

25) Interview with Mr. Okada Yoshimasa (岡田芳政), official, Cabinet Planning Board

Mr. Okada Yoshimasa was a civil servant, an official of the Cabinet Planning Board. Prior to this, he was a military officer and temporarily transferred from the Ministry of the Army to the Cabinet Planning Board. Mr. Okada was a member of the 36th graduating class of the Army Academy. According to the book, “Army Operation Counterfeit Note,” written by Mr. Yamamoto Keizo (山本景蔵):

Mr. Okada Yoshimasa was a cheerful and magnanimous man who was in the same graduating class as Mr. Tsuji Masanobu (辻政信) at the Imperial Japanese Army Academy as well as the Army War College and both were known for their excellent performance. After graduating from the Military Staff College, Mr. Okada was assigned to the China Department of General Staff Headquarters, and after two years, he went to China as a resident officer. He was in Beijing from January until April 1935, in Nanjing from May 1935 to February 1936, and then in Canton from February to December 1936. During the Nanjing period, in autumn of 1935, he saw the grand celebration of Chiang Kai-shek's 50th birthday.

Mr. Okada returned to Japan in January 1937 and entered the Department of Economics, Tokyo Imperial University. In those times, as was customary, each year, two to three persons in the Military Affairs Bureau in the Ministry of the Army were sent to Tokyo Imperial University to study for 3 years. Captain Okada was selected to enter Tokyo Imperial University. But shortly after he entered University, the China Incident broke out. Thus, he had to terminate his studies at the University and was temporarily transferred to the Cabinet Planning Board, under the same status he held at the Military Affairs Bureau. In those days, the Cabinet Planning Board prepared and drew up the most important national policies, and so the best people were recruited from each ministry. The Cabinet Planning Board established the Third Committee for the research and planning for Chinese Economic Development in the old Parliament Building, which was situated at Hibiya Park, to which the Ministry of the Army, the Ministry of the Navy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent someone--the Ministry of the Army sent Mr. Okada.

During the time described above, Mr. Okada went to Nanjing. He was 34 years old.

After completing his duties at the Cabinet Planning Board for over a year, Mr. Okada returned to his old position, the 8th Department of General Staff Headquarters in March 1939 and engaged in strategizing against China. In September 1939, he was appointed as staff officer of the China Expeditionary Army and continued to engage in strategic operations as an Information Staff Officer. At the end of the War, he held rank as a colonel and served as the Chief of the Second (Intelligence) Section of the 6th Area Army (Hankou).

Mr. Okada was born in 1903 and when I interviewed him he was 82 years old. He was in fine health and walked everyday. I interviewed several times and he always designated the Kazan-kai Club, located at Toranomom, as the place for interviews. The Club was established by members of the *Dong A Dong Wen Shu Yuen Da Xue*, the East Asian Literary School, and the name of the Club was derived from Prince Konoe Kazan (Atsumaro) (近衛篤磨), the founder of the School, who used the pseudonym “*kazan*”. This Club has very close ties with China.

– You were in Nanjing for a year before the China Incident. What was the situation in Nanjing then?

When I was in Nanjing from 1935 to 1936, new government buildings had just been constructed in the northern half and most of the citizens lived in the southern half. It was the capital of the Nationalist Government, but the real center was still Shanghai, so on the weekends, the management class went to Shanghai—there was no one in Nanjing. This was understandable as Shanghai was a lively town whereas Nanjing had no entertainment. Chiang Kai-shek knew this very well so he made his home at the Military Academy and never left Nanjing, either on weekdays or weekends. Wang Zhaoming (汪兆銘) and He Yingqin (何応欽) followed his example--their homes were in Nanjing. Those buildings stood alone in an empty field. Nonetheless, the management class continued to visit Shanghai over the weekends.

– You visited Nanjing the year shortly after the capture of Nanjing. What was your purpose?

When Shanghai fell into the hands of the Japanese Army, the Third Committee was assigned to inspect Shanghai for its economic recovery. I was a member of the Third Committee and went to Shanghai. Based on the Committee's report, the Central China Development Company was established the following year, in 1938.

We completed the inspection of the Shanghai area on December 23– at that time, Nanjing was already captured. I had stayed in Nanjing for a year as a resident officer. The New Year holiday was coming, so I asked for permission to go to Nanjing. I got permission and then went to Nanjing.

– What date was it?

