

Nanjing Diary: October and November

Lao Pengyou

Old friends know what I like:
They bring wine whenever they come by.
We spread out and sit under the pines;
After several rounds, we're drunk again.
Tao Chi'en (365-427)
(Tr Eugene Eoyang, Sunflower Splendor 54)

Many things about my life in China remind me of life in the convent. Living together with my fellow teachers in monastic quarters, dining together at a definite hour in a dining hall, being told what to teach, having our classes switched unexpectedly, having no input into our living arrangements or class assignments, having to take whatever we are given, having authorities (the waiban or foreign affairs officers and department chairs here; superiors in the convent) over us who arrange our outings and of whom we had to ask permission, having to ask help of more experienced "sisters" like Cheng Mei, e.g., to go to the doctor, feeling like we were children--all these and the pervasive indifference toward us remind me of the darker side of convent life. I feel uprooted from my own soil which I have enriched and fertilized over the years with my own ingredients; I have been transplanted into an exhausted, undernourishing soil, just as I had been in the convent. This is not an intellectual or artistic or cultural or even healthful milieu. I know I have to struggle to make this a rich experience;

*I had to put down a deep, strong taproot to support myself.
I put it down in my friends, our little foreign community
that met for Mass on Sundays and then went on outings together.
I put it down in my classes where I managed to find activities
that involved my students and myself in a process of exchange.
I put it down in my apartment,
-- my paintings and calligraphy on the walls.
I put it down in through travel
I tried to make China my China, approaching it asthetically
through its language and poetry and painting and landscapes.
I fertilized the soil of China with my own imagination
and got myself back in return.*

10/10

Today is National Day. There's a boat cruise tonight for our group on the Yangtze River, but I won't go because of my bronchitis.

Besides my three classes, I also meet on Monday with two to four members of the Research Institute when they wish, about articles on American literature they are writing for a Chinese History of 20th century American literature. I'm doing a section on popular American literature, and Zhang Ziqing, a poet who spent a year at Harvard, will translate. Other members of the Institute are Liu Haiping (American drama-O'Neill specialist), Tan Dali (a PhD student), Zhuang Guo-ou, Mrs. Mao, Zhang Jun-huan, Zhang Ziqing, all centered around Chen Jia, the famous Shakespeare scholar. They have their special building with research books for their use only. There are a number of such private collections. The English section of the Foreign Languages Dept, which I rarely visit, has all the Norton anthologies, texts brought by former Fulbrights, secured for the use of the English faculty. I was introduced to the Foreign Language Reading Room when Ms. Jin unlocked it for me so that I could get out copies of the American Lit survey that Carol had purchased and left the year before. There is also the Fulbright-Australian library, which has books donated by Australians and Fulbrights strewn about everywhere, with the attendant who doesn't even read English, so can't catalog or even put them in alphabetical order. This is probably where all the books I donate will wind up. Such a waste.

Last weekend the Waiban took us to the Changjiang Bridge, the long span across the Yangtse built by the Chinese alone after the Russians, who had planned it, pulled out, taking their plans with them. The Chinese are so proud of the bridge, the first technological feat they accomplished all alone. They all claim to have helped in its construction--even faculty members here. On that trip Xu Xin told us he was a Red Guard in the 60's. He said everyone wanted to be a Red Guard in those days because it meant loving China. He couldn't join at first because his father had been a banker--a bad background. Eventually he made it and went to the countryside for a year to "learn from the peasants." We wanted to know what he could learn from them except farming. He had thought they had correct political thoughts, but found they didn't know anything about politics. He has such a positive attitude that he still feels very close to that farm and visits them occasionally, as a sort of second family. Would you call that brainwashing? He is such a nice fellow that we can't hold his having been a Red Guard against him. Even now, all the Chinese here have to go to political meetings every Saturday afternoon. I wonder if politics, like religion, hasn't drifted toward the safe area of morality. The priest at the Catholic Church in town preaches for an hour on Sundays about morality. Doctrine is too dangerous, perhaps.

Two other Chinese who are friendly with me are Yu Nin Ping and Cheng Mei, both teachers in the English section. Both have MA's in English; both are about 30 and were in the overachieving class entering college in 1977, just after the Cultural Revolution. Ninping spent three years in Southern California at Sonoma. She is married and lives with her husband off campus at his danwei (work unit) where the housing is better. Cheng Mei is hoping to go to England next year on a British Council exchange. She helps me with many things because she lives on campus.

