

Return to Tzeluitsing, 1939 - 1944

We arrived home on October 26, two days before Dad's birthday. He said we were the very best present he would ever receive. What a welcome! Although we had been gone for over two years, I felt that I was back home. Here were the people that I had missed, my beloved brother Donald, Perpy, our intelligent German Shepherd/Collie look alike, and most of all, my Dad. Our gatekeeper, Lao Uin, opened the heavy doors of the gatehouse. Waiting to greet us were Joh Yuin Jin, our cook and Tsoa Da Niang, our nursemaid. What a welcome! All exclaimed about how much we had grown.

In 1939 Tzeluitsing was the center of missionary work, surrounded by about 60 hamlets, villages and towns. The population of the city was about a half million people. On the far side of town was the mission hospital, a three-story building complete with operating rooms, a pharmacy and a training facility for nurses. There were three mission houses, each very similar to ours. Dr. Sheridan was the head surgeon. To my 7 year old eyes Dr. and Mrs. [Pearl] Sheridan were really old -- as old as my grandma in Canada. Mrs. Edmonds lived over there with Nettie [Edmonds]. Mr. and Mrs. Stinson and their baby daughter, Dora Ann, had just arrived after their year of language study. He would be assisting my father in the district.

On our side of town was the WMS house with Miss Darby, a teacher, and Miss Tallman, a nurse. The Girls' School was empty. The students and Miss Hambly were safely in an ancestral hall in the country. Our house was beside the church property -- the church and a smaller building for the Sunday School and other meetings. Lao Uin was the gatekeeper for that building also.

Dad was the senior evangelist, working with the pastors in the smaller centers, providing ministerial counselling, leading prayer meetings and Bible Study groups. Usually he was away for several days every week. If it was to the farthest corner of the "parish" maybe all week. He was also the person who conferred with the police chief and the local magistrates when conflicts arose. Another responsibility was the interdependence with other foreign personnel, notably those officials at the Salt Administration.

There had been, of course, changes. After all, there was a war on and Tzeluitsing was a prime target for the Japanese because of the salt wells. Now there was an air raid shelter under the basement stairs as well as a shelter of piled up sandbags near the postern gate to the church. Still this was back to familiar territory, with the sights and sounds and smells that I had missed. Mother wrote to her mother that I ran around in great happiness, examining all the familiar and exclaiming over all the new. There had been a heavy bombing 2 weeks earlier on the Double Tenth holiday. The Li mansion next door was destroyed. The Sunday School building between the church and our house was a pile of rubble. That destruction took second place to the familiar.

Our house was the conventional 2-storey, foursquare brick mission house, encircled by verandahs on both floors. The house was surrounded by lawns and gardens, all protected by a high wall, the top edge of which had shards of glass embedded in a thin layer of cement. The gate house (also the servants' quarters) opened onto the busy street. Inside the house everything was the same -- Oh, No! There was fresh paint! What else would we discover? There were holes in the screening upstairs where our beds were. Holes made during the bombings by debris and shrapnel. Dad assured us that all would be safe before mosquito season came.

That return did have great happiness. Donald came home for the holidays from the Canadian School in Jenshow. That was a two or three day trip each way and sometimes the children who were boarding stayed until June. I suspect that Mother just had to see her little boy after being separated for eighteen months. The trunks finally arrived and Mother opened a can of peaches in celebration. I know that she had brought new clothes all the way from Home as his Christmas presents. Malcolm remembers helping Dad and Donald as they replaced the wheels on his tricycle. It is written that I followed him about like a puppy dog.

A new person came into my life that Christmas. Her name was Zhang Xiang Yun, whom we called Edith. She was a student in the WMS school for girls that had been moved to the country. Her family was killed in the October 10th bombing. Her uncle couldn't afford to keep her so Dad chose to pay her school

fees. The story was that Dad gave the uncle a bushel of rice as an indication of adoption. Edith became a very important part of my next four years.

After Donald returned to school the days fell into the familiar pattern. Malcolm and I had school every morning, starting with arithmetic at 9 and ending with History and Geography at noon.

Mother taught nursing students several afternoons each week in operating room procedures. Every two weeks she took a turn at the Well Baby Clinic, washing babies and coaching mothers on how to care for the infants. I remember she came home one afternoon and said that there had been over 70 babies that day. And, yes, some babies did cry. After particularly devastating air raids she would be called in to assist Dr. Sheridan in the operating room. She also assisted in the apothecary and occasionally I would help fold the squares of paper that would contain each dose.

She certainly was called upon when any missionary was ill. That first spring back Miss Hambly swallowed a date and the pit stuck in her throat. A date pit has long sharp ends and it was solidly stuck. Doctor Cunningham came all the way from Chengtu to remove it. She was ensconced upstairs in our guest bedroom for many days. It was an anxious time. I suspect now that she developed pneumonia. Malcolm and I were cautioned to be quiet. Miss Hambly was an impressive woman – short, very old to our eyes, intimidating. She had had, even in the '40's, an impressive career as an evangelist – an old China hand – worthy of respect from our elders and fear and awe from me.

For several years Mother taught a class of young men employed by the Bank of China, in preparation for positions in international banking. I suspect she groomed them in English, Western-style manners and culture more than finances, although Mother could have. She had the financial knowledge and was quite competent in the Mandarin language. One year the Bank Boys invited us to a tour of their bank building followed by a feast. They sent us home in rickshas. Two momentous happenings: being included in a feast and riding a ricksha, all in one day. This was a rare occasion as young foreign children were seldom invited to evening events. When we left in 1944 her Bank Boys presented her with a woven bamboo fan with their felicitations and names woven in.

Several of these young men had moved upriver during the early years of the Sino-Japanese conflict. One became a good friend. P.Y. Wang had attended a Christian school down river and joined the church when he came upriver. He met and married Miss Chen, a nurse in our mission hospital. I think Dad officiated at their wedding. In any case they became quite good friends of ours. That first summer of 1940 when the bombings began in April, Mrs. Wang and two children stayed in our cottage. I remember a picnic the next year when we went on a coal boat to an island. Malcolm and I went fishing. Baby Julia was only a few months old and I was allowed to hold her. In my diary for January 13, 1942 I wrote "*9.20 Time to go over to Stinson's to go to Wongs. Back from Wongs, a lovely meal with 12 dishes.*" Later that year P. Y. went to the United States for further education in electrical engineering. Mother and Dad gave him letters of introduction for family and friends in Ontario.

