MacARTHUR:

DESTINY'S CHOICE

The story of a man carried away by his own legend

By SHELLEY MYDANS

ONCE THERE WAS a little boy who was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1880. He was born on an Army Post because his father was a general. Indeed, his father was a brave and famous general and his mother was a beautiful lady with an Old Virginia Name. So when this little boy was born, all the good fairies came to his crib, even though it was way out in Arkansas, and gave him all the usual gifts: beauty (or in this case handsomeness) and fame and courage and high ideals and brilliance and eloquent speech. They said that he would be very successful and happy, but that occasionally they would put some very big obstacles in his path so that he could overcome them.

When the last of the fairies came, there was nothing left to give, so she thought for a long time, while the little boy waited (he had already been given the quite invaluable gift of patience and accurate timing), and finally said she would give the child a Legend that would grow up with him and stay by him all his life.

And everything that had been promised came true. The boy was handsome and brilliant. He grew up to a whole series of successes in that most dashing of all fields, the military. And when he became old he was still handsome and bril-

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and these he overcame. He was indeed a successful soldier.

And, for a soldier, he was now considered quite a success as a statesman, too. Thus emerged the figure who today dominates Japan: General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Soldier-Statesman. He is a lofty-minded man, a man of righteousness—without cynicism, and with little humor. He has, however, a flair for the dramatic; like most geniuses he sees himself always in the center of the world and he endows that world with the scintillation of forceful happenings. And like many geniuses, he is as sensitive as a mimosa to criticism.

This unusual sensitivity is not the product of the self-doubt that haunts most touchy men, or the result of trying to hide any mistake or failing. It springs from MacArthur's lofty certainty that he is *right*. He is for peace. Isn't that enough? He is for democracy. Isn't that enough? He is for mankind. What more do you want? And anything less than 100 per cent endorsement of the MacArthur policy constitutes an attack on these ideals. Is it a wonder, then, that criticism sets him pacing his large, well-ordered office, thundering denunciations?

Because of this isolation and this sensitivity, in contrast to the shoulder-rubbing experience of more hardened politicians, many

In 1930, MacArthur took oath as Chief of Staff (left). In this capacity, he and his aides (right) broke up the Bonus Army march on the capital.

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of MacArthur's associates believed he would not be available as a presidential candidate. But when the Wisconsin drums began beating for him, the general listened gravely and declined to decline.

Then Eisenhower declared himself unavailable. Several prominent New England Democrats declared for MacArthur. The Hearst newspapers, to nobody's evident surprise, began a "MacArthur for America" boom. On March 8th the Supreme Commander issued a special statement to his Wisconsin supporters:

"While it seems unnecessary for me to repeat that I do not actively seek or covet any office and have no plans for leaving my post in Japan, I can say, and with due humility, that I would be recreant to all my concepts of good citizenship were I to shrink because of the hazards and responsibilities involved from accepting any public duty to which I might be called by the American people."

MacArthur's second wife and 10-year-old son, shown at a Tokyo celebration, are charming, popular, and photogenic.

With his masterly sense of timing, MacArthur had waited, leaving the early campaigning to pre-convention favorites. He clearly understood that it is always advisable for a dark horse to remain as deep as possible in the shadow till the trumpet sounds for a dashing entry.

Obviously MacArthur would like nothing better than being wafted into the White House on the wings of his own legend. But whether the men who control the Republican Party will be willing to back him, should an impasse develop at the convention, is another matter. These Republican politicians were evidently relieved when General Eisenhower announced his disinclination to run; they were afraid he would be difficult to handle. I doubt if MacArthur would be any easier. He is used to dishing it out rather than taking it. And just as the warmth of General Ike had captured many American hearts, so the Legend that is MacArthur's could easily kindle a worship.

Douglas MacArthur combines in his handsome person many of the traditional virtues that Ameri-

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cans admire: He is hardworking; he sits at his desk seven days a week. Although he has plenty of money, his life is simple; he has dined out only twice since his arrival in Japan. He has a lovely and photogenic family: his charming, vivacious second wife, Jean, and their ten-year-old son, Arthur. He has spent twenty years of his life abroad but he carries America always with him.

Best of all is his rare ability to inject an ardor and a sense of something new into those old familiar phrases which are an integral part of American politics. MacArthur is for "human justice, broad tolerance, and individual dignity." He is for peace and "the freedom of the common man." He is for "the broad middle course of moderate democracy." These would be his campaign slogans and he would endow these seeming platitudes with such dramatic impact that they would be on the lips of everyone—whether in crusading fervor or weary scorn.

