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MASANOBU TSUJI

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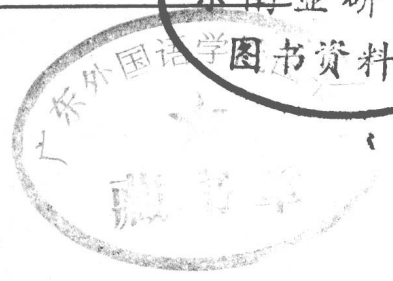
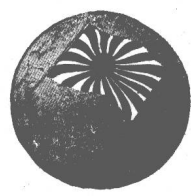
by Colonel Masanobu Tsuji

CHIEF OF OPERATIONS AND PLANNING STAFF, 25TH JAPANESE ARMY, MALAYA

暨南大学

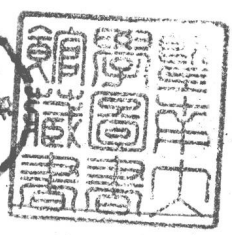
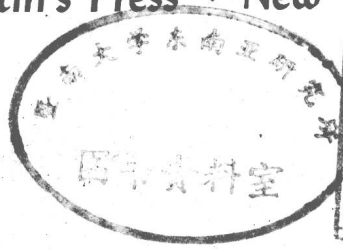
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TRANSLATED BY MARGARET E. LAKE, B.A., Dip.Ed.
EDITED BY H. V. HOWE, MILITARY SECRETARY TO THE AUSTRALIAN
MINISTER FOR THE ARMY, 1940-6. WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL H. GORDON BENNETT, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., V.D.,
COMMANDER, 8TH DIVISION, AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE, MALAYA, 1941-2

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Editorial Notes

COLONEL MASANOBU TSUJI commanded the small group of officers who formulated the plans and tactics for Japan's seventy-day campaign for the conquest of Malaya. As Director of Military Operations, 25th Japanese Army, he was later one of those primarily responsible for their successful execution according to schedule.

A review of the Japanese edition of his book that I saw in a Malayan newspaper suggested to me that the book disclosed aspects of the operation not apparent from British or Australian records and of great interest to the expert and the general reader.

Through Mr Katsume Nihro, pre-war Japanese Vice-Consul in Sydney, I endeavoured to obtain a copy of the book. Mr Nihro informed me that no English translation was available, but put me in touch with the author, who stated that it was not his intention to publish an English edition. I thereupon wrote to him, in 1953: "It is, I think, of the utmost importance that history should be fully and accurately recorded, and this cannot be done unless Allied historians are able to read the Japanese account of the campaign in Malaya written by the officer principally responsible for its planning and execution. In order that the operations of the Japanese Army may be correctly presented to the English-speaking peoples of the world I strongly urge upon you the desirability of publishing an English translation of your book."

After much further correspondence Colonel Tsuji agreed to my arranging a translation. His consent appears overleaf.

In the Japanese edition the brief history of Malaya given in the Preface is repeated in Chapter 58 ("Sharing the Joy"). The duplicated passages have been omitted here. The text is otherwise a complete translation; it has been submitted in typescript and also in proof to the author, and corrected at his direction.

Apart from Figure 1, which has been added, all maps are based on and translated from the maps in the original Japanese edition. Photographs other than those acknowledged to the Australian War Memorial are from Japanese sources.

Editorial Notes

The pamphlet "Read This Alone—And The War Can Be Won", which appears as Appendix 1, was not included in the original work, but is reproduced here with the author's permission. Appendix 2, "East Asia Federation", was compiled by me from English and Japanese reference works and corrected and approved by the author.

All footnotes, without exception, are mine—not the author's.

H. V. HOWE

Dural, New South Wales

Author's Note

I ACCEPT with complete satisfaction your proposal to publish an English translation of my book.

It is my hope emanating from the bottom of my heart that it should be read by all the peoples who long for peace beyond past vengeance.

I offer sincerely my profound respect to officers and men who most gallantly fought in the battlefields of Malaya. I offer my deep silent prayers from my heart to all of your officers and men who sacrificed themselves in the battlefields.

