

Translated by
Defense Language Branch

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL FOR THE FAR EAST

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, et al

-vs-

ARAKI, Sadao, et al

FILE COPY
RETURN TO ROOM 361
Sworn Deposition

Deponent :- KOSHI Saburo

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.

I, KOSHI, Saburō, am living at No.1110, Nishiuzuhashi,
Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture. I am thirty-six years of
age. During the Pacific War I, as the assistant Resident of
Asahan of the East Coast Residency, Sumatra, Netherlandish
East India, was in charge of the general military government
in this district for three years ranging from August 3, 1944
(Showa 17) to August 15, 1945 (Showa 20). And then from the
termination of the war to the end of April in 1946 (Showa 21)
when I was repatriated, I engaged myself in the arrangement of
business at Tanjon Valley of Asahan Sub-Residency. Accordingly,
I am one of those who have the best knowledge of the condition
of the military government and the real state of the general
detention camp, not only in Asahan Sub-Residency, but also in
the East Coast Residency.

I. General treatment for war-prisoners and internees in
Sumatra.

A. War-prisoners

At the time when I arrived at my post there (August 6,
1942 (Showa 17)), the European War-prisoners camp was in the
vicinity of Medan. All the native soldiers had been released
by that time except the soldiers who came from Ambon. They
were kept under detention at Kota Chano because their religion
and custom were different from others' and they had no
occupation. I do not know about the internal affairs of the
camp, for the administration of war-prisoners was under the
direction of the commandant of the detention camp at Singapore

and had nothing to do with the military government.

B. General internees

The policy concerning the treatment of the interned was always in accordance with humanity and the international law.

Provisions were supplied with food according to the rule, compulsory labour and mistreatment were prohibited, and punishments were all dealt in the light of the law. Besides, private things of the interned were permitted to be brought in to the greatest possible extent, and their remaining things and the property of legal persons were respectively kept and administered by the Administration Bureau of Enemy's Assets in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

For the sake of convenience for making statements, I should like to divide into three terms the period ranging from the time of my arriving at the post to the war-end.

The first term: From August, 1942 (Showa 17) to March, 1944 (Showa 19)

(a) During this term the detention camps were under the control of the Military Government Department. They were located in the cities of Medan, Blastag Shantal, Binjay, Tanjon Valley.

- (1) Hospitals, hotels, churches and private houses (residences of European people) were used for camp buildings.
- (2) The ration of provisions, especially of staple-food, for the interned was much larger in quantity than that for general inhabitants. Even in the pre-war time Sumatra could not supply herself with sufficient food-stuff and was dependent upon the import from abroad. During the war-time, the lack of vessels and the damages sustained by the attack of submarine boats caused great difficulty in its importation of food. From a viewpoint of self-sufficiency, we were conducting a movement for a great increase in food-production, but we could not get any noticeable result. Due to the shortage of transportation capacity we encountered many difficulties in gathering crops. Accordingly we could not distribute food to inhabitants so well. But as for the ration of food for the interned, we did our best to maintain the prescribed quantity. When there was shortage of rice, we always made up for it with some other kinds of grain. Vegetables were raised and

only by a few natives and some Chinese residents and that very little. So we encouraged vegetable-growing but the result was not so good.

- (3) General internees were at first allowed to carry some money in cash and other valuables. But this was restricted around May 1943 (Showa 18) due to various evils which took place in connection with them.
- (4) The internees were allowed to go shopping on a duty system and the authorized merchants to enter the compound. Therefore the internees at first much enjoyed their lives. But as evils came to take place one after another, the authorities became more strict with them and at last those intercourses with outside were prohibited. So was the employment of maid-servants.
- (5) Sanitation
One European doctor was attached to every detention camp. Mild cases were looked after at the dispensary in the camp and those with serious disease were admitted to a hospital with the permission of the responsible persons. At that time medical articles were kept in large quantities.
- (6) Within the compound of the camp everything was transacted by the internees on an autonomous system. They could take recreation and other necessary measures for securing health at their own device. Then there was anything that they found impossible for them to do, they used to send us their representatives and had them make proposals to us. They were allowed to buy sporting goods.
- (7) The buildings of the detention camp were of European style and very good for health. Their life within the detention camp was totally autonomous and they carried on the education of their boys and girls for themselves.
- (8) Considering distance and other matters we provided the greatest possible convenience for their interview and communication. On every national holiday they were permitted to see their families.
- (9) Japanese personnel could not enter the camp without the permission of the responsible person.
- (b) Collaborators in military government.
It was the policy of military government at that time to have those who were concerned in farms and doctors to voluntarily collaborate in the administration of farms and in sanitary business respectively. So several hundreds of European people worked outside the camp

and still enjoyed almost the same life and status as before. Such persons were completely protected from being looted by the natives or from the dangers of life, and were vested with the authoritative power concerning the performance of their duties and this power was guaranteed. Some of them were made to stop collaboration and held in the detention camp through the prescribed formalities for such special reasons that they went into personal conflict with some Japanese, made friction with native people, did or might go against the aim of military government, or often took an action liable to be regarded as being against the aim. All others continued their life until the military situation became acute afterwards. All, except special persons, willingly collaborated in our task of military government. The heads of the military government office all recognized, admired and appreciated the good results of their collaborations.

