

## Chapter 2

### Nanjing, as Observed by Japanese Soldiers

“As a matter of fact, I sympathize with China. I did not agree with the establishment of Manchuria. In the *Nisshi-jihen*, or China Incident, Japan went too far. But as far as the refusing to surrender as advised in Nanjing, I think China was wrong. And eventually, the top commander, T'ang Sheng-chih (唐生智), himself escaped. . . . . This would be the same at a company. If the company's leaders disappeared, the company would be left in chaos and their employees would steal goods and run away. Had they not refused surrender, the matter of prisoners would have never come up. If you look at international law, I think the path China had taken was the problem.” (From a statement by Mr. Okada Takashi, attached to General Matsui.)



Around the Safety Zone at Zhongshan Road, a stall for boiled *gyoza* started business. The first customers were Japanese soldiers. (December 15<sup>th</sup>, 1937)

## 1. The Army

### 19) Interview with Major Yoshinaga Sunao (吉永朴), Staff Officer, 10th Army

Mr. Yoshinaga Sunao served as Staff Officer in the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, then as senior Staff Officer in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army, then Chief of Staff in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Forces, and finally as Director of Imperial Japanese Army Air Academy, for which he is well-known today.

Mr. Yoshinaga was born in 1897, participating in the attack on Nanjing at the age of 40, and at the end of the War he was 47 years old. When I interviewed him he was 88 years old but he looked stately and fine. He did not need a hearing aid. He told me, “You are the first person to ask me to talk about Nanjing,” and tried to remember of the things from a long, long time ago.

It was December 27, 1985 when I interviewed him. Actually, I got a letter from him in the summer of that year, in which he responded my questions. His letter started by stating that the Nanjing massacre is groundless rumor. And he answered my questions, one by one, on the controversy issues regarding Nanjing and ended the letter with: “If you want to know more details I can meet you.” Encouraged, I asked him for interview at once and waited for his response. But he didn't respond after that. Considering his age, I assumed that his health might not be so good, so I waited patiently.

Around the same time, I got responses to my questions from Mr. Matsumae Misoo (松前未曾雄), the former executive secretary to the Minister of Army. Unexpectedly, however, soon I saw Mr. Matsumae's obituary in the newspaper, less than one month after I got his letter. I did not get any sense that he was on the verge of death from his postcard, so I was really surprised. I thought that the same thing might have happened to Mr. Yoshinaga. I inquired about his health at the Army Officer's Club, *Kaikosha* (偕行社). The reply was that Mr. Yoshinaga had no health problems.

But several months already passed since I sent my letter. I decided to call him, and his wife answered the phone. She said that Mr. Yoshinaga could not meet me. She explained that immediately after he got my letter, a stranger came to meet him on a similar issue and he defrauded Mr. Yoshinaga. Mr. Yoshinaga was terribly shocked by this and so he decided not to meet strangers anymore, he could not stand further shocks.

I understood his shock but I still had many things to ask him. I sent him a letter again, and called him again--finally he agreed to meet me. The interview finally, conducted at the end of December. Under the circumstances, he was cautious, so the vice-manager of the retirement home where he lived, was present with us. Accordingly, one might imagine that there was a harsh atmosphere during the interview, but, in fact, Mr. Yoshinaga prepared a room for the interview and answered my questions politely, despite my questions focusing on the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, which may have sounded like accusation.

– Mr. Uesuna Katsushichi (上砂勝七), Chief of Military Police, 10<sup>th</sup> Army, wrote in his memoir, *Military Policeman for 31 Years*<sup>1</sup>, the following:

After the Hangzhou Bay landing, the 10<sup>th</sup> Army had to rely on requisition for food supply. The chief accountant of the 10<sup>th</sup> Army raged that he would go back Japan because he could not take responsibility for such an undesirable approach. Chief Staff Officer Tanabe tried to soothe him to settle the matter.

Have you heard of this argument within the 10th Army?

I knew Mr. Uesuna but never met him in face-to-face at Headquarters, I don't think this was true. I knew Captain Fujino Ranjo (藤野鸞丈), adjacent to the Chief of Military Police, too. While I was serving as the director of Imperial Japanese Army Air Academy, Mr. Fujino was the Chief of Tokyo Military Police. Mr. Fujino and I talked many times regarding the case of Ward Chief Colonel Uehara Shigetaro (上原重太郎), so we had many chances to talk several matters but I have never heard such things from Mr. Fujino.

– I assume that the requisition was really undertaken...

As soon as the 10<sup>th</sup> Army landed at Hangzhou Bay, they had to rush across the creek zone in order to reach the rear of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army as according to plan. So the Army soldiers, including the commander, raced along a field footpath with minimum equipment. The mountain artillery was disassembled and transported. Under the circumstances, the transportation corps landed everything in Shanghai, including our heavy equipment. The horses were exhausted, some of them just stood there like statues.

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<sup>1</sup> Uesuna Katsushichi, *Military Policeman for 31 Years*, Tokyo Life Inc., Tokyo, 1955.

Even my baggage was carried to Shanghai--it was a lot of trouble for me, too. In this situation, as Sun Tzu said in his book, *The Art of War*,<sup>2</sup> “Rely on the enemy for food”, it was an inevitable part of the job.

– In his book *Military Policeman for 31 Years*, it says that the 10th Army had disciplinary problems, therefore the General Chief of Staff issued admonitions. How was the discipline of the 10th Army in general?

From Hangzhou Bay Landing until the Nanjing Attack, the 10th Army fought with speed and bravery. Some confuse their brave, reckless action with disciplinary problem. I regret that Mr. Uesuna brought up an entirely unacceptable discussion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Army.

– Did you move together with Headquarters before you reached to Nanjing?

Yes, I did.

– When did you enter Nanjing?

At the Nanjing Attack, the 10<sup>th</sup> Army’s Headquarters was deployed at Hong Lanbu (洪藍埠). Then the artillerymen joined us for the first time, and on December 12, the Oita Regiment hoisted the Japanese sun-flag on the rampart. I was ordered to establish the Headquarters of the Army by the Chief Staff, Major General Tanabe Moritake (田邊盛武), so on the early morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>, I entered Nanjing through China Gate (中華門). Walking one kilometer or so from the gate, I found Shanghai Saving Bank (上海儲蓄銀行) at the intersection of Zhu Qiaolu (朱雀路) and Health Road (健康路), and decided to use it as headquarters and made it ready for the Commander.

