

Did Millionaire Ah Fong Dive into This Volcano?

He Made Sun Yat Sen President of China, Forfeiting His Life or Honor--- So He Went to His "Fire-God"

Mrs. J. W. Brewster, nee Melome Ah Fong



D ID Kilauea, where lives the Hawaiian firegod, devour Wing Ah Fong, Chinese millionaire?

Did he and his eldest son deliberately go to their deaths within the seething crater of the volcano to escape the fury of a Chinese secret society?

Recent events give reason to believe that Dr. Sun Yat Sen, President of the Chinese Republic, will reveal the fate of his friend Ah Fong, who financed the revolution which deposed the imperial family and substituted a republican form of government in what was formerly the Celestial Empire.

The story of Ah Fong is a romance of the mysterious East—that land of inscrutable secrets, where men are lost to view amid myriads of their fellow men—where lives are worth nothing—where fatalism is the accepted rule.

Ah Fong drifted into Honolulu, a Chinese coolie, pack on back and fortune to be made. He disappeared the possessor of some \$40,000,000. And he went to his death deliberately—for he knew that death awaited him—to prevent the desecration of the graves of his ancestors!

Fortune favored Ah Fong from the first. Everything he touched turned into gold. Importing precious silks from the Orient, he made his first few thousands. Then he bought a ship and traded. Soon another ship flew his flag, to be followed by another and another, until his flotilla was seen in all the ports and marts of the Pacific.

But he was not content to be a merchant solely. He acquired plantation after plantation. He raised sugar. He bartered sugar for pearls and pearls for money. There was apparently no limit to his enterprises.

And then Dan Cupid found in him an easy victim. Years before, a Portuguese sailor had been shipwrecked on one of the Hawaiian islands and had taken to him a Kanaka maiden for wife. The Portuguese died soon after the birth of a daughter and the widow found herself penniless. So she started back to her native village, but was prevented from taking her baby with her by American missionaries, who desired the child to be reared as a Christian.

The baby was adopted by Ichabod Bartlett and his wife. Bartlett was a physician hailing from Bath, Maine, and he looked upon the child as his own flesh and blood. And Conception Bartlett, as the child was known, grew into beautiful young womanhood.

Ah Fong had seen her. It was a case of love at first sight on both sides. Ah Fong asked Bartlett for permission to marry the girl, but Bartlett refused, for he had heard rumors that Ah Fong had a wife and family in China. This Ah Fong denied, and eventually Conception became his wife.

Ah Fong built himself a beautiful home

in Honolulu. And there came to him an amazing family of seventeen—two boys and fifteen girls. Three of the latter died in childhood; the other twelve all married white men—admirals, officers, judges—men of the highest type.

And as each child arrived Ah Fong added an extension to his home until it became the show place of Honolulu, for it was surrounded by sunken gardens in which played translucent fountains, where birds sang and romance dwelt.

He was lavish in his entertaining. His receptions and dances savored of Arabian Nights festivals. Money meant nothing to him—he lavished untold wealth on the education of his children—he was recklessly extravagant where their happiness was concerned.

Mrs. Maud Ah Fong.



Mrs. A. J. Daugherty, nee Martha Ah Fong.

U. S. N.; Margaret, the wife of Lieutenant A. J. Daugherty, of the 17th U. S. Infantry; Melaine, Mrs. J. W. Brewster, of Honolulu, and Alida, Mrs. George Hutchinson.

The social standing of the Ahfongs was secure. They were entertained in all homes and when they came to the United States on tour, they were received everywhere with open arms. For their father dowered them with \$150,000 in gold each, with still another thirty millions to divide after his death.

And now, to turn back the wheels of time—to vast China with its herds of starving coolies—its mossy rice fields—its teeming rivers and houseboats by the hundreds of thousands. For on one of them lived Sun Yat Sen, the poor of the poor—who divided pennies into tenths when he bought food—who dressed in rags and was fired with the ambition of a Washington to free his country from the yoke of its Manchurian dynasty.

Sun had plotted for the overthrow of the Manchus. He had perfected some sort of revolutionary machinery, but he lacked the most vital essential to success, money. And then his plot was discovered and disguised he fled his native land and sought refuge in Hawaii. There he came into contact with Ah Fong.

What passed between the two men is not known, but soon Sun showed decided symptoms of prosperity. His rags were replaced by American clothes of good cut. He met mysterious Chinese in out-of-the-way places. His new home became the rendezvous of emissaries from his home land. And one day, Sun disappeared from his haunts in Honolulu.

