

226A

Foochow 20th Nov 1874

Sir,

The events which will
 now occur in Yarkund &
 Kokand will be of great
 interest and importance to
 Japan. I therefore send your
 Excellency a paper, which
 though short, gives much in-
 formation.

I have the honor to be

Sir,

Yours devotedly

James

To His Excellency
 Governor Mathura
 Peking.



YACOUB BEG, or, as he is more properly termed, Yacoub Khan, has had a remarkable personal history, even for the unquiet region in which he has long been a prominent figure. The accounts of him are naturally varying enough, inasmuch as those of the Russians, whose path towards South-Western China he bars, have invariably taken an unfavourable view, representing him as at the best a successful upstart, who treacherously turned his sword against his liege lord the Khan of Khokand, and as a severe and capricious despot in his own dominions. As a champion of the Moslem, on the other hand, against the encroachments of the Chinese and Russians, he is probably as unduly exalted in the native press of Constantinople as he is abused in that of St. Petersburg. According to a Turkish life of Yacoub, which has been translated in Germany, he is a hero who only left the Khokand army because he was forced to escape from the treacherous design of the Khan on his life, and whose valour and conduct in the field are even excelled by the administrative skill he displays in the territory he has won by the sword. Our Indian reports of him take a sober line, running between the two extremes. Yet the published Blue-books of the Supreme Government about Kashgar (or *Alti-Schahar*, as the whole province is properly named) are in great part a compilation of bazaar reports, and can hardly help us to determine the exact truth as to one who is certainly a very remarkable man, whether he be as black or as white as his various biographers would make him. What is certain may be thus briefly given. Yacoub was first known as a general under the Khan of Khokand, whom he served for many years; and he was employed with distinction in the border struggle of that Tartar prince against the Russians, in which he last figured as commanding the important fortified citadel of Tashkend. A surrender of this place into Russian hands, after a long and up to that time apparently successful defence, brought on him the charge of having sold it to the besiegers. Nor was this lessened by the fact that he had on a former occasion been accused of taking bribes from the enemy for the abandonment of a position confided to him. His accusers on this second occasion were the inhabitants of Tashkend themselves; while the answer made was, of course, that all resources had been exhausted, and that the citadel itself was about to fall. Yacoub Beg, who had left the place with his troops under the terms of the surrender with military honours, was on his way to *Andiyan*, the Khan's capital, when he learned that his accusers were beforehand with him, and that his arrival would be followed by his immediate arrest on the charge which had been preferred against him to his master. He lost no time in collecting out of the forces under him a select band of the best warriors devoted to his person, and taking leave of the service of the Khan. Making his way eastward out of Khokand he arrived after a long march at Kashgar, just as a renewal of the old struggle for independence of its Mahomedan inhabitants against the Chinese, who had never abandoned their claim to sovereignty over the whole of *Alti-Schahar*, was at a crisis, Kashgar itself being about to fall into the hands of an Imperial detachment. According to another account, it should be added, his reinforcement at this juncture of his co-religionists was permitted, or even ordered, by the Khan of Khokand, whose ancestors had hereditary claims over Kashgar, and had repeatedly aided the Mahomedans—people of Bokhara extraction originally—in their efforts to throw off the Chinese yoke. Be this as it may, all admit that his opportune arrival in 1863 proved the turning point in a long and varying struggle, which had been carried on for generations. A surprise, which he ably conducted, broke up the camp of the besiegers of Kashgar, and the ulemas of the city, rejoiced at their unexpected relief from danger, at once declared Yacoub Emir, and proclaimed his chieftainship throughout the country. He proved himself fully worthy of their choice. A little more than a month later, after obtaining various minor successes, and with a force largely augmented by Mahomedan volunteers, he marched on Aksoo, one of the chief garrisons left to the Chinese. His reputation and his formidable preparations so intimidated the defenders that they surrendered it almost without resistance. Hotan, their last stronghold of importance, soon followed its example; and when Yacoub turned his steps back to Kashgar, where his presence was urgently required to consolidate his new-found power, he was able to leave a victorious army of 20,000 men in the field under his trusted lieutenant, Abdallah Bey, to whom he confided the now easy task of extirpating the last remains of the Chinese occupation. How well he has succeeded in his administration the Indian Blue-books tell in glowing terms. According to these, he has founded a small but solid empire on the ruins of the Chinese domination, over Moslems grateful for freedom from their servitude to the Buddhists. Though his army is contented and well officered, it is paid without extortion, no taxes being levied in his dominions except those legitimized by the Koran. Though rewarding his old Khokand friends with many of the chief offices, he still manages to employ a fair share of the natives of the country. Pretenders to the Crown are not wanting from among the families of the old chiefs; but they have only a very limited amount of influence. Above all, he understands the age he lives in well enough to seek to strengthen himself by diplomatic overtures to the great nations that lie beyond his own borders. And thus we have just heard that he had the good sense to send a formal conciliatory embassy to St. Petersburg before the expedition to Khiva was fairly set on foot; while he has managed to make the Indian Government understand that he desired nothing so much as its friendship, and is willing to open a new pathway for our trade into the very heart of Central Asia. On the whole, therefore, he is not a ruler to be despised; and we may fairly hope that the Indian Government, without making any dangerous promises, will secure for us a friend in this able Sovereign, and a new market in the kingdom he has so rapidly raised into importance. Perhaps the least satisfactory thing known about him is the news we recently published of the fresh war he has provoked with China, in which, however, he appears again to have been completely successful, and to have enforced peace on his own terms.

To His Excellency
Tomomi Iwakura
Takarada-cho.
Babaushi-gomon.

Tokeio.

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