Dad had several responsibilities, as well. Both the Christian schools, one for boys, one for girls, formerly under mission control, were now largely staffed by Chinese. The United Church in West China still had funding responsibilities and Dad was the liaison for this. For several years he taught English at the Boys' Middle School. There weren't many Chinese who were qualified to teach English and those that were found positions in the government schools with higher salaries. That first summer both schools were moved to the countryside. The Boys' Middle School was cut in half during the Double Tenth bombing. Fortunately, the teachers and students were safe in the country.

Preaching in the church next door was a somewhat similar arrangement with the pulpit duties shared with Chinese pastors. Dad spent about half of his days in the country, usually with Chinese laity, both men and women, spreading the gospel through talks and tracts. It was here that his farming background gave him a rapport with the men.

The Daily Routine

The day started in the kitchen. It was a large room adjacent to the dining room corner of the house. There was a black iron stove with an oven and a water heater at the right end. The chimney went up through the ceiling to the bathroom right above. There was a long wooden table under the double window that

overlooked the path that went from the cowshed to the Sunday School building. Most importantly was the locked pantry with all sorts of goodies from Home.

The back door led to a work room where the laundry was done. The washing machine was made of tin and the dirty clothes were agitated by turning a paddle. Then each garment would be rinsed twice in 2 big tin basins and hung out to dry. Also here was the wind cupboard, a framework of wood and screening, maybe 2'x2'x3' high, suspended from the ceiling on a Doctor Doolittle pushme/pullyou pulley. This was draped with cheesecloth, dampened by osmosis from the water bowl balanced on the top. Open the door and there were two shelves with the milk, vegetables and eggs. It was a privilege when I was allowed to retrieve something from this contraption. Another joy found in the laundry area was our da niang's crock of pickles. It held a wonderfully delicious melange of vegetables, which we were forbidden to touch. Oh, but they were so good!

Adjacent to the wind cupboard was the filtration system for our drinking water. Water from the cistern or a rain barrel would seep down through the sand and charcoal filling three great big clay jars into a lidded container. That water would be boiled for drinking. The cooler water would be kept in the cellar and decanted into green bottles to sit on the sideboard in the dining room. These green bottles had come from Home, filled with raisins and currants. These delicacies were kept in the locked pantry along with baking soda, sugar, Klim and other necessities that were not procurable locally.

Each morning Mother and Joh Yuin Jin would meet to look at supplies, discuss recipes and plan the day. He would go to the market and return to go over his purchases and the accounts with Mother every day. It seems to me that she was often in the kitchen, especially when a cow or pig was butchered. Imitating the 'beef ring' practice in rural Ontario, the whole community shared in the meat. Beef was cooked and put in glass jars, sealed with fat. Hot water baths and pressure cookers were unheard of processes. Canning required utmost care and Mother saw to that. The rubber jar rings had come all the way from Home in a trunk. I don't recall any spoiled meat. Pork was smoked in the brick smokehouse that abutted the compound wall and the gate house. I remember it not for the hams and bacon but for the enormous snakes that lived there.

Dad had a big garden with vegetables, grown from seed brought from Home. Any fruits and vegetables to be eaten raw, we grew in our own garden. Berries became jams and jellies, carefully sequestered in the pantry, some set aside for Christmas gifts. Pomelo and persimmons were shared with others and any extra were carefully wrapped in rice paper and stored in the cellar. I disliked going down those stairs into the dark, musty space to unwrap fruit for a meal. I was instructed to bring up any with spots and to re-wrap the 'good' ones. When did we get to eat 'good' ones? after they developed spots? Fruits and vegetables bought at the market were thoroughly scrubbed and cooked. When the Edmonds house was bombed, all the jars broke – a huge loss. We packed a box for them from our pantry.

Joh Yuin Jin ground the peanuts for peanut butter using the same millstones used to grind soybeans for the cows. This didn't happen very often. I don't remember seeing Mother in the cowshed but I'm sure she oversaw the scrubbing of the millstones before he started. He always made a lot. Was it just for us or was this a joint enterprise with the other families? It would have been wasteful to make a small quantity because so much would be stuck in the millstones. I recall cleaning the grooves with my fingers. Did the glop go into the container or into my mouth?

For sugar he bought coarse lumps at the market and refined them by adding good water to make a syrup. This was boiled, strained through a cheese cloth funnel, and skimmed, much as maple syrup is made. Sometimes Malcolm and I were allowed a stir, sitting outside the kitchen door, shaded by the wisteria vines that trellised to the second floor. Sugar was very expensive and was kept in the locked pantry. The sugar bowl on the buffet in the dining room was just enough for morning porridge and numerous cups of tea. Perishables were kept in the wind cupboard in the back kitchen. It hung just above and to the right of the three clay sand-filled jars that filtered our water.

In the kitchen pantry under lock and key Mother kept precious supplies such as chocolate, baking soda, cream of tartar, canned peaches and the horrible Klim, a dried milk product. These were treasures from Home, irreplaceable during wartime. For my first biscuit baking sessions I learned to mix baking soda and

cream of tartar together. Baking powder from Home was perishable. Non-food items such as kerosene, lamp chimneys and rat poison were off in a corner all by themselves. More critical in the last two years was salt storage. When salt became rationed (even though it was produced within sight) and the price tripled, the salt for us and for the cows was kept in the pantry.

We were blessed with a huge deep cistern, so big that the top was a regulation tennis court where Mother and Dad and others played. When the Li mansion next door was destroyed in the Double Tenth bombing, it was water from our cistern that saved some of their belongings. Our water also put out embers that landed on the verandahs and the roof of our house. I recall just once going down the ladder to walk in the cold ankle-deep water.

Just outside the back kitchen was a deep concrete water trough, the intermediary between the cistern and the water filtration system. It was the best place for watching mosquito larvae and other unnamed creatures. We were strictly forbidden to let even one drop of water touch our mouths. Beside the trough was a flat stone where Joh Yuen Jin would kill the chicken for Sunday dinner. This he did in the Chinese manner by sticking a sharp knife down the poor creature's throat. The blood would be drained for future meals in the servants' quarters.

Yes, we had chickens, possibly descendants of the roosters Dad had brought from Home in the '20's. Eggs were an important part of our weekly diet, either for suppers or for baking. When the hens were laying we had eggs, when they stopped laying we had meat – that was the way it was. In 1943 there was widespread crop drought. Also our chickens contracted an illness and died. Eggs at the market cost 25 cents each when available. That year we were rationed to two eggs each a week and 4 ounces of meat each on 5 days of the week.

