

TERASHIMA. File of F.S. Taverner. Jr.

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Kindly allow me to submit to you the attached sheets which I have written on behalf of my close friend, Admiral Ken Terashima. My excuse in doing so is that I have known him most intimately from his early youth. Not only do we hail from the same province but also we have, throughout our long Naval career, shared the sweet and bitter like two brothers. Accordingly, I think I can claim to know the man. May I describe the personality and views of this precious friend of mine in the earnest hope that he may be speedily released from the present imprisonment at Sugamo, in the light of the recent verdict of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial which seems to absolve him of any suspicion?

Thanking you for your kind attention to the matter,

Yours sincerely,

Kichisaburo Nomura

Case of Admiral Ken Terashima

I. Born in 1882 in Wakayama prefecture, Ken Terashima graduated from the naval Academy with honor. He was sent Europe where he stayed some five years mostly in England and France. During these years, he served with distinction as Naval attache to the Japanese Embassy in Paris where his outstanding personality commanded an abiding admiration of a great number of people who, even now, remain his trusted friends. In 1924 he was appointed senior aid de camp to the Minister of Navy (Takarabe) and it fell to his duty to take charge of external affairs of the Ministry. He executed his duty with remarkable success and he made no secret of the fact that he enjoyed it. Thus he became gradually recognized as an expert on matters concerning international law and usage and was generally regarded as one of the most promising officers. This recognition was not limited to the Japanese circle but was shared fully by the Governments of other friendly Powers as witnessed by the fact that many foreign decorations were conferred upon him.

2. Such an officer should have easily risen to the highest position in the Navy. Indeed, it was a general consensus of opinion both in and out of the naval circle that Terashima would surely become Navy Minister in due course of time. However, this was not to be. He was obliged to leave active service in March, 1934. It was due to the fact, which is universally known in this country, that as the Director of the Bureau of Education, and later as the Director of the Bureau of Military Affairs of the Naval Ministry, Terashima vigorously supported the London Naval Treaty of 1930 and also strongly demanded the severe punishment of the perpetrators of the May 15th Incident of 1932. It should be remembered that there prevailed a grave dissention of views regarding the London Treaty and that only those officers who held unwavering conviction in the cause of friendly cooperation with the Western Powers openly advocated it. Opposition to this Treaty was so violent that it took a considerable courage on their part to defend it. It is on record that Terashima fought valiantly for the Treaty. As regards the May 15th Incident, it must be recalled that the slackness of justice in this case was largely responsible for the subsequent repetition of similar incidents, a fact which proves the statesman-like insight of Terashima. There is no need to point out that in view of the rising temper of nationalism in these days, his action required a superb courage, involving him in great personal danger.

Terashima also opposed the alteration of the provisions of the Naval General Staff sponsored by the extremist elements which aimed at enlarging the powers of the Chief of the Naval General Staff at the expense of those of the Minister of Navy. The former was highly critical of the London Treaty

while the latter was ⁱⁿ the favor of it. It was actually the aim of the Naval General Staff to embark upon an active preparation for war and Terashima firmly opposed it.

These stands taken by Terashima naturally antagonized the bulk of the right-wing officers and brought his otherwise very promising career to an abrupt end. Indeed, he was branded as a traitor to the cause of the Imperial Navy. He never advanced beyond the rank of Vice Admiral. In one of the entries of the Harada Diary, there is a passage which attributes a remark to Terashima to the effect that he deplored to Baron Harada the fact that Admiral Osumi, the Navy Minister, was gradually falling under the influence of the extremists and that the Navy was indulging in attitude and actions similar to those of the Army. This was on the eve of Terashima's dismissal from the post of the Director of Military Affairs Bureau of the Navy. This is one of the many instances which illustrate his general outlook.

3. After his withdrawal from the Navy, Terashima became, in December of the same year, the President of the Uraga Dockyard Company Ltd. He thus became a civilian without any official position when in October 1941, he was appointed as Minister of Communications (and concurrently Minister of Railways) in the Tojo Cabinet. He had had no acquaintanceship previously with General Tojo. His entry into the Cabinet was through the recommendation of a body of liberal opinion in the Navy which, though not very influential, was still hoping to preserve peace at that critical juncture. As is well known now, all the important major policies of the State were deliberated and decided upon at the Liaison Conference from the outbreak of the Chiba Incident in 1939. Terashima never participated in it, not being in position to do so. This also covers the period from the appointment in the Cabinet to the outbreak of the Pacific War. Takeshi Terashima, his son, has submitted to the Legal Section of the Scap adequate evidences on this point.

After the policy of opening of hostilities was decided upon by the Liaison Conference, the Cabinet could not do anything to alter, but to acquiesce in, it. Terashima was thoroughly opposed to war believing as he did in peace. The circumstances of his retirement from the Navy testify to his settled convictions regarding the maintenance of friendly relations with America and Britain. Minister of Communications is an outsider, so to speak, to the important decisions of the State and he had to follow the path laid out by the Liaison Conference. Terashima merely took charge of such technical matters as Mail, Communications, Land and Sea Transportation, etc., and, moreover, even these matters were under the dominant influence of the fighting services, in particular the Army, and the Planning Board and similar Government institutions. Minister of Communications, being a civilian Minister, could not exert any influence, singly or collectively, on the course of national policy. It may be added here that

Terashima withdrew from Tojo Cabinet in October 1943 prior to the collapse of the Cabinet due to disagreement with General Tojo.

There is a degree of difference of importance among the Cabinet Ministers. It was perhaps through the recognition of this point by the Allied Powers that Mr. Hatta, Railway Minister from December 2, 1941 to February 19, 1944, was never included among the War Criminal Suspects and that Mr. Ino, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry from June 17, 1941 to April 20, 1943, was set free already in 1946. It seems anomalous at least that Terashima who occupied a similar post, is still detained in prison. Moreover, the verdict of Tokyo War Crimes Trial absolved Admiral Shimada (Navy Minister), Mr. Togo (Foreign Minister), Mr. Kaya (Finance Minister) and Mr. Suzuki (President of the Planning Board) from the charges of atrocities on the prisoners of war. Consequently, Terashima should be held innocent on this head, too.

In short, Terashima was well versed in the ideas and ideals of the West and all his life he observed them as the guiding light of his conduct. A man of advanced culture and of liberal education, he was always most anxious to promote the cause of international peace.