

# Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto and His Manner of Death Re-considered

Jiro Anzai

Lies dormant in the naked data  
Soon after the occurrence of any event  
Is the Key to the kingdom of its truth.  
Equally dormant in the spilled data  
By part undertakers in the event,  
Long after its fading truth,  
Lies the Key to the maze of the same  
Truth now revived! Or else the shame  
On thee! —Jiro Anzai, a historical psychologist—<sup>1)</sup>

Once again another bright star has fallen!

How much darker has the road ahead grown.

—Vice Admiral M. Ugaki—<sup>2)</sup>

(The above-quoted shorter poem was one made by Vice Admiral Matome Ugaki, on the occasion of his learning the sudden death of Admiral Mineichi Koga, a close friend and the successor of the late Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto as C-in-C of the Imperial Japanese Navy's Combined Fleet.)

## A Telegramme That Shook The IJN From Its Foundations

Telegramme Dest. : The Shared Signals (Covered Addressees); To The Naval Ministry and  
The Chief of The Naval General Staff

Top Secret: 181430

Classifications: Ko's 1st Info.

Sender: Vice Admiral Jinichi Kusaka, C-in-C of the South-Eastern Fleet

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1) Jiro Anzai, "The Final Secrets — Left-over from the PHA," Maru, Dec., 1991, pp. 76-83.

2) Matome Ugaki, *Sensoroku Vol. 1*, Shuppan-kyodo-sha, 1953, p. 17.

“Medium attackers carrying the members of the Combined Fleet HQ, escorted by six fighters, had been challenged by more than ten fighters, and in the following mêlée, No. 1 plane carrying C-in-C (A), Combined Fleet’s Surgeon (C), Staff Officer Toibana (E), an aides-de-camp (F), had caught fire and glided down in a shallow angle into the jungle below, estimated 11 miles west of QBV (Buin). No. 2 plane, carrying Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Ugaki (B), Paymaster Rear Admiral (D), Chief Weather Analysis Officer (G), Staff Communications Officer (H), Staff Officer Muroi (I) on board, had made an emergency ditching on the waters off and south of the Moiga (sic) point. What has been found up to the present, both B and D are rescued, though wounded. Search and rescue efforts are still on. Here-after all the outgoing communications on this matter be referred to as the *Ko-info.*, and that all duty functions be referred to the above-mentioned alphabetical letterings as indicated in brackets.<sup>3)</sup>”

When the fore-mentioned report, executed in the name of the South-Eastern Fleet Vice Admiral Kusaka had reached the Naval Ministry and the Naval General Staff at the Kasumigaseki in Tokyo, it was a little over the middle of April, 1943 (or the 18th day of the 4th month <April> of the year Showa 18th) where there groves of cherry trees were shedding their pink-white blossoms in benign breezes.

Yes, indeed, half a century before to the day or April 18th of the year 1943, the central figure in the above-mentioned telegramme, Admiral Yamamoto, C-in-C of the Combined Fleet and his accompanying staff officers such as his Air Staff Officer Lieutenant Commander Toibana and others, altogether 11 men aboard the Mitsubishi’s Type 1 Medium Attacker (Betty in the American designation) whose serial number 323-*go* craft (bi-motored with the same Mitsubishi’s Mars-11 engines) was suddenly attacked by a flight or two of the US Army’s P-38 fighters.

They had come flying a maximum-range trans-oceanic mission so as to ambush Yamamoto in the doomed craft. And in short, No. 1 aircraft fell into the Bougainville jungles below, all eleven men aboard killed.

To recapitulate, the 11 persons including the crew had succumbed to their respective deaths.

Although the writer of this article would hardly need to remind the reader of the following, it should be recalled that the very date of the ambush had happened to have been the unwelcome anniversary of the Doolittle’s Tokyo Air Raid, the Raid of which had caused Admiral Yamamoto to lose his face quite devastatingly just one year before the day!

Now back to the day’s carnage, the toll had spread even to the number 2 plane that car-

3) Self-Defense Research Inst. edit., *Asagumosenshi* vol. 4, Asagumo-shuppan.

ried the Chief of Staff Ugaki and other high-ranking officers among his staff's. The fate of this No. 2 plane serially numbered 326 had, however, less in the amount of punishments taken; for, having ditched onto the seas off the said point, its sole surviving crew or its chief pilot had survived the crash, together with Vice Admiral Ugaki and Paymaster Rear Admiral, though the latter two were heavily wounded.

Why do you bring up that ancient story again, with  
the lapse of almost half a century afterwards?

The reader would posit a question like the above heading, knowing or believing all of us so interested in the Pacific War, especially that ambushed death of Admiral Yamamoto's and its manner were things of *fait accompli*, and that nothing more can be added to or subtracted from them. At first sight, the reason seems to stand up well. But the facts should have been betraying other and much more sinister implications that demand further perusal and re-considerations.

Having telescoped the past hysteresis of this peculiar event overlapping the individual as well as group hystereses of people participated in the event, from possibly all the angles, the writer of this article cannot but conclude a series of such differing and contradictory informations as well as evidences that one has to dig into the far deeper strata so as to reach the possible truth.

