

Monday, February 5.

1935

Dear Mama and Lillian,

I thoroughly enjoyed Lillian's letter of January 6 that came last mail day. I am glad to hear that Mama is improving, but I can see what a long seige it has been. I hope that with the coming of spring she will steadily gain strength and that the "few days" in bed will get really fewer. I am sure that the friends have been good with Christmas gifts, visits and the like. It must have been a treat to have Frances with you for a week, and Christabell talked as though some of them would be up later to help out and visit with you. Lillian, I do not know that your wing has a story, but perhaps I shall know more about that when I reach home. We do pick up information little by little although we do not directly study it. So many things in China are laden with story and symbolism, that it is difficult to get things straight.

I can tell you something about the wood carved figures; I meant to do that with the Christmas parcel. I think the two were not exactly the same, but here are two possible explanations:

One who accompanies

a) ~~the~~ the eight Immortals- Taoist (pronounced dowist) representations of persons who have attained immortality. SHUN LAO- the deification of Lao Tzu, the founder of the Taoist sect, often seen as a statuette of in company with the Taoist immortals. He is sometimes seen resting under a pine tree with his deer, sometimes among the rocks and pavilions of the hills of Longevity. His distinguishing features are a protuberant brow, suggesting benevolence, lengthened earlobes, indicating wisdom, and a flowing beard. He is usually seen carrying a "Ju-i", or sceptre.

b) The first of the three Taoist Star Gods is called Shou #sing, the God of Long Life and he carries a peach and a scroll.

It is interesting to note that they are carved out of single pieces of wood; they are not likely very old but may well be fifty or more years. The long staff is always a feature of the Long Life character, and sometimes attached to the staff is a gourd in which are supposed to be carried the herbs and medicines which cure human mortals of their ailments.

I am glad the doctors liked them. Lillian, I have been inquiring about a jade wing; and for a band of jade you would have to pay anywhere from 60 to 100 dollars mex. for one that was much good. Is that more than you want to pay? That would mean at the present rate of exchange say 35-25 dollars gold. I think that is rather an extravagance, for that amount would buy rugs or many other nice things. Let me know. If you want some jade, it would be possible to get a jade stone for a ring that would be relatively inexpensive.

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Yes, I have heard from Dr. Murray, such a nice letter, not promising anything but saying that he would be glad to recommend me for work at the university, or R.C. if there were any vacancies. He said he remembered quite vividly my work at R.C. So, who knows?

We have been having a gay time, but to-night will not go into detail. Last Monday we entertained (Abigail and I) about 20 girls at a "high tea" and games if they wished; Tuesday about 20 at a Chinese supper that was successful and lots of fun, so my entertaining is just about done for the year. It was fun when the crowd was away and we practically had the place to ourselves. On Wed. a.m. five of us started off by car to Wuhu- Abigail, I, the chauffeur who is an English teacher in the University of Nanking, and the two bachelors- Pascoe and McLeod. We had a glorious time- leisurely- took hours getting the 60 miles to Wuhu, because we stopped for pictures, took time to go to T'su Shih-chi that I have described in some of my previous letters, etc. Then at Wuhu it did our hearts good to meet such fine people, and to see through the wonderful Methodist hospital (I must describe it to the medical people in the family at a later date!) go shopping in the Chinese city, eat spring rolls and geowdze that every foreigner likes (they are fried cakes with meat inside) go sight-seeing etc. etc. and all without fuss and hurry. We reached there Wed. at 5 p.m. and left about noon Friday. We got back here in the afternoon and felt greatly refreshed.

I worked all day Saturday until 6:30 when Abigail and I went out to the Daniels for supper and the week-end. The adults were not at home but they had told us to have supper with the children and we had a good time. Sunday was a lovely day, with a walk in the streets to see the activity in the streets just at this gay time of the Chinese New Year, church in the afternoon and a very quiet evening when Mrs. Daniels and I took most of the heat by sitting over the neat register- but I haven't had the chance before since I was out at Albert's. To-day I spent the morning there, had lunch, then six of us went down to the Bazaar district to see how the Chinese were celebrating; found mobs of people that do not know what politeness mean, as far as elbowing one and pushing are concerned, so it was not a restful two hours; but the color was glorious in a garish sort of way- lanterns made of paper in the shapes of rabbits, dragons, frogs, turtles, fish, crabs, lotus leaves and flowers etc. etc. They were on long sticks, so floated above the heads of the crowd. To-night we saw the rabbits along the roads, pulled along on wheels and lit up with candles inside. Now every door has its red papers and red strips with good auspicious sayings in this way.

It is a great season, with the burning of the kitchen gods, burning incense to ensure good luck for the year, sons and daughters, happiness, wealth etc. Then we arrived home after a lecture at the women's club to find the servants off celebrating, so we raided the larder, and finally three of us sat in the living-room with this conglomeration for supper: chicken sandwiches; bread and butter; fresh marmalade; brocoli with salad dressing; dills; fresh apples; cold water, with some scraps such as baked apples and the like for those interested. So now to bed, with heaps of love to you both. I tried to mail you a package of tea but found the postage was about four times the cost of the tea, so shall wait until something else is going to you, or take it with me in June.

Lanterns

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