of one of the women, she died in China? Was there a ripple effect, as intended by missionaries, that their teachings would affect family members of the individuals with whom they had direct contact? Did their message live beyond their physical presence in China? Further, it is difficult to set a date when these women began considering China

¹ This term, once a favorite among historians of modern China, is no longer in vogue. Nonetheless, it remains important to consider the two-way interaction between foreigners and Chinese in China. While it seems limited in scope and dated to consider an "impact upon" China, it is nonetheless central to this paper to recognize that the presence of foreigners, among them missionaries, made an inherent difference at the least, to some Chinese, and at the most, to the history of modern China.

as a place where they would live most of their adult lives. Was there an incident in their childhood; was it the impact of their parents, of their mother, of a church leader or school teacher? Beginnings and endings are difficult to establish, although the documentary sources may appear to offer boundaries.

Linked to this problem of beginnings and endings is the selection of sources. The letters and diaries of these women are almost inherently self-selected, as the reader can choose to examine only the women's diaries and personal correspondence held in the archives. The documents however, easily lead the reader on a trail in search of more information from other files. A reference by one woman leads the researcher to look for further details of a specific incident. Lack of information in the source under study causes the reader to search for clarification from archivists, or to look for more general background. This information may be found, for example, in the general history of the mission field, or from contemporary sources. Clearly, it was necessary to limit the sources in order to enable me to work on a project of appropriate size for the task at hand. Therefore, with few exceptions, I decided to confine the sources I would use to the available correspondence and diaries of each of the women, and to limit the years under study to those in which they were in mainland China. For clarification of their movements, I used the United Church of Canada Archives biographical files, which offered uneven detail about the women's careers in China. The archival guides, or finding aids to the specific missions fields, as well as the guides to missionary work in China provided background to the history of Protestant China missions.

In all, this has been a fascinating and wonderful project. Many fellow graduate students feel a sense of weariness with their projects, as weeks and months turn into years of work. The material seems either stale, or at least less interesting than at the outset of the research. Perhaps it is the

"onlooker" in me; perhaps it is my interest in people's motivations and experiences; whatever it is, the possibility of looking at China through the eyes of these women is a venture that I feel privileged to have undertaken.

Deborah Shulman

INTRODUCTION

This study looks at twentieth century China through the eyes of three Canadian women missionaries, Margaret Helen Brown (1887-1978), Mary Letitia Lamb (1879-1960) and Victoria Cheung (1897-1966). The careers of these women spanned the years 1913 to 1966, when they represented the United Church of Canada in China. The United Church had three "mission fields" in China, in Henan, West China (Sichuan) and South China (Guangdong). Each of these women, for most of their careers, worked under the Woman's Missionary Society (WMS); this was the branch of the United Church which sent Canadian women to foreign missions, in order to work with local women and children.

Each of the women selected for this study worked in China during the Republican period (1912-1949). Although this is a recognized period in Chinese history, it is employed in this paper, to easily earmark the years between the last dynasty and the end of civil war, with the victory of the Communists in 1949. The term has little other meaning for these women, as it is never referred to in their writings. Margaret Brown arrived in China in 1913, and worked there, in several capacities, until the late 1940s, when following a furlough to Canada, she was unable to re-enter China. Mary Lamb worked in West China for two decades, beginning in 1920, and ending with her retirement from mission work in 1940. Victoria Cheung began her work in South China in 1923, where she remained until her death in 1966. Each of the women was involved in one sector of mission work; together the three represent the types of missionary work available to, and undertaken by, Canadian Protestant women missionaries. Brown began her career as a teacher, and then worked as a literary editor, in order to make Christian literature available to the women and children of China. Mary Lamb was, in her first term, matron of the Canadian Boarding School

in West China, and was subsequently involved directly in evangelical work among women and children. Victoria Cheung was a medical missionary.

The organization of the paper is as follows. The first chapter presents both historical and historiographical overviews of Western contact with China prior to the arrival of these three women. Each of the three main chapters looks at an individual Canadian woman missionary in China; the first at Margaret Brown, the second at Mary Lamb, and the third at Victoria Cheung. There are four sections within each of these chapters. First, a biographical sketch outlines the woman's life in Canada prior to departure for China, and then summarizes her China work assignments. The second and third sections of each chapter bring the voice of the woman to the reader. In the second section each woman describes her personal experiences in China; the third part provides each woman with the opportunity to describe and discuss her impressions of a vast array of things which she found interesting while living there. The fourth part of each chapter provides an analytical perspective on each woman, including a discussion of the woman's personal correspondence as an historical source, and of her observations of China. The thesis culminates with an analysis of the experiences and impressions of the three women, comparing and contrasting and providing historical perspectives on their personal writings, their experiences, and their impressions of China.

The letters and diaries of the three women missionaries are collected in the holdings of the United Church of Canada Archives, located at Victoria University, University of Toronto. The United Church Archives is the central repository for both national and some local records of the United Church (since 1925) and of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational and Evangelical United Brethren churches (prior to Church union). Immediately upon formation of the United Church in

1925 an Historical Committee was created. This Committee continues to exist, as the Committee on Church Archives. In 1940 Victoria University agreed to become the central repository for the Church records. Today, the Central Archives of the United Church houses almost two miles of records.

In this thesis Chinese place names and individuals have generally been spelled in the *pinyin* form of romanization. The two exceptions are in direct quotations and in those cases where the modern equivalent of very small places could not be identified.² A table of equivalencies is provided as an appendix.

² The following place names are not spelled in the *pinyin* form of romanization, Bu Ho Kay, Changshee, Chapci, Dan Shi Si, Fengdu, Hwaiking, Iching, Jung Jow, Kiating, Kwei Fu, Shwang Long Chang and Shi Dju.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT - WESTERNERS AND WESTERN MISSIONARIES IN CHINA

This chapter presents an historical and historiographical overview of Western contact with China. It begins with the macrocosm of the arrival of Westerners in China. In three subsequent steps, it discusses Christian missionaries, Canadian missionaries and Canadian women missionaries in China. In this way, the stage is set for the early 20th century arrival in China of the three Canadian women missionaries, Margaret Brown, Mary Lamb and Victoria Cheung. Each section has both an historical narrative and a brief historiographical review of the literature pertaining to the narrative.

Westerners in China

Early Western contact with China (late 13th to late 18th centuries), while not insignificant, was minimal and intermittent. The early Western travelers who did reach China were driven by one or more of three incentives; the spirit of adventure; mercantile interest; and/or an evangelical mission. Among the most memorable of early Western visitors was Marco Polo (1254-1324) who was particularly notable to Westerners because he returned home with a famous journal of his travels, the first known China travelogue to have been written in a Western language. Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English travelers would all reach China during this early period of contact. The advances in technology and geographic knowledge in the late 17th and early 18th centuries enabled increased and more sustained voyages to China and to other Asian countries.

The Chinese of the Middle Kingdom did not share this Western enthusiasm for increased relations. Nonetheless, the imperial courts of both the Ming (1368-1643) and Ch'ing (1644-1912) dynasties

tolerated the presence of Westerners. The tributary system of approaching foreign relations which was established by the Ming court, was applied to Westerners who arrived on China's shores.³

By the end of 18th century, Westerners were agitating for increased contact with the reticent Chinese. The leap in technological advances of a newly industrializing Europe enabled travelers to reach China more easily, and with increased regularity. The declining Chinese court contained Westerners with some success through its regulatory "Canton System" of trade (1759), which imposed severe restrictions in the movements and behavior of the Westerners in China. During the 18th century the British emerged as the paramount Western merchant presence in China. The powerful British East India Company, which had been granted a monopoly on all east India trade by the British government, pressed for unlimited access to trade with China. Despite increased mercantile pressure from the West, the Chinese appeared uninterested in Western products. On the other hand, Europeans were particularly attracted by Chinese silk, cotton and tea. The British, whose economy was suffering from the increasing trade imbalance with China, introduced opium as an illicit drug in China. By the middle of the 19th century, the building frustration of Westerners with the Chinese, who imposed unique limitations and restrictions upon their activities, burst forth in the Opium War (1839-1842). With the ensuing defeat of the Chinese by the British navy, the first of the "unequal treaties" was imposed upon the China, in the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). The treaty system which subsequently developed between China and European countries (and eventually United States) signaled the opening of China to the eager Westerners.

³ The tributary system was an hierarchical system of international relations which confirmed China's view of itself as the "middle kingdom" while ordering its unavoidable relations with its inferior but loyal neighbors.

Western determination to open China increased in the 19th century, while Chinese central authority weakened, and the international community affirmed China's vulnerability. In England the China traders lobbied with intensity, claiming that the China market was limitless, and therefore deserved the support of parliament. The brief but far-reaching success of the Taipings (1850-1864) both reflected and ensured the continued weakening of central authority in China. Westerners had mixed reactions to the Taipings. The quasi-Christian component central to Taiping philosophy was initially comforting to Western observers; missionaries thought that a Taiping victory might help their work in China. On the other hand, Western traders were immediately concerned with the strong Taiping anti-opium policies, and feared that trade would be inhibited; and Western diplomats increasingly viewed the Taiping with disquiet, as a Taiping victory might throw China into excessive disorder. Eventually, missionaries joined the other Western observers in supporting dynastic authority, as the religion which the Taipings espoused had little in common with missionary teachings. The defeat of the Taipings ushered in a period of dynastic revival, known as the Tongzhi Restoration (1862-1874). This restoration sought to reaffirm Confucian morality while reconstructing and "self-strengthening" the country. The Confucian provincial leaders who had crushed the mid-century anti-dynastic rebellions were instrumental in ushering in this period of self-strengthening, as they orchestrated changes in the handling of foreign relations, in the building of ships and weaponry, and in the teaching of international law and Western sciences to Chinese students. However, only two decades later, the unexpected result of the Sino-Japanese war of 1895 awakened those Westerners who had continued to see China as impregnable, and caused Chinese leaders and intellectuals to evaluate how to strengthen China to withstand further external aggression.

Any historiographical discussion of Westerners in China might begin with Jonathan Spence's compact but excellent book, *To Change China: Western Advisors in China 1620-1960*.⁴ Spence examines the lives of 16 self-designated Western advisors who brought a wide variety of primarily technical knowledge to China. This is a fascinating study in which the author finds a common thread among the experiences of Westerners involved in many different activities during an extensive period. These individuals shared an inherent sense of moral superiority, which of course traveled with them to China. Furthermore, they shared a simplistic understanding of China. Spence concludes that China was changed, but in ways unexpected by the Westerners. Certainly from the time of the Opium War and the signing of the "unequal treaties," Westerners developed a proprietary vision of China which lasted into the 20th century; on the other hand Chinese retained a contractual understanding of their relationship with Westerners. Among the vast literature written on the Opium War, two rather intimate looks at both Chinese and British perceptions of the war are found in Arthur Waley's *The Opium War Through Chinese Eyes*.⁵ and Michael Greenberg's *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-1842*.⁶ Waley's text is a translation of and commentary on the diaries of Commissioner Lin Zexu (1785-1850), the chief negotiator for China at the treaty talks following the Opium War. Waley also discusses the memoirs of Chinese soldiers and civilian observers of the war. Greenberg however, portrays the role of the feisty independent British merchants who replaced the East India Company in the China trade. These men promoted their own commercial interests, rather than those of the British parliament. Two other critical texts which examine the opening of China to the West, are John King Fairbank's *Trade and Diplomacy*

⁴ Jonathan D. Spence, *To Change China: Western Advisors in China, 1620-1960* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969).

⁵ Arthur Waley, *The Opium War Through Chinese Eyes* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958).

⁶ Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-1842* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

on the China Coast,⁷ and Chang Hsin-pao's *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War*.⁸ Fairbank's study chronicles the disconnected activities of the Chinese and British negotiators. Fairbank argues that China in fact was "responding" throughout this period to the ramifications of the intrusion of the West. Chang, a former student of Fairbank, argues that opium merely hurried along an inevitable conflict. Increasing contact between Westerners and Chinese in China exacerbated the difficult meeting of two fundamentally different cultures. Pursuant to Fairbank's thesis, Chang describes the Chinese as unable, and perhaps unwilling, to formulate their own plans for a self-determined future. Mary C. Wright's *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: the T'ung-chih Restoration, 1862-1874* remains an important volume on this period of dynastic restoration.⁹ Nathan Pelcovits' *Old China Hands* is a particularly interesting discussion of one Western interest group which sought increased involvement in China.¹⁰ Pelcovits articulates the passion with which the British lobbied parliament for a parliamentary commitment to the China market. However, he concludes that despite their passion, these men were unable to change the more limited vision of China trade held by the British Foreign Office at the end of the 19th century.

Christian Missionaries in China

Christian missionaries, particularly European Jesuits, enjoyed significant success in China until disputes among the religious orders led to their eviction in the early 18th century. The Jesuit order was particularly interested in evangelizing the East, and by the middle of the 16th century, several members of the order had entered China. Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) worked in China for almost

⁷ John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: the Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1953).

⁸ Chang Hsin-pao, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

⁹ Mary C. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: the T'ung-chih Restoration, 1862-1874* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

¹⁰ Nathan Pelcovits, *Old China Hands* (New York: Crown Press, 1948).

three decades, until his death in 1610. Initially, Ricci tried to proselytize among the Chinese poor, but recognized that he might be more successful in approaching the upper echelons of society first. His Jesuit colleagues continued this "top down" policy, in which they would initially introduce their skills in science and mathematics to the imperial court, and only subsequently introduce religious teachings. These early Western missionaries in China were committed to adapting to China: they learned the language; they studied Chinese philosophy; and they adopted a Chinese lifestyle. They had considerable success in court circles, as the emperor respected their knowledge, and members of his court were interested in their teachings.¹¹ However, the Jesuits were unable to sustain their presence in China, as the members of the Franciscan and Dominican orders brought the Jesuit methods of missionary work to the attention of the Pope. The heated and lengthy dispute which ensued, known as the "Rites Controversy," eventually led to the proscription of Christian missionaries in China in 1727. During more than 125 years in China, the Jesuits had written many books and had kept extensive personal correspondence which was later available to Europeans who were interested in China. However, Chinese continued to have little interest in the West, and this early missionary presence left little lasting impact on China.

Chinese leaders and Christian missionaries approached their subsequent interactions, in the middle of the 19th century, with contradictory expectations, and antithetical historical memories. The Westerners recalled their past in China, and looked forward to their future involvement there. The Chinese continued to believe that Westerners were of little importance to China. Western missionaries who joined other 19th century travelers to China considered that they represented not only their churches, but their nations as well. In this age of burgeoning nationalism, missionaries

¹¹ Jesuit translators were essential in the negotiations between Russia and China which culminated in the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689), signed by representatives of the two countries.

had gained the legal entry to China through the treaties which their governments had signed with the Chinese. Furthermore, Western military presence and gunboats ensured their safety when missionaries were threatened by anti-foreign activities. The Western missionaries were the focus of growing anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiments. The resultant violence threatened the future of missionary work in China. The most alarming of incidents was the Tianjin Massacre in 1870 in which sixteen French missionaries were killed by a Chinese crowd.¹² The anger which was directed at the French Roman Catholic missionaries in Tianjin reflected the deep and significant problem between many Chinese and the missionaries. The Catholic missionaries were particularly vulnerable, as they tended to work in the interior of China, rather than in the treaty ports and large cities, as did the Protestant missionaries. By the end of the century this hatred had once again erupted, in the Boxer Uprising (1898-1901). By the end of the 19th century members of this secret society had destroyed and/or stolen much of the property belonging to Chinese Christians, killed Chinese converts and alarmed the Westerners living in China. Chinese activists did not distinguish between foreigners and Christians as the Chinese xenophobia grew. This paralleled the missionaries' own self-identity, as they saw themselves as representatives of both their nations and their churches.

The vulnerability of Christian missionaries to Chinese anti-foreign activities was compounded by the military threats to China beginning in the 1920s. Missionaries were repeatedly evacuated from their stations when their safety appeared to be seriously threatened. This decision regarding imminent danger was taken either by the groups of missionaries in the field, or by the government officials of their home country (or by Britain, in the case of Canadian missionaries). Major disruptions to missionary work in this period occurred in 1925, following the "Shanghai incident"

¹² Sixteen French men and women were killed, as well as three Russians who were believed to be French.

(1925), at the height of the Japanese occupation of China (early 1940s), and following the Communist victory in China (1949-52).¹³ The few missionaries who remained in China after the Communist victory, finally departed following the Korean War (1950-1953), as the Chinese government no longer tolerated any "imperialist presence."

The literature on Christian missionary work in China has tended to focus on either the history of missionaries or the history of China. The seminal text on Christian missionaries in China is Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christian Missions in China*, which was originally published in 1929.¹⁴ Latourette traces the origins of China missions to pre-Mongol times, and continues his examination of the work of Christian missionaries through the centuries, culminating with the work of Protestant missionaries in the 1920s. This extensive study served as the scholarly source for mission history for decades, and was reissued in 1967. Jonathan Spence has written the fascinating story of Matteo Ricci in China, in *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*.¹⁵ This study however, fits neither the mission history model nor the biographical history model, as Spence weaves the worlds of Ming China and counter-reformation Europe into a narrative organized around Matteo Ricci's own observations and reminiscences. Vincent Shih discusses the relationship of Christianity and Taiping ideology, in his text, *The Taiping Ideology: Its Sources Interpretations and Influences*.¹⁶ He examines the relationship of Christian missionary work and the unique interpretation of Christianity espoused by the leadership of the Taipings. Paul Cohen

¹³ When the missionaries discuss the "Shanghai Incident" they are referring to the unrest in Shanghai in 1925, which culminated in the British-led police firing on unarmed students and worker protesters in the International Settlement in Shanghai. Many demonstrators died, setting off a wave of demonstrations and strikes that expressed solidarity with the anti-foreign nationalistic cause of the May Thirtieth martyrs.

¹⁴ Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

¹⁵ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1984).

¹⁶ Vincent Y. C. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology: Its Sources, Interpretations and Influences* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967).

provides a fascinating examination of the meeting of missionaries and Chinese in the interior of China. In *China and Christianity: the Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860-1870*, Cohen discusses both the intentional and unforeseen results of missionary work, particularly in terms of the emergence of Chinese xenophobia during this decade.¹⁷ Victor Purcell's *The Boxer Uprising: a Background Study* describes the unsettling presence of missionaries in the interior of China.¹⁸ The first half of this book is particularly useful in exploring the relationship of missionaries and Boxers, and growth of violent anti-foreignism at end of the 19th century. Joseph Esherick's more recent volume, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, is an interesting study which revises previous interpretations of the imperial role in the uprising.¹⁹ In part, Esherick examines the unique local conditions which encouraged members of this secret society to resort to violence against the foreigners. Finally, Albert Feuerwerker's short book, *The Foreign Establishment in China in the Early Twentieth Century* has an excellent chapter on missionaries.²⁰ Feuerwerker argues that the missionaries' efforts were tainted by their association with their own governments; after all, their presence in China was legitimized by the unequal treaties imposed by the West. He concludes that Christianity failed to play a central role in changing China; in his view, missionaries did not significantly touch the intellectual, cultural, social or political forces which were shaping modern China.

¹⁷ Paul A. Cohen, *China and Christianity: the Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Antiforeignism, 1860-1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

¹⁸ Victor Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising: a Background Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

¹⁹ Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

²⁰ Albert Feuerwerker, *The Foreign Establishment in China in the Early Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976).

Canadian Missionaries in China

Canadian missionaries were the bridge between Canada and China for half a century. Canada and China engaged in limited trading and diplomatic activities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; their trade connections remained marginal into the 20th century despite the decision to appoint a Canadian commercial representative to Shanghai in 1903. Within three years, this official was named Trade Commissioner. Nonetheless, China remained of only marginal interest to Canadian policy makers. On the other hand, there was a growing interest in China among the Canadian churches, which was reflected particularly in the burgeoning missionary enterprise among Canadian Protestant Churches, beginning in the late 1880s. The Canadian Roman Catholic church only began sending missionaries to China in the 1920s, at which time both French and English organizations exhibited a commitment to China missionary work. By the 1930s, when Canadian Protestant missionary work had already reached its peak in terms of financial investment and number of missionaries in the China fields, the Canadian policy makers were only just beginning to discuss relations with China. Diplomatic recognition between the two countries was finally established by China, with the appointment of an ambassador (Liu Shi-shun) to Canada in 1942. Canada responded the following year, with the appointment of Major-General Victor W. Odlum (1880-1971), who was assigned to Chongqing, the wartime capital of China.

Canadian missionary work in China in the 20th century relied upon the support and direction of the religious communities. The first two decades of the century witnessed the greatest interest in and financial support of missionary work in China by North American church-goers. Following the early but limited enthusiasm in the 1880s and 1890s for missionary work, in which adventuresome

visionaries left their homeland to begin establishing mission stations, subsequent decades witnessed a growing upsurge of support from the North American Christian community.

The focus of Protestant missionary work in China gradually shifted at the turn of the century. The earliest generation of missionaries were evangelical Protestants, who intended to save the Chinese by transforming individuals. The subsequent generation intended to Christianize society; they were social gospellers, who saw in Christianity the key to renewing Chinese society.

The Protestant Church had the most significant presence of Canadian organizations in China during this period of missionary activity. Mission fields in China were initiated by many individual Canadian churches early in the 20th century. Once the United Church of Canada was formed in 1925 (out of the Methodist, Congregationalist and part of the Presbyterian Churches in Canada), it immediately dominated Canadian missionary work in China; its missionaries worked from three major provincial centers, many smaller mission stations, and Shanghai. The Sichuan or West China field was the largest among the United Church of Canada mission fields. The Henan field was also a well-established mission center. The South China mission was the smallest of the United Church of Canada stations.

The mission era which had begun with the exuberance of Canadian university students and missionary leaders ended abruptly at mid-century. In May 1947 the United Church mission in Henan was closed when the Communist forces occupied the region. The following year, Canadian Anglicans evacuated Kaifeng. Many Canadian Roman Catholics underwent interrogation and were killed as the Communists swept through China. The limited number of Canadians who remained in

China after 1949 were forced to leave during the Korean War.²¹ Sixty years of Canadian missionary activity was brought to a close.

Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolic's *Reluctant Adversaries Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970* is a collection of 10 essays which together examine Canada's relationship with Communist China, until the formal recognition of China in 1971.²² In the introduction to this collection, Paul Evans discusses Canadian preoccupation with the Cold War, and lack of interest in both China and Asia. He explains that this preoccupation led Canadian policy makers to follow the United States' restraint in establishing relations with China. Peter M. Mitchell's essay, "The Missionary Connection" in the Evans and Frolic collection is particularly interesting, as Mitchell explains that the missionaries represented the most significant Canadian presence in China.²³ Alwyn Austin's *Saving China: Canadian Missionaries in the Middle Kingdom, 1888-1959* continues to be one of the few studies of Canadian missionary activity in China. The narrative of this highly readable text begins in 1888, as the first Canadian missionaries departed for China, and concludes with the final departure of Canadian missionaries from China. Cheung Yuet-wah, in *Missionary Medicine in China: A Study of Two Canadian Protestant Missions in China before 1937* provides a good profile of Canadian Protestant missions in China in the introduction to his study.

²¹ Peter Mitchell advises that there were still 850 Canadians missionaries in China in 1949. Peter M. Mitchell, "The Missionary Connection" in Paul M. Evans and B. Michael Frolic, eds., *Reluctant Adversaries: Canada and the People's Republic of China, 1949-1970* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 31.

²² Evans and Frolic, eds., *Reluctant Adversaries*.

²³ Mitchell, "The Missionary Connection," pgs. 17-39.

Canadian Women Missionaries in China

Canadian women missionaries were actively involved in working among Chinese women and children in the first half of the 20th century. While American women had led the movement to establish woman's missionary societies immediately following the American Civil War, Canadian women as well, were staunch advocates of their own societies. Canadian married women accompanied their missionary husbands to China, and unmarried women traveled to China with the earliest Canadian missionary groups. The China Inland Mission was among the first organizations to recruit both Canadian women and men to begin missionary work in the interior of China.

The focus of Canadian women's work in China shifted during the 20th century. The first generation of missionary women focused on evangelical work with individual Chinese women. However, by the subsequent generation, Canadian women were devoting themselves to work which mirrored the work being done among missionary men; they had become increasingly active in education and medical work as well. They were among the "social gospellers," who were determined to Christianize society, and to introduce Chinese women to the benefits which Christianity had brought to Western women. These women were crucial to the expansion of missionary work among Chinese women, as Chinese social custom prohibited foreign male missionaries from interacting with Chinese women.

Historians have become increasingly interested in the activities and experiences of Canadian women missionaries abroad. There appear to be two focuses to this research, Canadian women's history, and Chinese social history. Rosemary Gagan's *A Sensitive Independence, Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* is a fascinating text which examines Canadian women who were employed by the Woman's Missionary Society of the

Methodist Church to work in its Japan and China mission fields.²⁴ Gagan is committed to expanding the historiography of Canadian women, to include the women who worked as foreign missionaries.²⁵ Gagan explains that missionary work offered Canadian women the opportunity to be involved in an exciting and interesting occupation, which coincidentally offered them an alternative to marriage, a family and their traditional societal role in Canada. She concludes that these missionary women had highly individual experiences, which reflected the individuality of the women themselves. Some of the women thrived in foreign mission work and remained overseas throughout their careers; others were unable to either physically or emotionally bear the hardships, and returned home after their first term. Ruth Compton Brouwer similarly explores the role of Canadian women missionaries, in her volume, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914*.²⁶ On the other hand, Jane Hunter, in *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* examines the interrelationships of American women missionaries and the Chinese women with whom they worked.²⁷ Hunter argues that the women missionaries were the most successful emissaries of Western civilization. These Protestant women believed that Christianity had enabled Western women to achieve an elevated status by the 20th century, and wished to transmit the gains which they enjoyed to the women of China. Furthermore, Hunter concludes that the foreign women missionaries were conventional women, rather than being among the ranks of the feminists of their

²⁴ Rosemary Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Women Methodist Missionaries in Canada and the Orient* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1992).

²⁵ Gagan advised that the Woman's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church employed more than 300 women in Canadian and overseas work. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁶ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

²⁷ Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

day. They clearly hoped to bring the established conventions of North American society to the unenlightened Chinese women.

This new field of Chinese history, that of Canadian women missionaries in China, is in its infant stage. It is certainly evident that further studies in this field should be undertaken; studies which are designed on a microcosmic basis, in order to bring out the experiences of Canadian women missionaries in China. This type of research will allow the Canadian women missionaries to speak for themselves, and to make this rich archival material more accessible to a generation of Canadian scholars. This thesis attempts to add to this "history from below" on Canadian women missionaries in China.

CHAPTER TWO: MARGARET HELEN BROWN

Margaret Helen Brown was a missionary in China for 43 years, first working as an educator in North Henan (1913-1927), and then as an editor at the Christian Literature Society (CLS) in Shanghai (1929-1947). Brown spent the last eight years of her extensive missionary career in Hong Kong, continuing to work as an editor, and as well serving as an important liaison between the United Church in Canada and the Canadian missionaries who had remained in China following the Communist victory in 1949. After nearly half a century in China, Brown returned to Canada in 1956, when she retired from the Woman's Missionary Society.

Biographical Sketch

Margaret Brown was born in 1887 in Tiverton Ontario, a town on the east coast of Lake Huron, situated south of Port Elgin.²⁸ She was the third daughter, born to religious parents. It was Brown's mother who particularly encouraged her to live a Christian life, and to center both her daily life and her long-term goals around this religious core.²⁹ Brown attended the local elementary and high schools and Ottawa Normal School. Although she did not expect to attend university following her high school graduation (1905), her cousin, with whom she shared many interests, encouraged her to attend Queen's University, and to support herself with part-time employment.³⁰ Both young women were successful in their endeavors, and earned their Bachelor of Arts degrees in 1912. Together, they joined the Student Volunteers, a Christian youth movement, and as well took optional courses

²⁸ Please see photographs of Margaret Brown in Appendix One of thesis.

²⁹ Margaret Helen Brown, biographical file, held at the United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto (hereafter referred to as MHBBF).

³⁰ The biographical file on Margaret Brown identifies her cousin only as "Margaret." MHBBF.

in theology. Even before completing their studies, Brown and her cousin had decided to become foreign missionaries. Both of these young women were subsequently appointed by the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church to work in its Henan mission field.³¹ Brown would later receive a Bachelor of Pedagogy from the Ontario College of Education in Toronto (1928), as well as a Master of Arts in Chinese Studies from the Hartford Seminary Foundation (1935). Her special area of interest in graduate school was Chinese culture. Her thesis was titled "The Chinese Attitude to Peace and War in Pre-Confucian Times," and was published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1936. She later began doctoral studies in theology at the Union Theological College, Columbia University in New York (1941), but did not complete her degree.

Margaret Brown was assigned to North Henan as an educator for her first and second terms in China (1913-1919, 1920-1927).³² Brown and her cousin left Canada together in July 1913, and arrived in Shanghai in early September. Brown immediately left Shanghai and continued overland, reaching Hwaiking five weeks later. She noted that it had taken her only one week more to travel from Canada to China, than from Shanghai to North Henan, a distance of approximately 500 miles. She taught Chinese girls and young women at the mission school, which was located just outside the Hwaiking city walls. Eventually, Margaret Brown became the principal of the school. As well, Brown was instrumental in opening the first full primary girls school located within the city walls. This school was established in order to attract students from what Brown called, "the better class" of Chinese society. Brown advises that she hoped that parents who were unwilling to send their daughters to the school at the mission compound would find the new school more acceptable.³³ While stationed in Hwaiking, she was also instrumental in establishing a school for

³¹ This Presbyterian Church work was taken over by the United Church after 1925.

³² Please see map of Henan mission field in Appendix One of thesis.

young married women.³⁴ Brown returned to Canada for her furloughs following these two terms; it was during her second furlough that she earned a Bachelor of Pedagogy from the Ontario College of Education.³⁵

Margaret Brown became an editor at the Christian Literature Society (Shanghai) in her third term in China (1929-1934). When she returned to China after her 1927-28 furlough, she was asked to work as an interim translator of Oriental languages for the Canadian Commissioner of Trade in Shanghai. However, while she was working in this capacity, the Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada appointed her to the editorial staff of the CLS.³⁶ Brown described the Society as "the big Protestant publishing house (which) was both inter-denominational and international."³⁷ At the CLS she was appointed Editor of Literature for Women and Children. She immediately became involved in editorial work, and as well in translation of articles, administration of the Society, and her own literary work. Brown was the author of many articles and booklets; among them was the popular series entitled *Mrs. Wang's Diaries* which were based on the lives of Chinese women. During the Japanese occupation, Brown wrote about Chinese refugees.³⁸ Brown's

³³ MHBBF.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The WMS played an active role in the Christian Literature Society. It supported the CLS financially, and assigned missionaries to work at the Society. For general information on the Christian Literature Society and the Shanghai Mission, please see the historical sketch in finding aid 45, United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto (hereafter referred to as UCCFA number: volume: series). The aim of the Christian Literature Society according to the early "charter" was to promote Christianity among Chinese, by offering literature "of a distinctly religious character"; general literature written from a Christian standpoint, as well as scholarly works suitable for schools; and literature, chiefly religious and suitable particularly for women and children. By the 1920s it had expanded its scope of activities, increased production and planned to distribute publications throughout China.

³⁷ MHBBF.

³⁸ Ibid. She established and was editor of a magazine entitled the *Woman's Star* which used only 1000 of the most widely known Chinese characters and she also edited the children's magazine *Happy Childhood*.

excellent Chinese language skills enabled her to write these books in Chinese. They were later translated into both English and Swedish. She took her third furlough in 1934, and once again, returned to China in November 1935.³⁹

Margaret Brown's work at the CLS was upset by the increasing Japanese military incursion into China, during her fourth term (1935-41). After less than two years of work in this term, Brown joined the women and children under the jurisdiction of the British Consulate in evacuating from Shanghai. Upon her arrival in Hong Kong, Brown immediately set in motion the necessary plans to publish their literature from Hong Kong, as she was unsure how long the evacuation orders would be in force. In fact, Brown and her colleagues were able to return to Shanghai within three months.⁴⁰ As the Japanese military increasingly made its presence felt in China, the CLS had difficulty distributing literature beyond the port cities. Brown planned to have a depot established inland at Kunming, from which the CLS would be able to distribute its literature. In 1939 she visited Kunming and Yunnan for this purpose.⁴¹ In October 1940, it appeared that Brown would once again be evacuated from Shanghai. The American government had announced the evacuation of all American women and children from the "Far East."⁴² Margaret Brown and the staff of the CLS thought that they too would have to leave Shanghai, and planned their possible retreat to the

³⁹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 12, 193, Margaret Helen Brown, box 1: file 3, held at the United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto ((hereafter referred to as MHB box : file:).

⁴⁰ Margaret Brown, letter to Mrs. Taylor, August 22, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

⁴¹ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, December 25, 1938 (MHB 1:5).

⁴² Brown attended a meeting of the National Christian Council (at which every mission was represented) in October 1940. She advised that it was at this meeting that the Americans announced their plans to evacuate. The British had no similar plans. A member of the London Mission explained that not only could there be no quick evacuation of British, due to numbers present, but further, "there were many British (Eurasians and non-Anglo Saxons) who had no other home but in the Far East and it would be unthinkable that they could remove them. Also Australia and Canada would be the only places to which Br. Missionaries could go and with no connections there they could not afford to live there." Margaret Brown, circular letter, October 30, 1940 (MHB 1:7).

interior, which had not yet been attacked by the Japanese military.⁴³ Brown did not in fact move to the interior at this time, as the Executive of the United Church in Canada advised her that she should book a speedy passage to Canada, since she was almost due for a furlough. Although she doubted that she would be able to secure a booking before the following May, Margaret Brown did, in fact leave for her fourth furlough on March 8, 1941.⁴⁴ It was during this furlough that Brown studied for a year at Union Theological College in New York. She also applied to work at the Canadian Civil Service Commission in order to help the Canadian war effort, but returned to China before she had an opportunity to begin this work.⁴⁵

Margaret Brown and the staff of Christian Literature Society moved to the interior of China as the Japanese military continued their march through China in the early 1940s. It took Brown more than six months to reach Sichuan from Canada, as she had spent five difficult weeks in Calcutta, and then traveled over the Hump, and into West China, finally arriving in Chongqing in November 1943. A month later she traveled on to Chengdu, where she worked for the following two years.⁴⁶ In Sichuan Brown and her colleagues joined the growing numbers of refugees from occupied China; university professors and students, government workers, and military personnel who accompanied Chiang Kai-shek had become members of China's refugee population. Brown was astonished at the seeming suddenness of Japan's surrender in 1945, and she began making plans to return to Shanghai immediately. She eventually secured a seat on an RAF plane, due to her

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Margaret Brown, circular letter, January 21, 1941 (MHB 1:8); Margaret Brown, circular letter, February 5, 1941 (MHB 1:8).

⁴⁵ Mrs. Taylor, letter to Margaret Brown, September 1, 1942 (MHB 1:9); Mrs. Taylor, letter to Ruth Walker, September 11, 1942 (MHB 1:9); Mrs. Taylor, letter to Ruth Walker, September 15, 1942 (MHB 1:9); Mrs. Taylor, letter to Margaret Brown, September 28, 1942 (MHB 1:9).

⁴⁶ Mrs. Taylor, letter to Bertha Drummond, November 17, 1943 (MHB 1:10).

friendship with Canadian diplomat Major-General Odium.⁴⁷ She arrived back in Shanghai in November 1945, where she remained until her furlough in 1947.

Margaret Brown was never again able to enter China. She did leave from Canada in 1949, en route to Shanghai but was unable to proceed beyond Hong Kong, in December 1949. She planned to wait there until she could reenter China and return to Shanghai. The Communist victory in China during her absence made this return impossible, as missionaries were no longer granted entry permits. Brown remained in Hong Kong from 1949 until 1955. There she acted as liaison between the Canadian Church and the missionaries who were still in China, immediately following the change of government. As well, she was the official representative of the Christian Literature Society until communications with China were cut off. She was then appointed Editor of Literature for Woman and Children with the newly formed Council for Christian Literature for Overseas Chinese. She remained on the staff of this council until her retirement in 1956.⁴⁸ After she retired the United Church asked her to write a history of the Henan mission. Brown produced a four volume manuscript entitled *History of the Honan North China Mission of the United Church of Canada, Originally a Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1887-1961*. Among her many other publications is a biography entitled *MacGillvray of Shanghai*, published in 1968. Brown returned to Canada when she retired, and remained active in the Church until her death in 1978, when she was ninety years old.

⁴⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, December 2, 1945 (MHB 1:12).

⁴⁸ For background on the Hong Kong Mission, please see UCCFA 90.

Experiences in China

Margaret Brown has left us an abundance of diaries and letters which together provide access to her experiences in China.⁴⁹ She was a faithful diarist, who filled several volumes during her 43 years in China. She was also a tireless correspondent, describing her experiences to Canadians. She communicated diligently with Canadians via general letters, which were usually sent to at least seven or eight of her colleagues. She also wrote fairly frequently to her good friend Bertha Drummond, as well as her friend and colleague Bruce.⁵⁰ The letters to the former are chatty, and again provide quite detailed insight into her experiences; the latter are more introspective and philosophical. Margaret Brown maintained her correspondence with Canadians throughout her years in China.

