

## CHAPTER XII

**I**N their desperation to enlist first the sympathy and then the aid and with the hope eventually of intervention of the Americans, the falling Chiang Kai-shek government moved in on the missionaries. They already had bagged the sympathy to a large degree of some of the Protestant sects. Now they approached the Catholic missionaries. The Catholic missionaries on the whole had generally remained aloof, had not taken sides. Before the war they had not received any too great encouragement from the Nanking War Lords. Now, with the Japanese upon them, fiercely divorcing China from Bolshevik influence from Russia, the former Nankingers made all sorts of high sounding promises to the Catholics whom before they had more or less sidetracked in the mission field.

Like their Protestant brethren a few of the Catholic missionaries fell for the Chiang Kai-shek promises, overlooking the fact that the Bolshevik, if Chiang had won against Japan, would make short work of them and that the creed of their Church is that there can be no compromise with Communism. Some of these were missionaries who had lived long in China and in one particular place

and who had been too close to the glass to observe the red tinge on the China governmental horizon.

The Chiang Kai-shek people approached these, and, as with the Protestant missionaries, had them write harrowing letters to their friends in the United States, filling the missionaries' ears with wild tales of alleged Japanese atrocities.

Some missionaries in the south of China were influenced this way, and even a few in Shanghai, writing letters to their friends, no doubt, in all good faith, but when they succumbed to this Chiang influence they did so in more or less contradiction to the wishes of their superiors who have remained strictly neutral.

In my travels over China and the Far East, both before, and during the war, I came in contact with many missionaries of many sects and I found, especially among the Catholics, that they were sharply divided in their opinions as to the justification of Japan being in China. The majority were in defense of Japan, others in defense of China. The Catholic missionaries in Japan, Korea and Manchoukuo were frank in stating that Japan was saving Asia from Bolshevism. So were the general run around Peking and in the interior of the North. But in Shanghai, where these missionaries had labored heroically among the wounded and the dying and the starving the picture of war's horror was so vivid that there were a few who held for China and against Japan.

These the Chiang Kai-shek henchmen were quick to pounce upon, along with some Protestant missionaries, and urged to write letters "home" and condemn the Japanese. These letters were used by the war lords of China as powerful propaganda and some of them even found their way into the papers and the magazines in America although always anonymous.

Long before the Generalissimo and his war lords moved in on the missionaries for propaganda purposes in the United States many of the missionaries had built up in the natural course of their work a deep bond of sympathy for China among the Americans.

It was American donations that kept the missions going. Consequently the missionaries presented to their countrymen on this side of the world the more friendly side of the picture in China. They did not mention the war lord regimes, the thievery, the quackery, the treachery, the filth, the brutality, the immorality, the corruption in Chinese life both among the officials and the masses. They told only the "nice" side, the pathetic side too, the side that would arouse sympathy. The Chinese were good and poor and deserving and yearning for what the Western World and Christianity could give them. When a missionary was kidnaped and held for ransom or killed and there have been 250 of them done away with by the Chinese soldiers and bandits in the past few years against ten

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or twelve who met death at the hands of the Japanese during the war, when these things happened and the Chinese were to blame the matter was hushed and soft-pedaled. But when the missionary died at the hands of the Japanese, and there have been comparatively few of them, the matter was heralded to the world in black type.

It must be said that the missionaries have been "on the spot" in China, surrounded by Chinese soldiers and bandits and Communists and that a word said for Japan under any circumstances would have meant their death. To their credit the missionaries on the whole have a great love for the Chinese. They have done good work for them. They have refuted the idea that many of them are "Rice Christians; no rice, no Christian." And they are spending their lives at what appears on the surface a thankless task. China owes them a great deal, more than she can ever repay. Japan realizes the good done by the missionaries at large and has donated moneys to rebuild missions destroyed in the war.

I have talked to many missionaries in China and even the few who side with Chiang Kai-shek admit the peril of Bolshevism coming in, but unlike the majority of their brethren they are willing to take a chance or do not wish to incur the hatred or the danger of revenge by the Chinese terrorists who roam disguised in the crowds and strike down those who oppose the Generalissimo and his war

lords. Some have told me frankly their hands are tied, that if they favored Japan they would be killed as Lo Po Hong, the great Catholic philanthropist in Shanghai, was killed.

I remember being in Nanking the winter before the war and stopping in the home of a Catholic missionary, a saintly man, who lived a life of hardship and privation that he might bring his Faith to the Chinese. It was an old house, without fuel, because fuel was costly, and he lived alone with a Chinese boy to serve him and cook his meals. It was so cold in the house that we ate our meals with our overcoats on and I even slept in mine. This priest bore a deep love for the simplest coolie and for even the Chiang Kai-shek officials who refused him recognition and did not allow him the privilege to conduct a school although certain other sects conducted colleges in the city. At night this priest was allowed to teach languages to some of the Chiang Kai-shek officials. That was all. He hoped, some time, with patience and prayer, to secure the then powerful Chinese government's permission to open a real school in Nanking and to found, eventually, a real college there.

When the war came on the attitude of the Chiang Kai-shek government, that had all but spurned this Catholic priest, changed. He was offered the privilege to build and open a college in Nanking. The overture, the promise came, note, after the war started and when Chiang Kai-shek

and his war lords needed all the sympathy they could get from the United States, the Generalissimo no doubt having his eye on the 22,000,000 Catholics in the United States and the fear that in their opposition to Communism they might see and feel the Moscow influence behind him. Yet when I met a compatriot of this priest later in Shanghai he told me in all simplicity and good faith that Chiang Kai-shek had promised he and his co-workers might have a college in Nanking "when the war was over and won."

This priest, like his compatriot, had spent years in Shanghai, steeped in the native quarter, laboring in acts of mercy and charity among the most miserable of the coolies, and when the fighting was on and Chinese bombs from the sky were tearing their own countrymen to pieces they had remained at their posts at the risk of their lives. They could see nothing of the situation, or beyond it but the misery and suffering of "their children," as they called them. But the missionaries who traveled, those priests who had been abroad in the land and who, as it were, from watch towers had seen the handwriting of the Bolshevik on the walls of China knew and felt differently. They were of the opinion that it was better for China that Chiang Kai-shek and his war lords and the Bolshevik influence that they had come under, go; that Japan put China upon her feet and save her from the mire into which she was sinking.

In striking contrast to some of these missionary horror letters that have been used by the China war lords for propaganda purposes with such telling effect are two from Taian, written by priests who were through the war in its most terrible phases. They blame the atrocities not on Japanese troops, but on Chinese soldiers of the so called irregular armies who, they declare, are little more than bandits preying upon their own people. They write:

“The reports in the American papers dealing with the situation here are one sided and exaggerated—often real fabrications spread as propaganda against the Japanese. We have seen the heads of prisoners taken by the Chinese stuck on poles. The Chinese farmers are suffering most from the depredations of the Chinese irregular soldiers who are often little more than bandits. The bombing of the large cities has been brought on by the Chinese generals quartering their troops, ammunition and supplies in congested areas. Often the army supplies are piled high in the very center of cities.

“According to our experience,” continue these two Catholic missionaries, “the Japanese soldiers have shown discipline and have never molested us in any way. Willingly we shall stay with our good Chinese people. However the truth must be stated in regard to the Japanese. They are good to us. During the bombing of Taian our mission was

badly damaged. The Japanese officers, on the fall of the city, came and expressed their regret and then gave us 3000 yen to restore the church, offered us their autos for service and posted signs of protection on our missionary buildings which gave us a feeling of security after the harrowing experiences we had been through before they came into our midst.”