– What was the situation in Nanjing then?

I saw bodies abandoned near the rampart. They looked miserable, some of them were run over by cars. Looking them, I thought we had to win the war, and that the country which lost was just shattered. On the way to the Saving Bank, I met a family in descent shape. I

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<sup>2</sup> *The Art of War*, written by Sun Tzu (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), is a book composed of 13 chapters on ancient Chinese military strategy. This book is utilized even today by the US Army.

gave them my name card and wrote on it “Let them pass freely through sentry lines.” This meant that the inside of the Nanjing was settled enough such that a family could walk about. I'd like to add: the number of Japanese soldiers who were allowed to enter Nanjing was limited. I was not in charge for issuing restrictions, so I do not know the details, but before the Nanjing attack, each Division was given an order concerning troop numbers.

– What did you do after December 14?

A couple of days later, I went to Xiaguan to confer on military operations. I saw a number of corpses of Chinese soldiers at the wharf--they were submerged in the Yangtze River.

– How many is “a number of”?

I don't know exactly, several thousand, maybe. The 10<sup>th</sup> Army attacked from the south of Nanjing and at the same time the Kunizaki detachment also attacked the Chinese army from Pukou (浦口). I think the corpses were battle casualties.

– Were they all soldiers?

There were many Chinese in civilian-clothes. I heard later that in Nanjing a large number of military uniforms were discarded, so I guess that Chinese corpses in civilian-clothes were *ben-i-hei*, soldiers in civilian attire. I saw hanging corpses dressed in civilian clothes.

– Where?

I am not sure. To my memory, the corpses looked like they were hanged, but they might have been washed up shore due to the tide and so I thought that they had been hanged.

– Other than Xiaguan, did you visit any other place?

I climbed Mt. Zijin. I think it was December 16, the day before the entrance ceremony. I was not impressed by Mt. Zijin in particular.

– Did you hear about a massacre by then?

No, not once.

– Muto Akira (武藤章), the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Central China Area Army, wrote in his memoir, *From Philippines to Sugamo*: “During the operations, General Matsui tried to respect Chinese standing to the extent that it was far from realistic. The General’s soft attitude frustrated some of the officers. A commander and divisional general, who considered strategy a priority, gave protest to the General. At Nanking, being lodged in a neighboring room, I could hear them quarreling furiously.”

– I assume that this certain commander was Lieutenant General Yanagawa Heisuke (柳川平助). Did you come across such arguments?

I don't know what they were quarreling about, they might have been arguing about the *Lady Bird* (the accidental shelling of a British ship by the Japanese Army). The 10<sup>th</sup> Army had to move to attack Hangzhou immediately after the entrance ceremony, so they must have had no time for such an argument.

– When was the Hangzhou Attack decided?

I assume that the moment of Nanjing Attack, the Hangzhou Attack had already been decided. Lieutenant General Yanagawa insisted on capturing Hangzhou as well, so at his initiative, Lieutenant Colonel Terada Masao (寺田雅雄), who was in charge of strategy, planned the Hangzhou Attack. The operational plan was presented to Headquarters. Therefore, at the moment of entering Nanjing, Headquarters had already prepared to move on to Hangzhou. Lieutenant General Yanagawa’s idea was that Japan had to capture the triangular area of Shanghai – Nanjing – Hangzhou, then to wait for diplomatic negotiations. He submitted his idea again after he returned Tokyo.

– Did the Commander Yanagawa have the idea of attacking Nanjing from the beginning?

Yes, he did. At first, the 10<sup>th</sup> Army focused on the attack of Shanghai from the rear but Commander Yanagawa already had a plan to attack Nanjing. He presented his plan

repeatedly. There were a lot of differences between his plan and Imperial Headquarters'.

– What kind of person was the Commander Yanagawa?

While I was in the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, I was constantly under Lieutenant General Yanagawa. He was great man and, even now, he has my deepest respect. He was a reticent person, in a word, he was a quiet hero.

Lieutenant General Yanagawa loved China. On the way to Nanjing, he gathered several of his staff in the inner courtyard of a Chinese house, and watching the harvest moon, said that it was not a desirable thing for Japan and China to fight each other, however, duty is duty.

After entered Hangzhou, the 10<sup>th</sup> Army was not engaged in battle--it was relatively peaceful. I even had time to play tennis. Shortly after, Lieutenant Colonel Terada Masao returned to Tokyo and I was ordered to become an instructor at the Military Staff College. But I had tasks to be completed, so I asked Major General Iimura Yuzuru (飯村 稔), the director of the Military Staff College, to allow me to stay in China for a little longer and I did my tasks under Colonel Fujimoto Tetsukuma (藤本 鉄能).

The Headquarters of the Army was at a place called Xileng Fantien (西冷飯店) near West Lake, and Lieutenant General Yanagawa lodged at a wealthy Chinese man's house located close to Headquarters. It was said the Commander Yanagawa recited a sutra everyday. I wrote a battle report for the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, and visited the Commander Yanagawa several times in order to get his signature. I stayed on with the last of the 10th Army soldiers and on February 26, 1938, when the Commander Yanagawa returned to Tokyo, in triumph, I accompanied him.

After the War, I met the Commander's wife and his daughter. Still now, I keep in contact with his daughter.

– In the beginning of February Lieutenant General Honma Masaharu (本間 雅晴), Chief of the Second Section of the General Staff Headquarters, visited Hangzhou. Did you meet him?

Lieutenant General Honma was my instructor at the Military Staff College who taught me current circumstances regarding the UK. He knew my brother, who was a doctor, too. But I have no memory of meeting him in Hangzhou.

– It is said there was a massacre in Nanjing.

I have the firm belief that there was no massacre in Nanjing. Most of all, Chinese civilians escaped quickly. Only a few were left. Furthermore, if Japanese soldiers had killed hundreds and thousands of Chinese, how would they have accomplished this? Even if they had made every Chinese line-up, it still would not have been possible. The number “hundreds and thousands” is a huge amount that you cannot move through such a group of prisoners. There was not even that many people left in Nanjing (before the attack).

