

SOUTHEAST ASIAN
MINORITIES IN THE
WARTIME
JAPANESE EMPIRE

SOUTHEAST ASIAN
MINORITIES IN THE
WARTIME
JAPANESE EMPIRE

Edited by Paul H. Kratoska



RoutledgeCurzon
Taylor & Francis Group

First Published in 2002
by RoutledgeCurzon
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by RoutledgeCurzon
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

RoutledgeCurzon is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

Editorial Matter © 2002 Paul H. Kratoska

Typeset in Stempel Garamond by LaserScript Ltd, Mitcham, Surrey
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Biddles Ltd, Guildford and King's Lynn

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or
reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic,
mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented,
including photocopying and recording, or in any
information storage or retrieval system, without permission in
writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-7007-1488-X

M

959.032

504

M

1080777

23 APR 2003
Perpustakaan Negara
Malaysia

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	viii
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	ix
Prologue	
<i>Paul H. Kratoska</i>	1
Japan and South-East Asia	
1 The Japanese Imperium and South-East Asia: An Overview	
<i>Gregory Clancey</i>	7
Burma/Myanmar	
2 The Karen of Burma under Japanese Rule	
<i>Paul H. Kratoska</i>	21
3 Between China and the Japanese: Wartime Affairs in Kokang State and the Failure of the Spiers Mission	
<i>Paul H. Kratoska</i>	39
Indonesia	
4 Japanese Policy towards the Chinese on Java, 1942-1945: A Preliminary Outline	
<i>Elly Touwen-Bouwisma</i>	55
5 Chinese Leadership and Organization in Yogyakarta during the Japanese Occupation	
<i>Didi Kwartanada</i>	65
6 In Pursuit of Mica: The Japanese and Highland Minorities in Sulawesi	
<i>Lorraine V. Aragon</i>	81
Malaya	
7 Japanese Army Policy toward the Chinese and Malay-Chinese Relations in Wartime Malaya	
<i>Cheah Boon Kheng</i>	97

Borneo

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 8 | The 1943 Kinabalu Uprising in Sabah
<i>Hara Fujio</i> | 111 |
| 9 | The Japanese Occupation and the Peoples of Sarawak
<i>Ooi Keat Gin</i> | 133 |
| 10 | The Pontianak Incidents and the Ethnic Chinese in
Wartime Western Borneo
<i>Kaori Maekawa</i> | 153 |

Thailand

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 11 | The Indian Community and the Indian Independence Movement
in Thailand during World War II
<i>E. Bruce Reynolds</i> | 170 |
| 12 | The Thai-Japanese Alliance and the Chinese of Thailand
<i>Eiji Murashima</i> | 192 |

Philippines

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 13 | The Battle of Tamparan: A Maranao Response to the Japanese
Occupation of Mindanao
<i>Kawashima Midori</i> | 223 |
|----|---|-----|

Maps

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1 | South-East Asia showing locations discussed in the book | 8 |
| 2 | Burma (Myanmar) | 22 |
| 3 | Western Central Sulawesi Highlands | 87 |
| 4 | Borneo | 112 |
| 5 | Thailand | 171 |
| 6 | Lake Lanao Area | 224 |
| 7 | Site of the Battle of Tamparan | 229 |
| | <i>Index</i> | 244 |



Preface

The origins of this volume date back to 1995, when the Department of History at the National University of Singapore, with financial backing from the Toyota Foundation, held a conference dealing with the Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia. Some of the papers dealt with the experiences of minorities in the region, and this topic seemed to merit further examination. At an earlier conference in Japan, also sponsored by the Toyota Foundation, two participants had delivered papers in Japanese that dealt with minorities, and the Foundation agreed to pay for translations of these essays. It also provided additional funds to help cover editorial expenses for a volume of essays on this subject. I am deeply appreciative of this support.

The editorial process was long and sometimes arduous. I am very grateful to the authors for their patience in dealing with repeated requests for additional information, and their acceptance of numerous editorial changes to the manuscripts. I should also like to thank Malcolm Campbell and Peter Sowden of Curzon Press for their encouragement and support.

Paul H. Kratoska
Singapore
November, 2001

Acknowledgements

Chapter 6, 'In Pursuit of Mica: The Japanese and Highland Minorities in Sulawesi' by Lorraine Aragon, is a revised version of "Japanese Time" and the Mica Mine: Occupation Experiences in the Central Sulawesi Highlands', which appeared in the March 1996 issue of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, volume 27 number 1, pp. 49-63.

Chapter 12, 'The Thai-Japanese Alliance and the Chinese of Thailand' by Eiji MURASHIMA, is a revised version of an article published in Japanese under the title 'Nit-Thai Doumei to Thai Kakyo' in the Seikei University Journal *Ajia Taiheiyō Kenkyū* [Review of Asian and Pacific Studies], number 13 (Jan. 1996), pp. 43-71.

Chapter 13, 'The Battle of Tamparan: A Maranao Response to the Japanese Occupation of Mindanao' by KAWASHIMA Midori, is a revised version of 'Nihon senryōka Mindanao to ni okeru musurimu nomin no teiko: Tamparan jiken o megutte', published in *Tonan ajia shi no naka no nihonsenryō* (Japanese Occupation in the Southeast Asian History), ed. Kurasawa Aiko, Tokyo, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1997.

These articles are reprinted with permission.

Illustrations for Chapter 3 were provided by Yang Li, and I am grateful to her for sharing these family portraits. The illustrations in Chapter 13 are wartime photographs provided by Kawashima Midori.

The maps were drawn by Chong Mui Gek.

Notes on Contributors

Lorraine V. ARAGON is Visiting Associate Professor with the Department of Anthropology, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA. Her book, *Fields of the Lord: Animism, Christian Minorities, and State Development in Indonesia*, was published in 2000 by the University of Hawai'i Press. Her other research interests include colonialism, missionary activity, ethnic minorities and developing states, and communal conflicts in Indonesia.

CHEAH Boon Kheng was formerly Professor in the History Section, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia. He has carried out research into the anti-Japanese resistance in Malaya, wartime social unrest, Japanese policies on ethnic relations and memoirs of the war. His publications on the Occupation period include *Red Star Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict during the Japanese Occupation, 1941-45*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1983, and 'Memory as History and Moral Judgement: Oral and Written Accounts of the Japanese Occupation of Malaya,' in *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, ed. P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999.

Gregory CLANCEY is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History of the National University of Singapore. He received his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1998. His research is mainly in Japanese cultural history from Meiji through early Showa. He is presently at work on a book manuscript entitled *Foreign Knowledge*, concerning the relation between Japanese science, art, technology and imperialism. His other research interests include science and Japanese colonialism in Taiwan, the construction of Hokkaido, and the cultural history of natural disaster.

HARA Fujio is a Professor in the Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Foreign Studies, Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan. He has written extensively on the Japanese Occupation in Southeast Asia, and on the Chinese community in Malaya. His principal publications include: *Malayan Chinese and China:*

Conversion in Identity Consciousness 1945–1957, Tokyo, Institute of Developing Economies, 1997; 'Japanese Activities in North Borneo before World War: Focus on Labour Immigrants', *Sejarah* (Journal of the Dept. of History, University of Malaya), 2, 1993; 'The Japanese Occupation of Malaya and the Chinese Community', in *Malaya and Singapore during the Japanese Occupation*, ed. Paul H. Kratoska, Singapore, Journal of Southeast Asian Studies Special Publications No. 3, 1995. In addition to his work on the war period, Professor Hara has done research on the Communist Party of Malaya, the North Kalimantan Communist Party, and historical relations between Malaya (Malaysia) and Japan.

KAWASHIMA Midori is an Associate Professor of Southeast Asian Studies with the Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University, in Tokyo, Japan. She has done research on Japanese policy toward the Muslims in Southeast Asia and on Muslim communities in the Southern Philippines during the Japanese Occupation. More generally she works on political, social and religious movements among Philippine Muslims, and on religious and ethnic conflicts. Her publications include 'Japanese Administrative Policy towards the Moros in Lanao', in *The Philippines under Japan: Occupation Policy and Reaction*, ed. Ikehata Setsuho and Ricardo Trota Jose, Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999; 'The Records of the Former Japanese Army Concerning the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 27, 1, March 1996; and *Boeikenkyujo Shozo Nihon no Firipin Senryo Kankei Shiryo Mokuroku* [Bibliography of Historical Materials Relating to the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines in the National Institute for Defense Studies], comp. Kawashima Midori, Tokyo, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1994.

Paul H. KRATOSKA teaches in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore. His research activities focus on Southeast Asia, and include work on the Japanese Occupation, food production and nutrition, minorities and nationalism. He is the Editor of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* and founding editor of the H-SEASIA internet discussion list. His publications include *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore: A Social and Economic History*, London, C. Hurst, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1998; *Food Supplies and the Japanese Occupation in Southeast Asia* (edited), London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Publishing Co., and New York, St Martin's Press, 1998; 'Imperial Unity versus Local Autonomy: British Malaya and the Depression of the 1930s', in *Weathering the Storm: The Economies of Southeast Asia in the 1930s Depression*, ed. Peter Boomgaard and Ian Brown, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001; (with Benjamin Batson), 'Nationalism and Modernist Reform in Southeast Asia', *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, Vol. II.

Didi KWARTANADA received his bachelor's degree in history from Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in 1997. From 1998 to 2001 he was a Research Associate with the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan. His research deals with the Indonesian Chinese during the first half of the twentieth century and with Japanese policy toward foreign minorities during the Occupation of Indonesia, including the Jews of Indonesia. His publications include 'Minoritas Tionghoa dan Fasisme Jepang' [The Chinese Minority and Japanese Fascism], in *Penguasa Ekonomi dan Siasat Pengusaha Tionghoa*, Yogyakarta, Kanisius, 1996, 3rd ed. 1998, German translation forthcoming, and 'Taisei Ikoki ni Okeru Gendai Indonesia Kajin Shakai no Henyo' [The Chinese during the Current Political Transition] (in Japanese), in *Indonesia Yuragu Gunto Kokka* [The Indonesian Archipelago in Turmoil], ed. Ken'ichi Goto, Tokyo, Waseda University Press, 2000. He is co-author of a book entitled *Less is More: 36 Tahun P. T. Gelora Djaja*, Surabaya, Gelora Djaja, 2000, which recounts the history of a major cigarette company.

Kaori MAEKAWA is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan, and a Research Fellow of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. Her research focuses on the mobilization of manpower during the Japanese occupation in Indonesia and New Guinea, and on regionalism in Indonesia during the 1940s and 1950s. She has published an article entitled 'Native troops under Japanese Occupation in Indonesia: the Enlargement of the Hei-ho System and Their Perception of Their Experiences', *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies*, 15, 1997, and has two forthcoming articles: 'Military Mobilization: Heiho during the Japanese Occupation in Indonesia 1942-45', and 'Not the National Army: British Indian POW in the Japanese Army in Eastern New Guinea', in *Remembering the War in New Guinea*, Australian War Memorial web publication [www.awm.gov.au:8000/ajrp] under the Australia-Japan Research Project.

Eiji MURASHIMA is a Professor in the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan. His major research interest is the diplomatic and political history of Thailand in the Second World War. Among his publications are *Pibulsongkhram and the 1932 Revolution in Thailand* (in Japanese), Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1996; *Sino-Siamese Politics: Political Movements of the Overseas Chinese in Thailand during 1924-1941* (in Thai), Bangkok, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1996; 'Decolonization of Thailand and Independence Movements in Indochina in the 1940s', in *Vietnam and Thailand* (in Japanese), ed. Eiji Murashima, et al., Tokyo, Taimeido, Tokyo, 1998; 'The Commemorative Nature of Thai Historiography: A Narrative of Independence Restoration concerning the Thai Military Advance in Shan States during 1942-1943', *The Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* (in Japanese), No. 17, 1999.

OOI Keat Gin is a Lecturer in the History Section, School of Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, London. He has done extensive research on the history of Sarawak under the Brooke regime and during the Japanese Occupation, and on various aspects of the history of peninsular Malaysia, particularly the state of Penang. His publications include *Rising Sun over Borneo: The Japanese Period in Sarawak, 1941–1945*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Publishing Co., and New York, St Martin's Press, 1999; *Of Free Trade and Native Interests: The Brookes and the Economic Development of Sarawak, 1841–1941*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1997; (comp. and intro.) *Japanese Empire in the Tropics: Selected Documents and Reports of the Japanese Period in Sarawak, Northwest Borneo, 1941–1945*, Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1997; 'Chinese Vernacular Education in Sarawak during Brooke Rule, 1841–1946', *Modern Asian Studies*, 28, 3, July 1994; (comp.) *Malaysia*, World Bibliographical Series, Oxford and Santa Barbara, Clio Press, 1999.

E. Bruce REYNOLDS is a Professor of History at San Jose State University, San Jose, California, USA. He is the author of *Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994, and of a number of articles relating to the war and Occupation, including 'From Anomaly to Model: Thailand's Role in Japan's Shifting Asian Strategy, 1941–1943', in *The Japanese Wartime Empire*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1996; 'The OSS in Thailand', in *The Secrets War*, ed. George C. Chalou, Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Service, 1992; 'Imperial Japan's Cultural Program in Thailand', in *Japanese Cultural Policies in Southeast Asia during World War 2*, ed. Grant K. Goodman, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1991; 'International Orphans: The Chinese in Thailand During World War II,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 28, 2, Sept. 1997. He is currently working on a book on the wartime Free Thai Movement.

Elly TOWEN-BOUWSMA, a historical anthropologist who earned her PhD degree at the Free University in Amsterdam, is Head of Information and Documentation at the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation in Amsterdam. She is interested in the history of Indonesia under Japanese military rule and in particular the policy of the Japanese towards indigenous and non-indigenous ethnic groups in Indonesia. Recent publications include 'The Indonesian Nationalists and the Japanese "Liberation" of Indonesia: Visions and Reactions', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 27, 1, Mar. 1996, and 'Japanese Minority Policy: The Eurasians on Java and the Dilemma of Ethnic Loyalty' in *Japan, Indonesia and the War; Myths and Realities*, ed. Peter Post and Elly Touwen-Bouwsma, Leiden, KITLV, 1997.

Prologue

Paul H. Kratoska

In December 1941, following a period of open warfare in China and intense diplomatic wrangling with the Western powers that dominated South-East Asia, Japan's armed forces invaded and swiftly conquered the Philippines, British Malaya, British Borneo, the Netherlands Indies and British Burma. Thailand and French Indochina had already signed treaties of alliance with Japan, and within six months the Japanese effectively gained control over all of South-East Asia.

Japanese expansion was largely a response to trade restrictions that limited Japan's access to the petroleum and other natural resources of the region, an issue given considerable urgency by military needs arising from the ongoing Sino-Japanese War. Moreover, by controlling South-East Asia, the Japanese severed important lines of supplies and communication used by their opponents in China. In an effort to evoke local support within the region, Japanese wartime propaganda presented the invasion as anti-imperialist and a step in the direction of a pan-Asian nationalism, but the peoples of South-East Asia encountered another reality, a powerful nationalist ideology that emphasized the superiority of the people and culture of Japan, and drew sharp distinctions between different ethnic groupings.

In contrast with fascism in Europe, which aroused genuine enthusiasm in certain quarters outside of Germany, neither the ideas that drove the Japanese war effort nor the experience of Japanese rule generated much support in occupied South-East Asia, although various people did see in the sudden elimination of European colonialism an opportunity to advance their own political agendas. Nationalist organizations in particular anticipated immediate access to power and rapid progress toward independence, but their hopes were not realized. Japanese military authorities required an effective and responsive administration, and to this end they retained the administrative apparatus of pre-war colonialism, and turned to the existing corps of local civil servants to run the occupied territories. They also banned existing political and religious organizations,

and created consolidated, monolithic bodies that dominated political, economic and social life.

Although the Japanese disappointed the expectations of pre-war nationalists, they displayed an affinity for the majority peoples in South-East Asia, particularly the Buddhist populations, and seem to have been far less comfortable with animist and Christian minority groups. They treated some minorities with suspicion because of their European connections, and disdained others because of their seemingly primitive way of life. Moreover, many minority groups occupied marginal areas where it was difficult to monitor their activities, and were suspect for this reason. Japan's policies toward minorities were intended more to maintain peace and order than to cultivate support among these populations.

In the context of the South-East Asia of the 1930s, the concept of minority is charged with ambiguity. Colonial censuses had established the existence of ethnic categories based on language and other criteria, but not all of these groupings represented communities whose members felt a sense of solidarity. Moreover, there had been considerable movement within the region, and many people lived in places where they were to some degree strangers. The situation was complicated further by the presence of minorities from outside of South-East Asia – Indians and Chinese, Arabs and Europeans and Americans.

Colonial regimes maintained the integrity of minority communities, and cultivated ethnic identities through education and ethnically discriminatory legislation. They also sheltered minority groups from exploitation by predatory neighbours, and in return tended to receive strong minority backing. The basic units of empire – British Burma, British Malaya, the Netherlands Indies, French Indochina, and the Philippines – contained a profusion of territorial and administrative subdivisions, some of them dominated by minorities. In Malaya the population of the Straits Settlements was predominantly Chinese. In British Burma the 'frontier' areas (renamed 'Scheduled Areas' in connection with reforms in 1919–23 that gave a measure of home rule to Burma, and 'Excluded Areas' in 1935) had largely non-Burman minority populations. The American administration in the Philippines maintained special administrative arrangements for Muslim areas in the south, and in the Netherlands Indies a degree of *de facto* local autonomy prevailed in many places outside of Java. Beyond these territorial arrangements, colonial regimes had special laws or administrative provisions pertaining to minority peoples, and respected local customs and traditions. In some instances minority groups filled specialized roles within the colonial state, providing manpower for the police or the military and helping staff the civil service.

Local political leaders operating under Japanese auspices set out to create supra-nationalities that coincided with the former colonial states and would subsume minority peoples. Policies followed by indigenous governments

that held power before the Occupation foreshadowed this approach. As early as 1928 the Indonesian nationalist movement had adopted the concept of a *bangsa* Indonesia, an Indonesian nation embracing all of the peoples – termed '*suku bangsa*', or fractions of the *bangsa* – in the archipelago, and this concept was a cornerstone of Sukarno's nationalist vision. The Commonwealth government in the Philippines envisioned a single 'Filipino' nationality that would embrace both Christians and the Moros, the Muslims of the southern Philippines; President Quezon declared in a speech delivered in Lanao in 1936, 'You, the Mohammedans and you, the Christians, constitute one people . . .', and the National Assembly removed special laws and administrative arrangements pertaining to the Muslim area.¹ Thai Prime Minister Phibunsongkram's 1939 Ratthaniyom reforms declared appellations such as 'Thai Muslims' inappropriate because Thailand was 'one and indivisible', and Phibun sought to assimilate the people of Patani into an overriding Thai national identity.² In like fashion, Ba Maw, who was briefly Prime Minister of Burma in the late 1930s and headed the wartime government set up by the Japanese, set plans in motion to end special treatment for minorities and create a single 'Mahabama' or Great Burman nationality for the country.³

The wartime experiences of the minorities described in this book varied enormously. The people of Sarawak enjoyed a relatively untroubled passage through the Occupation owing in large part to their location far removed from major lines of defence, and a paucity of economic resources needed by the Japanese; the latent hostility that simmered beneath the surface never broke through to become overt opposition, and local disputes were for the most part contained. Kokang, a small state along the China-Burma border and similarly removed from centres of Japanese activity, was never formally occupied, but Japanese patrols and the activities of Chinese guerrillas and of the Chinese army caused considerable turmoil. The state also became the subject of a diplomatic struggle involving Britain and China.

In the southern Philippines and in North Borneo, hostility toward the Japanese produced armed revolts. The uprising in North Borneo was quickly suppressed, and some 270 people were executed. Although the episode is conventionally described as a Chinese rebellion and its leader was Chinese, other ethnic groups also took part, a point largely overlooked in early post-war histories but given prominence in more recent publications that reflect the changed political circumstances of late twentieth-century Malaya. The Moros of the southern Philippines faced fewer repressive policies, and the Japanese presence there was minimal. Nevertheless, in September 1942 the people of Tamparan massacred a patrol sent to their area, and subsequently held the Japanese garrison at bay until it withdrew in October 1944 under pressure from Allied raids. In large part this uprising appears to have been caused by local grievances rather than the Japanese presence *per se*, and because the Muslim areas in southern Mindanao had no

great strategic or economic importance for Japan, the Japanese tempered their response to avoid setting off a wider rebellion.

For the Karen people of Burma, the Occupation removed the protection provided by the British, and upset a *modus vivendi* with the ethnic Burman population. The war began with attacks on the Karen by members of the Burma Independence Army, and with killings on both sides. The Japanese imposed peace on the combatants but could not resolve the differences between the two sides, and the conflict spilled into the post-war period.

The Chinese in South-East Asia had also benefited from protection supplied by colonial administrations, and now confronted local populations that bore animus against them arising from their past commercial activities, and from social and cultural differences. In some places they also faced Japanese soldiers and civilians bent on revenge for the support Chinese communities in South-East Asia had given to China during the Sino-Japanese War. Although Japanese Military Administrations throughout the region operated under common guidelines, the treatment of the Chinese was far from uniform. In Malaya and Singapore the Japanese carried out mass killings calculated to eliminate those people most likely to resist them and to intimidate the rest of the population. They also imposed restrictions on travel and demanded crippling financial contributions. Chinese populations elsewhere in the region faced similar pressure for donations and some intimidation, although in Java the occupying force adopted a more conciliatory approach and the Chinese experienced little brutality. *Peranakan* communities, made up of Chinese who had acculturated to South-East Asia over long periods of time and retained few links with China, posed little threat to the Japanese, and readily accepted changes in the political order, while the *totok* – recent immigrants from China, were more likely to be hostile. The Japanese administration in Java recognized this distinction, but Japanese authorities elsewhere appear to have conflated the *peranakan* and more recent arrivals, while in Western Borneo the substantial *peranakan* community fell victim to Japanese paranoia, and large numbers were killed toward the end of the Occupation. In Thailand – a Japanese ally rather than an occupied territory – the government, although not itself particularly friendly to the Chinese, strongly resisted Japanese efforts to dictate policy toward this community. For their part, the Chinese made some efforts to use the Japanese to ameliorate harsh Thai policies directed toward them.

Before the war substantial numbers of Indians lived in Burma and Malaya, where the community included both unskilled labourers and a better-educated element made up of people working as merchants, administrators or clerical staff. Indian labourers were largely apolitical, and for the Indian community as a whole political concerns generally focused on developments in India. From the Japanese perspective, the situation of the Indians was completely different from that of the Chinese.

There was no enmity between the two peoples, and little historical contact. Anti-colonial politics in India fit comfortably with the line taken by Japanese propaganda in South-East Asia, and also provided a possible means of diverting British resources from the war. Accordingly, the Japanese encouraged and supported Indian nationalism in South-East Asia. Thailand, as a non-colonized country, offered a favourable environment for an anti-colonial movement, and much of this activity took place there. However, despite their harmony of interests, relations between the Japanese and the Indians were not smooth, largely because Indian leaders resented Japanese efforts to direct their political activities.

Many of the conflicts described in the articles that make up the present volume have roots that pre-date not only the arrival of the Japanese but also the arrival of Western rule. Colonial regimes created a stable political environment, but did little to resolve existing tensions apart from keeping contending elements apart and imposing peaceful conditions. At the same time, colonial administrations severely weakened traditional ruling elements, and when the colonial regimes themselves collapsed under the Japanese assault they left a political vacuum, and violence ensued. The Japanese re-imposed peace and order but offered no solution to existing difficulties, and in some cases generated powerful opposition that produced rebellions against Japanese authority.

The war and Occupation gave minority groups an opportunity, and a need, to redefine their relationships with other communities, and to some degree to redefine themselves. The periods of political collapse at the start and again at the end of the war facilitated this process, allowing individuals and groups to pursue agendas that would not have been possible under previous circumstances. Some of these initiatives involved violence, but there were also attempts to achieve institutional change within a constitutional process, and efforts to redraw borders. In general these developments took place with little regard for Japanese wishes, and while the Japanese influenced the process in some ways, they were unable to control it.

The brief interregnum between the Japanese surrender and the arrival of the Allied forces brought initiatives that were crucial to the transition to independence. The events of the war and Occupation were not forgotten, but they were quickly superseded by fresh sets of concerns as colonial authorities and local leaders grappled with the transition to independence, and the need to establish order in a new world whose shape was only just becoming visible. Minority groups now had to come to terms with assertive nationalist movements dominated by majority peoples bent on eliminating special provisions for minorities, and drawing all peoples into a process of modernisation and development. This re-ordering of the region would have

been hard at the best of times, and the bitterness and ethnic tension that were a legacy of the Occupation made the process all the more difficult.

Notes

- 1 Peter Gordon Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos – Heritage and Horizon*, Quezon City, New Day Publishers, 1979, pp. 176–7.
- 2 The Ratthaniyom reforms are translated in Thak Chaleomtiarana, ed., *Thai Politics, 1932–1957: Extracts and Documents*, Bangkok, Social Science Association of Thailand, 1978, pp. 244–54. The quoted passage is on p. 246. For a discussion of the reforms, see Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, *Thailand's Durable Premier: Phibun through Three Decades, 1932–1957*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 112–4.
- 3 See Chapter 2 in this volume.

Chapter One

The Japanese Imperium and South-East Asia

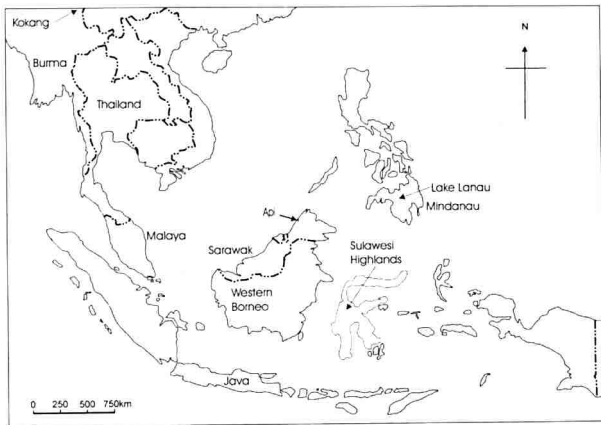
An Overview

Gregory Clancey

South-East Asia is a region of multiple and often complex ethnicities. The simplifying strategies of its European colonizers – their practices of ‘racial’ classification and boundary-drawing – only spawned new and often hybrid identities at every margin. One of colonialism’s most visible legacies, however, in this region as in others, was the creation of ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ communities within new political collectives. Millions of South-East Asians found themselves (and find themselves still) in the status of ‘minorities’, with the multiple insecurities that designation generally implies. ‘Majority’ status, on the other hand, could be demographically fragile and unreflective of political or economic influence, especially as the colonizers often assigned minorities special and often privileged functions.

In the course of a few months in 1941–42, all of South-East Asia fell suddenly under the rule of Imperial Japan, a country where the concepts ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ had little official or common meaning. Moulding a hegemonic ‘racial’ identity to overcome deep regional, class and caste divisions, Japan’s nineteenth century nation-builders had left the country ill-prepared – arguably less so than the European imperial powers – to encounter and conceptualise diverse ethnic identities. The conquering army that sailed south in 1941 under the slogan ‘Asia for the Asians’ was convinced above all of its own ‘racial and cultural’ homogeneity, and of the identity of each of its soldiers as sons in a ‘family state’ under a father-god. It was far less certain, and would remain so, about the meaning of ‘Asia’.

Accounts of the Japanese occupation of South-East Asia are usually organized around particular colonies, or even post-colonial nation-states. Partly this reflects the brevity of the Japanese presence; the inability of a new Japanese regional map to take lasting cultural hold. Just how ‘new’ the geography of Japanese empire in South-East Asia actually was, however, remains problematic. While the borders defining European colonies melted with Japan’s pan-regional advance, the entities they defined did not simply collapse. The structures of the middling and lower colonial bureaucracies –



Map 1 South-East Asia showing locations discussed in the book

from administrative systems to indigenous personnel – generally survived, as they had to for life to carry on. The bureaucracies, along with a plethora of less formal yet no less tangible structures – religious, economic, and social – were co-extensive in most cases with distinct ethnic communities, some pre-dating colonialism and others constituted, if not sustained by it. These local infrastructures not only remained the primary interface between the new rulers and the ruled, but also became sites where Japanese and South-East Asians had some of their most intimate, banal, frightening, daily, clarifying, and confused encounters.

Each local community would have its own reactions to, and relationships with, Japanese rule. But the very dynamics of community-formation would also change under occupation, as the Japanese sought, like the Europeans and Americans before them, to bring disturbingly complex and alien societies to order through their own simplifying devices. For minorities in particular, the new 'facts on the ground' could be highly destabilizing, depending on the closeness of their relationship to the former colonizers, to surrounding majority populations, and to the inchoate plans, fantasies, and anxieties of the local Japanese command. Would they be singled out, or made to disappear into new collectives? Would existing privileges remain or be withdrawn? Would they even be understood by a foreign power that knew little or nothing of local history and lacked the means and interest, in most cases, to find out?

There is now a relatively large literature on Japanese colonialism, the Imperial Japanese Army, and Japanese Occupation policy in South-East Asia, much of it institutionally-based. There is a less well developed but growing historical literature on Japanese constructions of 'race', ethnicity, and polity, little of which, unfortunately, touches directly on the South-East Asian Occupation. The following paragraphs will attempt to blend observations from both literatures, providing needed background – if not fine-grained answers – for certain behaviours of the ruling Japanese 'minority' between 1942 and 1945.¹

Historians' narratives of the Japanese occupation of South-East Asia often reproduce, if only implicitly, those of the German occupation of Europe. Overseas Chinese sometimes play the role of the Jews, for example, and the Kempeitai that of the Gestapo. The reasons for this and other similarities in narrative construction are not hard to grasp. Both German Europe and Japanese South-East Asia were seized in a 'lightning war' by conquering powers who deployed racist ideologies and brutalized civilian populations. Moving beneath these generalizations, however, a 'common frame' for both occupations tends to obscure more than it reveals, particularly in the matter of social policy or the administration of subject peoples. The Germans planned their advance, particularly to the East, with policies of social re-ordering, colonization, and concomitant genocide very much in mind. From nearly the beginning of hostilities, crucial resources

were actually removed from their war effort in order to classify and physically relocate large civilian populations in occupied lands.

The Imperial Japanese Army and Navy advanced to the South mainly to gain control of its raw materials, and to encircle China, the two goals being intimately related. The peoples of South-East Asia and most of the land they occupied were of comparatively little interest to the conquering power. Japan's enemies, by mid-1942, were all located outside the region, or at its peripheries. What Japan demanded over most of *Nanpo* (the Southern region), apart from natural resources and the labour to exploit them, was quietude – an utter acquiescence to Japanese military rule and manipulation.² Japanese ambitions in both their short-term and meta-historical forms did not lie primarily in South-East Asia but on the Asian mainland opposite Japan. While the peoples of occupied Europe, particularly in the East, suffered from a murderously detailed fascination on the part of their German conquerors, the peoples of South-East Asia more often suffered from a murderous neglect and ignorance on the part of the Imperial Army and Navy.

Lebensraum for Japan was Manchuria, not South-East Asia, which was considered by most Japanese to be exotic, far away, and perhaps uninhabitable. It is true that military planning documents of the 1930s, when official interest began to turn South, mention South-East Asia in the context of Japan's 'population problem'. Two of the largest Japanese communities outside the Empire were indeed in Singapore and Davao, and smaller numbers of Japanese lived in cities and towns throughout the region. By the time of the conquest, however, colonisation plans for Manchukuo had become so extensive that an Army planning document of 1942 suggested sending mainly Koreans to the South in order 'to restrain their advance into Manchuria and China' in competition with Japanese. The 'Yamato people' were given the role of *shujin minzoku* (master people) in the region, but seem to be described, in this document and others, as a small leader-class rather than as numerous peasant settlers. In contrast to Manchukuo, the emphasis in discussions of the South was always on resource extraction rather than resettlement.³

For all its remoteness, however, the South was not without identity in Japanese geography and even mytho-history. The contemporary 'South-East Asia' was a term only crafted by the wartime Allies around 1943, and then to describe the Japanese-occupied region to be liberated. Japanese geographers, however, had already conceptualised and named this 'South-East Asia' (*Tonan Ajia*) at least two decades earlier, when Japanese commercial and political interests turned their gaze from the mainland to the sea-lanes in the aftermath of WWI. The construction of 'South-East Asia' was related to the 'southern advance' (*nanyo roshin*), a Japanese concept with a long and complex history but framed in the interwar period as the inevitable consolidation of the region's famously rich resources under Japanese economic control.⁴

This unified 'South-East Asia' was, however, a comparatively late invention. Since the Meiji period, Japanese geography had more commonly split the region into a mainland of former Chinese vassal states (roughly equivalent to 'Indochina') and an expanse of islands called *Nanyo*, literally 'The South Seas'. In many Japanese accounts, The South Seas swept uninterrupted from the Malay Peninsula and the archipelago all the way through Oceania, or across geographies which Euro-American mapping tended to separate. A major characteristic of The South Seas was its historic remoteness from Chinese influence, which rendered it both repellent (primitive or savage) and attractive (simple and fresh, somewhat like mytho-historic constructions of ancient Japan).⁵ Indeed, the region figured prominently in Meiji-era debates on whether Japanese were 'Mongolians', and thus kin of Koreans and Chinese, or 'Malays', and thus from the beginning an island people quite distinct from mainlanders. The construction of the Japanese as a 'South Seas' people would subsequently be used to suggest racial solidarity between Japanese and the inhabitants of the East Indies, although its original intent was not so much to build new ethnic bridges to the south as burn down old ones to the west, that is, distance the 'Yamato race' from Koreans and Chinese.⁶

The theory of a southern 'racial origin' for the Japanese came to be incorporated into occupation-period language, however, and may have contributed to occasional Japanese favouritism toward Malays in colonial administration. General Imamura relates in his memoirs how, on being asked by a friendly village elder, shortly after the invasion of Java, why the Japanese looked like Japanese, he told the man 'some ancestors of the Japanese came from these islands in boats. You and the Japanese are brothers.' Imamura conducted a relatively 'soft' occupation of Java until his transfer in late 1942.⁷

The remoteness of South-East Asia from the home islands combined with the legend of the southern origin of the Japanese 'race' might have suggested an easy acquiescence on the part of Occupation authorities to South-East Asian nationalisms, or at least autonomy. Yet there was little official Japanese discussion about, let alone encouragement of, a political role for South-East Asians prior to 1943, when the war was beginning to turn and the military sought (too late and too hesitantly, it turned out) to cement relations with local majority elites in the face of an almost certain Allied counter-offensive. Why, it has often been asked, did the Japanese authorities not take their own slogan 'Asia for the Asians' more seriously? Why did the Japanese military leave the region having misunderstood and made enemies of so many of the peoples it had come to 'liberate'? Why could the Japanese not see, until it was too late, the potential for turning indigenous populations into true allies in a pan-Asian, anti-colonialist war?

A commonly-advanced answer is that the Japanese military administrations of South-East Asia were governed by an overly-narrow pragmatism, a

simple or simplistic dedication to prosecuting the war quickly, using whatever – and whomever – was most concretely at hand. The dynamic of the Axis governments, after all, even at their centres, was decisive 'action' without hesitation, or hence much attention to long-range planning. This was particularly true of Japan's military-dominated government of 1941, which took South-East Asia without adequately determining how its oil was to be shipped to the distant North, let alone how its diverse peoples were to be engaged, ordered, inspired, or governed.

Accounts that treat the Japanese occupiers as 'pragmatic' usually recognize, however, the often contradictory, factional, and anxious dynamic underlying their governance, a clique-centred political style that extended uninterruptedly from the home islands into the conquered regions. The infamous rifts between the Imperial Army, the Navy and the civilian-staffed ministries recreated themselves in the colonies as competitive, parallel administrations in some places, and entirely separate Army and Navy overlordship in others. The Imperial Army had long considered colonial affairs on the Asian continent its own, and had bitterly opposed civilian interference in the rule of Korea and Manchuria. It would do the same, even more successfully, in South-East Asia. The new Greater East Asia Ministry of 1942, although largely staffed with civilians, was actually a creature of Tojo's military-dominated cabinet, designed to exclude the civilian-run Foreign Ministry from having a voice in Southern affairs. Despite the presence of civilian ministerial personnel in South-East Asia, Imperial Army and Navy officers remained, on every level, by far the dominant players. This was generally unfortunate for subject peoples, as the two services were the Japanese institutions most likely to sacrifice the needs of civilians for the sake of 'the war effort', which meant the sake of the services themselves as distinct and competitive societies, cultures, and institutions.

The Imperial Army and Navy garrisons in the South were also expected to 'live off the land', rather than be supplied with necessities from the home islands. This meant that, as in China, looting on a grand scale would become official policy and 'normal' practice, beginning with the shakedown of Chinese merchant communities in order to 'rebuild' local economies. It also meant that the corruption among officers which had flourished in China would be carried to the South, where there was so much more worth possessing. This necessity (and inclination) to rely on local resources only reinforced inter-service and intra-service factionalism, meaning that local area commanders had far more power over the lives of subject peoples than centralizing organizational charts would suggest.

Yet the picture of the Japanese occupation authorities' 'pragmatism' – of military officers wanting to 'just fight the war' – even when tempered by accounts of factional competition and plunder, explains only so much. It does not fully engage, for example, the historically-particular ideologies and practices which the Japanese military forces, and in particular the Imperial

Army, carried to South-East Asia from China, Korea, and the home islands themselves; a complex set of ideas, instincts, presuppositions, and behaviours that were anything but 'pragmatic' in their origins or implications. In other words, the culture and ideology of the Imperial military is as important to an understanding of the occupation as its institutional arrangements or its reactions to changing local circumstances and events. Indeed, these realms of the cultural, institutional, and the dynamic are not easily separable.

Putting aside their pressing need to win the war, or, after 1942/43, stave off defeat, the Imperial Japanese Army and Navy were institutions singularly ill-prepared to engage the diverse ethnic communities of South-East Asia in cooperative effort or understanding. The Imperial Army, despite its character as a largely peasant force, was in no sense a 'popular' one, lacking as it did an ethos of liberation or duty toward even its own civilian population. It was the *Imperial* Army, the Emperor's army, which under an activist yet indecisive Emperor had become a closed fraternity of competing cliques, and by the early 1940s was operating virtually unrestrained, its major civilian rivals effectively neutralized. It was deeply (at times pathologically) anti-civilian in outlook. Masking the increasingly peasant and proletarian identity of its field officers behind a carefully-edited *bushido*, the Imperial Army was purposely and systematically brutalizing toward its own recruits in a manner which extended beyond the needs of military discipline into the realm of social re-engineering. Dedicated to strategies of all-out attack with a cultivated unconcern for preserving enlisted lives, the Imperial forces were poorly suited to the mundane and comparatively non-violent tasks of governing foreign populations mainly concerned with their own daily survival. Prior experiences with civilian populations in Korea and China had given its soldiers and sailors an often deep contempt for other Asians, and many veterans arrived in South-East Asia with civilian blood on their hands. Certainly some Japanese civilian administrators, and even individual military officers, approached the slogan 'Asia for the Asians' with sincerity and sophistication, and earnestly sought to build lasting bridges to formerly colonized peoples. Yet it was the Imperial Army and Navy in their more 'normal' forms which the region's ethnic communities engaged most deeply and regularly; a military culture whose narrow construction of Japanese ethnicity, history, mission, and 'racial' superiority would tolerate few half-way meetings with the customs or concerns of subject peoples.

The ethos of the Imperial forces was particularly unreceptive to arguments for autonomy, whether framed by majority or minority groups. 'Independence' was granted to certain former colonies, but with such need for surveillance and control as to eventually alienate even Japan's erstwhile allies. The Imperial Army had long been the locus of anti-liberal belief and action in Japan itself, opposed to any 'politics' other than its own. This was

partly the result of its constitutional severance from control by civilian cabinets, which insulated even its highest officers from the work-a-day political experience of crafting broad-based policies and cutting deals. Carried to the occupied territories, this disdain for 'politics' made it difficult for most military officers to understand or condone political organization in South-East Asia, even by their collaborators. An army which was actively rooting out 'politics' in the home islands and stressing the 'unity' of all civilians under its own leadership could hardly be a reliable ally of indigenous politicians of any stripe. It could, and did, argue for an 'Asian' collectivism which had as its highest ideal the ability to recognize, understand, and accept Japan's military-centred leadership.

The most explicit encouragement to indigenous nationalism that the Imperial military made in South-East Asia was toward the Indian minority in Malaya and Thailand. India was of course an active battlefield, and the recruitment and fielding of an Indian army had obvious strategic and propagandistic advantages. India was also remote in the Japanese geo-imaginary, and ultimately peripheral to a Greater East Asia. The circumscribed encouragement given Ba Maw in Burma, Jose P. Laurel in the Philippines, and nationalist politicians in the East Indies, was more in line with Army control policies in Manchukuo and occupied China.

Some distinction needs to be made here between the terms 'nationalist' – whose overly common usage has rendered it obscure – and 'imperial' as it was used and understood by Japanese militarists of the 1930s–40s. 'Nation' in its nineteenth-century conception had been largely eclipsed in the language of Japan's war-time right by a spiritualised, mythologized racialism, with European as well as indigenous roots. Thus the military regime's policy statements by the 1940s consistently favoured the term 'Yamato People' over the more neutral 'Japan', and Emperor (or 'The Imperial Way') over a more easily translatable language of state. Given Japanese policy statements regarding 'Asia' and 'co-prosperity', South-East Asians were ill-prepared for, and found it difficult to understand, this emphasis on race in Japanese militarist thinking, associating it as many of them did with European colonialism rather than pan-Asianism. The Burmese politician and wartime head of state Ba Maw, writing after the war, complained that the Japanese officers with whom he had worked were 'race-bound . . . one-dimensional in their thinking, and in consequence . . . totally incapable either of understanding others, or making themselves understood by others'. It was the military's 'racial impositions' and 'racial fantasies', he concluded, which ultimately betrayed what he still saw as Japan's positive action of 'bringing liberation to countless Asian peoples'.⁸

It was not simply occupation politics that made the Japanese authorities more comfortable discussing 'race' with their South-East Asian subjects than 'nation'. Like other nineteenth century nation-states, 'Japan' had been politically constructed as a 'people' (*minzoku*) as much as a 'state' (*kokka*),

and the concepts were easily and commonly conflated. Yet '*minzoku*' and '*kokka*' – and related terms such as the uniquely Japanese *kokutai* (national polity) – could also carry distinct emphases, particularly when given mantra-like repetition by particular groups competing for power in a narrow field. The imaginary of the 'race' (particularly in the construction *Yamato minzoku*) came to be emphasized by militarists of the 1930s–40s, who sensed that its appeal to the vague, irrational, and mytho-historical reinforced the Emperor cult in ways that 'state' – with its concomitant possibilities of constitutionalism, citizenship, and possible respect for Korean and Chinese nationalism – could never be reliably made to. 'Race' was of course used in similar ways by illiberal forces around the world. Japanese conservatives had learned directly from the European colonizers that 'race' was an excellent way to organize and control foreign peoples, as it contained built-in hierarchal assumptions (linked to gender and, through biology, to family and lineage) that could undermine political and personal confidence. It was also, of course, an effective antidote to communism with the latter's stress on 'class'. The uniquely Japanese innovation in the history of 'race' may have been its close linkage to kingship, a move that Western racialists were generally unable to make or sustain given the extremely cosmopolitan character of European ruling houses and even aristocracies. This allowed the additional innovation of collapsing 'race' and 'family' into the hierarchy of the state itself, embodied by the Emperor. The very success of this closed circuit built a racial exclusivism into Japanese imperialism, which was quite different from, if not opposite to, the inclusivist or accomodationist instinct in most other 'imperial' cultures, including China's. The point is that 'race' was not a concept incidental to Japanese militarism in the home islands or overseas, but a central pillar and one that stood too often in the way of sympathising with or even understanding local agendas.⁹

The Imperial Army, by the early 1940s, was well honed as an anti-nationalist force. Chinese (and Korean) nationalists had, after all, long been the Army's archenemies. Manchukuo, the Kwantung Army's own political creation, was not a 'nation' but a dependant 'empire' in which the indigenous Manchus were not destined to be even the majority, let alone in charge. The slogan 'cooperation among five races', and the official identity of Manchukuo as 'multi-racial' entity served mainly to dilute Manchu/Chinese nationalism while giving Japanese and Korean colonists full ('equal') rights of occupancy and ownership. Korea ('Chosen') was a slightly different case. There the antidote to nationalism had been a policy of extreme assimilation, attempting to turn Koreans into 'Japanese' of a special, lower caste. While multi-culturism of a superficial sort was celebrated in Manchukuo, ethnicity was stamped out at every turn in Korea. Manchukuo and Chosen each represented, however, a desire on the part of the Japanese military and its right-wing allies to recreate Asia as a direct, if slightly exotic

extension of Japan itself, a place where the *Yamato minzoku* might be the directing force in all important areas. Racial hierarchy was in that sense the fulcrum of 'co-prosperity'. An Asia without Japanese micro-direction, and hence permanent occupation of some sort, was likely not conceivable to the military administrations which settled over South-East Asia in 1941–42.¹⁰

There were, however, certain contradictions in Japanese racist thinking that diverged from the contradictions of its European and American counterparts. Declarations that the Koreans and Japanese (or Malays and Japanese) were actually the same 'race', for example, while controversial in some quarters, were seen as better facilitating outright annexation of Korea (or Malaya or the East Indies) and the suppression of indigenous nationalist feeling. Assimilationist rhetoric and policy was in no sense egalitarian, however, crafted as it was within the rubric of Japanese experience with caste. *Burakumin* were also Japanese, after all, yet had been effectively tagged and isolated for countless generations. An important ingredient in assimilationist thinking was the neo-Confucian ideology of 'proper place', which was capable of policing *intra*-racial barriers as effectively as *inter*-racial ones. The extreme emphasis on 'family' within the Japanese ethno-political system (for example, *kazuko kokka* or 'family state') was meant to arrange its members, at every turn, into parents and children, seniors and juniors, the knowing and the naive. Applied to 'races' or ethnic groups, this may have allowed for 'growing up', but it never allowed 'children' to grow older, wiser, or deserving of more respect, deference, or status than 'parents' or older siblings. Nor, given the extended nature of Japanese family relations, did it allow for 'independence', the highest ideal of European-inspired nationalisms.¹¹

If the overlapping cultures of Japanese militarism and racialism offered so little in the way of autonomy to the majority cultures of South-East Asia, how then, did they engage the region's minorities, and mediate the relation between the two? Given their penchant for assimilationist and collectivist (though hierarchical) conceptualisation, the Japanese Imperial forces were more inclined to dwell on their own homogeneity – as value and model – than on fine differences between subject 'races'. 'Races' were classified, characterized, and listed by the Japanese authorities, but never with the niggling scientism of the Europeans. The classic European colonial policy of 'divide and conquer', while sometimes discernable in Japanese practice, competed with a nearly opposite instinct to control through consolidation.¹² The geography that the Imperial Army was fighting to create, 'Greater East Asia', was a remarkably flat one, ensuring 'the peace of Asia' by rooting out detail or diversity. The role of the *Yamato minzoku* within this geo-imaginary was clear, but the role of the other 'races' only came into focus around their support for Japanese projects, or their performance of exaggerated rites of Japanese-ness fashioned by the military authorities. The focus of 'cultural' policy in the occupied areas was Japanese language

training, which was at once 'practical' in the sense of allowing rulers and ruled to communicate, but also, and always, about much more than simply language or understanding. According to a 1942 declaration by the propaganda department of the military government in Singapore, teaching the Japanese language as a lingua franca 'will remove differences in customs and habits of various ethnic races in Malaya and Sumatra'. Wrote Kaionji Ushigoro, a novelist attached to the same office: 'the pride of Asian peoples in their own cultures' has to be 'destroyed completely by condemning their's as being useless to the present age . . . Taoism, Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Hinduism should face severe and merciless criticism.' Without such an extreme policy, he argued, 'the superiority of the *Kodo Bunka* [Imperial Way Culture] cannot be made understandable to native people'.¹³ Perhaps in his last statement, at least, he was right. Clearly many Japanese in the occupation force took a more pragmatic approach to cultural questions, but such pronouncements betray a widespread unease with the reality of ethnic diversity, a habit – likely honed in Korea – of seeing 'culture' as a zero-sum game.

The overseas Chinese are the best known of South-East Asia's minorities, and form the nucleus of discussion in this volume. It is often assumed that the brutalizing experience of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya under Japanese rule was general throughout the region. While forced payments and conscription demands were made of Chinese communities everywhere, the factionalised nature of Japanese administrative geography ensured varied models and practices of 'Japanese policy', as did differing relationships between the overseas Chinese and surrounding majority communities. Negotiation between the Chinese (and other minorities) and the Japanese occupiers was never bilateral, but involved inter-ethnic relations that predated the Japanese invasion. While massacres of Chinese civilians in Malaya and Western Borneo are a reminder of how uniquely vulnerable this community was under Japanese rule, the option of collaboration – or 'knowing one's place' in the Japanese racial construct – was available to the Chinese and other minorities across much of South-East Asia. This was particularly true in Java, where the Imperial Army adopted a conciliatory approach to the substantial Chinese community and the latter generally accommodated themselves to the new power. Ironically the Imperial Army took on the role of protectors of local Chinese against violence by indigenous Javanese, some of whom seized the opportunity to initiate pogroms at the Dutch retreat. The Japanese ban on speaking or writing Dutch meant the *peranakan* – locally born and Dutch speaking – were forced to re-learn cultural behaviours, beginning with language, they had largely forgotten. Both examples suggest that 'Chinese' identity in the former Dutch East Indies was – somewhat inadvertently – reinforced by the Japanese occupiers, who preferred to engage a uniformly predictable and tameable 'Chinese race', whether in the Indies or in Shanghai. In Thailand,

where it faced an assertive Thai nationalism, the Chinese community made discrete appeals to the Japanese (in this case the Foreign Ministry) to mediate against the more discriminatory local policies. In Sarawak, again under Imperial Army rule, Chinese merchants were even seen as Japanese collaborators by the Iban population, and became victims of reprisal killings following the Japanese withdrawal.

'Knowing one's [racial] place' was arguably less complicated for immigrant minority communities than it was for indigenous majorities or minorities who believed themselves already in a place rightfully their own, and who sometimes collaborated with the expectation of an autonomy or redress of grievances beyond what the Japanese authorities were likely to allow. Indigenous nationalist movements were certainly as threatening for the overseas Chinese and other minority communities as was Japanese occupation itself. On the other hand, majority populations sometimes saw Chinese collaboration with the Japanese as an arrangement between two foreign, northern peoples that was prejudicial to indigenous interests. In this sense the three-cornered relationship of minority-majority-Japanese occupier was more complex than models of simple Japanese repression would suggest.

The very status of the overseas Chinese as a minority community within Dutch, British, and American colonies was altered when they became subjects within the Japanese imperium, where the Chinese were in the majority. It is questionable whether the Imperial forces, assuming as they did an eventual Japanese control over all of China, saw the overseas Chinese as a 'minority' in the same sense as previous colonial overlords. Regular references to a naturalized Chinese 'role' in South-East Asia in Japanese military documents suggest a willingness to construct the Chinese as an Empire-wide caste of lower merchants, much as the Koreans were given the role of farmer-colonizers. The language of 'racial' aptitude for this or that activity was not, at base, locational.

Despite and sometimes because of the Japanese emphasis on an 'Asian' collectivism, the Occupation seems only to have deepened pre-war rifts. As this book shows, the withdrawal of Japanese control often led to a bloody settling of scores, based on various communities' perceptions of differential treatment under the Japanese (or more precisely, Japanese alteration of patterns of privilege and deference constructed during the longer period of European divide and rule). Japan's positing of a common 'Asian' identity around Japanese cultural practices was not only stillborn, but like other simplifying strategies deployed in colonial contexts, productive of further fragmentation. The twin disruptions of European withdrawal and reconquest also opened critical windows for communal violence. The result was that pre-war colonies became post-war nation-states with their inter-ethnic tensions often inflamed by wartime experience.