Experiences in Henan (1913-1927)

During her eight years of missionary work in Hwaiking, Margaret Brown's main focus was on education. She arrived at her North Henan teaching post determined to attract the upper class of Chinese society to the Presbyterian Mission School at which she was working. From her earliest observations of Chinese society, she realized that "these people do more to preserve the worship of idols than any other class. They have money & make a lavish use of it for such purposes."⁵¹ Brown believed that Hwaiking presented a particularly good opportunity for this approach to missionary work because of the interest in Christianity which the families of both civil and military officials had already demonstrated.⁵² When the niece of a provincial official enrolled in the mission

⁴⁹ Please see extracts of Margaret Brown's diaries and correspondence in Appendix One of thesis. Margaret Brown's letters and diaries are found at location number 86.046C, box 1 and 2. There are 21 files of chronologically arranged letters (1917-1971), and 6 files which include a biographical file, diaries, scrapbook, newspaper clippings, photographs and documents pertaining to the Christian Literature Society.

⁵⁰ Bruce's surname is not identified in Margaret Brown's correspondence.

⁵¹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 23, 1917 (MHB 1:1).

⁵² Margaret Brown, letter to Dr. Mackay, April 10, 1918 (MHB 1:1).

school in 1918, Brown explained the importance of this student's attendance. "So far as I am aware it is the first time that a girl or indeed a boy from a *Yamen* has come into any (of) our schools in N. Honan"⁵³ As well, Brown was teaching approximately 100 women each week at Sunday meetings. It is really wonderful to see how these high class women," she explained, "who have never done anything all their lives but eat and wear clothes and gamble are showing an interest in the teachings of Jesus. Of course I have to make it very simple for them. We have it as a sort of Sunday School and I try to teach only a very little . . ." ⁵⁴

Margaret Brown reports that her work in Hwaiking with Chinese children at the mission school was encouraging. Her determination to rent a school in Hwaiking was rewarded in 1917. In the early months the enrollment of children progressed at a slow but even pace, and so Brown advised her colleagues in Canada that she was willing to welcome children in the middle of the term, despite the pedagogical problems which would undoubtedly arise. In April 1918 five new students arrived, as word of the school spread to interested families.⁵⁵ Brown's enthusiasm and determination in these early days was rewarded, as she was encouraged by the gradual spread of the missionaries' teachings. "Results are not easily tabulated and we know that out here, working amongst uneducated people, winning souls for Christ seems a long process." It appeared that "in nearly every official family in Hwaiking, at least one person knows 'Jesus loves me' and quite a number have learned the Lord's prayer." Further, she advised, the twelve girls who attended Bible class would "go home every day from my school and tell the Bible stories they have learned." She hoped that in this way, the message of the missionaries would spread, from one child or female

⁵³ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 23, 1917 (MHB 1:1). *Yamen* is the residence and office of provincial officials.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Margaret Brown, circular letter, April 17, 1918 (MHB 1:1).

family member to other relatives.⁵⁶ With the guidance of the teachers, the children from different socio-economic classes were learning together. This "mingling" of children was a break in tradition in Hwaiking. In the past the upper classes would refuse to learn together with "slave girls and children of servants," however with the encouragement of the missionaries, the schoolroom population was changing.⁵⁷

Margaret Brown's busy schedule in Hwaiking appears to have left her little time to engage in the evangelical work which she so enjoyed. The anti-foreign activities of 1925, which had caused the short-lived summer evacuation of missionaries, also affected the reopening of the school in the fall of that year. Although Brown believed that the children and missionaries would not be endangered if school reopened, she was pleased to have some free time in which she could proselytize among the local Chinese women. She continued to be most interested in working among the wives of city officials and high ranking military officers.⁵⁸

It was during these early years in Hwaiking that Margaret Brown established her career-long rigorous and demanding schedule. In this particular period she supervised teachers at a country school which was several hours cart-ride beyond the city of Hwaiking; she attended weekly foreign prayer meetings; and most time consuming of all, sat on many committees. As well, she carried on her daily teaching and administrative responsibilities at the mission school.

⁵⁶ Margaret Brown to Dr. Mackay, April 10, 1918 (MHB 1:1).

⁵⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 17, 1923 (MHB 1:1).

⁵⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, September 23, 1925 (MHB 1:1).

A conference held in 1926 in Hwaiking, in which the future of missionary work in China was the focus, was terribly distressing for Brown. As this "Conference of Forty" approached, Brown looked forward to it with great expectation. She had been one of the key organizers of the meetings, at which discussions were to be held regarding the devolution of the Protestant Church, and the readiness of the Chinese to assume responsibility for the Church in China.⁵⁹ Twenty foreigners (twelve men and eight women including Brown) and 20 Chinese were invited to attend. The missionaries intended to focus on developing a reasonable plan in order to "devolve more responsibility upon the Chinese," but were somewhat wary about the planned meeting. Brown explained that she and her colleagues were apprehensive because,

The Chinese are feeling that they want to express themselves in some bigger way and as yet they do not seem ready for bigger responsibilities. It will remain to be seen what the outcome will be. It will be one of the most important meetings that we have ever had.⁶⁰

The outcome was, in fact, disturbing to the missionaries. It appeared that the Chinese had come with the intention of securing financial input in mission affairs, and were abrasive and confrontational regarding the amount of money spent on missions. They initially inquired, and then demanded to know facts, among them the missionaries' salaries, which Brown considered "no concern of theirs." She believed that the individuals involved were stimulated by the "havoc so much Bolshevism is having even amongst the Christians." Brown's outrage led her to declare that if this group had their way, "all the station meetings would have to be in Chinese, and minutes kept in two languages and two treasurers, Chinese and foreign one."⁶¹ She added "It just seems to be

⁵⁹ Brown was one of the missionaries who received Canadian donations which were to be used at their discretion. Brown received donations from individual Canadian women, the Chalmers Club and the Five O'Clock Club. The China missionaries were always working with financial impediments, and so welcomed these donations, and used them carefully. Brown decided to spend some of her Five O'Clock fund on food for the Conference of Forty, an indication she advises us, that it was to be an important conference. Please see Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 27, 1925 (MHB 1:1); Margaret Brown, circular letter January 24, 1926 (MHB 1:1); Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, April 12, 1926 (MHB 1:1).

⁶⁰ Margaret Brown, circular letter, April 20, 1926 (MHB 1:1).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

piling up the machinery so much that I feel I should like to belong somewhere where life is more simple." She was disheartened, and added a rather plaintive postscript in her letter to her good friend Bertha, that "These meetings depressed me terribly & made me wonder if what we are doing is so worthwhile after all. . . ."⁶²

While in Hwaiking Margaret Brown was determined to allot some time to developing friendships with local Chinese women. She was interested in becoming at ease with Chinese etiquette, and conscientiously worked towards this goal. Her learning was facilitated by a friendship which developed between Brown and an "influential" local woman, Mrs. Chen. This woman, who would become Brown's closest friend in Hwaiking, was the daughter-in-law of the matron of the mission boarding school. The older woman had been a Christian for years, whereas her daughter-in-law, who held the reputation of being "the best educated woman in these parts"⁶³ only became interested in Christianity as she became a devoted companion of Brown's.⁶³ Mrs. Chen, as Brown called her, would explain subtle social rules of etiquette to her. She advised Brown that in China, one action prompted another: for example, during Chinese Spring festival, acceptance of gifts from an individual who could well afford to give the gift, might encourage others who were financially constrained to feel they too must provide gifts.⁶⁴ When, in fact, messengers began delivering gifts to Margaret Brown, Mrs. Chen then taught her that she must send back her own card, "with thanks, and also leave a few coffers on the tray" for the servant. "That reminds me," Brown advised, "I use more calling cards in a month here than I did in a year at home. You see," she explained, "I mix in high society and I simply have to follow these customs."⁶⁵

⁶² Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 7, 1926 (MHB 1:1).

⁶³ Margaret Brown, circular letter, April 20, 1926 (MHB 1:1).

⁶⁴ Margaret Brown, circular letter, June 16, 1918 (MHB 1:1).

Margaret Brown encouraged the Chinese people with whom she socialized in Hwaiking to become supporters of missionary work. For example, she invited a country official to visit her at home, and used this occasion to introduce him to the newly established mission school for women. Brown mustered all of her recently acquired etiquette for this visit. Mrs. Chen was present, and Brown asked a male colleague to join them as well, as she thought it appropriate to have a male foreigner in attendance. Brown's carefully made plans for the afternoon were altered as soon as her Chinese visitor arrived, as he decided to send his chairman to return home to ask his wife to join them. Brown scrambled to readjust her plans, led the little group on a tour of the new building, and asked the school children to perform for them. Brown was pleased with the afternoon visit, and the official promised to publish an order to do with unbinding of feet. Unfortunately, he was transferred from the district before he could do so.⁶⁶

Brown took every available opportunity to learn about local Chinese customs in Hwaiking. On the day of the Chinese Spring Festival, she was fascinated by the special festival clothes in which the children appeared at school. "Every child had a pomegranate blossom in her hair and also a piece of mugwort, and fastened to their buttons at the right side of their garment every child had a sachet, of many and varied odors." The children presented her with four or five sachets, and Brown sent one of them to Canadians with the warning,

You may have to have it outside the house for Miss Brydon would not sit beside me when I had it on. She said it smelled exactly like a pig. She wouldn't even walk with me outside. Yet one Chinese lady told me that everyone liked that smell! I think I am getting used to it. The pomegranate in the hair is supposed to keep you from getting sore eyes, the sachet is to keep people from smelling the odor of your perspiration. The mugwort is to keep away

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 4, 1922 (MHB 1:1).

mosquitoes etc. from biting you. For this purpose red sulfur is also rubbed on the lobe of the ear.⁶⁷

By the end of the festival day, Margaret Brown had proudly pinned some pomegranate and mugwort on her own clothing.

Brown appears to have been particularly concerned about the strains that limited financial resource was placing on missionary activities in Hwaiking. Brown was particularly stressed by the inherent demands made upon her as Hwaiking missionaries departed from the mission field, and were not replaced by the Home Board. Financial limitations impacted directly upon the number of missionaries in the North Henan field. In the same year that the Conference of Forty was held, the Hwaiking missionaries received notice from the Board in Canada that grants were to be reduced. Brown was alarmed by this announcement, and concerned about the viability of their work.⁶⁸ After examining the history of the mission, and the new proposal, she was distressed to find that with the shrinkage in staff, they were "actually nine less than in 1915." Furthermore, the age of those in Henan was reflected by the decades most of the missionaries had already spent in the field. Brown advised that the missionaries' knowledge and experience was surely offset by their aging, exhaustion and illness, all of which appeared to her, to be the end result of many years of missionary work in China. In all, she exclaimed, the figures illustrated "how pitifully weak the staff is. . . with only nine evangelistic Ministers (now) on the field."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, June 16, 1918 (MHB 1:1).

⁶⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, February 2, 1926 (MHB 1:1); Margaret Brown, circular letter, February 10, 1926 (MHB 1:1)

⁶⁹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, February 10, 1926 (MHB 1:1)

Experiences in Shanghai (1929-1941)

In Shanghai, Margaret Brown once again became a driving force in expanding the missionary work in which she was involved. At the Christian Literature Society, Brown was the editor of three magazines, *Happy Childhood*, *Woman's Star* and in later years, the *Honan Quarterly* (begun in 1940).⁷⁰ Margaret Brown was instrumental in developing the *Woman's Star*, which she described as a "little new venture for Country Women." It was marketed to encourage "newly-literate women to take an interest in reading books and magazines."⁷¹ All the articles in this particular magazine had to be "original" because Brown was unable to find anything "simple enough" which could be translated from English. Brown's "advice column" in the magazine was particularly successful. One young Chinese woman wrote to Brown immediately after reading the first issue, and explained that she had been a student at Honan Provincial University, where she was raped twice by "the tiger," as she referred to the Japanese soldier who was the perpetrator. She described the revulsion that she was feeling, and explained that she was unable to find a doctor who would perform an abortion. "What can I do?" she asked. "Answer me in your next issue."⁷² This plea for advice reinforced Brown's commitment to helping the women of China through this magazine. Brown subsidized the *Woman's Star* with donations from the Five O'clock Club.⁷³ The magazine was well-received by Chinese women, and the readership increased from 500 subscribers in the first year, to over 2,450 by 1943.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Margaret Brown, circular letter, October 31, 1930 (MHB 1:2).

⁷¹ Margaret Brown, letter to Friends of the Five O'Clock Club, March 12, 1934 (MHB 1:2).

⁷² Margaret Brown, letter to Friends of the Five O'Clock Club, September 7, 1944 (MHB 1:11).

⁷³ Margaret Brown, letter to Friends of the Five O'Clock Club, March 12, 1934 (MHB 1:2).

⁷⁴ Margaret Brown, letter to Friends of the Five O'Clock Club, March 12, 1934 (MHB 1:2); Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 23, 1934 (MHB 1:2); Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 20, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

Margaret Brown devoted many of her leisure hours to writing the short stories which brought Christian lessons to Chinese women, and which satisfied her personal desire to become an author. Brown once again wrote those very popular, *Mrs. Wang's Diary* stories in Chinese. Brown ordered larger "runs" of the popular publication, and found herself writing second, third and fourth volumes of *Mrs. Wang* stories.⁷⁵ She once again decided to help defray the costs for printing with donations from the Five O'clock Club. Mrs. Wang's fame spread, and Brown was asked by two separate Christian publishing houses, one in Sweden and another in Scotland, for permission to translate her book into Swedish and English. Brown wrote to her friend in Canada, excited about the reception that her book had received abroad. "Well I certainly was surprised and cannot get over the idea of imagining my book in three languages! It makes me feel almost like a real author."⁷⁶ Chinese women and foreign missionaries reported their belief that the books were written by a Chinese woman, as Brown's insight into the lives of Chinese women was reportedly excellent.⁷⁷ By the early 1940s, Brown considered bringing Mrs. Wang "up-to-date" with the current fashion and inflationary economy. "She has her hair bobbed now," she advised,

puts a hundred dollar bill on the collection plate. Don't faint. What's a hundred dollars? It will only buy you one pound of beef! She also knows all the latest models of American planes and has a close acquaintance with Japanese bombs.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Margaret Brown, circular letter, October 31, 1930 (MHB 1:2).

⁷⁶ Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 2, 1937 (MHB 1:4); Margaret Brown, circular letter, October 1, 1938 (MHB 1:5). *Mrs. Wang's Diary* was published in Scotland by Edinburgh House in 1938.

⁷⁷ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, October 1, 1939 (MHB 1:6).

⁷⁸ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, May 15, 1944 (MHB 1:11).

Margaret Brown was also actively involved in the varied social life of Shanghai's international community, from informal gatherings with colleagues to formal parties in honor of diplomats. She occasionally hosted United Church - CLS teas in her garden at home, and could always be counted upon to hold farewell parties for departing missionaries.⁷⁹ Living in Shanghai prompted her to sustain this hectic social schedule, as it seemed that on any day there were friends, colleagues and friends of colleagues visiting the city, on their way into or out of China. She organized many social outings for the Shanghai missionaries. On one occasion in 1936 the Shanghai missionaries had expected invitations to Dominion Day celebrations at the home of the Canadian Commissioner. When the invitations did not materialize, Brown joined a reception committee which quickly organized a moonlight excursion down the river. She joined diplomatic and military officials at a variety of parties which were held in honor of the 1937 British Coronation.⁸⁰

Margaret Brown witnessed the devastating results of the escalating war in China, as she became intensely involved in refugee work beginning in 1937. She had been evacuated from Shanghai with the other British "women and children" in 1937, and immediately upon her return from Hong Kong, took steps to shift the focus of CLS work to refugee work. Shanghai was teeming with people who had been forced from their homes, and moved into the city's refugee camps. Brown headed a committee to distribute Christian literature among the camps, and as well she visited many hospitals and refugee centers herself.⁸¹ She met with "a steady stream of people" who asked her to recommend literature for use in religious work in the camps, and also requested "free gifts." She found it difficult to refuse these requests, but the Society could not afford to give away

⁷⁹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, June 28, 1936 (MHB 1:3).

⁸⁰ Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 14, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

⁸¹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 23, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

unlimited free literature.⁸² Even before the 1937 evacuation, the CLS had financial difficulties, and she had advised the Home Board that "The situation is terribly unsettling. Our whole business is upset as is all other business in Shanghai. We may have to dismiss our staff." ". . . we are dreadfully worried about our work as all sales are at a standstill and we have been living a hand to mouth existence for some time."⁸³

As the CLS work was increasingly jeopardized by the Japanese military thrust into China's major cities, Margaret Brown initiated plans to move at least part of the Society's work to the interior. Brown and the members of the CLS editorial board watched the political and military developments of 1938-39 before taking any action.⁸⁴ The CLS sales representative working in Sichuan reported that magazine sales remained high. On the other hand, the Shanghai headquarters was struggling with ongoing distribution problems. It was difficult to ship the books as far as Kunming, and then, even if she managed to do so, Brown did not know how to send them on to Chengdu and Chongqing. In 1939 Brown and her co-workers reached the extraordinary decision to join the Seventh Day Adventists and the Scots Bible Society in forming a caravan of four trucks to transport books to Chongqing. They planned to purchase these trucks in Hong Kong, and resell them in Sichuan CLS literature could then be distributed throughout the area.⁸⁵ By the time that the convoy was readied, reports had reached Shanghai about the bombings of Chongqing.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, the convoy left with its load of two and a half tons of books. Brown described the

⁸² Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 20, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

⁸³ Margaret Brown, untitled document, notes to herself, August 12, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

⁸⁴ Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 18, 1939 (MHB 1:6); Margaret Brown, circular letter, April 15, 1939 (MHB 1:6).

⁸⁵ Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 13, 1939 (MHB 1:6).

⁸⁶ Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 27, 1939 (MHB 1:6).

hazards of this "1800 mile trip, over precarious roads and five very high mountain ranges, all the while in danger of being mistaken for Government convoys and receiving the attention of enemy planes."⁸⁷

Experiences in Sichuan (1943-1945)

Margaret Brown spent a rather frenzied month in Chongqing immediately after her returning to China from her 1942-43 furlough. After a long and exhausting trip from Canada, Brown had a four week stopover in Chongqing before moving to the new CLS headquarters in Chengdu. Brown and many CLS staff members joined the throngs of refugees in reestablishing themselves in the new Nationalist capital. She immediately connected with many of her "old Shanghai friends," both Chinese and Western, who could help her in reestablishing the CLS.⁸⁸ She gathered information which she could insert into their first magazine issue and interviewed prospective employees. Brown was also able to schedule two visits with her neighbor, Major-General Odlum, who was living in one of the mission houses adjacent to the Chongqing hospital.⁸⁹

Margaret Brown once again had a very hectic schedule when she established herself at the CLS wartime headquarters in Chengdu in 1943. She initially found it more difficult to settle into the Chengdu foreign community, and it was only after she felt that she had been "properly received" at several teas held in her honor, that she was content in Chengdu.⁹⁰ She was once again asked to sit on many committees, and expected to receive the many visiting missionaries who arrived in

⁸⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 24, 1939 (MHB 1:6).

⁸⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, December 1, 1944 (MHB 1:10).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Chengdu for meetings.⁹¹ Brown was proud to be the only woman appointed to the editorial board of the new *Christian Weekly*, which was a joint enterprise under the auspices of the United Christian Publishers.⁹² Within only a few months, Brown was a welcome guest at what she considered socially prestigious dinner parties. Two years later, during one of her last evenings there, while awaiting travel arrangements to return to Shanghai following the truce, she attended a dinner “given by the Commissioner of Foreign Affairs. . . .The American Consul and the French Consul were both there as well as the Press Attaché folks,” Brown advised. “I was the only person from the mission though why I do not know.” She did recall later that two of her colleagues had been invited, but had declined to attend.⁹³ Within a few days Brown also lunched at the French Consulate.⁹⁴

While she was stationed in Sichuan, Margaret Brown had the opportunity to travel beyond the cities of Chengdu and Chongqing, and to appreciate the beauty and wealth of the province. On her first trip out of Chengdu, she joined a colleague to attend a graduation ceremony at the Mission Middle School in Peng Xian, about 90 li from Chengdu.⁹⁵ They left home at 9:00 in the morning and did not arrive at their destination until late afternoon. She described the difficulty of traveling all day in a rickshaw.

I think I've mentioned before that the rickshaws are not very comfortable and you may imagine what they were like on a very rough road. I was quite exhausted when we arrived

⁹¹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, December 27, 1944 (MHB 1:10).

⁹² Margaret Brown, circular letter, October 1945 (MHB 1:12). The editorial board advised that the magazine would “present the Christian point of view on all social, political and world problems, etc.”

⁹³ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, September 16, 1945 (MHB 1:12). Brown's colleagues were concerned about socializing because there had been cholera in the city.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Brown advises that 90 li is about 30 miles.

and my back was sore though I had been wise enough to take two cushions, one to sit on and one for my back.⁹⁶

Despite her discomfort, these excursions provided her with a chance to see the sights of the province, and deepen her understanding of the people who lived there. "Szechwan is s (*sic*) wealthy. They say there are over 50 kinds of vegetables and over forty kinds of fruits and every one eats better than anything I saw the wealthy eat in Honan."⁹⁷

While they were vacationing at nearby Mount Emei in 1945 Margaret Brown and her traveling companions were astounded to hear that the war had ended with the surrender of Japan. She and a group of missionaries had traveled downriver aboard a houseboat, from Chengdu to the Kiating mission before visiting the famous Sichuan tourist attraction, Mount Emei. Brown was enjoying a fascinating and unhurried vacation until the little group heard about the truce. "We always tied up for the night at some town and always we foreigners were great centers of interest." They visited "the big Buddha across the river from Kiating" and then traveled up to Mount Emei in "hwakans."⁹⁸ Brown had never before seen this type of carrier, and assumed it was unique to Sichuan.

When we used to go up the mountain at Kikungshan you traveled in a regular light wicker chair carried on poles, but this is more like a tiny hammock made of bamboo slats. It forms a little seat and your feet and legs would dangle down but a rod slung on rope like a swing is there for your feet and this permits your feet to sway with the motion of traveling.⁹⁹

As they were leisurely coming back down the mountain, they heard the unexpected news. There was no easy or quick route back to Chengdu, however Brown and her companions tried to hurry

⁹⁶ Margaret Brown, circular letter, June 27, 1945 (MHB 1:12).

⁹⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, December 27, 1944 (MHB 1:10).

⁹⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, August 17, 1945 (MHB 1:12).

⁹⁹ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, September 16, 1945 (MHB 1:12).

along, using whatever means possible to convince both the Chinese carriers and the American soldiers they met along the way to help them return quickly.¹⁰⁰

Brown found that the CLS work remained "encouraging" throughout the two years that she spent in Chengdu. By the time of the truce with Japan, the circulation of all their magazines was high, and *Happy Childhood* was straining the production capabilities of the CLS. *Woman's Messenger* had earned "a fine reputation" and it appeared that the most interesting section was "the letter box . . . at least so it would seem by the letters we receive" advised Brown. "The questions asked are largely in relation to practical problems of marriage and its ethics, etc." Brown was present at a meeting of the Christian Homes Committee of the National Christian Council, at which Mrs. Mei, a college-level Home Economics teacher and married to the Dean of Arts of the College of Yenching spoke about the ethical void confronting Chinese. "There are no moral standards in China today. We have not accepted Western standards and we have abandoned our old Chinese ones. We must reach the young girls in Middle School. By the time they reach the university it is too late. Their lives are already ruined." Brown felt that this dilemma provided "a great challenge to those of us who are preparing Christian literature."¹⁰¹

Impressions of China

In her correspondence and diaries Margaret Brown describes her impressions of China as well as her specific experiences in China. Brown's letters are more descriptive than her diary entries. The latter tend to be related to specific events, although Brown does become quite reflective in some of her entries. In this section, Margaret Brown's impressions of China are discussed thematically.

¹⁰⁰ Margaret Brown, circular letter, September 8, 1945 (MHB 1:12).

¹⁰¹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, October 1945 (MHB 1:12).

From the beginning of her career, Brown was impressed with the magnitude of opportunity faced by Western missionaries in China, which she juxtaposed with Chinese attitudes towards foreigners. This section moves from a discussion of Brown's life as a missionary and her impressions of missionary life in China, to a discussion of her views of Chinese politics. Particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, Brown had the opportunity to observe the power struggle being waged in China. This section concludes with Brown's impressions of the future of missionary work in Communist China.

Being a China Missionary

Margaret Brown's expectations of the relationship between China missionaries and the women of China did not always match the reality that she encountered, particularly when she was stationed in North Henan. As she settled into her new life as a young missionary, she was overwhelmed with the opportunity that she faced. "Sometimes the greatness of the opportunity I have here almost staggers me for I think how dreadful it would be if I should not be able to measure up to the opportunity."¹⁰² However, only eight years later she expressed an entirely different sentiment. By 1925 she was half way through her second term; she had heard about the "Shanghai Incident" and endured frequent interruptions of her work in Henan. She had heard the anti-foreign propaganda around her and felt the hatred of anti-foreignism. She came to feel that "her China" was being transformed into something that she no longer understood. During her vacation at the popular seaside resort of Beidaihe which was frequented by most Henan missionaries, she explained,

. . . there has come a sense of apatness. I seem as it were, detached . . . It seems so immaterial to me whether I go back to Honan or go home to Canada . . . Of course I know it is only a phase of my mind, due to a reaction after all the strain & worry of these past months. No doubt when the time for action comes I shall recover my usual enthusiasm.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 23, 1917 (MHB 1:1).

¹⁰³ Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 27, 1925 (MHB 1:1). Beidaihe was a favorite vacation area for the Hwaiking missionaries; Chingwangtao was the port of Beidaihe.

However, the completely unexpected news of the death of her sister and young nephew only a year later, helped Margaret Brown to refocus her impressions of the work she had come to China to do.¹⁰⁴ Once again she expressed her feelings to her friend Bertha. "The uncertainty of my life out here throughout the years, made me cling more to the home ties, and that is why the blow is so terrible a one. Maybe the lesson I'm to learn is right there - a more whole hearted devotion to my work here."¹⁰⁵

Margaret Brown was content to maintain her Western lifestyle during her long career in China. When she lived in the Hwaiking compound, Brown recognized that she and her colleagues worked among Chinese women, but remained quite separate from them because the missionaries lived within the confines of their missionary compound. Although she was determined to learn as much about Chinese etiquette and social customs as possible, skills which would enable her to be successful in her work, she was not drawn to a more Chinese lifestyle, and reported to Canadians that in their foreign compound, they lived "more or less away from the Chinese . . ."¹⁰⁶ In later years in Shanghai, this separateness was also easily maintained. Brown encouraged her housekeeper, who she called "amah," to adapt to her requirements.

. . . Amah never had made cakes until I (Brown) taught her. We have neither measuring cup nor scales so it is not so good. I gave her a recipe for rocks today. She listened to me carefully so many ounces of flour etc. - she cannot write them down - then she said 'I always use two cups of flour when I use two eggs.' Well the only thing that resembled rocks in what we got were the raisins and currants. They were jolly good but they certainly were not rocks.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Mother and child had become ill with "the flu"; first Brown's nephew died, and only a week later, her sister died.

¹⁰⁵ Margaret Brown, letter to Bruce, April 1926, (MHB 1:1).

¹⁰⁶ Margaret Brown, circular letter, June 16, 1918 (MHB 1:1).

¹⁰⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, January 21, 1941 (MHB 1:8).

Connections to Canada

Margaret Brown's desire to maintain active connections to Canada and her Canadian friends was sustained throughout her China career. She continued to write regularly to these friends throughout the years that she lived there. She reminded her friend Bertha Drummond, with whom she exchanged gossip and news about people and events in Canada and China, how much she relied on her letters to maintain her close connections with Canadians. "Don't worry Bertha, about me ever tiring of your lovely newsy letters. If you could just see how I re-read all my home letters you would understand."¹⁰⁸ The two women requested specific items from one another, which were either unavailable or too expensive to purchase in Canada or China. Brown received Danish butter and pillow slips in one parcel; she advised that the butter arrived unspoiled, and was a most welcome gift.¹⁰⁹ She also sent detailed requests for shoes.

One pair of Locke's for every day wear like the second pair I got. I think I have his card and can enclose the number. I would like to have a pair of shoes (white) for the summer. The last pair you sent me were from Armstrong and Richardsons's and were a little too narrow. They bore a number 60560 160. I don't know whether that would mean anything to him but I must have them wider. One's feet have a habit of swelling in the summer time. I guess I have a big foot at a ny time. I think I should like them kid if possible as they are softer and really cooler than buckskin."¹¹⁰

In return, Brown expected detailed requests from Canada. She once again advised her Canadian friend, "The most important thing for me to know when people order a tea cloth is whether they want it 36" or 54" or 72" or more. A tea cloth without some limits just doesn't mean anything to me as they are of such varied sizes . . ."¹¹¹ Perhaps the exchange which brought her friends closest to her was the Christmas parcel which they sent to her each year. . She explained after one

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, May 25, 1925 (MHB 1:1).

¹⁰⁹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, April 17, 1918 (MHB 1:1).

¹¹⁰ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, February 22, 1939 (MHB 1:6).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

Christmas holiday. “. . .the loveliest thing happened. My Ottawa box actually arrived on Xmas morning!” She sent the coolie down to pick up the box, and when he arrived back, despite the fact that she was alone in the house, she felt unable to wait for her colleagues’ return before opening her gifts. She recalled “I just sat down on the rug in the middle of the floor of my study and opened up everything. I just felt I wanted to cry to think how good everyone is to me and to think of getting a parcel from home on Xmas day.”¹¹²

Chinese Attitudes towards Foreigners

Margaret Brown suggests that in the political and military confusion of the 1920s, it was difficult to determine the actual threat to missionary work. Immediately following the Shanghai incident in 1925, she witnessed the increased spirit of anti-foreignism, as wall posters were hung and propaganda against foreigners increased. Nonetheless, it was impossible for her to determine the future of such activity, as she explained, “. . . it takes a very brave person to dare to prophesy what may happen.”¹¹³

Increasing anti-foreignism appears to have had a limited impact on the activities of Canadian missionaries in North Henan. While vacationing with her colleagues at the nearby beach resort of Beidaihe in the summer of 1925, Brown advised that the Westerners felt quite safe, despite the intensity of anti-foreign propaganda. There were British cruisers within close proximity of the mainland, and although the threat to foreigners was real, Brown felt that the missionaries were safe with this “considerable protection” so close by. Nonetheless, she explained that she felt more secure outside Hwaiking, at least temporarily. Regarding the safety of missionaries, she advised,

¹¹² Margaret Brown, circular letter, December 27, 1922 (MHB 1:1).

¹¹³ Margaret Brown, circular letter, July 3, 1925 (MHB 1:1).

I think it is much wiser to be here. We have considerable protection. I believe there are also two cruisers lying out at a distance as a protection as well as the troupes we have here. Everyone's thoughts go back to the Boxer days. I can imagine how the mob got worked up in those times. The lies and lies that are being circulated about the foreigners is simply appalling. The British come in for most of it. That is due to the Bolshevistic influence for it is Britain that they hate . . . ¹¹⁴

Even when the decision was made to delay the opening of the mission school, in the fall of 1925, Brown felt, in retrospect, that they could have safely invited the students back. Despite all of the unsettled conditions, the evacuations, the fear which the presence of military inspired and the almost chronic instability in Henan, Brown and her colleagues would continue their work with relatively minor interruptions. In fact, she realized when she looked back on this period, that a vivid impression which remained, was that "over the (seven) years show suprisingly little our work was interferred with in spite of the welter and chaos amidst which we dwelt."¹¹⁵

Politics in China

Margaret Brown's overwhelming image of Chinese politics in the first half of the 20th century, was that of an unrelenting struggle for control. Brown considered that this struggle for power unfolded over at least forty years, beginning with Chinese warlords, and only culminating with the victory of the Chinese Communists in 1949. This section therefore focuses on the parties which Margaret Brown identified as involved in this contest for power in China; the warlords and their soldiers, the Nationalists under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, the Communists and the Japanese. ¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Margaret Brown, circular letter, July 3, 1925 (MHB 1:1).

¹¹⁵ Margaret Brown, undated document, (MHB 1:1).

¹¹⁶ Sun Yat-sen made little impression upon Brown; when she heard news of his death, she noted it in the following comment, "Meantime Sun Yat-sen has passed away and we are not sure whether that brings the unification of China nearer or puts it farther away. He was Bolshevistic in his tendencies." Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 20, 1925 (MHB 1:1).

1. Warlords

Margaret Brown's comments suggest that there was an almost chronic struggle for power by regional military leaders in Henan during the 1920s. Although it was usually impossible to foresee the immediate outcome of the military activities, the missionaries and Chinese residents were affected by the contest for control. Brown advised colleagues of rumors about an official who had recently moved into the area, "

If one half of what is being told about him is true we are to see changes in Hwaiking. An order is out cutting off all queues and unbinding all feet. He dresses in coarse cloth and walks around the street and has ordered the idols to be removed . . . I believe we are to see a new day in Honan.¹¹⁷

It seemed to Brown, that none of the leaders were able to sustain their control of the region for any length of time. Only 18 months after the official had arrived, another outbreak of armed skirmishes began. Margaret Brown described their presence in Hwaiking.

When I went into the school on Monday morning I could hardly get down our street for the carts and horses that were waiting to take them (the troops) to Chinghwa. All week there were some stationed in every other house all down the street. Then suddenly Thursday morning the few who were left were ordered hot foot to Meng Hsien and we heard the guns again. We can get no reliable news but we can only hope for the best. The worst of it is we are not sure just who is fighting this time but it isn't very far away from us . . .¹¹⁸

No one appeared able to unravel the meaning of the military events. Brown explained that even the soldiers who passed through Hwaiking, "did not seem to have the very foggiest idea" of who was winning.¹¹⁹

2. Nationalists

Margaret Brown appears to have regarded Chiang Kai-shek as the only leader who might have been able to unify China, but she was ambivalent about his abilities and intentions. She was not

¹¹⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, August 30, 1922 (MHB 1:1).

¹¹⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 20, 1925 (MHB 1:1).

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

very optimistic that he could unify China, as he appeared unable to even consolidate his own party. Furthermore, he appeared to be obliged to accommodate his divergent supporters, and to compromise his own beliefs in order to maintain adequate support. For example, the reliability of Chiang Kai-shek's declarations that he was a Christian were questionable. Brown explained,

I suppose you saw the big item about General Chiang Kai Shek becoming a Christian. This news item was censored so that it has never appeared in the Chinese papers. That is not specially a good sign. I heard that when he was at the front he kept repeating Buddhist prayers so one wonders. I believe that he promised his wife when he married her that he would become a Christian and that this is the fulfillment of his promise.¹²⁰

This issue concerned Brown and her colleagues, as many missionaries believed China's future would be altered if there was a strong Christian leader at its helm. The potential impact of Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement remained uncertain as well. Brown described the Movement as "an attempt to put new life into China along the lines of ancient Chinese culture."¹²¹ She recognized that "a good deal of effort is being expended trying to promote it" but advised that the long-term effects of this part of Chiang's efforts were also uncertain.¹²²

It appeared to Margaret Brown that the international community incorrectly believed that Chiang Kai-shek was successfully pursuing his efforts to become the leader of a unified China. She pointed out that by the early 1930s, there was still no central leader who represented China among the international community. She explained,

The National Government at Nanking has never been National except in name and their influence extended only a short distance from Nanking. All attempts at unification have proved futile and if you search for the reasons why they failed, they all boil down to one thing and that is the division of the spoils and the military forces. There has been little divergence of opinion on vital issues. The failure to establish a stable government has left China really not a sovereign state so recognized.¹²³

¹²⁰ Margaret Brown, circular letter, July 25, 1929 (MFB 1:1).

¹²¹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 23, 1934 (MFB 1:2).

¹²² *Ibid.*

She explains that the disrespect with which China approached its treaty obligations highlighted the lack of central authority, although this was not evident to the international community.¹²⁴

Brown observes that Chiang Kai-shek was unable to rouse consistent support among Chinese. People appeared to be ambivalent about supporting his leadership and his party. When he was released from being held hostage in Xian, during the Sino-Japanese war, Brown advises that the Chinese crowds "went wild."¹²⁵ Yet over a decade later, when the Japanese finally gave up their claims to China in 1945, ending years of war and occupation for the Chinese people, Chiang was unable to elicit widespread support. Brown reports that when Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang visited Shanghai after the truce was declared, he appeared unable to lead the country. The crowds who witnessed his arrival and speech in Shanghai appeared generally disappointed.

