

No. 2567

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Translated by  
Defense Language Branch

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

Sworn Deposition

Deponent: SANO Torata

Having first duly sworn an oath as on attached sheet and in accordance with the procedure followed in my country I hereby depose as follows.

1. I was born on August 8, 1889, at No. 1060, Ueno, Yokokawa-mach, Aira-gun, Kagoshima-ken.

I reside at present at No. 707, Chigusa-Shinden, Onuki-machi, Kimitsu-gun, Chiba-ken.

2. The following is a brief outline of my career.

I graduated from the Military Academy in 1911;

Appointed 2nd Lieutenant, attached to the Kurume 56 Infantry Regiment in 1911;

Took part in the Battle of Tsingtao, during World War I, in 1914;

Appointed Commander of the 23rd Regiment in May, 1938;

took part in the Battle of Hankow.

Subsequently appointed Principal of the Kumamoto Military Training School, Commander of the Tungning Frontier Guard, Manchuria, and Commander of Nakachishima 42nd Division, Chishima, in the order mentioned; the last office I held till the end of the war.

I was appointed lieutenant-general in March, 1944.

3. I took part in the Battle of Hankow, as Commander of the 23rd Infantry Regiment belonging to the Ushijima Detachment of the 6th Division; on October 26 I entered Hankow as leader of the advance unit. On November 5 we evacuated the said city.

It was about 2 p.m. on October 25, 1938 that I led the advance unit in chase of the Chinese forces and reached Taokuanchien 1,100 meters north of Tsaichiashan, on the northeastern extremity of Hankow.

The Chinese Army had cut off communication and traffic by causing inundations on the Yangchia-ho. They attempted to check our advance by machine-gun fire from a series of positions set up on the Changkung embankments on both sides of the Tsaichiashan fortification.

Our troops commenced crossing the river by means of one 30-passenger civilian boat and eleven 5-passenger civilian boats and landed about 7 p.m. on the Changkung embankment on

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the northwestern side of the hill. The Chinese force, after having done some firing, retreated in the direction of Hankow leaving us in possession.

When the boats had crossed the river and back for the fifth time, they were found much damaged, and we felt misgivings about their security. We therefore ceased the river-crossing at about 10.30 p.m. and decided to wait the arrival of the main strength of the unit with its river-crossing equipment section before continuing our river-crossing. We therefore concentrated and bivouaced in the vicinity of Taokuanchien and Niehkow (T.N. ?).

The Chinese Army commenced bombarding the Japanese Concession about 2 p.m. on October 25, and toward evening the bombardment became fierce.

I stayed on at the river-crossing point at Taokuanchien till after evening, taking charge of the unit's river-crossing operation and other matters, but finding it dangerous to try and transport the troops in the defective boats, I gave up the undertaking about 10.30, p.m. About 11 p.m. I went back to the advance unit headquarters in the village of Taokuanchien and looked over the documents from the higher headquarters concerning preparations to be made for the intended October 26 occupation of Hankow. These documents had been dropped on

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the previous day by an airplane of our army.

I have no clear recollection of the description of the papers nor of their number; however, of special importance were those specifying the instructions of Commander-in-Chief of the Central China Army HATA concerning the Hankow occupation and the matters relating to the arrangements between the Army and the Navy. The perusal of the documents made me realize the seriousness of the occasion so forcibly that I at once made up my mind to act in faithful obedience to the commander's wish : so that the true worth of the Japanese Army might be proved in the eyes of the foreign residents. I called Captain CHOSHO, regimental adjutant, and ordered him to transmit the Commander-in-Chief's instructions, enjoining him at the same time to see that they be strictly enforced. I also ordered my subordinate officers -- battalion and company commanders-- that before we began the occupation march the next day it should be arranged that a number of soldiers be left about the place where we had bivouaced to look after the arms, materials, impedimenta and other things and that the troops who were to join the march should be those that had been chosen specially for the purpose.

