

Weihsien

March 1943 - October 1945

魏賢



TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| - Timeline | 6 |
| - Why? War in the Pacific | 7 |
| - "Captives of Empire" | 8 |
| - by Christine D. Spinck | 8 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 11 |
| - the Mainichi | 12 |
| - from Mr.Mansell's website | 14 |
| orders to Kill All POWs | |

FROM PEARL HARBOR TO WEIHSIEN HOUSE ARREST

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| - by Pamela Masters | 16 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 23 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 29 |
| - by John Hoyte | 33 |
| - by Leopold Pander | 36 |

WEIHSIEN: FIRST IMPRESSIONS

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 39 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 41 |
| - by Pamela Masters | 49 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 53 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 61 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 65 |

WEIHSIEN: THE COMMITTEE

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 70 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 77 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 80 |
| - by David Michell | 82 |
| - by Edward S. Galt | 83 |

WEIHSIEN: THE FOOD

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 89 |
| - by Leopold Pander | 96 |
| - by Frances Osborne | 99 |
| - by Ida Talbot | 103 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 108 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 111 |
| - by Edward S. Galt | 116 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 119 |
| - by Raymond deJaegher | 123 |
| - Annie deJongh's memories | 126 |
| - by Mary Previte | 131 |
| - by David Michell | 132 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 134 |
| - by Mary E. Scott | 136 |
| - by Desmond Powers | 139 |
| - Ron Bridge | 140 |

WEIHSIEN: THE RED CROSS PARCELS

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by David Michell | 144 |
| - by Mary E. Scott | 145 |
| - by Desmond Powers | 146 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 147 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 150 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 152 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 153 |

WEIHSIEN: THE CESSPOOL MAILBOX

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Raymond deJaegher | 164 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 167 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 169 |
| - by Howard S. Galt | 170 |

WEIHSIEN: WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Howard S. Galt | 171 |
| - by Zandy | 173 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 176 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 184 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 187 |
| - by J-M Sruyven | 190 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury née Cooke | 191 |
| - by Mary E. Scott | 193 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 195 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 196 |
| - by David Michell | 198 |
| - by The Whipples | 200 |
| - by Annie deJongh | 201 |
| - by Laurie Tipton | 203 |
| - by John Hoyte | 204 |
| - by Sr; M. Servatia | 206 |
| - by Sylvia Prince, née Churchill | 210 |
| - by Mary Previte, née Taylor | 211 |
| - by James H. Pyke | 213 |

WEIHSIEN: COAL & COAL-DUST

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 214 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 216 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 217 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 219 |
| - by David Michell | 220 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 222 |
| - by Mary Previte, née Taylor | 225 |

WEIHSIEN: CHILDREN, GAMES & ... SCHOOL

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 226 |
| - by Howard S. Galt | 229 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 230 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 238 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 242 |
| - by Ida Talbot | 243 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury née Cooke | 247 |
| - by Christine D. Spinck | 250 |
| - by David Michell | 253 |
| - by John Hoyte | 257 |

WEIHSIEN: ROLL CALL

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Howard S. Galt | 259 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 260 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 263 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 265 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 269 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 274 |
| - by Sr. M. Servatia | 278 |

WEIHSIEN: LEISURE TIME

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 282 |
| - by Howard S. Galt | 289 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 291 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 292 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 296 |
| - by Sr. M. Servatia | 298 |
| - by David Michell | 301 |
| - by Mary L. Scott | 304 |
| - Norman Cliff | 306 |

WEIHSIEN: THE HOSPITAL & DOCTORS

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 308 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 313 |
| - by Laurance Tipton | 317 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 319 |
| - by Howard S. Galt | 325 |
| - by David Michell | 326 |
| - by Mary L. Scott | 330 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 333 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 336 |
| - by Mary Previte, née Taylor | 341 |
| - by Ida Talbot | 342 |

WEIHSIEN: RELIGION

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| - by Howard S. Galt | 348 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 349 |
| - Annie deJongh remembers: | 357 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 360 |

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| - by Raymond deJaegher | 362 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 363 |
| - by the Whipple Family | 365 |
| - by Gordon Martin | 368 |

WEIHSIEN: THE ESCAPE

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Raymond deJaegher | 362 |
| - by Laurance Tipton | 373 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 380 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 383 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 384 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 386 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 388 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 390 |
| - by David Michell | 391 |
| - by Desmond Power | 394 |

WEIHSIEN: LIBERATION

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Mary Previte, née Taylor | 396 |
| - by Pamela Masters, née Simmons | 398 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 402 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 404 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 408 |
| - by Peter Bazire | 410 |
| - by David Michell | 413 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 416 |
| - by Raymond deJaegher | 419 |
| - by Sylvia Prince, née Churchill | 421 |
| - by Sr. M. Servatia | 422 |
| - by John Hoyte | 424 |
| - by Desmond Power | 427 |

WEIHSIEN: EPILOGUE

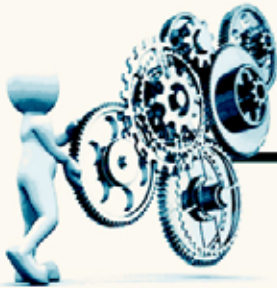
| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| - by Pamela Masters- | 430 |
| - by Peter Bazire | 434 |
| - by Ron Bridge | 437 |
| - by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke | 440 |
| - by Langdon Gilkey | 442 |
| - by Meredith & Christine Helsby | 447 |

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| - by David Michell | 450 |
| - by Raymond Moore | 452 |
| - by Mary L. Scott | 454 |
| - by Norman Cliff | 456 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 458 |
| - by Laurance Tipton | 459 |
| - by Sr. M. Servatia | 461 |

WEIHSIEN: FIRST LETTER HOME ...

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| - by Raymond deJaegher -- | 464 |
| - by Emmanuel Hanquet | 466 |
| - by L. Pander Sr. | 470 |

HISTORY ...



timeline ...



| date | local | event |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| September 1st, 1931 | | Japan Invades Manchuria (Mukden Incident) |
| November 25, 1936 | | Anti-Comintern Pact: Germany and Japan |
| July 7, 1937 | | Japan Attacks Beiping (Marco Polo Bridge) |
| August 13, 1937 - November 26, 1937 | | Battle of Shanghai |
| December 9, 1937 - January 31, 1938 | | The Battle of Nanking |
| December 13, 1937 | | Nanking Massacre |
| January - 1938 | | Japanese Troops occupy Chefoo |
| September 1, 1939 | Europe | Germany invades Poland |
| June 22, 1941 | Europe | Germany Invades USSR |
| DEC 7, 1941 | Pacific | Japan Attacks Pearl Harbor |
| December 1941 ... | "Enemy Nationals" | Japan declares War on Britain & America. Restrictions & house arrest for all Western nationals at war with Japan. "Pa" Bruce (Headmaster) arrested & imprisoned in Astor House. Compulsory armbands: Movement restrictions. |
| January 25, 1942 | Chefoo | "Pa" Bruce released. |
| May, 1942 | | Battle of Coral Sea |
| June, 1942 | | Battle of Midway |
| August 22, 1942 | Chefoo | Japanese commander announce plans to take over the whole Chefoo compound. |
| November 5, 1942 | Chefoo | House arrest: Temple Hill |
| August 1942 to February 1943 | | Battle of Guadalcanal |
| From Pearl Harbor to March 1943 | Weihhsien | The Japanese Army squat the Weihhsien Compound - deteriorating the Hospital's infrastructure and surroundings ... |
| March 1943 | Weihhsien | "Enemy Nationals" living in North China are herded into Weihhsien Camp |
| August 16, 1943 | Weihhsien > Peking | Roman Catholic Priests and Nuns leave Weihhsien for Peking ... |
| September 15, 1943 | Weihhsien | Prisoner exchange > M/V Gripsholm |
| September 15, 1943 | Chefoo - Weihhsien | Arrival of the Chefoo School |
| November 1943 | | Battle of Tarawa |
| June 6, 1944 | Europe | Operation Overlord in Normandy - Europe |
| June 8, 1944 | Weihhsien | Tipton & Hummel escape ... |
| October to December 1944 | | Battle of Leyte |
| January 1945 | Weihhsien | We all receive Red Cross Parcels |
| February to March 1945 | | Battle of Iwo Jima |
| May 8, 1945 | Europe | Germany surrenders |
| April - June 1945 | | Battle of Okinawa |
| AUGUST 6, 1945 | | 1st ATOM BOMB over Hiroshima |
| August 14, 1945 | | HiroHito: surrender speech |
| August 17, 1945 | Weihhsien | Liberation of the Camp - OSS team = "Duck Mission" |
| September 26, 1945 | Chefoo | Chefoo School evacuated to Edgewater Mansions Hotel, Tsingtao. |
| October, 1945 | Weihhsien | ... last evacuations by air. |
| December 9, 1945 | | Japan Formally Surrenders - USS Missouri. |

Why?

War in the Pacific: Outbreak of the War

History of the Outbreak of the War in the Pacific

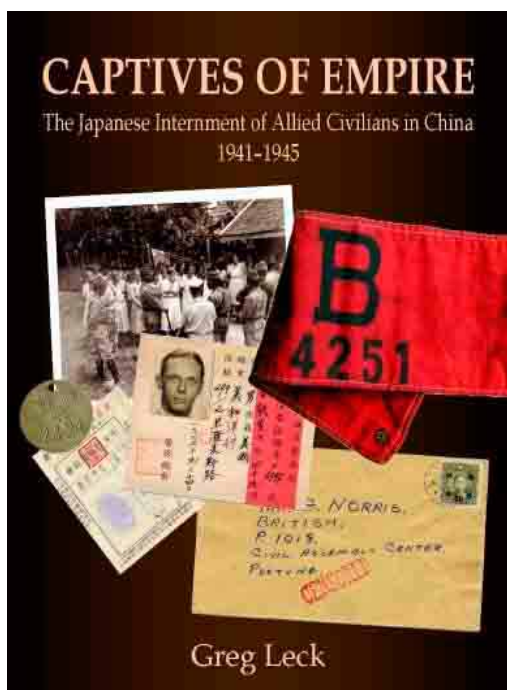
The underlying causes of the outbreak of the war in the Pacific relate to Japan's desire to effectively compete with the industrialized nations of western Europe and the United States. As an island nation, Japan had very few natural resources of her own and, therefore, looked elsewhere for raw materials to supply her growing industrial base. Japan

felt that Asia and the western Pacific islands were inside her spheres of influence, and resented the presence of other colonial powers such as Britain, France, Holland, and the United States. Following the invasion of China, and subsequent occupation of French Indo-China, the Japanese felt increasing pressure from the United States, including economic embargoes, and concluded that war was the only solution. Japan's need for resources found expression in a determination to achieve dominance in the Pacific by forceful means. The opening attacks caught the Allies by surprise and unprepared for war; the initial Japanese victories were stunning. Japan controlled a huge area in the Pacific, and her impressive victories continued.

Once the decision for war had been reached, the Japanese strategists decided a surprise raid on Pearl Harbor was the best chance of gaining the necessary objectives in Asia and the Pacific. The attack on Pearl Harbor corresponded with attacks on other Allied possessions in the region, such as the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, the Dutch East Indies, Malaya, and Hong Kong. Although Wake Island and Guam were not rich in natural resources, the Japanese wanted these islands to consolidate their holdings throughout the western Pacific and strengthen their defensive perimeter.

https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/npswapa/extContent/wapa/guides/outbreak/sec1.htm





of the Happy Way." Its Shadyside Hospital, constructed in 1924, was considered one of the best constructed mission hospitals in North China. However, by the time internees arrived, all usable equipment had been looted or carried off. Student dormitories, consisting of rows and rows of rooms, as well as large buildings originally used as classrooms and libraries, housed the internees. One of the largest camps in China, Weihsien housed, at one time or another, almost 2,250 internees.

Chungking, while remaining in the vicinity of the camp with Nationalist guerrillas. At the end of the war Weihsien was the scene of an exciting drama when a seven member OSS team parachuted near the camp and were welcomed by the overjoyed internees. Afterwards, Chinese Communist guerrilla activity prevented the evacuation of the camp. After an initial group was removed by rail to Tsingtao, the railway line was blown up. Internees were finally airlifted out by Army Air Force planes.

Located two miles east of Weihsien, the American Presbyterian Compound in Weihsien was known by the Chinese name of "Courtyard

Two internees who escaped provided information on the camp to OSS operatives in

© *Captives of Empire*, by Greg Leck

<http://www.captives-of-empire.com/>

by *Christine D. Spinck*

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/ChristinaSpinck/9\)AppendixB_\(History\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/ChristinaSpinck/9)AppendixB_(History).pdf)

Title of Dissertation: AN ORAL HISTORY CASE STUDY ON THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLING AT THE CHEFOO SCHOOL AND IN WEIHSIEN INTERNMENT CAMP

Author: Christina D. Spinck

Approved by:

Antonia D'Onofrio
Antonia D'Onofrio, Ph.D., Chair person

William W. Cutler, III
William W. Cutler, III, Ph.D., committee member

Barbara Norton
Barbara Norton, Ph.D., committee member

Edward R. Rozycki
Edward Rozycki, Ed.D., examining committee

Marilyn Kimmelman
Marilyn Kimmelman, Ed.D., examining committee

Date: June 8, 2000

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

APPENDIX B :

Expanded Historical Context

Japanese Presence in China

A continued Japanese presence in China began at the end of the nineteenth Century. In the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, Japan invaded Shantung and Manchuria in its dispute with China over the control of Korea. Following its decisive victory, Japan received the most-favored-nation status that had been extended to Britain, France and the United States in 1843-44. Japan's new status and the opening of four more ports to trade, created an "imperialist scramble" on the part of Britain, Germany, Russia, France and Japan to partition China into "spheres of influence."

Germany, “taking advantage of the murder in Shantung of two German Roman Catholic missionaries,” seized Tsingtao, forcibly leased territory in Kiaochow, and was assured railway and mining rights in Shantung Province.

In 1899 in the Shantung Province, flood and famine combined with local unrest against the German and foreign presence to create an uprising which culminated in the Boxer Rebellion. National feelings were strong against missionaries, particularly Catholics, who were seen as foreign agents after an imperial rescript gave Bishops privilege to seek interviews and rank with viceroys and governors, and to have certain civil jurisdiction over their converts. The climax came in Peking in 1900 when missionaries, Chinese Christians and foreign diplomats were besieged in the legation quarter of Peking for forty-five days until relieved by an international expedition.

Because they were scattered throughout China, rather than concentrated in the port cities, missionaries received the brunt of the hostilities. Approximately one hundred and eighty-seven Protestant missionaries were killed during the Rebellion. “Of these, slightly more than a third were under the China Inland Mission and its associated societies.” Though twenty-one were CIM children, the Chefoo School was spared any bloodshed. In keeping with their total reliance on God to provide, the mission that suffered the most loss refused not only to “enter any claim against the Chinese government, but to refrain from accepting compensation even if offered.

The years after the Boxer Rebellion were fruitful and saw expansion of the missionary movement and the establishment of Western education in China. Even the disorder of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the Republic did not interfere substantially with mission work or the security of the Westerner. “Both Manchus and revolutionists were eager not to offend the foreigner for fear that the Western powers would support their opponents.” This protected status would soon come to an end.

During World War One, while the rest of the foreign powers were busy fighting each other, Japan presented its twenty-one demands to China. Divided into five sections, the first two sections of the twenty-one demands called for recognition of Japanese rights in Shantung, Mongolia and

Manchuria. Japan declared war on Germany in August of 1914 and by November had seized Germany’s holdings in Shantung. After the First World War, Shantung Province was assigned to Japan by the Treaty of Versailles in which China had no say and therefore refused to sign. However, the Washington conference of 1922 made Japan restore its holdings in Shantung to China. Japan acquiesced, but still maintained a presence in the Province. Despite the return of Shantung Province to China’s control, China was still obligated to the extraterritoriality of the Western powers. This Western presence contributed to continued unrest among Chinese student and political groups.

After the First World War, Western prestige and power in China had changed. No longer could the Western powers jointly impose their will on China. The groundwork had been laid for domestic forces to emerge. By the mid-Twenties, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang Nationalist Party (KMT), led by Sun Yat-sen, were functioning. As the Chinese political parties developed, agitation increased against the foreign presence, especially that of the British and the Japanese. With the rise of Chinese nationalism, anti-imperialist and anti-Christian demonstrations grew. These uprisings peaked in 1927, but by then many of the missionaries, as advised by their consuls, had evacuated interior China for the port cities, or had left China altogether.

Although the persecution was not as drastic as that of the Boxer Rebellion, it was more widespread and the prospect for a semblance of peace seemed remote. One reason restoration of order seemed unobtainable was due, in part, to the continued unrest between the KMT and the CCP. By 1928 the KMT had formed a national government in Nanking. However, warlordism, a continued Communist presence in the rural areas and the KMT’s own factions prevented true unification of China. The rise of Chiang Kai-shek as the leader of the KMT and his anti-Communist movement eventually split the party after much bloodshed, most notably in Nanking and Shanghai. Chiang then established a government in Nanking.

While Chiang pursued the Communists, Japan sent troops into Shantung. Japan justified its action as protecting Japanese lives and property from the strong anti Japanese and anti-imperialist feelings of the Chinese, which often erupted into strikes and protests. The clash of Japanese and nationalist



In a paradoxical way, therefore, the Japanese threat may have been a significant reason why Chiang Kai-shek's regime survived the period 1931-1934." Any further revolutionary upheaval would only have invited increased aggression from Japan.

In the early 1930's, Shantung province went through a civil war between two warlords. After the civil war, Han Fu-chu, the winner, "apparently reached an understanding with the Japanese that he would remain neutral if the Japanese attacked Peiping, Tientsin or other areas in North China. In return, the Japanese agreed to

spare Shantung." On July 7, 1937, after provocation by both sides, war broke out between Japan and China when Japan came south and attacked at the Marco Polo Bridge and then occupied Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, and by December of 1937, Nanking.

Chiang's Nationalist government fled to Chungking, which was not under Japanese occupation. Chiang Kai-shek's strategy of trading territory for time meant that he accepted the loss of large areas of North and Central China. By 1938, the Chinese defended positions in the hills and mountains where the motorized Japanese Army could not easily penetrate. The Japanese countered by occupying the coastal areas and causing economic strangulation for the interior. So the lines between the two combatants remained essentially in a stalemate battle of attrition until mid-1944. And, by 1940, Japan sought imperial expansion into other areas.

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/ChristinaSpink/9/AppendixB_\(History\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/ChristinaSpink/9/AppendixB_(History).pdf)

forces only intensified anti-Japanese sentiments, especially as Japan reoccupied part of Shantung. Acting out of its own sense of "manifest destiny," Japan seized Manchuria in 1931. The Japanese considered China a "backward and disorganized nation, victimized by the Western powers," and felt they had a duty to dominate East Asia. That domination included Manchuria with its relatively unpopulated territory, which could easily be settled by Japan.

China sought help from the League of Nations to oust Japan, but no significant enforceable action was taken. Japan resigned from the League, the clashes continued, and Manchuria became Manchuko. By 1933, Japan and China signed a truce that left Japan in control of the area north of the Great Wall. Intent on wiping out the Communists, but knowing that his troops were inferior to Japan's, Chiang Kai-shek adopted a policy of "first internal pacification, then external resistance," to buy time to prepare his army and to rout the Communist threat to his power. This policy, however, did not endear Chiang to his own people. "While the Chinese disliked the Kuomintang, they hated the Japanese more....

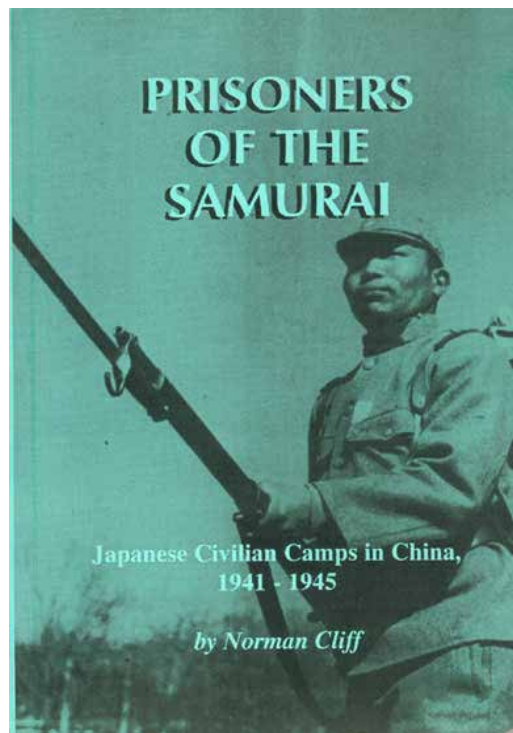
CHAPTER 1

THE RAID WHICH STARTED IT ALL

Let's face it. Life was good for the Westerners living in the 1930s in the principal cities of China. Back in the 19th century "unequal treaties" had been forced on the Central Kingdom, granting to the citizens of Western governments "extraterritoriality" (exemption from the laws of the land) and other wide ranging privileges.

Big business had developed and large companies had been launched, covering shipping, banking, insurance, coal, oil, tobacco and chemical products. The China Taipans had spacious homes, modern cars and a staff of "cook boys" and "amahs", with whom they communicated in that quaint language called "Pidgin English". In leisure hours there was recreation at the local club - golf, tennis and swimming - as well as regular visits to the theatre. Life was equally good, but for different reasons, for the large missionary community - Protestant and Catholic - in China, who had little social contact with the Taipans, mildly disapproving of their way of life. After the Boxer Rising at the turn of the century the antagonism of the populace to the Christianity of the West had waned, and with their skilled assistance in the crises of floods, famines, epidemics and bombings the missionaries had gained the respect and trust of the Chinese people.

But for both merchant and missionary an ominous cloud had cast its black shadow over life in the Far East. Japan, with its ambitious programs to establish its "New Order in East Asia", was slowly controlling the high seas of the China coast; its gunboats were patrolling the Yangzi River, and its business men were penetrating into the rapacious world of big business. Aware of this cat-and-mouse game, Western executives were sending



progress reports to their headquarters in London and New York. Unmistakably a confrontation, bigger than the four year old Sino-Japanese War, was coming to the Orient.

The U.S.A. in particular was aware of its shaky relationship with Japan. American women in the business houses had been sent home while the men tried to continue. Britain too was on the alert. Notices in the Shanghai press strongly

urged the wives and children of British business men to leave; and with the two year-old war being waged in Europe young men were being asked to return to Britain for conscription. In November and early December 1941 thousands of British and Americans left to go to their home countries. One British vessel, the CNC Anhwei, was to call at Manila to carry further passengers, and was caught by the outbreak of war, and all on board interned for the duration.

On the whole there was a half-hearted exodus. To the business community surely this agreeable way of life could not be coming to an end. Plans were in hand for the urgent destruction of code books and confidential reports in case war should come. These business men were determined to carry on somehow. In the missionary community many families also remained, but for different reasons. They wanted to stand with the Chinese people in the privations and hazards of war. For both groups the mystique of China and its people tugged at their hearts.

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Samurai/p-Frontcover.htm>

The Mainichi

Japan's National Daily Since 1922

日本軍總司令

傳單

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 各 | 日 | 良 | 官 | 日 | 日 |
| 戶 | 僑 | 民 | 員 | 本 | 軍 |
| 掛 | 回 | 務 | 必 | 軍 | 快 |
| 日 | 到 | 須 | 要 | 是 | 護 |
| 本 | 就 | 安 | 維 | 軍 | 回 |
| 國 | 市 | 居 | 持 | 規 | 日 |
| 旗 | 面 | 樂 | 公 | 嚴 | 本 |
| 歡 | 興 | 業 | 安 | 正 | 領 |
| 迎 | 旺 | | | 保 | 事 |
| 日 | 的 | | | 護 | 和 |
| 本 | 了 | | | 良 | 僑 |
| 人 | | | | 民 | 民 |
| 罷 | | | | 來 | |

日本軍總司令

The Japanese Army is coming soon to protect Japanese civilians living in China. The Japanese Army is an army of strict discipline, protecting good citizens. Civil servants must seek to maintain peace and order. Members of the community must live together peacefully and happily. With the return of Japanese businessmen to China, the businesses will prosper once more. Every house must fly a Japanese flag to welcome the Japanese.

JAPANESE ARMY HEADQUARTERS

The Japanese Army is coming soon to protect Japanese civilians living in China. The Japanese Army is an army of strict discipline, protecting good citizens. Civil servants must seek to maintain peace and order. Members of the community must live together peacefully and happily. With the return of Japanese businessmen to China, the businesses will prosper once more. Every house must fly a Japanese flag to welcome the Japanese.

JAPANESE ARMY HEADQUARTERS

Imperial War Rescript

We, by grace of heaven, Emperor of Japan, seated on the Throne of a line unbroken for ages eternal, enjoin upon ye, Our loyal and brave subjects:

We hereby declare war on the United States of America and the British Empire. The men and officers our Army and Navy shall do their utmost in prosecuting the war.

Our public servants of various departments shall perform faithfully and diligently their appointed tasks, and all other subjects of Ours shall pursue their respective duties; the entire nation with a united will shall mobilize their total strength so that nothing will miscarry in the attainment of Our war aims.

To insure the stability of East Asia and to contribute to world peace is the far-sighted policy which was formulated by Our Great Illustrious Imperial Grandsire and Our Great Imperial Sire succeeding Him, and which we lay constantly to heart.

To cultivate friendship among nations and to enjoy prosperity in common with all nations has always been the guiding principle of Our Empire's foreign policy. It has been truly unavoidable and far from Our wishes that our Empire has now been brought to cross swords with America and Britain.

More than four years have passed since China, failing to comprehend the true intentions of our Empire, and recklessly courting trouble, disturbed the peace of East Asia and compelled our Empire to take up arms. Although there has been re-established the National Government of China, with which Japan has effected neighbourly intercourse and co-operation, the regime which has survived at Chungking, still continues its fratricidal opposition.

Eager for the realization of their inordinate ambition to dominate the Orient, both America and Britain, giving support to the Chungking regime, have aggravated the disturbances in East Asia.

Moreover, these two powers, inducing other countries to follow suit, increased military preparations on all sides of Our Empire to challenge us. They have obstructed by every means our peaceful commerce, and finally resorted to a direct severance of economic relations, menacing gravely the existence of Our Empire.

Patiently have We waited and long have We endured in the hope that Our Government might re-retrieve the situation in peace, but Our adversaries, showing not the least spirit of conciliation, have unduly delayed a settlement; and in the meantime, they have intensified the economic and political pressure to compel thereby Our Empire to submission.

This trend of affairs would, if left unchecked, not only nullify Our Empire's efforts of many years for the sake of the stabilization of East Asia, but also endanger the very existence of Our Nation. The situation being such as it is, Our Empire for its existence and self-defence has no other recourse but to appeal to arms and to crush every obstacle in its path.

The hallowed spirits of Our Imperial Ancestors guarding Us from above. We rely upon the loyalty and courage of Our subjects in Our confident expectation that the task bequeathed by our Forefathers will be carried forward, and that the sources of evil will be speedily eradicated, and an enduring peace immutably established in East Asia, preserving thereby the glory of Our Empire.

Imperial Sign Manual

Imperial Seal

December 8, the 16th year of Showa.

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/history/p-Mainichi.htm>



7th DECEMBER
PEARL HARBOR
Remembrance Day



**Order Telling Guards to
Flee to Avoid Prosecution for War Crimes
Order to Kill All POWs**

[Main Page](#)

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Exhibit "J" - The order authorizing brutal guards and commanders to flee Source: NARA, War Crimes, Japan, RG 24, Box 2011 | | |
|  | Page One of authorization for Guards to flee because of mistreatment of POWs Dated 20 Aug 1945, 5 days after the surrender. For larger image, 72 dpi, 72 Kb file, click on image | Translation of Exhibit "J" Complete text as submitted for trial. (Higher resolution file available upon request.) |
| | Page Two of authorization for Guards to flee because of mistreatment of POWs Dated 20 Aug 1945, 5 days after the surrender. For larger image, 72 dpi, 87 Kb file, click on image | |
| Doc 2701, Exhibit "O" - The order to murder all the POWs Source: NARA, War Crimes, Japan, RG 24, Box 2015 While some claim the author of this "policy memorandum" from the War Ministry did not have the authority to issue such an order, this "policy" was transmitted to every POW Camp Group Command and POW prison camp commander. Other documents in this same file show that input of suggestion for the "Methods to dispose of the POWs" had been solicited from all commands in the preceding months. Per Toru Fukubayashi : "It appears that the Japanese Army did have a policy to kill all the POWs if Allied Forces landed on Japanese home islands. Some argue that there are few materials to prove that this policy existed. However, Mr. Yamashita, who was the commander of Iruka Branch Camp (Nagoya No.4) in Mie Prefecture, told me in 1995 that ideas about how to kill the POWs had been discussed among the principal members of the branch camp." See below ATIS bulletin excerpt. | | |
|  | Page 1 of the War Ministry's order for the disposition (murder) of all POWs. For larger image, 72 dpi, 80 Kb file, click on image. Date of order: 1 Aug 1944 | Translation of Exhibit "O" Applicable text as submitted for trial. (Higher resolution file available upon request.) |
| | Page 2 of the War Ministry's order for the disposition (murder) of all POWs. For larger image, 72 dpi, 83 Kb file, click on image. Date of order: 1 Aug 1944 | |
| N.B. The Japanese had plans to murder all prisoners starting in September of 1945 (link). However, see this ATIS bulletin excerpt ("Put all prisoners to death"), translated from a Japanese document in the Philippines, March 30, 1944: | | |
| <p>(3) Extract, dated 30 March 1944, regarding treatment of prisoners of war, from carbon-copy and handwritten file covering period 19 February to 30 March 1944 containing general instructions regarding intelligence, belonging to DOI Force Headquarters.</p> <p>"Policy of the Division Commander is to put all prisoners to death, but they must first be sent to Regimental Headquarters after which they will be dealt with at Headquarters (IN: Presumably Headquarters of formation effecting capture)."</p> <p>(ATIS Document No. 12310, ATIS Bulletin No. 1142, page 15)</p> <p>From: Bodine Diary Exhibits re killing POWs civilians.pdf</p> | | |
| For further information regarding the above documents, see these following PDF files of excerpts from the Tokyo War Crimes Trials (IMTFE). Many of the pages are of poor quality, however, due to the low resolution of the originals online. | | |
| <p>IMTFE Exhibits 2688-2701 A-O 1947-01-09 - Section listing trial exhibits including Exhibits A through O</p> <p>IMTFE 14706-14727 Taiwan documents 1947-01-09 - Trial transcripts regarding Taiwan document exhibits</p> <p>IMTFE 58-441 Summary of Arrangements for POWs Exhibits H-O</p> <p>IMTFE James Cross affidavits re exhibits - Affidavits by Major James T. N. Cross, British American Formosa War Crimes Team member (and former POW), who introduced the documents</p> <p>IMTFE 57-58 Regulations on Treatment of POWs p216-301 - Laws, Rules, and Regulations Pertaining to POWs; POW Labor</p> <p>IMTFE 58-340 Outline for Disposal of POWs 1945-03-11 - Re transfers and utilization of POWs, and the change of locations of camps. Note that the POWs "may be set free" in the event of an attack.</p> <p>IMTFE 57-58-311 Employment Use of POWs 1942-03-09 - Re sending POWs to Korea (to "stamp out respect and admiration" for the Allies); Use of POWs for Labor Shortage; Employment of POWs</p> <p>IMTFE 58-350 Tojo Treatment of POWs 1942-07 1946-01 - Tojo's instructions to POW camp commanders re treatment of POWs; Interrogation of Tojo re mistreatment of POWs</p> <p>IMTFE 58-338 Cautions on POW Info Censorship 1943-12-20</p> | | |
| See also these documents: | | |
| <p>The Treatment of Surrenders - Nov. 1944</p> <p>Japanese Instructions on How to Interrogate (full ATIS Report on Japanese Interrogation Methods, June 1946)</p> <p>On Killing POWs - Nov. 1944</p> <p>Kill All Order posted in camps 1944 - article from American Ex-POW organization</p> <p>Airmen to be "suitably disposed of":</p> <p>Hoka wa tekioi shochi subeshi 1945-04 from IMTFE Docket 288.pdf</p> | | |
| More information can be found on the webpage Atrocities Against Allied POWs: What we knew and when, and how we reported the facts . For a very interesting and enlightening discussion on the "kill all POWs" orders, see Atrocities . | | |

Kill All POWs

ORDER TO FLEE

Order authorizing Japanese guards to flee to avoid prosecution for war crimes

Main Page Taiwan Documents About Us

The following is an exact re-type of a faded copy of Document 2697, located at the United States National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD. Copy was found in File #2011 of the War Crimes Records. Note that while it is Doc #2697, it is certified as Exhibit "J" in Doc. No. 2687 and referred to as Exhibit "J" in the affidavit of James Thomas Nehemiah Cross. [Record Group 238 Box 2011]

22-1-9 13 [penciled in]

E2011 [penciled in]

Document No. 2697

(Certified as Exhibit "J" in Doc. No. 2687)

TO: Chief of Staff, Taiwan Army

FROM: Chief Prisoner of War Camps Tokyo

POW Camps Radio #9 Top Military Secret.

20 August 1945

Personnel who mistreated prisoners of war and internees or who are held in extremely bad sentiment by them are permitted to take care of it by immediately transferring or by fleeing without trace. Moreover, documents which would be unfavorable for us in the hands of the enemy are to be treated in the same way as secret documents and destroyed when finished with.

Addressees: Korean Army, Taiwan Army, Kwantung (Manchuria) Army, North China Area Army, Hong Kong. (YOSHIOKA, Nadaji) [penciled in]

Reference [penciled in] Chiefs of Staff -- Korea, Taiwan, Mukden, Borneo, North China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaya, Java.

Each POW Camp Commanding Officer.

I hereby certify that this is a true translation from Taiwan Army H.Q. Staff Files concerning POW's. Vol. 7.

Signed: Stephen H. Green

This is Exhibit marked "J", referred to in the Affidavit of JAMES THOMAS NEHEMIAH CROSS.

Sworn before me this 19th day of September, 1946.

/s/ P. A. L. Vine

Major R. M.

ORDER TO KILL ALL POWS

"to annihilate them all, and not to leave any traces"

Main Page Taiwan Documents About Us

The following translation was found in File 2015, designated as Document No. 2710, certified as Exhibit "O" in Doc. No.2687. NARA, RG 238 Box 2015

Special Note: In RG 238 Box 2012 is a request "for suggestions on how to dispose of all internees." 22-1-9 17 [penciled in] — E2015 [penciled in] — Document No. 2701 — (Certified as Exhibit "O" in Doc. No. 2687)

From the Journal of the Taiwan POW Camp H.Q. in Taihoku,

entry 1 August 1944

(entries about money, promotions of Formosans at Branch camps, including promotion of Yo Yu-toku to 1st CI Keibiin - 5 entries)

The following answer about the extreme measures for POW's was sent to the Chief of Staff of the 11th Unit (Formosa POW Security No. 10).

"Under the present situation if there were a mere explosion or fire a shelter for the time being could be had in nearby buildings such as the school, a warehouse, or the like. However, at such time as the situation became urgent and it be extremely important, the POW's will be concentrated and confined in their present location and under heavy guard the preparation for the final disposition will be made. The time and method of the disposition are as follows:

The Time.

Although the basic aim is to act under superior orders, Individual disposition may be made in the following circumstances:

When an uprising of large numbers cannot be suppressed without the use of firearms.

When escapees from the camp may turn into a hostile Fighting force.

The Methods.

Whether they are destroyed individually or in groups, or however it is done, with mass bombing, poisonous smoke, poisons, drowning, decapitation, or what, dispose of them as the situation dictates.

In any case it is the aim not to allow the escape of a single one, to annihilate them all, and not to leave any traces.

To: The Commanding General
The Commanding General of Military Police

Reported matters conferred on with the 11th Unit, the Kiirun Fortified Area H.Q., and each prefecture concerning the extreme security in Taiwan POW Camps."

(The next entry concerns the will of a deceased POW).

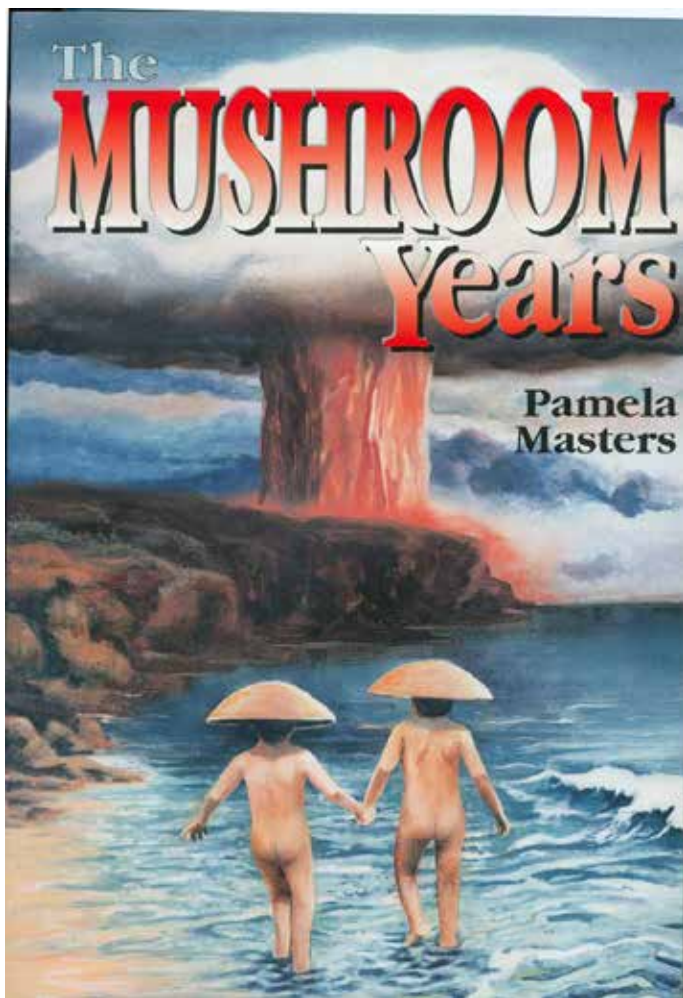
I hereby certify that this is a true translation from the Journal of the Taiwan POW H.Q. in Taiwan, entry 1 August 1944.

Signed: Stephen H. Green

AFTER PEARL HARBOR AND BEFORE WEIHSIEN:

by Pamela Masters

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p_FrontCover.htm



Chapter 6 [excerpts]

TIMES BEST FORGOTTEN

No one talked on the train to Tientsin, we were all too deeply engrossed in our own thoughts.

I found myself wondering what life would be like in the city now that it was run by the Japs. Would we be allowed to go to school? I really missed not being able to finish high school. I won't be getting any bonuses for completing my senior year on time, I thought ruefully. I decided to give up thinking of the future, as each thought had to be left in limbo; only time would elicit an answer. Getting nowhere in a hurry, I got out my pirated edition of Eric Knight's, *This Above All*, and got lost in his great character studies.

There was no getting off the train to stretch

our legs this time. Although the guards weren't sitting in our compartment, they were very evident whenever I looked around. It made the trip seem twice as long, and we were all ready to get off as soon as the train pulled into the station.

This time the old city definitely wasn't the same, and the weird feeling I'd had in Peking the previous spring took hold. I felt numb as we went through the British Concession. It wasn't ours anymore. Even the historic old street names were gone, replaced by numbers.

The "Poached Egg" now flew from every flagpole that had once been graced by the Union Jack, and slowly I found anger taking the place of anguish.

"We're going to take it all back you little buggers," I swore under my breath.

The feeling of bravado stayed with me all the way to our new home on Edinburgh Road—now Number 37 Road—where the rickshaw coolies dropped their shafts in front of a pair of massive red wooden gates.

The house turned out to be quietly elegant. Not the rambling, homey, bungalow-type we were used to, but a huge, three-storied affair, with a wisteria-draped entry yard, and a pretty, high-walled rose garden with a pocket-sized lawn.

The downstairs had a compact, oak-paneled den, a spacious living room that looked out onto the rose garden, and a dining room that could easily seat twenty. But the room I really loved was the library that led off from the dining room through a moongate; it had two walls lined with fascinating books and two walls covered in a rich, reddish-brown leather. To add to the feeling of opulence, there was mood-lighting throughout the downstairs rooms.

There were three large bedrooms on the second floor, and two bathrooms. The master bath was big enough for serious calisthenics, but turned out to be too cold to use in the winter, as

we had no fuel to fire the central heating system. There were two more bed-rooms on the third floor, and although they were icy in their remoteness, I turned one into my studio hideaway.

Up there, I would find myself thinking of the family that had built the house, the Winchells, wondering if they had gone on leave only to find they could not return, or if they'd just panicked and abandoned it with all its lovely furnishings, to become another luckless statistic of a foreigner's lot in the Orient.

And from my chilly perch high above the city, I could look down on the street and watch the beggars plead for alms. I knew that begging was a profession in China, but it still didn't help me to understand the cruelty of parents who could willingly deform their babies by tying string around some member of their bodies till it atrophied and dropped off. Sometimes they only tied members back, like shins to thighs, so that they would grow stunted and malformed, and the poor soul would have to kneel for the rest of his life, scooting around on a little wheeled tray like some performing circus animal.

I recalled Amah insisting that the worse they looked the richer they were, some even coming to their begging posts in their own rickshaws, and going home at night to a hot meal and a warm bed. I had never believed her.

Mother's first complaint, when the cook asked her for more hsiao-mi for Brewster, was reminiscent of those earlier days. "There's no way you went through fifty pounds of millet in just over a month. Brewster couldn't eat that much in three months!" she exploded.

The cook, looking bewildered, started to wring his hands and say, "But Missy ... please Missy...".

Then Mother, realizing what was going on, said, "Okay, it's been a long time since I lived in this city. The beggars... I forgot the beggars. It's all right Cook, you may feed them—but only the ones at our back door, not everyone on the street!"

The beggars at our back door materialized every evening at "dog chow" time; it was their assigned turf, and the servants would fill their grimy, old, wire-handled tin cans with millet and whatever food scraps we had. Often, I'd see them scoot down the street swinging their stunted

bodies on scrawny arms, or wheeling along on trays, to some less fortunate soul at another station who had not been fed, and they would share their steaming scraps. The scene always touched me.

I found out about completing my senior year in a hurry: the Japs wouldn't allow us to congregate in groups of any size, so school was out of the question. To kill the monotony of the days, Mother arranged for private tuition. I never did learn where the money came from for the classes, or for putting food on our table, as Dad didn't go to work. Typical of our life, I couldn't ever remember worrying about anything as mundane as money. If we needed it, we had it.

Although we appeared to be living as we always had, the days were shrouded in apprehension—mostly due to the ugly red-and-black arm-bands we had been issued. I loathed seeing mine attached to my warm fur coat; I felt it branded me as some sub-hu-man species. I knew Ursula felt as I did, but as Mother never stepped outside the house, it was of little consequence to her. As for Dad, if it bothered him, he didn't show it.

He would get up in the morning as the spirit moved him, and Jung-ya would lay out his clothes and draw him a bath, as he'd done as far back as I could remember. Then we'd all sit down to break-fast. Ours was usually hot cereal, and once in a while eggs, but Dad had to have an English breakfast of croquettes, or kedjeffee, or bubble-and-squeak—sometimes sauteed brains—with lots of strong tea and piping hot toast and marmalade.

Afterwards, we'd go our different ways. Mother to her house-hold duties, Ursula and I to our classes, and Dad to some favorite haunt. And while Ursula and I would wrap ourselves up warmly and leave for class, we'd hear Dad hail a rickshaw and say, "Eu-ropa" or "Club Metropole" to the nimble coolie. To his chagrin the Tientsin Mens' Club and the Country Club were out-of-bounds now, so he and a few cronies would sip coffee in some sleazy little restaurant on Cousins Road or Dickinson Road, where once they would not have allowed themselves to be caught dead, and try to reel in some illusive rumor, or just talk about the "good old days".

The proprietor of the Europa, Isaac Zeligmann, was a Jew who had escaped from

Germany late in the thirties, and he and his wife ran the little dump of a restaurant with hearts overflowing for the plight of the Allies. It was obvious that the arm-bands we wore really got to them, reminding them of the horror they had escaped from in Europe. In their broken English they tried to make everyone welcome, and Dad insisted, if Isaac's wife hadn't had her hand on the till, he would have given away everything in the place. He was just that way. Time and again, Dad would come home in the evening saying that some tragic musician, who had miraculously escaped from the paws of Hitler, had poured his heart out in music fit for the Met; for that, Isaac would feed him, or her, and help them find a place to live.

And, while Dad thus whiled away the days, we would be studying French with a Mrs. Warwick, or painting with Pierre Travers-Smith, a famous English water-colorist. Or, on a more practical note, taking Gregg's shorthand and typing from a very talkative Mrs. Norman, as Ursula and I had always wanted to be secretaries like Margo in the worst way, especially now that she had such a good-looking boss.

Of course, we didn't know how much Margo and Faulkner loathed being collaborators or the toll it was taking on them. It didn't help matters much that they did nothing but sit at their desks like so much window-dressing, and by the time December rolled around, they were both ready to climb the walls.

Then one day, just before Christmas, when Margo was about as low as she could get, the Japanese, who never lost an opportunity to make themselves look benevolent, asked her if she would like to go to Tientsin and spend Christmas with her family.

She looked at Mr. Araki, who was doing the interpreting, and asked, "Is this on the up-and-up?"

He looked confused, so she smiled and asked,

"Do they really mean it?"

"Oh, yes, they do," he said with a smile.

"You bet! When do I leave?"

"You will travel up on the twenty-second and return on the twenty-sixth."

"Please thank them for me," she said, turning away so they wouldn't see her tears.

The twenty-second was cold and clear, and Margo rather enjoyed the trip until she arrived at the Tientsin station late in the afternoon. It never occurred to her that the Japs would use this occasion for propaganda, and when she stepped off the train and was met with news cameras rolling, she felt trapped. She stood in embarrassed silence while military brass gathered around her, chattering uncomprehendingly into the cameras, obviously making points for home consumption regarding their humane treatment of the enemy.

Although we weren't allowed to meet her at the station, we had been told when to expect her, and sure enough, as the time arrived, we heard a taxi come to a jarring stop.

Mother, Ursula, and I rushed out to greet her, while Jung-ya took her bags from the taxi driver. His face was beaming when he said,

"Missy, Missy.. .so good see you!"

"So good to be here, Jung-ya," she said, her voice almost breaking as we all went into the house.

"My God, what a place!" was all she could say, as we led her into the huge living room.

There was a fire going in the hearth, and tea and cake waiting on the low table in front of it. We couldn't get a Christmas tree, so had decorated a pretty cedar in the rose garden, just outside the picture window, and the late afternoon sun caught the tinsel and made it sparkle through the dripping, steamy window.

Brewster rushed up to her and sniffed her happily.

"I'll bet he smells Vicki," Margo said, as she sat by the fire and he put his head on her lap, eyeing her lovingly. "I left Vicki with the Joneses—their place has been our home away from home. When I left, she was happily exploring the house."

"How's she doing?" Mother asked.

"Fine. She's no longer a puppy really, although she still has a puppy's appetite."

"How's everyone at the port?" Mother asked.

"Okay.. .I guess." She hesitated for a moment, then said, "Actually, time waffles between excruciating monotony and downright panic."

"Panic? What do you mean?" I asked.

"The Japs have installed air-raid sirens, and when they start to howl in the middle of the night, we

feel like a bunch of sitting ducks.

After the first warning, we made plans to slip out of the port under cover of dark and to meet down at the golf club on the mainland—at least then, if the harbor were bombed, we'd have a fighting chance.

"Usually Vicki and I meet up with the Joneses near the Marshes' old house, and we hike on down together. So far, the sirens have always stopped before we got out to the golf course."

"Have you ever heard any planes?" Mother asked anxiously. "No. And the damn Japs at the Rest House always laugh like idiots when they see me coming back in the wee hours with Vicki." "Could be it was just a drill," Ursula said musingly.

"Well, as long as the little bastards think it's clever not to tell us so, we don't dare take a chance."

There was a momentary lull in the conversation, then Mother asked wistfully, "Has the Corona been back to port?"

"Not unless they've changed her name," Margo said, adding, "Actually Klette is taking it very well, though I bet he'd love to run their bloody ships up on the rocks!"

Olaf Klette, a very close family friend, was an independent Norwegian skipper who'd lost his ship, the SS Corona, to the Japs. On the Fatal Eighth, the Corona was being loaded with coal in Chinwangtao harbor—she never got away. The Japs not only commandeered her, they commandeered Klette as well, making him assistant port pilot, with an eye to him being senior port pilot when the Kailan's Captain Arnold was interned.

"What do you do at work?" I asked.

"Nothing!" She replied disgustedly. "I'm a pawn in their little game of keeping people in line. It's horrible. And the Rest House has to be the worst place I've ever been. Remember how we enjoyed staying there the summer we lived in Tientsin? Well, now it's a prison, and I'm the only prisoner. The Japs have taken over all the other rooms, and they are noisy and drunk most of the time. At first, I couldn't sleep for Vicki's growling. She'd hear them shouting and staggering up the halls, and she'd lie at my door snarling. I always lock myself in, and pull a heavy chair in front of the door. It's scary." Then she noticed Mother looking worried again, and added quickly, "Don't worry, Mumsy,

I've got an overactive imagination. They won't do anything to me; it would spoil their image as humanitarians."

As we enjoyed the tea and cake, we caught up on more of the port news. There wasn't much, but it still made me homesick.

Margo jabbed the coals in the fire and held out her hands to its warmth, while Mother rang for more hot water. There was a pleasant lull in the conversation for a few minutes, then as Jung-ya came in with the water, Margo asked, "Where's Dad?"

"At the Europa, I guess," Mother said.

"What's that?"

"A little greasy spoon on Cousins Road where the Allies meet to talk about the good old days." I said.

"Dad can't go to the club?" she asked, surprised.

"Uh-uh. The Japs have taken over both the Mens' Club and the Country Club."

"How's he getting along without wheels?"

"Oh, he takes a rickshaw everywhere, and does a surprising amount of walking," Mother said.

"Actually, I think he's a lot better off physically than he was. I guess everything's a mixed blessing."

"I noticed a red arm-band on the sleeve of your fur coat in the hall," Margo said, turning to me.

"What's that for?"



"Didn't we write you? We all wear arm-bands. It labels us by our nationality, and scares most of the Chinese off. Come to think of it, it scares everyone but another arm-band away."

"We haven't been issued them in Chinwangtao yet. Guess there's really no need; there are so few of us and we're under continuous surveillance."

Dad came in the front door just then, stamping his feet and clapping his gloved hands together. While Jung-ya helped him off with his coat I heard him muttering his old favorite saw about it being cold enough to freeze the balls off a

brass monkey.

Margo looked up as he came into the living room. He gave her a quizzical smile, and said, "I see you made it okay."

"Yes, it was an uneventful trip till the little Nips met me at the station with news cameras rolling," Her voice bristled with disgust.

"Those damn buggers—they never give up!" Dad snorted as Mother handed him a cup of tea.

"I want something stronger than that, Gee," he said, waving the cup aside.

"You're going to be out of booze if you keep this up."

Dad ignored her, and called, "Whiskey-chee!" to Jung-ya, who was still hovering in the background.

"How do you get booze here?" Margo asked.

"Black market," Dad said. "And it costs an arm and a leg." Then, changing the subject, he asked how things were at the port and if the Japs were still losing tonnage.

"If they are, we'll never know, as Araki's not saying anything that would jeopardize his job."

"Mrs. Araki pregnant again?" Dad asked with a smile. "No. I believe they've finally given up trying for a boy."

"Just as well. If this war lasts much longer, he'd only end up being a kamikaze pilot!"

Christmas was a time of mixed emotions that year. The joy of having Margo with us was mingled with the torment of not knowing where, or how, Jack was. Time flew, and before we got used to her presence, she was gone again. The whole episode seemed unreal; it was as though she'd never been there, and yet the emptiness we all felt after she left belied the unreality.

Somehow the winter of '43 crept inexorably on. Dad would come home evenings from the Metropole or the Europa with stories of our imminent internment, and tales of a civilian committee that was helping organize the round-up of all Allied nationals. Dad said they were awesome in their dedication.

It was imperative that no one was overlooked, as their lives would be hell if they were left behind. We had to stay together, that

was our only strength. And the chore of finding all the Allies, some who were addicts and felons who didn't want to be found, was a challenge that the civilian committee had to overcome without letting our Japanese captors know that the situation was sometimes anything but one of happy cooperation.

Finally, on the twelfth of March, we were told we would be leaving for Weihsien Civilian Assembly Center on the twenty-third.

We planned and packed, and unpacked, then packed again, knowing we would not be able to take much and trying to figure what we really needed and what we could do without. We should have known—a week before we were to leave, the ever-efficient committee came up with rosters of names, lists of necessities, and complete instructions for our debarkation.

On the fifteenth, Margo arrived in Tientsin with Vicki and the last of the port regulars: Harry and Eva Faulkner, Sid and Ida Talbot, Percy and Meta Jones, and Preston Lee. The only people left behind were the Bjerrums, who were Swedish and neutral; Captain Arnold, who, as a Manxman from the Isle of Man, insisted he was neutral too; and Captain Klette. Arnold was to learn, along with quite a few Free Irish in Tientsin, that the Japanese despised people who turned their backs on their country. They considered anyone from the United Kingdom as British, and if they denied allegiance to Britain, they were treated as "dishonorable prisoners of war".

While we were getting ready for internment, we were told if we packed our valuables into crates, made a manifest of their contents, and took them down to the Swiss compound, they would be locked in the godowns and secure for the duration.

Mother felt it was too good to be true, but after losing two complete homes to warlords before I ever came on the scene, she was willing to believe anything, so we wrapped, packed, and cataloged all our valuables, and on the designated day, Dad accompanied a mule cart loaded with the crates down to the Swiss compound. When he came home, he had a big smile and an itemized receipt.

"Guard this with your life, Gee," he said, handing the paperwork to her. "You have to admit these little Nips are civilized. I don't think it will be long before we'll be claiming all our things again."

It didn't take much to make Dad optimistic, but it was short-lived. Moments later, his happy mood ended abruptly with a pounding commotion out in the entry yard, followed by heavy kicking on our front door. Brewster and Vicki went wild, barking and snarling viciously.

"Chain them up!" Dad shouted to us as he called Jung-ya to open the door.

We didn't have time to chain them, so we rushed the dogs out through the sliding doors into the rose garden.

Ed Lewin, a civilian interpreter, was with the Japanese brass who came striding into our home. They went through the house from bottom to top, making notes of all the furniture that was left, and obviously checking accommodations for future Japanese occupancy. They finally came stomping back down the stairs into the living room. The dogs by now were in a complete frenzy, snarling and throwing themselves at the plate glass doors trying to get in.

The senior Japanese officer snapped something at Ed, who turning to Mother and Dad said, "The major wants your dogs. You are to leave them here, and they will pick them up after you leave for the internment camp."

"What's he want them for?" Mother asked suspiciously. "War dogs!"

"But they won't attack unless we're here. They have been trained to protect us!" she exclaimed.

Ed explained that to the Japanese officer, who smiled and said something softly under his breath.

Looking worried, Ed said, "You are to leave the dogs—that's an order!" Then, following the major out of the house, he hung back for a moment and said quietly, "I'm so sorry; all I am is an interpreter."

As they stepped out into the biting cold, Mother looked at Dad and said, "That does it! I knew we were going to have to destroy the dogs, but we're going to have to do it now! I just know the Japs aren't going to wait till we're gone, they're coming back right away."

"Now, Gee, don't go jumping off the deep end. Dr. Hoch is coming later this week to do it, gratis. The Japs won't be back before then."

"You don't know that!" Mother shouted.

Dr. Hoch was an American veterinarian who had watched over and worked on all our horses, ponies, and pets. He knew the anguish we were all going through, and as he was the only one with the expertise and necessary drugs to put our pets to sleep, we welcomed his generous offer.

"Sorry, Gee, I won't help you," Dad said, as he gently mussed

Brewster's ruff and went out to the entry hall and picked up his coat.

"Damn you! Take off then, you son-of-a-bitch, and leave me to do the dirty work!"

Mother turned and looked at Ursula, Margo, and me, as we stood open-mouthed at her foul tirade.

"Get out all of you!" she yelled. "Go! And stay away! I don't give a damn for how long. If you're wise, you'll be gone at least three hours. Get out! Get out! GET OUT!" Her scream turned into a wail.

"I'm going to see Iris," Margo said quietly. Iris was another war bride, whose marine husband, like Jack, was a POW somewhere in a Japanese military camp.

Ursula and I grabbed our scarves and coats and rushed out of the front door. As we slammed it behind us, we heard Mother call, "Jung-ya, I need you!"

When we got back that evening, it was dark outside. We wiped our feet on the scraper and timidly tried the front door. It was unlocked, so we tiptoed in.

Mother was sitting in front of a small fire, staring at the flickering blue flames. In her hand was an empty highball glass.

Ursula came in and put an arm around her shoulders.

Mother looked up, expressionless. She tried to speak. Nothing came out.

I rushed up and tried to give her a hug. She just stared.

Ursula looked at me over Mother's head and said, "We'd better get ready for dinner," and we both slipped out of the room.

As we passed Margo's bedroom, we saw her sitting silently on her bed. She didn't look up.

"The dogs didn't greet us; they must be gone,"

I said. And as realization hit me, I took a deep breathe and held it; when I finally let it out, tears came too, and I sobbed till I choked.

"It really is all over, isn't it?" Ursula said softly, adding, "We'd better go downstairs and be with Mother. She's been through hell."

I splashed my face with icy water, combed my hair, and put on a dab of lipstick, then followed Ursula down to the living room.

Margo was already sitting on the hearth, hugging her knees, and I blessed the darkened room for being kind to our puffy, tear-stained faces. Mother didn't look as though she had moved, but she must have as the glass in her hand was now half-full.

Dad came home about then, and I heard Jung-ya quietly greeting him.

"Whiskey-chee," Dad said, as he stepped into the living room. Jung-ya mumbled something, and Dad shouted, "What do you mean—we're out of whiskey?"

That finally got to Mother. She turned slowly from the fire, tossed back the last of the drink in her glass, and in a slow, slurring voice, said, "I buried the last bottle with the two dogs—want to make something of it?!"

Jung-ya turned and left the room, and as he did, he staggered and fell against the pantry door. Mother smiled for the first time and said, "And Jung-ya helped me!"

The next morning when I came down for breakfast, the day was brilliant. The sky was a glorious, cloudless blue, and there was just a touch of hoarfrost on the shrubs in the rose garden. Then I saw the big patch of newly-turned earth, and the horror of yesterday came flooding back.

I knew Margo and Ursula were still asleep and that Jung-ya was serving Mother and Dad their morning tea in bed, so I quietly stepped outside, unmindful of the cold, and carefully stamped on the mounded earth. I went over it and over it, till it was almost flat, then carefully covered it with fallen leaves, so that it blended with the rest of the rose-bed. Then, passing under the pergola to the front gate-yard, I wiped my feet and slipped back into the house.

It was just after noon when the Japanese came back for the dogs, and my skin crept as I realized Mother's Scots' heritage of precognition

had not let her down. This time Ed was not with them. In fact, they had no interpreter, and they didn't need one. They marched in through the house and slid open the plate glass doors to the garden. The Japanese major was the only one from yesterday, and he was accompanied by two soldiers.

He looked out into the empty rose garden, then turned belligerently to Mother. She looked him straight in the eye and slowly shook her head. He exploded! I thought he was going to hit her—but she didn't flinch. She just turned her back on him and beckoned him to follow her.

He ranted and roared as she kept steadily walking to the front door and out to the red entry gates. She threw them open and flung her arms wide, pointing down the street as she completed the gesture. She didn't need to speak Japanese; it was obvious she was telling him the dogs had gone.

He shook his fist in her face, and shouting to his two men, jumped into the command car. As the driver peeled out from the curb, we noticed two empty dog pens in the back, their doors banging open and shut with every jolt of the command car.

"Why didn't he search the house?" I asked, bewildered.

"Japanese never keep animals in their homes," Mother said. "The fact that ours were in the rose garden when he first came made him believe we didn't allow them in either. I guess he never thought of searching for them..." she ended lamely.

"He wouldn't have found them even if he had," Margo said sadly. "We could have hidden them all along, and then left them with friends while we were away," I said disgustedly.

"No, Bobby, it wouldn't have worked—you know that. They would have starved to death, even if we could've found someone to take them."

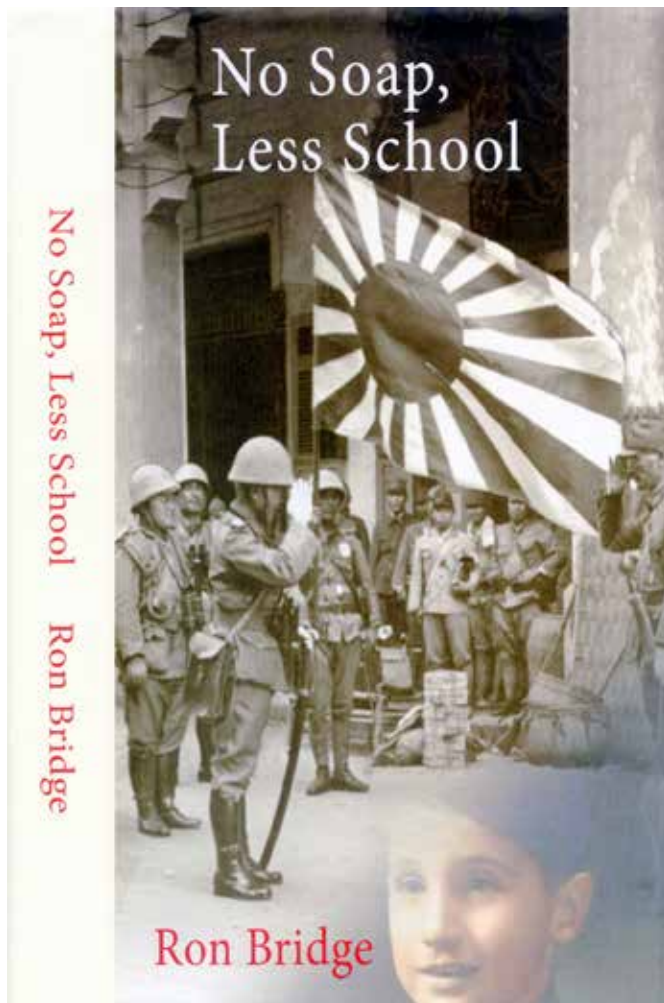
She was right. For a moment, I'd forgotten their fierce loyalty to our family.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p-FrontCover.htm> <http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/>

by Ron Bridge

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/index.htm>



The front of the hotel had a Japanese machine gun pointing towards it. I rushed to my room door and looked down the corridor: there was a Japanese soldier with a rifle and he waved me to go back to my room. I went back in and sat on the bed, terrified. Had they taken Mum? Had they taken the baby? What was going to happen to me? I was left alone in my room for what seemed like hours. Nobody came near me and I was hungry and a little frightened, so I hid beneath the bed, just in case!

Then the door opened and I heard Mum's voice; she sounded as scared as I was. 'Ronald, Ronald where are you?' I got up from under the bed as she came into the room to tell me that I would not be going to school. She went on to say that she did not know what was happening, but had ordered the cook to make breakfast and serve it in their bedroom. This last seemed a very good idea to me, because I had foreseen my morning porridge going down the pan and the threat of hunger for the rest of the day lingered.

'What about Dad?' I asked as we walked along the corridor.

'He has been arrested and taken away by four Japanese soldiers, to be questioned,' she told me. 'I am sure he will be back soon.' In the event he was held for a week by the

Chapter 4 [excerpts]

the Second World War Comes to North China

The British decided to publish a list of priorities for eligibility for sea passages in the event of a sudden need to evacuate. This caused ill feeling amongst the British community. Some men married to Chinese started selling their 'seniority' on the list. Others said they did not want to go. Others said that they merited being on the 'Diplomatic' list. The haggling stopped on the 8th December 1941, a Monday morning when the Concession woke up to find the Japanese Army in complete control, and the Consul-General froze the list.



After Pearl Harbor and before Weih sien ...

Japanese Military Police in the Masonic Hall on Race Course Road.

By this time we were in her room, where Roger was in his cot gurgling. He was two months old to the day. I kept asking questions, including the fact that I had not seen Funainai about.

‘Most of the servants have been sent away,’ Mum said. ‘Funainai has gone to her relatives’ house.’

‘But she didn’t say goodbye,’ I wailed. Life without Funainai would be awful, as she was like another indulgent aunt. I had momentarily forgotten that I now had to share her with Baby Roger.

‘She had to go at once. The Japanese soldiers sent her off with the others. They left only the cook to do breakfast,’ Mum explained. ‘Maybe they will let her back later.’ Mum was trying to cheer me up and she succeeded. Especially when she announced that the Grammar School had closed until further notice.

Later in the day we found that my grandfather, ‘Bert’ Fleet, had been taken from his house in Meadows Road at breakfast and was also in the cells. Granny Fleet had been left on her own.

It was a fait accompli, and resistance would have been impossible. There had been no fewer than 30,000 Japanese soldiers around Tianjin, and the British Municipal Emergency Corps — all of two hundred part-time ‘military’ businessmen — would not have made much impression on the Imperial forces in a battle. To avoid a needless slaughter, the Corps were voluntarily disarmed, and the Rising Sun — or ‘Poached Egg’ — took control. All adult male Britons were rounded up and after a night in the cells in the Gordon Hall they were now incarcerated in the Masonic Hall on Race Course Road, where they would remain for up to four months.

By March 1942 most of the adult English males had been allowed home to their wives; very few of them were of military age, as those in that category had already left to join the British Army in the summer of 1941, to serve in Europe or the Middle East, although events meant that they virtually all ended up in Burma. Dad, being a businessman with no technical qualifications, and therefore not considered a potential saboteur, was released; he then tried to carry on the business by

selling the goods that the company still had in its warehouses. The Chinese staff still required paying, and I detected that finance was tight. Those who remained in Japanese detention tended to be engineers by profession, and so considered capable of sabotaging facilities, and thus posing a potential threat to Nippon.

Initially, house arrest was the order of the day and we were confined to the house after dark. But by April 1942 the Japanese had decreed that we were to keep Tokyo time, which meant advancing clocks by two hours, and they had also issued obligatory red armbands with the character ‘ying’, which was the nearest they could get to ‘English’,³⁹ and formal curfew hours were established. Ironically, the Japanese did not understand Chinese customs or traditions; red was the colour of celebration for the Chinese, and ‘ying’ also meant ‘victorious’ or ‘winner’.

Dad came home one day and told Mum about the armbands. The both laughed as they knew what the translation meant. ‘Trust them to make a mistake like that, but, we can all go round proudly wearing them now.’

‘I could remember Grandpa Bridge had told me that in Chinese the word Ying meant conquering race,’ I put in. ‘But, everybody says that Japan is winning.’

‘They are not winning the propaganda war,’ Dad replied. They probably didn’t realise it.’

‘Stop telling Ronald things like that,’ Mum interrupted. He might repeat them unwittingly to someone else.’

Dad slapped me on the back. ‘Just remember that we must still wear the armbands whenever we go out. Roger has one that can be pinned to his bib. It tells the world that we are English.’ The Americans could also have a laugh. Their red armbands had the character ‘Mei’, which was the nearest the Japanese could get to ‘America’. ‘Mei’ meant ‘beautiful’ or ‘good’. The word ‘country’ in Chinese was ‘Guo’, which was nearly always added when talking.

I, as an eight-year-old, was not considered a threat by the Japanese: no minder or police escort for me. Consequently I often visited my maternal grandmother in her house on Meadows Road. Her husband was kept in the Masonic Hall Detention Centre until the end of March 1942 ‘under guard’,

although she was able to get small food parcels to him in January and February 1942. Grandpa Fleet was released after just under four months due to age and infirmity. (He had suffered a hernia after being pushed over by a Japanese soldier in December 1941.) After a couple of months, Funainai was allowed back to be Roger's amah, and to look after my clothes, but it was never the same for me. A chapter of my young life was over and I had been propelled a long way, and fast, into early adulthood.

We were allowed to visit my Uncle Alwyne Ogden, the British Consul-General, only on rare occasions. He, his wife Jessie (née Bridge, Dad's elder sister), their daughter Anne and son Brian were virtually locked up in the Consul-General's House at 1 Race Course Road.⁴⁰ The sentry on their gate ensured that they kept to their curfew hours, which were more stringent than ours. It was always nice to visit my cousins, as they had bicycles and I could ride round the garden. The Ogdens had been allowed to keep their servants because the Japanese seemed to respect diplomatic niceties.

Mum and I were able to visit my paternal Grandmother, who was seventy-five and frail. She had moved in with Freda (née Bridge, Dad's eldest sister) on Parks Road near the Union Church with her husband, my uncle by marriage Tullis Lewis. He was temporarily held in the Masonic Hall by the Japanese Army; he was an engineer and part-time Fire Brigade Chief. (He only turned out if there was a big fire.) That absence caused endless worry to his wife and mother-in-law. Mum during her visits always got dragged into that conversation, which allowed me to sneak up to Uncle Tullis's train room and play.

Dad's two RCA Victor Radios, his Ford V8 and the Rover car were confiscated, although he was given a receipt that they would be returned at the cessation of the conflict. (As an aside, I sent copies off to the Japanese Ambassador in London in the year 2000. To be told that Emperor Akihito was now on the throne and the Japanese Government did not accept the validity of the signature of one of Former Emperor Hirohito's officers!) One of the radios was later returned with the short-wave capability removed, and then confiscated again in March 1943, never to be seen again.

The British Tianjin Grammar School was requisitioned, along with all the other British

municipal buildings. The older grammar school pupils were all told in January 1942 that they could call at the school to collect their books. The Japanese Military Authorities had given permission, and on Saturday us children assembled in the school. The school hall was packed and Mr Woodall the Headmaster came in and sent us all to the classrooms to collect our books. As soon as a form got into its room the door was locked. The teachers helped as they spent the next couple of hours filling in forms, and waiting for the Japanese to let them go. The Headmaster then ushered us all out into the playground where the officer in charge was going to address us. A red carpet was laid out to the side entrance ready for his arrival.

However, his adjutant decided that this was not impressive enough and the red carpet was wheeled round to the main entrance.

Mr Woodall got in a quick but very loud word to the assembled children. 'Be very serious. Do not laugh,' knowing how the Japanese hated any, even imagined, ridicule at their expense.

Through the interpreter the Major began, but the interpreter seemed to be stuck on a few words which were repeated over and over. 'Very sorry we must take school from you. We do not want to take school but Military Orders say we must. Very sorry but Military Orders must be obeyed. You continue your education somewhere else. Very sorry.'

My books came home with me in the rickshaw.

My parents did not have much time to teach me anything, Dad was constantly being summoned to the Japanese Headquarters. The trouble seemed to be that one of Dad's companies, Hotung Land, had a contract to look after the buildings of the former British Army Barracks. I overheard my parents' conversation and realised the issue: the Japanese were convinced that Dad had the keys to the safes in the barracks. I never found out whether the Japanese thought that the safes contained arms, bullion or just money. Anyhow, by the end of 1942 the Japanese were very frustrated and used explosives, to find that indeed the safes lay empty.

I did get stuck into my algebra and geography books. Mum was finding it very hard without servants to look after a baby and a near-disobedient boy — me — under the prevailing

conditions. I had to obey the rules of the curfew and stay in after dark. I was fortunate in that I had the run of the hotel, but there was really very little to do, but still I did not have to get up early because there was no school to go to.

After a few weeks boredom set in, and then, after a lot of haggling with the Military Authorities, there was an attempt made to educate the British and American children by establishing a school at a large private house in the British Concession, occupied by Wilfred Pryor, the Acting Chief Manager of the Kailan Mining Administration and his family. His daughter Gillian was a little older than I, and his youngest daughter Shirley two years my junior.

The Pryors' drawing room was transformed into a classroom, allocated to Form Three, and seventeen of us trooped in every morning. The floor was beautiful wood-block parquet and impressed me. All the furniture had been moved out, chairs and a large blackboard replacing them. My seat was close to the French window overlooking the garden, and I spent many hours, particularly during French or English Literature, working out what the Pryors grew in their garden. I noted with approval that there was evidence that they used straw to cover up their grape vines, climbing roses and clematis. I could still remember Grandfather Bridge's exhortation that to grow European plants in the harsh North China climate one needed to wrap the plants with straw and lay them on the ground⁴¹ during the winter months.

School continued each Monday to Friday from just after nine to five. Three lessons in the morning, and two plus games in the afternoon. The garden was not big enough for teams; use of the Minyuan Ground was negotiated as it was not far. But using different houses meant that teachers had to cycle or use a rickshaw between the various classes. It was considered safe or more controllable for the adult teacher to move than the children. Thus games were back on the timetable.

Fraternisation continued erratically with French friends, who had all declared themselves Petain supporters, and thus allies of Japan and hence outside Japan's regulations. Other European nationals surreptitiously tried to help. Social ties with Germans and of course the Japanese were cut completely.

Whilst I was in the hotel, the lack of guests

meant that I had all the corridors to myself. Mum, concentrating on Roger and finding washing clothes by hand a real chore, could afford me little time and hence supervision had evaporated, allowing me to run riot. I took to watching the Japanese sentries on the back yard of the hotel and on the front. The latter were relatively friendly and even on occasions offered sweets. The back overlooking the Bund was quite different. They had a machine gun in a sandbag emplacement. I tried to get near to see if it was loaded on a number of occasions, but that always woke the soldier up and he shouted and waved his arms. I realised that it was a step too far, and scarpered in terror.

The Chinese and Sikh constables of the former British Municipal Police continued with their duties under Japanese officers, as did the Russian Sergeants. Some categories within the population, although technically British, were free of any restrictions and did not have to wear armbands: those British citizens not considered European enough, women married to Japanese or their allies, Chinese wives of Maritime Customs officers, and their children under five. Maritime Customs officers themselves were treated like the rest of us. In July 1942 diplomatic and selected people were notified they would be exchanged, but would have to travel to Shanghai first.

The British diplomats, who included Uncle Alwyne and family as well as others, were augmented on the 'exchange' by adults who could wangle their way onto the passenger list. They were all taken to Shanghai in early August and on 16th August 1942 they sailed from Shanghai on the Kamakura Maru, known by then as the Wangle Maru, to Lourenço Marques.⁴² This was in Mozambique, a Portuguese colony, hence neutral, where the actual exchange for a similar number of Japanese citizens took place on the Swedish SS Gripsholm.

In early September I learnt that the Pryors' house had been requisitioned, so now school was 'off for all those under ten. Grandpa Fleet was back with his wife in their Meadows Road house, where they stayed for the next six months or so. I used to go virtually daily in roughly school hours to be taught by Grandpa Fleet, mainly mathematics, history and geography. As no names for streets in Tianjin were allowed by the Japanese, his house, which had been 143 Meadows Road, was now

House 143 Road Number 20.

It was three-quarters of a mile from where we lived in the Court Hotel and I only had three roads to cross to get there; cars were few and most goods were carried in human-pulled carts. Mum was tied up with the baby and, because of the performance of getting him into a pram, I said to Mum that I could walk to Grandpa's on my own. I enjoyed the freedom to be by myself. My grandparents' house was spacious, with Grandpa's study at ground level off the garden; he had a weakness for growing flowers, especially poinsettias and hollyhocks. I used to think it strange — the short and the tall — but they were rarely out together. The floor above had the bedrooms, and I used to use the small room above the entrance if I stayed a night.

Dad had done business with a certain Russian-Swiss Company, Bryners, that specialised in shipping and forwarding. He was apprehensive as to how things were going to work out so decided safeguards were necessary, and as a precaution contacted them. Mr Bryner⁴³ allowed the Bridge family silver, linen and upright piano (which had been buried during the Boxer trouble in 1900) and valuable furniture to be stored in wooden packing cases under at least 40 tons of coal, and there it stayed for the duration of hostilities, in the Bryner warehouses or godowns. The amount of coal went up and down but the boxes were never exposed. Mum was dismayed when it was collected in 1945, as the linen was black, but she recovered it and it washed up well. Some is still in use as I write seventy-odd years later.

The apprehension about possessions rubbed off on me, for whilst I knew that my toy soldiers were portable, the same could not be said of my train sets. I had been told some days before that Aunt Freda and her husband were staying in Tianjin, and not going to camp, because old Granny Bridge was excused internment and they were being allowed to stay behind as her custodians.

When going in and out of my parents' bedroom I noticed Dad's Browning 0.32 on top of the wardrobe. I think he had forgotten where it was; I realised that it might be, to the Japanese, 'big trouble', so I smuggled it into the train room while packing up the train, wrapped it in an oily cloth and stuffed it behind loose bricks and carefully screwed the train table back. I was only

just in time at packing up the train and deliberately forgot anything about the revolver.

The Japanese Army then deemed it necessary to implement a new policy: the concentration of Allied civilians from isolated premises into one place, especially if they were living in places where they might 'spy' on troop or ship movements. People who owned their own property were sometimes able to stay in it. But our flat at the back of the Court Hotel overlooked the Bund, and was considered a strategic location by the Japanese Military. They feared that we might count ship and troop movements. So we were given a few days' notice before being forcibly relocated.

Whilst the armband curfew regulations remained in force, the venue chosen for the Bridge family, and those Britons whose houses the Japanese Army had requisitioned, was the Talati House Hotel, owned and run by a British-Indian family, the Dhunjishahs. This was effectively requisitioned and filled with Allied citizens in September 1942, although the enforced 'guests' were invited by Japan to pay for their own food and accommodation. I, my parents and brother exchanged the luxury of our 'company' flat for the cramped quarters of two small single hotel rooms. Sadly, Funainai had to be paid off as a result of the move to Talati House. We had become accustomed to the almost daily changes and upheavals. The new rooms were much the same distance from Granny and Grandpa's house, in which they were allowed to stay. So, my erratic teaching by a 65-year-old pensioner could continue.

Christmas 1942 came somewhat muted: few presents could be exchanged, church services allowed only by daylight. Mum was always strained and almost short-tempered. I managed to get out of her much of the reason why. When the Japanese had taken over on 8th December 1941 she had been carrying my brother, then two months old. She was being ushered rather fast along a corridor and stairs with the usual 'Speedo' cry when she tripped and fell. The shouts reached a crescendo and the soldier, thinking she had deliberately tried to delay matters, hit her with the butt of his rifle, right across her kidneys. I think Roger had sensed that something was wrong and tended to cry more, possibly thinking that he could summon help. Mum had then got to my room, but felt that there was no need for me to know.

When rumours first began circulating within the city that the American and British civilians would soon be shipped out, nobody really believed it. I just hoped that we would be able to move to my grandparents' house; that was not on the agenda though. My ninth birthday came and went completely uncelebrated, and then on March 12th 1943 each adult Briton received a letter from O. Joerg, Consul for Switzerland,⁴⁴ in charge of British, American and Dutch interests, enclosing a copy of the letter that he had received from the Japanese Consul-General.⁴⁵ Internship in a Japanese camp was now the order of the day.

Readers will note that the Japanese and Swiss Consular authorities, in communicating with each other, did not use the then language of diplomacy, French, but rather a style of written English familiar to Whitehall's Civil Service and the British Military Staff Colleges; indeed, the precepts of Victoria's British educationalists had percolated to every strata of almost every nation's endeavour in the Far East. Britain had been around for a long time and had intended to run things the British way. The 'loss of face' with the fall of Hong Kong and then of Singapore had made a huge dent in Britain's standing in the Far East, and knowing the thought processes of Eastern cultures it would probably never recover.

The instructions attached to the Swiss letter allowed each prospective internee to ship a case, a single bed and a few books, plus one sewing machine per 100 prospective inmates. These to be ready for an inspection by the Kempetai one week before the individual's departure, when the Japanese Army conducted a very thorough and ransacking search, which ensured that the cases were no longer able to be secured properly and so the contents were largely pilfered on the later journey. All other possessions were to be locked away and the Kempetai would place seals on the locks, where things would be left untouched until the war finished, no sooner uttered than realised to be a hollow promise. Houses and flats were to have a detailed inventory made of all contents and the keys lodged with the Japanese Army for safekeeping. There was no need to include cars or radios as separate receipts had already been given when they were confiscated.

Imperial Japanese Consulate

11th March 1943

Dear Colleague,

I have the honour to inform you that owing to military requirements enemy nationals residing in Tientsin who are American, British, Dutch and Belgian citizens are ordered to leave for Weih sien, Shandong Province to reside in an assembly.

The party is scheduled to proceed to Weih sien in three groups, the first leaving on the 23rd, the second group on the 28th and the third group on the 30th instant. (March 1943.)

I should be much obliged if you will kindly inform those enemy nationals under your charge to this effect. Instructing them that they should prepare for the assembly in conformity with the instructions attached herewith.

I have the honour to be,

Sir and dear colleague,

Your obedient servant

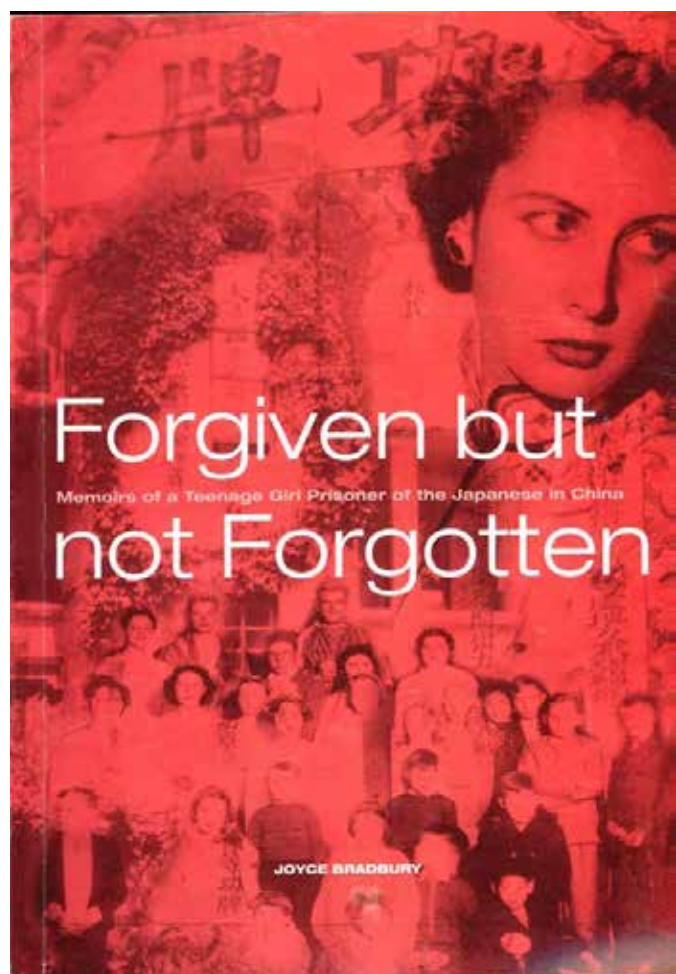
Tomotsune Ohta

My Grandparents, Bert and Elizabeth Fleet, told us that they were scheduled for the 23rd March departure. Whilst Mum, Dad, Roger and I were on the 30th March; my paternal grandmother, Minnie Bridge, could stay behind with her eldest daughter Freda and Freda's husband, Tullis, both of whom, as I had already found out, were excused camp to look after her in their house. There was then frantic activity to catalogue inventories of house contents (although in our case that had been done when we were turfed out of our flat in the Court Hotel), buy suitcases, pack trunks and crate beds. This 'deep sea' baggage was to arrive at Weih sien in early April. Those that had not been relocated were told to inventory their houses and leave the lists and the keys with the Kempetai.

Destination

Weih sien

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)



... after Pearl Harbor and before “Weihsien” ...

Chapter 4

The Japanese change my life

I remember the morning in 1938 when my father and I heard a lot of aeroplanes in the distance. We looked towards the Chinese village which was a few miles from our house and I could see objects dropping from the planes. I realised

they were bombs when I heard explosions.

I did not see the damage but within an hour we saw a flood of people from the villages rushing past our house with little bundles of whatever they could gather and heading for the hills to escape. The bombing only lasted a few minutes and did not affect us at all.

The next thing I remember was an influx of Japanese soldiers [17] armed with rifles. The officers wore swords. There were military vehicles, bicycles and motor cycles but I do not remember any tanks. I did not see any fighting. The Japanese did not interfere with the British or other Europeans in any way at that time as their war was only with China. The soldiers were followed eventually by many Japanese civilians from Japan and other parts of China who set up homes and shops mainly in the Japanese trading concession area.

For the next few years our pleasant lives went on as before but now it was under Japanese military government. Then, one day I remember hearing the newsreader, Carol Alcott, broadcasting from Shanghai Radio, which was repeated into the Tsingtao area by a local transmitter. He said: “Ladies and gentlemen, Pearl Harbor has just been bombed by the Japanese. He then said: “Stay calm and stay at home” or, “indoors.” That’s about it.

Within an hour of that broadcast, Japanese officers wearing swords and soldiers with rifles knocked on our front door. The soldiers hammered wooden boards on our front door bearing Japanese characters that said ‘British enemy’. The Japanese said to us: “You are all under house arrest. How many people live here? How many males? How

17

The Japanese reasons for the invasion of China are complex. In the 1930s, militarist factions gained control of the Japanese Government. In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria where there were extensive Japanese interests plus mineral

and farming resources desired by Japan. Subsequently, a considerable number of Japanese were settled there. In 1937, Japan began its invasion of northern China on the grounds it was protecting its economic interests and the Japanese citizens who had settled there. Their invasion was helped by the weakness

of the Chinese Nationalist Army which was no match for the Japanese forces. In 1938, the Japanese took Tsingtao because of its strategic significance to the Japanese. It provided a good port for Japanese shipping and access to well-developed rail infrastructure.

many females?" My mother said: "My husband, me, my daughter and son." A Japanese asked: "Where's the daughter?" — my mother said as she pointed to me: "This is my daughter."

Because I was recovering from typhoid fever my head had been shaven and I was in an emaciated state and wearing slacks to hide my skinny legs, the Japanese officer would not believe I was a girl. I do not know how she did it but eventually mother convinced the Japanese I was a girl. The officer then gave us a hand-made armband each bearing the letter 'B' denoting British and some Japanese characters. He ordered us to wear them at all times.

Because they were so quick in producing the armbands, I think the armbands must have been prepared before Pearl Harbor was bombed. I still have mine [18]. The Japanese then placed us under house arrest and said we could be absent from our house only between 9 a.m. and midday each day to go shopping. In other words, we had to observe a curfew.

During the first time the Japanese came to our home, one of the Japanese officers who my father later told us was Korean, accused him of working for the British secret service. He asked my father: "What do you know about the Japanese Navy?" My father answered: "Nothing." The officer then changed the subject for a while pointing to our dog and then at some ornament in the room saying: "That's nice." He did this several times and then he again said: "What do you know about the Japanese Navy?" and received the same negative reply.

While the officer continued to interrogate my father, my mother and I went into the kitchen where, with Chang's help, we burned in the stove some photographs of Japanese ships in Tsingtao harbour that my father had taken. They were in a large envelope ready to be given to the British Consul. The Japanese did not find out what we did.

We often wondered why they suspected my father. For about a week, the same Korean regularly came to our house and questioned my father, asking: "What do you know about the Japanese Navy?" Each time, he received the same reply. Father was taken away for interrogation

several times by the Japanese. My mother kept a small bag of clothing and other articles for him to take with him in case he was kept for an extended period. He always came home at the end of each day.

I found out later from my friends that the Japanese put notices on the doors of all the British, American, Dutch and Armenian homes identifying them by their nationality and as enemy. The notices were all placed within hours of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Japanese were obviously well-prepared for the coming conflict. We lived under the curfew which was rigidly enforced. We did not have to go to school and Pop could not go to work.

Some time before the Pearl Harbor attack a local dentist had made braces to straighten my teeth. My mother had given him some gold to use for the purpose. While we were in the curfew period of periodic detention, my mother took me back to the dentist to have the braces removed because we did not know whether we would have access to a dentist in the future. To our surprise the dentist was gone so we went to Dr Lustig, another dentist. When he removed the braces he found they were made of brass and not gold. Our original dentist had kept the gold and substituted a cheap metal. Mum went looking for him but we never saw him again. Lucky for him.

After a few weeks, some Japanese officers came to our home and said: "We're going to put you into a civil assembly centre." That was our first full-time camp. They imprisoned us in the hotel just behind our house named the Iltis Hydro. It was a large hotel and there were about 500 internees with us. We stayed there until shortly after Christmas 1941. My family was accommodated together in one room. The food was reasonable and we were looked after by the regular hotel staff who were kept on by the Japanese.

At the Iltis Hydro hotel we were guarded by Japanese soldiers with rifles. They always carried rifles. To convince us to obey their rules, they grabbed a little Chinese beggar boy who had been scratching around for pieces of coke for his fire. The soldiers put a dog collar around his neck with a long chain, stuffed his mouth with orange peel and fastened the boy to a tree. They then undertook

18 Japanese internee armband given by Japanese Army to Joyce Cooke to wear, December 1941. Bradbury family collection.

a Japanese martial arts exercise called 'kendo'. The guards used long bamboo kendo swords and beat the boy. The Japanese said to us: "If you misbehave, you'll get the same treatment." I vividly remember the poor little boy's eyes streaming with tears. It was sad but we could do nothing about it.

Another unhappy incident occurred when the Japanese brought one of the Chinese servants into the dining room while we were having breakfast. They put a kettle of boiling water on a chair and made him lift the chair up and hold it above his head. We all knew that if the chair moved, or if he moved it the wrong way the boiling water would scald him. Again we were told: "If you misbehave, this will happen to you."

On another occasion in the hotel, the Japanese took away one of our Armenian friends named Armic Balianz [19]. They thought he was a spy because he spoke a number of languages including fluent Japanese. He was in his 20s at the time. The soldiers took him for the whole day and they brought him back terribly injured. My mother said to me: "Don't look, don't look." Everybody who saw him was 'oohing' and 'aahing' because of the blood. I didn't look because my mother said: "Go inside, go inside." My mother later told me that the Japanese had beaten him with bamboo rods and he was in a terrible mess with blood and bruises all over him. Afterwards his wife, Tsolik, asked mum for cushions to put under Armic to ease his pain. Mum gave her the cushions and mum also helped Tsolik nurse Armic back to recovery from his bashing.

With my husband Bob, I had dinner with Armic's wife and Armic's daughter Jeannette in San Francisco some years ago. They retold the story about Armic first being beaten for no reason.

He now lives in the US and still suffers badly

from his injuries because over the period of his internment he suffered three savage beatings by the Japanese. Armic was a pleasant young man. Before the war he helped his parents in their Vienna cafe in Tsingtao which also was a bakery and confectionary shop. Armic's grand daughter is Melissa Etheridge, the world famous singer and songwriter. Melissa's mother, Jeannette Etheridge – who was a very young fellow wartime internee with me – owns the famous San Francisco Tosca Cafe, which is well-known for its show business patrons.

During the hotel internment, I was one of a group of children who put on a Christmas concert for internees. The girls dressed as angels.

Early in 1942, Japanese officers told us: "You will be given one hour to go home and collect whatever you want to collect. We are going to put you into another civil assembly camp. You have got only one hour to get ready." They did not tell us where we were going or for how long. Fortunately for my family we only had to climb a fence and we were back home so that saved time, but the dilemma facing the family was: what to take? My mother solved the problem by telling us to place four bed sheets on the floor and to pile whatever came into our minds – clothing, bits and pieces. Looking back it's funny to know what strange things people pack when they have got only an hour to do so. Mum wanted all her jewellery and my father said: "It's no use taking your jewellery. It might get confiscated, so leave it behind."

Then, he had a bright idea. At home, we had built-in cupboards. Pop put the jewellery into little cloth bags, placed the bags under the floorboards in the built-in cupboards and then nailed back the floorboards. We just left the jewellery there for the duration of the war.

We packed clothing and a few blankets. The Japanese said we could take our beds because where we were going we would need furniture. My parents took their double bed and two camp stretchers. We took toothbrushes, towels, linen and my father took as much money as he had. I don't know how much.

I had a large elaborate doll house and a number of beautiful dolls which my uncle André said he would look after for us. Uncle André (mother's brother) had Russian nationality and was not interned. It was a large collection of dolls which I had collected and carefully kept. Years afterwards, we found André sold them because he thought we would be shot and never come back. André also undertook to look after our cocker spaniel dog, Sally. Somehow, a German couple obtained her and renamed her Mutze. We got her back after the war but we didn't have the heart to change her name again so we left it as Mutze. She later died while having puppies.

During our time as prisoners at the hotel, our home was not looted because our servants remained there. They probably thought we would be back because the Japanese had said we were only going to be sent away for a short time. We strongly felt the second time we left home that we were leaving home for a long time.

After we packed, a couple of trucks came and took us together with our furniture to the main Tsingtao railway station where we were placed on a train. On the train, we sat on tatami straw mats. The train took several hours to get to a place called Wei-Hsien (pronounced wee-siang). It is now known as Weifang and it is a major rail junction town in Shantung province. From the railway station we went to our new camp.

The new camp was formerly an American Presbyterian missionary training centre. Its

buildings included a well-built church, a hospital, dormitories and two-storey houses surrounded by a brick wall on which there was barbed and, later, electrified wire. There were machine-gun posts at intervals on the walls. On arrival we were allotted rooms. In our case we were given one room sized about 3 metres by 4 metres for my parents, young brother and myself. Upstairs were the de Zutter family from Tsingtao. Unaccompanied single persons were put into same-sex dormitories.

Wei-Hsien is a hot-and-cold place. It has snow in the winter and can be boiling hot in the summer. It is inland and about 120 kilometres west of Tsingtao. Outside the camp, there was farm land on which there were market gardens. Because for three-and-a-half years we did not leave the camp, I cannot describe what the farmers did and what the nearby town area was like.

When we arrived, the camp [20] was in very bad condition because it had not been used for some years. It had earlier been looted by Chinese bandits or Communist forces before the Japanese Army took control of it. The camp's toilets were all blocked or inoperable. There was rubble everywhere.

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/p_FrontCover.htm

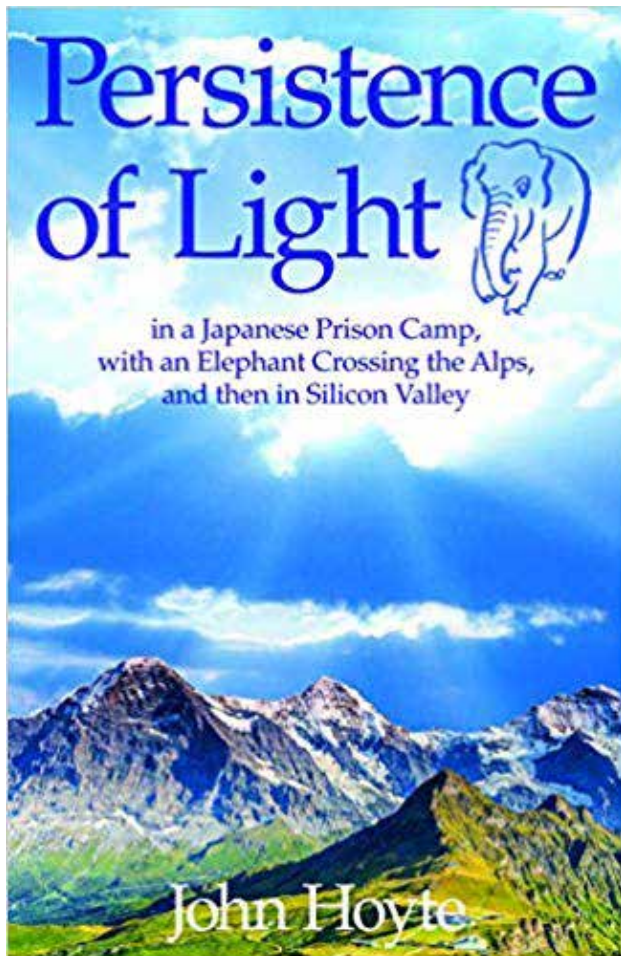
20

It was quickly claimed soon after our arrival that the US novelist Pearl Buck (The Good Earth, interalia) and US publisher Henry Luce (Time, Life, Fortune) were born in the Wei-Hsien training centre. Buck (nee Sydenstricker) was born 1892 in West Virginia USA and Luce was born 1892 in Tengchow, Shantung province. Both sets of parents

were American missionaries who served in China. Buck's first husband, John Buck, who she divorced in 1934, was also a missionary in China. Consequently it is possible the parents of Buck, Luce, or Buck's first husband may have used the Wei-Hsien facility. The assertions that Buck (1892-1973) and Luce (1892-1967) were born there are not correct.

by John Hoyte

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)



... after Pearl Harbor and before “Weihsien” ...

[excerpts ...]

... “With six children at the school, our parents had asked the mission leaders if they could remain at Chefoo, but Dad was badly needed to be superintendent of the hospital at Lanchow. Looking back, how we wished that he had said “no” and insisted on either staying at Chefoo or, if that did not work out for the mission, taking us all back to England for our education. Hindsight is easy, but at the time, missionaries seldom questioned the decisions of their mission board. Also, little did we know of the coming attack on **Pearl Harbor**, and there were certainly expectations that we would be together for another Chefoo holiday in the foreseeable future. Our mother hated to show us children how much she felt the parting. She did not want to add to our distress, so spoke brightly of the

holidays we would have together in the future. Yet as she left Elizabeth, her youngest, she completely broke down in the headmistress’s room after saying goodbye. It took great courage to compose herself and face the future.

So it was that we were orphaned for five years, for instead of seeing Mom and Dad the next summer as anticipated, we faced a Japanese internment camp. My brother Rupert later wrote about his sadness when told that we would be taking up boarding again at school. The devotion that our parents had to their missionary calling had always seemed to him so totally genuine and of overriding importance that he thought he could honestly say he never really resented it. In this, he considered himself most fortunate, knowing that many children of missionaries have continued through life with much resentment. That was Rupert’s response.

However, each of us six responded differently, and we have all had to struggle over the separation—a full five years from our father and forever from our mother, or at least for this lifetime.

I was still at the prep school and felt particularly lonely and sad that first Christmas after Mom and Dad left. The teachers did their best to comfort Elizabeth and me, but we needed the family comfort that no boarding school could supply. Our siblings were separated from us in the upper grades, and the boys’ and girls’ schools were in different buildings. One huge encouragement for me was that Miss Stark, who taught art and literature, praised my drawing abilities and encouraged me to draw and color a Christmas card for my parents. Her enthusiasm was infectious. I suddenly experienced a new sense of self-worth in spite of the loss of Mom and Dad and our close-knit family unit. This made a huge difference to me at this crucial time in my life.

Most of my experiences in the prep school were with other boys and girls my age, and I do not recall spending time with my older brothers and sister. This was one of the problems of boarding school life. Siblings tended to be separated by

grade and so lose family cohesion.

We used to explore the hills behind Chefoo, and at one point, three of us found a low, narrow tunnel in the foothills. Smaller friends managed to get through, but I became stuck at a very narrow point and panicked. The experience of lying there in complete darkness unable to move forward or backward was terrifying. Praying calmed me down, and inch by inch I worked my way backward and out again with just a few scratches. The experience fits so well into my theme of light and its corollary darkness. The dark, coupled with total immobility, became synonymous, a kind of paralysis. That fit my mental state.

There were times when we prelates were quite rebellious, and once, a group of us sat in the school's central courtyard refusing to move or obey any of our teachers' requests. I do not recall what the outward reason for the revolt was, and on the whole, the teachers were loving and patient with us. But they were not our parents, and so for all this time, we had a deep ache inside. Now I understand it as a sign of the shades of darkness and separation we all were experiencing.

THE STORM STRIKES

Forget your perfect offering.

There is a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in.

—Leonard Cohen

It was December of 1941, and I was walking along the beach with some friends. Out to sea a huge storm was gathering with dark and sinister clouds. A stiff salt wind was springing up, and I suddenly felt chilled. The storm was moving quickly in our direction, and we began to look for cover. An older boy ran up to us shouting:

"Have you heard? The Japs have attacked the American fleet at Pearl Harbor, and we are at war with Japan."

How does a nine-year-old boy react to such news? I immediately connected it with the storm at sea and felt a simultaneous sensation of dread and excitement. A huge storm was coming, and we would be caught up in it. I felt dread at what the Japanese might do to us and excitement at the

possibility of adventure in this new, unpredictable world. Danger thrummed through my being as my friends and I scurried for cover.

A few days later, we had another surprise. Along the main road into town came several hundred Japanese cavalry in double file. At first, we just heard the clip-clop of hooves, and then turned wide-eyed to the improbable scene.

It was vivid: The harnesses jingled, horses whinnied, the smell of horse manure wafted on the air. The leader shouted strange commands in Japanese, and each rider wore a long curved sword.

It seemed like a war movie projecting me back into World War I. But it was real. I now realized that indeed, we were enemy aliens. The United States and Britain both had declared war on Japan, and life under Japanese control would be quite different from now on. Our headmaster Mr. Bruce, was taken into custody for a month, and our ability to travel out of the mission compound was restricted. We had to wear armbands wherever we went. The teachers began to prepare us for the tough time ahead. At that moment, I wished Morn and Dad were not so far away but right here with us at Chefoo. I was an orphan placed twice into jeopardy. It was dark. The storm had hit.

TEMPLE HILL INTERNMENT

Eventually, the Japanese military took over the whole school compound, and the two hundred students and teachers were forced to move to Temple Hill on the other side of town, into three houses built to each house a family of six. We managed to squeeze into them and every square inch was precious. After we had been marched out of our old school buildings and had a chance to look around, it was discovered that all the light bulbs had been stolen from our new confinement. My oldest brother, Robin, had the presence of mind to somehow sneak back into the school and fill an old suitcase with as many light bulbs as he could find. When the Japanese guard challenged him as he left the compound, he just replied with a nonchalant beerdee dungshee, meaning that he had some things. Amazingly, he was not searched, and we enjoyed the benefits of his courage for many months to come. How proud I was of my big brother! During those sardine months on Temple

Hill, food became very scarce not only in our camp but also in town. The Japanese commandant was a Christian and could give us more food than was available to the townsfolk, including German and Italian missionaries who, of course, were not imprisoned.

This raised an interesting question: How did we as proudly British missionaries and “mishkids” relate to missionaries from enemy countries? I am thankful to say that generally, we treated each other with goodwill and respect. However, I do recall that before Mom and Dad left, a German missionary family living next door repeatedly sang nationalistic German songs. We were duly distressed but kept this to ourselves like good Christians. Our thoughts were not so holy!

Since the walls around our makeshift camp were only six feet high, it would have been easy to escape. But as conditions were worse outside than inside, we naturally didn’t. In fact, the reverse took place. Chinese thieves would climb in and take what they could. This led to my first attempt at writing a brief memoir, complete with sketches of the camp compound and a thief climbing down from a veranda:

THIEVES

There are a number of Chinese people who live in some houses just behind our camp, and they can see very well onto our verandahs. They watched where we kept things, and they knew that on the front and side verandahs, there were rows of boxes. They decided that they would come and steal a lot of things. June 15. In the early morning of Foundation Day the big boys were sleeping in the garden when a thief crept up to our verandah. Costerus heard him and called out, first in English and then in Chinese. Then he sent Theo Bazire to tell Mr. Bazire that there was a thief. Costerus himself went to the kitchen

to get a mop. The thief heard some noises, so he thought he would go down the stairs. But luckily Mr. Bazire was at the bottom, so he went back onto the verandah and climbed down a pillar and ran. The boys saw him and gave chase. The man tripped up and was taken to the boys’ room as a captive. They tied him up and took him to the laundry room. They gave him a mattress and drink. Mr. Bazire sat outside, guarding him in a deck chair, and at 5:30 AM, he went to light the kitchen fire. Before he went, he loosened the man’s hands “to make him feel more comfortable.” Then he left a boy to keep guard on the thief. The thief slipped his hands out of the loops where his wrists were tied and moved a tub to get out of the window. When he was out, he climbed over a wall, so he escaped after all. All the grownups were very relieved for they thought he would be hurt by the Japanese if we handed him over.

Such is the situation when a compassionate missionary captures a thief under an authoritarian dictatorship! I cannot remember if the Japanese commandant was a Christian at this stage or not.

#

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)



... an act of resistance ...



This building was - in 1941 - the Banque Belge pour l'Etranger - Extrême-Orient -

Photo: August 2015

© L. Pander.

... a true story,

by Léopold Pander.

... this is the story – as I remember it – the way our father (Mr. Pander, C.E.O. of the Belgian Bank in Tientsin) told us ... many years after the war.

He came to China from Belgium after World War I — in 1924 as a young banker and started his professional life in Peking.

At barely 30 years old, he was manager of a Bank in Hankow. He was very broad-minded to all the different cultures and customs of the time and became quite competent in the art of compromise and especially, discretion. I remember that when he was much older, retired

... in Belgium, long after having left China, we asked him to write his memoirs. He refused to do so, pretexting that he knew too many secrets.

Let us come back to our story:

In 1941, Dad was the manager of the Belgian Bank in Tientsin and his assistant Manager was Mr. Pétiaux. Both of them were married with two very young children and the two families lived on the upper levels of the bank.

The bank itself was a three storeys massive building built in 1922 (Belgian architect: Mr. Gustave Volkaert). The ground floor and the basement were exclusively reserved to the bank. The first floor held the manager's apartment and the second floor (under the roof) was for the Assistant Manager and their respective families. They lived where they worked.



... the facts:

Tientsin, December 8, 1941
– 7 o'clock in the morning ...

... the two managers were brutally awakened by the coming of Japanese soldiers. The Japs were there to take over the Belgian Bank – they said -- “in the name of their emperor, Hirohito” ...

Quite rapidly, the attack on PEARL HARBOR became known to all, the Japanese being very proud of the success of their surprise action conceived

by Admiral Yamamoto. They proudly divulged the news to impress the Chinese population as well as the foreigners.

The Pacific War was beginning.

Tientsin, December 1941.

France - Germany - Switzerland - Sweden - Italy, keep their privileges as neutral countries or allies of Japan (Axis: Berlin - Rome - Tokyo).

France (with the presidency of *Maréchal Pétain* at its head) will benefit from doubt, during all the hostilities. The Japanese had already infiltrated the northern part of China since 1937.

This was not the case in Shanghai and especially Hong Kong, where resistance occurred. The reprisals were bloody and terrible. To the military fury of the Japanese was added their racial hatred of the whites. The Hong Kong military forces resisted against the Japanese invasion by the way of arms and the Japanese fought back by killing without discrimination. Military as well as civilians – killing and raping.

But prudence and obedience to regulations and defences were, of course, advised.

All “enemies” had to wear a red armband with the black sign indicating their nationality. Prohibition to leave the concession that one lived. Curfew. Obligation to submit to all kinds of vaccines. Passes needed. Requisition of cars, pianos, rugs, refrigerators.

Sentinels were posted at the entrances of all the important buildings, including the banks. All the enemy banks were therefore occupied by the Japanese and their “gold” seized in the name of the Emperor.

On the first day of occupation in the Belgian Bank, when the managers had gone downstairs, not yet fully dressed, the enemy had already invested the Bank, and Japanese soldiers with Arisaka Rifles and bayonets took over the whole building.

The administrators had to comply but adopted a style of hypocritical politeness in regard to their captors.

Rapidly and in the presence of the two managers, all the sensitive parts of the Bank were sealed such as the vault in the basement including the customers' coffers. The Japanese requested all keys to be handed over to them, including all duplicates if any. My father, and the other members of the staff stated that no duplicates existed ... so, none were given. They pretexted that it was a peculiarity of the Belgian Bank and the Japs believed it.

After Pearl Harbor and before Weihsien...

[illegible]

That same night, quite a while after closing time and in the silence of the night, the two managers and the comprador crept down into the basements and thanks to Mr. Wei's skills, cautiously broke the Japanese seals placed earlier in the day and opened the vault with the spare keys they possessed.

A strong tarpaulin was spread on the vault's pavement and the coffer of most of the important customers were unlocked and emptied of their gold ingots. The action went as fast as possible and in silence. The tarpaulin was then dragged out of the vault and the chamber was closed.

The seals retrieved their original state thanks to the comprador's know how.

The tarpaulin was then painfully hauled to the upper floors and the contents hidden all over the place. My father told me that many ingots were hidden in the flush tanks of the toilets ... amongst others!

Dad did not tell me if they were disturbed by Japanese guards so I guess that thanks to the managers' rapid action – promptly after the Japanese takeover – the Japs's organisation was not yet optimum or maybe that the guards, outside, were drowsing at their posts!

The story doesn't finish here

This large amount of gold could not stay in the apartments at the Bank.

Discreetly the owners of the coffer were notified.

When told, they did not believe their ears. Their logical guess was that their possessions were lost and already in the hands of the Japanese

emperor.

Slowly and surely, each client recovered his due.

Of course, considering the exceptional situation, no receipt could be required, a fact well understood by both parties.

Each of our Chinese clients gave his word of honour to confirm after the war that they had received the contents of their coffer. Three years later, none failed.

This is a true story!

Shortly after this incident, we no longer lived at the Bank. The Japs transferred the two families to another location in Tientsin and we lived there, very uncomfortably, under house arrest for the time being.

Mr. Pétiaux was requisitioned by the Japs to work for the Tientsin Tramway Co. Dad had received the same kind of proposal but refused to work for them and thus, his family was herded into a Concentration Camp for the duration of the war.

We lived in Weihsien for two and a half difficult years – 873 days.

Even after the war and a very long time after, Dad always refused to work or make business with or for the Japanese.

#

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/pander/bbe/leopold.htm>



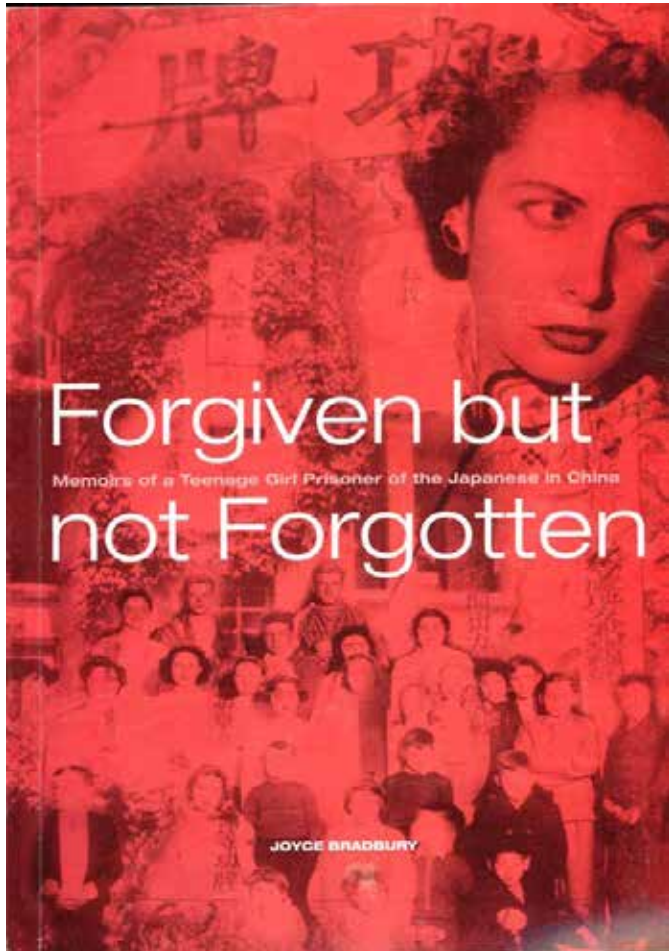
1933-08--Hankow-

Mr. Pander (Sr.) and Mr. Pétiaux.

WEIHSIEN: FIRST IMPRESSIONS ...

by *Joyce Bradbury née Cooke*

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)



Chapter 5 [excerpts]

Teenage prisoner of the Japanese

Our group was the first Japanese internment prisoner batch to arrive in the Wei-Hsien camp and thus we bore the brunt of the camp's initial cleaning up.

As the days went on some 500 Catholic priests, brothers and nuns arrived together with

clergy from a diverse mix of other denominations. About 1500 more civilian internees were also brought to the camp. For the first few weeks we had a big clean-up and committees were formed to set up and staff schools, the hospital, a bakery, a shoe repair shop and kitchens.

No clothing was issued by the Japanese during the next three-and-a-half years. As children grew out of clothing it was swapped at the exchange stall set up specially, which we called the White Elephant Exchange.

Internee arrivals trickled in from many parts of Japanese-occupied China. Many came from Tientsin (now called Tianjin), Peking, Chefoo and Tsingtao. Among the adults were professors, teachers, scientists and doctors. There were tradesmen, including butchers, bakers and carpenters, and ordinary businessmen. There were single men and women and many married couples with and without children.

Most of the prisoners were of British and American nationality. There were Eurasians and Asians from other countries. There were several Chinese prisoners including an American called Mr Chu. He was tall with an attractive part-Chinese wife. The criterion for internment was citizenship of countries with which Japan was at war but the Japanese interned some who were from neutral countries. Besides the British and Americans, the nationalities in the camp on June 30, 1944 [21] included Australians [22], Cubans, Greeks, Belgians, Iranians, South Africans, Canadians, Poles, Portugese, Dutch, Norwegians, New Zealanders, Uruguayans, at least one German who apparently also had American nationality, Filipinos, Palestinians, Panamanians and some Russians. The age range of the internees was wide. The eldest internees in mid-1944 were a missionary couple both aged 86. The youngest internee was a one-month-old infant. Because so

many school-children had been brought to the camp, there was a disproportionate number of children at the time the list was compiled.

Some of the imprisoned Catholic clergy belonged to strict religious orders which meant their lives were lived in monastic silent contemplation under sparse conditions. They were rounded up by the Japanese and brought into the camp. As my family members were already camp inmates we saw their arrival. Some of these monks had long hair and beards which they were forced to remove. I remember some of them being handsome young men when we saw them the next day, clean shaven, hair trimmed, wearing donated shorts and shirts. Many of them gazed about in wonder during their first days in the camp but they soon became friendly with the young girls and boys in the camp, of which there were many.

As we began to settle down the various committees allocated duties to every-body over the age of 14. Doctors and nurses were assigned to hospital duties and caring for the health of people while tradesmen worked in the carpentry and other shops. In general, the women had to peel vegetables and the men worked in the kitchens irrespective of their former callings.

The clergy also worked. They performed kitchen duties, stoked hot water boilers for the showers and pumped water which had to be done 24 hours a day. They also helped with heavy work such as lifting when required. One Catholic priest, Father Schneider, was formerly a shoemaker and he was put in charge of the shoe repair shop. Some of the nuns worked in the kitchen, cleaning vegetables, and also taught in the schools alongside Protestant missionaries. Some nuns nursed and some volunteered for the terrible job of clearing overflowing toilets, which they did with grace and dignity. The nuns wore veils over a stiff

cloth frame called a 'coif' on their heads when they first arrived. After a while, they dispensed with the coifs and just wore a veil pinned to their hair. Many of the Protestant clergy had added tasks. They had to tend to the needs of their families, of which there were quite a few.

Everybody I knew worked hard for the benefit of the whole camp and I am not aware of any problems with persons not pulling their weight. There were four kitchens and dining rooms. Because of the food supply situation, it was a big job trying to satisfy the hunger of the inmates. Sadly, that was never really achieved. My father, a qualified accountant, was given cooking duties in a communal dining room where meals were cooked and served in relays. Mum also worked in the kitchen and made craft goods.

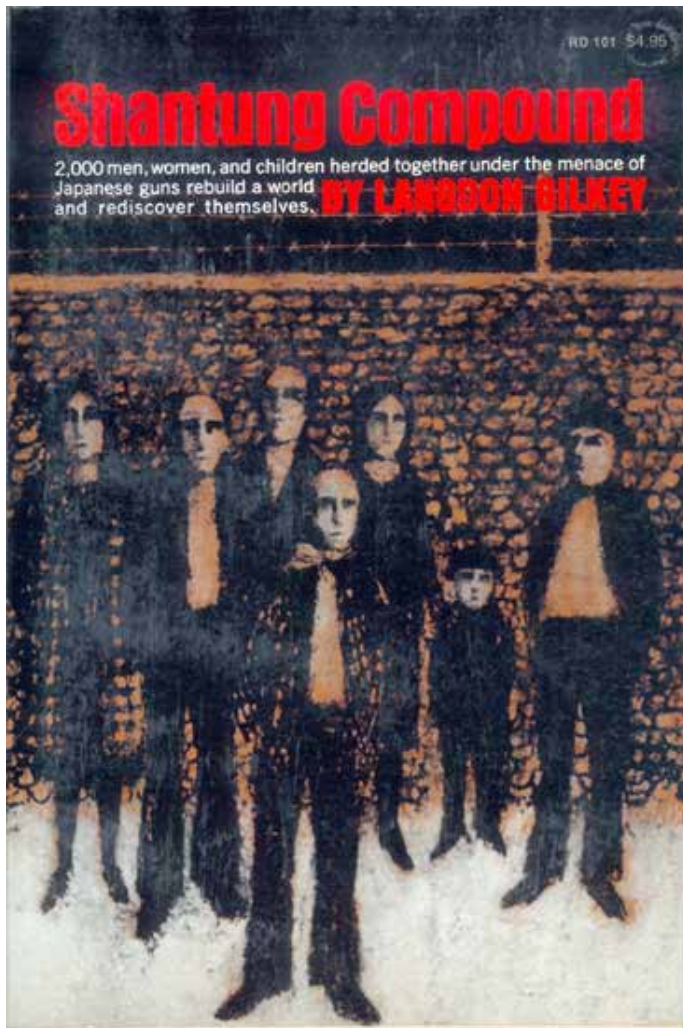
...

[further reading ...]:

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)

21 *List of internees dated June 30, 1944 giving names, marital status, nationality, age, sex and occupation. Bradbury family collection. Pamela Masters in her memoir The Mushroom Years, published 1998 by Henderson House Publishing, Placerville, California, writes of at least one French national acquaintance in the camp. However, the list of internees mentions no people of French nationality. See Further Reading.*

22 *The number of Australians and New Zealanders in the camp list of internees appears disproportionately high compared to the other major nationalities — British and US. Most of the Australian males were either missionaries or businessmen. Analysis of the countries where the Wei-Hsien internees settled after liberation suggest that Australia and New Zealand took a disproportionate number of them. This latter observation is based on address lists I have been given at international reunions of camp inmates. Bradbury family collection.*



CHAPTER I

Into the Unknown

The letter arrived in late February, 1943, at the door of the house I shared with five bachelor teachers in Peking. Rumors had been going around for weeks that the Americans and the British who were then in Peking would be sent “somewhere to camp.” Some said we would be shipped to Japan; some said Manchuria; some, a Chinese prison. These stories increased in volume and in flavor; something was going to happen soon, we knew. So it was with anxious concern that I tore open the long, white envelope.

In stilted English sentences, the official letter announced that “for your safety and comfort” all enemy nationals would be sent by train to a “Civilian Internment Center” near Weihsien. This was a city in Shantung Province, two hundred miles to the south. The letter went on to declare that “there every comfort of Western culture will be yours.” For our own well-being we could send ahead a bed or cot and one trunk apiece. We were to bring our eating utensils with us. Beyond these items we were allowed only what we could carry by hand. Meanwhile, the letter concluded, we were all to make preparations for this “rare opportunity” which the Japanese government was providing us.

How do you prepare for an internment camp? No one in the British or American communities knew—nor did anyone know exactly where we were going or what life would be like when we got there. Further rumors told us that the camp would be in an old Presbyterian mission compound, but beyond that we had no information. I pictured a life of monotony spent in a prison cell, and so rounded up copies of Aristotle, Spinoza, and Kant.

Another man, who took seriously the travel-brochure promises of the letter, lugged his golf clubs along. We were both wrong. Wiser heads in the community advised us all to bring blankets, towels, and basic camping and household equipment. They did say to be sure to pack some books, and if possible, musical instruments in our trunks. We were advised also to take our share of necessary medicines. Committees made up of the few doctors and nurses among us were formed to see that the latter items were bought and distributed so that each of us would bring some medicines with us. Everyone tacitly agreed that since the trunks might not arrive for weeks at this remote spot, we had better carry with us as much in the way of extra warm clothing and woollens as we could.

On March 25, we Americans met in the former United States Embassy compound. On the great lawn surrounded by the empty and

mindless buildings of officialdom long since fled, a motley crowd had gathered with all their varied equipment. There must have been about four hundred or so, males and females of all shapes and sizes, from every segment of society, ranging in age from six months to eighty-five years. The only thing we all seemed to have in common—besides our overloads of possessions—was a queer combination of excitement and apprehension. Were we bound for a camping vacation or the torturer's rack? Because of the uncertainty, our emotions see-sawed, voices were loud and tempers short.

The group of teachers from Yenching University, of which I was a part, were, of course, familiar to me. Yenching was a privately owned Anglo-American university near Peking, one of ten "Christian Colleges" in China, with Chinese students and about one-third Western faculty. In our group were older professors, some young instructors in their twenties like myself, graduate students of Chinese like Stanley Morris, as well as numerous women professors. I also recognized the doctors from the Peking Union Medical College, the missionary families from the leading Protestant Boards, and some of the businessmen. The latter had been helping to provide leadership for the Americans in Peking since the beginning of hostilities a year and a half before, when we found ourselves captives of the Japanese and confined within the city walls of Peking.

But most of this varied crowd was new to me. There, a few feet away, for example, stood Karl Bauer, tall, straight, strong and sour, an ex-marine and ex-pro baseball player. Karl was never known to smile; for him everything that happened was an irritant, and everyone hostile. As we came later to know, he was capable of generating with less reason, more unhappiness in himself and others than anyone I have encountered before or since. Standing near him was a wan, paper-thin ghost of a man, with dirty, torn clothes, scraggly beard and sea-green complexion. His name proved to be Briggs, and he was the captive of a dope addiction that was slowly eating away what flesh remained his own.

By way of contrast, near the steps of the deserted Embassy office building was a knot of what were obviously wealthy older women. All

wore furs and elegant hats. A few, I was told, were wealthy widows who had been living in retirement in Peking many years, and some were world travelers who happened to be caught and held in North China by the suddenness of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Further away, by the long-deserted American Ambassador's residence, were what seemed to be hundreds of Roman Catholic priests, monks, and nuns. They were missionaries, who had been seized in Mongolia, and brought here from their monasteries to go to camp with us. The panoply of civilian life in all its wonderful and amazing variety seemed to be represented here.

We stood waiting for orders. Each child clutched his teddy bear; single persons and families alike stood surrounded by the miscellaneous heaps of bags, duffels, coats, potties, and camp chairs—all this assorted gear, in spite of the stern Japanese warning that we must bring only what we could carry.

That warning had been issued in earnest. At noon sharp, a Japanese officer shouted through a megaphone that everyone must pick up his own belongings and carry them by hand to the railway station. A horrified gasp swept through the crowd. Every elderly person, every father of a family, every single woman thought of the station a mile away and then looked in near panic at the mountain of his own stuff at his feet. In the group were a goodly number of men alone—many of whom had sent their families home the year before—but since each of them had already brought as much as he could manage, they could not carry it all. Even the old and the very young had somehow to drag their things. Everything was a necessity. How could anyone bear to leave anything behind when he was bound to a strange life of indeterminate duration in a faraway concentration camp?

The Japanese officer again barked out his order to march.

There was nothing to do but to pick up the things and start moving. Every man, with the exception of those over seventy, carried the bags of at least two other persons. So, by a process of dragging and resting, of dragging some more and resting again, the march began. Slowly we crawled out of the Embassy compound and onto the main streets of Peking.

Here we found that the Japanese had lined up most of the city's Chinese population along the street to view our humiliation. The Chinese had been our allies against the Japanese; they had done much for us since the beginning of the war. And yet, because they themselves had been ruled so long by the West, they must have had mixed emotions as they impassively watched these four hundred white Westerners stagger weakly through their streets. We knew the Japanese intended that these marches, which took place throughout the cities and ports of China, be the symbol of the final destruction of Western prestige in the Orient. For that reason, we tried our best to walk erect and to present a dignified mien. But that is a hard enough job for a young man carrying four or five heavy bags. It was hopeless for the elderly. So on that sad mile we provided precisely the ridiculous spectacle that the Japanese hoped for. From this late vantage point, it is plain that the Japanese had guessed correctly: the era of Western dominance in Asia ended with that burdened crawl to the station.

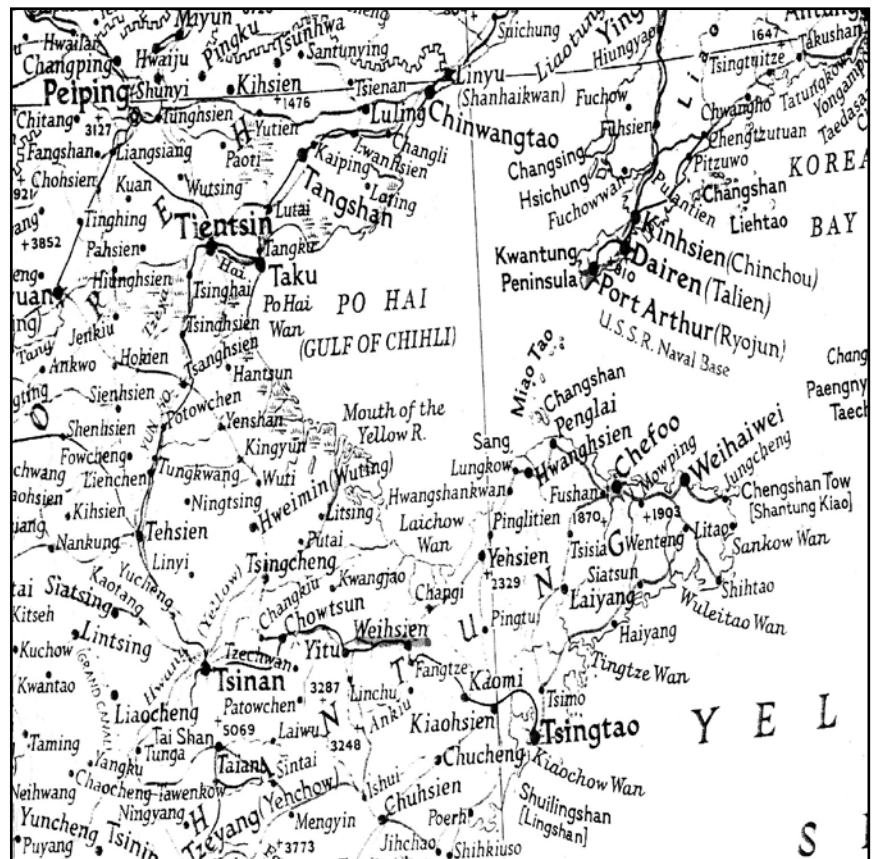
A full hour had passed before that march was finally over. It was a great relief to hear that it had caused no more than one fatal heart attack and two fainting spells.

At the station we were told that a train would be ready to take us to Weihsien in another hour or so. Meanwhile we were ordered not to move from the platform or to make contact with the Chinese. This latter proscription was far from welcome since it meant that no more food and no more liquid could be purchased from the hawkers, who now stared at us wistfully from another platform with a look of disappointment matched only by our own. We would have to make do on the long trip to Weihsien with the little that each of us had brought along. So we all sat down on our belongings and waited. We sipped from our canteens and nibbled on our sandwiches.

The train ride itself was no improvement. We were jammed into the straight, wooden seats of

Chinese third-class carriages, some of us standing, some sitting on luggage. In this comfortless state, we lurched and bounced for twenty-four hours two hundred miles into the south. For the old people, exhausted from the march, for infants and young children, that night on the hard boards of the jolting smelly train must have been a nightmare. Every rattle of the loose windows, or screech of the old-fashioned whistle was accompanied by the cries of those miserable youngsters suffering from hunger, from thirst, and from just plain fright.

No one could sleep. We talked endlessly about what might lie ahead. Would we be in cells? If so, what would we do there? Would they work younger men to death, as we had heard? Would there be enough food? Again our thoughts were a strange brew of excitement, apprehension, and curiosity. What would camp be like?



We were well into the long night when the sound of singing drifted in from the coach behind us. It came softly at first and then grew loud enough to drown out the cries of the children around us. We looked back to see a car filled with pipe smoke through which we could discern dim, monastic, bearded figures. These monks, cheerful and certainly untroubled by discomfort, were

loudly singing Dutch and Belgian student drinking songs. After a moment's surprise and delight at this totally unexpected aura of easy good humor, some of us moved back to their car, joined in lustily, and sang ourselves hoarse as the train lurched over the

of being provided with heat, food, warm water, and clean clothes peeling off—and a quite new life beginning.

Soon, however, the trucks arrived and we clambered into them with our baggage. After a forty-minute ride through the cobbled streets of the city, through the massive gates in the city walls and out across three miles of countryside, we arrived at the compound. Curious as to what our future would be inside those walls, we climbed stiffly out of the trucks and looked around.

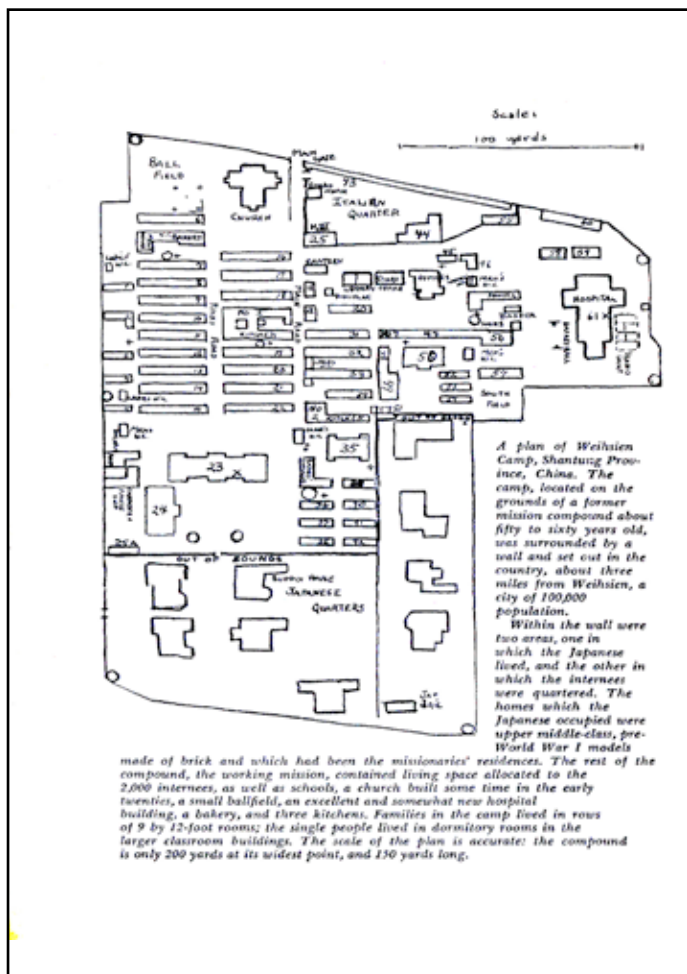
The compound looked like any other foreign mission station in China, dull gray and institutional. It seemed roughly the size of most of them—about one large city block. There were the familiar six-foot walls that surround everything in China; there were the roofs of Western-style buildings appearing above the walls; there was the welcome sight of a few trees here and there inside the compound; and, of course, the familiar great front gates. Stretching endlessly on either side was the bare, flat, dusty Shantung farmland over which we had just come. We turned to take a last glance at that landscape. The guard on our truck barked at us, and we started up the slope toward the gate.

The first sight that greeted us was a great crowd of dirty, unkempt, refugee like people, standing inside the gate and coldly staring at us with resentful curiosity. Their clothes looked damp and rumpled, covered with grime and dust—much as men look who have just come off a shift on a road gang.

“My God,” I thought, as I stared back at them with disgust, “they look like real freight-yard bums. Why haven’t they cleaned themselves up a little bit?”

A feeling of utter dreariness came over me as I looked at them. Would we, in time, become as drab and disheveled as this crowd? Was this dull dirtiness to be the character of our life here?

Who were these people? I wondered. With some distaste, we learned that they were earlier arrivals. Some came from Tsingtao, a nearby port city, and some from Tientsin. It had never really occurred to me that there would be anyone in camp besides our small Peking group. At this sudden confrontation with total strangers, I felt



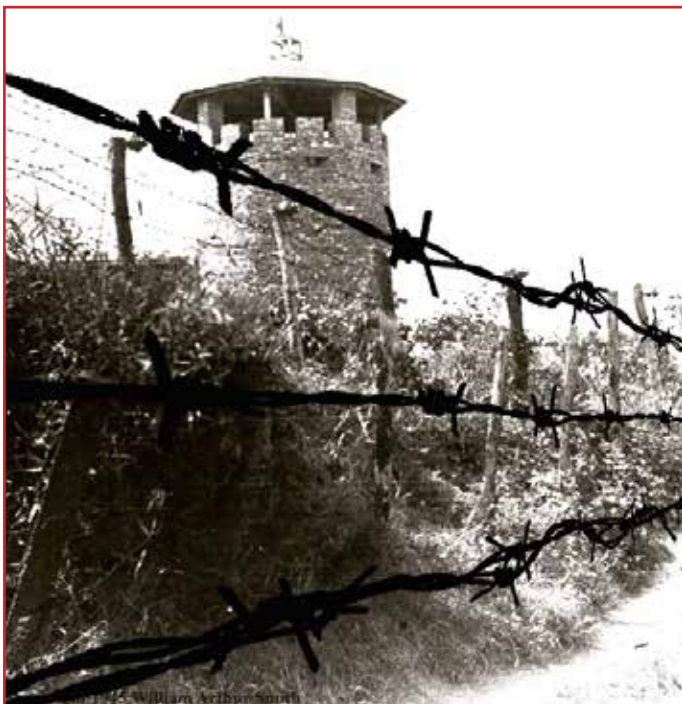
dark plains and into the darker unknown ahead.

Our food and water ran out early in the night; no one had any sleep to boast of, so it was a dirty, stiff, tired, and hungry crew that arrived at the Weihsien city station in the middle of the next afternoon. On hand to greet us was a British businessman from Tientsin who had been sent to camp four days before when the first Tientsin group arrived. We were pleased to hear that army trucks would come shortly to take us to the camp, some three miles outside the city walls. But his second statement gave us all a jolt. No Chinese would be allowed in camp. No Chinese? Who, then, would be the No. 1 boys in this new world? Who would cook the food and feed the fires necessary for life and warmth? And with that thought, I could feel the years of being waited on and served, both at home and at college, going down the drain. I could feel the familiar comforts

excitement as well as antipathy. Paradoxically, the camp might offer a wider, livelier universe for a young man than our small world of academicians, business people, and missionaries in Peking. Immediately I found myself “checking the crowd,” searching eagerly for a pretty face or a rounded figure—and, sure enough, even among that scruffy-looking lot there were three or four.

Still looking about us curiously, we were led from the gate past some rows of small rooms, past the Edwardian-style church, out onto a small softball field in one corner of the compound. Here we were to be lined up and counted. For the first time I noticed the guard towers at each corner or bend of the walls. I felt a slight chill as I noticed the slots for machine guns, and the electrified barbed wire that ran along the tops of the walls.

Then a considerably greater chill swept me as I saw that the machine guns were pointing our way.



And a sense both of complete change and of utter reality came over me. Suddenly I felt what it was like to be inside something, and stuck there; and what is more, inside an internment camp from which one could not get out for any reason whatsoever, a camp run under the iron discipline of an enemy army.

With this awareness I could feel my world shrink: the country-side beyond the walls receded and became unreal—like the pictured scenery

of a stage set. The reality in which I had now to exist seemed barely large enough to stand on, let alone large enough to be alive in. With a feeling of genuine despair I thought, “How can anyone live enclosed in this tiny area for any length of time? Will I not go wild with cramp, with boredom? What can there be to do in this dreary place?”

I moved dejectedly toward a doctor I knew, who was talking to the “leader” of the Peking Americans, William Montague, of the British American Tobacco Company. Seated on a small mound on the edge of the diamond, Montague was the cheerful center of animated chatter and amused laughter. This able man, undismayed by any misfortune, seemed more like a happy old grad at a homecoming game in his soft camel’s hair topcoat, than the responsible head of an internment-camp community. Apparently the Japanese had told him to pick one man to be in general charge of our group (Montague, needless to say, had regarded himself as already appointed to this post!), one other person to handle housing, and another to organize our food and cooking. This group of lively participants was suggesting names of men suitable for these our first political positions. I do not know what prompted me, a young teacher of English and philosophy barely twenty-four, to enter this world of affairs. Anyway, I blurted out the name of Dr. Arnold Baldwin for the housing job. I was aware that he had been head of an American Quarters Committee formed in Peking after the start of war to help homeless Americans. Montague looked up at me at this—he hardly knew me—and said quickly and coldly: “Oh, no, Baldwin has much more important work than that to do here. There will be more sickness in this mess than any number of doctors can take care of!”

Knowing he was absolutely right in his observation, I felt ashamed for having put in my two cents. I started to turn away, when, to my amazement I heard Baldwin say, “All right, I’ll accept that—but how about young Gilkey here for housing?”

Montague looked at me again, narrowed his eyes, and said, “All right, Gilkey, you help me with this housing stuff, and I’ll take over the general charge of the group—Dr. Foster can handle medicine, and we’ll find someone for cooking when we’ve had a look at the kitchen setup.”

I swallowed hard and said nothing. I had no knowledge of housing and had hardly any administrative experience. But still, I thought, who did know how to house people in an internment camp? Surely working with the effervescent Montague would be more diverting than staring dolefully at my shoes from the side of a bed! So I said I would take a crack at the housing job, and went back to join my friends.

Just then we were lined up in rows to be counted and harangued. We found ourselves listening to a set speech on the rules of camp life, and on our good fortune at being there. At the end we had to swear to cooperate with our overlords in anything that they might ask of us. It sounded grim enough. The March wind was becoming freezing cold. But something new had entered into this drab scene. I remembered my glimpse of two or three shapely girls in the motley crowd at the edge of the ball field. Also as we parted, Montague had said that tomorrow night there was to be a meeting of "leaders," and I could help him by going along with him and taking notes.

When this initial roll call was finished, one of the earlier arrivals in camp, another British businessman from Tientsin, gathered the men of our Peking group together. He was natty in a plaid wool shirt, bow tie, gray tweed coat and checkered hunting cap, but all of this elegant ensemble was slightly soiled from a solid week's wear. He led us over to our temporary quarters, while others conducted the families and the single women to theirs.

"Ours" turned out to be the basement of one of the two school buildings. We were ushered into a large room without furniture, its cement floor damp and dirty. There were naked bulbs hanging from the ceiling, and great wet splotches showing through the broken plaster on the walls. We were told that in the corridor were rush mats for us to sleep on, and that we ought to hang onto them since the beds we'd sent weren't likely to arrive for several weeks. Meanwhile, we were to wash up and in half an hour- get our first meal at the kitchen run by earlier arrivals from Tsingtao. By the following day we were to get our own Peking kitchen in operation, for it would have to feed the next batch of internees from Tientsin who were due in a couple of days.

We deposited our gear on the cold cement floor, and found mats, for our beds. Then some of us went out to look for the toilet and washroom. We were told they were about a hundred and fifty yards away: "Go down the left-hand street of the camp, and turn left at the water pump." So we set off, curiously peering on every side to see our new world.

After an open space in front of our building, we came to the many rows of small rooms that covered the camp except where the ballfield, the church, the hospital, and the school buildings were. Walking past these rows, we could see each family trying to get settled in its little room in somewhat the same disordered and cheerless way that we had done in ours. In contrast to the unhappy mutterings of miscellaneous bachelors, these rooms echoed to the distressed cries of babies and small children.

Then we came to a large hand pump under a small water tower. There we saw a husky, grinning British engineer, stripped to the waist even though the dusk was cold, furiously pumping water into the tower. As I watched him making his long, steady strokes, I suddenly realized what his presence at that pump meant. We ourselves would have to do all the work in this camp; our muscles and hands would have to lift water from wells, carry supplies in from the gates. We would have to cook the food and stoke the fires—here were neither servants nor machinery, no running water, no central heating. Before we passed on into the men's room, the British pumper, whose back was rising and falling rhythmically, fixed us as best he could in that situation with a cheerful and yet hostile eye, and reminded us with as much authority as his gasps would allow, "Every chap will be taking his full share of work here, chaps, you know!"

As we entered the door of the men's room, the stench that assailed our Western nostrils almost drove us back into the fresh March air. To our surprise, we found brand-new fixtures inside: Oriental-style toilets with porcelain bowls sunk in the floor over which we uncomfortably had to squat. Above them on the wall hung porcelain flushing boxes with long, metal pull-chains, but—the pipes from the water tower outside led only into the men's showers; not one was connected

with the toilets. Those fancy pipes above us led nowhere. The toilet bowls were already filled to overflowing—with no servants, no plumbers, and very little running water anywhere in camp, it was hard to see how they would ever be unstopped. We stayed there just long enough to do our small business—all the while grateful we had not eaten the last thirty-four hours—and to wash our hands and faces in the ice-cold water that dribbled out of the faucets.

Back outside, we strolled around for our first real look at the compound. I was again struck by how small it was—about one hundred and fifty by two hundred yards. Even more striking was its wrecked condition. Before the war, it had housed a well-equipped American Presbyterian mission station, complete with a middle, or high, school of four or five large buildings, a hospital, a church, three kitchens, bakery ovens, and seemingly endless small rooms for resident students. We were told that, years before, Henry Luce had been born there. Although the buildings themselves had not been damaged, everything in them was a shambles, having been wrecked by heaven knows how many garrisons of Japanese and Chinese soldiers. The contents of the various buildings were strewn up and down the compound, cluttering every street and open space; metal of all sorts, radiators, old beds, bits of pipe and whatnot, and among them broken desks, benches, and chairs that had been in the classrooms and offices. Since our “dorm” was the basement of what had been the science building, on the way home we sifted through the remains of a chemistry lab. Two days later we carried our loot to the hospital to help them to get in operation.

The one redeeming feature of this dismal spectacle was that it provided invaluable articles for the kind of life we had now obviously to live. Old desks and benches could become wash-stands and tables in our bare quarters. Broken chairs could give us something to sit on besides the wet floors. Clearly the same thought had occurred to others; as we walked home, we saw in the dim light, dingy figures groping among the rubble and carting off “choice” bits and pieces. We made up our minds to get started on our own “scrounging” operations first thing in the morning before all this treasure was gone.

Soon after we got back to our room, we were led over to another part of the compound for supper. I saw stretching before me for some seventy yards a line of quiet, grim people standing patiently with bowls and spoons in their hands. Genuinely baffled, I asked our guide—a pleasant man from Tsingtao, with all the comfortable authority of one now quite acclimated to camp life—what on earth they were doing there.

“Oh, queuing up for supper, of course, old boy,” said the Englishman cheerfully. “You’ll get yours in about forty minutes, actually, if you join the queue now.”

Could human patience bear such a long wait three times a day for meals? However, I joined the line, and three-quarters of an hour later, we reached the table where thin soup was being ladled out along with bread. That was supper. Fortunately, there were “seconds” on bread, because we were very hungry after our long train trip without food; I ate five to ten slices to help supplement the tasteless gruel.

Our meal finished, we lined up again to have our bowls and spoons washed by women from Tsingtao. The patterns of chores in the new situation were beginning to come clear. As I went out past the steam-filled kitchen with its great Chinese cauldrons, I saw three men from our Peking group being shown how to use the cooking equipment by the men from Tsingtao, turned into “experts” by their three days of practice. Despite that tasteless meal, I felt content; I was no end proud of my job in housing and looked forward to finding out more about this strange camp and how it worked.

When we walked back to our quarters, it was already getting very cold. The climate in North China is not unlike that of Chicago or Kansas City. Thus in March ice can still form at night, and unless one has dry clothes and some measure of heating, one can freeze. Needless to say, having neither, we felt chilled to the bone as we stamped about in our bare basement room. There was nothing to do but try to go to sleep. People must have some place to sit if there is to be a bull session of any sort! And so, still in our clothes, we lay down on our mats. Since each of us had only the things he had been able to bring with him, overcoats became extra blankets and sweaters were pillows. For long

I lay there, trying unsuccessfully to find a soft spot in my cement mattress, but sheer fatigue finally overcome even that discomfort, and I fell asleep.

We awoke the next day to a cold drenching rain that had turned the compound into one great mud swamp. In the midst of this downpour, we new arrivals were once more called to the ballfield. Here we were again counted, sworn in, told to be good and, this time, ordered to surrender all our cash. Having been warned by the Tsingtao group that compliance with this order would be a completely unnecessary virtue, we kept back most of our cash, hidden in our shoes and our underwear.

After this, slopping in puddles, wet to the bone, angry but intensely curious, we were guided by a guard to our new “permanent” quarters. These were better by far than the wet basement room of the previous night, but still hardly ideal. In three small 9-by-12-foot rooms, dirty beyond description, we eleven bachelors were crammed into a space comfortable for only four or five people. There were the same bare walls and floors, only our suitcases to sit on and our straw mats to lie on—and no sign of any heating. It was messy, bleak, cold, and wet. Until our beds arrived two weeks later, every place in camp was like that.

The wonder is that flu or pneumonia did not decimate this vulnerable population. Fortunately, I was young and had warm clothes. It certainly never occurred to us to take anything off when we slept on the floor. Thus at the end of two or three days we looked just as bedraggled and unkempt as did the internees we had held in scorn upon our entry into camp.

This existence was of the greatest conceivable contrast to all that had gone before in my life, and the same was true for almost everyone there.

Brought up in the comfort of an upper-middle-class professional home at a large Midwestern American university, where my father had been Dean of the Chapel, I had been waited on by maids at home and in the opulence of prewar Harvard College from which I graduated with an A.B. in 1940 just before coming to China to teach English at Yenching. In twenty-four years I had known little else than steam heat, running hot and cold water, a toilet in the next room, good food, clean clothing,

plenty of space, and a quiet, academic existence. Only occasionally, when cruising or camping, had these comforts of civilization been absent. These periods, however, were short, voluntary, and such fun that they made no lasting imprint. Life to me, as to most of the camp, was civilization. Existence on any other terms was almost inconceivable. But at Weihsien all the vast interconnected services of civilization had vanished, and with them had gone every one of our creature comforts.

If this great crowd of people were to survive, much less to live a passable life, a civilization of some sort would have to be created from scratch. Gradually the nature of the problem facing our community dawned on me. As it did so, everything took on an intensity and excitement I had not known before. Thus for a healthy young man those first weeks of camp were an absorbing experience—physically no worse than army life in the field and yet much more interesting. However, for men and women in their late sixties and seventies in the single dorms, for the sick or the incapacitated, and above all, for the babies and children and their troubled mothers, those first weeks, with no heat and no beds, were a nightmare which I am sure none of them can recall to this day without shuddering.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm



Chapter 8 [excerpts] ...

WEIHSIEN PRISON CAMP

I hardly remember the walled city of Weihsien with its massive gates and cobbled streets. It's all a blur to me. A stop on the way to a prison camp for the crime of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. We did get one break, though: there were trucks waiting for us at the station—not enough to take us all to the camp at the same time, but still trucks—a blessing, as it was late in the afternoon and a cold rain was falling.

The ride over bleak, rutted country roads was slow and tedious, and several trucks high-centred and had to back up to find surer passage. It took

almost an hour to cover the three-mile trip to the camp, and when we arrived, the tired old trucks groaned and skidded as they turned under a huge ceremonial gateway with bold characters inscribed beneath its dripping, ornate grey-tiled roof.

"The Courtyard of the Happy Way," Dad translated, reading its incongruous message of greeting. "Happy? That's not what I'm feeling now!" His comment was greeted with several "Amens" from fellow travellers.

Climbing out of the truck, I almost fell, stepping into slick, slimy mud that sucked at my sturdy walking shoes, trying to drag them off my feet. As I steadied myself, grabbing a tarp hook on the side of the truck bed, someone handed down my suitcase and said, "Welcome to Weihsien!"

There wasn't much to see. Misty rain, dripping trees, rows of soggy grey brick buildings with tiled roofs, and the smell of rotting human excrement. Oh, happy way! Oh, happy day! I thought facetiously, as I found myself being herded along like so many cattle to one of the larger administration buildings.

It was just as well I hadn't eaten all my sandwich on the train, as we'd no sooner stepped in out of the drizzle than we were told that our first meal would be breakfast the following morning, if volunteers stepped forward to help with the meal. I wonder if Cook ever realized how great the remaining half of that sandwich tasted...

Somehow we survived that first freezing night. Not surprisingly, accommodations had not been made, so we slept on hard wooden floors, literally collapsing where we stood, curling up in our disheveled clothes, too tired to care. Within minutes, grunts, snorts, snores, and whimpers faded into nothing as we passed out in complete exhaustion.

Breakfast the next day in the steamy community kitchen was skimpy and pretty foul: weak Chinese tea and bread porridge. The latter made with sour bread that had been soaked in

boiling water and stirred to a mush, as it was too stale to serve any other way. With no sugar or cream to add to it, it was almost inedible. While we were eating, a committee member came in and told us that, when we were through, we were to go to the athletic field for indoctrination, housing, and work assignments.

The field wasn't hard to find as it was the only large, treeless area in the camp, and through the years, it was to become the site of most of our outdoor group activities and daily headcounts. Located in the southwest corner of the prison camp, its two six foot-plus exterior walls were of grey brick, topped with several feet of electrified barbed wire. An ugly guard tower with gun slots buttressed the outer corner, and I noted with a chill that there were machine guns mounted in the slots trained directly on us. As I looked up at the forbidding sight, two young guards in black uniforms stepped out of the tower and placed their rifles against the waist-high railing. They looked as though they were in their teens, like me, and as they laughed and joked and punched each other on the shoulder, the incongruity of the situation hit me. Somehow it was hard to think of those kids as my enemy.

Margo came up just then, mad and out of breath. "Where the heck have you been?" she snapped, "You're supposed to be with us so we can be assigned living quarters. Come on, hurry up!"

I followed her to where Mother, Dad, and Ursula were gathered, and withered slightly under their reproving stares.

As the last stragglers trailed onto the field, there was a loud squawk from a public address system, and the droning buzz of conversation around us stopped. After a few more crackling sounds, a voice called out, "Attention, please! Attention, please! This is your Commandant! Welcome to Weihsien Civilian Assembly Center!"

"Call it anything you want," Dad said under his breath, "it's still a prison camp!"

I couldn't see the Commandant because of the crowds, but I could hear him, and his English was excellent.

"I am a repatriate from the United States,"

he went on, "and I was in Hot Springs Assembly Center in Virginia before I was sent back to Japan. I want to tell you something,"—he paused to get our complete attention—"while I was at Hot Springs, I was always treated with courtesy and respect, and I aim to see that you receive nothing less."

I felt, rather than heard, a murmur of approval run through the crowd.

"But remember..." here he paused once more for effect, "if you want to receive courtesy and respect, you must cooperate. Provocation and disrespect will be treated harshly.

"One more thing. This camp is not Hot Springs. If your rations are short, ours will be too. If you are cold, we will be too. In short, we are all in the same boat; whether we're all rowing in the same direction remains to be seen."

He sounded firm, but fair.

Then, he introduced the captain of the guards and interpreted as the stocky officer, with arms well down to his knees, stood stiffly to attention and barked his orders. He also wore a black uniform, and I learned later that it designated that he, like the young guards, was a member of the consular guard and not an officer in the Imperial Japanese Army. I wondered if they would prove to be as obnoxious as their khaki-clad cohorts.

He told us that the arm-bands we had been issued while under house arrest were not valid in camp. We would be assigned new numbers and new tags, which we were to wear at all times, and each morning, there would be a roll-call. Through the years, we were to find ourselves responding with a "Here!" to the guards shout of, "Yon hyaku kyuu juu nana, kyuu juu hachi, kyuu juu kyuu," Ursula, me, and Margo, reduced to 497, 498 and 499.

Before we left the roll-call field, all the single men and women were told to report to the respective dormitory areas, and heads of each household to the administrative office compound to be assigned cell numbers—only they called them room numbers. Meanwhile, most of the committee responsible for our orderly move to camp pitched in once more to organise work details.

All those not preparing food were to be assigned to cleaning up the camp. The rains of the day before, which had gone on through most of the night, had left the main roadway a quagmire. I found that the stench that had greeted us on our arrival was from overflowing latrines, augmented by piles of soggy garbage in various phases of decomposition.

Somehow I missed the cleanup detail and found myself peeling potatoes with twenty others in the community kitchen—dubbed “Number 2 Kitchen” or “K-2”—where we’d had breakfast a couple of hours earlier. With so many people, and so few potatoes, the job was soon done, and I left the kitchen compound and stepped out onto Main Street, the name some enterprising individual had already posted on the road leading up from the main gates.

The sun had finally come out, and to my surprise, Dad was standing across the street from me in the entrance to a cell compound. “What’s up?” I asked, as I waved to him.

“Come see our new living quarters,” he said.

I darted around the deeper puddles in the road and stepped through a pretty, little gateway into a long, narrow compound studded with nostalgic acacias.

“We have the first two cells,” Dad said, as he led me to them.

Mother had just completed sweeping out the first one, and she handed the broom to me, saying, “Oh, there you are! Give this to Margo and tell her when she’s through with it to hand it down the line.” Then she turned to Dad and said, “The light doesn’t work. We’ll need a lamp bulb before tonight. See what you can find.. .or swipe.”

I smiled at her remark as I moved on to the second cell, handing Margo the broom as I stepped inside. As she took it and started sweeping, she said, “For God’s sake, wipe the mud off your shoes before you come in! This is all we’ve got to call home for Lord knows how long—let’s keep it as neat as possible.”

“Where’s Urs?” I asked.

“Rounding up our cots and bedding.”

“And all the good-looking guys in camp!” I said with a laugh, as I turned and saw Ursula coming through the gateway, followed by two good-looking strangers pulling a wobbly handcart loaded with all our worldly possessions.

“Good girl!” Dad said, eyeing the unwieldy stack, then turning to the boys, he offered, “Hey, let me help you.”

“That’s all right, sir—just tell us where you want them.”

I wasn’t to know it then, but I’d just met two of Ursula’s most ardent admirers—soon to become rivals: tall, unassuming Alex Koslov, and his complete contrary—stocky, conceited, Grant Brigham.

As the day progressed, I learned that Weih sien had originally been a university campus, and that the long cellblocks had been student housing. Each block consisted of a row of twelve small rooms, measuring nine-by-twelve feet, that looked out onto a narrow, tree-studded compound and the back of the next row of rooms. The compounds were connected at each end by latticed brick walls and decorative gateways.

Each room had a door and standard window in front, and a little, high, clerestory window at the back for air circulation. They hadn’t been used by students in years, and before we arrived, had housed soldiers of the Chinese Puppet Army. The rooms had all been badly neglected; the white plastered walls were peeling and in need of repair, and the only electrical fixture was a ceiling lamp, hanging from a frayed cord.

When we moved in, Margo put her canvas cot under the front window, and I fitted mine, foot-to-foot with it, along the right wall. Ursula’s cot was across from mine on the left wall. There was a high, three-foot-long shelf with a rod under it at the end of Ursula’s bed to hang our clothes on, leaving just enough room for a crate to sit on and the door to open. It was very primitive, and along with the communal biffy a hundred feet down Main Street, it was to be our home for nine hundred and thirty-five days.

As soon as I had made up my cot and stashed my suitcase under it, I stepped out into welcome

sunshine to explore. I found the camp divided up into a myriad of compounds and courtyards with airy latticed walls, many graced by moongates and pretty tile-roofed gateways, enclosing administrative offices, kitchens, two-story classroom buildings (now made into dormitories), and living quarters. There was an all-pervading flavour of the Orient throughout, and I couldn't help thinking that it must have been a lovely place once.

Going through one more little compound, I stepped out onto a basketball court with a large, L-shaped building on two sides of it. Surprisingly, it did not have an oriental flair, but was a tall, three-storied affair of solid Western design. I was wondering what it housed when I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder. As I turned, I saw Dan Friedland, an old friend from convent outings.

"I knew I'd find you, if I kept on looking," he said with a lopsided grin. That's what I'd always remembered about Dan—his tall, gangling, good looks, and that infectious smile. I'd met him one weekend when Aunt Kitty wasn't feeling well and had asked if we'd mind staying with the Blessings. Claire, their daughter, was a day scholar at St. Joe, and she and I were always at loggerheads. I felt she tolerated our company that day, because her parents made her, but after the first outing, the scene changed: Ursula had hit it off with one of the boys in Claire's group, so from thereon, we were always invited to join them on our monthly outings. I still felt like a tagalong though as Ursula was the one with the boyfriend; it wasn't until Dan, with his zany American sense of humour, made me feel like one of the crowds that I got to enjoy those Sunday excursions.

"Where were you on the train?" he asked. "I looked for you, but I never saw you."

How could I tell him I was fighting with a rabid communist and hadn't given him a thought! I was really glad to see him now, though, and I told him so.

He grinned and asked, "Know where you are?"

"Haven't the foggiest."

"Well, that there building there," he said, affecting a drawl, "is the hospital."

"Really? I was trying to figure out what it was when you came up."

"Well, now you know."

"Bet the rooms in it aren't as tiny as the one that was assigned to us."

"For your information, all the cells are the same size, so don't go around feeling you're being dumped on. Next thing you'll be saying is you don't feel well and need a stay in the hospital!"

I laughed. "You read me like a book!"

"Just one of my talents," he said in mock modesty, adding, "Actually, what are you doing here?"

"Just nosing around. Think I'd better start looking for my cellblock, though, before Margo and Urs think I've gone over the wall."

"Where is your cellblock?"

"Just off Main Street, directly across from Number Two Kitchen."

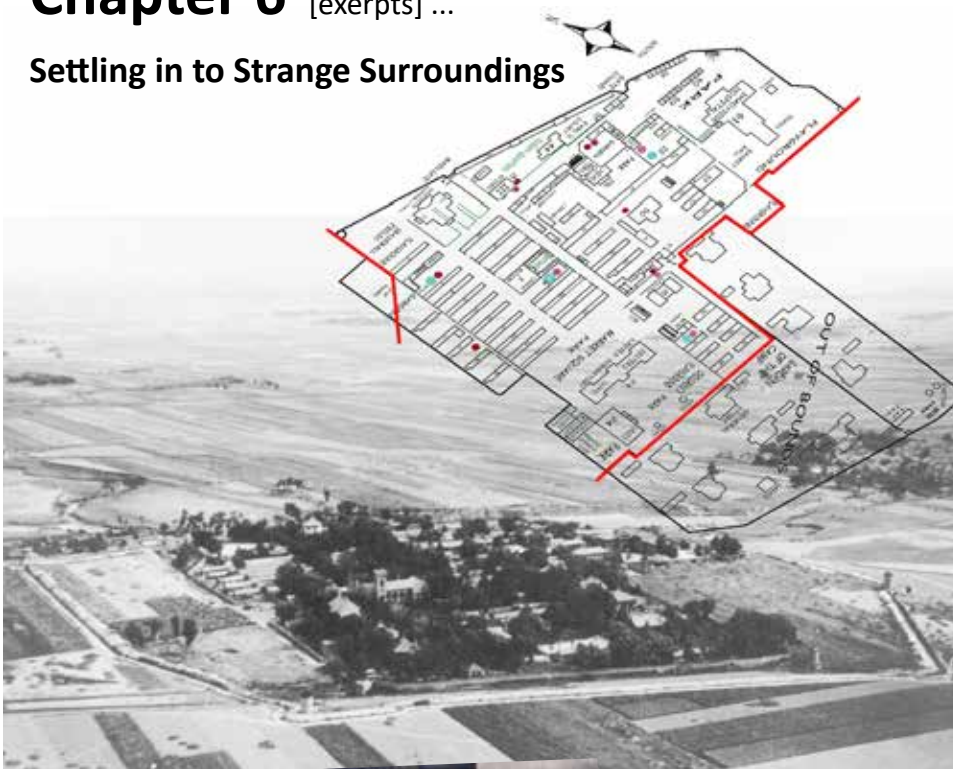
...

[read further] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)

Chapter 6 [exerpts] ...

Settling in to Strange Surroundings



In spite of the rock-hard floor I slept well that first night in camp. On reflection it was not surprising, as there had been two days of travelling, a night when I had not seen a bed followed by a day without food. I woke up to hear someone knocking at the door.

‘Who is that?’ Mum called out nervously. ‘Wait a moment. I’m coming.’

She got to her feet, and her movement woke Roger who had been lying on bundled-up clothes between Mum and Dad since daylight.

Then he promptly started wailing.

‘It is only me Margot’ called out the familiar voice of my grandmother. ‘I have just come down to see how you are and how you managed on the journey.’

It was wonderful to see her small figure outside, well wrapped in her everyday grey woollen coat. Granny was not much taller than I, just under 5 foot; she was rather rounder, but at that moment she was a comfortably familiar figure. Her face was serene as usual and her grey hair had been drawn into a neat bun at the nape of her neck. She was wearing her usual pince-nez glasses. Mum did not look much like her, being much slimmer and 6 inches taller. Granny kissed her daughter, gave me a hug and picked up Roger who immediately stopped bawling.

‘Where is Leo?’ Granny asked. ‘Has he gone off to get your breakfast? I was going to take you down to the kitchen. We have to use Kitchen No. 1 as we are over in Block 13 but you are in Block 42 and will have to use Kitchen No. 2. Both kitchens



have dining rooms attached.'

'Last night Leo brought us our supper here, and I think he will do the same today.' Mum added quickly, 'I don't really want to take Roger to a public dining room. We haven't got a high chair for him and he will just be a nuisance if he cries all the time.'

I had only just realised the significance of Dad not being in the little hut. But if he was off getting food that was all right. I was starving hungry again and I slipped outside to watch for his coming back.

The night before, I had not really taken things in regarding my surroundings. It had been at least half dark, and I was too tired and upset to care where we were, so long as I could get food and somewhere warm to sleep. Now, as I stood outside, I realised we were in a little courtyard, with six rooms in our block and six more in the next. The path separating the two blocks was in the middle and led to the rest of the camp.

Granny pointed out that the wall on the left and in front of us divided us from where the Japanese guards lived, in the old missionary houses, and that that area was prohibited to all internees. She went on to say that the huts that we were living in had been the student quarters when Weihsien was an American Presbyterian Mission School. Founded in 1883, Weihsien played a leading role in establishing primary and secondary schools for girls throughout its mission field. The missionaries had begun with a conservative agenda of creating good Christian households at the time, and Weihsien, as it now was, had originally been just a single building; it grew to encompass a compound containing a high school, a large three-storey hospital, called Shadyside, the Arts College of the Shandong Christian University, a Bible School, and residences for the missionaries and teachers. The 1911 Revolution had boosted its status, followed by subsequent injections of American money. In addition to its institutions, the mission established schools and dispensaries throughout its catchment area, covering some 400 square miles around the station in Weihsien. These schools not only trained female students to become professional teachers and nurses, but also enlightened them in the local cultural sphere. Sadly, the invasion of the Japanese

in 1937-8 meant that all the laboratories and operating theatres had been looted; indeed, the hospital had had all its plumbing ripped out.

Along the path I could see another three sets of buildings like ours, and then more structures beyond. More important I could see Dad walking towards us, bringing breakfast in a Chinese-type food carrier, which Mum had thoughtfully packed in case there was going to be communal catering. We had only bread, weak tea and a little milk for Roger, but it tasted very good and after this I was ready to check out the neighbourhood. Mum wanted to unpack and sort out our small home, which I considered pointless until our beds arrived.

I said that I would like to go out and explore. It was obvious though that Mum was worried that I would get lost.

'Come with me,' Granny said, solving the problem. 'I can show him around and take him to our hut where Bert is and leave you in peace. Come on Ronald.'

Happy to have something to do, I followed the bustling

figure of my grandmother along the path between the blocks of rooms. We came out near Kitchen No. 2, where our meals would be prepared. The building on the left, she said, was the ladies' shower block. We walked past the kitchen and across the top of Main Street, which ran south towards the main entrance. I must have walked near or on this road last night, and said so, but Granny thought that we would have taken a route along some of the blocks to the left. Main Street was lined with mature trees, some nearly 60 feet tall. We walked only a little way before turning left past Kitchen No. 1 and then a large dining area. Each side of us were blocks of accommodation rooms, but these blocks seemed to contain about a dozen rooms. At the ends of the blocks were linking walls, so the effect was a series of courtyards. Then we came to a raised road of random granite blocks. I asked Granny why. And she said that it would keep our feet dry when the summer rains came. Granny turned south along 'Rocky Road'; I knew the direction from the position of the sun in the sky. Shortly after, we came upon a large space with no buildings but filled with different sorts of trees.

Then, in front of us, was a large grey building with a bell tower in the middle tiled with the red tiles so common all over China.

‘That building and the one behind it were classrooms,’ Granny said.

‘Does that mean I am going to school?’ I asked.

Granny laughed and said ‘No, the rooms are now used as dormitories for Roman Catholic priests and nuns who arrived in Weihsien at the beginning of March.’

We walked round the end of the building to another open space, but this was filled with blackened and broken desks, and laboratory equipment. There were one or two internees picking over the burnt remains in case they could find something that might be useful. ‘Look, they have had a big fire, Granny,’ I said.

‘Yes they have, but it was done by the Japanese Army about five years ago when the Japanese were fighting the Chinese, and they destroyed the school. Such a waste.’ She continued, ‘The American missionaries fled and the Chinese students were either killed or sent back to their towns and villages.’

‘Why did they kill the students?’ I asked.

‘They were innocent enough and harmless and would not have hurt anyone. But they were Chinese and there was a war on. Just like Japan has now declared war on us English.’

The block in front of us was also classrooms, but that too was now used as dormitories for priests and nuns.

‘Where do you live Granny?’ I asked.

‘Not very far away in Block 13,’ she replied. ‘I am going to take you there as Grandpa should be back now from Kitchen No. 1. In the meantime I thought I would show you this area.’

‘Why has he been at the kitchen? Surely, he doesn’t work there?’ I commented.

‘Oh, yes he does. All the internees here at Weihsien have to do something for the Community, we have no servants like we all used to have before the Japanese came. I believe that

the present rules excuse ladies with children under two and the one or two ladies expecting babies. I peel vegetables in No. 1 Kitchen.’ We carried on walking across the near open place with all the trees.

‘Granny, why are there so many different types of tree in Weihsien?’

‘Because, when it was a school and college they used to teach botany, and rather than show the students pictures of trees they let them see real trees. So many of the students came from Shandong Province where there are only small trees that could almost pass for bushes,’ Granny replied.

‘There is a big river north of us now which is called the Yellow River or Hwang Ho. From the time of Jesus until 1853 it flowed into the Yellow Sea a couple of hundred miles south of here. Then there was a big flood which killed off the trees in Shandong Province. When the water had all flowed out to sea the river had changed its course from a place called Kaifeng and flowed north-east to the sea which meant that the Shandong hills, where Weihsien is, became south of the river.’

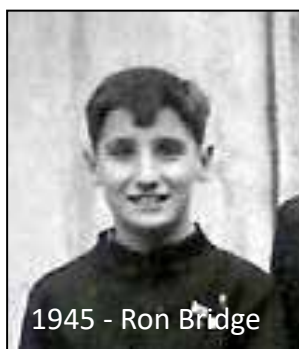
‘There is Grandpa going in to your room,’ I said as we entered the courtyard, defined by a wall between the ends of Blocks 13 and 14. When we got to the room Grandpa was surveying the pile of blankets and clothes on the floor and the packing cases alongside one wall, which had arrived the day before. He was scratching his head and studying the mess in the small space, particularly the two dismantled beds in a crate. He looked up in pleasure when we appeared in the doorway.

After hugging me and asking after Mum, Dad and Roger, he took charge.

‘I will show Ronald the camp,’ he said firmly, ‘while, you, Fanny, can tidy up this place. It looks as though a typhoon has swept through it. I will put the beds together when I can borrow the tools. Come along Ronald.’

He took my hand and I followed happily enough and we left Granny sighing heavily but getting down to sorting out their possessions, much as Mum would have to do when our trunks arrived, as she only had suitcases for the next week.

Grandpa was taller than me; he was sixty-seven with a head of thick white hair. The story went that he had been kicked by a horse at the age of twenty-one and went white overnight. I was not so sure. He had worked for years in China as an electrical engineer and Lloyd's surveyor, and having spent most of his working life in north China he could not imagine life anywhere else. The upheavals of the last three years had hit him very hard, literally turning his world upside down. Leaving his Tianjin home in Meadows Road after nearly a quarter of a century had affected him deeply. However, to me he was the same as I had always known him and I skipped along happily as he took me walking through the camp that was to be home for the next two and a half years, although I did not know it at the time.



1945 - Ron Bridge

We walked along the front of the rooms that were in their block, through an open kind of arch, although it looked as though there had once been a door. In front, running left to right, was the Rocky Road that Granny and I had walked along, turning left past Kitchen No. 1 on the right. This area, Blocks 1 to 15, had originally been for those who had come from Beijing and Qingdao, but Granny and Grandpa had been put into that area, and hence they were allocated Kitchen No. 1. After we walked about 150 yards we came to a playing field, three-quarters the size of a normal soccer pitch, marked out as a hockey field with a 'D' shaped penalty area. There was also a softball square in the south-east corner.

'Nearly all sports are played here. They had to restrict themselves to a softball diamond because someone worked out that if they played baseball the ball would forever be hit over the wall,' Grandpa added in explanation.

We turned right and walked past the Church. Grandpa went on to say, 'The Church is used by all Christian denominations. I think at the moment there are about 250 Roman Catholic priests in camp and nearly the same number of nuns, which with the Catholic congregation makes about 600 Catholics. Then there are about 600 Anglicans and 900 other Protestants.'

'That is about 2,100' I said, doing some rapid mental arithmetic. I had been brought up to learn up to the 12 times table and been encouraged to repeat it almost daily, so juggling figures was never a chore.

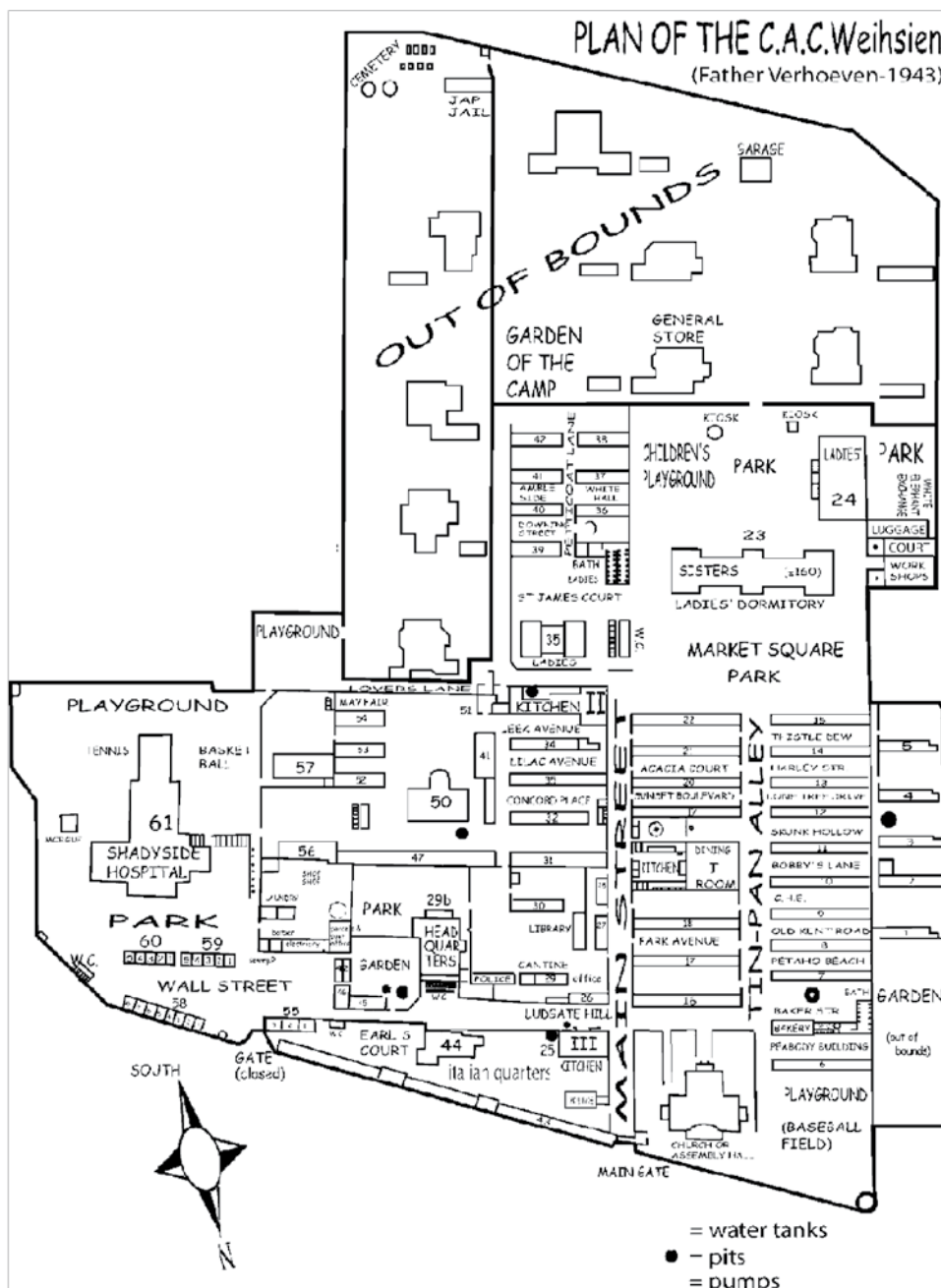
'Yes, so you see that if all go to church there have to be services each hour of daylight on Sundays. Which to my mind is a good thing, because sermons have to be of the seven-minute variety. And in a way the clergy are quite happy in these difficult times, as more turn out than usual for the services.'

Just past the Church was Main Street, and as we crossed it I could see the guardroom on the right and the closed gates that we had come through when we had arrived down the hill to the left. Although that was only yesterday it seemed as though it lay somewhere in the distant past. In front of us was Number 3 Kitchen and some rooms backed up against the outside wall; these seemed to have been accommodation allocated to missionaries who had been at isolated mission stations.

The first buildings were the camp offices and the Commandant's Office. Grandpa hurried through these. I somehow felt that Grandpa was frightened to be seen by a Committee member and hauled in to do a job, which he was a few weeks later when he was roped in to sort out the electricity distribution. Grandpa did point out the post box and said that the Japanese allowed letters to places in China using the Chinese postal system, but they had to be addressed in Chinese characters. However, letters to England and America had to be written on Red Cross forms and placed in the box in the office for censorship.

Then past some more accommodation used by Catholic priests from the towns and cities in the hinterland of China. The camp wall continued with another watchtower and I saw a guard at the top carrying a rifle. Opposite, well within the camp was the 'Sunnyside Hospital', which had been built in the past twenty years. It was three stories in the front but having been built on a semi-cliff, as the ground dipped down to the river, the back was only two stories.

'Grandpa. Why is what you have called the hospital in such a dirty state?' I asked.