The morning of December 24. Lieutenant Colonel Sasaki, who was sent from the Ministry of the Navy, helped me to get a surface boat and we went to Nanjing by boat. There were several people from other Ministries who also wanted to go to Nanjing. We arrived up-stream of Nanjing in Yangtze River. We asked the boat to stay there and in the afternoon of the next day, the 25th, we returned to Shanghai.

– What was the situation of Nanjing?

We found war casualties, 10 or so, floating in the Yangtze River. We heard that there were more bodies but they drifted away. We landed at a place near Yi Jiang Gate, a car waited for us, and we entered Nanjing through this gate by car. The officer who received us said that Japanese soldiers encircled the Chinese soldiers around the Yi Jiang Gate, so many bodies were found there. But when I visited, I found just a few.

I visited the Headquarters at the Capital Hotel (首都飯店) and heard the story of the capture.

In the evening, I visited the Special Service Agency to meet Major Sakata Shigeki (佐方繁木) who was my superior at the China Department in General Staff Headquarters – I had heard beforehand that he had arrived Nanjing as the Head of Special Service Agency. At the cross-section of Zhongshan Road and Zhongshan East Road stood the three-storied China Bank building. The building was terribly ruined but Mr. Sakata used the second floor of the building. A bottle of sake was delivered from Headquarters, so we

set up candles and sipped sake, chatting until midnight. It was Christmas Eve. Mr. Sakata said nothing but later I heard that his child died that day.

The next day, with Mr. Sakata's guide, we drove around Nanjing. I visited Guanghua Gate and China Gate, where intensive battles took place. At the China Gate, a couple of Chinese street stalls were open for business. After that, I went to the northern area, which became a battlefield, and found Japanese soldiers, Japanese civilians, and reporters, I guessed, walking around. Several houses had burned. In Nanjing, I remember one house smoldering.

I visited the place where I used to live, it stood as it was, looking peaceful, no trace of damage from battle. There was Jin Ling Women's College nearby, where I found many refugees, who looked very calm. The Chinese gatekeeper of the College, who knew me, welcomed me with a big smile.

– I thought you could not freely access areas where refugees were.

Nobody stopped me, in particular. I entered--perhaps because the gatekeeper knew me.

– It is said that there was a massacre. Did you see any other bodies?

I saw only a few bodies on the shore of the Yangtze and outside Yi Jiang Gate. When I drove around in the city I did not see any battle casualties. The city was calm and quiet. I assumed that battle casualties had already been cleared away.

At any rate, the Japanese Army entered Nanjing on the 13th and there was still fighting on that day. I visited Nanjing only 10 days after that. How many bodies could they take away? Even if there were bodies, there must have been several hundred or several thousand. I doubt, number of bodies which the Red Swastika Society stated they themselves had buried.

–After that, you were engaged in formulating strategy for China. You must have had frequent opportunities to meet Chinese people. Did you not hear from them that there was massacre in Nanjing?

No. Never. For the first time, I heard about it after the War. I was totally surprised to hear this. I lived for a long time in China and I knew Chinese people well, and I saw Nanjing before its capture and after its capture, too. That's why I am convinced that the “Nanjing-Incident” is Chinese propaganda. After the War, at the Tokyo Trial (IMTFE), China quickly claimed that hundreds of thousands were killed and their claim spread all over the world. That is the reality of the Nanjing-Incident--the impression of which is so strong that it will not easily go away. The Nanjing-Incident is one tale in the propaganda war, a war which China was engaged in before the War and is still waging even today.

China is very good at propaganda. Japanese people cannot understand this, but in China, the country of *Hakuhatsu* 3,000 *jo*¹, this is an everyday occurrence. Japan lost the propaganda war.

In those times, we didn't have an accurate number of the Chinese population, we didn't know who were soldiers--it is impossible to get an exact number. Therefore, no matter how hard the Japanese side tries to show the truth, by collecting reports of the army's activities and witnesses' testimonies, it is impossible to overcome this huge work of propaganda. Besides, China is a county of “FACE”, they would never take back what they once said, since it means losing “face”. So there will never be a solution to the Nanjing-Incident.

– We don't have any means by which to reveal the truth of the Nanjing-Incident?

Admit defeat, quite simply. We lost the propaganda war. Nothing else. Arguing over the numbers is silly.

What I wanted to discuss with Mr. Okada was matters concerning Nanjing but Mr. Okada always converged on the present: how to maintain Japan-China friendship. I met him three times, got 5 letters and frequent phone calls before I wrote his statement above. Japan-China friendship--that was his highest concern.

