



Chapter XVIII

[excerpt]

CONCENTRATION CAMP-WEIHSIEN (1943-45)

After the death of Father Lebbe I planned to go to Chungking and take over his work with the armies. But I waited too long, and the day came when the Japanese arrested me. They began rounding up most of the foreigners in China soon after Pearl Harbor, but it was not until March 1943 that they came to the mission and took me off to a concentration camp. I was permitted to take only what I could carry in my hands, and ten books. I packed some clothing, my four breviaries, a Chinese dictionary, and five books of Chinese classics to study in camp.

The police took me by military truck to Tingsien, a city on the railroad, not too far from An Kwo, where a special train which had come from Taiyuan waited for us. This was the train which would carry all the "enemy foreigners" from Shansi Province and the southern part of Hopeh. We travelled slowly, picking up other prisoners en route, and after a full day we came to Peiping.

The Japanese had occupied Peiping for more than five years now, but they had been at war with

Advance comments on **THE ENEMY WITHIN:**

HERBERT C. HOOVER:

"In terms of his personal experience and observation, Father de Jaegher tells a grimly fascinating story. Here is the reality of communism in action in all its naked horror. I recommend it to my fellow Americans who want to see and know, in close-up, the demonic force now loose in our world."

SENATOR WILLIAM F. KNOWLAND:

"For those who would better understand the methods by which communism fastens its grip upon a nation *THE ENEMY WITHIN* is required reading. It is also a book hard to put down until the reader has completed the final chapter."

LIEUTENANT GENERAL ALBERT C. WEDEMEYER:

"*THE ENEMY WITHIN* depicts objectively the conditions prevailing in China the past several years. The authors have had wide and unique experiences in that complex area of the world and are therefore qualified to analyze individually and collectively the manners, customs, and daily lives of the people. I know of my personal knowledge that Mrs. Kuhn was highly respected by scores of Chinese in all walks of life.

"It is obvious to the reader that Chinese adults and children react not unlike members of the Anglo-Saxon race—family loyalties, keen sense of humor, appreciation of the good things of life, an innate desire to live and let live. This book is extremely entertaining and perhaps one of the most highly instructive that I have read on China."

the Western powers only fifteen months, and this was the first fine opportunity they had had to make affective anti-foreign propaganda. From my car window I could see official Japanese photographers hopping all over the Peiping station with their cameras, taking still pictures; several more had set up motion-picture cameras at different points and were concentrating on footage of the Peiping foreign residents carrying their own luggage. Everybody had bags, boxes, and valises, whatever they could carry, and some of the women were pushing small wheelbarrows. The loading of the train was greatly delayed in order that the photographers could get thousands of feet of film of this parade of humiliation to impress the Chinese citizens with Japanese power and make the white foreigners "lose face." Chinese amahs, separated from the children they had cared for since babyhood, wept openly, and the children had to be torn away from last embraces with their beloved Chinese nurses by frantic parents.

All of us on the train saw this drama on the

THE ENEMY WITHIN

by Raymond J. de Jaegher
and Irene Corbally Kuhn

Belgian Father Raymond de Jaegher first went to China as a missionary in 1930, and from that time until his perilous escape from the country in 1949 he has watched the insidious but systematic spread of Communist domination in the Far East. In *THE ENEMY WITHIN* he presents a graphic and unforgettable eyewitness report on Red conquest, which might happen similarly in any nation, a creeping terror which unrolled before his eyes "like a Chinese scroll painted by a devil."

First the Communists undermined the traditional Chinese family life, code of morals, and religions, forcing even the peace-loving Buddhists into active underground resistance. They then used the war with Japan to weaken further the National Government, and Father de Jaegher describes one tragic day in the spring of 1940, when the Reds calmly annihilated nearly sixty thousand of their own countrymen, while a Japanese army idled less than fifty miles away. He tells how children were forced to witness beheadings, details the inhuman tortures inflicted upon anti-Communists: freezing, flaying, burial alive, and the "Peiping Express," wherein the unfortunate victim is dragged to death by a horse beaten into a frenzy.

Father de Jaegher often finds flashes of humor in his experiences, but most of his shrewd and articulate report is grimly serious. And whether relating events during his imprisonment in a Japanese concentration camp, recounting talks with Chiang Kai-shek, or tracing the vain efforts of the United States to bring peace to China, he tells his story in terms of effect, showing vividly the devastating effects of communism on all classes, from peasant to scholar and banker.



Father Raymond de Jaegher was born in Belgium, educated there and in England, and spent nineteen years as a missionary in China. He came to this country in 1949 and now makes his home in Maryknoll, New York. He lectures extensively on his experiences in the Orient, and during the past winter he returned to Formosa and Hong Kong for a brief visit.



NBC photo

Irene Corbally Kuhn, who collaborated with Father de Jaegher on this book, is a well-known magazine writer, war correspondent, radio commentator, and author who spent a great deal of time in China, both before and during World War II. She currently resides in New York City.

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As soon as we were loaded into trucks at the railroad station at Weihsien, I guessed our ultimate destination, for I was familiar with the Presbyterian mission and knew its size and general layout made it ideal for a concentration camp. Besides, the compound was surrounded by a high brick wall, which naturally enhanced its value as a prison. The Japanese had only to put a few watchtowers on the wall for their sentries. Later on they were to build a deep moat around the wall - a big ditch, really - and string electric wires around the camp's perimeter.

When we came to the solid red brick wall and went through the big gates into our prison in the fading light of that March day, none of us knew when we would come out again. This was to be our home now until an Allied victory set us free. We didn't know when that would be, but not one of us doubted that the day would come.

There were seventeen hundred of us, one thousand British, three hundred Americans; the remaining four hundred were Belgian, Dutch, Norwegian, and nationals from many South American countries. There were whole families

with several children, and single men and women. There were business and professional people, missionaries, soldiers of God and soldiers of fortune. There were priests like myself, several Trappists, some Franciscans, Scheut Fathers, Jesuits, men from Maryknoll.

Most of the assorted company, gathered here from widely scattered places in North and Central China, had never had to lift a hand to help themselves in all their years in China. They had lived in large comfortable houses or company messes, with excellently trained Chinese servants, loyal, willing, and devoted, to cook, serve, and wait on them. They had been driven to their offices, or about the towns and cities where they lived, in rickshaws or automobiles. The amahs had looked after the children for the women; the office compradors had handled the tedious and intricate details of business for the men. Life had been pleasant and easy. Now it was to be lived on a new plane entirely.