The man himself, tall, spare, erect, is still handsome at 68, despite the sagging lines of age. His skin is as smooth as wax, his color high, his thinning hair (combed over the top of his head from a low side-part) still black.

Some of the fire has gone from his eyes and his small white hands shake when he lights his pipe, but the power of his voice remains. The pitch is low, his speech commanding, deliberately slow-paced, and with it he holds his listeners—by a change of tone, a whisper, a pause, a catch in the throat, a ringing denunciation of evil, or a reaffirmation of a faith. In public addresses his technique is that of the pulpit: the rolling phrase, the climactic emotion. Twice within a short time he wept before an assemblage of Filipinos and Americans after the liberation of Manila. His audience wept with him.

But probably the chief factor in MacArthur's physical personality is the carriage of his head, which is still noble, the fine arched nose, the thrust of his chin. It is the characteristic image that often has been caught by the photographers and is therefore entirely familiar to the American public. It is the way MacArthur sees himself (although few men recognize their own profiles), because from the heights to which the legend has carried him, he can look down and see his own physical self just as he sees the rest of humanity.

And in this image one can read the qualities for which frightened men might vote in this hysterical hour when they are looking for a powerful, determined, horizon-gazing, just, and righteous warrior to lead them—that is, if Americans are looking for a man to lead them, rather than a President to represent them.

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Douglas MacArthur's mother was the former Mary P. Hardy, a beautiful girl who came from an old Virginia family.

liant and brave and idealistic and eloquent.

At 68, Douglas MacArthur (for that was the little boy's name) is worshipped as a kind of god in three countries: In Japan, the land he helped to defeat and now rules, he is proclaimed as "the new Man Behind the Bamboo Screen," that is, the new Heavenly Emperor, now that Emperor Hirohito has been demoted to human being. In the Philippines, the land he liberated, he is honorary first citizen, and only this year another coin was struck with the stamp of his famous profile. And in America, his native land, which he has not seen for ten years, they are booming him for President.

To the man who was brought up with the Legend this is all perfectly natural, for it is impossible to live with a legend and not come under its spell. Those close to the general are dazzled by it. But in MacArthur himself it has produced only a profound belief in his own role in the long perspective of history. Americans who like to think they are any man's equal are offended by MacArthur's obvious assumption of superiority, and sometimes attack the Legend with songs and jokes about MacArthur and God. But these, like most cracks about big men, are unfair.

MacArthur does not claim to associate with God; he consults, rather, with the historian of two thousand years from now, saying in defense of his sometimes high-flown statements, "The people may not understand me, but history will understand." As to his relationship with God, MacArthur is one of His strongest boosters. He believes that to his friends the historians, our times will be marked as the era in which Christianity came to the Orient. His faith in the Christian mission is equalled only by his faith in "moderate democracy." And although he seldom goes to church himself (he works on Sun-

Shelley Mydans spent 21 months in a Philippine internment camp and entered Japan with our occupation forces. She is now in Tokyo with her husband, Carl Mydans, bureau chief for *Time* and *Life*.

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days), "he believes," as one of his aides has said, "that religion is a good thing for the people."

Although most observers in Japan have as yet found insufficient proof to support such beliefs, MacArthur is certain that the ideal of democracy has taken seed in the minds of the Japanese populace and will flourish there. This faith is based on the information he receives from his immediate staff, the three or four men who funnel up to him the plans and reports of the occupation organization known as SCAP; on the charts and graphs of various social phenomena that he keeps in his office; and on letters from Japanese admirers. His personal contact with the Japanese has been limited to five audiences with the emperor, and brief interviews with each of four successive prime ministers and a scant handful of other bigwigs. Thus his faith in the Japanese and in humanity in general cannot be said to be based on personal acquaintance.

Nevertheless this faith is so profound and determined that it has set the pattern of American influence in Japan; to it can be attributed the successes and failures of this occupation. The successes are manifest and have been often described. When the Japanese capitulated, MacArthur, with a handful of combat men, set out to accomplish as quickly as possible the directives laid down by the victorious allies. His dramatic entry, which he has described as one of the greatest gambles in history, went off with the ease and sparkle of a hit show. In a few weeks, MacArthur had secured Japan. He moved his family into the American Embassy and his headquarters into the great grey Dai Ichi Insurance Company Building, and since then he has not strayed farther than the road connecting these two.

