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General Masaki Jinzaburō and the Imperial Way Faction (Kōdōha) in the Japanese Army 1932-1936 – Part Two¹

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3.1. Political incidents and events

The first question that needs to be discussed in this chapter is the problem concerning Masaki's removal from the post of General Inspector of Military Education. The plan to fire Masaki from his post was the main aspect in personnel changes suggested by Minister Hayashi in the second half of 1935. His suggestions stimulated one of the most important political events in the above-mentioned period. They also caused the intensification of conflict between the Kōdōha and Tōseiha. Soon, the conflict came to its climax and after that the Imperial Way Faction finally lost its importance and position. Most of its members were removed from the main posts in the Army.

The direct consequences of Masaki's removal were two important events, specifically, the Aizawa Incident (*Aizawa jiken*) and the February 26 Incident (*Niniroku jiken*). These two incidents were closely connected with Masaki himself as well as with the factional struggle; therefore, they ought to be presented in this chapter.

3.1.1. The problem concerning Masaki's removal from the post of General Inspector

The proceedings relating to the "Emperor-as-an-Organ" theory as well as the November Incident and their direct consequences caused a strong attack on Gen. Masaki undertaken by his opponents, opponents who accused him of nurturing the mutinous atmosphere among the "Young Officers". The antagonists, that is to say mainly the members of the Tōseiha and the Seigunha as well as the Emperor's advisers and some politicians, more and more frequently demanded Masaki's dismissal from his post.

Notes about these facts already appeared in the General's diary in March 1935 (Mn, II, 39, 41) but he did not really believe in the possibility of the accomplishment

of this plan. The Tōseiha officers, however, felt strong enough to throw Masaki out from the Army Central Headquarters and at the same time to remove the rest of Kōdōha's representatives from the other important posts. A good opportunity to carry out this plan was the annual August changes of the Army staff. The Tōseiha members were also going to get rid of Hata Shinji (the Commander of 2nd Division) and Yanagawa Heisuke (the Commander of 1st Division), putting them on a reserve list and to remove Suzuki Yorimichi from the post of Chief of Strategy Section (GSO). Having completed all these changes the Tōseiha would gain exclusivity in deciding all the Army matters, as most of the important posts would be in the hands of its followers.

In the General's diary the notes on this matter and his intention to resign appear more often again in July 1935 because many consultations concerning this problem took place at that time. In order to talk about this for the first time Masaki met Hayashi on 10 July 1935, when the Army Minister showed him the project of changes prepared by the Vice-Minister, Hashimoto Toranosuke. The proposals given by Hayashi read as follows:

“First of all, among those who, according to the Minister's project, are to undergo the reshuffle are: Hishikari, Matsui, Wakayama – reduction; I – remaining only as the Military Councilor; Watanabe – my successor; Hata – reduction; Koiso – the Chief of Aviation Head Office.” (Mn, II, 151)

Masaki, however, did not agree with Hayashi's suggestions, responding:

“As concerns true relations between the sovereign and the subordinate I state positively that I will fight to the death.” (Ibidem)

On the same day he started his own campaign against his opponents from the Tōseiha trying to compromise them. For this reason he met his followers, Araki, Katō, and Hiranuma, ordering them to bring some evidence and documents, but he did not state precisely (in his diary) what he had in mind.

Minister Hayashi's suggestions were supported by the Chief of GSO, Prince Kan'in who, for the last few years had not liked Masaki, which was one of the reasons why Masaki had little chance to win. The General, however, tried to explain to the Prince that his antagonists were to be blamed for the situation within the Army.

On 11 July he said to the Prince:

“The March and October Incidents and also the movement for taking over the political power had influenced the present situation in the Army. The examples of the rivalry among the supporters, of the right relations between the sovereign and subordinates and their opponents, the rivalries appearing in an ideological dispute are:

- the fact that some people who had been, for a period of time, debarred from the central posts were stimulated by the incidents and the movements;
- the fact that such a situation was mainly the effect of Minami's and Nagata's activities and also the fact that the Military Academy Incident was turned into an intrigue, while its real causes were kept secret. It might be feared that if we in this situation take even one false step everything will turn upside down. It is most regretful for me as a soldier that I will be buried alive as a leader of the conspiracy. But I will not rest until I make clear which is white or which is black." (Mn, II, 153)

Once again Masaki stressed that Nagata and Minami were the centre of the evil and intrigues within the Army. In the General's opinion they organized the incidents trying to regain power – consequently blaming their antagonists, that is, Masaki's group. Whereas he himself, the honest soldier of His Majesty, the Emperor, "the white side" of the Army tried to put the situation right in accordance to "the true relations between the sovereign and subordinates" (*taigi meibun*).

On 12 July, at 1 p.m. the Big Three Conference (Sanchōkan Kaigi)¹ started. It was expected that during this conference the decision to remove Masaki would be taken.

Demanding Masaki's dismissal, Hayashi said that according to the general Army opinion Masaki was the leading spirit of factionalism (*tōbatsu shunō*) (Mn, II, 155). Masaki, however, did not agree with the accusation. He did not even want to discuss things thoroughly saying that he had presented his opinion in writing. He called it "a separate paper" (*besshi*). A few days later, on 15 July, during the resumed debate he quoted this document. Unfortunately, this text is not enclosed in the diary.² Once more, just as he had during the conversation with Prince Kan'in, in this document Masaki blamed, first of all, Nagata for planning the March Incident in 1931.³

On 15 July, during the resumed debate, Masaki refused to resign his post. Both Hayashi and Kan'in were of the opinion that his resignation was necessary for the Army's good. But Masaki said:

"As the General Inspector of Military Education, the Inspector for His Majesty, I can't agree with it." (Mn, II, 160)

Then, he wrote in his diary:

"The conference comes to an end and in this matter the Minister decides himself to report it to the Throne." (Ibidem)

¹ For more details see: Takamiya 1951: 214-221.

² The text is included in Gs, XXIII: 438-441; Cf.: Nini, I: 3-6.

³ Masaki maintained that Nagata was the author of *The Project of the March Coup d'Etat*; Cf.: Takahashi 1969: 123-124.

Under the circumstances Hayashi decided to present the decision himself to the Emperor. Masaki's successor was to be Watanabe Jōtarō (8) and Masaki was to be left with only the post of Military Councilor. However, this was not the end of the matter. During the debate, Masaki defending himself recollected an old principle dated from the second year of the Taishō era (1913). It was not written but was accepted by the Emperor at that time. It referred to decisions relating to personnel changes of the three highest posts in the Army.⁴

According to Masaki such changes could only be made by the Big Three, that is to say, after obtaining the consent of the Minister, the Chief of GSO and the General Inspector. Although, by right, the final decision belonged to the Minister, Masaki found it impossible to be dismissed without his own approval, as he himself was the Inspector of His Majesty, the Emperor, confirmed by the Emperor. He considered that in a matter like this the Generals could not decide themselves. Defending himself he said that such a decision taken without his approval would be "violating the rights of the Supreme Command" (*tōsuiken no kanpan*).

Finally however, on 16 July, with dignity, he accepted the order to resign, handed to him by Hashimoto.⁵

The whole affair seemed to be closed but a few days later "the Young Officers" once again undertook an attack on the Tōseiha. They began printing texts "mysterious documents" (*kaibunsho*) in which they accused Nagata for his interference in the rights of the Supreme Command (*tōsuiken*), for Masaki's dismissal, etc. They declared to be against the new General Inspector, Watanabe, saying that he supported Minobe's theory.

In fact, Gen. Watanabe defended Minobe four months after Masaki's instructions were published, on 4 October 1935, during a meeting at the 3rd Division. He said then, that Minobe's theory was right because regarding the Emperor as an organ it was in accordance with *The Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors* (1882) in which Emperor Meiji said:

"We rely upon you as Our limbs and you look up to Us as your head."⁶

This speech infuriated many of "the Young Officers". Consequently Watanabe, together with Nagata, came to be regarded as traitors within the Army.

The main authors of these *kaibunsho* were, like before, Muranaka and Isobe as well as Nishida Mitsugi.⁷ Masaki's dismissal and these texts that made "the Young Officers" very furious were the main reasons one of them, Aizawa Saburō, committed murder.

⁴ Ibidem: 207-214

⁵ Mn, II, 160-161; Cf.: Arisue 1975: 369-373.

⁶ Shillony 1973: 51.

⁷ See: *Kyōiku sōkan kōtetsu jijō yōten*, Gs IV: 678-680.

Before describing this incident, in the end of this section, the authoress would like to present the public reaction to Masaki's dismissal. Hayashi's decision was praised in almost all newspapers. The journalists considered it to be "a masterpiece" as well as "a pressing on carrying out a purge in the Army" or "the first step of a return towards the state of normality within the Army".⁸ Masaki was publicly condemned as guilty of demoralization and the cause of the bad atmosphere within the Army.

On 20 July, the Army Minister announced the personnel changes to the most significant posts that were confirmed by the Emperor.⁹ According to the previous suggestions, Hata Shinji and Hishikari Taka from the Kōdōha were placed on the waiting list, while Ishiwara Kanji replaced Suzuki Yorimichi as the head of the Strategy Section. By the end of 1935 the Tōseiha became the strongest faction within the Army and the Kōdōha lost its influential position. Only a few members of the latter were not definitively expelled from the Army Central Headquarters. (Major-General Yamashita Tomoyuki was the head of Research Bureau; Gen. Yanagawa Heisuke, until 2 December 1935, was the Commander of 1st Division, which made the Kōdōha still powerful in the Tokyo area). But comparing the position of Kōdōha during the period 1932-1934 and during late 1935 up to March 1936 it became clear that its representatives lost power and could no longer independently decide Army politics. It was one of the main reasons for the important incidents soon to come, i.e., the Aizawa Incident and the February Incident.

3.1.2. The Aizawa Incident

The Aizawa Incident, known also as "the Incident during which Nagata, Chief of Military Affairs Bureau was stabbed to death" (*Nagata gunmu kyokuchō saisatsu jiken*)¹⁰ was the direct result of Masaki's dismissal and of the publication of such papers like "mysterious documents". Aizawa Saburō was a member of "the Young Officers' Movement" and a friend of Nishida Mitsugi. He had admired General Masaki very much and therefore he could not bear Masaki's removal from his post.