The Japanese organization, if one can call it that, was terrible. We had to create order out of the chaos into which we were dumped.

station platform, and we watched the performance, saddened and apprehensive, knowing that our turn would come when we had to change trains. That came sooner than we expected, for while there was ample room for all on this prisoners' special, we were ordered out of the cars, then packed into two trains to Tientsin, and there we had to change trains again. These changes were equally unnecessary, but all this was done to impress the Chinese and annoy and exasperate us.

When the Tientsin foreigners joined us, the Japs routed the train south to Tsinan, in Shantung Province. Once again we changed trains for the benefit mostly of the Japanese still and motion-picture cameramen, and chugged on for another full day to Weihsien. This city is halfway between Tsingtao, the port, and Tsinan, and was the seat of the American Presbyterian mission, then one of the largest and most important in China. It's many fine buildings, including a large hospital and school, are grouped in a compound about two and one half miles from the city. It was inside this compound that the famous American publisher, Henry Luce, was born.

The human creature is adaptable and resourceful, and our company was no exception. Seventeen hundred persons constitute a small city. The leaders began to emerge from the rank and file; the ingenious and skilful ones began to organize the conglomerate mess in which we found ourselves into a tidy, orderly whole.

All over China and elsewhere in Asia where the Japanese had seized control, in Shanghai and Manila and in the Dutch East Indies, other foreign prisoners were doing the same thing. Persons of all ages, of the most mixed and diverse kinds, were learning by trial and error how to survive.

It was exceedingly difficult for us in the beginning, for nobody knew what to do, but we all adapted ourselves to the situation, and we set up committees and began to work in harmony for our own welfare.

It was a little easier for me than for most because I had lived a meager life and was used to hard physical exercise and outdoor work. As a matter of fact, I was living better in camp than I had lived outside. In An Kwo we had had bread only twice a week; in camp we had bread every day. I have often searched my own mind with some amusement to discover if my eternal craving for bread, never satisfied during my life in An Kwo, was what made me an eager volunteer kitchen helper in camp right from the start. I knew nothing of baking, but many of the fathers did, men with whom I shared this detail; and very few of the other foreigners, who had been waited on all their lives in China, knew much if anything about cooking either.

We had to learn as we went, and there were plenty of errors. One day soon after we arrived I put a great lump of salt in the soup, to my sorrow and chagrin, and I feared no one could eat it. But everyone did, for we had nothing else. Sometimes the food was burned or the soup was too diluted. But since we had to eat our mistakes or go hungry, everyone who went on the kitchen detail soon learned how to make palatable food out of what we had.

The food the Japanese gave us, however, was not adequate or varied enough, and the mothers, particularly, began to fret about their children. They knew they could get eggs and other produce of the countryside if they could establish some kind of

communication and liaison with the Chinese. I made the contacts between the Chinese workers in the camp and their trustworthy friends outside, and we began to plan carefully.

Five Trappist monks (Note***) were housed in one room in a section of the camp nearest the wall, a most fortuitous location for black-market operations. One of them, an Australian of Irish descent named Scanlan, was quite willing to act as head of our smuggling ring. Father Scanlan was a big round-faced, red-haired man, going bald. He spoke with a soft, slow voice; all his movements were slow and measured. But his mind was fast and good and resourceful, and for this reason, chiefly, the camp chose him to head the ring.

His egg-smuggling operations constituted an interfaith movement, you might say; Father Scanlan's outside operative who delivered the eggs was Mrs. K'ang, a Protestant Chinese, and equally resourceful and spunky.

The Trappists' room was located near a drain, which carried off the overflow of water from heavy rains. The drain was built underground to the road that ran outside the camp, by the outer wall, where it was covered with iron bars. Father Scanlan used this drain for his delivery route for eggs, cigarettes, and produce. He would crawl through it as far as he could, and Mrs. K'ang or one of her small boys would push the eggs and small packages through the bars to Father Scanlan inside the drain. I often went along to help, especially when we had big orders coming in. The rendezvous was always at night, and that meant working in pitch-darkness.

Father Scanlan kept his accounts in what he called quite aptly *The Book of Life*. He entered the date of the transaction, the number and description of the purchases, and the prices paid, all in the most regular fashion, as if he were a storekeeper in Sydney or Melbourne.

He kept the eggs in a trunk, and we did business on a big scale, with many Chinese supplying us regularly. We carried the eggs around camp in our pockets, delivering them as we went, exercising reasonable caution, of course. We had so many people in camp buying eggs that we had to establish queues in the kitchen to accommodate all the campers who wanted to fry them. Oddly enough, the Japanese guards at first didn't know that eggs were not a part of our regular legal supplies, but one day they caught on and then they began to search for the black market. By this time everyone in camp was in it, and many particularly daring Chinese were scaling the wall, doing business right inside the camp, not

*Note : ****

The Trappists had to abandon their habitual silence while they were imprisoned. When necessity released them from their vows, they all talked constantly, as if to make up for the years of silence.

just delivering through the drain.

It seemed that Father Scanlan operated under a special dispensation from Providence, for he seemed to sense the times that were safe for these over-the-wall operations and the times when it was best to lie low. One evening he put all his provisions in our room nearby and suspended all his operations for a while. He was sure the Japanese were aware that he was the ringleader, and he was particularly careful.

Then one night he had to go out into the grounds, near the wall, to talk to a Chinese supplier who had dropped over the wall to discuss some special business. Suddenly, as they were conferring in whispers, Father Scanlan's ears heard footsteps and he knew the guards were nearby. He barely had time to boost the agent over the wall when the guards flashed their light on him.

It was a black, moonless night; nevertheless, Father Scanlan had his breviary open in his hand and he was reading from it.

"What are you doing here, outside your room?" the guard asked.

"I'm just saying my prayers," Father Scanlan replied amiably.

The Japanese scoffed at this, naturally, since no one could read in the dark.

Father Scanlan had an explanation. He had begun to read while it was still daylight and he had just kept on, turning pages to have something to do, pretending to read. He knew all the prayers in this book by heart, he added blandly.

The explanation was pretty weak and it didn't satisfy the Japanese, so they took Father Scanlan off and put him in solitary confinement for fifteen days.

The area to which he was taken was the best part of the compound, the former residential section for the mission teachers, doctors, and their families. It was out of bounds for all the "enemy foreigners" now, however, because the Japanese officers were housed there, and their administrative offices were in this section too.

