

**THE WILDERS - 1940**

**At Home in Occupied Peking**

Christmas celebrations.  
Much fighting in many places now.  
Streets full of people in kimonos.  
The "new order" is no order, except by force.

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Gertrude S. Wilder

*Peking*  
*December 31, 1939 and*  
*January 9, 1940*

*Dearest Margaret,*

*I can almost see your yard with the trees all lighted up for Christmas and your living room with the pretty tree (dismantled now, of course) in the corner. There is a beautiful, tall evergreen tree here in the central yard between the two hostels, a perfect cone shape 20 feet high that has been lighted up every night since a few days before Christmas. It stands by itself on the lawn and is flanked on either side by two marble bowls with standards into which they put electric bulbs. The effect was lovely. The tree with lights of all colors and the two large bowls sending out clear, white light. They will soon be dismantled and the routine of a new term will begin.*

*We had most of Christmas with the Language school students, though it began with a good Christmas service Sunday morning (the 24<sup>th</sup>) at the North Chapel and a beautiful evening service at Union Church. No, it really began with the "Messiah" given by the Yenching chorus of 250 voices on Friday night and a perfect rendering of Christmas carols by a group of Language School students on Saturday evening. They sang beautifully. They had worked hard at their practices and the result was flawless.*

*On Christmas day we had breakfast at one of the hostels, came home to undo our parcels and look at all the unopened cards, then*

went back at 9:00 to the East Hostel sitting room to gather around the tree and each receive a gift from a very lifelike and versatile Santa Claus. Each one had drawn a name and bought a small gift (at a fixed price) for the person whose name he had drawn, and these were the only gifts supposed to be on the tree. We happened to get another however, as Kao Yu Hua, of the P.U.M.C. had delivered two bottles of Welch's grape juice for us -- all done up in Christmas paper. Santa Claus had some remarks to make about the suspicious looking bottles, of course.

At 12:30 p.m. we had Christmas dinner at the hostel -- all 75 sitting at one big T-shaped table, very prettily decorated by the student committee, and in the evening at 8:30 p.m. we all got together for games and folk dances, ending up with the Virginia reel. It was a full day of play, and we enjoyed it. The students and the British refugees who are staying here are all such fine people.

Our Congregational Christmas dinner was on Tuesday evening the 26th at the Tung Fu.<sup>1</sup> The people from Yenching came in and went back on a special bus, so with other guests we were quite a crowd. I think there were 36 at the table. We all contributed to the dinner -- we taking mince pies. After dinner there was some singing, solo and all together, then Lucius Porter read Dickens' "Meditations on Former Christmases" (that's not the exact title), and read it well. After that, we went home to bed with the festivities over for another year. We did very little this year, sending out only a few cards. There are plenty of opportunities for giving to people in desperate need. We did give each other a gift or two, however. Father gave me a lovely tea cloth and napkins and I gave him a silk shirt (which I had made by a tailor) and two neck ties -- most

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<sup>1</sup> \_\_?\_\_

ordinary presents on my part. Oh, yes, I also gave him a bamboo pen holder, carved, that he had seen and wanted.

We went to Lung Fu Ssu<sup>2</sup> one day -- the only time in years -- and bought one or two things, but they ask such fancy prices that one is bewildered. Things don't seem right when the man will come down from \$18 to \$6, and follow you way outside the gate to get it.

There is a great deal of fighting going on in many places just now. A few days ago 48 bombing planes went over going west to Pao T'ou, which the Chinese have been trying to take, and yesterday over 60 went over, going in the same direction -- with what results we do not know. Because things have been so long drawn-out and difficult for them (the visiting team) they are taking it out in worse and worse ways on the people in their power. On the surface things are peaceful in Peking, but there is a lot going on that we know nothing about. The streets are full of the people of another nation, going about in their bright flowered flowing garments (the women) and throngs of children. A great deal of building is going on, schools for Japanese children, factories, etc.. They are putting up a "new city," they say, outside the Hai Chih men gate, but I have not been out to see what it's all about. I only wish they could all go home (and I think most of them do, too) and not come back until intercourse can begin again on an entirely new basis. This present "new order" is no order at all except were there is force to make it go.

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<sup>2</sup> Lung Fu Ssu (Eternal Happiness Monastery): A fair held three times each month in the courts of a dilapidated Ming temple near the —Eastern Four P'al lous.— (Juliet Bredon, *Peking*, p. 496.)

*I am going to have a good vacation now, as the Bible school is having its month of practice work in the country, in addition to two weeks of vacation. But I must try to do some studying right along to get ahead of next semester. I'm supposed to keep an eye on the cook now that Mr. and Mrs. Pettus have left, and also to keep track of the sick folks and see that they get proper food and treatment. That can easily be a not too easy task.*

*The snapshots and enlargements of Donald are lovely. I get my pictures of you all out often and show them off. Did I tell you that our albums of all of your photos were intact? They were in the side of a book box that was not meddled with at all.*

*Give my love to each one of you and keep a big share for your own self.*

*Very lovingly,  
Mother.*

*P.S. I'll write to Betty soon. How are the squirrels?*

New students from England at the College.  
Planes bombing nearby villages where railroad tracks were torn up.  
Japanese experiencing military reverses everywhere.  
Talk of possibility of an honorable peace.  
Streets are full of Japanese women and children.

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Gertrude S. Wilder

*Peking*

*Jan. 9, 1940*

*Dearest Margaret,*

*We have had a good batch of home mail within the past few days -- letters from Ted, Ursula, David, and Sally, and yesterday from you, Gertrude (such a nice one) and George. Yours and George's were also nice, but Gertrude's, being a rarity, struck us as especially good . . . .*

*The College has been going for a week now, with quite a number of new students. The surprising thing is that there are new students from England -- 69 attending altogether. It shows faith that this phase of the situation is going to change some day -- and they are going to be all ready to get to work when the time comes.*

*On New Year's Day we had a surprise. A lot of bombing planes flew over us, going west -- some said 48 planes and some said 64 -- and soon after they had passed over they began dropping bombs, near enough to make every window in our building shake and rattle. The Japanese explain it by saying that they were celebrating the new year and the birthday of their Emperor, born of the Sun goddess a few thousand years ago. But the Chinese say that they were bombing villages not far from Lu Ki Chiao and on the way to Kuan Tso Ling, because railroads had been torn up again. It was near enough to make us realize to a slight degree how frightful it*

*must be to have them really overhead, dropping their horrible explosives.*

*There is beginning to be talk of an honorable peace in six months -- Japan and China on a basis of equality, Japanese soldiers withdrawn, and Chiang Kai Shek (not Wang Chien Wei) supreme in China. The Japanese are having reverses everywhere and are getting discouraged. Also, things are going none too well in Japan. If they will only back out quietly! I'm afraid of a disorderly going, with reprisals. But when the time comes, it will be to Japan's credit to make a polite adieu, and I hope she does it. The sooner the better.*

*I think I wrote you about our happy Christmas. On New Years afternoon we went to a reception at the U.S. Embassy, given by Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. They are delightful people and make everyone feel so perfectly at home. He has to spend most of his time at the new capital, Chungking. Mr. Pettus flew from Shanghai to Chungking and we hear that the government gave him their hour over the radio to tell about conditions in the North. I wish we had known when it was to be broadcast so that we, too, might have heard him. He would have been at no loss for things to say.*

*We hear, among other things, that anti-American posters are printed and all ready for posting up when the fateful day in January arrives. They seem to expect that America will abrogate the old treaty and not make a new one.*

*You would be surprised at the number of Japanese, aside from soldiers, who are living in Peking now. The streets are just alive with (I might use the word that is taboo) gaily-dressed Japanese women and children. They are learning a lot from the Chinese (or should*

be) and I would not be at all surprised if the women who go back to Japan, go back with more independence and less subservience to the male of the species than they came here with. Their men do keep them down . . . .

Miriam is far from well and the doctor wants her to have a complete rest. She and her three girls are living in a little Chinese court yard and she works at the Peking Exchange. The worry of leaving her mother and setting up a separate home for herself and the girls was hard on her, and being away from home all day is not so good. She is very nervous, as you know, and puts a lot of nervous energy into what she does. I imagine her financial problems are not small, though I don't know how she is situated. Things are not easy for her — there is always someone else present, but I want to go over some day soon. She lives near the P.U.M.C. north compound in a nice little Chinese house built around three sides of a little court yard, and with a nice little back yard which will be nice in summer. (Three "nices"!)

Poor Iwa! What a time she does have! I wonder if she takes all the vitamins she should in concentrated form. It seems as if she might build up her strength and be less liable to sickness. Her doctor has probably seen to that, though. I meant to send her a word of greeting at Christmas — and believe it or not, I did. I just looked at my little book and her name is crossed off as having been remembered. Alas, there were several others that weren't. We sent cards to only a few people this year.

About a week before the 80th anniversary of the founding of Pilgrim Church in Cleveland, we sent an amateur radio message to them, with our congratulations, etc. A few days ago we received their church "Messenger" and there was our message in print, with

*the announcement that it got there on the very day, and was read at their banquet. They sent a return message with the announcement of Dr. Bradley's death. He had gone to Cleveland to attend the celebration and fell dead the night before. It saddened the day for them but Mrs. Gibbons wrote that it made a deep spiritual impression.*

*A letter from Mildred tells of the hard time they have been having. Her Aunt was very sick and not expected to live, and most of the responsibility for everything was coming on Mildred. The Aunt is the last member of her mother's family – besides her mother, of course. Try to drop her a note.*

*I have a mouth infection, for which I'm going to Dr. Prentice. It's better.*

*Your loving mother.*

Gertrude S. Wilder

Date?

Dear George,

*I'm going to write a little note to you to go with Gertrude's letter. Grandpa and I just think it's fine to get letters from our grandchildren. Do keep it up.*

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*I had a caller at this point and then it was high time for children and old folks to go to bed, so I did, and now it is the morning after, and a beautiful Spring morning it is.*

*Yesterday when I was coming home down our alley I saw a little boy hopping around in the funniest way with his hands up in the air, and he was saying something to himself as fast as he could say it, paying no attention at all to the people who were passing by. When I got near enough I saw that it was a little bit of down from a feather that he was watching and waving at, and what he kept repeating was, "Old man, come down, old man, come down, and I'll give you a cake baked nice and brown." This is my translation. He said it in Chinese, of course. I admired his intentness on what he was doing. He hadn't eyes for anything but that piece of down that he was apostrophizing. That's a long word. Perhaps Gertrude or Betty will explain it to you, or look it up in the dictionary.*

*I hope you are still interested in the piano. It will be fine when you can play well enough to accompany Gertrude and Betty when they play their violin and cello. We had two young men for dinner*

*a while ago. One was a regular musician and played beautifully*

*on his Chinese violin (of which this is a poor picture):  
and the other one, who is very musical but not so trained a  
musician, played very well on our kind of violin, a Chinese violin,  
and a saw. This was at a hostel dinner with all the students.*

*Lots of love to you all,  
Grandma*

Christmas presents.  
Warlord General Wu Pei Fu's elaborate funeral procession.  
Hope and a good spirit in West China.  
Grain and flour are restricted to Japanese, or exported to Japan.  
"Interesting times" are pretty terrible.

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Gertrude S. Wilder  
(Re-typed by GDW)

Peking  
Jan. 25, '40

Dear Families,

Your Christmas parcels having all been extracted from the Post Office on the same day. I am going to write to you at the same time. George had to make two trips to the P.O. but before the second trip the slips were all in and he was able to bring them all home. We thank you all for everything, and such a long list it is; towels, socks, tie, dressing set, Jello, blotters, snap-shot album that brought us up to date with the Daniels family, cleansing cream, vest and panties! And before all that had come the subscription for "Time" from Mrs. Daniels and Olive, for which we are very grateful. Also two books from Ursula and Teddy. No one here has read "Escape," so we are passing it around, after having read it ourselves with breathless interest. Thank you again for your many remembrances and Christmas and New Years greetings.

