

THE MIKADO'S OLD DREAM

Colonel T. describes Japan's plan of conquest. The change of strategy from the chord "Berlin-Omsk-Tokyo" to the arc "Berlin-Ceylon-Tokyo."

THIS writer confesses to owning a Rand McNally atlas of the world. At the time when the German Ambassador in Tokyo, General Ott, signed the preliminary agreement between Germany and Japan for the "exchange of information," (meaning that German spies would work for Japan in "white" countries and Japanese spies would work for Germany in "yellow" countries) I took the map of Eurasia and marked it with two red pencil strokes. One red line started at Berlin and ran through the "Bagdad route," pointing its arrow at Ceylon. The other line started at Tokyo, crossed the Malay Peninsula, and pointed its arrow at Ceylon, too. And the few people who were privileged to see this work of art of mine expressed the opinion that I belonged in the ranks of the mentally underprivileged.

Some four or five years have passed and my red lines are thrown into bold relief by the military events of the moment. The German arrow line has advanced about 2,000 miles to the vicinity of Tobruk. A branch of it is hovering on Crete, 1,500 miles from its starting point on the banks of the Spree. The line has some 3,000 miles to go. The Japanese arrow line has reached Martaban and Singapore. It has already covered some 3,500 miles and has only a little over 1,000 miles to go.

Of the whole huge Arc of Conquest from Berlin to Ceylon (symbolically speaking) to Tokyo—roughly 9,000 miles long—5,000 miles have been covered by enemy forces. A distance of some 4,000 miles separates the jaws of the huge pincers menacing the world, and in particular the colonial body of the British empire. The fall of Singapore has hurled the Japanese branch of the pincers into the limelight. So let us concentrate on the evaluation of its truly lightning-like progress.

IN THIS CONNECTION let me remark in passing that here again I stubbornly repeat what I said about the German military might after the fall of France and what can be applied to the Japanese military machine with a vengeance: *It is rolling on because it has not yet met anything approaching its match.*

The Germans, of course, have met their match on the Soviet front. The Japanese have met it in China and on the great horse-shoe of the Manchukuo border. The meeting of the German and Japanese "Aryan brothers" somewhere between the Urals and Lake Baikal has been indefinitely postponed. This is why, contrary to the tenets of the original plan of conquest, aggression has to run along the line of least resistance, i. e. not along the "chord" Berlin-Omsk-Tokyo, but along the bloody "arc" Berlin-Ceylon-Tokyo.

The original plan I mentioned above, as far as the Japanese part of it is concerned, was fully embodied in the famous Tanaka Memorandum presented to the emperor of Japan by Premier Tanaka on July 25, 1927. It is interesting to quote one paragraph from it:

"In order to defend itself and others and in order to overcome difficulties in Eastern Asia, Japan will have to carry out a policy of blood and iron. But in carrying out such a policy, it will come face to face with the United States. . . . If we want in the future to take control over China into our hands, we shall have to crush the United States, i. e. treat them as we treated [Russia] in the Russo-Japanese War. But in order to conquer China, we must first conquer Manchuria and Mongolia. In order to conquer the world, we must first conquer China. If we succeed in conquering China, all the other countries of Asia as well as the countries of the South Seas will be afraid of us and will capitulate. The world will understand that Eastern Asia is ours and will not dare dispute our rights. This plan is the legacy of Emperor Meidzi Tenno (1852-1912) and its success is a vital factor of our national existence."

So here we have a clear blueprint. The order of conquest is as follows: Manchuria and Mongolia, China (with a concurrent conflict with the United States), the world. In evaluating things to come in the Pacific, we should always bear in mind that the blueprint and the order of conquest have been upset. The keystone of the plan—China—has *not* been conquered. Neither has all of Mongolia.

Japan is trying to meet Germany in India without having secured its continental flank. It is performing a huge 5,000-mile flank march over seas, islands, and peninsulas with its right flank open to attack from Ningpo, south of Shanghai, to Canton, Yunnanfu, and Rangoon. This flank march has netted Japan great advantages, so far. The fall of Singapore provides the long sea line of the Japanese Navy with a spearhead base. It can now do well without Cavite, should General MacArthur succeed in preventing its use by the enemy for some time to come. It is also possible and even quite probable that in a few days Japanese submarines and even surface warships will make their appearance in the Indian Ocean and that shells will be pumped into Madras and Colombo. The pincers around Java will attempt to close their jaws from Sumatra and Celebes, with a central thrust from Borneo at the only United Nations naval base at Surabaya (and a second class base, at that).