October Dancing in the Rain

I sent a letter on Friday but forgot to put a stamp on it.

The sun finally came out for two days in a row--not all day, mind you, but enough to cheer our hearts and get everyone outdoors. It's now been raining for 13 days in a row.

Tuesday I was feeling the effects of the antibiotic, but I managed to practice some calligraphy in the morning in preparation for our calligraphy teacher Ren Rong's lesson in the afternoon. That made me feel better.

Wednesday I had two classes. It was still raining but I have decided that classes are the only way of escaping from the environment. We all (grad students and I) threw ourselves into a discussion of Rip Van Winkle and The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, following a "pamphlet" that we have compiled out of material I prepared for them on the computer and gave to the Department to xerox. The students had prepared an analysis of Sleepy Hollow, so after the first hour, I was tired and told them to take over and be the teacher for that story. They were hesitant and humble at first, as their culture tells them to be, but I talked them into it, and before long one person after another was up before the class explaining some aspect of the story, and others in the class were giving her or him a run for his money to defend what he had said. It was exhilarating; I was so pleased and they were pleased with themselves too, because they know we foreign teachers are always trying to get them to speak out, and they had! I am going to get tired and sit down more often; it has such a salutary effect. These graduate students are my pets, I confess. I am happy to see them succeeding.

Wednesday afternoon I showed *Moby Dick* to my film class, but was disappointed that the machine did not show it in color; the students can't really get the full impact of it in black and white. Also, they understand only about one-third of the dialogue, and I have no way of pausing the machine, so I just have to shout over the sound track to be heard by the fifty students. There are plenty of the right kind of machines I have been told, one floor up, but they do not belong to the English Department, and God forbid that one department would lend another something around here. Yu Ningping (who spent 3 years in California and knows American films) often comes to class. She assists me in talking to the technical. I've learned "kai yi kai" from her: "start from the beginning (rewind)." As if the mechanical problems weren't bad enough, students from neighboring classes stroll in and out through the film's showing and don't know what is going on and annoy us. I am going to ask not to teach this class next term because of all the problems. The fifty students who are coming to class this term are enough to make it worth my while bringing the tapes; moreover the department has copied many of the tapes and is showing them on Friday afternoons. So many people are in charge of every aspect of video here, and they all have other jobs and so assume or ask that somebody else do their job, so no one gets the job done. For example, no one bothered to inquire from the Sound Lab where I show my films what system they would be projected on. Our department recording technician knew that my tapes and the copies they made are all on the

NTSC 4.43 system, and she must know that the Sound Lab uses PAL, but she didn't think about the problem, so here it is: NTSC projected on PAL equipment. Sometimes, on top of everything else (cold, damp weather, cold, inability to talk to the technicians upon whom I depend) these added hassles and negligences seem like the last straw.

Wednesday night, however, made up for all that fuss, for four of us--Lynn, and I and the two British Council girls Sara and Fiz, had a dinner party in my apartment, with Tandoori chicken and curried rice. It was nice to use pretty chopsticks and a teapot and eat in a warm room on soft chairs. After dinner we started watching *Gorky Park* (one of the films I bought) , but suddenly the electricity went off. Masako had been using an old hot plate that took 1000W when new and now drained the circuits. The usual bevy of Chinese helpers came but couldn't figure out the problem. The next morning I awoke to more rain and darkness. How dreary to wake up and not even have the comfort of a light or the VOA broadcast. On top of that, the British Council girls told me that my graduate course was listed as an elective for their students (undergraduates) for next term. I got up and wrote a letter to the head of the English section, saying that I already had more students than books and, moreover, it was a two semester course, so the same 23 people would be in it next term. I added that I didn't think I would teach the Images of America again a second term because of the problems with equipment--(no color, PAL projection format, students don't understand, no control over the situation, no translator to the technician. Sure enough, Xu Xin just paid ma visit to say, "But, it's already all planned," to which I replied, "Well, take it out of the plans."

Thursday I spent the day preparing to give my lecture on Colonial America, based on my slides of New England, Williamsburg, Charleston and other colonial places I have visited. I started with a folk-art slide of a baby, and said, "If you were a Colonial baby, what would your life have been like?" I showed them the different regions of America where they might have grown up--colonial New England, Pennsylvania, the South, the frontier, and finally Williamsburg, with which I led up to the Revolution. I gave the talk to a full house of students who wanted to practice listening to English but who had no particular interest in colonial America. I was mightily pleased with myself and they laughed often in pleasure--whenever they heard a word they understood. Afterwards the Student Association gave me a reproduction of a Tang dynasty ceramic horse as a thank you.

