

INTERROGATION OF

SHIODEN, Nobutaka

Date and Time: 24 January, 1946. 1400-1600.  
Place : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan.  
Present : SHIODEN, Nobutaka  
Lt. Comdr. F.B. Huggins Interpreter  
Comdr. John D. Shea Interrogator  
Dinah Braun Stenographer

Oath of Interpreter: Administered by Comdr. Shea:

Comdr. Shea: Do you solemnly swear, by Almighty God, that you will truly and accurately interpret and translate from English into Japanese and from Japanese into English, as may be required of you, in this proceeding?

Lt. Comdr. Huggins: I do.

Questions by: Comdr. Shea.

Q. What is your full name?

A. SHIODEN, Nobutaka.

Q. I am Lt. Commander John D. Shea, a member of the International Prosecution Section, General Headquarters, Supreme Command for the Allied Powers. I would like to ask you some questions concerning your official connections with the Japanese Government and the military forces of Japan from the years 1931 to 1944 specifically.

A. Yes. I was retired in 1929 and have never been called back from retirement or had any connection with the army since then.

Q. When were you born?

A. September 2 1879.

Q. Where were you born?

A. In Saitama Prefecture.

Q. Had your forefathers, particularly your father been members of the military?

A. No.

Q. What was the family occupation?

A. They were farmers and also merchants for a while.

Q. But you would say that your early historical background is that of a farmer and merchant family. Is that right?

A. No, we were SAMURI.

Q. In the history of your family is there any member who had previously been affiliated with the official government or official governing families of Japan?

A. If you go way back, I did have.

Q. What attitude did your father or the dominating members of your family take toward the so called "Restoration"?

A. I might explain that I am an adopted child of the SHIODEN family and the SHIODENS were fairly important people in the MATSUDAIRA clan and during the Restoration my grandfather who was a very diplomatic individual managed to get by and help out the MATSUDAIRA family without getting involved in any of the fracas that was prevalent at the time.

Q. At what age were you adopted into this family?

A. When I was 19 years old.

Q. You of course had your early boyhood days and up to the age of 19 with your own family?

A. No, I entered the preparatory military academy when I was fifteen.

Q. Did you go to the preparatory military academy while you were a member of your own family?

A. Yes.

Q. So that you were adopted into the SHIODEN family either during the time you were a military student or upon the completion of that course? Is that right?

A. Just before my graduation from the preparatory academy.

Q. As to your own family, were they comparatively poor farming people or people of station and position?

A. They had a general store at the time and we were in straightened circumstances. I might add that I was originally very fond of farming and had decided to become a farmer but after going to school I suppose I acquired a certain amount of knowledge and I wanted to be a college professor. However, through some turn of the fates I ended up a military man. One of the reasons for that was that I was not able to carry on my education as I might have desired and the military was the simplest method if I wished to raise my station of life.

Q. Is it not true that many wealthy families in Japan adopt into their family persons who succeed to the position of inheritance the same as any member of their family?

A. I went to the SHIODEN family as a YOSHI which means that I became the successor to the family portion, the idea of this adoption in Japan being that if there is no male heir the family generally adopts someone or else marries the daughter to the man and he in turn takes the wife's family name. In my case I did not marry the daughter because there was no daughter.

Q. When did you finish your studies at the military academy?

A. 1898. I then entered the military academy which at that time had a course of one year's duration. In 1900 I was probational officer. While I was a probational officer I became involved in a fight with the German Ambassador. This event took place at the OJI Station where the Ambassador boarded a train and very arrogantly refused to get in to the same coach. To make a long story short, this affair grew in great proportions and appeared in the newspapers and was brought up to the War Minister, who being a friend of the German Ambassador talked of punishing me severely. Because of this I almost left the army. However, the matter was cleared up with my finally being the victor as the German Ambassador was shortly thereafter recalled.

Q. Who do you take this opportunity to explain that incident?

A. I was explaining the steps in my military career and I considered this one to be a fairly important point. In addition, the German Ambassadors of that period were very arrogant men and this man's predecessor had also been involved in an incident where he had used a horsewhip on some Japanese students that had passed the path of his carriage. Another reason I tell you this incident is because I am always being tied up with Germans in the public view whereas actually since as long ago as this incident I have never liked German arrogance.

Q. Were you placed on duty with a military organization when you graduated from the military academy or the War Academy?

A. Following my graduation from the military academy I continued my military studies with the Engineering Regiment of the Imperial Guard. Then in 1902, after the Boxer Rebellion I was sent to North China as a member of the garrison troops there. Then I returned and entered the artillery engineering school. Then I again rejoined my regiment and then in 1904 and 1905, took part in the Russo-Japanese war with the Imperial Guards.