Like the Chinese saying, *hakuhatu sanzen-jo*, or 3,000 *jou* of white hair, the Chinese made mentions of “massacres” much later. My conclusion is: there was no massacre.

\* 1 *jou* is approx. 3 meters.

## 20) Interview with Major Okada Yuji (岡田西次), Staff, Special Duty Section of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army

In 1930, Mr. Okada Yuji, then an accounting officer, was studying in the department of economics at Tokyo University as a correspondent student. He had already realized the importance of a Japan-China economic bloc, that is, the importance of economic ties between the two countries in order to fight a modern war, which was characterized as “total war” at the time.

For 12 years, since his graduation from Tokyo University in 1933 until the end of the War, his career mainly related to China, including the China Section of the General Staff Headquarters, Shanghai Military Office, Shanghai Expeditionary Army, East Asia Development Board, adviser to the Wang Zhaoming (汪政權) Government, and China Expeditionary Army, and so on. In Shanghai, together with the Shanghai Mayor Zhou Fo-hai (周介海), Mr. Okada heard the broadcast in which the Emperor accepted the Potsdam Declaration. He was a Major General then.

Mr. Okada's activity in China and his Chinese friends and acquaintances are described in his memoir, *Behind the Scenes – Note on the Japan-China War*. In his long experiences in

China, I asked him questions focused on the period of the entrance into Nanjing in 1937.

Mr. Okada was a quiet person--from his compact body, it was not easy to imagine he was once a major general. This was due in part because his responsibility was not on the battlefield but in financial matters. When I interviewed him he was 88 years old, very active and still working at a leading company in Yokohama – he travels to his office everyday from his home in Kamakura. After the War, he engaged in business, serving as vice president of his company and now as a consultant.

In April 1936, Mr. Okada moved from “the China Section of the General Staff Headquarters” to “the Office of Military Attaché to the Shanghai Embassy”. His job was to research and study the Chinese economy and he did this by creating a new office. The next year, in August 1937, as the Shanghai Expeditionary Army landed in Shanghai, he joined the Army as a special duty member of Headquarters. The name of his position changed but his duty was same--he was responsible for financial arrangements in the Expeditionary Army. During the China Incident, economic and political matters were regarded as important as military strategy. For the purpose of economic arrangements, Mr. Okada entered Nanjing as soon as Nanjing was captured.

– Did you enter Nanjing with Headquarters?

No, I entered Nanjing following front-line troops. When Japanese troops started to attack Nanjing, the Headquarters of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army was deployed in Tang Shuizhen (湯水鎮) and I was there. The Shanghai Expeditionary Army was headed by Prince Asakanomiya. The Central China Area Army was headed by General Matsui, and Major General Tsukata was the Chief of Staff. The Headquarters of the Central China Area Army had not arrived at Tang Shuizhen yet.

I was in the Headquarters of the Expeditionary Army but I had to handle Chinese bank matters of as soon as possible, once Nanjing was captured, so I moved with the front-line troops after we expected that the capture of Nanjing was only a matter of time. We traveled by car, bullets spraying, and on the way to Nanjing we came across Chinese remnants, who escaped from Nanjing and were fleeing towards Tang Shuizhen. Also, I saw lines of prisoners tied-up and marching. It was December 12.

– When did you enter Nanjing?

In the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup>, through China Gate. I stayed in Nanjing for 4 days.

– What was the situation inside of Nanjing?

There were not so many bodies around the rampart, but after walking for a while, I saw a number of bodies. First, I entered the Bank of Communications, and were not so many bodies around the bank.

– Were you the first Japanese who entered the Bank of Communications?

Yes, I was the first Japanese. There was nobody in it.

– Did Japanese soldiers or anyone else use the building?

No one came in while I was there.

– What was the inside of the bank like?

It was empty. I found no important account books, nothing. No *hohei*, Chinese paper money--the safes were open. Perhaps as the Chinese Government fled, their people took everything. Even if they had left something, Chinese soldiers and civilians must have ransacked the place. After checking the Bank of Communications, I went to the nearest bank, China Bank. But like the Bank of Communications, this bank was also empty. So I gave up on inspection of the banks, ending with these two banks.

– According to the diary of Lieutenant General Nakajima Kesago, the 16<sup>th</sup> Division Commander, there were some Japanese soldiers who ransacked the bank's safe.

I know--that is from Lieutenant General Nakajima's diary, published recently [November 21, 1984] by the *Yomiuri Shimubun*.

In the banks which I inspected, there was no money found at all. I am sure of that because I was the first to enter. I doubt the statement in Nakajima's diary.

However, other than the 4 main banks, there were several ordinary banks in China and most of them established their main offices in Nanjing. They had also many branches in Nanjing so there might have been some money left in those branches.

– According to Nakajima’s diary, some Japanese exchanged the *hohei* to Japanese yen and sent them to Japan. Was it possible to exchange the *hohei* to yen?

This was possible in Shanghai. In the Shanghai International Settlement, the *hohei* was the main currency and Japanese Bank notes were also used there, so they were freely exchangeable.

– But was it possible to send them to Japan?

There was the Shokin Bank (正金銀行) in Shanghai which could transmit funds with the permission of the Vice Minister of Finance. I should add that governmental funds, which were handled either by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Army, were a different matter. I heard that Kodama Yoshio, (児玉誉士夫), [a well-known but mysterious gangster], asked the Army to handle his money as governmental funds and sent them to Japan. I guess that Kodama got permission from the Army’s finance department . Each soldier had an accounting officer, and if the officer gave permission then it was possible. I heard that some people begged the accounting officer to give permission to transmit funds to Japan.

– According to a memoir written by Mr. Maeda Yuji, a war correspondent for *Domei Tsushin*:

“At the end of November, in Suzhou (蘇州), Japanese soldiers never gave a second glance to piles of Chinese money, *hohei*.” On the other hand, according to Nakajima’s diary, less than one month after Maeda’s story, Japanese soldiers tried to get *hohei* by breaking into bank safes in Nanjing. Which is true?