So that Japan might never again wage war, MacArthur divided his occupation aims, in order of precedence, into three parts: demilitarization, political democratization,

General Arthur MacArthur, the hero's father, was a famous military leader who died as he had lived—dramatically.

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As a West Point cadet, MacArthur already had the touch of greatness: his marks were the highest ever recorded.

economic democratization. The first was accomplished with magnificent dispatch, thanks, in good part, to the cooperation of the Japanese. With only minor reservations, Nippon's military leaders accepted their purge from public life, the soldiers shouldered their meager packs and marched home as civilians, and the people—who had known the worst that war has so far offered—announced their hatred of the whole business and turned, first with fear and then with hope, to something new. This was success. And the credit went to MacArthur.

In the political field, MacArthur had neither the experience he had had in the military nor the wholehearted cooperation of the Japanese. Nevertheless, many reforms were pushed and some bludgeoned through the Japanese Diet on the say-so of MacArthur. Few Americans would question MacArthur's blueprint for political democratization of Japan, based on planning by the eleven-nation Far East Commission in Washington. And typical of it is the MacArthur national constitution. As early as fourteen months after the Japanese had been resisting America's wartime advance with fanatic belief in their own wartime spirit, a detailed democratic constitution representing a distillation of democratic man's highest ideals was presented to them.

As with most of the occupation reforms, a faint pretense was made that the new constitution was conceived and written by the Japanese themselves. In fact, it was not written by the Japanese and is today understood by very few of them. The gift of an idealistic conqueror, this constitution has actually been a deterrent to the few true democrats who live in Japan, for it was sprung upon them just when they had begun with painful effort to formulate their own concepts of a democratic constitution.

As discussion grew in the drafty classrooms with their broken window-panes, in the factory union halls, and in the cluttered city

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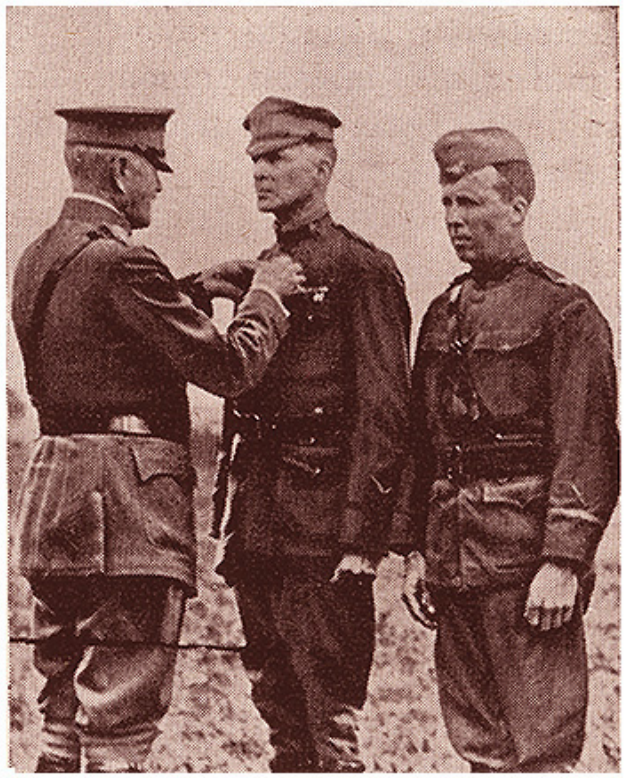
rooms of Japanese newspapers, and as the worried, muddled, earnest Japanese intellectuals began to picture themselves as modern Jeffersons and Paines, MacArthur let drop upon them from the heights of his lofty ideals the neatly packaged gift of democracy. It fell upon them with a thud. But the great majority of the unthinking Japanese liked it very much, and accepted it all the more readily because it was promulgated by their emperor, whom they still adore. Few of them know its authors or its contents.

As to the economic reforms incorporated in the original plan, these are being written off by the many changes in the world situation since the more optimistic days of 1945. It has become more important to Washington, and to MacArthur, to reestablish Japan's economic self-sufficiency than to revise the feudal-monopolistic economic structure that led Japan along the road to war. MacArthur is no fonder of Big Business than he is of Labor. As a first step towards the democratization of Japan's feudal-monopolistic economy, his headquarters has purged the top directors of the "big ten" Zaibatsu family monopolies and has ordered the dissolution of the vast, country-wide, Control Association cartels. But when it came to the recent bitter fight over the actual decentralization of Japan's monopolies, MacArthur held himself aloof. The structure of Japan's economy will not be greatly altered by the American occupation.