'The building was gutted and looted in the fighting between the Japanese and Chinese in 1937-8. Sadly most if not all the patients were bayoneted. That has been cleared up but the electric wiring and plumbing was all ripped out; it will take a lot of work before it can be used again as a hospital, although the top floor has been appropriated by Catholic priests for living accommodation. I suspect that you can see the fields from their windows, as the priests have devised a means of signalling to Chinese outside the camp. You can see that all the medicine has been poured away and pills are ground into the floors. Just wanton destruction.'

'What is "wanton" Grandpa?'

'It means needless, unnecessary.'

As we climbed up the slope of the ground, Grandpa added: 'You can see a couple of tennis courts and a basketball field. I suspect that was devised by the American Missionary Doctors to get patients to recover with exercise. Whilst basketball can be quite lively a game it can also be quite gentle. Americans are very keen on it.'

'Did you play basketball, Grandpa?'

'No,' he replied, laughingly, 'I am too short. One needs to be well over 6 foot to play properly. Even your Dad at over 6 foot did not, he concentrated on rugby, ice hockey, and recreational tennis with your mother.'

By now we had come to a little doorway, going through it there was a small field edged with trees. This seemed to have been taken over by Catholic priests, who were walking to and fro reading from their prayer books. I realised that they were saying their 'Office'. It was a poor substitute for cloisters, but better than nothing. There was another doorway in the corner and this led to a sort of passageway between the wall that separated the internees' part of the camp from the comfortable-looking, two-storey Japanese quarters, originally the Missionaries' Houses. The right wall just split off some more accommodation and a small field which I could see had mulberry trees. I recognised these from Beidaihe, and I knew that their berries were delicious and that the trees were ones you could climb. The rather useless acacias had very

brittle branches, as I had found to my cost the last year in Beidaihe when a four-inch branch had snapped under my weight. I had been warned by Art, but in my usual manner of disregarding elder cousins like adults I had to find out for myself, fortunately with no broken bones. The acacias in Weihsien I identified as being too tall and thus unsafe, higher than about 12 feet.

As we are now quite close to your room I will take you back to your parents,' Grandpa said, as I recognised the back of Kitchen No. 2.

Roger was playing in the dirt outside our door with some coloured wooden blocks that had been packed for him in my case. I squatted beside him, as he had also been given my 'official' toy, a metal ambulance about 12 inches long. I don't think that Mum had found my toy soldiers which I had smuggled on to the train, and still had. Then Grandpa went inside to speak to Mum.

The first few weeks we lived in Weihsien was a period of adjustment for everyone. I ran around freely with little parental supervision and played with the children living in and around the neighbouring blocks; in fact those first three months I tended not to wander too much from our room. The organising of schools was put into the 'difficult' tray, it was going to be too hot and there was no obvious building to use.

In normal times the next term would not have started until September, and anyway things might be different then. Our parents had a far worse time of it, trying to get accustomed to life in such restricted confines. In fact the room that we lived in seemed smaller than the enormous cupboard in which Mum had kept her clothes in Tianjin. Until our heavy baggage arrived we had to sleep on the floor, but fortunately Mum was able to borrow a cot, brought in by an expectant Mum who would not need it for a few months. That stopped Roger waking and grizzling on and off during the night. Otherwise I enjoyed sleeping on the floor, especially as I could keep my clothes on.

It was difficult trying to keep Roger clean; Mum washed his nappies, but I was left to my own devices. All the adults had had their luxury lifestyles abruptly terminated. The ladies suffered much more, doing their own chores. They had always been spoiled, with servants to do the domestic work.

In about ten days our trunks and beds arrived, dumped on the road near Kitchen No. 2. There was a general feeling of 'I'll help you if you will help me,' and the items got put on the ground in front of each room. The trunks had been broken into, but as they were mostly clothes nothing much had been taken.

The beds were intact but three full-sized beds and a cot would take more floor room than our room possessed. My parents realised that the only solution was bunks. The packing cases had to stay on the ground until they were dismantled, and the beds assembled. That was not an easy process as the door was too narrow to take an assembled bed unless turned on its side! Borrowing a claw hammer, Dad was able to retrieve the nails from our crates and straighten them on a stone.

Then Dad needed to borrow a saw. Our next door neighbours were Dr 'JW' Grice, his wife and their daughter Susie, who was about three years older than I. Dr Grice offered a saw but Dad declined on the grounds that 'It might be needed to take a leg off someone.' Dr Grice was the family GP in Tianjin and 'JW' and Kay Grice were good friends of my parents; he had been a British Army doctor during the First World War and sometimes could be persuaded to talk about the Mesopotamian campaign. However, in Rooms 2 and 3 of our block were the Dunjishahs. There were three daughters, Thritie, Katie and Frennie. Thritie was a bit older than I, Katie six months younger and Frennie two years younger. Mr Dhunjishah, who had been manager of the Talati House Hotel, had a complete carpenter's tool box, and Dad had no qualms borrowing his saw for the morning to cut up crates to make the beds into bunks. Dad opted for a top bunk with one below for Mum, her back still troubling her, whilst Roger and his borrowed cot had to stay on the floor. Thus I was made an upper bunk with long legs so that the space below could be used as well for the pram. I was always dubious at the stability of the arrangement, but did not fall out and it did not collapse.

It was right across camp to Block 7 where the men's showers were. When to go and have a shower was decided by Mum, when she often issued a tiny square of soap. My reaction to start with was 'Why can't I use the women's as they are much closer?' I was firmly rebuked for that

thought and told that I was too old. Dad cut in to say he was going to the shower block and that I could come too. The shower block had a water tank built on a tower with a pump at the bottom, which was manually pumped by sixteen- to nineteen-year-old boys, so that the tank was filled and the water pressure gave what was considered a decent shower. When I first tried them I discovered that the water was 'cold only', too uncomfortable and as there was no other soap than a battered bit of carbolic which had been used by dozens, it seemed better to stay dry, unwashed but comfortable.

I also sneaked into the men's lavatories near the playing field when caught with the need, the urinals there basic but useable. One day I heard Mum having a whispered exchange with Dad on the subject, and he had told her quietly 'Don't let him go there, Margot, he can use your ferry in the hut here for the time being. The nearest "gents" are just not suitable for youngsters yet.'

Naturally this aroused my curiosity, and as soon as I could get away from my parents I did so. I recruited my new Weihsien friend, Joe Wilson, who lived in Block 41 Room 1, across the path from us but in the same compound. Joe was eighteen months younger, but nonetheless someone to play with. Anyhow, we found our way to the men's toilet block near the end of Block 23. It smelt pretty unpleasant as we approached and on entering found out why. There were no toilet units or seats, just shallow square cement 'basins' with two raised foot plates each side of a hole in the middle. There was no cistern and the means of flushing was a bucket which was filled under a pathetic tap in the far end. The whole place was running with sewage and even we, scruffy schoolboys, were horrified. There was a man taking his trousers down balancing on the foot rests, trying desperately to keep his trousers out of the various liquids, he shouted at us to get out as we stood gaping, whilst he bent and tried to align himself with the hole in the floor. We fled giggling and took to doing what we had to do against the toilet block wall, having made sure we were not seen. As to my father's edict I had no intention of using a potty, which I considered was for babies only. Mum could make her own arrangements, but I was not going down that route.

'I do not know what the fuss is about, Joe,' I

said, 'The facilities are no different to the ones we provide for the servants in Tianjin, although we do give them a short piece of hose with a working tap. Puzzles me, where do they keep the paper? It can't be in reach' I continued. And then changed the subject.

After a few weeks the loo problem was largely cured. Amongst the camp inmates there were engineers of every kind, architects, builders and designers, not to mention doctors and teachers. Some form of engineer rigged up a way to flush the formerly un-flushable and we were allowed permission to use the cleaned-up facilities, with the caveat being 'only when wearing shorts'. When I looked puzzled, Mum said, 'If you go in there and try and take long trousers down you will get them into the filth. And, you will then stink and I am not washing stinking trousers. You know there is no laundry. The Japanese had one about six miles away and people started sending sheets and towels, only to find that they came back both torn and dirtier than they went in, if they were indeed returned. So we ladies have decided to boycott the laundry until a better one is provided.'

During April and May us boys kept clear of the blackened rubbish tip, which was adjacent to Blocks 23 and 24 yet only just over the wall from Block 41; there were too many adults trying their hands at scrounging bits to salvage. This pile of partly burnt furniture and laboratory equipment I had first seen on my walk with Granny the day after we arrived. Joe and I with one or two others used to sift through the ash to see if we could find anything for us to play with. We had got the idea from adults who had salvaged half-burnt furniture and repaired it to make it useable. Dad had even used some of the wood to make the headboards of our bunk beds. The certainty, to us boys, was that you got filthy, but by then we had worked out that if you finished by five in the afternoon you could get down to the showers and have a near hot shower because the sun had heated the water in the tank. Leave it any later and the adults had used all the warm water.

Soap was still a problem but one could rub hard, which was the only solution Mum had to offer. What little soap she had she needed for Roger.

One day towards the end of April, after the adults had given up on the area and removed anything of use or value, we came across some shards of broken glass. Joe cut himself and yelled, but I was too busy digging out something much more interesting, something different from below the glass.

‘Look what I’ve found,’ I crowed in delight. ‘I think it’s an engine or something like that.’

‘Does it work?’ asked Brian Calvert seriously. ‘I bet it doesn’t work.’ Brian was six months older than I but we had known each other for years. In fact the last birthday party that I had been to was his in Tianjin. He now lived in Block 17 on the opposite side of the camp.

I tried to run it along the ground without much success. ‘No, not really but I can still use it with my ambulance. I think the model is some sort of steam engine.’

‘What would they use those for in a laboratory?’ Joe asked curiously. We had all been told to keep away from this part of the rubbish pile as there was a lot of glass from broken laboratory equipment.

‘Maybe they did experiments with steam engines,’ I suggested, not having much idea.

‘Possibly, better than this book anyway,’ Joe muttered. He had found a half-charred physics book and was trying to decipher the symbols and make sense of it.

I was admiring my new toy when I was pounced upon from behind and the engine snatched out of my hand by a larger boy whom I did not recognise, from yet another part of camp. A scuffle followed and we both fell into the bonfire ash whilst we wrestled for possession of the treasure. I won but not before I had got myself covered in dirt. When I got back to our room Mum was horrified, but I was triumphant, although battered.

‘Look at you,’ she cried. ‘We have very little soap and I have to wash everything by hand on a washboard in the washhouse. Roger’s nappies take a lot of time and precious soap. How could you get so dirty? You are not to go and play near that bonfire again.’

Unfortunately, Dad backed Mum up, although I think that he thought it was quite amusing when I explained indignantly that I had only fallen in the ash because a bigger boy had tried to steal my trophy. But the ash pile was out of bounds at least for a few days, until my parents forgot about the incident.

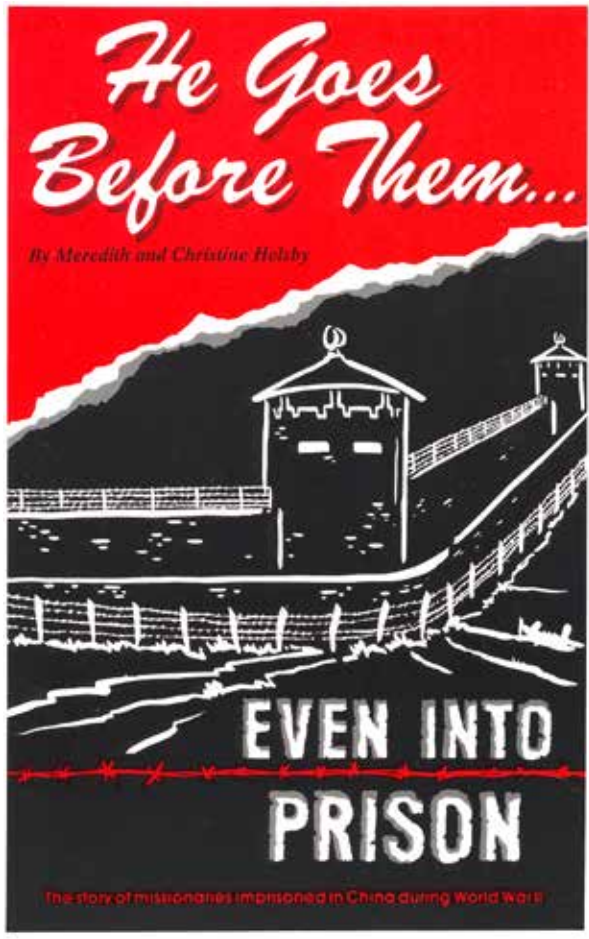
Joe and I moved our operations to another part of the camp, nearer a kitchen where we could smell food even if we could not have it. One day we found a paper sack of very light grey powder, slightly torn but discarded behind a building near some low bushes, and smuggled it back to Blocks 41 and 42. We got some water and found that if mixed with earth it made perfect modelling clay which was quite hard when dry. We spent a whole day making several masterpieces.

A couple of days later we were found by an American man, who at first admired our efforts, then got rather upset when he read the label on the bag. ‘Hey kids, this stuff is cement,’ he told us so loudly that several other men were attracted to the scene. ‘What the hell are you doing playing with this? We can use this for building. You had no right to mess with this.’

...

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)



[first impressions ...]

Chapter 5 [excerpts] ...

WEIHSIEN

With the dawn of our first day in Weihsien Camp came the opportunity to explore our surroundings. Weihsien had seen happier times. In its prime, during the early years of the century, it had been a model missionary compound of the American Presbyterian Church.

Within the walls of the six-acre enclosure were a Bible school, hospital, bakery, long rows of single-story dormitories, and western-style homes for American missionary doctors and teachers. In fact, two notable personalities, novelist Pearl Buck and

Henry Luce, founder of Time and Life magazines, had both been born there.

Leading from the high wooden gates up the slope through the center of the one-time campus was a black cinder road which we came to call "Main Street." On either side was an assortment of buildings. Behind them rose what had at one time been splendid edifices of Edwardian architecture, housing the administration building and the hospital.

For more than a year both Chinese and Japanese troops had been quartered on this compound, and although the buildings had not been damaged their interiors were in shambles with fixtures ripped out and furnishings ruined. Their contents now were scattered about yards and doorways in unsightly piles of debris. Gratefully, a good deal of this material could now be salvaged, refashioned and put to good use. We all learned a new word, "scrounge," which meant picking up any piece of anything we thought would make our homes more livable.

In his well-known book *Shantung Compound* one of the internees, Langdon Gilkey, gives a graphic description of our community:

- We were, in the words of the British, a "ruddy" mixed bag. We were almost equally divided in numbers between men and women. We had roughly 400 who were 60 years of age and another 400 under 15. Our oldest citizen was in his mid-90s, our youngest was a baby who had just been born in the camp hospital.

We were equally diverse in our national and racial origins. At the start of camp our population comprised about 800 Britains, 600 Americans, 250 Hollanders, 250 Belgians (the major portion of the last two groups were Roman Catholic clerics of various sorts).---

'These are approximate numbers. Scandinavians should also have been included. By April 1, 1943, our camp population numbered 1,751.---

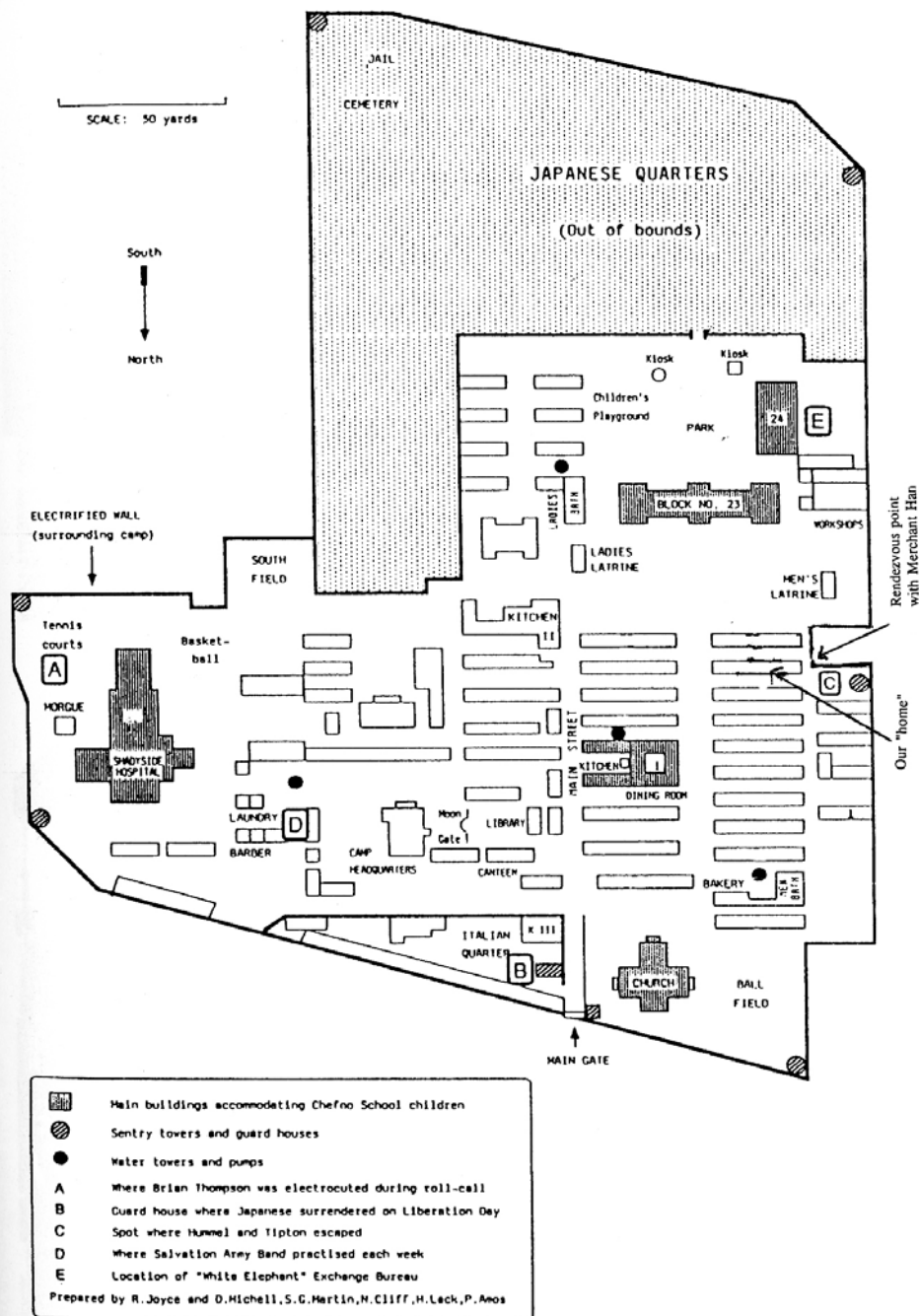
--- We were later joined by about 100 Italians from the Shanghai area, who were placed in a separate section. Interspersed throughout were eight Belgian and two Dutch families, four Parsee families, two Cuban families, part of a touring jai-alai team, a Negro and Hawaiian jazz band, a few Palestinian Jews, an Indian translator and interpreter and about 60 White Russian women and their children... .

--- Called White Russians because they were politically aligned with the Mensheviks (whites) who were defeated by the Bolsheviks (reds) in the power struggle following the revolution of 1919.---

The most obvious diversity lay in the differences in the social status which each of us had enjoyed in the outside world. As we could see from the first moment, our group ranged up and down the entire social ladder.

Our members included some from the well-to-do leaders of Asia's colonial business world and the genteel products of English "public school" life. More were from the Anglo-Saxon middle-class (represented by small businessmen, customs officials, engineers, exporters, lawyers, doctors and shop-keepers), and not a few from among the dopers, barflies and raffish characters of the port cities. Mingling with the secular hoi polloi were some 400 Protestant missionaries. They embraced almost all denominations, theologies and ways of life. Also, for the first six months, there were 400 Roman Catholic priests, monks and nuns. . . . When the last group arrived in camp, we totaled nearly 1800.

WEIHSIEN CONCENTRATION CAMP



The first great crisis faced by this vast hoard of people thrust so unceremoniously into the ill-prepared compound was occasioned by the basic demands for toilet facilities. Since our captors were ensconced in the western missionary homes there remained four simple latrines containing no more than five or six toilets apiece to service our entire community. These toilets were of the simplest Chinese design, mere holes in the floor bereft of flushing mechanisms and designed to be emptied regularly by Chinese coolies with "honey buckets"

From dawn to dusk lines outside the latrines were interminable, and before long contents were overflowing, creating the most repulsive conditions imaginable. This was a special trial for women, due not only to their delicate sensibilities but to the fact that they had only one latrine to the men's three. This, we learned, was due to misinformation the Japanese had received concerning the ratio of the sexes of their captives.

This situation was somewhat alleviated when a delegation of volunteers, among them intrepid Catholic nuns, tied cloths over their faces and waded into the loathsome mass of excrement to clean it up. In time, a crew of engineers devised a system for hand-flushing the toilets after each use.

The first day after our arrival at the Weih sien Compound, we were summoned to the playing field to be identified and counted, an irritating ordeal that took several hours. The commandant read the rules. One strictly specified that we were to have no contact with the Chinese on the outside of the wall. This was a fore-taste of the innumerable roll calls, an immutable feature of camp life.

The bell tolled at 8:30 each morning and again at 6:30 p.m. (earlier in the winter). This was to summon the entire camp population to six designated areas.

Residents of our section assembled in the church yard in rows of 20, I.D. badges properly displayed on the left shoulder. This ritual required no less than 45 minutes, often much longer if somebody couldn't be accounted for. Gratefully, while waiting to be counted, we were permitted to relax and visit with friends.

The stern-faced officers who moved at such a deliberate

pace to peer at our badges and check our names in their registers soon became familiar figures to us. Fortunately the 70 guards assigned to the Weih sien camp were not members of the regular Japanese army but civilian diplomatic officers, who had served in various capacities in China, thus a cut above the typical soldiers who brutalized Allied prisoners in the infamous P.O.W. camps in Singapore and the Philippines.

For the most part, the guards' treatment of us was marked by decorum and good discipline, and efforts were made to observe the articles of the Geneva Convention governing treatment of civilian prisoners of war. A few, like Mr. Kogi who had studied in a mission school, had come in contact with Christianity in Japan and went out of their way to treat us with consideration and courtesy.

Still when our captors, small of stature and looking almost like children beside a 6 foot 2 inch American or Englishman, felt intimidated they could respond with unfeigned arrogance or fly into a rage barking, ranting, gesticulating, slapping and kicking. When in dress uniform these diminutive men strutting back and forth, their long Samurai swords trailing in the dirt, looked so much like small boys at play it was hard to suppress a smile. Smiling or laughing in their presence, however, is something we early learned to avoid — as this was often taken as a sign of contempt, insolence or lack



WEIHSIEN: First Impressions ...

of respect, inviting angry reprisals and threats.

Among 70 men of any nationality one will, of course, discover tremendous diversity. And while some of these guards early identified themselves as friendly, others we soon learned to give a wide berth. A few acquired interesting nicknames.

The commandant, a heavy scowling man of surly disposition, was soon dubbed "King Kong." Another officer, who looked like the Japanese counterpart of Sergeant Snorkle, took a perverse delight in squelching any activity which appeared suspiciously like fun. The sight of an internee sunbathing or a couple holding hands would elicit a growled "Pu Hsing Ti." (You can't do that!)

---'Wade-Giles Romanization was in wide use during World War II era.---

Soon he had earned the moniker Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti. Before long wherever this gentleman appeared, he was greeted by throngs of small children who followed, dancing up and down chorusing, "Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti, Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti."

This was most disconcerting, of course. So much so that the man appealed to the commandant, and a short time later the following announcement appeared on the camp bulletin board: "Henceforth in the Weihsien Civilian Center, by special order of His Imperial Majesty, the emperor of Japan, Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti is not to be known as Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti but as Sergeant Yomiara."

Life is full of surprises, and we soon learned it was a mistake to judge the Japanese by their appearance. One internee described a surprising encounter with a menacing-looking guard:

It was with great apprehension that we saw one afternoon at tea time one of the soldiers, loaded down with every kind of portable weapon,

approach a building where, among others, an American family with a baby was housed. I was the only male present at the time. Gingerly I opened the door at the guard's brisk knock. He bowed and sucked air in sharply through his teeth. Then unloading his extensive armor, to my utter amazement he opened his great coat and pulled out a small bottle of milk.

"Please," he said haltingly, "take for baby." After we had recovered from our surprise sufficiently to invite him to come in, we asked whether there was anything we could do for him in return.

"May I hear classical records?" he asked. Again we gasped and said, "Who are you?" He answered, "I, second flutist in Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. Miss good music!"

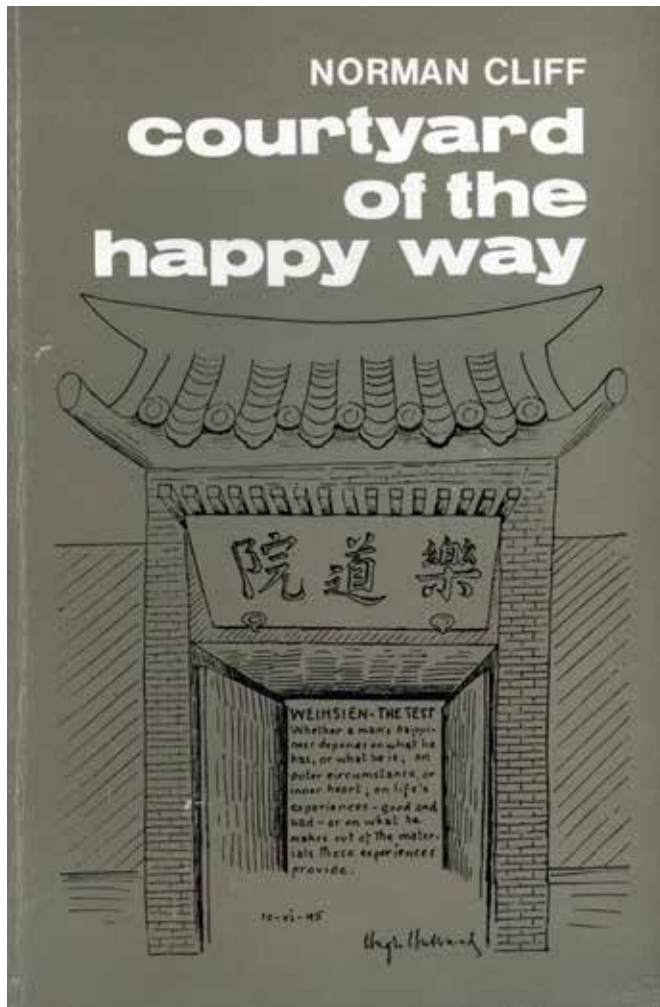
Weihsien camp was, in effect, a hastily assembled city of 1800 people of 17 nationalities wedged into the confines of a six-acre compound. All of the organizations and services that develop in a normal community over decades we were now forced to construct almost overnight. In this enterprise, our Japanese overlords demonstrated the commendable gifts of efficiency and administration that have made them the world leaders in commerce and industry.

...

[further reading] ...

(copy/paste into your internet browser !)

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)



Chapter 6 [exerpts] ...

One day in August 1943 a top-ranking Japanese officer from the consular headquarters accompanied by Kosaka came to each of the three Temple Hill camps with the curt instruction-“Make immediate preparations to be transferred to the Weihsien Civil Assembly Centre.”

Certain Americans and Canadians were told to prepare to travel ahead of us to Weihsien via Tsingtao. There they were to be grouped with hundreds of other compatriots and be repatriated to the USA and Canada in a recently organised exchange of prisoners.

We did not take long to pack and make ourselves ready. We had already discarded all extraneous belongings when at the C.I.M. compound, and were living with our basic possessions mattress, blankets, clothes and a few books.

In September amid much excitement, we boarded a small Japanese steamer in the harbour. At last we were leaving the narrow confines of the Temple Hill camp. The Japanese had warned that they would not be supplying any food for the voyage, and so the baker, a former mission employee, who had been bringing bread daily to the Temple Hill camps, had agreed as his last transaction with us to deliver to the ship enough for the short voyage and journey ahead.

But when the ship's siren sounded, the baker had not arrived. The vessel began to glide out of the harbour. The headmaster had visions of a shipload of frantically hungry schoolchildren crying out for food. But the ship stopped in the harbour. A launch was making its way from the docks towards us.

The determined baker had secured transport for his important cargo of food. The bread aboard, we slipped out of the harbour in front of the Bluff towards the open sea. Across the water was the whole port of Chefoo — the place of my birth eighteen years before, the scene of my upbringing for the previous twelve years, including a year's internment. Few could lay greater claims to this port as being home.

There was the Bund along which we had trudged every Sunday to Union Church, the Chefoo Club where the business community had had their social life, the Settlement Hill with its consular offices in past days. Every glance recalled a thousand memories.

From the deck we looked across at the Boys' School, the compound, the Co-Educational block, the bathing houses, and in front of them all the sea, where we had bathed and had boat races. On looking more closely, we could see alterations

to the premises stables and other buildings erected by the Japanese.

In that small geographical area which we could see, I had learned virtually everything I knew of life discipline, sportsmanship, educational knowledge and, not least, trust in God.

The fleeting glance at the schools was over. We were going out to sea, but Chefoo was still very much in my heart.

"Land of my youth!

What mortal hand Can e'er untie the filial band

That knits me to thy sunny strand."

My mind went back over the events since Pearl Harbor nearly two years before — the food brought to the compound by a German missionary, the arrest and subsequent release of the business men of the town and Pa Bruce, the ten months at Temple Hill and the launch with the supplies of bread arriving in the nick of time.

...

[Further reading] ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

CHAPTER VII

WEIHSIEN THE TEST

[Excerpts] ...

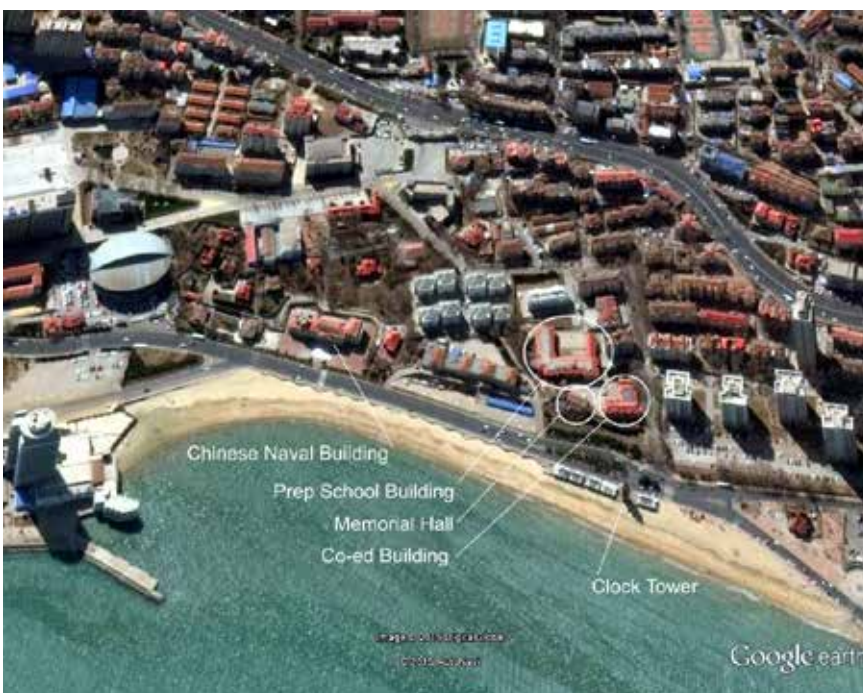
WE WERE SOON TO LEARN the story of how Weih sien Civil Assembly Centre, as the Japanese officially described it, came into being.

Six months before our arrival in Weih sien, Allied personnel from all over Japanese-occupied North China had been rounded up to go into internment.' In Peking and Tientsin, the Chinese populace lined the streets to witness the strange spectacle of hundreds of British and Americans of all ages and backgrounds struggling through the streets, dragging the luggage allowed them in the official circulars just sent out. It was a deliberate act of humiliation by the Japanese.

They were from all walks of life — lecturers and professors from Peking Union Medical College and Yenching University, missionaries of the London Missionary Society, the English Methodist Society, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, officers of the Salvation Army, business executives of the British & American Tobacco Company, priests and nuns from North China and Manchuria.

Some two thousand of them came by cart and train, converging on Weih sien, tired, apprehensive and ill-prepared for the manual labour and hardship which were in store for them. Their relatively easy life in these Far Eastern communities with plenty of servants and a high standard of living had come to an abrupt end.

The deserted compound to which they had been brought, in size 200 yards by 150 yards, had been a flourishing Presbyterian mission centre, which included a church, hospital, rows of tiny rooms (9 feet by 12 feet) for the housing



of Bible students, tuition buildings, and, at the farthest end from the main gate, staff houses for the American missionaries, teachers and doctors.

In its very earliest days two now well-known American personalities had been born here — Henry Luce, editor of Time and Life, and Pearl Buck, popular authoress of novels based on Chinese life and customs.

The new arrivals had found the premises in very bad condition; after the missionaries and Chinese student body had left, the property had been looted by Chinese bandits, and then occupied by Japanese soldiers; afterwards vacated and left to deteriorate further. The roads were strewn with rubble, the toilets choked, and the remains of desks and tables lying around, having been broken up for firewood.

These first internees had set to work with that resourcefulness and determination characteristic of the human race when looking for the basic comforts of life. They cleared roads, cleaned the rooms, opened up three big kitchens (Kitchen I for the Tientsin community, Kitchen II for those from Peking and Kitchen III for Tsingtao internees), each feeding five hundred people. Catholic priests from Belgium, Holland and America, mostly in their twenties, cleared the toilets and erected large ovens for the camp bakery.

A well-organised community was soon running its own affairs, each person with his or her own specific duties. At the top of the organisation chart was the Japanese commandant, and under him the camp representative. He was in turn chairman of a Council of Committee leaders, covering general affairs, discipline, labour, education, supplies, quarters, medicine, engineering and finance.

How fortunate we were in that by the

time we arrived in this self-contained community all was running smoothly and efficiently. The administrative machinery was most impressive. The Quarters Leader allocated us dormitories, the Labour Leader gave us forms to fill in with crosses to put down to indicate how much experience we had had in teaching, engineering, cooking, baking and other spheres.

It was quite evident that the four hundred

Catholic priests and nuns had made a great impact and profound impression on the internee community. They had turned their hands to the most menial tasks cheerfully and willingly, organised baseball games and helped in the educational programme for the young.

But inevitably romances had been formed between admiring Tientsin and Peking girls and celibate Belgian and American priests from the lonely wastes of Manchuria. Anxious Vatican officials had solved the delicate problem by careful negotiations with

the Japanese, as a result of which all but thirty priests had been transferred to an institution of their own in Peking where they could meditate and say their rosaries without feminine distractions.

Their departure had left a vacuum in effective manpower for such tasks as pumping, cooking and baking. Thus the arrival of our Chefoo community aggravated the situation further, for out of the three hundred of us only about two dozen were potential camp workers, the remainder being schoolchildren and retired missionaries.

But for ourselves coming to Weih sien proved to be the opening up of a new world, after the cramped and monotonous life at Temple Hill. Here in Weih sien were well-informed scholars,



missionaries of other traditions, business men with a variety of backgrounds. Adult education was provided in Chinese, Japanese, Russian; bookkeeping, shorthand and philosophy. There were concerts, pantomimes, plays, baseball matches and many other community activities.

Soon life in this new camp was running smoothly and we were feeling very much part of this new social environment. I was housed with other boys of the school in Block 23, an attractive building at the far end of the camp, superior to the small blocks of rooms in which the families were housed. The Labour Representative placed me in a kitchen shift of Kitchen I that fed some six hundred people.

Our mode of life was simple and primitive. The day began with filling buckets at the pump for purposes of cooking and washing. Firewood was collected from trees and bushes, and used in the stove in the middle of the room. From this, water was heated for shaving and washing, and at a later stage for cooking breakfast, that is whatever we had privately for supplementing the official rations. We queued up in Kitchen I for a ladle of bread porridge and some bread. Into our mugs was poured black tea ladled out of a bucket. Back we went to the bedroom to mix the kitchen issue of food with our own dwindling resources in the most enjoyable combination possible.

Then followed washing of dishes, cleaning of rooms, hanging our mattresses in the sun in a bid to kill the bed bugs, washing our clothes, hanging them out to dry, and so on.

By this time the roll-call bell would ring. We would wait in four groups in different parts of the camp for the Japanese guards to inspect us, count us and make provision for those who were on special duties. While waiting for the guards we read books, studied languages, shared camp rumours and speculated about the future.

In addition to the limited resources of the official camp kitchens, there were other sources of supplies. There was the White Elephant where cigarettes, soap, peanut oil and other provisions could be purchased. Internees without ready cash brought books and clothes which they bartered for food.

Cash for buying these commodities came

from "Comfort Money", brought by the Swiss Red Cross representative, Mr. Eggar, who took all kinds of risks to visit the camp regularly. Internees had to sign a promissory note, undertaking to repay the money after the war. In Chinese dollars the amounts received monthly sounded large, but with the rapidly rising inflation they in fact bought less and less.

Another factor in the battle for survival was the black market. I watched this delicate operation in full swing. Going to chop wood for fuel in an out-of-the-way part of camp, I stumbled on it quite accidentally.

In between electrified wires were three Chinese, busy passing over the wall below the wires boxes of eggs and some crates of bigar (wine). On this side of the wires were some Tientsin business men receiving the provisions and piling them behind some loose bricks. The operation depended on the vigilance of another internee a hundred yards away on Rocky Road, who was on the look out for any movement of Japanese guards either from their residences in one direction or from the sports field in the other. Farther away another man was posted on the main road, watching for any movement at the guardroom just inside the main gate of the camp. If one guard appeared on any front, the man watching blew his nose ostentatiously. The same gesture followed down the line, and within half a minute black-market operations came to a standstill till the all clear was given once again.

Through this adventurous exercise families with small children were able to get eggs and other items not available at the White Elephant, while thirsty bachelors could drink the bigar to drown their sorrows. Initially the goods were bought for hard cash, but as the war progressed IOU chits were signed undertaking settlement after the war.

Early one morning I walked past the sports field to see the corpse of a Chinese black marketeer hanging on the wires. The authorities left it there for a while as an object lesson. On another occasion a group of Chinese traders was caught and all were beaten up by the Japanese. On the whole the marketing was carried out without such repercussions.

My only dealings with the black market



a line of internees outside Block 24 when Aunt Lilian (an American Presbyterian lady missionary who had known my parents at Shunteh) asked to see me after roll-call.

When I found her, she said with a tone of uncertainty in her voice, "Norman, I received some Golden Syrup from my mission station, but a rat fell into it as soon as I opened it. I've put it in the garbage box behind the building. If

were unique and perhaps amusing. Pa Bruce, the headmaster, came round taking orders for eggs. I asked for two dozen, and paid cash for them, leaving just a few coppers in my purse. Two weeks later he returned with the eggs.

I awoke the following morning ready for a feast. Around the stove in the centre of the dormitory, I gathered a good supply of twigs and cardboard for fuel. The fire was lit, the frying pan placed on the stove. Into it went some hair oil, all I had for frying. Into a mug I broke an egg — it was black and green. I emptied it into a bucket and started again with another egg.

But all were bad. I had hardly thrown the shell of the last egg on to the ash tray when Pa Bruce entered. Sizing up the situation over-hastily, he shouted, "If you are going to eat all your eggs the first day, I won't order any more for you." He was gone before I could explain. I had put all my eggs in one basket in more ways than one.

Another source of nourishment in the early period of internment was the parcels received by the missionaries from their stations in Peking, Tientsin and other places. Catholic nuns and priests received what seemed to us wonderful luxuries on a grand scale. Protestant missionaries did not fare nearly as well.

Soon after I had become a roll-call warden, charged with the task of counting the personnel in Blocks 23 and 24, I was taking the guard along

you're interested, take it."

I rushed to the box, grabbed the tin, and went to my dormitory with the valued spread. While there was usually plenty of bread in the camp, spreads were hard to come by. The rat was duly removed, the syrup was boiled for several hours over the stove, and then three of us spread it sumptuously on our bread for some weeks afterwards.

For those were the days when the Lord's Prayer had to be amended to read, "Give us this day our daily bread, and some jam to spread on it."

End of Chapter.

...

[Further reading] ...

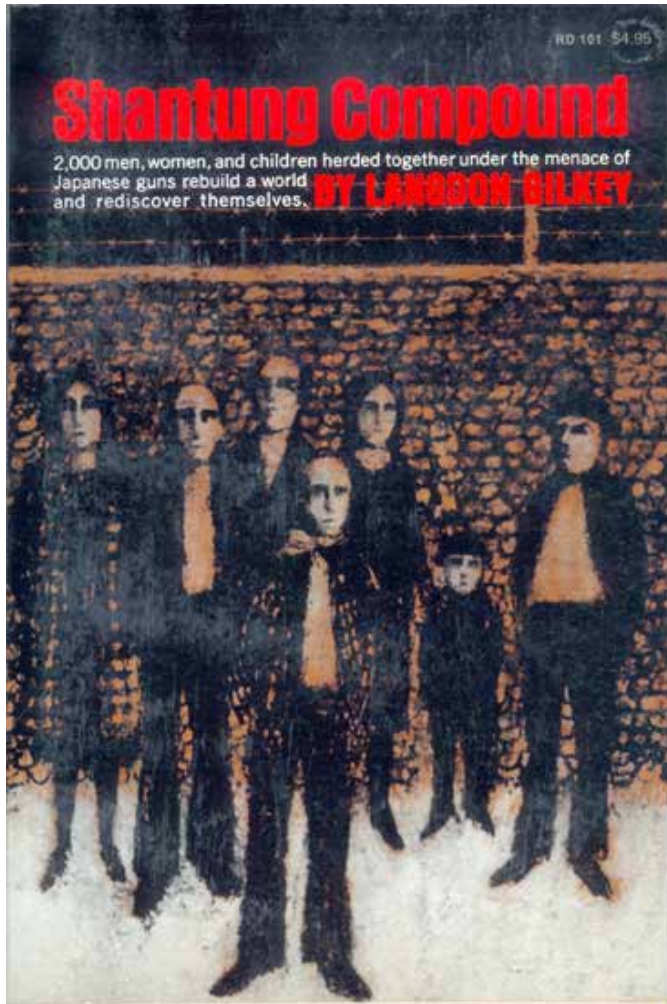
(copy/paste in your web browser):

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

WEIHSIEN: THE COMMITTEE ...

by *Langdon Gilkey*

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)



I arrived together, the room was filled with important looking strangers. Most of them seemed to be British businessmen, with some Americans thrown in. There was a scattering of missionaries, and in one corner a small contingent of Catholic priests. Partly by surmise, partly by asking, I found that they were, like ourselves, the temporary representatives of what were clearly the four main groups of the camp: Tientsin, Tsingtao, the Catholics, and the newly arrived Peking contingents. Probably picked hastily and arbitrarily much the way we were, these men represented the informal leadership that had been established in each city before coming to camp. And as each of them sensed, if anybody was to solve these early problems of the camp, it must be these representatives. Hence immediately they agreed to meet there every night in order to plan an organized attack on our difficulties, and to ask the Japanese rulers of the camp to come in to discuss with them whatever needed to be done.

My first sight of how men behave in relation to power came in those sessions when our political structure was being born. What became apparent at once to my fascinated gaze was the serious way in which these Titans of North China's business world began jockeying among themselves for leadership.

With the exception of the priests and a few of us who sat in the back rows, most of those in that large room represented some large European, British, or American business in China fully as much as he did his group in camp. These men were "Stone of Standard Oil," "Robinson of National City," "Jameson of British and American Tobacco," "Campbell of Butterfield and Swire," "Brewster of Lloyd's," "Johns of the Kailon Mining Company," and so on.

Chapter 2 [excerpts] ...

... Camp organization:

The Committee ...

The initial meeting of the "leaders," held that first night we arrived, took place in a large room in the old school building reserved for administrative offices. When Montague and

In the course of these early stages, each saw himself and the others in terms of the image created by the power of his company, and by the prestige of his own role in that business. Each brought with him, therefore, not only long habits of personal authority, but the expectation—indeed the need—to exercise the same dominating role here that he enjoyed in the treaty ports. As a professor needs recognition when he delivers a paper, or a minister needs gratitude when he has preached a sermon, so these men needed authority—even if realistically it was the paltry power of an official position among a gang of internees in the hinterland of China.

This struggle for leadership made itself evident in many subtle ways. Ostensibly, when each man spoke in those informal meetings, he was concerned that the problem under discussion—whether sanitation, food, or leaky roofs—be solved, and he would carefully address himself to that problem. But it was evident from his tone of voice, his manner, the emphasis of his speech, and above all from the way he handled the alternative suggestions of others, that he was also anxious that his be the germinating mind that provided the resolution, and that his be the voice that ended the discussion.

This struggle for the authoritative voice, for the dominance which others not only respect but give way to in will and opinion was both evident and fascinating because prior to these meetings no one had such authority. It all had to be generated right then and there and, so to speak, out of the sole materials of human will and brains. There was no camp chairman, no government, not even a chairman of the meeting; all such posts of authority were still “up for grabs.” Nor were there any of the outward supports and symbols of personal authority: transparent wealth, support of powerful groups and forces—or guns. The only external authority possessed by anyone was that steadily fading aura of the prestige he had once enjoyed in the world outside. Whatever dominance a man achieved in that group, he gained through inherent personal capacity for power. Such capacity is composed of those intangible but basic qualities that cause the outward signs and symbols of authority to gravitate to and remain with a particular man. These qualities are the ability to think quickly and relevantly, the crucial force of

GENERAL ELECTORAL CAMP COMMITTEES

TESTED

| See | Candidate | Kitchen | Proposer | Secondar |
|------|------------------|---------|-------------------|------------------|
| LINE | E. McLaren | 1 | Bishop T.A. Scott | J. Ryelap |
| ION | W. Pryor | 2 | H.L.N. Snow | A.J.D. Brishland |
| ENT | W.J. Howard | 2 | H.W. Hubbard | J.O. Stewart |
| RING | I.B. Gilling | 2 | A.G.F. Cobley | A.E. Hartledge |
| | J. Allan | 1 | J.G. Gray | A.G. Cameron |
| IRS) | E.J. Schmidt | 2 | C. Appadboom | R.J. Hoch |
| | Dr. J.W.H. Gries | 1 | M.B. Mathews | C.H.B. Longman |
| S | M.C. Halton | 2 | C.M. Pryce | J. Wilkie |

I declare the above duly elected as Chairman of the respective committees.

Sturtevant
Controller

| See | Candidate | Kitchen | Proposer | Secondar |
|-----|---------------|---------|--------------|---------------|
| ES) | P.A. Whitting | 1 | R.H. Eckford | G.N. Courtney |
| | P.H. Cobb | 2 | J.O. Stewart | L.C. Porter |

A secret ballot for the above Committee will be held at the Club Hall on Saturday, November 18th, from 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.

VOTERS MUST APPEAR IN PERSON: PROXIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Votes and the “Committee”

GIVE A CROSS IN THE LAST COLUMN AGAINST THE NAME OF THE CANDIDATE FOR WHOM YOU WISH TO VOTE. YOU ARE ALLOWED ONE (1) VOTE ONLY FOR EACH COMMITTEE.

| COMMITTEE | CANDIDATE | VOTE |
|-----------------|-------------------|------|
| DISCIPLINE | MCLAREN, E. | |
| | STEWART, J.C. | X |
| ENGINEERING | CHAMBERLAIN, W.R. | |
| | GRAY, J.G. | X |
| FINANCE | ALLAN, J. | |
| | HISLOP, J. | X |
| GENERAL AFFAIRS | ANDREWS, E.A. | |
| | CHILTON, W.B. | X |
| | JARRETT, F. | |
| | SCOTT, T.A. | |

great self-confidence and iron firmness of will, and boundless personal energy. The man who had these inherent qualities, like the man with a rapier among those armed only with clubs, could in a short time stand alone over his fellows.

To those of us who watched this developing political struggle, it was soon evident that by the end of the first week these intangibles had done their work; the men with rapiers were already victorious. The character of the discussions had gradually changed. At the beginning any one of the twenty or so men in the room might have felt he could compete on an equal footing with any other man and, if he thought it prudent, challenge the opinion of even the most potent. This was soon no longer the case.

A hierarchy of power had appeared as a few men attained a subtle but real dominance. Now, before committing themselves to an opinion, most of the twenty waited to hear what these

few would say; and when these men had made their statements or suggestions, the others would quickly fall into line. At this point, only the great dared challenge the great; the rest had given up the fight. They would rather now be secure on the side of the winner than reach for the glory of power, only to find themselves defeated, isolated, and humiliated. So, without any external force, even without a hint of a ballot, but only by the quiet processes of self-elimination, the list of contenders had been reduced to two or three giants who were still able to contend for the role of Caesar.

In these nightly meetings I also recognized for the first time the unique character and value of the business mind. The core of its strength was what I might call the “mentality of decision.” One or two of these men seated around the table had taken part in academic discussion groups in Peking. There we pondered such abstract issues as peace, international justice, and the relations of ethics or theology to the world of affairs. I had noted then how strangely silent, though observant, polite, and respectful, these men had been. By contrast, we academicians had fairly flowed with verbiage. And as hour after hour went by with no comment from these business types, I thought to myself in some disappointment and not a little disdain, “nice, responsible men, but hardly bright—surely not able to think.”

Here, however, all was different. The minds of these men, accustomed to practical problems, which called for both know-how and decisiveness, clamped onto our situation and dealt with it creatively. What was needed here were concrete answers to technical and organizational problems. Here general principles and ultimate ends—their interrelations and connections with life—could not have been more irrelevant. To be facile in the area of abstractions or of general truths was of no help when the oven walls were cracked, when the yeast wouldn’t raise the bread dough, when the slightly smelly meat was delivered in hot weather. Now it was the professional mentality that was proving useless, and the academic voices that were strangely silent. I could see the concrete need only after they had pointed it out to the Japanese; I could recognize the neatness of their solution only after they had explained it to us.

These political and organizational sessions continued for about ten days after our arrival. Then, one evening, a Japanese interrupted our meeting. To everyone’s surprise, he announced that committees to represent the whole camp must be formed within forty-eight hours. There were, he said, to be nine such committees, and he listed them: **General Affairs, Discipline, Labor, Education, Supplies, Quarters, Medicine, Engineering, and Finance.**

A Japanese would be in charge of each of these departments of camp life; under him would work one internee who would be the chairman of the committee concerned. The internal governing body of the camp, he continued, was to consist of a council of the nine chairmen of these committees. This council, as a body, would represent the camp to the ruling Japanese authorities. For their own reasons, the Japanese did not wish to have to deal with one powerful man in whom could be embodied the will of the camp. At the time we resented this idea as being against our interests. We wanted a strong leader to represent our needs to the Japanese. But long before the end of our sojourn, most of us agreed that the Japanese had been quite right, although for different reasons. No one among us was big enough for that enormous job.

This Japanese order, abruptly laid down without further discussion, tossed into our laps a ticklish political problem: How could the nine-man council be chosen?

An election by the whole camp was out of the question. In the first place, such a complex matter as a democratic election could never be organized within forty-eight hours. Next, the ordinary voter could not at this point have any idea for whom or for what he was voting. Almost no one was as yet known to more than a few of his intimates; and little about the projected political structure would be understood by anyone outside that room.

It was decided that initially, at least, this ruling committee would be formed by appointment. The method was to be as follows: the present informal leaders of each of the four groups (Peking, Tientsin, Tsingtao, and Catholic) should nominate a slate of nine men from their outfits—one for each of the nine committees. Each sector of the camp

would thus be represented on each committee, the several committees to consist of these four men, one from each group. For example, I was the man chosen by the Peking leaders to be on the Quarters Committee, and so I would presumably join the representatives from Tientsin, Tsingtao, and the Catholics. Then, each of these committees would meet together the next evening to choose one from among the four to be chairman, to sit on the council of nine, and to represent the entire camp to the Japanese in all matters under his jurisdiction. This was a roundabout method at best, but it seemed to make sense considering the situation.



The next night we all met to pick our leaders, and a strange sort of session it was. I felt fairly excited, for I knew that if there had been political pulling and hauling, attack and defense, before in our ordinary sessions, it would be doubled now. The political prizes had now been clarified; and they had been increased in number. The result was that many would-be leaders who had given up the fight to be Caesar could now return to the lists in competition for lesser spots on the ruling council.

As the rest of the men arrived in the committee room, I realized that many new faces had been added to the original twenty or so. Consequently most of us were probably unknown to each other. Then I found myself sent to a corner of the room designated "Quarters," to which three others had been dispatched, a Britisher from Tsingtao, another from Tientsin, and an American Catholic priest. We eyed one another warily for a moment; then we all laughed sheepishly over the fact that we four strangers were to pick from among ourselves a

chairman for the camp Quarters Committee.

The first move was made by the priest. He was a quiet, pale, bland, but quite firm American professor of philosophy. He spoke easily but with precise formality.

"It has been settled authoritatively and finally by our presiding bishop that we of the Catholic clergy are not to take any ruling or leading roles in the camp; rather we are to leave the political direction of things entirely in secular or lay hands. Thus, by order as well as preference, I remove myself at once from competition for this post—although I shall be glad to cooperate with the committee in all matters relevant to the housing of our priests and nuns. Thank you."

Thus was exorcized the brief but unreal specter of Catholic rule among us.

I was about to make the same sort of statement, pleading youth and inexperience, when the lively looking Britisher from Tientsin began speaking. He had introduced himself as Shields, "Far East Shipping, you know." He was a handsome man with a small, neat mustache, sprucely dressed for an internee in a tweed jacket and ascot, with matching silk handkerchief in his breast pocket. He had a pleasant, frequent smile and intelligent, alert eyes. But the way in which his remarks seemed to beat one to the gun could signal a lot of ambition—or at least so I thought as I looked at him.

"That seems to me a very wise move on the part of you fathers," he remarked briskly, "I want you to convey to your bishop for me my personal appreciation for it."

Fie then turned to me, obviously expecting my similar withdrawal from competition. I did not disappoint him, which left the two Britishers to work it out between themselves. At this, the alert Shields grabbed the ball again, and turning to the other Britisher, he asked, "And what sort of experience have you had in this kind of work? Robbins—did you say your name was?"

The moment I looked carefully at the man from Tsingtao I realized somewhat sadly that this would be no contest. A genial, portly, middle-aged Englishman, comfortable with his pipe and heavy tweeds, with a round, fleshy, kind face and heavy-

rimmed glasses, he was obviously no match for the aggressive Shields.

"Yes, my name is Robbins," he said modestly, "and I'm just an engineer from Tsingtao. I can't say I've had too much experience in housing people—for that has never been my line. I certainly don't want to shirk and will be glad to cooperate with any chap, but actually I can't lay claim to any particular qualifications for this job, you know."

We all turned back to Shields, expecting out of deference for the formalities, if nothing else, much the same modest disclaimer—at least in the first round.

Things had developed so well for him, however, that Shields was not interested in form; he struck while we were all off balance.

"As a matter of fact, chaps," he said, "I happen to have had a good deal of firsthand experience in Tientsin—head of quarters there, you know—and so I'm not altogether ignorant of the sort of problems we'll run into. Actually, in my business I've had to deal quite often with top Japanese, invaluable experience for this sort of job, you know. Also I do speak rather passable Chinese. [Later I found even I could speak the language better than he.] Therefore chaps, since none of you seems to feel like doing this, I suggest that I be appointed, shall we say, temporary chairman. Then when we all get to know one another better, we can choose a permanent one."

We were hardly in a position, since we had all backed out of the door, to prevent his locking it from the inside. So we weakly assented to his proposal, and presto—our chairman had been chosen!

This small political gust over the chairmanship of the Quarters Committee increased into gale force among the four nominees for the General Affairs Committee, considered by all to be the central directing agency of camp life. Ever since we had arrived, the question "Who will run the camp?" had been bruited back and forth by politically minded internees. All the serious candidates for local Caesar had been nominated for the General Affairs Committee: Montague, the British American Tobacco man from Peking; the reigning bishop of the Catholics; Harrison,

the leading importer from Tsingtao; and finally Chesterton from Tientsin, the solemn British chairman of the massive Kailon Mining Company. Already everyone knew the real battle would be between Montague and Chesterton, representing as they did the significant social and commercial forces in camp life: American vs. British, Peking vs. Tientsin, tobacco vs. mining. Both men, as had become obvious in our nightly sessions, had the capacities needed for power, however different they were in character.

As I have already hinted, Montague was the American extrovert. Round of face and body but handsome, always clad in a polo coat, he looked among us like a refugee from a country club. He was cheerful, friendly, immensely talkative, quick in repartee, and full of lively stories. He was seldom unkind, never arrogant, and always the embodiment of charm itself—but like most of us, he was never averse to accepting the best room or the favored treatment his importance deserved.

I remember seeing his stout form running down a street the day we were being housed by the Japanese. Out of curiosity as to whither he was bound, I followed. Soon I saw him grab a slight, elegant gentleman by the elbow. Immediately I recognized Dr. Charles Foster, the immensely respected and modest American surgeon. Montague propelled that puzzled but ever dignified gentleman at great speed over to a marvelously private room for two that Montague had just spied. When the Japanese arrived a moment later, Montague assured them that "the overburdened doctor must have quiet and privacy, and has asked me to join him in here." I think he really believed it himself when he said it. But Montague was, more than most of us, lovable as well as sharp, and I never doubted that his heart was in the right place. Certainly he was more than usually intelligent as well as decisive, and when pressed had a very strong sense of responsibility to his community.

Chesterton was as different from Montague as night from day.

A small, thin man with an immensely ugly and sad face, he was as deliberate, both in physical movement and in speech, as Montague was fast. In our meetings, when Montague spoke, he would

have the whole room in gales of laughter through his sparkling wit. Chesterton would sit there glumly silent until he was ready to pronounce. Finally, when he did speak, his surprisingly deep voice came out so slowly he was inclined to make me feel impatient and bored in the waits between the carefully deliberated words. And yet, there was no question of his inherent power. Except in those instances when Montague disagreed with him, the men seemed instinctively to follow Chesterton's lead. I observed that the discussion of any subject almost always terminated after one of Chesterton's authoritative pronouncements.

These two very diverse men were evidently those most liberally supplied with whatever it is that produces personal power and the leadership that is its consequence. It was they who gradually came completely to dominate our sessions. Which of the two would ultimately become the more potent figure was endlessly debated among us. Thus, although all of us in that room were immersed in our own little dramas, each of us would look regularly over to the corner where the tussle for General Affairs was proceeding to see who would, in the end, be Caesar.

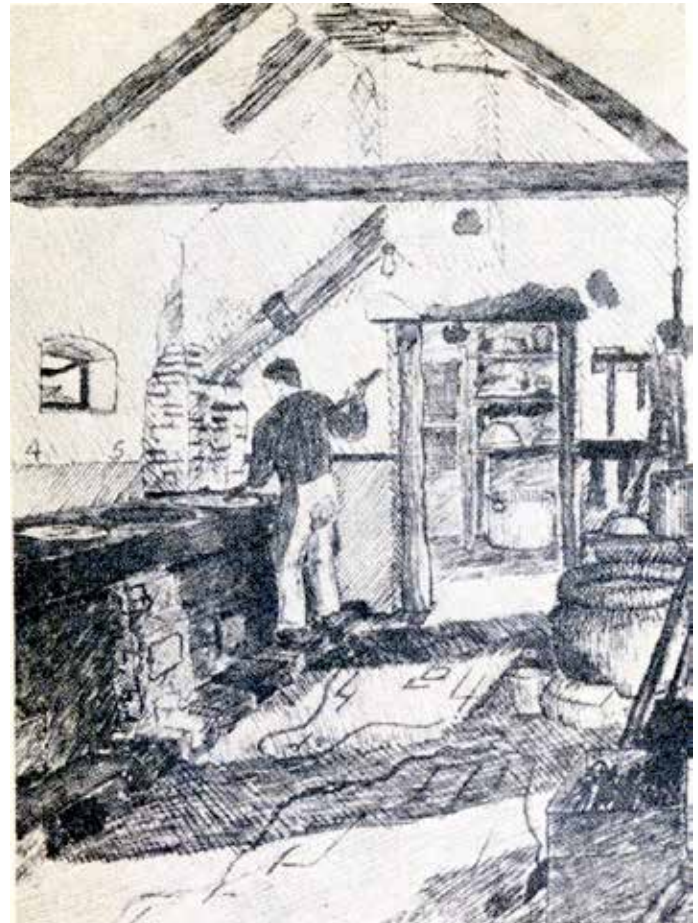
It turned out to be the sad-faced Englishman who arose and called the meeting to order. Speaking in his leaden-paced drawl, Chesterton announced his own "chairmanship of the internment center," and then apparently felt he must say a few further words on the attitude he intended to manifest as our leader.

"Colleagues in leadership," he began, "I wish to impress upon you how honored and touched I am to be designated for this significant work. I realize that now responsibility for the health and well-being, not to say the lives, of ourselves and our loved ones rests directly upon my shoulders. I shall not disappoint your expectations and hopes; I have shouldered heavy burdens before, and am happy to bear this load for you. And I promise that whatever the temptations that beset a man in high office, I shall rule the camp in strict accordance with our great British tradition of justice and fair play!"

The room rang with muffled "Hear, hears!" as on this solemn (and carefully prepared!) note, our political life began.

As an admirer of Montague's unique abilities to get whatever he wanted in almost any situation, and somewhat shaken by the heavy pomposity of the acceptance oration, I could only conclude as I left that night, that Montague had decided to let Chesterton become top dog because of the preponderance of British in the camp—but of that I will never be sure.

The next morning the first real joke of camp life broke.



When the names were handed in and the Japanese explained further what the duties of each committee would be, it became plain that the General Affairs Committee, far from being the coordinating center for general camp policy, was merely to be caretaker of certain leftover items. As the astonished Japanese said, "This man is not to be 'boss'! He is to rule over such things as sports, the sewing room, the barber shop, the library, and the canteen!"

Poor Chesterton had been wrecked on a semantic reef: "Miscellaneous Affairs" had been mistranslated "General Affairs."

When this coveted prize, over which our giants had fought, turned out to be miniscule, the camp hooted with derisive delight. Chesterton, the victor, was not merely embarrassed but downright sulky about it. He promptly announced his resignation, indicating that now that he understood what the job involved, he saw that it was too small for a man of his stature. At this the camp hooted once more; Chesterton never acquired political prominence again. Needless to say, Montague, holding his sides and weak from laughter, thanked his lucky stars that he had not been tapped for the honor!

Thenceforth the General Affairs Committee was run by another Britisher, a modest, younger vice president of one of the Tientsin banks. The vision of a single political leader of the camp vanished never to appear again.

In this bumbling way, the official camp organization was formed. From that time on, there were nine internee committees, each with a chairman and one or two assistants who negotiated directly with the Japanese. The job of each committee was, on the one hand, to press the Japanese for better equipment and supplies and, on the other, to manage the life of the camp in its area. Thus the needs of the camp began to be dealt with by designated men. The amorphous

necessary to supply services essential to life and to provide at least a bearable level of comfort.

By the middle of April, moreover, the camp cleaning force had cleared away all the rubble and debris. Most of the dismal ugliness that had greeted us in March disappeared. At this transformation, the garden-loving British began to spring to action. You could see them everywhere—in front of their dorms or along their row of rooms; around the church or the ballfield, turning up soil wherever they could establish claim to a plot of ground, planting the seeds which they had brought from Peking and Tientsin, and then lovingly watering the first signs of new life. In the same spirit, other families would begin to survey the small plot of ground in front of their rooms, planning patios made of scrounged bricks, and experimenting with awnings fashioned from mats purchased in the canteen—all of this, apparently, spurred on by the prospect of summer “teas.” I could feel a new warmth in the wind and see a new brightness in the air wherever I went.

About the same time, evening lecture programs for adults sprouted in every available empty room. These talks touched on a wide variety of subjects, from sailing and woodwork, art and market research to theology and Russian, on which there

were unemployed experts both willing and eager to speak. Concurrently, our weekly entertainments began. These took place in the church, starting with simple song fests and amateur vaudeville skits. The culmination of these early forms of “culture” came, surely, when a baseball league (e.g., the Peking Panthers vs. the Tientsin Tigers) started in

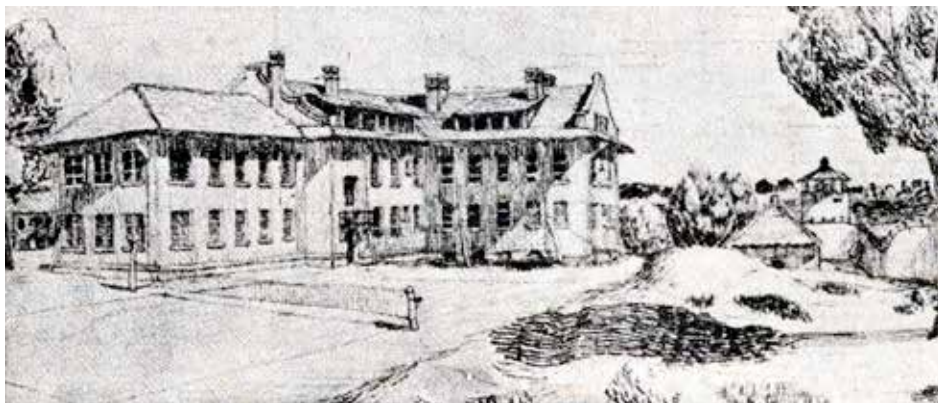
earnest on the small ballfield, exciting the whole population two or three afternoons a week.

...

[further reading] ...

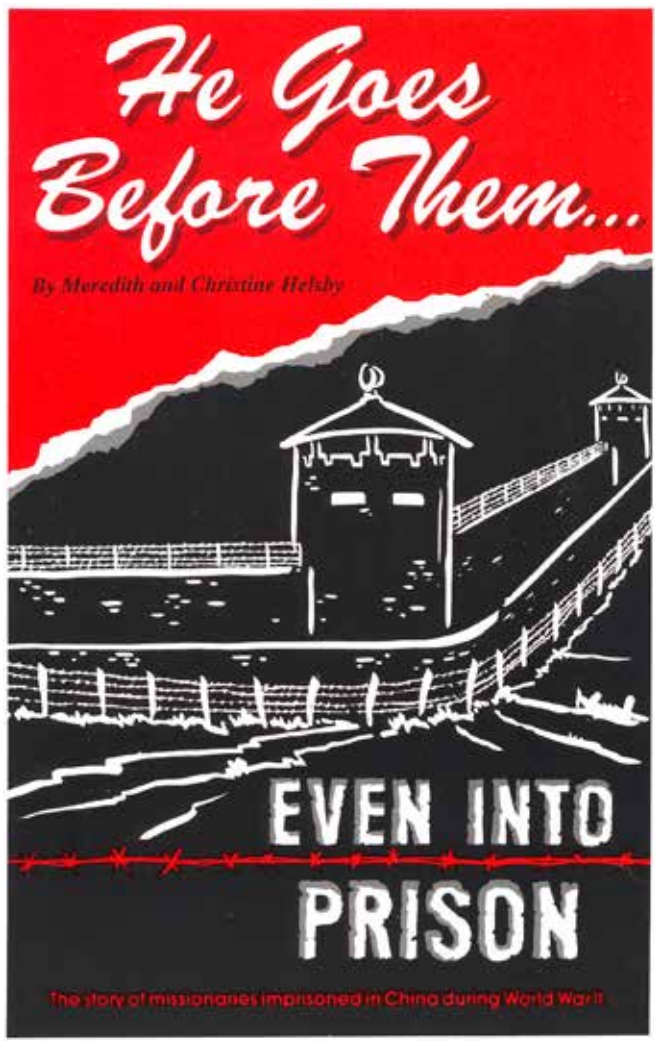
copy/paste into your internet browser ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm



labor force was organized; the problems of equipment and of sanitation were handled by the engineers; supplies were distributed more fairly and efficiently; the complex problems of housing began to be tackled; and schools were started for our three hundred or more children.

With such centralized organization, our community began to show the first signs of a dawning civilization; it was slowly becoming capable of that degree of coordinated work



Chapter 5 [excerpts] ...

... camp organization ...

...

Ten days after our arrival in camp, the Commandant issued a decree that within 48 hours we were obliged to create nine committees, each of which would operate under the direction of a Japanese officer. These committees would then elect a member to serve on a council which would represent the interests of the entire community to the Japanese authorities, as well as to a delegate from the Swiss Council who made periodic visits to the camp.

Employing the democratic process in the

election of committee members was, at this stage, clearly impractical. Virtually all of us were strangers to one another and, as such, had no intelligent basis on which to cast a vote for anyone. Hence the generally acknowledged or informal leaders of the four major groups in camp from Peking, Tientsin, Tsingtao and the Catholic clergy, would each appoint a member to sit on the nine committees. Later that year when we had had time to make acquaintances with our fellow internees' regular elections were held.

These committees, presumably designed to care for all the needs of the camp, were designated General Affairs, Discipline, Labor, Education, Supplies, Housing or Quarters, Medical, Engineering and Finance.

Under their direction the entire camp was organized into a work force with every able-bodied individual, including youth, given an assignment. The internees themselves enforced the rules of their own making: If you're not ill, you'd better be on the job and on time — "No work — No eat." (Manicures didn't last long in camp, and of course there was never any nail polish anyway!) On the registration form we had been required to fill out upon arrival, I, under the heading "work experience," had indicated that I had worked part time as a cook in seminary. Hence I was appointed to one of the three camp kitchens. Christine's assignment was helping to clean and prepare vegetables. With few conveniences or proper appliances, this chore took many hours each day. The task she most disliked was peeling and cutting leeks, especially in the winter when they were frozen. Her hands often became so numb that she couldn't even tell when she'd cut a finger. And all of the women worked standing on a cement floor, often in an inch or two of water. That vegetable crew caught plenty of colds but not a lot of pneumonia so we were all blessed!

Since the preponderance of our camp population was drawn from the professional class, few had the practical skills required for the maintenance of this small city. Gratefully,

however, among us was a sprinkling of craftsmen, artisans and skilled laborers versed in the arts of construction, masonry, carpentry, baking, plumbing, etc. These “masters” now began to school novices assigned to their work force. Professional engineers and skilled plumbers had soon trained a corps of apprentices who set about to provide a satisfactory solution to the monumental latrine and bath crises. A shower system was devised and operated by a gang of workers, whose labors with hand pumps sent water to a tower and provided a steady flow, though small at times, to bathers.

Among us were two professional bakers from Peking. Their first project was a 48-hour clinic to train all interneers assigned to the bakery in the art of making bread. By the end of the session, these recruits were turning out 400 loaves a day. The bread always had a slightly sour taste, since beer hops was the only leavening agent available. At first we were also troubled by the presence of little black bits (weevils), which we carefully picked out of each slice of bread. But after about a week we didn’t even notice them. Perhaps they may have even provided some extra protein!

Few of us who arrived in camp that March had any recent acquaintance with the rigors of manual labor. Denizens of the expatriate world of business and commerce, for the most part, lived a life of shameless luxury surrounded by every imaginable comfort and a small army of Chinese servants to do their bidding. Even missionaries, many of whom had grown up on farms, employed servants in their homes in China. They had relinquished most labors involving physical exertion to coolies desperately in need of employment and with no means of survival other than that provided by human muscle. This also freed the wives for more time for teaching and mission work.

Now overnight under this new order, bank clerks, city administrators, missionaries and professors were turned into ditch diggers, carpenters, masons, stokers and hospital orderlies. The result was an epidemic of blistered hands, aching backs, sore muscles and tired feet. But undeniably there are rich benefits in subjecting the body to hard labor. Sleep comes easily at night when the body is fatigued, and the mind relaxes in the satisfying knowledge one has put in an “honest

day’s work” In time, overweight businessmen and missionaries with pot-bellies and sagging jowls, were exhibiting a new trimness and muscle tone. One drug addict who entered Weihsien a virtual derelict gained weight, put on muscle and after a year was fit and rejuvenated. We all rejoiced in his rehabilitation, but his gaining several pounds on camp food made him an oddity.

Manual work is also a healthy leveler and a warm camaraderie grew between once stuffy professors, import executives, and green young missionaries who worked together in the hot sun building a latrine or dormitory extension.

One of the most pressing concerns in the early days of camp was continuing education for the children. After the entire faculty and student body of Chefoo (the China Inland Mission school for missionary children) arrived at Weihsien in the fall of ‘43, we had more than 400 youngsters under age 18 in our community.

Organizing classes for all the students, kindergarten through 12th grade (the responsibility of the education committee), was a Herculean task indeed. There were virtually no textbooks or equipment and the only regular classrooms on the compound were of necessity being used as dormitories. The dedication and resourcefulness of teachers and staff were a marvel to behold. Yet, regular classes continued until our liberation, and three classes of seniors actually took the Oxford Matriculation Exam.

Many of the students in Chefoo boarding school, when war broke out, were separated from their parents. The teachers were more than ever now not only instructors but surrogate parents, a responsibility they did not take lightly. This noble corps of missionaries resolved that even in prison camp, under the most appalling conditions, they would not relax standards of decorum and good breeding one whit.

Mary Taylor Previte, the great granddaughter of CIM founder, Hudson Taylor, and her brother, James (later general director of Overseas Missionary Fellowship), were Chefoo high scholars who also became “Weihsienites.” She recalls, “Our Chefoo teachers never watered down the standards for learning or decorum. There wasn’t one set of standards for the outside world, they

said, and another set for concentration camps. You could be eating the most awful glop out of a tin can or a soap dish, but you were to be as refined as the royalty who lived in Buckingham Palace. The rules were clear: sit up straight, don't stuff food into your mouth, don't talk with your mouth full, don't drink when you have food in your mouth, keep your voices down, and don't complain. After all, in kitchen number one where we ate, Saint Paul and Emily Post ranked almost equal. We heard Saint Paul over and over again, '... for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content.' We were God's representatives in this concentration camp, our teachers said, and God was not represented well by rudeness."

' Mary Taylor Previte, "Legacy of Trust," East Asia Millions, November-December 1985, Pages 102-104.

Children and youth were not the only students at Weihsien camp. Among the internees were distinguished professors from a dozen or more schools in east China, enough to staff a whole university. Why not, then, have evening classes for adults? Courses were offered in a number of languages, theology, bookkeeping, art, marketing, woodworking, first aid, even sailing. Among our professors were some of the finest Chinese scholars in the world, most notably Dr. Hugh Hubbard of the American Board Mission; Dr. Wilder, a Congregational missionary; and our friend, Dr. J. D. Hayes, a Presbyterian principal of the Peking Language School. Eager to get on with our language study, Christine enrolled in Conversational Chinese and Character Writing while I studied Introduction to Literary Chinese and Newspaper Chinese. Regrettably the zeal with which we first embarked upon this venture diminished as the months passed. Suffering from malnutrition, we found that after putting in a full day's work at our regular assignments, teachers and students alike lacked energy for the demands of these academic endeavors. After about six months the adult education program was allowed to lapse.

During our years in camp, news from the outside world came to us principally from three sources. The first was the Peking Chronicle, an English language newspaper which old subscribers among the internees continued to receive. Under

the Japanese puppet regime this paper was strictly a propaganda vehicle with regular "news" of the U.S. fleet being dispatched to the bottom of the Pacific. It did, however, serve one invaluable purpose. The progress of Allied Forces could easily be charted by noting names of Pacific Islands in which the Imperial Forces had enjoyed their most recent "triumph" The successive mention of the Marshall Islands, Manila, Iwo Jima and Okinawa told us of our troops' approach to Japan. And when the Chronicle reported "thousands of Allied bombers being shot down over Japan," we felt certain that the end of the war was near.

A more reliable source of news was a fellow internee, a White Russian, who was a skilled radio technician and called upon to keep radios of Japanese officers in repair. After fixing the radios, he of course "tested" them and in the process was able to glean regular war news from Allied shortwave broadcasts.

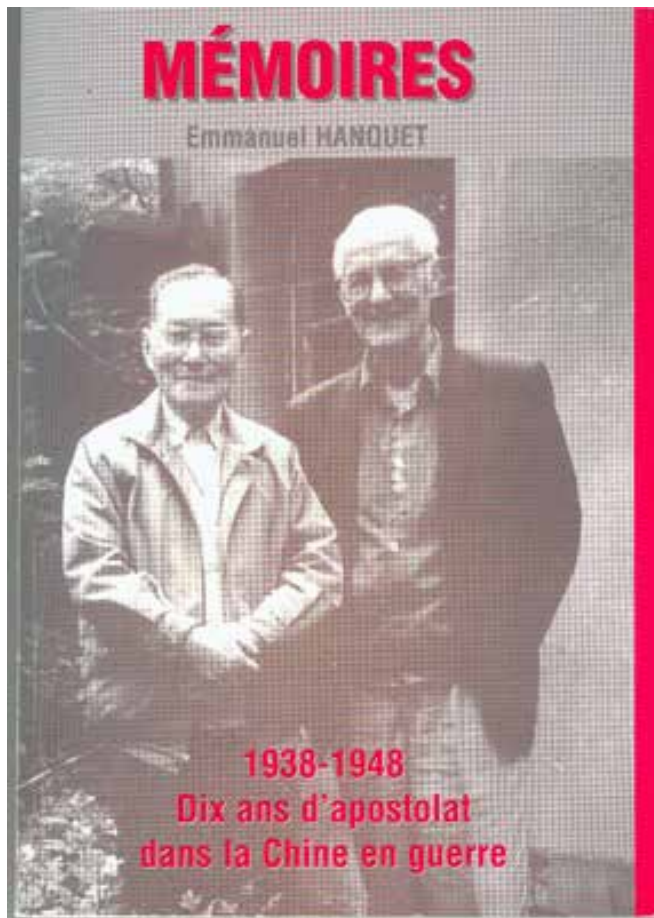
The third source of information was the coolies who almost daily entered the compound to haul away garbage and empty the reeking cesspools. These gentlemen, for obvious reasons, were given a wide berth by our guards. Significant news from Chinese guerilla bands in the area was carried into camp by these couriers, in their nostrils, mouths or concealed in the loathsome night soil kangas (drums). As internees brought garbage to the coolies at the bins located in each housing area, small wads of paper bearing the precious inscriptions were surreptitiously transferred. Letters were also smuggled out of camp in airtight metal containers dropped into a barrel of fresh sewage!

#

[further reading] ...

Copy/paste this URL into your browser ...

http://weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/photos/p_FrontCover.htm



Tangling with the Japanese

[exerpts] ...

...

On the way there [*Weihsien*] our train stops for an hour to take on board a contingent of American and British folk who were to find themselves interned with us. I have the happy surprise of finding in the group six other Belgian colleagues from my missionary society, who are likewise made to board by the police. They are Fathers De Jaegher and Uden, who are working in Ankuo diocese; Keymolen and Wenders, who are professors at Suanhua grand seminary; Gilson, who is the Peking procurator; and finally my very good friend Father Palmers who, as I write, is the last survivor of that group of six. [He died three years later while parish priest at Taipei on the island of Taiwan.]

Weih sien Camp

Two thousand internees share what this camp has to offer. It was formerly a Presbyterian mission set in the heart of Shantung Province. The founder of Time magazine, Henry Luce, was born there into a family of Protestant pastors. Our Japanese gaolers have kept the best buildings for themselves and leave us with the student accommodation and with a number of buildings which had been used for teaching.

The terrain surrounding the camp was gently undulating, not to the point where you were prevented from seeing what was going on beyond the perimeter walls, though in order to see over those walls you had to go up the single tower which dominated the centre of the camp. Going up was, naturally, forbidden.

The little student rooms were built on to one another side by side, twelve to fifteen to a block, and formed a succession of rows which were separated by little narrow gardens that were overgrown when we arrived. Groups of blocks could be divided into three or four zones or quarters, each having a kitchen equipped with a simple outside boiler which provided, two or three times a day, hot water for those who wished to make a cup of tea.

Our little room stood a somewhat apart. At a pinch you could get four people into its 12 square metres, and that was what we had to do. Four colleagues, fortunately, all from the same missionary society, the Society of Mission Auxiliaries. We share our riches and our poverty... Raymond de Jaegher, who had managed to bring in two wooden chests, let me have them for a bed, while my three comrades had salvaged some iron frames that resembled bed bases. Simple deal pedestal tables served as bedside tables... indeed tables for all purposes. To house everything else a collection of odds and ends of wood somehow turned into a rudimentary set of shelves. In times like those, you had to make the best of it! Improvisation and ingenuity reigned.

Luckily, we had none among us who had been convicted of ordinary crimes. We were all deemed to be political prisoners, gathered up and put away because our governments were at war with Japan. Everyone had been living in North China: Peking, Tientsin, Tsingtao or Mongolia. Thirty or so of us Belgians found ourselves in the midst of a host of British and American internees, along with a few Dutch and others. We had become enemies of Japan on the day our own government, exiled in London, decided to open hostilities with Japan to protect the uranium reserves in the Congo which were so coveted by the Americans.

Actually, in March 1943 there were more than a hundred Belgians in the camp. The majority were missionaries working in Mongolia; Scheut Fathers; and Canonesses of Saint Augustine. They left us a few months later, were transferred to Peking and interned there in two convents.

So we ended up as ten or so priests and four nuns available to serve our fellow prisoners. Initially, life in camp involved a lot of feeling one's way. How should things be organised? Who was going to teach, cook, mend, build, fix up? Everything had to be sorted out. For example, in No. 1 kitchen where I had volunteered to work our only equipment was six huge cast-iron cauldrons each heated by its own stove. We had to improvise lids using planks and carve great spatulas out of good wood in order to stir the grub as it was cooking...

Very quickly the senior people from Tientsin, Tsingtao and Peking proposed to our guards that we should be left to organise life inside the camp, while they kept an eye on us and stopped us from running away... For our forty guards, this proposal had to be a good one. They accepted it and concentrated their energies on guarding the gates and controlling the Chinese who came into the camp to provide various services. They also had to mount a night watch on the seven or eight watchtowers which stood on the perimeter of the camp. Later their task was to become even easier as ditches were dug at the foot of the perimeter wall, to which were added strands of electrified barbed wire.

Life slowly settled down. It was not yet a model community, but all bent themselves to

the task of giving it a good foundation. Elections were held to establish committees to deal with various aspects of camp activity: committees for discipline, housing, food, schooling, leisure activities, religious activities, work, and health.

At first each committee comprised three or four people. Later, when camp life settled down to its cruising speed, we were to limit each committee to a single elected person. Every six months we replaced or reelected them. The first discipline committee was chaired by the American Lawless who was impressive and good-humoured. His wife was Swiss and she died in camp. Lawless had been chief of police in the British concession in Tientsin and he took on his task in the camp with competence and authority. Later, when there was an exchange of prisoners, he would be repatriated and replaced by an Englishman called MacLaren, who had a family and had been the Tientsin director of a British shipping company.

As for education, we turned to the teachers. Some of them had arrived in camp with their pupils. It proved to be not too difficult to set up two teaching groups, one each for British and American teaching programmes. There were some two hundred children and adolescents running about the camp and it was pretty urgent to arrange plenty for them to do!

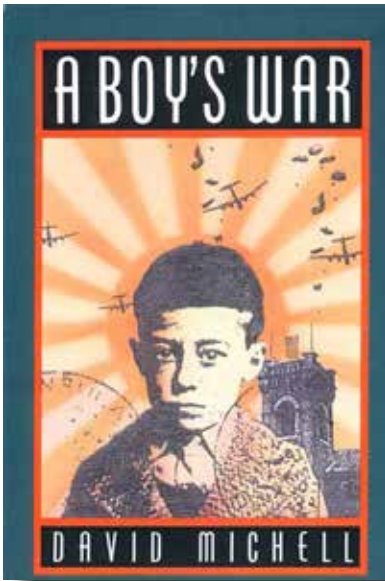
Clandestine Scouts

Well, now, one Sunday in springtime Father Palmers and I were sitting on a seat by the central alley. The Protestant service had just finished and we were chatting with some others from the kitchen and the bakery. Cockburn and MacChesney Clark, both old British teachers, were, like us, regretting the lack of educational activity for the young. All four of us were former scouts and ...

[further reading]:

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser ...

<http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



Chapter 6

[excerpts] ...

were to see that none escaped and to supply coal and wood for cooking and heating and “adequate” food.

Adequate was an overstatement, as their basis for calculation was quantities for two meals a day. Weihsien was really a world in microcosm with at least fifteen nationalities represented. The majority were families associated with foreign business enterprises, but the largest occupational group were missionaries, belonging to various Protestant mission boards or denominations. There were 400 Roman Catholic priests and nuns, although all but 30 of the priests were transferred to Peking not long after our arrival. Their going was a great loss to the camp work force as our school was a poor substitute in terms of manpower. Other people who carried the work load realized that with our coming, the ratio of children to the total camp population had risen to about one child to two adults, entailing heavier duties for older people. But since we were all civilians, we fared better than the military POWs. We were even given freedom to organize our own activities, being for all practical purposes a self-governing community, with committees elected by internees. Camp was managed by nine

...

As people realized that internment could go on for a long time and that the quality of camp life depended on their own efforts, they got down to work. The Japanese limited their own involvement in the internal work of the camp, stating that their two responsibilities

committees: Supplies, Quarters, Employment, Engineering, Discipline, Medical, Education, General Affairs, and Finance. The senior ruling body in camp was called the Discipline Committee. The chairman was Ted McLaren of Butterfield and Swire, a British business concern with a long history in China. That committee was made up of a number of business people and missionaries, including some of our own staff. They were the group who spoke on behalf of the camp to the Japanese rulers and also were our mouthpiece to talk with Mr. Egger, the Swiss Consul, who was given permission on rare occasions to visit the camp. Every able-bodied person was given regular work to do. In the kitchen most people worked a twelve-hour day shift and then had two days off. Many of the older boys took turns at pumping water up into the water tower for the camp supply. We younger children did things such as transporting water from one side of camp to the other and carrying the washing, which our teachers had tried to scrub clean, often without soap or brushes. We also sifted through the ash heaps to try and find pieces of coke or unburned coal, and gathered sticks and anything else that would burn, to try to keep warm through the winter. Undetected by the teachers or Japanese soldiers, we sometimes sneaked into the Japanese part of the compound and climbed the tall trees looking for dead twigs or branches.

[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)

by *Howard S. Galt* on board m/v Gripsholm

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf



The nearly 1500 American and Canadian repatriates aboard the Gripsholm broke into the strains of "God Bless America" as the exchange liner passed the Statue of Liberty on the way to her Pier F berth at Jersey City, N. J., this week. Crowds of excited relatives and friends awaited near the dock to welcome them home on the arrival of the vessel.

THE INTERNMENT CAMP AT WEIHSIEN,
SHANTUNG PROVINCE, CHINA
March - September, 1943

An objective and descriptive account of the Internment Camp from the point of view of the writer's experiences. It is thought to contain no statement of political or international significance.



Howard S. Galt, 1943

[excerpts] ...

... all the prisoners selected for the return to America on board the Swedish m/v Gripsholm were shortly to be replaced by the ±300 students and teachers of the Chefoo School ...

What follows is an excerpt of a confidential report written by Howard S. Galt upon arrival in the States.

...

After the camp residents had all arrived, and provisions had been made for living quarters and eating arrangements, it was time for the permanent organization of camp life and activities. We had been informed in advance that the camp must be self-operating as far as labor was concerned – that no servants or workmen would be supplied to us, and that the work must thereafter all be done by ourselves. But organization included much besides labor

activities. Recreational, cultural, educational, musical, religious, and other activities and interests were all promoted and regulated by the general organization.

The main fields of organization were determined in advance by the Japanese commandant, the

supreme authority in the camp.

According to his plan there were a number of committees to serve the whole of camp life, with Japanese as the chairmen. These chairmen were merely nominal heads who might exert a certain amount of directional and veto power.

On each committee there were three to five members from the camp personnel, usually chosen to represent more or less equitably the three kitchen groups, and one of whom served as the real working chairman. These committees will be mentioned in order. (Factual details may not be entirely accurate as I must now depend entirely on memory. The manuscript of an exact account of the camp, with many notes and statistical material, was taken from my luggage by Japanese examiners.)

The General Committee

A small but important committee, taking charge of general affairs, as the name indicates. Its duties were in part residual – taking charge of many matters as they arose, matters which did not logically belong to the more specialized committees.

The Quarters Committee

In charge of housing, assignment of rooms, etc. Changes in the original housing arrangements and assignment of place to occasional newly arrived members were the functions of this committee.

The Employment Committee

In charge of the permanent and periodic assignment of work jobs. The scope and importance of this committee's functions will be readily understood. Its decisions and appointments affected the daily work of more than 1,000 people - all of the adults and many of the older children.

Of course there was much labor connected with the commissariats of all three kitchen groups. Accordingly there were three subcommittees to take charge of these divisional assignments. Taking the Peking (Kitchen 3) group as an example: The committee instituted an inquiry of all concerned to discuss the qualifications, aptitudes, skills, and preferences with respect to the great variety of tasks to be done. In the assignments special skills, aptitudes and choices were considered as far as possible. Some skills and aptitudes – for example those of amateur carpenters – suggested permanent assignments to jobs.

In types of work perhaps not requiring much skill, or which were particularly hard and unpleasant, frequent rotation was most satisfactory. The week was chosen as the unit of time and so it came about that there was posted a weekly bulletin giving a complete list of assignments to tasks for the following week.

These weekly lists probably contained the names of at least 100 people. Of kitchen and dining room activities more will be written below.

Besides the work in the three kitchen groups there were general tasks by which the whole camp was served. There was the central bakery, which operated more than half of the 24 hours of each day, thus requiring several shifts of workers. There were the pumps which supplied water to the reservoir tanks, and which had to be manned steadily all day long. There were the furnaces and boilers for the supply of hot water for the bath showers and for washing purposes, and distilled water for drinking. These required men with engineering experience. There were the sanitary installations to be cared for – work the more necessary and the more unpleasant because of the defects of the plumbing system.

There were jobs for carpenters, blacksmiths,

plumbers, metal-workers, masons, and electricians. To these jobs there were usually permanent assignments as mentioned above.

The Supplies Committee

This central committee consisted of two divisions: one in charge of general supplies, and one in charge of hospital supplies. As to general supplies, chiefly food and fuel, for the first few months the operations were carried on in part by three sub-committees for the three kitchens. Later there was a large degree of unification and one general committee received supplies daily from the Japanese in charge, weighed or counted the total and made an equitable assignment to the three kitchens. Supplies were usually brought into the compound on Chinese carts and wheel- barrows, with Chinese drivers or runners in charge. But after two months or so, the Japanese authorities, becoming suspicious of secret communications with the outside world through the carters, ordered that Chinese bringing the supplies were not to enter the compound gate. From that time it became necessary for supplies committeemen to meet the vehicles at the gate and drive (or lead) the cart mules, or push the wheel-barrows, to the supplies depot several hundred yards distant near the south border. For the men concerned, and for spectators, these were new and interesting experiences. The Chinese mule has his own ideas about the language and methods of the driver and the mule's responses to a stranger are not always cordial. As to the wheel-barrow, the usual type is large and carries its load high, and an amateur's efforts to balance the load are not always successful. But on the whole the committeemen did well. There was no stoppage in the general stream of supplies and only one or two run-aways by the mules.

The tasks of the division in charge of medical supplies were quite different. After the initial opening of the hospital, orders for supplies for the most part had to be placed in Tientsin or Tsingtao in care of the Swiss Consuls. When these arrived they had to be carefully conveyed to the hospital and distributed for use or placed in the pharmacy.

The Finance Committee

The operations of this committee were much like those of a bank. During the first few days in camp all members were compelled to hand in to the bank their ready cash. To each person was issued a statement of account, corresponding to a bank pass- book. Subsequently, according to the regulations of the Japanese authorities, the bank would pay monthly to each depositor a fixed sum (at first \$50 North Chinese currency – abbreviation “F.R.B.” for “Federal Reserve Bank” – later increased to \$100) for use in the camp. Such funds were needed to make purchases in the canteen, pay minor assessments to the kitchens for “extras” or to pay laundry bills.

Later when “comfort money” from the American and British governments was receivable, the specified amounts were credited to the individuals’ deposit accounts, and part payments were added to the banks regular monthly payments.

When those camp members whose names were on the repatriation list were ready to leave, the bank arranged for the transfer of the specified amounts (not to exceed F.R.B. \$1,000 per individual) to Shanghai for use on the voyage. Provision was also made for the issue of smaller sums for use on the journey by rail to Shanghai.

Among camp members there were a number of competent and experienced bankers from the North China cities, and with their appointment to the Finance Committee, it goes without saying that the banking operations were well managed. It should be added that the actual cash was kept in custody by the Japanese, and the Japanese accountants “chop” (seal) was necessary for all cash transactions.

The Discipline Committee

The Camp was at all times under the ultimate control of the Japanese consular police and of the guards appointed by them – all under the supreme control of the Commandant. But the ordinary conduct of camp members – social or anti-social as the case might be – was under the control of the Discipline Committee. An active member of this committee was Mr. Lawless, an Englishman whose

regular position was head of the Legation Quarter police force in Peking. Mr. Lawless was a large, portly, impressive-looking man, usually very jovial, but at times very stern, admirably adapted to his task. This task was on the whole not very difficult, for the behavior of camp members was good, with few exceptions.

Perhaps the most difficult part in this committee’s administration had to do with the control of the so-called “Black Market” conducted “over the wall” between camp members and Chinese who were bold enough to approach the wall from outside. At this point it may be explained that some time during the months preceding the establishment of our camp the Japanese military had occupied and fortified the compound. Guard towers of brick had been built at all corners and strategic points, and against the compound wall in the inside, at intervals of 30 or 40 yards, mounds of earth had been thrown up of sufficient height to enable guards to stand watch or shout over the wall. Some of the fortifications had been demolished prior to our occupation of the camp. It will be easily understood that the lower port holes in the corner towers, and the numerous mounds inside the wall could easily facilitate communications with people outside.

The chief market demand of camp members was food stuffs – especially eggs, and honey, sugar and other sweet products – to supplement the meager dining room fare. Tobacco and matches were also much in demand.

All such traffic with people outside was forbidden by Japanese regulations, but the Japanese guard was insufficient to prevent such traffic – especially at night. The Japanese authorities expected the Discipline Committee to cooperate in the enforcement of these regulations. But the Discipline Committee was half-hearted and rather indifferent in the matter. Contact with the outside world seemed hardly within the responsibility of the committee. Furthermore a large element of public opinion in the camp heavily favored these “Black Market” operations – partly on the ground that the authorities were not keeping the promises made in advance regarding the camp diet. With such conditions the Discipline Committee did not take much part in enforcing Japanese regulations relating to this traffic and

these “over the wall” operations continued during the whole period – at least to the date of the repatriation of Americans (September 14). At times there were even suspicions that some of the Japanese guards were making “squeeze” money in these operations, and were not too energetic in enforcing regulations.

Besides the above-mentioned committees there were other committees of an un-official character – un-official yet making large contributions to camp life. A few of these will be considered.

The Education Committee

There were a considerable number of school-age children in camp. For most of these, provision was made in two school groups. Peking had a large and well organized “Peking American School.” There were in camp a few teachers and perhaps 20 or 30 pupils from that school. Places in the church or church yard for classes were found, school desks were assembled from corners of the compound and before many days the relocated but attenuated “P.A.S.” was again in operation. Studies were carried on so successfully that the committee in charge felt justified in authorizing a “commencement” with official graduation of 3 or 4 members of the senior class. This graduation ceremony, prepared for and conducted in the approved and conventional American style, was a highly interesting event in the camp, with an audience which entirely filled the church.

In the British tradition there was the Tientsin Grammar School. In the camp were a few of the teachers and some of the pupils from that institution. They also were organized into a school and in quite a regular way were able to carry on their studies.

In addition to these schools, there was a large and well conducted kindergarten and also some educational classes for young children conducted by Catholic sisters.

Besides these formal schools there were organized many classes, lectures and discussion groups in the field of adult education. The curriculum subjects probably numbered as many as 20 or 30, studies in the various languages predominating, and among the languages Chinese

most in demand.¹ Besides the lectures offered in series to select groups there were general lectures, usually one each week, on themes of common or popular interest.

The Entertainment Committee

After the beginning of camp life, not many weeks elapsed before a series of weekly entertainments was provided. These took many forms, dramatics and music programs being the most frequent. Members of the group coming from Peking – a city always proud of its cultural attainments – were most resourceful in preparing entertainment programs, but the Tientsin group was by no means backward. In many of the entertainments, both dramatic and musical, all three of the city centers furnished talent.

In this connection it is not improper to mention Mr. Curtis Grimes, a young pianist and conductor with a rapidly growing reputation in Peking. His most notable contributions were his own piano concerts, and the leadership of a chorus and an orchestra.

The nucleus of both chorus and orchestra had been trained for longer or shorter periods by Mr. Grimes in Peking. These members were reinforced by excellent musicians from the other cities.

1 The Chinese language instructor was George D. Wilder, a retired missionary who had returned to Peking to teach in the College of Chinese Studies.

Among the musical programs of the chorus were three of the great classical oratorios.

In this connection it may be noted that, at the time of the establishment of the camp the Japanese authorities were good enough to give special permission to transport to the camp a grand piano from Peking. Later a second piano was similarly brought from Tientsin.

The church serving as auditorium with a seating capacity of 700 or 800, made possible the regular entertainment programs. It was soon noted that if programs could be given twice, the attendance of practically the whole adult membership of the camp was possible. Friday and Saturday evenings

were usually chosen for the two settings, and on Thursday tickets for the two evenings in equal numbers were freely distributed.

Besides the evening entertainment there was an almost daily series of athletic sports. The grounds near the hospital, already mentioned, were used for tennis, basketball, and volleyball. An athletic field left of the church was larger and there baseball and hockey were played. By far the most popular sport was baseball – most popular both for the players and spectators. The size of the grounds cramped the game somewhat so that the soft-ball (or playground ball) was commonly used. For this also the grounds were really too small, so that some special “ground-rules” were necessary, one of the most important being that when the batter knocked the ball over the compound wall he was entitled to a “home-run.” In the selection and matching of teams all of the major divisions of camp personnel were recognized. Each kitchen group had its team, and at times a second team as well as a first. Each of the three cities – Peking, Tientsin, and Tsingtao – had its team. Some of the larger corporations, such as the B.A.T. (British American Tobacco Co.) and the Kailan Mining Administration, had their teams. Other teams were selected quite miscellaneously by captains, appointed or self-chosen. There were boys’ teams and girls’ teams. But the team which, after many contests, proved superior to all was a team selected from among the Catholic Fathers. The whole camp was surprised at the proficiency of this team and at the interest both Catholic priests and nuns manifested in the game. One of the Catholic bishops took part in the game. The best player in the whole game was a priest whose nickname was “Father Wendy.” Although competition was keen there was the utmost harmony and good feeling. When the weather was good there were games almost every evening and spectators gathered in crowds. At some of the keenly contested games probably more than half of the entire camp (often including some of the Japanese guards) was present along the sidelines.

Among entertainments there should be mentioned one organized not by the entertainment committee but by the Catholic Fathers. It was an out-door performance held Sunday evenings.

Its leading spirit was a Dutch priest of great vigor and vitality, a good musician and possessing marked natural qualities of leadership. English was the language which was most used, of course, but the Father in charge had very incomplete knowledge of English, and his foreign accent, and the mistakes which he made, which did not at all quell his enthusiasm, were part of the entertainment. The program, largely improvised and prepared for each occasion, included much music, instrumental and vocal, the latter in the form of community singing. The words of the songs, usually adapted to familiar melodies, often referred to interesting camp happenings, or made “local hits.” Besides music, with a continual flow of interactions and humorous comments by the leader, there were simple dramatics, puppet shows and shadow pictures. A small movable stage, with suitable electric lighting, was set up for each occasion. These entertainments seemed to fill a Sunday evening vacancy in camp life and became very popular with an attendance of people, both sitting and standing, of 500 or 600. It may be added that the Protestant church held Sunday evening song services, but they were by no means as popular as this entertainment by the Catholics.

A very different form of entertainment, the game of chess, while not under the auspices of the Entertainment Committee, was quite popular, promoted and organized by a chess society. The players were classified and a systematic tournament was held.

The Medical Affairs Committee

The operation of the hospital and the general medical and sanitary care of the camp were the functions of this committee. There were a considerable number of doctors in the camp, among them a chief surgeon and a prominent physician from the Peking University Medical College. Although there was quite a little illness in camp and the resources of the Hospital were fully used, there was no serious epidemic and on the whole health conditions were quite good. One of the senior physicians was a competent and experienced oculist, and there was present a competent and experienced dentist. Offices for them were provided at the Hospital and thus the corresponding special needs of camp residents were cared for.

As to general sanitation the deficiencies in the sanitary installations of the Japanese were the cause of extra difficulties, dangers, and unpleasant tasks, but with careful safe-guarding, and general cooperation, the dangers were overcome.

Committee on Engineering and Repairs

This committee was under the direction of a trained engineer. In cooperation with the employment committee there were organized squads of masons, electricians, plumbers, metal-workers and carpenters. Some of the work of these specialists consisted of repairs, but much of it was of the nature of remodeling or rebuilding to remedy deficiencies in the original preparation of the camp. Some of the men among these skilled workers were men of special training in these vocations, but most of them were men whose avocations had attracted them into these fields and whose skills were those of amateurs.

In the fields of women's work there was some unofficial but very effective organization. A few sewing machines were available and so a center for sewing and repair of clothing was established. Repairs of course implied chiefly hard work, and this was distributed among a large number of women to be done in their homes.

As to laundry work, most people did their own, often in the midst of great difficulties and limitations. Washing was of course a necessity but many came to the conclusion that ironing was an unnecessary (or unobtainable) luxury. In the laundry work many women helped their men friends in voluntary and informal ways. However, a group of Catholic Sisters, taking advantage of facilities in the Hospital basement, organized a semi-public laundry, and eventually arrangements were made by them with skilled Chinese in a village outside to do laundry work on a commercial basis.

One enterprising woman widely known and experienced in the management of a shop in Peking, took the initiative in establishing camp exchange (known as the "White Elephant Exchange") where, besides some buying and selling, people could exchange their own useless things for things useless to other people – a process of transformation which rendered

all things useful. This institution was not fully organized for several months, but when it was installed in its own quarters and clearly advertised, it rendered much service to the community.

Other aspects of women's work will be described below in connection with kitchen and dining room service.

There were three other forms of community service not mentioned in what we have reported about organization and employment. A barber shop was manifestly a great need and, when two men with the necessary skills were found, a room was provided and the shop opened. Shoe repairing was a second need soon widely felt, since the foot wear was deteriorating with the heavy work and a shoe-repair shop was opened. A third need was watch repairing. Several decades earlier the Catholics gained the reputation of introducing the arts of watch and clock repairing into China, so it was not surprising to find among our Catholic Fathers a man with skill in this art – whereupon a shop for his services was duly opened.

Thus, sooner or later, as almost all the practical needs of a community of 2,000 people became evident, ways of supplying these needs were found and adopted, so it might almost be said that our camp was a self-contained community.

[excerpts] ...

[further reading] ...

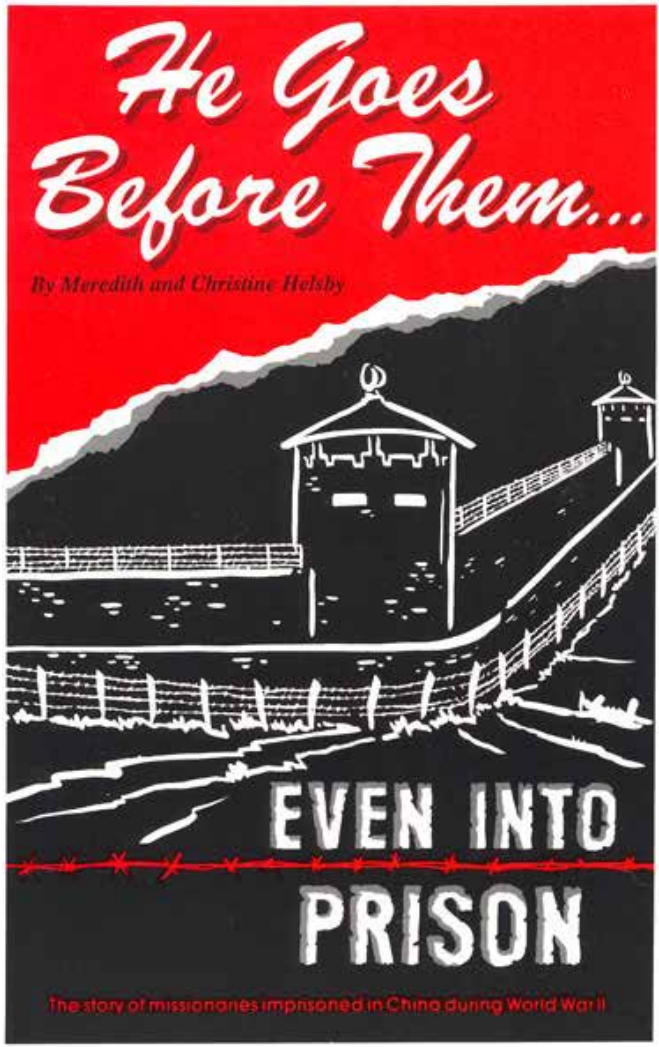
copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf

FOOD HUNGER & SMUGGLING

by Meredith & Christine Helsby

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)



Since our camp was not located in a war zone, supplies of grain, vegetables and sometimes pork, beef and horse meat were obtainable from Chinese merchants by the Japanese. Thus, we did not suffer the near starvation so common in other P.O.W. camps in Asia.

As the war progressed, however, supplies dwindled and hunger was a constant companion. Food became an obsession. "A conversation on almost any subject," one internee remembers, "would eventually get around to food." A favorite game was, "If you could go into a restaurant and order anything at all, what would you like?" One young missionary recalls that his favorite fantasy was going to a Howard Johnson's and ordering juicy hamburgers and copious quantities of milk shakes.

"Give us this day our daily bread" took on new meaning in that our diet consisted largely of bread, a commodity that for our first year in camp was not rationed. With more than enough flour for the daily bread supplement, the cooks also made noodles and dumplings. In October, 1943, I mentioned in my journal that Dr. Anderson, a professor in a China university, estimated that 83 percent of our nourishment came from white flour.

Chapter 6 [excerpts]...

FOOD

Our first meal when we arrived in Weih sien that bleak night in March, 1943, was a single dish, a most unappetizing soup consisting of pieces of fish — heads, tails and all mixed with stale bread and salt, in plenty of water.

Once the kitchens got organized and our cooks were trained, the fare improved somewhat.

Along with bread, however, there were supplies of Chinese grains. Although we virtually never had rice we did receive millet occasionally, as well as a coarse sorghum-like grain called "kaoliang" which the Chinese grew primarily to feed pigs. Since any food could be made to go further by watering it down, our menu was replete with soups, stews and porridges.

A typical day's menu in camp was as follows: Breakfast — bread, porridge consisting of leftover bread (usually stale) mixed with water (no milk or sugar), "lu tou" (very small dried green Chinese

beans) or kaoliang; Lunch (our main meal of the day) — usually bread and stew (generally referred to as SOS — “same old stew”). Now and then there was relief from the stew, in an occasional “dry meal” consisting of some kind of meat, fried potatoes and gravy.

Supper — soup and bread.

Each internee was entitled to a ration of about one tablespoon of sugar a week. By common consent we agreed that the entire allotment be turned over to the cooks, who could then occasionally furnish us with a dessert of inestimable delight. We cherish memories of these culinary oases in those bleak deserts of dietary sameness. From the bakery came such creations as shortbread, gingerbread, even cakes. Amazingly, wedding cakes were baked for all three of the weddings that took place in camp. These were wondrous concoctions to us, though looking back, I doubt that they bore much relationship to modern America’s tiered masterpieces.

Attempts were made in a variety of ways to find additional nourishment to supplement our diets. Some discovered weeds growing around the compound which when cooked resembled a coarse spinach. Eggs, though later obtained through the black market (more about this later), were at first a rarity. Sandra, along with the other children, was allotted about two eggs a month or as the Japanese could obtain them. To prolong the pleasure and nutrition of these treasures, Christine fashioned a concoction by mixing the egg with “tang shi” (kaoliang molasses). Used as a spread to top our bread, the food value of that egg could be extended several days.

To supplement the bone meal which we brought into camp (but ran out of almost a year before we were freed), we pounced upon eggshells discovered on a trash heap, dried them for days on our window sill, then rolled them as finely as possible with a glass. Sandra consumed about a quarter teaspoon mixed daily in her food. (Her adult teeth are now as strong and beautiful as any whose childhood was spent in “replete” America.)

There was a critical need for milk, especially for small children. When the commandant was appealed to, surprisingly he arranged to have a

quantity of milk brought regularly into camp. This was properly sterilized in the hospital kitchen and distributed to children under three years of age, enough for each child to have about a cup of milk daily, though not available every day.

As we entered 1944, food supplies progressively dwindled. Bread was rationed to two slices a meal and the quality of food likewise deteriorated. What meat we got was half rotten and of questionable origin, generally thought to be either mule or horse. The variety of vegetables was reduced to cabbages; large, coarse, unpalatable, waterlogged white radishes; and supplies of eggplant, which when cooked turned into a repulsive purple mush without seasoning except a bit of salt.

Everyone lost weight. Those who came into camp overweight lost as much as 100 or more pounds. Some weighing 170 or 180 were soon dropping to 125 or lower. Though we were not starving, with the interminable progression of the war and the prospect of repatriation an ever-receding mirage, the specter of serious malnutrition loomed before us, large and threatening.

In Chapter 11 Christine describes our last Christmas in camp when she was in the hospital. It doesn’t seem “fitting” in that part of the story to speak of food, so here she adds a line or two while we’re on the subject:

While talking about Weihsien meals and menus, I can’t help but recall what was to me the most impossible, most inedible portion set before me during our almost four years of prison life. And in my state ingesting it was not an option but an absolute “must.”

The doctor had earlier said that I could probably leave the hospital by New Year’s Day but that was not to be, for in my weakened condition I had now contracted typhoid fever which, in the end, meant almost a three-month stay.

The typhoid began with days (and nights) of high temperature and chills. I shook so hard that the patients in beds on either side of me couldn’t sleep because I was shaking their beds too. Then I lapsed into a coma which lasted about two weeks.

When I came to, the doctors were in an almost constant huddle, trying to find something I could eat — not that I wanted anything. For once I was not hungry. Of course, there was no hospital equipment for I.V. feeding so what I got by way of nourishment was simply whatever they could give me by mouth.

Regular camp food was definitely too coarse since it irritated the myriad of tiny sores covering the inner lining of the intestines. This did not particularly trouble me since I had no appetite anyway. But the doctors, of course, knew they had to get some kind of food in me, and quickly.

What they came up with was corn-starch, a food sufficiently bland for my organs to handle. So cornstarch — thick, gray blobs of it became my daily menu. It looked just like the glop my mother used to cook up for Dad's shirt collars! That was it, three times a day for three weeks. I really struggled with it. The taste and look of it was equally revolting. The staff — bless their hearts, worked diligently to find an incentive to help me get it down. Somebody thought of the inducement of giving me a level teaspoon of sugar on "the blob," for one meal, every third day! This was long before Mary Poppins' "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." So I ate — so I lived.

In the meantime there were other concerns. First, my hair! It was coming out in bunches. If I'd had my wits about me, I'd have said, "Shave it!" (Then maybe it would have come back in, curly!) But since I couldn't sit up, they just rolled my head around on the pillow and snipped it off, leaving two-inch tufts all around.

And then, it seems, I was developing a different strain of typhoid. I was covered with a rash from the soles of my feet to my scalp.

Not an inch of my body was clear. This meant that all the doctors in camp wanted to see me. They stood in line outside the screen around my bed, awaiting their turn and discussing my symptoms.

This extra attention I could handle except that I was very weak and soon tired of trying to answer their questions. But most tormenting of all was the itching, all over and all at once. The nurses

were sympathetic but could offer no medication that would help. Their best solution was pai kan — a cheap Chinese wine which left me positively reeking. This did not make me the most popular patient in the ward! The pai kan did, however, soothe the infuriating itch.

The benefits, though, quickly wore off so I often begged for another "dunking."

But, thanks to my Father's healing hand and all the loving care of my fellow internees, I survived. I left the hospital on March 8, and it was so good to be home with Meredith and Sandra in our little 9 by 12. My weight had dropped to 93 pounds, and with my less-than-petite frame I looked a bit gaunt. But we were together, and though we didn't know it then we had less than six months to freedom.

Meredith continues:

Blessed supplements to dining hall fare came on occasion from three sources. Comfort money, which was advanced to us at intervals through the Red Cross (I'll speak more of that later), could be spent in the canteen, a small shop which periodically carried limited quantities of food stuffs. We were especially grateful for Chinese dried dates (which gave a bit of the sweetness we so much craved), peanut oil, and sometimes a ration of peanuts which we made into a chunky spread for our bread. Once, however, we were mistakenly sold fish oil which tasted much like cod liver oil. With this we spoiled three rations of peanuts we'd been hoarding to make a spread. But, of course, we ate it.

Secondly, on occasion, internees were permitted to receive packages. The arrival of Red Cross parcels was, apart from word of war's end, the most exciting news ever received in camp. These beautiful cardboard-encompassed bonanzas were supplied by the American Red Cross.

These magnificent gifts measured almost 3 feet long, 1 foot wide, and 18 inches high and weighed 50 pounds. Inside was a treasure trove of incredibly wonderful things: a pound of powdered milk, four small tins of butter, three of Spam, eight ounces of cheese, sugar, two four-ounce tins of powdered coffee, jam and a small package of dried fruit — either raisins or prunes — and four packs of

Lucky Strike cigarettes.

So prized were these marvelous gifts from heaven that one internee wrote, "To each of us, this parcel was real wealth in a more basic sense than most of the symbols of wealth in civilized life. No amount of stocks or bonds, no Cadillacs or country estates, could possibly equal the actual wealth represented by this pile of food, for that food could prevent hunger for four months. A Red Cross parcel made its possessor an astoundingly rich man."

Mixed in with the food was a considerable complement of men's clothing. Curiously, however, although there were supplies of shoes, underwear, shirts, even a few coats, we never received any trousers. This gave rise to some amusing remarks, particularly from the Britishers, one of whom remarked, "Doesn't anyone wear pants in your country, old boy?" But Christine wondered why the men complained because they had no trousers, while the women internees never received a single piece of any kind of clothing.

These parcels came from the American Red Cross and were designated for American prisoners of war. Needless to say when these blessed bundles arrived, we were often the objects of envy by the many non-Americans in the camp. For the most part, however, American internees made it a point to share the contents of the packages with their non-American friends and neighbors.

Later, we received a load of smaller packages from the U.S. Red Cross — and this time there were enough for everyone to have one.

The third means of quelling hunger pangs came from food from Chinese merchants, in a secretive and strictly illegal "over-the-wall" enterprise in which I figured as one of the leading camp entrepreneurs. In most penal systems throughout the world an amazing amount of commerce is carried on between prisoners and the out-side world. In this respect, Weihsien was no exception.

With our poor diet and need for a variety of commodities unobtainable in camp, there was powerful motivation to make contact with local Chinese merchants. By nature the shrewdest business dealers on earth, our Chinese friends saw

in this an opportunity for mutual profit.

During the early days of camp, the general disorder and lack of vigilance by the guards, and the fact that the compound wall was topped with but a single strand of barbed wire, provided opportunity for contact with enterprising merchants. These men would stand outside the lightly guarded barrier, informing us that for a price they could supply us with everything from sugar and condensed milk to eggs (our all-important source of protein). In this way, I made the acquaintance of merchant Han.

I did not lightly embark on my career as a black marketeer nor without some initial pangs of conscience. Contact with Chinese, I knew, was strictly forbidden. And trading across the wall was clearly in defiance of camp rules.

Still, as we faced the daily struggle for survival, I came to believe that it was more my moral duty to use means at my disposal to relieve suffering and save human life than to adhere to the laws imposed upon us by our captors.

--- James H. Pyke records in *White Wolves In China* (page 143, printed in 1980 as a memoir of Fred and Francis Pyke) that "the difference between survival and disease or starvation was the operation of the black market. Fred Pyke was a very moral person, punctilious about right and wrong, but he worked on the black market chiefly because of 450 children in camp. Their whole lives would have been affected without proper nourishment and the black market did provide peanuts and eggs." ---

Thus, the "Helsby Company" was formed and my over-the-wall marketing activities begun. My partner in this crime of benevolence was Hilda Hale, a mother of two daughters whose husband in prewar days was head of Cook's Travel Service. She was my lookout, and her room served as a temporary warehouse for the stashing of our goods.

One may wonder at this point what we used for currency in these transactions. A word of explanation is in order. According to regulations of the Geneva Convention, civilian P.O.W.s were to receive the equivalent of \$5 a month, designated

“comfort money.” These funds came from the Swiss Consul and were intended for the purchase of toilet paper, toothpaste, sundries and occasional food items obtainable from the camp canteen which was operated by internees under Japanese supervision.

For the three Helsbys our allotment came to a fairly generous \$15 a month. Unfortunately, however, squabbles between Japanese and the Swiss government over rates of exchange impeded the flow of this allowance. We seldom received comfort money two months in a row, and at one point went six months with-out a payment.



Another problem soon developed — inflation. The FRB (Federal Reserve Bank) currency, in which we received our comfort money, had a fairly stable 4 to 1 U.S. dollar value in 1943. By 1944, however, it had been devaluated a whopping 600 percent. The slight increases in the comfort allowance never began to keep pace with this galloping inflation.

At first, over-the-wall business was done with FRB dollars, but when money ran out the merchants incredibly agreed to take promissory notes in both U.S. and British currency, to be paid after the war. Toward the end, watches and rings were bartered.

In our black-market business, our confederates were Chinese coolies who regularly came into camp to empty cesspools, haul away garbage and do menial tasks. Acting as couriers they would secretly carry notes and orders for goods back and forth between internees and Chinese merchants. At other times, they would actually carry into camp

large quantities of goods concealed in the big metal “kangs”

My contact point with Han was a felicitous jog in the compound wall immediately in back of the guard tower and not a stone’s throw from our barracks, room No. 14/7. By climbing up on the drain pipe I could peer over the 12-foot wall and on occasion speak directly with him.

Once I had taken an order for eggs, sugar, milk and other commodities from my fellow internees, I would laboriously write the aggregate amounts in Chinese characters and convey the memo to merchant Han.

By a coolie go-between, he would inform me of the time of delivery. Our preference was a dark, moonless night or times of inclement weather, when we knew the guards would be less vigilant and we would be less likely to be seen or heard.

At the designated hour, I would slip quietly along the wall to the rendezvous point with Hilda keeping watch. A low whistle was her signal that a guard was approaching.

A knock on the wall told me that Han had arrived. My response was “Wei Wei” (yes or hello) to which Han would reply “Laile Laile” (I’ve come, I’ve come). At this point I would slip my money over the wall into his outstretched hand. Then in a few minutes I would see his men begin to materialize from behind the grave mounds in the adjacent field. Hastily now the goods were hoisted in wicker baskets atop the wall and slid under the barbed wire into our waiting hands. Fearful of being caught with any of this store of goods in our rooms, we delivered the supplies to our buyers as quickly as possible, often within minutes of the time we received them. If some things remained for daylight delivery, Christine, holding anything but eggs under her jacket or coat, could get past the guards with less suspicion.

Two cardinal rules we adhered to from the outset: we never did business in either liquor or cigarettes nor did we personally profit from the exchange, charging our fellow internees exactly what we paid merchant Han.

We were but one of several “companies” engaged in this important enterprise. Most notable perhaps was “Wade and Company” who operated at the south end of the compound. They did a brisk business, not only in eggs, but also in pai kar (a kind of rice wine) and other spirits in great demand by many in our community. Wade’s most unlikely partner was a remarkable Catholic priest, Father Scanlon, of Australian-Irish ancestry. He was a rotund little man with a shock of red hair. In the evenings while fellow monks posted themselves at strategic points as lookouts, Father Scanlon knelt beside the wall apparently engaged in evening prayers. When Japanese guards passed they observed him with his prayer book in hand chanting loudly in Latin.

Scanlon had managed to work a brick loose at the base of the wall and through this opening his contact, a Christian woman named Mrs. Kang, would with the help of her little boys slip him large quantities of eggs, which he would then conceal under his flowing, brown monk’s robes. In time, Scanlon and Wade became the chief egg supplier for the camp.

His operation flourished for months until one fateful evening, in the midst of his activities, a Japanese guard approached. Though warned by his lookouts of the pending danger, Scanlon was unable to get word to Mrs. Kang to halt the flow of eggs which she continued hurriedly shoving through the opening and under his robes.

In desperation, Scanlon commenced a loud recitation of his “prayers,” all the while calling his brothers in Latin. But too late. At this most inopportune time, the guard, in an unusually friendly mood, stopped to engage him in conversation. Still the eggs kept coming, until finally the sound of cracking shells and a tell-tale mess of yokes flowing out from beneath Scanlon’s robes gave him away.

With a shout of rage and wild gesticulations, the soldier hauled the monk off to the guard

house.

When news of Scanlon’s arrest circulated, there was dark speculation about his fate. Would he be shot?

Possibly tortured?

When authorities declared, however, that the priest’s punishment for his crimes would be two weeks in solitary confinement, they were baffled by the smiles and muffled laughter their announcement provoked. They did not know as we did that Scanlon, a Trappist monk, had spent most of the past 25 years in a small cell under a vow of silence.

Though Scanlon was safely behind locked doors, the Japanese discovered they were not easily done with this pestilent fellow. At night he made it his custom to sing his Latin prayers in a booming voice. Guards, housed in a nearby building and trying to sleep, had little appreciation for this show of piety. Yet possessing the Asian’s typical superstition and awe of religious ritual, they were hesitant to forbid these clearly obligatory “holy exercises.” As a result, after one week’s incarceration Scanlon was released.

Escorted back to his quarters, he was followed by the Salvation Army marching band playing a spirited number!

Though for us internees the penalty for black-market activities was usually two weeks solitary confinement, an experience which I was destined to share, our heroic Chinese friends often helped at the risk of their very lives. One coolie trying to get goods to us atop the wall was electrocuted on the high voltage, barbed-wire fence. The Japanese authorities left his corpse hanging for days as a grim warning to all aspiring black marketeers. Others of our Chinese cohorts, more fortunate, were merely beaten up. Two, however, were taken outside the compound and within earshot executed by a firing squad. Another, found carrying contraband goods, was seized by the arms and legs, his body swung like a battering ram against the brick wall until his skull was a bloody pulp.

In 1944, the change in the chief officer in charge of the guards brought a crackdown which meant an end to our black market business. The

motivation for this we soon learned, far from being any concern for maintaining the integrity of neither camp rules nor increased malice for the internee miscreants was simply greed. With the progression of the war and inflation, our captors, too, were finding themselves increasingly hard pressed for cash. In the black-market business they saw lucrative opportunity for personal advantage. Thus business continued as usual, but now the middlemen were our Japanese guards, who like syndicate bosses fought among themselves for choice customers and the larger share of the trade.

Before leaving the subject of food, let me quote a typical entry in my diary, this for October 26, 1943:

The 23rd was a great day — our day. I was trying all week to get two chickens as a surprise for Christine to celebrate our anniversary three years in China. It was only on Friday I was able to place the order with merchant Han. I got up early Saturday morning full of hope that the order would somehow get through. And yet, there was really little chance, for the Japs have been keeping close vigil.

I climbed up the drain, high enough to peer over the wall, and soon saw Han coming. The coast was clear. I told him to quickly come with the groceries. Soon they began to pile in — two chickens, two bottles of peanut oil, 250 eggs, 40 tins of strawberry jam, 30 pounds of sugar — a total of \$1020 FRB (or U.S. \$255). Business was just finished when the guard appeared. He had a strong suspicion we had been “dealing,” for a close watch was kept on Hilda’s room where the goods had quickly been stored.

Coming to our room proudly carrying the chickens, I found that Christine had gone to the hospital for Sandra’s breakfast. She had thoughtfully saved a chocolate bar from last summer and had left it as a gift — a real gift these days. A card on it read, “Welcome To China!

Happy 23rd Sweetheart.” I placed the chickens in a basin, transferred the card to the chickens’ feet and left with our food carrier to get our breakfast from the dining hall. Christine was happily surprised and they were a real treat. The first

chicken in many months! We made chicken salad for a little party that evening and in addition had several meals of chicken, rice and gravy. (This was one of the rare occasions when we had received a small portion of rice from the canteen.)

Friday, I baked a small cake for the occasion. We had some walnuts issued to us and were able to make a chocolate icing which included chopped nuts! It was a delightful change. In the evening Hayes, Cotterill, Ditmanson, Marjorie Monaghan, K. Porter, M. Scott came in and we enjoyed games and eats. A very full tea. (It was times like these which helped us keep our sanity and momentarily forget about the stress.)

Sunday was a full day. The 11 a.m. service was splendid. Dr. Howie, medical missionary of the CIM, spoke on Ezekiel 33: “Son of man I have appointed thee a watchman. If we fail to warn the wicked, their blood is required at our hands” — what a great responsibility. About 40 present. Went to prayer and open-air meeting at 3 p.m. At the 4:30 service in the church Dr. Martin spoke — not very inspiring to me.

We led the evening hymn-sing. Lights were out and few came. But by candle light we sang the favorites from memory. Christine and I sang, “Back of the Clouds.” (See words at end of chapter.) We used the double chorus “In My Heart There Rings a Melody” and “Sunshine and Rain.” We also used the hymn story of “It Is Well With My Soul.”

#

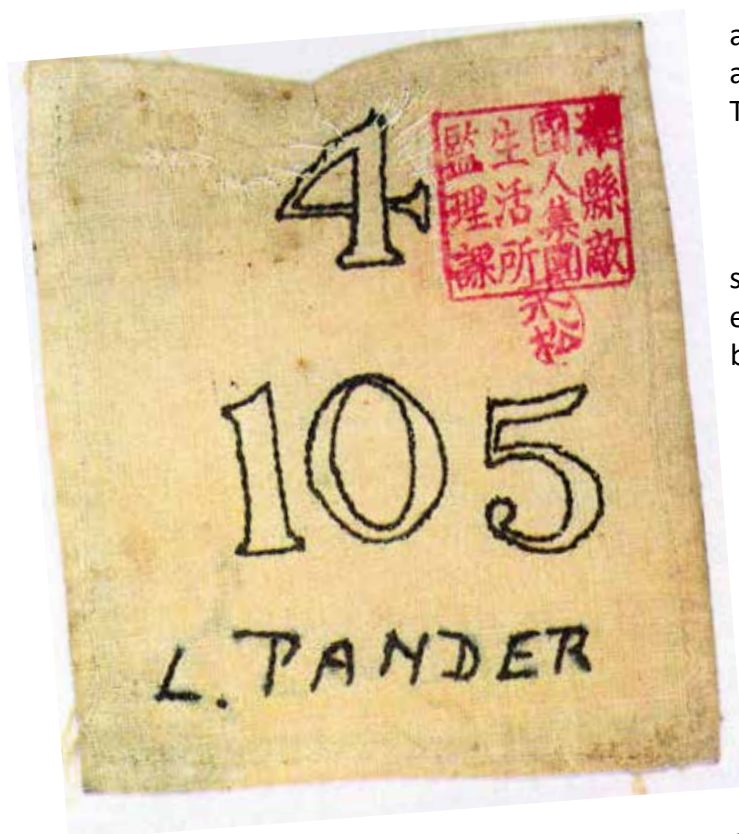
[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)

by Leopold Pander (Sr.)

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/pander/index.php>



Roll call: 7:30h

curfew: 22:00hours

Meals at: 08:15h, 12:30h, 18:00h

Meals are served at the refectory.

The food:

You can only count on enough bread and some Chinese vegetables. Occasionally, eggs, fish and meat are obtainable. However, besides these and other supplies, an additional half a pound of fish or meat per day per person would be more than satisfactory, to complement a meal.

Work and working hours:

... varied. In general, one day off, every three days for the men, and every two days for the women.

Labour is normal for our community life (cleaning, coal transport, peeling of vegetables, etc.). It is advisable for men to take overalls with them, aprons or pinafores for the women and

also, clogs for everyone. To be mentioned: there are three distinct kitchens and the one for the Tientsin folks is the worst of all.

Electric current:

... 220 volts. It would be wise to take a few screw-on light bulbs. It is forbidden to take along electric irons, foot warmers, electric stoves, etc. but you can always try, for those are very useful items to have. A useful thing to take with you is a small Chinese stove with no chimney, because the stoves we have here take a long time to get heated and are never ready before noon. There is coal, but it is more dust like and it would be very useful to bring along a rake to scrape it and also a little axe to cut the wood, as well as a saw.

The washing is done by ourselves, but there is a Japanese laundry on the outside which accepts washing three pieces per person per week. This is useful for bed sheets. Soap can be purchased there for personal laundry and washing.

Useful things to take with you:

... Benzene, spade, cigarette lighter, a lot of cigarettes, buckets, jugs, basins, ...

At the local canteen, you can buy local fruits, thermos flasks, soap, moth balls, toilet paper, shoe laces, carafes, small towels, very bad quality notebooks, pencils, ... and all that for quite cheap.

All the food supplies in your possession upon arrival in camp can be kept, but you absolutely need very good quality trunks (2 or 3 maximum), for there is very little space in the rooms. The rest of the gear will have to be stocked in the baggage room where there are thousands (!?) of different trunks difficult to reach.

Essential food supplies to be taken:

... bacon, animal fat, powdered eggs , powdered milk, cocoa, coffee, butter, flour,

cheese, sugar, honey, jam, meat, vegetables, etc. You can't buy anything from the outside. The first to arrive in camp (as a group) haven't been searched though isolated persons were. Bear in mind that the railroad system is insecure and that you must have two excellent padlocks with different keys for each trunk.

Take as much money as you can. Normally, you have to leave it all to the authorities upon arrival in the camp, but don't be stupid enough to do so. Out of that money, you have a monthly allowance of \$.50.-. Take with you as much medicine as you can because there is nothing at the camp hospital. You can keep all your personal reserves.

Meals can be prepared during the winter months with your personal provisions in your room, and on the common stove during the summertime season.

There are no facilities for reading, writing or studying because we are too badly housed in our rooms. Bring as many games as possible and also reading novels.

Shoes are quickly worn out over here, so take good shoes with you, and also working shoes, and if you have to pass through the rainy season, take wooden soled shoes or rubber boots. It would be judicious to take a bit of leather or rubber to replace the shoe soles: there are people with the adequate tools over here to help you.

For the communal showers wooden sandals are best (there is danger in catching "Hong Kong foot"). The ladies must not hesitate in buying local Chinese shoes made of solid canvas, green or red, with good leather soles. I insist on the "shoe" item because shoes are the first to wear out.

Therefore, the valid men, those who will, of course, have to work, should have a working outfit, an overall, etc. because, when you are a stoker, or a mechanic, or a rubbish collector, or a flour bag carrier, or a baker ..., good clothes are unwise. The women must bring along aprons or old dresses. Usual everyday clothes or objects you must, of course, bring along, but I must point out a few practical items one might forget to take. Thus, for the kitchen stuff, each person must have at least three containers: i.e. two soup plates and an enamel mug which resists better. Those who want to can also take an earthenware cup to sip

their coffee in their rooms. No drinking coffee in golden cups, you could burn hands and lips. (??!) This is probably a double meaning sentence!! Take a coffee pot, not too small, especially for the families. Two cooking pots and a bigger one like a jam pan. Families must have an extra plate or two. Also, take a good tool for opening tin cans.

Take a raincoat or a big Chinese umbrella. It is very useful to have a good hammer, pincers, a pair of pliers, a screw driver, a length of iron wire, nails, etc., a saw and an axe (we are given small tree trunks, these are too big to light up the stove). It is better to take a small saw, and a saw for iron, a gimlet, etc. for those who are concerned ink to mark your clothes, a good provision of benzene for the cigarette lighters, also take some for our older folks, a spade, a rake. For those who like "fricassée de lard" (bacon fricassee), pancakes, and fried eggs: a good frying pan.

Food to take with you:

It is useless, for the first days, to bring along a week's provision of bread and cakes, it takes too much place and it gets all dry. However do take (mostly for the families) what is necessary to make porridge, flour, a lot of sugar, salt, mustard, etc. according to each one's tastes. As for tinned food, take butter, fat, jam, pâté, sausages, bacon, tongue, vegetables, sauces, vinegar, powdered milk, powdered eggs, cocoa, oil, coffee and cheese. Everything can be used. All this can be used as an everyday food supplement, mostly (as it happens from time to time) when the food served at the kitchens is uneatable. Don't worry, however, we are not starving out here.

The families must take two buckets, a big jug, and a few basins. Bachelors must take a big basin, a washing board.

Please take a saw and a hammer for Mr. Pander.

As books; take easy reading novels. The children must take their school books. The camp library is well provided with books in English, loaned monthly.

This should be a good opportunity to learn Russian, it is the language of the future, but there are no Russian books out here. For money, it's as I have already explained, but if it could be possible

for the gentleman to whom Mr. Pander left an amount of money, take \$.500.- and give them to the owner. I think he will be pleased with it because he put all his money in the bank and what he can take out every month does not cover his expenses. As for the foreign money, may each do as he thinks best. I should, however, take a few "golds", and those who have a gold watch or small valuables easy to handle, why not take them also, it can occasionally be used as exchange money. Be cautious, when you send your trunks along: close them well, with padlocks and special keys, for there are many thieves on the way and they are well equipped with many keys. A deckchair could be quite welcome. Also, the necessary material for the making of curtains for the windows and those who have old drapery should take them along to hang on the walls, it is cleaner. Also, carpets.

Do not take big beds, but good ones, however. If you have matting to sandwich in between the mattress and the bed sheets, as well as for the pillow slips take that too, for in the middle of the very hot season, it comes in handy. Electric irons. The eventual electricians (and the audacious ones) should take whatever to tinker with, such as wall outlets, switches, etc. ... but don't let them catch you!

Take woollen sweaters.

No name, no date!

This letter was obviously written by my Dad in Weihsien.

... from another source:

[http://www.goens-pourbaix.be/multimedia-pourbaix/Mandarijn/Tram/camps-japonais.htm](http://www.goens-pourbaix.be/multimedia/pourbaix/Mandarijn/Tram/camps-japonais.htm)

Journal de Shanghai
24.8.43

Les internés du camp de Weihsien dans le Chantong mènent une existence paisible

Pékin 23 août — M. Wedeking, reporter du «Peking Chronicle» a visité le camp de Weihsien, dans le Chantong, où ont été rassemblés 1.794 ressortissants ennemis appartenant à quatorze nationalités.

Les internés mènent une existence calme et paisible. Ils dirigent leurs propres affaires par l'intermédiaire de comités élus. Le comité médical s'occupe de l'état sanitaire du camp, le comité du bien-être veille à l'éducation et pourvoit aux distractions, le comité des finances et des affaires générales exerce un contrôle général, le comité du ravitaillement est chargé du ravitaillement et de la cantine, et un comité de discipline répartit le travail et règle les questions de logement.

Les internés, à l'exception des enfants et des personnes âgées, sont astreints à deux heures et demie de travail par jour. Le reste du temps, ils sont absolument libres de leur temps.

Les enfants doivent se rendre à l'école où enseignent des missionnaires catholiques et protestants.

L'hôpital est situé dans un bâtiment bien aéré et bien éclairé. Dix-sept médecins, dont certains sont d'éminents spécialistes, et trente infirmières diplômées y travaillent. L'hôpital comporte une salle d'opérations et une section d'obstétrique.

While the Red Cross finds the food "good" and that the Belgian Government wondered whether to grant a "extra" to its nationals interned, here is the daily diet of an internment camp, described by an anonymous Belgian (probably from Kaiping mines):

Morning: kind of gray dust dissolved in water, Sunday, holiday, water with a little rice in it, no salt or sugar

Noon: "stew" a little fishy, a mixture of lemon grass, turnips, water dishes, peel potatoes and sometimes vague pieces of buffalo, still earth and sand - 1 or 2 tablespoons rice

Evening: red beans or corn flour with water - a ladle. Bread that I never could digest

MENU OF LAST MONTH

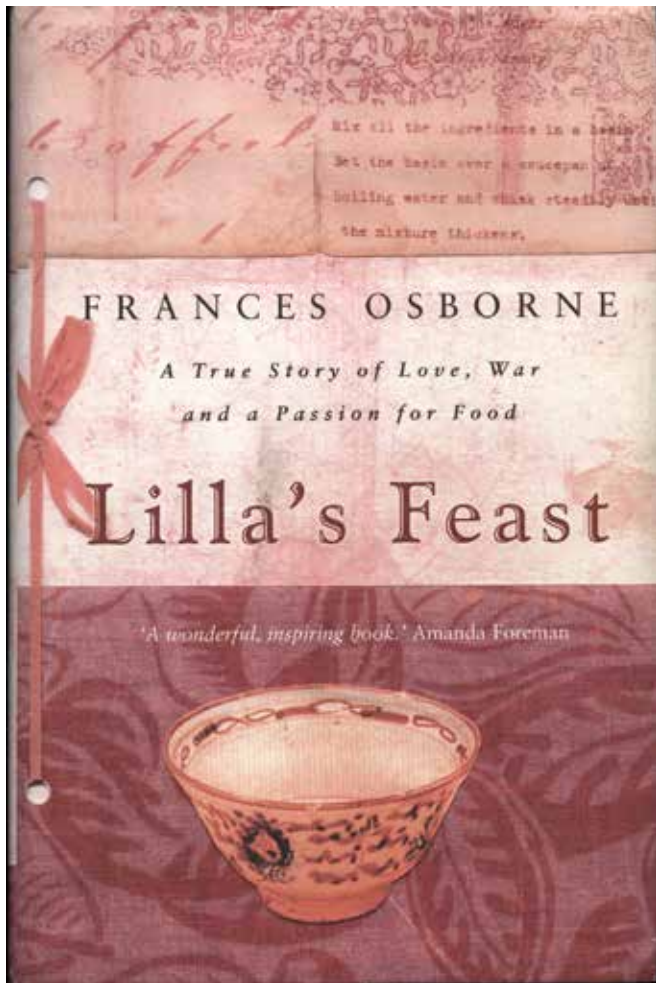
Morning: nothing

Lunch: a small piece of rotten tripe and green and a spoon rice

Dinner: every other day, red beans as I gave in the mine to my cow, the other day nothing, all dirty, disgusting, full of wood and earthworms. They had only boiled water from the river, where there was as much drinking as eating.

by Frances Osborne

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/LillasFeast/p_FrontCover.htm



Chapter 15 — [exerpts] ...

HUNGER

Weih sien internment camp, North China, November 1943.

— *Thirteen months into Lilla's imprisonment.*

THE PRISONERS had been freezing for several weeks by the time the stoves arrived. One stove for each cell, a leaden square box with an opening for fuel and an exit for smoke. Something that, even if it couldn't make them properly warm, should at least keep Lilla and Casey alive.

[exerpts] ...

The cold ate away at everyone and everything. It 'dampened our mood and stunted conversation'.

Fewer people scurried along the camp paths. And when they did, instead of finding themselves stuck in the mud, they slipped and skidded on the ice. Even the Red Cross visits slowed. Home rations, comfort money, contact with the outside world, all dwindled. Sporting matches were unplayable. Musical and theatrical performances were abandoned. 'Every effort was spent acquiring fuel, food and clothing.'

And then, after six months in Weih sien, eighteen months in captivity, just as winter eased, when Lilla must have thought that they'd made it, they were alive and now the cold was abating they would have a chance to build themselves up a little — the rations began to be cut.

Years of war and occupation, followed by a hard winter, had left food in China thin on the ground, the Japanese told the prison committees. What they didn't mention was that, as US forces made their way steadily across the Pacific, Japanese resources were being diverted to try to hold their positions rather than run their new empire. The prisoners' days of filling up on noodles and dough, of longing for home supplies of sweet spreads to smear on abundant bread, were over. Even at the start, the Japanese authorities had calculated food supplies on the basis of 'quantities for two meals per day', which the kitchens had stretched to three. Now this would be almost impossible.

Cereal was the first to go. That glutinous mass of stodgy millet porridge had sat heavy in the prisoners' stomachs from breakfast onwards, choking their insides into believing that they were full. Then it was tea. No tea. In China. The last beaten and rebeaten teabags had disintegrated, the leaves washed pale. Hot water that you had to wish the flavour into. By the end of the morning, Lilla and Casey must have been struggling to find the energy to stand in the long queue for lunch.

Spring didn't come to the camp in 1944. There was no warm Chinese sunshine and blossom.

No gentle awakening and flowering of a new year. Instead 'the climate in the camp switched from arctic cold to tropic heat with clock-like precision'. With the heat came a sun that dried out every inch of the ground.

Left the alleyways punctured with ankle-twisting crevasses. Sent clouds of dust swirling through the air, into the cells, under the sheets, into the prisoners' lungs. The prisoners must have felt their skin, still cracked by the winter, begin to shrivel further as the heat stole the last drops of moisture from them. The heat was unbearable. Although we wore only khaki shorts (without shoes [which wore out easily and so were saved for the winter months] or shirts), the perspiration just poured off us,' says Cliff, who was so desperate for water that he often drank straight from the camp pumps — in direct contravention of the health committee's orders to drink only boiled water. Obviously others had too, as 'throughout the night there was the pitter-patter of feet down the corridor to the toilet of those suffering from dysentery'.

And, as the heat rose, the camp's other inhabitants flourished, especially at night. 'Mosquitoes buzzed around us persistently ... Rats ran over us and became such a menace that the Japanese authorities organised a competition to stamp them out.' Bedbugs swarmed up through any gaps they could find in the floors and walls, and surfaced from the depths of the mattresses. The prisoners tried to slow them down by pouring boiling water into the cracks, but still 'by the light of our two- and four-wick candles we could see clusters of little black-red bodies scurrying across the sheets'.

The heat besieged the prisoners in a different way to the cold. Cold chills you from the inside. Heat punches you in the face and chest as you step in it, awake in it. You feel as if a great fist will knock you over, evaporate you the moment you step into its glare. I can imagine Lilla trying to keep to the shade of the trees as she made her way round the camp, each step producing a trickle of sweat that defied gravity as it worked its way into every fold of her skin. Sticking her together with a persistent dampness that inevitably turned into the itchy red rash of prickly heat.

One afternoon in June 1944, a rumour ran

round the camp that two prisoners had escaped to join a band of Chinese rebels. Avoiding the electrical fence, they had climbed through a watchtower during the guard's evening cigarette break. The inmates' initial reaction was elation. For a few precious hours, excitement buzzed from cell to cell. The knowledge that somebody, anybody, had made it into the outside world gave even the oldest and weakest prisoner a glimmer of hope. 'The effect was electrifying.'

But by nightfall elation had been replaced by fear. How would the Japanese react?

Until this point, as in the Chefoo camp, the rule of the Japanese Consular Guard had been relaxed. The soldiers had been on reasonably friendly terms with many of the prisoners, giving some of the boys jujitsu lessons, helping others to dig their toy gardens in the dirt and even fielding a baseball team. And, perhaps because they were preoccupied with the bands of Chinese guerrillas fighting in the region around the camp, the Japanese had stated that their only responsibilities in respect of the internees 'were to see that none escaped and to supply coal and wood for cooking and heating and "adequate" food'.

This escape therefore meant a great loss of face for the Japanese guards. Yet worse was the fact that the Japanese had not picked up on the escapees' absence in the morning's roll-call — and had had to be informed of the escapes by the prisoners themselves. The captain in charge was 'livid with rage'. He ranted and raved at the camp's committee leaders. He doubled the daily roll-calls to morning and evening and made the prisoners stand outside in the burning sun for hours on end as soldiers counted and recounted, barking at any internee who fell out of line. He imprisoned every other man in the escapees' dormitory for several days, questioning them again and again as to what they knew.

And then he cut the rations. For two weeks there was no meat. Not even horsemeat or the 'tablespoonful of donkey' that the prisoners were becoming used to.

Yet, however hungry they felt, every single one was grateful that his anger had stopped at that.

After a couple of weeks of punishment the meat ration was restored. Shortly afterwards,

the summer rains came. Water poured out of the heavens and seemed to turn to steam as it hit the baking ground. The hot, damp air hovered above the ground, as if trapped by the thick cloud above. With every inch of water, the earth softened and gave way, dissolving back into the rivers of stinking mud that had greeted Lilla a year beforehand. When the rains moved on, they took all the warmth with them. As quickly as winter had turned into a baking summer, so the summer flipped back into winter.

It was then, in September 1944, at the beginning of Lilla's third year in a prison camp — as, unknown to the prisoners, the US military was pushing its way into the Japanese-held Philippines — that the more systematic cuts in rations began. I don't know whether this was a calculated cruelty or whether the camp authorities were running out of the money or men needed to obtain the food. They admitted to neither, and simply told the prisoners over and over again that there was no more food to give them. The clearly ragged state of the Japanese soldiers that winter must have made these assertions all the more believable — 'we looked at our bedraggled clothes and barely-shod feet and saw our reflections in the young, forgotten guards. They had put newsprint in their boots to keep their feet warm, and wrapped their legs in whatever rags they could find, as they, like us, had no socks to wear. Their uniforms were in shreds, and their bare hands, as they checked off the roll, were cracked and bleeding from the cold,' writes Masters.

First to go was meat again. Not cut entirely, just halved. But halved from very little to almost nothing. I can imagine Lilla studying the stew that was ladled into her bowl at lunchtime. Sweeping her spoon through it, catching each lump and bringing it to the surface to see whether it was meat, or just another piece of aubergine. SOS, the prisoners called it, Same Old Stew, as each day's ingredients were indistinguishable from any other's. Flour went next. Just as the autumn weather was growing colder again. At the next monthly meeting between the supplies committee and the commandant's men, the Japanese imparted the news with deadpan faces. The flour ration would be cut by half. From now on, Lilla would be lucky to see two slices of bread at each meal to go with her stew, thinned down to a cup

of soup at supper.

The following month it was oil. Peanut oil. The prisoners used it for frying, baking and, most importantly of all, to supplement their diet. Peanuts are full of goodness, Lilla had written in her recipe book. Peanuts can be used as a substitute for meat when it is scarce. In a few weeks their fingernails would crack more readily than usual, a little more of their hair would fall out on their brush each night, their skin would feel even drier and, as the increasing cold bore down on them, would split into crevasses at every joint.

They came to dread these monthly meetings, wondering what would be taken away from them next. Whether they would be left with anything at all. Not a hungry soul could open his mouth without talking about food. 'Our stomachs, like implacable slave masters, completely supervised our powers of thought. A conversation might begin with religion, politics, or sex, but it was sure to end with culinary fantasies.' Adults talked about meals they'd had, evenings out, New Year's feasts, in 'intricate detail and tasting in our excited imaginations long forgotten dishes in restaurants visited in some dim past'. I can almost hear Lilla's voice joining in, chatting away about h-h-how to bake this, h-h-how to cook that, as she scribbled down notes of new recipes before rushing back to her cell to type them up.

In conversation the images were there for a few tantalizing seconds — and then they were gone. Vanished. Not waiting to be turned over and rediscovered as they were in Lilla's recipe book. She could flick back through the pages, though carefully, as most of the ricepaper was too fragile to stand heavy handling, and gaze at food words she'd typed days earlier. Eggs. Mix. Stir. Sift. Until steam rises. Chop the pork finely. Add garlic. Add cream. Add wine.

It was as though, by writing down the recipes, or even just the words — chocolate, sugar, tomatoes, lamb — Lilla gave them a life of their own inside the camp. And, as the book progressed through category after category, from meat to game to Chinese dishes to savouries to ice creams, Lilla recreated in her tiny grey cell an entire universe of the good old days. The good old days back in her grand apartment in Chefoo. The smell of course after course being carried

into the dining room. The tastes changing from dish to dish so that you could eat more than you really had room for. That slightly bloated feeling of having overeaten. Or the good old days in a crisp-white-tablecloth restaurant in Shanghai, the long low-ceilinged room sending the noise and clatter of plates and the latest news echoing back around her ears. Waiters charging past, steaming platters held high. Even the good old days in Kashmir. Roasting the goose that Ernie had stormed in with so triumphantly, still wearing her nightdress over his coat. The good old days that would now always exist on the paper pages of her recipe book, ready to be picked up again the moment she was free.

As the chasm grew between the food that Lilla was eating and the food that she craved, or knew that she needed in order to survive, even bringing herself to type out these recipes must have begun to feel like self-torture. Chop the onions. Onions. Just onions. Raw, cooked, even sprouting with age. As she typed out the word 'o-n-i-o-n', Lilla must have yearned to feel its weight in her hand, brush off the dirt, peel away its papery skin. Wanted to bite into it. Even a raw onion. Crunch through the layers with her teeth. Feel its juices squirt into her eyes, making them sting.

By the end of 1944, food supplies were so low that children's teeth were growing in without enamel. Girls were not reaching puberty — some would never be able to have children. The queues for what little food there was brought out the very worst in the internees. Everyone was desperate to see his or her own bowl filled. As they neared the serving hatch, starving prisoners would literally pounce on the servers, accusing them of handing out too much to those ahead of them. Gordon Martin, a teacher at the Chefoo school, remembers feeling 'filled with black poison' when he saw the food run out before his family's bowls were filled, leaving his young children to go hungry.

I don't think that I could even have rasped out the words 'roast beef' at this stage. Let alone written a recipe. I would have cracked at the mere prospect of doing so. I think most people would.

Lilla, however, didn't.

Maybe it was because she was so used to picking herself up off the floor that she knew how to take a deep breath and make the great

mental leap required. Maybe it was because she had learned she had to fight to survive. And then, surviving this far might have weakened the prisoners' bodies, but it had given them a lean inner strength. Enough to keep almost all of them alive.

It is still dumbfounding to read what Lilla was writing then.

By this stage she must have reached her recipes for pastries and puddings, desserts and cakes. Lilla had a sweet tooth and wrote chapter after chapter full of sugary, gooey treats. They take up a good part of her book. Recipe after recipe of indulgent dishes. List after list of cakes. Large cakes, tea cakes, scones, 'i-c-i-n-g', she typed. Dripping raisin cake. Chocolate layer cake. Honey gingerbread. Raspberry sandwich cake. Swiss roll. Cream puffs. Treacle scones. Waffles. A warm, sweet orgy of cakes and puddings. Steamed sponge puddings, hot enough to burn your tongue, coated in a thick, sugary syrup that stuck to your spoon until you had licked every last sticky drop away. Trays of freshly baked apples just out of the oven that you could slide your spoon into as smoothly as butter, their cooked insides melting into a white sugary soup. Or bread and butter pudding. Thick, yeasty bread layered with eggs and milk and butter and sugar and raisins and baked until the crusts were still crisp but the centre had melted into a single hot sweet soggy mass.

This was Lilla's feast.

#

[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/LillasFeast/11-war.htm>

from Oda Talbot's diary ...

<http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/ChSancton/diary/Diary/calendar.htm>



March 27, 1943 ...

From the diary directly as written that day.

27-3-43

My dear Freda:

I am afraid I have been compelled to allow a week to lapse before writing to you as I have been extremely busy. The journey was very long and arduous, the children took it very well. We had terrific receptions at Linsi and Tongshan Stations. At the former Mr Walravens, the Kelseys, and Dufrasne brought a huge quantity of food. Then at Tongshan, Miss Gunn, Miss Hill Murray, Vera Dutoff and Mr Ducuron came with 28 boxes of foodstuff, as well as cigarettes and tinned milk and biscuits.

The Consular Official who accompanied us from CWTao was a particularly nice chap and was extremely helpful. He allowed the foodstuff to be put on board on condition that he examined it to ensure that no booze was brought on. It was only

perfunctory as after the first few he said OK.

We changed at Tientsin. etc. [excerpts]

8-4-43

The food here is most inadequate for hardworking men. Can you imagine what it must be like to begin the day with bread porridge (well cooked & nicely flavoured with orange peel, by the nuns) then stew, potato, leeks for tiffin, then spinach soup for supper? Fortunately, one can eat as much bread as required. This diet cannot be blamed upon the cooks - they have as a matter of fact produced the best result on the poor materials given.

[excerpts]

13-5-'43

7.30, when anyone requiring dry bread and water may do so. Lunch is at noon. Frost ulus (?) it is called. After lunch there is time for a short nap and without a single exception, everyone does hard manual labour for 2 1/2 hours. The supper, lecture prayers in the Church which ends with the Salve Regina and so to bed at 7 p.m. The Trappists endeavour to avoid being a burden on the other communities and towards this aim they work. They make the well-known cheese. They also endeavour to have sufficient to share their wealth with the local destitutes.

As regards food, they eat neither meat, fish nor eggs. This latter was after a slight pause, to which the audience responded with great gusto, as Father Scanlon is the Chief importer of black-market eggs. We all laughed heartily.

Their monasteries are surrounded by high walls and no women are admitted. At the word walls, we broke out into laughter again. As it over the wall that we do black marketing. The discipline is a handle with several knotted ropes which is used on themselves once weekly. It is not true that the monks beat themselves to blood. As a matter of fact Father Scanlon says that any man can hurt himself as hard as he likes.

[excerpts]

15th May 1943 ...

I have been conferred a great honour, Father Scanlon came along with 5 oranges and has asked me to make him marmalade. He gave me 3 lbs sugar (black-market) I succeeded in making about 7 lbs marmalade, as I took a lot of trouble with it. I think it is very good. One of the Trappists has been down with typhus and it is for him that I have been making it. Poor chap must have acquired the virus on his long journey from the Mongolian border.

[excerpts]

28-5-'43

The quality and quantity of food are going down day by day - I expect it must be the depreciation of the FRB.

[excerpts]

31-5-'43

Mr Shirekawa, now chief manager of the K.M.A., came to pay the ex.K.M.A. a visit yesterday and today. The rumour soon spread around that he had brought comfort parcels. Naturally, we were conjecturing as to the quantity of cigarettes, jam, etc. which would be coming our way. Went so far as to wonder whether the men would each receive a carton of cigarettes, we had much fun wondering and it eventually turned out that only a small supply of miscellaneous goods were brought by Mr Shirekawa. In fact, 3 ladies, Mesdames Pryor, Allen and Faulkner were requested to distribute them. It was decided that articles would be divided into units for fair distribution, 1 tin jam, 2 units, 1 tin *powdered milk, 7 units, 1 tin sausages, 2 units, 1 pkt cigarettes, 1 unit. We had 1 unit of a tin of sausages and 1 unit of *powdered milk (7 tablespoonsful). We were very happy. But the Wallingtons had a unit of milk and instead of being satisfied as expected were the contrary and exchanged their share for something else. The Wallises are dying for milk, and only got 1 unit of sausages and 1 unit of jam.

...

Managed to buy some black-market strawberries at \$6.00 per lb. Got 2 lbs. and Marie

made jam. It is a little runny but just the same they are delightful. We have absolutely run out of money, I think Sid has borrowed \$30. from A.C. Hennings.

[excerpts]

17-6-'43

So today we had a tea party for which Oswald Dallas baked as marmalade cake and Gracie Lambert presented a chocolate cake. We also had egg and cucumber sandwiches and rock cakes. Mr. & Mrs. Henning, Gracie and Betty and Father Ziegenhorn was asked. The party was held outside our home, but, of course, we are exposed to all the people who have to pass us on their way to the ball field. It was a little too "on view".

That night we had salmon mayonnaise and cucumbers. Father Heier, Oswald Dallas and the Hennings came, of course, the Robinsons are always the principal guests when we have any "do". I think Gay had quite an enjoyable time.

[excerpts]

19-6-'43

I applied to the Swiss Consul, the Red Cross Representative armed with a certificate from Robbie stating that I required additional food, e.g. cheese, milk & jam. I ordered 2 cases of evaporated milk, 3 Dutch cheeses and 1 can assorted jams. I wonder whether any of these items will be sent in to me. We now have only \$700 odd in the Camp Bank which I hope will be sufficient to cover this order.

[excerpts]

29-6-'43

Several more parcels have reached people. Bill Chilton has been distributing them – not to us as we are not from the "Mines" proper. He seems to think that Captain Costain would be sending us parcels and that these would be divided between people from Chinwangtao. I wonder? I can't see Dairy or Eva doing any such thing. David Heyman sent us a post card telling us that he was sending us 5 tins jam, 3 pkts of sugar as well as a pot of honey. We are looking forward to the parcel, not so much for the articles as the thrill of receiving

proof that people are thinking of us. I am not expecting anything.

[]excerpts

17-7-'43

Rumour is persistent that Benito Mussolini has flown. Many parcels are reaching folks here. Apparently, large K.M.A. subscription parcels, some only for K.M.A. and some only for the whole community. The latter being Nathan Pryor's headache. Although, I do think that the best scheme would be to distribute the foodstuff through the kitchen, to ensure that everyone will receive a share.

...

3 big cases were received from the K.M.A. and destined for people who are not receiving any comfort parcels. Haven't heard who and what the folks were getting. We ourselves, being considered as three adults, 3 tins Blue Cross condensed milk, 2 tins pineapple, 1 tin Delmonte Heinz sardines, 3 Tim Lithy's cornbeef, 2 jars malt, 2 tins fruit salad, 1 tin liver paste, about 12lbs dried fruit, 8 yds mosquito netting, 2 boxes matches; it was indeed a grand parcel.

The Robinsons have been receiving parcels whenever parcels have come in and so we have done quite well – on their tins.

There is an aeroplane buzzing overhead – How long will it be before an American fly overhead.

The canteen now is functioning extremely well and they are receiving a continual flow of goods, and are eating on an average of either fresh fruit to tomatoes twice weekly, so are doing well. We are very well, I am afraid we are inclined to feel sorry for your life being so expensive and so lonely.

[excerpts]

6-8-43

My dear Freda:

The 3 parcels of biscuits arrived, unfortunately they are practically pulverised. However I managed to secure some swole gingerbreads which were delicious.

[]excerpts

6-9-'43

Marie received, or rather rescued her parcel from the Lowensens. There must be a systematic method of pilfering, sugar, cigarettes & cheese from parcel Tisha Metcalfe was sent a round of Trappist Cheese, the lid of the box was all that came.

[excerpts] ...

16/10-'43

In the afternoon, after Robbie had just gone to a violin practice, Marie to veg, a stone came over and the gent popped his head suddenly & said quick, quick and handed 10 bottles brandy. The 1st 4 I took and hid under the pillow, and Sid, whom I shouted for took the rest and hid them in the hamper, then he came in and took away the bundle I had, but just as he was concealing then in the hamper, the guards were heard clattering down the alley, unfortunately facing the lean-to where Sid was busy. Whatever transpired, Sid dashed (unfortunately) out and accompanied the guards in their search around the house, they did not find anything, but one gent remembered the lean-to, and when he was there Sid handed out the stuff, seeing, as he thought the game was up. He called out to me, I was busy with Christine, and asked me to tell what had happened that the gent handed the stuff, which he had not ordered. The gent became quite cross and wanted to know why we should have hidden it. Because, said I, we were frightened of them. He then demanded a basket, and started marching off with "if there is any trouble your husband may have to explain." I thought the matter was shelved, but Sid, wanting to cut his losses, dashed off ahead and said "I'll go to the guard room," on the way he popped into Discipline and informed, Mr MacLaren who got the interpreter, Mr Sabouval and went to the guardroom. Meanwhile all the alleys up to 11 were searched thoroughly. Mrs Hares had to explain her stock of sugar- she had 30 lbs. Many people were trembling in their boots, as there were black-market eggs, condensed milk, etc.

Apparently, the interview was very pleasant, with Mr MacLaren refusing to budge unless Sid was restored safely in the bosom of his family.

All day Friday, he was jittery, having a premonition that something was befalling, the stupid gent popped his head over at the usual, and was quite incensed when told to go away. I felt very unhappy too, feeling the impending doom. This morning Sid woke me, at with the dog barking in the village and we were prepared for the gent's reception - he was going to get a ticking off. Sid said at about 10.30, that if nothing happened this morning that all would be well.

At 10.45 3 Japanese came, and my heart dropped, I promised the Virgin Mary a novena of Masses if Sid were OK. At about 11.30 Sid returned, I was glad but my joy turned to sorrow when I heard that he was sentenced to 7 days. All sorts of wild ideas passed through my head, retaliations, splitting to the guards, etc. I wept buckets and poor Sid had no time to feel sorry for himself - perhaps it was all to the good.

Before 2, Bill, Harry Faulkner, Robbie and Father Rutherford helped carry his things to the guardroom, but again Sid was inopportunistly anxious to do the right and suggested search of his suitcase and person. But he refused to allow them to take his braces, which they wanted to do. His shaving tackle was extracted as well as cigarettes. However all is well, Bill Chilton has organised a programme, whereby a K.M.A. individual carries Sid's food to him from the Hospital Diet Kitchen. Actually if Sid were not in jail, he would be a hospital case as he is with dysentery.

[excerpts] ...

8-12-'43

Vera's parcels to Marie & me arrived - I had a portion of the lid and Marie had some portion of the box that's all. We were frightfully disappointed. We were looking forward to the bacon.

[excerpts] ...

Another unlucky parcel day for the menage. Marie's 2 parcels from Lowensen's were listed on the broken list, but it was worse than that, one was practically empty and the other with more than half missing. All the Xmas gifts were lost Marie was extremely distressed, shedded tears, but Robbie a trump and cheered us up

considerably. But I got 2 red cross letter, from Ena dated 26/8/43 and 1 from Arthur's dated 27/7/43, Elsie came along, and gave us a piece of bacon We're too sad for words.

[excerpts] ...

22-12-'43

Our mail day was disappointing. I was hoping to hear from you, Divert and Mother. Instead p.c.s or Xmas cards from Sister Agnes Loyola, Father Legrand, Vera D. & the Walravens. However this disappointment was counterbalanced by the news that we have 4 parcels to come & so have the Robinsons. 2 from Suzanne Simon, 1 from Walravens & 1 from Ducuion. I do hope they'll be okay. The biggest list of parcels ever 340, but the General Affairs Dept. are not so happy as they are apprehensive of broken, pilfered or lost parcels.

[excerpts] ...

8-1-'44

We have run completely out of tea, and it is unobtainable - except from a friend - we asked Elsie Henning and she very sweetly let us have some. She has been our angel of help on many an occasion.

[excerpts] ...

12-1-'44

Yesterday Sid celebrated his birthday in good style. He had several slices of bacon for breakfast, we didn't, but he was privileged.

I made a blancmange pudding for tiffin, and for tea we did have a sumptuous spread, Marie had made an excellent birthday cake - icingless - and a red apple pie, Gay made some peanut cookies, and Wendy some excellent biscuits. Then we were busy as we had a dinner party, it being Bill Chilton's birthday too - I made the tomato soup and for some reason it curdled, perhaps it was the Benyake beef or perhaps the onions which I put in. Marie prepared the pork and beans. As guests we had Elsie & Alan Henning, Clemmie & Bill. They came at 7.30. At 8.45 Sid acquired a bottle of Port (?) with which we had some curried tuna. Then tomato soup, pork & beans & corn beef, pineapple tart, birthday cake, etc, with coffee - Bill & Clemmie left at 9.40 straight from the dinner

table. Then we had snort-os. It was good and deliberate.

[excerpts] ...

24-1-'44

Last night the Hennings brought cheese, real butter, 2 tins pineapple & Morton's custard for their Sunday night supper. It was a feast. We played Vingt-et-un, and at about 9, I started cooking the cheese for the cheese toast, then the feast started. The kids had pineapple & custard, so did we, after the cheese toast.

Father Rutherford came to tea. He was much depressed. Dr Vio came for coffee at elevenses, Stan gatecrashed & so did Elsie. Today my big wash is still hanging outside as it's been raining all day. Hope it's safe. The Elephant Bell brought me \$50 - \$30 for cod liver oil & \$20 for soap powder. I hope to buy a clock from the Italians with it, as our prize clock has been damaged by Christine.

[excerpts] ...

16-2-'44

We had decided that "Valentine's Day" would be the family birthday, and have a family party to which the kids would be invited. So we killed the fatted Coq, had salmon canapes, fried ham steaks, peas & fried s potatoes, custard pies. We did have a very enjoyable supper. It had to start at 8, as I had to attend an emergency meeting of the executive committee of the Homes Committee to discuss "serious" complaints against the Elephant Bell which had been received by the said committee. We decided to advise Mrs Wright, the lady manager of the Elephant Bell to refrain from reselling or exchanging goods purchased at the Canteen.

[excerpts] ...

25-2-'44

Cigarettes were issued today after a wait of almost 5 weeks. People were becoming desperate. Twas no longer safe to walk about smoking one. But what a blessed relief this evening, like gentle rain falling on a thirsty soil. 200 each adult at \$8.80. Pretty cheap when it is considering that a Mercury packet costs \$7.00 in town, and amongst these 200 are 4 packets of Mercury.

[excerpts] ...

5-3-'44

There has been tremendous activity on the part of the Authorities to nab black marketers. They nabbed one. He is a missionary, Helsby by name. He was waving a white flag to the Chinese outside, when the white flag was spotted by a Jap. Meanwhile Helsby stuffs the offending white kerchief into his pocket, with a corner hanging out - down main street. The Jap jumped the wall and spotted him right away. He apparently told 2 yarns, and eventually broke down & confessed to his guilt. All row No. 14 was searched and I believe some sugar & rice were found in Helsby's which the Authorities donated to the hospital. Helsby was sentenced to solitary confinement for 2 weeks.

[excerpts] ...

Goyas had a shipment, of sugar - 11 bags being delivered over the wall in the Japanese compound only a Jap passing saw the stuff, and took it. Goya was helplessly to watch \$2310 worth falling into the wrong hands, but he was lucky not to have been caught. He was also warned by Discipline regarding the import of Pai Kel.

[excerpts] ...

13-3-'44

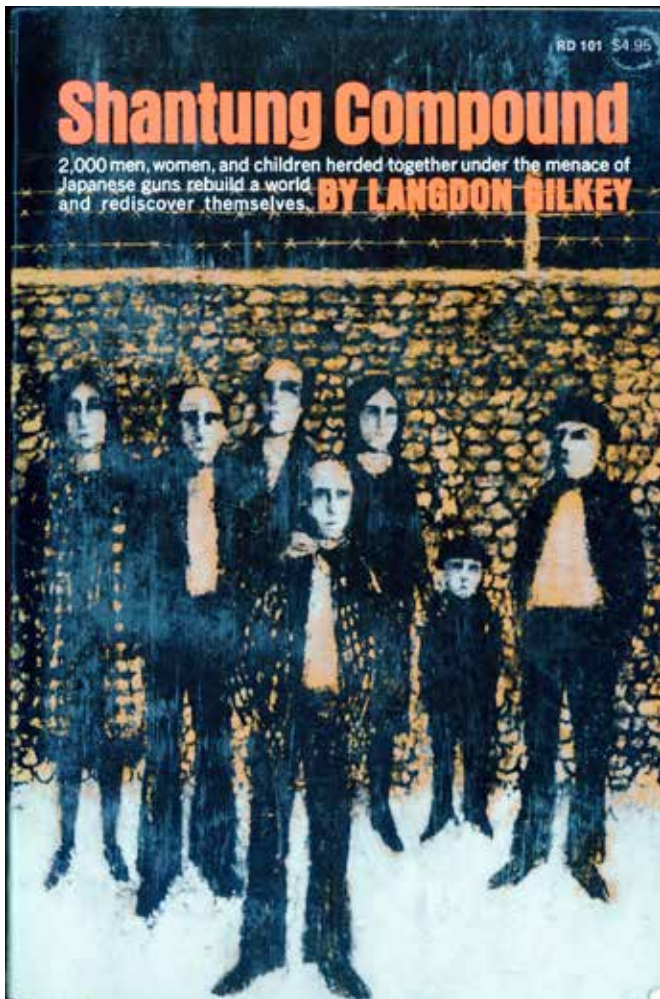
We are receiving 3 parcels this week, and Robinsons 2. One containing pig brawn. Our kitchen food has been on the retrograde, so we are grateful for this present and hope that they will all arrive safely.

[excerpts] ...

[further reading]

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/ChSancton/diary/Diary/calendar.htm>



Chapter 4 [excerpts] ...

in The Kitchen ...

[...]

It was at this point that I became an assistant cook, hardly knowing then how to boil an egg. My boss was a gay and talented bachelor named Edwin Parker. With graying hair and a round face, he had been a curio and art dealer from Peking. Edwin knew how to cook, but he hated to boss anybody or to organize his meals too carefully. As a result, our life was filled with confusion and laughter, but also with frequent culinary triumphs. My job was to keep the pans and cauldrons clean, to cut up

meat, stir soups and stews, fry leeks, and braise meat—in other words, all the routine chores, while Edwin, as chef, planned, directed, and seasoned the menu.

Since we both wanted to live on as good food as possible, we worked hard. Although we were not the best of the three cooking teams in our kitchen (each one worked every third day), ours came to have a growing favorable reputation among our ordinarily disgruntled diners. As the first winter closed in, I liked to come to work before dawn, to watch our stoker (an insurance man from Peking) coax the fires into life under the cauldrons, to start cooking the cereal in the large guo (caldron), and to fry people's black-market eggs on our improvised hot plate. Then, after spending the rest of the day preparing lunch and supper, I would return in the dark to the hospital and an evening with Alice, tired but full of the satisfaction of one who has worked with his muscles all day.

It was, therefore, a severe blow when word came from the Japanese that on January first (1944) we would have to move out of Kitchen III into one of the other two large kitchens. Each of these was filled with what seemed to us to be immense crowds of unfamiliar people, and from all reports, enjoyed a notoriously bad spirit and worse food. But since the Japanese insisted—they intended to house the newly arriving Italians in that section of the camp—we had no choice but to leave Kitchen III.

As luck would have it, my first day of duty in the new place, Kitchen I, came on New Year's morning. I had never been inside the place—so much vaster than our intimate kitchen with two small guos and a team made up of only two cooks—and so I hardly knew my way around its vast interior. What made matters worse was that the night before there had been a very gay dance in the Tientsin kitchen (Kitchen II) to which Alice and I had gone and, reasonably enough, we had not got in until about 4 A.M.

So, sleepy, headachy, and angry, I groped my way, about 6 A.M., into the unknown recesses

of Kitchen I. It was a cold, damp morning; the newly made fires created such thick steam that I could only dimly discern the long line of huge guos with many strange figures bending over them. Gradually, as the steam cleared, I became aware that the voice giving sharp orders Belonged to the boss cook, and the feet I kept seeing under the rising steam to the six helpers on the cooking team; also I realized that I was helping to cook cereal and that others were beginning the preparation for lunchtime stew.

It took little longer to grasp that no one there was much concerned about the quality of the food we made, and no one was eager to work more than absolutely necessary. McDaniel, the boss, was a nice enough guy in a rough, indifferent, and lazy way; but we knew that his sharp-tongued wife told him what to cook. He used to run home in the middle of most afternoons because he had forgotten what she had told him about supper! Beyond carrying out these orders, he knew little and cared less about cooking. For my first two months there, I felt frustrated about the job we were doing. There must be some way, thought I, of peppering things up and turning out better food. And so I began to look around for others who might feel the same way, but who, unlike myself, knew how to cook.

Gradually as I worked in that kitchen and learned to know it, its strangeness and size diminished. I even found myself enjoying my hours every third day on duty. There was a sunny courtyard just off the main kitchen, and on good days, when we could prepare the food for stews out there and eat our lunch at the big table, there was an atmosphere of rough, ribald fun that I heartily enjoyed. As this sense of at-homeness grew, I found that the functioning of the kitchen as a complex of coordinated activities came to interest me—for it really was a remarkable organization.

This organization began outside the kitchen when food supplies were brought into camp on carts by Chinese. They were distributed by the Supplies Committee proportionally to each of the two main kitchens. Then the supplies gang carried them in wooden crates to the kitchens—vegetables to the vegetable room and meat to the butchery. At this point the two cooks for the following day

looked glumly over the meager supplies they had been given for their eight hundred customers, racked their brains for some new ideas for a menu, and then told the vegetable captains and the butchers what they wanted in the raw preparation of these supplies.

That same afternoon and into the next morning, the two butchers sliced, cubed, or ground the meat (this would be the winter procedure; they boiled it in summer in order to ensure its keeping at least over night without refrigeration). Teams of some fifteen to twenty women diced carrots, peeled potatoes, and chopped cabbage, while middle-aged men helped them by carrying the vegetable baskets around and by cleaning the produce in a pair of old bathtubs taken from the residences in the “out of bounds” section of the compound.

The next day the two cooks and five helpers came on duty about 5 A.M. They prepared breakfast cereal if there was any, and then lunch and supper for that day. A pan washer on my shift (actually a scholar of Chinese literature, and now a professor at Cornell University) washed the containers we used in preparing the food and from which we ladled out the dinner. Then women servers distributed the food to the waiting lines collecting food for our eight hundred people. They were checked and watched over by elderly men counters who made sure no one came in twice, and kept tabs on how fast the food was running out.

Girls then passed tea—if there was any—around the tables in the dining room. Men tea servers poured it into flasks for the majority who, being families preferred to collect their food in covered containers and to eat it en famille in their rooms. Near the serving tables was the bread room where five or six older men sliced two hundred loaves of bread daily and distributed to each his ration. And finally, two teams of women dishwashers cleaned up the dishes after the meal of those who ate in the dining hall. All of these groups got time off depending on the hours and heaviness of their work.

Cooking food and boiling water, however, required heat. For this purpose, coal and wood were brought to the kitchen yard from the supply

house in carts. In our yard two men were always chopping wood while others molded bricks out of the coal dust that made up most of our usual coal issue. Two stokers got up the fires and tended them, one in the cooking area and the other where water was boiled for drinking. Stoking was a job which called for great skill since the coal was poor and the cooks extremely demanding about the level of heat they had to have under their precious stews.

To keep this intricate organization running smoothly, there was at first only an informal structure, headed by the manager of the kitchen, who seemed to do everything, and two women storekeepers. The latter kept an eye on our small stores of sugar and oil; also they purchased raw ginger, spices, and dried fruits when they were available in the canteen; and generally functioned as advisers of the manager on his many problems.



A drawing by Miss Marie Regier, a missionary at Weihsien, showing women (who could be missionaries, bankers' wives, gay ladies, and so on) scrubbing and cutting the vegetables and washing them in the old bathtub.

One morning my career as a kitchen helper was rudely interrupted by a fairly serious accident. It was a raw February day in 1944. Since there was nothing much to do in the cooking line, some of us, spurred on by the complaints of our more sensitive diners, decided to clean up the south kitchen where water was boiled for drinking. Our kitchens were terribly dirty; soot from the fires covered ceiling and walls; grease was inevitably added to this layer on the cauldron tops; and the floor combined all this with its own tracked-in mud. Cleaning meant trying, with brooms and cloths, to get as much of this dirt and soot off the walls,

ceiling, and pipes as possible.