We have written about our Christmas doings so I shall not mention them again. There was a reception at the U.S. Embassy on the afternoon of New Year's day, which we attended of course, and saw almost all the Americans in town there. The Johnsons are delightful people. Everyone thinks so much of them. Probably you read the write-up of him and the family in one of the recent numbers of Time. We were at a dinner party not long ago where they were also guests and, sure enough, he sat on the floor part of the time. I didn't know it was a habit of his until I saw the comment in Time.

There have been some notable deaths lately. First General

Wu Pei Fu and about three weeks after, his mother-in-law.<sup>3</sup> There seems to be something mysterious about the death of the former, which may be cleared up some day. Yesterday school was dismissed for a few hours and everyone was out taking pictures and watching the procession. It was a bitter cold day but we avoided the wind and the cold by taking our stand in a jewelry shop near the mouth of our alley. The massed crowd was on the opposite side of the street, which was more protected from the wind, and getting the full benefit of the sun, so there was nothing to cut off our view of the procession. And it was a grand spectacle. First came four colossal figures made of papier mache, followed by a large group of Lama priests in their bright, yellow satin robes. I cannot pretend to tell of it in detail or in order. At intervals there were groups of Buddhist and Taoist priests and nuns all dressed most gorgeously in bright, beautifully embroidered satin robes. I counted more than a hundred in one group so there must have been hundreds of them. There were five foreign bands in addition to the temple musicians, who played classical funeral marches, an advance in taste since the Empress Dowager's time, when they "made the welkin<sup>4</sup> ring" with "O, My Darling Clementine." There was an uncountable number of silk and satin banners beautifully embroidered with sentiments and intricate designs, also umbrellas in the same style and materials. In addition to all these there were any number of sedan pavilions, you might call them, each one containing from one to three framed sentiments, such as

日月爭光

"The Sun and the Moon vie with him in brilliance."

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<sup>3</sup> Wu Pei-fu was a warlord and the dominant leader in North China from 1922 to 1926. According to the official version, late in 1939, while under considerable pressure to collaborate with the Japanese-backed candidate, Wang Ching-wei, Wu developed blood poisoning from an infected tooth (Boorman and Howard, *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, vol. III, Columbia Univ. Press, page 450).

<sup>4</sup> Awelkin@ 'Athe sky, the vault of heaven (chiefly literary).@

Each of the highly decorated sedans was carried by four bearers. Of course there were huge wreaths galore made of artificial flowers, and a great deal of paper money was thrown as the catafalque came along. It was a super elegant one. I have never seen so many mourners at one funeral, the men and boys walking and the women in sedan chairs and carriages. Hugh Hubbard has been with us for a week and he spent three hours taking pictures with a color film strip only to find to his disgust that some little thing hadn't been adjusted and the film had not moved. It wasn't spoiled and he had time to chase the procession up in a taxi but by that time clouds had come up and the sun was low, so he thinks he did not get much. He feels very badly about it for a display like this one doesn't come much more than once in a life time.

We have just had a card from Mrs. Pettus en route to the U.S. While she stayed in Shanghai Mr. P. flew to the west and she says that his trip was one grand joy, "seeing accomplishment and careful plans, and fine spirit, unity, and great hope." That is the way everyone talks who pays a visit to West China. A good many who have been driven from their stations are going West where there is plenty to do and where they are wanted.

Last evening we, Hugh Hubbard and four Japanese - two men and two ladies - were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Hayes in the east hostel dining room. One of the ladies spoke very little English and conversation with her was difficult but the others spoke fairly well. There are lots of questions one would like to ask in a group like that but we did not wander far from safe ground.

I think I have told you about the grain and flour shortage which is getting worse all the time. I should not say shortage, but restriction. The people of another nation and those who are working for them have no trouble getting all they need, while the Chinese can buy only three pounds at a time, an amount that does not go far in a family of several. We have had great difficulty in getting it for ourselves and the price, even of

the coarsest black flour, is out of reach of the common people. If there isn't a change for the better before long it is hard to predict what may happen. The Japanese guests knew nothing of shortage or restriction. "They" are exporting grain and flour to their own country where there is a shortage, and that would explain whatever shortage there may be here. The rise in prices hits the work for refugees of flood, famine and war, for their estimates of a year ago of \$4.00, F.R.B. per person a month will not more than half do it now, and that will provide only two meals a day of millet or kaoliang porridge with a bit of salt vegetable. We have fallen upon interesting times, but they are pretty terrible.

Last evening we ate at the hostel with the students and some invited guests, the guests being Prof. Creel of Chicago Univ., his wife, and the Father Superior of the Franciscan, order who is also a student of things Chinese. Prof. Creel spoke after dinner, telling of the kind of work in Chinese that is being done in Chicago. Nothing later than the Han Dynasty. He is here to buy books for the Chinese department of their library.

*Mother and Grandma*

Hard to find cooking utensils to buy. Japanese insist that shops stock Japanese goods, discourage other imports.

Glad Margaret's speaking is getting easier for her.

British stand alone in Tientsin, while the US supports Japan with war supplies.

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Gertrude S. Wilder

January 25, 1940

Dearest Margaret,

*I'm trying to tuck a personal note in with my general letter, which does not seem to have much in it this time.*

*You are certainly leading a busy life. I'm glad that you were able to take part in the play and that it was not too much for you. Since then there seem to have been a lot of things to which you have gone. I'm glad that speaking is easier for you. Perhaps it isn't, but if you can forget yourself to the extent that you said you did, you have probably mastered your fear, even though it may take a lot out of you. If I really have something to say in which I am interested I seem to get along all right, and it is probably the same with you.*

*I want to know how George is getting on with his piano lessons. He is taking lessons — yes? — I can imagine how cute Donnie is. His picture — in fact, all of your pictures — get produced and passed around very often. Everyone exclaims over his. I must have it framed.*

*We are not going to do too much buying until we see what is left of our things -- just confining ourselves to essentials. I should have bought more kitchen utensils, as it is very hard to get such things here. The Chinese shops are just about sold out and are not getting in the new stock from abroad. The Japanese insist on their having a certain amount of Japanese stuff their shops and discourage their buying from any other country. Things are pretty awful. The*

question now is — what is Great Britain going to do? If she backs down and concedes a lot to the Japanese there will be no living here for anyone before long. And if she doesn't back down, what will happen? The Japanese military in Tientsin are angry at the government for consenting to move the issue to Tokyo and discuss it there, and they say that something is going to happen. They aren't going to stand by and see their power usurped by the Tokyo government, and they have the whip handle. England seems to stand pretty much alone on the local Tientsin question, but when it comes to the larger issue, France and the U.S. ought to do something, it seems to me. Dr. Leighton Stuart thinks that we can't expect anything from the U.S. She is still helping Japan hand over fist. Of course she is helping China, too, but under great difficulties of transportation and so on. It's a queer situation. Germany, Japan's ally, has just entered into the big trade agreement with China. We are slowly reading "Dynasty of Death," an 800-page novel by Caldwell, which has to do with the arms industry in which the lives of two large families are involved. It's a novel with a purpose — very interesting, but too long. It shows what terrible things money and power — the lust for them — will do to some people.

Isabel and her family are settled in her mother's house and Mrs. Ingram is living in the Ballow house at Teng Shih Ko'u — the house that was the "chiao shih low<sup>2</sup>."<sup>5</sup> She will take in guests, I think. Isabel looks as well as I have ever seen her and the children are fine. The oldest one looks so black, with his black hair and eyes and with heavy eyebrows. He's a fine looking little chap.

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<sup>5</sup> ???

*There's a lot more I could write but you will be getting quite a sheaf and I must write another note and do some thinking about what I'm going to talk about to the North Chapel women on Saturday.*

*Tell Gertrude to get Emily Dickinson's poems and read them. I think she would appreciate her style and her thought. She is coming into her own as a great poet after many years. She has been dead a long time, but her poetry is coming to life.*

*Love to Len and the children -- and to you my dear, from your loving mother.*

Embassy mail and private radio messages should only be used for emergencies.  
Magazines confiscated by censor.  
Hens' eggs are a better standard of value than gold: were 100 for \$1, now only 12.  
Talk on "Animals and the 10 Commandments."  
Pain in back - can't stand or sit for very long.

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George D. Wilder

College of Chinese Studies  
Peking, China  
February 1940

Dear Ursula,

Guess I will have to write to you alone, after all that grist of your letter plus the newspaper clippings reporting on your speech that was sent up to me by special messenger from Frederick Munson at the Legation. We did not have to read far to see why you had to send it that way. I think this is only the second letter we have had from America by that route and unless there is some very special reason I do not think we had better take advantage of their mail bag. We hear that the privilege has been made too much use of for private family mail. The same way with the free radio messages. We have quit on them, too, unless there is something very important, as for instance the arrival of the Gilbert's baby a while ago. They telegraphed to me and I got the operator of the wireless to telegraph, i.e. radio the news in his own name, to our Board at Boston and they relayed the news to the relatives in the States. So let's not use it except in emergency.

That was a good lot of material you got into your speech and we were glad to see it all. We had letters from Ted and Nita and from Margaret the same day, yours coming in a few hours later, and also one from Ethel Sumner Hecock of Elyria telling us of her Mother's death in August, and Aunt Ella's in Topeka on Dec. 30, the day after her 90th birthday. A letter from cousin Grace Sargent in Topeka a day or two before had told all about her Mother's death but she did not give the date she died, only that she was buried Jan. 2nd, in Maquoketa beside Uncle Frank Lyman.

Glad to hear about your Xmas. I expect the next letter will tell about your visit to New York City when you were to initiate the pajamas. You spoke of how Mrs. Fenn was interested in the Art books. I remember you said you had heard her lecture once. Did you speak of my still being at work trying to get the Fifth edition of Dr. Fenn's Dictionary out of press. We still hope it will be done in March. Hayes and Pettus have got to make some arrangement with him about the sales. I expect he was glad to see you, and he never forgets how you and Billy used to be rivals in tennis.

We feel as though we had neglected David a whole lot just when he needed attention most. I did write once or twice but fear the last one did not get there until after he was up and around. Congratulate him on his recovery. It has seemed pretty slow to us as your reports have come in.

In spite of the war and lack of food in this country, we, like you, had turkey for the holiday feasts, two or three times, and chicken once in its place.

Was it not the "Chinese Recorder" that you used in your talk and are enjoying instead of the "China Journal" as you said in your letter. The Recorder probably comes to you until March or perhaps it was only last December and after that it will come to me here. I get the China Journal. If you ever run across any of the latter save them for I found that I had lost two war numbers there. August and Sept. 1937 and I am short three of last summer's numbers that I should have gotten here. I suppose the censor has them, as much magazine material seems to have been confiscated here in the Peking office, and it might easily be lost in other ways as the Post Offices are just swamped with packages. I have seen them stacked up out on the sidewalk 50 or 100 feet on both sides of the doorway as high as the window sills in Shanghai and the back yard here stacked full above the eaves of the porches around the place and mat sheds erected just to shelter the extra parcels and I had three notices in hand when I went the first day and got two more the same trip so that I was doing it all at once. I got crowded among some Japanese ladies

at the window where we paid customs and they had been there two days. One of them had brought back a box she had gotten, paid duty on and then found it empty. They gave back her duty, and that was all.

By the way, do you ever have to pay excess postage on our letters? We have been told that some people in America have had to. Our branch office at the Szu P'ailou tells us that the 25 cents is full postage. It is not much over a cent U.S. money and so might well be increased but they insist that it has not been changed officially.

Gold and silver are no standard at all for value. Hens' eggs are far better and less fluctuating. An egg has the same nutritive value now that it had years ago when we got 100 for a dollar. Now we get only 12 or 13 for a dollar.

A "Yenching Economic Bulletin" today tells us that on the basis of 1936 prices being standard, 100%, our cost of living now is 282.9% I suppose that shows that eggs have appreciated in money value far more than most things. War is hard on hens. Every soldier going through the country of course thinks he has as much right to the hens running around as anyone.

