

IV - 69 - 3. News Clip - "Japan's Foes Becoming 'night blind' -  
Daily News, Los Angles, Friday June 27, 1941.

# Japan's foes becoming 'night blind'

The nights belong to China and the moon is called a traitor.

The Japanese are afraid to go into the night. The explosion of a firecracker keeps them fidgeting until dawn.

They are afraid of the vastness and the loneliness of the China night—this is the time that ravaging bands of Chinese guerrillas peck away at them, and there is no defense because it's night.

But even the night that belongs to China, the night that envelops movements of the quickly striking guerrilla hordes, is at last turning against her.

Slowly men of the guerrilla units—men who must fight at night, men who can't fight superior Japanese forces in the daylight—are becoming night blind.

It's their diet—or lack of it. This was the story told her yesterday not by anybody who took a quick look at seacoast China and came back here hysterical for Chinese aid, but by a woman who spent more than four years at the actual fighting front.

She is Agnes Smedley, a newspaperwoman turned organizer of medical relief for the army and the common people of China.

Miss Smedley left China when her health broke to the extent she had to get out of the orient.

She'd been eating army food, living under the wild conditions of the Chinese army.

It got her just like it's getting the guerrilla fighters. Her stomach went on the fritz. She got malaria and—night blindness.

"Night blindness creeps up on you," she explained, "just like night does. Pretty soon you can't see anything after dark.

"When the troops get it they can't march at night—oh, I can't say that, it isn't true, because they've got to march and they do. It's the only time China can fight and they have to keep it up.

"It's getting harder and harder to feed China. Each spring and fall the Japanese troops destroy the crops. Of animals and fowl they destroy all they can't eat.

"China must have food." Food, of course, is not by a long shot all that China needs.

Chief interest of husky, thirtyish Agnes Smedley is the Chinese Red Cross medical corps. Outside of the actual materials of war, medical supplies are China's greatest need.

"After Hankow fell in October 1938," she explained, "the Chinese war strategy changed. You see, the Japanese kept their men in long lines—up and down the Yangtze, for instance.

"But they had nobody to garrison the rear. They actually could not man their 'occupied area.'

"So the Chinese decided to turn the Japanese rear into a 'Chinese front.' This meant turning every man, woman and child into a soldier. And it also meant a terrific problem in treating the wounded.

"I went into the area to investigate medical conditions for the army and I—well, I can't describe the horror. It was like conditions in the Crimea.

"Or do you know Tolstoy's 'War and Peace'? Do you remember the Russian wounded there? Well, this was worse."

Miss Smedley said they couldn't get enough doctors for the new front, and bitterly she explained why.

"You see, the Chinese government won't conscript the educated classes. That's a sidelight on democracy for you.

"Why, this is perfectly magnificent."

Another picture showed a group of Chinese student girls. The caption said they were acting as nurses at the front.

"Damn this face saving business!" thundered Miss Smedley. "These girls never see the front. They stay thousands of miles behind the lines. They are of the 'educated' group and don't 'have' to help their country fight. They just turn out like this on national holidays to have their pictures taken."

One of the most revealing things brought back by Miss Smedley was her memory of the diary of a Japanese soldier killed by a guerrilla band with which she was working.

"I translated several of the diaries. Each was a study of a good man, a common man turning slowly into a beast. When they started out none of them wanted to fight. They didn't know why they were going to China.

"One man wrote that when he left Japan it was raining lightly. In his diary he asked: 'Is this rain or is it my tears?'

"He was sent up to fight the guerrilla army I was with. One night he was taken to a brothel of captured Chinese women maintained by the Japanese army.

"He was nauseated and that night observed that he couldn't go back again. However, several weeks later he noted in the diary that he now goes there two or three nights a week.

"Further on in this soldier's moral decomposition he sarcastically commented on a scene where new recruits shuddered and turned their faces from the torturing of a Chinese soldier.

"But he added: 'Pretty soon they'll be doing the same thing.'"

At one time after the Japanese troops moved into a deserted town this soldier wrote:

"If this goes on, if there is nobody in the towns we capture, how can we possibly maintain peace and order in east Asia?"

At the end of his diary he wrote:

"I remember the time I was full of sorrow for our people and the people we are fighting—now I just want to stay drunk all the time and think of nothing."

trymen were dying at the front because they couldn't get proper attention.

"I remember too that for several years the American Red Cross barely recognized the existence of the Chinese Red Cross—at least we didn't get any help.

"But finally we did. We got bandage belts left over from the 1914-18 war—and the bandages were still in them. They were black and rotten and moldy. I was ashamed of my country.

"But that didn't stop the Chinese. They cleaned out the belts, loaded them up with scraps of cloth that could be used for bandages."

When shown a picture of the underground hospital at Chungking and asked if this were typical of Chinese hospitals, Miss Smedley groaned:

"I only wish it were. At the front we never had such elegance. Why, those doctors are clothed in white and the person on the stretcher has a clean white sheet!

"Ninety-nine per cent of the so-called Chinese hospitals are in mud hovels. Patients lie on rice straw on the floor—that is, unless the Japanese have burned it all off in the fields.

"If there's no straw the men and women lie on the dirt floor. They lie so close together you'd have to stand straddling over while you treat him."

Then looking at the picture again she murmured wonderingly:



AGNES SMEDLEY (LEFT) WITH HANAN GUERRILLA COMMANDER  
This man helped turn Jap rear into "Chinese front"

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THREE



THIS IS CHINA—THIS IS THE CHINA THAT PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN, DYING IN—FIGHTING ON IN Chinese Red Cross organizer Aenes Smedley says multiply this picture a million times and you see the suffering of China



AMERICAN TRUCKS HAUL AMERICAN MEDICAL SUPPLIES OVER BURMA ROAD  
But there aren't yet enough trucks, not nearly enough supplies



—Acme photos.  
COMPARED TO MOST CHINESE HOSPITALS THIS ONE AT CHUNGKING IS "MAGNIFICENT"  
To field worker Agnes Smedley those white sheets are "pure elegance"