Along the wall above the top of the cauldrons was a chimney ledge that protruded about five inches. Thinking that it was wide enough to stand on, I clambered up. I had not been there twenty seconds when I felt myself losing my balance, and instinctively I stepped back—into a cauldron of boiling water. “Boy, that’s hot,” I half-said to myself, and in the same instant I was across the room. I can recall no conscious mental command telling me to jump as I found myself leaping out of that cauldron. In fact, I catapulted out so fast that my working mate only saw me crashing into the wall opposite and thought, he admitted later, that I had simply gone mad. Next I found myself hopping up and down as fast as I could. Then I sat down and eased off my shoes and socks to see what had happened to my feet.

I had no idea I was badly burned until, taking the sock off my right ankle and foot, I found the skin coming off with it. By that time the boss cook had come over from the north kitchen. With one look at my now skinless ankles, he gave quick orders to take me to the hospital immediately. Two burly fellows on the shift made a chair with their arms and trundled me off. It was not until we got out in the air that I became conscious of real pain. To be sure, when I was hopping up and down, my feet stung; but this was worse. From that time on for about five hours, my burns hurt a lot.

The doctors in the hospital did a wonderful job. A British doctor for the Kailon Mining Company put picric acid on the bandages and did not take them off for about ten days. Due to the sulphanilamide that was smuggled into camp through the guerrillas, I was able to avoid infection. When the bandages finally came off, new skin had grown almost everywhere. Within three weeks, I was hobbling around. In six months all that was left to show of the burn was a rather grim abstract color effect of yellow and magenta.

[further reading]

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

<https://www.amazon.com/Shantung-Compound>

by Emmanuel Hanquet

<http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



Father Emmanuel
Hanquet remembers ...
(September 2002)

Father Palmers
and Unden
decided to work in
the bakery.

That helped our
group a lot, since
every three days,
we could bring back

a big loaf of bread that was issued as a premium
to us heavy workers, going to work at 5 in the
morning.

I myself chose to work in kitchen number one
and got a job as the 5th "roast-about". Every third
day, I had to work hard there, beginning at 6 a.m.,
and learned the job as much as possible. So much
that, after ascending every rank in the team, I was
finally assigned the job of "chef-cook".

We were a happy team of 7, joyful and
cooperating. My assistant was an American named
Zimmerman who had a Russian wife who knew
a lot about cooking and helped us to create and
prepare new dishes. At the beginning, in that
kitchen, there were no ladles, spoons and special
utensils to ditch the food out, so, we had to ask
the repair shop to make new instruments out of
tins. The same for the covers of the "kuo".

There were 5 of them, large kettles of which
the bigger one contained twelve buckets of
water.

We even had a team song, that was taught to
us by a young British from Tsingtao and we sung
our song every now and then, especially when we
saw some protestant reverend passing alongside
the small windows above our kettles. We sang it
with a certain smile and even a point of derision
for the Holy Book --- it goes; (like a nursery rime)

"The best book to read is the Bi-i-i-i-ble (bis)

"If you read it every day

"It will make you on the way

*"While turning in our kettles,
(at this point, we yelled) "OUPS!"*

"The best book to read is the Bi-i-i-i-ble "

---- and so on ----

I worked in the kitchen for almost a year. After
that, I was assigned to making noodles with two
new friends, Langdon Gilkey and Robin Strong.

Somebody had discovered in the attic of the
old mission a machine that looked like a wringer
for drying the laundry. The machine was made of
two cylinders turning in opposite directions and
closed together. After many trials of mixing flour
with the right proportion of water --- neither too
much nor too little --- and by feeding the device
with the good mixture between the two cylinders
turning slowly, we obtained noodles that could be
boiled as such for a few minutes and were a regal
for all of us.

It did not last long for me and I switched to
"woodcutter", chopping wood for the stoves of
the hospital.

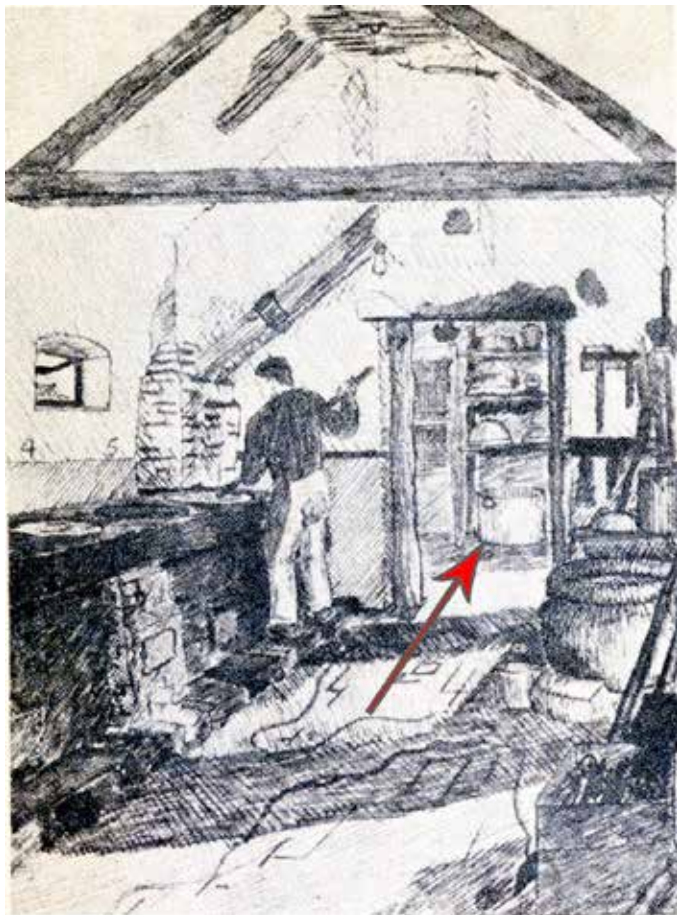
N.D.L.R.

(by Leopold Pander)

... and here is the true story of how Father
Emmanuel Hanquet's adventure in Kitchen #1
finally ended:

*... it is as he told it to me at his home in
Louvain-la-Neuve — when he was still alive and
healthy !*

*He didn't say whether it was in the morning
or in the afternoon shift but he was chef cook in
Kitchen number one and they were preparing
a great quantity of boiling stew in a very large
cooking pot placed on top of the red-hot burning
stove as the one on the image of the kitchen
#1. The red arrow points towards the marmite
mentioned here. The morning stokers — he told
me — had just fed the fires with a new provision of
wood.*



As Father Hanquet was conscientiously mixing the contents of the boiling stew by stretching his whole body to reach the summit of the large cooking pot he unconsciously leaned a bit too close against the furnace and did not immediately feel that his trousers were burning.

Well, his pants were on fire and when his kitchen mates finally extinguished their flaming chef cook there was evident damage on the most sensitive parts of his body.

He was taken in express — to the hospital where the doctors declared that his family jewels and surroundings were badly burnt and that he would have to stay in hospital for a certain time.

Needless to mention that he was replaced as “chef” in Kitchen number one.

Of course, all his fellow priests had a good laugh at this momentary handicap — .

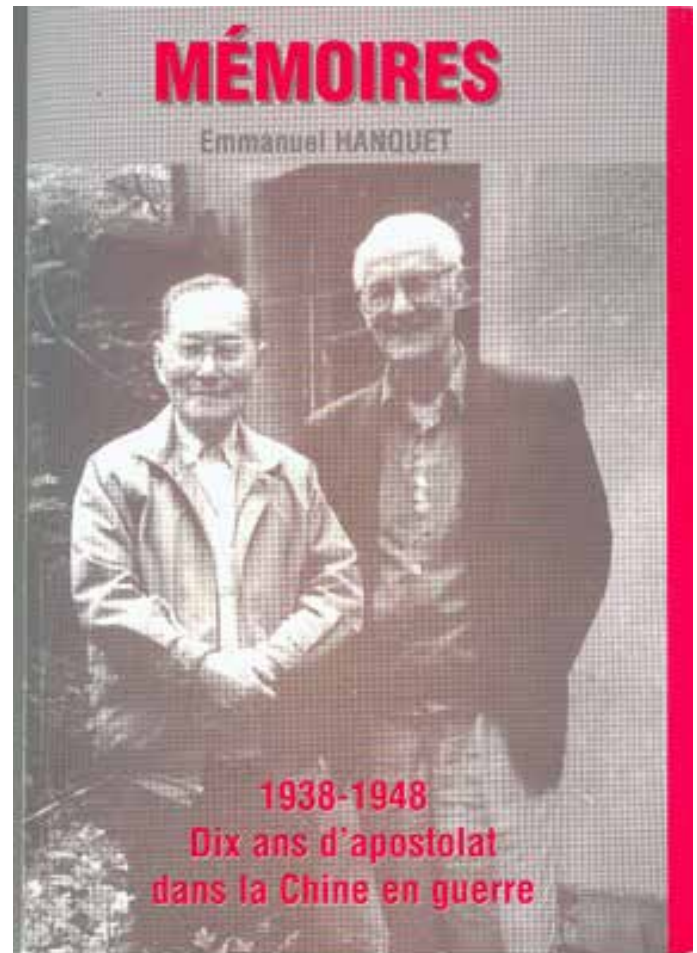
Once his health re-established and with another pair of trousers Father Hanquet did not return to Kitchen number one. Instead, he had to cut wood for the kitchen fires which he did with so much energy that he broke the axe’s wooden handle. He got it fixed with an iron handle instead.

He missed the company of his cooking mates as

his woodcutting chore was to be done all alone.

Anyway, he had a good chuckle when telling me that story. Ha! Ha! Ha!

He loved to laugh when telling stories about Weih sien !



[excerpts] ...

Everything had to be sorted out.

For example, in No. 1 kitchen where I had volunteered to work our only equipment was six huge cast-iron cauldrons each heated by its own stove. We had to improvise lids using planks and carve great spatulas out of good wood in order to stir the grub as it was cooking...

[excerpts] ...

All available skills were harnessed: carpenter, bricklayer, tinsmith, baker, cook, teacher, seamstress, soapmaker[!], instrumentalist, etc

As for me, I offered my services to the kitchen

as junior kitchen-hand No. 6. It was a good way of ensuring that you got at least some food! Dare I admit that I hardly lost any weight in camp and that I ended my career in the kitchen as head cook for six hundred souls?! I was proud of my young and active team of six who never complained about the hard graft. My right hand man was one Zimmerman, a Jewish American, who was a far better cook than I was. He had a Russian wife who was a source of good ideas. For example, we were renowned for our Tabasco sauce which was a mixture of raw minced turnip, pili-pili and red peppers which you could sometimes get from the canteen. With these ingredients we would make a sort of sauce that took the skin off your throat but which had the merit of giving some taste to dishes which otherwise had none.

We used to put up our menus when it was our turn to cook - every third day: it was our way of lifting the spirits of the internees. But one day we realized that a Japanese guard would come and conscientiously copy down our menus for sending to... the Geneva Convention!

That put an end to our gastro-literary efforts!!

The young people had to work too. Their studies came first. We had organized for them two teaching regimes, American and British. So they went to school every day in the makeshift classrooms. But they were also required to pump water for two hours a day. That was the wearisome task for many of the rest of us too, as there were four water towers in the camp from which water had to be distributed to the kitchens and the showers. Otherwise you got your own water in jugs. The latrines were inevitably very primitive, and had a system of pedals such as used to be found in French railway stations. They were well kept. Oddly enough they were often the responsibility of the Fathers, of us missionaries, although we were few in number! But I have to say that our willingness to undertake this task was not entirely disinterested. The latrines were one of the few places you could meet Chinese, who came to empty them, and we developed good relationship with them with an eye to planning escapes.

To complete the account of the types of work I chose to do or found myself obliged to do during those thirty months I would tell you that I was also

a noodlemaker, a woodcutter and, last but not least, a butcher.

That was the work I most liked, though you had to be very careful not to get infected fingers. Much of the meat was very poor, but we tried to rescue enough to make so-called hamburgers or stews, though they were mainly of potato.

And choosing the job of butcher was also calculated, since there too you could meet Chinese people as they came to deliver their merchandise.

Occasionally, and fleetingly, you found yourself alone with one of them and that gave you a chance to exchange news.

That was how I learned of the Japanese military collapse...

I hastened to pass on the amazing news to the other prisoners. I remember that some English friends whom I had told of the rumour invited me to take a thimble of alcohol to celebrate the glad tidings. But 'Beware lest you be wrong' they said to me 'for if you are you will have to buy us a whole bottle'.

In the event I had no cause to regret my optimism.

etc.

[excerpts] ...

The White Elephant Shop

The needs of everyday camp life made you ingenious and resourceful. Some internees had managed to bring into camp in their baggage more than they needed. Others, in contrast lacked everything. I remember a silver tea service which was sold for a few kilos of sugar to the king of the black market, a certain Goyas, who arrived late in camp but who was preceded by his reputation as a notorious fraudster.

Goyas had the tea service melted down into ingots that could be used for currency exchange.

To facilitate exchanges of goods between prisoners the camp committee had the idea of opening a shop where clothes and other items, ticketed with a price, could be exchanged. For

example, you could buy some winter garment so long as you brought along another object of the same value, or paid for it with the Japanese yuans which were meted out sparingly to us and referred to as comfort money . This was in the form of a loan which had to be repaid to our governments at the end of the war!

The White Elephant shop ran for about a year, until there was practically nothing left to turn into cash or to exchange.

Cigarettes were another source of currency, at least for the non-smokers. We were entitled to a pack of a hundred cigarettes once a month from the canteen. That was not nearly enough for the serious smokers, but it was handy for those who could use them for barter.

The children from Chefoo school – a protestant school which had arrived in camp complete with staff – used them to augment their bread ration, which was never enough to satisfy their hungry young stomachs.

[excerpts] ...

The Black Market...

In the early days of our internment, the Japanese did little to stop us communicating with the outside world. Apart from the perimeter wall and the barbed wire beyond there were only the watchtowers – or perimeter towers – which occurred on the wall wherever there was a corner.

There was however an exception: the camp was not an exact rectangle, and there were blind spots including one section of wall which was hard to see from a watchtower.

The Trappist monks' accommodation was near to this stretch of wall and Father Scanlon had made it the HQ of the black market, with the wall itself serving as the ... counter.

The Chinese outside the wall had been quick to take advantage of this feature of the wall to come - by day - and prowl around, offering to sell things, mainly sugar and eggs.

At first the orders were delivered over the wall by Chinese who climbed over the barbed wire,



... a discreet place behind the walls ...

but the day came when the wire was electrified and one of the traders was electrocuted and left hanging dead on the barbed wire.

The black market was a pretty risky business...

Nevertheless Father Scanlan continued unfazed with his little egg trade and was thus a great help to those families with children. He had found another discreet way to take delivery of his egg orders: a length of guttering which served to carry away rainwater.

When the weather was dry the eggs arrived one by one along this guttering, despatched discreetly by a Chinese posted on the other side of the wall.

However, Father Scanlan was being closely watched. Already a guard had once come upon him pacing the wall at nightfall, breviary in hand. He had been challenged: - 'What are you doing here?' - 'As you can see, I am reading my breviary.'

- 'Impossible, it is far too dark' retorts the guard.
- 'Yes, but I know it by heart' replies Father Scanlan.

Alas, what he was up to was stumbled on one day when he was sitting on a stool with his Trappist robes covering the stool below which the eggs were gently rolling out.

Up comes a guard. No chance of warning off the Chinese who continues to send along the eggs. One unfortunate egg, more fragile than the others, comes and cracks open against the others.

The sound alerts the guard who uncovers the ploy.

Father Scanlon was taken to the cells which were close by the building where the guards lived.

The Father, as a good Trappist, was untroubled by solitary confinement and would sing the different hours of the breviary at the top of his voice.

This drove the Japanese mad, and after trying him in another cell they decided to send him back to us.

That was the end of the black market...

[excerpts] ...

Have I ever been afraid in camp ?

As an answer to Mary Previte's question, I believe that once or twice, I feared reprisals from the Japanese guards, and for that, yes, I was afraid that something nasty could have happened to me.

I specially remember this little adventure that finally had a favourable outcome though it could have sent me directly to jail for several days if ever I got caught red handed.

You all know of the food shortage problems and how much we suffered from the lack of primary food necessities such as, oil, eggs and sugar. Sugar was in great demand by the children's parents who tried getting small provisions through the black market.

We, adults, were quite accustomed to the shortage of sugar. That is the reason why my friend C.B. made an inquiry to find out where exactly the Japanese stored the bags of sugar. In precisely which house in the compound it was kept, and when he finally had this valuable information, he decided to act immediately.

To act quickly, he needed an accomplice to watch our side of the compound wall while he was on the other side, in the Japanese quarters, rigorously reserved to the Japanese and them alone. Another problem to resolve, was the hiding of the precious sugar before transferring it into little bags for the few families who had asked for it.

Just outside our quarters, (bloc n°56) there was, in a small garden, a dry well which must have been dug in the past years for keeping vegetables during the winters. That was an ideal place for our sugar. Safe and discreet.

So, on one autumn evening when darkness fell around us, my friend made a rendezvous with me near the wall, just behind the Japanese accommodations. I was watching while he was on the other side. I walked to and fro, trying to make believe I was just a passer by.

After what seemed to be a long time, I saw a head emerging just above the wall, and all of a sudden I had in my arms, a whole bag of sugar of 10 kilos. It was quickly hidden in an old jacket and off we went to bloc n°56 to hide, the old jacket with the sugar in the well.

We didn't meet anybody on the way. The following days, C.B. made a few nightly visits to our little garden, taking in tiny bags, small amounts of the precious sugar to those who needed it.

I would like to add a comment about "scrounging" in camp. You can only imagine how we felt, as civilians, rounded-up, imprisoned behind walls and guarded by armed Japanese soldiers.

To pinch away something from them was not an act of stealing, it was just a correct return of what they had taken from us.

[excerpts] ...

[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

by *Howard S. Galt* on board m/v Gripsholm

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf



THE INTERNMENT CAMP AT WEIHSIEN,
SHANTUNG PROVINCE, CHINA
March - September, 1943

An objective and descriptive account of the Internment Camp from the point of view of the writer's experiences. It is thought to contain no statements of political or international significance.

Howard S. Galt, 1943

Dining

As to general living conditions in the camp some accounts, more in detail, of kitchen and dining room arrangements, is in order.

By way of example the conditions in Kitchen No. 3, which served the Peking group, will be considered.

Kitchen No. 3, and its dining room, were housed in the lower floor of a two-story building in dimensions about 80 feet long by 40 feet wide. The kitchen occupied two rooms about 12 feet wide, across the two ends of the building, the central part

being the dining room, and communicating with the kitchen rooms by broad doorways. For the kitchen fires the Japanese had built brick ranges, with grates for either wood or coal, and crowned with large, shallow, open kettles about four feet in diameter. These stove structures, with their big kettles, were essentially in the common Chinese pattern. The kettles were covered with round wooden covers. All processes of cooking had to be adjusted to this equipment. The dining room was supplied with tables and long benches (no chairs) hastily built by carpenters.

The benches were so poorly constructed that they soon began to collapse, and all of them (and those in the other dining rooms also) had to be rebuilt by the camp carpenters.

East and North of the building was a wide open space, partly shaded by trees.

In this area supplies of food and fuel could be unloaded, meat and vegetables could be prepared for cooking, and queues for entrance to the dining room doors could be formed.

The kitchen 3 group was fortunate in having among its personnel a few cooks of almost professional status.

There was an ex-Marine from the American Embassy guard in Peking, a Catholic "Father," and a group of two or three Dutch nuns.

All of these had had experience in group-kitchen cooking. Assistants were appointed for these and they took charge of the heavy cooking labor in rotation through weekly periods.

Besides the cooks a large staff of women and men were required for specialized tasks. The preparation of vegetables, the pumping and carrying of water, starting the fires, chopping wood, serving in the dining room, washing dishes, washing dining room tables (there were no table cloths) and sweeping the floors, carrying bread and other supplies – nearly all of these tasks required 3-times-a-day attention and effort. Weekly assignment to these tasks, involving perhaps 30 to 75 people, was the responsibility of the employment committee.

As to supplies for the diet, there were only two articles unlimited and always available: white bread and tea, and some of the meals, especially breakfasts, consisted entirely of these two articles. That more meals were not this limited was the result of ingenious planning of the cooks, rather than of the liberality of the Japanese supplies office. We have already mentioned the bakery as a central establishment.

Flour and yeast were often variable in quality and at times the bread was quite inferior. But on the whole, the bread may be rated as good and wholesome. Tea was served without fail three times a day, but there were no “trimmings” to go with it.

Vegetables, next to bread and tea, were the most liberally provided.

Potatoes were quite frequently supplied, but they were usually small and limited in quantity. For the sake of economy they were usually served (and eaten) unpeeled. Cabbages, leeks, onions, and other green vegetables were more liberally supplied.

Meat and fish appeared quite often, and were supplied more frequently than conditions in the cities we had left behind would lead us to expect. Beef and pork were most common, with fish occasionally.



Eggs were issued in very limited numbers to the kitchens, but a larger proportion of people had their own methods of securing eggs (either from the canteen or from the “Black Market”) and special arrangements were made in the kitchen for cooking eggs for individuals.

Fresh fruits, such as apples and pears in season, were issued occasionally to the kitchen in very small quantities. Some sugar and margarine were supplied.

Salt and *chiang yu*, a Chinese condiment resembling Worcestershire sauce were issued in sufficient quantity.

Considering the limited and rather irregular issue of food supplies by the Supplies Office the cooks seemed remarkably resourceful

and ingenious in introducing both variety and palatability into the diet.

The bread and tea menu, which seemed so often indicated by the limited supplies issue, was often varied by making a kind of “bread porridge” out of the dried and leftover residues of the daily bread quota. This breakfast dish was served so often that it came to be called “Weihsien Porridge.” While many people tired of it, to be sure, yet it was a successful effort to make much out of little.

For the other meals the chief dish was usually a rich soup or a stew to which, in order to achieve nourishment and variety, all the ingredients in the daily issue of supplies were added.

One reason for putting most of the meal into a single soup or stew was the manner of service.

Everyone had to supply his own dishes, carrying them to and from the dining room for each meal.

With the number of dishes by this condition reduced to a minimum one large bowl or one deep plate was the most common equipment.

Not only so, but speed in the serving process, with long queues waiting was important, and one large unit of food was most convenient. Economy in dish washing was also an important factor.

The food was served just inside the door from large containers brought steaming hot from the kitchen.

As soon as served, people found their places at the tables, having mastered the art of climbing or hopping over the long benches already placed at the tables.

In doing so, if you managed to kick only one of your neighbors already seated you were considered quite polite.

At the table were found plates or trays of bread – frequently replenished by waiters appointed for the purpose. Another set of waiters poured tea or hot water or both as required.

Besides these two types of floor waiters there was a third, a woman who went about with a cloth wiping the table after persons had finished, in preparation for the next to follow.

If the food for a meal was sufficient second helpings could be had by those with more hearty appetites.

A second helping was usually served from a well-recognized extra container in the corner of the room, and was often announced orally by persons in charge, the formula being, for example "Seconds on stew!" For such an announcement, or for any other, to be made, there must first be a sharp table-rapping to silence the noise and secure attention. The talking and clatter in a dining room of 110 or 200 people reminded one of the noise of conversations in a large institutional reception, when everyone has to raise his voice to be heard.

Dish washing was a carefully systemized process.



There were two or three units of operation, each in charge of one woman or sometimes two.

For each unit there were two large containers of hot water, one for washing and one for rinsing.

When people had finished a meal they "queued up" before one of these units, handed in their dishes (after each person, urged on by public notice and public opinion, had made them as clean as possible as he finished the meal) and received them again out of the rinsing pail.

There was no dish wiping except as some of the more particular arranged to do it for themselves.

Although for the fastidious feeders and delicate diners, people who ordinarily make much of the aesthetic aspects of eating, the meals were not attractive, yet on the whole they were fairly nourishing and wholesome.

There was a monthly weighing schedule, arranged by some of the physicians as a check on diet.

The monthly weight records showed that, after the first few weeks, gains and losses of weight were somewhat evenly balanced.

This good result of diet should no doubt be credited in part to purchases of food from the canteen, rather than to the adequacy of the dining room diet.

After the first month or so the canteen was provided with more adequate snacks, so that eggs, fresh fruit, honey and some other articles were available for purchase.

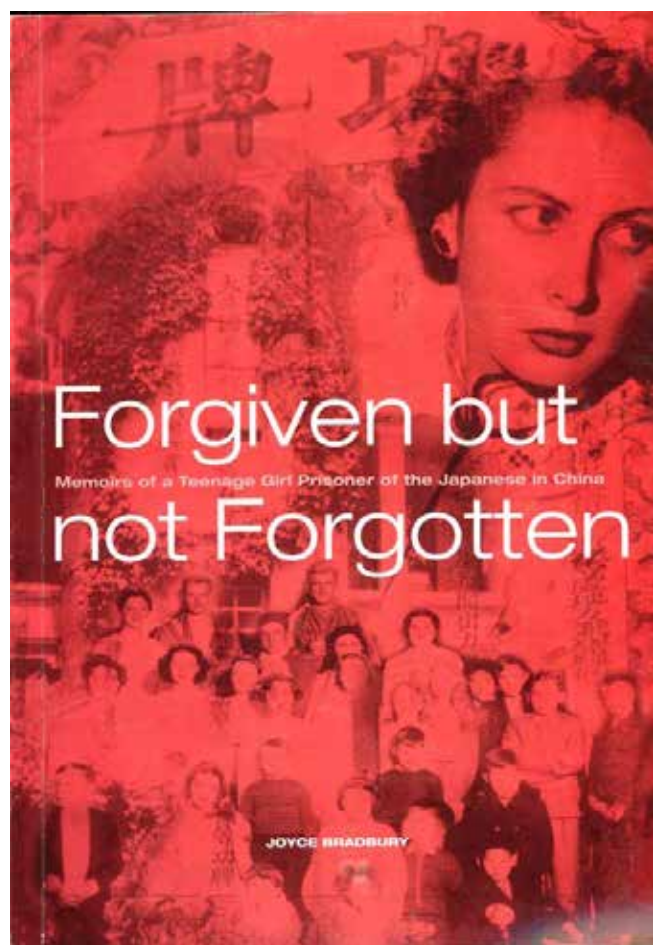
With most of these commodities, however, the supply was limited, so that a system of rationing and systematic distribution had to be adopted. At first this meant long lines in queue, but later, after the system of wardens was adopted, the distribution was usually through the wardens, and long periods of waiting were unnecessary.

#

[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihhsien-1.pdf



Chapter 5 [excerpts] ...

Everybody I knew worked hard for the benefit of the whole camp and I am not aware of any problems with persons not pulling their weight. There were four kitchens and dining rooms. Because of the food supply situation, it was a big job trying to satisfy the hunger of the inmates. Sadly, that was never really achieved. My father, a qualified accountant, was given cooking duties in a communal dining room where meals were cooked and served in relays. Mum also worked in the kitchen and made craft goods.

Our food was sparse and we were always hungry. It was usually boiled sorghum seeds for breakfast. Sorghum is usually grown in China for

livestock feed. It is made up of little red seeds which are awful to eat but I have since been told they are a good source of protein, fibre and energy. They are difficult to swallow and I had to chew and chew them. My mother would say: "Keep chewing it until you can swallow it or you will go hungry." Lunch would usually consist of one scoop of a thin vegetable stew. We were issued with a little tin plate and a tin cup. We had potatoes, carrots, leeks and Chinese turnips. The camp cooks were ingenious but the food was insufficient.

Sometimes there was enough for second helpings but not often. On these occasions, the extras would be served at half a scoop. Families often put their whole ration into a larger container to take back to their rooms to eat. Somewhat surprisingly, there was never any rice for us. I presume it all went to the Japanese military.



Kitchen number one

It was very difficult for the younger children. They had to go hungry and they did not understand what was going on. The rest of us just had to put up with the shortages. We were given some flour, which the inmates made into bread. The bread always tasted stale to me, although it was freshly made. We had peanut butter because Wei-Hsien grew a lot of peanuts. The peanuts were ground by hand either in the bakery or the kitchen and that's what kept us going. I still like to eat peanut butter.

On one occasion a load of potatoes was delivered and dumped in a corner of the parade ground. The Japanese would not allow us to move the potatoes and they were left out in the weather until they started to rot. We were then told to eat them and when the inmates complained, the Japanese said: "You'll get nothing else until the potatoes are eaten." So, we ate them.

When a horse dropped dead behind the camp near the Japanese officers' quarters, the Japanese refused to let the inmates eat it until it was maggoty and putrefying rapidly. They said, once again: "Eat it — you'll get nothing else until you do so." The inmates promptly skinned the carcass and removed the rotten areas as much as possible and stewed the rest. We were rarely served meat.

Some inmates brought canned food with them into the camp but my family did not. One of our family's good friends, a wealthy lady, brought a fairly large quantity of canned and preserved food into the camp and although she had been allocated work by the committee, she preferred to employ others to do her share on the payment of her food to them. Eventually, she ran out of supplies and then had to do her share of work. We kept in touch with her until she died several years ago. In her latter years she showed us a thick coil of malleable gold which could be worn around her wrist saying: "If ever I have to go into camp again, I will take this gold with me and cut off little bits to use to buy food."

I do not remember any shop in the camp where we could buy necessities such as food or toiletries although I have since been told there was one for a short period of time. A cake of soap was issued now and again. We used that to do our laundry outdoors in large round tin wash tubs with two handles. We had to cart our laundry hot water in buckets from the shower block boiler.

Many people desperate for a smoke rolled used dry tea leaves into cigarettes and smoked them. My mother who was a heavy smoker did this, but after a lot of urging from my father she gave up smoking for the rest of the war.

While there was a shoe repair shop in operation, new shoes were non-existent and when my brother Eddie wore his shoes out, mum made a pair out of canvas for him. It took her days to sew them but he wore them to pieces

within a couple of hours. Many of the children went barefoot. My mother was more successful at making cloth toys for children which she used to trade with other inmates for canned and preserved food.

[excerpts] ...

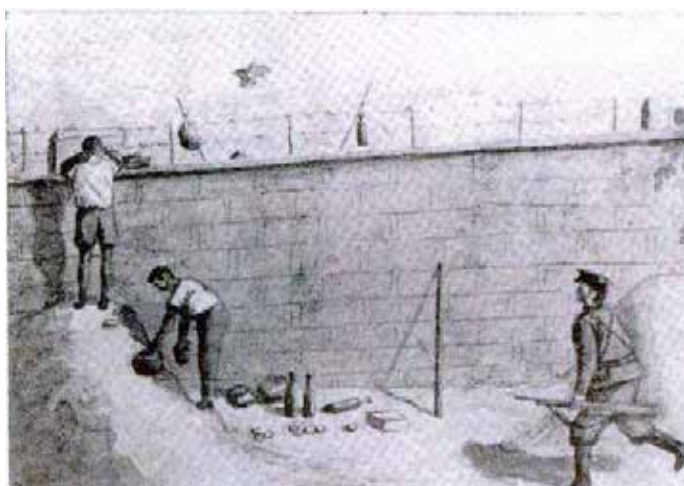
I lost weight but otherwise remained healthy except for tinea of my toes for which one of the doctors gave me Condyl's crystals which helped heal them. My brother went to the camp hospital and received treatment for a cut lip.

During our imprisonment my brother was still recovering from tuberculosis. The doctors handled limited supplies of milk and eggs for babies and



BLACK MARKET WALL (EAST) The building in the picture would be the morgue, and was also the place where the trappist monk, Father Scanlan, was confined after he was caught buying eggs in a "black market" operation. At the time of his confinement there was a funeral for a priest who had died of cancer, and I was assigned the task of sneaking down from the burial ground (the vantage point of the artist) to the small building and passing a flask of water to Father Scanlan. The feat was successfully accomplished.

children under 10. Because Eddie turned 10 at Wei-Hsien, he did not qualify for the milk and eggs. This annoyed my father who thought he should receive milk and eggs to help him recover. Pop was working in the cookhouse one day wondering how he could get nourishing food for Eddie when a pigeon flew in through a window and fell into a vat of boiling soup. In no time it was plucked, cooked and fed to my brother. Pop always said the impromptu pigeon meal saved young Eddie's life.



There was a black market in the camp. Chinese used to pass food through holes in the camp's perimeter wall under cover of darkness and payment would be made in money or articles of jewellery. My wristlet watch went this way because my parents had no jewellery to barter. Sometimes, the food was donated by Chinese friends of inmates.

Our room was near the perimeter wall and Pop made a hole in it by removing a brick. Pop used to act as a blackmarket buying agent for others. Mr de Zutter used to be his lookout and if he saw a guard coming he would warn Pop by saying: "Good night, I'm going to bed now," or starting to whistle. On one occasion my father was buying the Chinese sorghum-based wine called bygar when he was almost caught by the Japanese. He ran and jumped into his bed fully clothed, leaving the wine bottles on the table where my mother found them next morning.

One of the internees, Father Patrick Scanlan became our best blackmarketer. He specialised in obtaining food for the other inmates — which he did for no profit. Some of the food he bought from the local Chinese came into the camp in large quantities. Its arrival supplemented our sparse

Japanese-supplied rations. Amazingly, he was able to get special food wanted for the hospital inmates.

Once Father Scanlan was kneeling at the hole in the wall doing his black-marketing business when a guard came up. Father Scanlan immediately took out his prayer book and told the guard he was reading his prayer book and praying. The guard didn't believe him because he knew even Japanese couldn't read in the dark. Father Scanlan said he didn't need light to read because he knew all the pages by heart.

This did not convince the guard and Father Scanlan was locked up behind the Japanese officers' quarters and sentenced to solitary detention for two weeks by the camp commandant. His solitary confinement would have come as a breeze for Father Scanlan because he had spent more than half his life living in a monastery. To upset his captors, Father Scanlan, in the first several days of his confinement, chanted his prayers in Latin at the top of his voice. He continued night and day telling the sleepless Japanese officers that it was his duty as a priest to daily recite his mandatory collection of prayers called the priest's office. Catholic priests daily say their office, generally silently or quietly. The Japanese were too superstitious to stop him. After several days, when the Japanese could stand our blackmarketing priest's sleep-disturbing prayer chanting no longer, they released Father Scanlan.

News of Father Scanlan's release triggered one of the most joyous days in the camp. Everybody came out and cheered him. The Salvation Army members in the camp co-led by Father Scanlan's fellow Australian, Salvation Army Major Henry Collishaw [31], assembled. They escorted Father Scanlan through the compound with their 20-piece band blaring away. It was a joyful occasion for us and for Father Scanlan. The Japanese guards were surprised by our reaction to Father Scanlan's release. However, they took no punitive action. Without delay, Father Scanlan immediately resumed his blackmarketing.

Father Scanlan had a narrow escape on another occasion when he had about five dozen blackmarketed eggs hidden in his upper clothing. He was confronted by a guard. He immediately squatted on the ground and said in Chinese:

“dootzetung, dootze-tung” which means sore tummy or diarrhoea. Because this was a common ailment, the Japanese soldier believed him.

People like Pop, Stan, and Father Scanlan helped keep us alive during these years and we were all very grateful to them. Most of the blackmarketed goods brought into the camp consisted of eggs, vegetables and sugar.

Occasionally, the Chinese smuggling goods to the camp were caught and they were given a severe beating by the Japanese. There were suggestions in the camp that two Chinese were shot for smuggling.

[excerpts]

Some Red Cross parcels were received at the camp. The arrival of the first lot led to bad blood because some Americans claimed they should solely have them because they came from the American Red Cross. When a second lot of Red Cross parcels arrived, the question of their distribution was solved after discussions the camp management committee had with the Japanese camp commandant. The Japanese ordered the parcels to be fairly shared or they would be with-drawn. Incidentally, the Red Cross parcels received at the camp over the internment years came from the Australian Red Cross and the American Red Cross. The Australian Red Cross parcels were arranged by a Sydney relation of the interned Tipper family from Australia.

In the Red Cross parcels were chocolates, canned and packet food and knitting needles with wool. There was some clothing too. I will never forget the candy-coated Chiclets chewing gum that I received as my gift in the American Red Cross parcel sharing. After chewing it all day, I stuck it each night on the side of the cupboard near my bed and placed it in my mouth the next day. I did that until the chewing gum disintegrated. I also received a frock which came in one of the parcels. It was a winter dress of woollen material and I still have a photograph of myself wearing it after the war. Towards the latter

stages of the war the Red Cross parcels stopped coming.

One of the perks of working in the food areas was taking home extra food. My father was able to bring home dripping once in a while which we ate on our bread. We were always hungry and fantasised about food. Some people thought about milk and sugar because we had to drink tea without milk or sugar. The tea was ladled out to us from large pots. My mother missed her coffee and we all missed bacon and eggs. I do not remember anyone putting on weight. Some inmates were caught by other inmates stealing vegetables, bread and other food. They appeared before a camp committee which decided whether they were guilty or not. I don't remember what punishments were inflicted except the names of the guilty were put on the notice board.

It is possible some of the priests, particularly the Trappist Father Scanlan and the Belgian Father Raymond De Jaegher, who was a seminary professor, actually ate better in the camp than they did before imprisonment because pre-camp they lived mainly on bread and water. Father Scanlan often said that. I was never quite sure whether he and the other priests were trying to bolster our spirits. I knew that Trappists were required to live under severe rules of austerity and silence and Father Scanlan writes in his book that meals in the monasteries were always spartan.

[excerpts] ...

[further reading] ...

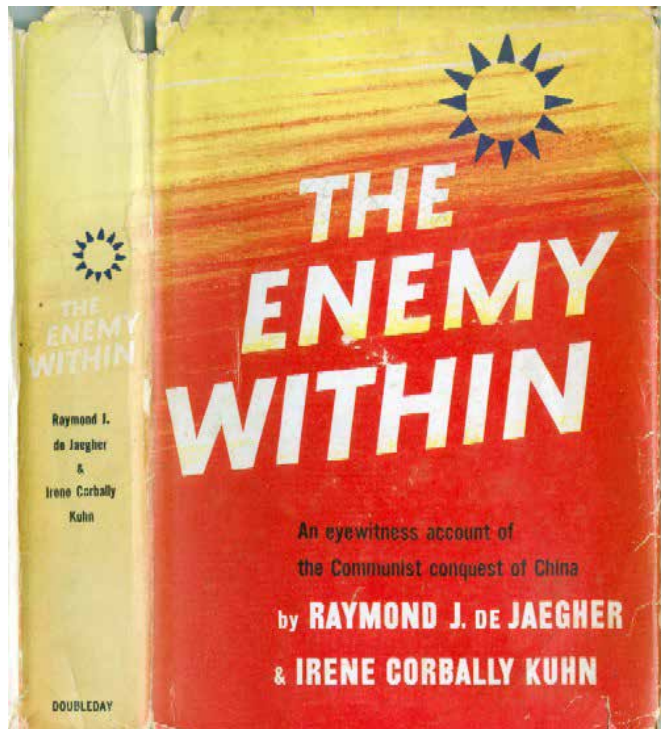
copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ch5.htm>



by Raymond deJaegher

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



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 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.

Chapter XVIII [excerpts]

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

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 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 adjutorium 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 superstitious 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.

#

[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/RdeJaegher\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/RdeJaegher(WEB).pdf)

Annie deJongh's memories ...

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/Hier_In_Het_Oosten_Alles_Wel/Surviving.htm#02

Page 283 [excerpts] ...

SURVIVAL IN WEHSIEN

[...] Google translated from Dutch

...

The Japanese camp leadership let the prisoners relatively free. As long as they adhered to the agreements and rules, the internees were allowed to organise everything themselves. The Japs were very tolerant, as long as people didn't try to escape or smuggle goods into the camp. They mainly threatened verbally.

General commander Izu, who spoke English, was nicknamed King Kong. He was the captain of the guards, but the camp was actually run by Gold Tooth, his right-hand man, who loved authority and could be cruel. He treated the guards with contempt. When the internees carried supplies happily whistling, he became furious and waved his swaggering stick angrily.

The leaders of the approximately twenty-five camps in China generally treated the internees according to the international agreements of the international Geneva Convention and the Hague Peace Conference. However, the Japanese side had not signed for it and the applicable agreements were not well known to the Japanese.

They prided themselves on treating the prisoners humanely. Feeling superior and invincible, the Japanese looked down from a great height on the internees, who had a good but distant relationship with them. In any case, the Japanese camp authorities departed from the Geneva Convention as far as food was concerned.

They shared the lack of food with the



prisoners, but if the shortages got too bad, the Japanese would be favoured.

The camps were under consular and civil authority, the Kempeitai (this is the gendarmerie).

So the guards were consular policemen, who were far more humane than the military and naval personnel. There was quite a lot of rivalry and differences of opinion between the Japanese consular authorities, on the one hand, and the Japanese army and navy

on the other.

The camp residents in China were therefore generally treated better than the prisoners in the Japanese camps in the Indies, who were under the authority of the army. In contrast to the camps in India, men and women were not separated in the Chinese camps. Neither were the parents and children.

The inhabitants of Weih sien were also fortunate to have ended up in one of the best camps in China.

However, horrific, war crimes have also occurred in some Chinese Japanese camps, such as murders and rapes.

However, this mild treatment did not apply to the Chinese in the vicinity of the camp. If they made a mistake, the death penalty followed.

[excerpts] ...

Nevertheless, there were factors in Weih sien that had a positive influence on health.

There was organized exercise on a regular

basis, compulsory sleep time, fresh air, sunlight, a simple diet and the absence of alcohol.

However, the millet, which was often on the menu and which was perceived as difficult to digest, contained many nutrients. The head of the dietetics department of Peking Medical College was also interned. He knew exactly how to put together the menu in order to obtain the highest calorie content and was involved in the kitchens.

The doctors arranged for a special diet kitchen to be added to the three general kitchens. This kitchen was set up for vulnerable camp residents such as children, pregnant women, nursing mothers, hospital patients, diabetics, invalids, the patients, people with stomach ulcers and kidney patients.

The diet kitchen could feed two hundred people. The food was withdrawn from the general stocks. The best food was reserved for this group, who also received slightly larger portions. The doctors persuaded the Japanese to supply the camp with soya beans. The protein-rich soy milk was made from this for the children.

A public health department was set up to ensure that the camp was kept clean. This department kept an eye on whether the kitchens (for example the kongs or cauldrons, the large kettles in which people cooked) were properly cleaned in the shower rooms and the laundries, whether the gutters and drains were not polluted and whether the common areas were clean. In addition to cleaning, this committee also had the task of developing vaccines,

[excerpts] ...

Getting enough food; that was the biggest problem. There was always much too little. Often there was only porridge of gauliang or kaoliang. It was brown sorghum with skins on it. The quality of this millet left much to be desired. There were often stones in it.

It was not the intention of the Japanese to serve the camp bad food. They often could not get enough food. Nor did the Japanese actually have the money to finance the 25 internment camps. The camp leaders, as long as there were no serious shortages, ate just as badly as the

prisoners. But they did not always keep to the Geneva agreements.

If the prisoners complained, the meal was taken away and skipped as a punishment. Especially meat or fish was almost impossible to get.

There was sometimes ribbon fish or bad and coarsely cut buffalo meat, horses and mules, which was known as Chinese poor man's food. The meat was often already a bit rotten before it arrived at the camp. Once the bones were removed, very little remained.

One of the photos of the camp shows a large menu board with SOS written on it, meaning same old stew, as everyone called the daily stew. It was a thin, barely zero soup for dinner, subtracted from meat. Often there was also a little bit of vegetables, for example different types of pumpkin, beans, soya beans, eggplant or onions, with or without potatoes.

[excerpts] ...

The cowardly porridges of gauliang or kaoliang, which were mainly served at breakfast, were filling, but gauliang was very heavy on the stomach and very difficult to digest. Father Frans (*Anne deJong's father*), had had a golden idea when he had packed the things for the camp.

[excerpts] ...

He had brought a bottle of concentrated saccharin. You could sweeten a bottle of water with a few drops of saccharin.

That was then used to make the tasteless SOS edible or to sweeten tea and porridge. They've been dealing with that counterfeit sugar for a very long time. Father had also brought cocoa along with him and made his own chocolate peanut butter from peanut butter.

Each day all the camp residents got about eight ounces, ± 230 grams of brown bread, baked from inferior whole meal or kaolin flour, which quickly became rotten. By reheating the bread in an oven helped to make it more edible. People ate in overcrowded dining rooms, but you could pick up seven portions in a large pan and eat them at home. If the portions were very small, one of

the De Jongh children would go back for a second helping and sometimes they succeeded.

The International Red Cross sent large quantities of broken rice, left over from famine aid in 1930, to the camps. The rice, which was already heavily polluted and full of maggots, corn worms, beetles, rubble and seeds, had also been wiped off the floor in the godowns with everything that had been found on those floors, such as dust, mud, vermin, broken glass, pieces of cement, cut nails, rat poop and the like.

Older people were patiently cleaning this grain for hours. They picked out the vermin and the pieces of dirt one by one, as far as it went, but it was a very difficult and precise job.

In the beginning, people still ate the canned food that they had brought, which consisted mostly of meat and fruit. They also ate dandelions, chrysanthemums and leaves. One of the Presbyterian missionaries who belonged to the former order of Weihsien pointed out different kinds of edible plants.

During the 2.5 years of the camp, the inhabitants lost an average of 35 to 40 kilos. Anneke and her brothers and sisters had become skinny and even Willy came slim out of the camp.

[excerpts] ...

The prisoners sometimes received food parcels from the Red Cross. These were large consignments from the American and English Red Cross, destined for all residents. Those packages were quite large, 90 by 30 cm. They contain milk, butter, crackers, cigarettes, instant coffee, tea, SPAM, cheese, chocolate, soap, concentrated sugar bars, toilet paper, scrambled egg mix, toothpaste, dried fruit and cans of other foods. With such a package, you could go ahead for another four months. Every now and then, when a shipment from the American Red Cross arrived, Anneke was allowed to make a list of everything that was in the packages assigned to her family and what was eaten.

For example, she was allowed to tick cans of SPAM, egg powder and coffee powder. Sometimes there were notes in the Red Cross packages with sweet wishes to keep you up: 'Hi there, best of luck, we're thinking and praying for you.'

You could also have individual food parcels sent by friends who were not interned, often Chinese, with whom you had left money. The De Jongh family got them through their Swiss contact from Tientsin, De Hesselde, or from the office manager of the HCHC in Tientsin.

You were allowed to receive one package per month, which was then delivered by the Red Cross. The De Jongh family ordered and received two packages for six months. There were things like bacon, bacon, egg powder, cocoa, rice, nuts to grind for peanut butter, rind, cans of butter, milk powder and salami. The De Jonghs polished their shoes with the fried thick rind.

[excerpts] ...

By May 1944, the diet was so deficient that people really went hungry. The food situation became critical. The internees dropped out and began to dream about food.

Ninety percent of the time residents did not sleep, they were concerned with how to get enough food.

Hunger had a bad effect on their physical and mental health. In the summer of 1944, many had nervous breakdowns, especially those over the age of 40. These nerve patients occasionally exhibited strange behaviour. Their survival instincts took over and they began to rummage through garbage for food, gawk, cheat, and trade on the black market.

[excerpts] ...

In August 1944 the coal was rationed. In the winter, the daily calorie intake dropped to 1,200 calories per day, and in May 1945 to 300 per day.⁴⁶⁴ Therefore, a new shipment of Red Cross food parcels in August 1945 was a very welcome addition.

[excerpts] ...

Cooking was done in separate cooking areas. There were three kitchens. Kitchen number I, number II and number III. The cooking/eating groups were formed by the order of arrival at the camp.

Just like with showers or the hot water, you

had to queue and wait a long time for your turn. In the early days, Mother Adelard was the head of the kitchen.

In Kitchen I and II, everyone cooked.

The kitchen utensils were rather flawed. It consisted of pots, pans and cutlery brought home from the internees. They also cooked in large kongs. The stoves ran on coal. Raw food was brought in by the Japanese in wheelbarrows.

Cooking crews of six to seven people got up at 5 a.m. to prepare the broken rice congee or kaoliang porridge. The water from the wells on the site was pumped up to fill water towers, which was hard work. Being a stoker was also physically hard work. The coals were of poor quality. First a bolt had to be gathered. Burning accidents were frequent. People also got sick from the smoke.

Another tiring job was working in the Chinese grain mills, with heavy millstones. The work was made even more difficult by the fact that people consumed too few calories per day. The Weihsien diet consisted of about eighteen hundred calories the first year of the internment. Someone who does light work already needs at least two thousand calories. The diet contained just enough protein. So too few calories. Furthermore, there was too little fat, calcium (already mentioned), vitamin B and vitamin C. Fortunately, children were given the soy milk mentioned earlier.

The camp residents could obtain a loan or comfort money from their home country through the mediation of the Red Cross. For that money they could buy extras in the small camp shop.

But even there shortages soon arose and a lottery ticket was drawn to buy something. Helen Burton, who had a souvenir shop in Tientsin, tidied up The White Elephant shack, where you could exchange things. After the war it turned out that the ex-internees had to pay back the money advanced by their fatherland at a ridiculously high rate, because the Japanese and Swiss used the exchange rate to improve themselves. The Swiss had complicated financial agreements with the Japanese. At first they were favoured for the Swiss, later for the Japanese.

In November 1943 part of their comfort money was confiscated by the Japanese as a contribution

to the maintenance of the camp. Then the Swiss consul general stopped the allowances. At that time it was still possible to have comfort packages sent via non-internees in China. Anneke's father had left money with friends in China, so he could get some extras.

The employees of the HCHC sometimes also sent food. For many families it then became very difficult. The Chinese friends outside the camp did not always want to help, because they were afraid of difficult questions from the Japanese about their income. The Japanese still refused to pay for medicines. s father had left money with friends in China, so he could get some extras. The employees of the HCHC sometimes also sent food.

For many families it then became very difficult. The Chinese friends outside the camp did not always want to help, because they were afraid of difficult questions from the Japanese about their income. The Japanese still refused to pay for medicines. s father had left money with friends in China, so he could get some extras. The employees of the HCHC sometimes also sent food. For many families it then became very difficult. The Chinese friends outside the camp did not always want to help, because they were afraid of difficult questions from the Japanese about their income. The Japanese still refused to pay for medicines.

[excerpts] ...

Weihsien and Stanley, another Japanese camp, had the largest illegal trade of all Chinese camps. The fact that the black market in Weihsien developed so quickly and flourished like this was easy to explain. There were not enough guards to constantly patrol the walls and the supply of agricultural products were very large in the Weihsien area. Moreover, in the beginning the internees still had cash. Purchases through the black market was even organised by Peter Lawless, police chief when he was still living in Tientsin, who was on The Discipline Committee. The priests played a crucial role in the communication, because they lived close to the wall and spoke Chinese dialects, so that they could make themselves understood by the farmers outside the camp. The contact with these farmers and the smuggling in of their belongings was also relatively easy because thirty-meter heaps of guards had

been thrown against the wall, which served as escape routes, for example in the event of a fire. You could climb on them. At the bottom of the walls there were loopholes, also useful places for contact with the outside world. They also dug secret tunnels and corridors.

Thirteen hundred eggs, sugar, dried fruit, condensed, milk, jam, oil, tobacco and cigarettes came across the wall every day. The most successful egg smuggler was Father Patrick Scanlan, a Trappist. Several witnesses talk about him, and Anneke also remembers how he went to work. The other missionaries of his order hoisted Gregorian chants as soon as the coast was clear or a sentry appeared. The Fathers also had other ways to warn each other with agreed upon signs, such as closing your breviary book. The missionaries were suitable smugglers, because the Japs didn't quickly suspect them.

In addition, the missionaries were housed on the top floor of the hospital, allowing them to see far beyond the walls in all directions. One of them could then see from the hospital the Chinese farmers outside the camp carefully arriving with their food. He then gave a signal to the breviary priests, who then quickly took off their white pipe in order to be less conspicuous. They then gently negotiated eggs, bacon, nuts, honey and sometimes baïgar, a strong Chinese whisky. Money and goods went back and forth through the wall where the bricks were loose. First Scanlan, called O'Hanlon by Bobby Simmons, only tried to get food for the sick and the children. Later he helped everyone. When the alarm went off, he pinches as if he was going to pray, hiding the eggs under his cassock. At one point he was caught with one hundred and fifty eggs, so he was taken away for interrogation. He did not defend himself. The leader of the committees then explained to the Japs that he should have taken the vow of silence for his order and not talk. The Japanese with their sense of honour and duty were sensitive to that argument and did not punish him. After all, a vow had to be kept. Later he was caught again, this time with sugar and jam. An old American priest betrayed him. He was sentenced to two weeks in solitary confinement. The General Commander King Kong didn't understand, but everyone laughed at that punishment. After all, it was hardly a punishment because as a monk he

was used to living in solitary comfort. He started singing spiritual songs at night. Everyone awoke to it, including the Japs, who were raging due to unrest, so that four days later he was allowed to leave the cell. He was brought back into the camp to the sounds of a twenty-strong Salvation Army orchestra.

At the end of 1943 the Japanese used two Chinese coolies, working on the wall, as a terrifying example. They were caught with eggs, which they smuggled on their bodies. King Kong was furious. They were executed like scapegoats by a firing squad, a punishment that shocked everyone. Then the black market disappeared for some time. Although the camp residents, who were just as much to blame, were not executed and either came or went with the shock of it, the Japanese were ruthless to the Chinese. In May 1944 the new chief constable of the consular police had a deep ditch dug in front of the wall. There was also a large earthen wall with an act of terror on the outside of the wall. Nevertheless, after some time the black market reappeared. The Japanese were now openly acting as middlemen on these new markets and were making good money.

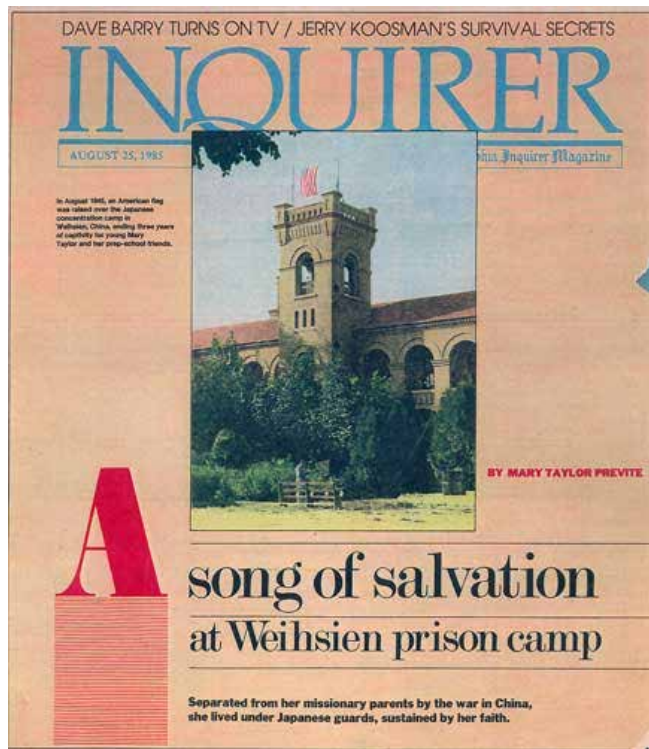
The black market also ensured that complex financial transactions could take place. For example, an internee who needed cash sold jewellery via a syndicate in the camp and then received cash from the Japanese in FRB (Federal Reserve Bank of Beijing, a currency that was the northern counterpart of the CRB, Nanking's currency). He then spent the money immediately and the rest was sold to other internees against promissory notes or IOUs in American dollars. This allowed the residents to get cash.

[further reading] ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Hier_In_Het_Oosten_Alles_Wel/Surviving.htm#02

by Mary Previte ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>



[excerpts] ...

... Food supplies dwindled as the war dragged on. If you wanted to be optimistic, you could guess that the Allies were winning and that you were going hungry because the Japanese weren't about to share their army's dwindling food with allied prisoners. Grown men shrank to 100 pounds. But our teachers shielded us from the debates among the camp cynics over which would come first, starvation or liberation.

There were many meatless days. When even the gao liang and lu dou beans ran out, the cooks invented bread porridge. They soaked stale bread overnight, squeezed out the water and mixed up the mush with several pounds of flour seasoned with cinnamon and saccharin. Only our hunger made it edible.

An average man needs about 4,800 calories a day to fuel heavy labor, about 3,600 calories for ordinary work. Camp doctors guessed that the daily food ration for men in our camp was down to 1,200 calories. Although no one said so out loud, the prisoners were slowly starving. The signs were obvious - emaciation, exhaustion, apathy. Some

prisoners had lost more than 100 pounds. Children had teeth growing in without enamel. Adolescent girls were growing up without menstruating.

That's when our teachers discovered egg shell as a calcium supplement to our dwindling diet. On the advice of the camp doctors, they washed and baked and ground the shells into a gritty powder and spooned it into our spluttering mouths each day in the dormitory. We gagged and choked and exhaled, hoping the grit would blow away before we had to swallow. But it never did. So we gnashed our teeth on the powdered shells - pure calcium.

Still, there was a gentleness about these steely teachers. On my birthday, my teacher created a celebration - with an apple - just for me. The apple itself wasn't so important as the delicious feeling that I had a "mother" all to myself in a private celebration - just my teacher and me - behind the hospital.

In the cutting of wondrously thin, translucent apple circles, she showed me that I could find the shape of an apple blossom. It was pure magic. On a tiny tin-can stove fuelled by twigs, she fried the apple slices for me in a moment of wonder. Even now, after 40 years, I still look for the apple blossom hidden in apple circles. No birthday cake has ever inspired such joy.

It was a lasting gift these teachers gave us, preserving our childhood in the midst of bloody war. But if we children filled our days with childish delights, our older brothers and sisters had typically adolescent worries: college, jobs, marriage. Kathleen, quite head-over-heels in love by now, was sporting a lovely pageboy coif with a poof of hair piled modishly over her forehead.

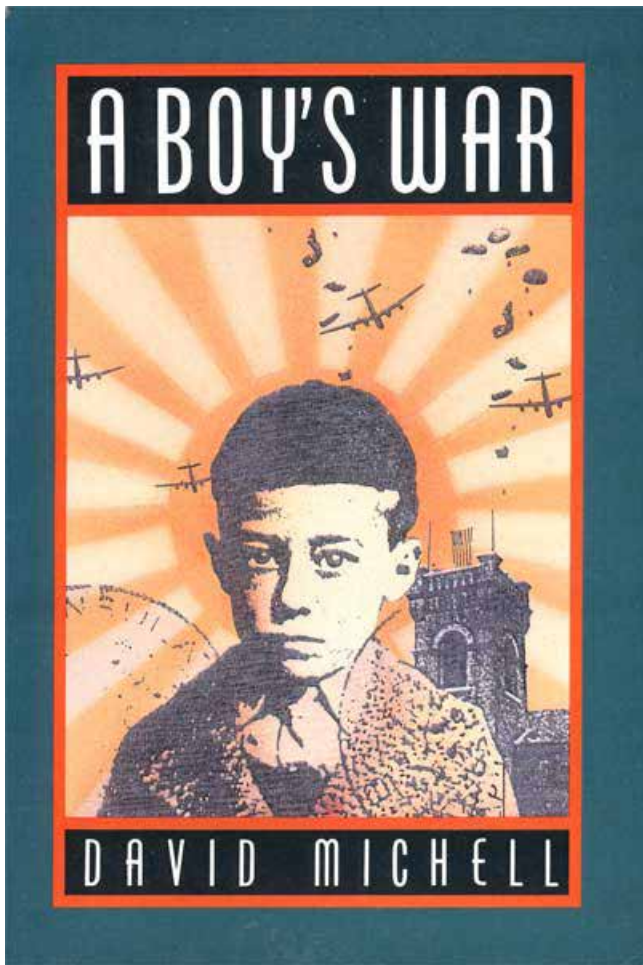
[further reading] ...

copy paste this URL into your Internet browser:

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>

by David Michell ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)



[excerpts] ...

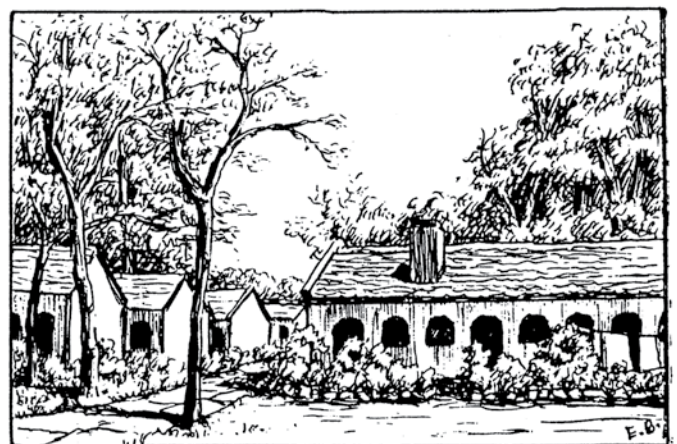
...

Food and freedom were probably the major topics of conversation. The camp was organized into three kitchens, staffed by internees. Hands that were totally unaccustomed to the culinary arts were soon turning out fancy-named items which appeared on the daily menu board. These mysterious products completely belied their humble origin from turnips, eggplant and cabbage with occasional squid, fish or what could aptly be described as “no-name” meat. Actually, it had a name—it was either horse or mule. Morning, noon and night we lined up in long queues for our portion of food and then sat down at rough-hewn tables and benches. Servers had to try and be scrupulously fair, or there were complaints.

A typical camp menu would be: Breakfast—two slices of bread (often hard and flat if the yeast supply was low) and millet or sorghum porridge, with sugar on very rare occasions; dinner or lunch—hash or stew including mushy eggplant, popularly called “S.O.S.” (“Same Old Stew”), and occasionally dessert; and supper—usually soup, which was often a watered-down version of S.O.S.

“As the diet was lacking in calcium (no milk, no cheese, no ice cream),” Evelyn Davey remembers, “we collected the shells from the black-market eggs, ground them into a powder and fed it to the children by the spoonful. We also gathered certain weeds around the compound and cooked them into a spinach-like vegetable to supplement the rations. Fruit, apart from a few apples, was almost unknown, and one little girl in school asked, ‘What is a banana?’”

Second helpings of anything were very rare. When one five-year-old discovered that she was allowed a second drink of water at playtime, she shouted excitedly to the others, “Hey, everybody, seconds on water!”



The student huts that became home to whole families when the Courtyard of the Happy Way became Weih sien Concentration Camp under Japanese occupation.

Drawing by Eileen Bazire.

The sketch above and those by Helen Hulise Fox in *A Boy's War* are used courtesy of the Chefoo Schools Association.

However, there were times of feast as well as fast. Each Christmas special items that had come in through the Red Cross were saved up and used to provide something special. Mrs. Lack on our school staff, wanting to make the Chefoo Foundation Day occasion one to be remembered, pled the children's cause to the Japanese, and her pleading brought results, with the supply of extra flour. With a number of the other staff ladies helping, they mixed up Chinese dates, sugar, peanut oil and flour and managed to produce about 88 pounds of cake.

Encouraged with this success, the ladies attempted even wedding cakes! At least two of our staff got married in Weihsien Camp—Ruth Greening married Buddy Price; and Jeannie Hills married Joe Cotterill. They had met each other for the first time in camp. This is how Mrs. Lack describes her cake-making enterprise:

We made up our minds that as the cake was about all we could give, we would give our best. One hundred and fifty guests were invited, including all children in the Senior School ... Everyone made contributions. I also collected apricot stones from people who had been fortunate enough to get a few apricots, and these made lovely almonds. Also bits of orange and pumelo skin, some nearly two years old, were added. It grated up beautifully and gave the

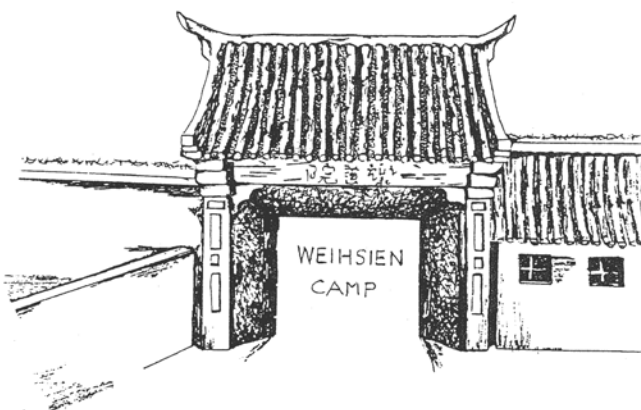
flavor which was all that mattered. We managed to collect two pounds of sugar altogether for this special cake, using a quarter of it for the cake and the rest for icing purposes. With a few real sultanas from our Red Cross parcels and a little dripping given me from one of the kitchens, plus oddments of spice and cinnamon, we set about this cake-making with a professional feeling. Lots of Chinese dates helped to make the mixture sweet. The tins were anything except cake tins, but we managed to get three sizes of right proportions, including a powdered milk tin for the top tier. The baking took five hours in a kerosene tin oven. The decorations were made from silver paper or tin foil. The pillars of wood were covered with tin and then polished. Someone lent a cake icing outfit and with some persistence we managed to make a boiled icing work for decorations. The ornament on the cake, a Gothic arch, I made from a strip of tin released on opening a tin of milk. This was covered with white tape and lily-of-the-valley, (a bunch of artificial flowers I had worn for five summers), with little bits of green here and there and with little bells hanging on the top gave it the finished look. The children loved pre paring for the wedding, and we all looked upon it as a jolly good excuse for a cake.

What a celebration it was too!

#

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)

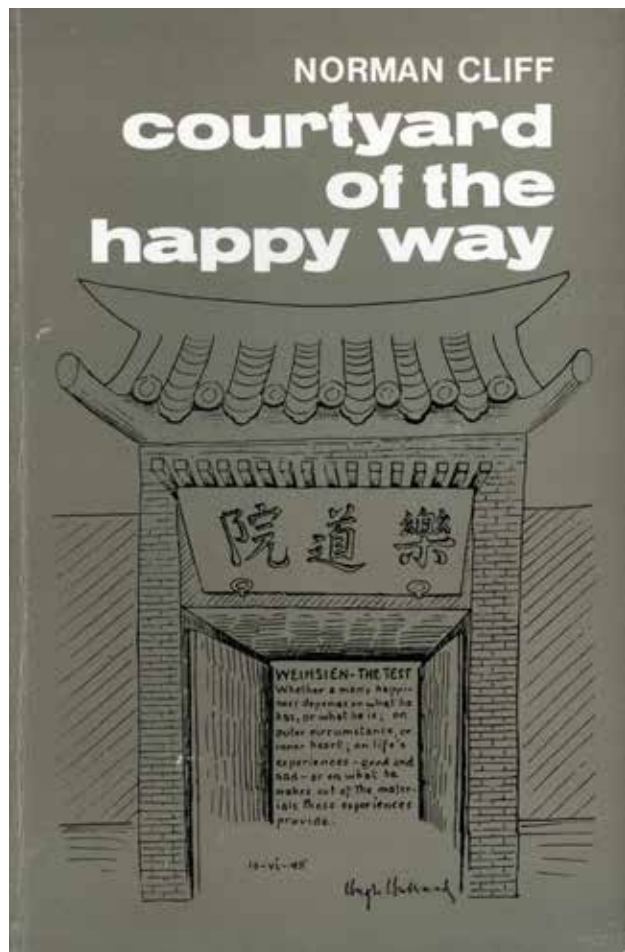


The gate to the "Courtyard of the Happy Way" that became Weihsien Concentration Camp.

Drawing by Judith Michell

by Norman Cliff ...

<http://weih sien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>



Chapter XI

[excerpts] ...

Christmas 1944 was celebrated with meagre rations and few festivities, except singing which could not be rationed. During that year there had been periods when flour was our only stock-in-trade, and the menu had shown little variation from bread, bread porridge, bread pudding and bread-anything-else. There had been brighter periods when the slate outside Kitchen I had read "millet porridge, black tea, bread" for breakfast, "stew, black tea and bread" for lunch, and "soup, black tea and bread" for supper.

Supplies were now lower than they had ever been, and spirits were following the same graph. The temperature too was unbearably low. Snow and frost were everywhere, with little coal dust from which to make our briquettes to burn in

our stoves.

"Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" asked the psalmist of old.

One snowy day in January 1945, when I was working in greasy overalls over a kua (cauldron) in Kitchen I, a tall American nicknamed Skipper came running in and said, "Have a look at what's coming in at the front gate!"

A moment later we were standing on Main Road, witnessing an unbelievable sight. Donkeys and carts were filing in slowly up the hill towards the church (the usual venue for such emergencies). Fifteen hundred boxes marked "American Red Cross" were unloaded.

There were 1500 internees in Weihsien Camp one big box each! There was wild excitement at the prospect of having some good nutritious food and the possibility of enjoying delicacies we had not tasted for years. Since our arrival in "Courtyard of the Happy Way" we had not tasted fruit, milk, sugar or butter.

But most excitement and surprises in this war period seemed inevitably to have their anticlimaxes, and this was no exception. Soon afterwards a notice appeared on the camp notice boards announcing curtly that the distribution of parcels had been cancelled, as consideration was being given as to whether the donors intended them to go solely to the two hundred Americans in Weihsien.

Two weeks of arguing and dissension among the American community followed, the majority of them being adamant that the boxes should be shared with all. A few families, in spite of their missionary status, spoke loudly about the "morality" of ensuring that the parcels were given to those for whom they were intended.

Meanwhile the local Japanese authorities, perplexed at civilised Westerners haggling in this manner, consulted their headquarters for instructions on how to distribute the boxes. The

decision from Tokyo was a wise and equitable one—one parcel for every internee.

Soon a fresh date was fixed for the distribution of the parcels. We queued up at the church and then each struggled to his digs with a heavy cardboard box, three feet by one foot by one-and-a-half feet. Sitting at our beds, we eagerly ripped the boxes open. In each were four small sections, each with powdered milk, cigarettes, tinned butter, spam, cheese, concentrated chocolate, sugar, coffee, jam, salmon and raisins.

Tea could now be drunk with milk and sugar. Bread, our staple, diet, could now be eaten with butter and cheese or jam. Cigarettes could be traded with smokers for further items of food. The long list of items lent themselves to all kinds of recipes and combinations.

If these welcome supplies were used to supplement the official camp rations from the kitchen, and used in careful instalments, we could enjoy nutritious and tasty meals for at least four months to come.

Social calls became popular. At roll-call, we made dates to visit each other to try the latest menus and recipes. The White Elephant swung into action again, and as we cooked over the hot cauldrons in Kitchen 1 we would overhear the latest exchange rates for Red Cross food: one packet of cigarettes could be bartered for two bars of chocolate, two tins of spam for one of coffee, and so on, according to the law of supply and demand.

The arrival of these supplies definitely saved the day for our community. Scrounging and quarrelling about rations and perquisites subsided as every family worked out its own method of spreading the food over as long a time as possible. Physical hunger and exhaustion were less acute, and with this the general morale was clearly lifted.

During 1945 we became more and more convinced that the war was turning in our favour in Europe and in our own theatre of fighting in the Far East.

Whispers in the camp indicated that Hummel and Tipton, who had escaped eight months previously, were about a hundred miles

away in one of the many pockets of resistance against the Japanese, and that from there they were in touch by radio with Allied leaders in Chungking.

Chinese cesspool coolies, who entered the front gate of the camp daily, were carefully searched by the Japanese guards who frequently hit them with their fists or with the butts of their rifles. One of these coolies came to the camp with news direct from Hummel and Tipton. The guards would search him carefully from head to foot, as with the others, and allow him through. Walking down Main Road towards a cesspool with his buckets over his shoulders, he would spit onto a dump of ashes a message in waterproof paper. An internee waiting nearby would discreetly take the paper to the man involved in this operation.

From this source word soon got around Weihsien that the Allies were on the initiative in Europe; that Britain and America had invaded France and were pushing the Nazis eastward while the Russian army was rolling southward and westward.

A subsequent instalment of news told of V.E. Day. The Germans had surrendered to Eisenhower and Montgomery. This welcome news had little direct effect on our daily lives, except for one incident which happened soon afterwards.

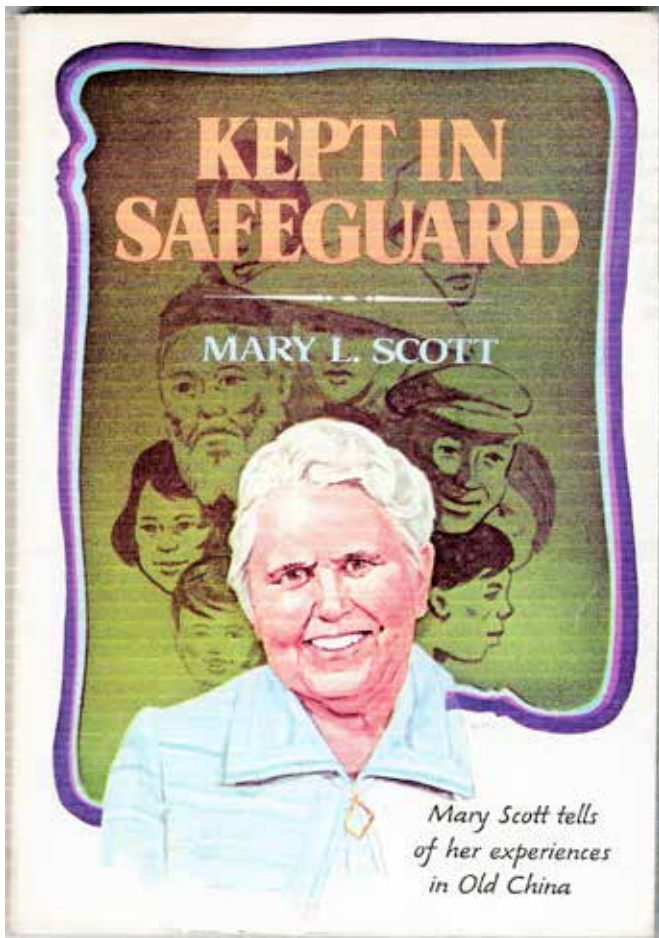
[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser

<http://weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>

by Mary E. Scott ...

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)



[excerpts] ...

Being kitchen laundress was not without its problems and rewards. The cooks soon discovered that the people ate the soup or stew better if they found no clue as to where the flavor came from. So they put all the “stuff” in flour sacks, boiled out the flavor, then discarded the “stuff” before serving the food. It was our job to wash these dirty, greasy, smelly meat sacks as well as kitchen aprons and towels. At least we had hot water to do it with, though at times soap was scarce. Because I had to go to the quarters office later in the morning, I usually did the kitchen laundry between 4:30 and 6:00 in the morning.

It was not very easy in a dormitory with so many others, to find a quiet corner for private devotions. But I discovered that my Lord didn't mind if I talked to Him while bent over a wooden washtub and a wooden washboard trying to get kitchen “linens” clean. His ear was open to the cry

of His child as I looked up into the clear China sky and asked my Father to supply needed grace and strength for the day and to bring glory to himself through my life that day. What sweet communion and fellowship we enjoyed together in those early morning hours!

[excerpt] ...

Food—Japanese Issue

Food was a major subject of discussion even if the conversation had begun on an entirely different topic. Many hours were consumed telling each other what we would order if we could have anything we wanted. The long list included steak, ham, southern fried chicken, ice cream, hamburger, choco- late milk shakes, and even the lowly hot dog. While food was never in abundance, there never was a day when we didn't have something edible to eat. I say “edible” because many in civilian concentration and prisoner of war camps had to eat things we do not consider edible. We were very fortunate in our camp because we were not in a war area, and supplies could be purchased from the Chinese farmers and merchants. Toward the end of the war even these supplies dwindled drastically. Yet, I am told we had more to eat than the people in Japan, and even more than their military.

There were four main sources of our food. Major and basic was the Japanese issue of food which was delivered to our supplies committee and distributed to each of the three kitchens (only two after the Italians came) and the hospital diet kitchen. By common agreement the diet kitchen had first claim to the supplies needed by the patients in the hos- pital or those on special diet by doctor's orders. Storekeep- ers in each kitchen kept close watch over the supplies, espe- cially the oil and sugar.

For nine months those of us from Peking enjoyed the family like intimacy of Kitchen III. Since there were only about 300 served from our kitchen, it was possible to make good use of the supplies, making special dishes (even fried

hamburger) not possible in the larger kitchens. These special advantages disappeared when in January, 1944, our beloved Kitchen III was turned over to about 100 Italians who were brought into camp and segregated in the area next to the main guardhouse. We became a part of Kitchen I and collected our food along with 800 others.

Breakfast usually consisted of *lu dou* (a type of bean) or *kao hang* (grain) cereal and, in the later days, bread porridge made from old bread with very little seasoning. There was no milk or sugar for the cereal unless you had your own private supply. And there was bread. Many ate at the bare tables in the dining room, but others, especially the families, preferred to collect their food in tiered containers and eat in the privacy of their own rooms. In our dormitory we often collected our food too, especially if we had some peanut oil in which to produce “fried bread” on our makeshift stove. It was better than dry bread. Butter or margarine was not a part of our regular issue. When it did come, it was sometimes full of straw and mold, fit only for kitchen use.

Lunch was the main meal of the day—usually stew unless the cooking team was willing to go to a lot of extra work to produce a “dry” meal with braised meat, fried potatoes, and gravy on the side. We were fortunate to have men and women on our Kitchen I cooking teams who were willing to put forth this extra effort.

Supper was usually soup and bread.

During the first year, supplies of meat and vegetables were fairly adequate. Extra issues of flour, besides what was necessary for the 400 loaves of bread a day, made it possible to make extra food like noodles, or even shepherd’s pies (meat pies) and a meat dumpling made by the Russian ladies in our kitchen. The patrons of our kitchen voted to leave our small ration of sugar (a tablespoon a week perhaps) in the kitchen so the cooks could make desserts. These extras called for volunteer help, but always willing hands were found to turn out delicious shortbread, cakes, date tarts, and even gingerbread. Those were really high days when a special dessert was served. I thoroughly enjoyed being on these special teams to produce such delicacies.

The first Christmas in camp was not without its

very special food. When our committee explained to the commandant that Christmas was the major holiday of the Western world, comparable to the Japanese New Year, he went all out to bring in extra supplies for a real Christmas feast: pork roast, ham, oranges, and extra supplies of sugar to make dessert. We deeply appreciated these special concessions.

The cooking teams usually worked every third day. We soon knew what to expect when certain cooking teams were “on.” Besides the cooks, many supporting teams were needed. There were the vegetable crews, made up mostly of women and older men who washed and prepared vegetables in large tubs. There were the butchers who prepared the meat (when we had it), according to the chief cook’s specifications. The stokers were men who had the responsibility of keeping the fires going under the big food cauldrons as well as the boiling water for tea and drinking. The stokers made their own coal balls or bricks.

The serving teams portioned out the food as the internees came along in a cafeteria like line. The dishwashing teams washed the tin plates, bowls, and “cutlery” of those who ate in the dining room. There were usually three on a team, each manning a pan: the initial rinse, the soap-and-water wash, and the final rinse. If your dishes were dried, you did it yourself.

The bakery teams were indispensable. Their job was demanding, but the bread was unusually good as long as the good yeast lasted. There were those, too, who worked “overtime” to bake the shepherd’s pies and desserts.

One great need was milk for the children. When confronted with this request, our commandant arranged to get cow’s milk brought in, which was properly sterilized in our hospital kitchen and distributed to families with children three years old and under. Sometimes there was just a small amount in the bottom of a cup, but at least an effort was made to supply the need for fresh milk for the children.

The Canteen

The canteen was another important source of food.

Pomelos (a type of grapefruit) were very popular, especially for making marmalade if we could find the sugar. Apples and pears came in season. Nothing was wasted. The peelings and cores, if we didn't eat them, found their way into a large crock in our room to make vinegar. There was the inevitable maggoty stage, but the end product was well worth the process. Peanuts became peanut butter if a meat grinder was available.

On one occasion oranges came in. There were not enough to go around, so quotas were established. Our dormitory of 14 women received three oranges. We drew straws to determine the lucky ones to get the oranges. The winners were happy but very generous. They divided the oranges among the rest of us so we all had a taste.

The Black Market

Another source of our food was the black market which operated over the wall in broad daylight or in the middle of the night, depending on where the Japanese guards happened to be. Hundreds of pounds of sugar, peanuts, jam, and soybean paste came over the wall as well as eggs and sometimes chickens. Until discovered, the black market, carried on mostly by the Catholic priests and monks, was most productive.

The time of evening prayers was an especially good time for black marketeers who knelt along the wall near the hospital, saying their prayers. The story went the rounds about one Trappist monk who devised an ingenious scheme to get Black market ... eggs. He removed a few bricks in the lower part of the wall and, "kneeling in prayer," received dozens of eggs and hid them under his robe. One day a Japanese guard became brave enough to lift up the monk's robe. He found 150 eggs!

Everyone in camp was greatly concerned about what the punishment would be. Would he be tortured? Would he be shot? It was with great relief and shouts of delight that the internees greeted the announcement of the sentence—one and a half months in solitary confinement. For a Trappist monk who had spent 25 years in the same monastery and had not spoken more than four or five words to a living soul during that time, this was a light sentence indeed! I am sure the Japanese

were baffled by the hilarious reaction of the crowd and the joyous singing of the monk as he was led off to his cell in the "out of bounds" section of the camp. Another missionary (Protestant) who had been successful in getting things over the wall, was taken to the guardhouse for questioning. Being a Christian, he admitted that he had engaged in the black market, even though he was not caught in the act. Word spread quickly that he was being questioned. Friends went to his "house" (his 9 x 12 room) and whisked away all visible evidence of the black market and hid it in their own rooms. With nothing specific to go on, the Japanese gave him a lighter sentence of only two weeks in solitary. Besides, his wife was permitted to take his meals to him twice a day.

The kitchen prepared special food, and those of us who had obtained black market supplies from him, made cookies to send to him. The result was that he weighed 10 pounds heavier when he came out than when he went in! He told us that one of the guards had whispered to him that he was a Christian and discreetly left to give him and his wife a few minutes alone. Another guard later came by his room and delivered sugar and eggs "for his little girl" (three years old). Our Japanese guards missed their own children whom they loved dearly, and expressed that love to the children in camp.

The black market was financed through a companion black market in money carried on by just a few men in camp. The Chinese merchants and farmers seemed perfectly happy to take promissory notes for British sterling or U.S. gold, to be paid after the war.

Unfortunately two Chinese farmers were caught in black marketing. To the horror of the internees, the farmers faced a firing squad within hearing distance of the camp.

It was reliably reported that in time a new chief of guards succeeded in gaining control of the lucrative black market; so the black market in goods and money continued, but in Japanese hands.

#

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

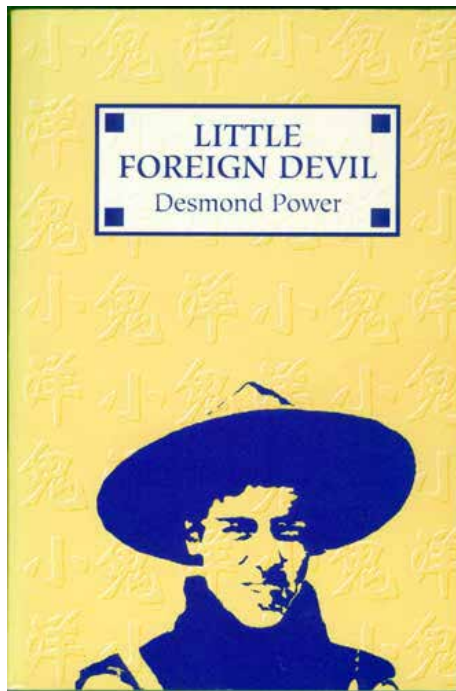
[excerpts] ...

Assigned to the job of stoker at Kitchen Two (the kitchen that catered to some nine hundred internees from the Tientsin area), I was quick to catch the uplifting spirit that prevailed on the shift. No grousing, no scrimshanking. The shift boss, Major Evenden, and his assistant, Major Sowton, both of the Salvation Army, led by example, never balking at the dirtiest task. It was they who sifted through the half-rotting sinews and entrails of the

day's meat supply, slicing off whatever edible pieces they could find for the communal pot. At clean-up time it was they who rolled up their sleeves and reached for the scrubbing brushes to tackle the guos, the giant cauldrons in which all the food was boiled. They seldom found fault, but neither did they lavish praise. Therefore it took only a smile, a single word of approval after a hard day's work, and we were off to the washhouse glowing. Everyone on shift vied for that approval. When feeding fires, I put on quite a show, clanging my shovel against the cast-iron doors. I smashed clinkers with a foundryman's ferocity. But then I had an additional motive for gaining Major Evenden's attention - his daughter, the radiant Eleanor, was in camp.

As it so happened, I did indeed gain the Major's attention, but not in the way I had intended. I did it with a breach of conduct that even after fifty years has me squirming whenever it comes to mind.

Because all of our water - drinking water, toilet water, laundry water - had to be pumped by hand from a well, a bucket was an inmate's most prized possession. On my second day in Weihsien I found that

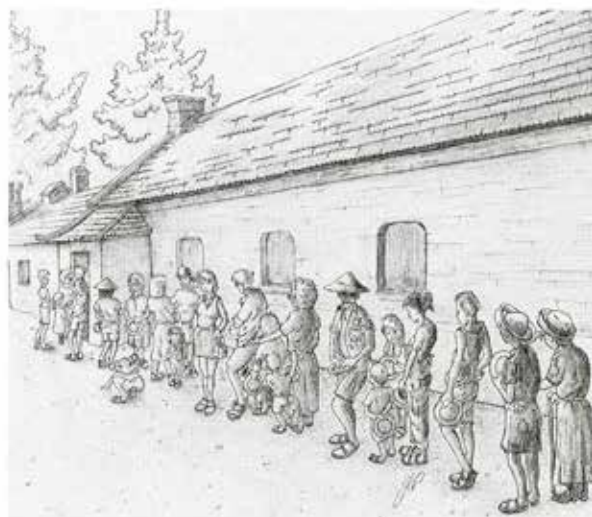


Tai-tai of all people had no bucket. For two years she'd managed with an enamel washbasin, but managed awkwardly, slopping half the contents before getting it back to her hut. And the situation so easily remedied. I reported for work at 3:30 a.m. when the kitchen was bathed in morgue-like silence (the cooks didn't arrive on shift till 6:00), and where in a neat row stood four buckets of gleaming zinc, all for the taking. As far as I was concerned, it was perks, fair and square. At 4:00 a.m. I deposited a bucket outside Tai-tai's door. At 8:00 a.m., after the sour bread- porridge

had been served up and Number One Guo was ready to be cleaned and refilled for the day's soup, Major Evenden asked: "Desmond, did you happen to see anyone come in to borrow one of our buckets?" At 8:15 Major Sowton asked the same question. And the same again a little later from cook's helper, Gavin Chapman.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForeignDevil/Power-143-pages.pdf>



Soup line-up at No. 2 Kitchen -
We're beside the stoker who can't bring the guo to the boil!

Chapter 7

[excerpts] ...

...

Filling my stomach was probably the most important event in each and every day. I was young and growing and always hungry. I had been spoiled in Tianjin, we had employed a cook, and he was good. I relished his speciality, which was to make a duck and two-chicken roast, although a pheasant often replaced the second chicken in the winter. He used to bone them whole and put one inside another and then use stuffing to put them into shape, so that then when it came to carving a knife would glide through the lot.

[excerpts] ... **Weihhsien:**

In the first weeks I remember little of our precise diet, except that we ate a lot of bread produced by Qingdao Bakery, and not a lot else.

This arrangement could only last for a few months, after which the inmates would be on their own. A Greek baker, Mr Stephanides from Qingdao, had brought in some yeast and was appointed camp baker, and I suppose he was multiplying the yeast. All food had to be made by the inmates themselves, but since the adults had all employed cooks pre-war they did not even have latent skills on which to call. The bread was rather lead-like at first, but soon the bakers got accustomed to the quantities to use, and the fact that yeast needed sugar to rise properly was 'discovered', not that much sugar was ever available.

The task was fairly formidable: 400 loaves a day were needed to feed 2,000 people.

As food was precious, as much as possible was done to minimise waste. Thus any stale bread was boiled up as porridge for the next breakfast.



The experience has left me with a lifelong dislike for bread sauce. We did have flour, which was so different from other Japanese camps in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, where the staple was rice and with it vitamin B deficiency for the consumers. The flour supplied slowly deteriorated as the years passed, until by the end it was mostly weevils' bodies — protein I suppose — and millet seeds that were milled, but which in their natural state looked remarkably like the seeds that one buys in bags to feed wild birds today.

My mother brought all our rations back from the kitchen to our room and we always ate there at a folding games table that came in our luggage.

She did not want us to eat in the crowded dining room, and most other families with children under five did the same. The queues for serving and eating would have been impossible otherwise, and bawling two-year-olds would have added nothing but irritation to the atmosphere.

The camp had a policy at the kitchens that, if you ate in the dining room, you could ask for a second helping, not always forthcoming, but over the months 'Seconds' became almost universally used as a description for more. Manuel Sotolongo, an eight-year-old Cuban, caused a big laugh when he asked for seconds of salt, pepper and mustard.

I knew very little about the workings of the kitchens, as children were prohibited to go in them. I did take a peek a few times. They were hot, with open fires, with a decking over in which up to five large 'woks' or 'Kongs' were set. These were about five feet across (11/2 metres) with a wooden lid, used to boil water and make stew. (Recipe: water, lots of vegetables and an occasional cube of meat.) Often one of the men had to balance precariously over the lid to retrieve something and it was also not unknown for the lid to collapse and the volunteer cook then got scalded legs.

The cooks did make tempting smells with their soups and stews.

Sadly, lack of supplies meant second helpings were few and one had to be satisfied with the aroma.

These thin stews were generally our daily fare for at least one meal. I did not think too much of them: the meat, if you could find it, was stringy, the vegetables overcooked, even if they were often soya beans or soya bean leaves, and almost a mush. I also missed having any milk to drink. The alternative was water, and even that was a problem as the shallow wells were only five metres from the cesspits. Mum felt that water should be boiled — definitely a desirable policy — but most of the time there was no fuel, so that was but seldom implemented.

There were three cows grazing in the graveyard in the Japanese area of camp. Pathetic beasts, which were milked for the babies and the hospital patients. Roger had a cupful on most days; I eyed it once and it had been so watered down that the milk took on a bluish tinge. I decided I was not missing very much.

Mum said that we had not brought in much in the way of food, although this puzzled me as Roger's Pedigree pram had been overloaded with the stuff. I think really Mum was of the opinion that it was better to use currently issued supplies and keep the tins 'in case', for the future.

Thus, like a lot of families, my parents patronised the small canteen provided by the Japanese to buy extras. The canteen was staffed by inmates, supplying, when they had such goods, cigarettes, toilet paper and sometimes small quantities of soap, peanut oil, dried fruit and spices. But we had to have ration cards for these sorts of items and the card had to be marked.

They were paid for by money that inmates were given, called 'comfort money'. It was supplied by the British Government to the Swiss, whose Consul in Qingdao, Mr Eggers, used to make a monthly visit starting with a suitcase full of Chinese dollars. I never had much to do with money and the lack of it made little difference to me, in any case the management of any money was in the hands of my mother. But I did notice that Mum's small trinkets seemed to disappear

from time to time. I learned these financed extra food like eggs for us from the black market.

Anyone who was around ten years old knew that a big trade was happening over the wall, mainly in food, though nobody ever said anything.

Watching and sometimes getting involved, even if inadvertently, was fascinating. The main organiser of the black market was an Australian Cistercian Monk, Fr Patrick Scanlan, using priests to make the transactions. There was a general curfew at lights out, 10 p.m., but in the summer evenings it was not unusual for us boys to sneak out of bed and see what was going on, usually as a sort of dare.

We soon spotted the priests trading over the walls, but nobody ever betrayed them, even to our parents, although I knew from Mum that she was grateful for those extras, even though she was not sure precisely how it was done. Order placed one night, eggs or whatever received the next.

But rapidly the guards realised what was going on and more devious methods had to be introduced, especially when they started cocking their rifles and firing the odd shot in the air. The standard of trust was sufficiently low that it was jewellery, or money, up front.

Fr Scanlan, realising that inmates were free to practice their religion, instigated a system whereby the priests would walk around the hospital area holding their breviaries, but also bearing a basket, hung on a belt under their soutanes. The basket started out being filled with money and sometimes jewellery; towards the end, after the transactions, it now contained the food of various sorts that was on order. One of the older priests had difficulty walking, and had asked his Bishop if he could say his office seated against the wall, and we boys often used to sit by the wall with him idly talking. I was doing that one evening with Brian just after supper. Two guards approached the priest, speaking broken English, and said that there was no way he could read in that light.

The priest said, 'I have very good eyes I can read clearly,' I suspected that the guards had thought the breviary was a diversion. So they then said 'Then read to us.'

The priest then started 'Pater noster, qui es in caelis Sanctificetur nomen tuum...' I had difficulty stopping from bursting out laughing, because it was obvious the light was too bad to read and the recitation was from memory. But it satisfied the guards and they left. Brian and I then said goodnight and we both got up off the ground to leave, but the priest said, 'Boys, would you mind taking these to Fr Scanlan,' producing two boxes of eggs from under his soutane!

One evening in July Dad came in from his job as a stoker in Kitchen No. 2 to relax before our last meal of the day. 'The Trappist, Fr Scanlan, who smuggles over the wall has been caught by the Japs,' he told Mum.

'How did that happen?' she asked, obviously shocked. 'What will happen to him now?'

Dad shrugged his shoulders. 'The Japs are going to try him, so it seems.'

The whole camp was aware of the coming trial and it wasn't just his fellow clergy who were praying that the Japanese would not decide to make an example of the monk. I did not consider it myself, but Mum admitted that many of the adults were afraid he would be executed. He was tried by the Japanese Consular Police, and the only internee allowed at the proceedings was Ted McClaren, the 'head' of the internees. The sentence was one month in solitary confinement.

I heard some adults saying that was a fitting penance for an Australian Trappist monk.

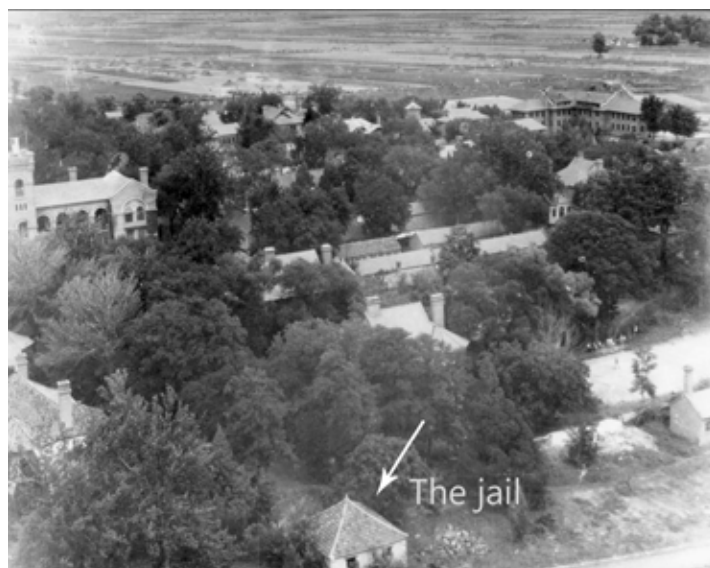
Then the Japanese had a problem. 'The Commandant's House was the northernmost of the old missionary houses and the nearest to the internee section of the camp. The only cell was on the ground level of his house. Because of the construction of the houses, the top two floors were living accommodation, whereas the ground level was rather like a cellar and used as such. Fr Scanlan was duly placed in the cell and allowed his breviary. But then Fr Scanlan hit back: he had a fine voice, and used it to sing the 'office' in plainsong.

Fr Scanlan's fellow priests got as near as they could in a narrow path between two walls and either responded to Fr Scanlan's chanting

or all recited the office out loud. The Japanese listened appreciatively, although the latter was unintelligible to them. They were still relatively relaxed when the midnight office was sung, but come 3 a.m. they were woken up and were displeased. This procedure lasted for a few days.

After a week Fr Scanlan was escorted in front of the Commandant again, in the presence of Ted McClaren, to be told that for good behaviour he was being released. Face-saving by the Japanese, as they would not of course admit that it was Fr Scanlan's voice at 3 a.m. that had driven them crazy, and they had to put a stop to it somehow.

Peanuts came over the wall in great quantity,



and peanut butter became a staple to be put on bread. Ordinary mincing machines were modified by replacing the single cutter and fitting a pair which ground the peanuts into a paste. The rather tedious task of winding the mincing machine on the table usually fell to me. I did this chore for our immediate family and for others in Block 42, always ensuring they got the same amount of peanuts back.

The priests really impressed me in Weihsien; they had become the unofficial morale leaders. Many had long black beards, which I guessed were why my parents had called them 'Daddy Whiskers' in the past. I had occasionally been taken to All Saints Anglican Church in Tianjin, the Church my parents were married in, and they did not go too often in Weihsien. Mum always used Roger as an

excuse, saying that he would probably bawl and disturb the service. Dad was into 'bells and smells', I think from his time at Abbotsholme. I was not bound to go regularly, but I found solace in going to sit on the wall near the Church during Roman Catholic Mass and listening to the chanting of plainsong. It was an experience I always enjoyed, although I could not read a note of music at the time. I liked classical music but I think that I inherited my tone-deaf voice from Mum. In fact, I am sure, because Dad could and often did play the piano in Tianjin.

[excerpts] ...

Winter was not far away. Most of the huts had no heating and those with experience of the climate estimated that the temperature could fall as low as 0°F, or minus 17°C. The Japanese promised coal, thus each room needed a stove (the dormitory rooms already had pot-bellied iron stoves, fitted with chimneys made out of four-inch (10cm) tin tubing). The coal duly arrived: a couple of buckets of black powder with the odd walnut-sized lump. One could not burn it in the open and there were no hearths. So, from the engineers came a rapid design for those hut rooms without stoves. They were to build new ones: three foot long, built from bricks obtained from those demolished walls which had once defined each courtyard between the blocks. The stove included an oven, made from a square five-gallon oil tin, and a chimney built out of 3/4-pint soup tins carefully pushed into each other. There was no solder, so the engineers stressed the need to ensure that the top of each tin went snugly into the one before, so that smoke could not leak into the room. Leakage of carbon monoxide, which came from incomplete burning of fuel, was potentially fatal: it could kill the occupants as they slept.

The ovens meant that housewives could cook a little extra, if they could find ingredients. They certainly could keep food hot after collecting it from the kitchen. Often though, there was so little of the food that at any temperature it tasted great. The trouble with the 'private' stoves was fuel, and I recall seeing Mr Nathan, who was Chief General Manager of the Kailan Mining Administration, a man regarded with great respect and who was at least ten years older than Dad, atop the ash pile outside of No. 1 Kitchen. He was carrying a

little bucket with him, and had climbed up there in order to pick up, very carefully, small pieces of partially burnt coal to take to his dormitory to burn in their stove. It seemed so ironic: here was a businessman used to dealing with thousands of tons of coal being forced by a war to try to find, with his bare hands, a couple of pounds for his own use.

The Japanese realised that all this illegal building of stoves was going on, and issued smaller cast iron stoves but without the chimney piping. And policy caught up with the facts: you needed to have been issued a stove to be allowed to draw coal, so Dad got two, one for each room. He then had a brilliant idea when he saw the unscrewed top of the pot-bellied stove — he promptly mounted it on the bricks so that there was now a 'ring' to heat kettles and saucepans, and the oven for the 'brick' stove.

Dad said, 'I have already scrounged a five-gallon oil tin, and I must now find enough soup, fruit or vegetable tins to make the chimney. I have staked a claim for a number of bricks from one of the end walls. I have also got a small bag of that cement you were playing with ages ago, Ronald, which when mixed with mud should do to cement the bricks together and seal the top.'

When challenged, I agreed that I had a number of iron bars that would make a grate, again trophies from the fire and ash pile from what seemed months before. 'I told you Mum, that they would come in useful.' Mum had to agree that one could ever tell when things would find a purpose. That was the first and only agreement that I ever had from Mum regarding my trait of squirreling things away in case they might be wanted. I had pointed out to her that she herself was keeping all those tins of food that had been so elaborately brought in Roger's pram for a 'rainy day'.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)

[excerpts] ...

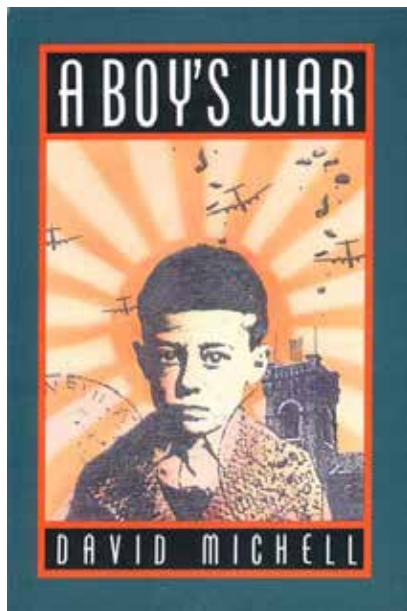
As the war progressed, commodities at the canteen and the food rations allowed in by the Japanese diminished drastically.

Through the good offices of our indefatigable Mr. Egger of the Swiss Consulate, occasional parcels of food or medicines from friends in other parts of China were passed by the Japanese authorities and given to those to whom they had been addressed, to the envy of all.

In July 1944 a consignment of two hundred parcels from the American Red Cross was delivered for the two hundred Americans in the camp. We all crowded round with our mouths watering to see these privileged owners unpack undreamt-of delicacies in the form of tins of butter, powdered milk, coffee, salmon, spam, and packages of raisins, cheese, chocolate and sugar. Out of their largesse, we all benefitted by some tokens. That night in our room, our little gang of nine boys brought out the hoarded treasures and, by the light of the candles we had managed to keep secret, took a few leisurely savoured nibbles before squirrelling away the rest for the bleaker days we knew were coming.

About seven months later, long after the food from the parcels had disappeared and when winter was at its coldest and dreariest, a commotion erupted near the main gate. Fourteen donkeys were seen struggling to ascend the slope up the main road pulling their rickety carts, loaded high with food parcels. On each was clearly visible, "American Red Cross." The Americans were ecstatic while everyone else was glum and "choice" words about the Red Cross of every other country represented in camp were flying freely. When all the parcels had been unloaded and counted, there were found to be 1,550 — more than enough

for every one of the 1,450 of us in camp. The commandant made a very fair decision, most people thought, by allocating one each to everyone and an extra half-parcel to the two hundred Americans.



The lineup for the parcels began bright and early the next morning, but young and old after long hours of waiting were greeted by the baleful news that there would be no distribution at all. Soon it was learned that seven of the Americans, very disturbed that American parcels would go to non-Americans, thus depriving them from getting seven and a half parcels each, had protested the commandant's directive.

Caught unprepared for a problem of this nature among the internees whose culture and customs had him baffled, the commandant, feeling obligated to present a minority's cause, relayed the facts of the problem to Tokyo for a judgment. The image of all the Americans was badly blemished as, predictably, tensions mounted daily in the camp.

After some days a pronouncement came from the Japanese authorities that there would be one parcel per person. The extra hundred parcels would be sent back for distribution to American prisoners in other camps. It was the nearest we came to an international crisis, but in due course feelings died down, and everyone was grateful for what had been received.

Our school was able to make very favourable exchanges of all the packets of cigarettes for nourishing food that kept us going through the winter. Not a mouthful of food was ever wasted. Without doubt the hardest weekly mouthful for me, until supplies ran out, was the spoonful of cod-liver oil that looked and smelled like slimy green marmalade.

#

by Mary E. Scott ...

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

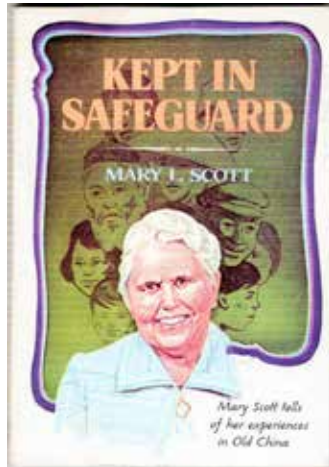
[excerpts] ...

Red Cross Parcels

Two shipments of American Red Cross parcels arrived in our camp. The first was in July 1944, when 200 parcels arrived for Americans only. Each parcel weighed 50 pounds and was divided into four sections, each containing one pound of powdered milk, four small cans of butter, three cans of Spam or Prem, one pound of cheese, sugar, raisins or prunes, Ration-D chocolate, four packs of American cigarettes, and assorted cans of jam, salmon, liver paste, and powdered coffee. We were wealthy! But in a situation like ours, wealth is to be shared. Our British friends said that there was hardly a person in camp who had not received something from those parcels, thanks to American generosity.

In January 1945, when the Japanese issue of food was at its lowest point, an even larger shipment arrived: 14 cart-loads, each cart carrying over 100 parcels. Tears, unashamed, streamed down the internees' faces as they looked on in utter amazement. Each person in camp received one of these parcels: British, American, Belgian, etc. What a day! How rich we all were to have 50 pounds of good American foodstuffs—and not even rationed unless we disciplined ourselves to ration our own supply.

To us grown-ups who hadn't tasted milk for months and months, the powdered milk was a heavenly treat. The Spam was a welcome change from what little mountain goat and horse meat (at least we suspected it was) we had been given recently. I couldn't remember tasting anything so good as those Ration-D chocolates and the powdered coffee! I had never been a tea drinker, so I pounced on the coffee. The cans were only small, one-ounce size, and some of the contents had solidified, but we chipped out pieces for our much anticipated cup. Before too many days had passed, I had to decide on my coffee strategy. If I drank it as strong as I liked it, the coffee would



last only so long; if I made it weak, it would, of course, last longer. I decided that I would much rather have it the way I liked it for a shorter period of time than to have it weak for a longer period of time and not really enjoy it any of the time.

Most of us set aside a “rainy day” parcel against the time when food might be even more scarce than it was now, since we had no idea how much longer we would be detained.

Besides food, clothing, toothbrushes, and toothpaste came in. What a luxury to brush my teeth with a good brush once more. And shoe polish! Not too many in camp still had shoes, but I was one of the fortunate ones. What a luxury to be able to polish my shoes!

While the intrinsic value of all these things was considerable, particularly in that situation, their value as a morale builder was beyond calculation. We had been told that our country was on the verge of collapse, but these parcels were ample evidence that this was far from true. The spirit of the camp rose perceptibly after those parcels arrived. I know every internee would join me in saying thanks to all who had any share in sending them to us, and thanks to the Japanese officials who had allowed them to be brought in.

I received one other parcel in May 1945, from a person whom I had never met—a Mrs. Bataille from Tongshan. It contained one and a half pounds of bacon and one and a half pounds of crackers. The note on the card attached to the parcel expressed the hope that the parcel would arrive in good condition and extended best wishes. Thank you, Mrs. Bataille. May God reward you for this “cup of cold water” given in His name.

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

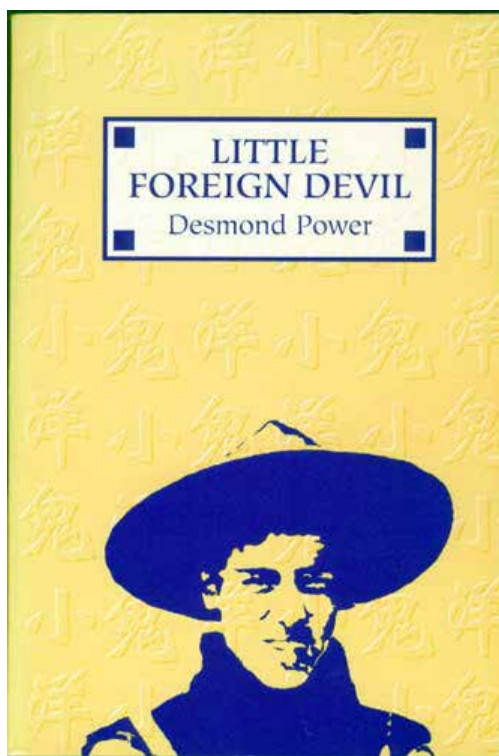
[excerpts] ...

Why the flurry of escapes? For one thing, the food situation was going from bad to worse. In Weihsien our rations were so reduced that camp leader McLaren picked out six of the skinniest inmates and had them parade bare-chested before the Commandant. I was one of the six. Mr. McLaren gave an impassioned speech. He pointed at our corrugated ribcages, our jutting cheek bones. He quoted the Geneva Convention. The Commandant's response was equally impassioned.

"You people are luckier than you think. You are better off than the citizens of our home islands. You have more to eat than our soldiers in the field. Even so, I have managed to postpone a reduction of your vegetable marrow allocation. But I won't be able to do that again. You must expect cuts. And you won't be the only ones affected. I've already told my chief of police that the guards' rations are to be reduced. It's a bad time for everybody. You must remember there's a war on. And as long as the war continues, I can do no more for you."

But he did do more, a lot more — for us Limies, that is. I am referring here to the episode that kicked off with a breathtaking spectacle, a biblical caravan (if you can visualize Shantung mules as the camels of Araby) trundling through the ceremonial gateway and up the incline towards the main road, heavily laden with cardboard cartons, stamped triumphantly with the universal symbol of the Red Cross.

Camp interpreter Al Voyce, who was present when the Commandant inspected three of the cartons, got himself all tongue-tied describing



their fabulous contents: Klim, Spam, Hershey Bars, cheese-spread, coffee, sugar. And clothing too: shirts, pants, sweaters, field jackets, boots. But it was all too good to be true for those of us who did not hail from the Sweet Land of Liberty. We were dealt a gut-wrenching blow by a group of Americans (missionaries predominantly) who raised a great big stink with the Commandant. They demanded that he hand over the cartons to Americans only. They stated that it was both illegal and immoral to do otherwise because stamped on the outside of each and every carton were the words:

GIFT OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS.

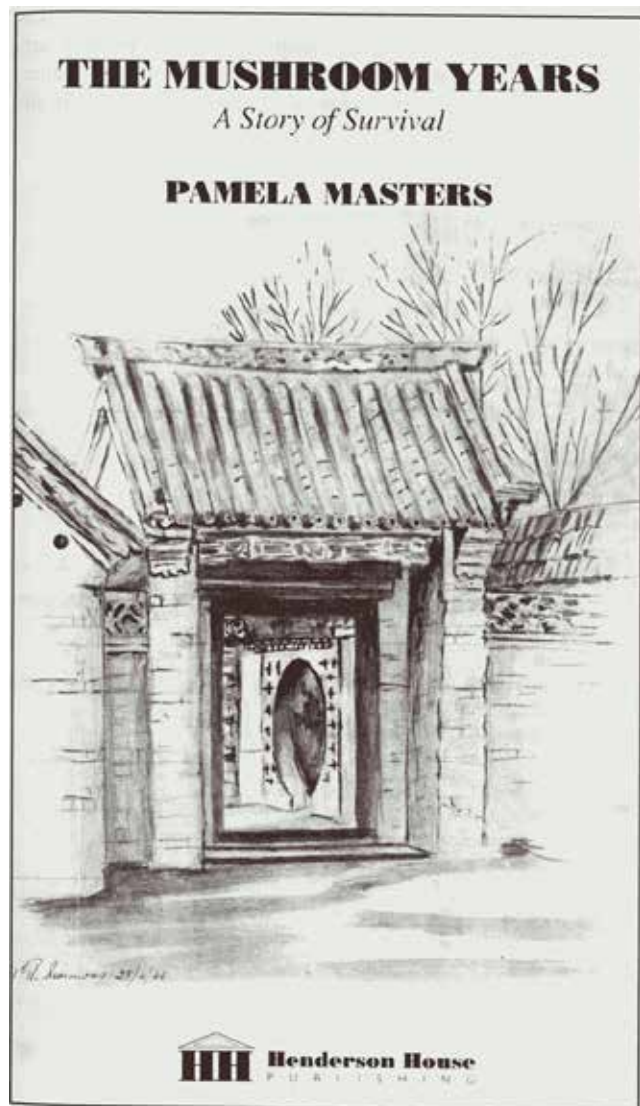
For a week the cartons remained stacked in the church while the Commandant pondered the issue. In the end his Buddhist principles prevailed over the claimants' Christian ones. He saw to it that those considered alien by the American Red Cross (as the claimants had led him to believe), alien Britons, alien Hollanders, alien Belgians, all got a share of the prize. And he didn't omit the alien Italians, the elegant set I travelled with from Shanghai, who, for reasons best known to Tokyo, were walled off together with their Peking, Tientsin, and Tsingtao compatriots in a camp of their own, a camp within a camp so to speak. (Though I was never more than 150 yards from them the whole time I was in Weihsien, not once did I catch sight of my travel companions, not Signor Piscatelli, not Signorina Mazzini, my dusky Sardinian Cleopatra.)

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForeignDevil/Power-143-pages.pdf>

by Pamela Masters ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



Chapter 13 [excerpts] ...

[...]

Then, one day in mid-January 1945, when snow and sleet were coming down to add to our misery, the main gates were dragged open, and a line of donkey carts loaded with Red Cross parcels started weaving and side-slipping up the grade!

I stood in total disbelief as load after load came into the camp. In my excitement, I hadn't noticed the crowd that had gathered around me until Pete Fox picked me up and spun me around shouting,

"Now do you believe in Santa Claus?!"

"They say American Red Cross, like those back in July," I said, remembering the handful of parcels that had come in the previous year and been doled out to the Americans.

"Yeah, but I counted a hundred boxes on each cart. And there were fifteen carts; that's more than enough for every one of us in camp!"

Pete had to be right—these parcels were for all of us! So Christmas was late, so what!?!

I found myself dreaming of their contents, and the anticipation was delicious. I knew what I needed: soap. And, luxury of luxuries: toothpaste. I knew what I wanted: tea, coffee, and maybe some candy; my craving for something sweet was almost unendurable. I would have loved eggs and butter, but knew they were perishable items that could not stand weeks and months in transit. I dreamed on and savored every minute it.

Strangely, the parcels arrived with no instructions, and as there were just over fourteen hundred internees left in the camp now, including two hundred Americans, the Commandant posted a notice stating that the parcels would be given out the following day, one to each internee, and one-and-a-half to each American.

His orders didn't prevail though. He was mobbed by a contingent of angry Americans, who stormed into his office and told him that those parcels were for them and no one else, and that he had no right to give away American



property; it was not his to give.

I was with Dan when we learned of this turn of events, and he was sick and disgusted with his fellow men. “What the heck would my Mom and I do with fifteen comfort parcels!” he exploded. “How could we possibly enjoy them while all our Allied friends were going without. This is ridiculous! I bet, if they polled the Americans, they’d find most of ‘em want everyone to get a parcel.”

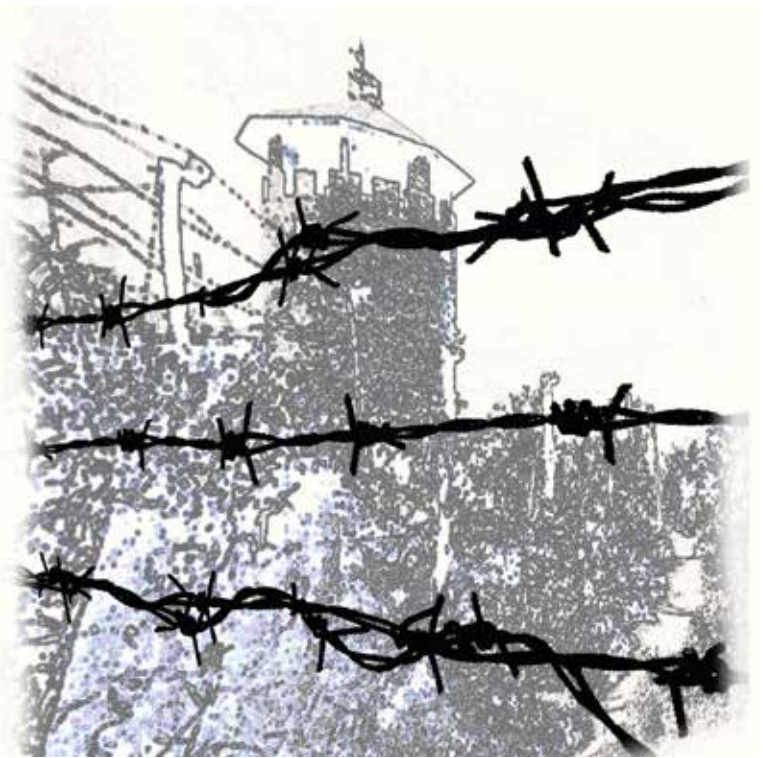
Dan was wrong though. The generous Yanks had made an about-face, and even if the majority didn’t like the stand that had been taken, they backed the group that made it, stressing the parcels were American property and reiterating that they were the only ones entitled to receive them.

Afraid of an uprising, the Commandant took immediate control and had all the parcels locked up until he got instructions from Tokyo. While we waited for them, the camp that had once been tolerant of all the different nationals, became bitterly divided.

The ensuing two weeks had to be the slowest I’d ever known, and when the instructions from Tokyo were posted—just in time for my eighteenth birthday—they stated that every American and Allied inmate would get one comfort parcel; anything over would be sent to another camp.

Although this decision was final, the **Hattons** in our block decided to ignore them, and when the happy block wardens, along with their helpers, starting lining up for the parcels, they were met with a half-ton human blockade.

To our cellblock’s embarrassment, the six Hattons were lying on top of the piles of cartons. The parents, over three hundred pounds apiece, were spread-eagled on the larger stacks, and their four pudgy offspring were straddled on top of



smaller ones; they were all chanting, “We want our doo! We want our doo!”

“What the heck’s a doo’?” I asked one of the crew, and he explained they meant “due”, giving it the English pronunciation. Finally, Roger Barton broke through their silly chant, shouting, “Shut up!”

Old man Hatton, purple with rage, and thrashing about like a humongous, bloated fish, screamed, “I won’t shut up! Those parcels are marked American Red Cross, not International Red Cross! Nobody’s getting them except Americans!”

I couldn’t believe my ears. This man and his family, supposed Christian missionaries, would get seven- and-a-half packages apiece, or a total of forty-five cartons, if he had his way!

I didn’t see Rob Connors standing behind me, and was surprised when he said, “Now you know why I can’t stand missionaries.”

Rob had been transferred from a Shanghai camp with his side-kick, Chad Walker, a year or so after we’d been interned. They both strolled into camp with guitars slung over their shoulders and mischief in their eyes, and from the moment they arrived, they regaled us with bawdy, underground



songs that had us in stitches. One still comes to mind ...

*My father was a good missionary,
He saved little girlies from sin;
He could sell you a blonde for a shillin'
Lordy, how the money rolled in!
My brother took care of old women;
My mother made synthetic gin;
My sister made love for a livin'
Lordy, how the money rolled in!*

There were lots more verses, and I remember being quite shocked when I first heard them.

The only missionaries I'd ever known were really good people, and I couldn't see any of them using the Lord's work to further their own ends. Now, watching the antics of the Hattons, I got to thinking that Rob probably knew a heck of a lot more about the missionary element in China than I did.

Crowds started to converge on the compound when they heard the ruckus, and I saw the anguished faces of the Tucks, Beruldsen's, and Collishaws, and many other upstanding Christians; I felt sorry for them because of what one family was doing to their image in a camp with a pretty low tolerance for their way of life.

Then the Hattons started screaming again, as a group of internees tried to heft their huge bodies off the piles of parcels. Kicking and screaming, Mr. Hatton shouted, "Don't you dare touch me, while Mrs. Hatton, flabby arms waving, started to yell, "Leave our kids alone!", as the children, kicking and screaming, were carried out of the compound.

Barton threw up his hands in disgust and charged into the office, coming out with a bullhorn.

"Listen to me, you two idiots!" he bellowed, "You're right, these packages are marked American Red Cross, but if it wasn't for the INTERNATIONAL Red Cross they'd still be sitting on the docks Stateside! There's no way anyone would get them without the help of the Swiss or the Swedes. How the hell do you think they got here!?!"

A rumble of assent ran through the crowd, as he told the Hattons to get down or they would be hosed down. As he spoke, a huge fire hose was hauled out of the building. I didn't see a hydrant anywhere, but the threat worked. The Hattons, flustered and fumbling, tried to get down. As they squirmed and slithered, they dislodged the topmost packages, and they came crashing down on them. Everyone just stood and watched, and not a hand was lifted in help. It was as though the coveted comfort parcels had come alive, playing a role none of us would have dared, flipping and bouncing and clobbering their monstrous human targets till there wasn't an inch of them that wasn't black and blue.

After the Hattons staggered out of the compound and the hubbub died down, the packages were distributed to all the block wardens and their happy band of helpers.

I couldn't believe what they contained!

There was instant coffee, something we'd never seen before. Real tea in tea bags; cans of butter that didn't need refrigeration; crackers; concentrated chocolate bars; cookies; sugar; scrambled egg mix; Spam; soap; toilet paper... and toothpaste! And, now and then, a mash note from some sweet soul who had packed the box. We called it the "fortune cookie touch", comparing handwriting and messages, soon forgetting the Hattons and their rotten behavior. The simple excitement of sharing and trading, knowing that people in the great world beyond the walls remembered us, and cared, was an emotion so great, it swept all the previous pettiness before it, and helped make my eighteenth birthday the most memorable one in camp!

[further reading] ...

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser:

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)

by Ron Bridge ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)



Chapter 11 [excerpts] ...

...

The next week heavy rain fell each day. But then on 21 August 1944 Mr Eggers made an unscheduled visit, escorting 400 American Red Cross parcels. A big parcel contained four parcels each about 12 inches (30 cm) square and 6 inches (15 cm) deep.

Eggers said they were for all the camp but had no detailed instructions. The American Missionaries claimed that they were American Red Cross parcels for Americans, and that the British could make their own arrangements and obviously had not. Not that any American in the camp had had anything to do with the organisation of the parcels. Many of the individual Americans shared

out some of the contents with their non-American friends, as they could not accept the policy of their camp leaders.

[excerpts] ...

...

On 25 January 1945 another 400 big American Red Cross parcels arrived. Captain Tsukiyama said they were to be divided, one small parcel per person. Which meant, I thought, that the Bridge family would get one big parcel containing four small parcels. Terrible rows began from the Americans, whose stance again was: 'They are US Red Cross parcels paid for by US taxes hence not to be given to foreigners.'

I overheard Dad saying that the ringleaders of the American rebellion were both tobacco experts who had lived in China for a number of years with their Russian wives. He doubted if they had ever been in America for long enough to pay a penny in tax there.

Captain Tsukiyama said he would go to Qingdao and clarify the distribution of parcels; meanwhile, parcel distribution was on hold. The atmosphere in the camp grew poisonous; people vented their anger by resorting to fists and flinging mud at the Americans. I kept a low profile while these exchanges were going on because I could see no advantage in getting involved.

Four days later Captain Tsukiyama returned from Qingdao to say that instructions from Tokyo were that a small parcel was to be issued to each inmate, and the medical supplies were for the hospital. Then Dad came back into the room and said that Captain Tsukiyama added that, if inmates did not agree with the Tokyo directive, there would be no parcels for Weihsien and they would be sent back to Tokyo. The Americans reluctantly accepted the directive over the parcels, but still maintained that it was unlawful for US goods to be given to other nationals.

The Committee confirmed the ruling: one small

parcel per head.

The Red Cross parcels were distributed, despite continuing American objections. The medical supplies consisted of a lot of boxes and we all helped carrying them to the hospital. There were lots of books too, but these all had to go to the Commandant's House to be vetted.

Even newspapers arrived, saying that the end of war in Europe was coming soon, on 4th February. Mum and Dad did not believe this since there would have been some reaction from the Commandant if it were even half true. Then they went back to what they intended doing that day.

Tobacco leaves were removed from their hiding place behind the kaoliang stalks of the ceiling, Mum stripped the stalks off and Dad pounded the rest of the leaves to near dust before rolling a few cigarettes.

Another distribution of Red Cross goods, razors and blades, some soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Mum now allowed us butter and jam for tea. Sometimes, we even got some Spam out of a tin from the parcels.

Mrs Grice came round for sympathy, as when the 'end of war' rumours had surfaced she had been very vocal about how it would serve Hitler right. Mrs Gerber, the German wife of an American, had complained to Ted McClaren about her remarks. Then, when that complaint had received an unsympathetic response, Mrs Gerber went round to Mrs Grice's hut and tried to start a fight.

Mum got a food parcel from Freda; miraculously untouched by postal or customs authorities, so the contents were intact. Previous parcels from her had up to half the contents rifled.

Then bartering started about a week after the distribution of the Red Cross parcels, the 'exchange rate' generally on a standard scale. A pound-tin of milk powder went for three small tins of jam, or four tins of Spam. No equivalent price was quoted for a small packet of ten cigarettes.

There was much drama in the Italian part of the camp, where two ladies went berserk.

One, the Korean wife of an Italian, stripped herself naked and was found in Fr Rutherford's room; the other kept rushing round camp clad in only the thinnest of nightdresses. In the end she was apprehended and put in a locked room on her own.

[further reading]

copy/paste this URL into your Internet browser

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)



Chapter 11 [excerpts] ...

[...]

One snowy day in January 1945, when I was working in greasy overalls over a kua (cauldron) in Kitchen 1, a tall American nicknamed Skipper came running in and said, "Have a look at what's coming in at the front gate!"

A moment later we were standing on Main Road, witnessing an unbelievable sight. Donkeys and carts were filing in slowly up the hill towards the church (the usual venue for such emergencies). Fifteen hundred boxes marked "American Red Cross" were unloaded.

There were 1500 internees in Weihsien Camp one big box each! There was wild excitement at the prospect of having some good nutritious food and the possibility of enjoying delicacies we had not tasted for years. Since our arrival in "Courtyard of the Happy Way" we had not tasted fruit, milk, sugar or butter.

But most excitement and surprises in this war period seemed inevitably to have their anticlimaxes, and this was no exception. Soon afterwards a notice appeared on the camp notice boards announcing curtly that the distribution of parcels had been cancelled, as consideration was being given as to whether the donors intended them to go solely to the two hundred Americans in Weihsien.

Two weeks of arguing and dissension among the American community followed, the majority of them being adamant that the boxes should be shared with all. A few families, in spite of their missionary status, spoke loudly about the "morality" of ensuring that the parcels were given

to those for whom they were intended.

Meanwhile the local Japanese authorities, perplexed at civilised Westerners haggling in this manner, consulted their headquarters for instructions on how to distribute the boxes. The decision from Tokyo was a wise and equitable one. One parcel for every internee.

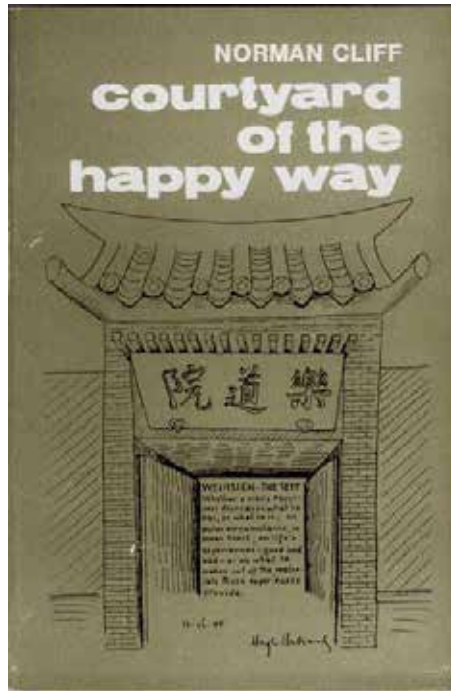
Soon a fresh date was fixed for the distribution of the parcels. We queued up at the church and then each struggled to his digs with a heavy cardboard box, three feet by one foot by one-and-a-half feet. Sitting at our beds, we eagerly ripped the boxes open. In each were four small sections, each with powdered milk, cigarettes, tinned butter, spam, cheese, concentrated chocolate, sugar, coffee, jam, salmon and raisins.

Tea could now be drunk with milk and sugar. Bread, our staple, diet, could now be eaten with butter and cheese or jam. Cigarettes could be traded with smokers for further items of food. The long list of items lent themselves to all kinds of recipes and combinations.

If these welcome supplies were used to supplement the official camp rations from the kitchen, and used in careful instalments, we could enjoy nutritious and tasty meals for at least four months to come.

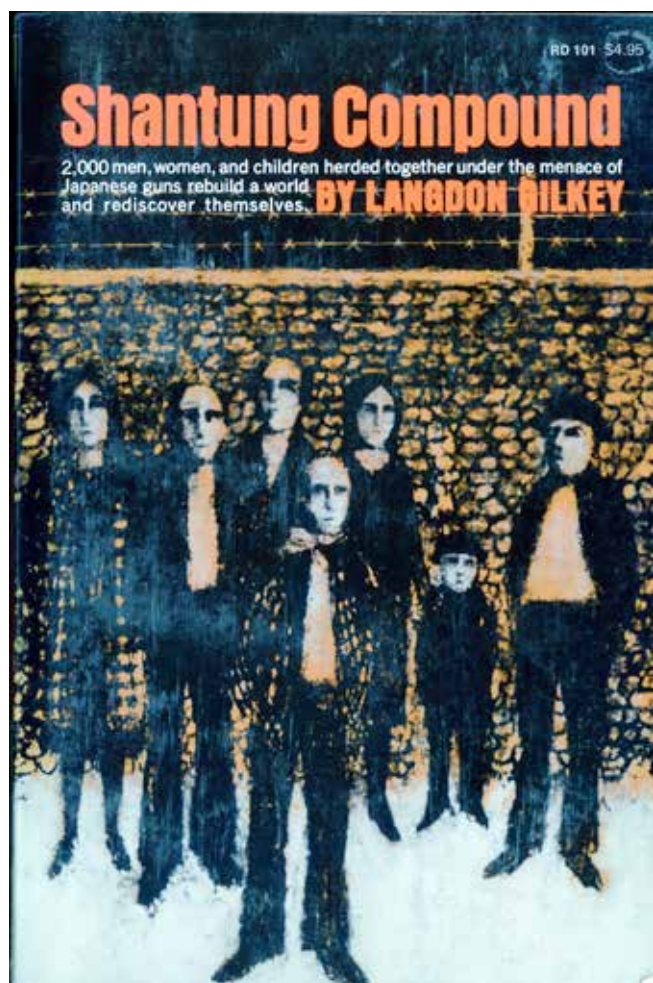
[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)



by Langdon Gilkey ...

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm



Chapter 6 [excerpts] ...

[...]

Where there had been excess weight before, there were lean shanks and flapping dewlaps now. Some who had been grossly overweight lost as much as 100 pounds. I myself, having weighed 170 pounds when I came in, dropped to 125. Few signs of dangerous ill health manifested themselves from this cause, although the number of fainting and low blood pressure cases began to mount alarmingly, threatening the ability of men over forty to do heavy labor.

Since the war, many more have experienced the ill effects of those three years of malnutrition in failing eyesight and various internal afflictions. As we were always slightly hungry, I suppose the one thing we all longed for most—next to our

freedom—was more to eat.

There did come a time when this unremitting hunger of the last year and one-half was partially appeased for some of us. At the time the exchange of evacuated American internees had taken place at Goa, India, via the *m/v Gripsholm* in the fall of 1943, hundreds of American Red Cross parcels had been handed to the Japanese for delivery to those Americans still in prison in the Far East. Nine months later, in July, 1944, two hundred of these parcels arrived at Weih sien, addressed by covering letter to the two hundred Americans remaining in the camp.



None of the Americans will ever forget the day we first saw those parcels. We had heard that they were large and that their contents surpassed all belief. Still we were not prepared.

We were waiting in line outside the General Affairs office. Brown was at the head of the line—he was at the head of every line, whatever was being given out. We could hardly believe it when we saw him stagger out with what seemed to be a gigantic box in his arms.

“Is that one parcel?” a still rather stout woman next to me called out. “In that case I’m ready to get fat all over again,” she cooed in sheer delight. All of us felt the same way when at last we, too, stared down at the immense boxful that was ours to eat. Happily we found ourselves barely able to take the box home to explore its magic contents.

These were indeed magnificent parcels. About three feet long, a foot wide, and eighteen inches

high, they contained a seemingly inexhaustible supply of unbelievably wonderful things. In them was all that a hungry internee had longed for and had thought he would never see again.

Each parcel had four sections. Each section contained a pound of powdered milk, four packs of cigarettes, four tins of butter, three of Spam or Prem, one pound of cheese, chocolate, sugar, and odd cans of powdered coffee, jams, salmon, liver pate, and a one-pound package of dried prunes or raisins. After a diet made up largely of bread, low on meats and oils, and lacking in sweets of all sorts—in fact, without real taste—fifty pounds of this sort of rich, fat-laden, and tasteful food was manna from heaven.

Since that time I've heard many complaints from G.I.'s about the army canned food. But in our hungry camp, Spam, butter, Nescafe, and raisins seemed to us the last word in gustatory delight.

These packages, moreover, represented more than the mere pleasures of unfamiliar taste. As I looked down at this mass of stuff on my bed, and thought of it in terms of the new future it would bring me, I grasped the idea that this parcel meant, above all, security, safety from hunger for an amazingly long period of time. For as my friends and I found out, if a hungry man disciplined himself and ate only a little each day, his parcel could be stretched to supplement the daily diet for almost four months, and keep its owner from being really hungry.

To each of us, therefore, this parcel was real wealth, in a more basic sense than are most of the symbols of wealth in civilized life. No amount of stocks or bonds, no Cadillacs or country estates, could possibly equal the actual wealth represented by this pile of food—for that food could prevent hunger for four months. A Red Cross parcel made its possessor an astoundingly rich man—as each of us knew the minute we looked up from that lovely pile on our bed into the hungry eyes of our dorm mates who had received none.

Accompanying this food was also a considerable complement of men's clothing. Again, since this was consigned to the Americans, every American man was given one article of each type: an overcoat, a pair of shoes, heavy underwear, a flannel shirt, a sweater, a cap, socks, gloves, and a

set of durable coveralls.

I shall never forget the Greek-American barber in the camp looking with some disgust at this pile of new clothes and saying with deep pathos: "Where de hell are de pants?" Why none had been included was the topic for some amusing theories among the British in our dorm, one of whom remarked, "Doesn't anyone wear the pants in your country, old boy?"

Fortunately there was much more of this clothing—especially overcoats and coveralls—than there were American men. Therefore the rest was distributed to other nationals. This fact and the fact that almost without exception the Americans were most generous about giving their non-American friends food from their parcels, made the whole affair the source of a good deal of international good will, as well as of better-filled stomachs and better-warmed backs. British friends told me they thought there was hardly a person in camp who had not received something from these parcels. Obviously, they were impressed with American generosity.

By the beginning of the winter of 1944-1945, food from the parcels had long since vanished, and the cuts in our supplies were growing ever more drastic. Winter on the plains of North China is biting cold—such as one might expect in Detroit or Chicago. We were issued very little coal dust with which to heat our rooms. Morale in the camp was at its all-time low. The future stretched on as endless and dreary as the snow-covered flatlands beyond the barbed wire on the walls of the compound.

Then suddenly, without warning, one cold January day the most wonderful thing imaginable happened. Some internees who happened to be near the great front gate saw it swing open as usual. The familiar donkey carts that carried our supplies came plodding in through the snow. But what they saw in those carts, they found hard to believe. Piled high, box on box, were seemingly endless numbers of Red Cross parcels! Word spread swiftly around the camp. In a twinkling, a huge crowd had gathered. Everyone was laughing and crying at once. We all looked on in disbelief as cartload after cartload kept coming through the gate. In utter amazement, tears streaming down

our faces, we counted fourteen of those carts, each one carrying well over a hundred parcels!

"Why, they're the same parcels!" someone said. "See there's the label—AMERICAN RED CROSS—but there are many, many more than before!"

"I just heard from a committeeman that there's no covering letter for these parcels, no indication as to who is to get them."

"Then who are they for?"

This question, "Who is to get them?" ran like wildfire among us. Quite naturally, the first reactions had been generally that the Americans were in luck again. But, when more and more carts kept coming in the gate, notions as to who would be given them became confused. The Americans, counting the carts as they went by, began to speculate happily on this windfall.

"My God," exclaimed one in a loud voice, "I figure there must be at least fifteen hundred parcels there—wow! Why, that's seven to eight parcels for each American! I don't even know where I'll put all that stuff!"

But other thoughts were going through other minds as the significance of the quantity struck home: "Why, fifteen hundred is just about the number of people in the camp! Could it be that we British are going to get a parcel, too? Could they be for everybody this time?"

As this question swept through the assembled crowd—which, by now, was comprised of the entire camp—it collided head-on with the exultation of the Americans. Frowns replaced looks of amazed wonder; angry mutterings succeeded the early shouts of joy.

"Damn it, you limey," one outraged Yankee voice cried out, "that's American stuff, and you lousy spongers aren't going to get a bit of it. Why doesn't your Red Cross take care of you?"

The answer was a snort of disgust.

"Well, you Americans are a bunch of bloody buggers! You want everything for yourselves, don't you? If it's your property, no one else is to have a look in, is that the idea?"

And so it went. The parcels were piled up in a great heap in the church building awaiting word from some authority as to how all this wonderful wealth was to be distributed. A heavy guard was posted to watch over them. Every row of rooms and every dorm where Americans lived with other nationals began to stew in bitter disputes. In those where no Americans lived, there was general gloomy agreement that while Americans might be rich, they were certainly neither very human nor very trustworthy; for when the chips were down, they wanted to be sure they got theirs—and who cared about the other fellow.

Two days later the Japanese authorities posted a notice which seemed to settle the issue to everyone's apparent satisfaction. The commandant, after stating that he was acting according to official instructions, proclaimed that the parcels were to be distributed to the entire camp the next day at 10 A.M. Every American was to receive one and one-half parcels; every other internee, one parcel. This ingenious distribution was possible because there were 1,550 parcels for a camp of 1,450 persons, 200 of whom were Americans.

I was elated. I regarded this as a master stroke of statesmanship in a touchy situation. It looked as though the whole camp would be well fed by this arrangement. At the same time, the super patriots among the Americans would be appeased because they were getting substantially more than did the "damn furriners."

It is impossible to set down the joy and excitement that gripped the camp that night. It was as though everyone were living through every Christmas Eve of his lifetime all rolled into one.

What a heaven of goodies awaited each child with a parcel of his own! What blessed security was promised to every father and mother with three, possibly four, parcels for their family, enough surely to last through the spring, whatever might happen to our camp supplies! The dreary remnant of winter and the stark uncertainty of the days ahead seemed no longer impossible to contemplate as each internee savored the prospect of rich food and tried vainly to quiet his excited children who were already pleading to get in line for the great distribution.

Universal good will flooded the camp; enthusiasm for American generosity was expressed on every hand. Our morale and our sense of community had climbed swiftly from an all-time low to an all-time high. As Bruce, the sardonic Scotsman in our dorm, said, "I almost feel tonight that I might be able to love other people—and that for me, brother, is a very rare feeling indeed!"

The next morning, long before the appointed hour, the camp in festive mood lined up for the parcels. Then suddenly the bottom dropped out of everything. Just before ten, a guard strode past and hammered up an official-looking notice on the board.

Those at the head of the line crowded around at once to see what the announcement said. They came away looking black as thunder. I made my way up to the bulletin board, peering over the heads of the crowd to read the words. As I approached, an Englishman was turning away. "The bloody bastards!" I heard him say. "What the bloody hell am I going to tell my kids?" An awful heart-sinking prescience told me what the notice said—and I wasn't wrong.

The notice contained one short but pregnant sentence:

DUE TO PROTESTS FROM THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY, THE PARCELS WILL NOT BE DISTRIBUTED TODAY AS ANNOUNCED.

THE COMMANDANT

When we tried to find out what had happened, we were told that seven young Americans had gone to see the commandant about the matter. They had demanded that he produce his authorization to distribute American Red Cross parcels to internees who were not American citizens. Since there was no such proof, the seven insisted that these parcels be turned over at once to the American community, the rightful owners, for them to do with as they saw fit.

One may, I think, legitimately surmise that the Japanese official was caught completely off guard by this strong and reasoned appeal to what is a peculiarly Western sense of ownership. From his own cultural background he could conjure up no ready defense against it. The commandant had

apparently acted solely on the basis of his own moral judgment in announcing the distribution to all internees, and had no higher authority with which to back up this judgment. In this case, surely, it would have been better for all concerned had he used some of the customary military inflexibility. Had he merely told the delegation to get out, the camp would have been spared much bitterness and the Americans much later humiliation. But he wavered, promising he would refer the whole question to the arbitration of Tokyo. Then he canceled the distribution.

Through the action of these seven men, the American community found itself in the unenviable position of preventing the distribution of life-giving parcels to their hungry fellows. Apparently we were content to let them go hungry so long as we got our seven and one-half parcels.

The inevitable result was that all the bitter arguments of the two days previous broke out more strongly than before. Men who, like the Englishman I overheard, had to explain to the expectant children that "the Americans had taken away Santa," were not inclined to feel lightly about this. The Americans, finding themselves bitterly accused of a selfishness and greed which they had not explicitly encouraged, were not inclined to admit their own fault nor that of their countrymen, especially to enraged foreigners. With that pathetic but automatic defense mechanism almost every man develops with nationals of another country, Americans hotly defended whatever their countrymen had done long before they found out either what it was or what they themselves really thought about it.

There followed about ten days of delay, while we all waited for word from Tokyo. This hiatus provided the opportunity for all the hostility, jealousy, and national pride of 1,450 hungry, exasperated, and anxious people to accumulate and to boil over. Where there had been only arguments before, now there were fist fights. In one row, an American boy and a British boy got in a scuffle over the matter. When the fathers discovered this battle between erstwhile best friends, they at first chastised the youths. But when they learned what the fight was about, they themselves came to blows. Others had to step in and separate this pathetic but furious pair who had

been neighbors and friends for a year and a half.

It was the same story all over. A community where everyone had long forgotten whether a man was American or British, white, Negro, Jew, Parsee, or Indian, had suddenly disintegrated into a brawling, bitterly divided collection of hostile national groups. Ironically, our wondrous Christmas gift had brought in its wake the exact opposite of peace on earth. The massive mounds of life-giving parcels lay inert in the center of the camp, while gusts of human conflict and ill will swirled turbulently around them.

For the first time, I felt fundamentally humiliated at being an American. The British in our dorm were too courteous to be openly nasty—they knew how most of our group there deplored this—but their silence spoke volumes.

The experience of the Red Cross parcels vividly revealed to me aspects of human communal life of which I had been formerly unaware. A day or so later as I was staring moodily at that heap of magnificent parcels, pondering the irony of our suddenly brawling society, I came to see that wealth is by no means an unmitigated blessing to its community. It does not, as may often be supposed, serve to feed and comfort those who are lucky enough to possess it, while leaving unaffected and unconcerned others in the community who are not so fortunate. Wealth is a dynamic force that can too easily become demonic—for if it does not do great good, it can do great harm.

The arrival of those parcels represented for our camp an accretion of sheer wealth almost of incomprehensible scope. It was as if, I thought, our small community had been whisked overnight from the living standard of a thirteenth-century village to that of modern affluent industrial society. Now we had food to keep us all from hunger through the spring.

And yet, the introduction of this wealth—the central factor in material progress—was in fact the occasion for an increase in bitterness and conflict such as we had never known before. Staring at those symbols of our material advance, I suddenly realized that Western culture's dream of material progress as the answer to every ill was no more than a dream. Here was evidence before my

eyes that wealth and progress can have demonic consequences if misused.

Had this food simply been used for the good of the whole community, it would have been an unmitigated blessing in the life of every one of us. But the moment it threatened to become the hoarded property of a select few, it became at once destructive rather than creative, dividing us from one another and destroying every vestige of communal unity and morale.

I realized that this was no mere matter of angry words and irate looks. It was just the kind of issue which men were willing to fight over. Seeing the guards now patrolling the streets, I was glad they were there. Had there been no Japanese guns guaranteeing order in the camp, we might easily have faced real civil strife. Thus might our community have destroyed itself over this issue.

I suddenly saw, as never so clearly before, the really dynamic factors in social conflict: how wealth compounded with greed and injustice leads inevitably to strife, and how such strife can threaten to kill the social organism. Correspondingly, it became evident that the only answer was not less wealth or material goods, but the development of moral character that might lead to sharing and so provide the sole foundation for social peace. It is the moral or immoral use of wealth, not its mere accumulation; it seemed to me, that determines whether it will play a creative or destructive role in any society. The American claim for all the parcels, and its devastating effects on our social fabric, had taught me at last the true significance of moral character in any human community, and I would never forget it.

In the world today, Western culture as a whole is learning that material progress and the wealth that it creates are no unmixed blessings. The present possession of security and goods in a world where the majority are hungry and insecure puts the Western world in much the same position as those Americans in the camp, hugging to themselves their seven and one-half parcels. If the material gains of modern Western society can be spread over the world with some evenness, this new wealth may create a fuller life for us all. But if we hoard it for ourselves alone, it will surely become a demonic possession

creating bitterness and jealousy all around us, and ultimately threatening our very existence. Wealthy classes and wealthy nations are unmindful of the destructive effects of their wealth, isolated as they are by the comforts and perquisites of their possessions. Those outside the charmed circle of privilege, however, remember, and no lasting community can be formed in the midst of the bitter resentment that inequality and selfishness inevitably engender. Thus the creation of a viable community is as dependent on the moral ability and willingness to share what we have with our neighbor who is in want as it is on the technical ability to produce and accumulate wealth.

Should the democratic culture of the West go down before an alien Communist world, its demise can probably be traced more directly to its failure to learn and to enact this moral truth than to any other source. The forces now arrayed against this culture have been created precisely by this sort of resentment at the unwillingness of the predominantly white West to share its privileges.

Marxism itself is the direct result of the unwillingness of propertied classes of the past to share their economic privileges with the peasant and the working classes. It has a continuing potent appeal mainly because of this resentment. The openness of many former colonial peoples in Africa and Asia to a Communist influence, if not alliance, is likewise the clear effect of the past unwillingness of Western nations to share their political privileges with peoples then subject to Western imperialism. The resentment against the West on the part of the whole nonwhite world is mainly the consequence of the white man's refusal to share his social privileges with men of another color. "Moral" actions undertaken solely to save one's own skin can hardly claim to be fully moral. Nevertheless, it is demonstrably true that a desperate attempt to hang onto wealth and privilege can destroy the community in which all, rich and poor, may live, and so can bring the mansions of the wealthy toppling down about their ears.

Some of us in the American community were understandably troubled by the action of our countrymen that resulted in canceling the distribution of the parcels. As always, it was with optimism that we embarked upon our program

of rectification. As I said to my bunkmate Stanley Morris, close friend and colleague in this program, "This can't express the will of the American community. Surely the majority want the whole camp to get the damn parcels."

So we got together with a number of others who felt the same way. We decided that each of us should talk with certain "representative" Americans to find out what our community's sentiments really were. If it turned out that the American community did seem to favor the universal distribution of the parcels, then we would call a meeting and take a vote repudiating the action of the seven. Thus in effect we would guarantee the distribution as well as express a needed sense of solidarity with our "foreign" mates in the camp.

The talks were fascinating, although shattering to the remaining shreds of my old liberal optimism. They revealed to me with stark clarity the subtlety and infinite depth of the human moral problem, and the strange behavior of which we are all capable when we are under pressure.

The first man I approached I had suspected would be tough. His name was Rickey Kolcheck. He was a hard, slightly pushy, defensive, sardonic, completely unsentimental small businessman from Chicago. Rickey had never been known to take the lead in any "good works" for the community, and he successfully managed to preserve the air of a cynical, humorous, "hard guy." One never knows, however, what lies under such a Runyonesque surface, and Rickey was generally regarded by the worldly as a "good guy" because of his ready humor and tolerant ways. I had no idea what sort of response I would elicit, when I approached him on the subject of sharing the parcels with the camp as a whole.

Rickey never really understood what I was saying. These were his sandwiches, and he was hungry—it was as simple as that. It might be tough luck for the ones who'd brought no sandwiches, but that wasn't his problem. Looking at me with his hard blue eyes, he said bluntly, "These parcels are mine because I'm an American, and I'm going to see I get every last one that's coming to me. I'm sorry for these other guys, sure—but this stuff is ours. Why don't their own governments take care

of them? No lousy foreigner is going to get what belongs to me!”

As I listened to Rickey, I knew he spoke for many Americans, who had lived and worked next to these “foreigners” for two difficult years. For them any sense of a bond with their neighbors and so of any obligation to them vanished when the security of the self was at stake.

The next man I talked to would have found such a direct attack fairly crude. He was an American lawyer from Tientsin. He began by saying he liked to look at these things from the legal point of view.

“Don’t misunderstand me,” he remarked emphatically. “I’m not worried about the parcels—about how many I or the other Americans may get. I couldn’t care less. With me it’s the legal principle that counts.

“This is American property—simple, isn’t it? You can’t question that! You see, this property can only be administered by Americans and not by the enemy. We’ve got to make sure in this hellhole, whatever price we have to pay in popularity, that the rights of American property are preserved and respected. Come to think of it, we’ve also got to be faithful executors to the American Red Cross donors who sent these here for our use. But mind you, I speak as a professional lawyer. For myself, I don’t really care how many parcels I get.”

“Sure, sure,” I thought. I marveled at the ways by which we can fool ourselves. We don some professional or moral costume so as to hide even from ourselves our real desires and wants. Then we present to the world a façade of objectivity and rectitude instead of the self-concern we really feel. It was the Quarters Committee all over again. As in those cases, I found myself entangled with this man in endless legal arguments about property rights and their relation to the Red Cross, to the Geneva Convention, and to the principle of nationality. Yet I knew these arguments were meaningless because they did not deal with the real factors in the situation: hunger, anxiety and self-concern. Surely it was ironic that the Red Cross, established by the voluntary donations of countless good souls to feed the needy—whoever and wherever they might be—should have its magnificent gifts claimed entirely by a small group

on the principle of the absolute right of property!

It was my next interlocutor, however, who presented the strangest posture so far. He was a kindly, elderly, conservative missionary named Grant. Grant had a Chinese wife and four small children about whom he was naturally much concerned. But surprisingly, he did not bring up this point as his main concern at all. Rather, it was the “moral” side of the issue that exercised him.

He said to me, “I always look at things, Gilkey, from the moral point of view.” Fascinated, I heard him out.

“You understand, of course, that I am not at all interested personally in the parcels, even for my family. I only want to be sure that there be a moral quality to the use we make of these fine American goods. Now as you are well aware, Gilkey, there is no virtue whatever in being forced to share. We Americans should be given the parcels, all right. Then each of us should be left to exercise his own moral judgment in deciding what to do with them. We will share, but not on order from the enemy, for then it would not be moral.”

Thinking of Rickey and my lawyer friend, I asked, “How many parcels do you really suppose the Americans will share with others?”

“Why,” said Grant with satisfaction, “I’m sure that most of them will give away at least two of their packages.”

At this answer I quickly phrased my rejoinder:

“That would mean that each non-American would get, on the most optimistic guess, less than one-fourth of a parcel instead of one parcel apiece. Would that be moral sharing when all of us are equally hungry and in need?”

Grant looked at me in bafflement. This was not at all what he meant by “moral.”

“I don’t understand you,” he said. “If the Japanese share it for us, no one is doing a good act, and so there’s no morality in it anywhere.”

I was incredulous as I listened to this argument. I was hearing from the mouth of Grant a widely held but surely by now discredited view of morality. It was, namely, that moral action is to be

understood as the means by which an individual becomes “good.” Thus human actions, however creative their consequences for the people around, that are not the results of the free acts of individuals—actions, for example, by a government cannot be “moral.” Who then becomes holier by means of them? Grant would ask. Correspondingly, actions at the expense of the well-being of one’s neighbors can be moral if the individual has done them freely and in order to be good.

To Grant, moral actions are to be conceived only in reference to the individual who performs them: good actions add to his virtue, bad ones detract from it. In such a view an act that is compelled by some authority, even if it results in good for all, has no moral implications whatsoever. No wonder, I thought, that men like Grant can never see any connection between the actions of government and the morality of that government’s citizens, and, no wonder they find it impossible to relate morality to the problems of politics!

Such a theory of moral action as a means merely to personal holiness completely ignores the fact that moral action has to do primarily with the relations between persons in a community. Thus in reality moral actions are those in which the needs of the neighbor are given an equality with one’s own needs; immoral acts are those in which the neighbor is forgotten for the sake of the self. Moral action, then, certainly if it is to be called “Christian,” expresses in the outward form of an act a concern for the neighbor’s welfare, which concern is, if anything is, the substance of inner virtue.

In such a view all actions which help to feed the hungry neighbor are moral, even if the final instrument of that sharing is an impersonal arm of government. Thus, as I argued to Grant, efforts designed to bring about a universal sharing were moral, efforts to block such a sharing, immoral.

But Grant, for all his piety, would not listen. He did not really care how well the hunger of his neighbors was appeased, so long as the Americans were given a sporting chance to become “holy.” Further, his view of moral action was one which envisioned merits for the individual self, established by credit in some heavenly bank account. It thus fitted in very well with the self-

interest of each of us, as the Protestant reformers continually argued in their struggle with the medieval merit system. How ironic, then, that the rabid, if peaceable anti-Papist Grant should espouse this view!

The advantage of Grant’s view was that on its terms, “being moral” allowed us both to eat our cake and have it too. For as was plain from his argument, if I were good and shared two of my parcels with our British neighbors, I would not only gain moral credit (and also, incidentally, be humbly thanked by the British for my generosity) but even more, I would be able to keep five whole parcels for myself!

I could not help being reminded of similar arguments at home with regard to helping “the poor.” Is it not more moral to care for the needy solely through private acts of benevolence, so the reasoning went, rather than through impersonal law? And is it not more fun, too, since we can, by doing so, ease our consciences while retaining our wealth virtually untouched?

After a day of such heated discussions, I came back to my room struck with the intense difficulty that each of us has in being truly humane to our fellows, and the infinitely subtle ways in which we are able to avoid facing up to this difficulty. The pressures of self-interest in this case were, of course, immense. This was especially true in the case of those men and women responsible for hungry children.

When one is hungry, and when the threat of worse hunger to come nags continually at the subconscious, then even seven and one-half immense parcels hardly seem enough. We begin to picture to ourselves the dread time when even those seven will be gone. So the prospect of losing any one of them to our neighbors—of having only three or four instead of six or seven—creates as much anxiety of spirit as had been there before the parcels came.

In the possession of material goods, there is no such thing as satiety. One seems never able to accumulate enough to be a safeguard against the unpredictable future, and so the requirements of full security remain in principle unlimited. Thus, men who otherwise appeared quite normal and respectable were goaded by their insistent fears

about the future into claiming all they could for themselves and their own. And concurrently, the needs of the neighbor receded into the dim background. Men in such a situation seemed hardly free to do the generous thing, but only free enough to act in their own self-interest.

As Brecht puts it in the Threepenny Opera:

*For even saintly folk will act like sinners
Unless they have their customary dinners.
And his other observation:
What keeps a man alive? He lives on others,
And forgets that they were supposed to be his brothers.*

This was the reality of all of us. Not many of us, however, can stand to admit that this is the truth about ourselves. Something in us, some strange desire to remain “moral,” is offended by this self-concern; refusing to acknowledge it, we become hypocritical. These examples indicated that rarely does self-interest display itself frankly as selfishness. More often it hides behind the very moral idealism it is denying in action; a legal, moral, or even religious argument is likely to be given for what is at base a selfish action. And what is more, the moral disguise usually deceives even the self who has donned it. For no one is more surprised and outraged than that self when someone else questions the validity of his moral concern.

For this reason, as I saw for the first time, idealistic intentions are not enough; nor is a man’s idealistic fervor the final yardstick of the quality of his character. We commit most of our serious sins against our neighbor—and these are the serious sins—for what we regard as a “moral principle.” Most of us, in spite of whatever harm we may be doing to others, have long since convinced ourselves that the cause for which we do what we do is just and right. Thus teaching high ideals to men will not in itself produce better men and women. It may merely provide the taught with new ways of justifying their devotion to their own security.

This truth is manifested in every political struggle for power and security in the wider world. Classes, nations, and races, like individuals, seldom either defend their own interests or grasp for their own advantage without first finding a legal or moral reason for doing so. Marx

called this tendency “an ideology” and Freud a “rationalization.”

The experience of camp life, and the lessons of history generally, established to my satisfaction that men act generally in an “immoral” way when their interests are at stake. With equal force, however, they showed me that men remain at least moral enough to be hypocritical, to wish to seem good—even if it is beyond their capacities to attain it.

A day later we gathered once again in a friend’s room to pool our findings and to decide on our next move. I came feeling discouraged, for I had found few who agreed with our position. I was still hopeful that the others would come in with more favorable reports. When the others began to speak, however, it became clear that their experiences roughly paralleled my own.

On a wide variety of grounds, the majority of those interviewed favored supporting the protest of the seven men and keeping the parcels in American hands. Greatly disappointed and frustrated, therefore, we concluded we dared not take a vote. For the American community officially to indicate by vote its calloused unconcern for the other internees would merely have aggravated an already unhappy situation.

As we parted morosely that night, I thought to myself, “That certainly settles it. If ordinary men were as rational and good as they like to believe, we would have won that vote by a huge majority—but we didn’t dare even take the vote!”

Several days later, the final decision arrived from Tokyo. It was at once announced to the camp. Every internee was to get one parcel—the one hundred extra parcels,” so the announcement said curtly, “previously assigned to the Americans, are to be sent to other camps.”

The irony of this was not lost on the gleeful camp: the demand by the Americans for seven and one-half parcels had effected in the end the loss to each of them of an extra half parcel! Thus, as Stan and I grimly agreed, even an enemy authority can mediate the divine justice in human affairs. The camp then settled down to enjoy their packages, and much of the bitterness was forgotten in the wonder of so many badly needed and wanted

things.

The whole rather sordid story ended on a note of humor. In the later stages of the controversy, when the great mountain of goods had been gone over, it was discovered that among the piles of clothing and shoes that came along with the parcels were two hundred pairs of boots from the South African Red Cross. This was a needed reminder to many Americans that there were benevolent souls in Red Cross chapters outside the boundaries of the United States. To the delight of almost everyone, the two South Africans in our midst posted the following notice:

DUE TO THE PRECEDENT THAT HAS BEEN SET, THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY IS LAYING CLAIM TO ALL 200 OF THE BOOTS DONATED BY THEIR RED CROSS. WE SHALL WEAR EACH PAIR FOR THREE DAYS TO SIGNAL OUR RIGHT TO WHAT IS OUR OWN PROPERTY, AND THEN SHALL BE GLAD TO LEND SOME OUT WHEN NOT IN USE TO ANY NON-SOUTH AFRICANS WHO REQUEST OUR GENEROUS HELP.

These conflicts—first over space and then over food—made me think a great deal more deeply about men and their life in community, and about the kinds of beings they really were.

Surely I had learned that men are neither so rational nor so moral as they like to think. Their minds and their ideals alike had too often shown themselves to me to be the instruments of their total self. And that self had manifested itself as consistently concerned about its own welfare, and thus hardly free to respect or be just to its neighbor, although it was “free” enough to find rational and moral reasons for what it did!

What then, I asked myself, is the cause of this unhappy situation? Why are we not what we want to be, or pretend even to ourselves to be? Could it be our lower instincts that cause the trouble? Is this, as we often popularly say, “the ape man in us”? Or, to put the same thought in more sophisticated language, is it an inheritance of animal instincts not yet brought under rational control? I was aware that the modern intellectual is apt to conceive of our problems in this way, and to believe that when we learn through scientific inquiry how to deal with these lower instincts, we shall have solved our most important dilemmas.

Our experience had shown me, however, that this depart-mentalizing of ourselves into a set of instincts, on the one hand, and an impartial inquiring and controlling mind, on the other, was far too simple a dualism to explain the actual complexity of human behavior. The selfishness that had shown itself so widely among the internees was by no means merely “instinctual.” Its roots lay in fears concerning the self’s security which only a self-conscious and intelligent being could experience. It would thus be more illuminating to classify the demand for seven and one-half parcels as a “human” rather than an “animal” reaction.

Only the human mind could look far into the future and see that four or five large parcels would run out over several months’ time; then, noting that distant peril, decide that at least seven would be needed for its security. A merely instinctive or animal reaction would have required only a momentary satisfaction. It is above all our frightened human spirits which, when we become fully aware of present and future perils, move quickly to protect themselves against all the contingencies of life.

Man’s mind thus adds dimensions to his instinctive “will to live” that quite change its character. Here the will to live, because now conscious and intelligent, becomes the much more dynamic will to power and will to possess an infinity of goods. Men and animals both want to survive, and in both this might be called “instinctual.” But because he is made up of spirit as well as instinct, mind as well as organic drives, man is much more dangerous to his fellows in his efforts, and much more rapacious in his demands for goods. To call this behavior “instinct” is to minimize the relative innocence of our animal cousins, and to exonerate the spiritual, mental, and conscious elements in our nature which are even more deeply involved.

As I now saw it, therefore, man’s problem is not just a matter of enlightened minds and devoted wills controlling a rebellious instinctive nature. Rather man is to be seen as a totality, a unified being made of body and of instincts, of consciousness and subconscious, of intelligence and will, all in baffling and complex interaction. And it is that total psychological organism, that total existing self in its unity, which determines

whether the “higher” powers of mind and of will are going to be used creatively or destructively.

Thus a man’s moral health or unhealth depends primarily on the fundamental character, direction, and loyalty of his self as a whole; of the “bent,” so to speak, of this deepest level of his being where his spiritual unity is achieved. But sadly enough, it seemed just as plain that this fundamental bent of the total self in all of us was inward, toward our own welfare. And so immersed were we in it that we hardly seemed able to see this in ourselves, much less extricate ourselves from this dilemma.

Having found these truths about human existence enacted before my eyes, I began to recall some of the theological ideas I had almost forgotten in the bustle and activity of camp life. Among the most relevant, it now seemed, was the old idea of original sin.

When its relevancy was so striking in this new context, it seemed ironic that of all the ideas linked with Christian belief, this one should probably strike the average man as the most dubious. Of course, much of its traditional form now seems to us outdated. In all probability there was no such single pair of progenitors as the man Adam and his wife Eve; in any event, this is a matter for the biological and anthropological sciences to determine. Few of us wish to or can believe that their one act of disobedience brought about a fall for the whole race continued in us by inheritance. Blaming our troubles on an inheritance from Adam is as futile and evasive as blaming them on our evolutionary animal predecessors!

Yet, when one looks at the actual social behavior of people, this theological notion of a common, pervasive warping of our wills away from the good we wish to achieve is more descriptive of our actual experience of ourselves than is any other assessment of our situation. What the doctrine of sin has said about man’s present state seemed to fit the facts as I found them.

Certainly in camp everyone alike was involved in the problem; none was entirely righteous. “Good” people and “bad” people found it incredibly difficult, not to say impossible, to will the good; that is, to be objective in a situation of tension, and to be generous and fair to their neighbors. In all of us, moreover, some power

within seemed to drive us to promote our own interests against those of our neighbors. We were not our “true selves,” the selves we wanted to be or liked to think we were. We were caught willingly and yet unwillingly in a self-love from which we could not seem to achieve our own release, for what was wrong was our will itself. Whenever we willed something, it was our own distorted will that did the willing, so that we could not will the good. Though quite free to will whatever we wanted to do in a given situation, we were not free to will to love others, because the will did not really want to. We were literally bound in our own sin.

This was, I knew, the way Christian thought had long viewed man’s predicament. It was also precisely what the facts of my experience seemed to substantiate.

When I saw this congruence between the Christian description and our actual experience of ourselves, I realized that it was just this situation which the idea of original sin had always sought to make partially clear. The reality to which the symbols of the “Fall” and of “Original Sin” point is not really the particular and dubious act of Adam. Rather it is this fundamental self-concern of the total self which, so to speak, lies below our particular thoughts and acts, molds them, directs them, and then betrays us into the actual misdeeds we all witness in our common life. The particular past act of Adam and Eve in the garden, and the Augustinian notion of an inherited corruption, were explanations or theories used by Christian thinkers to explain how this undeniable reality in human existence came about, how we got into the difficulty we are so clearly in.

And, as I ruefully concluded, the problem pointed to and described by these symbols is still very much evident in our ordinary experience, whatever modern knowledge may have done to the saga of Adam and his mistake.

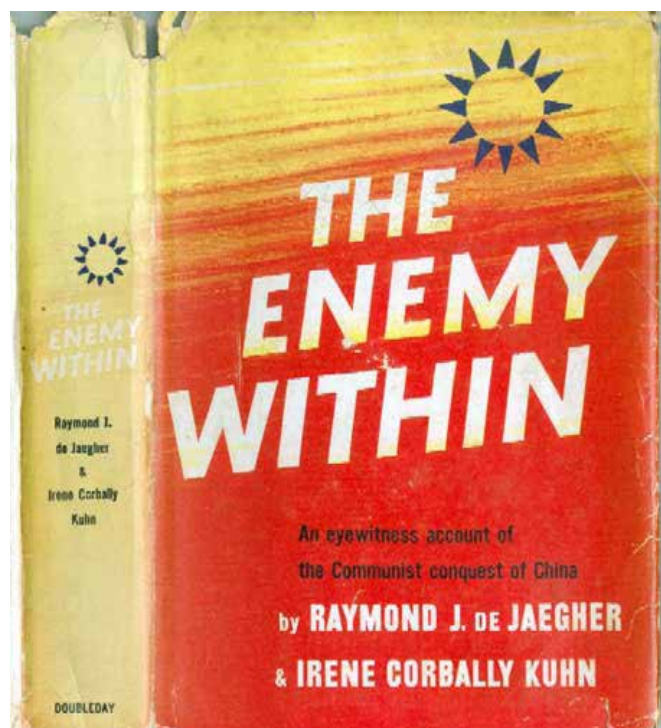
[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm

COMMUNICATING BEYOND THE WALLS

by Raymond deJaegher ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher(WEB).pdf)



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.

Chapter XVIII [excerpts]

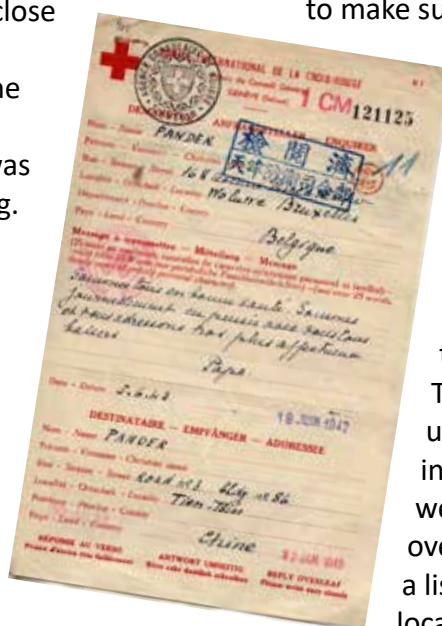
[...]

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

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 weighed 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 suspicions 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 suspicions 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 suspicions, 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, flung 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.

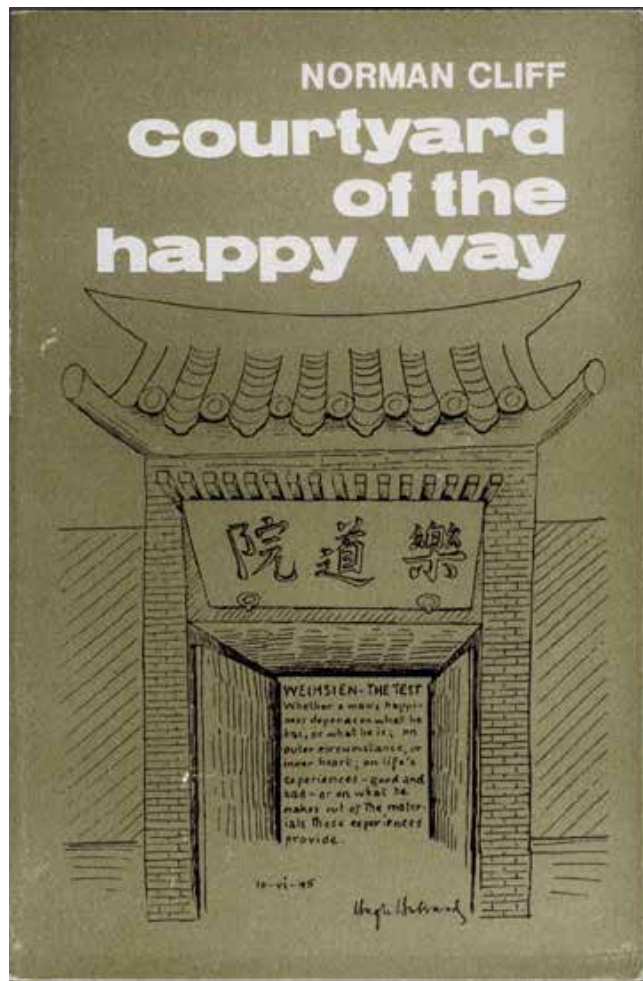
Tipton and I agreed to work together about this time to establish sources outside and try to arrange for the two of us to get away. Little by little we accumulated maps, information about the country, location of enemy forces, Communist forces, all that. We also learned to our great joy that there were 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.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher(WEB).pdf)

by Norman Cliff ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)



[excerpts] ...

[...]

One day I was on one of my routine visits to the guards when, just at the gate, I saw a Chinese postman furtively dropping some mail in the watchman's house. The watchman beckoned to me. They were Chinese-style envelopes with printed red lines surrounding the names and addresses of the addressees. I looked carefully at the Chinese characters—they were letters addressed to various members of the staff. I delivered them excitedly to Mr. Welch. Inside were letters in Chinese written on thin rice paper. We identified the names of the children for whom they were intended. I helped to translate them. Boys took them excitedly to the other members

of their families at the Girls and Prep. Schools.

Replies written in Chinese and placed in Chinese envelopes were promptly posted back to parents in inland unoccupied China. We had outwitted the Japanese, for how could they identify as enemy correspondence letters written in Chinese to parents, using their Chinese names?

Soon the postman was coming once a week with small batches of letters. I would collect the mail, identify the names and distribute the letters.

Mail was now going back and forth at fairly regular intervals.

We then tried writing in English and posting the letters inside Chinese envelopes. If this were successful, correspondence with our parents would be so much simpler.

And successful it was.

The batch of mail brought by the sympathetic Chinese postman was getting larger and larger. I never heard of any instance when mail of this kind was intercepted.

Through this same route came our Oxford School Leaving Certificate examination results.

They had gone from Oxford to our Mission headquarters in Chungking, Free China, and then to us at Weih sien in a Chinese-style envelope. The results were outstanding. The "best school East of Suez" was certainly maintaining its good reputation for academic successes.



[excerpts]

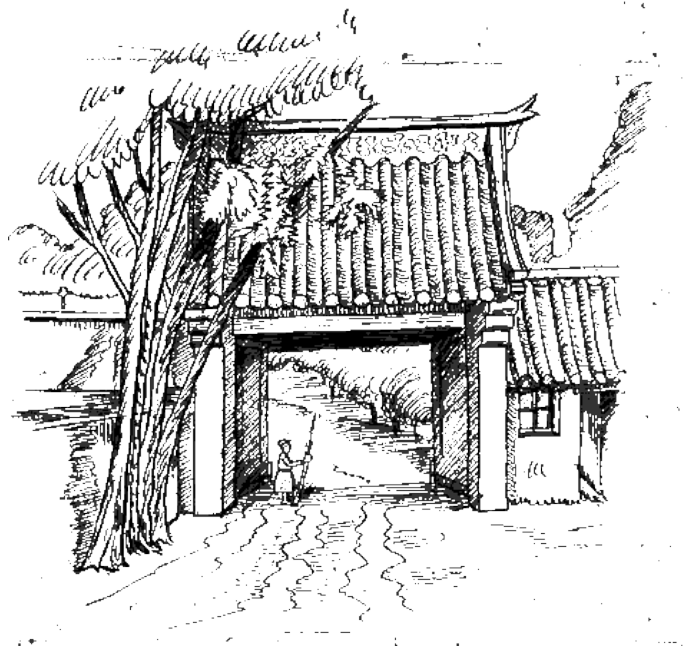
A German Jewish dentist was allowed to come at regular intervals to attend to our teeth in a room close to where the Japanese guards lived. While extracting teeth, inserting fillings and so on, he spoke in French and German, passing on the news he had heard over the radio at his home.

It was just at this time that Mr. Egger of the Swiss Red Cross made his first appearance with Red Cross letters and messages from the Mission leaders, as well as news of the other camps in Hong Kong and Shanghai. As he was based at Tsingtao, we were to see him at regular intervals throughout our internment period.

[excerpts]

CHRISTMAS 1944 was now upon us. News from parents had for most families become sparse and spasmodic.

Periodically during 1944 we had been given Red Cross letter forms to complete. With the issuing of these was a long list of prohibited



matter, the weather, camp activities, food and so on. The Japanese during the years following Pearl Harbor had become wise to the deeper meanings behind such messages as "Awaiting Uncle Sam's arrival", "John Bull urgently needed", "All is well. Tell it to the marines."

The maximum length of the communication was twenty-five words, and the contents had to be straightforward with no double meanings.

As we sat in front of those official forms struggling to decide what we could write without infringing any of the regulations framed about their wording, many of us decided that the only thing that mattered was that our parents should receive a piece of paper on which was our handwriting; the contents were immaterial. Just to receive that form meant that we were alive, however little it gave of personal news, so we took every opportunity to complete them. Later we were to learn that the Japanese censorship in the guardroom could not keep pace with hundreds of internees writing letters, and therefore proportionately few reached their destinations.

[further reading] ...

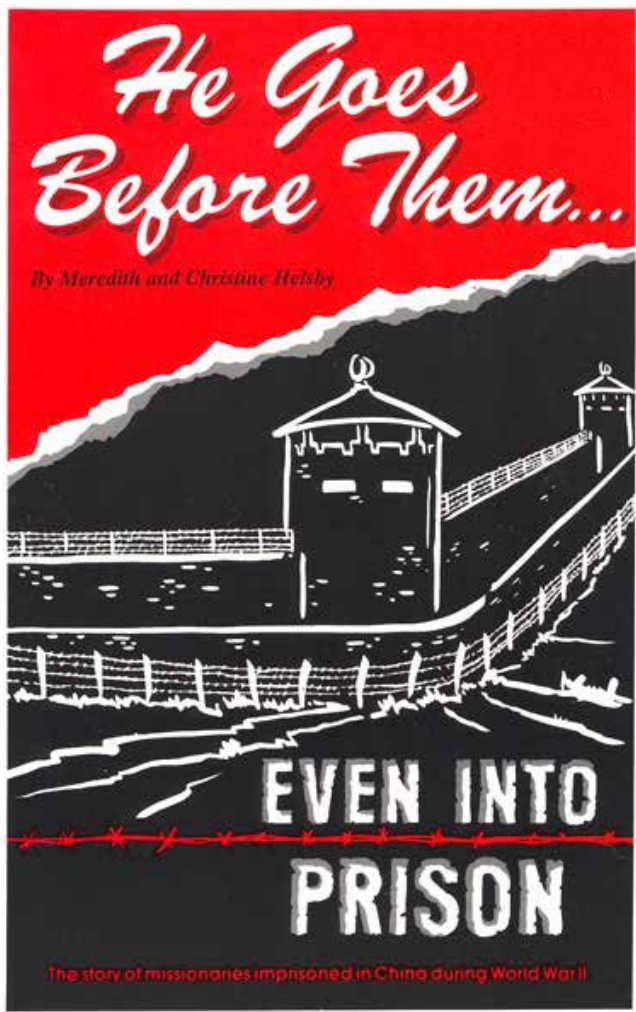
[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

and

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/escape/Letters/escapeLetters.htm>

by Meredith & Cristine Helsby ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)



[excerpts] ...