Of course the word of his confinement went through the camp immediately, and for a week Father Scanlan never had it so good, as the saying goes. All the mothers who remembered how he had managed to get eggs for their children through the drainpipe, giving up one night's rest after another to take advantage of the darkness, began to bake cakes and cookies and special goodies for him. They secreted these on the children, who were adept at snaking

through the guard lines to the out-of-bounds area, where they passed them along via their own relay system to the popular jolly Trappist. Father Scanlan gained weight and had a fine rest in that week, but he was lonesome for his fellow prisoners from the beginning and he spent only eight days in his well-fed solitary confinement. His quick mind had found a way out almost at once.

Shortly before midnight the Japanese officers were awakened by the rich stentorian tones of a baritone voice chanting:

*"Deus, in adiutorium meum intende,
Domine, ad adjuvandum me festina."*

It was Father Scanlan, singing his office at the top of his voice, yelling in Latin:

*"Lord, come to my aid.
Lord, come quickly to my aid."*

The officers did not approach him at first. They were too curious to do more than listen.

Father Scanlan went on from the matins, continuing in his loudest tones:

*"Domine, quam multi sunt qui tribulant!
Me multi insurgunt adversum me!"*

This part of the office might have annoyed the Japanese had they understood Latin. They were all so hypersensitive and weighted down with inferiority complexes, they might have wondered why this foreigner complained to the Lord, "How many there are who trouble me! How many are there who are against me!"

On and on Father Scanlan went, putting all his heart and soul and voice into his office:

*"In te, Domine, speravi:
Non confundar in aeternum."*

Giving voice to his own great faith as he sang "In you, Lord, I have hoped: I will not be deceived forever."

An hour had gone by now, and the Japanese were getting restless. At first they had been sure this was only a momentary aberration on the part of this great red-faced, red-haired foreigner, but now, after

an hour, when he showed no signs of letdown, either in volume or enthusiasm they began to send for aides and orderlies and ordered them to find out what was going on.

Father Scanlan wore a guileless face when they questioned him.

"I am obliged to do this," he said, which was quite true, as every Catholic priest must recite his office daily. What he didn't feel obliged to add, however, was that he could have chosen another time to do it and that he could have read it silently to himself.

The Japanese had a superstitions fear of interfering with religious practices, and when the guards reported back to their officers what Father Scanlan had said, they all shrugged and decided not to do anything further that night.

Father Scanlan continued to chant his office for another hour or so, and he kept this up all week, making his starting time later each night. Finally, in desperation, the officers whose sleep had been wrecked every night for eight days ordered Father Scanlan out of solitary confinement and back to camp.

The news went through camp immediately, and Brigadier Strang, a fellow prisoner, assembled his Salvation Army band of twenty pieces to welcome Father Scanlan back. The band fell in line directly behind Father Scanlan as the Japanese brought him into our area, and with him at their head, and all the shouting, laughing children following, and as many adults as could fall in step quickly, the procession marched in triumph around the camp, tootling and blowing and blaring away, banging on drums and cymbals. Cheers resounded from one end of the compound to the other, with everyone laughing and joining in, Father Scanlan smiling and bowing to all his friends like a conquering hero, as indeed he was.

The Japanese were nonplussed by this, but they did nothing then to stop the parade, and the incident allowed everyone to blow off steam and relieve tension. The next day, however, the Japanese posted a notice forbidding the camp to hold any meetings "without permission of the chief of police."

We all did what we could in that close communal living to keep things on an even keel. We were cut off from the outside world completely at first and we had no means of knowing how the war was going, whether we were winning or losing. We were allowed to write letters, and the Japanese collected them regularly to censor and mail. They

imposed restrictions on this correspondence, however, limiting the number of letters any one person could write in a month and insisting that the letters contain no more than twenty-five words -what they called "Red Cross" letters written on paper supplied by the International Red Cross and sent through them to the addressees. This was highly, unsatisfactory, and when we learned that even these skeleton epistles were held by the Japanese for a year before they bothered to send them on, the indignation of the camp was intense.

A few of us talked together about a way to circumvent these restrictions, and I devised a scheme which I was sure would work. Through our Chinese agents on the outside, our own private black market, I purchased several Chinese-style envelopes and addressed them in Chinese characters, of course, to loyal Chinese friends of certain prisoners in camp who joined me in the plot. Some of these old China hands had many good, close friends among other long-time residents in Chinese cities who were citizens of Germany and Italy and, as such, not subject to imprisonment by the Japanese.

However, while we now had certain fixed, sure addresses of persons outside to whom direct letters could be sent, or messages for others enclosed for relaying from the first point, we had to make sure mail from a Japanese concentration camp could pass through the Japanese-controlled Chinese post office once it was safely over the prison wall and in the post office. The name and address of the writer of every letter had to appear on the envelope. This stumped me for a while until, fortunately, I found in the hospital files, which were intact and had been overlooked by the Japanese, a list of former patients with local addresses. This solved the problem. I used these names and addresses on the Chinese envelopes, changing them regularly, of course, and keeping careful secret records of my own.

When the outgoing letters were written and scaled inside the properly addressed envelopes, I weighted the package with a brick and threw it over the wall with money to cover the transaction to the Chinese waiting to receive it. He stamped the letters and routed them to other trusted agents, who posted them at different places. We never used the local Weihsien post office for this business, and our letters always arrived safely at their distant destinations, Peiping, Tientsin, and Tsingtao, even Shanghai. We began presently to get answers to our letters and news of a sort.

Our activities with Chinese outside grew so varied and numerous that too many agents were

coming over the wall all the time, and finally the Japanese strung an electric wire around the ditch to prevent this illegal traffic. We soon overcame this temporary frustration by using the handful of Chinese coolies who came inside every morning.

These were the only Chinese workers allowed in the camp. They were lavatory coolies who came in to clean out the cesspools and carry the pails outside the camp. The Japanese considered this dirty work beneath them, one that was fit only for the Chinese. I asked for the job of "sanitary patrol captain," whose duties included taking care of all the toilets in camp, in order to be able to make contact with the lavatory coolies. These humble men were searched coming into camp, but when they went out, with their filthy buckets swinging on poles from their shoulders, the Japanese gave them a wide berth and never bothered to search them. I had observed this for a long time, and now all I did was give the packets of letters to the coolies, who stuffed them inside their baggy blue cotton pants as they went out.

But after a while the Japanese became suspicious of them and searched them daily as they came and went. I had to think up something else. I soon did. I rolled the letters up tight, put them in a tin box, filled the box with sand, and sealed it. By this time we had a little engineering shop going in camp for minor repairs, and it was easy to seal the tin box all around. Once that was done, I dropped the tin box into the pail of human refuse, and the coolie took it out.

