5-1-1977

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OLD CHINA HANDS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Alma Vander Meer

This project has been made possible by a grant from the Youthgrants in the Humanities Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, a Federal agency established by Congress to promote research, education, and public activity in the humanities.

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Preface

Narrator: Mrs. Alma Vander Meer

Spring, 1977
Home of Mrs. Vander Meer in Fresno, California
Alma Mathiesen was born in Skandenburg, Denmark, on April 22, 1894. She grew up in Denmark and remained there through her college years, receiving her R.N. from Bispebjerg Hospital in Copenhagen. She then went to New York City Presbyterian Hospital for post-graduate work. She has also had training in midwifery at Queen Charlotte's Hospital in London, England.

While in New York, Miss Mathiesen became acquainted with the Reformed Church mission in China through another nurse in her post-graduate program, and Mrs. John G. Fagg, a former missionary to China. Through them, she was introduced to Dr. Chamberlain of the R.C.A. Board of Foreign Missions. After working in New York City's Henry Street Settlement, she was commissioned by the Board to be a medical missionary to China. In September, 1923, she arrived in China.

Her first year she spent in Chang chou. The next year, from 1924 to 1925, she lived in Kulangsu, and then was stationed in Sio-khe from 1926 to 1928. She went on furlough in 1929, and during her furlough, she married William Vander Meer, a Hope College graduate, and fellow missionary to China. On returning from their wedding the Vander Meers were stationed in Dhang chou from 1929 to 1939. With the Japanese War and heavy bombing in the Chang chou area, Mrs. Vander Meer and her two sons went first to Baguio, Philippines, and then to Kulangsu. Mr. Vander Meer went inland with the students of Talmage College. After Pearl Harbor, while most of the missionaries in Kulangsu were interned, Mrs. Vander Meer was allowed to move fairly freely about the island because of her Danish citizenship. Because of this, she was able to be a great help to the other missionaries who were interned. She returned to the United States in 1942, although
her husband remained in China until 1944. Mr. Vander Meer died in America in 1945 of pneumonia. Mrs. Vander Meer decided to return to China in 1946, and she was stationed at Sio-khe with Elizabeth Bruce until 1949, when they were forced to leave the village for Kulangsu because of the Communist advance. She remained in Kulangsu until after the Communist takeover, and then, near Thanksgiving, 1950, she petitioned the Communists for permission to leave. She left China in March, 1951.

This narration by Mrs. Vander Meer was made after the interview she had with David Vander Haar in 1976, and gives a more thorough description of her life and work in China. Her accounts of the atmosphere of a Chinese upcountry church, her work as a nurse, and life under the Japanese during their occupation of Kulangsu are particularly vivid and informative.
I was brought up in a Christian home in Denmark, and I remember my mother when I wanted to become a nurse, she said, "That's wonderful because I always wanted and prayed that one of my five daughters would be a missionary, so maybe one day you'll be a missionary." I graduated from the nursing school in Copenhagen, and then went to the United States to do some post-graduate work. While in the United States I became acquainted with a nurse in the hospital where I was working, and she said she wanted to be a missionary in the Reformed Church. So she introduced me to Mrs. John G. Fagg, who used to be in China, and she told us many wonderful stories of her missionary work there. I was very much interested, and then she introduced me to Dr. Chamberlain of the Board of World Missions in the Board rooms in New York City. They sent me to prepare for missionary work. After the four months in the maternity hospital I went to work as a visiting nurse in Henry Street Settlement in New York City. This meant going from home to home on the East Side of New York, caring for the sick people under the instruction of their doctors. I felt that this was a good preparation for missionary work. After that I went to White's Bible School for six weeks in New York City, and then I was sent to China as a missionary. I was partly supported by the church in Passaic, and got acquainted with the church people in that town. It was hard for me to leave for China without saying good-bye to my family and friends in Denmark. I had only left Denmark with the understanding that I would return to the hospital where I was still holding a job on the staff of Bispebjerg Hospital after one year in America. I had promised to get back home.

While doing my shopping for China I stayed with Mrs. Fagg. One day when I came home from church alone I said to Mrs. Fagg, "I noticed the headlines in the paper. There's been a terrible earthquake in Japan." Mrs. Fagg, who was of the old school, said, "That's too bad. I really must know about it,
but we cannot buy a newspaper." So I went to the elevator man in the house and borrowed his newspaper so Mrs. Fagg and I could read about it.

I crossed the United States and then went on a Japanese steamer to Japan. This was the first time that this Japanese boat went back to Japan after the earthquake, and many of the crew on board had not heard a word from their people, so it was very touching to land in Yokohama and find how many of these people were being met by some of their relatives. Many of them were not, of course.

We walked around Yokohama and saw the terrible destruction, and we went to see the house of Dr. and Mrs. Oltman and their daughters. They were on the ship with us. In their home there was not much destroyed, but when we went with them to the bluff in Yokohama, we really could see the terrible destruction to that big city. And in Yokohama at the Ferris Seminary, that's where one of our missionaries was killed during that earthquake.

From Japan our ship carried us to Shanghai, and then we changed to a coastal steamer to Amoy. When I had written to my father and mother that I was going to Amoy, my father, not knowing too much about the town, looked it up in the Danish encyclopedia and there it said, "Amoy is the dirtiest city in the world." He was horrified that his daughter was going there.

I was warmly welcomed by the mission and then I was sent to Chang chou to be with Bessie Bruce. With Bessie I shared the unmarried missionaries' residence in Chang chou right near the big Tang-hoa church. She was the principal of the girls' primary school right near our compound. The students had never had any physical exercise or been taught to play, so Bessie had now started to teach them ball games and other games. She put up a swing set in the kindergarten. She had the playground leveled. Now, the Chinese teachers feared that people passing by would look over the wall and watch the girls play. Even running was not proper for a girl.
We had several boarders and some teachers living in the school dormitory. One of the teachers got ill. The Chinese doctor diagnosed it as bubonic plague, something I'd never seen before. But I took care of the teacher. We isolated her in her room and I changed her dressing everyday. This was before we had the anti-plague vaccine, but fortunately no one else got the dreaded disease.

I was studying Chinese with a seminary student. Not being used to sitting so much, I'm glad I had a call to help in two baby cases. Fortunately, they were boys. I met a Chinese woman who had killed seven of her babies because they were girls. The Chinese do not believe it is a sin if they cover the baby's face with the placenta so he does not have a chance to breathe.

Bessie Bruce and I often visited churches in villages near Chang chou. They always warmly received us. We would sit on the women's side. There is a high partition in the middle of church separating the sexes. There were always many new hearers who needed instruction. While singing, we'd stand next to a woman who could not read. We'd quickly recite the lines of the hymns, thus the woman could learn many verses by heart.

We can't say that there was a reverent, quiet atmosphere in the church. Often the women would call out to each other or to their children who would run around. Babies were being fed, and with a sharp whistling sound from their mother, encouraged to urinate on the mud or brick floor. The babies did not wear diapers, but trousers open in the crotch which makes the process handy, also for older children who squat where they see fit, at times calling their dog to clean up after them. Even pigs and chickens find their way through the open church doors.

Walking on narrow pathways between the churches on mountain paths, we'd meet hundreds of coolies carrying heavy burdens of rice or salt or wood, or
such things. Young men look old and drawn; their shoulders have a deep dent from the constant wearing down of the bamboo stick.

Bessie and I were very happy to have a young missionary couple living not too far from us, Rev. and Mrs. Henry Beltman. Henry's job was to oversee the building of Talmage College, which was to move upcountry from the coast in order to give the boy students more of an atmosphere of Chinese country life. The architecture of the school is red brick buildings with beautiful partly Chinese style with blue slanting roofs. The site was an old temple ground. Twenty-four acres of land, beautiful long stone steps were unearthed, and one day we were called to see that the diggers had found three large stone idols in good condition. How we wished we could have displayed them, but we were advised to bury them immediately because if the Chinese non-Christian community would see them, they would demand that the sacred temple grounds should be returned to the city. The material and workmen were all paid for in cash, which in those days was brass or other metal coins with a hole in the middle. A thousand cash was only worth a few cents, and you can imagine the weight of them. Mr. Beltman always had to take a rick-shaw when he carried hundreds of strings in a sack.

When General Tan Kheng Beng, who was favorably inclined toward the missionaries, took over the town, Mr. Beltman negotiated with him to buy great big stones from the city wall, for the purchase of hundreds of beautifully cut stone boulders just perfect for the foundations for the buildings of Talmage College. The stones came from the city walls. These had been torn down during the wars, and so the walls were of no use any more. We were able to buy these stones, and then we had coolies carry them for days from the city walls over to our compound. We wanted to do this hurriedly lest we should have another change of generals who was not favorably inclined to mission work.
All the digging and building of the school was done by manual labor. No tractors, no cranes. I watched the slender eighteen-year-old girl who looked more like twelve years old carry burdens up the hill. I tried to put her bamboo pole on my shoulder, but couldn't even lift it off the ground. She earned forty cents, which was equivalent to fifteen U.S. money a day.

We did not generally travel alone, but one time Bessie had to go to the coast, to the Island of Kulangsu, and she traveled down alone. When it came time to come back after a few days, she found that we had been at war in Chang chou and we had had a change of warlords, so there was no boat for her to come back up the river. However, after waiting some days, she got word that there would be a boat early the next morning. When she got on board she learned that the boat would not leave for five hours. There was hardly a place to sit. However, within a few hours, an officer came on board and ordered the boat to leave immediately. All passengers were ordered to crawl down below the deck, fearing that the soldiers would be firing from the shores.