Orders, notices and other announcements issued by the Central Army Headquarters were, as a rule, to pass through the corps, division and brigade before they were transmitted

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to the lower formation. However, in the present case I concluded that owing to the unexpectedly speedy progress it was feared that the instructions, if they were transmitted through the customary channels, would fail to reach the advance guard of the pursuing unit in time, and so they were careful enough to deliver the instructions directly to the advance troops. (As a matter of fact, when the headquarters of the pursuit unit was at Huangpo the headquarters of the division was located in the vicinity of Hsinchu, 60 kilometers to the rear). This scrupulous case was specially taken, I thought, to prevent the subordinates from falling into mistakes, and I read the instructions with extreme gratitude.

The instructions both minute and careful, covered several pages, and the following are the important parts that still remain in my memory.

The gist of the instructions as to Hankow occupation.

In Hankow there are the French concessions and the other old international settlements of European and American Powers as well as the consulates-general of the Powers. Foreign nationals reside there, and for their protection there are stationed troops on guards. The Powers have their own rights and interests. The units are each requested to admonish its subordinates, enjoining them to maintain military discipline and be prudent in their behavior so as to prove the prestige

of the Imperial army in the eyes of the foreign residents. The following are the detailed items of which special note must be taken.

(a) No unit, soldier or attached civilian will intervene with foreign rights or interests.

(b) The military corps, servicemen and civilians in the service should be scrupulously careful not to cause frictions with foreign residents, furthermore no soldier or attached civilian will negotiate with foreign residents either in a military or private capacity.

(c) No units, soldiers or attached civilians will enter the French Concession without consent of the authorities concerned.

(d) Matters to be borne in mind with relation to the Chinese people.

(1) Refrain from being stated at victory and behaving unjustly or illegally to the people of the Republic of China, whether they are officials or otherwise.

(2) No servicemen or attached civilian will independently enter any private dwelling.

(3) Without the resident's consent no billeting should be arranged and no furniture or utensils should be used.

(4) No unit, soldier or attached civilian will commander or work the inhabitants arbitrarily.

The situation prevailing on October 26 was as follows:

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The river-crossing equipment company was greatly delayed, arriving on 26, about 8.30 a.m., with only eight collapsible boats (made of plywood fastened with thin rubber-belts). With these boats we built four pontoon rafts (by combining two boats) and began ferrying after 9 o'clock under the leadership of Detachment Commander USHIJIMA. Before beginning to cross the river, Detachment Commander USHIJIMA told us to faithfully obey the instructions given by Central Army Commander-in-Chief HATA and our other superior officers concerning the Hankow occupation, enjoining us to enhance the glory of the regimental colors. The first to cross the river was a small party led by Lieutenant-Colonel NARITOMO of the 45th Infantry Regiment. Next Commander SANO and the headquarters of the SANO unit started, but the outboard motor of the pontoon raft got out of gear which rendered it impossible for the boat to steer; the boat was actually carried about 3,000 meters down the Yangtze. It was not until eleven o'clock that they got ashore after having repaired the boat. When the main body of the ferrying troops reached a nameless village on the road over Tsaichiasan near the northeastern extremity of Hankow, it was found that there were no Chinese troops remaining in the city. There we stopped for about one hour and had our lunch. After having adjusted the deployment and seen that the uniforms and equipment of officers and men were in order we started



again at 12.30 in good order. Shortly after one o'clock the advance party of the unit headquarters arrived at the north-western end of the French Concession, when the 3rd Battalion Commander who was at the head of the unit sent the following report requesting at the same time instructions as to how to deal with the situation.

"The Italian Consul-General has communicated to us to the following effect. How shall I deal with this?

The Chinese Army has already withdrawn from Hankow, but it is rumored that there are mines laid on certain roads. If the Japanese Army desires it, we shall be glad to send a guide to lead them along a safe road on their march to Hankow."