Your mother and I have joined an Old Folks Club that was started by Christians here a year or two ago. They had an all-City meet at our North Chapel on the 15th of this month and asked me to give my standard talk on the Animals and the Ten Commandments. I think it went across the best yet and I have given it off and on for many years, usually to young folks. A few days later I met a Chinese YMCA secretary on the street and he said he had heard about it and wanted me to give the same thing to about 18 old men they had gotten together for weekly meetings at the Y. That was to be tonight, but the ache in my back was such that I had to call it off by phone this afternoon. I can sit up a half hour or stand up perhaps that long, and then I get very weary and my back aches like the tooth ache. The Doctor would not let me take my class yesterday, in which he was one, however, and set his foot down on my going out tonight.

However, he says it does not set it back to get hurt and be used, but weariness is a sign to stop. That is the way it is now, too, at this machine.

With lots of love to you all, and thanks for the many letters that we can hardly answer in toto, from so many of you.

*Lovingly,*

*Father*

Father confined to bed from back pain.  
Some pleasant Japanese.  
Can no longer send letters by Legation mail — can say little about news.  
Don't worry about us. Conditions are bad, but no real danger.  
Living costs rising: a bag of flour now \$24, vs. average Chinese salary of \$30/mo.  
Japanese are able to get all they need.  
Food riots in Tientsin and Peking. See women going from store to store, but finding no flour.  
Coloring the pictures in our copy of the bird book.  
Moonlit nights spoiled by bombers flying over.  
Aunt Ella dies.

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Gertrude S. Wilder

February 27, 1940

Dearest Margaret,

*This is prayer meeting evening, but I decided not to go down to Teng Shih Kow alone. "Alone," because Father has been in bed most of the time for over a week. He strained the sacroiliac muscles and his back, playing volleyball, and then either there was some infection with it or he had flu at the same time, for he ran a temperature for several days. The worst of it was the awful twinges that came every time he moved or tried to change his position. Those sudden spasms of pain have stopped and he has been fairly comfortable the past two days. Today he ventured over to the recitation hall, had a short session with his teacher and listened to Daisy Atterbury give a very interesting chalk talk. She is very clever at it.*

*First I must acknowledge the two batches of photos you sent. They are so good, I think. I have already spoken about the first lot and told about the Chinese banker who picked out the one that he (and I, incidentally) liked the best, and walked off with it. I am not leaving them carelessly around any more. He knew a good thing when he saw it and I admired his taste.*

*Father's illness prevented us from going to the Washington's Birthday party at the Wagon Lits Hotel. We gave our tickets to John*

*instead. A couple of evenings before that we went to dinner at the Japanese hotel on the invitation of a Mr. and Mrs. Murikami. He is a Presbyterian pastor who recently came over to organize a church here among the Japanese, there being none of that denomination here. Mr. and Mrs. Hayes and Mr. and Mrs. Lenzer were also there. We had a nice Japanese hibachi meal and a very pleasant time. If all Japanese were like them there would never have been any trouble.*

*There is a very interesting adventure going on, which will be very tell-able, I imagine, when it is all over. So I'll tell you about it when the time comes.*

*We cannot send letters as we have been sending them. I think soon the legation people will not be able to send their private letters, so we shall have to confine ourselves to the day's work and say little about news, etc.*

*In your last letter you said that Len had not been feeling well. He knows how to be careful and I hope that he has lived up to his knowledge and is feeling better. How is Grandpa Menzi? You also said you were having headaches and were not feeling well. You must take care of yourself. Not caring to go out may be the result of not going out enough. Don't let yourself shut yourself up too much into your own self, but take every opportunity you can for going out and seeing people. It would be good for you to play some mild tennis, I should think, unless your blood-pressure is up again. How is it? You haven't mentioned anyone coming in to help you and I'm sure you should have someone at least once a week. Of course that costs money, but your health and strength are more important still. If the girls had time to help it would be different. When summer comes you must put more burdens on them and get out from under some of them yourself. Is Donald very much of care now, or does he look out*

for himself? Of course he has to be bathed, dressed, put to bed, etc. From his pictures and from all you say he must be cute as they make 'em, and precious, too. How I'd love to see him!

You don't need to worry about us a bit, and you mustn't. Of course conditions are bad, but they are not fraught with danger for us. The great problem now is the food problem. It is increasingly hard to get some things, but they are no higher for us whose salary comes in gold than they were a year ago. They only seemed higher -- \$24 for a bag of flour seems terrible, but when you remember that exchange is between 16 and 20 to 1, it isn't quite so breathtaking. But for the Chinese, who don't get benefit from exchange rates, it is no less than tragic. The average Chinese doesn't get thirty dollars a month, probably. Think of having to spend \$24 of it on one bag of flour, especially if there are several mouths to feed. Other things have gone up accordingly. Cloth, which was 10 or 15 cents a foot is now 70 or 80 cents. Rents have grown up, too. Wages have also gone up, but not in proportion to the rise in prices. We pay a dollar for 12 little eggs now, which is not more than four cents gold for us, but for the Chinese it's a dollar. One trouble with the flour and grain situation is that unless one has pull or a friend on the inside, you can't get it even if you have the price.

I met such a disconsolate bunch of women as I was coming home from Chinese church on Sunday. Each one had a bag or a square of cloth wadded up in her hands -- empty. I stopped to talk with them, and they said they had been going to different shops where they had heard there was flour, but there was none to be had. It was "mei fa tzu."<sup>6</sup> They looked so sad and so tired. There have been food riots in Tientsin and Peking and you can't blame the

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<sup>6</sup> \_\_?\_\_

people for getting out of patience and out of hand. There is a shortage -- but there is manipulation and regulation going on by the powers that be. They seemingly get what they need.

Saturday afternoon the Union Church celebrated its somethingth birthday with a tea, given in the Pettus's elegant home. It was a grand affair and lasted from 4:00 to 7:00. The women of the church furnished the refreshments -- my share being sandwiches -- and a committee arranged a fine musical program that lasted through the whole time. It was well arranged. When it was time for a new number someone struck together two sweet-toned brass gongs. The conversation stopped at once while people sipped their tea and coffee, munched their cake and sandwiches and listened. It was a wonderful program and I enjoyed every minute of it. I know that I, like you, am inclined to shirk going out as much as I should. This occasion was thoroughly enjoyable. I must not forget the College Club meeting that comes tomorrow, nor my meeting with Dr. Prentice, which comes the next day! He has been looking after a tooth of mine lately and is going to pull out the nerve on Thursday. Will it hurt? He is going to use novocaine, so I hope it will not be painful. I dread pain more than I used to. Perhaps that's due to falling down the cellar stairs and getting bashed on the head. Dr. Prentice is very gentle and won't hurt me more than he must.

I have gone rambling on but I don't seem to have said very much. Hugh Hubbard is making film strips of the birds in our bird book, and he wants them colored, so I am coloring the ones he has selected -- 160 in all -- and his man that colors the strips can copy from those I color. It takes time, but I enjoy doing it. I have already done nearly half of them. I practice on our book, which means that I do each bird twice, but it will make our own book more interesting and valuable. I think I shall do all in our book eventually -- 300!

*I'm going to bed now, but won't close, as I may add more tomorrow. We enjoyed Betty's letter so much. Also Gertrude's of some weeks ago.*

*\* \* \* \* \**

*Good morning after a pretty good night. I realized that I wasn't going to drop off to sleep easily so got up and played Chinese checkers with myself until one o'clock – then to bed and to sleep.*

*When it is printed I'll send you a copy of a letter Father sent to the paper in answer to a suggestion by some cabinet minister (or former one) in Japan that their government give American missionaries ten million yen to help them carry on their work and also to help them to cooperate with the above mentioned government in establishing "the new order in Asia." Imagine! Mr. Hayes liked what father wrote so much (Mr. H. is head of the Language School in Mr. Pettus' absence) that he is having copies struck off to hand to guests. And the U.S. embassy spoke to Mr. Hayes about it and also wants copies to have on hand. I'm enclosing a modest effort of mine, the last part of which the Christian Century actually printed, much to my surprise. I sent it to them but hardly expected that they would deign to use it.*

*Don't worry about us, for there is absolutely no cause for worry. And write whatever is in your heart to write, provided it is all right for the censors here to peruse. We have been having perfect moonlit nights, spoiled only by oodles of bombing planes flying over. They make use of these clear, bright nights. On the 15th of the 1st month we had beautiful fire works in the lawn – ever so many of the flower pot ones and lots of Roman candles. In the midst of it a flock of*

*planes flew over, so high that we could only see the red lights. Pretty, but you don't like to think of what there were out for.*

*Mr. Martin is back, looking well – also Alice and Mable Huggins.*

*We just had a letter from Grace Sargent telling of her mother's death – Aunt Ella. She was ninety years old and had become very hard to take care of. I'm glad we had our short visit with her in Los Angeles. She was a beautiful woman.*

*I must get to work, as I want to get this painting job out of the way before Bible school begins again.*

*My love to each one of you – big, little, old (not so old), and young.*

*Lovingly -- Mother.*

Japanese proposal to subsidize missions can not work.  
Missionaries' success is due to their disinterested desire to do good.  
Missionaries would welcome friendly economic cooperation between China and Japan, as equals, not master and subject.

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## **Memorandum on Christian Missions and Government Aid**

**by G.D. Wilder**

A Domei report from Tokyo reports that a member of the diet, Mr. Hajime Hoshi, has proposed that the foreign office prepare a bill asking the government to aid American Mission work in China. He suggested ten million yen, and if possible help in raising funds in America, and Japanese cultural efforts to be carried on in cooperation with American missionaries for the good of the Chinese public. Mr. Arita reportedly says he will consider the matter and pass it on to the China Affairs Board. He may well consider it carefully.

The suggestion is made doubtless because of what the Army and the China Affairs Board has seen of mission work in China. They have found that it is very widespread, and that it has won the hearts and confidence of the common people. It has done so because there have been missionaries everywhere in time of war and famine who stay by their work, often in the midst of hardships, and do all in their power to alleviate suffering, to bring peace and understanding. They have seen that the spirit of public helpfulness is disinterested, unselfish and extended to the people of any race or nation impartially. The missionary and the native Christian Church hope for and work for a new order in East Asia in which Japan and China cooperate on terms of equality and mutual profit. Japan may well seek to enlist the aid of such a force.

Mr. Arita and all advocates of this plan must also seek to understand the full spirit of the mission work and the secret of whatever success it has had in winning the hearts and the cooperation of the Chinese people. They have seen enough to show its desirability, perhaps not realizing its essential nature. The very success that is seen as useful, is due to the disinterested desire to do good. That is something that cannot be bought or hired with money. Mr. Arita may well ask, "Would subsidized mission work continue to get the results he desires?" The churches of America would reply, "It would not."

Contrary to the widespread notion that missionaries are paid agents of the government, not only is there no state church in America but in forty-five years experience I have never known of any American missionary receiving any pay or

financial aid for his work from his own government. Our government has never offered subsidy and we would refuse to receive it should the offer be made, as promptly as we would from Japan or any other government. Such refusal means no hostility to that government; it only registers our belief that such gifts would injure our mission work.

So far as I know we missionaries would gladly see friendly economic co-operation between China and Japan on a just and equal basis of sharing in both control and profit. We believe that such co-operation would be to the advantage of every nation's trade, as compared with present conditions.

This communication is absolutely unofficial and from one who is in old age retirement from active work. His experience, however, leads him to wish that his friends in Japan may more thoroughly understand the facts and the spirit that motivate this letter, and that they would inform the Japanese government and nation that money is not needed to get the hearty support of American missionaries. All that is needed to get this support is for the Japanese civil government to carry out the fine statements and desires that have been expressed by some of her liberal statesmen like Baron Shidehara, and treat China justly, as an equal, not as an inferior and subjugated race. To such a new order we would give our unqualified support.

Chinese farmers now forced to plant opium.  
Cotton they grow is used for explosives, not clothes.

