

Excerpts from Interrogation of MATSUI,  
Iwane, dated 8 March 1946

Q "When did you first hear, if you did hear, that Europe and America got the idea that your troops committed many outrages in Nanking?"

A Almost as soon as I entered Nanking.

Q You heard about it?

A Yes

Q From what source did you hear about it?

A From Japanese diplomats.

Q Who was the Japanese diplomat.

A It was a very small diplomatic official and I do not remember his name, the Consul at Nanking.

Q Do I understand then that the Japanese Consul was in Nanking when the Japanese troops were approaching the city?

A They went in with the Japanese troops. They were attached to the army to go in and preserve peace.

Q There is a history of the Far East in Modern Times written by a man named Vinacke and he says that Chinese civilians were tied in bunches with ropes and machine gunned and women were turned into houses of prostitution for use of the Japanese soldiers and that many civilians were bayoneted in Nanking. Do you know where this historian could have gotten this information.

A I do not know. Perhaps from the Chinese.

Q Did you hear any stories of that sort when you came into Nanking?

A No.

Q My record says that you made certain public utterances defying foreign governments. I haven't any to point out but did you make any statements?

A I never refused intervention or defied governments, as a matter of fact in Shanghai and Nanking I collaborated with the United States, British and French diplomats

and Consuls to help Chinese refugees. A French missionary who was engaged in this type of work appealed to me for help and I donated the sum of ten thousand yen to his work.

Q Do you remember his name?

A I don't remember now but will try to remember.

Q Was that in 1932 or 1937?

A 1937.

Q Also there is a statement here that you were relieved from command because of this Nanking situation and replaced in February by General Hara. Is that correct?

A No, that is not the reason. I considered my work ended in Nanking and wished to doff my uniform and engage in peaceful pursuits.

Q Do I understand you to mean that you gave the French missionary ten thousand yen of your own personal funds or was that collected from the Japanese army or Japanese people as well as yourself?

A This was army funds.

Q It was for the help of Chinese refugees around Shanghai?

A That is correct.

Q Do I understand that you asked to be relieved of command in 1938?

A Yes, at my request.

Q That request was addressed to the Chief of Staff?

A To War Minister General SUGIYAMA.

Q Was that in writing?

A By letter.

Q Was it personal or official?

A Half private and half official.

Q Mr. Abend states that at the same time you were relieved that Kingoro HASHIMOTO and Prince Yasuhiko ASAKA and about eighty staff officers were sent back to Japan. Do you remember about that and is that correct?

A Yes, but Mr. Abend was wrong in his deduction. The reason for the return of the two officers and eighty staff officers was the fact that the ten divisions in Nanking were reduced to some five divisions and as a result these officers were superfluous. There were two army headquarters and this was reduced to one.

Q I understand there was an army that came down from the North and then there was the army that had been at Shanghai and they joined forces with you. Is that correct?

A This was after I returned to Japan.

Q I understand there were some troops between the Shanghai operations and the taking of Nanking, like the Sixth Division for instance, under General TANI, composing in part the Tenth Army which I understood came down from the north. Is that correct?

A This came up from Shanghai.

Q And the Sixth Division joined you before you went to Nanking, as I understand, and the Tenth Army?

A Yes, that is correct.

Q The charges also are made that the discipline of troops that captured Nanking was very bad.

A I considered the discipline excellent but the conduct and behavior was not.

Q Of the soldiers?

A Yes.

Q This was at Nanking?

A Yes. I think there were some lawless elements in the army.

Q I understand then you are drawing a distinction between the obeying of orders by a soldier in the process of operations and what the soldier does off duty and in this instance after the town was captured?

A Yes.



Q And, of course, the officers commanding the troops in Nanking did have the duty of overseeing the behavior of their soldiers both off duty and on duty?

A Yes.

Q Why do you say that it is your opinion that the behavior of the soldiers was bad? On what do you base that statement?

A On account of their behavior towards the Chinese population and their acts generally.

Q Were there any general orders that preceded the capture of Nanking from your headquarters? Especially regulating the conduct of the soldiers after the capture of the city as was anticipated.

A I always advocated the maintenance of strict discipline and the punishment of all evil doers. I also advocated the thorough investigation of the Nanking Incident, and collaboration with foreign officials and diplomats and this was done.