We also had one or two cows, and when they had calves, we had milk. That first winter back our cow had died during the rinderpest epidemic despite our prayers and two vaccinations. So we had to drink that horrible crusty mixture called Klim – the only thing from Home that I hated. Luckily the heifer gave birth in the spring and we had real milk. The cows were housed in a shed just outside the gate to the W.M.S. school. Every day fresh soy beans would be ground between two grindstones, 3 feet in diameter, for their food. There was a communal bull that

went from stable to stable, even sometimes to an experimental farm. This one was the descendant of the bull that Dad had brought from Home when he came back to China in 1929. I do, however, remember vividly trying to fly by racing along the cowshed's ridgepole and leaping off, assisted by mother's dressing gown for wings, and landing PLOP! in a bed of nettles.

The stable boy looked after our cows. If he were dishonest he could make a lot of money on the side by selling manure. Another ploy was by watering the milk. A cup of milk had a high price on the black market. One cowman secreted a water-filled balloon in his armpit with a rubber tube to his hand. He would dilute the milk to get an extra pint or more extra to sell on the market. It took careful watching to catch his subterfuge. I remember that Dad milked the cow for several days in the effort to figure out why the milk was so thin. It wasn't the milk that I remember; it was Dad milking!

My father had very firm ideas about meal times. There was always a blessing – thanks for the food, a prayer for others and a petition for God's blessing on our tasks. Table manners were important – and that training stood me well when I went to boarding school in 1942. Often there would be a guest. There always was food for one more, and the message would be FHB (Family Hold Back). If too many people happened to turn up at mealtime Mother and Dad would take turns talking with them elsewhere.

One rule was absolutely no animals in the dining room. Perpy was not a problem – he was an outdoor dog. The cats, Peanut and Butter, were a different story. Dad would flick his serviette at them to drive them from the room. When Butter decided to give birth she chose mealtime and proceeded to produce two wet mewling infants right beside Dad's chair. Then she groomed each and set to nursing them. Malcolm and I were mesmerized. Mother was barely able to contain her laughter. When the infants were nourished she carried them, one at a time, up the stairs to the verandah to a spot where there were missing boards.

We had a wind-up Victrola in the sitting room and lots of records, mainly classical. Our favourite was The Peer Gynt Suite; and Malcolm and I would run around and around to the strains of The Hall of the Mountain King. Newton and Donald had marched the perimeter of the carpet to the Colonel Bogey March.

Mother kept the gramophone needles in her desk drawer. Malcolm and I were not allowed to change them. They were from Home and irreplaceable.

Dad's study was the room closest to the church with an outside door and a walk to the postern gate that led to the Sunday School building and the church. Parishioners and petitioners and officials did not come into the rest of the house unless Dad invited them for tea. Malcolm and I were welcome when the inside door was ajar. Just inside that door was a bookcase with shelves and many small drawers. We each had our own private drawer for our treasures. I remember birthday cards and mummified creatures in mine. Several drawers held Dad's cobbler's tools. There were pliers, needles, awls, tacks, pieces of leather, heels and the lasts that fitted on a sturdy stand. He kept us as well-shod as he could and would even refurbish the hand-me-downs.

In Mother's study was her big desk with three drawers. There was a shelf on each end, one end for Malcolm and one end for me, where we kept our school work, toys and personal papers. That room was packed full with a bookcase, a trunk, the treadle sewing machine, and a chest of drawers. One drawer held precious necessities from Home: dressmaker's scissors, pins, needles, hooks and eyes, dome fasteners, thread, elastic (both used and brand new) and most precious of all, extra bobbins. We had a small rectangular table with two chairs. This was our school room.

Malcolm and I had lessons every morning Tuesday to Saturday. Mother relied on the same Ontario-approved curriculum, the Calvert System, that she had used for Newton and Donald. We learned that penmanship and spelling were as important in our compositions as the flow of the sentences. Dad would critique our compositions with particular attention to grammar and punctuation. He was addicted to commas - a tendency that has stuck with me. Mother was a whiz with numbers, especially mental arithmetic. So we did a lot of math in our heads. Although we didn't know it, we learned elementary set theory as we sorted buttons by colour, size and the number of holes. Counting the Sunday collection was a sought after privilege. Numbers fascinated both of us. . Our library included many books, most notably the much read multi-volume The Book of Knowledge . Donald claimed that he had read every page of every volume. Certainly when we

did enter the Ontario Public School System we had a broad range of knowledge, sometimes quite out of line with what our teachers expected.

Letters from Home took at least a month to cross the Pacific. The round roll, of the envelopes, was the one we looked for first! Sometimes it would be quite smooth, sometimes it looked as if it had been opened and re-rolled. Perhaps the censors were bored that day and needed something to read. Sometimes there would be a knitting pattern or several parts of a dress pattern. Always there would be the comics, especially the ones about Dagwood and Blondie.

Mother insisted that we have a rest each afternoon. Then we could garden or read or maybe play a game of croquet. We had jigsaw puzzles and card games, Chinese checkers and skipping ropes, and always those funny papers that big sister Dorothy sent. Both Malcolm and I had music lessons. I played the violin as well as the organ. Malcolm practiced more than I did, Still we often played duets, often when we had visitors. Sometimes we would walk over to the other side where the hospital was located and play with the children there. Dora Ann Stinson's mother taught us gymnastics - headstands, cartwheels, somersaults.

Upstairs there was a central hall with two rooms on each side, and a washroom. This room was over the kitchen and was warmed by the stove pipe. A ceramic bowl nestled in a hole in the washstand with a soapdish beside it. Another green bottle filled with drinking water was beside our toothbrushes. There was a big tin tub which took a whole lot of buckets of water to fill. Malcolm and I bathed together and then either Mother or Dad took a turn. The toilet was in a little closet next door and every morning either the cowboy or our da niang would empty the bucket.

Tsoa Da Niang's room was in that same far corner beside the back stairs leading down to the laundry area. This was off-limits to us. Only a knock on her door was permitted. However, I remember sneaking in to see her white mouse. She kept her pet in a wire cage on the window sill. When she was sitting it would be in her lap, just like my cats, Peanut and Butter. She had one practice that upset me. If and when she stood up for a moment, she would put a pin through its tail and pin the mouse to the window sill.

Malcolm and I slept on the screened veranda, just outside our parents' bedroom. Some nights I would awake hearing soft gentle murmurings as they prepared for sleep. I would sing Brahm's Lullaby to Malcolm: "*Sleep my child, may God be with you all through the night*". He hated it and would end up being snuggled while I was chastised for knowingly upsetting him. Whether this happened repeatedly or just once or twice, the memory is as clear as a bell. Hopefully I realized that I was the loser in the drama. If so, I don't recall any remorse.