There are indeed several different interpretations on the singular event of Admiral Yamamoto's death that took place on the 18th April, 1943.

Categorized, they are as follows:

- (1) The instantaneous death caused by the P-38s attacks in the mid-air mêlée
- (2) The post-crash death of instantaneous nature
- (3) Survived the crash, but died of the severe wound sometime later
- (4) The deliberate fulfillment of his own death wishes
- (5) The post-death flight or the P-38s' group attacks or their ambush shot down only the coffin flight, thus creating the heroic myth of Yamamoto's death in the mid-air
- (6) Japanese mutilation upon the admiral's corpse, dead or alive

Of these six differing theories, Nos. 4 and 5 are mine (Anzai's), of the latter two, the writer of this article is to deal later.

As the reader would naturally see, the most problematic as well as astounding are Dr.

Chikamasa Ninagawa's Nos. 3 and 6 theories or postulates. But the writer of this article would like to call the reader's especial attention to the fact that Dr. Ninagawa's what seemed to be too fantastic a theory is backed up with the existence of a testamentary booklet entitled "*Kawasaki No. 100th Bank's gift notebook*,"<sup>4)</sup> in which astonishing reveals concerning Admiral's very secrets are contained. The original owner of this notebook was none other than the late Army Surgeon and Captain Chikahiro Ninagawa, elder brother to Dr. Chikamasa Ninagawa. The contents of this booklet happened to be a coroner's note on the late Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's corpse!

The existence of this much enigmatic notebook did not come to my attention until Kojinsha Publishing Company did publish this information in two different books by the above-mentioned Dr. Chikamasa's pen. The former entitled *The Coroner's Note on Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's* was published in 1971, and the second one titled *The Last of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto* was come out in 1986. To these books just mentioned in the above, the writer of this article is much indebted, and no doubt would like to make much use of them.

However, nearly two decades and a half before, I did publish my own independent study which was related to the same subject; in fact, I had it published in an article entitled, "*The Navy that had been lured into the No. 4 Death Snares*,"<sup>5)</sup> in the September issue of the *Bungeishunju*, in the year 1966. This article of mine, however, interpreted the same incident as the inevitable end result of Admiral's death wishes, dwelling much on the unconscious play of psychic nature woven into the person and temperament of the great Admiral's.

Despite all this preamble, some of you readers might challenge the writer by saying not only the writer's absurd theory but even the two books by Dr. Ninagawa have yet scarcely caught the attention of war historians, except rare few. Against these dissenters, I would like to urge your individual re-evaluation on the followings.

### A Sea-monster Hypothesis can be of some avail

In the field of oceanographic physics there exists a particular phenomenon called a sea-monster phenomenon. For all the phantastic entitling the mechanism of this phenomenon, once understood, is rather simple.

There exists a phenomenon that goes by the above-mentioned nomenclature; it can be

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4) Chikamasa Ninagawa, *The Coroner's Note On Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto*, Kojinsha, 1971.

5) Jiro Anzai, "*The Navy that had been lured into the number 4 Death Snares*," *Bun-gei-shunju Magazine*, Sept., 1966, pp. 308-312.

observed on the waters near the river mouth where there occurs a distinct separation of waters into the salt-water layer and fresh-water one; whereupon a hapless little boat drifted into the area, would find herself stuck as if in the doldrums, or as though her bottom were in the grips of a sea-phantom's. What is really happening is, all the energies generated by the rowing of the crew are used up in making what in the oceanographic physics called "Standing Waves," the waves of such would make up a series of useless wave pattern amidst the boundary layer between the fore-mentioned fresh- and sea-water layers. Essentially the same sort of phenomenon is reported to have been observed by the famous explorer Nansen on one of his Polar expeditions.

What had been there and then, is explained by physicists, as a work of oceano-physical vector, not the work of such the sea-monster's. What happens in a gist is all the energies are being dissipated into the boundary layer betwixt the fresh- and sea-water layers, after having made a series of standing waves which contribute nothing in the way of propelling thrust.

The facts that Dr. Chikahiro Ninagawa's theory of the late Admiral Yamamoto's death as the post-flight one of some allegedly malicious intention and that Prof Anzai's pre-flight suicide theory both have not produced any earth-shaking effects are somewhat akin to these sea-monster phenomena. What we have been doing in the field of Yamamotology have been causing nothing but "standing waves" amidst the boundary layer of the un-conscious collective human psyche's.

One thing the writer of this article would like to emphasize is the fact that many of the allegedly strong points of views have been based on the said Army Surgeon's notebook entitled "*Kawasaki No. 100 Bank's*." Yes, indeed, among this rather most ordinary innocuous-looking notebook, there exists a dynamite key to unlock the enigma not only of the late Admiral's mysterious death, but also the sealed archives of the entire Pacific War histories. The above-mentioned is rather too sweeping a statement, but possible import and implications go far beyond one's fathoming.

