

2342

INTERROGATION OF

General (Baron) Sadao Araki

Date and Time: 18 January 1946, 1400-1645 hours

Place : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan

Present : General (Baron) Sadao Araki
Colonel Thomas H. Morrow, Interrogator
Mr. Edward M. Dell
1st Lt. Steve Yamamoto, Interpreter
Miss Jewel E. Newman, Stenographer

Questions by : Colonel Morrow

Oath given to interpreter by Colonel Morrow.

"Do you solemnly swear (affirm), 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?"

- Q. General, I understand that you were an officer in the Russo-Japanese War?
- A. Yes, I was a lieutenant and later became a captain. I believe I was in the Brigade headquarters during the Japanese War and had the position of Adjutant throughout.
- Q. Do you understand Russian?
- A. I served about 8 years in Russia and had some sort of connection with the Russians. I do speak and understand Russian but not too well.
- Q. No English? You were military attache there, I believe?
- A. I did study English about 50 years ago for about 10 years so that right now it does not come back to me so much as I would like but I am studying it right now.
- Q. I understand, also, that you were a graduate with honor from the Japanese Staff College?
- A. Probably might have been a mistake but I was told I had graduated from Staff College with honors.
- Q. So I understand. And you were afterwards an instructor there, weren't you?
- A. Since I was in Russia for awhile I did teach customs and anything concerning Russia at the Staff College. I was not actually

58-40

FILE NO. 58

18 Jan 1946

instructor then but a lecturer and had the position of Superintendent for about a year.

- Q. You were Commandant for awhile, I understand?
- A. I also taught military history for a short period at the Staff College.
- Q. And later on you were Commandant of the Gendarmerie, i. e., Military Police, that is, before that I believe?
- A. Yes, I was Commandant of the Military Police on one occasion. During the period of Ugaki there was a case called the Namba incident. That incident concerns the time when the Cliques wanted to assassinate the Emperor. There was a ruse and they were going to assassinate the Emperor. This Namba was a well known Communist leader in Japan at the time. This was in the 12th year of Taisho (1923). The War Minister wanted a full investigation of this Communist's undertakings. Since this War Minister told me to look into this affair I complied with his request and, consequently, I found out that I was made Commandant of the Military Police. If I, myself, had had previous knowledge that this assignment would put me as a Commandant of the Military Police I would never have accepted the position because I don't like the work of the Military Police at all.
- Q. Why did you dislike to be at the head of the Military Police?
- A. I became a soldier to become a soldier and not to spy on some other criminal details, etc. So I protested to General Ugaka who was the War Minister at the time while I was Commandant of the Military Police.
- Q. That was during Hamaguchi's ministry, wasn't it?
- A. During Kioura's period. General Ugaka requested that I become Commandant of the Military Police as this was the first instance of its kind where the Emperor's life was threatened.
- Q. How long did you hold this position?
- A. Approximately a year and four months. Since the Japanese Military Police were not too reliable at the time the War Minister requested me personally, as a favor, to take the position. In those days there were many incidents within the Military Police which were unfavorable both to the Government and to my ideals as well. When I became Commandant many unfavorable comments were made toward my way of commanding the

18 Jan 1946

Military Police. There is a Major General Ishida OTOGORO, whom I believe is in this prison at the present, and he knows the situation of the Military Police at the time much more than I do. So I took the post to quiet the Military Police and make them behave, then being a radical outfit at the time, more or less to make it a more tranquil and orderly outfit.

Q. Did I understand that you used a word meaning "radical"? Just what did you mean?

A. During the 1923 earthquake there was the Osugi incident. Osugi was also a Communist and the Military Police assassinated this Communist leader Osugi. These assassinations are not the duty of the Military Police. The duties of the Military Police have solely to do with the military. The duties of the Military Police are to hold up the military traditions. And, therefore, when the Gendarmerie goes beyond the limits of the authority of their duty and takes action with the civil authorities it is not purely satisfactory from a military ideal. And so I took the post more or less to calm the so-called radical doings of the Military Police. So the first step I took after I took command was to withdraw the military activities from the governmental police functions. And, secondly, had the Gendarmerie study the military texts instead of the civil. And, thirdly, had them study the basic texts of the army so that they would have a good knowledge of how the army is run. Fourthly, prohibited the Gendarmerie from taking part with the court and criminal cases because that is not within the jurisdiction of the Military Police. If the reliability of my statements is doubtful if you question Major General ISHIDA, OTOGORO it can be verified. I would like to elaborate on the subject later if you prefer.

