

# WARRIORS OF THE SUN FLAG



GENERAL BARON KUROKI



WAR between America and Japan—which the eight million gods of our fathers forbid—the very possibility of which ought to be impossible to the common sense of either shore of the Pacific—if it ever come, as, indeed, the impossible has a way of coming sometimes, who will be the defenders in the field of the sun flag?

In such an unhappy miscarriage of Providence the command of the Pacific will be of the first and by far the end of greatest importance, for the war largely will be naval. That is another way of saying that upon the leader of our sea forces rests the heaviest responsibility.

Full of honor, ripe in years and rich in splendid achievement, Admiral Togo has been enshrined in the dignified office we call the chief of admiralty staff department. It is not likely that he will be called upon to lead again his Mikasa and the sisters of the united squadron. Upon whose shoulders, then, is his mantle to fall? Into whose hands is Nippon going to place her fate?

It is not difficult to pick the man; in fact, there is no other than Admiral Kamimura. In 1856, three years before the advent of Commodore Perry into the waters of the Yeddo bay, Kamimura came into the world. As you see, then, he was cradled in the self-same pregnant days of travail when the new Nippon was being born. And the place of his birth? Why, it was in the palatial samurai home, on that famous street called Kajiyu, in the city of Kagoshima. For a soldier's home it is hard to improve upon—it is the holy of holies of the militant Nippon. Like the rest of his comrades, he breathed from his youth up the virile atmosphere whose son is the great Seigo.

Early in the sixteenth year of his life he was permitted to take an active part on the battlefield of Shirakawaguchi—that was in the war of restoration, as the struggle between the shogunate and the imperial government of 1866-68 was called. For the youth it was bloody indeed, this first introduction to war. He was shot through the chest, and the impatience with which the young boy rushed back into the field long before the wound was completely healed has passed into a heroic chapter of our history, and many a Satsuma man has waxed eloquent over the incident about the camp fires in Manchuria.

Easily in his twentieth year upon the young soldier broke a new light—he became convinced that the first and the prime defense of the empire was the sea. In 1871, therefore, he entered our naval academy, which was then called Kaigun Heigakuryo. Since then he has been true to his second love. After three years of schooling he devoted himself to the study of high seas—on the old wooden corvette Teukuba, which was built at Malacca on the very next year after the birth of Kamimura himself, and which was bought from Englishmen—he measured the China and Formosan waters and worked himself into the good graces of many remote stretches of the Pacific.

Our young lieutenant took his post graduate course through the civil war of the tenth of Meiji (1877), through the Korean trouble of five years later, and on June 23, 1894, we find him capturing a Chinese transport as the commander of the Akitsushima. The story of the Akitsushima through the battle of the Yalu or Haiyan has never failed to tune our blood to the national anthem, which her guns and men sang to the destruction of many a hapless Chinese of the once boasted Pelyang fleet, which was and is not now. In November, 1905, at the formation of the united fleet of the Nippon navy, Vice Admiral Kamimura was given the command of the second squadron, composed of armored cruisers.

If the idealized commander in chief of the united fleet of 1904-05 would be unlikely in the future to lead the ships in person, the tactical brain of the Nippon navy of 1904 and 1905 is still in the flower of his usefulness and activity.

"As for the Sakusen" (one might translate it the framing skeleton of fight), said Admiral Togo at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese war, "We have Shimamura with us."

Today you need not take the words of Admiral Togo on Shimamura. The Russo-Japanese war comments on his ability with significant emphasis. No particular surprise, therefore, if Nippon would turn once more in her critical hour that is to be to the tactical ability of Rear Admiral Shimamura. Vice Admiral Kataoka and Vice Admiral Uriu would doubtless lead the second and third squadrons of our country. The actual school-

ing through the trying winter blockade of Port Arthur, the rigorous schooling of August 10 on the Yellow sea and the lessons they learned through the Korean straits and on the Japan sea may count for something with the officers and men who are to serve under these leaders.

Captain Vladimir Semenov of the Russian navy fought on the Tsarevitch on August 10. He saw also the battle of the Nippon sea from the bridge of Admiral Rojestvensky's flagship. The difference in the performance of the Nippon men on these two occasions shocked out of him this exclamation, "No, it was not like the 10th of August!" And since the battle of Nippon sea there are scant reasons for assuming that the Nippon navy has gone to rust. We went into the fight of 1904 and 1905 with six battleships.

