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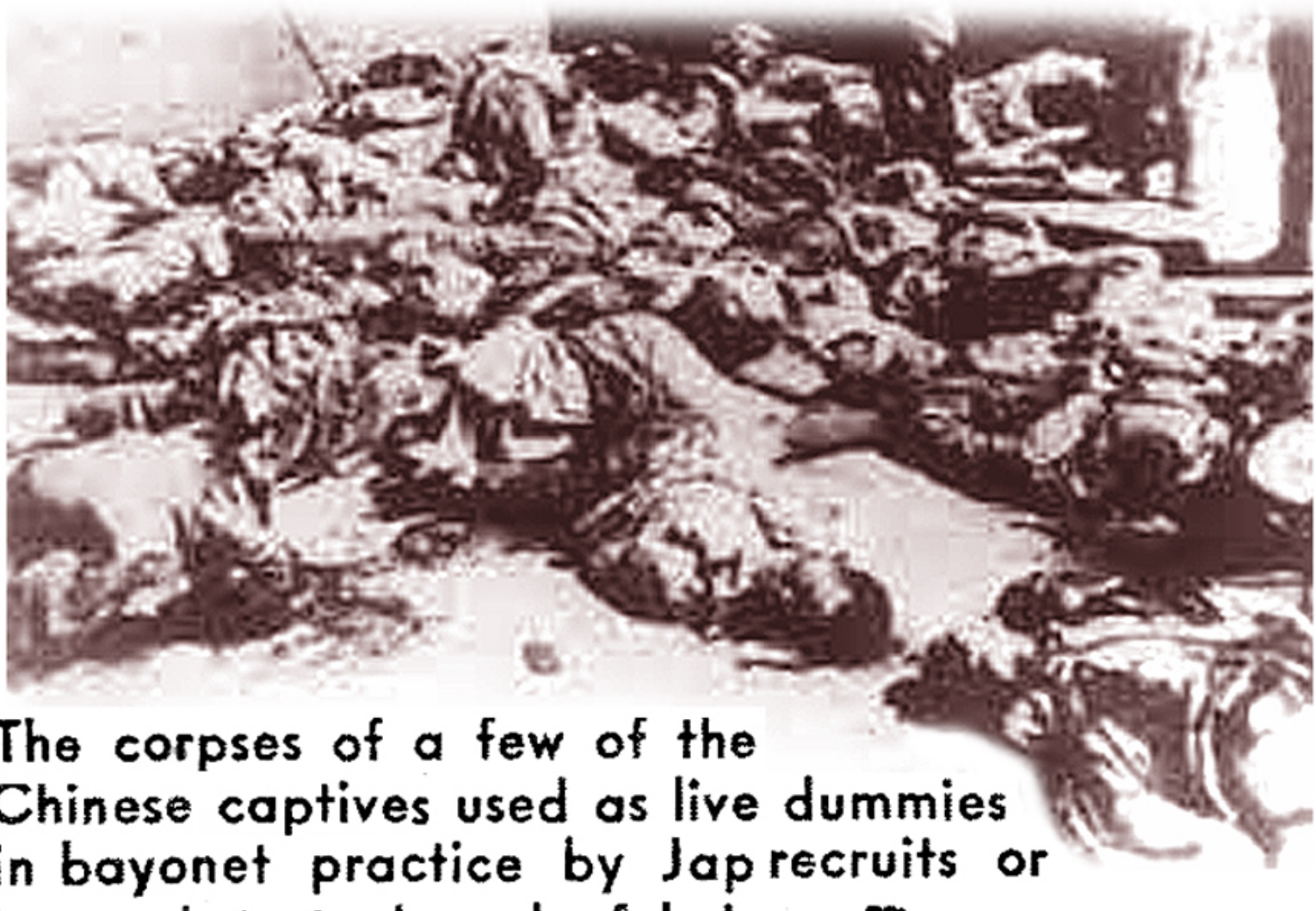
WHY JAPS DON'T TAKE PRISONERS

Here, from one of them, is a tragic confession of the brutality, greed, and lust that rule them

BY HALLETT ABEND



The corpses of a few of the Chinese captives used as live dummies in bayonet practice by Jap recruits or in sword tests by playful Jap officers.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT told Congress on December 8 that not for a thousand years would mankind forget the treachery of the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor. It will be important, of course, to remember that treachery, so that never again can Japan or any group of Japanese commit the like of it. But even more important will be the framing of such a peace treaty, when Japan is finally defeated, as will make it impossible for her to resume her policy of conquest for another thousand years.