This went on for a long time, and then the Japanese became suspicious again, and before a coolie was passed through the gates a Japanese soldier stopped him and at arm's length poked around in the mess with a long stick. It was really funny to match those Japanese soldiers, with white gauze masks covering their faces, as they went about this disagreeable duty. It was funny, but it annoyed me, too, because I realized I then had to find still another way of getting the mail out.

Many times after I came to New York and had business at the main post office on Eighth Avenue there I read the carved lettering over the doors, the motto that has set the code for the faithful and trustworthy men in the American postal service. That's the motto that all Americans know, I'm sure - "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." Every time I climbed the steps and read that motto I thought of the way we got mail through from the Weihsien concentration camp for more than two years without

once getting caught. The Japs heard something that made them suspicious, but we were always just one jump ahead of them. We were lucky, but I was also careful never to describe my methods or discuss them with anybody. Only my fellow prisoner in the engineering shop who sealed the tin boxes with his soldering iron knew what he was doing it for -and even he didn't know about my other methods.

In the end, however, the simplest trick of all worked perfectly, and I used it all the time right up until V-J Day.

Every Saturday the Weihsien post office sent a postman to deliver mail for the camp. In the beginning he had several bags, but as time went on and restrictions were piled on restrictions, the bags grew fewer and fewer. One postman came once a week with one small bag, which he carried on his bicycle. In that bag were newspapers and mail for the whole camp.

The postman was always searched thoroughly as he alighted at the gate, and a Japanese guard accompanied him to the commandant's office. The postman pushed his bike along, and the guard walked beside him. At the office the postman lifted the mailbag off his bike and, with the guard tagging along, went inside to deliver it.

I noticed that the Japanese were most suspicious of the Chinese postman but never of his bicycle and that it was left beside the door unguarded. I noticed, too, that there was a small canvas bag which hung from the frame of the bike, between the saddle and the handlebars. This was the bag in which the postman undoubtedly carried his local mail, I reasoned, and into which, on his return from the commandant's office, he put the rolled-up empty bag which had held the camp letters and papers.

For a few Saturdays I watched his coming and going and observed the fixed pattern of the routine. One Saturday I strolled casually by and dropped a few letters into the empty bag while the postman was in the commandant's office with the guard. Then I walked away and stood off to one side and waited to see what would happen.

The postman came out with the guard. He was rolling up the empty bag. He leaned over to put it into the small canvas bag on the frame of his bike and he saw what I wanted him to see the letters I had dropped in and, on top of them, an American dollar bill.

He looked once and looked again, and then half straightened up and looked around. I moved

quickly and put myself directly in his line of vision and made the Chinese gesture of thanks to him, my two hands clasped together and raised in front of my face. He understood at once and jammed the empty bag in on top and went off with the guard.

I repeated this performance every week then for the rest of the time we were there, eighteen months or so, I should judge. It cost us only a dollar a week, a small expense everyone was glad to share for this invaluable service. All the letters got through even though we had many different postmen. The first passed the word along to his successor and they all let nothing interfere with the swift completion of their appointed rounds, neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night, nor Japanese.

It was only natural, since we had had so much success getting our mail out, that we should have thought of getting ourselves, out.

One of our numbers was a brave and ingenious Englishman named Laurie Tipton, who had been connected with the British American Tobacco Company before the war. Tipton knew agents of the company in the city of Weihsien, but they were afraid of the Japanese and were of no help to us. Then through one of the American Franciscan brothers in camp I made contact with an Irish priest in Chow T'sun. This village was a hundred miles away from us, but soon we were in frequent touch with him and, through him, with much of what was going on, because he had a radio and collected all the news that came over it, wrote it out, and assembled it in readable form. He gave this to his Chinese servant, who came by railway to Weihsien, walked to the camp, and at an appointed hour, threw the packet over the wall.

We passed the news around, and it was very welcome indeed because up to then the only China news we had was from an occasional issue of the Peiping Chronicle, which of course was all Japanese propaganda.

Tipton and I agreed to work together about this time to establish sources outside and try to arrange for the two of us to get away. Little by little we accumulated maps, information about the country, location of enemy forces, Communist forces, all that. We also learned to our great joy that there were Nationalist guerrillas nearby, and through my faithful lavatory coolies I made contact with them. This took a lot of time because among the coolies, who were changed every month, there were Nationalists and Communists as well as Chinese who were pro-Japanese.

I had always to have one reliable man on the coolie staff. When a change in the shift was coming he would advise me, and then on the first day of the change, while the old crew and the new crew worked together, my reliable man in the outgoing group would evaluate all the new ones for me. Before the day was out he always passed the word along to the right man and to me, and again I had someone I could trust. My "office" was a small lavatory near the kitchen, away from the others, which I could close off for as much as an hour while we talked and made plans and exchanged messages.

Although we had made contact with the Nationalist guerrillas, we still had a long row to hoe before we could join them. We consumed a year in making plans to escape and in infinitely detailed preparations. There was three items of the preparation we had to be sure of. First, the night of escape must be one when the moon would not be at its full until an hour after we had gone over the wall - we had to be sure of an hour of darkness in which to get a real start, and full moonlight to find our way.

The second important particular concerned the guards. The Japanese used three teams of guards. One group came on duty on Monday and had two days off; the second group worked Tuesday and had two days off; the third group took over on Wednesday and had Thursday and Friday off. Then the first team took over again for one day on and two off, and so on. By means of this rotating system the guards were on a continuous twenty-four hour duty, so oftentimes they were not as alert and careful as they were supposed to be.

We had to watch and study the three teams, and after a bit we learned that two teams were faithful and strict, one team was careless. The lazy team would go to the watchtowers and stay on guard for an hour or so and then sneak off for a cup of tea or a smoke. We charted their behaviour. and when we were sure of its regularity we had then to fit this item into the moon-darkness clement and make certain that the careless team was on duty on the escape night, with the moon at full at precisely the right hour after we had taken off.

The third point was to be sure the Chinese Nationalist guerrillas could move with safety and be waiting at an agreed-upon point, about two miles from camp, a cemetery plainly identifiable by its fir trees and grave mounds.

As I said, it took a year of careful working out and fitting together of these principal elements in our plan, but finally all was ready. The date was set; we had word from the guerrillas that they would meet us

at the cemetery and lead us to their hideout headquarters. We were confident we could reach there by the time the roll call was taken next day in camp. Everything was set; Tipton and I were geared up for our effort.