In those days, as a member of group that plotted against China, Mr. Okada could have

¹ A typical expression of exaggeration commonly used in China. It came from Tufu's famous poem, “My white hair has become 3,000 *jo* (9 kilometers)”.

used abundant secret military funds to operate the organization but now, empty-handed, he must feel helplessness in the conflict against China. He was deeply involved in China from the beginning and still now, he tries to contribute to various matters and to friendship between Japan and China.

26) Interview with Colonel Isayama Haruki (諫山春樹) , Chief of the General Affairs Bureau, General Staff Headquarters

Since the landing of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army in September 1937, the Central Authorities frequently sent their staff to Army units dispersed throughout China, for the purpose of inspecting them and communications.

At the end of December 1937, Colonel Isayama Haruki, the Chief of General Affairs Bureau in General Staff Headquarters was dispatched to Shanghai, and then in the New Year, to Nanjing. He was accompanied by Major General Anami Korechika (阿南惟幾), the head of the Bureau of Personnel Affairs of the Ministry of the Army, Lieutenant Colonel Nukata Hiroshi (額田担), Senior Officer of the Personnel Assignment Section, Lieutenant Colonel Inada Masazumi (稲田正純), Senior Officer of the Military Affairs Bureau, and Major Arao Okikatsu (荒尾興功), staff officer in the Operations and War Plans Section of General Staff Headquarters. Among these men, only Mr. Isayama is alive today. I interviewed Mr. Isayama in September 1987 and asked him what the Central Authorities thought about the dispatch of troops and Nanjing.

– According to a 1937 report prepared by the General Affairs Bureau:

“On December 26, Colonel Isayama was dispatched to the central China area in order to communicate with the headquarters of the Army and Divisions regarding personnel affairs and staff officers' duties.”– Specifically, what was the objective of this trip?

The purpose of this trip was to check the situation of dispatched troops and the relationship between the Army and the Divisions.

– Was the purpose to inspect disciplinary problems?

No, it was not. The purpose was to grasp the situation of the troops there and the activities of staff officers; nothing further than that. It was standard.

– The Chief of the Office of Personnel Management, Anami, and Senior Staff in the Office of Personnel Management, Nukata, were sent together with you as well.

Originally, personnel affairs of the General Staff Headquarters were handled by the General Affairs Bureau and other personnel affairs were handled by the Personnel Affairs Office of the Ministry of the Army. However, since the February 26 Incident in 1936, all personnel affairs were handled by the Personnel Affairs Office.

Concerning personnel affairs of staff officers, the General Affairs Bureau of the General Staff Headquarters made the original plan, then the Personnel Affairs Office approved it and received the final decision. Accordingly, the Chief of the General Affairs Bureau and the Personnel Affairs Office in the Ministry of the Army related with each other. I remember I was with the Chief of the Personnel Affairs Office Anami, but I have no memory of Mr. Nukata.

– Did you visit Nanjing, too?

I went to Nanjing around the New Year. I inspected several places in the city and found a woman's body,--that's all. Nevertheless, Chief Staff Officer Tsukada Osamu (塚田攻) told me that General Matsui Iwane was extremely worried about outrages committed by Japanese soldiers. It was not a specific remark but just general one, and did not suggest a massacre or anything shocking like that, so I didn't take it too seriously. It was not a matter of a massacre, of which it is currently argued, and it did not occur to anyone to ask of a "massacre".

– Did you discuss this with Headquarters?

No, I think we spoke at a restaurant in Shanghai. The Chief of Staff was a strict man, he spoke in a serious tone.

– Did you meet General Matsui?

I met General Matsui at the Headquarters. We just exchanged greetings.

– What kind of person was General Matsui ?

He was my boss when I was assigned to the Second Section of General Staff Headquarters after I graduated from the Army Staff College. Since then I met him every now and then. The Chief of the Section was Colonel Tatekawa Yoshitsugu (建川美次). Mr. Tatekawa was carefree man but under Mr. Matsui he restrained himself.

During World War I, Mr. Matsui was in France as a resident officer, and his achievement then was said to be remarkable. After serving the Chief of the Second Section, he attended the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, as a plenipotentiary. I was in Paris then and served with him.

In Shanghai, he looked deeply matured and like a greatly experienced man.

– In the Special Services Agency in Shanghai, Colonel Kimura Matsujiro (木村松次郎), who was in the same class as you, served as the head of publicity.

I didn't meet him.

– On January 4, 1938, the General Chief of Staff Officers gave an admonition on disciplinary problems and on January 9, Chief Staff Officer Tsukada Osamu, of the Central China Area Army, issued a notice of discipline to subordinate troops.

I don't remember.

