坂の上の雲

Clouds Above the Hill

A historical novel of the Russo-Japanese War

Shiba Ryōtarō

Volume IV

JD

Translated by Andrew Cobbing
Edited by Phyllis Birnbaum

ROUTLEDGE

Clouds above the Hill

Clouds above the Hill, a longtime best-selling novel in Japan, is now translated into English for the first time. An epic portrait of Japan in crisis, it combines graphic military history and highly readable fiction to depict an aspiring nation modernizing at breakneck speed. Acclaimed author Shiba Ryōtarō devoted an entire decade of his life to this extraordinary blockbuster, which features Japan's emergence onto the world stage by the early years of the twentieth century.

Volume IV begins with the dramatic battle of Mukden, in which Akiyama Yoshifuru's cavalry plays a major part in the action against the Cossacks. Meanwhile, Admiral Tōgō's fleet sails to the Tsushima Strait to intercept the Baltic Fleet en route to Vladivostok. With the help of Akiyama Saneyuki's strategies, the Baltic Fleet is totally destroyed and the Japanese fleet makes a triumphant return to Yokohama.

Anyone curious as to how the "tiny, rising nation of Japan" was able to fight so fiercely for its survival should look no further. *Clouds above the Hill* is an exciting, human portrait of a modernizing nation that goes to war and thereby stakes its very existence on a desperate bid for glory in East Asia.

Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–1996) is one of Japan's best-known writers, acclaimed for his direct tone and insightful portrayals of historic personalities and events. He was drafted into the Japanese Army, served in the Second World War, and subsequently worked for the newspaper *Sankei Shimbun*. He is most famous for his numerous works of historical fiction.

Translated by Juliet Winters Carpenter, Andrew Cobbing, and Paul McCarthy
Edited by Phyllis Birnbaum

Shiba Ryōtarō is Japan's best-loved author, and *Clouds above the Hill* is his most popular and influential work. In it he celebrates the transformative spirit of Meiji Japan and examines Japan's unexpected victory in the Russo-Japanese War, providing a thoughtful and thought-provoking perspective on those dramatic times and the people at their center. This distinguished translation of a modern classic is a landmark event.

Donald Keene, University Professor Emeritus,
Columbia University, USA

Shiba Ryōtarō wrote that from the Meiji Restoration of 1868 through the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, Japan transformed its premodern "brown sugar" society into a modern "white sugar" one, eagerly scooping up crystals of the new substance in the drive to create society anew. During the Pacific War, by contrast, the nation's leaders merely went through empty motions, and Japan collapsed. This book looks back on that earlier era through the lens of the later tragedy, depicting the struggles and growth to maturity of Japan's young men.

Tanaka Naoki, President of the Center for International
Public Policy Studies, Japan

When the siege of Port Arthur was over and Japan had won, the commanding generals from both sides came together face to face at Shuishiying. They paid honor to each other's bravery and expressed mutual condolences, and before parting they shook hands. I have visited that very place, which seems to me less the site of a Japanese victory than a monument to the souls of fallen soldiers on both sides. I have no doubt that *Clouds above the Hill* was also written to honor those souls.

Anno Mitsumasa, author and illustrator of
children's books in Japan

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

THE JAPAN DOCUMENTS
381 KAMIYAKIRI MATSUDO CHIBA-KEN JAPAN 271-0094
TEL: +81-(0)47-312-2201 FAX:+81-(0)47-312-2202

First published in hardback 2014
First published in paperback 2015
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Shiba, Ryōtarō, 1923–1996.
[*Saka no ue no kumo*. English]
Clouds above the hill: a historical novel of the Russo-Japanese War/
Shiba Ryōtarō; translated by Juliet Winters Carpenter, Andrew Cobbing and
Paul McCarthy; edited by Phyllis Birnbaum.
p. cm.
Saka no ue no kumo, Shiba Ryōtarō." 1. Shiba, Ryōtarō, 1923–1996.—Translations into English. 2. Japan—Politics and government—1868–1912. I. Carpenter, Juliet Winters II. Cobbing, Andrew. III. McCarthy, Paul. IV. Birnbaum, Phyllis. V. Title.
PL861.H68S2513 2012
895.6'35—dc23
2012033404

ISBN: 978-0-415-50889-6 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-138-85894-7 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-88330-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Scala Sans and Times New Roman
by Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon

Contents

Principal Characters—Volumes III and IV

Abo Kiyokazu (1870–1948): lieutenant commander, chief of artillery for the entire Japanese fleet.

Akashi Motojirō (1864–1919): colonel and agent provocateur who helped foment revolution in Russia.

Akiyama Saneyuki (1868–1918): Yoshifuru's younger brother; staff officer of Japan's Combined Fleet at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Akiyama Yoshifuru (1859–1930): Saneyuki's older brother; father of the modern Japanese cavalry; defeated Russian Cossacks in the Russo-Japanese War.

Alexeyev, Yevgeny Ivanovich (1843–1918): Russian tsar's viceroy in the Far East.

Clapier de Colongue, Konstantin Konstantinovich (1859–1944): chief of staff to Rozhestvensky in the Russian fleet.

Felkerzam, Dmitri Gustavovich von (1846–1905): commander of the Russian fleet's Second Division; died from illness just before the battle of Tsushima.

Fok, Aleksandr Viktorovich (1843–1926): the highest-ranking officer in Russia's Port Arthur army after Stoessel.

Fujii Shigeta (1858–1945): chief of staff of General Kuroki's First Army.

Gapon, Georgi Appollonovich (1870–1906): Russian Orthodox priest who organized the march that led to "Bloody Sunday" in St. Petersburg on January 22, 1905.

Grippenberg, Oskar-Ferdinand Kazimirovich (1838–1916): commander of the Russian Second Army in Manchuria; very critical of Kuropatkin's tactics of drawing the Japanese Army deep into Manchuria.

Hayashi Tadasu (1850–1912): Japan's ambassador to Britain at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Iguchi Shōgo (1855–1925): staff officer of Japan's Manchurian Army during the Russo-Japanese War.

Ijichi Kōsuke (1854–1917): chief of staff of General Nogi's Third Army.

Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909): head of the Privy Council; prime minister at the time of the First Sino-Japanese War.

Itō Sukeyuki (1843–1914): fleet commander during the First Sino-Japanese War; chief of the Navy General Staff during the Russo-Japanese War.

Kamimura Hikonojō (1849–1916): commander in chief of the Second Squadron of the Japanese Combined Fleet during the Russo-Japanese War.

Kataoka Shichirō (1854–1920): commander of the Third Squadron of the Japanese fleet.

Katō Tomosaburō (1861–1923): chief of staff of Admiral Kamimura's Second Squadron.

Katsura Tarō (1847–1913): prime minister at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Kaulbars, Aleksandr Vasilyevich (1844–1925): commander of Russia's Second Manchurian Army, the main force behind the Russian offensive in the battle of Mukden.

Kodama Gentarō (1852–1906): chief of staff at General Headquarters of Japan's Manchurian Army during the Russo-Japanese War.

Komura Jutarō (1855–1911): foreign minister at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Kondratenko, Roman Isidorovich (1857–1904): Russian general revered by officers and men at Port Arthur; known for his strong defense of the port.

Kuroki Tamemoto (1844–1923): commander of the Japanese First Army in the Russo-Japanese War.

Kuropatkin, Alexei Nikolayevich (1848–1925): Russian war minister and the commander in chief of the Russian Manchurian Army during the Russo-Japanese War.

Linevich, Nikolai Petrovich (1838–1908): commander in chief of the Russian Manchurian Army; after the battle of Mukden, succeeded Kuropatkin as commander in chief of the Russian armies in the Far East.