[...]

During our years in camp, news from the outside world came to us principally from three sources. The first was the Peking Chronicle, an English-language newspaper which old subscribers among the internees continued to receive. Under the Japanese puppet regime, this paper was strictly a propaganda vehicle with regular “news” of the U.S. fleet being dispatched to the bottom of the Pacific.

It did, however, serve one invaluable purpose. The progress of Allied Forces could easily be charted by noting names of Pacific Islands in which the Imperial Forces had enjoyed their most recent “triumph” The successive mention of the Marshall Islands, Manila, Iwo Jima and Okinawa told us

of our troops’ approach to Japan. And when the Chronicle reported “Thousands of Allied bombers being shot down over Japan,” we felt certain that the end of the war was near.

A more reliable source of news was a fellow internee, a White Russian, who was a skilled radio technician and called upon to keep radios of Japanese officers in repair. After fixing the radios, he of course “tested” them and in the process was able to glean regular war news from Allied shortwave broadcasts.

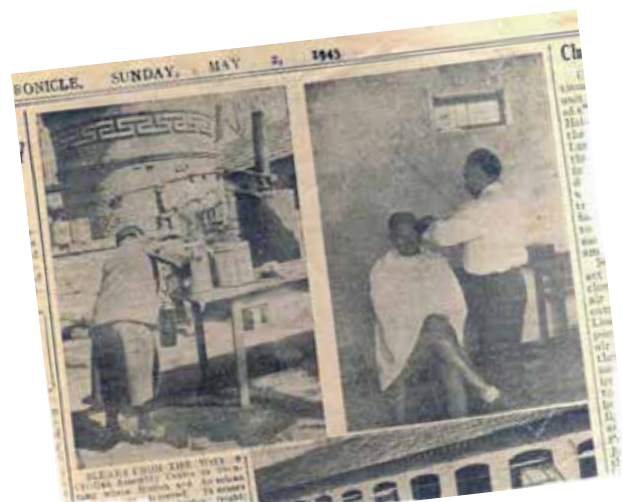
The third source of information was the coolies who almost daily entered the compound to haul away garbage and empty the reeking cesspools.

These gentlemen, for obvious reasons, were given a wide berth by our guards. Significant news from Chinese guerilla bands in the area was carried into camp by these couriers, in their nostrils, mouths or concealed in the loathsome night soil kangs (drums).

As internees brought garbage to the coolies at the bins located in each housing area, small wads of paper bearing the precious inscriptions were surreptitiously transferred. Letters were also smuggled out of camp in airtight metal containers dropped into a barrel of fresh sewage! #

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)



by Howard S. Galt – 1943 ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-03to09-TheInternementCampAtWeiHsien.pdf>

THE INTERNMENT CAMP AT WEIHSIEN,
SHANTUNG PROVINCE, CHINA
March – September, 1943

An objective descriptive account of the Internment Camp from
the point of view of the writer's experiences. It is thought to
contain no statement of political or international significance.



Howard S. Galt, 1943

[excerpts] ...

[...]

Communications

The communications facilities of the camp with the outside world were strictly controlled and very limited.

Newspapers, especially the Peking Chronicle, were admitted, though quite irregularly and not in continuous series. There was a camp post office, which censored and much delayed incoming letters.

Packages from outside friends in Peking, Tientsin, and Tsingtao mostly containing food (after reports of the limited camp fare had gone out) began to arrive in large quantities and after some delay was delivered upon the payment of small fees.

Outgoing letters or postcards were limited as to frequency of posting, content, and form of hand-writing.

Post cards were usually limited to 50 words, and letters to 150 words. In both cases, block letters or type writing were required.

In such circumstances there were some arrangements for secret communications "over the wall," but these were very limited. In a community thus circumstanced rumours were rife, much

discussed and quickly disseminated.

They were concerned with all topics of interest, both serious and comic. Rumours in serious subjects were usually not taken seriously, but they offered interesting topics of conversation while we were so isolated from happenings in the outside world.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-03to09-TheInternementCampAtWeiHsien.pdf>

N.D.L.R.

Léopold Pander:

The majority of the books about Weihsien, written after our imprisonment (a certain time after WWII), hardly mention the communication techniques used by the camp "Committee" — especially after Tipton & Hummel's escape.

Even Langdon Gilkey doesn't mention the cess pool mailbox in his book considered to be a very complete description of our life in Weihsien.

He describes himself as very connected to the important individuals of the "Committee" but misinformed as to the numerous letters flowing in and out of the camp — all, unnoticed by the Japanese and apparently, the other prisoners. Not once — in his book — does he mention the alias for Father Raymond deJaegher as he did for many other individuals. The best I could find as to a possible description of Raymond deJaegher was — on page 204: "... **a discreet Missionary**" and on page 175: "**the Jesuit**".

#

WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY

by Howard S. Galt – 1943 ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-03to09-TheInternementCampAtWeiHsien.pdf>

[excerpts] ...

[...]

After the camp residents had all arrived, and provisions had been made for living quarters and eating arrangements, it was time for the permanent organization of camp life and activities. We had been informed in advance that the camp must be self-operating as far as labor was concerned – that no servants or workmen would be supplied to us, and that the work must thereafter all be done by ourselves. But organization included much besides labor activities. Recreational, cultural, educational, musical, religious, and other activities and interests were all promoted and regulated by the general organization.

[excerpts] ...

The Employment Committee

In charge of the permanent and periodic assignment of work jobs.

The scope and importance of this committee's functions will be readily understood.

Its decisions and appointments affected the daily work of more than 1,000 people - all of the adults and many of the older children. Of course there was much labor connected with the commissariats of all three kitchen groups.

Accordingly there were three subcommittees to take charge of these divisional assignments.

Taking the Peking (Kitchen 3) group as an example: The committee instituted an inquiry of all concerned to discuss the qualifications, aptitudes, skills, and preferences with respect to the great variety of tasks to be done. In the assignments special skills, aptitudes and choices



were considered as far as possible.

Some skills and aptitudes – for example those of amateur carpenters – suggested permanent assignments to jobs.

In types of work perhaps not requiring much skill, or which were particularly hard and unpleasant, frequent rotation was most satisfactory.

The week was chosen as the unit of time and so it came about that there was posted a weekly bulletin giving a complete list of assignments to tasks for the following week. These weekly lists probably contained the names of at least 100 people.

Of kitchen and dining room activities more will be written below. Besides the work in the three kitchen groups there were general tasks by which the whole camp was served.

There was the central bakery, which operated more than half of the 24 hours of each day, thus requiring several shifts of workers.

There were the **pumps** which supplied water to the reservoir tanks, and which had to be manned steadily all day long.

There were the **furnaces** and **boilers** for the supply of hot water for the bath showers and for washing purposes, and distilled water for drinking. These required men with engineering experience.

There were the sanitary installations to be cared for – work the more necessary and the more unpleasant because of the defects of the plumbing system.

There were jobs for carpenters, blacksmiths, plumbers, metal workers, masons, and electricians. To these jobs there were usually permanent assignments as mentioned above.

[excerpts]

Committee on Engineering and Repairs

This committee was under the direction of a trained engineer.

In cooperation with the employment committee there were organized squads of masons, electricians, plumbers, metal-workers and carpenters. Some of the work of these specialists consisted of repairs, but much of it was of the nature of remodeling or rebuilding to remedy deficiencies in the original preparation of the camp. Some of the men among these skilled workers were men of special training in these vocations, but most of them were men whose avocations had attracted them into these fields and whose skills were those of amateurs.

In the fields of women's work there was some unofficial but very effective organization.

A few sewing machines were available and so a center for sewing and repair of clothing was established.

Repairs of course implied chiefly hard work, and this was distributed among a large number of women to be done in their homes.

As to laundry work, most people did their own, often in the midst of great difficulties and limitations. Washing was of course a necessity but many came to the conclusion that ironing was an unnecessary (or unobtainable) luxury. In the laundry work many women helped their men friends in voluntary and informal ways.

However, a group of Catholic Sisters, taking advantage of facilities in the Hospital basement, organized a semi-public laundry, and eventually arrangements were made by them with skilled Chinese in a village outside to do laundry work on a commercial basis.

One enterprising woman widely known and experienced in the management of a shop in

Peking, took the initiative in establishing camp exchange (known as the "**White Elephant Exchange**") where, besides some buying and selling, people could exchange their own useless things for things useless to other people – a process of transformation which rendered all things useful.

This institution was not fully organized for several months, but when it was installed in its own quarters and clearly advertised, it rendered much service to the community.

Other aspects of women's work will be described below in connection with kitchen and dining room service.

There were three other forms of community service not mentioned in what we have reported about organization and employment.

A barber shop was manifestly a great need and, when two men with the necessary skills were found, a room was provided and the shop opened.

Shoe repairing was a second need soon widely felt, since the foot wear was deteriorating with the heavy work and a shoe-repair shop was opened.

A third need was watch repairing. Several decades earlier the Catholics gained the reputation of introducing the arts of watch and clock repairing into China, so it was not surprising to find among our Catholic Fathers a man with skill in this art – whereupon a shop for his services was duly opened.

Thus, sooner or later, as almost all the practical needs of a community of 2,000 people became evident, ways of supplying these needs were found and adopted, so it might almost be said that our camp was a self-contained community.

[further reading],

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-03to09-TheInternementCampAtWeiHsien.pdf>



about pumping and stoking ...

Those few words on 'stoking'. Now, upon reflecting on the subject, I feel something should also be said about, 'what came before', as a lead up. Maybe it's a bit too dramatic but I see it as (...)

A Human Metamorphosis.

(How it changed us and how we coped)

Our comfortable life style, as foreigners living in China in the early 40's, was rudely interrupted when as enemy nationals of the occupying Japanese, we were 'bundled off', somewhere, to internment and an uncertain future.

As a thirteen and a half year old, I was less concerned of the consequences than my mother and had less trouble adjusting to this new way of life. It was a bit like a new adventure for me!

We soon found ourselves, men, women and

children of all ages, in confinement, in a relatively small enclosed compound, which I later learnt, was called, 'Weihsien'.

After almost 60 years, I am a bit vague on most of the precise details but feel we must have arrived at the camp in mid afternoon, to be inducted as 'inmates', counted and given a number, and then we must have been allocated a 'place' to bunk down. That place, I was soon to realize was one small 12 x 9 foot (less than 4x3 metres) room in a row of 10.

After everything entailed in 'moving in', we were given the glad tidings that there was a 'meal' waiting for us, in 'our' dining hall/kitchen. (The last arriving Peking group, in '43 had 'Kitchen 3'.)

That meal, was 'Octopus soup' which I couldn't stomach and went hungry for the first time that night.

That meal, I was later to realize, had been prepared by earlier Peking arrivals, no doubt, Americans.

(The British group followed the American group into Weihsien.)

Work for yourselves! This was to be the basis of our existence in internment.

There would be no one to 'wait on us' anymore, while we were here! There would be no more 'servants' to wash, clean and cook for us, here! The Japanese certainly weren't going to do anything for us!

We had do everything for ourselves! And that is quite a story on it's own, which is well documented in Langdon Gilkey's book, "Shandong Compound", which covered all the 'trials and tribulations' of how that labour (the business of every able person doing their bit towards the up keep of the community on the whole.) was organised.

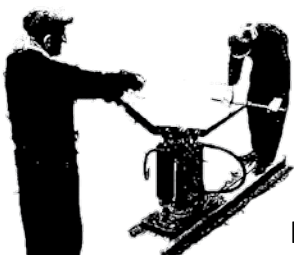
But this is my little story on how it was for the most 'junior' of that labour force.

Essentially, we had to stay alive! So feeding

ourselves while maintaining a degree of hygiene came first.

The common factor, needed for both, was water ! And it's only source to the camp was by pumping it out of the ground, from about 5 or 6 wells, scattered around the internees section of the compound.

The wells were positioned adjacent to the kitchens, bakery, hospital and the shower blocks. With the pumping set up being that a constant flow of water had to be forced into tanks, perched atop 10 metre towers, adjacent to these dilapidated, old classic suction type, manually operated pumps, situated on a platform positioned directly over the well.



The limited number of able bodied men, who were willing to 'do their share', carried the bulk of the heavy work load. Which was mainly in the bakery and kitchens

on regular shifts, involving designated days on and off, through each week, with insufficient hands left over to man the pumps, which many internees didn't realize, had to be kept operating, almost around the clock, for the duration of our interment. I often wondered, how would we have fared, had the wells dried up?

So, the job of pumping water for all our needs, fell upon the strength and stamina of the younger 'men', down to the 14 age group. Many in our present "Topica" chat group were, (sadly?) too young to be drafted into this under age labour experience, but a couple of us, are still around, to give the story the light of day and help make you aware of what you missed.

Naturally, a 'tricky roster' needed to be drawn up to cope with the confusing issue of 'who' was 'on' and 'where'! (Remember there were half a dozen pumping stations operating at the same time.) And there had to be a constant 'stream' of 'boy power', coming and going, to and from shifts.

These shifts varied in duration from 30 minutes to 2 hours, dependant on ones age.

To begin with, I was started on one 30 minute

shift, per day. And if you are wondering what it feels like, standing over a pump, working the arms while bending the back, up and down, constantly for up to 500 times in each 1/2 an hour shift ? I suggest you try it. It's 'bloody' back breaking work.

In 'no time' at all, it was turned into a 'one hour shift, and the fun was fast fading, even though you could usually rely on a few minutes of jovial company, from your on coming reliever.

It was always considered 'a no, no' to expect anyone to keep pumping till you arrived!

With the passing of a few more months, the powers to be got even 'tougher' and the 'penalty' now, was 2 shifts (one am and one pm) per day. Now it was pure monotonous drudgery! No other word for it.

You became more obsessed watching the people coming for a shower, knowing they would be the cause of your hard earned gains, on the water gauge, being eroded. Inevitably you had to work harder too, as a log book had been introduced to discourage the 'poor performers'.

Then, some time in my sixteenth year, the word came down that 2 x 2 hour shifts were to be my lot.

Enough is enough!

I'm pleased to be able to say though, I did give it a try before handing in my resignation, with the proviso that I wanted the "stoking job" at the hospital! Thankfully, I got it almost immediately.

So, off I went to join 2 other 'young fellas', Nick Orr and Alioshka Marinellis(the Greek lad who was killed in the fall from that tree on 'Main Road') as happy hospital stokers.

Now, this was a whole new ball game!

Maybe, it wasn't so much as the caterpillar turning into a butterfly, trick.... but... more like the simple satisfaction that I had managed to 'wangle' the change to a boy taking on 'mans' job.

I was now issued with a pair of overalls, shown over that corner of the hospital where the 'diet kitchen was situated and keys to the coal yard was

kept. 2 large cooking vats appeared to be our main concern, under which we were expected to keep the fires burning, in spite of the poor draught and coal quality.

The routine in this job, for one thing, was vastly different to 'pumping'.

Two men were allocated to each shift, which was 12 hours long, beginning at 4 am. But we used to split the shift in half, (making it an easier 6 hour day,) with the one doing the morning shift having the added job of drying the kindling for the next mornings re-firing up. Then alternating the shift arrangements.

The early man also had the 'eerie' walk, across a slumbering camp, never quite sure if someone (or even a Jap guard) or something was going to jump out from behind a tree and scare the daylights out of him.

The dead of night is not a completely silent place either, some insects and animals, even in camp, were nocturnal and often on the move. Besides, when walking past the rooms of the sleeping internees, it was surprising how noisy some of us are, even in complete repose.

Waking at 3:30 am was always a problem in my teens, and often wondered how much sleep my dear mother must have missed out on in watching the clock for me?

At the time, this job with the early hours was well worth the effort, as it came with a most envied 'perk'. The hospital staff, while on duty, had their (hospital) meals, there. Need I stress what a plus that was?

Breakfast was lighter than lunch, of course, but the tradition was, we got a slice of toast smothered with 'delicious' dripping around about 10 am, to keep us 'going'.

I can't imagine myself swallowing anything like that, today!

The rest of the working conditions weren't bad at all, even the feeding of the small furnace fires from the cramped confines of the 'stoking hole' was okay and in my opinion, I thought shovelling a few spades of coal and ash was a lot easier than the back breaking 'pumping' action any day.

I also realize now it was the 'boys' manning the pumps who should have been given extra rations to keep them going for their 'punishing' weekly hour tally, especially when it got up to the 4 hour a day mark.

Nufsed!

I've had quite enough to say.

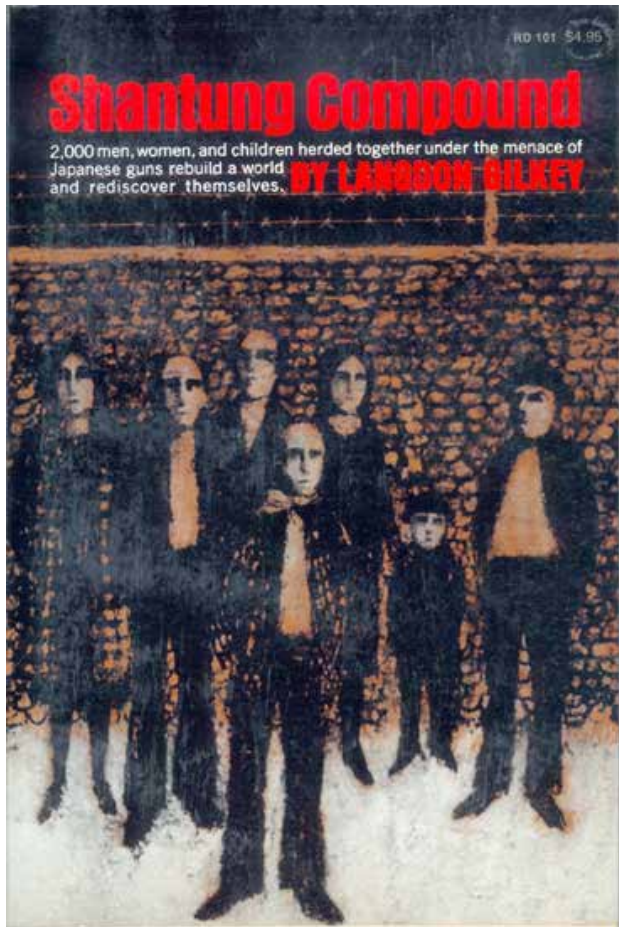
I realize you only asked me only for the short tale on 'stoking' from Janette's email, but in my opinion, it was the frustrations from the pumping job that drove me, to more or less, demand a change to stoking, and I wanted to make that understood.

Besides, it was the story about the job the boys in camp did, that all of us benefited from, which deserved telling, if you know what I mean. I remember walking in the wintery, early morning darkness for my shift at the bakery pumping station, but I can't remember how we unfroze the pumps though. (The water coming up the pipes from down below would not have been frozen, of course.)

#

by Langdon Gilkey ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)



[excerpt] ...

Then we came to a large hand pump under a small water tower. There we saw a husky, grinning British engineer, stripped to the waist even though the dusk was cold, furiously pumping water into the tower. As I watched him making his long, steady strokes, I suddenly realized what his presence at that pump meant. We ourselves would have to do all the work in this camp; our muscles and hands would have to lift water from wells, carry supplies in from the gates. We would have to cook the food and stoke the fires—here were neither servants nor machinery, no running water, no central heating. Before we passed on into the men's room, the British pumper, whose back was rising and falling rhythmically, fixed us as best he could in that situation with a cheerful

and yet hostile eye, and reminded us with as much authority as his gasps would allow, "Every chap will be taking his full share of work here, chaps, you know!"

As we entered the door of the men's room, the stench that assailed our Western nostrils almost drove us back into the fresh March air. To our surprise, we found brand-new fixtures inside: Oriental-style toilets with porcelain bowls sunk in the floor over which we uncomfortably had to squat. Above them on the wall hung porcelain flushing boxes with long, metal pull-chains, but—the pipes from the water tower outside led only into the men's showers; not one was connected with the toilets. Those fancy pipes above us led nowhere. The toilet bowls were already filled to overflowing—with no servants, no plumbers, and very little running water anywhere in camp, it was hard to see how they would ever be unstopped.

We stayed there just long enough to do our small business—all the while grateful we had not eaten the last thirty-four hours—and to wash our hands and faces in the ice-cold water that dribbled out of the faucets.

[...]

[excerpt] ...

With so many people living in such unsanitary conditions and eating dubious food at best, we expected a disaster in public health any day. The greatest need was for a working hospital. The doctors and the nurses among us grasped this at once, and so began the tremendous job of organizing a hospital more or less from scratch. Perhaps because the mission hospital building had contained the most valuable equipment, it was in a worse state than any of the others.

The boilers, beds, and pipes had been ripped from their places and thrown about everywhere. The operating table and the dental chair were finally found at the bottom of a heap at the side of the building. None of the other machinery or surgical equipment was left intact. Under these conditions, considering that there was as yet no

organization of labor in the camp, it is astounding that these medics and their volunteers were able to do what they did. Inside of eight days they had the hospital cleaned up and functioning so as to feed and care for patients. In two more days they had achieved a working laboratory. At the end of ten days they were operating with success, and even delivering babies. This was, however, not quite quick enough to save a life. Four days after the last group arrived, a member of the jazz band from Tientsin had an acute attack of appendicitis.

Since the hospital was not yet ready for an operation, he was sent to Tsingtao six hours away by train, but unfortunately he died on the way.

Another serious matter was the simple problem of going to the toilet. For a population of about two thousand, there was at first only one latrine for women and three for men—the Japanese had expected a great preponderance of men over women. In each of these latrines there were only five or six toilets, none of them flush toilets.

Needless to say, the queues for this unavoidable aspect of life were endless. When the poor internee finally reached his goal after a long and nervous wait in line, he found the toilet so overflowing that often he felt sick and to his despair had to leave unrequited. I recall clearly my relief that a providential case of constipation during the first ten days of camp saved me from having to test the strength of my bowels.

The sole contact the average urban Western man has with human excrement consists of a curious look at what he has produced, a swirl of water, and a refreshing bar of soap. Consequently the thought of wading into a pool of his fellow man's excrement in order to clean up a public john not equipped with flush toilets is literally inconceivable. And so the situation grew progressively worse. It would have continued so had not some Catholic priests and nuns, aided by a few of the Protestant missionaries, tied cloths around their faces, borrowed boots and mops, and tackled this horrendous job.

This doughty crew stayed with it until some of the camp engineers, taking hold in a professional way, freed us all from this daily horror. After huddling long hours over this emergency—unrehearsed at M.I.T. or the Royal College for

Engineers—they devised a means of hand-flushing the toilets after each use with a half bucket of water.

But of all the basic needs of life whose resolution had to be organized, the most vital and difficult was the problem of eating. The camp had to keep right on feeding itself while it was learning to do so. In the area of health and sanitation we had trained personnel in the camp, but practically none of our two thousand people knew much about quantity cooking in cauldrons for six or seven hundred, or baking in coal ovens for two thousand. Legend has it that a restaurant owner from Tsingtao taught the raw volunteers in their kitchen how to make soups and stews, and that in our Peking group's kitchen, an ex-marine cook introduced our workers to the finer mysteries of the culinary art. Our food those first two weeks certainly substantiated the latter story!

Meanwhile, the bakery was also struggling to get underway. For the first week we were provided with bread baked in Tsingtao. Since this supply was to stop on a set date, our own bakery operation had to be organized in a hurry, for bread was the only solid food in our life. Our population, luckily, happened to include two aged Persian bakeshop owners from Tientsin. These men spent forty-eight hours straight training two shifts of green recruits to mix, knead, and bake the four hundred daily loaves necessary to feed everyone. Within another week, these amateur bakers had mastered the essentials of their craft. Thereafter, while the good yeast lasted, our camp bakery turned out what we all proudly assumed to be the best bread in China.

Thus it was with all the labor in the camp during those first days. Jobs which had to be done were at first taken in hand by experienced people who alone knew how to handle them, and therefore alone saw the real need.

Later, when work was organized and every able person was assigned a task, inexperienced people were trained in the new crafts. Thus bank clerks, professors, salesmen, missionaries, importers, and executives became bakers, stokers, cooks, carpenters, masons, and hospital orderlies.

There was also a great deal of heavy unskilled work such as lugging supplies from the gates to the utilities and cleaning up the compound. Work of

this sort, while largely voluntary at first, was soon organized so that in a short while everyone had a set job with a routine and regular hours. With such a thoroughgoing organizational plan, the most vital material needs of these two thousand people soon began to be met. The first rude form of our camp's civilization started to appear.

For about the first six months, this sudden dive into the world of manual labor was for the majority of us perhaps the most valuable experience. All manual labor in China, skilled and unskilled, was done by Chinese. Therefore the foreign population in that land included no "working force." The majority of internees were either men accustomed to executive work in offices or women used to the help of innumerable Chinese servants around the house. To be forced to do hard physical labor, often outdoors, was a new experience. We all discovered what it was like to be worn out from work with our muscles and to return black and grimy, our clothing ripped and torn, from a day of hard labor.

In many ways, of course, this regime was good for all concerned, especially for those—and they were many—who had spent the last decade imbibing too many highballs on the club porch. Men with too much fat and sagging jowls soon found themselves lean again, tanned and hardened. At the other end of the scale, a derelict such as Briggs the junkie, lost his green color, put on weight and muscle, and looked a fine figure when he left camp in the repatriation of some Americans in August, 1943.

Suddenly we had all become equally workers of the world, and although many of us were not apt to admit it then, most of us enjoyed it. As a Peking student, now a prominent professor of Chinese studies at Yale, said to me, "At least from now on I won't have to wince every time I carry my suitcases in the station!"

[...]

[excerpts] ...

Since no one could buy new clothes, since everyone had to do his own laundry, and do it with little water and less soap—how I hated that chore—after a few months every tweed looked threadbare, every shirt was equally tattered and dirty. All trousers looked alike, unpressed and

baggy. There were some men with girl friends who laundered their shirts and hand-pressed their army shorts. These had an edge over the rest — but such romantic aids knew neither class lines nor old school ties. Everyone was entitled to the same basic rations and the same amount of living space. And above all, everyone was required to do the same sort of work, according to his physical abilities. If a British banker and a Eurasian waiter were weak and sickly, both washed vegetables or were cutters of bread. If an American professor and a cockney were sturdy and able, both had to bake or stoke.

In such a situation, the more basic human virtues suddenly claimed their rightful place. A man's excellence was revealed by his willingness to work, his skill at his job, his fundamental cheerfulness. On a kitchen shift or kneading dough in the bakery, any sane man would rather have next to him an efficient hard worker who could laugh and be warmly tolerant of his fellows, than to have there the most wealthy and sophisticated slacker or grumbler.

After working or living beside a man for months, who cared — or even remembered — whether he was Belgian, British, or Parsee? Thus in a very short time people became to us personalities, pleasant or unpleasant, hard working or lazy, rather than the British, Eurasians, or Americans that they were when we first met them. The three hardest-working and most valuable men in our kitchen were two ex-British seamen—one from a Yorkshire farm and the other a cockney—and an American tobacco-leaf expert raised on a North Carolina farm and, as he used to say of himself, "barely able to read the funnies." Correspondingly, the laziest man on my cooking shift was an executive from a shipping company with "fine blood" and a privileged education. Bored with everything about his life in camp, he was neither cooperative nor charming and so of little use to anyone.

Perhaps the greatest value of this experience, as of almost all war experiences, was that we worked our way through the false barriers of the world at large to reach our common humanity. In time, we were able to see our neighbors for what they were rather than for what they had.

At this point, then, we were an uncoordinated mass of humanity. We had to tackle together certain basic problems if we were merely to survive.

[...]

[excerpts] ...

Since no one could buy new clothes, since everyone had to do his own laundry, and do it with little water and less soap—how I hated that chore—after a few months every tweed looked threadbare, every shirt was equally tattered and dirty. All trousers looked alike, unpressed and baggy. There were some men with girl friends who laundered their shirts and hand-pressed their army shorts. These had an edge over the rest—but such romantic aids knew neither class lines nor old school ties. Everyone was entitled to the same basic rations and the same amount of living space. And above all, everyone was required to do the same sort of work, according to his physical abilities. If a British banker and a Eurasian waiter were weak and sickly, both washed vegetables or were cutters of bread. If an American professor and a cockney were sturdy and able, both had to bake or stoke.

[...]

[excerpts] ...

The other interest, besides our personal relationships, that fills our human days whether we be in a city, on a farm, or in a camp, is work. Work and life have a strange reciprocal relationship: only if man works can he live, but only if the work he does seems productive and meaningful can he bear the life that his work makes possible. The work in the camp was, then, central to each of us. All of this coordinated activity kept us alive by providing the services and goods necessary for our existence. And however dull it seemed, it gave a focus of interest and energy to a life that otherwise by its confinement and great limitations would have been overwhelmed by boredom. Perhaps the best way to describe what our work was like is to tell my own experience of it.

After six months spent in the wearing and bruising conflicts of the Quarters Committee, both Shields and I felt that we and the camp needed

a change, and so in September, 1943, I chose to do manual rather than office work. For a time I was the assistant to the camp mason. He was an American technician from Tientsin—tough, cool, and capable. Masoning was good for the muscles, but in the end I found mixing mortar for this good man boring, and so I applied for a job in the kitchen.

Kitchen III, the one serving the Peking group, was the ideal place to be introduced to camp cooking. This had been the liveliest of the three kitchens. Serving only three hundred people, this kitchen was small enough for its cooks to be teams of women. They were able, for example, to make and fry small hamburgers, a process that was then inconceivable in a kitchen serving eight hundred.

Above all, filled as it was by the educational and missionary personnel who had been centered in Peking, this community had a cooperative spirit which was unmatched elsewhere. The cooking teams were thus able to call on ten or fifteen more women to help them when there was extra work to do, and so to pioneer in experimental ways with our strange Chinese equipment. When the American evacuation of August, 1943, took place, however, and most of the Catholic fathers went as well, this community's food standards dropped noticeably, and a British pall seemed to settle over our menus.

It was at this point that I became an assistant cook, hardly knowing then how to boil an egg. My boss was a gay and talented bachelor named Edwin Parker. With graying hair and a round face, he had been a curio and art dealer from Peking. Edwin knew how to cook, but he hated to boss anybody or to organize his meals too carefully.

As a result, our life was filled with confusion and laughter, but also with frequent culinary triumphs. My job was to keep the pans and cauldrons clean, to cut up meat, stir soups and stews, fry leeks, and braise meat—in other words, all the routine chores, while Edwin, as chef, planned, directed, and seasoned the menu.

Since we both wanted to live on as good food as possible, we worked hard. Although we were not the best of the three cooking teams in our kitchen (each one worked every third day), ours came to have a growing favorable reputation

among our ordinarily disgruntled diners. As the first winter closed in, I liked to come to work before dawn, to watch our stoker (an insurance man from Peking) coax the fires into life under the cauldrons, to start cooking the cereal in the large guo (caldrone), and to fry people's black-market eggs on our improvised hot plate. Then, after spending the rest of the day preparing lunch and supper, I would return in the dark to the hospital and an evening with Alice, tired but full of the satisfaction of one who has worked with his muscles all day.

It was, therefore, a severe blow when word came from the Japanese that on January first (1944) we would have to move out of Kitchen III into one of the other two large kitchens. Each of these was filled with what seemed to us to be immense crowds of unfamiliar people, and from all reports, enjoyed a notoriously bad spirit and worse food. But since the Japanese insisted—they intended to house the newly arriving Italians in that section of the camp—we had no choice but to leave Kitchen III.

As luck would have it, my first day of duty in the new place, Kitchen I, came on New Year's morning. I had never been inside the place—so much vaster than our intimate kitchen with two small guos and a team made up of only two cooks—and so I hardly knew my way around its vast interior. What made matters worse was that the night before there had been a very gay dance in the Tientsin kitchen (Kitchen II) to which Alice and I had gone and, reasonably enough, we had not got in until about 4 A.M.

So, sleepy, headachy, and angry, I groped my way, about 6 A.M., into the unknown recesses of Kitchen I. It was a cold, damp morning; the newly made fires created such thick steam that I could only dimly discern the long line of huge guos with many strange figures bending over them. Gradually, as the steam cleared, I became aware that the voice giving sharp orders belonged to the boss cook, and the feet I kept seeing under the rising steam to the six helpers on the cooking team; also I realized that I was helping to cook cereal and that others were beginning the preparation for lunchtime stew.

It took little longer to grasp that no one there was much concerned about the quality of the food

we made, and no one was eager to work more than absolutely necessary. McDaniel, the boss, was a nice enough guy in a rough, indifferent, and lazy way; but we knew that his sharp-tongued wife told him what to cook. He used to run home in the middle of most afternoons because he had forgotten what she had told him about supper!

Beyond carrying out these orders, he knew little and cared less about cooking. For my first two months there, I felt frustrated about the job we were doing. There must be some way, thought I, of pepping things up and turning out better food. And so I began to look around for others who might feel the same way, but who, unlike myself, knew how to cook.

Gradually as I worked in that kitchen and learned to know it, its strangeness and size diminished. I even found myself enjoying my hours every third day on duty. There was a sunny courtyard just off the main kitchen, and on good days, when we could prepare the food for stews out there and eat our lunch at the big table, there was an atmosphere of rough, ribald fun that I heartily enjoyed. As this sense of at-homeness grew, I found that the functioning of the kitchen as a complex of coordinated activities came to interest me—for it really was a remarkable organization.

This organization began outside the kitchen when food supplies were brought into camp on carts by Chinese. They were distributed by the Supplies Committee proportionally to each of the two main kitchens. Then the supplies gang carried them in wooden crates to the kitchens—vegetables to the vegetable room and meat to the butchery. At this point the two cooks for the following day looked glumly over the meager supplies they had been given for their eight hundred customers, racked their brains for some new ideas for a menu, and then told the vegetable captains and the butchers what they wanted in the raw preparation of these supplies.

That same afternoon and into the next morning, the two butchers sliced, cubed, or ground the meat (this would be the winter procedure; they boiled it in summer in order to ensure its keeping at least over night without refrigeration). Teams of some fifteen to twenty women diced

carrots, peeled potatoes, and chopped cabbage, while middle-aged men helped them by carrying the vegetable baskets around and by cleaning the produce in a pair of old bathtubs taken from the residences in the “out of bounds” section of the compound.

The next day the two cooks and five helpers came on duty about 5 A.M. They prepared breakfast cereal if there was any, and then lunch and supper for that day. A pan washer on my shift (actually a scholar of Chinese literature, and now a professor at Cornell University) washed the containers we used in preparing the food and from which we ladled out the dinner. Then women servers distributed the food to the waiting lines collecting food for our eight hundred people.

They were checked and watched over by elderly men counters who made sure no one came in twice, and kept tabs on how fast the food was running out.

Girls then passed tea—if there was any—around the tables in the dining room. Men tea servers poured it into flasks for the majority who, being families preferred to collect their food in covered containers and to eat it ‘en famille’ in their rooms.

Near the serving tables was the bread room where five or six older men sliced two hundred loaves of bread daily and distributed to each his ration. And finally, two teams of women dishwashers cleaned up the dishes after the meal of those who ate in the dining hall. All of these groups got time off depending on the hours and heaviness of their work.

Cooking food and boiling water, however, required heat. For this purpose, coal and wood were brought to the kitchen yard from the supply house in carts. In our yard two men were always chopping wood while others molded bricks out of the coal dust that made up most of our usual coal issue. Two stokers got up the fires and tended them, one in the cooking area and the other where water was boiled for drinking. Stoking was a job which called for great skill since the coal was poor and the cooks extremely demanding about the level of heat they had to have under their precious stews.

To keep this intricate organization running smoothly, there was at first only an informal structure, headed by the manager of the kitchen, who seemed to do everything, and two women storekeepers. The latter kept an eye on our small stores of sugar and oil; also they purchased raw ginger, spices, and dried fruits when they were available in the canteen; and generally functioned as advisers of the manager on his many problems.

[...]

[excerpts] ...

Besides stoking at the ovens, working in the kitchens, tending the boilers, pumping water into the water towers at kitchens and showers, and hauling supplies to and fro, the other heavy work was carried on in the carpenter and fitter’s shop.

Surprisingly, a crew of some thirty men was kept busy continually, repairing utensils, supply crates, rooms, windows, etc., which hard usage had rendered unusable. The men in the shop also rebuilt much of the hospital, one of the kitchens, and redid the boilers that gave us hot water. They did this work wholly with materials “scrounged” here and there in the compound, and refashioned for this new use. The equipment with which the camp was originally furnished consisted of next to nothing.

Besides kitchens, bakery, hospital, and shop—what we called our “utilities”—there were many other forms of work necessary for our common life. There was the leisurely, comradely, but otherwise unappealing task of keeping the three men’s latrines clean. The two-man crew in charge of the one near our dorm consisted of a middle-aged American missionary and a retired British banker. The casual naturalness with which they went about their job showed the radical changes camp life had wrought in attitudes. Instead of being horrified at their work, these men made the most of its friendly, social possibilities. They laughed and joked with each client—and everyone was their client!

Often that retired banker with his white mustache and twinkling eyes would complain to me that we cooks had given them more business than they really wanted that day—or to the baker that the bread had been unusually heavy. As a

result, he and his partner had seen no one at all after breakfast—and “How the hell am I to get the news of the world if no one comes in?”

Interestingly enough, for whatever reason, no women in camp would take on as a steady job the cleaning of their latrines. All the able-bodied ones had to take it in turn, therefore, each one doing her bit of cleaning about one week during the year. Although it was admittedly an unpleasant enough job, most of the men suspected they relished its opportunity for conspicuous martyrdom, for without fail, one could always tell who was on that week.

And the gayer ones had a fine time with it. Clad in long boots and carrying a large mop—symbols of their trade—they would greet every male they met with a cheery wave and ask, “Guess what job I’ve got this week! Why not come along and give me a hand with the heavy work?”

Most fascinating of all about these strange (to men) female arrangements was the fact that the only women in camp who deliberately avoided this latrine duty were two Russian women married, respectively, to a wealthy American and a wealthy Briton.

The point certainly was not that they were Russian. They hired other Russian women to do these chores for them, paying them in coffee sent in to them by relatives in Tientsin. And it was a wonderful Russian woman, married to the British Professor of English at Yenching, who voluntarily took on the odorous and bruising task of running this cleanup crew for the women’s latrines.

Obviously the cause of their refusal was that they were both hoping to move up socially into colonial society and out of the nothingness of refugee society. They had, one could not but guess, married these well-to-do men for their wealth and their prestige. They did not intend to lose all this newly gained social status by falling back into the kind of life they had left behind them. For them, if there was any one symbol of that old life, it was the job of taking care of women’s conveniences!

The irony of this was intensified by the fact that the socially prominent wives of high-ranking British business officials would never have dreamed of refusing to do this work, once it became a

recognized form of community service. While the two women who aspired to grandeur were too proud and too insecure to do it, the British possessors of status were too proud and too secure to refuse.

The mind of the refugee Russian woman, working her way up, was dominated by precisely those values lacking in the social milieu she had just quitted. Refugee society in the Orient was dismal: abysmally poor and protected by no government of their own, they were the most vulnerable of any foreign group to every economic or political upheaval. They had been badly misused by the Japanese, who had forced them into all sorts of unwelcome labor. Anyone with energy would do almost anything to leave that society.

Among the values idolized by this group were, therefore, material security, personal cleanliness, escape from lower-class life and its humiliating chores, and so on. To do this work of cleaning toilets was to repudiate every value of one’s new existence. A woman dare not do it for fear of falling back and so losing her one hope of being a lady. In her own mind, she was still a poor refugee. Work like this, so perfectly fitting her inward assessment of her status, frightened her.

To the secure British woman of the colonial upper class, on the other hand, who had been placed at the top by birth and breeding, this job held no social threat at all. Even in dirty, refuse-covered boots, she felt and knew herself to be a “lady.” This job was merely a role adopted for the moment; it did not fit either her inward assessment of herself or the way she thought others would assess her and so it held no terrors. Moreover, she was also conforming to the subtler standards and requirements of that upper class, namely to be a sport, to do your share, to cooperate willingly even though it was distasteful.

These standards she dare not ignore, however uncomfortable the job might prove to be to her. Only such a person well within an upper-class group would even be aware of those standards—not someone looking longingly up from below.

The Russian women had no idea at all that they had broken those rules. In this situation, a lack of “breeding” did seem to hurt, but it did hurt only those women desperately wanting to be

considered well born, and in their very desperation proving to all and sundry that they had not been.

There were innumerable other jobs, although none of them so unusual. One of them was in the shoe repair shop. No new shoes were available in Weih sien. Since many people had arrived with only the well-worn pairs bought on the last trip home years before, four men were kept continually busy rescuing dilapidated shoes from nonexistence. Finally, next door to the watch repair and barber shops, was the sewing room where a crew of women tried to patch together the tattered garments of the camp's bachelors.

One pair of undershorts of mine brewed up quite a metaphysical storm in our dormitory. Since the shorts were so covered with patches that only the band around the middle contained some of the original cloth, a nice philosophical point was raised: was it now the same old pair of shorts, and if not, at what point had it become another pair?

Day in and day out, the camp was a small hive of activity, most of it manual and vigorous. Everyone became more efficient in dealing with the practical problems of life than he had been when he came in. Men who had never used a hammer put up shelves on their walls. Others who had never seen a mason's trowel built clever brick stoves in their rooms; these stoves had an oven inside so that they not only heated the room, but also baked a modest cake or cookies. In summer everyone constructed elaborate awnings of mats bought in the canteen, and thus provided pleasant shade for the patio in front of their room. After we had been there a year or so, an exhibit was held of the artifacts that ingenious people from all professions had made. They were almost unbelievable to one not blessed with technical or inventive gifts. They included the fanciest of brick stoves, sliding screen doors and windows, homemade cooling systems, elegantly fitted cabinets, and beautifully wrought oil lamps. Most fascinating to me was an intricate and finely balanced system of shelves that would, at the mere touch of a finger, disappear on ropes to the ceiling and thus free half the floor space of a small room.

The display drove home to me the truth that no practical situation, however unwieldy or difficult, was too much for human ingenuity.

This group of humans had been faced with the total lack of all the comforts to which they had been accustomed, and for once they were unable to purchase gadgets ready made. Thus all the intense technical creativity that resides in any group of men became active. Each in his own way embarked with energy and skill on the task of raising ever higher our level of material comfort.

We came to realize, however, that a community of people needs more to keep them going than the bare necessities. We all felt this as early as the first dreary week, when we crowded into the church on Saturday night and sang our throats out, as a talented monk and a Salvation Army captain led us in familiar songs. Encouraged by this visceral response to even the simplest form of entertainment, some of us from Yenching University started to work up a few topical skits.

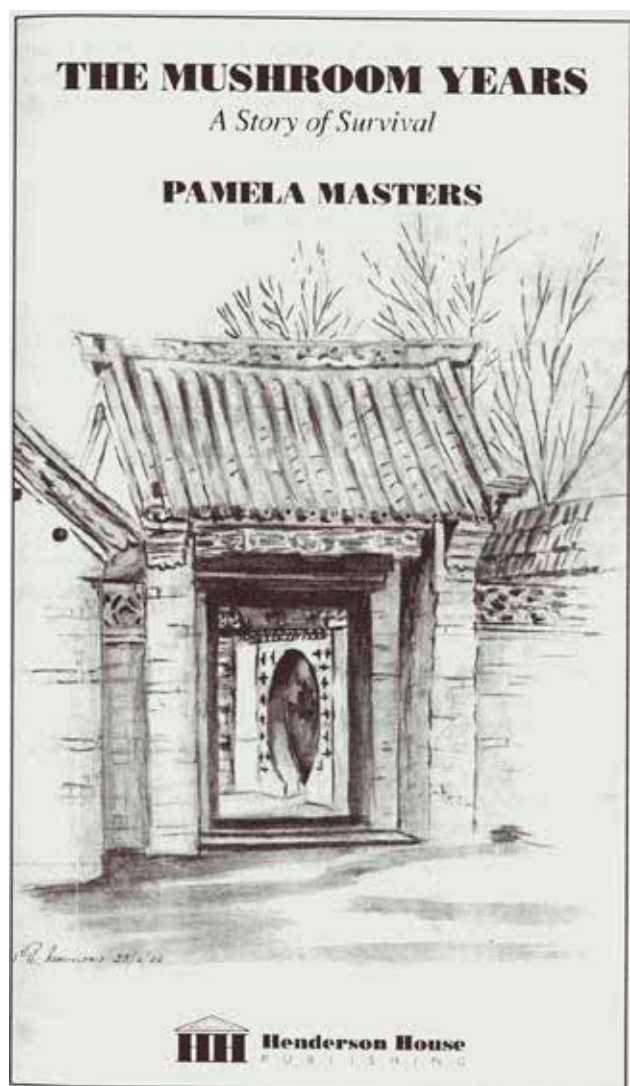
[...]

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEBSITE\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEBSITE).pdf)

by Pamela Masters ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



[excerpts] ...

[...]

Breakfast the next day in the steamy community kitchen was skimpy and pretty foul: weak Chinese tea and bread porridge. The latter made with sour bread that had been soaked in boiling water and stirred to a mush, as it was too stale to serve any other way. With no sugar or cream to add to it, it was almost inedible. While we were eating, a committee member came in and told us that, when we were through, we were to go to the athletic field for indoctrination, housing, and work assignments.

The field wasn't hard to find as it was the only large, treeless area in the camp, and through the years, it was to become the site of most of our outdoor group activities and daily headcounts.

[excerpts] ...

Before we left the roll-call field, all the single men and women were told to report to the respective dormitory areas, and heads of each household to the administrative office compound to be assigned cell numbers—only they called them room numbers. Meanwhile, most of the committee responsible for our orderly move to camp pitched in once more to organize work details.

All those not preparing food were to be assigned to cleaning up the camp. The rains of the day before, which had gone on through most of the night, had left the main roadway a quagmire. I found that the stench that had greeted us on our arrival was from overflowing latrines, augmented by piles of soggy garbage in various phases of decomposition.

Somehow I missed the cleanup detail and found myself peeling potatoes with twenty others in the community kitchen—dubbed “Number 2 Kitchen” or “K-2”—where we’d had breakfast a couple of hours earlier. With so many people, and so few potatoes, the job was soon done, and I left the kitchen compound and stepped out onto Main Street, the name some enterprising individual had already posted on the road leading up from the main gates.



[excerpts] ...

I learned later that they told the assignment committee they felt they could help the camp more if they were allowed to do the Lord's work, and then asked if they could call a prayer meeting in the church.

They were advised they would have to get in line if they wanted to use the assembly hall, as there were denominations ahead of them that had prior rights.

[excerpts] ...

Margo had befriended several other war brides whose husbands were in military camps, and they helped each other out. She also volunteered to work in the hospital as a nurse's aide and had started pretty rigorous training. She admitted one evening that it was nothing she planned to do for the rest of her life, but it was a change from secretarial work and a great way to help others.

I was restless. Everyone seemed to be finding their niche except me, and although I was getting used to the routine, I was definitely not enjoying it.

My idea of nothing was peeling potatoes, or chopping leeks for a couple of hours a day, then tramping around the camp looking for something to do. After a couple of weeks, I complained to the assignment committee, but was told everything would change soon, as they were planning to open school for us in Number 2 Kitchen, and we would be too busy studying to have time for any other work.

I didn't know which would be worse, chopping leeks or trying to study in a busy kitchen. I found out soon enough when classes started, and I tried to apply myself with tears running down my cheeks from the fumes of the vegetable prep area.

[excerpts] ...

Surprisingly, as we headed for the library,

my dark thoughts were replaced by memories of the camp's second "minor miracle"—the arrival of several cartloads of books during the sweltering heat of the previous summer.

When they were uncased, most were found to be in deplorable condition, and the assignment committee requested that if anyone knew anything about bookbinding would they please step forward. Dad, who had had a fine collection of books, some rare first editions, had taken up binding as a hobby in the port, but had never done much with it. He told the committee he would gladly do the job.

His workshop was a partially isolated little cell near the hospital area. And that was just as well, as the fish glue he heated up to tip in the pages and mend the spines had a stench that made me gag. I once asked him how he could stand it, and he said, "Oh, like everything, you get used to it."

I had to admit he did a lovely job on the books; especially the spines that always got the worst beating. He not only repaired them so that they were stronger than before, but would painstakingly letter the titles and authors, so that they looked like the original bindery job. You could tell he was happy in his work. And, as he was also his own boss, I knew he read most of the books before, or after, he bound them. Dad, like me, loved to read, only he had a photographic memory. He could scan pages so fast it was impossible to believe he had read them. He used to read a book a day on tiffin break in Chinwangtao. He not only read the books, he devoured them; and from them he got a vocabulary that was second to none. I never recall opening a dictionary until I went away to the convent; if I got stumped, I always asked him for the meaning of a word. He would not only give it to





[excerpts] ...

After Nico's death, Guy asked for a change in jobs, not being able to face the bakery shift without his buddy. His first short stint was as a stoker in K-1, then he got transferred to the hospital diet kitchen where I worked. His shift followed Dan's, so now I had two stokers I could look forward to working with, and most of all, it gave me a chance to talk with him without feeling shy and awkward. Guy wasn't as helpful as Dan, but he would pitch in and help if I asked him.

me, but he would give me the root, the usage, and all the derivatives. He was my dictionary.

Oh, hell, Dad, how can you be so nice and such a dirty bouncer at the same time?

[excerpts] ...

Margo wasn't to be soothed: her nostrils flared and her eyes flashed. "You bet I'm tired! I'm tired of helping them pump his stomach to save his life. Dammit, it's not fair! Like that witch who ate a box of match heads and got violently ill. We worked around the clock on her. And the one who slashed her wrists, but not deep enough to make it work. Or the umpteen Italians, begging for attention and a way out of their prison compound, who never hang themselves high enough to get anything more than a crick in the neck and a week in the hospital! They don't mean to commit suicide; all they want is sympathy, and I'm fed up! They don't deserve it. I'm going to talk to Roger Barton. I think, if they care so damned little for their lives, we should make them into a suicide squad, and if we're attacked, we'll send them out as the first wave!"

I'd never heard Margo so hot on anything before, but then, I hadn't worked upstairs with her in the sadly wanting hospital and seen all the suffering. When Ursula and I finally got her calmed down, I sensed she wanted to be alone, so after Alex picked up Ursula for their bridge game with Claire and Randy, I went for a walk.

One morning, after getting him to help me wrestle with the blending of the soaked millet and boiling water, he stood back and watched while I stirred the mush with the long wooden paddle I used. Feeling his eyes boring into my back, I turned and looked at him, and some of my old animosity started to rear its ugly head, but I stopped when I saw his face. He looked tired, almost ill. "What's up, you look dreadful," I asked. [...]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)

[excerpts] ...

[...]

The block in front of us was also classrooms, but that too was now used as dormitories for priests and nuns.

‘Where do you live Granny?’ I asked.

‘Not very far away in Block 13,’ she replied. ‘I am going to take you there as Grandpa should be back now from Kitchen No. 1. In the meantime, I thought I would show you this area.’

‘Why has he been at the kitchen? Surely, he doesn’t work there?’ I commented.

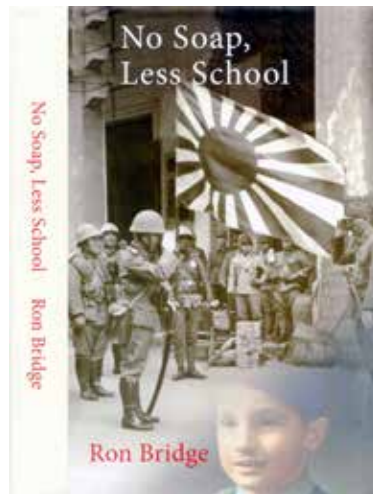
‘Oh, yes he does. All the internees here at Weih sien have to do something for the Community, we have no servants like we all used to have before the Japanese came. I believe that the present rules excuse ladies with children under two and the one or two ladies expecting babies. I peel vegetables in No. 1 Kitchen.’

We carried on walking across the near open place with all the trees.

[excerpts] ...

It was difficult trying to keep Roger clean; Mum washed his nappies, but I was left to my own devices. All the adults had had their luxury lifestyles abruptly terminated. The ladies suffered much more, doing their own chores. They had always been spoiled, with servants to do the domestic work.

In about ten days our trunks and beds arrived, dumped on the road near Kitchen No. 2. There was a general feeling of ‘I’ll help you if you will help me,’ and the items got put on the ground in front of each room. The trunks had been broken into, but as they were mostly clothes nothing much had been taken.



The beds were intact but three full-sized beds and a cot would take more floor room than our room possessed. My parents realised that the only solution was bunks. The packing cases had to stay on the ground until they were dismantled, and the beds assembled. That was not an easy process as the door was too narrow to take an assembled bed unless turned on its side! Borrowing a claw hammer, Dad was able to retrieve the nails from our crates and straighten them on

a stone.

Then Dad needed to borrow a saw. Our next-door neighbours were [...] ...

[excerpts] ...

I also sneaked into the men’s lavatories near the playing field when caught with the need, the urinals there basic but useable. One day I heard Mum having a whispered exchange with Dad on the subject, and he had told her quietly ‘Don’t let him go there, Margot, he can use your ferry in the hut here for the time being. The nearest “gents” are just not suitable for youngsters yet.’ Naturally, this aroused my curiosity, and as soon as I could get away from my parents I did so.

I recruited my new Weih sien friend, Joe Wilson, who lived in Block 41 Room 1, across the path from us but in the same compound.

Joe was eighteen months younger, but nonetheless someone to play with. Anyhow, we found our way to the men’s toilet block near the end of Block 23. It smelt pretty unpleasant as we approached and on entering found out why.

There were no toilet units or seats, just shallow square cement ‘basins’ with two raised foot plates each side of a hole in the middle. There was no cistern and the means of flushing was a bucket which was filled under a pathetic tap in the far

end. The whole place was running with sewage and even we, scruffy schoolboys, were horrified.

There was a man taking his trousers down balancing on the foot rests, trying desperately to keep his trousers out of the various liquids, he shouted at us to get out as we stood gaping, whilst he bent and tried to align himself with the hole in the floor.

We fled giggling and took to doing what we had to do against the toilet block wall, having made sure we were not seen. As to my father's edict, I had no intention of using a potty, which I considered was for babies only. Mum could make her own arrangements, but I was not going down that route.

'I do not know what the fuss is about, Joe,' I said, 'The facilities are no different to the ones we provide for the servants in Tianjin, although we do give them a short piece of hose with a working tap.'

Puzzles me, where do they keep the paper? It can't be in reach' I continued. And then changed the subject.

After a few weeks, the loo problem was largely cured.

Amongst the camp inmates there were engineers of every kind, architects, builders and designers, not to mention doctors and teachers. Some form of engineer rigged up a way to flush the formerly un-flushable and we were allowed permission to use the cleaned-up facilities, with the caveat being 'only when wearing shorts'.

When I looked puzzled, Mum said, 'If you go in there and try and take long trousers down you will get them into the filth. And you will then stink and I am not washing stinking trousers. You know there is no laundry. The Japanese had one about six miles away and people started sending sheets and towels, only to find that they came back both torn and dirtier than they went in, if they were indeed returned. So we ladies have decided to boycott the laundry until a better one is provided.'

During April and May us boys kept clear of the blackened rubbish tip, which was adjacent to Blocks 23 and 24 yet only just over the wall from Block 41; there were too many adults trying their

hands at scrounging bits to salvage. This pile of partly burnt furniture and laboratory equipment I had first seen on my walk with Granny the day after we arrived.

Joe and I with one or two others used to sift through the ash to see if we could find anything for us to play with. We had got the idea from adults who had salvaged half-burnt furniture and repaired it to make it useable. Dad had even used some of the wood to make the headboards of our bunk beds. The certainty, to us boys, was that you got filthy, but by then we had worked out that if you finished by five in the afternoon you could get down to the showers and have a near hot shower because the sun had heated the water in the tank.

[excerpt] ...

I knew very little about the workings of the kitchens, as children were prohibited to go in them. I did take a peek a few times. They were hot, with open fires, with a decking over in which up to five large 'woks' or 'Kongs' were set.

These were about five feet across (11/2 metres) with a wooden lid, used to boil water and make stew. (Recipe: water, lots of vegetables and an occasional cube of meat.)

Often one of the men had to balance precariously over the lid to retrieve something and it was also not unknown for the lid to collapse and the volunteer cook then got scalded legs. The cooks did make tempting smells with their soups and stews.

Sadly, lack of supplies meant second helpings were few and one had to be satisfied with the aroma.

These thin stews were generally our daily fare for at least one meal. I did not think too much of them: the meat, if you could find it, was stringy, the vegetables overcooked, even if they were often soya beans or soya bean leaves, and almost a mush. I also missed having any milk to drink.

The alternative was water, and even that was a problem as the shallow wells were only five metres from the cesspits. Mum felt that water should be boiled — definitely a desirable policy

— but most of the time there was no fuel, so that was but seldom implemented.

There were three cows grazing in the graveyard in the Japanese area of camp.

[excerpts] ...

More immediately, and after we had digested the school division policy, a couple of days later, at supper, Dad said that he had now finished the stove but that we would need fuel to burn in it. Dad was still working as a kitchen stoker, but with the move to Block 13 he had been transferred to No. 1 Kitchen, across the rocky road from our new block, but a bit further north.

‘There is nothing for it Ronald,’ said Dad, ‘you will have to make coal balls as the coal we are to be given for burning is literally dust. I know, as I am having to try and burn it in Kitchen 1. Dad was having some success, which he attributed to the fact that they had bigger fireplaces there, under the kitchen Kongs.

So, after asking around, I started my new job.

The coal ball recipe was 60 per cent coal dust and 40 per cent mud, with enough water to make a really thick paste. You had to take a handful and using both hands mould it like a small snowball. Then you placed it on the ground to dry. If you really wanted one to burn quicker add 10% sawdust.

That was the easy part; getting the residue off your hands and arms was a different matter. Soap was in short supply and hard to get hold of. My suggestion to Mum that I be allowed to help do the clothes washing fell on stony ground. It was a huge concession by me, as I had never thought much of soap, and only used it in the past under the direct persuasion of Funainai.

‘You are not coming near to the washing with those hands — find a bucket of water and scrub!’

After a couple of times with this method, Grandpa came to the rescue. ‘Ronald, I’ve got a half-sized tin, which used to have salmon or fish in it. With a couple of nails we can fix it to a piece of wood, and then with another piece of wood you can fill the tin, press the coal mixture down hard and then, if you bang it on a brick, you will get a

perfectly round, if flattened, coal ball.’

This I tried and found that it worked, and so from then on I got less black dust under my fingernails. The semi-mechanised coal-ball production got into its stride and continued intermittently, whenever the weather turned cold.

By now Mum, who had always been an inveterate letter-writer, had established correspondence with my Aunt Freda, as well as Danish and French friends in Tianjin. In addition to guarded exchange of news, food parcels sometimes used to get through. Along with the little luxuries like tea and coffee, Mum found that the more substantial food like tinned corned beef had generally been ‘liberated’, probably when the parcels were inspected by ‘Postal Customs’.

Mum was still excused work, although come 8th October, which was Roger’s second birthday, she started **vegetable peeling** and **cooking** in Kitchen No. 1, but on a different shift to Granny, so that one of them could look after Roger.

These two somehow thickened our soups or stews heated up in the room stove by adding selected bits of vegetable peelings or soya beans. This policy did allow me free rein; I was no longer tied to Roger.

The way we boys played was very territorial, based either on the physical location of our rooms or the kitchen in which we ate. As I had changed kitchens and moved well away, I felt resignation from my first gang was a better way out than the inevitable eviction. I soon caught up with Michael and Peter Turner, twins from Tianjin, who had a young sister, Barbara, in Block 2. Their parents again were good friends with Mum and Dad.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)

The Storm Breaks

Father Bernard was happy to return to monastic life which meant so much to him. Alas, new difficulties were waiting for him. In September 1939 war was declared in Europe. Soon it would engulf the world. Japan hurried to take the side of the Axis powers of Berlin and Rome, and life was made difficult for citizens of countries belonging to the other side. For security reasons, the Japanese detained them. It was on the feast of St. Joseph, that is the nineteenth of March that the Japanese began hoarding foreigners together in one place. Father was arrested on the 21st of March 1943 and sent to the concentration camp in Weihsien, three hundred miles southwest of Peking in the province of Shan-tung.

The camp was established three kilometres from the town on the site of a large Protestant Mission built by the Americans. It consisted of a hospital and a school 1800 enemy nationals were assembled there: English, Americans, Canadians, Dutch, Belgians but no French, because their nation had already come to terms with the Axis Powers.

Among them were four hundred missionaries, both nuns and priests, and seven Bishops.

Father Bernard had the good fortune to meet up with a classmate of his who had attended the Institute of Saint Marie. They became fast friends again. Carlo von Melckebeke who was now a missionary bishop recalled this meeting in an article: he wrote later. 'In the midst of a group of priests, I picked out a large man with a stoop. He was smiling and had a twinkle in his eyes he was in Chinese attire and had a colonial-style hat (a topi or pith helmet perhaps?) Hello there Bernard! Hello there Carlo! came the reply.' (November 1948)

Camp discipline was quite good. The Japanese maintained external security and the inmates organised internal discipline. Different areas of community living were identified, such as discipline, recreation, culture, and religion. A

leader was selected for each. The appointment was for a six-month term.

Father Bernard managed the **repair shop**. As an engineer he was able to turn his hand to many things: he was smithy, welder and mechanic. His co-worker was an Anglican bishop, a jovial man who handled woodworking projects. Together they worked in a small building along the outer wall of the camp.

In an article Msgr van Melkebeke writes: 'Father Bernard in Chinese pants and an old jacket was master of the forge. He used it to transform tin cans into saucepans and kettles in a matter of days. He repaired taps in the shower house and mended spades for gardeners. Other friends of his in Weihsien spoke of his gentleness, his goodness and his kindness. He tried to reconcile the Cistercian life of prayer with the ordinary life of a prisoner. The early rising was particularly difficult to achieve without disturbing others. He was a large man and the meagre diet was a test for him. However, his friends found ways of supplementing his diet. The lack of food did not prevent him from expending energy. For instance, one day he broke the anvil. From that time on, he was known as **Father Steel-hammer**.'

The Catholic priests showed great sympathy for their fellow inmates. They looked for ways to serve the community. They sifted through rubbish dumps and found articles which might be useful. They also proved to be adroit black marketeers in the trade that was carried on over the wall with the Chinese peasants. Their intention was to obtain necessary items for the most needy; that is for the sick, for mothers, and for children. All the time they were in the camp, morale was high and good humour prevailed. This part of their detention did not last long.

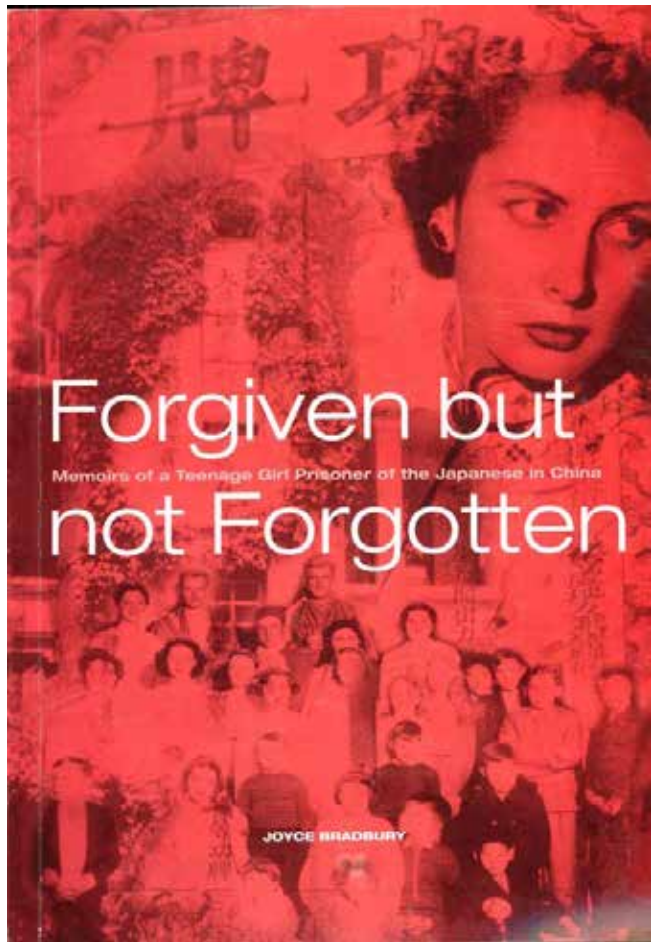
#

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JMStruyven/TheMemoirsofFatherBernardStuyven.htm>

by Joyce Bradbury née Cooke ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

As we began to settle down, the various committees allocated duties to everybody over the age of 14. Doctors and nurses were assigned to hospital duties and caring for the health of people while tradesmen worked in the carpentry and other shops. In general, the women had to peel vegetables and the men worked in the kitchens irrespective of their former callings.

The clergy also worked. They performed kitchen duties, stoked hot water boilers for the showers and pumped water which had to be done 24 hours a day. They also helped with heavy work such as lifting when required. One Catholic priest, Father Schneider, was formerly a shoemaker and he was put in charge of the shoe repair

shop. Some of the nuns worked in the kitchen, cleaning vegetables, and also taught in the schools alongside Protestant missionaries. Some nuns nursed and some volunteered for the terrible job of clearing overflowing toilets, which they did with grace and dignity.

The nuns wore veils over a stiff cloth frame called a "coif" on their heads when they first arrived. After a while, they dispensed with the coifs and just wore a veil pinned to their hair. Many of the Protestant clergy had added tasks. They had to tend to the needs of their families, of which there were quite a few.

Everybody I knew worked hard for the benefit of the whole camp and I am not aware of any problems with persons not pulling their weight. There were four kitchens and dining rooms. Because of the food supply situation, it was a big job trying to satisfy the hunger of the inmates.

Sadly, that was never really achieved. My father, a qualified accountant, was given cooking duties in a communal dining room where meals were cooked and served in relays. Mum also worked in the kitchen and made craft goods.

[excerpts] ...

Some inmates brought canned food with them.

One of our family's good friends, a wealthy lady, brought a fairly large quantity of canned and preserved food into the camp and although she had been allocated work by the committee, she preferred to employ others to do her share on the payment of her food to them. Eventually, she ran out of supplies and then had to do her share of work. We kept in touch with her until she died several years ago. In her later years, she showed us a thick coil of malleable gold which could be worn around her wrist saying: "If ever I have to go into camp again, I will take this gold with me and cut off little bits to use to buy food."



[excerpts] ...

One of the perks of working in the food areas was taking home extra food. My father was able to bring home dripping once in a while which we ate on our bread. We were always hungry and fantasised about food. Some people thought about milk and sugar because we had to drink tea without milk or sugar. The tea was ladled out to us from large pots. My mother missed her coffee and we all missed bacon and eggs. I do not remember anyone putting on weight. Some inmates were caught by other inmates stealing vegetables, bread and other foods. They appeared before a camp committee which decided whether they were guilty or not. I don't remember what punishments were inflicted except the names of the guilty were put on the notice board.

[excerpts] ...

There was no piped water in the camp but there were wells. To cater for the whole camp of some 2000 people the well pumps had to be hand-operated 24 hours a day and a number of men were kept at this work. We were allowed one shower a month in a communal bathroom. The bathroom consisted of about 12 showers and three or four hole-in-the-floor toilets. We were rostered alphabetically for hot showers. My second cousin Bob (Bob Cooke whose father — my great-uncle Edward — was also in the camp) was one of the stokers of the boilers.

[excerpts] ...

Work and working hours:

... varied. In general, one day off, every three days for the men, and every two days for the women.

Labour is normal for our community life (cleaning, coal transport, peeling of vegetables, etc.). It is advisable for men to take overalls with them, aprons or pinafores for the women and also, clogs for everyone. To be mentioned: there are three distinct kitchens and the one for the Tientsin folks is the worst of all.

[further reading]

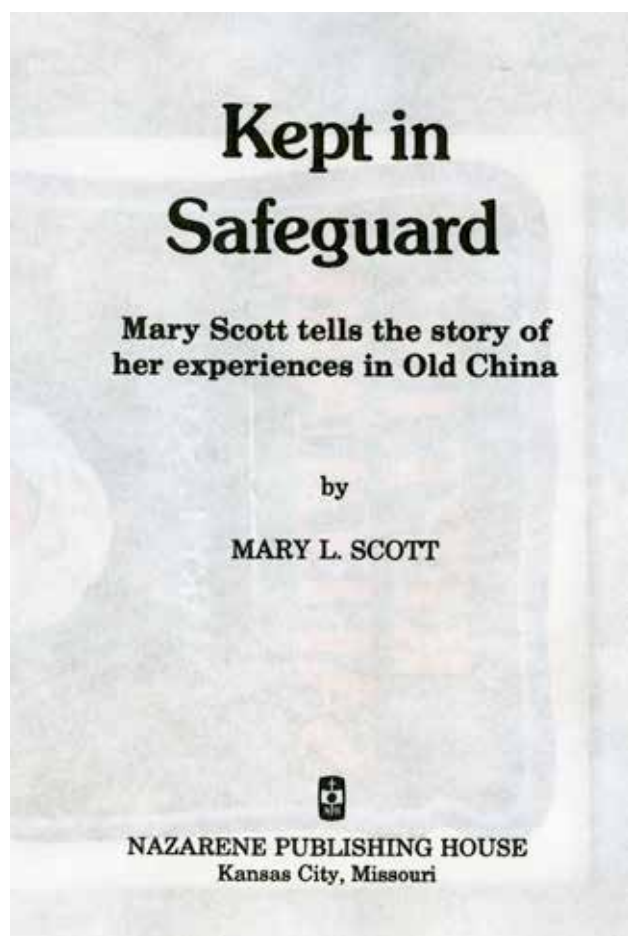
[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)



Map of Northern China. Cartography: Georgie Perry

by Mary E. Scott ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Our camp was indeed what had once been a beautiful Presbyterian mission compound. It was a little over six acres in size and had housed a well-equipped high school with classrooms and administration buildings, a church, hospital, bakery ovens, three kitchens, and row after row of 9 x 12- foot rooms used to house the resident students. The buildings seemed to be undamaged, but the contents were a shambles. Refuse was piled outside the buildings or strewn along the driveways by the garrisons of Japanese and Chinese soldiers who had been billeted there.

Our immediate task was to clean up the place. It was a gigantic undertaking but the people had a mind to work. Besides, there were valuable broken desks and chairs that could be used if repaired.

Scrounging, looking anywhere, even in rubbish heaps to find something usable, became an everyday operation.

It soon became apparent that one of the greatest needs for the internees was for a working hospital. There were sure to be illnesses in our community of nearly 2,000, particularly with the unsanitary conditions under which we lived. Rumor had it (and I can't verify it) that the Japanese had used part of the original hospital building as a stable.

Nothing daunted, the doctors and nurses in camp and many volunteers, including Mr. Moses who had been business manager of our Nazarene hospital in Taming, began the herculean task of cleaning up and salvaging what equipment they could from piles of debris scattered about everywhere. Within eight days, the hospital was functioning sufficiently to feed and care for patients, and in two more days the operating room and laboratory were ready for use.

Another very serious problem was that of sanitary facilities. At first there were only six cubicles, equipped with oriental flush toilets that didn't flush, available for about 800 women. Excrement overflowed the bowls until it required a strong stomach to use them at all. Missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, tackled the task of cleanup until our "camp engineers" came up with a solution. Large water barrels were placed at one end of the latrine, into which used wash water was poured. Each user of the latrine was required to "flush" the toilet with a half bucket of water. Ladies were stationed at the latrine to inspect each toilet after use to see that it had been properly flushed.

All went well as long as there was water in the barrels, but sometimes the water ran out!

Later the latrine which we called the "cowshed" was assigned to the ladies. Each of the six "stalls" consisted of two narrow cement platforms on the sides on which to stand, a cemented hole for solids and a slanted front which carried the urine to a trough. In the morning a Chinese "night soil" coolie

came in to scoop out the solids (it was valuable to him as fertilizer). The assigned latrine cleaners of the camp went in to finish the cleanup. Sometimes the odors were so pungent that our noses literally burned when we came near, especially in the summer.

But there were very profitable lessons to be learned, even as a latrine cleaner. My godly, sanctified railroader father, brought up a Canadian Presbyterian, had taught us around the family altar that a Christian can do anything that is right to glorify God. I shall never forget one Wednesday morning when this teaching became a reality. I was on "latrine duty" and in the midst of that very unpleasant task, I looked up and said, "Now, Lord, help me to clean these latrines in a manner that will glorify You."

And I felt that the Lord himself came down that Wednesday morning. He took hold of the bails of those two big, five-gallon gasoline cans that had been made into water pails. He helped me carry them to the latrine. He took hold of that little, stubby brush, and together we dug into the corners and the crevices trying to get every place as clean as we could. He got down on His knees when I got down on my knees; and with a little old cloth, no disinfectant or soap, just plain cold water, we got every place as sanitary as we could.

When I finished, I looked back and said, "Now, Lord, does it please You?" I couldn't see a place where I could have done a better job. I wasn't cleaning latrines because I'd been assigned it, or because that particular week I'd volunteered to do it. I was cleaning latrines for my Lord. That was one of the sweetest and one of the most real experiences I've had with the Lord in all my Christian life.

But even this task was not without its physical and material rewards. As one of the "dirty workers," latrine cleaners were allowed to take a shower every day even during those times when others were limited to one shower a week!

[excerpt]

Most of the women in camp had been accustomed to having Chinese servants in their homes. To be plunged so suddenly into a world of hard, manual labor was good for them if it

wasn't pleasant. Labor was the great leveller, and men and women alike were soon known not by their "outside" occupation but by the quality of their work, their spirit of willingness, and their measure of enthusiasm. A "lazy" worker was not much respected, as all the work we did was for our own maintenance and the welfare of all in our community, not for our Japanese captors. We judged people not by what they had, but for what they were.

[excerpt]

After the many initial adjustments, we led quite a normal life on the 6.2 acres assigned to us behind the eight-foot wall. Work, recreation, and social and religious activities filled our days and evenings.

My work assignments in camp were varied. Besides being a member of the "sanitary police", I was asked to work in the kitchen at various tasks. The same week I supervised the serving team, I was also latrine cleaner. It kept me hurrying all morning to complete the latrine cleanup, take a shower and clean my fingernails, and get to the kitchen in time to help serve lunch. I liked the bread-slicing job (by hand). We tried to please everyone by cutting some loaves in thin slices, some medium, and some thick.

Being kitchen laundress was not without its problems and rewards. The cooks soon discovered that the people ate the soup or stew better if they found no clue as to where the flavor came from. So they put all the "stuff" in flour sacks, boiled out the flavor, then discarded the "stuff" before serving the food. It was our job to wash these dirty, greasy, smelly meat sacks as well as kitchen aprons and towels. At least we had hot water to do it with, though at times soap was scarce. Because I had to go to the quarters office later in the morning, I usually did the kitchen laundry between 4:30 and 6:00 in the morning.

#

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

The new arrivals had found the premises in very bad condition; after the missionaries and Chinese student body had left, the property had been looted by Chinese bandits, and then occupied by Japanese soldiers; afterwards vacated and left to deteriorate further. The roads were strewn with rubble, the toilets choked, and the remains of desks and tables lying around, having been broken up for firewood.

These first internees had set to work with that resourcefulness and determination characteristic of the human race when looking for the basic comforts of life. They cleared roads, cleaned the rooms, opened up three big kitchens (Kitchen I for the Tientsin community, Kitchen II for those from Peking and Kitchen III for Tsingtao internees), each feeding five hundred people. Catholic priests from Belgium, Holland and America, mostly in their twenties, cleared the toilets and erected large ovens for the camp bakery.

A well-organised community was soon running its own affairs, each person with his or her own specific duties. At the top of the organisation chart was the Japanese commandant, and under him the camp representative. He was in turn chairman of a Council of Committee leaders, covering general affairs, discipline, labour, education, supplies, quarters, medicine, engineering and finance.

How fortunate we were in that by the time we arrived in this self-contained community all was running smoothly and efficiently. The administrative machinery was most impressive. The Quarters Leader allocated us dormitories, the Labour Leader gave us forms to fill in with crosses to put down to indicate how much experience we had had in teaching, engineering, cooking, baking and other spheres.

It was quite evident that the four hundred Catholic priests and nuns had made a great impact and profound impression on the internee community. They had turned their hands to the most menial tasks cheerfully and willingly, organised baseball games and helped in the

educational programme for the young.

But inevitably romances had been formed between admiring Tientsin and Peking girls and celibate Belgian and American priests from the lonely wastes of Manchuria. Anxious Vatican officials had solved the delicate problem by careful negotiations with the Japanese, as a result of which all but thirty priests had been transferred to an institution of their own in Peking where they could meditate and say their rosaries without feminine distractions.

Their departure had left a vacuum in effective manpower for such tasks as pumping, cooking and baking. Thus the arrival of our Chefoo community aggravated the situation further, for out of the three hundred of us only about two dozen were potential camp workers, the remainder being schoolchildren and retired missionaries.

But for ourselves coming to Weih sien proved to be the opening up of a new world, after the cramped and monotonous life at Temple Hill. Here in Weih sien were well-informed scholars, missionaries of other traditions, business men with a variety of backgrounds. Adult education was provided in Chinese, Japanese, Russian; bookkeeping, shorthand and philosophy. There were concerts, pantomimes, plays, baseball matches and many other community activities.

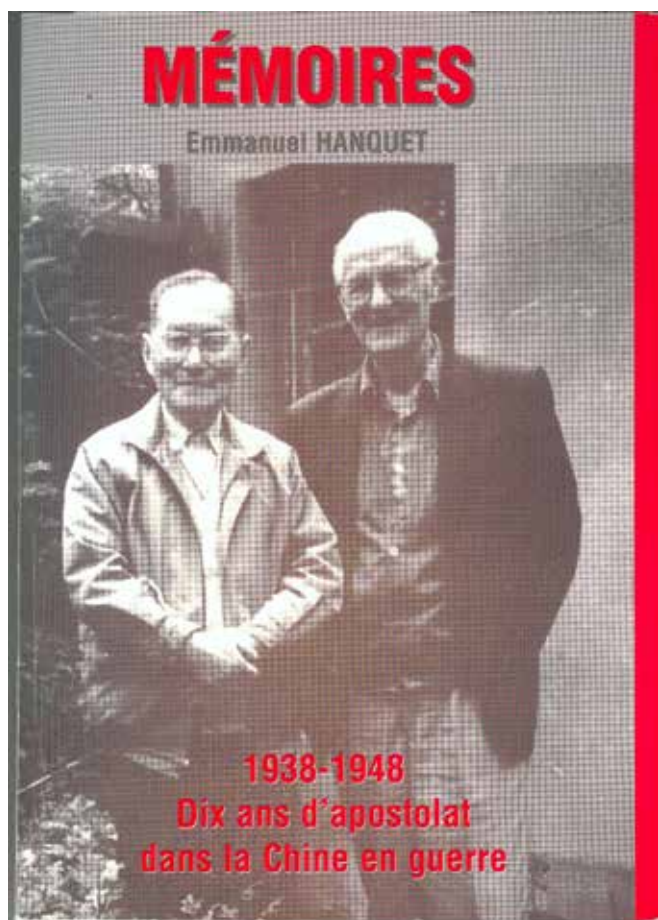
Soon life in this new camp was running smoothly and we were feeling very much part of this new social environment. I was housed with other boys of the school in Block 23, an attractive building at the far end of the camp, superior to the small blocks of rooms in which the families were housed. The Labour Representative placed me in a kitchen shift of Kitchen I that fed some six hundred people.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

by Emmanuel Hanquet ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



[excerpts] ...

[...]

So we ended up as ten or so priests and four nuns available to serve our fellow prisoners.

Initially, life in camp involved a lot of feeling one's way. How should things be organised? Who was going to teach, cook, mend, build, fix up? Everything had to be sorted out. For example, in No. 1 kitchen where I had volunteered to work, our only equipment was six huge cast-iron cauldrons each heated by its own stove. We had to improvise lids using planks and carve great spatulas out of good wood in order to stir the grub as it was cooking...

Very quickly the senior people from Tientsin, Tsingtao and Peking proposed to our guards that

we should be left to organise life inside the camp, while they kept an eye on us and stopped us from running away...

For our forty guards, this proposal had to be a good one. They accepted it and concentrated their energies on guarding the gates and controlling the Chinese who came into the camp to provide various services. They also had to mount a night watch on the seven or eight watchtowers which stood on the perimeter of the camp. Later their task was to become even easier as ditches were dug at the foot of the perimeter wall, to which were added strands of electrified barbed wire.

Life slowly settled down. It was not yet a model community, but all bent themselves to the task of giving it a good foundation. Elections were held to establish committees to deal with various aspects of camp activity: committees for discipline, housing, food, schooling, leisure activities, religious activities, work and health.

[excerpts] ...

Work in the Camp

Everyone had to work in camp. The jobs were organised with a view to the well-being of the two thousand internees, all of them civilians and political prisoners. There were old people and very young children. From the outset a rudimentary hospital was set up to provide basic medical care to those in need. Fortunately, it emerged that there were five or six doctors and several nurses among our number. When we got eggs from the Japanese, the whole lot went to the hospital for distribution to the children. The rest of us were just allowed the shells, which went through the mincer and were then consumed as a source of calcium... Actually, our teeth suffered badly from malnutrition, and there was only one dentist for the whole camp. Poor Doctor Prentice spent many hours on the treadle which drove the drill; he filled cavities with dental cement after disinfecting them. That was about all he could do for us...

All available skills were harnessed: carpenter,

bricklayer, tinsmiths, baker, cook, teacher, seamstress, soapmaker[!?!], instrumentalist, etc.

As for me, I offered my services to the kitchen as junior kitchen-hand No. 6. It was a good way of ensuring that you got at least some food! Dare I admit that I hardly lost any weight in camp and that I ended my career in the kitchen as head cook for six hundred souls?! I was proud of my young and active team of six who never complained about the hard graft. My right-hand man was one Zimmerman, a Jewish American, who was a far better cook than I was. He had a Russian wife who was a source of good ideas. For example, we were renowned for our Tabasco sauce which was a mixture of raw minced turnip, pili-pili and red peppers which you could sometimes get from the canteen. With these ingredients we would make a sort of sauce that took the skin off your throat but which had the merit of giving some taste to dishes which otherwise had none.

We used to put up our menus when it was our turn to cook — every third day: it was our way of lifting the spirits of the internees. But one day we realised that a Japanese guard would come and conscientiously copy down our menus for sending to... the Geneva Convention! That put an end to our gastro-literary efforts!!

The young people had to work too. Their studies came first. We had organised for them two teaching regimes, American and British. So they went to school every day in the makeshift classrooms. But they were also required to pump water for two hours a day. That was the wearisome task for many of the rest of us too, as there were four water towers in the camp from which water had to be distributed to the kitchens and the showers. Otherwise you got your own water in jugs. The latrines were inevitably very primitive, and had a system of pedals such as used to be found in French railway stations. They were well kept.

Oddly enough they were often the responsibility of the Fathers, of us missionaries, although we were few in number! But I have to say that our willingness to undertake this task was not entirely disinterested. The latrines were one of the few places you could meet Chinese, who came to empty them, and we developed good relationship with them with an eye to planning

escapes.

To complete the account of the types of work I chose to do or found myself obliged to do during those thirty months I would tell you that I was also a noodle-maker, a woodcutter and, last but not least, a butcher. That was the work I most liked, though you had to be very careful not to get infected fingers. Much of the meat was very poor, but we tried to rescue enough to make so-called hamburgers or stews, though they were mainly of potato. And choosing the job of butcher was also calculated, since there too, you could meet Chinese people as they came to deliver their merchandise. Occasionally, and fleetingly, you found yourself alone with one of them and that gave you a chance to exchange news.

That was how I learned of the Japanese military collapse... I hastened to pass on the amazing news to the other prisoners. I remember that some English friends whom I had told of the rumour invited me to take a thimble of alcohol to celebrate the glad tidings. But 'Beware lest you be wrong' they said to me, 'for if you are you will have to buy us a whole bottle'. In the event I had no cause to regret my optimism.

#

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

[Excerpts] ...

[...]

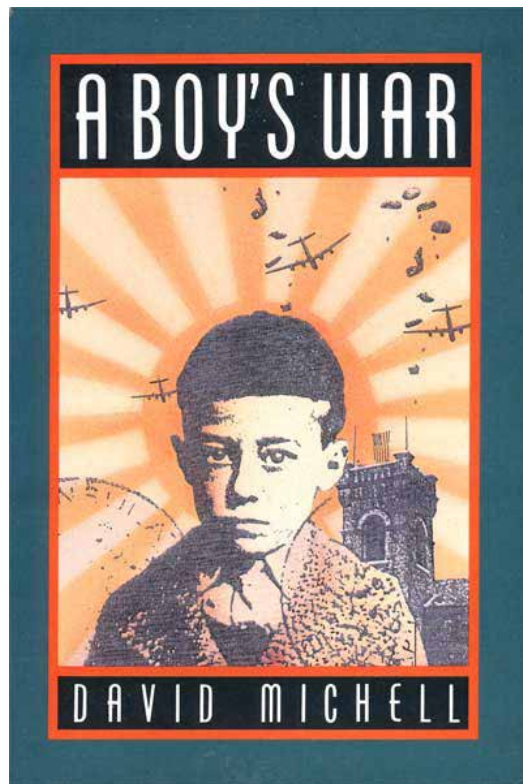
As people realized that internment could go on for a long time and that the quality of camp life depended on their own efforts, they got down to work.

The Japanese limited their own involvement in the internal work of the camp, stating that their two responsibilities were to see that none escaped and to supply coal and wood for cooking and heating and — “adequate” food.

Adequate was an overstatement, as their basis for calculation was quantities for two meals a day. Weihsien was really a world in microcosm with at least fifteen nationalities represented. The majority were families associated with foreign business enterprises, but the largest occupational group were missionaries, belonging to various Protestant mission boards or denominations. There were 400 Roman Catholic priests and nuns, although all but 30 of the priests were transferred to Peking not long after our arrival. Their going was a great loss to the camp workforce as our school was a poor substitute in terms of manpower.

Other people who carried the work load realized that with our coming, *[the Chefoo kids came when the Gripsholm folks left ...]* the ratio of children to the total camp population had risen to about one child to two adults, entailing heavier duties for older people.

But since we were all civilians, we fared better than the military POWs. We were even given freedom to organize our own activities, being for all practical purposes a self-governing community,



with committees elected by internees.

Camp was managed by nine committees: Supplies, Quarters, Employment, Engineering, Discipline, Medical, Education, General Affairs, and Finance. The senior ruling body in camp was called the Discipline Committee. The chairman was Ted McLaren of Butterfield and Swire, a British business concern with a long history in China. That committee was made up of a number of business people and missionaries, including some of our own staff. They were the group who spoke on behalf of the camp to the

Japanese rulers and also were our mouthpiece to talk with Mr. Egger, the Swiss Consul, who was given permission on rare occasions to visit the camp.

Every able-bodied person was given regular work to do. In the kitchen most people worked a twelve-hour day shift and then had two days off.

Many of the older boys took turns at pumping water up into the water tower for the camp supply.

We younger children did things such as transporting water from one side of camp to the other and carrying the washing, which our teachers had tried to scrub clean, often without soap or brushes. We also sifted through the ash heaps to try and find pieces of coke or unburned coal, and gathered sticks and anything else that would burn, to try to keep warm through the winter.

Undetected by the teachers or Japanese soldiers, we sometimes sneaked into the Japanese part of the compound and climbed the tall trees looking for dead twigs or branches.

[excerpts]

Even though our shoes were saved for the winter, by the last year some had to get by with layered cloth top nailed onto wooden soles.

Before long, shirts and pajamas were made from old curtains and mattress covers, and even blankets were cut up to make trousers. "Prickly seat" became more common than prickly heat. Since tablecloths were rather out of place in camp and were a dispensable luxury, they were cut up for underwear. In a day when there was no such thing as colored underpants, I was glad I wasn't the boy that had an embroidered wild rose right on the seat of his briefs.

Our teachers carried a heavy work load with the laundry since there was very little soap, and what there was, was very inferior. The brushes soon lost their bristles, and many a knuckle was bruised on the ribs of the washboards. White shirts became but a memory as no clothes were spared from the graying common to Weihsien garments. "Give us the soap, and we will finish the job" was an often heard slogan around the laundry tubs in a part of the hospital basement.

The laundry was one of our chores.

Three days a week a dawdling line of the younger children could be seen weaving its way back from the hospital to our rooms in Block 23, with basins of wet washing on our heads or in our arms.

One time I tripped and had to detour by the pump to give everything another rinse and wring out before delivering the goods to the teachers for hanging out on the line. Some days when we had to wait for the washing, a few of us who were either braver or more morbidly inclined would let our curiosity get the better of us. The laundry was near the camp morgue. When we knew there was a body in the morgue awaiting burial, we would lean in the small window at the back, and using a long stick to lift a corner of the sheet, see who it was that had died. The room was fairly dark with only the one small window, and one time, just as the stick was making contact with the sheet, a man opened the door and the edge of the sheet fluttered upward. We didn't wait to see any more and took off without looking back.

[excerpts]

The boys and girls in the other schools set the tables and clean rooms.

Here the staff do their chores and spread bread. It is quite a business to clean your room before school in the mornings. We are also limited in the number of pieces of bread that we eat; the Preps eat nine a day. At supper they are allowed one every five minutes, and each is very particular that no one gets over his share.

We are having the most interesting meals, tou-fu (bean curd) in a large loaf for dinner. "Of course we see no fruit, though we have a lot of vegetables and often have raw cabbage and carrots for a salad.

I am sure that no one has talked so much about food for years. We spend absolutely no money outside the compound more than is really necessary. We are ripping up war knitting, scarves, etc., and making them into cardigans for the children. The staff are busy knitting stockings and other necessities.

[excerpts]

Every one of us in camp had our regular chores, from sweeping floors to peeling potatoes. Literally jammed in between all this we pursued our lessons on trunks and boxes round the walls of our all-in-one classroom-living-room-dining-room-bedroom.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

[excerpts] ...

[...]

Committees were formed and I was named to the General Affairs Section.

The children eventually went to school under the German sisters from Tsingtao. Groups from Peking, Tientsin, and all parts of North China brought our total number in the course of days to 1,800. Three kitchens fed the mob and general and decided dissatisfaction prevailed to the end over the poor and scanty amounts of food provided by the enemy administration. Sanitary conditions became appalling, work became heavier, for we were compelled to do all phases of heavy duty: ditch digging, pumping water, clearing away tons of garbage, carrying flour, all baking and cooking, carrying supplies, hauling coal, and minor brick construction work attached to rooms and chimneys. We had our own carpenter and iron repair shops and forged our own materials for various uses around Camp. [...]

[excerpts] ...

A Normal Day's Activities

Elden was usually up first, starting our outside fire, a communitybuilt affair of mud and bricks. The rest of us arose in time to dress for roll call, before which I often had fifteen or twenty diapers and other things washed and hanging on the line. My wife, Lois, was in bed for two and a half months with pleurisy, but as she gained strength she took over some of the washing and ironing in the morning hours. The guard appeared and one of us simply told him the number of people in our small compound of five rooms, after which he disappeared, much to our peace of mind. Having our own stock of cereals and eggs, we never went to the community dining hall for the usual breakfast of bread porridge, but prepared our own, and in good weather ate outside in the fresh air. The girls collected dishes, Marian (Mrs. E.C. Whipple) or Elden started washing them, and sometimes I came in for the drying. Our central living day's dining room came next for the

sweeping and mopping, and our two bed rooms were set in order before Elden went off to work in the carpenter shop or to pump water, while I chased off to headquarters. Marian collected bottles and bag, and journeyed to the hospital for the days' supply of eggs and milk, paid for by the interneers. When she became strong enough, Lois continued with house work, though the baby took up most of her time. I moved around in my capacity as a General Affairs Committee member, from canteen to shoe shop to library, putting in a nail here for the ladies in the sewing room, or scrounging a box from the rear of the canteen to make additional shoe shelves for our industrious and capable Flemish Catholic shoe repairers. Elden served more nobly on the Music Committee. "Thus noon came upon us and we consumed weak soup, a little potatoes (rare), a little meat, and a little tsai" (vegetable) in some sort of gravy, supplemented with baked bread, in munity dining hundred others, The dishes, our own, our own the comroom, with eight plus uncounted flies! were washed outside by the faithful ladies, and we returned home for a brief rest. Elden and I resumed our appointed tasks in the afternoon, returning for tea. Elden's brew of black tea always tasted so good that some friends from different parts of camp came daily at that hour to see us! Music practice, baseball, or making coal balls out of coal dust and mud took up the rest of the afternoon. Supper, the youngsters brought back from the community kitchen in kettles, and we enjoyed (but for the flies) this meal outside also. The dishes washed and the children in bed, Elden and Marian went off to visit Mr. and Mrs. McNeil of the National Bible Society of Scotland, while Lois tended the baby and read, and I watered the garden; or we all went to a concert. We usually turned in for the night about ten o'clock, after coffee or some drink and sandwiches, unless we had business at the wall, in which case we retired about half an hour later! So ended the day!

[further reading]

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/HeritageOfFaith/WhippleWWII\(web\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/HeritageOfFaith/WhippleWWII(web).pdf)

[excerpts] ...

[...]

Many camp residents missed their house staff. Now they had to do everything themselves. In principle, everyone did as much work as possible for which he or she was trained or experienced. All professions were represented in the camp. Everyone had to improvise with faulty material and/or tools. Furthermore, water had to be pumped, heated and carried and the new supplies of food and coal delivered to the gates had to be brought to the kitchens and the warehouses. So the camp residents did everything themselves, including their own laundry. As we know, in the beginning the heavily polluted camp had to be cleaned. The prisoners took the rubbish outside the camp. The engineers dug drainage channels for the rainy season.

There was a lot of stealing, especially when food became scarce, and for that reason a disciplinary committee was set up. Punishments were handed out such as banning cooking in your room, house arrest, no more access to the library or other camp services, dismissal from a job. The punishments made little impression. Yet, given the circumstances, there was little crime. There was order and authority. Despite all the problems, the residents managed to run the camp with integrity.

[excerpts]

Although the camp hardships were relatively easy - the De Jongh family withdrew into the family circle, in the quiet block, with friendly families, Frans [*being father of a numerous family — of 5 children + a newborn baby*] — did not have to do the heavy work and had money to buy extra food



every now and then. —

Camp life was very hard for many residents and some could not cope with the tension. There was no alcohol, no tobacco. Cigarettes were made from pine needles, leaves or tea. People smoked each other's butts. By the way, tobacco was missed more than alcohol. Other inhabitants were frustrated and that sometimes led to violence. If there had been a stabbing the hospital staff would not report these wounded to the Japanese.

Several suicide attempts were made. A number of internees had been important or famous before the camp time and could not cope with the change. Suicide, however, was weird. A hospital employee, Mike Fox, who had been a renowned correspondent, tried to commit suicide with an overdose of morphine and aspirin. The internees blamed him for wasting the precious medicines. Another prisoner ate the cups of the matches from one box. She became seriously ill but survived. She had been a fashion model in America in the thirties and could not cope with the loss of all attention. A daughter of the most famous Madame in Beijing, who had become a star in the nightlife of that cosmopolitan city, slit her wrists, but not deep enough. Bobby Simmons also remembers these failed suicide attempts.

[excerpts]

Anneke was also happy to meet nuns from her old school who fulfilled all kinds of useful tasks.

The clergy had no family and immediately and unconditionally put themselves at the service of the community. They became indispensable in all the work that had to be done, especially in nursing, teaching, and caring for small children.

Because they had no children of their own, they were able to take over much of the care of the large families. Furthermore, they did the heavy work such as maintaining the water tower by pumping water. They baked bread, cooked and took care of the kitchens.

The religious also took care of maintaining the moral and mental health of the internees. Most of the orders were Catholic. The Scheutists were so enthusiastic that many Protestants were converted to the Catholic faith in the first months after the internment. The Japanese thought it was all fine. Anneke says that people in distress 'go to the Lord'.

Suddenly people became very pious and there was a lot of prayer. After all these years, she still feels some aversion to the already compelling pious reports of the American and English missionaries and the children of the Chefoo Inland Mission School on the Weih sien website.

Nice young fathers, who had always lived in monasteries, suddenly came to Weih sien, Shantung and became very popular. They sometimes had romances with beautiful young girls. Because of their direct contact with young women and their constant closeness they fell in love and vice versa. Thus Anneke remembers a certain father, a handsome Franciscan, with whom she moped up as a blossoming adolescent and with whom she was secretly in love. All sorts of barriers also fell away with the clergy.

[excerpts]

A well-known Lazarist was Father Verhoeven, who was very good at drawing and painting. He made numerous drawings and paintings of the buildings and grounds in the camp. He also drew an accurate map of Weih sien.

As no photographs were taken during the camp period, so Father Verhoeven's pictures are very valuable to the former camp residents, their relatives, and those interested.

Unfortunately, most nuns and fathers had to leave the camp after six months. The internees were heartbroken, Anneke says. The nuncio, the diplomatic representative of the Vatican, issued a decree on behalf of the Pope, stating that the Catholic religious had renounced their own nationality by entering the monastery and going on missions. They were first and foremost Catholics and members of the Vatican; the Vatican City was thus their homeland. They no longer had allied nationality. The nuncio also contacted

the Japanese about this and they judged that the Catholic monks were unjustly imprisoned. All of a sudden they all had to go back to the monasteries. Presumably, the Pope feared that they would go to damnation in Weih sien because of the intensive contact with lay people. The Lazarists were then more or less locked up in a French convent in Beijing, which was located in the compound of the Bei Tang Church, the neo-Gothic Catholic cathedral of the Sacred Heart. They would stay here until 1945.

[excerpts]

The sewing workshop was very important, but sewing and adjusting clothes was more necessary than a recreational activity. Knitting and embroidery, however, were also ways to pass the time, as were woodcarving, drawing and painting. The internees had brought paint, watercolour, drawing ink and brushes with them. The woodcarving was ingenious and produced, for example, beautiful boxes, desk sets and chess games.

Most of the woodcarving was done in vegetable gardens for the production of food. A few, like Frans de Jongh, were engaged in the planting of flowers. It must have been a comforting occupation for Anneke and Wiesje. Planting something beautiful and seeing it coming out of the ground gave them hope for the future.

In the extremely harsh winter of 1944-1945, there was no more sport.

The vitality of the people was greatly reduced by the hardships. It was so cold that games were no longer held on the baseball field. The guards counted the people by the blocks. So they could immediately count the sick. The people who were absent because they worked in shifts also had to be counted. For example, they'd shout: "All out, twenty-one."

[further reading]

http://weih sien-paintings.org/books/Hier_In_Het_Oosten_Alles_Wel/p_HierInHetOostenAllesWel.html

by Laurie Tipton ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/TiptonTotale\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/TiptonTotale(WEB).pdf)

[excerpts] ...

[...]

Within a few weeks the camp began to organise itself, and committees were formed which took the responsibility of seeing that the necessary jobs were done. Soon life had settled down to a well-organised routine.

The Japanese supplied coal and wood for cooking, flour from which we made our own bread, vegetables of the cheaper sort (such as carrots, turnips, sweet potatoes, cabbage and leeks), meat and sometimes fish, usually squids or an assortment of small odds and ends, hardly worth the trouble it gave the fish-squad to clean them, and salt, pepper, soya-bean sauce and oils for cooking. Occasionally we received a ration of sugar and eggs. Everything in the camp was done by the internees themselves, and the greater part of the work was concerned with the feeding of the 1800 people. Coal had to be brought from the coal dump, wood carried and chopped, meat washed and minced or cut into cubes, vegetables washed, peeled and cut up, and supplies carried from the store-house to the kitchens. Relays of stokers were required to keep the huge cauldrons boiling, also dish-washers and cauldron-cleaners, cooks, assistant cooks and their helpers.

For the first few weeks it was exhausting work but one gradually got used to it. I first worked in the Peking kitchen as general help and then graduated to the butchery, where the maggot-ridden carcasses and the myriads of flies which laid eggs on the meat faster than one could wipe them off were rather more than I could stomach, and I went back to the kitchen as a helper on Father J—'s cooking team. Remaining in the kitchen for the rest of the time, I gradually worked my way up from helper to chief cook.

Arthur Porter cooked in the winter and worked in the community garden in the summer, and Ram



divided his time between the kitchen and the camp canteen, and so, by skilful planning and a little scrounging, we contrived between us to look after our own interests with considerable success.

As the summer approached, people relaxed, realising that they would in all probability be interned for some time to come. Camp work was

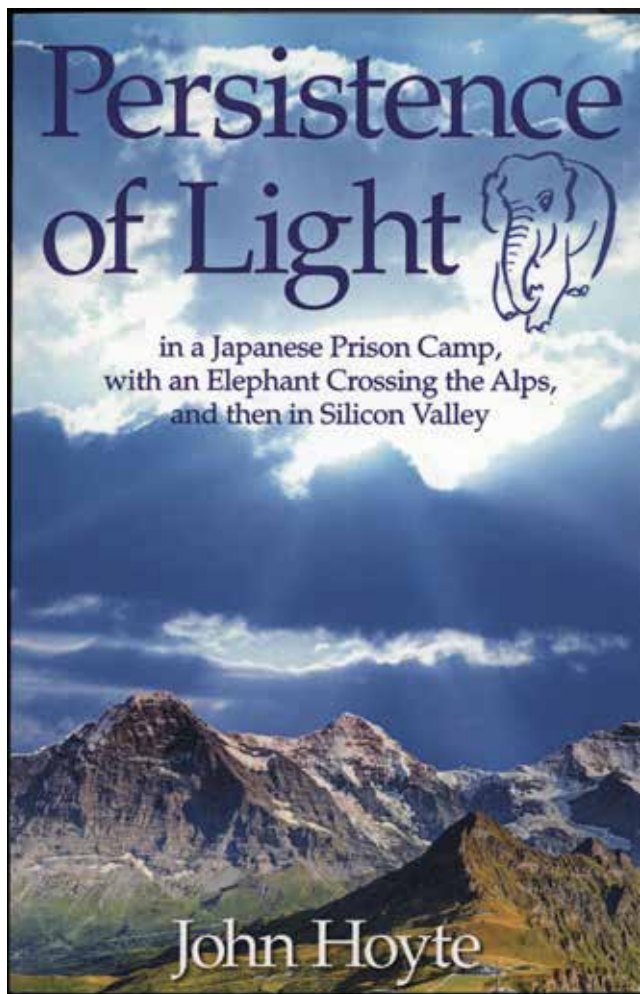
put on to a regular basis, the majority of the men doing one twelve-hour day on their assigned duty and two days off. Amongst the Catholic Fathers, the educationalists from the Peking universities and the language students, we had some of the finest intellects in North China, and lectures and talks were given on every imaginable subject. A children's school was organised; a Dramatic Society had been formed and had produced some very creditable shows; concerts were arranged and pianoforte recitals were given by Curtis Grimes or Shireen Talati, equal to anything of that nature one could hear in the Far East. The various religious denominations worked out their arrangements for church services. A baseball league was started with matches played almost every evening.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/TiptonTotale\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/TiptonTotale(WEB).pdf)

by John Hoyte ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)



[excerpts] ...

[...]

Fortunately for us, an earlier band of prisoners from Beijing and Tientsin had worked on improving matters, cleaning out the toilets (which were inches thick in human waste), and establishing two working kitchens.



Our new home was about two hundred by a hundred fifty yards, and housed up to two thousand prisoners at its maximum.

There were rows and rows of tiny rooms which had been designated for Chinese students, each with a narrow door and window at the front and a small window at the rear, but now were crammed with prisoner families. With no running water or heat, the new inmates had to become very adaptable.

Six months earlier, the first batch had been brought in, followed by group after group of enemy nationals, as the Japanese called us, from many parts of northern China.

Before our three hundred arrived, there were about sixteen hundred prisoners. It was a crowd of many nationalities, the very last arrivals being Italians brought in after their country's capitulation.

Together, they all formed a mixed bag of personalities, rich and poor, missionary and secular, young and old, generous and miserly, healthy and sick. Mr. Watham, for example, was a millionaire, the president of a huge coal mining operation, while Barbey was a drug addict picked up off the streets of Beijing. We all had to learn to live within the same primitive conditions.

[excerpts]

JOBS AND WATER

Everyone had a job—even the slackers, and there always were some, who tried their best to get away with as little work as possible.

We kids watched the adults laboring away in the kitchens and janitorial services, making shelving and stovepipes, and providing many other services, and wondered how we could contribute. Eventually, we were given our own jobs.

Mine, as an eleven-year-old, was to work the manual water pump for an hour at a time. All the

water for the camp was pumped up by hand from two deep wells into two thirty-foot water towers. Fortunately we never ran out of water.

Our pump was a long-levered, double-handled type, made of cast iron and creaking loudly as we operators moved the handles up and down. For a whole hour we would work at it, with short breaks or taking it in turns.

The book lovers would be able to place a book beside the mechanism and read it while pumping. I tried to read *The Scarlet Pimpernel* this way. It worked for a while but my eyes would get tired refocusing all the time.

We climbed up the metal ladder fastened to the side of the water tower and gaze longingly at the cool liquid glory up there, in the sweltering heat of summer. Oh for a dip! This was, of course, strictly forbidden. I cannot remember the punishment but it must have been severe as not once did our little gang of eleven-and-twelve-year-olds go in.

The wells were contaminated with giardia, so all drinking water had to be boiled.



On long, hot summer days we would drink and drink and drink, mainly from old wine bottles, though the water was always lukewarm.

All the refrigerators that were in the compound had been taken by the Japanese.

My ten-year-old sister, Elizabeth, had the job of hanging out laundry to dry. During the summer this was fine, but in the bitter cold winters, her fingers turned black and blue. It was particularly painful gathering in the sheets that turned into solid expanses of ice on the clotheslines.

Cleanliness was a constant challenge, as soap was desperately short in supply. We were supposed to receive one small bar per person per month, but delivery was unreliable, the quality of soap was bad, and it had to cover all laundry personal toilet, and cleaning facilities.

Eventually whites took on a permanent grayness. After a few months, linens, socks, and other clothing became worn and torn, making repairing them a major project for the women and girls.

I was quite expert at darning my own socks, a practice I had learned from my mother.

Everything was recycled. Everything was hand-me-down. We were growing out of the clothes we had at the beginning of the war.

I became well acquainted with my brothers' things. Leather was scarce and shoes precious. We went barefoot as much of the year as possible, definitely all summer and as much of the spring and fall as we could.

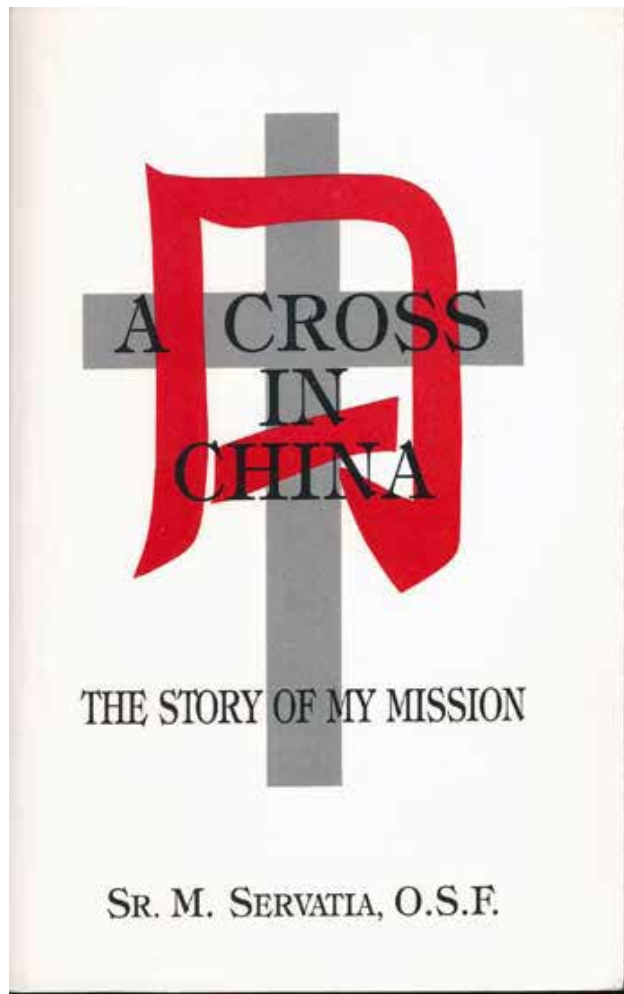
The camp shoe repair shop was much appreciated when leather started to fall apart.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)

by *Sr. M. Servatia, ...*

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia\(WEB\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia(WEB).pdf)



[excerpts] ...

[...]

The Commandant of the Camp, Mr. Sukigawa, spoke fairly fluent English, having previously held a consular position in Hawaii. I think he tried his very best to keep away any friction between us and the guards.

The guards, being in Consular Service, fared far better than those in the war areas, but they were changed occasionally although none of us knew how often or for what reason. Mr. Ibara was the Commandant's aide. He was more straight-laced than was Mr. Sukigawa, but like the guards I am sure he appreciated the position he had.

During that first week papers were being sent around, asking us what work we were most interested in.

While we were at the camp, we did not know how long we would remain and some thought that perhaps the Japanese would in time send us over to Japan and we would have to work for them at their pleasure. As a result, this form caused us some concern. We did not realize that the paper was coming from our own side and certain people of the camp were trying to get organized. There was much work to be done, particularly because there were few conveniences.

Water had to be pumped by a steady shift of men at several pumps. Cooking and preparing of vegetables, meat, fish was also necessary. The bakery was a problem. The hauling of coal, care of the lavatories, teaching of the children, washing, keeping the grounds clean, etc., etc. were all vital chores.

I signed up for kitchen duty and got it. Each person in the camp was required to perform at least three hours of camp duty. In no time the labor committee organized the camp.

[excerpts]

The next week Sr. Reginald asked Sr. Esther if she could do the washing for the five Trappists. There was enough to keep us busy, crowded as we were, but Sr. Esther said she could, on condition that she asks none of us to help her. I felt sorry for her because I thought the washing for five men would be too much so I offered to help. She went over to get the sheets and other wash and came back loaded down. Father Scanlon offered to carry the water and Sr. Reginald managed to find someone who would lend her a twenty-four-inch basin and I took our two basins along and we found a place outside to wash. The sheets were made of a material almost like canvas and we wondered when they had been washed last. Sister managed to borrow two scrubbing brushes and together we scrubbed. I had only a small basin so

I could scrub about a six-inch square at a time, but we felt we were doing good work so we might as well enjoy it while it lasts. Each week after that we did their washing, with Father Scanlon standing by to get us hot water from the boilers about two blocks away. And while we scrubbed, he would talk.

One day Sr. Reginald got tired because she couldn't scrub and listen intently at the same time to his Australian dialect, so she told him to please go away. He was hurt and so after that he sent Father Alphonsus L'Heureux instead.

[excerpts]

The leeks were interesting things. They were about two feet long, and of course, mostly greens, which the one in charge said were to be cut off and put into the garbage. Gradually we began to recognize the value of these greens and used them in Kitchen One.

One day we found Sr. Ludmilla trying to fry onion tops with some potatoes she had gotten somehow. On being asked where she got those from she said, "from Kitchen 3's garbage box". She had taken them from the top of the bin and washed them off.

One day I happened to be working alone in a room outside the kitchen chopping the tops off. I had a bunch cut off and when I turned to them, they were gone. Mr. Echford was just snatching them away. The British ex-Consul of Peking and here he was scrounging onions! He said, "Doctor's orders!" and left. I did not respond as it was better not to say anything about it.

Cleaning of the vegetables was a job for the ladies and we had ladies at it who perhaps hadn't ever done it before in their lives, and now for want of something else, they got that job. They willingly peeled the potatoes and clean the vegetables but when it came to the leeks, there was always trouble.

That seemed to be something too demeaning.

Some generous soul had donated two potatoes paring knives but it didn't take long and we had

only one, then none. We were given a few knives for use on the vegetables, but the one in charge had to guard them with hawk eyes because they were precious things.

It was the men's duty to bring the vegetables to the kitchen and also to wash the potatoes.

Outside the kitchen were two bathtubs which we figured, the army personnel had taken out of the houses in "out of bounds" because they preferred showers. The men were to fill them with water from the well and scrub the potatoes for the ladies to peel. Brother McCoy got that job and he hated it. I gently reminded him of what he said about not having anything to do in a concentration camp and he advised me that his opinion had changed.

[excepts]

One of the worst jobs in camp, although there were many other unwanted ones, was cleaning fish. We finally got a little crew together. Sr. Mercedes and I, three of the Protestant missionaries and perhaps one or two others. Each time the fish came in we would be alerted and we clung to the job and if the rest didn't want to do it.

. . . well let them go hang. In winter it wasn't less pleasant because the fish were packed in huge boxes of ice and we had to pull them apart and besides the work had to be done outdoors on an old table. It was always interesting to note the different kinds of fish that came out of the box and sometimes we wished one of us had studied fish before we came because there were varieties none of us had ever seen before, even baby octopus.

[excerpts]

The lavatories must have been a problem to those who were preparing the place. Generally speaking, Japan does not have lavatories such as we have in the States. The ones in the camp were in separate buildings, the men and women each having their own. Each building had about eight toilets, separated by a wall. On top was a water box

for flushing, but since all water had to be pumped and there were so many to use them, it took about three days and these boxes were useless from then on, which meant that it had to be periodically flushed with pails of water.

There were no seats, just an elongated, enamel bowl on the floor about a foot wide. The matter was flushed to a place outside the room and Chinese were allowed to come and remove to their fields where it was used for fertilizer.

Cleaning these places was another duty not to be envied and it was finally resolved that all ladies take their weeks for the W.C.'s and men for the M.C.'s.

Sometime in the beginning of 1945 the Japanese got in a long urinal along the other wall of the room. We wondered why and finally it was thought that since in Japan there is no distinction between men's and women's facilities they expected the men to use ours too, but we dared them and there was no challenge.

[excerpts]

The next thing we needed was a diet kitchen with food of a little better quality for the sick, so one was organized. Mrs. Wormsby was put in charge, and she was good because she could put everybody under her in their place, whether you liked it or not. Rough as she was, I finally got to like her. I was placed in charge of dining room service and she told me just how much to give each so there was something left over and I could give seconds. The work wasn't hard since I only had to be there at meal times. Several of the Fathers had jobs around the kitchen and dining room. Father Corneille Louws, a Dutch priest and Superior of the mission of Yungping, was under me and the tables were his job. I was the boss of a Superior, and Mrs. Wormsby told me in no uncertain terms I shouldn't be afraid to tell them what to do. One of the Trappists was sick for a few weeks and Father L'Heureux would come to get his ration for him. He would bring the little bucket, stand it down for me to fill, and then go out. Sometimes it was late when he would return. One day we were all finished in the dining room and Father had not returned. I took the bucket and walked the three blocks



A former "taipan" named Blackadder

over to the Trappists house, knocked at the door. Someone inside said:

"Ching!" ("Enter"—in Chinese) and there sat the sick Trappist on his bed eating his ration from the kitchen which one of the Fathers evidently brought him, and it looked like a proper portion to me. I spoke a few words in Chinese but he didn't understand. I gave him the dinner and left.

[excerpts]

One of the White Russian ladies requested an English teacher. She didn't want to attend classes so I went over to her room a few times a week.

Her husband, Johannes Johannsen, had been a sea captain, and had travelled around the world



Prisoners who worked in the kitchens and bakery suffered less than most of the other adults from the inadequate food supply

working in different countries. He was quite ill, but he loved to have company and I often thought that was his wife's main reason for not wanting to leave him alone while she went to class. He had many stories to tell and he used to joke about the fact (and we all knew it was true enough) that he had always felt best on sea and now that he had to stay on land, he was ill, while it was just the opposite with the rest of us. The English lessons were interesting indeed. I listened to more sea stories than she to English. The captain got gradually worse and finally passed away.

I continued teaching and one day she told me that she had come to China with her ex-husband to escape the Revolution in Russia but later they separated. Then she met the captain and married him. She had a servant girl in Shanghai, also a Russian, who married, and later left her husband and married another. She scolded the girl for doing so, not realizing that she herself had done the same thing. Probably she thought because she was of a higher class, it didn't make so much difference. One has to marvel at the way the faith of the Orthodox Church is handed down from generation to generation. Although most of these didn't care about Sunday services, still there must be Baptism, weddings and funerals according to the rites of the Church.

[excerpts]

It was said that Goyas made a million dollars on the black market while in Weihsien, but even if that were so, when eggs were \$5.00 apiece, a million dollars wasn't what it was at that time in the States. It was also said that he had four passports and we all believed that story. One night we were awakened by a noise in the little corridor outside our room. It was a hot summer night and we had not locked the door; there was just a little sliding half-door which was hooked. Then a loud knock on Sr. Eustella's door. There were a few more quiet noises and all was still.

In the morning I asked Sr. Eustella about it and she said the guards most likely were after Goyas again and that our quarters were one place he thought it was safe for hiding. The Japanese would not easily come into the nun's quarters.

But try as the Discipline Department could, they could never stop the scrounging any more than they could stop the breathing of the camp.

Those who worked in the bakery took home flour, those in the kitchen meat, and the ladies at the vegetables stuck some vegetables in their pockets. It was nice to have a job where you had a chance to scrounge something to cook on your little stove at home, and it just meant somewhat less in the dining room and fewer seconds.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia(WEB).pdf)

[excerpts] ...

[...]

When they handed out jobs, Dad was put to work as the baker. Three large clay ovens were located in buildings near the playing field. Mixing the wormy flour and stoking the fires with coal kept him busy most of the day. He often came back drenched in perspiration and terribly tired, but he never lost his sense of humor.

When we had to use the toilet at night (especially the children), we used chamber pots. During the day, they were emptied into open sewers in the compound. Our Belgian neighbor, who had been president of the largest bank in China, was dead meat for Dad. Mr. Pander would cover his chamber pot with a delicate French doily and perform his task with the air of an English butler. Dad would call out from our doorway, "Hey, Pander, you going for seconds?" then laugh himself silly as Mr. Pander's face turned red. After a few weeks the lace doily disappeared and Mr. Pander, brandishing the pot, would jovially return a few remarks. Once he said, "I'll get you some too if you want."

Serving the meals was Mom's job. Queues of internees, sometimes 1,000, would snake out the door of the flimsy log dining hall. Mom had to stand with a few other women, ladling out stew or soup for hours. It was hard on her, especially with her deformed leg, but she never complained and, for a bonus, she could sometimes bring home leftovers.

Food was not scarce at first, but it was far from substantial. We did get turnips, cabbage, and sweet potatoes that were brought in by neighboring farmers. Meat was kept on trucks for days without refrigeration and often had maggots



in it. The soup was seasoned with Chinese leeks, but there were no spices. If it hadn't been for sweet potatoes, we would have been sadly deficient in Vitamins A and C because there was no milk, fruit, or juices. Instead, we drank soybean tea. It was my duty to get a small pail of soybean tea, walking the twenty blocks back to our rooms. With no sugar or cream, it was quite distasteful at first. Now nutritionists are proclaiming the benefits of soy. So, go figure!

As far as meat, Langdon Gilkey, a fellow internee who went on to write a book about his experiences in the camp, claims we had an occasional hamburger. I don't recall them, and Gilkey may have had special treatment because he was the cook. There was some sinewy horse meat at times in stew, but it had gray veins and gristle and was on the verge of being spoiled due to lack of refrigeration.

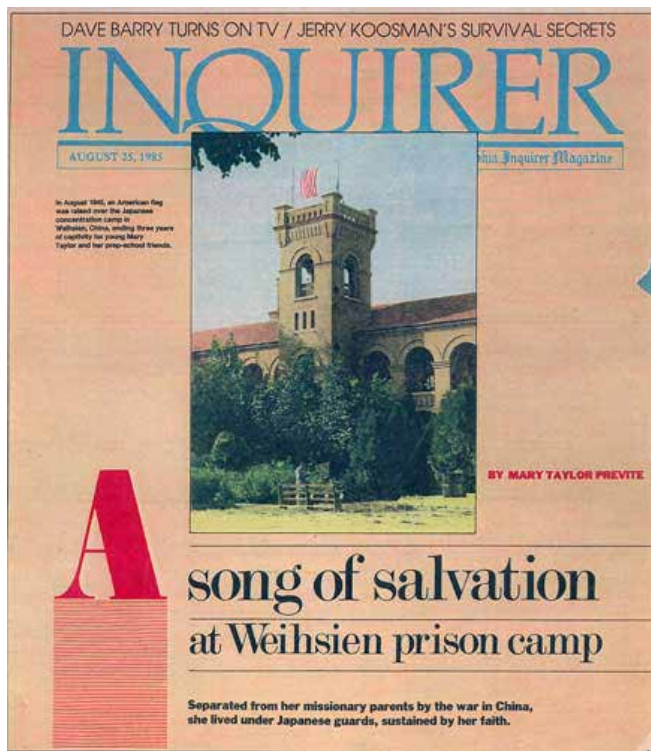
Nothing was wasted. All unused bread was soaked overnight in big vats with a little shredded orange peel (the only touch of citrus that we had in our diet). It was heated in the morning as our porridge and served with soybean tea. The Chinese peasants hated the Japanese and tried to send us all they could, but they were starving themselves and under strict surveillance by the Japs.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/OneLeafInTime/OneLeaf\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/OneLeafInTime/OneLeaf(WEB).pdf)

by Mary Previte, née Taylor ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>



[excerpts] ...

[...]

SELF-GOVERNMENT AT WEIHSIEN ruled that every able-bodied person should work.

The prisoners did everything - cooked, baked, swabbed latrines. My older sister, Kathleen, scrubbed clothes. Jamie pumped long shifts at the water tower and carried garbage. John made coal balls. Before and after school, I mopped my square of the floor, mended clothes, stoked the fire, and carried coal dust. Not coal. The Japanese issued only coal dust.

Like every other Weih sien problem, coal dust had its dark side and its bright side. You could take your pick. You could grump yourself miserable about having only coal dust to burn; or, when you were breaking the ice in the water bucket in the morning to wash your face, you could count your blessings that you had anything at all to fuel the stove.

We younger girls made a game of carrying the coal buckets. In a long human chain - girl, bucket, girl, bucket, girl, bucket, girl - we hauled the coal dust from the Japanese quarters of the camp back to our dormitory, chanting all the way, "Many hands make light work." Then, in the biting cold, with frost cracked fingers, we shaped coal balls out of coal dust and clay - two shovels of coal dust, one shovel of clay and a few splashes of water. Grown-ups swapped coal ball recipes. Winter sunshine made the coal balls dry enough for burning.

One person in the camp who didn't work at a job was Grandpa Taylor. Almost 80, and the only surviving son of J. Hudson Taylor, he had dwindled away to less than 80 pounds. His clothes bagged around his emaciated frame. "Grandpa Taylor," people begged him, "let us take in your clothes to make them fit."

He always smiled, his face haloed with glory: "God is going to bring me out of Weih sien," he used to say. "And I'm going to fit in these clothes again." (He was right: he did survive the war and was flown back to England.)

[excerpts]

Only the stouthearted could work in the butchery with the maggot-ridden carcasses. Plagues of fly-laid eggs on the meat faster than the team could wipe them off. When the most revolting-looking liver - horribly dark, with a hard, cream-colored edge - arrived with the day's food supplies, the cooks called in our school doctor for a second opinion. Was it fit to eat? Probably an old mule, he guessed. So we ate it.

If you wanted to see the worst in people, you stood and watched the food line, where griping and surliness were a way of life. Hungry prisoners were likely to pounce on the food servers, who were constantly being accused of dishing out more or less than the prescribed half dipper or full dipper of soup. It was a no-win job.

by James H. Pyke ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Diary/WhiteWolves/p-WhiteWolves.htm>

[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Arriving at Weihsien, Fred described what they saw: “Bare walls, bare floors, dim electric lights, no running water, primitive latrines, open cesspools, a crude bakery, two houses with showers, three huge public kitchens, a desecrated church and a dismantled hospital, a few sheds for shops, rows of cell-like rooms, and three high dormitories for persons who are single — out of this we set to work to organize a corporate life.”

Frances’ description of the camp supplements Fred’s: “The Presbyterians had two mission compounds that they were particularly proud of, one was a big college on the Bosphorus, and the other was at Weihsien in the Province of Shantung. This compound which covered several city blocks was a wonderful example of mission strategy and Christian foresight. Inside the outside walls were several smaller compounds, each with its own walls. One was for the hospital, the Nurses’ Training School and the doctors’ residences, one for the Bible Women’s Training School and the dormitory for the Bible women, another for the Middle Schools. There were elementary schools as well with their dormitories, row upon row of them. It was ideal for a prison camp.

[excerpts]

Frances reported that in camp Fred first volunteered for the meanest jobs, such as cleaning the toilets and showers. Later he became coordinator of the wells which meant that he was responsible for getting pumpers to man the pump handles at all times. Then he worked in the carpentry shop.

“At mealtime we found yellow slips on the long pine tables in the kitchens asking each to indicate experience and preference regarding various kinds of camp labor. There was work for all and those who refused were few. The Yenching University

contingent of teachers, doctors of literature, philosophy and science worked beyond their strength. The Catholic fathers and sisters won golden opinions by their cheerful assumption of disagreed tasks. Frank Connelly of the Baptist Mission managed a kitchen for eight hundred people. He was a born leader and people of all sorts worked with him gladly.

“Next we found white slips at our places indicating procedure for electing camp committees. When the Japanese imprisoned us, they imprisoned democracy, democracy — that was the watch word. Yet they seemed pleased to have the details of camp management left to the prisoners, while they laid down general rules. These were: no traffic with the enemy, no black market, no effort to escape, no vandalism, no insubordination.

[excerpts]

Frances, who worked in one of the kitchens for a time, recalled how everything had to be dumped into huge cauldrons which could hold sixteen buckets of water. Under them were fires of coal balls which were made from coal dust and clay. The resulting stews were enough for a meal, twice a day, which the cooks tried to stretch to three times a day. They tried to make the stew taste a little better by putting up on a blackboard the name in French or in Spanish or in Italian or German or some other language. No one was fooled. Then one day they put up an “S.O.S.” and the hungry internees thought it meant nothing to eat. However, they soon discovered that it instead meant “Same Old Stew.”

[further reading]

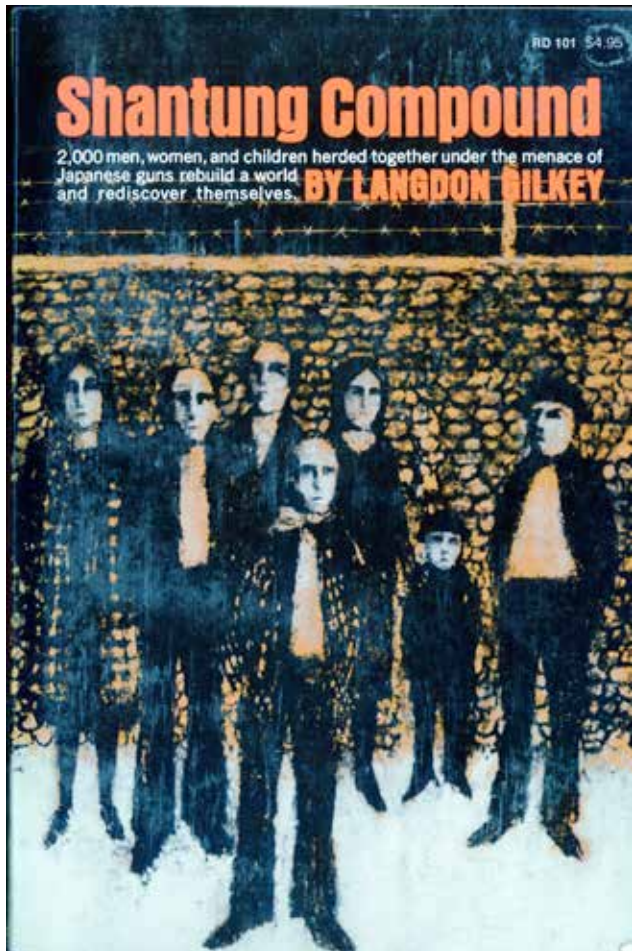
<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Diary/WhiteWolves/p-WhiteWolves.htm>



COAL & COAL-DUST

by Langdon Gilkey ...

http://weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm



was a job which called for great skill since the coal was poor and the cooks extremely demanding about the level of heat they had to have under their precious stews.

[excerpts] ...

By the beginning of the winter of 1944-1945, food from the parcels had long since vanished, and the cuts in our supplies were growing ever more drastic. Winter on the plains of North China is biting cold— such as one might expect in Detroit or Chicago. We were issued very little coal dust with which to heat our rooms. Morale in the camp was at its all-time low. The future stretched on as endless and dreary as the snow-covered flatlands beyond the barbed wire on the walls of the compound.

One of the stokers in the kitchen was a former official in a Far Eastern shipping line, a rather high-class type with a good education. Shortly after the law went into effect, he was caught taking home buckets of lump coal (rather than the coke made by his fires) from the kitchen yard.

[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Cooking food and boiling water, however, required heat. For this purpose, coal and wood were brought to the kitchen yard from the supply house in carts. In our yard two men were always chopping wood while others molded bricks out of the coal dust that made up most of our usual coal issue. Two stokers got up the fires and tended them, one in the cooking area and the other where water was boiled for drinking. Stoking

At his trial he defended himself by maintaining that his act was not stealing, but the common “perk” for his stoking job. Thus, said he, what he did was merely something that every stoker did by common practice and so his case was no different in kind from tens of others. Consequently, he continued, while he recognized that “perks” were now against the law, he demanded that every stoker in camp stand with him in the dock, or else he would claim that he was being tried unfairly. His sharp defence—one could see the advantage of a trained mind—put the court in a tough spot, as it was calculated to do. The Discipline Committee had no intention of prosecuting all the other stokers whom they knew were continuing



to take home “mild perks” as usual. What the committee wished to prosecute was stealing, and the members were certain that what this man had been doing was just that. They had, however, to acquit him, for they could not define legally the subtle but important difference between a normal “perk” and stealing so long as the law regarded both as crimes. What was needed was a legal definition of a legitimate “perk” so that anything beyond that could be effectively prosecuted. The mistake had been to seek to abolish an accepted pattern of the community’s life—rather than to control it within reasonable bounds. Shortly after the conclusion of this case, another man was caught taking raw supplies home from the kitchen. When he, too, claimed that this was his rightful “perk” and that he was then “no different from any other kitchen worker and so could not be prosecuted unless they all are — this mistake in the law became plain to everyone. As we all knew, “perks” had not ceased because of the law against them. On the contrary, all that had occurred by the promulgation of an idealistic law was the removal of the law from its relevance to the social scene—and that was a serious matter. For then, practices which the community would not accept were legally identifiable with continuing practices that it did accept, and so the law became incapable of coping with precisely those actions it was designed to prevent.

Community morale is a vague, irrational matter of atmosphere and moral tone—not a matter of logic. It would seem that once a basic moral standard is flouted in one area it is difficult for standards to be upheld in some other area. I was made aware of this tone of unlawfulness when, as manager, I heard a stoker on the boiler side say to a friend as he was putting his coke “perk” into his bucket to go home for the night, “These

committeemen and that damn manager says we shouldn’t take home lump coal — do they? Well, every one of those bloody committeemen have stolen stovepipes in their rooms—stolen from the same bloody Nips. Why is the coal I take home so different, except that I’m not a pukka big shot! Probably old man Campbell is well supplied with coal anyway—the stoker on No. 2 boiler lives right next door to him—the very one who got Campbell his extra stovepipes!”

One night a middle-aged woman, an Anglican missionary, saw John and Willie taking lump coal from the supply pile. She reported this at once to the Discipline Committee. The lawyers in the camp had devised for us an intricate judicial system. Now began its first real testing.

The day after reporting the case, the woman duly accused Chamberlain and Bryan before the Discipline Committee. At that meeting the two of them offered as a defence the justifications, we all knew so well: (1) Coal was the recognized “perk” of the supplies gang. If they were to be convicted, the entire laboring force should be similarly treated, although it was pointed out by a committee member that lump coal taken at night hardly counted as a “perk”. (2) They were actually helping the Allied war effort since the Japanese would have to replace the coal from their own supplies.

They felt, as Willie sardonically remarked, that they should be feted, not punished, by the camp for having risked their skins to relieve the Japanese of some of their coal! In spite of these arguments, the committee agreed that a case had been made against them, and that the trial would start the next day.

[further reading] ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm

by Meredith & Christine Helsby ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/photos/p_FrontCover.htm

[excerpts] ...

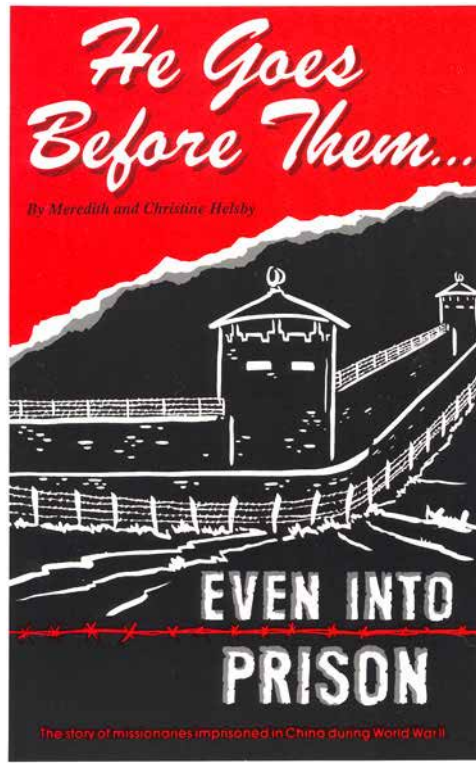
[...]

our “kitchen” consisted of a brick stove he (*Meredith*) had recently built in one tiny corner of block 14, No. 7 — the 9 by 12 room that was “home” to the three of us.

At night, Meredith had secretly wrested bricks from the rubble of an old wall the guards had torn down from around the church. He, of course, had no tools with which to dig and made-do with any small piece of wood or part of a tree branch he could find. But the earth was packed solidly and was extremely hard. Sometimes he retrieved only one brick in an evening’s work so it took weeks to gather enough. The stovepipe had been patiently assembled from 21 old tin cans.

It was my job to collect those cans, which meant many trips to the dump heap and months to find them. We didn’t get many cans in camp, and if one had a can, he had better keep it in case of future need or the possibility of trading it for something else. The burner, the most difficult part to procure, was a thick metal tile form. For it we had paid the exorbitant price of two full cans of evaporated milk. But what a difference that “kitchen” made! During the winter we would take our half- bucket allotment of coal dust, mix it with clay and roll it into small balls, baking them in the sun.

Then we would buy whatever edible items there might be in the small camp canteen. Thus we managed to supplement the wearisome, half-palatable, mess-hall diet, which so often consisted of delights such as worm-ridden bread, fish soup and a dark porridge of kaoliang.



The first item in my kitchen set was a baking pan (not that anyone would have succeeded in identifying it as such). It had originally been an oversized sardine tin, of the sort our White Russian neighbors sometimes received in packages. The rough edges had been lovingly smoothed, and small handles fastened at each end.

Now, when our birthdays came and we got the promised two-cup ration of flour (though we seldom did), we could have a birthday cake!

The next implement was a spatula, made of real rubber.

Meredith didn’t tell me until later that it had been carefully whittled from a discarded boot heel, a bonanza he had discovered in the camp trash heap.

Completing the set was a tea strainer.

Afterwards I learned that the patch of screening from which the gift was devised was the remnant of a carefully scrubbed and well-boiled fly swatter!

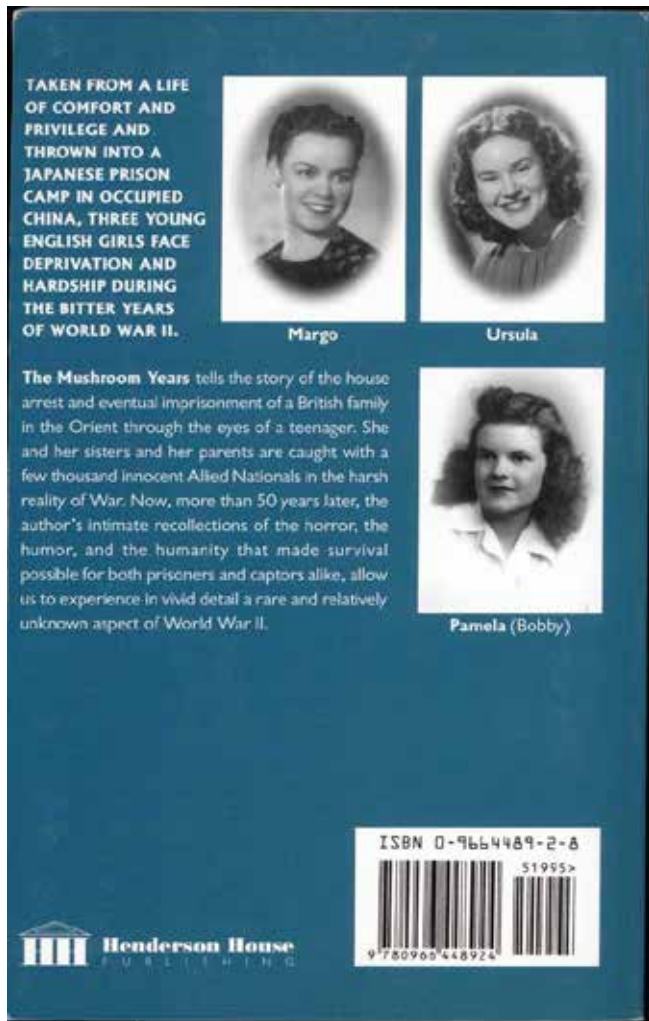
#

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/photos/p_FrontCover.htm

by Pamela Masters ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

There was no fuel!

It wasn't until several weeks later that a load of coal came in for us, and when we went to get our ration, we found it wasn't coal, but coal-dust. Recalling the lovely big chunks of coal we used to get from the Kailan, I asked in disgust, "What the heck are we supposed to do with this?"

"Make coal balls," I was told. "How?"

"You mix the coal-dust with mud, and compact it well, and it should burn very nicely."

"How much?" I asked. "How much what?"

"How much mud and how much coal-dust?"
"You'll have to experiment."

"Thanks a heap!"

"Don't be sarcastic, Bobby, he's trying to help," Ursula said, as she helped carry the bucket of coal-dust back to the cell.

"Well," I said slowly, "If we mix one bucket of dust with one bucket of mud, we might get two buckets of coal balls. That should last us a day, then what do we do?"

"It's obvious we can't light a fire till evening, and then only if we are really freezing, as they're not going to give us a ration of coal-dust on a daily basis. Maybe not even weekly."

We soon found out Ursula was right. We also found out how to make coal balls, and after a while, we learned there were different types of soil in different parts of the camp that bound better, and burned longer, and we kept these little caches of special clay a secret from the others.

I'll never forget the day we made our first batch of coal balls.

We got filthy, and our hands turned numb as we had to make them outdoors. Then, when they were done, we found we still couldn't burn them as they were wet through.

"Lord, how long will it take these darn things to dry out?" Margo asked.

"The Adams got their coal-dust a week ago, because their name starts with an 'A'," Ursula said, "And they told me their coal balls are only now dried through."

"You mean, after all this, we've got to wait another week before we can have a fire?" I wailed.

"Just think how wonderful spring's going to be when it comes around," Margo said facetiously.

#

[excerpts]

It was a good two weeks later, after a gloriously wicked evening of warmth and happy-talk, almost like old times, that I fell asleep to be woken later by the sound of soft crackling. I immediately thought the banked fire had started up again, so I furtively put my hand near the stove. No heat. I touched it. It was cold, but I could still hear the crackling.

I reached for some matches, and lighting the oil wick, carefully peered around the room. Then I saw it, not two inches from Ursula's face—a horrible scorpion, poised to strike!

It was the first scorpion I had seen in our cell, although I'd heard some had been found in the camp. This one had come out of the cracked plaster on the walls to enjoy the warmth of the fire, and when the fire had gone out, it had decided to get some more heat from a human body—Ursula's.

I didn't dare make a sound, in case she woke up and moved. I fumbled quietly trying to find a scrap of paper in the dimly lit room, so I could pick up the creature and kill it.

"What's up?" Margo whispered. "Sssh! Scorpion!" I said softly.

Finally, finding some Japanese newsprint that we'd used to start the fire, I crept over to Ursula's bed and carefully grabbed the menacing creature; then dropping it on the floor, I proceeded to pound the life out of it with my shoe.

"Hey! What's going on!?" Ursula yelled, sitting bolt-upright in bed.

"You had a visitor. A scorpion. I killed him." "Oh, my God!"

None of us slept the rest of the night, as we were

too scared the scorpion's mate would come to avenge its death.

#

[excerpts]

Not long after their arrival, the weather turned bitter, and the long, cold evenings started to get to us. None of us could afford to fire up a stove; we found ourselves keeping our little stashes of coal-balls for emergencies, or a possible illness requiring heat for recovery. Even when we huddled in each others' cells, the cold dampened our mood and stunted conversation. The only night we all looked forward to was Saturday, where the dances in old K-2 really warmed us up. It didn't matter that the place stank of rancid stew, or pungent leeks; it was warm, and that's all we cared about.

#

[excerpts]

The monsoon rains were late that year. As soon as they had come and gone, cold seeped into the camp and chilled the soggy ground and buildings.

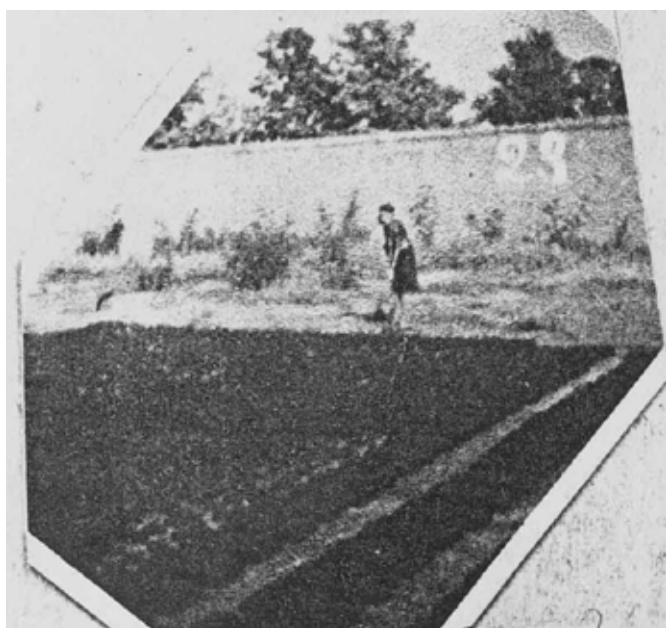
We hardly had an autumn before winter grabbed hold. The days weren't bad, especially when the sun shone, but the nights were miserable. No matter how we tried, we couldn't seal up our cells to keep them warm, let alone livable. There was no doubt we would have to have stoves if we were to survive the bone-chilling nights, but the Japs were in no hurry to oblige.

As it was, I spent most evenings in bed, bundled up in my clothes—including my fur coat—doing homework. When the breaker was pulled at ten o'clock and all the lights in camp went out, I would light a little wick floating in my precious ration of peanut oil, and keep on studying while my teeth chattered and my numb fingers could barely write. Ursula was no better off, and I would listen to her sniff as she quietly worked on her assignments.

When I finally snuffed out the wick and settled down for the night, I'd pull my covers over my head and breath deeply down into the bed, trying to trap the last ounce of body heat before suffocation set in. It wasn't until early November that a carload of ... stoves arrived. They were heavy monsters, and the three of us went down to the canteen to pick up the two for our cells.

Even disassembled, it took us a couple of trips. After setting up one in Mother and Dad's cell, we placed ours between the beds at the back of our cell, with the stove pipe angled out through a pane of the clerestory window. A tin plate with a snug-fitting hole for the pipe had been provided to replace the glass pane, and with a lot of cussing and kidding, we ultimately installed the darn thing. Dumbly, we thought with the arrival of the stoves our troubles would be over, but they weren't.

There was no fuel!



coal-balls drying in the sun !

... Then, in the biting cold, with frost cracked fingers, we shaped coal balls out of coal dust and clay. Grown-ups swapped coal ball recipes. Winter sunshine baked the coal balls dry enough for burning.

#

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p_FrontCover.htm

[excerpt] ...

[...]

So, after asking around, I started my new job.

The coal ball recipe was 60 per cent coal dust and 40 per cent mud, with enough water to make a really thick paste. You had to take a handful and using both hands mould it like a small snowball. Then you placed it on the ground to dry. If you really wanted one to burn quicker add 10% sawdust. That was the easy part; getting the residue off your hands and arms was a different matter. Soap was in short supply and hard to get hold of. My suggestion to Mum that I be allowed to help do the clothes washing fell on stony ground. It was a huge concession by me, as I had never thought much of soap, and only used it in the past under the direct persuasion of Funainai.

`You are not coming near to the washing with those hands — find a bucket of water and scrub!'

#

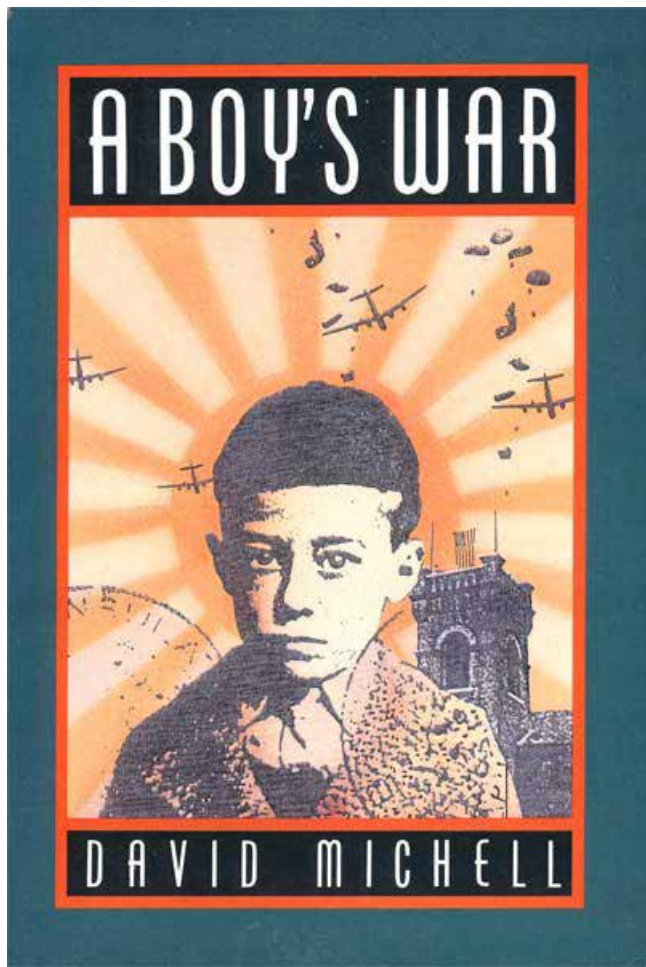
[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/index.htm>



by David Michell ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/p_FrontCover.htm



[excerpts] ...

[...]

However, some stoves were found, and each house had at least one fitted up. Many a time we were down to the last bucket of coal, but there was always enough to keep one room warm. Coal dust and clay mixed into coal balls saw us through the winter, but we often suffered the misery of chilblains and chapped hands and legs.

Every one of us in camp had our regular chores, from sweeping floors to peeling potatoes. Literally jammed in between all this we pursued our lessons on trunks and boxes round the walls of our all-in-one classroom-living room - dining room - bedroom.

[excerpts] ...

At one end of our room, in due course, we had a little mud-brick stove built. The nuns had kindly given us a kerosene tin for an oven, making ours the most modern stove in the place! In this little stove, we burned whatever twigs and wood we could gather and also our handmade coal balls of coal dust and clay pressed together. Some of the more sophisticated in camp with entrepreneurial talent developed coal-ball making equipment out of an empty can with a stick attached to it.

The deluxe model had two cans attached to the one stick. These little coal bricks could often be seen drying in the sun in the few square feet of private space people could call their own backyards. We heard a story of one family who "scrounged" bricks and a few other materials and achieved what every room aspired to—a little stove to keep out the winter cold. Evelyn Davey describes the following incident:

One day the word got around that the guards were coming to look for stolen bricks and unofficial fires. One family hastily took down their stovepipe, flung a blanket over the stove and sat on it. When the guard entered the room, smoke was billowing gently from under the blanket and it was getting HOT. The Japanese, either kindhearted or blind, glanced around perfunctorily and passed on down the block.

[excerpt] ...

As people realized that internment could go on for a long time and that the quality of camp life depended on their own efforts, they got down to work. The Japanese limited their own involvement in the internal work of the camp, stating that their two responsibilities were to see that none escaped and to supply coal and wood for cooking and heating and "adequate" food. Adequate was an overstatement, as their basis for calculation was quantities for two meals a day.

Weih sien was really a world in microcosm with at least fifteen nationalities represented. The majority were families associated with foreign business enterprises, but the largest occupational group were missionaries, belonging to various Protestant mission boards or denominations. There were 400 Roman Catholic priests and nuns, although all but 30 of the priests were transferred to Peking not long after our arrival. Their going was a great loss to the camp workforce as our school was a poor substitute in terms of manpower. Other people who carried the work load realized that with our coming, the ratio of children to the total camp population had risen to about one child to two adults, entailing heavier duties for older people. But since we were all civilians, we fared better than the military POWs.

We were even given freedom to organize our own activities, being for all practical purposes a self-governing community, with committees elected by internees.

[excerpt] ...

Every able-bodied person was given regular work to do. In the kitchen most people worked a twelve-hour day shift and then had two days off. Many of the older boys took turns at pumping water up into the water tower for the camp supply. We younger children did things such as transporting water from one side of camp to the other and carrying the washing, which our teachers had tried to scrub clean, often without soap or brushes. We also sifted through the ash heaps to try and find pieces of coke or unburned coal, and gathered sticks and anything else that would burn, to try to keep warm through the winter. Undetected by the teachers or Japanese soldiers, we sometimes sneaked into the Japanese part of the compound and climbed the tall trees looking for dead twigs or branches.

[excerpt] ...

It snowed today. There was no coal."

[excerpt] ...

Not long after, death touched us more personally. A young Greek with a powerful physique, admired by all of us boys as we watched him do his exercises, was caught stealing on one occasion and brought before the Discipline Committee.

His punishment was to collect wood for the stoves for a week.

One afternoon a small group of us were watching him at work on the upper branches of one of the tall trees, as suitable branches for burning had long since gone from the lower levels.

He was swinging from a strong-looking bough as he jumped up and down on a dead-looking one below him, trying to break it off. All of a sudden, the top branch snapped instead, and he fell to the ground not far from us.

People ran to help him straightaway, but the fall had injured him critically despite his great strength.

He died the next day.

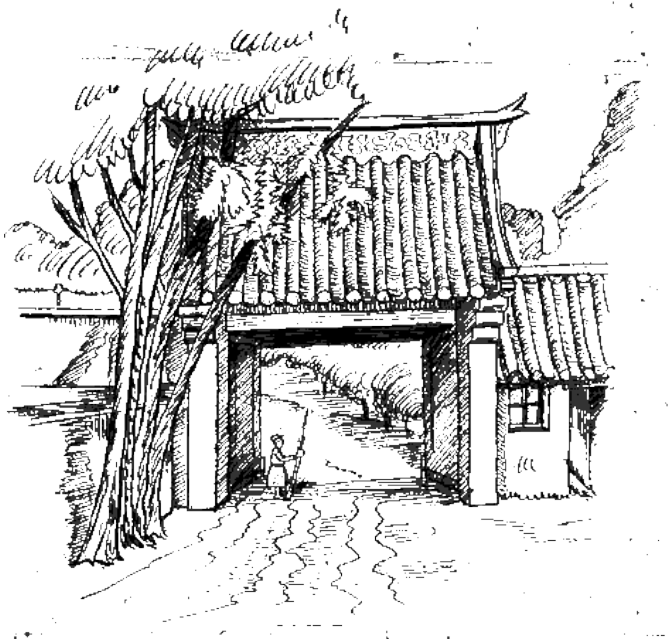
The boy's family was very bitter, cursing God in their tragic loss.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/p_FrontCover.htm

by Norman Cliff ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>



[excerpts] ...

[...]

by Mary E. Scott

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

Coal dust was issued according to the size of the stove: one bucket for a small stove, two buckets for a medium-sized one, and three buckets for a large stove. No lump coal was issued. The dust had to be mixed with clay and water to form coal balls or bricks. (The men exchanged coal-ball “recipes”: three of dust to one of clay, or four to one.)

I made as many as 500 to 800 coal balls in one day and set them aside to dry. Though not exactly the most convenient way to get heat, we were grateful for coal dust we were given, especially since many times we had to break the ice in the water bucket to wash our faces and hands in the morning.

[excerpt]

With such a cross section of humanity from all walks of life, from the highest executive of a large mining or tobacco company, missionaries, professors, artists, and importers, to junkies and women of the street, it was inevitable that there would be some conflict—in thought at least. In normal city missionary life, the business community and the missionaries moved in different circles and saw very little of each other.

But in camp, they cooked together, baked together, made coal balls together, cleaned latrines together, and played together.

Toward the close of camp, one businessman told a missionary that he had always thought of missionaries as a “queer lot”. But he said, “I have observed you missionaries and have to confess I have changed my mind. You can take it better than the rest of us, and in a better spirit.”

Another internee expressed it this way—that the missionaries seemed to respond to a need naturally and without pretence. Though unnoticed by many, this spirit was a great morale builder that made it possible for the camp to survive as well as it did with a degree of normal living.

[excerpt]

by Norman Cliff

Added to the business of living, eating and washing was the new problem of keeping warm in Weihsien’s Siberian type of winter.

We had been freezing for several weeks in November, but in the first week of December small stoves were issued to each room. Throughout the winter small quantities of coal dust were distributed at irregular intervals.

Heath Robinson stove pipes were assembled by fitting together spliced jam tins. The pipe fitted into the stove and led out through a hole in the wall to

the outside. Then there was the problem of fuel.

Coal dust could not be burned in the condition in which it was issued. It was sifted, mixed with sifted soil in various ratios (one recipe for lighting the fire, another for banking the fire overnight and so on) together with water, and put out in the sun to dry as coal bricks.

By careful rotation dozens of briquettes were prepared and dried in the sun. Wood was "scrounged" (a great Weihsien word) off trees and, by some, from kitchen supplies.

Then in addition to the little black stoves issued by the authorities, brick stoves were evolved with a standard design. Heat from the fire in this stove went around and behind an oven (which was a large peanut oil tin), and the smoke escaped up the jam-tin stove pipes. Thus there was scope for cooking, baking and keeping the room warm. In this desperate effort to keep warm in this biting cold winter not only were coal dust, wood, jam tins and peanut oil containers at a premium, but bricks for the home-made stoves (?) where could these be obtained (?)

One day the Japanese demolished a wall near the sports field in order to use the material for construction work elsewhere. To their amazement all the bricks disappeared overnight.

Then a wall was demolished near the hospital for the same purpose.

My grandmother was needing a stove in her room on the first floor of the hospital. Late one evening I borrowed a wheelbarrow, enlisted the assistance of my fellow student, Dick Vinden, and filled it with loose bricks from this demolished wall. We were pushing it through the darkness when a guard stopped us, and asked what we were doing.

Playing dumb was of no avail. "Ya men chu," he shouted ("Come with me to the guardroom"). To be taken to the guardroom was the most dreaded experience of camp life. We followed him a few steps, then he lost us in the darkness. The stove was duly built and served my grandmother and aunt for the remainder of the war.

[excerpt]

"Scrounging" became the prevalent sin. Every effort was spent acquiring fuel, food and clothing. The fortunes of war produced some strange situations.

One fine British Jewish millionaire could be seen working regularly through a pile of ashes behind Kitchen I, sifting and separating coke and partly burned lumps of coal for his cooking needs.

A leading Tientsin female socialite could be seen chopping wood. Away for several years from a hairdressing salon her hair dye was beginning to fade into a strange mixture of colours.

[excerpt]

Supplies were now lower than they had ever been, and spirits were following the same graph.

The temperature too was unbearably low. Snow and frost were everywhere, with little coal dust from which to make our briquettes to burn in our stoves.

[excerpt]

Our mode of life was simple and primitive. The day began with filling buckets at the pump for purposes of cooking and washing. Firewood was collected from trees and bushes, and used in the stove in the middle of the room. From this, water was heated for shaving and washing, and at a later stage for cooking breakfast, that is whatever we had privately for supplementing the official rations.

We queued up in Kitchen I for a ladle of bread



porridge and some bread. Into our mugs was poured black tea ladled out of a bucket. Back we went to the bedroom to mix the kitchen issue of food with our own dwindling resources in the most enjoyable combination possible.

[excerpt]

My only dealings with the black market were unique and perhaps amusing. Pa Bruce, the headmaster, came round taking orders for eggs. I asked for two dozen, and paid cash for them, leaving just a few coppers in my purse. Two weeks later he returned with the eggs.

I awoke the following morning ready for a feast.

Around the stove in the centre of the dormitory, I gathered a good supply of twigs and cardboard for fuel. The fire was lit, the frying pan placed on the stove. Into it went some hair oil, all I had for frying. Into a mug I broke an egg —, it was black and green. I emptied it into a bucket and started again with another egg. But all were bad. I had hardly thrown the shell of the last egg on to the ash tray when Pa Bruce entered. Sizing up the situation over-hastily, he shouted, “If you are going to eat all your eggs the first day, I won’t order any more for you.” He was gone before I could explain. I had put all my eggs in one basket in more ways than one.

[excerpt]

When I found her, she said with a tone of uncertainty in her voice, “Norman, I received some Golden Syrup from my mission station, but a rat fell into it as soon as I opened it. I’ve put it in the garbage box behind the building. If you’re interested, take it.” I rushed to the box, grabbed the tin, and went to my dormitory with the valued spread. While there was usually plenty of bread in the camp, spreads were hard to come by. The rat was duly removed, the syrup was boiled for several hours over the stove, and then three of us spread it sumptuously on our bread for some weeks afterwards.

[excerpt] ...

Then in addition to the little black stoves issued by the authorities, brick stoves were evolved with a standard design. Heat from the fire in this stove went around and behind an oven (which was a large peanut oil tin), and the smoke escaped up the jam-tin stove pipes. Thus there was scope for cooking, baking and keeping the room warm. In this desperate effort to keep warm in this bitingly cold winter not only were coal dust, wood, jam tins and peanut oil containers at a premium, and bricks for the home-made stoves ?

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>

by Mary Previte, née Taylor ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/2017-0625-GIMLET/p_Gimlet.html



An email to the wrong address sends us hurtling into the world of professional cookie advisors. Plus, a new Yes, Yes, No. This is a rebroadcast of a story.

[Exerpts] ...

[...]

PJ: Mary was separated from her parents, unsure of when she'd be released, surrounded by attack dogs and men with guns. She says that she spent a lot of her time just thinking about earning merit badges. In the winter, it would get cold, freezing. But no heat was provided to the prisoners by the guards. Instead, Mary and her friends had to go collect left over coal shavings from the guard's quarters.

MARY: I remember now the ritual of going to Japanese quarters to get the coal dust and carry it back.

PJ: Like making a new pencil from pencil shavings. Except the coal was heavy, and it had to be passed bucket by bucket in a line of girl guides. Then the shavings had to be mixed with dust and water and dried into balls of coal. It was long hard work. And then at the end of it, you still had to go use the recycled coal in a pot bellied stove, and keep the stove lit so that everybody would be warm. It sounded horrible. Like a childhood from a Charles Dickens novel. Except Mary remembers it as being surprisingly fun. A game she could win.

MARY: I and my partner Marjorie Harrison, we won the competition in our dormitory of which stove lighting team made the pot bellied stove in the winter turn red hot more times than any other girl in the camp. Well, you know here I am eighty-two years old and what do I choose to tell you? I won the pot belly turn red more times with me and Marjorie Harrison than any other girl in our dorm!

PJ: When you describe it it sounds like you're describing summer camp instead of describing like a concentration camp. Did it feel like summer camp?

MARY: Well I never was in a summer camp so I can't give you a, no. No, no. Absolutely, not. When you had guard dogs, bayonet drills, electrified wires, barrier walls, pill boxes with guards, armed guards in them, you know, you weren't in a summer camp. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying this was fun city. I'm telling you we lived a miracle where grownups preserved our childhood.

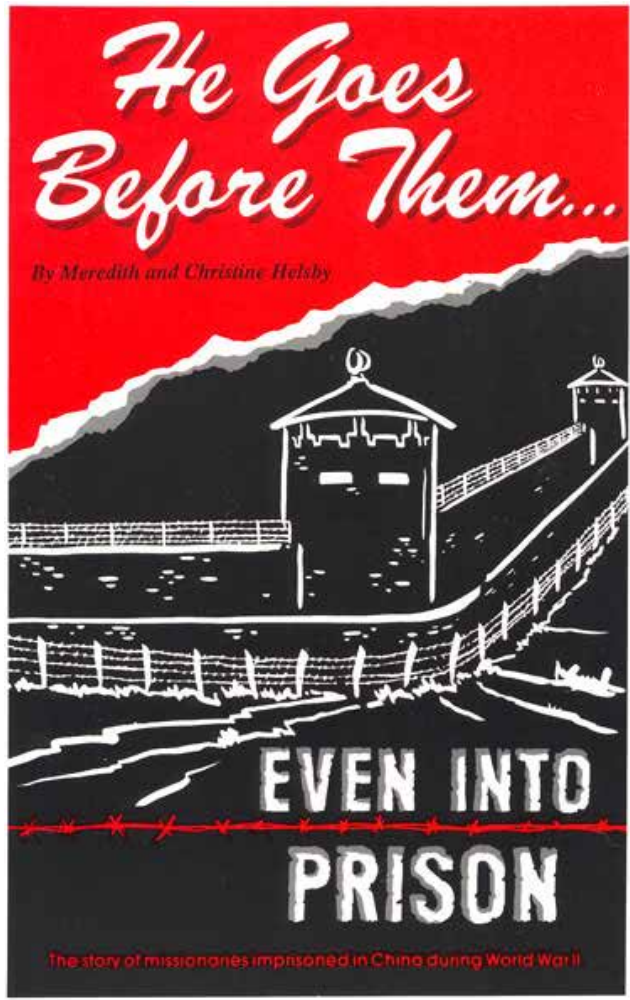
[further reading] ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/2017-0625-GIMLET/p_Gimlet.html

CHILDREN, GAMES & ... SCHOOL

by Meredith & Christine Helsby ...

http://weih sien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/photos/p_FrontCover.htm



[excerpts] ...

[...]

For the most part, the guards' treatment of us was marked by decorum and good discipline, and efforts were made to observe the articles of the Geneva Convention governing treatment of civilian prisoners of war. A few, like Mr. Kogi who had studied in a mission school, had come in contact with Christianity in Japan and went out of their way to treat us with consideration and courtesy.

Still when our captors, small of stature and looking almost like children beside a 6 foot 2 inch American or Englishman, felt intimidated they could respond with unfeigned arrogance or fly into a rage barking, ranting, gesticulating, slapping and kicking. When in dress uniform these diminutive men strutting back and forth, their long Samurai swords trailing in the dirt, looked so much like small boys at play it was hard to suppress a smile.

Smiling or laughing in their presence, however, is something we early learned to avoid — as this was often taken as a sign of contempt, insolence or lack of respect, inviting angry reprisals and threats.

Among 70 men of any nationality one will, of course, discover tremendous diversity. And while some of these guards early identified themselves as friendly, others we soon learned to give a wide berth. A few acquired interesting nicknames.

The commandant, a heavy scowling man of surly disposition, was soon dubbed "King Kong." Another officer, who looked like the Japanese counterpart of **Sergeant Snorkle**, took a perverse delight in squelching any activity which appeared suspiciously like fun. The sight of an internee sunbathing or a couple holding hands would elicit a growled "Pu Hsing Ti." (You can't do that!)



Soon he had earned the moniker Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti. Before long wherever this gentleman appeared, he was greeted by throngs of small children who followed, dancing up and down chorusing, "Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti, Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti."

This was most disconcerting, of course.

So much so that the man appealed to the commandant, and a short time later the following announcement appeared on the camp bulletin board:

"Henceforth in the Weihsien Civilian Center, by special order of His Imperial Majesty, the emperor of Japan, Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti is not to be known as Sergeant Pu Hsing Ti but as Sergeant Yomiara."

[excerpt] ...

Life is full of surprises, and we soon learned it was a mistake to judge the Japanese by their appearance. One internee described a surprising encounter with a menacing-looking guard:

It was with great apprehension that we saw one afternoon at tea time one of the soldiers, loaded down with every kind of portable weapon, approach a building where, among others, an American family with a baby was housed. I was the only male present at the time. Gingerly I opened the door at the guard's brisk knock. He bowed and sucked air in sharply through his teeth. Then unloading his extensive armor, to my utter amazement he opened his great coat and pulled out a small bottle of milk.

"Please," he said haltingly, "take for baby."

After we had recovered from our surprise sufficiently to invite him to come in, we asked whether there was anything we could do for him in return.

"May I hear classical records?" he asked. Again we gasped and said, "Who are you?" He answered, "I, second flutist in Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. Miss good music!"

[excerpt] ...

One of the most pressing concerns in the early days of camp was continuing education for the children. After the entire faculty and student body of Chefoo (the China Inland Mission School for missionary children) arrived at Weihsien in the fall of '43, we had more than 400 youngsters under

age 18 in our community.

Organizing classes for all the students, kindergarten through 12th grade (the responsibility of the education committee), was a Herculean task indeed. There were virtually no textbooks or equipment and the only regular classrooms on the compound were of necessity being used as dormitories. The dedication and resourcefulness of teachers and staff were a marvel to behold. Yet, regular classes continued until our liberation, and three classes of seniors actually took the Oxford Matriculation Exam.

Many of the students in Chefoo boarding school, when war broke out, were separated from their parents. The teachers were more than ever now not only instructors but surrogate parents, a responsibility they did not take lightly. This noble corps of missionaries resolved that even in prison camp, under the most appalling conditions, they would not relax standards of decorum and good breeding one whit.

[excerpts] ...

Sandra, along with the other children, was allotted about two eggs a month or as the Japanese could obtain them. To prolong the pleasure and nutrition of these treasures, Christine fashioned a concoction by mixing the egg with "tang shi" (kaoliang molasses). Used as a spread to top our bread, the food value of that egg could be extended several days.

To supplement the bone meal which we brought into camp (but ran out of almost a year before we were freed), we pounced upon eggshells discovered on a trash heap, dried them for days on our window sill, then rolled them as finely as possible with a glass. Sandra consumed about a quarter teaspoon mixed daily in her food. (Her adult teeth are now as strong and beautiful as any whose childhood was spent in "replete" America.)

There was a critical need for milk, especially for small children. When the commandant was appealed to, surprisingly he arranged to have a quantity of milk brought regularly into camp. This was properly sterilized in the hospital kitchen and distributed to children under three years of age,

enough for each child to have about a cup of milk daily, though not available every day.

[excerpt] ...

Situated throughout the compound were unspeakably foul, open cesspools, dug to receive the waste produced by our camp's 1800 residents.

As we have mentioned, periodically these pools were emptied by Chinese coolies with their "honey buckets." Why a child would choose the vicinity of a cesspool for a playground is a mystery beyond the ken of any adult. Yet, it is the nature of children to be oblivious to many things that their elders find impossibly distasteful. And so it was that John and Mary Kelly had chosen to play on the low, stone rim of the cesspool situated not far from kitchen number one.

Johnny's father was a British missionary who worked in Mongolia. There he met and married a Chinese woman. The whole family lived "native style", wearing Chinese clothes, eating Chinese food and speaking very little other than Chinese. In camp they kept aloof from most of the missionary community.

How it happened no one seemed to know for sure, but the fact is, Johnny fell head first into the loathsome pool. The frantic cries of his sister, Mary, brought men working in the area to investigate.

One of these was our dear friend, John Hayes.

Kelly had gone under and bobbed up the fourth time when Hayes plunged into the pool to rescue him, thus averting another camp tragedy. It was inevitable that little Johnny, thereafter, was always referred to as "Cesspool Kelly."

And thankfully, neither Johnny nor our friend, John, seemed any the worse for their cesspool "baptism."

[excerpt] ...

During the two-and-one-half prison years, the camp was devastated by succeeding epidemics of dysentery and hepatitis. Others suffered from

severe mental disorders. Despite the handicaps, doctors performed many major operations, among them a good number of deliveries.

There were 32 children born during our years in camp, and in that same time 28 people died.

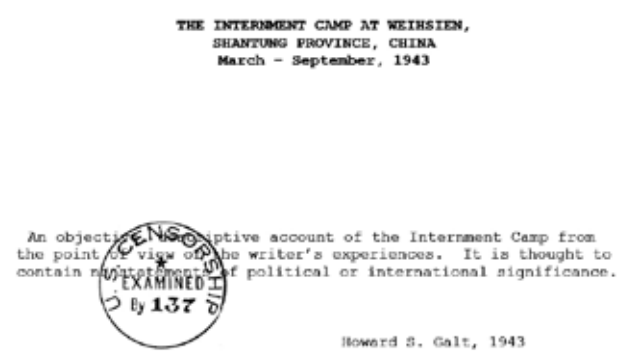
Many of these were elderly, who without sufficient nourishment grew weaker and weaker. The father of our friend, John Hayes, was one of the elderly who died early in camp. But all the victims were not the elderly and fragile. Clarice Lawless was a young, uncommonly robust woman who lived three doors down from us. She led the Chefoo girls in calisthenics every morning on the softball field. Yet Clarice was taken down by typhoid, surviving only eight days after she was stricken.

[further reading] ...

http://weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/photos/p_FrontCover.htm

by Howard E. Galt ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf



[excerpts] ...

[...]

There were a considerable number of school-age children in camp.

For most of these, provision was made in two school groups.

Peking had a large and well organized "Peking American School." There were in camp a few teachers and perhaps 20 or 30 pupils from that school. Places in the church or church yard for classes were found, school desks were assembled from corners of the compound and before many days the relocated but attenuated "P.A.S." was again in operation.

Studies were carried on so successfully that the committee in charge felt justified in authorizing a "commencement" with official graduation of 3 or 4 members of the senior class. This graduation ceremony, prepared for and conducted in the approved and conventional American style, was a highly interesting event in the camp, with an audience which entirely filled the church.

In the British tradition there was the Tientsin Grammar School.

In the camp were a few of the teachers and some of the pupils from that institution. They also were organized into a school and in quite a regular way were able to carry on their studies. In addition to these schools, there was a large and well

conducted kindergarten and also some educational classes for young children conducted by Catholic sisters.

Besides these formal schools there were organized many classes, lectures and discussion groups in the field of adult education. The curriculum subjects probably numbered as many as 20 or 30, studies in the various languages predominating, and among the languages Chinese most in demand.

Besides the lectures offered in series to select groups there were general lectures, usually one each week, on themes of common or popular interest.

[excerpt] ...

After the departure of the Catholics the vacant space was soon filled by large groups of adults and of school children from the coast city of Chefoo.

The pupils were from the C.I.M. (China Inland Mission) school and the others were from an internment camp.

For reasons of convenience and economy the Japanese authorities thought it best to concentrate all of these in the Weihsien camp.

[further reading] ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf

by Ron Bridge ...

<http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/index.htm>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Everything was based on or mirrored England, including the Tianjin Grammar School, run and administered by Englishmen and based on the British educational system. The majority of the Anglo-Saxon British children used the Grammar School as a feeder for the years of 'going home [i.e. England] to school'; the other British used it as a copy of the public schools they could never aspire to, and it served other nationalities who were to be inculcated into the British way of thinking. The standard curriculum, with examinations leading to Cambridge University's school certificate, which were held each December, was used in all schools. The pupils of the Tianjin Grammar School, British and foreign alike, started the day with prayers from the Book

of Common Prayer and sang Hymns from Ancient and Modern, the school song was 'Forty Years On', so drummed into me, time and time again, that seventy-five years later I can still remember the words.

[excerpt] ...

Chinese students at mission schools run for Chinese children followed the same curriculum. This was guided by a principle unchanged for nearly a century: give these boys (girls were always an afterthought) a solid education in their language and in ours – English. Instruct them in the British system and bind them by a link that could not easily be severed. American mission schools taught an American curriculum and other countries generally applied a similar philosophy. The Chinese realised that the only universally recognised datum of achievement was English and the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate, thus, due to demand, a curriculum based on achieving that aim was increasingly adopted in French, Irish, Dutch and German-run Roman Catholic Mission schools, as well as the Protestant mission schools, although these latter were few and far between.

[excerpt] ...

The first few weeks we lived in Weihsien was a period of adjustment for everyone. I ran around freely with little parental supervision and played with the children living in and around the neighbouring blocks; in fact, those first three months I tended not to wander too much from our room. The organising of schools was put into the 'difficult' tray, it was going to be too hot and there was no obvious building to use.

[excerpt] ...

When the school started again in September the question of 'where' raised its head. The hospital was a proper hospital now and an alternative venue was needed. As the Church was

only occupied on Sundays, it was deemed that the Church pews would be suitable. So I started again under Miss Rudd, who retained her ability to trip one up with her walking stick, but had now added the ability to lift one up by the hair if one was being exceptionally thick or obstructive. Each class was allocated two rows of pews with two more rows between each class. It just did not work, as we told the officiating adults, but the views of young boys that run contrary to those of adults are generally discarded. The noise of voices went down to the altar, whilst the voice of the preacher went up to the back. Teachers working at one end of the pews could not be heard at the other end.

That experiment lasted three weeks before it was officially accepted that it was bedlam and declared, 'Good idea but failed.' Thus us kids were back on the 'streets' again.

[excerpt] ...

But before the Church School idea had happened, sports had started to be organised by everyone. Softball was played by most.

The Catholic priests fielded several teams, some of which were very good, probably as they were Americans and had been playing softball all their lives.

The remaining nuns formed another team.

The adults and children over twelve played theirs in the big field near to the Church, whilst those younger played in the small South Field.

We also invented a game generally played in the light summer evenings on the main sports field: two teams were chosen and each team had a 'home' in the penalty 'D' of the hockey markings. The idea was to get 'home' while the opposite team had to try and stop you, and if they did you were taken back as a prisoner and had to hold on to the previous prisoner. If one of your own team cut the prisoners' line, all those freed prisoners started again. It occupied us all for a couple of hours, made sure we were tired when we went to bed, and in spite of fights, arguments and occasional cheating we enjoyed the diversion very much.

[excerpt] ...

One thing that most of the families did was to subscribe to the Peking Chronicle, an English-language newspaper printed in Beijing, and edited by a German editorial team. Reading it through one could estimate the progress of the war. It, however, had a far more essential function when torn into small squares — toilet paper was as ever in short supply. We boys often did not have the time or inclination to go back to our huts to get some and, while definitely avoiding stinging nettles, tended to use softish leaves, equally good to our minds.