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### **HARVEST TIME IN NORTH CHINA, 1936**

The fields are full of reapers.  
Under their busy hands  
The rows of standing grain, yellow and full and ripe  
Fall and are tied in bundles.  
And following close upon them  
Gleaners innumerable, hurry to and fro,  
"Ruths" of another time and of another clime.  
And little children, too,  
Eager to gather and to carry home  
Each head of yellow wheat  
That has been left behind, and fight for it if need be.  
So much it means to them,  
So hard the winter's been.  
Now joy is in the very air they breathe.  
Do some of them, I wonder, reapers and gleaners too,  
Straighten their tired backs, look up  
And send a grateful thought to "Old Man Heaven?"

### **HARVEST TIME IN NORTH CHINA, 1939**

The fields are ripe for harvest,  
But not a harvest of life-giving yellow grain.  
In many farmers' fields it's poppy,  
Poppy from seed that they, perforce, must plant or meet the penalty.

Poppy, and for what use?  
Only to weaken and debauch the people  
Who must be conquered now or never, then enslaved.

In other fields it's cotton, but not for padding  
For their winter clothes.  
Oh, no, It must be turned into explosives  
And then brought back

To harass and destroy the very ones  
Who took part in the planting.

With bended backs, despairing hearts,  
They gather in the harvest for their foes.  
Small wonder if the toilers sadly say,  
"Old Man Heaven must have forgotten us."

Gertrude S. Wilder

*(The first part of this I wrote in Techow during a wheat harvest.  
Then I added the 1939 part after hearing of what was going on and  
had the tenacity to send it to the Christian Century. Much to my  
surprise they printed the 1939 part.)*

Story of a Chinese village destroyed by Japanese bombers supplied by U.S.  
Chinese villagers, believing America to be China's friend, at first do not believe it.

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## **THE BOMBING OF WILLOW VILLAGE** **by Gertrude Stanley Wilder**

It was a thrifty village of one hundred families, nestled among willow trees, from which it derived its name. The day's work was done, the last meal eaten, and now the men were gathering on the threshing floor, talking about their crops and discussing the latest news, while the women sat around the fringes gossiping about the things that women are apt to be interested in and trying to hear scraps of the men's talk. And the children were swarming everywhere, playing games, hiding in the fuel piles and having a grand time while their elders' thoughts were otherwise engaged.

The chief topic of conversation, and one that evidently troubled some of them, was a recent bombing. Sweet Water Village, only fifty li away, had been completely demolished and everyone in it killed outright or burned to death, excepting a few who had not been at home at the time, and another few who had been just plain lucky. "What do they do it for?" some one asked. "Do you think it can ever happen here?" asked another. No, nothing could happen to their quiet little place -- or could it? What did someone hear at market yesterday? A sentry had been killed, but that was forty li away, too far to involve them. No, nothing could happen here. None of them had torn up any rails, nor had an Eighth Route Army soldier even passed by their village for two months or more. And so they talked of other things. But some looked anxious and one old man, going off to feed his pigs, kept shaking his head and saying, "But that sentry, that sentry."

The children heard it first - a big bombing plane. They heard it before ever they could spy it. And soon it came in sight, rapidly drawing nearer and nearer and none of them could move, so held were they by fear and fascination. Then someone came to life and shouted, "Run, run for your lives out to the open field and lie flat, as flat as you can." Distracted people began to scatter in every direction, mothers screaming to their children, husbands dragging along their wives too weak from fright to run, mothers with babies in their arms, stumbling at every step. The man who had shouted hastened away down the village street, for he had a sick wife and a new born baby at home on the k'ang. And others there were, who in their thought for loved ones could not save themselves.

And then it was upon them, this messenger of death; and above the noise of the bursting bombs, the falling houses and the sharp crackling of the burning fuel piles could be heard the screams of those who had been caught, some crushed beneath the very roofs that had sheltered them so long, some suffering the agony of being slowly burned to death.

It had not taken long. The big bomber seemed to be moving on and those who had been lying in the field began to rise on hands and knees, eager to hasten back and help those who were not beyond help and to salvage what might be left of their meager possessions. But they had moved too soon and were detected. Almost at once the bomber turned and swooping to the earth raked with merciless machine-gun fire those who a moment before thought they had escaped, then rising higher and higher headed toward the east and disappeared. Only a few were left alive to crawl, sick and despairing, back to their ruined homes.

When the first shock had worn off a bit, two or three sad-eyed men came to poke among the ruins, hoping that they might find something with which to make a new beginning; a hoe, perhaps, or a plowshare or even an unbroken bowl or two, and once again they talked of this and that but mostly of the bombing. One said that he had heard something hard to believe but it had come straight from a school teacher in a far away village. This teacher took a newspaper and seemed to know everything that was going on in the world.

"Well, tell us what it is that he knows so much about."

"All right, it's this. These bombers and what they hurl down upon us; these soldier-laden trucks that bring death and destruction to our people, who haven't done a thing; most of these things and more beside come from America."

"That can't be so," the others said. "America has always been China's good friend."

"The teacher says, that time has passed. The teacher says it's so."

"But that's unthinkable." the others said, "But that's unthinkable."

"The teacher says it's so. The teacher knows."

\* \* \* \* \*

*(I sent this story to Ruth Durand and asked her to get it into a popular paper of some sort if she thought it was worth anything. If not, to drop it in the waste basket.)*

*Chinese always ask of one's nationality. My pride in my country grew with the admiration in the eyes of the Chinese who, upon being told that I was an American always replied, "Ah, then you are all right. America is tí í ga guo (top place). You Americans always have been kind to us and treated us well, but the other countries, not so."*

*One of my earliest recollections is of my old Chinese nurse saying "Little American, we Chinese love you."*

Margaret's letter-writing campaign.  
New government under Wang Chin Wei is despised by the Chinese people.  
John Stanley girl Mary Boyd is saying with us.  
Tientsin concessions still blockaded.  
Fixing up clothes. Hard to get material; nothing imported except from Japan.

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Gertrude S. Wilder

*Peking*

*March 31st, 1940*

*Dear Margaret,*

*You are so good about writing. I marvel that you can find time for it in the midst of all your household duties. Just what is the burden of all the official letters you have been writing? Ursula has evidently joined you in the campaign and has done some writing too, but not as much as you, I judge.*

*There doesn't seem to be much news of late. The new government under Wang Chin Wei was supposed to begin functioning yesterday and during the forenoon 12 planes circled around over the city, flying so low and making such a noise and commotion that our windows kept up a more or less constant rattling. It seemed to me that they spent more time directly over us than they spent anywhere else. It was joy-riding to celebrate the inauguration of the new puppet government. How everyone does despise the Chinese who are trying to curry favor and are being so disloyal to their own country. You would think that their present bosses would not only despise them but also distrust them. There has been some discussion as to what flag to use. They had been using the five-barred flag, but to get the approval of the people they have gone back to the old Kuomintang flag -- white star on blue ground with a yellow pennant above it -- making a very ugly combination. Evidently there is some idea of been a little conciliatory, but everything is taken with many grains of salt. Of course the*

government at Chung King repudiates this newly set up one absolutely.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now it is April 2nd.

The Chandlers brought Mrs. Sewell and they stayed with us — Bob for two days and Helen for four. Now we have John's girl, Mary Boyd, with us, which means John too for meals, and most of the rest of the time. She has been here several days and will stay several days more — a lovely, attractive girl she is — a trained nurse. For several months she has been in Tientsin helping in the refugee camp hospital, but will soon be leaving for Huaiching(?) to work in the hospital there. For some reason the Japanese have not yet evicted the British from some of their stations. I think they have been more lenient toward Canadians. The barrier is still up at the concessions in Tientsin and it is a crying shame. As long as they are making it pay as it does financially, it will probably not be taken down. It brings in some tens of thousands of dollars a day, they say, in bribes and demands. And because this is all done by Chinese police "under guidance" it can truthfully (perhaps) be said that no money is paid to a certain nationality. There are so many ways of shifting responsibility.

This has been a full week for me -- with guests all the time, my classes every other day, two Chapel exercises, choir, women's meeting at Union Church, the same at North Chapel, missionary fellowship meeting and a prayer meeting at the North Chapel. It is too much of a good thing -- and the worst of it this afternoon was that the meeting was terribly dull, just one long talk for a straight 45

*minutes, and church was cold. No one else seemed to mind, so I shouldn't.*

*Spring is here – everything bursting into bud and blossom. I am trying to fix over some clothes but do not get very far. If there were only some easy way of getting clothes. It is hard to get materials now. There is nothing imported in the Chinese shops excepting flimsy stuff from Japan.*

*Father has more teaching than ever this semester. A lot of new students have come, most of whom I haven't met yet. Some will be in my one class.*

*I won't keep this any longer. Loads of love to you, my dear.*

*Mother*

Story of how a boy who gave \$29 he had saved for a bike to China Relief , which inspired others until it became \$1,200.

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Gertrude S. Wilder

Peking, March 31, 1940

Dear Betty,

*I am writing a letter to your mother (she that's my daughter, you know) so this, going in the same envelope to you, is a true story, not a letter at all. I thought you would be interested and might tell it to your Sunday School class.*

*A young Chinese boy, born and living in the Philippines, had been working hard, trying to save money to buy a "bike." He had saved \$20.00, just half the amount he needed, when he went to a meeting one night to hear some one speak on China, and when he heard of famine conditions and the desperate need for food, he made up his mind at once that he was going to do all he could to save the day. So he took his dollars, went to a bakery, bought twenty dollars worth of bread and rolls and took it to the home where the speaker was staying. She was rather overwhelmed but tried not to show it and accepted his gift graciously with many expressions of thanks. She also found out who he was and how he happened to come by all that food. After he had gone she and her friend, who was a school teacher, put their heads together and decided to auction off the bread at school, which they did and in one half hour the twenty dollars worth of bread had grown to \$150.00 dollars. Another school heard of it, asked for the bread and the \$150 became \$400.00. Another school or two had it, then a Rotary club, I think, and when they decided to send the money to the Relief Committee in Shanghai the \$20.00 had grown to \$1,200.00! His self-sacrifice and his caring, to the point of doing something about it was contagious.*

*There's a sequel to it. He had had his reward and wasn't looking for anything more tangible than the happiness that had come to him, but Mrs. Henry Ford heard about it and said that he must have his bicycle. Henry wanted to give it but she insisted that she had thought of it first and it must be her gift. It was, and the boy is now enjoying his new bicycle.*

*Perhaps I'm not fair to Ford but I couldn't help wishing that he had said something like this – "Why, that boy gave all he had and really made a big sacrifice. What about me? Why not give up some of my profits and stop sending trucks and tanks and air plane parts to help Japan cause more misery and suffering and hunger to the poor, distracted people in China?" Why can't he?*

*You will agree with me that this is no letter, but it doesn't claim to be. However, it takes a great deal of love to you all. I am very glad that you are working away on your cello. Don't give it up but keep at it until you can play well, and that means Gertrude and her violin, too. It is so fine to have something of that sort that you can really do well. You will never regret the time and effort that you are putting into it.*

*I'm sure that I have written about receiving the pictures of George and Donald. They are all so good and natural. We have had Jello several times as a special treat.*

*Your Loving Grandma*

Bright moon means bombing planes go over all night.  
Chandler tells of atrocities — can't write about what's happening.  
Japanese are pouring in. Streets are full of Japanese women and children.  
"New order in Asia" now includes public drunkenness.

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Gertrude S. Wilder

*Peking*

*April 24, 1940*

*Dearest Margaret,*

*A big U.S. mail came today but there was only one letter for us, and that was from none of you. We have nothing to complain of, however, as we had a good mail only a short time ago. You're very good about writing.*

*This week we have had visits from Helen Chandler and Uncle Charlie. She came to see Carolyn Sewell and also to have one of her ears treated, and Uncle Charlie had some sort of business at Yenching.*

*This afternoon I went to a meeting of the College Club — in fact, I was one of the hostesses and took along some cookies. New officers were elected, and for president this year we elected Mrs. Johnson, our U.S. minister's wife, and Isabel Ingram Mayer was elected Secretary. None of the others you know.*

*A group of six read a one-act play, reading and acting at the same time, you know. They did it very well and it was entertaining. Of course it is a great time-saver over having to commit everything to memory.*

*Isabel is moving to the Legation quarters and Miriam, who has been staying with her since coming from the P.U.M.C. is going back to*

her little Chinese house. And that means that Mrs. Ingram will move out of the Ballou house and go back to her own, which Isabel has been occupying. Such moving around!