The unit commander decided to enter the city led by the guide whom the Italian Consul-General had proposed to send, and at the same time to relax battle preparedness to some extent, adopting rather a war-and-peace attitude and to conduct a formal entry ceremony. About half past one, after about 20 minutes' rest during which time we attended to our equipment and dress, and uncovered the regimental flag, we started led by the guide (a French missionary) sent by the Italian Consulate-General. We took the way from the western end of the Japanese Settlement to the Bund and then to the Italian Consulate-General, when we were welcomed by the Italian guards and by scores of Italian nationals (men and women, young and

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old) and presented with tobacco. After several minutes' rest, we resumed our march, the 3rd Battalion--the party at the head of the unit--led by the French missionary and the unit headquarters guided by an Englishman who was proficient in Japanese. We followed the safe roads for the most part indicated on the map of Hankow (attached to these papers); we passed round the French concession, taking over on the way the empty Hankow Peace Preservation Office and other Chinese rights and interests, and finally found ourselves a little after 4 o'clock in front of the Hupeh Telegraph Office in the old British Settlement.

In the British Settlement there was an area set aside for the sake of distressed people; so Captain HIGO, Commander of the 9th Company was ordered to post a guard and post sentries so that no unit, soldier or attached civilian should enter the area. The corps headquarters and the 9th Company were billeted at the Hupeh Telegraph Office and at empty houses near by, while the rest of the corps were billeted at empty houses in the neighborhood of the Kianghan Road.

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On 26, the river at Tao Kuan chien was bridged over for crossing<sup>s</sup> by means of only four boats, but as the materials used for this purpose were of poor nature such as folded mats, the loading capacity of the bridge for personnel and munition was thereby greatly lowered. In consideration of these facts it was at first considered rather preferable to send into the city only a certain number of picked troops especially as this entry had to be made in the presence of residents of the powers, and therefore not to permit each Unit to take with them horses or heavy loads except one half of light firearms such as machine guns, and regiment artillery. So all personnel of the field artillery, mountain artillery, and trench mortar units regimental artillery and machine guns and a large number of horses, baggage, and loads of each unit were left in the vicinity of Tao Kuanchien and Niehkow and in order that communications might be kept open between the crossing-point. Surveillance guard and the Headquarters, Lientuant OCHIAI, the Second Adjutant, remained at the crossing-point. As no battle was engaged in on the 26th in HANKOW city or in its vicinity, our unit had no person either killed or wounded and on the part of the Chinese troops too there was nobody killed, wounded or taken prisoner.

Just as the SANC Unit marched on to the coast road lying in the neighbourhood of south-west edge of the Japanese

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settlement, on October 26 at about 1 p.m. and sighted a Japanese naval unit sailing up the Yangtsekang on board a cruiser-type war-ship and, afterwards at about 5 p.m., also a landing party consisting of about 20 men marching eastwards passing by the front of the Telegraphic Office of Hupai Province. On entering the Hankow city, the unit was followed by about twenty correspondents from all Japanese Newspapers.

The French Settlement, it was recognized, had been surrounded with wire entanglements and the entrance in and exit of its principal roads had been closely shut off with blocks and guarded by armed troops. It was obvious also that on the coast road within the bounds of its settlement, guards had been placed so as to prevent Japanese troops and civilians from passing.

I remember that major AKAGI, staff officer despatched by the 6th Division, called on the German Consulate General on October 20 at about 19 o'clock, and made request asking them to commence negotiations with the French Counsel General in order to get the closed coast road opened to the Japanese troops and civilians for their free passage, but without avail.

Becoming aware of the negotiations commenced by the Officer AKAGI, the SANO unit the same night issued an order to prohibit units, troops and attached civilians from entering or going out of the French Settlement and, moreover, mounted

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guards in order to execute this order of prohibition, and prohibit any entry in the direction of the coast road.