In November, in Suzhou, Japanese soldiers were constantly in battle and, at the time, were confronted with death, so paper money meant nothing to them, I guess. If such things as breaking into safes happened in Nanjing, it means the battle was over and the soldiers had time to think about money.

– Did you enter Nanjing just to inspect the Chinese banks?

I had another important job. The soldiers had military scripts and I had to check to see if military notes would be accepted in Nanjing. It was very important to decide how to handle military scripts after that.

– You left Nanjing before the entrance ceremony. Before you left Nanjing, did you have any opportunity to see the moment that the military scripts were used for selling and buying goods?

Yes, a couple of times. It was outside China Gate, my memory is not clear but surely outside the Castle. It was not a real flea market, just several people standing outside the gate, here and there, to start their businesses. It could not be called a market, but, anyway, people were selling their used books or imitation antique goods.

– The sellers were Chinese, and the buyers were Japanese soldiers, right?

Yes. In addition to the antiques, the sellers sold cigarette, piece by piece. I watched them if they accepted military scripts or not. Unfortunately, it was not so successful. Some Japanese soldiers forced the sellers to take the military scripts. After I saw that, I went back Shanghai by car, on 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> – maybe it was the 16<sup>th</sup> .

– Have you met the Commander of the 10th Army, Lieutenant General Yanagawa Heisuke?

Yes, I had several opportunities to meet him. In 1933, when I was to be promoted to major, I learned that I was short of the required years of army experience, because of my time spent at Tokyo University, department of economics, for study. In order to fulfill the requirement, I quickly joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. Lieutenant General Yanagawa was the Commander of the Division. Also, when I became a field investigator in the East Asia Development Board, Lieutenant General Yanagawa served as the Secretary-General. He was a great man.

– How about General Matsui Iwane?

I worked at the Special Duty Section in General Matsui's Army and I met him several times in Shanghai. I was just a major and he was the top Commander, so I was not able to speak with him directly. So, my opinion at the time was that we had to get along with China for the purpose of forming an economic bloc. I studied China and I considered myself to be pro-Chinese. General Matsui had the same ideas, so I met him occasionally at meetings of people who shared the same ideas.

After the entrance of Nanjing, General Matsui wrote me a classical Chinese poem depicting the entrance of Nanjing Castle. In addition, after he returned to Tokyo in triumph, he shared with me some of gifts given to him by the Emperor. I was so impressed by his tenderness and greatly admired him.

General Matsui loved China and the Chinese people so much, yet he was accused of committing the Nanjing-incident and executed. I have no words that could console his soul and express my sorrow.

– You stayed in Nanjing for 4 day. During that time, did you see something called a “massacre”?

“Massacre” means gathering up unarmed people and shooting them or something like that, but I didn't see such a thing. After the capture of Nanjing, I returned to Tokyo to report, and after a week, I visited Nanjing again. It was shortly after the entrance ceremony, everything was in a mess, but, generally, Nanjing city looked secure and in order.

– It is said a massacre happened.

In the Nanjing Attack I saw women among the Chinese soldiers. I myself saw female Chinese soldiers killed. Some of the Chinese army stragglers and *ben-i-hei*, soldiers in civilian clothes, put up unexpected resistance, and I watched them being killed. I assume that their corpses were later designated as “massacre” victims.

In battlefields, I saw Japanese soldiers set fire to Chinese huts. I asked the soldiers why they did that--I thought those huts could be used for Japanese soldiers. The soldiers

replied that when they were on sentry duty, they were attacked by Chinese soldiers hiding behind the thatched huts, which were standing in front of them. This means that, in order to protect their own lives, they sacrificed their own lodgings. You have to kill the enemy before he kills you--that was more or less instinctive.

Under normal circumstances, no one could kill a person who begged for his own life. Some Japanese soldiers might have gone crazy for revenge because one of their comrades, who was alive yesterday, was killed today. Being desperate, I don't totally discount this, they might have slaughtered some Chinese soldiers. But to make a judgment on their battlefield motivation, here and now, is not such a simple matter. In the case of Nanjing, it was not an open battlefield but an urban battle, inside the Castle, and that made matters more complicated.

I'd like to add this: in the International Settlement in Shanghai, you could buy good cameras such as a Leica and if you have the Army's permission, you could buy those cameras cheap at what we would call today tax-free shops. After the end of the Shanghai Attack, a number of Japanese soldiers went to the International Settlement to obtain cameras. Those soldiers went to Nanjing with their cameras in hand. I myself entered Nanjing with my camera. What did these soldiers take photos of? An apricot flower? No, they took photos of unusual things, things which you could never see in normal circumstances, that is, horrible things like corpses. They asked merchants in the International Settlement to develop the photos. The merchants then gave the photos to foreigners in the International Settlement, which in turn, flowed abroad as news. Individual pictures of bodies formed an overall image--this happened often enough in Nanjing.

During the Wang Zhaoming (汪兆銘) administration, advisers of the government, including Mr. Fukuda Takeo [former Japanese prime minister], gathered together annually. All advisers, including myself, had many Chinese friends and acquaintances. After the War, my Chinese friends told me that, in China there was a word, *Han Jian* (漢奸), or traitor, and every person who stood against the Government was definitely regarded as *Han Jian*, for whatever reason. This means that the Chinese government would never allow people to say anything wrong about China. Therefore, if we insist that the Nanjing incident was exaggerated beyond a doubt, the Chinese would consider this treason and would never accept this.

The fact is fact. It is hopeless to oppose each comment, who said this, who said that. Just pursue the facts, then someday people in next generation will arrive at the right conclusion.

## **21) Interview with Captain Onishi Hajime (大西一), Staff Officer of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army**

Considering the Nanjing Attack, then the Nanjing Capture, the most knowledgeable people of these events in general as well as of details must be the people who were in the Shanghai Expeditionary Army and the Central China Area Army. The Shanghai Expeditionary Army, in particular, fought against the Chinese Nationalist Army as early as August, so they grasped the overall situation. In addition, after the capture of Nanjing, their Headquarters was located at Capital Hotel (首都飯店), Zhongshan North Road (中山北路), in Nanjing, at which they stayed until February. Compared to the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, which left Nanjing on December 18 in order to attack Hangzhou, and compared to the Central China Area Army, which returned to Shanghai on December 22 to administer the whole of Kangnam (江南), the Shanghai Expeditionary Army had the most experience and knowledge about Nanjing.

