
The Image and the Likeness

John Scott Campbell



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Cover

We stared—frozen—at the great face above us.
We stared—frozen—at the great face above us.

*Up from the horror of Hiroshima came a god. He gave
the people hope and for this they killed him—as they
have always killed their gods.*

THE IMAGE
and
THE LIKENESS
By John Scott Campbell

SHANGHAI had changed. We sensed that the moment we came ashore. Extraterritoriality was long gone; we had known that, of course. The days of exploitation, of clubs where Chinese and Burmese and Indian servants waited on Britons and Americans were passed. Pan-Asia had seen to that. This was 1965. The white man's burden in the east had been upon brown and yellow shoulders for over sixteen years now, and the Indians and Burmese and Indonesians were ruling themselves, after their fling at communism in the fifties.

The initial bitterness which followed the debacle of 1955 had passed, we were glad to see. Porters no longer spat in the faces of white men. They were polite, but we had not been in the city a half hour before we sensed something else. There was an edge to that politeness. It was as Major Reid had written before we left San Francisco—a subtle change had come over Asia in the previous few years. They smiled—they waited on us—they bent over backwards to atone for the excesses of the first years of freedom from foreign rule; but through it all was an air of aloofness, of superior knowledge.

Baker put it in his typically blunt British way.

"The blighters have something up their sleeves, all right. The whole crew of them. Did you notice that rickshaw boy? When I said to take us to the hotel, he answered 'Yes, today I take you'. The Major was right—there's something in the wind, and it's damned serious."

We were sitting, surrounded by our luggage, in our suite at the New China Hotel. There were four of us: Llewelyn Baker, Walter Chamberlin, Robert Martin, and myself, William Cady. Baker and Martin were anthropologists, and old China hands as well. Chamberlin was a geologist, and I claimed knowledge of zoology. We were here ostensibly as a scientific expedition, and had permission from the Republic of East Asia to do some work on Celebes man, following up the discoveries by Rance of bones and artifacts on that East Indian island in 1961.

We had another reason for coming at this particular time, although this was not mentioned to the authorities. Our real objective was to find out certain things about New Buddhism, the violently nationalistic religion which was sweeping Pan-Asia.

New Buddhism was more than a religion. It was a motivating force of such power that men like Major Reid at the American Embassy were frankly worried, and had communicated their fears to their home governments. The Pan-Asia movement had, at first, been understandable. At first it had been nationalism, pure and simple. The Asiatics were tired of exploitation and western bungling, and wanted to rule themselves. During the communist honeymoon in the early fifties, it was partly underground and partly taken over by the Reds for their own purposes. But through everything it retained a character of its own, and after '55 it reappeared as a growing force which was purely oriental. Or at least so it seemed. Our job was, among other things, to find out if Russian control was really destroyed.

We had already made several observations. The most obvious was the number of priests. Yellow robed Buddhist priests had always been common, begging rice and coppers in the streets, but in 1955 a new kind appeared. He was younger than his predecessors, and was usually an ex-soldier. And his technique was different. He was a salesman. "Rice—rice for Buddha," he would say. "Rice for the Living Buddha, to give him strength. Rice for the Great One, that he may grow mighty. Rice for the strength to cast off our bonds."

And they had organization. This wasn't any hit or miss revival, started by a crackpot, or by some schemer for his own enrichment. There was direction back of it, and very good direction too. We sensed that it had been Japanese, at least at the start, but with the end of the occupation, we could no longer barge in and investigate officially. Now there were treaties to respect, and diplomatic procedure and all that sort of thing.

Instead, we were here to spy. Unofficially, of course. The ambassador was very explicit on that point. We were strictly on our own. If we were caught, there could be no protection. So here we were. Four scientists investigating Celebes man, and trying to find out, on the side, just what was back of New Buddhism.

We washed up, had dinner, and presently, as we had expected, Major Reid called. After a few jocular references to anthropology, for the benefit of the waiter, he got down to business.

"I'll have to be brief," he said, "because I can't spend too much time with you without stirring

up suspicion. You all know the background. They claim that this business is simply a new religion, a revival of Buddhism modeled to fit new conditions. President Tung claims that there is no connection between it and the state. We think differently. We have reason to believe that the direction back of this movement is communism, and that its ultimate object is military attack on the western world. What we don't know is the nature of the proposed attack. Some of us suspect that they are making H-bombs, and have covered up so that we cannot spot them. That's what we must find out.

"The headquarters of New Buddhism is on a small volcanic island called Yat, off the east coast of Celebes. Your job is to reach that island and find out what's going on, and then bring the information back. Clear?"

We nodded. We had received a similar briefing in Washington, and from a far more distinguished personage than Major Reid, but we felt no need of mentioning this. In such a business, gratuitous information, even to friends, serves no useful end.

OUR INFORMANT in Washington had told us a good many other things, too. In the name of New Buddhism, the priests had been collecting immense quantities of supplies, and on an increasing scale. Tons of foodstuffs had been gathered and then shipped off to an unknown destination. Machinery, lumber, structural steel, canvas by the thousands of yards had been purchased, loaded onto ships and barges, and spirited away. It appeared that the New Buddhists were maintaining a standing army, or perhaps a labor force somewhere east of Borneo, but the picture was very incomplete.

Part of the failure of ordinary methods of intelligence may have been due to the supersecrecy of the New Buddhists themselves. It was not difficult to corrupt priests on the lower levels, but all they knew was that certain quotas of food and materials were set for their territory, which were then shipped away to Borneo.

The big break had come only a few months ago. One of the OSS men got through to a barge captain, who had been to the headquarters itself. He identified the location as an island a few miles off the northeast coast of Celebes. It was, he said, highly mountainous—in fact he believed it to be an extinct volcano, with a water filled crater reached only by a narrow passage from the sea. Boats, he said, could go in and out, but his barge was not among those permitted. He delivered his cargo, three thousand tons of rice and five thousand raw hides, and was then sent on his way. Under questioning, he said that there were many people living on the island—thousands at least. Most of them lived in barracks among the trees fronting the ocean, but some had special privileges and were allowed to go to the top of the crater rim.

Of the activities within the crater our informant knew nothing. At night the clouds were often lit by reflections from there, and once he had heard noises, accompanied by a distinct shaking of the earth, as though blasting were being done at a great depth.

This was the extent of our knowledge. We knew the location, but it was up to us to find out the rest.

Our departure from Shanghai for the great island of Celebes involved the usual exasperation of delay and red tape. The American Embassy did everything possible to expedite matters, and brought a little pressure to bear, I think, on the strength of the then impending American Sixth Loan to China. In any case we were at last cleared, and boarded the plane for Celebes.

We took one of the six place compartments on the upper deck, and presently had company in the form of two yellow-clad New Buddhist priests. Baker, who had the best command of Chinese, engaged them in conversation.

As we had expected, they were very willing to talk, and displayed a lively interest in Celebes man. That they were here to watch us was obvious. Baker bided his time, and then switched the conversation to New Buddhism. On this subject too the priests were anything but reticent. They described with enthusiasm the great spiritual renaissance that was sweeping all Asia "like a wind, the breath of life from the Living Buddha." Baker asked a few questions about the Buddha, since to show no curiosity about such a life subject might excite suspicion. The priests were ready for them, and gave what was evidently the stock answer: the Living

Buddha was the very incarnation of Gautama himself, a spiritual leader who was being groomed to take over the guidance of all mankind, in east and west alike.

"Where does the Great One live?" asked Baker, alert for a trap.

"In Celebes, where you are going," was the reply.

"Oh," said Baker innocently, "Then perhaps it could be arranged for us to meet him?"

This, explained the priest, was quite impossible. In due time Buddha would display himself for the world to see and marvel over; meanwhile, while his preparation was yet incomplete, he must remain in seclusion.

By now convinced that the presence of the priests was no accident, Baker settled down to the sort of verbal sparring match that he enjoyed. He had been speaking in the Cantonese dialect, but now he abruptly switched to English.

"You know," he remarked, "you fellows are using an amazing amount of material at your headquarters. Enough food to keep a good sized standing army."

The two priests, who had professed ignorance of English at the start of the conversation, stiffened visibly. Baker returned to Chinese.

The priests recovered their composure with some effort. The older replied suavely, "Gossip is a creative art. There is a large monastery at our central temple, and much is needed to maintain its activities."

"Truth," said Baker pontifically, "is usually disappointing. The imagination changes a mud hut to a palace, and a sickly priest to a demigod."

The two priests inclined their heads slightly at this. We watched their expressions. If Baker's purposely provoking language brought a reaction, it was not visible. But we had learned one thing: they spoke English but preferred that we did not know it.

OUR ARRIVAL at New Macassar, the Indonesian capital of Celebes, was attended by the usual confusion and delay. Our Buddhist friends vanished with a speed which suggested special consideration, while the man from the American Consulate was still getting our equipment through customs.

This business at length completed, we were escorted to a taxi by the attache and whisked up one of the wide avenues of the city without a question as to where we were to stay. Baker and Martin stared out the window with studied ease—they knew that something was up, but were content to await further developments. Now I noticed something else. The driver of our cab was a European, not a native. I started to frame a question, when, without warning, the car ducked into a side street, swung around two corners and abruptly entered an open doorway in a tall stucco building. Both Walt and I were half out of our seats in alarm, when our guide spoke.

"The American Consulate, gentlemen," he said, with the slightest trace of a diplomatic smile.

The cab had stopped in the ground floor garage of the consulate, and opening the door was the consul himself.

"Good morning, I'm Stimson. Hope Avery didn't give you too wild a ride, but I thought it best not to advertise my interest in you at the front door. Things have changed a bit in the last few days. Well, Avery will show you to your rooms. I'll be in the upstairs study when you're freshened up."

There was little to speculate on as we shaved and changed to less rumpled clothes, but we worked over the available data for what it was worth.

"Consul takes us in tow," remarked Chamberlin. "That isn't in line with the unofficial status so strongly impressed on us at Washington."

"And sneaking us in through the back door isn't according to best diplomatic form, either. Stimson wants to protect us from something, but obviously doesn't want the local constabulary to know." This from Martin.

"It seems to me," I ventured, "that they could check the hotels. It shouldn't take them long to put two and two together when we don't show. I'm blessed if I can see what Stimson has to gain from this maneuver."

Baker turned from the mirror where he had been adjusting his tie. "Suppose we ask him," he commented.

The consul was waiting for us in his study. After the briefest greeting which his official position permitted, he got down to business.

"Gentlemen, I've had to pull a diplomatic boner of the first magnitude. I refer to the cloak and dagger method of getting you here. But believe me, it was the only way. They're onto your scheme. If you went to a hotel in New Macassar, you wouldn't be alive tomorrow morning."

"But, the taxi—" began Martin.

"It gave us a few hours. If I had sent the consulate car, they'd have us sealed off tight right now. I could keep you safe here, or get you on the Shanghai plane, but you couldn't make another move. As it is, we have perhaps two hours—with luck."

The consul settled back in his chair, evidently gathering his thoughts. We waited, more mystified than before, if that were possible. At length Stimson started again.

"You're well briefed on the general situation. Reid gave me the gist of his conversation. But there are some other things that even Reid doesn't know." He opened a folding blotter on his desk and drew out an eight by ten photographic print.

"You're aware of the efforts that have been made to look into the crater on Yat. To date we have not succeeded in getting an eye witness to the rim. We have flown over Yat, of course, and have taken pictures from every altitude from 5,000 to 70,000 feet, but so far they have outsmarted us. They have smoke generators all around the rim, which they fire up night and day whenever the natural clouds lift. We've used every color, including infra red. We've taken stereo pairs, and flash shots at night, but, with one exception, all we've ever gotten are beautiful pictures of clouds and smoke. The exception I have here. It was taken two weeks ago, during a brief break in a heavy storm. Before I say anything more, I'd like to have you look at it and form your own opinions."

He placed the print on the desk, facing us, and leaned back while we four crowded around. My first glimpse was disappointing. Fully two thirds of the picture was occupied by clouds. But gradually I made out the details. There seemed to be several buildings of uncertain size in the lower part, and a fringe of brush extending up to the left. Half visible through the mist were several structures which seemed to me, in comparison to the larger buildings, like chicken houses or perhaps rabbit hutches. No humans were in sight, evidently because of the storm. But in the center of the picture was the thing which fixed our attention from the first, leaving the other details for later scrutiny. This was an immense human figure, lying on its side with the head pillowed on its hands in the attitude of the colossal figures of the reclining Buddha found in the mountains of China. The body was partly covered by a robe, but whether this was part of the figure or a canvas protection against the rain, was difficult to tell. Only the head, hands and feet showed. The face was partly in shadow, but enough could be seen to identify the typical Buddha countenance: closed eyes and lips curled in an enigmatic smile.

WE STARED at this peculiar picture for a good minute, taking in the details, while Stimson watched us. Then Baker looked up.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Before I tell you our guesses," replied the consul, "I'd like to hear your reactions."

"It would appear that the New Buddhists are doing the obvious—setting up a Buddhist temple.

Although, except for the statue, you'd never guess it." This from Chamberlin.

Martin squinted closely at the print. "Yes, the buildings look more like airship hangars than a temple."

Stimson raised his eyebrows slightly. "That's an interesting observation," he commented.

"Wish there were some humans, or something else to give a scale," said Baker. "For all we can tell, it could be anything from doll houses and a life sized statue, all the way up to an air base, and a reclining Buddha to end all reclining Buddhas."

There was an expectant pause. Stimson, seeing that we had nothing more to add, cleared his throat, glanced briefly out of the window behind his chair, and hunched forward.

"This picture was made from an F-180A, modified for photo reconnaissance. The plane was on a routine flight from Singapore to Mindanao, over a solid deck of clouds. The pilot swung south over Yat just out of curiosity. He approached the island at 50,000 feet, using radar, and was about to pass over when he spotted a hole in the overcast. Time was 1800—just sunset—but the edge of the crater was well lighted, although the bottom was in deep shadow. More important, the smoke generators had been turned off. Obviously the clouds had just parted, and would close in again in a minute. The presence of the F-180A at this particular instant was just one of those one in a million lucky breaks. The pilot realized this. He put the ship into a dive and ordered his photographer to ready the cameras.

"The plane approached Yat at a speed above Mach 1.2, so there was no audible warning, and evidently the island's radar was off, for the surprise was complete. Within 90 seconds the F-180A closed level just over the crater and shot past with only a thin stratus layer between it and ground. Time over the crater was hardly 10 seconds, and neither pilot nor observer saw anything, but the synchronous vertical camera was operating and four flashes were made during the middle four seconds. Then the plane was in the clouds again at a 45 degree climb and a dozen miles towards the Philippines before anyone on Yat could even get outdoors.