Makarov, Stepan Osipovich (1848–1904): commander in chief of the Russian fleet at Port Arthur and author.

Matsukawa Toshitane (1860–1928): staff officer of Japan's Manchurian Army noted for his abilities in offensive strategies.

Meckel, Klemens Wilhelm Jacob (1842–1906): German military officer and advisor to the Japanese Army.

Mishchenko, Pavel Ivanovich (1853–1918): commander of the Cossack cavalry brigade involved in many battles of the Russo-Japanese War.

Nagaoka Gaishi (1858–1933): vice chief of the Army General Staff during the Russo-Japanese War; proud of his mustache, which was said to be the world's second longest.

Nebogatov, Nikolai Ivanovich (1849–1922): commander of the Russian fleet's Third Division during the battle of Tsushima.

Nicholas II (1868–1918): Russian tsar at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Nogi Maresuke (1849–1912): commander of the Japanese Third Army during the Russo-Japanese War.

Novikov-Priboy, Alexei Silich (1877–1944): writer on board the battleship *Oryol* who participated in the battle of Tsushima.

Nozu Michitsura (1841–1908): commander of the Japanese Fourth Army during the Russo-Japanese War.

Ochiai Toyosaburō (1861–1934): chief of staff of General Nozu's Fourth Army.

Oku Yasukata (1846–1930): commander of the Japanese Second Army during the Russo-Japanese War.

Ōyama Iwao (1842–1916): army minister at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Politovsky, Evgeny Sigismondovich (1874–1905): chief engineer of the Russian fleet who was killed during the battle of Tsushima; his letters to his wife were published as a book.

Rennenkampf, Pavel Karlovich (1854–1918): commander of the Russian left flank during the battle of Mukden.

Rozhestvensky, Zinovy Petrovich (1848–1909): favorite of Tsar Nicholas II and commander of the Russian Baltic Fleet, which traveled via the Cape of Good Hope all the way to the Sea of Japan.

Sakharov, Vladimir Viktorovich (1853–1920): chief of staff to Kuropatkin in the Russian Manchurian Army.

Saneyuki (see Akiyama Saneyuki).

Semenov, Vladimir Ivanovich (1867–1910): staff officer of the Russian fleet and author.

Shimamura Hayao (1858–1923): chief of staff of the Japanese Combined Fleet at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Smirnov, Konstantin Nikolayevich (1854–1919): commander of the Port Arthur fortress.

Stakelberg, Georgi Karlovich (1851–1913): commander of the First Siberian Army Corps.

Stoessel, Anatoly Mikhailovich (1848–1915): commander of the Russian forces at Port Arthur.

Tatsumi Naobumi (1845–1907): a seasoned veteran who assisted Akiyama Yoshifuru's cavalry detachment at Heigoutai; commander of "Tatsumi's provisional army."

Terauchi Masatake (1852–1919): army minister at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Tōgō Heihachirō (1847–1934): commander in chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet in the Russo-Japanese War.

Tsunoda Koreshige (1873–1930): Nogi's staff officer who later, at Nogi's suggestion, campaigned to have Stoessel's life spared.

Uehara Yūsaku (1856–1933): chief of staff of General Nozu's Fourth Army.

Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578) A prominent sixteenth-century daimyo known for a series of battles with his rival diamyo Takeda Shingen at Kawanakajima.

Uryū Sotokichi (1857–1937): commander of the Fourth Division of the Japanese Combined Fleet in the Russo-Japanese War.

Utsunomiya Tarō (1861–1922): Japanese military attaché in London.

Vitgeft, Vilgelm Karlovich (1847–1904): acted as commander in chief of the Russian fleet at Port Arthur after Makarov's death.

Wilhelm II (1859–1941): German kaiser.

Witte, Sergei Yulyevich (1849–1915): Russian finance minister 1892–1903; strong opponent of the Russo-Japanese War.

Yamagata Aritomo (1838–1922): architect of the modern Japanese Army and chief of the Army General Staff during the Russo-Japanese War.

Yamamoto Gombei (1852–1933): Satsuma-born officer responsible for modernization of the Japanese Navy; navy minister at the time of the Russo-Japanese War.

Yoshida Shōin (1830–1859) A scholar and ideologue; he educated young samurai who would later become leaders of the Meiji government. He was executed by the shogunate.

Yoshifuru (see Akiyama Yoshifuru).

Yuan Shikai (1859–1916): Chinese army leader; first president of the Republic of China.

Chronology of Major Events

1603	Establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate
1825	Shogunate issues order to repel foreign ships
1853	U.S. Commodore Perry's warships appear in Edo Bay (now Tokyo Bay)
1854	Perry reopens Japan to the Western world, ending the period of national seclusion that began in 1639 and lasted more than two hundred years
1868	Collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate Meiji Restoration
1868–1869	Boshin War
1877	Satsuma Rebellion
1889	Promulgation of the Meiji Constitution
1894	Outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese War (August) Yalu River naval battle (September)
1895	Destruction of the Chinese fleet at Weihaiwei (February) Peace treaty signed at Shimonoseki (April) Triple Intervention (April–May)—Japan forced by Russia, France, and Germany to relinquish the Liaodong Peninsula
1898	Spanish–American War
1900	Boxer Rebellion in China
1902	Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed in London (January)
1904	Outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War (February) Battle over the crossing of the Yalu (April) Siege of Port Arthur (August–January 1905) Battle of the Yellow Sea (August) Battle of Ulsan (August)

	Battle of Liaoyang (August–September)
	Battle of Shaho (October)
	Russian Baltic Fleet departs the Baltic Sea (October)
1905	Battle of Heigoutai (January)
	Battle of Mukden (March)
	Tōgō's Combined Fleet defeats the Baltic Fleet at Tsushima off the coast of Kyushu (May)
	Peace treaty signed in Portsmouth (September)

Japanese and Russian Fleets at Tsushima

The battle of Tsushima was not merely the most climactic naval battle of the "pre-dreadnought era," the age of coal, steam, and steel warships before the First World War, it was also one of the most decisive naval battles in history. Readers will encounter the names of many Japanese and Russian ships during the course of Shiba's narrative of the battle, and a brief survey of the most significant ships and the organization of the two fleets may prove useful.

On the morning of the battle, May 27, 1905, the Japanese had four powerful new battleships—*Mikasa*, *Asahi*, *Fuji*, and *Shikishima*—each armed with four 12-inch guns. They also had eight new armored cruisers—*Asama*, *Tokiwa*, *Azuma*, *Yakumo*, *Iwate*, *Nisshin*, *Kasuga*, and *Izumo*—mostly armed with four 8-inch guns. In 1905, these were the two types of ships that counted. Indeed, it was expected that only the heaviest guns—the 12-inch battleship guns—would prove decisive. However, Tōgō did not have many battleships, and so in spite of the armored cruisers' weaker guns and armor, he was forced to include them in his single battle line to oppose the Russian battleships.

The Russians had five new battleships: *Alexander III*, *Suvorov*, *Borodino*, *Oryol*—all with four 12-inch guns—and the somewhat weaker *Oslyabya* with four 10-inch guns. These five ships were the real threat to Japanese command of the sea, and Tōgō's top priority was to destroy them. But in addition, the Russians had three older, slower, and weaker battleships—*Sisoy Veliky*, *Navarin*, and *Nicholas I*—giving them eight battleships to the Japanese four. They also had three examples of the "coast defense ship"—*Apraxin*, *Senyavin*, and *Ushakov*. These were small, slow, heavily armored ships with 10-inch guns. With their low "freeboard"—low deck height above the

water—they were likely to take waves on board in heavy seas, hindering their ability to fight in such conditions. The Russians also had several old and weak armored cruisers—*Vladimir Monomakh*, *Dmitri Donskoi*, and *Admiral Nakhimov*, only the last of which had 8-inch guns.