[excerpt] ...

On 9th September 1943 trucks came in the front gate bringing prospective internees.

There were boys and girls, some younger than me, and a few teenagers, accompanied by adults: all in all a total of 200. We soon learnt that they were members and staff from the China Inland Mission School at Chefoo. They had previously been confined to the school premises, Temple Hill, Yantai (Chefoo), and had left Chefoo a couple of days earlier by a tramp steamer to sail round the coast to Qingdao, and then a four-hour train journey to Weih sien.

The schoolchildren were moved into Blocks 23 and 24, just vacated by the nuns.

The married teachers, especially those with children, were allocated hut rooms rather like ours.

[excerpt] ...

By now the teaching staff of the Chefoo School had got themselves organised. They decreed that as they were an intact complete boarding school, and that they, the teachers, were responsible for other people's children, Chefoo School should try to continue as it had before in Yantai. And, as before, there would be no fraternisation with children of 'commercial' parents — social classes would be kept separate. To a large extent, this was already the de facto position: the Chefoo scholars had been strutting around as though they owned the world. An attitude that did not settle well

with those who had been in Weihsien six months longer.

Grubby fists came into play, and the missionary children were taught the facts, but this, of course, drove them into the hands of their teachers, who were the instigators of the 'separation' in the first place. The only exception would be on the sports field, with supervised games. This policy was imposed strictly by Chefoo schoolteachers. I frankly thought that they were being idiotic, but gradually the real reason behind it all emerged: the Chefoo teachers felt that schools like Tianjin Grammar School and Beijing American School had too many Catholics, and even people of mixed race, and that the purity of their Protestant charges was endangered.

I always found this attitude difficult to understand, because they were forever emphasising that they were missionary teachers, loving everyone. Like all stupid policies, it would not last and was finally overturned eighteen months later.

[excerpt] ...

Even I could understand the concern Mum had about clothes, as both Roger and I were rapidly growing out of ours. While swapping or getting given items for Roger, now a two-year-old, was relatively easy, my age made it another matter.

Boys are never very caring of their clothes, and I was no different: the needle and thread was in constant use, and it became necessary to unpick knitted garments so they could be re-knitted into a larger size. I was living too rough a life for clothes to have much life in them, and previous owners had been much the same. Climbing trees, buildings, and squirrelling under barbed wire fences was not the same as sitting 'quietly' on a hard school bench.

[excerpt] ...

As June 1945 dawned, my friends and I remained totally without discipline, as the heat and lack of food rendered the adults lethargic. Those blackboards once destined for the school, and which hadn't proved of much use, as there

was no chalk, had all ended up burnt as firewood. So no chance of lessons. Paper and pencils were unobtainable.

The Chefoo School, though, functioned as normal, and still considered themselves above us 'town urchins'; they maintained their self-proclaimed status as superior 'public schoolboys'. To prove our superiority in all things mischievous, several of us conceived a cunning plan. There were several cesspits in camp, which were emptied by Chinese coolies allowed in for the purpose. One of the American children, one Art Kelly, had fallen into a cesspit early on. Fortunately, his sister had seen the accident and had called their mother, who got him out, but he stank for days and had to live with the name 'Smelly Kelly' for the rest of the war.

After this, wooden covers were made and fitted over all the cesspits. But the incident had given us an idea.

One cesspit, near the hospital, was not far from one of the paths that went round inside the walls of the camp, along which the Japanese guards patrolled at night. The path was defined by white-painted stones so the guard could see the way. In the twilight one evening, several of us got together and moved the white stones, diverting the path from its original trajectory, which bypassed the cesspit, so now it defined a gentle curve straight towards it. We removed the covering boards too. We imagined the guard's face when he stumbled and fell, and thought the incident would be very funny. It was only a pity that we would be back in our huts with our parents if the plan came to fruition, but nevertheless it had been fun to do, and not that easy to move the stones without being seen. I went back to our hut and had supper of soup and a crust. Then I went to bed and forgot all about the cesspit and the path, as I think most of us did.

Next morning I woke to the sound of Dad shouting in annoyance. Apparently, he had gone across to collect breakfast to find the Kitchen in uproar. I was surprised, for he seldom got really cross, but I was not long kept in the dark.

'Ronald, did you or your friends have anything to do with moving the stones on the path by the hospital?' he demanded at once.

I was not quite sure how to reply, so stayed quiet. Were you involved?' he said again, suspiciously.

'What stones? Mum put in, giving me a chance to stay silent.

'Those white stones that outline the path for people to see at night,' Dad explained.

'Well, what happened?' Mum inquired as she dished out our millet porridge, but for once I had lost my appetite.

'Those white stones were moved so that the path, instead of running past the cesspit went straight into it,' Dad told her, 'and the boards were removed as well.'

'Does it matter that much?' she asked.

'One of the new young guards was nearly killed last night when he fell in.'

Foolishly, I blurted out, 'Did a guard fall in then?'

'He did and he would have drowned if his rifle hadn't stuck across the pit and given him something to hang on to.'

Mum giggled and I did too. 'You mean one of the guards fell in and had to stay there hanging on to his rifle,' she laughed. 'Serves him right.'

'Not really. The poor fellow was stuck for two hours until the next guard patrol found him up to his shoulders in the cesspit contents, so I believe he is very lucky to be still alive.'

'He must smell awful.' I breathed happily. Our plan had succeeded. A perfect conclusion.

'Maybe he does, but his superiors are not amused and have reported the incident to Ted McClaren to carry out a full investigation. The Discipline Committee intends to do something about it.'

I now saw why Dad was so cross and my heart dropped. There was going to be real trouble.

....

We had to suffer some punishment to mollify the Commandant. But our street credence soared, and all the adults suddenly acknowledged us.

The Chefoo schoolteachers warned their pupils that we were agents of the devil and must be ignored.

Encounters were definitely to be restricted to games on the sports field, and then, without exception, under supervision.

[excerpts] ...

The warmth brought the scorpions out from the remaining walls, the presence of which had been used as an excuse for the Japanese to demolish some of the walls, when the real reason was that the camp wanted use of the bricks.

The current craze was scorpion fights; they would not cross a ring of ash, so we boys we selected a scorpion, and the dangers made the whole process more exciting.

We used to pick the creatures by going in over their heads, where the sting in the tail did not reach. There was a skill in this, and whilst I never got stung others did.

We kept our scorpions in reclaimed jars, holes punched in screw top. The procedure was that two picked out their scorpions and placed them in the ring, the scorpions then attacked each other and when one was dead the owner of the other got points.

Mum never found out about scorpion fights because she would have created a dreadful fuss.

At the end of the day of scorpion-fighting the winning owner, if lucky, got a boiled sweet.

The sad part of this game was that none of the scorpions lasted very long. A champion rarely survived more than three or four fights. It was a pity but we felt that we were doing the camp inmates a favour by ridding the area of scorpions.

[excerpt] ...

I was rarely in our two rooms in Block 13 during the day.

After breakfast and roll call, I was off somewhere in the camp running wild without supervision.

Meals, however, were too important to miss and my friends, like me, ate in their own huts, so we all went back for lunch, our main meal and supper, usually some kind of soup and bread. I was not allowed out after supper except on the light summer evenings when there were semi-organised games on the sports field; otherwise I was taught various games of cards.

[excerpt] ...

Other mothers must have had similar experiences; with the walls joining the blocks and making the camp into a series of little compounds, it was difficult to see what was going on. Thus, in early May they decided that organising the children into some sort of school to occupy them, particularly the boys, was essential, if only for the adults' sanity.

There were about 200 children out of around 2,000 inmates, mostly English and American. The only spare area was in front of the hospital, the bottom two floors, which were being renovated.

Our first teacher was a nun who got us to sit down, but as we had no paper we were taught algebra by drawing equations in the sandy ground. The children from twelve to fifteen were worked harder, but they did get scraps of paper to write on.

Over sixteen had to work around the camp as the men and some women did.

As the weather grew hotter all lessons were taught outside, often sitting under the trees. Then we had a harridan of a teacher, Miss Rudd, who had a shock of snow-white hair, was slightly lame and used a walking stick. One could not get away from her, as she had the knack of flicking her stick to hold the ferrule end and then catch your ankle with the curved handle. Anyhow she started us on Latin verbs. I got quite used to etching the ground with a stick with *Amo, Amas, Amat...* but somehow it did not hold my interest as sums did.

By late May all the leaves were out on the trees and us nine- to eleven-year-olds were detailed to collect leaves from each of the different trees. There were over 100 types and I collected nearly that number. These were the trees that had been planted to assist in the

long-forgotten mission schools' botany classes. They also served to make a great contrast to the treeless plain outside the camp. In the trees were also a lot of birds, including the golden oriole. Thinking ahead, I could see another teacher, another day, saying `...and please collect as many different bird feathers as you can.'

The teachers felt that they had to encourage us and devised small prizes. Someone had realised that the odd food parcel from friends and later the Red Cross parcels contained a bar of chocolate.

Most bars would break into ten squares, and a square of chocolate was a wonderful prize for a ten-year-old. A policy with which I heartily agreed. Especially as I was usually the winner.

[excerpt] ...

Once the commandant saw that the children were under some sort of control, he gave orders for paper and pencils to be made available.

Drawing was then encouraged and art teachers came out of the woodwork. There were rules, though. The Japanese would not allow anything to be drawn of the outside of the camp. Drawing of the watchtowers or of the guards was forbidden.

We could draw only trees, bushes and birds in the middle of the camp; we would draw portraits, but nothing of military value. I was never very good with the birds, flowers or the bees but quite tolerable on buildings and perspective.

[excerpt] ...

Then in July the Japanese, who disliked gatherings of adults and children, stopped our lessons, fearing they were in preparation for some kind of organised disturbance. I was very happy to go back to running wild throughout the camp, now I knew my way around and was a wiser boy after two months' self-education. But the adults soon got weary of mobs of uncontrolled children and petitioned to allow Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Cubs to be formed. Rather surprisingly this was granted, on condition that their activities mainly took place in the South Field. There was an ample number of people who had been Scoutmasters, or in the case of the younger priests remembered

being Rover Scouts. I had an advantage in that I had my own copy of the handbook, which I guarded carefully. We had no uniforms, but the ladies looked around at their hoarded 'might be useful things' for felt to embroider badges, which we wore on our ordinary clothes. The pattern could not be the same as Baden-Powell had designed, but our 'Cub' badges ended up eight-sided with Weihsien'.

The Japanese thought this a marvellous idea and provided the lone occasion when an outside photographer was allowed in to take 'team type' photographs, so that the Japanese could show the world that they were treating Allied internees correctly. Dad helped to set up the Scouts with Mr O'Hara; both had been in Tianjin, where they had been respectively Deputy and Head Commissioner of Scouts for North China before the war. Mr Kerridge, another pre-war Scoutmaster, often gathered us in groups under the plane trees, which were planted five feet or so in from the walls of the Field. The Scout movement failed by the winter as there were suddenly a lot more children and there was no adequate accommodation to protect meetings from the cold weather.



[excerpt] ...

As boys we were always looking for a sport we could practise, and the latest phase was to tease the guards.

One of their Sergeants, a big swarthy bloke for a Japanese, who used to wear a ridiculously small forage cap on a large shaven head, was often baited.

He seemed to know only one phrase of Chinese — 'Bushinde' — which he would yell out at us; it meant 'Don't do that!' or 'You can't do that!' Very soon, whenever we saw him, we used to form a circle, out of arm's reach, and taunt him with the word before running off. At first he resented the nickname and would get furious. But after a while he seemed to accept it and almost liked it, I suspect.

Another nickname was coined when an adult

described a guard as King Kong, as he reminded her of the gorilla of that name in the 1930s film.

Not that taunting was restricted to harassing the guards. There was an American missionary family in Block 15 with three young children, and they would start the day rolling around on the dirt outside their rooms while saying their 'prayers'.

This inevitably got around, so a bunch of us used to get there before breakfast and start rolling around in the mud mimicking them. They invoked the 'freedom of religion right', and six ten - or eleven-year-olds were duly paraded in front of the Committee and sentenced to be caned if we kept doing it. So that ended us baiting the 'Holy Rollers'.

...

Finding something to do that was acceptable was growing ever more difficult.

A month to go to Christmas. Mum sent off Christmas cards, which Dad had made with a hectograph (stencil), which he had constructed using an old half-inch-deep baking dish. He copied the design on to pre-stamped post cards, which the Japan censor allowed.

[excerpt] ...

Adults were still trying to organise lessons for us children, but the problem was largely the lack of paper and textbooks. Chefoo School maintained its isolationism and in fact tried to run a camp within a camp.

Life is too short for petty squabbles, but the adults seemed loath to disturb the status quo.

Infighting was not confined to policy over schools.

I was playing with Hazel Hoch, who was my age, and her younger brother Johnny near Block 18 when their mother came over and reported that Mr Winslow had a fight in the kitchen with Ahmed Kamal, a Turkmenistani, and that Mr Prior had tried to separate them only to have a bowl of hot curry poured over his head, and that there was now curry everywhere. Mrs Hoch then said she had fainted, and then went on to say that Miss Lindsey, a nurse, had hit Mrs Kelly with a broom and the latter had retaliated by throwing hot tea into Miss Lindsey's face. That squabble was over

a bed space, so both ladies had been moved into new dormitories.

[excerpt] ...

Mum sometimes went to the general swap store, called the 'Elephant Bell', which was to be found at the back of Block 24. All the children were growing and there were not enough bigger clothes to go around. Footwear presented a particular problem. The store originally started to help people who wanted to exchange sizes, but it soon developed into people charging for items, using the money to buy eggs and other necessities.

[excerpt] ...

Days were just passing by and our food was deteriorating in both quantity and quality. Mum and Granny spring cleaned the huts and washed winter clothes, as the temperature would hit 28°C by the end of the month. The current problem was again clothing. Children grow, and when Mum got out the clothes that I had been wearing the previous year, they were too small. Patching of clothes was ever more necessary, and we faced the issue of shoes for growing feet.

Toe caps were chopped off to make room for cramped toes.

[excerpt] ...

Towards the end of June, starting with all the medical staff, there was an outbreak of diarrhoea of epidemic proportions.

At the same time, the weather broke and there was a day of heavy rain, a real downpour. So many were sick that roll call took a couple of hours. The next day the Japanese medical team arrived.

The Japanese were paranoid about a cholera outbreak. So we were all lined up outside the hospital, everybody had a glass rod shoved up their behind; then after a test of the surface the glass rod it was wiped in alcohol and then shoved up the next candidate. There were at least five teams and the whole process took all day,

although as originally planned the men were to be first, then the women and then those under fifteen.

But the children under seven started bawling for their Mums and chaos reigned. One certain thing you could say is that it was unpleasant while it lasted, and I got rather tired of looking at bare behinds.

But probably not as unpleasant as when we got inoculations for whatever was the current threat of disease. As an example, shortly after the cholera scare, there was a big line-up for a typhoid inoculation, but one had to gauge one's place in the queue carefully, as needles were in short supply. The needle was changed about every 100 inoculations.

[excerpt] ...

There was a big showdown outside Block-24, which now held adult women. On a cold wet morning, having been counted at roll call, the women immediately went back inside. King Kong saw them and ordered them to stand for half an hour in the wet.

They retaliated by dancing and skipping. King Kong went apoplectic, jumped on to a little platform and addressed them in Chinese, saying that he had been greatly insulted; if we had been in India, the authorities would have hung them up by their thumbs.

He knew that they called him names, but they were lucky that he did not take one of them and shoot them as an example for causing a Japanese to lose face.

King Kong then went into Mrs Buist's block which was across the Rocky Road from ours, and ordered her to stand on parade for roll call. Mrs Buist, a Salvation Army officer, refused to leave her three children, the eldest of whom was six. King Kong called her an 'addled egg' in Chinese.

Next day King Kong took roll call again and ended with 'OK, ladies thank you.' He had decided to be polite and ignore insults. The previous day he had arrived at the roll call saying, 'I'll dig the old sows out of their beds if they are not already standing to be counted.'

However, in early December, a Japanese guard went up to Mrs Howard-Smith, a nurse, and slapped her face when she was not lining up to his satisfaction outside the hospital. Ted McClaren reported it to the Commandant.

King Kong was livid and upset, and said that if he was reported again he, King Kong, would have to commit hari-kari and it would be on McClaren's conscience.

The next day King Kong brought a dozen bottles of beer to men working in the bakery.

They reported that he was staggering, but they accepted the beer. On the way back to the guard room, we watched him pull out his sword and have a fight with a tree. A few days later one of the guards got very drunk, went into Block 24, sat on a box and said he felt sick.

One of the ladies got him a bowl, he heaved violently, lay down on Miss Dorea Harper's bed and went to sleep. He had to be removed by Ted McClaren, helped by another Japanese guard.

[excerpt] ...

...

Somehow, the evening roll calls always took longer. On 16th August, at the 7 p.m. roll call, boredom had again set in: not only did the number within each group have to tally, but then the guards had to add up the totals. Any doubt and the whole camp had to be re-counted.

The electric wiring in the camp was looped about anything and ran at varying heights. It was particularly low in front of the hospital (Block 61).

To relieve the boredom of waiting during roll call, the Chefoo School students, mainly the twelve- to sixteen-year-olds, used to jump up and touch the wires.

One day the current was obviously 'on', as someone got himself burnt, but another, Brian Thompson, being very tall, had reached up and just gripped the wire — he was instantly electrocuted. Dr Grice was called and then Dr Robinson (Kailan Mining) and Dr Howie (Chefoo), because they were further away; the three carried out artificial respiration for nearly three hours, but

to no avail.

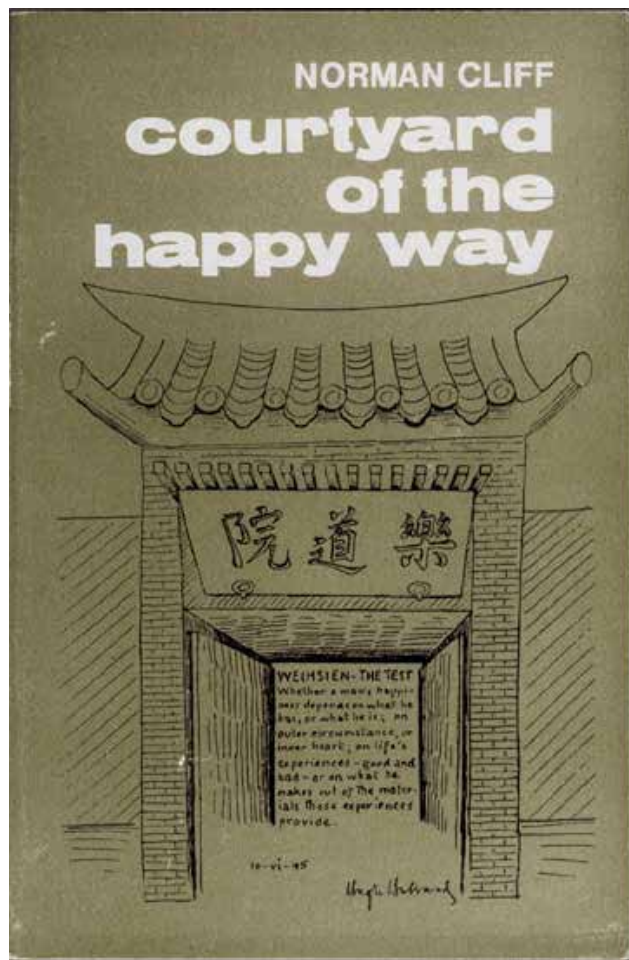
Brian's funeral was the next day, but Brian's Mother, who was in the camp, ruled that it would be private, for Chefoo only, the first and only restriction placed on attendance at a funeral, but then the parents were missionaries.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/index.htm>

by Norman Cliff ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

During the following year Mother and Father went on furlough to England, and my Christmas was spent at the school with other children whose parents lived in provinces too far away for holiday travel.

[excerpt]

Gradually the guards at the barrier thawed to the missionary children. They spoke to us in broken Chinese or faltering English. They showed us their bullets, photos of their sweethearts or families at home, and laughed and joked with us. We learned their names and began learning to count in Japanese.

[excerpt]

The months at Temple Hill dragged on monotonously.

Stocks of flour and coal often ran dangerously low to be renewed in the nick of time. Clothes were wearing out, and children were outgrowing what they had. Dresses and shirts were made from curtains brought to camp. We were learning to improvise in a hundred and one ways.

[excerpt]

But when the ship's siren sounded, the baker had not arrived. The vessel began to glide out of the harbour. The headmaster had visions of a shipload of frantically hungry schoolchildren crying out for food. But the ship stopped in the harbour. A launch was making its way from the docks towards us.

The determined baker had secured transport for his important cargo of food. The bread aboard, we slipped out of the harbour in front of the Bluff towards the open sea. Across the water was the whole port of Chefoo — the place of my birth eighteen years before, the scene of my upbringing for the previous twelve years, including a year's internment. Few could lay greater claims to this port as being home.

[excerpt]

The womenfolk and younger children were packed into buses. I jumped on the back of a lorry piled high with luggage. We rattled and bumped along a dusty road for several miles past Chinese farm fields. What we gathered must be Weihsien Camp sprang into view. Rows of juniper trees, long lines of dormitory blocks, the red-tiled roof of an Edwardian-style church — all surrounded by a wall with electrified wires and with cement boxes here and there.

[excerpt]

Their departure had left a vacuum in effective manpower for such tasks as pumping, cooking and baking. Thus the arrival of our Chefoo community aggravated the situation further, for out of the

three hundred of us only about two dozen were potential camp workers, the remainder being schoolchildren and retired missionaries.

[excerpt]

Included in this small group of keen Hebrew students was an Irish boy, Brian Thompson. Several years my junior, he was the life and soul of the group, always up to pranks.

His mother was on the school staff, and he was the eldest of a line of young children.

One afternoon we were having roll-call on the overgrown tennis court outside the hospital. Five hundred men, women and children were in long lines, waiting for the Japanese guard and roll-call warden to arrive. Some were sitting on a deckchair reading, others standing talking and laughing.

A school friend standing a few places away from me said to Brian, who was tall for his age and standing next to him, "I dare you to touch that wire." Over our heads going diagonally across the field was an electrified wire, running from the power station to the guard's watchtower behind us. Originally twenty feet from the ground, it had been sagging lower and lower in recent weeks.

Brian, standing with bare feet on damp ground, laughingly took up the challenge and touched the wire.

His fingers contracted around it. Letting out a desperate groan, he pulled the wire down to the ground; it narrowly missed dozens of fellow internees.

The following ten minutes were perhaps the most frightening in my life.

[excerpt]

When we arrived in Weihsien children from Peking and Tientsin already had a school running, largely a continuation of the Tientsin Grammar School. But in mid-1944 discipline was low and studies for this group were grinding to a halt.

The camp Education Committee cast envious eyes at the Chefoo school group, with its well-behaved scholars and smooth-running academic programme. The result was that two Chefoo masters and I were approached to reorganise the Weihsien School ? a change which immediately

put it on a new footing. I was given a class of eight-year-olds to teach. We sat in one wing of the church. The group under me included White Russians, Hindustanis and Eurasians. It was a happy experience and the children seemed to get on with their studies with renewed zeal.

[excerpt]

Soon life in this new camp was running smoothly and we were feeling very much part of this new social environment. I was housed with other boys of the school in Block 23, an attractive building at the far end of the camp, superior to the small blocks of rooms in which the families were housed. The Labour Representative placed me in a kitchen shift of Kitchen I that fed some six hundred people.

Our mode of life was simple and primitive.

The day began with filling buckets at the pump for purposes of cooking and washing. Firewood was collected from trees and bushes, and used in the stove in the middle of the room. From this, water was heated for shaving and washing, and at a later stage for cooking breakfast, that is whatever we had privately for supplementing the official rations. We queued up in Kitchen I for a ladle of bread porridge and some bread. Into our mugs was poured black tea ladled out of a bucket.

Back we went to the bedroom to mix the kitchen issue of food with our own dwindling resources in the most enjoyable combination possible.

Then followed washing of dishes, cleaning of rooms, hanging our mattresses in the sun in a bid to kill the bed bugs, washing our clothes, hanging them out to dry, and so on.

[excerpt]

Then, in addition to problems with hygiene, pilfering and labour was that of keeping the education going of those who, had they not been in camp, would still have been at school preparing for Matriculation.

The Chefoo school on moving to Temple Hill, then to Weihsien, had kept its identity as an educational unit, and to a remarkable degree had maintained a regular programme of studies; in

spite of limited supplies of textbooks, paper and other necessary materials they had kept abreast of their prescribed syllabi, leading up to the Oxford School Leaving Certificate.

[excerpt]

It was quite evident that the four hundred Catholic priests and nuns had made a great impact and profound impression on the internee community. They had turned their hands to the most menial tasks cheerfully and willingly, organised baseball games and helped in the educational programme for the young.

But inevitably romances had been formed between admiring Tientsin and Peking girls and celibate Belgian and American priests from the lonely wastes of Manchuria. Anxious Vatican officials had solved the delicate problem by careful negotiations with the Japanese, as a result of which all but thirty priests had been transferred to an institution of their own in Peking where they could meditate and say their rosaries without feminine distractions.

[excerpt]

Christmas came. We bought small presents for each other at the White Elephant, made little gifts from our limited supplies of wood, cloth and paper. We had games and parties, as well as a joint Christmas service in the camp church.

A group of us went from block to block on Christmas Eve singing carols, and we invariably ended each visit with this significant postscript:

*"We wish you a merry Christmas,
a merry Christmas,
a merry Christmas;*

*We wish you a merry Christmas,
and a Happy New Year,
And hope it won't be here!"*

Imagine our surprise and amusement when on Christmas Day a Japanese guard off duty walked happily down the main road from the guardroom, singing merrily:

*"Ha, ha, ha, hee, hee, hee,
Elephants nest on a rhubarb tree,
Ha, ha, ha, hee, hee, hee,*

Christmas time is a time for me!"

[excerpt]

A guard off duty invited me to play him a game of chess. He took me to the officers' quarters at the far end of the camp from the gate ? a part I had been to only once previously to sweep and spring clean some houses for Japanese officers moving in.

I sat in his room and looked round his abode simple, clean and cheerful. A picture of his sweetheart was on the wall. Uniforms were hanging up in the window to dry in the summer sun. He passed me a "ringo" (apple) as we played. It was hardly an inch and a quarter in diameter. I devoured it, small though it was. It was the only fruit I had tasted during the two years in Weihsien camp.

Playing chess proved to be a most effective way of diverting one's mind from the trials of those days — the shortage of food, the possibility of a Japanese victory in the Far East and the frustration of losing valuable years of one's life in internment.

Thus when off duty I went the rounds of certain chess enthusiasts and played for hours. The intricacies of the game so absorbed my mind that fears and forebodings were temporarily squashed.

Another pastime for me was learning French conversation. I had learned to read and write French, and had had good results in my Matric exams.

Now it was the opportunity to put theory into practice. The Belgian priests working alongside me in Kitchen 1 spoke French frequently to me, while I in turn helped them with English. Several evenings a week I went to the bachelor quarters of a Mr. Dorland for French conversation. Sitting on his porch in the dark (there was no electricity in the living quarters) we discussed architecture, theology and camp life in general. Rumour had it that Dorland was a spy for the Japanese, and so I steered the conversation along uncontroversial lines.

N.D.L.R. from Leopold Pander: ... in fact, Mr. Dorland — as written in the text above — is Father Emmanuel Hanquet, a Catholic missionary in Weihsien. He told me what really happened, many years later when I was assembling the

various parts of this present website about Weihsien. It is also thanks to Emmanuel Hanquet who convinced Norman Cliff to trust me using all his scrapbooks about Weihsien for the veracity of all you are reading within.

...

[... the same story]

What good has come from Weihsien ?

by Gordon Martin

It was good that missionaries and business people should live together. Both sorts live in China absorbed in their own lives there is usually little intercourse and too much feeling of difference. In internment camps, missionary and business man were neighbours, knowing each other's ways and temper; sharing camp duties, sweeping, carrying garbage; standing in the same queues, silent queues, impatient and resentful queues, talkative, cheerful queues; seeing each other take hardship or responsibility. Many of us are very grateful for the chance of knowing fine men and women from the business world, whom we should never have met but for internment.

Then what a chance to meet our missionary partners ! The whole missionary body of North-East China was in Weihsien, except for German or neutral missionaries. We were of different denominations and diverse in outlook; but we had a Weihsien Christian Fellowship, a Fellowship in spirit as well as in organisation. In this matter we owed very much to Harold Cook, of the Methodist Missionary Society, and to Bishop Scott (S.P.G.). We all had a chance of enrichment, and we shall have friends everywhere, as a result of internment.

These new contacts made possible new duties.

We from Chefoo were no longer living in a small largely feminine community. We had to work with **men** and commend our Gospel by being active and efficient. Some of us were Wardens looking after the needs of people in our blocks ; others were cobblers, bakers, butchers. Gordon Welch became manager of the camp bakery - a vital function! - and for a long time he served on the most difficult of the camp committees, the Discipline Committee. Managing the games for the camp, running a Boys' Club in the winter, running Scout and Guide activities, and many other tasks

gave us new chances of being useful. Cleaning vegetables, issuing stores, managing the sewing room, mending clothes were less interesting tasks : but all meant new contacts; and new contacts and necessary tasks were for our profit.

As I think about the Chefoo boys and girls in the camp, what was their gain? We know that their book learning was curtailed, that they went through considerable discomfort, and that they were tested severely in character. **Some minds have been contaminated**, early training has been shaken, standards have become uncertain or lowered. Close contact with men and women of every sort has opened the eyes of our boys and girls: they have seen dishonest and vicious people; they realize how widely diverse are the standards of conduct and amusement, even among people of upright life; they have seen many varieties of Christian life and worship. To assimilate so much experience was not easy without some upsets. But in these matters they are the better fitted by these experiences to enter the adult world of their home countries. And tests are God-given: we do not know the end of these testings. To counterbalance those boys and girls whom we think of as defeated, we look at others who not only survived the tests, but triumphed; who were shaken, but ended with their convictions settled on the Rock. I believe that most of our boys and girls will be stronger for life because of Weihsien.

In self-reliance, in manifold abilities they have gained greatly: cooking, stove building and tending, household duties are familiar to them. To choose their own occupations, their own reading, friends, way of spending much of Sunday, the fashion of their private devotions - these choices have been forced upon them by circumstances. For choosing adult careers, they are better equipped both by what they have done and by the contacts they have had, than by the ordinary training of school and college.

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Aftermath/GordonMartin/p_GordonMartin.html

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>

by Emmanuel Hanquet ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>



[excerpts]

...

Clandestine Scouts

Well, now, one Sunday in springtime Father Palmers and I were sitting on a seat by the central alley. The Protestant service had just finished and we were chatting with some others from the kitchen and the bakery. Cockburn and MacChesney Clark, both old British teachers, were, like us, regretting the lack of educational activity for the young. All four of us were former scouts and it seemed to us to be a good idea to use scouting methods to bring into being something educational despite the limitations of our imprisonment. We decided to think about it and to ask the opinions of others. Ideas were exchanged, and the contacts developed quickly.

We shouldn't try to recruit everyone. Let us begin at the beginning! First we needed to establish a nucleus of scouting life, a patrol seven or eight strong. Junior Chan, a 14 year-old Chinese Canadian Catholic, could make a good patrol leader; Zandy, a Eurasian; the de Zutter brothers, who were Belgians aged 12 and 14; and finally three or four British lads. There was a good mixture of Catholics and Protestants, with

one orthodox element for good measure. It was decided that Cockburn should be in charge; the rest of us would be assistants.

We have to invent everything and cannot mention scouting as such. The motto is to be "all for one and one for all". The badges - a *fleur de lys* on a clover leaf - are to be embroidered by mothers and sisters. The necktie is a white handkerchief dyed in blue ink. Everything else falls into place thanks to scouting skills, and all goes well. When we were liberated, we even managed to get ourselves

photographed by friends from outside the camp.

[excerpt] ...

Escaping ... from Boredom

But the winters were long and tedious. What do you do in the evenings when you are bored when you are deprived of liberty? Clearly, there was no radio, still less television. That is why a few of us set up a sort of youth club which met three times a week after the evening meal. You could learn to play card games, to hold forth, and even to dance. It was an excellent safety valve to help young people to avoid descending to more suspect leisure pursuits. Not many people knew that that Father Palmers and I were behind the establishing of a series of evening classes, which were very popular, though they did not appeal to everyone. During the final winter, it proved essential to fill every evening ...

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/UK_L9_TableOfContents.htm

[Excerpts]

...

Now I have to cope with Christine's food, I have to make cream of heat porridge, etc. and we also have frequent visitors who come for a warm (...) as only families with children under one are receiving stoves.

[excerpt]

From Sunday it started raining and here we are it still is and from Saturday until tonight, there was no electric light. It was dreadful trying to cope with bathing the children, have & clear up supper in semi obscurity. On my birthday there was no light, used 3 peanut oil lights to light the room.

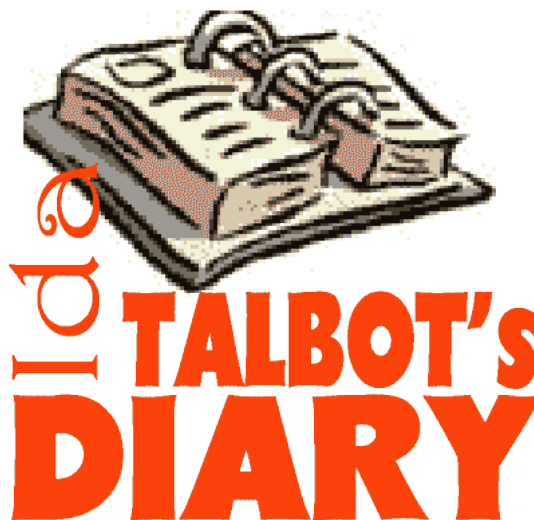
[excerpt]

Mr Joerg's present of eggs was duly delivered children up to 12 received 2 and 13 upwards to 18-3. So, us parents are having an egg breakfast or two, too

[excerpt]

The Authorities seem more kindly disposed somehow. The Commandant had a 'chemise' made for his wife, and since then, one week he sent into sewing room 5 eggs & a huge mellon. The eggs were given to those with children. The following packets of cigarettes were sent in for everybody.

A couple of days at roll call, one of the guards brought out a packet of cigarettes and asked Voyce to distribute it to the men around. And yet an internee went outside a gap in our wall to look at the new outer wall which is being built, as well as the moat. Before we go, says the Jap. You will all be thrown in there!



[excerpt]

We ran out of yeast by Wednesday. After much delay it arrived on Saturday morning. It is very poor, and makes the heaviest bread. Today, at tiffin (20-3-44) only school children had 1 slice each.

[excerpt]

We had a family party on the 28th, the 14th wedding anniversary, had pork & beans and excellent

custard pies, only the children and ourselves, we had an enjoyable evening.

[excerpt]

Things are much the same excepting that there is a fresh crop of rumours, i.e. that E.J.Nathan, Bill Chilton, Dr & Mrs Bryson & Hyslops & 12 Chefoo children will be among the repatriates. No confirmation of course. Also that Germany has dropped gas bombs over England & 3hrs later we flattened Dusseldorf with Hermite bombs. Perhaps it is wishful thinking.

[excerpt]

Caxap received and distributed. Mary came but left unsatisfied. Christine is now able to get on beds, chairs, etc., quite often to keep her quiet I have to give her a piece of paper and pencil, which will keep her amused for quite some time. Today the children are uncomfortable from surfeit of rich food. *[n.d.l.r. = food from the American Red Cross parcels]*

[excerpt]

Yesterday I signed for another parcel from you - I am thrilled - especially to get the shoes. I and the children are wearing out our shoes at a terrific speed. Christine's first birthday was a success despite the fact that she was unwell.

[excerpt]

I cleared the front room & put a board on

the floor propped up by 1 layer of bricks. A clean sheet was spread over it, a bowl of yellow cosmos, and cut out newspapers for cushions we had 10 children: Mary Ann Taylorson, Kay Allen, Graham Milne, Astrid Danielson, Michael Jones the 2 Robinsons and our 3. Of parents Jean, Eleanor, Robbie, Marie, Mrs Danielson, Elsie, Mrs Jimmy and myself. Sid was baking so he popped in occasionally. Gay & Wendy looked after the children after tea under the trees. Eleanor was relieved to have Mary Ann, off her hands for a while.

Goyas yarn to the Chief of Police was quite dramatic. That as the others were getting comfort money, and he wouldn't be getting any, and being hard up for cash, in order to buy some honey, etc. he gave into temptation and sold his watch. As for the 2 rings, and usually worn by him, but owing to pumping he had taken it off. The other was a keepsake from his wife. A 2nd operation for cancer of the breast, etc. shed a couple of tears. Perhaps he will get away with it.

[excerpt]

Xmas Day started with the eve of course.

Jimmy Jamieson came with their gifts for the children, a darkie doll for Christine, pair of reversible mitts for Peter and a silk scarf for Gay. I went along to Jimmy's later to watch Mary make scones, she decided to go to Midnight Mass. When I returned home, I heard Willy Howell was moribund and Robbie was with him. Elsie came with her gifts and Allen stayed behind to mind Xtine.

The Mass was beautiful, enhanced by the brilliant and flickering candlelight. Lights were out. But the sermon was too long and also found that they were crowding far too many hymns. Mina sang beautifully but his pronunciation was foul, he killed Minuit Chretiens.

[excerpt]

The Talbots awoke this morning with gusto - with a feeling of suppressed excitement hanging over us. It was due to Christine's first day at School - the beginning of many years of instruction. It was extremely warm again, all day yesterday we left our front door open, the flies buzzing indoors was not so pleasant, but it was indeed pleasant to hear

them buzzing out of doors.

The school is a largish wall enclosed playground. Miss Clarke was in charge, Lucy Attree & Christiane Chatham are helpers. Today being the 1st day there was much crying. The helpers were continually having to chase the little 'uns. But Christine who, at home is toy-less, became immediately absorbed in the various toys and much to Gay's and my expectation were able to leave her there without trouble. But apparently she cried when the other children had their "lunch" as she didn't have any. So tomorrow I'll have to take lunch for her.

[excerpt]

The Chefoo children arrived here and are not mixing, they will remain a C.I.M. School consequently, Mr Pryor, at the instigation of Mr Foxlee, has established a Weihsien Camp School, without inviting the Sisters to the discussions. The result is that an American School is being established under Miss Moore, our children are going to it as the Sisters & Fathers will be on the staff.

[excerpt]

Christine is now trying to get on her feet, she hauls herself up as far as her knees by holding on to the side of her cot. I am unable to do any communal work as she is still a handful. Even have to rise at 6p.m. to cope with the washing. Peter is a handful too - poor children they are completely out of hand and the poor parents their temper is frayed to a frazzle. You'd be surprised to see the number of children who are getting their long waited for spansks.

[excerpt]

We have heard that no letters have left Camp. I don't think the authorities would allow any letters to reach the outside world until each and everyone is incarcerated.

22 Peking people arrived on the 13th morning at 6.30 they had to walk here from the station. I think women and children came in rickshaws. They have brought fantastic news - fantastic as they are they seemed to be too good to be true. That Norvorissish, Kharkov and Smolensk have been retaken. That the North African campaign was over, that the Italian Government was

endeavouring to sue for peace, that the German people were demanding peace at any price.

[excerpt]

We are hoping to receive our allowance soon, although we have today signed a petition requesting an increase for the allowance for children. We received last month \$80. per couple and \$30 thereafter for each child.

[excerpt]

On Friday, March 31st, I went to A "red hot and blue" Variety show given by Winnie Tipper & Gerald Thomas. It was extremely good and vulgar. Betty Lambert danced the "Hula" well - I preferred it to the French Can-can. Jacqueline de St. Hubert & Geoff Gardner did the Rhumba extremely well. The costumes were little short of gorgeous, and the music "hot". References to Public School, brought the house down- implied I think that most of the audience did not have it and envious.

[excerpt]

Christine goes to Nursery School tomorrow I am apprehensive as I feel that she'll create a scene and won't stay I hope to goodness she'll take to it, as it means that for seven days of the week from 9.30 to 12.30 she'll be off our hands.

[excerpt]

We rearranged our room to the pre-winter style, and thanks to the space restored by the stove, we feel a little more roomy. Christine wasn't very tractable at school.

[excerpt]

The Italians are now not allowed to move freely into our compound. They were given Monday & Tuesday from 6.30 to 8 the baseball field, where it would have been out of bounds to us. This the Italians refused. They wanted to be allowed to come on the baseball field and mingle with us. Only one Italian is to come for the hospital diet food for their children. I haven't heard how they are coping with the schooling as their kids attend our schools. In order to prevent them from spending money in our camp, they have to account for every penny spent when drawing their bank balance.

[excerpt]

Had Mrs Cullen in to tea and for the occasion I baked 2 date tarts. Father Rutherford dropped in too. Discussing schools, he thought the Chefoo C.I.M. much too narrow advised me to take Gay to England. Talked about Siberian Route, etc. my knowledge of Russian will serve me in good stead me seems.

[excerpt]

Gay being unmercifully ragged in school. Called 'swotter', because she enjoys learning & wants to get on. During break the other girls hid her books in various desks. Most unhappy as feels all class plotting against her. Told her had to take it.

[excerpt]

As the schools note books are costing \$20. The whole of the lower school has resorted to slates. But I believe the C.I.M. school are worried for the older children!

[excerpt]

Hiawatha and all sports were cancelled -but not by the Nine Committee. In the morning MacLaren went into his office and there, Pander, his assistant told him that the sports had been cancelled. MacLaren thought that at least John Stewart should have consulted with him. Pander said that Stewart was not responsible, but Martin, a teacher of the C.I.M. School. I think Howard Smith cancelled Hiawatha. We are waiting to see if Martin & H.Smith will be asked to explain themselves, or will the Nine Committees take this lying down. God bless Roosevelt.

[excerpt]

P.S. All children in Upper School received 2 writing books each and in Lower School three. There would have cost the parents \$250 - Heard that a garden broom - will cost \$600 - and a coolie hat \$250 - Bought 6 yards French Lingerie Ribbon, pink, \$10 per yard. I couldn't resist. Two weeks ago I bought a 'Horner' mouth organ for \$200 for Gay's birthday - I wonder whether she'll be pleased with.

[excerpt]

Am now busy obtaining data regarding Bridge School for youths. Seems the most popular activity

amongst the youth of the camp.

[excerpt]

2 Guard were boozing in the Italian Cons. one of whom was the constant object of Soapy Sam's venom. The other his friend had a loaded mauser, and proclaimed that 'this is for Soapy Sam'

The hosts became alarmed and ordered the pair home as they had had too much to drink. When they reached the main road they decided to look for Soapy Sam, so they rolled up to his house but could not get in. They then fired at his windows (which accounts of the splintering of windows heard by people living close by) Meanwhile Soapy Sam decided to look for a safer spot, so in his carpet slippers and pyjamas he dashed out of the back window, threading his way in and out of alleys. (This accounts for Jimmy Windsor thinking he had seen a Chinese amah about.) However the 2 guards found Soapy Sam in the Guard Room. He was thrown on to the floor, and as one guard had raised his sword with which to slay him when he enters King Kong and his satellites which put an end to a game of 'evens'. We hear King Kong, Soapy Sam and Bushing deh will be leaving shortly.

[excerpt]

It occurs to me that we are taking the end of the European war too nonchalantly, but it reveals the state of our mental attitude resulting from this long incarceration and the lack of vitamins contained in green veg. & fruit. I have been feeling below par for some time and my headaches intense, but last Wednesday consequent upon a very badly played bridge game on Tuesday night and the examination thereof that I started taking special vitamin B tablets. My headaches have lessened in intensity and generally I think there is an improvement in my system as a whole. But today I am suffering from nausea & diarrhoea due to a very excellent - too excellent supper at Marie's. She celebrated her birthday yesterday, and gave us pork & beans, baked potatoes, tangshi & raisin tart and a birthday cake - it was too rich and I am suffering therefore. We gave Marie, a pair of panties which I made especially for the occasion, a packet of cigarettes and a hanger. Now I am making a tea cosy cover in blue Angora woollen cloth for Elsie, her birthday is tomorrow.

[excerpt]

Today has ended up being a pukka wet Wednesday, the much anticipated ball game 'camp versus army' was cancelled due to wet weather. Our No. 1 kitchen boiler for the first time has not been able to produce boiling water for tea - so had to stand in the rain at Ladies' Shower to make tea for the Homes Committee meeting at which Mrs Hubbard & self were hostesses.

[excerpt]

August 17, 1945 ...

Well, my dear, our most thrilling day materialised today. As I was taking Christine to her nursery school, the plane zoomed very low overhead, crowds who were awaiting the return of passports cheered & cheered.

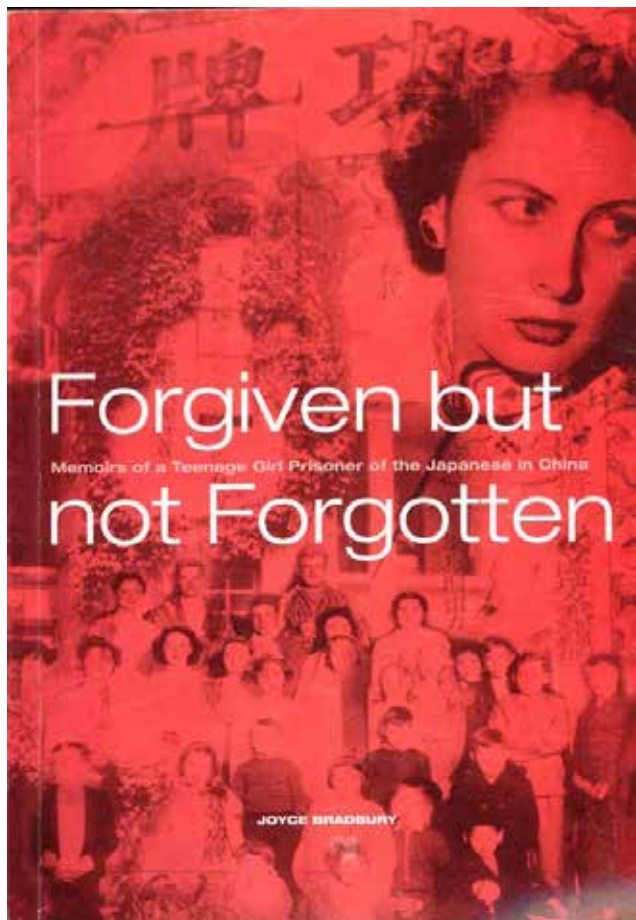
Presently it came back, and again, then on my way home I saw the parachutists.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/ChSancton/diary/Diary/calendar.htm>

by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

During the hotel internment, I was one of a group of children who put on a Christmas concert for internees. The girls dressed as angels.

[excerpt]

No clothing was issued by the Japanese during the next three-and-a-half years. As children grew out of clothing, it was swapped at the exchange stall set up especially, which we called the White Elephant Exchange.

[excerpt]

The age range of the internees was wide. The oldest internees in mid-1944 were a missionary couple both aged 86. The youngest internee was a one-month-old infant. Because so many

schoolchildren had been brought to the camp, there was a disproportionate number of children at the time the list was compiled.

[excerpt]

It was very difficult for the younger children.

They had to go hungry and they did not understand what was going on. The rest of us just had to put up with the shortages. We were given some flour, which the inmates made into bread.

The bread always tasted stale to me, although it was freshly made. We had peanut butter because Wei-Hsien grew a lot of peanuts. The peanuts were ground by hand either in the bakery or the kitchen and that's what kept us going. I still like to eat peanut butter.

On one occasion a load of potatoes was delivered and dumped in a corner of the parade ground. The Japanese would not allow us to move the potatoes and they were left out in the weather until they started to rot. We were then told to eat them and when the inmates complained, the Japanese said: "You'll get nothing else until the potatoes are eaten." So, we ate them.

[excerpt]

While there was a shoe repair shop in operation, new shoes were non-existent and when my brother Eddie wore his shoes out, Mum made a pair out of canvas for him. It took her days to sew them but he wore them to pieces within a couple of hours. Many of the children went barefoot. My mother was more successful at making cloth toys for children which she used to trade with other inmates for canned and preserved food.

[excerpt]

I attended school in the camp. It was conducted by nuns, priests and staff from the Peking American High School. Most of the teachers were university trained. My father used to say to us: "You are getting the best education because these people are some of the most highly trained teachers in the world." Text books were

scarce and we had to share them. We had pencils and paper and some had fountain pens. We were given homework most nights.

[excerpt]

Other schools operated in the camp. This was done to help children who had been educated together before the war to remain together in school at the camp. The Chefoo School, which the Reverend Norman Cliff and his siblings attended as students, operated in the camp. The school was well organised with sporting teams and a Boy Scout group.

As soon as I turned 14 in mid-1942, I was given the regular job of cleaning toilets. I was given a bucket, a brush, some cloth and disinfectant. Every day I had to clean the ladies' and gents' toilets near the communal showers. There were no sewer or flushing toilets.

[excerpt]

During our imprisonment my brother was still recovering from tuberculosis. The doctors handled limited supplies of milk and eggs for babies and children under 10. Because Eddie turned 10 at Wei-Hsien, he did not qualify for the milk and eggs. This annoyed my father who thought he should receive milk and eggs to help him recover. Pop was working in the cookhouse one day wondering how he could get nourishing food for Eddie when a pigeon flew in through a window and fell into a vat of boiling soup. In no time it was plucked, cooked and fed to my brother. Pop always said the impromptu pigeon meal saved young Eddie's life.

[excerpt]

The Salvation Army members were well keeping up people's spirits. They constantly organised activities for younger children, visited the ill and encouraged people interested in learning to play a musical instrument. Reverend Norman Cliff, then a schoolboy, learned how to play the trombone from them and used to perform at their recitals.

There was also a Dutch married couple known as the 'holy rollers' because of their religious beliefs. They were members of a group of religious people who manifest their religious fervour by rolling on the floor while saying their prayers. They

did their praying regularly because I used to see them from where we lived.

[excerpt]

The Japanese sergeant who was responsible for our section of the camp was known to us as Sergeant Bushing-de because he always said no to any question and "bushing-de" in Chinese means "no can do". We used to refer to another guard as slippery Sam because he was sly and slippery in his actions towards us. There was also a big guard nicknamed King Kong.

Captain Yumaeda, who was one of the camp's commandants, owned a nanny goat from which he used to obtain milk for himself and perhaps other officers. One day the goat wandered into the general camp compound and was immediately milked by the inmates until there was no more milk. My mother had a go at it but without success. Somehow or other we had some of the milk in our tea that day but I don't remember how we got it. It was lovely. The goat never escaped again. The scene of all these ladies chasing the goat to milk it was a sight I will always remember.

Funny yes, but pathetic in retrospect.

[excerpt]

The clergy also worked. They performed kitchen duties, stoked hot water boilers for the showers and pumped water which had to be done 24 hours a day. They also helped with heavy work such as lifting when required. One Catholic priest, Father Schneider, was formerly a shoemaker and he was put in charge of the shoe repair shop. Some of the nuns worked in the kitchen, cleaning vegetables, and also taught in the schools alongside Protestant missionaries. Some nuns nursed and some volunteered for the terrible job of clearing overflowing toilets, which they did with grace and dignity.

The nuns wore veils over a stiff cloth frame called a "coif" on their heads when they first arrived. After a while, they dispensed with the coifs and just wore a veil pinned to their hair.

Many of the Protestant clergy had added tasks.

They had to tend to the needs of their families, of which there were quite a few.

[excerpt]

I attended school in the camp. It was conducted by nuns, priests and staff from the Peking American High School. Most of the teachers were university trained. My father used to say to us: "You are getting the best education because these people are some of the most highly trained teachers in the world."

Text books were scarce and we had to share them. We had pencils and paper and some had fountain pens. We were given homework most nights.

On completing school in the camp at the age of 17, I was presented with a graduation certificate signed by Alice Moore, my camp school's principal. Before her imprisonment, Miss Moore was principal of the Peking American High School. Amazingly, Miss Moore brought the blank graduation certificates with her and other necessities such as books for running a school in the camp. I still have the graduation certificate which says I graduated from the Peking American High School. I separately studied shorthand while I was attending high school in the camp. I still have my certificate of competency at a rate of 60 words per minute.

[excerpt]

We all lived together and helped each other. Nobody thought it strange for different religions to mix together in church. After all, we mixed together in everyday life in the camp so it was natural to mix together at worship. The church and the dining room were used for school rooms during the day but we had to vacate the dining room for lunch to be served.

[excerpt]

I had boyfriends for a while and then they either got sick of me or I got sick of them. There were plenty of young men there but I used to select those who were interesting and had personality. I don't remember how many boyfriends I had those days but I don't think I really loved any. I found it was good to be with someone who cared and was willing to sit and talk. There were no drugs that I am aware of and alcohol was a no-no for teenage girls. Everybody warned us what happened to girls who drank

alcohol.

And sex was just not a thing we thought about. That was our training and upbringing — especially for convent-educated girls.

[excerpt]

I did not leave the camp for short excursions into the local neighbourhood after the liberation.

To my mind, there was nothing to see. Just miles and miles of open fields and farms devoted mainly to cropping. For the younger children, schooling continued. Because I had finished high school I still had to do my camp committee-appointed chores. However, there was a big difference — a difference in morale among us. We had music all day and we could have hot showers whenever we wanted them. And we could move around freely and visit friends at night. Above all, there was plenty of food. The American food parcels were brought in regularly. Fresh vegetables came in from the Chinese.

For reasons I have never fathomed, we still didn't get any rice.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts]

[...]

Of special interest is the formation of schools in Weihsien prior to the arrival of the Chefoo group. The head of the Education Committee had previously been with the Tientsin Grammar School. The committee organized the children into groups. At the pre-school and kindergarten age, there were approximately ninety students who were then divided into age-appropriate groupings from three to six years old.

On the elementary level, two schools evolved.

The American School derived its staff from the Peking American School and the British School was made up of teachers from the Tientsin Grammar School.

The two schools went from grades one through eight, or the comparable Forms on the British side. They had one hundred students and sixteen teachers between the two schools. At the high school level, there were approximately fifteen teachers and seventy-five students in the British and American schools.

Adult education also thrived. "Amongst the Catholic Fathers, the educationalists from the Peking universities and the language students, we had some of the finest intellects in North China, and lectures and talks were given on every imaginable subject." Ninety teachers taught more than 700 students in twenty-five subjects

which included art, botany, ornithology, physics, chemistry, Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, Latin, Greek, philosophy, psychology, theology, commercial subjects, vocal and theoretical music, and higher mathematics.

[excerpt]

For the Chefusians, however, Weihsien was a God-send. "The School entered a camp already in working order, and it was a measure of relief to the staff to feel that some of the responsibilities of Temple Hill would now be shared by the various departments of the camp's administration....

Cooking, which had been an increasing burden at Temple Hill, no longer fell upon the womenfolk. The repatriation also necessitated the reorganization of the camp schools. There were still four schools, the nursery, the kindergarten, the Weihsien School and the Chefoo School.

The Weihsien School was a conglomerate of the former American and British Schools. Since the Weihsien School used different textbooks, Chefoo maintained its own school and did not take in any Weihsien students. Some of the Chefoo staff, though, did teach in the Weihsien School. The Chefoo faculty had a staff meeting where, "after computing the least number for the running of the School, it was decided. . . .

Those free from other official camp duties were able to organize classes so that at least half a day's schooling was done (...) in dormitories."

The staff also decided to continue preparing the students for the Oxford Examinations as "an incentive to steady work with a definite objective The effect on the whole school was noticeable The reintroduction of half-term marks was a further spur to industry, and a means of checking the progress of individuals." The Chefoo staff had prepared for the continuation of schooling during internment by having students bring a complete set of textbooks for their year which were then passed down during the next three years to younger students. So the Chefoo School was able to function in cramped conditions and despite a



“desperate shortage of paper.

Work would be done in pencil, erased, and the sheet of paper used again.”

Once the Chefoo contingent had settled in, Weihsien life took on a structured routine. “Roll Call- 7:30 a.m., Breakfast- 8:00, Tiffin [lunch]- 12:30, Super-6:00, Lights out- 10:00 p.m.”

Meals consisted of bread and tea, sometimes millet, for breakfast, stew for lunch, and soup for supper. This was supplemented with eggs from the black market, vegetables from small gardens and milk for the infants from cows kept near the camp.

The most glaring deficiencies were in “calcium, vitamin B, vitamin C and calories To attempt to partly meet the calcium needs of small children and adolescents, we are grinding up egg shells and feeding this, [but] the supply of egg shells is itself wholly inadequate.” In between meal times everyone did their assigned tasks to keep the camp functioning.

In the evenings there were recreational activities, adult classes, lectures, debates, plays, religious meetings, and concerts. “The aim of the camp was to have one entertainment a week

These, whilst being a strain in a way was quite a relaxation from work.”

Those with comfort money could make limited purchases at the canteen, and all could swap goods at the internee organized “Camel Bell Exchange.” Beneath this placid exterior there existed a black market, passing of secret messages to the outside world, and the plotting of an escape from Weihsien.

[excerpt]

The interned children were also involved in Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and Brownies. While waiting in roll call lines the children would practice their “semaphore and Morse code messages.” They would earn scout badges for being able to build a fire and cook something in “tin cans [made] into stoves where you’d make a little opening with twigs underneath. These were big deal type things.

They even set wilderness trails where you had to follow like markings,” within the confines of the camp.

[excerpt]

Though the internees realized the importance of recreation for maintaining a healthy mind, body and spirit, there were concerns for the health of the children who were not getting adequate nutrition.

Some of the children had teeth coming in with improper enamel covering because of the inadequate food. On the rare occasions when eggs could be obtained at the canteen or from the black-market, the teachers saved the egg shells, dried them, “wound them and made us eat ground egg shell to keep the calcium.

We also got peanuts. We’d grind them on a hand grinder and make our own peanut butter.”

Although Mary did not have any problems with her teeth, she did suffer from severe asthma while in the camp.

“It was agony for me. The kids would complain that I snored. I would try to keep awake until everyone would fall asleep so I wouldn’t bother them.” Once she left the camp, though, her allergies subsided. Mary claims no long-term ill health effects from being interned and feels that overall her family has been “blessed with good health with the exception of Kathleen. She died of lupus six years after we got out of the concentration camp.

Was there any connection to that?

I have no idea. Doctors don’t know how people get lupus.” The lack of appropriate nutrients and

caloric intake caused other problems as well, especially with menstrual periods. Most of us were delayed because of the nutrition level.

These British spinster teachers certainly did not discuss these matters with us. I had never heard of having a menstrual period. That was not anything the teachers talked to us about and I have a feeling that was one of the reasons we were kept in separate dormitories. My bed was right next to Sandy's and toward the end of the camp there some secret thing that every month Sandy got taken aside, hushy-poooh with the teachers and whatever it was we had no idea. I didn't even know where babies came from. When we were in Chefoo before the war my sister surreptitiously wanted to know if I knew where babies came from and I had no idea. I had no idea when I got into the concentration camp, but all of a sudden Sandy had something happening to her that the teachers would take her aside. . It wasn't until after we were out of the concentration camp I got fattened up with decent food that I started my period and my sister told me what had happened. Here, one girl started her periods before we got out. I think we were all retarded in our physical growth and development.

[excerpt]

The internment provided the Chefoo siblings an opportunity to see each other more than they would have if they had stayed at the Chefoo School. At the Chefoo School, siblings traditionally only interacted with one another on Sundays during "family time" when they were allowed to walk home from church together.

We saw [our siblings] much more in the camp. When we all got put in the hospital building [dormitory] I didn't see Johnny as much because he was still housed in block 23, whereas Kathleen was on the same floor as I, and Jamie was one floor up. Our roll call was together. We didn't have classes together, but we would have hymn sings together.

Mary interacted enough with her sister Kathleen to know of her sister's crushes which Mary still talks of with schoolgirl secrecy.

I've got to tell you a secret. The older girls were beginning to have love affairs, my sister Kathleen was one of them. She was in love [and] even engaged to be married with Dougie. He was a 6' 6-1/2" brilliant athlete, and really a lovely person and that was, of course, terrible because he was not Christian as we knew it, [was not a Chefoo boy].

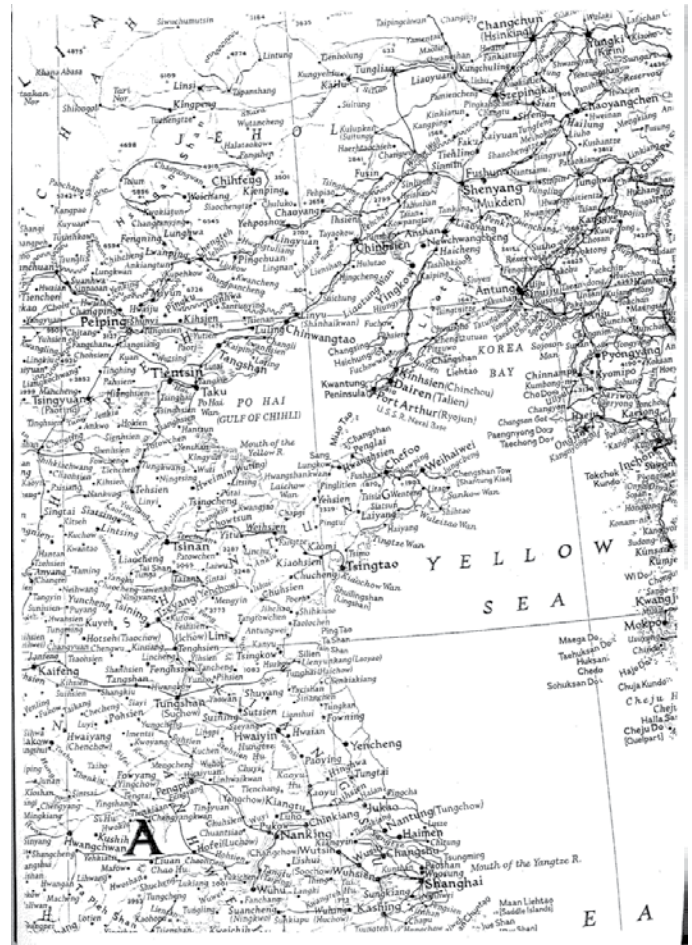
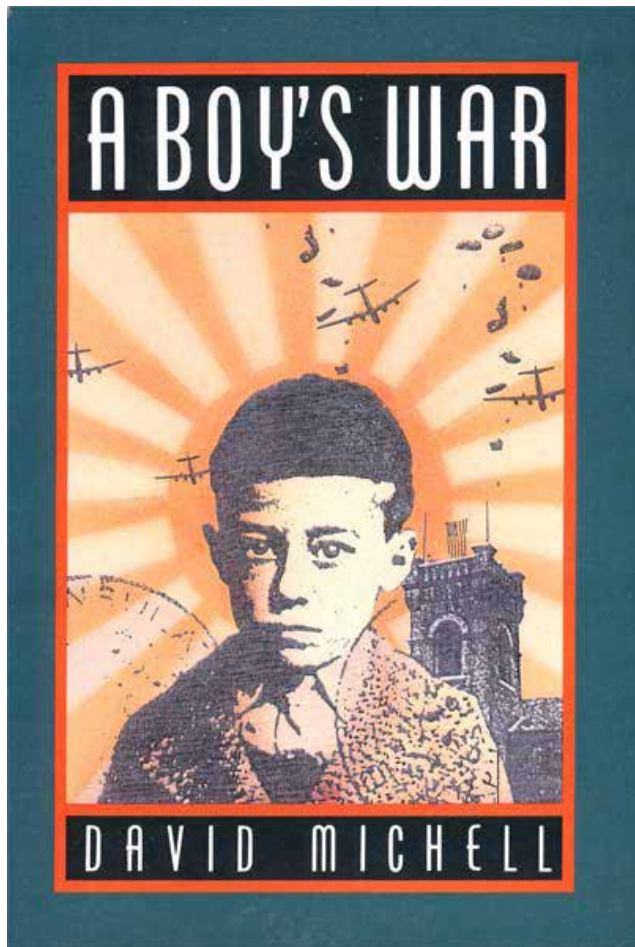
Although the siblings were able to interact more, classmates and peers were still the most significant relationships as they would have been at the Chefoo School. "The primary group was our classmates. The people that you were really close to were our dormmates and then the boys and girls that were in our class together."

[further reading]

<http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/ChristinaSpink/index.php>

by David Michell ...

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

It was late August 1944. I was eleven, one boy in a whole school of missionaries' children interned under the Japanese.

Home was Weih sien Concentration Camp in Shantung (Shandong) Province, North China.

[excerpt]

That sports day on the playing field was a speck of glitter in the dull monotony of camp life.

The youngest children ran first, then we juniors, pounding down the track barefoot, in hand-me-down shorts and shirts. Yelling and

laughing, we slapped each other's backs as we finished the course.

Then, as the veterans' race prepared to start, a hush distilled over the crowd. Our eyes shifted to the chairman of the Camp Recreation Committee, who was starting well behind the others as a voluntary handicap. "He can never make up that distance!" gasped a boy beside me.

[excerpt]

Already more than a year had passed since our school had been marched in under guard to join the rest of the prisoners. There were over two hundred of us, children of missionaries, separated by war from parents who were working in inland China, in regions not yet taken over by the Japanese. Business people, tourists, entertainers, and their families as well as children from other schools made up the rest of the prison population.

More than a third of the internees, in fact, were children. For all of us life was confined within the high brick walls that ran around the Weihsien compound.

The Japanese guards, with bared bayonets, were never out of sight by day, pacing along the foot of the forbidding gray walls or clustered at the main gates or corner searchlight towers. Even by night the searchlight beams—sweeping across the camp and over the deep trenches and coiled barbed wire— reminded us of the soldiers' presence.

Across those trenches and outside those walls was the world, we had once known.

[excerpt]

Evelyn Davey's diary :

Yesterday I did my first duty in an internment camp. Putting the children to bed was hectic. We had to wash in relays, and all face flannels and towels have to be handed from high pegs. Hot water has to be carried from the boys' washing room (the old servants'?) to the girls' washing room (Miss Beagle's bathroom); and cold water has to be carried from the girls' to the boys'. We are only allowed to wash at night, because water is so scarce! We ate our supper sitting on cabin trunks in the hall - the Preps in their dressing gowns and pyjamas! otherwise we all eat together in two rows downstairs - all sixty- two of us. We balance plates on our knees, eat stew with a soup - and enjoy it all immensely.

[excerpt]

Now the cold weather is here and the fun has really started. I was on duty on a cold, wet, sleety day! The children had to play indoors - in their dorms and the hall. It was SOME squash! I wandered around stoking stoves, answering questions, quelling quarrels, finding paper, pencil, glue, string, etc. "raving" at people for walking on the beds, and emptying "chambers"! They could not go to the outside lavatories because of the snow - so I was kept busy. To crown all, the electric lights failed to come on, so we had to go to bed by

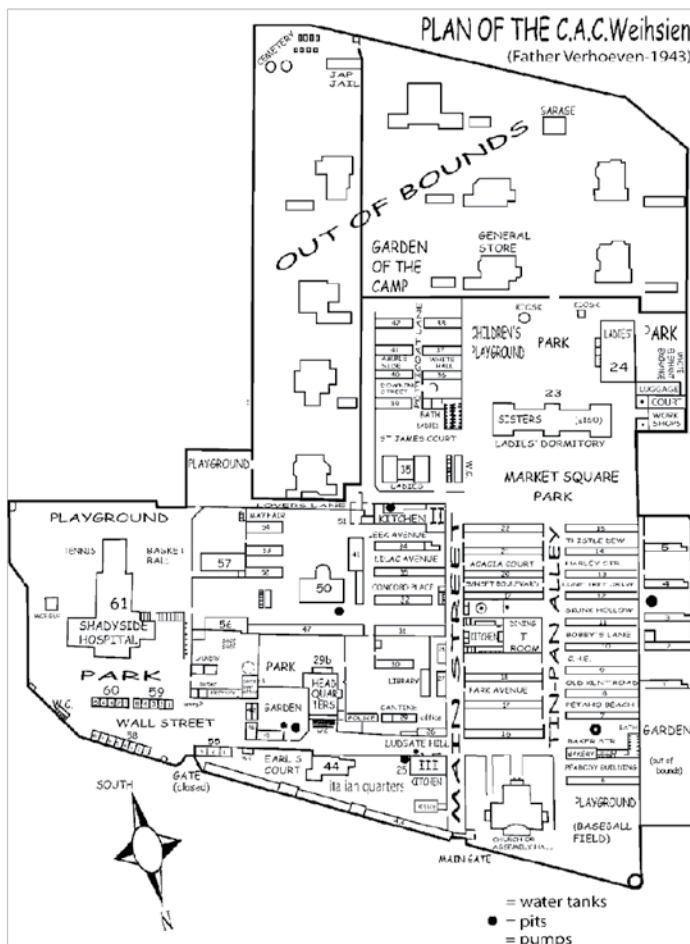
candlelight. I had just escorted eight little girls into the bathroom to wash, holding a very wobbly candle, when the candle overbalanced, fell behind the geyser, and left us in complete darkness. I took a step forward to find it - and knocked over a jug of cold water which swamped the floor! Oh dear! Poor Teacher on Duty!

However, the day ended at last!

Yesterday we had an epidemic of children being sick. Dorothy spent the day washing out innumerable sheets, dressing gowns, pyjamas, pants and other garments.

We have a communal bath system for the children. They all wash all over using their own basinful of water, and then we have a common rinsing tub.

[excerpt]



We noticed in the camp quite a lot of children, who gave us smiles that seemed to say they understood what we were coming to. We later made good friends of many of them, most students from the Peking and Tientsin Grammar Schools, which carried on as did our own Chefoo School in camp.

That first day we were led to the open area to the west of the Mateer Memorial Church, which was beside the main street, not far from the main gate. After the guards checked to see that we were all present and correct, and after they read the camp rules and regulations to us, we were allotted rooms or dormitory numbers. Families of four were given one tiny room while those with six members usually managed two rooms. The rooms were practically bare, but after our baggage arrived a week later traces of personality began to appear. Many people's baggage was stolen en route or arrived badly damaged. Nevertheless, through the ingenious efforts of those with handyman skills, makeshift furnishings gave an amazingly homey appearance to our new quarters.

We younger children and our teachers were assigned to Block 24, one of the large buildings of classrooms. The only accommodation that could be spared for us was two rooms in the basement. We deposited what we were carrying, wondering, however, we would all be able to sleep in such a small space. There was no time to solve the problem as supper was ready at kitchen number one. The menu was onion soup, dried bread and pudding made with flour and water. As a special treat for new arrivals sugar was included. We were so hungry we thought it was a good meal.

[excerpt]

We children learned to amuse ourselves with simple activities. Because one game we invented required buttons, it wasn't long before our clothes were pretty well all buttonless. Stringing the buttons on lengths of string, we spun them round, producing all sorts of variations in their gyrations. One day a teacher picked up 26 buttons off the floor.

It was really amazing what value became attached to such simple possessions. I remember one Christmas receiving a grubby old cotton spool, and you would have thought I had been given a

bicycle!

Walking became a favorite pastime. Some of us were able to boast of having walked a grand total of 63 miles. An elaborate wall chart recording our scores was our pride and joy.

[excerpt]

Also among the internees were some entertainment groups which were part of the Western community in the big cities in North China. A black jazz band added quite a bit of life to camp. In fact, for us younger children from Chefoo, who had known nothing but a very sheltered missionary environment, it was our first sight of a black person! And to come face-to-face with glamorous models wearing lipstick and high heels was mind-boggling!

[excerpt]

"As the diet was lacking in calcium (no milk, no cheese, no ice cream)," Evelyn Davey remembers,

"we collected the shells from the black-market eggs, ground them into a powder and fed it to the children by the spoonful. We also gathered certain weeds around the compound and cooked them into a spinach-like vegetable to supplement the rations. Fruit, apart from a few apples, was almost unknown, and one little girl in school asked, 'What is a banana?'"

[excerpt]

The laundry was one of our chores. Three days a week a dawdling line of the younger children could be seen weaving its way back from the hospital to our rooms in Block 23, with basins of wet washing on our heads or in our arms. One time I tripped and had to detour by the pump to give everything another rinse and wring out before delivering the goods to the teachers for hanging out on the line.

[excerpt]

The medical accomplishments of camp personnel were remarkable and courageous, taking into account the lack of facilities, equipment, and medicines. Doctors performed many major operations and numerous minor ones. During our twenty-five months of imprisonment 32 children

were born, and 28 people died. Had it not been for the Trojan efforts of the Red Cross in getting altogether unprocurable medicines into camp to us by the most creative means, we would have fared much more gravely. It truly was the goodness and grace of God in His loving, providential care of us, and many a time and many a person testified publicly to this.

Living in the cramped conditions of camp required much patience and consideration. The rules of one of the women's dormitories in Block 23, which had eleven people in a space about 25' by 15', were as follows:

1.

Poker must be laid at right hand of the stove.

2.

Wood must not be dried in front of fire.

3.

The axe edge must be turned away from the room.

4.

Children must not visit in rest hour.

5.

No "foreign body" must be put in the highway.

6.

You must be in bed before "lights out" (10 p.m.).

7.

Mats must not be shaken on the balcony.

[excerpt]

Some of our teachers helped to teach in the other schools organized for children in camp. Evelyn Davey taught at the kindergarten that was organized. She describes her pupils:

The children were of many nationalities. Some of them were from missionary families; some from business families from Peking and Tientsin.

Julienne was English. She was always the perfect lady. Her brown hair was swept smoothly back from her face, and her clothes were always neat. She never pushed. Her

father was an executive of the Kaoliang Mining Company.

Jeannette was quick and volatile. She had a Belgian father and a Ukrainian mother. She spoke both languages, and also the Chinese dialect used by her amah [babysitter]. She learned English in six weeks.

Margaret was a big five-year-old who liked to "mother" the others. She was Scotch and spoke with a soft brogue. Her father was a missionary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Janet had the curliest hair, the brownest eyes, and the frilliest dresses in the class. Her daddy played in a dance band in Tientsin.

Mickey Patternosta was Belgian. His favorite occupation was getting on top of a wall somewhere with some like-minded friends, and seeing who could spit most accurately.

[excerpt]

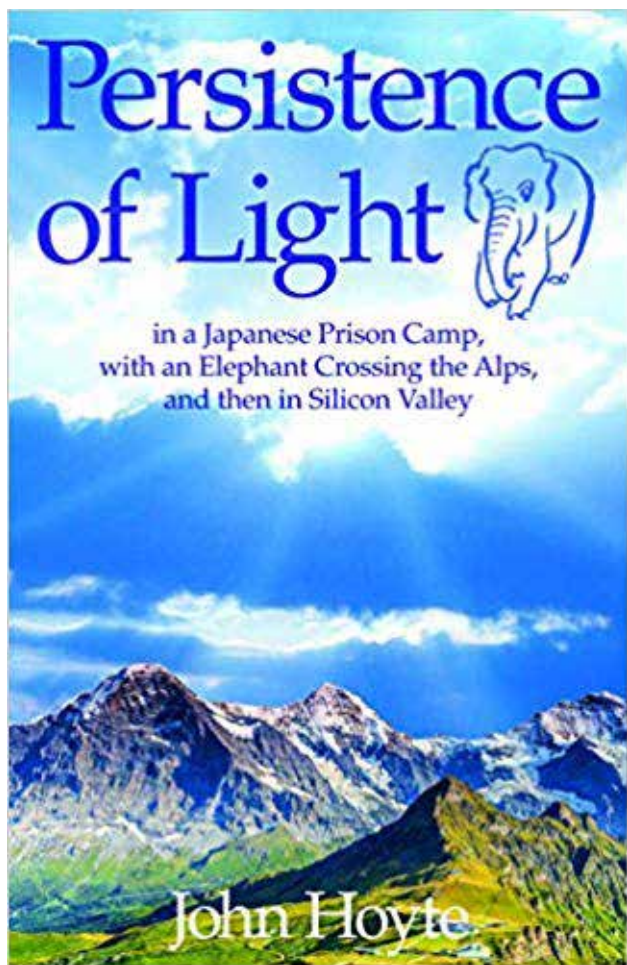
For a number of months, catching flies was the number one pastime in our spare minutes in lineups or when watching the ball games. My greatest feat was what I called my best Sunday catch—sixty-six during one Sunday school lesson! Although we younger children made quite a dent on the fly population, we didn't win the prize. We were outdone by the older boys whose methods of operation were on a larger scale.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/p_FrontCover.htm

by John Hoyte ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)



[Excerpts]

[...]

The internees already there were crowding the walls, the gates, and the alleys to welcome us.

Pity, interest, curiosity, and perhaps a little disgust at the thought of more mouths to feed were all evident on their faces. Their clothes looked rumpled and torn, covered with dust and dirt, but there were women and children as well as men. We kids were excited at the prospect of more space to run around in after being cramped for so long in the three houses in Chefoo. The housing committee found space for us in the education building. We had to make do with what bedding we had, as our mattresses did not arrive for another two weeks. We unpacked and settled

down on the floor. Apprehension and excitement kept me awake for some time.

Next morning, we explored our new environment. High walls surrounded the camp, with guard towers at each strategic corner, and high voltage wires, mounted on insulators, warning us against any attempt to escape. There also were searchlights and guard dogs, and we wisely respected the security that surrounded us.

[excerpt]

When children look on a human death, they instinctively know the terrible difference between this and that of a favorite pet. Some children would have wanted to get out of the morgue as soon as possible. I wanted to stay. I carefully touched the hem of the nun's habit as an act of reaching out to the mystery, to the unknown, though I did not know where it would lead. Here was a mystery, and I was on the shore of a vast unknown ocean. Little did I know that—twelve months in the future and thirteen hundred miles away—my own mother's body would lie like this, with my dad watching over her, his life torn apart in grief.

Theo and I left in silence, not saying a word. We had ventured out of our depth.

[excerpt]

Camp life revolved around food and fuel, food to keep us going and fuel to keep us warm.

Both were the cause of much turmoil and anguish, and lack of them the cause of much suffering. The food in the camp was prepared, cooked, and distributed in two kitchens. We children went to Kitchen #1 which fed up to a thousand prisoners. The staple and generally unappetizing diet was a coarse, peasant grain called kaoliang. There was kaoliang soup, kaoliang porridge, kaoliang stew, and kaoliang curry, and not much else.

The meat we had was from horses or mules, and so tough it needed a lot of cooking. Because there was no refrigeration, meat had to be cooked as soon as possible, and, of course, there was

never enough to go around, particularly for us growing boys. Since ten pounds of meat would have to feed a thousand internees, the cooks would make it into a thin but at least slightly meaty stew.

Such things as milk, eggs, and sugar were considered luxuries and kept for expectant mothers or the very ill. Near the end of the war, food became harder and harder to get, strongly tempting the workers who handled it to steal.

When you are putting the ten pounds of meat into the huge cooking pot for your thousand impersonal campers while your own, close family is starving, it would be easy to cut off a half pound slice and slip it into a pocket. This raised the whole question of personal morality in a situation where everything of value was scarce.

[]

We were desperately short of green vegetables, and there was an attempt to grow a vegetable garden at the back of the camp. But space was so limited that it did not amount to much.

To help our bones grow, so ran the theory, we children were required to eat a daily teaspoon of powdered egg shells to make up for the milk we were not getting. How we loathed the flat, dry, choking taste. We never found out where the shells came from as we did not see many eggs in our diet. Fruit was nonexistent. Norman Cliff, a close friend of my brother Robin, was invited to play chess with one of the Japanese officers. As they played, in the relatively luxurious Officers' Quarters, the officer handed him an apple, an inch and a half across. Norman devoured it, small though it was. It was the only fruit he had tasted during his years in the camp. He was also suffering from amoebic dysentery and backaches, attributed to the lack of hygiene and hard labor at the camp.

Six months before the end of the war, yeast became unobtainable, so the bakery was unable to produce bread. Considering how important it was to our limited diet, this meant we were near the starvation point. Day after day, the diary of my youngest sister, Elizabeth, read: Still no bread. Red Cross parcels came in the nick of time and helped us survive.

[excerpt]

When the problem of a growing infestation of rats in the camp became serious toward the end of the war, the commandant organized a rat-catching competition. This was taken up very seriously by us boys. The irony was that though we were the captives and the Japanese the captors, we were being asked to take their role in the rat kingdom! There would be prizes for the teams that caught the three largest rats by April 1.

My best friend, Jimmy, and I took much delight in modifying an old defunct trap we had found on the scrap heap and getting it to work with a powerful spring action. This was my first engineering project. Then we had to decide where to put it in order to catch our prize. This turned out to be more complicated than we had at first thought, as various rat-catching teams were staking out areas for their exclusive use.

Quite how this worked I cannot remember, but I know we did not have a good location, so stealthily and late at night when all were asleep, we placed our trap in a dark attic area which my brother Rupert and his team had claimed for their own. So far, we had caught nothing, and the April 1 date was getting very close. Next morning I was groping for the trap on my hands and knees in the filth and darkness. Suddenly I felt the stiff pelt of a dead rat. Instead of being repelled, I called out in delight and dragged the stiffening carcass into the daylight by its tail. We had caught a monster, eighteen inches from nose to tail!

The teams brought their trophy rats to the commandant's office for measurement and final judging. The big question was, Would ours earn a prize? Rupert's team complained that we had been in their area, but they were fortunately overruled since the trap itself was ours.

We received second prize, which, once again, was a can of beans. To the two of us, in our state of perpetual hunger, the reward was highly prized and eagerly devoured. Questions remain: What happened to the trap? Did we catch any more rats? I retain only the glorious memory of winning the prize.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)

ROLL-CALL

by Howard S. Galt ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf

[excerpts]

Upon arrival we first lined up on the small athletic field, near the church, for a thorough check-up, roll-call and then were marched to "Building No. 24" for assignments of temporary quarters for the night. Men were placed in the basement classrooms and women in the classrooms above. There were no furnishings in these classrooms except a few reed-mats for the floor – not enough for all. There were, however, two or three stoves placed where their heat could temper somewhat the cold rooms.

[excerpt]

From the beginning of camp life the Japanese insisted on a daily roll-call, or check-up on members. The hour for this was at first 10:00 o'clock, but this time, in the midst of the dinner work period proved very inconvenient.

Consequently the roll-call was changed to 7:30 in the morning. Consular police or guards made the rounds of buildings and rooms, which had been grouped in numbered blocks, and called for the prompt appearance of all residents outside their doors to be counted. It soon became apparent that in each block there was a need for someone to call people to their doors (considering the early morning hour) at the right moment, to save the time of all concerned. For this service, and also to serve as convenient means of communication in verbal notices or orders, wardens were appointed for the several blocks. (The clever reader, like the facetious persons in camp, perhaps cannot resist the temptation to call these functionaries "block-heads"-but this term never became popular!) The total number of these numbered blocks was about 60 and such approximately was the number of

wardens, comprising both men and women.

[...]

The daily roll-call, in which the wardens officiated, occasionally exhibited features both interesting and amusing. Late sleepers were often reluctant to appear outside their doors, the men frequently being seen in their pajamas, or with faces covered with lather for the shaving process.

On the part of the police, as time went on the roll-call became more and more perfunctory.

Frequently they passed the blocks rapidly, accepting the wardens' reports that all were present or accounted for (quite a number of persons were already at work in the kitchen or elsewhere at the roll-call hour) and scarcely looking at the line of people standing in the doors. Occasionally the roll-call was carried out in a comprehensive and careful way. The whole camp personnel was assembled on the athletic field by the church, and lined up in numerical order according to the number which at the outset had been assigned to all. The consular police carefully checked each line, then added and compared results as a check on total attendance.

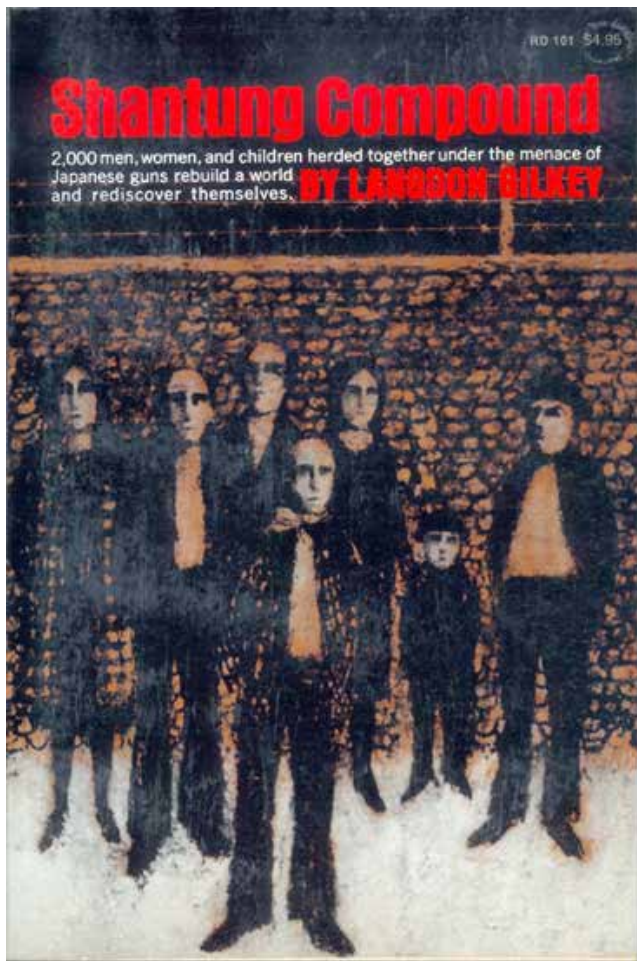
Nearly an hour of standing in line was involved on each of these occasions, which occurred about once a month.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf

by Langdon Gilkey ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

I was continually surprised at the relatively minor role our Japanese rulers played in our lives.

We were, of course, always conscious that they were there. Military guards strolled through the compound at regular intervals to take up their positions on the walls. Any young man, out with his girl friend after 10 P.M. when the lights were turned off, had to dodge guards on his way home in the dark.

Men in committee work had daily to deal with the Japanese civilian officials, for all our supplies and equipment came from them, and most of our major decisions had to be negotiated with them. But on the whole, they left us alone to do our work

and solve our problems in our own way. Except for the 7 A.M. roll call, and later on, one in the afternoon as well, the average internee, unless he were a black marketeer, seldom had any contact with the Japanese.

[excerpt]

We had not been long in camp before it seemed an ordinary thing to wake up in a room with twenty men, to hear Joe Jones talking to Maitland about his lumbago, or Sas Sloan griping at the extra long line at the hot-water boiler where we took turns to get our shaving water in a pail. Then we would stand yawning and sleepy for a half hour to an hour waiting for roll call, talking together about our girl friends, the dance coming up next week, or the baseball game that afternoon. And soon I would go to the kitchen for breakfast and hear another man saying, "The old lady was sick last night, but a spot of hot tea fixed her up," or another complaining that, "It's always those people next door that give us the most trouble." And when I would arrive at the quarters office about 9 A.M., I might hear Shields sighing as he came in, clean-shaven for the day and natty in his army khakis, "If only this bloody weather would stop and the sun would come out again, I would feel a hundred per cent better about life— God, did we have a bunch of lousy hands at bridge last night!"

[excerpt]

The much more serious consequence of this escape was that roll call was henceforth a serious matter. Instead of being a perfunctory check in our rooms in the early morning, as it was before the escape, it was now held both morning and afternoon. The camp was divided into four "roll call groups," and twice a day each group had to line up on its designated parade ground. Since each mustering required from forty minutes to an hour of patient standing while the entire camp was counted, roll call became a crushing bore for us younger folk and a source of real discomfort for the families and the elderly.

[excerpt]

As was mentioned earlier, after the two men escaped from the camp in April 1944, every internee had twice each day to gather with his group at a set spot and to stand in designated rows for about an hour while the camp was counted.

Since the Japanese were now very strict about this whole matter, if any individual in a group was late, the whole group had to remain an extra three quarters of an hour. Most people came to their place in roll call as soon as the great bell began to ring, and waited for the guards to arrive.

Not so Mrs. Witherspoon.

Unfortunately for her section, her back window overlooked the ball field where they were gathered. Thus she would stay in her room, “combing her hair” as she explained, until she saw the guard run up. Then she would leave her room, and stride as quickly as she could down her row and onto the ball field. Like some great rhino seeking to be unnoticed, she would attempt to squeeze her wide bulk invisibly into her place in the line at the last minute. Naturally, since she was hardly designed by age or bulk to be a sprinter, she was late time and time again. The guard would get to her place before she did, or he would see her wallowing in that direction, and each time he was infuriated and made the entire four hundred people remain overtime.

Her neighbors were thus daily enraged with her, and did not attempt to hide the fact. The internee warden repeatedly pleaded with her, begged her, and tried to order her to appear with the rest when the bell sounded. She always refused. In desperation, the warden and the Discipline Committee called on the chief of police. They told him that the community had sought in vain to get this woman to cooperate. Since the community was unable to control her, it should not be held responsible for her, said they. Therefore the section should not be punished for her stubbornness. Having watched her antics once from a distance, the chief agreed. In broken English, he put the point quite well, “Group have not responsibility for her; she has none for them.” If moral pressure could affect the antisocial, this thick-skinned lady would have wilted quickly enough.

[excerpt]

Life was much more than daily chores, fun, and games for these men, however. They had a strange power as a group when they wanted to exert it.

In the early days, when the black market was flourishing mightily, the guards caught two Chinese farmers and shot them. Using them as an example, they tried to frighten us out of trading over the wall.

The day after the incident—the whole camp had heard those fatal shots, and was pretty fearful of what might happen next—the Japanese lined us up outside our rooms for a special roll call.

For an hour we were kept waiting, wondering what the next move would be. I looked up and down the row of about a hundred men standing there with me. I thought to myself that it would be hard to find a tougher-looking bunch anywhere.

Many of them were ex-British army men and ex-American marines; they looked as ready as any to have it out with the guards if need be. At last a Japanese officer appeared. He walked up and down in front of us screaming, stamping his foot, waving his sword—and then coming right up within six inches of one immobile internee’s face and screaming all the louder. Quite frightened, the internee translator, a likeable half-Japanese, half-British boy from Tientsin, said that the officer was telling us that if anyone was caught on the wall, he would be shot like the farmer.

During this harangue, not one of these tough men moved a muscle or uttered a sound. We were impressed that the officer meant what he said. No one fancied himself looking down the barrel of that officer’s revolver by reacting in any unseemly way to his outburst.

After five minutes of this torrent of howls, yells, and shrieks, we were all dismissed. The officer and his two guards moved off to the hospital to give the same lecture to the Catholic fathers assembled there.

For about fifteen minutes, we sat on our beds talking quietly and soberly about this new turn.

Suddenly we heard a deep roar from over near

the hospital. It had a sound like laughter—laughter from hundreds of male throats. As we ran out the door, the cascade of sound mounted steadily in volume.

Then, to our complete puzzlement, we saw the officer and his guards fleeing past us in obvious panic.

Consumed with curiosity, we ran over to learn what had transpired.

We found the fathers stretched out on the ground, literally holding their sides, gasping and weak from laughter. Soon one of the American fathers got enough breath to tell us about it. “That squirt was yelling and carrying on,” he said, “when suddenly we noticed that the Belgian Dominicans over to the right were slowly moving toward him.

So, as though it was a signal, we all started slowly to surround him. Before the little guy realized it, he was enveloped by a crowd of big, bearded monks. We were all staring down at him with popping eyes and laughing. We kept moving closer and closer in massed ranks, laughing louder than ever.

We must have frightened the daylights out of him—you know the way they are about ‘holy men.’

Anyway, just about the time he was engulfed to the point where he could hardly see the sky any more, he lost his nerve. I saw him push his way out frantically, and flee in your direction. It was beautiful!”

After this event, even the most anticlerical looked on the fathers with new respect. What difference a deep sense of unity, a sort of subconscious common consent, can make! Had any one of our line of “single men” started to move toward the officer or to laugh, we others would merely have looked at him admiringly. With a pang of sympathy, we would no doubt have asked ourselves, “What will the Japs do to him?” When the same thought crossed a father’s mind and he began to act on it, every one of the others acted with him in concert—and the enemy was routed!

[excerpt] > August 17, 1945 ...

The next morning was all that a practical joker’s soul might desire.

Sharp at six, the quiet air of the camp was rent by the blare of “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning!”

As soon as I realized what was happening, I went out on the balcony of our dorm to enjoy the fun. The camp was a chaos of furious inmates.

After three years of rising at seven for roll call, in rain, sleet, or snow, on Sundays, Christmas, and weekdays alike, everyone had luxuriated in lazy risings since August 17. Everywhere I looked, angry people were rushing about. Enraged fathers poured out of the little rows of family rooms; elderly women in curlers, hurriedly putting on their bathrobes, stumbled from their dorms. Each of them charged out looking for blood! Then, some of them, realizing they hadn’t the least idea where the music was coming from, began, each in a dazed and blind sort of way, to go off in different directions. Some kicked the loudspeakers in helpless fury. Still others stood there holding their heads and trying to think out calmly where the ultimate source of the blare might be. Soon, stopping up their ears, all marched off to the section commandeered by the army.

I laughed as I imagined the scene when that irate throng of bath-robed internees finally located the good-hearted G.I. in charge of the record player.

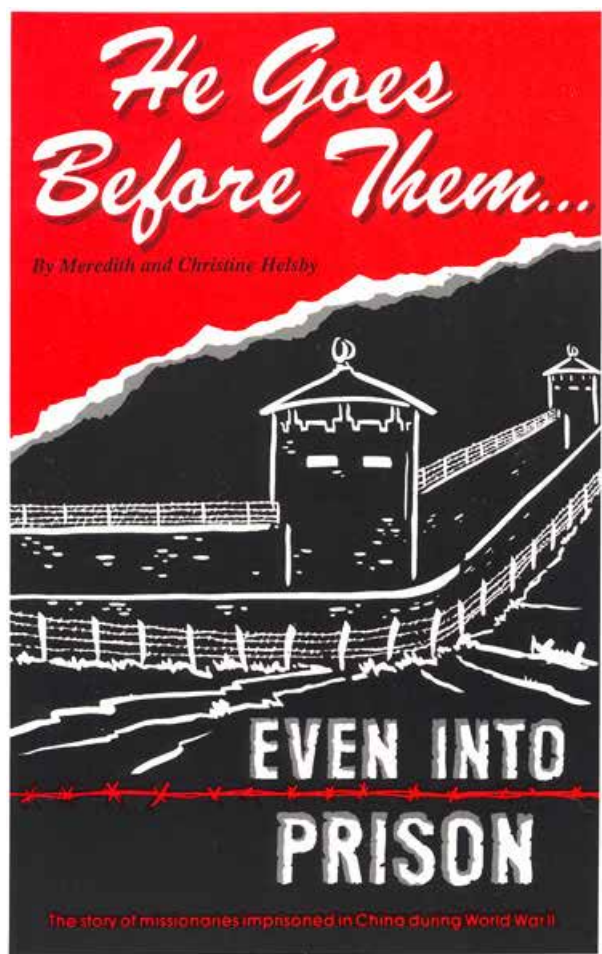
He said to me later with some awe, “It was a strange experience to face so many really crazy people, all mad at you! My gosh, hadn’t I played the latest popular tune, one they hadn’t even had the chance to hear before? You know I honestly think all of you must be a little touched in the head by all your troubles. I hope you can get back to normal again all right.”

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm

by Meredith & Christine Helsby ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/photos/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Han arrived at the wall early the morning of the 4th. I instructed him to return with the goods after the 8 a.m. roll call when I would hoist my signal flag, a piece of white cloth. Roll call over, I cautiously retreated to our rendezvous point and sent up my flag. From my perch on the drain pipe behind the guard house, I could see Han and his helpers almost immediately start running across the field toward the wall. All were burdened down with supplies. When he arrived I slipped a wad of bills, \$680 FRB, under the barbed wire into the merchant's outstretched hands.

Now in a moment, I thought, the packages will begin to flow across the wall. When the goods did not arrive, however, I began to feel uneasy.

Climbing back up on my perch, I surveyed the situation to learn the reason for the delay.

Suddenly I saw Han's helpers scampering in every direction. At the same time, I could hear the thundering footsteps and bellows of rage coming from Japanese guards in pursuit of the miscreants.

Instantly I hauled down the flag, jumped to the ground and called to my lookouts that the deal was off. Stuffing the white cloth in my pocket, I started toward our quarters, struggling to affect the casual gait of a man on a leisurely morning stroll. But the next moment I found myself looking into the surly visage of a guard who pointed to the bulge in my pocket and demanded an explanation.

From the cold smile on his face as he examined the flag, it was clear he knew all too well what purpose it served. He started to escort me to the guard house, but then evidently remembering the unclaimed bonanza of sugar and supplies abandoned outside the wall, he hastily took my name and darted toward the front gate.

The brief reprieve gave me time to hurry back to our quarters and "clean house", distributing our stored goods among our friends before the inevitable search began. At 10:30 a.m. I was summoned to the office of the commandant for the grand inquisition. Interpreting was our "friend", Saborwal, a burly man of unknown nationality fluent in Japanese, who was clearly serving our captors in return for sundry favors. Saborwal was not the most popular man in camp. I soon learned that the Japanese had the story of my buying activities well in hand, obviously obtained from inside intelligence.

My sentence was two weeks in solitary confinement without books (although at the end they relented allowing me to take my Bible).

At 12:30 I entered my cell, a small six by eight room in what had originally been the servant's quarters.

[excerpt]

The escapees' nine roommates were shut up in the compound church and interrogated nonstop for several days.

In time, however, the authorities became convinced that the men did, in fact, know very little about either the escape plans or their colleagues' present whereabouts, and therefore released them.

Most vexing, the commandant now required the tedious roll calls twice a day at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., each session taking a full hour. Beyond this, however, there were no other reprisals; nor did our captors resort to violence or torture, as some had feared.

[excerpt]

On that morning of August 7, the Thompsons joined the 400 other internees of group six for roll call at the old tennis court situated beside the camp hospital.

While waiting for the "warden" who habitually showed up late, the youngsters looked for a diversion.

Running diagonally above the court was an uninsulated power line leading from the camp transformer to the sentry tower. Originally, it had stretched a full 20 feet above the ground, but with the passing months it sagged lower and lower. Three times Japanese authorities had been appealed to, to remedy this situation, but nothing had been done.

On this morning, the ground was damp due to the rain during the night. "Bet you can't touch that wire," one of the teenagers challenged. A smaller high school student leapt high in the air barely touching the wire with the tips of his fingers.

"Wow," he exclaimed, "I got a shock!" Now Brian, his curiosity piqued, attempted the same.

Taller than the others at six feet one, he not only touched the wire, but seized it. The full charge of electricity convulsed every muscle in his body.

Unable to let go, he fell to the ground with an awful cry, narrowly missing several of the internees

standing nearby.

Mrs. Thompson, seeing her stricken son, instinctively rushed to his aid, but was providently restrained — her life probably saved — by alert neighbors.

While a collective cry of alarm rose, several men using wooden deck chairs slashed at the wire, finally, but belatedly, freeing Brian. He was taken to the hospital, and while our camp doctors worked over his body, his classmates waited and prayed outside.

Three hours later a doctor emerged to announce that all attempts to revive the lad had proven futile.

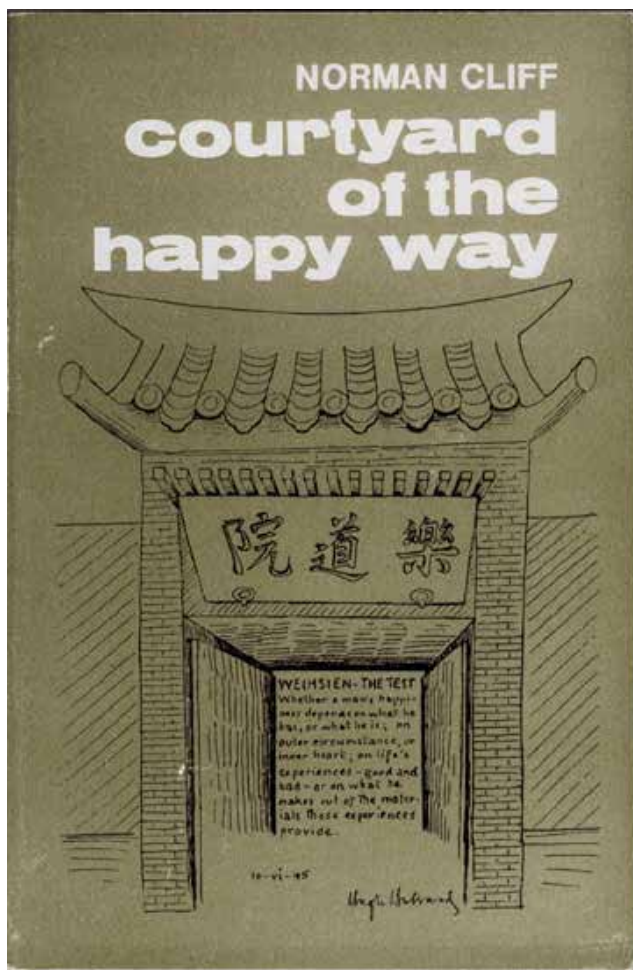
Brian Thompson was dead.

[further reading] ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/photos/p_FrontCover.htm

by Norman Cliff ...

<http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>



the coveted opportunity to look across the beautiful countryside and breathe the fresh air. It was a treasured moment of enjoying the open spaces, pretending to ourselves that we were not prisoners, before returning to the narrow confines of what came to be called Irwin House.

[excerpt]

In the spring of 1943 "Candleblower" (so named because of the face he made when listening to the guard's speech at roll-call) handed over to Kosaka as commandant. This immaculately dressed man, with a kindly face, impeccable manners and a good command of English, stands out in my memory as unique and superior to any Japanese officials with whom we dealt up to that time and subsequently.

He never raised his voice in anger and always approached us with a courtesy which removed all the fear and tensions of those difficult days. He would query after our health and well-being, and showed a special concern for the older missionaries.

[Excerpts] ...

[...]

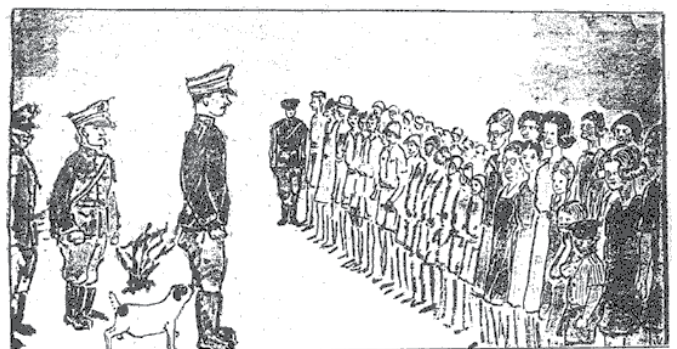
Every morning we had roll-call, numbering off in Japanese. The guard on duty would then salute the commandant and give a speech with which we soon became familiar. It went something like this — :

"This is Camp No. 3. Out of 98 inmates, there are 94 present. Three are on duty, and one is sick."

As soon as this formality was over two of us boys would carry a crate of ashes out of the back gate next to the pump house. Emptying the contents, we would leave the crate lying upside down for a few moments while we took

[excerpt]

By this time the roll-call bell would ring. We would wait in four groups in different parts of the camp for the Japanese guards to inspect us, count us and make provision for those who were on special duties. While waiting for the guards we read books, studied languages, shared camp rumours and speculated about the future.



[excerpts]

Soon after I had become a roll-call warden, charged with the task of counting the personnel in Blocks 23 and 24, I was taking the guard along a line of internees outside Block 24 when Aunt Lilian (an American Presbyterian lady missionary who had known my parents at Shunteh) asked to see me after roll-call.

When I found her, she said with a tone of uncertainty in her voice, "Norman, I received some Golden Syrup from my mission station, but a rat fell into it as soon as I opened it. I've put it in the garbage box behind the building. If you're interested, take it."

[excerpt]

While waiting for the guards to come round during daily roll-call, we would look longingly over the wall through the barbed-wire fences beyond the fields under cultivation to the distant villages on the horizon as far as the eye could see.

From camp rumours — bits of information which had come via cesspool coolies, and speculation — we gathered that the countryside around us was not uniformly under Japanese control.

While our camp was in the heart of Japanese occupied China, and to all appearances the Japanese ruled with undisputed control for hundreds of miles around us, there were in fact "pockets" quite close to us of Chinese puppet groups, officially assisting the Japanese but vacillating in their loyalties. Scattered in the area were evidently also pockets of Chinese Communist troops as well as Chiang Kai-shek units.

Fighting a common foe, the Japanese, there was an uneasy and uncertain truce between these heterogeneous groups.

[excerpts]

Roll-call that afternoon took three times the normal duration. Over the months it had become loosely organised and carelessly administered. As a roll-call warden, waiting outside the guardroom to ring a bell as a signal that the community could break up and return to work, I had noted that the figures chalked up on the blackboard in the

guardroom had one day totalled 1,492 and the next day 1,518, and so on, with little effort to account for the discrepancies.

But from now on it was an exercise computed with the utmost care. The Japanese guards would count us over and over again. The roll-call period was prolonged. The Guards were gruff and their attitude one of distrust. If rows straggled crookedly, they shouted and swore.

Bit by bit details of the escape leaked out, [...]

[excerpt]

One afternoon we were having roll-call on the overgrown tennis court outside the hospital. Five hundred men, women and children were in long lines, waiting for the Japanese guard and roll-call warden to arrive. Some were sitting on deckchair reading, others standing talking and laughing.

A school friend standing a few places away from me said to Brian, who was tall for his age and standing next to him, "I dare you to touch that wire." Over our heads going diagonally across the field was an electrified wire, running from the power station to the guard's watchtower behind us. Originally twenty feet from the ground, it had been sagging lower and lower in recent weeks.

Brian, standing with bare feet on damp ground, laughingly took up the challenge and touched the wire.

His fingers contracted around it. Letting out a desperate groan, he pulled the wire down to the ground; it narrowly missed dozens of fellow internees.

The following ten minutes were perhaps the most frightening in my life.

Panic spread throughout the group. Brian's mother rushed to free him from the live wire, but someone thought quickly enough to hold her back, or she too would have been electrocuted. Screams and cries came from all sides, and pandemonium prevailed everywhere. Some calmer men slashed at the wire with their wooden deck chairs, which would not be conductors of electricity, and belatedly freed the victim, who was rushed in a lifeless state into the hospital, given artificial respiration but to no avail.

A shocked group of internees remained for the

completion of roll-call formalities. For the rest of the evening, we waited outside the hospital in the hope that Brian would be revived, but it was not to be.

[excerpts]

Social calls became popular. At roll-call, we made dates to visit each other to try the latest menus and recipes. The White Elephant swung into action again, and as we cooked over the hot cauldrons in Kitchen 1 we would overhear the latest exchange rates for Red Cross food: one packet of cigarettes could be bartered for two bars of chocolate, two tins of spam for one of coffee, and so on, according to the law of supply and demand.

The arrival of these supplies definitely saved the day for our community. Scrounging and quarrelling about rations and perquisites subsided as every family worked out its own method of spreading the food over as long a time as possible. Physical hunger and exhaustion were less acute, and with this the general morale was clearly lifted.

During 1945 we became more and more convinced that the war was turning in our favour in Europe and in our own theatre of fighting in the Far East.

[excerpt]

By this time I had moved back from the top floor of the hospital to a bachelor dormitory of Block 23, and was once again a roll-call warden. In the centre of this attractive building was the tower and bell which had been used in earlier days to call the Bible School students of the then American Presbyterian Mission to their classes. But now it was used by the Japanese to announce twelve o'clock noon every day, so that clocks and watches could be adjusted. In fact, it rang at 11.45 a.m. one day and at 12.25 p.m. the next. We could only conclude that for security reasons the Japanese did not wish us to have the exact time.

In the middle of a night in May 1945, we awoke rubbing our eyes. The Block 23 bell was ringing. We sat up in bed and speculated anxiously as to why the bell should be ringing at that unearthly hour. Was the Japanese war now over as well as the European one? Was there some kind of

emergency?

Outside we could hear the heavy boots of guards, and shouts of anger in Japanese. Then a member of the Discipline Committee came in and said that everyone had to line up for roll-call outside in his or her usual group. Had some more fellow internees escaped?

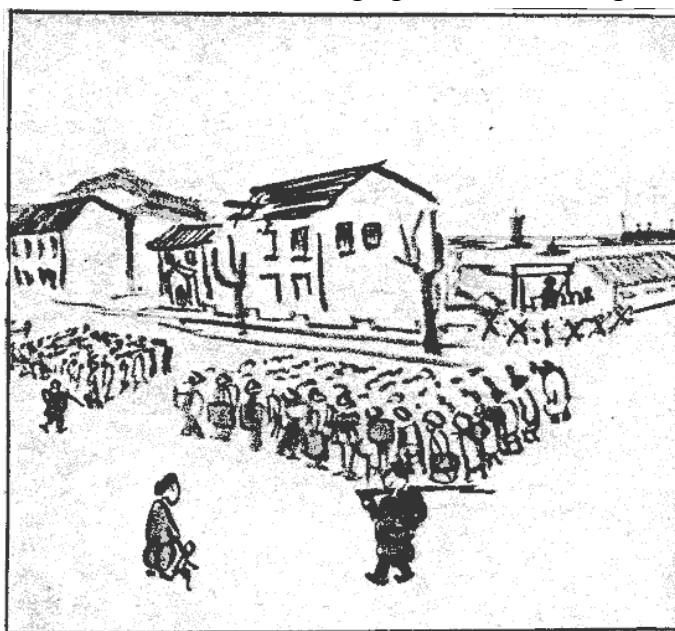
As a roll-call warden for Blocks 23 and 24, I went to all the bachelor and spinster dormitories in the two blocks, passing on the instructions. I passed the message on to the Mother Superior at the other end of Block 23 — a number of American nuns in her room were sleeping under mosquito nets.

We lined up outside, not very wide awake. The Japanese guard counted us with a pistol in his hand, pointing at each person as he was counted.

His manner was abrupt.

We could hear shouting and orders being given out at some of the other roll-call groups.

As we tumbled back into bed the explanation for the crisis reached us. Months before V.E. Day one man had "dared" another that, as soon as the war in Europe was won by the Allies, his friend was to ring the tower bell at midnight. He had taken up the dare and carried it out. The Japanese were given the explanation for the bell ringing that same night, though the names of the offending internees were carefully withheld from them as recrimination would be certain and serious. But in spite of the explanation, the Japanese were still convinced that the bell ringing had been the signal



for a further escape ? Hence the careful roll-call.

Another source of information about the war was a pro-Japanese English newspaper, printed in Peking and distributed in small quantities in the camp. The statistics of casualties, sinking of ships and destruction of aeroplanes were heavily loaded in favour of the Japanese, the intention being to convince us that the Allies were losing the war in the Pacific. But it told us more than that.

[excerpt]

ALARM AT WEIHSIEN

Incident of 5 May 1945

The camp lights had been extinguished at the usual hours, 10-p.m., and most internees soundly sleeping.

Just before 11-p.m. the startling sound of a rolling bell customarily used as the signal for roll-call, broke the stillness of the night and aroused the sleeping community. This was followed at a short interval by scurrying feet racing round the alleys, and the raucous sound of agitated Japanese voices and then the wail of a siren.

What could it all mean was the somnolent enquiry of many so rudely awakened from their slumbers: not the usual roll-call signal and surely not parade at such an hour. Perhaps an outbreak of fire or escaped internees!

Voices in semi wakefulness were raised in protest against the speculative suggestions of those prepared for "a bit of fun". "Let people sleep" was the angry retort of many, weary with a day's heavy labour. Those anticipating an early call to duty next morning.

But sleep was not to be, for an order from the police chief was quickly conveyed to internees through the chief discipline officer for a roll-call outside blocks at once.

More grouching from sleepy voices, but eager anticipation from those with the mood for sound excitement. A weary wait for more than an hour in the cold of the early morning whilst the guards checked numbers only aroused further speculation and discussion of the alarming incident, ending in no more satisfaction than the hope of an early resumption of sleep.

"Did YOU ring the bell" was the query one met with throughout the camp the next day, and the usual discussion of the war news contained in the newspapers issued the previous day was completely overshadowed by the night's events.

The mystery was still not solved until a threat of punishment by the authorities brought for the following confession:-

"The bell was rung by me last Saturday night as an expression of joy & thanksgiving for peace in Europe. I regret any unforeseen inconvenience caused to anyone."

PEACE! Not yet for us but still the great joy and happiness of knowing that the Old Folks at home are at last released from the miseries and horrors of war and for us – **NOT LONG NOW.**

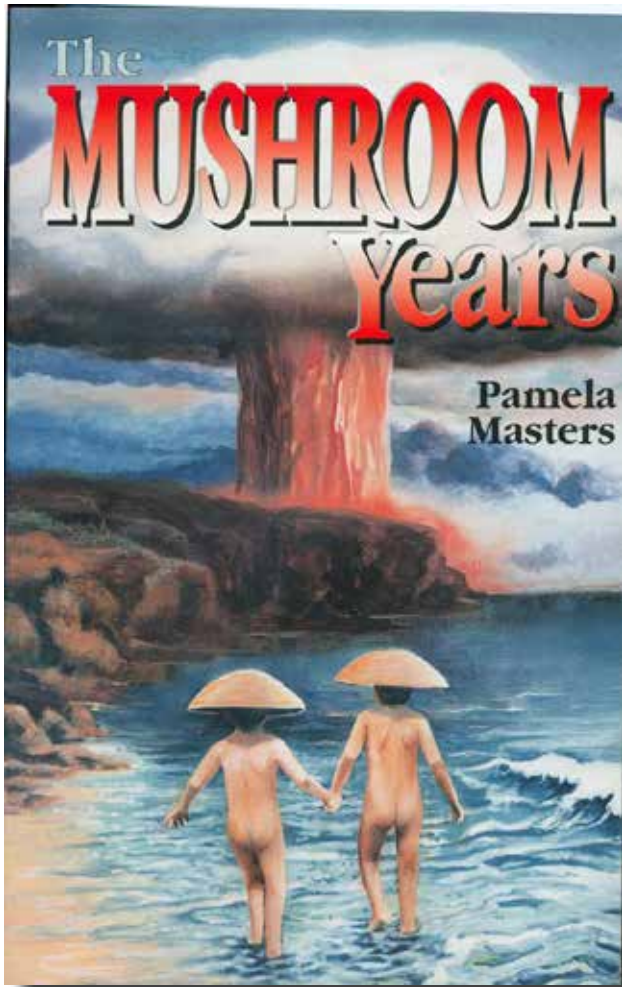
16/5/1945

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/p-Frontcover.htm>

by Pamela Masters ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

He sounded firm, but fair.

Then, he introduced the captain of the guards and interpreted as the stocky officer, with arms well down to his knees, stood stiffly to attention and barked his orders. He also wore a black uniform, and I learned later that it designated that he, like the young guards, was a member of the consular guard and not an officer in the Imperial Japanese Army. I wondered if they would prove to be as obnoxious as their khaki-clad cohorts.

He told us that the arm-bands we had been issued while under house arrest were not valid in camp. We would be assigned new numbers and new tags, which we were to wear at all times, and

each morning, there would be a roll-call. Through the years, we were to find ourselves responding with a "Here!" to the guards shout of, "Yon hyaku kyuu juu nana, kyuu juu hachi, kyuu juu kyuu," Ursula, me, and Margo, reduced to 497, 498 and 499.

Before we left the roll-call field, all the single men and women were told to report to the respective dormitory areas, and heads of each household to the administrative office compound to be assigned cell numbers—only they called them room numbers.

Meanwhile, most of the committee responsible for our orderly move to camp pitched in once more to organize work details.

[excerpt]

When the number came to an end, he asked conversationally if I'd seen King Kong's latest bulletin.

"No. Why?"

"It's a very stern message telling us that we're never to sing Happy Birthday on the roll-call field again."

Seeing a twinkle in his eye, I said, "You're pulling my leg." "Honest—but it did say we could sing God Bless America." "Now I know you're pulling my leg."

"Come on," he said, grabbing my arm, "it's on the bulletin board. I'll show you." And, sure enough, there it was, emblazoned with King Kong's chop, standing out from all the other notices on the board. I could see the deft hand of the Commandant behind the choice of God Bless America. He was obviously trying to soften the blow, all the while making King Kong take full blame—and making him look like a total ass in the process!

The singing of that childish song had started innocently a couple of months after we were in camp. Our kooky block mate, Gladys Tabor, wearing her usual floppy shorts, ruffled blouse, gobs of

makeup, and a big Betty Boop bow, pranced up to Jock Allan one morning while we were waiting in line for roll-call, and said, "Today's my birthday, whatcha got for me?" then she leant over and puckered up. Jock obligingly gave her a resounding smooch on the lips, while his wife, Emma, grinned, and Mark Tabor looked like thunder. Then Gladys, pretending to get all flustered, batted her heavily mascaraed eyes, and simpered, "Oh, Jock, you shouldn't have!"

Dad called out meanly, "How old are you Glad-Eyes?"

"Twenty-nine and counting," she quipped, turning her back on him and flipping her shorts in his face as she can-canned back to her place in line.

"Hey, let's all sing Happy Birthday to Gladys," Jock called down the line, and as he gave the downbeat, we all broke into the happy refrain.

The idea took off like wildfire. With almost two thousand people in the camp, and only three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, there was no way a day could pass without someone having a birthday. Each morning after that, the block wardens would check their lines for "birthday babies" and the song would go up and down the ranks as each celebrant was honored, from the tiniest toddler to the oldest inmate. It was infectious, and it made the days start out on a happier note.

I looked at the incredible bulletin again and said, "Whatever brought that on?"

"I understand that every time the guards stepped onto the ball field with their clipboards, we broke into the darn song, and they thought it was something ridiculing them."

"Couldn't the Commandant explain what the song was about?" I asked incredulously.

"He probably did—but I think King Kong's got his number!"

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p_FrontCover.htm

[excerpt]

I had no trouble getting a job as breakfast cook in the hospital diet kitchen the week after I took my finals, as the committee was still looking for people to fill positions that had been vacated by the repatriated Americans.

Although some had been taken over by a contingent of missionaries from Chefoo, who came in after the Americans left, there were still a few gaping holes to be filled, and one was the unpopular early morning shift I applied for. I'd had a yen for that job ever since Margo had told me she hated her early stint at the hospital because, when she sent orderlies down to get the patients' breakfast trays, more often than not she'd find that no one had bothered to turn up to prepare breakfast!

I couldn't help thinking, what a glorious out!

I loathed roll-call. It was so demeaning.

If I could get the breakfast shift for the duration, I would never have to stand roll-call again! I was wrong, of course, as I was told I would get one day off in four, and a captain from another shift would take my place on that day. I got philosophical: One roll-call out of four wasn't as demeaning as four out of four! And then, there was an extra plus. As I was the only one on the early morning stint, I figured I was considered a shift "captain"; of course, I never let it go to my head!

I must have been on the job for about three weeks, and the new year was just around the corner, when I got up at my usual ungodly hour and reached for the basin of water we kept on top of the stove; I didn't expect it to be warm, but I didn't expect it to have half-an-inch of ice on it either! Well, I'm not going to wash myself today, at least not at this hour, I thought, as I brushed my hair and teeth, the latter without toothpaste and chattering so badly the toothbrush couldn't keep up with them. Cramming on the clothes I'd worn the day before, some of which I'd slept in, I reached for my old fur coat, which was beginning to look mangy and very worse for wear, and slipped out of the cell.

[excerpt]

It was June nineteenth and headcount time on the roll-call field. I remember the date exactly, because as I was trying to ignore the indignity of the moment and savoring my day off, an outbreak took place that had guards suddenly exploding in all directions like firecrackers. After lots of shouting and yelling, one peeled out of the group and rushed off for King Kong.

We were all standing around stunned, and except for intermittent yelps from the remaining guards, the silence was deadly.

Finally, Jock went over to the warden of the men's dorm section, where the eruption had taken place, and asked what had happened. After a while, I saw him nod, and coming back to our line, he whispered to Dad, "Laurie Tipton and Arthur Hummel have escaped, and the guards have just found out. Pass it down the line, but hold the applause."

When King Kong arrived, he was livid with rage and had the nine men who were dormmates of the escapees pulled out of line and marched off to the Assembly Hall, where they were put under heavy guard. We didn't like that, but there was nothing we could do about it, except pray that they wouldn't be tortured to give out information about the escape.

The hall was put out of bounds, and they were held for eleven days on starvation rations, while they were interrogated mercilessly, but none of them could tell the Japanese a thing, because they hadn't known of the escape—which took place on the sixth—till after it had happened. The only crime they could be accused of, if it could be considered a crime, was that of covering up the escape by juggling places in the roll-call lineup to confuse the guards and buy time for Tip and Arthur to get well away.

When Gold Tooth couldn't get confessions out of the men, King Kong put out an official press release that was carried in all the local papers. According to Dad, who translated the write-up, it said nine men had escaped, but seven had been recaptured. "That's the Oriental way of saving face, or covering one's arse," he said wryly.

[excerpt]

There was one blessing that came out of that freezing winter: the Japs decided it would be quicker, and warmer, for all concerned, if we stayed in our compounds and the guards counted us outside our cells. That way they could check on any ill inmates as they took the count, instead of having us stand on the roll-call field till they came back with the tally. The only other people they had to check were the shift workers, like me, and that process was separate from the general roll-call.

It worked out a lot better this way, and went much faster. Jock would stand, looking down Main Street, and as soon as the guards started down Cellblock Twenty, he'd bellow, "**All out Twenty-One!**" and we'd come out of our cells and line up for the count.

His little daughter Kay loved to help him at these times and would jump up and down and sing out, "Hello, Mr. Japanese!" as the young guards turned into our compound. They seemed to love little children, and as cold as they were, they'd always smile and pat her on the head ... probably thinking of little brothers and sisters back home.

[excerpt]

Suddenly, during one of our long pauses, the silence was shattered by the clanging of a loud bell. It rang, and rang, and rang and our whole cellblock seemed to rock with the vibration of its clangor.

"My God! What's that!?!"

"The bell in the bell tower!"

And just as suddenly as it started, it stopped, and the silence was ominous. I found myself holding my breath, unable to say a word, just listening. Then, Margo started to say something, but Ursula stopped her with a soft, "Hey, sssh... l-i-s-t-e-n!" I found myself straining to hear once more.

"Footsteps. Someone's running," Ursula whispered. Then I heard them; they were coming closer. We heard Japanese being shouted back and forth between guards who were double timing up and down the roads and through the compounds.

Margo peered out of the window and whispered, "The guards are up and at it."

"Think someone's escaped again?" I asked. "Well, ringing the bell won't bring 'em back," Ursula said, drily.

About half an hour later, after lots of weird, indefinable noises, Jock banged on our cell door and shouted, "All out for roll-call on the roll-call field!"

"What the heck...?" Margo started, as we clambered out of our beds, threw on some warm clothes, and trotted over to the ball field, with Mother and Dad making up the rear.

The internees closest to the field were already in line. Babies were bawling, kids were whimpering because they'd been dragged out of their warm beds, and everyone was in a foul mood. The air was biting cold. Half the internees turned up in inadequate clothing and were chilled to the bone. The only thing keeping them from getting hypothermia was their overheated tempers.

Everyone looked accusingly at the other, assuming he was the only one left in the dark about what was going on. And Jock didn't help matters when he whispered to each of us that we were not to talk to each other or make a sound. He carried little Kay on his shoulders and tried to keep her quiet as he delivered the individual warnings, but every time he bent over to whisper in someone's ear, she would yell like a banshee. The situation would've been really comical if it hadn't been bristling with would-be incidents.

Although I noticed only a few guards, their tempers were more frazzled than ours. The night was extremely dark, and the few internees near the perimeter of the field were the only ones who could be seen under the dimly lit lamp standards.

I wouldn't have liked to have been a guard under such circumstances, and I wondered if they were fearful like we were.

We waited what seemed like hours. When finally the main contingent of guards came out of the guard shack, we saw to our horror that they weren't carrying clipboards, but machine guns.

They placed themselves strategically around us, and I felt a sudden wave of real fear sweep through the crowd as the guards stared at us with cold, blank eyes, as though they'd never seen us before.

There were no instructions or demands. Just silence. Deadly silence, broken here and there by the whimpering of a child and the shushing of a parent.

The Commandant was nowhere to be seen.

Then, Ed Lewin came quietly down the lines and whispered to each of the block wardens, who in turn whispered to each of us. The message was simple. We would stand there all night, and all day if necessary, until someone confessed to ringing the bell.

Well, at least that was cleared up; we now knew one of us had rung the bell. But why? For God's sake..., why?"

Another hour passed, and the older internees tried to sit down on the ground, but the guards shouted at them and they were held up between their more robust neighbors.

I looked at my family. Ursula and Margo were expressionless. Dad resigned. Mother defiant. I shrugged and looked up the line. The Collishaws were standing quietly holding hands. Towering Jim Tuck had a faraway look on his face as he stared over the heads of the rows of people, but his equally tall wife was beginning to crack. The Beruldsen's were standing like Stoics, while the obnoxious Hatton clan was quiet for once, quiet and scared. Emma Allan had little Jeremy in her arms, while Douglas and Kay clutched at her skirt as they watched Jock silently walk up and down the line trying to look calm and unperturbed, smiling at those who needed encouragement.

Gladys Tabor, irrepressible as ever, gave him an outrageous wink, and nodding toward the guard at the end of our line, made an obscene gesture with her hand that I couldn't help catching and smiling at. The Stones were silent; Deirdre holding her precious new baby, a look of terror in her eyes.

One of the guards had trouble with his automatic and let out a burst over our heads. That

was all Mrs. Tuck needed. She snapped and started screaming, "We're all going to be killed! We're going to die! We're going to die!"

Mother brushed my sleeve as she stepped out of line, marched up to her, and reaching up, slapped her hard on both cheeks. Her face crumpled like tissue paper, as Mother quietly hissed, "Shut up! We are not going to die! They haven't kept us alive for almost three years to kill us now. They could have done it ages ago, if that's what they'd wanted to do. Shut up! Stand straight (...) and don't let them get to you!"

Jock quietly led Mother back to her place in line, and the silence was complete.

A long while later, King Kong marched onto the field, flanked by Gold Tooth, who handed him a bullhorn, which he used to yell at us in Japanese. Ed Lewin quickly rushed up beside him and tried to translate, tossing the bullhorn back and forth between commands. "You are to return to your cells...there will be no rations (...) until the perpetrator of this monstrous act (...) turns himself in for punishment."

There was a rustle in the lines, and everyone looked at his neighbor, trying to figure out who had rung the bell. The wardens rushed up and down the rows whispering, "No confessions, absolutely no confessions!" We nodded in agreement, and after another interminable wait, we were finally dismissed and sent back to our cells.

Dawn was breaking when we got back to our compound, and not knowing whether the restricted rations applied to the hospital, I went to work. That turned out to be the last meal I fixed for a while. As the grain had been soaking all night, the guards let me prepare it so that it wouldn't be wasted, then the rest of the supplies were hauled away.

Rumor went rampant in camp, the most persistent of which was that the war was over in Europe! We figured we would happily starve if that was the case, and to the Japanese's surprise, our spirits went up instead of down. People with remains of comfort parcels and hoarded food meted it out to the children, so they wouldn't go without, and we just cinched our belts tighter.

After almost a week of no food, we were walking zombies, but we never missed a roll-call, or let the Japanese know how badly off we were.

On the sixth morning, we were told that breakfast would be served as usual.

I hoped we had won without a confession, but found that was not the case.

Peter Fox had turned himself in during the night while everyone was asleep, because he couldn't stand seeing the people suffer for what, it turned out, he had done. He hadn't been very smart, though.

When he confessed to ringing the bell, he couldn't help telling the Japanese why he had done it (...)

the war was over in Europe!

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Then we were told that we were being given new internee numbers to wear, and we had to collect new three-by-four-inch cloth name badges, to be on display at all times.

The number consisted of one's group number, a number up to fifteen, and an individual number to aid counting. We were lined up each morning in sequence in each group, although on occasions we had a 'grand' roll call on the sports field, when the group number became the row number. I always eyed the watchtower with its machine gun that I had seen on my very first evening at Weihsien.

During roll call it was not unknown for us boys, having been counted once, to run behind

the backs of the adults to be counted again, which when it occurred totally confused the guards and caused much scratching of heads. The adult internees did not take kindly to such antics because it often lengthened roll call to a couple of hours, and the guards took it out on the adults, slapping their faces, while I among the other boys got away scot-free.

[excerpt]

Towards the end of June, starting with all the medical staff, there was an outbreak of diarrhoea of epidemic proportions. At the same time, the weather broke and there was a day of heavy rain, a real downpour.

So many were sick that roll call took a couple of hours.

The next day the Japanese medical team arrived. The Japanese were paranoid about a cholera outbreak. So we were all lined up outside the hospital, everybody had a glass rod shoved up their behind; then after a test of the surface the glass rod it was wiped in alcohol and then shoved up the next candidate. There were at least five teams and the whole process took all day, although as originally planned the men were to be first, then the women and then those under fifteen. But the children under seven started bawling for their Mums and chaos reigned.

One certain thing you could say is that it was unpleasant while it lasted, and I got rather tired of looking at bare behinds. But probably not as unpleasant as when we got inoculations for whatever was the current threat of disease. As an example, shortly after the cholera scare, there was a big line-up for a typhoid inoculation, but one had to gauge one's place in the queue carefully, as needles were in short supply.

The needle was changed about every 100 inoculations.

[excerpt]

I was rarely in our two rooms in Block 13 during the day. After breakfast and roll call, I was

off somewhere in the camp running wild without supervision. Meals, however, were too important to miss and my friends, like me, ate in their own huts, so we all went back for lunch, our main meal and supper, usually some kind of soup and bread. I was not allowed out after supper except on the light summer evenings when there were semi-organised games on the sports field; otherwise I was taught various games of cards.

[excerpt]

The usual 9 a.m. roll call had been augmented by another at 7 p.m., the logic of which I could not understand. When Tipton and Hummel had made their escape, their subsequent absence had been obvious during morning roll call, and anybody else escaping would surely follow their lead and do so at night, not during the day: so the morning roll call should have been enough. Somehow, the evening roll calls always took longer.

On 16th August, at the 7 p.m. roll call, boredom had again set in: not only did the number within each group have to tally, but then the guards had to add up the totals. Any doubt and the whole camp had to be re-counted.



[excerpt]

The electric wiring in the camp was looped about anything and ran at varying heights. It was particularly low in front of the hospital (Block 61).

To relieve the boredom of waiting during roll call, the Chefoo School students, mainly the twelve to sixteen-year-olds, used to jump up and touch the wires.

One day the current was obviously 'on', as someone got himself burnt, but another, Brian Thompson, being very tall, had reached up and just gripped the wire — he was instantly electrocuted. Dr Grice was called and then Dr Robinson (Kailan Mining) and Dr Howie (Chefoo), because they were further away; the three carried out artificial respiration for nearly three hours, but to no avail.

Brian's funeral was the next day, but Brian's parents, who were in the camp, ruled that it would be private, for Chefoo only, the first and only restriction placed on attendance at a funeral, but then the parents were missionaries.

[excerpt]

On 1st October, the guards moved the evening roll call, which was brought forward to start at 6.30 p.m. Then a new timetable was issued: 8.15 a.m. Breakfast; 9 a.m. Roll call; 1.15 p.m. Tiffin; 6° 5.45 p.m. Supper.

[excerpt]

There was a big showdown outside Block-24, which now held adult women. On a cold wet morning, having been counted at roll call, the women immediately went back inside. King Kong saw them and ordered them to stand for half an hour in the wet. They retaliated by dancing and skipping. King Kong went apoplectic, jumped on to a little platform and addressed them in Chinese, saying that he had been greatly insulted; if we had been in India, the authorities would have hung them up by their thumbs.

He knew that they called him names, but they were lucky that he did not take one of them and shoot them as an example for causing a Japanese to lose face. King Kong then went into Mrs Buist's block which was across the Rocky Road from ours, and ordered her to stand on parade for roll

call. Mrs Buist, a Salvation Army officer, refused to leave her three children, the eldest of whom was six. King Kong called her an 'addled egg' in Chinese.

Next day King Kong took roll call again and ended with 'OK, ladies thank you.' He had decided to be polite and ignore insults. The previous day he had arrived at the roll call saying, 'I'll dig the old sows out of their beds if they are not already standing to be counted.'

However, in early December, a Japanese guard went up to Mrs Howard-Smith, a nurse, and slapped her face when she was not lining up to his satisfaction outside the hospital. Ted McClaren reported it to the Commandant. King Kong was livid and upset, and said that if he was reported again he, King Kong, would have to commit hara-kiri and it would be on McClaren's conscience.

[excerpt]

On May 3rd Mr Sabarwal, an 'Indian' whose British passport had expired in 1923, and who had long been suspected of being a Japanese stool pigeon, announced to the Committee that

Germany had surrendered, but the camp was not to be told. Dad came in with the news half an hour after the Committee meeting. It was being openly talked about by the evening.

Two days later the Peking Chronicle arrived with the same news. At 11 p.m. that night, two teenagers climbed the bell tower of Block 23 and started tolling the bell, which served as the Fire Alarm.

Sgt Bushinde got very drunk, whilst all the rest of the guards were rushing round like headless chickens. Then one of them started the siren at the gate, but no one knew what that meant, least of all the guards. King Kong decided that at 1 a.m. there was to be a roll call and told Ted McClaren, who had to agree. Then Sergeant Bushinde ruled that guards would drag inmates from their beds if necessary. With twenty minutes' notice, we spent an hour in the dark and cold. When it was over Mum announced that, as we had a little millet bread back at the hut, she was going to open a tin of salmon for a late-night feast. The consensus of opinion, amongst the adults, was that it had all been a stupid incident, but I never did find out



what Mr Cotterill and the former Miss Hills, both Assembly of God missionaries, thought of it all: they had been married less than twelve hours when kicked out of bed for a roll call.

[excerpt]

Roger was now only a couple of months off four years old, and he and his American friend Charley no longer stayed so close to home to play. Roger was now allowed to wander over part of the camp, but never to cross Main Road. 'There were no cars so he ran no risks from vehicles except the honey cart, and that came only once a day, and was pushed by four men. He used to enjoy playing near the sports field, as he knew the way there.

That had been the scene of the Mauser pistol episode.

Furthermore, he had often to go there for roll calls. He and his friend Charley had a passion for anything that moved. They loved insects and creatures that were alive. His favourite trick was a plot to give Mum hysterics. He would trot into the hut in his much patched sun-suit, with shorts as bottoms and a bib front with straps. Mum had made several out of a pair of curtains. Then, just as Mum was getting him to sit down and eat, he would reach into his bib front and produce a live toad and put it on the table.

The result was always the same: Mum would skip out of the hut and shout, 'Do something, somebody!'

[excerpt]

Mrs Lawless died of typhoid on 8th August, and as the graveyard was now full the burial the next day had to take place outside the walls, hence only a handful of people could attend. Watanabe was nowhere to be seen. He was tracked down and Ted McClaren tried to speak to him, but Watanabe just ran away, pursued by a few dozen inmates. They lost him when he fled through the front gates, knowing that the internees could not follow there. Watanabe was unpopular with the prisoners, but if he were behaving like that then surely there must be something to hide. What was it? Speculation grew wilder and wilder. I kept remembering Grandpa's predictions and wondered if we would all be killed

before we could be freed from the camp.

On 14th August we had a special roll call on the sports field, and I eyed the machine guns in the towers. They traversed over our heads but nothing fired.

The next day there were more rumours that the Emperor of Japan had made a proclamation. Mum heard from Mrs Grice that Dr Vio had told her husband that the Emperor had given a broadcast, 'For the first time in 2,600 years Japan had to seek peace from four countries.' Was it really true? Nobody knew. The guards were conspicuous by their absence, but the answer was not long in coming.

[further reading] ...

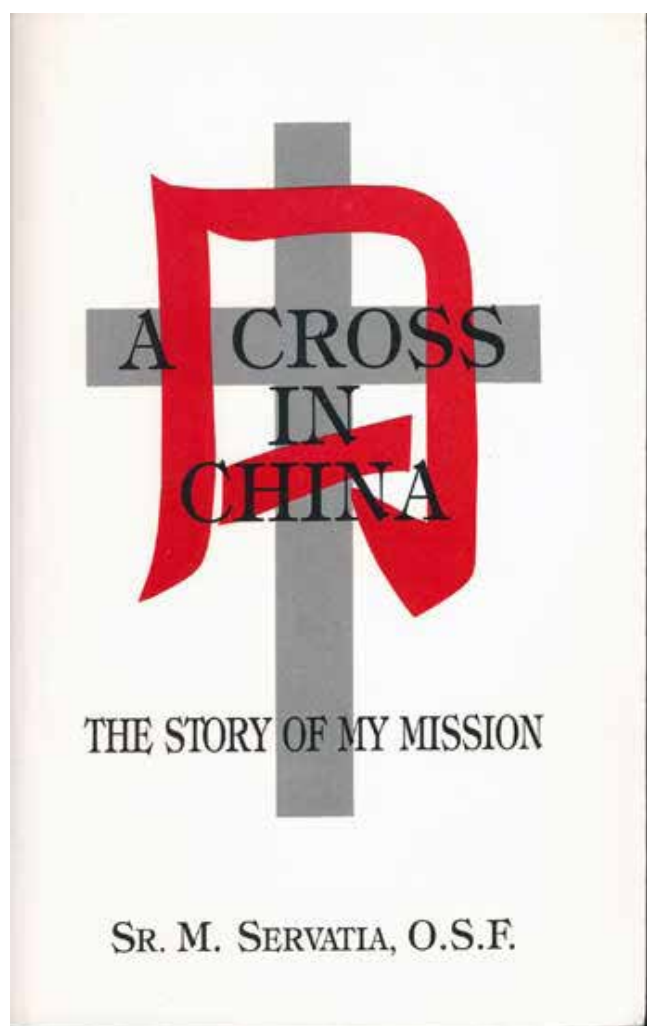
http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/p_FrontCover.htm

[Previous picture] —

Roger (as mentioned in the text) is the little boy of four, holding Father Hanquet's hand in the foreground and approximately in the middle of the picture ...

by *Sr. M. Servatia ...*

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

We were told to line up and were then given a number which was to be worn for identification. We were told that we were now “Enemy Citizens” and that we would have to abide by the laws given us but fortunately, there would be freedom of religion as an enemy subject.

This was our first Roll Call and we were to have hundreds more.

The lights would be controlled by the Japanese and we were not to turn them on or off. They did have a system of electric lighting, admirable for that part of the country at that time, in which all lights went off or on at the same time.

[excerpts]

When we first came into the camp, we noticed the leftover furniture in heaps outside the buildings.

Obviously, the former missionaries had much more than what was left there and it will never be known how much had been carried out before we arrived. In no time it was all gone as everybody took what they wanted to furnish their bare rooms.

I got a stool and that stool was worth its weight in gold to me. I didn’t need it so much in the room because you could always sit on the bed boards, but when you had a one- or two-hour roll call each day and had to stand in the open, a stool was about the most welcome thing in the world. Also it was convenient when you went to the evening lectures held out under some tree. We needed tables for the altars and during the day it could be used to store the things ordinarily found on the tables.

[excerpts]

Punctually at 7:30 each morning someone went through the camp ringing a hand bell, which was evidently one of the old school bells, to summon us all to roll call.

Everyone was required to attend and if a person was too sick to go, he had to be reported by a friend and the Japanese “counter” would go to the home to verify the statement. The same procedure was used for those on duty at the stoves, kitchen, or other important places because everyone had to be counted.

Sometimes the count would be wrong in one place and all would have to be recounted. Sometimes the “counters” would be late. The best thing was to take a book or some work along. You might see a lady bring along a dish of apples to peel if she had been fortunate enough to get them, and someone might go over to sit next to her, just to get the smell of them.

Sometimes the teenagers would bring their accordions or harmonicas along and there would be singing. Once we got a longer roll call because the boys were using slingshots and one hit a lady right in the eye. She had to be taken to the hospital immediately and lost the eye and that of course, slowed everything up.

At another evening time roll call while waiting for the “counters”, the boys were standing alongside a building trying to see how high they could reach. One of them, Brian Thompson, a sixteen-year-old who that day they said had made a wonderful witness of Faith in his morning service, challenged the others to reach a wire above him.

He reached out for it and was immediately electrocuted, as it had been a live wire. The mother was nearby but they rushed the boy to the hospital just to keep her from shock. We did not know why our roll call was lasting so long until we found out.

If it rained the “counters” would try to hurry, and you took your umbrella.

[excerpt]

Breakfast was served at 8:30 A.M. or after roll call was held.

We queued up for it, bringing our dishes and if you happened to leave the dishes there by mistake, they would be gone quickly.

Although arriving early meant waiting in line you could always converse with your neighbor and sometimes the queue conversations would get rather animated.

For some reason the Japanese never entered the dining room. For breakfast the fare was usually bread cut up and cooked in water and a little sugar, and tea.

Coffee was out of the question entirely.

Dinner was served at twelve noon, and it meant another wait in line, but it also meant another chance to get acquainted.

The serving was usually just a ladleful of stew, a spoon of vegetable, occasionally a kind of dessert. The evening meal, which was “tiffin” (someone

brought in the word and it stuck. I think it may have originated in India) was a little less than supper.

[excerpt]

In each room there was a little stove and we were given a ration of coal. In April it was announced at roll call that the guards had orders to remove the stoves. Underneath the stoves were sheet-iron pans and someone had suggested that these might be nice for ironing, so when they came to our place I asked the guard if I could keep two.

We expected the stoves would come back in the winter if we were there that long. I told him I would take good care of it, explained why I wanted it, and that if he needed it at any time he could come and get it. He was most obliging and I kept them until we left. The pans came in very handy for the church wash, and I could even get the long altar cloths ironed by folding the cloth and laying the two pans together in the sun. The wash had to be laid out flat and the hot sun was enough to dry it and the underneath came up nice and shiny, as if laundered. Handkerchiefs came off better than if ironed. Of course, while I had the pans out in the sun I would have to take a book or something to do and watch because we had all kinds of people around and some could not be trusted.

We had brought wash lines along and sometimes the wash would be taken off the line if not watched.

[excerpt]

On June 10, very quietly the news went around that two of the men, Tipton and Hummel, had gone over the wall to the Chinese guerillas and by that time they were quite far away.

The Japanese did not yet know it. They had left early and a friend had excused them from roll call. The next morning they could also be excused possibly, but then the guards would be getting suspicious. By the time the guards caught on, it was too late to find them. The escape angered the guards and they decided that in order to tighten up, we would have to have two roll calls daily, so another was added to the late afternoon before Tiffin.

We knew what that meant; standing another hour every day, but the two men could not foresee this.

One of the priests [NDLR= *Father Raymond deJaegher*], who knew more than anyone what was going on outside was determined to go along with them, but Father Ildephonse [NDLR= *Father Rutherford*] refused him permission, saying that if he left, he would be excommunicated, so he did not go.

However, for two days all the men whom the Japanese thought might know anything about the escapees were kept in the church and no one else was allowed in.

They were questioned by the Japanese, but of course, the men knew nothing and were finally released. At the roll calls one day, they asked us each to yell out our number, instead of them calling the number and we, answering present, as had been done until then. When it got to 222, the young man who had it screamed out “toot-toot-toot” and, of course, the whole group broke out in laughter.

The guard didn’t know what was wrong, but he told the interpreter to tell us that we weren’t supposed to laugh at roll-call. By this time we were so used to roll calls that we didn’t mind it, and besides you could get quite an amount of work done, unless it was too cold, or raining.

[excerpt]

On the 2nd of February, Mr. Liddell, our faithful friend and interpreter passed away.

We mourned him, attended the funeral service and he was buried in the cemetery, one of the twenty-nine who were to swell the number of the former missionaries who had been buried at the camp before we arrived on the scene. Someone else took his place at roll calls. While we did not talk usually to our guards, they seemed more friendly.

Perhaps they realized that they were losing the war, but at least they knew much more than we did, and maybe they were glad the war was coming to an end. Certainly, they could feel much happier than their brothers out in the war zone or those

even in Japan because even Tokyo was getting its bombings.

I don’t think we ever needed to be afraid of the guards, even at night. Out alone at night I should have been afraid of some of the people on our side, more than of the guards because we had people of all walks of life and some of these walks weren’t the most admirable.

[excerpt]

One of the guards was more or less disliked by the internees.

It seemed whenever anyone asked him for something, the answer they got was “bu-hsing”, which in Chinese means “not-do,” in other words “it won’t work.”

So the camp dubbed him “Bu-hsing”. One day a little puppy came into the compound through one of the holes. The children grabbed it, and at last they had a pet. They fed it and took care of it for a few weeks. They called it “Bu-Hsing”. It happened that big “Bu-hsing” was walking along the street towards the guardhouse, when a little child called “Bu-hsing”. The Japanese love children and he felt rather flattered that the child was calling him, even though she did use his nickname, but then, turning around, he saw that the child was calling the dog which was directly behind him. Angrily, he grabbed the little dog and threw it over the wall.

The children managed to coax the dog in again, but after that they kept him hidden.

[excerpt]

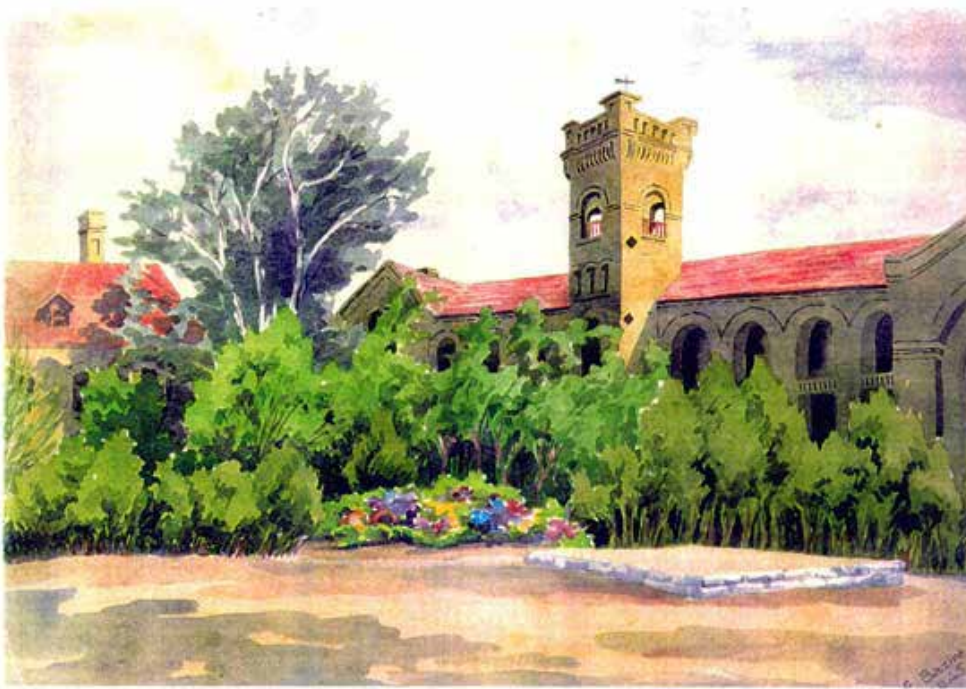
March 1945 came in like a lion, with rumblings about the war in Europe and the Allies imminent victory and the men took to betting again.

On the night of March 30 or 31, we were awakened at midnight by the big bell on top of our building ringing loudly.

Suddenly all lights went on and then the roll call Bell Tower : Block-23 bell. Someone was going through the compound ringing it.

We all got up.

It could mean nothing else than roll call but



One had brought his accordion and there in the cold night the rest of us huddling in our blankets as the young folk were dancing to keep warm.

It angered the guards that they could not find out who rang the bell. We were told to go back to our rooms which we did willingly, still wondering.

The next day word was passed around quietly that Germany had fallen and one man had bet another that he would ring that bell at midnight

why in the middle of the night? We shuddered at the thought of an hour out there in the cold and we shuddered more at the thought that this might be our final end, perhaps we would never return to this room.

All of us knew how the Japanese had taken whole villages of Chinese out to the threshing floor and shot them down with machine guns.

Was it our turn now?

Quickly we dressed, and we prayed. We took blankets and everything possible along. Everybody out on the plaza was as perturbed as we were.

No one had any idea what it was all about. We sat there anxiously waiting for the guards.

Finally, they came, three of them. They were very animated and angry. They fairly yelled at the interpreter and he interpreted, "They want to know who rang that bell?" One young man called out "I wish I had!" and everybody laughed. The tension was broken.

But the question remained about the bell ringing in the tower . . . who did it? No one knew.

We were counted and told not to laugh during roll call. Then they went to the other groups to check. It was a long time before they returned. In the meantime, the young people began to dance.

if Germany fell, which he did. He confessed and it was all taken care of quietly and the camp in general did not even know who he was. But the Chief of Police whom the internees called "King Kong", and who had been expecting a promotion, lost face by the incident.

The ringing of the bell had scared him too and he had surmised a riot and had called for help from the neighboring troops. Of course, when they came they weren't needed.

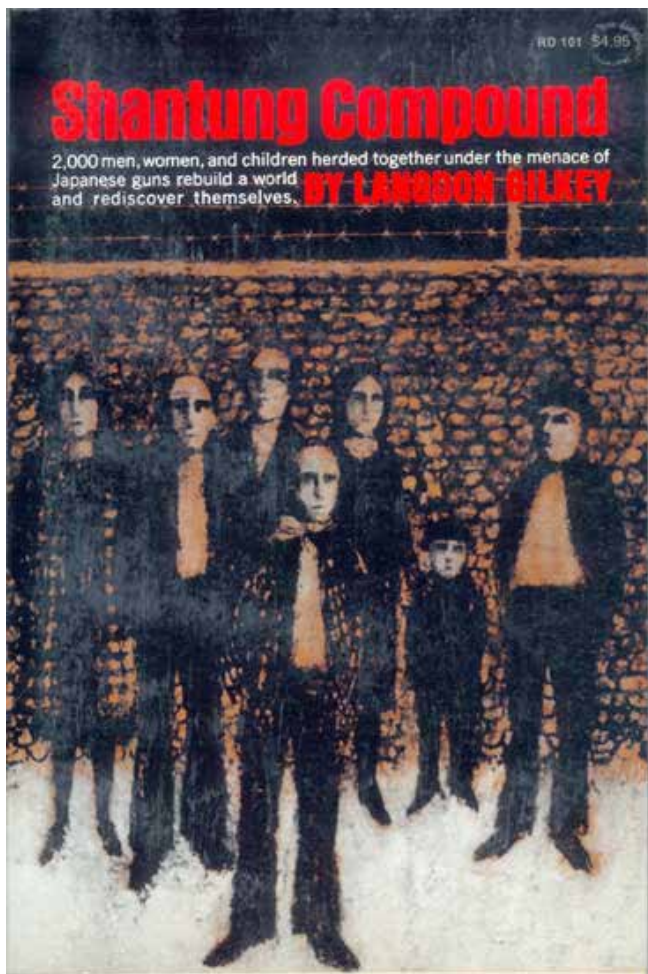
[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/p_FrontCover.htm

LEISURE TIME

by Langdon Gilkey ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

No one on the Labor Committee ever ventured to suggest that philosophizing or preaching be regarded as valid camp jobs.

That fact alone appeared to me to be an adequate commentary on their social usefulness. Apparently, our intellectual, and especially our “religious,” vocations were so unrelated to the real needs of life that they had to become “avocations.”

They were relegated to the categories of leisure-time and Sunday activities. The engineer, the doctor, the laborer, the producer, on the other hand, were asked to modulate, but not to abandon, their vocations when they entered our community. Each of their calling proved its worth by the necessity for it in the support of our material existence, and by the fact that those of us in “spiritual” vocations had to learn other skills if we were to take part in the daily work.

For these reasons, after I arrived at camp, I quickly lost my former interest both in religious activities and in theological reflection.

The missionaries were, it is true, achieving a unity and accord hitherto unknown, both among the various groups of Protestants and between the Protestants as a whole and the Catholics. Numerous joint enterprises consisting of lectures, services, and the like were planned and initiated.

In all of this I took only the mildest interest, and soon found myself dropping out altogether. My feelings found full expression one Sunday when, rushing by the church bent on some errand for the Housing Committee, I heard a familiar hymn ringing out through the open windows. I asked myself irritably, “What for—when there are so

many important things to be done?” And shaking my head in disbelieving wonder, I went on about my business.

[excerpt]

Thenceforth the General Affairs Committee was run by another Britisher, a modest, younger vice president of one of the Tientsin banks. The vision of a single political leader of the camp vanished never to appear again.

In this bumbling way, the official camp organization was formed. From that time on, there were nine internee committees, each with a chairman and one or two assistants who negotiated directly with the Japanese. The job of each committee was, on the one hand, to press the Japanese for better equipment and supplies and, on the other, to manage the life of the camp in its area. Thus the needs of the camp began to be dealt with by designated men. The amorphous labor force was organized; the problems of equipment and of sanitation were handled by the engineers; supplies were distributed more fairly and efficiently; the complex problems of housing began to be tackled; schools were started for our three hundred or more children.

With such centralized organization, our community began to show the first signs of a dawning civilization; it was slowly becoming capable of that degree of coordinated work necessary to supply services essential to life and to provide at least a bearable level of comfort.

By the middle of April, moreover, the camp cleaning force had cleared away all the rubble and debris. Most of the dismal ugliness that had greeted us in March disappeared.

At this transformation, the garden-loving British began to spring to action.

You could see them everywhere—in front of their dorms or along their row of rooms; around the church or the ball field, turning up soil wherever they could establish a claim to a plot of ground, planting the seeds which they had brought from Peking and Tientsin, and then lovingly watering the first signs of new life. In the same spirit, other families would begin to survey the small plot of ground in front of their rooms,

planning patios made of scrounged bricks, and experimenting with awnings fashioned from mats purchased in the canteen—all of this, apparently, spurred on by the prospect of summer “teas”. I could feel a new warmth in the wind and see a new brightness in the air wherever I went.

About the same time, evening lecture programs for adults sprouted in every available empty room.

These talks touched on a wide variety of subjects, from sailing and woodwork, art and market research to theology and Russian, on which there were unemployed experts both willing and eager to speak.

Concurrently, our weekly entertainments began. These took place in the church, starting with simple song fests and amateur vaudeville skits.

The culmination of these early forms of “culture” came, surely, when a baseball league (e.g. the Peking Panthers vs. the Tientsin Tigers) started in earnest on the small ball field, exciting the whole population two or three afternoons a week.

[excerpt]

We began to write, plan, and practise a small revue. We were sure we liked this kind of nonsense. But would this conglomerate community find it funny?

We were a somewhat apprehensive foursome as we strode to the front of the stage, dressed in camp working clothes and looking as grimy as possible. Then we pantomimed and sang a song about camp labor to the tune of “Solomon Levi.” To our relief and delight, the audience shook the building with their roars, and stamped for us to return and sing it again and again. The reason, of course, was not that either song or singers were good, but that after that trying first month, this was the best—almost the only—laugh the internees had had.

For the first time, they were able to get out of their miserable selves and to rise for the moment above their troubles by laughing at them and at themselves—a kind of reverse “catharsis” in which

the tragedy in an audience's real life is relieved by an analogous comedy on stage.

This was the beginning. From that point on, it was just a matter of time until the large number who were interested in drama and music went to work and eventually developed our Saturday night entertainments in the church to a high level.

Later that spring we were treated to our first real theater. This took the form of two one-act plays; I had a part in the second, a very funny thing by A. P. Herbert. There was no attempt to make sets for these; one or two simple articles of furniture sufficed.

By summer, full-length plays began to appear, each developing its dramatic art and its sets to a little higher point than the last. Among the dozen or so plays produced, I recall having small parts in Noel Coward's *Hayfever* and James Barrie's *Mr. Pim Passes By*, and enjoying thoroughly a hair-raising production of *Night Must Fall* and a most hilarious *Private Lives*. Two British couples in their thirties took the four roles in that latter play and did not need, it might be noted, too much coaching for those parts. These couples were our most talented dramatists, and were able to write and produce two very funny comedy-and-song reviews of their own.

After the rather heavy dose of Barrie, this earthier sort of humor in which they excelled came as a great relief.

The culmination of this dramatic development was reached in June 1945, when a full-scale performance of Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion* was staged with three complete stage sets, a full-sized lion made of cloth and cardboard, and armor and helmets for ten Roman guards soldered together out of tin cans from the Red Cross parcels.

We had musicians among us as well as actors, so two musical Saturday evenings were provided during each "season."

There was a choral society which sang Handel's *Messiah*, Stainer's *The Crucifixion*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and others.

The camp boasted a more than passable symphonette of some twenty-two pieces, whose

last concert included a full performance (minus bass violins and tuba) of Mozart's *Concerto in D Minor*.

Unlike the other instruments, most of which had been brought from Peking or Tientsin in a trunk or by hand, the piano had been found in a most dilapidated state in the church basement. It had been banged up by the soldiers quartered there, but it was speedily renovated by camp musicians and used to great effect in all our concerts.

Except in the worst heat of summer and cold of winter when the church was not habitable, there was a remarkably good entertainment each weekend: a play, a revue, a choral program — all calculated to take the edge off our otherwise monotonous life. As we often said to one another, when one is immersed in a play or listening to a symphony, the mind is most easily transported beyond the walls of the camp.

For two hours each week that rather ragged group of people were enabled to make a brief return to London's West End or to an off-Broadway haunt. Hence every person in camp, many old hands and many who had never been to a play or a concert before, jammed into our entertainments; for the last year and a half, we had to run shows on both Friday and Saturday nights to accommodate the crowds.

[excerpt]

The clearest illustration of the relation of space to human intractability came with the problem of families of four in one room. Apparently when they housed the camp at the beginning, the Japanese treated the families with two children in two very different ways.

They gave two rooms to the twenty-four families with two teenaged children. But to the twenty or so families with smaller children they gave only one room.

For the latter, therefore, life was intolerable. It meant that in a space only 9 by 12 feet—about the size of a dining-room rug—two adults, used to a large house, had to live with their entire family.

There they had to find room for two more

bunks or beds for the children, and provide space for them to play during the long, wet, cold months of North China's winter—not to mention doing the extra cooking and washing that any mother must do for infants.

As one of these mothers bitterly accused us in the Housing Committee office shortly after the camp began: "By doing nothing, you are making us bear the main burden of the war!" We could only agree. Something had to be done.

When we began searching for extra space into which these crowded families might overflow, we naturally eyed the twenty-four families of four who had two rooms. Here, obviously, was the only real "Gold Coast" living in the camp, for in each of these twenty-four cases, two teenagers shared one entire room.

Clearly, our best hope involved getting these teenagers to squeeze up a little in some way in order that the embattled mothers of two infants might have a little more space. And as always, I was hopeful of not too difficult a time. When Shields and I looked over the list of twenty-four families with two rooms,

I felt optimistic.

[...]

[excerpt]

Among the priests, for example, was every type, from tough ex-barflies, cowpunchers, and professional ballplayers to sensitive scholars, artists, and saints.

The Protestants embraced every variety, from simple, poorly educated Pentecostal and Holiness missionaries to the liberal products of private colleges and suburban churches.

Understandably, in this large group of humans were a few whose morals and whose honesty could be validly questioned; there were others who were unable to cooperate with camp policy, where that step involved some personal sacrifice.

Missionaries seldom stole goods; but on occasion they could be as lazy as the next fellow, and they were often as unwilling as anyone else to give up space for those who had less.

To be fair, however, such cases were the exception. It seems to me that on the whole the missionaries were more honest and cooperative than any parallel secular group. But the missionary community did have its own characteristic weaknesses as well as its own unique strengths.

We continually pondered and talked about these characteristics in Weih sien.

The Catholic was the most intriguing group, by far. A heterogeneous collection of Belgian, Dutch, American, and Canadian priests, monks, and nuns, from about every order and vocation, they had been herded into our camp from monasteries, convents, mission stations, and schools all over Mongolia and North China.

Reared as I had been in a non-Catholic culture, it was an experience to live next to these bearded men with their long robes and frequent prayers, their gruff masculine heartiness and ready humor. They seemed a strange mixture of worldliness and saintliness; perhaps that was what made them so fascinating. What was more relevant, they were, especially in the early days, invaluable.

Unlike us laymen, the fathers had long been disciplined to cooperative, manual work. They had baked, cooked, gardened, and stoked in their monasteries and in their chapter houses. There they had become accustomed to the rigors of an austere life. Camp existence with its discomforts, its hard labor, its demand for cheerfulness and a cooperative spirit was merely a continuation of the life to which they were already committed, but one with more variety and excitement. With their rules relaxed, new faces to see, and above all with the added zest of the continual presence of women, their life in camp was perhaps not less but more happy than that one they had left behind.

Consequently, the natural good cheer of these men increased rather than waned. The younger ones frankly loved their life there—"in the world" as they often quaintly put it. Many told us they did not look forward to a return to the relative quiet and seclusion of their monastic existence.

This zest for life and for work had a tonic effect on the disheartened layman, unaccustomed to manual labor, and cut off now both from his usual comforts and from the possibility of achieving

through his daily work at the office his normal goals of new wealth and success. The high spirits, the songs and jokes of the younger fathers, like those of boys released from boarding school, helped immensely to get things going.

[...]

[excerpts]

Although they did try to be friendly, the Protestants nevertheless typically huddled together in a compact "Christian remnant." Not unlike the Pharisees in the New Testament, they kept to their own flock of saved souls, evidently because they feared to be contaminated in some way by this sinful world which they inwardly abhorred. In contrast, the Catholic fathers mixed.

They made friends with anyone in camp, helped out, played cards, smoked, and joked with them. They were a means of grace to the whole community.

Looking at them, I knew then that one man could help another man inwardly not so much by his holiness as by his love. Only if his own moral integrity is more than balanced by his acceptance of a wayward brother can he be of any service at all to him.

Honest Protestants, I thought, could well admire and seek to emulate this ability of much of the Catholic clergy to relate creatively to the world. How ironic it is that Protestantism, which was established to free the gospel of God's unconditional love for sinners from the rigors of the law, should in its latter-day life have to look so often to its Catholic brothers to see manifested God's love for sinful men.

All in all, therefore, the Catholic fathers played a most creative role in our camp life, and the internees responded with genuine affection.

It is true that many of the peculiar and difficult problems of traditional Catholicism and its relations to non-Catholics were not evident in our situation. Wisely at the start, the "bishop" in charge determined not to try to control in any way the political or the moral life of the camp as a whole. As a minority group, they carefully refrained from any action against the freedom of expression

of other faiths.

The one Achilles' heel which I saw in their relations with the rest of the camp concerned the problem of intellectual honesty, one which every authoritarian form of religion must finally face.

Among the Protestant missionaries, diversity of opinion was so prevalent that at first it seemed embarrassing when compared to the clear unity enjoyed by our Catholic friends. The fundamentalists and the liberals among us could work together, to be sure, when it came to services in the church and other common activities. But still their frequent bitter disagreements were painfully obvious and damaging. This was especially clear one night when a liberal British missionary gave a learned lecture on Christianity and evolution.

The next night a leader among the fundamentalists responded with a blistering attack on "this atheistic doctrine" because it did not agree with the account of creation in Genesis.

A day later I happened to be sitting in the dining room next to a scholarly Belgian Jesuit. We had often talked together about theology and its relation to science. The Jesuit thoroughly agreed that the lecture by the fundamentalist had been stuff and nonsense.

He said that the quicker the church realized that she does not have in her revelation a mass of scientific information and so allows science to go on about its business without interference, the better for both the church and the world.

Two nights later, however, the leader and temporary "bishop" of the Catholic group gave his lecture on the same topic. He was a big, jovial, American priest, large of heart but not overburdened with education, either in science or in theology. As he declared, he was only "going to give the doctrine I learned in seminary." Apparently, the series so far had sown confusion (as well it might) in the minds of his flock, and so he had "to tell them what the truth is."

I gathered that to him truth was equivalent to what he had "learned in seminary." Knowing him, we were not surprised that his lecture, although based on dogmatic ecclesiastical statements of various sorts rather than on particular

verses of Genesis, repeated idea for idea the fundamentalist's position of a few nights before.

From that time on my Jesuit friend sedulously avoided the subject of science and religion. Nor would he criticize in his temporary "bishop" the very concepts he had ridiculed in the Protestant. Both critical faculties and independence of thought seemed to wither, once a matter had been officially stated, even on such a low level of ecclesiastical authority as we had.

Over a year later, this same priest to my great surprise revealed again the difficulty an authoritarian religion has with intellectual honesty.

There was in camp a good-hearted but not intellectually very sophisticated British woman—divorced and with two small children—who was increasingly unhappy with her Protestant faith. As she explained to me once, her Anglican religion was so vacillating and ambiguous that she found no comfort in it. It seemed to say Yes and then No to almost every question she asked. Such vagueness on matters of great concern to her failed, apparently, to provide needed inner security for a lone woman in that crumbling colonial world.

So she was searching for something "more solid", she said, "to hang on to".

I was not surprised when she told me this same Jesuit priest had begun to interest her in Roman Catholicism, nor even when a month or so later she said she had been confirmed. But I was surprised when she showed me with great pride the booklets the priest had given her to explain certain doctrines. Among them was one, she especially liked. It described in great detail—and with pictures of Adam, Eve, and all the animals—the six days of creation and all the stirring events of the historical Fall.

Here were statements clear and definite enough for anyone looking for absolute certainty. But whether she would have found that certainty had she heard the priest talk to me of science and theology, I was not so sure.

One thing I learned from this incident was that a mind needing security will make a good many

compromises with what it once knew to be false.

When these same views—now expounded by the priest—had been expressed by the fundamentalist, she had felt them to be absurd.

Clearly, the fundamentalist's faith did not offer her the certainty she yearned for. With the Jesuit, she was willing to pay the price of her own independence of thought, which she had formerly prized, in return for the greater gain of religious assurance.

The same price, of course, was paid by the priest. For the sake of the authority and growth of his church, he paid heavily in the good coin of his own independence and honesty of mind. Perhaps she, as a lonely woman in need, gained from her bargain. But I concluded—although no Catholic would agree with this—that he, as a highly educated and intelligent man, was quite possibly a loser with his.

Certainly, the most troublesome, if also exciting, aspect of our life for the younger Catholic fathers was their continual proximity to women—women of all ages, sizes, and shapes. With their rules relaxed so that they could work, they found themselves mixing with women to an extent which they had not known for years.

In the Peking kitchen at the start of camp, this created a touching but also touchy situation.

Among our group were some ten to fifteen very conservative missionary families, all of whom had teenaged daughters. There were also a number of boys their own age in the camp—sons of families in the Tientsin business world. But these girls were too unsophisticated and far too "moral" to enjoy their company. To these girls, therefore, the American and Canadian priests in their early and middle twenties were an absolute Godsend.

Neither party wanted anything serious to develop in their relationship, both had strictly honorable intentions, and heaven knew none of them courted trouble. Thus, trusting completely the other's non-serious intentions, and realizing subconsciously their immense need for one another, young Roman priests could be seen taking the air of a fine evening with Protestant daughters, both enjoying this companionship to the utmost.

Soon they had paired off into “steady” couples.

Only after several months did any of them realize to what extent their real affections had become involved.

Almost everyone in camp rejoiced over this situation as by far the best answer to the inevitable needs of each group. The only exceptions to this general approval were, needless to say, the rather strongly anti-Papal fundamentalist parents of the girls, on the one hand, and the Catholic authorities, on the other, both of whom regarded the whole development as one of the major calamities of church history!

Perhaps the most astounding ecumenical gathering ever to take place was the meeting in the kitchen one night of the outraged fathers of the girls and the stony, embarrassed, and inwardly furious Catholic prelate and his staff.

Knowing they had problems in common, they got along well enough and spent the evening trying to find means to break off these “courtships.”

Actually, there was little that either side could do while the summer air remained heavy with romance. But apparently there was agreement on one thing: the quicker the division of Christendom between Catholic and Protestant was enlarged, the happier all would be!

The transfer of the priests, monks, and nuns back to Peking in September 1943, six months after camp began, ended this idyll as well as all the other benefits that this interesting group brought to our lives.

To their dismay, all but ten or so of them were called back to their monastic and chapter establishments. Apparently, the papal legate to Tokyo had convinced the Japanese government that these men were neutral “citizens” of the Vatican state, instead of the Americans, Canadians, Belgians, and Dutch that the Japanese had thought them to be. Therefore they were no longer considered to be, “enemy nationals.”

We chuckled over this interpretation in our dorm, remembering the many times that the Catholic hierarchy at home has paraded its stanch

“Americanism.”

The day of their departure was for each of us one of the saddest days in camp. As the four hundred of them climbed reluctantly into their trucks, there was hardly a dry eye anywhere.

Men, women, and children lined the streets to wave forlornly and fondly to these good friends who had loved and helped them time and again. The missionary girls wept openly, without embarrassment, as they saw their trusted and trustworthy companions leaving them. Both priest and girl friend looked glumly into a future bereft of such friendship. As a British banker standing near me said when the trucks had driven away, “I wish to God the Protestants had gone off instead.”

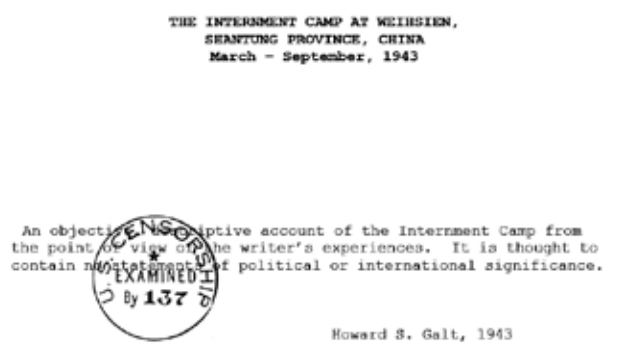
#

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/p_Gilkey.htm

by Howard S. Galt ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihhsien-1.pdf



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

The Entertainment Committee

After the beginning of camp life, not many weeks elapsed before a series of weekly entertainments was provided.

These took many forms, dramatics and music programs being the most frequent.

Members of the group coming from Peking – a city always proud of its cultural attainments – were most resourceful in preparing entertainment programs, but the Tientsin group was by no means backward. In many of the entertainments, both dramatic and musical, all three of the city centers furnished talent.

In this connection it is not improper to mention Mr. Curtis Grimes, a young pianist and conductor with a rapidly growing reputation in Peking. His most notable contributions were his own piano concerts, and the leadership of a chorus and an orchestra.

The nucleus of both chorus and orchestra had been trained for longer or shorter periods by Mr. Grimes in Peking. These members were re-enforced by excellent musicians from the other cities.

Among the musical programs of the chorus

were three of the great classical oratorios.

In this connection it may be noted that, at the time of the establishment of the camp the Japanese authorities were good enough to give special permission to transport to the camp a grand piano from Peking.

Later a second piano was similarly brought from Tientsin.

The church serving as an auditorium with a seating capacity of 700 or 800, made possible the regular entertainment programs. It was soon noted that if programs could be given twice, the attendance of practically the whole adult membership of the camp was possible.

Friday and Saturday evenings were usually chosen for the two settings, and on Thursday tickets for the two evenings in equal numbers were freely distributed.

Besides the evening entertainment, there was an almost daily series of athletic sports.

The grounds near the hospital, already mentioned, were used for tennis, basketball, and volleyball. An athletic field left of the church was larger and there baseball and hockey were played.

By far the most popular sport was baseball – most popular both for the players and spectators. The size of the grounds cramped the game somewhat so that the softball (or playground ball) was commonly used. For this also the grounds were really too small, so that some special “ground-rules” were necessary, one of the most important being that when the batter knocked the ball over the compound wall he was entitled to a “home-run.”

In the selection and matching of teams, all of the major divisions of camp personnel were recognized.

Each kitchen group had its team, and at times a second team as well as a first. Each of the three cities – Peking, Tientsin, and Tsingtao – had its

team. Some of the larger corporations, such as the B.A.T. (British American Tobacco Co.) and the Kailan Mining Administration had their teams.

Other teams were selected quite miscellaneously by captains, appointed or self-chosen. There were boys' teams and girls' teams. But the team which, after many contests, proved superior to all was a team selected from among the Catholic Fathers. The whole camp was surprised at the proficiency of this team and at the interest both Catholic priests and nuns manifested in the game. One of the Catholic bishops took part in the game. The best player in the whole game was a priest whose nickname was "Father Wendy."

Although competition was keen, there was the utmost harmony and good feeling.

When the weather was good, there were games almost every evening and spectators gathered in crowds. At some of the keenly contested games probably more than half of the entire camp (often including some of the Japanese guards) was present along the sidelines.

Among entertainments there should be mentioned one organized not by the entertainment committee but by the Catholic Fathers.

It was an outdoor performance held Sunday evenings. Its leading spirit was a Dutch priest of great vigor and vitality, a good musician and possessing marked natural qualities of leadership.

English was the language which was most used, of course, but the Father in charge had very incomplete knowledge of English, and his foreign accent, and the mistakes which he made, which did not at all quell his enthusiasm, were part of the entertainment.

The program, largely improvised and prepared for each occasion, included much music, instrumental and vocal, the latter in the form of community singing. The words of the songs, usually adapted to familiar melodies, often referred to interesting camp happenings, or made "local hits."

Besides music, with a continual flow of interactions and humorous comments by the leader, there were simple dramatics, puppet shows and shadow pictures.

A small movable stage, with suitable electric lighting, was set up for each occasion. These entertainments seemed to fill a Sunday evening vacancy in camp life and became very popular with an attendance of people, both sitting and standing, of 500 or 600.

It may be added that the Protestant church held Sunday evening song services, but they were by no means as popular as this entertainment by the Catholics.

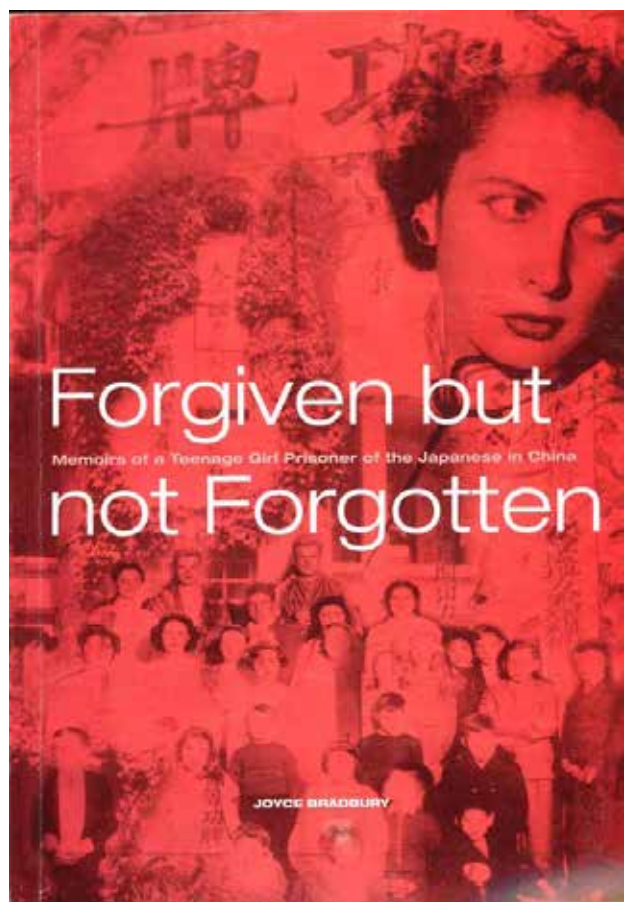
A very different form of entertainment, the game of chess, while not under the auspices of the Entertainment Committee, was quite popular, promoted and organized by a chess society. The players were classified and a systematic tournament was held.