"As might be expected there was a considerable protest over this violation of Celebese territory, although oddly, it was based on moral grounds rather than national integrity. The protest was signed by the Lama of Macassar, and demanded neither indemnity nor punishment of the pilot, but asked merely that incense be burned in Washington to appease Buddha. Now of course the Lama isn't that naive, or devout. As you may know, Phobat Rau was educated at Harvard and CIT, and is a thoroughly trained and tough statesman who knows his way around anywhere, and doesn't believe the theological hogwash in Pan-Buddhism any more than I do. So it was a question of getting behind his motives. Of course, it could be a cover, but our final guess was that the protest was really made for the benefit of the faithful in Asia. This opinion was strengthened, at least as far as I am concerned, about a fortnight ago when Rau attended the British Embassy reception for Lord Hayes. He didn't avoid me, but actually seemed to single me out as a foil for some of his witty small talk. Asked if I was much of a student of Buddhist architecture and carvings, and if I had seen the Kyoto Buddha, or the reclining Buddha on the Yangtze. He was fishing, of course, but I played it dumb, and presently he gave up.

"Well, there you have it, at least as far as the picture is concerned. The Buddhists were considerably upset, for they tightened up security all over the islands. And then you came into the scene. Naturally nobody believed that you were just after Celebese man, but the governor granted permission—so easily, in fact, that we got suspicious. Americans are no match for oriental subtlety, but we do have a few tricks, one of whom is a code clerk in the Macassar foreign office, and from her we learned that you were set for the preferred treatment: to be let in easily, and then knocked off in some painless way. Hence the taxi, and the sneak ride here."

He paused. "That's the situation to date, gentlemen. Any questions?"

Martin had been studying the photograph. "At what altitude was this taken?"

The consul shook his head. "The autorecorder was off. The observer forgot to set it, in the rush."

"Well, couldn't they estimate?"

"They did, but it's obviously way off. The pilot swears that he levelled at 9,000, but that would make these buildings a quarter of a mile long, and the Buddha at least five hundred feet.

Unless you want to believe that they have another Willow Run on Yat, you can't take that figure."

Another pause. Finally Baker spoke. "You said you had a guess."

"Yes, I have." Stimson seemed reluctant to speak. "But it sounds so damned fantastic I hate to tell it to you—well, to be short, I don't think that this Buddha is a statue."

We all sat up. "Then what is it?" This from Martin.

"I mean, not a statue of stone or masonry in the usual sense of the term. I think that it is a portable image of Buddha—an inflated gas bag like they use in the Easter parade. I think they intend to float it in the air—perhaps tow it—to impress the faithful. If the thing's really 500 feet long, it may be a blimp or a rigid airship with its own motors. But, whatever the details, I think our mystery is just a piece of propaganda for Neo-Buddhism, although a damned good one, from the native standpoint."

We all relaxed. This was an anticlimax. Stimson had built us up to something—just what, we were not sure—and then had pricked the bubble.

"Well, it sounds reasonable," Baker finally remarked, returning the print to Stimson, "although not particularly dangerous, and certainly not worth risking our necks to spy on. However, I don't think it's good enough to explain all of the supplies that have gone into Yat."

The consul nodded. "Yes, that's the rub. If they hadn't taken such pains to conceal the thing, I'd be inclined to call it just a cover for something else."

"Maybe it still is," said Baker.

Stimson looked at us carefully, as though making up his mind.

"That is where you gentlemen come in," he said finally. "I have reason to believe that our picture has tipped their hand, that they are going ahead with whatever they have planned in the next few days. Someone's got to get to Yat first—someone who can observe intelligently, and speak the language. My staff is all clerical, and there is no chance to get any CIA men now. You're the only ones available."

He paused. We looked at each other, and then at Baker. He cleared his throat a couple of times, took another squint at the photo, and then spoke.

"Speaking for myself, Stimson, when do we leave?"

"That goes for me too," said Martin. Chamberlin and I nodded.

Stimson seemed relieved. "I'd hoped to hear that. In fact, I'd have been considerably embarrassed if you gentlemen hadn't come through, because I have a seaplane waiting right now to take you to Yat."

II

THE NEXT two hours passed swiftly. Once the decision was made, we all became so involved in the details of preparation as to have no more time for reflection, either upon the nature of what we should find on the island of Yat, or the possible personal consequences of our expedition.

First Stimson briefed us on the geography of our objective. Yat was a volcanic island, one of a group strung across the shallow sea east of Borneo and north of Celebes. It was almost circular, with a diameter of about seven miles, and was entirely covered by a dense tropical forest. The principal feature of the island was an extinct volcanic crater, rising to an altitude of 2,000 feet, at the east end of the island. The crater measured about two miles across, and perhaps a third of its area was filled with water from a narrow channel leading to the sea. Photos taken before the closure of Yat by the Indonesians showed a typical Malay isle: coconut and mango plantations, with forests of gum and mahogany climbing and filling most of the crater. The entrance channel was narrow and quite deep and the interior lake constituted an ideally sheltered anchorage. On the east coast the land rose steeply in a series of mossy cliffs over which waterfalls poured, while to the west, away from the volcano, plantations stretched inland from the coral beaches.

As we studied the pictures and charts, Stimson briefed us on the course of action.

"Your first objective is to find out what they're doing in that crater. Are they building some new weapon, or training an army, or what. You'll have Geiger counters and a krypton analyser of course, although the analyser is no guarantee in detecting fissionable material production. Then we want to know what their plans are, particularly in the next few days or weeks. Finally, just who is involved in it? Is New Buddhism entirely Asiatic, as they claim, or has Russia cut herself in too?"

"You will be landed on the west coast of the island just after sunset. The east, with its cliff and entrance channel is undoubtedly too well guarded, but on the west side, with four miles of flat country, they may depend on defense in depth, so that you'll have a better chance of getting past the beach. The plane will come in low, make a landing just off the breakers and drop you off in rubber swim suits. It will then taxi to the north of the island and make a fairly long stop, to divert attention, since it will certainly be picked up by radar. Your job will be to swim ashore, bury the rubber suits, and make your way east to the crater. If you reach the rim, see what you can, and report by radio at any hour. If you don't make it to the top, observe as much as possible on the island, make your reports, and rendezvous with the plane at your landing point at 2400 the next day. If you miss that time, a plane will be back daily at the same time for four days. After that, we will assume that you have been caught."

We were driven to the harbor in the same disreputable taxicab which had brought us to the consulate a few hours before. Time was a little past three in the afternoon as the seaplane roared down a lane in the swarm of junks, tramp freighters and warships of the Indonesian state. We hoped that we were not too well observed; there was no way of knowing until we arrived on Yat, and the learning might not be too pleasant.

The flight northeast from New Macassar was uneventful. We passed over a blue tropical sea, dotted with island jewels. For a time the low coast of the great island of Celebes made a blue haze on the eastern horizon, and then we had the ocean to ourselves. At dusk there were still two hundred miles between us and Yat, a flight of about forty minutes. Pulling down the shades, lest the cabin lights reveal us to a chance Indonesian patrol, we busied ourselves with packing the portable radio equipment and putting on our watertight clothing.

The last fifty miles were made on the deck—in fact, once or twice the hull actually touched a wave-top. The pilot extinguished the cabin lights and we peered ahead for a first glimpse of our objective. The sky was clear, but the moon would not rise until nine, so that the only indication we had that Yat was at hand was a slight deepening in the tropic night ahead and to the right, which the pilot said marked Mount Kosan, the ancient crater. But no sooner had we gotten this vaguely orienting information, than the flaps were lowered, the plane slowed to

under 100 miles per hour, and we touched the water. The co-pilot opened the side door, and we crouched together peering out. The plane taxied over a choppy cross sea toward the shadow of the island, while we squinted through the salt spray. Presently the engines dropped to idle, and the rumble of surf became audible.

"Practically dead calm tonight," said the co-pilot reassuringly. "Wind usually dies out at sunset. You won't have any trouble getting through. Just watch your step when you're ashore."

"That's always good advice for sailors," remarked Baker.

As the plane lost headway, the white line of surf and the silhouettes of cocoa palms took shape. Evidently the plantations came right to the water's edge at this point, a circumstance for which we were all thankful. I was just turning to Martin with some remark about this when the pilot called softly and urgently. "We're as close as we can drift safely. Jump, and good luck."

"Righto, and thanks," came Baker's voice, and then a splash. I was next. I took a deep breath, and clutched my rubber covered bundle of radio gear. I leaped out into darkness. An instant later I was gasping for air beside Baker. Two more splashes in quick succession and then the engines picked up speed, the dark shape of the wing overhead moved off, and we were alone.

FOR A moment we swam in circles, getting our bearings. Baker had removed his glasses for the jump, and so we depended mainly on Martin for directions. There was really no need for worry, however, for it soon became apparent that a strong onshore current was bringing us in to the breakers at a good clip. The line of phosphorescence marking their crests was now hardly a hundred yards away.

With Martin in the lead we began to swim. Presently one of the swells picked us up quite gently, moved us forward, and then suddenly exploded into a foamy torrent which tossed us head over heels and left us gasping and spitting sand on the beach.

As quickly as possible we got into the shelter of the first ranks of trees. Here we dug a hole at the base of a great cocconut palm and buried the rubber suits and cases of radio gear, along with a small vial of radium D. This had been provided for us, along with the Geiger counter, by the thorough Mr. Stimson as a means for locating our cache when we returned, if we should miss our bearings.

It was 7:45 when this chore was completed. We had an hour and twenty-three minutes to moonrise.

Turning inland, we walked in silence through the grove for a few hundred yards, and then came upon a road. This we recognized, from our map study, as the main coastal highway. We hurried across, rather elated at the progress we were making and a little surprised at the lack of fences or other protective devices on the island. Things seemed just too easy.

On the other side of the road we encountered a rice paddy, which made the going a good deal more difficult. But after about ten minutes of sloshing through this, we came to a diagonal road, or rather path which seemed to be going our way. Thanks to this, by 8:45 we felt the ground rising underfoot and sensed a darker bulk in the shadows ahead, which could only be Mount Kosan itself. Here we came to our first fence, an affair of steel posts and barbed wire, which appeared to be a guard against cattle, but hardly more. After inspecting one of the posts for signs of electrification, we crawled under the bottom wire and started up the slope.

"Are you sure we're on the right island?" asked Chamberlin. "From the security measures I don't think we're going to find anything more secret than a copra plantation."

Baker shushed him, and whispered back, "We're on the right island, but that's the only thing that's right. This is simply too easy to be true."

"Well," said Martin, "Stimson could be all wet. Maybe they're just sculpting a king sized Buddha after all."

The slope had now steepened considerably, and further conversation died out in the effort of

climbing. The volcano was heavily forested all the way up with mahogany and gum trees, and a dense undergrowth of vines and ferns entangled our feet. Twice we came upon rapidly flowing streams.

We were perhaps two thirds of the way up when the moon appeared. Its light didn't penetrate very far into the dense foliage, but it did enable us to make out the top of the mountain, which took the form of a vine covered outcrop of lava. We altered our course slightly, and at 9:50 P.M. the forest fell away and we faced a rough wall of rock some two hundred feet in height.

Before tackling this last obstacle, we paused for a rest and some hot coffee from the thermos which was included in our equipment. Then, at five minutes past ten, we started the final ascent.

The cliff proved to be more of a climb than we had anticipated, and the time was close to eleven before we pulled ourselves up over the last boulder and could look across the crater to the other rim.

The last few feet we negotiated with the greatest caution. Martin, I think, was first, and he pulled himself on his belly across to the beginning of the inner slope. He lay quietly for a half minute, then muttered something under his breath which sounded vaguely like "I'll be damned", and made way for Baker, who was next. I squeezed in beside him, and so we got a look into the crater at the same time. Baker, being a very self-contained man, made no audible comment, but I must have, for the sight which met our eyes was certainly the last thing I had expected to see.

The crater of Mount Kosan was filled with steel and concrete structures of gargantuan size, and of the most amazing shapes I had ever seen. I say amazing, but I do not mean in the sense of unfamiliar, on the contrary these incredible objects had the commonest shapes. Had it not been for trees and normal buildings to give the scene a scale, I would have sworn that we were looking into a picnic grounds a hundred feet across instead of a two mile diameter plain ringed by mountains 2,000 feet high. The buildings seen in the aerial photo occupied only a small part of the crater—all of the other structures must have been concealed by clouds.

DIRECTLY below our perch the rim dropped vertically into deep shadows, as the moonlight reached but half the crater. A thousand yards west of us, where the light first touched the floor, we could make out several clumps of brush or small trees, among which was set a rectangular concrete surface measuring perhaps four hundred feet square, and resting on hundred foot steel columns. Near this, and partly supported by the side of the mountain was what appeared to be a great table, of roughly the same area, but standing on trussed columns the height of a thirty story building. In front of this was a chair, if by chair you understand me to mean a boxlike building twenty stories high, with a braced back rising as far again. A half mile along the rim was an even larger structure whose dimensions could only be measured in fractions of miles, which resembled nothing more than a vast shed built against the cliff.

Next my attention was attracted to a number of objects lying upon the platform immediately west of us. One of these appeared to be a steel bowl-like container some thirty feet deep and a hundred in diameter, like the storage tanks used in oil fields. Nearby was an open tank measuring perhaps fifty feet in each dimension, and beside this were the most startling of all—several hundred foot pieces of built-up structural steel resembling knife, fork and spoon.

In retrospect, the deduction from this evidence was obvious, but as we stared down at this spectacle, a sort of numbness took hold of our minds. As a later comparison of impressions verified, none of us came remotely near guessing the truth in those incredible seconds. For what seemed like minutes we just stared, and then the spell was broken. Walt had squeezed in beside me, where he gave vent to a low whistle of amazement. Baker shushed him, and then shifted to a better position, in so doing knocking a rock from the ledge. This started a small avalanche which went clattering down the cliff with a sound, to our hypersensitive ears, like thunder. We all froze in our places, abruptly aware that the moon illuminated us like actors in a spotlight. For a good minute we waited tense, and then gradually relaxed. Baker started to say something when without warning the ground beneath us shook, starting a score of

rockslides. We recoiled from the edge and braced for a stronger earthquake shock. Then suddenly Baker uttered a hoarse cry. He was pointing—pointing down into the blackness at our feet where our eyes had as yet been unable to penetrate. Something was there, something vast and dim and shapeless like a half inflated airship. Then a part of it was detached and came up almost to our level. It moved too rapidly for any detail to be seen—our only impression was of a vast white column large as the Washington monument which swung up into the moonlight and then was withdrawn. At the same time the ground quivered anew, starting fresh slides.

