

CHINA'S PLACE IN THE SUN

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China's place in the sun by Stanley High

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STANLEY HIGH

**CHINA'S PLACE
IN THE SUN**

TO STAY
AND
REMEMBER



The Great Wall, skirting for seventeen hundred miles along the Mongol border, is a colossal monument of Ancient China—the China that is passing.

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TO VIND
MACMILLAN

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TO
MY MOTHER AND FATHER

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PREFACE

On June 21st, 1921, General Jan Christian Smuts, Premier of the Union of South Africa, in addressing the session of the British Imperial Conference in London, declared: "Our temptation is still to look on the European stage as of first importance. It is no longer so. Undoubtedly the scene has shifted from Europe to the Far East and to the Pacific. . . . The problems of the Pacific are, to my mind, the world problems of the next 50 years or more. . . . There, I believe, the next great chapter in human history will be written."

On the same day, in Washington, the Secretary of Navy of the United States made public the plans for the reorganization of the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, according to which the finest ships in the American navy, the oil burners and the superdreadnoughts, all of the newer and greater types of warships, were transferred to the Pacific. According to the press report: "The growth of American interests in the Pacific has influenced naval strategists in favor of concentrating the greatest strength of the United States in that ocean. It is held that there is no menace to any other power in such a policy, but that with Hawaii, the Philippines and other widely separated Pacific possessions to defend it is the part of wisdom to familiarize the main fleet with the conditions which would confront it with reference to harbors and strategic conditions should the United States be called upon to defend its Pacific Ocean interests."¹

¹ *New York Times*, June 21, 1921.

The fact that the Pacific era of world history has actually dawned scarcely requires demonstration. The accumulation by the powers of great economic interests in territories adjacent to the Pacific has gradually concentrated international attention in the Far East. Whatever doubt there may have been, in 1914, in regard to the significance of Pacific problems has been finally dispelled by the events of the world war.

To attempt to indicate how or by whom the history of this era will be determined is, however, to essay the impossible. The decisive influence in the present conference for the discussion of Far Eastern questions is unquestionably that of western nations. And, though the war gave tremendous stimulus to the growth of national consciousness among Asiatic peoples, until that consciousness is developed to the point where its ability to effectively assert itself in its own behalf has been more clearly demonstrated, the balance of power for the settlement of Oriental questions will probably remain in the hands of Occidental nations.

There can be little doubt but that, among Asiatic nations, the one most abundantly furnished with the fundamental elements essential to world power is China. China has long been a nation of great potentialities, the object of heroic prophecies and the victim of an almost too-glorious past. When the nations of the west, bent upon trade and territory, disturbed the even tenor of China's unprogressive way they forced the Chinese, for the first time, to take cognizance of a greater world beyond their own and never since that time have they lost sight of it. Now, at the end of a World War in which China herself was engaged, there are many indications that the spirit of progress has laid hold upon the people

and that, as a result of the movements now developing, the latent resources of the nation will be realized in actual power.

It was the writer's privilege to travel extensively throughout China during the months following the Peace Conference when these developments were in the beginning and to observe something of their scope and significance. In the present volume we have endeavored to review the history of these movements and to relate them, in so far as is possible to the longer, more gradual growth of the Chinese national consciousness, of which they are the most recent and probably the most significant indication. We have sought, further, to point out that in the international struggle for foreign markets in which we have been obliged to participate the United States is destined to be drawn into increasing commercial contact with China. This fact, considered in the light of China's increasing fitness to claim her place in the sun, raises an issue of the utmost concern to the United States.

Mr. B. Putnam Weale writes: "The Chinese question is the world question of the twentieth century." Of all nations America is most vitally concerned with what takes place in China. To be indifferent to the present situation or to the possibilities, for good or ill, involved in it is to ignore the chief power with which the statesmanship of 2021 will be concerned.

The author is aware that the fact of political division and civil strife in China seems to indicate the inability of the Chinese to maintain a stable, republican government. Yet, in our impatience to see the nation abreast of the nations of the west we are very apt to condemn them too hastily for their apparent failure and pass over, with too brief consideration, the evidences of real