They hoped that prices would go down and instead of that they went higher and higher. I saw a paper in Chinese pasted on the wall. It was poetry almost impossible to translate but the gist was, 'The longer he lives the more commodity prices multiply 10,000 fold. When the Chinese National army arrives, the common people commit suicide.' One begins to feel the tenseness. It is as though we sit on a volcano about to erupt.¹²⁶

3. Communists

Margaret Brown suggests that the Communists were an unpopular and obscure group vying for political control of China. They appeared unable to win significant support within China, and they were highly problematic among the international community. The only way of identifying the Communist soldiers was that the "Red armies . . . were just a bit worse than all the others."¹²⁷

¹²³ Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 4, 1932 (MHB 1:2).

¹²⁴ Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 20, 1925 (MHB 1:1).

¹²⁵ Margaret Brown, circular letter, January 1, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Margaret Brown, undated document, (MHB 1:1).

They were unable to rally Chinese support, and they frightened members of the foreign communities. Despite the Communist efforts to reassure foreigners of their safety, Brown feels that the Communists were unsuccessful in spreading confidence among this community. She suggests that the Communists never won over the Chinese people, and that when they finally gained political control over the country, it was because the Nationalists had forfeited their advantageous role.¹²⁸

4. China at War with Japan

It appeared to Margaret Brown that by 1932 Japan was determined to challenge Chinese sovereignty. Shanghai felt the results of this determination in January 1932, as the Japanese soldiers began to attack Chinese in Shanghai. Brown reports that although residents of Shanghai were aware of the highly charged atmosphere, they did not expect the fighting unleashed by the Japanese military.¹²⁹ Shanghai residents watched as Japanese marines “drove out the Municipal police” and secured part of the International Settlement. Brown explains that although the foreign consulates had tried to intervene, the local Chinese accused the foreigners of “allowing the attack to start from within.”¹³⁰ Discussions continued, American destroyers were placed on alert, the Highland regiments entered Shanghai, and Chinese refugees “poured into the Settlement” from the Chinese district of Chapai. Most of the CLS staff lived in the affected areas, and so they brought their families to take refuge in the CLS building.¹³¹ After five weeks the Settlement police regained their authority, and the refugees were able to return home to their Northern district.¹³²

¹²⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, January 23, 1948 (MHB 1:15).

¹²⁹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, January 31, 1932 (MHB 1:2).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, January 31, 1932 (MHB 1:2).

¹³² Margaret Brown, circular letter, March 3, 1932 (MHB 1:2).

Margaret Brown was appalled by the suffering caused in Shanghai, by this Sino-Japanese war. The events which Brown witnessed in August 1937 were remarkable in their horror. The atmosphere had been calm in Shanghai in the early summer, but when Japanese destroyers filled the harbor in August, Chinese residents once again fled from their homes.¹³³ "Yesterday was the most ghastly day the Settlement of Shanghai has ever witnessed" Brown reports.¹³⁴ Chinese planes dropped bombs on the streets of Shanghai, killing Chinese civilians. Brown was unable to reconcile this military error.

One finds it understandable in the wind that blew yesterday and with the anti-aircraft guns playing that the Cathay Hotel and Nanking Road might accidentally get the bombs intended for the Japanese Flagship Idzumo which was less than a quarter of a mile away but why and how anyone should have dropped bombs on the intersection of Avenue Edward and Thibet Road is a mystery. They are a mile and a half from the flagship and the nearest Japanese. It is dastardly. The Chinese were in the streets looking up cheering at their planes at the very moment the bombs dropped. It is simply horrible.¹³⁵

The Chinese of Shanghai were victimized each day by Japanese soldiers. She describes the "atrocities" which she herself witnessed.

Chinese workmen . . . are stabbed to death on the least excuse. Women are raped. Right on a Settlement extension road three old women were done to death because they could not provide young ones for the drunken soldiers. When the full story of the atrocities Nanking are written the story will be almost unbelievable and it is little better anywhere else.¹³⁶

Shanghai streets became the temporary refuge of many of the city's homeless population during the early years of Japanese military aggression. In 1937 Brown was appalled at the numbers of Chinese around her who were unable to either find shelter or buy food.

I have never seen anything like it since the first days of the war in 1932. There are barrows, carts, wagons, rickshaws, motor-cars and people on foot as well as

¹³³ Margaret Brown, untitled document, notes to herself, August 12, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

¹³⁴ Margaret Brown, untitled document, notes to herself, August 15, 1937 (MHB 1:4)

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 23, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

trucks. Everything is loaded down with household belongings of the fleeing people. . . . Everywhere barrows laden with household goods and furniture touched each other and rickshaws with one adult and two or three children as well as bundles and bales. There were trucks of every description. There were people on foot. There were motor cars crammed. Families got separated and were in a panic until re-united and everyone had a dazed worn look.¹³⁷

There were lines of refugees standing out in the cold Shanghai winter, trying to buy a little rice for their families. Brown wondered why they did not substitute flour for rice in their diet; a Chinese colleague explained that Chinese from southern regions did not know how to cook with flour.¹³⁸

Refugees who reached Sichuan were not received by the local people with the welcome that Brown expected. When she initially heard that the Nationalist government was moving into the interior, Brown believed that this would benefit the isolated western region. She explained,

One of the compensations for China during the present struggle is the fact that her leaders have been forced to leave the treaty ports and go to the interior. Every day some of them are setting out for the West and Southwest. The forgotten provinces of Yunan, Kweichow and Kwangsi, not to mention Szechwan, now loom up as vastly important in the eyes of national leaders.¹³⁹

However, the people of Sichuan did not share Brown's interpretation of their isolation as negative. It seemed that the local people "bitterly resented the presence" of the refugees. "For centuries Sichuan went its own way largely ignoring the rest of China." The people who lived there believed that they had "the finest" of things,- their linens, houses, vegetables and fruit were all superior. When the "downriver" people arrived, they took the best jobs. They were "contaminated by the mechanized West. They were bringing this mechanical civilization with them." For the first time in their history, the Sichuanese felt inferior. In fact, Brown explained, the prestigious positions in

¹³⁷ Margaret Brown, untitled document, notes to herself, August 12, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

¹³⁸ Margaret Brown, circular letter, November 23, 1937 (MHB 1:4).

¹³⁹ Margaret Brown, circular letter, April 13, 1938 (MHB 1:5).

banks, factories, schools, universities and government offices were all held by "down-river" people. She concluded, explaining the bad feelings between them, "The Szechwanese may recognize the necessity but they do not admit nor like it."¹⁴⁰

Margaret Brown suggests that the residents of Chinese cities appeared exhausted by the years of war which they had endured. When she visited Hangzhou for a conference in 1940, she noted that the city had undergone remarkable changes. It had been "one of the most progressive and westernized cities in the Orient. There are no well-dressed people on the street. Only the lake is the same and even it looks sad. The old Pagoda on the hill beside it fell down during the bombardment and there are so few boats on it."¹⁴¹ Five years later, when she finally returned to Shanghai from Sichuan, she initially thought that Shanghai had remained unchanged, but quickly altered her opinion.

Everything was shabby and that included the people. Foreigners, for the most part, showed unmistakable marks of their years in concentration camps. Clothes were shabby and worn, faces looked shockingly thin and aged . . . But I was soon to learn that costumes (they wore) though not stylish, were admirably suited for life where one lived in unheated homes and traveled to office on bicycles and fought one's way on and off trams. Nothing in Shanghai had been painted or repaired in five years. Transportation was a nightmare. There were no taxis and no gasoline for sale. Shops and warehouses were closed and sealed . . . Stores were almost completely empty of goods . . .¹⁴²

5. Civil War

Margaret Brown feared that Chinese would not be able to live in peace until the domestic political situation was resolved. Immediately after the Japanese had declared a truce, she suggests that the

¹⁴⁰ Margaret Brown, circular letter, December 1943 (1:10).

¹⁴¹ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, April 7, 1940 (MHB 1:7).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

"two great parties" had not yet settled their differences. Nonetheless, she did not initially believe that there would be a civil war, advising that "both parties feel it unwise to risk civil war against world opposition."¹⁴³ Yet within weeks, and before she had even left Sichuan for Shanghai, she advises Canada that the Chinese political situation is deteriorating.

Apparently we are to have civil war. Last night's radio said they were massing troops on the Manchurian border to attack the communist troupes. The whole thing is rather disappointing but is exactly what most of us have expected. There is unrest everywhere.¹⁴⁴

As the Nationalists and Communists were fighting for control of China, Margaret Brown observes that the Chinese population increasingly lost all confidence in Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists. Shanghai citizens rioted in the streets as they were unable to buy rice. Brown advises that the Nationalists were going to lose their own battle.

. . . the common people have lost faith in their leaders. It is not at all unusual to hear an illiterate amah say 'Chiang Kai Shek is no good.' Let no one think she is a communist. The Communists have been in her village and seized her land and killed many people she knows. A few months ago she would not have made such a remark. She represents the temper of the common people and it shows that the atmosphere is not unlike that in France and Russia just before their revolution.¹⁴⁵

The Future of Missionary Work in Communist China

Brown's hope that Christian missionary work would continue under the new Communist regime was obliterated, as she observed events from Hong Kong. While awaiting a reentry permit to China, Brown was quite positive that she would be returning to her work in China. She explains that in January 1950,

There are a number like myself, waiting to get in. There seems to be little prospect for Americans but everyone thinks that Gr. Brit. will recognize the new Gov. early in January and that permits will then be forthcoming.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Margaret Brown, circular letter, October 1945 (MHB 1:12).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Margaret Brown, diary entry, January 18, 1950 (MHB 2:27).

Although Britain did recognize the new Chinese government, Brown was unable to reenter China. As time passed, the future of missionary work appeared to be in serious jeopardy. Brown noted in her diary at the end of April 1950 that "I believe the policy of the Govt. actually being put into effect is one intended to limit the scope of Xian work & eventually to eliminate missionaries entirely."¹⁴⁷ She would not write again in her diary until May 16 1951. In this final diary entry, Margaret Brown wrote,

Why have I not written in the year? Too busy keeping others informed. How interesting to read my last entry! How truly prophetic were my words. Missionaries are now almost all out of China and the whole Church under Govt. control. A so-called "Christian" Conference in Peking in April with 151 delegates. There were reps of all the churches. . . . For 2 full days leaders denounced fellow Christians . . . (people) are held in fear as the reign of terror proceeds.¹⁴⁸

Perspectives on Margaret Brown

Margaret Brown took a three-pronged approach to her work, that is the work of bringing the teachings of Christ to the Chinese. First, she worked in what can be appreciated as a quasi-Jesuit tradition, from the "top down." The Jesuits had worked with the top echelon of society, the emperor and his court; they expected that their work would then seep down into the lower strata of society. Brown similarly worked in Hwaiking with the official class. Brown and her colleagues expected that if they could convert individuals from either the civil or military official classes, they would be effective in their work. Second, she tried to reach out to China through work with its women and children; this was the way that the WMS missionaries tended to approach their work. They hoped that if one female member of a family converted to Christianity, or at least became interested in the Church teachings, that individual would take the lessons home, and eventually their word would

¹⁴⁶ Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, December 23, 1949 (1:16).

¹⁴⁷ Margaret Brown, diary entry, April 24, 1950 (MHB 2:27).

¹⁴⁸ Margaret Brown, diary entry, May 16, 1951 (MHB 2:27).

spread. Third, Brown spread the message of Christ through the distribution of Christian literature. In this work Brown was targeting a larger population than teaching or proselytizing permitted. However, she was still reaching out to limited numbers of women; those who were able to read, and presumably those who were able to afford the subscription fees. These women and the first group, the official classes, were members of privileged sectors of Chinese society.

Margaret Brown and her fellow missionaries were trying to change China. They brought the teachings and traditions of Christianity, together with Western social customs and traditions, to the women and children of China. The curriculum of the Hwaiking schools followed a Western curriculum: subjects included writing, arithmetic and physical education. However, together with their model, they deliberately brought Western values. Brown and her colleagues purposely attacked the social distinctions which were traditionally held, and had the students in their school “mingling,” regardless of whether they were daughters of servants or officials.

The greatest disillusionment felt by Margaret Brown was when the Chinese disappointed her, when they engaged in anti-foreign or anti-Christian activities. At these times she felt that “her China” was a disappointment. This maternalism of Margaret Brown becomes even more obvious when considering Brown’s understanding of the good and bad in China. She perceived that the good in China was the reality and the core of China, while the chaos was an aberrant event in its history. This parallels the mother’s understanding of the underlying good core of the child, which is occasionally and only temporarily thrust aside by problematic behavior.

The home board and its dealings with the missionaries were of a hierarchical and arguably, paternalistic nature: the missionaries were in the field, but relied upon financial support from and

followed the directives of the home Church. They were representatives of that home Church. Although the Church sent emissaries to tour the mission fields, and the missionaries wrote "home" on a regular basis, Brown questioned whether people in Canada really understood what was needed in China. She asked whether Canadians understood how much there was to do, and how few China missionaries there were. It can be argued that the paternalistic attitude of the home board toward the field missionaries mirrored two other relationships; that of the missionary in the field and the Chinese Christians, and as well, that of the foreign church in China and the young Chinese church. The eventual independence of the Chinese church was, after all, the objective of all missionary work in China, and yet the ambivalence towards this objective contributed to the difficulty the Chinese church had in maturing.

Brown was somewhat unique among China missionaries in her work and lifestyle. Most Protestant missionaries lived in large cities and many Catholic missionaries lived in the interior; in both cases, in the midst of Chinese people. Other than during her Hwaiking years, Brown lived and socialized among foreigners. Furthermore, the Hwaiking mission compound separated her from the Chinese people. At times, this reality was brought to her attention, as for example, when she thought about why she had never attended one of the Chinese festivals, although she had been in China for four years. In Shanghai, separation was even more natural; she and her colleague with whom she shared an apartment hired a "woman" and proceeded to explain their expectations, and teach the woman how to manage their home in a way in which they were comfortable, which was the Western way. Her strong national identity was as a British subject (she was only a Canadian on Dominion Day). Although she was working with Chinese staff at the CLS, she lived in cosmopolitan surroundings. She found committee work everywhere she went, in Hwaiking, Shanghai, Chengdu and Hong Kong. Despite her complaints of fatigue and even exhaustion, and her promises to herself and to

Bertha to limit the number of committees on which she sat, she continued to be as active as ever, even during the last years of her career. All of this work, however, while it enabled her to share her impressions of events in China with other Westerners, did not bring her into direct contact with the people of China. She sat on committees with Chinese and other foreigners, but once she left Hwaiking, and with the exception of visits to refugee camps and hospitals during the war, she had little direct involvement with Chinese people (as did other missionaries involved in teaching, medicine and direct proselytizing.) Of course, through her editorials and booklets she continued to bring the message of Christ to Chinese women.

Brown became something of a quintessential observer of China during her years at the Christian Literature Society. She was an active member of the Shanghai international community; she socialized and sat on committees with representatives of many Western countries. She saw the war in China from a lofty perch, nonetheless she felt that she lacked adequate information to judge or understand what was going on in China. When she became acclimatized to Chengdu, she recognized that she had misunderstood the attitude of the Sichuanese towards the war and their fellow Chinese. She thought that the Nationalist leaders would become more sensitized to the outlying regions, and that the people of China might in some way unite by coming to know each other. The move inland would thrust them together and they could forge a strong bond. However, to her surprise, the local people were angered by what they perceived to be the superior attitude of the refugees, and the differences between the people exacerbated the division between them into a chasm, as the "downriver folk" took the new jobs which opened, and appeared at least to have superior technical knowledge. Although Brown had commented that China was not really a sovereign country at all, that it had neither central government nor unity, she continued throughout

the years, to see China as one country. She wanted Chinese to learn to know each other, for the leaders to recognize all the regions, and for them to unify as one country.

Brown's interpretation of the years of fighting in China as one continuous war is interesting. The chaos of politics appeared to be a war, with different personalities vying for power. The supporting cast of characters was fluid, as alliances were temporary. There was little difference initially, between the northern warlords and Chiang Kai-shek. Only when Chiang seemed to be the person who had some chance of uniting the country, did she focus her attention on him as a "national" leader. On the other hand, in this period of heightened disunity and lack of effective central government, Margaret Brown did not believe that China was in fact a nation.

There is a noticeable but perhaps not remarkable imbalance of focus and information in Brown's writings on the Nationalist and the Communists. Brown spent little time discussing or describing the Communists. Perhaps this is to be expected, as international news reporting on China focused on Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang and the Nationalists had a more public profile than the Communists. His support was perhaps strongest outside China, and Brown was actively involved in the international community. Brown's ambivalence and that of the Chinese towards Chiang Kai-shek is evident throughout her writings, as is their shared despair with his inability to unite the country. The Communists on the other hand, remained faceless to Brown and in her opinion, to the Chinese people. They were an unknown group with less support than the Nationalists, although Chiang Kai-shek had gathered support from divergent groups with contradictory aims. Furthermore Westerners tended to be more comfortable with Chiang, who was Christian, and had a Western-educated wife who was charming and had an public profile internationally. The Communists on the other hand, were under the sway of "Bolshevism."

In the early 1930s, Japan was seen by Brown as justly claiming to “parent” China . China was in distress and incapable of helping itself. Its leaders were ignoring international treaties, and treating the international community with abandon if not disdain. At this point, Brown found the paternalistic attitude of Japan towards China seemed appropriate. With time, as Brown witnessed the Japanese military ravaging China, she stopped condoning their actions. Yet her perception that China needed parenting continued, and she looked to the West to save China. She believed, at various times, that either the League of Nations should actively involve itself in China’s defense, or Western countries should keep their military on alert. Somchow Western protectors should be waiting in the wings.

Brown saw the overwhelming strength of regionalism and disunity in China, despite her longing for unity among the Chinese. The power brokers were fighting, from the warlords, to the Japanese, and the parties in the civil war, for control of China, rather than a uniting of its people. The Sichuanese surprised her in their animosity towards the refugee Chinese. Brown looked towards the growth of nationalism as a positive development for China. In the midst of all the atrocities committed by the Japanese, she found one positive result, that their actions inspired Chinese nationalism. She has two references to this blossoming nationalism in her letters. She appeared hopeful when she saw signs of patriotism, and believed that flags flying in the face of the Japanese was a sign of cohesiveness and unity.

In conclusion, perhaps it is interesting to look at the highlights of what she has written about, and what she has not written about. Margaret Brown has not discussed two topics. First, she did not question the presence of missionaries or foreigners in China. That was a given. Second, she did not

develop a detailed or in-depth impression of the Communists. Not only did she seldom mention any individuals associated with the movement, she did not catalogue many events in which they were involved. They were in fact, faceless. On several occasions, when she was upset at a particular event, she likened those involved to Bolsheviks, or suggested that they had come under the influence of Bolsheviks. What she did underline, was her understanding of the Chinese as revolutionaries. Chaos in Chinese society and economy emerged to a great extent from the failures of leadership. Chinese people were encouraged to become revolutionaries, at least indirectly, because of the chaos which had emerged from the vacuum in leadership. Further, she sensed that the Chinese people were victimized by ineffective leadership and the Japanese war; they were the victims of problems from within and without. They were prodded and hurt and victimized until they became revolutionaries, when they felt they had nothing more to lose, and that the leadership which they had looked to was vacant. And so, argued Margaret Brown, they turned to the Communist revolutionaries, as there was little else if anything left to look towards, in order to stop the years of victimization. To paraphrase one of Brown's letters, . . . let no one tell you that the woman is a Communist. She has become a revolutionary, because all else failed her. And it felt, to Brown as if she was living on the eve of a revolution, much as it must have felt in France or Russia. While she was not compelled to describe, with any detail, the Communists who would finally end the decades of civil war, in underlining the vacuum which existed in leadership of China, she was driven to describe those who had lost the war.

CHAPTER THREE: MARY LETITIA LAMB

Mary Letitia Lamb was a missionary in Sichuan province for twenty years, first working in an administrative capacity as the matron of a boarding school for Canadian children in Chengdu, and then teaching Chinese women and girls, and evangelizing in Fuzhou and Chongqing. Lamb lived in St. Andrew's East, Quebec before becoming a missionary, and returned there when she retired. She was quite exceptional among Canadian women missionaries as she went to China for the first time at forty years of age, and remained there, in good health and continuing to work until her retirement twenty years later.

Biographical Sketch

Mary Lamb was born in 1879 in St. Andrew's East, a small Quebec community about forty-five miles west of Montreal.¹⁴⁹ Lamb tells us that she was raised in a Christian environment and that she and her family were active in the Church community.¹⁵⁰ She was particularly encouraged in her ambition to become a missionary in China and participated in extra-curricular "mission study courses" and summer camp in her high school years.¹⁵¹ She then moved to Montreal to attend McGill University as a part-time student, enrolling in a variety of courses.¹⁵² Her education was suddenly interrupted in 1903 when she was called home to take care of her mother, who had

¹⁴⁹ Mary Letitia Lamb, Application form for missionary volunteers, August 8, 1919, biographical file, held at the United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto (hereafter referred to as MLLBF). Please see photographs of Mary Lamb in Appendix Two of thesis.

¹⁵⁰ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (Mary Lamb, box 1: file 8, United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto (hereafter referred to as MLL box : file :); T. A. Halpenny, letter to J. Endicott, September 30, 1919 (MLLBF).

¹⁵¹ H. C. Priest, letter to J. Endicott, September 3, 1919 (MLLBF); T. A. Halpenny, letter to J. Endicott, September 30, 1919 (MLLBF).

¹⁵² Mary Lamb, Application form for missionary volunteers, August 8, 1919 (MLLBF).

become ill and was unable to remain alone. Mary Lamb never returned to McGill, but instead carried on her mother's work as postmistress and manager of the St. Andrew's East general store.¹⁵³ She remained at home, working and nursing her sickly mother for sixteen years. When she was forty years old her mother died, and it was only then that she reconsidered her dream to work in China as a missionary.¹⁵⁴

It was a middle-aged Mary Lamb who applied to and was accepted by the Methodist Church to go to China. Canadian women usually began their careers as foreign missionaries as much younger women.¹⁵⁵ Although Lamb had hoped to work as an evangelist, she applied for the matron's position at a mission boarding school for the children of Canadian missionaries stationed in southwest China.¹⁵⁶ She collected references, underwent the required medical examinations, and convinced the foreign missions board that she was healthy, strong and capable of weathering a term in China. On her application she advised the Board that she had not had any "medical attendance" for twenty-eight years.¹⁵⁷ The Mission Board approved her application, and urged her to set sail for China in early October 1919. In fact, she was unable to leave until the following February, as she needed time to organize her personal affairs.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ H. C. Priest, letter to J. Endicott, September 3, 1919 (MLLBF); T. A. Halpenny, letter to J. Endicott, September 30, 1919 (MLLBF).

¹⁵⁴ H. C. Priest, letter to J. Endicott, September 3, 1919 (MLLBF); T. A. Halpenny, letter to J. Endicott, September 30, 1919 (MLLBF).

¹⁵⁵ J. Endicott, letter to Mary Lamb, September 9, 1919 (MLLBF).

¹⁵⁶ Mary Lamb, diary entry, November 11, 1924 (M.L.L. 1:5); J. Endicott, letter to Mary Lamb, September 9, 1919 (MLLBF).

¹⁵⁷ Mary Lamb, Application form for missionary volunteers, August 8, 1919 (MLLBF).

¹⁵⁸ J. Endicott, letter to Mary Lamb, September 9, 1919 (MLLBF).

Unable to relinquish her dream of proselytizing among the Chinese, it was an ambivalent Mary Lamb who disembarked in Shanghai in March 1920 to begin her first tour of duty in China (1920-1925) as matron at the Canadian School for Missionary Children.¹⁵⁹ She almost immediately left for Rong Xian in rural Sichuan, for Chinese language training.¹⁶⁰ She spent almost two years there, preparing for her work at the school in Chengdu. In Rong Xian she lived with the Smiths, a Canadian missionary couple, and worked eagerly alongside Mrs. Smith when the latter visited Chinese women in their homes. Mary Lamb's first years in China appear to have strengthened her determination to embark upon an evangelical career.¹⁶¹ She therefore appealed to the General Board of the Canadian Church, asking whether she might remain in Rong Xian to work with Chinese women rather than proceed to Chengdu to work with Canadian children. She was reminded that she had been sent to China to work at the school, and that she should proceed there as scheduled in December 1921.¹⁶² Mary Lamb somewhat reluctantly left for Chengdu, where she worked for four years. Upon her arrival, she immediately involved herself in the challenges of administering the school. She was responsible for the health and safety of the Canadian children, the upkeep of mission property and the productivity of the Chinese servants. She was determined to construct an environment in which the children could flourish physically and psychologically and to develop relationships with them which were founded on compassion and discipline. When she completed her term she returned to Canada for her furlough, in June 1925.

¹⁵⁹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 22, 1921 (MLL 1:3). Please see map of the West China mission field in Appendix Two of thesis.

¹⁶⁰ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8). Lamb stopped briefly in Yichang, on the way to Rong Xian.

¹⁶¹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 21, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

¹⁶² Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 21, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

Mary Lamb only began evangelical work during her second term in China (1926-1933), in the small city of Fuzhou, in Sichuan province. She came to Fuzhou under the auspices of the Woman's Missionary Society, which assigned her to work among the Chinese women and young girls in a small mission located in a city where few foreigners lived. Her seven year term was abruptly interrupted for eighteen months when the missionaries were evacuated to Shanghai in January 1927 in the wake of increasing anti-foreignism in rural China.¹⁶³ She subsequently returned to Fuzhou where she continued working until her term ended. Lamb spent most of her time at the mission school for women and girls, teaching and organizing activities. She established relationships with the students and Chinese faculty, as a teacher and colleague, as well as an advisor and friend. In 1931 she was appointed to take over administrative responsibility for the Fuzhou district. It was only when she was able to find a few free hours, that she visited other Fuzhou women in their homes. These visits, she knew were so necessary, as this was "missionary work as it should be done."¹⁶⁴ Lamb left China for a Canadian furlough in 1933.¹⁶⁵

It was in Mary Lamb's third and final term in China (1934-1940) that she was able to devote all her time to proselytizing, when she was stationed in China's wartime capital, the large Sichuan city of Chongqing. The presence of the leader of the Nationalist government, Chiang Kai-shek, and his wife who were both sympathetic to Christianity, encouraged Mary Lamb and the missionaries. She was assigned to work among women in Chongqing and the outlying districts, and so spent a great deal of time visiting Chinese women, and traveling to Christian communities in the villages located

¹⁶³ Untitled and undated document (MLLBF).

¹⁶⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

¹⁶⁵ Untitled and undated document (MLLBF).

along the Yangzi River.¹⁶⁶ She spent the last year of this term in Fuzhou once again, due to staffing shortages at the small Fuzhou station. In Chongqing Mary Lamb was an active member of the large foreign community, and in rural Sichuan she was apparently one of the very few Western women who interacted with the local Chinese.

Mary Lamb was ambivalent about retirement when she left China in 1940. She was already considering whether to remain in Canada after her year of furlough, when she received news from St. Andrew's East that an ailing relative needed her assistance.¹⁶⁷ Although Lamb recognized that it was an appropriate time for her to retire, as she had already spent twenty years in China and few missionary women continued to work beyond their sixtieth year, she nonetheless felt despondent about leaving.¹⁶⁸ She returned to St. Andrew's East for her 1941 furlough, and retired the following year. She remained in St. Andrew's East until her death, at age eighty-one, following a lengthy illness.¹⁶⁹

Experiences in China

Mary Lamb has left us a wealth of diaries, letters and scrapbooks which together provide access to her experiences in China.¹⁷⁰ She was clearly a faithful diarist who, during her 20 years in China filled many diaries. She was also a regular correspondent, describing her adventures and undertakings to Canadians. She communicated quite systematically with her colleagues via circular

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Mary Lamb, diary entry, November 18, 1940 (MLL 1:9).

¹⁶⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entry, December 8, 1940 (MLL 1:9).

¹⁶⁹ MLLBF.

¹⁷⁰ Please see extracts of Mary Lambs diaries and correspondence in Appendix Two of thesis. The archival holdings for Mary Lamb consist of diaries, correspondence and a scrapbook of newspaper and magazine clippings. Seven small diaries and her personal correspondence is found in two files, arranged chronologically from 1923-1940, and are found at location number 86.308C.

letters, or “general letters to the Folks,” as she described this correspondence. She also sustained a somewhat more chatty exchange of letters to her cousin, Annie Dewar, through whom she received news of her family and friends left behind in Canada. Mary Lamb corresponded with Canadians quite regularly during her early years in China. As time passed, Lamb found that she was less able to maintain this pace, and so corresponded somewhat less frequently.

Arrival in China (1920)

Mary Letitia Lamb arrived in China full of eagerness to explore the China she had been envisioning for so many years. The ship docked at Shanghai on Tuesday, March 9 1920. She recorded in her diary, “An eventful day in my life. The day we reached China . . . Such confusion when we landed. Reminded me of NY.” She had arrived in China with a “rather troublesome cold,” but after a “fine nights sleep” was ready to begin exploring the following morning. Her host in Shanghai, Mrs. Brown, introduced her to the fine fashions of China, as she insisted that Lamb buy a pith helmet, although Lamb found them to be “horribly unbecoming things.” That day she bought her first Chinese cookbook, as she anticipated that she would require recipes for “the kind of thing one can buy in China.” Her first experience of being “carried” in a rickshaw, left her rather ambivalent, as she remarked that it was “. . . a rather nice way to ride but it makes me uncomfortable to see a man working so hard.” On her fourth day in China, she scurried about the Shanghai shops to buy her final purchases, packed her belongings, sent off her first letters to Canada, and hurried down to the dock to begin the long trip to Rong Xian.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Mary Lamb, diary entries, March 19-20, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

Lamb had an opportunity to see a little of China on her trip up-river. As the boat travelled along the Yangzi, the missionaries stopped to go ashore first at Nanjing, and then at Wuhu.¹⁷² Hankou (part of present day Wuhan) was an impressive sight, as it appeared to stretch for several miles along the bank of the Yangzi. "They call it the Chicago of China for it is a great manufacturing centre," she recorded.¹⁷³ The missionaries remained in Hankou at the China Inland Mission (CIM) for five days, while they awaited another steamer. On the first evening she strolled about Hankou, and felt as though it was "the first real Chinese street" she had seen, although it was not like anything she had imagined. When she settled in to the CIM house, it seemed as though she had finally reached ". . . the real China - coal oil lamps, real Chinese beds and furniture."¹⁷⁴ But the buildings were damp and cold, and she complained, "I don't think Western civilisation can boast of much if it can't keep itself warmer in this climate." However, her travelling companion, a veteran China missionary, assured her that it was not much colder in Sichuan in the winter, than in Hankou on that spring day.¹⁷⁵ After these few days in Hankou, they boarded the steamer and continued up river, anchoring at Kwei fu. The trip became more exciting after Iching, as the gorges were "grand beyond description," and as well, the steamer was the target of robbers who fired at it from the shore. The passengers were immediately sent below, while the captain "Put up the steel plates to protect the bridge, . . . (and) blew the whistles furiously thinking to scare the robbers."¹⁷⁶ Apparently it worked as they were able to continue their journey safely.

¹⁷² Mary Lamb, diary entry, March 21, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

¹⁷³ The beauty of China continued to impress Lamb throughout her years in China; whenever she traveled to new regions, she recorded her impressions, among them the gorges of the Yangzi, Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 26- May 1, 1920 (MLL 1:2); Mary Lamb, circular letter, October 11, 1934 (MLL 1:9); the hills beyond Rong Xian, Mary Lamb, diary entry, June 30, 1920 (MLL 1:2); and other travel, Mary Lamb, diary entries, May 18-27, 1920 (MLL 1:2) and January 24 - 28, 1921 (MLL 1:1).

¹⁷⁴ Mary Lamb, diary entry, March 25, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 29, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

Experiences in Rong Xian (1920-1921)

Almost immediately upon arriving in Rong Xian Mary Lamb began her scheduled year and a half of language study, in preparation for her work at the boarding school. In fact, she would continue her studies throughout the years she spent in China.¹⁷⁷ Studies at the beginning were difficult, time consuming and boring; it appeared to her that even the teacher was bored, as they spent approximately five hours each day on lessons. She suggested, "A very monotonous job it will be for a while."¹⁷⁸ After less than a week of lessons, she noted, "the teacher is getting worse."¹⁷⁹ Lamb had many language teachers over the twenty years she studied the language, and advised that some were good, some very poor and unreliable, and the most satisfactory lessons she had were from individual women who were interested in exchanging Chinese for English lessons, much later in her career.¹⁸⁰ Learning to write the characters was very difficult, and she did not begin these lessons until May 1921, when she had only six months remaining in her study term. She then wished that she had begun sooner, fearing that it would be a time-consuming venture. "I find it very hard to remember the order of strokes. My teacher is a good writer and finds me rather trying I imagine, altho he is a very good natured man."¹⁸¹ As the lessons progressed she found her studies much more interesting, but continued throughout her career to find Chinese a difficult language which required continuous attention. She was committed to developing adequate language skills to communicate with Chinese people, for she felt adamantly that without these

¹⁷⁷ In Chengdu, Lamb and two colleagues organized a study group, to ensure that they would study "a little Chinese" every morning; they hired students to teach them. Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8). When she was evacuated to Shanghai she immediately found a language teacher, advising "Personally, I feel as if I were very fortunate, for my Chinese language was very deficient and this is giving me a fine opportunity to acquire a little more of it." Mary Lamb, circular letter, April 15, 1925 (MLL 1:8). For further references to ongoing language studies, in Chongqing, please see Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, May 17, 1928 (MLL 1:8). For references to Fuzhou, please see Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 3, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

¹⁷⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entries April 6 - 8, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

¹⁷⁹ Mary Lamb, diary entry April 6, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

¹⁸⁰ In Fuzhou Lamb and "a well educated" Chinese woman exchanged an hour of English lessons for Chinese lessons. This woman had "contact" with Christianity before, through the YWCA. Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 3, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

¹⁸¹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, May 10, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

skills, she would be unable to do her work. "I don't see how I will ever get Christian truths over to these people who need it so much."¹⁸²

Lamb did become involved in activities besides her language lessons; she visited women in their homes, and became actively involved in the Chinese Sunday school. She found these early visits to Chinese homes in Rong Xian quite fascinating. "We went to some of the better class houses. So strange they seem to us. So many beautiful things in them, such a strange combination of the luxurious and the sordid. Full of rich handsome furniture and yet not even ordinarily clean."¹⁸³ Smith and Lamb also occasionally enjoyed dressing up in borrowed Chinese clothing when they visited local women.¹⁸⁴ Although she was concerned about her ability to communicate with Chinese people, she taught a Sunday School class to Chinese children at the East Gate bridge. While her first Sunday was an unqualified "red letter day" for her, she suspected that her teaching was not very successful, as she explained ". . . some teaching believe me! Poor little kids-only half of them could hear me at all and of those who heard, I don't believe they understood anything. But it is a beginning! Wouldn't I be happy if I could spend the rest of my life teaching the Chinese!"¹⁸⁵ She was also asked to play the organ at the East Gate Bridge; it seemed that the pastor there wanted to ensure that foreigners remained active in the church, and so had tried to enlist Lamb's support.¹⁸⁶ Although she did not want to leave Rong Xian, where she felt compatible with her hosts, and had enjoyed this introduction to China and missionary work, Lamb did go on to Chengdu and the Canadian boarding school, in November 1921.

¹⁸² Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, May 17, 1928 (MLL 1:8).

¹⁸³ Mary Lamb, diary entry, June 3, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

¹⁸⁴ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 8, 1921 (MLL 1:2).

¹⁸⁵ Mary Lamb, diary entry, March 20, 1921 (MLL 1:1).

¹⁸⁶ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 10, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

Experiences at the Canadian Boarding School in Chengdu (1921-1925)

Lamb arrived in Chengdu with some misgivings about the city, the mission and her own work, but was quite eager to embark upon her new responsibilities. She had visited Chengdu while living in Rong Xian, when she attended the 1921 Annual Council Meeting held there. Her early impressions of the city and the lifestyle within the missionary community were not promising. She had at that time described it as "a great big hive of human bees, a population of half a million they tell me. It would not be hard to lose oneself in the streets - there are people who have lived here 2 years and cannot find their way about. I have been here over 2 weeks and know nothing of this city . . ." ¹⁸⁷ Although she had enjoyed the meetings, she remained reluctant to move to Chengdu.

Every day since I came I have thanked God for the fact that I stopped off in Junghsien instead of coming on up here. It is harder to get near to God and the Chinese in Chengtu than in the smaller stations . . . (Junghsien is) a refuge from the conventionalists of this piece of Toronto that has been transplanted to West China. Toronto never did attract me - even Montreal with all its faults and failings seemed more human. ¹⁸⁸

Lamb immediately recognised that the management of the children at the boarding school was her most important, though quite daunting task. She was concerned that she lacked the experience, and perhaps the ability to manage a house full of children with their many needs. Further, she was determined to establish her own priorities regarding their care; among them to feed them well, discipline them adequately, and establish harmonious relationships and a relaxed environment. She did succeed in these goals, and even set aside time each week for recreational activities. She advised, "Saturday nights are most hilarious - I don't think the teachers approve but I feel as if (the children) should be allowed to let off steam at least once a week." ¹⁸⁹ It seemed more difficult to make other "contributions" to their lives,

¹⁸⁷ Mary Lamb, diary entry, February 13, 1921 (MLL 1:1).