– While you were in General Staff Headquarters, didn't you hear about disciplinary problems of dispatched troops?

No, I didn't.

– Were there orders issued to hush-up the Nanjing-Incident?

All the reports which came to the General Staff Headquarters were received first by the General Affairs Bureau, including daily telegrams, then divided into two; one for the main affairs section and another for the related affairs section, which were mimeographed at the time and then copies were delivered to the two departments. I checked all the documents, therefore it was not possible that I was not at all unaware. I served as the Chief of General Affairs until March 1939, all the while nothing of a massacre story arose; there was no order to hush things up at all.

– The Marco Polo Bridge Incident occurred in July 1937. How did the General Staff Headquarters respond?

The Chief of Strategic Operations Bureau, Major General Ishihara Kanji (石原莞爾), applied a non-expansion policy but in general others did not support the non-expansion policy.

– It is said the China Section insisted that they could defeat China with a single blow.

I don't know. I was not involved in that matter directly.

– In January 1938, the US claimed that the Japanese Army violated American interests in Nanjing and the Chief of the Second Section Honma Masaharu went to Nanjing together with Lieutenant General Hirota Yutaka (広田豊).

On hearing this, I vaguely remember that the US accused us of this then, but I don't remember Mr. Honma's visit. If he made the trip as the Chief of the Second Section it seems strange that he did not bring his subordinate but brought Lieutenant General Hirota.

By the way, Hirota and I were in the same graduating class of the Army Academy.

– According to the diary written by Lieutenant General Nakajima Kesago, commander of the 16th Division, “Our policy is not to take prisoners,” What did this mean?

Take their weapons and let them go. The prisoners were to be freed but before that their

weapons must be confiscated--otherwise they would come back to attack us.

– What thoughts did you have concerning prisoners?

Nothing in particular. We Japanese didn't think that we would be taken alive so we had no thoughts about being prisoners. In March 1939, I went to Datong as the Regimental Commander of the 26th Division, and as far as I remember, not many prisoners were taken. And I didn't know whether they were prisoners or not, but some Chinese were used as labor. I followed this practice as the former Regiment Commander did.

– At the time, did anyone talk about a Nanjing Incident?

I didn't know there was such an incident at all. When we lost the War, I was the Chief Staff Officer in the Taiwan Army of Japan and after the evacuation was completed I was brought in front of an American trial charged with the execution of a B-29 pilot and sentenced to life imprisonment. I was kept in Shanghai and then later in Sugamo. So I didn't know that the Nanjing Incident became a topic then. I was taught about the Incident recently and that is how I came to know about it.

Since 1985, Mr. Isayama sent me letters on several occasions to teach me what the Central Authorities were doing then. I wrote the gist of his statement in my book, “Nanjing-Incident – they told us “聞き書き 南京事件,” published in 1987. Shortly after the book was published Mr. Isayama sent me a letter in which he spoke about the army in general, and I met him in person for the first time. In fact, at first, he had declined my request to interview him, saying that he had no documentary evidence about the Nanjing-Incident.

During the interview, he brought up everything that was in his memory, including the Central Authorities and the trip to Nanjing. When he went to Nanjing, he was 43 years old--now he is 93 years old; 50 years had passed since his trip to Nanjing. Mr. Isayama is well-known for his gentle characteristics – when I met him, I was treated to his kindness.

In 1933, he returned from France and was assigned to the Second Section of the General Staff Headquarters. He was just a major, nevertheless serving as senior staff in the General Affairs Bureau. In August, he joined the Fukuoka Regiment, and one year later

he returned to General Staff Headquarters as senior staff again. Because of his neutral and calm personality, he was definitely needed for managing matters related to personnel. In November 1937, he was promoted to Chief of the General Affairs Bureau and served in this position until March 1939.

27) Interview with Major Otsuki Akira (大槻章), Member of the Army Affairs Formation Team, Military Affairs Bureau, the Ministry of the Army

Mr. Otsuki Akira went to Nanjing shortly after its capture, as a staff of the Army Affairs Section of Military Affairs Bureau, in the Ministry of the Army.

He was a major then. In the previous year, 1936, he was transferred from the post of adjutant of the Ministry of the Army to the Military Affairs Formation Team, Military Affairs Bureau. Since then, for 6 years before interruption by World War II in 1941, he worked in the Formation Team except for a period of time when he worked as a staff officer in the Central China Expeditionary Army, and in 1940 he was appointed as Chief of the Formation Team. At the end of 1941, he moved over to the South Area Army to serve as a staff officer, then as a staff officer of the 14th Army. At the end of the War, he was a senior staff officer of the 36th Army which was deployed on the Japanese home land.