We blinked stupidly for several seconds, and then became conscious for the first time of the sound. It was like a vast cavernous wheeze at first, and then a series of distinct wet thuds followed by a prolonged gurgling rumble. If these descriptive phrases sound strange and awkward, let me give assurance that they are as nothing to the eerie quality of the noises themselves. We lay glued to our rocky perch, hardly daring to breathe, until the last windy sigh had died away.

Baker found his voice first. "Good God, it's something alive!"

Chamberlin tried to reason. "It can't be—why, it's two hundred feet high—it's just a gas bag, like Stimson said. It's—"

He stopped. The thing had moved again, more rapidly and with purpose. The great column rose, then pressed down into the ground and pushed the main bulk up out of the shadows. There was a moment of confusion while our senses tried to grasp shape and scale at the same time, and then it all came into focus as the thing arose into the light. At one instant we were sane humans, trying to make out a great billowy form wallowing in the darkness below. In the next instant we were madmen, staring into a human face a hundred feet wide, that peered back at us from the level of the cliff top! For a second we were all still—we four, and that titanic placid oriental face hanging before us in the moonlight. Then the great eyes blinked sleepily and the thing started to move toward us.

I cannot recall in detail what happened. I remember someone screamed, an animal cry of pure terror. It may have been me, although Baker claims to be the guilty one. In any case the four of us arose as one and plunged headfirst off our rock into the tangle of brush at the top of the cliff. I think that only the vines saved us from certain death in that first mad instant. I know that we were wrestling with them for what seemed like an eternity. They wrapped around my legs, tangled in my arms. They were like clutching hands, holding me back in a nightmare-like struggle, while the thing in the crater came closer. Then abruptly I realized that they *were* hands, human hands seizing us, pulling us back from the cliff and then skillfully tying us up.

It was all over in a moment. The madness was ended. We were once more rational humans, tied hand and foot, and propped against the rocky ledge in front of a dozen yellow-robed men. For a time we just breathed heavily—ourselves and our brown skinned captors alike. Then one of the latter spoke.

"You can stand now, yes?"

Baker struggled to his feet in reply. The rest of us did likewise, aided not unkindly, by the yellow-robed men. Baker found his voice.

"Thank you," he said. In the brightening moonlight we looked more carefully at our captors. They were of small stature, evidently Japanese, and, by their costume, all priests.

Baker laughed briefly and glanced at the rest of us. "It would appear," he said dryly, "that we have been taken."

III

THE LEADER of the priests indicated by a gesture that he wished us to move along a narrow trail cut in the vines along the rim. I attempted to get another look at the horror within the crater, but the ledge of rock down which we had just fallen stood in the way. We were guided into a pitch black trail which descended steeply into the forest on the outer slope of Mount Kosan.

I lost track of direction almost at once. The trail zigzagged a couple of times, and then I sensed that we were in a covered passage. After a few more steps and a turn, a light appeared ahead, to show we were walking in a concrete lined tunnel. Our captors had split themselves into two groups, a half dozen ahead and an equal number behind. Soon there appeared a metal door in one wall, which proved to be the entrance to an elevator. We all squeezed in, and were taken down a distance which surely must have brought us near to the crater floor itself. The door then opened, and again we were escorted along a concrete passage. There were many turns. Our captors paused before a narrow door with a tiny barred window. This was unlocked, we were directed to enter, and the door clanked shut behind us.

For the first few minutes no one had anything to say. We examined the interior of our cell, but found nothing more remarkable than concrete, a small ventilator hole near the ceiling, and a wooden bench along the wall opposite the door.

Martin found his voice first. "A human being," he said slowly, "as big as the Woolworth Building!"

Chamberlin, apparently still involved in his last abortive try at reason said, "But it's impossible. The laws of mechanics—why the biggest dinosaurs were only eighty feet long, and they had to be supported by water. It's a mechanical device, I tell you."

"It could have been an illusion," I ventured. "Perhaps an image projected on a fog bank, or something similar—" Neither Walt nor I were very convincing—not with the memory of that face fresh in our minds. We all fell silent again.

Several minutes passed, when abruptly we became conscious of a movement of the floor, slight but repeated with regularity. A shake, a pause of six or eight seconds, then another shake. Baker stood on the bench and put his ear to the ventilator. He heard nothing. The movement came again. Shake, pause, shake, pause, like some distant and monstrous machine. I was reminded of the small earthquakes felt in the vicinity of a heavy drop hammer. Shake, pause, shake, pause, and then a heavier jolt accompanied by a distinct thud. After that, quiet.

"Obviously," Baker said, "they knew all about us." He was evidently thinking out loud. "Probably picked us up on the beach, and then just let us go on, clearing out the guards ahead, and keeping near enough to see that we didn't use the radio. Why? Maybe to find out how much we knew about the place already. I daresay they know one thing now: we never expected to find—what we did. Which brings us to our Buddha. The big question is, is it mechanical or—alive?" He paused. "I don't know—none of us can know yet—but, I'm inclined to believe the latter. Cady, what's your opinion?"

I had forgotten for the moment that I was a zoologist. To tell the truth, the whole thing had been a little outside of the type of specimen I was familiar with.

"Its movements were lifelike," I replied. "They suggest muscular action rather than mechanical drive. But, as Walt says, it's just not possible. Nature has placed a limit on the size of living creatures. The strength of bones, the energy requirements, the osmotic pressures needed to move fluids through tissue. Besides, where could it come from? There have been giants—eight, ten, maybe up to twelve feet—but this thing is of a different order of magnitude. It must weigh millions of pounds. As a zoologist, I can't believe that it's alive."

Martin and Chamberlin had a few more remarks of the same nature, and then the conversation died away. We waited. Eventually they would come—the yellow-robed ones. When they did, we might learn more. I had little doubt as to our ultimate fate, but in the

dulled condition of my senses, I didn't seem particularly to care.

My watch had been smashed in the struggle, so that I had no idea of how long they kept us in the cell. It could not have been too many hours, for the elementary needs of nature had only begun to assert themselves when the sound of a key came from the door. We all stood up. It was our conductor of last night, the one who spoke pidgin English.

"Good morning, gentlemens," he said with a bow. "You spend nice night, yes? Get plenty sleep?"

We did not reply. Still smiling politely, he beckoned. "Now please to come with me. Head Lama talk to you now."

ONCE MORE we traversed the interminable concrete corridors of that subterranean city, but this time we came out into a hall illuminated by natural daylight. The walls here were neatly plastered, and the doors more ornamental.

"Getting near the high brass," murmured Chamberlin.

The last hall was terminated by a window and balcony, beyond which the green of a distant hillside could be seen. Before we reached this, however, our guide stopped at a heavy aluminum door and directed us into a sort of ante-room, occupied by uniformed guards and a male receptionist. A few words were exchanged in Japanese, and the guards quickly and expertly frisked us, although this had already been done once. This ceremony over, another door was opened and we were admitted to a large and sunny office, whose big windows gave a panoramic view of the whole crater.

Our eyes were so dazzled by the sudden burst of light, and our curiosity was so great to see that fantastic place by daylight, that we did not at once see the man who sat behind a desk opposite the windows, watching us with an expression of high amusement. Baker first noticed him.

"Phobat Rau! So you're back of this, after all!"

The other stood up. He was a short man, evidently Burmese, and wore a tan military uniform. His smile revealed a bonanza of gold teeth, while his thick lensed spectacles glittered in the brilliant sunshine streaming in through the windows.

"It is a great pleasure to have you here, Professor Baker, although there is in the circumstances some cause for regret. But all that in its time. What do you think of our Buddha?"

As he spoke, Baker was glancing about the room, and I saw that his eye had alighted upon an instrument just behind Rau's desk. A second look showed it to be a tape recorder, with the operating lamp on.

"Until we have more data," replied Baker, "our views are still as you have them recorded."

Phobat Rau laughed delightedly. "You're a good observer, Professor. Yes, I must confess I was curious about your reactions to our charge. So you doubt that he is alive?"

Baker nodded. "Under the circumstances last night, there was every chance for a mistake, or a hoax."

"In that case, perhaps you would like a second look. He's right across the valley now, having his breakfast."

We hastened to the window. Rau's office, we found, was in a sort of cliff house perched half way up the northern side of the crater, and commanded a view of the entire area, now brightly illuminated by the morning sunlight. We easily identified the enormous furniture of last night, against the west cliff about a mile away. But we had little interest in these structures, monstrous as they were. For, sitting cross-legged on the ground before the low table, was the giant. At that distance he did not look so huge—in fact, with an effort we could almost ignore scale and perspective and imagine that he was a normal human fifty feet distant. He appeared a typical young Japanese, his hair cut long in the old style, and wearing a sleeveless tunic like the statues of Buddha. His face was smooth and serene, and he was eating a white pasty looking substance from his great steel dish, using a big spoon. Even as we watched, he finished the meal and stood up, causing the whole building to sway slightly. He glanced about for a moment, his eye lingering briefly in our direction, and then he walked in a leisurely way to the lagoon, where he bent over and rinsed out his utensils. Returning to the table, he placed them carefully in the position we had noted last night. He then straightened to his full height, raised his great arms far up into the morning air and began a series of earth shaking calisthenics. After about ten minutes of this he walked over to the leanto structure, entered and closed a curtain behind him.

Rau, who had been watching us with great amusement, offered an explanation.

"His reading room. Books on his scale would be a bit difficult to make, so he uses microfilm

and a projector. The microfilm," he added, "is on eight by ten plates, and the screen is two hundred feet square."

We returned to the desk and took the seats Rau indicated.

"So now," said our host, "you would like to hear a word of explanation, perhaps?"

"Several, if you can spare the time," answered Baker with a dryness equal to Rau's.

"It all began," began Phobat Rau, "on a beautiful summer's day in 1945, August 6, I believe, was the exact date. Perhaps you recall what happened on that day, in the city of Hiroshima. If not, I will refresh your memories. A bomb was dropped on that day, a new type of bomb. It caused a great deal of destruction, and killed tens of thousands of people. Some died at once from the blast and heat, but many more, who had escaped apparently uninjured, developed serious illness days later and died. The cause you know, of course. It was called radiation injury, the internal destruction of cell structure by gamma rays emitted by the bomb.

"Many strange things happened in that blast. In some, injury was confined to particular parts of the body, as the hair. Others were made sterile, in fact, the reproductive function and apparatus seemed particularly susceptible to the rays. In many cases, the genes—those vital units within the cell which determine growth and structure and all physical and mental characteristics—the genes were altered, so that children grew abnormally, with deformities or mental sickness.

"But these things you well know. Afterwards biologists and physicians and geneticists came from all parts of the world to study the effects of the atomic bomb, and the flow of learned papers on this subject is not ended even now."

THE SPEAKER paused, as if inviting some comment or question. Seeing that we intended to remain silent, he resumed.

"There was one case, however, which was not studied by western scientists. In many respects, it was the most interesting of all, for the bomb blast and the accompanying deluge of gamma radiation occurred just at the instant of conception. As usual, damage was sustained by the genes, but this damage was of a peculiar and highly special sort. The only gene affected, apparently, was the one controlling growth, although, as you will see presently, other structural and chemical changes took place without which the growth could never have occurred.

"The infant involved was a male, named Kazu Takahashi. He was born prematurely on March 26, 1946, with a weight of fourteen pounds six ounces. The parents were well to do, and the infant was given the best of care, first in a private hospital, and later in its own home.

"During the first few days of life, little Kazu was apparently normal, except for his prematureness and a rather great weight for a seven-month infant. And then the change began. His nurse first noticed an increasing appetite. He cried constantly and would be silent only when feeding. He emptied nursing bottles in a few seconds, after he learned to pull off the nipple, and was soon consuming a quart of milk every hour. The nurse humored him, in order to keep him quiet, and presently became afraid to tell either the parents or the doctor just how much milk her charge was drinking. As the days passed and no ill effects developed, she became less worried, although the daily milk ration had to be increased twice, to 23 quarts a day on the sixth day.

"Kazu doubled his weight in the first eleven days, and at the end of two weeks tipped the scales at 39 pounds. His pink tender skin was now rapidly becoming normal in color and texture, and he was behaving more and more like an ordinary child, although already of startling size. By the fourth week he was drinking 59 quarts of milk a day and weighed 145 pounds. The parents—by now thoroughly alarmed—called in the doctor, who at once realized the cause of the abnormality. He could offer no suggestions, however, save to continue feeding at a rate to keep the child quiet. This, by the sixth week, soared to the incredible figure of 130 quarts a day to feed a baby now five feet tall and weighing 290 pounds. At this point the Takahashi family felt that their problem was getting beyond them, and being Buddhists, they

appealed to the local temple—it was not in Hiroshima, but at a nearby town—for assistance. The priests took the child in, after a generous contribution had been made by father Takahashi, and for a time the embarrassing matter seemed solved. The Takahashis went on a three weeks vacation to the south coast of Honshu, and all was peaceful, externally at least.

"When the family returned, they found a note under the door urgently requesting their presence at the temple. When they arrived, they were met by a highly agitated chief priest. Something had to be done, he said. Things were getting out of hand. He then took them to the nursery. Here they beheld a baby that would have been seven feet eight inches tall if it could stand, and which had weighed in that morning on the platform scales in the temple kitchen, at 670 pounds. After hearing the details of the milk bill, father Takahashi wrote out another check and departed hurriedly.

"After the passage of three more weeks, a delegation from the temple again waited upon Mr. Takahashi, with the news that his son now measured 9 feet 3 inches in length, weighed 1175 pounds, and consumed the entire output of a local dairy. They politely requested that he take care of his own infant. Mr. Takahashi as politely refused, and at this point bowed out of our story completely."

Phobat Rau hesitated again and inquired if his statistics were boring us. Baker glanced out of the window and replied that while he ordinarily did not have much appreciation of figures of this kind, under the circumstances they had a certain interest. Rau smiled briefly and continued.

"The summer of 1946 was one of increasing difficulty for the temple. By the beginning of July Kazu weighed 1600 pounds and cried with a voice like a wounded bull. A number of trustworthy medical men examined him, and concurred that his only abnormality was size. In bodily proportions he was quite ordinary, and, for a 3-1/2 month baby, his mental development was, if anything, a bit ahead of normal. The priests took in their belts, appointed eight of the strongest as nursemaids, and wondered where it would all end.

"It was at this point that a member of the Buddhist priesthood from Burma happened to pass through the neighborhood and heard of the infant. After being sworn to secrecy; even from other members of his order, he was allowed to view little Kazu. Now this priest, whose name I might as well admit was Phobat Rau, had perhaps a bit more imagination than some others, and when he looked upon the little monster, he was struck by an idea which was to grow like Kazu himself."

"The Living Buddha," murmured Baker, "Ye Gods, what a symbol."

Rau nodded like a schoolteacher. "A symbol, and more. A machine to rebuild the world, or conquer it!"

