

TALES OF THREE CITIES IN MANCHURIA

By
KINOSUKE ADACHI



SOUTH MANCHURIA RAILWAY COMPANY

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I. DAIREN

Day was breaking on a turquoise sea set in an encircling arm of amethyst hills. Ahead of us gleamed a white lighthouse at the entrance of the harbor of Dairen. The sunset on the Sea of Myriad Isles, the Tatokai, off the southern tip of Chosen, was still opal and warm in our memory. There was enchantment in the scene — the lure of the Eternal East, in spite of all the evidences of civilization.

The premier port of the newly born Manchukuo State — the mightiest entry port of all the Northern seaboard of continental Asia — is a princely city built on the gentle slope of a range of hills dipping into the sea, like Kobe, like Seattle. Forty odd years ago, it had nothing more imposing than a few mud huts of fisher folks huddled together along the beach. It was then known as Talien Bay.

It was on this modest sheet of land-locked water unknown to fame, that Tsarist Russia found its age-long dream of an ice-free port realized. She lost no time in getting to work. A budget of 10,800,000 roubles was devoted to the first stage of construction with an additional appropriation of 2,000,000 for the construction of the port city. The actual amount of Russian money put into the building of the port was more than 30,000,000 roubles. And that was a mere beginning. For just at that stage the Russo-Japanese War put a sudden and definite end to the Russian dream of Far Eastern Empire. Fate sitting at her loom of destiny began to weave a new pattern at the tip of the Liaotung Peninsula.

Article V. of the Portsmouth Treaty of September, 1905, transferred to Japan all the Russian enterprises in this city which the Russians called Dalny — the far away dream Empire of theirs. The genius of Kerbetch, the Russian engineer at whose suggestion the site of Dairen itself was chosen, and of Sabaroff, the engineer-in-chief who directed the construction of both the harbor and the city of Dairen and the millions of Russian roubles, all these had achieved much. But the much was a mere beginning of the great work to which Nippon fell heir. Japan entered the scene in 1907 and found only one pier completed. She found only 18 feet of water at the wharf basin and the depth of the harbor ranging from 17 feet



THE WHARF AT DAIREN

to 28. The breakwater at that time was nothing much more than a jagged interrogation point rising out of the calm waters of the bay. The levelling of the city site had been partly completed but only a small section of what is now known as the Russian Section — a rather insignificant and decidedly shabby fragment of the present day Dairen — was finished. That was on the water side, north of the railway track. And on the south side where one finds the main section of the proud city of today, there was only a handful of buildings, mostly occupied by Chinese, huddled along a single street. The entire stretch of ground between what is now the Central Circle, with its imposing structures of stone and bricks, and the main

wharf were, in those days, just so many acres of hills, rocks and pools, fresh from the hands of Nature. The very site of the present Wharf Office — one of the first structures which catch the eyes of a traveller nowadays — was covered by a dismal pool. And the rest of the far-sung Dalny of the Russians was largely on blue prints.

In China, cities have stood for ten centuries without making a single forward step. No boom town in the Western States of the United States has gone much faster than Dairen. She has outdistanced all the cities in the whole of North China as a thoroughly modern city. When the Russians left there were only a few thousand people there. In 1930, there were more than 396,000. The expenditure of the city of Dairen for the fiscal year of 1930 was more than 18 times the amount spent in 1915.

Early one morning, the sun and a touch of Autumn in the air lured me out of the Yamato Hotel. I picked my way toward the emerald hills behind the city. In three blocks I came to where two great asphalt-paved streets forked. And there, dominating the scene from the shoulder of the rising ground, I saw the most imposing structure of the great city. It was the new home of the famous Dairen Hospital. Its tapestry brick buildings crowned with cement cover four huge blocks and would