Three members of the governing committee in camp knew we were going over the wall, and I had confided also in Father Rutherford, one of the American Franciscans. He had been troubled about it for a long time and had talked to me at length about it. But I had been so busy with preparations; my mind had been so intensely preoccupied with arranging all the details of our safe getaway, that he had never carried the discussions to any lengths that might have upset the scheme. However, as the day came Father Rutherford begged me not to go for fear of reprisals against the innocent people in camp. He was so persuasive, so greatly concerned, that I could not with clear conscience disregard his earnestness and flout his wishes. On the other hand " I did not feel that I had any right to prevent Tipton's leaving or his taking someone else in my place, and another young man volunteered. He was Arthur W. Hummel, Jr., who had been an instructor in Fu Jen Middle School in Peiping until the outbreak of the war. I gave them my Chinese clothes and helped them over the wall, and then I retired to pray for their safety. They were over the wall, true; but they had to clear the live electric wire before they could make a safe getaway. They were prepared to do this by going through one of the sentry watchtowers. The Japanese had installed these live wires at all the sentry boxes in such a way that the guards could come and go in safety. A safe getaway depended on the sentries' absence from their post, and this is why we had had to study their habits and time the escape for a night when the careless team of guards had the sentry duty and would be sure to sneak away for a few minutes to have a smoke and a cup of tea.

Tipton and Hummel had promised that if they succeeded in getting to the guerrillas they would work out a code and send it back so we could 'keep in touch with each other just before I said good-by to them in the darkness we decided on an identifying word I would use to find the coolie who would bring in the code.

Those first moments after Tom Wade and Roy Chu and I boosted Tipton and Hummel over the wall and heard the soft thud of their feet on the other side were anxious ones. Many times before I had done this with the Chinese merchants and agents with whom we did business. Once, with Tipton, I had

even rehearsed the dash through the watchtower in broad daylight when the sentry was absent, but this, somehow, was different. I lingered there in the silence and the darkness, but no sound reached my ears after I heard the last stealthy footfalls of the two men. There was no harsh Japanese order to halt; and, thank God, there were no shots to tear the blessed silence.

The hour of darkness passed and the moon's rise found me breathing easier; by the time the moon was riding the heavens in full glory I was content. I knew that Tipton and Hummel were well on their way to the guerrillas' hideout.

The Japanese did not notice the men's absence at roll call, but Mr. McLaren reported them as missing. We had agreed on this plan beforehand in order to avoid reprisals and trouble for the other internees. Since only a few of us had known the plans, the amazement of the other internees was genuine and complete, and this fact alone made things easier. The Japanese soon accepted the inevitable. Two men had made their escape. The noise and uproar inside the camp soon died down.

My natural impatience kept me on tenterhooks and I worked every day with the lavatory coolies, but no single hint was forthcoming from any one of them that he had any message for me. Two, three months went by. And then one day, as I was mumbling "fifty-six," the identifying word, a new coolie sidled over to me and whispered that he had something for me. When we could get into my "office," which I insisted needed this man's special attention, he brought out a small tightly rolled paper he had secreted inside the padding of his trousers.

My excitement was twofold, for this was the first concrete evidence I had had that the men had managed to get away safely, and now we had a means of communicating with them and, through them, with the National Government. I confided now in two of my close friends, Mr. McLaren and Dr. I-I. W. Hubbard, a Protestant minister I had known in Paoting, and the three of us arranged to send out our first code message. We typed it on a piece of white silk torn from an old handkerchief. The material was so soft the coolie could conceal it easily in his sleeve.

"Send us latest news," we wrote, restraining ourselves until we could be sure the code would work. Somehow, the fact that two men had got away and were now free and able to get word to us and receive news from us made our incarceration less binding and onerous. Tipton and Hummel were on the Shantung peninsula with the guerrillas, and the underground message system was working so well

that very soon we had a reply from our first code message. They had established radio contact with Chungking and were able to tell us the progress of the war. The tide had begun to turn and we grew more hopeful daily.

Oddly enough, though, it was from the inside, and from the Japanese themselves rather than from the outside " that we learned the war was going against them. One day the Japanese brought in a group of Italian prisoners. They were arrested because they were anti-Fascist, anti-Mussolini, violently and passionately so, as only Italian dissenters can be. The Japanese put them in separate quarters near the main gate because they thought that, despite their strong views, which jibed with the British and American sentiments, there might still be trouble if they were all quartered together. Among these new inmates was a Signor Gervasi, who was married to a Belgian woman. Naturally, we made friends quickly, and from them I learned there was a Japanese guard who was always hanging about their house, forever complaining about the war and declaring bitterly he was fed up with it.

He and two other camp guards were very young idealistic men who had been inflamed by the propaganda of their own militarists and induced to throw themselves into this "great and honorable war." They were wounded in the fighting on the Malay Peninsula, and their disillusionment was complete after their experiences there. They had grown more and more bitterly opposed to the war until they were really fanatical pacifists when I encountered them in camp, as violently anti-war as they had been for it before they left home. It was not too hard to win these young men over to our side and, while they remained Japanese soldiers, under military jurisdiction, doing their duty as guards, they had no heart for their work and helped us enormously. They began to give us all kinds of information, and of course I encouraged them, as did the Gervasi. It was thus I learned that the war was not going well and that plans were under way to move the various interment camps scattered all over the Pacific area. The prisoners in the Philippine camps were to be sent either to Hong Kong or Japan; the Hong Kong camps were to be moved to Shanghai, the Shanghai camps to Peiping, the Peiping camps to Mukden. Of course the military prisoners in these places, as well as the civil internees, would be moved, and the leapfrogging arrangement was to gain time and hold onto as many of these captives of war as possible, as long as possible, for bargaining purposes.

Since we would be included in the Peiping grouping, we would inevitably go to Mukden. I knew it would be extremely bad for us if this move went through, particularly for the women, because Mukden is a rugged place at all times and devastatingly cold and bleak in winter. I realized we would have to do something, and so did the committee in whom I confided my news. We made emergency contact with the guerrillas and inquired how long it would take them to bomb the railway from Tsinan to Tsingtao, the road through which we would have to be evacuated. The word came back quickly, and it was cheering. They would need only one day's notice. Knowing we could always count on that, and that we need never have to move, we relaxed.

It was not just messages like this that came to us regularly, but medicine when we needed it, flown all the long way from Chungking, a thousand miles southwest, over enemy-held territory, to the Shantung peninsula, where it was dropped by parachute to the guerrillas. The guerrillas sent the package to old Father Chang in the Catholic mission in the city of Weihsien. Word of this went over the "bamboo wireless," as the underground was called, to Swiss Consul Egger in Tsingtao, who represented the International Red Cross. Mr. Egger was permitted to visit the camp every month with "comfort parcels," which were the gifts of the Red Cross. He delivered the medicines at these times. Some of these medicines were so new-the sulfa drugs, for instance-that the doctors in camp had not even heard of them and didn't know how to use them. We had to get directions for their administration by code the long way from Chungking.