The members of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army Headquarters were the Commander, and under the Commander, the Chief of Staff Major General Iinuma Mamoru (飯沼守), Vice of Chief Staff Colonel Uemura Toshimichi (上村利通), and several staff officers. Among Headquarters staff, only Staff Officer Onishi is alive today.

Mr. Onishi was born in December 1902, graduating from the 36<sup>th</sup> Class of the Military Staff College. In 1935, one year after graduated from Military Staff College, Mr. Onishi was assigned to General Staff Headquarters' China Section, and in August 1937, he became a staff officer of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army. He was captain and 34 years old.

In February 1938, after the Shanghai Expeditionary Army was disbanded, he was assigned to the Central China Expeditionary Army, as the Chief of Special Duty Organization in Nanjing and stayed in Nanjing. One year later, in 1939, Mr. Onishi returned to Tokyo to staff the Military Affairs Bureau. At the end of the War, he was in Nagoya where the Headquarters of the 13<sup>th</sup> Area Army was deployed. By then he was a

colonel.

The Headquarters of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army had 15 staff officers in its three sections. The First Section was in charge of strategy, the Second was in charge of intelligence, and the Third was in charge of logistics.

The head of the Second Section was Lieutenant Colonel Cho Isamu (長勇), under him were Major Hongo Tadao (本郷陸夫), Major Mikuriya Masayuki (御厨正幸), and Captain Onishi Hajime. The duty of the Second Section was to collect information on the Chinese Army and to know of the deployment of the Chinese division. The Chinese Army was an aggregate of military cliques, therefore differences among of each division's strength was significant. Knowing the disposition of Chinese troops was vital.

Naturally, persons who were familiar with China were assigned to the Second Section. Captain Onishi worked for two years in the military geography group of the China branch in the Second Section of General Staff Headquarters. The leader of the military geography group was Lieutenant Colonel Cho Isamu. Captain Onishi and Lieutenant Colonel Cho had worked in China-related sections in the Army. In December 1936, Cho lived in Hankou as a resident military officer. Captain Onishi remained in Japan. The next year, 1937, Captain Onishi was appointed assistant military attaché to the Shanghai Embassy and prepared to go China in August--he was officially appointed and already given traveling expenses.

However, fighting occurred at the Marco Polo Bridge in July, which spread to Shanghai in August and in response, the Shanghai Expeditionary Army was organized. Under the circumstances, his appointment as assistant military attaché was dropped, and Mr. Onishi went to Shanghai under a different status, that is, as a staff officer in the Expeditionary Army.

Lieutenant Colonel Cho, who was resident military officer in Hankou, went to Shanghai as well. Major Hongo, who served as resident researcher in Changsha, also came to Shanghai, as their offices in Hankou and Changsha were abolished due to the all-out confrontation between Japan and China.

The Third Section was mainly in charge of supply and correspondence, plus prisoners. Under Lieutenant Colonel Chief Teragaki were 4 staff members, Kushida (榎田), Sakakibara (榑原), Kitano (北野), and Sasaki (佐々木). Among them, Accountant Major

Sakakibara (榑原) was mainly in charge of prisoners.

I started by asking Mr. Onishi about the Chief of the Second Section, Cho Isamu, on whom several rumors were pinned.

– According to the magazine *Kaiko* (a monthly magazine published by Kaiko-sha) published in March 1985, Major Sumi Yoshiharu (角良晴), who was a senior adjutant to General Matsui Iwane, stated that Lieutenant Colonel Cho ordered the massacre.

I served under Staff Officer Cho, but I have never seen nor heard him issuing such an order. In Sumi's statement, he said that Lieutenant Colonel Cho gave an order to the 6<sup>th</sup> Division, but the 6<sup>th</sup> Division was under the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, not under the Shanghai Expeditionary Army.

It is impossible for the Shanghai Expeditionary Army to issue an order to a division which was under the 10<sup>th</sup> Army. Also, Lieutenant Colonel Cho was in charge of intelligence, and it is not likely a person in charge of intelligence issued such an order. Someone said Lieutenant Colonel Cho served as a staff officer in the Central China Area Army as well, but I have not heard that he held such a concurrent post.

– Major Tanaka Ryukichi wrote a book, *A History to be Judged*, in which he said Lieutenant Colonel Cho had ordered the massacre.

I have a story about Mr. Tanaka Ryukichi: when he was working as the chief of the Troop Office, I was working at the Military Affairs Section of the Military Affairs Bureau. During the time we had to settle a matter of Yen Hsi-shan (閻錫山) a Chinese warlord, in Shanxi Province (山西省), and Mr. Tanaka, the chief of the office, who was good at handling such matters, went to meet Yen Hsi-shan.

But Chief Tanaka was unable to meet him after all--instead, he met a messenger of the warlord. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Japanese Army was to give rifles to Yen Hsi-shan's army. The problem was that the amount of the rifles they demanded was equal to the annual amount produced in Japan. Totally unacceptable--I repeated this to Chief Tanaka. As shown in the episode, I was unable to trust him since then. Also, considering his statement at the Tokyo Trial (IMTFE) after the War, I cannot

believe his story concerning Staff Officer Cho.

– According to the book, *Illusion of Nanjing Massacre*<sup>3</sup> written by Mr. Suzuki Akira, Major General Yamada Senji (山田梅二), of the 13<sup>th</sup> Division, was given the order of massacre by Staff Officer Cho.

As the time for the attack on Nanjing approached, headquarters was deployed in Tang Shuizhen (湯水鎮), a stone hut standing in a basin was used as the headquarters' office. At that time, I was in Jurong (句容), but as the Nanjing Attack approached, I was ordered back to Tang Shuizhen on the 11<sup>th</sup>. This happened during my stay in Tang Shuizhen: when I got up one morning I found a number of Chinese soldiers appeared in the surrounding mountains. Headquarters hurriedly gathered all of its available soldiers and started to fight. We, staff officers, also surrounded the room of the Prince in order to protect His Highness. Normally protecting His Highness was the duty of adjutants but that time all of us were prepared to die. Soon the Tsuruga Regiment Commander and his battalion rushed over by truck and we were saved.