The Second Term: From around April, 1944 (Showa 19) to October of the same year.

During this term the 25th Army was in direct charge of the detention camps. This was because the military situation in the Indian Ocean grew gradually strained, and one or two of the detention camps were removed to the inner land. The treatment of the interned was, in principle, the same as in the First Term. However, it appeared that Lieutenant-Colonel SATA who newly entered upon the duty and some few soldiers and civilians in military service were in some points inattentive, because they were not accustomed to the land and could not make themselves understood and the surrounding situation became tense. And yet the military government department ordered them to give perfect assistance to the interned. It was around this time when the general economic difficulty began to be shown and the business of the detention camp began to grow gradually difficult to be managed. The officials concerned made their best to gather food-stuff and other materials as well as to make connection with the military government department. Their efforts were very impressive.

Owing to the shortage of staff, part of the guard was filled by the native supplementary soldier.

Since then European people as collaborators were gradually being replaced by Japanese people or the natives because the war situation grew acute.

The Third Term: From around October 1944 (Showa 19) to the end of the war.

During this term the administering system was the same as in the Second Term. With the pressing of the war situation and the military requirement, the authorities hastily established at Shilingolingo and Airupaminke near Lamtprapat which was under my charge new detention camps in which all internees amounting to some 7,000 in North Sumatra Zone were to be held. The detention camp of Shilingolingo was for the male, while that of Airupaminke was for the female and children. The former was newly built for that purpose, and the latter were buildings which had been used by a certain farm.

It is true that in the both camps living, housing and sanitation were not in a satisfactory condition. The detention camp for the female and children was in a little better condition than that for the male.

I sympathized for the interned who were living a hard life as food and other materials became scarce. However, that was caused by the military situation, and we could not help it. II. When TANAFÉ, Commander of the 25th Army, made an inspection (around June, 1945) (Showa 20), I happened to hear him and Division Commander KUNOMURA talking to each other. The improvement of the detention camp was the main subject of their talk. And soon after that time (about the middle of July, 1945 (Showa 20)) Chief Staff of the 25th Army, YAHAGI, on the occasion of his first inspection, delivered an address to the officials of the detention camp. I stood by him. In that address he made remarks generally and minutely on the treatment of the interned. Indeed, its contents were based upon humanity and the international law. He, pointing out the officials' inattentions one by one, rebuked them and showed clearly the rules of treatment to be followed. I listened to this address which deeply touched me. So far as I know, the order from above relative to the treatment of the interned was thoroughly based upon the international law and humanity. But I admit that, owing to the inattention of quite a few persons at the inferior-offices or to special situations of those days, there were cases where the orders were not perfectly observed.

I believe, however, that the detention camp was, as a whole, in a satisfactory condition prior to the Third Term. III. When I was in office, I was called a gentleman by European people, a Klamat by the native and a Tajen (a gentleman) by Chinese people. At the time when I left for Japan, I was specially given a farewell address by an English prosecutor to the following effect: "on behalf of each European people, I should like to express to you our deepest gratitude for your treatment of us European peoples during the war." I hear that witness Linhare acknowledged at this court the goodness of my treatment of the interned. In this connection, I must say that I owe all my honour to the guidance and instruction given by

Division Commander MUTO. Next, I will refer to my relations with Division Commander MUTO.

IV. Relations between me and Division Commander MUTO.

As military government in Sumatra was being performed by the military government department of the 25th Army, a division commander at the place had nothing to do with military government, nor had he a right to order the governor of each residency concerning military government. Accordingly, Division Commander MUTO had nothing to do with military government and the detention camp, nor had he any relations with me in the matter of order and direction.

I heard that Division Commander MUTO arrived at his new post on Sumatra in the middle of May, 1942 (Showa 17). He left Sumatra for his next duty early in October, 1944 (Showa 19). Accordingly, Division Commander MUTO stayed on Sumatra all through the period of the above-mentioned 1st and 2nd Terms. During this period North Sumatra was generally in a quiet condition except the food situation (above all rice). The policy of the treatment of the Third States' people and the interned was to have them collaborate in military government. The internment. The internment life was still in good condition. It was not long after I arrived at the post that I saw Division Commander MUTO for the first time. It so happened that I saw him when he took a rest at the official residence of Asahan Assistant Resident which was located in the city of Tanjong Valley. Now I should like to state what I remember of those matters instructed by Division Commander MUTO every time when I met and talked with him.