Notes

- 1 The more recent literature on Japanese constructions of 'race' includes Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan*, London, Routledge, 1994; John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1986; Frank Dikotter, ed., *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1997; Dru C. Gladney, ed., *Making Majorities: Constituting the Nation in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Fiji, Turkey, and the United States*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998; and Yoshino Kosaku, *Cultural Nationalism in Japan*, London, Routledge, 1992. The institutional literature on colonialism, the imperial military, and occupation politics – both in English and in Japanese – is too large to list here, but I have particularly drawn upon Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941–45*, London, C. Hurst, 1998; Meirion and Susan Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, London, Heinemann, 1991; Joyce C. Lebra, ed., *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in World War II*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975; Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, ed. *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984; Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, ed., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996; Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931–1945*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1978.
- 2 This is essentially the language of the Japanese government's 'Principles for Administration of the Southern Areas' of 20 Nov. 1941, which lists these as '... to restore order, expedite acquisition of resources vital to national defense, and ensure the economic self-sufficiency of military personnel'. Lebra, ed., *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*, pp. 113–7.
- 3 General Staff Headquarters, 14th Section, 'Plan for Leadership of Nationalities in Greater East Asia, 6 August, 1942', in Lebra, *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*, pp. 118–21.
- 4 Shimizu Hajime, *Southeast Asia in Modern Japanese Thought*, Nagasaki, Nagasaki Prefectural University, 1997. See especially ch. 3. See also Mark R. Peattie, 'Nanshin: The 'Southward Advance', 1931–1941, as a Prelude to the Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia', in Duus, Myers, and Peattie, *The Japanese Wartime Empire*.
- 5 Shimizu, *Southeast Asia in Modern Japanese Thought*.
- 6 Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Reading Pasts into History*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993, pp. 70–1.
- 7 Imamura Hitoshi, *Imamura Hitoshi Taisho Kaisoroku*, excerpted in Anthony Reid and Oki Akira, *The Japanese Experience in Indonesia: Selected Memoirs of 1942–1945*, Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1986, pp. 35–6.
- 8 Ba Maw, *Breakthrough in Burma*, excerpted in *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*, ed. Lebra, pp. 157–8. Kevin Doak has recently drawn detailed and insightful distinctions between the Japanese word *minzoku* and the English *race*, arguing that the former was closer to *ethnic nation* (and the German *volk*) and thus had, among other characteristics, greater political malleability. My use of *race*, *racial* and *racialized* to describe Japanese political economy is not meant to defend that set of terms against Doak's arguments, which fascinate me, but because the more neutral *ethnic* and *ethnicity* lack the nuance to properly describe how Southeast Asians like Ba Maw (who explicitly uses the term 'race') encountered Japanese attitudes and behaviours, or why Imperial forces were so

- ill-equipped to work with him and others in occupied lands. See Kevin M. Doak, 'Narrating China, Ordering East Asia', in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, ed. Kai-wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak and Pashek Fu, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2001; *idem.* 'Culture, Ethnicity, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Japan', in *Japan's Competing Modernities*, ed. Sharon A. Minichiello, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1998.
- 9 For a fuller discussion of Meiji nation-building, see Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1985.
- 10 On Japanese racial policies and Manchukuo, see Louise Young, 'Rethinking Race for Manchukuo: Self and Other in the Colonial Context' in Dikotter, pp. 158-76; and *idem.*, 'Imagined Empire: The Cultural Construction of Manchukuo', in Duus, Myers, and Peattie, *The Japanese Wartime Empire*, pp. 71-96.
- 11 On Burakumin, see Ian Neary, *Political Protest and Social Control in Pre-War Japan: The Origins of Buraku Liberation*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1989.
- 12 A General Staff document of 1942 stated that 'all peoples of East Asia are in a relationship of one inseparable body by preordination. We will have them complete an organic people's cooperative structure whose nucleus is the people of Yamato . . . in guiding and fostering each nationality, we will not stress the individual advancement of each nationality.' General Staff Headquarters, 14th section, 'Plan for Leadership of Nationalities in Greater East Asia, 6 Aug., 1942'. Lebra, ed., *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*.
- 13 Both quotations are from Yoji Akashi, 'Japanese Cultural Policy in Malaya and Singapore, 1942-45', in *Japanese Cultural Policies in Southeast Asia During World War II*, ed. Grant K. Goodman, London, Macmillan, 1991, pp. 121, 124-5.

Chapter Two

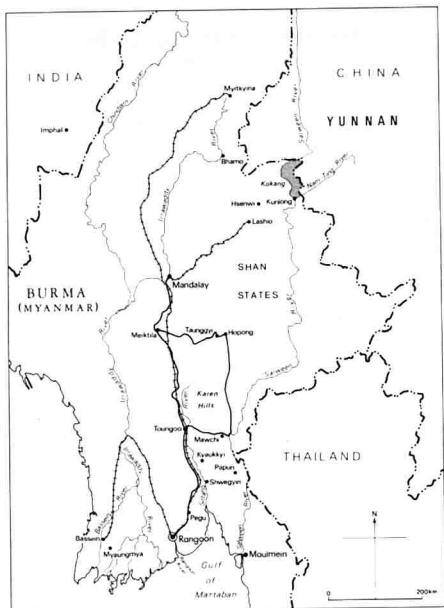
The Karen of Burma under Japanese Rule

Paul H. Kratoska

The Karen people occupied a special position in British Burma, where they provided manpower for the military and police forces, and in return received protection for themselves and their way of life. The British retreat in 1942 left the Karen exposed to hostile Burman nationalists, who resented their support of the colonial administration, and to the Japanese, who mistrusted them for the same reason. Although a minority, the Karen community was large enough, and sufficiently militant, to mount a vigorous defence of its interests, and Karen became involved in violent confrontations with ethnic Burmans during the war years.

The Karen were the largest minority group in pre-war Burma, accounting for 1,367,000 people (9.3 per cent) in a 1931 population of 14,650,000.¹ The term 'Karen' applied to several groups; Sgaw and Pwo Karen dwelt in the plains, while those living in the hill tracts were known to the Burmans as Taungthu Karen, meaning Karen of the hills, and to English-speakers as Karen-ni (Red Karen). During the Anglo-Burman wars of the nineteenth century, British forces found ready allies amongst the Karen. Karen guides assisted the English expedition against Ava in 1826 and the attack on the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in 1852, while during the third Anglo-Burmese War in 1885 Karen levies took part in the fighting. In view of the tensions that existed between ethnic Burmans and minorities such as the Karen and other hill peoples, the colonial government created separate administrations for the core area of the country populated by Burmans (Burma Proper, made up of the dry zone of Upper Burma and the river deltas of Lower Burma) and the hill tracts that lay in a horseshoe shape around this core.

The British used a military force known as the Burma Rifles to maintain order within the country. From the outset, the Karen and other hill peoples were prominent in this force, and during the 1920s the British strictly limited recruitment to the Karen, Kachin and Chin groups, while substantially reducing the number of ethnic Burmans in both the regular forces and the Military Police.² These policies, which caused Burman nationalists to associate the Karen with repressive aspects of British colonial



Map 2 Burma (Myanmar)

rule, go some way toward explaining the savage encounters that followed the British retreat in 1942.

In the early nineteenth century much of the Karen population lived in the hills along the present border between Burma and Thailand, seeking security by establishing villages in remote locations. Under British rule the Karen people moved to the plains in increasing numbers, and by the 1930s were to be found intermingled with ethnic Burmans throughout Lower Burma. They constituted a majority in the Karenni States and in Salween District, a region of heavy forest and rugged terrain where 91,000 out of an estimated population of 112,000 were Karen, but less than seven per cent of Burma's Karen population lived in these two areas. Elsewhere, they formed substantial minorities in the districts of Bassein, Pyapon, Pegu, Thaton, Moulmein and Tavoy in the lower delta.³ The Karen were predominantly animist, but European missionaries had found them responsive to proselytization, and by the 1930s some 16 per cent were Christian.⁴ Christians were the best educated and the most vocal element within the Karen population, and took the lead in establishing a Karen political presence in the country.

During the 1920s and 1930s the Karen leadership faced strategic dilemmas arising from introduction of the 1923 dyarchy constitution that gave Burma a measure of Home Rule. One group, which included the Karen leader Dr San Crombie Po,⁵ favoured the creation of a separate Karen homeland in the Karenni and Salween districts – a proposal that had obvious limitations given the physical distribution of the Karen population – while another sought ways to promote Karen interests within the Burmese political system. The dyarchy constitution reserved 'communal' seats in the legislature for minority groups, including the Karen. A new constitution in 1935 retained the concept of communal constituencies, reserving 37 out of 132 seats for minorities, and placed 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas – including Karenni and the Salween District – outside of what was known as ministerial Burma, with administration by a separate Burma Frontier Service.⁶ These arrangements had disadvantages for the Karen, in that Burman Ministers now handled Karen affairs, rather than British Deputy Commissioners as in the past. At the very least, the new system slowed down the administrative process.⁷

Two of the principal nationalist groups active in Burma were the Sinyetha Wunthanu (Poor Man's Party) led by Dr Ba Maw,⁸ and the Dohbama Asiayone (the We-Burmans Association), whose members referred to themselves as 'Thakins', a Burmese word meaning 'master' that was the required form of address for Europeans in Burma.⁹ Under the 1935 Constitution, Burma ceased to be a province of the Indian Empire and became a separate territory under the British Crown. The Constitution provided for a Council of Ministers, and Ba Maw, whose Sinyetha Party was second largest in the House of Representatives, became the first Premier

in a coalition government that lasted until February 1939. The Thakins opposed this and subsequent governments, preferring not to cooperate with the British, and following the fall of his ministry, Ba Maw's Sinyetha party joined the Thakins in forming a Freedom Bloc, which issued a demand for immediate independence.¹⁰

The Japanese invasion began in late December 1941, and by the end of May 1942 Japanese forces controlled all of British Burma except for the more inaccessible hill tracts. At the time of the invasion a group of Thakins known as the '30 Comrades' was in Bangkok, having received military training from the Japanese on Hainan Island. They established a Burma Independence Army (BIA) and entered Burma in the wake of Japanese forces, recruiting additional members from the ethnic Burman community in southeastern Burma. As the British withdrew the BIA rapidly swelled in size, growing to as much as 25–30,000 strong, and the Thakins used it to establish 'Free Burmese Civilian Administrations' throughout Lower Burma, setting aside both the laws and the administrative apparatus of the British regime.

Taking shape as it did, the BIA suffered from a lack of discipline, and some of its members – or people claiming to be members – were implicated in episodes of looting and violence.¹¹ Brigadier Maung Maung, who served as an aide to the BIA's leader, General Aung San, described the force as 'a rabble army with a minimum of military training',¹² and U Hla Pe, a Karen minister under the wartime Ba Maw government, called it 'a heterogeneous collection, ranging from the flower of the youth of Burma, from the best families in the land to the scum of the criminal world', an organization where 'pickpockets and thieves rubbed shoulders with University men'.¹³ However, while acknowledging that some people joined 'for the usual prospects of loot and plunder', U Hla Pe added that others took part 'simply because their country needed them', and called attention to the hardships that members endured, the sincerity of many of the participants and the high ideals of the leaders.¹⁴

Although the activities of the Thakins and the BIA caused difficulties throughout Lower Burma generally, in Karen areas the situation took on a more sinister aspect. The close association of the Karen with the British and their role in sustaining the colonial regime made them a primary target of Burman nationalists. Moreover, Karen who had served in the military often possessed weapons while the BIA had very few. The BIA called for a general surrender of weapons but many Karen refused to comply, leading to bloody clashes between the two sides. Lowland Karen who lived interspersed with ethnic Burmans were particularly vulnerable, and a pattern of ethnic violence soon took shape. (See Map 2).

At Shwegyin, a town in the Salween District with a large Karen population, a group of Thakins arrived on 24 February 1942 and found that the greater part of the Karen community had fled to nearby villages or taken

refuge in the hills. Saw Marshall Shwin, Superintendent of the Karen School and a leader of the British-sponsored Karen Home Guard, gave this account of what then transpired:

The Burmese public, being absolutely pro-Japanese, became very enthusiastic and satisfied. The youngsters at the bidding of the elders serenaded the streets shouting their slogans, 'Down with the British! Down with democracy! Do-Ba-Ma, Thakin-Myo. English! English! They have run away. Karen dogs! Karen dogs! They have fled to the hills. Shameful, Shameful. Liberty! Liberty! for the Burmese. Powerful are the Japanese. Let them be victorious, etc.'¹⁵

On 26 February a group of Indian and Karen soldiers entered the town, unaware that it was no longer in British hands, and a fight broke out in which several Thakins were killed, including Bo Saw Aung (Thakin Ngwe), one of the 30 Comrades. The soldiers then moved on. When the Thakins returned to Shwegyin they accused members of the Karen Home Guards of involvement in the attack, and tensions ran high. Around 1 March another group of British soldiers passed through Shwegyin; this time the Thakins withdrew, and upon their return they claimed to have driven the British out. The BIA then launched an anti-Karen vendetta, looting and destroying property and causing several deaths. On 13 March the British again recaptured Shwegyin, and the Thakins suffered further casualties. Learning that the Thakins had killed three Karen held in the local jail, and had burnt the Karen quarter and the local Baptist church, the British commander ordered his troops to set fire to the rest of the town.¹⁶

British forces now left the area for the last time and the BIA took control of what remained of Shwegyin. The Thakins launched a vigorous campaign to build support for the Japanese regime and to Burmanize the Karen and other non-Burmans, urging the Karen to call themselves '*Taungyoe Bama*', or Hill Burmans, and to use the Burman language. To promote Buddhism, the Thakins closed mosques and churches, and issued a general order that every family should install a '*Nyaung-yay-owe*', a Buddhist ceremonial vessel, at a conspicuous place in the house. They also told Christians to throw away their Bibles and hymnals, and to pay homage to Buddhist monks as they made their daily rounds begging for food.

The BIA announced that any Karen who had fled the town must return immediately or be considered rebels and hunted down. According to Saw Marshall Shwin, 'Certain portion of the letter was couched in generous words. However, the Karens, to be candid, had reasons to believe that the assurances were merely make-believe all sham and bogus.' Papun's Karen leaders sent a message to the head of the Karen military levies in Salween District, Captain Hugh Seagrim, appealing for arms and ammunition, but when these could not be provided, the exiles dispersed to villages throughout the area.

One can imagine the pitiable plight and feeling of the Karens at this stage. They were no more happy town dwellers but miserable rural rustics. Their food stock of sugar, milk, bread, butter and tea and coffee had [been] exhausted and they had to live on rice, salt and jungle vegetables such as bamboo shoots, danyin, beans and so on. Lack of medical treatment and chemical supply rendered them sickly, never healthy, or physically fit. Death of relatives, near and dear ones made them inactive, melancholy and disappointed. Denial and forfeiture of rights and privileges drove them mad, miserable and pessimistic. Irrecoverable loss of properties compelled them to be angry, craving vengeance. Everything life, comfort, faith, hope, safety and what not for them was at stake.¹⁷

Similar violent episodes involving Karen and Burmans occurred elsewhere in Lower Burma. On 22 March a BIA force led by Thakin Maung Maung (Bo Nya Na), another of the 30 Comrades, entered the town of Papun, which had a mixed Karen and Shan population of around 1,500 people and was headquarters of the Salween District.¹⁸ The following day the Thakins summoned Karen elders to a meeting, where among other points they announced that the people must surrender all weapons in their possession. The response was poor, and the Thakins then jailed 17 elders to put pressure on people to comply. On 5 April a group of Karen ambushed and killed Bo Nya Na and several others, and in retaliation his second in command massacred the Karen leaders detained in the jail. The Karen reaction came at the end of April when they attacked the town, killing several BIA members and rescuing a group of Karen from the local jail. The BIA then concentrated those Karen remaining in Papun in the compound of the District Commissioner's house, and carried out a series of raids on nearby Karen villages. In May a force of some 2,500 Karen prepared an attack on Papun, forcing the BIA to flee. The Karen then razed the town.¹⁹

The most serious outbreak of violence involving the Karen and the Burmans took place at Myaungmya, a large town southwest of Rangoon in the Irrawaddy Delta.²⁰ On 5 March, four days after the British evacuated the area, a BIA detachment under Bo Aung (Thakin Thit) took control of Myaungmya. As had happened elsewhere, the BIA confiscated money and property, and ordered the population to surrender their weapons. Racial incidents followed, and by the end of March the district was experiencing open communal conflict. In May there was a massacre of Karen in the area. Ba Maw, the leader of the Burmese government under the Japanese, later blamed the outbreak of violence on the Supreme Commander of the BIA, Colonel Keiji Suzuki (also known as Colonel Minami and by the Burmese name of Bo Mogyo).²¹ To avenge the death of one of his close friends, Suzuki ordered the destruction of the Karen village of Tayagon.²² This action produced retaliatory attacks by the Karen, and caused Burmans in the

area to seek refuge in Myaungmya town. On 26 May a Karen force arrived to evacuate the Karen living in the town, but the BIA had learned of the plan and drove the Karen troops away. In the aftermath, the BIA carried out a massacre at the compound of the Roman Catholic Mission, and another in Myaungmya's Karen quarter. Survivors were placed in the town jail, and the BIA subsequently executed nearly 50 men from this group. The Karen responded with still more attacks against Burmans, and the cycle of violence continued until Japanese troops entered the area in early June and restored order.

As early as April 1942 the Japanese created a 'Baho' (Central) administration in Rangoon under Thakins Tun Oke and Ba Sein in an attempt to establish control over local BIA committees, and on 5 May the leader of the BIA, General Aung San, ordered the BIA to stop interfering in political affairs. His instructions were widely ignored. In early June the Japanese told the BIA to withdraw from administrative activities, and in August they created a Burmese National Government under Dr Ba Maw, finally putting an end to BIA efforts to control the country. At the same time, the Japanese reduced the strength of the BIA from 23,000 to 3,000 men, and reorganized it as a Burma Defence Army.

Ba Maw reconstituted much of the British civil service, and restored the laws and procedures of the former colonial administration. For his political vehicle, he replaced the Dohbama Asiayone (We Burmans Association) with a more broadly based Mahabama Asiayone (Great Burman Association). A radio broadcast from Rangoon stated in 1944 that as all those living in Burma (Burmese, Shans, Kachins, Karens, etc.) were 'Mahabama', they had been 'consolidated into one unit under the organisation of the Mahabama Asiayone'.²³ Ba Maw made a particular effort to establish good relations with the Karen, and by lifting restrictions on Christian worship and recognizing Karen leaders achieved at least a superficial reconciliation.²⁴ However, his plan called for 'absorbing the Shan and Karenni States into the new State of Burma' and ending the special status enjoyed by residents of these areas, changes that were anathema to the Karen.²⁵

Ba Maw's cabinet included one Karen, U Hla Pe, who served as Minister of Forests and Mines. In the First Review of the New Order Plan for Burma, Ba Maw called upon him to maintain close contact with the Central Karen Board, 'with a view to dealing with the Karen question successfully'. U Hla Pe's ability to do so is doubtful, as an evaluation of the man by the Karen leader Oscar Loo Nee indicates:

he is a Taungthu Karen – a branch of the Karen race which is neither 2nd nor 3rd in population to the Sgaw Karen. Now that there are disturbances in Einme in the delta [in the vicinity of Myaungmya], and in Papun and Kawkareik, can he as a Taungthu Karen stop the trouble? Certainly not. I think he does not know Pwo nor the Sgaw-

Karen dialects and so he is as good as a Burman. In fact, many Karens in the Delta hardly know anything about him or heard of his name, and it is impossible for the Karens to obey a man whom they do not know, have not seen, and have not heard of.²⁶

In March 1943, acting on a suggestion by Ba Maw, Karen leaders created a Burma Karen Central Organization and selected Dr San C. Po as its Chairman. The task of the Central Organization was to explain government policies to the Karen, to resolve Karen-Burman disputes, and to investigate reports of anti-Japanese activity. With regard to the latter, it concluded that in many cases exaggerated reports of Karen hostility originated with the police, who were afraid to visit Karen villages and 'in order to get the companionship of the Nippon Military Police, . . . tried to magnify any conceivable case against the Karens into a Karen rebellion'.²⁷ The Karen Central Organization was dissolved on 7 August 1943, one week after the Japanese granted independence to Ba Maw's government, although the new administration later created a Central Karen Board to take its place.

There can be no doubt that the Karen disliked Japanese rule. One major grievance was forced conscription of labourers for the so-called 'Sweat Army' (the *Kywe Tat*), which provided workers for military construction projects such as the railway linking Burma with Siam, a military hospital at Thandaung and an airfield at Nyaunglebin. According to Saw Marshall Shwin, recruitment was carried out without discrimination between Burmans and other races, but demands for labour to supply timber for shipbuilding, firewood and other forest products such as thatch and canes fell heavily on those living in hill areas, and particularly on the Karen because they occupied forested land near Rangoon and the sea.²⁸ For its part, the Burma Karen Central Organisation complained that District Officers and their subordinates adopted 'uncivilised and high handed' methods to obtain labour.

Though emphasis was put on the word 'Voluntary' in recruiting, they simply gave out the number of men required from each village tract for the Service Corps and for the Heiho on such and such a date, and at the appointed time, the Police with the Headman concerned, appeared in force, fully armed and forcibly took away the required number of men without any consideration of their occupation and inconvenience.

Some of those seized were later 'redeemed' by cash payments and given an exemption from labour service, an arrangement that provided a 'luxurious means of corruption' for village headmen and the police force.²⁹

By the latter part of 1943 tensions between the Karen and the Burmans had subsided, but the Japanese continued to suspect the Karen of disloyalty. A 'Circular to All Karens' issued on 14 October 1943 over the signatures of

Dr San C. Po and two other leaders warned that the Japanese authorities were unhappy with the attitude and behaviour of the Karen, and said they must not support enemy soldiers or agents.³⁰ The Japanese had good reason to distrust the Karen, for in the face of Japanese threats to destroy entire villages for failing to report parachute drops, and their demonstrated willingness to torture and execute suspected members of the resistance, the Karen continued throughout the occupation to provide support for the anti-Japanese cause.³¹

The most audacious Karen challenge to the Japanese was the protection they gave to Captain (later Major) Hugh Seagrim, who stayed in Burma to organize resistance activities in the Karen Hills after the British withdrawal, and remained at liberty for two years.³² The Thakin leaders knew of Seagrim's presence, and in November 1943, having become disillusioned with the Japanese, sent a crucial message to him through Karen channels to inform the Allies in India that the Burma Defense Army was preparing to revolt against the Japanese.³³ The Japanese also heard rumours that a British officer was in the area and in February 1943 raided Pyagawpu, the village where Seagrim was living, but he received sufficient warning to slip away. Early in 1944 a force of some 1,300 men launched a major search in the area, beating and torturing villagers to obtain information, and at the end of the first week of March Seagrim surrendered to spare the local population further abuse.³⁴ The Japanese proceeded to arrest more than 100 Karen, including not only parachutists and former soldiers but also Karen elders suspected of giving aid to the guerrilla force, and brought the detainees to Kyaukkyi. According to Saw Marshall Shwin, who was among those detained:

With extreme violence the Karens were tortured daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a short interval at noon. Besides flogging, suffocating almost to the point of death, whipping, pressing, hanging by the heels to dangle in the air for an indefinite time, there were so many other cruel methods of torture. . . . Generally, the Karens spoke the truth and gave voluntary confessions. Some examinees whose statements were not given credence though they were speaking the truth were inflicted with severe punishment. . . . The result was that, in most cases, instead of arriving at the truth false evidences and untruthful facts were given, and thereby innocent persons were found guilty in the eye of the law.³⁵

On the basis of these interrogations, the Japanese staged a series of trials that ended on 12 May. Some of those accused were set free, while the rest were sent to Rangoon and imprisoned in the local jail. The prison routine required the detainees

to sit or squat on the floor, facing the corridor always, in rows usually 4 in each row. Talking, sleeping, leaning on the wall, lying prostrate on

the floor were strictly prohibited. If anyone was caught napping, talking or lying down, he was slapped on the face or given hard knocks on the head with the gendarme's truncheon.³⁶

Provisions for food, drinking water and sanitation were inadequate; each cell had a movable commode that routinely overflowed, but the warders only allowed prisoners to clean the floor once a week. Within a short time most of the prisoners fell ill, suffering from 'malaria, dysentery, headache, cold, stomach complaints and beri-beri'. There were no doctors, and little medicine apart from small doses of quinine. After two months of this treatment, the Japanese released the civilian detainees, but sent the military prisoners to the Insein Central Jail; in early September they executed Seagrim along with seven Karens.³⁷

Reflecting on the 'causes of the sufferings and afflictions' of the Karen during this period, and on their minority status, Saw Marshall Shwin wrote:

Obviously next to their loyalty to the British, the chief factor which had to do with their present predicament was that they had the unluckiness to belong to a 'negligible minority.' Yet they took pride in their unluckiness in this respect. As a minority, they had suffered through the ages at the hands of their jealous and haughty neighbours who had always relied on their preponderance in ill-treating them. As a minority, serious reflections made them conscious through their bitter experiences that they had extremely difficult problems to solve. Amidst surroundings of sinking sands, they had been solid in their support for the British who had been their custodians and trustees to whom they had bequeathed, consciously and unconsciously, their wills and testaments pertaining to their status, ideals, culture, aspirations, and destiny. They had cast their lot with their erstwhile masters, sinking and swimming with them under all circumstances, and for them and for themselves they had suffered. As bereaved devotees whose faithfulness and hero-worship had grown to be a religion, they had lost their benefactors and protectors who had been snatched away from them by the unbeatable forces. They were quite conscious of the gravity of their situation; they were absolutely in the dark about the future; and they were hopelessly helpless.³⁸

From a military point of view, however, the Karen were far from helpless, and in the final stage of the war in Burma they gained a potent revenge against the Japanese. At the beginning of March 1945, forces under the command of General William J. Slim captured the town of Meiktila, a major strong point some 70 miles south of Mandalay, and by 20 March Mandalay itself was in British hands. Despite these successes, prospects for the British forces were bleak, for they needed to reach Rangoon before the start of the monsoon rains, due in the middle of May. In Slim's words, 'If we did not

take Rangoon before [the monsoon] broke, we should, with landing grounds out, even dropping hazardous, roads dissolving and health deteriorating, find ourselves in a desperate situation with the prospect of a disastrous withdrawal.³⁹ Failure to capture Rangoon at this point would have allowed the Japanese time to acquire fresh supplies and strengthen their defences, and would have been a major setback for the Allied cause.

The main strong point between the British position and Rangoon was the town of Toungoo, which lay astride the road and rail lines that Slim's forces needed to use and offered the Japanese their best opportunity to halt the British advance. With the fall of Mandalay, both sides launched a desperate race to occupy Toungoo in force. The capture of Meiktila gave British forces control of the railway line and the main road, but the Japanese were able to use a second road to the east of the Karen Hills that turned west near the town of Mawchi to reach Toungoo. While Slim's forces fought their way south, Japan's 15th and 55th Divisions moved rapidly down the eastern route. However, the road passed through hilly jungle land where Force 136, the name by which Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) was known within the Southeast Asia Command, had started arming and training a Karen guerrilla force in February 1945.⁴⁰ (See Map 2).

The history of this force dated back to 1942, when the Oriental Mission recruited 3,000 Karen to resist the Japanese advance. About half of this number received military training and arms prior to the fall of Burma, and when the British withdrew they told the Karen to hide their weapons and await further instructions. In March 1943 Force 136 renewed contact with the Karen, and through its Operation Character began placing agents in the hills to gather intelligence. In February 1945 it expanded on these activities by arming and training military levies. As the race for Toungoo took shape, Slim decided to use SOE's guerrilla force to delay the Japanese advance, and on 13 April he ordered the Karen levies to take the offensive:

It was not at all difficult to get the Karens to rise against the hated Japanese; the problem was to restrain them from rising too soon. But now the time had come, and I gave the word, 'Up the Karens!' Japanese, driving hard through the night down jungle roads for Toungoo, ran into ambush after ambush; bridges were blown ahead of them, their foraging parties massacred, their sentries stalked, their staff cars shot up. Air-strikes, directed by British officers, watching from the ground the fall of each stick of bombs, inflicted great damage. The galled Japanese fought their way slowly forward, losing men and vehicles, until about Mawchi, fifty miles east of Toungoo, they were held up for several days by roadblocks, demolitions, and ambushes. They lost the race for Toungoo.⁴¹

The guerrilla force that Force 136 raised had some 3,600 members when operations began in the Karen Hills, but it expanded rapidly and probably

numbered around 12,000 by May 1945. In the aftermath of the race for Toungoo this force had to deal with an extremely difficult situation, for a large number of Japanese troops, possibly as many as 50,000, remained in the Karen Hills, where they regrouped and in some places carried out reprisals against Karen villages.⁴²

The Japanese withdrew from Rangoon at the beginning of May, and had a second disastrous encounter with Karen guerrillas while fleeing the British advance. Japanese troops followed two lines of retreat, one to the east toward Thailand, and the second to the south toward Moulmein. Both passed through Karen territory, and the guerrillas caused heavy casualties.

Papua again became the scene of military activity in this final stage of the war. The conflict in 1942 had decimated the town, and a 1943 report on the area by the Karen Central Organization noted that 'almost all the Karens leaders ... were either shot dead or jailed', and that people who ran away 'were branded as rebels, their villages destroyed and properties looted, as they failed to come out and co-operate with the Local Administration'.⁴³ Anti-Japanese sentiment was strong, and the southernmost of Operation Character's teams, operating under the code name *Mongoose*, set up its headquarters in the vicinity of Papua. When the Japanese withdrew from Rangoon the *Mongoose* team went into hiding: 'All parties were on the defensive against a hungry enemy adopting a policy of looting and burning villages and killing the inhabitants.'⁴⁴ *Mongoose*, however, remained effective and carried out the final important action of Operation Character. Charles Cruikshank in his official history of the SOE in the Far East provides the following description of the way it impeded the efforts of the 28th Japanese Army to cross the Sittang River and reach Moulmein:

Mongoose had a party of 750 guerrillas waiting for them south-east of Shwegyin. Three thousand Japanese reached the west bank of the Shwegyin Chaung, where they built rafts, but the *Mongoose* forces on the other bank pinned them down and left them a sitting target for the RAF. The Japanese lost 1,240 men in ground actions and many more in bombing and strafing. This one-sided battle went on until 8 September, in spite of leaflets dropped to the enemy to tell them that their Government had surrendered.⁴⁵

Casualty figures during this period are difficult to assess. Ian Morrison credits Operation Character with killing at least 12,500 Japanese, and with causing the deaths of many more by directing air strikes against Japanese positions. For the Sittang crossing, Japanese sources claimed losses in excess of 16,000, while British analysts suggested a figure of 11,000 killed or captured, although they added that some of the estimated 7,500 men who succeeded in crossing the Sittang were killed by guerrillas on the east bank.⁴⁶

Epilogue

The Karen community ended the war in an optimistic mood. San C. Po said in June 1945:

The progress of our people, the advancement of our country, their liberty and independence has been my lifelong wish and I verily believe God has spared me to live so long in order to see that day before I leave the world, and we today see the beginning of that great day being fulfilled.

He envisaged the creation of a United States of Burma composed of Burma Proper, the Shan States, Arakan State, and a 'Karen, Kachin and Chin State', each administered by its own people and participating in a Federal Union governing all of the territory that had once been British Burma.⁴⁷ However, the Karen community was deeply divided on the issue of future political arrangements, and some Karen remained extremely hostile to the Burmese. In June 1945 Cora Du Bois, Chief of Research and Analysis for the OSS in the India-Burma Theatre, observed that 'it would be naive not to expect any reprisal against the Burmese' on the part of the Karen, and she cited a report from the Tavoy area indicating that the Karen were willing to support an underground movement against the Japanese but preferred not to join ethnic Burman guerrilla bands because they did not wish to place themselves in a position 'which might later make it awkward for them to enjoy their revenge against the Burmans'.⁴⁸

Communal conflicts broke out during the interregnum between the Japanese surrender and the restoration of British authority, but the Karen battalion of the wartime Burma Defence Army prevented large-scale violence in Karen areas. The Karen National Organisation and the Karen Central Organisation, which would later merge to become the Karen National Union, issued demands for an autonomous Karen territory, and at a Karen Conference held in Rangoon between 30 June and 7 July 1945, delegates resolved to work for the creation of a Karen political entity. The Conference proposed that the 'United Frontier Karen States', consisting of Karenni, Tenasserim Division, Nyaunglebin sub-division and if possible the Karen-occupied areas in Thailand, be placed directly under the British Governor in the same way that the Shan States and Karenni had been before the war. In addition, they requested that the Irrawaddy and Pegu Divisions be recognized as 'Karen Divisions with special privileges for Karens within the Dominion of Burma, or within the Federation of Independent Burma as the case may be'.⁴⁹ However, some Karen elements opposed this approach, considering it preferable to work for an independent Karen state.

British policy after the war discouraged communalism, and the British feared that demands for what came to be called Karenistan might lead to a

split comparable to that between India and Pakistan. For this reason they gave little encouragement to the separatist cause, causing unhappiness among the Karen who felt that the British were paying more attention to the Burmans, who had been their enemies, than to the Karen, who had steadfastly supported them both before and during the Japanese period.⁵⁰ While rejecting Karen demands for a separate state, the British did try to shield the Karen and other minority groups from Burman domination. A White Paper issued by the post-war British administration indicated that Burma Proper would quickly move toward self-government, but left the status of the frontier areas unresolved.⁵¹ However, the British soon lost their capacity to influence affairs in Burma. The dominant political group, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, demanded independence after the war, and an agreement reached in January 1947 called for a new constitution and independence within one year.

Although delegates at the 1945 Karen Conference included Christians, Buddhists and animists, and some Karen sources suggest that their sufferings at the hands of the Japanese and the BIA drew all Karen together,⁵² the war had exacerbated ethnic and religious divisions within Karen society. Tensions between different Karen factions, between Christian and non-Christian Karen, and between Christian Karen who were Baptist and those who were Roman Catholic, split the community in the post-war period, reducing its political effectiveness.⁵³ The constituent assembly that drafted the new constitution made provisions for a Karenni State in the Union of Burma, and Karen delegates agreed to this arrangement. After independence, however, relations with the Union of Burma quickly soured, and in mid-1948 a group called the Karen National Defence Organization launched an insurrection in a bid to create an independent Karen state. The rebellion failed, but it left an enduring legacy of bitterness, and conflict between Burmans and the Karen has continued throughout the second half of the twentieth century. San C. Po's vision of an era of progress and advancement, liberty and independence was not to be realized.⁵⁴

Notes

- 1 The 1931 Census showed a total population of 14,647,756; the principal elements of the population were Burmans (9,267,196), Karen (1,367,673), Shan (1,037,406) and Indians (1,017,825). The 1941 census showed a total population of 16,823,798, but detailed figures were lost. Government of Burma, *Burma Handbook*, Simla, 1943, pp. 4-12.
- 2 J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1948, pp. 178-84; Harry I. Marshall, *The Karens of Burma*, Longmans Green & Co. for the Burma Research Society, 1945.
- 3 Government of Burma, *Burma Handbook*, pp. 6-9.
- 4 In 1931 the census recorded 218,790 Christians out of a total Karen population of 1,367,673. The largest groups were Baptists (168,935 adherents) and Roman Catholics (41,294).

- 5 Dr San Crombie Po was a highly respected leader of the pre-war Karen community. Born in 1870, he earned his medical degree in the United States at the Albany Medical College of Union University in the state of New York. From 1917 until 1923 he served as a member of the Burma Legislative Council, and in 1925 he was elected President of the National Karen Association. His book, *Burma and the Karens* (London, Elliot Stock, 1928) called upon the British to turn Tenasserim Division into a Karen state.
- 6 Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, London, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp. 3, 5; Josef Silverstein, *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1980, p. 26–32.
- 7 Neal M. Bowers to Cora Du Bois, 'The Karens in Politics', 1 Feb. 1945, RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1375.
- 8 Ba Maw, who was of mixed Burman and Armenian descent, was born in 1890. An outstanding student, he obtained his Bachelor's degree in 1913, and after a brief career as a schoolmaster earned a Master's degree and became a lecturer at Rangoon College. He subsequently studied in England and was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, and then went to France where he earned a Doctorate in Literature at Bordeaux. Robert H. Taylor, *The State in Burma*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1987, pp. 170, 172.
- 9 A third group, the Myochit ('Patriotic') party headed by U Saw, also cultivated Japanese support, but U Saw was poorly educated, heavily influenced by conservative Buddhist interests, and viewed by the British as corrupt. For background on the Dobama Asiayone, see Khin Yi, *The Dobama Movement in Burma (1930–1938)*, Ithaca, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1988.
- 10 John Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1958, ch. 12.
- 11 Office of Strategic Services, Research and Analysis Branch, R&A No. 2015, Japanese Administration of Burma, 10 July 1944, US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Record Group (RG) 226 Entry (E) 136 Folder 621.
- 12 Maung Maung, 'On the March with Aung San', in *Aung San of Burma*, comp. and ed. by Maung Maung, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff for Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1962, p. 59.
- 13 *U Hla Pe's Narrative of the Japanese Occupation of Burma*, recorded by U Khin, Ithaca, Data Paper No. 41, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1961, p. 8.
- 14 Jan Bečka, whose book *The National Liberation Movement in Burma during the Japanese Occupation Period (1941–1945)* (Prague, Oriental Institute in Academia, 1983) draws heavily on Burmese sources, similarly calls attention to positive aspects of the BIA. 'While there is no use denying the negative factors, it should be emphasized that the majority of the officers as well as of rank and file brought many personal sacrifices and served their country well.' (p. 85)
- 15 Saw Marshall Shwin, 'The Shwegyin Karens during the War (February 1942–February 1945)', Public Record Office HS1/11, p. 2. For Saw Marshall Shwin's testimony before the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry, see the committee's Report (Rangoon, Govt. Printing and Stationery, Burma, 1947), Part II, pp. 126–34.
- 16 Saw Marshall Shwin, 'The Shwegyin Karens during the War', pp. 3–4.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 8. *Danyin* is a fruit with a strong aroma, normally used in condiments.
- 18 OSS Operations Study, Papun, 13 July 1944, NARA RG226 Entry 16 89549; Pro-forma B – Tactical – Papun or Salween District, 10 Feb. 1945, NARA RG226 Entry 16 135486.

- 19 Ian Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs: The Life and Gallant Death of Major H. P. Seagrim G.C., D.S.O., M.B.E.*, London, Faber and Faber, 1947, pp. 69–71. See also Ba Maw, *Breakthrough in Burma*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968, p. 444, and 'Operations Study, Papun', p. 14 (citing an OSS interrogation report), OSS R&A CBI New Delhi, NARA RG226 Entry 16 number 89544.
- 20 For accounts of events in Myaungmya, see Dorothy Hess Guyot, 'Communal Conflict in the Burma Delta', in *Southeast Asian Transitions: Approaches through Social History*, ed. Ruth T. McVey, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1978, pp. 191–234, Ba Maw, *Breakthrough in Burma*, pp. 186–92, and Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, pp. 186–90. The description here is based on these sources.
- 21 Suzuki lived in Burma before the war as Mr Minami, and was president of the Burma-Japan Association. Bo Mogyo means General Thunderbolt, and referred to a traditional Burmese story which had political overtones. The British had banned a popular song based on this tale before the war. For details see Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, pp. 220–1.
- 22 The man killed was 'Lt Col Iijima'. Guyot identifies this name as a pseudonym for Colonel Kimata Toyoji, although there was a Lt Col Iijima Kimata serving as Staff Officer in Charge of Operations for the BIA. Some sources mention the destruction of a second village called 'Kanazogon', but Guyot was unable to find a village of this name.
- 23 Burma Home Service, 22 Aug. 1944, cited in W. S. Desai, 'The Activities of the Mahabama Asi Ayone', NARA RG226 Entry 16 134105.
- 24 Izumiya Tatsuro, *The Minami Organ*, trans. U Tun Aung Chain, Rangoon, Translation and Publication Department, High Education Department, 1981, p. 197. This work was originally published in Japanese as *Sono na wa Minami Kikan*, Tokyo, Tokuma Shoten, 1967.
- 25 *Burma's New Order Plan*, Rangoon, Bureau of State Printing Presses, Burma, 1944, p. 25.
- 26 Oscar Loo Nee – Exhibit 1: The Independence of Burma, NARA RG226 Entry 19 XL12637. A Taungthu Karen was a Karen from the hills.
- 27 'Report on the Working of the Burma Karen Central Organization, for a Period of 3 1/2 Months, ending the 30th June 1943', dated 3 July 1943 and submitted to the Japanese Military Administration in the name of the 'Chairman' of the Burma Karen Central Organization. Although Dr San C. Po was Chairman of the Organization, this report refers to him in the third person and was apparently written by someone else, possibly Sydney Loo Nee, a Pwo Karen from Bassein who served as Secretary of the organization. See also 'The Burma Karen Central Organization', a statement by Oscar Loo Nee to the Japanese Military Administration. NARA RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1203.
- 28 Saw Marshall Shwin, 'The Shwegyin Karens', HS1/11, p. 11. The Japanese also recruited young men to serve in a 'Blood Army' (*Thway-tat*), often as Heiho or 'sub-soldiers', but they accepted few Karen for this service, apparently because loyalty of the Karen was suspect. The wartime government had a Four Army Plan in support of the Japanese war effort, comprising a Blood Army, a Sweat Army, an Army of National Service (*Wah-tat*) and an Army of the sole political party, the Asiayone. U Hla Pe's *Narrative*, p. 15. Dorothy Guyot, 'The Political Impact of the Japanese Occupation of Burma', Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1966, provides details of the Sweat Army on pp. 258–63 and 305–7.
- 29 'Report on the Working of the Burma Karen Central Organization', NARA RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1203.

- 30 'Karen Organizations', OSS R&A SEAC Report No. 7, 26 Sept. 1944, pp. 11–2, NARA RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1417.
- 31 OSS interrogation report, 'San C. Po's Impression of Japs', 11 June 1945, NARA RG226 Entry 19 XL11599.
- 32 Seagrim's story is the subject of Ian Morrison's book *Grandfather Longlegs*.
- 33 Frank N. Trager, *Burma – From Kingdom to Republic*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1966, pp. 61–2.
- 34 Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, pp. 123–43.
- 35 Saw Marshall Shwin, 'The Shwegyin Karens', HSI/11, p. 15.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 16.
- 37 Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, pp. 153–5.
- 38 Saw Marshall Shwin, 'The Shwegyin Karens', HSI/11, p. 19.
- 39 Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, London, Cassel, 1956, p. 468.
- 40 The road the Japanese used runs between Toungoo and Hopong via Loikaw. Opened in 1937 and described as a 'great engineering feat', it 'climbs and descends repeatedly and heights vary from a few hundred feet to 4,500 feet. . . . The chief difficulty about the road is its exceedingly twisty nature and its narrowness.' Much of it was limited to a single lane. See *The Motor Roads of Burma*, 4th ed., Rangoon, The Burmah Oil Co. (Burma Trading), 1948, pp. 81–5.
- 41 Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p. 485; see also Terence O'Brien, *The Moonlight War: The Story of Clandestine Operations in South-East Asia, 1944–5*, London, Collins, 1987, 249–56; Vice-Admiral The Earl Mountbatten of Burma, 'Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, 1943–1945', London, HMSO, 1951, p. 153.
- 42 'Communal Awards to the Hill Peoples of Burma who have Formed or Aided the Resistance Movements Organised by Force 136 in their Areas', 4 Oct. 1945, HSI/17. For accounts of Operation Character by official historians, see S. Woodburn Kirby, *The War Against Japan*, vol. 4, London, HMSO, 1965, pp. 205, 249–50, 387 n. 4, and Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 186–90. An internal SOE document places the size of Operation Character's guerrilla force at 8,000 in May 1944. See 'Memorandum on Force 136 for the Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia', 17 July 1945, HSI/205.
- 43 'Report on the Working of the Burma Karen Central Organization', RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1203.
- 44 Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, p. 189.
- 45 *Ibid.*, pp. 189–90. See also 'Communal Awards to the Hill Peoples of Burma', HSI/17, and O'Brien, *The Moonlight War*, p. 338. Louis Allen's *Sittang: The Last Battle* (London, Macdonald and Co., 1973) is a detailed account of Japanese attempts to cross the Sittang River. Allen mentions the Karen levies on pp. 41–3, but says little about their activities along the Sittang River.
- 46 Allen, *Sittang*, pp. 247–8.
- 47 OSS interrogation report, 'San C. Po's Impression of Japs', 11 June 1945, NARA RG226 Entry 19 XL11599.
- 48 Cora Du Bois, Chief, R&A/IBT, to Carleton F. Scofield, 'Token Arms for the Karens', 27 June 1945, NARA RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1377.
- 49 OSS R&A/SEAC No. 13-R, 'The Karen Separatist Movement', 13 July 1945, RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1411. The quoted material was supplied by one of the conference delegates. A version of the resolutions published in *The New Light of Burma* on 8 July 1945 differed in many significant respects from this list. See also 'Post-War First Karen Mass Meeting in Rangoon', RG226 Entry 19 XL19357.
- 50 'The Karen Separatist Movement', NARA RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1411.

- 51 The Karen received special treatment in one respect. The fighting near Toungoo in March 1945 took place during the rice-planting season, and as a consequence the crop was very poor. A special operation called Hunger I was mounted at the end of 1945 to supply the Karens with rice, using various sorts of land transport along with air drops. F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-46*, London, HMSO, 1956, p. 278.
- 52 See, for example, OSS R&A/SEAC No. 13-R, 'The Karen Separatist Movement', 13 July 1945, NARA RG226 Entry 154 Folder 1411.
- 53 See, for example, Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, p. 73.
- 54 For discussions of the Karen in post-war Burma, see Mikael Gravers, 'The Karen Making of a Nation', in *Asian Forms of the Nation*, ed. Stein Tønneson and Hans Antlöv, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press, 1996; Clive J. Christie, *A Modern History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separatism*, London and New York, I. B. Tauris, and Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1996, pp. 53-80; and *idem.*, 'The Karens: Loyatism and Self-Determination', in *Turbulent Times and Enduring Peoples: Mountain Minorities in the South-East Asian Massif*, ed. Jean Michaud, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon Press, 2000, pp. 99-122. For the views of the Government of the Union of Burma on the Karen insurrection, see *KNDO Insurrection*, Government of the Union of Burma Publication, 2nd Edition, 1949, and *Burma and the Insurrections*, Government of the Union of Burma Publication, 1949.

Chapter Three

Between China and the Japanese

Wartime Affairs in Kokang State and the Failure of the Spiers Mission

Paul H. Kratoska

In Burma as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Japan presented its war against the Western Powers as a struggle to create an 'Asia for the Asians'. And, as was also the case elsewhere, local populations viewed the conflict in relation to their own interests and concerns. Ethnic Burman nationalists considered the Japanese invasion a positive development because it overturned British rule and appeared to move them closer to independence, but in the 'Excluded' Territories of British Burma outside of 'Burma Proper', where the population was predominantly non-Burman, the arrival of the Japanese was less welcome. There, colonial rule had brought few difficulties and a number of benefits, not least peaceful conditions and a reduction in ethnic tensions, and Britain's departure seemed likely to portend domination either by China or by Burmans, neither of which was an appealing prospect.

One location where the Japanese invasion unleashed powerful forces was a tiny territory called Kokang, situated within British Burma adjacent to the Chinese province of Yunnan. Kokang marked the limit of the Japanese advance, and was not occupied. Both Japanese and Chinese troops carried out patrols in the state, and actions by the Chinese here and elsewhere along the Burmese border during the war led Britain to believe they were attempting to take advantage of the unsettled conditions to overturn earlier boundary agreements and annex portions of British territory. As the Chinese presence grew ever stronger in Kokang, the British sought to make it clear that they were determined to resist such changes. (See Map 2).

Colonial rule in Upper Burma dated from November 1885, when British forces occupied Mandalay and deposed the last Burmese monarch, King Thibaw.¹ The British laid claim to the entire territory nominally ruled by the King, although it proved difficult to establish effective control because, in the words of Sir Charles Crosthwaite, Chief Commissioner between 1887 and 1900, 'a considerable minority of the population, to say the least, did not want us'.² On 24 July 1886 China signed a convention accepting British authority in Burma, and in 1894 the two parties signed a Boundary

Convention that settled most outstanding issues relating to the border between Burma and China. However, along the eastern side of the Wa States – an area claimed by the British but left 'unadministered' owing to the remoteness of the place and the recalcitrance of the local population – the border remained undefined and would be a source of contention for the next 50 years.

Kokang was immediately to the north of the Wa States. Since the greater part of the population consisted of ethnic Chinese, and the territory lay east of the Salween River, which to the north was itself east of the boundary between Yunnan and Burma, China could point to both demographic and geographic considerations to argue that Kokang should be part of China. It was in fact placed in China under the 1894 boundary convention, but this agreement included a provision that Britain was abandoning its claims to the states of Keng Hung and Munglam in favour of China on condition that the Chinese were not to transfer any these territories to any other nation. In June 1895 China violated this understanding by ceding a portion of Keng Hung to France, and Britain responded by insisting on a supplementary agreement, signed on 4 February 1897, which made Kokang part of British Burma.³ From the standpoint of Kokang the change had certain advantages, and H. R. Davies, who visited the area in 1895, wrote some year later that the people there would strongly object to being placed back under Chinese rule: '... no doubt its inhabitants find that they have much more independence in their present position than they could hope for under Chinese officials, especially now that the mandarins have begun to interfere more and more in the affairs of the border States and to establish garrisons close to the British frontier.'⁴

In 1942 the ruler of Kokang was an ethnic Chinese named Yang Wen Pin⁵ whose family had migrated to the state from Nanking. He was born in 1897, and had become the ruler of Kokang in 1927, succeeding his father in the position. For administrative purposes, the British authorities placed Kokang under the Shan state of North Hsenwi, and the ruler's Burmese title was 'Myosa', which identified him as the chief of a sub-state and subordinate to a Sawbwa, the title held by the principal rulers in the Shan States. The Chinese referred to the Myosa as the 'Magistrate' (Hsien Chang) or 'Kuokan Hsien',⁶ terminology that placed the area within a Chinese context. Both titles understated the importance of Kokang and its ruler, for the state had substantial resources derived from the opium grown there, and the Myosa enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. In 1903 J. G. Scott described Kokang in his *Gazetteer of Upper Burma* as 'certainly the wealthiest district in the Shan States', and said the ruler was 'not so much an official as a feudatory of the North Hsen Wi Sawbwa, whom he certainly greatly exceeds in riches and probably in material strength. In fact, below the greater Sawbwaw, Yang, the *hêng* of Ko Kang, is certainly the most powerful man in the Shan States. ...'⁷ An account written in the 1940s noted that 'till



Figure 3.1 Yang Wen Pin

recently no Shan official dared to interfere or visit Kokang on official duty', adding, 'those who did try to enforce authority by their presence there in 1929 or 1930' narrowly escaped with their lives.⁸

Kokang is 75 km long, measured from north to south, and roughly 25 km wide. The land is extremely hilly, and according to Scott's *Gazetteer* many villages in the 1890s consisted of just three or four houses 'simply because there is no room for more houses or because the land to be cultivated within any reasonable distance is all taken up'. The largest settlement was Nam Kaw, with 103 houses. Shan sources consulted in the 1890s indicated that there were 600 villages in Kokang – 455 of them Chinese – and around 4,000 houses.⁹ In 1947 the population was 40,804, and 82 per cent of the residents were ethnic Chinese. (See Table 3.1.)¹⁰

Kokang produced about half of its rice requirements, and imported the rest from Burma. Owing to the hilly terrain, wet rice had to be grown on terraced land. Scott's *Gazetteer* states:

Table 3.1 Population of Kokang State in 1947

Chinese	33,474
Palaung	3,224
Shans	1,405
Lisu	720
Myaungs	649
Wa	636
Kachins	600
Sino-Shans	96
TOTAL	40,804

Source: Report of the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry, Part II (Appendices), p. 31.

The hillside is dug into terraces, which at a distance look like a huge amphitheatre, one step being often six feet and more above the next, while the area for paddy is seldom more than six feet wide. These are irrigated by channels diverted for the purpose. The labour is enormous, and in most cases could only have been accomplished in several seasons . . .

The principal cash crop was opium.