In 1989, I visited Mr. Otsuki's home in Hachioji, Tokyo to interview him.

– What was your position when you arrived at Nanjing?

The Military Affairs Section staff took occasional trips to view current military circumstances. We made trips to Japan as well as China. So at the end of December 1937, I went to Nanjing, to inspect Nanjing.

– At the end of December 1937, Major General Anami Korechika, the Chief of Personnel Affairs, also visited Nanjing with his staff. Did you accompany them?

No. I went alone. At that time, I went to Nanjing and Hangzhou and returned to Tokyo, then went to North China as well.

– Where did you stay in Nanjing?

It was such a long time ago, I don't remember too well. I stayed overnight at a logistics inn. I went over to a bed and found that it was only the steel frame, no mattress, not even a straw mat. I spent the night covered with a single blanket – it was freezing cold. That was what I remember most.

– It is said that there was a massacre. Did you see or hear something?

I saw no trace of anything. Nothing. I discussed many things with staff officers at Headquarters, they didn't mention this at all. I believe that the massacre story is a lie.

After that I went to Hangzhou and visited the Headquarters of the 10th Army. As soon as I arrived in Hangzhou, there was heavy snowfall, all transportation stopped, including airplanes. I was trapped at Headquarters. All other Headquarters staff officers could do nothing as well.

In the 10th Army I met Major Yamasaki Masao (山崎正男), an operations staff officer. Mr. Yamazaki was from my home town, senior to me, and I knew him from Military Preparatory School. Mr. Yamazaki worked at the Military Affairs Section, being in charge of formation. I went there as his replacement. Therefore, we talked a lot. But issues such as a “massacre” was never raised in our discussions.

– Did you hear from other staff?

We were trapped in Hangzhou for a week or 10 days, we talked about many things because we had nothing to do. Lieutenant Colonel Terada Masao joined our discussions. And so did Colonel Tanida Isamu and Lieutenant Colonel Yoshinaga Sunao. I heard nothing from them.

– A massacre did not happen?

The massacre story is a lie. I went to Nanjing the next year, 1938, as a staff officer of the Central China Expeditionary Army, but I heard nothing then either. Without an order such a thing as a massacre couldn't have happened. If there was massacre, which was claimed after the War, I should have heard of this as a staff officer when I went to Nanjing. The massacre story is beyond belief.

– If there was massacre you should have heard of it?

Yes. The Commander who attacked Nanjing was General Matsui, then General Hata Syunroku (畑俊六) succeeded him. I worked with General Hata in the Central China Expeditionary Army, and when I returned to the Military Affairs Section of the Ministry of the Army he was Army Minister. In addition, in 1943 when I was appointed as staff officer of a Brigade, which was deployed near Nanjing, he was the General Commander. So I was able to speak frankly with General Hata, but I never heard about a massacre. It is a downright lie.

28) Interview with Colonel Mikuni Naofuku (三国直福), Commander of the 22th Field Artillery Regiment

Mr. Mikuni Naofuku was born in 1893, and when I interviewed him he was 92 years old. He worked at a company in Tokyo until he was 85 years old. He lost his wife when he was 79 years old. Since then, he lived alone. At the age of 85, he quit his job and moved to Chiba where his son lived. I visited him at his home in Chiba. He had a good complexion and looked very healthy. He did, he said, have a little problem with walking, so if he needed to go to Tokyo he goes by car. I visited him three times, we spoke for two hours each time. During the interview he sat on a *zabuton* cushion with his back straight. I, half his age, couldn't sit still long and moved my knees restlessly, looking for a comfortable position but Mr. Mikuni didn't show any sign of fatigue. I admired his attitude and felt guilty for letting him speak for as long as two hours.

Mr. Mikuni had a clear memory and well remembered matters that occurred in Nanjing, including dates. He was working at the Newspaper Unit in the Ministry of the Army and had a great appetite for knowledge about the mass media and for information in general, so he was well informed of current events. He knew what I wanted to hear from him

before my visit, so he was prepared to speak in detail.

After serving as Commander of the 22th Field Artillery Regiment, he was appointed as Chief Staff Officer of the 15th Division, then Chief of Nanjing Special Services Agency, and at the time of outbreak of the Greater East Asia War, he served as the Chief of the Research Section of the Ministry of the Army, that is, on the staff of Political Information under Prime Minister Tojo. He met the end of the War in Hanoi, when he was at the time Commander of the 21st Division.