Thus, the Japanese had sixteen 12-inch guns, versus the Russian twenty-six 12-inch and fifteen 10-inch guns aboard their heavy armored ships. But would those aboard the six old, small, and inefficient Russian ships really be able to play a significant role in the battle? The Russians, meanwhile, had nothing equivalent to the thirty 8-inch and one 10-inch guns aboard the Japanese armored cruisers. And would these big, fast, seaworthy, and relatively lightly armored Japanese ships be able to stand up against the heavy guns and armor of the Russian battleships and coast defense ships? World naval opinion was divided.

The Japanese fleet was organized into three squadrons. The First Squadron under Tōgō—also fleet commander—included the four battleships plus the armored cruisers *Nisshin* and *Kasuga*. The Second Squadron, under Kamimura Hikonojō, included the other six armored cruisers and the Fourth Division's protected cruisers. These were all at anchor in Chinhae Bay on the Korean side of the Tsushima Strait, waiting for reports of the Russian fleet before the battle began. Along with them were much of Japan's large force of torpedo craft, that is, destroyers and torpedo boats. On patrol in the Tsushima Strait was a scouting line of two protected and four auxiliary cruisers, supported by Dewa Shigetō's Third Division of four protected cruisers. Kataoka Shichirō's Fifth Division of old warships from the battle of the Yalu, including the antiquated ex-Chinese battleship *Chin'en*, sortied to join them from its base on Tsushima Island.

Meanwhile, the battle line of the Russian fleet approached the entrance of the Tsushima Strait in three divisions, the First Division under Zinovy Rozhestvensky including the four new *Borodino*-class battleships. The Second Division, under the putative command of Dmitri Felkerzam (who had died just before and whose death remained unknown to most of the Russian fleet during the battle), included the new *Oslyabya* and the old battleships *Sisoy Veliky* and *Navarin*, and the old armored cruiser *Admiral Nakhimov*. The Third Division, under Nikolai Nebogatov, included the old battleship *Nicholas I* and the three coast defense ships.

Both fleets included numerous smaller warships. The Japanese had fourteen protected cruisers, twenty-one destroyers, and fifty-seven torpedo boats. The Russians had five protected cruisers and nine destroyers. Indeed, the Russians were seriously worried about the numerous Japanese torpedo craft, while the Japanese conversely expected great results from them. The

Russians also had their convoy of auxiliary merchant-type supply and support ships to protect.

Perhaps one final point requires some explanation. In one sense, the fleets were essentially equal, in that both contained exactly four first-class, powerful new battleships with 12-inch guns, and it was the encounter of these eight ships on which the battle turned. On paper, the battleships were very similar in size, gunpower, and speed. But while the four Japanese battleships had been built by the British, the four best Russian battleships, the *Borodino*s, were new and powerful but had serious design flaws. They were constructed according to French theories of battleship design, which were logical and imaginative, but proven incorrect during the battle. First, their sides curved inward rather than flaring outward at the waterline, so that their high main decks were narrower than their hull at the waterline, a characteristic called "tumblehome." This provided wider arcs of fire for guns mounted along the ship's side, but decreased the stability of the ship and made it more likely to capsize under the influence of internal flooding.

In addition, these ships also followed the "all or nothing" theory of armor protection. The British-built Japanese battleships had their heaviest armor along their sides at the waterline, and their sides above the "belt" were covered by thinner armor. By contrast, the armor of the French-designed *Borodino*s was mostly confined to a very strong belt at the waterline and to their gun turrets, but their high sides and upperworks were largely unprotected. French designers held the thinner armor to be useless due to the particular behavior of armor-piercing shells, which are mostly solid steel, with a small inner cavity containing explosive. These armor-piercing shells are typically detonated by the shock of the shell hitting armor plate, with a short time delay, which permits the shell to pass through the armor and explode in the interior of the ship.

Heavy armor is intended to be thick enough to prevent the penetration of the largest caliber of armor-piercing shells, including 12-inch shells. British designers included thinner armor above the heavy waterline belts of their battleships to keep out smaller-caliber shells, but the French believed that this thinner armor would only cause greater damage from the heaviest shells. According to their theory, 12-inch shells that struck the thinner armor would smash through it, but the thinner armor's resistance would shock the shell fuse enough to make it explode after penetrating, doing great damage inside the ship. Better, the French believed, to have no armor except the very heaviest, which was capable of keeping out every shell, including 12-inch shells. This heavy "belt" would serve to protect the waterline, along with the engines and magazines below it. In the French view, armor-piercing shells

that struck the high, unarmored sides of the French battleships would not receive sufficient shock to detonate, and they would pass completely through the ship without exploding, doing relatively little damage.

Such French theories had not counted on the "high-explosive" shells used by the Japanese. These had thin cases and sensitive fuses, and in addition were filled with a large quantity of the devastatingly powerful Shimose explosive. While such high-explosive shells were indeed unable to penetrate Russian armor, they did explode on contact with the extensive unarmored sides and superstructures of the Russian battleships—with terrible effect.

The tables of organization below give the names of the battleships, armored cruisers, coast defense ships, and protected cruisers on both sides, plus the nine Russian destroyers, and the obsolete Japanese warships. The many Japanese destroyers and torpedo boats are too numerous to list completely, though some of them also played important roles in the battle.

THE FLEETS AT TSUSHIMA

Japanese Combined Fleet

Combined Fleet, Tōgō Heihachirō, commander in chief
First Squadron, Tōgō Heihachirō, commander

First Division, Nashiha Tokioki, commander
modern battleships:
Mikasa, flagship of Tōgō Heihachirō
Asahi
Fuji
Shikishima
armored cruisers:
Nisshin
Kasuga
dispatch vessel:
Tatsuta

Third Division, Dewa Shigetō, commander
protected cruisers:
Kasagi
Chitose
Otawa
Niitaka

Second Squadron, Kamimura Hikonojō, commander

Second Division, Misu Sōtarō, commander
armored cruisers:
Izumo, flagship of Kamimura Hikonojō
Azuma
Asama
Yakumo
Tokiwa
Iwate
dispatch vessel:
Chihaya

Fourth Division, Uryū Sotokichi, commander
protected cruisers:
Naniwa
Takachiho
Akashi
Tsushima

Third Squadron, Kataoka Shichirō, commander

Fifth Division
old protected cruisers:
Itsukushima, flagship of Kataoka Shichirō
Hashidate
Matsushima
old battleship:
Chin'en
dispatch vessel:
Yaeyama

Sixth Division, Tōgō Masamichi, commander
protected cruisers:
Izumi
Suma
Akitsushima
old armored cruiser:
Chiyoda

Seventh Division, Hosoya Sukeuji, commander
old ironclad *Fusō*, plus a number of small gunboats and obsolete warships

Besides these ships, the First and Second Squadrons had destroyer divisions and torpedo boat divisions. The Third Squadron had torpedo boat divisions.

Russian Baltic Fleet

In spite of its apparent organization into divisions, the Russian fleet fought as a single, if ill-coordinated, unit at Tsushima. Admiral Dmitri Felkerzam was dead, and Admiral Nikolai Nebogatov did not know this, even though this made him second in command of the fleet.

