

Ex 1982-A

Extract from  
Interrogation of Videki Tojo  
27 March 1946

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Q What was the purpose of your visit to the Philippines, that you have referred to, when you spoke to the Chief of Staff in connection with the "Bataan March"?

A Let's see, the independence of the Philippines was on 14 October 1943. It was in connection with the independence of the Philippines and conditions in the Philippine Islands. The purpose of it was chiefly in regard to matters related to the independence of the Philippines. I principally wanted to talk to important Filipinos in connection with independence matters.

Q How long were you in the Philippine Islands at this time?

A About three days, I think.

Q During the war, that is, from 7 December 1941 until the end of the war, was that your only visit, or were you there on other occasions?

A No, I went twice during the war.

Q What was the approximate date and purpose of that visit?

A I arrived in Thai on 4 July 1943, I believe, and stayed there, I think, for three days - the 4th, 5th and 6th. That was the principal objective of the visit, but on the way back, I spent two or three days in Malaya, one night in Sumatra, one night in Java, and one night in Manila; then I came back by plane via Formosa to Japan.

Q How many times were you in Formosa and Thai from 7 December 1941 until the end of the war?

A I was only in Thai the one time that I have mentioned. I was in Formosa twice, that is, going and coming, on the trip to the Philippines in May 1943; and again twice going and coming on the trip to Thai in July 1943.

Q What was your purpose in speaking to the Chief of Staff, on your visit in May to the Philippines, about the "Bataan March"?

A There were various matters in connection with the independence of the Philippines. They were the principal

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things. I spoke to the Chief of Staff about this other matter, but it was not a principal matter of discussion.

Q Why did you discuss this matter at all with the Chief of Staff?

A As I said before, there were various rumors of the sufferings that prisoners had experienced and I inquired of the Chief of Staff because I wanted to find out the facts about it.

Q Just what did you ask him in this connection?

A I said, "I have heard these rumors about the sufferings of the prisoners. What are the facts?" He replied that it was in the broiling sun, and that means of transport were lacking and so they walked them a long ways, and that it was a fact.

Q What was a fact?

A That it was a fact that they had walked them this long distance.

Q Did you ask him or did you find out how long the distance was that the men were marched?

A I have an impression about the main conversation, but I don't remember the details beyond that.

Q Were you not interested in finding out what distance the men had been marched in the broiling sun?

A It is difficult for me now to recall to just what degree of detail the conversation extended.

Q Do you know how far it is from Bataan to San Fernando?

A I don't remember.

Q Do you recall whether you learned from the Chief of Staff how many men had either fallen out, being unable to finish, or died during the March?

A No, I don't remember details like that, but I got the impression that the responsible commander, who was Lieutenant General HOMMA, did what he could under the circumstances then prevailing.

Q What led to your belief that General HOMMA had done what he could under the circumstances prevailing?

- A It is a problem of responsibility. As Supreme Commander in the Philippines at that time, he had a great responsibility to the Emperor. This responsibility was, on the one hand, to conduct the fighting and, on the other, to establish peace and order; as to prisoners, I think that, as the responsible commander, he did what he could. It is Japanese custom [tatemae] for a commander of an expeditionary army in the field to be given a mission in the performance of which he is not subject to specific orders from Tokyo, but has considerable autonomy. (This is called the heavy responsibility of an expeditionary force commander [kongai no jūnin]),  
(Reading: 300-300.)
- Q The protest of the United States Government, which was made to Japan, charged that the prisoners in the "Bataan March" were beaten, bayoneted, and shot. Did you discuss that with the Chief of Staff during your visit?
- A No, I didn't talk to him about those things. I thought that if the responsible army commander knew about those things, he would take proper action. I thought that the responsible army commander would take appropriate measures if things contrary to international law had happened.
- Q Did you inquire on either of your trips to the Philippines to find out if any action whatsoever had been taken in these matters?
- A No. As I said before, since the responsible commander had the authority I relied upon him in this matter. I only asked about the main points. Everyone thought that the Japanese character would not permit acts of an atrocious nature. This little booklet which I have here was issued on 8 January 1941 in connection with the China Incident. The title of it is "Teachings for the Battlefield" [Senjin kun]. It was issued by me as War Minister and at the time of the Greater East Asia War, officers and men had the same instructions. I will quote only briefly. Properly, it is a book on fighting, but if you will translate the pages I have marked in blue pencil, I will appreciate it. I thought that these were being carried out. [The booklet was given to the interpreter with the pages marked which will be translated and inserted in the record. See attached translation of booklet which is being made a part of this interrogation.]
- Q During your two visits to the Philippines, that you have referred to, did you visit and inspect either Camp O'Donnell, or any other prison camp?

A No, I didn't. I had no time for it. The only one I visited was Omori Prison Camp, here in Japan.

Q While you were in the Philippines on those two occasions, did you visit any camp where civilians were interned?

A No, I didn't. I am not too sure, but it seems to me I visited one camp for civilians in Malaya, I think it was. I am not sure about it.

Q During either of those visits to the Philippines, did you look into or inspect the treatment that wounded American soldiers and Filipinos were receiving?

A I visited a hospital where there were wounded Japanese, but I don't know whether there were wounded Filipinos or Americans in it or not.

Q And your purpose in going there was to visit the Japanese wounded, was it not?

A Yes, that was the main thing.

Q And you did not go to that hospital looking for either Filipinos or American wounded, did you?

A No, not specially. As I said, I did visit the hospital, but I don't know whether there were any wounded Americans or Filipinos there or not.

Q During your visits to Thai and Formosa, did you visit any prison camps at which American and British prisoners were interned?

A No, I didn't. In Formosa, I stopped at Taihoku. I think the prison camp was at Karenko, which was a long distance away. But I went to Taihoku.

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Attachment: Partial translation of booklet entitled "Teachings for the Battlefield" [Senjin Kun.]

NOTE: The witness produced a 32-page pamphlet entitled "Teachings for the Battlefield" Senjin Kun issued on 8 January 1941, over his own name, several passages of which were underlined. The underlined passages are translated as follows:

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Page 2 and 3. "When within the surroundings of the battlefield, one is apt to be absorbed by what is immediately before one's eyes and stray from principles and occasionally these acts may be contrary to one's duty as a soldier. Much discretion is needed."

Page 5 and 6. "To obey Imperial commands, to be brave as well as just, to be humane as well as brave, and to realize the grand harmony of the world - such is the spirit of the Emperor Jimmu, first Emperor of Japan. Bravery must be stern and charity must be far-reaching. If there is any enemy resisting the Imperial troops, we must destroy him with our tempestuous military power. Even if we succeed in subduing our enemy with our unrelenting power, if we lack the grace of refraining from attacking those who have laid down their arms and of treating kindly those who obey us, we can hardly be called perfect soldiers."

Page 24 and 25. "Care must be taken in the protection of property and materials owned by the enemy. Requisition, confiscation and destruction of materials, etc., must always be effected in accordance with regulations and invariably in conformity with orders by commanding officers. In view of the basic principles of the Imperial Army, we must be magnanimous of heart and treat innocent inhabitants with kindness."