After the lecture it was still raining and I had on my wellies (rubbers, galoshes). I went to a party of my graduate students in their dorm. When I walked into their recreation room, they were all dancing, so I immediately threw off my raincoat and jacket and began dancing with great joy and to their delight. The boys and girls all know each other well because this is their second year of being in classes together and living in the same dorm. They have these get-togethers about once a month, so they really prance around. Some of them are very good dancers. I danced with boys and girls and sometimes in groups of four and sometimes in lines--waltzes, fox trots, blues. Squooshing around in my galoshes, I haven't had so much fun since I came. I was the only teacher and I

was clearly one of the gang, even though they treated me as a special guest and encouraged me to try all the food. One student took my camera and began taking photos of everyone. The whole class asked to borrow the negatives when I get the pictures developed.

Friday I had a long talk with the English Student Association leader (appointed to the job by the department) about how the students feel about various things like being teachers. He told me that there is still a stigma attached to being a teacher left over from the Cultural Revolution when students reported their teachers and they were forced to march around wearing dunce hats. Now, in spite of government efforts to rehabilitate the profession and "honor" teachers, students do not want to go into teaching because it is not thought of as "honorable." (No wonder!) The government will have to increase teachers' salaries. Eighty yuan or \$25 a month is what most of the Chinese professors here get, while foreign teachers get from 600 to 800 yuan or \$200 to \$250 a month, so you can imagine that the Chinese teachers think foreign teachers should teach more than the Chinese do. Chinese teachers usually teach only 2 courses while foreign teachers have at least three. He said that the government should also provide them with better housing to prove that teaching is honorable.

Friday afternoon Charlie Wilson, an ex-seminarian from Agnes Stout College in Tennessee, here teaching at the seminary, came by with a computer some evangelical soul had given him, claiming that it had a Bible program Comword stored in it. Charlie has not even been able to get it booted up. I put in an MS-Dos disc and immediately it booted up. He left it here with me to use, but we can't find what he is looking for inside. I won't use it until I can find a transformer strong enough.

Later Friday I went into town. Although it was already getting dark and the streets were wet, I thought the ambience was better than in the daytime. Darkness concealed the squalid parts and the lights in the little stalls made Zhongshanlu seem a lively, warm, even festive place. Friday evening Deirdre, Lynn and I were wondering what to do. Deirdre suggested raiding a man's dorm, but we convinced her to rework her mohair sweater and watch a video with us. We chose *To the Lighthouse* because it was set in Cornwall in the summertime. It was more appropriate to our age than a dorm raid. Deirdre has so many ideas and projects in her mind at once, that any one you reinforce she'll go at it full tilt. She is all heart. She has a twenty-five year-old daughter Jacoba, a musician, whom we think is sponging off her good mum, who earns only \$250 a month yet sends Jacoba one hundred pounds a month out of her salary. As a result, Deirdre cannot even afford to go in town with us and spend \$3 for dinner.

Saturday, Lynn and I went on a shopping spree. I dropped off my films to be developed in a fast machine; we could pick them up by 4:30 p.m. By wandering in and out of little shops and department stores around Xinjiekou Square (the center of town, where the Jinling Hotel is), I managed to buy the following items: men's cotton long johns--one brown and one grey; four meters of cotton flannel to have a granny nightgown made, two pairs warm socks; one blue cotton top to go with the long johns--it's the large sizes that are hard to find, so I take whatever colors I can find; one bottle Bee and Flower hair conditioner; two

meters of a shimmering rayon material to use as a tablecloth; a book on landscape brush painting--and other odds and ends, all for under 50 yuan: \$17. We were looking for electric cooking rings to use in winter to heat our rooms. After shopping we ate lunch at the Jinling Hotel's Plum Garden Restaurant (wearing our jeans and sweatshirts.) Hot and sour soup, vegetable dumplings, sweet and sour pork and a big bottle of beer only cost 12 yuan (\$4) in that luxurious place.

That afternoon I devoted to calligraphy, then ran back to pick up my developed prints. After dinner, Lynn and I and Cheng Mei went to the fieldhouse on campus for a gymnastics exhibition followed by a dance. Again I enjoyed watching the students dance, dressed up in western clothes-- the boys in suits and ties, the girls in high heels, tight-fitting slacks with matching sweaters and pretty jackets.