Arriving in Chioh-be, a large city on the riverside, all the shops and homes were boarded up fearing the soldiers' looting. Fortunately there were a few Christians among the passengers, so Bessie decided to walk with them the last two or three hours to Chang chou since soldiers had commanded the busses. The Chinese were happy to have a foreigner in their group. They felt they were better protected against attacks. On the way they met several groups of coolies forced to help carry soldiers' equipment. She was nervously exhausted when she finally arrived in Chang chou.

While she had been gone, we had had the change of general, and I had watched the soldiers fleeing. This meant coolies to help carry the soldiers' burdens, boxes of ammunition, large kettles, and so on. For emergency supplies most soldiers carried a sausage-shaped cloth bag full of rice slung
over their shoulders. On such a day we tried to keep our servants indoors lest they should be caught. I heard they expected to catch five hundred men. They'd tie them together, ten or twelve in groups, and force them on.

I happened to pass a temple where the soldiers lived. There was great confusion as they were packing to leave. They were ordered to roll up their banners with the characters inside. Officers were to ride on sedan chairs.

These coolies that are taken away from home often do not return. Some of them find their way back, but often they go along with the soldiers and never return home. That evening our cook came upstairs carrying his lantern. He had answered the knock on the gate and came to report that a foreigner wanted to speak to us. He turned out to be a Russian in leather boots and uniform, an advisor to the army which had just fled. He asked if we would hide him overnight until he could get other clothes so that he could escape unnoticed. Of course we refused since we were not supposed to take sides with any government officials.

On February 24, I wrote, "Last night we had thieves in our house." Chinese are clever at climbing up a bamboo pole. They must have placed one at the front of our house and then opened the wooden lattice work and crawled in on our veranda, and from there they could walk right into our study and bedrooms. In the morning when we discovered that several of our brass ornaments were missing, we called the school principal and she reported it to the police. When they came they looked at our desk tops and table tops, and they found ashes from small torches. The police told us that the thieves had burned a certain doped incense which made us sleep so hard that we had not heard anything. This was really fortunate. What would have happened if we had walked in on them! The next day the chief of police came all dressed in a long silk gown. We kowtowed to each other, and he was very apologetic and assured us that such a thing would not happen again.
Every time we had a change of warlords it meant levying taxes and
looting of the stores. In some places the farmers and merchants had paid
taxes ten years in advance. One general felt that the farmers were very
impoverished, so he ordered them to grow opium in order to earn more money
quickly. This was really not the policy of the Nationalist government.
Some people had been executed lately for running opium dens, but these war-
lords, they did just as they pleased. Not even the Christian farmers were
exempt from growing poppies in certain percentages of their fields. So the
leaders of our church and the leaders from Amoy came up and they discussed
the problem, and then they put in a petition asking that the Christian farmers
might be exempt from growing poppies. This was partly permitted.

Through traveling evangelists, we often heard stories from mountain
villages. Once, the head of a strong bandit group invited fourteen bandit
leaders from the surrounding villages to come and have a big feast with him,
and while they were eating, suddenly there was a blast of firecrackers, and
this means great honor for the guests. But at the same time guns were fired
and all the fourteen leaders were killed. Such stories do not get in the
papers; nor do the people dare to talk about it.

After a few weeks of peace, we decided to travel to Tong-an to visit Mrs.
Vandeweg, who had just lost her husband. He was such a hard-working man. He
had first been a missionary in Africa and then he decided to become a medical
missionary, so went back to the Netherlands to study, and went to China.
After two years, he died. His widow and two sons returned to the Netherlands.

While in Tong-an we visited the sights around. We were told that in
Tong-an almost every house had a leper living there. Fortunately, now the
mission hospitals had started to give them treatments. Here I saw the only
leper with a lion face that I have ever seen. It is indeed an awesome sight.
The face of the girl looked just like a lion, and always in a case like that
the parents keep the child inside lest people look at her.

We went out to a sight where there was a temple. The temple, the man told us, had been built in his lifetime, and never have I seen such delicate stone carvings. The pillars were beautiful, but unfortunately they had been placed on wooden drums, and the white ants had eaten the wooden drums so the pillars had fallen down and the whole temple was destroyed. And it hadn't even been there a lifetime. Such a waste of work.

How many changes of warlords we had I have no count of. But one day when we had the worst fighting, bullets were whistling through the palm trees near our veranda where I was standing. Our pastor's wife was crawling near the wall to get over to the school. When she saw me, she called out for me to get downstairs under cover. It was a good thing I did, for we found bullet holes in the wall near the place I had been standing.

After the worst shooting was over, I saw a wounded soldier outside our gate, and thinking I should help him, I went to get my first-aid kit. Bessie Bruce warned me, saying that his regiment was fleeing town, so they would be picking him up. If not, I might have him on my hands the rest of my life. Being from the north, he did not speak our language.

That evening, Mr. Beltman came over to escort us to his house for dinner. There was still some shooting, so Mr. Beltman called out, "Stop shooting while we cross the street!" And they did. Taking us home later after dark, we carried lanterns. There were guards on every corner, so when we approached, a sentry would call out, "Who's there?" And Mr. Beltman answered "No lang," which means "good people." That was our password. And the next morning, I was called to the house of a Chinese student who had been shot in the abdomen by a stray bullet while standing on the veranda of the British high school. There was no hospital in town, and no way of transporting her to our hospital in Amoy, so she died of peritonitis. It surprised me to watch while her
parents showed her the pretty clothes she was to wear and told her that her coffin was very expensive. That, apparently, means a lot to the Chinese.

On June 22, 1924 I wrote, "We are busy getting ready for the closing of school. The children will give a program for parents. They are very clever in putting on plays and give a variety of programs." And then I also wrote, "Sun Yat-sen has died. Five times we heard that he'd been killed, but we are not sure. The rumor is that he was killed in order to cause a split in his army. Here we have a change in generals. We are between the north and the south."

We spent the summer on Kuliang, near Foochow, a mountain resort where our mission had a cottage. Six of us rented the cottage. We were Edna Beekman, Jean Nienhuis, Bessie Bruce, Cynthia Borgman, Tena Holkeboer, and myself. We had a wonderful time and a good Christian fellowship with missionaries from other parts of South China. We organized a choir and sang the "Crucifixion." Some of us who were still studying brought our Chinese teachers.

When it came time to get down the mountain, the six of us had thirty coolies as burden bearers—mostly women. You can imagine the noise while we were bargaining as we were getting ready to go! We could not get sedan chairs for all of us, so some of us walked down, and we had to walk along tiresome mountain paths. We even had to go around a longer way due to the moving of troops around there. We went by way of Ku-shan temple.

When we got to the riverside, it was about time for the boat to leave. We got our baggage on the boat. We had to leave with the tide, and get out to the coastal steamer which was anchored out in the middle of the bay. Just as we were ready to leave, the boat sprang a leak and we had to get all our baggage back to shore. By the time the boat people had patched the hole with mud and rags, it was too late to go that evening, so we walked to the University
of Foochow where the Martins from England took us in for the night. After our return to Amoy, the mission decided I should work with Jean Nienhuis at Hope Hospital.

Jean Nienhuis had started a nursing training school. In those days it was difficult to get any girls to take up nursing as a profession, so we had to start with older women. Students were not interested in manual labor and their parents would not allow them to touch other people, especially since this involved men, too. But gradually a few junior high school graduates joined us. Chinese and foreign doctors helped teach the different subjects, and I recall struggling to teach nursing ethics in the Amoy vernacular. No easy task, but fortunately I had a wonderful woman teacher who was a great help to all us missionaries.

In the spring of 1925 we were visited by an American nurse. She was traveling around checking on hospitals which had applied to register their nursing school. Hope Hospital was well-equipped, so we had no difficulty living up to the standards set by the government. This meant that from now on all the nurses on graduation would take the government exam and become registered nurses.

One night my servant came and told me that for more than fifteen minutes someone had been calling "help". Asking why he didn't inform me before, he answered that he didn't know who it was. I quickly got some hospital coolies with lanterns down to the jetty and there found two Englishmen who had been washed to shore. I put them in the hospital room with patients' clothes. My remark about this accident was that I wished that they had been Chinese because my coolie remarked that he didn't really think that I would have helped them the way I did the British.

Mr. Vander Haar, you ask about anti-Christian feeling among the Chinese. Yes, we did feel there was some of that. Whole villages were so steeped in
Buddhism and superstition that they did not want us to come and preach to them. They wanted nothing to do with us. There was some persecution if a child became a Christian, but not nearly as much as there was in India, or in the Muslim countries. I remember one woman who after repeated warnings from her wealthy husband kept on sneaking off to church. She was the number one wife of five. When she bravely took the step of joining and being baptized, he pushed her out of the house and gave her an empty bowl which was as much as to say, "Now you can go begging." Fortunately she knew about our women's school, so she came there and she studied and later she became a very faithful Bible woman.

The anti-foreign feeling was mostly against the British. On August 24, 1925, I wrote, "The Chinese principal of the English school in Amoy was shot by students." The newspaper said that he was friendly with the British. The next day he was accused of being patriotic. The following day a British steamer entered the harbor, and several missionaries wanted to board to get off to Foochow, but four students with guns prevented them from going aboard. Just as the ship was due to leave, the customs launch came and the students dispersed. The next day the newspapers reported about the brave students who risked their lives. They had held out in spite of shooting from the British ship. Not a shot was fired.

On October 5, 1925, after the Shanghai affair, that is, the shooting of the students on the bridge in Shanghai, the Chinese humiliated the British—called them foreign devils, et cetera. All summer the missionaries had been wondering if they would be able to return to their schools because the students went on strike. But now, the students on their own initiative sent a telegram to apologize.