Japan has been blood-drunk for more than a decade—ever since the Japanese invaded Manchuria in September, 1931. Without a pause, they have been killing and burning and raping in China. In four and a half years of warfare there, they have taken almost no prisoners. No one knows of the existence of a single concentration or internment camp in all of Japanese-occupied China. Chinese prisoners of war are shot, excepting captured officers or flyers from whom information may be extorted by torture, after which they are shot in the back of the head. The like is done to Chinese wounded left on battlefields.

The American people must disabuse themselves of the idea that we are fighting only the wicked Japanese war lords, not the Japanese people.

Much has been written and told about Japanese atrocities in China. Much that occurs is too terrible to be told or written. But the peoples of East Asia know. They have an almost miraculous way of spreading news by word of mouth. Americans out there call it the "bamboo telegraph."

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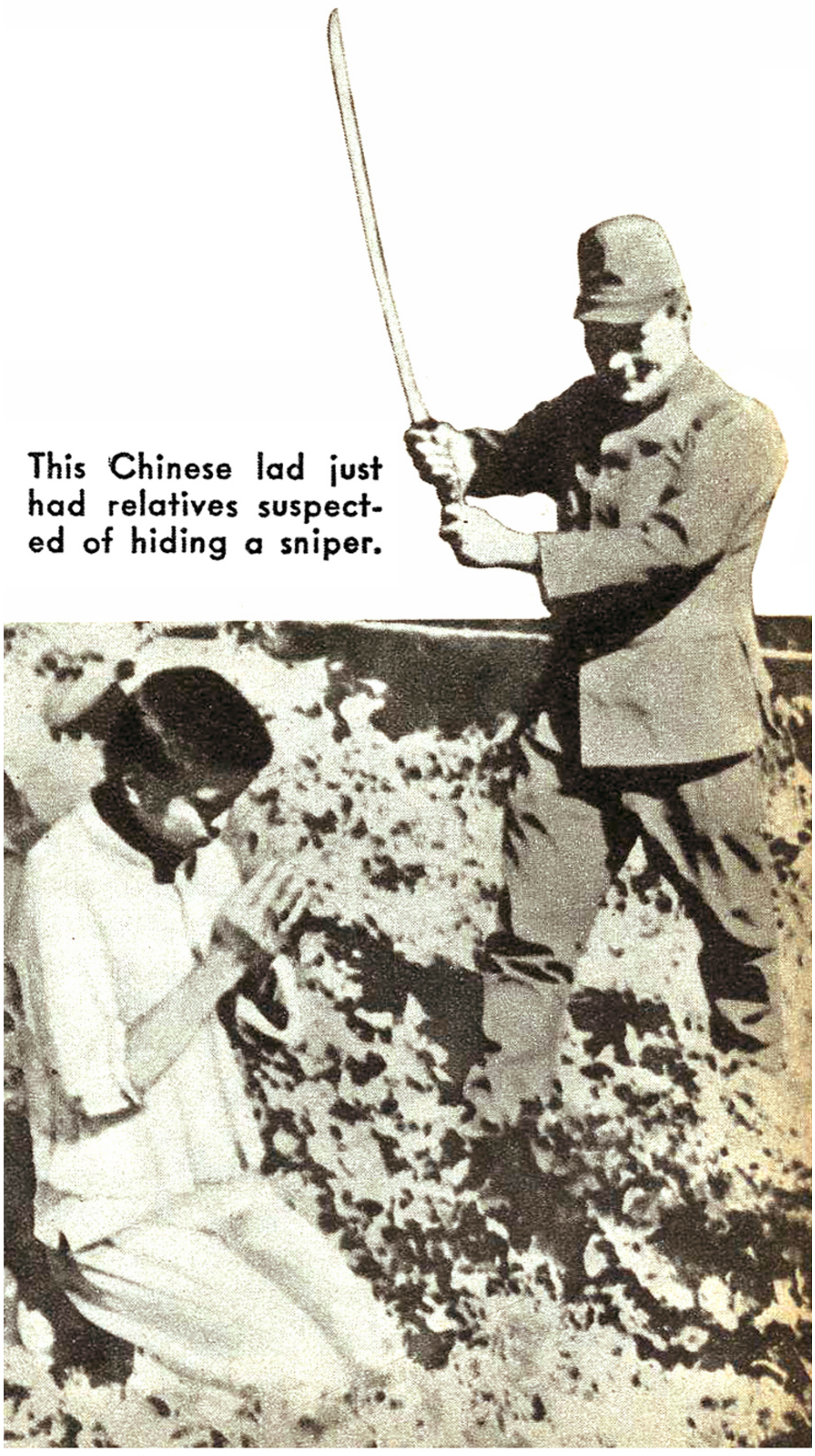