Q. What was your rank at that time?

A. I went as first lieutenant and returned as captain. I received a citation from General KRUOKI and this fact was published to the entire army.

Q. What was the citation concerning?

A. I was commended for my work in planning the crossing of the YALU River.

Q. At what location on the Yalu River did this take place?

A. On the border between Korea and Manchuria.

Q. What sort of a military component did you command at the time you received this citation?

A. I was a platoon commander at the time but was called to army headquarters to take part in the planning of this operation.

Q. Well, if you received a citation for having executed something in connection with the operation, you obviously could not be at headquarters and be a consultant at the same time, could you?

A. Essentially this citation was for my work in reconnoitering the area where the successful crossing was subsequently made in accordance with the plans that I had previously submitted. Of course it was not reconnoitering of the whole area, but of the sector where the Imperial Guards and Second Division were stationed.

Q. Was this an infantry platoon that you commanded?

A. No, they were engineers.

Q. Did you return to Japan after that?

A.9 I was returned to Japan because of an attack of typhoid and high fever and for a time was with General Headquarters. I then was sent to the Military Academy as an instructor in topography and fortification. That was the end of 1905 and the beginning of 1906. Following this period as an instructor I took the examinations for the War College and entered.

Q. At approximately what year?

A. About the end of 1906.

Q. Is it true that certain of the world powers forced the Government of Japan to retract much of the territorial and jurisdictional claims which she had gained as a result of the successful conclusion of the so-called Russo-Japanese War?

A. No, that was following the Sino-Japanese War when she was forced to return Laoting Peninsular.

Q. During your career as a student in the Military Academy and War College, did you find there was a division of opinion among the army leaders or teachers as to the desirability of expanding the Japanese Empire by strong military action as opposed to political action on the part of the Government.

A. Of course, I being a young officer at the time had no idea of what the policy of the leaders was but of course among a group of military men there were always those who wished to take a strong stand and to be quite truthful I believe there were more of these than those who advocated a more peaceful method. In that day the concern was more towards whether Russia would not come down into Korea. Then there was no thought of pushing into China. At that time of course we had just taken Port Arthur and Dairen and the worry was that Russia which was an imperialistic nation at the time would seek revenge.

Q. What was your army title and to what department of the army were you attached? After the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War, I mean.

A. I was returned to Japan in January 1906 and was attached to the Transportation and Communication Division of General Headquarters. That was prior to the events I told you of previously.

Q. What were your duties in that position at that time?

A. Assistant Adjutant.

Q. How long did you remain this position?

A. Not very much more than six months.

Q. What was the over-all plan or the military purpose of General Headquarters at that time?

A. This was towards the end of the war and while I am not certain what the plans were I do know that the people of that time were different from those of today. They were a group of deeper thinkers and realized that the war would have to be brought to a close -- you recall of course that it was through President Roosevelt's efforts that the treaty eventually took place.

Q. That is the treaty concluding the Russo-Japanese War?

A. Yes. Russia had not used her great man power reserves and we had almost completely mobilized so that of course there was that worry too.

Q. What do you mean when you say completely mobilized?

A. We had actually mobilized most of our first reserve and were dipping into reserves up to the age of 45 years even.

Q. Approximately, to the best of your recollection, how many men were under arms in the army at that time?

A. I am not quite sure but I would say about five or six hundred thousand.

Q. Was it the policy of the army, subsequent to this, after the conclusion of the treaty to decrease this number under arms, or did it remain in status quo at that time?

A. There was a rapid demobilization and the army went down to below two hundred thousand I believe.

Q. About what year did you enter the War College?

A. I entered at the end of 1906 and remained there until 1909.

Q. What was your next duty after leaving the War College?

A. I then went to Port Arthur where I was a captain on the staff of Army Headquarters.

Q. How long did you remain there?

A. I was there for three years.

Q. That is, up to 1912?

A. Yes.

Q. Was it not in 1912 that the Japanese Armed forces took over control of Korea almost entirely?

A. I am not too sure of that. The army I was connected with had nothing to do with it but I believe it was in the period between the end of the Russo-Japanese War and 1912.

Q. Do you recall how many troops were used in the complete operation of Korea?

A. I believe there were about two divisions.

Q. How many men in a division at that time?

A. I believe, although organizations are changed a great deal since that time, there were about 15,000 men in a division.