The first time he came to visit Major-General Nagata Tetsuzan on 19 July 1935 he tried to force him to resign the office because of his responsibility for Masaki's dismissal. Nagata refused and Aizawa went back to Fukuyama, to his 41st Infantry Regiment. But after he had read some *kaibunsho* published by Muranaka he decided to kill "the evil man" from the Tōseiha. On 11 August, Aizawa came to Tokyo on

⁸ See: *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 18, 22, 23 July, 15 August 1935, 1.

⁹ *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun*, 22 July 1935, 1.

¹⁰ For more details see: Gs, IV: 158-164; *Hiroku...* 1972: 246-275; Takamiya 1951: 231-240.

his way to a new assignment. (He was transferred to Taiwan during the personnel changes.) The morning after spending the night at Nishida's house he went to the Army Ministry. He seemed to be completely calm and unruffled.

“At first he bade farewell to his friend Yamaoka Jūkō [not Jūkō but Shigaetsu; EPR], head of the Third [Equipment] Bureau. While they were talking Aizawa asked him to check whether Nagata was in his office. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, Aizawa asked his friend to excuse him for a moment and headed straight for Nagata's office. The general was behind his desk, discussing ways of strengthening military discipline with Colonel Niimi Hideo, Chief of the Tokyo Military Police. Suddenly the door opened and Aizawa appeared, wielding his officer sword in his hand. The two men jumped to their feet. Aizawa dashed toward Nagata and struck him with the sword. Nagata was wounded. Niimi tried to engage Aizawa, while Nagata made a desperate attempt to reach the door. But Aizawa pursued his victim and slashed him from the back. Nagata fell dead. Aizawa left the room and returned to Yamaoka's office. [...] Sirens started howling and military policemen rushed into the building, but Aizawa seemed not to care. As he later told the court-martial, he intended to pick up his hat from Nagata's room and proceed to Taiwan. Before he could do that he was arrested.”¹¹

The assassination of Nagata shook the military circles and public. It was the first time an officer on duty had murdered his superior.

This incident was, however, a fortunate development for the Kōdōha and “the Young Officers”. First of all, Minister Hayashi, responsible for Army discipline, had to resign. His successor became, on 5 September 1935, General Kawashima Yoshiyuki, a neutral figure, but leaning more toward the Kōdōha than toward the Tōseiha. Although, according to Prof. Itō Takashi,¹² Masaki's clique expected him to do more for them, Kawashima contributed also to strengthening the Kōdōha position within the Army. He appointed Kashii Kōhei the Commander of the Tokyo Garrison. Murakami Keisaku (22) took the post of the Chief of Military Affairs Section. General Yanagawa was finally transferred from the 1st Division to Taiwan, but General Horii Takeo, another of Kōdōha's men became his successor.

Besides that, Kawashima also allowed Aizawa to have a public court-martial at the headquarters of the 1st Division, in Tokyo. The trial was pending from 18 January 1936 for many weeks. The presiding judge was Major-Gen. Satō Seisaburō, from the 1st Brigade, while the defenders were Dr. Uzawa Sōmei, the President of Meiji University and Mitsui Sakichi, both of them known Kōdōha followers.

The Imperial Way Faction tried to turn this trial into a stage for attacks on the Army leadership and on the regime. Mitsui and Uzawa, according to Crowley,

¹¹ Shillony 1973: 52-53.

¹² Itō 1984: 168.

“advanced familiar themes: the Emperor was surrounded by men, who were frustrating a “national restoration”, the Minobe theory enabled the plutocrats and the Okada Cabinet to misuse Imperial prerogatives, and a “military clique”, closely allied with bureaucrats and financial magnates, had driven Gen. Masaki from his post as Inspector General.”¹³

During the trial Aizawa said:

“I intended respectfully to support the great *Shōwa ishin*, undertaken by destroying the centre of high treason. I thought that His Excellency, Nagata, the Chief of Bureau was an evil member of the General Headquarters.”¹⁴

Nagata’s assassination itself, while not only a murder, but also a conspicuous violation of military discipline, ceased to be an important problem. Instead, Aizawa was made a simple soldier who sought only to reform the Army and the Nation, according to the *kokutai* ideals. His deed became a pattern for “the Young Officers” showing them, how to destroy “the evil” in the Army and the country. They understood that the time had come at last to carry out “the Shōwa Restoration”. They had been waiting for this moment for a long time but the Generals and others from the Kōdōha maintained that the right time had not yet come. This time, however, the latter’s behavior during the Aizawa trial, namely defending the murderer, who had, in their opinion, acted in the name of purifying the Army of the evil and the restoration of the *kokutai* ideals, convinced “the Young Officers” that it is necessary to launch the action. The nationalistic moods within the military circles grew even stronger.

The Kōdōha in spite of loosing the most important position in the Army did not stop fighting to regain it and to carry out their postulates, as its members still had many followers in the Army offices, mainly in the Army Ministry and also at the Imperial Court (e.g. Honjō Shigeru, the Chief Aide-de Camp). Besides, “the Young Officers” still backed them up. Due to those connections, Masaki’s followers could still take an active part in making decisions concerning the Army affairs, at least indirectly. In spite of the Tōseiha officers’ attempts, the Kōdōha’s members were not completely cut off from power, similarly to the situation existing in 1932-1934 when those from “the main stream”, namely the *Ugakibatsu*, had not been cut off.

The Kōdōha, in spite of unfavorable press and hostile attitudes of many groups in the Army, government and at the Court, did not lose the support of its followers. The situation in late 1935 speaks to this most distinctly. *Kokutai meichō undō*

¹³ Crowley 1964: 323.

¹⁴ Eguchi 1982: 274.

was still alive and its participants attacked Masaki's successor, General Watanabe for the views consistent with Minobe's theory. Dismissal of Masaki from the post also became a pretext used to accuse the Tōseiha members of "violating rights of the Supreme Command". Muranaka and Isobe used this subject to publish further *kaibunsho* in which they called for punishing those, who were guilty of "violating rights of the Supreme Command" and destroying the *kokutai* ideals. Another link in the chain of events was the Aizawa Incident, carried out under the influence of "mysterious documents" and the Masaki affair. This incident together with the trial performed according to the Kōdōha plan became the direct cause of launching decisive action by *seinen shōkō*.

It was impossible to stop this chain of events. The chauvinistic atmosphere among "the Young Officers" and their desire to free the Emperor from his bad advisers were too strong, and the Generals' attitude during the trial confirmed only the necessity to take action. Besides, the GSO decision to send the 1st Division, on February or March, to Manchuria was one more pretext. The direct cause of the GSO decision, made known by headquarters, was, that since the time of the Russo-Japanese War the soldiers of the Division stayed only in Tokyo and they never participated in direct fighting. It may seem, however, that the real, direct cause was a fear within the GSO, which was mainly represented by the Tōseiha, of the possibility of some activities undertaken by "the Young Officers" under the slogans of *Shōwa ishin*. However, before the soldiers were sent to Manchuria, the last, most significant incident of the 1930's took place.

3.1.3. The February Incident

This incident is a striking and still inexhaustible topic for historians as well as journalists and writers. Particularly for the last few years,¹⁵ as the publication of documents concerning the incident has become possible and when eyewitnesses and other people connected with "the Young Officers" have started to provide information concerning the subject, many reports and analyses have been published.¹⁶ Also, every February the Japanese press and television refer to the 1936 revolt and remind everyone of its cause, always adding some new, frequently not proven or supported by the facts, pieces of information on the subject of the incident.

Every year, in front of the Kannon (Goddess of Mercy; Buddhism) monument in the Shibuya Ward in Tokyo, which is devoted to the rebels of the *niniroku jiken*,

¹⁵ The text was written in the second half of the 1980s.

¹⁶ The basic materials relating to the incident are included in the following sources: *Niniroku jiken. Kenkyū shiryō*, 1976; *Nimi* 1971; Kashii 1980; Kido 1974; Honjō 1967; Cf.: writings left behind by executed "Young Officers", compiled by Kōno Tsukasa, Kōno (ed.) 1983 and many others. In English the most detailed work on that subject is Shillony 1973.

a small celebration in honor of the slain “Young Officers” is carried out. It is always led by Kōno Tsukasa, the brother of Hisashi, one of its members. The authoress had the chance to see such a celebration in 1985. This all proves the significance and the popularity of the February Incident, a great uprising, which is sometimes compared with the Meiji Restoration.

At 5 a.m. on the snowy morning of 26 February about 1400 soldiers from the 1st and 3rd Divisions and 1st Imperial Guard Division led by more than 20 “Young Officers” (see: Appendix 2) started the plot aimed at carrying out the *Shōwa ishin* goals. To begin they attacked residences of some, in their minds, of the “evil men around the Throne”, that is to say, of those from the government as well as some representatives of military circles.

First Lieutenant Kurihara Yasuhide (Saga, 41) and 300 soldiers from the 1st Infantry Regiment surrounded the official residence of Prime Minister Okada Keisuke, near the Diet Building. However, they failed to achieve their purpose because Okada escaped. By mistake, they killed his brother-in-law, Colonel Matsuo Denzō. They believed then, that the man shot down was the Prime Minister himself¹⁷.

But the rebels did succeed in some other cases.

120 soldiers from the 3rd Imperial Guard Regiment led by First Lieutenant Nakahashi Motoaki (Saga, 41) attacked the private residence of the Finance Minister, Takahashi Korekiyo in Akasaka. Nakahashi himself fired at the old man, who was asleep. The Minister died instantly.

At 5:05 a.m. another group of 150 soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Regiment that were under First Lieutenant Sakai Naoshi's (Mie, 44) command reached the private residence of Viscount Saitō Makoto, the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, in Yotsuya. Three officers shot him almost simultaneously.

About 6:30 a.m. the officers from the same regiment shot down the General Inspector of Military Education, Watanabe Jōtarō.

These were the only three victims out of the intended list of six that *seinen shōkō* managed to kill. As it has been mentioned previously, Prime Minister Okada was alive. The fifth “evil man” Makino Nobuaki, the former Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal also escaped from death at the hands of Captain Kōno Higashi (Nagasaki, 40), who arrived at 5.45 a.m. at the Itōya inn in Yūgawara, where Makino was staying.

Although the last victim, the Grand Chamberlain, Suzuki Kantarō had been severely wounded by the soldiers under the command of Captain Andō Teruzō (Gifu, 38), he recovered and a few years later became the last Prime Minister during the Asia Pacific War.

¹⁷ The first official announcement given by the Army Ministry said that Okada was murdered. The news was published by the press in the evening edition on 27 February.