Our unit on October 27 by order of the Brigade, moving up dawn, commenced to form the first line of the Brigade's left wing, and starting from the neighbourhood of the present camp, marched west-ward of the city area to proceed finally up to the line linking the city government with the neighbourhood of LUNGWANG MIAO wharf, but in the course of the march neither Chinese soldiers nor inhabitants were met with; judging from their houses which were closely shut, perhaps the latter had fled.

In the afternoon of 27th, the Unit received an order from the Brigade to bivouac in the vicinity of the KIANGHAN Road and Chou Shan Park and, so, the Unit proper had to put up at Liaotung Restaurant (perhaps also, the WUHAN Hotel, if I remember) situated on the western side of the CHUSHAN Road near TANG-I street.

I do not recollect minute details of the billeting of units but I do remember that an infantry platoon was billeted at HANKOW airfield.

Brigade Headquarters were set up in a certain drug store on the west side of Chung Shan Road, but I do not remember accurately where it was situated.

Around 31st October I presented myself to Division Headquarters and found that on this day they were installed in the

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building of a middle school said to have been established by the Japan-China Cultural Association located in the North-West area of the Japanese settlement.

On Oct. 27, at about 4 p.m. I received a report from the 1st Battalion Commander to the effect that a military surface unit had arrived at HANSUI (eastern side of TAIPIHSHAN) of the point of confluence of the YANGTSE-KIANG and HANSUI.. From Oct. 28 onwards, our unit was day and night occupied with preparations for establishing camps. Officer and men of the 6th Division in May of this year had been incorporated into a Northern River unit Investiture Force of the Wu-Han and left WUHU, and since then our troops during about five months had to overcome the ill-famed climatic conditions and to endure all sort of hardship in the regions of WOHU, CHAOHSIEN, TUNGCHENG, ANKING, TSIENSHAN, HUANGMEI, KUANGTSI and HANKOW. and, despite all this, pressing an enemy up to ten times more numerous than themselves, succeeded in moving on. Particularly since September 18th in the running battle, our forces, despite the fact that about 98% of all the combatants were infected with Malaria (among the officers of the 23rd Regiment of Infantry, only two in the person of Colonel SANO, the Unit Commander and Captain ORIONO, Chief of Company, were free of the disease), and that the Chinese retreating troops offered us desperate resistance, succeeded in breaking through on foot and in 9 months the long distance of 350 kilometers, dealing

them all the time deadly blows until we were ultimately rewarded with <sup>the long sought for</sup> successful occupation of Hankow so the long sought for. After the arrival of the SANO Unit at Hankow, the health condition of this Unit was found to be very bad and many cases of Malaria broke out among the combatants, not to speak of their bodily and mental forces which were generally in a run-down condition so that to give them a rest was considered utterly indispensable. Despite all this, the combatants, full of hope and rejoicing in anticipation of the probable outcome that the so long-desired rest would probably be allowed them in such a city as Hankow where facilities and accommodations were said to be perfect, tried to brace themselves up and, from October 27 onwards, to make all efforts to set up their camps. Nevertheless contrary to their expectation, the Unit about November 1 suddenly received the order to move to the neighbourhood of TAIYAHSIEN and, on November 7, left HANKOW to be removed to WUCHAN on November 5, by crossing the YANGTSE-KIANG, prior to proceeding finally to TAIYAHSIEN.

The 23rd Infantry Regiment which had been on guard duty in the former British Settlement were reported to have been removed, around November 4, to the TAIYAHSIEN district after handing over the guard duties to a unit under the 13th Division. No sooner did the British authorities of the former settlement know of this change than they made a request to the military

authorities requesting the cancellation of the move under the plea that an unexpected removal of the guard so noted for their military discipline and public morality and so highly appreciated by the inhabitants would surely bring great disappointment to the latter. Responding to the request, the military authorities gave order to the then 9th guard company (Company Commander, Captain Higo Morihide) of the Regiment, to mount guard continuously in HANKOW for one month after the departure of the Regiment's main strength from the city and towards the early part of December they arrived at SHIHHWEIHK'U, TAYFH-HSIEN, site of camps of the Regiment proper. The circumstances at that time were reported by the Japanese vernacular press and the excerpt from the "Miyasaki Shimbun" hereto attached, even though its contents differs a little from actual facts is reliable material from which to judge how the discipline and the morality of the unit were appreciated and to what degree the HANKOW inhabitants placed reliance upon them.