Whole stretches of hillside are covered with the poppy and the total area cannot be very far short of ten thousand acres. . . . the amount of crude opium produced annually must reach something like forty thousand pounds. . . . The labour spent in cultivating the fields is enormous. Some of these are several miles from the villages, often several thousand feet above or below them.¹¹

In Scott's time, at the small settlement of Kunlong in the southwestern corner of the state three dugout canoes carried goods and passengers across the Salween River near its confluence with the Nam Ting River, which formed the southern boundary of Kokang state. The Nam Ting lay along an old trade route that had fallen out of use with the improvement of communications between Mandalay and Bhamo, where access to China was more direct. However, the trade route from Bhamo into Yunnan passed through extremely rugged terrain, and following the British annexation of Upper Burma interest revived in the old passage along the Nam Ting River in connection with schemes to build a railway line into Yunnan, and ultimately to a section of the Upper Yangtze accessible to cargo boats. A Mandalay to Lashio line opened in 1902, but no further extensions were built.¹²

The war against Japan reached Kokang in May 1942 when, following the fall of Lashio, military authorities ordered an evacuation of the Northern

Shan States, and the 49th and 93rd divisions of the Chinese Army staged a disorderly retreat through the state. Their passage was accompanied by looting and rape, and created a great deal of hostility.¹³ This ill feeling had a long history, for as early as 1895 H. R. Davies noted that the expected arrival of Chinese soldiers accompanying the boundary commission had caused villagers to flee.¹⁴

When the Japanese reached Upper Burma, they despatched a force of about 200 men to Kunlong. By his own account, Yang Wen Pin, as 'a Chinese favoured by being under H.B.M.'s Government', was reluctant to have dealings with the Japanese: 'if I surrendered to the Enemy, not only should I spoil my own personal standing but I should also cause disgrace to my Ancestors as well as leave a bad reputation to my descendants.'¹⁵ Lacking a military force of his own, he felt compelled to attend a meeting called by the Japanese at Kunlong on 4 June 1942, but after hearing what the Japanese had to say he quietly slipped away and went to Yunnan where he sought support from the Chinese First Army. Within Kokang itself, he set about creating a Self Defence Force, which he equipped by purchasing a quantity of the arms and ammunition that became available after the fall of Lashio, reportedly paying around Rs. 800 per gun. The Chinese responded to his appeal by sending a small force which reached Lao Kai (Malipa) on 28 June 1942; the Myosa paid the expenses of these troops in addition to bearing the costs incurred by his own Self Defence Force.¹⁶

The Japanese settled on the Salween River, which offered good defensive positions, as the limit of their advance, and placed a garrison force at Kunlong.¹⁷ In August the Kokang Self Defence Force together with a body of Chinese troops attacked the Japanese position there, killing around 80 men. The Japanese then sent in some 1,000–2,000 troops and succeeded in outflanking the Chinese and local forces, but the Kokang men used their knowledge of jungle paths to help the Chinese troops escape the trap. Following this encounter, Chinese forces fled the area, and Japanese soldiers burned the villages where they had been staying. The Myosa now went back to Yunnan to seek further support. He approached the British Assistant Military Attaché, but was referred to the Chinese Expeditionary Force because Kokang fell within the Chinese Operational Area. The Chinese agreed to help, and in effect incorporated Kokang's local defence force into their own army, appointing the Myosa an Honorary Colonel and posting him to the 'Kokang Self Defence Branch Detachment' with the title of 'Sze Ling Kuan', used for commanders of independent units.¹⁸

Kokang now settled into a new and somewhat uneasy status quo. The Japanese remained at Kunlong and sent periodic patrols into the rest of the state, but made no attempt to occupy the area permanently. Chinese guerrillas also operated in the area, as did troops from the Chinese Expeditionary Force who, according to local residents, 'ate up the country like locusts' but fled when any Japanese actually appeared.¹⁹

With the rice-growing areas of Lower Burma under Japanese occupation, it was no longer possible to import rice from that source, but funds raised by the sale of opium sufficed to purchase rice from China. This trade continued surreptitiously even after the Chinese, in 1942, imposed an embargo on exports of rice from Yunnan.²⁰ Maize and potatoes supplied the rest of the needs of the people.

In April 1943 the Myosa paid a further visit to Yunnan, and while there received an invitation to go to Chungking and meet Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who gave him various presents including a sword (inscribed with the Generalissimo's name), a brass medal and a military uniform. Although this visit was a sign of approval at high levels, it apparently generated a great deal of jealousy because access to the Generalissimo was tightly controlled, and in Chinese circles the Myosa was considered an unimportant figure.²¹

The British viewed these developments with a growing sense of alarm. Since Kokang had not been occupied, Britain wanted to re-establish an administrative presence in the state, but the proximity of the Japanese and the growing influence of the Chinese made this difficult to accomplish. Then, at the end of September, a series of events began to unfold that convinced British officials that China intended to annex Kokang and adjacent border territories.

On 30 September the head of the Kokang Defence Force, a distant cousin of the Myosa named Yang Wen Tai,²² staged a mutiny, acting together with a group of Chinese officers who were helping train the self-defence force. One of the Myosa's sons was killed in the attack, and he himself suffered a broken leg while escaping to Chinese territory. Upon receiving reports of the mutiny, the Chinese immediately sent a military force into Kokang and seized Yang Wen Tai, who they accused of 'rebellion' and summarily executed. One of the Myosa's surviving sons, Yang Kyein Sein, reported that Yang Wen Tai told him he had carried out the rebellion under orders issued by 'Chung Yang' ('Central Government, an expression used to refer to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government): 'I did not wish to mutiny, I did it because I had received orders. I can show you the orders by wire.' He suggested Yang Wen Tai had been killed to prevent him from revealing details of the plot.²³ Two and possibly three Chinese officers involved in the mutiny were also killed, probably by the Chinese.²⁴

Remarkably, the Chinese authorities in Yunnan then accused the Myosa of pro-Japanese activities, basing the charges on information supplied by the man they had executed, Yang Wen Tai, concerning Yang Wen Pin's meeting with the Japanese in June 1942. The Myosa was detained, and the Chinese prepared to court-martial him. When British officials learned of these events, they protested on grounds that Kokang was British territory and the Myosa a British official, but the Chinese replied that they had jurisdiction over the case because the Myosa was an officer in the Chinese army,

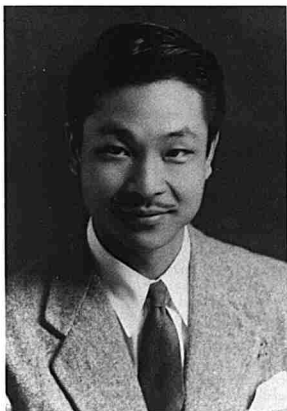


Figure 3.2 Yang Kyein Sein

'although he had entered it in an irregular way' (he did not, in fact, become a Chinese officer until five months after the alleged offence took place).²⁵ Court martial proceedings commenced on 14 February 1944. While the case was underway, the Myosa's brother and his son Yang Kyein Sein were invited by General Liu Ja-chiu to meet one of the judges involved in the court martial, a man named Cheng Chiu, who told them that the accusations against Yang Wen Pin were grave and rested on solid evidence. He added that he found himself in a difficult position and was thinking of withdrawing from the case because, as reported by Yang Kyein Sein, 'if he judged the case in favour of my father he would be accused by the 9th Division Commander, but . . . if he judged the case in favour of the Accuser he would feel bad toward my father's friends', including General Liu. The point of this conversation became clear the next morning, when General Liu informed Yang Kyein Sein that the judge 'wanted 200 "lung" (Taels) of gold to settle the case favourably to the Myosa'.²⁶

British diplomats continued to protest to the Chinese, and after lengthy negotiations, which included representations by the British Ambassador to China's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr T. V. Soong, the Chinese agreed on 17 March 1944 to release the Myosa. In fact, by this time the officer handling the court martial, a General Yin, had already told the Myosa that the accusations against him had been found to be false, and that he was to be freed. Nonetheless, the Myosa remained in custody until 16 April, and was only released after presenting gifts to Chinese officers (a British account speaks of 'extortion of presents and attempts at extortion of money' during this interval), and signing a letter that thanked the Chinese and said he himself was to blame for what had transpired. On 27 April 1944 British authorities flew the Myosa to Calcutta, where he remained for the duration of the war.²⁷ At the time of his release, the Chinese Expeditionary Force handed a letter to the British Consulate General at Kunming reiterating the charges against Yang Wen Pin, and expressed the hope that the British authorities would deal severely with the case. The Government of Burma did investigate the charges, and in August 1944 reported to the Burma Office that they had no foundation.²⁸ A doctor sent by the British to treat the Myosa's broken leg summed up the episode by saying that the verdict of the Chinese authorities had been 'Not Guilty, but too rich'.²⁹

One possible explanation for the coup and the Myosa's subsequent arrest, as suggested by British sources, was that it represented an attempt by Chinese authorities in Yunnan to install a compliant puppet administration in the territory preparatory to placing it under Chinese jurisdiction. For example, General Hsiao I-hsu of the China Expeditionary Force flatly told the British Vice Consul that Kokang belonged to China, although he retreated from this position when the Vice Consul pointed out it had been ceded to Britain in 1897. A book published by the Yunnan Government in 1934 made it clear that provincial officials hoped to change the existing frontiers. According to a report published in the *Times of India*, the map of the border areas that accompanied the volume showed a series of lines marking alternative boundaries:

First, nearest to Yunnan there is a line marked 'China-Burma undelimited boundary.' Further into Burma is a line marked 'Burma-China boundary demarcated in 1769.' This same line a little further on bears the inscription 'Territory filched from us (Chinese) in 1894.' Still further into Burma is a line inscribed 'China-Burma boundary when (China) powerful as of old in the heyday of Ching.'

The last of these lines embraced about one-third of British Burma, including Myitkyina, Bhamo and Lashio.³⁰

Although claims to Kokang were made by local officials and not openly supported at ministerial level, British authorities felt that the Nationalist government might be fomenting trouble to create opportunities to overturn



Figure 3.3 Yang Wen Tsan

the political status quo.³¹ In March 1944 the Kuomintang Ministry of Information issued a map that placed the Sino-Burmese border just north of Myitkyina, thus incorporating much of British Burma into Chinese territory. When asked to explain this matter, Dr K. C. Wu, China's Political Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, responded that border issues were unimportant at the present juncture and would be settled after the war.³²

The British also considered that the coup in Kokang might be connected with jealousy over the attention shown the Myosa by Chiang Kai-shek, or Chinese irritation over complaints about the behaviour of Chinese troops in Kokang. Another possibility was that the affair resulted from a local feud, since the leader of the rebellion, Yang Wen Tai, had connections with elements in the Shan State of North Hsenwi with whom the Myosa had come into conflict in the past, but the Myosa himself rejected this explanation.³³

After Yang Wen Pin's departure, the Chinese placed his second brother, Yang Wen Tsan, in command of the Kokang Defence Force, under the 11th Group Army. He was described by Brigadier Adam Wilson Brand, the head of the British Military Mission to the Chinese Expeditionary Force in Kunming, as a 'pleasant but far from strong personality who is the plaything of politics and war'.³⁴ Although the British considered him an acceptable replacement for the Myosa, they did not want to recognize any Chinese right to interfere in such matters, and finally settled on the expedient of allowing Yang Wen Pin to appoint his brother to be acting Myosa pending his own return.³⁵

The Spiers Mission

In June 1943 Britain's Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.), operating as Force 136, decided to set up a sub-mission with headquarters at Kunming to handle the launching of parties from China into Burma, Siam and French Indochina.³⁶ Its initial foray into Burma, known as the Spiers Mission, was directed at Kokang. The purpose was to establish 'a training and operational base for launching harassing parties against enemy lines of communication in the Lashio-Bhamo area'; specific tasks included maintaining contact with missions operating deeper within Burma, helping to move personnel and stores into operational areas, reporting on enemy activity, arming and training levies raised by the Myosa, and establishing good relations with the Chinese Expeditionary Force. There were also plans to carry out sabotage attacks on the Bhamo-Lashio road, although intelligence-gathering organizations such as the Inter-Services Liaison Division (ISLD) opposed 'pinprick' operations of this sort, preferring to keep everything peaceful along the routes used by agents so that information could be brought out without hindrance. Kokang was an attractive location for an operational base because of the sympathetic attitude of the Myosa, and because from there it was possible to 'get into the Jap communications and go for his material – locos, lorries, plants, etc.'³⁷

Lt. Col. P. H. Munro Faure was selected to head Spiers. He planned to enter Kokang in August, 1943, and received word from General Ho Ying Ching in July that China was unlikely to object to the mission. On this basis he went to Kunming, and once there applied for travel passes for himself and his staff. In October, not long after the mutiny drove Yang Wen Pin from Kokang, the Chinese informed Munro Faure that his application for permits to pass through Chinese territory had been turned down, and that he would not be allowed to establish an office in Kunming. Force 136 then shifted to an alternate plan that called for Spiers personnel to be dropped into Kokang by parachute.³⁸

The first Spiers party made its drop in December 1943. After failing to locate a suitable landing site in Kokang, they used one in Meng P'eng

District, five miles inside Chinese territory. The local Chinese garrison had not been informed of the operation, but were well aware that the site chosen was suitable for paratroop landings, and had given instructions that any strangers seen in the area should immediately be reported to the nearest military outpost.

After gathering their equipment, the Spiers party set off for Hung Ai, about 10 miles away in Kokang. They were soon approached by a man 'with a military bearing' who questioned them about their activities, and then took them to meet the Chinese authorities responsible for the area, who detained the party for several days. When they were finally allowed to enter Kokang, Chinese representatives accompanied them and refused to allow any contact with the local population. Finding that they could not operate effectively, the party withdrew, having accomplished very little.³⁹

Munro Faure eventually received permission to travel overland to Kokang, where he arrived on 26 February 1944. Reviewing the situation, he noted that the Chinese had taken 'the opportunity so providentially provided to remove all trace of British rule', and concluded that they were in the process of annexing the territory. The Chinese flag flew over Kokang Defence Force bases, pictures of Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai-shek hung on the walls of the Headquarters building, and troops sang the Chinese National Anthem. In an attempt to strengthen the British position, Munro Faure took steps to reorganize the Defence Force and brought in a large quantity of stores, but he could not eliminate the Chinese presence entirely because China had operational responsibility for the area, and even if placed under British control the local Defence Force would continue to take orders from the Chinese Expeditionary Force.⁴⁰

Munro Faure was relieved a few weeks later by Lt. Col. Ronald Kaulback, who was also appointed Civil Affairs Officer for Kokang in the hope that this token restoration of British administrative authority would strengthen his position with the local population. Kokang itself was considered solidly pro-British, but the neighbouring Shans were thought to favour the Japanese. The British felt this state of affairs was due in large part to the Chinese presence in the area: 'All prefer the Japanese to Chinese owing to the behaviour of Chinese troops on their retreat from Burma and to the depredations of Chinese guerillas.'⁴¹

Chinese military authorities in Kokang refused to recognize Kaulback as Civil Affairs Officer, saying they had no instructions from Chungking regarding the appointment, and their attitude soon degenerated into open obstruction. China accused Force 136 of raising an anti-Chinese force, and by July cooperation had entirely ceased, with the Chinese even refusing to supply food to the mission.⁴²

In an attempt to sort out this and other difficulties, Brigadier Adam Wilson Brand paid an unofficial visit to Kokang in October 1944, accompanied by a Major-General Lin from the Chinese Expeditionary

Force. Wilson Brand noted that the inclusion of General Lin was 'unfortunate' if the CEF Headquarters truly wanted to promote a settlement, for he was 'a very sick man, suffering from severe gall-bladder trouble, given to outbursts of violent temper, and of a propensity to intrigue and to exploit any minor advantages for the Chinese side. . . .'⁴³ Kaulback, who had advised Wilson Brand not to make the trip, reported afterwards that the Brigadier had been 'berated in public in front of the local populace' by the 'Chief of Staff' (elevating General Lin's position) of the Chinese Expeditionary Force, 'which, doubtless, applied the coup-de-grace to British prestige in the Kokang.'⁴⁴ Kaulback and a Major Leitch of the ISLD both moved out of Kokang shortly after Wilson Brand's visit, saying that they could not achieve results under the prevailing conditions, and Kokang was left without any British representative on the ground.⁴⁵ After his own return from Kokang, Wilson Brand met with General Hsiao I-hsu, Chief of Staff of the CEF, who expressed considerable concern over the withdrawal of Kaulback and Leitch. According to Wilson Brand, 'He feared that if they give Chinese antagonism and lack of co-operation as the cause of their withdrawal, mutual suspicions between the British and Chinese would be deepened with serious repercussions in a far wider field than the Kokang.'⁴⁶

At first the Wilson Brand visit seemed to have achieved positive results, for it produced an understanding that the CEF would withdraw to its side of the border, and that a British political officer would be appointed to Kokang. Officially the CEF did withdraw but many of its members remained in the state, where they continued to collect taxes and handle public affairs. The British Ambassador to Chungking credited the visit with clearing the air, and demonstrating that Britain did not intend to ignore events along the border, but little more can be said for it.⁴⁷

Conclusion

As the Japanese retreated in Burma, there was considerable Chinese infiltration of border areas. According to one British account:

Unjustified claims to British territory are made, British authority is flouted, boundary pillars are thrown down, and villagers looted and left to starvation. Sometimes the looting takes the more official form of a Chinese Unit requisitioning supplies and labour and failing to pay for them. Reports of murder are frequent.⁴⁸

It was unclear whether these activities represented an organized effort, possibly on the part of the Chinese Central Government, the Yunnan Provincial Government, or local officials, to gain political advantage. Clearly much Chinese activity was undirected and economically motivated, for private traders from China (often trafficking in military stores sold on

the black market) were swarming across the border. There were other Chinese in the area as well, some of them deserters, others stragglers separated from their military units. Lacking money and supplies, many of these people turned to theft to sustain themselves. Rumour suggested that regular Chinese Army units in the vicinity planned to fight the British, and Chinese soldiers were reported to be collecting taxes and trying to force the use of Chinese currency on Burma's side of the border. However, solid information was difficult to obtain, and a British report on the situation cautioned:

Any military force must set up some civil administration in an area it occupies if the old administration has ceased to exist. It will be remembered, too, that Chinese commissariat arrangements hardly exist, that their troops are often starving and that all armies loot at times.⁴⁹

Internally, these circumstances produced unrest in Kokang.⁵⁰ In an attempt to calm the situation, the Myosa was permitted in November 1945 to return to his state, which was now removed from North Hsenwi and made a separate entity known as Kokang State.⁵¹ The British anticipated using claims against the Chinese for their treatment of the Myosa to gain political leverage in the area, but by August 1946 both the civil authority of the British administration, and the local authority of the Myosa, had been fully restored, and the government of Burma decided not to pursue claims for compensation.⁵²

On 11 April 1947 the Myosa's son, Yang Kyein Sein, appeared before the British Frontier Areas Committee. Asked about the views of the people of Kokang, he said that the state would be happy to join whatever country would give it internal autonomy, meaning, he clarified, no external interference in internal affairs. Asked if Kokang would be willing to remain part of North Hsenwi, he said no: 'we are from a different tribe; and our customs are different; and so is our social life'.⁵³

The years that followed were tumultuous. At the beginning of 1948 Burma became independent; Kokang was a full state within the Union of Burma, and its ruler became a Sawbwa. In the same year Yang Kyein Sai succeeded his father, Yang Wen Pin, as ruler. The following year KMT forces escaping from the communist takeover in China occupied the Kokang area, and they were not expelled until 1953. The remainder of the decade was relatively uneventful, but in 1959 the Shan rulers, including the Sawbwa of Kokang, surrendered their hereditary rights, substantially weakening the political structure of the state. After the army coup that overthrew U Nu's government in March 1962, Kokang at first resisted the Ne Win government, and then fell into a state of civil war, which resulted in severe dislocations for the population of the state. In 1968 Kokang came under the control of the Burma Communist Party, and it remained outside

of the control of the Burmese government until 1989, when Kokang units of the Communist Party of Burma left the main communist organization and reached an agreement with the Military Regime governing the country.³⁴

Notes

- 1 The King's rule formally ended on 29 November 1885. On 1 January 1886 Upper Burma was incorporated into Her Majesty's dominions, and on 26 February the territory became part of British India.
- 2 Sir Charles Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma*, London, Edward Arnold, 1912, pp. 7–8, 13–14.
- 3 'Chinese Pretensions on the Burma-China Frontier', India Office Records (IOR) M-3-1737. Relevant extracts from the 1894 Convention and the 1897 Agreement are found in the British Public Record Office (PRO) FO 371/20237.
- 4 H. R. Davies, *Yün-nan: The Link between India and the Yangtze*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1929, p. 132.
- 5 This name appears in British documents as Yang Wen Ping and as Yang Wun Pyin. I have followed the spelling used by his granddaughter, Yang Li, in her book *The House of Yang: Guardians of an Unknown Frontier*, Sydney, Bookpress, 1997.
- 6 Spiers Report No. 5, PRO HS 1/4.
- 7 J. George Scott, assisted by J.P. Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States*, Pt II, Vol. 1, Rangoon, Supt, Govt Printing, Burma, 1901, p. 466. The Shans used the term *Sao-hpa* for the high level officials the Burmans called *Sawbwa*.
- 8 Untitled and undated note in PRO HS 1/174.
- 9 Davies, *Yün-nan*, pp. 83, 132–3; Scott and Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma*, Pt II, Vol. 1, pp. 464–6.
- 10 *Report of the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry*, 1947, Rangoon, Govt. Printing and Stationery, Burma, 1947, Part II: Appendices, p. 31.
- 11 Scott and Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma*, Pt II, Vol. 1, p. 466. For a summary of Kokang's early involvement in opium production, see Ronald D. Renard, *The Burmese Connection: Illegal Drugs and the Making of the Golden Triangle*, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner, 1996, pp. 18–21.
- 12 Davies, *Yün-nan*, pp. 4–17.
- 13 'Review of Events in the Kokang (1942-June 1944)', PRO HS 1/17.
- 14 Davies, *Yün-nan*, p. 133.
- 15 'Statement of Yang Wan Pyin A.T.M., Kokang Myosa, recorded at Kunming on 26th April 1944', PRO HS 1/4.
- 16 Accounts differ concerning the number of guns purchased, with one version suggesting the Myosa acquired 500–600 British guns and a similar number of Chinese rifles, and another stating that he bought 200 rifles and some Bren guns, along with small arms ammunition. Major L. R. Ogden, 'Kokang Affairs', 23.12.43, PRO HS 1/4, and Lt. Colonel P. H. Munro Faure to B. C. S. Calcutta, 'Spiers Report No. 5', 29.3.44, PRO HS 1/4. The Myosa's outlay has been placed at Rs. 1,714,800 (about £100,000) for the Self Defence Force, and Rs. 741,600 (£46,350) for one battalion of Chinese soldiers. Yang Li, *The House of Yang*, p. 50.
- 17 'Review of Events in the Kokang (1942-June 1944)', PRO HS 1/17.
- 18 Major L.R. Ogden, 'Kokang Affairs' (based on a statement by Yang Wun Shong, fourth brother of the Myosa), 23.12.43, HS1/4; 'Review of Events in the Kokang (1942-June 1944)', PRO HS 1/17.

- 19 'Review of Events in the Kokang (1942-June 1944)', PRO HS 1/17.
- 20 'Review of Events in Kokang', PRO HS 1/17.
- 21 Major L. R. Ogden, 'Kokang Affairs', 23.12.43, PRO HS 1/4. The Chinese used 'tu-tze', a term for a low-level official, in referring to the Myosa along with other Chiefs and Sawbwas. The term has historical associations with independent rulers within the borders of China.
- 22 This name also appears in British records as Yang Weng Tai and Yang Wun Tai.
- 23 L. R. Ogden's summary of information provided by Yang Kyein-Sein, Document 'G', attached to Report on the 1943 Kokang 'Mutiny', PRO HS 1/174.
- 24 'Review of Events in the Kokang (1942-June 1944)', PRO HS 1/17.
- 25 Ibid. The words quoted are attributed to Dr T.V. Soong. See Kunming News Summary, March 1944, Desp. No. 57, 5 Apr. 1944, to H.M.A. Chungking, Document 'S' in 'Report on the 1943 Kokang 'Mutiny'', PRO HS 1/174.
- 26 L. R. Ogden, Statement by Yang Kyein-Sein, third (second surviving) son of Kokang Myosa, 12 March 1944, Document 'P' in 'Report on the 1943 Kokang 'Mutiny'', PRO HS 1/174.
- 27 'Aide Memoire to S.O.E. Activities - Kokang', PRO HS1/5.
- 28 The Burma Office papers on Kokang are found in IOR M-4-2955; for the Burma Office investigation into the Chinese charges, see H. G. Wilkie, Chief Secy, Govt of Burma, to Under Secy of State for Burma, 29 Aug. 1944, in this file.
- 29 'Review of Events in the Kokang (1942-June 1944)', PRO HS 1/17. The doctor was Chu Yu Piao, who had been trained in Canton University, and was known as Dr Watt. After treating the Myosa, he was also detained by the Chinese authorities.
- 30 Extract from *Times of India*, Bombay, 20 Dec. 1934, PRO FO 371/19271.
- 31 'The Situation in Kokang', and 'Kokang' (31. Oct. 1943), PRO HS 1/174.
- 32 C. E. Gauss to Secretary of State, Washington, DC, No. 2352, 24 Mar. 1944, US National Archives RG 226 Entry 16 69559. A similar map appeared in the second (1944) edition of Chiang Kai-shek's *China's Destiny*. The issue is discussed by John S. Service in RG 226 Entry 16 69802.
- 33 'The Situation in Kokang', and 'Kokang' (31. Oct. 1943), PRO HS 1/174; L.R. Ogden, Statement of Yang Wun-Pyin, A. T. M., Kokang Myosa, recorded at Kunming on 26 Apr. 1944, Document 'U', Report on the 1943 Kokang 'Mutiny', p. 52, PRO HS 1/174.
- 34 Lt. Colonel P. H. Munro Faure to B. C. S. Calcutta, 'Spiers Report No. 5', 29.3.44, PRO HS 1/4; Brigadier Adam Wilson Brand to HQ, South East Asia Command, 19 Oct. 1944, PRO HS 1/174.
- 35 See PRO FO 371/41595, especially F2047/48/10 and F2083/48/10.
- 36 'Kokang', 30 Nov. 1943, PRO HS 1/5.
- 37 Munro Faure, Report, 12 Aug. 1943; Munro Faure to P. O. Meerut, No. 47, 29 Sept. 1943, PRO HS 1/174.
- 38 Letter to the Coordinator, 'P' Division, SEAC, 20 Feb. 1944, PRO HS 1/5; 'The Situation in Kokang', 9 Feb. 1944, PRO HS 1/174.
- 39 'Report on 1st Spiers Operation', 26 Jan. 1944, PRO HS 1/4.
- 40 Munro Faure to B.C.S. Calcutta, 'Spiers Report No. 5', 29.3.44, HS1/4; 'Aide Memoire to S.O.E. Activities - Kokang', PRO HS 1/5.
- 41 'A Short History of SPIERS', PRO HS 1/5.
- 42 Major J.C. McMullan to H.M.A., 13 July 1944, PRO HS 1/4; Sir H. Seymour, Chungking, to FO, 19 July 1944, PRO HS 1/5.
- 43 Brigadier Adam Wilson Brand to HQ, SEAC, 12 Oct. 1944, IOR M-4-2955.
- 44 'A Short History of SPIERS', PRO HS 1/5.

- 45 Interim Report on Chinese Infiltration into Burma, PRO WO 203/1755. See also 'A Short History of SPIERS', PRO HS 1/5.
- 46 Brigadier Adam Wilson Brand to HQ, SEAC, 12 Oct. 1944, IOR M-4-2955.
- 47 Brigadier Adam Wilson Brand to HQ, SEAC, 19 Oct. 1944, PRO HS 1/174; Seymour to SACSEA, 4 Nov. 1944, IOR M-4-2955.
- 48 'Chinese Infiltration into Northern Burma', in IOR M-3-1737.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 F.S. Detachment, Bhamo, to O.C. 576 F.S. Section, 'Special Report on Sino-Burmese Frontier Situation', 21 June 1945, and Brig. J.F. Bowerman, Depy Dir. of Civil Affairs to CAS(B), 12 Army, SEAC, nd, PRO WO 302/1755.
- 51 Ogden to Johnston, 5 Nov. 1945, IOR M-3-1784.
- 52 A. F. Morley to Secy, Frontier Areas Administration, Govt of Burma, IOR M-4-2955.
- 53 *Report of the Frontier Areas Committee of Enquiry*, Part II, p. 33.
- 54 These events are recounted in some detail in Yang Li, *The House of Yang*.

Chapter Four

Japanese Policy towards the Chinese on Java, 1942–1945

A Preliminary Outline

Elly Touwen-Bouwsma

Introduction

In the occupied Southern Area, the Japanese encountered large groups of indigenous ethnic minorities as well as substantial numbers of Europeans, Americans, Eurasians (the mixed-blood offspring of Asians and Europeans/Americans), Overseas Chinese and Indians. Until mid-August 1942 there was no general policy towards these minorities, with the exception of the Overseas Chinese. Some four months earlier, a special directive had been issued stating that the treatment of the Overseas Chinese should be in accordance with local conditions, but that Chinese human and financial resources should be mobilized in the service of the administration of the Southern Area.¹

In August the Marquis Tokugawa Yoshichika, Supreme Consulting Advisor to the military administration and Civil Governor of Malaya, drew up a plan for ethnic minorities in Greater East Asia under which the Japanese were to provide leadership for other peoples. The plan made a distinction between foreign ethnic minorities and the indigenous peoples in the Southern Area. Among the former, the Overseas Chinese were the first group mentioned, followed by Indians, Europeans and Americans. As Asian peoples, Overseas Chinese and Indians were entitled to become Japanese nationals, whereas the Europeans and Americans, as 'temporary residents', were to have their power curtailed or be expelled.²

Japan's general policy towards ethnic minorities was part of a broader concept that envisioned bringing the whole world under one roof (*hakko ichiu*) and creating a moral, peaceful and rational sphere of prosperity where all the peoples of the world would assume their proper place under the Japanese, as the dominant race in Greater East Asia.³ Within this framework, details of the policy to be followed towards ethnic minorities were left to the individual Japanese administrations in the occupied areas.

This article deals with the policy adopted under Japanese military rule in Java towards the roughly one million Chinese living on the island. There

were about 300,000 Dutch nationals (the Eurasians included), most of them resident in Java, and about 70 million Indonesians scattered throughout the whole of the Indonesian Archipelago.⁴ The Japanese recognized the economic abilities of the Chinese in Java, and both there and elsewhere in the archipelago saw the role of the Chinese as providing a concrete foundation for economic policy.⁵ The Japanese intended to steer the Chinese towards cooperation with the military administration, while attempting to remove barriers between them and the native inhabitants.⁶

The Chinese in the late colonial period

The Chinese community in Java was both culturally and politically heterogeneous. About half of the Chinese community consisted of '*peranakan*' Chinese who had lived for more than two generations in Java. Most, if not all, had Indonesian blood, and spoke Dutch, Malay, or Javanese instead of Chinese, although they still adhered to religious and cultural observances and social practices that had Chinese origins. The remainder, called *totok*, consisted of more recent immigrants, who to a far greater extent than the *peranakan* remained oriented towards China. They spoke Chinese, and considered the *peranakan* degenerate because they did not give their children a Chinese education.⁷ Despite these differences, the Dutch placed both groups in the same legal category, classifying them as Foreign Orientals. The Japanese, who been elevated to European status in 1899, and the *peranakan*, a community with a record of giving loyal support to the Dutch, sought equal treatment, but only a small number obtained this concession.

From the beginning of the twentieth century the Chinese in Java had worked to improve their socio-economic position. They particularly disliked regulations requiring them to obtain special passes to travel, and forcing them to live in designated quarters of cities and towns. A further complaint was that they were denied access to Dutch education. Eventually they persuaded the Dutch to cancel the restrictions on travel, and to allow the creation of private 'Dutch-Chinese' schools for Chinese pupils, in which Dutch was the medium of instruction but where the Chinese language was also taught. Taxes paid by the Chinese were also brought in line with taxes paid by Europeans.⁸

Few Chinese in Java were political in the sense of trying to change the political structure in the Indies, although all were engaged in a struggle to improve their position. From this point of view, the Chinese in Java fell into three distinct groups.⁹ The first, composed of supporters of Sun Yat Sen, was driven by a belief that the Chinese had to improve their position by their own efforts, and should not depend on the Netherlands Indies government. They believed that at the close of the war a strong China would emerge and protect the Chinese abroad.¹⁰ The second group was made up of

members of the Chung Hwa Hui (CHH, the Chinese Association), founded in 1928 by wealthy *peranakan* businessmen. Members of this group were loyal to the Dutch, and convinced they could preserve their privileged economic position only under Dutch rule.¹¹ The third group, the Partai Tionghoa Indonesia (PTI, the Indonesian Chinese Party), founded in 1932, was a rival of the CHH. The PTI promoted the idea that the homeland of the Indonesian Chinese was the Netherlands Indies, the land of their birth, but its founders fostered a positive attitude towards the Indonesian nationalist movement, and sought equal status with other Indonesian peoples.¹²

Despite their cultural and political differences, the various elements of the Chinese community in Java shared a common dislike of the Japanese. After the war broke out between Japan and China in 1937, most of the Chinese, whether *peranakan* or *totok*, CHH or PTI, were anti-Japanese and participated in a boycott of Japanese goods. In the resultant fervour, a China Relief Fund was set up to raise money for the purchase of quinine to be given to the National Chinese Red Cross for use in China.¹³ The Dutch allowed such humanitarian efforts, but the Chinese had to tread very carefully in showing support for Chinese victims of the Sino-Japanese war. Ventilating anti-Japanese slogans in their newspapers attracted trouble from the Dutch government, which wished to stay neutral and would not tolerate any offence being given to the Japanese. However, finally shaken out of its complacency by the attack on Pearl Harbor on 8 December 1941, the Netherlands was one of the first countries to declare war on Japan.¹⁴

The Chinese under Japanese rule

Before the arrival of Japanese troops in Java, the Dutch authorities ordered the Chinese to evacuate the cities and move to the interior. As part of their scorched earth policy, Dutch forces destroyed strategic harbour facilities and the big oil refineries, along with many Chinese-owned factories, to deny these assets to the Japanese. For example, of 130 sugar mills in Java in 1940, only 32 escaped demolition. The destruction of facilities carried out by the Dutch set off a wave of looting and killing by the Indonesians, much of it directed against the Chinese. All over Java, Chinese shops were looted and Chinese-owned rice mills destroyed or damaged. Although Java had a long history of violence directed against the Chinese, the long colonial interval had lulled them into an unwarranted sense of security, and these events caught the Chinese community completely unprepared.¹⁵ To their astonishment, they received support from the Japanese, who made it clear that violence directed against the Chinese would not be tolerated.¹⁶

The Japanese hoped to persuade the Chinese to be cooperative, and the oppressive anti-Chinese policies they adopted in other occupied territories were not introduced in Java.¹⁷ The Japanese army was well informed about

Java's important Chinese community. Prior to the outbreak of war the Japanese Vice-Consul at Batavia, Toyoshima, had kept track of anti-Japanese activities by the local Chinese population, and barely a month after the invasion in April the Kempeitai arrested a number of prominent Chinese known for their support of the Chiang Kai-shek regime or for their loyalty to the Dutch.¹⁸ Among those detained were the editors of Chinese newspapers,¹⁹ participants in Chinese Relief Fund activities, members of the CHH, wealthy businessmen, Chinese who had held posts in the Dutch colonial administration, journalists and members of demolition corps.²⁰ The Japanese authorities first held the detainees in Boekit Doeri gaol in Jakarta – the new name for Batavia – but after sixteen months moved them to the prison at Serang (West Java), where Chinese arrested in other parts in Java were also concentrated. In the course of 1944 the prisoners were transferred to a civilian camp at Cimahi, where they remained until the war ended in August 1945. The Japanese Military Administration's Bureau of Chinese Affairs confiscated their properties.²¹

The Japanese anticipated that a conciliatory approach would help them exploit Java's economic resources and sustain local commerce. The Commander of the 16th Army, General Imamura Hitoshi, claimed the Chinese were eager to please the Japanese, and said the policy appeared to work well.²² The Japanese used the Chinese as retailers and distributors, and curtailed but did not prohibit other Chinese business activities. Chinese businessmen accommodated themselves to the new situation; there was no organized and armed anti-Japanese movement of the sort developed by the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union in Malaya, and such resistance as there was the Japanese largely crushed during the first year of the occupation.²³

The Military Administration did introduce a number of restrictive measures aimed at the Chinese. They closed Dutch-Chinese schools, and refused to allow Chinese children to attend Indonesian schools. *Peranakan* Chinese could no longer use the Dutch language, and Chinese with Dutch first names now adopted a Chinese name. The owners of shops and companies replaced Roman lettering on their signs with Chinese characters. All Chinese had to be registered, at a cost of 100 guilders each for men, and 50 for women. In addition, the travel restrictions abolished by the Dutch were reintroduced. Under the old regime around 80,000 Chinese had been classified for legal purposes as Dutch and now found themselves in great difficulties, for the Japanese treated them as Europeans and confiscated their properties, transferring them either to the army or to Japanese companies.²⁴

During the first month of the occupation, the Japanese announced the dissolution of all existing Chinese associations. In July 1942 the Japanese-supervised Bureau of Chinese Affairs, headed by the Toyoshima, set up a new organization for all the Chinese, *peranakan* as well as *totok*, called the Hua Chiao Tsung Hui (HCTH, Federation of Overseas-Chinese

Associations).²⁵ The organization drew on pro-Japanese Chinese in each locality, and was organized along tried and tested lines for controlling the life of the Chinese in detail.²⁶ Leaders, who were appointed by the Japanese, were relative newcomers because most established pre-war figures had been interned, and could not act on their own initiative. In some respects, the HCTH was an extension of the Japanese propaganda apparatus,²⁷ but it also looked after the interests of the Chinese community, supervising everything, including the distribution of clothing and medicines, and establishing relief committees for the support of impoverished Chinese.²⁸

The Japanese imposed special war taxes on the Chinese community, and called on the Chinese to show their loyalty by donating large sums of money for Japanese projects.²⁹ Local branches of the HCTH collected these funds on behalf of the Japanese, operating without central coordination at the residency level. Twang Peck Yang claims that the organization obtained around US\$480 million from the Chinese community in the Indies, a remarkable figure.³⁰ One of the most burdensome demands on the leaders of the HCTH was to recruit women for Japanese brothels.³¹ It is not clear to what extent they fulfilled this particular request.

Black market trading was extremely lucrative during the occupation. Agricultural products as well as textiles and other essential goods were traded on the black market, causing enormous price inflation. *Totok* businessmen were major beneficiaries of this trade.³² Besides exploiting the black market, the Chinese set up small-scale industries in the cities to meet the demand for consumer goods such as soap, toothpaste, rubber shoes and textiles, formerly imported into the country and now in short supply.³³

The Ideology of Interracial Harmony

After their initial successes, the Japanese fared badly in the war against the Allies, and during 1943 they began to lay stress on national consciousness and to strive to get the local people to show greater belligerence towards the Allied powers. In 1944, the Japanese made cooperation among all racial groups an essential part of their policy on grounds that social harmony would engender a spirit of national consciousness and patriotism, and help bind together all the different units of the empire.³⁴ This approach produced a number of conciliatory gestures aimed at the Chinese. For example, the Djawa Hokokai (Java Service Association), created in March 1944, accepted members from all ethnic groups including the Chinese. The HCTH congratulated the Japanese on the establishment of the Djawa Hokokai, describing it as a practical organization co-operating with the military administration to achieve harmony and unity between the military authorities, government officials, and the various races, and the Japanese made the HCTH responsible for recruiting Chinese to join the Djawa Hokokai.³⁵ The Japanese also allowed Chinese schools to re-open, ended

restrictions on travel by the Chinese, and appointed five Chinese representatives to the Chuo Sangi-in (Central Advisory Council) – which had a total of 45 members.³⁶ In return for these concessions, the Japanese demanded full co-operation from the Chinese community.

In 1943 the Japanese had set up a youth corps called the Keibodan to provide assistance to the police. This body now received military training to help defend Java against any possible invasion by the Allied powers. The Keibodan, which had more than 1,280,000 members at the end of the occupation, did not accept Chinese members, but in August 1944 the Japanese ordered the HCTH to establish its own defence corps, called the Keibotai, to support the Japanese cause.³⁷ Having witnessed the hostility Indonesians exhibited towards them at the time of the Japanese invasion, the Chinese understood the value of having a trained force available in case further trouble arose.³⁸ Some 12,000 Chinese youngsters joined the Keibotai, including more than 5,000 from Surabaya.³⁹ Most came from the *peranakan* group, which had more vested interests and immovable property than did the *totok*.⁴⁰ The Keibotai operated along the same lines as the Indonesian Keibodan. Both groups received training from Japanese instructors, who drilled them with bamboo spears and occasionally with wooden rifles, and both took part in air-raid protection and coast guard services. Alongside the ordinary Keibotai, the Japanese established an elite Tokubetsu Kakyo Keibotai, whose members received special training at the Kakyo Seinen Dojo in Tangerang. Those who passed became Keibotai leaders in their hometowns.⁴¹

In 1944 the Japanese tried to re-organize the economic structure in Java, and forced the Chinese to co-operate with Indonesian businessmen. The Japanese exercised control through business corporations, sub-divisions under the army administration, and the *kumiai* – business guilds set up to encourage cooperation rather than competition within a given trade. Kumiai existed for every kind of business, from trade and industry to transportation and animal husbandry. The Japanese played a leading role in these organizations, and arranged matters so the Chinese and Indonesians met each other and worked together. The introduction of the kumiai system had important consequences for Indonesian businessmen. By participating in the kumiai with the Chinese, Indonesians became involved in economic activities to a far greater extent than before, and for the first time, the Chinese began to face significant competition from the Indonesians. Twang Peck Yang describes the Chinese businessmen as being sandwiched between two limiting forces, subject to tight Japanese control on the one side, and to pressures from emergent Indonesian business interests on the other.⁴² Unable to manoeuvre, they found their traditional share of the formal economy increasingly curtailed.

Meanwhile preparations for the independence of Indonesia had begun. The Chinese recognized that the position they would occupy in an

independent Indonesian state was of vital importance, but opinion diverged on what strategy to adopt. Followers of the pre-war Partai Tionghoa argued that Chinese should automatically receive Indonesian nationality, while others considered that China, which they expected to become a superpower in East Asia after the war, would protect their interests. A post-war study commission dashed the hopes of the former group when it decided that only native Indonesians would be given Indonesian nationality automatically, with the nationality of immigrant minorities to be regulated by Indonesian law. The expectations of the second group were also disappointed, for China proved neither willing nor able to intervene on their behalf.⁴³

Conclusion

In comparison with the methods they adopted in other occupied regions, such as Sumatra, West Kalimantan, Malaya and Singapore, the Japanese treated the Chinese in Java in a fairly benign way. The Chinese community did not face torture or execution, and was generally left in peace, although there were raids and some internments, and they were forced to donate large sums of money. Like the Dutch before them, the Japanese depended on the Chinese, and sought their loyalty by offering protection against anti-Chinese sentiments found in Indonesian society. In general, the Chinese accommodated themselves to the Japanese in order to survive.

The Japanese ideology of co-operation between all racial groups had a great impact on the economic position of the Chinese in Indonesian society. In particular, the forced co-operation with Indonesian businessmen in the *kumiai* was instrumental in altering the economic position of the Chinese, because it forced them to hand over parts of the formal economy to the Indonesians. Pre-war trading networks were considerably disrupted by both the Japanese policy of extraction and forced co-operation with the Indonesians.

The greater part of the Chinese community in Java survived the Japanese occupation. However, after the war, with neither nor the Dutch nor the Japanese to protect them, the Chinese became the target of violent outbursts by the Indonesians, and they were terrorized all across Java. The killing of Chinese started in October 1945 and continued at intervals during the Dutch military actions in 1947 and 1948, presaging an uneasy fifty years punctuated by furious outbreaks of violence.

Notes

- 1 The complete text of this document is found in *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia Selected Documents*, ed. H. J. Benda, J. K. Irikura, K. Kishi, New Haven, Translation Series No. 6, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1965, pp. 178-81.

- 2 Eurasians received no mention in the plan. The complete text of the 'Plan for Leadership of Nationalities' is found in J. C. Lebra, *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere in World War II. Selected Readings and Documents*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 118–21. For a detailed discussion of Japanese policy towards national minorities, see W. H. Elsabee, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements 1940–1945*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1953, pp. 133–63.
- 3 See among others J. W. Dower, *War without Mercy, Race and Power in the Pacific War*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1986, p. 273. According to Dower, this ideal was an improvisation on the popular slogan of the eight directions under one roof, *hakko ichiu*, which Westerners often interpreted as signalling Japan's plan for world conquest.
- 4 The 1930 census gives a figure of 1,044,657 Chinese inhabitants for Java. In an outline of the military administration in Java, the Japanese authorities estimated the number of Chinese living on Java to be about 500,000. RIOD. IC: 027965. For detailed figures on Europeans, A. van Marle, 'De groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indië, iets over ontstaan en groei', in *Indonesië* 5, 1951, p. 106. For a detailed estimate of the number of pure-bred Dutch, see E. Locher-Scholten, 'Het moreel van de Europese burgerbevolking in Nederlands-Indië 1936–1941', in *Nederlands-Indië 1942: Illusie en ontgoocheling*, ed. P. Groen and E. Touwen-Bouwsma, 's-Gravenhage, 1992, pp. 14–15. The Eurasian population in the occupied Netherlands East Indies has been estimated at 200,000. See L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, Nederlands-Indië*, II-b, Leiden, 1985, p. 868.
- 5 In Sumatra the policy of the 25th Army towards the Chinese was not so rigorous as in Malaya, where the Japanese terrorized the Chinese, but it was certainly more restrictive than on Java. See J. Mandemaker, 'De Chinese bevolkingsgroep op Java en Sumatra tijdens de Japanse bezetting van Nederlands-Indië in de Tweede Wereldoorlog', unpublished paper, 1996. In the Western part of Borneo the Chinese community was severely persecuted by the Japanese naval authorities. See the article by Kaori Maekawa in the present volume, and R. H. Zeeijk, 'De Chinezen in West-Borneo tijdens de Japanse bezetting en de onafhankelijkheidsstrijd, 1942–1949', M. A. Thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 1994.
- 6 See 'Outline of the Military Administration in Java', RIOD. IC: 027965. The policy for the Chinese in Java in general was in accordance with the principles governing the implementation of measures relative to the Chinese in the occupied areas. See the article by Didi Kwartanada in this volume, and Doc. No. 47 in *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia*, ed. Benda *et al.*, pp. 178–81.
- 7 Go Gien Tjwan, 'Wat betekende de Japanse bezetting voor de Chinese bevolkingsgroep?', unpublished lecture, 1986.
- 8 For an overview of the Chinese in Java during the colonial period, see C. A. Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity in Indonesia', in *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays*, ed. J. A. C. Mackie, Hong Kong and Singapore, Heinemann, 1976.
- 9 In addition to the sources cited below, see Leo Suryadinata, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java, 1917–1942*, rev. ed., Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1981, and *Political Thinking of the Indonesian Chinese, 1900–1977: A Sourcebook*, ed. Leo Suryadinata, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1979.
- 10 Ting Yi Oei, 'Some Thoughts on the Chinese Community under the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945', Hamilton College/unpublished paper, 1970. RIOD. IC: 072583.

- 11 Mackie, *The Chinese in Indonesia*, p. 32.
- 12 Bob Hering, ed., *Siauw Giok Tjahn Remembers: A Peranakan-Chinese and the Quest for Indonesian Nationhood*, Townsville, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1982, p. 20.
- 13 The China Relief Fund raised a total of 200,000 guilders. The Dutch, who were very careful not to offend the Japanese, ordered that the funds be handed over to the National Chinese Red Cross. 'Report on the Chinese on Java', RIOD.IC. 064875.
- 14 See Herman Theodore Bussemaker, 'Paradise in Peril: The Netherlands, Great Britain and the Defence of the Netherlands East Indies, 1940-41', in *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 31, 1, March 2000, 115-36.
- 15 Twang Peck Yang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia and the Transition to Independence, 1940-1950*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 70, 72.
- 16 See Elly Touwen-Bouwsma, 'De Indonesische nationalisten en de oorlog met Japan: houding en reacties', in *Nederlands-Indië 1942*, ed. Groen and Touwen-Bouwsma, pp. 57-75.
- 17 See also Didi Kwartanada, 'Minoritas Tionghoa dan Fasisme Jepang: Jawa, 1942-1945, in *Penguasa Ekonomi dan Siasat Penguasa Tionghoa*, Yogyakarta, Penerbit Kanisius and Lembaga Studi Realino, 1996, pp. 24-43.
- 18 Statement of the Chi Chung She (Association of Overseas-Chinese Ex-internees). RIOD.IC.019380.
- 19 The editors of *Sin Po*, *Keng Po*, *Thien Sung Yit Po*, and *Shao Po* were arrested. See Statement of the Chi Chung She (Association of Overseas-Chinese Ex-internees) RIOD. IC. 019380. According to this statement, 142 prominent Chinese were arrested and interned on 26 April 1942. Probably this number included those Chinese arrested in Jakarta. This document confirms that Toyoshima, the Japanese Vice-consul and intelligence officer in Batavia before the war, monitored anti-Japanese activities by the Chinese population in Java.
- 20 Twang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia*, p. 74. Twang places the number of Chinese from Java arrested and interned at 542.
- 21 Statement of the Chi Chung She (Association of Overseas-Chinese Ex-internees). RIOD.IC. 019380.
- 22 See Imamura Hitoshi, 'Java in 1942', in Anthony Reid and Oki Akira, eds., *The Japanese Experience in Indonesia: Selected memoirs of 1942-1945*, Athens, Ohio, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Ohio University, 1986, pp. 31-79.
- 23 Ting Yi Oei, 'Some Thoughts on the Chinese Community under the Japanese Occupation', RIOD.IC. 072583.
- 24 Didi Kwartanada, 'Minoritas Tionghoa dan fasisme Jepang', pp. 31-2; Twang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia*, pp. 75-6.
- 25 The same measures were taken towards other ethnic minorities in Java such as the Eurasians and the Arabs. All their pre-war organizations were dissolved and in their place Japanese-supervised organizations for Eurasian and Arab affairs were set up.
- 26 Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity in Indonesia', p. 39.
- 27 K.A. de Weerd, *The Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands Indies*, International Prosecution Section, Netherlands Division, 1946, pp. 82-3.
- 28 Ting Yi Oei, 'Some thoughts on the Chinese Community under the Japanese Occupation'.
- 29 de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Deel IIb, *Nederlands-Indië*, p. 257.
- 30 Twang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia*, pp. 76, 82.

- 31 See Didi Kwartanaka, 'Minoritas Tionghoa dan Fasisme Jepang', p. 34.
- 32 Twang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia*, p. 90.
- 33 Go, 'Wat betekende de Japanse bezetting voor de Chinese bevolkingsgroep'.
- 34 See Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements*, p. 139.
- 35 Ibid., p. 148; Benda, *et al.*, *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia*, p. 153.
- 36 de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, deel IIb, *Nederlands-Indië*, pp. 929-30. See also Didi Kwartanada, 'Minoritas Tionghoa dan Fasisme Jepang', p. 35.
- 37 'De Chinese Keibodan', RIOD.IC: 059396.
- 38 'The Kakyō Keibotai', RIOD.IC. 006524.
- 39 RIOD.IC. 005111-005115.
- 40 'The Kakyō Keibotai', RIOD.IC. 006524.
- 41 'De Chinese Keibodan', RIOD.IC. 059369.
- 42 Twang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia*, p. 85.
- 43 de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, deel IIb, *Nederlands-Indië*, p. 1024.

Chapter Five

Chinese Leadership and Organization in Yogyakarta during the Japanese Occupation

Didi Kwartanada

This chapter provides a case study of the experiences of the Chinese community of Yogyakarta during the Japanese Occupation.¹ The issues to be discussed are changes in organization and leadership, the ways in which leaders accommodated themselves to the new regime, the reasons behind their cooperation with the Japanese, and the significance of the Occupation for the Chinese community under the Indonesian Republic after the war.

Chinese leadership and organization at the end of the Dutch period

Yogyakarta is an administrative region located in the southern part of Central Java. The area is the heartland of traditional Javanese culture, and the capital, the city of Yogyakarta, is home to two sets of royalty, the Yogyakarta Sultanate and the Kadipaten Pakualaman. The pre-war Chinese community was substantial, the sixth largest in Java and tenth largest in the whole of the Netherlands Indies, and as was also generally the case elsewhere in the archipelago, was mainly urban.² The overall population picture in Yogyakarta as of 1930 is shown in Table 5.1.

