

SECRETMILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE
CAPTURED PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL BRANCH

Date of Report: 8 June 1945
 Date of Interrogation: 30-31 May 1945
 PW's Name: KIM, Ki Yon
 Serial No. and Rank: 4LJ-1374-MI
 Unit: Setsubutai
 Date & Place of Capture: 22 Aug 1944, Tinian

Lt. Wilson

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PREAMBLE

PW was born in 1920 in Cholla Pukto, Korea. His registered domicile is Somchol I, Pungsang Myon, Sunchang Kun (Junsho-gun), Cholla Pukto. He is uneducated, below average in intelligence and most of his life was spent on his father's farm. Prisoner is cooperative and hates the Japanese. Statements contained herein are considered fairly reliable.

CAPTURE

PW was captured on 22 Aug 1944 by U. S. troops while hiding out in an air-raid shelter on Tinian.

COMMUNICATIONS

Railroads: The construction of a railroad bed and bridges between Tamyang (Tanyo) and Koksong (Kokujo), Cholla Namdo, had been completed in January 1944; however, no rails had been laid because of an iron shortage.

SPECIAL INTELLIGENCE*KEIKI DO*

Allied PsW: From April to June 1943, PW worked as a stevedore at Inchon (Jinsen). At that time 40 American PsW were loading and unloading iron ore and coal on piers No. 1 and No. 2. There were 2 Japanese soldiers, armed with pistols, guarding the group. Apparently the guards could not speak English, as all instructions were given to the prisoners by hand signals. Although PW and other Koreans were working alongside the Americans, they were not allowed to speak or communicate with them in any way. Occasionally Koreans would give them cigarettes when they were not in view of the guards; however, if caught, both parties would get a beating. (PW never observed this beating but heard that it had been done). The Americans appeared to be undernourished. PW did not know where the prison camp was located or how many prisoners were in it.

A PW camp was reported to be in Pusan (Fusan), but Prisoner can give no details.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is based on questionnaire "Interrogation of Koreans, List #78, 28 March 1945." Observations as recent as January 1944.

The village headman is always a Korean selected by the villagers, but approved

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by the Japanese police.

The Myon headman (Kunsyu) is usually a Japanese. A Kun is usually headed by a Japanese, but in some counties this office may be held by a Korean.

In PW's village (Somchol I, Pungsang Myon, Sunchang Kun, Cholla Pukto), 6 men had been conscripted to work in coal mines in Japan for one or two years. Families of farmers who are conscripted must take care of the farm and make a living by whatever means they can. No allotment is given them by the government. PW heard that Korean laborers in Japan are paid 1 or 2 yen per day; they are treated harshly, receiving little food, and are kept in enclosed areas as if they were prisoners.

Koreans have not been allowed to emigrate to Manchuria or Japan since 1942.

All Koreans are rationed to a point near starvation. PW cannot give figures on the rice allotment, but states that the amount was too little for a working man to live on. Many Koreans had to eat the inner bark of trees and various kinds of weeds in order to keep from starving to death. PW observation January 1944.

Since the war the yield of all crops has been lessened because of the absence of commercial fertilizers. The 1942 rice crop was especially low because of the lack of rain.

In spite of the fact that there is a labor shortage and that farmers are weakened by hunger, Koreans are still able to cultivate all the fields that were in use before the war. Women, children and old men help with this work.

Farmers have no ration tickets of any kind. Food rationing is determined by the police inspector who tells the farmer how much of each crop he can keep for his own use. Requests for clothing purchases must be made directly to the police.

Koreans are not allowed to travel unless they have a permit issued by the police. Pedestrians are often stopped by police and are asked questions about their home and business. There is a curfew law requiring everyone to be in his house by 2400 hours.

PW has heard stories about young Korean students who escaped to the mountains or to Manchuria to keep from being conscripted into military or labor units. No details.

There are no neighborhood associations (Tonari Gumi) or their equivalent, in Korean farm villages.

Educated youths of Korea are of two extreme classes: those who tend to rebel against Japanese rule and everything Japanese; and those, who tend to be pro-Japanese (PW believes these to be in the minority), trying to make the best of the few opportunities that are given them. Prisoner is sure that this latter group would be anti-Japanese once Japan was defeated. The uneducated accept Japanese rule with tolerance, but they all have the hope that eventually Korea will gain her independence.

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PW was forced into the "Setsubutai" by fear of imprisonment and persecution of his family. He was not threatened personally, but had heard stories about other Koreans who had been punished in this manner after refusing to enter these units.

Korean laborers in the South Pacific receive very rough treatment from the Japanese. They are often beaten for not doing a job well or quickly. PW knew a Korean Gunzoku who was nearly killed when a Japanese cut him across the face with a sword for not carrying out an order properly.

80 yen of a Korean Gunzoku's monthly pay is supposed to go to his dependents, but PW has never heard of this money reaching his family.

Prisoner first heard of the United Nations pledge (at Cairo) that "in due course" there would be an "Independent Korea" while he was a PW in Hawaii. He would like the opportunity to fight the Japanese, as will most Koreans, once they realize the ultimate defeat of Japan is possible. The majority of the Koreans would like to have all Japanese removed from Korea after the war.

A village government would be able to function very well without any special attention from outside sources after the United Nations had occupied Korea. Since the war, the main duties of the police in the village government have been the rationing of farm crops and conducting an occasional sanitary inspection.

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CHRONOLOGY

1944 - 5 Jan - Conscripted in Cholla Pukto, Korea, and sent to Yokohama to enter a Setsubutai.

Feb - Sailed for Saipan on SANTOS MARU. The AMERICA MARU and 2 destroyers were the other ships in the convoy.

2 Mar - Left Saipan for Tinian. Worked on roads and airfield.

22 Aug - Captured.

He was born in 1922 in Cholla Pukto, Korea. His registered domicile is Seochwi 3, Pungnam 1st, Seochwi 2nd (Seochwi 2nd), Cholla Pukto. He is an educated, well-read person in English and most of his life was spent on his father's farm. He is a cooperative and likes the Japanese. He has no other family members.

He was captured on 22 Aug 1944 by U. S. troops while working on an airfield on Tinian.

Background: The construction of a railroad had been stopped between Tientsin (Tientsin) and Kailash (Kailash), Cholla Pukto, but had resumed in January 1944; however, no rail had been laid because of an iron shortage.

GENERAL INFORMATION

At that time, from April to June 1943, he worked as a storekeeper at Tientsin (Tientsin). At that time, 40 Americans had been landed and unloading iron ore and coal on ships No. 1 and No. 2. There were 2 Japanese soldiers, armed with pistols, guarding the area. Apparently the guards could not speak English, so all instructions were given to the prisoners by hand signals. Although he and other Koreans were working alongside the Americans, they were not allowed to speak or communicate with them in any way. Occasionally Koreans would give them cigarettes when they were not in view of the guards; however, if caught, both parties would get a beating. He never observed this beating but heard that it had been done. The Americans appeared to be underworked. He did not know where the prison camp was located or how many prisoners were in it.

A 70 kg man was reported to be in Tientsin (Tientsin), but prisoner can give no details.

INTERVIEW

The following is based on the interview of the prisoner of war, No. 11J-1374-MI, on 21 March 1945. The interview was conducted by the villagers, but approved by the Japanese.

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