Praying most sincerely that the friendship between the peoples of Australia and Japan may reap the fruits of mutual noble sacrifice,

MASANOBU TSUJI

The Diet of Japan

Translator's Note

IN THE PREPARATION of the English translation of Colonel Tsuji's book every effort has been made to present it to the reader as an Asian book by a Japanese writer as distinct from a European's version of the original work. Precision of English has in places been deliberately sacrificed to adhere as closely as possible to the author's phraseology in the belief that his meaning, outlook, train of thought, and mode of expression are thus conveyed more accurately than by more conventional translation.

MARGARET E. LAKE, B.A., DIP.ED.

*Sometime Lecturer in Japanese
University of Sydney*

Introduction

EVERY SOLDIER worthy of the name pays ungrudging tribute to the military capacity of his outstanding opponents. I have no hesitation in recognizing Colonel Masanobu Tsuji as one of the ablest of mine.

In his book he unreservedly attributes Japan's victory in Malaya to the patriotic fervour and self-sacrifice of the front-line officers and men of her 25th Army, which, in advancing six hundred miles and capturing Singapore in seventy days, achieved one of the decisive victories of World War II and accomplished a feat unparalleled in military history.

The trained observer must however conclude that the success of the campaign was primarily due to its extraordinarily thorough and quite original planning. The most unusual feature of the book is the author's account of the research into the techniques of tropical warfare. For three hundred days he and his small team—experienced only in the sub-arctic regions of Manchuria—lived and worked under primitive tropical conditions, and, divesting themselves of all the conservatism which usually afflicts army staffs, evolved the tactics, armament, and equipment best suited to jungle warfare.

For the first time in history an army carried out "a blitzkrieg on bicycles", astounding the world by the sureness and rapidity of its advance, and exploding the myth of the impregnability of Singapore—which, as Colonel Tsuji emphasizes, had no rear defences, a fact he states was unknown to Winston Churchill at the time.

No soldier smiles on defeat, and Colonel Tsuji is naturally distressed by the defeat of his country, which he ascribes to absence of inspired national leadership. Expressing the opinion that Sir Winston's character "savours of Zen mysticism" he pays him generous tribute as the type of leader necessary to carry a nation to victory through desperate circumstances.

Japan's collapse was not due to lack of spirit of her servicemen

Introduction

or her people, but to the weakness of her national economy, which, as the author points out, was clearly recognized by her Imperial General Staff, and by them was taken into account in weighing the probability of quick and complete victory against the inevitability of defeat in a prolonged conflict.

Colonel Tsuji's career proves him a master planner and an outstanding field officer. He now appears as an excellent writer and is to be congratulated upon his book, and also upon the motives which led to his escape from the Allied forces after the national surrender, of which he tells in another book, *Underground Escape*.

Like many soldiers in all countries he seems subject to strong religious influences, and, pondering the consequences of defeat in the light of his Buddhist faith, he determined that a paramount obligation was imposed upon him to work for the regeneration of his country. With the approval of higher Army authority he thereupon evaded arrest by Allied forces, disappeared, and for three years wandered through Asia, until, cleared of all charges against him, he was able to return to Japan, which he now serves as a Member of the House of Councillors in the National Diet.

H. GORDON BENNETT

Lieutenant-General

*Commander, Australian Imperial Force
in Malaya, 1941-2*

Turramurra, New South Wales, 1959

SINGAPORE シンガポール —運命の轉機— SINGAPORE

辻 信 著

東西南北社刊

Title page of the Japanese edition, "Shonan, the Hinge of Fate"

Preface

THE CAPTURE of Singapore was indeed the "hinge of fate" for Britain and the peoples of Asia. Domination based on force must be overthrown by force. Only by sincere adherence to sound moral principles can a just and lasting peace be made.

The author was Chief of the Operations and Planning Staff throughout the Malayan campaign, and he has dedicated this book to the memory of General Yamashita. In reply to Mr Winston Churchill* he transmits to future generations the true facts of the campaign, which will demonstrate to all the sterling worth of the Japanese Army.

In military strategy Japan conquered spectacularly; in the war she was easily defeated. But, incomprehensibly, as a result India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines achieved independence soon after the end of hostilities. Indo-China and Malaya had already become free almost overnight of domination by Europeans. These Asian peoples who were emancipated by the fall of Singapore will eternally pronounce benedictions on their benefactors.

