

Entered into
Correspondence
Book No. 6

222

Foochow 7th October 1874.

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter to me of 19th September.

I have no news concerning M^r Giquel who is in communication with H. S. Shen pao chên who corresponds with the Tsun-li-yamen directly from Tai-wan foo.

As your Excellency has before told me to address you at all times with perfect plainness and unreserve I will do so now.

Since my return to China I have closely observed the state of affairs. I, like all foreigners here, am very liable to mistake in such matters, but yet I am sure, from what is known to me, that China is in the throes of a great revolution which will overturn much of the present order of things.

I take the liberty of laying
before

before your Excellency a few remarks
which may make my reasoning plain.

After the year 1860 an active, and
powerful but yet numerically small
section of the governing class of China
accepted the conclusion that China must
to a wide extent modify her system of
internal government and foreign policy,
as the antagonism to western ways and
rigid isolation of the empire could not
be persisted in without endangering the
state which was at the time much wea-
kened by the Taiping rebellions. But
I must here tell your Excellency that
the conclusion was an enforced and un-
welcome one, and that the able, clear
sighted, but yet narrow minded men
who saw the need for general reform
and who wished to give the Empire the
forces which come from unity were
anxious to keep China as much as
possible apart from the rest of the world,
so that if foreign innovation were adopted
it would be as a means of rendering
China

China independent of foreign science and
culture. Tseng-quo-fang, Lin hung-
chang, Tso-tsung-tang, and their follow-
ing considered Western thought is too
explosive for China. They approved
of western arms, discipline, and organi-
zation, and would give them to China,
but as a means of keeping foreigners
out of the country. Li is in favor of
railways being made that they may
open up China to make it independent
of foreign trade. Others, like Chung Ho
wish to build steam cotton mills and
large works for making Iron & copper
that no foreign cottons and no foreign
metals be needed. A Chinese steam
company has been trying to drive away
foreign steam ships from the Chinese
waters, and all other plans approved
of have really for their end the peaceable
exclusion of foreigners.

In this narrow spirit the leaders of
China have projected reforms and
changes, and as the sequel shows,
without

without benefit of nation. Changes of vast benefit to China might have been made during the past 14 years if the leaders of China had been less selfish and exclusive, but the time has been wasted, and at this crisis China finds herself with a government which has become contemptible in the eyes of the people, without foreign sympathy or even respect; with undisciplined armies, undisciplined fleets, bad means of internal communication, no transport, no commissariat, no medical service, no organization, no scientific service, no direction, and yet Chinese territory has been invaded and held for nearly six months.

The previous paragraph fairly represents the talk of the trading classes here, at Canton and Shanghai, and is significant as showing the feelings of the Chinese people on the sea board. The perturbation is great, and if it lasts unredressed or allayed will
lead

lead to a rising against existing authority, as the proper pride or self respect of the Chinese people is deeply hurt by the vacillations, intrigues, corruption, and incompetence of the Peking government.

The recent degradation of Prince Kung has caused much excitement here. The traders and bankers here think Kung's real fault was that he showed the weakness of the Empire under its present organization for a time of war, and that he wished to apply remedies so that the vast dormant forces of the nation be turned to account, as they easily might be. And it has not escaped remark that Tso-tung-tang, formerly viceroy of Fokien, and one of the ablest men of the Empire, is practically banished to Kansuh, as his energy and wise counsel are not acceptable to the entourage of the young Emperor. Li-hung-chang, it is said, is also jealously watched. He has been refused the large

large sums of money he asked for to complete his army for offensive or defensive war. And, Chen-pao-chien, a man of exceptional talent, very popular in Foochow, Canton, and Ning-po is now in Formosa where his ability cannot be of much use to the state, while the whole empire seems drifting into great danger. The Peking government, Kung accepted, cling to worn out useless ways, and seem disposed to run all risks rather than accept the necessity of organic change. For these reasons I will not be surprised to see a popular explosion. If Li-hung-chang chose to do so he could be the leader of China, which would at once become formidable, as his force of mind could give direction to the movement which now wants a head. I am told that this disturbed feeling is as strong in the inland, as in the sea board provinces. But I must not conceal from you that it has for its

basis anger against Japan, and a desire to resent the supposed injury or affront to China. And, as I before have told your Excellency, some Chinese officials of authority hold the only way out of the present internal difficulty and disaffection is a war with Japan, in which it is thought that China, altho she may at first suffer, will be before long have a great preponderance of force, and so gain in the end. The general feeling of the people too is to run the risks of war, and any peaceable solution of the dispute in which Japan got an advantage would be greatly resented by the people.

For my part, I hope that a pacific agreement may be made in which the self respect neither of Japan, nor of China will be wounded. A conflict between the two nations will end badly for both. If China is weakened by Japan, Shingking, Manchouiria, Mongolia, Sli and Chihli will be a prey to Russia.

Y

If Russia organizes the elements of force
to her hand in these promices how
long will Japan remain independent?
If China overcomes by a great national
effort she is easily capable of making
Japan will not Yesso, nor have the
fate of Saghalien? The sole profits
of war between China and Japan will
fall to Russia, the natural enemy of
both nations and anxious to plunder
both. But if Japan is united to
China no attack could be made on
either. China would be a most power-
ful ally to Japan. Yesso would be
safe, and Saghalien might be recovered
if Chinese troops were stationed at
the North west, and on the lines of the
Lungari, & Ousuri while Japanese
troops, & ships operated on the coast
of Manchowria. I commend my
remarks to your Excellency's attention.

I am informed that the
Japanese government is building
Iron clads in England, but have
no

no details. I shall trust to your excellency's promise to me that the plans I gave will not be allowed to be used.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

your most obedt servt.

J. G. Dunn.

To His Excellency
Tomomi Iwakura
Yokio

J S Dunn
Foochow

7th Oct 1874

A letter to Mr Shoa Kung
giving information
upon the present state
of Southern China

三