

INTERROGATION OF
General Jinsaburo MASAKI

DATE:

6 February 1946

INTERROGATORS:

Col Gilbert S. Woolworth
Mr. Hugh B. Helm

INTERROGATION OF

General Jinsaburo MASAKI

Date and Time: 6 February 1946, 1015-1145 hours

Place : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan

Present : General Jinsaburo MASAKI
Colonel Gilbert S. Woolworth, Interrogator
Captain J. J. Robinson Interrogator
Mr. Hugh B. Helm, Interrogator
Lt Commander Frank B. Huggins, Interpreter
Miss Edna Hickam, Stenographer

Questions by: Col Gilbert S. Woolworth
Mr. Hugh B. Helm

Oath of Interpreter: Administered by Col Woolworth:

COL WOOLWORTH: 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?

Commander Huggins: I do.

Interrogation by Col Woolworth:

- Q. General, how old a man was Prince KANIN when you became Vice Chief of Staff?
A. Sixty-seven or eight I believe.
- Q. He was not very strong physically, was he?
A. He was a fairly vigorous man as he lived to be 80 something, but he would occasionally get a cold or something and rest for a few days.
- Q. On a number of occasions it is true, isn't it, that you while Vice Chief of Staff had audiences with the Emperor rather than Prince KANIN.
A. Yes.

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- Q. Were any of those audiences in connection with the Manchurian incident?
- A. I went generally to receive the Emperor's permission on different matters and specifically recall that I went to get this permission at the time we sent the 14th Division to Shanghai.
- Q. What year was that?
- A. I do not know the exact date, but I believe it was towards the end of January or the beginning of February 1932.
- Q. What was the occasion of sending the 14th Division to Shanghai?
- A. At the time the situation in Shanghai was becoming precarious and beyond the means of the Navy forces and the 12th Brigade to handle, so that the 14th Division was activated at Utsunomiya and dispatched to Shanghai.
- Q. What operations took place at Shanghai as a result of sending the 14th Division there?
- A. The 14th Division was not used at Shanghai. By the time it reached there the situation had settled down so that they were immediately withdrawn and sent to Manchuria.
- Q. How did it happen that you went to the Emperor instead of Prince KANIN?
- A. He was sick at the time.
- Q. Was Prince KANIN a professional soldier?
- A. Yes, he was a Field Marshal.
- Q. What was the purpose of sending the 14th Division to Manchuria?
- A. The 14th Division was sent to Manchuria as at that time the situation was such there that they needed reinforcements. In this connection, when I went to get the Emperor's permission to send the 14th to Shanghai he at first said that he could see no reason for sending it. I told his Majesty that they were already on the move aboard ships and trains and that if they were not to be used in Shanghai we definitely needed them in Manchuria, and he finally reluctantly agreed. I wish to say here that before I had an audience with the Emperor on any matter I consulted with Prince KANIN and also later immediately took the report of the conversation to the Prince. Also I would have to receive the O.K. of the War Minister before I did anything.

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- Q. Was General ARAKI the War Minister at that time?
A. Yes.
- Q. And there was no difference of opinion between you and General ARAKI on the matter of the strengthening of the Manchurian garrison, was there?
A. No difference at all.
- Q. Who was Chief of Staff of the Kwantung Army at that time?
A. I am not absolutely certain, but I believe it was probably KOISO.
- Q. What was the occasion in Manchuria which demanded reinforcements?
A. We were having trouble in north Manchuria at the time from a Chieftan named BASENZAN (Japanese reading of Chinese characters) who at first had been cooperating with us, but who at this time had revolted.
- Q. How far into northern Manchuria did the troops go at that time?
A. The Japanese troops were in the area northeast of Harbin.
- Q. On or about the 17th of February 1932 do you recall a meeting of the Cabinet when INUKAI insisted that the government should not recognize Manchukuo?
A. I do not know anything about it. In fact, I do not believe that in February talks had proceeded to such a point as to be discussing the independence of Manchukuo or anything of that sort.
- Q. INUKAI was later assassinated, was he not?
A. Yes.
- Q. At what time? Do you know?
A. The 15th of May 1932.
- Q. Will you explain, please, the November 8 1935 incident?
A. I do not know what incident you mean -- I have no recollection of the November 8 incident.
- Q. You stated here in the previous talk we had that a man named TSUJI was more or less responsible for the November 8 1935 incident.
A. That I believe is the November 20 incident. (Explanation by Interpreter: Somebody got mixed up on dates in interpreting, I believe. That's an easy mistake to make.)