Just think or re-consider the circumstances under which this dynamite-concealed booklet had been brought back into the hands of Dr. Chikamasa or the deceased Army Surgeon Capatain Chikahiro Ninagawa's younger brother. If you are still baffled, you should re-consider the existence of the utmost severity in the censorship that had been forced upon the Japanese repatriate before he or she is allowed to come home. Inasmuch as we know the contents extraordinary of the said *Kawasaki No. 100 Bank's* gift notebook, we can only be amazed at the slackness (?) of the Allied Forces' censor who had enabled the *emissary* (?) to pass the mountainous hurdles! So much for this time, the writer of this article is cer-

tainly come to further analysis in the part II.

Let's now be back at the crash site for much the narrower but still important analysis. According to the said notebook left for us for our perusal, Army Surgeon Captain Chikahiro Ninagawa tells us that the late Admiral Yamamoto had not been found seated in the cockpit, but found sitting in a bucket-seatlike contraption that seemed to have been shot out of the severed midship section of the No. 323 Aircraft.

For all that, Army Lieutenant Sunahama, the seemingly first arrived rescue team leader, testifies to this day that Yamamoto's face looked as lively and comely as a living man's,<sup>6)</sup> that he was holding in his white gloved hands, a sword; and that he had been found remaining in a seat, in a very dignified posture. Having scrutinized his report further, we find No. 1 aircraft or 323-go did not land in a natural clearing among the jungles, but the plane itself hacked it out by its paired prop-rotations and with its fuselage and wings as a sort of a giant's axe. Yes, indeed, the said clearing had been forced out into an abrupt existence by those horrendous swinging actions of last-minute propeller rotations and impacts of forced landings. With her 25-metre-spanned leading edges of the wings, not to mention of the Betty's equally huge fuselage cigar-shaped. To add, the very encountering of the Betty's bulk with the dense jungle had resulted in quartering of the invaded aircraft itself into several huge rinds, as seen in all the search-and-rescue parties' various and sundry sketches.

Had the process of crash and subsequent disintegrations been true, how could we have reconciled with other circumstantial evidences, especially with the very account left by the survived Vice Admiral Ugaki's oral statement? Especially with many postures and positions taken by the dead Admiral Yamamoto and his medical counsellor Rear Admiral Takada's position inasmuch as the rear admiral's body was found to have been in a sprawled position some 15 meters off the cracked-up midship section of the medium attacker's fuselage. According to another and one of the most decisive witnesses Lieutenant Sunahama of the IJA (Imperial Japanese Army), there in the cockpit were five to six charred-up corpses; these could have been none other than of the original six crew members, and one missing later found to have been thrown clearly out of the cockpit onto the dense jungled part some 15 meters or so ahead. These taken together, completely deny the possibility of Yamamoto's in the cockpit section; at least during the latter phase of the battling flight of 323-go craft!

This assumption backed up with the remaining evidences squarely collides with the Ugaki's descriptions. Why?

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6) M. Ugaki, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Pertaining to the above-mentioned interpretation of his, the writer of this article would like to call the reader's attention to the following: i. e. , the peculiar structure of this class of medium attacker (torpedo/level bombing one) and its fuel-carrying system in particulars. Called "integral tank system" it was the system almost unthinkable in other nations' military planes. Kiro Honjo of the Mitsubishi's Bomber Design Division, another whiz kid alongside Jiro Horigoshi of the Zero fighter design, had turned the entire wings into literally flying gas tanks. This device in the end had come to result in its earning such the infamous nicknames as "No. 1 One-shot Lighter" or the "Suicide Plane."

The above point itself is not chosen here by this article writer from the wise-after-the-event denunciation, however. What the writer of this article wants to call the reader's attention is; this arrangement and the subsequent disaster reports by Sunahama and all other parties directly collide with the Ugaki's oral report of the incident a year later (although taken *verbaitum* by Lieutenant J. G. Ebina of the IJNVR <Imperial Japanese Navy's Volunteer Reserve> and somehow walked into the so-called Ugaki diaries, published after the WW II).

"No. 2 craft is seen flying in a slightly oblique position, left and behind of No. 2 plane. The formation is so skilfully maintained that one would get a feeling as though wingtips of both the craft were touching against each other's. *The profile of our C-in-C as he is being seated in the commander's seat*, and the sight of someone moving to and fro is clearly observed..."<sup>7)</sup> (Italics are mine)

Despite the above-mentioned statement by Vice-Admiral Ugaki, even the position of the C-in-C's differs as describers differ. As forementioned, or in the Ninagawa's as well as rescue parties' Yamamoto was not occupying the cockpit seat! Moreover, had he been occupying one of the cockpit seats, he could not have survived the fate of charred corpse through the gasoline burst; in fact, there in the cockpit were altogether six charred corpses, or else five were there as charred-up masses, one of them being thrown out of the cockpit on-to the jungle ahead and obliquely right of the cockpit; this one was a pilotcapped corpse of a young man, and of course not Yamamoto's. These facts taken together, Vice-Admiral Ugaki's statement seems a sort of fabrication of the first order.

Moreover, according to many of the witnesses' accounts, on the port-sonson side sat GF's (Combined Fleet's) Staff Surgeon Rear Admiral Takada. We are to deal with his case, later as my exposition proceeds.

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7) M. Ugaki, *Sensoroku Vol. 2*, p. 293.