The mutineers knew, having learnt from previous failure, that only through the support of the Emperor a national reform would succeed. Therefore they planned to seize the Imperial Palace in order to replace some “bad” advisers with “good” ones and thus, to get the Emperor’s support. As it seemed unthinkable to storm the palace from the outside, the rebels decided to capture it from within. Fortunately, from the rebels’ point of view, First Lieutenant Nakahashi Motoaki of the 3rd Imperial Guard Regiment and his unit were scheduled to begin their duty as the Palace Guard on 26 February.¹⁸ Nakahashi was to enter the palace and open it to the rebels.

After completing the attack on the Finance Minister’s residence, Nakahashi took his men and succeeded in entering the palace grounds.¹⁹ But as the Commander of the Imperial Guard had learnt about Nakahashi’s connections with the rebels he ordered him to leave the palace. The plan to seize the palace failed and the rebels’ chances to get hold of the Emperor were lost. Fortunately for *seinen shōkō*

“the other parts of the occupation plan were carried out swiftly and encountered no resistance. By ten o’clock in the morning, the rebels were in control of the whole area comprising about one square mile to the south of the palace. It included the recently constructed Diet Building, the War [Army; EPR] Ministry, the General Staff, government offices, some foreign embassies [...], and the official residences of the Prime Minister, the War [Army; EPR] Minister and other Cabinet members. (The border of the area under the rebels’ control ran from the Hanzō gate [Hanzōmon; EPR] in the north, through Miyakezaka to Akasaka Mitsuke in the south, from there to Toranomom in the east, then to Sakuradamon in the north and from there along the southern moat of the palace back to the Hanzō gate [...], the whole area was sealed off by barbed wire and sentry lines”.²⁰

The mutineers were backed by many senior Army officers, especially by those belonging to the Kōdōha, such as Masaki, Araki, Yanagawa and their followers, namely General Abe Nobuyuki and others, and even by the Army Minister Kawashima as well as the Chief Aide-de-Camp, Honjō Shigeru who was the father-in-law of “Young Officer” Yamaguchi Ichitarō (Shizuoka, 33). They were also supported by Prince Chichibu (brother of the Emperor), and by Princes, Higashikuni and Asaka.

In the morning General Kawashima received the rebels’ leaders who gave him the “Demands to the Army Minister” (*Rikugun daijin yōbō jikō*) and their manifesto, called the “Outline of uprising” (*Kekki shuisho*).²¹ They demanded:

¹⁸ This duty, which was assigned every week to a different company of the Imperial Guard Division, entitled that company to enter the Palace grounds in case of emergency to protect the Emperor. For this reason the rebellion was scheduled on 26 February.

¹⁹ Cf.: Shillony 1973: 142.

²⁰ Ibidem: 143-144; the map see: Appendix 3.

²¹ For the text see: Kashii 1980: 37-38; Cf.: Takahashi 1965: 25-27.

1. to prevent the use of force against the rebels;
2. to arrest Generals Ugaki, Koiso and Tatekawa because of their part in the March Incident;
3. to dismiss the leading Tōseiha personnel from service, etc.

The manifesto was a representative text for the *Nihon shugi* activists, the text including all the ideas they propagated before. First of all they wrote that they served under the Supreme Command of the Emperor. They explained also that the essence of the country consisted of the evolutionary formation of a single nation and then of unification of the entire earth under the Japanese roof (*hakkō ichiū*). They mentioned that Emperor Jinmu, the legendary, according to the mythology, first Emperor of Japan (from 660 B.C.) had founded the nation and the Meiji Restoration had transformed the society. After that they underlined that some *genrō*, the military factions, the bureaucrats, the parties' politicians and so on had all contributed, as leaders, to the destruction of *kokutai* (by signing the London Naval Treaty, by dismissing Masaki, etc.). They also wrote about the *Ketsumeidan jiken*, *goichigo jiken* as well as the *Aizawa jiken*.

“Even if our actions cost our lives and our honour, vacillation now has no meaning to us. [...] To make the traitors perish, to make the supreme righteousness righteous, to protect the national essence and make it manifest, we dedicate our own true hearts as children of the sacred land, thereby giving our lives and brains to be consumed in the fire.”²²

The manifesto was written in a very moving style but it affected only the Kōdōha officers and their followers. The Emperor remained adamant. He refused to sanction any restoration and his firm opposition to the rebellion became one, although not the only, cause of its failure. However, the first two days of the uprising were full of success. Even the proclamation of the Martial Law (*kaigenrei*) signed by Emperor on the morning of 27 February was accepted with full satisfaction. According to the proclamation the Tokyo Garrison became the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters (Kaigen Shireibu) and Gen. Kashii Kōhei from the Kōdōha was appointed its Commanding Officer (*kaigen shireikan*). Soon afterwards the Army stopped bringing in reinforcements to the capital and the rebels reduced their occupation to the Miyakezaka area, south of the Imperial Palace.

But on the morning of 28 February they learnt that the situation was not going to be easy for them. The Emperor, the Navy²³ and GSO dominated by the Tōseiha men, opposed their action strongly. Finally, an Imperial Command ordering the rebels' units to withdraw from their position was issued and the rebellion ended

²² Kashii 1980: 37-38. Cf.: the translation given in Shillony 1973: 46-48.

²³ The Navy traditionally opposed the Army but then they were upset by the fact that the three people attacked during the incident were Admirals (Saitō, Okada, Suzuki).

as a fiasco. But it was not suppressed by force although many tanks began to enter the occupied area on the morning of 29 February. “The Young Officers” stopped their action because they were disappointed by the Kōdōha’s Generals. The Generals, knowing that the Emperor was against the rebellion and being afraid for their future backed out of the uprising. In such a situation the rebels decided to withdraw from the occupied area because they did not see any reason to further endanger the lives of their soldiers. But they categorically refused to commit suicide. Isobe, one of them, stated, that if they had to kill themselves, all the Generals who had supported them should do the same.²⁴ Only two of the 21 leading *seinen shōkō* committed suicide. They were Captain Nonaka Shirō (Okayama, 36) and Kōno Hisashi. There is also the possibility that “the Young Officers” did not commit suicide because they expected public trials as in the case of Aizawa and they intended to use the courtroom as a forum to stir up the people against the government and some of the “bad” advisers around the Throne.

But the end of the uprising was very tragic for the rebel officers and their civilian collaborators. In July, Kōda, Andō, Kurihara, Takeshima, Tsushima, Nakahashi and Hayashi, as well as the civilians Muranaka, Isobe, Shibukawa and Mizukami were sentenced to death and executed. Five officers, Mugiya, Tokiwa, Suzuki, Kiyohara and Ikeda were sentenced to life imprisonment. Forty-four non-commissioned officers and four soldiers were sentenced to various prisons. The troops taking part in the rebellion with a few exceptions were transferred to Manchuria in May. The Kōdōha senior Generals were temporarily purged from their posts. But the only General put on trial was Masaki Jinzaburō.

Some months after the February Incident Lieutenant-Colonel Aizawa Saburō was also sentenced to death for the assassination of Nagata. Kita and Nishida who played an important role in encouraging the rebels were also executed in August 1937.

Thus, the biggest uprising against the government in modern Japanese history and also the best organized one carried out by *seinen shōkō* ended as a fiasco. It was the last one. With the execution of the leading “Young Officers” the idea of *Shōwa ishin* died. “The Young Officers’ Movement” also ceased to exist.

However, this incident proved that “the Young Officers” could not only spread slogans concerning the Shōwa Restoration but also act in order to bring them to life. But they were His Majesty’s soldiers till the end and they surrendered only because they had not gained His support. Even in prison, awaiting death, they seemed to think mainly about their Emperor. The poems included in their wills prove it. For example, the following one: “Thinking about the Emperor and the people I am leaving this world forever.”²⁵

²⁴ Kōno 1957: 84-88.

²⁵ Shillony 1973: 204.

They were also betrayed by the senior Generals who, being the followers of the same ideology, encouraged “the Young Officers” to act. It turned out, however, that in a critical situation they backed out only taking care of their own posts and futures. They were not able to convince the Emperor that their views were right and in this way support the rebels. The Emperor did not want to realize the necessity for any changes in the political situation in the country fearing the uncertain future and the chaos, which could be brought about. He also feared the reaction of Western countries.

The February 26 Incident finally led to firing the Kōdōha’s representatives from a few posts in the Army that had still remained in their hands. And although Konoe Fumimaro (1891-1945) as the Prime Minister (4 June 1937 – 5 January 1939) in order to gain the Army support appointed once more several officers from this faction to some posts, Kōdōha’s members never again regained its position from the 1932-1934 period.

Thus, the Kōdōha lost its significance as the dominating power and Tōseiha’s rival in the Army. Putting Masaki on trial because of the February Incident also proved this to be so.

3.2. Masaki versus incidents

3.2.1. Masaki versus the Aizawa Incident

As mentioned before, Lieutenant-Colonel Aizawa Saburō had greatly admired Masaki from the time the latter was the head at the Rikushi in the mid-1920’s. During this time Aizawa was an instructor of Japanese fencing at the same Academy. According to Crowley, Masaki had been Aizawa’s sponsor even then.²⁶ Their connections became closer when Masaki was appointed the Commander of the 8th Division at Hirosaki (1927), where Aizawa also held a post. In early 1934 Masaki even visited Aizawa in a hospital when he was sick.²⁷

During the preliminary interrogation of the trial Aizawa said:

“Later, during my service with the Gymnastics School in Tokyo I got the guidance of His Excellency [Masaki; EPR] and I visited him frequently even at His house and listened to him. I realized that His Excellency was really an august personage.”²⁸

²⁶ Crowley 1964: 322, n. 58.

²⁷ Itō 1984 (a), I: 167.

²⁸ Ōtani 1961: 195.

Masaki confirmed this in his testimony after the February Incident. He added that Aizawa visited him to hear the General's opinion on the Army, the various ranks officers' duties and their morale, and also the views concerning the *kokutai ideals*.

Masaki found out about Nagata's assassination almost immediately after it had happened. Etō Genkurō informed him by telephone. But then the murderer's name was not mentioned at all. As this case had shocked the military circles, and Masaki, in spite of losing the Inspector's post, still belonged to the most important personages in the Army, he was, on that day, visited by many people, and some talked to him by phone, but Aizawa's name was not mentioned until the evening when Matsuura said to Masaki:

“This morning Aizawa visited Yamaoka and paid his respects to him. After Nagata was killed he once more entered [Yamaoka's room; EPR] to ask for a bandage.” (Mn, II, 187)

The General, during the earlier mentioned interrogation, stated that he had suspected various people of committing the murder but not Aizawa as he knew he had been out of Tokyo. Therefore he was very much surprised to find out that Aizawa himself was the assassin. He admitted, however, that Aizawa and Nagata both had contrary views on many matters concerning the Army.