It may be true that the British officials didn't always treat the Chinese right, but that's not the fault of the missionaries. Due to the anti-British
feeling, the British sent an airplane carrier into Amoy harbor. The Chinese were very "brave," saying, "Oh, we can beat the British." The Chinese only have very small gunboats. When I asked the Chinese doctor, "What would you do if it came to war between Britain and China?" "Oh," he said, "I would send my family to Singapore," which in those days was a British colony. In other words, they would be under British rule.

While working at Hope Hospital we had many interesting patients. One elderly woman whom we called "Velvet" came from a village on the coast where no white person had ever been. Velvet could neither read nor write, but when our blind Bible woman recited verses to her anthems, she was quick at learning them by heart. When she recovered she could hardly wait to get home and tell her people about Christ.

She returned for a visit and begged me to accompany her back because her people would not believe that there was such a person dressed in white (that is for mourning for the Chinese) with blue eyes and white skin. One man said, "If ever I see such a person, I'll cut off my ear." Velvet traveled on the only means of communication available to her village, namely boats with flat bottoms on which stood uncovered wooden buckets with human fertilizer. They sailed once a week from the city of Amoy to her farming village. Indeed a precious cargo! But I knew I could not take that for several hours, so I delayed for a couple of weeks until our hospital chaplain could hire a motor boat. Several of our hospital staff were able to go along, and we spread around in the village in groups in order to call on many homes.

I happened to come across a group of people who were trying to revive a woman who had fallen by the wayside. They sent for the herb doctor. He brought a long steel needle which he pierced through her tongue. He ordered a small boy to urinate in a tin can, and the liquid was forced down the woman's throat. Counter irritants were used, such as pinching, using the knuckles
on two fingers. Some women are experts in this kind of treatment. I sug-
gested cold water on her head, but I soon left because their next treatment
they explained to me would be the last resource. Hang the woman on the
ladder, tying her by her hair, and pulling on her body in order to shake her
back to consciousness.

Velvet came back several times for visits, and when she had learned new
Bible nurses and hymns she would return to her village and tell them all about
Christ. She decided that she wanted to be baptized and she wanted to wear
white during her baptism, and that was very unusual for a Chinese in those
days.

I do not have the date of this, but in my notes I write that Chiang Kai-
shek's coastal officers decided that a radio station must be built on an
uninhabited island on the coast of China. So, 104 technicians and laborers
were taken to the island with a supply of food and water to last them for the
time that it would take them to build the station. The island could only be
reached at a certain tide. After a couple of months of work, an SOS was sent
calling for more food. The government officials feared that if they sent a
ship, the workmen would try to escape, so they delayed and delayed, in spite
of the desperate calls telling them that the men were dying of beri-beri.
Finally a Swedish ship happened to intercept the radio messages, so they went
to the island and saw the ghastly sight. Bloated bodies of men lying on the
beaches. Only 16 men survived. The ship brought them to Hope Hospital where
we were only able to save a few of them.

In March 1926 I attended the first nurses' conference in Nanking. We
were 200 nurses; 96 were foreigners from many lands. There were in those days
300 missionaries in Nanking, so we were placed in different homes while attend-
ing the conference.

November 11, 1926, Jean Mienhuis returned from the USA. Tena Holkeboer
needed another year at home after having undergone a big operation. At this
time Mr. and Mrs. Brinckerhoff visited our mission. This led to many meetings
and a reception at the president's house near Amoy University, and evenings
of fun. I was supposed to move to Sio-khe, but Cantonese soldiers were
roaming the countryside making travel dangerous. If it was really true that
the Cantonese army wanted to work for a unified country, then there might be
peace for a while, but it generally did not last longer than until another
general came and took over. Before I went to Sio-khe I had to take my
second year language exam, write an essay, and read a book. Read the book
of Mark and know 300 characters.

On January 16, 1927, I wrote, "Strong anti-foreign and anti-Christian
feeling." There were processions and slogans in Amoy and on Kulangsu, and
billboards and big posters against foreign governments. On Christmas day a
long procession carried banners and slogans. Helen Joldersma, who had
recently arrived in China from America, thought the students were celebrating
Christmas, so she marched along, smiling and happy. Fortunately, Edna
Beekman happened to see her, and she quickly pulled her out and called her back
into San-loh, the unmarried missionary residence on Kulangsu.

Travel was difficult. Bandits were everywhere. River boats were plundered.
The boat people must pay 1000 Chinese dollars every month as a peace offering
so they won't be robbed. We heard a lot about kidnapping. Our mission had
a policy that no ransom would be paid for kidnapped missionaries. On April
14, 1927, I wrote that for a while everything was peaceful here in Sio-khe.
We were able to go to villages on the mountains and hold evangelistic meet-
ings and give medical treatment and advice and innoculate against typhoid
fever and cholera. But on April 11, we received an urgent letter from
Chang chou. We had to leave at once. Chang chou was in an uproar. In
order to get to the International Settlement on Kulangsu, we had to pass
through Chang chou. We quickly packed and rode with our baskets on the riverboat. For three days on the boat the weather was beautiful, but just as we were landing it started to pour. Our baskets and all our goods got wet, so we had to spend the next day drying our things. The mission had now rented three houses on Kulangsu, the International Settlement, in order to find places for everybody who had escaped from upcountry. Fortunately, I could stay with Jean Nienhuis, so I could help in the hospital there.

May 19, 1927. Schools must now register with the government. In order to do so they must be up to the specific standard. Teachers must have degrees. The equipment for chemistry and physics must be plentiful and up to date. The mission would like to have Christian Chinese take over the schools, but they don't seem to be anxious to take over.

Spring of 1928 I wrote: "Mr. Vander Meer returned to Amoy after three years of study in the United States." Before I left on furlough, he asked me to marry him upon my return in 1929. Due to strikes at Talmage and general unrest, the school closed early, so Mr. Vander Meer was able to take an extended vacation. He traveled hard class across Siberia, and we were married in the cathedral in Copenhagen. When it came time for us to return to China via Siberia, the war between Russia and Japan prevented us from traveling through Manchuria, so we were obliged to go all the way to Vladivostok and take a chance of getting a ship out from there. After a week on the train from Moscow, as we approached Vladivostok, all the passengers were asked to bring their passports to the dining car. Mr. Vander Meer went there to see what was going on. He realized that the Russian officials could not read some of the passengers' papers. The passengers were told to leave their passports. Mr. Vander Meer didn't like the idea, so when it was his turn, he held tight to his passport and refused to give it up, saying that it was against the
American policy.

In Vladivostok we ran into all kinds of unpleasant experiences, but fortunately we discovered that a Japanese ship had arrived and was ready to take people that were stranded there in Vladivostok over to Japan. They had no cabins or other comforts for us, but we were glad to get away. After a few days in Japan we went back to Amoy and were cordially received by our missionaries there. And we went up to Chang chou where we were assigned to live in one of the new mission houses on Talmage College campus.

In December the campus played host to Kek Le-Thoan, the big meeting, a big conference attended by many Christians, foreigners and Chinese. In our home we entertained Dr. Beets and Mr. and Mrs. De Korn from the Christian Reformed Church which was in the process of establishing work inland from Shanghai.

In February, 1930, we went to Kulangsu for a mission meeting which was to be a very strenous meeting due to the unsettled conditions. Mr. Koepp lost seven pounds during that week of meetings. We wanted to turn over our schools to the Chinese, but they did not seem anxious to take over. Another question to be settled was concerning our Bible School. The three missions had joined in this project: the Reformed Church, and the London Presbyterians, and the British Anglicans. The number of students was way down. They did not like the idea of the liberal teaching, so we were considering starting a Bible school of our own again.

While living in Chang chou I worked on different projects with the other missionaries, such as childrens' meetings, Sunday schools, and meetings for mothers and babies, baby clinics, and I also taught English at Talmage College. The political situation I wrote in December, 1929, "The political situation is getting more tense." The papers didn't say much about the unpopularity of Chiang Kai-shek, but the Chinese were anxious about the
situation. Communists were spreading literature among our students. Also in Chang chou the soldiers were robbing and killing. They would steal our electricity and our bulbs had no power. An official demanded our new beautiful church for theatrical performances. The consistory refused, but the locks were broken and they used the church anyway.

The Communists are back in Leng-na. No place is safe because our good soldiers have gone south to fight near Canton. On December 15, Mr. Vander Meer writes: "School is going on in spite of the fact that we refuse to register under the present instruction. More severe regulations regarding Bible study and Christian activities have been sent out from the education authority which make it impossible for us to register. Our Board of Foreign Missions highly commended the mission for taking the firm stand, but the Chinese Christians fear that the schools may be closed. But when the government is determined to take religion out of the schools, we have little choice of maintaining the Christian character of our schools."

February 6, 1930, we expect a deputation from the Board; Dr. Potter, and Mr. Van Kersen, and Miss Cob. It is not safe to visit Leng-na and Sio-khe. The Communists are still in control in Leng-na. Only the walls of our new mission houses stand after all the wood work has been torn up and used as fuel. People are fleeing. There is much misery.

On May 29, 1930, our son Canute and Ellen Veenschoten were baptized by our Chinese pastor in the big Tang Poa An church in Chang chou. On May 30, the British missionaries left Chang chou for the coast due to the fear of the Communists. In Amoy prison, the Communists fought their way into the prison and freed forty prisoners. The situation is tense. True, we have many soldiers in town, but they're so new and not issued guns lest they should turn around and use them in the opposite direction.

Mr. Vander Meer went to a meeting, and while he was away that evening my
servants and I fought white ants. Our new house has a sheet of zinc about half a foot above the cement foundations, but even so we have a great problem every year with white ants. We place candles in water basins all around the house, and ants fly into the candles and burn their wings and fall into the basins. The water must be changed repeatedly due to the large number of layers of ants.