[further reading] ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf

by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

We had dances in a dining room on Saturday nights. A specially formed dance band supplied the music. Because the camp lights went out at 10 p.m., the dances finished too early for us. In the camp there were some African-American musicians who played in the dance band.

Members of the Salvation Army also had a band which regularly played musical instrument. Reverend Norman Cliff, then a schoolboy, learned how to play the trombone from them and used to perform at their recitals.

[excerpt]

There was a stone church building in the camp which the inmates used for talks, study and recreation.

We had amateur concerts in there and some plays. I can remember singing a solo song in a concert. The song was called 'Daddy wouldn't buy me a bow wow.' Letitia Metcalfe and I also sang 'September in the rain.'

This concert was written and produced by Letitia's stepfather Gerald Thomas, a Tientsin businessman who concert-billed himself as 'Professor Thomas and his Stewdents.'

[excerpt]

... After liberation ...

The adults had to attend meetings chaired by American officers where they were told of the progress in returning us to our homes.

They told us to be patient because it would take some time.

For my family it took about two months.

The American civilian internees were the first to go. I know some of them declined repatriation to the United States because their homes were in China and they wanted to stay there. As for my family, the only home we knew was Tsingtao and that's where we wanted to go. I don't remember being impatient to go home because I started to enjoy myself. No more being dragged out into the open for roll call.

There were dances every Saturday night with the soldiers.

The American soldiers were extremely polite and well-mannered. They appeared strong and healthy. Everybody liked them. We rightly regarded them as our saviours.

Inevitably, I got into trouble with my boyfriend, Brian Clark (1923-1988), for dancing with the Americans. He never spoke to me again.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/p_FrontCover.htm

[Exerpts] ...

[...]

Slowly, the chilly spring turned into summer, and as the hot, airless days rolled by, tempers sizzled like overloaded fuses, turning the camp into a powder keg.

The chairman of our administration committee, Roger Barton, one of the Kailan's top men, realized if we didn't have some way to vent our steam we would soon be out of control. He discussed it with his committee, and the suggestion was made that what we really needed was entertainment of some kind. Something light and musical to kill the somber mood of the camp before any real killing took place.

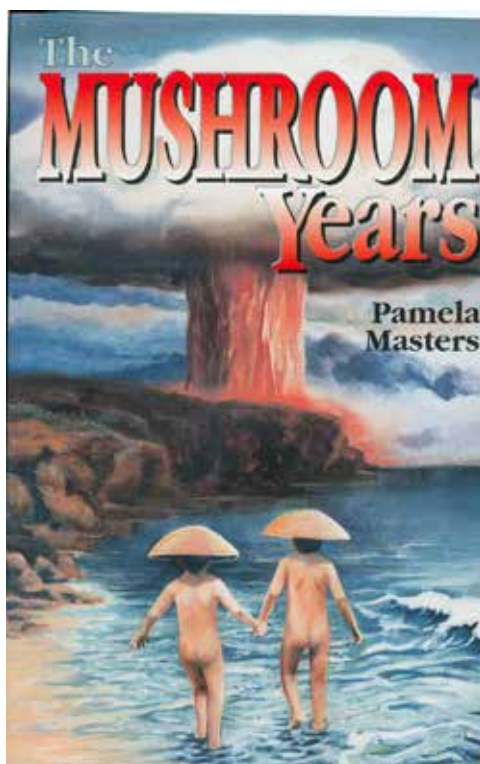
Not using quite those words, Roger asked the Commandant for permission to stage a show in the assembly hall. "Thought you'd never ask," he said, smiling, then, on a more serious note, added, "I'll have to get permission from the captain. Hope I catch him in a good mood."

Happily, when the Commandant approached King Kong, he found that he and the guards were as bored of camp life as we were, and all the captain asked was that the first two rows in the hall be reserved for him and his men.

That was all we needed to hear—auditions began on the spot.

It was just as well school was out by then, as the hall was monopolized by rehearsals, and the old piano that had belonged to the university was tuned till it sounded like a Steinway concert grand.

When we weren't listening to Sharon Talati working on Chopin's Polonaise, the exquisite notes



cascading out of the open windows and climbing the tall pines that surrounded the building, we would peek in and watch Jacqueline de St. Hubert practising the finale to Tchiakowsky's Swan Lake.

When, or where, the small band of black nightclub musicians from Peking rehearsed its numbers I couldn't say, but when the show came together a few weeks later, they were superb.

The night of the performance, King Kong made a rare appearance, sitting front-row center, flanked by the Commandant and Gold Tooth, with the rest of the guards filling the first two rows. It's a good thing the camp didn't have a fire marshal, as the remainder of the hall was packed, and the aisles crammed. Even the open windows were jammed with expectant faces.

The program turned out to be a portrayal of all our frustrations, lightened by song, skit, and mime, and punctuated by the Polonaise and Swan Lake for those who enjoyed classical entertainment.

A complete surprise just before intermission was the appearance of a Trappist monk singing the tragic lament, *If I Had the Wings of an Angel*, the words re-written to reflect our distaste for our new lifestyle.

Although the lyrics were humorous and right on target, his voice was so exceptional, I almost missed them. I couldn't help thinking of the MC's short introduction, where he said the priest had just come down from the hills beyond Peking after a twelve year vow of silence! I didn't realize at the time that the vow of silence only

covered communication with other people, and erroneously thought, Even the Lord can't ask that of such a voice...

When his last notes died away, the applause rang out again and again. There was no way he was going to get off the stage without an encore, but as he had run out of re-written verses, he returned to the original lyrics, and had us all spellbound again by the feeling he wrapped around the words.

No one dared leave their seat at intermission for fear of losing it to the hoards pressing to get in, so the MC cut the break short, and the program resumed with a skit on *The Jerry Trot*.

We were lucky our cell was only a hundred feet from the women's latrines on Main Street; for all those who were blocks away, with umpteen kids or invalids, the "*Jerry Trot*" several times a day was a must, each person trying to pretend that the object they were carrying draped artfully with a towel was not a chamber pot, when it so obviously was! The cheery "*Hellos*", "*Nice day, isn't it?*" and "*How's the family?*" as the parties passed back and forth, trying to appear nonchalant, were typically British, and ridiculous, and the skit had us laughing at ourselves till I thought I would cry.

As the evening wound down to a close, it appeared our Japanese captors had enjoyed the program almost as much as we had, even though they hadn't understood a word of it—except, of course, for the Commandant.

When it was time for the last number, the MC turned it over to Roy Stone, the leader of the black combo that had given the show such fantastic backup, and he stepped forward and said they would like to dedicate the number to Gold Tooth. The Commandant caught onto the name right away, and standing up, interpreted, as the supply sergeant beamed and hissed in pride at the honor. "And now...we would like to dedicate...to Gold Tooth (here the Commandant obviously put in the sergeant's correct name, as he got up and bowed several times to everyone)...this special number... (in English) *We'll Be Glad When You're Dead You Rascal You!*"

The number was a solid hit. Thundering applause rattled the rafters of the old hall as the internees yelled for more, and the encores got

louder and louder till the crescendo seemed to break through the walls. It was an ear-splitting success, and Gold Tooth jumped up and yelled and clapped, then climbed up on stage and danced a jig before the ecstatic musicians.

Everything seemed to ease up a lot after that, and ball games on the roll-call field in the evening became a daily occurrence, much to the Puerto Ricans and the "Padres" delight. It didn't take long for me to figure out how Father Windy really got his nickname: the fact that his name was an unpronounceable, vowel-less Polish one was secondary to the way he hit home-runs and winged it around the bases. There was only one drawback to his powerful swing—we started to run out of softballs in a hurry.

It must've been around the third or fourth game that the problem resolved itself. After Windy's bat had done its duty and he was sailing around the bases with a look of triumph on his face, and a look of woe on everyone else's, there was a lovely "Ay-a-a-AH!" from over the wall, and the ball came flying back in! Our Chinese friends on the outside had decided to join in the fun, even though they couldn't see the action—and whoever pitched those balls back must've had a fantastic arm. Later, when I kidded Windy about his name, he admitted he'd played semi-pro for several years before entering the order.

After the success of the musical and the ball games—the latter also enjoyed by the guards—we had no problem getting permission to put on other group activities and shows. The talent tucked away in that crowd of inmates was nothing short of remarkable. So much of it would never have been found if it hadn't been for the easygoing atmosphere that started to take over in the camp.

To break the monotony of the days, people who never thought of performing before would audition just for the heck of it.

[excerpt]

Ursula gave me a withering look, turned, and marched out of the compound. When she got back, she announced she'd auditioned for a minor role in *A. A. Milne's Mr. Pim Passes By*, and had got the part. It was her way of getting involved and not dwelling on the things she couldn't change. I got

her message.

She was all aglow when she came back to the cell after the first rehearsal. She spoke of all the neat, new people she'd met, and in passing, mentioned that a prompter was needed desperately.

Margo perked up, decided that was right up her alley, volunteered, and got the job. It proved to be a happy decision, as the part of Mr. Pim had gone to the Reverend Simms-Lee, the sweet soul who had married her and Jack twenty months earlier, and she thoroughly enjoyed renewing their friendship.

A week into rehearsals, the director said, "We've got to get out some publicity. We need posters—at least one at each kitchen." That's when Margo and Ursula remembered they had a kid sister who was "something of an artist", and I was asked to do the posters. They even supplied art board, and replaced many of my dwindling colors—where they came from I'll never know.

I started out having a ball, at least on the first poster for Number One Kitchen. And I refined it somewhat when I painstakingly redid it all by hand for Number Two Kitchen. But it became a total drag when I rendered it a third time for Number Three. Everybody had to be listed, from the lead to the props, in copy of lessening importance, and heaven help me if I didn't get them in the right pecking order!

The play ran for three nights, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, so that all could have seats and enjoy it. It was a delightful study in human nature, and the Reverend Simms-Lee seemed a natural for the mixed-up Mr. Pim. When the house lights dimmed for the last time—we didn't have a curtain to drop—I felt a nice cozy glow settle over the audience, reminding them that it was a pretty good old world after all.

[excerpt]

Saturday night dances at K-2 became a regular affair toward the end of summer, and as the guards never checked in on them, we could almost kid ourselves into believing we weren't in a prison camp.

The music was great ... and live. It was impossible not to enjoy Roy Stone's band and the two Hawaiian guitarists who teamed up with them.

They didn't need amplifiers to send their notes sailing, and although the kitchen windows were open most of the time, no one ever complained about the music.

The dances were also a great place to find out who was going with whom, who had broken up, and who was on the prowl. Lisa and I usually went with a group that fluctuated in number due to work shifts; sometimes I had a date, sometimes not. It was on one of the latter occasions that Guy came in alone.

Nico never came to the dances, and I dearly wished he would. If he'd been there, I could have gone over and struck up a conversation without turning into a barb-tongued witch. It happened every time I got near Guy. As I glanced his way, trying not to look obvious, Renée Francoise, a slim little French [*speaking*] girl with flaming hair, went over to him and clung on his arm, looking up at him with her ice-melting eyes. He looked over her head with a bored expression, trying not to make eye contact, but she giggled and finally got him to smile, and they stepped out on the floor. I thought, Oh Lord, she's nuts over him. Look at the way she's clinging to him, and I realized, with envy, that I could never do that.

I was still quietly fuming over the situation when Norm Shaw, one of the many camp bachelors, and a great dancer, caught my eye. The black mood of the moment was soon forgotten in the enjoyment of dancing with him. When the number came to an end, he asked conversationally if I'd seen King Kong's latest bulletin.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)

[excerpt]

Later in the morning, when breakfast was through and the wash-up done, I started to set up for the lunch crew. As I double-checked the

different items I had to put out, Dan came in and asked if I would like to go to the New Year's dance with him.

"Love to."

"I'll pick you up around seven-thirty then."

[excerpt]

New Year's Eve arrived bitter and raw, boding no promise for the winter ahead. The cell was like ice as I changed for the dance, and I was still shivering when Dan came to pick me up. His warm smile did wonders for my heart, but nothing for my frozen feet—and I told him so.

"So let's get over to the kitchen and thaw out," he said, propelling me through the door and out into the freezing night.

As we skirted the frozen puddles on Main Street, we were joined by Lisa and her boyfriend, Ian, on their way to the dance.

The kitchen was warm and steamy, smelling romantically of the leak soup we'd had earlier in the evening. The tables had been shoved up against the walls, and the trestles either stacked on top of them, or pushed up against them for us to sit on. The members of the dance combo were tuning up their instruments when we arrived, and Roy Stone was talking to Deirdre Carver, the lovely girl in the last cell in our block. He seemed completely taken by her, and the musicians were getting a boot out of watching him try to make time. Finally Smitty, the bass player, called out, "Come on, Roy, let's g-o-o-o!" and with a flustered giggle, he turned to the group and they broke into *My Blue Heaven*.

[excerpt]

Not long after their arrival, the weather turned bitter, and the long, cold evenings started to get to us.

None of us could afford to fire up a stove; we found ourselves keeping our little stashes of coal-balls for emergencies, or a possible illness requiring heat for recovery. Even when we huddled in each others' cells, the cold dampened our mood and stunted conversation. The only night we all looked forward to was Saturday, where the dances in old

K-2 really warmed us up. It didn't matter that the place stank of rancid stew, or pungent leeks; it was warm, and that's all we cared about.

The Saturday following my seventeenth birthday, Dan had the evening shift, so I went to the dance with Lisa and Ian and the rest of our little group, most of whom had paired off by now, leaving me feeling rather like the proverbial "crowd". When we got to the kitchen, Ursula was there with Alex. And I saw Grant come in with Tessie. Well, I thought, just to round it out nicely, Guy should arrive with René. But he didn't.

[excerpt]

Camp life continued to go on its muddled way, and Saturday night dances moved outdoors as the weather got warmer. Our favorite dance floor was a concrete circle in front of the bell-tower dorm, with a bank and benches around it, like a little amphitheater. Some nights, when the music wafted on the air, and the moon sailed through a starless sky touched now and then by wisps of clouds, it reminded me of summers in Chinwangtao and Mother's Harvest Moon parties.

Then my mind would play tricks, and I'd see the dancers—not in their bedraggled clothes, most of them barefoot—but beautifully dressed in crepes, voiles, and satins, the men in dress whites, and I'd keep up this charade till the last note drifted away on the evening air.

It was at one of these dances in early June that Dan, all lean six-foot-something of him, started to collapse in my arms. I looked at him, and my panic was reflected in his eyes.

"Get me to a bench, quick!" he pleaded.

I half-danced half-dragged him to the sidelines, then eased him down onto the bank, as the benches were all taken.

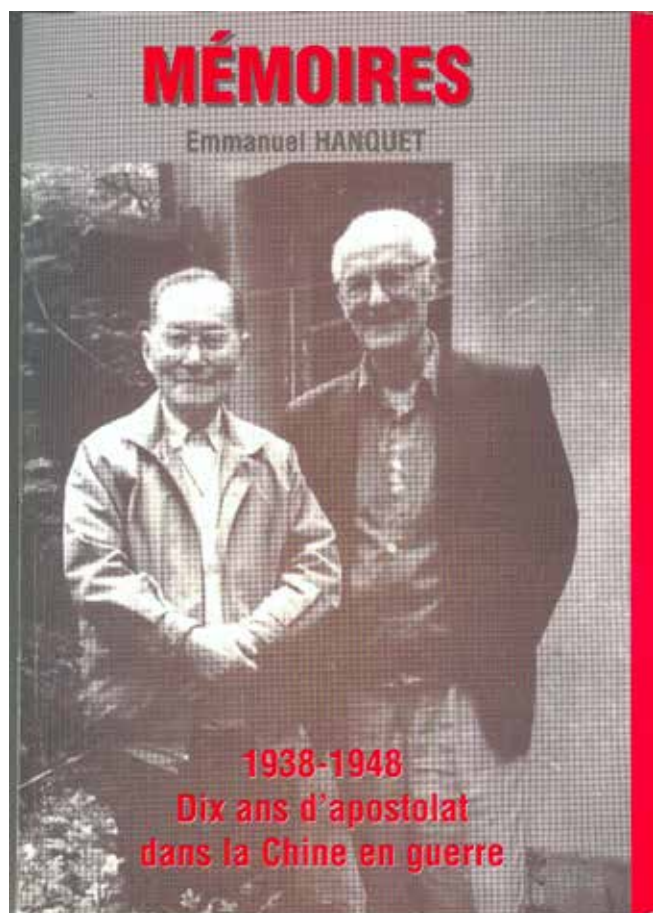
"What happened?" I asked, scared.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)

by Emmanuel Hanquet ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

It is essential to organise leisure activities in a concentration camp if one is to sustain people's good humour and patience.

We would regularly organise baseball matches for American or British teams. The Fathers' team had a certain notoriety. We were not short of supporters, who were mostly young catholics. Of course we were all pretty young at that time.

[excerpt]

With the coming of the first winter in camp, we experienced the monotony of the long, endless evenings. The Sun was more generous than in Europe, though, but it went down early and the long cold evenings began without radio and without TV. Television didn't even exist in those remote days!

For all those who had nothing special to do, the only distractions available were; reading books, walking around, or visiting friends and neighbours.

As for book reading, we had a small library with various books brought into camp by the different groups of prisoners that came from Peking or Tientsin or elsewhere. There wasn't a fantastic choice, but, I must, however, tell you that I read a great deal of books all about life in China and also about Chinese history.

Besides reading, the few possible occupations, were visiting friends and neighbours, singing and theatre activities.

About visiting: we had to find enough space to greet our friends in the little rooms where the only suitable seat was the bed next to the one you were already sitting on. There was always somebody around to listen to whatever confidence that you might be telling. That was why those visits were very rare, rather brief and had, for major purposes, the request of a favour.

As time went on and people got to know each other better, and becoming friendlier, it was customary to have birthday parties. The Mothers did marvels in the baking of cookies without eggs or butter!

We had concerts.

Those concerts, in the "sing-song" style were performed two or three times every winter and gave a little joy and beauty in our otherwise boring existence. Those concerts and recitals, of course, had to be meticulously prepared and we used and abused our local artists' talents. Percy Glee (?) was one of those precious artists. He was an excellent pianist and sung with the wonderful voice of a tenor. He was also able to conduct a choir. Thanks to that, we became more familiar with English folk music, folk songs, as well as with Negro spirituals. The song that was highest in rank on the hit parade during those days was: "God Bless America", it was a song that warmed up our spirits and pride and gave us the energy to go on. Everybody learned the words.

We had plays.

Theatre had no lack of artists and more than once did the little groups of our younger folks prepare their performances with great care and meticulousness.

They recited poems or performed in short plays. Some even adventured themselves in giving a full recital.

But the “**Must**” was by no contest, the performance of the Bernard Shaw’s classic, “Androcles and the Lion”. I must tell you about that, for I was closely involved in the adventure. The promoter and director of the play, lived in the same block as mine, but on the first floor. His name was Arthur P. and shared a room with Larry Tipton. He was a fine and distinguished Englishman, not very tall, with a soft voice and intelligent conversation. We were neighbours, and as “warden” of Bloc n° 56 I often had the opportunity of talking to him without ever really being his friend for as much. That is why he hesitatingly asked me - maybe due to my sacerdotal condition - that he allowed himself to take the risk to invite me to take a part in his project, as well as Father Palmers, to play the role of a Roman soldier!! I reassured him of our complete collaboration.

That is the reason why I still have an accurate memory of my Roman soldier outfit. It had been carefully assembled at the repair shop by the means of many tin cans that had been flattened and congregated together to finally take the shape of a helmet and a breastplate that fit us perfectly. To give more reality to the looks of our legs and arms that were, of course, all white, we painted them with potassium permanganate that got us all bronzed up. For only a few days, though.

Nero appeared in all his majesty with his laurel crown and draped in a white cloth surrounded closely by his courtesans chosen amongst the prettiest women of the camp, dressed in green and rose gown assembled by the means of old curtains. Two gladiators armed with nets were trying to hold Androcles as their prisoner.

The show was a great success and we even had to do an “encore” to be able to satisfy all those who wanted to see it. A few weeks later, when the American parachutists came into camp we even

had the honour to perform the play once again for them.

[]

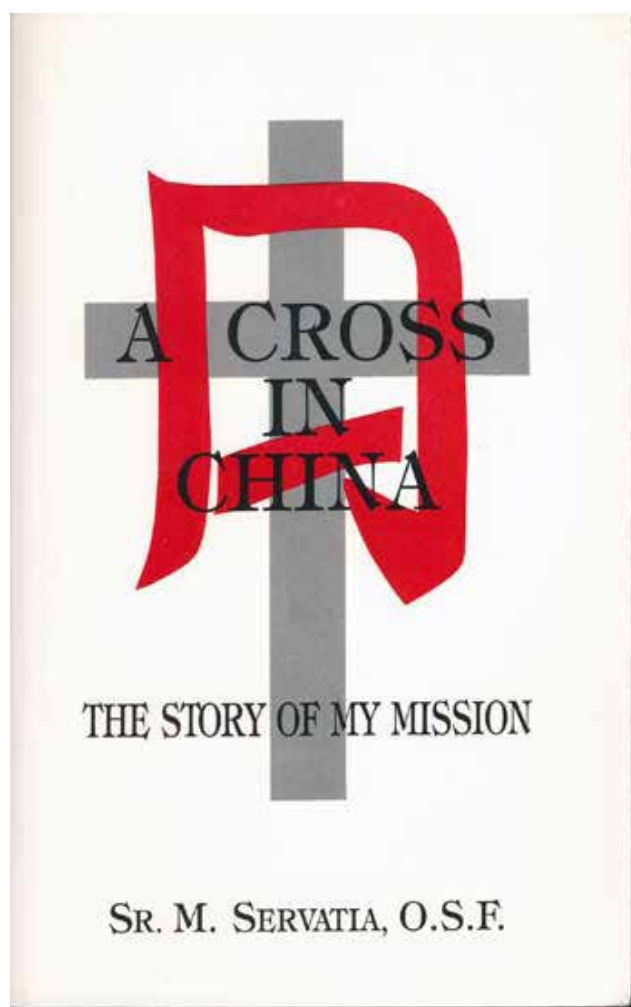
After dealing with that which has to be dealt with, we find ourselves killing time by making Chinese chess sets out of grey paper. I shall even, in the days that follow, manage to fashion a pack of playing cards using visiting cards found at the bottom of a drawer.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

by Sr. M. Servatia ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/p_FrontCover.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Sometime during those early months Father Scanlon put a notice on the Bulletin Board that he would give a lecture on the "Life of a Trappist".

There was more interest shown by the non-Catholics than those of our Faith and the hall was so packed that many could not get in. He gave it a second time and again it was packed so he gave it a third time. Sr. Reginald felt that since she was his "wash-woman", it was her duty to go and she asked me to go along. He spoke very beautifully of their life and he also played some records which were Gregorian Chants made at the funeral of a

Trappist. After that the people appreciated him all the more. Sr. Reginald's remarks after the lecture did not strike me much until after her death.

She loved the music best and wanted to hear it again.

[excerpt]

In the beginning of our camp life, we could go back for seconds if there was some left in the "guo", but later on this changed and we had to be counted.

Mr. Echford was given the job of counting us as we got our ration supplies. It almost looked as though someone's job was to think up other unheard of duties. Some of the ladies were shirking their duties or coming late, so they got a very special man timekeeper. Father Gus weighed about three hundred pounds and, of course, could not be given a heavy-duty, so he checked the ladies off and on duty. Since he was very humorous, the ladies soon got to like having him there and began calling him "Father Time" although to the rest of the camp he was "Father Gus". When he came up for his ration of food, he would often say "I'm two" and whoever was dishing out would forget all rules and give him two rations. Nobody ever objected to it.

He told the story of how when he was a student at the Seminary the boys gave a play and in it he took the part of a nun. He then had his picture taken and took it home with him on vacation to show his parents. At that time there was quite an article in the daily papers about a nun who had left her convent and created some scandal. His father was ranting about it. The boy said, "But at least she is quite good-looking". The father gave him a look and asked how he knew and Father Gus replied he had her picture. The father asked him how he got it, wondering why the boy was so interested in the nun. The boy went to his grip and got out his picture and showed it to the father. He looked at it and admitted she was good-looking, but he added, "Can't you just see the evil in her eyes?" We can imagine what happened next.

[excerpt]

The Salvation Army gave a First Aid Course which was very thorough and no materials were needed for the course. They also brought their band instruments along and on Saturday afternoons would play hymns.

Dr. Lucius Porter of Yenching University in Peking, a history teacher, gave classes on Chinese history, his speciality, and across the row from me sat Father DeJaegher, the successor to Father Lebbe, taking down every word Port said.

I thought it was a good idea so thereafter I did the same, and realized how valuable it is to have the notes.

In November 1944 there was also a little notice one day that even if we can't vote in the American elections, we can always bet, no distance or person can stop us from that.

[excerpt]

In order to keep the people busy and entertained, the Fathers started a little orchestra for Sunday evenings.

"Androcles and the Lion," was being prepared for production in camp, he was chosen for a unique part, to be the roarer for the lion.

The play opened up with the MGM lion roaring and one of the young men dressed as a lion while Father was backstage doing the roaring.

For several weeks the camp was entertained by his practising and it got to be very realistic. The lion's costume was very artistically done with whatever material was on hand.

Percy Gleed, a British internee, managed to get copies of Elijah by Mendelssohn and formed a chorus. Although that took quite an amount of evening time for rehearsals, it was worthwhile.

By this time we had changed to our white habits. The Benedictine Sisters also wore white shoes while we had black. Percy advised me to borrow a pair of white shoes so that the Sisters could be completely in white. One of the Benedictines lent me hers, but I had to fill out the toes because the shoes were too long.

[excerpt]

They duplicated songs and we could have community singing. Bishop De Smedt also played violin in the orchestra. One song the Belgian Fathers made up was a round about bean sprouts.

Since bean sprouts were one of the more common vegetables and you put the beans under wet dishcloths for a few days and they sprouted and thus were a little more than the beans would have been, this song with the words "Bean sprouts without end," certainly was appropriate.

Other entertainment included an occasional production staged for the benefit of the "residents".

One Priest became quite famous for his portrayal.

[excerpt]

Finally, it was decided to have the program in the church, which was our largest meeting place.

The Japanese permitted extra lights, but no national anthems of any nation were ever permitted on the campus.

The Fathers had the stage for the evening. Father Cary, Superior of the Canadian Scarboro Fathers was directing. The word was whispered around that there was going to be a surprise at the end, but no one knew what it was.

The Japanese guards came, they enjoyed only what they could understand and they finally got tired and left. Father Plummer, O.F.M. of the New York Franciscans, and a former ex-marine (who was renowned as the best clothes washer in camp) sang a parody to the Prisoners Song, made up by some of the Fathers and Sisters, telling about Father Scanlon who at the time was a double prisoner and could not be present.

There were tears in the audience as he sang it, verse after verse. There were other songs and acting and then "*God Bless America*." This song was new to me as I had first heard it a few weeks previous in one of the Sunday evening get-togethers, when Mr. Hannigan, an Irish tobacco man, stood behind me singing it with his lovely tenor voice. It thrilled me then, but now to hear

that packed hall singing it was thunderous. Then came “*There’ll always be an England*” and we reciprocated by helping them out. We couldn’t help with the Dutch or Belgian, but they had enough voice themselves and didn’t need help.

Then silence . . . and the surprise.

A curtain hung on the back wall of the stage was pulled and a large American flag was displayed! No Japanese were there to see it, nor did they ever know it was there.

The next day as we sat in the dining room chopping leeks, one of the ladies suddenly remarked—“Why are all those Catholic Fathers so good-looking?” and the others thought the same. I hadn’t given it a thought but after that when we had programs and the Fathers were on the stage I realized how true it was.

[excerpt]

The day before they left Rev. Connelly gave a party for the Sisters who were leaving. He had brought an ice cream freezer along to camp and he managed to get some cream and milk from the black market. That freezer was turned practically all day as he got the men to take turns at it, so that the Sisters could have ice cream. Needless to say, it was appreciated.

[excerpt]

On New Year’s Eve, there was a party in Kitchen One. We did not attend although all were invited. While those in attendance were playing cards, they got a nice little surprise. Father Hanquet had gotten a uniform somewhere and dressed like Hitler. (Apparently, he had done it before outside of Weih sien.) He walked into the dining room and around all the tables looking at the people sternly, saying nothing. Most did not recognize him and some of the ladies were even frightened until someone gave out who it was. But while it lasted, it was a good act in more than one way.

[excerpt]

A troop of Boy Scouts was organized with Father Hanquet and Rev. MacChesney-Clark in charge. The minister was of some special American denomination, but he was the only one in camp of

that denomination. When we had the Boy Scout’s Mass and sang hymns, he would be in the front pew sharing a hymn book with one of the boys and singing as though he had done that all his life, and the boys revered him too.

[excerpt]

The bulletin board gave notice one day of a lecture to be given by Father DeJaegher on “*The Life of Father Lebbe*”. To the Catholics in camp, Father Lebbe had meant nothing and they were not interested. The lecture was to be under the elm tree outside Kitchen Two. Sr. Eustella and I took our stools and went and during the lecture she nudged me and said, “Do you notice that we are about the only Catholics here?” I did, but I realized that the non-Catholic missionaries must have been rather interested in Father Lebbe or they wouldn’t have come either and they knew if Fr. De-Jaegher had something to offer, it must be good. In the audience was a young lady from the Chinese Inland Mission School. I particularly noticed her because although I had never spoken much to her, twice she had been brought to my attention.

[excerpt]

For Christmas dinner we had our good old stew and wormy bread but perhaps it was more than many others in war-torn countries were having and we knew it.

[excerpt]

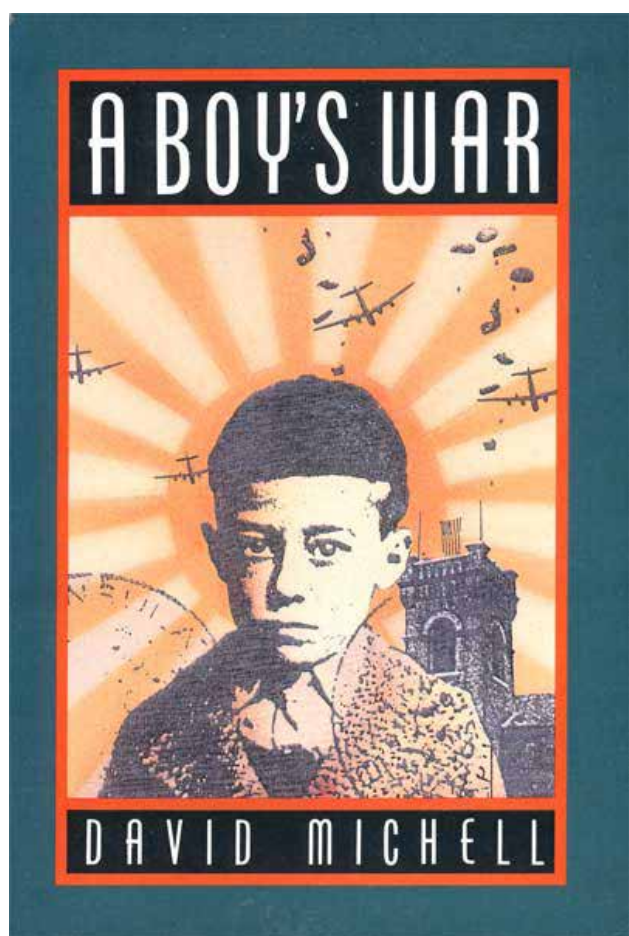
The feast was on a Wednesday and after the Mass Father DeJaegher came to our room, sat down on somebody’s stool and said he had news. Japan had fallen. He had no particulars. He had gotten that from the Chinese through his own methods, one of which was to send letters in tin cans sealed and mixed in with the garbage. Immediately the whole camp was in the highest of spirits. We could not say anything to the guards, in fact, now we felt pity for them instead.

[further reading]

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/p_FrontCover.htm

by David Michell ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Part way through our ten months of internment at Temple Hill, Japanese Consular Police took over from the military authorities, and our situation improved a measure.

The new commandant, Major Kosaka, allowed sand to be brought in for us to play in. He even let us have a supply of fireworks, so that we could have our own celebrations when festivities were going on around the temple with thousands gathering to worship the idols. The power of the big crackers really impressed us. Even a bucket thrown over one shot up as high as the top of the trees. I think I could still find the spot by the West wall where I buried one of my crackers, planning to retrieve it before I left the compound.

Of course, when the day came, I forgot it in all the excitement.

[excerpt]

Roll call, morning and evening, with all of us calling out our numbers in Japanese, became part of the daily routine. Mr. Martin wrote up the numbers in Roman letters for all of us to memorize.

We were very quick learners, and those of us at the younger end of the school always ran out at the roll-call signal, to get to the front of the line.

When the commandant in all his military braid and finery and with his attendant officers marched up, one of the soldiers with appropriate air-sucking preliminaries shouted out, "Bango," which meant "Number off!" Away we went, as fast as we could go: "Ichi, nee, san, she, go, roku, etc."

The first four in the line-up could play a joke with the numbers. Instead of counting "Ichi, nee, san, she," we would sometimes say, "Itchy knee, scratch a flea." It gave us all a laugh, and since we said it so quickly, I don't think the Japanese knew what we were up to.

[excerpt] by Evelyn Davey

The boys have a new craze playing with buttons and string. The result is that Bea collected 26 buttons they had pulled off their clothes! Bruce Keeble hadn't got one left on his coat.

[excerpt] by Evelyn Davey

Now the cold weather is here and the fun has really started. I was on duty on a cold, wet, sleety day! The children had to play indoors — in their dorms and the hall. It was SOME squash!

I wandered around stoking stoves, answering questions, quelling quarrels, finding paper, pencil, glue, string, etc. "raving" at people for walking on the beds, and emptying "chambers"! They could not go to the outside lavatories because of the snow — so I was kept busy. To crown all, the electric lights failed to come on, so we had to go to

bed by candlelight. I had just escorted eight little girls into the bathroom to wash, holding a very wobbly candle, when the candle overbalanced, fell behind the geyser, and left us in complete darkness. I took a step forward to find it — and knocked over a jug of cold water which swamped the floor! Oh dear! Poor Teacher on Duty! However, the day ended at last!

[excerpt]

Second helpings of anything were very rare. When one five-year-old discovered that she was allowed a second drink of water at playtime, she shouted excitedly to the others,

“Hey, everybody, seconds on water!”

[excerpt]



Following the ringing of the camp bell each morning was the daily roll call in six areas of the camp. It was always a tedious procedure, but thankfully did not always last five and a half hours as happened the first time. The older people were allowed stools or deck chairs, and we children were able to play

marbles once we had been counted.

We learned how to play “luncre” from the Peking and Tientsin Grammar School children.

To the teachers’ dismay and our discomfort, we learned more than the game of marbles. The teachers were shocked to hear us describe with great animation our latest exploits with the best “damn-crack” marbles in Weih sien Camp. We had added to our vocabulary swear words that didn’t exist in our world in Chefoo School, though some boys seemed to have quite a penchant for remembering Chinese swear-words. Unfortunately, most of us lost the Chinese language we should have remembered, having learned to speak it quite fluently from Chinese

playmates before we left home. At school we were not permitted to use Chinese, as a number of our teachers did not understand it.

[excerpt]

The priest was always one step ahead of the Japanese, and even in solitary, he put one over on them.

After about a week, Scanlan was lonely for company. He decided to sing his prayers out loud in Latin, late at night.

Since his cell was in one of the buildings housing the soldiers, his booming voice was keeping them from sleep. On hearing that these noisy activities were his obligatory religious exercises, they hesitated to interfere. They put up with the same routine one more night and then gladly sent him back to us. As Weih sien’s egg hero was marched back into camp under guard, the Salvation Army band fell in behind them, playing a march and soon a long train of grateful mothers and children were part of the joyful procession.

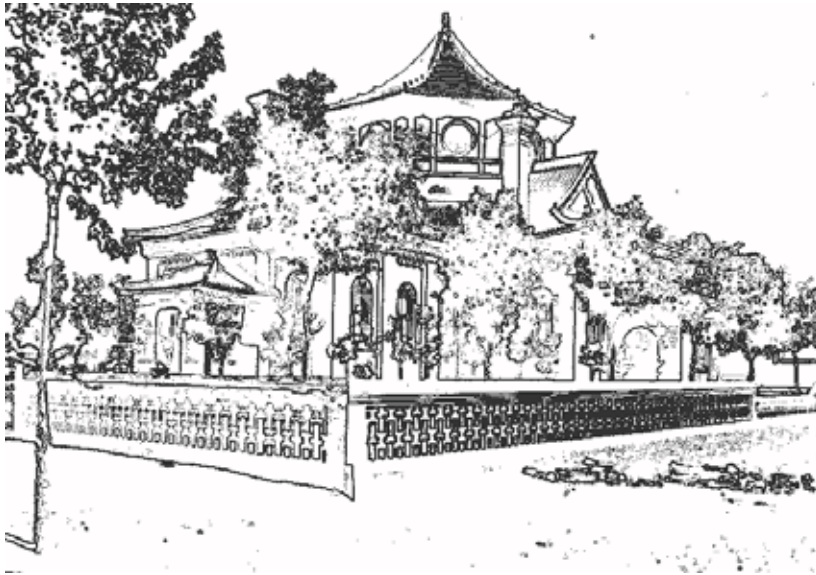
The Japanese appeared not to get the point as the camp feted its benefactor’s return.

[excerpt]

Not long after we had moved to Weih sien, another boy and I were playing a game of “conkers” with an acorn suspended on a piece of string.

My new-found friend looked up and said, “Do you know who that is coming up the camp road?”





[excerpt]

As chairman of the recreation committee, he helped organize the athletic events and worked with our teachers in arranging sports days. I remember him as umpire of our soccer games, which we used to play barefoot on the athletic field by the church.

He tore up the sheets he had brought into camp so that he could bind up the field-hockey sticks. In short, he always inspired enthusiasm as he found ways to keep the sports side of camp life going. Strong as he was in his conviction about Sunday not being a day for sports, he even agreed to referee the games of some of the children whose parents let them play on Sundays, when he found them fighting over the game.

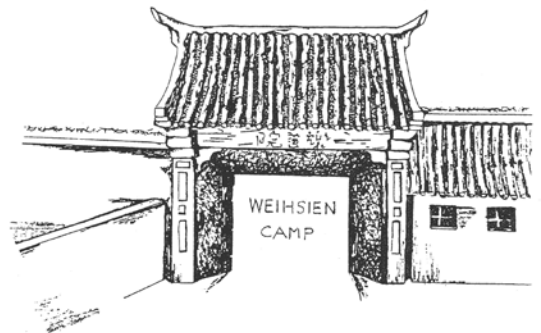
To all of us young people in camp, he was known as Uncle Eric.

To us he stood out as kind and friendly, with his ever-present smile and gentle, Christ-like manner. He was a true Christian gentleman. He loved children and gave a lot of time to those of us in the Prep School because we were the youngest without our parents.

As someone said, he had a Pied-Piper-of-Hamelin quality about him.

[excerpt]

Our conversation that day went back to the times when as boys we played marbles together in the dirt of Weihsien.



The gate to the "Courtyard of the Happy Way" that became Weihsien Concentration Camp.

Drawing by Judith Michell

We remembered those marbles matches which had helped us while away the waiting hours of the daily roll call, only to come to an abrupt end as angry boots appeared in front of our noses and our eyes followed them up into the glowering faces of the Japanese guards.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)

by Mary L. Scott...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

[Excerpt] ...

[...]

Recreation in camp could be grouped in two major categories: cultural and athletic.

After the first few months in camp, regular Friday and Saturday night programs were given. Sometimes it was a drama, sometimes a variety show, or a concert by the camp orchestra or a pianist (of which we had several).

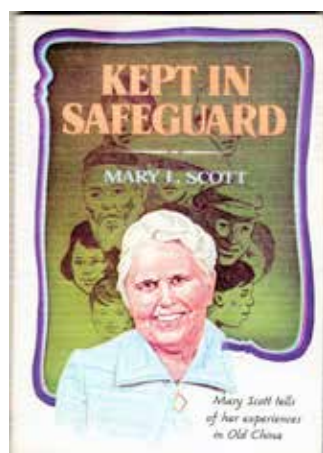
We were fortunate that the Japanese had allowed us to bring instruments into camp. I had the first chair in the clarinet section of the orchestra. The only reason I occupied the first chair was that I happened to be the only one with a clarinet—not because I was that good!

Some of the musicians had had foresight enough to bring the musical scores of many religious classics into camp, including Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Stainer's *Crucifixion*, and Handel's *Messiah*. These became regular musical presentations in season.

I remember so vividly one Easter morning, Mrs. Buist, a Salvation Army missionary from Wales, standing on a cement slab and singing in her clear, bell-like soprano, "I Know that My Redeemer Liveth." We were lifted to the seventh heaven as our love and faith reached up to our living, resurrected Saviour. What difference did it make if we were in an internment camp? He, our risen Lord, "stood in our midst" on that Easter morning.

A circulating library was a rich source of good reading. I am sure I read books I would have had neither the time nor opportunity to read had I been carrying on normal missionary activities.

The major athletic activity in camp was soft ball. There were three men's teams: the Tientsin



Tigers, the Peking Panthers, and the Priests' 70 Padres.

The Padres had an almost unbeatable pitcher, but competition was keen as two or three afternoons a week the men pitted their skills against each other, and the spectators yelled until they were hoarse. Ladies' softball teams were also organized. On one of the Playground ... teams I was shortstop, catcher, or pitcher, according to the need of the day.

I really enjoyed playing ball in camp because no one thought it strange or undignified for a woman in her 30s to be playing ball.

As much as I enjoyed playing, I got more satisfaction out of coaching separate groups of boys and girls between 12 and 16. Many had never played ball before, since baseball was not common in British circles. American personnel was comparatively scarce after the second repatriation, so the athletic committee used any personnel available. My "boys" invited me to tea one afternoon to celebrate a birthday. Seven signed their names and then added a P.S.: "Bring an item, please" (meaning food). I still have this invitation, written in pencil, among my most treasured souvenirs. Field hockey, though not as popular as softball, provided another physical activity for ladies. I have made my boast that our team never lost a game while I was playing goalie. But a reading of my diary for Nov. 27, 1943, casts serious doubt on the accuracy of my memory. I wrote: "Hockey game stopped because of the rain— rather fortunate because we were losing four to zero."

Social activities centered mostly around the families and the dormitories. One week after our arrival in camp, one of our dorm mates, Mrs. Stillwell, had a birthday. That was reason enough to celebrate with a special tea. When Miss Regier and Miss Goertz, Mennonite missionaries from Kaichow, arrived in June, we had a welcoming "picnic" at the Browns'.

The Helsbys' 9 x 12 became a welcome haven for Marcy Ditmanson and me to escape periodically from dorm life. We might celebrate a birthday—or just have an evening of games.

Battleship was very popular, and if we were not careful, the lights blinked at 9:45 before all the battleships, cruisers, or submarines had been sunk on a sea of 300 positions.

We were supposed to be in our rooms by 10, when the electricity was turned off. We were grateful for the candles we had brought from Peking, or even the flickering, sputtering tallow candles purchased locally.

[excerpt]

With such a cross section of humanity from all walks of life, from the highest executive of a large mining or tobacco company, missionaries, professors, artists, and importers, to junkies and women of the street, it was inevitable that there would be some conflict—in thought at least.

In normal city missionary life, the business community and the missionaries moved in different circles and saw very little of each other. But in camp, they cooked together, baked together, made coal balls together, cleaned latrines together, and played together.

Toward the close of camp, one businessman told a missionary that he had always thought of missionaries as a “queer lot.” But he said, “I have observed you missionaries and have to confess I have changed my mind. You can take it better than the rest of us, and in a better spirit.” Another internee expressed it this way—that the missionaries seemed to respond to a need naturally and without pretense.

[excerpt]

Word of V-E Day came early in May in the midst of the presentation of a play in the assembly hall (church).

The drama stopped and for a half hour all joined in singing “*God Bless America*,” “*There’ll Always Be an England*,” and “*Happy Days are Here Again*.” There was much cheering and many a silent tear.

Later that night some of the fellows succeeded in getting up in the tower and ringing the bell with the result that everyone—babies and the aged included—were called out for roll call at one o’clock in the morning.

One source of our news was the Peking Chronicle which the Japanese permitted to be published in English and sent to former subscribers. The “news” was strictly controlled, of course, but we read between the lines of their terribly distorted reports. We followed the American navy and marines in their progress up the Pacific from Guadalcanal, to Guam, the Philippines and finally Okinawa. When reports of “thousands U.S. bombers” being shot down over the cities of Japan came, we knew the end of the war could not be far away.

Another source of news was a White Russian radio technician who repaired radios for the Japanese in his room. While “testing” them, he listened to news reports and relayed the information to others in the camp.

But perhaps the most lowly and unsuspected source of our news was the night soil coolies who periodically brought in news by way of crumpled notes in Chinese carried in their mouths.

At the prearranged place, they spat into the garbage container at the end of a block where the wet notes were “found” by the internee garbage carriers. They, in turn, usually took them to a trusted, *discreet missionary* for translation, who turned over the message to the committee of nine for evaluation.

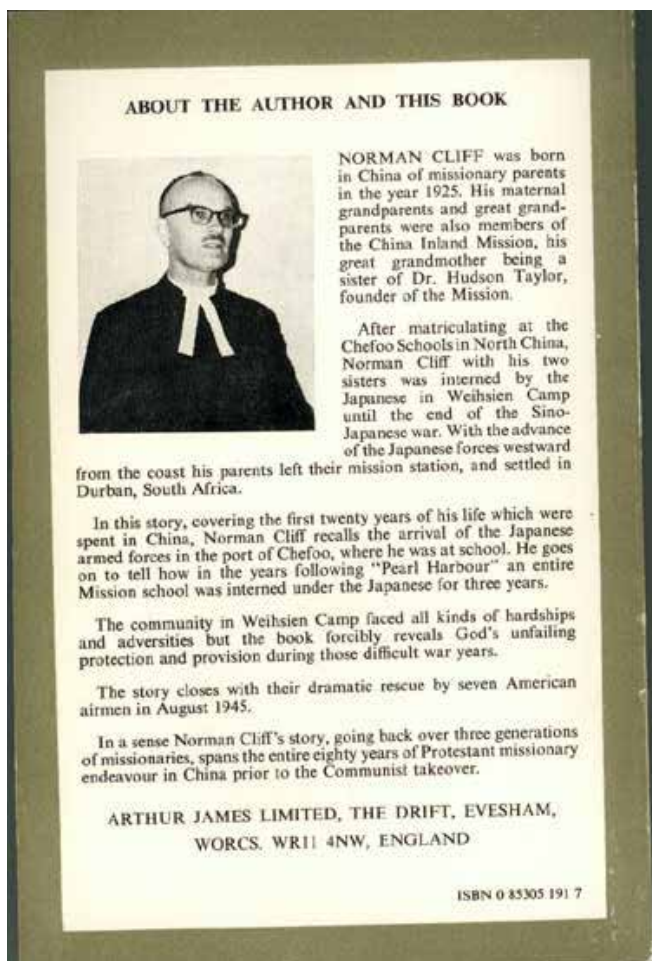
The committee decided whether the news should be spread through the camp in general. It was through this channel that the first word of peace negotiations reached us on Monday of that very eventful week.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

by Norman Cliff ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND THIS BOOK



NORMAN CLIFF was born in China of missionary parents in the year 1925. His maternal grandparents and great grandparents were also members of the China Inland Mission, his great grandmother being a sister of Dr. Hudson Taylor, founder of the Mission.

After matriculating at the Chefoo Schools in North China, Norman Cliff with his two sisters was interned by the Japanese in Weihsien Camp until the end of the Sino-Japanese war. With the advance of the Japanese forces westward

from the coast his parents left their mission station, and settled in Durban, South Africa.

In this story, covering the first twenty years of his life which were spent in China, Norman Cliff recalls the arrival of the Japanese armed forces in the port of Chefoo, where he was at school. He goes on to tell how in the years following "Pearl Harbour" an entire Mission school was interned under the Japanese for three years.

The community in Weihsien Camp faced all kinds of hardships and adversities but the book forcibly reveals God's unfailing protection and provision during those difficult war years.

The story closes with their dramatic rescue by seven American airmen in August 1945.

In a sense Norman Cliff's story, going back over three generations of missionaries, spans the entire eighty years of Protestant missionary endeavour in China prior to the Communist takeover.

ARTHUR JAMES LIMITED, THE DRIFT, EVESHAM,
WORCS. WR11 4NW, ENGLAND

ISBN 0 35305 191 7

[excerpt]

Adjutant Buist was a handsome and outgoing Welshman.

In his little camp room (which he shared with his wife and small children) he patiently gave me lessons.

After several weeks of training and practice I joined the band practice every Tuesday evening as second trombonist.

The Salvation Army had been treated with suspicion by the Japanese since their arrival in China. They disliked its military associations' uniform, officers and military terminology.

The movement had consequently been forced to change its Chinese name from "*Save the World Army*" to "*Save the World Church*".

Present at our band practices in a small room next to the boot repair shop were ten Salvationists with four or five Christians from other denominations. We spent many happy hours learning Salvationist marches and hymns. To play the great hymns of the Church with brass instruments in such harmony and rhythm was an indescribable experience.

One of the officers had composed a medley of all the Allied national anthems. But when we practised it all the parts were played except the air, and so the tunes were not recognised by the authorities. Convinced that camp life would one day come to an abrupt end, whether by Russian, American, British or Chinese intervention, we were determined to have a suitable piece of music to play for the great occasion, whenever it was or however it was to happen. We practised it month after month, and the very process of playing the Victory March kindled in our hearts faith and optimism.

On Sunday afternoons we would gather on the grounds outside the hospital, and under the baton of Brigadier Stranks play:

[Excerpts] ...

[...]

At strategic points throughout the camp were cesspools into which the latrines ran and dirty buckets of water were emptied.

Playing near the cesspool by the bakery with his sister, Johnny Kelly fell head first into its dirty waters, and Mary let out wild shrieks to attract urgent assistance for her unfortunate brother.

Johnny went up and down four times in the filthy pool to be rescued timeously by a burly British seaman who skilfully applied artificial respiration. The lad recovered from the accident, but for the remainder of the duration was dubbed "Cesspool Kelly".

*"Be still, my soul, the Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently thy cross of grief or pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain."*

#

[excerpt]

Getting my trombone from Block 23, I rushed back to the gate. The band was standing on a mound behind the electrified wires at the rear of the church in a position which commanded a good view of the triumphal entry of the seven American parachutists. The baton of Brigadier Stranks gave the signal, and we were away.

But my eyes strayed from the music to the drama going on outside the gate. The parachutists were being carried shoulder high towards the entrance by excited internees. My right hand went through motions of playing the trombone as I watched the developments in front of me. In the group of Americans was Jimmy Moore who had been a prefect at the Chefoo Schools when I was in the Second Form. He had evidently pulled strings to be in this particular relief mission.

Steven, the first trombonist beside me, a tall American lad, stopped playing and collapsed, sobbing like a baby. I was later told that hospital patients, suffering from all kinds of ailments, had jumped out of their ward windows to witness the morning's spectacle, and never returned to their sick beds, mysteriously healed of their various physical complaints.

#

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

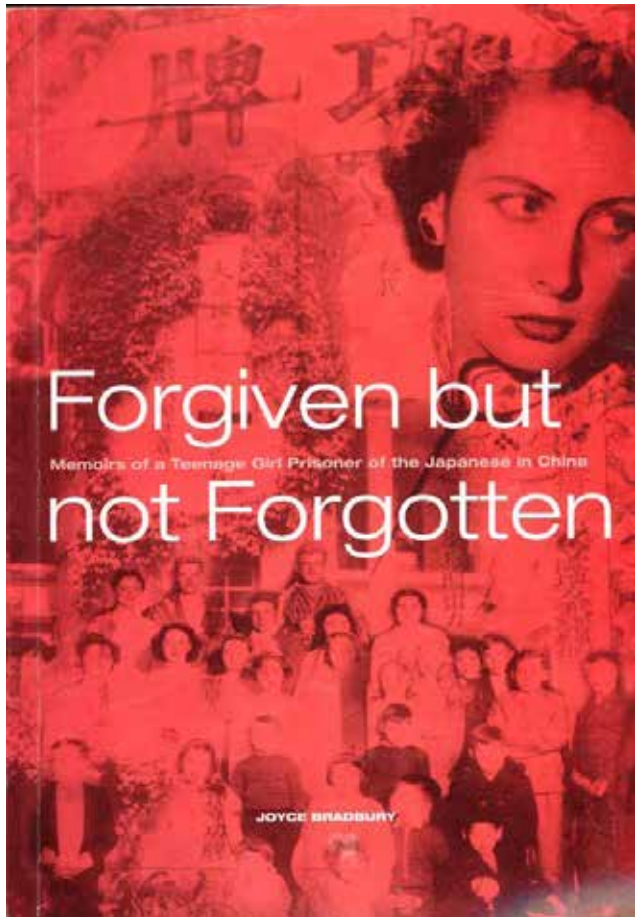
MAP SHOWING JAPANESE CIVILIAN CAMPS IN CHINA 1941 to 1945.



HOSPITAL, DOCTORS & HYGIENE

by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

The new camp was formerly an American Presbyterian missionary training centre. Its buildings included a well-built church, a hospital, dormitories and two-storey houses surrounded by a brick wall on which there was barbed and, later, electrified wire.

There were machine-gun posts at intervals on the walls. On arrival we were allotted rooms. In our case we were given one room sized about 3 metres by 4 metres for my parents, young brother and myself. Upstairs were the de Zutter family from Tsingtao.

Unaccompanied single persons were put into same-sex dormitories.

Wei-Hsien is a hot-and-cold place. It has snow in the winter and can be boiling hot in the summer. It is inland and about 120 kilometres west of Tsingtao. Outside the camp, there was farm land on which there were market gardens.

Because for three-and-a-half years we did not leave the camp, I cannot describe what the farmers did and what the nearby town area was like.

When we arrived, the camp was in very bad condition because it had not been used for some years.

It had earlier been looted by Chinese bandits or Communist forces before the Japanese Army took control of it.

The camp's toilets were all blocked or inoperable.

There was rubble everywhere.

[excerpt]

Our group was the first Japanese internment prisoner batch to arrive in the Wei-Hsien camp and thus we bore the brunt of the camp's initial cleaning up.

As the days went on, some 500 Catholic priests, brothers and nuns arrived together with clergy from a diverse mix of other denominations.

About 1500 more civilian internees were also brought to the camp. For the first few weeks, we had a big clean-up and committees were formed to set up and staff schools, the hospital, a bakery, a shoe repair shop and kitchens.

[excerpt]

As we began to settle down, the various committees allocated duties to everybody over the age of 14.

Doctors and nurses were assigned to hospital duties and caring for the health of people while tradesmen worked in the carpentry and other shops. In general, the women had to peel vegetables and the men worked in the kitchens irrespective of their former callings.

[excerpt]

I lost weight but otherwise remained healthy except for tinea of my toes for which one of the doctors gave me Condy's crystals which helped heal them. My brother went to the camp hospital and received treatment for a cut lip.

During our imprisonment my brother was still recovering from tuberculosis. The doctors handled limited supplies of milk and eggs for babies and children under 10. Because Eddie turned 10 at Wei-Hsien, he did not qualify for the milk and eggs. This annoyed my father who thought he should receive milk and eggs to help him recover.

Pop was working in the cookhouse one day wondering how he could get nourishing food for Eddie when a pigeon flew in through a window and fell into a vat of boiling soup. In no time it was plucked, cooked and fed to my brother.

Pop always said the impromptu pigeon meal saved young Eddie's life.

[excerpt]

The medical doctors and nurses ran the camp hospital with great efficiency.

There were many patients with illnesses and injuries. On one occasion late in the war, some medical drugs came to the camp hidden in Red Cross parcels. We were told the Japanese removed the labels from the containers. The absence of the labels was very troublesome because our doctors had to try to analyse the contents to find out what they were. Some of these drugs were the then new and highly effective anti-bacterial sulpha drugs. I have recently been told that the drugs were hidden in the Red Cross parcels by

Chinese Nationalist forces who had received them at their nearby base from an Allied air drop. The drug labels were removed to prevent them being detected by Japanese searchers when the Red Cross parcels were delivered to the camp. A short time after the drugs were delivered, Father De Jaegher obtained information on the dispatched drugs from the Chinese Nationalists and their recommended methods of usage which he gave to the hospital doctors. The doctors and those who assisted them in the hospital did a splendid job for the inmates. They also treated the Japanese when they needed medical attention.

[excerpt]

The compound still exists and from what we could gather it is now a hospital. Stan met one of the Chinese who used to black-market deal with him during the war. The insulator cups from the electrified wire fences are still on the compound walls and many of the buildings are still in use. The hospital, church and Japanese officers' buildings still stand. We located the kitchen where my father worked.

Memories flooded back for Stan and me.

[excerpt]

In her report, Dr Wagner makes the point that the American-held enemy internees were well treated in Texas and that comparison of their conditions with those at Wei-Hsien were as different as chalk and cheese.

Some parts of her recollections of Wei-Hsien differ significantly from mine. The differences, I suggest, are largely due to the camp's Japanese regime becoming stricter and meaner to the inmates from late 1943 until our liberation.

Because of the significance of Dr Wagner's comments about how she saw Wei-Hsien, I have included them in this book. Her comments have not been published in a book about the camp. Where necessary, I have paraphrased Dr Wagner's report.

Dr Wagner wrote of Wei-Hsien: "Situated between Tsinan and Tsingtao in the Interior of Shantung, about 150 miles south-east of Tsinan.

The camp is located on the premises of the

former Presbyterian Mission compound. The compound is situated about two miles from the town, Wei-Hsien. The compound was attractively landscaped with shrubbery and fine old shade trees, some 60-year-old. The climate is pleasant in the spring and fall [autumn].

"The summer heat begins in May, reaching its climax in the month of August. The rainy season begins in August. Heavy rains lead to roads being flooded, walls collapsing and flood waters reaching the window sill level of many houses. Rooves leaked. Rain poured into dormitory rooms, kitchens and mess halls. Winters cold and fairly dry. Bitter cold in December, January and February, moderating somewhat in March, but still cold.

"Wei-Hsien is probably as hot as [the Texas Crystal City] desert camp in the summer, but the heat is humid. The trees at Wei-Hsien provide some relief and shade from the heat indoors, which is not true of the [Crystal City] camp visited. The winters in Wei-Hsien are undoubtedly much, much colder than the winters at the [Crystal City] camp."

Dr Wagner says when she left the Wei-Hsien camp there were 1800 internees.

[excerpt]

"Dormitory rows of single rooms assigned to families. Rooms 9 feet by 12 feet [about 1.5 metres by 2 metres] containing two to four persons, depending on size of family."

[Accommodating]

Four persons barely possible in summer. If there is to be a stove in room in winter, [it is] impossible for four [people].

"Armies had previously occupied buildings.

Buildings in disrepair, wind and dust swept through cracks and crevices. Difficult to keep warm in winter. The walls were whitewashed and floors painted in preparation for internees. Many of the rooms infested with bed bugs and fleas. No beds, cots, tables, chairs provided. Internees were permitted to bring bed and bedding.

Internees who were transferred from Chefoo to Wei-Hsien just before we left [for repatriation] were not permitted to bring their beds, [they]

were sleeping on the floor.

No running water or toilet facilities. Space available per person 34 to 54 square feet [3.2 to 5 square metres.] Official allowance is 45 square feet.

"Stoves [March 1943] in only a few quarters — [for the] aged, small children, sick. Small stove in large dormitory rooms totally inadequate. No kindling wood or paper provided. Coal had to be picked by hand from coal heap, considerable distance away. No containers for carrying provided."

For washing, toilet and laundry facilities, Dr Wagner reports that the Wei-Hsien facilities contained: "Four blocks of 5 and 6 toilets each, Japanese squat type. Originally meant to flush, but never had tanks connected. Inconveniently located. So close to some buildings that the dormitories were never free of the toilet and cesspool stench, so far away from other buildings as to require a long walk in the outdoors to reach them.

23 toilets in all for 1800 people [resulting in] morning and evening long queues. In reality, [toilet availability] average was more nearly one to 100 people as some of the toilets were continually out of order. The water supply was so limited that very little fresh water was allowed for flushing toilets. Internees brought their own slop water and deposited it in two earthenware jars at the entrance to the toilet block. Used empty tin cans to flush toilets.

"Drain pipes leading to cesspools small and frequently clogged. [Because] cesspools had inadequate depth and diameter [they] usually overflowed, flooding surrounding areas with filth and stench. Chinese coolies finally allowed to come in regularly to empty Chinese latrines and to carry away some of the contents of the cesspools.

"All requests to be allowed to dig deep army-style open latrines turned down repeatedly. In August [1943] buildings containing flush toilets finally screened. No screens [on] Chinese-style toilets. Swarms of flies in toilets and around cesspools.

"No toilet paper supplied by authorities,

except for a few months to hospital [and inmates had] great difficulty in getting disinfectant and cleaning materials.”

Dr Wagner reports there were “four washrooms in toilet buildings. A number of faucets arranged over cement troughs. Only a trickle of water occasionally available. 90 per cent of internees used hand-basins in own quarters — carrying water from one of several wells.”

Shower facilities consisted of “one shower room for men, one for women with about 14 to 16 shower heads in each. Average one shower for every 60 persons.

“Showers [were the] only place [where] running hot water available. Because of limited amount of water, women only permitted three showers a week, men daily showers. Long queues [for showers] and there was no running water in any living quarters.

Laundry facilities consisted of “five stationary tubs in hospital basement and two in another building. Internees did their laundry in hand-basins and galvanised tin pails (if they could borrow one). Later, [it became] possible to send sheets, towels, pillowcases, heavy clothes to laundry outside. Expensive and badly done. Not many could afford this.”

On medical facilities at the camp, Dr Wagner notes the “hospital at Wei-Hsien was originally a fine little hospital. When internees arrived, only the outer shell left. Everything moveable had been taken away. Great big gaps in the wall where pipes had been torn away. Place littered with many months accumulated filth and debris.

“No cleaning materials or equipment provided by authorities. Nurses, doctors, internees went to clean up the place, [they] were able to find enough beds for three 12-bed wards, five beds for children, an obstetrical room. Patients brought their own mattresses, bedding, linen, wash basins, etcetera.

“Internees accumulated enough equipment for four outpatient clinics [which were] rather sketchily furnished.

[Internee] “doctors gave Japanese authorities list of drugs needed, nothing resulted except a few minor drugs. Copy of list was smuggled out to

Swiss representatives who in July [1943] got the drugs, along with some cereal and tinned milk to the hospital.

Each person in camp was assessed by internees’ committee \$60 [Chinese] to pay for his share of cost.

“Japanese eventually furnished a rather cheap operating table, a gasoline burner without gasoline, surgical equipment enough to open a boil, some mattress ticking, some sheets, some gauze.

“Hospital facilities and equipment dangerously inadequate together with lack of drugs when those on hand used up [because] Wei-Hsien is in an isolated community of no hospitals. Permission was given for patients to be taken to Peking — a long, dirty, difficult, expensive journey.

“Medical situation serious — save for good doctors and nurses among internees. None supplied by Japanese.

On Wei-Hsien’s cooking facilities, Dr Wagner says: “There were three mess halls with attached kitchens and a small hospital diet mess hall [for patients]. The Peking mess [indicating where the internees were first assembled before Wei-Hsien] served 400 to 440 people, Tientsin mess 600, Tsingtao mess 800.

“A small storeroom and butchery were assigned to each kitchen. In the case of the Peking kitchen [it was] a distance away. A family-size electric refrigerator and an icebox were eventually installed in the butchery.”

Dr Wagner writes: “A result of the lack of refrigeration [meant] much food had to be discarded because of spoilage. The camp suffered from epidemics of diarrhoea and [what] appeared to be dysentery.

“There were no equipped, stocked, refrigerated warehouses. A former residence was used as a central storage house. Vegetables, meat and fish rotted and spoiled because of poor storage.

“At the end of [the 1943] summer, permission was granted [by the Japanese] to internees to build an icebox for general storeroom for meat” which was “poor, makeshift. [The] Japanese

storekeeper [was] inadequate for the job. Finally, persuaded [Japanese] ... to allow internees' supply committee to divide food among mess halls.

"Meat came from army slaughterhouse 30 miles away. [It was] sent by train, unrefrigerated, often uncovered. Rooms for preparation of meat swarmed with flies, meat covered with larvae in a brief period of time necessary for preparation. "Kitchens painfully small. Kitchen where food for Peking internees was prepared was no larger than a kitchen in a modern American small apartment. But there was nothing modern about the kitchen. [It] contained a Chinese stove, no oven, two large cauldrons with fire boxes underneath, a ledge about 1.5 feet [0.5 metres] wide on which to place things, a sink without running water. The only equipment consisted of two large frying pans, two family-sized copper pots, some galvanised tin pails [of] poor quality, a dozen paring knives, 4 bread knives, a couple of crocks and bowls. Everything else in kitchen equipment — knives, forks, ladles, plates, bowls, pans, beaters, grinders and containers — provided by internees."

There was running water in two of the kitchens. In others, all water used in cooking, cleaning and drinking had to be pumped, carried and boiled in two cauldrons at the far end of the mess hall — well away from the kitchen areas.

"Dining room tables and benches [were] badly made of poor wood, difficult to keep from falling apart and difficult to keep clean. Seating space inadequate", resulting in "long queues" and "two and three sittings", for each meal.

"Occasionally, a mop or broom for cleaning was issued by authorities but never without a struggle. Internees furnished cleaning cloths, soap, powder, etcetera where they had it to spare.

"Authorities were given lists of equipment needed in the kitchen and for preparation and serving of food. Nothing ever came of this.

"Below is the quantity of food in ounces supplied per day [1 ounce or 1 oz equals 28.3 grams]. Often it was necessary to discard considerable amounts of meat and vegetables [because it was] unfit for human consumption.

"Meat 5 oz, potatoes 10.2 oz, vegetables 13.6 oz, bread 16.6 oz, sugar 0.6 oz, margarine 0.2 oz,

fish 0.8 oz, tea 0.1 oz, coffee substitute 0.1 oz, jam 0.03 oz, flour 0.2 oz, oil 0.4 oz," and less than one-eighth of an egg per person a day.

"Actual caloric intake 1905 [one calorie equals 4.855 joules], of which 1175 was from flour in some form.

"Calcium [intakes] inadequate. Egg shells salvaged and ground to supply calcium. No milk except as issued by hospital. At the highest point, 35 gallons sour milk for 1800 people. Usually 25 gallons per day." [1 US gallon equals 3.785 litres.]

As Dr Wagner shows and I have written in Chapter 5, Wei-Hsien in 1943 was no holiday camp. In my recollection, inmates' conditions worsened in 1944 and 1945.

Finally, to one other matter that has intrigued many about the Wei-Hsien camp. Since the late 1940s, it has been claimed that the US aviatrix, Amelia Earhart, was interned in the camp. Earhart disappeared pre-World War II while on a Pacific journey. It was suggested she was seized by Japanese officials because she had allegedly used her flights to spy on Japanese military preparations on small Pacific islands. The claims say she was later interned with us, hid in the camp hospital and either died there, or was spirited away by the Japanese before the end of World War II and executed.

As I have shown, we lived cheek by jowl in the camp. Never once in the camp or since have I heard from fellow inmates of a top-secret prisoner in the camp or Amelia Earhart being in the camp. None of those I have questioned heard of the story in camp and none has been able to give any credence to the suggestions that we had Amelia Earhart among us. If she was among us, we would have quickly identified her because she, before her disappearance, was one of the world's most photographed women.

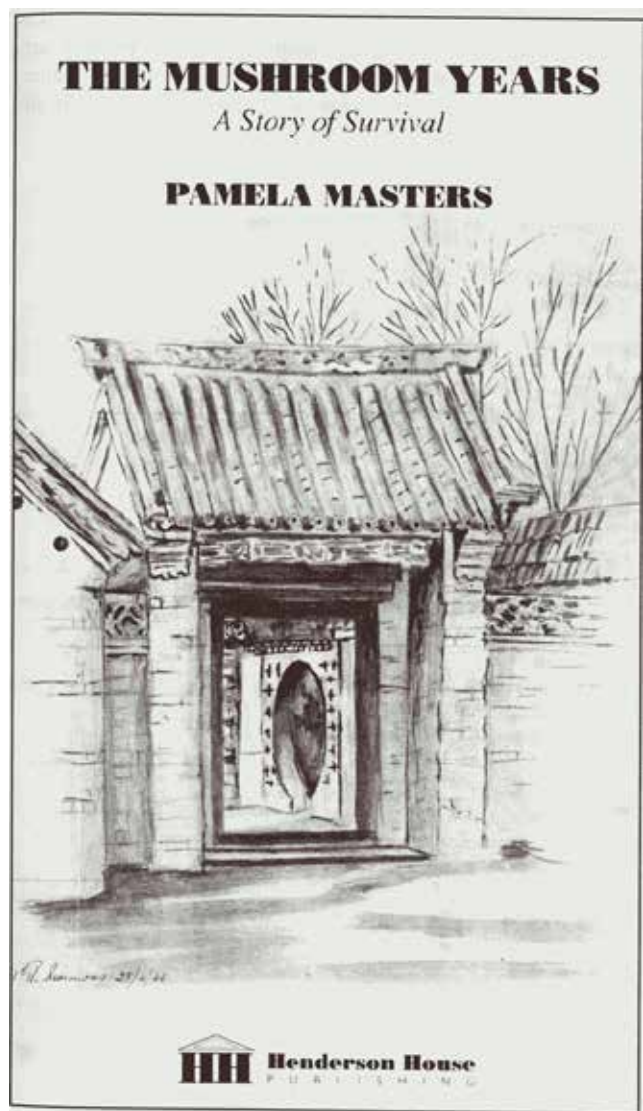
[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/HOAX/AmeliaEarhart/pAmeliaEarhart.html>

by Pamela Masters, née Simmons ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Margo had befriended several other war-brides whose husbands were in military camps, and they helped each other out.

She also volunteered to work in the hospital as a nurse's aide and had started pretty rigorous training. She admitted one evening that it was nothing she planned to do for the rest of her life, but it was a change from secretarial work and a great way to help others.

I was restless. Everyone seemed to be finding their niche except me, and although I was getting used to the routine, I was definitely not enjoying it.

[excerpt]

About six weeks after the show closed, Margo came off her hospital shift, shaken and depressed.

I was reading in the cell when she came in and couldn't help asking what was wrong. "It's the Reverend Simms-Lee," she said, with a catch in her throat. "They brought him in on a litter. He has terminal cancer... only days to live."

"Do you think he knew it when he did the play?"

"Of course, he knew it!" And then softly,

"You know, of all the church people I've known, he's the only one I felt comfortable with. The only one who showed real love and compassion.

I was broken up inside when you and Ursula weren't able to be at my wedding, and somehow he was able to turn my mood around and make it the most beautiful day of my life. He loves people, and it shows in everything he does."

He "passed gently by" a few weeks later, and became our fifth loss.

[excerpt]

The sump coolies were only one source of our black marketing enterprise.

We had a much bigger operation run on our side of the wall by a zany order of Belgian priests and Brother O'Hanlon, the American Trappist monk. They had honed their smuggling operation into a precision instrument. Their cover was unique. In the twilight hours at the end of each day, they'd say their office pacing along the wall beyond the hospital, gliding back and forth in their long white robes directly under the eyes of the tower guards.

This happened day in and day out, and before long, the guards lost interest in the whole charade.

That was the priests' master stroke—and the guards' one mistake.

The fathers were housed in dormitories on the top floor of the hospital, and from that great vantage point, they could see almost to the horizon in all directions. It was a perfect set-up for smuggling.

While they paced the wall saying their office, a lookout would be scanning the fields. When he saw farmers cautiously approaching with their wares, he'd signal to his pious colleagues below, and they'd slip out of their light robes, tucking them into the copious folds of the dark scapulas they wore under them, then melt into the deep shadows along the wall.

With the first timid rap from the outside, they'd start haggling with the farmers over eggs, bacon, nuts, honey and sometimes baigar, a potent Chinese whiskey—with money and goods moving back and forth through loose brick pass-throughs in the wall.

Brother O'Hanlon, with the glorious voice, was the one who had been caught earlier, before they'd concocted this sophisticated scheme, and King Kong couldn't understand why we all roared with laughter when he sentenced "a Trappist" to three months in solitary!

Not long after the shooting of the two coolies, we learned the real reason behind the incident: King Kong wanted a slice of the lucrative black market. He had Gold Tooth and the young guards contact the Chinese, who were now too scared not to comply, and smuggling flourished once more,

just as it had done in North China through the Great Wall at Shanhaikwan.

That time the Japanese military had used the subjugated Koreans. Bolder now, King Kong used his own men, with some of the internees doing the actual handing over of the goods, so that he would never be tainted.

[excerpt]

PHOTO: ... the small square construction in the foreground was the: "Jail-House".

In the background—right is the Hospital Building and on the extreme left is Block-23.

The 9 x 12 rooms can be seen approx. In the middle of the photo and the nice and comfortable looking villas were requisitioned by the Japs for their personal use.

[excerpt]

I had no trouble getting a job as breakfast cook in the hospital diet kitchen the week after I took my finals, as the committee was still looking for people to fill positions that had been vacated by the repatriated Americans.

Although some had been taken over by a contingent of missionaries from Chefoo, who came in after the Americans left, there were still a few gaping holes to be filled, and one was the unpopular early morning shift I applied for.

I'd had a yen for that job ever since Margo had told me she hated her early stint at the hospital because, when she sent orderlies down to get the patients' breakfast trays, more often than not she'd find that no one had bothered to turn up to prepare breakfast! I couldn't help thinking, what a glorious out!

I loathed roll-call.

It was so demeaning.

If I could get the breakfast shift for the duration, I would never have to stand roll-call again! I was wrong, of course, as I was told I would get one day off in four, and a captain from another shift would take my place on that day.

I got philosophical: One roll-call out of four



wasn't as demeaning as four out of four! And then, there was an extra plus. As I was the only one on the early morning stint, I figured I was considered a shift "captain"; of course, I never let it go to my head! I must have been on the job for about three weeks, and the new year was just around the corner, when I got up at my usual ungodly hour and reached for the basin of water we kept on top of the stove; I didn't expect it to be warm, but I didn't expect it to have half-an-inch of ice on it either!

Well, I'm not going to wash myself today, at least not at this hour, I thought, as I brushed my hair and teeth, the latter without toothpaste and chattering so badly the toothbrush couldn't keep up with them. Cramming on the clothes I'd worn the day before, some of which I'd slept in, I reached for my old fur coat, which was beginning to look mangy and very worse for wear, and slipped out of the cell.

[excerpt]

Margo told me that the action hadn't come any too soon, as there'd been several attempted suicides.

None had been fatal, and after the Italians had been cut down by fellow internees, the guards had been told they were ill, and they were rushed to the hospital. There, the overworked medical staff covered up the real reason for their hospitalization, so that the Japanese would never have the pleasure of knowing they had driven anyone to such lengths.

Right after their gates were opened, there had been another suicide attempt, only this time it had been from our side, and it made Margo seething mad.

That would-be suicide was Pete Fox's brother, Mike.

I'll never forget the first time I met him. He came into our compound, supposedly looking for Peter, and while Margo and I, both looking dirty and scruffy, were chatting on the cell step, he said, clear out of the blue,

"Next to Ursula, you two are a couple of also-rans." I didn't comment at the callous remark, but

Margo did.

"Great!" she snapped, "if you can't say anything nice, try an insult!"

"I believe in calling them the way I see them," Mike said smugly.

Margo grinned, "Next to Pete, you were left at the gate!"

"Touché!" he said, surprised at her comeback.

Now, here was Margo, venting off steam again.

This time cussing out spineless suicidal idiots in general and Mike Fox in particular.

"Damn, Mike," she hissed, "he not only took the last of the morphine and aspirin...he muffed it!"

"Margo!" I said in horror. "I mean it. We have people dying of cancer, in extreme agony, people who want to live so badly, they're fighting on when all hope is lost, and this creep has to finish off our only pain killers and take the last moments of peace they may ever know!"

"How did he get hold of them?" I asked.

"Hell, he's a hospital orderly!"

"You're tired," Ursula said, putting her arms around her.

[excerpt]

Towards the end of November, Margo came off duty with the unbelievable news that crates of desperately needed drugs for the hospital had just materialized out of nowhere.

Not even the Japs had a clue—and for once, they didn't even try to play the benevolent benefactor. If anyone knew where they came from, they weren't talking.

Needless to say, the hospital staff never questioned the miracle, but went their rounds once more with happy hearts, as surgery could again be performed, and acute pain assuaged.

[excerpt]

I guess that was the beginning of Arthur Hummel 's diplomatic career, as they were successful on both counts.

They didn't have time to celebrate though, as they soon learned they were in a very unenviable position: the Nationalist guerilla army they had linked up with, under General Wang Yu-min, was completely surrounded by Japanese forces, Chinese puppet forces under Japanese control, and Chinese Communists.

For the medical supply drop to be successful, it was going to have to be made with almost pinpoint precision, and after the drop, the crates would have to be retrieved without alerting any of the opposing forces.

Somehow, the sortie was carried out without any casualties, but the drama had just begun.

Now came the challenge of getting Allied medical supplies into a Jap prison camp without incurring the suspicion of King Kong and Gold Tooth!

The problem appeared insurmountable, and in desperation, Tip and Art sent a note by Chinese courier to Mr. Egger, the Swiss consul and International Red Cross representative in Tsingtao. The note said that four unmarked crates of medical supplies would be left with Egger in the early dawn hours of the following day, and that it was left to him to find a way to get them into the camp.

Egger was a timid little businessman who had been pressed into consular service by an act of war. Although he had made many visits to Weih sien to check on our welfare, the Japanese treated him with distrust, and we were unable to give him any messages that weren't first approved by our captors. It soon became evident that, even if he had found anything amiss, he had little or no authority to change our circumstances. His was a token position, and as such, he never thought he would ever be called upon to show extreme cunning and courage under enemy fire.

But that was just what Hummel and Tipton were expecting of him. If anyone knew how badly we needed medical supplies, Egger did. He also

knew that the only way he could get them into the camp was through the main gates with a signed manifest from the Japanese authorities in Tsingtao.

After mulling over the situation for while, inspiration hit him, and he had his Swiss secretary go into the city and purchase all the antacid, aspirin, cough syrup and bandages she could round up.

Taking them, item by item, he had her type up a manifest, leaving many lines between each entry, then, armed with this document, he went to the Japanese consulate requesting their approval.

After an interminable wait outside the consul's office, where his mind conjured up all sorts of harrowing situations, the paperwork was finally returned to him with the coveted "chop" on it. Racing back to his office, he had his still bewildered secretary fill in all the blank lines with the names of the supplies in the unmarked crates.

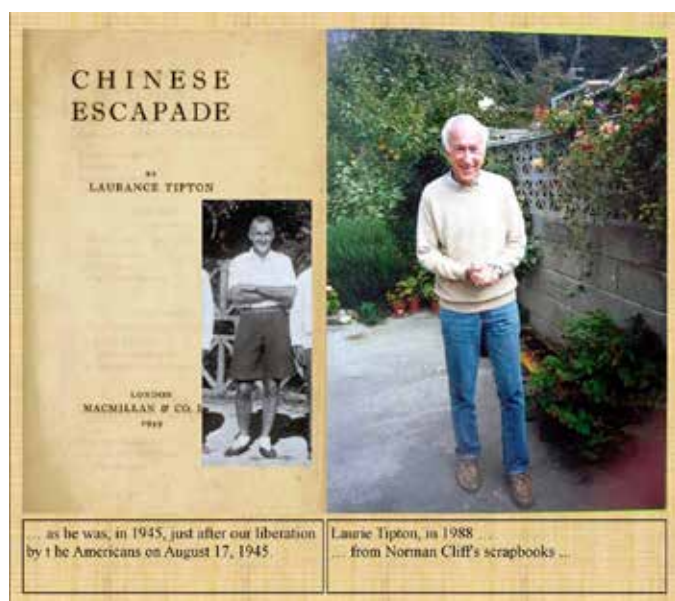
It was a stroke of genius!

The following day, when he arrived in Weih sien with his precious cargo, he had to face King Kong and Gold Tooth. His queasy stomach tied in knots once more as they went meticulously through the entire contents of the crates. Although he couldn't understand their comments, it was obvious they were completely baffled how Allied medical supplies could be sanctioned by Japanese consular authorities, and the tone of their remarks made his skin creep.

He kept waiting for someone to pick up the phone and call Tsingtao, but it never happened, and finally, cussing under his breath, King Kong pounded his "chop" on the paperwork and allowed the crates to be taken to the hospital. I'll never forget Margo's surprise when I repeated the story to her.

[further reading]

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

The whole compound could be divided into three sections.

The numerous alleys consisting of rows of students' rooms housed the married people, the women and a few of the more fortunate bachelors, and scattered amongst the students quarters were the class-rooms which had been turned into dormitories for the single men.

On the east section of the compound was the hospital, surrounded by open ground on which had once been a tennis court and a basketball pitch.

Divided by a wall from these two sections were seven or eight large western-style houses which in former days had been occupied by the mission faculty and were now housing the Japanese camp



staff and guards.

A few were unoccupied and it was from these that flowed the endless assortment of knickknacks which gave a homelike appearance to our bare cabins.

Before lunch we had succeeded in scrounging two cupboards and a table, and by supper-time that night we were comparatively well-furnished, having found two wooden chairs, a kettle, an enamel boiler, a bucket and a fine selection of glass preserving jars. By the end of the first week we had put up the beds, and nailed a few shelves to the walls, but by the end of a month we had a double-decker sleeping-berth, which left room for a couple of chairs and a collapsible writing-desk. We spread a rug on the floor, hung curtains at the windows and built an outside cooking stove against the next row of tenements.

The camp was in an appalling state: many of the buildings, including the hospital, were littered with filth to a depth of several feet; sanitary arrangements had not been completed ; there was rubbish everywhere.

No preparations had been made for the first arrivals, a group of British and Americans from Tsingtao. The American party from Peking had arrived before their beds and bedding, and had spent the first two nights on the floor with nothing more, for the most part, than overcoats and one blanket each.

It had snowed and had rained, and the compound became a perfect quagmire. Hot water was scarce and food supplies negligible, the most unappetising mess being served twice a day, under the alias of "stew", by the Tsingtao pioneers.

There were three centres for the preparation of food, known as the Tsingtao, Tientsin and Peking kitchens. By the time the Peking British arrived the Americans had brought some semblance of order to the Peking kitchen.

Within a few weeks the camp began to organise itself, and committees were formed which took the responsibility of seeing that the

necessary jobs were done. Soon life had settled down to a well-organised routine.

[excerpt]

After the escape: June 8, 1944 ...

Regular communications with the camp had been established, but, anxious not to take undue risks, we restricted these contacts as much as possible and all messages exchanged between us were in code.

We made use of a man who was employed by the Japanese as a camp carpenter. Our communications were written on the finest silk, folded into a small pellet and wrapped in contraceptive rubber. In order to take one of these into camp, the carpenter would place the pellet up his nose or hold it in his mouth, and, having entered the camp, he was closely followed by de Jaegher or Roy Tchou, who anxiously waited for him either to blow his nose or spit.

The return message, written on a piece of Mrs. Tchou's discarded silk undies, was concealed in the same manner.

On one occasion when the Japanese guard asked our messenger to open his mouth, he had to swallow the pellet. Unable to bring it up again, he got Roy into a secluded corner, confessed the trouble, and grudgingly agreed to wait while Roy rushed over to the hospital for a little harmless medicine to assist him.

He returned with about a third of a glass of castor oil. Late that afternoon just before the gates closed, a very sorry-looking Chinese shuffled towards the gate, followed by a Japanese urging him to hurry. Passing Roy, he "hoiked", and spat a mouthful of saliva at him, much to the amusement of the Japanese guard, who evidently took it as an expression of his contempt for the foreign devils.

[excerpt]

The Japanese, always suspicious, rarely gave him the opportunity of seeing a member of the Committee alone, much less an internee.

In order to keep him informed, reports on the camp and any special requests were prepared in advance of Egger's visits. Upon his arrival a Japanese would escort him from the main gate to the office and en route he would be met "casually

" by one or two of the Committee members, who, in passing through a gateway or going up the office stairs, would do a little pre-arranged hustling, during which messages were exchanged.

If this method failed, later, during the meeting that followed between the Commandant, Egger and certain members of the Committee, Ethel, who was present to take notes (usually sitting next to Egger), always managed to slip a note into his coat pocket or his attaché-case, which she sometimes used as a support for her shorthand pad.

Egger was the only official contact that the camp had with the outside world. He worked under tremendous difficulties: both he and his staff were watched very closely by the Japanese in Tsingtao and any move he made was regarded with the utmost suspicion.

On each trip to the camp he endeavoured to bring much-needed supplies.

We depended upon him to purchase the medicines and drugs for the hospital, and sometimes he would be able to bring in parcels for the internees from their friends in Tsingtao. In the beginning this was not too difficult, but gradually the Japs enforced a multitude of restrictions, and special passes and permits had to be obtained.

Any official orders handed to Egger through the Committee were always carefully examined by the Japanese, who delighted in crossing off various items, particularly extra food for the hospital patients.

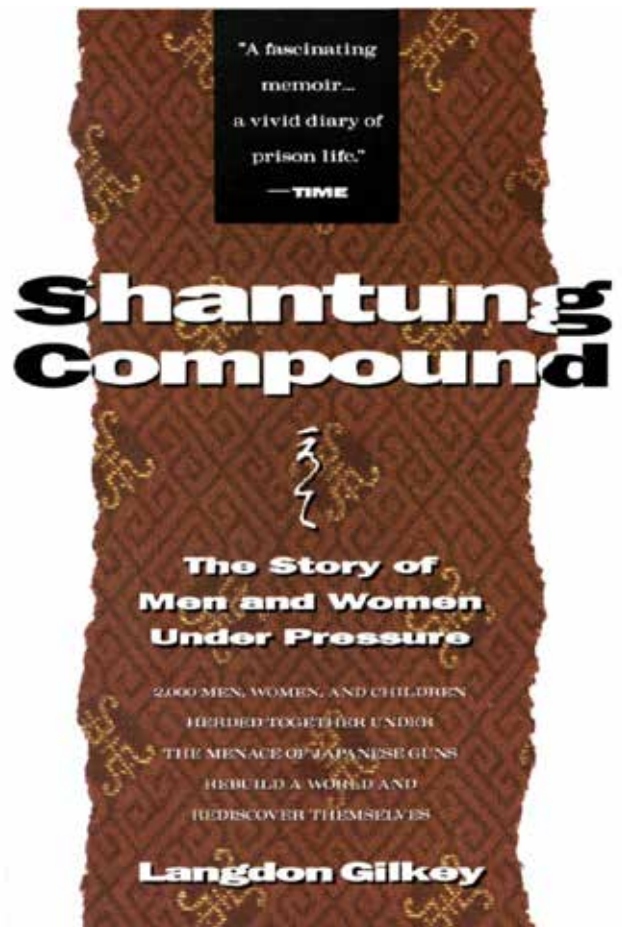
Sometimes he went so far as to alter and occasionally forge these permits.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/TiptonTotale\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/TiptonTotale(WEB).pdf)

by Langdon Gilkey ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)



buildings were.

Walking past these rows, we could see each family trying to get settled in its little room in somewhat the same disordered and cheerless way that we had done in ours. In contrast to the unhappy mutterings of miscellaneous bachelors, these rooms echoed to the distressed cries of babies and small children.

Then we came to a large hand pump under a small water tower. There we saw a husky, grinning British engineer, stripped to the waist even though the dusk was cold, furiously pumping water into the tower. As I watched him making his long, steady strokes, I suddenly realized what his presence at that pump meant.

We ourselves would have to do all the work in this camp; our muscles and hands would have to lift water from wells, carry supplies in from the gates. We would have to cook the food and stoke the fires — ... [further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)

[Excerpts] ...

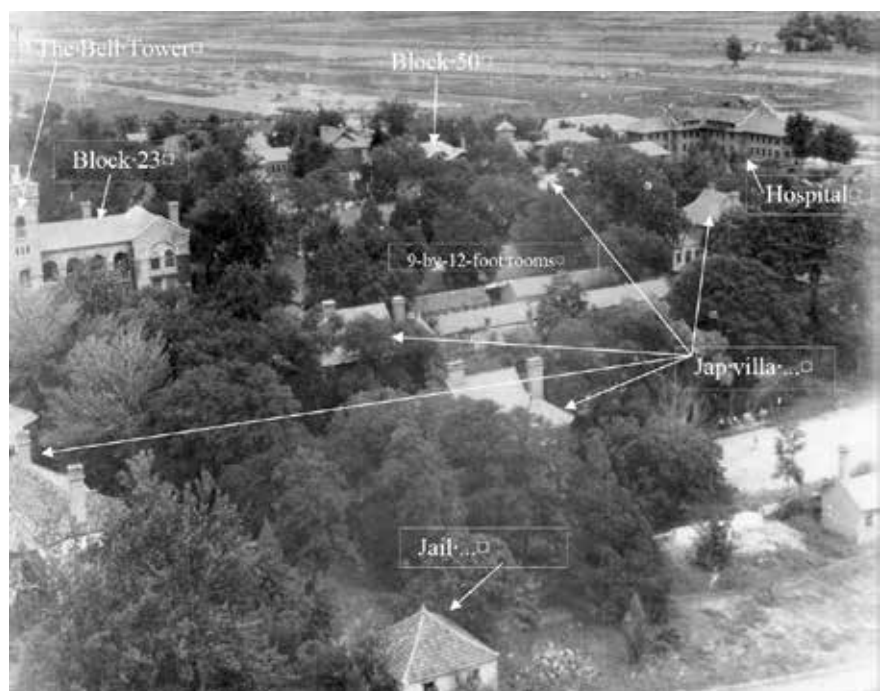
[excerpt]

Back outside, we strolled around for our first

[...]

We deposited our gear on the cold cement floor, and found mats, for our beds. Then some of us went out to look for the toilet and washroom. We were told they were about a hundred and fifty yards away: "Go down the left-hand street of the camp, and turn left at the water pump." So we set off, curiously peering on every side to see our new world.

After an open space in front of our building, we came to the many rows of small rooms that covered the camp except where the ballfield, the church, the hospital, and the school



real look at the compound. I was again struck by how small it was—about one hundred and fifty by two hundred yards.

Even more striking was its wrecked condition.

Before the war, it had housed a well-equipped American Presbyterian mission station, complete with a middle, or high, school of four or five large buildings, a hospital, a church, three kitchens, bakery ovens, and seemingly endless small rooms for resident students.

We were told that, years before, Henry Luce had been born there.

Although the buildings themselves had not been damaged, everything in them was a shambles, having been wrecked by heaven knows how many garrisons of Japanese and Chinese soldiers. The contents of the various buildings were strewn up and down the compound, cluttering every street and open space; metal of all sorts, radiators, old beds, bits of pipe and whatnot, and among them broken desks, benches, and chairs that had been in the classrooms and offices.

Since our “dorm” was the basement of what had been the science building, on the way home we sifted through the remains of a chemistry lab.

Two days later we carried our loot to the hospital to help them to get in operation.

[excerpt]

With so many people living in such unsanitary conditions and eating dubious food at best, we expected a disaster in public health any day.

The greatest need was for a working hospital.

The doctors and the nurses among us grasped this at once, and so began the tremendous job of organizing a hospital more or less from scratch.

Perhaps because the mission hospital building had contained the most valuable equipment, it was in a worse state than any of the others. The boilers, beds, and pipes had been ripped from their places and thrown about everywhere. The operating table and the dental chair were finally found at the bottom of a heap at the side of the building. None of the other machinery or surgical equipment was

left intact.

Under these conditions, considering that there was as yet no organization of labor in the camp, it is astounding that these medics and their volunteers were able to do what they did.

Inside of eight days they had the hospital cleaned up and functioning so as to feed and care for patients. In two more days they had achieved a working laboratory. At the end of ten days they were operating with success, and even delivering babies. This was, however, not quite quick enough to save a life.

Four days after the last group arrived, a member of the jazz band from Tientsin had an acute attack of appendicitis. Since the hospital was not yet ready for an operation, he was sent to Tsingtao six hours away by train, but unfortunately he died on the way.

[excerpt]

We were, in the words of the Britisher, “a ruddy mixed bag.” We were almost equally divided in numbers between men and women. We had roughly four hundred who were over sixty years of age, and another four hundred under fifteen. Our oldest citizen, so I discovered, was in his middle nineties; our youngest was the latest baby born in the camp hospital.

[excerpt]

Almost as soon as our committee was formed, a house-to-house count began. Gradually we filled in with names and numbers the great map of the compound that hung in the office. All went well until we came to the hospital.

There on the upper floors lived about 250 Dutch and Belgian monks. To our dismay, we discovered that apparently not even the Catholic leaders had any idea how many monks lived there or who they were. They were so jammed into each dorm that no man in a given room knew how many it held. Thus we almost had to buttonhole them one by one in order to make our list.

[excerpt]

After being badly burnt, the doctors in the hospital did a wonderful job.

A British doctor for the Kailan Mining Company put picric acid on the bandages and did not take them off for about ten days.

Due to the sulphanilamide that was smuggled into camp through the guerrillas, I was able to avoid infection. When the bandages finally came off, new skin had grown almost everywhere.

Within three weeks, I was hobbling around. In six months all that was left to show of the burn was a rather grim abstract color effect of yellow and magenta.

I learned through my experience that ours was a remarkable hospital.

Devoid of running water or central heating, it managed to be not only efficient but personal. It seemed to me a far better place in which to be sick than many “modern” hospitals, equipped with the latest gadgets but run on impersonal terms. It is this negation of the individual person, this sense of being “the bladder case in Room 304,” or “that terminal heart case down the hall”—not its food or even its service—that makes many an American hospital, despite its vast efficiency, a dreaded place in which to be sick.

The nurses and doctors, who formed the backbone of the staff of our hospital, had, of course, to work for long hours since no one could replace them at their tasks. But as I soon came to realize, a lot more than their skill was needed.

Among the essential services provided were a pharmacy where medicines (bought with a camp fund derived from a tax on comfort money) were given out and a lab where urinalyses, blood and other tests could be performed.

There was also a diet kitchen with its own staff of cooks and vegetable preparers (all women), a butcher, a supplies gang, a stoker, and a wood chopper. The hospital also had a hand laundry; there five women and one man washed the many sheets, towels, and bandages that were needed for the thirty or so in-patients.

To keep the building itself clean, a crew of moppers, dusters, and window cleaners daily made the rounds of the rooms and wards.

And finally, there was a staff of men orderlies and girl servers who helped the nurses to wash the patients and make them comfortable.

What made this small hospital unique in my experience was the unusual relationship between staff and patients, and among the patients themselves.

The workers, who came every day to the wards, sweeping under a patient’s bed or bringing him tea, were not strangers moving impersonally in and out of his area. Rather, they were friends or, at least, acquaintances who entered the patient’s life and communicated with him there. They had known him as a person in camp before he became a case in the hospital, and thus, greeted by them as a person, the patient never felt himself to be merely a rundown organism whose end might well be the disposal in the basement. And, of course, the patients in the ward knew each other, too.

For example, when old Watkins in the bed at the far end reached the “crisis” of his serious case of pneumonia, we were all aware of it, and waited in concern for him to ride it out. When the ex-marine bartender, the foreman of a “go-down” in Tientsin, and the Anglican priest—all of whom were the orderlies in the ward I was in—made up our beds and carried out our slops, they would find time to ask me about my feet, kidding me for thinking I could walk on water.

Thus, quite unconsciously, because this was so normal among friends, they created a sense of personal community that for the sick is one of the few real guards against inner emptiness and despair. I left the hospital refreshed and sorry to return to normal internment life.

One of the hospital’s greatest trials was keeping up its stock of medicine. We had each brought into camp quantities of medicines in our trunks, as our doctors had directed, but this supply ran out before the end of 1943. The Japanese supplied only a fraction of the medicines we needed. The Swiss representative in Tsingtao, who came to camp once a month with the comfort money, was able to buy for us in local pharmacies only the most commonplace drugs.

What in the end saved our health was the happy collaboration between American logistics

and the Swiss consul's ingenuity.

The solution of this problem, when finally found, was so unusual we came to regard it as one of the best stories in the camp.

The two men who escaped from camp in June, 1944, were able to report via radio to Chungking that we were in desperate need of medicines. In answer, the American Air Force "dropped" a quantity of the latest sulfa drugs to the nationalist guerrillas in our immediate neighborhood. But how were these supplies, obviously of Allied origin, to be smuggled into the camp past the Japanese guards?

The only man from the outside world permitted access was the Swiss consul in Tsingtao.

During a war, while other nations draft civilians into their armies, Switzerland, the perennial neutral, drafts civilians into its diplomatic corps—and with equally strange results. I remember, for example, dear old Duval, whom we had known as the nearsighted, brilliant, charming, ever courteous, but utterly unorganized, professor of history at Yenching University. Duval was a man with great popping eyes, a large, bald dome of a head, and an enormous black mustache. To our surprise and mild dismay we found that he had been made the assistant Swiss consul in Peking charged with extracting concessions for us from the Japanese military police! No man at the university was more respected and loved. But it was hardly for his practical competence, his wily ingenuity, or his crushing dominance of will that we held him in such high esteem.

An even more unlikely selection—if possible—was Laubscher of Tsingtao, the temporary Swiss consul for Shantung Province. Laubscher [= *Mr Egger*] was, therefore, the man slated by the vagaries of fate to visit us regularly at Weihsien camp and to represent us and our governments to the Japanese. According to those who knew him in Tsingtao, he had formerly been a small importer.

He seemed formal, stiff, and somewhat reticent in his old-world ways, and certainly he was red-nosed and rheumy of eye—probably, so the report ran, from years of silent sipping while he sat on the club porch or while playing a quiet game of bridge in the men's bar.

To look at Laubscher was to know that he would be quite incapable of pounding a table, even if he dared to, without hurting his hand. He seemed far too vacant of eye and unreal of being, too much inclined to try hard for a time but to effect nothing in the end. To be sure, we did not expect him to free us with a wave of his umbrella or even to force anything out of the Japanese against their wishes.

We were, however, aware that a firm will, steady and unrelenting pressure, and an ability to appear loudly outraged and genuinely angry while keeping a cool head could work wonders.

No one gave Laubscher the slightest chance of producing these traits out of his seemingly flabby ego. We waited, without much hope, to see what he could do for us.

What he did in fact accomplish, he explained to a group of us shortly before the end of the war. "You see, friends," said he in his soft, old-world voice, — "it all started when a Chinese dressed like a coolie rang the Swiss consulate bell in Tsingtao late one night and asked for me.

Since he would allow no one else in the room when he spoke to me—he said he did not trust my servants!—I was a trifle nervous. However, I tried—ahem!—to keep a walking stick near me!"

A small chuckle went round his group of listeners at the picture of the 120-pound (72.5 kg) Laubscher defending himself in single combat! "He told me," Laubscher continued, "he had sneaked into town that night from the guerrilla band in the hills.

The day before the American Air Force from West China had made one of its usual 'drops' to the guerrillas.

Among the packages were four large crates.

It said in an attached letter—fortunately, friends, the Yanks had enough sense not to mark the crates!—these were designated for the camp at Weihsien.

The letter also said the crates were full of medicines. The next night, said the coolie, four of

their band would come to the consulate at two A.M. to give the crates to me. I was to receive them quite alone and to tell no one.

It was up to me to get those crates into the camp to the internees.

“With these abrupt words the coolie left me. I must admit, friends, I was dazed and worried by all this. Not only was it risky; it was baffling—how could I carry off the role of fearless and omniscient secret agent?

For the first, but not the last, time during this episode, I allowed myself a little drink to calm my nerves!

“Sure enough, the next night at two, the bell rang at the gate. Having cleared the residence of servants, I opened the gates myself. Without a word four coolies marched in, each with a large wooden crate on his shoulder. At my order they piled them in my private office—I had planned to stow them away myself afterward in the consulate strong room adjoining it.

Then they left.

“I stared at this treasure: four boxes of medicines! How wonderful for the camp, I said to myself—but then I stopped dead, paralyzed by my next thought. How the hell—pardon me!—was I going to get those crates into the camp?

The Japanese knew well that bicarb and aspirin were the principal medications I could buy in Tsingtao. Where would I have run across all of this? For three hours I sat there on one of the crates almost in despair, trying to think of an answer—and again friends, I cheered myself a very great deal with a nip now and then!

“I kept asking myself: ‘What will I say when I try to get approval for this list at the consular police office here in Tsingtao?’

Discouraged there, I would then ask, ‘What can I tell the Japanese at the camp one hundred miles away when I arrive with all of these crates?’

And friends, it came like a flash! Suddenly my brain focused on the distinction between these two authorities, one in Tsingtao and the other at Weih sien, and my plan began to form.

“The next morning I told my Swiss secretary—I could, I decided, trust her—to type me out a list of all the drugs I could buy in Tsingtao. There were about twenty-five to thirty such items, I should think. Most important, I told her, she was to leave four spaces in her list between each item.

Puzzled, but obedient to my command—ahem!—she did this and gave me a list about four pages long.

“Then I rushed with this list to the office of the Japanese consular police for their approval—everything I bring into camp must, you know, be okayed first by them.

I must admit that the official looked at the open spaces on my list with some amazement; then he looked at me curiously, as if to ask, ‘What the hell is this little fool up to?’ I tried not to notice his look or to seem nervous, so I hummed a little tune to myself, tapped my umbrella impatiently on the floor, and gazed out the window. Hopefully, so I told myself, this official cannot figure out anything wrong or dangerous about all those spaces. How could he, I thought, even form a sensible question to me about it?

If I wanted to use up the consulate stationery in such a scandalously wasteful way, then that was my funeral! I almost chuckled at this thought, as I stared out the window. At last, with a skeptical sigh, the Japanese reached in his drawer, pulled out his little seal, and gave the list his official chop.

“Elated I sped back to the consulate. I told my secretary to use the same typewriter and now to fill in the vacant spaces on the list with the names of all the drugs in the crates.

I must say, gentlemen, she did look at me then with new eyes!

“The next day I caught the early morning train to Weih sien, and was at the camp gates with the crates by mid-afternoon. Again the Japanese officials were puzzled. Where had this little foreign fool gotten all these drugs? Had a shipment come from Japan that they didn’t know about?

Again they looked curiously first at my list and then at me—and again I hummed my little tune

and gazed in the other direction.

Apparently they decided it must be all right since there was no doubt about the consular chop at the bottom of the list.

The official said, 'Okay'; at last the gates swung open; and my cart filled with the crates rolled into camp and up to the hospital door.

I shall never forget the look on the faces of you doctors when I took you out to show you the crates and then gave you that list with their contents!

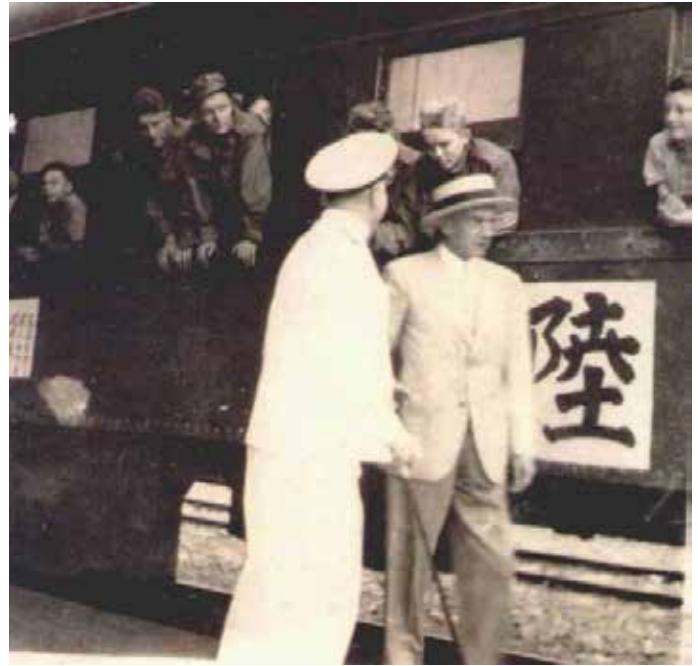
"Again, friends, I must tell you that I had myself quite a nightcap when I got home again to Tsingtao!"

When Laubscher had finished and stepped down, everyone looked at him with as much amazement and curiosity as had the Japanese officials he had so completely outwitted.

From then on he was greeted whenever he came to camp with a new affection and certainly a new respect. I often thought that he deserved at the least a small statue placed somewhere near the hospital, complete with battered homburg, rolled umbrella, stiff collar, and rheumy—but cagey—eye! ‘

[further reading]

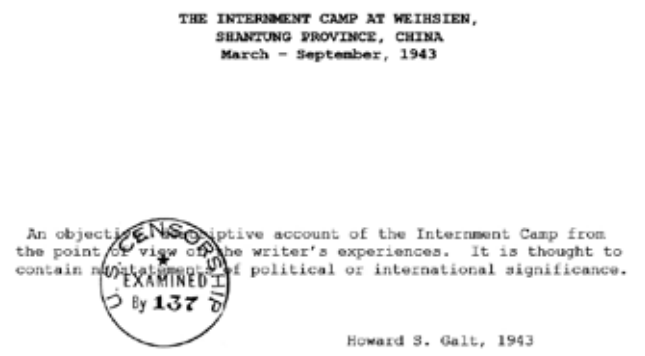
[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)



*'Qingdao Railway Station, Sept 25 1945 ---
The Swiss Consul'*

by Howard S. Galt ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf



[Excerpts] ...

Inside the front gate on the right was a large church building, designated by the Japanese authorities as the “assembly hall” for the camp.

Extending southward from the front gate, and from the church yard, were two straight roads, bordered on both sides with many small courts in which were long, low one-storied buildings for students’ dormitories. Beyond the southern ends of these two roads was an extensive open area occupied by two large three-story buildings.

These were constructed nearly forty years earlier for the union college located here, which later moved to Tsinan to become Cheeloo University.

Still further south were several smaller courts containing the two-story residences of the missionaries.

These residences were occupied by the Japanese authorities and so were “out of bounds” for camp residents.

A large area to the east of the general area just described was occupied by a variety of courts and buildings, dormitories or classrooms, for schools or for other purposes. Still further east on the border of the compound was the large three-story (plus basement) hospital, in the midst of its own rather

ample court, large enough for a tennis court, a basketball court, and a garden.

[excerpt]

The tasks of the division in charge of medical supplies were quite different. After the initial opening of the hospital, orders for supplies for the most part had to be placed in Tientsin or Tsingtao in care of the Swiss Consuls.

When these arrived they had to be carefully conveyed to the hospital and distributed for use or placed in the pharmacy.

[excerpt]

The operation of the hospital and the general medical and sanitary care of the camp were the functions of this committee.

There were a considerable number of doctors in the camp, among them a chief surgeon and a prominent physician from the Peking University Medical College. Although there was quite a little illness in camp and the resources of the Hospital were fully used, there was no serious epidemic and on the whole health conditions were quite good.

One of the senior physicians was a competent and experienced oculist, and there was present a competent and experienced dentist.

Offices for them were provided at the Hospital and thus the corresponding special needs of camp residents were cared for.

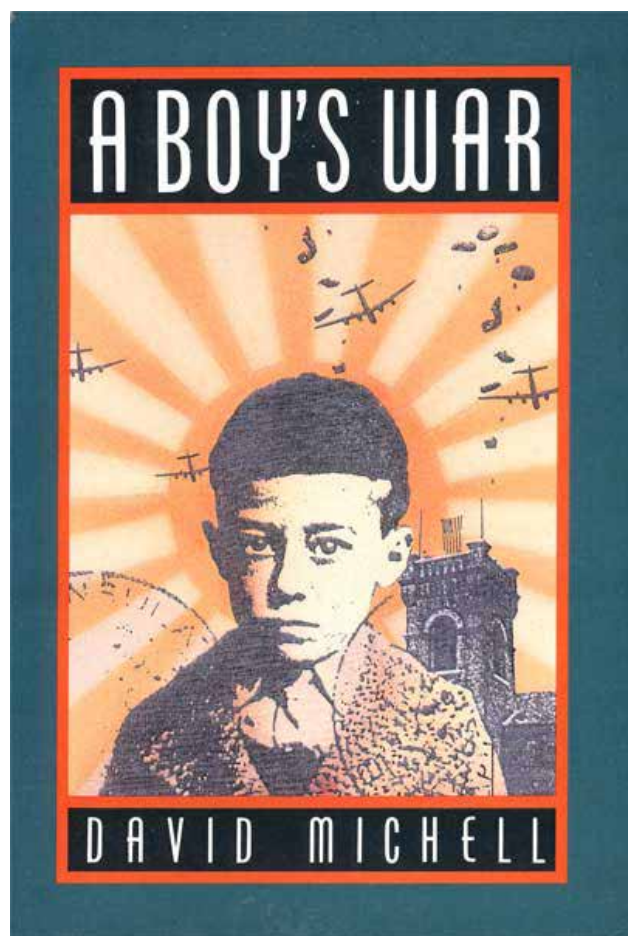
As to general sanitation the deficiencies in the sanitary installations of the Japanese were the cause of extra difficulties, dangers, and unpleasant tasks, but with careful safe-guarding, and general cooperation, the dangers were overcome.

[further reading]

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf

by David Michell ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Bare walls, bare floors, dim electric lights, no running water, primitive latrines, open cesspools, a crude bakery, two houses with showers, three huge public kitchens, a desecrated church and a dismantled hospital, a few sheds for shops, rows of cell-like rooms, and three high dormitories for persons who are single.

*** It was quickly claimed soon after our arrival that the US novelist Pearl Buck (The Good Earth, interalia) and US publisher Henry Luce (Time, Life, Fortune) were born in the WeiHsien training centre. Buck (nee Sydenstricker) was born 1892 in West Virginia USA and Luce was born 1892 in Tengchow, Shantung province. Both sets of parents were American missionaries who served in China. Buck's first*

It was to this scene of destruction and despair that we now came in September of 1943.

Weih sien had seen happier days.

In the early years of the twentieth century the American Presbyterian Mission had established a school, seminary, and hospital there, with a number of large, American-style homes for missionary doctors and teachers.

In fact, two Americans, later to become famous, were born in Weih sien— Pearl Buck, the popular writer, and Henry Luce, the cofounder of TIME magazine. When the “Courtyard of the Happy Way” was under the Presbyterians’ control, it was a very pleasant and well-planned campus. **

[excerpt]

Though the way back to Block 24 was fairly straightforward, the spirit of adventure was too much for me, and I decided to wander off alone to the other side of the camp to explore what was now our new home.

Soon I was hopelessly lost, and I couldn’t remember the number of the building where we were billeted or even what it looked like. It was already dark and I tried to think which building my sister was posted to. At last, on the verge of tears, I plucked up courage to ask one of the camp residents if he knew where our school group was.

He kindly took me to the hospital but no one there could help. Eventually, after we roamed round many of the buildings, I was safely delivered to the teachers, who were already becoming anxious.

husband, John Buck, who she divorced in 1934, was also a missionary in China. Consequently it is possible the parents of Buck, Luce, or Buck’s first husband may have used the WeiHsien facility. The assertions that Buck (1892-1973) and Luce (1892-1967) were born there are not correct.

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf#page=19](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf#page=19)

[excerpt]

We treasured our homemade candles, made with one, two, three or even four wicks. We used them not only for telling stories by candlelight after the teachers were in bed, but for sizzling the ubiquitous bedbugs that crawled out of the walls and into our beds on the floor.

Our four-wick candles were best for frying up old bread crusts “scrounged” from one of the kitchens. We also put them to work when we found mushrooms which made a rare delicacy fried in peanut oil.

Our favorite trick was to take our candles with us to our hide-out at the bottom of the water tower near the hospital.

[excerpt]

The camp population included a variety of professional and vocational groups. We had a number of doctors, nurses and pharmacists who staffed the hospital, although equipment and medicines were at a premium.

The educators among us established another smaller school, set up apart from the Chefoo, Peking, and Tientsin ones. Desperately short of paper, much of our school work was done in pencil and erased so that the paper could be used again. We used slates balanced on our knees for much of our school work.

As the camp had some of the finest intellects in North China, we had adult education, special lectures, classes in several languages, art, history and other subjects.

[excerpt]

Our teachers carried a heavy work load with the laundry since there was very little soap, and what there was, was very inferior. The brushes soon lost their bristles, and many a knuckle was bruised on the ribs of the washboards. White shirts became but a memory as no clothes were spared from the graying common to Weihsien garments.

“Give us the soap, and we will finish the job” was an often heard slogan around the laundry tubs in a part of the hospital basement. The laundry was one of our chores. Three days a week a dawdling

line of the younger children could be seen weaving its way back from the hospital to our rooms in Block 23, with basins of wet washing on our heads or in our arms.

One time I tripped and had to detour by the pump to give everything another rinse and wringout before delivering the goods to the teachers for hanging out on the line.

[excerpt]

The Japanese soldiers’ leniency was evident by the way they didn’t barricade an air-raid shelter tunnel that ran under the tennis court by the hospital. One of the corner searchlight towers was within 100 feet, but the guards knew that we liked to use the tunnel as a hiding place and didn’t want to spoil our fun. A huge boulder in the middle almost blocked the path, and I remember times when some of us had a powwow around it, imagining what it would be like to start digging towards the wall.

None of us, however, was quite enterprising enough to do much more than make a start.

[excerpt]

Father de Jaegher was Belgian and had worked more than ten years in China. Both fluent in Chinese, Tipton and de Jaegher became good friends in camp. One thing that drew them together was their common desire to hear news of the war’s progress. To get such news into camp, they looked for ways of making contact with cooperative Chinese.

What Father Scanlan had been able to achieve in the food-smuggling line, de Jaegher accomplished in the process of incoming and outgoing mail. Unwittingly, the Japanese proved to be very helpful in this process. The earliest method that de Jaegher employed for sending letters was to use Chinese-style envelopes addressed in Chinese characters. But a return address was needed, and this is where the Japanese proved an unknowing help to us.

When they commandeered the compound they had not destroyed the hospital files. De Jaegher chose at random the Chinese names and addresses of former hospital patients, whose record cards

had been overlooked by the Japanese. These now provided authentic Chinese return addresses.

[excerpt] — *(after liberation)*

Meanwhile, on the outside, congratulations were in order for Hummel and Tipton on their arrival at the Chinese base, and they were duly introduced to Commander Wang.

They set to and prepared a report which was to be taken as soon as possible to the British and American embassies in Chungking. Typing it up was quite a delicate process. The typing was done on a thin white silk handkerchief stuck onto paper by flour paste.

The report gave news of the camp, particularly stressing the urgent need for medical supplies and comfort money as well as a plea to quash any requests connected with the Chinese rescue proposal. They also stressed very strongly their concern for the safety of all in camp, should the Japanese in defeat order a transfer of all prisoners to Japan as hostages or even attempt a wholesale massacre.

Sewn into the soles of a pair of Chinese cloth shoes, the message, after many weeks and miles of hazardous travel westward, reached its destination in Chungking, still legible though very damp.

Through the yeoman help of Billy Christian, a former Weihsien prisoner, the greatly needed medical and other supplies were assembled.

They were then flown by a B-24 and dropped by parachute in a location about fifty miles from Weihsien camp, where Hummel and Tipton were in hiding with the Nationalist soldiers. As parts of a radio transmitter and receiver were damaged beyond repair in the drop, Hummel and Tipton had to wait several more months before replacement parts could be obtained from Chungking.

At last the units were put into working order and the two escapees could begin in earnest to send back news to the camp, as had been their intention all along.

But if the radio suffered for its journey, the four boxes of medicines sent by the American Air Force from Chungking arrived intact.

But getting them into the camp was another matter. Hummel and Tipton arranged for the four crates to be taken to our old friend Mr. Egger at the Swiss Consulate in Tsingtao, in the hope that he could get them into the camp.

Though Mr. Egger was due to visit the camp to take in comfort funds that had reached him recently and also a small quantity of medicines that he was able to buy locally, he was absolutely nonplussed as he examined the four big boxes that were delivered to him. The shipment included the new sulfa drugs, the like of which were unknown in North China at that time. He identified medicine after medicine as ones that the Japanese authorities would never let through. He himself could never have got hold of them, and the Japanese certainly couldn't have obtained them from anywhere either.

Suddenly he had a brain wave.

Calling his secretary, he had her type up on four pages of the Embassy letterhead the typical medical items that he could buy in Tsingtao—things like aspirin, antiseptic, etc. He instructed her then to leave a fourline space after each item. When this was complete, he signed the list and took it to the Japanese Consular Police for clearance. At the police office there was momentary puzzlement at the unusual layout and waste of paper, but no real objection was raised, and the necessary seals for approval were stamped on each page.

This hurdle past, Mr. Egger knew that the major one of getting the boxes by the camp guards still lay ahead of him. Back at his office, Mr. Egger had his secretary use the same typewriter and, with a gleeful grin all the while, watched as she inserted the names of all the new medicines on the lines in between.

When he reached Weihsien camp the next day with his four big boxes and lists and presented them to the guards, they were completely bewildered. Everything looked in good order with the right seals stamped in the right places, but they were mystified how approval could possibly have been given for such medicines for the camp.

Egger was chuckling quietly inside as he saw them in such a quandary, feeling certain they

would not refuse him with his papers so perfectly executed. They were baffled, but not wanting to lose face, they let him in and he handed over the life-giving supplies to the grateful doctors and nurses at the hospital.

And so our tenuous over-the-wall lifeline survived one more strain.

[excerpt]

Some of the cesspool coolies who helped us in our communications effort took very great risks which would have cost them their lives had they been caught.

There were many close calls, such as the time a guard, during the routine search at the gate, forced the new coolie at bayonet point to open his mouth. With a gentle gulp he swallowed the pellet, and with it our latest news bulletin!

De Jaegher and Tchou realized they had to work fast when they saw what happened. One of them dashed to the hospital saying there was an emergency that he could not explain but that co-operation was imperative. He was given a little supply of castor oil with no further questions asked.

After some conniving to evade the guards, they administered the medicine and up came the news right on time for the evening report. Whether the news pellet was in the coolie's mouth or up one nostril (and blown out in the old Chinese nose-blowing style), our news dispatches got through. Through this circuitous route we heard reports from the war zones including the news of Germany's surrender.

For everyone it was hard not to let on to the Japanese that we knew that the war in Europe had ended. But for two young men in camp the news was too good to keep.

On the night of May 7th, 1945, disobeying curfew, they climbed into the bell tower of our building, Block 23, and right on the stroke of midnight rang the camp bell. Panic broke out.

The Japanese sounded the alarm immediately, and within minutes angry guards were running by our window with their swords clanging as they

headed for the main gate.

Simultaneously a siren pierced the night air, signaling an escape attempt to the Japanese garrison a few miles away. Some among the internees, thinking the camp had been attacked, became hysterical.

[excerpt]

One wintry day in February, I was with our little group over by the hospital when we saw Eric walking under the trees beside the open space where he had taught us children to play basketball and rounders.

As usual he was smiling.

As he talked to us, we knew nothing of the pain he was hiding, and he knew nothing of the brain tumor that was to take his life that evening, February 21, 1945, when he, one of the world's greatest athletes, would reach the tape in his final race on earth.

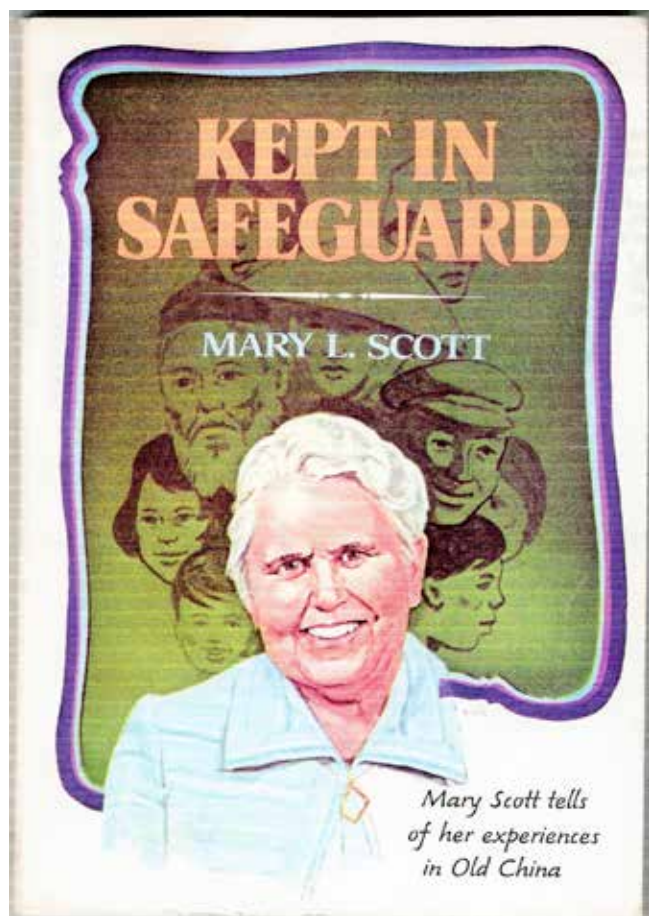
He was 43 years old.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)

by Mary L. Scott ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

It soon became apparent that one of the greatest needs for the internees was for a working hospital. There were sure to be illnesses in our community of nearly 2,000, particularly with the unsanitary conditions under which we lived. Rumor had it (and I can't verify it) that the Japanese had used part of the original hospital building as a stable.

Nothing daunted, the doctors and nurses in camp and many volunteers, including Mr. Moses who had been business manager of our Nazarene hospital in Taming, began the herculean task of cleaning up and salvaging what equipment they could from piles of debris scattered about everywhere.

Within eight days, the hospital was functioning sufficiently to feed and care for patients, and in two more days the operating room and laboratory were ready for use.

[excerpt]

Our camp was actually what had once been a beautiful Presbyterian mission compound. It was a little over six acres in size and had housed a well-equipped high school with classrooms and administration buildings, a church, hospital, bakery ovens, three kitchens, and row after row of 9 x 12 foot rooms used to house the resident students.

The buildings seemed to be undamaged, but the contents were a shambles. Refuse was piled outside the buildings or strewn along the driveways by the garrisons of Japanese and Chinese soldiers who had been billeted there.

Our immediate task was to clean up the place. It was a mammoth undertaking but the people had a mind to work. Besides, there were valuable broken desks and chairs that could be used if repaired.

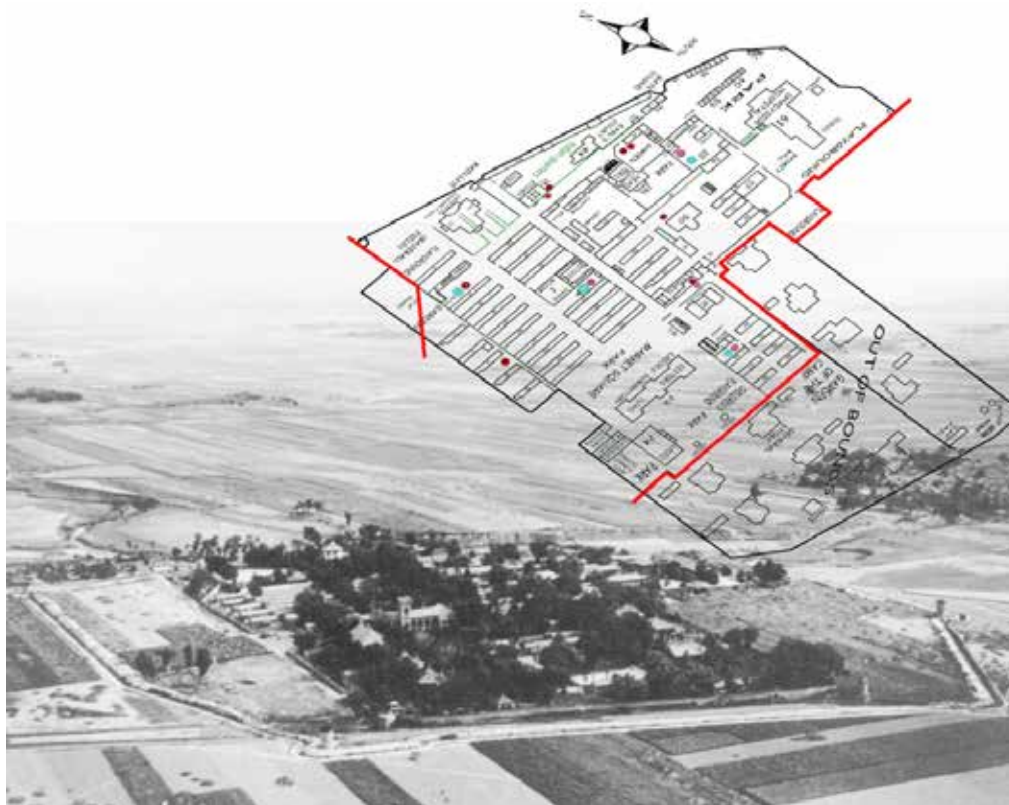
Scrounging, looking anywhere, even in rubbish heaps to find something usable, became an everyday operation.

[excerpt]

The Medical Committee had the jurisdiction of the hospital and general health services of the camp.

Tests of the water from all the wells revealed that it was necessary to boil all drinking water. It was an enormous task for the kitchen crews to provide drinking water as well as boiling water for tea at least twice a day between meals.

The Medical Committee discovered that the water from one well in camp was not safe to drink even after boiling for 30 minutes. It was used only for washing.



behind the eight-foot wall. Work, recreation, and social and religious activities filled our days and evenings.

[excerpt]

There were four main sources of our food.

Major and basic was the Japanese issue of food which was delivered to our supplies committee and distributed to each of the three kitchens (only two after the Italians came) and the hospital diet kitchen.

[excerpt]

We were granted full religious liberty as long as the Japanese authorities were informed when and where services were being held. On Sundays the church was in use all day.

The Catholics gathered for early morning mass, and the Anglicans had a service at 11 a.m.

Our smaller holiness group met in a room in the hospital building. At four o'clock in the afternoon a union service was held. The messages delivered were evangelistic, conservative, or liberal, depending on who was in charge.

The Evangelistic Band, formed early in camp, sponsored a Sunday evening singspiration. Old and young, Protestant and Catholic, attended. A short but pointed gospel message followed the singing.

Ten people were definitely converted through these efforts. And we prayed earnestly for the Japanese guards who slipped in occasionally. Though they might not understand the spoken language, we prayed that they would understand the language of the spirit of love which held no malice or resentment.

After the many initial adjustments we led quite a normal life on the 6.2 acres assigned to us

By common agreement the diet kitchen had first claim to the supplies needed by the patients in the hospital or those on special diet by doctor's orders.

Storekeepers in each kitchen kept close watch over the supplies, especially the oil and sugar.

[excerpt]

One great need was milk for the children. When confronted with this request, our commandant arranged to get cow's milk brought in, which was properly sterilized in our hospital kitchen and distributed to families with children three years old and under. Sometimes there was just a small amount in the bottom of a cup, but at least an effort was made to supply the need for fresh milk for the children.

[excerpt]

While the hospital doctors and nurses often worked around the clock, since there were no others who could spell them off, there was no way they could produce nonexistent medicines.

They suggested substitutes like ground eggshells to put in the children's cereal to provide

calcium. The Peking medical personnel had also given adults a quantity of bone meal to bring into camp.

But other than the few medicines that were made available through comfort money and the Swiss consul, little could be obtained.

Our need was at least partially met through the escape of two young internees who went over the wall one dark, June night in 1944. Tipton was a Britisher and Hummel was an American. For days before their escape, they sunned themselves for hours to get rid of the telltale white of their skin.

Successful, with the help of others, in getting over the wall, they joined a group of guerillas in the nearby hills. The escape caused quite an upheaval. From then on there was roll call in specified areas twice a day instead of the usual room check.

Roommates of the two escapees were held in the assembly hall incommunicado for several days as Japanese officials tried to pry information and confessions from them concerning their knowledge of the escape. They were moved from their pleasant rooms on the upper floor of the hospital near the wall to less desirable quarters in the center of the camp.

Tipton and Hummel were able to report to Chungking by way of radio that we were in very urgent need of medicines.

In response, the American air force made a drop of four large crates of the latest sulfa drugs to the nationalist guerillas nearby.

The next night a guerilla, disguised as a Chinese coolie, called at the Swiss consulate in Tsingtao and informed the consul of the drop and told him that they would deliver the four crates to him the next night at 2 a.m.

True to their word, four men, each carrying one large crate, appeared at 2 a.m., then slipped away into the night. Now the question was, how could these supplies be delivered?

The Swiss consul, as the official representative of enemy nationals in Shantung, was the only outsider (except the night soil coolies) allowed into our camp. Taking in the usual comfort money

and a few available medicines once a month was a simple procedure. But to take in four crates of medicines, much of which the Japanese knew was not available in Tsingtao, would be a very complicated affair.

Finally he devised a plan.

He had his secretary type a list of medicines available in Tsingtao, leaving four spaces between each item. The Japanese authorities, though puzzled by the spaces, put their official seal on the papers.

Then back at the consulate, he had his secretary, using the same typewriter, fill in the blank spaces with the names of the other medicines in the crates. The next day he arrived at the gates of the Weihsien Camp with the crates. While the Japanese wondered where all these medicines had come from, they finally gave their O.K. since there was no doubt about the consular seal and signature at the bottom of the list.

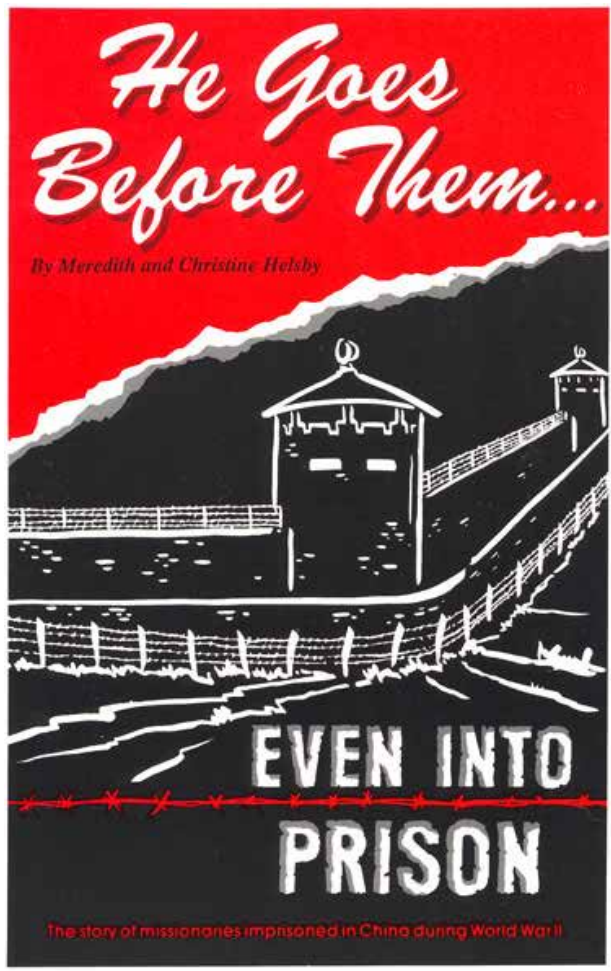
The carts rolled into camp and proceeded to the hospital to deliver their precious cargo.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

by Meredith & Christine Helsby ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/EricLiddell/p_EricLiddell.htm



[Excerpts]

[...]

How ironic that the “Happy Way Courtyard” became an emblem of oppression under the heel of Japanese militarists! That which had formerly been a stronghold of conservative Christianity was drastically changed.

For three decades these walls had housed a hospital, with nurses training school and doctors’ residences, a Bible women’s training school with dormitories, elementary and middle schools, as well as living quarters (single storied), row upon row. In a prominent place, near the main entrance, was the sturdily built brick church with a seating capacity of 300.

But in 1943 this community became the prison home for 1800 civilians from Allied nations.

Malnutrition, disease and suffering made a mockery of the name, “Happy Way.” Guard towers manned by Japanese soldiers, searchlights and machine guns became symbols of death and destruction.

Yet, the sudden dawn of the atomic age dramatically changed all, and the glorious moment of liberty finally came. At last, the loathsome bars of confinement were broken.

[excerpt]

Leading from the high wooden gates up the slope through the center of the one-time campus was a black cinder road which we came to call “Main Street.” On either side was an assortment of buildings. Behind them rose what had at one time been splendid edifices of Edwardian architecture, housing the administration building and the hospital.

[excerpt]

Now overnight under this new order, bank clerks, city administrators, missionaries and professors were turned into ditch diggers, carpenters, masons, stokers and hospital orderlies.

The result was an epidemic of blistered hands, aching backs, sore muscles and tired feet. But undeniably there are rich benefits in subjecting the body to hard labor. Sleep comes easily at night when the body is fatigued, and the mind relaxes in the satisfying knowledge one has put in an “honest day’s work”.

In time, overweight businessmen and missionaries with pot-bellies and sagging jowls, were exhibiting a new trimness and muscle tone.

One drug addict who entered Weihhsien a virtual derelict gained weight, put on muscle and after a

year was fit and rejuvenated. We all rejoiced in his rehabilitation, but his gaining several pounds on camp food made him an oddity.

Manual work is also a healthy leveler and a warm camaraderie grew between once stuffy professors, import executives, and green young missionaries who worked together in the hot sun building a latrine or dormitory extension.

[excerpt]

But, thanks to my Father's healing hand and all the loving care of my fellow internees, I survived.

I left the hospital on March 8, and it was so good to be home with Meredith and Sandra in our little 9 by 12. My weight had dropped to 93 pounds, and with my less-than-petite frame I looked a bit gaunt. But we were together, and though we didn't know it then we had less than six months to freedom.

Meredith continues: Blessed supplements to dining hall fare came on occasion from three sources.

Comfort money, which was advanced to us at intervals through the Red Cross could be spent in the canteen, a small shop which periodically carried limited quantities of food stuffs. We were especially grateful for Chinese dried dates (which gave a bit of the sweetness we so much craved), peanut oil, and sometimes a ration of peanuts which we made into a chunky spread for our bread.

Once, however, we were mistakenly sold fish oil which tasted much like cod liver oil. With this we spoiled three rations of peanuts we'd been hoarding to make a spread.

But, of course, we ate it.

[excerpt]

This was December 25, 1944, and I was lying on a rough grass mattress in the camp hospital, where I had been taken two weeks earlier for internal bleeding.

An adjoining building served as a barracks for the mentally ill, and not far away lay a melancholy plot of ground which enfolded the swelling

population of our dead.

How much longer would we have to endure this ordeal? Not one of us knew. Few dared guess.

Hope was hard to come by that bleak December.

But this morning would be different, must be different. This was Christmas Day! Now the pale morning light, like a persistent hand, was stirring patients from their fitful sleep. Beside me I could hear the moans of an older woman suffering from pleurisy. Beyond her another patient, a pneumonia case, struggled for breath. Directly across from me a young mother was apparently dying of some sort of fever.

There were 16 beds and 16 patients in that barnlike, women's ward. The once well-furnished hospital had been left a shambles by troops who had been quartered there after the Japanese occupation. Now the building was crudely sectioned off into two large wards.

Heroic doctors and nurses, themselves prisoners, gave unstintingly of their skill. But with few medicines available, too often their best efforts ended in futility.

For the most part the old hospital served only to quarantine the sick and dying from the still-functioning members of our community.

From his job in the kitchen, Meredith was permitted today to take one hour off between breakfast and lunch. We had agreed that he would bring Sandra and the gifts to my bedside. Here, in this precious segment of time we would celebrate Christmas together. And though I was still very weak, my heart warmed with wonderful anticipation.

[excerpt]

Eric was never one to solicit sympathy, and Meredith remembers that even after his move to the hospital, few knew the seriousness of his condition.

Joyce, a 16-year-old now, was one of the many teenagers who, to the annoyance of Eric's devoted nurse: Annie Buchan, would flock into the men's ward to visit their hero. Incredibly, in spite of the

excruciating pain, Eric continued to teach and counsel the youth, using his book of discipleship.

By coincidence, in another ward of the hospital at this same time Christine Helsby was recovering from a near-fatal bout with typhoid fever. One Sunday afternoon, February 18, 1945, just three days before his death, Eric came into the women's ward to borrow a hymnal. In a letter to his wife, Florence, then in Toronto, he was quoting from the hymn, "Be Still, My Soul." Characteristically he wanted to be sure of accuracy. Eric spotted Christine, waved his hand, and flashed the wonderful broad smile, which even the pain of his last ordeal had not erased. It was the last time she saw him.

Joyce Stranks visited Eric the morning he died. In their study of his book on discipleship they had come to the portion on surrender. "Although I had accepted the Lord as a child of seven," Joyce says, "it was not until this time in my life when, as a result of Eric Liddell's influence, I personally surrendered to the full will of God."

That morning Joyce arrived at the ward ten minutes early. But, impatient to see her teacher and friend, she entered anyway. As they went through the lesson, Eric looked at Joyce intently and said, "Surrender. surren"

Those were his last words. The next instant a terrible spasm convulsed his body.

Alarmed, Joyce burst into tears and hurried into the hall, calling for his nurse. Annie came running, scolded Joyce for disturbing Eric, and quickly put a screen around his bed.

Within minutes he was gone.

A post-mortem revealed a massive, inoperable brain tumor growing on the left side of his brain.

Funerals in the Wei Hsien prison camp were common enough during those dreadful days, but there was no funeral like Eric's.

Meredith remembers that, "The wave of sorrow which swept over Wei Hsien was unbelievable. His was by far the biggest funeral held in the two-and-one-half years of our stay in the prison camp.

The church accommodated 350 people and was full, but more stood outside than were inside. Rev. Arnold Bryson of the London Missionary Society conducted a memorable service. There were no long, flowery eulogies, but sincere praise to God was voiced for this one who had such far-reaching influence.

One of the missionaries testified. 'His was a God-controlled life. He followed his Master and Lord with a devotion that never flagged, with an intensity of purpose that made men see both the reality and power of true religion. "

Impressive was the fact that not only the missionary community attended Eric's funeral, but many others whose lives Eric so powerfully impacted.

Among them were the usually cynical business people, government officials, and even prostitutes.

Marcy explains that. "Unlike many missionaries, Eric seemed able to relate to everyone. Of course his celebrity status made him welcome in any conversation. But more than this, he had an unassuming, natural quality that gave him rapport with almost everyone he met. Everybody regarded Eric as a friend."

It was a cold February day when they buried Eric Liddell. Meredith remembers a piercing wind swirling patches of lightly falling snow. The simple casket was carried on the shoulders of eight missionary colleagues. Immediately behind was the honor guard, Eric's pupils of the Che Foo School, marching two by two.

Eric Liddell was dead, but the influence of this amazing man who had somehow discovered the secret of living wholly for his Lord and for the sake of others, would continue to touch generations to come.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/EricLiddell/p_EricLiddell.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

In late June the expected baby arrived, but was born with a cleft palate and lip.

To the limited surgical means available in Weih sien Camp Hospital this presented a serious problem. Fortunately, the inmates included Dr Harold Louks, an American surgeon who had practised 'plastic' surgery at Peking's Yen ching University Hospital, which was where he had been captured. There was also Dr Grice, our British GP and surgeon from Tianjin. Dr Grice lived in the next room to ours in Block 42, and after the birth came to me and said, 'There is a little baby girl who has just been born and is very sick and cannot eat and I would like some of your toy soldiers to make her better.' I looked at my precious toys and

asked wistfully if it mattered if the doctor took ones which had had their head or arms broken off, and was relieved to find that Dr Grice was quite happy with the broken ones as he was going to melt them anyway.

The broken lead toy soldiers were duly taken to the camp hospital where they were melted and moulded to form an artificial palate and sewn into the roof of the baby's mouth.

Susan Dobson made a full recovery and I caught up with her as recently as 2005, when I learnt that from Weih sien she had gone to London and had a more conventional palate sewn in her mouth, in a well-known children's hospital.

Meanwhile, on 29th June 1943, there had been a death in the hospital, a Dutch priest who had been admitted to hospital, almost as soon as he arrived in Weih sien, with typhoid.

He was not very old, in his sixties, I was told, but that still seemed ancient to me.

The funeral was held a couple of days after the death. The whole camp attended the funeral or watched it. After the service in the Church, the coffin was carried out by six priests all of about the same height. The procession started with all the RC priests in their vestments, the nuns in their habits and all the Anglican and Protestant clergy in either vestments or best suits, as the internees of all denominations then filed in after the principal mourners. In the end there was probably a total of 800 in the procession, headed by five RC Bishops, an Abbot, an Anglican Bishop and the senior American Presbyterian Preacher, all singing suitable hymns to the tunes of the Salvation Army Band.

This was reinforced with three or four priests in soutanes blowing trumpets or trombones, as well as Jonesy Jones, Wayne Adams and Pineapple Alama, the three dance band musicians whose tour of the Far East had been rudely shortened when the war broke out. I was very much a spectator to start with, but then I saw Susie Grice, our neighbour, walking and joined the procession myself.

Very impressive, to a nine-year-old. But, I thought, 'Why does it take a tragedy to get them all together?'

I knew that some of the participants would not pass the time of day, let alone a religious ceremony, with each other in different circumstances. The procession ended at the graveyard, which was in the south-east corner of the Japanese area, somewhere we would not, under normal circumstances, be allowed to enter, but on this occasion the guards stood back, saluted the coffin and held the gates open for the mourners.

After the burial proper, I thought this was an ideal time to investigate the layout of this prohibited area of camp, so I took my time making my way back.

The reconnaissance was later to prove useful. Then in July the Japanese, who disliked gatherings of adults and children, stopped our lessons, fearing they were in preparation for some kind of organised disturbance. I was very happy to go back to running wild throughout the camp, now I knew my way around and was a wiser boy after two months self-education.

But the adults soon got weary of mobs of uncontrolled children and petitioned ...

[further reading]

[excerpts]

There were three cows grazing in the graveyard in the Japanese area of camp. Pathetic beasts, which were milked for the babies and the hospital patients. Roger had a cupful on most days; I eyed it once and it had been so watered down that the milk took on a bluish tinge. I decided I was not missing very much.

[excerpt]

We saw a lot of new activity around the walls by workmen, supervised by the guards.

When they finished one could see from the top of the hospital building that the barbed wire stretched along the top of the wall was now electrified, and there were five separate electrified barbed wire fences, including coiled barbed wire,

in the 400 or so metres around the camp.

Shortly after, one of the Chinese black-market tradesmen was electrocuted and his body was left on the wire for several weeks in sight of all.

Then Ted McClaren reported that the Commandant said that two bags of sugar and two bottles of brandy had been found in his pockets.

Ted also reported that the Commandant had complained that internees were not being respectful enough to the guards, and through that being disrespectful to the Emperor of Japan. Internees were to be instructed on the point. Ted put up a notice, which strangely enough met with the Commandant's approval.

INTERNEES WILL GIVE WAY TO UNIFORMED
MEMBERS OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY'S FORCES
I.E. INTERNEES WILL ALTER THEIR COURSE TO
PORT OR STARBOARD TO AVOID A HEAD-ON
COLLISION.
TED MCCLAREN
(DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE)

[excerpt]

I asked Dad one day, 'Why have they moved everybody Dad?' He replied 'Ronald, from the windows at the top of the hospital you could see the village to the north-east, and the Japanese suspected that candles or lights were being used to signal.

By putting the younger children in those rooms they think the Chefoo teachers will control the children and that form of communication will stop.'

My response was 'There are other ways of getting messages through, I believe?'

Dad's silence in response to this question was confirmation enough that my discoveries were correct.

[excerpt]

The batsman hit a possible home run, the runner on 2nd base ran past 3rd base and his knee collided with my head.

I was knocked out for a moment, staggered up and ran off to my room. I was still pretty shaken so climbed into bed.

An hour later Mum woke me, and as I turned over she discovered that I was bleeding from my ear. She felt that Dr Grice was needed and went and collected him from his hut.

Dr Grice took one look at me and diagnosed a fracture of the skull. He then said to Mum, 'Margot, I would have liked to have X-rayed his skull, but the machine is broken and I'm hoping that Eggers will bring the replacement parts when he comes next month. But by that time the bone will have healed.

I will take him off to hospital now. He will need to be "in" for three weeks.'

The camp had no stretchers, so I was carried across the camp on a door by two or three men.

Dr Grice then said I had to sleep on my back on wooden boards for the next three weeks. It did not start out very well. At first I could not sleep then, after two or three hours, sleep took over.

Then the next part of the drama. Mrs Warmsley the Matron woke me up, I suppose about dawn, and shoved something into my mouth, I was used to eating and I just crunched my jaws, there was a splintering of glass. I spat it out, but Mrs Warmsley was really upset as they apparently only had a couple of thermometers.

Then she realised that I had swallowed the mercury.

The next thing was the bed was surrounded by virtually all the medical staff, scratching their heads. The consensus was they had no medical equipment available that would help and nature would have to be left to run its course.

The days and weeks passed by in hospital; the food was better than No. 1 Kitchen but not as good as when Mum enhanced it by adding her home-grown extra vegetables.

Other than a slightly sore head, I was fit, but any attempt at sitting up, let alone at getting out of bed, brought an instant rebuke from the duty nurse or sister. I had upset Matron and that seemed to put me in purdah. But I could lift my head to peer round at my fellow patients.

There were no such things as curtains to put round the beds and I was intrigued at the old man in the next bed. He had a woman doctor, Dr Gault,

who used to come in twice a day with what looked about two-foot length of clear tubing and stick it down his penis and then at the other end get a small bowl of urine.

The moans that the man gave out were painful to hear. To my mind it was a form of torture, and I was never voluntarily going to let anyone do that to me.

About ten days after I was admitted to hospital, Stanley Nordmo, a sixteen-year-old Chefoo schoolboy, came down from his dormitory on the upper floor. I did not know him but he introduced himself and asked after my head.

He had come to apologise because it was his knee that had done the damage. I learnt that he had been blind in one eye from birth and had misjudged the distance between us.

I thanked him, but in my own mind felt sorry, as he had a permanent handicap, while my sore head would be on the mend within a couple of weeks.

When I was discharged, I got back to my own hut to find that I had missed a lot of rain, although I had heard it in hospital; some more mail had arrived and also the latest edition of the Peking Chronicle.

Towards the end of June, starting with all the medical staff, there was an outbreak of diarrhoea of epidemic proportions. At the same time, the weather broke and there was a day of heavy rain, a real downpour.

So many were sick that roll call took a couple of hours.

[excerpt]

One day in mid-October, I came across Suzanne Twyford-Thomas on Main Street, full of the news that her father, who was a cook, had met with rather a nasty accident in his kitchen.

He'd been trying to push the small amount of meat available through the mincer when part of his finger went through the machine. With great presence of mind Mr Twyford-Thomas, with someone holding a piece of paper with his finger on it, walked from No. 2 Kitchen to the hospital, where Dr Grice sewed it back on. I thought it interesting, but it did not affect me as Mum got

our stews from No. 1 Kitchen.

[excerpt]

The Swiss representatives Mr Joerg and Mr Eggers went round the camp, and spoke to the vegetable workers in the hospital kitchen.

They walked into the Sewing Room to find a Japanese guard behind the door with his trousers off, getting them sewn.

Then one of the camp inmates came in to have his shorts repaired. Miss Clements, who had been a nurse at the Kailan Mines hospital, shouted out:

‘Do not take your shorts off, there is one man behind the door already with his off!’

[excerpt]

However, in early December, a Japanese guard went up to Mrs Howard-Smith, a nurse, and slapped her face when she was not lining up to his satisfaction outside the hospital.

Ted McClaren reported it to the Commandant.

King Kong was livid and upset, and said that if he was reported again he, King Kong, would have to commit harikari and it would be on McClaren’s conscience.

[excerpt]

Eric Liddell suddenly collapsed, unconscious, and as some rushed off to find a doctor, I went across to Block 23, as I knew that there was a stack of doors in the basement, and a couple of us grabbed one and by the time we got back most of the doctors in the camp were there.

Eric Liddell was put on the door and carried to the hospital. I went back to our block and told Mum and Dad what had happened. The incident occurred midafternoon, and by the evening we heard that he had died of a brain tumour and haemorrhage.

[excerpt]

Real drama occurred on 3rd March 1945. My birthday had passed off as a really tame affair and I was trying to go to sleep when a lot of pistol firing was heard coming from the sports field. I looked out to see what was happening, and

saw two guards dressed in white ju-jitsu clothes tearing down Rocky Road towards the Japanese quarters.

I was woken up just after midnight by more shouting and lots of shots. I wanted to go and see what was happening but was told to stay in bed.

Next morning I went to look for someone who could tell me what all the firing in the night had been about. I met up with Brian whose hut was across Main Street from the Guard House.

Apparently the guards had been having a ju-jitsu competition outside the Guard House and one of the contestants accused another of cheating. One then chased another to the sports field where the firing of Mausers started up.

Then the two, thought to be Bushinde and King Kong, disappeared to the Japanese Club for more beer. They came across another guard, whose nickname was Soapy Sam, and chased him in their ju-jitsu pyjamas back to the Guard House.

Meanwhile the rest of the guards were having a riot in the sports field, shooting in the air to try and quieten things down.

Soapy Sam then ran back to near Block 50 to try and hide.

King Kong, despite being a Sergeant, emerged but events proved he had no control.

Suddenly, with no more beer to drink, the guards went off and the incident fizzled out.

After discussing the drama of the night before, Brian and I then went off to see if we could find any ammunition. There were lots of empty cartridge cases lying about. Then in the far corner I could see my young brother Roger holding a Mauser machine pistol, pointing at another four-year-old boy, trying to pull the trigger, saying ‘Bang, bang, you’re dead’.

The trigger was fortunately too stiff for his little fingers. I was able to disarm him and gave the gun to Ted McClaren, who had arrived by then.

He unclipped the magazine and took the gun to the Commandant.

Where the Mauser’s wooden holster was I had no idea: they usually came with a big wooden

holster that doubled as a butt, converting the weapon to a shoulder gun, and one usually saw it with its leather carrying straps.

[excerpt]

I and a dozen of us were fooling around on Main Street during the first week of August 1945, enjoying a bit of shelter from the sun under the avenue of acacias, as over the last week the weather had been unbearably hot.

Some of the older inmates joined us.

A nineteen-year-old Greek called Aliosa Martinellis swaggered into the group, intent on climbing a 60-foot acacia tree. When he was nearly halfway up we shouted, 'Don't go any higher as the branches could snap.' He totally ignored us and kept climbing; then, suddenly, I heard a very loud crack, a yell and then a loud thump not far from my feet.

Peter went to check, and shouted to Brian:

'Go and get a doctor.'

Meanwhile all Martinellis' clothes were slowly turning red with his blood. A door was acquired to serve as a stretcher. The number of onlookers was growing, for the overall noise had attracted a lot of people.

The women started shrieking, and half a dozen men slid their hands under the body and lifted it six inches while the door was slid under. Dr Grice arrived and escorted the 'stretcher' to the hospital.

The Committee descended on us boys, but for once we were defended by the ladies, who confirmed that we had been trying to warn the boy, shouting 'Do not climb the acacia' ... 'Don't go any higher.'

The fickleness of North China acacias, particularly after a very hot spell, had been drummed into me from the age of six at least, and in the interests of self-preservation I had always heeded those warnings.

When I got back to the hut for lunch I was not hungry, an unheard-of occurrence, and Mum thought I was sickening, but when I told her what had happened she understood and did not press me. Granny then came in to share the news;

all I remembered from the accident itself was something that sounded like a bag of rice falling down ten feet away.

Martinellis never recovered consciousness and he died that evening of awful internal injuries.

[excerpt]

Mrs Lawless died of typhoid on 8th August, and as the graveyard was now full the burial the next day had to take place outside the walls, hence only a handful of people could attend.

Watanabe was nowhere to be seen. He was tracked down and Ted McClaren tried to speak to him, but Watanabe just ran away, pursued by a few dozen inmates. They lost him when he fled through the front gates, knowing that the internees could not follow there. Watanabe was unpopular with the prisoners, but if he were behaving like that then surely there must be something to hide.

What was it?

Speculation grew wilder and wilder. I kept remembering Grandpa's predictions and wondered if we would all be killed before we could be freed from the camp.

On 14th August we had a special roll call on the sports field, and I eyed the machine guns in the towers. They traversed over our heads but nothing fired.

The next day there were more rumours that the Emperor of Japan had made a proclamation. Mum heard from Mrs Grice that Dr Vio had told her husband that the Emperor had given a broadcast, 'For the first time in 2,600 years Japan had to seek peace from four countries.' Was it really true?

Nobody knew.

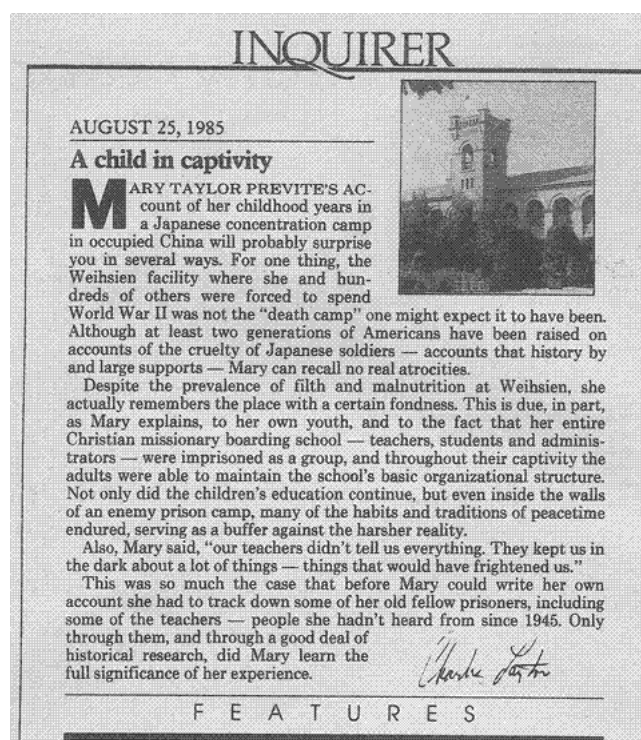
The guards were conspicuous by their absence, but the answer was not long in coming.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)

by Mary Previte, née Taylor ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Still, there was a gentleness about these steely teachers.

On my birthday, my teacher created a celebration - with an apple - just for me. The apple itself wasn't so important as the delicious feeling that I had a "mother" all to myself in a private celebration - just my teacher and me - behind the hospital.

In the cutting of wondrously thin, translucent apple circles, she showed me that I could find the shape of an apple blossom. It was pure magic.

On a tiny tin-can stove fueled by twigs, she fried the apple slices for me in a moment of wonder.

Even now, after 40 years, I still look for the apple blossom hidden in apple circles. No birthday cake has ever inspired such joy.

[excerpt]

Weihhsien was a society of extraordinary complexity.

It had a hospital, a lab and a diet kitchen. It had its own softball league, with the Tientsin Tigers, the Peking Panthers and the Priests' Padres playing almost every summer evening.

Though we young ones never knew it, Weihhsien also had its prostitutes, alcoholics, drug addicts, roving bands of bored adolescents, and scroungers and thieves who filched extra food from the kitchens and stole coal balls left to bake in the sun.

Compressed into that 150-by-200-yard compound were all the shames and glories of a modern city.

[excerpt]

IT WAS FRIDAY, AUG. 17, 1945.

A SCORCHING heat wave had forced the teachers to cancel classes, and I was withering with diarrhea, confined to my mattress atop three steamer trunks in the second-floor hospital dormitory.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

This morning at 3a.m.
Coogee Ladow came for Dr Robinson, as Meta had started with her pains.

He, Robbie, put on his clothes leisurely, and when he got on the bakery, he saw Percy dashing up and could hear Meta shouting away, he hadn't time to wash his hands, still less time to take her to hospital when the baby was born. The cotton snapped and there was no hot water to bath the baby.

Robbie then dashed off to the hospital, awoke Luiznow Smith who is the orderly, and got the night nurse to awaken Mrs Ball. The carrying chair was hurriedly brought to Percy's, and the baby, unwashed was wrapped in a towel, and then in a blanket, and Meta carried her in her arms.

Coogee & Luiznow carried Meta & baby to hospital.

I believe the double bed of Meta's was in a dreadful mess, but in the light of daytime, these seem inconsequential, the greatest thing being that Meta is all right and the baby a girl.

Probably will get more details today or tomorrow. Received Vera's parcel, minus 2 small tins salmon & 1 tin jam.

[excerpt]

The coal shortage here is becoming acute.

About the middle of last month, we were allowed to take 1 bucket of coal per family. After about a fortnight, all the stock was gone and since then no new supplies have come in. So people have been scrounging the bakery stocks, and kitchen stocks, consequently these places now find themselves without coal & having to use wood.

Carol Corkey was put into hospital this morning with Scarlet Fever. Gay hasn't been feeling well since yesterday, sore throat and fever, I hope she isn't down with it. The Medical Authorities are trying very hard to locate it.

[excerpt]

Kojo says no more sugar nor jam. Not even for the Hospital, that we should be content to get as little sugar as the Japanese are getting. He doesn't realise that we consider sugar one of the most important ingredients in the child's diet.

However, che sara, che sara.

[excerpt]

It is today 11 months since we left you, the baby and our home. It has been a particularly trying day.

I had an extremely big wash with many interruptions.

Vicky Waters from Quarters came to make an inventory, then Mrs Cockburn came to cut Gay's hair.

Girly came and sat. She paid me \$30.00 for a lb tin of Golden Lion Milk. Sid had to fetch the milk & eggs from the Hospital, a chore which I undertake to do myself. I finally finished by 12.

The day was bitter cold and my hands were numb. However the washing was dry by nightfall - the 1st time this winter.

[excerpt]

Yesterday I visited the hospital, saw Mrs Voyce, Sister Eustella & Daisy. I think they were quite pleased - so was I.

Father Rutherford is a semi invalid, the dirt & dust in his room made me want to tidy it up, but I think I would have offended him.

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/ChSancton/pages/p_Rutherford.htm

[excerpt]

Egger is in.

He has brought us the news that there will be no "comfort money" and that Joerg, who was arriving tomorrow will explain. We are unhappy, as our comfort money has certainly helped to make things easier for us. At the time of writing, we are paying \$1 for an egg in the hospital and \$0.9 for milk for the older children. So out of \$700 comfort money we have to commence paying \$103.50 to the hospital.

Things are going up. Understand a lady received a pair of shoes from Tientsin at \$1500 ? A ton of coal costing \$900.

[excerpt]

Robbie awoke with streptococcal infection of the throat - and at 3.30 was taken to hospital. Dr Vio was ill too & sent a henchman for Robbie this a.m. it was amusing to hear that Robbie regretted he could not come personally as he was ill too.

Dr Corky came to see me, as I too was ill. Being laid low with a very violent headache. Sinus she thinks, 'Tis possibly so.

Sid replaced Robbie at Sunday bridge four. Did 3 slams, and won \$7- so he kept the reputation of the menage at the same level.

[excerpt]

We went on to No. 2 Dining Room, the bride & groom went the hospital to visit Elsie, and when they arrived at the Kitchen ludo beans were shied on them. After Clemmie & Bill had been "wished happiness", E.J.Nathan made a speech and he mentioned that the knife with which the bride would cut the cake was an heirloom. That its painting of a wounded officer on a horse, tired out, arriving at the army headquarters in 1840 was the only British survivor of the 2nd Kabul War.

That man was Captain William Bryden after whom Bill was named, he was Bill's mother's uncle. It is a giant boy scout knife. Bill at the end of his reply continued with ... "before I will permit my wife to cut the cake I must." The bridegroom was the more prominent of the 2, like a King and his consort a few steps to the rear smiling graciously.

[excerpt]

Egger is in today.

He is supposed to have brought sugar & rice for the Hospital which the Authorities have refused permission for their entry into the Camp. I hope E[gger]. has brought in more red x letters. I am longing to hear from my sister & family.

[excerpt]

George Wallis is in hospital with some low form of meningitis. He is not seriously ill, but has a permanent headache.

I bet Voyce \$10 that Germany will be out of the war within 2 months. I somehow feel that I'm not going to lose.

[excerpt]

Today, as I was going to fetch Christine's food from the hospital, met Sid and Christine, he whispered "Hummel and Tipton" gone.

I twigged immediately in a flash I remembered seeing them together with Father D[eJaegher]. the evening previous. And later they were together, moving about restlessly, around No 1 Kitchen. We expected some heavy retaliation on the part of the authorities, but apparently even the guards think it is a joke on their New Police Captain, who is a tough baby.

[excerpt]

All the bachelors & spinsters living in rooms above the hospital are to be moved to No23 where the Chefoo children are, and they will have to go there.

Iso says this is conformity with the commandant's regulations wherein he stated that in the event of a person or persons whose identity is not established residing in certain blocks having communicated with Chinese, the entire residents of that alley will be removed!

Miss Monihan (Monaghan), Peter's teacher had a Union Jack in her room, the Japanese made her take it down.

[excerpt] 15/06/'44

As a reprisal for the escape of Hummel who lived in the attic of the hospital, all the people who live above the hospital, that is, the 2 stories including the attic have to be moved today into building No. 23, which until the present was housing most of the Chefoo boys.

Unfortunately, it is a wet day and those who are assisting are having a damp time of it. It is a camp assignment and everyone not on duty this morning have to assist at the moving over.

Marie says that if everyone able-bodied, man woman or child went, they'd be overcrowded, so she isn't assisting. I am not there because

I) Christine, due to rain, has no school and has to be looked after.

II) my arm hurts badly.

III) I am, or should be on duty on veg otherwise.

Last night's rumour was that Paris and Genoa had fallen.

Egger came in yesterday and has been able to make us understand that we are pouring troops into France & Italy.

[excerpt]

I bought a packet of Strawberry jello for \$25 from Mrs Mosley. Am negotiating for egg powder. Bought a baby doll fully gowned for \$40 for Christine. I think she'll enjoy it if she doesn't break it in no time. Have also asked Franky Pear to make a little doll's pram for her. Hope it'll be ready on time.

Sid has boils in his ears. Suffering very much. Apparently in the hospital here in peaceful times most of the patients suffered from carbuncles due to some deficiency in the water.

[excerpt]

At the Homes Committee meeting on Wednesday, 13.9.'44, I was elected Vice Chairman to assist Mrs Hubbard, chairman. The new committee's first problem was to cope with the Bickertons who are being discharged from hospital and over 80. Have arranged for Stocker to empty slops & sweep. Mrs Shragges will keep motherly eye.

[excerpt]

Spent all our money, paid balance of \$125 for

Peter's coat, \$250 for a flask. \$200 to hospital for eggs. \$75 for Tang Hsi. \$500 to Warden. \$180 for sugar. \$25 for Peanut oil lamp. Now in a financial pickle. **Goyas** owes me \$20, Marie \$25 (which she doesn't seem to recall at all) But understand will be getting \$300 for Peter's boots, thank goodness.

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/GregLeck/pages/Goyas/Goyas.html>

[excerpt]

My middle finger which was injured by being caught in the door several weeks ago, is definitely not improving, as a matter of fact Robbie wants me to go to the hospital with him in the morning to get it lanced. Confess I am frightened feel as though I couldn't bear another bit of pain.

[excerpt]

Whilst unpacking the medical supplies from the Red Cross, Dr Grice asked Itara if he could have some stout ropes. When told upon inquiry that they wanted for fuel in the hospital, Itara replied that it would be better if they kept as they would come in useful for packing up his belongings for Tientsin. Now that seemed particularly encouraging, but we now feel depressed, the severe cold after a prolonged winter of chores may have something to do with it.

[excerpt]

Meta Jones went into hospital owing to a miscarriage so I have volunteered to bath the baby and get her ready for the day, then in the evening get her ready for bed. 'Tis quite simple. But it fills my day just that much more.

Heard that a Jap guard was found with his throat slit on Saturday morning. Much excitement.

All night King Kong and others running around shouting all night. Now they deny all rumours of such a story, but nevertheless De Zutter got up early on Saturday morning and saw the truck bringing in a coffin. Mrs de Zutter (they live in the flat above Ed Cooke's) saw the truck bearing the coffin away by the usually closed gate.

So !! Now six police dogs are in too.

Another Allied plane flew over yesterday noon.

Hear guerillas assembling 30 miles from here, are they going to act simultaneously with an Allied landing at Tsingtao?

Heard Russians warned Germans that every city, man, woman and child will be destroyed henceforward until they capitulate.

[excerpt]

Meta returned home from the hospital this p.m. got Carmen ready for bed as I had done previously. Will have to probably go again tomorrow and the morning after, as she doesn't seem to strong yet.

Eric Liddell's funeral today. Gay assisted with service. How sad, how sad! So young, when there are so many helpless old 'uns left. Old Mrs Lavers, who lives in the Old Ladies Home, under the care of 2 stalwart females, is over 92 and completely living in the past, how unfair that Liddell in the prime of his youth with so much to live is dead I don't believe he has even seen his youngest child born since his wife was evacuated.

Understand from paper of the 11th Feb that at the Moscow meeting of Stalin, Churchill & Roosevelt, Stalin stated that he would wipe Berlin off the map.

[excerpt]

Clemmie has been in the hospital with small pains. Created a scene when someone wouldn't stay with her all night.

Had hysterics this morning, and has been weeping since. Believe has gone into the theatre now 8 p.m. Hope it will be a girl.

We're in a jam, except the Americans who have received money, peanut oil but we haven't been to buy any, no spondulux. It now costs \$100 - a portion. Our soap was \$8 - a portion - cost us

\$40 – another \$20 for 2 hanks sewing cotton. Sid has been able to occasionally bring home a spot of oil that that which he would have put into a date loaf, in this way I have been able to build up a reserve – (...)

[excerpt]

Nelma Shanks' wedding was very pretty.

She dressed at the hospital and walked there in procession to the Assembly Hall. As the procession got settled down to being in step, the Father saw Robbie, who halted to allow the procession to pass, greeted him with "How are you, Doctor", thereby throwing the whole procession out of step and once again had to halt and start marching in step, 'left, right, left, right'.

Made a brick stove for Mrs Davidson today. It works alright. I was rather apprehensive at first.

Egger brought in the Red Cross shoes – and the Talbots received five pairs, being gifts from the Red cross. I understand many people are extremely peeved.

He brought in no news – and here we are with our tongues hanging out for news.

Also built myself a stove of 21/2 roof tiles three bricks 7 four fire bars. It works like magic.

[excerpt]

Ten members of Camp went over Heads Committee to the J.Commandant to ask for more food. As expected he promised to look into the matter. Faced with flour shortage, for 2 days the Js. [Japs] drew flour from their own supplies.

Are expecting 6 cartloads today, have seen no signs so far.

Barton was reported by Isidore Haas for pinching Hospital Coal.

He was furious as he says it seems silly to be caught taking so little when he used to take buckets load previously. However he decided to avenge himself, he and a couple of witnesses sat near the hospital coal dump for the whole day the following day and caught:

P.H. Colt, Mrs Hughes, A. Moyler. Mrs T.A.S. Cameron and 2 others. Barton was summoned to court, as he failed to appear he was given 4 weeks deprivation of privileges and 2 extra weeks for contempt of court. We are awaiting with interest the result of the trial of the six others.

[excerpt]

I forgot to mention that on the 30th of May was the 'At home' day to the whole of camp from 3-5 in 20 homes, selected for their special features.

Mrs Cotterell, newest bride, April vintage, has the most attractive of those seen, then Mrs Pykes then the Scamonis and lastly Nicolis, I traipsed up and down hundreds of step up storeys down storeys. Mrs Cotterell lives 69 steps above the second floor of the hospital. We visited three dormitories, one dormitory decided to have a narrow, central passage, and cubicled space behind beds, for private sitting out, washroom etc.

Another preferred to have a wide central passage with table & flowers in centre and no curtained off. Another has 2 cubicled washroom. They were most colourful with brightly coloured curtains despite the diversity of patterns the whole was colourfully pleasant.

[excerpt]

My energies are flagging I'm afraid.

Had a blood count and the result is anaemia. It was awful you know that awful dizzy feeling, my conscience revolted at my laziness but it wasn't strong enough to over ride.

Yesterday had been my worst day - slept practically all day without eating till bedtime.

When I was asked my initials at the hospital, I couldn't even recall that.

[excerpt]

Joerg did not arrive on the day anticipated, but the following day. He brought gifts for his friends

included in parcels marked for the hospital.

[excerpt]

The weather is still HOT-92° indoors. I am in a sweat all day. Its terrific.

Christine makes a terrific wet patch on her bed, but due to good hospital anti-heat-spots she has very little.

Astrid Danielson has had her adenoids taken out. They were done yesterday and returned today. I believe in ordinary life adenoids are taken out during clinic.

A Jap. guard came to warn Argee Ladow at 4.30 a.m. to put away all empty bottles as McGilchrist & Wilkie were caught drunk. However they were only retained in the guardhouse for a minute during which time they distributed cigarettes all round. What a difference with the old days.

[excerpt]

Received handsome parcel from the Walravens. Even cocoa & glycerine. They're bully.

Egger's runner in but so far no repercussions. I am feeling sleepy, my sleeping draught working. Just remember tell you about ice water & ice cream racket in hospital.

[excerpt] 16/08/'45 (*one day before liberation*)

It is rumoured:

- 1) Davies occupied by Canadians
- 2 Weihaiwei occupied by British
- 3) Chefoo occupied by British
- 4) Tsingtao occupied by Yankees

I have had a bad attack of quizzles perhaps due to hangover, but more possibly due to weakness of stomach after exciting news. Dr Corkey tells me she has many such patients.

Forgot to mention Mrs J. Pamilis the day before

yesterday gave birth to a son, John Frederick. Meta Jones is improving. Dr Gault will be out of hospital by end of week. The schools have been given a holiday.

[excerpt] 16/08/'45 (*one day before liberation*)

Father Wenders started the ball rolling on the 15th morning at 11 am. by dashing to the hospital and telling Jaten the war is over.

[excerpt] (*after liberation*)

The most amazing sight and without its parallel in history, I guarantee, is the sight of Japanese Guards, fully armed on trucks bringing in supplies from the airfield. F....ly the Japanese being here to protect us.

Of course the Japanese, in my opinion, have lost the War in a manner totally differently from the Germans. China did not beat him, nor did Dutch East Indies, India Malaya. Perhaps that is why they treat their defeat differently.

Told Margot Bishop at the shower that Jack ..still fly over to fetch him or to visit her. Since the ... & Peking Concentration Camp have been freed. Robbie is furious that in the world news Weih sien is stated as being slightly under weight & only 10% hospitalisation.

My sleeping draught is working.

[further reading]

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/ChSancton/diary/p_excerpts.htm

RELIGION

by Howard S. Galt ...

[Excerpt] ...

[...]

The normal religious interests of a community of the size of our camp would present important aspects, but, as the camp had so many professional religionists in its personnel, religious activities had more than usual importance.

Among the Catholic, Anglican, and Free Church groups there was enough cooperation to make common use of the church and arrange in a harmonious schedule the services of worship for Sundays and other days. The church building then became a very busy place during all the hours of Sunday.

The Catholics began with two or three early services of Holy Mass, followed about 11:00 by the Protestant Anglican morning service of worship. In the afternoon the Free Church people of many denominations joined in a union church service.

The presence of so many Catholic priests and nuns and six bishops in a camp made possible their full ritualistic services of worship including Pontifical Mass, as well as the special services for Palm Sunday and Easter.

With carpenter work by priests and decorative work by nuns a very beautiful and impressive altar was arranged. All other necessary requisites, altar furnishing, etc., had evidently been brought to the camp. The antiphonal singing by companies of well trained priests, and the polyphonic singing when nuns also took part, were features of interest to both Catholics and non-Catholics.

The Anglican or Episcopal members of the camp were not numerous, but all their formal

services, with altar furnishings, bishop's robes, and fixed ritual less elaborate than the Catholics, were held regularly. Early morning communion, because of conflicting hours and fewer attendants, was usually held elsewhere than in the church.

Missionaries and laymen belonging to the free churches constituted a large group and because of varying practices in the different denominations, and more democratic procedures, presented more complications in organization. A representative but temporary committee was appointed which made plans for services of worship and other activities and chose the necessary leaders.

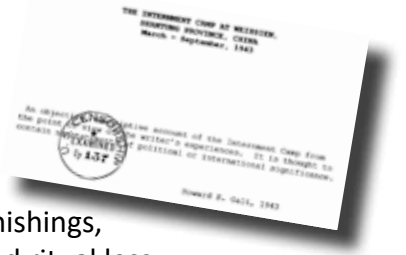
After several weeks the temporary arrangements, without much change, were made permanent and the united organization developed its many activities under the name "Weihsien Christian Fellowship." The organization under this name, rather than under the title "Union Church" was adapted after much earnest discussion. The somewhat broader and less formal organization under the name "Fellowship" made it possible for the Anglican group to cooperate in many of the activities.

There was hope that some of the more liberal-minded Catholics might participate also, but although unorganized and social relationships were very friendly and harmonious, this hope was not realized.

However, there were some small discussion groups, interested in religious and theological themes, in which both Catholics and Protestants participated.

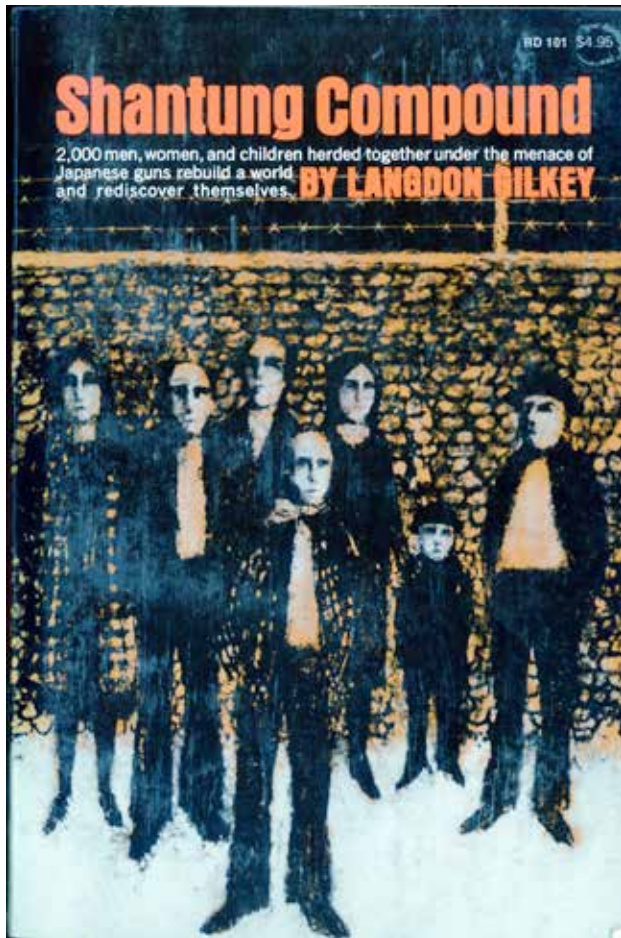
[further reading] ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/DonMenzi/ScrapBook/1943-Galt_Weihsien-1.pdf



by Langdon Gilkey ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/p_preface.htm



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

This deeper framework for life came to me rather suddenly, as to many in those years, through the speaking and writing of Reinhold Niebuhr. Here was a searching realism that was willing to face all the ambiguity and squalor of any human social situation.