– You went to Nanjing in January 1938.

I arrived in Nanjing on the 15th and stayed until the 22nd. I arrived in the evening of January 15 and on the 22nd, took a boat for my return, so I stayed in Nanjing in total for 6 days.

I visited Division Headquarters the next day to report my return. Divisional Headquarters was located in the splendid buildings of the Nationalist Government. I apologized to the Divisional Commander for my absence due to illness.

– At that time, did you hear anything about disciplinary problem or the Nanjing-Incident at Division Headquarters?

I heard nothing. After I visited the Divisional Commander I went to the Chief of Staff, and I heard nothing there either. When I returned to my job, the 16th Division was planned to move to North China again and, a couple of days later, the Divisional Commander came to our Regiment for an inspection. The inspection took either a half day or all day. I spoke about many things with the Divisional Commander but it was nothing special.

– Did you hear something from lower ranking soldiers in the 22nd Regiment?

Usually, I made a report on officer performance evaluations in December, but I was hospitalized that time so I couldn't do that, therefore I had to collect information about the battle for Nanjing and other things as soon as I arrived Nanjing. I got a number of reports from subordinates and found no special incidents.

– Did you hear any talk about disciplinary problems from the other divisional commanders or regimental commanders?

I had opportunities to talk to my own Divisional Commander and our Chief of Staff, but rarely with the other divisional commanders and regimental commanders. This was common in the army.

The 16th Division was mobilized in August 1937 and I stayed with the 16th Division until July 1938. On the battlefield, I never met Mr. Noda Kengo (野田謙吾), the Commander of the 33rd Regiment, nor Mr. Sukekawa Seiji (助川静二), Commander of the 38th Regiment. Mr. Noda was a year senior to me and later was substituted by Yamada Kizo (山田喜蔵), who was in the same graduating class as me. I had often shared the same battles with Mr. Katagiri Goro (片桐護郎), the Commander of the 9th Regiment, yet I talked to him in person only a couple of times. And I have no memory of meeting Mr. Oono Noriaki (大野宣明), of the 20th Regiment.

It was same with the Brigade Commanders, I met Mr. Sasaki Toichi (佐々木到一), Commander of the 30th Brigade, only once and Mr. Kusaba Tatsumi (草場辰巳), Commander of the 19th Brigade, more often yet a couple of times at most. And I never heard of the Nanjing-Incident from them.

– Who grasped the Division's situation as a whole?

I think the Chief of Staff did, Colonel Nakazawa Mitsuo (中沢三夫). After Nanjing, the 16th Division moved to North China again and around Zuzhou they were in continuous battle, for as long as 29 days. During the battle, an adjutant from each Regiment regularly visited the Chief of Staff to receive orders. And the Chief of Staff himself gave them orders. So the Chief of Staff knew everything in the Division. Mr. Nakazawa Mitsuo lived in Fukakusa, Kyoto, and it so happened that his house was one house over from mine. He was a quiet man.

– What was the situation of Nanjing, when you arrived on 15th January?

It was a battlefield so I accepted that. It was wretched and empty. Nevertheless, I felt good

because I could catch up with my troops, finally, after my sick leave.

– Were there bodies in the street then?

There might have been, but I didn't see any. I didn't have time to make careful observations.

– Did you look around Nanjing City?

Yes. I inspected my subordinates' battle area. At Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, I received an explanation from an officer who was in charge of observation, and inspected the area for a couple of days. But I didn't see any bodies that looked like they were the result of a massacre.

– When you headed for North China, you must have left from Xiaguan. What was the situation in Xiaguan?

I don't remember anything in particular.

– So, among the top officers in the 16th Division, nobody talked about a Nanjing-Incident?

No one did. Not only among top-level soldiers but also lower ranking soldiers, I heard nothing from them. I myself didn't see anything.

During battle in North China again, I was appointed Chief of Staff of the 15th Division in Nagoya, Japan, and went to Nagoya in July 1938. Later, this Division was ordered to garrison Jiangning (江寧), therefore, I returned to Nanjing in August. Here again, I heard nothing about a massacre. At that time a number of Japanese merchants had already arrived in Nanjing, many from Nagasaki, so we call Nanjing “Nanjing City of Nagasaki Prefecture”. I knew that people couldn't speak out against the Japanese army but the Nanjing streets atmosphere was very lively.

