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IS IT THREE OR  
FOUR COAT COLD?

A letter to the "Prayer Mission-aries" in the Benedictine Orient magazine caught my eye. I am sure that you will be interested in reading it as I was. Here it is: "Dear Prayer Missionaries:

"Did you look at the thermometer today? As Pan Chao is writing, it is 5 degrees above zero. In China we would not say 5 degrees above zero—we would say '4 coat-cold today'.

"Yes, Pan Chao was cold this morning. And he wondered about the people who are suffering from the cold—especially now during the war. Then he thought perhaps you would like to know what the Chinese wear to keep warm.

"Well, first he will tell you in general what they wear. As you know, many Chinese customs are almost the opposite of ours. This is true even in clothes.

"Both men and women wear a long loose robe with wide sleeves and trousers. Over this is a short jacket—often without sleeves—worn according to the weather—like our overcoats. But here is the difference—men's robes are long, much like skirts; women's are short. In fact, it would be very unwomanly for women not to wear trousers; and for men, very unmanly not to wear skirts.

"Since cotton and silk are not warm, the Chinese solve the problem of cold weather by making clothes double, and stuffing a thick layer of wadding in between. Can't you imagine how difficult it must be for them to bend? The rich line their garments with fur—not on the outside as we do, but on the inside. On the outside they keep their rich silk.

"Color is important in Chinese clothes. Certain colors may be used only with certain official positions. Colors harmonize well, and contrasts are avoided. Dark purple over blue is a frequent combination. . . . White, you know, is a mourning color.

"In the days of emperors, clothes were richly embroidered, but ordinary clothes today are somber in color. Children and women do wear gay colors and patterns, and light colors in summer, but men wear dark clothes.

"Shoes are made of cotton or of silk, and the soles of thick felt. Officials, though, wear satin boots into which they slip their pipes and fans—men wear fans, you know. Otherwise the fan can be stuck at the back of the neck, or attached to the belt—which, incidentally, holds many other things—a purse, watch, snuff box, chop-sticks.

"Men wear close-fitting caps, and the peasants have large straw hats. Women generally have no head covering—except their hair. When they can afford it, women wear elaborate head ornaments—artificial flowers, butterflies of jade, gold pins and pearls.

"In the old days men let their hair grow long enough to gather it in a knot at the top. But after the Manchu conquest they were compelled to wear a pigtail or queue. This, you know, is a long braid hanging from the back of the head. To make it longer, they used strands of black silk thread. The front half of the head was shaved. Today, however, men cut their hair much as we do.

"Our modern Miss who lets her finger nails grow can never compete with the Chinese. Officials and men of leisure let one or two finger nails grow very long—even two inches—and protect them with a metal case. This is a sign that the owner has to do no manual work.

"Speaking of cold, there is yet another cold we know of—the lack of the warmth of God's love. In this sense the Chinese feel the cold. We who possess the warmth of heaven, want to share it with them. Our prayers for them can be the 'wadding' that will protect them against the cold of paganism. During Lent, let us be especially busy stuffing them with wadding until they are well rounded in the grace of God's love."

PAN CHAO

MY LENTEN PRACTICE

Fourth Order Jean Fehner of St. Benedictine School has been busy during the warmth of God's love during Lent. She writes: "I am sending this story to you so that I can say a mission baby—I was saying since February. It was my Lenten practice. When you receive the money, I want you to pick out

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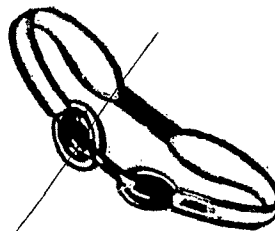
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