

CHAPTER VII

ONE of the outstanding fabrications against Japan that has even found its way into the archives of foreign governments, was made much of at the Geneva conferences and is bantered now and then across luncheon tables and at civic talks by speakers, official and otherwise, who should know better and could if they took the pains; one of the outstanding fabrications is that Japan has encouraged and fostered the use of dope, first in Manchuria and then in North China.

In my early years as a newspaper reporter in San Francisco, I followed on the line of my work the narcotic trails of the underworld, from the Orient to the shores of America and down into the Chinatowns of our country. And in later years in China and Manchuria I probed into its sources of production and distribution. To begin with, no one, of recent years, has ever taught a Chinaman to use hop. A lot of them have been most adept at it. It was not entirely their fault either, that is, the masses of dope users in China. The war lords, the soldier-politicians saw to that. It was part of their recognized income for a long time. Not a few of

the war lords, the generals in command of divisions, actually used the stuff, smoked opium as a habit and a fad, and many correspondents in the Manchurian wars, when the Japanese were coming in and running the war lords to cover, tell of the Chinese generals being disturbed at their pipes of opium to hear reports of how their battles were going.

Chiang Kai-shek, particularly in his earlier years, was credited with being one of the biggest dealers in opium if not a user of it. And even up to the start of the present incident he is said to have cached away huge quantities of it. Yet in the years 1937 and 1938, when Chiang Kai-shek was in the heyday of his press agency and popularity in the United States and some other parts of the world, there were widely publicized executions of miserable coolies by his soldiery and the soldiery of some of his war lord aides, especially in Peking, coolies who were "caught" using opium. I have seen them die, kneeling fatefully, against the little adobe wall outside Peking, while the soldiers stepped up behind them and popped their brains out, the victims falling forward on their faces, their hands bound behind their backs. It did make good publicity, dreadful publicity for the outside world, true, but it spread the idea now deeply implanted in the minds of many people that the "new government" was determined to stamp out the traffic

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in narcotics, even at the sacrifice of lives of people who used it.

A morbid crowd of Chinese witnessed the execution of their wretched fellows and upon their minds these executions were supposed to have a deterrent effect, but as a matter of fact no sooner had the shootings taken place and the crowds returned to their homes than agents of the very war lords and officials who had ordered the executions were scurrying over the city selling narcotics to the people. Thus in a few weeks another batch of "smokers" would be rounded up and shot and pictured as they died for the press abroad, among them no doubt some of the more recent buyers. But the business of dope went on and it went on through the agencies of the very officials who were being advertised as stamping out its use by death.

Manchuria, before the Japanese came in, was flooded with dope. Its manufacture and use was widespread and even officially recognized, but no record, no statistics were ever made of its manufacture and consumption. When the war lords were run out and the Japanese began the structure of the new Empire of Manchoukuo and put a prince of Manchurian blood on the throne, the first thing the Nipponese did was to go about the work of getting an official record of the narcotic traffic. This, mind you, was the first ever made in Manchuria and when it was complete it showed astounding depravity, the result of years of usage.

Along with records of births, of buildings, of hospitals, of housing, of governmental departments for the bringing about of law and order and security and stability the Japanese proudly published to the world their findings, but the world at large, particularly at Geneva and in the United States, took little heed of how many schools and hospitals, etc., the Japanese were rearing, but pounced with something like savage glee on the statistics of dope in Manchuria. These enemies of Japan, for they were nothing more, and could not be under the circumstances of their attacks, hailed to the world their "new findings."

The statistics painstakingly gathered by the Japanese in Manchuria with an idea of getting a start on stopping the traffic and use of dope in that country were used against the Japanese by these fault finders, one of them an actual delegate at Geneva, who had once sold typewriters in Japan and for some reason or another been thrown out of that country as a nuisance. To their astonishment and somewhat hurt, the Nipponese found their own work of rehabilitation turned against them. The Japanese are poor propagandists. Instead of hitting back, they sulked. If the Western world could not see what they were doing, it could go to blazes. Their very silence was taken by millions of readers of scare head articles as proof positive of their guilt.

Now the Chinese, or the Chiang Kai-shek crowd,

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took it up. Reeking with dope themselves, actually trafficking in it, they gave forth a plaintive plea to the world that Japan was seeking to break the spirit and the morale of their nation by encouraging the Chinese to smoke opium and use heroin and cocaine. To the foreigners in China who knew the situation this was a laugh, but to the Nanking government, it was an escape for a crime that threatened eventually to catch up with it and good propaganda and publicity against the Japanese. Through a rare trick and chance that was in reality a golden opportunity, the Japanese whom the war lords hated, were being blamed by the world for their own high crimes. I have heard the chief of police of my native city, a splendid fellow, who had been deluded by this lie, get up before a body of business men and charge the Japanese with flooding China with narcotics and sending a lot of the dope into this country.

The Japanese, like any other nationality, have their hard characters who are not averse to trafficking in anything be it women or dope and a comparatively few of these did get into Manchuria early after the Nippon occupation, veritable camp followers, like our own carpet baggers in the South after the Civil War, and these ruffians did, as the Japanese will admit, take up some of the dope trade where the China war lords had left off, but the Japanese police and military began to hunt and track them down and it fared hard with them

when they were caught. They were comparatively few, however, and certainly not enough in number or the quantity of their trade to blame the Japanese nation and government for foisting the dope habit on two nations.

Good men and women over the world nevertheless, held up their hands in horror and told you that Japan, beside conquering poor China, was forcing the people of that country to smoke opium. As a matter of fact, Manchuria as Manchoukuo, sponsored by Japan, is a great improvement over what it was under Chinese and Russian rule. The ungodly fear of the people of that country has been that Japan would leave them to the mercy of their former masters, that Manchuria would again be thrown open to the rape of the war lords and the ravishment of bandits. It was the original idea of Japan, and still is, to make of Manchuria a country so prosperous and peaceful and contented that North China would welcome trade and commerce with Nippon.