BAKER CHOSE to ignore this leading remark. He wanted more of the story.

"So you took him over?"

"Well, it was not so easy as that. You see, I was only a young priest then, and had no resources to undertake such a project. But the more I thought of the possibilities, the more sure I was. But first I had to convince others, and time was short. The priests were near to their limit, and were about to appeal to the Americans. I secured their promise to wait until I could return to Burma, and then I flew to Bangkok, to Rangoon, to every center of Buddhism where I was known. It was a sales trip, you might say, and for a time I thought that I had failed. But there were also forces working for me. The world was uncertain. The communists were at the start of their triumphal sweep over Asia, and the leaders of our faith foresaw what lay ahead. On the first of August, 1946, a delegation of priests from eight Buddhist countries journeyed to Japan to view Kazu, who was now a lusty 4-1/2 months old, 12-1/2 feet long and of 2914 pounds weight. He was in fine health, and when he slept the resemblance to the infant Buddha was startling. You gentlemen are worldly men, and I pride myself upon freedom from the more naive illusions of my faith, but perhaps you can try to imagine that our feelings were not entirely those of ambitious schemers—that perhaps within us was some higher motive for the step we took. Our poor suffering Asia was in deeper misery than ever before, for atop her

own famine and war had come also the troubles of the west. Under the Red flag millions of our deluded countrymen were taking arms against their brothers. Confused by a glib ideology, they were daily turning more from the religion of their fathers. Although we did not speak it, we all felt inwardly that perhaps there was a purpose in this great infant—that, though we made promises with tongue in cheek, perhaps a miracle would occur to fulfill them.

"And so we arranged to transport Kazu Takahashi from Japan to a safe location where he might grow to manhood, where he might be suitably educated to take the place that we would prepare for him. The details of this move were not difficult to arrange. A special traveling crib 20 feet long was built, and in this by truck, lighter and motor junk he was carried by easy stages to this island. Here we established a great monastery, surrounded by rice and fruit plantations. Here we brought physicians and scholars to care for him and plan his education, and we built a nursery to accommodate his increasing bulk.

"We did not know, of course, what his final size would be. We kept careful records of his growth, but even after the first year he was not more than ten times the normal height. But year by year we had to revise our estimates, for his growth soon accelerated beyond our wildest expectations. For a time indeed we feared that it would never stop and that he would die of starvation when the world could no longer feed him. For a time also we were sure that he would never be able to stand, through the action of simple mechanical laws relating to weight and the size of bones, but apparently nature has provided a marvelous compensation, for his bones, as revealed by X-rays, are of a density and strength equal to that of steel.

"His feeding was always a problem, although fortunately its increase was not beyond our ability to organize and plan. At first we supplied him from plantations on Yat and on neighboring islands. Then we were forced to organize Neo-Buddhism as an implement to solicit contributions of food and money. Perforce we took many into partial confidence, but the complete story was known only to those on Yat.

"On his first birthday Kazu was 29-1/2 feet long and weighed 30,100 pounds. By his second birthday he could walk, and now surpassed all land animals save the monsters of the Jurassic age, with a height to 51 feet and a weight of 158,000 pounds. During 1949, while the communists were overrunning China, our Buddha grew from 70 to 82 feet. In June of 1950, while the world watched the flames of war kindle in Korea, we saw him exceed the capacity of our million pound scale. In the year of 1950 also we built his first schoolroom and developed the system of projected pictures and letters used in his education.

"In 1951, Buddha's increasing appetite combined with the inroads made by the communists upon our territory brought a crisis. He was now 200 feet tall, weighed seven million pounds and ate as much as 75,000 men. In spite of all our efforts, his food supply was dwindling and, worse, the communists were becoming suspicious. And so we were forced to a decision. We had to appeal to the western world. But to whom? To America, or to Russia? You all know the situation in 1952, the time of the false peace. We turned to Russia. They sent a commission to investigate, and then acted with dispatch. Russia would feed our Buddha, but on a condition: Neo-Buddhism must sponsor communism.

"We had no choice. Now that the secret was out, Russia had Yat at its mercy. So we agreed, but with one reservation. We alone should direct the education of Kazu. To this Russia agreed. Perhaps they considered that it was unimportant. Perhaps they thought that Kazu was an idiot, useful only as a symbol. But they agreed, and so his education continued in the tradition of Buddhist scholarship. He is well read, gentlemen. He knows the classics of China, and of India, and of the west also. I myself taught him English. At the request of our sponsors, he has studied Russian. He is still young, but he has an inquiring mind. When he takes his true place in the world, he may not always be the tool of the Kremlin. But of these things even I am not given to know."

Rau paused, and indicated the window. Buddha was emerging from his leanto.

"Look well, gentlemen. There stands the hope of Asia. There is the Living Buddha himself. He is only 19 years of age, but he stands 590 feet high, and weighs 198,000,000 pounds. At first he will be but a symbol, but soon he will be much more. The time of compromise, I promise you, will not last forever."

Rau stopped. We waited for him to resume, but instead, he pressed a button on his desk. Immediately several members of the guard entered. Rau now addressed us in a new voice.

"Gentlemen, you probably wonder why I have spoken so frankly of all of this. To be candid, to

a certain extent I wonder also. Perhaps it is to get it off my chest, as you say. Perhaps it is just pride in what I have done. But whatever the reason, the consequences for you are regrettable. Your spying trip to Yat alone is sufficient for death; what I have told you makes your return a complete impossibility. I am sorry, particularly for you, Baker. We shall do it as humanely as possible. Good day."

The guards, as upon a signal, closed in on us. For a second I thought insanely of flight, or a plunge through the great windows to certain death on the crags below. But there was no chance. Before any thought could be translated into action we were back in the corridor, escorted by an augmented guard of priests, on our way back to our cell, and death. A death that would be—as "humane as possible".

IV

IT WAS NOT until some minutes after the steel door had clicked shut that the full realization of our predicament came to us. Rau's story had been so fascinating, and his manner so rational and civilized that we all had forgotten that he was of a race and ideology opposed to all that we stood for, and that we were spies caught red-handed in the innermost shrine of Neo-Buddhism. Even after twenty years of cold war, all of our civilized instincts rose against the idea that a suave brilliant intellectual like Phobat Rau could so cold bloodedly order our deaths.

But the awakening was at hand. If we doubted Rau's intentions, one look at the cold Mongol faces of the guards was enough to dispel any hope. Baker tried to sum it up.

"No use trying to argue with him. Fact is, we won't even see Rau again. We could, of course, simply call it quits and wait for them, but I'd rather fight it out. Anyone have an idea?"

Martin hopped up on the bench and studied the ventilator. He reached one arm in as far as possible, and reported that there was a bend about a foot in. While he was doing this, Chamberlin made a minute investigation of the door, but found that neither hinges nor lock were accessible. There were no other openings into the chamber save the electric conduit which presumably entered above the electric fixture in the ceiling. Finally Baker spoke.

"Nothing we can do until they come for us. We'd better plan towards that, unless they're going to gas us through the ventilator."

This unpleasant thought had not occurred to the rest of us before. Martin returned to the opening and sniffed, and then with happy inspiration, he rolled up his jacket and stuffed it in. Baker nodded approval.

So the time passed. We listened at the door for footsteps but none came. Presently we became aware of a now familiar sensation. The floor commenced to shake gently and regularly. We counted the steps. There were twelve, and then they stopped. Chamberlin calculated mentally.

"Say, about 250 feet per step. That would be three thousand feet—six tenths of a mile. Wonder where—"

Martin, still near the ventilator, shushed him, and pulled the coat out. Through the small hole we heard a deep sound, a sort of low pitched irregular rumble. Baker suddenly jumped up and listened at the opening. After a bit the sound stopped. Baker became excited.

"It was a voice," he explained. "I think it was *his* voice. It was speaking Japanese. I couldn't catch many words, but I think he was talking about us."

Now the rumble came again, and louder. A few words, a pause, and then more words, as though he was in conversation with someone whom we could not hear. Baker listened intently, but he could catch only fragments, owing to his small knowledge of Japanese and the extremely low pitched articulation of the giant. Presently the voice rose to a volume which literally made the mountain tremble, and then it stopped.

Baker shook his head. "Couldn't make it out. I think he was inquiring where we were, but it was too idiomatic. I think he became excited or angry at the last."

"Fee, fi, fo, fum," said Chamberlin. "Now wouldn't *that* be an interesting end?"

Martin laughed. "We wouldn't even be enough to taste."

As no one else seemed anxious to pursue this subject further, we subsided into a sort of lethargy. Even plans for what we should do when the guards came were forgotten. And then, suddenly, the door was opened.

We all sprang to our feet. A priest—in fact, the same one who had brought us here originally—came in. A squad of guards stood outside.

"Good afternoon, how are you? Chief Priest ask me to tell you, Buddha wish to see you. Please

you come with me." He politely indicated the door.

With a shrug Baker complied, and the rest of us followed. Down the hall we marched again, through all of the turns of the morning and so at last into the corridor which ended in a window. This time we passed the aluminum door and continued right to the end. The window, we now saw, was really a French door which opened to a small balcony. Our guide opened the door and pushed us out. The balcony, we found, was about four hundred feet above the valley floor, but we did not spend much time enjoying the view.

Scarcely fifty feet in front of us stood the Living Buddha!

For a full minute we stared at each other, and then I began to realize that he was embarrassed! A wrinkle appeared between his eyes and he swallowed a couple of times. Then he spoke.

"Good afternoon, Professor Baker and party. I am happy to meet you."

The voice, and particularly the language, so startled us that for a moment nobody could think of a reply. The voice was a deep pulsing rumble, like the tone of the biggest pipes of an organ, and filled with a variety of glottal wheezings and windy overtones. I think it was through these additional sounds rather than the actual tones that we could understand him at all, for the fundamentals were surely below the ordinary limits of human audibility. What we heard and could translate into articulate words was hardly more than a cavernous whisper. The important thing was that we could understand him, and, more than that, that he was friendly. Baker made reply at last.

"Good afternoon. We also are happy, and most honored. How should we address you?"

"My name is Kazu Takahashi, but I am told that I am also Buddha. This I would like to discuss with you, if you have time."

"We have time for nothing else," said Baker.

Buddha's eyebrows raised slightly. "So I was right. They are going to kill you."

Baker glanced at us meaningfully. This giant was no fool. Suddenly there came over me a little thrill of hope. Maybe—but he was speaking again.

"I have not before had opportunity to talk to men from west. Only from China, Japan, Soviet State. You will tell me of rest of world?"

"With pleasure," said Baker.

I became conscious that the door behind us was opening. I glanced back, and saw Phobat Rau, surrounded by guards and priests. He gestured to us to come in. Baker turned, while Buddha bent his head closer to see also.

Rau came to the door. "Come back," he called urgently. "You are in grave danger. You must come in."

QUITE DEFINITELY I had no desire to go in. Neither did Baker, for he shook his head and moved away from the door. Rau's face was suddenly enraged. He made a quick motion to the guards, and then held them back. With an evident effort he calmed himself and called again, softly.

"Please come in. I was hasty this morning. I am sorry. I think now I see a way for you to return safely, if you will come in."

For reply, Baker turned to the giant. He climbed upon the rail of the balcony.

"Take us away from here, if you wish to hear what we have to say. Take us, or they will kill us!"

In answer, Buddha extended one hand, palm up, so that it was level with the balcony. For an instant I hesitated at the sight of that irregular rough surface, big as a city block, and then I

heard steps behind us and a click. With one accord we leaped over the parapet just as a scattered volley of pistol shots rang out. We tumbled head over heels down a rough leathery slope into a hollow, and then the platform lifted like a roller coaster. In a second the balcony, the whole hillside vanished and we went rocketing up into the blue sky. A gale of wind blew past, almost carrying us with it, and then a portion of the surface rose and became thirty foot tree trunks which curled incredibly over and around us, forming a small cavern which shut out the wind and held us securely against falling.

Buddha had closed his fist.

For a breathless fifteen seconds we were carried in darkness, and then the great hand unfolded. It was lying flat on an immense smooth area of concrete, which we presently identified as the higher of the two tables. We got to our feet and staggered to the edge of the palm. Here we met another problem, in the form of a rounded ten foot drop-off to the concrete table. As we stood looking down in dismay, the other vast hand came up from below, carrying a heavy sheet of metal. This was carefully placed with one edge on the hand and the other on the table, forming a ramp. Holding onto each other for mutual support, we made our way to the table and there literally collapsed. Chamberlin became violently sick, and none of the rest of us felt much better. The giant carefully withdrew both hands and watched us from a distance of a hundred yards, with only the head and upper part of his body visible.

From our position on the concrete platform I now looked closely at Kazu for the first time. My first impression was not so much one of size, as of an incredible richness of detail. It was like examining a normal human through a powerful microscope, except here the whole was visible at once. Even at a distance of two hundred feet, the hair, the eyelashes, the pores of the skin showed up with a texture and form which I had never noted before, even in my studies as a biologist. The general effect was most confusing, for I would lose and regain the sense of scale, first thinking of him as an ordinary man, and then realizing the proportion. The nearest comparison that I can think of is the sensation when standing very close to a large motion picture screen, but here the image is blurry whereas I saw with a clarity and sharpness that was simply unbelievable.

Buddha seemed to realize our condition, for he smiled sympathetically, and waited until poor Walt had recovered somewhat from his nausea. Baker, as spokesman, renewed the conversation. Walking a few steps toward the front of the enormous desk, he spoke in a loud clear voice.

"You have saved our lives. We thank you."

The great head nodded benignly, and after a thoughtful pause, that strange voice began.

"My teachers have brought others before me to lecture, but always I know that they speak only as they are told to speak. You are different. I am glad that I saw you last night, or I would never know that you had come."

He paused, evidently gathering his thoughts for the next foray into an unfamiliar language. Then he leaned closer.

"Phobat Rau has spoken to you of my birth and life here?"

Baker nodded, and then, realizing that Kazu could not see such a microscopic movement, he replied orally.

"He has told us your story in detail. It is a marvel which we can yet scarcely believe. But the greatest marvel of all is that you speak our language, and comprehend so quickly."

Kazu thought of this for a moment.

"Yes, my teachers have done well, I think. I have studied the writings of many great men, but there is yet much that I do not understand. I think it is important that I understand, because I am so strong. I do not wish to use this strength for evil, and I am not sure that those whom my teachers serve are good. I have studied the words of the great Buddha, but now my teachers say that I am to appear as if I were Buddha. But that is an untruth, and untruth is evil. So now I hope that you will tell me the whole truth."

Kazu stepped back a quarter of a mile, and then reappeared, dragging his four hundred foot chair. Sitting on this, he crouched forward until his face was hardly a hundred feet before us, and his warm humid breath swept over us like wind from some exotic jungle. Baker took a moment to marshal his thoughts, and then came forward, threw out his chest and began

speaking as though addressing an outdoor political meeting.