### Just in what manner did Naval Surgeon Takada die?

The above sub-titled words happened to have been the very utterance that fell out of Lieutenant Commander Tabuchi's mouth in the post-war days. It should be emphasized that this lieutenant commander was the very person that had examined the corpse of Admiral Yamamoto on the 21st April of 1943, in the fore-noon at that day, within a clearing secretly made off the Buin's Base Hospital whose head was Lieutenant Commander and Surgeon Tabuchi.

"Just in what manner did Naval Surgeon Takada die?"<sup>8)</sup> were the exact words which had been voiced by Tabuchi when he was first interviewed by the truth-seeking Dr. Chikamasa Ninagawa. Tabuchi's declaration should have flabbergasted him inasmuch as both men were of medical profession and doctors of long standing.

The enigmas concerning the case of Admiral Yamamoto's further more intensify. That is; the loss of the late Chief of Staff Ugaki's crucial pages out of his ever-more important war-time diaries; they had been lost due to the careless (?) mishandling by the war-survived Kuroshima, on the flimsy pretext that the same person is going to use the journal at the Tokyo's International Military Tribunal Court. But even to this day we are unable to locate an episode of ex-Rear Admiral's testifying at the said Court, quoting from the borrowed journal pages!

The fascination of these enigmas multiplies, furthermore, to the extent that if we had thought our solving one problem, right the next moment still another problem would rise up, as if still another range appears to the explorer who had just crossed one summit, thinking he had crossed one-and final range to the destination.

Now, we are going to discuss the mechanical intricacies of the medium attacker's so as to help the reader to understand the situations involved.

To be fair to the plane's designer Kiro Honjyo, I would like to add the following: on the eve of his constructing the new, long-range attackers for the navy, he had amply advised on the feasibility of the four-engined attacker as the best solution for the future security of the IJN as well as of the nation, adding in his statement to the effect that with the two engines you can carry the plane and bomb/torpedo load as well, and with the other two, easily provide armaments and range as well, including self-sealing tanks. Alas, this sane proposal, out of healthy respect for the capabilities of the American fighters had been rudely brushed

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8) C. Ninagawa, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.

9) M. Ugaki, *op. cit.*, Vol I, p. 275.



off the Mitsubishi's drawing board by Vice Admiral Misao Wada in anger. As a result Honjyo had come to face the ordeal; that was how to cope with the heavily armoured Americans with the bi-motored medium attackers minus protections.

For all that, the Combined Fleet and the Naval General Staff did not back away from the severe range demand; the end result turned out to be not only the production of unprotected passenger-plane-like structure for the attacker but also the earner of horrible nick-naming of "one-shot lighter" or "suicide attacker."

It should be recalled also that the idea of long-range attackers is the key to the decisive victory over the oncoming might of the America's so-called "Ring Formation" in the mid-Pacific theatre, was the basic strategic concept fully endorsed by the younger-day Yamamoto as the real panacea.

So that the structural weakness that took its fate upon Yamamoto's *Betty* had been of Yamamoto's own mind and breed as well. It should be recalled, furthermore, one engine, soon after receiving bursts of P-38s' gunfires, got afire and began glowing in every second's lapse in its intensity. And by the time the said *Betty* had crash-landed, the original flames were met with running gasoline poured out of the bursted gastanks. The horrendous fireballs or evaporated gasoline flames should have fallen from behind into the cockpit part, making it into an instantaneous coffin amidst furnace situations, and thus engulfing all the crew members, with their bodies finally reduced into charred-up black masses.

This interpretation almost automatically negates the fore-mentioned theory of Admiral's taking the direct command of the very ship from the so-called commander's seat.

And yet, there still exists some degree of feasibility for the former's in the case of Admiral Yamamoto. It is as follows:

Some witnesses reported Lieutenant Commander and Air Staff Officer Toibana's<sup>10)</sup> uniformed corpse had been badly charred, and yet he had been seated far behind and just before the bulkhead of the so-called tail-end Cahrlie's position.

How could you figure out this extraordinary feat?

My answer can be; in the welter of the furnace, this loyal officer had pushed himself forwards and brought the Admiral out of the burning cockpit, and in so doing caught the fire on himself.

But there exists one drawback in the above interpretation. That is; the man of Yamamoto's calibre and integrity could not have reconciled with the act of cowardice on himself while his subordinates were in the welter of the inferno.

The above-mentioned seems to have given only a second credibility to what might have

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10) C. Ninagawa, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

occurred; but when considered the late Admiral's integrity in his words as well as deeds, and thus weighing various factors against others, we could not help feeling that it would fade into another case of impossibility.

### Self Termination or Yamamoto's Suicidal Death Took Place at 4:00 AM on the 18th of the 4th Month (April) of the Year 1943

Having telescoped all these possibilities, I now venture into introducing my own postulation; that is to say that our C-in-C Yamamoto should have committed his own determined death at 4:00 AM, before his scheduled boarding that 323-*go* aircraft at 6:00 AM at Rabaul, on April 18th, 1943.

In order to test this assumption, let us recall the disarrayed witnesses' accounts by various men and their groups who had engaged in the rescue works. For one thing, Lieutenant Sunahama of the IJN (The Imperial Japanese Army) and men under his command had testified that the admiral's corpse was found being seated in a seat, with a sword clasped in his gloved hands, but that sword without effort came unclasped. The fact of which could be taken as the very sign that hardening of the body was already gone by the time Sunahama party had reached the crash site.

