

BOOK REVIEW

Hidden truths behind America's engagement in Asia

The China Mirage explores a difficult century that defines U.S.-Chinese relations to this day.

Review by Walter Ko
CAF Board Member

The *China Mirage* is a concise chronicle of America's misguided domestic and foreign policies in Asia during the past century, many of which still are affecting today's international relations. This book is an extension and elaboration of Bradley's previous best seller, *Imperial Cruise* with a different focus on the romance of USA, China and Japan.

The book begins with quotes from two Presidents Roosevelt. First, President Theodore Roosevelt, having recognized the powerful and aggressive Japan after Meiji Restoration defeated China and Russia, adopted a secret encouragement that a "Japanese Monroe Doctrine in Asia will remove the temptation to European encroachment and Japan will be recognized as the leader of the Asiatic Nations". Second FDR was quoted "The people of China well over a century have been, in thought and in objective, closer to us Americans than almost any other peoples in the world – the same great ideals. China, in the last – less than half a century has become one of the great democracies of the world".

Bradley traces that the dark wealth of famous "Fortune Tops" families was made in China by following the British and pushing opium to the Chinese people and labeling them as "Sick Man of Asia". With many military defeats by Western Powers, China was forced to sign humiliating unequal treaties demanding

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of American
Disaster in Asia,*
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extraterritoriality – freedom from Chinese laws and the right to try their own transgressors, and the most-favor-nation clause – all foreign powers would share the same equal privilege what a western power could squeeze from China.

Bradley informs that following these forced concessions by China, Western countries established regional "treaty ports" as foreign enclaves dominated by modern, western, "civilized" and Christian exchanges. Missionaries arrived promoting their own Western religious version a "Kingdom of Heaven". Religious, political and economic conflicts caused the Boxer Movement resulted in the Eight Nation Invasion to Peking in 1900. It ended in Boxer Indemnity the following year with the subsequent establishment of Tsing Hua University for American technology and democracy.

Chinese people remembered the harsh law of Chinese Exclusion Act passed by US Congress on 1882 to stop Chinese laborers from entering America. And Bradley introduces readers to Charles Soong a smart and fortunate individual whose Christian influence Sino-American relation for a century by his children and their families. His was considered the prime idyllic family that enthusiastic missionaries were excited about as a model for eternal life and democracy and the greater success of China. Educated in America, the three Christian Soong sisters were molded into different characters, Ailing being fortune hungry, Ching Ling being patriotic and Mei Ling being power loving. The

military strong man Chiang Kai Shek walked down the Christian path of baptism in order to take Mei Ling as his bride.

So with great American writers such as Pearl Buck and Henry Luce, they fed American people with their versions of Chinese experience, the people, poor and innocent, and rich and powerful. Such illusions created a favorable impression for American Christians who were all too eager to help their Chinese brethren into the nation of democracy and Christianity. Pearl commented: "China is knocking at American doors . . . entering eagerly into the colleges and universities, examining critically all that she sees, seizing ideas which she thinks will be useful to her, and returning again to her own land to use her new knowledge in her own fashion". Pearl powerful statement of wisdom, certainly is true now and then.

However, Missionaries also knew that Christian Chiang was a one party boss with legions of Blue Shirt thugs terrorizing the populace. Nevertheless, America accepted the status quo of Japanese Puppet State of Manchukuo as seen in the movie "The Last Emperor" while League of Nations was incapable of stopping Japanese aggression in China. Still through rosy glasses, TV Soong presented to the world a picture of a new China whose population admired America and yearned to embrace Jesus and Jefferson. The China Lobby perpetuated this mirage as they asked for more money and weapon to fight against Japanese invaders. All the while, US officials looked away as financial aids mystically disappeared into some rich, powerful and famous bank accounts.

Bradley makes a comparison from Stilwell on Chiang and Mao which is insightful good for understanding America national policy. Mao extended his hand and friendship to US through John Service. It is interesting in the interview, Mao said: "China must industrialize only by free enterprise and with the aid of foreign capital . . . Chinese and American interests are correlated and similar. They fit together,

economically and politically. We can and must work together. . . ". Mao was visionary right then and now. However, he was ignored. It was only when President Nixon visited China in 1972, Mao had the opportunity to express to the number one anti-communist world leader his admiration of "most respected enemy". Bradley also compared and contrasted how UK and US treated Chinese Chiang by Churchill and FDR.