CITY OF DAIREN

easily hold their ground with dignity and without apology, among the structures of up-town New York. No paying business, however, is this institute of eleemosynary work. That it would bring no direct or indirect returns was a foregone conclusion. And yet the 8,000,000 yen Hospital was constructed and is maintained by the S. M. Railway Company at no small yearly cost. The expenses for running 21 similar hospitals scattered along the railway lines and those for the upkeep of various schools are a heavy drain upon the earnings of the same Railway. The Japanese Government, however, takes the responsibility upon itself to function as a civilizing force and, through the S. M. R. Co., sees that the community life in general

is directed not only along the material but along the cultural lines. I skirted the north and the east sides of the ground and came out upon the Kagamigaiké—the Lake of Mirrors. Acacia-bordered paths wander in and out all along the water's edge. Imagination fails to conjure up a pleasanter spot to loiter away a leisure hour or two. From there I climbed up to the spacious ground of Dairen Temple to the west. Here, every prospect pleases. Below, like the ruddy skirt of an ancient court lady, spread the red tiled roofs of the city: and beyond them the busy waters of the sheltered bay, covered with the ships from all lands. And beyond them all, the melting silhouettes of far hills and the still softer fog veil under which sleeps the Gulf of Pechihli. When Nature takes up her brush, human artists might just as well devote their time and energy to the study of the philosophy of the poets of the Tang Dynasty and spare themselves the pangs of despair.

Pressing still westward along the hill trails out to the sky-line Boulevard, I find before me the largest park of the city, Central Park the people call it now. Not so many years ago, they called it West Park. And in this simple change of the name of their principal playground, the tale of the rapid growth of the city is told. What was the western hem a few short years ago, is now the center of two wings of the growing city. The park



A STREET SCENE IN DAIREN

covers more than 1,833,000 square meters and it boasts of a monument which is the Japanese equivalent of the grave of the "UNKNOWN SOLDIER" at Arlington. It has all civilized inconveniences including a couple of baseball grounds. And in all this I have merely covered the A. B. C. of the "sights" of the place.

I must not, however, pass by without a remark on the Central Laboratory; for a visit there is an eye-opener to the secret of the phenomenal rise of Manchuria's material wealth, achieved in last quarter of a century. There a number of experts are busily engaged, with flasks and test-tubes, in ambitious experiments, in an effort to realize what might seem fantastic dreams to the

laity. And many a dream, indeed, has come true, giving birth, one by one, to a new industry in this land. Likewise, an hour or so in the Manchurian Resources Museum will be an education: there are on exhibition one hundred and one specimens of discovered treasures with which Nature has endowed this country.

And five miles southwest of Dairen, along the paved motor road to Port Arthur, one catches his breath: for there he is face to face with Hoshiga Ura — the Port of the Stars. Some advertising pamphlets call it "Star Beach", never mind that. Manchukuo is no playground for loafers. But there is irresistible temptation for loafers, professional and otherwise, in this bit of rock-studded



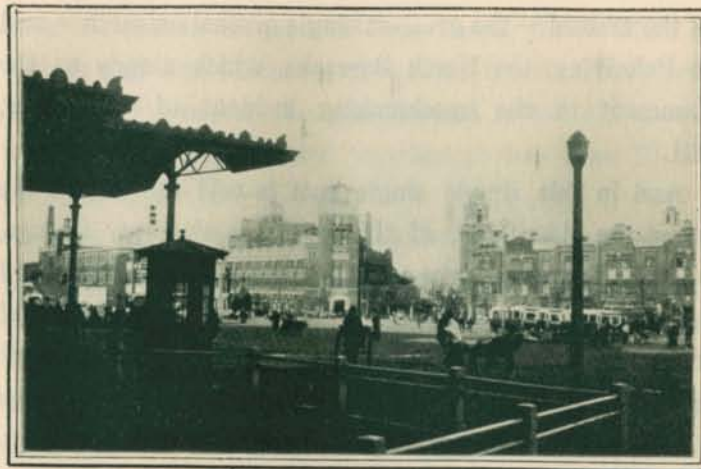
HOSHIGAURA — "THE PORT OF THE STARS"

water with its stretch of golden strand which makes up the Port of the Stars. Not even the 18-hole golf course covering some 550,000 square meters on the other side of the highway, is able to destroy the magic of the place.