¹⁸⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entry, February 2, 1921 (MLL 1:1).

¹⁸⁹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, December 25, 1924 (MLL 1:5).

and the children did not make "the progress" that she had hoped for.¹⁹⁰ Unplanned problems, such as illnesses, wreaked havoc with her expectations; the children had bouts of mumps throughout one entire season, and it seemed to take all of Lamb's strength, time and organisational skills just to keep them "clothed and fed."¹⁹¹

Her second focus was the management of the eighteen servants who worked at the boarding school; it was critical that she provide the leadership which would ensure that they worked according to the standards expected by the missionaries. During school term they were all occupied fulfilling the daily needs of the children, staff and missionaries; keeping them well-fed, the school clean and the property in good repair. In her first days at the school she found that the food was too frequently poorly prepared and that the menu was uninteresting. She immediately tackled the problem and worked with a coolie, even before the children returned from their Christmas break, making marmalade. "It was more expensive than the kind the cook makes, but also more edible I think . . . what I want to do is get the ordinary food better cooked," she advised. "The bread is almost inedible at times - the peanut butter just lovely sometimes and at others in hard lumps with the peanuts and salt hardly ground. The potatoes wet and soggy and an inferior quality - the whole kitchen dept. needs a thorough overhauling and I hope that the process will not have too much of a disturbing effect on the retinue."¹⁹² The cook only had recipes for "four kinds of puddings," and so Lamb introduced a few more to their menu. After a brief interval, it appeared that the servants were responding well to her direction.¹⁹³ Most of the servants remained in the compound during the summer break, as they were "afraid of being impressed into army service if they go

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8).

¹⁹² Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 2, 1922 (MLL 1:4).

¹⁹³ Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 7, 1922 (MLL 1:4).

off the place."¹⁹⁴ Keeping them occupied when the students were away was a challenge, and so she organised a "canning factory," and together they prepared peaches, plums apples and tomatoes, as well as jams and marmalades for the following school year.¹⁹⁵

The relationship between Mary Lamb and the servants at the boarding school was not without problems. The most severe of these was the theft of sixty pounds of butter from the store-room in the cellar. It was difficult to know how to tackle this problem: the school could not afford to lose this quantity of butter, and it was a poor precedent to allow the matter to remain unresolved. Lamb was unable to discover who was responsible for the theft, yet was uncomfortable entrusting the matter to the Chinese police. Further, some of her colleagues urged her to seek police involvement, and yet one of those colleagues had sent her the servant who she felt was most likely guilty of the theft. The problem was never resolved to her satisfaction. She did finally decide to request police assistance although she advised that "their methods of justice are to our ways of thinking very un-just."¹⁹⁶ All the servants were held at the police station for two days, and then were ordered to share the cost of replacing the butter, which would be taken from their wages over a two month period. Lamb knew that the innocent individuals were sharing the punishment with those who were guilty, and that families would be hungry while wages were reduced. One of the servants later told her that the head table boy was responsible, and if he was not discharged, the others would leave. Even with this information, she suspected that the theft could not have been managed by one person and remained uncomfortable with the entire affair.

¹⁹⁴ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, October 7, 1924 (MLL 1:8).

Lamb initiated evening classes for the boarding school servants, in order to advance their education. Mid-way through her term as Matron she had created this first opportunity to work directly with Chinese individuals, as she inspired ten servants to attend these classes. Even the cook attended the first class, although Lamb doubted that he would continue throughout the semester. In comparing her daily work with the children and this new venture, she advised, "I suppose I do not show a proper spirit as matron to feel more deeply about this venture than the other school projects. But it is the Chinese that I yearn to help and this is an outlet to my feelings which are getting more and more to the explosive stage all the time."¹⁹⁷

As her first term in China drew to a close and she prepared for furlough in Canada, Mary Lamb became increasingly preoccupied with finding a way to return to China as an evangelical missionary. She acknowledged that the school children needed a caretaker, but could not move beyond her own personal need to work among Chinese women. She once again was drawn, as she had been on her first visit to Chengdu, to what she considered was true missionary work. "I wonder - I wonder and wonder about it all," she had written in 1921, ". . . so many women and children and so few who know God. I want to get down among them. I wonder if I will ever have a chance to do it."¹⁹⁸ Although she left China in 1925 with the knowledge that she would miss the children, as she had decided that she would not return to Chengdu, she looked forward to applying to the Woman's Missionary Society, where she would be able to fulfil her dream of China mission work.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ Mary Lamb, diary entry, October 19, 1922 (MLL 1:4).

¹⁹⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 28, 1921 (MLL 1:1).

¹⁹⁹ Mary Lamb, diary entries, June 3 - 4, 1925 (MLL 1:5).

Experiences in Shanghai, Chongqing and Fuzhou (1926-1933)

Mary Lamb had hardly settled in to her second term in China, as an evangelical missionary under the WMS stationed in Fuzhou, when she and her colleagues were pressured by the British Consulate to leave their work and evacuate to Shanghai in the face of the widespread anti-foreign activities of 1927. Early in January Lamb had advised that "Things are beginning to happen again. Today a note came from the consul saying that conditions were cracking down again and that we must prepare to evacuate. That all missionaries, American and British must leave the country."²⁰⁰ The women called a meeting to discuss this advice, evaluate the danger, and "to make decisions and plans."²⁰¹ Several days later, Lamb's appraisal was that "The feeling on the street is no worse than usual" and she and her colleagues remained reluctant to follow the advice of the consulate. However, as the consulate increased its pressure, they finally agreed to leave, and only when they were actually loading their trunks on to the steamer, found that "we were really being evacuated" and that it was a joint effort by the governments of Britain and the United States, who truly feared for the safety of the missionaries.²⁰² The river level was so low that only small steamers could travel up it, and so it had become impossible to defend the cities along the Yangzi.²⁰³ The missionaries became refugees in Shanghai at the end of January 1927, where they would remain until March 1928.

Shanghai was swollen with temporary residents, all of whom required immediate accommodation, and many of whom, particularly missionaries attached to the smaller missions, lacked adequate funding to

²⁰⁰ Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 4, 1927 (MLL 1:5).

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Consul Pratt, letter to Mr. Frier, January 13, 1927 (MLL 1:9).

²⁰³ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, February 3, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

live in the city. The West China WMS women settled in to the International Concession, amidst an existing community of missionaries. They were not terribly threatened by the threats of violence, as Lamb explained, "We did not worry much about the threatened "Attack" on Shanghai, for we had lived in China long enough to see how little excitement was caused when a city turns over from one form of government to another, a few shots are fired, and one kind of flag is rolled up and put away, and another hung in its place."²⁰⁴ But as artillery attacks approached their residences, the missionaries were directed by the Shanghai police to move to safer buildings. The women did not intend to follow this advice, as they asked, "... what was the use of worrying over a few stray bullets flying around? We were just as safe there as anywhere!"²⁰⁵ Despite their intentions to never again be ordered out of their "'appy ome,' they were given no option but to move into a school which had been assigned as a safe refuge for the night.

All over the first (floor) were sleeping Punjabis . . . my friends were amusing themselves drawing pictures of the 'situation' on the school blackboard. We 'pooled' all our bedding, and settled down on the floor for the remainder of the night, expressing ourselves very forcibly about those 'authorities' who had ordered us to leave our nice comfortable beds for this kind of thing.²⁰⁶

They moved on to the Navy YMCA the following day, where they shared quarters with "soldiers, sailors, men and women missionaries of all ages, even the usual number of crying babies. . . . I moved to my new boarding house a week ago," advised Lamb in April, "and am very comfortable, just next door to a house which is occupied by eight other of our WMS ladies, and on the other side of the street are other houses filled with West China people."²⁰⁷ In the city she initially helped sort the mail, which was a daunting task as the mail was diverted from the many mission centres to Shanghai. She was later asked to teach a semester of English and geography to Chinese high school students. She found it difficult to

²⁰⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, April 5, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

teach adolescent boys, and was concerned as she had not yet taught any classes. However she found them to be "awfully nice Chinese lads," and enjoyed the experience.²⁰⁸ After eighteen months in Shanghai, she explained that she was content to return to West China. "As you know, I do not like city life, and I was glad to get away from the noise and confusion of Shanghai, which is very much like any of our cities at home."²⁰⁹

The British Consulate once again determined the immediate fate of the missionaries when they were allowed to leave Shanghai; women were only allowed to return to Chengdu or Chongqing. The four women who were returning together to West China decided that three of them would go on to Chengdu, while Lamb remained in Chongqing until reinforcements arrived the following autumn, at which time she would return to Fuzhou. Lamb did feel somewhat at risk immediately upon her return to West China, and was content to follow the advice of the Consulate. She joined the Chinese family which had been left in charge of the mission residence in Chongqing during the evacuation, and felt comforted by their company, and their protection.²¹⁰ Mary Lamb remained in Chongqing for fourteen months, and finally returned to Fuzhou in the early summer of 1929.

Resettling into life in Fuzhou required concerted effort as the compound had been occupied by soldiers during the missionaries' absence. Some of the missionaries had not returned to Fuzhou; they had either taken their furloughs or been reassigned to other work during the lengthy evacuation, and so the remaining returned missionaries were challenged by the cleaning and reorganising confronting them. The presence of soldiers demanding billeting had become a chronic problem in the region, and buildings were

²⁰⁸ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, September 4, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

²⁰⁹ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, May 17, 1928 (MLL 1:8).

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

never left vacant for long without being seized by the military. The newly returned missionaries hired a coolie, and Lamb began teaching him "how to cook." She found that "He is very keen to learn, can cook dandy Chinese meals," and added, "I am having Chinese guests in to dinner tomorrow. Have just made some lovely pumelo marmalade (Pumelo is something like Grapefruit, one made eight pints of jam) Am smoking ham and bacon and have put the school servants on to making the garden which has been neglected for three years, discovered some strawberry plants today . . ." ²¹¹ The little Fuzhou community was so depleted that she was happy to hear that more missionaries were expected, and they would soon have "quite a 'foreign community' here." ²¹² The mission home was ready for the new arrivals in the fall of 1929, but at that time Lamb decided to continue sleeping at the women's school, in order to keep the two Chinese women who were in residence company as they were nervous about being left by themselves. She ate her meals with the other women missionaries "up the hill," but continued to sleep and work in the school. This not only alleviated the boarders' anxieties, but also allowed them to visit with her more frequently, as it seemed that they were more comfortable approaching her in her study than entering a "foreign home." ²¹³ By 1930 there were twelve WMS missionaries in Fuzhou. ²¹⁴

The woman's school work in which Lamb became involved was quite successful, as the small group of women who initially attended classes grew, and the participants seemed to be serious in their studies. Lamb had begun with only five students, but by the end of the 1931 academic year, was pleased to report, "twelve of my women took their exams - the highest number to date." ²¹⁵ A core group who were

²¹¹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 14, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²¹² Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 17, 1929 (MLL 1:8).

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 16, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²¹⁵ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9). For references to Women's School attendance and school openings please see Mary Lamb, diary entries, February 24, 1932, March 2-19, 1932 and September 3-10, 1932, (MLL 1:6).

very interested asked if they might have their breakfast at the mission, to enable them to attend morning prayers. Even throughout the summer heat these women had continued attending church services. She reported, "they seem not altogether averse to the Bible teaching I am trying to give them. It gets a little easier all the time to express what I want to say in Chinese, and I hope by the end of my six years that I will be able to make myself understood. It really is a terribly difficult language, at least I have found it so."²¹⁶ The curriculum offered what Lamb described as "an all round education." They were teaching the women "a little of everything," from the basic skills required to read and write, to music, hygiene and Western games. The most popular course among the students was the foreign cooking class; they were so eager to attend this particular class that Lamb accommodated them by inviting them to come in pairs on Saturday morning, and make marmalade, doughnuts and gingersnaps. One of the servants was particularly creative in trying to build a stove which simulated a foreign oven, and Lamb adjusted recipes to match the ingredients available in Fuzhou.²¹⁷ She had an assistant who was one of the newly arrived missionaries, as well as a fascinating man who taught Chinese subjects, and helped her to prepare her own lessons for an hour a day. "I wish you could see him!" she wrote. "He is the wildest looking creature! His hair stands up straight, he is blind of one eye, he wears a foreign overcoat with an imitation fur collar on top of all his Chinese clothes, he is said to be addicted to opium, which latter I have not had any proof of yet." She would not keep him if he was an opium addict, as "it (the opium) absolutely demoralises them in every way in a very short time."²¹⁸ She gradually introduced the women to the semi-formal gatherings of a women's club, to which they responded with interest.²¹⁹ The women who were encouraged to join this club were "of the better class," women who would be interested in discussing

²¹⁶ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 3, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²¹⁷ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 16, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²¹⁸ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 17, 1929 (MLL 1:8).

²¹⁹ Mary Lamb, diary entries, April 21, 28, 1932, May 2, 16, 21, 28, 30, 1932, June 1, 27, 1932, September 7, 1932, December 13, 1932 (MLL 1:6).

topics such as "Care & training of children," or recipes for cakes and cookies. As well as this loosely focused club which held its meetings at members homes, the missionary women initiated a second and more formal club which was focused on "Public Health."²²⁰

Baby welfare was an important part of the WMS women's work in Fuzhou. They began this work in 1930, and within a year had established three centres where the women of Fuzhou could bring their babies to be bathed, vaccinated and seen by a nurse or physician. The centres were located at the mission hospital, the church and the women's school. The students at the school had a course on baby welfare, in which they were to study "how to care for their own babies, and also," as Lamb explained, "the lesson that they need to learn so badly in this non-Christian land, the lesson of service for others, by helping these poorer women who week by week bring their babies to our school."²²¹ Mothers occasionally brought new-born babies for their first bath. One day two women arrived with a baby girl who appeared to be about one month old, and in need of a bath. The women told Lamb that she did not belong to them, "Some one had thrown it away, and it was such a cute little one that we thought we would try to save it and we heard that we could get a bath for it free here, so we brought it in."²²² Perhaps the most outstanding child who visited the clinic was a young girl who seemed to be about twelve years old, with what seemed to be darkened, "diseased" skin. When questioned, her mother who accompanied her could not remember if she had ever been washed. Even after summer holidays began, Lamb always had hot water prepared so that mothers could bring their babies in to be bathed. On one particularly hot July day

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9); Mary Lamb, circular letter, September 27, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²²² Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

many mothers visited the clinic and she advised, "I think I sleep better, knowing that thirty babies are more comfortable for having had a bath in this hot weather."²²³

Mary Lamb also became actively involved in working with Chinese youth, particularly teaching singing classes to Chinese children, and occasionally responding to invitations to give lectures at Chinese schools. The children of Fuzhou seemed to have had little experience singing "as we understand it" and so Lamb held music lessons, particularly around Christmas time, in order to encourage them. The missionaries were also trying to bring, as she explained, "native music" to the children, which had been difficult to do because it had not been adapted for children's usage in the past. She taught the children "several pretty patriotic songs," advising that they had only recently appeared, "during the last revolution, previous to that there were very few available, the foreigner had to make up patriotic songs for them to use."²²⁴ She advised that she felt "safe in saying that it is in the Christian schools that have taught, and are teaching the common people of China to sing. No doubt the Chinese have had their musicians, as every country has, but before the coming of Christianity, singing was not practised, either in their schools, or in their homes, and they do love it."²²⁵ She was also invited to speak to high school students at two of the government schools; one of the schools had been known as a "hot-bed of anti-Christian propaganda, and so she was encouraged that the anti-Christian sentiments were subsiding when she was invited to speak there. A teacher of English at that particular school had attended the Christmas prayer meeting in 1931, and he spoke to those congregated in a "forceful defence of Christianity."²²⁶ It was astonishing that this outspoken Christian was a teacher at that particular Boy's High School which was located just outside the city. Lamb presented her lecture in English, and the teacher acted as translator.

²²³ Mary Lamb, undated document (MLL 1:9)

²²⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 17, 1929 (MLL 1:8)

²²⁵ Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 4, 1932 (MLL 1:9)

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

She suspected that she shocked the elderly school principal at tea that afternoon, as she was an unchaperoned foreign woman who sat at the same table as the male teachers. She spoke Chinese, English and even French that day; French to a young science teacher who had studied abroad in France.²²⁷

Whenever she had the opportunity to travel out of the city to visit with rural Christians, Lamb did so. Her "first trip to the country" was not as she explained, actually "to the country, but to a large town on the river, about half way between here and Chungking," to the town of Changshoo.²²⁸ The WMS had been working in Changshoo for some time, and the local pastor asked for a renewed involvement on their part, in order to encourage the women of Changshoo in their Christianity, and begin a Christian girls school. As soon as a temporary replacement for Lamb arrived in Fuzhou, Lamb set out for Changshoo with a Bible teacher and a servant. They travelled on the overnight gasoline launch which carried travellers between Fuzhou and Chongqing, and reached Changshoo the following morning. The pastor and all his students greeted them at the shore, and it was apparent that their arrival "created quite a stir, as very few foreign women have ever been there, and none for several years."²²⁹ The children performed "a small spectacle" for their guests. The two women then met with the young girls and mothers who were interested in Christian schooling, and Lamb found the eighty women in attendance "most attentive," considering that, as she explained, "it was my first experience of talking to a group like that, but they seemed glad to listen, and what was more surprising, seemed to understand something of what I said."²³⁰ This was to be a brief, weekend trip, and so the missionaries only had the opportunity to hold one further

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

evening meeting, when "a few women came back 'to study' and to find out something more about the Gospel."²³¹

In 1931, when Lamb was appointed to administer the district, she was able once again to travel beyond the city of Fuzhou. There were enough teachers to manage at the women's school in that year, and so their presence enabled her "to get away from the school and out into the country in a way that I have wanted to do ever since coming here."²³² Furthermore, Lamb felt she must immediately begin surveying the field, and so accompanied a colleague who was taking two new teachers to their placements at rural mission schools. The group which set out in the fall of that year included the two young teachers, Mrs. Liang who was the Bible teacher, Lamb and her colleague, a servant, the captain, pilot and three men to row the boat. The group boarded the "small native boat . . . (which was) about twenty feet long" together with the girls' "trunks or travelling boxes." Their destination was Shi Dju, "a little town in the heart of the mountains," which was approximately eighty miles down river and then overland thirty miles "back from the river." The river trip took a day, and they then required sixteen men "to carry" them and their belongings to Shi Dju. Unfortunately, they had arrived on market day, and even with the intercession of a pastor from a town lower down the river, were unable to hire carriers until a day hence. They all returned to their small boat, where they camped out until the following day. They were advised that they would be carried in "'Hwa Gans' a sort of cloth hammock swung between two poles and carried by two men."²³³ As the carriers straggled in to begin the trip, the pastor suggested that the two Canadian women set out ahead of the rest, because the carriers felt that it would take longer to carry

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Mary Lamb, circular letter, September 27, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²³³ Ibid.

them than the Chinese women because of their weight. With some misgivings, Lamb and her colleague set out, although she recalled, in retrospect,

I did not like the look of my men, especially the man at the back, they had the stamp of the opium addict, and such men are no good on a long pull . . . I had only gone about half a mile out of the town when I heard my back man beginning to grumble at my weight, which as you know, is not that of a feather pillow! In a few minutes he set me down, and absolutely refused to go another step. The other fellow was more decent, and abused him roundly . . .²³⁴

With a promise to send a replacement, the back man departed abruptly. "It was a broiling hot day," she recalled, "and as I sat by the roadside and watched the farmers going to market, I created quite a lot of interest, for they do not often see 'foreign devil' out there." A replacement did arrive, and the group finally reached their destination in the middle of the night. They had a good visit, meeting with many of the townspeople and settling the new teachers in for their winter work. On their way back they once again met with the pastor from downriver. They returned via Jung Jow, and visited with the local Chinese pastor, discussed working with younger girls and held a women's meeting. The daughter of the pastor who was to attend the Fuzhou mission school that year, returned with them. Lamb had an exhilarating trip back to Fuzhou, and advised, "any one who wants thrills should try to come up the rapids on this Yangtse in a small boat when the high water season is on."²³⁵

Mary Lamb and Mrs. Liang returned to Shi Dju for a more extended visit (of eleven days) in 1932. They travelled in the winter, and so the water on the river was lower, and the trip not nearly as thrilling for Lamb. However, it was easier to travel and work in the cooler climate. She advised, "Although we never see a stove and keep ourselves warm by piling on clothes, still it is like camping in the open at home except that we always manage to have a roof over our heads."²³⁶ They were able to make their

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 4, 1932 (MLL 1:9).

arrangements for carriers in advance, and travel was more orderly and less eventful. The women were asked to visit prisoners at a nearby jail, which the Chinese pastor visited quite regularly; the man in charge of the prison was a graduate of a mission school, newly appointed to the position, and quite discouraged with conditions in the prison. Lamb advised, “. . . Chinese jails are not pleasant places, to put it (*sic*) mildly. He found that the prisoners had nothing to sleep on, and not enough to eat, and only the clothes they were taken in to wear, no changes . . . horrid, no sanitary conditions and too many men crowded in together.”²³⁷ She doubted that the prisoners would be attentive, as the conditions in which they were living was not “a favourable circumstances for giving any moral teaching!”²³⁸ However the group of forty-five men, most of whom were “bandits and so-called ‘Communists’ ” appeared interested, although she suspected that “any change in the monotony of their existence in cold damp dark cells” would have been welcomed.²³⁹ On their return trip they once again visited Jung Iow, then the town of Fengdu, and completed their journey by travelling “home by a different route.”²⁴⁰

Experiences in Chongqing and Fuzhou (1934-1940)

Lamb was again involved in women’s work upon her return to China for her third and final term, in the large metropolis of Chongqing. Her earlier impression of Chongqing, during her brief stay in 1928 was that it was not “the most attractive of our mission stations . . .”²⁴¹ Steamers boasting international flags travelled along the river between Yichang and Chongqing, carrying on a brisk trade. She advised,

This city of Chungking is a city of contrasts, terrible slum conditions and much wealth. Quite a lot of motor cars on some streets, and sedan chairs and rickshas all mixed up together . . . It is such a big city, they claim that with all the suburbs, it has a population of about a million,

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, October 11, 1934 (MLL 1:9).

thongs that press us on every side when we are out make us realise something of the task that is facing us here.²⁴²

Attendance at mission organised events was correspondingly larger in Chongqing than in Fuzhou. At one large "evangelistic meeting" to which a visiting speaker had been invited, approximately 1200 "intelligent Chinese men and women" attended. From gatherings such as these, it was hoped that individuals would make further contact with the missionaries, and long-term interest in Christianity would be forged. Following the large meeting, 200 young Chinese who were not Christian signed up to begin Bible study.²⁴³ There were already successful Bible study classes underway; over 100 young people attended English Bible lessons weekly, although the missionaries were aware that many of them attended because they wanted to improve their English skills, rather than out of interest in Christianity. When the students were asked if they would attend if the language of instruction was Chinese language classes, half of the group were interested, and so the missionaries planned to begin these as well. Young businessmen attended classes on a regular basis, and continued to do so even after two years of study. Lamb also travelled to a large suburban government school for girls each Friday in order to lead Bible studies. The Christian women of Chongqing had an active women's club as well; this club was so popular among the membership, that the women asked Lamb if she would also lead two Bible classes weekly. This however would have meant that Lamb and a colleague spent three afternoons with the same women, and so all agreed that the women would continue to have their club meetings, which were focused on secular topics, on their own, and the missionaries would attend and lead one Bible class each week.

²⁴² Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 23, 1934 (MLL 1:9).

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

Lamb once again felt ambivalent about her group-oriented work and priorities, as she reflected upon her busy schedule. "The kind of work that is so important, personal work, I am not finding as much time for as I should. It is so easy to have a full program and crowd out the more vital things."²⁴⁴ She did have the opportunity to visit the town of Dan Shi Si, across the river from Chongqing, where the missionaries were involved in developing a mission school and Christian community. The work in the town, despite weekly visits over several years, was in the long term frustrating. It had seemed to be a promising centre initially, but as time passed Lamb found it increasingly difficult to make progress there.²⁴⁵ As well, due to shortage of workers in Fuzhou, she was called upon to help at that centre several times while residing in Chongqing.

In light of the fall of Nanjing and the Japanese penetration of China, Mary Lamb was asked to relocate to Fuzhou after her summer holiday in 1938. She appreciated that her work would involve assisting refugees, and that this refugee work might, in fact become her primary focus. As she advised, ". . . one has to be prepared to meet any emergency these days."²⁴⁶ Almost immediately upon her arrival she began itinerating in the Fuzhou district.²⁴⁷ "The fine group of farmers" in Shwang Long Chang, which, as she advised means "Double Dragon Village" asked if a Bible teacher could join their congregation, in order to assist the local pastor. Lamb accommodated them in their request, and although pleased that the mission work was "broadening out," knew that the small Fuzhou group would miss the contribution of this colleague.²⁴⁸ The Bible teacher had been particularly active in the city's baby welfare clinics,

²⁴⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 14, 1936 (MLL 1:9).

²⁴⁵ Mary Lamb, diary entries, March 9, 1936, April 13, 1936, May 12, 1936, June 8, 1936, October 26, 28, 1936, November 23, 1936 (MLL 1:6).

²⁴⁶ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 11, 1938 (MLL 1:9).

²⁴⁷ Lamb refers to almost all of her evangelical work outside the city as "itinerating."

²⁴⁸ Mary Lamb, circular letter, April 23, 1939 (MLL 1:9). They had first visited Shwang Long Chang in the fall of 1932, when she noted in her diary "it would seem a good place to work." They returned there Nov. 29 1932 as it

because she was an experienced nurse. Lamb was able to combine work with pleasure, as she was occasionally invited to dine in the homes of influential Chinese. She visited a nearby "wealthy home, where the hostess was a former teacher in our WMS school here." The owner of the house was the head man of the district, and "a man of refinement and education." His wife had been a Christian for some time, and he had recently been baptised as well, at the Fuzhou church. His baptism was particularly important as he was so influential in the district, and further, there was no church or pastor in the village, and so he could become the focal point of the Christian community.²⁴⁹ By the fall of 1939 it became more difficult to continue her "country evangelism." As she advised, ". . . it will not be easy (to travel), as so many men have been taken in conscription that travel will be difficult and expensive." As well, many sons of farmers had been conscripted to the front lines, and so the families were less available to meet with visiting missionaries. Instead, Lamb visited establishments which she had been asked to visit in the past, but had never found the time to do so. She travelled approximately six miles up river to visit opium addicts at a hospital in which eighty of the five hundred residents were women, and a hospital for soldiers. As well, she visited the prison she had been to in the past, and a woman's prison; she hoped to be able to visit the latter on a weekly basis.²⁵⁰

Despite the "terrific" bombing of Chongqing, the Fuzhou mission was able to continue functioning in the spring of 1939, as missionaries either branched out into new work, or continued already scheduled classes and events.²⁵¹ Refugee work became Lamb's major preoccupation, as she had expected. She

apparently became a fairly frequent stopover when visiting Changshee. Mary Lamb, diary entry, October 4, 1932 (MLL 1:6).

²⁴⁹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, April 23, 1939 (MLL 1:9).

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ Chongqing had already sustained its fourteenth air raid, which Lamb witnessed from the Chongqing hills, in August 1939. In the middle of August approximately one-third of the city of Kiating was destroyed and the mission church was burned. To her shock, at that time the Chinese newspapers reported that "Canada is not quite sure that she wants to stop selling war materials to Japan!" Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 25, 1939 (MLL 1:9).

invited a teacher to visit the woman's school, to teach them how to "weave cotton and make towels, etc. etc.," which she hoped in some small way would offset the problem of soaring cotton prices in Sichuan. The Japanese had destroyed China's cotton mills, and so there were shortages of cotton products, and when available, the costs were prohibitive to poor people. Beside making visits to hospitals and refugee camps, she met with smaller groups of refugees who were passing through Fuzhou. Many young people who had been separated from their families, were happy to receive the support she could offer, as she helped them to find food, shelter, and offered them spiritual guidance.²⁵² An "interesting group of well-educated refugees" from down river gathered each week to hold a Bible class in the WMS home. A judge and lawyer were among this group, and they encouraged Lamb to make further visits to the prison, in order to offer spiritual guidance to the prisoners. Another English language study group met in her den twice weekly. The Fuzhou school continued until the scheduled term end in June 1940, although the teachers adjusted their schedule "to accommodate the Japanese visits - classes beginning at 6 a.m. and closing at 9:30 a.m. Then from 4-6 p.m."²⁵³

Summers in the cities of Chongqing and Fuzhou were almost unbearably hot and dusty, and so Lamb joined her colleagues and many other foreigners, who gathered in the "hills" above Chongqing. "We do not call these mountains," she advised,

for they are not high enough to dignify with that name. In fact they tell me that the altitude of these hills is lower than that of the Chengtu plain, where I lived when I was in China before. Nonetheless they are cooler than the city, and they provide a rest and respite from work.²⁵⁴

The scenic beauty which engulfed the vacationers was relaxing in itself.

The view from the upper veranda of this nice bungalow is picturesque enough for anything - a succession of hills range after range, with the Yangtse river now swollen to the limit of its

²⁵² Mary Lamb, circular letter, April 23, 1939 (MLL 1:9).

²⁵³ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 25, 1939 (MLL 1:9).

²⁵⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 1, 1928 (MLL 1:8)

summer swiftness, in the distance. The sunsets here are wonderful, and when it rains the shifting clouds and mists are lovely.²⁵⁵

The hills offered the opportunity to unwind and revive, as the vacationers swam, played tennis, rode horses, and gathered each evening to play games, hold discussions and listen to Gilbert and Sullivan operas on their victrola. Her tennis matches did not provide adequate exercise for Lamb, who was conscientious about staying in good physical condition, and so she rented a pony "for about twenty-five cents a day," and went hiking across the hills.²⁵⁶ These holidays became so routine, that when she arrived in the summer of 1938, she reported that it was "a bit like getting 'back home,' to come into the house I lived in so long in Chungking . . ." ²⁵⁷ In 1930 Lamb shared her accommodation with a senior worker from the American Woman's Board, and an American physician and his family. That summer she had begun her vacation with a lengthy twelve hour journey to Chongqing (from Fuzhou) on the very crowded "little launch," in order to look up her friends, Chinese and foreign, and "was properly thrilled by the busy town, and by the sight of a couple of aeroplanes soaring over the city."²⁵⁸ The foreign community was particularly small that season, as many owners of bungalows had left China two years earlier, "when the anti-British feeling was so strong," and not returned. The community at that time had about twenty-five adults and "several" children; Lamb's closest neighbours were nine members of the China Inland Mission. She swam in their pool early each morning. Over the hill were two Canadian men in one bungalow, a family of Seventh Day Adventists in another, two American women, and "a whole

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ From her earliest days in China Lamb was aware of the drain that China mission work had upon missionaries' health. On April 19, 1920, she reported that after only a month in China, she had seen "2 single ladies who look as I will in a few years." Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 19, 1920 (MLL 1:1). The following year she remarked, "What a blessing good health is. Those who have been out here a number of years have used up so much of their nervous and physical energy." Mary Lamb, diary entry, May 2, 1921 (MLL 1:3). Among the many references to physical fitness, please see Lamb's comments on tennis, horseback riding and need to keep physically fit, Mary Lamb, diary entry, July 31, 1920 (MLL 1:2); Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 15, 1921 (MLL 1:1); Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, September 4, 1927 (MLL 1:8); and Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 11, 1938 (MLL 1:9).

²⁵⁷ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 11, 1938 (MLL 1:9).

²⁵⁸ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 3, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

houseful of gun-boat people. . . They are not fond of missionary company," she realised, as they "keep themselves to themselves." The following year, there was a mixed community again, of missionaries, business, naval and consular people.²⁵⁹ They held Sunday Services in Chinese and then in English in the little community chapel.²⁶⁰ The English services was particularly enjoyable, as she explained, ". . . Chinese is not quite as difficult for me as it was ten years ago, but still - it is nice to sing the old hymns, and to hear an English sermon for a change."²⁶¹ The hills seemed more enjoyable, particularly as she was "getting into such ruts, and needed to get out and see other people, and what they did, and what they said and thought, and what they wore!"²⁶² It was difficult to find much at all to buy in Fuzhou, and so she was quite astounded at the fashions she saw foreigners wearing that summer.

Really the clothes of those business folks were a revelation to me and more or less prepared me for what you (her friend Annie Dewar) must be looking like at home now. . . . You see, we are still wearing the same styles that we brought with us five years ago, but I'll try not to take any of them home with me if I can help it, altho, I do think they are more sensible than al these frills and foundes, and draperies dragging and flopping everywhere.²⁶³

Towards the end of her third term in China, she was returning to a cottage in which she had lived each summer since returning from her furlough; the house had belonged to a Scottish missionary who donated it to the Canadian WMS when she retired and returned to Scotland.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 1, 1938 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, circular letter, September 27, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²⁶⁰ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 1, 1938 (MLL 1:8).

²⁶¹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 25, 1939 (MLL 1:9).

²⁶² Mary Lamb, circular letter, September 27, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 11, 1938 (MLL 1:9).

Impressions of China

In her correspondence and diaries, Mary Lamb describes her interpretations of China as well as her specific experiences in China. Lamb is particularly descriptive and offers lengthier interpretations of China in her correspondence, while her diary entries are usually related to specific events. In this section, Mary Lamb's impressions of China are discussed thematically. She was determined, particularly in the beginning of her career in China, to juxtapose her ideas of missionary life with the reality which she found upon her arrival in China. This section moves from her expectations of her own work, to that of missionary work in China, and to the changing connections which missionaries and she herself had to her homeland. It then addresses her impressions of Chinese attitudes towards foreigners. In looking at Chinese society, Lamb is of course particularly concerned with the role of women. She was apparently less interested in politics in China, and so has limited impressions of the political scene and the intervention in China by Japanese military during the 1930s. This section concludes with Lamb's interpretation of the changes which she has witnessed in China.

Being a China Missionary

Mary Lamb was confronted with the disparity between her expectations of life as a China missionary, and the reality that she encountered as she settled into her new life in China. She understood that her first impressions lacked the context and years of experience she hoped to accumulate in the future; nonetheless, she was particularly disconcerted about the missionary lifestyle. She had expected to be and looked forward to being impressed and possibly overwhelmed by China, but had felt quite secure in her identity as a novice China missionary. After only two months in China, she remarked, "A simpler way of living is what I am more accustomed to."²⁶⁵ Although the people with whom she was staying were "very

²⁶⁵ Mary Lamb, diary entry, May 2, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

nice," she found them "quite too conventional to suit me."²⁶⁶ It seemed that spirituality suffered due to excessive socialising, and Lamb felt she needed to have "some solitary prayer" and "private devotion." However, Rong Xian was more spiritual than West China: in Chengdu there was too much time and money spent on clothes and entertainment.

Foolishly I thought I would leave these things behind when I came to the mission field. Perhaps I would have, had I come out under the CIM but I feel sure I would not have passed muster with them theologically. I am coming to see more and more that the WMS is the place for me and when I have finished this term in this job will see if they want me. The WMS point of view is more self-sacrificing and devoted than that of the General Board as I see it.²⁶⁷

Lamb was particularly disillusioned after her month of summer holidays, spent in the hills above Chongqing.

The forms of entertainment were mostly card parties and afternoon teas, not much tennis on account of the continued mists and rain. I must confess it surprised me to find the missionaries played cards and Methodists at that - well 'chaque un a son gout.' I cannot recall seeing any of the WMS playing and still they find such fault with the Chinese for gambling when they are not even willing to give up this one form of amusement for the sake of others.²⁶⁸

She had been chastised for being too liberal in St. Andrew's East, but advised her Canadian friends that she was far from liberal in her new surroundings. "Don't run away with the idea that missionaries are orthodox, the ones out here in West China certainly belong to the 'New school.' I find I am quite a conservative among them and you remember how Mother used to grieve over my heresy."²⁶⁹ Her overwhelming concern was that the affluence in which she lived offered a poor role model for the Chinese, and underlined the disparity between the Chinese with whom they worked, and themselves.

I wonder what will become of our fine houses when the native church needs the missionary no more . . . It seems to me that our life should be simpler - that we would get closer to the Chinese if it were and would be more like brothers than benefactors - a relation that seems to me more

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, October 7, 1924 (MLL 1:8).

²⁶⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entry, August 27, 1923 (MLL 1:4).

²⁶⁹ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8).

like Jesus teaching and . . . it seems to me as if we laid ourselves open more or less to anti-foreign sentiment.²⁷⁰

This sense of dissociation from the Chinese varied from one mission centre to another. Rong Xian appeared less vulnerable to this problem, whereas in Chengdu, "the lines are even more tightly drawn."²⁷¹

The goals and future of missionary work in China

Mary Lamb was convinced that Christianity would fill the void left by the loss of Confucianism following the collapse of the last dynasty: "It is going to be easier for the Chinese Christians to give up their old New Year customs than for the ones who know nothing about Christmas, for the fun and brightness, the concerts, the giving of gifts, etc. etc. will help to fill up what they used to have at their New Year time."²⁷² China was missing an essential factor, which the missionaries were there to offer.