At the same time, it was intensely moral, for it had a deep commitment to human good. The difference was that this commitment was not based either on a belief in the overriding goodness of men or even on the possibility of establishing ideal solutions in social history—both of which seemed contradicted by the obvious facts. It was based on faith in God, and it resulted in a call to serve one's fellows however ambiguous the

situation in which man might find himself.

It was now possible for me to face the war with a realism that was not cynical and an idealism that was not naïve. I was intensely interested in this new “realistic theology” when, just out of college, I went out in 1940 to China to teach English at Yenching. Although I had had no seminary training, I devoured theological tomes every moment of my free time from then until I went to camp in 1943.

By that time my whole orientation had changed: from the naturalistic humanist of my college days, I became what I felt to be a “convinced Christian.”

My new faith, however, was not so much the result of any personal religious experience as it was the intellectual conviction that only in terms of the Christian view of things could I make sense out of the social history in which we live and the ethical decisions we humans have to make.

And so to camp I went, replete with theological jargon, many secondhand concepts, and a conviction that mine was the only way in which to view life. For a person thus encumbered, those first months of camp raised the most urgent and devastating of questions: What's so important anyway about the way a person looks at life? Isn't this a typically intellectualist way of looking at our crises?

Are these “big problems of life” really problems at all?

Surely the issues of our existence are not these intellectual points of naturalism vs. Christian faith, or even of idealism vs. psychoanalysis.

Such are all right for the philosophically minded collegian; but are they basic? The real issues of life are surely material and political: how we can eat and keep warm, be clothed and protected from the weather, and organize our common efforts. These matters are resolved by practical experience and by techniques, not by this or that philosophy or religious faith, however, convincing an expression of that faith may be to the cool observer of the

scene. It was not that I thought religion wrong; I simply thought it irrelevant. What real function in actual life does it perform under conditions where basic problems are dealt with by techniques and organizational skill?

I was quite willing to admit that there are people who are interested in the nature of man and the universe; and that apparently there are others who enjoy religion and going to church.

But, unlike food and sanitation which one must have in order to live, is not religion merely a matter of personal taste, of temperament, essential only if someone wants it but useless if one does not happen to be the type that likes it?

Is there any “secular” use for religion; does it have any value for the common life of mankind? Or is it there useless, because secularity with its techniques, its courage, and its idealism is quite able to create a full human life without religion?

As I asked myself these questions over and over throughout those first months of camp, I became what we might call “secular”. That is, I was a man convinced that while religion might help those who liked it, it was a waste of time for others. Certainly “the others” now included myself.

Wherever I turned, everything I saw reinforced this view. Of what use to our life were the vocations of teaching philosophy or preaching Christianity?

Those of us who had performed these tasks in the outside world now carried our weight of camp work; yes— but not in those roles. We were useful only insofar as teacher or evangelist became able stoker or competent baker.

No one on the Labor Committee ever ventured to suggest that philosophizing or preaching be regarded as valid camp jobs. That fact alone appeared to me to be an adequate commentary on their social usefulness. Apparently our intellectual, and especially our “religious,” vocations were so unrelated to the real needs of life that they had to become “avocations.”

They were relegated to the categories of leisure-time and Sunday activities. The engineer,

the doctor, the laborer, the producer, on the other hand, were asked to modulate, but not to abandon, their vocations when they entered our community. Each of their calling proved its worth by the necessity for it in the support of our material existence, and by the fact that those of us in “spiritual” vocations had to learn other skills if we were to take part in the daily work.

For these reasons, after I arrived at camp, I quickly lost my former interest both in religious activities and in theological reflection.

The missionaries were, it is true, achieving a unity and accord hitherto unknown, both among the various groups of Protestants and between the Protestants as a whole and the Catholics.

Numerous joint enterprises consisting of lectures, services, and the like were planned and initiated. In all of this I took only the mildest interest, and soon found myself dropping out altogether.

My feelings found full expression one Sunday when, rushing by the church bent on some errand for the Housing Committee, I heard a familiar hymn ringing out through the open windows. I asked myself irritably, “What for—when there are so many important things to be done?” And shaking my head in disbelieving wonder, I went on about my business.

[excerpt]

By the end of the first month of camp, my view of life was being altered. I went back to the confident humanism so characteristic of the liberal academic circles in America I had recently quitted.

As I looked around me during those early weeks, I felt convinced that man’s ingenuity in dealing with difficult problems was unlimited, making irrelevant those so-called “deeper issues” of his spiritual life with which religion and philosophy pretended to deal.

[excerpt]

One had to do with a prominent American missionary family. The head of the house, although then middle-aged, was a handsome, intelligent, sophisticated Ivy League graduate.

With graying hair, ruddy complexion, and clean-cut features, albeit now a little rotund, he cut a suave figure in gatherings of either business or religious leaders. His wife was a capable, respectable, motherly woman, wedded to innumerable social causes, a born hostess, at once elegant and gracious. They represented almost the model of the American professional couple: educated, liberal, kind-hearted, epitomizing good will and Christian concern. They had two sons, one sixteen and one thirteen, one or both of whom might, therefore, move into a dorm.

Since one of the overcrowded families of four lived right next door, I knew these good people were by no means ignorant of the problem. When I knocked at their room, I expected a relatively easy time.

Mrs. White greeted me, as I anticipated, with courtesy and graciousness.

As I warmed to my subject, she expressed concern for the plight of these unfortunate people, and assured me that she and her husband were only too willing to do what they could to help solve this problem. Considerably encouraged, I unfolded our plan for a dorm for boys. I told her of the "fine Christian schoolteacher" who would proctor it, and how much I hoped they might agree to help us effect this resolution. At this point in our conversation, Mrs. White, if anything, grew even more polite. But she also grew more vague—I noticed a certain hesitancy. It became harder and harder to get back to the practical details. Finally, I suggested that perhaps they would like to have time to think it over and that I would come back the next day for her answer.

"Why, thank you so much," she said with her soft smile, "This will give my husband and me a chance to think and pray about it tonight."

On that encouraging note, I left.

When I returned the next day, she seemed both more definite and more sure of herself. I was mildly elated. Here at last, I thought, is someone who will take the lead, not in opposing us but in helping us. I listened eagerly as she began graciously to approach the subject. "We have had our evening of thought and prayer about the problem you shared with us," she said, smiling at me, "and we have

reached our decision.

"We cannot allow our young sons to go into the dorm."

"But they will be only fifty yards away, Mrs. White!" I exclaimed.

"Surely you don't think anything will happen to them there under Eric Ridley's [*Liddell's*] care!"

"Oh no, it's just that Paul is only sixteen and subject to so many influences right now. I don't want to say anything about those other boys, but you know how they are! And besides, the heating and drafts here are very unusual, and I know that, with the little he gets to eat, unless someone watches over him, he will always be getting colds and flu. And it is quite out of the question for Johnny at thirteen to leave us."

"Okay, fair enough"—though I was very disappointed—"Let's look at another alternative then.

How about your youngest moving into this room with you, and Paul moving in with the two Jones boys in the next block?"

"Oh no. We talked about that, too, and have made up our minds. We believe in keeping a nice home for our boys to come to, and that would be impossible with three in one room. As we talked last night, all this became clearer and clearer: home and family are so important in a place like this.

We decided that our first moral responsibility in the camp is to keep a real American home for our two boys."

I could see that in her gracious but determined way, she was feeling more comfortable now that she had found a clear moral principle to back her up. etc., etc.

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/p_preface.htm

[excerpt]

To our mixed amusement and dismay we found that our stomachs, like implacable slave masters, completely supervised our powers of thought. A conversation might begin with religion, politics, or

sex, but it was sure to end with culinary fantasies.

As we would warm to the topic, soon we would again be describing in intricate detail and tasting in our excited imaginations long forgotten dishes in restaurants visited in some dim past.

My one silly ambition, which obsessed me day and night, was to walk once again into a Howard Johnson restaurant and to savor their hamburger and chocolate milkshake.

[excerpt]

The ultimate roots of social law and order extend down to the same moral and religious depths of the self where lies the basis of cooperation and sharing.

If a man is committed only to his own survival and advancement, or to that of his family and group, then under pressure, neither will he share with his neighbor nor be obedient to the law. Had our community been made up solely of such men, all cooperative action devoted to the production and distribution of food, and all courts and laws devoted to the maintenance of order would have become inoperative.

My early indifference to the moral element in society faded, as our splendid institutions were threatened with collapse from within. I had thought that the only vocation that the camp could not use was the religious calling.

But now it was clear that all the many secular vocations and skills the camp needed were of use to us only if the men who performed them had some inner strength. Hardheaded men of affairs are inclined to smile at the moralist and religionist for concentrating his energies on the problems of morality and conscience far removed from what he considers to be the real business of life: that is to say, producing food, building houses, making clothes, curing bodies, and defining laws.

But as this experience so cogently showed, while these things are essential for life, ultimately they are ineffective unless they stem from some cooperative spirit within the community. Far from being at the periphery of life, spiritual and moral matters are the foundation for all the daily work of the world.

This same hardheaded man of affairs will probably continue to smile—but the effectiveness of his day-to-day work will still be based on that ethical core.

[excerpt]

A community needs ethical people, but does the secular world need religious people?

Are the saints really good, is religious piety a requisite for communal virtue, do we need God in order to love our fellow man?

These questions occurred to me with increasing frequency as the deep significance of the moral dimension of life came clear to me. I looked around to find enlightenment. I had to admit to myself that no easy answer to these questions could be found merely by noting the way in which different types of people, religious and irreligious, behaved.

It was not possible to study us and say,

“There, that proves you must be religious, for only the pious are good.”

People continually leap out of all the categories we try to put them in, and behave in totally unexpected ways. The most important lesson I learned is that there are no cut-and-dried categories in human life, no easily recognizable brand names by which we can estimate our fellows. Over and over “respectable people,” one of the commonest labels applied in social intercourse, turned out to be uncooperative, irritable, and worse, dishonest.

Conversely, many who were neither respectable nor pious were in fact, valiant.

At the same time, many obvious bums were just plain bums. It was the mystery, the richness, and the surprise of human beings that struck me the most when I looked round at my fellows.

[excerpt]

The Catholic fathers possessed a religious and moral seriousness free of spiritual pride, they communicated to others not how holy they were but their inexhaustible acceptance and warmth toward the more worldly and wayward laymen.

Nothing and no one seemed to offend them, or shock them; no person outraged their moral sense.

A person could count on their accepting him, as he could count on their integrity—and such acceptance of others is sadly rare on the part of “moral” people.

Consequently, no one felt uncomfortable with them, or sensed that sharpest of all hostilities of one human being to another—that non-acceptance which springs from moral disapproval and so from a feeling of moral superiority.

The fathers mixed amiably with anybody and everybody; with men accustomed to drinking, gambling, swearing, wrenching, even taking dope, men replete with all the major and minor vices. Yet they remained unchanged in their own character by this intimate, personal contact with “the world.”

Somehow they seemed able to accept and even to love the world as it was, and in this acceptance the presence of their own strength gave new strength to our wayward world. How much less creative, I thought—and how far from the Gospels—is the frequent Protestant reaction of moral disapproval, and of spiritual if not physical withdrawal.

Although they did try to be friendly, the Protestants nevertheless typically huddled together in a compact “Christian remnant.” Not unlike the Pharisees in the New Testament, they kept to their own flock of saved souls, evidently because they feared to be contaminated in some way by this sinful world which they inwardly abhorred. In contrast, the Catholic fathers mixed.

They made friends with anyone in camp, helped out, played cards, smoked, and joked with them. They were a means of grace to the whole community.

[excerpt]

All in all, therefore, the Catholic fathers played a most creative role in our camp life, and the internees responded with genuine affection.

It is true that many of the peculiar and difficult

problems of traditional Catholicism and its relations to non-Catholics were not evident in our situation.

Wisely at the start, the “bishop” in charge determined not to try to control in any way the political or the moral life of the camp as a whole.

As a minority group, they carefully refrained from any action against the freedom of expression of other faiths.

The one Achilles’ heel which I saw in their relations with the rest of the camp concerned the problem of intellectual honesty, one which every authoritarian form of religion must finally face.

Among the Protestant missionaries, diversity of opinion was so prevalent that at first it seemed embarrassing when compared to the clear unity enjoyed by our Catholic friends.

The fundamentalists and the liberals among us could work together, to be sure, when it came to services in the church and other common activities. But still their frequent bitter disagreements were painfully obvious and damaging. This was especially clear one night when a liberal British missionary gave a learned lecture on Christianity and evolution. The next night a leader among the fundamentalists responded with a blistering attack on “this atheistic doctrine” because it did not agree with the account of creation in Genesis.

A day later I happened to be sitting in the dining room next to a scholarly Belgian Jesuit. We had often talked together about theology and its relation to science. The Jesuit thoroughly agreed that the lecture by the fundamentalist had been stuff and nonsense.

He said that the quicker the church realized that she does not have in her revelation a mass of scientific information and so allows science to go on about its business without interference, the better for both the church and the world.

Two nights later, however, the leader and temporary “bishop” of the Catholic group gave his lecture on the same topic. He was a big, jovial, American priest, large of heart but not overburdened with education, either in science or in theology.

As he declared, he was only “going to give the doctrine I learned in seminary”.

Apparently the series so far had sown confusion (as well it might) in the minds of his flock, and so he had “to tell them what the truth is.”

I gathered that to him truth was equivalent to what he had “learned in seminary.”

Knowing him, we were not surprised that his lecture, although based on dogmatic ecclesiastical statements of various sorts rather than on particular verses of Genesis, repeated idea for idea the fundamentalist’s position of a few nights before.

From that time on my Jesuit friend sedulously avoided the subject of science and religion. Nor would he criticize in his temporary “bishop” the very concepts he had ridiculed in the Protestant.

Both critical faculties and independence of thought seemed to wither, once a matter had been officially stated, even on such a low level of ecclesiastical authority as we had.

[excerpt]

Over a year later, this same priest to my great surprise revealed again the difficulty an authoritarian religion has with intellectual honesty.

There was in camp a good-hearted but not intellectually very sophisticated British woman—divorced and with two small children—who was increasingly unhappy with her Protestant faith. As she explained to me once, her Anglican religion was so vacillating and ambiguous that she found no comfort in it.

It seemed to say Yes and then No to almost every question she asked.

Such vagueness on matters of great concern to her failed, apparently, to provide needed inner security for a lone woman in that crumbling colonial world.

So she was searching for something “more solid,” she said, to hang on to. I was not surprised when she told me this same Jesuit priest had begun to interest her in Roman Catholicism, nor

even when a month or so later she said she had been confirmed.

But I was surprised when she showed me with great pride the booklets the priest had given her to explain certain doctrines. Among them was one she especially liked. It described in great detail—and with pictures of Adam, Eve, and all the animals—the six days of creation and all the stirring events of the historical Fall.

Here were statements clear and definite enough for anyone looking for absolute certainty.

But whether she would have found that certainty had she heard the priest talk to me of science and theology, I was not so sure.

One thing I learned from this incident was that a mind needing security will make a good many compromises with what it once knew to be false.

When these same views—now expounded by the priest—had been expressed by the fundamentalist, she had felt them to be absurd. Clearly, the fundamentalist’s faith did not offer her the certainty she yearned for.

With the Jesuit, she was willing to pay the price of her own independence of thought, which she had formerly prized, in return for the greater gain of religious assurance. The same price, of course, was paid by the priest.

For the sake of the authority and growth of his church, he paid heavily in the good coin of his own independence and honesty of mind.

Perhaps she, as a lonely woman in need, gained from her bargain.

But I concluded—although no Catholic would agree with this—that he, as a highly educated and intelligent man, was quite possibly a loser with his.

Certainly, the most troublesome, if also exciting, aspect of our life for the younger Catholic fathers was their continual proximity to women—women of all ages, sizes, and shapes. With their rules relaxed so that they could work, they found themselves mixing with women to an extent which they had not known for years.

[excerpt]

Baker's religion was rigidly fundamentalist and conservative, and his moral standards equally strict.

Any deviation from his own doctrinal beliefs or any hint of a personal vice spelled for him certain damnation. From his bed in the corner, as we "bulled" together around the stove, he would cheerfully assure us that anyone who smoked, cussed, or told off-color jokes was certain to go to hell.

Near him in the row of beds were two American ex-marine—named Coolidge—and so-called "Cal"—and Knowles, and a Scottish atheist named Bruce who, despite his name, assured us he was not of Celtic origin:

"Goddamn it, I'm a Jew, I'm a Jew," he said to Baker one day when the latter tried to convert him.

[excerpt]

This bizarre view of Baker's was by no means typical of even conservative missionaries. What was typical of much conservative religion, however, was the radical separation in Baker's mind of what he thought of as moral concerns and what were, in fact, the real moral issues of our camp life.

For him holiness had so thoroughly displaced love as the goal of Christian living that he could voice such a prejudiced and inhuman policy with no realization that he was in any way compromising the character of his Christian faith or his own moral qualities.

As Cal put it with a laugh, "Thank the Lord he's only a harmless missionary."

[excerpt]

Everyone in camp—missionary and layman, Catholic and Protestant—failed in some way or another to live up to his own ideals and did things he did not wish to do and felt he ought not to do.

It was not of this common human predicament that I was thinking.

What I felt especially weak in these Protestants

were their false standard of religious and ethical judgment that frustrated their own desire to function morally within the community, for this standard judged the self and others by criteria which were both arbitrary and irrelevant.

In the end, it left the self-feeling righteous and smug when the real and deadly moral issues of camp life had not yet even been raised, much less resolved.

[excerpt]

"If that is morality, then I want none of it," said a man on our shift disgusted with this narrowness.

Serious religion in this way became separated from serious morality, with the result that both religion and morality—and the community in which both existed—were immeasurably debilitated.

The most pathetic outcome of this legalism, however, was the barrier it created between the self-consciously pious and the other human beings around them. Almost inevitably the conservative Protestant would find himself disapproving, rejecting, and so withdrawing from those who did not heed his own fairly rigid rules of personal behavior.

Once I watched with fascinated horror this process of rejection and withdrawal take place when a nice, young British fundamentalist named Taylor joined our cooking shift. Taylor wanted with all his heart to get along with the men there, to be warm and friendly to them, as he knew a Christian should be.

All went well for the first few hours or so; no one told a dirty joke or otherwise made life difficult for Taylor. But then when we were ladling out the stew for lunch, a few drops of the thick, hot liquid fell on Neal's hand.

Tom Neal was an ex-sailor of great physical strength and brassbound integrity.

Naturally, this British tar made the air blue with his curses as he tried to get the burning stew off his hand. When the pain was over, as it was in a minute or so, he relaxed and returned to his usual

bantering, cheerful ways.

But something was now different. Taylor hadn't said a word, nor had he moved a muscle. But he looked as if he had frozen inside, as if he had felt an uprush of uncontrollable disapproval.

That feeling, like all deep feelings, projected itself outward, communicating itself silently to everyone around. An intangible gulf had appeared from nowhere, as real as the stew both were ladling out of the cauldron.

Of course Neal felt it, and looked up closely and searchingly into Taylor's withdrawn and unhappy eyes. With surprising insight he said, "Hey, boy, them words of mine can't hurt you! Come and help me get this stew to the service line."

Taylor tried to smile; he hated himself for his reaction. But he felt immensely uncomfortable and spent the rest of his time with us on the shift spiritually isolated and alone.

He was happy, so he told me one day, only when he was with the other "Christian folk."

[excerpt]

Among the missionaries were indeed many who seemed free of the proud and petty legalism characteristic of numerous others. When this was the case, they contributed a great deal to our life: not only rugged honesty and willingness to work, but also the rarer cooperative and helpful spirit of persons dedicated to a wider welfare than their own.

Those missionaries were most creative; it seemed to me, whose religion had been graced by liberalism in some form. By this I do not mean to include people with any particular brand of theology. Rather it seemed apparent that people with all sorts of theological opinions, liberal or orthodox, could be immensely impressive as people so long as they never identified their own beliefs either with the absolute truth or with the necessary conditions for salvation.

These people were able to meet cooperatively and warmly with others, even with those who had no relation to Christianity at all. Whatever their code of personal morals might be, they knew

that love and service of the neighbor and self-forgetfulness even of one's own holiness, were what a true Christian life was supposed to be. Unlike the pious legalist, they attempted to apply no homemade plumb lines to their neighbors' lives, but sought only to help them whenever their help was really needed.

[excerpt]

The man who more than anyone brought about the solution of the teenage problem was Eric Ridley [*Liddell*].

It is rare indeed when a person has the good fortune to meet a saint, but he came as close to it as anyone I have ever known.

Often in an evening of that last year I (headed for some pleasant rendezvous with my girl friend) would pass the game room and peer in to see what the missionaries had cooking for the teenagers.

As often as not, Eric Ridley [*Liddell*] would be bent over a chessboard or a model boat, or directing some sort of square dance—absorbed, warm, and interested, pouring all of himself into this effort to capture the minds and imaginations of those penned-up youths.

If anyone could have done it, he could.

A track man, he had won the 440 in the Paris Olympics for England in the twenties, and then had come to China as a missionary.

In camp he was in his middle forties, lithe and springy of step and, above all, overflowing with good humor and love of life. He was aided by others, to be sure. But it was Eric's enthusiasm and charm that carried the day with the whole effort.

Shortly before the camp ended, he was stricken suddenly with a brain tumor and died the same day. The entire camp, especially its youth, was stunned for days, so great was the vacuum that Eric's death had left.

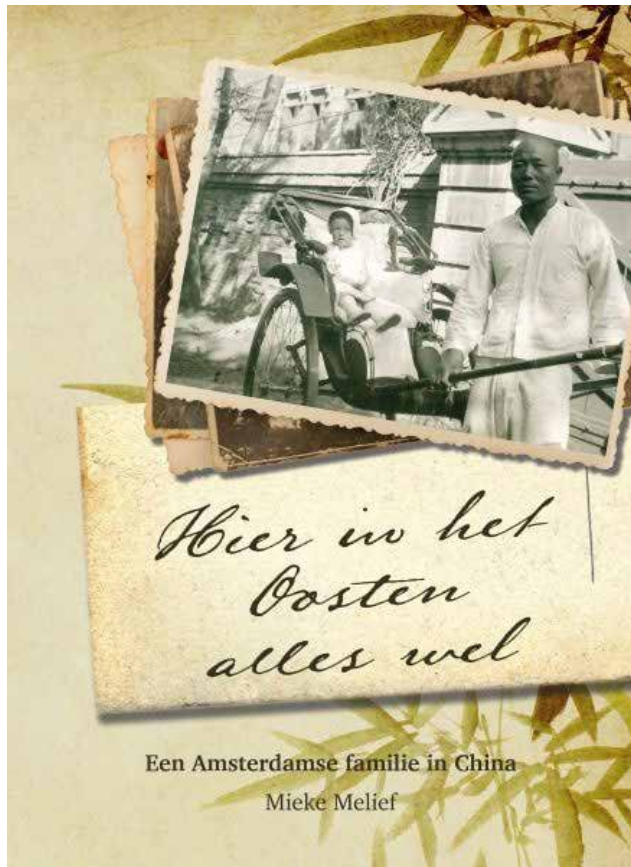
etc., etc., etc.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)

Annie deJongh remembers ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Hier_In_Het_Oosten_Alles_Wel/p_HierInHetOostenAllesWel.html



[Exerpts] ...



[...]

According to Leo his lordly uncle was not so exuberant, but he must have joined his former housemate chaplain Hubert Schlooz. He did leave a flattened thumb to the camp, because many had to do work for which they were not trained, such as carpentry.

Jan de Bakker and other mainly young missionaries were disappointed by the fact that all fathers and nuns were removed from the civilian camp at the hands of the Vatican. Bakker says: 'I thought it was stupid, we shouldn't have been treated better than the rest. We were right there. We all wanted to stay behind, but we weren't allowed to. You turned it into study time.

You had all kinds of specialists there and from different congregations.

What are we going to do later? There was a revolution in thinking. Contacts with people who weren't Catholic, dissenters, all kinds of religions. Had opened our eyes. "Lectures, theatre, music, disputes.

After most Catholic priests and nuns had left, a small unit of four priests and five sisters remained for the spiritual care of the internees, for the masses and for help in the church. The priests were, apprehensive; they had nothing to do with the Vatican and took care of the families & children in the camp.

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/people/individuals/Hanquet/p_Hanquet_pic.htm#56

Au camp de Weihsien, il y avait 1,500 internés (dont 300 catholiques) de 13 nationalités, en majorité des Anglais et des Américains. Après le départ des missionnaires, autorisés par les Japonais à vivre à Peiping (6 évêques, 400 prêtres, 200 religieuses), il ne restait en fait de missionnaires que 10 prêtres : 2 franciscains américains, 6 Auxiliaires des Missions, 1 Bénédictin belge et 1 jésuite belge. Il y avait également 6 soeurs américaines. 25 personnes reçurent le baptême au camp, toutes converties du protestantisme.

Parmi elles, Miss Brayne, une Anglaise, missionnaire de la «China Inland Mission».

Especially in the beginning, when there were still many Catholic monks in the camp, impressive and colourful masses were celebrated.

More than three hundred priests and one hundred nuns sang the Mass of Angels.

At Christmas there was a Mass on Christmas Eve and a Night Mass. At Easter there was an Easter vigil. Musical instruments were played. Later there were still beautiful masses on Christmas Eve and a night mass with the religious who stayed behind. Groups came together to pray or to study the Bible.

The priests were busy with baptisms, confessions of faith and marriages. Two hundred

and fifty Catholic marriages alone were blessed. In the Assembly Hall several services were held on Sundays, including a Catholic high mass and an Anglican service.

In the afternoon there was a meeting of the Union Church and the Brass Bands of the Salvation Army. On Thursday there was a separate performance of these Brass Bands every week, for which there was a lot of interest. About twenty Catholic orders were represented in the camp.

The Trappists gave up their vow of silence.

It was possible to confess in quiet places. Children were also prepared for their First Holy Communion.

The Jewish community had its own rites.

Protestants organised all kinds of activities for their religious community.

Sometimes things clashed between people with different religious beliefs, but this did not lead to serious conflicts. The camp, which mainly taught the residents to be open-minded, had a levelling effect on social and religious differences, because a powerful ecumenical élan arose.

At first there were also many mutual prejudices between the missionaries, who were seen as hypocritical fanatics and the taipans, which had gone to China for economic reasons and were seen as harsh, immoral people who exploited the Chinese and did not allow them to join the urban concessions and their clubs.

Many were doctors or teachers and worked very hard in that capacity.

In Weihsien they organised sporting and musical activities, which guided people through periods of hard work, lack of food and little perspective.

Music education played a major role in Anneke's life in the camp. Many people had their own instrument with them.

There were a few gramophones and many ebonite records brought by the prisoners.

Interested people gathered regularly in the evening, usually in Moongate Park, to listen to those records. All kinds of classical concerts and

recordings of chamber music were played in the open air. Everyone took stools with them to sit on. The other residents were aware that music was being listened to and quietly walked around Moongate Park.

During the first six months the Dutch Fathers organized music evenings, which were called Sing Song or the Sunday Evening Concerts and which became more and more extensive. They cheered the camp residents up tremendously. The conservative Belgian Bishop De Smedt played the accordion.

[excerpt]

Nice young fathers, who had always lived in monasteries, suddenly came to Weihsien, Shantung and became very popular.

They sometimes had romances with beautiful young girls.

Because of their direct contact with young women and their constant closeness they fell in love and vice versa.

Thus Anneke remembers a certain father, a handsome Franciscan, with whom she moped up as a blossoming adolescent and with whom she was secretly in love.

All sorts of barriers also fell away with the clergy. The camp became an ecumenism anyway. There were also a number of bishops and Anneke and her family with their friends — the priests of the Yung-Ping-Fu monastery — who had stayed with them in Tientsin often and to annoyance.

It often happened that a Mass with Three Lords was celebrated, because there were countless priests available. Fortunately, Anneke said, we had several bishops in the camp, including Bishop Lebouille and Bishop Geurts, Lazarists, and Bishop Pessers, a young French bishop who had once visited the De Jongh family in Tientsin and who would later baptise Anneke's youngest brother, Paultje.

On August 12, a young missionary, Nico Dames, died of cancer. He was given the most beautiful funeral the camp residents had ever seen or would see in the rest of their lives. The whole camp ran out and the funeral service was

led by the bishops who lived in the camp.

In addition to a large number of believers, all the religious, many of whom were musical and sang the polyphonic hymns during Mass from full breasts, were present at the service in full oratorio (as far as possible). Anneke remembers this bearded dead person well.

[excerpt]

A well-known Lazarist, was Father Verhoeven, who was very good at drawing and painting. He made numerous drawings and paintings of the buildings and grounds in the camp.

He also drew an accurate map of Weihsien.

Virtually no photographs were taken during the camp period, so Father Verhoeven's pictures are very valuable to the former camp residents, their relatives, and those interested.

[excerpt]

Unfortunately, most nuns and fathers had to leave the camp after six months. The internees were heartbroken, Anneke says.

The nuncio, the diplomatic representative of the Vatican, issued a decree on behalf of the Pope, stating that the Catholic religious had renounced their own nationality by entering the monastery and going on missions. They were first and foremost Catholics and members of the Vatican; the Vatican City was thus their homeland.

They no longer had allied nationality.

The nuncio also contacted the Japanese about this and they judged that the Catholic monks were unjustly imprisoned.

All of a sudden they all had to go back to the monasteries.

Presumably, the Pope feared that they would go to damnation in Weihsien because of the intensive contact with lay people.

The Lazarists were then more or less locked up in a French convent in Beijing, which was located in the compound of the Bei Tang Church, the neo-Gothic Catholic cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

They would stay here until 1945.

An official CM document from 1945 from the Lazarists, made available by Father Bellemakers CM, confirms that the Fathers stayed in the camp from March 23 to August 23.

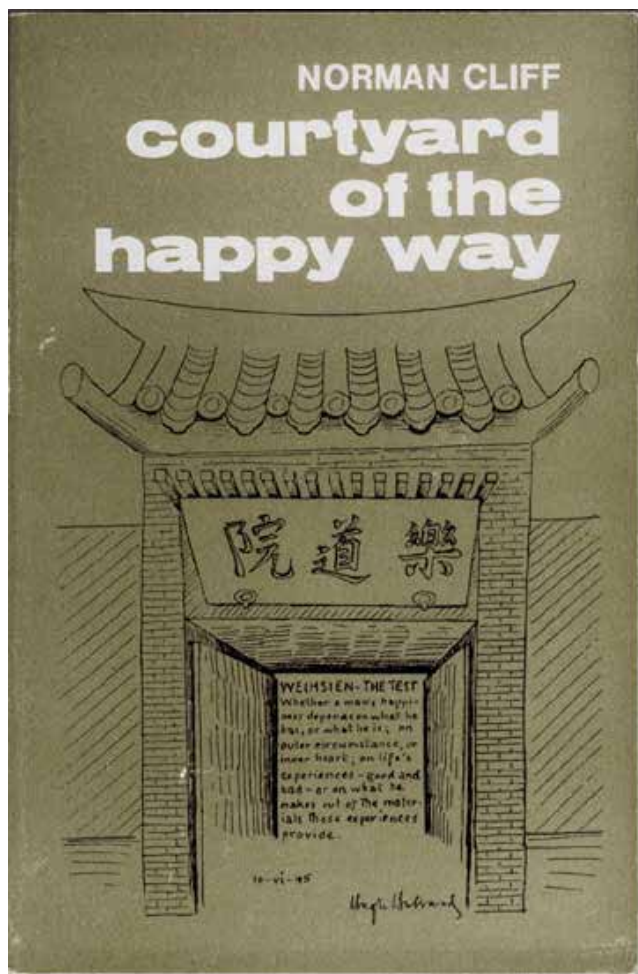
Anneke told them that everyone cried when they had to leave.

Quotation from the document:

After six months, Monsignor Zanin, the Pope's delegation, allowed the missionaries to leave the camp altogether, although the young people would have liked to continue sharing the fate of the civilians. But that would not have been without danger for them either. It was an apt farewell: many great weepers, the children almost all of them.

[further reading]

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Hier_In_Het_Oosten_Alles_Wel/p_HierInHetOostenAllesWel.html



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

These first internees had set to work with that resourcefulness and determination characteristic of the human race when looking for the basic comforts of life.

They cleared roads, cleaned the rooms, opened up three big kitchens (Kitchen I for the Tientsin community, Kitchen II for those from Peking and Kitchen III for Tsingtao internees), each feeding five hundred people.

Catholic priests from Belgium, Holland and America, mostly in their twenties, cleared the toilets and erected large ovens for the camp bakery.

[excerpt]

It was quite evident that the four hundred Catholic priests and nuns had made a great impact and profound impression on the internee community. They had turned their hands to the most menial tasks cheerfully and willingly, organised baseball games and helped in the educational programme for the young.

But inevitably romances had been formed between admiring Tientsin and Peking girls and celibate Belgian and American priests from the lonely wastes of Manchuria.

Anxious Vatican officials had solved the delicate problem by careful negotiations with the Japanese, as a result of which all but thirty priests had been transferred to an institution of their own in Peking where they could meditate and say their rosaries without feminine distractions.

Their departure had left a vacuum in effective manpower for such tasks as pumping, cooking and baking.

Thus the arrival of our Chefoo community aggravated the situation further, for out of the three hundred of us only about two dozen were potential camp workers, the remainder being school-children and retired missionaries.

[excerpt]

Another source of nourishment in the early period of internment was the parcels received by the missionaries from their stations in Peking, Tientsin and other places. Catholic nuns and priests received what seemed to us wonderful luxuries on a grand scale.

Protestant missionaries did not fare nearly as well.

[excerpt]

After the departure of the bulk of the Americans and Canadians for repatriation, and the transfer to Peking of the majority of the Catholic priests and nuns, as well as the arrival of our Chefoo community, there was a new "mix" of race, age and social grouping.

Sixty per cent were British, twenty per cent American, the remainder being a number of minority groups such as Belgian and Dutch.

Later we were to be joined by a hundred Italians after their country had capitulated to the Allies. Regarding them as “dishonourable Allies” in contrast to ourselves, who were “honourable enemies”, the Japanese placed them in a camp within a camp. They were interned in a block of houses behind the guard room, and at first were not encouraged to mix with the rest of us, but as the months went by the difference in status was dropped.

By profession and occupation there was first of all a large missionary community representing the entire spectrum of Protestant and Catholic missionary traditions; then there were top executive business men, and their families, employed by the major industrial and commercial companies, a group previously enjoying a high standard of living in Peking and Tientsin.

Largely from Peking were educationists and language students who had come to camp from the cloistered walls of university and college.

Last but not least, the camp included some of the drop-outs of Western society, who had run away from their past in a more sophisticated environment to enjoy the wine, women and song of North China’s underworld.

A well-known group in Far Eastern society consisted of White Russians who had fled from the 1917 Communist rising in Russia, stripped of land, wealth and status in the revolution which swept their motherland. In China they were a pathetic stateless people with little economic or social security. Many Russian women found security in marrying British and American business men. Some of these were in the camp. Fearful of revealing their earlier background of poverty and manual labour, they were loath to turn their hands to some of the less attractive tasks which camp life demanded, while the wives of British and American top brass executives readily did so; but it was quite foreign to their easy-going life before the war.

There were other internees of mixed blood-half Chinese, half Japanese, half Filipino.

There were four American Negroes who had been bandsmen in a Tientsin nightclub.

Among the various races were prostitutes, drug addicts and alcoholics, who found their particular moral weaknesses severely cramped in the Weihsien style life. Inevitably in such a community a few individuals stand out in my memory for their foibles and peculiar personality traits, or their uncommon saintliness and integrity.

[excerpt]

From the Roman Catholic priests (whom I greatly admired and came to regard as among my best friends in the camp-though I could not grasp the significance of their rituals and dogma) I had learned the habit of walking back and forth in the open for prayer and meditation. Kneeling at my bed to pray tended to put me to sleep from sheer exhaustion.

Into this situation came what I have come to regard as milestone number three in my spiritual pilgrimage. Back in the old Prep. School playground in Chefoo praying with a classmate on that Saturday afternoon eleven years previously, I had suddenly seen that God has no spiritual grandchildren, and that Christ was on the Cross for my sins and failures. Four years earlier was milestone number two when Father had baptised me on that summer day in 1940 in the bay in front of the schools, while the crowds on the beach were singing:

“Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus, Anywhere, everywhere, I will follow on .. .

[excerpt]

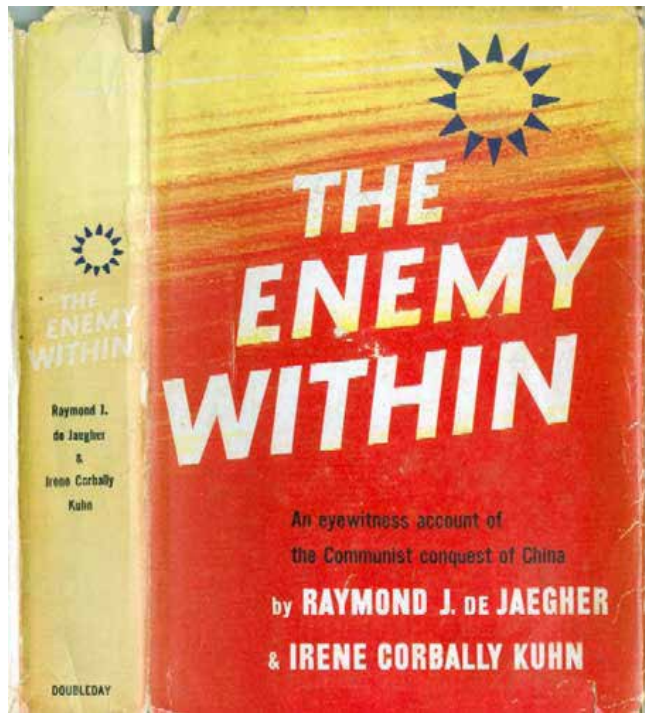
The more devout internees gave vent to their happiness in services of thanksgiving at the church in various traditions of Christian worship ? Catholic, Anglican and Free Church. The Edwardian style church, which had served at various times as school, prison and distribution centre, was now (as it had often been during the darker years of internment) the focal point of worship and heartfelt praise to the Lord.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

by Raymond deJaegher ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/ChapterXVIII.htm>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

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.

[excerpt]

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.

[excerpt]

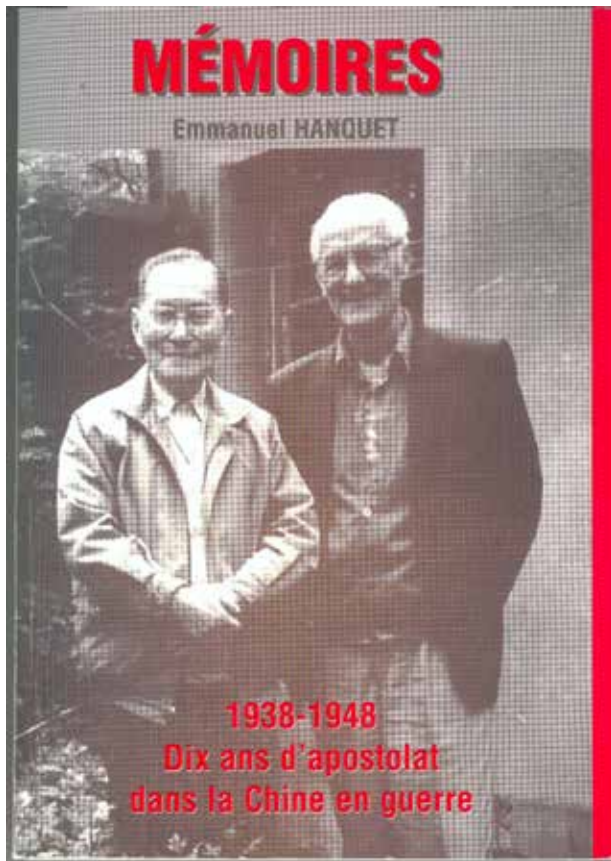
My excitement was twofold, for this was the first concrete evidence I had had that the men had managed to get away safely, and now we had a means of communicating with them and, through them, with the National Government. I confided now in two of my close friends, Mr. Mac Laren and Dr. H. W. Hubbard, 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.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/ChapterXVIII.htm>

by Emmanuel Hanquet ...

<http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Life slowly settled down. It was not yet a model community, but all bent themselves to the task of giving it a good foundation. Elections were held to establish committees to deal with various aspects of camp activity: committees for discipline, housing, food, schooling, leisure activities, religious activities, work, and health.

At first each committee comprised three or four people. Later, when camp life settled down to its cruising speed, we were to limit each committee to a single elected person. Every six months we replaced or reelected them.

[excerpt]

We shouldn't try to recruit everyone. Let us begin at the beginning! First we needed to establish a nucleus of scouting life, a patrol seven or eight strong. Junior Chan, a 14 year-old

Chinese Canadian catholic, could make a good patrol leader; Zandy, a Eurasian; the de Zutter brothers, who were Belgians aged 12 and 14; and finally three or four British lads. There was a good mixture of catholics and protestants, with one orthodox element for good measure.

It was decided that Cockburn should be in charge; the rest of us would be assistants.

[excerpt]

Old Mr. Kelly was a protestant missionary who had married a Chinese girl late in life; and who had arrived in camp with four young children. He stood out with his dress and his habits for he had gone completely Chinese: clothing, food, speech and way of life. His children ran about, dressed like Chinese children, accompanied by Dad who couldn't always keep up with them. One day little Johnny accompanied by his sister Mary ventured close to an open cesspool. [We had no sewers in the camp and the latrines were connected to trenches which were regularly emptied by Chinese coolies.] The predictable happened. Out of curiosity our Johnny went too close and of course fell in. Luckily his sister Mary was on watch. She gave the alarm to passers-by who were able to fish out Johnny before he died of suffocation. As a result of this misadventure he acquired the unusual nickname of Cesspool Kelly.

[excerpt]

Cigarettes were another source of currency,



at least for the non-smokers. We were entitled to a pack of a hundred cigarettes once a month from the canteen. That was not nearly enough for the serious smokers, but it was handy for those who could use them for barter. The children from Chefoo school — a protestant school which had arrived in camp complete with staff — used them to augment their bread ration, which was never enough to satisfy their hungry young stomachs.

[excerpt]

I liked him a lot, Brian, that tall sixteen year-old lad, the eldest of four children who had arrived in camp with their mother as part of the Chefoo School group. His father, Mr. Thompson, was in Chungking in charge of a protestant mission and had been separated from his family since Pearl Harbour. Although he was a protestant he had come to me, a catholic missionary, to ask for French lessons. We met twice a week, and thus I got to know him better.

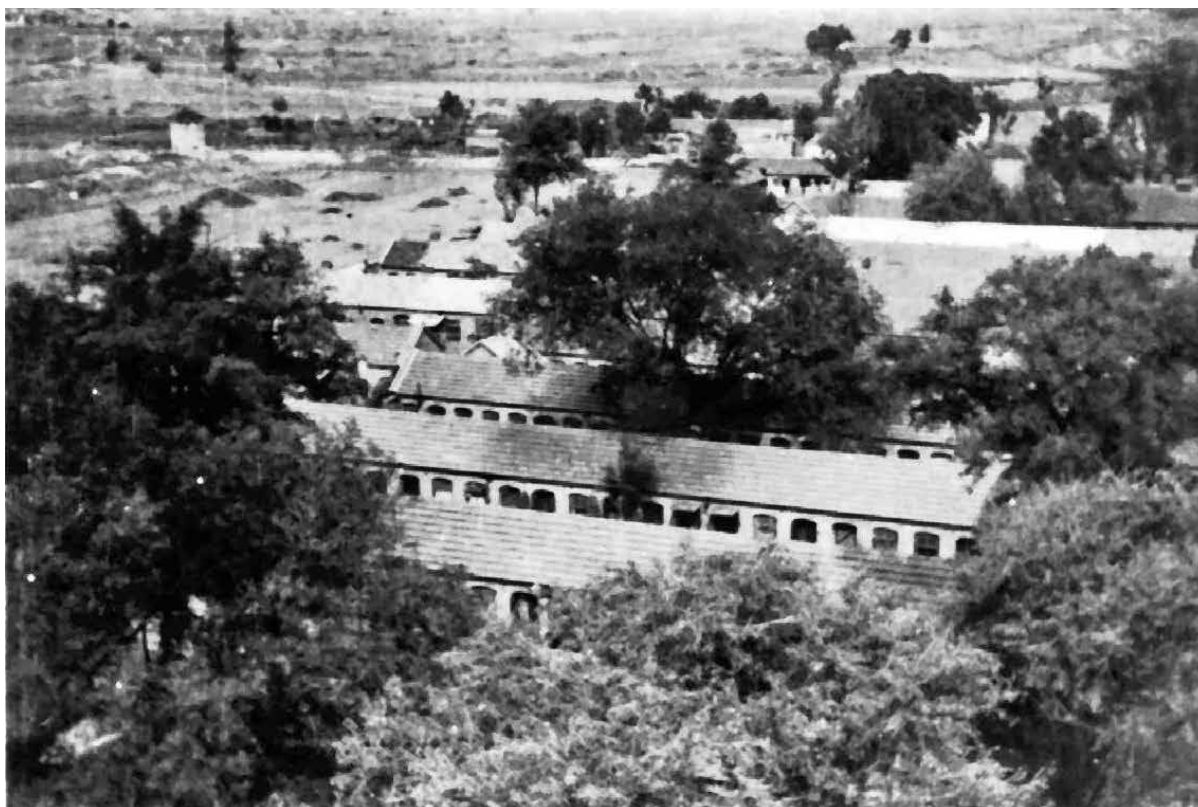
http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Aftermath/GordonMartin/p_GordonMartin.html

[excerpt]

On my right, between the hospital and the east wall of the camp, there is not a lot of space nor much vegetation, but nevertheless we held many a grand Scout function there and often operated a very profitable “Black Market,” most of all during the first months before the prison-like installations were so redoubtable and well coordinated. As the song lyrics said in the renowned musical revue in which 50 missionary priests went on-stage in shirts and white pants to entertain the public, everything passed over the wall: eggs, honey, sugar, soap, peanut oil and even, at times, pork quarters. In those good old days in our first months here, priests were the main specialists in these matters, due to a mixture of audacity and absence of commercial aspirations. To divide the goods and facilitate accountability in case of loss, each room, involved stored one or two items — some kept tobacco, eggs, sugar, we had the oil and jars of jam and sometimes alcohol as well.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



HERITAGE of FAITH

*A Chronicle
of the
Otis and Julia Whipple Family*

Pleasant Word

[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Today – what the British call “Boxing Day” – a special party and tea was arranged by the Catholic Sisters who have charge of our Camp School for the children. It began at 2:30 with games in the dining room, and at 4:00 everyone turned out for a Camp photograph, taken by a Japanese photographer on the tennis court.

It was bitterly cold waiting for him to get us arranged to his satisfaction and his camera adjusted.

Yesterday and today there has been a stiff north-west wind and we have hugged our stoves!!

[excerpt]

What do you think?

This noon one of the American Catholic Sisters

appeared at Lois’ room with a tray, bearing a complete lunch and she calmly announced that she was going to feed Lois three meals a day for the next three weeks!!

She wouldn’t let Lois or Nate say a word.

They feel Lois isn’t getting the proper food to nurse the baby, so they are supplying it!

Really, the group of Sisters here are lovely women. They have done much for the kiddies and for the whole Camp.

We are here all together and just trust the Lord that no impressions will be given the children that will be difficult later. These Sisters have the children in school, too, day by day and certainly the standard of pedagogy is higher than they got at home with us!!

[excerpt]

Sonny’s birthday.

I got up at 6:30 to build the fire; made coffee for Marian and me and cocoa for the kids, then they all got in or on Sonny’s bed and he opened his presents.

There was a tie and fountain pen (one of Marian’s) and wool gloves from Mummy and Daddy; a \$5.00 bill, gum and candy and pair of knitted gloves from Lois and Nate and their kiddies and notebooks from others.

We ordered a cake from a Russian bakery near by and it came at noon.

The Catholic Sisters had a gallon of ice cream made for us at their home – so at Children’s Supper we had a real party.

I preached at 4:15 and the Lord gave liberty and, I trust, blessing. Nate led the service and I played the piano as usual. At the last minute, Mrs. Reinbrecht was sick and could not come to sing her soprano part in the special duet – so I

“pinchhitted” for her – sang her part!!

In the evening after roll-call, Lois and Nate and we two finished off the ice cream and cake with a cup of coffee – the first ice cream we grown-ups have tasted since coming into Camp.

[excerpt]

Played ball at 2 p.m.

The last evening or two Marian and I have been practicing duets for Sunday services, with Miss Clara Sullivan of the Lutheran Mission.

She has a lovely voice and it’s lots of fun – even tho’ the piano is terrible! Once in awhile I practice a bit on a violin belonging to one of the American Catholic Sisters.

[excerpt]

Our central living day ’dining room came next for the s sweeping and mopping, and our two bed rooms were set in order before Elden went off to work in the carpenter shop or to pump water, while I chased off to headquarters.

Marian collected bottles and bag, and journeyed to the hospital for the days ’ supply of eggs and milk, paid for by the internees.

When she became strong enough, Lois continued with house work, though the baby took up most of her time.

I moved around in my capacity as a General Affairs Committee member, from canteen to shoe shop to library, putting in a nail here for the ladies in the sewing room, or scrounging a box from the rear of the canteen to make additional shoe shelves for our industrious and capable Flemish Catholic shoe repairers.

Elden served more nobly on the Music Committee.

“ Thus noon came upon us and we consumed weak soup, a little potatoes (rare), a little meat, and a little tsai ” (vegetable) in some sort of gravy,

supplemented with baked bread, in the community dining room, with eight hundred others, plus uncounted flies!

The dishes, our own, were washed outside by the faithful ladies, and we returned home for a brief rest.

Elden and I resumed our appointed tasks in the afternoon, returning for tea. Elden ’ s brew of black tea always tasted so good that some friends from different parts of camp came daily at that hour to see us!

Music practice, baseball, or making coal balls out of coal dust and mud took up the rest of the afternoon.

[excerpt]

Conviviality existed throughout the camp.

Over four hundred Roman Catholic priests and nuns left the encampment for Peking.

In the course of time another rumor came true in the arrival of our Chefoo friends to be repatriated. It was so good to see Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, Mrs. Hannah, and Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Taylor again, and to learn from them of Chefoo camp life.

All the rest of the Chefoo internees arrived but two weeks before we left Camp. Most of the Camp turned out on both occasions to welcome their entry through the “ prison ” gates.

Our negro band played welcoming music while the crowd cheered.

Trucks of baggage rolled in, followed by over 340 children and teachers on foot.

An even greater spectacle than the children was old Mr. Herbert H. Taylor (son of J. Hudson Taylor), eightytwo years of age, with bent back and flowing white beard, briskly walking up the incline with the aid of his cane. Here they came: children and old men and women, virtual prisoners of war in a country friendly to them but overrun by an aggressor nation.



Time passed quickly, and some news of world events came over the walls, enabling us to keep above the feeling of being uninformed as to Allied progress toward ultimate victory.

[excerpt] on board m/v Teia Maru

At our third class dining saloon table sat those who made the eating part of life during seasick days somewhat endurable. Most interesting conversations took place.

There were five of us at first: Dr. H. Loucks, head of the famous Peking Union Medical College, Professor R. Sailer, Mr Personius, former Marine Radio expert, a Roman Catholic priest a very pleasant fellow, but one utterly unconscious of the stench produced by his pipe, and myself.

En route to Hong Kong, we traveled over very peaceful waters and felt we were at last out of the reach of military tyrants though still in the clutches of their boor representatives.

Almost half of the passengers were missionaries, Protestant and Roman Catholic. Greek New Testaments, English and Hebrew Bibles, and Latin prayer books were visible in the hands of devoted students all over the ship all of the time.

From remarks overheard it made a certain class of people feel much out of place.

On the boat deck aft, replacing a gun which evidently was there in former days, there stood on the concrete emplacement a large white cross on a high frame. This was illuminated at night and in its brilliant glow each evening many missionaries and other Christians gathered to sing choruses and hymns to the praise of the glory of God.



[excerpt]

Looking out past the long breakwater at 6 p.m. – far out over a wide expanse of the Indian Ocean the heavens once more declared the glory of God in a sunset brilliant with red and gold.

An Indian dhow with full sails to the wind clearly silhouetted against that beautiful background, declared man's freedom to enjoy God's glory.

I wondered if anyone on that large dhow knew the world's Saviour, or if the darkness of Catholicism through the ages from Xavier's day in this section of India permitted no light of Truth to shine.

Then it happened, the Gripsholm came in sight!...and word passed around brought most of the fifteen hundred repatriates, it seemed, to the decks to see her beautiful white outline. Such a contrast to the dirty grey of the Teia Maru.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/HeritageOfFaith/WhippleWWII\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/HeritageOfFaith/WhippleWWII(web).pdf)

by Gordon Martin ...

http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Aftermath/GordonMartin/p_GordonMartin.html



[Excerpt] ...

'GOD meant it unto good,' as He means all things to work together for good for His servants. Hard times are not something for us to dodge, not something to get through as soon as possible; they are a rough field to be tilled for a harvest: they are something which GOD can train us to welcome. But GOD's purpose of good is for us to attain, and afterwards we must not let it slip away.

What good has come from Weihhsien ?

It was good that missionaries and business people should live together. Both sorts live in China absorbed in their own lives there is usually little intercourse and too much feeling of difference. In internment camps, missionary and business man were neighbours, knowing each other's ways and temper; sharing camp duties, sweeping, carrying garbage; standing in the same queues, silent queues, impatient and resentful queues, talkative, cheerful queues; seeing each other take hardship or responsibility. Many of us are very grateful for the chance of knowing fine men and women from the business world, whom we should never have met but for internment.

Then what a chance to meet our missionary partners ! The whole missionary body of North-East China was in Weihhsien, except for German or neutral missionaries. We were of different denominations and diverse in outlook; but we had a Weihhsien Christian Fellowship, a Fellowship in spirit as well as in organisation. In this matter we

owed very much to Harold Cook, of the Methodist Missionary Society, and to Bishop Scott (S.P.G.). We all had a chance of enrichment, and we shall have friends everywhere, as a result of internment.

These new contacts made possible new duties.

We from Chefoo were no longer living in a small largely feminine community. We had to work with men and commend our Gospel by being active and efficient. Some of us were Wardens looking after the needs of people in our blocks ; others were cobblers, bakers, butchers. Gordon Welch became manager of the camp bakery - a vital function! - and for a long time he served on the most difficult of the camp committees, the Discipline Committee. Managing the games for the camp, running a Boys' Club in the winter, running Scout and Guide activities, and many other tasks gave us new chances of being useful. Cleaning vegetables, issuing stores, managing the sewing room, mending clothes were less interesting tasks : but all meant new contacts; and new contacts and necessary tasks were for our profit.

As I think about the Chefoo boys and girls in the camp, what was their gain? We know that their book learning was curtailed, that they went through considerable discomfort, and that they were tested severely in character. **Some minds have been contaminated**, early training has been shaken, standards have become uncertain or lowered. Close contact with men and women of every sort has opened the eyes of our boys and girls: they have seen dishonest and vicious people; they realize how widely diverse are the standards of conduct and amusement, even among people of upright life; they have seen many varieties of Christian life and worship.

To assimilate so much experience was not easy without some upsets. But in these matters they are the better fitted by these experiences to enter the adult world of their home countries. And tests are God-given: we do not know the end of these tastings. To counter-balance those boys and girls whom we think of as defeated, we look at others

who not only survived the tests, but triumphed; who were shaken, but ended with their convictions settled on the Rock. I believe that most of our boys and girls will be stronger for life because of Weihsien.

In self-reliance, in manifold abilities they have gained greatly: cooking, stove-building and tending, household duties are familiar to them. To choose their own occupations, their own reading, friends, way of spending much of Sunday, the fashion of their private devotions - these choices have been forced upon them by circumstances. For choosing adult careers, they are better equipped both by what they have done and by the contacts they have had, than by the ordinary training of school and college.

Will our internment mean any gain for the Chinese ?

I think the Chinese will feel themselves nearer to us for two reasons. First, the missionary lost his national superiority . For so long, we Westerners had been neutrals, looking on while the Japanese armies invaded China ; now we have been with the Chinese, equally the objects of Japanese control and spoliation. Then, the missionary lost his superior economic position : no longer was the missionary rich (compared with the average Chinese) and living in comfort (compared with most Chinese houses). The missionary was now housed in Chinese houses : he was in need of every scrap of fuel now, and went gathering cinders from rubbish heaps, like any Chinese beggar; the missionary lived on the simplest foods and relished the simplest Chinese extras, peanuts, soy-bean sauce, jujube dates, to flavour the dull fare. So we have 'eaten bitterness', as the Chinese say, sharing the dish of deprivation from which most Chinese eat constantly. This should be a real bond between Chinese and missionary.

Looking back on Weihsien, I feel we have learnt for life (though I know how easy it is to forget GOD's lessons) that externals don't touch internals. What is outside can't affect what is inside: in two ways. Covetousness does not come from outside, but inside. It was easy when supplies ran short, to excuse oneself for covetousness on the score that it was natural to make sure you (and your family) had enough, but when airborne supplies came

beyond our needs, still the covetous heart urged people to grab, even with abundance around. But even more, contentment, and resting in GOD, are not caused by external circumstances, nor are they at the mercy of adversity. So 'I congratulate myself on the pressure of adversity; for adversity fashions endurance, and endurance produces tested character, and character breeds hope; and that sort of hope never lets us down, because GOD loves us and GOD has revealed His love in our experience.'

Gordon Martin

March – April 1946

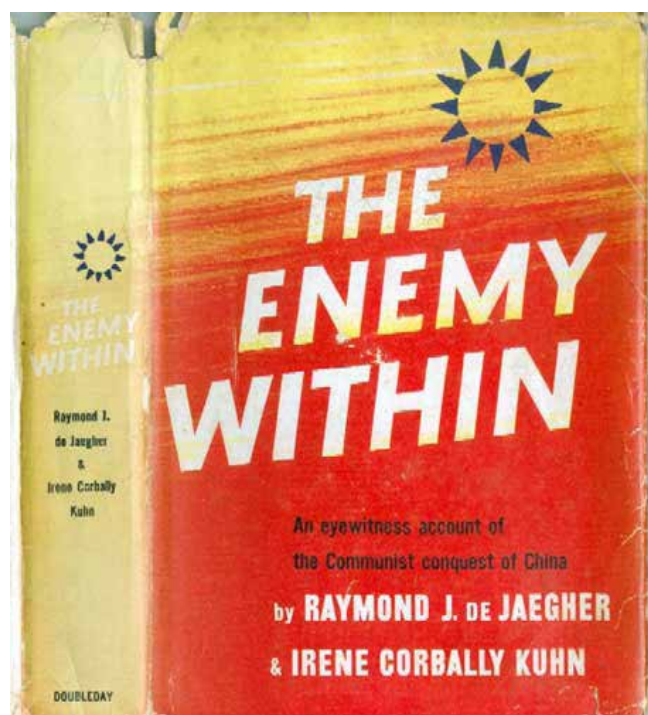
http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Aftermath/GordonMartin/p_GordonMartin.html

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)
[read page 29](#)

THE ESCAPE

by Raymond deJaegher ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

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

[excerpt]

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 often times 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 element 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.

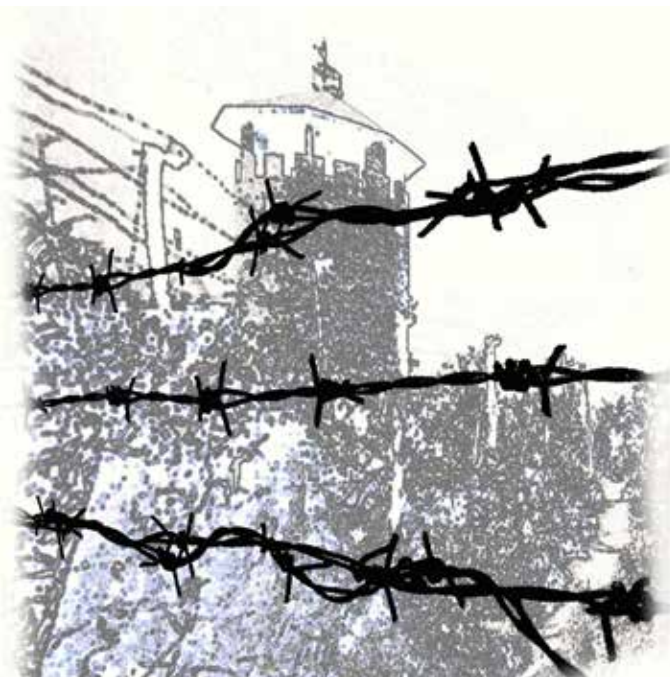
As I said, it took a year of careful working out and fitting together of these principal elements in our plan, but finally all was ready. The date was set; we had word from the guerrillas that they would meet us at the cemetery and lead us to

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-bye 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. Mac Laren 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 tenderhooks and I worked every day with the lavatory coolies,

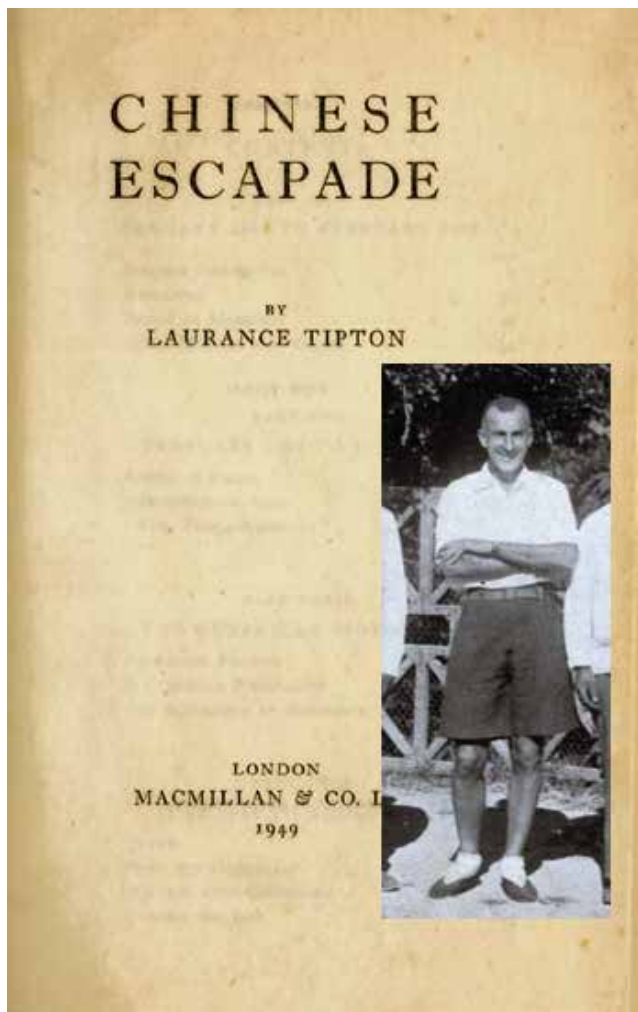
but no single hint was forthcoming from any one of them that he had any message for me. Two, three months went by. And then one day, as I was mumbling "fifty-six," the identifying word, a new coolie sided over to me and whispered that he had something for me. When we could get into my "office," which 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. Mac Laren and Dr. H. 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.

[further reading] ...

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher\(WEB\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/R_deJaegher(WEB).pdf)



[Exerpts] ...

[...]

The camp was by no means ready for occupation by such a large group of people, and even the Japanese themselves realised that there was yet much to be done.

Reluctantly, therefore, they allowed specially selected gangs in to complete the necessary repairs: cesspool coolies to whom they had sold the sole rights on this popular form of fertiliser, a tin-smith to make pots, pans and buckets for the use of the kitchens, and a group of carpenters.

At first these workmen were not searched very closely and several of the carpenters used to fill their toolboxes with eggs. In order to keep

in close touch with these men, I made a regular contract for a couple of dozen eggs a day in an effort to gather what information I could regarding conditions outside the camp, but either they knew little about them, or refused to talk.

Having eventually gained the confidence of my egg man, I decided to have some Chinese clothes made, realising that it would be far too conspicuous to wear foreign clothes if one wanted to try and escape. Cloth was very expensive, and feeling that I should conserve my funds, I gave him a pair of sheets, which he agreed to dye black and have made into a Chinese jacket and trousers by his wife.

In due course he came into the camp wearing the jacket over his own, which aroused no suspicions, as the Chinese wear from one to six layers, depending upon the temperature. The trousers, he promised, would be forthcoming in a day or so.

As his work took him to various sections of the camp, and since at that time I was working in the butchery every morning, it was arranged that he should throw them through the back window of our room which overlooked one of the much-used footpaths of the camp.

One morning our neighbour, the Bishop of the Anglican Mission was lying on his bed reading when, suddenly, a pair of black trousers came flying through the window and landed on his chest. The Bishop's immediate reaction was one of righteous indignation.

"Evidently," he thought "someone has stolen these trousers from a washing-line and, being caught in the act, has thrown them through the nearest window"

In a moment he was stirred to action and, dashing up the alley, made record time to the path behind our row, waving the offending trousers in the air and shouting "Thief ! Thief !"

A crowd soon gathered.

The theft seemed difficult to explain, as

there was no clothes-line in the vicinity. Much speculation ensued, but no one claimed the trousers and in due course the Bishop returned, having decided that the correct procedure was to hand them in to the lost property office.

When I returned from work that afternoon, I was told the story of the mysterious Chinese trousers and, reluctantly, I decided that if I wanted my trousers the only thing to do was to own up.

So I explained to the Bishop that I had ordered them as my own clothes got so greasy and dirty in the butchery. I felt very sure that he did not really appreciate my explanation, and from that time onwards he always looked a little surprised to see me amongst those present at the morning roll-call.

The trousers having had so much publicity, I had no alternative but to wear them, and from then on they became known as "the Bishop's Jaegers".

There were of course several groups who from time to time interested themselves in the possibility of making a break from camp. For the first month or so C— of the China Soap Company, Arthur Hummel and myself worked on the idea.

Through Chinese working in the camp, letters were dispatched to friends outside in an endeavour to make contacts; messages were sent to Tientsin and Tsingtao, and we even sent a messenger up to Peking, but all to no avail.

We got into touch with some of the Catholic priests who, up to the time of concentration, had been working in Shantung, and received from them a lot of helpful information and sound advice, but nothing practical materialised.

Later I worked with D— who always swore that he had infallible connections.

We held long uninterrupted conversations with the black-marketeteers as to the possibility of being guided to the nearest Chungking troops, but with these people such matters always revolved around the question of money. Invariably they asked for a great deal more than we could possibly raise and we never got very far with them, as their main interest was the black market.

Some months later our efforts were revived by

one of the Catholic Fathers concerned in the black market. He had been in touch with someone who he was sure would help us.

Many letters were exchanged over the wall, and a certain amount of money, but once again the plan fell through.

By now it was well into the autumn and we realised that if we were going, we should have to get out before the winter set in, and as there seemed to be little hope of that, gradually the matter was dropped.

Nevertheless I continued to keep up my contacts with the Chinese workers, and when they were changed, which was frequently, they would either recommend me to their successor or to someone else who was remaining, with the result that I had outside contacts the whole time.

[excerpt]

The Committee was worried: the food situation threatened to get worse; there was no indication of comfort-money payments being resumed. Italy had capitulated, the Americans were pressing the Japanese in the Pacific, and the papers began to admit the possibility of an Allied invasion of Europe.

With the turn of the tide the position of the camp became a matter of some concern. What would be the Japanese reaction to increasing Allied victories?

Would they take it out of the internees or would they endeavour to ingratiate themselves with the camp?

What would be the final outcome?

What were the conditions outside the camp?

Communists?

Roving hordes of irregular bandit-troops?

Were there any reliable Chungking forces in the area? Would the Japanese in the camp be attacked or would they, in a mad spirit of reprisal, massacre the internees?

At this point, rumours were heard amongst those close to certain members of the Committee, of a letter having been received from a Chungking unit. There was talk of a ridiculous scheme to

rescue members of the camp, on a secret airfield and relays of planes that would whisk us all off to Chungking.

This, I decided, was worth further investigation, and finding de Jaegher, we went off together to see Hubbard of the American Board Mission, who, we felt, would know all about it.

Hubbard was an extremely sound man with years of experience of China and the Chinese, a man of wide interests and incidentally the leading ornithologist in North China; I had made a practice of discussing with him the various plans which we had made from time to time.

Being on the Committee, we felt sure he would know the details of this latest development. We were not disappointed. He showed us the original letters and the Committee's courteous but non-committal reply. The letter in Chinese received from the Commander of this Chungking unit was certainly interesting:

H.Q. 4th Mobile Column, Shantung -Kiangsu War Area.

Beleaguered British and Americans: Greetings to all. The dwarf islanders, the brigands and robbers! have upset the order of the world.

My countrymen have experienced their brutality in war and widespread calamity with human sacrifice beyond any comparison in human history. Without taking account of virtue and measuring their strength, they dared to make enemies of your countries so that you have met with great misfortune and have been robbed of your livelihood and happiness.

We can well imagine that your life in Hades must reach the limits of inhuman cruelty.

As I write this I tear out my hair by the roots. But the Allies in the Pacific, in south-east Asia and on the mainland of China have counter-attacked with great success. I beg of you to let your spirits rise.

My division is able to rescue you, snatching you from the tiger's mouth, but the territory we control is small and restricted and I cannot guarantee your safety for a long period.

If you will request your consuls to send planes to pick you up and take you to the rear after I have released you, then my divisions can certainly save you.

Regarding this matter I am asking Mr. Chen to find some way of getting in touch with you and to make arrangements. I respectfully hope that you will be able to carry out these plans and send you all my good wishes.

Wang Yu-min 33rd year of the Republic of China, Fifth month, fourth day (4/5/'44)

Together with this was received a letter in English from Mr. Chen :

DEAR FRIENDS,

This serves to inform you that first of all I have to introduce myself to you. I was first-class interpreter in the Chinese Labour Corp, B.E.F., during the last War. . . .

I have been in Ch'angyi just a couple of months and the first thing I decided with the Commander and the Assistant Commander is to arrange to save you all out from the camp and then send you back to your own country.

But please note that from here to Chungking is rather difficult to go right through as the Jap soldiers are all blocked up the ways. So we have to arrange to send you all back by air. In this connection, we have to send a few special men (and I myself) to Chungking to connect the matter and request the Chinese Central Government, American and British ConsulateGenerals to arrange to send down some big aeroplanes for the transportation, so therefore before we save you all from the camp we have a lot of things to do such as to build the aerodrome for the planes to land and etc.

However, after everything settled up we will let you know beforehand.

Kindly believe us that we are easily to save you all out as we have over 60,000 soldiers staying in Ch'angyi area . . . wishing you all have good luck.

Please keep patient for the time being. We may not act till the kaoliang crops grow up. Wait! Wait! I remain, Yours very truly, S. W.

Chen

P.S.—God will help us.

Subsequent letters were received, elucidating the details of this hare-brained scheme and announcing that construction of the landing field had been commenced in the area held by these troops.

As soon as the crops had grown to their maximum height, the camp would be attacked, the Japanese guards annihilated, the internees transported to this airfield and flown off by relays of planes to Chungking, where they would live happily ever after!

The Committee replied that much as they appreciated the compassionate motives behind this scheme, they feared that owing to the large percentage of women and children, the sick and the aged, it would not be a practical move and regretted that it could not in these circumstances be considered.

It was not long before a reply was received which, completely ignoring the Committee's polite but firm refusal, announced that their representative was about to leave for Chungking and requested a letter of introduction to our Embassies.

It further exhorted the internees to be patient, for as soon as the crops were high enough to afford cover, they would be rescued.

The Committee, who had not the slightest desire to be rescued in this way, were in rather a dilemma, as, if this unit did in their enthusiasm attack the camp, there was no knowing what would be the outcome.

Something must be done to stop it.

Ted McLaren, H—, de Jaegher and I discussed the matter at great length; de Jaegher and I felt that at last we were in touch with a genuine proChungking unit and that this was the moment to which we had been working for the past year. If the matter was judiciously handled, we could obtain our objective and at the same time be of some service to the camp.

We convinced McLaren and H— that for the

benefit of the camp this connection should not be ignored, and pointed out that we should work towards turning this wild scheme to some more practical form of assistance of real benefit.

From then onwards the matter was turned over to us with the understanding that we should keep them fully informed on any future developments.

We immediately sent off a letter to Mr. Chen to the effect that this whole scheme was of great importance to the camp and needed much careful planning, which could not possibly be carried out successfully through the present hazardous means of communication.

We therefore suggested sending two representatives to the Commander's Headquarters to discuss this matter. In due course we received a reply from Mr. Chen stating that he thought this could be arranged and he was leaving immediately for Headquarters to discuss details with Commander Wang Shang-chih and Vice-Commander Wang Yu-min.

In the meantime we had started to assemble what we thought it necessary to take with us, deciding that we would limit our gear to a knapsack apiece.

De Jaegher's superior Father Rutherford, happened to call in just as he was re-checking the contents of his knapsack. It did not take Father Rutherford long to tumble to the idea and he forbade de Jaegher to leave. McLaren, H— and I argued with him alternately but without success.

Although entirely in favour of the scheme, he felt that he could not afford to have the Catholic Church involved for fear of consequences, not so much in the camp as elsewhere, and now that de Jaegher's part in this plan had come to his knowledge, he had no alternative but to stop him.

He added, however, that he would of course pray for the success of the mission.

This was a great disappointment as we considered de Jaegher's experience and knowledge of the language invaluable.

Looking around for someone else to take his place, I asked Arthur Hummel, who needed little



CAMP WALL FROM THE OUTSIDE, SHOWING SEARCHLIGHT, WATCH-TOWERS AND THE ELECTRIFIED BARBED-WIRE FENCE OVER WHICH HUMMEL AND THE AUTHOR ESCAPED

persuasion to fall in with the scheme.

Although successive disappointments had made us some-what sceptical, we could not help but feel that this time we had the right connection and it was with eager anticipation that we kept our appointment at the wall on the scheduled days.

But for a week our man failed to come.

Then one day he appeared only to signal “no message”.

Another week passed without any news and we felt that, after all, this connection which had offered so much promise was obviously going to fall through, as had all the others.

[excerpt]

ONE Saturday morning towards the end of May 1943 [sic] — (*in fact, it was in May, 1944*), we received a number of Japanese English-language newspapers which the Japs let us have from time to time, and there, on the middle page of one issue, was a half-column account of a successful Japanese mopping-up operation against this very unit with whom we were negotiating.

It claimed that Japanese planes had completely demolished the Headquarters of these “bandit troops” whose forces had been routed by a Japanese expeditionary force. Ammunition and clothing depots had been destroyed and the leader of this band, Wang Shangchih, captured.

This at least seemed to prove beyond doubt the existence of such a unit. Resigned to yet another failure, we were amazed when a few days later we received a letter from Mr. Chen.

He apologised for the delay due to the large-scale Japanese attack on their Headquarters at Suncheng, during which their Commander, Wang Shangchih, had been captured and taken as a prisoner to Tsingtao. The new Commander, Wang Yumin, was still entirely in agreement with our plans and if we would advise them of the date on which we proposed to leave the camp, the necessary preparations would be made and plans communicated to us in due course.

We consulted Tommy Wade as to the most suitable place to get over the wall, and it was decided that a small watch-tower in the middle of the west wall was the ideal spot. An indentation in the line of the wall obscured this section from the direct rays of the searchlight on the north-west corner of the athletic field.

It was, however, exposed to the search-light on the watch-tower at the southern end of the wall in the Japanese residential section of the camp. The guard was changed at 9 P.M. and it was customary for the new guard to make a tour of inspection along the alley-ways in this section after coming on duty. This usually took about ten minutes.

During those ten minutes we would have to make our get-away.

It was essential that there be no moon, but on the other hand we felt that a moon would be of considerable assistance to us once we had got clear of the camp ; such ideal conditions would prevail on the 9th and 10th of June, which would give us exactly one week in which to prepare.

Having decided on these two alternative days, we replied to Mr. Chen and advised him that the rendezvous would be at a thickly-wooded cemetery a little over a mile north-east of the camp between nine and midnight on the 9th or 10th of June.

The suspense of the ensuing week was unbearable.

The knowledge that within a few days we would have finished with this futile existence made us pity the other internees who would have

to endure it for the duration ; the excitement and the anticipation made us long to tell the world.

Each day passed like a week and each night a month of rest-less tossing and turning.

As part of our plan to help exonerate our room-mates, we started to sleep outside, as many people did during the summer months. This would at least clear them of the blame for not reporting our absence if our beds were found empty at the ten o'clock lights-out.

I resigned from my cooking job and, having worked for four months on a stretch, asked the Labour Committee for a few days' rest. We did all we could to make our absence as inconspicuous as possible.

On the evening of 8th June we received the reply.

Every-thing had been arranged, a posse of plain-clothes soldiers would meet us at the appointed place and escort us to a point two miles to the north, where a mounted detachment would be awaiting us with ponies; we should be at their Head-quarters by dawn.

A postscript was added, requesting that we bring a typewriter with us, as the only one the unit possessed had been destroyed in the recent bombing, and a watch and a fountain pen for the correspondent were also required!

There was little more to be done. We went to see McLaren and told him we would be leaving the following night. Although he agreed, he did not seem now to be so enthusiastic about the scheme.

The next morning he asked us to go over to see him again. He wanted us to call it off.

The new Chief of the Japanese Guards, who had only just taken up his position, was an unknown quantity; he appeared to be rather a tough customer. There would doubtless be reprisals.

We had discussed this angle long ago and it had been decided that any consequences visited upon the internees would be more than outweighed by the advantages derived from established connections with a reliable pro-Chungking unit. But since then this change in the

Chief of the Guards had been made and McLaren was not now in favour of the scheme.

That afternoon we had a further talk with him. Arthur and I felt that the arrangements had gone too far for us to back out now unless we wished to lose connection with this unit altogether, and in the end Mac eventually admitted that if he were in our position, he would most probably go.

He left it to us to decide, on the understanding that if we did go, then we must arrange with either Wade or de Jaegher to let him know once we had got clear of the wall, so that he would at least be prepared for the rampages of the Chief when he got to hear about it the following morning.

That evening I told my room-mates; they of course had been aware that some such move was in the air. I knew it would put them in an awkward position the next morning when we were found to be missing and it was only fair to give them warning.

Arthur Hummel also told one of his room-mates and it was agreed that if they could get by with-out reporting our absence at roll-call, they would not do so till later in the morning. By eight, Tommy Wade and his scouts were out on the job on the west wall, checking the activities of the guards.

At eight-thirty I pulled on "the Bishop's Jaegers" and a black Chinese jacket, and joined Arthur in the vicinity of the wall.

The guard was changed but he did not leave his post for the customary walk around. We waited anxiously — eventually he strolled away, but there were two people sitting outside their room directly facing the spot from which we intended to leave.

By the time they were out of the way, the scouts had lost track of the guard! We decided to take a chance. In a moment we were up in the tower and had let ourselves carefully down the wall till our feet touched a pile of conveniently placed bricks.

Tommy Wade followed with a small stool.

From the stool I stepped inadvertently on to Tommy's bald head instead of his shoulder, and

with a hand on the post of the electrified fence, vaulted over. Arthur followed and our knapsacks were thrown to us.

We saw Tommy on his way back up the wall and then made a dash for a graveyard some fifty yards away and flung ourselves behind the nearest grave.

A pause to collect our breath, and we made another dash which took us out of range of the searchlights, and, taking our bearings from the camp, we headed directly north over ploughed fields, through wheat crops, stumbling over ditches and sunken roads until we reached the stream that flowed north of the camp.

Wading across this, we headed in the direction of the cemetery.

The moon was rising.

In less than half an hour we could make out the dark mass of trees within the cemetery and by the time we reached the walls there was sufficient light from the moon to see quite distinctly.

We followed a path that led directly to the elaborate gateway surmounted by a triple-tiered roof and supported by carved stone pillars thrown into deep relief by the moonlight. It appeared to be deserted.

We scouted round the wall and turning the south corner facing the camp, we saw the glow of a cigarette and a group of figures huddled against the wall in the shadows.

A figure detached itself and approached us; as he drew nearer; we saw he had a pistol directed against us. We stood still, away from the shadow of the wall, in the moonlight.

Approaching, he asked who we were and we replied: "Friends." He peered closely at our faces and lowering his pistol, called to the others, "Yes! It is they," whereupon the other four gathered around us, smiling and shaking our hands in an enthusiastic welcome.

One of them unrolled a couple of triangular white cloth banners on which was inscribed in English: "Welcome the British and American representatives! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"They invited us to sit down and, producing

cigarettes, started to question us, apparently in no hurry to move.

Having discussed our family status, the camp, the war and the high cost of living, one of them suggested that we might as well get along.

Like us, they were all dressed in black, and each carried a cocked German Mauser. One of them went on ahead about fifty yards, three of them kept with us and the fifth followed about fifty yards behind; we were evidently making for another rendezvous where we were to meet the sixth.

There, we thought, we should no doubt meet the mounted detachment. We walked for three or four miles in a north-easterly direction, skirting some villages and passing through others to the accompaniment of yelping dogs, but this did not seem to worry our guards.

Once or twice, on a signal from the scout ahead, we hid behind a clump of bushes or pancaked in the grass.

Finally we came to a halt outside a small village into which one of the men proceeded. Here there was some delay. We gathered from the conversation that we were to pick up someone here, who from their remarks was "an opium-smoking son of a bitch".

In about an hour the guide returned and we moved on. Skirting around the village, we climbed an embankment which I recognised as the Weihsien–Chefoo motor road.

From the shadows of a small wayside hovel we were joined by a tall thin man, slow of speech and equally slow of action.

He was immediately greeted by all hands with a string of abuse relating to his mother's and grandmother's reproductive organs for producing such a turtle's egg who would wear a white coat on a night mission.

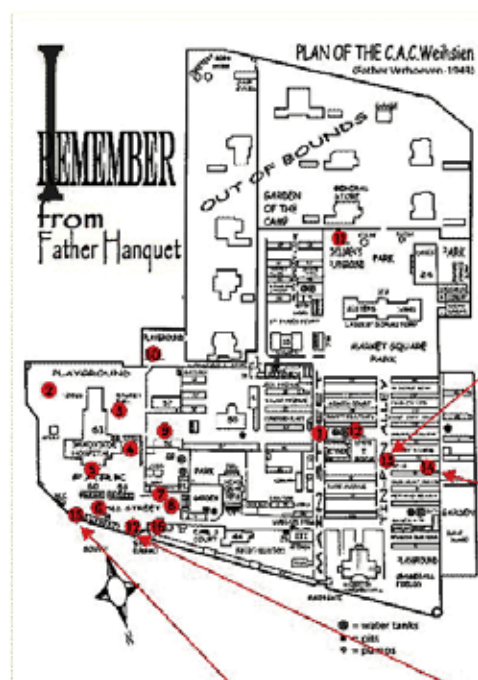
Little perturbed, he retired to the back of the hut and reappeared with a bicycle and accompanied by an old man with a wheelbarrow.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/text/00-Contents.htm>

by Emmanuel Hanquet ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



I remember:

that I was on watch here. It was on a late evening in June 1944 when Hummel and Tipton escaped from the Weihsien Concentration Camp.

I remember:

that it was from this part of the wall that Tipton and Humel disappeared into the night ---

I remember:

that it was here that I waited for Tipton and Humel --- *We were, however, very anxious to avoid any mishaps, and had previously arranged with them for a recuperation procedure if ever they missed the "contact" at the scheduled location. That is why, between 6 and 7 in the morning, the following day, I had to be waiting for them near the boundary limits not very far away from our bloc n°56 at a place, behind the wall that was invisible from the watch towers. I hid myself just behind the morgue ready with a thick strong rope. If ever I heard the cry of the owl, I had to thrust the rope over the wall to help them back into the compound. ""*

I remember:

that it was behind this part of the wall that I waited for Tipton and Humel's probable return --- should their escape had gone wrong. Fortunately, they succeeded and I put the ladder and rope away before the Japanese guards saw anything.

[Excerpts] ...

Emmanuel Hanquet recalls:
E... "All those who were in Weihsien concentration camp know that Tipton and Hummel had made an evasion during the month of June 1944, but what they don't know, is how it was prepared and how, finally, it succeeded.

I will try to give them that complementary information.

For a few young and dynamic prisoners who

didn't have family responsibilities, evading camp was a constant dream. I was one of them.

It was also a means to lessen the monotony of the camp days.

Well, to do so, there were a few conditions to respect. Firstly, absolute secrecy was a major clause. Father de Jaegher, who was one of those young and dynamic elements, and with whom I shared the same room, had the same desire of evasion.

We, however, never spoke about it.

Every one of us, without the knowing of the others, was trying to put up a contact with a Chinese from the outside. That was the second condition to accomplish: to find a serious arrangement with a Chinese from the exterior who sometimes came into camp. This service would have to be well paid for, and that would be done by Larry Tipton, often seen with Father de Jaegher and who had a few gold bars, a necessity for the transaction.

Tipton and R. de Jaegher were often seen in the mornings, walking to and fro on the sports field pretending to improve their Chinese language while, in fact, they were exercising their muscles for the long walks they would have to make, once outside. That was during the winter period of 1943-44.

Meanwhile, R. de Jaegher kept on trying to establish a contact with the cesspool coolies that came daily to empty the prisoners' latrines. As for myself, I was lucky enough to meet and make friends with a Chinese carter bringing the vegetables into camp. I talked about it to R. de Jaegher, and we decided that I could maybe try something about it. As my Chinese friend seemed trustworthy and quite serious, we promised him a good reward by the means of Larry Tipton's gold bars. That was during the months of March-April 1944.

One day, my Chinese contact brought me a written message: "our plan is well established, and on the chosen day, we would be met and provided with donkeys or mules on a road boarded by trees, situated beyond the valley at the north-east end of the camp. We were to have a little flag with the mention: "welcome to our foreign friends". We hoped to travel by night so as to reach a safe enough point by the following day.

We had now to select the date. We had observed the moon and decided to choose a night when the moon would rise after midnight, which would ease our moving about. Don't forget that in those days, there was no street lighting. That got us in the whereabouts of the 10th of June.

In the meantime, Father de Jaegher had had difficulties with our immediate ecclesiastical superior in camp, Father Rutherford. He had been informed of our project by another Father (N.W.),

and had pronounced an ecclesiastical sanction in the terms of: "suspensus a divinis" if ever he left the camp. He had to, he said, because it was vital to avoid the eventual reprisals by our Japanese captors towards the Christian prisoners in camp.

Tipton was very disappointed. He absolutely wanted to leave the camp with a missionary. You must know that in those days, local churches easily welcomed the travelling missionaries.

Father de Jaegher told me of this interdiction, and it was agreed between us that I would take his place. Alas, whilst sitting on my bed, and while, in great secrecy, I was confectioning my back sac, my colleague, Father N.W. saw me doing so and quickly concluded that I was going to take Father de Jaeger's place in the escapade. He told so to Father Rutherford who called for me and pronounced the same banning as he had to R. de Jaegher.

A hasty meeting was held, and we decided that Tipton would ask Hummel to take our place. He immediately accepted which allowed us to keep the schedule previously established for the getaway.

Now, we had to choose the place and the exact time such as to involve the smallest number of people and, however, succeed in our task. As for the place of the breakthrough, we quickly found complicity at the end of an alley (in the vicinity of n°10) where we hid a ladder, absolutely necessary to go over the boundary wall high of more or less 2.40 metres. In those days, on the other side of the wall, there was just a fence with 6 to 7 barbed wires of which the uppermost was electrified. We believed that the current was put on that wire only after 10 P.M., which was curfew time, and also the moment when a Japanese guard switched off all the lights in our compound for the night. We weren't sure about that and told the escapees to wear rubber-soled shoes and rather put their feet on the big porcelain isolators while climbing over the fence.

We also had to make sure that there were no Japanese guards around. On the chosen night, our group of 6 or 7 friends were all in place and watching in the different alleys in order to get the ladder in place, against the wall. The time was then, 9.30 P.M. and in less than 5 minutes, Tipton and Hummel were beyond the wall and over the

fence.

We were, however, very anxious to avoid any mishaps, and had previously arranged with them for a recuperation procedure if ever they missed the “contact” at the scheduled location. That is why, between 6 and 7 in the morning, the following day, I had to be waiting for them near the boundary limits not very far away from our bloc n°56 at a place, behind the wall that was invisible from the watch towers. I hid myself just behind the morgue ready with a thick strong rope. If ever I heard the cry of the owl, I had to thrust the rope over the wall to help them back into the compound.

You can easily understand that on that particular night, we didn’t sleep very much and that I sighed with relief after 7 o’clock in the morning when I got out of my hiding place just behind the morgue.

Now, we had to give the best possible chances to our two escapees in order to let them get away as far as possible from the camp. As we know, the Japs made a roll call every morning at 8 o’clock. At that precise moment, we all had to stand in a row in front of our respective blocks and in the order of our badge numbers. Tipton lived with us, on the first floor. Actually, it was Mc. Laren who was responsible for us towards the Japanese Commandant. I secretly informed McLaren of our projects and arranged with him that as warden of our block, I would give the alert as late as possible. At the roll call, I would simply say that Tipton was already working in the kitchen. It is only around 10 o’clock that morning, that I mentioned Tipton’s absence to McLaren. He then asked me, in the presence of the camp’s Commandant, to go and make sure that he was not in the toilets or anywhere else. The same thing happened for the missing of Hummel. While I was going all over camp to search for Tipton, the rumour spread fast, and at about 11, I came back empty-handed, and informed the irritated Commandant. He was very sure of himself and absolutely certain to recapture the escapees. As a precautionary measure, he put all the escapees’ roommates under room arrest. Even, days after that, and from time to time, they had us rounded up in the middle of the night and guarded by armed Japs.

As for the escapees, they rapidly managed to reach the Chinese guerrilla forces and shared their lives with them for 14 months. They managed to smuggle a radio, in small parts, as well as medicines for the hospital and supplements of flour.

It is only the day after the parachutists came with the Americans that we saw, one morning, our two escapees all tanned by the sun and in excellent health.

E. Hanquet.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

<https://keisan.casio.com/exec/system/1224689365>

Input negative degree for west longitude and south latitude.
If your local time is on Daylight Saving time, select 'ON' from DST mode.



| | | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Longitude | <input type="text" value="119.16176"/> | , Latitude | <input type="text" value="36.70686"/> | Google Map |
| Altitude | <input type="text" value="50"/> | m | | |
| Date | <input type="text" value="Jun"/> | / | <input type="text" value="8"/> | <input type="text" value="1944"/> (1900~2099) |
| Time zone UTC | <input type="text" value="+8"/> | h | (New York:-5, Los Angels:-8) | |
| DST <input type="radio"/> OFF <input checked="" type="radio"/> ON | | | | |
| <input type="button" value="Execute"/> <input type="button" value="Clear"/> <input type="button" value="Store/Read"/> <input type="button" value="Print"/> | | | | |
| Moonrise | <input type="text" value="21:47"/> | Azimuth angle | <input type="text" value="117.2653"/> | degree |
| Culmination | <input type="text" value="01:52"/> | Elevation angle | <input type="text" value="31.6347"/> | degree |
| Moonsset | <input type="text" value="06:56"/> | Azimuth angle | <input type="text" value="243.2052"/> | degree |
| Moon's age | | <input type="text" value="16.9"/> | days | |

by Pamela Masters, née Simmons ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



Pamela, Margo, and Ursula, over fifty years later, enjoying a European tour.

Pamela laughs when she recalls the “tourist episode” of her early years, as now she has happily joined their ranks, and with her sisters, enjoys visiting different countries and ports of call.

[Excerpts] ...

[...]

When I got off shift one afternoon, I noticed something was up. All the internees in the highwalled, barbed-wired “quarantine compound” were being moved to other parts of the camp.

What the heck was going on?

[excerpt]

It was June nineteenth [1944] and head-count time on the roll-call field.

I remember the date exactly, because as I was trying to ignore the indignity of the moment and savoring my day off, an outbreak took place that had guards suddenly exploding in all directions like firecrackers. After lots of shouting and yelling, one peeled out of the group and rushed off for King

Kong.

We were all standing around stunned, and except for intermittent yelps from the remaining guards, the silence was deadly.

Finally, Jock went over to the warden of the men’s dorm section, where the eruption had taken place, and asked what had happened. After a while, I saw him nod, and coming back to our line, he whispered to Dad, “**Laurie Tipton and Arthur Hummel have escaped**, and the guards have just found out. Pass it down the line, but hold the applause.”

When King Kong arrived, he was livid with rage and had the nine men who were dorm-mates of the escapees pulled out of line and marched off to the Assembly Hall, where they were put under heavy guard. We didn’t like that, but there was nothing we could do about it, except pray that they wouldn’t be tortured to give out information about the escape.

The hall was put out of bounds, and they were held for eleven days on starvation rations, while they were interrogated mercilessly, but none of them could tell the Japanese a thing, because they hadn’t known of the escape—which took place on the sixth—till after it had happened. The only crime they could be accused of, if it could be considered a crime, was that of covering up the escape by juggling places in the roll-call lineup to confuse the guards and buy time for Tip and Arthur to get well away.

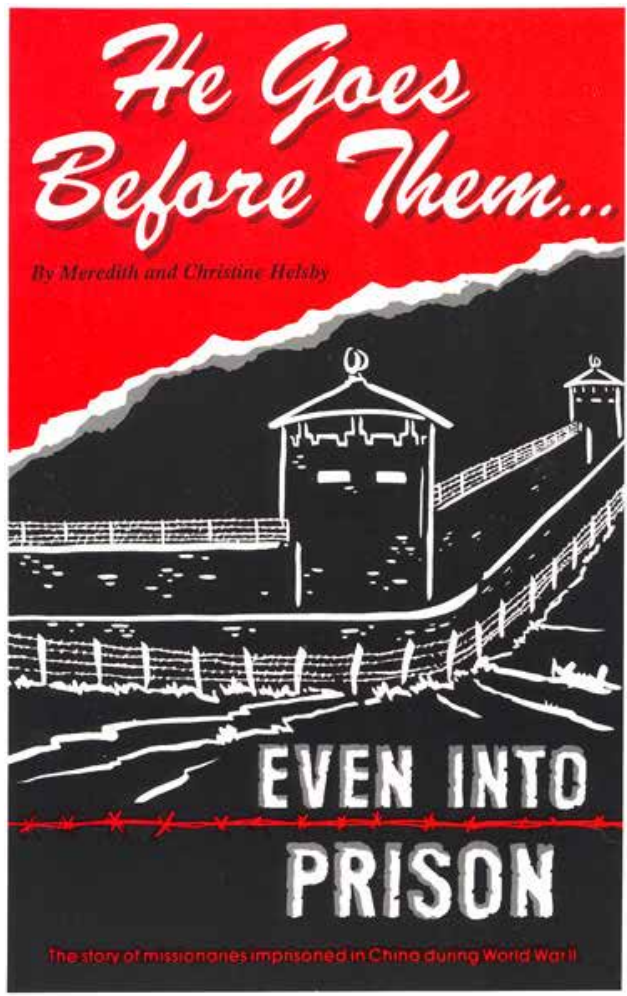
When Gold Tooth couldn’t get confessions out of the men, King Kong put out an official press release that was carried in all the local papers. According to Dad, who translated the write-up, it said nine men had escaped, but seven had been recaptured. “That’s the Oriental way of saving face, or covering one’s arse,” he said wryly.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)

by Meredith & Christine Helsby ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

In June of 1944 word was smuggled into camp of a detachment of 60,000 Chinese troops, led by a Commander Wang, deployed in the vicinity of Weihhsien. Rumor had it that Wang was actually planning to storm the camp and liberate us.

This intelligence inspired two of our bolder internees to attempt an escape from camp, in order to make contact with the commander and his troops. The wisdom of this risky venture was, before and after, much debated.

With steady Allied advances, the war was

clearly coming to an end. What then was to be gained by an escape? And should the plan succeed, our captors would doubtless vent their wrath and frustration upon the rest of us.

Yet, a successful escape would be a tremendous morale booster, and once free, our men could contact the Allies, furnishing them with valuable information and perhaps even procure desperately needed medical supplies for us.

The two conspirators, with the blessing of the camp Discipline Committee, carefully crafted their escape plan. To pass, undetected, through the countryside they would need to look as much like Chinese as possible. To accomplish this they sunned themselves daily until well darkened.

They would dress in dark-coloured, Chinese, pajama-type outfits, especially tailored to fit their large, European dimensions. The two men who volunteered for the deed were Charles Tipton and Art Hummel.

Tipton was an Englishman, who formerly worked for the British and American Tobacco Company. Hummel had been in graduate studies in Yen Ching University, Peking. He later served as U.S. Ambassador to China.

Both men spoke Chinese fluently.

The escape plot was hatched with a great deal of care. The date chosen for the attempt was June 9; the time, between 9 and 10 p.m. That night the moon would not rise until 10:40. Once over the wall the escapees would have a full hour of darkness.

It had been observed that every night at nine o'clock there was a changing of the guard. The oncoming shift, customarily, would quickly patrol the perimeter of the camp and then retire for a ten-minute break for "ocha" (tea) and cigarettes before taking their positions in the six sentry towers.

The venue for the escape would be a spot along the western wall where the shadow of an adjacent

sentry box kept it in darkness. Also, due to a slight jog in the wall, this strategic few yards were never illuminated by the rotating search lights.

To ensure secrecy, only three persons in camp knew the actual time of the intended escape. One of these was Roy Tchoo, an American-Chinese, who would serve as a lookout. Another was Tommy Wade, who had done a thriving business in black-market goods. A tall, broad-shouldered fellow, Tommy had the tricky assignment of boosting the men over the electrified barbed wire atop the wall. A Catholic priest also helped as a lookout along the west wall. As it happened, on the appointed night, we had a front-row seat for the drama.

June 9 was muggy and hot. Sandra was already in bed and the two of us were seated in the tiny patch of a yard in front of our room.

A little after nine o'clock Art Hummel came by, barely recognizable with his darkened face and wearing the Chinese pajamas. A few moments later Wade followed carrying a high stool. Tipton, who came from a different direction, met the two men at the western wall beside the sentry tower.

While Roy kept an eye open for approaching guards, the two men in turn mounted the stool and from there, positioned themselves atop Wade's broad shoulders, to be gingerly hoisted over the barbed wire. This was delicate business. Hummel, now nervous, shoved off with such alacrity that Wade came within inches of toppling into the highly charged wire.

Once over the wall, the men concealed themselves behind the tomb mounds in the adjacent cemetery, expecting at any moment to hear the alarm siren. But everything had gone without a hitch.

Under cover of darkness, for the moon had not yet appeared, Tipton and Hummel made their way to a rendezvous point at a nearby village.

There, according to plan, they found some 20 armed Chinese soldiers waiting to escort them the 10 li (about 6 miles) to another juncture where horses were waiting for them.

Once mounted, they continued their flight another 40 li until they arrived at Commander

Wang's headquarters. Here, guides were furnished to take them through enemy lines into free China.

Once established there, they arranged for a courier to take a message, which had been sewn into the sole of his cloth shoe, to Chungking where Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist government was headquartered. The note advised the general of their location and requested that a shortwave radio be dropped to them.

Incredibly, two full days passed without the Japanese discovering Tipton and Hummel's absence.

At this point, our committee decided that it would go easier on the rest of us if the wardens voluntarily reported that the men had escaped.

Accordingly, the Discipline Committee informed the Japanese commandant. Predictably, when the report of our friends' disappearance reached the commandant's ears, it precipitated no small furor.

Guards with police dogs were dispatched to scour the surrounding countryside, but to no avail.

The escapees' nine roommates were shut up in the compound church and interrogated nonstop for several days. In time, however, the authorities became convinced that the men did, in fact, know very little about either the escape plans or their colleagues' present whereabouts, and therefore released them.

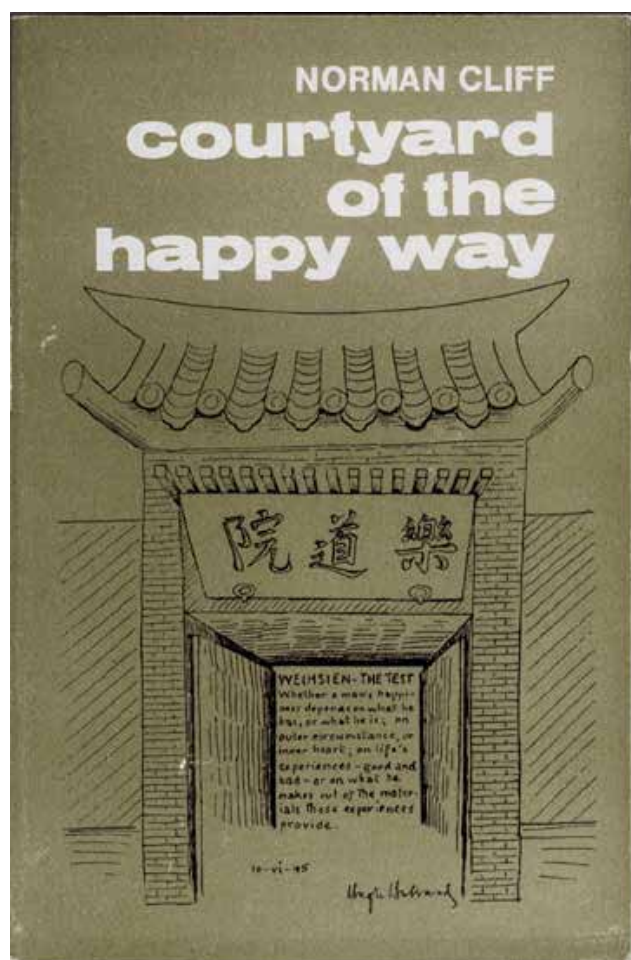
Most vexing, the commandant now required the tedious roll calls twice a day at 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., each session taking a full hour. Beyond this, however, there were no other reprisals; nor did our captors resort to violence or torture, as some had feared.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)

by Norman Cliff ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)



[Excerpt] ...

[...]

One Saturday evening in mid-June 1944 the news spread rapidly through the camp, "Hummel and Tipton have escaped."

The effect on the humdrum routine of camp life was electrifying. But after the initial excitement of such a dramatic development came a sense of apprehension, tenseness and fear.

How would the Japanese react? Would there be serious recriminations on us? Would some of our privileges be curtailed?

Roll-call that afternoon took three times the normal duration. Over the months it had become loosely organised and carelessly administered. As

a roll-call warden, waiting outside the guardroom to ring a bell as a signal that the community could break up and return to work, I had noted that the figures chalked up on the blackboard in the guardroom had one day totalled 1,492 and the next day 1,518, and so on, with little effort to account for the discrepancies.

But from now on it was an exercise computed with the utmost care. The Japanese guards would count us over and over again. The roll-call period was prolonged. The Guards were gruff and their attitude one of distrust. If rows straggled crookedly, they shouted and swore.

Bit by bit details of the escape leaked out, and as we walked round and round the blocks when the day's work was over, in our little groups we shared excitedly but discreetly what we each had gleaned during that day.

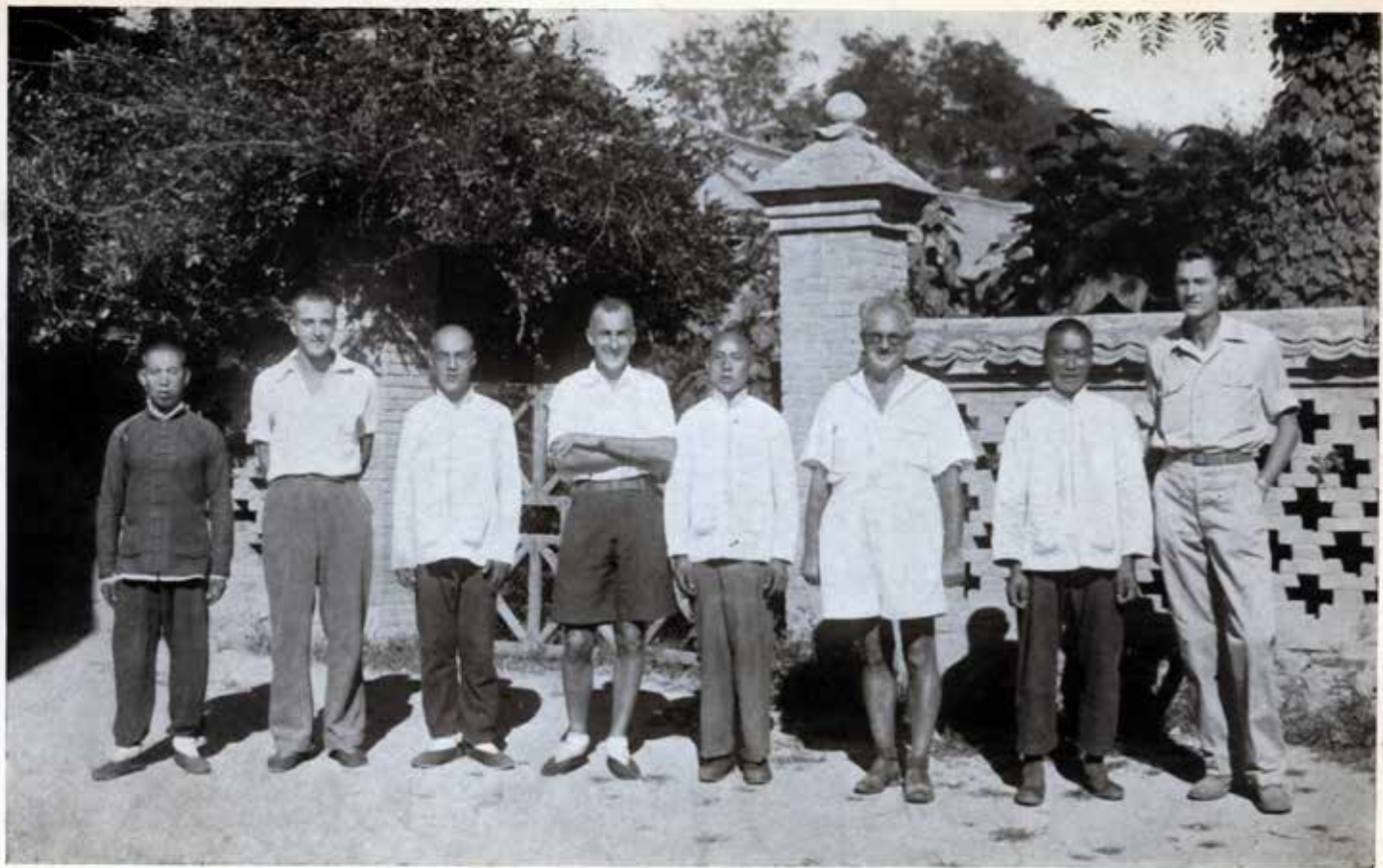
Our camp leaders had been aware of the planned escape for that Friday night, but had planned to report the two men as missing on the Saturday afternoon, to ensure that the escapees had a reasonable start on their journey.

The commandant and his twenty-five guards were furious on hearing of the escape, and immediately made plans to recapture them. Soldiers with police dogs scoured the surrounding countryside unsuccessfully.

The local press, we were told, gave a face-saving statement that seven had attempted to escape, and five had been recaptured. For two out of seven to get away was less serious than two out of two!

The nine men who shared their bachelor dormitory were arrested, placed in the church building for ten days, and subjected to prolonged interrogation. They all pleaded ignorance of any planned escape, and were released again.

I was working at the time in a shift cooking food in Kitchen I, and over the subsequent weeks the skeleton facts relating to their escape came out.



LiberationGroup

RETURN TO CAMP: from left to right --- --?, Arthur Hummel, --?, Laurie Tipton, --?, Father Raymond deJaegher, Zhang Xihong's father and --- Roy Tchoo.

In order not to be missed in the routine of camp duties, Hummel and Tipton had taken leave from their shifts on which they had worked in Kitchen 1.

They had also moved out of their bachelor dormitories and slept outside, so as not to implicate their room mates in any way.

They had calculated that on a certain night in June there would be a full moon, suitable for their escape across the Chinese countryside.

Moreover, at a certain time this full moon would shine on the sentry's tower and cast a dark shadow across a large area of the wall. At 9 p.m. the guards would change, and the policeman coming on duty would do a routine inspection of the area around before mounting his watchtower. It was that short changeover period that enabled the escapers to escape and for which they had waited as planned.

Two internees helped them through the two stages of electrified wires on to the field outside,

where Chinese were waiting to assist in their getaway.

One of the effects of this successful escape was that the bachelors were moved from the top floor of the hospital (where they could see the open countryside and thus get ideas about escaping) to Block 23, nearer to the Japanese officers' quarters.

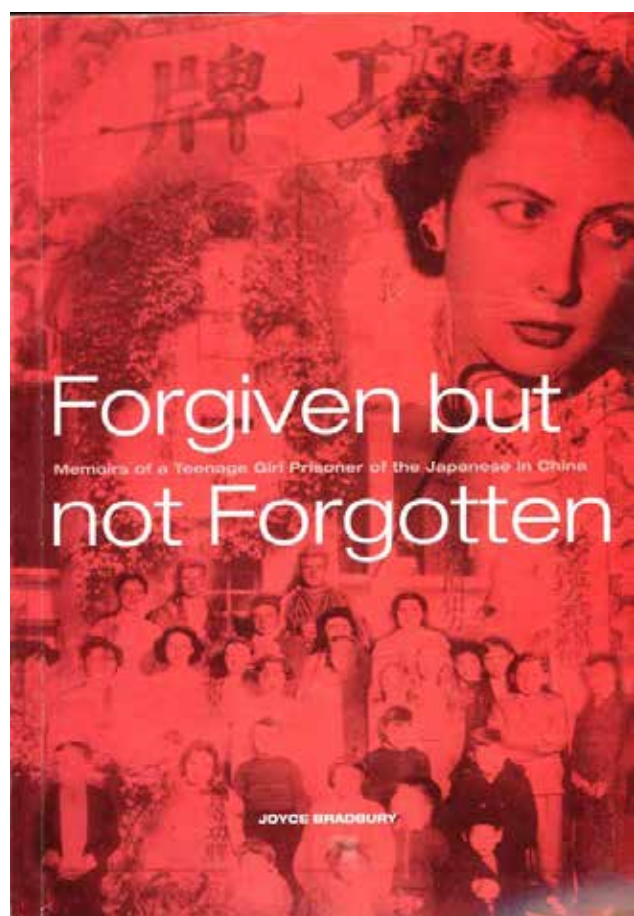
The Japanese arranged for them to swap with the boys and girls of the Chefoo schools. I moved with the schools, getting a much coveted room to myself, which had just enough room for my mattress and improvised bedside table.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Father De Jaegher played a key role in organising the only escape from the camp, and was a significant adviser to the camp's management committee in general matters of dealing with the Japanese.

As the Allies' war progressed against the Japanese, Father De Jaegher noted a decline in the guards' morale. He advised the committee on how to treat with Chinese Communist-led forces. These forces, towards the end of the war, began encircling the Wei-Hsien area.

His advice to the committee possibly averted a massacre of the camp's inmates. He recommended the camp leaders not to provoke a revolt by the camp's inmates as suggested by the Chinese Communists in a secret communication to

the camp.

He warned a camp revolt could lead to the gathering Communist forces – who were no friends of nonChinese (contained in the camp) and the Japanese guards – massacring both the inmates and the Japanese.

He counselled that the camp patiently wait for Allied liberation.

His suggested strategy was accepted by the camp's leaders. They were guided in that decision by Father De Jaegher and others analysing the information they were gathering from secret radio monitoring and incoming documentation being brought in secret messages by the Chinese toilet coolies.

His advice was later proven to be well-founded. In the last days of the repatriation of liberated internees from the camp, Communist forces blew up the key Wei-Hsien railway infrastructure.

This forced the Allied forces to fly out the last remaining Wei-Hsien internees.

[excerpt]

Another matter that enraged the Japanese was that two of the inmates, Arthur Hummel Jr [later the US Ambassador to China in the 1980s a British man and Laurie Tipton, , escaped from the camp in early June, 1944 and were never recaptured.

They had been planning their escape with the full assistance of Father De Jaegher for more than 12 months but there were several postponements because of Japanese patrols, a full moon, or poor escape conditions.

One night everything went well and away they went. I did not know any details at the time of their escape but I remember them arriving back at the camp shortly after our liberation.

When Mr Hummel and Mr Tipton arrived back at the camp, they were given heroes' welcomes and carried shoulderhigh by the inmates. I listened avidly to the tale of their escape from the time when they further darkened their heavily tanned

faces and wore long Chinese gowns to look like Chinese.

After escaping from the camp, they met some Chinese Nationalist guerrillas by arrangement who hurried them away and hid them. Their escape aim was to contact Chungking, which was then the seat of the Chinese Nationalist Government in unoccupied China, so that the western Allied forces could be informed of deteriorating prison conditions because it was believed the Allied forces had no recent knowledge of our plight.

Mr Hummel and Mr Tipton told us how they spoke by radio to Chinese Army authorities in Chungking, which was also the headquarters for the Allied forces seeking to liberate China from the Japanese. The United States authorities obviously became concerned about our conditions in the camp because we were rescued by American soldiers two days after the war ended.

We were very glad to be so quickly rescued because the Japanese always told us we were going to be killed whether Japan lost or won the war. It was always in the back of my mind that we may be shot.

I am convinced that had the Japanese main islands or our part of China been invaded by the Allies, we would have been shot without hesitation.

As it was, the sudden unexpected capitulation of Japan prevented this. I was always frightened of the machineguns on the walls. They used to point at us and I never knew whether they would shoot us because the guards often said they would if the war ever went against them.

I remember saying to my mother on one occasion: "I think they're going to kill us this time" and I thought to myself: "I'm only young, there's so many things I want to do before I die and now I won't be able to." Thankfully, they did not fire. I did not regard the guards' threats as idle talk at the time and I still don't. When you have a gun pointing at you, you tend to listen carefully to what is said.

Between June 1944 and our liberation on August 17, 1945, Mr Hummel and Mr Tipton served alongside Chinese Nationalist forces in Shantung Province and regularly communicated

with Father De Jaegher in the camp using Father De Jaegher's messaging system.

They sent news of the war and helped arrange for the urgently needed medical drugs smuggled into the camp hidden in Red Cross parcels.

Part of the story told to cover up Hummel's and Tipton's escape was that they were in the camp toilets during head counts but the camp management committee, to prevent reprisals, reported them missing the day after they escaped.

Our food ration was withheld for a day or two after the escape.

From then, the Japanese were especially alert to prevent escapes and stopped any inmate out of his room after dark.

For instance, my elderly uncle Edward was heading for the toilets one night when he was challenged by an irate Japanese guard who stuck his rifle into his stomach and demanded in Japanese to know where he was going. Edward expected nervously to be shot because he couldn't remember the Japanese name for toilet. He knew that it was similar in sound to a stringed musical instrument and he went through: guitar, ukulele before he hit upon the correct one, banjo. Benjo is Japanese for toilet.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)

[Excerpt]

[...]

Then great excitement came to the camp on 5th June 1944, which quite put everything else out of the minds of inmates.

Rome had fallen to the Allies, and the Japanese openly allowed the information to circulate.

Rumours of an invasion in France were also rife, but nobody knew anything definite. The Peking Chronicle grudgingly admitted the fall of Rome. Then, suddenly, the camp's morale was lifted with excitement as definite news arrived of 'D-Day' on the Normandy Beaches.

The Committee, in secret session, had decided that the interests of the camp would be better served by having 'representatives' at the Headquarters of the local guerrilla leader, General Wang.

Quietly, one night, two internees, Lawrence Tipton, an Englishman who used to work in British American Tobacco, and Art Hummel, who was an American Missionary from Beijing, escaped over the wall and negotiated the barbed wire safely.

Ted McClaren gave them a few hours and then reported the 'escape' to the Commandant, which safeguarded his and the Committee's position, because he knew that the Japanese would exonerate the Committee from implication in the escape, reasoning that they would not report something they themselves planned.

The escapers and other single or unaccompanied men had been housed in dormitories on the top two floors of the hospital.

When their escape was discovered there



was a hue and cry amongst the guard. The Head of Japanese security was replaced and within five days the younger children of the Chefoo School and their teachers were ousted from their dormitories in Blocks 23 and 24 and re-housed at the top of the hospital; the whole move to be completed in under three hours.

The men who had originally been in the hospital block were temporarily housed in the Church whilst they were being interrogated. When they were released on 21st June they found that their effects had been relocated to the former Chefoo School dormitories.

Whilst all this shouting was going on, I, along with most of my age group, curbed our more clandestine activities; discretion seemed the order of the day.

I asked Dad one day,
'Why have they moved everybody Dad?'

He replied 'Ronald, from the windows at the top of the hospital you could see the village to the north-east, and the Japanese suspected that candles or lights were being used to signal.

By putting the younger children in those rooms they think the Chefoo teachers will control the children and that form of communication will stop.'

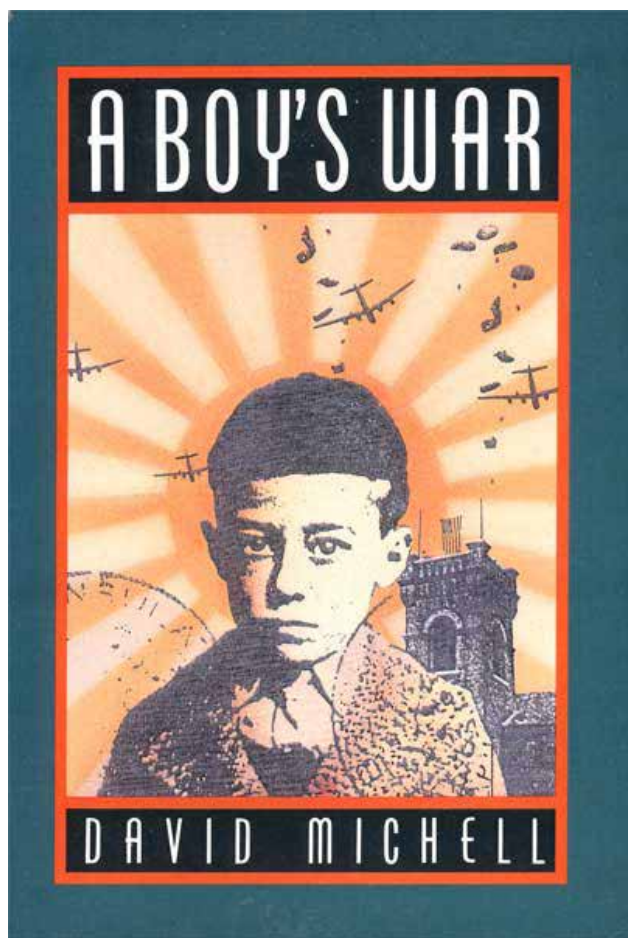
My response was 'There are other ways of getting messages through, I believe?' Dad's silence in response to this question was confirmation enough that my discoveries were correct.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)

by David Michell ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)



[Excerpt] ...

[...]

The whole plan [*the Chinese guerrillas*] appeared to be the wild vision of an erratic leader who saw in this bold stroke his hopes for greater recognition.

The impracticality, considering the many dangers and the condition of the sick and elderly, not to mention the high percentage of women and children, was evident to the committee.

They [*the committee*] responded cautiously, not wanting to lose the link with a potentially valuable ally, but at the same time not wanting to give the green light to a far-fetched scheme which they might be powerless to stop once it was launched.

The camp committee took Tipton and de

Jaegher into their confidence to get their advice.

The outcome of these discussions was that the two of them should try to escape from the camp so that they could meet the leader of this unit, who purportedly had an army of 60,000 soldiers.

De Jaegher worked through his cesspool coolie cohorts to acquire a good knowledge of the location and size of the military groupings in Shantung Province, and he and Tipton mapped out a course of action.

To ensure the success of their escape, a number of things had to all work together. The guards, the moon, the place and time for rendezvous all had to be carefully considered, and there was no time to lose.

June 9th or 10th, just ten days away, was chosen as the target date, as that night would give them an hour of darkness to make good their escape from the camp area before the moon's ascent.

It was necessary, too, to make the escape attempt during the duty period of the team of guards that were the most lax. This squad was on the 9:00 p.m. watch, and their routine began with an inspection up and down their beat by the wall and in their tower, followed by a ten-minute break for ocha (Japanese tea) and a smoke.

In that short span of time, de Jaegher and Tipton concluded, they would have to make their escape.

Only three members of the camp committee knew the date the escape would be attempted, and all were sworn to secrecy. They agreed that de Jaegher should be allowed to tell his Superior, Father Rutherford, now that plans were definite and their escape kits were being prepared. Little knapsacks were packed with a few personal effects, plus a typewriter, a watch and fountain pen requested by the Nationalist soldiers.

Right at the last, Rutherford persuaded de Jaegher to back out of the venture because he

feared there could be cruel reprisals on the rest of the camp, and he didn't want one of his priests being responsible for it.

With great reluctance de Jaegher agreed.

The organizing group of Tipton, de Jaegher, Roy Tchou, and Tommy Wade asked Arthur Hummel, Jr., an American who had been a teacher in a school in Peking, to take his place. Hummel accepted without hesitation, and final preparations were given fine-tuning.

News had come through the "water-closet wireless" that a small band of Chinese soldiers disguised as peasants would be at the meeting place, two miles north of the camp, at the prearranged time. Every care was taken not to arouse any suspicion within the camp and, apart from accelerating their suntanning program, Hummel and Tipton carried on as normally as they could.

The suspense for those in the know for the last few days was intense.

The watchtower chosen for the escape bid was the shortest one of the six around the walls. It was located in the middle of the west side, where a bend in the wall to the north obscured it from the searchlight tower beams.

On June the 8th, Hummel and Tipton and the other three, including de Jaegher, did a dry run during the daytime. They got a good look at how to avoid touching the electrified wire while scaling the wall at the tower.

The next evening, while everyone else in camp was going about their humdrum routine in what, for many, had become an almost zombie-like existence, the scent of freedom was already in Hummel's and Tipton's nostrils, and their hearts were beginning to beat faster. As casually as they could, they let someone in their respective rooms into the secret, asking them to do their best to cover for them, at least until the evening roll call, by which time they would hope to be safely at the Nationalist soldiers' headquarters.

By 8:00 p.m., as Hummel and Tipton slipped into their close-fitting black Chinese clothes that had been specially made and smuggled in to them,

the others were closely monitoring the movements of the guards.

At 9:00 p.m., the easygoing watch came on duty as expected.

To Hummel's and Tipton's consternation, however, the tower guard didn't walk his beat straightaway as he usually did. The two would-be escapees waited breathlessly in the shadows for ten more minutes and then breathed a sigh of relief as the guard moved away from the tower.

In a flash, de Jaegher, Roy Tchou, and Tommy Wade ran into the tower and helped Tipton and then Hummel up the wall and over the live and barbed wire fences.

Once on the other side, the duo retrieved the knapsacks that had been thrown over after them and ran to the overgrown Chinese graveyard some 100 feet away, throwing themselves down behind the first grave mound they came to.

As they waited a few moments to catch their breath and get their bearings, they realized with much thankfulness that no alarm had been raised.

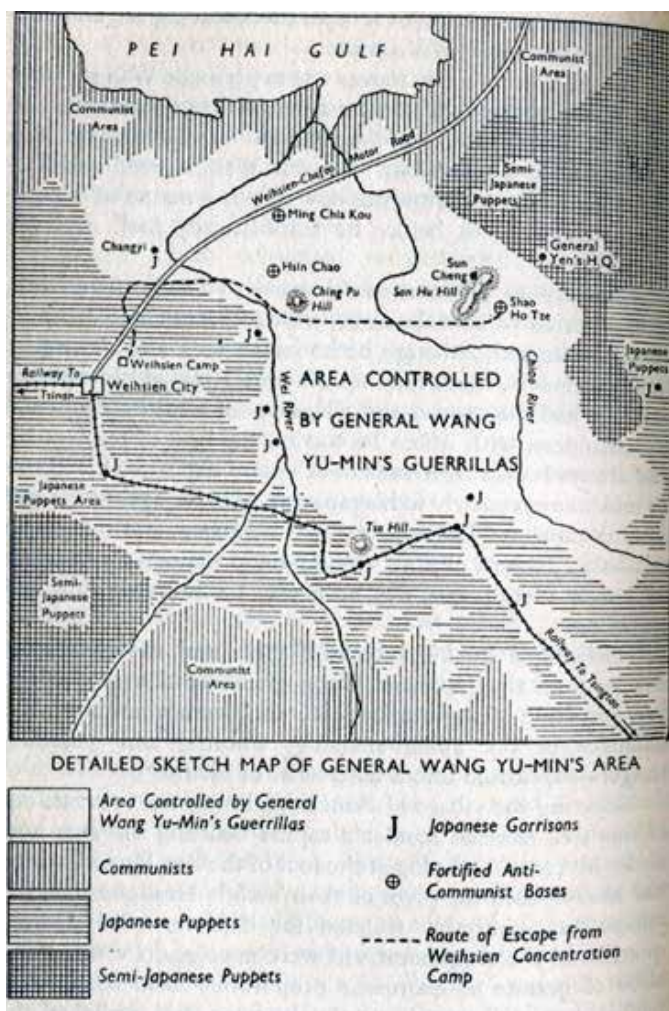
They got up noiselessly and, after stumbling through the fields of millet, cautiously waded through the river that ran north of the camp.

With the moon now shining, they headed off quickly for the rendezvous a mile and a half away.

Great was their relief on reaching the cemetery to find a mounted detachment in hiding, waiting with ponies to take them to their headquarters' hideout. Striking up friendly conversation with the soldiers, they traveled with them through the night, eventually reaching the unit base the following afternoon.

Meanwhile, back at the camp, de Jaegher and the others climbed down out of the tower undetected and then endeavored to retire casually for the night.

De Jaegher's first concern on reaching his room was to pray for his compatriots' safety.



At the next morning's roll call, Hummel and Tipton were not missed, but knowing their absence couldn't be concealed for very long, Ted McLaren, the chief of the Camp Committee, reported to the Japanese that they were missing.

The commandant raged and fumed.

Roll call was doubled to morning and evening, and food supplies took a further cut back — no meat, not even horsemeat for a while. But all of us were thankful that the Japanese response took the form of voluble haranguing rather than any physical punishment.

Eventually, however, the furor over the escape of the two men, who had achieved hero status in camp, died down completely. Nothing new seemed to happen to relieve the daily tedium.

When some months passed with no news of Hummel and Tipton's whereabouts or of the war's progress, de Jaegher and his colleagues began to wonder if a worse fate had met their friends.

One day, however, as de Jaegher mumbled the agreed-on password wushi-liu while shuffling among the Chinese coolie work party, he got a nod of acknowledgment.

“Come to my ‘office’ (a modified latrine cubicle) so we can discuss the next job,” de Jaegher called out with annoyance as he looked at this man. With the guard’s suspicions satisfactorily allayed, the priest escorted the coolie into the cubicle.

Once inside, the workman pulled out a tightly compressed note from the lining of his baggy trousers and, faintly smiling, handed it over to de Jaegher.

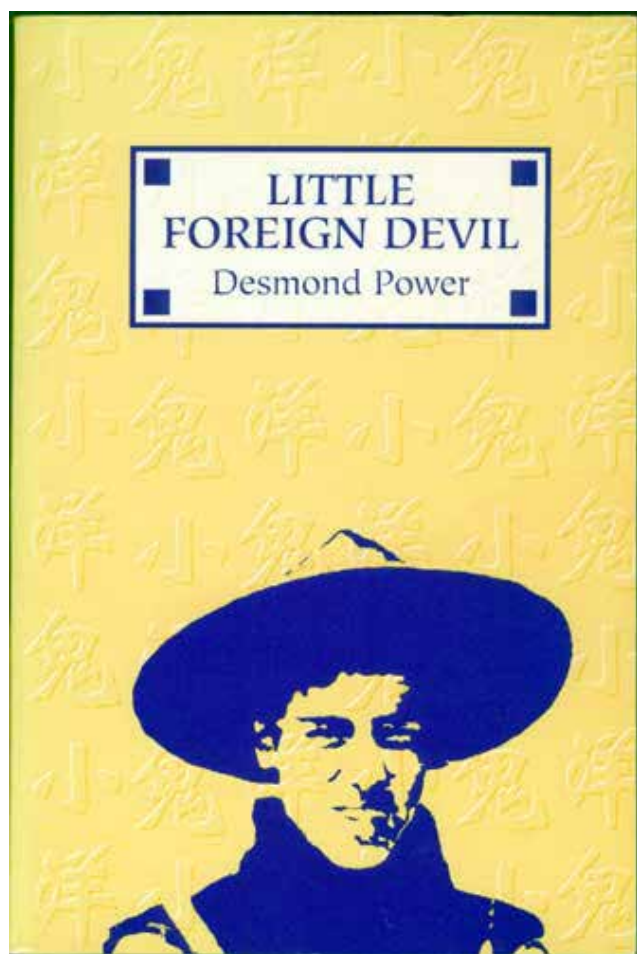
That night, when de Jaegher had decoded the message, he was hardly able to contain his excitement.

At long last, proof had come that Hummel and Tipton had made it safely to freedom and that two-way communication was about to start.

He let McLaren and Hubbard of the Camp Committee into the secret. A brief coded response was sent out in the same manner as it had come.

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)



[Excerpt] ...

[...]

Nevertheless, those months were not without their moments of excitement.

There was an escape.

Laurance Tipton (British) and Arthur Hummel (American) went over the wall one dark and moonless night.

And didn't that send our Nagasaki jailers into hysterics!

Then, completely out of the blue, Brian Clarke arrived in camp, transferred as I was from Lunghua. He brought news of a second Lunghua escape which, unlike the one on New Year's Eve 1944, was successful - the five men involved getting clean away to Kunming in free China.

The fact that I knew four of the five added spice to the news. One was Reggie Euluch, Brian's buddy, who helped settle me in when I arrived from Pootung, two were fellow Pootung transferees - Tommy Huxley and Mike Levy, and the fourth, Roy Scott, crossed paths with me at the Columbia Country Club following the Kamakura Mar-u fiasco. Only Lewis Murray-Kidd, the escape leader, was a total stranger.

Why the flurry of escapes?

For one thing, the food situation was going from bad to worse. In Weih sien our rations were so reduced that camp leader McLaren picked out six of the skinniest inmates and had them parade bare-chested before the Commandant.

I was one of the six.

Mr. McLaren gave an impassioned speech. He pointed at our corrugated ribcages, our jutting cheek bones. He quoted the Geneva Convention.

The Commandant's response was equally impassioned.

"You people are luckier than you think. You are better off than the citizens of our home islands.

You have more to eat than our soldiers in the field. Even so, I have managed to postpone a reduction of your vegetable marrow allocation. But I won't be able to do that again. You must expect cuts. And you won't be the only ones affected. I've already told my chief of police that the guards' rations are to be reduced. It's a bad time for everybody.

You must remember there's a war on. And as long as the war continues, I can do no more for you."

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForeignDevil/Power-143-pages.pdf>

by Mary Previte, née Taylor ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>

[Excerpt] ...

WE LISTENED WIDE-EYED TO THE whisper that passed from mouth to mouth one day at roll call: "Hummel and Tipton have escaped!"

My heart pounded against my ribs as I grabbed Podgey Edwards and started jumping up and down. I tried to recall what Hummel and Tipton looked like. Shaved bald and tanned brown like Chinese, someone said. Chinese clothes. But how in the world, I wondered, did they get over the electrified wire atop the camp wall without getting killed?

Our teachers and the older boys were more subdued. Escape would mean instant reprisals.

Roll call that day dragged on and on. With Hummel and Tipton missing, the guards' count failed to tally, and when the Japanese realized what was wrong the commandant unleashed the police dogs. And Japanese soldiers promptly arrested the nine remaining roommates from the bachelor dormitory and locked them up in the church for days of ugly interrogation. But nothing worked. Hummel and Tipton were gone.

Roll call was never the same after that. Instead of one, we now had two roll calls a day. Japanese guards cursed and shouted. They counted and recounted us each time. They also dug a monstrous trench beyond the wall, 10 feet deep and five feet wide, and beyond that they strung a tangle of electrified wire. No one would ever escape again.

Laurance Tipton had been an executive with a British tobacco importing firm. Arthur Hummel Jr. had been a professor of English at Peking's Catholic University; today, he is the U.S. ambassador to China.

Not until years later did I learn the story of their escape. Shortly after the nightly changing of the guards, in a prearranged plan with Chinese guerrillas, they had gone over the wall at a guard tower. For the rest of the war, maneuvering in the hills within 50 miles of Weihsien, they employed

Chinese coolies - either repairmen or "honey-pot men" who carried out the nightsoil from our latrines and cesspools - to smuggle coded messages in and out of the camp.

This was our "bamboo radio," known only to the camp's inner circle. It was a deathly dangerous business. The Japanese had once found a concealed letter on a Chinese coolie as they were checking him before entrance into the camp; they dragged him into the guardhouse and beat him until he was unconscious. He was never seen again. Another Chinese confederate who was passing black-market supplies over the wall to hungry prisoners slipped, in his hurry to get away as the guards approached, and was electrocuted on the wire that crisscrossed the wall. The Japanese left his body hanging there for most of the day, as a grim warning.

News from the "bamboo radio" was delivered, therefore, with extreme care. A message would be written on the sheerest silk, wadded into a pellet, placed inside a contraceptive rubber and then stuffed up the nose or inside the mouth of a Chinese workman. Once inside the camp, at a prearranged spot, the coolie would clear his sinuses and spit out the news. Insiders then pounced on the spit wad and took it to the translator.

Ironically, the Japanese themselves helped confirm the accuracy of some of the smuggled information. They distributed English editions of the Peking Chronicle, a carefully doctored propaganda rag filled with hideous lists of sunken Allied ships and downed American planes. In our Current Events class, we followed the names of the places where battles were in progress: the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, Guadalcanal, Kwajalein, Guam, Manila, Iwo Jima, Okinawa. It was obvious where the battles were raging: closer and closer to Japan! Our bamboo radio was right. Japan was on the run.

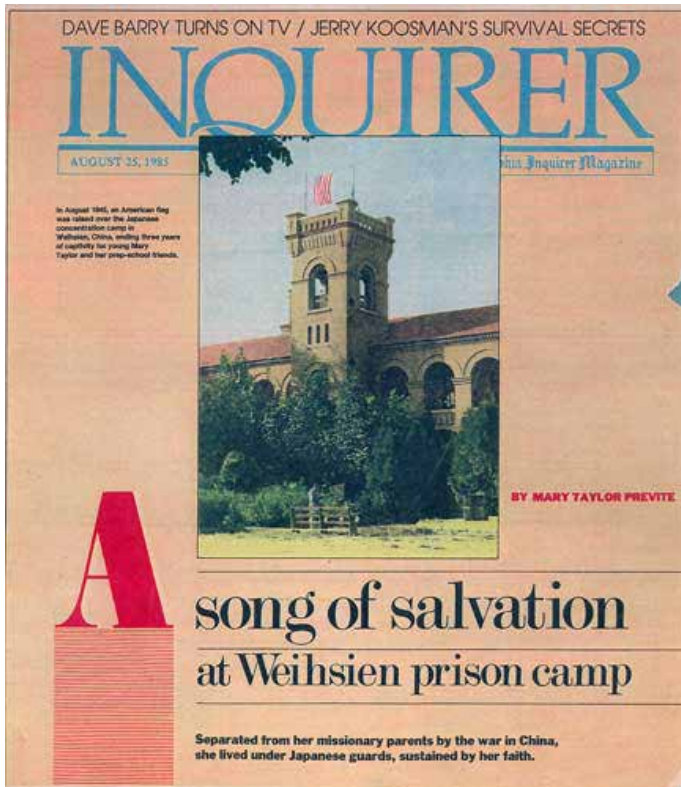
<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>



LIBERATION

by Mary Previte, née Taylor ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>



[Excerpt] ...

[...]

THEY WERE SPILLING from the guts of the low-flying plane, dangling from parachutes that looked like giant silk poppies, dropping into the fields outside the concentration camp.

The Americans had come.

It was August 1945. "Weih sien Civilian Assembly Center," the Japanese called our concentration camp in China.

I was 12 years old. For the past three years, my

sister, two brothers and I had been captives of the Japanese. For 5½ years we had been separated from our parents by warring armies.

But now the Americans were spilling from the skies.

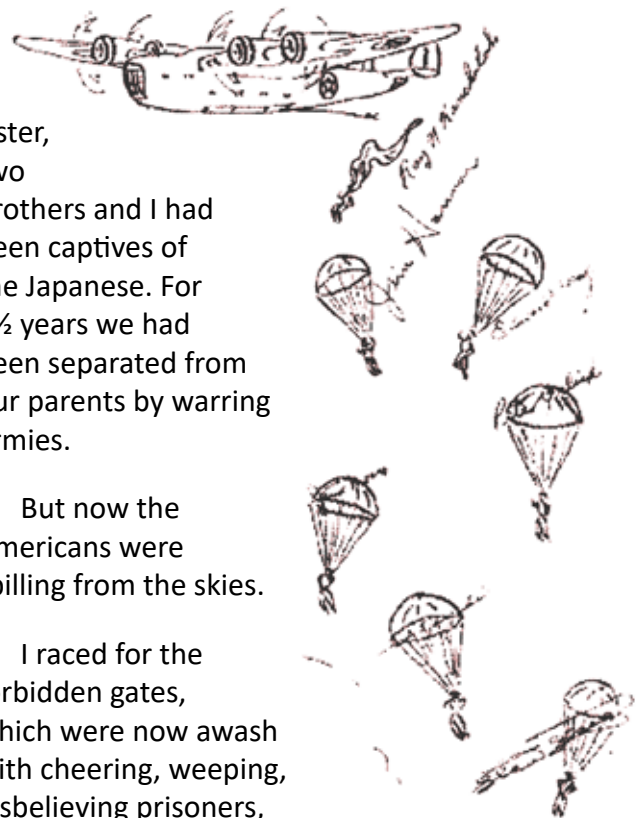
I raced for the forbidden gates, which were now awash with cheering, weeping, disbelieving prisoners, surging beyond those barrier walls into the open fields. Americans, British, men, women, children - dressed in proud patches and emaciated by hunger - we made a mad welcoming committee. Our Japanese guards put down their guns and let us go.

The war was over.

[excerpt]

IT WAS FRIDAY, AUG. 17, 1945.

A SCORCHING heat wave had forced the teachers to cancel classes, and I was withering with diarrhea, confined to my mattress atop





A mile away we found them - seven young American paratroopers - standing with their weapons ready, surrounded by fields of ripening broom corn.

Advancing toward them came a tidal wave of prisoners, intoxicated with joy. Free in the open fields. Ragtag, barefoot, hollow with hunger. They hoisted the

three steamer trunks in the second-floor hospital dormitory.

Rumors were sweeping through the camp like wildfire. The prisoners were breathless with excitement - and some with terror. Although we knew nothing of the atomic bomb, the bamboo radio had brought the news two days ago that Japan had surrendered.

Was it true?

Mr. Izu, the Japanese commandant, was tightlipped, refusing to answer questions.

Lying on my mattress in mid-morning, I heard the drone of an airplane far above the camp. Racing to the window, I watched it sweep lower, slowly lower, and then circle again. It was a giant plane, and it was emblazoned with an American flag. Americans were waving at us from the windows of the plane!

Beyond the treetops, its silver belly opened, and I gaped in wonder as giant parachutes drifted slowly to the ground..

Weihsien went mad.

Oh, glorious -cure for diarrhea! I raced for the entry gates and was swept off my feet by the pandemonium. Prisoners ran in circles and pounded the skies with their fists. They wept, cursed, hugged, danced. They cheered themselves hoarse. Wave after wave of prisoners swept me past the guards and into the fields beyond the camp.

paratroopers' leader onto their shoulders and carried him back toward the camp in triumph.

In the distance, from a mound near the camp gate, the music of "Happy Days Are Here Again" drifted out into the fields. It was the Salvation Army band blasting its joyful Victory Medley. When they got to "The Star Spangled Banner," the crowd hushed.

O, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave, o'er the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave?

From up on his throne of shoulders, the young, sun- bronzed American major struggled down to a standing salute.

And up on the mound by the gate, one of the musicians in the band, a young American trombonist, crumpled to the ground and wept.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Mprevite/inquirer/MPrevite.htm>

[Excerpt] ...

[...]

I was standing in the breakfast line at K-2 when I first heard the gentle purr. I wasn't the only one.

There was a hush in the chow-line as the hum of the plane got louder. It struck me that the sound was different; not the funny, tinny drone of the Japanese Zeros and Judys, or the rattling-roar of their bombers, but a strong, steady, comforting sound that seemed to push up against the heavens and reverberate back down to earth.

I knew instinctively this was one of ours!

The foliage over the camp was dense and we couldn't see the plane's approach, but the drone got louder., and louder., and then there it was!

Directly overhead—its wings painted with a huge POW and a Red Cross on the fuselage!

A cry went up, "Oh, God, it's over! It's over! They've FOUND US!"

I lost it completely!

I started jumping up and down and shouting deliriously. The yells, screams, and pandemonium that broke out all around me drowned out the roar of the plane's engines as it skimmed over the camp. We were hugging each other, laughing and crying at the same time.

The plane made another pass, and I rushed out of the kitchen compound and started down Main Street to the prison gates, forgetting my soggy breakfast in the excitement of the moment.

Suddenly, the joyous shouting turned into a long moan. The plane had left and was roaring off to the west, towards China's mountainous heartland...

The crew hadn't seen us after all!



The guards were coming out of their quarters, heavily armed, jogging down to the main gates and the guard shack, their faces grim. Gold Tooth looked sallow and sick. I stood still for a moment, looking up and down the street trying to decide

where I could find some high ground to watch the plane's flight.

Then, remembering the forbidden bell-tower, I raced towards the women's dorm. Not surprisingly, everyone else had the same thought, and scores of us pounded up the stairs looking for a vantage spot. I could see the plane again in the far distance, like a little fly speck against billowing thunderheads.

I watched till it looked as though it would disappear into white nothingness, then it turned south and flew along the face of the clouds. "It's heading home—maybe to Kunming."

I couldn't believe the voice I was hearing. It was Pete Fox! But before I could say anything, he let out an, "Oh, hell..." and started back down the stairs on the heels of a disappointed, disbelieving crowd.

"Hey, wait a minute, how did you get out?" I yelled, running after him.

"When the guards left, I wriggled out through the vent," he said over his shoulder.

"Great!" I sang out, clumping down the stairs.

As I passed the second floor dorm, I saw Miss Blodgett standing by her bed, mumbling to herself

and throwing things out of an old suitcase like a demented customs official. Suddenly, she gave a little cry of triumph, grabbed a piece of rolled up cloth, kissed it, and tucking it under her arm, raced down the stairs behind the motley mob. I followed her, churning with excitement.

"Whatchagot?" I asked, coming up behind her.

"Old Glory. I've hidden it all these years. It used to fly over our mission compound, and I just couldn't leave it for the Japs to get."

Her eyes began to water, and she brushed away a tear, as she stopped and cocked her head to one side, birdlike, listening.

"They'll come back," she said, confidently, "I know it ... and this time we'll be ready for them!"

The few times I'd seen her, I had thought she was quiet and rather meek, but when she started to sprint after the crowd again, her long, black skirt flapping against her thin legs, I realized I had never really known her.

She was dynamite!

When she got in front of the crowd, she stopped and waved her arms till she had everyone's attention, then she started unfurling Old Glory.

We all just stared.

As I finally grabbed one side of the flag and helped her hold it aloft, I felt goose-bumps crawling all over me again...

"Those planes flew over us, because they didn't know we were here," she shouted. "If they saw us at all, we were just a bunch of running people ... any people.

If we go out the gates and lay Old Glory in a wide, open field, they'll know we're here!"

"What makes you think they'll come back?" someone yelled.

"They're looking for us!" Pete said.

"Miss Blodgett's right, they'll be back. Let's help them find us!"

From somewhere in the milling crowd, there was a bellow of, "Let's G-O-O-O!" , and like lemmings streaming off a cliff, we started running toward the main gates.

We saw Gold Tooth, standing with his binoculars looking up into the sky, cussing a blue streak, and stopped dead.

It was obvious he had spotted the plane returning.

With that realization, we started yelling all over again. My throat was raw, and as I ran with the crowd, I tripped over a slab of granite that had broken loose from the wall around the assembly hall compound.

I picked myself up and kept on going. Then I saw King Kong. He was yelling at his men, as they formed a solid line across the heavy wooden gates, their machine guns aimed at us, point blank. I looked at the guards, especially the young ones who were the same age as us, wondering if they would fire.

We had known them for almost three years; we had seen them become forgotten by their country, suffering from homesickness, their uniforms in tatters, their teeth chattering in the cold, their bodies sweating in the heat—but they'd always been good soldiers, following commands without flinching...

God, help us! I prayed silently.

Just then, someone yelled, "Buggayara!" , and as if on cue, we all let out a roaring,

"B-A-N-Z-A-I!" , and charged the gates.

The yell caught the men off-guard, and they lowered their guns, as Pete shot the gate-bolt and Miss Blodgett rushed through, Old Glory streaming out behind her, followed by the most ragtag bunch of scarecrows I'd ever seen.

The feeling of freedom was intoxicating. I'd almost forgotten how beautiful the Chinese countryside could be. Wind-scarred willows clung to the banks of a running stream, and little bare-bodied children ran splashing through the water, waving bamboo sticks with bright paper windmills

pinned to them.

They were giggling and shouting, “Mei kuo fen! Mei kuo jen!” (Americans! Americans!), pointing to the skies.

I looked up too and saw the plane circling.

There was a lump in my throat as I kept up with the crowd racing out to the kaoliang fields. The plants, like corn, were tall and ready for harvest.

I knew that throwing Old Glory over the tassels and pulling her out straight and square would be tricky to do, but there was nowhere else to lay her down, as the fields were planted to kaoliang as far as the eye could see.

While we wrestled with the flag, the plane dropped lower and lower, and then, as I looked up, it made a roaring pass, the cargo doors opened, and seven paratroopers rolled out like marbles from a bag, followed a few moments later by huge metal drums of supplies.

Hysteria swept over us once again as we raced out to where they were landing, fighting our way down the long rows of kaoliang and jumping up to spot their location. Some of the brightly colored supply parachutes didn’t open, and we could hear their cargo landing with a ominous thud.

When we finally came upon the men releasing their ‘chutes, we were surprised to see them in full combat gear, and laughed when they told us to stay back, as they might have to fight their way into the camp.

We also found one tragic victim: a little Chinese boy, who had sustained a glancing blow from a drum that had landed with an unopened parachute. Pete gently lifted the little fellow in his arms, and then, before the paratroopers knew what had happened, the stronger of our men had raised them shoulder-high, and we swarmed back down the road and through the prison gates. The older people and young children were standing in a semi-circle just inside, their faces flushed with excitement, while the jubilant Salvation Army band was playing God Bless America!

There weren’t any Japanese to be seen.

I turned and looked at the guardhouse to the left of the entrance; a white flag was flying from a hastily erected pole. I smiled at Miss Blodgett, who was happily draped in Old Glory. Her neat bun had broken loose, and her dark hair cascaded down her back. Her face was flushed with joy and excitement, and she looked like a young girl.

Pete, who had handed the injured boy over to a hospital orderly, gave her a big hug, and spinning her off her feet, shouted,

“You’re one helluva lady!”

[excerpt]

It must have been two days after “liberation”, when I was down at the main gates inhaling the intoxication of freedom, that four Chinese horsemen came riding slowly up to the camp. As they alit, Rob Connors, a very recently appointed member of our new Camp Police Force, and a Jap guard challenged them.

The challenge abruptly turned into a cheer when two of the Chinese turned into Laurie Tipton and Arthur Hummel, the escapees of the previous year!

With recognition came an ear-splitting warwhoop that rang all through the camp, and before you could spit, noisy crowds of well wishers gathered from all over. It was an unforgettable reunion, and as the day progressed, the plotting and planning of the breakout, and the miraculous appearance of the medication and drugs, all came to light.

[excerpt]

I couldn’t help asking myself:

1. If she was a “Yank”, and in such deplorable condition as the OSS lieutenant says, why didn’t he call in one of the camp’s many excellent doctors to examine her?

Let’s face it, the war was over: the Japanese had no control over us. We, especially the OSS, were completely in charge.

2. If she was a “Yank”—an American—why did he allow her to be taken out of the camp on a

litter and flown off in a Japanese bomber... to who knows where?

3. How could he think that the Speedletter to G. P. Putnam was confirmation of Amelia Earhart's being in the camp? As a wealthy publisher, with world-wide connections, he could have had other relatives and business associates in China who would wire him on their liberation from a prison camp. And there was no elation in his subsequent note of September 9, 1945, to the State Department, in which he stated flatly, "I have just received the message sent recently from your office and would like to file with you my new address, in the event any other messages are sent me from overseas."

Then he listed his new address in Lone Pine, California.

Not one word regarding the so-called liberation of his long lost ex-wife Amelia Earhart!

Further investigation in January of this year brought me in contact with yet another source: the author of an intriguing book on Amelia Earhart.

To my surprise he too appears convinced that the lieutenant's story is plausible and that Amelia Earhart was in our camp. He gave me several graphic examples of crowded prison camp conditions, such as ours, where people and equipment were concealed and not brought to light until hostilities were over. I didn't point out that neither the people cited, nor the radio equipment involved, needed around-the-clock medical attention, but instead, I shot him the three points I have already listed: he either ignored them or told me I must be referring to the lieutenant's first, fictionalized account of the incident—to which I said, as far as I was concerned, all the accounts were fiction.

He then asked me why it was that Weih sien was the only prison camp liberated by the OSS.

"That's easy," I said, "it's because the map showed us 1,000 miles due west of our actual location, and it took the persistence of the OSS to find us."

He insisted that wasn't the reason; it was because Weih sien was a VIP camp that's why

Earhart had been interned there.

I told him I was sure we would all have liked to have been considered VIP's, but we weren't, we came from every walk of life in the Orient.

He wasn't impressed, persisting that the real reason the OSS liberated Weih sien was because they were on a special mission to spirit Amelia Earhart out.

I knew there was only one solution to this—I would have to find the OSS major in command of the sortie.

Luck was with me.

I located him the following week, and, after thanking him for his part in our liberation, I asked him point blank if he had been sent to Weih sien Prison Camp to free Amelia Earhart.

He chuckled.

He said, although he was the CO in charge, he never received any such orders: the first time he heard of Amelia Earhart supposedly being in Weih sien was in December of '97.

So, to all you researchers and writers involved in the Amelia Earhart saga, "Hang in there, the final chapter has yet to be written!"

To everyone else—so you can understand where I am coming from you would have to have lived within the confines of a cramped city block with between 1,500 and 1,800 people to realize "there was no place to hide."

Believe me, I tried many times.

And to all those souls who want to find closure regarding Amelia Earhart's disappearance, I empathize with you, but all I can say is,

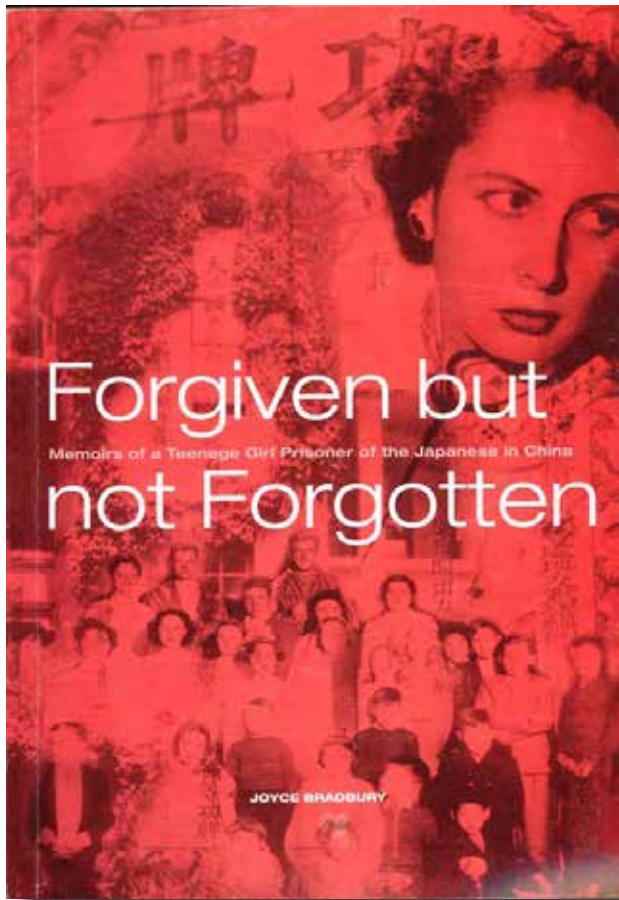
"Forget Weih sien—look somewhere else."

[further reading] ...

[http://weih sien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://weih sien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)

by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

The one morning that will always remain in my memory was the morning I heard the sound of aeroplane engines and Pop calling out to my mother:

“Vera, Vera, come quick. Look, look, they’re dropping something.”

We ran outside and saw an aeroplane flying overhead. It was lower than any aeroplane we had seen before. This was something completely new for us. Although we had seen tiny dots high in the sky several times before we had never seen an aircraft so close.

August 17, 1945, was a clear day at Wei-Hsien. From the low-flying aeroplane, I suddenly saw objects dropping and parachutes opening. My

father called out:

“Oh look, they’re dropping food or something for us.”

We watched with amazement. Then Pop said: “Oh, they’re men. They’re moving. Look at their legs. They’re men.”

The first wave of parachutists landed at 10.15 a.m. on August 17, 1945. The time and date were recorded by one of the parachutists in my autograph book.

We all realised that something big was happening and we ran past the church towards the camp’s entrance. Many ran out the camp’s gates but I didn’t. To be honest, I was frightened of the Japanese guards there. The guards stood at their posts. They were looking at the parachutes too.

They seemed stunned and taken completely by surprise. Many of our young men ran right past them and the guards did not try to stop them.

Everybody was calling out: “What’s happening? What’s happening?”

The parachutists landed just outside the compound. I ran full pelt up to the gate to see what was happening.

At the gate, I saw these armed and uniformed parachutists being carried shoulder-high by the inmates into the camp. As the parachutists were carried to the gate, I realised they were American.

One of them was a Japanese-American named Tad Nagaki. He went up to a bewildered gate guard, slapped him on the back, and said:

“Now, what do you think of your Nagasaki?”

The Japanese guard stood there dumbfounded.

Understandably, we did not know anything about Nagasaki, one of two Japanese cities which were targeted with US atomic bombs in August 1945. I wonder now whether the confronted

Japanese guard knew anything of the atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki.

From the camp entrance, the American soldiers led by Major Stanley Staiger then walked towards the Japanese officers' quarters. Some guards ran toward the quarters but they did not try to stop the Americans. The guards then abandoned their positions at the gate. There was a big commotion as the camp inmates realised their imprisonment was ending.

Everybody was unbelievably excited.

At the officers' quarters, Major Staiger walked with two Japanese guards to the commandant's quarters. The Japanese commander met Major Staiger and quickly surrendered his sword to him.

Overhead, the B-24 US aeroplane from which the US soldiers parachuted kept flying around in circles. The aeroplane flew so low I could see its name, The Armored Angel, and a painting of a glamour girl in a two-piece costume on the fuselage.



A short time after the Japanese commander's surrender, a canister was dropped from the aeroplane. The canister contained supplies for the parachutists. It wasn't long before other American aeroplanes came and dropped many canisters together with leaflets warning us not to overeat.

[excerpt]

During this period, Tsolik Bariantz and I got hold of some parachute material which was pure silk and extremely strong. She made me two

blouses and a skirt from the material. One white blouse and one red skirt and blouse. She used one of the camp's portable sewing machines that my mother had used earlier to make me a pair of shorts and a top out of an old dress.

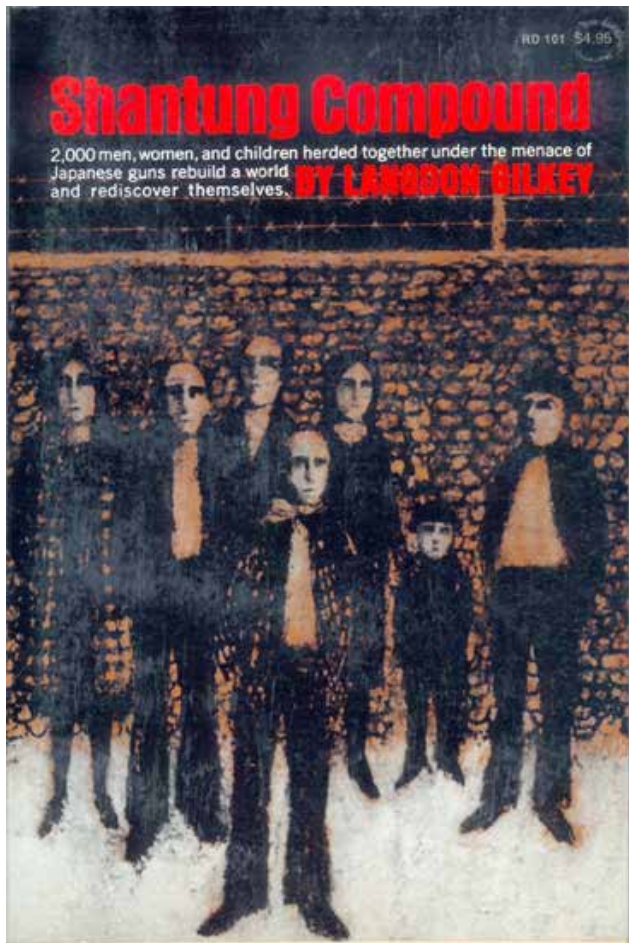
After liberation, every family was issued with cartons of tinned food from the canisters. There was no necessity to cook — everything was prepared. Cheese, butter, jam, corned beef, tongue, Spam (a brand of canned processed luncheon meat) and chipolata sausages. They were all packed in khaki-green coloured cans. There were also biscuits that the American soldiers called dog biscuits. The Americans didn't forget anything in their food parcels. The parcels even had little can openers. Among the parcels came plenty of cigarettes. So mum, and I think my father, took up smoking again.

[further reading]

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)

by Langdon Gilkey ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Everyone expected the end of our world to come; yet, for the moment, we were still absorbed in the trivia of camp life.

Then on Friday, the end came in as glorious a Parousia as the wildest biblical scenarist could have devised. The day, August 17, 1945, was clear, blue, and warm, as such a day should have been. We all began our chores of cooking, stoking, and cleaning up slops as usual. About the middle of the morning, however, word flashed around camp that an Allied plane had been sighted.

Two or three times during the course of the war, we had seen one of "our" planes flying way up in the upper atmosphere, a fast-moving silver speck far out of identification range.

We felt sure they were Allied because of their solitary height and their speed, a vivid contrast to the antiquated Japanese planes that chugged overhead, burning, as one wag put it, "coal balls." Those lonely high fliers sent an electric shock through the camp on those two or three occasions, for they were, from the beginning of the war to its end, our only contact with Allied military might. Yet at that distant height they seemed, like Aristotle's god, to be wholly indifferent to our presence in their world, indeed, if they knew about our existence at all.

The plane that had been sighted on that Friday was evidently quite different—or so the boy who spread the word made clear as he ran through the kitchen yard screaming in an almost insane excitement,

"An American plane, and headed straight for us!"

We all flung our stirring paddles down beside the cauldrons; left the carrots unchopped on the tables, and tore after the boy to the ball field. This miracle was true: there it was, now as big as a gull and heading for us from the western mountains.

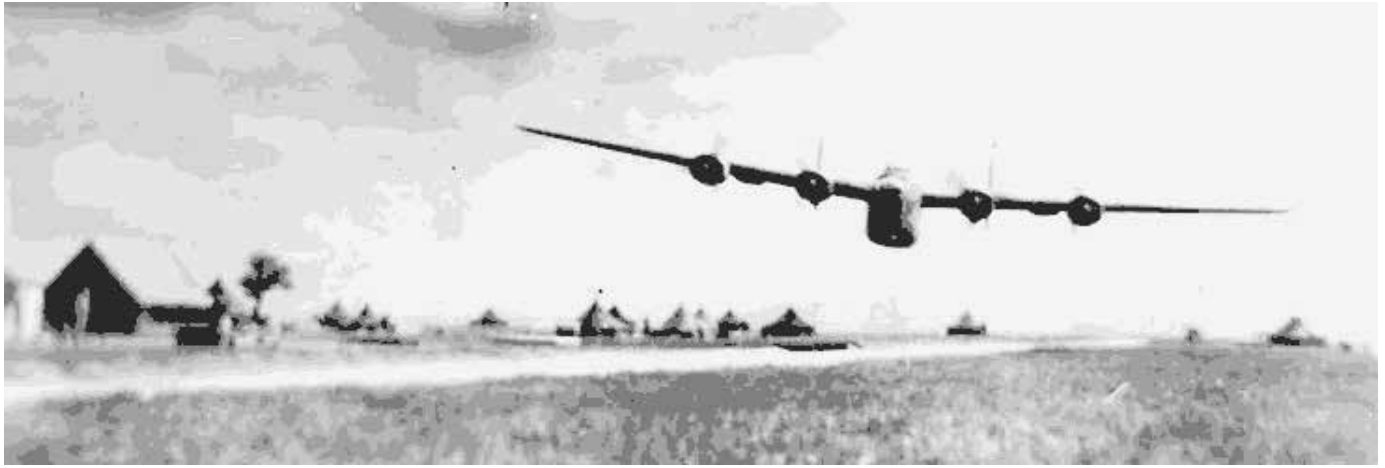
As it came steadily nearer, the elation of the assembled camp-1,500 strong—mounted.

This meant that the Allies were probing into our area, not a slow thousand miles away! And people began to shout to themselves, to everyone around them, to the heavens above, their exhilaration: "Why, it's a big plane, with four engines! It's coming straight for the camp—and look how low it is! Look, there's the American flag painted on the side!

Why, it's almost touching the trees! . . . It's turning around again. . . . It's coming back over the camp! . . . Look, look, they're waving at us!

They know who we are. They have come to get us!"

At this point, the excitement was too great for



any of us to contain. It surged up within us, a flood of joyful feeling, sweeping aside all our restraints and making us its captives.

Suddenly I realized that for some seconds I had been running around in circles, waving my hands in the air and shouting at the top of my lungs. On becoming aware of these antics, I looked around briefly to see how others were behaving. It was pandemonium, the more so because everyone like myself was looking up and shouting at the plane, and was unconscious of what he or anyone else was doing.

Staid folk were embracing others to whom they had barely spoken for two years; proper middle-aged Englishmen and women were cheering or swearing. Others were laughing hysterically, or crying like babies.

All were moved to an ecstasy of feeling that carried them quite out of their normal selves as the great plane banked over and circled the camp three times.

This plane was our plane. It was sent here for us, to tell us the war was over. It was that personal touch, the assurance that we were again included in the wider world of men—that our personal histories would resume—which gave those moments their supreme meaning and their violent emotion.

Then suddenly, all this sound stopped dead.

A sharp gasp went up as fifteen hundred people stared in stark wonder. I could feel the drop of my own jaw. After flying very low back and forth about a half mile from the camp, the plane's underside suddenly opened.

Out of it, wonder of wonders, floated seven men in parachutes! This was the height of the incredible!

Not only were they coming here some day, they were here today, in our midst!

Rescue was here! For an instant this realization sank in silently, as a bomb might sink into water. Then the explosion occurred. Every last one of us started as with one mind toward the gate. Without pausing even a second to consider the danger involved, we poured like some gushing human torrent down the short road.

This avalanche hit the great front gate, burst it open, and streamed past the guards standing at bewildered and indecisive attention. As I rushed by, I caught a glimpse of one guard bringing his automatic rifle sharply into shooting position. But his bewilderment won out; he slowly lowered his gun.

It was the first of several lucky breaks that day, when split-second decisions had to be made in the face of absolutely new situations to which no page of the Japanese soldier's manual applied.

By some quirk of Providence, as in this instance, the decision was the right one. Oblivious to all this danger, yelling and shouting, jostling and pushing, we rushed through the narrow streets of the neighboring village and out into the fields. So intent were we on finding our parachuted rescuers that we scarcely had any time to savor the sweet feeling of freedom that colored so vividly those earliest moments.

Suddenly we had become part of the wider world; even the Chinese village of eight clay huts

huddled near the walls of the camp held mystery and fascination for us; its rude dirt street was beautiful. Every sight, every smell, every sound was etched on our consciousness. These sensations of freedom were like a tonic, building up our excitement to an ever-higher pitch.

[excerpt]

About a half mile farther on, we came to a field high with Chinese corn.

My first sight of an American soldier in World War II was that of a handsome major of about twenty-seven years, standing on a grave mound in the center of that cornfield.

Looking further, I saw internees dancing wildly about what appeared to be six more godlike figures: how immense, how strong, how striking, how alive these American paratroopers looked in comparison to our shrunken shanks and drawn faces! Above all, their faces were new!

After two and one-half years, we had come to assume subconsciously that everyone in the world looked like the fifteen hundred of us—we were our world. I had forgotten that more variety than our camp features provided was possible.

Meanwhile, some of the more rational internees were trying to fold up the parachutes.

Most of us, however, were far too “high” for the task. We just stood there adoring, or ran about shouting and dancing.

Our seven heroes were concerned with other matters.

They had descended into the fields with their automatic weapons at the ready, anticipating a Japanese attack at every moment. The last thing they expected to find was this onslaught of ecstatic internees whose dancing about was making it impossible for them to deploy safely in the gao-liang field as they had planned.

In any case, after gathering up their gear and talking to enough of us to get an idea of the situation, they asked to be guided to the camp—so

they “could take charge there.”

This casual, matter-of-fact statement of intentions sent us into another transport of rapture.

The Japanese would no longer rule us!

With this word, our cup of ecstasy ran over. The internees picked up their discomfited rescuers on their shoulders, and in a wild cheering procession reminiscent of a victorious high school student body bringing home the winning coach and team, the internees wound their way back to the camp.

As we approached the camp, the effect with its contrapuntal motifs was a mad confusion. Below there were the joyous, abandoned internees singing and yelling like Maenads in a bacchanalia, conscious only that the Lords had come and wishing only to shout hosanna. Above, on their shoulders, were the grim, watchful American soldiers, their arms at the ready, alert for any hostile move on the part of the twenty gaping Japanese guards who stood by the gate as we approached.

This time the tension was even more marked.

The guards had to decide whether to fire on the seven parachutists or not.

At point-blank range, they eyed one another for a brief moment. Then, as the triumphal procession, unmindful of the military drama being enacted above their heads, proceeded to the gates, a Japanese guard saluted—and the gates were opened.

We first grasped the military aspect of the capture of the camp when the procession came to a halt just inside the gate. At that point, the young major in charge leaped to the ground and asked,

“Where’s the chief military officer of the camp?”

Somewhat awed, the internees nearest to him pointed to the neighboring yard where the Japanese administrative officers were.

With a fine sense of drama, the major, who had a service pistol on each hip, drew them both,

checked them out carefully, and then strode toward the head office.

In his figure, every internee saw the embodiment of the righteous marshal striding fearlessly through the swinging doors into the barroom where a hated outlaw awaited him.

The scene that ensued was in the same great tradition—so we were told afterward by the major's interpreter. With both guns levelled, the major entered the room. There sat the Japanese officer, his hands spread out on his desk, awaiting his antagonist.

Neither knew what the other intended to do, nor just what he himself would do in response—again it was touch and go.

Through his interpreter, the major demanded that the Japanese officer hand over his gun and recognize that the American army was now in full charge.

This must have been a hard decision for the chief officer. Probably the Japanese had been taken so unaware by the parachuting a bare twenty minutes earlier that they had had no chance to communicate with their superiors in Tsingtao.

Moreover, the chief himself probably had no accurate information as to whether Japan had really surrendered or not. If it was true, then to fight these seven men and possibly to kill them, would make it go all the harder for the chief and his men. But if Japan had not yet given up, then to surrender his well-armed force of fifty men to seven paratroopers would have been an act of cowardice and reason to commit hara-kiri.

For a full moment the commandant considered.

Then slowly he reached into the drawer in front of him, as the major's trigger finger twitched.

With a deliberate motion, the chief brought out his samurai sword and his gun, and solemnly handed them over to the major, who was astounded, relieved, and somewhat touched.

At that remarkable gesture, the major handed back these symbols of authority, told the chief that

they would work together, and stalked from the room.

With that confrontation, the camp passed into American hands; henceforth, Japanese soldiers and G.I.'s alike took orders from the American officers.

etc., etc.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEBSITE\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEBSITE).pdf)

by Ron Bridge ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)/WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)/WEB.pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

On the morning of 17th August I was down by the Church when the drone of an aircraft could be heard.

A lot of people rushed out of No. 1 Kitchen and streamed towards the sports field. Suddenly a large American aircraft appeared from the sky and began to circle the camp.

With each circuit it came lower, and out of the rear dropped seven parachutists.

From the churchyard we were the nearest, so we ran down the sloping road and out of the gate, turned left and along the road to the end of the

camp wall.

The guards made no attempt to stop us.

The Americans landed in a field of kaoliang, and one had damaged his shoulder falling on a grave mound. As we approached, the paratroopers emerged from the six-foot-high kaoliang with guns at waist height.

On slipping out of their parachute harnesses they had put their fingers on the triggers of their carbines. When they realised that they were being approached by schoolboys, women crying with joy, and gangly thin men they relaxed.

Explanations followed and they said that they had been briefed that the landing could have been opposed by the Japanese.

It may well have been so, but the fact that the inmates rushed the gates without fear had not been a scenario anticipated by the guards. So they had just opened up the camp.

One of my friends grabbed at a parachute and we passed the silk around. 'Let's cut it up and each have a piece,' Peter said quickly. 'We could ask the soldiers to sign it,' I suggested eagerly, grabbing a piece of parachute silk, for to have autographs would be really exciting and a great coup.

Anybody got a knife?'

One appeared and the panels of the parachute were soon mutilated, and our heroes asked to sign before they disappeared into the camp.

'Please sign your name,' I asked the first officer I came to, held up my piece of parachute silk and he produced a stubby pencil.

My friends were all doing the same thing.

The good-natured soldiers obliged us, probably flattered to be asked and relieved to have such a happy friendly welcome instead of the hostile reception they had expected.

'Now don't you go tearing up any more of the parachutes, guys,' Major Staiger said as he

scrawled his name on my piece of silk. 'One ruined chute is enough.'

Yes sir,' we breathed as we trooped after them, mingling with the crowds. Not only did I get all seven signatures but acquired the pencil as well!

While this was going on the aircraft continued to circle, but now with its bomb doors open, dropping grey cylindrical containers, each with one parachute in a variety of colours.

There had been one or two dropped with the parachutists, which they had immediately opened, and contained carbines and arms.

Now things were more relaxed we were asked to find the containers, as falling among the kaoliang they were easily hidden. It was really impressive how far the aircraft and soldiers had come, having taken off at five a.m. from Kunming, which was near the Burma border, with a refuelling stop at Xian at eight.

They reached Weihsien at eleven a.m.

Ted McClaren took the Americans towards the camp entrance; here they met the Committee members and had an informal conference as they walked, when Major Staiger explained that his mission was a humanitarian one, to take care of the health and welfare of the internees.

He had only seven men and taking over the full responsibilities of the camp was out of the question.

He valued the Committee's thoughts.

Then it was through the gates to accept the surrender of the Commandant in his office near the guardroom, where the Japanese guards were cowering.

Major Staiger stated that his 'Duck' team (all relief teams had code names) would administer the camp with the camp's Committee of Nine.

Defence of the camp from the surrounding guerrillas would rest with the Japanese, as would the provision of food and fuel. The Japanese officials appeared confused by the situation, because such a scenario had not been envisaged by the Japanese planners. The local commanders felt themselves unable to make a binding decision

but agreed to accept the directives 'temporarily'.

Mr Izu, the Commandant, kept asking what would have happened if the Duck Mission had failed.

He got a stock answer: in that case a second much larger team would have been sent and that would certainly not have failed. Izu then seemed to accept that the Americans were here to stay, and though the subsequent conferences with the Japanese authorities may have been dilatory they were never openly hostile.

Major Staiger mentioned that, as his men would be staying in the camp, the only suitable buildings were the Japanese Headquarters, so the Americans took these over while the Japanese officials returned to their living quarters.

Cpl Orlich set up his radio equipment and suddenly we were in communication with the world.

During the early afternoon, Mr Koga, Vice-Consul at Qingdao, who happened to be in Weihsien when the Duck Team landed, called in, and the whole purpose and authority of the Duck Team had to be explained again.

The agreement of the morning was re-negotiated, Mr Izu pushing for the Americans to take full control, but this was not agreed.

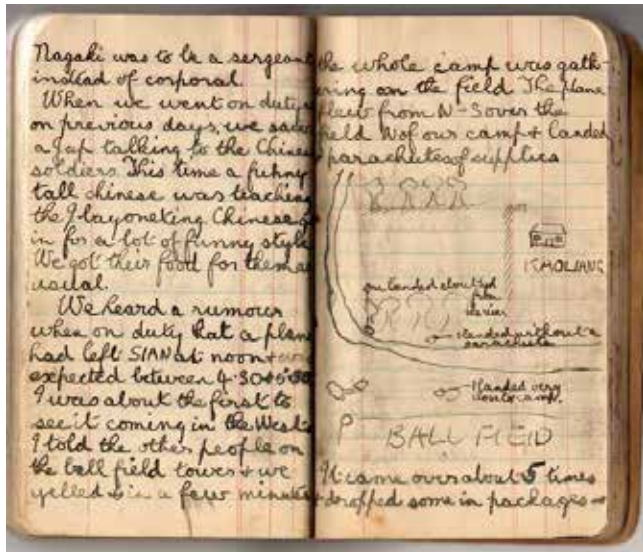
The Committee had recruited a number of men to form a camp police force, if necessary; Dad was one, so he swapped stoking fires and went on roistered guard duties at the gate. We still got hot food from the kitchen, so I suspected that someone else was now a stoker.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)

by Peter Bazire ...

<http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/PeterBazire/diaryBook/Wednesday.htm>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Wednesday, August 15th --

During the afternoon and evening rumours were going around camp that war had finished. In the evening, Mr. Mc Laren read out in front of the discipline office that the Japanese emperor had ordered that no more firing should be.

The Japs neither confirmed nor denied this statement.

Thursday, August 16th

Around midday rumours went around that war was over. There were crowds near the front gate all talking away.