Over my bed hung a very special gift from Dad's friend, the Roman Catholic priest downtown. Sometimes Dad would take me along on a visit and I would play with his cat during their long conversations. On one of those visits this friend gave me a picture of the Madonna. I told him that lots of people and even Perpy, our dog, had haloes just like Mother Mary. When I told my mother this, she said I had a good imagination and I was not to say my prayers to a picture. I stopped talking about haloes and in time somehow haloes stopped appearing to me. Malcolm and I did have very active imaginations about fairies and brownies and guardian angels. We knew what was real and what was make-believe. (Well, guardian angels were a bit different!) It was years before I allowed myself to see haloes. Dad's co-religionist perished during one of the horrible bombings in the summer of 1942.

While we lay in bed we often heard the mah jong tiles hitting the tables at the tea shops down the street. Occasionally there was the ring of the night patrol keeping watch in the streets for thieves and fire. One night I was awakened by horrible yowling seemingly under my bed but really in the garden. I said my prayers again, just to be sure that God and Mother Mary were protecting me. Sometimes in the morning we awoke to the sound of gunfire from the executions taking place across the river.

Beside their bedroom was the family dressing room, where our clothes were stored in wardrobes and dressers. There was a wicker settee but no chair that I remember. In one corner was a washstand with a flowered china bowl and pitcher, our toothbrushes and water glasses, a waste water pail beside and a commode shrouded by a screen. In January 1942 when electricity was installed, a single bare bulb replaced the *chin yu* lamp on the dresser. The service was very erratic at the

best of times and non-existing when lines broke during bombings. A memorable event is memorialized in my I.I.T. diary (Innermost and Immortal Thoughts) when I had an electric shock

I recall very few illnesses, although Mother wrote in her letters Home that Malcolm was a sickly child. A mustard plaster was the prescription for chest colds, leaving reddened skin when it was removed. For a stuffed-up nose we sat shrouded by a sheet over a steaming pot of hot water with a tablespoonful of Friars Balsam (Tincture of Benzoin) added. For a sore throat Mother would swab our throats with a vile mixture that always made me gag. I have no idea what was in that tincture. I only recall trying to concentrate on anything else to avoid throwing up. When our noses were too sore to blow on the thin rice paper used for printing religious tracts, we used large thick soft cheesecloth squares kept in the lower right hand drawer of the washstand. Years later I realized that these were Mother's menstrual napkins.

On rainy days we would play on the upstairs verandah. I had a doll house furnished in the style of Home. Malcolm had blocks and he would fashion speedways and overpasses for his cars. And there was the attic, with boxes and trunks and dress-up clothes. Malcolm and I delighted in looking at the grotesque pictures in Mother's nursing books.

Most days though we explored our compound, carefully tending the banana trees, gashing the rubber tree in hopes of oozing sap, playing croquet or helping the gardener. Dad had an extensive garden on one side of the compound between the gatehouse and the air raid shelter. Vegetable seeds, brought from Home, were carefully saved. Dad folded little paper envelopes, just as the pharmacist did, and kept seed from year to year. Sometimes he traded seed; sometimes he gave seed away to farmers. There were two pomelo trees, one peach tree and a persimmon tree. On the side of the house facing the church was Dad's flower garden with roses, lilies, chrysanthemums and Dad's favourites, the gladiolas. Here also were his bee hives.

Every week I had Chinese lessons, both written and spoken. Miss Lui was the first teacher and she and I were not compatible. My second teacher was one of mother's bank boys, a Mr. Chen. It was he who introduced me to the intricacies of the abacus. Equally challenging was writing with a brush and ink, not pen and

pencil, and from top to bottom, left to right so the characters didn't get blotchy. We would have tea together – and I wonder now if part of his pleasure in teaching me was the prospect of cookies. When Edith was home from school at holiday time she would sit with me and help me hold the brush correctly when I was copying characters. I was always very careful because Edith would praise not criticize!

Very occasionally I would be invited next door to play with Li Mei-Mei. The Li were among the richest landowners in the city. They were not Christian although several of the children, including Li Mei Mei, had been baptized. It had been an impressive house, three-storied, set in a beautiful garden with peonies and chrysanthemums and plum, persimmon and magnolia trees. The compound was surrounded by a high wall, higher than the one around our house and garden. The top of this wall was studded with sharp glass to deter burglars. On the roofs of the house and outbuildings were rows of mirrors. If an evil spirit did manage to come close, it would be so frightened by its face, it would drop dead. These mirrors had not been proof against the Japanese bombs, however. The mansion was completely destroyed in the Double Tenth bombing. A new 2 storey house was built and the family spent time both next door and in their country home. The servants quarters and the gatehouse were replaced and the gardens were replanted.

This house was beautifully furnished with black or red lacquered tables and chairs and intricately carved chests. Li Mei Mei's bed had pale rose silk hangings embroidered with flowers as well as a mosquito net. There was a cotton sheet over the straw mattress which covered the rope springs. Folded at the back were her "pu tze" – silk comforters filled with down or fluffed cotton, each richly embroidered with birds and flowers. We would play tea party with her dolls as guests. Her da niang would serve us very weak tea and an assortment of candied fruit and peanuts. I don't remember anything resembling cookies. That was the enticement when she came to play with me. In 1942 when the bombings became more frequent the Li family moved to their country home.

When Old Man Li died the weeping and wailing went on for a week. This was done by hired mourners. Mother said that the family was glad that the old autocrat had died. It was an impressive funeral with many Taoist and Buddhist priests, lots of white robed mourners and a paper house, chair and money for his

use in the spirit world. The whole clan was present – aunts, uncles, wives, concubines, sons and daughters and grandchildren.

Social Life

There were frequent social events in our closed community. Someone was always dropping in for tea. Mother always had cookies or biscuits waiting in the pantry. Sometimes the afternoon would start with croquet on the front lawn. I remember bowling to see who could get closest to a little white ball. The balls and wickets were kept in the hall behind the front door. It was always a struggle to get everything out because our suitcases were right by the door ready to grab when we rushed to the shelter.

The indoor games included card games like Old Maid, Touring and Pitt. Sometimes Malcolm and I would spread out the cards face down and try to pick up pairs. The one with the most pairs won. Mother said it was a memory test. Another favorite pastime was Chinese Checkers. Mother had brought marbles from Home and then had the boards carved locally. There was a lot of discussion about the rules and finally our rules were written down. Then someone translated our rules into Chinese and this became the game of choice. One year three families received boards for Christmas. I guess they found their own marbles.