Second and Third Pacific Squadrons, Zinovy Rozhestvensky, commander in chief

First Division, Zinovy Rozhestvensky, commander
modern battleships:
Suvorov, flagship of Zinovy Rozhestvensky
Alexander III
Borodino
Oryol

Second Division, Dmitri Felkerzam, commander
modern battleship:
Oslyabya, flagship of Dmitri Felkerzam
old battleships:
Sisoy Veliky
Navarin
armored cruiser:
Admiral Nakhimov

Third Division, Nikolai Nebogatov, commander
old battleship:
Nicholas I, flagship of Nikolai Nebogatov
coast defense ships:
Apraxin
Senyavin
Ushakov

Attached Protected Cruisers
Zhemchug
Izumrud

First Cruiser Division, Oskar Enkvist, commander
protected cruisers:
Oleg
Aurora
old armored cruisers:
Dmitri Donskoi
Vladimir Monomakh

Second Scouting Division
protected cruiser:
Svetlana
armed merchant cruiser:
Ural

Destroyer Flotilla
Bedovy
Buiny
Bravy
Bystry
Blestyashchy
Bezuprechny
Bodry
Gromky
Grozny

Auxiliaries (transports, hospital ships, tugs, etc.): *Almaz*, *Anadyr*, *Irtuish*, *Kamchatka*, *Koreya*, *Rus*, *Svir*, *Oryol*, *Kostroma*

Robert Patrick Largess

A Note from the Editor

This translation project has benefited from the expertise and assistance of a number of people, most importantly, Takechi Manabu, of the Center for Intercultural Communication, who has checked the translations, researched background information, and created most of the introductory materials. He is a devoted fan of *Clouds above the Hill*; Shiba Ryōtarō and our project are fortunate indeed to have his invaluable help. Noda Makito checked the translations in Volume IV.

Lynne Riggs, also of the Center for Intercultural Communication, has been our indefatigable behind-the-scenes advisor and liaison with various business concerns. Assisted by Imoto Chikako, she obtained appropriate images for the covers and the required permissions. Anne Bergasse and Kiwaki Tetsuji of Abinitio Design are the cover designers.

We are grateful for the cooperation of the Shiba Ryōtarō Memorial Foundation, with special thanks to Uemura Motoko, who helped answer our various questions.

Tamara Agvanian has toiled as our official Russian expert, going to great lengths to track down the English equivalents for the Russian names and terms in our text; Miguel Romá joined the search for other non-Japanese names. Komiyama Emiko of Komiyama Printing Company created the map graphics. HyunSook Yun was a great help with Korean names and terms. Bruce Carpenter looked up Chinese sources, interpreted Chinese poems, and provided vital advice.

Robert Patrick Largess was our military consultant, finding the appropriate English for the many guns, ships, and other military terms in the text; he compiled our explanatory "Japanese and Russian fleets in 1904" and "Japanese and Russian fleets at Tsushima." In addition, his vast knowledge in other fields has served to improve these translations in many ways.

My personal thanks to Teruko Craig and Stuart Kiang for their helpful, speedy advice.

Above all, everyone who has contributed to this translation of *Clouds above the Hill* thanks Saitō Sumio of Japan Documents, whose enthusiasm and determination have brought this project to fruition. He did not only decide to have this immense novel translated and succeed in organizing a translation team, but he has also been a tremendously loyal supporter of our efforts. His patience, generosity, and, most importantly, his calm in the face of assorted difficulties have made this work a great pleasure for all.

* * *

Clouds above the Hill was originally published as a serial in the newspaper *Sankei Shimbun* from April 22, 1968 to August 4, 1972. Traces of the serialization remained when the entire novel was published in book form; those traces can be seen in this translation as well. The section breaks are often indications of the end of a day's installment, although there are times when we've merged sections or moved the breaks around. At the start of a new section, Shiba frequently summarized what had gone on just before to help readers who had missed the previous installment. We've tried to eliminate some of these repetitions, but they are too numerous to eliminate entirely.

In the main, we have used pinyin to transcribe Chinese place and personal names; exceptions are well-known places and names like Port Arthur, Mukden, and Genghis Khan. Some of the famous sites around Port Arthur are in English.

Shiba alternates between the metric and imperial systems in his measurements, but we've made certain measures consistent: we've used the imperial system for naval guns; metric for land guns.

Japanese names are in Japanese order, the family name followed by the given name. Ages are cited in the traditional Japanese method of calculating ages—a child is one on the date of birth and two the following New Year's Day.

We have not corrected any errors Shiba may have made regarding historical fact or translations from other languages. "General Staff" refers to the Army General Staff unless otherwise noted.