\* \* \* \* \*

I am just back from the Bible school -- a farewell meeting in Miss Coombs' honor. She is going to Cheeloo to be the Dean of women there. My idea was to stay for a little while and then slip out, but of course, I had to have one of the seats of honor in front, so there was no slipping out. Then when I tried to get out of staying for supper, they simply wouldn't hear of it, so I had to send word to father to go on without me. It was all right and I had a good time, though I am very tired. I seemed to have a queer kind of cold that makes my bones and one side of my neck ache. Nothing serious.

It is bright moonlight so the things that zoom over us all day long keep it up all night long. They aren't usually out for any good purpose. Helen Chandler had some pretty bad stories to tell us -- stories that can't be repeated in a letter like this. When such things are repeated, it isn't propaganda, it's just a plain statement of facts.

Because of exchange rates we have accumulated some of our gold, and father and I have decided that it might better be used to some purpose than to be invested, so we are sending you check for one hundred dollars to help a little bit in tiding you over your salary-less summer. I'm sure it will come in handy. We are so glad to do it. It probably won't balance your budget. How do you stand? I have wondered if the State's Republican administration shows any inclination to "up" teachers' salaries or if they, too, cut schools before cutting other things. They are very shortsighted if they do.

We have a good letter from Durand today. He is planning to have the boys with him for a month again this summer. It will mean renting a small cottage, I guess, and I think we shall help him out a little there. It's a great thing for him and the boys to be together, and I am so glad he feels it is. They are fine boys. I wish Gertrude and Betty could know them better. Durand thinks that Jimmy can get a scholarship at some college on his voice — for glee club work, as he has a lovely and true voice. Dick stars in athletics.

There is nothing much that I can report to you in an open letter like this. Things are happening but just where the advantage lies, it's hard to say. More and more of another nationality — men, women, and children — are pouring in and the streets and alleys are "l \_ \_ \_ y with — em." Many pretty, attractive women and oodles of cute little children. It isn't their fault and one can't blame them for coming over when they hear such glowing tales about peace and happiness over here. And of course, with this money that comes cheap, they can live much better here than they can in their own country.

The night before last, Dr. Young, one of the students here, took eight of us to dinner at the Wagon Lits, and after that to the annual stunts night of the men's brotherhood in the P.U.M.C. auditorium. We had a good dinner, a good time and a good entertainment. In the dining room, not far from our table, was a table with four people of another nation, noisily guzzling their soup, exploding when they talked, and being quite noisy. One of them was properly drunk and was rowdy-ish at times. We didn't know what might happen, but they managed to get through and leave the dining room intact. I was really worried for fear of a scene. Part of the "new order in Asia" is drunkenness — a thing that we have practically never seen on the

streets before. You see and hear it a lot now, and the pity of it is that others are copying them.

I guess I'll stop now — get my regular bit of bed time fruit and go to bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

B — which I did, and now it is Sunday a.m..

I have consumed my usual quota of waffles, been over to Mrs. Parmabroker's(?) to "pao-pao"<sup>7</sup> their baby for a little while (I almost felt as if I had Donald and my arms) and I must soon post off to the North Chapel for the half-hour before-church sing. They are trying to learn the new hymns in the new hymn book..

Father preaches this morning. He plans to add to this letter before starting it on his way.

We keep busy most of the time, but try to take an after-lunch rest every day — it is usually a pretty short one. Mr. Hayes has just had a telephone extension put in our apartment, which is going to be a great convenience.

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<sup>7</sup> \_\_?\_\_

*If only these wars would stop and people everywhere, with the wisdom which should come after experience, should insist upon no more wars and a chance to live normally – or what should be normally – what a blessing it would be. There has got to be a lot of acknowledgment of sin and deep repentance, followed by the determination to do right – to be just and friendly and build up a friendly world. No nation's hands are clean, and some of them are realizing it in spots. The present situation can't last forever. Then what?*

*My love to you all.*

*Affectionately,  
Mother.*

Duck hunting with Hubbard.  
Peking National Historical Society will present the King Gold Medal.  
Margaret's writing campaign to U.S. policy-makers against big business profiting from Japan's war on China.  
Devastation of villages only a few miles away.  
Food situation is better — prices dropping a little.

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George D. Wilder

College of Chinese Studies  
Peking, China  
April 29, 1940

Dear Margaret, Len et al,

Gertrude has a letter to get off to you and I want to send something besides the long general letter that may or may not go in the same envelope. With a fifty cent postage we feel like filling the envelopes to capacity and no more. But you have never said whether you have to pay excess postage on ours that have only 25 cents on them. We have heard of other folks having had their friends say so but the central office and all branch offices here tell us that 25 cents is the right amount. Let us know.

I think that my "separates" from the China Journal articles might interest some of you and I will try to send the last one on the "three Pacific Ocean albatrosses," all of which I identified on the trip across. I think I did send you a copy of the reprint of my letter commenting on the suggestion by a Diet member that Japan cooperate with American missionaries in China and raise ten million for them.

We have one nice, religious Japanese studying here now, but he is not in my classes. Another like him is starting a YMCA for the Japanese here and tries to get the Christians of both countries together. He has been here to see me several times and asked me my opinion on all sorts of live issues, saying that a part of his work is to help the Japanese army people to understand the missionaries, whom they think to be all government agents just as their religious workers are. Well, he made several calls to find out just how many people were connected

with this institution in any way, even to the families of the teachers and servants. Hayes was anxious to have it exactly correct for fear it might lead to complications if not, so it took a long time and went beyond the limit set by Mr. \_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup>. Finally he came when Hayes was not here and unwittingly I gave him the approximate number, about 300, a surprising figure even to us. Then it turned out that all he wanted was approximate figures so that in a big cheap-flour distribution he could assign enough to us to amount to something. A few days ago we were told we could buy 125 bags at \$12.00 per bag. It had been up to \$22 and is now about \$17, I think. We are going to let each teacher have a bag at that price when he gets his April salary, and each servant a half bag if they want it. Our cook wants one.

At Peitaiho I found that I had forgotten how to shoot ducks on the wing after ten years or so without trying it, except for one goose shot at Lintsing – two really but I lost one of them. One day Hub came in with eleven ducks but dissatisfied because in going out into the fields to pick up a fine male falcated teal, he had to leave the female for a few minutes, which he had shot and left lying on its back in the middle of a long narrow pond with its legs feebly kicking. When he came back it was nowhere to be seen and he hunted a long time, as he wanted the pair for specimens. The next day I went with him and he directed me to a fine bushy willow stump on the bank of the pond where I was to sit and wait for shots while he chased around among the marshes and stirred up the ducks. As I was approaching the place I missed a pair of mallards twice, then shot a small bird specimen from the tree itself, then went up to take my seat on the edge of the water where the bank was cut to let the water flow out through a deep cut only about a foot wide, right at my feet. As I looked down, there at my feet was a female falcated teal sitting perfectly naturally, in rigor mortis, the current holding her body right across the opening. She had died after hiding somewhere and then the current had floated her right to the spot.

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<sup>8</sup> Blocked out by censors in the original.

Well, I must go to class. Just had a call from a gent who told me that the RICO investment Co. in Shanghai had my name on a list of folks they could not get in contact with, and wanted to send money to, 10% of their losses in the firm, and eventually would pay about 50%. We had \$900 with them. I must write for it. The same man told of a missionary in Nanking whose library was all burnt who out wanted to buy most of my commentaries and theological books. I was on the point of selling them for old paper. One set of about 30 vols. cost me \$2.25 apiece. How much shall I ask?

April 30.

I hope we can get these things off today, especially the check that Mother wrote about. We have no good way to invest it in the Oberlin bank. I hope that it will help out in the lean months when the great state of Michigan has to save money off its teachers. I don't see why they can't get some of the profits from all these trucks and gasoline that we see on the streets and over head every day here.

Last evening I received a note from the Secretary of the Peking Natural History Society, which published our bird book, asking me to be sure to attend the annual meeting on May 11th, in the PUMC auditorium to receive the King gold medal "for meritorious work on birds." That famous artist who was going to illustrate our book and his brother gave a fund to provide such a medal every year. What I dislike about it is having to get up and receive it and make some remarks, I am afraid.

We hear that three mails have been lost since last December and so fear we have lost your letters. Looking over a pile of them we find Jan. 1st about the last, then Feb. 29, which is the last. Dec. 1 and 3rd and Oct. 26 and Nov. and Jan 14 and 20 also I now turn up among some of Ursula's. I don't suppose you have the good practice of recording the dates when you mailed letters. I try to keep such a list and it is useful. You, Margaret, certainly have been busy on the writing to the high-ups in control of our foreign policy, but so far as I see big business

is bound to have it go on and make all they can out of it irrespective of how many lives are taken. We hear of devastation of villages near Shanghai recently, and also only a few miles from us.

Glad that George could be at the Fathers and sons banquet and be so proud of his father's speech. Don certainly is getting to string sentences together marvelously, but don't let him learn to point guns at anyone and "get them covered" as he said. How can a boy get such phrases so early? He doesn't go to the movies yet, does he? His "Excuse me" and "You are welcome" are better.

We had almost no snow, unlike you, and have had the mildest of winters, unlike America and Europe, and have had a fine rain so that crops are going to be fine. You do not need to worry about our food and coal. We live in luxury.

The food situation in the city has eased up and prices are dropping a little from their highest level of 3 to 4 times what they were in 1936. You know we had coal for all this year and part of the next laid in last summer at a fair price.

I go to Tungchou today to sell books. You ought to see my comfort right now writing here with my comfortable wen ao - partly silk wadding - over my pajamas. It was not taken at Techow, as I feared, and I've used it a lot this winter.

Our supply of fruit, chickens, eggs, etc. has not failed - just think of it. But the poor country people!

*With love,*

*Father-Grandfather*

Program at which GDW was presented with the King Gold Medal.

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PEKING SOCIETY  
OF  
NATURAL HISTORY

*This is a "Lapland Longspur"  
(*Calcarius lapponicus  
coloratus*) a species that  
I knew in Dakota in 1885  
in summers and find here  
winters only.  
Drawn by Gertrude.*

*GDW*



FIFTEENTH  
ANNUAL MEETING AND TEA RECEPTION,

AUDITORIUM, P.U.M.C.

MAY 11, 1940

*(from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.)*

**I**  
**TEA RECEPTION**

**II**  
**BUSINESS MEETING**

1. REPORTS OF THE HONORARY SECRETARY AND THE HONORARY TREASURER
1. STATEMENT OF THE BOARD ON PUBLICATIONS
2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY ELECTED FELLOWS
3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS
4. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTION OF NEW LIFE COUNCILOR

**III**  
**AWARD OF THE KING SENIOR MEDAL**

to

**DR. GEORGE D. WILDER**

*One of the founders and first president of the Peking Society of  
Natural History*

for

his work done to further knowledge in the field of Natural History  
in China, especially for his meritorious work on

**"The Birds of Northeastern China"**

**IV.**  
**ADDRESS OF THE AFTERNOON**

*"A New Interpretation of the History of the Earth"*

By

Dr. A. W. Grabau \*

\* *Author of the revolutionary "Rhythm of the Ages,"  
explaining his pulsation  
theory of the earth's  
formation.*

**OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY  
1939-1940**

*PRESIDENT:* DR. J.C. LI  
*VICE-PRESIDENT:* DRs. A. M. BORING AND L. C. FENG  
*SECRETARY:* DR. HUEI-LAN CHUNG  
*TREASURER:* DR. CHAO-FA WU  
*COUNCILORS:* DR. A. W. GRABAU, LIFE COUNCILOR  
DRs. C. Y. CHANG AND I. C. YUAN  
1937-1940  
DRs. H. M. CHANG AND S. T. WANG  
1938-1941  
DRs. T. H. SHAW AND JOHN CAMERON  
1939-1942

**OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 1940-1941**

*PRESIDENT:* DR. A. M. BORING  
*VICE-PRESIDENTS* DR. L. C. FENG AND PERE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN  
*SECRETARY:* DR. HUEI-LAN CHUNG  
*TREASURER:* DR. CHAO-FA WU  
*COUNCILLORS:* DR. A. W. GRABAU, LIFE COUNCILLOR  
DR. A. B. D. FORTUYN, LIFE COUNCILLOR  
DRs. H. M. CHANG AND S. T. WANG  
1938-1941  
DRs. T. H. SHAW AND H. C. CHANG  
1939-1942  
DR. GEORGE D. WILDER AND HSIEN WU  
1940-1943

## THE KING SENIOR MEDAL

This medal was founded by Mr. Sohtsu G. King in memory of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sung-yen Daw King. It is awarded annually for the most meritorious work on the flora or fauna of China.

