

No. 3359

Def. Doc. # 2511

Exh. No. 3359

Translated by  
Defense Language Branch

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al



SWORN DEPOSITION

Deponent: HONDA, Masaki

Having first duly sworn an oath as on attached sheet and in accordance with the procedure followed in my country, I hereby depose as follows:

1. I am a former Lt. General and my name is HONDA, Masaki. I was born on 17 May 1889. I am at present residing at No. 168, Zaimok uza, Kamakura City. Having graduated from the Army Cadet School in the year of 1910, I was commissioned as a Sub-Lieutenant. After occupying various posts, I was appointed the Commander of the 33rd Unit under the Burma Area Army in April 1944 and held the post until the end of the war. On 4 August 1947 I got on board the last ship at Rangoon and came back home.
2. When General KIMURA arrived at his post around the middle of September 1944, the 33rd Unit was being engaged in military operations in the neighborhood of Tung-Ting in parallel with

Def. Doc. # 2511

an attacking advance of the Unnan Expeditionary Army. Owing to the unfavorable progress of the combat, however, we continued retreating, taking part in a combat in the vicinity of Meiklila at the battle of the Irrawaddy River. From that time onward, we marched on southward along the eastern side of the Sittang River, making a resistance step by step.

From the middle of May 1945, having gradually gathered our troops in the vicinity of the Sittang, the unit took charge of the defense of Tenasserim region, east of the Sittang and west of the Salween river on the one hand and, on the other, checking an advance of the Anglo-Indian Army till the termination of the war.

3. I have read the Court exhibits concerning the alleged atrocities in Burma submitted to this Tribunal. Of the alleged crimes mentioned in Court exhibits No. 1537-A Nos. 1549 to No. 1553-A inclusive, I state that no orders of any kind were given by me concerning the matters and I knew nothing about the illegal acts mentioned at all, notwithstanding that they appear to have happened in the zone of operations under my charge. I learned, for the first time, part of the facts mentioned in the exhibits, when the Japanese war criminal suspects were on trial in Burma after the close of the war. No reports whatever were tendered by the unit to the Headquarters of the Area Army or no orders of any kind were received by the unit from the headquarters concerning

these matters during the wartime.

4. I was confident that we strongly maintained military discipline and morale as well and, consequently, could render services in the cause of good understanding and harmony between the Japanese and Burmese by virtue of the efforts exerted by our officers and men in compliance with the spirit and intentions of General KIMURA, the Commander-in-Chief of the Area Army, though we were in such miserable conditions that the 33rd unit was hard pressed and continually retreating from September 1944. I was rather surprised to hear of the atrocities mentioned in the above numbered exhibits.

5. General KIMURA showed his way of command through his address after arrival as the commander of Burma Area Army. Also, in the several meetings of headquarters of the area army through his staff and he also sent me private correspondence six or seven times; furthermore, I met him three times directly during the war. It is, therefore, but natural that I should have well understood his way of command. At all times, he laid emphasis on the strict enforcement of military discipline, maintenance of morale, and the proper use of reward and punishment.

In addition to that, he told us to treat the Burmese populace with precaution, and sympathy, so that we might win their hearts and enhance the support of the Imperial Army. We were told to put "The Battlefield Instructions" in practice, and if we might be later forced to abandon Burma as a result of a battle lost, "We should leave, at least, such an impression on the minds of the

Def. Doc. 2511

Burmese populace that the morality and good will of the Imperial Army were high, so that these immensely heavy sacrifices should not have been in vain."

As General KIMURA always repeated and emphasized such, we strove to realize his spirit and intentions, resorting to every possible means to do so.

On this 3rd day of September 1947.

At Kamakura

DEPONENT: /s/ HONDA, Masaki (seal)

I, KORETSUNE, Tatsumi, hereby certify that the above statement was sworn by the Deponent, who affixed his signature and seal thereto in the presence of this witness.

On the same date, at the same place.

Witness: /s/ KORETSUNE, Tatsumi  
(seal)

OATH

In accordance with my conscience I swear to tell the whole truth withholding nothing and adding nothing.

/s/ HONDA, Masaki (seal)