Malaya's history is the history of the strong preying upon the weak. The Polynesian peoples who were the original owners of the country lived in the jungle, but were ousted by invaders from the Palembang Kingdom in Sumatra, who in turn were later overthrown by the Kingdom of Java. Thus ownership of the country was changed for the third time.

Portugal, by great achievements on the seas of Europe and

**The Hinge of Fate*, volume iv of Winston Churchill's history of the Second World War, was published in 1951. The first edition of Colonel Tsuji's book appeared in Japan the following year.

Preface

Asia, became very powerful and gained control of Malacca Straits, and so Malaya received its fourth ruler. Before long Holland took the place of Portugal, and when later Great Britain appeared on the scene to outrival Holland, Malaya received her sixth master—Stamford Raffles.

From the time Raffles founded Singapore, Britain's Far Eastern aggression and rule over the island lasted over one hundred and twenty years; and then in seventy days it was given a fatal blow by the lightning operations of the Japanese forces.

The halo of victory must shine on the Union Jack, but today there remains little vestige of its glory of former times. As Mr Churchill proclaimed, the surrender of Singapore was Great Britain's "hinge of fate". In this single issue England was weighed in the balance and found wanting, and she forfeited the dignity of one hundred and twenty years. Although victorious in the war, she lost India and released her hold on Burma; and now, alas, she sees Malaya buffeted on the waves of her people's revolution.

War in these modern times has a new character, for it brings hardship to the victor as well as suffering to the vanquished. Is this not a revelation of Providence showing the limitations of government based on force? Today, however, the position of the world remains the same, for the guiding spirits of America and the Soviet are not awake to the change in historical philosophy, and continue to believe in domination by force. In the event of a third world war, whoever may be victorious there will be no crowning laurels of victory, but only skeletons exposed to the sun on the ruins of the battlefields.

When the dread threat of atomic war was looming over the world, Mr Churchill was once again elected Prime Minister of Great Britain. Confronted by the rise and fall of their nation, this was the man in whom the people of Britain put their faith, and to whom they entrusted the destiny of their motherland. Immediately after his re-election he gave warning of the

possibility of a third world war and made clear his intention to avert the danger by interviewing Stalin, or, if necessary, by cautiously investigating the establishment of American atom-bomb bases in England. While the Japanese Prime Minister, a younger man, was resting at Oiso or Hakone* Mr Churchill, though well into his seventies, signified his willingness to travel to Moscow or to Washington. By his readiness to negotiate he hoped perhaps to influence even Stalin.

Mr Churchill is a man I hold in the highest esteem. Glancing over his personal history it appears that when young he cast away his military profession, but later, as a cavalry commander during the South African War, while on reconnaissance he passed too deeply into the enemy's lines, became separated from his compatriots and was taken prisoner. He seized the first opportunity to escape, and in constant danger succeeded in making his way through the enemy lines and eventually returned to his own people.

Subsequently he entered the political arena, and in the First World War, while holding the important Cabinet position of First Lord of the Admiralty, he visited the battle line in Belgium. While there inspecting the British Naval Brigade [at Antwerp] he found himself caught in the midst of a heavy German attack. He is reported to have telegraphed directly to the Prime Minister his wish to resign from the Cabinet and to be appointed to command of the Naval Brigade. There is nothing particularly surprising about his bravery as a young man; but now, when over forty years of age and a Cabinet Minister, he desired to cast aside his high position and fight with the officers and men in the front line; his ardour and fighting spirit gushed forth unrestrainedly from a deep affection for his country and his people.

Frequently during the Second World War, when critical

* A mountain resort in Honshu.

Preface

situations arose, it was the strength of one man—Mr Churchill—which brought the British people through. Then, after victory and the change of Cabinet, the shining laurels of victory were passed on to Mr Attlee without regret or dissatisfaction, and Mr Churchill, wielding his powerful pen, wrote his imperishable precepts for the nations.