11/4

The Bug

I feel very settled now; in fact the only "foreign" thing now is the weather and pollution, which still make me have to fight off a bug two or three times a week. I can hardly plan to go anywhere for a weekened, because I don't know whether I'll be "catching something" on the day I'm supposed to go. It's so damp and cold everywhere; the most comfortable place is my apartment, where I can control the heat and humidity (by boiling water) and cure whatever I'm catching. Really it's annoying. Lynn and Deirdre are in the same boat--always coming down with a cold or trying to get rid of one. Deirdre's been in China for three years now, and she says this place is the least healthy spot in China. I have gotten the knack of fine-tuning my environment in my apartment by using an electric cooking ring and keeping water boiling, but when I go out into cold, drafty classrooms or waiting rooms, I can just feel something taking over. Other than that, everything now seems very familiar. I do wish I could get along with Chinese better. My calligraphy is doing well, but my language classes are not dependable. Occasionally Cheng Mei comes over and we talk in Chinese, but if we get on an interesting topic, we switch to English.

Our new hobby is having clothes made. Lynn and I have bought material and are having slacks, skirts and jackets made. I'm having a cotton padded jacket made as well. Nothing ready-made fits.

The foreign students had a Halloween party for everyone. I took pictures of the costumes and dancers. There were two canaries, two gypsies, one Pippi Longstocking, a black cat; a Chinese student arrived dressed in Western suit, trenchcoat and wide-brimmed hat with moustache, looking like a 20's Mafia. Western students' parties are more rambunctious than the Chinese parties. I prefer the Chinese parties and dancing for style, and the foreigners for energy and expression.

Sunday the Waiban took us on a half-day trip out to the Purple Mountain, where we visited the Ming tombs. We had been taken to the Purple Mountain, Sun Yat Sen's Memorial once before, in hot September. Now we saw it in cool

fall. The first Ming emperor was buried there, together with one hundred concubines who were put to death and interred with him, so he wouldn't be without any usual consolation in the next life. The tombs here are not as touristy as those in Beijing and nicer. I'm going to try riding my bike out there some weekend when it's nice. This was the first sunny weekend for a long time, so I enjoyed the outing and even climbed to the top of the pagoda. I forgot to mention that the Friday night before the weekend we went to Wuxi, the Waiban had taken us to see a Chinese opera, *The Sandalwood Fan*. The plot was a complicated one about a woman who disguises herself as a man and goes off to study with her lover, passes the exams and returns with her lover as a rival suitor for her own hand. One of my students went along to translate for us, so we thoroughly enjoyed it. It was my first experience of the high-pitched artificial whining and growling Chinese opera.

Tomorrow I'm supposed to go to the Jinling Hotel to pick up someone from the American Consulate in Shanghai who wants to come to campus to meet the Americans here, to see if he can help us. We seem to be pretty independent; except for Western medicine, we don't lack much. Fortunately we have the Jinling only ten minutes away by bike for our weekly taste of luxury. We go shopping and have lunch there every Saturday, to give ourselves a lift. I'll send a picture of the inside and the Plum Garden Restaurant along with a picture of our dining hall, so you'll appreciate the difference.

11/7

Jim Friend and Deirdre

Now that I'm feeling well all the time and my classes are going along smoothly and I have settled into a comfortable routine, I have nothing to write about. I'm so used to everything now that nothing strikes me as unusual enough to write about. Perhaps that's why we don't write about our daily lives at home; they seem so banal. To the Chinese, our lives in the West are astonishing.

I feel a part of the flow here. I just hop on my bike, pedal out the front gate (dismounting in respect as I go through the doors), turn left and a half block down I'm on Zhongshan Lu where I join the stream of Chinese thronging the bike lanes, obediently stopping en masse at the through streets.