Japan understood well what Asia Monroe Doctrine meant for Imperial Empire. In the name of the Emperor as Asia liberator, the Imperial Army tried to remove by duplicating European encroachment in Asia in brutal atrocities. When US declared steel and oil sanctions to starve Japanese war machine, Japanese advisers to the Emperor felt that Japan was provoked into a war of self-defense and self-preservation. This false argument was spun into Emperor Hirohito's 1945 radio broadcast to Japanese people in Imperial Rescript on the Termination of War then to the recent Prime Minister Shino Abe's dismissal of Tokyo war crime trials in the aftermath of WW II as nothing more than "victors' justice".

As Japan surrendered unconditionally, US chose a "politically correct" way of helping Chiang under many wise men advice on how best to achieve the US post-war goals coming from many circles of influence. The religious right's "man of the hour" was Chiang who unfortunately made war torn Chinese economy worse leading to the Chinese people lost confidence in his abilities, as the one with the mandate of heaven in his statesmanship and savior.

In contrast, Mao won the hearts and minds of the majority Chinese people who forsake the corrupt Chiang as they hoped for a new modern, industrialized and independent China. Mao commented with John Service: ". . . for America to insist that arms be given to all forces who fight Japan, which will include the Communists, is not interference. For America to give arms only to Chiang will in effect be interference "in the domestic affairs of another country". Seeing "The East is Red", US kept

betting on Chiang, with the red scare and decline Mao's hand of friendship asking for help. Such refusal pushed Mao into the bosom bear hug of Kremlin. The mood in Washington was: The Republicans took on the fight against the Communists as a moral cause; the military men were concerned about a future conflict with the USSR; and the churchmen embraced it as a struggle against the Antichrist in Asia.

With adoption of Acheson's NSC-68 called for worldwide containment of Communism, America asserted itself as a nation built on democracy and self-determination and the beacon of hope for the oppressed colonial dominated Korea and Vietnam. And a populace misled about the true nature of the state of affair in China, Korea and Vietnam. The election outcomes of Korea and Vietnam, being turned out not to the expected like, resulted in US military intervention and confrontation in Asia leading to disaster after disaster.

The China Mirage, a serious research study bringing to light how poorly understood US actions in Asia over the past hundred years, has led to today's policy blunders and misunderstandings, from Theodore Roosevelt down to Obama.

Bradley shows what is old and new, mirage and reality, rich and poor, love and hatred, win and loss, democracy and totalitarian, friend and foe, blue and red. By reviewing the history of Sino-American relations, he helps us all understand the future. Is it the Tao of yin and yang that U.S. and China were comrades in arm allies in defeating Japan in WW II and now US and Japan are allies in confronting China? It makes one wonder who attacked Pearl Harbor, the Day in Infamy?

Years ago, Walter Cronkite produced a CBS program, "Who Lost China". This title's wording reveals much about how the wealth and power of the US is presently being employed worldwide, in an attempt to replicate American society for "gain". It means America has high expectation of seeing China in the envisioned

self-image of US, wealthy and powerful. It is not that China does not achieve the goal but she takes her own unique path, not Soviet nor American, but from Dr. Sun Yat-sen's The Three People's Principles.

This book covers many parts of history unknown to many Chinese and most Americans. Hopefully reading this book helps clear away this historical mirage leading to better understanding to prevent more disasters. However, a few mirage typos do not impact the significance of the book, such as B29 (not B52) dropping napalm on Tokyo, 1862 (not 1892, p.32) and 1950 (not 1905, p.349).

Given the latest technology of communication, will the media, turning up their rhetoric demonizing China, risk the danger of once again fostering a Sino-Russia coalition in yet another cold-war mentality? Will the recent presidential candidates in their mysterious dreamy stereotype of using China as a scapegoat in stealing jobs, causing the national deficit and expecting "anchor baby", employ the same excuse to wage another Opium War as the British cousin did in the Nineteen Century?

Is it irresponsible freedom of speech to use China as convenient punching bag for political gain and vote, especially to perpetrate the optical illusion? Why there is hysteria, paranoid and Sino-phobia to treat China as Satan reincarnated outside the Axis of Evil? Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

For a better future and peace under heaven, this book is a must read for Chinese officials in Beijing, members of the US Congress and especially the President in Washington and American citizens and Chinese people everywhere.