On November 2, 1931, Mr. Vander Meer writes that the students have become very patriotic due to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. Each school has organized an anti-Japanese, save-the-country society. The purpose is to make the boycott of Japanese goods more effective. The boys are also starting military drill. Japan has much reason to grow impatient with the continued delays of China in settling the large number of disputes. Nevertheless it is hard to believe that the extreme methods the Japanese are using are necessary. Our students get so excited at patriotic rallies. The boys told the girls to stop wearing the pretty colored barrets in their hair, and the girls answered back saying, "And what would happen if you all should stop wearing Japanese plastic belts?"

Mr. Vander Meer writes on April 13, 1932: "Alarming reports. The Communists, 10,000 strong, are occupying Fukien." We quickly closed our schools, and within a few hours Chang chou was in an uproar, and few means of conveyance were available.

June 10, 1932. For three years the Communists have been about 75 miles from Chang chou, so the populace knows what they can expect. We escaped to the coast where we now are waiting events. The Communists are studying the church role in order to extract money from Christians, but most of them have fled. While refugeeing on Kulangsu, we carried on school classes since many teachers and students also escaped to the coast. We now had learned that the provincial authorities have approved the registration of Talmage, and now it
must be sent to Nanking. No difficulties are expected there. I believe our Christian work must be maintained at this time. We may have to change our plans. We are aware of tremendous forces which are working against us and we realize more fully the need of divine guidance and strength. One of our teachers who formerly was head of the anti-Christian forces in Chang chou had a change of heart and is talking about becoming a preacher.

Mr. Vander Meer adds that we are disturbed about the continued reports of the business depression in Europe and America. You may be sure that this makes us most careful about our use of every dollar that is sent to us from the church at home. Fortunately, exchange rates are favorable for the Board, otherwise our work would suffer greatly.

The government troops are moving in on Chang chou. The Nineteenth Route Army is coming down from Shanghai, so we are waiting the day to return to Chang chou. The Communists said that they don't want to fight, but apparently they need money. They demanded six hundred thousand dollars from Chang chou and four hundred thousand from Chioh-be, and if it was not given to them, they said they would burn the towns. A few days after the Communists' retreat, Bill Angus and William Vander Meer went to Chang chou so they could survey the destruction. They almost cried when they saw that in one of our mission houses all the plumbing which had recently been installed, this was something new to our mission houses, but all the plumbing had been torn out. The mosquito screening had been cut from all the houses, and the floors had been torn up. The soldiers had cooked on our hardwood floor in our new house, so the walls were all black with soot, and there were black rings on the floors. All lighter furniture had been carried out. What the Communists did not want, the local people came and helped themselves to. They carried clothing, et cetera, in dresser drawers. Floors had been torn up. In our houses all the books had been thrown outside and burned in a great heap.
The people were so relieved to see Mr. Vander Meer and Mr. Angus return to Chang chou. They gave them great hope that things would be better. Some of the people around returned a few of our things, and some of it we paid for and thanked them for taking care of it. After the summer, much of the repair work had been done on our houses, and the missionaries were able to return to their work in the station, and all were happy to take up the work again. Except in Leng-na, it was not safe there yet.

The fighting is still going on around us. Chhoa Teng-khai from the Nineteenth Route Army is second in command, and he's living in one of our mission houses on Talmage College here. We are protected by guards. We have many soldiers, but are they loyal to the Nationalists, question mark. School has opened with 154 boys, which we consider quite good under the circumstances. We need to replace a lot of the broken equipment, but most major repairs of the building are done. Mr. Vander Meer is eager to start the students working, so he himself leads in cutting hedges, cleaning the campus, et cetera. Some teachers and a few students are beginning to help. He's encouraging the students to build a basketball court. This would not be so strange in the United States, but here labor is looked down upon.

One day as I was walking the streets with a Chinese friend, a woman carrying a basket stopped me and asked if I would buy some dishes that she had. So I looked at them and some of them were my own dishes, but I thought maybe she had some more at home, so we said, well, we'll go home and see what she had. And she did have several of my dishes, and also some of Mrs. Renskers', so we got some of them, and then I said to her, instead of giving her money, I would give her cans of milk. We had noticed that in a little basket was a Chinese baby, and the baby was being fed milk. But the baby had rats ears, so apparently some parents did not want her, and this old woman said she would feed the baby. So I said we would bring her milk from time to time to feed the baby. Well,
General Chhoa Teng-khai and his family are very friendly, and so are other officers. Some of them are asking for English lessons which give us a chance to teach them the Bible. We noticed that Colonel Chen had quite a well-worn Bible. General Wong, who is really in charge, he speaks good English and comes to visit us quite often. He says he likes to shoot tigers.

The students have started classes for illiterates. The government is encouraging this. The collapse of the Chinese army in Jehol was most disappointing. The outlook looks rather hopeless. Unless foreign powers put pressure, financial and otherwise, on Japan, she will continue her advance over China at her convenience.

On August 14, 1933, I write Mr. Vander Meer wanted his family to get away from the heat in Chang chou, so he brought us up to what we call the Big Hat Mountain where a few missionaries have small cottages. We were feeling especially safe since the American consul, Mr. and Mrs. Franks and their children were also up there, and because General Wong had sent soldiers to protect us. However, it didn't last long 'til he sent word that he was sorry, but the soldiers were needed to fight Somewhere in the south. The consul advised us not to stay, so we all had to get down to the steaming heat in the valley. Two British ladies had just unpacked and were told to pack again and go the next day. We were escorted by soldiers, and between us we had four sedan chairs and sixty burden bearers. On our way down we learned that people were again fleeing Chang chou, so the boys and I, instead of going back home to Chang chou, went down to Kulangsu. All the summer Mr. Vander Meer was holding summer school in order to keep the teachers and the students busy. The mission called us together for a meeting to discuss the situation. Also because Dr. Strick had left our mission in about 1922—he wanted to start his own hospital at that time—but now he wanted to get back into the mission, and such questions had
to be voted on.

The Nineteenth Route Army has now taken over Fukien Province which makes the Nationalist Army jealous. Some fear that the Nineteenth Route Army will go over to the Communists and fight against the Nationalists.

Shortly before going to Big Hat Mountain our mission had to make some important decisions. The Board informed us that they cut our work budgets forty percent and our salaries twenty-five percent. It's going to cause hardships, for the value of the dollar has gone down from one to three, to one to two.

Chang chou, and especially the church, has entertained distinguished guests, General Chang Dh'i-kiang, formerly chief of staff of General Feng Yu-shen's army, and now a high official in the Nanking government. He came primarily in the interests of the hundredth anniversary of the American Bible Society, but also to arouse interest in Chinese boxing, he himself being an athlete. The Chinese Boxing Association conducts a school in Nanking. Accompanying him were his family, several secretaries, a personal guard, and a boxing team. All were entertained at Talmage, so it was our privilege to have the general, his wife, and two children as guests in our home.

In one of three addresses he gave in our city churches he told how he formerly was opposed to the church and had had men punished for preaching the gospel. Later he came under the influence of General Feng and became a Christian. It was now his firm conviction that there is no hope for China except as it comes through personal salvation through Christ. His statements concerning the Bible cheered all lovers of that book.

During a feast at Talmage College, a large beautifully illustrated book concerning the work of the American Bible Society was distributed. The following day he laid a cornerstone at the British Mission girls' school, then rushed to the military barracks to tell the soldiers about the value of boxing, then
on to the park where he addressed a huge throng of people and gave an exhibitio
of the shadow boxing. The fact that such an outstanding man in Chinese
public affairs has taken a strong stand for the Bible and Christianity would
give the local churches added prestige. This comes at an opportune time, for
with the collapse of the Chinese Army in Jehol, many patriotic people are
 sorely perplexed and do not know which way to turn.

The people continue the boycott of the Japanese, and have collected money
for the Northern Army. Now, to have one of their leading military men tell them
that the salvation of China lies elsewhere means much. While General Chang was
guest at Talmage he was asked to write the characters on our new school gate.
He is known as one of the finest calligraphers. It is considered an honor to
be asked to show such skill.

We now get news dispatches over the radio from Manila or Nanking. Recently
we heard a speech to the Communists from the Nationalists urging their coopera
tion against the Japanese.

October 29, 1934. John Sung is holding evangelistic meetings all over
China. He is at present here in Fukien. He is son of a Methodist minister.
He went to the United States to study. Graduated with several Ph. D.'s. He's
a very eccentric man, and for a while in the United States he was considered
ready for an asylum. On his way back to China the Lord called him to preach
the gospel to his own people, so he threw away his diplomas, he threw them over-
board, and is giving all his time now to the Lord's work. People flock to
hear him. He preaches three times a day, and three hours each time, and
people don't get tired of listening. Some missionaries refuse to hear him.
Some feel that he will upset the minds of the otherwise stable Christians.

He organizes bands of Christians to go around preaching the gospel. In
Amoy alone we have a hundred bands. Each walks with a banner which explains
their message. I understand that the church in Thailand is refusing to have
him enter that country to preach, but this is my remark: With the wars in South China the people were dispersed all over Southeast Asia. Many of these were Christians who had taken part in John Sung's crusade and continued gathering in evangelistic groups to spread the gospel. Thus we see that many Sunday schools and churches have mushroomed because of Dr. Sung's message of forgiveness and salvation.

1935 our family went on furlough. We sailed on a Japanese ship by way of the Suez Canal, and landed in London where we visited with Dr. Fahmy and his wife. Then we went on to Denmark where we visited with my family, and then on to the United States. In the spring term of 1936 our son Canute, then six years old, went to school in Kalamazoo, and Paul, three and a half, went to nursery school there. When we crossed country we stopped in Iowa with my husband's family, and there my sister from Denmark, my sister Asta, joined us, and she drove with us all the way to the West coast. Here we boarded another ship, a Japanese ship, and went back to China.