It was just at the time of the reception of the Area Army Commander, HATA, on November 3 that the unit commander SANO marched out to the Custom House wharf near the former foreign settlement on November 3rd, and as both sides of the road were lined with guard troops, gendarmerie and others, it was impossible to discern whether or not the camped troops were also present on both sides of the route running from Chungshan



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Road to the Custom House Road.

At that time I did not sight any troops, any military personnel or any civilians passing by the coast road which lies along the lower end of the Custom House wharf.

As there was no prisoner taken in Hankow city area by the 23rd Infantry Regiment, no incident came to pass regarding prisoners.

The main force of the Chinese troops, before October 24, and a part of the remaining troops, in the evening of October 25, respectively commenced to retreat so that as of October 26, this retreat was complete and as there was no battle engaged in between the Chinese and Japanese troops in the area of Taikiashan and Hankow city district there was therefore not a single Chinese prisoner of war.

In the battle on the evening of October 25th engaged by the 23rd Infantry Regiment at the river-crossing there was only one soldier wounded, and it could almost be called a bloodless engagement and on the 26th, led by foreigners they entered ceremoniously into the Hankow suburbs. Such being the case, there was no reason for the officers or men to feel hostile and their hostile feeling against the enemy not being stirred up, they had nothing else to do other than to march gleefully into the streets of the city so that there was no fear of their illegally treating Chinese

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military personnel or civilians in general. Moreover, as there were no Chinese military personnel left in the city and the group of the remaining citizens had been taken for protection into a refugee area set up within the French Settlement and the former foreign settlement, no opportunity for a possible outbreak of incidents was afforded owing to the lack of any object for such illegal treatment. Who after all could believe that the troops followed by two foreign guides and with about 20 journalists on their heels could have resorted en route to violent acts or that, in addition, troops composed of only picked soldiers well-known for their military discipline could commit unlawful acts in an area settled by residents and troops of various foreign countries?

October 27 just fell on the day on which, by order of the Brigade, the unit was to make a general move-out and there was no officer or man engaged in any action outside the unit area. And nowhere was sighted any who dared take any military actions whatsoever outside the sphere of their duties. From October 28th onwards, on the land front troops from the rear, striving to be the foremost, were being poured in continuously toward Hankow so long desired, and on the Yangtsekiang, military and naval surface units were crowding up the river. Under these circumstances, the troops who, full of enthusiasm and rejoicing and contentment, thought of nothing else but to be the first to enter triumphantly into

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Hankew and who were also exceedingly occupied with setting-up work of camps in expectation of a rest to be given them in compensation for their services so heroically rendered, surely had no occasion, to commit any unlawful acts.

The first photograph attached to this document was taken on a road near the southwest part of the Japanese settlement, and shows the headquarters of the SINO Unit about to march on the road towards the River-side Road. The second photograph shows the Unit solemnly passing by the French Settlement.

Both photographs, which were taken by a war-correspondent and appeared in the home-land newspapers, show us the peaceful and quiet atmosphere of the marching troops, suggesting that this atmosphere is quite different from the excited air to be expected if they were of troops marching through a street immediately after a fierce battle.

The guards of the 23th Infantry Regiment were posted at every battalion, and they kept strict watch over conduct of the Japanese soldiers. And the 9th Company of the same regiment was posted at the former British Settlement exclusively to watch over that area. Supplementing their strict service which had prevented the occurrence of offences, the Military Police, a part of which having arrived there by October 29th, joined with them on November 2nd and restrained completely the occurrence of offences.