There is an oft-repeated story about Mom's cookies. She was asked for the recipe of one especially delectable cookie, a recipe that could be easily replicated with locally available ingredients. In those days of limited contact with the Western world, this was an important reality. Some months later the recipient was visiting again and commented on these very same cookies and asked for the recipe. Mother said that the visitor already had it. It turned out that the visitor had cut back on the sugar and peanut butter. Also she didn't insist that drippings be clarified as thoroughly as Mother demanded. Of course her product was quite different.

In April, 1940 Madame Chiang Kai Shek and her two sisters visited Tzeluitsing. Mother, Malcolm and I went down to the docks to see them get on their boat enroute to Chengtu. It was the boat that fascinated Malcolm and me -- so big, so polished, so elegant beside the scruffy well worn scows loaded with salt.

That year there was no rain until October. The cistern was barely damp. We had to buy water at 50 cents a pail. The rice crop and the vegetable fields dried up. Prices for rice and kerosene doubled. Chengtu suffered many bombings and the Canadian School students were moved to Mt. Omei until the summer holidays.

In February 1941 two women and two men came for tea. They were Oberlin students in Sichuan on contracts to teach English in the schools, newly established by the government. They had toured Kiating, Mt Omei, the Gin Din and now it was the salt wells. Malcolm and I conferred and decided to show them our most precious treasures -- three dragon bone fossils, unearthed during a bombing. They were quite amazed. It made our day when they stayed for supper. Then it turned out that the two girls would sleep over -- on the verandah right next to me! It would be some decades before Drumheller and Zigong became partners in archeological digs and exhibits.

In October 1941 the Mission received a grant of \$20,000 from the Red Cross Relief Committee. Dad was the consultant and Mrs. Stinson was the organizer. It was decided to produce clothing and 50 *pukai* (duvets) for the homeless. This was one of Mme. Chiang's pet projects. At this time Dad was the official representative of the Red Cross and the supply depot was at our house. As part of her official duties, Mme. Chiang came to review the project and to confer with Dad in his study. Mother had tea and cookies prepared in the living room. There was even a small fire going, despite the scarcity of kindling and the elevated price. I passed the cookies around and sat down on the wicker footrest. At this point Miss Tallman presented Mme. Chiang with a gift. Mme. Chiang unwrapped it -- a beautiful yellow box with a picture and writing. Carefully Mme. Chiang lifted the lid to display the Laura Secord chocolates -- all the way from Home -- a very precious gift. The scent wafted through the room. My mouth was watering so. Then she said "Thank you" and carefully covered the chocolates with the lid. It was at bedtime that Mother told Malcolm and I that in such a situation it was good manners to share. Mother was very much more explicit when she recounted the incident to Dad! We overheard "And, Fred, she went to Wellesley!"

In 1941, two young American airmen stayed for a few days. I was quite overwhelmed by these young grownup boys who actually flew airplanes. They

were members of the American Volunteer Group, also known as Chennault's Raiders as well as Flying Tigers, young men who left the U.S. Armed Forces to join a company supporting the Nationalist Air Force. It was strictly against the American position of neutrality to take sides in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Actually the pilots and supporting ground personnel were well-paid mercenaries. Years later I obtained a letter written by Commander Bruce Leighton, giving the history of America's involvement prior to official involvement. However, at age 9, I followed them about as a little sister might.

When Mother, Malcolm and I boarded the liner in September of 1939, the British Empire and Canada were not at war with Japan. Japan had already invaded Manchuria and parts of China, notably Peking. War had been declared between Great Britain and Germany only days before we left. It has always puzzled me that we were even sent back. We returned to many pieces of evidence of damage around our house and the church and Sunday School building.

We had our own alarm system. Perpy would hear the bombers and warn us of air raids even before the sirens sounded. He would run to the dugout, which had been chiseled from the huge rock in the corner against the high compound wall. It was a U shape, wide enough to line with the trunks to sit on and even, sometimes to sleep on. The suitcases were packed ready to grab as we ran out the door. Moonlit nights were the worst because the low-flying bombers could see their targets so clearly. I have a clear memory of sitting and reading and singing with little Dora Ann Stinson in a dugout. Was that our dugout or was it the bomb shelter by the hospital? After a raid we said prayers for God's protection and our thanks for surviving yet another raid.

The Sunday School building next door had suffered two small incendiaries, as I recall. The shrapnel, however, did far more damage to the screens and windows of the house. Over the next year Malcolm and I filled a big wicker basket with shrapnel. We used the pieces to build a replica of the Tower of Babel. Over the next several years it turned into the Leaning Tower of Pisa. All that was courtesy of the Book of Knowledge! It was in the course of collecting debris on the ruins of the Sunday School building that I twisted my ankle and was chair bound for a week. During that week I read a book about the British Museum that

impacted on my later years.

In 1940 the air raids began in early May. On the 4th (two days before my birthday!) the squadrons flew over enroute to Chengtu. The Women's Hospital and the Outpatients Building were struck and fire destroyed both structures. Usually two or three times a week we would see and hear the bombers. Other days there would be alerts. So that year we left for the cottage early. Donald came directly to the cottage from his school in Chengtu. As it happened he didn't go to Tzeliutsing at all that summer. He returned to school from the cottage. One July afternoon we watched five squadrons of nine planes each fly over en route to Chengtu, then wheel around and head for Tzeliutsing. Sitting on the packed earth patio we could hear the thuds of the biggest bombs and see the glow in the sky. When Chou Yin Jin stuck a knife in the earth we could feel the vibrations. Dad was there in the thick of it all and we prayed that he was safe with Perpy in the bomb shelter. In this raid the W.M.S. house on the other side of the Li compound was hit. Of equal concern were the fires which wiped out the business section and the banks. Mother worried about her bank boys, too. It was three days before a runner arrived with the news that all were safe. In another raid in August the hospital was badly damaged.

In January and February 1941 Dad was very ill. For weeks he was in bed unable to come downstairs for meals. Malcolm and I were entrusted with small errands, such as a glass of water or a damp washcloth for his head. Recovery was slow. Amoebic dysentery was the diagnosis. The medicine that was prescribed was in short supply and very expensive. It was summer before he was back to normal as we knew it. It was to be a recurring condition for the rest of his life.

