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Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1921-02-28, Canton, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

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Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1921-02-28, Canton, China, to Emma Mills

Transcription

Kwan Yin Shou,
Canton
28 February, 1920

Dearest Dada,

Here I am in Canton visiting my sister Mrs. Sun Yat Sen. I have been here almost a week and have seen quite a good deal of the city, and the various famous sights of Canton. The weather here even now is hot, and as I had to wear my fur coat in Shanghai about 2 weeks ago, naturally I did not think Canton would be so hot as it is. Consequently I brought my winter things, and now find them of no use to me.

Altho Canton is not nearly as foreignized as Shanghai, still it is struggling into quite a town. My sister said that three years ago, the streets were all very narrow; now many of the streets are quite as broad as those in Shanghai. But I will say this, the automobile roads here are absolutely rotten, -- so full of hiccups, holes, and gravels that riding here is a terror instead of a joy. Sister is always wanting me to see this and that famous sight, and as Canton is so mountainous, and the automobiles cannot climb these mountains, one has to do a lot of walking after one descends from the car. You know, in Shanghai, there is not even a semblance of a hill, -- all is level, and therefore I never walked there. Here with the sun [page break] blazing down and climbing hilly rocky paths with French heels is no joke. And the sun is so hot that it gives me the headache every time I go out of doors. My face is always so sunburnt too. But all in all, I am having a novel experience.

We are living on the Kwan Yin Mountain. "Kwan Yin" is one of China's most famous goddesses,
the goddess of Mercy. Right above the house, at the top of the mountain is the famous Kwan Yin Temple and the Seven Story Pagoda. Right below us are soldiers' barracks, my brother-in-law's soldiers. I think 5,000 of them are stationed below. We hear bugle calls all day long, and can see them practicing and drilling on the marching grounds below. Right in front of the barracks is the Government House. In going to town, we are obliged to pass all the barracks and the Gov't House where many many people are patiently waiting to get an interview with Dr. Sun.

This house in which we are living belonged to the former Governor of the State. It is typically Chinese, and is therefore very roomy. Our back yard is most attractive, all rocks, stone steps which go up and down the natural elevations of the ground, trees, and large stone [page break] seats. From the gov’t house to our house is a private covered passage something like an elevated bridge of 1/3 of a mile long. At either end are guards, whom one can only pass if he has a pass from Doctor Sun. This passage-way is only used by us, and by our callers. There is another way to come to this house, by stone steps, but these too are well guarded by armed guards. So you see, we have a great deal of privacy, which is what we like.

Although when I left Shanghai, there was snow on the ground, everything here is like summer-- the birds, bushes, trees, and flowers are blooming luxuriously.

A few days ago we went to General Li's fruit plantation of 150 [miles] of land. Every kind of fruit trees imaginable are growing there, oranges, lemons, pumelos, alligator pears, sugar cane, and a great many other Chinese fruit of which there is no name in English. We went by a fast motor boat, and returned on a lovely Flower Boat. I wish you were here, for I know you would enjoy it. Write me to Shanghai-Daughter.
Kwan Yim Chan,
Canton, 25 February, 1921.

Dear Dada:

Here I am in Canton writing to you. I have been here almost a week and
have seen quite a good deal of the city, and its various
famous sights of Canton. The weather here even now is
hot, and as I said to wear my fur coat in Shanghai
about 2 weeks ago, naturally I did not think
Canton would be so hot as it is. Consequently I
brought my winter things, and wore green flannel
of no use to me.

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as Shanghai, for it is struggling well quite a
town. My sister said that three years ago, the
streets there were very narrow, how many of
the streets are just as broad as those in Shanghai.
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Daughter