The Japanese knew we had some contact with, the outside. They grew increasingly suspicious, and the coolies became more nervous and frightened as the search of their persons became more frequent and thorough. The authorities now assigned a special guard to each coolie who worked in the camp. The fact - which we knew- that the Japanese were losing the war made them more cautious and at the same time more fearful themselves.

It got so that we could no longer send out any messages to the guerrillas on silk or paper or anything else that could be secreted inside a coolie's clothes. Once again we had to find a new way to keep our "lines of communication" open. I bored small holes in the walls of the lavatory, small and irregular enough to escape detection unless you knew exactly where to look for them, large enough to hold little pellets. We typed the messages on very small

pieces of silk and wrapped each one in a chewing-gum wrapper, and I poked these messages into the small holes I had bored. I suppose discarded chewing-gum wrappers were never put to a more novel and useful purpose. The Red Cross had sent us "comfort parcels" every month, and Mr. Egger had conscientiously and faithfully delivered them, but the Japanese had kept all but one. I had collected all the papers and wrappers from that one package and saved them. I was sure I would have occasion to put them to use for us, and this was the time.

I told the coolie who was our messenger that whenever I had a message to go out I would tell him the number of the toilet where I had secreted the pellet in the wall. The coolies always came in at nine o'clock in the morning, marching directly to the guardhouse just inside the main gate. Here the guards searched them thoroughly. Then they marched along in orderly file to the prisoners' quarters. I was always waiting just inside the main gate with a few other men, apparently merely interested in the morning ritual. As the coolies marched to their work, I walked past them in the opposite direction, chanting. In the middle of the chant, a typical Chinese working song, I would have a number. This was the clue to my coolie. The number I chanted was the number painted on the wall of the toilet, and the coolie knew that all he had to do when he got there was to lean his hand against the number and extract the chewing-gum wrapper rolled up in the aperture in the plaster. The coolie kept the message secreted on him until he was ready to leave, and then he put it in his mouth just before he went through his exit examination. If the Japanese ordered him to open his mouth for any reason, he was prepared to swallow paper wrapper, silk and all.

Whenever a coolie brought a message into camp, he brought it in his mouth. According to prearranged plan, I was always near the gate or walking along the camp's main street when the Chinese crew came on in the morning. I had instructed these coolie agents that whenever one of them had a message for me he was to nod his head up and down to signify yes. Then I would follow along. When he had none, just for double check, he always wagged his head negatively from side to side. I took advantage, too, of the Chinese penchant for expectorating and urged the coolies to spit a lot to get the Japanese used to the idea that these men were more addicted to this unpleasant habit than most. When the right opportunity came the coolie would spit out the message and I would pounce on it.

It is comic now, in retrospect, to reflect that all

war news came to us in the Weihsien concentration camp this way. It is even more comic, I suppose, that I distributed the news after decoding the typing by pasting the bulletins on the walls of the toilets, and had soon to discontinue this because people stayed there too long to read, and we had complaints. It was just a matter of too many people and not enough toilets. I tried the washrooms next, but since the laundry had also to be done there and the avid readers lingered too long and got in the way of women with piles of family wash, I had to give this place up too. I had finally to resort to word-of-mouth news distribution, but even here I had to dissemble because by this time we had learned that there were two or three internees who had turned stool pigeon for their Japanese captors in order to win a few privileges for themselves.

To confound these few, I started wild rumors that the Japanese Emperor had been assassinated; that two hundred thousand Japanese had been killed in one battle alone, rumors like that - and in these rumors I mixed the items of real news. Those in the know could distinguish the true from the false.

For quite a while in Weihsien we had no contact with any Communists, something new for me who had been dealing with them, living under them, for nearly seven years. But soon I became aware that there were Chinese Communists among the coolies, who began to smuggle in Communist literature. It didn't take the Japanese long to find this Red propaganda, and they punished all the coolies and changed crews frequently. And of course as soon as the Japanese had discovered the source, the Communists quit trying to propagandize us with literature.

However, one day a man who couldn't read Chinese received a long letter whose contents were addressed to all the people in camp. The letter came from the Communist commander of the "Chinese Communist Government of Shansi, Hopeh, Shantung, and Honan" and got to the addressee through a coolie. Had it come in through the mail the Japanese, of course, would have destroyed it. The man who received it took it to McLaren, but since he also couldn't read it he brought it to me to translate for him and the committee.

The letter was the usual artful Communist propaganda, couched in the most polite terms and expressing sorrow for our "sufferings in camp." Their sympathies were with us in the common struggle against imperialism, they said, and they had a plan to release us. They suggested that we revolt inside the

camp, and they would attack from the outside, during the night. They would then evacuate the whole camp to Yen-an, they continued, and we would no longer be oppressed by Japanese imperialism.

When Mr. McLaren read my translation to the camp's administrative committee, they all listened with something less than wild enthusiasm. The letter constituted a minor problem, really. The committee quite naturally didn't want to risk offending the Communists, who were all around us, nor did they want to stage any kind of revolt. If the revolt was unsuccessful, everyone in camp would suffer, and if the revolt and the Communist attack succeeded and we were evacuated to Yen-an, we would be even worse off. Finally, after a great deal of thoughtful discussion, the committee concocted a letter which thanked the Communists for their thoughtfulness and kindness, and explained that since only three hundred of the seventeen hundred internees would be able to make the march, we felt it best to stay where we were. We added that we had learned that the war was going so well that we were sure we would all be liberated soon, and therefore it seemed best to wait. We sent the letter out by the same coolie who had brought the Communist missive in, and I was ahead of the game, for this was one coolie to whom I gave a wide berth when I sent out the camp's messages to the Nationalist guerrillas.

I had the feeling that this message from the Communists meant that the end was nearer than any of us believed, and on the eleventh of August word came from Tipton and Hummel that the Japanese were on the verge of giving up, and advising us that we must prepare ourselves. They inquired, too, if we thought it a good idea for the Nationalists to take over immediately. We replied at once to this heartening message that we had decided to wait for the Americans to release us, since the end was so near.

And it didn't take the Americans long to get to us. Less than twenty-four hours after the Japanese surrender we heard of it in the most glorious and spectacular way possible. There was a vibrancy in the air on the fourteenth. Everybody sensed something big had happened, but we were afraid to speak our thoughts, afraid to mention the word "victory." The tension and excitement mounted through the day and night, and on the morning of the fifteenth we knew the dejection in the Japanese officers' attitude could mean only one thing—that the war was over and they had lost it.