The Chinese community of Yogyakarta was predominantly *peranakan*, locally born Chinese who had adapted to Indonesian culture. Nearly 79 per

Table 5.1 The population of Yogyakarta by ethnic group (1930)

Area	Indonesians	Europeans	Chinese	Others	Total
Yogyakarta City	121,979	5,593	8,913	164	136,649
(%)	(89.3)	(4.1)	(6.5)	(0.1)	(100)
Yogyakarta Region	1,538,868	7,317	12,640	202	1,559,027
(%)	(98.7)	(0.5)	(0.8)		(100)

Sources: *Volkstelling 1930*, vol. 2, 1933, pp. 138-9, 148-9, 158, 160; vol. 8, 1936, p. 65.

cent of the Chinese living in Yogyakarta in 1930 had been born in the Netherlands Indies, but during the 1930s immigrants from China, known as *totok*, arrived in growing numbers because of economic and political turmoil in China, and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.³

Chinese communities in South-East Asia are well-known for their wide variety of voluntary associations, which fall into five categories: trade and professional, religious, mutual help, recreational and political.⁴ During the period 1905–40, at least 33 *peranakan* or mixed associations were active in Yogyakarta, along with five that were purely *totok*.⁵ The *peranakan* generally accepted *totok* members in their organizations, but were effectively excluded from *totok* bodies by virtue of the fact that the latter conducted business in Chinese. The profusion and variety of these bodies illustrate the heterogeneity of the Chinese community in the region. Attempts had been made over the years to create a single central association for the entire community, but without success.⁶

One of the most important associations was the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. Established in 1905, the Chamber had a membership in 1938 of around 200 merchants, both *peranakan* and *totok*, who controlled around 1,000 shops of various sizes.⁷ The name suggests a concern with economic affairs, but the Chamber was involved in a wide range of activities, and represented the Chinese community as a whole in its dealings with the Dutch and with the Chinese government.⁸ Although *totok*-dominated, it was led in 1938 by a *peranakan* named (Ir.) Liem Ing Hwie.⁹ Liem (1900–1962) graduated from the Technical University of Delft in 1925, and worked in the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia and China before returning to the Netherlands Indies in 1932. The owner of a number of businesses and one of the wealthiest men in Yogyakarta, he had a wide range of contacts within the Dutch, aristocratic Javanese and Chinese communities.

Yogyakarta also had a sub-branch of the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, which was closely associated with the figure of Ang Ping Gwan.¹⁰ A Hokkien and a *totok*, Ang was born in 1900 and migrated to the Netherlands Indies at the age of 23, becoming a successful businessman. He joined the Kuomintang in 1926 and actively promoted the party in Yogyakarta and surrounding areas, but it attracted only a limited following.¹¹

Chinese attitudes toward Japan (1937–1942)

The local Sino-Malay newspapers, *Soeara Mataram* and *Kiao Seng*, gave extensive coverage to the Sino-Japanese War, and both received warnings from the government for publishing harsh diatribes against Japan.¹² The Chinese in Yogyakarta followed Chinese elsewhere in South-East Asia by boycotting Japanese goods, and there were acts of intimidation, such as painting the doors of shops that failed to observe the boycott.¹³ However,

Table 5.2 Money collected by Chinese charity funds (1937–1941) (in Dutch Guilders)

City	Total	City	Total
Batavia	4,512,446	Cirebon	353,365
Surabaya	1,763,562	Surakarta	219,510
Palembang	1,043,788	Lampung	211,502
Bandung	1,014,111	Yogyakarta	148,000

Source: *Sin Po*, 14 Feb. 1942, n.p.

attitudes softened as the war dragged on, and from the middle of 1938 people gradually resumed doing business with the Japanese.¹⁴

The Chinese community also collected funds to support China through charity shows, house-to-house collections and monthly subscriptions paid by Chinese shopkeepers. In 1937 Liem Ing Hwie, the head of the Chamber of Commerce, set up a local branch of 'Chinese Charity Funds', called the Tjin Tjai Hwee, for this purpose. However, as Amoy, Canton, and other cities fell to the Japanese, the growing list of defeats left the Chinese sceptical concerning the future prospects of Chiang Kai-shek. They also became suspicious about what use was being made of the money they donated, and fundraising largely came to a halt.¹⁵ The data in Table 5.2 indicate that contributions in Yogyakarta between 1937 and 1941 only amounted to fl. 148,000, just three per cent of the amount collected in Batavia, and much less than in smaller places such as Cirebon and Lampung. One reason might be that the Chinese in Yogyakarta were predominantly *peranakan*, and felt less patriotic toward China than the *totok*.¹⁶

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Dutch authorities in Java detained 110 Chinese suspected of pro-Japanese sentiments, or thought to be followers of the Japanese-sponsored Wang Ching-wei government in China.¹⁷ However, not a single Chinese was arrested in Yogyakarta, suggesting that the Dutch found little Japanese influence in the city. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce expressed support for the Dutch, and in return the state radio station for the first time broadcast China's national anthem. On 30 December 1941 the Chamber created an organization called the *Chineesche Burgerfront Organisatie* (CBO, the Chinese Civil Defense Organization), also led by Liem Ing Hwie. The CBO enjoyed widespread popular support, and the Chinese community donated the large sum of fl. 5,000 to it over a period of just two days.¹⁸

Indonesian nationalists viewed the CBO as an attempt by the Chinese community to bolster Dutch colonial rule, and for this reason the organization generated tensions between the Chinese and the Indonesians. Pribumi Indonesian activists saw the Japanese as 'liberators' who would free them from the fetters of colonialism, and considered anyone who resisted

the Japanese advance an obstacle to independence. For their part, the Chinese (and the Dutch) saw the Japanese as conquerors. This difference in opinion would become sharper in the early days of the Occupation.

Chinese-Japanese relations during the Occupation

When the Japanese entered Yogyakarta, on 5 March 1942, Indonesian nationalists formed an 'Indonesian National Committee' (KNI, Komite Nasional Indonesia) to liaise with the new rulers. Some KNI extremists agitated against the Chinese, accusing them of being anti-Japanese, and attacked Dutch and Chinese properties. The Japanese did not welcome these activities, and quickly banned the KNI along with all other political organizations.¹⁹

The Japanese detained some 36 Chinese leaders in Yogyakarta, including Liem Ing Hwie, but after just two to three months told these men they could go free if they would stop anti-Japanese activities, cooperate with the new regime, and make large cash donations to the war effort. Most agreed to the Japanese conditions and were released around the end of April 1942.²⁰

A list of 536 Chinese sent for long-term detention at Cimahi Camp because they posed a serious threat to the Japanese included only five names from Yogyakarta, and when the numbers of internees are compared by region, Yogyakarta is near the bottom (15th out of 19).²¹ (See Table 5.3.) Given the fact that Yogyakarta had the sixth largest Chinese community in Java, the small number of arrests provides clear evidence that the Chinese there adopted a generally cooperative stance.

Why did Japan release people who had formerly been their declared opponents? There are several possible reasons for this policy. First, the Chinese were detained in connection with their opposition to the Sino-Japanese War, and the Japanese knew that the *peranakan*, in contrast with the *totok*, had little real interest in this conflict. Second, many of the Chinese leaders had professional training as engineers or doctors, and could be useful to the Japanese. Third, the Japanese knew that the Chinese, as a minority

Table 5.3 Chinese interned at the Cimahi Camp from the principal cities of Java

City	Number of people interned	City	Number of people interned
Batavia	133	Pekalongan	15
Cirebon	45	Bojonegoro	13
Bandung	32	Bondowoso	11
Semarang	31	Kudus	11
Surabaya	24	Solo	10
Cianjur	18	Yogyakarta	5

Source: Manuscript of Tan Gwat Hoei (Magelang), n.d.

group within a majority community that was generally pro-Japanese, were not capable of organizing an underground movement, and in any case the military police (the *Kenpeitai*) were ready to eradicate hostile activity.

Members of the pre-occupation elite became involved in several forms of collaboration following their release from detention. The foremost Chinese leader, Liem Ing Hwie, was an experienced mechanical engineer, and he worked for a Japanese company during the Occupation. Ang Ping Gwan, the Kuomintang leader, was an interpreter for the *Kenpeitai*.²² The Hong Oe, formerly active in the Tjin Tjai Hwee, became the head of a new association the Japanese created for the Chinese. Other pre-war leaders were simply 'neutralized', and cut off from politics.

The Chinese of Yogyakarta quickly adapted to the new order and resumed normal life, as can be seen from press statements about the situation in the city during the first three months of the Occupation:

... many baba (*peranakan*) work for the Military Administration and Military Police, for example as translators ... one sign that the Chinese, in this case the baba, in Yogyakarta, have a positive attitude and are cooperating with the Japanese military. ...²³

Few Japanese knew Malay or Dutch, but they could communicate with the Chinese through *kanji*, the written characters shared by the Chinese and Japanese languages, so there were openings for Chinese to work as translators. These opportunities mainly went to the *totok* Chinese, for few of the *peranakan* knew Chinese well enough to perform this task.

Why did Chinese leaders in Yogyakarta become collaborators? It is difficult to say for certain, because each individual chose his own course of action. Some sources claim that people agreed to work in Japanese offices in order to learn of Japanese plans for the Chinese community, or to learn about possible actions directed against the Chinese by local nationalists.²⁴ Others say the Chinese cooperated with Japan out of a simple will to survive. And some Chinese saw in the Occupation a chance to advance their personal interests. The following section will explore further the high level of collaboration among the Chinese of Yogyakarta.

Imamura Hitoshi and the Chinese

The Chinese in Java did not experience the brutality and mass killings that characterised the Occupation of Malaya by the 25th Army. Responsibility for Java lay with the 16th Army, and its commander, Lt. Gen. Imamura Hitoshi (1886–1968), approached the situation logically and strategically, recognising that brutality would only engender a strong resistance. In his memoirs, Imamura relates an interesting story concerning his first meeting with the Chinese in West Java, shortly after his arrival. Some Chinese complained to him that several shops had been looted following the collapse

of Dutch rule, and asked whether the Japanese could restore their property. Imamura replied:

... as you can see, we are fighting the Dutch. We have no time to search for stolen goods. When we win this war, which is sure to be soon, an order will be issued for the police to search for them and recover them. Whenever your lives are threatened by the natives, you can come to the Japanese who will certainly protect you.²⁵

The same story is told in a memoir written by the Chief of Staff of the 16th Army, Lt. Gen. Okazaki Seizaburo, who said: '... their courage to meet General Imamura would later exert some influence on the military policy toward the local Chinese'.²⁶ The guarantee of security given by Imamura is interesting, and deserves emphasis. The fact that the Japanese extended a helping hand to the Chinese during such distressing times went some way toward redressing the negative image of the Japanese military.

In the face of considerable criticism from his colleagues in other places, Imamura became known for his soft and tolerant policies, which appeared to deviate from the principles laid down in Tokyo. Among other things, he gave priority to restoring the economy and securing a quick return to normality, with Chinese participation. Pressure from Tokyo and Singapore to restrict the activities of Chinese economic organizations did not concern Imamura, who considered that such limitations were certain to impede efforts to restore a normal flow of goods, including war materials.²⁷ Imamura defended his policy, observing that 'there is no necessity for an iron-handed policy in Java. Those who criticize the Java administration do not know the reality here'.²⁸

This explanation is very important to an understanding of the interaction between the Chinese and Japanese in Java. Another element shaping the situation was the partial breakdown of relations with the Indonesians. The Chinese had considered their relations with the pribumi Indonesians to be harmonious, and failed to anticipate the violence directed against them during the transition from Dutch to Japanese rule.²⁹ The Japanese did not approve of anti-Chinese violence, and one of the first tasks undertaken by the Military Police was to restore peace and order.

Radical religious and nationalist groups had not previously been a significant force in Yogyakarta, and only moderate nationalist organizations with a '*kejawan*' or strong Javanese cultural focus (such as the Pakempalan Kawula Ngajogjakarta and Taman Siswa), and moderate religious organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Partai Islam Indonesia, had enjoyed a following in the area.³⁰ The attacks on the Chinese community came as a great shock, and the decisive steps the Japanese took to restore peace and order had a deep effect, causing the Chinese to feel that it was not the Japanese but the Indonesians they mainly had to fear.³¹

A central organization for the Chinese: The HCTH

Measures taken by the Japanese to unite various competing organizations during the Occupation must be seen as part of the 'corporatism' associated with fascist politics. This involved the creation of non-competitive units, organized hierarchically, differentiated on functional lines, and recognized and sanctioned (if not actually created) by the state.³² From the Japanese perspective, the system simplified administrative oversight, for it is clearly easier to supervise one organization rather than a cluster of competing groups.

The first Japanese attempt to establish a unified multi-ethnic organization was the 'Gerakan 3A', or Triple A Movement (based on the slogan that Japan was the Light, the Leader and the Protector of Asia), but it was a complete failure. The *totok* and *peranakan* Chinese and the Arabs showed interest in the project, but the Indonesians did not want to be grouped together with the descendents of foreigners.³³

Learning from this experience, the Japanese gave each ethnic group its own organization: the Hua Chiao Tsung Hui (HCTH, the Federation of Overseas Chinese Organizations) for the Chinese, the Arabujin Shidō linkai for the Arabs, the Indian Independence League for Indians, and the Konketsu Jūmin linkai for the Eurasians. The creation of organizations based on existing ethnic groupings strengthened the identification of each group, and deepened the divisions between the various minority groups and the Indonesian population.³⁴

The story of the HCTH in Yogyakarta can be briefly summarized.³⁵ On 8 May 1942, shortly after the release of the local Chinese detainees, the Japanese called a meeting of the leaders of 10 Chinese organizations. The groups were: (i) Hoa Kiao Societeit Mataram, a recreational association (ii) Hua Chiao Tsing Nien Hui, a youth organization based in the Chinese schools (iii) Hoo Hap Hwee Koan, a mutual help organization (iv) Hiap Gie, a burial society (v) Pak Hoo Tong, also a burial society (vi) Chung Hsioh, an association for students attending Dutch schools (vii) Ai Shung Chi, a sports group (viii) Rukun Kampung Tionghoa Tugu, a mutual help organization (ix) Kong Khauw Hwee, a religious body (x) Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan, an educational association.

A young Japanese named Tsuda Fumio, who was on the staff of the Yogyakarta Sendenbu (Propaganda Department), chaired the meeting.³⁶ He explained that Japan wished to restore prosperity and unity within a new political atmosphere, and needed the cooperation of the Chinese to achieve this objective. The basic points made during this historic meeting were as follows. First, all existing organizations were to be dissolved, and replaced by a single body representing the Chinese community. Second, all organizations were to provide a complete list of their assets. Third, the administration would not bear any financial responsibility for the new

organization and would not provide any subsidy, although certain facilities would be made available on a short-term basis. The Chinese leaders were not invited to give their views on these matters, but the Japanese encountered few difficulties in setting up the new association because everyone was afraid of them.

One very important issue was the question of who would lead the new body. Most of the likely candidates refused the job, considering it too risky. The Hong Oe eventually took on the task, although it is strange that the Japanese agreed to this appointment because of his participation in the anti-Japanese Tjin Tjai Hwee. The Japanese had mistakenly arrested his younger brother, The Bik Tjwan, for this offence, and apparently did not know of his involvement.³⁷ A *peranakan*, The Hong Oe seems to have been acceptable to both *peranakan* and *totok*. He had received his education at the Chinese English School in Semarang, giving him a command of spoken and written Chinese as well as English, and could communicate readily with the *totok* and also with the Japanese.³⁸

The HCTH was officially inaugurated in Yogyakarta on 7 July 1942, although the Japanese authorities did not give final approval until 5 October 1942.³⁹ Membership was open to Chinese aged 20 and above, while a youth division accepted members who had reached age 15. HCTH propaganda materials provided this comment on the importance of creating a single organization for the community:

... because of the desire of the Japanese Military Administration to unite all Asian peoples, it should not be surprising to see the emergence of a Chinese organization that is not based on the principle of 'peranakan for peranakan' and 'totok for totok'. *All groups now join together within the HCTH*, a common centre for the Chinese which not only unites the Chinese but also provides a way to offer all the human resources of the community to the Japanese administration to achieve Greater East Asia. ...⁴⁰

The Hong Oe and his deputy, Mr. Ko Siok Hie,⁴¹ were assisted by two secretaries, two treasurers, and a chief clerk. The most prominent section was the 'Department of Propaganda and Information', whose employees bore a particularly heavy burden because they had to communicate whatever the Japanese asked to the Chinese community. There were six additional departments, concerned with burials, charitable activities, trade, labour, youth and sports.⁴² The Chinese Chamber of Commerce became the 'trade section' of the HCTH, but in the absence of significant trading activity its importance progressively declined. The Chamber's wartime leader, Lie Liang Sing, was a far less influential figure than the pre-war head, Liem Ing Hwie. Lie was a middleman trader and a significant local figure, but he had never been outside of Java while Liem had visited four continents.⁴³

The HCTH provided assistance to large numbers of Chinese from all across Central Java who had fled to Yogyakarta because it was situated deep in the interior and seemed to offer a safe haven. Some brought money with them, but others had few resources. The HCTH arranged for those who needed assistance to stay with local families or in public buildings, and organised welfare services, including a polyclinic, and a public kitchen. At the end of April 1943 the public kitchen was serving 777 meals per day, but by July the number had fallen to around 400, and in November just 230 remained, because many people had found work or left the city.⁴⁴

In April 1942 the Japanese ordered all 'foreigners' to register with the government, charging a fee of fl. 100 each for male Chinese, and fl. 50 for females.⁴⁵ The HCTH collected funds from the Chinese community to help families without means meet the requirement, and by the end of July 1942 had registered around 4,000 people, making payments to the state treasury that amounted to fl. 283,690 – a very substantial sum.⁴⁶

The Japanese forced the HCTH to perform certain other burdensome duties, including the collection of donations in the form of jewellery, scrap iron, or cash from the Chinese community to carry on the war. On occasion the Japanese announced that they needed comfort women, and the HCTH had to arrange for their recruitment.⁴⁷

The Emergence of New Leaders

A number of new leaders emerged within the Yogyakarta Chinese community during the Occupation, especially among the *peranakan*. Many came from a 'second tier' of men who had participated in various local organizations before the war but had rarely appeared in the forefront of community affairs. For example, The Hong Oe, general head of the HCTH, had been involved in youth activities such as sports and social events during the Dutch period. The Deputy head, Ko Siok Hie, was a lawyer before the war, and had taken little part in public life. People doing propaganda work for the HCTH, who wrote speeches and read them on public occasions or over the radio, and prepared opinion pieces for the *Sinar Matahari* newspaper, became particularly well known.⁴⁸

The Chinese community after the war

Following the capitulation of Japan, there was intense pressure within the Indonesian Chinese community against those seen as traitors (known as '*bankan*') because of their connections with the Japanese. Various young people, most of them *totok*, came forward claiming to have carried out underground activities against the Japanese. They created an organization with Kuomintang ties known as the San Min Chu I Youth, and prepared a

'black list' naming Chinese they considered *hankan*, including people who had worked for the *Kenpeitai* or the HCTH.⁴⁹

Chinese youths in Yogyakarta did the same.⁵⁰ They declared the leaders of the HCTH to be *hankan* and at one point tried to attack HCTH headquarters, but were deterred by security guards. At the time, people hated anything that smelled of the Japanese and the atmosphere became very heated, causing some members of the Yogyakarta HCTH staff to flee to other cities where they were not known. Not surprisingly, a number of Chinese who had lacked the courage to take a visible stand during the Occupation now joined the rush to denounce wartime collaborators. However, in comparison with what happened to Chinese leaders in neighbouring countries, the fate of the former HCTH leaders was relatively benign. So far as is known, militants killed just one of them, and most either remained politically active or resumed their earlier careers.⁵¹

An Old Organization with a New Name: The CHTH

Following the Japanese surrender, the HCTH acted as an intermediary linking the Chinese community and the Republic, but the hostility it faced as an Occupation period body soon led to the creation of a new organization. In Yogyakarta there was a meeting on 23 December 1945 to discuss the issue: Lie Tjik Kiang chaired the session, explaining what lay behind the organization that was to be formed, while The Hong Oe discussed the history of the HCTH and stated that it was from that moment officially dissolved. The meeting elected a management committee consisting of 40 members, nine of whom served on the board of directors.⁵²

In effect the new association, named the Chung Hua Tsung Hui (CHTH, or Chinese Central Organization) was simply a continuation of the HCTH under another name. Its stated purposes were to unite the Chinese in order to enhance the position of the Chinese race, promote prosperity and well being, and make arrangements to cooperate with other groups and organizations. The organization and functions were very similar, and both provided a single umbrella organization for a variety of other Chinese organizations, as well as a link between the Chinese community and government authorities. One writer has described the CHTH as 'a new label on an old bottle'.⁵³

On 2 January 1946 the directors of the CHTH initiated friendly contacts with the local government. Several leading figures in the CHTH held meetings with Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX and the Paku Alam VIII, and with the Komite Nasional Indonesia (KNI, the Indonesian National Committee), in an attempt to reach an accommodation with the new authorities, and to establish patronage ties with them. Two days later, at the invitation of the Sultan, the government of the Republic moved its capitol to

Yogyakarta, in view of the increasingly uncertain security situation in Jakarta. Yogyakarta remained the capitol until the end of 1949.⁵⁴

The Activities of Collaborators after the War

In Jakarta, where the Dutch resumed control after the Occupation, leaders of wartime organizations faced ostracism, but in parts of the country held by the Republic collaboration did not become a major issue.⁵⁵ In Yogyakarta the treatment accorded those who worked with the Japanese depended largely on whether they had acted to benefit themselves or had tried to serve the interests of the community at large. Some people considered The Hong Oe a 'hero' of the Occupation period for bringing the community safely through a difficult time, and he, together with his deputy Ko Siok Hie, and Oei Tik Giau, the secretary of wartime HCTH, accepted positions with the CHTH.⁵⁶ The Hong Oe served on the management committee that made preparations for the federation of CHTH branches across Jawa and Madura, and also held posts in the local Republican administration. When revolutionary activity grew more heated and young radicals began entering Chinese houses in search of weapons, he withdrew from public life for a time, but he remained interested in politics and later stood as a candidate in the 1955 General Election.⁵⁷ Ko Siok Hie remained active in Chinese affairs in Yogyakarta, serving as a director of the CHTH, and as a member for Yogyakarta on the planning committee for the central Java-Madura CHTH. During the physical revolution in Yogyakarta he courageously gave public support to the young republic, but he subsequently left politics and became an academic.⁵⁸ Lie Giok Gak, the former leader of the wartime *Kakyō keibōtai* in Yogyakarta, became head of the CHTH in 1948.⁵⁹

Liem Ing Hwie can also be grouped with those who collaborated with the Japanese, although he spent the Occupation working for a private Japanese company and was not part of the HCTH. He became one of the directors of the CHTH, and served as its deputy head from 1945 until 1947, when he was put in charge of the CHTH Security Committee for Yogyakarta. During the Congress of the Federation of CHTH branches in Jawa and Madura, Liem was elected head of the Presidium.⁶⁰ In addition to his work within Chinese organizations, he also served as a member of the Yogyakarta Municipality (from January 1948).⁶¹

In April 1948 the Dutch Lieutenant Governor, H. J. van Mook, chose a Chinese named Thio Thiam Tjong as one of his advisors,⁶² and officials of the Indonesian Republic at Yogyakarta responded by making Liem Ing Hwie a member of the Supreme Advisory Council (the Dewan Pertimbangan Agung, or DPA).⁶³ The appointment presumably was at least partly to demonstrate to the Chinese community that the Republic was paying attention to their needs, and it showed the outside world, especially China,

that the Chinese in Indonesia had their own representative in the higher reaches of the Republican Government. At the time, China's representative to the United Nations was submitting regular protests to the Indonesians over the harsh treatment of the local Chinese population.⁶⁴

The wide range of positions held by Liem demonstrates that the Chinese community of Java showed little concern about wartime activities in choosing leaders during the revolution. This attitude was particularly apparent in Central Java, where personal qualities were more important than past activities. The Chinese recognized that collaboration was forced upon people during the Occupation, and for reasons they could readily understand. They were all victims together during this difficult and bitter time. Moreover, Liem Ing Hwie's rise to high positions both locally and nationally gives some indication of the willingness of the Republic of Indonesia to work together with a former collaborator. This is not to say that his career proceeded without obstacles. Certain elements leveled strong criticisms at the Republican government for choosing Liem as a member of the DPA, and a left-wing daily published an anonymous letter that attacked his collaboration during the Japanese time, likening him to Mr. Sudjono, an Indonesian who landed at Banten with Imamura in 1942.⁶⁵

Conclusion

From the discussion above, it is apparent that in Yogyakarta collaboration during the Japanese period was not of great importance in the post-war period, and anyone who demonstrated a capacity to lead was welcomed both by the Chinese community and the Republican government. Some leaders from the Dutch period were neutralized during the Occupation and took no part in the activities of the HCTH, while others collaborated, but both groups remained important under the Republic. So, too, did those who emerged as leaders during the Occupation, although most no longer held senior positions in Chinese organizations. There was, however, a shift in the balance of power between *peranakan* and *totok*, in part because the *totok*, who were formerly not a significant force in Yogyakarta, now took an active role in the CHTH.

This attitude toward collaboration can be explained in various ways. First, a society decides who is truly a 'collaborator' based on whether a person acts out of purely selfish reasons or tries to serve the interests of the people. Second, it is characteristic of the people of Central Java (including Yogyakarta) that they readily excuse the mistakes of others. Third, the proportion of *totok* Chinese in the region was relatively small compared with Surabaya or Jakarta, and intense hostility directed at the HCTH and at collaborators was mainly found among the *totok*. Fourth, the government of the Republic of Indonesia could readily understand the position of former 'collaborators', and needed their skills. Anyone of

sufficient standard, regardless of their background, was recruited to sit on government bodies.

Notes

This essay was written in Indonesian, and translated by Paul H. Kratoska.

- 1 Studies on the position of the Chinese during the Japanese Occupation remain include: Willard Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movement*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1953; Mary Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java', PhD diss., Cornell University, 1965; Twang Peck Yang, *The Chinese Business Elite in Indonesia and the Transition to Independence 1940-1950*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1998. Writings on the Chinese community at the local level include works by R. Hardjono, 'Komuniti Tionghoa Jogjakarta', minithesis, IKIP Sanata Dharma, Jogjakarta, 1970; Eddy Hermawan, *A Historical Study of the Overseas Chinese Community in Indonesia [on West Java]*, Bandung, New Budaya, 1999; Didi Kwartanada, 'Kolaborasi dan Resinifikasi: Komunitas Cina Kota Yogyakarta Pada Jaman Jepang, 1942-1945', undergraduate thesis, Yogyakarta, Gadjah Mada University, 1997.
- 2 A description of the geography and history of Yogyakarta can be found in Selo Soemardjan, *Social Changes in Jogjakarta*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1962, ch. 1. In this chapter the term 'Yogyakarta' refers to the city of Yogyakarta.
- 3 *Volkstelling 1930*, Vol. 7, Batavia, Landsdrukkerij, 1935, pp. 287, 304. Hokkien made up 62 per cent of the population, Cantonese 8.5 per cent, Hakka 2 per cent, and Teochew 1 per cent. Between 1930 and 1941 a total of 466 heads of families from China received permission to live in Yogyakarta; only nine such application were rejected. See *Statistisch Jaaroverzicht 1931-1940*, Batavia, Landsdrukkerij, 1932-1941. The rate of immigration increased beginning in 1938 owing to the growing intensity of the Sino-Japanese War.
- 4 Donald E. Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1960, ch. 6.
- 5 Compiled from the following sources: Liem Thian Joe, *Riwayat Semarang*, Semarang, Hoo Kim Yoe, 1933, p. 235; R. Hardjono, 'Komuniti Tionghoa Jogjakarta', p. 47, Liu Huan Ran, *Hosbu Dong Yindugailan*, Singapore, Nanyang Shangbao, 1939, p. 67-8; Tan Hong Boen, *Orang-orang Tionghoa Jang Terkemoeke di Java*, Solo, Biographical Publishing Centre, c. 1935, pp. 73-9; Harry A. Poeze, ed., *Politiek-Politieoneele: Overzichten van Nederlandsch-Indië*, vol. 1, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1982, p. 204.
- 6 See, for example, 'Satoe Algemeen Chineesch Verbond', *Sin Po*, 333, 17 Aug. 1929, pp. 310-1.
- 7 This discussion of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce is based on Liu, *Hosbu Dong Yindugailan*, p. 68. The Chamber was first formed in the Netherlands Indies in 1921; see 'Chineezee', in *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, ed. J. Paulus, 's-Gravenhage, M. Nijhoff, 1917, p. 484.
- 8 Willmott, *The Chinese of Semarang*, p. 160.
- 9 The title Ir. refers to 'insinyur' (engineer). It should be noted that earning this academic title was an unusual achievement; during the entire period of Dutch rule, only 40 Chinese earned the title of 'insinyur'. See F. J. E. Tan, 'Tjendekiawan2 Keturunan Tionghoa di Indonesia Dewasa Ini', *Star Weekly*, 578, 26 Jan. 1957, p. 56.
- 10 See Ton Emonds, 'De Invloed van de Kuomintang in Nederlands-Indië: Voorwerp van Bestuurzorg, 1923-1931', undergraduate thesis, University of Nijmegen, 1979,

- and the Introduction to Harry Poeze, *Politiek-Politiee*. Unfortunately there are very few studies on the Kuomintang in the Netherlands Indies.
- 11 Liu Huan Ran, *Hosbu Dong Yindugailan*, p. 67 and the biography of Ang (no page numbers).
- 12 Poeze, *Politieke-Politiee*, vol. 3, Dordrecht, Foris Publications, 1988, p. 93, 109, vol. 4, Leiden, KITLV Uitgeverij, 1994, p. 200.
- 13 Interview with Tan Thiam Kwie, 17 Apr. 1992.
- 14 Dutch and Japanese sources confirm the following facts. See Report of the Chief of Detectives, Yogyakarta, 3 Feb. 1940, as cited in G. C. Brantas, 'Wrede Duivels of Deftige Aziaten?', in *Beelden van Japan in het Vooroorlogse Nederlands Indië*, ed. E. Locher-Scholten, Leiden, Werkgroep Europese Expansie, 1987, pp. 293, 301; Mantetsu ToA Keizai Chosa Kyoku, *Ranryo Indo ni Okeru Kakyō*, Tokyo, ToA Keizai Chosa Kyoku, 1940, pp. 396-7.
- 15 Mantetsu, *Ranryo Indo*, pp. 396-7.
- 16 This phenomenon was especially pronounced in Java, where a majority of the Chinese are *peranakan*. See Ken'ichi Goto, *Returning to Asia: Japan-Indonesia Relations 1930s-1942*, Tokyo, Ryukei Shosha, 1997, p. 412. The city of Semarang, which had the third largest Chinese population in the Netherlands Indies, is not included in Table 5.2. The leaders of the Chinese community there tried to distance themselves as much as possible from the Sino-Japanese conflict, and made no effort to collect funds for the war effort. See *The Memoirs of Tan Kah Kee*, ed. A. H. C. Ward Raymond W. Chu, Janet Salaff, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1994, p. 114.
- 17 *Adil*, 18 Dec. 1941.
- 18 *Mataram*, 10 Dec. 1941; 30 Dec. 1941; 5 and 6 Jan. 1942.
- 19 For details see 'Laporan Soekarto', NIOD - IC 031605-30, especially pp. 7b-8; see also Elly Touwen-Bouwsmā, 'The Indonesian Nationalist and the Japanese "Liberation" of Indonesia', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 27, 1, Mar. 1996, pp. 1-18.
- 20 Interview with Woo Shu Fe, 24 Sept. 1993.
- 21 Tan Gwat Hoei, manuscript, n.d. Courtesy of Khoo Djie Tjay, Magelang. Cimahi Camp in West Java also housed Allied POWs.
- 22 Interviews with The Djan Liong, 5 Mar. 1994, and Liem Liang Kioe, 6 May 1995.
- 23 *Hong Po*, 26 June 1942.
- 24 Interviews The Djan Liong, 5 Mar. 1994 and Lie Djin Han, 21 Apr. 1993. See also 'Laporan Soekarto' [Soekarto Report], pp. 7b-8.
- 25 Imamura Hitoshi, 'Java in 1942', in *The Japanese Experience in Indonesia: Selected memoirs of 1942-1945*, ed. Anthony Reid and Oki Akira, Athens, Ohio, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Ohio University, 1986, p. 43.
- 26 Quoted in Eddy Hermawan, *The Overseas Chinese Community in Indonesia*, p. 10.
- 27 Mitsuo Nakamura, 'General Imamura and the Early Period of Japanese Occupation', *Indonesia* 10, Oct. 1970, pp. 12-14.
- 28 Imamura, 'Java in 1942', p. 55.
- 29 Twang, *The Chinese Business Elite in Indonesia*, p. 72.
- 30 W. J. O'Malley, 'Indonesia in the Great Depression', Ph.D.Diss., Cornell University, 1977, ch. 4.
- 31 Tan Po Goan, 'Chinese Problem in Indonesia', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, November 1, 1946, pp. 20-5.
- 32 Douglas A. Chalmers, 'Corporatism and Comparative Politics', in *New Directions in Comparative Politics*, ed. Howard J. Wiarda, Boulder, Westview, 1985, pp. 58-60.
- 33 Somers, 'Peranakan Chinese Politics in Java', p. 106.

- 34 Didi Kwartanada, 'Minoritas Tionghoa dan Fasisme Jepang: Jawa 1942-1945', in *Penguasa Ekonomi dan Siasat Pengusaha Tionghoa*, Yogyakarta, Kanisius, 1996, p. 30.
- 35 This section is based on Hardjono, 'Komuniti Tionghoa Jogjakarta', pp. 47-8.
- 36 Tsuda worked as an architect before he joined the Army. He arrived in Java in March 1942 and worked in the newspaper division of the Propaganda Department. See Lt. Col. Adachi, 'Replies of Questionnaire Concerning Sendenbu', p. 9. Nishijima Collection, Waseda University, Tokyo.
- 37 Interview with The Djan Liong, 4 Mar. 1994
- 38 *Jawa Nenkan Showa 19-nen* [Java Year Book, Showa-year 19], Jakarta, Jawa Shinbunsha, 2604, p. 465.
- 39 *Sinar Matahari*, 31 July 2602, 19 Oct. 2602 [1942].
- 40 The Tjiang Oei, 'Hua Chiao Chung Hui', *Sinar Matahari*, 15 Jan. 2603 [1943]. Emphasis added.
- 41 Mr. is a Dutch title, Meester in de Rechten, meaning Master of Laws.
- 42 *Sinar Matahari*, 31 July 2602 [1942], 6 Dec. 2603 [1943]; also The Hong Oe, 'Tudjuan dan Haluan Hoa Chiao Chung Hui' [The Purpose and Direction of the Hoa Chiao Tsung Hui], in *Sinar Matahari Nomor Peringatan 1 Taboen Kemakmoeran Asia*, Jogjakarta, Sinar Matahari, 2603 [1943], p. 31.
- 43 Twang, *The Chinese Business Elite in Indonesia*, p. 84. See 'Lie Liang Sing', *Mingguan Ekonomi*, 1, 1, 25 Nov. 1949, p. 15.
- 44 *Sinar Matahari*, 14 May, 29 July, 9 Nov. 2603 [1943].
- 45 *Boekoe Pengoempoean Oendang-oendang*, ed. Gunseikanbu, Djakarta, Koku-min Tosyokyoku, 2604, pp. 10-11.
- 46 *Sinar Matahari*, 1 Aug 2602 [1942].
- 47 Oei Tjoe Tat, *Memoar Oei Tjoe Tat* [Memoir of Oei Tjoe Tat], Jakarta, 1995, p. 46; Siauw Giok Tjhan, *Lima Jaman* [Five Eras], Amsterdam, 1981, p. 72.
- 48 For details see Didi Kwartanada, 'Kolaborasi', pp. 162-4.
- 49 Siauw, *Lima Jaman*, p. 76.
- 50 Information about the 'hankan' issue is based on interviews with Lie Djin Han on 28 Apr. 1993 and The Djan Liong on 5 Mar. 1994.
- 51 Twang, *The Chinese Business Elite in Indonesia*, pp. 87, 110 n. 133.
- 52 *Kedaoelatan Rakjat*, 25 Dec. 1945.
- 53 Mary F. Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity: Ethnic Chinese and the Indonesian Revolution', in *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II*, ed. Jennifer Cushman and Wang Gungwu, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1988, p. 122.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 4 Jan. 1946. The post-war KNI differed in organization, structure, membership and other features from the KNI that emerged with the arrival of the Japanese forces.
- 55 Mary Somers, 'Citizenship', p. 122; Twang, *The Chinese Business Elite in Indonesia*, pp. 87, 110 n. 134.
- 56 Didi Kwartanada, 'Kolaborasi', pp. 240-1.
- 57 *Ibid.*; Hardjono, 'Komuniti Tionghoa Jogjakarta', p. 52; Leo Suryadinata, *Prominent Indonesian Chinese: Biographical Sketches*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1995, p. 186.
- 58 Hardjono, 'Komuniti', p. 53; Didi Kwartanada, 'Kolaborasi', pp. 241-2.
- 59 CHTH Archives, Yogyakarta, 9 Jan. 1948. Courtesy of Mrs. Bernie Liem. *Kakyô Keibôtai* was a semi-military body for the Chinese. See the article by Elly Touwen-Bouwisma in this volume.
- 60 *New Light Magazine*, 6, 1, 5 Apr. 1948, p. 9.
- 61 CHTH Archives, Yogyakarta. Courtesy of Mrs. Bernie Liem. 9 Jan. 1948.

- 62 Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity', pp. 118-9. Thio came from a wealthy Semarang *peranakan* family.
- 63 *New Light Magazine*, 8, 1, 7 May 1948, p. 3. Ironically, Thio and Liem were in-laws. Interview with Mrs. Bernie Liem, 3 Feb. 1995.
- 64 Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations*, London, Stevens, 1960, pp. 42, 378-9.
- 65 'Wong Tjilik' (pseud.), 'Surat Kiriman [Letters to the Editor]', *Patriot*, 3 May 1948, p. 2

Chapter Six

In Pursuit of Mica The Japanese and Highland Minorities in Sulawesi

Lorraine V. Aragon

In modern warfare, mica is truly indispensable. Coordination of combatant units necessitates maintenance of intricate communication equipment, in the construction of which high-grade mica is essential.¹

Introduction

At the height of World War II in 1942, the Japanese government secretly intended a permanent occupation of the former Netherlands Indies, and to this end attempted to establish a strong, self-sufficient colonial administration in what is now Indonesia. Near the eastern periphery of the archipelago, Japanese soldiers forced villagers in highland Central Sulawesi to operate a mica mine located near the village of 'Towulu' in the southern Kulawi district² (See Map 3). The highlanders retained vivid memories of occupation hardships yet they were puzzled why Japanese soldiers enslaved them to extract a shiny mineral that Central Sulawesi people used mainly on ritual occasions to decorate barkcloth blouses. My questions about the Japanese government's interest in mining operations near 'Towulu' village were clarified by an examination of mica's industrial uses for electronics components and other strategic wartime products. The essential military uses of mica during World War II, the Allies' restriction of mica imports to Japan, and the stringent labour requirements of mica extraction all combined to make the 'Towulu' mine and its captive, nimble-fingered population important to the Japanese war effort.

Japanese military documents on the regional Occupations of Indonesian islands were destroyed in the interval between the Japanese surrender and the arrival of the Allies.³ The few substantive Japanese descriptions that remain include memoirs such as those by Okada Fumihide, who was the Chief Civil Administrator of the Navy's South Western Fleet Civil Administration Office (*Minseifu*) between 1942 and 1944. Although any single line of evidence about the past highlights data drawn from the narrow perspectives of the creators, the combination of multiple lines of evidence,

such as Japanese memoirs, Southeast Asian oral histories, and Allied military documentation, broadens and balances historical scholarship.

Okada wrote that he deliberately chose to work for the Japanese Navy because he held a low opinion of the Japanese Army. Yet once he was assigned to the Indies he was chagrined to discover that, even in the Navy, the number of 'sensible military officials' employed in the occupation administration 'was indeed small'. Corroborating elements of oral histories I collected in Sulawesi, Okada Fumihide laments that some of the 'lower class of employees' treated the natives violently.⁴ In another instance, Okada Fumihide's claims of the natives' enthusiasm for the Japanese cotton production drive directly contradict statements by the Indonesians I interviewed.⁵ Western Central Sulawesi highlanders report that they loathed the cotton plantation system and other Japanese-imposed changes to their farming activities. Therefore, the addition of indigenous narratives adds a challenging historical dialogue with prior written data on the wartime occupation of eastern Indonesia.

Eyewitness accounts by Central Sulawesi highlanders, however, do more than simply document Indonesian perceptions of specific occupation events in obscure locations. They also illuminate a process of fundamental identity change among a group of Indonesian ethnic minorities who have spent much of the twentieth century under foreign political, religious, and cultural domination. Villagers' narratives about the Japanese occupation disclose how the collapsing boundaries of colonialism during World War II reoriented a series of encounters between indigenous people and dominant outsiders. Although the occupation was a watershed that raised doubts about the invincibility of Europeans and their God, Kulawi highlanders emerged from the occupation with a greater allegiance to Western Protestantism. Villagers' intensely negative reactions to their wartime experiences in part explain the increasingly Protestant focus of their post-war religious and ethnic identities.

When discussing the past, Central Sulawesi highlanders classify their local history into a sequence of political time periods. Twentieth century periods generally are characterized by the names of foreigners who dominated the highlanders.⁶ World War II, or the 'Japanese time' looms prominently in this progression of foreign sovereignties as the first period when Kulawi populations were held hostage at gunpoint and forced to make drastic changes in their farming routines to produce goods for foreign rulers. Oppressive wartime experiences under Japanese dominion catalysed the religious and ethnic identities of interior Central Sulawesi groups who increasingly turned to Christian devotions and Protestant allegiances following the occupation.

The Ethnographic Inquiry

In the mid-1980s I began conducting research on Protestant missionization and conversion in western Central Sulawesi, and discovered that villagers discussed what they called the 'Japanese time' more readily than events from the earlier colonial 'Dutch time'.⁷ This primacy of World War II events in highlanders' narratives about their history could be attributed partly to chronological proximity, but also to the extraordinary nature of their experiences during the Japanese occupation. In any case, it was the dramatic urgency of the highlanders' 'war stories' and their curiosity about the mica mines that motivated this particular line of historical research.

Christian conversions in the Kulawi district were achieved by European missionaries by the 1920s and 1930s. Therefore only a few elderly villagers in their sixties or seventies could speak about the Dutch time from personal experience. Many adults of approximately fifty years of age, however, initiated stories about World War II, and their accounts repeatedly underscored the Occupation tribulations they endured, particularly in the mica mines near Towulu'.

With a present population of over 1,000 individuals, Towulu' is the largest village in the Uma-speaking Tobaku region of the Kulawi district in Central Sulawesi. Even during the 1990s, a trip to Towulu' necessitated an arduous two- to three-day journey by foot from Kulawi centre through a range of largely uninhabited mountains whose peaks reach over 2,000 meters. The remains of the Japanese mica mine are located several hours beyond Towulu' along overgrown footpaths that have gone unused for decades. That the Japanese in the 1940s would design and implement a mining operation in such a remote location, and for such a seemingly common mineral as mica, at first seemed incomprehensible.

One Central Sulawesi highlander suggested that their mica had been used to make windows for the Japanese aeroplanes that were first seen overhead during World War II. The mica, he added, would be good for aeroplane construction because it 'is not eaten by fire'. This observation was insightful – mica's earliest European use was for windowpanes resistant to thermal extremes – but the Japanese had other motives.

A question I raised with villagers was how the wartime Japanese administration knew of the existence and extent of mica resources in the Towulu' area. One individual claimed that for several years prior to the war the Japanese government had sent spies posing as traders to what is now the provincial capital of Palu. The spies, he said, learned about mica sources from local informants and then drew maps used by the military during the occupation. Another villager said that twice during the Dutch time in the 1930s, Japanese scouts arrived in Towulu' to inquire about minerals. In his memoirs, Okada does not speak of pre-war reconnaissance, but he does write that a mineral investigation team accompanied the occupying forces in

1942. Okada does not specifically mention mica but remarks that Japanese experts quickly discovered many useful minerals previously unknown to the Dutch administration.⁸

In March 1988, two 'Towulu' men guided my husband and me to the site of the former Japanese-run mica mine, cutting slowly through thick brush and thorn-covered rattan palms. During our journey, Tama Lei and Tama Ance' pointed out the location of the former 'Japanese dormitory' (in Indonesian, *asrama Jepang*), where Japanese soldiers and their servants resided during the occupation. This place is known locally as 'kilometre two' (*kilo dua*), because it lies about two kilometres from the village along the route to the mine. Finally, beside a tributary stream of the Lariang River, we entered shallow caves created by the wartime mining, and I collected mica samples for subsequent analysis.

Mica uses and the mining process

Microscopic examination of the rock samples from 'Towulu' and research on strategic wartime minerals explained Japanese reasons for mining mica in Central Sulawesi. Mica is a group name for a number of complex silicates comprised of aluminium in combination with bases such as sodium and potassium.⁹ Although micas are common, extensive deposits of the two types important for industrial purposes, muscovite and phlogopite, are relatively rare.¹⁰ Phlogopite is sought for a few specific industrial uses, but the harder muscovite is more highly valued, especially in its better grades.¹¹ The mica samples from 'Towulu' proved to be muscovite, the preferred chemical form of industrial quality mica.¹²

Mica's value as a mineral lies in a unique combination of properties that have been of great interest to the electronics industry since its inception. Mica separates into thin, strong, elastic, flexible and transparent sheets (technically termed 'blocks') that exhibit high temperature resistance, low heat conductivity, impregnability to moisture, chemical inertness, and dielectric strength, meaning that they can withstand high voltages without puncturing.¹³ Although mica's first industrial use in the 1800s was as window panes in European stoves, it became indispensable to the early radio and electronics industries for use in condensers or capacitors, and it has continued to be of use as an insulator or storage element in computers, transformers, rheostats, vacuum valves, fuse boxes, telephones, and radar apparatus.¹⁴ Ground mica also has been used as a filler to increase the heat resistance and dielectric properties of paint, plastics, resins, and rubber manufactured for electrical uses.¹⁵ Although other materials have been developed that perform some of mica's functions, no single synthetic replacement combines all of mica's useful properties.

On the eve of World War II, the United States Army was the world's largest producer and consumer of mica. The Army not only used mica

sheets for electronics components but also developed formulas that involved ground mica for asphalt aeroplane landing mats, cable insulation, and waterproof fabric paints.¹⁶ At the start of the war, mica was still essential for the insulation of aircraft spark plugs, although by the war's end the United States had improved ceramics for this function.¹⁷ Throughout the war, however, mica remained a key component of vacuum tubes and condensers for radios and radar equipment.

The United States supplemented its own needs with mica extracted from mines in Canada, India, Brazil, and Argentina. Britain controlled the largest world mica reserves through its colonies, primarily India, while France also was self-sufficient in mica through its mines in Madagascar. Japan and Germany, however, were not so well endowed with either local or colonial mica resources.¹⁸ Throughout the 1920s, Japan relied upon mica mines that it operated in Korea (then called Chosen) with local Korean labour. Although Korean production increased steadily throughout that decade, reaching 63,500 pounds per year, much of the yield was soft phlogopite, an inferior mica source for most electronics purposes.¹⁹

During the war the United States Munitions Board classified industrial grade mica as a strategic mineral, and Conservation Order M-101 regulated certain grades and sizes of muscovite blocks throughout the conflict.²⁰ Although the United States had domestic reserves of mica, even prior to World War II the vast majority of mica consumed in the U.S. came from British India, where the supplies of muscovite were not only abundant but also inexpensive, owing to low labour costs. With its limited mineral resources, Japan was dependent upon mica imports but none of the significant world producers of quality mica in the mid-1930s – India, the U.S.S.R., the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Madagascar – was associated with Japan in the war.²¹

The Allies sought to deprive Axis powers of their imported mica supplies and were largely successful in these efforts. Brokers in London and New York controlled India's approximately nine and a half million pounds of exported mica, and these supplies could readily be withheld from the Axis powers.²² Therefore, the Japanese government clearly undertook to mine mica from highland Central Sulawesi because they needed supplies for military uses, and were denied access areas with sufficient sources.

The selection and extraction of mica deposits are labour intensive procedures that require a large work force. Quality micas, like gems, are subject to a complex system of grading by eye.²³ Moreover, the successful removal of delicate mica flakes from the pegmatite bodies (coarse-grained igneous rocks) in which they form does not allow for much mechanization of the mining process.

Dynamite is used to bring down rocks containing mica 'books' (the naturally layered sheets of raw mica) and experienced miners simply follow mica veins until they are exhausted or inaccessible. Some smaller mines

relied on hand drilling, and hoisted mica-laden rocks in buckets. For these reasons even post-war mining for larger blocks and splittings (thin sheets averaging less than .001 inch in thickness) has been conducted only in regions such as India, Madagascar, and Brazil where labour costs are extremely low.

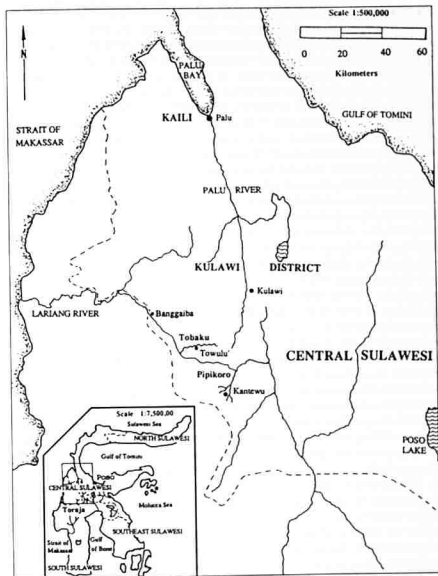
The granite or quartz rocks that contain mica must be processed by hand with a graded set of hammers and knives. Once separated from the rocks in which they are embedded, the delicate mica flakes are trimmed, sized, and evaluated for quality. For international trade in 1930, mica sheets from India were classified into ten quality grades and eleven standard sizes ranging from less than one square inch up to seventy square inches.²⁴

The highest quality block or sheet mica was and is fabricated directly for electronics components. Since 1894, smaller mica splittings have been combined with binders and cured under heat and pressure to create mica plates in sizes (typically 18 x 36' or 36 x 36') that are larger than most found in nature. The production of both mica blocks and splittings is a time-consuming job where one worker may produce only a few pounds of the finished product each day. Moreover, the successful selection, splitting, and knife-trimming of mica books requires skills acquired only through direct practical experience. In the early twentieth century, the painstaking preparation of mica splittings was virtually a monopoly of British India, where women and children extracted mica films of as little as one one-thousandth of an inch in thickness.²⁵

A captive population such as the Kulawi district highlanders, who already were familiar with mica reserves, was no doubt an inviting potential work force to undertake the arduous process of mica extraction. Therefore, the confluence of three factors – the burgeoning wartime electronics industry, the scarcity of quality mica available to the Japanese military, and the extensive need for manual labour in mica collection and selection – made the 'Towulu' mine a compelling endeavour for the Japanese government. Its difficult geographical location, hidden from the Allies under the cover of a tropical rainforest, perhaps further contributed to its wartime appeal for the Japanese.

Occupation hardships

Elders in 'Towulu' described more than two years of social disruption and forced labour in the mica mine. Japanese soldiers concentrated residents of the scattered highland villages to excavate the mine, process ore, and carry cleaned mica through the mountains to the nearest roads, which were at Kulawi centre. People were relocated to 'Towulu' from as far north as Kulawi, as far west as Banggaiba, and as far east as the Kantewu or Pipikoro region, distances of about 50 kilometres in every direction. Every month, about one hundred men and women – reportedly ten from each population



Map 3 Western Central Sulawesi Highlands

centre, were compelled to move to 'Towulu' and labour for nine hours a day in the mica mines.

The local population plus those relocated to Towulu' were divided by the Japanese soldiers into young men's and women's teams. Males worked about three kilometres outside the village digging, blasting, and hoisting rocks from the mines while females worked inside the village to trim, select, and pack the mica blocks in wooden boxes for transport. The crates filled with processed mica were said to weigh approximately twenty-five kilograms each and porters received thirty cents apiece for each box they carried to Kulawi. Small weekly payments also were made to mine workers for their services but all able-bodied villagers were forced to perform mine work when requested or risk beatings by Japanese soldiers. The boxes containing mica were carried through the mountains to Kulawi in caravans of twenty to forty persons. From Kulawi the mica was trucked via Palu to Poso from where it was loaded onto ships – although how much Central Sulawesi mica evaded the Allies' blockades and actually reached Japanese bases is not presently known.

In the late 1980s the wife of the headman (*kepala desa*) of Towulu', Tina Rida', related how her father, the wartime headman, was forced into submission by the first Japanese arrivals. These soldiers threatened to shoot her father's entire family, which quickly motivated him to cooperate and organize a mining labour force. As the headman's oldest daughter, Tina Rida' was ordered to lead the girls' work team. Their job was to do the fine work of separating mica from quartz and other rocks in which it was embedded. Japanese soldiers provided the girls with small knives and four sizes of hammers. These tools were used to smash the mined rocks and separate mica flakes from unwanted surrounding minerals. Although Tina Rida', like all Towulu' women, always performed the hard physical work of farming for her family, she described her mica service for the Japanese as excessively gruelling labour. She also told of a beating she received from a higher-ranking soldier when she unwittingly offered an unusually coloured rock to one of his subordinates instead of reporting it directly to the more senior officer.

