

## DRUGS

After returning to London from China in March 1936, various reports reached me during the next fifteen months from foreign observers, medical men, journalists and missionaries, that the drug situation in China was becoming steadily worse. Chinese Mayors and magistrates were unable to prevent the sale of poisonous drugs by Japanese and Korean traders because they were protected by extraterritoriality; these Japanese citizens were untouchable in cases where Chinese drug traders would be severely punished. After special publicity at Geneva or as the result of representations made by some public spirited Japanese, a raid would on occasion be undertaken by consular authorities. One such led to thirty men being arrested, but other peddlars promptly took their place.

Mr. Kawagoe, the Japanese Consul General in Tientsin, promised me he would do something to control the traffickers under his jurisdiction; as a result a raid on a certain town was ordered. However, the news of it reached the drug merchants there before it could be carried out, and their well organized association warned most of them to go out of business for a week or so. These warnings were sent by public telephone, several of the messages being left with the Chinese operator for him to deliver as soon as the subscriber's number was free. A few months' imprisonment or banishment, especially when the border is only a few miles away and return is easy, did not prove intimidating, and fresh plans were made to attract customers to drugs. Opium is an old story with the Chinese, they know how to cope with its effects, but heroin and morphine are new and far more potent. They work with terrific speed; a single shot of morphine may lead to addiction. One may take a few whiffs of heroin in a cigarette without knowing that one is being inveigled into a literally deadly habit. A packet of heroin may be purchased for 10 cents (3 U. S. cents or 3 halfpence).

During 1936 the traffickers set up clinics at village fairs advertising their skill in curing tuberculosis and other diseases. The medicine sold was always the same, heroin or morphine. The country folk were ignorant of what was happening to them, and when the effect of the medicine wore

off, feeling worse than ever they returned to the clinic for advice. They were told they must persist with the treatment. All over China and into Hongkong these drug peddlars penetrated systematically.

Early in 1936, the Nanking Government passed a law that every addict should present himself within the next twelve months at one or other of the treatment centres provided and undergo a cure, and that after that period any one found taking drugs would suffer the death penalty. Much remedial work was done during the period. Those who did not come voluntarily were fetched and treated under prison conditions; the others had hospital care. The expenses of all were met by their communities, rural or urban.

TIENTSIN. In Tientsin one city hospital was devoted to this work and another put aside part of its premises for the same purpose. Missions and private hospitals also gave treatment to addicts. In one of these I saw the patients' case papers with their photographs before and after cure. Letters from grateful relatives were preserved; one which referred to the "goddess doctor", bore the seal and signature of the village elder. Among the patients from rural areas, about four out of five took heroin or morphine; one in five took opium; one in every thirty patients was a woman.

When the Peace Preservation Council was set up on August 3d, 1937, it was announced that the Nanking law was no longer applicable to the district. The drug habit reassumed its tyranny. Anti-narcotic hospital work was stopped. In the old Japanese concession is a street in which about 50% of the houses are drug joints. They are not allowed to sell to the Japanese, but foreigners and Chinese, men and women, are offered the stuff openly as they walk through the streets. No trade was apparent however when I visited the street; the shops had been temporarily closed the previous day. It was reported that coolies employed by the Japanese were paid part of their wages in drugs, but I was not in a position to get evidence of this.

PEIPING. In Peiping I spent a morning visiting drug joints. There are plenty of them, (I am getting a map of this quarter of the city with the location of various shops) The Japanese are no longer allowed to carry on this trade, and their drug shops are now left in charge of Koreans. These shops receive Japanese protection, but Chinese police arrest any Chinese trafficker whom they find. Death is the penalty. A Chinese trafficker looked very frightened when we appeared. The difference between his furtive expression and the self-assurance of all the Korean dealers was marked. My companion, an American journalist, speaks Chinese fluently and told the traders that I was a Russian addict on my way to Shanhai kuan. We were able to buy as much as we liked. But the ten minutes we were in one shop. Here we learned that the best grade of heroin comes from Dairen and sells at eighteen dollars an ounce. This is two and a half times as much as Tientsin heroin. Small boys were on the look-out for customers and led us genially along the sidestreets. A middle-aged procurer took us to a brothel where we purchased heroin. Here they told us that many traders had left Peiping to follow the army into pastures new, but their places are quickly filled by others. This establishment supplied the more expensive brand from Dairen as well as the Tientsin brand. We went to a house belonging to a Russian cabaret manager who also owns a hotel in Tientsin. Though drugs are habitually sold here, we could not enter as he had gone to Taiguan to extend his business and the two Japanese who were retailing heroin in his house, using his name to protect themselves, were not at home either. The thing that troubled me most in Peiping was the number of small clinics which the Japanese are opening. They are well lit and very attractive. One of them displays the red cross. Most of them use illumined street signs to guide passers-by from the main roads to their doors up the side streets. A crowd of rikshas waits outside them at night. They advertise in the papers the various diseases which they cure. The procedure in many of them seems to be that each person on entering is given a cursory examination by an unqualified doctor or