How long Baker spoke I do not know. He began by outlining history, contrasting the ideals of Buddha and other great religious leaders with the dark record of human oppression and cruelty. Kazu's vast face proved most expressive of his feelings as he listened intently. When Baker came to the subject of communism, he leaned over so far backward in his effort to be fair that I feared that he was overdoing it, and would convince the giant in the wrong direction.

WHEN BAKER was only part-way through his lecture, he remarked that some point in geography could be better explained by a drawing, but that obviously he could not make one large enough for Kazu to see. At this the giant laughed and pointed to his big leanto.

"Come," he said, "you shall draw on a piece of glass and the light will make it great that I may see."

We were thereupon transferred the mile distance to the building by a reversal of our previous route: up the ramp to Kazu's ample palm, a series of breathtaking swoops through space, and we were in the vast interior of the leanto.

The furnishings of this study room consisted of a chair, a sloping writing desk and a screen fully two hundred feet square on the wall opposite the chair. Beside the chair was a sort of bracket on the wall which supported the projection room. Kazu placed his hand level with an elevated balcony leading to this and we scrambled off. With Baker in the lead, we opened the door and entered the projection room. It was larger than we had estimated from outside, when we had the immense furniture for comparison. The dimensions were perhaps forty feet on the side, and most of the interior was taken up by shelves on which were stored thousands of films of book pages, maps, photographs and diagrams of all kinds. In the side facing the screen were a number of ports and a battery of movie and still projectors. One of the latter was, we saw, adapted for writing or drawing on the glass slide while it was being projected. We studied this for a moment, located the special marking pencil, and then I called out of the door that we were ready.

"Look also," replied Kazu, "you will find device which magnify voice. My teachers use this always."

A further search disclosed a microphone and the switch for a public address amplifier. Baker settled down to his now illustrated lecture.

After he had talked himself hoarse, Baker asked each of the rest of us to speak briefly on our own specialties. I was the last, and I was practically through when I became aware that we were not alone in the room. I gave Martin a nudge, and turned from the microphone to face eight of the uniformed guards, led by our friendly yellow-robed priest. Only now he wasn't friendly, and he carried a heavy automatic which was carefully aimed right at us.

"Very clever, gentlemen," he said. "You took good advantage of your chance with our simple giant, did you not? Tried your best to ruin the whole work of Pan-Asia just to save your miserable skins. Well, you shall not—"

He was interrupted by the thunder of Kazu's voice.

"Please continue, Mr. Cady. I find it most interesting. Why do you stop?"

I took a step toward the microphone, but a menacing gesture with the gun stopped me. I looked from yellow-robe to Baker. After a moment's hesitation, the latter spoke.

"I'm afraid, my friend, that you have misjudged the situation. I admit that we jumped into Buddha's hand to escape from Phobat Rau, but if you are familiar with the expression, our leap was from the frying pan into the fire. Your giant is holding us prisoner, and even now forces us to tell him things on pain of death."

The priest looked astonished, and the gun barrel dropped slightly.

"No one," continued Baker in a sincere tone, "could have been more welcome than you. But"—his voice dropped and he took a step toward the other—"we must be careful. If he should even suspect that you are here to rescue us, he would crush this room like an egg!"

The priest, now thoroughly alarmed, glanced about nervously, his automatic pointing at the floor. The guards, who knew no English, looked at each other in surprise.

Baker took quick advantage of the confusion.

"We must not allow him to become suspicious. I will continue talking over the microphone while your guards take my friends to safety."

With this he stepped to the microphone and projector. The priest seemed for an instant about to stop him, and then he turned to the guards and gave a series of rapid orders. They advanced and surrounded Martin, Walt and me, and indicated by gesture that we were to go with them to the walk-way which led to the wall of the great room. In panic I looked at Baker, but he was bent over the glass plate of the projector, drawing something and speaking in his precise clipped voice.

"I shall now show you a map of the United States and indicate the principal cities. First, on the Atlantic coast we have New York..."

We were out of the room and on the gallery. For a moment I thought that Kazu might see us, and then I realized that the whole place was dark and that he was concentrating on Baker's silly map. Briefly I wondered what Baker was up to anyway, but this sudden terrible turn of events made any kind of calm reasoning very difficult.

Outside the projection room, Baker's voice came booming over the loudspeakers.

"Chicago is located at the southern end of Lake Michigan, just west of Detroit, while St. Louis —"

S UDDENLY the room lights came on, and the whole structure of the bridge shook as from an earthquake. The guards ahead abruptly turned and scrambled back, knocking us over in their haste. I grabbed the handrail for support, and then became aware of a vast blurry shape looming above and of a hand as large as a building that reached down toward the guards, now halfway back to the projection room. In a sort of hypnotic horror I watched the thumb and forefinger snap them and a thirty foot section of railing off into space. Then, very gently the hand plucked the roof from the projection room, exposing Baker and the priest. Yellow-robe dropped his gun and ran towards a corner, but Baker neatly tripped him and then stepped back for Kazu to finish the job.

A moment later Baker came out onto the bridge. Martin tried to frame a question.

"What—how did he—?"

Baker grinned and pointed silently at the screen. We looked and understood. Where a map of the United States should have been was a scrawled message in English: "Priests here taking us captive."

We returned to our lecturing, but after what had happened neither we nor Kazu felt much like concentrating on geographical or other general facts. We all knew that Rau had not given up. For the moment we were protected by Kazu's immense power, but there were some doubts in our minds as to how long this might last. After all, Rau was his lifelong mentor and protector. For the moment the young giant seemed to have taken a liking to us, but perhaps it was only a passing whim. Presently Rau would assert his authority and Kazu, his curiosity satisfied, would hand us over—in exchange, perhaps, for supper.

After about fifteen minutes more of lecturing, Kazu interrupted.

"Soon will be sunset. Suggest we return to privacy of high table to discuss next move."

The transfer took less than a minute. The afternoon, we saw, was indeed far gone. None of us had realized how long we had been in the projection room. Once we were safely back on the

table, Kazu addressed us, using his softest voice, which was a hurricane-like whisper.

"Phobat Rau plans for me to go soon to head armies of Asia in fight against west. My study of history has raised doubts of rightness of such war, and what you say strengthen these. Now I must see for myself, without guidance or interference from Rau. But I need assistance, to direct me how I shall go. I believe you will be fair. Will you help me?"

For a moment the incongruity of that last question prevented our grasping the full implication of Kazu's statement. Then Baker, evidently realizing that this was no time for philosophic quibbling, signified our assent. Kazu proceeded at once to practical plans.

"Tonight I sleep in usual place, where you disturbed me with small rock slide. But you must stay awake by turns to guard against capture. In morning you direct my steps away from Yat to mainland of Asia, where—"

He stopped. Seeing the direction he was looking, we hastened to the edge of the table. Far below, on the ground, was a railroad train surrounded by a small crowd of priests. For a moment we were puzzled, and then we saw that the train was made up entirely of gondola cars such as are used to carry coal and other bulk cargo. But these cars, a dozen in number, contained a white substance which steamed. We did not require more than one guess. The train brought Kazu's supper.

The giant made a slight bow of thanks to the delegation at his feet, and proceeded carefully to empty the cars into his dish. Then, instead of squatting at his low eating table, he brought the dish and other utensils up to our level and dumped a ton or so of steaming rice at our feet. Evidently he wished us to share his supper. We had no tools other than our hands, but since we had not eaten in almost twenty-four hours, we did not stop for the conventions. Scooping up double handfuls of the unseasoned stuff, we fell to even before Kazu had gotten his ponderous spoon into position. Suddenly, Baker yelled at us.

"Hold it!" He turned to Kazu who had a spoonful poised halfway to his mouth. "Kazu, don't eat. This rice is doped!"

I took a mouthful of the rice. There was not much flavor—only a little salt which I guessed came from seawater. I explored the stuff with my tongue, and presently noticed a familiar taste. It took me a moment to place it. Yes, that was it. Barbiturate. The stuff in sleeping pills.

Kazu bent his great face over us. Baker briefly explained. Kazu appeared at first puzzled. He dropped the spoon into the dish and pushed it away from him. His brow wrinkled, and he glanced down at the ground. Walking to the edge, we saw that the group of priests were standing quietly around the engine, as though waiting for something. What they were waiting for evidently struck Kazu and us at the same time. Kazu leaned toward them and spoke in Japanese. His voice was angry. Baker tried to translate.

"He says, 'how dare you poison Buddha'—Look, they're running off—"

The next second things happened too rapidly for translation or even immediate interpretation. Kazu spoke again, his voice rising to an earth shaking roar at the end. The little men below were scattering in all directions, and the train started to back off down its track. Suddenly Kazu turned and picked up his hundred foot steel dish. He swept it across the table and then down in a long curving arc. There was an earth shaking thud and where the running figures and the train had been was now only the upturned bottom of the immense dish. Priests and cars alike were entombed in a thousand tons of hot rice!

Kazu now turned to us. "Come," he said, "Yat is not safe, even for Buddha. Now we must leave here at once."

He extended his hand towards us, and then, with another thought, turned and strode to the leanto. In a moment he returned carrying the projection room, with a tail of structural steel and electric cables hanging below. This he placed on the table and indicated that we were to enter. As soon as we were inside, Kazu clapped on the roof and picked up the stout steel box. We clung to the frame supporting the projectors, while a mass of slides, film cans and other debris battered us with every swooping motion. We could not see what was going on outside, but the giant seemed to be picking up a number of things from the ground and from inside the leanto. Then he commenced a regular stride across the crater floor. Now at last we got to a window, just in time to glimpse the nearby cliff. On the rim, some hundreds of feet above I saw a group of uniformed men clustered about some device. Then we were closer and I saw that it was an anti-aircraft gun, which they were trying to direct at us. I think Kazu must have

seen it at the same moment, for abruptly he scrambled up the steep hillside and pulverized gun, crew and the whole crater rim with one tremendous blow of his fist.

I got a brief aerial view of the whole island as Kazu balanced momentarily on the rim, and then we were all thrown to the floor as he stumbled and slid down the hillside to the level country outside of the crater.

V

UP UNTIL this moment we had been engaged in an essentially personal enterprise, even though its object was to secure information vital to the United Nations. From this time on, however, the personal element was to become almost completely subordinate to the vast problems of humanity itself, for, as we were to soon find, we had tied ourselves to a symbol that was determined to live up to all that was claimed or expected of him, and further, who depended upon our advice. The situation for us was made much worse because at first we doubted both his sincerity and good sense—in fact, it was not until after the Wagnerian climax of the whole thing that we at last realized, along with the rest of the world, exactly what Kazu Takahashi believed in.

Kazu crossed the flat eastern half of Yat in less than a minute, evidently wishing to get out of range of Rau's artillery as quickly as possible. His feet tore through the groves as a normal man's might through a field of clover; indeed, he experienced more trouble from the softness of the ground than from any vegetation. As we were soon to learn, one of the disadvantages of Kazu's size lay in the mechanical properties of the world as experienced by him. Kazu stood almost 600 feet high, or roughly 100 times the linear dimensions of a normal man. From the simple laws of geometry, this increased his weight by 100^3 or 1 million times. But the area of his body, including the soles of his feet which had to support this gigantic load, had increased by but 100^2 , or ten thousand times. The ground pressure under his feet was thus 100 times greater, for each square inch, than for a normal man. The result was that Kazu sank into the ground at each step until he reached bedrock, or soil strong enough to carry the load.

At the beach he hesitated briefly, as though getting his bearings, and then waded into the ocean. The surf which had used us so violently was to him only a half inch ripple. He strode through the shallows and past the reef in a matter of seconds, and then plunged into deeper water. From our dizzy perch, now carried at hip height, we watched the great feet drive down into the sea, leaving green walls of solid water about them.

Although we did not realize it at the time, we later learned that Kazu's wading forays were attended by tidal waves which inundated islands up to a hundred miles away. This trip across a twenty mile strait swamped a dozen native fishing craft, flooded out four villages and killed some hundreds of people.

We fared better than some of these innocent bystanders, for Kazu carefully held our steel box above the sea, and presently lurched through shallow water to the dry land.

The new island was larger than Yat, and entirely given over to rice growing for Kazu's food supply. He threaded his way easily among the paddies, up through some low hills, and then down a narrow gorge into the sea again.

Ahead lay a much more extensive body of water. The sun was now hardly fifteen degrees above the horizon, and its glare plus a bank of clouds made it difficult to see the distant land. Kazu raised our room to the level of his face.

"Is that Island of Celebes?"

Baker started to pick up the microphone, and then abruptly realizing that it was dead, he shouted back from the projection port.

"I think it is. Let me look for a chart."

Kazu waited patiently while we searched, placing the room on a hilltop to give us a steadier platform. We all began a mad scramble in the mass of debris. Kazu removed the roof to give more light, but it soon became clear that there wasn't much hope. All that we could find were thousands of slides of the Chinese classics. At last we gave up. When we told Kazu this, he looked across the water and wrinkled his brow. We could sense the reason for his anxiety, for the distant shore could hardly be less than seventy miles away. Mentally I reduced this to terms I could understand. Seven tenths of a mile, of which an unknown percentage might be swimming.

Kazu's voice rumbled down to us, "I would prefer to wade. I cannot swim well." He peered down into our roofless box anxiously.

"If we only had one chart," began Baker, when Walt, who had been rummaging near the projector window, called to us.

"Take a look over there, just around the point."

We saw the prow of a ship. There was a moment of terror lest it be an Indonesian coast patrol, and then we saw that it was just a small island steamer of a thousand tons or so, chugging along less than two miles offshore.

I THINK that the idea hit us all at the same instant. Baker, as spokesman, called to Kazu. The giant, for the first time, grinned at us. Then he picked up our box and waded into the ocean.

I don't think the people in the little ship even saw us until we were practically upon them, because of the mist and sunset glare. What they thought I can only imagine, for the water was little more than knee deep and Kazu towered fully four hundred feet above it. Then a hand as big as the foredeck reached down and gently stopped them by the simple expedient of forming a V between thumb and fingers into which the prow pushed. I heard the sound of bells and saw tiny figures scurrying about on the deck. On the opposite side a number of white specks appeared in the water as crewmen dove overboard. Our box was now lowered until its door was next to the bridge. We leaped aboard, under cover of a great hand which obligingly plucked away the near wall of the pilot house. We entered the house just as the captain beat a precipitate retreat out the other side, and after a moment in the chartroom we found what we wanted. While Martin stood watch at the far door, we took advantage of the electric lights to examine the chart of the east coast of Celebes. That island, we found, was only sixty miles away and the deepest sounding was less than six hundred feet. Kazu could wade the whole distance.