The next day after the incident Masaki participated in the Military Councilors' Conference. During the conference Minister Hayashi said, among other things, that the direct causes of this assassination were the former incidents, that is to say the March and October Incidents as well as the November Incident. Araki, on the other hand, tried to draw attention to the danger from the civilians' side, those who were going to get mixed up in the Army. That day Masaki also found out that false rumors were being spread that he himself had inspired Aizawa's action. Masaki developed this topic in greater detail during the visit of Lieutenant-Gen. Ishimaru Shitsuma. He then heard that his opponents thought Aizawa had committed this crime because he knew he had had Masaki's support, as he was his guarantor at the Rikushi. In answer to this accusation Masaki said that he could not see any need to explain the fiction made up by outsiders. As always, and this time also, he tried to avoid a positive answer since he did not know the attitude of many people towards this incident.

However, for the next few months, until the February Incident, Masaki was very busy with the matters and events, which were the consequences of the *Aizawa jiken*. The above-mentioned personnel changes and Aizawa Saburo's public trial were the most important among all others.

Minister Hayashi had to bear the consequences and resign. Masaki, in spite of the fact that the Tōseiha's officers occupied a great number of important posts, still had, as the Military Councillor, a right to vote for the candidates for the Minister's

successor. Therefore he often met with the people from the Kōdōha, mainly Araki and his followers from outside the faction to discuss the suggestions concerning the choice of the new Minister. Finally, on 5 September 1935, Kawashima was appointed the Army Minister. As Kawashima's attitude towards the Imperial Way Faction has already been described in Chapter 3.1.2. it only ought to be added here that Masaki recognized Kawashima's candidacy as the most suitable one and supported it. Although Kawashima feared that his nomination might lead to another incident Masaki said:

“We all will support you as strongly as possible. We should make an effort in order to exclude any difficulties.” (Mn, II, 214)

Anyway, Masaki did not trust Kawashima completely. His doubts grew stronger when it came to the discussion with the new Minister on the subject of the choice of the Army Vice-Minister. Masaki put forward, among others, the candidacy of Yanagawa but Kawashima did not give a definite answer. The discussion on that matter lasted for several days and finally, on 21 September, Furushō Motoo (14) was appointed the Vice-Minister. As Masaki also suggested choosing him, this nomination might perhaps be considered as Kōdōha's partial success. Although none of the leading members of the Kōdōha were chosen, Imai Kiyoshi from the Tōseiha had also been rejected. However, the main posts in the Army Central Headquarters were mostly in the hands of those representing the Control Faction. Masaki's followers could not agree with it. Besides, they considered (Cf.: Mn, II, 298) that their enemies would not rest as long as they were able to eliminate the Kōdōha's members from all the most significant posts. The December personnel changes, namely sending Yanagawa to Taiwan and dismissing Yamaoka from the Chief Equipment Bureau, were the best examples of Tōseiha's policy in staffing matters. Then the same people, e.g. Imai, Hashimoto, etc., already planned the March personnel changes of 1936, which were supposed to result in the definite elimination of the Kōdōha's members from the Army Central Headquarters.

On 28 January 1936, the public trial against Aizawa Saburō began. Masaki did not participate but was very much interested, that attitude is proven by the spacious notes in his diary on that particular subject. In the authoress' opinion, Masaki's interest resulted mainly from two reasons. The first one was certainly the fact that Masaki liked and even admired Aizawa for his courage. The second, much more important, was the fear for his own skin.

As it is known Masaki had sporadically met Aizawa since 1927. During these meetings they discussed the Army problems, which led the General to learn of “the Young Officers” views. And although Masaki was astonished by the fact that it was Aizawa who assassinated Nagata he understood why it was he who had done it. Even before the trial, on 16 January, after having listened to the recorded protocol from Aizawa's hearing he wrote in the diary:

“On hearing this [the protocol; EPR] I feel ashamed of my misunderstanding. I suddenly experienced feelings of relief and respect towards Aizawa.” (Mn, II, 348)

That was the reason why, later on, his attitude towards each day of the trial was so emotional. Some sentences put down at that time in his diary show very well his attitude towards the accused and the whole matter. Masaki wrote that he was praying for a happy ending, or that he wished Aizawa the best of luck. Besides that, for the first time in his diary, he recollected a happy event that had taken place in the past, on the same day. It seems that quoting some such sentences will be a good example of Masaki’s emotional attitude towards the whole affair.

- “3 January: Since this morning it was cloudy and I have been superstitious about it. However, the weather changed about 10 a.m. and I am delighted with this lucky omen for today.” (Mn, II, 360)
- “1 February: I wish Aizawa good luck at the trial.” (Ibidem: 363)
- “3 February: It has been snowing heavily since afternoon and I felt anxious about the future fortune. But if I turn the pages of the diary I will see that this day is the day of the Imperial Conference concerning the Russo-Japanese War and also the day of the attack on Weihaiwei during the Sino-Japanese War. I haven’t yet been informed about today’s trial but probably everything will be brought to a happy end.” (Ibidem: 365-366)
- “14 February: Today will be a lucky day because [on the same day; EPR] in 1932 the 9th Division landed in Shanghai. I wish good luck for the future of this affair.” (Ibidem: 376).

The second, more important reason of Masaki’s great interest in the Aizawa’s trial was the fear that his enemies would use this matter to destroy the General definitively. Many members of Masaki’s faction paid him visits at that time relating the trial to him, describing the activities of the opponent faction and insisting on the General not participating in the whole matter. At first Masaki agreed with them but eventually, as he had learnt Aizawa’s and his enemies’ points of view, he arrived at the conclusion that for the good of the Army he ought to appear as a witness before the jury.

On 30 January, during his conversation with Araki who maintained that Masaki’s appearance at the trial may result in his disadvantage the General firmly replied:

“I do not care if it even leads to an unfavorable result for me. I should deal with it on the basis of an elimination of impropriety in the Army, regardless of my advantage or disadvantage.” (Mn, II, 362)

Since that day Masaki began to prepare a written testimony, which he wanted to present before the jury. As it was in his nature he talked this text over with many

people considering every possible consequence of its publication. One more problem, which was connected with this testimony, had arisen at that time. The text was to be sanctioned by the Emperor. Masaki, appearing before the jury, would appear not as a private person but as a General, Military Councilor, and the former Inspector General and Vice-Chief of GSO. That is why he thought that his testimony ought to be approved by the Emperor. He did not wish to cause His anger again, and he wanted to prevent attacks from the Court. Finally, however, on 25 February, he appeared before the jury having received no answer. The trial due to the fact that Masaki was the main witness on that day continued behind closed doors. However, in the General's diary detailed descriptions can be found. This time also the General remembered as he had before that:

“Today is the day when, in 1863, the English and French guards in Yokohama withdrew.” (Mn, II, 386)

Further he described leaving the house, meeting with journalists on the way to the Headquarters of the 1st Division.

During the trial he first answered the presiding judge's questions. They concerned Masaki's relations with Aizawa, his own views on the subject of Aizawa himself and on the assassination of Nagata. Next, he had to answer the defenders, Uzawa and Mitsui. It ought to be mentioned here that even earlier, that is during the first days of the trial, they both often visited Masaki at home relating the process to him and that their mutual relationship was not indifferent. Both Uzawa and Mitsui supported and respected Masaki, while the latter had a high opinion of both Aizawa's defenders, particularly of Mitsui.

Answering Uzawa's questions concerning relations with the Aizawa Incident and the problem of violating rights of the Supreme Command, Masaki said that it was the basic problem for the whole Army. The Imperial Army ought to watch out that the principles that were at its core would not be thoughtlessly destroyed. Referring to spirit and the basic significance of the Army he added that he himself as one of the Imperial officers deeply believed that the matter of the incident would be completely cleared for the Army's good. Mitsui also referred, in his questions, to the problem of violating the rights of the Supreme Command. He returned to the Big Three Conference during which Masaki opposed the decision to dismiss him from the Inspector's post. Answering, Masaki said that his protest was neither personal nor was it caused by the dislike for Minister Hayashi or Prince Kan'in.

Judging by what had been written in the diary, the whole trial went according to Kōdōha's plan. The Aizawa Incident was used to introduce the ideological discrepancies in the Army with which the assassin, having acted for the Army's good, could not go along. Masaki appearing before the jury also believed that he acted for good of the Imperial Army. He claimed, as far as we can take the sentences

from his diary as the source of the truth, that the jury would rightly judge whether or not he stood behind Nagata's murder. He made up his mind to withdraw completely from political life if his influence on Aizawa's action could be proven.

It all speaks very well for the General's nobleness and integrity but nevertheless, one thing must be mentioned at this point. Masaki knew what the personnel roster of the jury had been and that it was Yanagawa, the man from his faction, who, before leaving for Taiwan had chosen those particular people. They were almost all Kōdōha's followers and therefore its opponents' attempts to use the process as the means to destroy Masaki's group were for nothing. Although the Imperial Way Faction together with Masaki was dismissed almost totally from the main posts in the Army, its members and their ideology still had the support of many social circles. Aizawa's process convinced them that following "the Imperial Way" had been right and that it was necessary to carry out the *Shōwa ishin* quickly. Therefore the next day after Masaki appeared in court, the February Incident broke up.

3.2.2. Masaki versus the February 26 Incident

On 26 February about 5:30 a.m., when Masaki was woken up by a servant who told him that Kamekawa Tetsuya had come, he did not expect the news he heard in the least. He supposed, as he said during the above-mentioned hearings (Nini, II, 204), that the reason for such an early visit was some important matter connected with Masaki's appearance before the jury concerning the Aizawa Incident the day before. However, Kamekawa informed him about "the Young Officers'" uprising and in tears asked Masaki for help. He claimed Masaki was the only person who was able to support the rebels. He said:

"If it is impossible to form the new Cabinet today the soldiers will be killed. Therefore it is necessary to meet many people." (Mn, II, 389)

Masaki was extremely astonished. During the later hearings he also mentioned that he had not thought that the matter would go in such a direction. Just to the contrary, during the whole of Aizawa's trial he heard that "the Young Officers" were gradually calming down and they were glad with its course.