(a) August 16, 1942 (Showa 17)

(At the Assistant Resident's official residence in the city of Tanjong Valley)

It was right after my arrival, and I was just taking over the official duties from the predecessor, Army Lieutenant YAMADA. I told the Commander what I had known for myself since my arrival and the condition of the Sub-Residency which I had learned from the predecessor. Then I requested him to give me a word of instruction which I, as Assistant Resident, should bear in mind in order to carry on military government. In compliance with my request he told me as follows:

- (1) "During a short period of time following the occupation of Sumatra, a military officer was in charge of military government. But I hope that you, as a civil official, will do daringly what you believe the best regardless of precedents set by soldiers."

(2) "You cannot secure public peace without winning the natives' heart, nor can you realize any ideal without securing public peace. It is a matter of importance that you should pay full consideration and attention to this respect."

(3) "As the internees of the enemy nation are to be sympathized for, you must look after them with full compassion. The location of the detention camp must be made prudently for fear lest any of the native or any disgraceful one of the soldiers should commit unlawful acts upon the interned and thus you must secure its safety."

(b) January 25, 1942 (Showa 18)

(At the Division Commander's official residence in Medan) Calling on Division Commander

Calling on Division Commander MUTO at his official residence, I set forth the following plans which I had made in accordance with his suggestion given to me on the occasion of his first inspection:

To get together at one place several detention camps then scattered over the city of Tanjong Valley.

To take measures concerning their life, sanitation and entertainments.

To have a Netherland doctor reside outside the camp with his family and have his work for the health of the interned and the native.

He looked much pleased with these plans and urged me to carry them out promptly. I added that it was uneconomical for us to let them idle away at the time when the food situation grew worse. Then he said to me, "Since compulsory labour is prohibited according to the international law, always encouraged them to work voluntarily and do your best supply the proscribed quantity of food."

He also told me as follows:

"In any country a child is a treasure. So let not children in the detention camp merely play all day, but have them study for themselves. You may for them collect text books which they possibly possess in their respective homes."

He further told me as follows:

"The Imperial Army must maintain its strict military discipline. But since various kinds of army corps have come here to Sumatra these days, I can not tell what kind of person is included in them. Whenever you find anyone act indiscreetly, let me know right away."

He also pointed out that we ought to treat as gentlemen all internees working in the plantation or in other places.

(c) Around August 1943 (Showa 18)

(When Division Commander MUTO inspected Wilholmina Fall. At the Assistant Resident's lodging at Kisaran)

I was looking forward to the inspection tour of Lieutenant-General MUTO. The Division Commander at his interview with me told the following matters:

- (1) "In order to carry out military government successfully, you must push Sultan forward. You must be always prudent when you make any revision of the old way of administration."
- (2) "Foodstuff (rice) is the most important to the people. So you ought to make great efforts for the increase of food-production. However, when control goes too far, the circulation of foodstuff will be hindered and people's productive desire will be oppressed."
- (3) "You should make full use of the economic activity of Chinese merchants. To this end you must have Chinese merchants feel easy."
- (4) You should expel bad Japanese people from your jurisdiction."

On Japan's politics which I referred to, Division Commander MUTO said, "I do not like the rightest wing. Japan's idea ought to have more universality. The Japanese must work more and observe the world."

(b) Around September, 1944 (Showa 19)

(At the time when Division Commander MUTO made inspections right before his start for his next post. At Kisaran Assistant Resident's lodging.)

At the time when I saw him at Kisaran Assistant Resident's lodging, he expressed various opinions. Among them, I remember there were the following words:

"Japan's government has recently promised Indonesians' independence. But I feel extremely discouraged to see Sultans clinging yet to the feudalistic Sultan government. It is necessary for the military government officials concerned to lead them well."

Division Commander MUTO, as I mentioned just before, had nothing to do with me concerning the command system and the business system. Nevertheless, I personally and voluntarily requested Division Commander MUTO at every chance to express his opinions on the performance of military government. Based on these opinions I transacted the business of military government for more than three years and gained good results. Therefore, I am still very grateful to him for his guidance.

On this 12 day of June, 1947

At Tokyo

DEPONENT /s/ KOSHI Saburo (seal)

Def. Doc. #2297

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

On the same date, at the same place.

Witness: /S/ HARA Seiji (seal)

OATH

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

/S/ KOSHI Saburo (seal)