As for the ships, we have many an old acquaintance, even in the first line of battle. Last year we saw the resurrection of the historic Mikasa out of the mud of Sasebo harbor, and if the Americans were to make war on us tomorrow she will be quite ready once more to carry the commander's pennant on her halcyard. Just about the time when the Mikasa was being restored to life and usefulness we saw the completion of the two sister ships—the Kashima and the Katori. The one is more than 16,000 tons displacement and the other is very close to it. Each of them carries four 12-inch guns and four ten inch rifles and each steams more than 18 1/2 knots, and these two latest additions to our navy are perhaps among the most powerful vessels afloat today.

We went into the Russian war with only six battleships; today we have 11 first class battleships, each of which, with the single exception of the Tango (the old Russian Poltava), has a speed of 18 knots or more, and the eight armored cruisers which can join the first line of battle, as indeed they did, both at the battle of August 10 and of the Japan sea, are intact, as the following table shows:

First Class Battleships.	Tonnage.	Speed. Knots.	When Built.
Kashima	15,490	18	1906
Katori	15,350	18 1/2	1906
Asahi	15,200	18	1893
Mikasa	15,140	18	1900
Shikishima	14,850	18	1898
Iwami (Oriol)	15,516	18	1902
Hizen (Retvizan)	12,700	18	1902
Sagami (Porsviet)	12,674	18	1901
Suwo (Pobleda)	12,674	18	1901
Fuji	12,420	18	1897
Tango (Poltava)	10,960	16.2	1898

  

Armored Cruisers.	Tonnage.	Speed. Knots.	When Built.
Asama	9,750	22	1898
Tokiwa	9,750	22	1898
Izumo	9,750	21	1899
Iwate	9,750	21	1900
Yakumo	9,846	20	1899
Azusa	9,307	20	1899
Kasuga	7,528	20	1904
Nishin	7,528	20	1904

\*Launched.



REAR ADMIRAL URIU

VICE ADMIRAL KAMIMURA

VICE ADMIRAL KATAOKA

Who could be the Leaders of LAND and NAVAL FORCES for JAPAN in case of WAR with AMERICA?



GENERAL NOJI



GENERAL OKU



GENERAL NOZUE



LIEUTENANT GENERAL HASEGAWA



CAPTAIN SHIMAMURA

joy a few peaceful days of quiet among the pines and the plums of his old Satsuma home, whose simple heart the frank and candid friendship of the Americans moved almost to tears, and make him lead an army against the Americans, in whom he has found so many things to admire and love. But, of course, we are talking of an "impossible war" and therefore may be permitted to indulge in strange fancies, and no one, if such an unfortunate crisis were to occur, would be surprised to see General Kuroki placed at the head of the land forces of Nippon.

It was an early day in May, 1904, a few days after General Kuroki had driven the Russians from the Yalu, and the place was the historic and time honored castle at Kiuicheng, just over the Yalu river. A telegram was handed to him. It read, "Umimo rikumo Kajiyamachi de mochi Kiridani," which by interpretation means, "Both by land and by sea Kajiyu street has done it all!" The telegram came from Admiral Kabayama, he who was the chief of the admiralty staff in our war with China; for, like Togo and Oyama and Kamimura, General Kuroki came from the self-same historic street, Kajiyu, in Satsuma, where he was born in the 11th day of the third moon, 1844.

Of Polish parentage? Pshaw! we are not jesting now. General Kuroki has just about as much Polish blood as President Roosevelt—a little less, if anything.

Like that of his friend, Admiral Kamimura, the bright day of General Kuroki fell in the closing days of the Tokugawa shogunate. With the rest of the youths, General Kuroki worshiped the great Seigo as he had never done a god. When the troublesome days of the restoration came, Kuroki found himself at the head of a subcompany, No. 4, under the command of great Seigo. It was at the famous battle of Fushimi and of Toba that Kuroki read his first primer of war, writ in actual blood and fire. All through the trying years of the restoration Kuroki fought under the imperial standard, and in 1871 he was summoned to Tokyo and made the captain of the bodyguard of the emperor. The year 1872 saw him promoted to the rank of major and placed at the head of a battalion of the Imperial guard.