Q. I believe you were first a war minister in the Inukai Cabinet?

A. Yes.

Q. That was from December 13, 1931 to May 25, 1932.

A. I believe it is from the 13th of December, approximately 2 years from that date.

Q. And you were also the War Minister and the Army Minister in the Saito Cabinet?

A. Yes.

Q. That was May 1932 to July 1933?

18 Jan 1946

- A. From the 25th or 26th of May, 1932, to the 22nd or 23rd of January, 1934. During the latter period I was sick.
- Q. You were also made a general of the Army?
- A. October 1933 I was made a general of the Army.
- Q. Then you were Minister of Education in the first Kanoze Cabinet?
- A. Both in the Kanoze and the Hiranuma Cabinets.
- Q. When you were in the Inukai Cabinet the assassination of some cabinet members took place?
- A. I can't recall at the present but as far as I know there has been no assassination in the Inukai Cabinet.
- Q. I thought there was one in May 1932? Wasn't the Prime Minister assassinated then?
- A. Junosuke INOUE and Dan (Baron) TAKUMA. There was a shooting affair in the Cabinet and these two were the ones that were assassinated.
- Q. Was not the Premier assassinated in Inukai?
- A. These two were assassinated at a different occasion, whereas Premier INUKAI was assassinated during his regime.
- Q. I understand that you were out of town when this happened?
- A. The time Premier INUKAI was assassinated I was in KAMAKURA as it was on a Sunday.
- Q. That is a Buddhist Shrine there?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And later on you were Minister in the Kanoze Cabinet when the War with China, or the affair with China of July 7, 1937, took place?
- A. At the time there was a so-called 2-26 incident which occurred on February 26. This was the turning point of Japan's undertakings.

18 Jan 1946

Q. What do you mean by turning point?

A. By that I mean that the Military from that date on had become worse and at this instance I voiced my opinions about the Military and quit the Army and, consequently, I did not go anywhere that the Military instructed me. From that date on I led a life by myself in the farming district, and during that period this 2-26 incident took place. Then the China incident took place. Believing that something terrible had happened a dispatcher was sent out from the Kanoze Cabinet to come after me which was some time in October.

Q. October 1937?

A. October 1937. A dispatcher was sent for me for the purpose of hearing my opinion on the recently born China incident. This was a very grave problem and we must make the Military quit the China incident.

Q. I would like to know who was behind and who was to blame for the China incident if you know?

A. At the time as I had withdrawn from my post I have not a very concrete idea, but since the Manchurian incident I refrained from making any outside tours. But from hearsay I have heard that the Chinese-Japanese relation was very grave but my conception is that this China incident was something that could not be put off and came on as a matter of course. I have no knowledge of how this China war came on or who is the responsible party for bringing about the China incident.

Q. Well now, the February incident--do you know what was the motive for that and who was behind that?

A. MURANAKA and ISOBE, former captains of the Army, at the time retired. The situation concerning this 2-26 incident had become very complex previous to the actual happenings and the actual assassination was done by the two former captains mentioned above. There are various causes for the 2-26 incident. During this 2-26 incident was the period of the downfall of the Army and the Military.

