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## Letter from Fr. Leonard Amrhein to Catherine Amrhein, Al, and Tom.

Fr. Leonard Amrhein C.P.

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Catholic Mission  
Huki, Xuan Chuang  
Hubei,  
Jan. 13, 1947.

Dear Mom - Al - Tom,

Tom's letter of October 13-24 arrived here November 29. Mom's card and letter arrived December 28. Many, many thanks for everything, especially the check in Tom's letter.

What a pleasant surprise, Mom, to receive your letter. I read it and re-read it and still I don't get tired reading it. It's like speaking or listening to you talk personally. Write some more.

How is your arm coming along, Mom? Naturally, it will be stiff for sometime. Most likely you'll have to learn all over again to use it. But you are very lucky. You sure have a good Guardian Angel.

Your package hasn't arrived yet, Tom. But it is only two and a half months on the way. Lots of time yet. Sometimes it takes longer than that for letters to come. I think I mentioned in my last letter that Mary's two packages arrived here safely.

Tom, your mention of the "tail end of the garden" reminds me of something I wanted to ask for. Send me some vegetable seeds. The Chinese have fine vegetables, but not much of a variety. And not many American vegetables. My cook prepares my meals foreign style. He is pretty good at it too. But I like the Chinese meals. I was out to my first Chinese banquet the other week - about two weeks ago. I like it a lot.

Of all the funny things to happen. Your boy "was savers" for me. Now we cannot buy wax. So soon we'll be burning oil instead of candles. But this will only be temporary. When communications are improved we'll be able to get wax from down river. I just have to laugh when I think of it. "Wax savers" and no wax.

How's Al's refrigeration plant coming along? I often thought that if Al was here in Ukiki - given the materials - he could establish an electric light system for us. There is a creek flows just outside the Mission. I often thought we could have electricity in the mission - generated by water power from this creek. It could very easily be done. But all the materials would have to be carried in on poles and on backs. There is no road into the Mission. The paths are a foot or two wide. Some places we have to cross creeks on logs thrown across. So Al, if you can invent a pocket generator run by water power I'll see if I can't persuade our Bishop to buy one for Ukiki.

They use the water of this creek to turn their gold mills. There is a gold mine in Ukiki. Some people from Changsha own it. They sell the sand and rock which is left over after the gold is mined. The people buy this stuff, put it in a big cement trough like a big saucer. They have a big heavy cement roller turning around in this saucer. It is turned by the stream - like a mill. After grinding for about a day, they wash out the sand and find tiny specks of gold - about

the size of pin heads. I never saw any <sup>gold</sup> but I was told how it works. I saw lots of these mills. When the water is high, they are all working.

Well, did you have a nice Christmas at home? Is Tom still afraid of Santa Claus' false face?

He had a nice Christmas here. Every family received a letter inviting them in for the Feast. Some said they were surprised that we still remembered them. They just locked up their homes and came in. Some live far away.

He didn't have a mid-night Mass. The orphan girls came over about 12:15 and sang "Silent Night". I didn't know about this before hand, so when I awoke and heard the singing I thought the angels were serenading me. What presumption!

He had two early Masses and one at 10:00. The weather was terrible but we had a crowded Church in spite of the weather. I think we would have had more, if the weather was better.

After Mass the Christians had a "noodle breakfast" and the kids had peanuts. So everybody had a happy Christmas - including the pastor. I had lots of visitors during the day. They brought me honey, eggs, pie cakes and one brought me a live chicken. Lots of mail arrived on Christmas too - from far and near. So it was like old times - presents and mail. I just about got my Office said before dark set in.

Now we are getting ready to celebrate the Chinese New Year on January 22. There isn't much of a celebration here <sup>in</sup>

the country, I understand. The kids get about three weeks off from school. In the city, they celebrate for two weeks. What a racket! I was in Chenki last New Year's Day. I'll never forget it.

See, Tom and I have birthdays this month. "Happy Birthdays to you." I never could remember which one came first.

No hum! I'm getting sleepy. I don't like to read or write by the light of an oil light. I get sleepy too & quickly.

Well I can't think of anything else to write about. So I guess we'll have to say "so long for now".

Best wishes to everybody at home. Hope everybody is well.

As always,

Leondad.

湖南天主教

CATHOLIC MISSION

PASSIONIST FATHERS  
WUHL KUAN CHUANG  
HUNAN, CHINA.



湖南天主教

美國

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