THE NAUTICAL charts did not show much detail for the interior of Celebes, but from our elevation we could see enough of the terrain to guide Kazu quite well. The course which Baker plotted took us across the northern part of the big island, and far enough inland to avoid easy detection from the sea. As the day progressed, the sky gradually filled with clouds, promising more rain, so that I doubt if many people saw us. Those who did, I suspect, were more interested in taking cover than in interfering with Kazu's progress.

The journey across Celebes took only a couple of hours, and so, by noon, we stood on the shore of the strait of Macassar, looking across seventy-five miles of blue water to the mountains of Borneo.

It was not until now that Baker explained what he had in mind in choosing this particular route.

"We're going to Singapore," he said. "Get under the protection of the Royal Navy and Air Force before the commies spot us and start dropping bombs and rockets. If Buddha wants to see the world, he'd better start by getting a good bodyguard."

Kazu seemed agreeable when appraised of this plan, and so we began to plot a more detailed route over the 1,100 miles between us and the British crown colony. We stood at the narrowest part of the strait, but unfortunately most of it was too deep for Kazu to wade. Reference to the charts showed that by going 250 miles south, we would reduce the swim to about 30 miles, or the equivalent of some 500 yards for a normal man. To this was added a wade of 120 miles through shallows and over the many small Balabalagan Islands.

Suddenly Kazu's hand swept down and came up with a 60-foot whale, which he devoured in great gory bites. After this midocean lunch, Kazu resumed his wading. In the middle of the strait the depth exceeded five thousand feet, and he had to swim for a time, after fastening our box to his head by means of the trailing cables.

At length the sea became shallow once more, Kazu's feet crunched through coral, and the coast of Borneo appeared dimly ahead. We were all taking time for the luxury of a sigh of relief when Chamberlin screamed a warning.

"Planes! Coming in low at three o'clock!"

Fortunately Kazu heard this also, although the language confused him. Precious seconds were wasted while he held the box up to his face for more explicit directions. The planes, a flight of six, were streaking towards us just above the wavetops. We could see that they carried

torpedoes, and it was not difficult to guess their intentions.

"Go sideways!" Baker yelled, but Kazu did not move. He simply stood facing the oncoming aircraft, our box held in his left hand at head level, and his right arm hanging at his side, half submerged. Either Kazu was too frightened to move, or he did not understand the danger. The planes were hardly a half mile away now, evidently holding their fire until the last moment to insure a hit. What even one torpedo could do I didn't dare to contemplate, and here were twelve possible strikes. After all, Kazu was made of flesh, and after having seen the effect of TNT on the steel side of a ship, I had little doubt as to what would happen to him.

Now the last seconds were at hand. The planes were closing at five hundred yards, the torpedoes would drop in a second.... But suddenly Kazu moved. His whole body swung abruptly to the left and at the same time the right hand came up through the water. We, of course, were pitched headlong, but we did briefly glimpse a tremendous fan of solid green water rising up to meet the planes. They tried to dodge but it was too late. Into the waterspout they flew, all six with their torpedoes still attached, and down into the ocean they fell, broken and sinking. It was all over in a moment. We were so amazed it was moments before we could move.

Kazu turned and resumed his stroll toward Borneo without a single backward glance at the havoc wrought by his splash.

AS WE entered the foothills I became conscious for the first time of a curious change. It was a psychological change in me, a change in my sense of scale. We had been carried so long at Kazu's shoulder level, and had grown so accustomed to looking out along his arms from almost the same viewpoint as his, that we were now estimating the size of the mountains as though we were as large as Kazu! It is difficult to express just how I felt, and now that it is all over, the memory has become so tenuous and subtle that I fear I will never be able to explain it so that anyone but my three companions could understand. But this was the first moment that I noticed the effect. The mountains were suddenly no longer 4,000 foot peaks viewed from a plane 500 feet above ground level, but were forty foot mounds with a six inch cover of mossy brush, and I was walking up their sides as a normal human being! The change was, as nearly as I can express it, from the viewpoint of a normal human being under extraordinary circumstances to that of an ordinary man visiting a miniature world. The whale to me was now a fat jellyfish seven inches long, the Chinese warplanes were toys with an eight inch wingspread, the little steamer of yesterday was a flimsy toy built of cardboard and tinfoil. We had, in effect, identified ourselves completely with Kazu.

And so we climbed dripping from the Straits of Macassar, and entered the mists and jungles of Borneo.

Our course toward Singapore carried us across the full width of southern Borneo, a distance, from a point north of Kotabaroe to Cape Datu, of almost six hundred miles.

After about an hour, the blue outlines of the Schwanner Mountains appeared ahead and presently we passed quite close to Mt. Raya, which at 7,500 feet was the greatest mountain Kazu had ever seen. Then, dropping into another valley, we followed the course of the Kapuas River for a time, and finally turned west again through an area of plantations. Here Kazu made an effort to secure food by plucking and eating fruit and treetops together. The result was unsatisfactory, but presently we came upon a granary containing thousands of sacks of rice. The workmen, warned by our earthquake approach, fled long before we reached it. Kazu carefully removed the corrugated iron roof and ate the whole contents of the warehouse, which amounted to about a handful. The sacks appeared about a quarter of an inch in length, and seemed to be filled with a fine white powder.

Following this meal, Kazu drained a small lake, getting incidentally a goodly catch of carp, although he could not even taste them. Then, since it was now late in the afternoon, he turned northwest to the hills to spend the night.

The last part of the journey was almost entirely through shallow water—three hundred miles of the warm South China Sea. Baker planned to make a before dawn start, so that we might

be close to the Malay Peninsula before daylight could expose us to further attack. Kazu suggested pushing on at once, but Baker did not think it wise to approach the formidable defenses of Singapore by night. And so for a second time we sought out an isolated valley where Kazu could snuggle between two soft hills, and we could get what sleep was possible in the wreckage of the projection room.

The China Sea passage was made without incident. We started at three A.M. in a downpour of rain, and by six, at dawn, the low outline of the Malay Peninsula came into sight. We made our landfall some forty miles north of Singapore, and at once cut across country toward Johore Bahru and the great British crown colony.

The rice paddies, roads and other signs of civilization were a welcome sight, and I was already relaxing, mentally, in a hot tub at the officers club when the awakening came. It came in the form of a squadron of fighter planes carrying British markings which roared out of the south without warning and passed Kazu's head with all their guns firing. Fortunately neither his eyes nor our thin shelled box was hit, but Kazu felt the tiny projectiles which penetrated even his twelve inch hide. As the planes wheeled for another pass he called out in English that he was a friend, but of course the pilots could not hear above the roar of their jets. On the second try two of the planes released rockets, which fortunately missed, but this put a different light on the whole thing. A direct hit with a ten inch rocket would be as dangerous as a torpedo. Baker tried to yell some advice, but there was no chance before the planes came in again. This time Kazu waved, and finally threw a handful of earth and trees at them. The whole squadron zoomed upwards like a covey of startled birds.

By the time we had reached a temporary haven, Kazu was thoroughly winded, and we were battered nearly insensible. Baker, in fact, was out cold. Kazu slowed down, and then finding no directions or advice forthcoming, he resumed a steady dogtrot to the north. Martin and I tried to draw Baker to a safer position beside the projector, but in the process one of the steel shelves collapsed, adding Martin to the casualty list. Walt and I then attempted to drag the two of them to safety, but in the midst of these efforts a particularly hard lurch sent me headfirst into the projector, and my interest in proceedings thereupon became nil. Walt, battered and seasick, gave up and collapsed with the rest of us. Further efforts at communication by Kazu proved fruitless. Buddha was on his own.

VI

I AWOKE with a throbbing headache to find the steel room motionless, and warm sunshine streaming into my face. Looking around, I saw that my three companions were all up and apparently in good shape. Baker was the first to notice that I was awake, and he came over immediately.

"Feel better?" he inquired cheerfully.

He helped me up and I staggered to the window. The room was perched, as usual, on a hilltop, but the vegetation around was not tropical jungle. I turned to the others, noting as I did that the room was cleaned up.

"Where—" I started, with a gesture outside. Baker stopped me and led me to an improvised canvas hammock.

"You really got a nasty one," he said. "You've been out two days."

"Two days!" I tried to rise, but the effort so increased the headache that I gave up and collapsed into the hammock.

"Just lie quiet and I'll bring you up to date." Baker drew up an empty film box for a seat. "I was knocked about a bit myself, you know, and by the time I came around, our friend had trotted the whole length of the Malay Peninsula and was halfway across Burma."

"But the people at Singapore," I began, "Don't those fools know yet—"

"Things have changed," said Baker. "The biggest change has been in Buddha's mind. He took our advice and almost got killed for his pains. Now he's on his own."

I tried to look through the open door. Baker shook his head.

"He's not here. No—" this in answer to my startled look, "just off for a stroll, towards China this time, I think. Yesterday he visited Lhasa. Said it's quite a place. Talked to the Lamas in Tibetan, and they understood him. He calls it playing Buddha."

Baker got up and searched among the maps, finally finding one of southeast Asia. He spread it out before me, and placed a finger rather vaguely on the great Yunnan Plateau between Burma and China.

"We're here, somewhere. Buddha doesn't know exactly, himself. He made it to Lhasa by following the Himalayas, and watching for the Potala. I hope he'll find his way back this time—be a bit awkward for us if he doesn't."

He stepped outside and brought in some cold cooked rice and meat.

"Kazu brought us a handful of cows yesterday. They were practically mashed into hamburger. I guess you'd call this pounded steak."

I ate some of the meat and settled back to rest again. Presently I dozed off.

When I awakened it was dark and Kazu was back. Martin had started a big campfire outside, evidently with Kazu's aid, for it was stoked with several logs fully eight feet in diameter and was sending flames fifty feet into the sky. Kazu himself was squatting directly over it, staring down at us. When I came to the door, he spoke.

"Ah, little brother Bill. I am so sorry that you were hurt. I am afraid I forgot to be gentle, and that is not forgiveable in Buddha."

I made an appropriate reply, and then waited. Evidently he had as yet told nothing of his day's expedition. Finally he plucked a roasted bullock from the fire and popped it into his mouth like a nut.

"Today," he said, "I visit Chungking, Nanking, Peking. I think I see hundred million Chinese. I know more than that see me. Also I talk to them. They understand, for miles. They expected

me. As you say, brother Llewelyn, Rau has excellent propaganda machine. Everywhere they hail me as Buddha, come to save them from war and disease and western imperialism. I speak to them as Buddha; today, I am Buddha."

Baker glanced at us meaningfully and murmured, "I was afraid of this." But Kazu continued.

"Today all of China believes I am Buddha. Only you and I know this is not so, but we can fight best if they believe."

"Have you eaten?" inquired Martin. Kazu nodded.

"At every temple they collect rice for Buddha. Many small meals make full belly. But," his face wrinkled with concern, "many thousands could live on what I eat today. China is so poor. So many people, so little food. I must find ways to help them." He paused, and then resumed in a firmer tone.

"But not in communist way. Rau was right about western imperialists, but he named wrong country. Russian imperialists have enslaved China. First we must drive communists from China. Then I can help."

"Amen," said Baker softly. Then, to Kazu....

"We've been trying to do just that for years. But how can you fight seven hundred million people?"

"Don't fight—lead them."

It sounded so simple, the way he said it. Well, maybe he could. But now Baker had more practical questions.

"What does the rest of the world think about all this? Have you talked to any Europeans, or heard a radio?"

Kazu shook his head. "But I caught communist General. He tell me Russia sending army to capture me. He say only hope is for me to surrender, or Russian drop atom bomb on me. Then I eat him."

We must have showed our startled reaction, for Kazu laughed.

"Not much nourishment in communist. I eat him for propaganda—many people see me do it. Effect very good." He paused. "Not tasty, but symbolic meal. China is like Buddha, giant who can eat up enemies."

"What are you going to do next?" asked Baker.

"That is question. I need more information. Where is leadership in China I can trust? What will Russians do? How long for British and Americans to wake up?"

"You're not the only one asking these questions," said Baker. "But maybe you can get some answers."

BEFORE Kazu could continue, Chamberlin held up his hand for silence. We listened, and presently heard above the crackle of the great bonfire, the throb of an airplane engine. Kazu heard it too, for he suddenly arose and stepped back out of the light. We four also hastened into the shadows and peered into the dark sky. The approaching aircraft displayed no lights, but presently we saw it in the firelight—a multi-jet bomber bearing American markings. We rushed back into the illuminated area and danced up and down, waving our arms. The huge plane swung in a wide circle and came in less than five hundred feet above the hilltop. I could make out faces peering down at us from the glassed greenhouse in front. As it roared past, one wing tipped slightly in the updraft from the fire, and then suddenly the plane stopped dead in its tracks. The jets roared a deeper note as they bit into still air, and then very slowly and gently the great ship moved back and down until it rested on its belly beside our steel box. Not until it was quite safe on the ground did Kazu's hands release their hold on the wings, where he had caught it in midair.

The eleven crew men from the B125 came out with their hands in the air, but their expressions were more incredulous than frightened. Baker added to the unreality of the situation by his greeting, done in the best "Dr. Livingstone-I-presume" manner.

"Welcome to Camp Yunnan. Sorry we had to be so abrupt. I'm Baker, these are Chamberlin, Martin, Cady."

"I'm Faulkner," replied the leader of the Americans automatically, and then he abruptly sat down and was violently sick. We waited patiently until he could speak again.

"My God, I didn't believe it when we heard." He was talking to no-one in particular. "One minute we're flying at 450 miles per hour, the next we're picked out of the air like a—like a—"

He gave up. Kazu came into the firelight and squatted down, quite slowly. Baker introduced him.

"Colonel, I'd like you to meet Kazu Takahashi." The American arose and extended his hand, and then dropped it abruptly to his side. Kazu emitted a thunderous chuckle.

"Handshake is, I fear, formality I must always pass up, even at risk of impoliteness."

I think that the language, and particularly the phrasing, jolted the airmen even more than the actual capture. Colonel Faulkner kept shaking his head and murmuring "My God!" for several moments, and then pulled himself together. "So the story's really true after all," he finally said. "We got it on the radio day before yesterday at Manila. It was so garbled at first that nobody could make any sense. Ships reported thousand foot men wading in the ocean. New Macassar radio reported that Buddha was reincarnated, and then denied the story. Announcements of a pitched battle at Singapore, and frantic reports from every town on the peninsula. Then a statement by some Lama on Macassar that the British had kidnaped Buddha, had him hypnotized or doped, and were using him to exterminate China."

He paused and looked up at Kazu, who had bent down until his face was only a hundred feet above us.

"Part of it is true," said Baker. "There was a giant wading in the ocean. As to the rest, I fear we have caught the red radio without a script. I'll tell you the story presently, but just now there are more urgent things to do. Is your radio working?"