Of Christless religions and philosophies, China has an abundance, and they have been sadly ineffective in getting her anywhere, some of their theories are very beautiful, but the things that happen every day all around us here, make us feel as if something different must be brought into the lives of these people if they are going to get anything (unclear word) – will make life really worth living.²⁷³

Lamb and her colleagues brought their own diverse skills to the attention of the Chinese.

Our work, as you will see, is many sided, this country needs all kinds of help, and we want these people to know that Christianity is a religion that makes men and women 'all round', and not lop-sided. Their own religions do not seem to have any connection with their daily lives, the more religious you are i.e., the priests, the dirtier you are, and the more unscrupulous.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 27-28, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

²⁷¹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, September 25, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

²⁷² Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 14, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²⁷³ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, May 17, 1928 (MLL 1:8).

²⁷⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 12, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

And so the missionaries sent workers out to all the stations in the district, to hold special meetings in the fall of 1931, to try to "encourage the Christians, and deepen their spiritual life." She advised that in one of the groups of four men (two Chinese and two foreign), one was an agricultural expert, who would be able to hold meaningful meetings with farmers.²⁷⁵

Testimonials or public declarations of faith seemed to be one of the best ways to foster Christianity among the Chinese. At the Christmas program in 1931, which the townspeople were urged to attend, Lamb noted that "The finest thing on the program (from our missionary point of view) was a magnificent defence of the Christian faith given by our nice Dr. Djao. It required no little courage for him to get up there before all the leading men of his own city, and tell what he thought."²⁷⁶ Baptisms were another form of "public declaration," as this serious commitment to Christianity encouraged others. Finally, the missionary presence offered "moral support" to the Chinese, who were experiencing such devastation during the Japanese war. Immediately prior to leaving China for the last time, Lamb knew that she did not want to leave until "things looked a little brighter for the Chinese people whom I love so much."²⁷⁷ "It is mostly in little ways that we can help them, but I do think they like to have us around."²⁷⁸

Connections to Canada

Lamb's need to maintain an intimate connection with Canada diminished as the years passed. Some of this longed for transition had happened by the summer of 1923. On July 1 she advised Annie that, "This is Dominion Day with you . . . I made the best of resolves to get up early and hoist the Union Jack, but when morning came - well you know how comfortable one's bed is on a Sunday morning when there is

²⁷⁵ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 12, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²⁷⁶ Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 9, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²⁷⁷ Mary Lamb, circular letter, February 8, 1940 (MLL 1:9).

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

nothing that has to be done?"²⁷⁹ As her responsibilities widened her weekly and then monthly correspondence was crowded out of her busy schedule. "The home news comes at intervals," she wrote a month later.

Of course the letters are more irregular, as I expected them to be. My own letters home of a necessity are getting fewer and farther between. It is one of the few trials we have out here, this necessity of severing connections with the loved ones at home. I suppose I find this harder than others, because I have come out here later in life than most of the others, and the roots had gone deeper into my heart than if I were twenty years younger.²⁸⁰

She encouraged her friend Annie to send as many newspaper "clippings" as possible, as they helped her to remain up to date with the Canadian news. In exchange, she sent Chinese newspaper articles to Canada, hoping to offer Canadians a different perspective on events in China.²⁸¹ The connections with Canada were never as strong or emotionally provocative as when Lamb received her Christmas parcels. Her first Christmas in Chengdu was rather lonely: only one colleague was in the boarding school on Christmas day when she received her Christmas presents from Canada. "I opened my box from home which came that day. It was a perfectly lovely box - not very big but so much in it and the chocolate! How much we appreciate it out here. Also a lovely home made blouse. I can just see them packing up for me, each one bringing their contribution and then packing it all in the tin box and mailing it."²⁸² Several years later, similarly alone in Fuzhou residence as she had remained behind to watch the mission buildings while the others went off the Annual Conference, she was just "wondering if I would be lonely, when what should come along but a letter . . . and my lovely big parcel from St. Andrews with

²⁷⁹ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8).

²⁸⁰ Mary Lamb, diary entry, August 27, 1923 (MLL 1:4); for further references to Lamb's need to receive home letters please see Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, April 21, 1927 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, May 17, 1928 (MLL 1:8).

²⁸¹ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, October 7, 1924 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, February 3, 1927 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, September 4, 1927 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, May 17, 1928 (MLL 1:8). On reassuring Canadians of her safety, please see Mary Lamb, letter to Annie, February 3, 1927 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, April 21, 1927 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 1, 1928 (MLL 1:8); Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 9, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

²⁸² Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 1, 1922 (MLL 1:4).

remembrances from no less than twenty of my dear friends there. It was perfectly lovely, I lighted a fire in the grate in my study, and spent the evening with my home folks."²⁸³ She found that she was writing fewer and fewer letters, and by her last term in Chongqing, apologised for her neglect to her Canadian colleagues. By 1935 she expressed her regret to them all as she explained,

It gives me quite a shock when I look at the calendar and realise how long it is since last I wrote a letter home! I think it must be nearly two months. I feel sure that I have written one since last Xmas but did not put down the date, so do not remember how long it is.²⁸⁴

That summer she once again had to write, "I have no face left at all, and to 'lose face' is one of the worst things that can happen to anyone living in China! To think that we have been up here for a whole month, and no letters written yet."²⁸⁵ In the midst of the war in April of 1939, Lamb discovered that she had not written home for nearly three months. She compared her lack of correspondence to her early days in the field, "I think back to my first few years on the Mission field, when I thought that I must get a letter off at least once a month, and now it is sometimes only three times a year that you hear from me directly!"²⁸⁶

After her second furlough she began her first letter written in Chongqing by referring to the confluence of her two worlds. "It hardly seems possible that I am really 'back home' again, in such a short time."²⁸⁷

Adjusting to Life in China

From her earliest days in China, Mary Lamb looked forward to the time when she would "bridge the gap" between Canada and China, when she would no longer feel like a Canadian, temporarily working in

²⁸³ Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 14, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²⁸⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, March 10, 1935 (MLL 1:9).

²⁸⁵ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 4, 1935 (MLL 1:9).

²⁸⁶ Mary Lamb, circular letter, April 23, 1939 (MLL 1:9).

²⁸⁷ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 23, 1934 (MLL 1:9). Lamb is referring to the speedy trip from Vancouver to China, and notes that not only was the ocean voyage quicker than earlier trip, but "travel conditions are improving all the time, even here on the Yangtse river."

China. "I'd like to put in 3 terms of service in China and possibly by that time China will be more like a home than Canada - but I don't feel that way now of course having just come out."²⁸⁸ In those early days she was very aware of being foreign, and being watched by the Chinese.²⁸⁹ Lamb and her host in Yichang, Mrs. Brown, took the children down to the river shore, so that they could play in the sand, and she noted that ". . . we were the centre of attraction - the Chinese stood around and stared."²⁹⁰ Everywhere she went in Yichang she felt the eyes of Chinese on her. Several days later, attending her first Chinese feast in Rong Xian, she was still very self-conscious. "We (Mrs. Smith and Lamb) had a real good time and I think the younger ones were as much entertained by my mistakes as I was by their queer ways."²⁹¹ She continued to feel awkward and the object of curiosity when she shopped, finding herself "the centre of attraction of a large crowd of spectators, old and young."²⁹² But perhaps she was most remarkable to the local people when she went horseback riding. She felt that she caused quite a sensation, ". . . as the kids on the street fairly hooted and yelled."²⁹³

As time passed, and almost without realising it, Lamb became comfortable with life in China, and able to advise newcomers and visitors about things intrinsically Chinese. "It is strange to see the average girl from home trying to fit into the life out here. It is not easy and requires some re-adjustment."²⁹⁴ The fundamental and unspoken expectation of time was something newcomers had particular difficulty

²⁸⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entry, October 26, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

²⁸⁹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 5-6, 1920 (MLL 1:2); Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 29, 1920 (MLL 1:2); Mary Lamb, diary entry, September 27, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

²⁹⁰ Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 6, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

²⁹¹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, September 16, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

²⁹² Mary Lamb, diary entry, September 27, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

²⁹³ Mary Lamb, diary entry, October 20-21, 1920 (MLL 1:2).

²⁹⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 27, 1936 (MLL 1:9).

understanding. "in this land where there are no timetables."²⁹⁵ Canadian expectations versus the Chinese experience in Yangzi River travel was discomfiting, and Lamb advised her friends that they must be extremely patient when awaiting a steamer. When Canadian Church visitors were scheduled to arrive in Fuzhou, Lamb advised,

There is always a delightful uncertainty about the arrival of guests in Fow Chow, one never knows when the steamer will get here, nor if it will stop when it does come into sight. We were on the alert for several days. The steamers can be plainly seen away down the river from our upper veranda (We have a magnificent view of the river here) but the landing place is about four miles up the river, and it is impossible to walk that distance after the boat is in sight, and get there before it does, so the only way to do is to "take your knitting" and sit on the wharf and wait. We took turns at it, the men two of them, sitting there from ten a.m. until four p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15 then the following day, another two went up and spent the afternoon there. You see, it is this way, the steamers do not actually stop, they only slow up, and those on the shore who are expecting to meet friends, go out in a small boat to meet them, and the friends are slid over the side of the steamer into the small boat. If the steamer sees no small boat coming out, she goes right on, so if we wanted to get our guests, the only way was to sit on the job and we certain did want to get them. Tuesday a.m. I was up at daylight, and after an early breakfast, had the delightful walk up the anchorage. We - two of the men and myself, only waited about one-half hour when the boat came around the bend. It was whistling so loudly that we knew it was going to stop, so did not need to wave the Union Jack we had brought along for the purpose.²⁹⁶

It was not a matter of neglect, but rather merely China circumstances. The steamer captains were limited by the river conditions. When the West China missionaries were returning from Shanghai in 1928, they had waited in Yichang for over two weeks for the water to rise sufficiently to travel through the gorges.²⁹⁷

It was of course difficult for Mary Lamb to completely obliterate the pleasures of westernised surroundings. Lamb was invited aboard a British steamer for a cup of coffee with the ship officers and some friends, and she had a remarkable sensation, after years in China. "It was quite like a step into

²⁹⁵ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 23, 1934 (MLL 1:9).

²⁹⁶ Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 14, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²⁹⁷ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, May 17, 1928 (MLL 1:8); for another interesting account of the difficulties of "catching" a motor boat from Fuzhou to Chongqing, please see Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 17, 1929 (MLL 1:8).

civilisation to get on board one of those big British steamers again, and we spent the evening with a lot of our old friends who were going farther, and had a very jolly time . . . ”²⁹⁸ The friends she was visiting aboard the steamer had recently arrived in China from Canada, “with all the latest news, the newest styles (sloppy looking skirts!) the freshest slang . etc. etc.”²⁹⁹ Lamb wondered how out-of-style she would appear to Canadians when she returned on furlough. “One feels very ancient, and out of date, after having lived up here for five years, and it needs some one from the homeland to freshen one up in many ways. Still, I have not yet gotten a permanent wave, or a dress that reaches the ground! I’ll wait till I get to Shanghai, to see what things look like there.”³⁰⁰

Over time Mary Lamb became used to China, and increasingly out of touch with Canada. On a trip to Bu Ho Kay in June 1924, she merely noted an event in her diary which in earlier years would have been quite outstanding. “My chairman spilled me in the ditch so I walked. It rained and I got wet.” Nonetheless, she continued to sense the gap which continued to exist between herself and Chinese, particularly with respect to the comforts of compound life. In Chongqing she planned to purchase a lantern and lamp, but was assured by a colleague that they were soon to have electric light in the house. There was also a new city water supply, and so they had installed taps “upstairs and down,” and would soon have hot water available through their stove. When she realised they also had a piano (recently purchased by the mission school which was attached to the residence) she advised, “. . . really, I don’t feel as if I were in China at all, except when I go out on the streets, where I am constantly reminded of the hymn ‘Where cross the crowded ways of life.’ ”³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 16, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

²⁹⁹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, September 27, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

³⁰⁰ Mary Lamb, circular letter, February 2, 1933 (MLL 1:9).

³⁰¹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 23, 1934 (MLL 1:9).

Chinese Attitudes towards Foreigners

Violence against foreigners seemed almost an anomaly to Mary Lamb, as she witnessed so much enthusiasm for Western products throughout the years she spent in China. Yet on April 13, 1920 Jardine Matheson, the British trading company lost 100,000 taels worth of merchandise when their Yichang godown was ignited. This was Lamb's first experience with anti-foreign activity in China, only a month after her arrival; the fire occurred as she and her colleagues passed through Yichang on their way up river. Lamb recorded in her diary, "very serious for the merchants of this town."³⁰² Less than a year later, the attendance at Rong Xian's Sunday school at East Gate Bridge was lower than expected, and upon inquiring, the missionaries were disturbed to discover that teachers in a nearby school had told the boys that if they were caught attending the Sunday School, they would "be beaten 100 strokes. Poor little kids," Lamb commented, "It's pretty tough on them. All one can do is to pray that they may change their attitude toward us."³⁰³ Soldiers added to the foreigners concerns, as they generally "do not behave themselves." Then there were outbursts by individuals, who took any opportunity to holler insults, such as "foreign dogs" at passing missionaries.³⁰⁴ For Lamb the most devastating sight was vestiges of the "Friends or Quakers" missionary cottages up on the Chongqing hills.

It would make your heart ache to see the place nothing but heaps of ruins. So far will hate and prejudice let loose the basic passions. First they stole all that was of any value, and then they tore down the houses, in most cases not leaving one stone on another. Who did it? The mob egged on by the students, the local militia taking a share and the mountain folk getting anything that was left . . . The floor was littered with them (books) a mixture of German, French, English and Chinese literature. The missionary was noted as a linguist . . . The disturbing thing about it all is that the work which these people were trying to do has been laid down and in many cases will never be taken up again. It makes one sorry to learn of so many of our good workers turning their energies into other sources because they feel as if China did not want them any more.³⁰⁵

³⁰² Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 14, 1936 (MLL 1:9).

³⁰³ Mary Lamb, diary entry, October 17, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

³⁰⁴ Mary Lamb, diary entries, June 24-25, 1927 (MLL 1:5).

³⁰⁵ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 1, 1928 (MLL 1:8).

The yearly disturbances during the Christmas season which always threatened and usually did disrupt the Christians' celebrations were organised by students and labour agitators, who then encouraged observers to join in the activities.³⁰⁶ Chongqing had been the target of some protests immediately preceding the 1927 rash of anti-foreign activities, most certainly organised and led by students, as part of their larger "program" which was crossing the country. Although there was less anti-foreign activity in Chongqing than some other cities at Christmas season, even in Chongqing

. . . the streets were full of groups of loafers listening to students haranguing them from every corner on the evils of the foreigner and of Christianity - we passed two such groups one day and it was funny to watch the frenzy of the soap box orators - one at each corner and they seemed trying to 'out-shout' each other - waving their arms and jumping up and down and mopping the perspiration from their brows. It is little wonder that the mob does get excited, when the agitators keep on the job so insistently and persistently.³⁰⁷

It was not clear whether attacks on foreigners were random, or whether the perpetrator in some way sought out a particular victim. On a visit to the Christian community in Changshoo, the missionaries had certainly attracted the attention of "all the rag-tag and bog-tail of the street rabble," however a soldier "made some rude remarks, and threw some mud" at Lamb's colleague. She may have been the object of the attack because she was more noticeable, thought Lamb; she was a very tall woman, "taller than most Chinese men," walking towards the back of the group and was wearing Western clothing whereas Lamb was in "Chinese dress" which she felt probably made her "less conspicuous." They were both surprised when the next morning, they received an apology from a city official. This was certainly a positive sign,

³⁰⁶ 1930 was the first year that Christians celebrated Christmas without anti-Christian demonstrations, since Lamb's arrival in Fuzhou. Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 14, 1930 (1:8).

³⁰⁷ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, February 3, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

as only a few years earlier, "noon of the officials cared or dared to say anything in defence of foreigners."³⁰⁸

The curious relationship which appears to have existed in China, between the anti-Christian activities which the missionaries suffered, and the desire for things foreign, was evident but difficult for Mary Lamb to understand. It was to be expected that the city of Shanghai, which was exceptional in China in its cosmopolitan make-up, would cater to the foreign market present in that city, however there was a market for foreign goods in the interior as well.³⁰⁹ The market place in Chengdu overflowed with foreign products.

Chengtu is a great business centre, and quantities of foreign goods are sold here, I even saw an ice-cream freezer for sale in the Arcades the other day, there is one very fine store which makes a speciality of foreign goods, I quite often get a tin of Baker's cocoa when I am there. . . . One cannot help feeling that the Chinese themselves must use a lot of foreign goods, for there is not a large enough foreign population in Chengtu to warrant the importation of such a quantity, as one sees displayed. It is a strange situation, for while there is quite a lot of anti-foreign feeling latent among the non-Christian Chinese, still they are very glad to get our goods, our education, our clothes etc. In Chengtu at least, it is hard to say that there is any characteristic Chinese dress for it is such a mixture of the old and the new. I must confess that I much prefer to see them in their own garments, than in the semi-foreign clothes that look so much like caricatures, and give them a grotesque appearance.³¹⁰

There appeared to be a consistent demand for English language lessons, even during the height of the 1927 anti-foreign sentiment. While living in Shanghai, Lamb advised, "I think I can get private pupils who will want English, for one of the inconsistencies of this anti-foreign movement seems to be an in

³⁰⁸ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9); Mary Lamb, diary entries, October 1, 1932, October 4, 1932 (MLL 1:6).

³⁰⁹ The Hongkew market in Shanghai offered a tremendous variety of international products. "It is a huge place, and the throngs of purchasers that are there every time I have been there, represent every nationality under the sun . . . Yesterday, I saw beautiful grapes, pears, apple persimmons, fresh figs as well as assunkist oranges and grape fruit (six) from California." Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, September 4, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

³¹⁰ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8).

creasing (*sic*) desire on the part of young Chinese to know more English!"³¹¹ And later, the Fuzhou missionaries, well aware of the allure of "things foreign," invited forty of the high-ranking men of the city to attend a dinner party, in order to encourage these men to be sympathetic to the Chinese Christians of Fuzhou. Invitations were sent out in the name of the Chinese Church to "the officials, educationalists, Post Office and telegraph managers," to attend one of the two dinners held during the Christmas season. The missionaries then planned to invite these same people to attend Christmas celebrations at the Church. Lamb and her colleagues decided that, "In spite of all the 'Anti-foreign' talk and all that they say about despising us, the fact remains that foreign food and foreign goods and foreign goods (cigarettes) are tremendously popular, so . . . the feast must be a foreign one."³¹² The plans worked wonderfully. All the men attended both the parties and subsequent holiday celebrations, and although Lamb did not count how many town-folk attended the Christmas festival, she did know that she alone had given out "five hundred tracts on the meaning of Christmas," and had not had enough to meet the demand.³¹³

Western influence was evident in contemporary architectural styles, even in Fuzhou. The WMS was located in a beautiful old Chinese building with a long and interesting history, having originally been owned by a "famous family who had been given the place by the Chinese emperor a couple of hundred years ago for some political service rendered by the head of the family."³¹⁴ The gatehouse had more recently been converted into the church where the Christians worshipped, which is why, as Lamb was pleased to advise, "our church is so distinctly Chinese." In contrast to the "grandeur" of their buildings,

³¹¹ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, September 4, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

³¹² Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 9, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

³¹³ Lamb noted, "Of course it was a man's affair, this is still a man's country, and the women keep more in the background that we are accustomed to, altho they are not as much so as they were when I first came to China. The hostesses at these feasts were not in evidence being busy in the kitchen, the men of the house doing the honours." Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 1, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

³¹⁴ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, June 3, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

other older buildings were being "torn down with a ruthlessness, and replaced by ridiculously poor imitations of our foreign houses, many of which are four stories high, without any foundation, and about fifteen feet deep. We are all of the opinion that in a few years, most of them will come tumbling down over the heads of the occupants" advised Lamb.³¹⁵

Chinese women

The Chinese women who responded to the invitation of the missionaries, and attended classes or met with them in their homes, seldom seemed happy to Mary Lamb. At least part of this unhappiness was rooted in the "institutions" of plural marriage, and early or childhood marriage; all were arranged by parents without input from or consultation with the future bride. While in Rong Xian Lamb became acquainted with a young woman, Lo Shu-lan who had received a letter in June 1921 from her fiancé ordering her "to ready (herself) to be married in July." She was neither prepared to marry him, as she had not acquired her trousseau money, nor was she looking forward to marrying him. "Poor girl," advised Lamb, "I do feel so sorry for her, for I think she is dreading it. She has had a vision of a broader life and the prospect of becoming subservient to a man who is not worth of her (as so many fear is the case) is none too cheerful."³¹⁶ Lamb attended Lo Shu-lan's wedding, as well as two other Chinese weddings all within a two week period, and found that "it was an exceptional opportunity for me to study Chinese life."³¹⁷ She recognised that it was a limited "study", as all the weddings involved at least one Christian member, and were "somewhat modern."

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Mary Lamb, diary entry, June 22, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

³¹⁷ Mary Lamb, diary entry, June 22, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

These Chinese weddings provided an opportunity "to see these customs in their transition stage and to see how the old customs were losing their hold on the people and particularly how the girls are getting their liberty and independence."³¹⁸ Another young woman had been a boarder at the Fuzhou mission school from the age of sixteen, at which time she was already married to an army officer who was about thirty years older. He had supported her stay at the school for a year, but was then transferred to Chongqing. She expected to leave her studies and move to Chongqing with him. He never "sent for her," and she left the school in embarrassment. Eventually, when the missionaries discovered that she had been abandoned, they helped her to write forceful letters to her "recalcitrant husband," who had probably married another woman. "Her story is only too common," advised Lamb, "one can find this kind of thing happening any day of the week out here. The old rigid customs are breaking down, and nothing is being established to replace them."³¹⁹ Another woman student had become a second wife at fifteen years of age; when she gave birth to a baby boy, the first wife who had been unable to have a male child, attempted to poison her. The young second wife was "discarded" by the husband who kept the infant and sent her home to her parents. Fortunately, her mother was able to "marry her off" to another man; the second husband "being of a generous enough disposition to give her a few months schooling, which she is enjoying tremendously."³²⁰ Lamb commented, "As I have remarked many times, work in a school for Chinese women tends to make one more and more confirmed in the practice of celibacy for women! The greatest source of their troubles, I think I can safely say, is the question of plural marriage." Many of her students "share(d) their husbands with one or two other wives, which caused disparity and unhappiness at home."³²¹

³¹⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entry, June 27, 1921 (1:3).

³¹⁹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 16, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

³²⁰ Mary Lamb, undated document (MLL 1:9).

³²¹ *Ibid.*

Women who were involved in plural marriages or were concubines posed difficulties for the women's mission schools. The warlord general Yang-sen who was interested in making improvements in Chengdu, had sent one of his wives to begin university studies when the mission university opened its doors to women. When it became obvious that although she had some prior education, she was unable to cope with the curriculum and withdrew, it was a relief to the missionaries. Her presence created two difficulties: as a leading woman in the community, she would have brought many servants with her to the women's residence, and because she was "one of many concubines (it) made her presence undesirable for the principle of the thing."³²²

A further conflict arose for young women who had been introduced to Christianity, but who, as the only member of a household or village to have embraced it, became isolated in their own environment. These young women became caught between the "old customs" which "still held them down a good deal," and their new experiences which encouraged them to break the restraints of traditional societal rules.³²³ If an individual woman had been the only one "to advance," it made it difficult for her to continue to be a "dutiful daughter, younger sister, and do the things the way the family insists upon."³²⁴ One woman returned to her home village, in which she was the only one among the fifty inhabitants who was Christian. Lamb realised this was "A difficult position for anyone. It is hard for us to realise what they are up against."³²⁵

³²² Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, October 7, 1924 (MLL 1:8).

³²³ Mary Lamb, diary entry, June 27, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

³²⁴ Mary Lamb, diary entry, June 29, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

³²⁵ Mary Lamb, diary entry, July 22, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

Politics in China

Mary Lamb seemingly had little interest in Chinese politics. Rather than discussing or describing the ongoing political turmoil in China during the years in which she lived there, she considers the political forces as they impact upon her work, as upon the Chinese people with whom she is working. This section therefore focuses on the concerns which she herself postulated, the Sichuan warlord generals and their soldiers, and the Nationalists under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. She was far less informed or concerned about the Communists, and spent little time developing any interpretation regarding the Japanese military invasion of China.

1. Warlords

Mary Lamb's writings suggest that there appeared to be unending fighting for control of geographic territory among the Sichuan warlords. It was not always possible to determine who was fighting, or whether there was any discernible pattern in their actions. The fighting impacted upon mission work, as the environment in which the missionaries lived was dangerous, and further, some generals were more tolerant or even supportive of their work than others. One particular Chengdu warlord, Yang-sen, was sympathetic to foreigners and the improvements which he seemed committed to introducing often embraced foreign elements. He was ". . . a very progressive man and is very keen to get foreign ideas and apply them when possible to Chinese conditions. . . He is very simple in his tastes and temperate in his habits."³²⁶ However, he of necessity resorted to coercion to maintain his position. In January 1924, although no one initially knew the reason, the city gates were closed. The military situation "seemed uncertain," and the gates continued to open and close erratically over the next few weeks. "Heavy rifle fire" disturbed the sleep of the missionaries, and infringed upon the freedom and activities in which the

³²⁶ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, October 7, 1924 (MLL 1:8).

children at the mission school were involved.³²⁷ One night Yang-sen was "pounding at the North Gate." A few days later the South gate was captured, and the city remained closed as soldiers fought at the East gate as well. It became increasingly difficult to buy a "variety of food," and the school suffered from coal shortages.³²⁸

Fuzhou was particularly attractive to warlords, as opium was shipped through the port, and then "smuggled to other parts of China," and so it was "an ideal place for any official who is trying to fill his pockets, and the said General (Kuch 'pronounced Gway') has certainly squeezed the people here out of every last dollar that he can get out of it."³²⁹ In the summer of 1931 Lamb was still concerned about soldiers reoccupying the mission buildings while the missionaries summered in the hills, and so she thought it wise to have at least one woman remain behind to protect the property. "I hear that the general who entertained us so royally recently," she advised, "has expressed a wish to 'borrow' a foreigners home for the summer!"³³⁰ And four years later, in Chengdu, soldiers announced that they "wanted to come into the girls school 'only to cook a meal.'"³³¹ Soldiers were always present in Sichuan, and they caused lasting widespread concern. They were intimidating to the local residents as well as the foreigners, and the "threat of interference" from them was real. Lamb had been called down to the gate of the Fuzhou mission at least once a week in the spring of 1930 because the gateman feared that soldiers would successfully "force their way in to see if they could occupy the property."³³²

³²⁷ Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 25, 1924 (MLL 1:5).

³²⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entries, February 2-4, 19-20, 24, 1925, March 7, 1925, April 11, 1925, June 5, 1925 (MLL 1:5).

³²⁹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 17, 1929 (MLL 1:8).

³³⁰ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

³³¹ Mary Lamb, diary entry, January 21, 1935 (MLL 1:6).

³³² Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 3, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

2. Nationalists

Mary Lamb appears to have regarded the Nationalists as the only "party" which might have the strength to bring about peace and stability. However, unless they were able to unite themselves, unification of China seemed unrealisable. "Many of us had hopes," wrote Lamb in 1927,

that the Nationalist movement would do something to bring order out of the terrible chaos in this poor war torn country, and it may work out that way ultimately, but at present the outlook is not very bright from the point of even the most optimistic. The Left and Right wings of the Nationalist party are very much at loggerheads just now, and Eugene Chen, the dictator, is practically a prisoner at Hankow which city is in as bad a mess civically, and from a business point of view as it can well be.³³³

Further, they were overextended, and yet insisted on adding more activities to their agenda. During the Shanghai evacuation, the Nationalists had threatened to impose censorship on a variety of things, including correspondence. This did not seem feasible, as "they already have a much heavier program than they can consistently carry out . . ." advised Lamb.³³⁴ It was clear that the Nationalists required strong leadership, and it seemed that Chiang Kai-shek might be the individual who could fulfil this role.³³⁵

Residents of Sichuan had some opportunity to evaluate the leadership potential of Chiang Kai-shek even before the Nationalist government moved to Chongqing; Chiang Kai-shek visited Chongqing on more than one occasion in 1935, apparently "to see what can be done to improve conditions in this province that is considered the wealthiest in all of China . . ." The missionaries were immediately hopeful that his presence indicated that the "days of civil war" might soon end, at least in Sichuan.³³⁶ His impressive

³³³ Mary Lamb, circular letter, April 15, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

³³⁴ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, September 4, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Mary Lamb, circular letter, March 10, 1935 (MLL 1:9).

arrival by air followed by the arrival of his wife by steamer (as she “did not care to fly”) created a great sense of expectation in Chongqing. Not only were the residents hopeful that they would soon have peace, but the missionaries expected that their presence would strengthen mission work in China. These hopes were strengthened when two foreign women were asked to greet Madame Chiang at the docks, and a WMS missionary was selected as one of the women. Although “he himself is not a Christian, but a Buddhist,” advised Lamb, his wife always wanted to meet Christians when she travelled. Amidst the fanfare of her arrival, as schoolchildren, missionaries, and many other Chongqing residents gathered at the dock to catch a glimpse of Madame Chiang, Lamb could not help but remark upon the irony that the Madame Chiang thanked the crowds “in perfect English for coming to meet her in the rain. One of the problems” advised Lamb, “is that although she speaks perfect English (Was she educated at Wellesly [sic] College?) she cannot speak the kind of Chinese that we do up here . . . It does seem strange that it should be necessary for English to be the medium of intercourse in this country.”³³⁷ The following week the couple asked to meet with “All the missionaries, Protestant and R.C.” to solicit support for the fledgling New Life Movement.³³⁸ The couple continued to maintain close ties to the missionary community, as they vacationed with some of the missionaries at Mount Emei in the Chongqing hills.

The Nationalists’ “new program of reform” was difficult to access; it gained widespread popularity remarkably quickly, but it remained unclear how substantive it was. It seemed to focus primarily on public hygiene, yet was also concerned with controlling the growth, sale and usage of opium. There was no doubt however that it was “closely connected with militarism,” and that preparations for war were being carried out. Bank clerks, office men, shopkeepers, factory hands and many others were participating in the military drills. The Board of Education organised military drills during the day, and

³³⁷ Mary Lamb, circular letter, March 10, 1935 (MLL 1:9); Mary Lamb, diary entry, March 10, 1935 (MLL 1:6).

³³⁸ Mary Lamb, diary entry, March 18, 1935 (MLL 1:6).

the young members of the Girl Guides participated in overnight quasi military drills. Lamb noted that had the missionaries suggested that girls stay out overnight, parents would have been furious and refused. "Think of the the girls of thirty years ago who were not allowed to stick their noses outside the compound without a chaperone, and here they are off on a jaunt like that!" exclaimed an astounded Mary Lamb.³³⁹ "The words New Life Movement are in the mouths of all these days, even the boatmen on the river who cannot read a word one will hear them using the slogan almost like a swear word! 'Hain Sen Ho Yuin Dong' one hears and sees everywhere."³⁴⁰

Although Chiang Kai-shek did not, at this time, remain in Sichuan, he did leave behind several thousand "Government troops" whose presence ensured "a measure of peace in this province which has known nothing but war since the founding to the Republic." The soldiers thwarted the activities of the Communists and warlords; however, Lamb advised, "one of the outstanding characteristics of the Chinese people is patience, and what is a year to a country with history that reaches back several thousand years? These warlords were quite content to play a waiting game." The Nationalist army policed Sichuan for a year, and during that time the missionaries worked in a favourable environment.³⁴¹ By the summer of 1939 it appeared that Chiang Kai-shek would be successful in the quest to unite and govern China. "Pray for the Generalissimo and Madame Chiag (*sic*). They are a wonderful couple, but are carrying a terrifically heavy burden and one wonders how long they can stand the strain."³⁴²

³³⁹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 14, 1936 (MLL 1:9). Lamb conceded that the regimentation had "certain value, in a land where there was so little order or discipline, it will teach them some things that may be of help, but we who are women would rather our girls were putting their time learning how to be better mothers and housekeepers, as that is how 90% of them will probably spend the rest of their lives after they leave school."

³⁴⁰ Mary Lamb, circular letter, May 16, 1936 (MLL 1:9).

³⁴¹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 27, 1936 (MLL 1:9).

³⁴² Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 25, 1939 (MLL 1:9).

3. Communists

The writings of Mary Lamb imply that the Communists were more poorly understood than either the warlords or Nationalists, but that they had been threatening Christians and foreigners predating 1927. They were responsible for the anti-British sentiment that swept China in 1927. "There is no doubt in anyone's mind now that Russia is pushing this whole anti-foreign movement and working on the prejudices of the Chinese to try to get a slap at Britain," advised Lamb from Shanghai.³⁴³ The missionaries were besieged by rumours about the Communists and their activities, yet it was unclear what, if anything, could be done to inhibit their activities.

We do not know what the Soviets are going to do to us next. Their threats are dire, but we are not sure how much power they have to carry them out. Certainly they have smashed up our Mission business pretty badly & it is rather stupid sitting here (in Shanghai, 1927-28) while they do it & waiting until we can Go back & repair the damage they have done both moral & material.³⁴⁴

The aims of the Communists seemed no more clear in the following years. Chengdu was fearful of Communist advances in the winter and spring of 1935. "People arriving from Chengtu in various ways - An anxious time for all." reported Lamb. "The Red menace seems to be threatening."³⁴⁵ The following day, on Easter Sunday, the Chengdu missionaries were ordered to evacuate by the Chinese authorities, presumably the Nationalists, who feared the advances of Communist troops. Yet actual activities of the Communists remained murky, as Lamb reported in May 1935, "The reports of the political situation in Chengdu are a little more encouraging - still there is a great deal of uncertainty."³⁴⁶

³⁴³ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, April 21, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ Mary Lamb, diary entries, January 9-14, 1935 (MLL 1:6).

³⁴⁶ Mary Lamb, diary entry, May 3, 1935 (MLL 1:6).

4. China at War with Japan

China appeared to grow in strength as Japan carried out its war of occupation. Despite the horrifying results of the bombings by Japanese aircraft, and the endless numbers of refugees who pushed into Sichuan, it seemed in April 1939 that "China is getting stronger all the time." From the early days of military action, Lamb was hopeful that "making war on the Chinese (who) are in such a hopeless mess at home . . . might have the effect of uniting them as a nation, but it is not likely."³⁴⁷ The reality was however, that people from occupied China fled to the western province, and as Chongqing became unbearably crowded, more and more people tried to "get up to Chengtu The professors and teachers from down river universities who are hoping to get positions in some of the colleges in Chengtu" were among the throngs that pushed towards the city.³⁴⁸

Changes in China

Mary Lamb observed that China was experiencing many rapid and remarkable changes, with little apparent planning, direction or continuity, and that these "improvements" encouraged a sense of discontinuity for the Chinese people. In January 1930 the changes in Fuzhou seemed remarkable.

One feels rather sorry for the Chinese these days, the very foundations of all they hold dear seem to be shaking beneath them. From my window I can see the new road, actually they are making a motor road with a side walk four feet wide on each side, the latter are stone paved, with a stone left out at intervals so that a tree can be planted! To do this they have ruthlessly torn down houses, shops and temples, a couple of huge idols stood out in the open for weeks, quite disregarded by all. A Cemetery is being turned into a pleasure garden, the bones all dug out of the graves, piled in heaps and burned. And now to crown all, the Govt has issued an order that the Lunar calendar is to be used no more! The older people are aghast, and say 'How will we know our ages now?' The farmers say 'How will we know when to plant our crops?' They will celebrate their New Year this year, but as the Govt. has prohibited the printing of any calendars with the lunar year, they will have great difficulty following it any longer. It has its pathetic side. One wishes they would grasp Christianity to replace what they are bound to lose by these changes.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, April 21, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

³⁴⁸ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 11, 1938 (MLL 1:9).

³⁴⁹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, January 14, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

Travel had changed dramatically as well. It took only two days to commute on the new "motor road" from the Chongqing hills back to Fuzhou. Lamb recalled her first trip to the hills, when it had been a nine or ten day journey in sedan chair or one month by steamer. However, the new transportation was not without problems; due to the ongoing war with Japan, Yangzi traffic had been blocked for nearly a year, and so gasoline supplies were extremely reduced, and bus transport limited. "It begins to look as if we might have to go back to the sedan chair method of travel again, which will not be easy, as the veteran chairmen who could stand a long journey like that have either died off, or gone into other occupations."³⁵⁰ The most astounding change in travel was certainly the availability of air travel. There was a flight from Chongqing to Chengdu scheduled three times weekly, flown by an American pilot and Chinese "assistant or engineer." It was a popular flight, carrying four passengers, and which was usually booked two weeks in advance. Lamb dropped a colleague at the airport for the flight, and recollected.