This Chinese lad just had relatives suspected of hiding a sniper.

In Manila last October, Admiral Thomas C. Hart, commander of our Asiatic Fleet, was discussing with me the almost universal aversion to the Japanese felt by the other peoples of East Asia. We were sitting in his suite at the Manila Hotel. His hotel rooms, like his office rooms two blocks away, faced Manila Bay, and he always sat facing the water, so that, as he explained, he could see any signal that might be flashed from any of his ships in the bay.

There was no lack of being "on the alert" at Manila, as there was two months later in Hawaii.

"It is a tragic and touching thing," he said to me that hot October afternoon, "the way the people native to these lovely islands share the hatred, fear, and horror of the Japanese with the other peoples of East Asia. This feeling is practically universal amongst the Filipinos, except for a handful of disaffected dwellers along the northern coast of Luzon. Their good will has been won by the Japanese naval agents, posing as fishermen, who poach in Philippine waters. They give fish and money and smuggled goods to some Filipinos in the northern villages, hoping, I suppose, to use them as fifth columnists when they try to invade the islands."

He told me how, a fortnight before our talk, he had taken a portion of his fleet and some marines northward along the west coast of Luzon to practice surprise landings.

"Knowing how the Filipinos live in mortal terror of a Japanese invasion," he said, "I steamed all my ships up to within sight of the little town during the middle of the afternoon. Then, with my staff, I went ashore to call upon the mayor and other dignitaries.

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"I told them that at dawn the next morning our fleet would try out the tactics of a surprise landing on the shore near the town. I warned them that there would be airplanes roaring overhead, that the ships would fire noisy broadsides of harmless blanks, and that the landing party would use guns loaded with blanks. They thanked me profusely. They placarded the town, and policemen went from shop to shop and from house to house with the reassuring information. Runners were sent into the countryside with it."

The admiral paused and his face set in a bitter expression. "It was a damn shame!" he continued. "It was pathetic. When our planes came over before daybreak next morning, the townspeople panicked. They fled to the hills, and in the country people dived into the jungle. When our landing parties got ashore they found a deserted town. The only living things were the dogs and the cats, and a few people too old or ill to be moved. The terror of those left behind was sickening.

"And that," he concluded, "shows what these people think of Japan and her New Order."

TO help free the people of East Asia from this dread, such a peace must be made as will force Japan to behave herself for the next thousand years, even though we are fighting this war primarily for our own present and future protection.

It was the rape of Nanking by Japanese troops in December, 1937, that first caused Japan to be thus hated and feared by the peoples whose cause against the white man she has pretended to be championing. The famous bamboo telegraph carried far and wide, and in many tongues, the details of that horror. It is not my purpose to try to print the unprintable ones here; but I can give here the personal version brought to me in Shanghai by the loyal Japanese subject who at that time was Japan's consul general there. He was Y. Miura, that same Miura who has been Japan's ambassador to Mexico, and who failed in his effort to leave that country and return to his homeland only a week before the attack upon Pearl Harbor.