### RECIPIENTS

1929-39	Prof. J. G. Needham	<i>of Cornell University</i>
1930-31	Dr. Hsen-Hsu Hu	<i>Botanist</i>
1931-32	Dr. Davidson Black	<i>Discoverer of "Peking Man"</i>
1932-33	Dr. C. Ping	<i>Biologist</i>
1933-34	Dr. A. W. Grabau	<i>Author of "Rhythm of Ages"</i>
1934-35	Dr. Wen-hao Wong	<i>Pres. of the Geolog. Society &amp; Gov't Surveys</i>
1935-36	Dr. B. E. Read	
1936-37	Dr. Chenfu F. Wu	<i>Prof. Of Biology at Yenching Univ.</i>
1937-38	Prof Franz Weidenreich	
1938-39	Prof Yuanting T. Chu	

*The above is quite a galaxy. I had no idea of joining it, thinking it was given for work during the current year and was quite surprised when the Secretary informed me that for 1939-40 the King Gold Medal was voted to me for our Bird Book. It reposes in a box with my "Chia Ho" decoration now.*

*GDW*

A visit to the Forbidden City.

The Biblical prophets' words fit the present situation well.

Ford, scrap-iron and Standard Oil enable Japan to make war on China — responsible for deaths of thousands of innocent people and homelessness of wandering millions.

Chungking bombed terribly after a letup.

European situation like a dark cloud. US should have sent clouds of planes to England by now.

Gertrude S. Wilder  
(Re-typed by GDW)

College of Chinese Studies  
Peking, China,  
July 5, 1940

Dear Ones,

We had had such good letters within the last few days, letters that deserve good answers, weather permitting. The rainy season has begun earlier than usual this year and we are now in the midst of it, with great heat and mugginess. One just pours from every pore and that is why I am using the typewriter. At eight o'clock last evening it was 99 degrees outdoors.

George went to Peitaiho this morning for a weekend trip to check up on the work the students are doing there. A summer session is going on both here and at Peitaiho, which makes it necessary for one of the foreign teachers to go there every week. John Stanley will probably go next week.

This morning I went to the Forbidden City with Helen Chandler's sister and a friend. They have both been in South Africa for over forty years and are now retiring. Twenty-five years ago the sister, Mrs. Bridgman went to America via China because the world war made the Atlantic unsafe and now after 25 years the situation is the same. She would have come this way anyway in order to see Helen, but it's quite a coincidence. Thus far the visiting team has left all the ancient land marks that are of interest to tourists intact. It is in their interest to do so, as admission has to be paid at nearly every gate and all the revenue goes to them. I am not sure that it costs more than formerly but it is one source of income, which is one thing they need. This morning we went to three of the huge buildings, the

largest of which was the throne room. Some of the priceless works of art I had seen before, but many of them were new to me, exquisite things. I wonder if they will be left to China when and if this all becomes a past "incident." In the evening seven of us elderly women went to the Pei Hai inside the Forbidden City for a picnic supper. We ate our supper on a pleasant elevation surrounded by trees, sitting comfortably in chairs at a small table, and then we started off to find the famous nine dragon screen. None of us knew just where it was so I went up to a nice looking chap in a group of sightseers and asked him if he would be kind enough to direct us. After telling us how to get there he said, "Aren't you Wan T'ai T'ai?" and when I asked how he knew me he said that I used to teach him in Techow. That was the first time we were there and he was quite young. I did not recognize him at all, but wasn't it queer that I happened to pick him out of the hundreds of people who were passing? Helen and her sister went on the Tientsin this afternoon leaving Miss Frost here and I have promised to go places with her as she seems shy about starting out with only a ricksha man. We have one here who speaks fairly good English and is a good guide, so I hope she will be willing to trust herself to him part of the time. She will follow them to Peitaiho in a few days.

It is hard to talk or write about anything but the present chaos. I have just been reading a very arresting article in the Christian Century, "What On Earth Is God Doing?" I would like to quote from it but that will take too long as I would have to quote a lot. In my teaching of the Prophets I have been so stuck with the way their words and advice fit in to the picture now. They knew just exactly what they were talking about and they expressed their ideas in no uncertain terms. Our attitude as nations, and as individuals too, toward the universal truths and the laws of the universe that they emphasized has been very much like the attitude of the people to whom they spoke more than two thousand years ago. And it has happened, and the only thing we can do now is to keep on living our normal lives as cheerfully and helpfully as possible.

Have I told you that Mrs. Frame has been operated on for cancer? She is at home now and is beginning to get up a little every day but she knows and we all know that the thing will come back again, perhaps in a few months. It is too sad for words. Rosamond, her daughter, is here and will teach for another year in the N.C.A.S. She is taking summer school work in the Language School. She and her mother are as cheerful as can be on the outside. It is an effort. Mrs. Frame was prepared for the worst and she is wonderfully brave. It seems as if these dreadful diseases are more prevalent than they use to be, probably because instead of going home for treatments and operations everyone comes to the P.U.M.C. It certainly is a blessing.

Your good last letter nearly took my breath away, Margaret. How do you manage all the writing you are doing and all your other work. Isn't it a senseless thing for our country to be arming like mad and not being able to speed up production to the degree desired and yet to be providing Japan, whom she is arming, with most of the things that she will need with which to fight us if things ever come to that point. We don't think that they will, but never again will we say, "That simply can't happen." Too many impossible things have happened and have happened with lightning speed. I wish Ford could be convinced of the fact that had it not been for his trucks and planes Japan could not have done much damage. The same is true of scrap iron and Standard Oil - especially, for the high power gasoline that is made only in the U.S. is absolutely necessary for the bombing planes. How can the people who have supplied these things sleep at night? They are directly responsible for the death of thousands and thousands of innocent men and women and little children and for the wandering homeless of millions of others, a good proportion of whom have died from hunger and exposure. How can people expect anything but just retribution some day for such callousness and greed?

Chungking is being terribly bombed lately after having had a let up. The big university was about demolished and one of the legations was directly hit and badly damaged. Fortunately, most of the people were in dug-outs. The European situation hangs

over us like a dark cloud all the time. Never in history has there been anything so ghastly. No one is safe. We are all holding our breath for poor little England. The U.S. should have had "clouds of airplanes" over there by this time.

I have been on a short trip with Mrs. Frost this morning - just to one shop and two small factories in our alley, one a lacquer factory and one a place where they manufacture a kind of cloisonne that has no wires. The pattern is beaten and carved by hand on a copper base and the different colored enamel painted on. We didn't see the last process - painting or dipping - but watched the man for a while working out most intricate and beautiful patterns. I want to go in again to find out first how the enamel is put on. It was all work that had been ordered, mostly for the United States.

This afternoon after it cools off a little we are going to visit our schools. Schools are having vacation of course, but the buildings and grounds are there.

Durand wrote that he was hoping to have Jimmy and Dick for another visit this summer. I hope he can manage it. Ursula spoke of getting you and Len to go to Oberlin with them. I wonder if that was done. I'll know all about it in the course of time. Father is safely back from P.T.H.

With love to you all,

*Affectionately, Mother*

# Peitaiho, 1940

Would like to see you but we are needed here to bring comfort to Chinese friends.  
Exchange rate makes things cheap here.  
Enjoying bird tramps on the flats .

---

George D. Wilder

East Cliff, Peitaiho Beach  
Aug. 4th, 1940

Dear Betty Ann,

It is a cold rainy Sunday morning and in a half hour I am going to church but want to get a start on my Sunday letters. Yours of June 25th, just reached us here yesterday after going to Peking. That is pretty good time especially as it left Ypsi only on July 1st, having been delayed a few days to get your Mother's installment. You will have to excuse a lot of mistakes, as I am using your Grandma's portable Corona after having used only mine for a year. This has two shift keys and that only one, so the mistakes come easily. I wonder what sort of a machine you use. You certainly packed a lot of news into your one page.

You spoke of a lot of good close tennis doubles. And your Mother told of your getting the mumps so that you were not likely to play in the tournament, though they were drawing it out as to time, hoping that you would get in a few days later. I am afraid the mumps would not get well so soon. They are not that obliging, though I never had any experience with them. None of our family have except Theodore, and that was after he was in College, and I was not there to see how they went.

I am glad that you do miss us as you said twice, and that you want us to go back as soon as we are not needed out here in China. Of course we would like to go back and see you all. I know your Grandma feels that way very much, and so do I. But it really seems as though we are needed here and that we can bring a lot of comfort to our Chinese friends. Two highly placed Chinese, trusted clerks in foreign-style banks have told me that "It makes us feel more comfortable just to know that you are here." One of them has moved to Shanghai this year to another branch of his bank, and we think it was to get where there were fewer personal acquaintances among the foreigners as he had been warned not to have anything to do with us in a social way in Peking and not to attend Union Church, where he was chairman of

the Men's Brotherhood. His family still stay and I have just arranged with his wife for the purchase of their radio set, a fine one, for Mr. Hubbard. He got it cheap for \$500.

Such prices sound high and we always say things are so frightfully dear but when we reduce these big figures to our own money, at \$20 to \$1.00, we often find that the price is much lower than three years ago, when the exchange was \$3.34 to \$1.00 for some years. It is true even when we count in the fact that we return to the Board 25 per cent of the profit on exchange now as compared with then. I have bought for other people at the second-hand stores about ten binoculars running from \$100 to \$350. One or two men with whom Hubbard and I have dealt with a good deal let me take them home and try them out thoroughly and are willing to wait for their money. I brought three up here for folks at PTH and will take the money back to the dealers when we go at the end of August.

There are two ladies, Dr. Morgan, and Nurse Hazel Myers, just come to live the month with us and they both have been studying birds for a year or two, using our book. They went out with me yesterday for a tramp on the flats. The wind and tide had combined to cover them, largely, so we had a lot of wading in a few inches up to three feet of water, but we were all dressed for it. We all had binoculars, and once while I was watching a flock of three kinds of terns settled on a sand bar, a fish hawk, also called an osprey, came up out of the water with a fish so large that he seemed to have difficulty in carrying it away. One of the girls had seen him drop from not very high into the water to get it. It is a thrilling sight to see them drop many hundreds of feet with claws outstretched and wings folded back to back, stretched full length backward and then plunge into the water, even the tips of their wings out of sight. When we got back to Hubbard's house and met the family coming back from their swim, they said they had seen an osprey, so far as they could tell, flying toward the flats and wanted to know if we had seen it. It's catching the fish was perfect identification, as no other hawk does that stunt.

Your Grandma has read "The Yearling" and liked it. Now that I have your judgment about it I think I shall have to draw it

from the Library and read it. She reads a good many such books that I do not get time for. We are in two book clubs and always feel that we must read those books or fail to get our money's worth. Just now we are very much enjoying one - "The World and Man as Science See Them." I just read the chapter on the "Problems of Plant Life" by Coulter. Each chapter is by a different Professor of Chicago University. One on Astronomy, one on Geology, one on Physics, and one on Chemistry, etc.

I wish we could have seen Gertrude's recital, as I suppose that you did.

I used to see Nature Magazine and know it is very interesting and scientifically reliable.

Do you have a field glass or binoculars? It seems as though I remember that you have a good one. If not I could get one out here for you. We have two now which I think we will keep though we could sell them again most any time for what we gave in this debased currency.