dispenser who registers him as suffering from some specific disease; then he is allowed to buy as much heroin or morphine as he likes. Here also on certain nights of the week, come the prostitutes to renew their weekly licenses. The well-known Japanese dispensary in Hatamen Street was the chief retailing centre for drugs until a few months ago, when it became illegal to have drug joints on the main streets. Probably that is why the clinics are springing up now. We also went to the big foreign-style house where opium is regularly brought in from Jehol for distribution. The Japanese who own the place have five cars in regular use for this purpose.

Three hundred addicts were set free from the city treatment centre last week (3d wk of Feb. 38) and the place closed down. There is no longer any clinic available here. In this city trained observers vouch for the fact that Japanese often pay their Chinese servants or business employees half in cash and half in drugs.

CHANGLI. Last week I revisited Changli, Hopeh, where I made a detailed survey in March 1935. It has a self-respecting population, a public-spirited mayor, and an excellent long established mission school, hospital, health centre, and agricultural centre. Since the taking of Manchuria, all this area which includes Shanhaijuan, Lanhsien and Chingwantao has been invaded in ever increasing numbers by peddlars of poisonous drugs; but no other town was so well conditioned to resist the evil. The traffickers could find no-one inside the city walls willing to rent them a shop. They ensconced themselves therefore in shanties just outside the walls. Of course they ignored the mayor's request to close down their anti-social activities, their pawn shops, gambling dens, brothels and theatre; each of which enticed the country people to contract the drug habit. They merely answered that they were Japanese citizens and continued to do as they like. The mayor's authority extended however, over any Chinese they might employ, and his police eventually caught one such, confiscated the drugs he was carrying, and imprisoned him. The next day the mayor found himself held a prisoner in his own office by armed ruffians who demanded the value of the drugs - 2,500 dollars - and the

release of the Chinese employes. He had to make payment out of his own pocket before they let him stir.

On one occasion a consular raid was carried out by the Japanese, but the traders grew more numerous in spite of it. After a time another illegal and lucrative trade attracted their attention: as Changli is only ten miles from the coast, it became a convenient centre for smuggling. Fifteen hundred registered carts were in constant use between the coast and the Changli railway station. So valuable was the cotton and oil and other goods stored there that in 1936 a machine gun was set up on a raised platform above the station, to protect it. The railway company received 300,000 dollars during the year for freightage of smuggled goods belonging to one firm alone.

I was glad to see that Changli folk are still successful in keeping the drug traffickers outside the city walls. There they continue their trade unchecked, though many have gone to follow the army. I have a series of photographs taken in 1936. They show the various shops and the unpleasant theatre which I saw in 1935 and the drug peddler setting off on horseback on his rounds. A new feature which was introduced in 1936 was a series of shops and sheds built up against the wall. There are two pictures of the South wall and its South-east corner, showing the line of sheds and shops (about 300 yds long) which have been put up in the last year or two. About every other one is used as a hospital where patients can get drugs in any quantity.

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A Western traveller visits a village in North China. He is surprised and delighted to find there a Christian church of about twenty Koreans. After the service he talks in a friendly way to this unchartered community, and asks them why they have come there. "Oh, we were sent" is the answer. Further Christian curiosity discovers that five out of the twenty are engaged in selling drugs. How did they as Christians come to be mixed up in such a trade? "That was the job assigned to us" he is told.