Because of the very character of the theater of war in the South Seas, which actually consists of island stepping stones, possible operations are marked by the interlocking circles

of fighter plane range. It must be conceded that such circles drawn with a radius of 350 miles from air bases now available to the Japanese cover the entire area from Mandalay in Burma, to Sabang at the northwestern tip of Sumatra, along the southwestern shores of Sumatra and Java, to Timor and the western tip of New Guinea. So far, with the notable exception of China and Luzon, the Japanese have been able to take any point covered by the shadow of their fighters, escorting bombers.

It would seem realistic to be prepared to face the complete domination of the East Indies by the enemy. In any case long range war plans should be predicated on just such a contingency. This means that China, Burma, India, and Australia become the springboards for a future offensive which will certainly start with the cutting of the 3,000-mile long Japanese line of communications. Through this line Japan must suck up the riches of the East Indies if she is to survive. Through this line she must feed and arm her legions spread from the Salween River in Burma, to Palembang, to Amboina, Davao, and Bataan.

Because the United Nations' sea and air power is not available in sufficient quantities this line at present is most difficult to attack. In this connection a stark illustration of the global character of the war is provided by the fact that the return of the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, and *Prinz Eugen* to their berths at Kiel makes it still less possible to detach a single unit of the British or US Navies from service in the Atlantic and Mediterranean for service in the South Seas. For the global character of the war demands that Japan and her Axis allies be defeated by destroying the keystone of their structure—Nazi Germany—on the European land base.

NEVERTHELESS, Japan now has laid her hands on thirty-six percent of the world's output of tin and forty percent of the world's output of rubber in British Malaya and is about to hog twenty-eight percent more tin and forty-eight percent more rubber in the Netherlands East Indies. (More than half these latter amounts are already in her hands in Borneo and Celebes.) The scorched earth as carried out in Malaya and on the East Indies Islands is of doubtful character. There is no doubt that Japan got a lot intact. But all this hangs on a long and tenuous thread stretching from Yokohama to Singapore, Banjermassin, Macassar, and Amboina. This line can be cut by air power from Ningpo, Foochow, Amoy, and Swatow. Its buttress in Indo-China, Thailand, and Malaya can be hurled into the sea from Yunnan and Burma. It can be rolled up from Australia. This is where future victory in the Pacific rests with its wings still folded.

COLONEL T.

CHINA'S BEST SELLER

Edgar Snow's tribute to the first contemporary Chinese novel translated into English. In "Village in August" T'ien Chun reveals the inner heart of a courageous people.

IN THE most sublime and stirring moments of history it often happens that a single novel or poem or essay manages to reveal, better than any straight factual account can do, the inner heart or purpose of a period, or the source of power or decay working within a society to bring about its collapse or its regeneration. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is an obvious example. Could we understand the French Revolution without *Les Misérables* or at least Voltaire, or the decline of the Spanish empire without *Don Quixote*, or the Filipino's political awakening without Rizal's great novel, *The Social Cancer*?

Village in August has now become such a book. Its appearance coincided with, and helped to create, the political events which culminated in the union of the Chinese people for a common struggle against enslavement by Japan. It is the first contemporary Chinese novel to be translated into the English language—a fact in itself an adequate commentary on our past indifference to changes taking place over in Asia which were eventually to compel us to fight for our lives.

There is scarcely an educated youth in China who has not heard of *Village in August* and every wide-awake one has read it. Thousands of soldiers have seen it dramatized in the living theater which has grown out of the war. The book was a success from the moment it first appeared, in 1934, and its epochal quality is indicated by a popularity lasting to this day. The outstanding work of the past decade, it is, moreover, perhaps the only novel in the past twenty-five years—or since China's so-called Literary Renaissance began—which really caught on with the masses.

The latter is an interesting thing because the whole aim of the Literary Renaissance, which established the vernacular, or "plain speech," as a literary medium side by side with the classical language (intelligible only to scholars), was to enable intellectual leaders to reach the people and spread democratic education among them. But T'ien Chun was the first novelist who really succeeded in carrying out that purpose. He bridged the gap between intellectual China and the lives of the common people. They got hold of his idea with astounding rapidity.