Did he really know nothing about "the Young Officers'" preparations for the coup? Engrossed in Aizawa's case he did not mention it at all in his diary. As it is very well known, Masaki was careful not to get involved in any illegal action and that is why perhaps he avoided such discrediting notes. It seems unlikely that he, who had always been well informed about everything that was going on in the Army, was omitted this time. It is even more unlikely as "the Young Officers" trusted him very much. They planned that he would become the chief of the new, reformed

government under Martial Law. It was Kamekawa (the same person, who visited Masaki in the morning) who suggested to the rebels that, following the outbreak of the rebellion, Uzawa Sōmei be dispatched to the *genrō* Saionji Kinmochi to recommend Masaki as the next Prime Minister.²⁹ The proof for these plans might be Kamekawa's short sentence written down by Manaki in his diary. He said:

“I will visit Uzawa now and we shall go together to Saionji.” (Mn, II, 389)

Due to an upset stomach, Masaki went to the Army Minister's official residence as late as 8:30 a.m. There he met Minister Kawashima, the Vice-Minister and five or six “insurgent officers” (*kekki shōkō*), but he only knew one of them, Captain Kōda Kiyosada. Reserve-General Saitō Ryū related to him the events of that morning.

According to what had been written down during Masaki's hearings on 21 April 1936, all present there listened to the rebels' manifesto and were wondering what to do next. Masaki suggested to Kawashima to call for the Cabinet (they all thought at that time that Okada was dead) and to proclaim Martial Law. About 10 a.m. Masaki went to the Palace to meet Prince Fushimi and tell him the news concerning the present situation in the Army. This piece of information ends the up-to-date notes written during the incident in Masaki's diary. The General himself added that he would complete them when he could find the time. Further, in the diary there are notes from March and the news from 26 February after 10 a.m., from 27, 28 and 29 February but they are put down no earlier than between 10 and 11 March.

This fact slightly lessens the diary's value as the basic source material as it might have happened that the General, being extremely occupied with different events at that time, had forgotten some important details. Besides, writing about those exciting days after suppressing the incident and knowing the Emperor's and other influential personalities' attitude towards it and fearing for his own future, he could have concealed or interpreted differently some facts. Still, as Masaki's diary is the basic source material for this work the authoress decided to continue to make use of it in this chapter. Comparing the facts from this diary with the facts from the protocol of Masaki's hearings from April 1936 and supplementing them, if the need arises, with pieces of information from other available documents and studies, it is possible to show the General's activities during the incident with some accuracy.

The Military Councilors met at the Imperial Palace that afternoon at 2 p.m. The meeting was dominated by Kōdōha's men, namely by Masaki, Araki, Kashii, Yamashita and Murakami Keisaku. Besides them also Minister Kawashima, Sugiyama, the Vice-Chief of GSO, and others were present. Probably it was Sugiyama, a man from the former Ugaki clique and the Tōseiha's representative, one of the staunchest

²⁹ It was a reason for cancelling the attack on Saionji Kinmochi. Uzawa left for Saionji's residence but returned later in the day without finding the *genrō*.

opponents of the rebels who suggested asking for some Imperial instructions, how to pacify the situation. However, Araki replied that the Councilors had to cope themselves with such an unprecedented affair within the Army. He also suggested drafting a proclamation to the rebels, which was then written probably by Murakami or Yamashita and corrected by Terauchi, Abe and Ueda.

The text reads as follows:

“- The purpose of Your uprising has been reported to the Emperor;
 - Your true motives are approved;
 - We, Military Councilors will be striving together for the realization of the real intentions.” (Nini, II, 207; Cf.: Mn, II, 400)

Masaki, having learnt his lesson through experience, did not voice his opinion during that debate, being afraid that what he would have said could have been used against him in the future. He behaved in the same manner that evening, when he was called together with Araki and others to the Minister's residence to meet the rebels' representatives. The purpose of the meeting was to impart to them the Military Councilors' opinions.

After the night spent in the Minister's residence, on 27 February, in the morning, Masaki together with other Councilors went to the Imperial Household Ministry (Kunaishō) to discuss with the members of the Cabinet the matter of future government. However, no definite result was reached. During the day the General met many people, but it wasn't so important for the topic of the work.

About 3 p.m. Gen. Kashii Kōhei having already been appointed the Chief of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters applied to Masaki with a request that he went to “the Young Officers” to discuss with them various matters connected with the incident. But Masaki refused being afraid that it would again be used against him. The General did not agree to go there alone in spite of the fact that all the Military Councilors insisted on him doing that. At the same time they pointed out that the moment was important and that Masaki's position among the rebels had been so strong. Finally, about 4 p.m. Masaki with two other Councilors, Gen. Abe Nobuyuki and Gen. Nishi Giichi met with the *seinen shōkō* in the Minister's residence. As it is written in his diary (Mn, II, 401), eighteen rebels came to the meeting. Nonaka spoke on behalf of all of them:

“We would like to leave the control of the situation to His Excellency, Masaki. We wish that other Military Councilors will agree and will cooperate with him.” (Mn, II, 401-402)

Both Abe and Nishi agreed to help and cooperate if Masaki or anyone else were to be questioned. Then Masaki spoke and reminded them, as it had happened

before in similar situations, that being a Military Councilor he was totally subordinate to the Emperor's orders and he could not do anything against the Emperor's will. However, in a moment so important for the country he could not be idle. As a superior officer he wanted to help "the Young Officers" and therefore he agreed to accept their proposal, but on one condition. As after proclaiming Martial Law the units of mutinous officers also were under the orders of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters, they had to obey all the commands of the Commander of the 3rd Regiment, who was their direct superior. He said:

"If it happens that you disobey an order it will mean that you stood against the Imperial standard. Then I, as I have always stressed it, will be the first to suppress this fighting against the Emperor." (Mn, II, 402)

"The Young Officers" agreed with Masaki and this fact satisfied and calmed him down.

The General's decision may be interpreted in two ways. The first - the rebels understood it in this way - the senior officers supported the incident and since then *seinen shōkō* would act under their orders to carry out the reforms. The second - that how the senior officers as well as Masaki explained it after suppressing the incident - the rebels' units were in this way under the command of the Martial Law Enforcement Headquarters, which would make possible bloodless withdrawal from the occupied area and would lead to the definite ending of the revolt.

On the same day, in the evening, Masaki together with Abe and Nishi related the meeting with "the Young Officers" to the Princes Higashikuni and Asaka, and also to some representatives of AM and GSO. He spent the night in the Collective Activity Society (Kaikōsha),³⁰ which was his substitute home during the days of the February Incident.

The morning of 28 February, however, brought a complete change of the situation. Masaki himself, who was so glad with the decision he made together with "the Young Officers" the day before, was very astonished of this change. The Emperor did not approve the coup and ordered to suppress the rebels as soon as possible. The "Young Officers", disappointed with this turn of the events, called on Masaki as early as 7:30 a.m. The General, in spite of the fact that he sympathized with them, did not show his feelings as he realized that the incident would end in the failure for *seinen shōkō* and all their supporters would be punished.

During the hearings carried out by the Military Police on 21 April, Masaki repeated several times that he did not remember precisely what had happened on that day or who had said what. Fearing the consequences, he probably preferred

³⁰ Translated also as the Companions' Society; Cf.: Morris 1960: 216, n. 3; Club of Army officers, established in 1877 in Tokyo.

to refrain from speaking the truth. He also maintained, that he had not known why the situation had changed so completely. Besides, he added he had not known and had not understood the reasons for the February Incident, which had probably been the result of a spontaneous, inspired from the outside “Young Officers’ Movement”. He said:

“When I learnt about their uprising I thought that they had done me a terrible thing.” (Nini, II, 210)

When it had become clear that “the Young Officers” would not reach their aim and a government with Masaki at the head would not come to life the General taking care of his own future preferred not to admit that he had been on the rebels’ side. Also this time his common sense had prevailed over the emotions.

Thus, when Masaki learnt that the Emperor had refused to sanction the Shōwa Restoration and had even given an order to expel the rebels’ units immediately from their positions during this day, for many hours, he thought together with many people over some ways, how to obey the order. It became clear that *seinen shōkō* decided to ignore and disobey the Imperial order, because some of them suspected it of being a forged document, written by the traitors of GSO, which therefore did not bind them. They tried to contact the Emperor directly by an Imperial messenger (*chokushi*) and if, then, the Emperor disapproved of their deeds, on this one condition, they would commit suicide. However, the Emperor did not grant the request and for that reason the rebels decided to fight to the end. In such a situation General Masaki and General Abe gave their consent (as the Military Councilors) to the use of the Imperial Guard Division for suppressing the rebellion.

The whole situation was a dramatic experience for Masaki. His concise, very short notes in the diary, from 29 February, prove it best:

“Finally they will attack. It has been decided not to shoot, making use of all other possible means;
 7:30 – they surrender one after another;
 8:00 – Major Ōkubo from the Press Section comes to report on the situation of surrendering;
 8:45 – completion of arrangements for the attack;
 10:00 – I’m going to the Palace. Each of Their Imperial Highnesses is observing the military operation from the palace near the Shintenfu;³¹
 1:30 – I give my respects to His Highness, Prince Kan’in at Court;
 2:20 – return to the Kaikōsha;
 3:00 – Major Yagasaki makes a report on the situation in the Prime Minister’s residence;

³¹ Pavilion in Remembrance of the Dead in War, built in the Imperial Palace compound after the Sino-Japanese War.

8:30 – the Army Minister called on us. We all together asked whether we should resign or remain in office.” (Mn, II, 404)

And so, finally, on 29 February, the rebels surrendered and this, the greatest in the modern history of Japan, incident ended as a fiasco. “The Young Officers” and Kōdōha’s representatives’ dreams to carry out the aims of *Shōwa ishin* had not come true. They had, on the other hand, to consider the consequences of the incident.

During the next few days Masaki was extremely busy with numerous meetings and debates during which he considered his future and the fate of the other officers from the Kōdōha.

On 1 March he wrote in his diary:

“I was in the club the whole day. I’m absorbed in some desultory conversations about the present situation.” (Mn, II, 389)

They were mainly occupied with three matters, namely, the matter of the March personnel changes; the problem of responsibility for the incident breaking out; personnel matters in the future, namely what would happen with Kōdōha’s members and whether the Tōseiha would completely dominate the Army Central Headquarters.

They also worked out *The Broad Policy for the Future (Shōrai no daihōshin)*, which are not included in the diary.

The next two days, still during numerous meetings with officers from his groups, he was considering the future of the Army and the new personnel relationships. On 6 March he was placed on the waiting list and next, on 10 March he retired from active service.