We returned to Chang chou looking forward to working together, but unfortunately it wasn't going to be for long. In 1937 the Japanese repeatedly bombed our city, often aiming at our schools. Since the bombers had to come quite a distance we could generally expect them around noon, so the schools opened at daybreak, and were dismissed at ten, and then met again at three p.m.

While the Communists had lived on our campus in 1933 they had used the large cut stones from the old city wall as you may remember that General Tan Kheng Beng had sold them to our school. The Communists had built strong shelters with these. We either stayed there, or when the bombers came more frequently, we watched them diving over the city, shooting with machine guns. How many really were killed is not known. After several days and nights of no sleep we hired a big bus, got our teachers, wives and children, and the necessary supplies on, and went to a temple way up in the hills. Cobwebs and dirt were swept from
the temple and we placed our bamboo stretchers for beds and covered them with mosquito nets, and there we had our first good night's sleep. We stayed there for about a week and then word came from the American Consulate that he wanted the American women and children to leave China, so we packed our things and we went to Kulangsu.

The mission decided that some families should go home on furlough. Mrs. Veenschoten with her three children and I with my two were sent off to Baguio in the Philippines. Here we rented a government cottage. We taught our children, and we cooked on a wood stove. While we were refugees in Baguio we found that many of the merchants in the town there were Chinese, and some of them were even Amoy-speaking. Several came from Christian homes, or studied in mission schools on the mainland of China. Among them was Mr. Kho Kong-Iau and his family. He had a furniture business on the main street. One day a fire started in the house near his shop where he also had his home. These houses were wooden structures and were very close together. He feared that the wind which directed the flames toward his house would spark fires on his roof. He started to pray, and suddenly the wind blew in the opposite direction, so his home was no more in danger. He came running up to our house, went down on his knees, and all out of breath he told us how he hadn't prayed for a long time and now God had heard his feeble prayer.

So with Mr. Kho and other Christians we approached the Church of the Brethren and asked if we could start having services for the Chinese. In time it was arranged and we were heartily welcomed by the Filipino congregation. Now, the Chinese and Filipinos had not mingled, but this started a happy Christian fellowship with social gatherings in the church fellowship hall. For our Thanksgiving party we rented a large hall in a hotel where small tables were arranged and the two nationalities shared their Christian fellowship. Speeches and prayers and songs and other entertainment broke the ice.
There was even a song written for the occasion to the tune of "In Christ There is no East or West."

The Veenschotens and our family were frequently invited to the Filipino homes for an afternoon meal generally served on the lawn. There were missionaries there from other parts of China, too, and they were also invited to join. Catholic neighbors were surprised that Americans would associate socially with the na-ive Filipinos. The Catholic priests and nuns who were mostly Spanish, did not socialize with their parishoners.

The Open Market in Baguio was very colorful. Igarotes and other aboriginal tribes brought their products. Not only vegetables, fruit, and wood, but also hand woven materials and embroidered dresses, et cetera. The market was opened on Sunday, and I recall the struggle of some Christian families who decided to close their stalls on Sunday.

On May 18 I wrote we were happy to have Bill with us for a short vacation. When he left Baguio he went down to Manila and at the agricultural school there he purchased leg-horn chickens and a variety of fruit trees. He got them loaded on the ship for Amoy, but the boat was delayed in Manila for a couple of days, and when he wailed and approached Amoy Harbor, they got a radio message to stay in the outer harbor because the Japanese were bombing Amoy and were at the point of taking over the city of Amoy and Kulangsu. That night our good pilot friend, George Van Krogh, who knew that Bill was due on that ship, went with his pilot motorboat and was able in the darkness to get Bill off the ship with his precious cargo, and he took his boat over to the mainland coast which was not under the Japanese and there they unloaded his goods.

The governor of Fukien, who was married to a Japanese, had said that they were not going to fight if the Japanese were going to take over Amoy, so there was not much fighting. It was good that I did not return to Amoy with Bill. What we feared had now happened. Japan had taken Amoy and Kulangsu.
had one hundred thousand refugees without water because that comes from Amoy, and without food or shelter. Dr. Holleman and Dr. Oltman and the other missionaries are organizing camp on Kulangsu while Bill is doing the same for even more refugees in Chang chou. Before the Japanese took over there were many Chinese who did not want to pay the high taxes to the Nationalist government, so they became Japanese citizens. All they had to do was buy a citizenship for fifty cents. Many of them were running opium dens which was against Nationalist government policy, and when police came, all they had to do was to show that they were Japanese citizens, and they didn't have to pay because they were Japanese citizens. Now that Japan had taken over they ordered all women and children, all Japanese citizens to go to Japan. They loaded the women and children on ships, but the men were not taken on the same ships, and we understand that they were sent to the front. The Chinese who had bought citizenship wanted to get rid of theirs but could not do that, so they, too, were sent to the front.

Rich Chinese merchants from overseas sent money and rice for the refugees, and after Amoy had fallen, many of the refugees left Kulangsu and went back to their homes on that island. Kulangsu was still an international settlement, and that's why they sought refuge there, and they were taken care of by a committee of missionaries and Chinese. At this time, word came from the Chinese government, from Chiang Kai-shek, saying that the law against the religious instruction in all schools must be changed. And Madame Chiang explained that the missionaries had showed such courage, even risking their own lives helping the refugees, they themselves being in great danger.

Now that Amoy had fallen and Kulangsu was still an international settlement, we were allowed to return from Baguio, Philippines. Kulangsu was still an international settlement with extraterritoriality, so we were allowed to live on Kulangsu, but not inland in Chang chou because the Japanese were still
bombing there. When the Japanese insisted that they needed more troops on Kulangsu to protect their citizens (it was always a wonder to us that some of these were not molested by the Chinese), the foreign population got together with the municipal council and it was voted that we, too, should call upon other governments to send troops. So both France and England and the United States each had the same amount as the Japanese troops.

We did not feel, though, that we were better protected because since there was no entertainment for sailors while they were ashore, they often got drunk and were a nuisance to the Chinese. One day when I was in my bedroom I heard a row in the hall and found that a drunk British soldier had pushed my cook against the wall, wanting to start a fight. I quickly got hold of the intruder and forced him to walk with me down the street where I knew some soldiers were stationed. When the guards saw me they started to accuse me of getting the sailor drunk, but fortunately an officer heard the row and came to my rescue. A few days later the British consul and the captain from the ship came to apologize.

Gradually many of the refugees left Kulangsu. By the time I arrived I was told there were sixty thousand. On the island of Kulangsu tents were erected and the Chinese organized themselves into working squads, some for cleaning, and some for cooking, et cetera. On Kulangsu was a large soy sauce factory owned by a Christian family, and he let them do the cooking of rice in their big woks, and then the rice was carried hot in wooden buckets to the refugee camp. Bessie Bruce, Jessie Platz, and myself were able to help. We ran baby clinics and fed the babies. The milk powder was so expensive so only babies under six months would be able to get milk.

The Japanese gradually took over parts of the China mainland, but seemed to have no intention of taking Fukien Province. But they kept on bombing. Talmage dormitory, the most beautiful building in South China, had a direct
hit and was almost destroyed, especially due to heavy rains, too. Mr. Vander Meer and the teachers searched for a place where they could move the school, and they found in Hoa-an, way up in the mountains, there were quite a few empty buildings and temples, and the villagers were quite willing to have the students come there. In the old days, at the time of the tea trade, it was a very important tea plantation center; thus it was a very rich place, but many of those buildings were now empty because China had lost the tea trade.

Near Hoa-an was a beautiful artistic bridge across a river. It was built by money donated by a wealthy overseas Chinese merchant. He wanted to help his people, thinking that they could cross over on a bridge. But instead of making use of the bridge, they blockaded it in the middle because the peasant farmers feared it would interfere with their business in the market places. Market days were important, generally every five days, and the people did not figure time by the week but by the market days. When our missionaries first settled in Leng-na they put up signs on the streets, Today is the First Day of the Week, and so on, and Sunday they would have a sign for that.

It was a tremendous task for the teachers and Bill to move the equipment up to Hoa-an. It first had to be taken six miles by burden bearers, and then loaded on a paper boat. These were called paper boats because coming down the river they always carried paper from the paper mills up the river. The paper was made of bamboo--mostly used idol "money" which was burned to please the idols. The trip up the river was very slow; there were many rapids. When Bill and his servant arrived in Hoa-an they were invited to live in what they were told was the house of one of the wealthiest families. The owner of the house was the head of the bandits; thus the school felt pretty safe because he would generally give a warning, "Now, don't travel or move any of your stuff on certain days," because they were going to raid around those places.

When Dr. Shafer traveled from Japan over to Chungking, he stopped in
Amoy to see our mission, and he wanted so much to see Talmage. So Bill took him on this trip up the river, and this was the time when he said to Bill, "I don't see how you can take it." But Bill, of course, was dedicated to his work, so he said it was well worthwhile. The people in Hoa-an were very cooperative. They helped the students find places where they could have dormitories and also where they could have classrooms in temples. The students in turn did a lot of preaching around on Sundays. They'd spend the whole day walking into the mountains preaching and teaching the word of God.

The missionaries, with the Red Cross, negotiated with the Japanese and got permission to run a boat from the mainland of China down to Kulangsu in order that the people upcountry might receive the necessary supplies. Thus, the men whose wives and children were on Kulangsu were able to take turns in coming down to see their families. This way we did get to see Bill a couple of times before Pearl Harbor, but of course after Pearl Harbor everything was closed.