II. MUKDEN

Most of the six hours between Dairen and the ancient natal city of the Manchu Dynasty, Mukden, I spent on the rear platform of the South Manchuria Railway express train. I was anxious to see the hand-writings and especially the hoof-prints of the famous Manchurian bandits, the Hunghudze. From what I had been reading in the American newspapers, I confidently expected to see ruined crops and stretches of desolation. I expected to find also a large section of the country returning to wild nature, abandoned by the peasants. The S.M.R. express sped on under a sunny sky; mile after mile of fruitful valley unfolded before our eyes. There was not a single square yard, as far as the eye could reach, of the fruitful land that did not seem to be literally groaning under the full burden of a harvest of kaoliang and of the famous soya beans. And here and there, at rare intervals, cotton fields waved their white handkerchiefs to the passing travellers in graceful greetings. Not one solitary spot told of fire or of blood. One unbroken march of fruitful valley, clean up to the gate of the ancient walled city. It was incredible; are we to believe the testimony of our own eyes or the reports in newspapers? Far out in forest wild along the foot hills of Changpai range who knows what might be



RAILWAY STATION PLAZA, MUKDEN

happening? But that is a regular thing with the primitive life out yonder. The peasants of South Manchuria are not so badly off after all: there are lots of people in a darker valley right in the heart of that mother land of prosperity called the United States.

Mukden is the old Manchu name for this grey-walled natal city of the Manchu Dynasty. Nearly 400,000 people live there, today. Chang Hsueh-liang, the ex-war lord, the young marshal, fled from there, leaving his 5,000,000 dollar new residence unfinished. But the glory of the ancient city of the Manchus abides. Ten years ago when I visited it the main sights of the city were the two imposing mausoleums: — the Peiling and the Tungling. Today they

are the arsenal — the greatest single arsenal on earth — and the Peitaiying, the North Barracks, which stands as the monument to the epochmaking incident of September, 1931.

And in this simple single fact is told the tale of the fall of the older order of things under the two Changs, father and son, and the rise of the new-born State of Manchukuo. For after all is said and done, the chief reason for the fall of the Chang regime in Manchuria is the overwhelming and utterly silly ambition of the Changs to establish a new dynasty on the throne at Peking. That and nothing else drove the elder Chang to squeeze the life blood of the Manchurian peasant farmers to the last drop by the bitter and heartless taxation and the flood of worthless Fengpiao (the fiat money for which the Manchurian farmers were compelled to sell their entire crops). Chang Tso-lin spent no less than 100,000,000 Chinese dollars for the establishment of his arsenal alone, without counting the cost of maintaining it. He had a standing army of over 300,000 — larger than the entire standing army of the Japanese Empire. And it takes money to maintain such a force. And Chang had no other magic gold mine than the toil of millions of the hapless peasants of Manchuria. The revenue of the Three Eastern Provinces for the financial year of 1930 totaled 133,000,000 Chinese dollars in round numbers. Of that

total more than 85 per cent was spent for military activities and establishments of various types. Every penny of that came out of the peasants and merchants, most of whom keep body and soul together on less than 10 cents of American money a day.

Here in this walled city was the cradle of the Taching Dynasty which lorded it all over the Eighteen Provinces of the Central Bloom for 267 years — from 1644 to 1912, in which fateful year, a mere infant, the last of the Taching Emperors signed an Imperial Edict. And that edict gave a fine excuse for the jackal politicians of China to force upon the great people the harlequin mask of a republic. But imperturbable Fate sitting at her eternal loom wove on. And in her mystic pattern she has brought the same young Mr. Pu Yi to crown her new design of a new-born state — born anew in the same natal fields of the Taching Dynasty.

The Old City of Mukden is surrounded by a wall about four miles long; it is 30 feet high and 26 feet thick at its base. If the top were evenly paved, there would be no trouble at all to drive three, four automobiles abreast, for it is 16 feet wide. It has eight gates to it all capped with tiled towers. All the old palaces and important administrative yamen as well as the new 5,000,000 dollar residence of the now exiled war lord, Chang Hsueh-liang, are in this old walled city. Four main thoroughfares cut the walled



CENTRAL CIRCLE, MUKDEN

city into six squares. The Old Town has long since outgrown the wall and spread out in all directions. A mud wall encircles the overflow spreading over nine square miles of area.

Just outside of the mud wall, west of it, lies Shangfuti — the foreign settlement. In it are located the consulates general of various countries including those of the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and Russia. Also the Japanese Red Cross Hospital, banks, business offices of various types conducted by foreigners.