Villagers described canings they received from Japanese soldiers either for innocent mistakes in their work activities or for infractions of unfamiliar rules. Soldiers demanded that highlanders demonstrate absolute subservience by bowing before any Japanese present and also to the Japanese flag. Highlanders recounted that they were compelled to entertain their captors by staging dances and jumping competitions. Towulu' men were struck with rattan whips to force them to jump higher and higher as Japanese soldiers laughed at their humiliating predicament.

During the two and a half-year occupation several villagers reportedly were slain by Japanese soldiers. More died in the mines, killed by falling rocks blasted with Japanese dynamite. Rumours spread among the

highlanders that there was a Japanese plan, to be implemented once the mines were exhausted, to murder all local inhabitants over eight years of age so that news of the mining atrocities would not spread.

Besides these elements of terror and the physical stress of mining work, other burdens inflicted by the Japanese stemmed from their interference in Central Sulawesi farming practices. Labour was diverted from fields to the mines, and the soldiers also demanded that highlanders modify their planting habits. Kulawi highlanders invariably interspersed rice and maize seeds in their swidden gardens but the Japanese insisted that they plant the two crops separately. According to villagers, rice planted under this Japanese restriction could not thrive because maize is the 'male' plant that fertilizes the 'female' rice plant. Although maize was introduced to western Central Sulawesi only during the colonial era, highlanders consider the combined planting of rice and maize to be a basic tenet of ancestral law. In their view, violating that prescription doomed their crops to failure. The neglect of farming duties occasioned by the shift of labour resources to the mines surely also contributed to the poor harvests that reportedly occurred during the occupation.

In the immediate vicinity of Kulawi itself, the Japanese forbade the planting of dry rice altogether. They insisted that all hills in the area be cleared and planted with cotton, most of which was requisitioned by the Japanese for their own clothing needs. This interference in subsistence practices coupled with wartime trade embargoes made food and clothing increasingly scarce as the occupation progressed. Local rice supplies were appropriated and then rationed for each household at rates below usual consumption levels. Only some mine workers and personal assistants to the Japanese received access to woven textiles.

Family members of local Towulu' leaders who mediated between the Japanese and other members of the highland communities received exceptional treatment. One such person was Guru Gideon, in the 1980s a Salvation Army elementary school principal, who was the oldest son of the headman in Siwongi village near Towulu'. During the occupation he was assigned to procure vegetables, game, and other supplies for the kitchen of the Japanese soldiers' quarters. In exchange for these services, he received extra food rations for himself and his family. Similarly, Tina Rida' said that although most villagers were reduced to wearing barkcloth rags or old rice sacks for clothing, she and her father, the Towulu' headman, were provided with one new piece of cotton cloth each month. Other families, however, were compelled to resume their formerly dwindling efforts to manufacture barkcloth. Processed from a variety of trees by women with wood and grooved stone mallets, barkcloth was the source of virtually all highlanders' clothing until the Dutch colonial administration conquered western Central Sulawesi in the first decade of the twentieth century. Barkcloth also held ritual significance in the

precolonial religion where it was painted and used for sacrificial offerings, sacred flags, and ritually specific apparel.²⁶

Under Dutch rule, machine-woven cotton cloth became widely available in the highlands for the first time as indigenous regional warfare was curtailed and coastal-to-highland trade activities increased. Barkcloth and imported *ikat* cloths then were reserved for certain ceremonial occasions, while loomed cloth became the everyday fabric of choice. With the Japanese occupation, access to this much beloved commodity and common element of bridewealth gifts suddenly was impeded.

Women in the 'Towulu' region, an area which had been a major centre for barkcloth manufacture in precolonial times, organized wartime barkcloth production groups, enlisting older women excused from mine work or younger ones free from service. Working in groups of about six at a time, the women beat their barkcloth bast on wooden anvils in communal sheds. The duress of occupation circumstances and the need for quickly produced clothing led women to eschew the use of their preferred tree barks from species of the genus *Ficus* in favour of bark from the *Antiaris toxicaria* tree which could be beaten into cloth more rapidly. 'Towulu' women described how the wartime barkcloth makers hammered away at their anvils day and night to meet the villagers' clothing needs, setting off a din such as had not been heard for decades.

Some of the more poignant stories about the humiliation of occupation conditions revolve around this desperation for proper attire. A Tobaku man, Tama Bugu', described how he finally was reduced to just one ragged woven *sarong* cloth that he wore proudly around his shoulders and over his barkcloth loincloth. One day as he was walking through the mountain paths he encountered someone dressed in barkcloth leading a large cow. As the stranger spotted the *sarong* Tama Bugu' was wearing, he offered to trade the cow outright for the woven cloth. Tama Bugu' steadfastly refused. Related this story some forty years later, 'Tama Bugu' laughed at himself because now a cow is many times more valuable than a threadbare piece of cloth. During the occupation, however, that woven textile represented the fragile sheath of his personal dignity.

After hearing such stories about the misery inflicted by Japanese officers, it was startling to learn what a small number of soldiers held the Towulu' region hostage. Different individuals reported that three to eight Japanese men were resident in 'Towulu' along with their Kaili servants and Javanese wives or concubines. Tina Rida' recited the names of six Japanese men she remembered personally. Although this now sounds like a very small number of Japanese rulers, Okada Fumihide notes that the Japanese used more foreign personnel than the Dutch administration – up to two Japanese officials per district town, and that 'tens of thousands' of natives, especially Javanese, were drafted to supplement the Japanese force.²⁷ Moreover, the Japanese soldiers' guns and their willingness to shoot troublemakers on

sight, perhaps coupled with the highlanders' prior acquiescence to the Dutch colonial administration, made the thousands of highlanders in the Kulawi district a ready target for wartime captivity.

Post-War changes in political, religious, and ethnic identities

The economic effects of Japanese rule in the Kulawi district seemed devastating during the occupation yet they generally were more short-lived than the social consequences. Before their nation's defeat in 1945, Japanese soldiers compelled western Central Sulawesi highlanders to revamp their economy and daily activities. Villagers were required to toil long hours for the mica mine instead of for their own subsistence needs and to plant rice fields separate from their maize fields. They were forced to beat barkcloth instead of trading for woven cloth; and in the Kulawi area, to plant cotton instead of food crops.

Almost all these changes were reversed as soon as the occupation ended. The mica mine was abandoned, rice and maize plants were interplanted once again, production of barkcloth again declined in favour of imported textiles, and cotton was no longer farmed in the Kulawi area. Indonesia, which was not a significant region for mica exploitation prior to World War II, again turned most of the nation's efforts to develop other natural resources. In recent decades, mica exports from Indonesia have been minimal, and that which is produced is sold exclusively to Singapore for its manufacturing industries.²⁸

The occupation did produce at least one lasting ecological transformation in the western Central Sulawesi highlands. The Kulawi Valley was so thoroughly cleared of trees for Japanese cotton production that severe erosion occurred, and a post-war prohibition on swidden rice farming remains in force to the present day. Kulawi residents now tend wet-rice or permanent crop fields, such as clove or cacao trees, in the immediate Kulawi vicinity. Swidden rice fields can be cultivated only by migrating or 'commuting' Kulawi people who farm in adjacent regions that never fell victim to the Japanese cotton project.

Although the Japanese occupation left behind only a few permanent marks on the economic landscape of the Kulawi highlands, it left other types of scars and influenced post-war social patterns in unexpected ways. Kulawi highlanders began to view themselves with humiliation as a continuously subjugated people – and they also started to compare their various foreign oppressors. Ultimately, their negative impressions of Japanese military behaviour, coupled with forced indigenisation of Salvation Army leadership in the area during the Occupation, drew highlanders closer to the Protestant religion, a faith they had encountered with ambivalence during the Dutch administration.

It might be argued that many Kulawi district highlanders had already been converted to Protestantism by Europeans prior to World War II, and

that the Japanese occupation had no significant impact upon this process. My data suggest, however, that the Japanese occupation significantly transfigured highlanders' ideas about foreigners, religion, and their own ethnic identity. The Dutch colonial regime was never as suffocating in the western Central Sulawesi highlands as it was in certain other parts of the archipelago such as Java. With the arrival of Japanese soldiers, Central Sulawesi highlanders began to look back on the Dutch administration as relatively benevolent, and they continue to do so to this day. The Dutch, they say, interfered to some degree with their political administration and settlement patterns, but at least they brought order in the form of secure trade routes and regional peace. The Japanese, they say, just brought chaos: fear of corporal punishment, forced labour, hunger, and clothing shortages. This invidious comparison of the two foreign overlords can be correlated with highlanders' perspectives on the foreigners' religions.

After the occupation Kulawi highlanders no longer compared their pre-colonial religious practices only to European missionary teachings but also to what they perceived to be Japanese belief and practice. Many highlanders stated that the Japanese had no real religion but only worshipped their national flag. The Japanese stipulation that villagers bow in the presence of a Japanese flag was cited as evidence that the Japanese people's flag was their god. Although Towulu' villagers and Japanese soldiers reportedly cooperated to conduct pre-Christian rituals aimed to improve their fortunes in the mica mine, by the war's end Central Sulawesi highlanders concluded that the Japanese were truly godless and they themselves were not. They began to identify their own morality and sense of local authority with the European Christians expelled by the Japanese.

Many residents of large highland villages such as Towulu' and Kantewu were enrolled as Protestants by Salvation Army missionaries prior to the arrival of the Japanese, yet some pre-Christian rituals continued to be performed. Throughout the occupation, two types of indigenous temple buildings (in Uma, *lobo* and *sou eo*) remained standing, and Towulu' had no official church building. A Christian elementary school erected by the Salvation Army mission was the site of Protestant Sunday services. Once the Japanese soldiers seized control, the Salvation Army prohibition against working Sundays was removed and villagers were expected to work the mines on Sundays the same as other days. European missionaries had modelled their interdiction against Sunday farming and hunting on local calendrical taboos which entailed cosmological sanctions, and Kulawi highlanders inferred that Sunday labour and the termination of Protestant services also might have unfortunate consequences.

Mining accidents and intermittent difficulties in locating adequate veins of mica led villagers, and reportedly the Japanese soldiers as well, to conclude that their mining activities were causing offence to local 'owner' spirits (in Uma, *pue*'). Some suspected that the unseen power(s) ruling the

mountains wanted revenge for excavation disturbances and the plundering of mica resources without proper compensation in the form of food offerings. On one occasion Tina Rida's father sacrificed a buffalo at the mining site to appease whatever deity was angry with the miners. The ancestors, indigenous nature spirits, the Christian God, or some combination of these deities, seemed displeased with the highlanders and their captors.

Although the Japanese may not have disapproved of the highlanders' ancestral rituals in the same way as the European missionaries did, they seem to have interfered with these rites in such a way as to prompt local re-evaluation. To summon and communicate with their pre-Christian deities, Kulawi highlanders performed circle dances and accompanying songs (in Uma, *raego*) at all major precolonial religious rituals.²⁹ The Japanese soldiers found these mixed sex dances entertaining and they commanded performances of what were formerly life cycle or calendrical rites for their personal amusement. The forced enactment of ritual sacrifices and dances at the behest of their Japanese captors seemingly turned highlanders away from their ancestral ritual practices and further towards Protestant devotions.

The available data indicate that Christianity in general and the Salvation Army Church in particular gained strength from highlanders' experiences under the Japanese occupation. Just prior to World War II, the Salvation Army was running 140 corps (larger population centres served by resident 'officer' ministers) and outposts (smaller centres served by visiting officers), nineteen schools, and five clinics in Central Sulawesi. These mission bases were supervised by sixty-six Salvation Army officers under the direction of Leonard and Maggie Woodward, a British couple who resided in Kantewu.³⁰ During the Occupation, all European Salvation Army officers from the allied nations were removed from their posts and interned in prison camps. From 1942 until the war's end, the Woodwards lived in separate men's and women's camps near Makassar in South Sulawesi.

In the Europeans' absence, responsibility for all Salvation Army divisions in Central Sulawesi was turned over to an Ambonese officer, Adjutant Sahetappy, who did his best to keep the mission organization running despite a difficult financial situation and occasional Japanese threats.³¹ Some indigenous people still oriented to their ancestral religion intimated that the tragedy of war and oppression of the Japanese was brought on by the neglect of ancestral customs in the wake of Christian conversion.³² Local Christian leaders, however, endeavoured to dispel these notions and make Christianity a rallying point of opposition to the Japanese invaders. Although they generally detested Japanese plans for their future, highlanders did emulate the Japanese proposal of 'Asia for Asians' by beginning a more thorough indigenization of the church, at first under duress but subsequently by design.

Toward the end of 1943, the Allies began to bomb Sulawesi.³³ In the wake of that strategy, the tide of the war and the security of the Japanese occupation began to shift during 1944. In early August 1945, the Indonesian replacement officers were called to Palu where they learned that the war was over. Both Leonard and Maggie Woodward survived in their South Sulawesi prison camps, but were released in a relatively weak condition. Within the next year, the European Salvation Army officers who were still alive and in good health began to return to their Central Sulawesi divisions, often following furloughs to their homelands. Fifteen out of about 150 foreign officers in Indonesia had died during the occupation period. The Woodwards travelled first to Australia for recuperation and then made a return tour of welcome to Central Sulawesi before retiring to England in 1949.³⁴ Leonard Woodward died in 1950, within a year of his retirement.

In Kantewu, one of the pioneer indigenous officers, Laua, took over Woodward's duties and achieved impressive results in Salvation Army school attendance. Just prior to the war there were 120 children attending three primary school grades. By 1949, there were 250 children attending six grades.³⁵ This rapid doubling of post-war school and church attendance suggests that the highlanders' wartime experiences of Japanese rule and indigenous church leadership catalyzed Christianization more rapidly than the prior colonial European status quo.

If Dutch administrators of the colonial period had nudged and pressured Kulawi district highlanders into half-hearted acceptance of Western foreigners and their demands, the Japanese occupation startled highlanders into realizing the potential tyranny that an outside force could wreak upon their lives. Soon after World War II the highlanders became unsuspecting victims of the Peremesta and Kahar Muzakar rebellions that infiltrated their regions from North and South Sulawesi respectively in the years between 1950 and 1965. Again highlanders were subjugated by foreigners, whose guns easily overwhelmed their locally manufactured spears and blowpipes. And again highlanders pointed to their Protestantism to try to convince both Muslim and Christian rebels that they were neither savages nor infidels.

When the New Order Indonesian government gained control in 1965, the national administration was firmly grounded in West Java, the provincial administration was centered at the coast in Palu, and any hope Kulawi district highlanders had of regaining full-fledged political autonomy disappeared. Their fate, rather, was to take a place among the nation's hundreds of small, peripheral, and relatively weak ethnic minorities. The highlanders' new foreign overlords were Indonesian government officials invariably originating from other larger ethnic groups.

While western Central Sulawesi highland communities admit to political weakness and relative poverty within the Indonesian nation, they also claim a measure of spiritual and ethnic strength through their ties to Protestantism. To government and foreign outsiders, they distinguish themselves

ethnically from both animist (the so-called 'estranged ethnic groups' or *suku terasing*, Indonesian) and coastal Muslim groups through their resolute allegiance to Salvation Army Christianity. The 'Japanese time' is recalled as a puzzling historical nightmare with little but an abandoned mica mine to show as proof of the veracity of local war stories. Nevertheless, lasting influences from highlanders' occupation experiences are ensconced in the their post-war Christian devotions and self-effacing ethnic identities within the New Order Indonesian nation.

Notes

I gratefully acknowledge grants from Fulbright-Hays, the National Science Foundation, the Association for Asian Studies and the Luce Foundation, and the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Research permits were granted by the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in Jakarta and Tadulako University in Palu. I am indebted to the people of highland Central Sulawesi who divulged their wartime experiences, to James S. Watson of East Carolina University for geological analyses of mica samples, and to Michael G. Cotter of East Carolina University's Joyner Library for bibliographic suggestions concerning wartime minerals use. An earlier version of this chapter was published under the title, 'Japanese Time' and the Mica Mine: Occupation Experiences in the Central Sulawesi Highlands' in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 27 1, Mar. 1996, pp. 49-63. James Rush provided helpful comments for this revision.

- 1 G. Richards Gwinn, 'Strategic Mica', Information Circular No. 7258, Washington, D.C., United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Mines, Sep. 1943, p. 1.
- 2 The apostrophe that ends Towulu' and other Uma language words signifies a phonemic glottal stop.
- 3 Anthony Reid and Oki Akira, 'Introduction', in *The Japanese Experience in Indonesia: Selected Memoirs of 1942-1945*, ed. Anthony Reid and Oki Akira, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for Southeast Asian Studies, 1986, p. 1.
- 4 Okada Fumihide, 'Civil Administration in the Celebes, 1942-1944', in *ibid.*, pp. 132, 140.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- 6 Lorraine V. Aragon, 'Maps of Political, Religious, and Moral History in Western Highland Central Sulawesi, Indonesia'. Paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the Association for Asian Studies, 24-27 Mar. 1994, Boston, Mass.
- 7 Lorraine V. Aragon, *Fields of the Lord: Animism, Christian Minorities, and State Development in Indonesia*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.
- 8 Okada Fumihide, 'Civil Administration in the Celebes', p. 156.
- 9 S.A. Montague, 'Mica', in *Industrial Minerals and Rocks*, ed. Joseph L. Gillson *et al.*, New York, The American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers, 1960, pp. 551-66.
- 10 Miloš Kužvart, *Industrial Minerals and Rocks*, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1984, pp. 222-8.
- 11 Lawrence L. Davis, *Mica: 1993 Annual Report*, Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Mines, 1994, pp. 3-4.
- 12 Microscopic analysis of the mica samples was undertaken in the laboratory of the Geology Department at East Carolina University by James S. Watson.
- 13 William H. Dennon, *Mineral Resources: Geology, Exploration, and Development* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1989), pp. 203-4.

- 14 Kužvart, *Industrial Minerals*, p. 223; Joseph Ulmer, 'International Trade in Mica', U.S. Department of Commerce, Trade Promotion Series No.95, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1930, p. 9.
- 15 Paul M. Tyler and K.G. Warner, 'Mica', in *Minerals Yearbook 1939*, Washington, D.C., United States Government Printing Office, 1939, pp. 1347-8.
- 16 G. Richards Gwinn and Ethel M. Tucker, 'Mica', in *Minerals Yearbook 1944* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 1471-5.
- 17 Montague, 'Mica', pp. 552-64.
- 18 Ulmer, 'International Trade in Mica', p. 3.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 29-32.
- 20 Gwinn's 'Strategic Mica', p. 3, provides detailed specifications for mica defined as strategic for World War II military purposes.
- 21 Tyler and Warner, 'Mica', pp. 1352-3.
- 22 Ulmer, 'International Trade in Mica', pp. 37-43.
- 23 Dennon, *Mineral Resources*, p. 203.
- 24 Ulmer, 'International Trade in Mica', p. 39.
- 25 Ibid., p. 8.
- 26 Lorraine V. Aragon, 'Barkcloth Production in Central Sulawesi: A Vanishing Textile Technology in Outer Island Indonesia', *Expedition* 32, 1, 1990, 33-48. See also Eija-Maija Kotilainen, 'When the Bones Are Left: A Study of the Material Culture of Central Sulawesi' (Helsinki: The Finnish Anthropological Society, 1992), pp. 220-7.
- 27 Okada, 'Civil Administration in the Celebes', pp. 143, 154, 156.
- 28 John C. Wu, 'The Mineral Industry of Indonesia', *Minerals Yearbook Volume III: Mineral Industries of Asia and the Pacific*, 1989, Washington, D.C., United States Government Printing Office, 1992, p. 142. The major Asian producers of mica currently are South Korea, India, and to a lesser extent, Taiwan (ibid., p. 5).
- 29 Lorraine V. Aragon, 'Suppressed and Revised Performances: Raego' Songs of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia', *Ethnomusicology* 40, 3, Fall, 1996, 413-39.
- 30 Albert Kenyon, *Leonard Goes East* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, 1952), p. 77.
- 31 Melattie Brouwer, 'Tanah Toradja: Separated, But One in Spirit', *The War Cry* (Australia), 6, Apr. 1974, p. 4.
- 32 Kenyon, *Leonard Goes East*, p. 77.
- 33 Okada Fumihide, 'Civil Administration in the Celebes, 1942-1944', p. 150.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 92-101.
- 35 Salvation Army, 'A Pioneer in Celebes', *The Warrior*, Sept. 1949, pp. 98-9.

Chapter Seven

Japanese Army Policy toward the Chinese and Malay-Chinese Relations in Wartime Malaya

Cheah Boon Kheng

Introduction

During the final battles of the Malayan Campaign, in the last ten days before the fall of Singapore, some 4,000 local Chinese joined British troops to fight in the defence of Singapore. Known as Dalforce after their commander, Lt. Col. John D. Dalley (Director of Intelligence for the Federated Malay States Police Force), these volunteers fought savagely against the invading Japanese troops, but given the overwhelming odds against them, they had no hope of keeping the Japanese out of Singapore.¹ Shortly after the British surrender, the Japanese Army launched a '*sook ching*' (purification by elimination) operation, and between February and June 1942 they massacred a large number of Chinese in Singapore and Malaya. The *sook ching* had three objectives: to eliminate elements in the Chinese population that posed a direct threat to the Japanese, to punish Chinese for their pre-war and wartime anti-Japanese resistance, and to coerce them into paying a 50 million yen 'gift of atonement' demanded by the Japanese Administration.²

The guidelines prepared for Japanese forces in Southeast Asia struck a moderate note with regard to Chinese living in the region: 'For the present, the overseas Chinese shall be utilized for economic purposes but their social power shall be gradually checked by the application of appropriate political pressures'.³ However, pre-war anti-Japanese activities by Chinese residents in Malaya, such as strikes and boycotts of Japanese goods in protest of Japan's invasion of China in 1937, and fund raising to support China's war effort, had marked them out as dangerous enemies who needed to be controlled and punished.⁴ Accordingly, the Japanese Military Administration employed repressive measures against the Chinese, while adopting a friendly stance toward Malays and Indians, whom it regarded as sympathetic and cooperative.

This article explores three questions. First, what was the relationship between the resistance mounted by Dalforce and the subsequent massacre?

Second, how did the different sectors of the Chinese population in Malaya respond to the Occupation, and to Japanese attempts to achieve a *modus vivendi*. And finally, to what extent was the outbreak of communal violence in Johor during the last few months of the Occupation a result of the policies of the Military Administration?

The period of repression

Dalforce

The British Official History of the Second World War gives 'cool and brief' recognition to the exploits of Dalforce.⁵ The Chinese Volunteer Force was created to operate as a guerrilla organization behind enemy lines, and its members received rudimentary training at the 101 Special Training School in Singapore, set up by the Malayan wing of Britain's Special Operations Executive to prepare volunteers for resistance work behind enemy lines.⁶ Sometimes described as 'Chinese Irregulars', the Volunteers came from all social classes, ranging from labourers and rickshaw pullers to students and secret society members. Significantly, supporters of both the Communists and the Kuomintang took part, setting aside their differences to respond to the Japanese attack on China in 1937 and the massacre at Nanking.⁷ The commanders were British and Chinese officers from the Straits Settlements Volunteers rather than regular soldiers. Members wore blue uniforms and triangular armbands, but had no helmets or caps, and wrapped pieces of yellow cloth around their heads. A Chinese member of the force recalls: 'Round their heads they each wore a towel-like cloth, like a turban. Each had a sling of ammunition to feed the shotguns or rifles which they carried.'⁸

When British forces withdrew from the Malayan peninsula and prepared for a last-ditch defence of Singapore, the Volunteers were offered a chance to take part. Those who accepted left their training camps for the front lines on 5 February, ten days before the British surrender, equipped with around 1,000 hunting rifles and shotguns, and a small quantity of ammunition. Some volunteers received as little as seven shells for their shotguns, and though they asked for more, additional supplies were not forthcoming. Accounts differ as to the size of Dalforce, with most estimates ranging from two to four thousand.⁹

The fighting spirit of Dalforce first became apparent in the battle to defend the Singapore-Johor Causeway on Tuesday, 10 February 1942. Richard Gough offers this version of what happened:

In an attempt to capture the Singapore end of the causeway, Yamashita had launched his Guards Division across the Strait against the Australian 27th Brigade and the Chinese Volunteers from Dalforce,

just west of the causeway. But the attackers were thrown back with such heavy losses that he considered calling off the operation. However the Guards were ordered in again, and this time found the Australians had for some reason fallen back and left the Chinese Volunteers from Dalforce, armed with their sporting rifles and shotguns, to fight it out to the end amongst the stinking mangrove swamps. This withdrawal also left 11th Division's left flank exposed. By Tuesday morning both ends of the causeway were in enemy hands

. . .¹⁰

The Chinese Volunteer force was placed between two Australian battalions in a mangrove swamp in the northwest sector of the island. The Japanese assault was expected elsewhere, but this location proved to be directly in the line of advance followed by the main invasion force. Kenneth Attiwill, an Australian who served through the whole campaign, has described the fate of one Dalforce unit:

In the morning Dalley went back to his company [at Kranji River] and found it, or what was left of it. One British officer and five other ranks had fallen back; the remainder of the 200 – mostly Chinese – had stood and fought it out against a Japanese machine-gun battalion. 'It was a frightful sight', he said. 'They'd been blown to pieces. They'd used up all their ammunition. There were no wounded to bring back. They'd stood their ground. They'd had orders to stay and they stayed. And they all died. The Australian machine-gun battalion did not stand. They moved back. They were frightened. . . .'¹¹

Another account of the Kranji River fighting, written by a Chinese member of the Volunteer force, reports that Dalforce inflicted a large number of casualties on the Japanese:

The 22nd Australian Brigade, after an hour of bloody fighting in the dark, withdrew towards Ama Keng Village. This meant that Dalforce between Lim Chu Kang Village and the Kranji River was left to its fate. There was one company of Chinese irregulars along this stretch. They saw the Japanese boats head towards them. Their leaders ordered them not to fire, until the Japs landed. As soon as the enemy troops touched land, the irregulars opened up with their shot guns and rifles. Scores upon scores of Japanese troops in full battle-gear piled upon each other. Still they came and Dalforce ran out of ammunition. The irregulars supported by some regulars made a suicidal charge with bayonets and broad swords. Dalforce, heroic but ill-equipped and inadequately trained for modern warfare, was wiped out but a few irregulars managed to escape. As the Chinese formed the majority of Dalforce, the Japanese were infuriated.¹²

Some of the Dalforce volunteers who survived the invasion were later identified and executed by the Japanese. Others managed to escape to the Malay Peninsula with their weapons, and joined the anti-Japanese resistance force known as the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA).

The Dalforce volunteers were without question extremely brave, but the Volunteers themselves, and the British officers directing the defence of Singapore, ignored the possible consequences of their actions for the Chinese population in Singapore. A contemporary account by the Australian journalist Ian Morrison made the following prescient point:

When the Japanese came swarming on to the island, the Chinese Volunteers put up a good fight, from what I have heard since. They fully justified the confidence which had been placed in them. But they were not able to make any difference to the progress of the struggle, and I fear that, as a result of their participation in the military struggle, the Chinese population was laid open to terrible reprisals once the Japanese armed forces were in full control.¹³

This assessment proved tragically correct.

The sook ching

On 18 February 1942, three days after the British surrender, the Japanese launched a mass screening of the Chinese population in Singapore. Some Singapore Chinese remember one big 'Operation Clean-up', but there were actually three: the first during the period 9–16 February 1942, the second from 16–25 February, and the third from 28 February–8 March. The Japanese ordered males between the ages of eighteen and fifty, and in some cases women and children as well, to gather at several locations in the city. Some were told to bring food and water, but others had to spend several days in the open with no food and inadequate toilet facilities while they were being checked and classified. Hooded collaborators, some of them captured communists or criminals, helped identify men whose names appeared on wanted lists, and those picked were taken away for summary execution. The Japanese targeted five categories of people: communists, Volunteers, anti-Japanese elements, looters or others who threatened law and order, and armed men or those harbouring weapons, but many of those killed did not fit any of these descriptions.¹⁴

Accounts of the *sook ching* differ on a number of points. Briefly, controversy centres on the following questions:

- (a) Was the *sook ching* planned in advance of the 25th Army's attack on Malaya, or did it emerge only in the last stages of the military contest for the Malayan peninsula?

- (b) Did Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita, commander of the 25th Army formulate the plan, or was it actually the work of others on his staff?
- (c) Why did the Japanese only launch the *sook ching* operation after the fall of Singapore, when nothing of the sort had been done upon the earlier occupation of the various states of the Malay peninsula?

It seems clear from the various accounts of the massacre that the *sook ching* policy did not originate with the Japanese Military High Command in Tokyo, and there are reasons to believe that it took shape in the course of the Malayan Campaign.¹⁵ The government-military liaison conference held in Tokyo on 20 November 1941 identified the Chinese in Malaya and elsewhere in Southeast Asia as a special problem and a possible threat to Japanese interests, but it advocated a conciliatory approach: 'Chinese residents shall be induced to defect from the Chiang Kai-shek regime and to cooperate and align themselves with our policies.'¹⁶ However, the 25th Army adopted a much harder line following its successful campaign in Malaya, as seen in the following set of instructions issued in April 1942 by Military Administration Headquarters:

Rely upon severe judgements. Those who refuse to cooperate shall be dealt with by means of extremely severe measures – specifically, confiscation of property and deportation of the entire family with prohibition of reentry – while hostile elements shall be answered with capital punishment, thereby influencing the course to be adopted by the entire Chinese community.¹⁷

The War Crimes trial held in Manila in October 1945 found Gen. Yamashita guilty of war crimes, as he was overall commander of the Japanese troops that committed atrocities in Malaya and elsewhere. However, both Japanese and non-Japanese accounts have identified Col. Masanobu Tsuji, Yamashita's senior Planning and Operations Officer, as the person really responsible for the massacre in Singapore. Retired Major General Kiyote Kawaguchi first made this accusation some eight years after the Japanese surrender, when Tsuji emerged from hiding in China and declared his intention to stand for a seat in the Japanese parliament. Kawaguchi had recently returned to Japan after spending six years in a Manila prison as a punishment for the murder of Jose Abad Santos, the Chief Justice of the pre-war Supreme Court of the Philippines, an action ordered by Tsuji. His accusation appeared in the Japanese daily newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* on 4 March 1953. Notwithstanding the controversy over his wartime activities, Tsuji won a seat in the Diet, but Kawaguchi pursued him, repeating the accusations and engaging Tsuji in public debates. This airing of his criminal past ultimately caused Tsuji to be barred from holding public office. In a book published in 1992, Ian Ward called Tsuji Japan's 'No. 1 War Criminal', and blamed British bureaucrats and American intelligence operatives for allowing him to evade

war crimes charges at the end of the war. Both Ward and Chen Su Lan, author of a memoir about the Occupation entitled *Remember Pompong and Oxley Rise*, claim that before the war Tsuji's Singapore-based espionage network had collected lists of residents with anti-Japanese tendencies, and that these lists were used in the screening operations.¹⁸

The third question is more complicated. There are two possible reasons why *sook ching* operations were not carried out in the peninsula until after the fall of Singapore: either the 25th Army had no time to deal with 'mopping-up' operations, or the Japanese considered Singapore the best place to begin their anti-Chinese operations. Evidence on this point is insufficient to supply a definitive answer.

The Singapore massacre

In 1946 the Japanese government acknowledged that 5,000 Singapore Chinese had been killed in the *sook ching*, but Col. Cyril Wild, a British officer who investigated the massacres and acted as prosecutor in the war crimes trials, said the number was 'definitely considerably in excess of 5,000'.¹⁹ Mamoru Shinozaki, a Japanese official in wartime Singapore, said the Kempeitai reported 6,000 Chinese killed in 'Operation Clean-up',²⁰ while General Kawaguchi placed the death toll in Singapore between 2,000 and 10,000.²¹ A Japanese journalist told the War Crimes Trial in Singapore that he had been informed by 25th Army intelligence chief Colonel Ichiji Sugita that 50,000 Chinese in Singapore were to be killed, and that 'almost half had been dealt with'.²² A Malayan Chinese source has estimated the number of deaths at between 50,000 and 60,000.²³

Although certain officers within the Military Command of the 25th Army, especially Gen. Yamashita and Col. Tsuji, made the crucial decisions that led to the killings, the 25th Army included many officers and men who had experienced savage fighting in China during the Sino-Japanese War.²⁴ According to the Japanese historian Yoji Akashi, 'A psychological state of mind for atrocity' developed on the battlefield, and led to 'the infamous *sook ching* (purge through purification) after the fall of Singapore'.²⁵

Shinozaki contended that Japanese officers of the 25th Army were furious about the resistance mounted by the frontline Chinese Dalforce units, and carried out the *sook ching* to punish the Chinese:

It had been planned by Lieutenant-Colonel Tsuji, officer in charge of planning and action. The 25th Army intended to move to Sumatra. Only the Defence Force would be left behind to hold Singapore. Tsuji argued that before they went the 25th Army should clean up all anti-Japanese elements including the Chinese Volunteers who fought so tenaciously against the Japanese, all members of the China Relief Fund, and other anti-Japanese organisations.²⁶

Yap Pheng Geck, before the war a senior officer of the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force, supported this view, adding that the Japanese often mistook his organization for Dalforce, 'their enemy No. 1 among the Singapore residents'.²⁷

In the Malay Peninsula, the massacres appear to have been carried out by Kempeitai units rather than soldiers of the 25th Army. The killing continued until the end of March 1942, and again casualty figures are in dispute: some sources report as many as 50,000 Chinese killed in Johor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, with Johor alone suffering losses of 25,000–30,000.²⁸ The figure of 50,000 seems much too high, and my own estimate, based in part on figures inscribed on Chinese memorials to the war dead, is that around 20,000 Chinese were killed during *sook ching* operations in the three states.

Was the British Military Command justified in positioning the Chinese Dalforce Volunteers in the frontline at the eleventh hour? In retrospect, it seems unwise to have committed Dalforce units to a last-ditch battle when defeat seemed inevitable. The explanation for Percival's action appears to lie in a series of telegrams sent in the final stages of the battle for Singapore. On 10 February 1942, with the situation becoming desperate, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill signalled the Supreme Commander for the Far East, Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell, that he was to fight 'to the bitter end at all costs':

It is doubtful if the Japanese have as many [troops as the British] in the whole Malay peninsula. . . . In these circumstances the defenders must greatly outnumber Japanese forces who have crossed the straits, and in a well-contested battle should destroy them. There must at this stage be no thought of saving the troops or sparing the population. . . . Commanders and senior officers should die with their troops. The honour of the British Empire and of the British Army is at stake. I rely on you to show no mercy to weakness in any form.²⁹

Wavell informed Churchill that General Percival's forces in Singapore could deal with the Japanese 'if the troops can be made to act with sufficient vigour and determination', and told Percival, 'You must fight it out to the end as you are doing'. In a subsequent message, Wavell seemed to accept that the Japanese would triumph, but instructed Percival to 'continue to inflict maximum damage on enemy for as long as possible. . . . Your action in tying down enemy and inflicting casualties may have vital influence in other theatres.' On the basis of these instructions, Percival intensified the fighting, even though he considered the situation hopeless.³⁰ Five days later, with food rations and water supplies running low, and feeling that further resistance would only harm non-combatants, Percival capitulated.

In a speech delivered after the war, the Singapore Chinese leader Tan Kah Kee blamed both the Dalforce Volunteers and the British for the fate of the Chinese population in Singapore. He noted that before escaping to the

Netherlands Indies on the eve of the fall of Singapore, he had told the Communist and Kuomintang leaders in Dalforce, 'You do not deserve any pity because you are prepared to make self-sacrifice, but the whole Chinese populace in Singapore would be wiped out when the enemy entered the city.' Tan added: 'I had the opinion that the British Government was malicious in despatching the untrained Chinese to the front, when the trained British troops were withdrawn behind the lines.'³¹

On this reading of the situation, the British Command bore a moral responsibility for the severity of the *sook ching*, but volunteers in the Dalforce units also failed to recognize the dangers to non-combatants arising from their actions. The Japanese 25th Army already held strong anti-Chinese feelings and was well aware that the Chinese of Malaya and Singapore had strongly supported China in the Sino-Japanese War. The actions of the Dalforce Volunteers had made it all but inevitable that the Japanese would punish the Chinese population.

The shift to a policy of conciliation

In the first year of the Occupation, the Japanese introduced harsh repressive measures against the Chinese: Chinese schools were closed, Chinese residents were registered, and their movements were restricted. In December 1942 Tokyo directed Military Administration Headquarters in Singapore to observe the need for 'winning the hearts of the peoples under our rule'. This directive signalled a change in Japanese policy towards the Chinese.³² In March 1943, the Deputy Chief of the Military Administration in Malaya, Wataru Watanabe, left Malaya, and his extreme hard line policies towards the Chinese came to an end. However, the Japanese made concessions in such a grudging and lopsided manner that the Chinese remained on guard. A policy allowing the re-opening of Chinese schools in 1943 had little impact, because the schools were required to devote 14 hours a week to Japanese language instruction, compared to just seven for the Chinese language, and the following year the Military Administration reversed itself and banned Chinese language instruction altogether.³³ In June 1944 the Administration began to set up 'Epposho' (information offices or complaints bureaus) to improve Japanese-Chinese relations. The first office opened in Penang, staffed by Japanese but with prominent Chinese serving as advisers, and others followed in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. The Malay population objected, saying that 'Epposho' should be created for them as well, and mounting criticism within the Japanese army that the programme amounted to pandering to the Chinese brought it to an end in October.³⁴

By 1945 the Japanese had begun to contemplate offering independence to Malaya, and had tried to assess the response of the Chinese should this be done. A secret memorandum prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tokyo in February 1945 took note of the fact that the transfer of four Malay

States to Thailand in 1943 had greatly increased the importance of the Chinese in what remained of the old British Malaya.³⁵

Taking this year's [estimated] population, the composition without the four provinces incorporated into Thailand is as follows:

Malays: 1,210,718 (a little over 34.3 per cent)

Chinese: 1,699,594 (a little over 47.7 per cent)

Indians: 651,948 (a little over 18 per cent)

According to the above figures, apparently the main race in Malaya, excluding the four provinces incorporated into Thailand, is Chinese rather than Malay. . . . Therefore in granting independence to Malaya it is impossible to ignore the Chinese on population grounds alone, even without taking into consideration their economic activities. . . . These days, the present Malayan military government is starting to show signs of changing the policy enforced in the early stages of military administration and which had been claimed to stand for principles emphasizing the position of Malays, because it has become impossible to ignore the power of overseas Chinese merchants in various areas such as commerce, industry and labour.³⁶

In the end, Japanese attempts to placate the Chinese community did not overcome Chinese hostility toward the regime, and revenge attacks by the Chinese-led resistance movement against 'collaborators', and especially against cooperative Malay officials (village chiefs, policemen and government officers), increased in intensity as Japanese fortunes waned. MPAJA reprisals caused interracial tensions and ultimately produced serious clashes between Malays and Chinese, with the worst violence occurring in Johor.

Malay-Chinese conflicts in Johor

The Chinese-led resistance movement paid close attention to race relations, and told its cadres and guerrilla fighters to respect the customs and cultures of each racial group, and protect and help all inhabitants suffering under the Japanese yoke. This approach later gave way to short-term survival strategies and punitive measures that followed the principle of 'an eye for an eye'. The change was largely due to pressures arising from repressive Japanese Army actions which, intentionally or otherwise, had the effect of playing one group against the other. For instance, Malay guides often took part in police raids against Chinese villages, and when the Japanese burned houses and placed people under arrest, the villagers blamed Malay collaborators.

Serious Malay-Chinese clashes broke out in Johor in 1945 after the Japanese Army carried out anti-guerrilla operations in the state. The Japanese used Malay village chiefs, police and 'Giyu Gun' (Volunteer

Corps) units against the Chinese resistance, and the Chinese interpreted their involvement as collaboration, seeing the Malays as willing instruments of the Japanese. Open racial conflict began in April in the Batu Pahat district and then spread to other parts of the state. Armed guerrillas of the MPAJA attacked Malay village heads, police officers and government officials who had supported the Japanese actions. The Malay response took the form of a religious war, with charismatic Islamic leaders organizing Red Bands of the Sabilillah (Holy War) Army and declaring a 'jihad' (crusade).

Accounts of these conflicts differ: Malay and Japanese sources blame the Chinese for starting the trouble, but Chinese, MPAJA and British sources blame the Japanese and the Malays.³⁷ Newspapers published by the Japanese administration, such as the *Penang Shimbun* (22 June 1945) and the *Malai Sinpo* (6 July 1945), claimed that the clashes were not racial but the work of 'communistic bandits', and reported that local Japanese authorities were taking steps to restore good relations between the Malay and Chinese communities. However, Japanese forces in the state were depleted when troops were sent to the north to prepare for an anticipated Allied invasion, and attacks continued without any let-up until the Japanese surrender.

The number of casualties arising from this conflict is difficult to ascertain. Chinese accounts imply that the Chinese suffered most, but their descriptions are vague and hard to verify. The Chinese Government issued a statement in Nanking at the end of the war claiming to have received reports that between May and August 1945 Malays in Johor 'instigated by the Japanese Army, massacred Overseas Chinese there, the victims numbering over 4,000 and refugees 20,000 and losses of property being very large'.³⁸ The Selangor branch of the Malayan Kuomintang Party offered a similar set of figures:

In May 1945 at Batu Pahat, Johor the Malays, instigated and variously armed by the Japanese, started an attack on the Chinese residents of the place. As a result, the Chinese being taken unawares, between 15,000 and 20,000 Chinese inhabitants, including women and children were killed and rendered destitute and homeless. The Japanese authorities treated the incident as a mere disturbance of peace and punished [the people] indiscriminately.³⁹

The official report on the British Military Administration did not give an estimate of the number of deaths, but said that when British troops reached the area on 8 September 1945 they found some 4,000 refugees in Batu Pahat, and 10,000 more in Muar.⁴⁰ The refugees were not identified by race, but since they were found in towns, most were probably Chinese.

The conflicts ceased temporarily with the end of the war in August, when the belligerent parties themselves arranged a truce, but soon flared up again and began spreading to other states. The seeds of conflict planted during the Japanese occupation had taken root and were growing.

Conclusion

Both W. H. Elsbree and Harry Benda have argued that the increased hostility between Chinese and Malays during the occupation was not 'the result of deliberate Japanese policy'.⁴¹ While it is true that the Japanese did not deliberately incite Malay attacks on the Chinese, or vice versa, Japanese policies nevertheless produced this effect. The massacres that took place early in the Occupation clearly show that the Japanese 25th Army had targeted the Chinese for reprisals because of their anti-Japanese activities. The Japanese committed atrocities in their dealings with the other communities in Malaya, but not on the same scale. Among the Chinese, the killings produced intense anti-Japanese feelings, which carried over to those seen as collaborating with the Japanese. Racial tensions also resulted from competition for favours, privileges, jobs, goods and foodstuffs, which came to be seen as a matter of survival as shortages grew more severe. Until the closing months of the war, the Japanese authorities seemed oblivious to this issue or paid little heed to the possible effects of their policies on interracial relations. When they became aware of the situation, it was too late.

Notes

- 1 The Japanese victory has been described by Lt. Gen. H. Gordon Bennett, Commander of the Australian forces during the campaign, as 'one of the decisive victories of World War II' and 'a feat unparalleled in military history.' See his introduction to Masanobu Tsuji, *Singapore 1941-1942: The Japanese Version of the Malayan Campaign of World War II*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1988; reprint of *Singapore: The Japanese Version*, Sydney, Ure Smith, 1960, p. vii. For an account by a Singapore Chinese volunteer, see Lim Thean Soo, *Southward Lies the Fortress*, Singapore, Educational Publications Bureau, 1971.
- 2 On the \$50,000,000 gift, the policy states: 'With Singapore as the focal point, influential Chinese from major cities such as Penang and Kuala Lumpur shall be assembled as representatives, and the entire Chinese community ordered to raise a minimum of 50,000,000 yen'. See 'Principles Governing the Implementation of Measures Relative to the Chinese', April 1942, Doc. No. 47 in *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia: Selected Documents*, ed. Harry J. Benda, James K. Irikura, Koichi Kishi, New Haven, Translation Series No. 6, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1965.
- 3 'Instructions on the Administration of Malaya and Sumatra', April 1942, Doc. No. 44 in *Selected Documents*, ed. Benda, et al., p. 169.
- 4 Ibid., p. 180.
- 5 Maj.-Gen. S. Woodburn Kirby, *The War Against Japan*, vol. 1, London, HMSO, 1957, pp. 364, 371; the quotation is from Louis Allen, *Singapore, 1941-1942*, London, Davis-Poynter, 1977, p. 252.
- 6 By the end of the war there were eight MPAJA regiments. The central command in Ipoh was in contact with Force 136 Officers in Admiral Mountbatten's South-East Asia Command. For further details, see F. Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle is Neutral*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1949, and Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star*

- Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict During and After the Japanese Occupation, 1941-1946*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1983, ch. 3.
- 7 The most detailed account of Dalforce is by Australian journalist Ian Morrison in *Malayan Postscript*, Sydney, 1943, ch. 18, 'The Chinese and the Defence of Singapore', pp. 161-72.
- 8 Lim, *Southward Lies the Fortress*, pp. 111-12.
- 9 Louis Allen (in *Singapore 1941-1942*) places the initial strength at 2,000, Frank Owen (in *The Fall of Singapore*, London, Joseph, 1967) says it was around 3,000 men and Kenneth Attiwill (in *The Singapore Story*, London, Muller, 1959) between 3,000 and 4,000; one Chinese source says 20,000 - clearly an exaggeration. See Hai Shang Ou, *Ma-lai-ya jen-min k'ang jib chun* (The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army), Singapore, 1945, ch. 1.
- 10 Richard Gough, *The Escape From Singapore*, London, Kimber, 1987, p. 56.
- 11 Attiwill, *The Singapore Story*, p. 207.
- 12 Lim, *Southward Lies the Fortress*, pp. 125-6.
- 13 Morrison, *Malayan Postscript*, p. 172.
- 14 N. I. Low and H. M. Cheng, *This Singapore (Our City of Dreadful Nights)*, Singapore, Ngai Seong Press, 1946; Chen, *Remember Pompong*, p. 185-91; Shinozaki, *Syonan - My Story*, Singapore, Asia Pacific Press, 1975, ch. 3, 'Chinese massacre', pp. 16-24; Shinozaki, *My Wartime Experiences in Singapore*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1973, p. 26. Among the lucky few that cheated death was a young man in his early teens who had been selected for execution. 'So my good luck was to be allowed to go back to collect my things', he recalled. He was Lee Kuan Yew, the future Prime Minister of Singapore. Lee told his story to the Japanese newspaper, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, nearly 50 years later. See Ian Ward, *The Killer They Called a God*, Singapore, Media Masters, 1992, p. 56.
- 15 See Yoji Akashi, 'Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 1, 2, Sept. 1970, pp. 61-89; and Shinozaki, *Syonan - My Story*, pp. 20-1. For an account blaming Tokyo for starting the *sook ching*, see Lee Tieh Min et al., *Ta-chan-yu Nan-chiao*, pp. 169-70.
- 16 'Principles Governing the Administration of Occupied Southern Areas' [Nampo senryochi gyosei jissai yoryo], adopted at the Liaison Conference between Imperial Headquarters and the Government, 20 Nov. 1941, Doc. No. 1, para. 8, in *Selected Documents*, ed. Benda et al., p. 2.
- 17 'Principles Governing the Implementation of Measures Relative to the Chinese', Apr. 1942, Doc. No. 47, in *Selected Documents*, ed Benda et al., p. 180.
- 18 Ward, *The Killer They Called a God*, pp. 85, 305-11; Chen Su Lan, *Remember Pompong and Oxley Rise*, Singapore, The Chen Su Lan Trust, 1969, pp. 185-7. For other accounts linking Tsuji with the Singapore massacres, see Mamoru Shinozaki, *My Wartime Experiences in Singapore*, p. 15, and Shinozaki, *Syonan - My Story*, pp. 20-1. Surprisingly, Yoji Akashi's 1970 article, 'Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese', does not link Tsuji with the Singapore massacres.
- 19 Ward, *The Killer They Called a God*, pp. 136, 140, 157, 162.
- 20 Shinozaki, *Syonan - My Story*, p. 24.
- 21 Ward, *The Killer They Called a God*, p. 319.
- 22 Ibid., pp. 175-6.
- 23 Japanese estimates of the number of Chinese killed tend to be lower than Chinese figures. For the Chinese figures, see Lee Tieh Min, et al., *Ta-chan-yu-Nan Ch'iao (Ma-lai-ya-chih pu)* (The World War and the Overseas Chinese in Nanyang - The Malaya Section), Singapore, Singapore New Nanyang Publications

- Company, 1947, pp. 68, 69, 93, 97-99, and Chen Su Lan, *Remember Pompong and Oxley Rise*, pp. 185-7, 271. Chen gives the figure of '50,000 - 60,000' deaths (pp. 217-21).
- 24 See the account of the formation of the 25th Army in Tsuji, *Singapore, 1941-1942*, p. 40.
- 25 Akashi, 'Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese', p. 63.
- 26 Shinozaki, *Syonan - My Story*, pp. 20-1.
- 27 See introduction by Yap Pheng Geck to Shinozaki, *Syonan - My Story*, p. xi.
- 28 Chen, *Remember Pompong*, p. 217, provides a detailed account of Chinese massacres in Singapore, Johor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang by a medical practitioner, who was involved with several post-war organizations, such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau in Singapore and the Social Committee of the Christian Federation of Malaya in calling for a commission of inquiry to be set up on missing persons. See also Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, London, C. Hurst, 1998, pp. 95-100.
- 29 Arthur Swinson, *Defeat in Malaya: The Fall of Singapore*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1970, p. 140.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 See Tan Kah Kee's speech at a meeting at the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce to discuss the loss of Chinese lives and properties as a result of Japanese atrocities, in the Singapore Chinese daily newspaper, *Sin Chew Jit Poh*, 30 Oct. 1945.
- 32 Telegram on the Administration of Occupied Southern Areas (Nampo senryochi no tochi ni kansuru dempo), from Vice-Minister of the Army, Tokyo, to Superintendent of the Singapore Military Administration Headquarters, 5 Dec. 1942, Doc. No. 7, *Selected Documents*, ed. Benda *et al.*, p. 47.
- 33 Akashi, 'Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese', pp. 84-6.
- 34 Yoichi Itagaki, 'Outlines of Japanese Policy in Indonesia and Malaya During the War with Special Reference to Nationalism of Respective Countries', *The Annals of the Hitotsubashi Academy*, 2, 2, Apr. 1952, pp. 183-92; see also Akashi, 'Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese', pp. 86-8.
- 35 The four states transferred to Thailand in August 1943 were Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu. This move angered Malays, who now became minorities both in Thailand and in what remained of Malaya. See Cheah, *Red Star Over Malaya*, p. 109, and 'Marai dokuritsu mondai' (On the problems of Independence for Malaya), Political Affairs Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, 20 Feb. 1945, Microfilm No. 16-30 in the Nishijima Collection, Waseda University, Tokyo. This item also appears as Ms. Film 50, item no. 5, in the Echols Collection at Cornell University. See also Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya*, pp. 85-91.
- 36 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, 'Marai dokuritsu mondai' [On the problems of Independence for Malaya], 20 Feb. 1945. See Appendix A in Cheah, *Red Star Over Malaya*, p. 302.
- 37 For an analysis of these different accounts, see Cheah, *Red Star Over Malaya*, pp. 210-23.
- 38 Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to British Embassy in Nanking, 7 Feb. 1946, in MU Secret 346/46 (MNA).
- 39 See Memorandum, 'Treatment of people during the Japanese Military Occupation', compiled by the Extraordinary General Affairs Section of the Kuomintang, Selangor Branch, Kuala Lumpur, Sept. 1945, in BMA ADM 8/1 (MNA).
- 40 H. R. Hone, *Report on the British Military Administration in Malaya, September 1945 - March 1946*, Kuala Lumpur, 1946, p. 41.

- 41 W. H. Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian National Movements, 1940-1945*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 149; Harry J. Benda, 'The Japanese Interregnum in Southeast Asia', in *Imperial Japan and Asia. A Reassessment*, Occasional Papers of the East Asia Institute, comp. Grant K. Goodman, Columbia University, New York, 1967, p. 77.