On the other hand, Navy Lieutenant, J. G. Yoshida, who seemed to have arrived at the site later than the Sunahama's, tells us that he had found the C-in-C's corpse was lying near one of the engine nacelles, and likewise a naval surgeon in his white togs was found near by in a sprawled position. Inasmuch as the two high-ranking officers had not walked off the original site, it can be assumed that either Sunahama or others must have re-arranged the bodies. Despite all these many contradictory sayings or actual findings, there at the back of my psychologist's mind is a nagging thought of lessons from the cognitive psychology's or criminal psychology's workshop experiences that even if we are shown the same stage action, practically each and every one would report his or their markedly differing observations.

The greatest service executed by the Ninagawa brothers is the fact that they have succeeded in preserving the fore-mentioned document for us the posterity, and that they had had courage enough to have their accounts published in two separate book forms, despite the pressure of unreasonable, negative factions. It had been further revealed by Dr. Ninagawa that the real sins had been committed by the officers of higher ranks whose names seem to have been appearing on almost all the important annals and archives of the official Japanese Navy's; it is, moreover, not of the irresponsible exposé, but the just cry of Prophet John's kind that his righteous axe had crashed the past falsehood to smithereens.

By his steadfast efforts and truth-seeking endeavours Dr. Chikamasa Ninagawa had crashed the heart of Dr. Tabuchi, once the top-level naval surgeon that had truly examined the late Admiral Yamamoto's corpse himself, on the 21st of April 1943, instead of his alleged saying in his past Navy days that he had examined the corpse aboard the sub-chaser No. 15, at 4 PM on the 20th!<sup>11)</sup>

It is tantamountingly important for us to recognize that the total confession had been obtained on his deletions and fabrications in the official records. Nevertheless, Dr. Ninagawa had not blamed Tabuchi a bit; in fact, he has been amply condoning him. But it should be noted that the same Ninagawa is not in such a magnanimously condoning spirit at the fore-mentioned two officers.; in fact, Dr. Ninagawa is not sparing his pen in his pointing accusing finger at Watanabe and Kuroshima, whose Lasputinean behaviours seem to have caused their protector Yamamoto's downfall.

Yes, we are indeed left bewildered when we learn the followings: (1) The gaping blank on the Yamamoto's naval coroner's report or his birth date was left blank; (2) The date on which Surgeon Tabuchi examined his corpse, was deliberately changed from the 21st as it confessed by Dr. Tabuchi in his civilian practice days; (3) the reason for this fabrication was; the doctor had done so in as much as his superior officer had made him do so!

For all that, to make up or fabricate any record is from the start a criminal offense. One thing for sure is, these did not happen accidentally; the things had been meditated for a long duration, and done deliberately, and even those by personal order of some dubious nature. To clinch the linkage theory of successive kind of conspiratory acts and actions, Dr. Tabuchi in muftis pronounces very categorically on the 20th day he happened not to be on board the sub-chaser No. 15, even though the official record carrying his own signature says of his presence.

Inasmuch as he had been at the Buin's Naval Base Hospital as its director, how could he have possibly been on board on such the craft, on the 20th, not to mention of his doing a coroner's inspection on the C-in-C's corpse on the deck?

In Tabuchi's post-war confidence to Dr. Ninagawa, two decades afterwards, on the morning of 21st, he was alerted to the stand-by position from the upper chain of command to the effect; to wait for the arrival of seriously wounded high-ranking officers, but what materialized finally was the examination of the Combined Fleet's C-in-C Admiral Yamamoto's corpse, amidst the hastily hacked-out clearing not far from the base hospital. Naval Surgeon Tabuchi of course went through a series of routine process as a coroner, but nothing more was asked from him.

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11) C. Ninagawa, *The Last of Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto*, Kojinsha, 1986.

What is really sickening are further possibilities for doubts in that had all these weird businesses into which Lieutenant Commander Tabuchi been dragged into are found true, what other heinous sins would have been committed by these high-ranking officers in the annals of the IJN until its defunction today? It should be recalled that not only the details of Admiral Yamamoto's death incident and surrounding events had been falsified, people at large have been left at the mercy of accidents to come to even an inkling of or a segment of truths, not to mention of "at 4:00 PM on the 20th April, 1943, as they brought up the honourable corpse on the sub-chaser No. 15's deck..." account.

This report goes on to pronounce that the coroner's examination was done to the corpse, by Tabuchi and the papers concerned were signed by Tabuchi and countersigned by Fleet's Surgeon Okubo!

For all these, Dr. Tabuchi now declares the date had been falsified; moreover, he had not been on the sub-chaser on the 20th; he could not have been, because of his capacity as the Buin Naval Base Hospital's director.

What makes us or anyone bewildered is the fact that the Combined Fleet's Staff Officer Watanabe and Naval Surgeon of the higher rank, Okubo (of the direct superior to Tabuchi) should have directed him to fabricate such the categorical data in the coroner's record and affidavit.