Q. But the complete occupation of Korea did take place within a period of approximately ten years from the conclusion of the treaty ending the Russo-Japanese war, is that right?

A. Yes. That is correct.

Q. And is it not true that the instructions received at the military or war college would indicate that the army intended to occupy all of Korea in the interests of the exploitation of the military necessity of the Japanese armed forces?

A. We did hear almost continually that for the safety of Japan and the Far East, because Korea was vacillating one way and the other, that it would be necessary to take her over. I would like to add something else. I believe at that time that rather than conquer Korea by force of arms, this penetration was brought about peacefully by taking the Koreans into the Japanese nation and thereby also raised their standard of living and for this reason the Japanese and Korean dignitaries had gotten together.

Q. Where were you located with the army forces at the time all of Korea was occupied by the Japanese Army?

A. I was at the War College.

Q. Who was the general of the army in command in Korea?

A. Field Marshal HASEGAWA.

- Q. He was the military governor at Korea for some time, was he not?
- A. No. Marquis Ito was the governor and the field marshal was simply commanding the army and was under the governor.
- Q. The government was not open as such until the army had completely taken possession, is that not true?
- A. It is a good many years ago and I do not recall exactly what the organizational set up was but I believe that there was no period when the army actually went in first so to speak - rather I think that the Governor and the Army went there together although I am not definitely sure on that point.
- Q. At the outset the military commanders of the Japanese Forces and the Japanese Government representatives, in the presence of the Forces of Arms of the Japanese Military, made a treaty with the then emperor of Korea, is that not true?
- A. Yes, I believe so.
- Q. Subsequently Korea was annexed to Japan as part of the empire, is that right?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And the treaty that was made with the then Emperor of Korea was rendered for no purpose whatever?
- A. Yes, it could be called that although it was by mutual consent.
- Q. How long a period of time approximately between the treaty with the Emperor of Korea which gave the Japanese forces complete occupation and control of Korea, and the date of the annexation of Korea as part of the Empire of Japan - approximately how long a period of time?
- A. I am sorry I could not be sure of dates on this unless I looked up some history or something.
- Q. As a matter of fact, Korea was officially annexed to the Japanese Empire in 1915, was it not?
- A. I do not believe so.
- Q. Have you ever been stationed in Korea as an officer of the Japanese Forces since 1912?
- A. No, I have never been stationed in Korea.



Q. Do you know as a matter of fact that Korea was developed economically for the principal benefit of the military forces of the Japanese Empire?

A. No. I think that would be a little too one-sided, to make a statement such as that of over-all Korean policy. Although I am not an expert on these matters I think that the army's position in Korea was as a tool of the governor - for the governor and officials of the governor's organization. I might add that naturally the army did gain something out of the economic advances into Korea. However, to say that the governor was run by the army would be a mistake. I have taken a trip to Seoul and seen the impressive edifices of the gubernatorial organization, whereas the army is stationed some distance from there and is apparently subservient to the governor.

Q. Do you think that the welfare of the Korean people or the nation benefited as a result of its annexation to Japan?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. In what respect?

A. Economically and other ways. Of course I realize that there are many bad officers who exploited Korea but on the whole I would say that Korea and the Koreans benefitted economically, politically and educationally through the Japanese annexation.

Q. That is your present opinion?

A. Yes, I still think so. Yes, I do believe that Korea benefitted because had she been left alone entirely, disorders would have been rife. However, it does not necessarily follow that the country annexing Korea should necessarily be Japan in order that the Koreans benefit. I simply mean that any nation that was civilized would have helped the Koreans by annexing them.

Q. In other words, it is your theory that a powerful cultural nation has a right, by force of arms, to impose its government upon a weaker people on the theory that that is mutually beneficial?

A. Of course I believe that nations should have a right to their sovereignty and if another nation stronger than her helps her economically, culturally and politically, it would be to the benefit of both. That would be the best method. However, in Korea's case this was not what happened - - - in Korea's case I should justify what did happen.

Q. That is not the question I asked? I will restate the question. Do you believe that a nation has the right by force of arms to impose its government upon another nation or people upon the theory of the powerful nation that the occupation is mutually beneficial?

A. No I do not think so. In this connection, I believe that in the case of Manchuria that many Manchurians were worrying that Japan would take over the nation as she had done with Korea. I did not believe that this should be done and that if Manchuria wished to be independent that she should have the right to be so.

