

Jap Army Policy

GENERAL

SECRET

JAPANESE POLICY WITH REGARD TO DISPOSAL AND TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

From a number of enemy captured documents it has become possible to get some idea of the Japanese policy with regard to the disposal and treatment of prisoners-of-war. The most comprehensive instructions yet to fall into our hands are contained in a cyclostyled document entitled "Rules for the Handling of Prisoners-of-War". It is evident from this document that in theory the Japanese Army has definite rules for the disposal of prisoners-of-war; but the interesting part of this document is the fact that there is a definite distinction made between Indian and 'white' prisoners-of-war.

Particular emphasis is laid on the treatment of Indians prisoners-of-war with the admitted intention of using them "to augment the fighting strength of the Indian National Army" and to impress them with "the Imperial Army's true attitude towards India". 'White' prisoners-of-war on the other hand, are to be interned in prisoner-of-war camps as soon as examination has been concluded, except in exceptional circumstances. What these circumstances are, is not stated, and it would appear that the decision as to what constitutes an exceptional circumstance is left entirely to the local commander. This undoubtedly accounts for the numerous cases of bayonetting and shooting of 'white' prisoners-of-war and the pencilled jotting found in a notebook which belonged to a Japanese officer which reads, "Do not kill Indians - kill whites, but not officers or those who understand Japanese". In fact, the inference to be obtained from the captured documents, which are reproduced as an Appendix 'B' to this Summary, is that although the Japanese High Command have issued no specific orders that 'white' prisoners-of-war will be killed, the practice is at least tolerated, and that their disposal is left entirely in the hands of local commanders.

Source: Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 142, Sections "A" and "D", S.E.ASIA, INDIA and FAR EAST, dated 21 July 1944, JICA No. 4362, routed to Op-16-FE.

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