It should be noted that only two weeks previously, on the 4th of April (4th month) of the year 1943, the date of which happened to fall on the 59th anniversary for this Admiral, this staff officer Watanabe, together with Senior Operations Officer Captain Kuroshima, had been planning a spectacular fly-by for his fond Admiral, utilizing several hundreds of planes based at the Rabaul.

Under such the circumstances, how could they have forgotten the Birth Day of their Lordly Protector's? And yet, the blank that should have been filled with the very date (The 4th Day of The 4th Month) has been left out in blank to this day! Why is this? The medical officer of higher ranks such as Tabuchi and Okubo could not have forgotten such all-important data as the birthday of their C-in-C, and yet they have slipped the error into a historical eternity. Even if they had forgotten, their secretaries or aide-de-camps should have easily filled in the blank, even if a momental stupor would have taken a possession of those doctors.

All these thoughts taken together, make us to cast a web of doubts upon the conducts of those high-ranking officers.

What had happened there and then might have been as follows:

What happened there and then indeed might have been as follows: (1) the possible existence in the offenders' minds of the conscious as well as un-conscious mental inhibition (gagging) as in the guilt-laden commanders as W... and K... For it was only the duration of a fraction of a second or two they seemed to have succeeded in their gagging; no sooner had they thought than their conscious and un-conscious minds began receiving pangs of guilt. In fact such the fabrication act was the limit of their endurances. And the writer of this article believes that even these two commanders who had survived the war could not have escaped the impacts of the undeniable number 4 omen's.

To re-scan things with this line of reasoning, let's turn our search light to the following.

Though I have been entertaining the so-called No. 4 theory for along time, the basic structure of the number 4-omen is nothing new to the most Japanese; in fact, many foreign missionaries whose good part of lives had been spent in this country are aware of them just as in the Western counterpart of the unlucky Friday 13th omen. What is important, however, is the very fact that this number had crisscrossedly appeared in the wakes of the IJN's so-called glorious history that I myself had been lured into a very special study of these, and as its result I have come to my astonished realization that the numbers have taken their death tolls in the twists and turns of the IJN until its defunction on the 15th August, 1945.

### The Existence of The Unlucky 4-omens that had crisscrossed the entire wakes of the now-defunct Imperial Japanese Navy<sup>12)</sup>

That birthday, the day on which it usually brings one a lucky day, or at least has been lucky signs, had been turning out a series of misfortunes for no other than our Yamamoto; now in the case of Yamamoto's successor Admiral Koga, his birth day, to be sure, did not fall on the 4th of the 4th month; never-the-less, even his life had been ominously bound up to the unluckiness of the 4th number; in fact, even this admiral disappeared aboard the 4-motored flying boat and lost in *April* 1st of 1944, for ever, but one theory has it that having been captured by Phillipino guerrillas but rescued by the Japanese army garrison on the island he had only to kill himself on the very fateful day, or June 4th (2nd anniversary of the Midway debacle), 1944!

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12) J. Anzai, "*The Navy that had been lured into the number 4 Death Snares*," *Bun-gei-shunju*, Sept., 1966, pp. 308-312.

In case of Yamamoto, its first known appearance occurred on the 4th month of 4th year of Showa (1929) for the then Captain Yamamoto, at the time commanding the aircraft carrier *Akagi*. It so happened that due to an unusually thick fog which developed off the Saishuto, he had come to lose all the aircraft ordered by him for a routine flight.

Next occurrence, was the so-called 4th Fleet Incident, in which the *Tokugata* (Special Type) destroyers *Hatsuyuki* and *Yugiri* happened to have lost their respective bows, due to the horrendous crests of the typhoon waves; it was said that the entire fleet had rammed into the 4th phase of the typhoon storms; so that ignoring the weather forecaster's warnings the doomed fleet had on its own rushed into the region where the storms would rage most furiously.

Inasmuch as these Tokugata destroyers had been believed to be of the most sea- and battle-worthy class, consternations they had felt were fathomless. Moreover, what had made the situation worst was the fact that of these two hapless ships, the destroyer *Hatsuyuki* was carrying in her bows all kinds of codes and ciphers with which the IJN would fight with its hypothetical enemies or USN or USSRN! Now in the case of the destroyer *Yugiri* her severed bows went down almost as fast as their severance, but in case of *Hatsuyuki* they did not.

Alas, the *Hatsuyuki*'s bows did not sink instantly but began to drift away from the locale and off the Fourth Fleet; all kinds of rescue endeavours had failed and finally the Fourth Fleet Command shelled the doomed bows into the ocean depths.

Quite by accident, the Chief of the Investigation Board happened to be that Admiral Kichisaburo Nomura, the very same man who was to become the 1940-41 ambassador of Japan to America, at that turmoiling pre-Pearl days. Moreover, the same Fourth Fleet's Investigation Board Committee included such familiar names as Vice-Admiral Yamamoto and Rear Admiral Koga on its list! The fateful year in which this tragic incident occurred was the year 1935. One of the latter officers, Koga was the very man who was to succeed Admiral Yamamoto at his death as C-in-C of the Combined Fleet. And if the writer reiterates, this same Koga happened to have died in April 1st, 1944, having boarded the 4-motored flying boat that took off the Palau islands, on the 31st of March, 1944.