What made this achievement little short of miraculous, in the eyes of the Chinese literati, was that the author of such an historic book should be not one of themselves, "an educated fellow," but a mere soldier. It demonstrated once more what vast wells of talent and ability lay in the common people of China, ready to be opened up by a true democracy.

Village in August is a simple story without

much plot. It tells how the people of Manchuria, relying upon their own wits and resources alone, organized and armed themselves and in their wrath fought back against the Japanese invaders and their own puppet officials. Its message to the Chinese south of the Great Wall was one of hope and courage in the years when China's own government leadership seemed ready to yield concessions to Japan indefinitely. What the simple farmers of Manchuria could do, youths in the south told themselves after reading *Village in August*, the sons of Han everywhere could do.

"The people" as a source of strength and recovery dawned upon many a young student for the first time, and many a soldier too, as they read T'ien Chun's honest tale. Its ring of sincerity convinced everyone that the young author was describing something he had lived himself. Readers believed him, took heart, and prepared to act.

I WAS IN PEKING when the novel appeared, and suddenly every student I knew was talking of it. The book was handed around surreptitiously, for the government, not wishing to offend the Japanese, had banned it. Government policy seemed reconciled to the loss of North China, and the most humiliating conditions were already imposed by the Japanese. They insisted on censoring out all "anti-Japanese" material from textbooks and newspapers, and upon the suppression of patriotic societies among youth.

Peking, the traditional intellectual center of China, and the home of thousands of students, stood these and other indignities for several years—and then dramatically rebelled. Tens of thousands of students poured onto the streets one day in protest against Nanking's appeasement moves and to insist upon resistance to further Japanese demands—at any cost. Scores of leaders were beaten and thrown into jail. For many of them the example of characters in *Village in August*—such as Iron Eagle and Hsiao Ming and Anna—made mere imprisonment seem a trivial inconvenience. This student movement was the historical beginning of a spiritual rebirth which was to unite China in a resistance that would astound the world.

The influence of the book was especially pronounced among the exiled Manchurians. Over at Sianfu, headquarters in Northwest China of the Young Marshal, Chang, Hsueh-liang, who had withdrawn from Manchuria in accordance with the orders of the Nanking government, *Village in August* was read by thousands of exiled students and soldiers. Then engaged in civil war against the Chinese

Reds, the ex-Manchurian army was thrilled by this account telling how their own families were fighting the invader. More and more they lost interest in waging war on their own countrymen. "Fight Back to Our Old Home!" was the slogan that aroused their enthusiasm. It was this cry that later led them to mutiny and arrest Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, in order to impress upon him the necessity to make a peace internally, and organize the nation to oppose the external foe.

And now T'ien Chun's story is being repeated again and again throughout China, where in literally thousands of villages the people have steadfastly refused to submit to the Nipponese overlord. Here is no black-and-white tale of villainy and bestiality on one side and saintly perfection on the other, but a realistic report written by a soldier, filled with enthusiasm for the whole story of teeming life on both sides and the frailty and the strength of ordinary mortals.

HERE ARE the people of China, to whom we owe so much. Not a famous general or two living in comfort with their families far from the daily misery of war, but the people rooted to the soil, the only home they know. People who cannot make "strategic withdrawals," but stay and fight for every inch of the land, after the generals and the rich have fled. People whose capacity for sacrifice and labor and hardship is all that has stood between China and defeat during the years we were deaf to their need.

Here, described with realistic integrity, and sometimes Rabelaisian intimacy, are people at whom you will smile and whom you will understand, with all their ignorance and prejudice and delayed awakening—and their hidden splendor, too. Little Red Face, Big Liu, Old Sun and his boys, Liang Hsiang, Seven Spot Cheng, Seventh Sister Li and her lover, Old Boil Tang, Old Eight and his robust wife—they are as real and genuine, all of them, as anybody who ever came out of a Chinese village.

No dilettante, and quite uninhibited in his use of crude and uncouth language when it is required, T'ien Chun also handles with great beauty and discernment moments of basic conflict of will and purpose. Womanhood acquires under his treatment a new meaning for China's youth, something pure and fine as represented by Anna, the determined revolutionary heroine. Here love too takes on a heroic sacrificial quality new to Chinese fiction, when Anna, human after all, momentarily gives way to her emotions, but recovers