It was nearly midnight on the fifth or sixth day after the Japanese capture of Nanking, and I, wearied and sleepy, was ready for bed, when the telephone rang. "I've just come back from Nanking," said Miura's voice, "and I must see you. Shall I come to you or will you come to me?"

I told him I'd hurry over to see him. I found him pacing up and down his large sitting room. His face was worn and lined as I'd never seen it before. On the table in the center of the room were two bottles of whisky, six bottles of soda, a silver pitcher of water, and a silver tub filled with ice cubes. But there were only two glasses.

"Have a drink, a big one—do," he said. "I need one—several—and so will you."

He was not intoxicated; he was distressed. His face seemed distorted by some inner tension. He made me comfortable in a big chair, and then began

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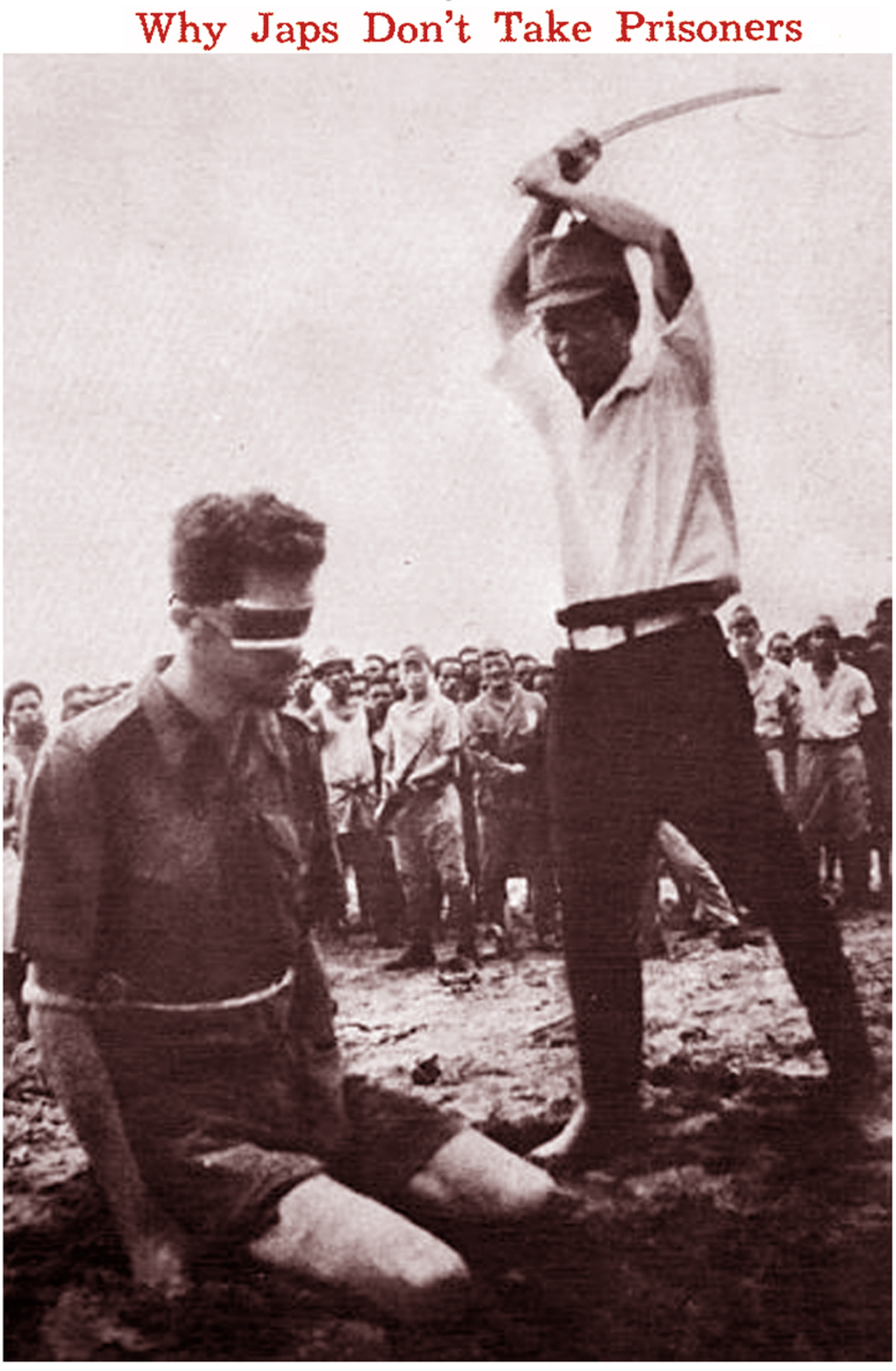