And suddenly in the sky, a fine clear blue

summer sky, over the camp there appeared a big American bombing plane, a B-25. It flew low enough for us to see painted on its side the words "Flying Angel," and never, we thought, was anything so aptly named. All the internees began to sing "God Bless America." The plane circled and flew around us a few times, and the whole camp poured out onto the grounds, shouting, singing, waving. The Flying Angel disappeared to gain altitude and presently



*The "ESCAPE" team,
From left to right
Larry Tipton//Father Raymond de Jaegher//Arthur W.Hummel
Centre front
Father Tchang// ... and his Chinese friends who helped L.Tipton and
A.Hummel to find their way to the Chinese guerrillas ...*

came back, and we counted our saviors literally dropping out of the skies. When the parachutes opened, the camp cheered and stamped and roared and hoorayed and went wild with joy. People cried and laughed and hugged and kissed each other and slapped one another on the back, and then the camp moved en masse to the main gate to greet the American fliers.

The Jap guards were still on duty, but they made little if any effort to stop men, and women, us and children streamed out through the gates, tasting freedom for the first time in two and a half years.

The paratroopers had come down in the sorghum fields and, since the grain was very high, we had to go in and find them and guide them out. The joyful shouting and calls of "Where are you?" and "Here, right over here!" went on until we had collected the team of which a young American major named Stanley Staiger was in charge. He had arms for the camp in case the Japanese proved difficult, but we assured him we didn't need them. The fight was out of the Japs here in Weih sien.

Major Staiger was hoisted to the shoulders of a few of the strongest men, and that was the way he entered the camp. On all sides the Japs were saluting him and bowing in deference. The young major returned their salutes with military punctiliousness from the shoulders of the men who such a little time before had been the Japs' despised enemy inferiors. They were now free men again, superior in their victory but with commendable restraint and sportsmanship, not showing it or taking advantage of it, except to see that authority was shifted at once to them from their erstwhile captors.

As the major waited for the Japanese officers to assemble, an old woman ran up and kissed his hand. He blushed a fiery red, but he suffered her expression of gratitude rather than snatch his hand away and hurt her. He almost ran into the office while the Japanese guards bowed low. The Japanese commandant put his sword on the table. Major Staiger accepted his surrender. Now we were free, actually and technically free, and a great shout went up, cheers for the United States, cries of "God save the King!" from the Britons, cheers for all the Allies. All the anthems of the countries represented in that camp were sung by their citizens, and the August air was a bedlam of joyous sound.

Meanwhile, Major Staiger and the commandant discussed the business of the day and how the camp could be taken over by the victors. It was thrilling to see this handful of young paratroopers, competent, efficient, and pleasant, take up their stations. They were so full of vitality that

they actually communicated some of their zest and exuberance to our bedraggled and debilitated numbers.

Next day more planes came over, and later B-29S from the Okinawa air base dropped supplies by parachute. On the heels of the supplies from Okinawa came Colonel Hyman Weinberg from a China base, and he superintended the evacuation of the camp by rail and air, a job that took two months. I was one of the last to leave, flying out in October 1945 to Peiping.

Translation letter Father deJaegher,
Peking, Christmas 1945,

Dear Y, F and E, A and his wife, A and tt,

I'm taking advantage of this occasion to send news of myself and also a few photographs taken in Weihsien, after our liberation by the Americans. Also a Chinese friend had my picture taken by a photographer from Peking, but I don't know if I'll receive this photo before posting my letter. These photos will show you that we



haven't become too thin in Weih sien concentration camp.

I'd like to tell you about our life in camp in more detail, and of course I would have liked to tell you about all this face-to-face!

RELIGIOUS LIFE. There were 1,500 internees of 13 nationalities (mainly British and Americans). There were 300 Catholics; and 10 priests remained behind in the camp - 2 American Franciscans, 6 Auxiliaries, 1 Belgian Benedictine, and a Belgian Jesuit. Also there were 6 American sisters. 25 people, Protestants were baptised in camp. I would like to tell you one day about the conversion of Miss Mary Brayne, an English missionary of the China Inland Mission, whom I had the honour of instructing and receiving into the Holy Roman Church.

Church services went very successfully in the church, which also served as school, conference room, theatre etc. We preached in turn, in English for both Sunday High Mass and Children's Communion. It was a good chance to practise English and at the same time doing our apostolic work! Every morning we said Mass, three priests in the two rooms which the sisters occupied the others in a very small room which served as a chapel, and where we kept the holy sacraments.

We had very little wine for Mass, and we managed to say 100 Masses with a single wine bottle. We had to use a spoonful of wine and water, both taken with a dropper.

We had an American school run by the sisters, which amounted to being a Catholic school.

EDUCATION. Many of us led in courses of study. For myself, I had 12 hours a week — Chinese, French, Religious classes! Education for children as well as adults, as we had a good educational course for adults.

ORGANISATION. The camp was under the control of the Japanese Consular authorities, helped militarily by Consular police and the Japanese Army. But we organised ourselves into committees elected by the internees. The Committee of Nine covered Education, Discipline, Labour, Engineering, Recreation, Accommodation, Medical, Supplies and Finance. Every six months we appointed new personnel. All delicate matters which arose were negotiated between the committees and the Japanese. Weih sien became a model concentration camp. From this point of view we were better off than the other camps. This was due to the close collaboration between the internees and the camp committee. The Japanese did not dare put too much pressure on us for fear of possible trouble.

FOOD. At the beginning food was sufficient, though for the laity it was hard, as they were used to an easy life in the Far East with numerous servants and all the modern facilities. But in Weih sien there were very cramped rooms and simple food. We who were used to being in far away inland missions, we found ourselves better off! The food diminished as the war dragged on. In the spring of this year (1945) we had two slices of bread in hot water for breakfast, two slices at midday with thin vegetable soup and two slices in the evening with still thinner soup. Fortunately we received some packages from the American Red Cross, one package each at the beginning of this year, and after

the Japanese surrender we received plentiful supplies by B29 aeroplanes.

ACCOMMODATION. We were five in a small room - Michel Keymolen, Manu Hanquet, Albert Palmers, Herman Uden and myself. We sat on our beds which served as benches. We also had some furniture which we rescued at the beginning of camp from the homes later occupied by the Japanese.

EXTERIOR RELATIONSHIPS.

From the beginning of camp life I could have escaped. Bishop Yu Pui, from Chungking, had asked me to take over the work of P. Lebbe. But it was impossible to leave from An Kwo because I was hemmed in by the Japanese police force. (Between ourselves, for seven years I had been a voluntary worker for China's Secret Services). One could always escape from a concentration camp.