Chapter Eight

The 1943 Kinabalu Uprising in Sabah

Hara Fujio

On the night of 9 October 1943, the eve of the Double Tenth National Day of China, more than 300 youths from various ethnic groups in Sabah, the former British North Borneo, rose up against the Japanese Military Administration (JMA) in and around the town of Api (formerly called Jesselton and presently Kota Kinabalu). The uprising was organized by the Kinabalu Guerrilla Force (KGF, in Mandarin the *Shenshan Youji Dui*) led by Albert Kwok alias I. N. Kwok (in Mandarin, Guo Yi Nan), a Teochew Chinese born in Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, in 1921. Kwok had spent time in China studying Chinese medicine, and came to Api in May 1941.

The main guerrilla band, led by Kwok and made up of about 100 mainland residents, most of them Chinese, attacked JMA offices, police stations, military hotels and the like. Simultaneously, another band of more than 200 residents of offshore islands – led by Panglima Ali of Suluk Island, Arshad of Udar Island, Jemalul of Mantanani Island and Saruddin of Dinawan Island – landed at the Api wharf and set warehouses there on fire. In nearby towns such as Tenghilan and Kota Belud, police stations were also attacked. Some Indian as well as Dusun policemen turned against the JMA to support the rebels, who killed 60 to 90 Japanese, including some Taiwanese. However, the KGF ruled the area surrounding Api for barely a day before retreating to its headquarters in Mansiang, near Menggatal, and then to various mountainous villages. Their arms were inadequate to attempt to remain in Api any longer; apart from several hunting guns and pistols, they had no modern weapons and relied mostly on *parangs* (long knives) and spears.

The JMA had been headquartered in Kuching since it had started to rule the former British Borneo (Sabah, Sarawak and Brunei, collectively referred to as Northern Borneo in this article), and less than 50 Japanese soldiers were stationed at Api.¹ On 11 October, the JMA, reinforced by two army companies as well as kempeitai (military police) and local policemen dispatched mainly from Kuching, began severe and massive reprisals directed not only against the rebels but also against all people dwelling in



Map 4 Borneo

the involved areas. The top leaders including Albert Kwok were captured on 19 December 1943. One month later, on 21 January 1944, the Japanese authorities executed Kwok and 175 other people, some of them guerrillas but others suspected sympathizers, followers and supporters, at Petagas, just opposite the site of the present Kota Kinabalu international airport. Another 96 detainees had already been tortured and killed at the Batu Tiga prison camp. A further 131 were imprisoned on Labuan Island off Brunei Bay, and only seven survived the ill-treatment they suffered there.

During unrelenting manhunts and reprisals on the part of the JMA, many Chinese inhabitants of towns as well as natives of such islands as Suluk, Udar, Dinawan, Mantanani and Mengalum were massacred; in all, as many as 3,000 people may have been killed,² although a Japanese politician who was the governor of Keningau at the time later placed the number of deaths at around 500.³ The then chief of the police bureau of Seikaishu (West Coast State), Oho Masuo, stated that number of the bereaved people whose family members had been killed because of the incident reached 3,000, including the Japanese.⁴ This is a rough outline of the uprising and its aftermath.⁵

In almost every territory conquered and ruled by the JMA, an anti-Japanese organization emerged and developed. The KGF was unusual in that various ethnic communities took part, although the Chinese initiated the movement, and played a decisive role in its activities. Thus it is useful to understand the relations between the Chinese and the native communities in the KGF.

This article will examine three issues relating to the Api Rebellion: (1) the causes of the uprising, (2) the characteristic features of the rebels and their organization, and (3) the historical significance of the episode.

Causes of the uprising

Why did Sabahans stage an uprising even though there seemed to be no possibility of lasting success. To answer the question, the burden the JMA placed on Sabahans in general needs to be considered, for the uprising involved various ethnic communities of Sabah. In addition, since the main and decisive initiators of the rebellion were Chinese, the policies of the JMA toward the Chinese community will be scrutinized.

Collapse of the Economy

The first priority of the Northern Borneo JMA was to secure essential military resources, in particular the oil fields of Miri (in Sarawak) and Brunei. Every effort was devoted to restoring pumping and processing facilities destroyed by the British army before their surrender. Sabah's main export products – rubber, timber and Manila hemp – were readily available elsewhere in the territories conquered by the Japanese, and most of the

Table 8.1 External trade of Northern Borneo

Commodity	1937 (1)		1938 (1)		1939 (2)	1940 (3)	1942+ (4)	1943† (4)	1947 (3)
	Tons	000 \$	Tons	000 \$	Tons	000 \$	Tons	Tons	000 \$
<i>Exports</i>									
(Sarawak) Rubber	26,700	17,280			44,000				35,600 tons
(Brunei) Rubber	1,400*	580*			5,000	1,500			885 tons
(Sabah) Rubber	13,400	8,790	9,700	4,740	21,000	14,500	6,852	1,900‡	11,250
Timber (000 m ³)	178	2,840	132	2,120		2,200	0.6		1,500
Manila hemp	524	10	1,271	260	3,900	550	1,117	0	500
TOTAL for Sabah		14,300		9,530		20,270		0	16,930
<i>Imports</i>									
(Sabah) Rice	14,000	1,030	16,000	1,150		1,450	23,000	6,079+	2,960
Foods	3,000	490	2,900	450		1,000		¥316,000	3,610
Tobacco	818	460	843	460		410		¥337,000	1,880
Metal products		400		430		670			
Textiles		720		630		1,200		¥658,060	2,830
TOTAL		6,360		6,200		9,980		¥3,287,000	20,470

* Figure for 1935.

+ ¥790,370.

† Export and import figures for 1942 and 1943 are for Northern Borneo; figures for 1943 cover the period Apr. 1943 to Jan. 1944. Under imports, the figure for Foods stands for sugar and salt only.

‡ Planned.

Sources:

(1) Taiwan Sotokufu Gaijibu [Foreign Affairs Department, Governor's Office, Taiwan]; *Nanyo Nenkan* [South Sea Yearbook] Vol. 4, 1943.

(2) Nada No. 9801 Corps, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo* [General Outline of the North Borneo Military Administration], 1943.

(3) Yu Shu Kun ed., *Nanyang Nianjian* [South Sea Yearbook], Singapore, Nanyang Siang Pau, 1951.

(4) Nada No. 9801 Corps, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944.

people employed in these industries in Sabah lost their jobs. The American and European markets were completely cut off, leaving Japan as the sole export market. Exports of rubber and Manila hemp were respectively just one-tenth and one-quarter of the pre-war level in 1942, and negligible from 1943 to 1945 (see Table 8.1). The JMA made plans to use local timber to build vessels for riverine and coastal transportation in Borneo, but had no way to transport it to the shipyards. Though small quantities of local produce were purchased by the JMA, prices were lower than before the war,⁶ and the disruption was so severe that even in 1947, two years after the conflict ended, production had not returned to pre-war levels. The Japanese shifted equipment and labour from 'superfluous' industries either to food cultivation or to military projects.

Shortages of Materials, Inflation and Taxes

Before the war, most manufactured daily necessities had been imported, but it proved difficult for the JMA to locate alternative sources of supply within the Japanese empire, and because of shipping shortages, goods often could not be moved even when they were available. For example, Northern Borneo imported a total of 8,000 tons of sugar before the war, but just 1,550 tons in 1943. Clothing imports from other southern territories were so limited that only labourers engaged in essential projects could obtain a ration. The annual demand for small boxes of matches was around 11 million, but a monopolistic Japanese company located in Sabah only manufactured 3.6 million boxes. The same company produced 12 tons of paper to satisfy an annual demand of around 300 tons, and the quality was so poor that pens could not write on the surface.⁷ Japanese textile manufacturing companies and rubber processing companies attempted to establish operations in Sabah, but could not find transport to bring in needed equipment.

In contrast with the acute shortage of commodities, the supply of Japanese military currency notes (Nampo Kaihatsu Kinko Ken) increased rapidly, causing high rates of inflation. The JMA attributed the increase to a huge trade surplus derived from the export of such essential military materials as petroleum, rubber, tannin, copra and timber.⁸ A more important reason was rampant over-issue of notes by the JMA, which used the money to cover huge expenditures on uneconomic military projects such as the construction of airfields and roads. As a result, people suffered both from ever-increasing inflation and from a shortage of essential goods.

In 1942, in order to overcome the budgetary deficit and reduce inflation, the JMA intended to absorb excess money by monopolizing sales of such items as rice, salt, sugar, matches, dried fish, petroleum and opium, and by introducing a poll tax at an annual rate of six dollars per head.⁹ The poll tax – introduced in July 1942 – proved excessive, and was abolished as early as

February 1943.¹⁰ It has been argued that the JMA stopped collecting the poll tax because of the Double Tenth revolt (the Api uprising), but this interpretation cannot be sustained. The JMA itself admitted that widespread unhappiness among the people, who were suffering both from a shortage of materials and from soaring prices, was exploited by the enemy, and that dissatisfaction with the JMA caused the revolt.¹¹

Plans to Increase Rice Production

Before the war, Sabah produced about 15,000 tons of rice annually and imported a similar quantity. Northern Borneo as a whole produced a total of 50,000 tons and imported 60,000 tons. Under the JMA, rice imports to Northern Borneo were only 23,000 tons in 1942, and 10,000 tons in 1943. (See Tables 8.1, 8.2.) Facing a serious shortage, the JMA began to cut rice

Table 8.2 Rice supply of Sabah

Sabah	1937 (1)	1938 (1)	1941*(2)	1943 (3)	1944 (4)	1957 (5)
<i>Wet rice</i>						
Acreage (000)	43.2	43.8	37.5	46.9		43.1
Production (tons)						21,700
<i>Dry rice</i>						
Acreage (000)	39.2	38.6	33.7	67.0		
Production (tons)						7,200
<i>Total</i>						
Acreage (000)	82.4	82.3	71.2	113.9	111.7	
Production (tons)	14,300	14,200	17,500		17,359†	28,900
Imports (tons)	14,000	16,000				
<i>Northern Borneo</i>						
Acreage (000)				289.7	309.0	
Production (tons)		49,500		68,000+	46,698†	
Import (tons)		57,000		6,079**		

Notes

* Figures for 1941 are for the West Coast State (Seikai-shu) only.

+ Production for 1942 was 50,000 tons.

** Imports from Apr. 1943 to Jan. 1944. Imports planned for 1943 were 10,000 tons.

† According to source (4), padi production in 1944 was 1,556,616 pikuls (1 pikul = 60.3 kg), equivalent to 46,698 tons of rice. The conversion involves multiplying padi production in pikuls by 0.03 to obtain rice production in tons. In 1944, padi production of Sabah was 578,632 pikuls, and the same formula gives rice production of 17,359 tons.

Sources:

- (1) Fu Wu Men, ed. *Nanyang Nianjian* [South Sea Yearbook] (Singapore: Nanyang Siang Pau, 1939).
- (2) Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo* (1943).
- (3) Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo* (1944).
- (4) Daiichi Fukuinkyoku [First Demobilization Bureau], *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo* (Tokyo, 1946).
- (5) *North Borneo* (London: HMSO, 1958).

rations (per capita rations were reduced by 35 per cent in 1942), and drew up a plan to expand local cultivation. In 1943, paddy was grown on 289,741 acres in Northern Borneo, and production increased 'with a great leap' to 68,000 tons. The JMA made plans to improve 60,000 acres of existing paddy fields, and to open another 10,000 acres where paddy would be grown by labourers transferred from other industries.¹²

Writing after the war, the former military administrators responsible for Northern Borneo boasted that by concentrating mainly on land improvement projects and soil preparation they had achieved the expected results, even though rice production deteriorated owing to a shortage of labour, poorer than expected progress in a 'return to the farm movement', and damage caused by insects and animals. 'At the end of 1944, cultivated land for paddy had increased by 33,800 acres over the previous year to reach 342,772 acres (137,000 ha).'¹³ However, the table that this source presented merely indicated increases in the area planted with paddy. Production figures were only given for 1944,¹⁴ and when these figures are compared with those of the earlier Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo,¹⁵ it becomes clear that rice production actually fell from 68,000 tons in 1943 to 46,700 tons in 1944. (See Table 8.2.) The plan to increase rice production thus seems to have failed.

Construction of Airfields and Roads

Before the war, there were three airfields in Sarawak (at Kuching, Miri and Bintulu), and none in Sabah. Between June and July, 1942, in order to facilitate military operations across Dutch Borneo and to strengthen defensive facilities, the JMA decided to construct 12 more airfields in Northern Borneo, including seven in Sabah (at Api, Sandakan, Keningau, Kudat, Tawau, Labuan and Lahad Datu). During the same year, in connection with a plan to construct a trunk road either between Api and Tawau or between Api and Sandakan, the JMA launched a series of projects to improve the roads joining Ranau with Keningau, and Kota Belud with Tenghilan, and construct a new road linking Kudat with Kota Belud. These roads passed through mountainous areas, and required 'the highest ever number of romushas (labourers)'.¹⁶ To meet the demand, the Japanese introduced labour registration in May 1943, and devised a plan to bring in workers from elsewhere, especially Java. Wages were kept low by a JMA regulation issued in October, 1943. In November 1943, that is, immediately after the uprising, the JMA decided to bring 15,000 Javanese labourers to Northern Borneo, possibly considering that it would be difficult to conscript enough labourers locally. The planned number of new workers for 1944 was 10,000 from Northern Borneo and 40,000 from Java.¹⁷

An official Japanese document compiled after the war includes a table indicating that the Japanese brought 17,485 labourers taken from Java to

Table 8.3 Javanese labourers recruited to work in Borneo

	Recruited in Java	Between Java and Syonan	Landed in Syonan	Between Syonan and Borneo	Landed in Borneo	Total
	22,730		17,310		11,269	
<i>Accident</i>						
Absconded	4,720		2,184			6,904
Died	525	175	936	521		2,157
Others			1,700	700		2,400
Subtotal	5,245	175	4,820	1,221		11,461
Shipped off	17,485		12,490			

Source: Daiichi Fukuin Kyoku [First Demobilization Bureau], *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo* [General Outline of North Borneo Military Administration] (Tokyo, 1946), p. 49. In the column headed 'Between Syonan and Borneo', 'others' apparently denotes those who drowned when the ship transporting them was sunk.

Northern Borneo, travelling via Syonan (Singapore). Around half of the 22,730 youths conscripted in Java absconded, died, or were lost en route. (See Table 8.3.) Many of those who managed to reach Northern Borneo died because of harsh working conditions, maltreatment, starvation or sickness. One source says only 1,500 survived the war.¹⁸

Chinese Policy

Repression

Immediately after occupying Sabah, the JMA concentrated on eliminating anti-Japanese elements.¹⁹ Many patriots affiliated to the Jiu Zai Hui (Association for Relief of Calamity) were arrested, and several Chinese organizations were disbanded.²⁰ The JMA intended to replace Chinese businesses, which had 'monopolized commercial activities as well as the commodity-supplying mechanism', with Japanese firms, and called on the Chinese to place their experience and knowledge at the service of the Japanese enterprises.²¹ The Japanese also called for the gradual suppression of the Chinese language, although its use was tolerated on a temporary basis. Only Malay and Japanese were given official status.²² The 'Tochi Yokoh', a set of Essential Guidelines for Government introduced in January 1943, said that local ethnic communities should not be allowed to conceive of themselves as equal to the Japanese, although such groups were to be treated with leniency and dignity. For the Chinese, the guidelines set down the following points:

1. there was to be no contact with the Chiang Kai-shek government, or even with the Japanese-sponsored Wang Qing Wei government;

2. no political organizations were permitted;
3. only low-level economic entities were allowed;
4. political power was to be taken over by the natives;
5. the JMA was to make the Chinese totally loyal to it.²³

In February 1943, an Association for Controlling the Rationing of Materials (Borneo Busshi Haikyu Tosei Kumiai) was formed to handle the distribution of specified civilian goods. In connection with this development, the JMA noted:

The general commercial mechanism of the Chinese has so far been destroyed. Due to the establishment of the Association, Chinese economic activities have clearly been stopped now. Those who lost their business or jobs are being returned to farms or sent to important project sites.²⁴

Within the administration, natives gradually replaced Chinese in higher-level positions. The fundamental principle was to punish or exterminate vicious malcontents, while protecting the rights of law-abiding citizens.²⁵

Forced Donations

On 26 July 1942, the JMA headquarters convened a conference in Kuching that was attended by 30 prominent Chinese representing the Northern Borneo Chinese community. Six persons including Dr. Lau Lai and Cheah Loong Ghee represented Seikaishu (West Coast State), which included Api. The Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Manaki Takanobu, delivered an address that contained the following passage:

During the last five years, the anti-Japanese activities organized by the local overseas Chinese, such as the boycott of Japanese commodities and pressure against the Japanese, have been beyond our tolerance. Further, after the Greater East Asian War started, they became the vanguard of Britain. Therefore, the overseas Chinese are our enemies. They shall be imprisoned like the British, the Dutch and the Americans. All of their properties shall be confiscated. . . . Whether they should be repatriated or their lives be taken, or on the contrary treated as newly accepted subjects, will solely be decided by the Commander in Chief of the JMA. . . . If you repent your previous sins and wholeheartedly obey our orders, the Commander in Chief will assure and protect your lives. If he shows such lenient mercy, how will you repay it?²⁶

Upon hearing this address, the Chinese representatives realized that they had to offer a substantial cash donation. When they approached Manaki with a proposal along these lines, he responded by saying that:

2.5 million Chinese of the Malay Peninsula donated 50 million dollars. If the average amount per head, i.e., 20 dollars, was obtained in Northern Borneo whose Chinese population is 200,000, the total donation should be 4 million dollars. However, when the poorer economy of Northern Borneo is taken into account, the fairest amount should be 3 million dollars (15 dollars per head) or so.²⁷

A donation of three million dollars was thus agreed, with Sabah to provide one million dollars – 600,000 dollars from the West Coast (Seikaishu) and 400,000 dollars from the East Coast (Tokaishu). It is not known how much was ultimately collected, but one can surmise that the burden was extremely heavy from the fact that a poll tax of just six dollars per head introduced at almost the same time proved excessive, and was withdrawn. As also happened in Malaya, a substantial number of people were unable to pay the sums demanded even after disposing of most of their assets, and were forced into bankruptcy.

The following month, in August 1942, the Northern Borneo Oversea Chinese Association was formed. Most of its founders, including the chairman, Ong Tiang Swee (1864–1950) of Kuching, had attended the July conference, and the Association took charge of calculating individual assets, making assessments and collecting donations. The Kinabalu Guerrilla Force regarded the group's leaders, such as Dr Lau Lai, as *Han Jian* (traitors), but the Oversea Chinese Association also harboured anti-Japanese sentiments, and the Japanese arrested both Dr Lau and Cheah Loong Ghee in April 1944 for plotting a revolt. The former was hanged and the latter tortured to death in prison.²⁸

There is a connection between forced donations and the creation of Oversea Chinese Associations both in Malaya and in Northern Borneo. Shinozaki Mamoru, who initiated the Syonan (Singapore) Oversea Chinese Association in February 1942, wrote in his memoirs that Lt. Gen. Manaki, at that time President of the Military Administration of Malaya and also Deputy Chief of the Staff of the 25th Army, was sympathetic to the Chinese and willingly approved his proposal to set up an association to protect the Chinese. According to Shinozaki, Manaki's leniency resulted in his being dismissed and relegated to Northern Borneo as of 1 March 1942, after which the new President, Colonel Watanabe Wataru, formerly the State Secretary (*sohmu buchob*) of the JMA in Malaya, drew up and implemented a plan to collect a huge sum of money from the Chinese in Malaya and Singapore. The character of the Association thus changed.²⁹

In actuality, Manaki did not leave his post in Malaya until 6 April, and he was appointed Chief of the Staff of the North Borneo Garrison (later renamed the 37th Army) four days later.³⁰ When the donation plan for Malaya was being finalized in March, Manaki was officially still in charge. It is true that Watanabe criticized Manaki's idea of using influential Chinese community

leaders as unrealistic, and said it would create opportunities for them to exploit the Japanese.³¹ However, Manaki's transfer was not a demotion, and his speech at the Representatives' Conference in Borneo bore a close resemblance to one given by Watanabe in front of a group of Chinese leaders in Singapore towards the end of March. Both speeches stated that the Chinese must provide a donation to show gratitude for the mercy shown by the Emperor (in the case of Watanabe) or the Army Commander (in the case of Manaki) in sparing their lives.³² Moreover, though the total sum of the donation seemed to be personally and casually decided by Manaki on the spot, there are indications that the entire scheme had been deliberately planned in advance by the army central command. The Japanese army knew that the amount of currency (Straits Dollars) circulating in Malaya immediately before the outbreak of the war was 220 million dollars.³³ A donation of \$50 million amounted to 22.3 per cent of this figure. In Northern Borneo the Japanese army estimated that the amount of currency in circulation was 13 million dollars, and three million dollars was 23.1 per cent of this amount. It is difficult to suppose that these figures coincided simply by chance.³⁴

Conscription of Chinese youths

Most Malaysian accounts trace the double tenth uprising to a Japanese plan to conscript young Chinese men into military service.³⁵ According to an ex-comrade of Albert Kwok, one of their members working with the Kempeitai as an interpreter brought information on 1 October 1943 that 2,000 Chinese youths of Northern Borneo were to be conscripted in November and sent to the battlefield.³⁶ Another source says Kwok learned that the Japanese intended to seize a large number of Chinese girls to become comfort women.³⁷ In any case, Kwok advanced the date of the uprising, which took place earlier than originally planned.

There is no direct confirmation of the conscription plan in Japanese documents. However, the following details may be relevant. In September 1943, the Nampogun (Southern Expeditionary Army) ordered each JMA under its jurisdiction to form a Native Army. In Northern Borneo, 1,300 natives, mainly Dayaks of Sarawak, were conscripted to establish an army for maintaining peace and guarding against enemy agents, but the Chinese, as non-natives, were excluded from this exercise.³⁸ According to a senior staff officer, Imaoka Yutaka, the Kyodo Butai (homeland corps) was formed on 1 October 1943;³⁹ no other source makes any reference to it.

Another development had to do with the recruitment of forced labour. Between April and July 1943 the JMA carried out a labour survey, and on 1 May 1943 it created a Romuka, or labourers' division. On the 18th of the same month, Labour Management Regulations were introduced.⁴⁰ These measures were a heavy burden for the Chinese, and John Maxwell Hall suggests that the October revolt forced the Japanese to change their plans.

From that date (10 Oct. 1943) the Japanese abandoned all attempts to coerce the Chinese people on the west coast and they did not go on with their plan to draft three thousand men for service with the Japanese army. Instead the Japanese recruited as many others as they could to serve as police and not as soldiers. . . . The Chinese and native girls for the most part remained unmolested, while girls of foreign races from overseas were selected to serve the brothels.⁴¹

However, at least as far as the draft plan is concerned, Japanese documents do not support Hall's explanation.

The rebels: Chinese, natives and the Allied forces

The national salvation movement of the Chinese

In 1913, just two years after the Republican Revolution, a Chinese consulate was established in Api, remaining there until 1933 when it shifted to Sandakan. When Japanese forces occupied Sabah in January 1942, they closed the office and arrested the consul, Zhuo Huan Lai. He was executed in Kuching just one month before the Japanese surrender. The consulate was re-established in July 1946, but in January 1950, following recognition of the People's Republic of China by the British government, it was closed down.

Owing partly to incessant efforts by the consulate to instil nationalistic sentiment among the overseas Chinese, a vigorous national salvation movement focusing on China developed in Sabah. When Japan invaded the Shan Dong peninsula in 1928, the Chinese in Api, led by a migrant from Shan Dong named Zhang Qian,⁴² organized the Lu An Houyuan Hui (Lu Incident Backing-up Society, Lu being an alternative name for Shan Dong province), and used this body to carry out various patriotic activities. When Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, the Jiu Zai Hui (see above) was formed under the chairmanship of Li (Lee) Tet Phui, the highest ranking Chinese officer in the North Borneo Volunteer Force set up by Britain. The Jiu Zai Hui put out a newspaper, and though it ceased publication for a time the paper reappeared in 1937, after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war.⁴³ When the Southeast Asia Federation of China Relief Funds (SEAF-CRF) held its inaugural general assembly in Singapore on 10 October 1938, two representatives from Sabah attended. In Sabah, affiliated committees of the SEAF-CRF were organized in Api, Sandakan and Labuan.⁴⁴ In 1939, 31 youths from Api (together with more than 40 Chinese youths from Sibu, Sarawak) returned to their 'home country' to participate in the anti-Japanese war. Many of them died in battle.⁴⁵

Albert Kwok was originally from Kuching, in Sarawak, but during the late 1930s he was living in China, where he participated in the anti-Japanese

national salvation movement and joined the Kuomintang.⁴⁶ He returned to Borneo in May 1941, and set up a medical practice in Api. Soon after his arrival, Kwok began contacting Chinese anti-Japanese leaders, and one source credits him with organizing the Kandi Chujian Lizhi Tuan (Anti-Enemy Troop for Encouraging Eradication of Traitors) early in 1942 to prepare for an uprising.⁴⁷ According to another source, leading Chinese secretly organized an Overseas Chinese Defence Association, which supported recruitment of the guerrilla force that became the KGF, and helped Kwok collect money.⁴⁸ One of his former comrades, Chia Yik Teck, says that Kwok organized the Jiu Hua Hui with six other youths, including Chia himself, on 6 June 1942. The Jiu Hua Hui was renamed the Kinabalu Guerrilla Force in the middle of December 1942.⁴⁹ It is not really clear which Chinese name – Jiu Zai Hui, Kandi Chujian Lizhi Tuan or Jiu Hua Hui – can be identified with the Overseas Chinese Defence Association. Judging from the fact that both the Overseas Chinese Defence Association and the Jiu Zai Hui were organized by the senior community leaders, Jiu Zai Hui seems most likely.

The overseas Chinese made another important contribution to the national salvation movement by raising funds for the Chinese government. Between July 1937 and June 1939, the Chinese in British Borneo paid a monthly subscription of 0.76 Yuan per head for this purpose. In Southeast Asia this level of giving was exceeded only by the Philippine Chinese, who contributed 1.16 Yuan per head. The third largest sum came from Burma, where the Chinese donated 0.51 Yuan per head.⁵⁰

This sketch of the anti-Japanese national salvation movement indicates that the identification of the Borneo Chinese with China was deep-rooted and resilient. These sentiments culminated in the Api revolt, which was linked to China in a number of ways:

1. The KGF uprising commemorated China's National Day (10 October, the tenth day of the 10th month, or the Double Tenth). Although the urgent news of imminent conscription hastened the original plan, the rebellion had been planned for 10 October 1944, and Albert Kwok stressed the significance of this date.⁵¹
2. When the KGF briefly conquered Api, the Chinese in the town celebrated by hoisting the Chinese national flag and crying out 'Long live China'.⁵²
3. The men who trained the KGF, Tan Kim Hing (a Hokkien later appointed deputy commander), and Chong Soon Leong (a Hakka), had gained military experience in China. Tan had served as a section commander of the 19th Route Army, and Chong was a graduate of the Whampoa Military School of Guangdong. A temporary trainer, Liau Chung Kiong (another Hakka) had also been attached to the nationalist army, too.⁵³

4. The spirit of the one hundred KGF members from Menggatal, most of whom were Hakkas, was strengthened by encouraging them to believe that the commander, Albert Kwok, had been specially dispatched by the Chinese government.⁵⁴
5. In their hide-out, Albert Kwok and his men celebrated the anniversary of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's birthday on 12th November, 1943, by hoisting the national flag and singing the national anthem.⁵⁵
6. Even in the early post-war period, when Chinese books published in Sabah or in Singapore spoke of 'our country' or 'the home country', or mentioned the 'national' flag or 'national' anthem, the reference was to China.⁵⁶

In short, the most crucial source of inspiration leading Chinese youths to rise up against Japan was Chinese nationalism.

The Allied forces

Two elements of the Allied military forces were involved in the uprising. One was the North Borneo Volunteer Force and the other the United States Forces in the Philippines.

According to Hall, the Volunteers' will to resist remained strong during the occupation, and many of them joined the Guerrillas. The initial success of guerrilla forces at Jesselton (Api) was partly a result of their training, conducted by Lt. Li Tet Phui, Sgt. Jules Peter Stephens and other members of the Volunteers who joined in the fight.⁵⁷ Hall does not state how many Volunteers joined the KGF, and Chinese sources rarely give any indication that North Borneo Volunteer Force members might have remained loyal to Britain, apart from a statement that the Union Jack was hoisted together with the Chinese national flag on 10 October 1943 to celebrate the guerrillas' short-lived victory.⁵⁸ The loyalty of the Volunteers was not recognized by the British government either, and Hall laments that although Sabah owes much to the Volunteers, 'Due honour has not been paid to the survivors. . . .'⁵⁹

The US Forces in the Philippines (USFP) were the sole armed resistance movement in the region at the time, and Albert Kwok had to rely on them for firearms. Lim Keng Fatt (1895–1944), a prominent businessman in Api and a leader of the Overseas Chinese Defence Association, had occasionally visited the Sulu Islands in the Southern Philippines on business before the war. Through him, Kwok contacted Imam Marajukin, a US army agent in the Philippines. In April 1943, Marajukin took Kwok to Tawi Tawi and introduced him to the commander of the USFP Sulu Sector, Lieut. Col. Alejandro Suarez. Kwok remained in Sulu until mid-May.⁶⁰ Regarding this trip, Hall merely says that 'Lim and Kwok sought assistance', but Chia Yik Teck recalls that Kwok brought 2,000 dollars and medicine with him to buy

arms. However, as the USFP itself was short of weapons, he could only obtain a small quantity. Suarez asked Kwok to collect donations to cover further purchases, pointing out at the same time that Kwok's followers were no more than an undisciplined crowd, and that arms would be useless to them without some kind of military training. In late June 1943, Kwok again visited Tawi Tawi. He took with him clothing and medical supplies along with \$11,000 that had been collected from the Chinese community – particularly members of the Overseas Chinese Defence Association – on the West Coast of Sabah. He stayed until the end of August and during this period received military training. On 30 August, Kwok was appointed a 3rd Lieutenant, and Suarez gave him a posting as an Intelligence Officer for the west coast of Sabah. When he left Tawi Tawi for Sabah, he was given three pistols and a box of hand grenades. Suarez promised to supply more weapons in due course, and told Kwok to behave prudently. Immediately before the uprising a British Intelligence Officer who was in touch with the east coast of Sabah issued a further warning to Kwok through Lim Keng Fatt that the time for action had not yet come, but circumstances forced Kwok to play his hand at once. The promised arms would arrive on 29 December 1943, ten days after Kwok and his men were arrested.⁶¹

Summarizing the relations between Albert Kwok and the Allied Forces, Hall states that the KGF fought and sacrificed their lives for the Allied cause. This conclusion will be reconsidered later.

Natives and other Local Communities

The Epitaph for the Kinabalu Guerilla Movement Martyrs engraved on the monument in the Petagas Memorial Garden states that 'a patriotic youth named Albert Kwok organized an underground guerilla force to which more than 300 young men from various communities in the State were recruited'. The monument records the names of 323 Chinese (of whom 205 were killed in Api and 118 in Labuan) and 66 non-Chinese martyrs (natives and Indians).

According to Western sources, in addition to Jules P. Stephens and the leaders from the offshore islands mentioned above, several other community leaders such as Musah (a Dusun), Duallis (a Murut), Subedar Dewa Singh (an Indian constable) and Charles Peter (a Eurasian) participated in the revolt from the outset. Musah, a well known rebel against Britain prior to Japanese rule, was subsequently arrested by the JMA and died in prison. Duallis remained active in the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement throughout the Occupation. Charles Peter, a member of the NBVF, was executed on the same day as Kwok.⁶² Dewa Singh, together with more than thirty other Indian constables who failed to support Japan when the revolt took place, was taken to Kuching and enrolled in the Indian National Army.⁶³ A number of Dusun constables who betrayed the JMA were executed.⁶⁴

The way non-Chinese participants in the rebellion are portrayed in local and foreign Chinese-language sources has changed over time. The *North Borneo Yearbook* published in Api in 1952 states that, unlike other natives, Sulus were strongly disposed to be anti-Japanese due to the influence of the US, and for this reason established a close relationship with Lim Keng Fatt.⁶⁵ The *Southseas Yearbook* published in Singapore in 1951 says that some Dusuns, including the penghulu (village head) of Menggatal joined the KGF,⁶⁶ while books on Malayan Chinese history published in Taipei in 1963 and in Hong Kong in 1967 also note that Dusuns – led either by the penghulus or by the *zhishi* (the brave ones) – joined the guerrillas at an early date.⁶⁷ However, these sources do not name any non-Chinese Sabahan leaders in the KGF, and say nothing about the involvement of members of other native communities. Only the number of the victims from these groups appears in these Chinese books. On Gaya Island, '50 to 60 people were killed . . . [while] elsewhere 20 natives and 400 Sulus were killed'.⁶⁸ And, 'More than one hundred KGF members and several hundred Dusuns were confined in the Api prison. Only 13 of them survived the occupation'.⁶⁹ It is impossible to know whether these people were active members of the KGF or merely supported the revolt.

More recent accounts of the uprising have given greater recognition to non-Chinese participants. Liu Zhi Yuan recalled in 1971 that the uprising was received enthusiastically, and that fraternal ethnic communities offered cooperation and support.⁷⁰ And in his reminiscences, published in 1978, Chia Yik Teck not only recorded the names of all the non-Chinese martyrs engraved on the monument, but also referred to Charles Peter as a guerrilla leader and mentioned 20 native members of the KGF in Kota Belud.⁷¹ A book published in 1993 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the revolt states that those attending the meeting of KGF representatives held in Menggatal on 7 October 1943, two days before the uprising, included native leaders from Kota Belud and Membakut.⁷² Thus, while in the early post-war years the Chinese did not fully acknowledge the role played by the other communities, they began to do so later on. This development appears to reflect a shift of orientation from China to Sabah or Malaysia, and the emergence of a new sense of national identity.

Historical implications of the uprising

Hall states in his book that the deaths of thousands of citizens loyal to the Allied cause will not be forgotten, and that the names of Albert Kwok and his men will be held in ever greater veneration with each passing year by the people who enjoy the benefits of the Allied victory for which the rebels sacrificed their lives.⁷³ Hall published his book in 1949, and it reflects a colonial point of view in saying that Kwok's uprising was in support of the imperial country and the Allied cause. Hall bases this contention largely on

the fact that Kwok sought military assistance, especially weapons, from the United States Forces in the Philippines. However, in view of the fact that he had to purchase arms, offering to pay as much as \$13,000 in advance in exchange for weapons, it is difficult to support Hall's interpretation, or to see the USFP as the dominant party. Kwok and Suarez appear to have interacted more or less as equals.

Chinese sources offer a contrasting point of view. Chia Yik Teck writes that Kwok spoke of developing an anti-Japanese 'national salvation movement'.⁷⁴ The *North Borneo Yearbook* for 1952 states that the rebels sacrificed their lives for the glory of their home country (meaning China), while cooperating with the government of the territory of residence.⁷⁵ The 1951 *Southseas Yearbook* characterized their activities as a contribution to the home country (China) as well as distinguished service to their place of residence (Sabah).⁷⁶ A Taiwanese history book published in 1963 describes the rebels as patriots serving China.⁷⁷ The cause for which Kwok and his followers sacrificed their lives clearly fell within the tradition of anti-Japanese movements among the Chinese.

However, the perspective in Chinese sources has since changed. As shown previously, since the 1970s local Chinese-language sources have begun to make reference to native leaders in addition to native members of the KGF, thus expressing an understanding and appreciation of their role in the rebellion. A commemorative book on the uprising, edited and published in 1993 by an *ad hoc* committee made up of prominent Chinese in Kota Kinabalu, states that the rebels fought in order to safeguard the sovereignty of Sabah.⁷⁸ A similar tendency is found in recent mainland Chinese publications. In April 1978 an article on the history of the overseas Chinese appeared in the *People's Daily*. Written by an official responsible for overseas Chinese affairs soon after the government of China revived its overseas Chinese policy, the piece did not refer specifically to the Api revolt but made the general point that when the Sino-Japanese war broke out in 1937, the Chinese overseas formed national salvation organizations and carried out patriotic activities on a large scale. During the Occupation, the article continued, the Chinese had defended their respective countries of residence against the Japanese.⁷⁹ A book on the patriotic movement of the overseas Chinese published in Beijing in 1989 (which oddly placed the Api uprising in the Indonesian rather than the Malaysian section) simply depicts the revolt as anti-Japanese, and does not relate it to Chinese patriotism at all.⁸⁰ The first comprehensive history of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia published in the People's Republic of China, a study that appeared in 1991, offers a similar interpretation.⁸¹ These recent publications reflect China's current policy, which regards the overseas Chinese not as Chinese nationals but as foreigners. Previously, China maintained relations with the overseas Chinese and encouraged them to exhibit patriotic feelings toward China, a policy that antagonized Southeast Asian countries.

A similar emphasis pervades official views of the revolt in Sabah. The epitaph engraved on the monument commemorating Kwok and the other martyrs is headed by the words 'Greater Love Hath no Man than This, That a Man Lay down His Life for His Country'. The monument was originally erected in 1949, but the inscription dates from 1979. It continues:

A monument was erected over the grave and the surrounding was made into a garden in perpetual memory and in honour of their gallantry and selfless sacrifice for their country. . . . An official memorial service is held on the 21st January of each year . . . This monument and the garden were improved in 1979 by the Kota Kinabalu Municipal Council with funds from the State Government.

The Malay version of the epitaph uses the words *tanah air* ('homeland') and *negeri ini* (this state) for 'country', and makes the point that members of all ethnic communities attend the periodic official service that takes place there.

A semi-official modern history of Sabah written by Cecilia Leong and published in 1982 contains this reference to the uprising:

Like the Chinese in Malaya those in Sabah were first to express dissatisfaction with the Japanese. Later in the armed rebellion . . . both the Chinese and indigenous guerrillas took part. . . . Secret meetings were now held among the Chinese, Bajaus and Sulus.⁸²

The book then names ten persons besides Albert Kwok as revolt leaders, namely Lau Lai, Cheah Loong Chee [Ghee], Wong Tze An, Musah, Duallis, Charles Peter, Kong Sze Fui, Subedar Dewa Singh, Jules Stephens and David Liew.⁸³

The Chinese sources quoted previously do not name the first two persons, Lau and Cheah, the leaders of Japan's Oversea Chinese Association executed in 1944, as members of the guerrilla organization, still less as leaders of the group. However, a more important difference is that Cecilia Leong's account, which analyses the uprising fairly and does not favour any single ethnic community, makes no allusion to the Chinese national salvation movement as a source of inspiration for the revolt.

Last of all, a history textbook published in 1992 for use in the national secondary school curriculum states:

Guerrilla resistance was carried out by all major ethnic communities in Sabah. The best-known episode was the Double Tenth uprising carried out by a group which called themselves the Kinabalu Guerrillas. This group was led by Musa, Korom and Albert Kwok. . . . In Sabah, although the population was made up of various ethnic communities, they could in a time of emergency unite forces to oppose an enemy which endangered their safety.⁸⁴

To sum up, the catalyst for the uprising was the sense of Chinese nationalism that flourished after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, and reached a climax when the Chinese were subjected to repression and persecution under the Japanese Military Administration. Economic hardship brought about by the JMA contributed to the uprising. Conditions were also bad for other ethnic communities, and for this reason they supported the Chinese revolt. This collaboration helped nurture a Sabahan identity or Sabah nationalism in the years that followed.

During the early post-war years Chinese accounts concentrated on the Chinese role in the uprising, but later versions show an appreciation of the part played by other ethnic groups. To this extent, historical understanding has become more accurate and objective. However, in correcting this imbalance, present-day historical works tend to overlook the China-oriented patriotism cherished by the Sabah Chinese in general and Chinese KGF members in particular. Since Sabah, before it obtained independence by joining Malaysia in 1963, was ruled by the British North Borneo Company and then by the British Government, it was natural that the Chinese did not and could not develop patriotic feelings for this state, and continued to give their loyalty to China and look to China for support in times of need. This neglect of Chinese patriotism may be based more on the need to separate the past record of the Chinese overseas from China and to create a unified and consolidated state of Sabah than on the desire to relate strictly objective historical facts. In this sense, historical assessments made with the benefit of hindsight are not always more reliable than those recorded closer to an event.

Notes

- 1 Memorandum written by a former senior staff officer, Imaoka Yutaka (henceforth, Imaoka Memorandum). He kindly arranged this for me in 1982.
- 2 John Maxwell Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, Jesselton [Kota Kinabalu], Borneo Literature Bureau, 1962, p. 152; Yu Shu Kun, ed., *Nanyang Nianjian* [South Sea Yearbook], Singapore, Nanyang Siang Pau, 1951, p. 110, section *gui*. Interview with former Japanese army civilian employees on 4 Apr. 1982.
- 3 Yamazaki Aen, *Minami Fujisei wa Itsuwarazu* [The Southern Cross Never Deceives], Tokyo, Hokushindo, 1952, p. 56.
- 4 Mochizuki Masahiko, 'Api Jiken no Shinso—Ko Oho Masuo shi no Shuki' [Truth of the Api Incident: Memoir of the Late Mr. Oho Masuo], *Gunji Shigaku* [Military Historiography], No. 123, Dec. 1995, p. 60.
- 5 Besides the sources mentioned above, this outline mainly depends on the following sources: Epitaph of the Kinabalu Guerilla Movement Martyrs engraved on the monument erected in the Petagas Memorial Garden, Kota Kinabalu, in 1979; Chia Yik Teck (Xie Yu De), *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi* [History of Anti-Enemy Movement of the Kinabalu Guerrilla Force], Tawau, Sabah, The Tawau Daily News, 1978.
- 6 Nada No. 9801 Corps (Northern Borneo Garrison Army), *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo* [General Outline of Northern Borneo Military Administration], 1943, pp. 14–19.

- 7 Nada No. 9801 Corps, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, Taipei, 1944, pp. 101, 102, 156; interview conducted on 28 Jan. 1995 with Kitano Shiryō and Ishibashi Yoshimichi, staff of the Nissan Agricultural and Forestry Manufacturing Co., Ltd., who stayed in Sabah during the occupation period.
- 8 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944, *Ibid.*, p. 164.
- 9 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1943, pp. 43, 47.
- 10 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944, p. 3. A well-known Japanese novelist, Satomura Kinzo (1902–45), who travelled along the Kinabatangan River in 1942, wrote that it was impossible to collect a poll tax of 2.50 dollars per month from each native household, which had an average of five persons and monthly incomes of barely one dollar. Satomura Kinzo, *Kawa no Tami* [People of the River], Tokyo, Yuko Do, 1943; Reprinted, Tokyo, Chuo Koron Sha, 1978, p. 78.
- 11 Stephen R. Evans, *Sabah under the Rising Sun Government*, Singapore, Tropical Press, 1991, p. 47. Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, p. 164; Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944, p. 48.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 142.
- 13 Daiichi Fukuinkyoku [First Demobilization Bureau], *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo* [General Outline of Northern Borneo Military Administration], Tokyo, 1946, pp. 31–4.
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 174. The transport carrying the first batch of workers from Java was sunk by the Allies and several hundred labourers drowned. Kitamoto Tadao, 'Borneo no Kaisoki' [Reminiscence of Borneo] in *Kita Borneo Kai* [Northern Borneo Association], *Borneo*, Vol. 4, Tokyo, 1981, p. 21.
- 18 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, p. 164.
- 19 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944, p. 74.
- 20 Editing Committee of the Overseas Chinese History, *Huaqiao Zhi-Bei Poluo Zhou, Poluonai, Salaoyue* [Overseas Chinese Records – North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak], Taipei, 1963, p. 135. (*Huaqiao Zhi* henceforth.)
- 21 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1943, pp. 14, 15.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 23 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944, pp. 75, 76.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 76.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- 28 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, pp. 10, 46; Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 41, 67, 68, 140–4; Evans, *Sabah under the Rising Sun Government*, p. 65.
- 29 Shinozaki Mamoru, *Singapore Senryo Hiroku* [Occupation of Singapore: A Secret Document], Tokyo, Hara Shobo, 1976, pp. 58–62.
- 30 *Tomi Shudan Shireibu Senji Geppo* [Monthly War Report of the Headquarters of Tomi Corps], End of Apr. 1942; Joho Yoshio, ed., *Gensui Terauchi Hisaichi* [Field-Marshal Terauchi Hisaichi], Tokyo, Fuyo Shobo, 1978, pp. 344–7.
- 31 Watanabe Wataru, 'Daitoa Senso Kaisoroku' [Recollections of the Greater East Asian War], July 1942, unpublished memoir (courtesy of Prof. Akashi Yoji).
- 32 When I pointed out these facts to Shinozaki, he responded in a letter dated 24 June 1987 that 'My assertion that Manaki had had thought of protecting the Chinese was to a great extent derived from my sentiment. In fact it [protection of the Chinese] was my own thought. However, if I had written so, it might have been seen as my self display. My humble way of writing made the readers misbelieve the situation.'

- 33 *The Penang Daily News*, 29 Apr. 1942; see also Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, London, C. Hurst, 1998, pp. 102–3.
- 34 First Demobilization Bureau, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, p. 60. The Japanese military authorities in the Philippines demanded in early March 1942 that the leaders of the local Chinese community there make a large donation to support the Japanese cause. There the figure was placed at 24 million pesos, twice the amount that the Philippine Chinese had remitted to the Chungking government. A Philippine Oversea Chinese Association was formed on June 1 to oversee the process, and it handed over 10 million pesos within a year. Huang Zi Sheng, He Si Bing, *Feilubin Huaquaoshi* [History of Overseas Chinese of the Philippines], Guangzhou, Guangdong, Higher Education Publisher, 1987, pp. 452, 465–7. The *Penang Daily News* also reported on 11 July 1942 that the POCA recently had started a movement to donate 20 million pesos to show whole-hearted support for the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, and that 2 million pesos had been collected by 7 July.
- 35 Yu Shu Kun, *Nanyang Nianjian*, p. 109, section *gui*. This book says the conscribed youths were to be sent to Sumatra as *heibo* (auxiliary soldiers). Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 74, 75.
- 36 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, p. 37.
- 37 Evans, *Sabah under the Rising Sun Government*, p. 52.
- 38 War History Department, Self Defence Agency, Japan, *Nansei Homengun Sakusen, Malai Ran'in no Boei* [Operations of the Southwest Expeditionary Army – Defence of Malaya and Dutch India], Tokyo, Asakumo Shinbunsha, 1976, pp. 167–70.
- 39 Imaoka, Memorandum.
- 40 Nada, *Kita Borneo Gunsei Gaiyo*, 1944.
- 41 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, p. 162.
- 42 Zhang Qian survived imprisonment during the Occupation and remained a prominent Chinese community leader until his death in 1966.
- 43 *Huaqiao Zhi*, pp. 135, 140, 141.
- 44 Tan Kah Kee, *Nanqiao Huiyi Lu* [Recollection of a Southsea Chinese], Fuzhou, China, Alumni of Jimci School, Fuzhou, 1950, pp. 58, 59.
- 45 Xie Ke Dian, ed., *Beipo Nianjian* [North Borneo Yearbook], Jesselton (Kota Kinabalu), Overseas Chinese Daily News, 1952, p. 220.
- 46 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, pp. 1, 5.
- 47 Xie Ke Dian, *Beipo Nianjian*, pp. 221, 222. The name was later changed to Jiu Hua Hui [Association for Relieving China].
- 48 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 52, 60.
- 49 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, pp. 11, 17.
- 50 Stephen Leong, 'Sources, Agencies and Manifestations of Overseas Chinese Nationalism in Malaya 1937–1941', Ph.D. diss, University of California, 1976; Haga Yu, *Toa Kyoeiken to Nanyo Kakyo* [East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and South Sea Chinese], Tokyo, Toko Shoin, 1941.
- 51 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, p. 38; Li Rui Qing, ed., *Shenshan Yinglie Zhi* [The Heroes of Kinabalu], Kota Kinabalu, Privately published, 1993, p. 32.
- 52 Yu Shu Kun, *Nanyang Nianjian*, p. 109, section *gui*; Xie Ke Dian, *Beipo Nianjian*, p. 222; Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, p. 45.
- 53 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, pp. 16, 33.
- 54 Li, *Shenshan Yinglie Zhi*, pp. 38, 39.
- 55 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, p. 104.
- 56 Xie Ke Dian, *Beipo Nianjian*; Yu Shu Kung, *Nanyang Nianjian*.

- 57 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 13, 15. Sgt. Jules Peter Stephens, an Australian, was the father of a former Chief Minister of Sabah, the late Tun Fuad Stephens. Fuad's mother was a Kadazan.
- 58 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, p. 47.
- 59 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, p. 14.
- 60 Li Rui Qing, *Shenshan Yinglie Zhi*, pp. 18–20.; Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 51–61.
- 61 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 57, 63, 73–4, 100, 113; Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, pp. 26–7, 30.
- 62 K.G. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Sabah 1881–1963*, Singapore, University of Malaya Press, 1965, pp. 208, 219; K.G. Tregonning, *North Borneo*, London, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1960, p. 89. Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 69, 70, 115, 116.
- 63 Yamada Masaharu, *Borneo Senki - Sento Hen* (Record of Borneo War - Battle Version), Private publication, 1969, p. 18; personal communication from Yamada dated 15 Jan. 1982.
- 64 Yamazaki, *Minami Jujisei wa Itsuwarazu*, p. 109.
- 65 Xie Ke Dian, *Beipo Nianjian*, p. 222.
- 66 Yu Shu Kun, *Nanyang Nianjian*, p. 109, section *gui*.
- 67 Huang Yao, ed., *Xingma Huaren Zhi* [Records of Overseas Chinese of Singapore and Malaysia], Hong Kong, Mingjian Chuban She, 1967, p. 265; *Huaqiao Zhi*, p. 136.
- 68 Xie Ke Dian, *Beipo Nianjian*, p. 223.
- 69 Yu Shu Kun, *Nanyang Nianjian*, p. 110, section *gui*.
- 70 Liu Zhi Yuan, 'Yabi Shenshan Kangri Youjidui Beizhuangde Huiyi' [Tragic Memory of the Kinabalu Anti-Japanese Guerrillas of Api], in Shu Yun Tsiao, ed., *Malayan Chinese Resistance to Japan 1937–1945 - Selected Source Materials*, Singapore, Cultural and Historical Publishing House, 1984, pp. 718, 719. Liu Zhi Yuan is the pinyin version of the writer's name.
- 71 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, pp. 46, 74, 98–101.
- 72 Li Rui Qing, *Shenshan Yinglie Zhi*, p. 39.
- 73 Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas*, pp. 171, 172.
- 74 Chia, *Shenshan Youji Dui Kangdi Shi*, preface.
- 75 Xie Ke Dian, *Beipo Nianjian*, p. 223.
- 76 Yu Shu Kun, *Nanyang Nianjian*, pp. 38–40, section *gui*.
- 77 *Huaqiao Zhi*, p. 135.
- 78 Li Rui Qing, *Shenshan Yinglie Zhi*, p. 48.
- 79 Lian Guan, 'Huaqiao de Lishi ji Guangrong Chuantong' [History of Overseas Chinese and their Glorious Tradition], *The People's Daily*, 13 Apr. 1978.
- 80 Ren Gui Xiang, *Huaqiao Di Er Ci Aiguo Gaochao* [The Second High Tide of the Overseas Chinese Patriotism], Beijing, Chinese Communist Party Historical Materials Publication Company, 1989, p. 312.
- 81 Lin Yuan Hui and Zhang Ying Long, *Xinjiapo Malaxia Huaqiao Shi* [Overseas Chinese History of Singapore and Malaysia], Guangzhou, Guangdong Higher Education Publishing Co., 1991, pp. 442–4.
- 82 Cecilia Leong, *Sabah—The First 100 Years*, Kuala Lumpur, Percetakan Nan Yang Muda, 1982, pp. 173, 174.
- 83 *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 175.
- 84 Sabihah Osman, Muzafar Tate and Ishak Ibrahim, *Karikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah, Sejarah, Tingkatan 3*, Kuala Lumpur, Zizi Press, 1992, pp. 13–14.

Chapter Nine

The Japanese Occupation and the Peoples of Sarawak

Ooi Keat Gin

Japanese Imperial forces occupied Sarawak from mid-December 1941 to September 1945. During this period, the local population faced shortages of various necessities, but on the whole experienced fewer difficulties than people in neighbouring countries. Policies towards the indigenous peoples were favourable, and the Japanese allowed Malays and Ibans a greater degree of autonomous authority and official status than would have been possible before the war. They regarded the Chinese with greater suspicion, but this community, too, suffered less than Chinese populations in many other parts of the region. This chapter outlines Japanese policies relating to the peoples of Sarawak, and evaluates their consequences. In general it concludes that the Occupation had little direct impact on Sarawak's indigenous communities, but produced strains in inter-ethnic relations that carried over into the state's post-war politics.