During the summer of 1941 I used all available funds to lay in supplies knowing that war was inevitable. Not only did I stock up on food, but also bought shoes for the children and for Mr. Vander Meer to take up to the teachers' children, and also medicine for Talmage College. The Japanese soldiers, of course, checked on the supplies that we took up, and I recall they objected strongly when they found that the Catholic priests who also used the boat were taking upcountry crates of wine supposedly to be for the communion services.

December 8, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day. We woke up and saw the Japanese flag waving on our school flag pole, so the much-dreaded moment had come. America was involved in the war, and we were caught in Japanese territory. Mr. Vander Meer, whom we had not seen for several weeks, was still in free China, and remained there until the spring of 1944 when he crossed China and
flew over the Hump and was sent back to the USA on a troop ship.

In the meantime we realized that we had to be ready in case we had to be interned, so our suitcases were all packed. When the soldiers came to my house they saw the Danish flag and the American flag on our walls and they tore them down and threw them on the floor. Then they asked for my passport. I showed them that I had a Danish passport, so they did not know what to do since I was not an American citizen, so they said they had to go back and ask the Japanese consul. After a while they returned and said I could stay in the house with the boys.

In the meantime we saw that the Americans and the British were taken along to the empty Japanese hospital where they were interned. We think that the Japanese themselves were very surprised by the news from Pearl Harbor. They had made no arrangements for the internees.

So, since I was free to go around, I arranged with our servants to carry boiled water for drinking and food for their meals. I also went to the different homes to get clothes and toilet articles. I always accompanied the servants when they went with their loads of goods because they were scared to face the Japanese alone, and I also took my two boys along, not wishing them to be home alone. After several days of this arrangement, I was met at the gate by a Japanese officer, and he said to me, "The navy very thank you for your help."

Our houses were searched repeatedly except Mrs. Angus'. She was living with her three children in Koeppe's house. The soldiers did not realize that it was a double house. One day Joyce Angus sent for me to come because a Japanese soldier had been to her house and accused her of having guns and ammunition hidden in the house. So I quickly went to the navy headquarters and asked for someone to come and search her house, and also asked that signs be put up saying that our houses had been searched.
One day little John Angus, five years old, broke one of the seals which was sealing the door to Mr. Koeppe's study. We had been told that if a seal was broken it meant off with our heads. The officer had made the gesture with his hand to show us to be sure that we understood. I took John by the hand and went to the navy headquarters and explained to them what had happened. First they acted very angry, but when I asked to talk to a higher officer, his heart softened when he looked at John and watched him playing with the soldiers' guns. Then he ordered a soldier to go with us and reseal the door.

The internees were escorted back to their homes after about a week or ten days and told that they were not to go out. Guards were placed at every gate. They gave me an armband with Japanese characters which read that I was a "friendly enemy". The Japanese had frozen our bank accounts, but we had plenty of supplies on hand and were given a small sum each month.

My radio knobs had been sealed with a piece of paper, but whenever a Japanese soldier or someone from the consulate came to my house they were very eager to hear the latest news, so they turned the knobs under the paper. Thus we heard about the fall of Singapore and Hong Kong, and the sinking of the U.S. gunboats. It was very disheartening. From time to time the Japanese consul distributed news sheets. I wish I had kept some of these because they told about the terrible conditions in the United States, how the people in Detroit were in uproar, and how people were starving. Of course we had no communications with our husbands on the mainland China. Mrs. Angus and I asked the Japanese authorities if they would take us across so that we could join our husbands and stay with them on the mainland, but they would not allow this.

At this time there were many rumors. It was the uncertainty of the situation that made it so hard for us. Some of our Chinese people told us that the Japanese were preparing an island and they were going to take us all out to this island and no one would know then what would happen to us after
that. However, we had better news from the American vice-consul, Mr. Alcott. President Roosevelt was negotiating for an exchange of prisoners. All our radios had been taken away from us, but I had hidden mine in the closet and men on the hill, Mr. Poppen, Oltman, and Veenschoten, were eager to get the radio because they didn't have any. So, one evening Mr. Veenschoten disguised himself in a long Chinese gown and it was raining so he carried an umbrella, and came to my house. He passed the guard unnoticed and then he came in for the radio and he brought it back. The guard did not realize that it was Mr. Veenschoten that passed.

At this time we started to sell our things to the navy and to the consular people. We did not sell our food supplies nor our kerosene. We left that with the people who were going to stay on because we were not all able to go on the first exchange ship. But we were promised that there would be a second chance, so it was decided that women and children should go on the first, and also Mr. Koeppe because he was not very well. Here I must insert that we were very grateful to our servants for staying with us during this time. Rumors were spread about what the Japanese would do with our servants after we had left, but we are thankful that upon our return to China we found that our servants had never been molested for being the "running dogs" to the British and the American missionaries.

The Japanese arranged for us to travel on a small coastal steamer to Shanghai. We were told that we could take just what we could carry with us, so we each had suitcases in each hand. A small space was allowed for each one of us in the hold of the ship where we slept on the hard wooden floor. The Japanese consul came down to say good-bye to us, and he told us, "The Japanese are treating you very well," and indeed they were, considering that we were at war with Japan. The trip to Shanghai took a whole week. We traveled only during the day. At nighttime all lights were out, and we were
anchored near the coast.

In Shanghai the foreign businessmen and missionaries had been allowed to form a committee to receive the refugees that came in by ship or overland to be stationed there until we could get on the ship. We were really fortunate being allotted beds in the Shanghai American School where also our food was cooked. Our food was sufficient and good. We learned that a shipload had been sent on to France with lots of food for the French people, but by the time it arrived there the Germans had taken over and so they would not allow the ship to land, so President Roosevelt said, "Turn around and dump all the food in Shanghai godowns because it may come in handy over there." And so we were very fortunate, having cocoa and hot cereals and butter even. Also, on the Conte Verte, when we got on board there, there was sufficient food and fruit for us.

While in Shanghai we were free to walk around. I remember seeing German Jews begging. Some of them were trying to find food in the garbage cans. Some of the German women came to the school and sold us linen supplies which they had no use for, but they really needed money very badly. On the Conte Verte the Italian crew gave us very good service even though we were their enemies and we also had been told there would be no tipping because we were not allowed to take any money out with us from Shanghai.

We sailed through the Indian Ocean over to Lorenza Marcus and it was really exciting to see the American gunboats there, the crew all on deck waving to us and blowing the whistle, the victory signal. And we saw the big ship, the Gripsholm, lying in the harbor there, a beautiful white ship painted in gold with red crosses around in different places. Our ship docked near the Gripsholm, and the exchange of prisoners took place. It was interesting to see that the Japanese had been allowed to take crates with what we understand was sewing machines, and typewriters, and bicycles, and all kinds of supplies,
and what we had was mostly carried in our hands as we boarded the Gripsholm. The table was set on deck for us and we had a great American feast. Beautiful American food, and we sang "God Bless America" as we stood there around the table of abundance.

In Lorenz-Marcus we were able to mail letters to our husbands back on the mainland China, and to America to our families there who would then be ready to receive us when we arrived in New York City. During the month while we were sailing on the Conte Verte and the Gripsholm, we taught our children and took part in many activities such as sports and singing groups, prayer meetings, and so on. Canute and Paul shared a cabin with Dr. Harding from the Presbyterian mission and went sight-seeing with him in Lorenz-Marcus and Rio de Janeiro.

We arrived in New York about the first week in September. An invitation was awaiting us to join Mrs. Veenschoten and her children. They had returned to the United States before Pearl Harbor and they had rented a large house in Detroit. It seemed the wise thing for us to go and live with her since we had lived together before. I had entered the United States applying for citizenship, so when I had the call I was able to go over across the border from Detroit and enter the United States getting my first citizen paper.

The following year we rented a house in Grand Rapids, hoping that Bill could join us there. He had stayed in a mountain village with our school and needed a furlough, so he and Bessie Bruce crossed China by bus and then flew over the Hump to India where they awaited the chance to sail back to the United States on a troop ship. He arrived in May, 1944, and in the fall we sent Canute to Blair Academy in order that he might spend two successive years in the same school while we went to live in a mission house in New Brunswick.

Mr. Vander Meer had preaching engagements over the weekends, and attended
Columbia University during the week. He had a strenuous schedule, and the winter was cold. He contracted a sore throat followed by pneumonia, and died in St. Peter's Hospital in New Brunswick February 21, 1945, and was buried in the family lot in Orange City, Iowa. Here Mr. Veenschoten, his great friend and fellow worker, led the service.

Mr. Vander Meer will be remembered by the Chinese for his great patience and counseling. He would spend long hours in the evenings listening to students and teachers, helping them in their troubles and perplexities, pointing them to the greatest teacher and friend, Jesus Christ. With the ending of the war in Europe, May 5, brought me back in contact with my family there. They had survived the hardships and anxieties of the war years and their joy would have been complete had it not been that they received word about Bill's death.

That winter Katherine Green came to live with Paul and me in New Brunswick for several months. The Board made plans for Paul and me to return to China, so we made a short visit to Denmark in the spring of 1946, and sailed through the Panama Canal with Dr. Shafer and Rev. A. Van Westenburg, leaving Canute to go to Hope College. I left Paul in Shanghai American School and went down to Fukien where Bessie Bruce and I spent the years 1946 to 1950 as the only foreigners in Sio-khe. The hospital there was built by Dr. Otte, and this is where he trained the first Western doctors. Among them were two women who later were doctors on Kulangsu and worked faithfully all their lives. Never did they marry, but spent their lives helping the sick. In Sio-khe we had contacts with the churches, there were about twenty of them in the mountains, and often the preachers would come and we would discuss their problems as they tried to hold their flocks together during the trying times when people were living in constant fear of Communism.