I had to pinch myself to realise that I was really In China as I watched them climb into the plane and fly away. I was soon brought back to the orient when I got into my sedan chair, and realised that it would take me more than half as long in that chair to get back to my home in Chungking city from the airport, as it would take my friends to reach Chengtu, three hundred miles away!³⁵¹

Perspectives on Mary Lamb

It is fortunate for the researcher that Mary Lamb deliberately used her diary entries and personal correspondence in order to help her to understand her new and certainly overwhelming environment. Keeping written records of her observations ensured that she would focus intently and

³⁵⁰ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 11, 1938 (MLL 1:9).

³⁵¹ Mary Lamb, circular letter, November 23, 1934 (MLL 1:9).

then assimilate her surroundings in a way that she found meaningful. On April 26, 1921 she recorded in her diary,

Have begun to write letters again. I don't want to give it up - for I am afraid that I will forget to notice the things on the street that I want to notice, unless I have some special reason for doing so. I don't want to lose the capacity to take impressions - I do want to get the proper viewpoint - as to our relations to the Chinese - I can't seem to make my ideas of Christ's teaching fit in with the present difference between us. It will take me some time to think things out.³⁵²

Her commitment to record diligently enables the reader of her personal writings to embrace the China in which she lived and worked. Only her earlier diaries, written between 1920 and 1935 occasionally contain more private thoughts which she has not tended to record in her letters. However, all the diary entries, including those from 1935 to 1940 provide an excellent source through which to trace her movements in China. For example, it is only by using both sources together that one is able to recognize the number of days that she had spent working at the village of Dan Shi Si before deciding that the effort was unsuccessful. The reader is then better able to understand her disillusionment, although it is never clear why the work was less satisfying than at the other small centers. A concurrent examination of the sources also enables the reader to grasp Lamb's many commitments; among them the intensity with which she undertakes Chinese language study. From her letters it would appear that her only concern is to communicate with Chinese women; the diaries allow the reader to understand Mary Lamb's commitment and frustration in her determination to speak Chinese.

Mary Lamb's expectations and impressions of missionary life in China were undoubtedly colored by her own history. She was forty years old when she began working in China and so her frame of reference was unique among WMS novice missionaries. She had felt almost self-consciously

³⁵² Mary Lamb, diary entry, April 26, 1921 (MLL 1:3).

“liberal” at home among her family and peers, while in China she was shocked by the lifestyle and spirituality (or lack thereof) of some of the missionaries she encountered. She decided that this difference in fundamental understanding of living a Christian life was due to the difference in the philosophies of the various missions, for example of the General Board of the United Church, the WMS and the China Inland Mission. However, it can be argued that her understanding of mission work was colored by her age, generation and experiences. She had spent only a brief time in Montreal at McGill University, but otherwise had lived in the very small community of St. Andrew’s East. The other women who were new to the China field were almost certainly up to twenty years, or one generation younger than Lamb, and therefore distanced from her in their lifestyle, context in which they had reached adulthood, and their experiences.

Lamb arrived in China with a clear image of the type of work she ought to be doing, and this vision remained with her for twenty years. The first time that she recognized that she had made a contribution to missionary work in China was when she instituted the little evening class for the Boarding School servants in Chengdu. She continued throughout her career, to be most fulfilled in her work at smaller stations, particularly Rong Xian and especially Fuzhou, where she was able to travel to surrounding areas to visit Chinese women. Lamb’s sensitivity to the legacy of Christianity for Chinese women is fascinating. She knew that she was enhancing their lives by bringing Christianity to them. However, she was also very aware that their contact with missionaries changed these women, and too frequently isolated them from their families and neighbors. Her work called for her to evangelize among women so that the women would then introduce Christianity to their children, and perhaps to their husbands. The reality then was that the women had been exposed to alternate expectations which separated them from the societal customs in which they remained.

Lamb had an entrenched concept of missionary identity, and her expectations and understandings of that role among the Chinese people never wavered. She presumably developed this image in her young adulthood, and all of her experiences in China did nothing to alter this fundamental perception of her role as a missionary. She embraced her new life fully once she became an "evangelistic missionary." She began wearing Chinese clothes (which seems to have been atypical of WMS women, although the CIM missionaries were known to have favored Chinese dress). Furthermore, despite the classes that she led which introduced Chinese women to the benefits of North American "domesticity" and despite her baby welfare clinics which she knew helped to make babies "more comfortable," she knew that bringing Christianity to the women was the reason that she was in China. She also knew that when she was teaching the women about cleanliness and hygiene, the most valuable lesson she was actually teaching them was to share their knowledge with less privileged women, according to the teachings of the Church. Her mission then was not the mission of combining the lessons of Christianity with Western domesticity, but she had identified it as bringing the Gospel to individual Chinese women. Even when she was awed by the beauty and/or sordidness of a Chinese home in Rong Xian and enters in her diary that it was not even "ordinarily clean," she does not impart a need or desire to teach the woman about cleanliness. She is far more interested and fascinated by the opportunity to bring a spirituality to the Chinese women which was (to her) so clearly lacking in their lives.

Mary Lamb's recording and interpretation of the missionaries interactions with British Consular officials brings into focus her perception of the distinction between missionaries and foreign government officials, and more generally the uniqueness of and distance between missionaries and all other foreigners. In considering the foreign presence in China, Mary Lamb would apparently

have separated herself and her colleagues from merchants, diplomats and "gunboatmen," as well as the spouses of the aforementioned men. The difference between the life of a woman missionary and that of the wives of foreign business was enormous. Missionary women were capable of making observations and appropriate decisions, and were loathe to accept directives from authorities, among them the British Consulate or the International Settlement police in Shanghai. She felt that they were able to determine "the mood on the streets," and were therefore qualified to determine their own agendas, even in the face of anti-foreign activity.

Lamb identifies three quite distinct groups which threatened the security of missionaries and local Chinese. Her writing provides a sensitive sense of the overriding presence and impact of warlords and their armies in the Sichuan region throughout this period. Soldiers moved about quite unrestrained, individually, in groups or under the supervision of commanding officers. The missionaries and presumably local residents were never quite sure what the intentions and actions of these armed men would be, and their appearance was always threatening to those around them. They roused adolescent boys and young men from their homes, among them Lamb's servants, to impress them into military service, and occupied homes and shops without permission from the owners. She advises that Chiang Kai-shek left his troops to control the local soldiers, and apparently they were successful in this work while they remained in the province. The second group were the student agitators and their supporters. The activities of these young people were directed particularly at foreigners and of course at Christian missionaries. The third threat emanated from the Communists or "Reds." Members of this last group seem to have been male soldiers whose movements were vague, always threatening, and worrisome particularly to the Christians. While the students were identified with specific activities and outbreaks of anti-foreign sentiment, among them the yearly Christmas disruptions, the Communist threat seemed vaguer and

yet more worrisome in the long term. It appeared to her that the Communists had the potential to stop Christian mission work, if they were ever successful in gaining political power in China.

Did Mary Lamb ever succeed in leaving Canada behind? When she returned to Fuzhou towards the end of her third term her "home" had become the mission center in that city. Canada had slipped away. She had lived her dream for almost twenty years by 1938. In her early days in China she had recognized that because she had stayed in Canada for twenty years longer than most new missionaries she had established "deeper roots," and so it was difficult for her to relinquish her attachments. Yet she felt as if she was returning home when she visited friends, "both foreign and Chinese" one summer during that final term. She had left behind her self-consciousness at being foreign which was so evident in her earliest writing. In Shanghai she had been reluctant to buy a pith helmet, and only did so at Mrs. Brown's urging. By the time that she had coffee aboard the steamer, she had lost track of Western fashion styles, and joked about how odd she would look if she returned home in the clothes she wore in China. Further, she had become most comfortable wearing Chinese dress. In her first eighteen months in China she unhesitatingly used Canadian standards to judge China. One city was the Chicago of China, another reminded her of Toronto, as she tried to find a comfortable context in which to situate her new life. It is of course impossible to determine whether she did leave Canada behind. Her correspondence diminished as the years passed. She had begun writing at least once a month, and ended by writing once every quarter. In August 1930 from Fuzhou she writes, "You will be beginning to think that I have forgottenall (*sic*) about you, for it is so many weeks since I have written you a proper letter that I am really ashamed of myself, but I am going to make a beginning tonight and pick up some of the threads that I dropped so long ago."³⁵³ The following July she began her letter, apologizing for the delay, because

³⁵³ Mary Lamb, circular letter, August 3, 1930 (MLL 1:8).

“for some reason or other, it has been hard to get up any letter-writing enthusiasm.”³⁵⁴ Her needs had altered. Can we then infer that her life was in China? She felt responsible to the Chinese people, to remain with them even in physically threatening situations, among them anti-foreign and anti-Christian demonstrations. This perhaps signified the depth of her responsibility and bond to the Chinese people, as well as her mission. Her return home to take care of a relative can then be interpreted on several levels. She was ambivalent about leaving China before this request arrived; she was sixty years old and had worked in China for twenty years. Perhaps the news that she was needed at home helped her to resolve her dilemma. She was as well the only unmarried female relative, and so probably felt that she had an obligation, despite her years of China work, to come home to fulfill this duty.

³⁵⁴ Mary Lamb, circular letter, July 5, 1931 (MLL 1:9).

CHAPTER FOUR: VICTORIA CHEUNG

Victoria Cheung, a native of British Columbia, worked as a medical missionary in South China from 1923 until her death in 1966. A Chinese-Canadian by birth, she was a remarkable woman, a pioneer who brought modern Western medical care to South China in the early 20th century. She remained in China during two major evacuations of foreigners from that country, first during the Japanese occupation and subsequently following the Communist victory.³⁵⁵ Cheung had little contact with the Canadian Church during both of those periods. The Church however, by mutual arrangement continued to consider her to be a Canadian missionary serving in China, until it received notification of her death.³⁵⁶

Biographical Sketch

Victoria Cheung was born in Victoria, British Columbia in 1897.³⁵⁷ Her parents had emigrated from South China to Canada in the 1880s; her father was among the Chinese men recruited from their homeland to work on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway.³⁵⁸ When he had completed this work her father settled in British Columbia, and sent funds to his wife so that she could join him in Canada. When Victoria Cheung was born her parents were already active in the

³⁵⁵ UCCFA 90: 1: 4. Most of the WMS missionaries were evacuated from the South China mission in 1939 when the region was occupied by Japanese military forces. One person relocated to Macao after the fall of Guangzhou, when the Union Normal School was moved to Macao in 1938. Others went to Hong Kong and tried to enter Free China. They returned to the Jiangmen Mission in 1945. In July 1950 the South China Mission Council was dissolved, mission work was transferred to the Church of Christ in China (the Kwangtung Synod) as the missionaries were forced to leave the country.

³⁵⁶ Victoria Cheung Biographical file, hereafter known as VCBF.

³⁵⁷ Please see photographs of Victoria Cheung in Appendix Three of thesis.

³⁵⁸ *They Came Through: Stories of Chinese Canadians*. Toronto: Literature Dept., Woman's Missionary Society and Committee on Missionary Education, United Church of Canada, undated. This was one of the pamphlets prepared for the "WMS Teen-Age Packet, 1944-45."

Chinese Christian community. Her mother had attended a Christian mission school in Guangzhou and was a practicing Christian throughout her marriage; her father had not been interested in Christianity while living in China, but was among the small, first group of Chinese men baptized in Victoria BC, prior to his wife's arrival in Canada.³⁵⁹

The young Victoria Cheung's links to the Church were reinforced when she became a boarder in the Oriental Mission Home at only five years old. She lived there while attending elementary and high school, as her mother who had been trained as a nurse-midwife in China, resumed her career in Canada and found that her hours were too irregular to ensure satisfactory care of her young daughter. Cheung first expressed her desire to become a China missionary when she was an adolescent and was encouraged in this dream by the matron of the boarding school. The then president of the Presbyterian WMS, who was visiting British Columbia, met with Victoria Cheung and offered to fund her university education. Cheung attended the University of Toronto and earned her medical degree in 1923. In that same year she completed her internship at the Toronto General Hospital and as well, was appointed by the Presbyterian Church to its South China mission as a physician who would treat female patients.³⁶⁰

During her 43 years in China, Victoria Cheung was constantly struggling with the limited resources available in the South China mission field. She initially worked as a physician at the Marion Barclay Hospital, primarily with women and children who sought her help, but soon became involved in other types of work. She was the chief administrator of the women's hospital. As well, she taught at the nursing school, worked at the medical dispensary in Jiangmen, and

³⁵⁹ Eleven men were baptized in 1887 (VCBF).

³⁶⁰ Cheung was the first female intern at the Toronto General Hospital. (VCBF). Please see map of South China mission field in Appendix Three of thesis.

frequently visited patients who did not make their way in to the hospital's out-patient clinics. In 1938 Cheung was elected Vice-Chairman of the South China Mission Council. As other missionaries were evacuated during the Japanese occupation of Jiangmen in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Cheung remained and was named Corresponding Secretary.³⁶¹ Despite Cheung's reticence to accept this position, she complied with the Board's wishes, as she was the only missionary who remained in South China during this period. At this time she was also acting administrator of the men's hospital. Cheung's parents and younger brother had joined her in Jiangmen shortly after her arrival in 1923, and her mother worked with her at the hospital and dispensary throughout the years.³⁶² In 1949 Cheung was once again appointed Corresponding Secretary, when other colleagues had either left or were in the process of leaving Jiangmen.

Victoria Cheung remained at the Jiangmen mission from her arrival in 1923 until her death 43 years later, leaving for brief holidays which she usually spent in Hong Kong, as well as several furloughs.³⁶³ Following her first term (1923-29) she sailed from China to Victoria BC for her furlough, and then spent time in Vancouver, Toronto and New York. During her visit to New York city she represented the Church and her Mission, when she purchased "medical machines" to be sent to South China.³⁶⁴ She once again spent the following term (1930-36) in Jiangmen. During her second furlough (1936-37) she lived in Toronto, and then in England where she studied for three

³⁶¹ T. A. Broadfoot, letter to Chinese friends in Canada, December 28, 1945 (VC 59:15a). Japanese troops occupied the nearby districts of Chung Shaan, Sun Wooi and Hok Shaan for six years, from March 29, 1936 to 1945. The compound at Jiangmen was occupied from December 8, 1941 until October 1945.

³⁶² Cheung's father and brother died in China, however the archives has no record of the dates of their deaths. (VCBF).

³⁶³ Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, April 22, 1940 (VC 59:11).

³⁶⁴ Walter Holt, letter to Ethel Bennet, July 9 1931 (VC 60:25); Walter Holt, letter to Ethel Bennet, July 24, 1931 (VC 60:25); Assistant Treasurer, letter to Walter Holt, July 16, 1931 (VC 6:25). Cheung ordered an "Elliot Machine," which presumably was a diagnostic or treatment tool which would be useful in the South China mission hospitals.

months at The School of Tropical Medicine in London.³⁶⁵ Her third term (1937-47) work changed significantly, as it was during this period that she remained as the only WMS missionary in Jiangmen during the period of Japanese occupation. Her furlough following this term (1947-48) was spent working among Chinese Canadians in British Columbia. She also had the opportunity to attend the Annual Conference on Medical Missions which was held in Washington DC. She arrived back in Jiangmen in September 1948. Many of her colleagues moved from Jiangmen to Hong Kong or Macao when the Communist victory appeared imminent, and although they expected to return to the Jiangmen mission as soon as the new government was installed, they would be unable to do so. The mission was first administered by the local Christian Church board, and then the mission compound buildings and hospitals were taken over by the Communist government. By 1951 Cheung advised the Church in Canada not to contact her in the future; she planned to remain in China to continue working as a medical missionary, but without divulging to authorities that she was a Canadian missionary.³⁶⁶ Records related to Cheung in the United Church Archives state that the WMS agreed, according to Cheung's request, to have no further contact with her "on understanding that if at any future time a relationship is re-established, there be a financial settlement with her on basis of a missy., deducting whatever amt. she has recd. in salary during interval."³⁶⁷

The official minutes of the 1962 Woman's Missionary Society record that Victoria Cheung was in a "unique position" as the only WMS missionary who continued to live and work in China after the Communist takeover. When the WMS Board was advised of her death fifteen years after

³⁶⁵ Undated document, executive minutes (VC 60:25).

³⁶⁶ Undated document (VC 60:25).

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Canadians had last seen her, its members agreed to refer her name "to the Resolutions Committee and included in the 'In Memoriam' listing."³⁶⁸ It had continued, throughout that interval, to recognize the work she was doing as missionary work, and to recognize Victoria Cheung as a representative of the Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada.³⁶⁹

Experiences in China

Victoria Cheung was not a prolific writer. Her periods of significant correspondence with Canada were particularly when she was Corresponding Secretary for the South China mission (1940-41; 1948), and was obliged to write to the Canadian Board on a regular, usually weekly basis. Furthermore, she did not apparently keep a diary, as did many of her colleagues. Nonetheless, in her letters written to Canadian colleagues she describes, frequently with considerable humor, her experiences in Jiangmen. Her colleagues in South China, as well, have made frequent references to Cheung's work in their own letters to Canada, and so it is possible, with the added input from these supporting documents, to piece together many of Cheung's experiences in China. However, even with the aid of these additional records, there is uneven coverage in the reporting of her many years in China. Her correspondence focuses particularly on the period in which she was the Secretary, during years of severe strain on the Jiangmen mission from external sources, first during the Japanese occupation of South China, and subsequently when the Communist victory over the Nationalists appeared imminent. And so despite Cheung's presence in Jiangmen from 1923 to 1966, her personal correspondence offers little evidence of her experiences until 1937. Despite these limitations of the source materials, Victoria Cheung's letters do provide access to many of her experiences in China.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Please see extract of correspondence of Victoria Cheung in Appendix Three of thesis.

Inadequacy of Mission Resources

Victoria Cheung was confronted with problems arising from the unique size and staffing of the South China mission. The problems became conflicts which had serious implications for the future of mission work in China, and so Cheung and her colleagues were pressed to find immediate solutions. Due to the limited funding and size of the South China mission, the foreign hospital staff was particularly overworked, and actually had inadequate time to fulfill its responsibilities. Two crises which occurred in the 1930s had their roots in the inadequate funding, which was a problem emanating from Canada. The "slump in Missionary and Maintenance giving to the Church" was itself a reflection of contemporary economic strains felt by Canadians.³⁷⁰ The first of two major eruptions in the Jiangmen mission occurred in 1933, at which time Cheung offered to resign from China missionary work. The Jiangmen medical missionaries were unable to agree on a resolution to a hospital staffing problem. A hospital at nearby Shiqi had been built by Guangdong businessmen, who had a verbal agreement with the Canadian Church that a foreign physician would always be assigned to their hospital. In 1933 the Marion Barclay Hospital, as well as other mission hospitals were short of staff, and the Canadian missionaries seemed unable to resolve the problem of how to appoint a physician to Shiqi as well.. The evangelical missionary who worked in Shiqi advised his colleagues that he was embarrassed and humiliated each time that he passed the abandoned Shiqi

³⁷⁰ The United Church of Canada archival holdings related to Victoria Cheung are not located together. A chronology of her career can be found in location number 83.058C, box 60, file 25, in a document entitled, Cheung, Miss Victoria, MD Executive Minutes. The pamphlet *They Came Through* describes Cheung's life, and was prepared for a readership of adolescents who would have been interested in the career of this young Canadian woman who became a medical missionary. Location number 83.046C, box 59 contains reports of the occupation of the South China mission; of particular interest are files 6 and 14. Letters written by Cheung can be found in files 9 and 13, and letters from missionary colleagues are in file 25. All of her letters are typewritten. General background of the South China mission is found in UCCFA 80. The documents pertaining to the career of Victoria Cheung are not well chronicled, and are, as evident, spread through many files, and located by cross-referencing details found in all of the above-mentioned sources.

³⁷¹ Nellie Swarbrick, report, March 12, 1973, UCCFA 80.

hospital.³⁷² The local Chinese business community had suffered its own difficulties, and the hospital had temporarily lost local financial support; the Canadian Church had failed for some time to provide a foreign physician. Cheung was so distraught by the situation, as it appeared that she would be unable to provide what she considered adequate medical coverage at the Marion Barclay Hospital, that she offered to resign. In the end, the missionaries were able to find an acceptable compromise, but the conflict, as Cheung was well aware, had potentially devastating implications for medical mission work in Jiangmen.

Once again, three years later, Cheung's work in South China was threatened. Canadian Board evaluators visited the Jiangmen station in order to discuss two inflammatory issues. The first was whether the mission should be closed down or doubled in size. The second, and related, question was whether Chinese Christians (the Church of Christ in China) were ready to assume complete responsibility for the work of the missionaries in that region. None of the options that the evaluators presented appeared promising to Cheung and her colleagues. The evaluators had arrived in China predisposed to recommending complete Canadian missionary withdrawal from the region. However, after interviewing the Canadian missionaries as well as their colleagues from other countries, the evaluators left South China ready to recommend that the Canadian missionaries continue their work. Missionaries working in the region representing other boards had impressed the Canadian visitors with the cooperation among the many small groups, and persuaded them that missionary work in South China would suffer if the United Church withdrew its support.³⁷³ Furthermore, Chinese Christians impressed upon the evaluators that they were not yet ready "to assume responsibility for the whole mission without a foreign staff."³⁷⁴ The South China Christians

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ Isobel Forbes, letter to Dr. Arnup, October 31, 1936. (VC 59:6).

who had strong links to the overseas Chinese community in North America were quite reticent about losing the connection which the missionaries appeared to represent.³⁷⁵

Medical Missionary Activities

Victoria Cheung and her medical colleagues deliberately worked to attract a sizable patient population. They needed to gain the confidence of local people in order to work with them successfully.³⁷⁶ Prior to the Japanese war in China the Marion Barclay Hospital had a fairly steady stream of maternity patients as well as patients attending clinics. In an effort to move out beyond the city perimeter, the hospital purchased an ambulance in the fall of 1937. Cheung and the staff introduced ambulance service very gradually to the rural population. Initially, one of the physicians and a nurse visited patients who were unable to travel into the hospital by themselves; this would have been the first time these rural people had seen an ambulance. Cheung hoped that with time, people outside the city would call the ambulance to pick them up in emergencies, receive immediate attention and be transported into the hospital. However she recognized that this understanding and acceptance of the availability of this medical service would require patience and time.³⁷⁷

Impact of Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)

Victoria Cheung's medical missionary work shifted to refugee work, as she became preoccupied with attempts to accommodate and help the tremendous numbers of evacuees arriving in Jiangmen. The patients she saw in the hospital were no longer local women, as increasing numbers of refugees

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, October 1, 1937 (VC 59:6); Bessie Cairns to Mrs. Taylor, January 8, 1938 (VC 59:7).

fled from Japanese soldiers. This shift was particularly noticeable after Guangzhou fell in 1938, as male patients began requesting treatment at her clinics. By the summer of 1940 Cheung reported, "We have no end of male patients, they're all poor and beggars can't be choosers, so they take us for granted."³⁷⁸ Although Cheung was occupied to a great extent with treating refugees, Jiangmen residents as well seemed to be impressed with her work and her professional behavior. "Our standing with neighbors is very friendly," she reported, "in fact we are afraid we shall be accused of being too friendly. I have a sneaking notion there is a slight respect for female doctors who dare treat males and females alike."³⁷⁹

When the Jiangmen compound became part of a refugee area, Victoria Cheung joined the ranks of foreigners and Chinese involved in the physically exhausting and emotionally draining task of ministering to refugees. All missionary work was upset; the mission school in Jiangmen had sixty-five registered kindergarten students in 1938; however attendance dropped to ten students once the Japanese occupied the area. The school became a temporary refugee camp, and the Bishop of Hong Kong joined a Canadian missionary to negotiate with the Japanese to have their respective compounds (Roman Catholic and United Church of Canada) "recognized by the Japanese as refugee camps."³⁸⁰ The Bishop offered financial support and personnel to act as relief workers to carry on this work.³⁸¹ Cheung as well, joined the missionary contingent which took turns identifying particularly needy refugees. She directed those who required medical care to the hospital, and others to the school where they could spend a night or two before being directed to a

³⁷⁸ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, December 12, 1938 (VC 59:7).

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

larger refugee camp. The women missionaries were warned about "difficult male refugees," some of whom "were hard to manage - just like prisoners."³⁸² Following this warning they decided to house only female refugees, and only "the neediest women."³⁸³ Cheung's colleague Bessie Cairns described the refugees, most of whom were fleeing from recently occupied Guangzhou, and were making their way to Jiangmen Port.

(They) are of three classes. 1. Those who have money and a place to go. 2. Those who have money, but no place to go. 3. Those who have no money and no place to go. But no matter to what class they belong, they have all suffered a good deal on the way. . . . Many come with a destination in view and some are just fleeing - anywhere to get away³⁸⁴

Their travel to Jiangmen had not been without trauma, as Cairns explained their appearance when they arrived. "They come weary, footsore, robbed, ill, young and old, and of course, hungry." Although some could afford to buy food in restaurants, most were unable to do so. Two restaurants had been donating soup to the needy, and the Cheung and her colleagues prepared "great quantities of thick soup . . . in the school kitchen and carried out to those (camping) on the wharf."³⁸⁵ Towards the end of 1938 the wave of Guangzhou refugees subsided.³⁸⁶ Newer arrivals appeared to be less desperate as they had not yet traveled far. Cheung's relief work lessened, as the government no longer allowed the homeless to remain overnight in Jiangmen Port, but redirected them to Jiangmen City.³⁸⁷

Cheung's medical work at the hospital decreased abruptly when Japanese soldiers occupied Jiangmen. She had fewer patients, as most residents of the region were afraid to travel. Japanese

³⁸² Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Loveys, October 29, 1938 (VC 59:7).

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Loveys, November 3, 1938 (VC 59:7).

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

soldiers blocked the roads and confiscated boats from boat people. It seemed to Cheung that the only people who were moving about were Japanese.³⁸⁸ As the situation degenerated during the occupation, Cheung suggested to the Chinese hospital staff that they take a leave of absence, as there was insufficient medical work to warrant a full staff. Certainly, Cheung was able to manage with less help, as her colleague reported.

All our plans are broken. The women's hospital is just open for clinic every day and those who come are from our camp in the schools or from the Catholic Mission. We have had one confinement since occupation and that was a refugee who was staying at the Catholic mission.³⁸⁹

Her colleague continued, explaining the scarcity of patients at the clinic, "For one thing, the wealthier classes have fled and also many middle class people. Others are afraid to travel."³⁹⁰ The number of patients continued to decrease that summer (1939), yet those Chinese who arrived in the Port did require Cheung's help. "The refugees seem to stick in spite of the fact that we have told them of certain possible conditions in the future" reported her colleague once again.

In the hospital we have only four men, four women and four children with one day nurse on the wards. At night we have a ward helper on duty. Our two nurses in charge of Dispensary and laboratory also help on the wards when needed at present.³⁹¹

There was also a refugee committee in the Port which was helping the displaced to return to their homes.³⁹² The refugees who returned to their homes were mostly those able to provide their own food. Many remained in the compound, "living here on rice gruel supplied by the Mission twice a day. A great many of these are children."³⁹³

³⁸⁸ Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, May 23, 1939 (VC 59:8).

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 12, 1939 (VC 59:8).

³⁹² Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 25, 1939 (VC 59:8).

³⁹³ Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, August 14, 1939 (VC 59:8).

Victoria Cheung had never imagined that all her colleagues would be evacuated from South China.³⁹⁴ Despite all the difficulties which the Jiangmen mission had experienced, and the years of warfare between Japanese and Chinese armies, Cheung was shocked when she was left alone at the Jiangmen station. Neither Cheung nor her colleagues understood why the Canadians had actually been evacuated. Certainly, the Japanese occupation troops had become increasingly hostile towards missionaries, and Cheung's co-workers had made plans to take their holidays outside China, or temporarily leave South China for safer areas. The missionaries required exit permits to leave, and so the British Consulate had acted on behalf of the departing missionaries to secure the required documents. Cheung's colleague explained the events leading up to the unintended evacuation.

In October (1939) we began getting letters from the British Consul with the result that Mrs. MacRae, Miss Cairns and I (Rae Isaac) have now been evacuated. The Consul sent a representative to Kongmoon to assist us in getting to Canton. We brought all our baggage as for furlough.³⁹⁵

It seemed however, that they were evacuated,

not because of any pressure by the Japanese but it started I think in an effort to get us out for a holiday and then when he, the Consul, had begun negotiations with the Japanese, he did not want to stop, although things seemed to be loosening up a bit in our district and we did not see any need for evacuating.³⁹⁶

Cheung and three missionaries were left to continue the work of the entire contingent of missionaries who had gone. Cheung felt able to carry on, as a "a number of Chinese staff" remained at the hospital.³⁹⁷ However, she was less confident in guessing when her colleagues would

³⁹⁴ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 30, 1940 (VC 59:9).

³⁹⁵ The three women left Jiangmen on Sunday November 19 1939 and traveled via Guangdong to Hong Kong. Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, November 28, 1939 (VC 59:8).

³⁹⁶ Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, November 28, 1939 (VC 59:8).

³⁹⁷ Unsigned letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 8, 1940 (VC 59:8).

be able to return, as they had signed statements that they would not try to reenter China until the Japanese gave them permission to do so.³⁹⁸

Victoria Cheung took on a huge range of new responsibilities during this occupation period, as she became foster mother to the many refugee children for whom the hospital became their home. Although some patients were admitted until their health improved, and then returned to their families, others remained in the hospital for longer periods of time. Cheung explained,

The children left here are not orphans in the true sense of the word only left with us because of lack of food at home. Most of them are admitted seriously ill besides being starved. There are 4 boys now 15 - 16; they do not want to go home; so are working hard so that we will keep them on and give them 3 decent meals a day; one 5 year old, her only fear too is that we will send her home.³⁹⁹

The hospital compound became a home to pigs and goats as well as children, all living together in one big, noisy "family."⁴⁰⁰ Cheung surprised herself at her adeptness in finding ways to care for these children, however some colleagues were disturbed and unhappy with their newfound roles. Cheung reported,

I was late yesterday morning and their (the children in residence) 'singing' bothered the evangelist . . . Will your budget allow us to get earplugs? Hospital was bedlam during Christmas, with t chatter, chatter of their voices and clatter, clatter of their clogs.⁴⁰¹

Her success with their patients was varied, as she advised, "One of the babies is showing her first tooth. The other one is only holding her own - she has not had the advantage of fresh goat's milk."⁴⁰² By the summer of 1940 Cheung had created an environment which accommodated their

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁰⁰ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, January 15, 1941 (VC 60:25).

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, January 15, 1941 (VC 60:25).

varied needs; children cared for animals, animals and gardens supplied the needed nourishment, and Cheung herself seemingly felt content with their co-existence.

The patients all have their duties and the children likewise, from tying on bibs to feeding the young ones, minding the gate and the goats (latest addition - for milk but when?). The goats and our human kids were having a wonderful time in Ronald's playgrounds today, sheltering in the sand-box during the rain, they had grass in the box to keep the goats contented too.⁴⁰³

The following spring the compound residents were still sharing the workload. "The 2 year olds were so happy this morning 'helping' to carry in wood, and the 4,5 and 6's were shining up the slide, but the 8 year olds weren't quite so gay, for the goats they were tending would wander off to where they're not supposed to be."⁴⁰⁴ Cheung found that one little boy, who had lived with her for two years, was rather challenging. She advised that

. . . he may yet turn out to be a naturalist of sorts. He's always busy catching fish, snails and frogs for his glass bowl; I've just been told he has so many crickets in his cupboard his clothes are getting bitten to bits. He'll start off to school with wooden sandals, leave them under a palm leaf nearby and then expect to find them still there on dismissal from school. He certainly is the world's best loser, hats, umbrellas, hymn books, bibles etc. etc.⁴⁰⁵

The following summer, 1941 Victoria Cheung and the hospital children continued to do well.

Cheung reported that,

The Hospital children are thriving beautifully on cracked wheat, there are 40 of them. This is the season for boils; fortunately their skin is a little tougher than the material with which their clothes are made. They are forever finding holes in their clothes, into which "pockets" they poke first their fingers, then stuff their whole hands! They'd soon have pouches like the kangaroos, if their scars could stretch like the tears in their clothes!⁴⁰⁶

Victoria Cheung had to become increasingly creative in finding food and supplies for the hospital as the Japanese occupation continued. She welcomed the help offered by missionaries from other

⁴⁰³ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁰⁴ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, April 26, 1941 (VC 60:25).

⁴⁰⁵ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁰⁶ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, August 9, 1941 (VC 60:25).107

stations; the Maryknoll missionaries helped by supplying food particularly when market prices were erratic. "Maryknoll Mission brought us back 250 bags of cracked wheat, which is a great help; they got 200 bags; they have over 100 in their rice line every morning."⁴⁰⁷ She had also been given twenty "leghorn eggs" by the "R.C. Sisters." Although Cheung managed to hatch fourteen, she advised, ". . . they are most difficult beggars to raise."⁴⁰⁸ As the war dragged on, Cheung remained uncertain whether patients would require hospital services, and further, whether the patients would be able to pay for any of the services which they might require. Although the hospital had a large number of admissions, she was concerned that the upkeep would be higher the following year. The inflationary economy and food shortages had created serious problems, as she reported, "There was a stampede in the rice line at the Benevolent Society in the city the other day; a couple of men ran off with the bags of rice; two children were trampled to death, several others were seriously wounded."⁴⁰⁹ Cheung advised in May 1940 of the financial constraints on the hospital,

. . . the hospital needs every cent it can lay hands on. Prices are soaring sky high, quality diving to third rate and lower; and you're fortunate to be able to get things. Price of rice has jumped from \$85.00 yesterday to \$100.00 today! Money market has gone to pieces.⁴¹⁰

Only two months later, Cheung was able to report, ". . . we've got the cash now, but where are we to get the rice, which by the way is \$70.00 and only \$5.00 allowed each buyer, I'm told. We're

⁴⁰⁷ Dr. Arnup, letter to E. Hibbard, June 3, 1942 (VC 59:13). The Maryknoll missionaries would be treated very harshly first by the Japanese occupation soldiers and then the Communist army. T. A. Broadfoot, June 2, 1942 (VC 59:13); Bessie Cairns, January 9, 1951 (VC 59:15b). T. A. Broadfoot advised that the Maryknoll Mission had suffered far more than the Canadian mission. "Everything has been looted - libraries, valuable books have been sold on the streets to light fires. There is apparently no one in charge of their compound, so that now the Chinese bad characters are beginning to carry off their doors and windows etc." T. A. Broadfoot, June 2, 1942 (VC 59:13). Bessie Cairns reported that "all Roman Catholics in the port had their houses searched a number of times (by the Communists), as had the people of the Maryknoll Mission. . ." Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 16, 1951 (VC 59:15b).

⁴⁰⁸ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, May 7, 1940 (VC 60:25). Cheung is probably referring again to the Maryknoll Sisters.

⁴⁰⁹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, May 6, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴¹⁰ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, May 7, 1940 (VC 60:25).

140 strong at meal time and a picule only goes part of the day!"⁴¹¹ In January 1941 she advised Canadians that she would probably have to request extra subsidies, as the number of charity patients would probably remain steady the following year. Despite plans to raise ward rates, the extra money would only cover food expenditures. ". . . .50 per day barely pays for one meal, so that we were losing .50 per day on those who were supposedly paying."⁴¹² By this time she was the only foreign missionary remaining at the hospital, but was receiving some mail from colleagues. Miss Cairns, a missionary who had been evacuated to Macao advised Cheung that they were unable to "get eggs" there, and so were eating a lot of bacon and bread for breakfast.⁴¹³ Cheung compared this to the situation in Jiangmen, and advised,

Fortunately we have our own hens, but we haven't learned how to make your kind of bacon yet (the Canadian variety), though the Sisters have treated us to home-made smoked pork, which was good. I've had ample opportunity of learning how to raise pigs, my office overlooks the private wards which are now harboring our pigs; if worse comes to worse, I'm going to the country to raise pigs, but you will have to return my retirement fund first for capital, and I'll invite you to a bacon and egg breakfast!⁴¹⁴

Cheung's growing expertise in non-medical matters became evident, as she advised,

Our piggies are good and round, the ducks are lengthening out, the chickens are still fluffy and pretty while the kittens are becoming quite useful as well as ornamental, for there are plenty of mice around. . . . The girls are interested in baking, they make good bread and cookies and are anxious to try cakes and pies and want ME to coach them, same tall order as the evangelist gave me last week 7 new hymns, one for each morning! We get through.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹¹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴¹² Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 17, 1941 (VC 59:10).

⁴¹³ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, May 7, 1940 (VC 60:25).

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*

It was inevitable that Cheung would be asked to become Corresponding Secretary when all other missionaries had been evacuated, however at the time she was surprised and somewhat reluctant to take on this new assignment. She felt ill-equipped to handle the work efficiently, somewhat insecure about her communication abilities, and generally awed by the work. Despite the history she had built over the previous twenty-seven years in the field, as a physician and administrator, she advised the Canadian board of her misgivings. "This business of having an honor thrust upon one without preparation of any sort and without constant personal guidance, overwhelms me."⁴¹⁶ She felt somewhat self-conscious even after beginning her new obligation, and ended her letter of July 10, 1940 defensively, "Probably longwindedness is a sign of inefficiency and need for change, but I still prefer to stay here."⁴¹⁷

Victoria Cheung found her activities increasingly restricted by Japanese military as the occupation continued into 1941. The occupation army was less tolerant of missionary activity, and Cheung was appalled that it had inhibited the refugee work of the Maryknoll Sisters.