The 23th Infantry Regiment, rewarded letters of praise during the China Incident, was strict in its order and discipline, and perfect in its education and training. This will be testified to by the fact that there was not even one soldier who had been punished during my term of office as the Regimental Commander until October of the 15th year of Showa (2 years and 5 months), except one case in which a noncommissioned officer was punished with light disciplinary confinement owing to his responsibility for preventing

fire, when a Chinese coolie burnt three cans of gasoline by mishandling.

From the above, I can conclude definitely that the soldiers and officers of the 23th Infantry Regiment never murdered war prisoners.

I believe that there could never occur any murder of war prisoners on the Yangtze River fronting the River side Road, inasmuch as I remember, the part of the said road east of (in the direction of the downstream of the Yangtze River) the wharf of the customs house was closed to Japanese troops and civilians on 27th and on 28th of October.

Moreover, as on 27th and 28th of October, the facilities for crossing the Taokuanchien River were yet incomplete owing to shortness of material for the work, and thereupon the 6th Division ordered the Commander of the 6th Engineer Regiment to exercise direction and control over the personnel and materials<sup>i</sup> of the units which were rushing to enter Hankow City, the units could not accompany war prisoners. This fact will also tend to show that there could not have been any massacre of war prisoners at that time. The apparatus used by the 6th Division for crossing the river was light river-crossing equipment made of plywood for one company which was in the custody of the River-crossing. Equipment Company attached to the Division from the 11th Division. Among these, however, there were some worn-out boats, so the boats which were actually used to construct the bridge numbered only 20. The capacity of the boat-bridge to transport troops, moreover, was very small perhaps 4,000 men on foot a day at the maximum. I suppose, on these facts, that by the evening of October 28th, if it was carried out in good order, the 45th Infantry Regiment, the second unit in the Divisions marching order,

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finished crossing the river, and the artillery and infantry of the vehicle units and pioneers of every company were crossing the river. The water units of the army, though they arrived at HANSHUI in the evening of October 27th, arrived at HANKOW in the afternoon of the next day after the USHIJIMA Branch Corps entry into Hankow, so it was impossible for them, who were not engaged in battle in HANKOW, to get war prisoners there. And the said units advanced in the rear of the ships and boats of the navy during the attack at the Wu-Han area and they did not fight with the Chinese water units, nor have I heard that they fought on land. So there was no chance for them to get war prisoners.

The naval units too, would necessarily get no war prisoner because they landed at HANKOW during the evening of October 26th, that is several hours after the 23th Infantry Unit entered the city, moreover their landing place was the same as that of the latter.

To summarize the above:

The 23rd Infantry Regiment entered the central quarter of Hankow on 26th October ahead of our main body at the order of the USHIJIMA Branch Corps. Then on 27th it occupied the part of the city west of the central quarter as the foremost left-wing of the USHIJIMA Branch Corps. For the following eight days it was quartered in the neighborhood of Kianghan Street, Hankow. On 5th November it withdrew from the city. At that time there was not a single Chinese prisoner of war in the city. Nor had we made any contact with the Chinese inhabitants there. Therefore it is certain beyond any doubt that there was no case of mistreatment or murder of Chinese inhabitants or

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prisoners of war.

On this 8th day, April, 1947,

at Tokyo.

Deponent: (signed) SANO, Torata (seal)

I hereby certify that the above deponent swore oath and affixed hereto his signature and seal in the presence of the Witness.

same date,  
at the same place.

Witness: (signed) IMANARI, Yasutaro (seal)

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the whole truth  
withholding nothing and adding nothing.

/s/ SANO, Torata (seal)

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TRANSLATION CERTIFICATE

I, William F. Clarke, of the Defense Language Branch, hereby certify that the foregoing translation described in the above certificate is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a correct translation and is as near as possible to the meaning of the original document.

/s/ William F. Clark (seal)

Tokyo, Japan

Date 1 May 1947.