

Prologue

THIS IS THE STORY OF the breakup of traditional Chinese society. It is also the story of how Americans, pushing westward across the Pacific, Britons northward from the spice islands, Japanese southward from their gnarled archipelago, and Russians eastward from out of the Siberian steppe, intruded upon China, collided with one another, and triggered the implosion and what followed—the fusion of a new order in China and East Asia.

Because a cataclysm of such magnitude is complex, the focus of this narrative moves back and forth from Asia, to the United States and to Europe. But the center of the story is China and its transformation through ideas and violence, foreign and domestic.

The time span for the implosion, the collapsing inward of a civilization, was about a century and a half. Traditional China—backward-looking, ponderous and smug—began to experience the disruptive impact of the maritime West at the end of the eighteenth century. The fission accelerated on into the twentieth century, reaching a climax in the 1940s when the Pacific War, followed by civil war, fired the collapse of the old order and fused a new China.

In telling this story I interpose personal experiences and observations, for in a sense I was caught up in the latter phases of the collision of power and implosion.

My parents were American missionaries in China, a part of a righteous and consecrated crusade that strove with love to win China to Christ and, in so doing, did much to shatter a civilization that had endured for millennia. I was born in 1908, during the last years of the Chinese Empire, and spent my boyhood amidst this proselytizing endeavor and the transition from imperial to republican to warlord rule. My college education was in the United States, excepting for one year at Yenching University, near Peking. During the 1930s, as an American Foreign Service officer, I observed the Japanese occupation of Manchuria and invasion of Central China.

As the collision of external forces and the internal implosion culminated in

the Pacific War, I was detailed to the American commanding general in China, Burma, and India, Joseph W. Stilwell, for whom I functioned as a political adviser. This kept me moving between Chungking, Washington, New Delhi, London, and Yen-an, headquarters of the Chinese Communist movement, which even then had begun the fusion of a new order in China. In 1945 I went to the American Embassy at Moscow on assignment and from there observed the Soviet assault upon the Japanese in Manchuria and Korea, the end of World War II, and the first two years of the Chinese Civil War.

I do not carry the autobiographical asides in this narrative beyond my tour in Moscow. What followed is another story. It is sufficient to say here that I was transferred in 1947 to the Department of State as a policy planner; that I was accused by Senator Joseph McCarthy and like-minded politicians and publicists of having contributed to the American "loss" of China; then, when I declined to resign under attack, John Foster Dulles, secretary of state, fired me in 1954 as a risk to the security of the United States; and that in 1969 the State Department reexamined my case and granted me security clearance.