Filling the space between the foreign quarters and the railway line is perhaps the most significant section of Mukden. It is called the New Town. The South Manchu-

ria Railway created it: it administers it today. It spreads from north to south and covers about 1,490 acres. Its wide streets are paved as smoothly as any of the show streets of New York or Chicago and its modern equipment, including water supply and drainage, is quite the most up-to-date in the world. Travelers can not lose sight of two imposing edifices — the Manchurian Medical College and the Mukden Hospital. They stand there bearing evidence to the Japanese aspiration to serve the public welfare. In 1929 the population of this section passed 46,000 mark; it is much larger today. Naniwa-dori which cuts straight through the New Town as Broadway cuts through the heart of Manhattan, passes by the Central Circle and out



WALLED CITY, MUKDEN

into the foreign settlement section and connects with Hsiao Hsi Chieh which takes the traveler into the Old Town. It is 120 feet in width and where it meets the Circle stands the famous Yamato Hotel of Mukden — the last word in hotel accommodation, and one bound to make Americans think of home and home comforts. For there is nothing in all the Far East that is quite so American in every detail as this newly built hotel in the very heart of the New State of Manchukuo, except the little Japanese girls in their picture-like kimono who look after the needs of customers there.

The arsenal — the famous Heikoshu, the greatest individual arsenal in all the world — the arsenal which really wrecked the Chang Regime in Manchuria. That was the thing to see. We rode through the old Walled City from east to west and came out through the Great Eastern Gate. And soon we found ourselves in the midst of a town quite distinct from the Old Walled City. The new town rose to supply the needs of tens of thousands of workmen of the arsenal. The paved street and the shops looking out upon it had little in common with those within the grey walls. The lofty brick wall which enclosed the arsenal seemed miles and miles long.

One thing stood out impressively with such overwhelming emphasis that it was practically impossible to miss it if one tried. The whole 100,000,000 dollar plant was

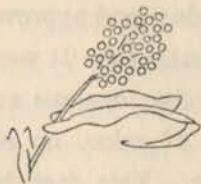


YAMATO HOTEL, MUKDEN

dead — dead as the old ex-bandit Chang Tso-lin's dream of a new dynasty on the dragon throne at Peking. Not a single wheel was turning in that vast enclosure. Not a hum or a whirl in all that bewildering world crammed full with the most modern and approved machinery for the manufacture of war materials. It went dead the instant it fell into the hands of the Japanese army.

This is no opinion of mine, no editorial assertion of anybody. It is a fact. This fact has never been put before the eyes of the American or European public in letters an inch high on the front pages of their great dailies. It should have been, if there be such a thing as fairness in these tangled days of high civilization. And

this fact is standing there today. Today practically the whole outside world — the League of Nations leading the chorus — is denouncing Japan as the one militant monster of the world. It is shouting itself hoarse against the war activities of Japan. And at Mukden, the greatest individual arsenal in the world stands mute and dead at the touch of the Japanese army. In contrast, the Medical College and the Hospital in the New Town are as lively as ever; the former initiating native young students, together with Japanese, into the mysteries of the healing art, the latter extending to native patients as well the aid of modern sciences. History has indulged in many a scathing sarcasm before; none more biting or eloquent than this one.



III. HSINKING (formerly Changchun)



NORTH MAUSOLEUM, MUKDEN

Once more on the rear platform of the through express of the South Manchuria Railway, out of Mukden and bound for Changchun. The deep russet wave of ripening kaoliang stretched away to the far clouds on the horizon, broken only by a cluster of thatched mud huts here and there. The picture of fruitful peace covered every nook of cultivable land. Not a hint or scar anywhere of the bandit raids or the horrifying turmoil so vivid on the front pages of great New York newspapers. Only on the station platforms one catches the glimpses of crescent piles of sand



AERIAL VIEW OF THE RAILWAY ZONE, HSINKING

bags for the use of riflemen protecting the railroad from the attacks of bandit gangs.

Changechun, or Hsinking, as it should be called from now on: for it would not cost our foreign friends any more either in money or effort to call Manchukuo cities by their correct names, has now joined the company of capital cities of the Far East, Tokyo, Nanking, Canton, Bangkok. She was a shy little lady, but a year ago: today she is growing "like young bamboos after a Spring shower" as the Orientals say. A bonanza city of wild western memory will have to work overtime to keep pace with her. To the east, to the north and to the south everywhere one can see nothing but new construction.