Faulkner nodded and led us towards the plane. Baker continued.

"Briefly, Kazu is a mutation produced by the Hiroshima bomb. He's been groomed for twenty years to take over as the world's largest puppet, but it turns out he has a mind of his own. We just happened along, and are going on for the ride. Want to join the party?"

The Colonel grinned for the first time as we all squeezed into the radio compartment of the plane.

"I like travel," he said. "It's so broadening."

The radio was not only operative, but proved most informative as well. Every transmitter on earth, it seemed, was talking about the giant. In the course of an hour we listened to a dozen major stations and got as many versions of the story. The communist propaganda factory had obviously been caught flat footed, for their broadcasts were a hopeless mixture of releases evidently prepared for the planned introduction of Buddha to the world, and hastily assembled diatribes against the capitalist imperialists who had so foully captured him. Some of the Russians apparently were not in on the secret of Buddha's dimensions, for they described in detail how a raiding party of eighty American commando-gangsters had landed by parachute on Yat, seized Buddha, and taken him away in a seaplane.

Before we went to sleep that night, Kazu extinguished the fire so that no one else would be attracted as the Colonel had been.

NEXT morning the first question concerned transportation. Colonel Faulkner naturally did not want to leave his plane, particularly since it was undamaged, but a takeoff from our

narrow mountain ledge was obviously impossible, so he regretfully ordered his crew to unload their personal effects for transfer to our box. At this point Kazu stepped in.

"If you will enter your airplane and start jets," he said, "Buddha will serve as launching mechanism."

Before the takeoff, the Colonel transferred his spare radio gear to our box, along with an auxiliary generator, and we agreed on a schedule to keep in touch. Then Kazu gently picked up the bomber, raised it high above his head and sent it gliding off to the north. The engines coughed a couple of times and then caught with a roar. Colonel Faulkner wagged his wings and vanished into the haze.

Our plan was to follow the plane east to the Wu River, and then north to its meeting with the Yangtze, which occurs some seventy five miles below Chungking. While the B125 cruised around us in a great circle, we loaded our belongings into the box, and Kazu picked us up and signalled the plane that we were ready. Colonel Faulkner's intention had been to circle us rather than leave us behind with his superior speed, but in a moment it became clear that this would not be necessary. Kazu set off down the canyon at a pace better than three hundred miles per hour, and the Colonel had to gun his motors to keep up.

We passed only a few small towns on the Wu. Kazu had been here before, and had evidently stopped to talk and make friends, for we observed none of the fright which had formerly greeted his advent. Instead, crowds ran out to meet us, waving the forbidden Nationalist flag and shooting off firecrackers. Kazu spoke briefly in Cantonese to each group, and then hurried on. Baker explained that he was giving them formal blessings, in the name of Buddha.

An hour's time brought us to Fowchow, on the mighty Yangtze Kiang. Here Kazu turned left, wading in the stream, and negotiated the seventy odd miles to Chungking in fifteen minutes.

The distance from Chungking to Hankow is somewhat more than five hundred miles. For much of this distance the Yangtze is bounded by mountains and rocky gorges, but in the final 150 miles, the hills drop away and the river winds slowly through China's lake country. Kazu made good time in the gorge, but his feet sank a hundred feet into the soft alluvial soil of the lowlands and he had constantly to watch out for villages and farms.

Buddha had not visited Hankow before, but he was expected. Even before the city came into view, the roads were lined with people and the canals and lakes jammed with sampans. Just outside of the city we noticed a small group of men in military uniform under a white flag. We guessed that they represented the communist city government, and so did Kazu, for he set our box beside the group and ordered the spokesman to come in for a parlay. The unfortunate officer who was picked obviously did not relish the idea, particularly after Martin cracked in English, "He doesn't look fat enough." Giving Martin a glare, he drew himself up stiffly and said, "General Soo prepared to die, if necessary for people of China."

The communist General showed somewhat less bravado after the stomach turning ascent to the six hundred foot level, but he managed to get off a speech in answer to Kazu's question. As before, Baker gave us a running translation.

"He says welcome to Hankow. The people's government, ever responsive to the will of the citizens, joins with all faithful Buddhists in welcoming Buddha, and in expressing heartfelt thanksgiving that rumors claiming Buddha to be a puppet of western imperialists are all false. Now he's saying that there is to be a big party—a banquet—for Buddha, in the central square. Rice has been collected and cooked, and a thousand sheep slaughtered to feed hungry Buddha."

Kazu replied formally that while he appreciated the hospitality of the people of Hankow, he could not accept food from the enemies of China. These words, which were clearly audible to the entire city, were greeted with cheers by the throng below. The General took this in, thought about it a moment, and then made a neat about face.

"General Soo," said he stoutly, "was communist when he believed communism only hope for China. You have changed everything. General Soo now faithful Buddhist!"

"May I," said Baker with a grin, "be the first to congratulate General Soo on his perspicacity."

AS THE General had promised, there was a great banquet spread. In spite of Soo's protestations, Baker insisted on sampling each course rather extensively for sleeping potions or poison, but either the idea had not occurred to the communists, or there hadn't been enough time, or poison available.

For the most part the civil government of Hankow joined with General Soo in a loudly declared conversion to Buddhism without communist trappings. In spite of Baker's skepticism, I believed that most of them were quite sincere. At least, they sincerely wanted to be on the side with the most power, and for the time being at least, Kazu seemed an easy winner. General Soo, in particular, insisted on making a long speech in which he declared the Russians to be the true "western imperialists", now unmasked, who since the days of the first Stalin had sought to enslave China with lies and trickery. Baker shook his head over this, and privately opined that Soo was a very poor fence straddler: such remarks went beyond the needs of expediency, and would probably completely alienate him from the Kremlin. However, the crowd thought it was all fine.

Kazu replied with a short, and generally well planned statement of his policy.

"Those who follow me," he concluded, "have no easy path. They must be strong, to throw off the yoke of those who would enslave them, but they must be merciful to their enemies in defeat, even to those who but a moment before were at their throats. For though we win the war, if we at the same time forget what we have fought for, then we have indeed lost all. I proclaim to all China, and to her enemies both within and without our borders, that the faith of Buddha has returned, and that interference in China's affairs by any other nation will not be tolerated."

Colonel Faulkner had landed at the Hankow airport and now, with his crew, shared our private banquet on the terrace of the city's largest hotel, only a few hundred feet from where Kazu squatted. Under cover of the cheering and speechmaking, he relayed to us some news which he had heard on the radio, which was not quite so rosy.

It seemed, first, that the Chinese III Army, under General Wu, had declared itself for Buddha, and was engaged in a pitched battle with the Manchurian First Army north of Tientsin. The communist garrison at Shanghai, where there was a large population of Russian "colonists", had holed in, awaiting attack by a Buddhist Peoples Army assembled from revolting elements of the II and VII Corps at Nanking. A revolt at Canton, far to the south, had been put down by the communists with the aid of air support coming directly from Russia. The most ominous note, however, was a veiled threat by old Mao himself that if mutinous elements did not submit, he might call upon his great ally to the east to use the atomic bomb. Mao spoke apparently from near Peking, where he was assembling the I and V Armies.

We digested this news while Kazu finished the last of his 1000 sheep. We all cast anxious glances into the sky. Soviet planes at Canton meant that they could be here also, and Buddha, squatting in a glare of light in the midst of Hankow, was a sitting duck for a bombing attack.

As soon as the main part of the formalities were over, Baker managed to get Kazu's attention, and informed him of the situation. Kazu's reaction was immediate and to the point.

"We do not await attack. We go north to free our brothers, and to instruct our errant General Mao in Buddha's truth."

By the time we were packed and in our travelling box, the time was eight-thirty. Reference to our map showed the airline distance from Hankow to Peking to be about 630 miles, and Buddha, greatly refreshed by the food and rest, promised to reach the capital by eleven.

To make walking easier, Baker plotted a route which avoided the lowlands, particularly the valley of the Yellow River, in favor of a slightly longer course through the mountains to the east. We started northwest, splashing through the swamps and lakes around Hankow at first, and presently reached firmer ground in the Hawiyang Shan. We followed the ridge of these mountains for a time, and then dropped to the hilly country of Honan Province. At first the night was very dark, but presently the light of a waning moon made an occasional fix possible, although navigation was confusing and uncertain at best.

We splashed across the Yellow River at ten o'clock, somewhere east of Kaifeng, and for a time were greatly slowed by what appeared to be thick gumbo.

Our speed improved once we got up into the rugged Taihang Mountains. Here also we felt safer from air observation or attack, although Kazu was soon panting from the exertion of crossing an endless succession of fifteen to thirty foot ridges. This was indeed rough country, terrain which had protected the lush plains of China for centuries against the Mongols. Here the great wall had been built, and presently, in the moonlight, we saw its trace, winding serpentlike over the mountains.

We followed the Wall for almost two hundred miles—all the way, in fact, to the latitude of Peking—before we swung east again for the final lap to Mao's capital.

DURING the last hour we trailed an antenna and listened in on the world of radio. The news was not good. The Shanghai garrison had sprung a trap on their disorganized attackers, and were marching on Nanking. Mao's armies were closing the southern half of a great pincers on Wu's troops, and only awaited the dawn to launch the final assault. Worst of all, there had been reports of increasing Soviet air activity over the area; a major air strike also apparently would come with daylight.

We were scarcely halfway from the edge of the city to the moated summer palace when a small hell of gunfire broke out around Kazu's feet. He jumped, with a roar of pain, and then lashed out with one foot, sweeping away a whole city block and demolishing the ambush. Limping slightly, he made the remaining distance by a less direct route and at last stood at the moat before the palace. The ancient building, and, indeed, everything about, was quite dark. Kazu peered about uncertainly, and then raised our box to ask for advice. Baker was pessimistic.

"I don't think you'll find General Mao here. But at this stage of things, I don't believe it would matter if you did. The decision will be made tomorrow by the armies."

Kazu stepped carefully over the moat and wall, and sat down wearily in the gardens of the summer palace. We peered with interest at the foliage, marble bridges and the graceful buildings, illuminated only by ghostly moonlight. With Kazu squatting among them, they looked like models, a toy village out of ancient China. I wished that a picture might be taken, for surely never before had Buddha been in so appropriate a setting.

While Kazu rested, we examined his feet. A number of machine gun bullets had entered his foot thick hide, and there was one wound a yard long from which oozed a sticky gelatinous blood. There did not appear to be any serious damage, although the chances of infection worried us. In any event, there was nothing we could do except douse it with buckets of water from the moat. Kazu thanked us formally, as befitted a deity, and added, as though talking to himself,

"Now is the most difficult time. How can I bring peace without the use of violence? I can appear before these armies and command them to stop. But what if they do not obey? Should I use force? Oh, that I were really the Great Lord Buddha—then I would have the wisdom, the knowledge that is a thousand times more potent than giant size. Oh Buddha, grant me wisdom, if only for a moment, that I may act rightly."

Presently the giant stretched out full length in the garden and, while we kept guard, slept for a time.

The first pale glow of dawn appeared soon after five, and we were preparing to awaken Kazu when Martin held up a warning hand. We listened. At first we heard nothing, and then there came a deep drone of jets. Not a single plane, not even a squadron. Nothing less than a great fleet of heavy aircraft was approaching Peking from the west. Baker fired his automatic repeatedly near Kazu's ear, and presently his rumbly breathing changed and he opened his eyes.

"Planes," said Baker briefly. "It's not safe here. Better get moving."

Kazu sat up, yawning, and we climbed into the box. The giant took a long draught from the nearest fishpond and tied our cage to his neck and shoulder so that both of his hands would be free.

By this time the noise of the planes had increased to a roar, which echoed through the silent city. Kazu arose to his full height and waited. A pinkish line of light had now appeared along the eastern horizon which, I realized with consternation, must silhouette the mighty tower of Kazu's body to whomever was coming out of the western shadows.

AND THEN then we saw them. A great fleet of heavy bombers, flying high, far beyond even Kazu's reach. Baker seized the glasses to look, and then gave a cry of warning. The leading plane had dropped something—a black spherical object above which blossomed a parachute. I think that Kazu realized what it was as soon as we, but he still stood quietly. Baker lost whatever calm he had left and screamed, "Run, run—it's the H-bomb!" but still Kazu did not move. In a moment another of the deadly spheres appeared, directly over us, and then a third. Now at last Kazu moved, but not toward safety. He walked slowly until he was directly beneath the first bomb, and reached up, until his hand was a thousand feet in the air. Down came the bomb, quite rapidly, for the parachute was not very large.

"What's the matter with the fool," yelled Martin. But now Baker seemed to get Kazu's idea.

"It has barometric fusing—it's set to detonate at a certain altitude. If that's below a thousand feet, and Kazu can catch it, it won't go off!"

Martin started something about detonation at two thousand feet, when Kazu gave a slight jump and his hand closed about the deadly thing, as though he had caught a fly. We cowered, expecting the flash that would mean the end, but nothing happened. In Kazu's crushing grip the firing mechanism was reduced to wreckage before it could act. When Buddha opened his palm, it contained only a wad of crumpled metal inside of which was a now harmless sphere of plutonium.

In quick succession Kazu repeated this performance with the other two bombs, wadded the whole together and flung it to the ground. Then he turned to the north.

By the time we had cleared the city, it was quite light, and we could see a dark pall of smoke in the northeast. The armies which had been poised last night had finally met, and a great battle was underway. Kazu hurried towards it, and presently we could hear the crackle of small arms fire and the heavier explosions of mortars and rockets. It took a moment or so for Kazu to get his bearings. Evidently we were approaching Mao's legions from the rear. Still keeping from the roads to avoid killing anyone, Kazu advanced to near the battle line, and there stopped.

"My brothers," his voice thundered above the heaviest cannon, "my poor brothers on both sides, listen to me. Stop this killing. Stop this useless slaughter. No one can win, and all will —"

Suddenly there was a blinding flash of light, a thousand times brighter than the newly appeared sun. It came from behind us, and in the terrible instant that it remained we could see Buddha's enormous shadow stretching out across the battlefield. Kazu stopped speaking and braced his shoulders for the blast. Subconsciously I was counting seconds. Four, five, six, seven—A sudden, insane hope gripped me. If we were far enough from the burst—and then the blast hit us, and with it, the sound. Kazu pitched forward a hundred yards, and stumbled on as far again. Then he recovered. One hand reached behind him, to the back that had taken the full brunt of heat and gamma radiation, and a half animal cry escaped from his lips. Over his shoulder we got a glimpse of the fireball, of the fountain of color which would presently form the terrible mushroom cloud. The thunder of the explosion reverberated, and was replaced by silence. The crackle of rifles, the thud of field pieces had ceased. From our perch we looked down at a scene straight from Dante's Inferno. About Kazu's feet was a shallow ravine in which a thousand or so communist troops had taken cover. These were now scrambling and clawing at the sides like ants trying to get away. Vehicles were abandoned, rifles thrown away. A few had been burned, but it seemed that for the most part the soldiers had been sheltered from direct radiation by the wall of their canyon, and by Kazu's great shadow.