The indigenous peoples and the Brookes

In 1933 the Brooke government defined indigenous peoples as subjects of His Highness the Rajah 'of any race which is now considered to be indigenous to the State of Sarawak', and prepared a list of peoples that met this criterion:

Bukitans, Bisayahs, Dusuns, Dayaks (Sea), Dayaks (Land), Kadayans, Kayans, Kenyahs (including Sabups and Sipengs), Kajangs (including Sekapans, Kejamans, Lahanans, Punans, Tanjongs and Kanowits), Lugats, Lisums, Malays, Melanos, Muruts, Penans, Sians, Tagals, Tabus, [and] Ukits. And any admixture of the above with each other.¹

Indigenous peoples accounted for about three-quarters of the country's total population. Table 9.1 shows the population figures in 1939 and 1947, while Table 9.2 provides data on minor native communities as of 1947.

Table 9.1 Population of Sarawak in 1939 and 1947

Community	1939	%	1947	%
Iban (Sea Dayak)	167,700	34.2	190,326	34.8
Chinese	123,626	25.2	145,158	26.6
Malay	92,709	18.9	97,469	17.9
Land Dayak	36,963	7.5	42,195	7.7
Melanau	36,772	7.5	35,560	6.5
Other indigenous	27,532	5.6	29,867	5.5
Others	4,579	0.9	5,119	0.9
European	704	0.2	691	0.1
Total	490,585	100.0	546,385	100.0

Table 9.2 Population of minor indigenous groups in 1947

Kayan	6,183
Kenyah	5,507
Kedayan	5,334
Murut	3,290
Bisayah	2,058
Punan and others	5,883
Total	29,867

Source: L. W. Jones, *Sarawak: Report on the Census of Population taken on 15th June 1960*, Kuching, Government Printing Office, 1962, pp. 55, 59.

In contrast with the situation in other European colonial territories, under the Brooke administration the term 'Native', referring to Sarawak's indigenous inhabitants, did not carry a derogatory meaning. On the contrary, the status of native in Brooke Sarawak carried certain privileges denied to non-native groups, such as the Chinese. The Brookes enacted legislation to shield native peoples from exploitation by both Chinese and Europeans, especially in matters relating to the acquisition and utilization of land, and even exempted certain native groups in the interior from prosecution for debts.²

In the early nineteenth century, Sarawak, then limited to the Samarahan and Sarawak river basins, was a vassal domain of the Brunei sultanate governed by local Malay chiefs known as *Datus*. When antimony was discovered in the area during the 1820s and a market established in the new port of Singapore, a Brunei noble, the Pangeran Mahkota, was assigned to oversee the production of this commodity. Dissatisfaction with his rule prompted the Malays and Land Dayaks to launch an anti-Brunei revolt (1836–40), and an English adventurer named James Brooke suppressed the rebellion on behalf of the Sultan, receiving the fiefdom of Sarawak and the title of Rajah as his reward. Setting up his capital in the town of Kuching,

James Brooke recruited members of the Malay ruling elite to serve as Native Officers in the civil service, where they functioned as assistants and advisers to European Residents and District Officers. He restored the Sarawak Malay *Datus* – the *Patinggi*, the *Bandar* and the *Temenggong* – to their former political functions and brought them into his government as native advisers, consulting them on an informal basis. Malays also staffed the police force as constables under European officers and served as teachers in government-run Malay schools. As members of the Brooke bureaucracy and police force, the Malays were a sizeable community in the urban areas.

The Sea Dayaks or Ibans were the largest native group, and lived primarily in rural areas, particularly in the Lupar, Saribas and Rejang river systems, where many practiced shifting cultivation. Ibans provided the greater part of the manpower for the Sarawak Rangers, the Brooke government's regular army, and small numbers also joined the police force. Melanau settlements dotted the low-lying coastal plain, especially in the districts of Sarikei, Sibu, Bintulu, Binatang and Mukah, and they were involved in the cultivation and processing of sago, as well as the timber and fishing industries. The remaining native communities lived scattered across Sarawak, and were primarily engaged in small-scale agriculture.

By the 1930s the communal warfare that characterized earlier periods of Brooke rule had largely ceased, and inter-ethnic relations in Brooke Sarawak were generally amicable.³ Malay-Iban ties were stable and friendly, and acknowledgement of the Malays as agents of the Brooke government by Ibans and other indigenous groups facilitated the administration of the country. The long and peaceful association of native peoples with the immigrant Chinese, the largest non-indigenous group, fostered a sense of interdependence. The main interaction between the Chinese and the local population was in the economic realm, where mutual advantage shaped the relationship of Chinese merchants on the one side and native producers of commodities and consumers of manufactured goods on the other.⁴

Politically the native inhabitants seemed inert. The Malays, Ibans and other native groups appeared content to support the Brooke Raj.⁵ Surprisingly, the Chinese community too, as a whole, showed little interest in politics. Although there were adherents of the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, and the Chinese Communist Party among Sarawak's Chinese, their involvement in political activities was slight compared to their compatriots in the Straits Settlements. The Singapore-based China Distress Relief Fund had branches in Kuching and Sibu, but the Chinese of Sarawak evinced little anti-Japanese feeling, and their support for the campaign to boycott Japanese goods was lukewarm at best.⁶ When the Japanese invasion forces arrived on Sarawak soil, they found a country and people content with earning a livelihood from the land, largely oblivious to events elsewhere in the region, and generally satisfied with the governance of the White Rajah.

The Japanese invasion and occupation

Under the terms of an 1888 Treaty, Britain handled Sarawak's defences and foreign relations, while the Brooke rajahs exercised full control of all internal administration. With its oilfields and an airfield near Kuching, Sarawak had sufficient strategic value to warrant protection against an attack by enemy forces, but Britain did not have adequate military resources to mount an effective defence. Denial schemes were in place to render the oil installations at Miri and Lutong unusable to an enemy, while the Bukit Stabar airfield to the south of Kuching was to be held as long as possible and then destroyed.⁷ The British could only deploy a single Indian infantry battalion to defend the territory, and its primary task was to carry out the scorched earth policy.⁸ The 2nd/15th Punjab Regiment arrived in April 1941, and the commander, Lt. Col. C. M. Lane, placed a demolition squad of Royal Engineers and an infantry company with a six-inch battery at Miri to execute the oilfield denial scheme, and deployed the remainder of the force to defend the Kuching landing ground. The combined strength of SARFOR (Sarawak Forces), consisting of the 2nd/15th Punjab together with local Sarawak and Brunei forces, was 2,565 officers and other ranks.⁹

The Japanese invasion force arrived off Tanjong Baram (Baram Point) on 15 December 1941, and ten days later, on Christmas eve, Kuching surrendered.¹⁰ For three years and eight months Sarawak was part of the Imperial Japanese empire, and along with Brunei and the former British North Borneo formed a single administrative unit under the Japanese 37th Army, which had its headquarters at Kuching.¹¹ The Japanese subdivided Sarawak into three provinces – Kuching-shu, Sibu-shu and Miri-shu – each under a Japanese Provincial Governor.¹² Beyond these changes the military government (Gunseibu) retained pre-war administrative structures, with principal positions reserved for Japanese. Administration in most of the outlying districts and the interior was left in the hands of native police personnel and village headmen, subject to Japanese supervision.¹³ A number of Japanese-sponsored organizations supplemented the administrative machinery, and at the same time fulfilled certain political and military objectives. The Japanese contented themselves with controlling the coastal regions and settlements on the major rivers, and apart from occasional patrols left the interior districts alone.

Political and Military Policies toward Indigenous Peoples

The Malays accepted the Japanese calmly and without visible resentment. The Malay elite, the *datu* class, either worked willingly (in some cases enthusiastically) for the Japanese, or withdrew from public life, as in the case of Datu Patinggi Abang Haji Abdillah who claimed his advanced age precluded further involvement in government affairs. Although some of the

educated Iban elite grasped the opportunity offered by the Japanese to move into positions of authority, the community as a whole resented the Japanese intruders. The Melanaus and the Land Dayaks neither resisted nor cooperated with the Japanese. The natives of the interior, such as the Kayans, Kenyahs, Kelabits, Lun Bawang and Muruts, were hostile to the invaders and assisted the Allies when the opportunity presented itself.

The Japanese military authorities claimed their relations with the indigenous population were 'uniformly good' until the latter part of 1944, when 'food shortages, bombing[s], news of the tide turning against Japan, and agitation on the part of Allied agents, began to be felt and the population gradually became more and more anti-Japanese'.¹⁴ It is certainly true that as living conditions worsened and shortages of food, clothing and other daily necessities became acute, anti-Japanese feelings developed. The population was particularly unhappy about compulsory labour, forced deliveries of rice and other foodstuffs, and the confiscation of firearms.

The Malay community experienced fewer hardships than other indigenous groups. As one study suggests, 'The Malays did not prosper during the [Japanese] Occupation but neither did they find it as difficult to survive . . . the Malay standard of living was already, for the great majority, at little better than subsistence level', and their reliance on fishing and agriculture left the Malays 'better prepared than the Chinese to survive during a period of economic hardship'.¹⁵ Furthermore, because most Malay police personnel and civil servants remained at their posts under the Japanese military government and drew salaries and rations, their families did not suffer great privations.

In accordance with a general policy to cultivate Islamic peoples in the Southern region, the Japanese made sporadic attempts to win Muslim support, for example, by giving Malay families rice free of charge. Apart from a few individuals who enthusiastically promoted the Japanese cause and worked hand in glove with the new regime, most Muslims seem to have been indifferent to Japanese rhetoric and propaganda. The general concern of the community was to survive the war. When Japanese brutality increased in the latter part of the occupation, and the number of incidents of assault on Malay women began to rise, the Malays became more resentful of the Japanese. Nevertheless, no active Malay anti-Japanese opposition developed.¹⁶

The Ibans, on the other hand, disliked the Japanese, and engaged in open armed clashes with Japanese forces, particularly in the final year of the Occupation. Iban alienation stemmed from a series of Japanese orders affecting the community; an order confiscating shotguns particularly outraged the Ibans,¹⁷ but regulations calling for compulsory sale of surplus rice, and the recruitment of adult males to provide forced labour for military installations, also generated hostility, and did harsh punishments for petty crimes. The Ibans got their revenge by assisting the Australian Services

Reconnaissance Department (SRD), the Allied advance parties, during their re-occupation campaign in 1945.¹⁸

Japanese commanders had instructions to 'use native princes as the instruments of military government, according to their former status and ability', and to restrict the political power of local Chinese.¹⁹ The native elite filled positions of authority vacated by their former European masters, subject to Japanese supervision. One example of this approach was the creation of *Ken Sanjikai*, or Prefectural Advisory District Councils, in accordance with a military decree issued on 1 October 1943.²⁰ Each council consisted of five to ten Malay and Iban community leaders individually appointed by the Governor of the Province, acting upon the recommendation of the Japanese District Chief. In Kuching, the *ken sanji* (council members) were the Datu Amar Abang Haji Suleiman, the Datu Pahlawan Abang Haji Mustapha, Haji Abdul Rahman – a noted intellectual and religious scholar, and Native Officers Abang Openg and Tuanku Bujang. Iban appointees were Charles Mason and Philip Jitam, regarded as unofficial leaders of the Iban community in Kuching because they were the most senior Iban government employees in the district.²¹ In Sibul, Jugah anak Barieng was elevated to the status of a *ken sanji* owing to his position as a Penghulu.²²

The councillors held bi-annual meetings under the chairmanship of the District Chief, but it is unclear to what extent the *Ken Sanjikai* actually advised the military authorities. In Kuching, members were instructed 'to assist with the various economic projects which had been planned, including a shipyard to make wooden hulls from local timber and a factory to extract oil from rubber latex'.²³ Jugah was ambivalent about his status as a *ken sanji*, although there is no doubt that he was much feared by the people, as the following recollection by a contemporary indicates:

I don't know what Jugah did as a sanji, but just as people were fearful of the Japanese, it carried over to him. [In those days] if we did something wrong, and some one like Jugah found out about it, he couldn't punish us, but they [the Japanese] could. So everyone was afraid of him. If people talked with him, they watched what they said.²⁴

The *ken sanji*, being community leaders, were expected to elicit popular support for the Japanese cause by giving talks during public gatherings and at official functions. Both Abang Haji Mustapha and Jugah spoke at Japanese-organized public functions.²⁵ Jugah's wit and clever use of words made his speeches non-committal with respect to both the Japanese and the Allied cause.

He was so cunning, and said, 'We did not have this kind of entertainment before the Japanese.' He made his speech in such a

way that you couldn't say he was anti-Japanese or anti-British. He was getting his digs in, but in a very clever way. He said, 'If you had come to a show like this before the Japanese came, you would have had to pay.'²⁶

A clearer manifestation of the use of indigenous leaders as instruments of military government was the practice of placing members of the educated Iban elite in positions of authority in the largely Iban districts of the Lupar and Saribas river systems, the Second Division in Brooke administrative terms.²⁷ As early as January 1942, the Japanese authorities appointed Eliab Bay as Liaison Officer for the Second Division,²⁸ in effect making him the Resident, a position reserved exclusively for European officers under the Brooke regime. Bay recommended other Ibans for positions of authority, including district officers (*guncho*), who were in large measure responsible to him. The mission-educated Bay, who was a court writer at Simanggang prior to the occupation, was selected by the Japanese owing to his position as the most senior Iban clerk of the Second Division.²⁹ There were few Japanese officers in the outstations, and Malay and Iban civil and police officials administered whole districts with little oversight or interference from the Japanese.³⁰ 'An outcome of all this', one scholar has commented, 'was that the educated Ibans employed by the Japanese realized that they were fully capable of taking a responsible part in the administration of the country.'³¹

By using Bay and other educated Ibans in the day-to-day administration of the Second Division, the Japanese military authorities overcame a shortage of Japanese personnel, particularly civil administrators, which resulted in large part from the sinking of four transport ships carrying Japanese civil affairs staff off Santubong by Dutch aircraft during the invasion of Kuching.³² The arrangement also reduced the difficulties associated with direct rule by a foreign regime, for the Iban people of the Second Division saw Bay and his compatriots as comparable to the 'Native Officers' who held office under the Brookes, except that they wielded more power in the absence of the 'White Tuan'.

In other parts of the country the Japanese also retained most Malay and Iban civil servants and police personnel in their positions. Several Ibans who joined the police force prior to the invasion gained rapid promotion to senior positions,³³ and a Malay who was a sub-inspector before the war became commander of the Police force at Kuching.³⁴ The situation in Lawas and Trusan is typical of other districts as well.

In government . . . the Lawas-Trusan area received no Japanese replacements for officials; instead the administrative staff in Lawas town remained the same, consisting of Acting D[istrict] O[fficer] Adenan and assisted by N[ative] O[fficer] Bugar. The Chief Clerk,

Mr. Hugo Low, and five other clerks. [sic] To the local police only one or two new men were added, in each case the newcomer was a Malay from Brunei. All the local officials were responsible to their [Japanese] superior officers stationed in Brunei which had become the Japanese administrative centre for the Brunei Bay territory.³⁵

The Japanese also launched a drive for new recruits, concentrating on the Malays and Ibans.³⁶

The Japanese authorities drew on the indigenous population to provide labour for military projects, conscripting native workmen to build or repair military installations. The absence of adult males from the longhouse for long periods 'had adverse consequences for agricultural production . . . particularly if the workers were conscripted at a critical stage of the farming cycle'.³⁷ At Bintulu, Ibans from the surrounding areas were 'drafted to dig and transport gravel, mix concrete, and perform other heavy tasks' to construct an airfield. Each longhouse in the area had to send all adult males to work for periods variously reported as two weeks or one month. Supplies were meagre, and workers had to bring their own food; they received payment in the form of kerosene and sugar.³⁸ Besides the military value of such work, it has also been suggested that 'the Japanese intention was to degrade the natives to coolie status, unless the Kyodotai and other organizations were successful in making them more or less willing tools'.³⁹

The *Kyodotai*, the North Borneo Volunteer Corps, was a Japanese-sponsored military force created on 10 October 1943. It was open to 'all native inhabitants of British Borneo', namely, 'Dusuns, Malays, Bajans [Bajaus], Sea Dyaks, Land Dyaks and Maruts [Muruts]'.⁴⁰ The aim of the organization was:

to train future village chiefs to accept the Japanese occupation, absorb Japanese ideals and ideas and work in harmony with the Japanese. After a two year course, trainees were to be returned to their kampongs [villages] as headmen, when they would be in a position to inculcate what they themselves had learned on their villagers.⁴¹

The Kyodotai only accepted trainees who were 'sufficiently intelligent to be able to absorb the doctrines'. The Japanese Governor of each province reviewed applications and recommended acceptance or rejection. Overall, 830 men were recruited: 350 for Kuching Company, 300 for Sibu Company, and 180 for Miri Company. The two-year training programme was divided into two parts, a six-month basic training course covering military subjects ('drill, use of arms, aircraft recognition, infantry tactics and defence position training') and the 'three r's', followed by 'specialist training in farming, building, sanitation, hygiene, field works and engineering and . . . communication'.⁴² Throughout the two-year period, trainees were to

receive instruction in the Japanese language, Japanese imperial history and geography. In practice, recruits did not complete the ambitious training programme:

after basic training all trainees were entirely [us]ed to assist various Japanese undertakings such as the building of factories and camps, the [d]riv[ing] and maintaining of Japanese vehicles and in cultivating land to produce crops designed to fill the belly of the Japanese soldiery.⁴³

The Kyodotai was disbanded in August 1945, having failed to achieve its objectives. According to Captain Ryuji Ikeno, commander of the Miri Company, its lack of success was due to the following reasons.

- (a) The natives dislike of the Japanese.
- (b) The unpleasant character of some of the Japanese soldiers in charge of training.
- (c) Language difficulties, an ever-present problem for both sides.
- (d) The excessively short period allowed for training.
- (e) The unfavourable situation of [the] Japanese in the war at the end of 1944, which caused native soldiers to lose interest in the course and they ran away whenever they could.⁴⁴

Gradually, as air raids disrupted communications and produced food shortages, the duties of the staff and students became more and more arduous; education was neglected and discipline languished.⁴⁵

Another Japanese-sponsored organization that used natives for military purposes, the *jikeidan*, was a kind of vigilante corps or auxiliary police.⁴⁶ In Sarawak the system worked as follows:

A leader is appointed for every group of ten households and a superior for every group of 30 households, 100 households, and so on. Householders are detailed to patrol the streets at night, to enforce blackout and other forms of A.R.P. [Air Raid Precaution] and to question strangers or suspects.⁴⁷

In upriver districts the longhouse constituted the *jikeidan* unit, with the *tuai rumah* (headman) as its leader. In essence the *jikeidan* was an informal spy network, which the Japanese military intelligence hoped to use to counter subversive activity. The results were disappointing. Longhouses in the interior districts, instead of feeding information to Japanese intelligence, provided valuable assistance and logistical support to SRD operations. For instance, despite the threat of severe punishment, longhouses in the Limbang provided shelter and protection to downed American airmen in late 1944, and in some cases paid a heavy price for their defiance.⁴⁸

The Sarawak Chinese under Japanese Rule

The Chinese in Sarawak were generally not politically active, and the Japanese authorities did not resort to strong measures to clamp down on suspected subversive movements. There were no mass executions of the sort that took place in neighbouring North Borneo and in Pontianak to the south, or in Singapore and Malaya. In the wake of the Chinese-led anti-Japanese revolt that broke out on 10 October 1943 in North Borneo, the Japanese became more vigilant, but even after the uprising, there were no witch-hunts among the Chinese community in Sarawak.

The majority of Sarawak Chinese tried to avoid contact with the occupying forces, and a considerable number of Chinese from the urban areas and the main river ports moved to less accessible areas along the coast or in the interior. It has been estimated that 'at least 30 per cent and possibly as many as 50 or 60 per cent of the Chinese' living in Kuching left the city.⁴⁹ In this way men avoided labour conscription, and the women lessened their chances of being raped or forced into prostitution. Many young Chinese women were hastily married off to avoid being sent to brothels.⁵⁰ This urban-rural migration of the Chinese was also a practical move enabling them to engage in subsistence farming at a time when food shortages were developing in the towns, which depended on imports.⁵¹

Donations were collected from the Chinese community as a form of *sook ching* (cleansing or purification through deeds) for their support of China in the war against Japan. The Oversea Chinese Association was assigned the task of collecting approximately \$2 million, allocated as follows: \$900,000 for Kuching, \$700,000 for Sibul, \$300,000 for Miri.⁵²

The Chinese had dominated trade and commerce prior to the Occupation, and wartime conditions adversely affected these activities. Apart from the highly resented prosperity of opportunistic people involved in smuggling and the black market, the majority of the Chinese suffered setbacks during the occupation. Many middle-class urban Chinese had to live entirely off their savings, and were in dire straits when the war ended. To control food and other commodities, the Japanese commandeered trading shops, merged businesses, and appointed certain merchants to carry out work as contract companies. In Lawas town, for example, the government used as its agent a local Chinese consortium known as the Soon Teck Kongsi, a Japanese creation set up early in 1942 when two major Chinese shops in the bazaar, Guan Soon and Hoon Teck, were instructed to combine. This consortium 'only distributed Japanese goods and collected produce brought in by farmers in the [Lawas] District'.⁵³ The strong demand for food benefited Chinese farmers, who were able to demand high prices for their produce. These farmers disposed of their agricultural produce (vegetables, poultry, rice) through Chinese businessmen in the towns who willingly cooperated with the Japanese, and achieved a degree of

prosperity at the expense of their fellow countrymen.⁵⁴ On balance, Chinese living in rural areas fared better than their urban counterparts. In the remote districts of Limbang and Lawas, for instance, the Chinese suffered little from food shortages and generally obtained adequate provisions from their own farms, even after making forced deliveries to the Japanese military.⁵⁵

The Chinese, as a whole, were politically indifferent prior to the Japanese invasion. But witnessing the collapse of the Raj, the indelible image of the procession of European Brooke officers being marched into internment camps, and the ignominious flight of British forces across the border into Dutch Borneo, heightened nationalistic feelings within the Chinese community. What is more, the sight of Malay and Iban police personnel and Native Officers who remained at their posts receiving promotions and supplies of food and cloth, and the spectacle of their own community leaders gaining benefits by cooperating with the enemy, caused indignation among the Chinese. This resentment did not manifest itself in overt anti-Japanese activities during the occupation, but became a major factor in post-war politics. Lobbying by local Chinese led to the establishment of a Chinese Consulate in Kuching in 1948, and a British Military Administration report stated in February 1946 that 'The Chinese are in some cases going so far as to say that Sarawak should be administered under mandate from China. This idea of making Sarawak a little China is becoming increasingly prevalent and may well be a contributed cause to inter-racial trouble in the future.'⁵⁶

The Decline of Traditional Leadership

The post-war colonial administration faced a dilemma with respect to Malay collaborators.⁵⁷ It would have been self-defeating to prosecute the small group of pro-Japanese Malay leaders 'since there were no friendlier people with equal authority to put in their places', and 'to prosecute the lesser fry and leave the big fish untouched' would have drawn 'too many rude comparisons' for comfort. 'The only course was to let them all go on swimming safely together.'⁵⁸ Accordingly, the British issued instructions 'not to institute further proceedings against persons alleged to be guilty of collaboration with the enemy ... where no atrocities or brutality is involved'.⁵⁹

When the British government took over control of Sarawak after the war, it put an end to the special privileges accorded to the Malays, and removed the preference given Malays in obtaining civil service appointments. These steps came in response to Malay collaboration during the occupation period and Malay opposition to Sarawak's cession to the British Crown, and also served to break with Brooke tradition and establish a more egalitarian administrative structure open to all ethnic groups.⁶⁰ Coupled with the deaths of several Malay *datus* during the occupation years and in the late

1940s, the changes greatly eroded the strength of the traditional Malay aristocratic ruling group. Members of the educated Malay middle class, who had expressed dissatisfaction with the traditional leadership since the 1930s, emerged with new vitality to struggle with the *datus* for control over the community.⁶¹

Although prominent Malay collaborators escaped unscathed, their Iban counterparts faced rougher treatment from the British colonial authorities. Eliab Bay, for instance, was dismissed from government service, while Juing Insol, a policeman who had gained rapid promotion under the Japanese, lost the opportunity to become Commissioner for Police owing to 'his reputation as a particularly anti-British collaborator'.⁶² The Japanese period undoubtedly boosted the confidence of the educated Iban elite in their abilities and raised their political consciousness. Edward Brandah, a post-war Iban police inspector who did not work for the Japanese regime and later joined the SRD, commented after the war that the administration of the indigenous peoples 'only requires 30 per cent' of 'western brains' while 'the rest should be native'. This idea, he said, 'came to me as far back as when I was in the interior of Sarawak during the Jap[anese] occupation'.⁶³ Kuching-based and mission-educated Ibans began to take a more active role in the political affairs of the country in the immediate post-war years, during the debate over the cession of Sarawak to Britain. In March 1946, the Sarawak Dayak Association (SDA) was registered as a social organization that aimed to promote unity among the Ibans and Land Dayaks, work for social, moral, educational, and intellectual advancement, and introduce modern agricultural methods.⁶⁴ The SDA became involved in the cession controversy, and had close links with the Malay National Union and the anti-cession movement.⁶⁵

Strains in Inter-Ethnic Relations

The British colonial authorities were highly selective in prosecuting cases of collaboration, but anyone regarded as a collaborator by the Ibans and other indigenous peoples was likely to face swift retribution. For example, the military government appointed Chinese commercial firms to work alongside Japanese companies in overseeing the distribution of goods and the system of forced deliveries. The natives viewed these Chinese as traitors, and during the brief interregnum (15 August to 11 September 1945) between the Japanese surrender and the arrival of Australian troops the Ibans carried out ugly massacres directed at such people. The worst incident took place in Kanowit, where 23 Chinese heads were taken.⁶⁶ In the aftermath of the Kanowit killings, rumours circulated in Kuching that Ibans from Dutch Borneo had crossed into Serian district, and with their local brethren were planning to march on the city and planned to massacre all the Chinese they found there. An Iban 'reign of terror' enveloped Serian town following the

killing of a Malay police constable who was notorious for his pro-Japanese sentiments.⁶⁷ There were also reports of Ibans killing Chinese in the Baram and the Upper Rejang, but the rumoured march on Kuching did not materialize.⁶⁸

Curiously the Chinese backlash came in a series of riots in several towns aimed not at taking revenge on Ibans but rather at 'punishing' Malays for collaborating with the Japanese. Chinese animosity towards Malays arose because Malay leaders worked closely with the Japanese regime, Malay civil and police personnel remained at their posts, and in general the Malay community experienced fewer hardships than other communities. The situation in Kuching was particularly grim when a thousand strong Chinese mob gathered outside the Brooke Dockyard in preparation for a march on the Mosque and Malay villages in the vicinity. Australian troops managed to disarm the rioters, and imposed a 24-hour curfew. The number of casualties during the clash with the soldiers is not known, and estimates of Chinese killed range from ten to a hundred.⁶⁹

There were no further inter-racial disturbances reported when civil government was fully restored in mid-April 1946.

The impact of rising ethnic and political consciousness on communal relations in the early postwar period is difficult to gauge. No evidence exists of any overt tension between groups after the reestablishment of effective government and the waning of the passions of the immediate post-occupation period.⁷⁰

Nevertheless there was underlying tension in Sino-Malay relations. The Chinese community, which had witnessed the 'political awakening' of the Malays during the cession controversy, saw the Malays as a political threat despite the withdrawal of preferential treatment for the Malays by the British colonial authorities. The Malays, for their part, felt politically threatened by the Chinese, with their heightened nationalism and Leftist political leanings, and the end of their special privileges in government service left the Malays feeling vulnerable. The numerical superiority of the Chinese, about 27 per cent of the total population in 1947 to the Malays' 18 per cent, was naturally disconcerting to the latter.⁷¹

Conclusion

For most of the period of the Japanese Occupation, the native population of Sarawak led a normal existence, although goods became scarce in the bazaars and there was no market for rubber, which formerly provided the natives with cash incomes. In the upriver and hill districts of the interior, native inhabitants rarely encountered a Japanese, and the impact of the Occupation was slight. When the food shortage became acute from mid-1944 and the campaign for food self-sufficiency was intensified, some of the

native longhouses in the interior were forced to sell their surplus rice stocks to government appointed agents, mostly local Chinese shopkeepers. In addition, certain groups of longhouses and villages were instructed to contribute labour gangs for work on airfields and other construction projects, and some young men were recruited to serve in logging camps and as sawmill workers. Many returned with tales of hard work and stinging slaps delivered by their Japanese overseers.

Some young native men, possibly encouraged by a Native Officer and also motivated by their own sense of *bejalai*⁷² or instinct for adventure, applied to participate in the Japanese-sponsored training programme, *kyodotai*. The harshness of their Japanese trainers, the difficulty in communication, and rumours of an imminent Japanese defeat created disillusionment among these recruits, leading many to desert and return home, or join bands of Australians (SRD) fighting the Japanese. Many longhouse communities disregarded orders to report anti-Japanese activities to the local authorities, and when Australian soldiers sought their assistance, they readily offered their hospitality, and even joined them in attacking Japanese outposts. The Ibans, infuriated by the Japanese demands that they surrender their shotguns and by severe punishments meted out to people who failed to comply, targeted people both the Japanese and people associated with them, in particular certain Chinese shopkeepers and Malay policemen.

In towns like Kuching, Sibu and Miri, and other smaller urban centres, the Malay community had few complaints. The big Chinese shops, which many thought would never be without provisions, surprisingly ran out of stocks. The shortage of textiles meant that aristocratic Malay women had to dispense with their veils to save cloth. The Malays also witnessed the sudden 'disappearance' of Chinese into the countryside. Malay farmers and fishermen continued as before. Native officers carried on with their work; although instead of answering to Europeans they now had Japanese superiors instead. Some local people were promoted to senior positions they would not have held before the Occupation.

Some village Malay and Chinese schools organized classes to teach the Japanese language. Native children and adults alike picked up some Japanese words and phrases, sang a few songs with little understanding of the lyrics, and bowed to a picture of the Japanese 'Rajah'. Occasionally there were public gatherings where school children sang and performed cultural dances, and community leaders gave speeches. Some of these speakers attacked Britain and America and praised Japan, while others diplomatically avoided commitment to either side. The Japanese authorities distributed leaflets to the public, but few could read them as much of the population was illiterate. None of these activities seem to have had a deep or lasting impact, and many awaited the return of their 'White Tuan'.

The foregoing account of the experiences of indigenous communities during the occupation demonstrates that the Japanese period did not to a

great extent benefit the indigenous people of Sarawak nor did it adversely affect them. No doubt some individuals did profit while others suffered, but the fact remains that most of the indigenous peoples were little affected by the various Japanese policies.

Notes

Research and writing of this paper were made possible by grants from the Centre for South-East Asian Studies, University of Hull; Research and Development Section, Universiti Sains Malaysia; and the Toyota Foundation. Two books have been published dealing with the war years in Sarawak. See Ooi Keat Gin, *Rising Sun over Borneo: the Japanese Occupation of Sarawak, 1941-1945*, London, Macmillan, 1999, and Bob Reece, *Masa Jepun: Sarawak under the Japanese, 1941-1945*, Kucing, Sarawak Literary Society, 1998.

- 1 Order No. 1-1 (Interpretation) 1933, Sarawak Government Gazette, 1 July 1933, pp. 160 and 164.
- 2 For Brooke policies and legislations relating to the protection of indigenous peoples, see Ooi Keat Gin, *Of Free Trade and Native Interests: The Brookes and the Economic Development of Sarawak, 1841-1941*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 19-79 and 225-50.
- 3 There were, however, pockets of disaffection in the upriver and interior districts. See, for example, Robert Pringle, 'Asun's 'Rebellion': The Political Growing Pains of a Tribal Society in Brooke Sarawak, 1929-1940', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 16, 32-33, Jul.-Dec. 1968, pp. 346-76, and Ooi Keat Gin, 'Rentap, Bantian and Asun: Brooke Rebels or Iban Nationalists? Revisiting Iban Anti-Brooke Movements, 1841-1941', Social Movements in History Seminar, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang Malaysia, 12 Apr. 1996.
- 4 See Ooi, *Of Free Trade and Native Interests*, pp. 83-119 and 251-88.
- 5 On this issue see R. H. W. Reece, *The Name of Brooke: The End of White Rajah Rule in Sarawak*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1982, pp. 132-9; and Sanib Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak 1946-1966: The Search for Unity and Political Ascendancy*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 28-9.
- 6 For Chinese anti-Japanese activities, see *Sarawak Administration Report 1937*, pp. 34-5.
- 7 For a detailed account of defence measures advocated for Sarawak, see 'Report Upon Defence Measures Adopted in Sarawak from June 1941 to the Occupation in December 1941 by Imperial Japanese Forces; also, an account of the movement of British and Sarawak Military Forces during the Japanese invasion of Sarawak', by J. L. Noakes, Formerly Secretary for Defence, Director of Air Raid Precautions and Security Officer, Sarawak, 15 Feb. 1946, MSS Pac.s.62 (Rhodes House Library, henceforth RHL); 'Sarawak and Brunei: Defences, 1941', CO 968/15/4 (Public Record Office, henceforth PRO); 'Sarawak Oil Denial Scheme, 1941-2', CO 968/15/5-6 (PRO); and 'Sarawak and Brunei: Coast Defences, 1941', CO 968/15/7 (PRO). See also A. E. Percival, *The War in Malaya*, London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1949, pp. 62-3, 93-4.
- 8 On Britain's failure to defend Sarawak, see Ooi Keat Gin, 'A Broken Promise? Great Britain's Failure to Honour Treaty Obligations to Brooke Sarawak, a British Protectorate', in *Indonesia and the Malay World* 27, 77, Mar. 1999, pp. 46-63.
- 9 See K. D. Shargava and K. N. V. Sastri, *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45: Campaigns in South-East Asia*,

- 1941-42, Calcutta, City Orient Longmans for Combined Inter-Services Historical Section, India & Pakistan, 1960, p. 370.
- 10 For the fall of Sarawak and the retreat of the 2nd/15th Punjab across Dutch Borneo, see A. V. M. Horton, 'A Note on the British Retreat From Kuching 1941-1942', *Sarawak Museum Journal*, 36, 57, Dec. 1986, pp. 241-9.
- 11 See Special Intelligence Bulletin: Japanese Plans and Operations in S.E. Asia: Translation of Japanese Documents, 21 Dec. 1945, Doc. 4: 'Army-Navy-Central Agreement for establishing Military Administration in Occupied Territories', WO 203/6310 (PRO), p. 6. In late 1943 the headquarters moved to Jesselton (also known as Api, now Kota Kinabalu), which was better positioned to deal with an Allied invasion. The timing of the transfer coincided with a clampdown on a Chinese uprising that broke out in Jesselton in October 1943. Dutch Borneo was administered separately by the Japanese Navy. For this Chinese insurrection, see Hara Fujio, 'The 1943 Kinabalu Uprising in Sabah' in this volume, and John Maxwell Hall, *Kinabalu Guerrillas: An Account of the Double Tenth 1943*, 2nd ed., Kuching, Borneo Literature Bureau, 1965.
- 12 Altogether there were five administrative provinces for British Borneo, three in Sarawak as mentioned and two others, *Seikai-shu* (Jesselton/West Coast State) and *Tokai-shu* (Sandakan/East Coast State). *Miri-shu* covered Brunei and Sarawak's Fourth and Fifth Divisions. See 'Interrogation Report No. 21: Interrogation of Saburoo Kawada, Senior Administrative Official in the Civil Administration, 4 Mar. 1946', WO 208/3114 (PRO), p. 1; and 'Intelligence Bulletin No.237, Item 2178: Interrogation of Manabu Kuji, Governor of West Coast (Jesselton) Province (20 Nov. 1943-1 Jun. 1945), North Borneo; Subject: Japanese Civil Administration in British North Borneo; c. mid-1946', WO 203/6317 (PRO), p. 1.
- 13 'British Territories in North Borneo', extract from Australian Landing Force South-East Asia, No. 52, 28 Sept. 1945, WO 208/105 (PRO), p. 22.
- 14 'Intelligence Bulletin No. 237, Item 2183: Interrogation of Lt. Gen. Masao Baba, General Officer Commanding 37th Army', WO 203/6317 (PRO), p. 19.
- 15 Craig A. Lockard, 'The Southeast Asian Town in Historical Perspective: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970', Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973, vol. 2, pp. 460-1.
- 16 See Liew Yung Tzu, *Sarawak Under the Japanese*, Sibui, Hua Ping Press, 1956 [text in Chinese], p. 30, cited by Lockard, 'A Social History of Kuching', II, p. 461; 'British Territories in North Borneo', p. 22; Craig Alan Lockard, *From Kampung to City: A Social History of Kuching, Malaysia, 1820-1970*, Ohio University Monographs in International Studies Southeast Asia Series No. 75, Athens, Ohio, Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1987, p. 153.
- 17 On this issue, see Reece, *Masa Jepun*, pp. 132-4. In the Simanggang district a Japanese police officer named S. Suzuki averted an anti-Japanese uprising by suspending the confiscation order, and found himself 'under threat of repatriation and court-martial for defying orders'. Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 149.
- 18 In early 1945, SRD units were parachuted behind enemy lines in central and northeast Borneo to organize resistance in preparation for Allied landings. Initially they recruited Kayans, Kenyahs, Kelabits and Muruts, and when these operations reached the Rejang River, many Ibans joined in the struggle. The SRD also received assistance from the Chinese. For SRD operations, see Tom Harrisson, *World Within: A Borneo Story*, London, The Cresset Press, 1959; Bob Long, *Operation Semut I: 'Z' Special Unit's Secret War; Soldiering with the Head-Hunters of Borneo*, Maryborough, Victoria: Australian Print Group, 1989;

- and Ooi Keat Gin, 'Laying the Groundwork: SRD Activities Prior to the Australian Re-Occupation of North-West Borneo, 1944-1945', 16th Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 27-31 July 2000.
- 19 Special Intelligence Bulletin: Japanese Plans and Operations in S.E. Asia - Translation of Japanese Documents, 21 Dec. 1945. Document 11: 'Summary of the government of occupied territory in the Southern Area', 12 Oct. 1942, W0 203/6310 (PRO), p. 24.
- 20 Extract of Tokyo broadcast dated 1 October 1943, Sarawak Government Agency, Sydney, Circular No.5/43, 12 October 1943, cited in Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 144.
- 21 Chinese, Indians, and other immigrants were appointed as Special Councillors. See Reece, *Name of Brooke*, pp. 133, 138 and 144.
- 22 See Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr., *Tun Jugah of Sarawak: Colonialism and Iban Response*, Kuala Lumpur, Penerbit Fajar Bakti for Sarawak Literary Society, 1992, p. 104.
- 23 Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 144.
- 24 Sng Chin Joo, interview, Meligai Hotel, Kapit, 1 Aug. 1987, quoted in Sutlive, *Tun Jugah*, p. 104.
- 25 Abang Haji Mustapha was later accused of giving pro-Japanese speeches at public gatherings. See Joseph Law to Bertram Brooke, 31 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3 (RHL); 'Statement by Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor', 29 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 22 (RHL); and K.H. Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, Ithaca, Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Data Paper No. 114, 1980, p. 173.
- 26 Interview with Harry Buxton, a Brooke Forestry Officer during the 1930s who was a prisoner of the Japanese at Bintulu during the occupation, quoted in Sutlive, *Tun Jugah*, p. 107.
- 27 Under Brooke rule, Sarawak was divided into five administrative units designated as the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Divisions. Delineation was based on river basins: First (Lundu, Sarawak, Sadong, Samarahan); Second (Lupar, Saribas, Krian); Third (Rejang, Balleh, Balui); Fourth (Bintulu, Baram, Tinjar); and Fifth (Lawas, Limbang Trusan).
- 28 K. Itoh to Datu Abang Zin Gapor, 9 January 1942, Eliab Bay Papers, cited in Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 147.
- 29 Bay had held various government posts in the Second Division including court writer at Engkilili, Sebuyau, Lingga and Lubok Antu, and as Treasury clerk and store keeper at Simanggang, prior to his appointment as court writer at Simanggang, the headquarters of the Division. He had also attempted to champion the rights of the Asiatic members of the Brooke Junior Service. For biographical details and his career prior to the war, see Reece, *Name of Brooke*, pp. 138-41.
- 30 Regarding the conspicuous absence of Japanese officials in the outstations, see Leonard Edwards and Peter W. Stevens, *Short Histories of the Lawas and Kanowit Districts*, Kuching, Borneo Literature Bureau, 1971, pp. 51, 55 and 162; and Sutlive, *Tun Jugah*, p. 105.
- 31 Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 147.
- 32 Ibid., p. 143.
- 33 Ibid., p. 147.
- 34 'British Territories in North Borneo', p. 23.
- 35 See Edwards and Stevens, *Lawas and Kanowit*, p. 51, and Lockard, 'A Social History of Kuching', p. 460-1.

- 36 Chinese were also recruited into the police force from mid-1944 for services in Chinese populated areas like in the Lower Rejang districts. See *ibid.*, p. 23. Apparently this policy was intended to stamp out subversive activities in Chinese settlements, as Chinese constables would be in a better position to overcome the language barrier than their native counterparts. Although there were no incidents in Sarawak comparable to the October 1943 Chinese-led revolt in Jesselton, it was no doubt part of a Japanese effort to prevent such a recurrence.
- 37 Cramb, 'The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Agricultural Development in Sarawak', ms (personal copy), p. 9.
- 38 Sutlive, *Tun Jugah*, quoting Harry Buxton, p. 107. See also Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 149. The construction of the Labuan airstrip relied on indigenous labour from the Lawas-Trusan basins. See Chong Ah Onn, '1943-46, Fifth Division, Sarawak', Pt. II, *Sarawak Gazette*, 31 Dec. 1952, p. 283.
- 39 'Intelligence Bulletin No.237, Item 2184: Interrogation of Major General Shigeru Kuroda, 37th Army HQ; Subject: 12. Japanese Policy in Far East', WO 203/6317 (PRO), p. 31.
- 40 'Intelligence Bulletin No. 237, Item 2182: Interrogation of Lieutenants Yoshihiko Wakamatsu and Kenzo Morikawa, and Captains Ryuji Ikeno, Minoru Tasuma and Yoshio Watanabe, all officers attached to the North Borneo Volunteer Corps (Kyodotai); Subject: North Borneo Volunteer Corps; c. mid-1946', WO 203/6317 (PRO), p. 12. Even before October 1943, there were already recruitment of native men grouped into small units for military training; these units were subsequently incorporated in the *kyodotai*. Chinese were strictly excluded from the *Kyodotai* for security reasons, and there were no exceptions to this policy.
- 41 'Intelligence Bulletin No. 237, Item 2182', p. 12.
- 42 'Intelligence Bulletin No. 237, Item 2182', p. 12. In the former British North Borneo, 450 natives were accepted into the *kyodotai*; 300 in the Keningau Company, and 150 in the Sandakan Company.
- 43 'Intelligence Bulletin No. 237, Item 2182', p. 12.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 45 Many disillusioned natives deserted their *kyodotai* units; some not only deserted their posts but defected over to the SRD and helped the latter in its campaign against the Japanese. See Chong, '1943-46, Fifth Division, Sarawak', p. 285.
- 46 In the Malay peninsula the *jikeidan* organizations was an adjunct to the state and military police forces. Under the system a group of households was collectively responsible for anti-social or subversive activities on the part of any member of the group. See Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Social Impact of the Japanese Occupation of Malaya (1942-1945)', in *Southeast Asia Under Japanese Occupation*, ed. Alfred W. McCoy, New Haven, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies Monograph Series No. 22, 1980, p. 103, and Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya*, London, C. Hurst and Co., 1998, pp. 80-3.
- 47 'British Territories in North Borneo', p. 23.
- 48 In the closing months of 1944, a U.S. plane crashed in Telak in the Limbang district. For this episode which ended tragically for some of the rescuers and the rescued, see 'Heroism in the Limbang', *Sarawak Gazette*, 2 Jun. 1947, pp. 100-1.
- 49 Lockard, 'A Social History of Kuching', II, p. 457.
- 50 John M. Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 99. These wartime marriages were one of the contributing factors to a high birth rate during this period that gave Kuching a 10 per cent increase in population. See J. L. Noakes, *Sarawak and Brunei: A Report on the 1947*

- Population Census*, Kuching, Government Printing Office, 1947, pp. 82-3; Lockard, *From Kampung to City*, pp. 155-6.
- 51 A post-war study of the predominantly Malay area of southwest Sarawak (Santubong) showed Chinese migration and settlement during the Japanese period. These Chinese newcomers, mostly from Kuching, lived off the land by growing root crops like tapioca and cassava, making salt from the sea and sugar from nipah palm, and fishing. Some sanctuaries or 'hide-outs' were established in the delta area, the 'heart of nowhere', to avoid the Japanese. See Tom Harrisson, *The Malays of South-West Sarawak Before Malaysia: A Socio-Ecological Survey*, London, Macmillan, 1970, pp. 46-7, 53-4, 301, 303-34, 397, 462, 585, 594-5. For Chinese migration to the inland Land Dayak areas of the Sadong, see Capt. D.F.A.F.D. Morgan, 'Monthly Report on Serian and Simunjan District', 15 Feb.-15 Mar. 1946, PRO WO 203/5983.
- 52 Reece, *Name of Brooke*, pp. 144-45; Edwards and Stevens, *Lawas and Kanowit*, p. 53; and James Wong Kim Min, ed., 'No Joke, James': *The World According to William Wong Tsap En*, Singapore, Summer Times Publishing, 1985, pp. 371-3.
- 53 Edwards and Stevens, *Lawas and Kanowit*, p. 52.
- 54 Chong, '1943-46, Fifth Division, Sarawak', p. 264, and Chin, *The Sarawak Chinese*, pp. 99-100.
- 55 Wong, 'No Joke, James', pp. 375, 379, 386, 409-10, 412, and Edwards and Stevens, *Lawas and Kanowit*, p. 54.
- 56 'First Division', Monthly Report for February 1946, PRO WO 203/5983.
- 57 Rajah Vyner who returned to Kuching in April 1946 admitted that several of the Malay *datus* were 'not too good' during the Japanese period. 'They all ran away to start with', he told Bertram, the Tuan Muda, 'and eventually returned festooned with Jap[anese] medals. But one can't be hard on our Malays - it wasn't really their war'. Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 19 (RHL).
- 58 Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, p. 76.
- 59 'S.O.I. Legal to Liaison Officer, Kuching, 23 April 1946', WO 203/5991 (PRO).
- 60 Towards the closing days of Brooke rule, the civil service was made up of 1,371 Malays; 456 non-Malay natives (mostly Ibans); 426 Chinese; and 49 Europeans. Michael B. Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1974, p. 23.
- 61 See Lockard, *Kampung to City*, pp. 158-9; Reece, *Name of Brooke*, pp. 246-78; and Said, *Malay Politics in Sarawak*, *passim*.
- 62 Reece, *Name of Brooke*, pp. 147, 153-5.
- 63 Edward Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 26 Oct. 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1 (RHL).
- 64 'Rules and By-Laws of the Dayak Association of Sarawak. Established 1st March 1946, Kuching, 1946', cited in Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 248.
- 65 See Reece, *Name of Brooke*, pp. 246-78; and Lockard, *Kampung to City*, pp. 210 and 247-9.
- 66 For the Kanowit killings, see 'Annual Report of the District Officer, Kanowit, for the year 1946', Typescript held by the Sarawak Museum and State Archives, Kuching; and Edwards and Steven, *Lawas and Kanowit*, p. 164. Reece maintains that the killings at Kanowit, and also at Song, were the result of 'the encouragement given Ibans [by SRD] to take Japanese heads' which 'got out of control'. See Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 150.
- 67 See Digby, *Lawyer in the Wilderness*, pp. 76-7.
- 68 See Tom Harrisson, 'The Chinese in Borneo, 1942-1946', *International Affairs*, 26, 3, July, 1950, p. 360.

- 69 See Reece, *Name of Brooke*, p. 159.
- 70 Lockard, *Kampung to City*, p. 180.
- 71 Noakes, *Sarawak and Brunei*, p. 38.
- 72 *Bejalai* (lit. to walk, walking) is the term for the Iban tradition where young men leave their homes to seek their fortunes.

Chapter Ten



The Pontianak Incidents and the Ethnic Chinese in Wartime Western Borneo

Kaori Maekawa

Introduction

In comparison with the situation elsewhere in Southeast Asia, Chinese communities in the Indonesian archipelago fared relatively well during the Japanese Occupation. The killings in Malaya and the demands for forced Chinese labour in Thailand had few parallels in the archipelago.¹ However, on two occasions in 1943-44 the Naval Police in Western Borneo accused the substantial Chinese community living in the vicinity of Pontianak of planning an anti-Japanese uprising, and executed several hundred people. These incidents form the subject of the present article, which argues that the killings took place because ambitious naval officers fabricated stories about an anti-Japanese plot. (For Western Borneo see Map 4).

It is difficult to develop a complete picture of events in Western Borneo because documentation is limited. Statements collected by war crimes investigators from the naval circle, officials in the naval administration, and civilians employed by Japanese companies provide some information, and a small number of published memoirs discuss the incidents,² but many of those involved in the affair have remained silent. Only two scholars, George Kanahale and Goto Ken'ichi, have examined events at Pontianak in any detail.³ The recent publication of memoirs by Iwakawa Takashi and Masuko Tsunesuke that provide information on the affair, and the discovery of an unpublished account written by Captain Okajima Riki of the Naval Military Special Police in Pontianak, provide an occasion to revisit this episode.⁴

Pre-War West Borneo

Population and Economy

Before the war, Western Borneo had the largest concentration of Chinese in the Netherlands Indies. A gold rush in the early 1700s had attracted large numbers of Chinese to the area, and gold mining remained important

for more than a century.⁵ When the mines were exhausted, the descendents of these migrants turned to trade, industry, fishing and agriculture. In 1930 about 80 per cent of the Chinese in Dutch Borneo lived in Western Borneo, where they made up 13 per cent of the population. (Table 10.1) This was a more settled community than the Chinese in Sumatra, and next to Java had the highest percentage of *peranakan* (local-born, Malay speaking) members. Some 72 per cent of the Chinese residents in Western Borneo had fathers born in the Netherlands Indies, compared with 41 per cent in Sumatra.

More than three-quarters of Western Borneo's Chinese population lived in rural areas where they ran shops or engaged in small-scale agriculture, planting rubber or coconuts for export and growing rice for their own consumption. Just 21 per cent lived in cities or towns.⁶ The greater part of the land held by the Chinese, including their rice fields, was in one or another of the autonomous sultanates in the region, and up to 92 per cent of the ethnic Chinese in Western Borneo were found in these territories.⁷ The geographical distribution of the population is shown in Table 10.2.

Table 10.1 Population in Western Borneo

Malay	Dayak	Other indigenous groups	Chinese	European	Others	Total
228,751	334,028	151,221	108,000	1,000	4,000	827,000
27.7%	40.4%	18.3%	13.0%	0.1%	0.5%	

Source: *Volkstelling 1930*, Vol. 5, pp. 158-9.

Table 10.2 Chinese (Peranakan and Totok) in Western Borneo

Division and sub-Div.	Chinese	Population	%
Singkawang	67,351	250,690	26.8
Sambas	4,263	68,504	6.2
Singkawang	38,072	100,107	38.0
Bengkajang	6,076	18,715	32.4
Mampawah	18,940	63,364	29.8
Pontianak	34,196	309,348	11.0
Pontianak	26,063	127,266	20.4
Landak	2,999	65,280	4.6
Sanggau	3,342	81,014	4.1
Sekadau	1,792	35,794	5.0
Ketapang	2,193	82,396	2.6
Sintang	4,258	160,013	2.7
TOTAL	107,998	802,447	13.4

Source: *Volkstelling 1930*, Vol. VII, pp. 120, 179.

Table 10.3 Dialects spoken by ethnic Chinese (Totok) in Western Borneo

Origin	Hokkien	Hakka	Chaochow	Kwangtung	Others	Total
No. of persons	2,570	38,313	21,699	2,961	1,257	66,800
Proportion of total ethnic Chinese population	3.8%	57.4%	32.5%	4.4%	1.9%	

Source: *Volkstelling 1930*, Vol. VII, p. 11.

The dominant Chinese dialect spoken in Western Borneo was Hakka, in contrast to the rest of the Netherlands Indies where Hokkien predominated. Hokkien speakers made up 65 per cent of the Chinese population in Java and Madura, and 84 per cent of those living in Bandjermasin, in South Borneo, but just 4 per cent of the Chinese in Western Borneo. The dialects spoken by the Chinese population in Western Borneo are shown in Table 10.3.