People like Jim Friend get turned on by these crowds. He loves to meet people indiscriminately, so he can go back to his room and write about his great adventures. The day we were walking back from the Friendship Store after ordering our bikes, a young man came up to us. "Speak English?" he asked. Jim was all smiles, flattered that someone wanted to speak to him. I listened as Jim tumbled for the man's line. He was an artist, he said. (A con artist, I thought.) Did Jim want to come to his home and see his paintings? Of course Jim did, so off he went. Later he ecstatically showed me a painting. "He was going to give it to me, but I insisted on paying him. 'Give what you like,' he said, so I gave him ten U.S. dollars." On the black market he could get perhaps eighty yuan for that sum, but I suspected that the artist expected more from a naive American, but let him have it as a good investment in his attempt to 1) get

further foreign currency, 2) get a connection with a foreigner who might become a financial sponsor to get to the U.S., 3) get a patron. Jim, however, refuses to believe in any Chinese ulterior motives. I watch with amusement as he lets Xu Xin do all sorts of special favors for him. I can't believe that Xu Xin is making these daily trips to Jim's apartment, taking him to a barber or to see this and that, making Jim as dependent upon him as Wooster on Jeeves, without some hidden agenda. "How are you going to repay Xu Xin?" I asked him once. "Xu Xin doesn't ask for anything. He likes me." I couldn't be so sanguine. You'll pay in the long run, I said to him in my mind.

Deirdre has formed a choir of about thirty-five foreign students and teachers and any Chinese who want to join. (Masako and a Japanese man and I are the only foreign teachers. Jim doesn't like Deirdre because she talks mainly about her own world, not his). We're learning Christmas carols, and the Chinese want to share in all things Western. The Chinese know music by numbers from one to 8 for the middle octave and then by numbers one through 8 with a dot above or below for octaves above or below the middle. They are unfamiliar with Western notation, so the Chinese students--eight sopranos, two tenors and three basses, are very brave to join. I've noticed that they hang back or don't come to rehearsals.

I haven't decided where to go for Christmas or when we get a break--probably somewhere warm like Hong Kong or Malaysia. I would like to lie on a beach. One of the Fulbrights in Beijing is going to Australia over the February break. It's about ten hours flying time to Sidney.

Deirdre, Lynn and I are planning a trip to Qufu, the home of Confucius. Deirdre was there her first year and wants us to see it. That will be our November trip. Tomorrow Fiz and Sarah (the British Council teachers) are going to Suzhou for the weekend, and I'm tempted, but I don't think two weekends in a row is a good idea. Maybe I'll change my mind if the weather looks good tomorrow.

It's tomorrow (Friday), and raining again, so I'll stay here and not go to Suzhou or Yangzhou. I'll concentrate on doing calligraphy and Chinese. I'm getting good at calligraphy; my walls are covered with Chinese characters I've done. Everyday I practice from one-half to one hour. I also am going to try landscape painting. Paper and ink and brushes and drawing books here are all very cheap, and there are several art stores within easy walking or biking distance. Landscape painting (shanshui) and flower painting (huaniao) are ancient arts that the educated Chinese keep up as hobbies; there are many books like *The Mustard Seed* (which a graduate student has given me) showing what brush strokes to use to get what kinds of trees or waves or huts or mountains. I could enjoy spending a year here just studying painting.

I heard on the VOA this morning that there is student unrest in China which is taking the form of anti-Japanese protests. In Beijing and Shanghai large student protests have alarmed officials so that they have begun to talk to student groups on campuses to find what the problem is. Students say that living conditions, lack of free expression, inequalities in living standards, and

dissatisfaction with curricula are some complaints. The officials are trying to tell the students that stability is more important (to foreign investment and international cooperation), and that student unrest raises the spectre of the Cultural Revolution when the students became the bad guys, so the students had better pull in their horns and help, not hinder, China's progress. We have not seen any signs of this unrest here. I think Nanjing is more conservative than either Beijing or Shanghai.

A representative of the Shanghai Consulate, Larry Robinson, came out to Nanjing. I met him at the Jinling and brought him out to campus to talk with the Americans teaching and studying here. He was traveling with the Consul on a diplomatic mission, chiefly concerned with the reasons Congress has been holding up the appointment of Vincent Lord as Ambassador to China. Some Congressmen feel that China's human rights abuses and one-child policy (which leads to abortion) should be punished by our withdrawing diplomatic relations and not sending any ambassador at all. When Robinson talked to the students, they told him of difficulties Chinese students have had visiting American students. Chinese students have to sign a register when they go to visit foreign students in their dorms; this is a way of spying on the Chinese and establishing a "record" which can be used against them. This has created tension, more among the foreign community than among the Chinese, who accept it. The Americans feel that they're being isolated from the Chinese--"for their own good," they're told, but really they feel it is the xenophobic fear that Westerners will pollute the Chinese with our corrupt ways.