RAILWAY ZONE, HSINKING

This is no time to start new construction in North Manchuria, yet the new structures which are rising on every hand are not architectural mushrooms. One and all they are of brick, even the humblest residence, while the buildings intended for great administrative and other public offices are imposing and permanent enough to take high rank in any cities of America or Europe. Out beyond the great park toward which the city is fast stretching, an airport is nearing completion. There is every promise that this new capital of the new State will soon be the air travel center of the North Eastern Asia.

The day was sunny, with a distinct touch of coming autumn in its gold and brocades as we drove through the



AERIAL VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, HSINKING

streets of the city and out into the surrounding country. The great Central Park was full of picknicking folks. In its athletic fields, a lively game of baseball between two rival school teams of the town was in progress. And on the faces of people there, there was not the slightest sign of depression so pronounced on the features of almost every other city the world round in these trying times. They were gay in dress and voice: they seemed to have plenty of money to spend.

Perhaps they are right, these people of Hsinking. Perhaps this city which has blossomed out on the bleak plains of North Manchuria like a sun out of a midnight sky, is indeed a twentieth-century Golconda; who knows?

Who knows that these adventurous June bugs buzzing around the midnight sun may not turn out to be prophets of a new day? And that this new capital city of the new-born State be not the herald of the dawn of peace and plenty to the war tortured sons and daughters of the Han race? Who can say?

The outstanding figure among the real authors of this new Manchukuo State said to me at Mukden:

“There is a lot of silly, loose talk about this Manchukuo State being a mere puppet state—a servile toy of Nippon. Wash the dust of your eyes and look straight at the facts:

“The Chinese farmers in Manchuria don’t care an iron



WEST PARK, HSINKING

cash who or what governs them. Russians, Japanese, Americans, Turks — it's nothing to them. They ask of the government — or of heaven and earth for that matter, — just one thing. And that one thing is put into four Chinese characters: An kyo Raku gyo (Live in peace and enjoy the work). That is all. That happens to be life's ideal with them. The ideal government or ruler in the eyes of the Chinese farmers here is he who gives them this one thing they demand.

“Before the event of September 18th the Changs, father and son, squeezed the peasants through taxation and more especially by forcing them to sell their entire crops



PARADE IN THE NEW CAPITAL IN CELEBRATION
OF THE FOUNDING OF MANCHUKUO



METROPOLITAN POLICE HEADQUARTERS, HSINKING

for the worthless paper Feng-piao. The Chang regime squeezed them with such savagery — appalling even in China — that it has thoroughly convinced the Chinese farmers here that nothing under the wide heavens could possibly be worse than the oppression and highway robbery under which they groaned helpless in despair. Mind, this terrific squeeze had gone on year after year. To the farmers, therefore, any change whatever — was better than the actual state of things. In their eyes any change was a change for the better.

“Just then came the incident. The farmers here did not rise and shout about it: they were too afraid, that is all. Afraid of the secret agents of Chang Hsueh-liang — the

convenient plain-clothes men, the ever present spies who delt out sudden death and destruction without mercy and without remorse. But one and all, practically all the 28,000,000 Chinese in Manchuria, except the official parasites of the Chang government, received the change with a sigh of relief which came out of the very depth of their humble hearts. They did not know just what the Japanese were going to do, of course. They didn't care. They only knew that any change whatever could not possibly be worse than what they were suffering.

“Talk of this new State as a Japanese puppet state! Why, if Japan were to send her entire standing army here, or even twice her standing army, and then try to force a puppet government of any sort on these Chinese it would fail in no time. If the Pu Yi government be a puppet of Japan pure and simple, and does not enjoy the support of the people here, the entire armed strength of Japan could not hold it up for three months to save her life.”

Here is the compass for the master pilots of the new State.

The Financial Readjustment Committee of Manchukuo, on November 16, 1931 — that is to say, in less than two months after the Event — abolished no less than six taxes; reduced four of them by half, transferred eight others to local governments and prohibited all levies without a legal basis. What would be the reaction of this fact upon the



AIR PORT, HSINKING

native populace who have known nothing of government other than exaction, extortion, oppression.

This is no mere high sounding talk, such as one meets constantly at Nanking: no mere broadcasting of Chinese political promise. It is an accomplished fact, obvious to any visitors with eyes to see. The State of Manchukuo was born anew and is being brought up along the “Kingly Way” — the principle of enlightened rule, entirely unknown to the hitherto oppressed natives.



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