Just after the 13<sup>th</sup> Division captured prisoners, we had just received Prince Asakanomiya as Commander of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, so even someone like Staff Officer Cho was very nervous to serve the Prince. Under these conditions, it was quite unlikely for Cho to issue such an order.

Staff Officer Cho belonged to the so-called right-wing, and in Shanghai he wore a *jinbaori*, or a classical Japanese surcoat, which was given to him by the Elder Toyama Mitsuru, who was assumed to be the founder of a Japanese right wing group. His right-wing followers followed Staff Officer Cho to Shanghai, and Staff Officer Cho once offered me to use his followers freely. He was that kind of man, so he could not, in front of the Prince, issue an order to kill the prisoners.

– What was his personality like?

I had worked with him twice, at the China Section of General Staff Headquarters and the Shanghai Expeditionary Army. He had a hot temper but understood China very well. Not an unreasonable man. All staff working in the Second Section knew China very well and

<sup>3</sup> Suzuki Akira, *Illusion of Nanjing Massacre*, Bungei Shinju Sha, Tokyo, 1973.

were sympathetic towards China.

Staff Officer Onishi entered Nanjing in the afternoon of December 13, 1937. Around the area of Capital Hotel (首都飯店), which stood on Zhongshan North Road, the battle still continued. It was 10 days later that the Headquarters of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army entered the Capital Hotel. Lieutenant General Prince Asakanomiya entered as well. They stayed until February 1938, when the Shanghai Expeditionary Army was disbanded after completed its duty. All orders during the occupation were issued from Headquarters.

– According to the diary of Lieutenant General Nakajima Kesago, the Commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division, it was said that “Because of our policy not to take prisoners,” and this was interpreted as evidence of a massacre.

It meant: confiscate their weapons and let them go. Chinese soldiers were gathered from all over the country, but since it was their own country, they should return home on foot.

– Was it not the Army's order?

The Army had never issued an order to massacre.

– Was it the Third Section that was in charge of prisoners?

Yes. Lieutenant Colonel Teragaki Tadao (寺垣忠雄) was the chief of the Section. He was a quiet man. And it was Major Sakakibara who was in charge. He was more quiet than his chief, the most quiet person in the Army. This Section never issued such an order. Staff Officer Sakakibara was alive until only recently, and he visited the Kaikosha to join in publishing the book “Nanjing War History Based on the Testimony”. At the meeting, he left us quickly due to his wife's illness, but ironically, he died before his wife.

– There are many rumors about Nakajima, the Commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division. What was he like?

Commander Nakajima was a lieutenant general, and I was just a captain then. I had no opportunity to talk to him directly. So, personally, I don't know.

– But the 16<sup>th</sup> Division was under the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, so it is likely you had some contact with the Commander?

Personally, I remember being uneasy about seeing him wearing a ring. The Commander studied in France, that's why he adapted such a custom, but I felt uneasy seeing his ring in the battlefield.

– It is said that General Matsui criticized Commander Nakajima's command. Is this true?

I heard the Commander said that it was no problem to burn Chinese homes. This was not said in front of General Matsui, of course. But on hearing that remark, General Matsui instructed me to speak to Commander Nakajima, to warn him not to do such a thing. So it was true that General Matsui had criticized Commander Nakajima.

So I went to the 16<sup>th</sup> Division, but I was just a captain, and it was not possible for me to give a direct warning to the commander. Fortunately, I found a staff officer in the 16<sup>th</sup> Division with whom I made an acquaintance during the Shanghai landing, and passed him the General's message.

– I assume that usually a commander would not give warning to other commander. Didn't General Matsui say something to the Commander Nakajima face-to-face?

It would be an exceptionally important occasion for the General to say something to a division commander directly.

– Lieutenant General Nakajima was eventually promoted to Commander of the Army and a representative of the Japanese Imperial Army.

One of my classmates, who served under Regiment Commander Nakajima, tried to apply to take the Military Staff College examination but couldn't get his permission. Without the Commander's permission, he couldn't apply to take the examination. My classmate was very upset. It seemed the Commander Nakajima very clear liked and disliked certain people. Regarding Commander Nakajima, I heard only negative stories.

– After the occupation of Nanjing, the 16<sup>th</sup> Division took charge of garrisoning Nanjing.

After the capture of Nanjing, the 10<sup>th</sup> Army left, and the Shanghai Expeditionary Army remained in Nanjing. Among the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, the 13<sup>th</sup> Division and the 16<sup>th</sup> Division joined the Nanjing Attack, and the 13<sup>th</sup> Division had already crossed Yangtze River after the capture.

The matter of who will garrison Nanjing was discussed within the Shanghai Expeditionary Army. The 13<sup>th</sup> Division was already gone, so the choice was either the 9<sup>th</sup> Division or the 16<sup>th</sup> Division. There were many people who didn't like Mr. Nakajima and tried to avoid him, so I proposed to leave garrison duty to the 9<sup>th</sup> Division and it was decided so. Therefore, I was ordered to give the instruction and went to the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, which was situated at the Guanghai Gate. However, the Chief of Staff of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, Colonel Nakagawa Hiroshi (中川広), said that they had come to Nanjing before clearing their own battle in Shanghai, that they wanted to go back to Shanghai and to clear the battlefield, so he declined Nanjing garrison duty. As a result, the 16<sup>th</sup> Division took the charge of Nanjing garrison duty.

– Were you performing liaison duties between divisions?

I was performing the duty of staff officer not only within the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, but also within the Third Fleet, where I had an office in the Izumo Fleet, too. So I did liaison work with the Navy as well. I acted as liaison among the staff of the Expeditionary Army so my duty was to inform on the acts and the intention of each Division to Headquarters.

–Major General Sasaki Toichi (佐々木到一), Brigade Commander, who commanded the 16<sup>th</sup> Division, was appointed to Garrison Commander of Nanjing Castle.

Major General Sasaki was a well-known expert of China, but his behavior was not good when he was drinking.