For an eternity, it seemed, Kazu stood there, swaying slightly, one hand still pressed against

his back, while the little men writhed about his ankles. Then, quite slowly, he raised one foot. I thought that he was going to walk away, but instead, the foot moved deliberately until it was directly over the ravine, and then, like a tremendous pile driver, it descended. A faint and hideous screaming came up to us, which abruptly ended. The foot came up, and again descended, turning back and forth in the yielding earth. Slowly Kazu brought his hand up, and lifted our box so that he could look at us. As he did so, I saw that half of his hand was the color of charcoal, and I smelled a horrible odor of tons of burnt flesh. Now at last he spoke, in a voice that we could scarcely understand.

"Guide me," he said, "Guide me, Baker. Guide me to Moscow!"

VII

KAZU walked quite slowly from the battlefield. His gait was unsteady, and at first we feared that he would collapse. We could not tell how deep the burns were, nor whether he was internally hurt by the blast. He appeared to be suffering from some kind of shock, for he did not speak again for a long time. But gradually he seemed to gather himself together, and we became almost convinced that the shock was more psychological than physical, and that even the atom bomb was powerless against his might.

We did not remain to see the outcome of the battle, but presently Martin turned the radio on. The news at first was fragmentary. Word that a Russian plane had atom bombed the new Buddha spread across China, and with it ended the last shreds of communist prestige. The armies which had been pro-communist turned on their officers. Mao himself was murdered on the battlefield before Kazu was out of sight. The former red defenders of Shanghai massacred twenty thousand hapless Russian emigrants. All across Asia the story was the same, a terrible revulsion. At first it was believed that Buddha had died instantly; later rumor had it that he had crawled off to Mongolia to die.

Radio Moscow at first was silent. The horror of what had been done was too much even for that well oiled propaganda machine. At last a line was patched together: the bomb had been dropped by an American plane, bearing Russian markings. Then Radio Peking announced that Chinese fighters had shot it down and that the crew was Russian. To this Moscow could think of only one reply: Radio Peking was lying; the station had been taken over by the Americans! A little later another Moscow broadcast announced solemnly that the whole story was wrong —Buddha hadn't been there at all!

All the time that this confused flood of talk was circling the globe, Kazu Takahashi, still clinging to the battered steel projection room, was striding across Siberia, staggering now and then, but still maintaining a pace of better than three hundred miles per hour.

At first he simply walked westward without any directions from us. By ten o'clock he had put a thousand miles between him and the coast and was well across the southern Gobi desert. Now Baker, who had been almost as stunned as Kazu, began to look into his maps. He had nothing for central Asia as detailed as the charts we had used in Borneo and Celebes, but he presently found a small scale map that would do. With this he identified the snowy range of mountains now towering on our left as the Nan Shan, northernmost bastion of Tibet. He hurriedly called to Kazu to turn northwest before he entered the great Tarim Basin, for the western side of that vast desert was closed by a range of mountains 20,000 feet high. Even with the new course, our altitude would be above six thousand feet for many miles.

At noon we were paralleling another mighty range, the little known Altai Mountains, and at one o'clock we passed the Zaisan Nor, the great lake which forms the headwaters for the Irtysh River. Here Kazu paused for a drink, and to rinse his burns with fresh water. Then we were away again, this time due west over more mountain tops, avoiding the inhabited lowlands. At three-thirty the hills dropped away and there appeared ahead the infinite green carpet of the Siberian forest. Kazu stopped again at another lake, which Baker guessed might be Dengiz. At four-thirty we crossed a wide river which we could not identify, and then at last commenced to climb into the foothills of the southern Urals. Just in time Baker discovered that Kazu's course was taking him straight toward the industrial city of Magnetogorsk. We veered north again into the higher mountains and then turned east to the forests.

We were sure now that Kazu must be delirious, but after a while he stopped at the edge of a lake.

"How far are we from Moscow?" he asked.

"Twelve hundred miles, more or less," said Baker. "You can make it by nine, maybe ten, tonight."

Kazu shook his head.

"No. Tonight I must rest, gather strength. We start two AM, arrive Kremlin at sunrise. We catch them same time they catch me. No warning whatever."

Kazu lay down on the swampy lake bottom while we huddled on the floor of the box, courting sleep which never came.

At one o'clock we at last gave it up, and Baker fired his pistol until Kazu stirred. While he was awakening we listened to the radio. Things had calmed down quite a bit, and as we pieced the various broadcasts together, an amazing realization came over us. Everyone believed that Kazu was dead! Evidently no word of our trip across all of central Asia had been received! Search planes, both Soviet and Chinese, were combing the eastern Gobi for the body.

OTHER news included a war declaration by China upon the Soviet Union, and the announcement that the Russian Politbureau had scheduled a meeting in the Kremlin to consider the emergency.

We passed all of this on to Kazu, whose grim face relaxed for the first time in a fleeting grin.

"Good reporters. Know what are most savory items. Now guide me well, and away from towns until we reach it."

The trip across the Urals and the plains of European Russia retains a nightmare quality in my mind, comparable only with that first night on Yat. Even Baker, who plotted the course, can remember it little better. Now and again we caught glimpses of the dim lights in farms, and once we saw the old moon reflected in the Volga. Much of the low country was covered with ground fog, which reached to Kazu's waist; this, combined with the blackout which had been ordered in every town, made observation by us or the Russians either way difficult. A few people saw Kazu, and their reports reflect a surrealist madness; those who had the horrifying experience of suddenly meeting Buddha in the early morning mists were universally incapable of making any coherent report to the authorities.

And then, just as the ghostly false dawn turned the night into a misty gray, we saw ahead the towers of Moscow. Now Kazu increased his speed. Concealment was no longer possible; he must reach the Kremlin ahead of the warning.

At 500 miles per hour Buddha descended upon Moscow. His plunging feet reduced block after block of stores and apartment houses to dust, and the sky behind us was lighted more brightly by the fires he started than by the dull red of the still unrisen sun. Now at last I heard the tardy wail of a siren and saw armored cars darting through the streets. On the roof of an apartment house I glimpsed a crew trying to unlimber an anti-aircraft gun, but Kazu saw it also, and smashed the building to rubble with a passing kick.

And then we were at the Red Square. St. Basil's at one end, the fifty foot stone walls of the Kremlin along one side and Lenin's Tomb like a pile of red children's blocks. Kazu stood for a moment surveying this famous scene, his feet sunk to the ankle in a collapsed subway. It was my first view of the Red Square, and somehow I knew that it would be the last, for anyone. Then Kazu slowly walked to the Kremlin and looked down into it. I remember how suddenly absurd it all seemed. The Kremlin walls, the very symbol of the iron curtain, were scarcely six inches high! The whole thing was only a child's playpen.

But now Kazu had found what he wanted. Without bothering to lift his feet, he crushed through the walls, reached down and pulled the roof from one of the buildings. He uncovered a brightly lighted ant-hill. Like a dollhouse exposed, he revealed rooms and corridors along which men were running. Kazu dropped to his knees and held our box up so that we might also see.

"Are these the men?" he asked. Baker replied in the negative.

Kazu abruptly pressed his hand into the building, crushing masonry and timbers and humans all into a heap of dust, and turned to a larger building. As he did, something about it seemed familiar to me. Yes, I had seen it before, in newsreels. It was—

But again Kazu's fingers were at work. Lifting at the eaves, he carefully took off the whole roof. Through a window we saw figures hurrying toward a covered bridge connecting this building with another. At Baker's warning, Kazu demolished the bridge, and then gently began picking the structure to pieces. In a moment we saw what we were after. A wall was pulled down, exposing a great room with oil paintings of Lenin and Stalin on the wall and a long conference table in the center. And clustered between the table and the far wall were a score of men. Anyone would have recognized them, for their faces had gone round the world in posters, magazines and newsreels. They were the men of the Politbureau. They were Red Russia's rulers.

There was an instant of silent mutual recognition, and then Kazu spoke to them. As befitting a god, he spoke in their own tongue. Exactly what he said I do not know, but after a little hesitation they came around the table to the precarious edge of the room where the outer wall had been. Kazu gave further directions and held up our steel box. Fearfully they came

forward and jumped the gap into our door. One by one they made the leap, some dressed in the bemedalled uniforms of marshals, others in the semi-military tunics affected by civilian ministers. The last was the man who had succeeded Stalin on his death, and who had taken for himself the same name, as though it were a title.

As he entered our room, we saw that he even looked like the first Stalin, clipped hair, moustache and all. He was a brilliant man, we knew. Brilliant and ruthless. He had grown up through the purges, in a world which knew no mercy, where only the fittest, by communist standards, survived. He had survived, because he was merciless and efficient and because he hated the free west with a hatred that was deadly and implacable.

I OFTEN wonder what his thoughts were at that moment. He came because he was ordered to and because he knew the alternative. He knew he was to die, but he obeyed because by so doing he could prolong life a little, and because there was always a chance.

At that moment I deeply regretted knowing no Russian. The twenty one who came in talked among themselves in short sentences. They saw us, but ignored us. Baker spoke, first in English and then in German. The one called Stalin understood the German, for he looked at Baker searchingly for a moment, and then turned away. Only one of them replied. This was Malik, the man who wrecked the old United Nations and then became Foreign Minister after Vishinsky was murdered. He ignored the German and spat out his reply in English.

"You will not live to gloat over us. He will kill you too, all of you!"

We can never be sure of what Kazu planned, because now—and of this I am certain—his plans changed. There was suddenly a stillness. We waited. Then I ran to the window and looked upward into the great face.

It had changed. A deep weariness and a bewilderment was upon it—as though Kazu had suddenly sickened of destruction and slaughter. His whispering was the roaring of winds as he said, "No—no. This is not the way—not Buddha's way. They must talk. They must understand each other. They must sit at tables and settle their differences, that is my mission."

Kazu took five steps. Below us was an airfield.

"Can you fly?" he asked us. Chamberlin had been an army pilot in the fifties. Kazu pushed the box up to a transport, an American DC8.

"Go in this," he said quite clearly. "Go in this plane until you are in Washington. Tell America about me. Tell America I am coming—that I am bringing—*them*. Tell America there must be—peace."

We scrambled out of the steel box, leaving the Russians in a miserable heap in one corner.

He arose to his full height and carefully adjusted the cables around his neck. I noticed that his fingers fumbled awkwardly, and that he staggered slightly. Then he spoke once more.

"I cannot cross Atlantic. Only route for Buddha is Siberia, Bering Strait, Alaska. But this not take long. You better hurry or I get to Washington first!"

He turned on his heel and walked a few steps to the end of the runway.

"Now get in plane. I give little help in takeoff!"

We climbed into the familiar interior of the big American transport. A moment later it arose silently, vertically like an elevator. Chamberlin, in the pilot's seat, hurriedly started the engines. He leaned from a window and waved his arm, and we shot forward and upward. For a moment the plane wavered and dipped, taking all of Walt's ability to recover. Then with a powerful roar, the big DC8 zoomed over the flames of Moscow toward the west.

THE FLIGHT to London and the Atlantic crossing seemed unreal. We lived beside the radio. War and revolt against the Soviets had broken out everywhere. With the directing power in the Kremlin gone, the top-heavy Soviet bureaucracy was paralyzed. The Yugoslavs marched into the Ukraine, Chinese armies occupied Irkutsk and were pressing across Siberia. Internal revolution broke out at a hundred points once it was learned that Moscow was no more.

Eagerly we listened to every report for word of Kazu. At first there was nothing, and then a Chinese plane reported seeing him crossing the Ob River, near the Arctic Circle. They said that he carried a box in his hand and appeared to be talking to it. Then news from the tiny river settlement of Zhigansk on the Lena that he had passed, but that he limped and staggered as he climbed the mountains beyond.

After that, silence.

Planes swarmed over eastern Siberia, the Arctic Coast and Alaska, but found nothing. Five hundred tons of C ration were rushed to Fairbanks, and tons of medical supplies for burns and possible illness were readied, but no patient appeared. At first we were hopeful, knowing Kazu's powers. Perhaps he had lost his way, without Baker and the maps, but surely he could not vanish. As the days passed Baker became more worried.

"It's the radiation," he explained. "He took the full dose of gamma rays right in his back. He might go on for days, and then suddenly keel over. He's had a bad burn outside, but it's nothing to what it did to him internally."

So the days passed, and so gradually hope died. And then, at last, there was news. It came, belatedly, from an eskimo hunter on the Pribolof Islands, in Bering Sea. He reported that a great sea god had come out of the waters, so tall that his head vanished into the clouds. But, he was a sick god, for he could hardly stand, and soon crawled on his hands. Around his neck, said the eskimo, he carried a charm, and he spoke words to this in a strange tongue. And the charm answered him in the same tongue, and with the voice of a man. And the two spoke to each other for a time and then the great one arose and walked off of the island and into the fog and the ocean.

Questioned, the man was somewhat vague as to the exact direction taken, although it seemed clear that Kazu had headed south. When Baker examined his chart of Bering Sea, he found that the ocean to the north and west, towards Siberia, was shallow—less than five hundred feet. But the Pribolofs stood on the edge of a great deep. Only twenty miles south of the islands, the ocean floor dropped off to more than ten thousand feet, for three hundred miles of icy fog shrouded ocean, before the bleak Aleutians arose out of the mists. This desolate area was searched for months by ships and planes, but no trace ever appeared from the treacherous currents of the stormy sea. Kazu had vanished.

So here ended the story of Kazu Takahashi, who was born in the days of the first bomb, and who died by the last ever to sear the world. He was believed by millions to be the incarnation of the Lord Buddha, but to four men he was known not as a god but as a great and good man.

THE END

Transcriber Notes:

This etext was produced from IF Worlds of Science Fiction November 1952. Extensive research did not uncover any evidence that the U.S. copyright on this publication was renewed.

Obvious punctuation errors have been corrected.

Corrections made:

page 6

original: wind, and its damned serious."

replacement: wind, and it's damned serious."

page 16

original: first fence, and affair of steel posts

replacement: first fence, an affair of steel posts

page 31

original: When Baker as only part-way

replacement: When Baker was only part-way

page 34

original: handfulls of the unseasoned stuff,

replacement: handfuls of the unseasoned stuff,

Unchanged:

page 16

sculpting a king sized Buddha after

sculpting is an old useage of the word

page 55

Straight, Alaska. But this not

Straight is an old useage of the word

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