

3 Exploring the Scenic Spots

Many foreign women in Ningbo are keenly interested in exploring the scenic spots. The waterways and dikes around Ningbo, along with Dongqian Lake, Tiantong Temple, Temple of King Ashoka, Xuedou Mountain, and Dalan Mountain, are dotted with their footprints alongside family and friends. *Edward Bangs Drew Collection* features many photographs of such excursions, with Mrs. Archibald Little's journey to Dalan Mountain being particularly representative.

"It is a plateau in an elevated valley, and the climate in the month of April recalls the Yorkshire moors or a spring day in Cumberland. In the morning one gets up to white mist over everything, and in the evening heavy mists settle down like a pall, covering first the distant hill tops, then shadowing the country below them, shining from under the veil all flecked with sun and shadow, finally settling down over everything visible."

She recommended: "It is so high up that one can wander over the adjacent hills for hours without ever descending any distance to speak of. These hills are grown over with firs, azaleas only budding then, lovely white and purple violets, tea plantations, and in the hollows the inevitable paddy. It was just a little cheerless there when the winter grass had not yet disappeared, or the bamboos put on their summer bravery. But some three weeks later it must be delightful indeed, and one envies the possessors of the various foreign houses, who can spend their summers here."

"The road from the Snowy Valley to Ta Lang Shan lies through a singularly beautiful ravine, full of bamboo groves with one bit like Scott's Enchanted Castle in the Valley of St John, with fine trees, and all the way a fresh running stream." She was fully captivated by the stunning scenes and passionately recounted: "I think it the loveliest valley I have ever travelled through, although, on saying so, visions rise up before me, rather reproachfully, of a Val Paraiso in far-off Madeira, with chestnut trees ever waving their many branches, and pale pink belladonna lilies bowing their heads distressed... It has a romantic character that made one wish all Shanghai could be transported bodily for one gladsome saunter, to go back refreshed."

The hospitality of the locals further added to Mrs. Little's great impression of Dalan Mountain, "Heated with walking it is very pleasant to be welcomed with hot tea—really sometimes of delicious favour—in the cool, dark guest-room of a farmhouse. We had eggs brought to us also, with salt; no bread of course; wine and pipes were offered, also a ewer of hot water with a cloth steeped in it, with which one is meant to cool one's face and neck. No fashion could be more sensible and acceptable."



Ningbo women. By John Thomson

4 Business Talents of Ningbo Women

Mrs. Daly from Ireland was a doctor who lived in Ningbo for about five years. In 1890, she married Dr. Charles de Burgh Daly (1861-1947), a medical officer at the Zhejiang Maritime Customs, in Ningbo.

As mentioned in previous articles in this series, the illustrations in Mrs. Daly's memoir *An Irishwoman in China*, published in London in 1915, were largely created by Ningbo artist Fan Zifu.

The book provides a detailed account of life in Ningbo, comparable to that of Ms. Cumming. In it, Mrs. Daly offers extensive descriptions of Ningbo women, uniquely capturing their lives from a female perspective—

"The streets are too narrow for carriages, but sedan-chairs borne by two or four bearers were numerous, and men on horseback not uncommon. If a chair contained a lady, the blinds were carefully closed."

Like Helen, Mrs. Daly also meticulously documented Ningbo-style weddings. In her view, the clothing of Chinese women, except for the shoes, was well-suited to the climate—simple yet pretty. She saw Ningbo women as not only tough, intelligent and capable, but also highly skilled in sewing and embroidery and often business-savvy.

"Amongst shopkeepers the wife has charge of the cashbox, while the mandarin commits that most precious possession—his seal of office—to the care of his T'ai-Ta'i. Old residents in China all agree that women possess much influence in domestic, commercial, and even political life. Some young men of my acquaintance frequently consulted their old Chinese nurse as to investments, and made large sums of money by following her advice. Chinese women obtain influence and power by sheer strength of character, with little help from their environment; when that is improved they will become a power in the land which must be very seriously considered." Mrs. Daly concluded.



Illustration of Ningbo woman going on a visit.



An illustration of a Ningbo woman. By Fan Zifu

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