Communist propaganda was infiltrating, especially among our students. News reports from the north were alarming. The Chinese would come to us and
say, "But America can't allow the Communists to cross the Yellow River." And later, after the Communists were approaching Fukien, they said, "But America can't let the Communists take Fukien. That's so close to Formosa." We heard that in Shanghai the Nationalist government had ordered the city to barricade by erecting a fence around the city made from the wooden planks which were a gift from the United States to Chinese fishermen after they had lost all their boats during the Japanese war. What would a fence do against cannons and bombings?

In the hospital we had a faithful Christian Chinese doctor. Every morning we gathered the hospital staff and patients for prayer and Bible study. Many patients gathered in the chapel, and many a patient I'm sure will remember to this day how he was met by the old preacher with the words, "You must repent and turn around".

The hospital together with the evangelistic workers from the women's school and teachers from the girls' school where Bessie was working made almost weekly tours to different villages preaching and teaching and giving inoculations and treatments. I recall how we visited several times in a wealthy village not far from Sio-khe. Finally we got a few women-who were willing to sit down and listen. Some months later we were surprised by several men who came from the village to talk to us. They wanted to discuss a problem with us. They said, "We want to become Christians because we understand that Christians do not have the trouble that we have. In our village, every year we feed a pig, and the families take turns feeding it one month at a time. And then at the heathen festival we slaughter the pig and put the food out for the idols. Then after this, the different families get their share of the pig. Now, through the centuries it's always been very orderly done, and the meat has been distributed among the families, but now some of them have been starting to fight because they want the better parts of the pig's meat
for their families. And so we want to give up this feeding of the pig and we want to come to hear your gospel in a church." And several of them did come.

Sio-khe had a generator for electricity, but during the years when we had been away, some parts had been stolen and we were unable to replace them. So we had to do with small kerosene lamps. We did have a gas lamp for the operating room. One evening a young man was carried in. He had cut his throat trying to commit suicide. He was a burden bearer but from lack of food he'd become so weak he could no longer support his family. When his wife saw what had happened she quickly wanted to stop the bleeding, so she picked a handful of chicken feathers from the breast of a chicken and put them on the wound, and this was the way he arrived at the hospital. So with small forceps and by the help of this gasoline lamp we had to pick out all those chicken feathers before the doctor could sew him up. His life was spared, and by help of some good food and vitamins he recovered and it was a joy to meet him on the road as he carried first the lighter burdens, and later on he would show us how he could carry a little heavier burdens, and he was very happy that he again was able to support his family.

Sio-khe received its share of United Nations Relief supplies such as milk powder, bean powder, bedding, mosquito netting, clothing, et cetera, so we set up a milk kitchen. During the war Sio-khe had had many refugees and many beggars from other parts of China when they were roaming around the mountains from the Japanese occupied territories, and many of the Christians told us that they had tried to help a few of those refugees. And now when they heard that we were opening a milk kitchen, they came streaming back to Sio-khe by the hundreds.

In the hospital courtyard the church people helped organize this milk kitchen, and everyday we were cooking great big kettles full of milk and bean powder. At first we thought we had to have them register when they came
for their milk. Each one had to bring their own bowl which would then be filled, and so we had them, since they could not write, we had them put their fingerprints on a piece of paper. This was more or less to think that we were trying to keep control of it, but later we had to give that up because there were so many of them that came, and they crowded in on us. I recall that several of them were so weak when they came first for their milk powder, and later on they were improved in health. One man who could not stand up, he came crawling on all four, just a young man, and after a few days of having been given the milk powder he was able to begin to stand up and after a while he could walk again as his legs were getting stronger.

Some years almost whole villages would be wiped out by bubonic plague, so the Chinese were beginning to realize the importance of innoculations and we went to many villages to innoculate the school children, and farmers would also come. I recall that when we were innoculating in a boys' school in Sio-khe the principal was eager to have the boys go forward to be innoculated, but he himself would not take the innoculation. Later on, a couple of years later, he himself died of plague. One day when we were on our way to innoculate some village, we heard of a village on the roadside where already several people had died from plague. We met a Chinese herb doctor who was on his way to the village, and I asked him, "How do you dare go the village if you don't believe in giving your patients innoculations?" He said, "No, I don't give the innoculations, but I take them myself as a precaution."

Every twelve years a special heathen festival was held in Sio-khe region. It was called the Chai Lau. People gathered from miles around to attend, spending several days at the festival. They carried dozens of roasted pigs, chickens ducks, fruits, cakes, et cetera, and placed their offerings in front of the huge paper palace several stories high. What an opportunity for evangelistic and medical work! One of our preachers even showed slides
of the life of Christ, and we played gramaphone records. Such things were new to the mountain people.

Sio-khe is a beautiful village located in the valley on the riverbank, surrounded by high mountains. Often we would hear tigers in the distance, and when you hear them like that they sound almost like a baby is crying right near your house. One time we saw a group of villagers carrying a great big boa constrictor in a basket. We asked what they were going to do with it. They were going to sell the snake, but they finally sold the snake to a Buddhist who would not kill it, so we heard that the snake had been let go again. Another time we heard that some villagers had brought in a tiger tied by the legs to a pole, and they were trying to sell the different parts of the tiger. Some of the most expensive parts are certain bones and the whiskers and the claws which are supposed to have medicinal value. One particular bone is especially good for use during childbirth to rub the woman's back.

The only industry in Sio-khe was the making of firecrackers, and we got several patients who were injured in this dangerous work. One had been burned all over the body, and another thing they were doing, using gun powder for killing fish instead of going out with nets like they do in some places to catch fish. They would take a bottle of gun powder and throw it in the water. The bottle would break and the gun powder would explode and kill the fish nearby, and so the fish would be floating to the top of the water. I recall getting patients who had their hands blown out this way.

One woman was brought to our hospital one day with her lips so swollen she could not open her mouth. We asked what was the trouble, and they said they had sewed her lips together because she was unable to have babies, and so they wanted to mistreat her. They had put a cat inside her pants and tied the pant tops tight, and so the cat trying to get out had scratched all over her body, and at the same time they had sewed her lips together so she could not
scream.

Villagers at one village very close to us had never opened their doors for us to visit them, and our servants told us that they were looking forward to the Communists' coming, hoping that they would get a chance to help loot our houses. During these years we had a Chinese general who was very friendly. He used to come to visit us in our house and he would invite us to feast at his house. He would entertain us with stories about how he disguised himself as a coolie and would sit in the market place and listen to the conversation among the farmers to find out who were really Communist sympathizers. Little did we know that we were entertaining a traitor. We heard later that he was the first to welcome the Communists, and I feel that he was responsible for the execution of many pastors and landlords.

In December, 1948, Dr. and Mrs. Milton Stauffer were to escort Helen Keller for a visit to Kulangsu. So Bessie and I went down to meet them. We were very disappointed that Helen Keller did not come due to the sickness of her companion. The Stauffers could not be responsible for her. She had been so well-received in Japan.

Christmas was a busy time with programs in schools and hospitals. Bessie and I wrapped ninety presents for our Christian workers, the preachers in the mountains, et cetera. We were able to give each family a mosquito net because we had the supplies from UNRRA and we could give them clothes from the guild boxes. For the last ten years they hadn't been able to buy clothing, so they very much needed to be replenished. The hospital pig was slaughtered and the patients and the workers and everybody was treated to soft rice cooked with pork. This was quite a treat for some of them who were not used to getting meat. We played Bingo and other games. We had no prizes, but it was fun to watch the coolies who were just learning how to read, to try to find the numbers.
The next day we opened the gates for the poor. We had hired someone to make Chinese buns, all told eleven hundred, so each one could get one. But since we also had some milk and bean powder left, we started dealing that out. Generally, beggars like that carry a bowl, but many of them did not have any, so off came the hats and scarves, and any piece of clothing that could be used to hold the powder. It was all fun. Within a couple of hours we had given out eight hundred pounds of milk powder and three hundred pounds of bean powder.

When Shanghai fell to the Communists in the spring of 1949, the students at the American school left and Paul came to Sio-khe, hoping that he could stay with me. But that was a short stay because when the Chinese saw him they feared that he might be kidnapped, so they suggested that he leave right away. He went on to Hong Kong and returned to the United States and joined his brother who was at Hope College, and Paul went to high school in Holland, Michigan.

The summer of 1949 the situation in Sio-khe became more and more tense with the Communists closing in on us. We heard that they lived in houses not far from us. Our Chinese friends asked us not to burn our big gasoline lamp. They did not want to attract attention. I could see to write, but I could not see to read by a small kerosene lamp.

In June when we went to Kulangsu for the summer, our Chinese friends advised us not to return to Sio-khe. Upon our arrival in Amoy we saw that the harbor was full of American gunboats, enough to take us all away if need be. We had a party for officers and crew on the flat roof top of our new mission residence. We danced folk dances and played games, and of course had good eats. One sailor who had been at sea for ten years said that this was the first time he had been invited to a home. In return we were invited to dinner on board the destroyer. We had chicken a la king, asparagus, and ice
cream, a real feast, and then they showed us and explained to us the radar which was really a new invention. At this time Bill Brandli arrived from the United States. He was a new missionary coming out. When he got off the ship and was taking the sampan to come from Amoy over to Kulangsu, the fare was ten cents, but the boatman wanted fifty United States dollars just to go across Amoy harbor. Fortunately an English consul's boat was going across, so he got a free ride, baggage and all.

At our communion service that Sunday we were six hundred people in church, and it was good that we could hear the message of peace even while planes were flying all around us. I took a short vacation in Hong Kong, and for the first time went on to Canton where I visited the Marshes at Lingnan University. I had a very pleasant vacation and returned to Kulangsu where I was asked to teach first aid in different schools. I had a class of university students who perhaps took the course mostly because I was teaching them in English.