Q. What you mean is that an Army plot to assassinate a Cabinet member is not creditable or proper? Is that it?

A. Definitely nothing to give credit to the Army at all.

18 Jan 1946

- Q. And of those two captains you mentioned one of them died soon after? The first one died soon after?
- A. No, the two were killed after trials. The person who died immediately after this incident was a person called, was Captain NONAKA. Those two previously mentioned were retired captains of the Army. This Captain NONAKA was a representative, so to speak, for Captains MURANAKA and ISOBE, the alleged leaders. Captain NONAKA is not the person who brought about this 2-26 incident but solely as a representative for the two other captains. Therefore, NONAKA committed suicide immediately after the case saying that he had shouldered all responsibility for all that had happened. All others that partook in this incident had stated that they would also commit suicide but did not carry it through.
- Q. Do I understand that all the people you know of concerned in this February 26 assassination are dead now?
- A. Possibly there may be a few officers still alive today. I believe there are a few who had partaken in this case alive today who are out of prison after the trials.
- Q. What was the idea behind that assassination in your opinion? What was the purpose of it?
- A. As I stated before the case leading up to the 2-26 incident is very complex and there is a very long history up to the time-- it may require a little time but if the Colonel wishes I will go into explaining the case leading up to the incident.
- Q. We will defer that a few minutes?
- A. I will go into very detailed description going into the case so that it may require a considerable length of time.
- Q. I will ask you about some other things then?
- A. Answering your query the object of this 2-26 incident was that the present army was a fascist army and that it should not be such. Secondly, the Government was not running according to the Constitution. The totalitarian system is not satisfactory. These three points must be revised or improved and a revised government must be formulated. Simply speaking, these were the points that were brought up before the 2-26 incident took place. Their sole objective was to have the Emperor form a new government

18 Jan 1946

under General MASAKI.

- Q. Did General MASAKI, was he concerned in this assassination plot? Or was he accused of that?
- A. He was in no way connected with the assassination or plot of the 2-26.
- Q. But the people who were in the assassination plot wanted to make him premier?
- A. They requested the Emperor to appoint General MASAKI to head a new government.
- Q. That is, you mean the people that were behind the plot? That was their idea?
- A. Yes. It was the people behind the 2-26 incident that wanted the Emperor to appoint General MASAKI to head a new cabinet. There was a group within the cabinet at the time that was very much opposed to this plan of having General MASAKI appointed. There was a group within the cabinet at the time that wanted to get rid of a certain party because they will obstruct their intentions or their ideas and they tried to hold General MASAKI responsible for having connection with this 2-26 incident and was put before trial. The judge presiding at the trial, sensing that General MASAKI was being involved or oppressed, their verdict was reached as "not guilty" for General MASAKI.
- Q. Do you think that that was correct?
- A. There was no mistake about General MASAKI being "not guilty". The proof of the fact is that at the time to become a war minister the candidate to be qualified had to be a retired officer or a reserve officer and this ruling was immediately rescinded to read that to become a war minister they had to be an officer on active duty.
- Q. Who was it that changed that ruling?
- A. It is looked upon as a group within the army known as the fascist or militaristic group.
- Q. I would like their names and how they did it?

18 Jan 1946

- A. This group was not headed by any certain person but was a group of young officers. After the 2-26 incident took place naturally the Cabinet had to resign, and, consequently, all bills that came through the Cabinet at the time were approved and passed without popular approval.
- Q. What are the names of some of these officers that had this ruling made?
- A. Most of the members of this little group consisted of young officers with ranks of Lieutenant Colonels and Majors, and, consequently, their names cannot be recalled at the time. My knowledge of the officers involved is vague.
- Q. Was this ruling made by the Cabinet to make only active officers eligible?
- A. The War Minister at the time made the ruling. The so-called party or fascist group within the army passed the ruling. It would appear that the War Minister at the time had approved the seal. The War Minister had approved of this new ruling.
- Q. Who was the War Minister then?
- A. The War Minister at the time was KAWASHIMA. And the War Minister that succeeded KAWASHIMA was TERAUCHI, and, consequently, the responsible War Minister cannot be pinned down to either as this approval was made during the changeover.
- Q. Well somebody must have recommended that to the Emperor, didn't they?
- A. It was submitted to the Prime Minister by the War Minister.
- Q. Which one, if you know?
- A. Since the Cabinet was also in a period of changeover, I, definitely, do not know which minister recommended the changeover to the Emperor.
- Q. Well, did the Emperor have to approve the changeover for all active officers?
- A. Yes, it had to be approved by the Emperor.
- Q. And recommended by the Cabinet? When you were in the Cabinet the war with China started or the fighting?

