Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1917-09-06, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

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491 Avenue Joffre 
Shanghai, China 
6 Sept. 1917 

Dear Emma: 

I am one letter late to you. But I have been so busy. During the last 2 weeks there was only one evening when we either did not give dinners or were not invited out! And of course we never returned until after mid-night. Is there any wonder then that I am tired? Then too we have had our new car, & with the carriage too, we are out most the time.

During one of the dinners, I met Eugene Chen, - editor in chief and owner of the Peking Gazette. Peking is too hot for him at present: therefore Putnam [Weale] is taking his place there, and he is in Shanghai. He has a house on Avenue Joffre also; but he lives much nearer town than we do, - about 3 miles nearer. You know I told you that this is the longest Avenue in Shanghai, and the further away from town, [page break] the more inaccessible and fashionable.

Mother dislikes living so far away from town: she says it is beastly inconvenient. Her idea is therefore to move back to our old house in Honkou. You remember, I told you that we have had that house for over 23 years; consequently now while the house is still as imposing as it used to be, - the district is getting too congested for
comfort. I have been trying to get her to sell the place: the land there is the most high-priced in Shanghai: but she was so shocked and grieved at my callousness towards our old home that I have not dared to broach the subject again!

I have to admit, though, that she is not happy here: this place is too foreign and crassly modern for a conservative like my mother. And it is very far away from town, and away from her charities where she spends a great deal of her time, energy, and money. She is very devout, and likes to be present at all her Board meetings. I have therefore been trying to find a house near town, and yet far enough away to have plenty of space. My sister Mrs. Kung is not going to remain in Shanghai: she returns to the North: so there will only be my two brothers, Dad, Mother and I. The house-hunting problem is no joke. I am so tired that I’ll have to stop now.

Love,
Mayling
Dear Emma:

I am on the train to you. But I have been so busy. During the last weeks there was only one evening when we either did not have dinner or were out late. And of course we never returned until after midnight. So there. Is there any wonder then that I am tired?

Then too we have had our meals in the carriage too. We are not used to this.

During one of the dinners, Metz, Eugene Chen, editor-in-chief and owner of the Peking Zzeteo Peking is too. Not for him at present there. For Putnam's place is taking him place there, and he is in Shanghai.

He has a house on Avenue Jaffee also, but he lives much nearer then we do—about 3 miles nearer. You know I told you that this is the longest Avenue in Shanghai, and the further away from town.
the war is inaccessible and fashionable. Her other dislikes living so far away. The house is therefore inconvenient. Her idea is to move back to our old house in Henkens, you remember, the house you lived in. We have had that house for over 23 years; consequently the house is still as now while the house is step as now when it used to be. The imposing as it used to be, the district is getting too congested for comfort. I have been trying to sell the place; the gether land there is the most high-priced land there is in Shanghai, but she was so shocked and flustered at my announcement towards her old home that I have not dared to broach the subject again. I have to admit, though, that she is not happy here; this place is too foreign andcrassly modern for
a conservatory like my mother's. And it is very far away from the town, and away from her charities where she spends a great deal of her time and energy. She is very devoted and likes to be present at all her Board meetings. I have therefore been trying to find a house near town, and yet far enough away to have plenty of space for my sister's use. Kung is not going to remain in Shanghai; she returns to the north, so there will only be my two brothers, Dad, Mr. Lee, and I. The house-hunting problem is no joke. I am so tired that I'll have to stop now.

Love, Mary Lee