When I think that in my naivete I considered bringing (or buying) a car here, I laugh. Individuals aren't allowed to drive cars in the cities, where traffic is already heavy with buses and trucks and official cars, jeeps, etc. in the middle lanes and bikes, rickshaws, carts in the side lanes, or outside the cities! The people at the Shanghai Consulate have cars but cannot drive from Shanghai to Nanjing. Perhaps this only applies to foreigners, because faculty from universities drive to other cities in university cars. Anyway, the trains are so comfortable and inexpensive (if you can get a ticket) that it's easier to go by train.

Yesterday Cheng Mei and I walked to the Gulou Department store to buy some fabric. We passed a garden where we heard birds singing. There were bird cages hanging on all the trees while their owners--a lot of old men--sat talking underneath. I've noticed that it's always men who have birds as pets. We joked that the men are out exercising their birds while their wives are home cooking.

11/13
Heat!

This is a special night. We have heat! About six p.m. some Chinese fuwuyuan (service persons) came in and knocked on my pipes, and before long the familiar sound of steam knocking through pipes began. The temperature has gone up to 80--a heat wave! It could not have come at a better time, for I have resorted to doing exercises when I get up and before I go to bed to take away

that gnawing cold feeling in my gut. When to take a bath has also become a problem because as soon as I take one I have to jump in bed or feel that I'm catching a cold. How nice it was, therefore, on this evening, to bathe, wash my hair, and sit down to write a letter and not have to huddle under the covers for warmth. (From Monday through Wednesday I am intensely busy every minute. Wednesday night I have my first break to write.)

The odd thing is that the temperature outside seems mild; I don't even notice the cold when I'm outdoors walking; it is only inside the uninsulated unheated concrete buildings that I feel the damp clutching feeling. The Chinese leave their windows open in the cold weather because the air outside is warmer than the air inside. That works only for rooms facing south. My north-facing room has become uncomfortable during the day, but now that it too has heat, if only for a couple of hours each night and morning, I can go in there again. I've heard that some foreign teachers take their work down to the Jinling Hotel and sit working in the heated coffee shop during the day when the heat's off. The classroom buildings are all unheated and there are many broken windows, so all the students wear thick padded coats over many layers of sweaters to class. I have followed their lead and teach wearing many layers and a cap; I also bought a pair of gloves with fingertips cut off to write.

Last night we went to see the Beijing Opera in town. It was not the Beijing Opera from Beijing but the Beijing Opera from Nanjing. The costumes and masks were all spectacular. Tomorrow (Thursday) Deirdre, Lynn and I will take the morning train to Qufu, Confucius's birthplace, for a four-day trip.

11/18

Qufu

Deirdre, Lynn and I spent a memorable weekend in Qufu. We took a soft berth train that left at 1:45 p.m. instead of 10:45 a.m. as scheduled. Fortunately, there was someone from the Teachers' College waiban waiting for us with a car when we arrived about 9; otherwise, we would have had no way to cover the ten miles to Qufu from the Yanzhou station, for the buses stop running at 5 p.m. We stayed at the Teachers College where Deirdre had worked her first year in China. On Friday we got bikes from three foreign experts there and rode through the village into the town of Qufu. The village was as it might have been centuries ago. The only modern technology were our bikes. Every mud hut with thatched roof had hay and corn stacked alongside to feed the donkeys and cows. Rich villagers might have a cow standing or sitting out front. Huge black sows followed by litters of little black pigs were everywhere. The barnyard fragrance of manure engulfed us. Mother goats were nursing little white goats. Rail-thin dogs were nosing in the streets for food. Inside courtyards behind the house entrances we could see ears of maize hung to dry. Children had spread out corn on bamboo mats to dry. Ducks and geese were in the streams that ran through the village. Alongside the road were market stalls where vendors sold white and green cabbage, green onions and turnips. Every few feet we stopped to take pictures. Again I felt that village life is the beauty and strength of China; this they do really well. They don't do city life as well. Why would anyone leave this

intimate, quiet, relaxing and clean rural village for the impersonal, noisy, tense, and polluted Chinese city?

In the town of Qufu we visited the red laquered temple of Confucius (Kong fu zi) with its many stele and animal figures set up over the centuries to honor Confucius. Pavilions and side buildings around each courtyard succeeded each other in ever grander proportions until we reached the great Dacheng Hall, over 90 feet high with yellow-glazed tile roof and stone dragon coiled columns. All the rituals concerned with Confucius took place here annually--bells and drums and gongs accompanied the rites. We could see the wanton destructiveness of the Red Guards here, because many of the steles that they broke in their eagerness to do away with the old have been restored, with their breaks visible.