1941 was the worst year for bombings. The first big one was in April and the last in November. One day Malcolm and I were over at the hospital side of the city when the sirens went off. Because there were too few persons available to move patients to the air raid shelters, our servant was commandeered to stay and Malcolm and I were sent home alone. It was the first and only time I recall being allowed to do that. Mother was horrified and made her shock and anger well known. The hospital was a very visible target and received much damage that year. Sometimes all the patients did not get to the dugouts and once I saw body pieces being gathered up for families to claim for burial.

That summer Donald joined us at the cottage for only a few weeks. He and four other Canadian School students were returning to Canada to finish their high school years. Don was just 16, the youngest of the group, and could have stayed another year. In Ontario he would join Newton at Llewellyn Hall, the United Church boarding school. In those three weeks we did all the usual things -- swimming in the Buffalo Wallow, visiting the pottery shop seven miles away, telling stories about the gnomes and fairies, and attending Sunday services.

One night we had a going away party. Dad and Donald dug a trench in the clay deck in front. Then they built a campfire. I don't remember the menu, except for the corn on the cob with real butter. Dessert was watermelon! As for that, what I recall is the contest between those of my age to see who could spit a seed the farthest. And, as usual, the evening ended with singing and prayers.

Dad accompanied the five boys to Chungking in early July. Then the boys flew to Hong Kong for their sailing date, July 18th, on the USS Madison, First Class, imagine! But that was not to be. The US Embassy had received notification that passengers of other nations had to have their documents verified in Washington. So Glenn Walmsley and Donald had an extra two weeks in Hong Kong before sailing. They arrived in San Francisco and went by train to Chicago and on to Toronto. Both were in Oshawa in time to register for high school!

That summer Edith and a friend came up to the cottage for a month. They didn't like swimming at all but had no qualms about accompanying Malcolm and me to the Buffalo Wallow or to Children's Delight. Other days they practiced their English and we practiced our Chinese. Mother was teaching both girls about sewing. Some outworn garments were repurposed for underwear. Dorothy had sent several packets of sewing needles all the way from Home in her letters. Edith went back to school with her own sewing basket.

I remember Mother playing our favorite songs for our Children's Church: Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam, Hear the Pennies Dropping and Dare to be a Daniel. Malcolm played hymns without looking at the hymnbook. I had to have the book! I really preferred to read and write and draw.

There had been a request that Mother, Malcolm and I move to Jenshow where Mother would be a house mother at the Canadian School. The discussions were confusing to both Malcolm and me. We, or at least me, were not used to hearing these conversations. The cottage wasn't big enough for much privacy! Dad's health determined the decision. This time the diagnosis was sprue. The decision was to stay together. Dad would have home-cooked meals and Mother would see that he rested. Mother had been asked to teach several more classes at the hospital. And there was still the threat of bombings. It was late September and turning cold before we returned home. I was happy to be back.

That Christmas I received a small black account book which became my diary. It starts with *Jan 1, 1942 Today I saw a cloth dragon. Malcolm saw a red squirrel. My I.I. Thought for today was to be kind and good, sweet and useful all the time. Saw nine dragons and eight trucks. MBR saw ten dragons.*" Yes, it was the New Year's Day parade, complete with fireworks preceding each of the dragons. In this beat-up diary I recorded many of the day to day happenings for the next 17 months. It is a precious collection of Innermost and Immortal Thoughts!

On my 10th birthday I received a small 4"x 6" clothbound book, an autograph book. On page 2 Dad had already written

*"A merry heart doth good like medicine,
A loving heart is the beginning of knowledge".*

Greetings and love to our ten year old. May 6th 1942 Daddy.

On page 3 Mother wrote

*To Elinor on her 10th birthday
The world is like a mirror
Reflecting what you do.
And if you face it smiling,
It smiles right back at you.
With love.
Mother*

May 6, 1942

The autograph book has been a prized possession all my life.

I still have another birthday gift from that day. It is a small gold ring with a green stone "*because the birthstone for May is the emerald.*" It was given to me by Mr. Archangelski, the man in charge of the Salt Administration. He lived in the big house at the top of the hill. He had a radio and sometimes Dad would go up to hear the news. Other times one of his servants would bring a note with the news. That's how we heard about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the Battle of Midway in 1942. Each year at Christmas we would be invited to hear King George talk to the British Empire. Mr. Archangelski was not a foreigner; he was a White Russian. This was a big puzzle because he didn't look any different than Dad or Mr. Stinson or Dr. Sheridan. His wife and daughter were in Hong Kong and his son lived in England. Such a puzzle! No, I've never had the ring evaluated!

In June Edith graduated from school as a certified laboratory technician. She had completed the two year course at the Tzechow Academy. In September she would begin work at the hospital attached to the Le Zhou Medical College. We went to the cottage on June 30th. Mother kept us busy making sure that each of us had what we needed for the new adventures in September. Edith shared my room. For several weeks one of her friends came to visit.

That summer I wrote my first novel. It was 33 pages long! The plot revolved around a small medieval household where the lady of the manor wore a bunch of keys under her apron. It was illustrated in color using the crayons from Home that I had received at Christmas. My second novel was about gypsies with painted caravans. The plot revolved around sealing wax that was invisible under certain conditions. Neither novel made the trip Home because of weight restrictions. Both were carefully packed in a trunk and stored in the attic. Dad never found either on his subsequent posting.

On August 16th there was a total eclipse of the sun! Watching the night sky was one of our favourite activities at the cottage. This was a daytime experience and we studied the articles in the Book of Knowledge in preparation. Dad arranged our two wash basins on an angle and filled each with water. They were aligned to reflect the sun's path. That way we could watch the trajectory without damaging our eyes. It occupied us all day!!

Also that August, Tzeluitsing received its worst bombing. Up at the cottage we could see the fire for three nights and the smoke for three days. At last, a runner brought the news that Dad and the other missionaries were safe. It must have been difficult for my parents with a war on their doorstep and three children in Canada, one of whom was aching to enlist as soon as possible. I credit my parents for keeping the war as distant from our childhoods as they did. In the diary I kept during that period I do not mention the war except as incidental to some other event.

Off to Jenshow

In early September 1942 when the big kids prepared to return to The Canadian School, I was with them. At last I would be able to do all the wonderful things that Dorothy, Newton and especially Donald had described. It was the very first time I was without a family member. Auntie Jean Holt would take care of me. It was a two day trip. I had graduated to a whagar of my own! I remember vividly my terror when we came to the first deep gorge. There was no bridge, no watchtower, no big bell, no path down. I would have to cross on a rope bridge swinging high above the water in the deep river gorge. The woven straw floor was barely 20 inches wide. The rope sides that X'ed up to the railing didn't look very tight. How could my whagar men cross with me in it – or worse, would I have to walk across all by myself. I put my faith in God and my companions. By the end of the trip I was quite adept at closing my eyes in prayer.