It is more than significant to recall the fact that Yamamoto had been caught in the snares of the unlucky No. 4's can be easily deduced in his Chief-of-Staff Vice-Admiral Ugaki's war-time diaries. The following words on the day or June 4th, 1942 (5th in the Japanese dating) was recorded; but inasmuch as the area the forces deployed was beyond the 180 degrees international date changing line, the Japanese had lost the 4 carriers (*Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Hiryu* and *Soryu*) on the fourth day! The following words voiced by Admiral Yamamoto betray

beyond doubt, Yamamoto had been awakened to the past ordeal of the Fourth Fleet in the annals of the IJN as though virtual example of "The Persistence of Memory," by Dali's. It is betraying in the very words voiced at the Yamato's bridge by Ad. Yamamoto himself as follows:

"Had the crippled Akagi fallen into the enemy hands, disadvantages would be almost fathomless. Akagi's immediate scuttling be advised. In the year of Showa 10th (1935) during big maneuvers, the Fourth Fleet had run into a giant storm, and one destroyer whose severed bows might have contained living souls had been sunk by our own shelling under the command of Rear Admiral Komatsu. . . "

This very fact that in the midst of the debacle, Admiral was fast utilizing the example of the past tragedy, moreover of the Fourth Fleet's, is betraying beyond any doubt that his associative power was raised to the level of the unlucky number 4 omen's.

Out of the Midway debacle, one other anecdote is sticking out rather like a sore thumb.

That was Captain Kuroshima's wailing wishes that the carrier *Akagi*'s scuttling be spared. This same officer was to act far more strangely even at the very heights of the Guadalcanal campaign to the effect that he had deliberately tried to delay the sinking of the battleship *Hiei*. What Captain Kuroshima had proposed twice on separate occasions did feed an extra coal to the existing fiasco and availed the friendly force nothing.

In each case, it was the good fight on the fleets as well as Yamamoto's Chief of Staff Ugaki's Steadfast decisions and wise advices that saved Yamamoto from the total disgrace. Although this can be a model example of the wise-after-the-event thinking, one fact remains clearly that Captain Kuroshima's can hardly be considered Empfindsamkeitsinsel (An isle for one's emotional soothing), even though this officer's name in the Chinese characters certainly did contain the word island in its *shima* part.

But the world's histories have been abound with such absurd instances, one of such the disharmonious couple, being that of President Roosevelt and his fond Secretary Harry Hopkins.

For all these surface matters, why did the Fourth Fleet Incident of some seven years' past float up into the conscious level of Admiral Yamamoto, in the welter of the Midway debacles? The readers whose over-bearing perseverances had endured my reading may have been tired out of the recapitulation of the same numbered things, but to square the facts already mentioned, let me quote few poems out of the *Manyoshu*, that time-honoured volume of ten-thousand leaves (words) anthology as follows:

*Hatsuyuki* (First Fall of the Season's Snow!)

Fall, fall on in thousand droplets.  
 Look at them in deep meditations  
 As in the deep mountainside's funeral flowers,  
 I wish to creep across the void to you!

*Yugiri* (In the evening fog that rose)

Birds' charpings have been heard,  
 Along the Saho road.  
 That must've been much ruined for sight!

Before going into the meditation of the above-two poems, I would like to call the readers' especial attention to one other poem that is tucked into a space between the two ones just mentioned. It goes as follows:

## As the Okuyama's (interior mountain's)

*Shikimi* flowers,  
 I wish to cling and weep after you!

Its starting line is betraying one's wishes to go beyond this world. *Shikimi* is a shrub as well as flower often associated with the graveyard or Buddhistic funerals. Moreover, the person like Admiral Yamamoto whose mental faculty is strong in associative power might have read the very Chinese characters horizontally and if he had done so, the same word can be rendered *Ki-Mitsu* menaing Ultra-Secret.

And thus, he might have been easily recalling not only the Fourth Fleet's debacle, but the very sinking of the destroyer *Hatsuyuki's* doomed bows that had come to be dealt with the gun fire, so as to keep the code secrecy for ever.

To be sure the same unlucky 4 omen not only did the service to the US Navy but availed it greatly. For at the Wake Island campaign a couple of Grumman F-4-fighters played a havoc among the Japanese invaders, sinking one Japanese destroyer, setting afire the shipload of depth charges and damaging other shippings. The island's shore battery blew apart another destroyer at the distance of 4-thousand metres off the island. It should be recalled, furthermore, that on the Wake Island Campaign alone the Fourth Fleet had lost 4 ships, with its aim repulsed until the island's defense had come overpowered by the carrier plane's strength dispatched from Admiral Yamaguchi's 2nd Air Fleet (that was on its all-vic-



torious journey back from the Hawaiian campaign).

The unlucky Fourth Fleet also kept running into the foul omen weather in that at the Coral Sea battle, the same Fourth Fleet again took the very punishment, with the carrier *Zuikaku* losing most of their veteran pilots and planes, and the carrier *Shokaku* receiving three direct bomb hits on her deck, not to mention of lives lost. Moreover, the heavy damages inflicted on the two carriers had come to rob the hitherto-all-powerful Nagumo Forces' six-carrier strength of the said two, thus making their numbers to that omened 4-carrier strength! But the Nagumo forces so fed up on the victory disease had never dreamed of their own complete defeat.