Q Can you give me the names of any of the foreign diplomats that investigated this matter?

A One was Mr. HIDAKA from the Japanese Embassy. I do not remember the names of the foreign diplomats as they were in Nanking.

Q Did you talk personally to any of these foreign diplomats?

A No, not at Nanking.

Q At any time later did you talk to anybody.

A I entered Nanking on the 17th and after one week I returned to Shanghai. I met and discussed with U.S. and British commanders and admirals, also the Italian and French ambassadors with a view to settling things in a peaceful way.

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Q Were the troops that entered Nanking and that were there on the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th of December, new troops or were they veterans and were they officered by experienced officers or otherwise?

A They were all experienced troops officered by experienced men.

Q Have you ever commanded these troops before?

A No.

- Q Had you ever heard that these troops had behaved badly off duty in China up to this time?
- A No, the army was a newly formed organization sent from Japan but it was composed of many experienced veterans. I had not heard of these troops behaving badly elsewhere in China.
- Q Or in Manchuria?
- A No.
- Q Part of them had been engaged in operations around Shanghai and those that had come down from the north had been in some skirmish around Peiping and Tientsin. Is that correct?
- A One division came down from the Peiping and Tientsin area.
- Q The claim is made that Lieutenant General Prince ASAKA was a field commander who should have had some oversight over the part of the army that first entered Nanking. Is it correct that Prince ASAKA was so placed?
- A Yes, that is correct.
- Q And Prince ASAKA married one of the daughters of Emperor Meiji?
- A Yes, that is correct.
- Q Some people claim that Prince ASAKA was responsible very much for what happened in Nanking but because of his relation to the Imperial family little or nothing has been said about it. Is that correct?
- A I do not think so. Prince ASAKA had joined the army only about ten days before its entry into Nanking and in view of the short time he was connected with this army I do not think he can be held responsible. I would say that the Division Commanders are the responsible parties.
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- Q You stated that you went in to Nanking on the 17th. Did you see any bodies of dead civilians, women or children? Anything of that sort?
- A They had all been removed by this time. I saw a few dead Chinese soldiers near the west gate.
- Q The Chinese War Crimes Commission claims that several hundred thousand civilians were killed and that there was burning and pillaging of Nanking right after the capture on the 13th. Was there any other evidence than what you stated that the town had been badly handled in the capture?

- A That is absolutely untrue. There was no, absolutely no, grounds for such accusations. This I can state upon my honor.
- Q When did you first see Hallett Abend after the Nanking capture?
- A I met him in China. I first met Mr. Abend after, perhaps a month after Nanking.
- Q Did Mr. Abend ask for an interview and get it?
- A No, I requested Mr. Abend to see me as I had heard rumors and I wished to quell these by putting the facts before Mr. Abend.
- Q What did you and Mr. Abend talk about? What was said?
- A I explained to Mr. Abend my views regarding the respecting of foreign rights and interests in Nanking. Also, my desire not to inflict damages to neutral properties and interests. I also stated that it was my desire to achieve peace and extend the hand of friendship to Chinese troops who had stopped fighting but that it was my duty to punish Chinese troops who continued opposition.
- Q After you got back to Japan in February were you ever asked to make a report about the behavior of your troops at Nanking either by the Chief of Staff or the War Minister or anyone else?
- A I was placed in the reserves immediately upon arrival in Tokyo so I do not know for certain but there must have been investigations and reports.
- Q Were you asked to make a report or questioned about this rumor concerning the behavior of troops at Nanking?
- A No, I was not asked to make a report. If there had been any such incidents I would naturally have made a report on my own responsibility. If you are looking for any reports they would be in the Demobilization Bureau.
- Q Do you have any papers or correspondence or a diary which indicates your activities at Nanking and Shanghai in 1936 or 1937?
- A The only notes in my diary concern a court martial of an officer and perhaps three soldiers in connection with the rape of Chinese in Nanking.
- Q What is the date and what was the verdict of the court?

A I think the officer was executed and the soldiers imprisoned. This was as a result of my advocating severe punishment for offenders. I received this information when I was in Shanghai and put it in my diary there.

Q I suppose you can give us a copy of that? Procure it for us?

A All my records were burned including this diary but I have a few notes from memory since which I think will be useful if I come to trial. My house was destroyed in one of the bombing raids.

Q When was this?

A August 26.