Q. In other words, you make the distinction between Manchuria and Korea in this regard?

A. I mean that as far as Korea was concerned the act had already been perpetrated. I was in the military college at this time and being a young man did not particularly concern myself with the factors involved. Of course it might have been better if it had been allowed to retain her sovereignty and Japan had acted as a good neighbor. In this connection I know of many Korean Independence Movements which I thought later might after all have some points in their arguments. However, I also want to say that essentially what I mean is that Korea was better off under Japan - that as long as the act had taken place, the results seem to show that the Koreans were better off than they had been before and better off than they would have been if left completely alone.

Q. Do you recall an incident in Korea after the Japanese government had been set up wherein a large number of Koreans were slaughtered when they had been ostensibly invited to present peaceful demands for the restoration of their own government?

A. I do not recall exactly but I remember hearing something of the sort.

Q. If this did happen it was of such little significance to you that at this time you don't recall the incident completely, is that right?

A. I do not believe the matter was ever clearly published or made public.

Q. Were you a member of the Japanese Army at that time?

A. Yes. Although my outfit had no connection whatsoever in Korea.

Q. What was your outfit?

A. I do not recall the year so I am not sure.

Q. You say your outfit was not there?

A. I was not in Korea and the publication of this incident did not make any special impression on me so that I do not recall where I was or what I was doing at the time.

Q. Did you have any official position with the Japanese Military Forces or the Government of Japan in the year 1931?

A. No, I had retired two years before from the army and was at that time connected with the Imperial Aeronautical Society, a civil organization.

Q. What was the nature of this association?

A. Its purpose was to foster the development of aviation in Japan which at that time was extremely low and even the airline between Tokyo and Osaka was not very well developed. Also there was a lack of pilots and the aim of the society was to get some pilots and build up aviation in the country.

Q. Civil aviation?

A. Yes.

Q. What about military aviation in the country?

A. The association had no connection whatsoever with the military.

Q. What about the condition of military aviation in the country at that time?

A. Military aviation was also very poor. While I do not know anything about the navy I do not believe the army had more than between five hundred and a thousand planes at the time.

Q. What was the nature of your affiliation with this aviation group.

A. Originally I was one of the directors and in 1932 I became General Secretary of the organization.

Q. As a director what was the nature of your duties?

A. Mainly administrative duties and also trying to get funds to carry on the work as we received only ten thousand yen from the government as a subsidy.

Q. What was the nature of the administrative duties you had then?

A. Trying to get funds kept me busy enough without having anything else to do, particularly as the society had financed an unsuccessful Trans-Pacific flight previous to my coming there - and even from these

we were able to get only about forty or fifty thousand yen a year.

Q. Had you had any previous experience with the military forces concerning aircraft before accepting this position with this association?

A. Yes.

Q. What was that?

A. I was stationed for a while in 1922 and 1923 at the TOKOROGAWA Aviation School where I was an instructor. I was chief of the instructors. This duty consisted of supervising the teaching of pilots' training and that of mechanics.

Q. Was this a military installation?

A. Yes. Later I was also at the Air Craft Reconnaissance School at Chiba.

Q. Was this a military school?

A. Yes, it was a branch of the TOKOROGAWA Aviation School.

Q. You received early training then in military aviation during your army career, is that right?

A. No I have had no direct aviation training, but as an engineer officer I naturally knew a good deal about aviation. Also during the World War I was attached to the French Force as observer and part of my main duties was to look into the rise of air power.

Examination adjourned until further notice.

INTERROGATION OF SHIODEN, Nebutaka

Certificate of Interpreter

I, LT. COMMANDER F. B. HUGGINS, USNR 167619 being sworn on oath, state that I truly translated the questions and answers given from English to Japanese and from Japanese to English respectively, and that the above transcription of such questions and answers, consisting of twelve (12) pages, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

F. B. Huggins

F. B. HUGGINS, LT. COMDR. USNR

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30 day of January, 1946.

John D. Shea  
Duly Detailed Investigating Officer  
International Prosecution Section, GHQ, SCAP.

Certificate of Stenographer

I, DINAH BRAUN, hereby certify that I acted as stenographer at the interrogation set out above, and that I transcribed the foregoing questions and answers, and that the transcription is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dinah Braun

Certificate of Interrogator

I, LT. COMDR. JOHN D. SHEA USN 194620, certify that on the 25th day of January, 1946, personally appeared before me SHIODEN, Nebutaka and according to Lt. Comdr. F. B. Huggins, Interpreter, gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth therein.

Tokyo  
(Place)

John D. Shea  
JOHN D. SHEA, LT. COMDR

January 30, 1946  
Date