18 Jan 1946

- A. As I have stated before the China incident took place in the country after I resigned all duty.
- Q. Do you know who it was that recommended the sending of a large number of troops to China at that time?
- A. Sugiyama.
- Q. Do you know if Sugiyama was in favor of a war with China?
- A. As I have no contact with Sugiyama and also the fact that I had been in the country and had not partaken in any activities of the army I would have no idea what Sugiyama's idea was about having the China incident.
- Q. Did the Cabinet discuss the trouble with China before you went to the country?
- A. As I have stated before I overheard officials coming in from the foreign countries state that the conditions between China and Japan were getting bad, but there was no discussion of the problem of the China incident in the Cabinet while I was present.
- Q. Well how long after July 1937 were you in the Cabinet? My records show that you were in there until May 1938 with Prince Konoye and later in the Hironama Cabinet? Is it not a fact that you were in the Konoye Cabinet until it was replaced by the Hironama Cabinet?
- A. Yes. I was a member of the Konoye Cabinet and also of the Hironama Cabinet. The China incident broke out July 1937 and in October a dispatch was sent out to me from the Konoye Cabinet stating that the fact that the China incident had taken place and wanted my opinion of the fact.
- Q. Did you come into Tokyo then?
- A. In October Prince Konoye requested my opinion in respect to the China incident. I immediately replied that we must quit this affair because it would lead into a grave situation. And if there was a meeting between him and the premier there would be various rumors and Konoye stated that we must organize a councillor or advisor. I believe it would be termed a Cabinet Councillor, and this was formulated. And as this councillor there was a group of ten men. And this councillor advised that we must quit this China incident immediately. In November a

18 Jan 1946

peace problem occurred and the Ambassador to China at the time, whose name I cannot recall, came in between China and Japan and took liaison. And by December the two or three occasions when peace negotiations were almost made between China and Japan and since I was not physically in the Cabinet at the time I am not too well informed of the proceedings.

- Q. Do I understand you were not attending the meetings of the Cabinet since the China incident until when?
- A. I did not partake in any Cabinet meeting until I took post as an Education Minister. I partook in Cabinet meetings as a member of this Councillor organization that was organized in October.
- Q. And then you became a member of the Cabinet in May 1938?
- A. I became a Cabinet member in 1933.
- Q. No, I mean with the Konoye Cabinet?
- A. 1938.
- Q. May 1938 until the end of the Konoye Cabinet--until January, 1939?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And during that time did you attend Cabinet meetings?
- A. Yes. I did attend a Cabinet meeting. While I was in the Konoye Cabinet there was a meeting of the China incident but since being in the Education Ministry they had nothing to do with the China incident.
- Q. You mean you had nothing to do with it?
- A. The meetings of the China incident were participated in only by the Foreign, War, Navy, Home and the Finance Ministries plus the Premier, and, consequently, all the other Ministries had no connection with the China incident meetings. Araki Suetsugu (Admiral) and Premier Konoye and possibly the Finance Minister held private discussions on two or three occasions. At these meetings were discussions on the China incident and became involved and the points of discussion differed among each other, and, consequently, Konoye suggested that we do not discuss the China affair at these private meetings.
- Q. Why?
- A. Since each had a difference of opinion they never arrived at a conclusion.
- Q. I would like to know who was in favor of the fighting in China in the Cabinet?

18 Jan 1946

A. There were two sides to this question. One that we should carry out entirely to the end and the other that we should quit immediately and there were also two sides of the question that we should lengthen our reach to Hankow and the other that we should quit before we even got to Hankow and we concluded the discussion at that point.

Q. Well, who was in favor of going to Hankow?

A. Suetsugu, who is now dead, was one who favored expansion to Hankow, or lengthening our reach to Hankow.

Q. Who was the other one?

A. He was the only one that definitely favored expansion to Hankow. Konoye did not favor expansion to Hankow.

Q. Well, how did it happen that the Army did take Hankow under General Hata although the Cabinet was not in favor of this?