Maryknoll Mission has been ordered to stop their rice line; - these feeble hobbling old women might be harboring undesirable elements; then they were asked to co-operate in keeping the port free from cholera which we hear is spreading more rapidly than one wishes. . . Only certain roads and waterways are open to traffic; a game of hide and seek is on.⁴¹⁸

Cheung's life in the compound remained at least temporarily safe and peaceful. This was in stark contrast to the conditions not far away, as she reported, ". . . we are reminded each moment of the day and night, by sight and hearing, just how fortunate we are."⁴¹⁹ Cheung wrote this in August,

⁴¹⁶ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 30, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴¹⁷ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴¹⁸ Irene Moore, letter to Mrs. Taylor, August 12, 1941 (VC 11:59).

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

1941; only one month later, she was advised by the Japanese not to remove anything from the mission compound without permission. By mid-December of that year, Cheung was the only person not expelled from the South China mission.⁴²⁰

Victoria Cheung decided to conceal her Canadian citizenship from the Japanese military so that she could continue her medical work in Jiangmen. The Japanese apparently recognized her as a "Chinese subject," and did not order her to evacuate to Macao with the small contingent of remaining missionaries. She watched the last of her colleagues depart, taking with them only their belongings which they could carry. Cheung and her Chinese colleagues were ordered to leave the compound, which was then taken over by Japanese soldiers. Although the soldiers seized many of the hospital supplies, including the ambulance, drugs, medical equipment and even the Red Cross hospital food, Cheung and several colleagues managed to open a dispensary nearby. Cheung, her mother and a Chinese physician shared accommodations in Jiangmen, and almost immediately began offering medical care to the residents once again.⁴²¹

Impact of Communist Victory (1949-1951)

Victoria Cheung found it difficult to believe that missionary work was once again threatened by yet another war, almost coincidentally as her colleagues returned from their evacuation. They had barely reestablished themselves as a community, offering a variety of missionary services, when she advised Canadians that their work was again threatened. Most of her colleagues had returned to work in the summer of 1945. By the fall, Cheung was reunited with all those who had been evacuated. She was again seeing more patients in the hospital clinics, as it was safe for Chinese

⁴²⁰ Dr. Arnup, letter to E. Hibbard, June 3, 1942 (VC 59:13).

⁴²¹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, October 9, 1941 (VC 59:10).

residents to travel. Boats were scheduled between Hong Kong and Guangzhou, and between Guangzhou and Jiangmen. By October 1945, Cheung reported that the mission school had a remarkable enrollment of 600 students. Victoria Cheung and her colleagues were able to work together for almost four years, however by 1949 Cheung again found herself almost alone, as many of her colleagues left for Hong Kong. Those who departed had decided to wait outside China, for signs of political stability, as the new Communist government established itself. Victoria Cheung apparently had some concerns about her own safety, as she once again asked Canadians to hold her salary in Toronto, and to be cautious when contacting her. Contrary to her colleagues' expectations, the Chinese political and military situation appeared, from Hong Kong, to be "rapidly deteriorating," and they reported a growing concern that there would be little opportunity "of carrying on Christian work under a changed government." Yet Victoria Cheung found that life in Jiangmen was not particularly alarming. Although the Communists were approaching Guangdong, they did not arrive until the middle of October 1949. In July 1949 she advised Canadians, ". . . All's quiet here; the floods have kept away most patients. The rice crop is being harvested, though it is not quite ready; in a few more days of this flood, it will begin to sprout on the stalks so that none can be saved then."⁴²² The following fall, she reported that she continued to feel relatively safe.

Schools have reopened and pupils are flocking back less fearsomely. They had a 3 day holiday for National Day - Oct. 1 which was welcomed by all. Typhoon Day was better for the hospital, hardly any patients came during the morning!⁴²³

The takeover of the Jiangmen mission hospital in 1949 by the new Communist regime affected Cheung's relationships with her co-workers. She had been appointed superintendent of the hospital

⁴²² Irene Moore, letter to Mrs. Taylor, August 12, 1941 (VC 59:11).

⁴²³ Bessie Cairns, January 9, 1951 (VC 59:15b).

when the former superintendent, who was the last missionary to secure an exit permit, stepped down. Hospital staff who had worked with Cheung before the take-over remained "loyal" to her, while new staff members formed their own clique. Cheung and her Chinese colleague, Dr. Wong were not invited to join the newly established labor union, nor were the staff members who were viewed as her supporters invited to join.⁴²⁴ Cheung, who was not considered a Westerner, was not subject to the new "criticism meetings," which targeted imperialists,- initially only Americans, but fairly quickly included British subjects and sympathizers as well.⁴²⁵

Victoria Cheung took active measures to ensure that her former colleagues did not reveal her identity as a Canadian missionary when writing to her. She sent a messenger to Macao with verbal directions for her friends and colleagues. Cheung was eager to receive news from them, but underlined that they must conceal knowledge of her missionary identity, or British citizenship. The last missionaries, among them Dr. McClure, the former hospital superintendent, had experienced a difficult time leaving Jiangmen, although it was clear to all concerned that there was no work left for them to do after the hospital was seized. Cheung's colleague, Bessie Cairns, recounted her visit from Cheung's messenger, in January 1951.

Once more Fear walks abroad in China. Last night as I listened to X (her informant) talking I was taken right back to October 1945 - sitting on a verandah at Kong Moon - the same person - the same whisper, at times almost too low to hear - the same furtive glances over the shoulder. We who have never known that fear cannot realize - But I have come to know it - not for myself - we have a kind of courage that is the heritage of people of free nations - but I have come to have that fear for others. It checks the careless word, the repetition of anything heard about anything . . .⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

The messenger from Jiangmen reported, once again that Cheung did not want any salary sent to her. "She wants to cut herself off from connection with the foreign Board," advised Cairns.

"Cut off" he said in English so she may have used the English words to him. I did not understand whether she meant that she wished to resign from her position as a missionary, making it a permanent cut, although I questioned him a little . . . He did not use the Chinese expression "resign" at all, only the English "cut off." And each time he said it he demonstrated the cutting off with his hand.⁴²⁷

Cheung and her colleagues maintained minimal contact through "friendly letters," as Cheung had asked Mr. Lee (X) to relay that this was the only communication which she should receive. Dr. McClure, who had been the last missionary to leave Jiangmen advised Cairns that Cheung

does not want to resign, but is at present afraid of what the acknowledgment of receiving salary from abroad might mean. She asks that salary should not even be placed to her credit in a home bank. Should she be questioned, as she will be, she wants to be in a position where she can say that she is not receiving salary from a foreign source . . . It is impossible to communicate with her.⁴²⁸

Impressions of China

In her correspondence, Victoria Cheung describes her interpretations of China as well as her specific experiences in China. As Cheung wrote to Canadians almost exclusively during the war periods, the Sino-Japanese war and to a lesser extent, during the Civil War, her impressions are limited to these time periods. In this section, Victoria Cheung's impressions of China are discussed thematically. She reflected about the implications of the proximity of Hong Kong to the South China mission and about the strong bonds between the overseas Chinese community and Chinese in Jiangmen. This section then moves from her understanding of the uniqueness of the Jiangmen mission, to her interpretation of the significance of the Sino-Japanese War, first to the missionaries (as distinct from the local population), and then to the Chinese. Despite Cheung's presence in

⁴²⁷ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 16, 1951 (VC 59:15b).

⁴²⁸ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, March 27, 1951 (VC 59:15b).

South China throughout this heightened period of political and military volatility, she did not discuss Chinese politics or power struggles. She was particularly concerned with the challenges impressed upon the Chinese people, and so this section concludes with her impressions of Chinese during the war years.

Jiangmen Christians and Overseas Chinese

It appeared to Victoria Cheung that her work as a Canadian medical missionary was compromised to some extent by the established three-way relationship between the Jiangmen Christian community, the overseas Chinese community in Canada, and the United Church. The interaction in Jiangmen between the missionaries and the local Christians was flavored by the usually subtle connections which had developed over many years. The Canadian community of overseas Chinese, which was centered primarily in Montreal during this period, had been central in urging the United Church to establish a mission in its homeland. The second generation of Canadian women missionaries, to which Cheung belonged, felt the burden of answering to these established and multi-layered commitments, particularly when stressed by inadequate funding and limited foreign medical missionary staff. Certainly Cheung's frustration at the ambiguities and responsibilities thrust upon her, in trying to fulfill her own responsibilities as physician-in-chief of the Marion Barclay Hospital reached a crisis when she offered to tender her resignation in 1933. Cheung and her colleagues felt the burden of fulfilling Church commitments to the Chinese Canadians, of bringing their skills and knowledge to the Chinese of Jiangmen, and of following the guidelines of the Canadian board.

Proximity of the Hong Kong to South China

Victoria Cheung recognized that the proximity of Hong Kong, a quasi-foreign metropolis, altered the lives and expectations of the South China missionaries in an undefined way. The women tended to take for granted how close they were to British shopping and influence; they easily left China for Hong Kong, to enjoy a brief respite from work, to catch up on shopping or to meet friends. Hong Kong seemed to be an extension of their mission field which was not part of China. Cheung reflected on the impact of Hong Kong upon the missionaries. "We are beginning to feel - Hongkong complex." They were accustomed to doing their Christmas shopping there, and only when it was impossible to do so in 1940, did they celebrate a more "traditional" and less consumer-oriented holiday. ". . . the road to Hongkong is long and bound by red tape," she advised. Travel was limited and conditions uncertain. The missionaries and the Chinese who were living with them had "an old-time Christmas, with its reds and greens and useful home-made gifts, for there were no shops to entice our spending. . . ."⁴²⁹ The festive season was helped along as there was less overt tension, despite the travel restrictions. She reported,

. . . Christmas day was wet and cold, but everyone was too happy to notice it. The program was a varied one; the first half being religious and the last half comical . . . The kindergarten was filled to overflowing; the atmosphere was one of happiness and of enjoyment, free from tension as compared with that of last year.⁴³⁰

Despite the shortage of crude oil which supplied the electric plant,- they suspected they had only one months supply remaining, they still felt some relief from the fear of the year before. "We are slowly returning to the days of 10, 20, and even 30 years ago, but with this exception, in those days human beings were as free as the air they breathed."⁴³¹ Travel to Hong Kong, Kowloon and

⁴²⁹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, December 26, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

Macao was restricted.⁴³² In the new year Dr. Broadfoot awaited a permit to go to Hong Kong “for business,” which he finally received a month later. Once in Hong Kong, he had to wait more than three weeks in Guangzhou for a permit to return to Jiangmen.⁴³³ So, although he was able to purchase some oil in order to keep the plant running for another month, “at about 300% rise in price,” was unable to bring it to the compound until March. However, the compound inhabitants would have to wait until he was issued an entry permit before he was able to bring the oil, and the compound was without heat.

It has been raining steadily for a month; the sun tries hard to shine and then everything gets wringing wet. The cement floors become so slippery, the children look as if they were having skating lessons . . . we have not a speck of heat in the hospital, and their little hands and feet were like so many lumps of ice. The temperature went down to 48F; ave around 58 with an occasional high.⁴³⁴

Missionary life in South China

Cheung recognized that the mission compound provided some sense of insularity from ongoing military activities. She described this feeling of distance from the outside world, and the surreal quality in the weeks immediately after being appointed Corresponding Secretary, when most of her Canadian colleagues had left. “There is very little excitement around here except that the bottom has fallen out of the money market and the prices continue to soar. It is so serenely peaceful within the compound, that it is hard to believe it is not so, elsewhere.”⁴³⁵ Cheung reported in March 1941, “All appears normal on the surface.”⁴³⁶ Yet despite this sense of safety within the compound, she sought the presence of a foreign male. The compound at Jiangmen “seems to be the most peaceful

⁴³² Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, March 10, 1941 (VC 59:10).

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁴ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, March 10, 1941 (VC 59:10).

⁴³⁵ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 30, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴³⁶ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, March 10, 1941 (VC 59:10).

and safest spot after all," she advised in July 1940. "of course as long as male members of the mission are on the scene; that is why I have been urging the return of the male doctors as soon as possible both for the sake of the hospitals and the mission as a whole."⁴³⁷ As her concerns for safety increased, she advised the Canadian board. "Our executive met last night - Dr. and Mrs. Broadfoot expressed desire to stay on the field till absolutely forbidden to do so; I will stay on as long as there is a foreign man on the premises."⁴³⁸ She later of course changed her mind; when all the foreigners left the Jiangmen district, she and her mother remained there, together with her Chinese colleagues.

Missionaries and the Japanese Occupation

Victoria Cheung and her Canadian, British and American colleagues seemed to be quite safe from Japanese attack, at least during the early years of warfare. Cheung and her fellow missionaries felt almost carefree as they painted large British flags on the roofs of their buildings to identify their possessions to Japanese pilots. It was generally agreed that the Japanese had issued tacit permission for them to remain at work in South China, despite the Japanese mounting military aggression towards Chinese. "We are having the Union Jack (10 by 15 feet in size) painted on each of our school buildings, on each hospital building and on the nurses home," advised Cheung's colleague Bessie Cairns.⁴³⁹ They later joined the residents and covered their "light colored houses with gray," until the port appeared "almost uniformly battle ship gray in color."⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴³⁸ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, November 26, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴³⁹ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, September 13, 1937 (VC 59:6); Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, September 27, 1937 (VC 59:6).

⁴⁴⁰ The Americans were asked by Japanese authorities to identify their buildings with flags on their roofs as well. Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, October 8, 1937 (VC 59:6).

As the military activities heightened, alarms sounded intermittently and aircraft passed overhead throughout each day, Cheung and her colleagues became immune from acute fears of bombings. At 12 I was in my study," advised Bessie Cairns,

studying with the language teacher when the lone plane returned, and I was told by an observer, passed over my house, out to the river in front of the hospitals, away along the river, back to the station where it circled around, then over the schools. At it got to the former Kai Tak it suddenly dropped so low, that Mr. Broadfoot, who happened to look out, gasped, I believe. Flying very low, it went over the schools, then away. So they had a good look at the flags on the roofs. When I heard it going over my head, apparently just grazing the chimneys, I felt that my roof was very thin. The rumor was that the station was to be bombed yesterday, but it has not been as yet. The people who live on the street near the station have all moved away.⁴⁴¹

When Cheung and her staff left the "safety" of their mission compound, they too became targets for aircraft attack. Dr. Tsang, a female physician at the Marion Barclay Hospital, together with a ward helper and driver traveled to the nearby San Wooi clinic in the hospital ambulance. They were strafed by one bomb which was probably trying to attack the railway line which ran alongside the road on which they traveled. The little group ran from the ambulance, but Dr. Tsang's dress was "pierced by a flying object," and the ambulance suffered some minor damage.⁴⁴²

Chinese Society and Years of War

Victoria Cheung's pervasive impression throughout the years of war was one of uncertainty for all Chinese. With increasing clarity, Cheung recognized that the Chinese population was unable to plan for its future, as any plans would be altered by events which could not be controlled. Political and economic uncertainties, together with the impact of Japanese war and occupation, meant that the only certainty for Chinese was that everything they experienced was indefinite.⁴⁴³ Cheung felt

⁴⁴¹ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, October 1, 1937 (VC 59:6).

⁴⁴² Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, December 27, 1937 (VC 59:6).

that any comments she could make regarding military activity or political struggles would be almost meaningless, as she had inadequate information at her disposal. "As for work elsewhere (beyond Kongmoon Port)" she advised, "we are entirely in the dark. Those passing through Toronto will be of more help to you in this regard."⁴⁴³ One result of the occupation of Guangzhou was that the Jiangmen missionaries received very fragmented information about military events. Boats which supplied them with newspapers arrived infrequently, and the missionaries relied on reports from refugees. "Newspaper details, however, which you would have had (in Canada) on Thursday or Friday, we did not get until Sunday. The last newspaper before that was printed Wednesday morning," advised Cheung's colleague, Bessie Cairns, in 1937.⁴⁴⁵ This lack of news and communication with Chinese beyond the immediate region continued, as Cheung noted, for three more years. Only in 1941, did she advise that she expected to have more access to news. "Rumors are that communications were to have opened yesterday between Canton and the outside world," she advised, and continued, "I hope it is true. It has taken 10 - 20 days for a letter from Hongkong and a week to 10 days from Canton! in this age of speed."⁴⁴⁶ Of course, communications between the field and Canada were affected as well, and had been delayed over the past year. She was concerned that she must begin working on her annual report and estimates for the forthcoming year, "or they'll be as late as last year's. Communications have not speeded up any yet."⁴⁴⁷ It was difficult to know what was going on beyond her rather limited world of the mission and Jiangmen Port. "The tension here is variable and we are not aware of any at the moment," she advised in November 1940, although by this time the missionaries were limited in

⁴⁴³ Rae Isaac, letter to Mrs. Taylor, May 23, 1939 (VC 59:8).

⁴⁴⁴ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, August 3, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁴⁵ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, September 27, 1937 (VC 59:6).

⁴⁴⁶ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, November 26, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁴⁷ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, December 26, 1940 (VC 59:9).

their travel, as Japanese authorities would not allow them to take a visitor sightseeing, or go into the city to purchase needed supplies.⁴⁴⁸ Cheung also assured Canadians that they were quite safe, and that they planned to remain in the field.⁴⁴⁹

It was apparent to Victoria Cheung that while she felt quite secure within the mission compound, the local residents and refugees were not safe at all. In 1937 and 1938, the early years of fighting, the Jiangmen Chinese believed that the targets of the Japanese planes were the railway stations. In December 1937 two planes "followed the train along the track from the other side of San Wooi on towards Toi Shan, which is nearly the end of the line. It was the early morning train from here," reported Cairns.

On the other side of San Wooi, the two planes were sighted, and most of the people on the train hurried into a shelter of bamboo trees not far from the track. The bomb, instead of hitting the train, fell into the bamboos. It was very sad. A man and his wife, who were among the killed, had been traveling here and there for sixty days trying to find a place which would seem safe.⁴⁵⁰

The planes returned once again that same day. The people in the city were frightened, not knowing that the planes had "already dropped their bombs." Many local people were seeking shelter in the mission schools.⁴⁵¹ However by the spring of 1940 Cheung was worried about the survival of the Chinese. "The middle classes have spent their all and have had to return; the poor are more helpless than ever. They are worn out from lack of food; they are so ill, one wonders whether even hospitalization will be of any use."⁴⁵² The price of food had soared by that time beyond the reach of many people, and seemed to keep on climbing without restraint. "Rice is \$85.00 N.C. (new

⁴⁴⁸ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, November 26, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁴⁹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁵⁰ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, December 20, 1937 (VC 59:6).

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, May 6, 1940 (VC 59:9).

currency) a picule as compared to \$10.00 of normal times, and sweet potato, \$13.00 - \$15.00 the picule."⁴⁵³

It was clear to Cheung that the most impoverished among the Chinese appeared to have suffered the most, as a group or class, by the devastating effects of the war. Patients who were able to pay for their medical services decreased in numbers during the war years, although the overall patient count remained quite high. Cheung explained that those who were among "the poorer refugees" made use of the hospital services. This was to a great extent because the wealthier refugees had greater opportunity to move out of the path of Japanese aggression "than their poorer countrymen."⁴⁵⁴ They were the victims of devastating inflation and yet the farmers were unable to properly care for their crops, and so the problems of food shortage were further exacerbated. As the Japanese tightened their control over the district, Cheung advised, "Price of rice still rises even in the midst of a crop of plenty."⁴⁵⁵ She explained that the farmers were unable to harvest their crops, as "Men were required for the building of roads, and the rice was left to sprout as it stood or whilst being harvested in the rain."⁴⁵⁶ Contributing further to the social dislocation and victimization of particularly the impoverished, was the unchecked inflation, which despite efforts, the Nationalist government was unable to halt. Currency had been unstable and devalued for many years.⁴⁵⁷ In April 1941 Cheung advised once again of recurrent inflation, "The bottom seems to be falling out of the currency again. \$1.00 H.K. - \$4.90 N.C. \$1.00 Mil. note - \$3.30 Rice is 14 oz.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁴ Bessie Cairns to Mrs. Loveys, October 29, 1938 (59:7).

⁴⁵⁵ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, August 9, 1941 (VC 60:25).

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, June 26, 1937 (VC 59:6).

for \$1.00.⁴⁵⁸ She understood that the Chinese people had no choice but to make many concessions to remain alive. When she treated male patients, she recognized that although they would not have wanted to blur the lines between appropriate gendered behavior, circumstances forced them to do so. Their sense of propriety and respect for tradition was drained as the war continued. And as she clearly surmised, those who came to her were among the poorest, and the poorer they were, the fewer resources they had to muster to help themselves, the less they could protest the offer of help from a female physician.

Perspectives on Victoria Cheung

It is unfortunate that Victoria Cheung neither kept a diary, nor wrote more extensively to Canadian friends. Despite her admitted self-consciousness when sending off news from South China to Canada, Cheung thoughtfully recorded occurrences which she considered noteworthy. Her correspondence is, of course, most fruitful during her periods of regular reporting, most particularly when her colleagues were evacuated towards the end of the Sino-Japanese War. Her commitment to record diligently at this time enables the reader of her personal writings to embrace the China in which she lived and worked. It is useful however, to supplement Cheung's letters with correspondence written by her colleagues in which Victoria Cheung is discussed. These documents serve as a helpful supplement to Cheung's own documents.

A question which inevitably emerges is why Victoria Cheung chose to remain in China in 1949, although all of her colleagues had eventually departed. It would seem that the dissolution of the Mission Council the following year added to her isolation and dislocation in Jiangmen. Did she have any clear indication that an era of missionary work in China had ended? Cheung's

⁴⁵⁸ Victoria Cheung, letter to Myrtle Buck, April 26, 1941 (VC 60:25).

correspondence offers little help in finding answers to these questions. A colleague described the heroism of Victoria Cheung; he was impressed that Cheung remained in China despite the threat of personal danger under the new Communist regime.⁴⁵⁹ Many years earlier, Cheung had offered to tender her resignation during the Shiqi hospital crisis; she appeared willing to leave her work in China, at least during this particular conflict. Yet Cheung chose to remain in China when her colleagues left during the Japanese occupation of South China. Perhaps then, the Communist regime's acquisition of the mission property did not immediately signal the end of missionary work to Cheung. She had little information regarding the political power struggle in China; her insight into the political future of China may have been similarly limited. Canadians had evacuated the mission in the past, yet had eventually returned to continue their work. It is only possible to speculate whether she believed that missionary work would continue, or whether, possibly, she had decided to remain in China under the new regime.

Victoria Cheung's experiences reveal a flexible and pragmatic woman. This flexibility is particularly evident in the years of war and occupation by Japanese military. Cheung moved beyond her medical practice in the Woman's Hospital to minister to the refugees and become a surrogate parent to the children in the hospital. She even became quite proficient at raising animals. She acted as Corresponding Secretary for the mission, despite her reticence and self-consciousness, and had no qualms about caring for male patients. She was willing and able to accept the seemingly constantly changing circumstances in which she worked. When the Japanese pushed into Jiangmen, she carried on her work "under their supervision." When she was forced out of the mission compound, Cheung and her coterie of helpers (a Chinese physician, lab technician, nurses and her mother) shifted course and were once again able to care for the sick, and as well were

⁴⁵⁹ Bessie Cairns, letter to Mrs. Taylor, January 16, 1951 (VC 59:15b).

financially self-supporting. She responded to events with her own brand of pragmatism working to the best of her ability with whatever group was in power. This was most evident when the Communist government took control, and she continued to work in the hospital, and moved from the mission compound when it was seized by the new authorities.

In her correspondence, Victoria Cheung reveals a complexity of relationships among those involved in mission work. She describes the sometimes difficult relationship between the Home Board and the China missionaries. Despite all the correspondence exchanged between missionaries and the Canadians, all the reports and letters written and received, when delegates visited the South China mission station in order to evaluate the work being done there, they left with completely different impressions and resolutions for the future than they had expected when they arrived. Furthermore, the on-site missionaries had diverse opinions about the work in which they were involved; the local community was also a heterogeneous community, and the members of the Home Board were individuals each with a unique understanding of mission work. Among the membership of the local Christian community were wealthy and poor Chinese, business people who had strong ties to the overseas community and people who lived near the mission compound. A rather complex community of individuals committed to working with diverse Chinese emerges from Cheung's letters. In Jiangmen, particularly because of the threat of closing down the mission, an adversarial relationship between the Canadian board and the China missionaries bubbled just beneath the surface. Nonetheless, Cheung's letters and reports are never placating or defensive of the work in Jiangmen, but rather range from businesslike to humorous.

Victoria Cheung's recording of gender-related issues is so difficult to understand, that it may in fact reveal her ambivalence about these issues. She comments fairly extensively (given the paucity

of her correspondence) upon the roles of male and female physicians and staff at the hospital. She transmits this ambivalence to the Canadian Board as, on one hand she asks them for "the speedy return of a male missionary," yet advises colleagues that she is working well without any male interference. When describing the horror of the stampede in the "rice line" which caused the deaths of two children, she writes, "The above are only some of my own reasons for begging the early return of a male member of the mission."⁴⁶⁰ Did she mean that women appeared less approachable or stronger in the presence of a foreign male colleague? She then comments, "We are busy but not any more so than if the male Dr. were here; In fact we feel less encumbered."⁴⁶¹ She explains that the salary being saved on a (presumably foreign) male physician was being better used by employing young girls, "green though they may be."⁴⁶² And among her most ambiguous comments is, "The real fact is there is absolutely only one in command; things are done in only one way - regular imperialism or is it dictatorship? We have no end of male patients, they're all poor and beggars can't be choosers, so they take us for granted."⁴⁶³ This murkiness regarding her views of the importance of a foreign male presence in the mission compound continues, when Cheung advises of the apparently peaceful quality in which they were living in July 1940, but then continues, "of course as long as male members of the mission are on the scene; that is why I have been urging the return of male doctors as soon as possible both for the sake of the hospitals and the mission as a whole."⁴⁶⁴ Her letters are not written with adequate regularity to unravel Cheung's intended meaning with any certainty. The immediate context in which she is writing is at times not evident; she fails to expand on her abbreviated comments, and so we are left with a feeling that she

⁴⁶⁰ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, May 6, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁶¹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, July 10, 1940 (VC 59:9).

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

may be ambivalent about the presence of male colleagues. Were the women able to carry on as well, if not better on their own, yet needed a foreign male for protection? Or did some of the Chinese or foreign patients require a male consultation?

Victoria Cheung's letters reveal the victimization of the Chinese people, particularly during the Japanese war and years of occupation. Further, she suggests that the extent of victimization was determined by social class. The poorer Chinese had less possibility of escaping the bombs and peril which threatened the population. The poorer Chinese were those who could not uphold their societal traditions; poor men and beggars were treated by the female Dr. Cheung. Children of poverty were admitted to the hospital suffering from malnutrition and starvation. The wealthier of the refugees were able to buy food in restaurants while the poorer stood in line awaiting whatever nourishment was available.

Cheung's most glaring omission in her reports from China is the lack of speculation on the future of missionary work, in light of the severity of work disruptions she weathered at the Jiangmen mission. Perhaps this omission reflects the difficult political circumstances in which she operated. Perhaps it is related to her declared inability to keep abreast of military and political news. In fact, she seldom refers to the shock and dismay with which she met the first evacuation of her colleagues, during the Japanese occupation. Rather, Victoria Cheung reports on people and events directly related to her medical work. She does not speculate about the future of services which could be offered to the Chinese people, other than her belief that the local people in the surrounding district needed to be encouraged to use the hospital services. Her letters reveal her concerns with issues that impacted directly upon her work. She considers the Japanese military insofar as the soldiers inhibited her Chinese colleagues from carrying on their work, and as Chinese were injured,

fled their homes and joined the swollen refugee population of Jiangmen. She discusses the inflationary economy, which seemed unchecked over such a long period of time, but only as it affected her administration of the mission hospitals. This omission no doubt reflects her unswerving commitment to her medical work, and as well the dearth of information available to her, with which she could forecast the future of missionary work.

CHAPTER FIVE: PERSPECTIVES ON CANADIAN WOMEN MISSIONARIES IN CHINA

This study has focused on three Canadian women who served as United Church of Canada missionaries in China in the first half of the 20th century. Drawing principally on their diaries and letters, the preceding three chapters have one-by-one examined the China experiences and impressions of three courageous women: Margaret Brown who spent 39 years in China as an educator and editor, primarily in Henan and Shanghai; Mary Lamb who spent 20 years in China as an educator and evangelist, primarily in Sichuan; and Victoria Cheung who spent 43 years as a medical missionary in Guangdong. This final chapter attempts to place the China sojourns of the three women in comparative perspective and to gauge the impact of their work both in China and on themselves.

The three women appear to be representative of many Westerners who have wished to “help” the Chinese people. Their approach to their work in China followed the continuum of centuries of Western advisors in China.⁴⁶⁵ Further, they are each representative of early twentieth century women missionaries stationed in China. China needed them, no invitation was necessary (or even considered) and they each had something to offer the Chinese, including their skills and Christianity. These three women shared an image of a simplified China, and lacked the understanding of the “impermeability of Confucian moral structure.”⁴⁶⁶ It is in this context then, that in the intermittent disillusionment which the three women experienced, they could believe that they had “lost” China, that it was theirs to lose. Certainly, Margaret Brown identified her sense of

⁴⁶⁵ Jonathan Spence suggests that his sixteen advisors shared this approach to their work in China. Spence, *To Change China*.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

disillusionment and disappointment with “her” China, particularly during periods of heightened anti-foreign and anti-Christian activities. Mary Lamb as well, occasionally reflected on the difficulties of working in China, and approached these periods with a proprietary sense of disappointment.

It may also be helpful to situate these three women within the tradition of foreign missionary work, and the perspectives with which their contemporaries approached their work in China. The work of missionary women had shifted gradually from evangelical work, that of saving individual souls, to “social gospel” work, that of Christianizing China. These three missionaries fit well into Rosemary Gagan’s model of Canadian women who thrived in their China careers.⁴⁶⁷ Despite the physical and emotional hardships suffered, each remained in China throughout her career, and both Brown and Lamb only returned to Canada in their retirement years. All three women were “social gospellers,” as they were involved in a wide range of activities, and approached their interactions with Chinese women within the parameters intended by early twentieth century missionaries. Of the three, probably Mary Lamb had the most difficult time leaving behind the strictly evangelical approach to mission work. Early in her career in China, she had considered whether she would enjoy sharing her life with CIM missionaries, but believed that she doubtless lacked adequate knowledge to work among them. Her dream had always been to save the souls of Chinese women, and despite all the work in which she was involved over twenty years, she felt most rewarded when proselytizing. She lay somewhere between the two schools of missionary practice. This no doubt emerged from her own identity; her age, the town in which she was raised and her religious experiences among her family. As well, she had been born a generation earlier than her colleague, Victoria Cheung; Lamb

⁴⁶⁷ Rosemary Gagan points out that the differences among the WMS women she has studied were as significant as the experiences that they shared in China. Rosemary Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence*.

was eight years older than Margaret Brown, and 18 years older than Victoria Cheung. The latter two women were more firmly rooted in the dreams of the social gospel missionaries; that second generation of Canadian women missionaries, who brought Christianity and North American domesticity to post-Boxer China. They had experienced university life, and had come to China with more specific skills which they hoped to transmit; Cheung was focused on her medical work, and Brown was focused on educational work and subsequently on publishing Christian literature.

The different experiences of the three women appear to reflect the different missionary work in which they were each involved. Mary Lamb reported that her work left her little time to proselytize. Almost every other responsibility pushed this work, which she found to be the most meaningful of her endeavors, to the side. Like Peter Parker and other missionaries who had made a decision to first introduce Chinese to their technical skills, and only to "Christianize" afterwards, Lamb realized that the transfer of skills left little time for anything else. Whereas Parker had spent many years in China before looking back in disbelief and dismay at the little time he had spent bringing Christianity to Chinese, Lamb was always aware that secular work crowded out the religious work which she found so important. This perhaps she shared with other missionaries who were both educators and evangelists. Brown had complained of similar frustrations in Hwaiking. However Cheung, who was focused completely on her medical work, experienced no similar difficulties. She was among those Canadian medical missionaries who believed that every individual has a fundamental right to the most up-to-date medical knowledge and skill, and so worked toward this goal of bringing her skills to the Chinese of Jiangmen.⁴⁶⁸ The strong sense of mission which pervades the descriptions of evangelical work, especially in Mary Lamb's letters, but as well in

⁴⁶⁸ Karen Minden discusses medical missionaries in this light. Karen Minden, *Bamboo Stone: the Evolution of a Chinese Medical Elite* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 104.

those of Brown, is not evident in Cheung's letters. She became a surrogate parent to many refugee children who were left in her care at the hospital, taught them to sing and occasionally, although quite self-consciously, led prayers. Despite the strong commitment which she obviously had to work among the Chinese, her letters do not suggest that she had a "mission" beyond the provision of good medical care. Only Brown's descriptions of her early work in Hwaiking as a teacher and evangelical missionary have remarkable similarities to Lamb's descriptions of proselytizing in Sichuan. Both were focused on reaching women, on saving these women who had no knowledge of the gospel, and on bringing to Chinese women a spirituality and enlightenment without which their lives were clearly, to the missionaries, quite empty. In their diaries and correspondence the reader senses a common perception of the accomplishment which they felt each time that they "reached" an individual woman: they both reported a feeling of elation at fulfilling their mission in China. This exceptional commonality in their reporting serves to underscore the differences in the women's other experiences.

The geographic location of the missions to which the three women were attached also played a role in shaping their personal impressions of China. How each woman described events in China to her colleagues back home in Canada depended to a certain extent upon her experiences in her own mission station. Of the three Margaret Brown appears to have been in the best wartime location to gather information and to begin to interpret events in China. Because she lived in Shanghai for many years, and then in Sichuan when the Nationalist government made its headquarters in that province, she was closer to the unfolding of decisions regarding the destiny of China. She had greater access to newspapers and radio reports, and fairly frequently found herself in the company of people who also functioned within Shanghai's international community. Further, in her work and in her temperament and interests, Brown was well-suited to her international lifestyle; she enjoyed

mingling with officials, and was fascinated by the political events around her. On the other hand, Victoria Cheung emphasized to her friends in Canada the lack of news circulating in Jiangmen, particularly after the fall of Guangzhou, and felt quite isolated from the rest of China. Mary Lamb was certainly less interested in the international and political scene than Brown, but also felt quite distant from the rest of China, at least until the Nationalist government and refugees from across China made their way to Sichuan. Lamb and Cheung, for example, had little to say about the Communists, and their knowledge of the ongoing struggle for political power was much more limited than Brown's. Cheung's silence about politics may well reflect the danger in which she, as a Chinese woman, would have been placed had she been less discreet. Lamb's observations are limited to her experiences in Sichuan. Her major contact with foreigners (other than missionaries) was limited to her summering on the hills above Chongqing. The foreigners with whom Lamb did socialize tended to spend their time at sports and enjoying evenings of light entertainment, apparently not discussing the ongoing political power struggles in China.

On the other hand, it appears that the missionary work in which the three women were involved was less affected by their location. With the exception of the unique circumstances of the Christian community in Jiangmen having significant ties with the overseas Chinese community, the work in which Cheung was involved was not terribly affected by the geographic location in which she lived. Cheung was of course less mobile than the others, as she spoke Cantonese. Brown and Lamb reported that they enjoyed living in some cities rather than others. While Shanghai seemed claustrophobic and overly busy to Lamb, Brown usually found it stimulating and a positive environment in which to carry on her CLS work. Lamb was more comfortable in smaller cities.

All three women were initially unconcerned about the threat posed by the Japanese military on Chinese soil in the 1930s. They believed that the Japanese would respect the status of Canadian missionaries as British subjects, and certainly had no sense in the early months of the devastation which Japanese soldiers would wreak upon the Chinese people. Each woman came to the realization that the Chinese were terribly threatened by the Japanese attacks, and only later understood that they too were not safe from this overwhelming military threat. As well, Brown and Lamb were both appalled that Canada continued to sell armaments to Japan, and that the international community was not doing more to stop Japanese aggression in China. Both Brown and Lamb recognized that if anything positive emerged from the war, it would be a burgeoning sense of nationalism among the Chinese, which might help to unify the country.

It appears that the three women enjoyed uneven relations with their Home Board in Canada. Their relationships suffered particularly when they each felt that their colleagues in Canada were unable to understand the needs of those in China, which then became magnified, in their frustration, to mean that the home board did not understand the work in which they were engaged. Brown was particularly frustrated during her early years in Hwaiking, when she was advised that there would be a cut-back in the number of missionaries sent to Henan. She was astounded and angered by this decision, impressing upon those in Canada that the ages of missionaries in that particular field were of concern to her, in view of the physical and emotional stresses under which they were working. Further, there was so much work to be done in China that the missionaries could not possibly function with an even smaller contingent. Similarly, Cheung felt frustrated with the Canadian Church when the South China field was in jeopardy, and when she judged that there were too few foreign physicians to carry out the necessary medical work. On the other hand, Lamb was so

pleased to be working in China under the Woman's Missionary Society in her second and third terms, that she appears to have had no conflicts at all with their guidance or decision making.