Next we visited the Kong family mansion next door. This was another series of pavilions and courtyards leading from the outer chambers (the magistrate's court) to the inner halls where the family lived from Confucius's time down to the present. The last duke left after the Revolution and lives in Taiwan. His older sister has written a book about growing up in the house, amid all the ceremonies. Their lives were worse than that of the poor villagers. They had no toys, wore old hand-me-down clothes, had no playmates and no idea of what was going on outside their gates. They lived in a round of rituals in honor of Confucius. It's hard to believe they were the most honored family in China.

We pedaled back to the college for lunch and a rest, then rode back in town to visit the tomb of Confucius in the Forest of Confucius. All the Kong family have been buried there down to the last generation. Kong Demao said they only swept the graves of the first and last three generations of Kongs, so the place is all overgrown, a forest of steles and statues of various Kong dukes. There we met some teachers from Fudan University in Shanghai, including a fellow Fulbright professor, Michael Helfand. We were about the only people in the forest, so it was a surprise.

After we left the Confucius shrines, we rode our bikes through Qufu, where a fair was in progress. The dirt roads were lined with booths selling materials and clothes. There were colorfully painted wagons, the work of the Hui (Muslim) Chinese who live there. These were the first minority people we had seen, and they have a different look than the Han Chinese. The roadside vegetable vendors (often children or old women) were sitting on heaped up cabbages and onions. Everyone was filled with purpose. Perhaps that's why Mao sent the city youth to "learn from the peasants." We visited in the home of a Kong family descendant--a seventy-seven year-old lady with bound feet. (There were many foot-bound ladies hobbling around on tiny feet, leaning on canes.) She asked Deirdre to take off her gold wedding ring to let them run it across the mole on the head of their great grandson. They fear he will get a brain tumor from the mole, as it is on his forehead. We ate tea with steamed bread and guazi (anise-flavored seeds which the Chinese love to crack with their teeth), then pedaled back to the campus.

That evening we had dinner with a Chinese professor and his wife, friends of Deirdre's. They showed us pre-revolutionary pictures of themselves, a glamorous couple wearing Western-style clothes. She looked like a grown-up

Shirley Temple, with black curls. He was an officer under Stillwell during the War. After the war he was in Hong Kong when the Revolution broke out. Out of patriotism he returned, but was immediately sent down to look after pigs because of his American connections, and his wife was humiliated because of her upper-class background. They were the most cultivated, outspoken and fun couple I have met here, yet they were living in a rural backwater. We even toasted the death of Mao and the rebirth of China as a result. He is the first person I have heard speak openly against Mao and blame him for all the mistakes during the 60's. They live in a three-room apartment, luxurious by Nanjing standards, but a "birdcage" by the standards they were used to before the War. They also had a darling cat which we all petted much. Cats are common among people there, and dogs too, because this is the countryside. This couple seem to have a better life than our Chinese teachers in Nanjing--more space, pure air, small town, rural pleasures.

On Saturday we were given a university car (a Ford, for which the university paid \$60,000) and driver to go out to Nishan, the place where Confucius was supposedly born in a cave. The cave is still there and above it a temple on the side of the mountain. We were the only ones in that austere setting. We climbed up the mountain a bit, then returned through the small villages where we tried to take more pictures alongside the road lined with poplars; rows of newly planted green vegetables alternated with rows of lettuce. I wonder whether they'll manage to harvest these this late in the season; surely a frost will come any day now. Donkey carts were pulling loads of cotton to market. People on bicycles were carrying sheep, chickens, geese dangling from the handlebars and back, heading for market. We saw every kind of animal pulling carts--little tiny donkeys, big cows, horses, and of course, poor men and even women hauling huge loads of six or eight immense jars.

Saturday night we were invited to dinner by two American girls teaching there who made us an American meal. Debby had just returned from California and had brought cheese (the Chinese don't eat milk products), oatmeal, spices, hot chocolate mix, and she fixed us mashed potatoes, roast pork and gravy over stuffing, cauliflower, carrots and spinach. For dessert she had made apple crisp. What a treat in the rural wilderness.

We came back on the 8:30 a.m. train and were lucky to find another soft berth cabin for four, with Irving Thalberg Jr. sharing our cabin. He teaches philosophy at Fudan in Shanghai. We shared our stories with him.