After that, I served in Nanjing as Chief of Staff of the 15th Division until August 1939, then was appointed to Chief of the Nanjing Special Service Agency and stayed on until

May of the next year, 1940. My duty as the Chief of the Special Service Agency was completely different from my past military duties. I had to meet and negotiate with Chinese people every day in order to consider their point of view. So I spoke with Chinese people in town in a friendly manner, but never heard from them about a massacre story.

I met frequently with Mr. Liang Hongzhi (梁鴻志), Premier of the Restoration Government, but I heard nothing from him about a massacre. Mr. Liang Hongzhi was a literary man and I still have his calligrapher which he wrote for me.

– The Chief of Special Service Agency – Captain Onishi Hajime, I think —was also the Chief of the Agency.

Yes, Mr. Onishi replaced Colonel Akiyama Yoshitaka (秋山義隆), then I succeeded Mr. Akiyama.

– Around that time it is said that Mr. Gao Guanwu (高冠吾), the Mayor of Nanjing, buried around 3,000 abandoned bodies found in the suburbs of Nanjing and built a monument.

Is that so? I didn't know that. Mr. Kokango drank well and we met often but I never heard reproachful words from him.

– There were many stories about Divisional Commander Nakajima, what did you think of him?

In short, he was keen and tactful in war. He was an expert in artillery; I had no bad feelings toward him. I was often with him – in 1933 when I became Lieutenant Colonel to the 22nd Regiment of the 16th Division, Lieutenant General Nakajima was the Commander of Maizuru Fortress, Kyoto. The Commander of Maizuru Fortress was under the 16th Division so I met him several times. During a military exercise we stayed at the same local inn for a couple of nights.

At the time of the February 26 Incident in 1936, I was staff officer at the Martial Law Headquarters and later, Mr. Nakajima became Commander of the Military Police. During that time, Mr. Nakajima went to General Ugaki Kazushige (宇垣一成) to stop him to form a cabinet--that was so well-known a story. I think it happened that Mr. Nakajima was in the position to do the job; it was a turn of fate.

In December of the same year, 1936, I was appointed Commander of the 22nd Field Artillery Regiment and in August 1937, the next year, I received Mr. Nakajima, who became Divisional Commander. As I received Divisional Commander Nakajima, he asked me about the field artillery regiment in detail. I had 8 months experience as the Regiment Commander and when I mentioned that he said, “Only 8 months, so you know nothing. OK, don't worry, I will teach you.”

Less than a month later, our regiment was scheduled for live fire exercise in Aibano, Shiga, so, on the night before we expected the Divisional Commander's inspection. The next day, we were suddenly ordered to mobilize. I stopped the training schedule and hurried to Division Headquarters. It was 3 o'clock in the morning, August 25. The Divisional Commander was there, he saw my tensed face and said, “Artillery man, don't worry.” I was touched.

Divisional Commander Nakajima was very devoted on battlefield, I was surprised that in North China, the Divisional Commander himself moved ahead to the front of the line. Those days I left all shooting matters to the chief of the company. The Divisional Commander asked the company commander to “Show me the target lists,” and asked many questions and gave instructions. It so happened that the company commander had just completed his training at artillery school, so he could answer all of his questions; I felt relieved.

During the moving from North China to Central China, the Divisional Commander instructed us to do live fire training whenever we had leisure time. We had once done a complete live fire exercise – all 12 companies laid out before the Divisional Commander. Divisional Commander Nakajima was well-known as an expert in artillery--he was really devoted. In the attack on Nanjing, he moved to the frontline artillery base and got injured.

I went to Nanjing to return to my duty after the attack on Nanjing was completed. The

Divisional Commander scolded me, “The shooting performance by the 22nd Field Artillery Regiment was terrible.” He was expert in artillery--that's why he was not satisfied with our performance.

He paid attention to details on operations, so some infantry regimental commanders complained about this – in a favorable view he was a very attentive person, and in an unfavorable view he was a meticulous person.

On the other hand, Divisional Commander Nakajima had a sensitive aspect. In Shunde (順德), which was located in north China, a superior of a soldier showed me a letter which was sent to the soldier in my regiment from his mother in which the soldier's mother worried for her son, from the beginning to the end. I showed the letter to Commander Nakajima, he read it and shed many tears.

And during the battle at Taierzhuang (台兒莊), when a transportation corps was in trouble due to the loss of their horses, the Divisional Commander himself came to me asking to give some of the artillery units' horses to the transportation corps. We were running low on artillery shells so our load was lighter, so I made our horses 6-in-hand to 4-in-hand and managed to give some of our horses to the transportation corps. Soon the Divisional Commander came to me again and said that the transportation corps was very pleased.