Soon after, the world was amazed to learn that the Manchus had been overthrown and that China was free. Thea Great Britain Rights Reserved.

A Remarkable Actual Photograph of the Crater of Kilauea in Action, Taken During a Recent Eruption.

Sun loomed into view as the first president of the first republic in the most ancient land on earth. But custom and precedent, coupled with superior organization and military power, proved too much for the infant republic and one day Sun found himself a fugitive once more, hunted, hounded—driven from pillar to post.

From a national idol he had become an outcast with a price on his head. And ever the Manchus legationaries were on his trail. Like the hunted beast he fled, into the mountain fastnesses—into the swamps—along the river banks, where the ooze and slime well nigh overwhelmed him and the stench of decayed fish made life a veritable hell for him.

One whole night he lay hidden in a rice field. Sunken out of sight, his mouth tightly closed, with two tiny bamboo shoots in his nostrils that he might breathe, Sun suffered tortures. Around the edges of the field, and on the paths traversing it, his pursuers tramped to and fro seeking their prey.

At last he made his way to the coast, where a sea captain took pity on his plight and took him away to Honolulu. But the Imperial Government was not so easily deprived of its prey. Filled by Sun, they took revenge on such of his followers as they could reach. One by one they died by strangulation or by the more merciful headsman.

The arm of the Manchus was long, but it could not reach Sun. But it did reach Ah Fong. The imperialists had learned that he had financed the revolt and they sent him word to return and take his medicine as became a Chinese and a Mason.

The message did not come in writing. Ah Fong was seated in his garden. From the open windows of his home came the strains of Occidental dance music—sensual, elusive. In the lights he could see his beautiful daughters dancing with white men. He smiled, inscrutably. Money could buy anything he desired, from a nation to a mere man—they were all alike. Only he, Ah Fong, was different. They were white, yes. They were civilized in their way. But ancient China was yet the best—its ways—its religion.

And then he dreamed of his old home; of the graves of his parents—his ancestors. For he was a Shintoist and worshipped the spirits of those gone before. He revered the grave that contained his father and mother and said daily prayers that their spirits might have happiness.

In the midst of his musings a hand was laid on his shoulder. Beside him stood a Chinaman, who bowed low.

"The great Ah Fong will forgive his humble servant for addressing him," said the stranger, "but it is of importance. The Imperial Government wishes the august Ah Fong to return at once to China."

Ah Fong looked at the man in astonishment. A stranger detesting to him—Ah Fong! He doubted his ears. He rose and faced the stranger.

"Who are you?" asked Ah Fong.

The stranger made a sign. Ah Fong started back, his yellow skin paler than usual. He had understood the sign of the secret Chinese order—a sign not to be ignored.

For a moment he thought, "I must politely decline to return to China," he said.

"Then your property will be confiscated," replied the stranger.

"I have plenty left here in Hawaii," replied Ah Fong, grimly.

"If you do not return within one month," retorted the stranger, "your ancestral graves will be opened and the bones of your ancestors thrown on the roads to be gnawed by dogs."

The stranger turned without a further word and faded into the darkness. Ah Fong stood stupefied. His parents' graves defiled? Their bones given to the hungry dogs?

Then the imperturbability of the Chinese blood asserted itself. His fatalism got the upper hand. He went into the house of gaiety and laughter. He gazed upon the scene silently. Then he called his oldest son to his side. They talked quietly. The boy nodded.

Father and son went to their rooms. They arrayed themselves in richest Oriental garb. They perfumed their bodies. Both were silent.

Ah Fong went to his desk and wrote: "To my wife and children: I am going on a journey. My love be with you till we meet again. WING AH FONG."

Then father and son left the house. Once they turned back to see again the lights—to hear again the gay laughter. Then they went into the darkness—into the Port of Missing Men. When last seen they were walking directly toward the volcano.

From that day on no trace of father or son has been found. Rumors aplenty there have been, but facts none. Ah Fong was reported to have died at Macao. He was "seen" in Hong Kong. Someone "saw" him in Peking. Another had heard of him in Foo Chow.