Soon the crowd dispersed and the people discussed the end of the war and what they would do.

About 8:20 p.m. a car arrived at the front gate. People came from all directions to see who was in it. It turned out to be a couple Japs. It was about the first car we had seen for a long time.

Friday, August 17th

Everybody was excited and couldn't settle down.

We, of course dug into our stores more than usual.

After morning roll-call, about 9:30 we heard a plane. Everybody rushed out and we found out that it was American. Occasionally foreign (sic) planes had flown over but this was the first to fly low. It came from S-W. It flew E. of the camp and we could see the star. It had 4 engines and was a B-24.

We all waved and cheered although they told us after that they didn't see us. It came over again and flew from S-N over the camp very low, about 40 feet. It almost touched the trees. Then it circled around and flew N-S, but what thrilled us all was that it dropped parachute troops. 7 in all.

Major Staiger

Lieut. J. Moore (Chefusian)

Lieut. Hannen

Sgt. Ray Hanchulack

Cpl. Tad Nagaki (naturalised Jap-American)

Cpl. Peter Orlick

Edward Wong. (Chinese)

We all rushed out of camp to help them in. They dropped in dull white silk parachutes. All they had to do was to turn a thing and ... press it and they were released from the parachute.

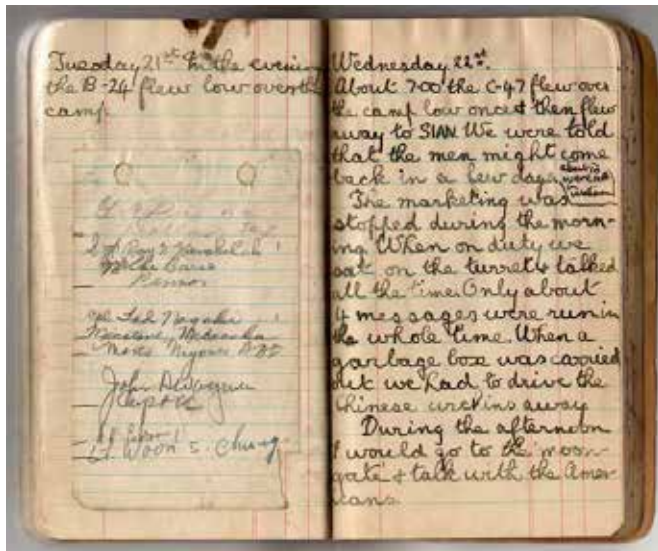
They hid behind grave mounds because when they had started out, war hadn't finished.

It was a mistake what we had heard on Thursday.

We yelled in English to them and they realised that they were safe then showed themselves.

I was one of the first to come across. E. Wong.

They had .45 colts by their hips and .32 up near their left shoulders.



We were half a mile from camp amongst kao-liang and millet.

The plane was 600 ft. up when they dropped. The plane zoomed over again and in its bomb racks it had big metal containers about 4' high and over a foot wide slightly rounded at each end.

We carried them to a general dump by a grave

. They were dropped with parachutes.

The plane came again and dropped a few more and after that circled once more and flew W very close to the kao-liang and went for ever that day. The plane also ... (?)

We then went in search for the supply containers. Some were'nt found for quite a time.

We had 4 men to a container and another carried the parachute. They brought out the reserve gang cart out and dumped a good deal of the stuff on that.

I thought the whole thing was over when Hoyte III asked me to come with him. A feeble minded police tried to stop us but we told him that we were doing good work so he let us go on. We carried a big basket affair which contained radio parts.

We ran all the way.

The band was playing and they had brought my trumpet. Since we children were not allowed out again I played in the band. The Chungking troops

were outside our front gate when the P. troops landed to protect them and us.

The major was about the last to come of everybody, and was carried by a couple of men.

Everybody cheered ...

The Americans went to the Administration building in Moon Gate and talked with the big-shots of the camp.

E. Wong talked to us through the window.

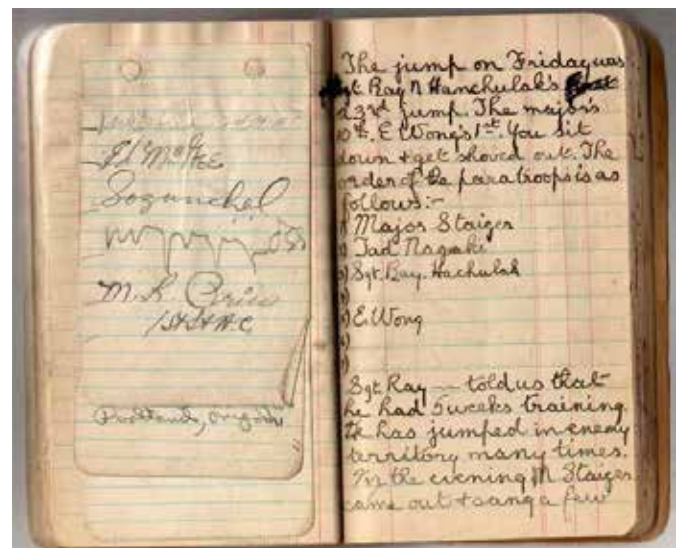
He was in Peking 7 years ago but escaped from school and went to high school and then joined up. It was the first time he had jumped from an airplane.

He is called "Shorty" because of his height (about 5')

When the soldiers came out children flocked towards them, especially Nagaki. He is always seen walking around with children.

These parachute troops were picked men. When they landed they didn't know, whether Japs or communists, who were numerous, would attack them for the war isn't over yet. They were brave men. The Japs were feeling funk'd and couldn't stop us so the Americans came in safe.

Some invalids were told to prepare 1 suit-case --- no more than 50 lbs. in case they would go that day.

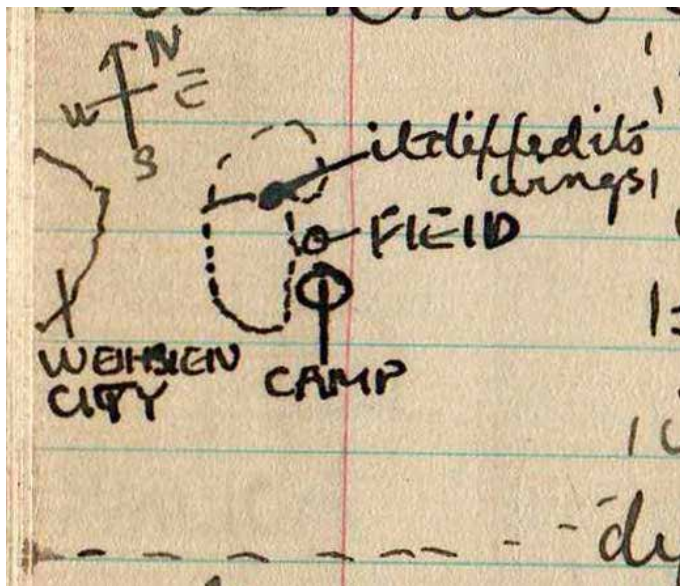


They didn't.

Saturday, August 18th,

People young and old were asking that Americans write their names in their autograph albums or suchlike books.

I forgot to say that on Friday evening the sewing room made letters out of the parachute "O.K. TO LAND" for the air-drome which is about 5 miles South of us at (?) ...

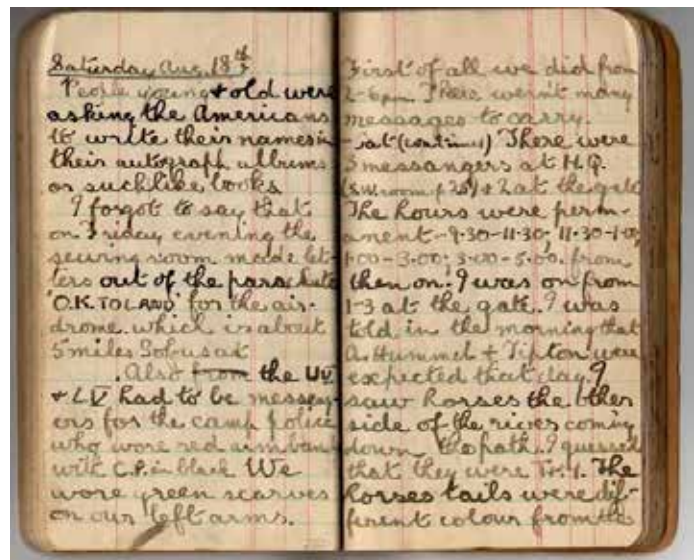


Also the U.V. and L.V. had to be messengers for the camp police who wore red armbands with C.P. in black. We wore green scarves on our left arms. First of all we did from 2-6 p.m.. There weren't many messages to carry.

- Saturday (continued)

There were 3 messengers (sic) at H.Q. (S.W. room of 25) & 2 at the gate. The hours were permanent — 9.30 to 11.30; 11.30 to 1.00; 1.00 to 3.00; 3.00 to 5.00 from then on. I was on from 1 to 3 at the gate. I was told in the morning that A. Hummel & Tipton were expected that day. I saw horses the other side of the river coming down the path. I guessed that they were T + H. . The horses' tails were different colour from the main body.

A Chinese told us that they were.



When they came in sight again they were walking with a Chinese officer between them. Tipton was in canary khaki & Hummel in blue trousers & white shirt.

The camp came down to the front gate to see them especially D. Candlin who is H's girl friend. They went to H.Q. & the Adm. Building & talked there.

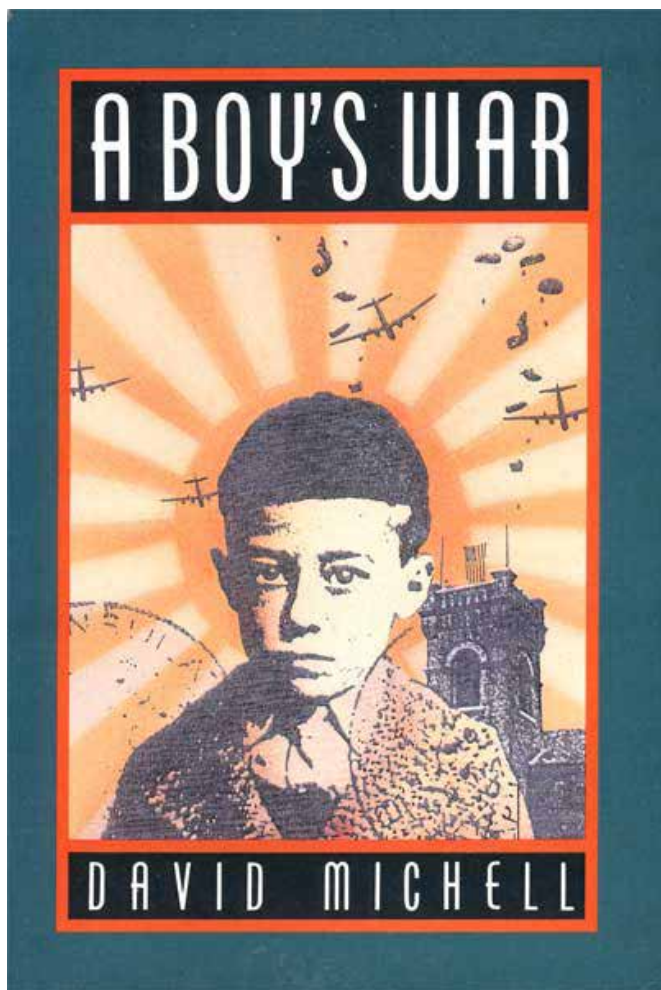
A wretched Jap plane was on the airfield so when the B-24 came that afternoon, it couldn't land. As well the Japs had some men with rifles on the base. The major was very heated with the Japs.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/PeterBazire/diaryBook/Wednesday.htm>

by David Michell ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)



[Excerpt] ...

[...]

Back in Weih sien camp the second week of August was very busy for our coolie couriers.

They brought in news from Tipton and Hummel that there were signs of surrender. The rumor factory in camp was never busier, but August 15, VJ Day, came and went just like any other day, with no definite news from our camp leaders or the Japanese.

Friday, August 17, started ordinarily enough. The work squads were going about their usual duties in the kitchens, at the ash heaps, or other

places. When at 9:00 a.m. our class went down to the church for our weekly singing lesson, little did we know we were coming up to one of those moments whose every detail would be etched on our memories.

The mid-summer sun seemed to be beckoning us as it filtered through the ornate corner windows of the church. "Let's try it one more time," our singing teacher said, with a hint of resignation. I was trying hard to hit the high notes but the weekly spoonful of crushed eggshells (for calcium), coaxed down my throat by the teacher that morning, turned my efforts into a sound little better than a growl.

We were droning our best, when all at once everything was drowned out by a deafening roar right over our heads. Above the din we heard frantic shouts of "American plane! American plane! It's heading straight for us."

We dashed outside and were caught in a frenzied flow of able-bodied inmates pouring out of the little shacks and crowded rooms onto the athletic field. The pumps, the coal balls, the washing and even the kitchens were abandoned.

We all ran to join the swelling throng already gazing raptly skyward, hearts pounding uncontrollably. Could it be that at last our three years of captivity were about to end? The plane had turned and was coming in very low, just sweeping over the lookout towers and the walls.

Shirts and arms were waving wildly as people began to jump up and down. Hysteria was at fever pitch, with some running in panic to and fro, others frozen to the ground, their upturned faces and searching eyes magnetized as it were by the huge B-24.

As the plane came down lower, we could see people inside and then its name, "The Armored Angel." The plane flew right over, and we expected that any moment the Japanese soldiers would open fire on it.

Then slowly, slowly the plane started upward again, moving away from the camp.

Was it going to leave us after all?

Then, to the piercing shrieks and wild cries of everyone, seven GI's parachuted down, floating out of the sky like saviors from another world. Nothing could stop us now.

The forbidding gray walls and massive gates in an instant lost their terror. Not even the guards with their bayonets drawn as they stood in line could block our headlong stampede.

Some of us children, barefoot and dressed only in shorts, were first down the cinder road to the main gate. We hesitated only momentarily as we neared the soldiers. The shouts and cheers behind us and the hope of deliverance within reach took away our fears.

As we surged through the gates with spirits bursting for freedom from the years of imprisonment, the guards fell away to the sides.

The stronger men, who reached the Americans first, were met by drawn pistols, since the GIs were prepared to meet Japanese soldiers. Henry Lack, one of our Chefoo boys, wearing only shorts and covered with soot from head to foot from stoking, came upon one of the airmen. Challenged the GI: "Are you British or American?"

Flustered by the pistol, young Henry apologized for his blackened appearance and said, "I'm supposed to be British!" Stowing away his pistol, the GI responded, "Boy, good to meet you; the war is over, and we'll soon have you out of this."

Another of the GIs was seized by one of the women, who hugged him around the neck and kissed him before fainting in his arms. Not so amorously inclined, the airman yelled to his buddies, "Hey, you guys, take this dame off my neck!"

In no time the parachutists were hoisted up by the prisoners onto the men's shoulders above the head-height corn and tall sorghum stalks, besieged by adoring girls and wide-eyed children.

One GI's remark was long remembered: "I wouldn't change places with Clark Gable for all the tea in China."

We younger children couldn't get there fast enough to be part of the first welcome. Though the soles of our feet were hardened from the barefoot life, our camp had long since been denuded of every prickle, and now the prickles on the dirt road slowed us down. As a small group of us were limping along, eyes strained in the direction of where the parachutes had disappeared, we suddenly heard screams warning us to look out.

A bundle without a parachute had been thrown out of the plane and was hurtling towards us.

Like pillars of salt we stopped dead in our tracks. The bundle kept plunging earthward and then with a terrifying impact buried a Chinese farmer in the field and bounced over our heads, showering us with dust and stones before landing in a little muddy creek that ran through the village.

The farmer was dug out and carried into camp. After being unconscious for two weeks, he recovered and was given reparation for his injuries.

This near tragedy for us was quickly forgotten as the triumphant procession of shoulder-borne liberators approached. We tagged along, shouting and cheering as we tugged the billowing folds of parachutes along the ground, bringing up the rear.

What a triumphal procession we were!

No ticker-tape parade could ever have matched it. Main Street by now was packed with people.

Nobody could stand to miss anything. The camp band was ready for this day and had taken up their positions at the back of the church. As the procession came nearer, they struck up the medley which they had in readiness.

We had always loved to watch the band practice. Even the Japanese guards had often stood and listened. But neither they nor we had caught on to their scheme. Little did we realize that the cleverly disguised drills that we had been listening



One of the team, of whom we were particularly proud, was Navy Lieutenant Jimmy Moore, a graduate of Chefoo School. He was the son of missionaries and had volunteered to be in the first reconnoiter party because many of us were missionaries and children.

When he reached the camp, his first words were, "Take me to Mr. Bruce!"

Some years later, General Wedemeyer, who had been in charge of the rescue

to over the past months were various national anthems without the melody!

Now loud and clear the notes rang out above the din, and Americans, British, Chinese, and others joined in singing the songs of victory.

As we neared the gates, tension grew. But nothing happened. Exuberant spirits won the day as we pressed into the camp, where pandemonium had broken loose.

The leader of the parachutists, Major Stanley Staiger, from Klamath Falls, Oregon, pushed through the crowd into the guardhouse with both pistols drawn to confront the commandant, who must have known the war was over because he and the whole garrison surrendered without resistance.

In a master stroke of face-saving, the Americans handed back the role of security of the camp to the Japanese. After all, what could seven GIs do? They hadn't even come to take over!

Our new heroes, Major Staiger and his men, explained that they had really come only to assess the situation and make arrangements to evacuate the critically ill and the elderly.

of foreign prisoners in China, said that in his view the rescue attempt by the seven was a "suicide mission" because of the paranoid military intentions of Japan to kill all Allied captives.

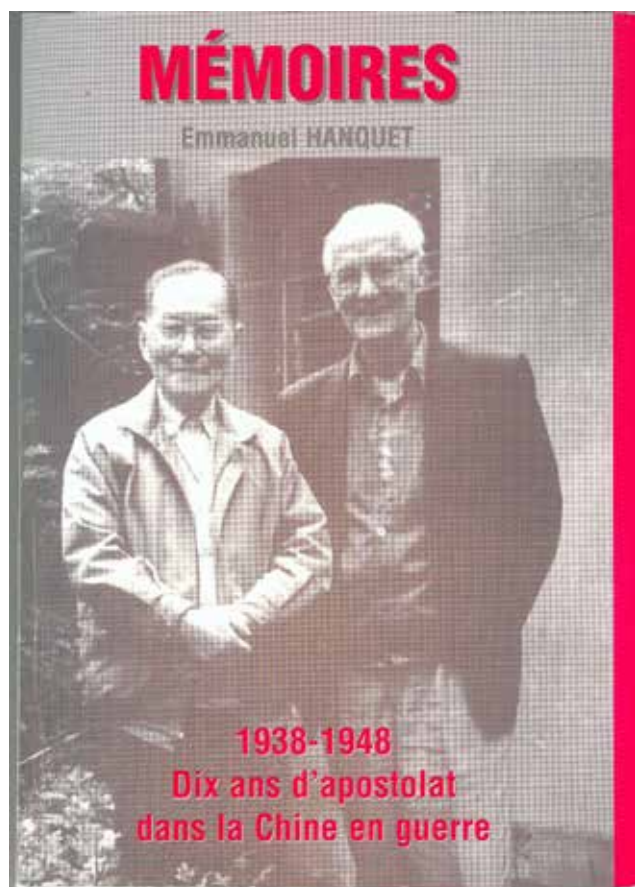
[further reading]

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)



by Emmanuel Hanquet ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

It is 10 o'clock in the morning. To pass away the time a few people are walking about on the assembly ground which we generously call the sports field. It is the only place in the camp where it is possible to play baseball without running the risk of breaking a window or hurting a passer-by. It is also the place chosen by our gaolers to assemble the internees to reassure themselves that no prisoner has escaped.

The weather is marvellously sunny and the temperature is tolerable. And what was I doing on the sports field where there was no shade at this time of day?

I seem to remember that I had noticed the sound of a plane engine, strange and unusual

because it sounded different from the engines of the Japanese planes that we were used to hear.

Curiosity had drawn me to the sports field, which was more open and was on one boundary of the camp. Some in the group on the field with their heads in the air have spotted a red, white and blue roundel painted on the side of the fuselage of the plane which is now flying over us.

Speculation were rife: 'Might it be a French plane?' 'What's it doing in these parts?'

Later we were to learn that American planes have the same colours as the French ones. 'Has it lost its way?' 'Is it doing a reconnaissance?' I should explain that from the air our camp looks like a Chinese village but the Allies were to recognise us because of the coloured shirts that a number of us were wearing.

Once the camp has apparently been recognised the plane begins to circle then, above some nearby fields not far from the perimeter wall it releases ten or so parcels dangling from red, yellow and green parachutes. What a lovely sight! A few minutes later a second drop releases a further dozen bundles.

On the third run, we see things that look like sacks of potatoes appear, then these suddenly acquire arms and legs and above them we see big white parachutes opening. There are seven of them.

What should we do?

Despite the expressionless faces of our gaolers, a rumour had been going round the camp that the Japs had been having some setbacks. We knew nothing of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which had brought Japan to sign a document of unconditional surrender on the 15th of August 1945.

I had tried to find out more from some Chinese who had delivered a cartload of vegetables to us. Taking advantage of one opportune moment, I had gleaned in confidence that the Japanese were abandoning the nearby town.

I had spread this long hoped-for news throughout the camp. But only on that marvellous morning of the 17th of August did this great hope seem to become a reality...

Now, while one of our comrades, strong and bold, had hitched himself up onto the boundary wall to see just where the parachutes had fallen, the rest of us had, as one, rushed towards the gate to the outside which was guarded by two sentries.

There were twenty or thirty of us hurtling down the slope towards it.

Were those Japanese who were on duty going to react?

After a few seconds of uncertainty, we were out in the countryside running towards those that we supposed, and hoped, were our liberators.

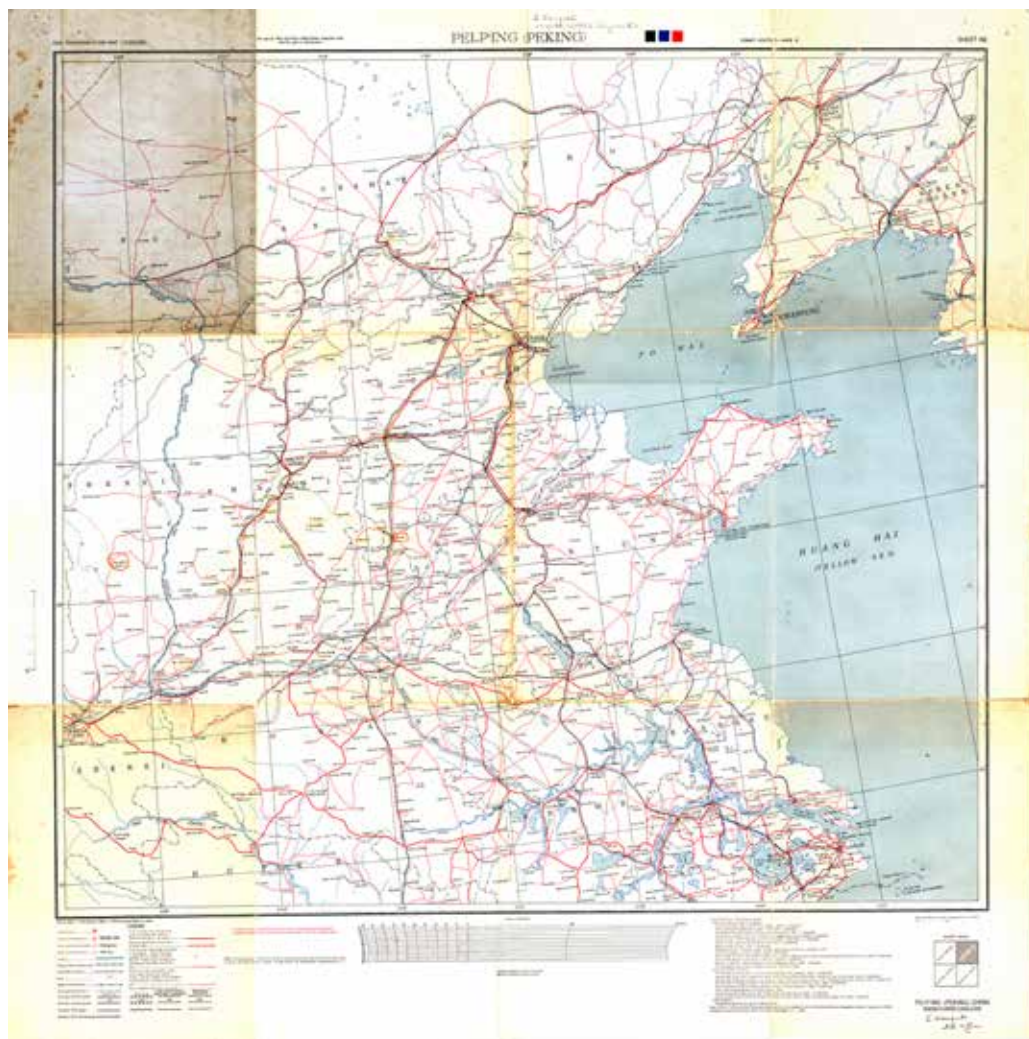
In the midst of tall heads of maize, standing on the tomb of a Chinese notable, an American major was giving orders. He seemed to us to be the liberating angel in person. What a welcome.

We looked around for his companions. 'There are seven of us,' he said, 'and we have twenty bundles to gather up as well as the parachutes.'

To work, now!' It took barely an hour to assemble the team and the materiel. One member of the commando, a 17 year-old Chinese, a volunteer interpreter, making his first jump, had broken his foot on landing.

We returned to the camp in triumph bearing them all on our shoulders. We were wild with joy.

However, the major calmed us down and advised us to let him go ahead with his men, each



armed with a Bren gun and with revolvers in their belts.

They could reasonably fear a violent reaction from our guards. Nothing of the sort, happily.

The Japanese commandant had assembled all the guards and was impassively waiting for the parachutists to arrive. He knew full well that the war was over...

Two interpreters, British Eurasians who had been interned with us, were present. The exchange between the Americans and Japanese passed off smoothly.

Orders from on high confined our former gaolers to their accommodation while entrusting to them the guarding of the camp at nighttime.

We learned that a guerilla force of communists were heading for the camp hoping to take us hostage.

Despite our hungry curiosity to know

everything, our rescuers were too busy, that day, to tell us about the operation that had been devised to rescue us.

But the following day we got to know the details: they were all volunteers for the mission, and had been brought together just twenty-four hours beforehand in order to get acquainted with one another and to clarify individual tasks. When told of the risks they were likely to run, none of them had backed out. The team consisted of a major in his thirties, the leader of the mission; a captain; two other officers - one for liaison and one a radio specialist; an orderly; a Nisei [an American of Japanese origin]; and a young Chinese who would act as interpreter if needed.

They had come from Kunming, an American base in Yunnan Province in South China, and had flown for six hours to reach Shantung Province and begin the search for our camp. After dropping them the plane had continued northwards to a base which had recently been liberated and which was not so far to fly. In the following days, other packs arrived from the sky containing clothes, food and shoes.

[excerpt]

As already told by many of you, and in spite of the armed guards standing at the entrance of the camp, we forced the gate and rushed into the fields out of the camp in order to cheer and congratulate our rescuers.

Major Staiger was in charge of the team.

He had already put his harness and parachute aside and was standing on top of a mound when we first saw him.

This mound was a tomb. For centuries, the Chinese used to bury their ancestors in the fields and they built a mound to mark the place of the burial.

The highest mound was assigned to the oldest ancestor.

Major Staiger accepted our cheers but very soon, wisely said: "Please gather next to this tomb, all the parachutes with their loads and also, bring here the men who had jumped with their white silk parachutes.

About more or less an hour later, everything was ready and we hoisted the seven men on our shoulders as, of course, we wanted to honour them as our heroes.

When we approached the walls of the camp, Staiger gave us the order to let them down so that they could encounter the captain of the camp and the guards who were watching us coming.

This was a wise measure, since the guards were all armed and our rescuers did not know at that moment what the Japanese's reaction would be in regard to this particular situation.

As I re-entered the camp on my own, I met two friends who were standing alongside the wall ready to defend us in case of a violent Japanese reaction. They were Roy Chu and Wade.

Both had an axe in their hands, and they had put their red armbands to be recognised. Only then, did I discover that a group of bachelors in the camp had organised a secret brigade to protect us from the Japanese, in case they would start their plan to exterminate us all.

Fortunately, this did not happen.

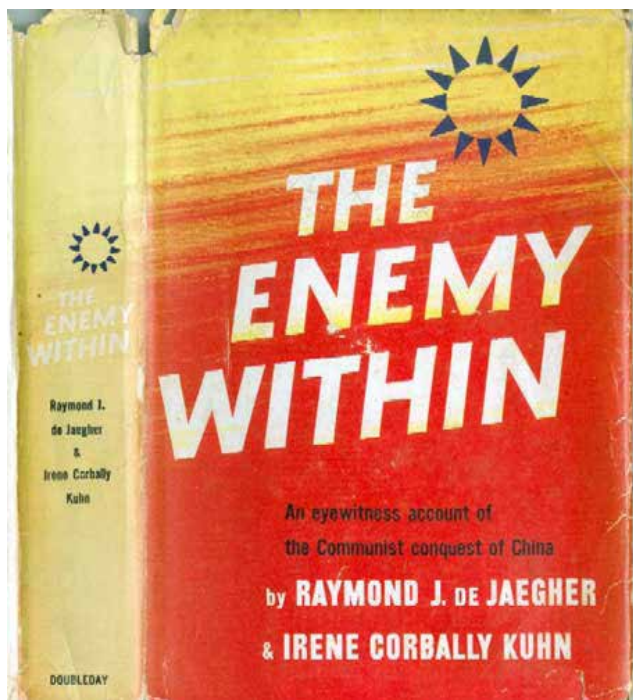
Everything went smoothly when the rescue team met the guards. Both groups received instructions not to fight and we would sleep in peace during the next two more months that we had to stay in camp, allowing intelligence officers to screen the former history of every one of us and to finally be able to evacuate my group to Peking by a plane, a C-46, on October 17, 1945.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

by Raymond deJaegher ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/ChapterXVIII.htm>



[Excerpt] ...

[...]

When Mr. Mac Laren 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-24. 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 came back, and we counted our saviours 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.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/text/ChapterXVIII.htm>

by Sylvia Prince, née Churchill ...

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/OneLeafInTime/OneLeaf\(WEB\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/OneLeafInTime/OneLeaf(WEB).pdf)

[Excerpt] ...

[...]

About twice a week, we would all gather in this building and have music.

Miss Budd, the beefy, ruddy-faced Scotch woman who also ran the Girl Guides, led us in song. Harry hated to sing, so he would just mouth the words and Miss Budd would put down her baton and move as close as she could to him. Then, cupping her ear with a fleshy hand, she would bend down to his face to hear his voice. The group would all titter, and poor Harry was so embarrassed his face would turn red.

"You take the high road and I'll take the low road and I'll get to Scotland before ye."

It was August 17, 1945, and Miss Budd had us in full swing in our school building when it came: the sound of an American plane, different from the broken-down lawn mower sound of the Japanese air force, came steadily booming, louder and louder.

We all dashed to the playing field, tumbling over each other in excitement and jumping up and down.

Looking up to the sky with shaded eyes, we were enthralled by the sight of a huge, silver aeroplane as it swooped several times over our heads. It flew so low that we could see the pilots sitting in the cockpit.

Everyone was jumping, waving, and cheering, holding on to each other and laughing, then crying.

This was it! We knew this was it!

Then out of the bowels of the B-24, seven parachutes unfolded one at a time.



Armed American soldiers, looking like toy dolls, drifted into a cornfield next to the camp. Unfortunately, one of the men thought the top of the corn was the ground and with this misjudgement, broke his leg.

Throwing open the gates, the internees rushed out to meet U.S. Army Major Staiger and the six paratroopers who liberated us.

Tom recalls that the Marines packed away their parachutes and, as he approached, they lay with weapons drawn, ready to tangle with the Japanese.

The Japs, however, knowing the war was over, had piled their rifles in neat stacks and were standing in front of the guardhouse by the front gate, with their hands held over their heads. They gave in very passively and weren't about to argue with the U.S. troops!

The only one missing was General Gesundheit. He evidently ducked out the back door, fearing reprisal. Triumphantly, the jubilant internees carried in our 'rescuers (the Marine with the broken leg was given medical attention at our crude little hospital) and we stood up to give our heroes three "hurrahs!" before smothering them with questions and stories.

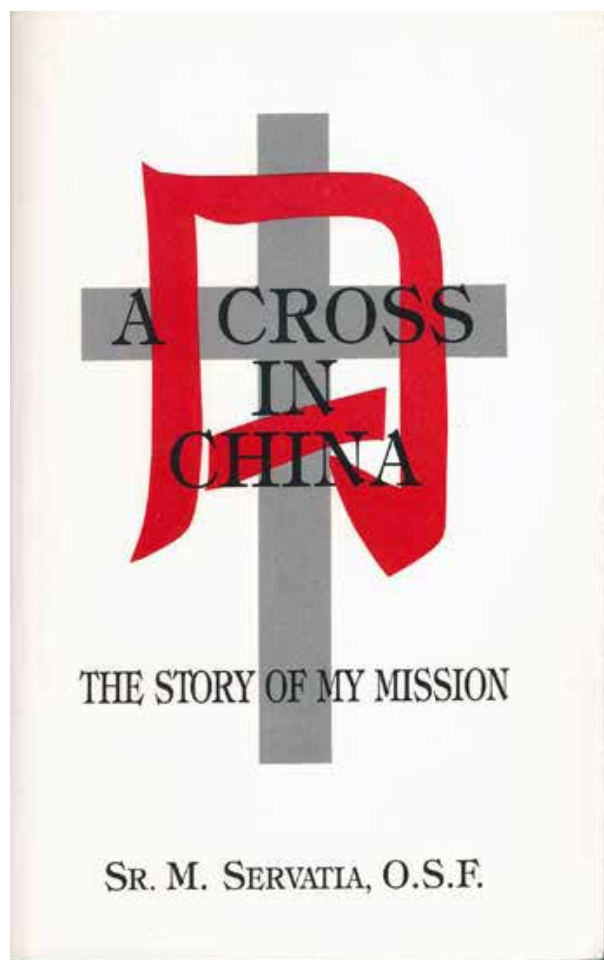
To our surprise, who should turn up during that week but the two men who had jumped camp about six months before? They had joined the Communists and, with dirt-smeared faces, proceeded to give us accounts of their escape, narrowly being caught by a band of Japanese reconnoitres, and their induction into the Communist army. They also told us that the Communists had chased the Japanese out of most of the cities and were all around the camp. Evidently, they stayed on after that and fought with the guerrillas.

[further reading]

[http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/OneLeafInTime/OneLeaf\(WEB\).pdf](http://weihsien-paintings.org/books/OneLeafInTime/OneLeaf(WEB).pdf)

by *Sr. M. Servatia ...*

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

The Japanese papers from Peking came in to the internees who could afford to subscribe. But more of the paper was missing now because our supervisors even had to censor their own newspapers because they couldn't afford to let us know that there was so little hope left for them.

On the 15th of August we had an early High Mass in the church and we were supposed to go about our duties as usual since the rest of the camp was not celebrating the Assumption of Our Lady.

The feast was on a Wednesday and after the

Mass **Father DeJaegher** came to our room, sat down on somebody's stool and said he had news.

Japan had fallen.

He had no particulars. He had gotten that from the Chinese through his own methods, one of which was to send letters in tin cans sealed and mixed in with the garbage. Immediately the whole camp was in the highest of spirits.

We could not say anything to the guards, in fact now we felt pity for them instead. The men went to Mr. Izu, our new Commandant but he was powerless since he had no orders, so he left immediately for Tsingtao to find out.

We were still under guard and had to be careful.

The Bamboo Wireless told us that the Americans would be coming on Saturday to free us. We believed that too because it was good to believe it. Now we could start packing perhaps, but in the meantime camp duties still had to be done. Now however, work was a joy.

Friday morning dawned, just another hot morning, but what a difference! We were all walking around on clouds because the "word" was that tomorrow the American Army would arrive.

We all had great faith in the bamboo Wireless, but the Bamboo Wireless had made a slight error this time.

About 10:00 A.M. a plane was flying overhead but at first we made nothing of it since they came often. It came lower and circled and someone shouted, "Its an American plane!"

By that time everyone was outside and shouting and waving up to the plane as it kept circling, coming gradually lower, we were all running back and forth with it. Then it went out westward. A wave of disappointment surged upward until we thought they must have heard us up there. It kept going west about two miles, then the hatch opened and a red, then green, then

yellow, five parachutes, the first most of us had ever seen, opened up.

In the sunlight, it was a beautiful sight to behold. The parachutes gradually descended to the ground.

Everybody then pushed to the front gates.

The guards had no orders and they had to hold us back. Two ex-marines pushed them aside saying, "Those are our men out there", and out the gate westward the crowd hurried, across the fields.

Sr. Eustella and I happened to be together. The guards went along and we followed behind them.

Those who got there first picked up the five men and carried each of them on their shoulders.

The guards looked in wonder at the scene scarcely saying anything. As the men who had gone ahead came back carrying the five rescuers, the Russian ladies pushed forward and threw their arms around them and kissed them over and over.

[excerpt]

Major Stanley A. Staiger was in charge of our liberators.

The seven had volunteered for this special service and at the same time another plane was going up to Korea. The planes were not permitted to land and had to return to base.

Our "rescuers" also included Lieutenant J. Moore, Lieutenant James J. Ray Hanchulak, Stanley Staiger, Tag Nagaki, Jim Moore. Tsingtao, 1945. Hannon of San Francisco, Sergeant Ray Hanchalek, Corporal P. Orlick of New York, Sergeant Nagochi and Edward Wang from Peking.

The last two were brought along principally for interpreting.

The plane had left Kunming on Thursday and stopped at Sian where they spent the night. Then were on their way again at 5:00 A.M. It was a distance of 600 miles from Sian to Weih sien and they made it at 10:00 A.M. The plane was a B-24, equipped with eight, fifty caliber machine guns in case the Japanese would fire back, but the sixteen

bomb racks were loaded with twenty-five parcels which were dropped with the men and carried back to camp.

Major Staiger asked someone to free him from the Russian women because he had work to do.

Most likely he was a little worried about the outcome the confrontation with the camp officials.

He was led to the Commandant's office, where Mr. Izu laid his gun on the desk before him, a sign of surrender.

From then on, we were under American rule, but we did not realize the difficulty outside. The Communist guerillas had blown up all the bridges and there was the tough problem of getting us out of the camp. We didn't think that day that we would have to stay over a month. But even so that was a very different month from those other twenty nine months.

We were introduced to our rescue crew, however those first few days there was little chance to talk to them. The girls managed to relieve them of all badges or buttons as these were prize souvenirs. The boys were willing to give them away good naturedly.

The latest Japanese newspaper had said ninety American bombers flew over Nagasaki and Hiroshima and destroyed both cities completely.

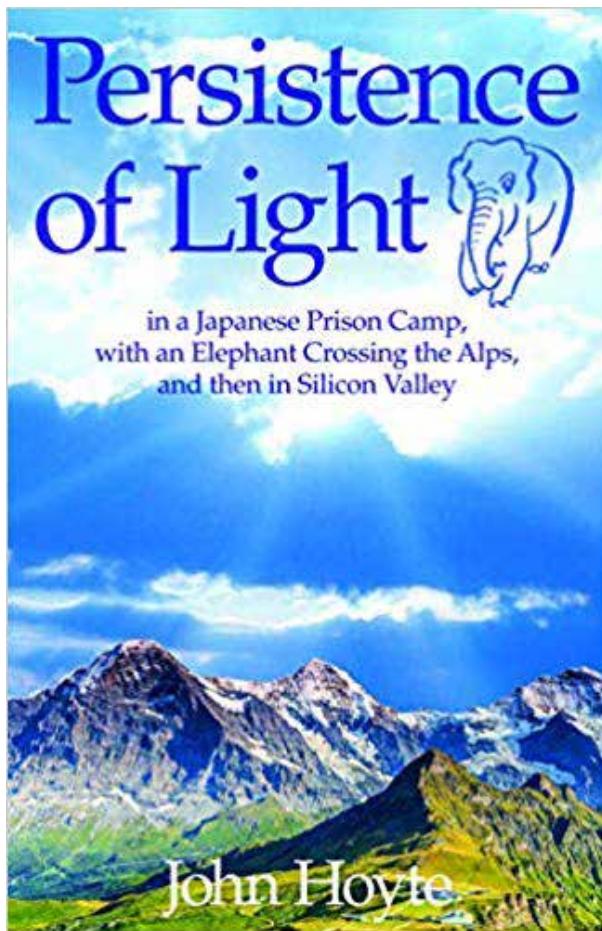
We had no idea it was one bomb until Major Staiger told us. They put up radios on the grounds with loud speakers. What a thrill it was to hear people speaking from the States and from England again! There were about four amplifiers and at news time people would gather round them because now we had news other than the Bamboo Wireless, this was plain fact.

[further reading]

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia(WEB).pdf)

by John Hoyte ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)



[Excerpt] ...

[...]

August 1945 had come, and there were rumors of Allied victories at sea. The Japanese published a weekly newspaper in English that was full of propaganda. Reported Japanese victories were closer and closer to Japan, so we sensed that the war was coming to an end.

The two prisoners who had escaped earlier, Arthur Hummel and Christopher Tipton, were with the Nationalist forces out in no-man's-land, and they managed to get news into camp by means of the coolies who emptied the septic tanks each week. The coolies tended to have terrible teeth, with lots of cavities into which a message on a tiny scrap of paper could be stuffed. They also tended

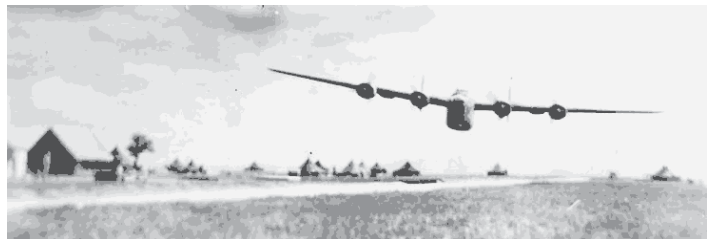
to spit, dislodging the message so it found its way unobserved to the ground, where a prisoner in the know could get the message.

This was all kept very secret so that the rest of us were out of the loop.

August 17, 1945, was clear, cloudless, and warm. We were in class that morning when the distant drone of an airplane caught our attention.

As it grew louder, we perked up our ears, for very few planes ever flew over the camp, and those that did were at high altitude. Quite suddenly, the sound was so loud that we rushed to the windows and looked out.

There, unbelievably, was an American bomber, a B-24, flying low over the trees, so low that we thought it might almost touch them. It climbed, circled, and came in low again.



The bold American star on its flank was unmistakable; it was clearly one of ours.

Everyone was outside waving wildly but also wondering if the Japanese would try to shoot it down. After all, as far as we knew, the war was still on. But the plane came down toward us so brazenly, so exquisitely, with such unimaginable reality.

The meaning was profound: This plane was for us! It was to give us a personal message.

Our little camp, out in the boonies, had been remembered. Could it be that the war was over?

The magical plane gained altitude, heading away, after passing over us three times. There was a gasp, a hint of disappointment. Someone said,

"They are leaving us! One day they will come back and deliver us," and so it seemed when an even-greater marvel took place, almost in slow motion.

The plane's undercarriage opened and seven dots appeared. Now it became clear that they were seven men parachuting down toward us.

And what parachutes! Their color was drab, but to us, they were in brilliant colors, the glorious colors of freedom.



How they contrasted with the shabbiness of the camp, for indeed we were drab. After all those months in captivity, most color had gone from our lives, with our clothes in tatters, devoid of color, and our food almost as colorless as it was tasteless.

So I can understand why the parachutes—so important to me—appeared to my mind as in brilliant colors. The more significant reality was that seven very real men were dangling from them.

The parachutes floated down to earth at such a leisurely pace, indeed like a vision from on high, almost too wonderful to take in and all in slow motion.

Without hesitation and disregarding the danger involved, we rushed toward the main gate of the camp, burst it open, and ran out into the fields. As we passed through it, a couple of guards brought their automatic rifles into firing position, but, in



obvious confusion, they slowly lowered them.

Our goal was to reach the seven airmen. We prisoners were barefoot, and the ground was rough with broken glass, sometimes jagged metal, and prickly kaoliang vegetation, but we did not care.

Half a mile out in a field high with kaoliang corn, our seven godlike heroes were unbuckling their parachutes. They had their rifles at the ready, preparing to fight their way into the camp if necessary, but were now taken by total surprise by this horde of ragtag, barefoot prisoners surrounding them in jubilation.

I was one of the first to reach Jimmy Moore, an alumnus from Chefoo, who had volunteered for the mission to help free his old school. His uniform was impeccable, his ruddy complexion like a god's, and just to touch his smart uniform was breathtaking. This was as close to worshipping a human being as a boy could get. Some of the adults and bigger boys carried him into camp on their shoulders, with us smaller ones tagging along.





The seven dismounted from their human chariots just inside the main gate, and their commander, Major Staiger, asked to see the Japanese commandant. A prisoner pointed to the hall where the Japanese officers had assembled.

Staiger, who was only twenty-seven, drew his two revolvers and strode in to face the commandant, seated at his desk with his hands spread out in front of him.

The moment was crucial for both sides, as the commandant probably could not be sure that Japan had actually surrendered. If it had, he knew, killing the seven would make it tougher for him and his men. If their country hadn't, for him to surrender would be an extreme act of military cowardice and might lead to hara-kiri.

In the crucial moment, the commandant drew his samurai sword and revolver and handed them to the major.

In a brilliant response, Staiger handed them back and insisted, with one of the parachutists who spoke Japanese interpreting that they would work together in arranging relief for the camp.

We who were waiting outside were relieved to see the major come out with his revolvers in their holsters and a smile on his face. It is hard to describe the sensation of freedom that came over me.

Theo and I walked out through the guard-less gate with a sense of ecstasy. I asked him, Do you mean that we can go wherever we like?

After nearly four years in captivity, it was incredible that we now had freedom. After we had first come into camp, the world beyond the walls began to shrink and become unreal. It was almost a two-dimensional stage set. Our only reality was the narrow, colorless existence of confinement.

Suddenly, the outside world became not only three-dimensional but had also taken on the fourth dimension of apparently infinite possibility. From grayness, we now looked on a multicolored world. Indeed, the world was our oyster.

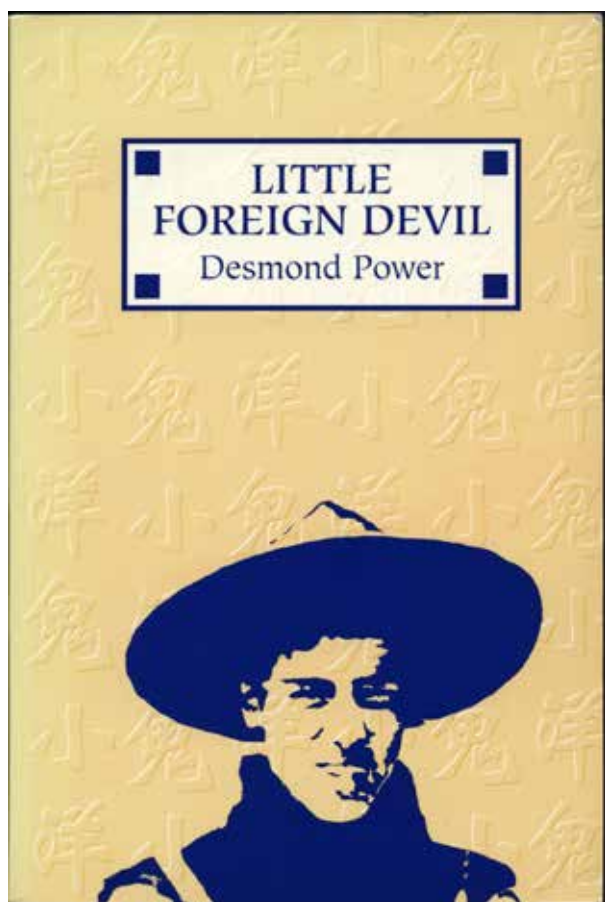
We were free.

For the next two weeks, the camp was run by the "fabulous seven".

They were intelligent, reasonable, and gracious, and put up with our adulation with quiet ease.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/JohnHoyte/JHoyte(web).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

What do you think is happening, sir? What should we believe?" I asked Doctor Robinson who was treating me for boils.

"Take it from me, laddie, the war is over. The Commandant will have to come out with it any moment now."

The USAAF beat the Commandant to it.

On August 17th 1945, at exactly nine o'clock in the morning, an almighty blast just about shook our dormitory building off its foundations. We gazed goggle-eyed at one another:

"What the heck was that?" . . . "Train crash?" . . . "Earthquake?" ... "Bomb?"

"Shut up," Brian Clarke snapped. "Listen."

Cupping my ears as he was doing, I picked up the drone of airplane engines, now faint, now dying away, now coming on palpably. The others heard the same.

We scrambled outside. We searched the sky. Vincy Murray broke into a high-pitched squeal: "Look, there, over there."

"Where?"

"Can't you see? Over by the hills."



Then I spotted it, way out on the horizon, the silhouette of a plane, its bulky shape much like one of those transpacific clippers we used to see on prewar Movietone News. Now it was hovering, now it was turning, ever so slowly, until its nose was pointed at the camp.

And Jiminy Crickets, it was coming straight towards us, low, almost at tree-top level, and the nearer it came, the more incredible its size, the more deafening its engines, until with a stunning shock wave, it wooshed overhead.

In that split second of ear-popping concussion I caught sight of a pink hand waving in a gun turret.

Waving hand!

Must tell the others.

Too late. They were charging helter-skelter for the ball field. When I caught up with them everyone was pointing up at the plane sailing

gracefully towards us.

About a quarter of a mile away it began ejecting bundle-like objects from its belly, and in a trice the objects blossomed into parachutes.

"Let's go," someone yelled out, and that was enough to start a frantic stampede for the gate.

What about the guards?

No guards, they'd evaporated. I charged through the gateway and quickly gained on stragglers wandering aimlessly along the mud road.

No aimless wandering for me. I had a pretty good idea where those chutes came down. They must be there to the right, in that field of mature seven foot-high gaoliang.

I swerved off the road and thrashed my way through the close-growing inch-thick stalks.

Not a sign of life.

I burst out of the gaoliang and into a stand of millet.

Still nothing. I ploughed on.

Then I saw it, there on a path beside a grave mound, a length of green and brown fabric lying in folds. I inched towards it.

"Hands up! Freeze!" I froze.

From behind the mound rose a figure straight out of Flash Gordon - exotic spaceman's helmet - gaudy one-piece space suit. Even the miniature carbine he had trained at my middle was an instrument of death from some other planet. The only give-away that he might be a mere earthling was the strips of common sticking plaster attaching his spectacles to his nose and temple.

"Don't shoot," I choked out, "I'm British. I'm from an internment camp nearby ..."

"Ammurrka has got a gigantic bomb ..." was all I caught of the burst of words he fired at me.

Like an imbecile, I shrugged my shoulders and shook my head.

He repeated in a flat monotone: "Ammurrka has got a gigantic bomb ... super bomb ... dropped two and killed ourselves half-million gooks ..."

And still those words, for me the very first of the new post-war era, refused to sink in.

We were standing gazing warily at each other when two men from the camp came plunging through the waist-high millet.

They threw themselves on the Martian, they hugged him, they slapped his back, they kissed him.

Tears were streaming down one man's cheeks.

"You saved us, you saved us, we were all about to die." (What a fib!) "Is the war really over?" the other gasped out between sobs.

"Ammurrka has won the war," the deadpan paratrooper was back to his monologue.

"Ammurrka has got the biggest goll-darndest bomb in the world . . . super bomb . . . Hiroshima and Nagasaki zapped . . . killed ourselves a half-million Japs ..."

MacArthur is sitting on Hirohito's throne calling the shots ..." It took a second Martian to switch him off.

This one, borne shoulder-high by adulating internees, fired a salvo of unintelligible jargon at us.

And our Martian countered with a salvo of his own. Was this strange lingo the lingo of the Brave New World?

If so, we were going to have a lot of learning to do. But not right now. Right now, our hero reverted to standard John Wayne English.

"Okay buddies, we gonna head for your camp.

Give us a hand with the chute." Two idolizing inmates jumped instantly into action, gathering and bundling up the tangles of cord and heavy green and brown fabric.

In triumphant procession we passed under the ceremonial arch and into the Courtyard of

the Happy Way. The main road was a bedlam of people screeching and bellowing and dancing the madman's jig. Someone grabbed my arm.

"The war's over! We've won!" Someone else pounded my back.

"The Americans have invented a wonderful new bomb. They dropped ten on Japan. Wiped out five million Jappos!"

"Not five million, eight million," a jubilant beetroot-faced man cried out.

"Tokyo, Nagasaki, Yokohama, Hiroshima, all turned to ash. Bloody marvelous! Absolutely marvelous!"

Everyone was pushing and shoving towards the Commandant's courtyard. I squeezed my way in. Mr. McLaren was standing on a table, waving his hands, calling for silence. All he got for his trouble was a chorus of rude epithets. But when a Martian officer got up on the table there was instant silence.

"I am Major Staiger of the OSS. I can confirm to you that the Government of Japan has agreed to Allied surrender terms. What I can't tell you though is how the Japanese army in the field is going to react.

It's possible they may refuse to obey Emperor Hirohito's order to lay down their arms. The Japanese garrison in Weihsien might turn on us. To calm your fears I want you to know that I have sent a message to their commanding officer advising him that we're here on a humanitarian mission.

After witnessing the horrors of the prison camps in Europe, we were expecting the worst here. It's a great relief, let me tell you, to find you alive and kicking. Now, I'm sure your first and foremost desire is to get out of this place. I'm afraid that might take some days, maybe a week, to arrange the necessary transportation, but you can rest assured we'll do our best to speed you out.

In the meantime, I've radioed for more supplies, and for more support personnel. I must ask you now to exercise patience. You've stuck it out for the best part of three years; you ought

to be able to manage a few more days. For your own safety I'm going to insist that you stay strictly within the walls of this camp. I'm going to ask your senior representative to organize a security team to police the exits. Also, the Japanese guards will retain their arms; I've given orders that they continue guarding this place as before...."

Someone in the crowd let out a boo. It didn't faze the major. He just went right on:

"I'm afraid we've no alternative. There's a lot of fighting going on in the countryside around us. The Chinese are locked in a bitter civil war. No one is to leave this place. That's an order, and it's for your own good.

Now, if you don't mind, we've had nothing to eat since dawn. We'd like to share lunch with you."

Mr. McLaren raised his hand to squelch the shouts of laughter. Then, smothering his own smile, he said to the major:

"You're welcome to come along to Number Two Kitchen, though you might not find it quite up to the Ritz."

Accepting the invitation was the biggest mistake of the major's heroic mission. He and his men came down with an unrelenting dose of the trots.

Just as the OSS hero had promised, more Americans arrived next day, but not by parachute; they came in a C47 transport that landed at the Japanese fighter airstrip at Erhshihlipu five miles to the south.

In bustled a rotund army major, his "re-orientation" team at his heels. "First thing we gonna do," he announced, "is re-orientate you folks. Can see you need it real bad, so gonna do it real good. Everyone to the church hall, sharp at three, to learn about the new United Nations, its charter, its establishment in San Francisco last April."

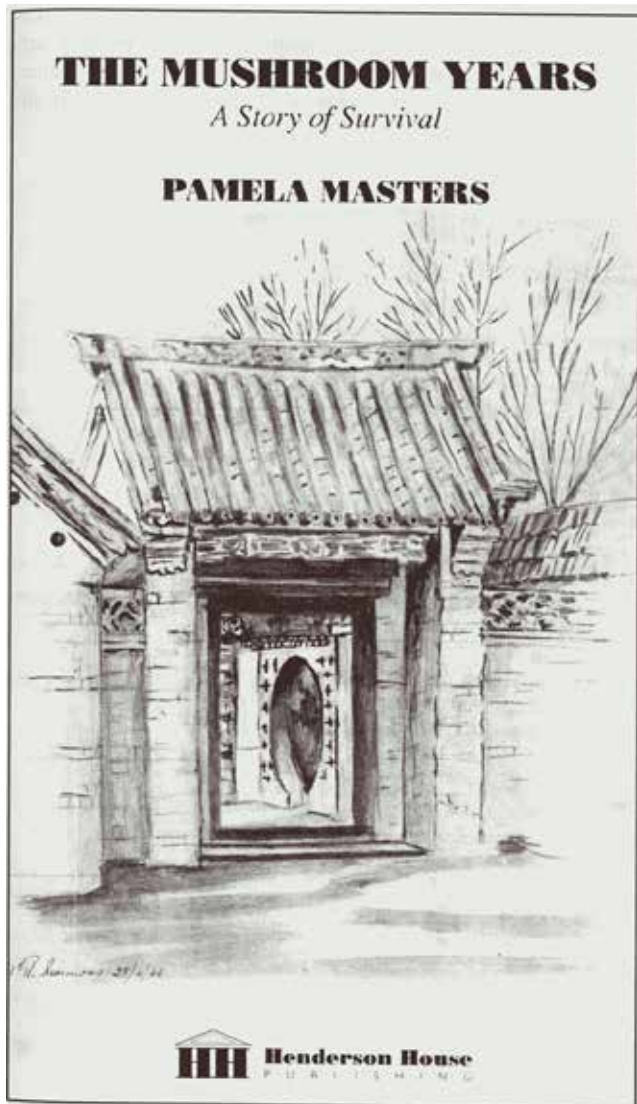
[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForeignDevil/Power-143-pages.pdf>

EPILOGUE

by Pamela Masters ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



[excerpts] ...

...

"You're too late, at least today. They've been taken out to the roll-call field and draped over the walls and benches to make it festive for the Victory Dance tomorrow."

"Who says?"

"Captain Casey. Have you met him?" "No, but I sure have heard him!"

"Yes, he does like that loudspeaker of his, doesn't he?" Just then Pete Fox came up with a face as long as a foot. "What's eating you?" Lisa asked.

"The same thing that's eating me, I expect," I said smiling. "You miss her, Pete, don't you?"

"Sure do! Hope everything goes right for her for a change. She deserves it."

"She'll be okay, Peter—I know it," I said, trying to keep the doubt out of my voice.

Changing the subject abruptly, he asked, "Are you going to be off tomorrow?"

"Yes, they're rescheduling our shifts." "How about Urs?"

"I don't know. Why?"

"They need a whole crew to bake a batch of chocolate cake for the Victory Dance tomorrow night."

"Chocolate! Where the blazes did they get chocolate for cakes?" "There was cocoa in one of those supply drums."

"How about eggs...and sugar?"

"We've got hundreds of eggs, and gobs of sugar. Believe me, we've got everything to make chocolate cake, except a crew!"

"I'll be your first volunteer!" Lisa said.

"Thanks," then turning to me, he added, "think you can round up Ursula, Bea, and Lettie, and

maybe Claire and Tess...?" "How many do you really need?" I asked.

"At least eight—ten would be better."

"We'll get 'em! What time and where?"

"Sun-up at Number Two Kitchen. The bakers want the cakes baked before they put the bread in the ovens."

"That might be a little tough, but I think chocolate cake's enough of an incentive to get most of them up at that hour."

Then the logistics hit me, and I asked, "What the heck are we going to mix them in? Do you realize how much cake we'll have to make for fourteen hundred people?!"

"Oh, they're bringing over an old clawfoot bathtub from the Commandant's quarters. You're to mix the batter in that."

"Sure we are!" I said with a grin.

We had a lot of fun rounding up the crew. Not a girl turned the assignment down. Bea's comment, when we asked her, was, "Sure, I'll do it if they'll let me lick the spoon."

"What spoon? We're going to use paddles!"

The next morning, while the rest of the camp was still asleep, our cake-baking crew assembled in Number Two Kitchen. The first thing we were handed was forty-dozen eggs to beat—without a single egg-beater between us. To the ten-girl crew, that came out to over forty eggs a piece, to be beaten with a fork in a long loaf pan! Although we didn't attempt to beat all forty at once, the job was still arm-aching beyond belief.

While we were beating our hearts out, Pete and his team of men were measuring and dumping flour, sugar, cocoa, and baking powder into the ancient bathtub. The monstrous old clawfoot had been raised up on blocks, so that the work would be less backbreaking, but it was still as awkward as the devil.

After the dry ingredients had been dumped and thoroughly paddle-mixed, we made wells in the mixture and dropped the beaten eggs into them,

then added powdered milk liquids, and peanut oil, and stirred like crazy.

We tried everything, from ten girls running around the tub with paddles swishing to standing still and just stirring in one place. Whatever we did, we must have done it right, because the batter turned out beautifully smooth, and we were soon filling the loaf pans.

"Hey, hurry it up! The ovens are ready, and we have to bake those dumb cakes before we can put the bread in!" shouted one of the bakery crew coming into the compound.

"We're going as fast as we can," Pete yelled back, as we went on dipping and filling pans, cake batter splattering up to our elbows. I looked at the tub, and a thought struck me. "I know we haven't had a bath in ages, but when we do, how do we empty the tub?" "We pull the plug!" someone said.

"S-o-o-o-o?"

Chalk one more up to inspiration. We laid an old one-by-eight piece of shelving we found in the kitchen under the bath, loaded it with pans, end to end, pulled the plug, and slowly pushed the "conveyor belt" along. It took about ten seconds to fill a pan, and as the first plank went through, we found a second and followed with it, while we loaded the first one back up with empty pans. The job was done in minutes, and we all stood back and had a good laugh, as the last pan was filled.

"Say cheese!" someone said over my shoulder, and turning, I saw a movie camera grinding away.

"How long have you been filming this operation?" I asked with a giggle.

"O-o-o-oh, from when you broads started chasing each other around the tub," the cameraman drawled.

While the cakes were baking in the big brick ovens, five B-29s flew over from Saipan, and figuring the beautifully draped roll-call field was intended for a drop zone, they obliged us by unloading their cargo right over the field!

It was Day One all over again, but this time we had nowhere to run!

The pinpoint drop was very accurate, with only a few missing the roll-call field, but the ones that did, dropped through cell roofs and into compounds, crushing everything they hit.

Pandemonium reigned. Mothers screamed for their children. Children wailed for their mothers. And the men swore in frustration.

"I can't believe I've survived four years of war, only to be killed by kindness," someone said in exasperation.

After the panic had subsided, we found that no one had been hurt, and the three drums that had crashed through cell roofs had done surprisingly little damage. The only really peeved people were the members of the Victory Dance Committee: they had to call in an extra work detail to clean up the mess and help them roll the drums away to a distribution area.

Nothing spoiled the Victory Dinner-Dance though. Major Staiger and his paratroopers, along with Captain Casey and his men, traded their C and K Rations for our stew and fresh bread, insisting it tasted "just like home cookin'", and the meal was topped off with fruit and chocolate cake, two treats we hadn't had in over three years.

After the meal, what was left of our fabulous dance band played up a storm for us. Roy, Deirdre, and their little son had left with Margo and the war- brides. The rest of the band was leaving for the States the next day; this was their last night in camp, and they were celebrating! Late in the evening, Captain Georgia, one of the new men replacing the OSS, took over Smitty's bass and introduced us to the boogie beat. We'd heard a little of it over the PA system, but nothing like this! It was contagious, and before we knew it, the whole camp was jiving!

[excerpt]

Jock came up smiling about then, and asked, "Want to hear the latest poop?"

Those OSS boys escorted King Kong and his men back to their quarters, but Gold Tooth refused to go with them. He said he wouldn't leave the guard shack till the OSS gave him safe-conduct out of the camp—he's afraid we're going to lynch

him!"

"Hey, that might be fun!" Gladys said.

"No... it's over," Dad said quietly, "he doesn't need our help to go to hell."

[excerpt]

Suddenly a loudspeaker blasted in my ear—it must've been rigged to the electric pole just outside the window—and a voice sang out,

"Good morning! This is Captain Casey.

Hope you have a great day!"

I shook my head in disbelief, and looking at Guy slouching in the doorway, I asked,

"Who the heck's Casey?"

He must be totally demented!"

"He came in yesterday with the medical group from Kunming. He's here to orientate us and get us ready to face the real world."

"Maybe we should tell him about the real world!" I said.

Before I could comment further, there was another crackle on the PA system, and a strong, male voice belted out a song I'd never heard before, the notes bouncing off the kitchen walls.

*"Oh, what a beautiful mornin' !
Oh, what a beautiful day!
I've got a beautiful feelin'
Ev'rythin' s goin' my way."*

"Shit!" Guy bellowed, as he rushed to the open window, sliding as he hit the rain slick floor.

Slamming the window shut, he turned to me and started to laugh. The darn song and the damn weather tickled his perverse humor. He laughed so hard and so long, he got me started, and we stood like a couple of mindless hyenas, laughing till we ached.

[excerpt]

Hey, there is a whole new world out there, I thought, as I flipped over the pages and drank in

the news.

It was all so fabulous.

Maybe that nut, Captain Casey, was right after all—what was a little rain when there was a beautiful world waiting for us outside.

There was a whole crew of new movie stars I'd never heard of, and a guy called Frank Sinatra who had bobby-soxers swooning and screaming; he didn't look like much to me, but then, I hadn't heard him sing.

There was also a new peace group called the United Nations meeting in San Francisco. I gathered they were something like the old League of Nations that had fallen flat on its kazoo back in the late thirties. I wished them luck, and turned the page.

[excerpt]

I shut my eyes, as I had done ever since my childhood, and tried to will the horrifying sight away, and as always, it didn't work.

I slowly opened the magazine again, and stared in disbelief at the pictures: they were of a German concentration camp, where emaciated bodies were stacked like so much cordwood, and the living dead, too weak to stand or cheer their liberators, stared at me from the pages like hollow-eyed cadavers.

Oh, God, this can't be real! No man could do this to his fellow men. Please, God, don't let this be true! My heart started to thump like mad, and I felt a wave of nausea sweep over me again.

I put down the book and stood up and went outside. Dad was sitting in front of his cell. He looked across at me and said,

"What's the matter? You look awful."

"Did you see that LIFE magazine?"

"Yes."

He looked away and got a tattered handkerchief out of his pocket, then, taking off his glasses, he breathed on them, wiped them with the handkerchief, and put them back on. I knew he was

playing for time and that he felt as sick as I did.

[excerpt]

When I looked at him again, he was staring at me, or rather through me, and he said in a sad, tired voice,

"I thought I had seen all that man could do to man.. .how wrong I was!"

He stood up, his back bowed, his shoulders drooping, and I hesitantly went over and gave him a hug.

"Daddy, it's all over. We'll never let it happen again, EVER!" I was so young and so sure, and he looked so old, and so sad. #

[excerpt]

I couldn't think of anything to say as we walked slowly back to the cellblock, but by the time we got there, she was her old self again.

She had spoken several times in the past of a kid brother in India whom she loved dearly. She hadn't seen or heard from him in years though, and didn't know if he was alive or dead. All I could think of was,

"There must be someone in the world for Gladys to care for.

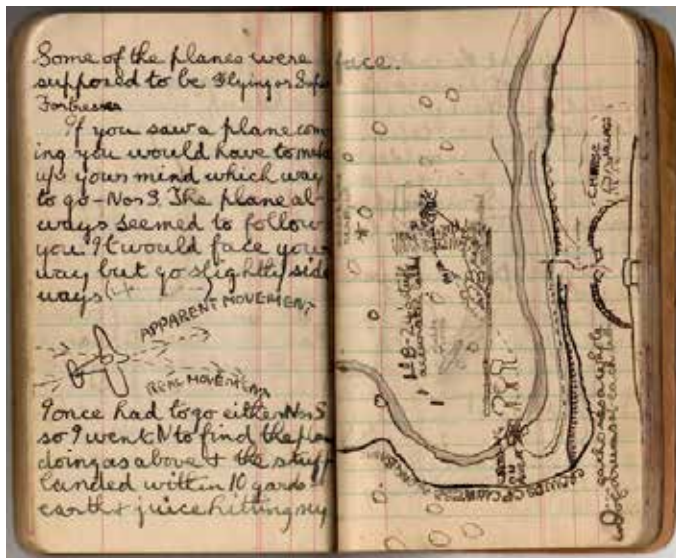
Right now she has no man, no home, and no job waiting for her. She has nothing! Then I looked at her, and she was cutting up once more, and I thought,

"So what, she'll never let it get her down!

I was right. After that, she slipped into the hole Lisa had left, and as each one of my friends took off for parts unknown and I felt the chasm getting wider and wider, she'd say, "Don't worry, honey, it'll be your turn next. You'll see, it'll be your turn next!"

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MushroomYears/Masters(pages).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Monday, August 20th

Marketing is going over the wall all the time. We gave tins & old clothing mainly & they mainly gave eggs, water melons, sugar, tomatoes, apples & sometimes cigarettes, corncocks, chickens, soap.

We sometimes gave money. Roughly 4 apples = 100 dollars P.R.B. One big water melon 500. Eggs 20-50\$.

A Jap at the front gate lost his head & fired, after long maneuvering (sic) with his pistol, at the Chinese selling. He purposely fired above their heads. About 4 p.m. the C of Police ran after the Chinese & fired above their heads & he came to the fence where there was a Chinese just the other side. It looked funny to see him purposely fire above his head with his small pistol.

At 4.00 there was chocolate for 1 – 16 or sweets. I drew chocolate.

In the evening there was a "Gala Supper" on the ball field. At 7.00 the band played a couple of marches & finished up with the victory march which contained the national anthem of :- England, America, China, Russia, Norway, Holland,

France & finished up with the English one in 4/4 time instead of 3/4.

Saturday 25th

In the morning a radio message came to say that Tad Nagaki was to be sergeant instead of corporal.

When we went on duty as on previous days, we saw a Jap talking to the Chinese soldiers. This time a funny (sic) tall Chinese was teaching the J. bayoneting. Chinese go in for a lot of funny style. We got their food for them as usual.

We heard a rumour when on duty that a plane had left SIAN at noon & was expected between 4.30 & 5.30. I was about the first to see it coming in the West. I told the other people on the ball field tower & we yelled & in a few minutes the whole camp was gathering on the field. The plane flew from N to S over the field N of our camp & landed parachutes of supplies.

It came over about 5 times & dropped some in packages — sections tied together & some containers.

The last time it flew over & dropped no parachutes & we knew it had finished — it circled there as usual but before reaching the field — it turned W & dipped its wings twice & went forever.

May I say that when the plane first was seen the major who was on the field with the other men, fired first a green then a yellow 'Very' light. Also he made some green then yellow thick smoke.

There were 14 drops in all. Some of the usual long packages & some boxes containing chocolate & cigarettes. The long containers had tin goods such as sliced bacon — roast beef — steamed fruit cake (3¾ ozs net) — all these tins are different from the parcels we had months ago. The tins were of green-khaki colour.

The plane is called the "Armoured Angel" [sic]

[excerpt]

At about 9.15 the plane dropped some white parachutes. I noticed that some didn't have parachutes. My father said that he would do my 9.30-10.00 pumping so I went out of the camp with a lot of other men & boys & helped roll the stuff along. It was terribly damaged – tins of fruit salad just half empty so we helped ourselves. On the pamphlets it said that supplies would be dropped in an hour or two. I saw a few planes appearing over the East horizon.

I had to go back & get some buckets for broken tins. In the meantime, the B-24s came over.

When I went out again, I found that it was very dangerous. They would land big drums about 2'x4' & some larger ones about 2 times the length - also clothing & medical supplies.

The stuff might land within 10 yards of you – nearly get killed.

The B-29s couldn't go slower than 200 m.p.h. so the stuff came down at a great angle.

"Heads up," was what people would say when a plane came from E-W low.

The planes (which had 1°.W.SUPPLIES under their wings) made circles E-W-S-E-N-W-west always over us.

It was really dangerous.

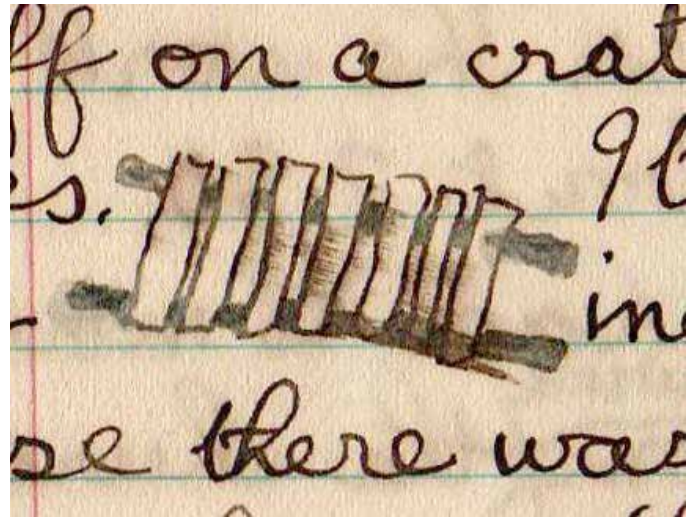
We were told afterwards that there were 12 planes in all but it seemed like only 7. A plane would circle around a few times & drop its stuff & then go & another would come.

They came from OKONAWA (sic) except the 'Armoured Angel'.

Some of the planes were supposed to be Flying or Super Fortresses.

If you saw a plane coming, you would have to make up your mind which way to go – N or S. The plane always seemed to follow you. It would face your way but go slightly side ways. I once had to go either N or S so I went N to find the plane doing as above & the stuff landed within 10 yards earth & juice hitting my face.

I expected to find a number of Chinese & us killed but there were evidently none. One Italian



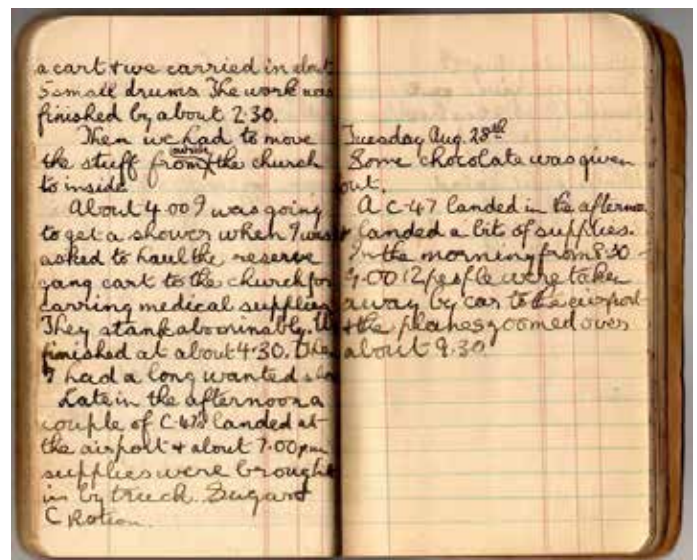
was grazed on the shoulder but was alright & went on working. Some people missed being killed by 3 foot or less.

All the time we were out there, we hogged away at tinned fruit salad & at tinned peach & milk.

There was also tinned grape fruit juice which was the most wanted for thirst. Also people helped themselves to packages of chocolate & chewing gum. They swiped enough to keep them going for the rest of the day. The men took cigarettes.

Around 10.30 I was on guard at the house where there was a temporary dump. There was a drum with only about 6" of cocoa in the bottom.

Then I went & helped roll the drums to the dump. When a plane came over, we would say 'all clear' because the flaps were shut. But when it got over us, the flaps would open & the stuff would



crash down the other side of the river. It wasn't a very pleasant to see the huge drums crash amongst the Chinese although I found out after that one or two were slightly hurt.

...

[excerpt]

Thursday August 30th

Theo's birthday.

A plane, which Tad said was a Jap, flew over about 12.00.

Boots were tried on at KI for your size; 7, 7½, 8, 9, 9½, 10, 10½, 11, 11½. Then you went in a queue & registered your size. I first took 8 then decided to take 9.

In the afternoon they were given out from 3 – 4.30. Soon after they began giving out, 9 and over were allowed to go to the head of the long queue & get theirs first.

I found after that mine were slightly narrow so (I had 9D) I changed for 9E.

I found in my boots a tin of Dubbing (sic) which I rubbed in. You can't polish after D unless you get a smooth surface & rub all over. I only want mine for rough use so I'm not going to. I polished my black ones & wore them in the evening. Most people are wearing their boots. I'm not wearing them till the colder weather.

[excerpt]

The instalments of my post-war Weih sien diary are coming to an end. There is an unaccountable gap from Wed Sept 12th to Sun, Sept 23rd when there are no entries. I suppose it must have been during these 12 days that Ronnie Masters and I walked south to a little "secret" airstrip a few miles from camp.

It took a bit of finding.

There were 2 or 3 small Japanese fighter planes and a few pretty tough-looking Japanese pilots.

We had the nerve to climb up in turns and look into a cockpit. Ronnie, who could speak Japanese, said to me, "Peter, they are discussing whether to



shoot us. Come down and we must walk calmly to the woods." (More or less those words.) When out of sight, we ran some way to distance ourselves from them.

I vividly remember the sense of relief when our camp came into view.

[excerpt]

October 1st 1945,

Rainy.

Went to Kokusal opera most of which was uninteresting. There was one part in which a small Chinese acrobat did things such as standing on his hands then feet etc. very quickly.

The British sailors & a marine band came & some Yank sailors most of which thought it very funny. I was in a bus & a Chinese got out to crank up & the bus in front backed & hurt him badly on the hand & stomach.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/PeterBazire/diaryBook/Wednesday.htm>

by Ron Bridge ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)/WEB.pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)/WEB.pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

We learnt that Major Staiger had deliberately left his parachute unfurled when he landed, as a checkpoint for further drops, and I now understood his comment about damaging parachutes.

The next day Major Staiger carried out an inspection, with Sgt Hanchulak and the camp doctors, and they decided that twelve inmates were in such poor health, physically or mentally, that they should be evacuated on the B24, which was expected to land that afternoon. But at the airfield the Japanese garrison, 200 army personnel, took up combat positions, so parachute

panels were laid out to tell the aeroplane not to land but rather go back to Xian.

The twelve patients, who had been moved to the airfield in two Japanese trucks, with Dr Grice as escort, returned to the hospital.

Major Staiger wanted Izu to explain what had happened at the airfield.

The Consular Commandant stated that the airfield belonged to the Japanese Army and that he had no control over them. Major Staiger then requested a message be sent from him to the Army Commander, and that he had no respect from an army whose officers did not obey orders.

This upset the face of the local commander, Colonel Jimbo.

So the next day he arrived at Weihsien.

Ted McClaren and Major Staiger soon realised that the negotiations would be carried out at a different level.

Mr Koga and Mr Izu were asked to withdraw.

Colonel Jimbo went to great pains to explain that the US Government had not notified Tokyo of the intended descent on Weihsien. He asked that Major Staiger request that General Wedemeyer inform the Japanese Government of the authority of the Duck Mission.

The protocol having been thus disposed of, the conference could get down to talk of the specific issues. Major Staiger told Colonel Jimbo that, in order to carry out his duties, he needed to get free passage of US aircraft at the airstrip.

Col Jimbo agreed that American aircraft would be given full permission to land.

[excerpt]

On 27th August a B29 Superfortress arrived from Okinawa, dropping leaflets to say that in one hour more B29s would arrive.

Just before the arrival of the B29s a B17 Flying Fortress landed unannounced.

This was full of photographers and news reporters after a story.

Major Staiger did not permit them into camp, because their arrival had upset the delicate relationship between Major Staiger, Colonel Jimbo, the Japanese and the internees.

[excerpt]

The B29s from Okinawa arrived, bomb doors open.

Their method of supply dropping was to fit a wooden grid, holding about fifteen containers, across the entire bomb bay. The containers themselves were made by welding together two large round 50-US-Gallon fuel drums.

Two lugs were then welded on and a parachute fastened. The bombardiers aimed at an approximate corner of the camp, released the wood grid, which then fell with a single parachute.

The oil drums followed and their parachutes jerked open, but usually ripped the lugs off. So effectively they became black cylindrical bombs, which hit the ground vertically and buried themselves half in the earth.

The only way of opening one was by hacking off the top with an axe and trying to extricate something edible from the mix of cardboard boxes, tins of mixed soups, Spam, fruit and fruit juice.

Major Staiger reported back that 25 per cent of the supplies were going to waste.

[excerpt]

A week after the first drop from B29s they started dropping supplies every other day, with B29s alternating from Okinawa and Saipan.

They still used oil drums but welded the lugs on better so that they did not snap off.

However, the aim was still as poor and several huts in the camp suffered 'bomb damage' from



oil drums filled with tinned Del Monte peaches or Campbell's soup.

In addition to food we started getting American khaki summer uniforms and boots or shoes. Initially only large sizes, but then I snapped up a pair of shiny brown polished boots in my size. Most of the boots were dull green-brown suede.

Being young, agile and fairly fit, although still underweight, we could run faster to the spot where a parachute had landed and got there before the local farmers, who somehow thought it was all manna from heaven for them.

[excerpt]

Now and then, when three or four of us were out scavenging, we came across containers inside the oil drums that had burst, mixing up all the contents.

The B29 drops were particular culprits for this.

If we were out of sight, we used to select tins



from the spilt rations and have a picnic, rather than return to camp for lunch. The rations had strange names, like 'C', 'D', and 'K', and there were even cardboard cases full of tins of CocaCola, but we learnt to avoid 'Root Beer', which had a vile taste. It was great fun sitting round the crater that the container had made having a secret lunch.

[excerpt]

As I crawled out of the cow muck, I was greeted with

'Poo. Don't come back like that, Bridge! Keep your distance.'

I made a rude gesture in their direction, then ran off across the field and jumped into the stream to wash off the muck. The water was not much cleaner, as it was downstream from the village there. But at least I was not covered with brown and green slime and straw anymore.

By the time I had run a few more lengths of the wall, my clothes had dried. I decided that I smelt reasonable enough to go off back to my hut room.

Mum greeted me with the news that it had been decided that, as the railway line north had been blown up again and the trains were being attacked by the Communist guerrillas, we would be flying to Tianjin.

First, though, the bomb craters in the runway had to be repaired using Japanese Army soldiers, so that took another week.

[excerpt]

We bounced down the track to Weihsien City.

The road had never been 'tarmacked' and the flurry of activity by the US Army on the rain-soaked ground over the previous few weeks had turned it into a rutted track. As the sight of the walls of the camp receded, I began to think in anticipation of my first flight.

The airfield had been extensively repaired by the Japanese, as the US Army Air Corps had heavily targeted the runways earlier in 1945, when we had heard that distant drone of aircraft.

The runway, being grass, had tended to muffle the actual explosions. Here were four or five C47s, most of them heavily camouflaged, belonging to the US Army Air Corps. However, one was all shiny silver, polished aluminium, belonging to the US Marine Corps (USMC), and I was rather envious that my friends got to travel in that one.

All the aircraft had seats along the length of the fuselage, either a metal bench-type, or canvas bucket seats by the windows. We bounced along the grass runway and were soon airborne, climbing to 8,000 feet.

Some of the women were screaming with fear as the aircraft left the ground.

Half an hour later we crossed the coast, heading north over the sea, with the Shandong coast on the port side.

Roger, sitting next to Mum, shouted out with glee: 'Mummy, what has that lady got a bucket for?' ... followed by

'Oh, Mummy look at that lady's breakfast!'

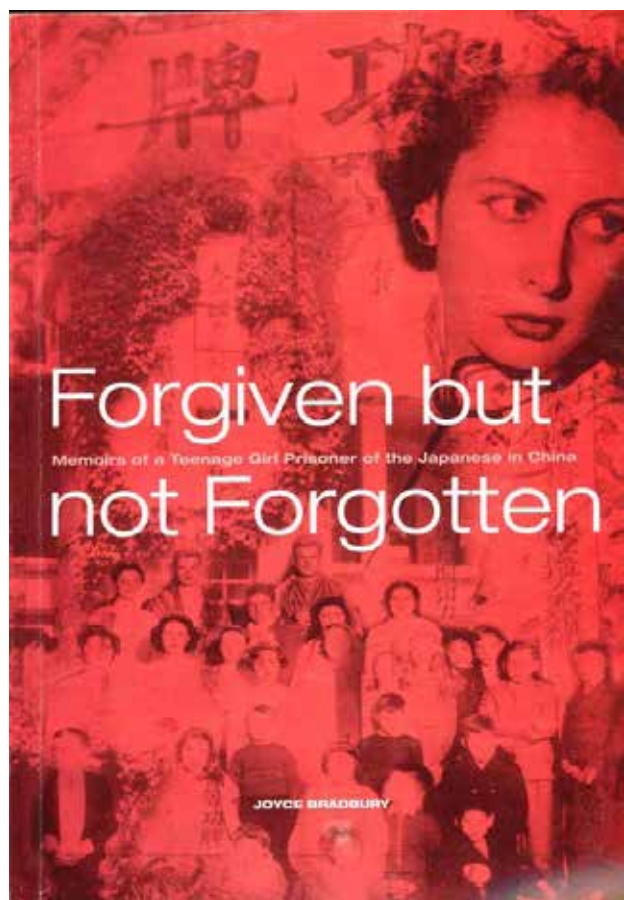
The exchange made a few more ladies 'green'.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book\(pages\)WEB.pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/NoSoapLessSchool/book(pages)WEB.pdf)

by Joyce Bradbury, née Cooke ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

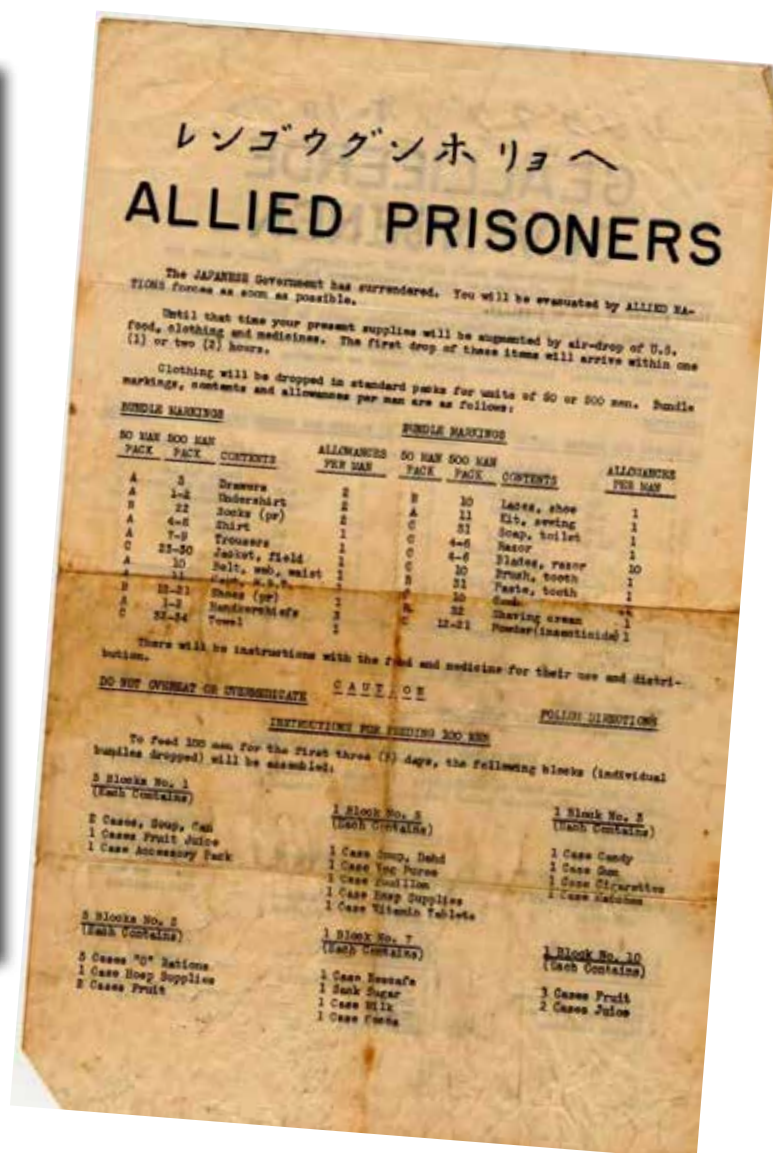
[...]

It wasn't long before other American aeroplanes came and dropped many canisters together with leaflets warning us not to overeat.

With glee, we fell upon the canisters and found they contained wonderful things. Cardboard cartons of tinned food, clothing, medical supplies, toiletries and now, I cannot recollect what, if anything, happened to any of the Japanese officers or guards.

They just weren't there any more.

I certainly did not worry about them or even give them a thought. Had anything untoward happened to them I would have been told about it.



On the first day of our liberation, we ate our normal rations but from then on we dined well.

The first lavish feast consisted of bread, butter, cheese, jam and everything else together despite the warnings from the American soldiers not to overeat.

As it turned out, we could not eat much. We had been starved for so long that our stomachs had consequently shrunk. It therefore took me two days to eat my first lavish meal but even then we didn't waste anything. We always saved the leftovers for the next meal.

As the days passed, more US soldiers arrived in trucks. There were many of them. They helped

with the running of the camp and everything went well. The soldiers must have been technicians because they got everything working in the camp including supplies of hot water in abundance.

[excerpt]

We really knew we were liberated when we were woken one morning by loudspeakers all around the camp blaring the song:

‘Oh, what a beautiful morning.’

From then on it was the signal every day to remind us that we were free again. What a lovely feeling and a lovely song. I shall never forget it or any song from the stage musical Oklahoma. They were constantly played over the loudspeakers.

[excerpt]

During this period, Tsoilik Bariantz and I got hold of some parachute material which was pure silk and extremely strong. She made me two blouses and a skirt from the material. One white blouse and one red skirt and blouse. She used one of the camp’s portable sewing machines that my mother had used earlier to make me a pair of shorts and a top out of an old dress.

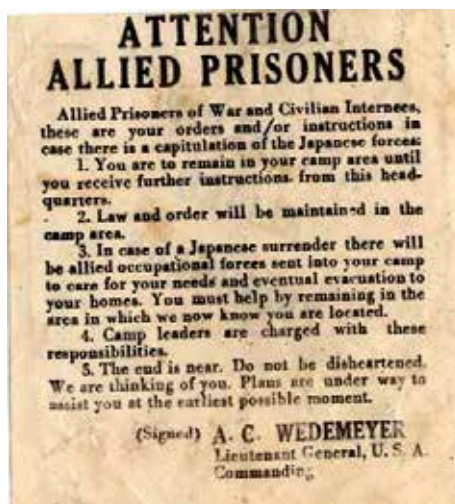
After liberation, every family was issued with cartons of tinned food from the canisters. There was no necessity to cook — everything was prepared. Cheese, butter, jam, corned beef, tongue, Spam (a brand of canned processed luncheon meat) and chipolata sausages.

They were all packed in khaki green coloured cans. There were also biscuits that the American soldiers called dog biscuits.

The Americans didn’t forget anything in their food parcels. The parcels even had little can openers. Among the parcels came plenty of cigarettes. So mum, and I think my father, took up smoking again.

[excerpt]

The adults had to attend meetings chaired by American officers where they were told of



the progress in returning us to our homes. They told us to be patient because it would take some time.

For my family it took about two months.

[excerpt]

The American civilian internees were the first to go. I know some of them declined repatriation to the United States because their homes were in China and they wanted to stay there. As for my family, the only home we knew was Tsingtao and that’s where we wanted to go.

I don’t remember being impatient to go home because I started to enjoy myself.

No more being dragged out into the open for roll call. There were dances every Saturday night with the soldiers. The American soldiers were extremely polite and well mannered. They appeared strong and healthy. Everybody liked them. We rightly regarded them as our saviours.

Inevitably, I got into trouble with my boyfriend, [... further reading ...]

[excerpt]

Because we had no suitcases for our belongings, we accumulated cartons from the food parcels to take our meagre belongings back to Tsingtao.

We didn’t have much at all.

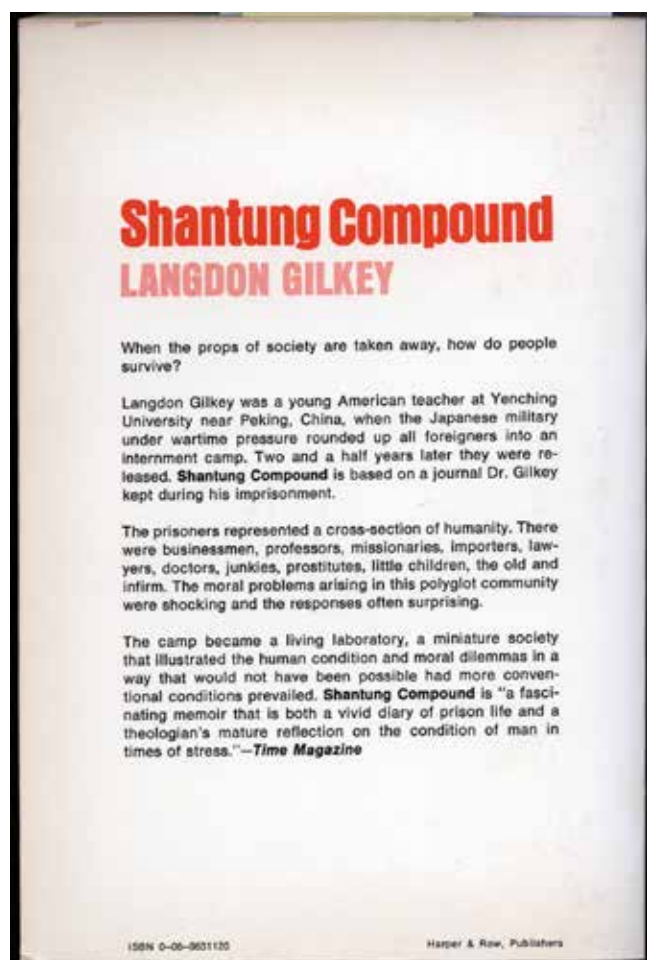
I just had my camp souvenirs. Prized among them is a large collection of signatures which include the signatures of the parachutists and many of the camp inmates. #

[further reading]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/ForgivenForgotten/Book/ForgivenNotForgotten(WEB).pdf)

by Langdon Gilkey ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

One result was that the experienced British leaders of the camp, who in other circumstances would have had little use for such youths — and American youths, in particular — treated these men like emperors.

These usually impressive figures could be seen rushing about, doing silly little errands, compiling useless statistics, ever ready to accede to the slightest need or wish of the liberators.

Middle-aged bankers, who were in frequent contact with the heavenly court, could be heard retailing the wonders of their wisdom to the little groups of odd fellow internees who were not

fortunate enough to deal with the newcomers directly.

It was, however, the women of the camp who most instinctively recognized their divine status.

Of all ages, whether from high society or low, married or single, proper or not so proper, all wanted nothing better from life than to adore. They followed the pleasantly surprised soldiers everywhere, staring at them in rapture, edging up to get a word from them, fighting for the chance to wait on them, and pushing their equally adoring children aside so as to be able slyly to touch or stroke them.

As always, it was wonderful to have gods in your midst—unless, like the writer and a few others, you lost a girl friend in the process!

With the paratroopers' arrival, everything changed.

A Chinese delegation from Weihsien City showed up the next day to offer all the vegetables and grain we could use and substantially more meat than we had ever received. And this, after the Japanese had told us over and over that such items were unobtainable. As carts of food began to roll into camp, all rationing ceased.

From then on we were plagued by stomach upsets only because of the rich food. During that first week, we could not eat a full meal without vomiting — but valiantly we kept on trying.

The walls in effect came down as we found ourselves free to walk outside the camp and, within limits, to explore the villages and towns round about.

Now, when the day's work was done, one could go on a picnic by the river some two miles from camp, or take the three-mile hike to Weihsien City for a Chinese dinner.

It was amazing to me, however, to find how quickly one slips back into the old indifference. I

can remember on my second trip to Weih sien City telling myself to wake up and enjoy myself.

This was stupendous, just what I had longed for! And yet, already I was taking it for granted and not feeling it at all.

So it was with most of these newly found good things.

We should have gloried in them for months, considering how we had longed for them for years. But somehow the second or third time around, they became as ordinary as if we'd had them all along.

When we had been hungry, our one thought had been for three square meals a day. Lacking sweets, we had dreamed of chocolate and candy.

Besieged with rumors, we had longed for news of the end of the war and of our release. Now we had all of these delights in abundance; yet we continually had to remind ourselves of this fact in order to appreciate them. We were not really any happier.

Our wants and desires had only become a little harder to satisfy. Instead of freedom we now wanted "home"; instead of enough to eat, we now dreamed of cocktails and seafood. Now that we had the necessities of life, we tended to take them for granted and look for the luxuries—such are the insatiable desires of the human animal.

Ironically, it is quite true that man does not live by bread alone; as soon as his craw is filled, his restless appetite will yearn for cake.

[excerpt]

About a week after our rescue, word flashed around camp that eleven more planes had been sighted on the horizon. This time they were coming from the opposite direction, the east. As they flew closer, it became obvious that these planes were no ordinary B-24's but the famed B-29's whose origin must then have been Guam or Saipan in the Pacific.

Magnificent and silvery as they circled far above us, they seemed almost to fill the sky.

To our amazement, these monsters also opened their bellies, and great cases of goods, literally tons of it, hurtled down all over the countryside around us. At once the men, greatly excited, ran out into the fields to bring these cases back into camp.

This job had to be done quickly if it was to be done at all.

When anything unusual happens in China, no matter how isolated or deserted the landscape might appear to be, in a few minutes' time hundreds of Chinese will appear from goodness knows where. It is hard to conceive of a more unusual event for the farmers of Shantung than that fleet of B-29's dropping cases of supplies in their fields.

As poor as they were, such a scattering of good things was not an opportunity to be missed.

Almost before we in camp had recovered from the shock of this bombardment, we found the fields already swarming with Chinese, understandably pocketing and lugging away as much as they could.

Naturally, we rushed out to salvage as much as we could.

[excerpt]

Soon after the first drop, the eleven planes circled around in a wide sweep.

Then to our mingled joy and horror, the big devils headed back toward us with their bellies open again.

The crucial difference was that the fields were now crowded with both Chinese and internees. Still the planes came on and emptied their lethal loads in approximately the same spots.

Amid shrieks from the farmers and, I must admit, a great deal of trembling and frantic running on the part of the rest of us, the great drums crashed to earth all around us. None of them came near me, but some missed four of my fellows by no more than fifteen feet.

I shall never forget the sinking feeling when I saw four double drums thunder to earth just

behind a large crowd of Chinese.

Why no one was hit, I never knew.

[excerpt]

The B-29s were not the only Western artifact which the farmers had never seen before. Many of the goods in the cases were equally strange to them.

One was eating happily the contents of a large tube when, spying an internee poring over the same broken drum, and wanting to show off his English, he pointed proudly to the word “cream” on the label. Unhappily, his vocabulary did not include the word “shaving” just above it.

Still another “rescued” a box of medicines. Before a nearby internee could stop him, he had downed in one gulp an entire bottle of vitamin pills.

When Knowles told this story in our dorm that night, Sas Sloan said from his double bed in the corner, “I wonder if that poor chap has stopped running yet!”

[excerpt]

There appeared to be little communication between the air force at Saipan and the army from West China who bossed us. For that reason, signals were always getting crossed.

Once the none too bright captain in charge of our morale, Captain Spofford—who will be described later—had, in preparation for a children’s party, spread a yellow parachute over the backstop of the soft ball diamond.

It was on this open space that all the women and children of the camp used to gather to watch breathlessly “the drops on Daddy,” as one child put it.

Evidently, the pilot of a B-29 took this yellow marker to be the drop signal, and let go with a large load right on target. To the horror of those of us looking on helplessly from the fields, we saw twenty or so cases crash among the terrified mothers and children and ten more go singing through the roofs of several rooms.

Again, by some astounding miracle, no one was injured. Each time this sort of thing happened, one could not help saying, “This luck just can’t hold!”

[excerpt]

When the next flock appeared, those of us in the countryside almost got ours.

We had now learned to wait on the edge of the fields while the vultures swooped twice. After two drops, they always turned east and fled home to Saipan.

As usual, after the second run, we moved out to forage for the dropped supplies.

Suddenly we all looked up.

There, coming right at us was one lone plane that had turned back and was just about to open up for a final drop. It was too late to try to run anywhere so, for whatever reason, we all stretched out flat in the grain and cowered there waiting for the end to come.

Seven free boxes and many more gallon-sized tins came down. They fell with great earth-shaking thuds all around us—one of them about twenty feet from me. But none of us was hit.

When at last, shaking in every limb, I lifted my head, I saw with relief the great plane winging east. I also saw crouching near me and white as a sheet, a large Scot named John McCracken, a man whom I admired very greatly as one of the wisest and strongest in the camp.

I said to him, “That was the closest call of the whole damn war for me.

This is the last time I go out among the corn to forage for Spam!”

[excerpt]

The next morning was all that a practical joker’s soul might desire.

Sharp at six, the quiet air of the camp was rent by the blare of

“Oh, What a Beautiful Morning!”

As soon as I realized what was happening, I went out on the balcony of our dorm to enjoy the fun.

The camp was a chaos of furious inmates. After three years of rising at seven for roll call, in rain, sleet, or snow, on Sundays, Christmas, and weekdays alike, everyone had luxuriated in lazy risings since August 17. Everywhere I looked, angry people were rushing about. Enraged fathers poured out of the little rows of family rooms; elderly women in curlers, hurriedly putting on their bathrobes, stumbled from their dorms. Each of them charged out looking for blood!

Then, some of them, realizing they hadn't the least idea where the music was coming from, began, each in a dazed and blind sort of way, to go off in different directions.

Some kicked the loudspeakers in helpless fury.

Still others stood there holding their heads and trying to think out calmly where the ultimate source of the blare might be.

Soon, stopping up their ears, all marched off to the section commandeered by the army. I laughed as I imagined the scene when that irate throng of bath-robed internees finally located the good-hearted G.I. in charge of the record player.

He said to me later with some awe,

"It was a strange experience to face so many really crazy people, all mad at you! My gosh, hadn't I played the latest popular tune, one they hadn't even had the chance to hear before? You know I honestly think all of you must be a little touched in the head by all your troubles. I hope you can get back to normal again all right."

If this G.I. was troubled by our "strangeness", Spofford was tortured by it.

His face took on a baffled, almost haunted look. No one appeared to want to cooperate with him on his many morale boosting schemes. As he said one night over some bourbon, very close to tears, he just couldn't understand it.

People kept complaining about his loudspeaker. Sas Sloan had called out one night as Spofford

walked by,

"Bring back the war—we want some peace!"

Another time somebody managed to cut the main line to the loudspeaker just outside Spofford's door!

"My God," he continued, shaking his head sadly, "anybody'd think we were your enemies! Why, when I read to them the United States Army lectures on world affairs, it is unbelievable but true that these foreigners called it propaganda! What makes it all so puzzling is that these same games, contests, and lectures went down so well with the kids in the service. You should have heard them cheer when I put a loudspeaker for popular music in their barracks!

Why, for God's sake, is everyone so upset? Folks keep telling me that Europeans—especially older ones—don't really want the same things that American G.I.'s do.

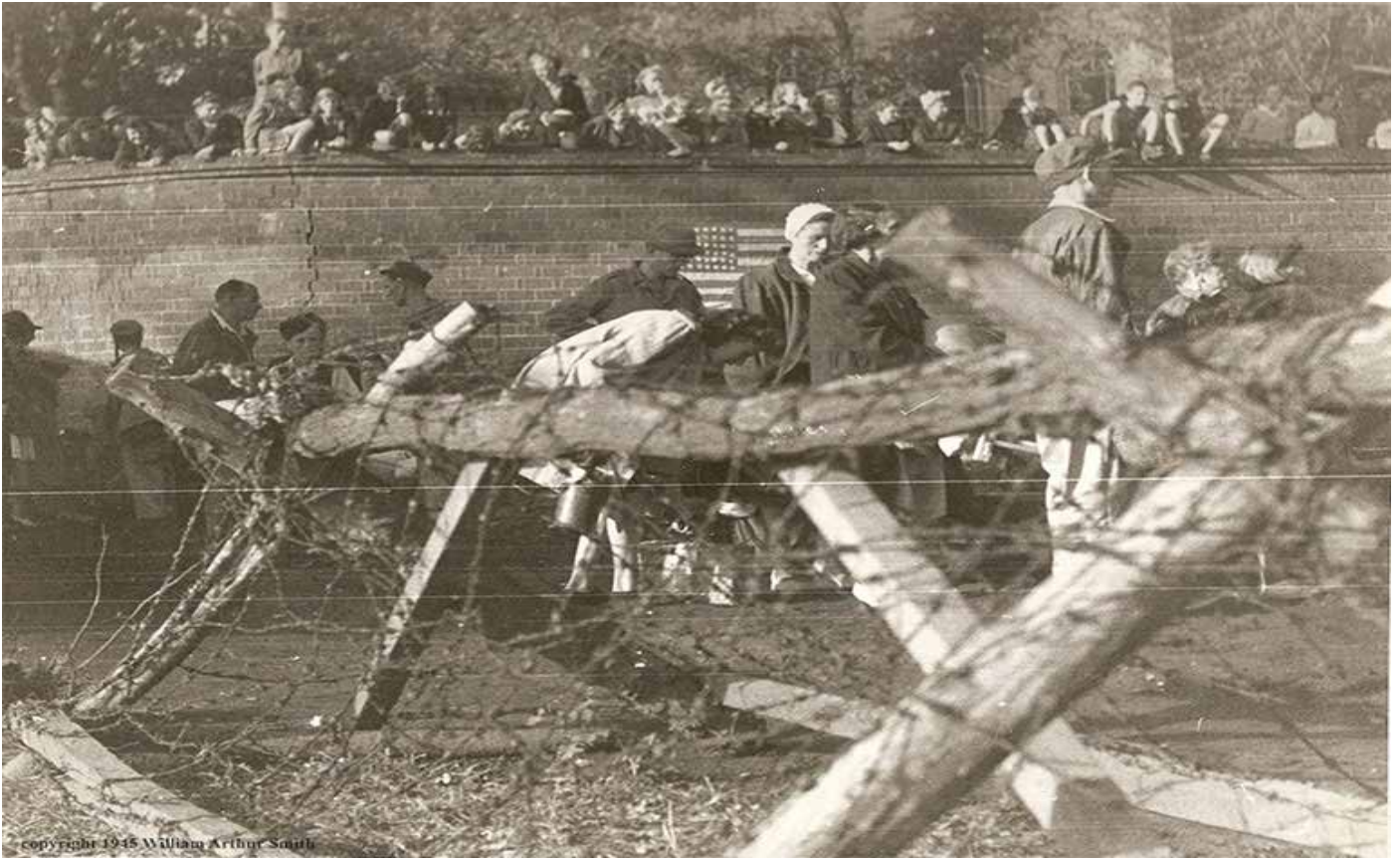
If that's true—and I still find it hard to believe—then people are a lot stranger than I thought, and I'm not even sure I understand them any more.

[excerpt]

We left the camp on September 25, 1945, and a strange, dreamlike, overwhelmingly exciting day it was. How could I say goodbye under such circumstances?

I knew the parting was for good; that the world was too big and our lots too diverse for us ever to meet again; that even if we did meet through some chance encounter, the relationship we had enjoyed would have vanished with its context. Both context and relationship would be at best old memories rehearsed over a drink, but never relived in any depth or intensity. The farewells were too ultimate even to be sad.

Besides, those of us who were walking out the gate for the last time were looking eagerly ahead to the trucks that waited to carry us into the promising future, and not particularly heeding our disconsolate friends waving from the wall.



Many of these had little future and were now losing their one firm reality, the recent past of internment life.

Glancing back for a moment at those waving hands, the thought came to me that only when destiny gives us the great gift of an open future are we able fully to live, for intense life in the present is made up in large part of expectancy.

Whenever we are alive and excited, it is the future and not the past that enlivens the present moment.

As the army trucks lumbered across the plain to the city, we could see that past receding in proportion to the diminishing size of the camp compound; with each yard forward, we could feel an increment of freedom and with each mile the patterns of normal life seemed to flow back like refreshed blood into our veins. I felt gloriously alive when I walked into a comfortable railway coach, picked out my own seat next to a window, and watched the countryside flash by.

Here were towns and villages, animals and birds, people waving, and the delights of a changing landscape. Each one of us felt himself to be alive and real again.

We had left the bloodless life of camp and each had become once more a participating part of the interrelated system of things and people that make up our universe. Life is participation, I thought, and as it dies when that participation is cut off, so it lives again when the world is re-entered. I think the leisurely picnic lunch which we all enjoyed as the train rushed along through farmlands and villages to Tsingtao was the happiest and most completely carefree meal of my life.

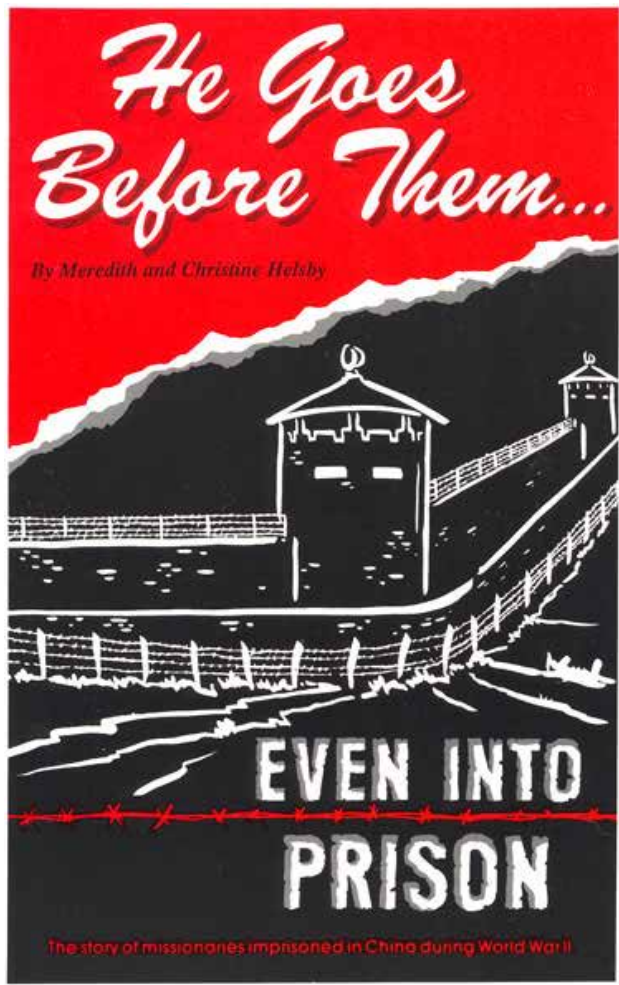
Not even for a moment could we keep our eyes off the world of which we were now a part.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/Gilkey/BOOK/Gilkey-BOOK(WEB).pdf)

by Meredith & Christine Helsby ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Sunday, August 19, was set apart for special Thanksgiving services which were held jointly by both Catholics and Protestants.

Praising together, tears of joy flowed shamelessly down every cheek. Never, it seems, were hearts more grateful. At the services everyone who had any kind of uniform wore it.

What a conglomeration of dress — uniforms and insignia of the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Rangers, military services of various countries, and of course the Salvation Army.

Three days after liberation we found ourselves again gazing with wonder into the skies at the approach of U.S. planes. These were B-29s, so huge they seemed to dwarf the B-24s that had come earlier.

We guessed they were based in Guam, Saipan and Okinawa. Theirs was a supply mission.

Again the huge bomb bays opened and a succession of multi-colored parachutes drifted down-ward.

All were laden with a cornucopia of supplies, everything from food stuffs and medicines to clothing (but this again for men only!).

Many rushed out to receive this incredible “manna” raining down on us from the skies and in doing so very nearly met their doom. Fifty-gallon metal drums had been welded together forming heavy tubes as large as sofas, all packed with goods. These huge pallets of supplies had evidently been assembled with haste.

The parachutes which bore labels “not to exceed 350 pounds” were dangerously overloaded. Cords snapped and cargoes plummeted to earth with murderous force. Some of us came within inches of being hit by these “bombs”.

During the whole of World War II my most terrifying experience came at this time, when I and my crew of Chinese workmen were out in the open fields gathering up supplies.

A second formation of planes came in, and heavily loaded pallets were landing all around me. I was frightened beyond words, running in circles, but finding no protection.

One Chinese teenager was less fortunate. At the time he was a few yards from me in the kaoliang field when a heavy bedding roll broke free, falling directly on him, mashing his body into the soft earth. Though unconscious and badly bruised, he was not dead.

We carried him to the camp hospital where he eventually recovered from his injuries. The supplies continued to come for several weeks averaging a drop every three days.

Understandably the Chinese, intent on availing themselves of the goods, swarmed into the fields to lug off anything they could carry away.

This resulted in some humorous incidents. One Chinese who had learned a few words of English was discovered devouring the contents of a tube marked “cream” a word he had learned. The fact that the contents did not taste like ordinary cream could be explained by the other word on the tube which was “shaving,” an English word he had not learned.

Another villager had copped a large bottle of vitamins. When he saw foreigners approaching, he feared they would confiscate his prize. Taking off the cap, he gulped down the entire contents of the bottle!

Many of the items descending on us from the skies we had never seen before.

“What is ketchup?” one missionary was heard to ask.

“Are you supposed to drink it or what?” DDT and band-aids were alike products we had never heard of.

[excerpt]

Almost like Rip Van Winkle we were projected into a world from which we had been isolated for four years.

So much had happened, of which we hardly knew anything.

The world was full of new inventions. Even new words. To ease us back into civilization our liberators set up orientation classes. Using large maps, they charted for us the progress of the war leading to the signing of the documents of surrender on the Battleship Missouri.

They also taught us a whole glossary of new terms — GI, jeeps, D-day, kamikaze, pin-up girls!

Some internees judged that our liberators

were a bit overzealous in their desire to propel us into American culture when they roused us from slumber at 6 a.m. with blaring jazz and pop songs, broadcast over the camp’s new RA. system.

One Britisher was heard to mutter, “We’ll have to have war all over again in order to get some peace!”

[excerpt]

The last group being evacuated by railway had arrived at the hotel at night.

The next morning upon awakening, one of the small children looking out his window at the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean shouted excitedly to his mother, “Mommy, Mommy, come here and look at this big cesspool!”

For the youngster who had known only one world in his lifetime, and that, with-in the enclosure of the Weihsien compound, the camp cesspool was the only “body of water” he had ever seen.

As the several groups were moving out, the Lord began to make it clear that we should go back to Peking before returning to the U.S. We knew it would be some time before non-military personnel would be allowed to enter China, and there were many mission matters that needed immediate attention. So with much prayer, we asked to be flown to Peking.

[excerpt]

After the first group of internees was repatriated, it was 19 long days before word came that we could leave camp.

On October 14 we boarded Japanese military trucks for a four-mile ride to the newly constructed airstrip.

Since the Chinese Communist Eighth Army had blown up railway bridges we would be airlifted to Peking rather than traveling by train.

[excerpt]

On the tarmac we found a C-46 plane waiting for us, still wearing its olive-green and khaki-brown camouflage. Inside, canvas bucket seats were

While Rev. Helsby was interned, a brother, Lt. Robert D. Helsby, was serving with the U. S. Navy. He spent 18 months on P-T boats during the greater part of the campaign in the Solomon Islands.

[further reading]

[illegible]

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/GordonHelsby/Helsby(WEB).pdf)

[Excerpts]

[...]

The words DROP HERE had been made out of silk from the parachutes and laid out in a big field in front of the camp. Most of the drops were successfully made in that general area.

However, one of the planes misfired, and this is how it happened: parachutes were in such abundant supply that we kids not only made a new game out of taking jumps from the mountain of piled-up parachutes, but we used the brightly colored chutes to decorate the playing field for a sports day in honor of the occasion. One pilot brought his B-29 right above us and gave the order, "Bomb racks open!" Under-doors parted, and boxes came crashing down onto the camp.

We kids loved it, but I saw one older lady, close to a nervous wreck at the best of times, look up in panic as she saw a parachute chasing her. She took off into the air as if she was going to meet the parachute halfway, but was saved the effort as a tree checked its fall.

She crumpled up on the ground exhausted, with the parachute's great silk panels gently enfolding her.

After the planes had dropped their supplies, we gathered what we could and brought them into the church, where they were sorted. We had never seen a warehouse sale or any kind of sale for that matter, but the church resembled one at that moment.

One lineup about which there were no complaints for a change was the one for the distribution.

My portion for August 29 was two towels, three handkerchiefs, one cap, four tins of food (one was "chopped pork and egg yolks"), two big and four small chocolate bars, ten packets of chewing

gum— Chiclets and Beechnut were two I remember—and ten boxes of cigarettes! We bartered well with the latter.

Much of the food was completely new to us. I recall having no idea what ketchup was. I found it a bit thick to drink but loved it.

Likewise with the Chiclets. Though hard to swallow, I kept getting them down and popping in another delicioustasting white square until somebody told me, "You don't eat them; you just keep on chewing!"

We devoured so much chocolate we couldn't even look at it after a few days. Gone forever were our desserts of acacia flowers stripped from the trees.

Though our stomachs were in turmoil, who could be ill at such a time? We heard of some people in the camp hospital who, when they heard the GIs had landed, jumped out of bed and out of the windows, never to return.

Freedom had come at last. Weihhsien Concentration Camp was almost history.

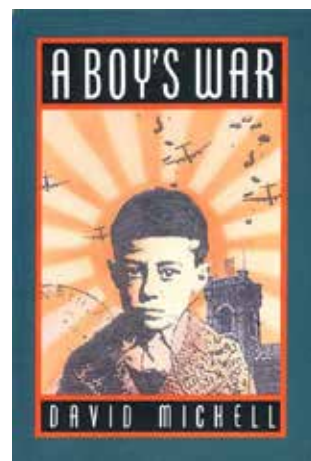
Now we had to get home!

[excerpt]

We heard that the day for our departure would be September 24.

As the day approached, I couldn't help feeling a bit sad at leaving. We had come to know the camp so well. It had been home to us for a long time.

But when the 24th dawned, our excitement was dampened only slightly by rain coming down in torrents. The day that we had dreamed about for years, however, was to bring heartbreaking



disappointment. Though our party of missionaries and children were loaded up into the trucks, the rain had turned the roads into quagmires, and we had to turn back.

The next day went better, and on September 25, 580 of us rumbled out on trucks through the camp gates and bounced our way to Weih sien city, where we boarded the train. We rolled out of Weih sien toward the coast not a day too soon, as guerillas blew up the track the very next morning.

What a royal welcome the Chinese people of Tsingtao gave us! As the train chugged into this coastal city, crowds lined the streets with banners held high, announcing "Grateful Welcome to Our Allies."

[excerpt]

We had our first swim, and as one of the teachers remarked, "We looked clean for the first time in years."

That was at least a better response than the little boy whose memories knew nothing before Weih sien.

When he saw the sea for the first time he said, "Mommy, look at that great big cesspool!"

[excerpt]

In Hong Kong the British RAPWI (Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees) cared for us. Soldiers treated us royally, taking us for cruises in their jeeps and trucks. And the British Red Cross put on teas and picnics for us, with all kinds of goodies.

Hearing in Hong Kong about the terrible conditions in the concentration camp at local Camp Stanley, we came to realize how much we had to be thankful for at Weih sien. As children we would never have survived what the prisoners faced under the Japanese military at Stanley.

Swarms of captured Japanese soldiers were being marched around in our area. A squad of them, in fact, were ordered to carry our baggage.

[excerpt]

Once the gangplank was down, my Dad came on board. Joyce rushed into his arms and I saw her heels flying in the air. I felt embarrassed and held back for a moment, but then ran forward with arms outstretched. The six to seven years of separation were over at last.

[excerpt]

A summer Christmas followed by vacation helped us to catch up with Western civilization. Then in February 1946 I started school—a real school, with proper desks and chairs and playing fields. My accent was very British, and the teacher advised the children to copy me. But I was more interested in copying them.

Classmates had difficulty believing some of the stories I told them. Only when I brought along some of my pieces of parachute—especially the piece signed by some of the GIs who dropped into Weih sien Camp—were they convinced. I had come out of another world.

Sometimes as I sat in class those first weeks at the Grange Primary School, my mind would wander back to Weih sien. Losing the teacher, I would look out of the window and see the trees, the neat houses and tidy fields, and in the far-off distance, the wide horizon and open sky.

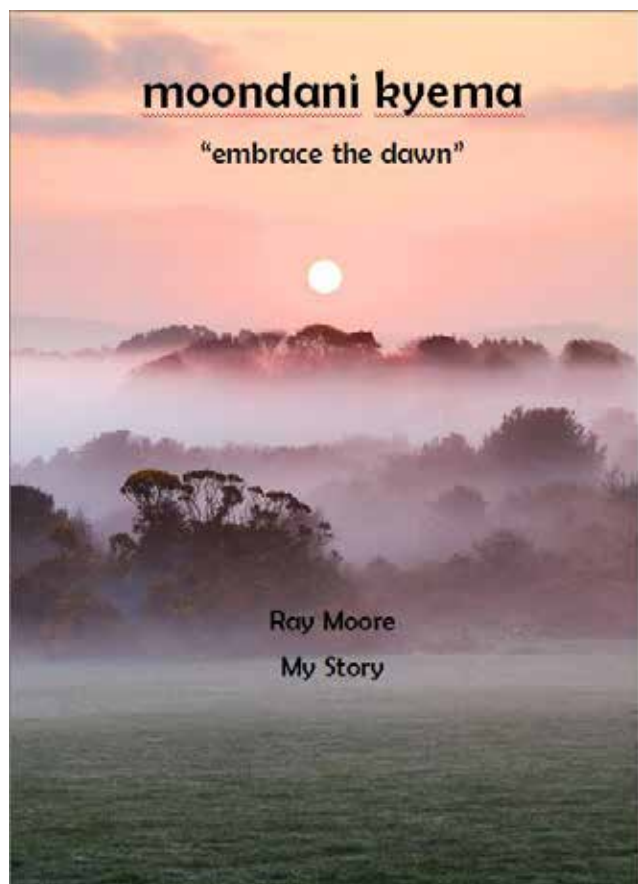
The walls were gone. I was free. I would burst into tears—tears of relief, of happiness and of thankfulness.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar\(LaTotale\)-pages.pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/aBoysWar/ABoysWar(LaTotale)-pages.pdf)

by Raymond Moore ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MoondanyKyema/MoondaniKyema2.pdf>



[Excerpts] ...

There is a frightening bit of background information to this part of the story which became obvious when these documents below were found in the hands of the Japanese.



[photo]

The “kill” document was issued in August 1944, about a year before the end of the war, but probably when the Japanese were realising that they were not going to win this war. The second “flee” document was issued two or three days after our camp had been liberated.

Document No. 2697

(Certified as Exhibit “J” in Doc. No. 2687)

TO: Chief of Staff, Taiwan Army

FROM: Chief Prisoner of War Camps Tokyo

POW Camps Radio #9 Top Military Secret.

20 August 1945

Personnel who mistreated prisoners of war and internees or who are held in extremely bad sentiment by them are permitted to take care of it by immediately transferring or by fleeing without trace.

Moreover, documents which would be unfavorable for us in the hands of the enemy are to be treated in the same way as secret documents and destroyed when finished with.

Addressees:

Korean Army, Taiwan Army, Kwantung (Manchuria) Army, North China Area Army, Hong Kong. (YOSHIOKA, Nadaji) [penciled in] Reference [penciled in] Chiefs of Staff-Korea, Taiwan, Mukden, Borneo, North China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaya, Java.
Each POW Camp Commanding Officer.

Document No. 2701

(Certified as Exhibit “O” in Doc. No. 2687)

From the Journal of the Taiwan POW Camp H.Q. in Taihoku,
entry 1 August 1944

[photo]



1. (entries about money, promotions of Formosans at Branch camps, including promotion of Yo Yu-toku to 1st CI Keibiin - 5 entries)

2. The following answer about the extreme measures for POW's was sent to the Chief of Staff of the 11th Unit (Formosa POW Security No. 10).

“Under the present situation if there were a mere explosion or fire a shelter for the time being could be had in nearby buildings such as the school, a warehouse, or the like. However, at such time as the situation became urgent and it be extremely important, the POW's will be concentrated and confined in their present location and under heavy guard the preparation for the final disposition will be made.

The time and method of the disposition are as follows:

1. The Time.

Although the basic aim is to act under superior orders, Individual disposition may be made in the following circumstances:

a. When an uprising of large numbers cannot be suppressed without the use of firearms.

b. . When escapees from the camp may turn into a hostile Fighting force.

2. The Methods.

Whether they are destroyed individually or in groups, or however it is done, with mass bombing, poisonous smoke, poisons, drowning, decapitation, or what, dispose of them as the situation dictates.

a. In any case it is the aim not to allow the escape of a single one, to annihilate them all, and not to leave any traces.

3. To: The Commanding General

The Commanding General of Military Police

Reported matters conferred on with the 11th Unit, the Kiirun Fortified Area H.Q., and each prefecture concerning the extreme security in Taiwan POW Camps.”

[excerpt]

We children and some of the older people followed the Americans around wherever they went, and on one of these “hero sessions”, while trailing along after one of the Americans, I was jumping over a bench and caught my arm between the back rails of the bench. “Ouch!” However, such was my excitement and awe at being in the orbit of this newly discovered star, that I ignored it for the rest of the day. In bed that night I began to feel the pain, and late that evening I was taken to the hospital, where they ascertained that I had a greenstick fracture of the radius and my arm was placed in a plaster cast.

A few days later, six of us children whose parents lived in the west of China, were flown out in a bomber which was stacked full of parachutes which had been used in the supply drop. As there were no seats of any kind on board, we spent the trip lolling about on parachutes in comfort, I with my arm in plaster – a wounded warrior.

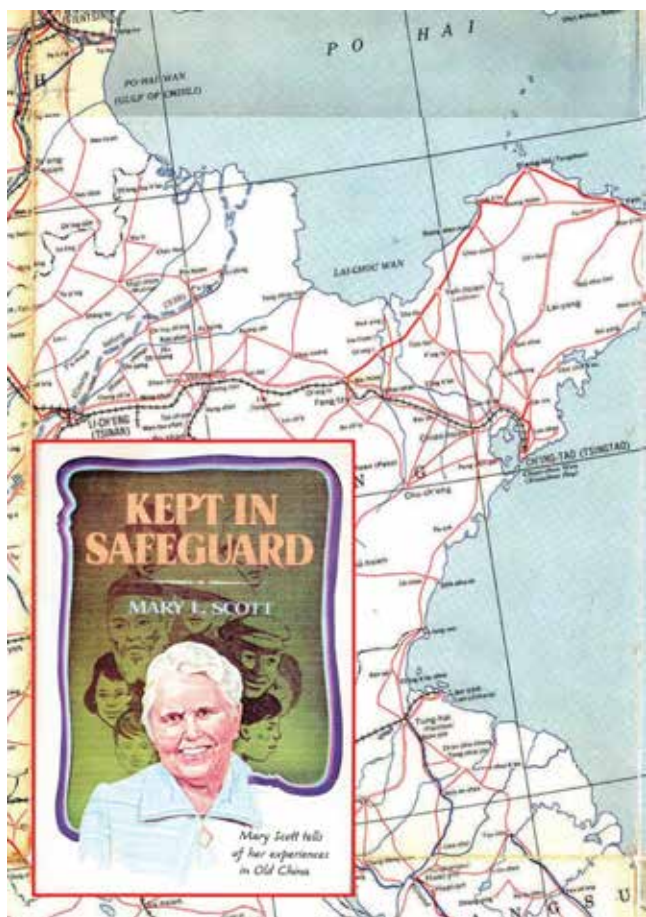
We were free at last.

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/MoondanyKyema/MoondaniKyema2.pdf>

by Mary L. Scott ...

[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

With the coming of the paratroopers, everything changed. The flag of the "Rising Sun" was taken down, and "Old Glory" was raised on the top of building number 23. What a thrill it was to see the Stars and Stripes blowing in the wind over our heads.

Chinese merchants from Weih sien sent in carts of meat, vegetables, and grain.

Big B-29s, most of them from Saipan or Guam, came at regular intervals to drop tons and tons of food, medicine, and clothing into the fields nearby. Many a woman in camp wore GI shorts during those last weeks in camp. All rationing of food ceased and internees literally made themselves

sick eating Spam, canned peaches (Del Monte, no less!), K-rations, and chocolates in spite of the leaflets dropped warning us, "DO NOT OVEREAT OR OVERMEDICATE." But it tasted good going down at least!

A big victory dinner was held on the ball field with tables piled high with food. I thought of that verse in the 23rd psalm: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The Japanese guards looked on as we celebrated. Whether they were given a share in this abundance I do not know. I hope so, for they had suffered short rations as well as we.

When I speak of enemies, I mean only enemies of our nation.

We had been treated well.

We had not suffered the privation or horrors of some other civilian camps to the south of us or the atrocities perpetrated at Belsen or Buchenwald. It was our good fortune, under the providence of God, to have as our commandant a Japanese gentleman. Though not a professing Christian, he had received his precollege education in mission schools in Tokyo and had taken his college work in the United States. In fact, he had been living in the States when the war broke out, was interned in California, but repatriated in the first exchange of prisoners in the summer of 1942. No doubt all these experiences were factors in the mild rule which we experienced.

One of the greatest luxuries enjoyed after the arrival of the paratroopers were the walks in the countryside or the trips to the nearby walled city of Weih sien, usually for a Chinese meal.

We enjoyed the magazines the boys brought in, though there were many terms and abbreviations which had come into use during the war with which we were totally unfamiliar.

One day a Britisher said to me, "Mary, what's a pin-up girl?" I performed some mental gymnastics trying to figure it out, but finally had to confess

that I didn't know.

Finally, we went to our rescuers with a list of terms and abbreviations we did not know (LCVP, LST, etc.) and asked them to make up a glossary so we could post it on the bulletin board.

We were as hungry for news and understanding as we had been for food.

Each internee in camp was permitted to send two radiograms anywhere in the World via the Army radio.

Though the messages were short (I don't remember how many words we were allowed), I sent a message to Dr. Jones in Kansas City and one to my brother, Ed, in Hammond, Ind. While in the beginning it was out of the question to airlift all of us out of camp, the rescuers, very soon after their arrival, requested the quarters committee to prepare a list of those seriously ill or in need of immediate medical attention. A list of the children whose parents were in West China was also provided. Internees in these two categories were flown out as soon as transportation could be arranged in Kunming.

On September 25, the first large contingent of about 600 internees bound for home, wherever that might be, left camp for Tsingtao, the seaport about 100 miles away. Here they were put up in the "Edgewater Beach" hotel which had been commandeered by the American army.

They wrote back telling of the plush carpets, spacious rooms, dining tables with sparkling white tablecloths and cutlery "a mile long," to say nothing of the variety of delicious food, including steaks. All these luxuries they enjoyed until the ships arrived that would take them to England, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, or Canada.

The next large group of about 600, made up largely of older people and mothers with children who were returning to points in China, was all ready to leave by train. In fact, some were already waiting at the train station when word came that the Communist guerrillas had blown up the railroad bridge. Six hundred extremely disappointed and frustrated people had to return to camp,

The army officers in charge decided that it would be necessary to organize an airlift because they had no assurance that, if they repaired the bridge, it would not be blown up again.

On October 14, the huge operation began, using mostly C47s with bucket seats along the sides.

I was in the next to the last load to leave the Weihsien Civilian Assembly Center and enjoyed my first aeroplane ride. I must confess that I was glad when we landed at the Peking airport.

The internment camp chapter of my life in China was closed, but it left rich rewards and memories.

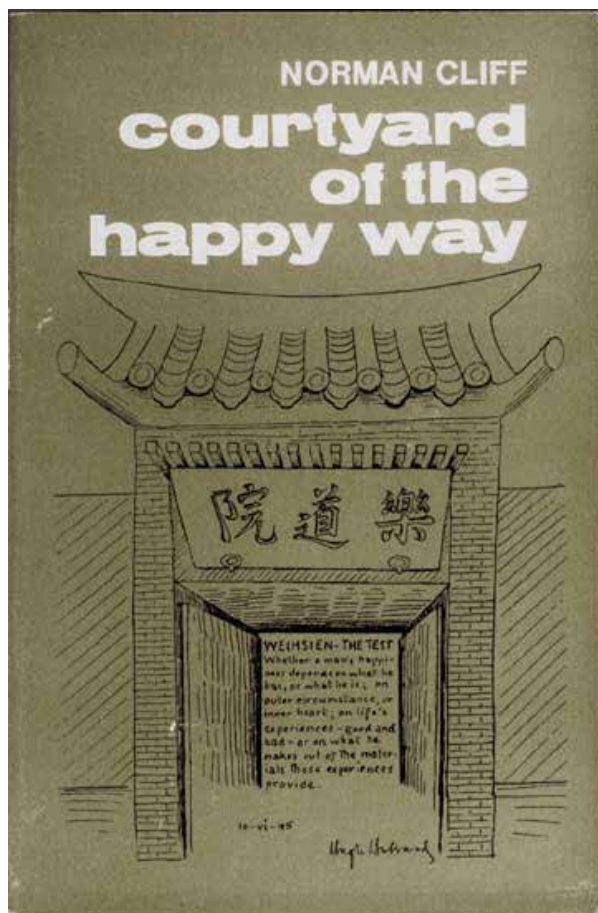
By the grace of God, what in itself could not be called good had brought new insights and experiences which God worked in and through to enrich my fellowship with Him and strengthen my faith that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." I wouldn't take \$1 million for the experience—or give a nickel for another one unless it came in the path of duty and in His will. #

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott\(web\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/books/KeptInSafeguard-MaryScott/MaryScott(web).pdf)

by Norman Cliff ...

[http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihhsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Two members of the group came to Kitchen 1 for supper that night. We drew out specialities from our store which we had been using sparingly for our six hundred strong clientele and cooked for these heroes a special meal to celebrate their arrival from the skies. But quietly and politely the food was left uneaten.

What to us seemed a treat, to them was unpalatable.

[excerpt]

Realising how little of the events of the previous four years we knew, the Americans organised "Reorientation Classes" for us in Kitchen II, to bring us up to date with recent world events.

An officer sketched the initial retreat of the American forces following Pearl Harbor, the turn of the tide in mid-1942, and the steady north-westerly retreat of the Japanese, culminating in the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan itself. Our vocabulary too was pitifully out of date. The American officer carefully explained the meaning of certain terms to a class of eager learners ? G.I., D-Day, Jeeps, B24, Mulberry Harbour, Kamikazes and so on.

Chinese officials came to the camp with cordial greetings and cartloads of gifts of food from mayors of nearby villages. I took turns on duty at the gate to help control comings and goings, and thus maintain law and order. Up the path towards the entrance came Chinese Church dignitaries, pastors, Salvation Army officers to visit their respective leaders in the camp. I asked them how the Chinese Church had been faring during the war years of ch'ih ku (eating bitterness). Church attendances had dropped, they told me, "rice Christians" had fallen away, but a new quality of membership and leadership had emerged from the fires of trial and persecution.

[excerpt]

Then planes came regularly from the east. They dropped parachutes loaded with food, clothing and medicines. I stood one morning in front of the guardroom, and looked at the sky, which was full of blue, green and red parachutes floating down on to the fields in front of me. It was a moving sight, and with a lump in my throat I sent up a little prayer of thanksgiving to my God. The years of bread porridge, bread pudding and bread-what-have-you were now over. The guards in the room to my right had no further authority over us. Manna was coming down from heaven.

[excerpt]

Not only did I take turns guarding the gate. I was also part of a team charged with supervising the arrival of the parcels from the skies and ensuring that they arrived intact at the church for subsequent distribution. As soon as the sound

of plane engines could be heard, one of us went up the tower of Block 23 and rang the bell to summon those on duty (the same bell which had been rung on that fateful midnight soon after V.E. Day). We then went into the fields, recorded the parcels as they landed, and later proved that all had reached the church safely.

The sudden cessation of fighting in the Pacific had meant that thousands of boxes of surplus supplies, suddenly no longer needed for American troops, could now be redirected to needy civilian camps in Weihsien and Shanghai.

But the dropping of the parcels of food and medicine and clothes was not an unmixed blessing. Having been hastily loaded on to the planes, they did not all float down softly. Many of the parachutes did not open fully, with the result that the boxes hurtled down, bouncing ten feet high, with tins and bottles scattered and broken around them. Tomato soup and vitamin pills lay in the mud around the large shattered boxes.

[excerpt]

But to our dismay we discovered that on several occasions after the plane had waved goodbye and closed its underside it reopened its belly and dropped a few more parcels not previously noticed. Boxes were raining down. Should I run for shelter and perhaps into the falling boxes, or stand still and pray? I held my breath. They landed all round me a few yards away, bouncing into the air again before lying dented or broken. An American officer standing beside me, shaken and out of breath, remarked that he had faced more hazards that morning in the Weihsien fields than in the earlier fighting in South-East Asia!

From then on we kept on the safe side of tall trees, and going into the fields again only when the planes had gone.

[excerpt]

The more devout internees gave vent to their happiness in services of thanksgiving at the church in various traditions of Christian worship ? Catholic, Anglican and Free Church. The Edwardian-style church, which had served at various times as school, prison and distribution centre, was now (as it had often been during the

darker years of internment) the focal point of worship and heartfelt praise to the Lord.

[excerpt]

I was now twenty, and my sisters eighteen and sixteen. We had not seen Father since July 1940, five years previously, and then only briefly, and Mother since a year before that. I got down one day to writing a long letter home (I use the word "home" as the place where my parents had been for two years. I had never set foot in Africa.) But it was not easy. For so long we had been limited to twenty-five words on Red Cross forms, and a formidable list of forbidden subjects. Here I was with a writing pad in front of me, and no restrictions on length or subject matter. With a strange feeling of guilt I wrote eight long pages, describing particularly the closing weeks of internment and our deliverance. Other adjustments also had to be made ? eating food unrestricted by rationing; walking in the fields outside the gate unaccompanied by armed little yellow men; wearing shoes and socks after running around barefoot ... These were but a few of the milestones to be passed before I was to become once again a normal human being in a wide open world. #

[excerpt]

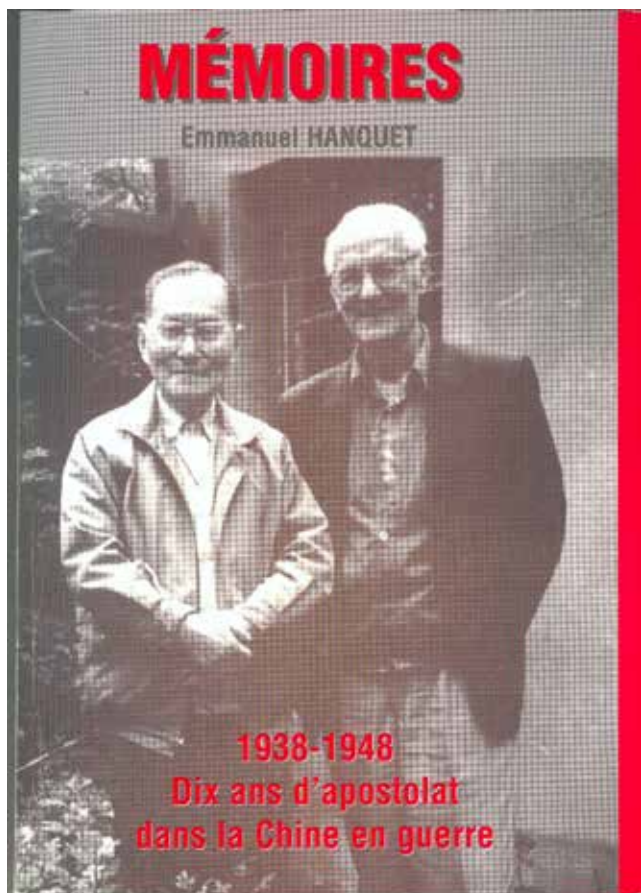
We went up Berea Road some distance before stopping at the little white church, built on a slope and overlooking the main highway to Pietermaritzburg. There were scarcely a dozen in the congregation, including the five of us. Father ascended the pulpit. The prayer and longings of many years had come to their moment of fulfilment. In his sermons he had often expressed his conviction that one day his children would be released and join him in Durban, though the paucity of news of us and the fluctuations of the war had sometimes made his hope seem unlikely to be realised.

[further reading] ...

[http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-\(pages\).pdf](http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/NormanCliff/Books/Courtyard/eDocPrintPro-BOOK-Courtyard-01-WEB-(pages).pdf)

by Emmanuel Hanquet ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>



[Excerpts] ...

[...]

Among other things our liberators felt they needed to reorient our minds. They feared that Japanese propaganda might have played havoc with our enfeebled brains which in any case knew nothing of the tragic events of the conflict. Thus we were required to attend sessions in which we were told about the sequence of events in the Pacific war and its litany of atrocities, ending with the final apocalyptic bombing of Japan which had resulted in the capitulation of the Empire of the Rising Sun. And we knew nothing about the atomic bomb! Loudspeakers had been set up all around the camp and these put out music all day long. Every morning at 7 a.m. we were awakened by the strains of

*Oh what a beautiful morning,
Oh what a beautiful day.
I've got a wonderful feeling,
Everything's going my way...*

It was not long before we had had enough of being dragged out of our sleep so very bright and early. The more so as one fine morning an absent-minded liberator put the record on at 6 a.m.! The captain charged with our reeducation was somewhat lacking in humour. During one evening's entertainment with a group of young folk who were used to putting on campfire sketches, we gently depicted him as a donkey: he took the point....

[excerpt]

Such slowness and shilly-shallying seemed to us hardly necessary and was delaying our getting back to work from which we had already been missing for a good thirty months. The young especially were chafing at the bit. Two of them, who couldn't take any more of it, had stealthily left camp and were following the railway line to get to Tsingtao on foot, a distance of some 100 km. They were caught three kilometres down the line and brought back to camp, sheepish and discomfited.

Finally, towards the end of September, a first contingent was evacuated by lorry to Tsingtao. As for us, we had to mark time until the 17th of October 1945, when we left camp in a lorry which took us to the airfield. There a Douglas DC 47, fitted with sideways-on metal seats, took us to Peking, fifty at a time. This was the only way to empty the camp: the railway and the roads were blocked or cut by the communist army.

A civil war was beginning...

[further reading]

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

[Excerpt] ...

The chief topics of conversation still revolved around food and the shortcomings of the Committee. Over the course of these years matters of the most trivial importance were magnified out of all proportion; personal affairs had become not only the concern of one's neighbours but of the whole camp. Confined to this complete world of their own for two and a half years, the majority of these people had become obsessed to an unbelievable degree with the petty affairs of the camp and their personal lives.

We were not apparently the only ones to realise this, for within a week the Americans had inaugurated an intensive course of "reorientation" calculated to bring the mental status of the ex-internees to a state of preparedness for their return to the world of 1945. Loudspeakers were connected up throughout the length and breadth of the camp; there was much preparation and then suddenly one morning at six o'clock the full blast of American high-pressure "reorientation", rent the air in the guise of Frank Sinatra singing, "Oh! What a beautiful morning, Oh! What a beautiful day." Doors and windows were flung open and masses of bewildered ex-internees in various stages of nudity looked out on this new post-war world to which they had had such a rude awakening. A stream of derogatory remarks floated up and down the alleyways. Someone cut a wire then silence. The doors closed on these staid and unappreciative Britishers, who crawled back to bed. There was much indignation on both sides — a compromise was reached and future "reorientation" was not commenced until 7 A.M., from which hour it continued at a fast and furious pace throughout the day under the able "Director of Reorientation", who had a special office to himself, from which he conducted music, lectures, organised games for adults and children, and kept an eye on the reading room. In the end the Americans, by sheer perseverance

and charm, won the day. The ex-internees were "reoriented" to everyone's satisfaction and learned thoroughly to enjoy the process!



With the collapse of the Japanese, the food situation became serious for a few days. Supplies of bare necessities were sufficient only for two to three days at the time of the Japanese surrender. The Weihsien puppet Commander, quick to see an opportunity of getting "out of the red" politically, needed little persuasion to send food, and Wang Shang-chih, although he could ill afford it, sent a letter by us with a promise of ten thousand pounds of wheat, but in spite of these efforts there was still insufficient to meet requirements. Staiger radioed his Headquarters for assistance and within a couple of days a B-24 flew over the camp to drop sheaves of handbills worded to the effect that supplies were on the way. Within half an hour, we heard the ponderous drone of heavily laden planes. Ten B-29s circled overhead and, as their bellies opened, tons of supplies were dropped, filling the sky with yellow, green, red, blue and white parachutes.

Some failed to open and steel drums hurtled through the air and, bursting on contact with the earth, sent up cascades of Californian peaches and cream, tomato soup, corned beef hash, cigarettes, candy and chewing gum. At least 30 per cent of the first drop was wasted. This continued on and off for several days, until the church, resembling a warehouse, was stacked high with clothes, boots, food, smokes, medical supplies and books — everything that the Stores Officer on Okinawa (from where the planes had come) thought might conceivably be needed.

To cope with the demand for fresh fruit, vegetables and eggs, an open-air market was soon established outside the front gate by the river, where dozens of stalls were set up. People

were still short of money, however, and most of the business was carried on by barter. Old clothes that were hardly fit to wear, boots and shoes with gaping holes, women's hats, were all exchanged for eggs, milk, or maybe a fried chicken or a bottle of the local brandy. Never had there been such eating a craving of two and a half years' standing was satiated there were casualties, but all admitted that it was worth it!

After the first excitement had worn off, and people were nauseated by the sight of food, the ex-internees began to talk of the return to their homes. Many of them failed to appreciate the true situation. The homes of the majority had been occupied by a succession of Japanese. What furniture and household belongings they had left behind on coming to the camp, had long since been sold by the Japanese occupants and replaced by cheap new furniture purchased and resold with each incoming tenant. Sanitary, steam heating and plumbing installations had been torn out and sold, or contributed to the Japanese war effort, and the majority of the houses were but empty shells. Before any move of the ex-internees could be considered, accommodation had first to be prepared in Peking, Tientsin and Tsingtao.

In the meantime, the political situation was deteriorating rapidly. The vanquished were now defending the victors --- the Japanese, on surrender, had been instructed by the Chinese Government to co-operate with them in the protection of the railways throughout North China from attacks by the Communists. Former puppet forces were now enlisted also to co-operate against the Communists, AN-ho were making increasingly frequent attacks on the railway, cutting communications for days on end and completely isolating the camp.

The American authorities planned to evacuate the camp by railway to Tientsin and Tsingtao, but it was not long before it was realised that the rail trip to Tientsin was quite out of the question. Plans were then made to evacuate the whole camp by rail to Tsingtao, but the Japanese did little to protect the railway and each day brought news of further Communist activities : bridges were blown up and miles of rail were removed. Repairs were carried out, and after days of delay perhaps

one train would manage to make the trip from Tsingtao to Weihsien before there were further demolitions.

The -weeks were passing, the ex-internees were getting restive and demands were made that steps be taken to find some means of evacuating the camp. The American officials were at a loss for a solution of the problem, and little progress was being made, when they agreed to the suggestion proposed some weeks earlier, that a deputation be sent to the local Communist Headquarters with the request that they should hold up any further demolition of the railway until the camp had been evacuated. Roy-Tchou had connections and he and Arthur set off on a secret mission in an effort to open negotiations which would halt the interruption of communications. The first contact was promising and was followed up by the American Commanding Officer. A truce was agreed upon and repairs were completed; baggage was dispatched on the trial train and was followed the next day by some six hundred of the ex-internees for Tsingtao.

The following night the track was again blown up and a large bridge demolished. More days of delay followed and it was during this period that I was fortunate enough to obtain a seat in a military plane leaving for Peking. As the plane circled over the camp and then headed north, I took my last look at the camp and congratulated myself on the fact that it «as I who had managed to get a seat rather than one of the less fortunate eight hundred whom I was leaving behind.

Some two weeks later, almost two months after the Japanese surrender, all hope of getting away the remainder of the e-internees by train was given up and they were flown out by relays of C—54s to Peking and Tientsin — here they were crowded into hotels and the few remaining houses that were habitable.

[further reading] ...

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/Tipton/text/e1-TheCommunistsAttack.htm>

[Excerpt]

On August 31, Colonel Hyman Weinberg and his crew of nineteen landed. These were to be our “permanent” supervisors now, appointed officially. The crew included: Commanding Officer; Lieutenant Colonel Hyman Weinberg, Executive Officer; Major J. A. Staiger, Assistant Executive Officer and Mess Officer; Captain G. R. Kranich, Adjutant; Sergeant A. S. Levy, Special Service; Captain Avery Ashwood, Transportation and Airdrome Officer; Lieutenant J. G. Griffin, Supply Officer; Lieutenant S. A. Farr and Intelligence and Communications Officer; Captain R. Brandt. The identifications were all listed on the bulletin board for us. Colonel Weinberg’s problem now was to get us out, but the Communist guerillas had blown up the railroads, one after the other, and now the Colonel had to negotiate with them and he was only partially successful.

[excerpt]

Captain Ashwood’s work was to orient the camp to what had been going on in the world during our stay in Weih sien. It was a big task because we were completely ignorant and couldn’t understand some things. Some of the internees even thought he was Communistic.

[excerpt]

One morning at 5:00 A.M. the camp was awakened with Bing Crosby’s crooning and although some were provoked at getting called that early, most of us enjoyed the music because it was so new to us as it came over the loud speaker. One of the officers on night duty had simply mixed switches and didn’t know he had the amplifiers on. Captain Ashwood asked the forces in Kunming for a jeep and some movies and we were very anxious for them, but by mistake they were shipped to Manchuria instead and we didn’t get them.

Soon after we faced another big decision. The

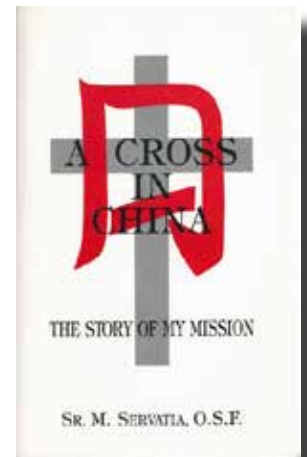
officers wanted us to go back to our respective countries, but most of us did not want to go. The missionaries wanted to get back to their posts and the business people wanted to get back to their homes and get their property back, but at least there would be a ship going to the States and we were invited to repatriate. Should we? Father Ghyselinck suggested that I should take a piece of paper, make two columns. In one column I should put down all the reasons, I could think of for going and in the other column, all the reasons for not going. I went back to my room and started out writing.

[excerpt]

The next morning the ground was dry enough and the exodus was on. Three buses stood outside the gates at 7:30 A.M. waiting. They were marked “Greased Lightning”, “Dying Duck” and “Honking Horace”. We bade farewell to the rest of the internees, then out the gate and into the buses. It was a glorious ride, and for most of us the most enjoyable bus ride we would ever have in our lives. Arriving at the station, we saw the train, that train that had been such a headache to Colonel Weinberg, now it would finally be on its way. The second group was to leave in two weeks on the same train and the third group after that, at least we thought so then. The Colonel was to get a few more headaches before he got his flock all out because of damage to the tracks.

[further reading] ...

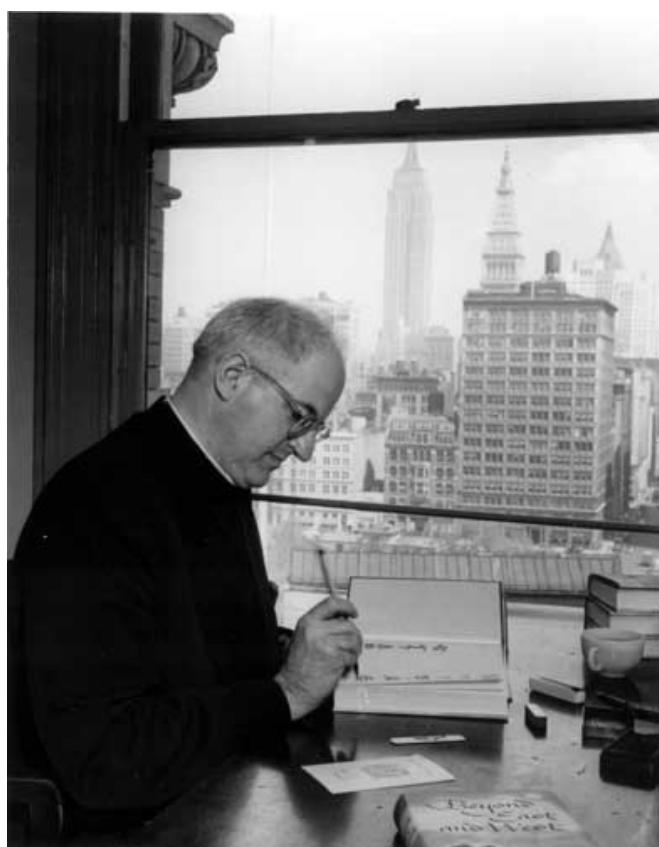
[http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia\(WEB\).pdf](http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/books/Servatia/Servatia(WEB).pdf)



FIRST LETTER HOME

by *Raymond deJaegher*

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/SAM/txt_fromPekingUK.htm



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 Weih sien, 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. Weihsien 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 Weihsien 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 Unden 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 Chongking in his mission of Peking, 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 Shantung 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 communications, 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 Weihsien 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.

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/rdjaegher/SAM/txt_fromPekingUK.htm





[Excerpt]

[...]

For months, or even years, we have had to keep our thoughts, our reactions and our feelings to ourselves.

As for me, I have been deprived of those familial contacts that united us so pleasantly before the wars in various countries completely broke the bonds that embraced us and sent me to this concentration camp for two-and-a-half years. Only a few messages from the Red Cross and several letters from Albert's brother-in-law were able to reach me. For me that meant I had to give up thinking in terms of family – "a letter will come tomorrow"; "in six days I must write to Albert"; "this or that niece is making her first communion, or that sister is getting married," etc.

I was carried off to a camp where I knew no one except for the other "auxiliaries" interned with me, and after two years and more I do not regret the experience even though it has distanced me from you. (Translator's note: Father Hanquet was a member of the Société Auxiliaires des Missions, the Society of Missionary Auxiliaries, or SAM.)

Much later I would like to tell you many details about our life during these 30 months, and I think that I will do it best by answering your questions. In any case, I would be able to talk for hours or write books about the lives we led here.

But, on the whole, the sum of good memories, good strokes of luck and remarkable adventures overshadows the bad experiences. To help you become acquainted with them I have asked a woman connected with the mines at Kailan, who was returning (to Belgium) with her children to see her mother, to pay you a visit.

Madame Brouet, that's her name, has a sister living in Chaudfontaine. She is not religious and does not hide the fact that she is returning to Belgium to seek a divorce so she can marry an English engineer with whom she has been living in the camp.

But that does not affect the fact that she knows much about camp life and that is what will interest you. So, before leaving this place, I would like to let you know some of the impressions that have come to mind as I sat saying my breviary on this bench from which I am writing you (excuse the corrections).

We lived in such a mixture of languages – English, Chinese, French – that I sometimes forget my grammar, even though I taught it for seven or eight hours a day for two years to young Belgians, Britons, Americans and others!

I am seated against the south wall of the camp, formerly topped with electric wire which we carefully destroyed when the Americans arrived (that felt too much like prison). Behind that wall was a double row of barbed wire, some chevaux

de frise (spikes) and a trench of three meters completed the penitentiary installations.

All these have started to disappear thanks to the dexterity of the Chinese who make off with all wooden things and make money from whatever.

Facing me is the hospital, the good hospital of the Presbyterian mission, supported and directed by our nurses and doctors, and which contributed to the maintenance of health among the internees, and the avoidance of epidemics. I never had to be a patient in it; I only made monthly visits to the dentist and occasionally to the doctor. The hospital is a big building in the form of a cross, with a wing for men and women with 15 beds each, an operating room, a pharmacy, etc.

The two upper floors were occupied by priests up until two years ago when they were concentrated in their monasteries at Peking, and later by a missionary school from Chefoo which had been transferred here, including the entire staff and all the pupils.

Between the hospital and my bench is a tennis court. I spent many pleasant hours there with young and old to maintain bodily condition and morale. In the summer there were so many players that one had to be adroit to claim the court for more than three hours a week.

But speak of the rise and fall of Byzantium – I believe we have not played any real matches since the Americans arrived. We used to have some great tournaments as we had some very good players of which one of the best – from America – was part of the U.S. Davis Cup team at Deauville just before the war.

On my right, between the hospital and the east wall of the camp, there is not a lot of space nor much vegetation, but nevertheless we held many a grand Scout function there and often operated a very profitable “Black Market,” most of all during the first months before the prison-like installations were so redoubtable and well coordinated.

As the song lyrics said in the renowned musical revue in which 50 missionary priests went on-stage in shirts and white pants to entertain the public.

Everything passed over the wall: eggs, honey,

sugar, soap, peanut oil and even, at times, pork quarters. In those good old days in our first months here, priests were the main specialists in these matters, due to a mixture of audacity and absence of commercial aspirations. To divide the goods and facilitate accountability in case of loss, each room, involved stored one or two items – some kept tobacco, eggs, sugar, we had the oil and jars of jam and sometimes alcohol as well.

At times the Japanese organized raids.

It was amusing to see merchandise in garbage pails or basins covered with towels as though one was going to the showers, being handed out of rear windows and other expedients.

The penalty for getting caught was several days of solitary confinement among several of us, a fate that I escaped.

That wall, did we not study it trying to discover its weaknesses? In April last year, it became an obsession, and the monotony of a life of imprisonment led me to the decision to take flight as soon as possible.

Alone at first, then with an Englishman and an American and Father Albert de Jaegher, we made various contacts among the Chinese who occasionally entered the camp, and finally all was arranged for the end of May.

But, alas, we had a priest, Father Rutherford, appointed by the Apostolic Delegate to have jurisdiction over the other priests for the duration of our imprisonment. At the last minute he got wind of the affair and threatened us with suspension. He said if we carried out our plan there would be reprisals against the Catholic people in the camp. We priests had to heed his warning, but the other two involved in the plan jumped the wall one evening and joined a guerilla band in the area.

They stayed in contact with us and sent us news, medicines, etc., and three days after the arrival of the American parachutists they came back to the camp triumphantly, enraging the Japanese who were still guarding the camp (under American supervision).

Later on if I have the time I will tell you the story in detail.

On the other side of the hospital, to the west, I see our house – six rooms at ground level and six rooms above them plus a veranda. When I say rooms I am talking about a space of 3 meters by 2.5 meters. Twenty-five of us lived in that house, the priests on the ground floor and several men above us.

As each house or building was required to have someone in charge, I was given the duty of staying in contact with the authorities on issues of administration, the cantine, of banking and of roll call twice a day conducted by the Japanese.

South of the house we had cultivated a patch of land to grow tomatoes, corn and carrots, and especially flowers around the edges. Because last year was not very fruitful, except for the flowers, and maintaining and watering the garden required a huge amount of work, this year I left the plot to some neighbors who were seriously focused on growing tomatoes, and they didn't do too badly.

As for me, I was more absorbed in teaching classes, so I was satisfied with the arrangement.

And I could go on for hours talking to you about these little details which made up our life here, but that would take too long. What is interesting to note today is the difference between the past and the present. We are still in the camp even though on August 17 six young Americans parachuted down at the risk of their lives to occupy the camp and prepare our liberation. (Later on, ask me to write you about that memorable day!)

Transportation difficulties have kept us here.

Only one group of 580 left for Tsingtao two weeks ago, and they will be repatriated by ships that are arriving these days. Last night it was announced that the second group would leave on Monday and my group on Wednesday. With the departure of those groups to Peking and Tientsin, involving the 900 remaining internees, the camp will be empty and will be turned over to three Presbyterian missionaries who will stay on.

Two loudspeakers broadcast music four or five hours a day, we have English and American magazines and pictorials available to us, and starting three days ago we have motion pictures every evening.

This evening we will have a program consisting of news and films about the war. News also arrives regularly, so we no longer feel isolated.

We can leave the camp during daylight hours and go to the town 30 minutes from here. For the last eight days I have gone out to walk in the countryside, swim in the river, chat with the Chinese peasants and above all to get some air.

I am feeling much better now, the food is much better, we have received magnificent bundles from the Americans, arriving in B-29s from Okinawa (various meats, cigarettes, chocolate, impressively packaged biscuits).

My departure date is in sight and I feel sure that this camp experience is truly ending and that my return to my mission is near.

Friday, October 12:

China is still China, and all the well-laid plans have been demolished in the space of a few hours! Instead of being in a hotel in Tsingtao, as I expected, I am seated on the same bench from where I wrote last week.

What happened?

Nothing unusual for those of us who have lived in China for some time. The railroad was destroyed in 17 places the night of Sunday to Monday by the Communists, who form a majority in the province.

For 15 days they had ceased their attacks following face-to-face secret contacts, and left the rail-line intact (without having made an agreement, they had implicitly given us a chance to evacuate). But our authorities were too engrossed in preparing the return to Tsingtao and neglected to take account of the guerillas.

That cost them dearly, because now the only way to evacuate us is to fly us directly to Peking and Tientsin by airplane. We might have been able to go by train from here to Tsinan and north from there, but the railroad is cut in many places on that route as well.

In the end, the American colonel in charge announced just before the motion picture that on Sunday or thereabouts they would start transporting us by air, and that the Peking

contingent (we) would be the first to go. Let's hope that at that time the airfield, which is five kilometres from here, will not have been destroyed by the guerrillas. While we wait we pass the time as best we can.

On the 10th, a Chinese holiday, I inspected Chinese troops. As I was by chance the only foreigner present, and I knew several high-ranking officers who came to the camp, I found myself being led away in American uniform (received by air drop from Okinawa) at the side of the general of Tjintao who commands 30,000 men in the region, and who had 2,000 of them passing in review that day.

I had to laugh momentarily, but I think I did just as well as an American colonel or captain.

Yesterday some of us spent three hours visiting the small arsenals in town. They make a copy of the Skoda sub-machine guns, rifles to which a bayonet can be attached, grenades, mortars and shells, and it was very interesting to see what they could do with very limited equipment.

Two years ago these Chinese troops were stationed in the mountains where they made these same arms, but they had to surrender to the Japanese on finding themselves cornered between the Communists and the Japanese.

Since then they were confined to the area and are now awaiting the arrival of the Nationalist troops to rejoin them. That is one of the aspects of the military situation in China. According to news we have received, the first group of evacuees from this camp, among whom was (Father) Albert Palmers, have left Tsingtao for Europe or America via Shanghai, where Albert will disembark to return to Nanking.

An Australian war correspondent who flew in by airplane for a day told us that there was a confrontation in the House of Commons regarding our camp because we were the last to be evacuated. It was interesting to listen to him as he witnessed the occupation of Japan, but the Americans were afraid that he would talk too much, and after a one-day stay they vigorously advised him to return to Tsingtao!

That's a pity, because he was very interesting

and he wanted to study at greater depth the issue of China which, he said, is one of the most important.

October 19, 1945

I am finishing this letter in Peking where we arrived by airplane on Tuesday after a trip of two hours. All went very well.

Our baggage arrived soon after, and for now we are to be fed by the American army for the next 30 days. As we have also received some clothing and some money, we want for nothing.

I am living with the Franciscans among whom I have quite a few friends, but I often go to see Paul Gilson where there are Auxiliaires. I think that I will return to the missions in about two weeks.

The railways are not yet very regular and the region is not very calm, but I think I will be able to get there just the same.

My dear mother,

[family gossip] ...

E. Hanquet

<http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/hanquet/book/Memoires-TotaleUK-web.pdf>

by L. Pander (Sr.)

http://www.weih sien-paintings.org/pander/FirstLetterAfterCamp/txt_deTientsin.htm



This is the very first UNCENSORED letter on Red Cross letterhead written by Mr. L. Pander Sr. ... to reassure his family in Europe.

It is certain: EVERYONE suffered from this stupid war — ... (!). Dad's letter is above all reassuring. There is no longer any censorship, of course, but "we" remain cautious!

Letter written on "American Red Cross" letterhead:

Tientsin, October 21, 1945

Dear All,

You can imagine how happy we were to finally hear from you. Your letter of September 23 reached us yesterday: it was short and we would have liked more details. Perhaps your next one will be less influenced by Z—'s desire not to displease the censorship.

The latter, if not thoroughly abolished, has become much more tolerant. Enjoy and tell us everything!

We too if we were together would have things to tell you, but by letter really, I don't know where

to start!

We learned in camp of the surrender of Japan on August 15; we weren't expecting it and personally I thought we would have another rough winter to endure!

Two days later, on the morning of the 17th, seven American officers landed near our camp by parachute and I can guarantee you that the internees gave them an ovation which they will remember for a long time. They brought food and clothing and since then we have been literally bombarded by packages falling from the sky and dropped by parachutes by fortress planes from the Pacific Islands. We lacked nothing, I assure you; we were even too spoiled.

Unfortunately, the evacuation of Weih sien involved very difficult problems.

The region was infested with Chinese troops who disagreed with the central government and who amused themselves, I don't yet understand exactly why, almost daily, destroying the railway lines towards the coast and towards the North. Only the way of the air remained free and it is that option which the American authorities finally adopted. So, we returned to Tientsin on October 18 by plane. Quick and wonderful trip and an unforgettable experience for the kids who all three suffered from airsickness!

And we found Tientsin swarming with American troops; the Bank and our apartments in an apologetic state and still officially occupied by the Japs. We will have to wait a week or two before we can return to our "home"!

In the meantime, we are staying with French friends who have given us a very warm welcome. However, we are still very confused and I believe that it will only be in one or two months that we will be able to resume a more or less normal life.

We would like you to see the children, they are wonderfully healthy. Janette is seven years old, tall and pretty, very nervous and very sensitive, very intelligent too; she asks to go to school because

she likes to read, write and count. She speaks English perfectly.

Leopold is a burly brigand who thinks only of shouting, playing, breaking, fighting; he is spoiled by everyone because he is a handsome kid and I believe he will become difficult and complicated. Perhaps discipline will have more effect on him here than in Weihsien; I hope. Marie-Louise is the model for babies: healthy, tall, fat, cheerful, not capricious, she was walking at 13 ½ months and never gave us the slightest trouble. As soon as I can, I'll take some photos that will hopefully show that we have every right to be proud of our three brats!

Write to us, until further instructions, via our embassy in Chungking, by plane and if possible, through the American Red Cross.

Be well, take care of yourself and Clava, the children and I love you all with all our hearts.

Paul

Tientsin, January 8, 1946

Dear All,

[... family gossip ...]

... Despite the Japanese occupation of China, we — like all foreigners — lived freely in Tientsin before December 8, 1941, though singularly poisoned by a multitude of restrictions the Nips imposed on business, communications, movement, etc. but we bothered very little about them, and we lived as we liked, that is to say very comfortably!

Everything changed on December 8, 1941, the day when, around 8.30 a.m., the headquarters of the Bank were invaded by the soldiers who kept Pétiaux and me in sight, insisting that I give them the keys to the safes and vaults, which, after my refusal, I was obliged to do at about one o'clock in the afternoon, in the presence of our Consul, whom the Japs had brought, and the director of a Japanese bank who was, so he said, instructed by the authorities to "liquidate" the Belgian Bank!

I grumbled like hell, arguing that Belgium had

not declared war on Japan, that the Bank was private property which they had no right to touch and — finally, after several days of unpleasant discussions, they authorised the Bank to reopen on December 15th.

This did not last long, for on the 20th, our government in London having officially declared a state of war with Japan, the Bank was re-invaded on Monday, 22nd December 1941, this time without further hope.

We were thus, under the leadership of Japanese "experts" for the liquidation of the Bank!

We have, of course, skilfully cheated them and so thoroughly — they are so stupid — fortunately for us, because they didn't even notice!

Despite their arrogance, they left us quite alone. They took our radios and our cars from us, they reduced our salary to the level of a Chinese employee, they forced us to wear a red armband, but we were authorised to continue to live in the Bank's apartments. We were also able to go out, to walk around in a fairly large area. The entries of the Bank were, furthermore, barricaded and guarded by troops.

And so it was, with relatively little trouble, that we lived until the end of 1942, when they threw us, purely and simply, out of our apartments.

The two families settled together in a fairly comfortable house, located apart, far enough from the centre where we hoped that we would be forgotten and that we would be left alone.

Alas! around mid-March 1943, we were invited, along with about thirty other Belgians, the majority of the other persons being British, American and Dutch, to be ready to go to Weihsien! — another location somewhere in China.

We could only take a limited amount of luggage; our furniture, piano, etc. — our magnificent carpets had to be abandoned in our locked accommodation, the latter having to be handed over to the authorities and — you can imagine the rest!

The bandits!

And on March 29 (1943) at 8 o'clock in the evening, we were, all under guard, herded on foot from an assembly point in the city, to the station.

You can't imagine what this 24-hour trip was like, packed, 120 of us, in a 3rd class wagon, doors and windows closed and closely watched by so-called "consular police guards" who were arrogant, surly and only looking for an incident — to have the opportunity and satisfaction to show their strength!

Everything went relatively well, however, until our arrival in Weih sien where our first impressions resulted in deep discouragement and a monstrous blues!

Imagine an enclosure of about 300 by 250 metres, a few large buildings and about fifty rows of low houses — "blocks" as we called them later — each made up of about ten "chambers".

This enclosure, before the war, was a Chinese school run by the Protestant Missions and these "rooms" served as accommodation for the Chinese student residents. It was we who replaced them and we were lucky enough to be designated, as soon as we arrived, for a well-located "block" where we were allocated, for the four of us, two of these small rooms. Each was 9 feet by 12 and 10 feet high, one window looking southwards about 3 feet by 3 and another to the north about 3 feet by 1.

When we arrived these rooms were completely empty and despite the promise made by the Japs to deliver our luggage to us immediately, they made us wait ten days during which we lived really rough, without beds, without blankets, so to speak without crockery and that was not being that thanks to the help of some missionaries and some friends that we were able to put a mattress on the ground and that we were able to eat in bowls!

There was obviously no organisation and it was us, the internees, who from the beginning had to install kitchens, bakery, toilets, showers, hospital, offices and — all this infrastructure in dirty and dilapidated premises and with a makeshift equipment.

Fortunately, we had up-to-date men; for example, all the best doctors in northern China, engineers, workers of all kinds, willing and

competent.

The beginnings were very hard, but the Japs left us fairly quiet by declaring that they were there to keep us locked within and not to take care of our comfort, our health, the preparation of our food, etc.

The camp appointed a committee which to the end succeeded in keeping — thanks to its always energetic attitude — a prestige which was on several occasions very useful to us and which saved us from the atrocities caused by our gaolers, or applied the necessary disciplinary measures which the Japs would have wanted.

This Committee, once constituted and efficient, negotiated certain thefts to their outcome, supervised the escape of two internees, controlled pro-Allied demonstrations or demonstrations against the reduction of rations, etc. etc.

I was part of this committee and I assure you that it was not always easy to navigate between the 1,500 internees and the Japanese Commander of the camp and especially his police chief, a former gendarme with a repulsive physique and a brutality worthy of his race; we even nicknamed him King Kong!

However, we were always privileged: we rarely ran out of food and our friends from Tientsin often sent us packages. Throughout our stay in the camp, we always had bread, most of the time excellent, made by about thirty internees led by two or three professional master bakers.

The camp had organised a special kitchen for kids under five; they were given the best cuts of meat, the best vegetables, they were given milk - obviously a little - and an egg a day and all this was prepared by a few ladies, under the supervision of dietitians. In addition, all the children at Weih sien looked radiant.

As for the adults, they had to work hard, first for the community and then for themselves! And you can trust me that on this regime, we did not get fat!

But that is all over now, and we are not going to complain about it!

Others, by the thousands — in other camps worldwide — suffered much more than we

did and if we sometimes grumbled about the degrading work that had to be done, about the length of the war and the absence of news, we realised that we were highly privileged prisoners in Weihsien!

January 12 (1946)

I just reviewed what I typed in the last two or three days: it's a bit confusing, a bit far-fetched, but it may give you an idea of what our life had been like in recent years. I will no doubt have the opportunity to tell you a few more stories from the camp; you must think that in our little village of 1,500 souls there was a lot of gossip and that we sometimes had fun with little nothings which, however, helped us for a few hours to cheer us up and find the life not so stupid!

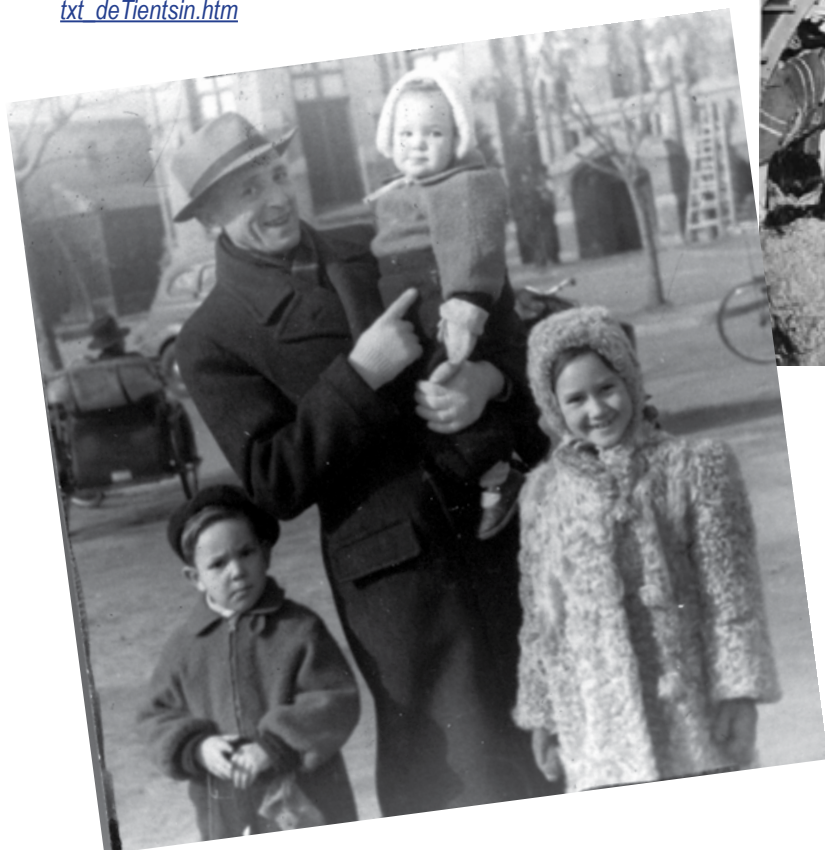
[... family gossip ...]

See you soon — more news, I hope I will also receive yours and I hug you all with all my heart.

Paul

[further reading] ...

http://www.weihsien-paintings.org/pander/FirstLetterAfterCamp/txt_deTientsin.htm



Assisted by two Army paratroopers and two Marine officers, Weihsien evacuees, dressed in a mixture of Army, Navy and Marine uniform items plus a few personal possessions that survived more than four years captivity, board a MAG-25 B4D in October 1945.



Disclaimer: *The opinions expressed at or through this site are the opinions of the individual author and may not reflect the opinions of the organization or any of its affiliates*

Copyright: *This website is non-profit and free access.*

*If copyrighted material has inadvertently been added to this page, please send a message to:
[weihsien@proximus.be] and the page will be rubbed out a.s.a.p.*