In the diary on this day he wrote:

“At 4:20 p.m. I was notified that the Army Minister decided that I should retire from active service, which was mentioned in the Imperial edict. So, I announce that I have finished 40 years of life as a soldier. However, looking at the present situation I do not intend to say that it is also the end of my spirit [=ideology; EPR]” (Mn, II, 399)

In spite of the fact that Masaki finished his active service in the Imperial Army he still participated, although unofficially, in many meetings and he was informed all the time about the problems concerning the Army. As he said himself in the above quoted fragment, he knew that his spirit, the ideology of the *kokutai*, *kōdō* and *seishin shugi* would not cease to have its supporters. It was this ideology which originally gained Masaki “the Young Officers” support but also the same ideology that created his enemies. Although he never changed his opinion concerning the role and shape of the Army, the Emperor’s position and so on, as the years went

by and as he was more strongly attacked by his opponents Masaki was more and more cautious while speaking on the subject, common sense and caution suppressed his feelings.

At present, many researchers of the events of that time, as well as people connected with the incident or supporting *seinen shōkō* blame Masaki saying that he had betrayed the latter.³² He was one of the senior officers in the Army Central Headquarters who had been trusted by “the Young Officers” and whose views concerning the *kokka kaizō* had fascinated them. Masaki himself, although he avoided direct encounters with *seinen shōkō*, carefully watched their activities. He was often kept informed by his confidential agents. The General tried to direct the movement in such a way that everything, in his opinion, would be according to the law and military discipline. He also read all the published *kaibunsho*, some of which (for example: *Sangatsu jiken kūdeta keikaku*) he even supplied with materials. Although he wrote in his diary that he had no foreknowledge about preparations concerning the February Incident, it seems to be unlikely.

During the first two days of the revolt he did nothing to lead it to a quick end and to the punishment of the guilty. He tried, on the other hand, to cautiously direct “the Young Officers”, this time leading to the formation of the Cabinet with him as the head. There is no proof for that but it seems very likely that the General of the Imperial Way Faction wanted to regain power for himself and, what is obvious, for the representatives of his group and to get rid of his enemies, that is to say mainly from the Tōseiha. In this way Kōdōha’s members could have again decided the policy of the Army and the country, explaining that the *seinen shōkō* itself was the Shōwa Restoration. But finally they and Masaki lost.

³² See for example: Tatamiya 1980; Tatamiya 1968; Nakano 1975 and others.

4. Conclusion

4.1. Masaki's life and activities (1936-1956)

General Masaki Jinzaburō was transferred to the reserve on 10 March 1936 and that was the end of his active service in the Japanese Army. In July of the same year he was imprisoned in Tokyo as a person suspected of having been connected with the February Incident, but he was released due to the lack of evidence on 15 September 1937.

Probably Masaki was relatively quickly released from the prison thanks to the Prime Minister at that time, Prince Konoë Fumimaro, who wanted to appoint some of Kōdōha's representatives to more important posts in the Army in order to gain a stronger control over it.

At present Masaki is regarded by some historians³³ as a member of the Konoë-Yoshida³⁴ group which was formed at the beginning of the 1940's and which stood in opposition to the group of Tōjō Hideki and others from the Tōseiha. This opinion is not shared by Masaki Hideki who maintains that his father had nothing to do with politics after his transfer to the reserve.³⁵ Nevertheless the same Hideki remembers very well that after 1937 there often came visitors to the General's house. They conferred sometimes until late at night, in Hideki's beliefs, seeking and probably receiving the General's advice.

It seems reasonable to presume that Masaki Jinzaburō's transfer to the reserve and then his imprisonment must have dealt severe blows to his soldiery pride. Afterwards he did not want to be associated openly with any group, nor with politics in general. But at the same time he did not become indifferent to the needs of his former disciples, colleagues, and other people of similar political orientation.

³³ Cf.: Itō 1979: 221-253.

³⁴ Yoshida Shigeru (1878-1967) was a diplomat, delegate to the League of Nation (1932) and Ambassador to England (1936).

³⁵ The authoress interviewed Masaki Hideki in April and May 1984, in Tokyo.

Not going into the open, he was nevertheless ready to help privately, discussing some matters over, etc.

The final blow, after which the old General's character changed markedly, came with Japan's defeat in the Asia Pacific War in 1945. On 19 November Masaki was again arrested and put into the Sugamo prison as one of the Class A war criminals. He was dropped from the list of defendants (together with Abe Nobuyuki) and consequently released on 2 September 1947.³⁶ From that moment until his death he did not participate in the political life. He died of a heart attack at 79, on 31 August 1956. The official funeral ceremony was performed in his house in the Setagaya Ward in Tokyo. Later on, following an old Japanese custom, another ceremony was held in his home town of Chiyoda, where the General's ashes were put into the family plot of the Buddhist temple Kyōsenji.

4.2. Some remarks on Masaki's character

Up to now the picture of General Masaki emerging from these pages was a rather fragmentary one. It contained an outline of Masaki's official career, with the emphasis put on five years only. Looking at Masaki's activities during those years when he was one of leading figures in political intrigue of the time, an attentive Reader may form the opinion that he was a biased, opinionated nationalist, a strict soldier, and a patriot of that fatal patriotic trend which finally led to the war. Such an opinion would be obviously very near the mark but it would not be quite adequate. It would come from an interpretation of the primary sources used in this work, i.e., from contemporary diaries, official documents, etc., showing the General's public appearances and some of his ideas. In the sources there is nothing personal about the General. Even his diary is almost devoid of any personal touches.

It seems unfair (to the late General as well as to the Reader) not to add a splash of color to that monochromatic picture. Nearing the conclusion of this work the authoress would like to devote some space to a few more or less informal remarks on Masaki's character and his private life, on his interests and his relations with his children.

According to Masaki Hideki,³⁷ his father, a typical soldier, was too much involved in the Army affairs to have time for other interests. In his spare time, however, he read a lot and especially studied the problem of the Japanese constitution, comparing it with those of other countries. He did it because he was sure that there were many obscure formulations in the Meiji constitution, for example, those parts referring to the duties of the Army Minister and the military advisors

³⁶ Minear 1972: 104, 108.

³⁷ The genealogical tree of Masaki Jinzaburō see Appendix 1.

to the Throne. As he did not have enough time for thorough study he wanted his eldest son to work on this subject.

Among many books that the authoress, thanks to the kindness of Masaki Ichirō (husband of Fumi, a daughter of Jinzaburō's younger brother), was able to see in the room dedicated to Masaki Jinzaburō in the Myōsenji temple (Chiyoda town in Saga prefecture), the majority referred just to the constitution. One book, however, seemingly did not fit the picture of a severe General. It was the English version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. It can be assumed that he was not only a soldier who fulfilled his duties very thoroughly but he was also just an ordinary man, who liked to relax with literature... Perhaps there was a poetic side to his nature. It rarely manifested itself, which cannot be surprising in a man who spent most of his life in barracks, among harsh soldiers. Certainly, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* alone would be too slim a clue to build a presumption that the General had his own private wonderland and liked to indulge in daydreaming. That would be going too far. But he wrote poems, which are scattered in fragments here and there in the diary. They tell about the beauty of nature and its connection with man's moods. Besides that, he also liked, as his father did, to listen to *gidayū*³⁸ of the traditional Japanese puppet theatre *jōruri*, recited to the accompaniment of *shamisen*, a classical instrument with 3 strings. He tried to recite himself but he had to resign when he realized that he had no ear for music. He kept, however, a collection of records of the most famous dramas of the plays.

Masaki liked to ride a horse and sometimes went for a ride early in the morning. But he had very little time to spend like this. Most of his time was taken by his professional duties.

According to Masaki Hideki:

“father in fact did not have any time for rest and entertainment. [...] He had numerous visitors until late at night. Besides, the period when he ended his active service in the Army was full of unrest for Japan. Nothing amusing was happening. [...] Sometimes, like other Japanese, he practiced calligraphy to calm his soul. He also wrote with a brush it took him a lot of time.”³⁹

As a father he was very severe with his children, especially with his eldest son, Hideki. Hideki was brought up like a soldier, he often got orders from his father and as a type of training he had to wash his face and sometimes even his whole body in icy-cold water. When Hideki, as a little boy, cried, he was told of examples of strictly-bred German soldiers' children. The father treated his son as he did “the Young Officers” when he was the head of the Regular Course of the Rikushi. He drilled them severely being convinced that nothing was impossible for a soldier.

³⁸ Dramatic recital accompanied by music in which the great achievements of ancient heroes were celebrated. Its origin dates as far back as the 13th century.

³⁹ From the interview with the authoress, April 1984, Tokyo.

Masaki's character and his attitude towards the children completely changed, after Japan lost the Asia Pacific War, when he came back home after being released from prison. He became less severe and since then he never was hard on his children. It was such a sudden transformation that Hideki remembers even today how much it astonished him.

Probably the fact that the Emperor renounced his divinity and that Japan had been transformed into a democratic country, deprived of its historical mission, had been a traumatic experience for Masaki. Throughout his entire life he implanted the ideals of the *kokutai* in his subordinates and officers of lower ranks, deeply believing in what he was doing. And then one word said by the Emperor was enough to ruin what he had faithfully served all his life. In spite of the fact that Masaki had been transferred to the reserve in 1936 and personally did not participate in the war, the soldiers educated by him, by a General fanatically devoted to the Emperor and Japan, fought and died on the Emperor's behalf. Although such people like Masaki are at present accused and blamed for sending millions of innocent soldiers to their deaths it should be admitted that they had been doing it, according to them, for the sake of the "highest ideals" of pre-war Japan, meaning the Emperor and their unique homeland. Thus, it seems natural that the 70-year-old Masaki could not accept the new, postwar situation.

Unfortunately, from all the published historical materials, up to now (1985), as well as from the talks with Masaki's relatives, it is impossible to learn the full truth about the old General, who experienced Japan's defeat in the war. One may imagine that the truth remains unknown so far. One may only venture a guess. One may imagine how the General suffered during that twenty-two months-long stay in prison. Physically he was fit enough to stand any hardship but mentally he must have been a badly shaken man. His whole world had collapsed around him. The "divine" Emperor was not divine any more. The *kokutai* ideals was shattered into atoms. The "unique" country lay in ruins while "big and vulgar" American soldiers trampled its "sacred" soil...