In 1875 he was made a lieutenant colonel and was given the command of the Twelfth regiment infantry of the Hiroshima garrison. When the civil war of 1877 came he was commanded to take the field against his own clansmen of Satsuma, at the head of whom was the god of his youth, the great Seigo. In the heroic story of the relieving of the Kumamoto castle, which had withstood the repeated assaults of the Satsuma forces under Seigo and which had suffered from perhaps one of the most trying sieges in history, you hear the name of Kuroki mentioned more than once. The struggle was desperate. Finally, on April 15, 1877, Kuroki, at the head of his men, entered the castle. That was the beginning of the end of the civil war.

At the close of the war Kuroki was promoted to the rank of colonel and his majesty bestowed upon him the decoration of the Rising Sun. After that many years of peace.

Then came the Chino-Nippon war, which told the world how well General Kuroki utilized the days of

peace for the critical hour that was to be. To General Kuroki was given the difficult task of superintending the details of mobilization at home. He had never had such a trying job before nor since. General Kuroki has a way of taking vacations when he is placed at the fighting front, and later, when he was actually in Shantung, he was heard to say: "I have never worked and worried as much as I did then. It was the hardest job I have ever undertaken, but, of course, here on the battlefield I am enjoying myself very well. I feel as though a heavy burden had been thrown off my shoulders."

Under General Oyama Kuroki took the field in northern China at the head of the famous Kyushu boys, and the capture of Weihaiwei and General Kuroki's splendid victory is now one of the thrice told tales.

Speaking of his work in the late Russian war, some one has said that American had Lee, Germany Von Moltke, France Napoleon and England her Wellington, but these countries count their military geniuses among the dead. Happier than they, Japan has her Lee, Von Moltke, Napoleon and Wellington all in the person of living Kuroki. Perhaps he was right. At any rate, Japan would feel no misgiving in placing her destiny in the hands of this silent admiral, the child of the elder days of Nippon.

Baron General Kodama, "the brain of Oyama's camp," as he has been repeatedly called—and justly, too—is no more. Still we are not without consolation. Have we not with us General Fukushima? He was the man—I almost said the man of genius—who had given for the guidance of our Manchurian army in the last war a knowledge of Manchuria which was very much more complete and accurate than was possessed by the Russians themselves. He also made himself famous with his amiable handling of the newspaper correspondents in the last war. There are people who say that his second achievement was greater even than the first. Men have spent time and words trying to compare General Fukushima to General Kodama. They have not always succeeded in making one more brilliant than the other as a military tactician, and that says a great deal for the ability of General Fukushima.

A few months ago his majesty the emperor expressed his confidence and appreciation of General Noji in an unusual way. The general was placed by the imperial command at the head of the Nobles' college, an institution devoted entirely to the education of the children of nobility. That was another way of saying that his majesty chose the general as an ideal man (and the ideal of Japanese manhood is a union of the soldier and the scholar in one), and honored him in trusting in his hands the peculiarly delicate work of fashioning the characters of the future sovereigns of the empire and their intimate kinsmen. But on a critical day, if ever it comes, Nippon knows always that the sword of General Noji is at her command.

To General Hasegawa and his men will perhaps be given the distinction of acting as the striking arm of our army in the next campaign. Like the rest of his comrades, General Hasegawa comes from Satsuma. Like the rest of his comrades, he has devoted his entire life to the service of the country. He has served in every war since the civil war of 1877, and in the Russian war he was placed at the head of the picked men we call the Imperial guard, which upheld the fame of Kuroki's ranks. Then there is General Terauchi.

In the matter of leaders, the Japanese army actually suffers from embarrassment of riches. As the Russian war did, so doubtless would a future war pick out men who would make a Jacob's ladder of heaven sent opportunities. But very likely all the division commanders of our army, the number of which after the reorganization has been increased to 17, will be called upon to take a very active part in a future war.

These, then, are the leaders of our forces by land and by sea in a future war. But why should I think of it? Do I believe in the possibility of a war with America? Not at all. Neither does any other sensible man on this side or that of the Pacific. At the same time, no sensible people believed in the possibility of the Spanish-American war on the very day when the Maine was blown up. Great fires have often resulted from nothing. It is all very well for us to talk of the handwriting on the wall. What's the use? It is very sure that none of us reads it.