– Colonel Muto Akira (武藤章), the Vice Chief Staff of the Central China Area Army, wrote in his memoir, *From Philippines to Sugamo [prison]*<sup>4</sup>:

<sup>4</sup> Muto Akira, *From Philippines to Sugamo [prison]*, Jitugyo no Nihon Sha, Tokyo, 1952.

“During the operations, General Matsui tried to respect Chinese standing to the extent that it was far from realistic. The General’s soft attitude frustrated some of the officers. A commander and divisional general, who considered strategy a priority, gave protest to the General. At Nanking, being lodged in a neighboring room, I could hear them quarreling furiously.”

– Were you there in the middle of the argument?

I don’t know of such a thing at all. Chief of Military Affairs Muto looked after me a lot while I was working in the Bureau of Military Affairs for 6 years. I have never heard of this story from him. But Mr. Muto became the Vice Chief of Staff of the Area Army when the Area Army was established, and he worked together with Mr. Matsui, so I think this was true.

– I assume that the certain Commander was Lieutenant General Yanagawa Heisuke, and the certain Division Commander was Lieutenant General Nakajima.

The Division Commander must be Lieutenant General Nakajima, and the Army commander was no one else but Lieutenant General Yanagawa. But I doubt there was any furious argument with General Matsui. They had some differences of opinions but I can’t imagine a serious argument between them.

– What was the situation in Nanjing after December 13?

On the 13<sup>th</sup>, the battle was still ongoing and we could not move ahead from the area around the Capital Hotel. When I went to Yi Jiang Gate (挹江門) it was full of bodies on both sides. On either the 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>, I went to Xiaguan, where I found a lot of bodies in Yangtze River. Not on the riverbank but in the River. This was a result of the sweeping nature of the battle. The bodies were left there until the end of 1937.

– How long were the bodies at Yi Jiang Gate left there?

They were left there at least until the 18<sup>th</sup>, the day of the memorial service for casualties from both sides. After that, maybe there were bodies that remained until the 20<sup>th</sup> or so.

Later a memorial service for Chinese victims was held by the Special Duty Organization inside the Yi Jiang Gate. At that time, the area around Yi Jiang Gate was cleared. I hosted the service and Chinese people related to the City Office Government, Japanese authorities and ordinary Chinese attended the memorial service, 400 to 500 people in total.

– Within the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, did you hear any stories of a massacre?

Never. After we entered Nanjing, the Second Section patrolled the inside of the Castle to control military discipline and public decency. I myself patrolled by car.

– Did you see anything?

I saw one rape.

– In the daytime?

Yes. We caught the soldier in the act. He was the soldier of the 16<sup>th</sup> Division, so I delivered him to the Division. Several cases of rape occurred, other than the one that I witnessed. At first, we opposed setting up a *ian-jo*, or brothel, but after seeing these incidents, we decided to establish a facility. The Third Section was in charge of making the *ian-jo*.

– Did you see anything else, such violence or ransacking?

No. After that, I was in Nanjing for a year as the Head of the Special Duty Organization. During the period, I visited many areas, in addition to Nanjing, including Wuhu (蕪湖), Taiping (太平), Jiangning (江寧), Jurong (句容), Zhenjiang (鎮江), Jintan (金壇), Danyang (丹陽), Yangzhou (揚州), Shushen (滁縣), twice for each area, but neither saw nor heard of a massacre.

During the period that the Japanese Army headed for Nanjing until its fall, the Army's Central Authorities dispatched several staff members to the battlefield, including Chief of Strategic and Tactical Operations Section Kawabe (河辺), and the Vice Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Tada Shun (多田駿), and after the capture, Chief of Personnel Affairs

Major General Anami Korechika (阿南惟幾) and Chief of the Second Section of General Staff Headquarters Major General Honma Masaharu (本間雅清).

After the War, dispatches of these inspections, sent by the Army's Central Authorities, raised the possibility that the Central Authorities had known about the Nanjing-incident.

– On one of those days, Staff Officer Hongo visited the US Embassy to explain the actual situation.

In General Staff Headquarters' Second Section, Staff Officer Hongo was most experienced, so, naturally, negotiations with foreign countries were handled by Major Hongo. After we arrived in Nanjing, I remember him visiting the US Embassy, though I don't know the details of his business. Since September, when we were in Shanghai, the Central Authorities repeatedly instructed us that we must respect American and British interests. During the battle conducted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division at Suzhou River, we saw machine guns at American and British factories, on left side of the river, pointed at us. However, due to the warnings about American and British interests, we could do nothing; it was very frustrating.

– Did you know that Lieutenant Colonel Nishi Yoshiaki (西義章) went to Nanjing?

I don't remember. When I moved back to the Bureau of Military Affairs, Mr. Nishi was in the Intelligence Section of General Staff Headquarters. I don't know why he went to Nanjing, if he went at all.

– Second Section Chief Honma went to Nanjing at the beginning of February.

I didn't know that.

– According to records then, he visited Nanjing in order to protect US interests, but some people said he visited because of a massacre.

If he did go, I believe that he went to Nanking in regard to American interests.

– Lieutenant Colonel Hirota was dispatched to the Shanghai Expeditionary Army.

Yes, I remember that. But he was very senior to me, and I don't remember any casual conversation, even if we did manage to meet.

– Have you met Eastern Area Defense Staff Officer Koga Takeshi (古閑健)?

No, I didn't know him then.

In February 1938, the Shanghai Expeditionary Army and the 10<sup>th</sup> Army were disbanded, leaving the Central China Area Army in place, and personnel were reassigned to their new responsibilities, because operations were completed by capturing Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hangzhou. The name of the new army was the Central China Expeditionary Army. Staff Officer Onishi remained in Nanjing as the Chief of Special Duty Organization of the Central China Expeditionary Army.

In the Nanjing Experience Report, which was published in 1938, names such as “Major O”, or “young chief of Special Duty Organization”, appear frequently, which refer to Mr. Onishi.

Major Sakata Shigeki (佐方繁木) was appointed as the first Chief of Special Duty Organization in Nanjing, on December 14, 1937, immediately after the capture of Nanjing. In February of the following year, Colonel Usuda Kanzo (臼田寛三) was appointed. However, only 10 days later, Major Usuda was replaced by Captain Onishi.