Unfortunately for me some Apostolic Delegates worked hard to arrange for the transfer to Peking of all the bishops and priests interned in Weihsien (there were six bishops, 400 priests and 200 nuns). If I had escaped at the beginning of internment, this would have been easy but the Delegation would then have been furious, if my escape had caused the failure of their plans.

I waited until the end of the month of August 1943 when the bishops and priests, after six months in Weihsien, returned to Peking to be interned in the premises of their respective religious orders. They were not to live at the expense of the Japanese government but at the expense of the churches. But we in the SAM, being priests

under Chinese bishops, could not expect to receive financial support in an exterior Peking concentration compound. So we wrote to the Delegate, saying that if the Pope couldn't financially help us out, we couldn't very well oblige the Chinese Bishops to pay, they were far too poor.

Here at Weihsien from the very beginning I was in touch with many Chinese. I was put in charge of all the toilets in the camp! My official title sounded very dignified — I was "**Superior of the Sanitary Patrols of Weihsien Camp**" — a task no one else wanted to do!

Through this arrangement I was able to establish and maintain contact with people outside the camp. I received letters, newspapers, Chinese books, thanks to very original means that would take too much time to narrate in detail. For the entire duration of camp life I sent letters to my mission - i.e. Chinese letters inside Chinese envelopes. These got through the censorship to the local post office. As the town of Weihsien had only 300,000 inhabitants the Japanese were unable to censor all the letters. Thus my letters and those of my friends went out by this means.

I had to use various methods for posting the letters — in the padded pants of the Chinese, in welded boxes which we placed in the buckets of the cesspools, attached to bricks which we threw over the wall when a Chinese was waiting.

In all these contacts with the Chinese, after six months I succeeded in making contact with officials of the Secret Service in Chongking, and they in turn put me into contact with their troops who were operating

in the Weihsien area.

At first these officials wanted to transfer the entire camp by air to Chongking. But in view of the large number of women, elderly people, the sick and minors the project had to be abandoned. I proposed sending a delegation to Chongking of which I would be a member.

I discussed with Lawrence Tipton, an English friend of mine, a plan of escape from the camp. It involved many factors that took many months to overcome. I prepared my luggage and Emmanuel Hanquet prepared his with a view to accompanying us.

One day when my haversack was packed and on my bed Fr. Nicolas Wenders saw it and wondered what it was all about. The other room mates said that I was soon planning an escape. Frightened, Fr. Wenders told Fr. Rutherford, senior priest in the camp. He was an American Franciscan who had been given authority by the Apostolic Delegate to be the senior priest. He was also Vicar General of Chefso in his mission of Pepso, and Weihsien was situated in this diocese.

Fr. Rutherford was equally concerned and forbade me as well as Father Hanquet to escape, under threat of priestly suspension. This was one of my greatest acts of self-sacrifice, and even now I bitterly regret having lost such an opportunity. Sometimes it is difficult to obey the Church. Arthur Hummel, a young American, took my place. He had made no preparations to take such a journey, but he was happy to be offered the

opportunity.

With other friends I helped them to get over the wall and through the electric wires surrounding the camp. The escape from the camp area was a great success. The Chinese contacts led them to the quarters of the Chongking Guerrilla troops who were working in the Shandong area. After a brief gap I got into touch with them, and from then up to the end of internment we stayed in touch, using a secret code on silk fabric which the Chinese carried in their mouths, as they were closely watched by the Japanese.

Tipton and Hummel gave good service to the camp, sending medicines which had been parachuted down and taken secretly to the Catholic mission in Weihsien, where the Swiss Consul lived when he was visiting the camp. He then brought the medicines officially to the camp in the name of the Red Cross. They rendered other services to the camp, and when the Japanese surrendered Tipton and Hummel returned to the camp accompanied by the Chongking troops.

We gave a big banquet to the Chinese who had helped us in our communités, and I gave them funds in the name of the central government and a large photo to each as a souvenir.

After the arrival of the Americans I was made the leading interpreter, then chief of the Intelligent Services of the camp. This dealt with matters relating to the American authorities, the Chinese and the Japanese. For two months before leaving

Weih sien for Peking I held this interesting post, and received gifts from the Americans and Chinese in recognition of services rendered. I am bringing back two beautiful parachutes for An Kuo and other various gifts from the Chinese.

From the moment I returned to Peking, on October 16, I have been busy trying to obtain compensation for our completely demolished mission, still being occupied by the communists. Monseigneur Wang wrote saying that I shouldn't go back to Bi Kwu, there wouldn't be anything to do there, as the Bishop's residence had been looted twice by the Japanese, and is now occupied by the Reds.

Here in Peking I've also worked for the Social Welfare paper "I Che Pao" that Monseigneur Wang will edit in 9 important cities of China. "I Che Pao" is already published in Chungking, Si An, Peking and Tientsin. I've also helped various Catholic associations. I preached during our brethren's 8 day retreat in Ts'wigho, and have come back yesterday from (....?), 19 hours by railway for 350 lis (175kms.) where I had to go to the vicariate for business affairs.

In Peking I've had the pleasure of meeting several important persons from Chungking: twice for business the general representing the Generalissimo in the North of China; once, General Shang Chen, head-chief of staff of the Chinese army; once, for an hour, Chang Kiai Che's secretary: Mr. Shun Chung Huan; another time during 3 hours Mr. Tai Ly, chief of all the secret services in China; and also many times the Chief Organizer of North China, Mr. Ma Han San.

Finally on December 17 I've had the great privilege of receiving an invitation to see the Generalissimo. He met me personally,

accompanied by his secretary, and we had an interesting conversation lasting a quarter of an hour. He came to Peking for only five days, and it was his first visit in ten years. Also it was the first time he left Free China to come to a region that had been occupied by the Japanese. Just to say that it was a great honor to have been received by him.

The Generalissimo made an excellent impression, and with such a man China will go far -- provided that he may live yet some years more.

Later, if ever we meet again, I'd love to tell you more of so many interesting things.

Since I left camp, affectionate tokens of friendship shown by our Christians, friends, etc...are very touching, also I received important sums of money, presents of all kinds, and endless invitations to lunch and dinner, all this though life has become very costly! I've just received some photos as a present from a Chinese friend. I hope that later on I'll have the pleasure of receiving photographs of you.

I would have liked to write a long letter to Abbé Boland but have had no time, so if you can, please pass on this letter to the vicar.

I pray for you often. Pray for me and for our beloved China, may she be strengthened by this present crisis.

Love from Raymond.

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