At 38, a brigadier general in France, MacArthur was decorated by General Pershing for valor at Chateau-Thierry.

But the great claim that MacArthur makes is that the Japanese people—farmer and fisherman, stall-keeper and factory worker—have experienced a spiritual revolution. Two events—both products of MacArthur's own policies—have recently brought forth evidence to refute his assertion. Before he ever entered Japan, MacArthur decided to utilize the Emperor of Japan in order to keep the recently defeated Japanese docile. The emperor served this purpose well, and when the

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danger was over, MacArthur suggested that Hirohito go out and "humanize" himself among his subjects. Again the emperor did as he was told.

Hirohito's trips around the country, and his attempts to act the politician rather than the god, have only intensified the worship of the Japanese. To their awe have been added love and sympathy. Today, if a popularity poll were taken, Hirohito would stand at the top and MacArthur would run second—a reversal of their positions in the first year of occupation.

At the climax of the twenty-month trials of Japanese war criminals early this year, wartime premier Hideki Tojo took the stand with a 64,000-word affidavit in which he exonerated the emperor, took upon himself all responsibility for losing the war and reiterated his ultranationalist propaganda. By making these points Tojo lifted himself in the eyes of the Japanese people—and at the expense of all the occupation teachings—from a despicable warmaker who botched his own suicide in 1945, to a national hero who resurrected and reaffirmed Japan's war propaganda in 1948.

After postwar service in Germany, where he studied the history of military occupations, MacArthur became the youngest superintendent West Point ever had, and was photographed there in 1921 with President Harding and some of his cabinet.

Reading his affidavit, the Japanese said, in effect, "It is only a matter of who wins. If America had lost the war, MacArthur would be on trial instead of Tojo."

But MacArthur weighs these small warning signs against the 475 democratic laws that have been forced through the Japanese Diet so far, and against Japanese civilians' frank distaste for war, which he takes for a renunciation of militarism, and finds his optimism justified. He says: "The strength and durability of the democratic idea in Japanese minds lies in the fact that it represents a *sound* idea." And there is no one to tell him different.

MacArthur's personal isolation in the very core of Japan today is prescribed to some extent by the role he must play as conqueror-cum-liberator of the Japanese. Among his own people he is isolated by the Army chain-of-command system, which limits ordinary give-and-take to men of equal rank, and necessarily relegates a five-star general to self-communion. But it is also in keeping with a personality that is constructed on the pattern of Victorian grandeur. In the audiences he holds with the higher echelon members of his staff, with newspaper correspondents, or with visiting American dignitaries, conversation runs a one-way track: from MacArthur to his listeners.

On a 1922 Florida vacation, he posed solemnly in this beach chair with his first wife. They were later divorced.

The gifted boy MacArthur emerged from his army childhood and the United States Military Academy in 1903. The flavor of the last century is still about him in his courtly manner, the slow pace of his speech, his fondness for soliloquy, and his frequent unsophisticated biblical allusions. For Douglas MacArthur is essentially an unsophisticated person.

The almost unbroken success of his long career may account for this. When Douglas MacArthur graduated from West Point he held the highest marks ever recorded at the academy. Shortly thereafter he began his education in the Orient with a year as engineer in the