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- A. This is a very complicated and involved incident, but to give you the outline roughly, it took place because the group in Tokyo planning the Nazi-like expansion into China, etc. found that a man like myself stood in the way of their plans. I think that TOJO was also mixed up in this affair, but a Captain TSUJI, who was a company commander at the military academy, used five of his students to spy on me and to frame an incident which would make it appear as though I were at the core. In other words, it was a plot to attempt to drive me out of office.
- Q. At that time what office were you holding?
A. Inspector General of Military Education.
- Q. Was that plot successful?
A. It was not. I battled it and took the matter right up to the War Minister.
- Q. What did they do to spy on you?
A. To put it simply, there were always a group of very sincere young officers who were attempting to work for the betterment of Japan, and these students were led by TSUJI, who egged them on to create an incident, I imagine, along the lines of the March and October ones.
- Q. What overt acts did they commit, if any?
A. At this time TSUJI and a Captain TSUKAMOTO, a Kempei Tai Captain, went to the home of Vice Minister of War, HASHIMOTO Toransuke, late at night and woke him up, telling him that plots were being fomented within the military academy. The point is that if something had occurred or was going to occur, it would have been my responsibility as Inspector General of Military Education, and the fact that they did not come to me but were putting the blame upon me was the whole idea behind the plot.
- Q. How was it stopped?
A. On the urgings of TSUJI and his group, Captains MURANAKA and ISOBE, who had been implicated in the 2-26 incident, evidently made some sort of inflammatory statements for which they were pulled in by the Kempei Tai. I insisted upon a court martial and a full examination of the facts. This court martial was held and while some of the facts behind the reasons for the arrest of these two men were brought out, the whole matter was finally cleared and nothing was done about it.

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- Q. Were these officers convicted?
- A. At the trial the two Captains brought up the point that they had been falsely accused by TSUJI and TSUKAMOTO, but the trial ended without anything being done about the counter charges. Following this the two Captains wrote a long document entitled "The Truth About the Army" and in this there were many things which hurt the War Ministry and the groups within the Army. So that it ended by MURANAKA and ISOBE being forced to retire.
- Q. Who was Chief of Staff at that time?
- A. It was still Prince KANIN.
- Q. When did he retire as Chief of Staff?
- A. I am not absolutely sure, but I think it was not more than two or three years ago.
- Q. Was Prince KANIN Chief of Staff at the time of the February 26, 1936 incident?
- A. Yes.

Interrogation by Mr. Helm:

- Q. Now, General, you mention a pamphlet that Captain MURANAKA wrote in his defense setting out a full history of these various plots that had occurred up to that time. You have read that pamphlet?
- A. Yes I have.
- Q. We have read it too; we have it. It exonerates Prince KANIN of any liability for any of these incidents, doesn't it? --- Let's put it this way: Captain MURANAKA didn't blame Prince KANIN for any of this, did he?
- A. I do not recall, but in my opinion, also, he was certainly not to blame.
- Q. What do you think of the accuracy of the events set out and the charges set out in this pamphlet?
- A. I could not say that it is 100% correct, but on the whole I believe it is.
- Q. The Captain in his defense blamed the Sakura Kai with engineering these plots and trying to carry them out in connection with Dr. OKAWA, didn't he?
- A. I do not know what he wrote, but I also feel that would be what he would say and what I think.

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- Q. General MINAMI has said that all the time he was War Minister this Sakura Kai bothered him and the Cabinet a great deal, that they were worried about it. Did the Sakura Kai also worry you?
- A. I had no connection with these matters and, therefore, I can not say that they bothered me or did not bother me.
- Q. Didn't you feel that this group under Col HASHIMOTO and Col NEMOTO, in collaboration with Dr. OKAWA constituted a threat to the parliamentary government?
- A. I did not know of their existence at the time and hence was not in position to oppose them or make a statement.
- Q. That is pretty hard for me to believe, because we have information that General MINAMI in 1931 was worried about these people and thought they were dangerous to the government, and he said the Cabinet discussed this threat. We have other information that the Emperor himself was worried about these young officers in the Kwantung Army and we want to know about this.
- A. Of course I knew that such an organization existed and was causing trouble, but I knew nothing further about their internal structure or what they intended to do.
- Q. I am not saying that you belonged to that organization, don't misunderstand me. But my position is that you, in your official capacity as Vice Chief of Staff, must have known about them as constituting a governmental problem at the time.
- A. Its rise came later, and in my period there was still not a time when we were particularly worried about these matters, as the Manchurian incident took up the whole of our efforts.
- Q. Now these men in the Kwantung Army, particularly the China section and the Russian section -- that is HASHIMOTO and NEMOTO -- they were for a vigorous policy of expansion in Manchuria, weren't they?
- A. I think so.
- Q. And as a matter of fact they advocated rather openly that the Army seize control of the government in Tokyo, didn't they?
- A. That may be so, but please recall that during my period in office the fire was raging outside the nation and internal affairs did not loom in great proportion.

