

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al)
vs.)
ARAKI, Sadao, et al)

APPENDIX



Araki not Bullion

DEPONENT: YASUOKA, Seitoku

I. YASUOKA, Seitoku, make oath and say as follows:

In 1921 I graduated from the Law Department of Tokyo Imperial University, and established the TOYO SHISO KENKYUSHO (the Oriental Thought Research Institute) to study Oriental classics with a particular stress on Confucianism. In 1925 I founded the KINKEI GAKUIN (the Academy of Golden Cock) with an aim to educating young men on the culture of Oriental and Occidental classics; and then I set up the NIPPON NOSHI GAKKO (the School for Japanese Farmers) for the purpose of raising the level of rural culture in Japan. Thus, I have constantly made earnest efforts to develop human morality which were universal, fundamental and genuine culture of the Japanese people along that line. I have never been in official service.

It was about 1922 or 1923 when I made acquaintance with General ARAKI. He loved poetry and reading. I paid him respect and liked him. We often discussed and shared the same anxiety over the prevailing situation that some Japanese had fallen into decadence by misinterpreting liberalism, while others had been caught by inhuman communism as a reaction of which, there was going to rise a tide of extreme right thought of violence and destruction. Also our intention was to prevent the relations between Japan and China from getting worse and since then our friendship has been spiritual and constant.

The ideas and deeds of General ARAKI on state were as follows. He was neither a Chauvinist nor a jingoist but one of the most progressive and retrospective patriots. He recognized the meaning and value of the state, not in its authoritative power of reign, but in the realization of humanity on the part of the people. For example, it was his ideal to realize social conditions where there would be no destitute, murders or thieves; and where lost articles would always be returned to their owners. He often stated that it was not a fancy but could actually be found in history in certain periods and localities and in our own day there was something like it in Sweden. He insisted that authority and guidance were necessary for the realization of such a national life.

The following were his ideas on war. From my many conversations with him, he regarded the force of arms as a means of self-defense against unjustified oppression or aggression from other countries. As to war, he recognized it to be "mala necessita", a necessary evil. He asserted that it was the first step of degeneration of military power to resort to war, and describing the miseries caused by World War I, he admonished all to avoid war by all means. That, I know of my own knowledge, was why some expansionists-by-means-of-arms discountenanced him.

On the Manchurian Incident he confided to me the worry and unrest he felt about our execution of military power in Manchuria, aggravations of our international relations, ill influence upon China, the dominating bellicosity of some of the militarists and rightists, and unexpected uprising of his popularity which was so earnest but untraceable. He stated that he was contented with the fact that the hostilities in Manchuria had come to an end sooner than expected and the Shanghai Incident had been quickly terminated; and he was endeavoring satisfactorily to adjust the relations between Japan and China. He also stated his intention to hold a Far Eastern Peace Conference or something like that to cope with the crisis. But he resigned from the post of Minister of War owing to his illness.

On the China Incident he further revealed that he regretted deeply the happening of the February 26th Incident, so he retired from public office and avoided attending political meetings. In 1936 when the China Incident broke out, he was in his retirement. In the last part of that year, however, he was invited by Premier KONOYE to become a Cabinet Councillor. Then in that capacity he stated his peace principle based on his long-cherished opinion regarding China, but it was not accepted. He said he was sorry for it and talked of cruelty of conflict between Japan and China by quoting a quatrain with seven Chinese characters in each line by TSAO-CHIEN.

As Minister of Education, I was aware that he avoided as much as possible interfering with general national policies, and devoted himself to the administration of education such as encouragement of rudimental science, realization of equal opportunity in education, enhancement of dignity and advancement of learning of teachers and students, improvement of educational administration, and protection and encouragement for men of religion. He worked earnestly but because of his short service for a little more than a year, all his works were in the beginning. However, I noted that students began to have a wider view of life and the world and their morals were improved more or less. As to military training in schools, he warned against degeneration of students by dubious character or training methods of soldier instructors. The problem of purification of universities was under discussion. He had no intention of interfering with the administration of universities but

to meet the public by renovating their atmosphere of dullness and stagnancy, with a view to gaining public trust and confidence, he told me.

Regarding international relations, we often discuss what he was most anxiously and earnestly striving for, to wit: an appropriate compromise and advancement of mutual understanding between Japan and China. As for the Russians, he used to tell of their racial traits with sympathy but disliked the red propaganda of the Third International. He had no intention of interfering with it. He would say the only counter-measure of communism was to deprive society of its evils with sound ideas. He admired the English for their well developed common sense and the high standard of culture of their leading class; and Americans for their enterprising and progressive spirit. He many times stated his deep regret for the discord between Japan, America and Great Britain.

Since 1935 or so he remained inactive in the political field. He expressed his disgust at the misunderstanding about him by the dominant Japanese military faction and at the aggravation of his intercourse with them. He further stated that his moral sensibility reacted when he was stealthily suppressed as he was considered to be an opponent to the said faction and an ambitious and grumbling statesman. He had no public relation with the current problems. After his resignation from the post of War Minister and during his days as Education Minister, his opinion on current issues were neglected. He often told me that he was regrettable for it.

YASUOKA, Seitoku

Subscribed and sworn to before the under-signed officer by YASUOKA, Seitoku, at the War Ministry Building, Tokyo, Japan, on this _____ day of August 1947.

4 September 1947

A Personal History of YASUOKA, Masahiro

Name: YASUOKA, Masahiro

Date of Birth: February 1898

Present Domicile: Sugaya-mura, Hiki-gun, Saitama Prefecture

Former Domicile: Osaka Prefecture

Schools graduated from:

1916 Graduated from the Osaka Prefectural Shijomawate
 Middle School.

1919 Graduated from the First Higher School.

→ 1922 Graduated from the Law School of the Tokyo Imperial
 University.

Positions Held:

After the graduation from the university, established an Institute for Oriental Classic where Japanese and Chinese Classics (Mainly Ethics and Politics) were studied.

1927 Apr. Established the KINKEI School /KINKEI is the name of place where the school was established/ and engaged in Classics Education in the said school.

1928 Oct. Established the KINKEI Club. Engaged in Civic Education based on the spirit of classics.

1930 Nov. KINKEI School reorganized as a Judicial Foundation enhancing the foregoing two enterprises.

1931 Apr. Established the Nippon Agricultural High School and made it belong to the KINKEI School for legal convenience.

1936 Mar. Radical inclinations toward the Leftist and Rightist were seen. Because of the influence on the education of young people, the KINKEI School was closed. Made efforts mainly in agricultural and civic education.

4 Jan. 1946

On account of some misunderstanding as to the Former KINKEI School (which was already closed on March 1936), the foundation, KINKEI School was ordered to be dissolved. For the said reason, it comes under the Purge Regulation.

At present, engaged as a writer.

Signed - YASUOKA, Masahiro