Phyllis Birnbaum

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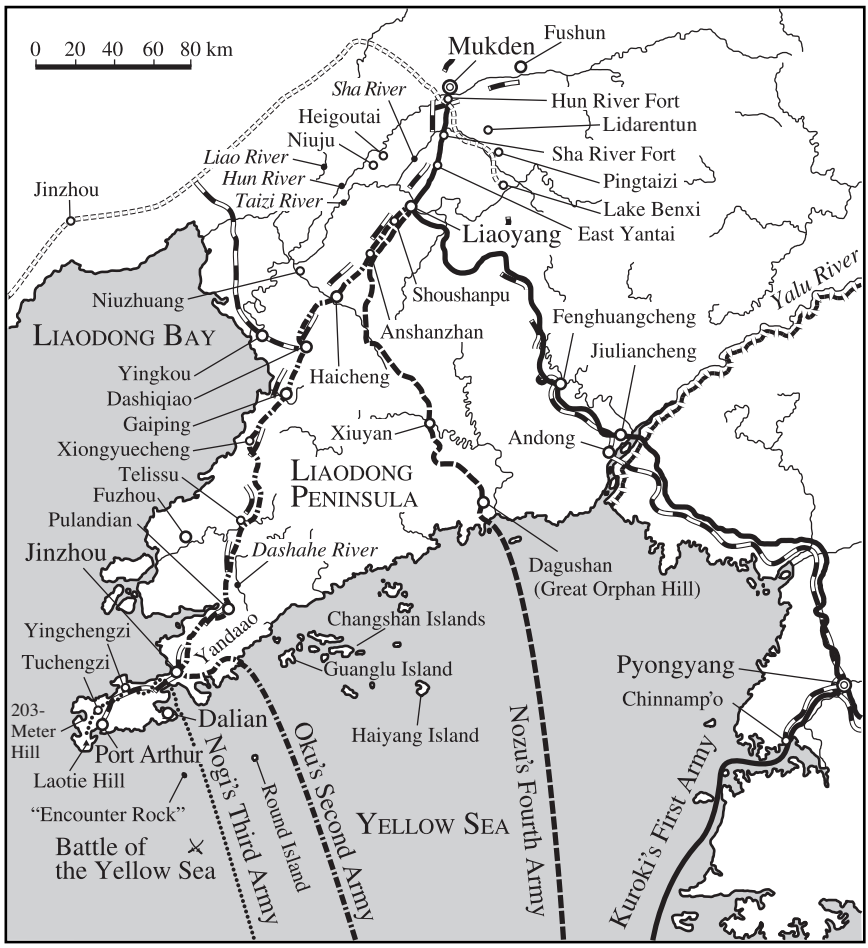
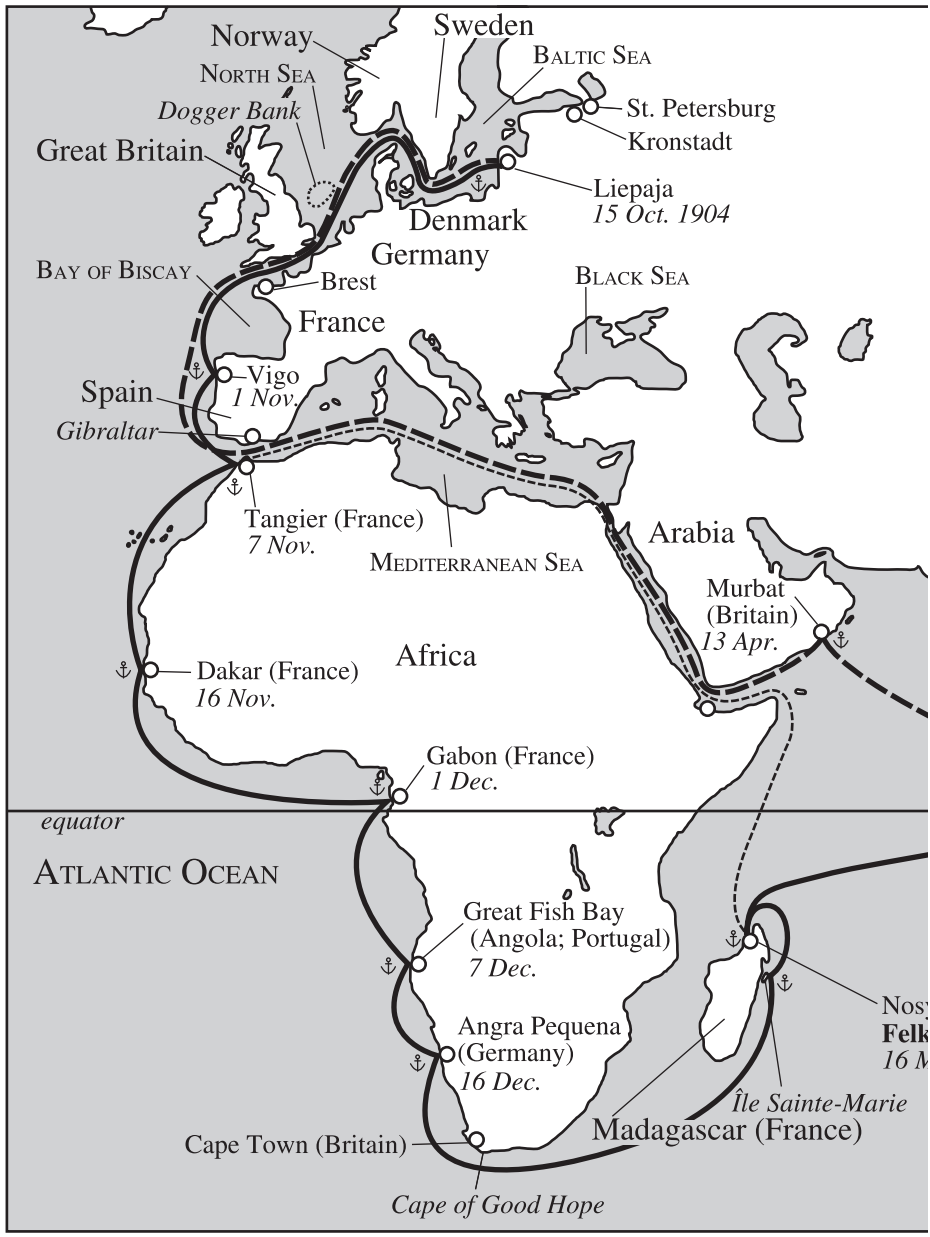
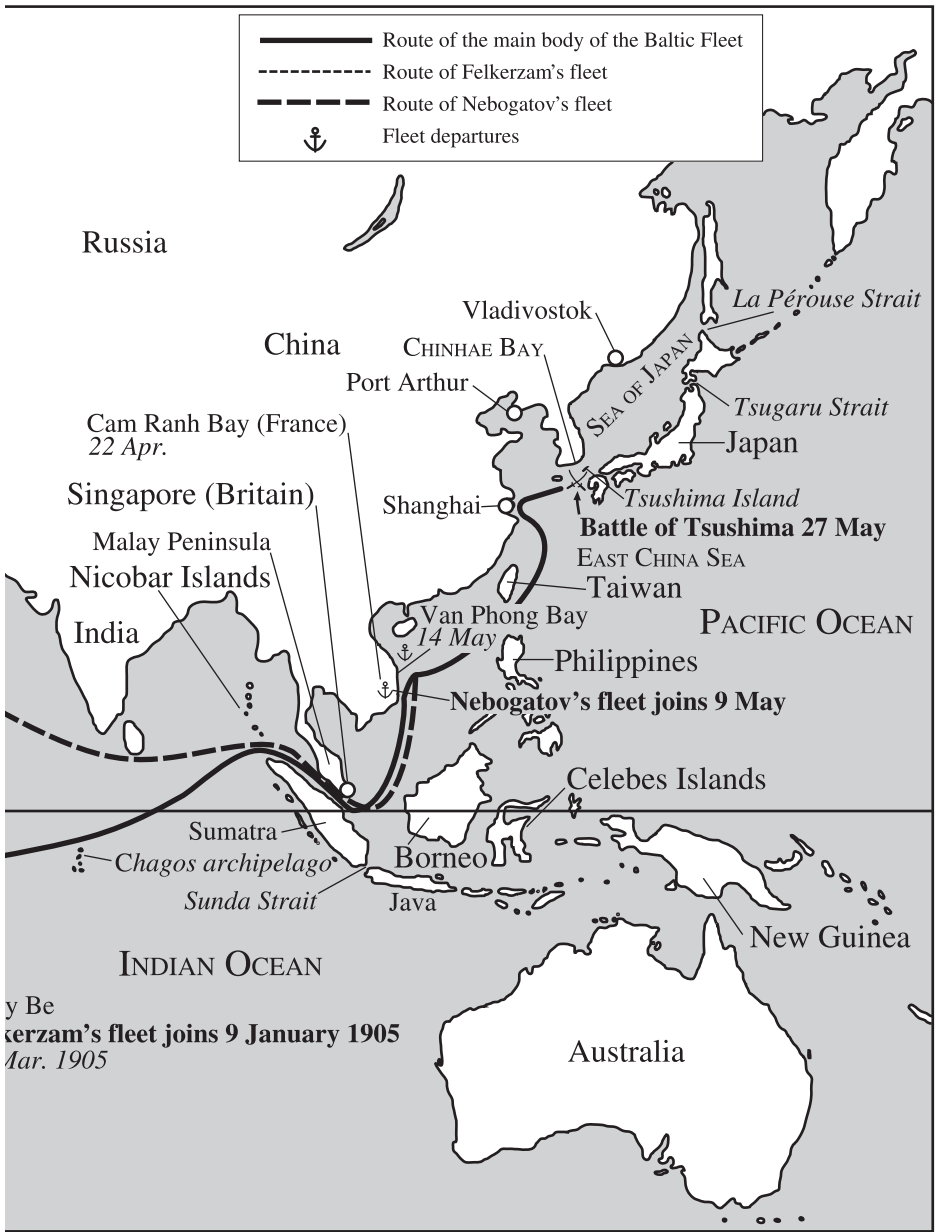


Russo-Japanese War



Route of the Baltic Fleet from European Russia to the Sea of Japan


Route of the main body of the Baltic Fleet
Route of Felkerzam's fleet
Route of Nebogatov's fleet
Fleet departures
Russia
Vladivostok
La Pérouse Strait
China
Chinhae Bay
Sea of Japan
Port Arthur
Tsugaru Strait
Cam Ranh Bay (France)
22 Apr.
Japan
Singapore (Britain)
Shanghai
Tsushima Island
Battle of Tsushima 27 May
Malay Peninsula
East China Sea
Nicobar Islands
Taiwan
India
Van Phong Bay
14 May
Pacific Ocean
Philippines
Nebogatov's fleet joins 9 May
Celebes Islands
Sumatra
Chagos archipelago
Borneo
Sunda Strait
Java
New Guinea
Indian Ocean
y Be
kerzam's fleet joins 9 January 1905
Mar. 1905
Australia

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Part 7

Translated by Andrew Cobbing

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1

BATTLE

By an extraordinary coincidence, plans for a major offensive were also underway at Alexei Kuropatkin's General Headquarters in Mukden. As we've seen, the Russians had attacked the left wing of the Japanese Army around Heigoutai in late January, striking at the detachment there under the command of Akiyama Yoshifuru; eventually, they had been pushed back following the arrival of a hastily formed relief force commanded by Tatsumi Naobumi. In addition, Kuropatkin had been so alarmed by the relief force's arrival that he needlessly gave the order to withdraw. The Russians pulled back to Mukden, having achieved nothing.