A. I believe that the Cabinet was not in favor of expansionism to Hankow. I do not think that General Hata was in command of the forces in China at that time. I believe it was _____ *

Q. Hankow was taken?

A. I do not think that our forces went to Hankow at the time. However, I will refer back. I can look up reference and make a definite statement.

Q. You know that eventually they would get Hankow?

A. Yes.

↓ Q. What I mean is that the Konoye Cabinet, or if the Premier Konoye was not in favor of aggression in China, how did it happen that the Japanese forces were making progress in advancing?

A. During wartime what the Cabinet wishes and what the Army does are two different things. I believe that the Army and Navy were in favor of aggression in China. Konoye was not in favor of the aggression. However, since Konoye was outnumbered two to one I possibly think that the forces took the best of the deal and made the aggression.

Q. What do you mean--outnumbered two to one?

* Stenographer's note: The name given by witness was not understood. However, the interrogator said he believed name to be of little importance as he had Hangchow in mind instead of Hankow. JEN

18 Jan 1946

A. The Army and Navy within the Cabinet.

Q. Because General Sugiyama and Mitsumasa Yonai were in favor of advancing and they were Army and Navy members that their word went with the Emperor and not Konoye's?

A. Since forces cannot be sent overseas without the consent of the War, Navy, Finance, Foreign Ministers and the Premier, I believe that it was approved by these Ministries that the China affair be carried through.

Q. Well, then, after you were in the Cabinet and the Japanese forces kept on advancing in China did you ever get a chance to express your opinion in a Cabinet meeting or a meeting of the four about this advancing and aggression in China?

A. There were numerous occasions when I told Konoye that this China aggression did not meet my approval and that we should quit this aggression.

Q. Whom do you think is responsible for the present bad position Japan is in?

A. As I have stated before, I believe it was the party that forced this 2-26 incident.

Q. Well, is there anybody alive today that you think is responsible for this bad position Japan is in?

A. If any certain individual is to blame the blame will fall on the leaders in the Military.

Q. Well, who is that?

A. The War Minister, the Chief of General Staff, the Chief of Naval Staff. I cannot say this conclusively because I have been away from various undertakings of the Cabinet for quite some time. In the second Konoye Cabinet regime Konoye came to me once again for help. He consulted with me for about five hours and with the situation as it was I could not do anything within my power to help. Since then I have withdrawn my hand from all affairs that the Government had undertaken.

Q. Is there anybody by name that you blame for the present bad position of Japan?

18 Jan 1946

- A. Since I do not know the recent conditions of the Government I am unable to name any specific individual as a responsible party for the present situation.
- Q. Do you think that the China incident started a lot of these troubles and the going into Thailand and Indo-China? Who do you think in the time before the War was responsible for getting Japan into this war of defeat?
- A. I do not think that we can get down to naming just a few individuals because it was brought about by a group.
- Q. What was that group?
- A. Since the China incident I was very unsatisfied with the proceedings of the Government and thought it very unjust the way the Government was carried through and I had no interest in the affairs of the Government and at the present moment I am unable to state who the actual responsible party is that brought about this state.

WITNESS DISMISSED AT 1645 HOURS

Certificate of Interpreter

I, Shigeo Yamamoto, 1st Lt., 0-81876, J.G.A.
 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 and one-half pages, are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Shigeo Yamamoto, 1st Lt.
 (Interpreter's Signature)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 194_.

 (Name and Rank)
 Duly Detailed Investigating Officer
 International Prosecution Section, GHQ, SCAP

18 Jan 1946

Certificate of Stenographer

I, _____, 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.

(Stenographer's Signature)

Certificate of Interrogators

We, _____,
and _____,
certify that on _____ day of _____, 194 , personal-
ly appeared before us _____, and ac-
cording to 1st Lt. Steve Yamamoto, Interpreter, gave the foregoing
answers to the several questions set forth therein.

(Place)

(Name and Rank)

(Date)

(Name and Rank)