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#10 Sze T'iao Hsiang
Kulou, Nanking
December 7, 1937

Dear Family:

I fell down last week about writing to you, so I will try to make amends this week. Please excuse me. We had a rather busy week which ended with our moving from Hsiakwan to the above address which is the residence of the German gentleman who invited Crisso to go to Hankow aboard the ship which the German Embassy had chartered for its nationals. A young Russian whom we call Kola since his real name is very difficult to pronounce is taking care of the house for Mr. Schultze-Pantin. You see our Hsiakwan compound is just outside the main gate of Nanking city from the north. We are really only a stone's throw from the gate and as the situation has grown tighter with the approach of the J. upon Nanking we decided it would be better for us and our Chinese workers and Christians to move inside the city lest the city gate be suddenly closed without warning and we be left outside with no place to go to. Mr. Hansen, the manager of the Texas Oil Co. very kindly invited us to use his company residences for ourselves and our people. These are within the area which the International Committee has been trying to reserve for a safety zone in order to save the civilians who cannot leave Nanking. We had quite a large group of workers and Christians to provide for so we decided it would be best to move them in and get them settled. John Magee and I decided to come to this house since the other place was quite crowded and we had to be a little freer to carry on our work. So here we are. We have been busy moving in as many of our things as possible for if the Chinese really defend the city our residences on the Hsiakwan compound are in for a lot of shelling, etc. It has been a hectic time trying to make all arrangements, and I think that when I can no longer qualify as a missionary I'll hire myself out as a mover and packer! From the news we are receiving it looks as tho the J. would be here very soon. Everybody is wondering how much of a fight the C. will put up. They are certainly making preparations to put up some resistance but it is uncertain how long they can hold out. Their casualties were very great around Shanghai and included some of the very best troops. Those who will defend Nanking will be either fresh troops of uncertain fighting calibre or else men who have already had a pretty heavy dose of fighting. We are realising more and more that only God can help, and we feel sure that He will accomplish His purpose. He has called us here, has given us work to do from day to day, and we are trusting Him implicitly to see it thru to the end. It is a great comfort to our Chinese believers, many of whom cannot go to other places and some of whom have come here from places that have been bombed and annihilated, to have us here. There is no complaining. In the house where many of them are living they have set up an altar and they have prayers there in the morning and evening. John Magee celebrated the Communion there while I did the same at St. Paul's. We did not have many at the latter place but even so it was thrilling to have as many as we did. On my way to the church we got caught in an air raid and had to leave the motor car to take shelter. The car was left here by the Wusih group when they went to Shanghai. We have found it invaluable, as Nanking is a city of tremendous distances, and for nearly three weeks practically all bus and rickshaw traffic has stopped and cars are not to be hired. The next week ought to decide the fate of the city. We hope it will be over quickly so that life can settle down normally. I rode my bicycle to St. Paul's this afternoon. The city was like a deserted place with only an occasional person to be seen here and there.

Our work for the wounded soldiers has borne some fruit. Conditions at the railway station where the men arrived were simply terrible. People who were being paid to do the work simply did not turn up and the wounded were left sometimes for days without any one to dress their wounds and feed them. We went down ourselves to help and made such a to-do about things that those high in authority became interested and did something. Now there are doctors and dressers on hand twenty-four hours a day and the men are moved rapidly to hospitals. Not a great many are coming in that way now since the fighting line has come so close that it is practically impossible to use the railway. John met an American who has been connected with the Chinese air force for four years. He had just returned from Shanghai from which place it had taken him two weeks to get here. He came by small boat, and reported Yangchow to be full of Chinese soldiers who retreated across the Yangtse from Chinkiang. That may mean that our buildings there have been occupied by them. Mr. Ko, our Chinese priest, wrote me that the Yangchow magistrate had tried twice to get our Mahan buildings for the use of the Kiangsu Provincial Government. We refused, of course, since our consent would involve our government. We have been allowing our buildings to be used for refugees and for the wounded, but not for military or official purposes. If they take them by force we have no recourse. The last word I had from Mr. Ko was that the buildings had not been taken. Mail is no longer being delivered in Nanking, so we have been cut off from communications for quite a time. Mail is still being sent out. I write to C. Crisso every day and send it air-mail to Hankow. I have had only one letter from her telling of her safe arrival there at noon on Thanksgiving Day. I have received no other letters from her. Last week she succeeded in calling me up by long distance telephone. She said she was well and that she had been getting my letters. I am glad of that. She is also going to language school in the mornings. From her experience in Nanking she realized how necessary it is for her to have a speaking knowledge of Chinese. I am glad she is able to study with others as it is easier and more regular than having to do it alone. She is staying with Miss Dexter. The Embassy called me up the other day to report that they had had an inquiry from the State Department as to Clarissa's plans at Hankow, so I take it that you have received my cable, sent thru the Embassy, telling of her departure for Hankow. I think she will be all right there, and if she has to leave she will do so in the company of some of the other Mission folk there whenever they deem it wise to leave. She can either go to Hongkong and then to Shanghai or else go further west into Szechuen Province whither the Central government has moved. In any case I do not think there is any cause to worry about her safety.

There are a number of foreigners remaining in Nanking, most of them having responsibility for various activities or people. The committee is working very hard to have a 'neutral' zone respected by both sides in case fighting takes place. The Nanking University Hospital is carrying on valiantly with a small staff of two foreign doctors, one Chinese doctor, and two foreign and several Chinese nurses. They are about worn to a frazzle thru pressure of work and lack of personnel, since the Chinese superintendent and about 49 other doctors and nurses connected with the hospital deserted and went to Hankow for safety. That has been one of the heart-breaking things we have had to endure - so many of the professional classes whose services are direly needed here have run away. On the other hand we have also seen some very encouraging exhibitions of loyalty to duty in the midst of great danger. We are realising the truth of Christ's parable of the hirelings and the good shepherd, and of the meaning of trying to save one's life and losing it.

We hope you are all fine. Our dearest love and best wishes for Christmas and the new year. *Clarissa + Ernest*