Perhaps during endless hours, days, months, when the General pondered over the past, it dawned on him that the *kokutai* was not transcendent, that it was only an idea, one of many possible but not necessarily right ideas. If that was so, then he had to come to the conclusion that he had been mistaken educating fanatical soldiers and then sending them straight into the jaws of death. If that was so, then he must have left the prison as a broken man. Hence, the behavioral changes which Hideki noticed in his father.

Excluding those last nine years of his life, Masaki Jinzaburō was a nationalist, totally devoted to the Emperor and Japan. In his lectures at the Rikushi and Rikudai he often emphasized the significance of the idea of *kokutai* and the unique character of the Japanese Empire. Masaki maintained that "spiritual training", "patriotism", "Nipponism" were fundamental values for Japanese soldiers, especially for

those who wanted to attain the *Shōwa ishin* goals. Such an attitude, and the fact that he was extremely involved in several problems relating to the Army, and that he was interested in the situation of the lower ranking officers, caused him in “the Young Officers” opinion, to become their protector and one of their leaders. On the other hand, as he scrupulously performed his duties he was promoted to the highest military ranks. Gen. Masaki can be recognized as a typical example of a Japanese officer who was not at all conspicuous by his individuality. He was not an orator as Araki Sadao.

Also, as he was of peasant origin (in spite of the fact that his family was a relatively rich one) he did not inherit manners, which were characteristic for aristocrats or for samurai. Nevertheless, owing to his diligence and stubbornness he became one of the most influential personages of the 1930's. For a short period, he was one of those who directly decided the Army policy and indirectly, Japan's policy. It was possible, because the group to which he belonged, the Imperial Way Faction, to gain a very significant position within the Army.

4.3. Final remarks

It is quite evident that the five years, 1932-1936, taken into consideration in this study brought about the apex of Masaki Jinzaburō's military career and at the same time resulted in the apex of the Kōdōha's influence. It is the authoress' conviction that both were not only closely connected but that they were inseparable results of interactions. The group, making use of its own already strong position, pushed up its representative member to high posts. Thanks to that he could then help the group in promoting its other members and shaping the educational policy within the Army in accord with the Kōdōha's ideals.

This interdependence is shown in Appendix 4 in which the names of Prime Ministers and of all most important functionaries in the Army Ministry, in the General Staff Office and others in the Army during the years 1931-1936 are indicated.

It becomes clear from the contents of the table that after Araki Sadao took the office of the Army Minister in December 1931 Masaki was the first person from the Kōdōha to be appointed to one of the main offices in the Army Central Headquarters. He started to act as the Vice-Chief of GSO on 9 January 1932. Then, as can be seen from the table, the Kōdōha's representatives took all the other most important posts in the Army. During 1932-1934 they acted together to maintain this position and then to strengthen it.

In order to attain its goals the Kōdōha's members tried to eliminate the other factions' representatives from the Army Central Headquarters. However, they failed in the latter part of 1934 because of an ideological dissent, which was described

in detail in Chapter 1.⁴⁰ The Gensho Kōdōha split and that was the starting point for the Kōdōha – Tōseiha rivalry.

The Kōdōha gradually lost its power and therefore its members were removed from the main posts within the Army one by one. At the beginning of 1935 only General Masaki from the Kōdōha stayed at the significant post of General Inspector of Military Education. Although Murakami Keisaku replaced Yamashita Tomoyuki as the Chief of Military Affairs Section in the Army Ministry on 11 October 1935 – both belonged to the Kōdōha – it was a less important post for the group's influence.

Masaki Jinzaburō was dismissed from office on 16 July 1935. It can be assumed that on just that one day the Imperial Way Faction lost any chance in regaining its power. Masaki was the first one from the Kōdōha to be appointed to one of the main offices in the Army, and after his appointment his group, the Kōdōha, grew stronger and stronger to become the most influential Army faction. He was the last one to stay in a significant office and after his removal his group lost its significance. But during his stay in office General Masaki Jinzaburō did his best to fulfill all his duties and to rise to the expectations set on him by his subordinates and members of the Imperial Way Faction.

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⁴⁰ See: "Analecta Nipponica", No. 4/2014, pp. 177-200.

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the authoress interviewed :

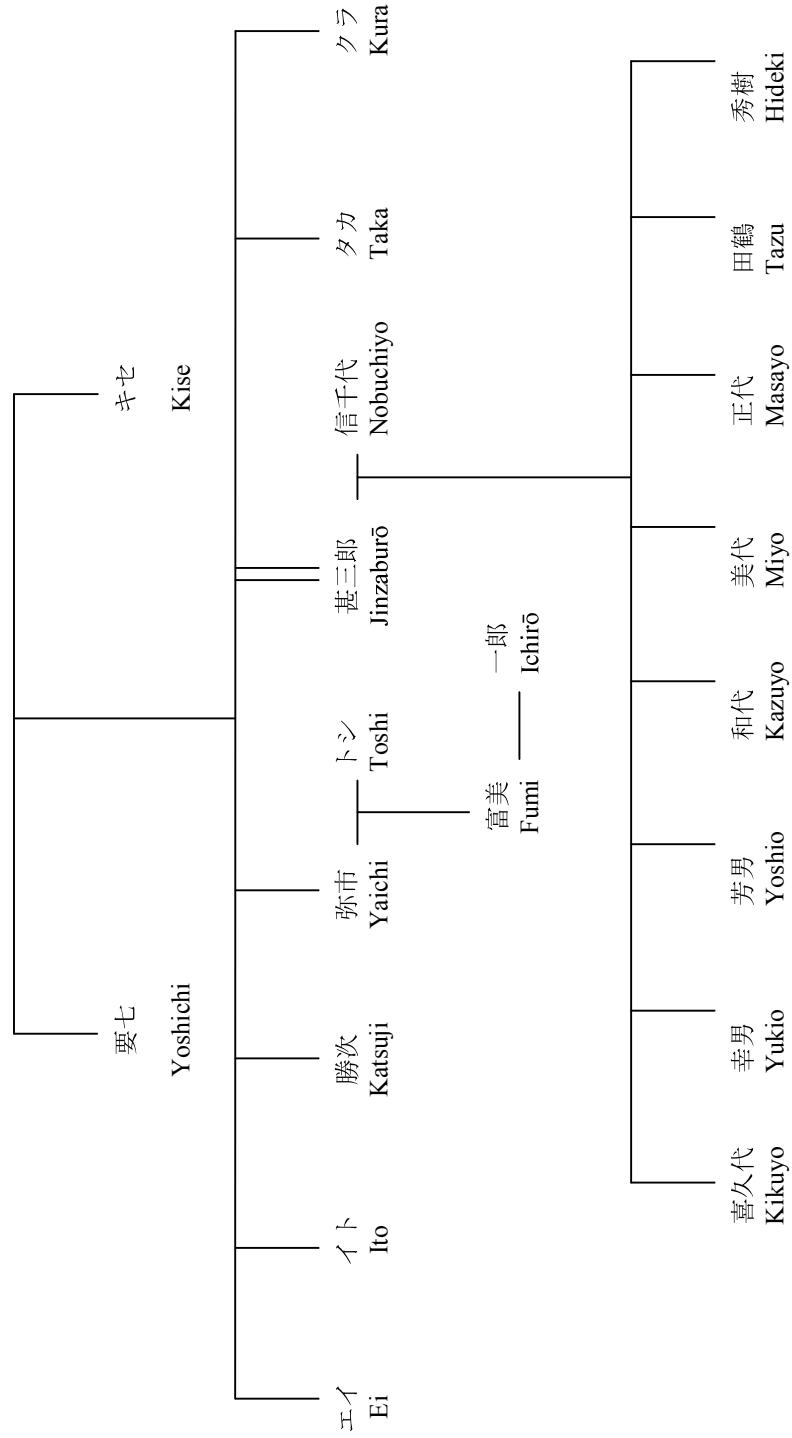
- Masaki Ichirō and Fumi, April 1984 in Inudō
- Masaki Hideki, April and May 1984, Tōkyō

Appendices

Appendix 1.

Genealogical tree of Masaki Jinzaburō

(Limited to his immediate family; Source: Min, I: Appendix 8)



Appendix 2.

The leading “Young Officers” of the February 26 Incident

(Limited to his immediate family; Source: Mn I: Appendix 8)

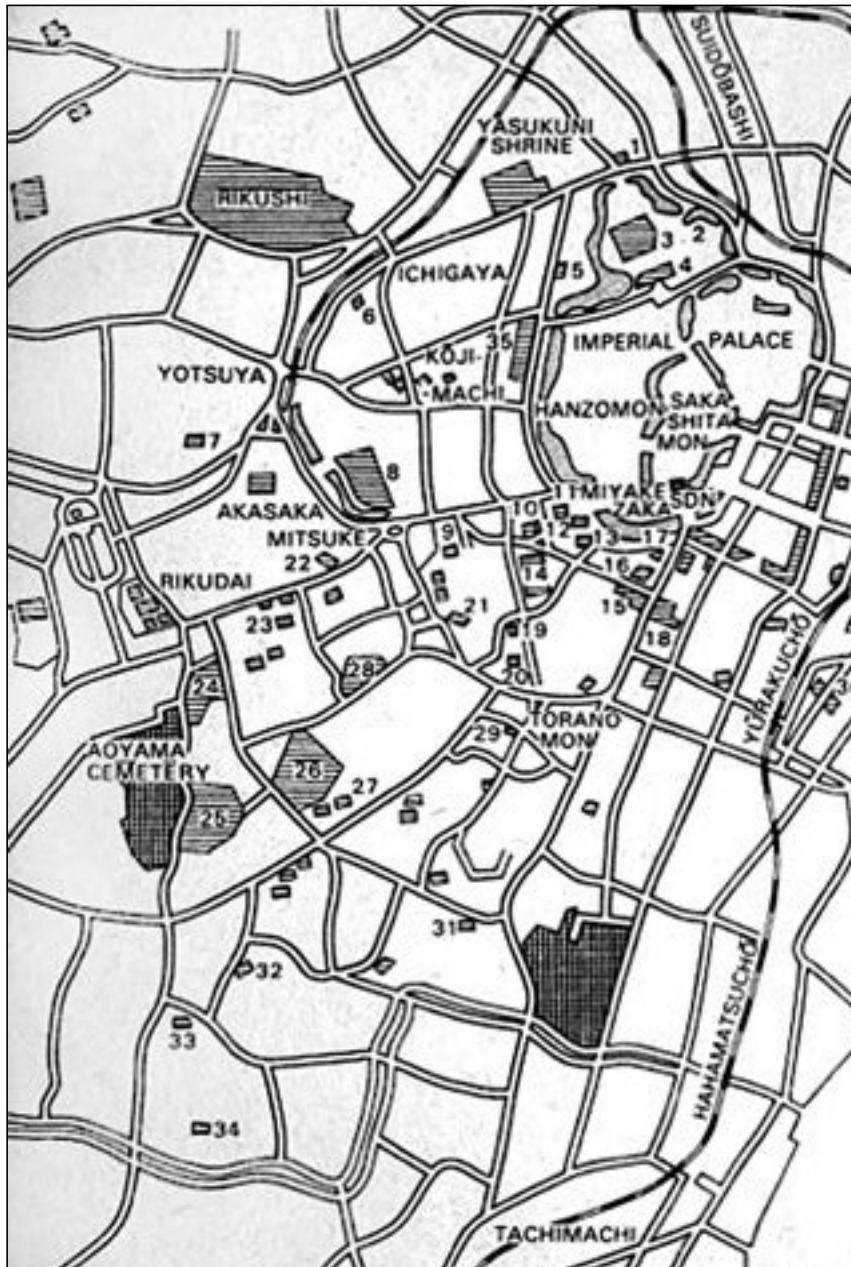
(Source: Kōno (ed.) 1984)