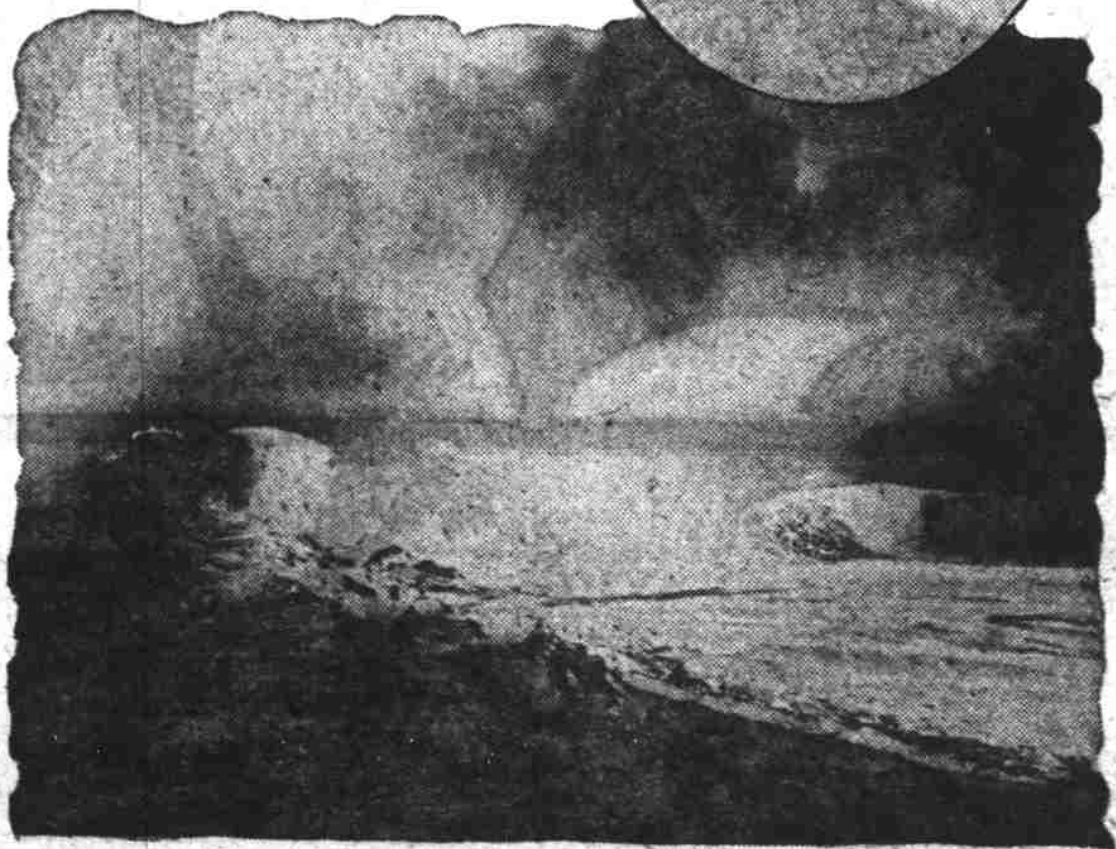
Influential American friends of the Ah Fongs made every effort to locate the missing men, but without avail. Inquiries were made through the United States Government. To all queries the Chinese Government replied politely—declined all knowledge and regretted lack of information.

And now Sun is again President of China. Again the reins of power are in his hands. Will he be able to solve the riddle of Ah Fong's disappearance?

Was Ah Fong killed by Chinese to avenge the Manchus' dynasty?

Or did he deliberately seek death within the crater of Kilauea that the fire god might be placated—even as Laana did in "The Bird of Paradise"?

The gates of eternal silence as yet are closed upon this fascinating mystery of a land of mystery, China.



Another View of the Seething Hole Which the Hawaiians Say is the "Home of the Fire-God."

To these entertainments came the best families on the island. There was no race line drawn where Ah Fong was concerned, for had he not lent money (at interest) to the haunt ton of Hawaii? Had he not saved many a white man from business disaster by his financial aid? And were not his children redned, educated, musical—thoroughly cultured, every one?

Yet it happened that one fine day America was amazed to learn that Etia Ah Fong, the eldest, was to marry Rear Admiral Whiting, U. S. N. Here at home, no one believed the story, but it was true nevertheless, for the wedding was the most

gorgeous and extravagant social function in the history of the islands.

Then followed one wedding after another and in every instance the bridegroom was white and American. And with the marriages, the Ah Fongs became Ahfongs. Thus it came about that Emeline married J. Alfred Magoon, of Indiana; Nancy became Mrs. Frank E. McStocker, of Honolulu; Julia became the wife of Arthur Johnstone, an author; Alice, Mrs. A. E. Henderson; Mirie, Mrs. A. S. Humphrey; Elizabeth, Mrs. J. R. Burns, of New York; Helen, Mrs. W. A. Henshell, of San Francisco; Caroline, the wife of J. M. Riggs,

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