to pace up and down again and talk. He paced and talked for nearly two hours, pausing only now and then to refill his glass.

"I have to talk to some one, and I dare not talk to any of my own countrymen, so I asked to see you," he began. "I have just flown down from Nanking—I simply could not bear to stay there another night through. Please tell me, if you can with propriety, what you have cabled about conditions at Nanking, what your correspondent there has reported to you."

"Well," I said, "there is the seemingly authentic story about nearly four hundred Chinese civilians, men and women, with their wrists roped together, being herded down to the foreshore by the river. The report says machine guns were set up and the whole hapless crowd was shot down."

I expected a violent protest, a denial. But no. "It's all true, but that isn't the half of it," he said with agitation. "What else, please? What else?"

So I told him all I had learned. About Japanese soldiers chucking wounded Chinese into the ruins of bomb-blasted buildings and then torching the ruins. About Japanese trucks and tanks crushing their way over mounds of Chinese dead and dying. I told of the looting, of the raping of women and girls of all ages, of drunken Japanese soldiers bayoneting and disemboweling any hapless Chinese whom they met on the streets. I told of the unauthenticated report that the Japanese generals had "rewarded" their soldiers by giving them three days' leave to do as they pleased in the shattered, captured city.

"All true, too true! But that's not half of it," he would mutter whenever I paused. "Now what else, please?"

When my recollection was drained dry of horrors, he began his own story. He had gone to Nanking expecting to stay a week. "But I couldn't bear it another hour!" he exclaimed. "Our soldiers thought they were celebrating a victory that would mark the end of the war. Instead, they have made

