On the Steamer "Mongolia  
Oct. 27, 1909

My dear girl-

This has been a most interesting day as we have been on land all the time and feel just a bit tired from sight seeing shopping etc. but I do not want to put off answering your good letter any long so will write tonight just the same.

You will notice at a glimpse of this stationary that we have reached the Orient but not our destination by any means. We have come 8, 500 miles and still have before us 2,000 miles more. Really seems as though we should never get to Suifu in western China where we expect to remain until we have acquired some knowledge of the Chinese language. I already am partly a “chink” as I’ve learned a few 2 of the Chinese radicals and expect to accomplish much more in that line going up the Yangtse in the house-boat.

Now for something about Japan- we come first into view of this picturesque country last Friday, the 22nd and saw peering away up into the clouds before us was the famous snow-capped mountain called Fujianyoma (pictured on the envelope). It is worshiped by the Buddhists and held very sacred by them. Yearly thousands of Buddhists climb this mountain to worship at a shrine at the top. We visited some of these Buddhist temples and shrines both in Yokahowa and Tokyo and they appeared just as those we have often seen pictures of at home in Missionary leaflets etc. They were very pretty from the outside but it fairly made my heart ache to see the poor people within clapping their hands to attract the attention of the gods and then throwing money between some raised spaces in the floor. Then they would pray asking to be relieved of some certain ailment etc. They also worship a white sacred pony and only take it out of the stable twice a year. There is much being done to enlighten the people of Japan but oh, they surely do need more workers there. I can’t imagine what China will be like if it needs the gospel more than Japan. (on the side of the page: We shall reach Shanghai next Friday the 29 of Oct and expect to be there a week making purchases etc.)

I must tell you about my first ride in a “Jinrikisha” for really you would have roared if you had seen us. It struck me so funny to find myself in one of those two wheeled “gigs” with a native in the front instead of a horse. There were five of us together going out with a missionary to her house to have dinner. And as I became greatly absorbed in the entirely new & quaint surroundings when to my surprise I looked ahead and found all the others out of sight. My Coolie was walking and I demanded a reason for his getting so behind when he replied “Seck (sick) Today”. I didn’t even know the street or place to which we were going to and I began to feel a bit nervous but I couldn’t make him understand another word of English so I decided there was nothing for me to do but keep still. In a few minutes however relief came for one of
the party had missed me and was awaiting for me. She laughed when I told her and said that was the way they tried to work on foreigner’s sympathy thinking at the end of the ride they would get an extra coin or two. A yen is equal to a dollar in our money and a sen a cent. Our money is worth just twice as much as theirs. It is surprising to see what beautiful things one can buy for about 2/3 or so less than they would cost in America. $20 silk embroidered long kimonos you can get for $5. Oh, and they are exquisite. Labor is so cheap. Here at Nagasaki men, women & children loaded the “Mongolia” for about fifteen cents a piece working about seven hours.

We visited the shops where Satsuma ware is made in Kobe, Japan and also Cloinnaise and damascene ware and today we visited the real tortoise shell shops. That is very expensive over here. Oh, Walde dear how I wish you could be with us- you and “Vivie” to enjoy this good time we are having.

The women many of them paint and powder their faces and lips and never seem to care how thick it is left on or how streaked. The married ladies black their teeth so that they wont be attractive to any other men. They all wear wooden shoes and we could not keep laughing to see a great string of men, women & children curiously following us, clattering along as we passed through the streets and Bazars. The women and little girls carry the babies on their backs.

We purchased some Japanese candy but a little bit of smell and a taste was quite enough. Hah! We don’t want any more of that just now. There are numberless other things I would like to tell you about but I must not take the time here.

I only want to thank you again dear for that sweet letter you wrote me. I felt very badly to read that you were having such a sick spell but hope when this reaches you you will be all better again. I can’t seem to get over that disappointment at not seeing you and those other girls out of my home before leaving. It was a shame that that mistake was made after Mrs. Curtice was so good as to give you six girls permission to come. We would have had a delightful time together I know. Give them all my love and tell them how sorry I am. It is a comfort girlie to know you think of me sometimes. Do write me often as your letters are an inspiration to me. Tell Miss Staley we had dinner at the Tenny’s home in Yakahoma and we are in love with them. Their little girl is a beauty. Kindest regards to your mother and Lillian and Mrs. Broady if you should see her again. Write me soon again to Suifu, Szechwan province, West China. With a big kiss and hug good night your devoted “Wilson”

Mr. Cherney wishes to be kindly remembered to you and all the girls.