Mr. Onishi worked in the Special Duty Organization with the rank of captain, so he was called the Chief Assistant Officer of the Special Duty Organization, because other chiefs in Shanghai and Hangzhou usually held a higher rank, such as colonel or lieutenant colonel. One month later, in March, Mr. Onishi was promoted to major, and thereafter was called the Chief of Nanjing Special Duty Organization for the first time.

Mr. Onishi was in charge of Nanjing and 9 other prefectures around Nanjing. He assigned 5 to 10 Special Duty staff to each prefecture and directed all of them. Staff members were civilians employed and dispatched by the Ministry of the Army. Mr. Onishi stayed mostly in Nanjing and served as negotiator with the Chinese.

During Mr. Onishi's service as the Chief of the Special Duty Organization, a Chinese civilian complained to him that Japanese soldiers were destroying their homes. He went

out with the Chinese and found that his home and neighboring homes, which were near Nanjing Station, were being demolished. He questioned the Japanese soldiers who were demolishing the homes and the soldiers replied that Colonel Tanida Isamu's (谷田勇) ordered the demolition. Mr. Onishi ordered the soldiers to stop and went to see Colonel Tanida. It so happened that Colonel Tanida was Mr. Onishi's instructor at a military engineers' class when Mr. Onishi a student at the Military Staff College. Colonel Tanida was now staff officer in charge of Logistics of the Central China Expeditionary Army. Mr. Onishi asked the Colonel Tanida why the houses were being demolished and the Colonel said that they were continuously receiving munitions from Shanghai, and the munitions must be stored around the Nanjing Station, so they had to demolish those homes. So, the reason was based on war necessity. As a solution, Mr. Onishi built 20 barracks outside of the Castle and let the Chinese live there.

As you can see, the Chief of Nanjing Special Duty Organization had to handle these kinds of matters, as representative of Japan in China. He was in the best position to know of the real situation of the people of Nanjing.

– So, since February your duty for a year in Nanjing was Chief of Nanjing Special Duty Organization?

Yes. All staff in China-related sections of General Staff Headquarters were expected to go to China, in one way or another. Under the circumstances, I remained in China as the Chief of Nanjing Special Duty Organization.

– Were the bodies of Japanese soldiers who were killed in the Nanjing Attack cremated by the Japanese?

Yes, all of them were cremated by the Japanese. In the Shanghai battle, some of them were left there, but after the Nanjing battle, there were no Japanese corpses remaining.

– Burial of the bodies of Chinese soldiers was performed under instruction of the Japanese army?

The bodies of Chinese soldiers were buried by the Chinese. They didn't particularly inform us of when they were buried. The Japanese army, however, did ask the Red

Swastika Society to bury bodies which were abandoned here and there.

– Are you familiar with the Red Swastika Society?

Yes, they worked very well, wearing their red mark.

– According to records, the Self-Government Committee was engaged in the burials as well.

The Self-Government Committee also did some but didn't do many burials. The burials were mainly done by the Red Swastika Society. And you mentioned a group--what was name?--who also did burials.

– Chongshantang (崇善堂) ?

Yes. But, at the time, I never heard of such a group. I didn't know them at all, but after the War, in the Tokyo Trial (IMTFE), they claimed to have done a lot of work. At the time, I never knew about them at all.

– When the year 1938 began, were the suburbs of Nanjing safe?

They were almost completely safe.

– The Japanese started to come to Nanjing to do business.

The matters of the Japanese people were handled by the Consulate General. The duty of the Special Duty Organization was to assist with Chinese administration. The Consulate General was operated by Mr. Fukuda Atsuyasu (福田篤奏), alone first, then Mr. Kasuya Takao (粕谷孝夫), the Consular Assistant, arrived. Our Special Duty Organization was on the second floor of the Bank of Communications, and before the Consulate General was opened, they used its first floor, which was empty then, as temporary office for the Consulate General.

– Did you hear of the Nanjing-incident after the War?

Yes. I heard that General Matsui was charged and prosecuted for it and I offered to be a witness for him, since I was in Nanjing as the Chief of the Special Duty Organization after General Matsui returned, and was very well aware of matters within Nanjing. However, at the time, I was also accused of being a war criminal, relating to the 13<sup>th</sup> Area Army, and so I was told that a “war criminal” would not be suitable as a witness, so I was unable to testify.

– Do you think you are the most knowledgeable person about Nanjing during the period from 1937 to 1938?

I think so. A decade ago, the *Asahi Shimbun* published the series, ‘Journey in China’<sup>5</sup>. Its depiction of the Japanese army during those times was far from the truth. I once met reporter Honda Katsuichi and denounced his claims.

The Nanjing-incident was raised in the Tokyo Trial (IMTFE), but after that it was almost forgotten. Then, as the series of ‘Journey in China’ was published, the Japanese started to say there was a “massacre”. I know the truth--I, who knows the truth, must write the truth, so I thought and tried to write the truth. However, people around me told me that it was too late, that people would simply look at this as an excuse and nobody would believe me anymore, so I was discouraged.

Since the series ‘Journey in China’ was published by the *Asahi Shimbun*, Mr. Onishi lost his trust in the mass media and, as a matter of fact, he at first refused my request for an interview. That's why his name is not mentioned in the mass media, despite the fact that he is the most qualified person to inform about the Nanjing-incident.

After I interviewed Mr. Onishi, I interviewed several people who were in Nanjing at the time. Some of them, including Mr. Okada Takashi (岡田尚) who served under General Matsui, Mr. Terasaki Ryuji (寺崎隆台), Captain of Gunboat *Seta*, and Mr. Yoshikawa Takeshi (吉川猛), Staff Officer of the Central China Area Army, assured me that Mr. Onishi was the most knowledgeable person about Nanjing, and his statements are totally reliable.

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<sup>5</sup> The series, ‘Journey in China’, was published in the *Asahi Shinbun* from August to December, 1971. Then, in 1972, the book *Journey in China*, was published by the Asahi Shinbun Sha.

I want to again emphasize the importance of Mr. Onishi's statements.