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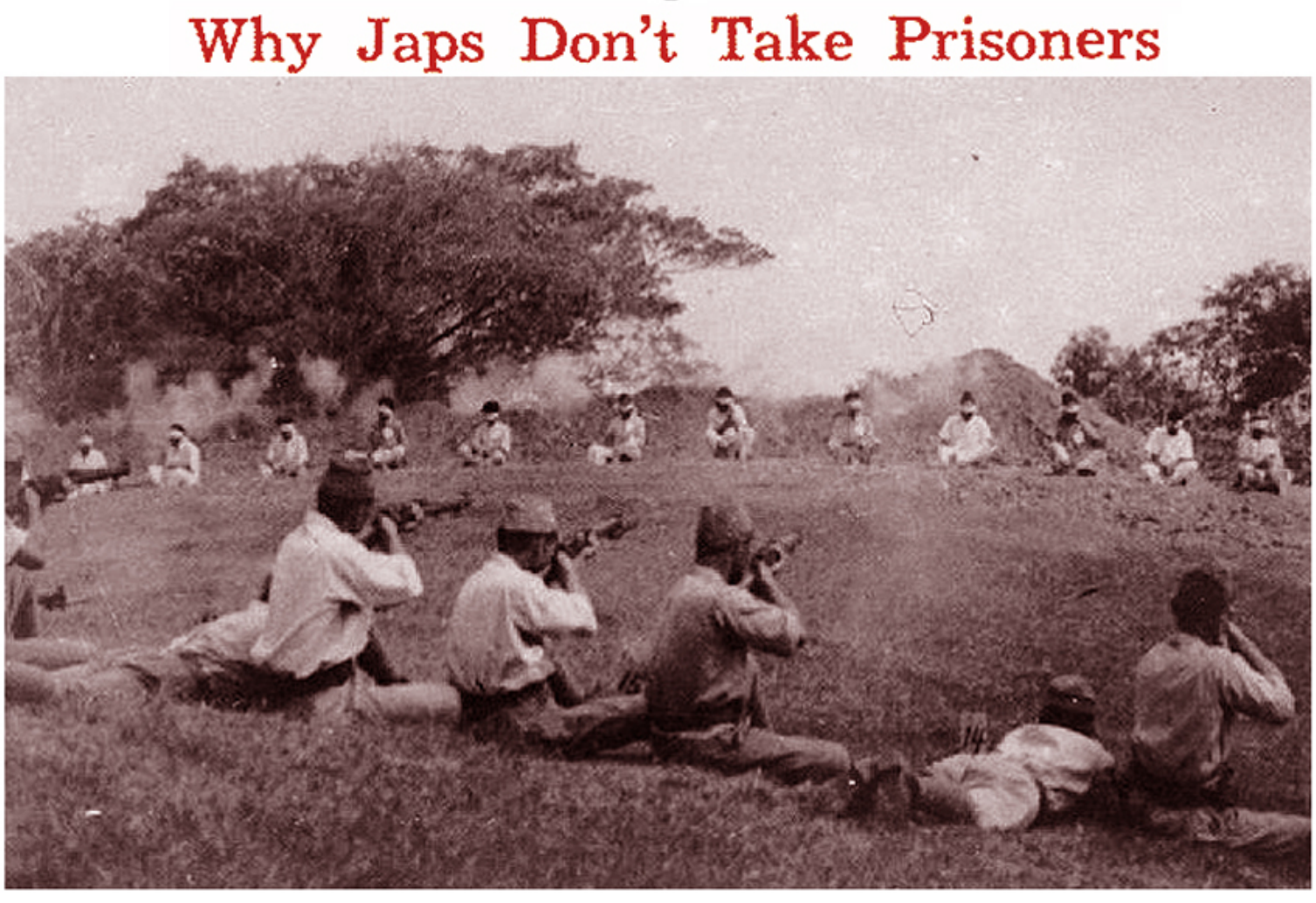

peace impossible. Never again can there be real peace between the Chinese people and ourselves.

"Last night at our consulate I could hear what was going on, even with double windows closed. There were shots all over the city all the time. And fires. But the worst was those civilian refugee camps. There are two near our consulate, one with about six thousand Chinese civilians, another with about eight thousand.

"Our soldiers would go to the camps in great numbers and call out that one hundred, maybe two hundred, women and girls must come to them or they would machine-gun the whole place. They actually did machine-gun one camp. After that the Chinese women, with faces like stone and with compressed lips, walked out to our soldiers and were dragged away into the darkness. . . ."

That is the kind of thing that must not happen again for a thousand years. It was not exceptional. The same sort of thing has been happening and happening in China since the summer of 1937. We in this country do not hear much about it any more. But the peoples of East Asia do—by bamboo telegraph. That is why the civilian Filipinos so hate and fear the Japanese, and why the Filipino soldiers have stood up so splendidly in the face of Japanese attempts at invasion.

It is not only their aggressive brutality, their greed, their lust, and their blood lust, which makes the Japanese unfit to fill their self-appointed role as the leaders of East Asia. Success and authority go to their heads. They do not know how to treat subject peoples decently. My last Sunday in Shanghai, I was crossing Szechuen Road bridge into Japanese-controlled Hongkew. Just as my chauffeur slowed down to show his pass to the Japanese sentry, an elderly Chinese, afoot, was waved on past. Six feet along he cleared his throat and spat—a habit prevalent among lower-class Chinese.

In a flash the sentry felled him with a blow on the head with the butt of his rifle, and prodded him in the shoulder with the bayonet. Then, revoltingly, he made the kneeling Chinese lick the spittle from the paving.

If they could invade this country, that's the way the Japanese would treat us.

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