But this school was not what Donald described. Where was the three story building with the 'big wide' steps to the front doors? Donald said the classrooms were on the second floor but there was no second floor. And where would I sleep? Where was the soccer field? – and the little bridge? – and the watchtower? – and the big brass bell so big that it took three boys to pull the rope? Somehow I had not realized that the school had been relocated to Jenshow. I was quite unhappy and quite perplexed. In my I. I. T. diary I drew a map showing the mission houses and the paths and stairs from one to another.

I lived in Lanwell, one of the six mission houses, with three other girls - Dorothea Hoffman, Grace Brininstool, and Miriam Wells. We had a dressing room for our desks and clothes and privacy. It was there that we would daringly light a

celluloid comb from the feeble *chin yu* light and glory in the brilliance. We slept on the porch adjacent to our dressing room, four beds in a row shrouded in mosquito nets. One night as we sat on our chamber pots saying our prayers, someone suggested that we would empty all the contents into one commode and pour that over the railing. At breakfast the next morning Mrs. Edmonds wondered if there had been a theft because she had heard something like rice being poured at the far end of the building. We prayed that night for forgiveness and promised Jesus never to do such a thing again.

It was in that porch that I learned how to short sheet a bed! Now maybe that's not a feat worthy of an award but my roommates thought it was. I was the only one who knew how to make a bed! It wasn't very hard to adapt that knowledge into 'take off the topsheet and pull the bottom sheet halfway and fold it over the blanket just as if it was the top sheet'. Of course in those days all sheets were flat rectangles. Modern fitted sheets were way in the future!

There was another prank that I had never heard of. Midnight feasts! On the appointed day each of us would bring something from lunch or supper and hide it carefully. Then that night when everyone in the house was asleep we would surreptitiously unearth our goodies, gather on one bed and, with very subdued giggles, munch away. Midnight was a moveable time for us. We didn't have a clock. One night midnight came about ten thirty. The door to our dressing room opened and then Mrs. Allan, our housemother, appeared at the door. She had just arrived home from the evening prayer meeting. Oh My, did we ever get a lecture!

Some things, such as morning prayers and grace before meals, were just the same as at home. I had learned to care for my clothes and to braid my hair. I had a brand new hairbrush that Dorothy had sent from Home because Mother hadn't taken into account that I might be going away to school. There was no Tsoa Da Niang to run to for help. Other things were different. There were bells to announce meal times and class times and church times. And there was one big difference: There were no air raid sirens.

That year there were 55 students in grades 1 through Grade 10 or 11. Most were the children from several Christian missionary groups: Canadian, American,

and English. Others were the children of diplomats and business people, Chinese, Belgian, as well as Canadian, American and English. The curriculum again was based on the Ontario Department of Education.

I was placed in Grade 6 with four others; Dorothea Hoffman, Joan Rackham, Marion Walmsley and Bill Willmott. We shared the room with six 7th and 8th Graders. Our teacher was Miss Buchanan. Sometimes Mr Walmsley, our head master (principal), would teach the 7th and 8th graders, altho' I don't remember what. Once when Miss Buchanan was sick, Donald Jones, one of the big High School boys, taught all eleven of us arithmetic for almost two weeks. I thought he was the smartest student there -- almost as smart as my brother Donald so far away at Home. My Social Studies project that year was the explorations of Thompson and MacKenzie in Western Canada. The CS library had been moved from Chengtu, and there I found atlases, partly for the explorers but also to understand Home. There were other treasures - my diary lists 55 titles!

With so many students we had marvelous games – Mother, May I?, Red Rover, Prisoner's Base, Pom-Pom-Pullaway. The big boys played soccer and baseball. At recess time we would play marbles of different sizes and colours on intricate courses with holes, a la golf (which, of course I knew nothing about). In the evenings there would be ping pong tournaments before evening prayers at 7:30. One sunny Spring Saturday the senior students had a paper chase all the way to the pagoda on the far hill. Some of us, including me, followed them as far as the first hill. Then we watched with envy.

Another awakening was participating in drama, writing scripts as well as performing. Mrs. Walmsley presided over theatricals such as The Bird's Christmas Carol. There was no electricity at Jenshow but Mrs. Walmsley somehow transformed the stage for each performance. She even used theatre gels with the 'lighting' which amazed me – as it still does. One of the big girls, Mary Jolliffe, began her life's work at the Canadian School writing and directing plays. One of these was a farce, The Bride of Ballyntyne, in which Donald had the role of Marmaduke, one of the henchmen of the villain Lord Ballyntyne. Lady Leonor Du Biz does marry the noble Lord Sir Jones, of course! Years later Mary was the Stage Manager at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario.

Some things, such as morning prayers and grace before meals, were exactly the same as at home. I had an allowance for Sunday collection.

That year the Christmas break was long enough that the school was closed. Most students went home for the break. Others spend the days with other families. Mr. Brininstool was coming to take Grace and Keith home to Kiating for the holidays. So Dorothea and I were under his care. Dorothea called him Mr, Meddlesome. That took 2 days by *wha gar*. Dorothea's father joined us in Kiating. "*On Monday (the 22nd) we walked all through the town to go to the bus station. We got 3 tickets. One for Dorothea, one for Dr. Hoffman and one for me. We rode all day, nearly several stops, got home at 4 o'clock.*" On January 4th Dad and I returned to Jenshow by truck in one day!

In February of 1943, Miss Buchanan left because of her failing health. So Mrs. Rackham and Mr. Walmsley became our teachers. Sometimes one or another of the big girls or big boys would fill in for a certain subject or even for a day or two. Mother and Malcolm had arrived because there was a need for a teacher for Grades 1-4. Malcolm was in Grade Four with Dorothea's sister, Beverly. He remembers that he had to take good paper and show how he did his arithmetic. He couldn't just put down the answer. He had to show how he did it. The library was his favourite spot.

Mother was alternately amused and pleased that she with only a grade 8 education would be called upon to be a teacher. However, it was a short-lived assignment. Momentous discussions were underway. Costs were rising expeditiously. The Mission Board decided to close the school. Students would transfer to the Woodstock School in Missourie, India. I was on the list to go.