He cared for me as well. I have a hemorrhoid problem and during the training he worried about my problem in a friendly manner. After a battle in Xuzhou, I got a message tube, thrown from a plane, in which I was ordered to be the Chief of Staff of the 15th Division. Therefore, after the battle was settled, I went to Divisional Commander Nakajima to report that I was leaving my current position. He told me then, “Mr. Mikuni is a man of sentiment, rather than rationality.” I thought surely this applied to Divisional Commander Nakajima.

–Both you and Divisional Commander Nakajima were artillerymen, his demands were high, nevertheless, there was understanding between each other, I suppose?

That was one reason. But there was another reason: commanders of artillery regiments and military engineers regiments must stay near the Divisional Commander-- that was a

rule. In case of the 16th Division, the brigade commanders and commanders of infantry regiments deployed far away so they could communicate only via radio. On the other hand I was always with the Divisional Commander. I think I was most near to him.

The Chief of Staff was always busy issuing orders and plans, and the Divisional Commander was often alone so I acted something like a conversationalist or entertainment. For this performance, Chief of Staff Nakazawa, greatly appreciated that. Also, the senior adjutant, whose duty was to serve the Divisional Commander, was in the same graduating class as me, told me often enough, “You helped my job a lot.”

– It is said that General Matsui criticized the Divisional Commander's command in Nanjing.

As I mentioned earlier, the Lieutenant General was very keen in battle. His main concern was battle. And for a person in the position of lieutenant general, he handled matters of detail himself so people thought every result was attributed to him.

Generally speaking – around 1913, when I graduated from the Military Academy-- “Depend on the enemy for food” and “Only reasonable number of prisoners” were commonly stated so I cannot deny those rough ideas existed.

– What kind of person was Brigade Commander Sasaki, who served as the Commander of the Nanjing Garrison?

As you know, he was an expert of China. I first met him at the Jinan (濟南) Incident, 1928. In Jinan, the Japanese 6th Division and Chiang Kai-shek's Northern Expedition, clashed. I was working with the newspaper team in the Ministry of the Army then and was ordered to join the 6th Division immediately. Lieutenant General Sasaki was in Nanjing then and he came to Jinan together with Chiang Kai-shek. In those days, Lieutenant General Sasaki had very friendly relationship with Chiang Kai-shek and he was posted in Nanjing as an adviser to Chiang Kai-shek. Later 1937, the Lieutenant General came to Nanjing again and that time he was in the position to attack Chiang Kai-shek. I wonder what he felt then.

While I was in the 16th Division, I had hardly opportunities to speak with Brigadier

General Sasaki.

– General Matsui was sentenced to death at the Tokyo Trial (IMTFE) and executed, due to the Nanjing Trials.

The War Trial was problematic. When the War ended, I was in Hanoi where I was about to leave by ship, but I was forced off the ship by a US military officer. Then, Chief of Staff Shishido (宍戸) and I were brought to Canton and charged as war criminals. The trial then was totally unreasonable, I was charged with creating the “puppet government” of Wang Zhaoming (汪兆銘), and that my soldiers used violence against civilians. Yes, I served as the Chief of Special Service Agency in Nanjing when the Wang Government was established but I was not deeply involved with them. Concerning the violence of my soldiers, my Division was involved in almost no battles and was strictly warned about discipline and so we had no problems at all. As a matter of fact, I awarded branch units for their good behavior.

When I was accused of using violence against civilians, I demanded for them to show evidence. They brought me a file as evidence, in which I found statements from people who were ordered by the Chinese army to make statements. In the file, the order of the statements was left as is--the dates shown in the file were of the lunar calendar and places and dates hardly matched that of the Division's movements. That was the extent of the Chinese “evidence”.

Also, in some trials there was neither a prosecutor nor an attorney. I heard that in a determination of the death sentence, the defendant's appearance played an important role. I don't know how the sentence and personal looks are related.

It was rumored that I would get a death sentence but I protested against every accusation. My trial was set towards the end but in the earlier trials, there so many people sentenced death, so beginning with the person tried before me, they handed out life imprisonment sentences and I got a sentence of life imprisonment, too. I was imprisoned in Canton for two years, then in a Shanghai prison for one-and-a-half years, and furthermore in Sugamo Prison for three-and-a-half years, until 1952.

That was how war trials were conducted by China after the War.

– When did you learn about the Nanjing-Incident?

After I was released from Sugamo Prison. But I knew that General Matsui had been executed, maybe I heard the news in prison in Shanghai. There were Chinese newspapers and someone who could read Chinese told me about it.