There is a savour of Zen* mysticism in this attitude of turning aside from fame and honour arising from distinguished service. Even before he had completed the manuscript of his memoirs of the Second World War, Mr Churchill had to face the prospects of a third world war, which, if it should come about, would result in the annihilation of the human race. Not only the British people, but the whole world, was watching and hoping that he would prevent it.

When Mr Churchill's Second World War memoirs were introduced to Japan by the *Mainichi Shimbun* I was absorbed in reading them and craved for more. In point of historical fact, excellence of treatise, and lucid penetration of historical data, they must be the supreme war document of the present generation. Of greatest interest to all Japanese was of course the fourth volume, called *The Hinge of Fate*, which, published serially in Japan, presented Mr Churchill's version of the campaign in Malaya. Even now, so long after the event, that book stirs up the feelings of the Japanese people not a little.

Prior to the outbreak of war in the Pacific I was a staff officer of Imperial General Headquarters, and at the end of 1940 was assigned to the preparation of plans for operations in Malaya. Just before the actual commencement of hostilities there we carried out manoeuvres in tropical warfare in southern Indo-China. From the beginning to the end of the

* Zen Buddhism, a popular Buddhist sect which originated in India about the sixth century and reached Japan by way of China in the twelfth or thirteenth century. It stresses attainment of salvation by mental and physical self-discipline. Self-knowledge is especially stressed rather than knowledge of canonical texts, with the aim of attaining by eventual intuition a total understanding of the universe.

Malayan campaign I served as Director of the Planning and Operations Staff under General Yamashita, Commander of the 25th Japanese Army.

If one's memories are carried deep into the past there are some hard lessons to be learned from experience. When I differ from Mr Churchill's opinions it is because in reading his memoirs I discovered some regrettable mistakes; but they are small flaws in a gem the full merit of which none will deny.

In regard to the campaign in Malaya the only men fully qualified to reply to Mr Churchill were General Yamashita, who has fallen on the execution ground at Manila, and his Chief of Staff, Suzuki, who too has vanished with the morning dew on Leyte Island. Today, however, reflecting upon the battles of years gone by, as General Yamashita is no more I venture to substitute for the spirit of the departed hero; and wishing to reply to Mr Churchill's memoirs, boldly and without regard for myself, I publish this review of the Malayan campaign from the Japanese standpoint.

Written ten years after the outbreak of war, it presents the views of one who was in close contact with General Yamashita throughout the campaign. With self-confidence and introspection it is submitted to aid the formation of a new historical philosophy by the youth of Japan who fought so hard and bravely on the battlefields of Malaya and who later suffered and gave themselves up to despair at the defeat of the Fatherland. In every epoch it is the disinterested and patriotic youth of every nation who are the pioneers and the backbone of their countries and who determine their destinies.

Notwithstanding the inspiring leadership of Mr Churchill, the British Army surrendered an impregnable fortress almost without resistance in barely seventy days, even though its military strength was greatly superior to that of its Japanese opponents. The youth of the army lived up to Mr Churchill's expectations, but because of inefficiency in the

Preface

British Army in Malaya, Japan conquered spectacularly.

In the war however Japan was defeated, notwithstanding the superiority of her youth. Was it perhaps because she had no such great leader as Mr Churchill?

It is true that the history of Malaya is the history of the weak falling prey to the strong. To say the least of it, to the extent that we control a living world, so naturally we are prepared to defend it with the utmost effort. We cannot tolerate continued dependence of our Fatherland's destiny on international guarantees and the good faith of a foreign power. You, the Japanese younger generation, are facing a crisis. As one reflects upon the might of the nation which your seniors demonstrated on the battlefields of Malaya, where they displayed a dauntless spirit second to none, one sees the same devotion to our country in your reconstruction of the defeated Fatherland. This nation must not again be subjected to the tragic atom-bomb. If possible it must have peace without fighting, not only for the sake of Japan, but for the sake of all Asia. If this can be achieved then the whole world must rejoice.

Already I have published a number of books, and from some of my readers and friends I have received rather scathing criticism as well as friendly advice—as, for example, “He writes as if he conquered the world by himself alone”, and, “He is not meditating on the punishment of defeat, he is inciting jingoistic thoughts.” I do not think I will discuss these criticisms now, and in any case I positively have not the power to wield my pen in any other way.