We arrived back to find the heat has not been turned on yet, alas. They were only trying it out to see if it worked that one night.

11/23
Ganxie

Thank you for the Christmas check, which I immediately deposited into the Bank of China and then withdrew enough to buy my first Christmas present--a bird! It is an orange canary, in a beautiful wooden cage like a pagoda, with little white and blue bowls to eat and drink from. Guillermo and I each bought one in

the old market of the old city--the Fuzi Miao area or the Confucius Temple area, a far bike ride south. The shopkeepers spoke no English, of course, so we had to point because we didn't know the Chinese names of anything. There were many beautiful parakeets, and I was tempted to get a pale blue one, but the shopkeeper said the wood cages we admired were not strong enough for the powerful beaks of the parakeets. No, they had no canaries. When they saw we were going away without buying anything, they sent out and came back with first one bright yellow canary for Guillermo, then an orange one for me that looked like somebody's pet, already living in a luxurious wood pagoda cage. There is probably some little child crying tonight for its little canary. They assembled the feeders for us, gave us two sacks of food each and tied the cages onto poles fixed to the rears of our bikes. Each of us paid 52.20 yuan (less than \$17). I covered it with a cloth, and out we rode into the crowded narrow streets with our cages swinging on our rears.

As we pedaled through the streets everyone was smiling and little children were pointing. It was harrowing, though, because the streets were crowded with rush hour traffic and it was growing dark (and of course we had no lights on our bikes). Buses were careening down upon us; heavy carts and motorcycles, not to mention the millions of bikes and pedestrians crowding the streets after 5 p.m. The streetlights are dim and the trees shade whatever light is left. We got separated from each other in all the traffic; it was everyone for himself and his own bird. Miraculously, we both made it back without any accidents. Any collision could have splintered the fragile bamboo cage. When I came through the back gate of the campus with the bird cage dangling from my rear, the guards at the gate looked at it smiling and said, "Ta yijing shui jiao." (It is already sleeping.) I thought more likely it was dead after all it had been through, but when I arrived at our compound and dismounted to take a look, lo! it was perched on one of its bars and looking up at me with a reproachful glance as if to say "What next!" When I brought it into my apartment and refilled its water bowl, it requited me with some chirps. Later in the evening, I put on some tapes for it to sing with and it gave a few trills. Then I put in a little bird bath, and it splashed around for a while, then spent half an hour grooming itself, pulling itself together after the indignity of that mad bike ride. As soon as I turned out the light, not a sound more was heard until this morning, when I turned on the light and it bounded back to life and began eating and drinking and chirping and splashing. I tried some more music and found that it really likes jazz: Jelly Roll Morton on the VOA got a stream of melody. Later it sang along to "Over the River and Through the Trees," a Thanksgiving song. I'll name him *Ganxie*, which means Thanks!

We're going to have a do-it-ourselves Thanksgiving dinner here. The kitchen staff claim they do not know how to do turkeys (even if there were such things in China), so we are supposed to get yams and cooked geese from the streets and bring a pot-luck dinner for over a hundred people. Jim Friend is organizing it and is talking about staying up all night and cooking. I am lying low; he likes to delegate jobs.

What I Like About America is That the Equipment Works

On Thursday night I was asked to give a talk before a group of engineers and medical students who want to practice listening to English. I decided to talk about "What I Like about America." I had slides of family, the lake, my apartment, my cats, my school, Chicago, etc but when I arrived face to face with several hundred persons, there was no slide projector or screen, and the audio-visual persons had all gone home, in spite of the fact that Yu Nin Ping had spent several hours in the freezing office trying to arrange for the equipment. I guess the technician who was supposed to bring it in and hook it up just forgot about it. So I had to go ahead and describe things in words: "Imagine the sun rising over the lake." "Imagine us all sitting down to a big dinner at my sister's house." The students are so eager and like whatever we say, so I was a big hit anyway, even with no pictures. They are just thrilled to have someone speak English to them.

Ganxie is tuning up to some Mozart now. He prefers classical music with full orchestras and choruses. I'll try some really grand opera on him to see if he's an opera fan. He's really getting into Mozart, with trills and flutters and long sustained notes.

Sunday: He likes organ music on Sundays. Today during Mass he bowed his head at the consecration and kept quiet during Communion, so we know he's a Catholic. Guillermo brought his bird down and we put their cages next to each other. "Kai hui," Guillermo said. "They're having a meeting."