

3086

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

SWORN DEPOSITION

DEPONENT: SAKURAI, Tokutaro

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, SAKURAI, Tokutaro, ex-major general, was born June 21, 1897. My present address is Tsuno-machi, Koyu-gun, Miyazaki Prefecture. I was in charge of defense of the Akyab area on the India and Burma border as commander of the Infantry of the 55th Division from September, 1943 to February, 1945. Then I served as chief advisor to the Burmese National Defense Army. Immediately after the Burmese National Defense Army rose in revolt, I was ordered to be attached to the Infantry School on 5 April 1945. Later, I became divisional commander and remained so until the end of hostilities.

2. It was after the military operation of Imphal which ended in failure, in mid-September 1944 that General KIMURA came into office. As the commander of the SAKURA Detachment, I took command of a force numbering about 3,700 consisting of three infantry battalions, one artillery battalion and one cavalry regiment as its nucleus and was in charge of the frontal defense of Akyab, while the main force of the 55th Division moved to the Bassein area.

3. General KIMURA, after he assumed office, especially stressed and advised that we should strive to win the confidence of the people, to enforce strict military discipline and to raise the morale of the men. Later he delivered instructions several times to the same effect. In compliance with his instructions, we brought it home to our subordinates that very strict military discipline was the best way to win the confidence of the people. We did our utmost to behave as prudently as possible, so military discipline was very strictly maintained.

4. General KIMURA was so earnest about the promotion of friendship and harmony between the Japanese army and the Burmese and the stabilization of the latter's livelihood that he had his subordinates compile a pamphlet entitled "The Attitude to Take Towards the Burmese", and distributed them to the members of units under his command.



We guided our subordinates on the basis of this pamphlet. Because of this, all the men in my garrison area behaved themselves well, adhering rigidly to "The Attitude to Take Towards the Burmese", and there was not a single case in which the Burmese were persecuted or maltreated. In addition, in order to raise the standard of the people's living, we made and gave agricultural implements, hatchets and boats to them, so that they were extremely grateful to us. Friendly relations between the Japanese and Burmese was very strong. Therefore, they were willing to help us with transportation in the rear areas and in the transportation of provisions and the sick even at the front voluntarily.

The Japanese Army particularly respected and protected the religion of the Burmese, so that they were very much in harmony with the inhabitants. The Burmese said that so far as the seashore was concerned they themselves would defend it and they did guard duty along the beach. When the enemy landed, they reported it to us by means of signals and the like. Once the village headman in the neighborhood of Inten (IN: phonetic) was killed in action while obstructing the landing of the enemy.

5. In February 1945, I left Akyab for Rangoon to become the chief advisor to the Burmese National Defense Army. Circumstances in the Rangoon area were different and public peace was not as good as in the Akyab area. At that time the main forces of the Burmese National Defense Army were located in Henzada, while powerful units were stationed in the vicinity of Toungoo, Pegu and Thatch.

On 15 March 1945, our army and the Burmese National Defense Army concluded an operational agreement and our army celebrated, holding a ceremony for their going out into the field. However, Burmese National Defense Army suddenly rose in revolt against us, at the end of March 1945, as the conditions of our Army became worse and worse day by day, not to mention the propaganda of the Anglo-Indian Army. With the sudden change of situation, I called on the Commander in Chief of the Burma Area Army, KIMURA, immediately, and talked it over with him regarding how to handle it. General KIMURA, after considering the former friendly cooperation between the Japanese Army and the Burmese and their standpoint, ordered me that our Army absolutely must not take any revengeful action against them. Furthermore, he ordered that we must protect all those who would pledge allegiance without regard to their past and carry out only the minimum punitive action necessary from the standpoint of operations.

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General KIMURA was so earnest about the protection of friendship and harmony between the Japanese Army and the Burmese and the stabilization of the latter's livelihood that he had his subordinates compile a pamphlet entitled "The Attitude to Take Towards the Burmese", and distributed them to the members of units under his command.



On this 14th day of June 1947

At Tsuno-machi, Koyu-gun  
Miyazaki Prefecture

DEPONENT: SAKURAI, Tokutaro, ( Seal)

I, KORETSUNE, Tatsumi, hereby certify that the above statement was sworn by the Deponent, who affixed his signature and seal thereto in the presence of this witness.

On the same date  
At the same place.

Witness: (signed) KORETSUNE, Tatsumi (seal)

OATH

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

SAKURAI, Tokutaro (seal)