

MURDER OF YANG

In Urumchi there was a juridical seminary that lay quite outside the yamen of the Governor-General. On July 7th an examination was held in the building. As Russian was among the subjects the staff of the Soviet consulate general were invited to attend. No other Europeans were present. Professor SIU was the only member of our expedition who happened to be in town, but he was not invited. For a succession of years YANG had honoured these examinations with his presence. On this occasion he had been in splendid spirits and had given a very witty speech. After the examination there was a banquet, where YANG was placed at a table with his ministers and two secretaries. Foreign Minister FAN YAO-NAN, however, sat at another table together with the staff of the Russian consulate. Before the dinner CHIN SHU-JEN, the permanent government secretary, had left the school, ostensibly to attend to official business.

Only ten minutes had elapsed, the first course had been brought in, and all were busily plying their chop-sticks, when ten men in servant's dress surrounded Governor-General YANG's table. YANG seems to have had a premonition of danger, for he was in the act of rising as if to hurry out when several revolvers were aimed at him and fired almost simultaneously. Three bullets found their mark in his forehead and two in his heart. He crumpled up and sank on to the floor. His faithful bodyguard, the fat and jovial Colonel KAO, tried to cover him with his huge body, but was immediately shot and died in his master's arms. YEN, the minister for industries, was struck by one bullet in the elbow and two in the thigh. He, too, fell to the ground and lay motionless, feigning to be dead. The two secretaries at YANG's table were murdered, and General TOU was either shot or stabbed to death. The assassins fired several shots into the ceiling in order to scare out all superfluous witnesses. Pupils and teachers fled precipitately. The Russians hid themselves in a closet.

The murderers were alleged to be disguised soldiers from the bodyguard of Foreign Minister FAN. The first signal for the murder was supposed to have been given by FAN in proposing the toast of one of the guests. Immediately after the first shots, followed by some of his men, he hastened to the yamen of the Governor-General and rushed through YANG's private apartments to possess himself of the seal of the province. He who has this seal in his hand is regarded as the highest in power and must be obeyed by all. At the entrance he had the two sentinels shot down at their post, as they refused to allow him to pass. His next step was to write a proclamation to the people, an admonition to all to keep the peace and obey orders. He then sent a messenger to CHIN SHU-JEN, the permanent government secretary. The latter refused, however, to come. FAN now realized that the game was perhaps up.

CHIN hastened to collect all the soldiers available (their number was said to