All my life perhaps the spilling of blood and the groping of my way along the road will be engraved deeply in my brain. I have set down only my own impressions, and as regards details of time, dates, military strength, names of people, and so on, it is difficult to guarantee the impossibility of errors of memory. Respecting the fundamental principles, however, I have a clear conscience, which is based on confidence in the records.

Preface

Meditating on the reasons for "conquest in battle and defeat in war", I earnestly hope that a road may be discovered to lead away from domination by force to alliances based on moral principles and sincerity.

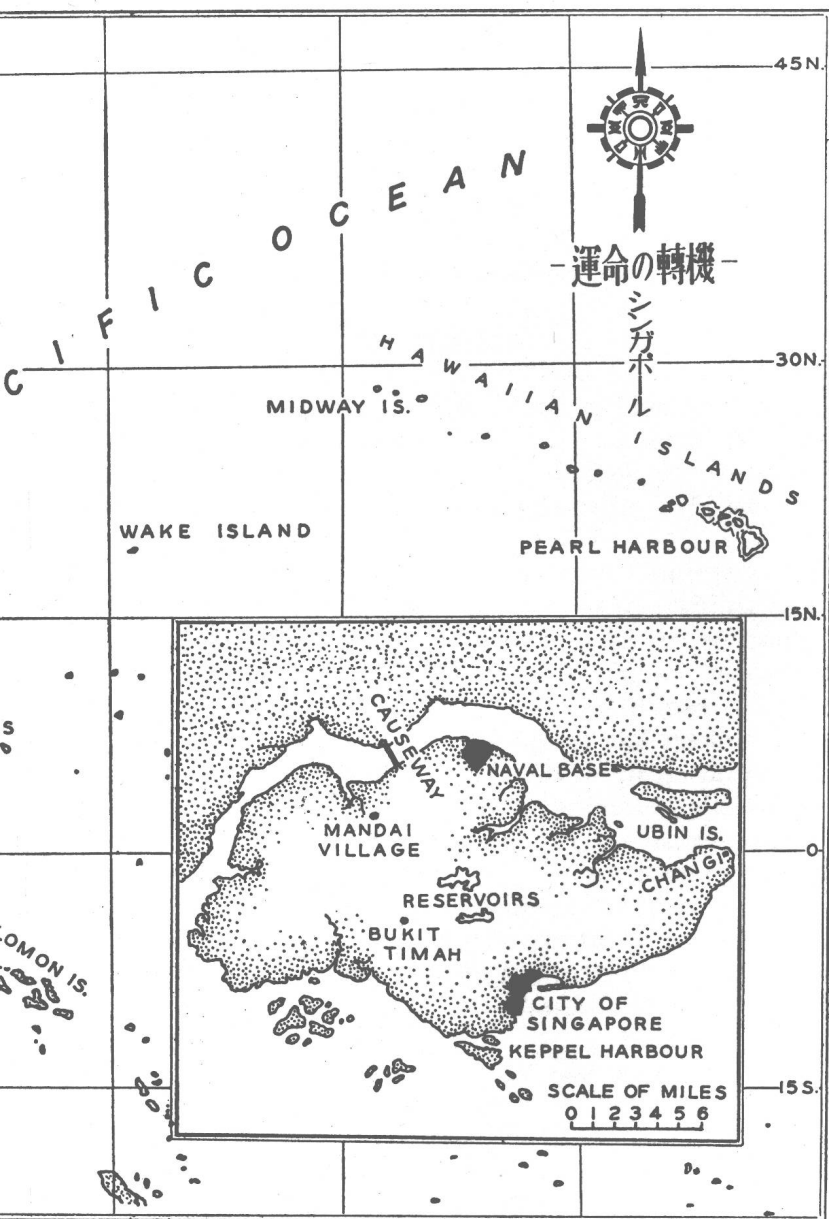
Today, ten years since the landing on Singora beach, this record is dedicated to the spirits of the now departed heroes General Yamashita and Army Chief of Staff Suzuki and the more than 3,500 soldiers who fell on Malayan battlefields.

MASANOBU TSUJI

8th December 1951



FIG. 1. The P



of war.