Did the missionary presence in some way disturb the continuity of modern Chinese history? After these women and their colleagues left China, was China ever the same again? Did their presence have any effect at all? Paul Cohen argues that in the early period of missionary work in China, the mere presence of the missionaries was a disturbance. When railways were built, the elements were disturbed; when the missionaries lived among the Chinese, the elements of human interaction were disturbed. The *feng-shui* was upset. None of the three women record that they willingly usurped the role of Chinese officials, as the early missionaries had threatened the authority of the gentry. On the other hand, Mary Lamb does describe her efforts to intercede on behalf of a young woman who had been abandoned by her husband. Margaret Brown certainly offered advice to Chinese women in her magazine column in the *Woman's Star*, in order to help them decide how to resolve their problems. However, the times were significantly different from the earlier period; the gentry had already lost the authority that it had possessed in imperial China.

What was the role of Christian missionaries in 20th century China? Margaret Brown and Mary Lamb both identify a void which the Chinese people were experiencing, concretely in the lack of China's leadership, and more ephemerally in their loss of the traditions which had guided China for centuries. Brown identifies the cause of the void as the years of distress which accompanied so many years of war. In her view, it mattered little to the Chinese victims whether the war was initiated by the Japanese, by the warlords, by the Nationalists or by the Communists. The Chinese had lived for decades under the cloud of persistent social dislocation, fear and suffering; all of which had the long-term impact upon them of loss of confidence in their future. Both women

envisage the importance of Christianity in filling this void; Lamb explains that Christianity will ease the sense of loss that the Chinese are experiencing, and provide the spiritual guidance which they have always been without. And so it would seem that the response of these two women would be that the Christian missionaries in China were crucial to maintaining the continuity of Chinese history; after all, the Chinese had demonstrated that they were unable to do so on their own. All of this is problematic however, in light of Lamb's awareness of the isolation which Christian education and experiences brought to some of the women. They were too often separated in their distinctiveness, both in their villages and in their homes. Further, she was aware that young women who had individual contact with missionaries or attended mission schools had been introduced to new ideas, which made it difficult for them to continue being "dutiful" daughters or younger sisters. However, Lamb also encourages us to recall that it was not only the missionaries who were introducing new experiences to young women. The overnight military drills for Girl Guides organized by the Board of Education under directives from the National government were also a breach of appropriate behavior for young Chinese women. It appears then that the missionary women altered the lives of Chinese women who were willing to meet and listen to the missionaries. Whether they altered the course of Chinese history is more questionable. The foreign presence was not new to China in 1913, the year that Brown arrived. The unequal treaties had "opened up" China years earlier; Chinese leaders and intellectuals had themselves grappled with the usefulness of or need for foreign technology, and overseas Chinese students had long since returned to their homeland. Whether the missionaries of the twentieth century changed anything larger than individual's lives is then questionable. The divisive forces were so clearly present in China; China lacked leadership, the dynasty had already collapsed, the warlords were entrenched in the provinces, and the role of Confucianism was already weakened.

Who benefited from the work of these three women? It is too facile to argue that everything these women did, and all the contacts they had with Chinese women were either to the detriment or benefit of the Chinese. I would suggest that Chinese women who were in contact with missionary women believed that they gained in some way. It is offensive for us to conclude that the Chinese women participated, but neither enjoyed nor benefited from their contacts with the missionaries. Women who joined Mary Lamb's club in Fuzhou, and then asked her to lead a Bible class for them knew that they were gaining something from spending their time with Lamb and the other missionaries. It can therefore be suggested that the women who engaged willingly and even eagerly in missionary-sponsored activities felt that they gained from these involvements. Nonetheless, Mary Lamb's description of the isolation and sense of dislocation experienced by some young women must be considered as well.

The three women certainly gained from their China experiences.⁴⁶⁹ For the most part, despite the difficulties of living in China, Brown, Lamb and Cheung described their work and lives in a positive manner. Of course, Margaret Brown suffered from ill health frequently during her years in China, and Mary Lamb was very conscious of the need to maintain her strength, to exercise and to eat well in the face of more difficult living conditions than Canadians were experiencing.⁴⁷⁰ Despite these realities, each of these women chose to go to China, and once there, to remain in China working until they were ready to retire, or died in the case of Cheung. In order to gauge whether

⁴⁶⁹ Jonathan D. Spence, in *To Change China* suggests that the men in his studies profited from their adventures in China.

⁴⁷⁰ As Mary Lamb looked towards her 50th birthday she advised her Canadian friends that although she was certainly aging, she was still healthy enough to continue working in China. Lamb described "a few more gray hairs, lost two more front teeth the other day at the hands of the dentist, imagine my eyesight is not as good as it was . . . I feel as if I were only beginning to live, as if there were long stretches before me to which I'm looking forward with keen interest and desire." Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, July 1, 1923 (MLL 1:8).

they benefited it is helpful to review when and why they had chosen to become missionaries. Each of the women had decided in their adolescence that they would become China missionaries. This was during the height of Canadian mission work in China, in terms of numbers of missionaries sent to China as well as funding provided for overseas Canadian missionaries. Further, each of them had to overcome difficulties in order to realize their ambitions. Cheung required a scholarship to university, to enable her to train to become a missionary; Brown apparently doubted whether she could financially afford to attend university, and her cousin encouraged her to work and attend classes concurrently; Lamb waited twenty years to fulfill her dream. Furthermore, nursing, teaching, and caring for elderly relatives were acceptable types of work for women of their generation; in the early twentieth century, it was appropriate for "spinsters" (as Lamb called herself and her friends) to work in these "maternal" types of careers. Missionary work as well was within the bounds of the turn of the century cult of domesticity. Women as helpers and educators, bringing North American values and Western knowledge to the Chinese was also acceptable. Canadian missionary women in China were faced with learning a difficult language, and living in dramatically different living conditions. However, they were teaching Chinese women similar values and skills to those which were being taught in their Canada. In addition, travel to China fulfilled a sense of the exotic for Brown and for Lamb. Both women had listened to stories of other missionaries. Lamb dreamed of travel and excitement; when she was in China she dreamt of traveling aboard an airplane to Europe; aboard a Yangzi steamer she thrived on the excitement of the gorges when the water level was at its highest. Brown had pursued her studies of China, as she earned a graduate degree in Chinese culture; she was enthusiastic about this opportunity to work in China.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷¹ Brown had dreamed, during a time of fatigue and disillusionment with her work, that she would like to go into the interior (at that time free China) and doing nothing other than write books. Margaret Brown, letter to Bertha Drummond, May 23, 1940 (MHB 1:1).

On at least three levels the missionary work of these three women heightened the awareness of China in Canada. Margaret Brown shared her impressions of China with Canadian officials. While her diaries and correspondence refer to information which she had gathered as a result of conversations with many Canadians, during these conversations she was also exchanging information garnered from her unique experiences and observations. She was a respected woman who had traveled about China, and whose experiences and input were valued by Canadian policy-makers. Second, these three women brought their impressions of China to a less formal audience, that of Canadian church-goers. When the women missionaries returned on furloughs they were always called upon to lecture and frequently to go on brief speaking tours. They visited Church communities in order to encourage donations to the foreign mission work, and as well, deliberately tried to bring "a little of China" to Canadians. Mary Lamb appears to have been the most dedicated in her efforts to observe China in order to remember and report "accurately" to Canadians. She conscientiously gathered information, took photographs and collected "memorabilia" which would allow her to introduce "the real China" to Canadians. She looked forward to meeting with small groups of women in order to show them the items which she had brought back from China, to describe her experiences and to discuss her impressions of China with them. Thus, limited numbers of Canadians were educated, and formed a more realistic picture of China, after they had met visiting or returned missionary women. Third, and more difficult to assess, is the support of many overseas Chinese in Canada, particularly for Victoria Cheung's work in South China. For more than half of her career she identified herself as a Canadian missionary. South Chinese were apparently uniquely tied to the overseas community, and at least those in China who were directly involved with the Church or with the mission schools and hospitals wanted to maintain their relationship with the Canadian missionaries. They were

concerned that they needed the presence of missionaries, and discouraged the closure of the mission. It can therefore be assumed that there was a positive feeling among at least those Chinese who used the resources of the mission, towards Canadian missionaries and Canada, which was encouraged and heightened by this presence.

Not surprisingly, the China experiences of these women reflect the situation of long-term travelers who spend as much of their adult lives away from their birthplace, which they continue to refer to as their homes, as they spend at their postings. It is clearer in the personal correspondence of Lamb and Brown, that while they retained their identity as Canadian women, it became increasingly difficult for them to refer only to Canada as their homes. Their adult experiences were taking place in what was a very "foreign" land, and yet upon their return to Canada, their efforts to bring their impressions of the Chinese reality to Canadians, reveals and mirrors their experience and identity as Canadians in China. Where was home? It probably failed to exist in conventional terms. It can be argued that they were unique and separate as missionaries. They were always foreigners in China, and this distinction was maintained through their lifestyles. They lived relatively secluded from the Chinese, and even encouraged their servants learn the necessary skills to be particularly helpful to them, to learn to cook and care for them in a Western manner. They were certainly separate from other foreigners. This is evidenced both in Lamb's narrative, in which she describes her vacations in the hills with some of the other "types" of foreigners; while she enjoys the socializing, she has no illusion that she is the same as them. She is a working woman, self-supporting, enjoying vacations after working hard all year. In her view, the wives of businessmen have little to do other than to entertain themselves, shop and lead what she considered, boring lives. Lamb was ambivalent about the role of consular officials in her life. She recognized that missionaries occasionally needed government protection, but was quite unsympathetic to the

difficulties that the officials faced, both in making decisions and in encouraging the missionaries to respond to consular directives. Brown also alludes to the difference between herself and other foreigners. When the missionaries did not receive an expected invitation to celebrate Dominion Day at the British Consulate, for example they planned their own excursion on the river. She recognized that while she may have developed friendships with the Canadian "official class," missionaries were separate from the other foreigners. Did the Chinese make these distinctions? From the reports of anti-foreign and anti-Christian activities, it appears that Chinese who resisted the foreign presence in their country did not distinguish between missionaries and others. They were all lumped together as Imperialists. When products were boycotted, Christmas celebrations were disturbed, and all foreigners were at risk. As anti-foreign activities and threats increased, missionaries together with all other foreigners were evacuated from their stations.

What emerges from the narratives of the three women about Chinese history? Probably the clearest impression that emerges is the one, shared by all three women, of the chaos in China during the Republican period. More particularly, they wrote of the chaotic conditions in which Chinese people lived; of the frantic quality of their lives, as they were unable to predict whether they would be physically safe, in the face of military threats from within and without; whether they would be able to feed themselves and their children; whether they would lose their homes; and what the outcome, in the near future, of all these chaotic conditions would be. Would there ever be an end to the confusion, lack of leadership, disunity and disorder. This pervasive image is recorded with impressive and sustained clarity by all three women. In the paucity, particularly in the cases of Lamb and Cheung, of their reporting on political history of the period, they underline the social history, the stories of the Chinese people with whom they had direct contact, and whom they observed. It can therefore be argued that the collection of personal records of these women provides

valuable documentation on the history of the Chinese people, not the economic history, nor the intellectual or political history, but the social history of the Chinese. The way inflation affected the poor who arrived at the Marion Barclay Hospital, or the uncertainty and fear which accompanied warlord skirmishes at "the city gates" are described with clarity that ensures that the reader will have a clear vision of the people involved. The chaos of China then emerges from all the correspondence, and with it the pathos of the situations of refugees. The increasingly overwhelming numbers of refugees is clearly related as having almost surreal qualities in all commentaries, as the missionaries' work moved from evangelism to working to save lives, finding shelter and food for the fleeing peasants. From the reports of the three women the reader gains an almost tangible sense of China which goes beyond their descriptions of their individual experiences. They made China come alive; the overwhelming number of people, the huge variations in temperature, and the unique Chinese concept of time are pervasive in these letters and diaries. The women typically did not compare China to Canada, or their Chinese experience to those that their friends and colleagues were having in Canada, but rather appeared to describe China as China,- without comparison, without contrasting it to Canada. Their letters and diaries make a leap, from Canada to China and bring China to the reader.

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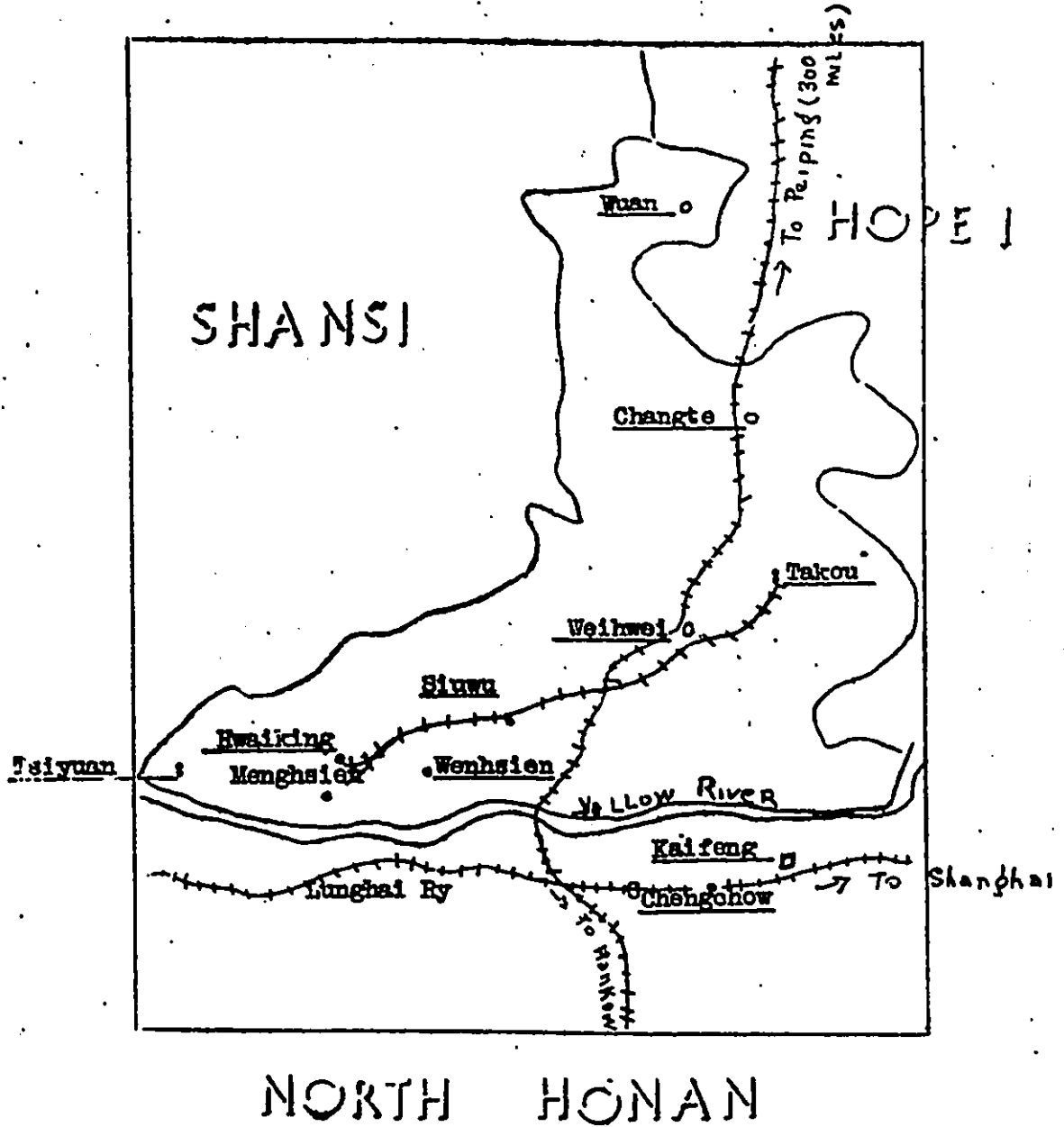
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APPENDIX ONE: MARGARET HELEN BROWN

Map of North Henan mission field



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⁴⁷² UCCFA 90: 1: 3.



Margaret Helen Brown ⁴⁷³

⁴⁷³ Photograph collection, location number 76.001P/654, held at the United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto (hereafter referred to as PC: location number).



Margaret Brown greeting Katharine Hockin at the Chinese border, 1951⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁴ PC: 76.001P2720.

July 24, 1939 -

The Tokyo Negotiations.

It has been a fantastic week. The financial world was rocking. Exchange we would yesterday reached 150% to the U.S. 1st or 60% to the £. Then came news that our Br. Ambassador ^{in Tokyo} was coming to terms with the Japanese! It seemed for a moment as though we were dealing the deathblow to China at the very moment when Japan had begun to feel herself sunk in the moccasins of China. The worst moment of it all was when we read that the Times had said: "The Japanese are the natural protectors of the Chinese." It was like a lash striking me. And oh the shame of it. With a trail of blood ^{which} ~~is~~ runs across a whole continent we talk of protection! What mockery! And the Times cannot be ignorant.

But in the revealing flesh of my humiliation when I felt I could not face my Chinese colleagues I began to see clearly that "patriotism is not enough." The Governments of the world are playing their game of chess with millions of human lives as their pawns. We who are followers of our Saviour must put our loyalty to him before all else & settle in preaching his Gospel & bringing in his Kingdom.

Oh help me, Lord.

⁴⁷⁵ Margaret Brown, diary entry, July 24, 1939 (MHB 2:27).

Extract from Margaret Brown's handwritten correspondence

To attempt to give you any adequate picture of our life in China during these past 7 years seems utterly hopeless. We have lived through famine & flood, banditry & civil war, anti foreign agitation & anti British Boycott experiencing never waning days of excitement and nights of tremendous strain & terrible anxiety. China has been making history & we were in the midst of it. We watched the rise & fall of the stars of the various war lords. These ^{generals} rose & fell not once but often several times so that even those of us best versed in Chinese affairs never dared to prophesy who will be the power of next month. Invading armies after an army came & went. I can hardly recall one from the other except the Red armies who were just a bit worse than all others. We seldom had time to realize which faction we most favoured because they had been replaced by others before we had sufficient time to make up our mind. But through it all we carried on holding tightly to our motto of "Work as usual" until we were ~~driven out~~ ^{knocked out}. And the thing that stands out most vividly in one's mind as one looks back, when the year is how surprisingly little our work was interfered with in spite of the welter & chaos amidst which we dwelt. It is quite true that for

⁴⁷⁶ Margaret Brown, undated document (MHB 1:1).

Extract from Margaret Brown's typewritten correspondence

Temp. Mission Council

Shanghai, Feb 8th, 1936.

Dear Home' eople,-

I fear I have neglected you badly for some time. I wrote just before I left for Honan for the meeting of Council.

Bruce and I left on the Sunday afternoon of Jan. 12th and I got back exactly two weeks later. It was quite cold all the time I was up North but it did not snow until the day I was leaving. The trip up was more or less uneventful until we got to the Lung Hai railway and on that line the Dining Car got something the matter with its wheels and was left behind. We had no lunch with us and had to get what we could for the next eight hours. Bruce decided we would buy a roast chicken at the first big stop. The men come on the platform selling them. In Shanghai we call them varnished chickens for that is what they really look like and in all my years in China I had never tasted one. We paid the great sum of thirty cents for a whole one and that is about ten cents in your money. Of course you must not picture it as a big fat chicken such as you would serve in Fiverton or Ottawa but still it was a whole chicken but chicken needs something to go with it and we had nothing else. However we had three fellow travellers in our compartment. One was a German engineer from the Arsenal just south of Hwaiking. He had with him his Russian wife and her Italian daughter! Can you imagine a more cosmopolitan group. Well they had brought along a loaf of Russian rye bread and they shared it with us and we gave them some of our lovely oranges which I had bought in Shanghai intending to take to my hostess in Honan. We had no butter but we got Chinese tea and made quite a meal of it. The joke was on Bruce and I for paying thirty cents for the chicken for they got the car boy to buy them one and he got it for twenty five! We took the skin of it so that it might be germ proof - or more or less so - and we enjoyed it. It had a sort of salt and smoked taste.

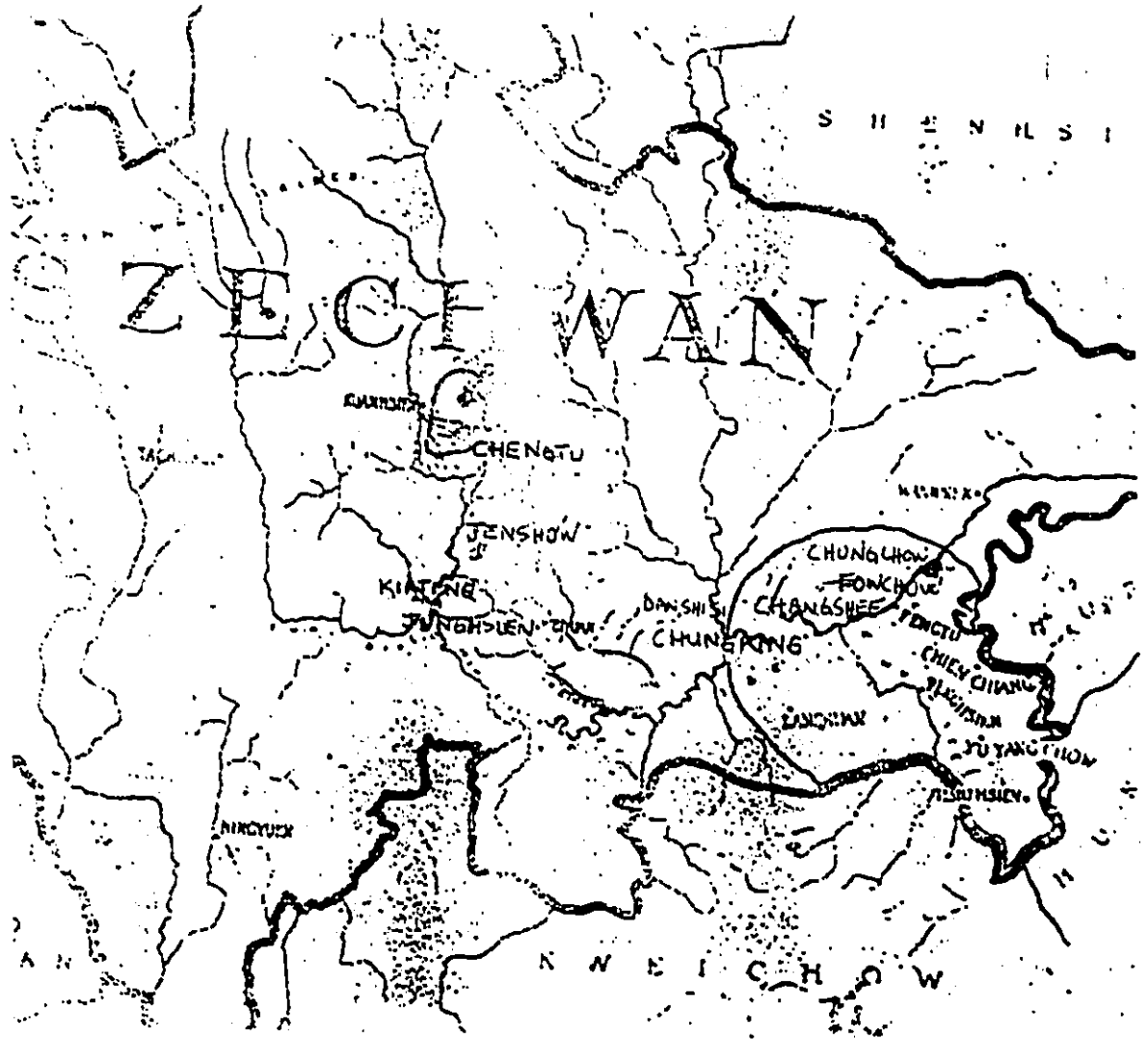
We spent the night at the China Travel Service's new Rest House. They advertise it as having all the modern fittings of bathroom etc. They are all there all right but NONE of them work! We got up and took the seventieth train north for Changte. It was a local and we travelled third class on it as we knew that the WeiHwei and Hwaiking people would be joining us as we got farther along. We got the car boy to scramble some eggs on his little stove and with a slice of the dry bread that we had not eaten the night before we made our breakfast. It was not what you would call travelling de luxe.

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⁴⁷⁷ Margaret Brown, circular letter, February 8, 1936 (MHB 1:3).

APPENDIX TWO: MARY LETITIA LAMB

Map of Sichuan mission field



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⁴⁷⁸ UCCFA 90:1:5



Mary Letitia Lamb ⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁹ PC 76.001P/3477



Canadian school children in West China, 1924 ⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸⁰ PC 90.017P/1



Eleanor Dell Graham with Mary Lamb, 1940 ⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸¹ PC 76.001P/2249



Mary Lamb and others of the Fuzhou Women's and Girl's Boarding School, 1931 ⁴⁸²

⁴⁸² PC 90.0170/3

Extract from Mary Lamb's diaries

APRIL 5

A red letter Day.

1932. We all went to the Cemetery & Col. Ches. Sinton's grave. His wife for me to ride. A wonderful sunny day.

1933. Reached Col. Grubbs very early - about 6.30 a.m. Interesting entering the Breckon - unexciting Coal.

1934. Evelyn sent Mrs. Pent to help me, so I could go on with classes. Dr. Hunt-Campbell came - says it is urgent - Order six weeks old set.

1935. A school holiday - but a busy day for us - Florence & Mrs. Stansby arrived unexpectedly (in tented world) from the Chow. Bible Class as usual.

1936. A hard morning in view with Communion - The Church being cleared. Two services in P.M. Christian Council. Went across river - from school. Passion Play Pavilion. I stayed at Sunday

APRIL 6

1932. Thunder in the night and a very cold change. Praying in the P.M. put it all away at my desk - book.

1933. Left Colombo at 2.15 p.m. A few new faces. Practised the 2nd part some of it being. Book.

1934. Mrs. Pent came again. So did many others from the A. Kate very well. I do not see any improvement. A very wet rainy day.

1935. Worked at W.M. accounts all morning. Then the wedding of Miss Jean (Widow) of Daniel & the widow's part in afternoon. Yalla Li Chen also married.

1936. Spent over the river early & saw the Bridgman & Gage william. Home for change by the Mission. Truett. Went to Deer Hill in P.M. Had a good talk with. visit in person.

Mary Lamb, diary entries, April 5-6, 1932-1936 (MLL 1:6).

32 Carter Road
Shanghai
China
April 21, 1927.

My dear Annie

you may be surprised that your letter of March 14, reached me over a week ago. I suppose people feel as if it were rather hopeless sending letters to China now, but we don't want our minds to get discouraged along that line, for some letters mean a great deal to us these times. Will you please thank Helen for her note? and add that she will accept this as an answer. For there are so many to whom I would like to write that I never get "caught up" with them all. Your offerings were all much appreciated. I am glad for the sake of all concerned that Miss Brinn & Johnson have turned out so well. Although I have no desire to go into any such ventures myself. I was also interested in the "cost of living" statement of the Civil Service man. It seemed to me to give me a very good idea of what would cost us to live at home. I know when I went home last year I was much impressed with the number of people who seemed to be regretting both their eyes & their feet. I left and it was for financial reasons. Having so many of these circumstances in our minds

⁴⁸⁴ Mary Lamb, letter to Annie Dewar, April 21, 1927 (MLL 1:8).

Extract from Mary Lamb's typewritten correspondence

ROSES-- ROSES -- ROSES. Hundreds of them, bushels of them, huge basketsful sent here, there, and everywhere. Dozens of bushes bending low with their burden of beauty for the brief two weeks or more while they bloom--this is what we have been having in our U.M.S. garden in Fow Chow for the past ten days. We would that we could send a picture home that would adequately show our garden at its best, but our picture-taking is not always as successful as we would like it to be.

In more ways than one are we forcibly reminded of the words "The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" when we look back two years, and compare conditions in this compound now with what they were two years ago. At that time, the garden that is so lovely now, was a tangled mass of weeds, and brambles, our nice comfortable home was being used by the General whose men were in our girls' school, and Miss Steele and I had gathered together a little group of a couple of dozen children, and three or four women, and were carrying on in the women's school building. I send with this a picture of the women pupils in the school this spring, and the same day that this was taken, a much larger group of girls posed among the roses, representing the girls' school under Miss Graham's management-- This is our great cause for "rejoicing", the fact that we have been able to get the work in this station really started, when the outlook was so unpromising two years ago!

To the readers of the Missionary Monthly, the group of women will just be "another school", but to those that are working among them, they are very distinctive personalities. Each one has her story, very seldom a happy one, but always interesting to the one who likes to think of herself as the foster-mother of the group. As I have remarked many times, work in a school for Chinese women tends to make one more and more confirmed in the practice of celibacy for women! The greatest source of their troubles; I think I can safely say, is the question of plural marriage. Many of my pupils have to share their husbands with one or two other wives, and it does not tend to make happiness in the home.

Take, for instance, the one at the bottom extreme ~~right~~ of the lowest row. She is the most enthusiastic of the group, and apparently the happiest. She is eighteen years old,--was married three years ago to a man who had another wife, and as she was fortunate enough to have a son, she became the cause of jealousy of the first wife, who tried to poison her. Because they could not get on together, the husband decided to discard her, keeping the baby of course, as the sons all belong to the paternal side of the family. He said her ~~husband~~ to get rid of her, and she went back to her mother, who soon married her off to another man, her present husband evidently being of a generous enough disposition to give her a few months' schooling, which she is enjoying tremendously.

But time will not permit of going into all these personal stories, for we would like you to know something of what these women learn in our school. First of all, they get the "three R's" the 'Rithmetic being their biggest bag-be ar, as it always was mine. Then they have singing (I nearly said music, but fear me that would be a wis-nerer) Geography--enough to teach them that the earth is not flat, and that there are other countries in the world than China--Hygiene, not to expectorate on the floor, or clean their teeth out of the window on the head of anyone who may happen to be passing Bible--mostly the life and teachings of Jesus. Sewing, cooking--this year I have added a foreign cooking class which is very popular, we were eating cherries last week. Then there is the Baby Welfare.

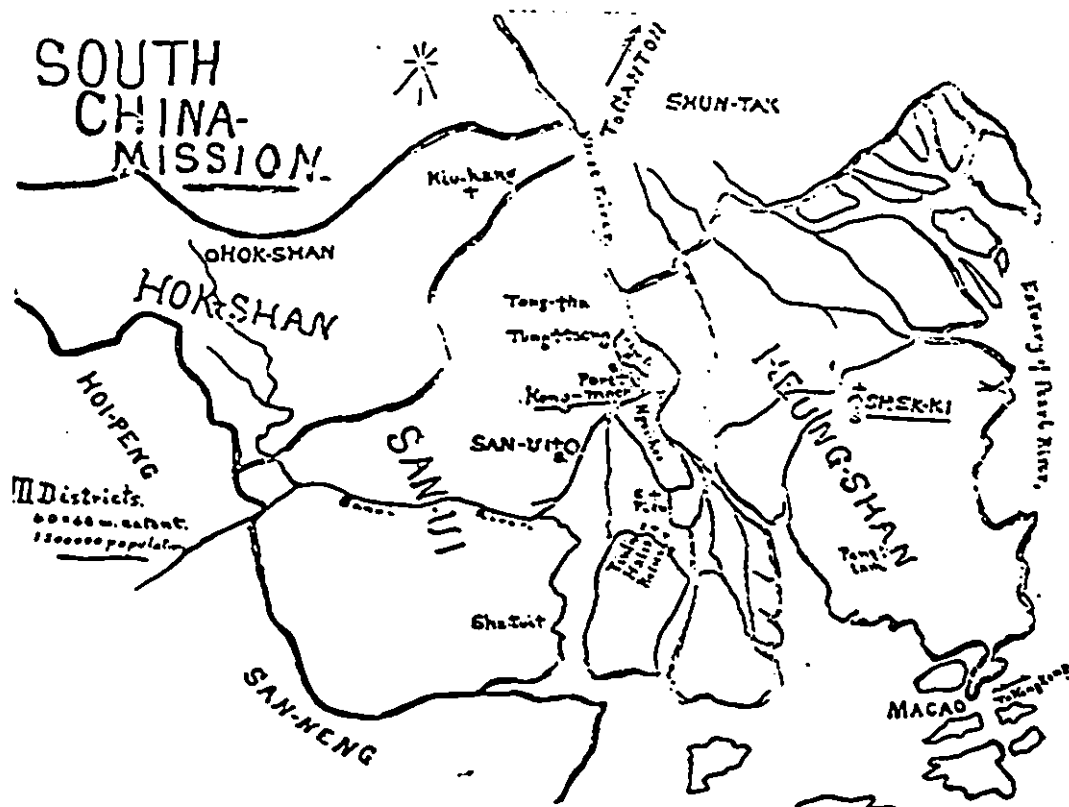
The latter needs more than a passing word, for we think it quite an important part of our work.

Mrs. C.A. Bridgman began the Baby Welfare work here over a year ago, opening it in three centres, one at the hospital, one at the church, and one in our women's school at this end of the city.

⁴⁸⁵ Undated document (MLL 1:9).

APPENDIX THREE: VICTORIA CHEUNG

Map of South China mission field



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Victoria Cheung⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁷ PC 89.133P/5 AR-33.



Jiangmen Mission Compound ⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁸ PC Kwangtung, Kongmoon, Mission Compound



Marion Barclay Hospital
Victoria Cheung and colleagues receiving supplies for the nursery
from Marlboro Street Evening Auxiliary, Brantford, Ontario ⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁹ PC Kongmoon, South China.



Marion Barclay Hospital, Jiangmen ⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁹⁰ PC Kongmoon, South China.

Extract from Victoria Cheung's correspondence

May 6, 1940.

Mrs. Hugh D. Taylor,
412 Wesley Buildings,
Toronto.

Dear Mrs. Taylor:

Both your letters of Jan. 26th and the 30th. arrived some weeks ago. I have delayed writing you in the hopes of receiving suggestions from Miss Cairns, which might help answer those requests from the findings on the Madras Report.

As far as Dr. Broadfoot and I know re the relation of our W.M. S. missionaries to the National Church, is that each member automatically becomes a member as soon as she begins work on the field. Evangelistic workers are assigned their work by the Church Synod, and work more or less, under the Synod. Others are merely appointed by the Home Board. As to literature, we all realize the great importance of literature in the work; there is less chance in this district, now than for a long time to use much, but still there is great need for tracts, colored pictures and helps for the children and young enquirers. Literature can still be got from Shanghai and West China.

We were just as happy to see Miss Isaac again as she was to be here herself. She was permitted to return to collect her odds and ends before going on furlough. Mr. McEae, got permission to get away for a month. We expect him back in the next few days. The Harbor-master and his wife are away too, so no more passes will be issued till—.

A feeling of hopelessness, a sense of the futility of hanging on, came over me as I watched the ship pull out with the Cookfields on it. What if they too, decide to stay home? Unless Dr. Lind returns this fall, the whole Mission next year, will consist of the Broadfoots, Miss Moore and myself. Surely Dr. Broadfoot will need medical and dental attention periodically then as much as now?

Amongst our profession, there is a constant conflict in the mind between patriotism and immediate local duty. Time hangs heavy on their hands, and they chafe under the thought of wasting it, when experience may be found elsewhere. And then there is the worry of the uncertainty of conditions. General consensus of opinion is service to their own but in their own territory.

The middle classes have spent their all and have had to return; the poor are more helpless than ever. They are worn out from lack of food; they are so ill, one wonders whether even hospitalisation will be of any use. Rice is \$85.00 N.C. a picule as compared to \$10.00 of normal times, and sweet potato, \$13.00-\$15.00 the picule. Though the hospital boasts of a larger number of admissions, the upkeep will be heavier than ever, this year. There was a stampede in the rice line at the Benevolent Society in the city, the other day; a couple of men ran off with the bags of rice; two children were trampled to death, several others were seriously wounded.

The above are only some of my own reasons for begging the early return of a male member of the mission.

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⁴⁹¹ Victoria Cheung, letter to Mrs. Taylor, May 6, 1940 (VC 59:9).

APPENDIX FOUR: TABLE OF GEOGRAPHICAL EQUIVALENTS

<u>Pinvin</u>	<u>Former spelling</u>
Beidaihe	Petai Ho
Chengdu	Chengtu
Chongqing	Chungking
Fuzhou	Foochow or Fow Chow
Guangdong	Kwangtung
Guangzhou	Canton
Hangzhou	Hangchow
Hankou	Hankow
Henan	Honan
Jiangmen	Kongmoon
Mount Emci	Mount Omei
Peng Xian	Peng Hsien
Rong Xian	Junghsien
Sichuan	Szechwan
Sichuanese	Szechwanese
Shiqi	Shekkei
Yangzi River	Yangtse River
Yichang	Ichang
Yunnan	Yunan