There were some young staff officers who put the failure of the operation down to their own cautious approach. "It was so close," one young captain said.

Major General Alexei Evert, who as chief of operations was the Russian counterpart of Major General Matsukawa Toshitane, agreed. "One more push and the enemy's left wing might have collapsed."

Even after the Russian withdrawal, Evert tenaciously continued gathering intelligence on the enemy's movements, and he learned that they were busily transferring their units around. Those troops sent to shore up the left wing, which had been caught off guard by the surprise Russian attack, were returning to their original positions.

"In that case," thought Evert, "they still have not grasped our plan, even after such a fierce assault on their left wing." In his view, the Japanese looked on the recent battle as just a large reconnaissance mission by the Russians, rather than a full-scale offensive. He was right.

"This battle of Heigoutai," Matsukawa Toshitane said, "was just a matter of our guests"—the Russians—"paying us a visit to have a look around."

This kind of thinking, as we know, infuriated Akiyama Yoshifuru, who had insisted all along that it had been a full-scale offensive.

"That's why," Evert concluded, "we must strike again!"

The Russians had to do so before this opportunity passed them by. If they launched an attack on an even larger scale while the enemy was reordering its lines with all these troop movements, surely the Japanese Army would be thrown into chaos. This was their chance to strike a single decisive blow in Manchuria.

Evert presented his views to Lieutenant General Vladimir Viktorovich Sakharov, who, as the chief of staff of the Russian Manchurian Army, was the Russian equivalent of Kodama Gentarō.

Sakharov had been thinking along the same lines and immediately agreed. "Go ahead and draw up the plans," he told Evert, uttering his next words as though he were reciting some heroic poem. "This won't be like the last attack—we're going to do it really properly this time!"

* * *

When Sakharov spoke about doing it properly this time, he meant that the Russian showing had been somewhat improper at the battle of Sandepu and the nearby village of Heigoutai.

Last time around, the operation had been planned by General Grippenberg, who had just arrived from European Russia. This operation had been a ruse designed to outsmart Kuropatkin. In his position as commander in chief, Kuropatkin had approved the plan, but only with great reluctance.

Grippenberg had launched a fierce attack on Akiyama Yoshifuru's position, on the Japanese left wing. He also fought hard against the enemy reinforcements as they arrived, but his operation was undermined by Kuropatkin's lack of support. If the commander in chief had only used the Russian First Manchurian Army to attack the overstretched Japanese center, as arranged beforehand, while Grippenberg kept the enemy left wing pinned down, they should have been able to break through.

But in the end Kuropatkin just folded his arms and did nothing.

Kuropatkin did not go ahead as planned because, had he had done so and won a great victory, the laurels would have gone to Grippenberg instead. He would have promptly lost his own standing in the Russian Army. In most countries, this would have been hard to believe, but in an autocracy like Russia, government officials made decisions more out of concern for their own positions than state interests.

In a related case, around the same time on January 18, the French diplomat Maurice Paléologue held a meeting in Paris with Fyodor Dubasov, a major

general of the Russian Navy. Under the terms of the alliance between the two states, the French government was, of course, supporting Russia.

Since Dubasov was a staff officer based at Imperial Headquarters in St. Petersburg, Paléologue assumed he would have a detailed knowledge of Rozhestvensky's fleet, which was then on a long voyage to Asia on the tsar's orders. To Paléologue's amazement, Dubasov knew nothing about this. Afterward, Paléologue wrote of how, as the conversation turned to the topic of Rozhestvensky's Baltic Fleet, he and the French naval officers present were left stunned when, "between two puffs of his cigar, the casual Dubasov cried out, 'Ah! Dear old Zinovy Petrovich! How is he, I wonder? And where might his fleet be now?'"

Caught in the middle of a complex international issue, France was at this stage obliged to look out for the needs of Rozhestvensky's fleet as it stopped at various ports of call en route. In the course of their work, the French Navy and Foreign Ministry's secret service were receiving updates on the Baltic Fleet. It was absurd that a staff officer from Imperial Headquarters in St. Petersburg should hear his old comrade's name and react by wondering nostalgically where he might be. In that autocratic state, however, government officials cared only about winning the favor of the supreme ruler, the tsar; the whereabouts of the fleet was not a matter of great concern. The same was true of Kuropatkin.

But let's return to our theme.

Major General Evert, the chief of operations, had finished off what Lieutenant General Sakharov, Manchuria chief of staff, called a "proper" plan. Field Marshal Ōyama and General Kodama would have been astonished if they had known about it. This was to be a major operation, drawing on the total Russian troop strength of over three hundred thousand men in Manchuria. The First Army was to engage with the enemy before the Second and Third Armies joined in a full-scale assault.

During the afternoon on January 31, Sakharov knocked on Kuropatkin's door with these plans in his hand.

As he listened to Sakharov's explanation, the commander in chief read the document enthusiastically until, halfway through, he suddenly seemed to lose interest. Sakharov asked him what the problem was, but he just shook his head and replied, "Nothing."

Outside, the bell of the Russian Orthodox church began to ring. The church tower was visible through the window. Kuropatkin waited until the chimes had stopped before saying, "I don't agree with this plan of operation. We should strike once more at Sandepu instead."

Sakharov was stunned. Kuropatkin had taken an extremely negative attitude when Grippenberg had tried exactly this just recently. By not

responding at the critical moment, Kuropatkin had actually assured the plan's failure. Grippenberg was so angry that he had resigned and returned to European Russia. Kuropatkin actually believed there was nothing wrong with Grippenberg's tactics, but he simply did not want to let him carry them out. He wanted to appropriate that strategy for himself.

Once Grippenberg had departed, Kuropatkin handed over command of the Second Army to Major General Sergei Mylov of the Eighth European Army Corps, who had long been a favorite of his. Mylov was only to serve as an acting commander.

Kuropatkin set about his grand scheme. First, he ordered Mylov to collect intelligence on the Japanese left wing in the Sandepu area. These positions were still being held by a combined force consisting of Akiyama Yoshifuru's cavalry brigade, together with some artillery and infantry. The reinforcements that had arrived during the battle of Heigoutai were in the process of leaving.

"So they are weak there!" Kuropatkin cheerfully said when he heard this.

His aim was to destroy the positions held by those puny Japanese cavalry soldiers on the left wing and attack the enemy rear guard, while also breaking through the center and chasing Ōyama Iwao as far as the coast of the Liaodong Peninsula. He was so supremely confident that he could not find so much as a single weakness in this plan.

* * *

Kuropatkin, indeed, was glowing with self-confidence. His regular features and well-trimmed, flaxen-colored whiskers always were in keeping with his reputation as a brilliant general, but such was his confidence in this plan of operations that he looked even imperious.

"Mylov has given my plan his one hundred percent approval!" he glowed.

Mylov had discovered that Akiyama Yoshifuru's positions on the Japanese left wing were weakly protected, proving Kuropatkin's acumen in planning to break through at this point and wheel around behind the enemy rear guard. He set about drawing up a powerful battle formation, saying, "We must strike at the enemy"—Akiyama Yoshifuru—"with as much force as we can."