I recall the day when our evangelistic team went to another village never visited by foreigners. We had to cross the water. As we approached a farm house a woman came out to meet us. She called us in and said, "This morning my mother-in-law told me that she had a vision during the night. She saw a big white house, and strange people dressed in white. So we came into the old woman's bedroom, and she immediately told us the same dream. And she was so sure that we were the people she had seen. She knew if she could get to this white house she would get well.

Then we heard her story. For twelve years she had been sitting on that hard wooden board bed, never a sunbeam could reach her under her heavy netting. When the daughter-in-law was out she told how mean she was to her, just threw a bowl of rice in to her in on her bed, and wouldn't even help comb her hair, it was so hard for her to lift her arms. It didn't take much to persuade her or her family that treatment in the big white house might do
her a lot of good. Her sons easily carried her in a round basket down to the boat, and we took her across to the hospital.

After some days of vitamins and sunshine and fresh air and good food, she was like a new person. She could get out of bed and walk. She stayed with us for quite a while, but her spine was affected by syphilis, so she finally died. Usually patients wanted to die at home, but not she. She wanted a Christian funeral, and to our surprise her sons agreed. I can see before me how those two ignorant farmers knelt in our hospital chapel and prayed that they, too, might learn about the living God, the loving God who cares for his people. I'm sorry we were never able to visit that village again.

When we'd go out in evangelistic teams people were really ready for the gospel message, but, oh, the misery. We visited the old people's home, the blind, the lame, all kinds of illnesses and no medicine. We sang with them and many of them could join us in some of the old hymns. I wondered if these people would be better off under the Communists! If so, it may be only temporarily.

Tiu Hok An and family finally decided to get out of China because they have three children and they wanted them to have good schooling. They got the last cabin on the last Dutch steamer leaving the harbor. Mr. Tiu went ashore to buy boxes of cookies for the children. Would he come back, or would he want to return to Chang chou? He came. Most of the foreign community people have left the island, but our Chinese friends are happy to have us stay. We had thought that Amoy was going to be the last stand that the Nationalists would take. They had their gunboats out in the outer harbor and were shooting right across the islands at the Communists on the mainland. It takes a lot to feed such a big army, and with inflation the rice was very expensive. We could not understand how the poor people lived. We had plenty of canned goods stored away, and also had money hidden in different places. It hurt us to
see the soldiers chopping up the boats in order to get fire wood. While the shelling was going on we tried to hide in the closets or under the beds. One time when Edna Beekman and I had planned to get into the guest room and hide under the bed there we did not find time for it so we stayed in the front of the building, and that time our kitchen in the back was demolished by shells, and after the shelling was over we went to the front bedroom and found that where we would have been hiding were several large pieces of shrapnel. Had they hit us we surely would have been badly wounded.

All the while life seemed to be going on as usual. Schools were open. Thousands of school children walking to school every day. Shops were open, and the churches held their services. Some soldiers remarked that they had never seen anything like it. At a time of seige there generally would be nothing going on.

In November, 1949, the Communist soldiers landed on the island and we were under the Red regime. We were allowed to stay in our homes and keep our servants, but hospitals and schools were out of our jurisdiction. The cadre who was in charge of all our affairs was a girl, aged about thirty. She would come to our homes and talk and ask us questions about our servants and about our lives, and she asked us who our friends were, and we answered, "Well, everybody's our friend." She was a graduate of Oberlin in China where she learned her English, but in fact she spoke more fluent French because that's where she went and where she got her Communist training. Many Chinese did. She looked sickly, and said she had T.B.. But she was very patriotic, so she did not want us to give her anything. We wanted to give her some vitamins, but she refused.

We were free to walk around on the island. The Communists knew that we had no way of escaping. Bessie went to the hospital to teach and sing with the patients, and I went to the free clinic down the street. The patients came
early and we would sing and have a Bible story before the doctor arrived. We knew that the Communists were spying on us every move, and I realized that the Chinese doctors were very nervous while they were working in the clinic.

The Communists were going very slow about suppressing Christianity. On this island it would come later through schools. They were telling all students that if they worked hard and got good marks they would get a red scarf to put around their necks. So, the students were very eager to work and study hard. Little did they realize that this red scarf around their necks meant that they must not carry Bibles or hymnbooks, or take part in any church services. The Communists were going around here asking people to sign their names on a long sheet of paper under the heading, "I want peace." Of course, all do, so they were eager to sign their names. Some of them said, "We just didn't sign our real names. We just wrote any character we wanted to." This list would be sent to the United States, the dangerous imperialistic country who sent planes to kill the innocent.

We felt for the Chinese with their old traditions, and many of them could not read or write, so they did not know what was going on. More and more Russians were coming to the cities, but the Chinese were giving them the cold shoulder. The Communist newspapers wrote that America was heading for a downfall. That's the reason they started the war up in Korea. Mostly in order to get work for all who were without work. The United States refuses to talk peace although the other side wants it. There are posters all over town showing Chiang Kai-shek and the United States president committing atrocities. Still we would meet only friendliness. Occasionally a small stone might be thrown by a boy, but we ignored that. However, very few Chinese dare to come and see us. One of the last ones who came to see us was telling us about the brain-washing sessions that they had every evening. His remark was, "They can kill our bodies, but that we have no freedom of thought is misery. If they
keep on telling us that black is white, after they've told us a hundred times we might believe it."

Mail had started to come through again. The Communists censored all our letters. A letter came from Dr. Shafer suggesting that we gradually try to pull out of China, and we, too, feel that that is a wise thing to do. So the next time Miss Oberlin, as we called her, came to call on us, we asked for permission to leave. She said, "Why aren't we taking good care of you?" So we were given a sheet of paper on which we had to write why we wanted to leave and how we felt about China before and after the Communist take-over. There were some things that we could in all truth say, that we thought the islands were cleaner, and that the people's health was better, there was better medical care for them.

I had some blood pressure trouble, so I was a patient in a hospital at the time when we were getting ready to leave. Most of us were sent overland to Hong Kong, but I was allowed to go on a ship with Jeannette Veldman. The Nationalist gunboats were still patrolling the outer harbor, so our boat with lights out had to sneak through the darkness and pass the Nationalist gunboats, but we did not have any shelling git us, so we arrived safely in Hong Kong. We sailed on the President Lines to the United States.

In my interview with Ruth Ransom at the Board rooms, she suggested that I go with Bessie to Hong Kong, and work there. But since there was no foreign doctor there to work with, I felt that I could not work as a nurse. So I decided to sever my relations with the Board, and start out alone. That summer I met a former China missionary who was working at Hygeia Hall at the College of Wooster, and she suggested that I try to get a job there. They accepted me as a nurse, and I worked there until my retirement in a very happy situation.

Canute and Paul got their degrees from Ann Arbor University, and are both professors at different universities at this time.
God is good to me. My sons have married two fine girls and given me four grandchildren. And I have many friends from all walks of life, all over the world. I'm thankful for each friendship, and I thank God for his care.

Thinking back on past experiences, I was married to Mr. Vander Meer for fifteen years, and I figure that we only lived together and worked together for half of that time because of the unrest and the wars. The boys were deprived of a father many years, and I of a husband.

I feel that I must relate one more story. In the district of Hing-hwa on the coast north of Amoy, the social customs of the people were different from our district in that it was mostly the women who did the heavy work, and the men stayed at home. The women would be working out in the fields and the men ran small shops. I have in my possession two very long sharp hairpins made of silver. The women's hair was very heavy and they would hold it up with these long silver hairpins, and we were told that sometimes the reason for these hairpins was that they wanted to defend themselves against bandits if they were molested in the fields.

Well, this group of soldiers was ready to go inland, and the women were working in the fields, so they were strong women, and the soldiers caught thirty of them. The men had gone into hiding. They took these thirty women away from their children and suckling babies, and they marched them two days inland before they arrived in Chang chou. It caused great indignation among our Christians in Chang chou when they heard about the mistreatment of these women.

Our pastor came to see us, asking for our assistance to go and plead with the military authorities. We got out our calling cards, and with pastor as an interpreter we approached the grounds of the yamen. Our cards were sent in to the big general, and word came that he was ready to see us. He was very courteous and understood what our trouble was, and he, too, realized that it
was not a good policy to have women go so far away from their families. One had died on the way, and one had given birth to a child.

The general was a very dignified-looking gentleman in a long silk gown. He was from the north and did not speak our dialect, but we spoke through an interpreter, and our pastor explained our reason for coming and asked him to try to get these women out of the mountains where they had been taken by the soldiers. The general promised to do so, and he sent a runner after them. After a couple of days they came back to Chang chou where we received them in a hall, and they were so thankful for the help they had received, they even knelt down and wanted to thank us, and we told them that it was God's grace that had helped them, and that we were happy that they were able to get back home. So they were given money so that they would not have to walk, but were given boat tickets so they could get back on the boat to their own villages.

I also have in my possession tiny embroidered shoes worn by women with bound feet. The rich families bound the feet of their babies. The poor farmers, not having done so, often was forced to bind them when they were ready to become engaged. The suitor preferred the bound feet. It gave him more prestige because it showed that he was not marrying a working girl, but was able to support a wife. I have visited with many women who would say to me, "Oh, you're lucky. You walk on big feet." Generally these women are not able to walk very far, but on the fifth day of the fifth moon you see them hobbling on the mountain paths out to the family graves, generally followed by a slave girl who carried the baskets of food to be offered at the graveside. Unbinding feet is a painful process, and a long process, but many Christians did it. Still, they never got back to their natural size, and even to this day you can see in the streets of San Francisco China town women who walk with stiff ankles because their feet used to be bound. I recall that when a servant
woman in one of our missionary homes was dying, she sent word to the missionary asking to borrow a pair of her shoes because she was embarrassed to arrive in heaven with such small shoes on.
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