	Name	Native Place	Parentage	Class	Rank	Judgment	Age
1.	Nonaka Shirō	Okayama	Son of Maj-Gen. N. Masaaki	36	C	Committed suicide	34
2.	Kōno Hisashi	Kumamoto	Son of Rear Adm. K. Sakinta	40	C	Committed suicide	30
3.	Kōda Kiyosada	Saga	not important	37	C	Sentenced to death and Executed	34
4.	Andō Teruzō	Gifu	Son of Keiō Univ. Professor	38	C	Executed	32
5.	Takeshima Tsuguo	Shiga	Son of Maj-Gen. T. Tōjirō	40	FL	Executed	30
6.	Tsushima Katsuo	Aomori	Not important	41	FL	Executed	29
7.	Kurihara Yasuhide	Saga	Son of Colonel K. Isamu	41	FL	Executed	29
8.	Nakahashi Motoaki	Saga	Grand-son of N. Tōichirō	41	FL	Executed	30
9.	Nibu Seichū	Kagoshima	Son of Navy C. N. Takehiko	43	FL	Executed	29
10.	Sakai Naoshi	Mie	Son of Maj-Gen. S. Heikichi	44	FL	Executed	27
11.	Tanaka Masaru	Yamaguchi	Not important	45	FL	Executed	26
12.	Nakajima Kanji	Saga	Not important	46	SL	Executed	25
13.	Yasuda Masaru	Kumamoto	Not important	46	SL	Executed	25
14.	Takahashi Tarō	Ishikawa	Not important	46	SL	Executed	24
15.	Hayashi Hachiō	Yamagata	Son of Maj-Gen. H. Daihachi	47	SL	Executed	23
16.	Mugiya Kiyozumi	Saitama	Not important	47	SL	Life imprisonment	27
17.	Tokiwa Minoru	Ōita	Not important	47	SL	Life imprisonment	23
18.	Suzuki Kinshirō	Ibaraki	Not important	47	SL	Life imprisonment	23
19.	Kiyohara Kōhei	Kumamoto	Not important	47	SL	Life imprisonment	23
20.	Ikeda Shungen	Kagoshima	Not important	47	SL	Life imprisonment	23

Maj-Gen. = Major-General; C = Captain; FL = First Lieutenant; SL = Second Lieutenant; Adm. = Admiral

Appendix 3.

The area of Tokyo under the “Young Officers” control
(during the February Incident)



Legend to Appendix 3.

1. Kaikōsha
2. Military Police Headquarter
3. 1st Imperial Guard Regiment
4. 2nd Imperial Guard Regiment
5. Official Residence of Suzuki Kantarō
6. Official Residence of Army Vice-Minister
7. Private Residence of Saitō Makoto
8. Residence of Prince Fushimi
9. Residence of Prince Kan'in
10. German Embassy
11. Army Ministry
12. Official Residence of Army Minister
13. General Staff Office
14. Diet Building
15. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
16. Ministry of Home Affairs
17. Metropolitan Police Office
18. Navy Department
19. Official Residence of Minister of Foreign Affairs
20. Official Residence of Prime Minister
21. Sannō Hotel
22. Residence of Prince Chichibu
23. Private Residence of Takahashi Korekiyo
24. 1st Division Headquarter
25. 3rd Infantry Regiment
26. 1st Infantry Regiment
27. Official Residence of Commander of Imperial Guard Division
28. 3rd Imperial Guard Regiment
29. American Embassy
30. Asahi News
31. Soviet Embassy
32. Manchukuo Embassy
33. Polish Embassy
34. French Embassy
35. British Embassy
36. SDN – Sakuradamon

Appendix 4.

Prime Ministers and most important functionaries in Army Central Headquarters

		1931			1932	
Prime Minister		29.7.2 Hamaguchi Osachi	31.4.14 Wakatsuki Reijirō	31.12.13 Inukai Tsuyoshi	32.5.26 Saitō Makoto	
A R M Y M I N I S T R Y	Army Minister	29.7.20 Ugaki Ub Kazushige	4.14 (6) Minami Jirō Ub	12.13(9) Araki Sadao GK		
	Vice-Minister	30.8.1 (12) Sugiyama Gen Ub			2.29 (12) Koiso KuniakiUb	8.8 (12) Yanagawa Heisuke GK; K
	Chief of Military Affairs Bureau	30.8.1 (12) Koiso Kuniaki Ub			2.29 (15) Yamaoka Shigeatsu GK; K	
	Chief of Military Affairs Section	30.8.1 (16) Nagata Tetsuzan GK			4.11 (16) Yamashita Tomoyuki GK; K	
	Chief of Personnel Affairs Bureau	30.12.22 (13) Nakamura Kōtarō			2.29 (15) Matsuura Junrokurō GK	
	Chief of Adjustment Bureau	30.8.1 (13) Hayashi Katsura Ub				
G E N. S T A F F O F F I C E	Chief of the GSO	30.2.19 (15) Kanaya Hanzō Ub	12.23 ks. Kan'in Kotohito			
	Vice-Chief of the GSO	30.12.22 (12) Ninomiya Harushige Ub			1.9 (9) Masaki Jinzaburō GK; K	
	Chief of First Bureau	28.3.10 (12) Hata Shunroku	8.1 (13) Tatekawa Yoshitsugu Ub			
	Chief of Strategy Section	30.8.1 (17) Suzuki Shigeyasu	8.1 (19) Imamura Hitoshi		2.10 (16) Obata GK	4.11(22) Suzuki GK Toshishirō Yorimichi
	Chief of Second Bureau	29.8.1 (13) Tatekawa Yoshitsugu Ub	8.1 (14) Hashimoto Toranosuke Ub		4.11 (16) Nagata Tetsuzan GK	
	Chief of Third Bureau	30.8.1 (14) Oki Naomichi			4.11 (16) Obata Toshishirō GK; K	
O T H E R S	Inspector General of Military Education	27.8.26 (3) Mutō Nobuyoshi GK			5.26 (8) Hayashi Senjūrō GK	
	Chief of Head Office in the Inspectorate	29.8.1 (9) Hayashi Nariyuki	8.1 (9) Araki Sadao GK		1.9 (10) Kawashima Yoshiyuki	5.26 (12) Kashii Kōhei GK; K
	Commander Officer of Kwantung Army	30.6.3 (8) Hishikari Taka GK	8.1 (9) Honjō Shigeru Ub		8.8 (3) Mutō Nobuyoshi GK	
	Commander Officer of Taiwan Army	30.6.3 (8) Watanabe Jōtaro	8.1 (9) Masaki Jinzaburō GK		1.9 (9) Abe Nobuyuki Ub	
	Provost Marshal	27.3.5 (7) Mine Yukimatsu	8.1 (12) Toyama Bunzō		2.29 (12) Hata Shinji GK; K	

1933	1934	1935	1936
	34.7.8 Okada Keisuke		36.3.9 Hirota Kōki
	1.23 (8) Hayashi Senjūrō T	9.5 (10) Kawashima Yoshiyuki	3.9 (10) Terauchi Hisaichi
	8.1 (14) Hashimoto Toranosuke Ub	9.21 (14) Furushō Motoo T	3.23 (15) Umezū Yoshijirō
	3.5 (16) Nagata Tetsuzan T	8.13 (15) Imai Kiyoshi T	3.23 (16) Isogai Rensuke
		10.11 (12) Murakami Keisaku K	3.28 (21) Machijiri Kazumoto
		3.15 (15) 8.13 (17) Imai Ushiroku Kiyoshi T Jun T	
	3.5 (15) Yamaoka Shigeatsu K	12.2 (18) Yamawaki Masataka	
6.18 (10) Ueda Kaneyoshi Ub	8.1 (12) Sugiyama Gen Ub		3.23 (14) Nishio Toshizō
	8.1 (15) Imai Kiyoshi T	3.15 (17) Suzuki Shigeyasu	3.23 (16) Kuwaki Takaakira
		8.1 (21) Ishihara Kanji	
8.1 (16) Isogai Rensuke		3.15 (16) Okamura Yasuji	3.23 (17) Watari Hisao
8.1 (14) Yamada Otozō	8.1 (17) Ushiroku Jun	9.7 (19) Tsukada Osamu	
	1.29 (9) Masaki Jinzaburō* K	7.16 (8) Watanabe Jōtarō	3.5 (10) Nishi Guchi
	3.5 (13) Hayashi Katsura Ub	12.2 (13) Nakamura Kōtarō	
7.29 (5) Hishikari Taka K	12.10 (6) Minami Jirō Ub		3.6 (10) Ueda Kaneyoshi Ub
8.1 (9) Matsui Iwane K	8.1 (15) Terauchi Hisaichi Ub	12.2 (12) Yanegawa Heisuke K	
	8.1 (15) Tashiro Kan'ichirō	9.21 (15) Iwasa Rokurō T	3.23 (15) Nakashima Kesago

*From this moment Masaki was left only with the important function of Military Councilor.

The numerals put in brackets after the date of appointment indicate "class", the year of graduation from the Rikushi. The letters given after a name indicate affiliation to a group (Ub = Ugakibatsu; GK = Gensho Kōdōha; K = Kōdōha; T = Tōseiha).