The assault was to be carried out by the Second Manchurian Army. Command of this army was uncertain because Mylov had been only an acting commander since Grippenberg's indignant resignation and return home. It would be unthinkable to entrust such a major task to just an acting commander. In the end, General Aleksandr Kaulbars of the Third Manchurian Army assumed command. His post was then filled by promoting General Aleksandr Bilderling, at the time commander of the Seventeenth European Army Corps.

In passing, it should be noted that the Japanese military structure consisted of armies, divisions, and brigades in order of size, whereas the Russians had one extra unit, the army corps, which was next in size to a full army. Since Kuropatkin's plan was to use a full army, the largest military unit there was, to attack what amounted to a single brigade, his chances of success were extremely high. It was practically as fail-safe as trying to smash the ground with a hammer.

He was so taken with the idea of ensuring the success of this plan of operations that he even devised another scheme to increase his chances of success. He decided to form a combined assault brigade as the spearhead of the Second Army. For this, he created six new battalions by handpicking crack units from the First and Third Armies. Together, they made what could be described as a special unit for attacking entrenched positions, much like the White Sash Troop, which the Japanese had used in the siege of Port Arthur. This new brigade had a single mission—to break through the enemy lines at Sandepu. Their orders were to crush the cavalry brigade under Akiyama, whose men had dismounted from their horses and were dug in behind their field positions. While the special assault unit engaged Akiyama's brigade, the main force of the Second Army would push on south and wheel around to attack the Japanese rear guard.

Moreover, Kuropatkin prepared yet another powerful weapon for the attack on Akiyama's positions. He added siege guns from the Third Army, significantly increasing the Second Army's firepower. Guns were an essential requirement for any attack on enemy lines. Since Akiyama's positions consisted of nothing more than earthworks piled high, just one shot from a siege gun would be enough to blow one of these defenses clean away.

* * *

Akiyama Yoshifuru, meanwhile, had little inkling of the incredible fate that lay in store for him as once again his small brigade would be forced to take on the main force of the Russian Army. He did wonder if the enemy might try the same tactic another time, but this was not his only guess. He also thought of various other possible stratagems the enemy might be planning.

Even if Yoshifuru could have looked into the future and foreseen that the Russians would once again attack the village of Heigoutai—or nearby Sandepu—he would still not be in a position to ask headquarters to take any defensive action beforehand. The Japanese Army might respond to an emergency by dispatching its limited reserve strength to positions here and there, but once the danger had passed, these units would return to their original positions or take up new posts.

So even if he could have predicted the Russian attack, Yoshifuru could not and would not request help, and his single brigade would simply have to face an entire enemy army on its own. Just as in the recent battle of Heigoutai, no emergency relief force would be forthcoming from headquarters until Yoshifuru's men were no longer capable of holding on themselves. And even if his brigade were crushed before help could arrive, their efforts would still have been all worthwhile so long as this bought enough time to allow the Japanese reinforcements to force the enemy back when they finally got there, just as Tatsumi Naobumi had managed before. Whether it was attack or defense, to serve in the Japanese Army, with its critical lack of troop strength, one could not count on sacrifices from one's comrades. The only way to respond to the threat was to sacrifice oneself.

In any event, the plan that had taken shape in Kuropatkin's mind had been calculated with mathematical precision. Akiyama Yoshifuru would be crushed.

As usual, however, Kuropatkin's mood suddenly changed, and all because of one matter. He was concerned about the whereabouts of Nogi's army of one hundred thousand men (in fact, there were just thirty-four thousand), which had previously taken Port Arthur. Kuropatkin used cavalry scouts and field intelligence from local guides to collect as much information as possible on Nogi's movements.

Of the army that had fought under Nogi at Port Arthur, two divisions had since arrived in Liaoyang, while another division seemed to have replaced the Eighth Division near the railway station at Yantai, where the Japanese had their headquarters. This was all Kuropatkin knew. The information he had was hazy, of course, and there was a general tendency to overestimate the numbers involved, but in broad terms certain indications supported such thinking. Although he managed to recognize these developments, Kuropatkin never suspected that Nogi's army might be preparing to swing round to the Japanese left wing and attack his own right flank.

But he received some surprising news.

"Nogi's one hundred thousand will attack Vladivostok." This was the report received from Major General Konstantin Desino, military attaché to the Russian legation in Beijing. Vladivostok was simply too far away. As far as Kuropatkin was concerned, he could disregard this information. What he could not ignore from Desino's report was the news that after landing in the Wŏnsan area in Korea, only part of Nogi's army was to attack Vladivostok, while the main force would make its way via Nikolsk (the present-day Ussuriysk) to the Ussuri region before striking at Kuropatkin's own rear guard.

* * *

For Kuropatkin, Nogi's one-hundred-thousand-man army was an object of fear. It was not so much its troop strength but the question of exactly where this force, which had transformed itself into a field army during the siege of Port Arthur, was going to appear next. Now that this major fighting unit had been freed up for use, Ōyama and Kodama could employ it wherever they liked. In Kuropatkin's mind, Nogi's army appeared to have wings. He did not know where it would fly off to or where it would land. So according to Kuropatkin's intelligence from Beijing, Nogi's army was going to deploy far to the Japanese right, wheel around to the left and appear behind the Russian rear guard.

But this was precisely the opposite of what Ōyama and Kodama actually had in mind. Their intention was to deploy Nogi's army on the Japanese left wing so that it could wheel around to the right and attack the enemy rear guard. This outflanking maneuver, confined geographically only to the immediate environs of the battlefield around Mukden, would be on a much smaller scale than the grand operation reported from Beijing.

Kuropatkin's information from Major General Desino had featured place names far to the east of Manchuria in Korea and the Primorsky Region. Names such as Wŏnsan, Nikolsk, Ussuri, and Vladivostok flashed in the back of Kuropatkin's mind like buried landmines exploding in quick succession. He had to contend with the extraordinary notion that Nogi's main force would eventually emerge behind his own rear guard.

The Beijing intelligence had clearly misconstrued some information relating to plans for the new Japanese Fifth Army—better known as the Army of the Yalu—which had just been created on orders from Tokyo. It was an easy enough mistake for Desino to make. After all, the main force of the Army of the Yalu was the Eleventh Division from Shikoku, which had just been transferred from Nogi's army. In his days as a major general, Nogi had once commanded this division himself, and it had recently won distinction fighting against heavy odds during the assault on Port Arthur.

In those days, it was possible to tell which army branch and regiment a soldier or officer belonged to by the marks on his uniform. If the enemy knew what his regiment was, they could also tell which division he was in. In that sense, intelligence was simple.

What they could not tell was that the Eleventh Division had left Nogi's army and had been incorporated into the Army of the Yalu. Local scouts on the ground simply assumed, "If that's the Eleventh Division, this must be Nogi's army!" They seem to have reached this conclusion after trailing some regiment or battalion of the Eleventh Division.

As the Army of the Yalu had been created at the instigation of Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo, it naturally acquired a bad name at Japanese General

Headquarters in Yantai, which was in charge of field operations in Manchuria. Matsukawa Toshitane liked to mock the army by pronouncing its name in a funny way that sounded like the call of a wild duck, implying that it was an easy prey and therefore an unwanted obstacle. As we've discussed, the army had been formed for the political objective of winning territory from Russia following the war. From an operational standpoint, its creation was indeed foolish, since it served no purpose during the decisive conflict between the main forces of the Russian and Japanese armies on the Manchurian plains.

Yet the Army of the Yalu would have an impact on the enemy that neither Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo nor Ōyama and Kodama had ever anticipated.

Kuropatkin was not entirely unaware of this new army. He had heard of it from another intelligence report. Not only did he know, but he wondered why the Japanese would even want to create such a ridiculous temporary fighting force. While the Russians were sending over wave after wave of crack troops from European Russia, the enemy was rounding up middle-aged war veterans tilling the fields in Japan and using them to form an army of standby reservists consisting of the First Standby Reserve Division and Sixteenth Standby Reserve Brigade.