Glad to hear about your dog. Red Irish Setters are beautiful. We have here two four months old Springer Spaniels. Mary Boyd, John Stanley's betrothed, who is living here with us and the Stanley family, has one of them and Uncle Charlie the other. They are fairly friendly on the whole but just fight like tigers if one or the other gets food that the other wants. Another of the same litter is living at the next house across the road and the Gilberts on the other side of us have a wire-haired terrier, "Whiskers." So we have plenty of dogs and dog training this summer.

We have had dinner after church and now I ought to take a nap and write to the Penn Yan grandchildren. All but Teddy wrote us letters just before we came down. Grandma tells me not to write so much to each one. So I will say goodbye and thank you for your good letter. I hope you will do it again.

With love to you especially this time,

*Grandpa*

Tennis.  
Revival meetings in auditorium.  
Not a pacifist; war is evil but some things are worse than war.  
Love is a greater power, but war can be carried on in love, for the highest good of all.

---

George D. Wilder

East Cliff, Peitaiho  
August 18, 1940

Dear Margaret,

This is the day before your birthday, Aunt Louise's in fact, and also Dr. Ross's. He is an old missionary of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission - United Church of Canada, they call it now. He has taught in Cheloo for a good many years with Uncle Charlie so they know him and her pretty well and they came over to tea yesterday afternoon -- and we had a nice time, remembering the two birthdays. We spoke of yours too.

The day before the Galts had come over including their big boy, Sheffield. We had asked them to come for three sets of tennis, John and I playing against them, but there was a fine match for the semi-finals between Shih, an old Tungchou boy of nearly forty years ago, and Mr. Kohler, best player in the College of Chinese Studies. Shih was too much for him and he got only one hard-fought set and old Shih tired him out. It was three out of five. We watched that until the last set and then retired to play ourselves. Galt and I played the boys and won 7-5 and then played for first five games and lost five to one. We had planned that we would use their Yenching system; that is, father and son of one family play those of the other family. Then Fathers play sons and then fathers trade sons and play a set. We hope to have them over again and play the three sets. The Galts have been playing Stephen Ts'ai and son. He is their fine Chinese treasurer of Yenching University, working under Galt, who is Vice President.

Monday morning, August 19.

We had to go to church, where we heard a very calm, collected sermon by a Canadian from the pacifist point of view. Hubbard said it took more courage than to face a machine gun, which may be a slight exaggeration, but it came very appropriately from a Britisher. The preacher, Mr. Johnson, is one of our College of Chinese Studies students of last year and a very handsome young fellow, married, with two children, working in a Presbyterian mission up in Manchuria.

They have been having revival meetings in the church for Chinese the last week, and the revivalist preached this morning, a terrific shouter from start to finish, though very dramatic and interesting in spots, with some good ideas too, but your Mother rather wished she had stayed at home and written to you. I preach and she plays the piano next Sunday. The servants and nearby Chinese attend pretty well, the fine big auditorium being nearly filled. It will seat 400, I should say, and is open all around the sides, looking out over the sea, closed in windy weather by blinds only, sliding in grooves like the walls of Japanese houses.

We expect to stay until our guests leave, and then take our time to close up and go, about Sept. 1st. Then when we get home we shall move into one of the three residences that have a little lawn and garden, which your Mother yearns for, and also a little more spacious dining room, where we can entertain our friends.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is Monday evening now and we have spent most of the morning at a Fellowship of Reconciliation meeting. Hubbard made some statements in writing on Christian principles that we thought all Xns - Japanese and Chinese and German and English -

could agree upon. I may be able to send you a copy. I don't know as I am worthy to be called a pacifist as I have always held in my fundamental philosophy that we must have goodwill toward all living things, from amoeba to God, no matter how bad they might be, or how much we disapprove of them or how bad enemies they may be. But war is about the worst thing for all concerned, so we are against it, but it is not the final absolute evil, it is only a relative evil because it does so much harm to living beings - physical and spiritual harm. There can be something worse in every way than war of defense from aggression. I mean slavery that has no respect for personality, refuses opportunity for free development, trains to believe in and carry on war to enslave more people on a still wider scale. To train children in that way is worse than to kill them with bombs. So I can hardly see how we can advocate submission without resistance to that sort of aggression. I still believe that in the end love is the greatest power, but that war may be carried on in love, for the highest good of all.

This morning I had to call the girls when I got up at six, to go off on a picnic to the sand dunes. All gathered here on our porch. I didn't go myself but it was fun to see them get off and then get back into bed and get warm.

Well all this is just to let you see how normal our summer is. Guess I told you before how Galt and I were battery as of old against the children, but it was indoor baseball that we played and some of the sons were daughters. But it was the old time way of celebrating our American Board get-together day.

I ought to answer a letter of George's, which I brought up, but other letters and the finals in men's doubles and women's doubles will prevent it today. I have a lot of such letters still to write before we leave. That way George has of correcting grammar over the phone was very cute, answering the "Can I speak to your Mother?" with a "Yes you may."

How are you all fixed with binoculars? I can get them now fairly cheaply on occasions. The bird watchers ought to have a pair.

With love to you all, and especial good wishes to you on this day, which is now your birthday. May you have many more.

*With Love,*

*Father*

*P.S. I have just cabled "No" to answer a cable from Lydia Lord Davis in Oberlin asking if I were available to go to Taiku for a year and if not, to recommend someone. The latter part must be answered by letter, which I must write soon.*

Recall pitching a shutout vs. local Marines.  
John Stanley and Mary Boyd betrothed.  
Competing with Hubbard on the number of bird species seen this month (102).  
Labeling Gertrude's 72 paintings of wild flowers.

---

George D. Wilder

Peitaiho

Aug. 28, 1940

Dear Margaret,

Yesterday we had a fine long letter from you telling all about everything. It came just as I was writing to Dr. Fenn and when I resumed writing to him after the interruption of hearing yours read out loud I told him about Miller's visit, which you appreciated so much. I told him you would appreciate such a one from him and his new wife. They had seen Ursula at Hall eight miles or so from Penn Yan, where his wife used to live.

Miller's words about my being the best pitcher he ever saw of course is pure blarney. If he had said the best he ever caught for or batted against there might have been more in it. Come to think of it, I guess he caught for me against some very poor Marines that we put out in one, two, three order for two or three innings and then traded batteries and shut out our own team the rest of the game, winning about 16 to 5 in our PTH team's favor though it was 5 to 0 in the PTH team's favor when we traded. That is the only shut out game I ever pitched - a curious one.

Sorry to hear about the \$75 check that could not be cashed. Is it not possible in such a cast to present the check again later when the account may have been replenished. What is the use of dropping it just because there were insufficient funds at the time you or the Y bank presented it? If it is a live account at all sooner or later there would be a chance of cashing. Theodore had a similar experience on a loan to him, you know.

This is one of our last days at this beautiful place. John and Mary went this morning at 6:30 and Dr. Julia Morgan went

yesterday. Hazel Myers and Aunt Louise go tomorrow and we the next day or Saturday, more likely. It was sprinkling when they went off with two rikshas of baggage and on their borrowed bicycles. Their own bikes were checked yesterday and they came back from the station on bikes belonging to another betrothed couple whose best man and lady they are to be Sept. 15 if Betty Thompson gets over her low fever and threatening T.B. in time. She marries a nice young red-haired Englishman, Dr. Gale of Cheloo. The rain soon stopped and it is a gently cloudy day. We are to go birding to Ch'ih T'u Shan (Red Earth Hill) in a half hour. I had just that time in which to write a line to put in your Mother's letter.

You certainly were appreciative of our little present, and if we had only known how 3/4 of it was going we might have made it more. You know living out here in this region of inflation puts us on easy street, even without my monthly honorarium from the Marine's Language School. That may not last forever of course. Isabel's husband, Major Bill Mayer, is running that school of four students and has my assistance. He is stiffening up their standards a good deal.

Well, Mr. Corkey and Hazel will soon be calling to start out and I want to go and raise my list to beat Hubbard's of last year of 102 species noted in August.

\* \* \* \* \*

Later.

In the meantime we and your Mother and Aunt have all been out for two and a half hours to the Red Earth Hill and I added two birds to my list for the month, making it 102, but there are two or three duplicates that I shall have to make up before I really have enough to beat his record. I have not been shooting except for one afternoon and that tends to keep the list down since if I am carrying my shotgun, when I see something that I can't name I just shoot it. We saw only 23 species. It drizzled occasionally and once the sun almost came out, but the birds stayed in. We got back just in time for our 1:00 PM dinner, all

well pleased. Every person had binoculars and that is a pleasure. I never knew there was so much fun to be had with them, and my little Japanese pair of 6X are proving exceedingly good. The little 3X ones that I bought from Boston while with you have gone fluey so they see double, but can be fixed. They are nice for opera but not strong enough for the field. My new ones cost about the same in US money, \$8.00. Dr. Morgan asks me to get some for her. I did bring some good Goertz 8X but it has the cloudy fungus growing on the lens. We carry our binoculars almost everywhere.

We spent a morning recently putting the typewritten labels on your mother's 72 flowers at the children's playroom. Mr. Morgan, who knows some Botany, helped, and Dr. Garven had named most of those that we had been unable to analyze. This morning I typed off a list of the remaining 32 that we are taking back to Peking, there not being enough frames here. I think I shall take up the matter of printing them in plates, but more description is needed to make a book and Garven's already covers the ground fairly well. He has plans for enlarging it and perhaps then can use some or all of our paintings.

Aunt Louise and Hazel are just off to the station to check their trunks and get their hair waved, and will be back for the night, then off for good tomorrow morning, leaving us a couple of days to be by ourselves. We have such a splendid caretaker that we do not have to pack away the bedding or lock up the house. Is not that a comfort? Saturday morning we will have a leisurely breakfast with the Chandlers who are just across the road from us, between us and the sea. Then we take a later train than the others have been doing, about 9:00 A.M. It is slower than the express but less crowded, having started only 20 miles away at Shanhaikuan.

Hubbard and Dr. Cochrane, who were put out of the tournament by the finalists, have been playing against Stringer and Stuckey, both brilliant players, Stuckey being probably better than Stringer's partner. Stringer is a young Catholic Father who lost the finals to our old friend, a Tungchou boy, C.L. Shih, now 51.

It has just showered a bit but I think they can play anyway after a little and we will go to see. They stand three sets apiece now, and are playing it off.

With love to you all as we want this to get off on the P.M. mail when our paper comes. Today's Peking Chronicle arrives the same day. Is not that service?

*Father*

*You know I can sympathize with you on back strain. But for your comfort let me tell you that it is curable. I scarcely feel it for months at a time. You ought to hear us brag to the young married couples about Len's powers in gardening, cooking, etc. They can scarcely believe our stories. He enjoys the gardening, I know, but don't let him work too hard and especially keep him from losing sleep. I suppose you know that. How could he ever play 11 sets in one morning?*

*P.S. Your mother had almost no competition among the girls at Oberlin in tennis, but played the men's champion, Patsy Nines — getting 3 or 4 games in a set, maybe even some sets.*

# Back in Peking

U.S. Embassy advises leaving. First evacuation boat departing, but no mass exodus.  
Whatever happens in Europe will determine events here.  
John and Mary's marriage is like old Chinese custom — in times of uncertainty, many weddings.  
Censors confiscate magazines with "dangerous thoughts."  
Train wrecks are frequent; sometimes accidents, sometimes planned.  
This letter will go by the second boat, leaving Shanghai soon.

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George D. Wilder

Peking,  
Nov. 10, 1940

Dear Families,

Which means each member of each family, for you are in my heart not only as groups, but also as very individual individuals.

We are going to try to get as many letters written as we can in the next few days to send by friends who are leaving on this first boat, which we hear is already filled to capacity. It is the only one coming to C'hing Wang Tao and the only time that the Embassy will take the responsibility of getting passengers and baggage to the boat, chartering a special train in order to do so. This is because there are no hotel accommodations and they must go at once from the train to the boat. Later boats will have to be taken at Shanghai.