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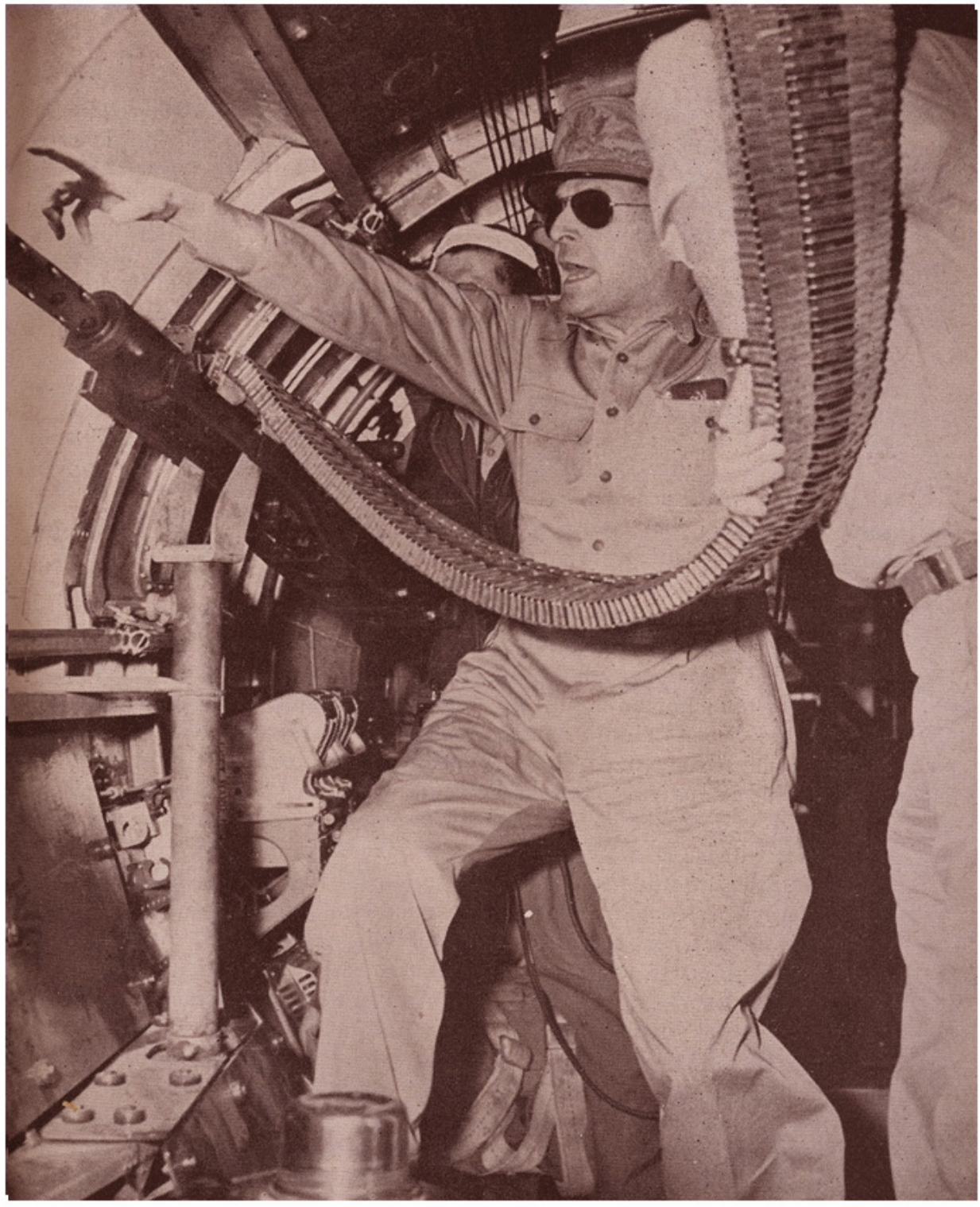

A dauntless commander in war, MacArthur was photographed not only landing with his men but also, as here, directing attacks from the waist of a heavy bomber.

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As president of the Olympic Commission, MacArthur was photographed in 1928 with the diver, Dorothy Poynton.

Philippines and a year as aide to his father in Tokyo. Later he was aide to President Theodore Roosevelt. During World War I he served with the Rainbow Division, which he helped to activate and which he commanded as a brigadier general at the age of 38. He was wounded twice but refused to leave his outfit for hospitalization.

He served with the Army of Occupation in Germany after 1918 and took that time to study the history of military occupations. Later, at 39, he became the youngest superintendent West Point had ever had. He spent five more years in the Philippines, rose to Commander of the Philippine Department. In 1930 he was appointed Chief of Staff of the United States Army (the youngest ever to hold the post).

In that capacity he had perhaps his only taste of widespread public disapproval. Obeying President Hoover's orders, he broke up the veterans' Bonus Army, which had marched on Washington, evicting the penurious ex-soldiers and burning their camp. About this time, with unwelcome foresight, he also told a nation dreaming of peace that a war was coming in which every American would be involved.

In 1935 he began what might be called his second career, as military adviser to the Philippine Commonwealth. As the war approached, he took command of all U. S. Army forces in the Far East and in this capacity, after the debacles at Pearl Harbor, Manila, and Bataan, he was forced to retreat, a general without an army, to Australia. MacArthur's dramatic refusal to consider defeat, the prideful challenge of "I shall return!" that he flung over his shoulder to the advancing, victorious Japanese, his long fight back in what he considered his own personal battle, is what gave final full stature to the legend that now holds him and his admirers enthralled. He had great obstacles

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