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- Q. Would it be fair to say that your duties as Vice Chief of Staff in connection with Army operations in Manchuria and Shanghai concerned all your time, so that, although you knew about these matters back home, these internal matters, you couldn't be bothered with them?
- A. I do not feel that you can put it quite that way. I am one of those who knew of the rotten core in the Army and who opposed it, and for this reason, if no other, I was never consulted or told about these matters that were taking place. Further at this time, when you say I was concerned with technical matters in Manchuria and Shanghai I want to point out that all my efforts were towards putting a stop to the further expansion of the Army because this was the Emperor's wish. If you will check I think you will find that the expansionists particularly dislike me.
- Q. Now, General, I would like to ask you about a few people who were connected with this Kwantung crowd. Do you know of a Colonel SHIGEFUJI?
- A. SHIGEFUJI? I believe the name is read SHIGETO, and if this is the man I have heard of him.
- Q. CHIAKI? What do you know about him?
- A. He was an extremely rambunctious individual. I know of him only, by hearsay, as being a man of extremely radical ideas.
- Q. He was connected with Col HASHIMOTO and Col NEMOTO wasn't he?
- A. I believe that there was a connection, although I have no proof.
- Q. Is SHIGETO alive today?
- A. SHIGETO died a few years ago.
- Q. How about Col NEMOTO? Is he alive?
- A. I believe he is alive. I think towards the end he was Army Commander or something in North China.
- Q. How about Colonel SATO, Kotoku?
- A. Yes I know him, although not personally. I believe he is another of this ilk.
- Q. Is he alive?
- A. I believe so. He failed in his Burma expedition and was recalled to Japan, so that I believe he is somewhere around here.

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Q. How about Col TANAKA, Ryukichi?

A. I have never spoken to this man although I have heard about him -- that he was one of those that had an opposing doctrine from mine. However, I heard somewhere that towards the end of the war he changed his ideas and also he wrote a book which I have recently requested my son to procure for me if it is permissible for it to be brought here.

Q. He resigned about a year after the war as Chief of the Bureau of Military Administration, didn't he?

A. I have heard such a rumor.

Q. He told General TOJO that since TOJO was very optimistic about the war and he was very pessimistic about it he would like to be excused?

A. I have heard something of the sort.

Q. And the name of his book is "In the Face of Defeat"?

A. I do not recall exactly. It was something of the sort.

Q. How about General NINOMIYA?

A. I know him. He was not a bad man, but was pulled into one movement or another and finally gained a poor reputation because of the March incident in which he was implicated along with KOISO, Sugiyama.

Interrogation by Col Woolworth:

Q. March of what year?

A. 1931.

Interrogation by Mr. Helm:

Q. Is he still alive?

A. No, he is dead. He was Home Minister in the KOISO Cabinet.

Q. Directing your attention back to your answer about the 14th Division being sent to Shanghai, when was this?

A. The end of January or the beginning of February 1932.

Q. This Division was sent over with the Emperor's approval, his reluctant approval?

A. It could not be sent without the Emperor's approval.

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- Q. But you already had it in the process of movement when you went to the Emperor, didn't you?
- A. Perhaps I put it badly because in activating the Division the Emperor's permission was necessary and further permission had been received to move the Division. However, the Emperor felt that with the situation coming back to normal in Shanghai it wasn't necessary to send it there.
- Q. On how many occasions did you send troops to Shanghai and to Manchuria?
- A. Three times. Once the 14th Division and again the 9th Division, and also the 12th Brigade.
- Q. Where did these go?
- A. To Shanghai.
- Q. Why did you send these troops to Shanghai?
- A. It was on an urgent request from the Navy, which stated that it could no longer handle the situation with the troops it had there.
- Q. What situation?
- A. The Special Navy Landing Force at Zahoku (Note by Interpreter: I believe this is Chapei) was surrounded by the Chinese and in danger of being annihilated, so they called for reinforcements.
- Q. Were they Chiang Kai-shek's troops?
- A. It might have been although I am not certain. The 8th Route Army was also there I believe.
- Q. At this time, General, had you ever heard of the sovereignty of China or the treaties that guaranteed it?
- A. I am sorry to say matters like that did not enter into our heads at the time.
- Q. That was just something you left to the Foreign Minister to worry about?
- A. Not exactly. Now that you speak to me about these matters I can realize that perhaps we should have thought of them but I am sorry to say that at the time matters like that did not enter into the discussions, and the simple fact of the matter is that we were sending reinforcements to save our soldiers from annihilation.
- Q. How many times did you send troops to Manchuria?
- A. During my period as Vice Chief of Staff, the only troops sent to Manchuria were the aforementioned 14th Division.

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Q. General, I believe you said that you didn't want the Manchurian incident to spread out of Manchuria, that is, past the Great Wall?

A. The incident was spreading rapidly, and while my wish was to stop it, it became necessary to finally name or decide upon some natural point, and I figured that the Great Wall would be the logical place. This does not mean that I wished it to spread even that far.

Q. As a matter of fact, the Emperor ordered you to go to the Great Wall and stop it if necessary yourself by holding your arms out?

A. That is not so that I received the direct order from the Emperor. But in this regard the Emperor many times called me in and asked why it was not being stopped as he desired. On one occasion he called me on a Sunday and definitely wanted to know what was the trouble and why the incident was still spreading. I bowed before him and apologized profoundly; but it would be impossible for me to continue living unless I stopped it, so thinking that if worst came to worst I would go myself to the Great Wall and stop the troops I immediately went by car to Odawara where Prince KANIN was, to tell him that I was leaving for Manchuria. He told me to please wait a few days as my going would leave matters in a confused state. And about this time the incident came to a close, fortunately. I might add in this regard that Field Marshal MUTO probably died as a result of his extreme endeavors and the trouble he had in trying to stop the Kwantung Army from going any further.

Q. When was this -- the date?

A. I am not certain of the date, but I believe it was in March 1932.

Q. Now, General, when were you relieved as Vice Chief of Staff, and why?

A. In August of 1934 I believe it was. I became a full General and as such could no longer hold the post.

Q. When did you make an inspection tour of Manchuria?

A. I believe it was in July of 1932.

Q. And when you came back you had an audience with the Emperor?

It was more or less a tea party. The Emperor entertained and you reported to the Emperor on your tour?

A. Yes, in addition to the Emperor there were Marquis KITO and several other people.

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- Q. We want to be fair with you, General. We have a report of the speech you made to the Emperor on that occasion. In the light of that intelligence, I will ask you -- did you not on this occasion urge on the Emperor an expansion of the Manchurian situation?
- A. I definitely made no such statement. If there is a record saying that I made such a statement, it is probably a forgery.
- Q. General, if we got a deposition from the Emperor about your speech, would you agree to what he said?
- A. I definitely have never had an expansionist idea, and hence if any such statements are made about me they are false.
- Q. But you did order troops to Shanghai in total disregard of treaties?
- A. That may be true if you say so now, but at the time, as I stated before, it was not something that entered into our thoughts.
- Q. And the presence of troops and the operations under your command in Manchuria were a violation of the sovereignty guaranteed by these treaties, weren't they?
- A. When you speak about treaties I am not in a position to state one way or the other whether that is correct or not. This was the government policy at the time and I simply followed through on it.

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I, Frank B. Huggins, Serial Number 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 eleven pages, numbered 1 to 11 inclusive, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Frank B. Huggins

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 8th day of February 1946.

Gilbert S. Woolworth

(Name and Rank)

Duly Detailed Investigating Officer
International Prosecution Section, GHQ, SCAP

I, Edna M. Hickam, 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.

Edna M. Hickam

We, Gilbert S. Woolworth and Hugh B. Helm, certify that on the 6th day of February 1946 personally appeared before us Jinsaburo MASAKI, and according to Lt Commander Frank B. Huggins, interpreter, gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth herein.

Gilbert S. Woolworth

Hugh B. Helm

Tokyo, Japan
8 February 1946