Thus, long before the Midway Operations got started, available full-carrier strength had been whittled down to the level of the ominous number 4! And yet who, indeed, on the Japanese side, had been truly aware of the very fingers of God that would tell the end of the forces and their downfall? None but God can.

For all the above, had you been the avid reader of the *Manyoshu*, especially its twentieth volume, the volume abound with warriors' as well as their wives' poems, you might have guessed that none other than Yamamoto should have been assailed with some inkling; for in that warriors-congested volume there are two poems crowned with the very words as *Hatsuyuki* and *Yugiri*, the same words that had been painted on the bows of the two hapless destroyers sank in the Fourth Fleet Incident, back in 1935!

It is, therefore, more than a mere chance possibility that our Admiral had been rudely awakened to the omen-numbered 4th or Death-tolling numerosity.

Those Western-hemisphered readers might say that it is nothing new to the sailor or seaman; in fact, even that manly hero Admiral Halsey had made the CINCPAC HQ change the naming of his own carrier task force from the 13th to 16th, and even the date of the sortie from the 13th Friday to other innocuous date. This anecdote, though seems fishy, turns out to be more than true.

This fact, moreover, proves beyond any doubt the true commandship in the person of Admiral Halsey, in that he had exerted every faculty of his if he could have secured any element of security as well as good faith of his men under his command.

The un-explainable crop-ups of the numbers 11s have been seen in the wakes of Admiral Yamamoto whose graduation rank from the Etajima's Naval Academy happened to have been that number 11<sup>13)</sup>.

When that shelling of the destroyer *Hatsuyuki*'s bows had occurred, the number 11 was painted on the very bows, as the incident happened to have occurred during the peace-time navy. These embossed letterings happened to have occurred during the peace-time navy period. The embossed 11 letterings may have meant the 1st ship of the 1st unit of the destroyer flotilla. But curiously the same number 11 happens to coincide with Yamamoto's graduation number. For anyone who studied the so-called depths psychology, the import and implications of the figures so closely associated with one's significant life cycle stay very decisively throughout one's life. Thus, you would recall the Mitsubishi's *Betty* bomber or attacker happened to be equipped with the equally Mitsubished *Mars-11*<sup>14)</sup> engines! Moreover, when two commanders Watanabe and Kuroshima backed away from the doomed 323-go craft the numbers aboard turned out to be 11!

When we come to this sort of realization, it is not so far from the realization that the reason why Kuroshima had brushed off the apt advice by Admiral Ozawa's to the effect that they should have a full-strength fly-by escort. Far more than this assumption, the nagging question as well as suspicion rises as in a black cloud: as to the reason why these two officers whose protector had been none other than Yamamoto had come to literally banish Ozawa from his send-off at the Rabaul; this action of Kuroshima defies all the past manners and courtesies of the IJN, but telltaling the nature of the malice accumulated in the psyche of the black-gauled Kuroshima and Watanabe.

The another fact that seems to have been telltaling is why the thoughtful Tabuchi's intent to remove Admiral's combat dress for the memorial purpose was discouraged down with the insane shout of hot angers from above? It was indeed so harshly voiced that Surgeon Tabuchi was trembled like a kindergarten pupil. These strangely emotion-charged behaviours of both Watanabe and Kuroshima, beyond any room for doubt telltale only the extent of their frustrations? I think not.

These series of strangely emotions-laden symptoms can be a truths-covering syndrome, hiding behind them the truths of horrendous degree of fabrications.

As already accounted for by this article writer, it is more than plausible for us to see the

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13) J. Anzai, "*The Enigma of the IJN that had been lured into the Death Snares*," Super-mystery Magazine *Mu*,

white togs of the surgeon Admiral Takada's and of Paymaster Rear Admiral's should not have been interpreted as a mere breach of etiquette on their part, but as their efforts to comply with the superior's virtual ordering in purposive masquerading.

With the superficial reading on the Ugaki's famous diary accounts, we might get an impression that the rigid manners-abiding Ugaki had been irritated on finding the surgeon and paymaster couple and appeared in their whites, completely defying the agreement before that they would go aboard wearing the combat dress. But our second reading helped in the light of some further illuminations makes us to believe the whole things might have been parts of the masquerading of the fact that the Admiral had been found dead at 4 AM on the morning of that 18th April, 1943, and that all other activities including Ugaki's sham (?) angers might have been part and parcel of hiding the very truth of the suicidal death of Admiral Yamamoto at 4:00 AM on the morning of April 18th, 1943, exactly one year after the day of the Doolittle Air Raid, so as to atone for the Emperor.

The flight, had its truth been known, would have shamed Mrs. Agatha Christie to no end. In my view the whole thing or scheme, might have dwarfed the famous book entitled "Murder on the Orient Express." Had we encompassed the scope of Commanders Watanabe's and Kuroshima's true intent as the very authors of the funeral (*cortège*) flight, all the enigmas should have been cleared off, with all the black shrouds falling apart.

(To be Continued)