You will realize by this time that we are not on the passenger list. So far as we know only two families from our mission are going, Mrs. Lewis and her four young children and Maud Hunter and her two girls. The Hunter's furlough is due this Spring so Jim will follow them in a few months. In addition an invalid, Miss Sewall, is going and Mrs. Hausske goes to take care of her. So you see there is no exodus from our or any other mission, only a few scattered families where there seem to be special reasons.

Nov. 15.

I had written this much when I realized that I must stop and went to bed with a resolve to stay there as long as I should,

which I did. I think my temp. will not return now. I am going to have my teeth x-rayed as a possible source of infection and I decidedly hope that it will not be necessary to be outfitted with false ones. Whatever it was that was causing me so much trouble in my left shoulder and arm has practically disappeared after two weeks of physio-therapy treatment at the Methodist hospital and three bakes a day, self administered with a little electric heater that we brought for the purpose. It is a great relief not to have that pain. And this is quite enough about me and my ailments.

This letter of mine had to miss the boat, after all, but I hope it will get into the next mail bag. To go back. You can imagine what questionings there have been ever since the advice to return to the U.S. was sent to us from the Embassy. My only anxiety was for you on the other side who, I knew, would be anxious and who might wonder at our not availing ourselves of the first opportunity. People were somewhat stirred up for a few days, but for a few days only. Taking the first boat meant packing in a great hurry and I was not well enough to tackle the undertaking. The very thought of it made me hot and trembly from head to foot. So, the boat has gone without us and to us it looks as if whatever crisis there was has gone by. One cannot predict however in this world that seems to have gone mad. We all have our eyes on Europe, believing that what happens there will determine the course of events here.

How did you all vote, and are you satisfied with the results of the elections? Does it mean anything that Japan and Germany are not satisfied?

I have seen no announcement but have heard that Thanksgiving is the 21st of November. The committee is planning a mission get-together of some kind, the first idea being a Peking-duck dinner at a Chinese restaurant, but ducks have soared in price lately so the committee balks at the price of such a dinner. Personally, the last place for a Thanksgiving dinner for me would be a Chinese restaurant, though there are some very nice ones now. We were invited to one not long ago where everything

was clean and the dishes were beautiful Chiang Hsi ware, but the spilling of food on the table cloth and a few other things that take one's appetite cannot seem to be avoided.

John Stanley and Mary Boyd are to be married soon. As she is a Canadian, she had to have a week's residence in Peking and the bans have to be up for two weeks after that. The bans are now up and I think the wedding is to be a week from next Thursday, Nov. 28. Fortunately the Yenching Dean of Women is losing her private secretary, into whose place Mary will step, so everything seems to be working out beautifully for the young couple and they are happy. Mary will be married in a bride's maid dress that she wore only a few months ago, quite outshining the bride. This quite carries out Chinese custom in a time of uncertainty. There are always many weddings, as the bride's parents are always anxious to get the bride safely married and in her parents-in-law's home. In this case the parents have had nothing to do with it as Mr. and Mrs. Boyd went to west China after they were driven out of Honan. This will all be news to them, and welcome news I have no doubt.

This has been a beautiful day and this forenoon I went out for the first time in nearly four weeks, going with one of the students to an exhibition of photographs at The Institute of Fine Arts. The artist is a young woman who has worked with Hartung for years and her work is almost perfect. Miss Saunders, with whom I went, is no mean photographer herself and she was almost overwhelmed by the perfection of the work. There is no dearth of interesting things to enjoy in Peking. Next week one of the Curtiss Grimes' piano pupils is to give a recital to which he sent us an invitation. She is a Russian girl and is really a wonder. Have you noticed that the Atlantic Monthly prize novel for the year is written by a Russian woman in Tientsin? The New York Times book review speaks very highly of it. "The Family", by Nina Fedorova. I hope our Atlantic Monthly will come more regularly. We have not had one since August and our other papers and magazines are very scattered. Most annoying. The amusing thing is that the Digest, for instance, will be suppressed for some article that is supposed to contain "dangerous thoughts"

while the pirated edition, printed in Shanghai is released from the Post Office without any trouble.

On my way back from the Institute I stopped in to see Mrs. Ingram. She looks well and is prepared to have a house full of people if there is to be an evacuation of people from Shansi. We hope it will not happen. Isabel left with the train load on the 14th, but her husband, now Colonel Mayer, is still here and in poor health. Tragedies happen here as everywhere. A few days ago his secretary, a young man, committed suicide. No one knows why.

### *Father*

*I am really ashamed to send this letter. The carbon paper that we buy here is poor and rubs off with the least touch. But you will be lenient, I'm sure.*

*Friday George and Mr. Hubbard started for Techow to attend an ordination service in which they were to help – and last night (Saturday) after I had gone to bed at about 11:30 I was roused by knocking and they by some one coming upstairs, and I opened the door to my husband. They had gone as far as Pau Tou, 100 li this side of Techow, where they were held up by the wreck of a long train, a freight train, I think it was. So after sitting there for quite a time they returned to Tientsin on the same train, getting there just in time to take the express to Peking. These wrecks happen often. This one may have been an accident or it may have been planned. No particulars yet.*

*Each of your last letters, Margaret, quoted Donald. He must be as dear and as quick in the uptake as they make them. Has not being able to "understand your language" is rich. I have the*

*enlargement of the four children hanging on the wall near our bed, where they smile down on us – genuine rays of sunshine.*

*This letter is intended to reach the 2<sup>nd</sup> evacuation boat, which leaves Shanghai on the 21<sup>st</sup>. It may not make it, but however it goes it takes my dearest love.*

*Mother.*

Writing a sermon on how a good God could have created a world of pain and misery — pain is necessary as a warning to avoid danger; sin is possible so there can be moral choice.  
Occasionally meet people who remember talks on bees and birds.  
Wrote up Peitaiho birding experiences for the China Journal. Fifty such articles since 1922.  
Playing in our tennis tournament.  
Wilkie may be good, but is a product of capitalist system, responsible for engineering wars; some doubt about which is worse, capitalism or Hitlerism.  
School has 100 students.  
No fear of internment.

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George D. Wilder

College of Chinese Studies  
Peking,  
Nov. 24, 1940

Dear Margaret and all the Family,

As you will see by the date we did not get your copy of Mother's family letter off on the S.S. Washington, Shanghai, on the 21st, as she intended. The reason was that it was all I could do to get letters from Theodore and Ursula answered, and one to Durand, before the date. So we let yours stay awhile as there is another mail from Shanghai at the end of the month which is called a Christmas mail, the same as the 21st. I think I duplicated a couple of pages to be sent on to your besides. Then we sent some by the evacuees on the Mariposa that left Tsingwangtao, near Peitaiho, on the 14th. These were rather old letters that had waited for the ship's sailing quite a while. They were written Oct. 13th and Nov. 10th for the Mariposa. Let us know if you get them as they were written rather freely. I had you and Ur exchange letters of those dates, I believe, so that I would have an extra copy to send all around the circle in California, Montana, Dakota, Ohio, Michigan and Vermont. Hardly worth it.

Today I have worked on a sermon for tomorrow at the big Wesleyan Methodist church at Hsiao Shun Hutung. I have not been there for years, since old Dr. Lowry died. It is an old one on "Could a both good and powerful God have created this present world of pain and misery (so-called)?" It was suggested by Buchan's remark "Pain is the best gift of God to man". As I

understand it pain is absolutely necessary for the existence of any living thing. How would anything avoid danger and death if there were no pain to warn it. It is also necessary for any moral ideas at all, so that all character and the highest spiritual joys of human beings depend on it. Their highest satisfactions have been found connected with suffering. Heb. 12:2 for instance and Byrd's, "Alone." It was out of goodness and love that He made a world like this in which pain is necessary and sin is possible. He would not have been good to have shrunk from it. As for Power. It is not possible for any power to compel a man to be good in his heart, any more than to make two and two anything else than four. To compel a man to be good is not goodness at all; either for the man who is compelled or for God who compels him.

Well, I was going to answer your letter of Sept. 26 -- Oct. 7th, and 8th. That does not seem so bad as the first date, as this is only the next month.

It seems to me that this was the first I ever knew of your having a dog, Chris, and now you don't have her. I remember the Lincoln School very well. I don't know as they remember me though. Occasionally they do out here in China. I sat next to a young fellow of Honan twice during some meetings this week and asked him his name. He said, "I know yours but you don't know mine. I heard you two or three times talk on birds in Tsinan." Another elderly man the other day when I was introduced said, "O, I have known you here in Peking ever since I was a boy, hearing you talk on birds and bees." Sometimes they even remember things said. I have told about our old dog, Caesar, and his thinking and his conscience a good many times lately. I would like to see a real pointer point again, and your Chris.

I have written up our Peitaiho bird experiences and if the Journal prints them I will send you separates. I do not know whether or not Betty would like to read some of those. There are fifty printed since about 1922. I have a few sets, and it might be well to have one preserved in the US.

We did not try much tennis at Peitaiho, but have had more since coming back. Charles Stelle, is the best here and yet I can give him a game. I lost a deuce set to him the other day in singles, which I rarely play, just by two or three inches. It is lots of fun. And he and Gray beat Hubbard and me yesterday 9 to 7. Stelle beat Hubbard at singles a while ago, which you know is going some. Gray also can beat me, though he is not quite so steady as Stelle, who is brilliant at times, with the prettiest back hand drive I have seen for a long time. We got a tournament started here and then came three days rain and a freeze that turned the courts into rinks and three inches of water. Strong and I have just won our first round and if we could win another would meet Stelle and Gray in the finals.

Mother's arm is now better and it was not that, but colds and slight rises of temperature that kept her from playing this fall.

We are certainly glad to see you helping to stir interest in China. It is time that we woke up to the crime we have committed and are still committing against her in furnishing so lavishly the things for her undoing. But don't let me get on to that subject.

I thought the New York Times' reasons for going over to Wilkie were pretty good. BUT THERE IS ONE THING -- he is a product, and the best product, of the capitalist regime and I am convinced that they are more to blame for cold bloodedly engineering these wars than anyone else. After all a victory for England and France, much as I incline toward them, means a strengthening of the money power on the world. Adolph Hitler's victory fastens Naziism and carries the anti-Jew bitterness, and there seems to be some doubt as to which is worse, of the two, capitalism or Hitlerism.

Our Reader's Digest has not come for two months until this evening, when we got the October number. I am going

to dip in as soon as I get this letter finished. We have few back numbers, alas, for reference. Our other magazines also are dribbling along slowly.

You spoke to Lutheran ladies. They seem to be right up and in earnest in missionary work. There are several in our school and twelve we expected were switched off to the Philippines and have sent to us for materials and three teachers for Chinese. You know we have the biggest-ever school. Instead of a panic and as Col. Mayers prophesied, "close out for the lack of students in a month," we have not had any leave to return to the States, only 20 plus to go on to their interior stations while the going is good, and it leaves us with a hundred right now. They are the finest of people. Col. Mayers did not seem to realize that folks with a life purpose are not scared back home by threat of internment, etc. That was a strenuous evening for you, ending at midnight at the party, with your talk sandwiched in at the Lutheran church.

Good for Gertrude taking French in the College. I wish I had ever had it as the pronunciation so often puts me to shame now. My Mother was perfectly able to teach me but I did not stick to it when I started once or twice. Tell Betty to look up the scientific names of birds in her Latin lexicon until she knows the meaning of them. Her glossary in textbooks will not answer. She will have to go to a real Latin dictionary. We have two good six power binoculars but did not get a pair sent off by the evacuees. Sorry. We enjoyed them much at the shore. I have not yet gotten Betty's letter about the glasses for birds.

Don's "whiskers" in his eyes and "Don't understand your language" is certainly a good sign of a quick mind.

Forgive this two-sided letter. The red seems to show a little better. This ribbon is the same I had on the machine when I came out. I have oiled it twice and it is rather dim but not worn through at all.

Well, this takes a "Merry Xmas" to you all and a card. We are warned that the Post Office will not handle cards this year. I do not wonder. The office is swamped with other kinds of mail.

Lovingly,

*Father*