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**Subject:** You're my new "Groupies"

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Hello!

I've just created you into my "Groupies". So many things are happening so fast, that I feel the need to tell you about it!!! In my general emails I'll be briefer -- but for you, family and some dear friends, I think there are some significant family things you'd like to hear about. If not -- delete!!!

What an amazing day this has been!! I turned in early last night since I hadn't really slept for 50+ hours. It felt good to stretch out in bed, although it is a hard one!! Good for my back!! Woke up early and showered in my funny looking bathroom!!! Not complaining at all -- I have a western toilet and running lukewarm water -- hurrah!!!

I was served breakfast -- and was the only hotel guest down there. Not sure if there are other people staying here. They have restaurant facilities, but it looks like it is used mostly for groups. I got a bowl of something, which I think was perhaps millet soup -- at least it was yellow! Then a small plate with four different kinds of pickles. Another small plate with two tiny "boaboas", a hard boiled egg and one large fried jiaozi!!

Mr. Wang, who had driven me from the airport, came at 7.30, with his wife, and drove me to school. There I met all the first year English teachers -- about 12 in all. The teachers' room holds all of us. Each person has one desk. The desks face each other -- two such rows in the room. Each teacher only had their own English text book on their desk and a dictionary -- no other materials were in sight!! They quickly dusted off a desk for me, removed four very dead plants, gave me a cup for tea, a towel and a bar of soap to keep me clean! As they came in I was introduced to them. I will be called Margareta (or more like Margaret). I'm trying desperately to remember their names. But there are three Li's, two Wangs, etc. etc. -- and by Monday I may not know who is who if they don't wear the same clothes again!!!

There are more women English teacher than men -- but all are very friendly. Their spoken English is not so good, but they evidently know their grammar!! I find that extremely interesting.

They can't seem to decide how to use my time. They only teach two hours (2 x 45 minutes) each day for a total of 10 hours per week. That is IT!! Class sizes are up to 60. They think it would be too much for me to teach 24 hours per week so they are trying to figure out how to make it work! One suggestion is that I would give a "lecture" after school hours to a larger group of kids (like 200 or so!!)

and then teach 12 hours per week. I don't think I'll know what will happen until Monday!! I will be flexible. I think that will be my new middle name!!!

There was a lot of talking and joking back and forth in the teachers' work room. I didn't see a lot of work being done!! But then it doesn't take a lot of time to prepare one lesson.

One of the teachers took me to lunch in the school cafeteria. It is a large room with long metal tables with metal stools. Looks very military! They gave me a card worth 300 yuan for lunches. I ate for 3 yuan today -- so I think the 300 should last me for a while!!! I ate rice, green beans with some meat in it, and a deep fried mystery meat. They had a lot of variety, including noodles, and "boaboa" (steamed bread). When I called it boaboa they laughed at me -- because that's an "old fashioned" word -- now it is only called "manto"!!

One of the tech teachers tried to get my laptop to work with my power points. No go --- my equipment is much newer than their PC projectors etc. So I put my stuff on a flash drive and hopefully they will work in the class rooms I will be using. At least they worked in the teachers' room!

The school schedule is quite interesting. Four periods in the morning, beginning at 7.50 and ending at 11.40. Then they eat lunch. Then there is a rest period till 2 pm. Teachers go home to eat lunch and take a nap!!!! They return for three more classes at 2.20 - 5.10 pm. After school activities are from 5.20 - 6.05. Teachers who don't have activities scheduled can go home at 5.30. There are built in breaks in the morning and afternoon -- as well as a five minute "eye exercise" time in the morning! They have provided me with a room (with bed and toilet) in one of the dormitories so that I don't have to go back to the hotel to take my afternoon rest!!!!

Out of the 4000 students, 3000 live in the dorms on campus. Eight kids to a room!!! There are many students from Korea.

After lunch I was free to leave -- and I don't need to be back till Monday morning. Mr. Wang and his wife drove me to the hotel. They are SUPER nice! He speaks no English, but is really a fun person. I had mentioned that I needed a map -- and we stopped and he picked one up for me. Of course, I can't read it ---- but we marked important points on it. As we drove we drove past the old campus -- and saw the old girls' school. My goodness, how exciting that was! Then I asked where the "new" church was. But they called it the "old" church (there is a newer one in the east part of town). So I knew it would be close to the girls' school -- and there it was!!! Our old property -- Dodo's old house etc. The gate around the house and church were locked -- but I think I can actually walk there in about 20 minutes from the hotel. I'll have to find out what time services are on Sunday.

Most of the places I know are along Guang Zhou Road. The school is located farther south on Chang Zhou Road. My hotel is just north of the south fork of the river that runs through town. The church and Dodo's old house is just north of my hotel. There is a big bus stop north -- but not as far north as the train station. There are buses that go to Qingdao -- no train stops here for Qingdao.

I hope that geographic description helps Dodo, Lally and John, know where I am located. You could probably Google and see where it is!

Weather is hot and humid. I've been home for a couple of hours, but will go out for a while and check

out the town. Yesterday I think I walked in the wrong direction!!! I should have gone south to find some shops. Thinking that I need to buy a few hangers to hang my clothes!! I probably also should have something to eat before too long!

Hope you're all well. I'm just fine -- but miss you all.

Love,  
Meta/Margie/Margareta (or whatever you call me!)