In Kuropatkin's view, such troops had no fighting strength at all. Moreover, standby reservist divisions did not usually have their own commissariat either, so there was not even any systematic provision of supplies. As Kuropatkin said to Lieutenant General Sakharov, he thought it unlikely that this Japanese force would be really capable of any independent action. He did sense that the Japanese Army was nearing exhaustion, but he always had a tendency to overestimate the enemy. To his misfortune, he managed to grasp the general outline, but he did not use this as a basis for his operations.

While Kuropatkin knew about the formation of the Army of the Yalu, mistaken intelligence put it at only a division and brigade of standby reservists and nothing else. This incomplete information further warped his judgment. He did not know that a crack unit in the shape of the Eleventh Division, or what amounted to Nogi's combat force, had also been incorporated into the new army. This missing information confused him.

Kuropatkin thought that the enemy troops trying to outflank him way out to the side and threatening his rear guard must be Nogi's army. This was his conclusion as he weighed the misleading report from Beijing on Nogi's movements and the field intelligence he had received about the Army of the Yalu. It was a terrifying prospect, but one that arose from his own temperament rather than the thinking of a trained military man. A man of this nature

may have been useful enough in the War Ministry in St. Petersburg, but he was not really suited to orchestrating the movements of a large army in the field. It was to imperial Russia's misfortune that such a man had been appointed commander in chief.

He did consider a sudden change of plan, but preparations for the assault on the Japanese left wing at Heigoutai were already in progress. Commanders were issuing orders, the army corps was on the move, divisions were advancing, and artillery troops were being transferred. To halt such an operation already underway was, in a sense, even more difficult than attacking the enemy.

* * *

For Ōyama and Kodama, February 19 was memorable as the day when the plan of operations for the battle of Mukden was decided and when Matsukawa Toshitane sent out written orders to each army. The commander of each army was summoned to gather at headquarters in Yantai the following day.

But February 19 was also an important day for the Russian Army under Kuropatkin. On this day, the commander and chief of staff in each of the Russian armies assembled for a council of war. Both armies, coincidentally, bore a close resemblance to each other. But there was this difference: Ōyama and Kodama were looking to force a decisive battle and drive the Russians back, but Kuropatkin, the one who had initially wanted to force the issue, now assembled his generals to hint at a change in circumstances that might even warrant abandoning the operation altogether. He just could not say it openly. This man of the world was planning to explain the situation and wait for his generals to say, "In that case, let's cancel the plan." This would allow him to avoid responsibility for the change, and if any criticism arose afterward at the Imperial Palace in St. Petersburg he could always point to the fact that it had been his generals' opinion as well.

The venue for this war council was not Mukden, but a railway station called Xiahewandun in the countryside to the south of Mukden, beyond an iron bridge across the Hun River. Despite its rural location, this was the terminus for the railway line to the Guchengzi area, and there were a number of railway buildings there. They held their meeting in one of those buildings.

Lieutenant General Sakharov, Manchuria chief of staff, acted as chairman. In that role, he should have presented the agenda, but Kuropatkin told him, "I will explain the situation." If he allowed the more bullish Sakharov to talk, it might affect the subtle outcome he was hoping to achieve. After casting a keen gaze over his generals seated around the table, Kuropatkin launched into a speech that would be remembered long afterward.

He began by explaining that the fall of Port Arthur and the battle of Heigoutai had left the Russian Army at a serious disadvantage. As a preamble to what he was going to say next, he presented the outlook in a pessimistic light, blaming Lieutenant General Stoessel at Port Arthur and General Grippenberg at Heigoutai for their current predicament. This had put him in a difficult position.

"The Japanese Army now has a real advantage. In particular, Nogi's army is free to move at will. And I have received sound intelligence on how and where Ōyama plans to use Nogi's one hundred thousand men."

Some of the commanders and staff officers were clearly alarmed.

"Where will Nogi appear?"

In reply to this question, Kuropatkin told the assembled commanders exactly what he had learned through Major General Desino's intelligence from Beijing. He also added some speculation of his own. "Nogi could appear behind our rear guard in the Mukden area, or he might swing round to the Jilin area or even as far north as Harbin. According to some further intelligence, the enemy is planning to advance as far as Mongolia and secure the cooperation of mounted bandits there to attack the railways to the rear of our army."

This was true. He was referring to the advance cavalry troops that Akiyama Yoshifuru had released from his own brigade and dispatched far afield. One detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Naganuma Hidefumi had begun operations on January 9 and advanced far behind the Russian lines into eastern Mongolia. Much to Kuropatkin's irritation, this had destroyed the railway bridge over the Xinkai River to the south of Kuanchengzi. At the same time, a second advance cavalry detachment under Major Hasegawa Inukichi had set out on January 12 and spent more than sixty days lurking behind the Russian lines, sporadically harrying the enemy, sabotaging railway lines, and attacking warehouses stocked with provisions.

These operations by Akiyama's brigade played on Kuropatkin's nerves and clouded his thinking. Eventually, they not only dampened his enthusiasm for a decisive battle, as he had shown at the war council, but they also restrained him from concentrating the troop strength he really needed for this final showdown. Afterward, these developments made people say that the diversionary tactics by Akiyama's brigade caused the Russian defeat at the battle of Mukden.

In his address to the war council, Kuropatkin said that he was relying on the Russian cavalry under Lieutenant General Pavel Mishchenko to guard the railway from these far-flung attacks. This cavalry corps of Cossacks was the pride of the Russian Army, and the force the Japanese feared most. But as Kuropatkin explained, Mishchenko's fearsome troop was deployed

far from the front lines in the Songhua River area and in the end would play no part in the battle of Mukden itself. The combined threats of Nogi's army and Akiyama's brigade had moved Kuropatkin to reassess his current plan of operations.

"We are in an unfavorable position," he repeated, and concealing his real intent he lied. "I have convened this council to hear your candid opinion about our future strategy."

But General Kaulbars, commander of the Second Army, was already making preparations for the assault on the Japanese left wing, and he replied after consulting with his chief of staff: "General, you are worrying too much." Declaring that this was the time to recall the saying that "attack is the best form of defense," he requested permission to attack the Japanese left wing as planned. Kuropatkin found himself isolated, for not only General Linevich, commander of the First Army, but even Major General Evert, the chief of operations on his own staff, agreed with Kaulbars. In the end, the meeting adjourned that day after reaffirming the existing strategy.

* * *

General Kuropatkin might be a better subject of study for a psychologist than a scholar of military history. It was he who had wanted a rerun of the battle of Heigoutai. To that end, his staff had drawn up a plan of operations, which he himself had approved, and he had given the orders for a major redeployment of troops. From start to finish, it had been his idea, and he was the one who had carried this out. This was not an unpopular plan since it had been greeted with enthusiasm by his staff and endorsed by his generals.

Yet he hesitated when the time came to put it into effect.

He began to feel apprehensive about where Nogi might appear, even though this was by no means a new factor in the equation. He was also deeply concerned by the damage that some units of Akiyama's brigade, then at large, had begun to inflict on transport links and other installments behind Russian lines. Common sense would suggest that this level of activity by the enemy cavalry was all part of the normal course of war, just as a fireman is only there to put out fires.

But as we know, Kuropatkin's delicate nerves did not allow him to take this view. Instead, he had suddenly assembled his generals and done all he could to persuade them to throw out his plans for a general assault on Heigoutai. In the end, however, everyone present had been against this veiled idea of cancelling the operation.

So as he adjourned the meeting, he had no option but to say, "Let's go ahead with the existing plan."