I moved from Lanwell to Belleview, where Mother and Malcolm lived. The big girls lived in Belleview -- Sheila Lui, Shirley Tomlinson, Doris Dirk. Oh my, how grown up they were. And how beautiful when they dressed up for the big dance. Joan Rackham was my roommate. Joan lived in Chengtu and knew so much more than I did about the world. She teased me but also helped me as I grew out of childhood into being a pre-teen.

In April Dad came for Mother's birthday. Both had been questioning the

advisability of sending me so far away. Perhaps Mother and Malcolm would go, leaving Dad alone for ten months. Mother was concerned about his physical and emotional health. There were financial considerations. If I stayed my school allowance would be canceled. In the end Mother and Dad chose not to send me. The final decision was to keep the family intact.

And Dad and I had a serious conversation. I was in the group preparing for church membership and I had a question. I queried him about the three parts of God -- God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. I was confused. I had asked Mr. Veals. He explained that God was just like my father, three persons -- a father, a son and a grown up man. I wasn't convinced. Dad's answer comforted me. He compared the tripartite deity to the three stages of water -- ice, liquid and steam -- three forms of the same compound, all found all around the world. It seemed reasonable and I was comforted.

So those nine months were my taste of real school!

In June 1943 Mother had gone to Chengtu for some surgery and some dental work. Dr. Service and a new friend, a Miss Highbaugh, accompanied Mother back to Jenshow to get Malcolm and me for the two day trip to the cottage. Several walls had cracked and needed to be plastered and painted. So Dad went up early and opened up our cottage as well as Miss Darby's cottage, where this Miss Highbaugh would live. We brought with us "droves of bedbugs and fleas" (letter of July 7), picked up in the inn where we had spent the night. The next few days everything we had brought was picked over or washed.

The Last Year

By 1943 the Japanese were far too busy in the Pacific to spend much time with Szechuan. That didn't mean things were normal, just quieter. Inflation was a huge issue both for the missionaries and for the Chinese church workers. The schools and the hospital were being rebuilt but the wages were barely covering necessities. Our gatekeeper was responsible for keeping undesirables out. Still it was well known that we had everything and all was in easy reach if only one could get in the compound. I remember vividly a man, who had been labeled as an informer, coming for gruel because his tongue had been cut out. Another, a

woman, came frequently, sometimes three or four times a week. She called on us *'Jesus, Jesus, help me.'* I wrote in my diary *"She doesn't even know who Jesus is."* Others begged for clothing and rice. Sometimes there were piles of padded garments and *pu kai* for distribution, other times there was nothing. We often felt that much of the clothing ended up in the local pawn shop but that was never proven. Disaster relief is never pretty.

So a mini-school was established in Zigong in September. Phyllis and Gwyneth Allen came to live with the Stinsons. Dorothea and Beverley Hoffman made six for Mother and Dad to teach. Poor Malcolm with five girls and the occasional kindergartener Dora Ann Stinson. Books and other supplies had been brought from Jenshow. Malcolm and I no longer did our arithmetic on handheld blackboards. We had paper! The school room was moved to the living and dining rooms. Often the pocket door between those two rooms was kept closed in order to keep in the heat from the kitchen stove. Some days we had quiet reading or music in the living room and a fire would be lit in the fireplace grate.

Dora Ann's mother was our gym teacher. Somersaults, hurdles, races, broad jumps and high jumps -- and we could wear shorts almost as if it was summer! My favourite memory was making pyramids: three on the bottom, two next and one on top. Often the one on top was Dora Ann, who was about 4 years old.

That December the six of us planned and presented a program to our families and friends, both Chinese and foreigners. We wrote a mini-play, The Golden Cup. I have no idea now what it was about! We sang as a group and individually. Then there was a party with Christmas cookies and stuffed dates. Shortly after Phyllis and Gwyneth returned to their parents in Chungking. Dorothea, Beverley, Malcolm and I had an abbreviated school! Two days a week.

We had returned from the cottage knowing that we would be leaving China sometime in the new year. Mother and Dad continued to do as much as possible of their missionary work. Mother taught only one class each week to the nurses and one conversational class with her Bank Boys. Dad stayed home and Mr. Stinson accompanied the Chinese pastors on evangelizing trips in the area. At home there was much sorting and packing to be done.

That October General Feng Yu Hsiang visited Tzeluitsing. He was one of the many warlords who had ravaged the province in the '20s and '30. He had traveled to Russia and had worked closely with Mao Tse Tung. Whether this was known at the time of his visit is a moot point. It was important to stay friendly. He spoke at a morning assembly at the Senior Boys School and on a Sunday morning service in our church next door. On two occasions he came for tea. I was quite in awe of him and his entourage. He signed my autograph book using the Nationalist dating system, 32.11.11. As a favourite of Chiang Kai Shek, he was able to procure American dollars to outfit his troops. He was known as the Christian general because all his troops were baptized Christians. Years later it was said the "baptism" was by a fire hose during an enlistment, not in a church.

Later that year just before Christmas Carroll Morgan, an engineer with the Wright Aeronautical Corporation came to tea. This was the firm that produced the P-40 fighter planes that were flown by General Clair Chennault's Flying Tigers. That firm also manufactured the C-46 cargo planes that were used extensively in the China-Burma-India theatre. He wrote in my autograph book "Keep Smiling". However it was upside down from me and I thought he wrote "Keep Silent". I glowered at him. Mother marched me out of the living room and severely reprimanded me. Together we examined the entry and I had to apologize. It was some time later that I overheard both parents and the young man laughing about the incident.

Return to Canada

In many ways I had a fantasy childhood and can't imagine a better one. Sure, I could have been in Canada with school experiences, learned to skate, known my cousins, had a radio, etc. Could have been in Canada where it was warm in the winter and the comics came with the paper every week. Dad would have been around all the time but fathers worked long hours in the 40s as did the mothers. I would have had a different life entirely.

I returned to Canada with

A sensitivity towards others, the knowledge of being different,

An abhorrence of war, mutilation, hunger,
A passion for reading and frugality,
and the question “If God is loving, why war?”

And Memories: Reading by moonlight by the kaoliang field

Measles and coffins

Chinese New Year – see diary re dragons & trucks. Dragons – mythical creatures with magical powers, generally benign unlike the European ones, although the dragons in the Yangtze River could be malevolent

Terraced rice paddies with water wheels worked by the feet of men

Kerosene lamps when kerosene became too expensive used peanut oil, very smelly and not too bright. Mother couldn't see to knit or write therefore read aloud

A noodle man peddling his wares on the street

A pig tied upside down in a wheelbarrow, squealing, on way to market