Trade with Singapore was far more important and profitable than that with Batavia. Merchants in Western Borneo raised capital in Singapore to purchase rubber, copra, damar and other primary products from Dayak and Chinese farmers for export, and imports from Singapore supplied many everyday necessities, including food. Owing to the monopolistic practices of the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (the Royal Packetship Company), it was cheaper to send goods to Java by way of Singapore than it was to ship to Batavia directly.⁸

Cultural and Political Activity

Pre-war Western Borneo did not have a Chinese-language newspaper. The Dutch-language *Borneo Bulletin*, published daily, and two weekly Malay newspapers, *Soeara Kalimantan* and *Pemberita Pontianak*, circulated widely, while Chinese newspapers arrived three times a week from Singapore. The Dutch scrutinized these imported publications carefully, particularly after Chinese throughout the region began to boycott Japanese goods to protest against Japan's actions in Manchuria and in Shanghai. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the boycott movement spread rapidly throughout the Netherlands Indies. In Pontianak and Sambas, Chinese stores that carried Japanese goods were smeared with tar, and an organized boycott took shape in Singkawang. As a result, prices rose and the flow of daily commodities stagnated.⁹

As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, a General Chinese Chamber of Commerce promoted Chinese business activities and helped maintain ethnic ties in Pontianak and Singkawang. The Chamber supported the boycott, and helped raise money for the Kuomintang government in China. However, a Japanese source claims that anti-Japanese actions here and elsewhere outside of Batavia were poorly organized and not well coordinated.¹⁰

Western Borneo under Japanese Rule

The Japanese advance and political change

As the Malayan campaign neared its conclusion, a detachment of the 25th Army proceeded to Miri on the north coast of Borneo, and then occupied Pontianak on 29 January 1942. Another detachment, supported by a naval landing force, arrived at Tarakan on 11 January, moved on to Balikpapan during the following two weeks, and finally reached Bandjarmasin in southern Borneo on 10 February. The Dutch area commander responsible for Western Borneo surrendered on 16 March, eight days after the Dutch capitulation in Java.

The Japanese Army and Navy had worked out an agreement concerning the areas where each service would create a military administration. Borneo fell within the naval area and was to be placed under *Minseifu* (Naval Administration Government) Headquarters in Makassar.¹¹ Overall responsibility for the Philippines (the First Southern Fleet), Dutch East Indies (the Second Southern Fleet), and the Malay Peninsula (the Third Southern Fleet) rested with a Southwest Fleet Naval Administration created at Manila in April 1942.¹² The Naval Ministry issued a set of regulations for Military Administration in Occupied territories similar to those used by the Army, except that the Navy intended to secure the areas under its control in perpetuity.¹³

The Army continued to administer Dutch Borneo for nearly six months after the conquest, a period known locally as 'zaman bintang' (lit., the time of stars) after the badge worn by members of the Japanese army, and only transferred responsibility for Western Borneo to the 22nd Naval Base Force at Balikpapan in mid-July 1942.¹⁴ The Naval Civil Administration officially commenced in August 1942, and the Navy placed garrison forces at Bandjarmasin, Tarakan and Pontianak, with detachments in Singkawang and Ketapang districts in Western Borneo.

Although the Army had made a number of changes, dissolving all pre-war Chinese *kongsis*, regrouping political organizations, and imposing

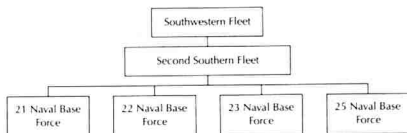


Chart 10.1 Naval command structure in the Indonesian archipelago

The Pontianak Incidents and the Ethnic Chinese in Wartime Western Borneo



Chart 10.2 Borneo Minseibu and West Borneo

restrictions on local trade, a liberal atmosphere had prevailed. Naval rule was far more oppressive. A post-war report prepared by officials associated with the Pontianak State Government referred to 'the antagonism accumulated among the general population due to the outrageous pressures of the military forces, owing to the misrule of the military administration personnel, and the economic blows caused by Japanese firms'.¹⁵

Economic Change and Japanese policy toward the Chinese in Western Borneo

The general principle employed by the Japanese administration in dealing with the Chinese was to use 'their existing business networks and practices for our policy. Needless to say we will exercise strict control over any anti-Japanese tendency, and as a matter of policy will block political links between Chinese overseas and China's home government'.¹⁶ During the Occupation, the economic situation deteriorated, with major consequences for the ethnic Chinese. Trade came to a standstill, and with exports of rubber and copra at negligible levels, most factories and plantations stopped operations. Some plantation land was cleared for rice cultivation, while stocks of rubber were used to manufacture a petrol substitute.¹⁷ Many of the labourers formerly employed in these industries were sent to work on the construction of a nearby airfield.

A number of Japanese had moved into Western Borneo in the 1910s and 1920s, some to plant rubber or coconuts, others to run photo studios or guesthouses, or engage in petty trade.¹⁸ Japanese commercial activities in the area consisted of small businesses that occupied minor economic niches in order to survive competition with larger Chinese enterprises. Now, however, much more substantial Japanese enterprises began operations in the region, and to establish these new arrivals, the Military Administration confiscated Chinese companies and industrial facilities on a large scale.¹⁹ Since most pre-war Chinese companies had taken on a Dutch legal identity, the Japanese treated them as enemy property, and could act against them with impunity.

The once-flourishing trade with Singapore did not revive, but Western Borneo re-established connections with Bandjermasin, a place where Pontianak had relatively few commercial dealings before the war. Newly created shipping lines using wooden ships provided service to Bandjermasin, and also between Pontianak and Surabaya. This was the extent of legal trade, but smugglers maintained ties with ports elsewhere area throughout the Japanese period.

Western Borneo was a rice deficit area, and before the occupation imported 10 per cent of the rice needed for local consumption from Java. A rice production campaign carried out by the Japanese destroyed a large number of rubber trees in order to prepare space for rice fields.²⁰ Half the rice crop had to be delivered to the Japanese at a fixed price of fl. 17 per 100 *gantangs* (approx. 250 kilograms), but the Japanese routinely took nearly all rice, allowing farmers to keep only 50 *gantangs* per household member per annum.²¹

The Japanese liquidated the Chinese Chambers of Commerce in Pontianak and Singkawang, replacing them with a Chinese Control Association (*Kakyo Toseikai*). All local trade and commerce fell under the control of the Navy, which established depots for daily necessities such as rice, salt, sugar, soap. Following guidelines set down by the economic bureau of the Civil Administration Government, the Chinese Control Association handled the distribution of these goods, and regulated the prices that shops could charge.

In 1944, the Japanese authorities reconstituted the Chinese Control Association as a more comprehensive Asia Cooperative Organization (*Kyoo Sokai*), with political, economic, cultural, music, propaganda, and welfare sections. The Honorary President of the Chinese Control Association,²² and President of the Asia Cooperative Organization, was a man named Ts'in Ts'ung Ji, who had raised funds for Chiang Kai-shek before the war. Although he had acted with the backing of the colonial administration, Dutch authorities viewed Ts'in as a possible security threat and interned him in Java upon the outbreak of the Pacific War. The Japanese Army later brought back him to Pontianak, but at the time of the second Pontianak incident the naval police accused him of instigating anti-Japanese activity.

The Naval Police

The naval garrison force assigned to Western Borneo was very small, given the vast size of the territories under its supervision. The 22nd Naval Base Force stationed in Pontianak had approximately 200–300 personnel, while the detachment in Singkawang had an additional 200 men, and that in Ketapang 30 more. In smaller and less important places, the Japanese presence was limited to small weekly patrols.²³ The Naval Police Force, called the Kaigun Tokubetsu Keisatsu but known as *Tokkei*, became one of

the most powerful Japanese institutions in the area and was responsible for 'uncalled-for interference' in the lives of the population.²⁴ Around 30–40 *Tokkei* officers operated out of Pontianak, supported by Indonesian members of the pre-war field police who wore their old uniforms and carried Dutch carbines and swords.²⁵ One informant said that relations between the local population and Naval personnel in general were not bad, but that the *Tokkei* were deeply hated and feared.²⁶ The ordinary police often assisted the *Tokkei*, and helped investigate suspected anti-Japanese plots in Pontianak.²⁷

The First Pontianak Incident

In the autumn of 1943 the Japanese authorities in Bandjermasin exposed an underground conspiracy led by Dr. B. J. Haga, the former Governor of South Borneo, and other Dutch-era Indonesian officials along with various professionals and some local Chinese. The group reportedly had made plans to stage an anti-Japanese revolt in the event of an Allied attack. More than 200 people were arrested, and 26 were executed after appearing before the criminal courts; others were killed in secret.²⁸

While looking into the Haga case, investigators received information about a plot to poison the Japanese based in Pontianak, and supplied details to Japanese authorities there. In September 1943 the Pontianak *Tokkei* arrested a large number of Indonesian officials, professional people and Chinese whom they suspected of involvement in the plot. Two months later, on 3 November 1943, they detained 12 of the reigning sultans in Western Borneo, and on 24 January 1944 arrested still more Chinese as well as members of other ethnic groups. Some were told they had to undergo 'training', while others were simply taken away in trucks covered with black cloth. Very few survived. In all, the *Tokkei* arrested more than 2,000 people, and probably executed more than 1,500. (See Table 10.4). The severity of the action reflected a preconception on the part of the *Tokkei* that every person who hoped for independence was disloyal and likely to be involved in a



Chart 10.3 Naval detachment in Western Borneo

conspiracy.²⁹ Trials took place only for selected cases, and many people were killed without trial, including the twelve sultans.³⁰ The Japanese carried out executions by decapitation for fear that the sound of gunshots would cause public unrest.

On 1 July 1944, the officially sanctioned Japanese newspaper, the *Borneo Shinbun*, unexpectedly published the 'whole story' of the affair, and announced that 48 people had been executed. The account said that naval authorities had uncovered 'a great secret conspiracy against the Japanese authorities'.

The ringleaders mainly living at Pontianak and Singkawang were very cautious and cunning. The first arrests were made on October 23 of last year [1943]. Other arrests were made in the early morning of January 24 of this year. After careful investigations it is clear that the Sultan of Pontianak and hundreds of others intended to revolt against the Japanese authorities by force of arms. Therefore the naval court-martial decided to execute the ringleaders and others. This execution took place on the 28 June.³¹

A post-war Japanese report declared that plans for an uprising began to take shape early in the Occupation. 'Sultans, Chinese, Indonesian government officials, Indians and Arabs, who had been antagonistic to each other, joined together to massacre Japanese', reacting to 'oppression by the military against discontented local elements and the failure of military officials to govern effectively.' Hatred of the Japanese had 'increased as a result of economic damage associated with the promotion of Japanese enterprises'. The report linked anti-Japanese activity in the area with 'Chinese independence movements, which had occasionally surfaced in this region under the Dutch government'.³² Reviewing these assertions, George Kanahele has argued that the Japanese invented the conspiracy. It was, he said, 'inconceivable that such disparate elements could suddenly have overcome their mutual animosities to conspire together to revolt – without leadership, without an organization and without arms – against the Japanese'.³³

In a book published in 1987, Izeki Tsuneo, a pre-war resident of Western Borneo who worked during the Occupation as an interpreter, claimed that 1,486 people were killed in the First Pontianak Incident, more than half of them ethnic Chinese, basing this figure on information from Yamamoto Soichi, Sub-Commander of Pontianak Naval Base Force, who was condemned by the War Tribunal and executed.³⁴ Izeki blamed the affair on two police inspectors, named Sasuga and Noma, who had played a major role in resolving the Haga affair in Bandjermasin and wanted to achieve something similar in Pontianak. During visits to the Naval Special Police Depot they spoke of a 'plot against Japanese', and the idea fell on fertile ground. *Tokkei* personnel in Western Borneo had previously served with

the Naval Base Force in Shanghai, where they had arrested many communist sympathizers, and readily accepted the idea that the Chinese in peaceful Pontianak were involved in hostile activities.³⁵ Sasuga and Noma claimed the plotters intended to poison the tea and other drinks served during a banquet to celebrate the second anniversary of the start of the Greater East Asian War, and then stage an armed uprising to overthrow the Japanese and establish a 'Republic of Western Borneo'. Izeki cited testimony by Tabata Shun'ichi, an ex-member of the *Tokkei* in Pontianak, who claimed that Noma drew up the scenario, and a *Tokkei* officer named Nakatani, said to be most right-wing member of the circle, collected 'evidence'. Tabata himself took a picture of arms collected in Singkawang.³⁶ Another source stated in a post-war interrogation that 'the Japanese rigged the whole story of poisoning. It was laughable. The Japanese showed a photo of a pile of weapons which supposedly belonged to the plotters. But we knew it was a fake. The plotters were just not the types to want to revolt. They were conservative, well-established older people.'³⁷ Japanese civilians in Pontianak had no intimation of any anti-Japanese plot before the account of the conspiracy appeared in the newspaper, and had been on good terms with the Chinese who were executed. They felt aggrieved by the arrogant behaviour of the Naval Special Police personnel.³⁸

The Second Pontianak Incident

The arrests and executions caused much fear among the Chinese, but also made them more strongly anti-Japanese. *Tokkei* personnel anticipated that the tightly organized and wealthy Chinese secret societies might react by forming ties with Chinese elsewhere in the region and taking up arms against Japan. Not long after information about the First Pontianak Incident was made public, the *Tokkei* claimed to have detected additional anti-Japanese plots. One involved a secret society modelled on the activities of an early Chinese leader in Western Borneo named Lo Fang Pai, who had organized a local Chinese administration in Sambas in the late eighteenth century to protect immigrants from violence.³⁹ In another, a group of young

Table 10.4 The number of victims of the First Pontianak Affair

Indonesian	577
Chinese	903
European	36
Asian Foreigner	18
Total	1,534

Source: *Tanjungpura Berdjuaug: Sedjarah KODAM XII/Tanjungpura Kalimantan-Barat, Tanjungpura, Semidam XII, 1970, p. 94.*

men and primary school teachers were ostensibly working with the Chinese Communist Party or the Communist Party of Malaya to plan anti-Japanese activity. Many Chinese businessmen who had survived the first investigation were now arrested, along with Chinese schoolteachers in Pontianak and Sinkawang, and further executions took place in mid-September 1944. This time about 350 people died.⁴⁰

Okajima Riki, a Tokkei captain in Pontianak and detachment commander at the Naval Base Force, offered an alternative explanation of the second Chinese plot during an interrogation recorded after the war. Okajima received a death sentence at the war crimes trials in Pontianak for his part in the killings, and was executed in 1948.⁴¹ According to his account, Chinese residents in Pontianak intended to set up a 'State of Autonomous Western Borneo' linked to the Kuomintang government in China. He claimed that on four occasions between July and September 1944, the Chinese in Sinkawang held secret meetings at Kong Tjia Kwee Koan, a building used by a Hakka secret society, where they made plans to poison Japanese personnel during a banquet at the 'Japan Theatre' on 21 September 1944, with an uprising to follow. He said the plot was exposed when a man named Yong Muk Fi was caught trying to hide a short wave radio in a kampong in Sinkawang; under interrogation, Yong named several persons involved. (Chart 10.4)

It was the second arrest for a number of leading Chinese, including Ts'in Ts'ung Ji, president of the Chinese Control Association and of the *Kyōa Sokai*, the Asia Cooperative Organization that replaced it. On the previous occasion, Tokkei investigators had felt that Ts'in was pro-Japanese and they released him in April 1944, but Okajima said when the Japanese authorities focused their investigation on Chinese societies, they concluded that Ts'in was the 'Ringleader and Commander' of the anti-Japanese movement.⁴² He 'pretended to be pro-Japanese and kept on collecting information from those who work in the Civil Administration and Companies'. When Ts'in was first arrested, he 'maintained his pretended pro-Japanese feelings, and was called a traitor by his fellow countrymen. But he quietly went on with the execution of his plans, which would efface the blemish on his name if realized – as he stated himself in his confession.'⁴³

According to Okajima, the poisonings were planned for August 1945 during a banquet to celebrate the creation of the *Kyōa Sokai*. The revolt by an armed 'death' battalion would take place on October 10, China's national day. He suggested that the plotters intended to use the *Kyōa Sokai*, which handled the distribution of commodities provided by the Civil Administration, to take control of the regional economy, and said the real reason for the executions was that the Chinese were causing an economic disturbance: 'Buying up of products and not releasing goods (copra) for the market. Refusal to sell raw materials to the factories', and 'keeping back goods supplied by the Minseibu and in this way causing friction between the

The Pontianak Incidents and the Ethnic Chinese in Wartime Western Borneo

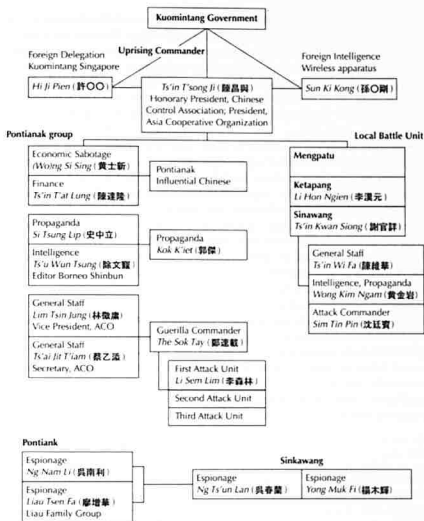


Chart 10.4 Organization of the Plot in Pontianak and Sinkawang as Constructed by the Japanese

Source: R.V.O. Indonesian Collection 009817, 009834 (NIOD)

Japanese and Indonesians'.⁴⁴ In accordance with their pretence of maintaining good relations with the Japanese, the plotters gave information to the economic police and naval special military police about such illegal economic activities, but *Tokkei* personnel believed their purpose in doing so was to create cleavages between the naval force, government officials and the local population.⁴⁵

Okajima made no mention of the supposed ties with Communist China, and such a connection would have been surprising. Most of the Chinese living in Western Borneo were *peranakan*; they had been born in Borneo, and expected to remain there for life. They maintained links with other parts of South-East Asia through family and commercial networks, but had little contact with or sympathy for Mainland China. Neither the Kuomintang government nor its communist opponents figured in their thinking to any great extent.

Okajima's statement makes it clear that the Tokkei took extensive precautions against the Lo Fang Kongsì, fearing that Chinese attachment to Lo Fang Pai would give them the solidarity and spirit to fight against the Japanese. However, Izeki argues that the suspicion of Chinese business networks and cultural solidarity was misdirected, because the Chinese commercial networks already provided reliable linkages, and they had no need of an autonomous state in a host country.⁴⁶

In a book published in 1999, Masuko Tsunesuke, a civilian employee of the Nanyo Warehouse in Pontianak both before and during the Occupation, also disputes Okajima's contention that the Chinese were planning a revolt. Masuko points out that the execution of Chinese leaders during the first incident had disrupted the Chinese community, and those who survived needed to hold meetings to reorganize, and rebuild communal structures. The ethnic Chinese believed that the end of the war was imminent, and they would soon be able to resurrect their business ventures and resume the uneventful life they had known. They also recognized that the Japanese intelligence network remained powerful and intimidating, and under these circumstances wanted to avoid taking any risks in dealing with the Japanese.⁴⁷

Conclusion

The Pontianak War Tribunal tried twenty-seven members of the naval circle, and sentenced fifteen of them to death. The accused included civilian interpreters, Minseibu officials, the officers who ordered the executions, and Naval police personnel who carried them out. Many Japanese who lived in wartime Western Borneo believed that the trials were unfair because they were held in the midst of the Indonesian War of Independence, and offered a chance for people to take revenge against the Japanese. Certainly the War Tribunal failed to uncover the truth about what happened in the First and Second Pontianak Incidents: the prosecutor raised the question of whether the plot really existed, but the Japanese rejected this suggestion, insisting that 'something must have happened', and the trials were conducted on that basis.⁴⁸

The death toll during the two Pontianak incidents was very high. One source suggests that the Japanese killed more than 2,000 Chinese, and an Australian officer noted in his post-war rehabilitation report that 'all the

men I met and talked to had lost either a father, a brother, or some other member of their family'.⁴⁹ This decimation of the community made it difficult to find suitable leaders when the Australian Army took control of the area at the end of the Occupation. As Mary Somers Heidhues has written, 'there was virtually no one left to rebuild community life at the end of 1945'.⁵⁰

Statements by *Tokkei* personnel concerning the local Chinese contain grave misunderstandings and distortions. The confiscation of Chinese businesses, the disruption of trade links, the massive intrusion of Japanese enterprises and massacres of prominent local figures certainly caused deep unhappiness, and lent plausibility to rumours of an anti-Japanese plot, but such activities were entirely out of character for the people who were executed. Several informants' statements on the first Pontianak affair give the strong impression that the whole story was a deliberate fabrication by a few Japanese officers. Whether they merely sought credit for themselves as wartime heroes, or maliciously set out to kill leading Chinese figures in Western Borneo to prepare the way for the Navy to hold the area in perpetuity, remains unclear. The first round of mass-arrests and killings created considerable uneasiness within the Naval circle, and the second Pontianak Incident appeared to justify what had been done earlier. Further research may reveal more details concerning the Pontianak Incidents, but it seems clear that the cause of this great tragedy lay in the Japanese mistrust of the local society, and their and misunderstanding of the activities of the local population.

Notes

- 1 See Chapters 7 and 12 in the present volume.
- 2 See, for example, *Sekido Hyo* [The Equator Beacon] and *Zoku Sekido Hyo* [The Equator Beacon, Part 2] ed. Michio Hiratsuka, Tokyo, Pontianak Sekido Kai, 1975, 1976. These two volumes contain 68 lengthy essays written mainly by the naval administration officials and civilians, with just five contributions from NCOs from the naval landing force or the garrison force. There are few references to the Pontianak incidents. See also Izeki Tsuneo, *Nishi Boruneo Jumin Gyakusatsu Jiken: Kensho Pontiana Jiken* [Massacre in Western Borneo: the examination of Pontianak Incident], Tokyo, Fuji Shuppan, 1987. Izeki went to Western Borneo in 1928 and worked at a plantation in Selandin, later becoming its director. After the war broke out, he joined the Sumitomo Takushoku Company. Because of his command of the Indonesian language, he served as an interpreter for the 20 suspects who were arrested very early stage of the Pontianak Incident in 1943. His discussion of the First Pontianak Incident is based mainly on interviews with Japanese.
- 3 Goto Kenichi, 'Pontianak Jiken Oboegaki' [Note on Pontianak Incidents], in *Nihon Senryoki Indonesia Kenkyu*, Tokyo, Ryukei Shosha, 1988, pp. 149-79, and George Sanford Kanahele, 'The Japanese Occupation of Indonesia: Prelude to Independence', Ithaca, Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1967. Goto thoroughly examined the First Pontianak Incident from both the Japanese and the Indonesian perspective.

- 4 Iwakawa Takashi, *Koto no Tsuchi to Narutomo: BC Kyu Senpan Saiban* [Die in a Foreign Land: BC Class War Tribunal], Tokyo, Kodansha, 1995; Masuko Tsunesuke, *Zoku Mandoru no Higeiki: Sambungan Tragedi Mandor di Pontianak* [Sequel to the Tragedy of Mandor in Pontianak], privately published, 1999; 'Plot amongst Chinese', statement of Okajima Riki, Japanese Captain of the Marines, to K. A. de Weerd, LL.D., Major Artillery RNEI, Senior Official attached to the Office of the Attorney-General N.E.I., 3 Sept. 1946, in Batavia. Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, Indonesian Collection R.V.O. 009833-009854.
- 5 See James C. Jackson, *Chinese in the West Borneo Goldfields: A Study in Cultural Geography*, Hull, University of Hull Occasional Papers in Geography No. 15, 1970.
- 6 *Volkestelling* 1930, Vol. 7, p. 11. See also Mantetsu Toa Keizai Chosakyoku, *Ranryo Indo ni okeru Kakyō* [The Chinese in the Netherlands East Indies], Tokyo, 1940, p. 240.
- 7 Until 1916, Chinese in this region gained customary rights to land simply by clearing it, but in that year a new decree required them to get permission from the government to lease uncultivated land. The lease period was 50 years for small-scale agriculture, and 75 years for plantations.
- 8 The largest regular cargo and transport service company in Pontianak, Tong Ek Co., was a joint venture involving Chinese in Singapore and Western Borneo. The KPM competed with Chinese transport between Singapore and Pontianak, and with Madurese and Buginese sailing ships that carried local commodities such as rice and livestock to Java and Bali. The coastal trade between Pontianak and Sinkawang-Sambas operated on a smaller scale, and these places also traded directly with Singapore.
- 9 For more details, see Toa Kenkyusho, *Dai San Chosa Inkaei Hokokusho: Nanyō Kakyō Konichi Kyakoku Undo no Kenkyū* [Report of the Third research Council: Study on Anti-Japanese and Save-the Nation Movement of Nanyang Oversea Chinese], Tokyo, Institute of East Asia, 1944.
- 10 Toa Kenkyusho, *Dai San Chosa Inkaei Hokokusho*, p. 330. Lai Piang Wun was chairman of the Association of Oversea Chinese for the Save the Nation Charity in Pontianak; the head of the Sinkawang branch is unknown.
- 11 See 'Senryo-chi Gunsei Jissi ni kansuru Riku-kaigun Chuo Kyotei' [Central Agreement between the Army and the Navy on the Military Administration of Occupied Areas], 26 Nov. 1941 and Naval Ministry, 'Kaigun Minseibu Kitei' [Regulation on Naval Administration], Nairei [Ordinance] No. 2, 11 Jan. 1942.
- 12 Southwest District Navy Civil Government Order on Administration, 'Nansei Homen Kantai Miseifu Rei' (Ordinance 740), 27 Apr. 1942. See Harry Benda, James Irikura, Kishi Koichi, *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia: Selected Document*, Translation Series, No. 6 (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1965), Document No. 52, p. 202.
- 13 'Senryo-chi Gunsei Shori Yoko' [Outline for the Military Administration in Occupied Territories], Kanbo-Kimitsu No. 3167, 14 Mar. 1942. Boeicho Boei Kenshu Sho [National Institute for Defense Service], *Nansei Homen Kaigun Sakusen*, Tokyo, Asagumo Shinbunsha, 1974, pp. 100-3.
- 14 By mid-July, Western Borneo was called the Western Province of North Borneo. The reason for the delay in transferring responsibility for defence and administration from the Army to the Navy is not very clear. See National Institute for Defense Service, *Nansei Homen Kaigun Sakusen*, p. 38. In Timor, where there was a similar delay in the transfer of power, the Headquarters of the Second Southern Fleet sent frequent requests to the Headquarters of Southern Army that defence and administration should be arranged in accordance with the agreement.

- 15 *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia*, (translation from Okuma Memorial Social Sciences Research Institute, *Indonesia ni Okeru Nihon Gunsei no Kenkyu*, 1959), Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of Commerce, 1965, p. 209.
- 16 Kanbo-Kimitsu No. 3167, Boeicho Boei Kenshu Sho, *Nansei Homen Kaigun Sakusen*, pp. 100–3.
- 17 Asuka Otohisa, 'Pontianak Jiken no Haikei wo Kataru' [Talk on the background of Pontianak Incidents], in Japan Indonesia Occupation Research Forum, *Shogenshu* Tokyo, Ryukei Shosha, 1991, pp 549–98.
- 18 Concerning the activities of pre-war Japanese migrants to this region, see Nakahara Zentoku, *Boruneo to Serebesu* [Borneo and Celebes], Tokyo, Hounsha, 1942.
- 19 Asuka Otohisa, 'Pontianak Jiken no Haikei wo Kataru', NEFIS Interrogation Report No. 708 (trader Oe Beng Kiang), Centraal Archiefvandeput van Ministerie van Defensie, Den Haag (CAvMD). For a complete list of Japanese companies in Borneo during this period, see Ota Koki, 'Kaigun Nanpo Senryochi ni Shinshutu shita Nihon no Kigyo Kaisha' [The Extent of Japanese Enterprises in Areas of Southeast Asia Occupied by the Japanese Navy], *Tonan Ajia Kenkyu* [Southeast Asian Studies], Kyoto University, 18, 3, 1980, pp. 132–45.
- 20 NEFIS Interrogation Report no. 2210/III.CAvMD.
- 21 Compilation of NEFIS Interrogation Report, nos. 661–669.
- 22 Effective power in the *Kakyo Toseikai* lay with the president of Ng family group, Ng [Wong] Ngiap Soen, who was executed in late 1944 in connection with the first Pontianak incident.
- 23 One patrol operated between Pontianak and the Karimata Islands, Ketapang and Bawal Islands and Kandawangan, and another between Singkawang and Lemoekeotan Island.
- 24 *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia*, pp. 208–9.
- 25 NEFIS Interrogation Report, no. 708.CAvMD.
- 26 NEFIS Interrogation Report, no. 2210/III.CAvMD.
- 27 *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia*, p. 181.
- 28 Iwakawa, *Koto no Tsuchi to Narutomo*, p. 315.
- 29 A Japanese named Ogawa was also arrested. He was the head of Pontianak branch of a Japanese-owned plantation company, and had been the chairman of the Japanese Association in pre-war Western Borneo. Although he worked as an interpreter in the Minseibu office, the *Tokkei* arrested him because he was popular among the local people, and they thought that he must have known about the conspiracy. Although lacking any evidence of wrongdoing, the *Tokkei* investigated and threatened him. Izeki and Ogawa noted that dangerous methods used in *Tokkei* investigations by those with little knowledge of local languages could mislead local suspects into making incriminating statements. Izeki., *Nishi Boruneo Jumin Gyakusatsu Jiken*, pp. 50–1.
- 30 The list of the Sultans executed is as follows:
 Sarif Mohamed Alkadri, Sultan of Pontianak
 Mohamad Ibrahim Tsafidedin, Sultan of Sambas
 Goesti Saoenan, Sultan of Ketapang
 Tengkoec Idris, Sultan of Soekadana
 Goesti Mesir, Sultan of Simbang
 Sjarif Saleh, Sultan of Koeboe
 Goesti Abdoel Hamid, Sultan of Ngabang
 Ade Mohamad Arif, Sultan of Sanggau
 Goesti Mohamad Kelip, Sultan of Sekadau

Goesti Djapar, Sultan of Tajan
 Raden Abdul Bahri Danoe Perdana, Sultan of Singtan
 Mohammed Aboufieik, Sultan of Mempawa

- Others executed included Pengeran Adipati, deputy of the Sultan of Pontianak, and Pengeran Agoen, secretary and fourth child of Sultan of Pontianak. Australian War Memorial, Canberra (henceforth, AWM) 54 41/4/37.
- 31 AWM 54 41/4/37, 'Surrender of Japan: Concentration of Japanese from Pontianak Dutch Borneo, reports from a local Dutch Commander and RSM of Royal Dutch Indies Army Dutch Bishop of Pontianak and Chinese Citizens', 29 Sept. 1945. Those executed included many leading Chinese, among them Kwee Liang Kie, whose younger brother, Kwee Liang Tjip, was president of the General Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Pontianak; Ng Ngiap Soen and Ng Leong Khoi, respectively the President and Secretary of the Chinese Control Association for Pontianak; Ng Ngiap Kan, the president of Sinkawang Chinese Association; Ong Tjoe Kie, a naturalized Dutch citizen and clerk for the Vice-President of Sinkawang District; Thji Boen Khe, a newspaper journalist in Pontianak; and Theng Soea Teng, Kapitan of Sinkawang. Kwee Liang Tjip was arrested but later released.
 - 32 Nishi Boruneo Minseibu Pontianak Shu Chijicho Fukuin Hokokusho [Repatriation Report of State Government Pontianak, Western Borneo Civil Administration], 20 July 1946, unpublished documents, Nishijima Collection, Waseda University.
 - 33 Kanahele, 'The Japanese Occupation of Indonesia', p. 159.
 - 34 Izeki, Nishi Boruneo Jumin Gyakusatsu Jiken, p. 175; *Tandjungpura Berjuang: Sedjarah KODAM XII/Tandjungpura Kalimantan-Barat*, Tandjungpura: Semidam XII, 1970, pp. 94-7.
 - 35 Asuka Otohisa, 'Pontianak Jiken no Haikai wo Kataru' [Talk on the background of Pontianak Incidents], in Japan Indonesia Occupation Research Forum, *Shogenshu*, Tokyo, Ryukei Shosha, 1991, pp. 570, 589.
 - 36 Izeki, *Nishi Boruneo Jumin Gyakusatsu Jiken*, pp. 170-81. Young and earnest, Nakatani was notorious both in Japanese and local society for his cruelty. He was killed in a Dayak attack in late 1944. Tabata mainly did clerical work, and was the only Japanese directly involved in the affair not to be charged with war crimes.
 - 37 Quoted in Kanahele, 'The Japanese Occupation of Indonesia', p. 309.
 - 38 Asuka, 'Pontianak Jiken no Haikai wo Kataru', p. 587-8.
 - 39 Lo Hsing Lin, *A Historical Survey of the Lang-Fang Presidential System in Western Borneo, Established by Lo Fang Pai and Other Overseas Chinese*, Hong Kong, Institute of Chinese Culture, 1961.
 - 40 *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia*, p. 209.
 - 41 Statement by Okajima, report of prosecution, R.V.O. 009833-9854.
 - 42 R.V.O. 009833-9854.
 - 43 A report of the prosecution of Okajima. R.V.O. 009811.
 - 44 R.V.O. 009832.
 - 45 R.V.O. 009847.
 - 46 Izeki, *Nishi Boruneo Jumin Gyakusatsu Jiken*, pp. 38-45. Izeki based his judgement on the interrogation of a man named Lim who was the secretary of Ng Ngiap Soen's Hak Hong Kongsu, and also a co-worker of Izeki at the Sumitomo Takushoku Company and a personal acquaintance. Izeki handled Lim's interrogation in connection with the First Pontianak incident.
 - 47 Masuko Tsunesuke, *Zoku Mandor no Higeke*, pp. 11-3. Information partly based on correspondence between Masuko and the author in Aug. 2000.

- 48 Asuka, 'Pontianak Jiken no Haikei wo Kataru', p. 570.
- 49 Sergeant Ong Kee Hui of the AMF Kuching Force filed a report on the situation in Pontianak shortly after the war. He said, 'the present President of the Pontianak Chinese Association lost 3 brothers who were all executed, while the present Capitan China was their former Capitan's clerk, both the original Capitan and his successor having been executed.' Ong Kee Hui to Brigade Commander of the Australian Forces in Kuching, 26 Sept.1945, AWM 54 619/7/22.
- 50 Mary Somers Heidues, 'Citizenship and Identity: Ethnic Chinese and the Indonesian Revolution', in *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese Since World War II*, ed. Jennifer Cushman and Wang Gungwu, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988, p. 117.

Chapter Eleven

The Indian Community and the Indian Independence Movement in Thailand during World War II

E. Bruce Reynolds

When the wartime activities of the Indian Independence Movement in Southeast Asia are mentioned, several locations immediately come to mind: Malaya, where F Kikan leader Major Fujiwara Iwa'ichi began the process of forming the Indian National Army (INA) in the early weeks of the war; Singapore, where Subhas Chandra Bose assumed the movement's leadership in 1943 after arriving by submarine from Germany; and Burma, site of the ill-fated Imphal Campaign of 1944, the failure of which ended Bose's dream of inciting an uprising against the British in India. Many important events in the movement's history, however, took place in Thailand, or involved Indian residents from there. This paper examines the wartime situation of the Indian community in Thailand, its participation in the independence movement, and the Thai response.

During World War II an estimated 40,000 Indians – Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims – resided in Thailand, having migrated there in search of economic opportunity. The community included prosperous textile merchants, jewellers, cattle traders, and moneylenders, among them Punjabis, Gujeratis, Bengalis, and Tamils. However, the largest group of the Indian residents consisted of Hindi-speaking dairymen and night watchmen of modest means and minimal education from the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.¹

By the early twentieth century, increasingly nationalistic Thai tended to view most of these resident Indians with disdain. Proud of their country's unique independent status in Southeast Asia, they cultivated a sense of superiority over the peoples from colonised areas of Asia.² They viewed Indians in an especially negative fashion as selfish moneygrubbers who did not assimilate culturally and repatriated their profits to a homeland to which most intended to return. Overseas Chinese were often similarly criticized, but Chinese merchants had been favoured under the Chakri Dynasty in the nineteenth century, and many had assimilated into Thai society through intermarriage. In contrast, intermarriage between Indians and Thai of high social standing was uncommon,³ not least because the Indians lacked the



Map 5 Thailand

Chinese advantage of light-coloured skin, a highly desirable physical characteristic in Thailand. The Thai encapsulated their attitude toward South Asians in a popular saying, still much quoted: 'On your way, if you come across a snake and an Indian, kill the Indian first'. One study of the Indian community in Thailand done in the 1980s acknowledged that 'the stereotyped view of Indians developed by Thais and Chinese is rather unpleasant', while another straightforwardly described the Indians as 'the least esteemed ethnic group in Thailand'.⁴

In the early decades of the century the British Legation in Bangkok generally considered the Indian community in Thailand commercially oriented and politically inert, although Sikhs were viewed with a degree of suspicion.⁵ The fact that the Thai government had long co-operated in suppressing Indian nationalist activities reinforced British confidence that the Indians posed little political threat. This co-operation reflected the Chakri Dynasty's policy of basing its foreign policy first and foremost on the principle of maintaining good relations with the British. As Consul General Josiah Crosby explained in 1921:

Siamese statesmen see clearly enough that their interests are bound up with the maintenance of the *status quo* in this corner of Asia. They have no wish to see ourselves expelled from India, or Burma, or the French thrust out from Indochina . . . The revolutionary movements in India and French Indochina therefore excite little or no sympathy.⁶

Although assiduous in their efforts to maintain proper relations with their European colonial neighbours, officials of the royalist regime were not in fact completely lacking in sympathy toward Asian independence movements. This was particularly true in regard to anti-colonial activities aimed against the French, whose heavy-handed seizures of Cambodia and the Lao states, territories previously under Bangkok's suzerainty, were strongly resented. Members of the new Thai political élite that seized power in the coup d'état of 1932 would prove still more inclined to support the nationalist aspirations of their neighbours, although this proclivity did not become immediately apparent.⁷

Despite early indications that the new Thai regime would maintain a co-operative relationship, the British soon found themselves in serious competition with the Japanese for influence in Bangkok. Under these changed circumstances, the British Legation could not but worry that the opportunities presented by frequent Chinese merchant boycotts of Japanese-made goods were drawing the nearly 50 Indian textile firms in Thailand into closer business relations with Japan. Several of these firms, headquartered on Bangkok's Ratchawong Road and in various upcountry towns, established offices in Tokyo to facilitate acquisition of inexpensive and popular Japanese goods.⁸

Shortly before the December 1941 Japanese advance into Thailand, Major Fujiwara arrived in Bangkok in civilian disguise to organize a scheme to subvert the loyalty of Indian troops serving under British command in Malaya. Fujiwara, operating under the direction of the chief of Japanese intelligence activities in the area, Colonel Tamura Hiroshi, the military attaché at the Japanese Embassy, won cooperation from Pritam Singh and several members of the Sikh-dominated Bangkok chapter of the Indian Independence League (IIL). When war broke out, Fujiwara and his Sikh allies joined the advancing Japanese army in Malaya. Their subversive activities are detailed in Fujiwara's memoir, translated into English under the title *F-Kikan*, and in Joyce Lebra's *Jungle Alliance*.⁹

Immediately after its move into Bangkok on 8 December 1941, the Japanese army issued a statement indicating that Indians and other British colonial subjects would not be treated as enemies so long as they 'did not take action injurious to the Japanese'.¹⁰ The Japanese clearly hoped to gain wider support from the Indian community, but not all its members were reassured. For example, two prominent Indian journalists – M. Siviram, who edited the Thai-owned *Bangkok Chronicle* and served as the local stringer for Associated Press, and S. A. Ayer, who represented Reuters – joined European and American residents in trying to escape from Bangkok to Burma. As Siviram related in his autobiographical work *Road to Delhi*, the two reached the border at Mae Sot, but were unable to leave the country. In January 1942 the Japanese army arrived in Mae Sot to prepare for the invasion of Burma, so after several weeks they gave up and returned to Bangkok.¹¹

In the meantime, leaders of the most prestigious Indian organization in Thailand, the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge, had taken advantage of the new circumstances to establish an Indian National Council (INC) in Bangkok. The founder of the Cultural Lodge, Swami Satyananda Puri (Prafulla Kumar Sen), a 40-year-old Bengali with a masters degree in Asian philosophy from Calcutta University, assumed the INC's presidency, with his associate Debnath Das taking office as secretary. This group had strained relations with Pritam Singh's IIL, in part because of the INC's emphasis on solidarity with the Indian Congress Party and its leaders' reluctance to be seen as 'Quislings of the Japanese'.¹²

The famous Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, who had visited Bangkok in 1927 at the invitation of Royal Thai Government, had encouraged Swami Satyananda Puri's move to Thailand in 1932 in an effort to re-establish broken cultural links between the Indian and Thai peoples. The Swami's expertise in philosophy and his knowledge of the ancient Indian languages upon which the Thai written language is based gained him a lectureship at Chulalongkorn University. He reportedly mastered the Thai language in six months and in short order began writing both philosophical works and biographies of contemporary Indian figures, including Mahatma Gandhi.

His Thai literary output eventually amounted to some 20 volumes. He also published a Thai-language newsletter and opened a study centre on Si Phraya Road in 1939 that became the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge the following year. The fact that the influential Prince Wan Wathaiyakon, adviser to the Foreign Ministry and a respected authority on the Thai language, became a patron of the Lodge and its library attests to the Swami's remarkable success in winning the friendship and respect of key members of the Thai élite.¹³

During the month that the INC came into being, December 1941, the Thai government's attitude toward Indian nationalism changed drastically. Premier Phibunsongkhram (Phibun) allied his country with Japan, and soon would declare war on Britain and the United States. In an effort to please and re-assure his new ally, whose armies were in the process of sweeping through Southeast Asia, Phibun decided to cooperate fully in Japan's efforts to use Indian nationalism as a weapon against the British.¹⁴ On 23 December 1941, the newly appointed Deputy Foreign Minister, Wichit Wichitwathakan, appeared before a Japanese-promoted, packed-house gathering of Indian residents at Bangkok's Silapakon Theatre. Speaking on behalf of Premier Phibun, Wichit, who concurrently served as the government's Publicity Bureau chief and had for some time before the war been viewed as a dangerous figure by the British, declared:

Asiatic peoples have the right to govern their own land and nobody should deny them this right. Japan has started the task of driving the white people from Asia. The Thai people themselves have many bitter memories of *farangs* [Europeans] and are now cooperating with Japan.¹⁵

In addition to offering such verbal encouragement and providing the facilities for the public meeting, the Thai government also allocated airtime for INC broadcasts on Radio Bangkok, programmes prepared under strict Japanese supervision.¹⁶

From the beginning, however, the Japanese faced difficulties in their efforts to mobilize Indians living in their rapidly expanding empire. Ethnic differences and political factionalism had long divided the Indian communities, and disagreements over the extent to which Indians should trust and cooperate with the Japanese further complicated the situation. In Bangkok, Swami Satyananda Puri openly questioned the credibility of Tokyo's anti-imperialist line in light of Japanese actions in Korea and China. Like Congress Party leaders Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, he feared that a successful Japanese invasion of India would bring only a change of colonial masters. The German Legation in Bangkok reported that such suspicions of Japanese intentions had led INC members to envision a future alliance of India, Burma, and Thailand to counterbalance the power of a victorious Japan. Other Indians concluded that while the Japanese were interested in using them for subversive and propaganda purposes, Tokyo was not

committed to the liberation of India. Some simply came to doubt Japanese political aptitude. One remarked to a Thai acquaintance: 'the Japanese may be a good fighter, but [he is] a bad politician and a zero on propaganda technique.'¹⁷

Encouraged by the Japanese government, Indian revolutionaries based in Tokyo made an early attempt to solidify overseas Indian support for Japan's war effort by inviting representatives of the Indian communities in Southeast Asia to a meeting in March 1942. However, even the Indians resident in Japan were not of one mind, and two prominent members of the community – Anand Mohan Sahay and Raja Mahendra Pratap – stayed away. Thailand's Swami Satyananda Puri agreed to attend, but the military plane carrying him, Giani Pritam Singh and others crashed in a storm on the way to Tokyo. In light of the Swami's well-known opposition to Japanese domination of the independence movement and his outspoken advocacy of fellow Bengali, Subhas Chandra Bose, a charismatic former Congress Party leader who had escaped to Germany, as the independence movement's leader, suspicions arose that his disappearance had not been accidental.¹⁸

Differences soon surfaced between the Southeast Asian representatives who did reach Tokyo safely and the Japanese, as did antagonism between the former members of the British Indian army who led the INA and Indian civilians. In deference to the strong preference of their hosts, the conferees agreed that a reorganized IIL led by veteran revolutionary Rash Behari Bose would represent all Indian expatriates. Bose, a naturalized Japanese citizen, had a Japanese wife, a son serving in the Imperial Army, and longstanding connections to Japanese right-wing societies and the Japanese army. The delegates also agreed to hold a larger, follow-up meeting of Indian representatives in Bangkok.¹⁹

This Bangkok conference provided another venue for airing various factional disputes. As the journalist Siviram, now an active participant in the movement, aptly put it, the conference 'produced a spicy fragment of Indian politics in all its complexity, regardless of the distance from the homeland and the exigencies of the war crisis'. The 'views and interests' of the delegates, Siviram recalled, 'represented sharp contrasts and the intricacies of the problems before them were equally wide and varied'.²⁰

Deputy Foreign Minister Wichit spoke for Thailand when the conference formally opened on the morning of 15 June 1942 at the Silapakon Theatre. Pictures of Gandhi and other prominent Indian leaders, the Indian tricolour flag, flags of the Axis and Greater East Asian states, and slogan-bearing posters decked the hall. Addressing an overflow audience that included Japanese Ambassador Tsubokami Teiji, German Minister Ernst Wendler, and Italian Minister Guido Crolla, Wichit read a message from Premier Phibun that supported Indian independence but reflected ample Thai conceit. While acknowledging the influence of Indian culture and religion on Thailand, the message noted:

During the period when India had to contend with foreign aggression and fell under the domination of a race alien in language and in culture, resulting in Indian Culture being deprived of support and maintenance which in time brought on a gradual decay, Thailand undertook the duty of safeguarding Indian culture. If you visit our National Museum, you will find that we have preserved ancient relics and objects of Art of India in a better state and to a greater amount than those to be seen in the Indian Museum in Calcutta.²¹

Phibun later received the key participants at an informal reception at his residence, and his government staged an elaborate tea party at Lumpini Park, where orchestras on a rotating platform and troupes of dancers entertained the Indian delegates, Thai cabinet members, and key Japanese officials.²²

After eight days of heated debates in closed-door sessions at the Oriental Hotel, the 120 Indian delegates produced a lengthy series of resolutions and a constitution for the IIL. Under Japanese pressure, the delegates re-endorsed, for the moment at least, the leadership of Rash Behari Bose. However, many delegates considered him too close to the Japanese and continued to advocate making Subhas Chandra Bose the movement's leader. In fact, Subhas Chandra Bose himself had expressed interest in assuming this role in communications with the INC sent through the German Legation in Bangkok. The Japanese, however, were not ready to embrace him and vehemently opposed a proposal to base the movement on principles he had proposed.²³

The passionate disputes intensified Japanese doubts about the reliability of the Indians as allies. Reflecting this uneasiness, Ambassador Tsubokami warned Tokyo on 3 July 1942:

I understand the Indians extremely well . . . and in India, regardless of faction, they don't trust Japan. The independence faction is most opposed to Japan and the majority of the Indians, even though they want to use Japan to get independence, intend to reject Japanese intervention when independence is realized.²⁴

The Japanese authorities clearly preferred dealing with the familiar Rash Behari Bose, but in any case Subhas Chandra Bose's transfer to Asia could be effected only with German cooperation, and at the time relations between the two allies were far from harmonious, particularly in regard to Indian policy. In fact, the Japanese Embassy in Bangkok learned that the German Legation was forwarding complaints from disgruntled Indians to Berlin. On 5 June, Counsellor Ishii Kō, then serving as chargé d'affaires in Tsubokami's absence, reported this with concern to Tokyo.²⁵ At about the same time, Japanese military officers were chastising Gen. Mohan Singh, the INA commander, for meeting with German officials in the Thai capital. The officers shocked Singh by characterizing Germany not only as a rival but

also as a potential enemy.²⁶ In response to Ishii's report, Foreign Minister Tōgō Shigenori sent a message to the Japanese Embassy in Berlin complaining that German officials in Bangkok were undermining Japan's Indian policy and playing into the hands of British and American propagandists. Tōgō instructed his diplomats to impress upon German officials the necessity of cooperating with Japan's strategy in Asia. When Col. Iwakuro Hideo, Fujiwara's replacement as chief liaison with the IIL, indiscreetly informed German Minister Wendler in Bangkok about Tōgō's message, Wendler vented his anger on Ishii. Declaring indignantly that he had been cooperating fully with the Japanese, Wendler advised Ishii on 2 July 1942 that he had reaffirmed this in a dispatch to Berlin. Taken aback, and embarrassed by what Iwakuro had done and the trouble it had caused, the frustrated Tōgō warned Bangkok that unless such 'military diplomats' as Iwakuro were reined in, 'our negotiations here with the Germans will become almost impossible.'²⁷

As Milan Hauner has shown in his superb study *India in Axis Strategy*, Hitler's racial attitudes, mutual mistrust and the pursuit of narrow national interests by policymakers in both Tokyo and Berlin stymied efforts to develop a unified Axis Indian policy. Any hopes for a coordinated Axis assault on the British in India died in the wake of the Japanese naval defeat at Midway in June 1942 and the landing of American forces on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands two months later. Hauner argues that hesitation on both sides resulted in a missed opportunity, a judgment supported by a contemporary British intelligence estimate.²⁸

In the wake of the June 1942 conference, the IIL set up its general headquarters on Wireless Road in Bangkok. Ayer, the former Reuters correspondent, took responsibility for broadcasts over Bangkok Radio. Swami Satyananda Puri's protégé Debnath Das assumed leadership of the Thailand branch of the newly reconstituted organization. Although the old animosities between the Cultural Lodge and Sikh factions within Indian community in Thailand remained, according to one participant the two groups eventually established a working relationship, if not a fully co-operative one.²⁹

Very soon, however, new problems erupted between the Indians and the Japanese because Tokyo had not categorically accepted all the resolutions passed at the Bangkok Conference. A general souring of relations between Iwakuro and both the IIL and the INA made matters worse. Then the Japanese arrested one of Gen. Mohan Singh's officers on charges that he had attempted to contact the British. Singh adopted a recalcitrant stance toward the Japanese, forcing Rash Behari Bose to sack the INA chief, who was himself arrested. Before this happened, Singh ordered INA troops to disband. These developments left both the IIL and INA demoralized and in disarray, and finally persuaded the Japanese to seek the urgent transfer of Subhas Chandra Bose from Germany by submarine.³⁰

As an interim step to re-unify the Indian movement, the IIL leadership and Iwakuro's liaison organization moved from Bangkok to Singapore, where the INA was headquartered, in March 1943.³¹ Hence, it was in Singapore, not Bangkok, that Subhas Chandra Bose assumed leadership of the movement in July 1943. He promptly re-organized the INA and IIL, assuming the supreme command of the former and the presidency of the latter. He then undertook the first of a series of visits to the major cities of Southeast Asia, seeking 'total mobilisation' of all available Indian resources, both human and material.³² Although the British believed the Japanese had brought Bose into the fray too late, they fully appreciated his importance. An intelligence report dated 14 July 1943 noted:

Bose's great drive and political acumen, his prestige in Indian revolutionary circles, his understanding of both Indian and English character, will be of real value to the Japanese whose propaganda against India has hitherto lacked imagination . . . there is no doubt that under Bose's direction subversive activities and espionage in India will be greatly intensified.³³

On 25 July Bose flew to Bangkok where he received a rousing airport welcome from members of the Indian community. After laying a wreath at the Thai Victory Monument, he made courtesy calls on Japanese officials, including the local commander, Lt. Gen. Nakamura Aketo. In their conversation, Nakamura related how he, as a lad, had decided to become a soldier in the wake of the humiliating Triple Intervention that had forced the return of Manchurian concessions gained in the Sino-Japanese War. Bose, in turn, recalled how Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War had fired his youthful determination to see India liberated from colonial rule. Bose's profession of joy at cooperating with Japan in pursuit of that goal, his spirit, and his dedication greatly impressed Nakamura, as it had Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki and other Japanese military officers.³⁴

Bose also visited the German and Italian ministers, met with local Indian leaders, and was hosted by Japanese officials on 26 July. The following morning he gave what Nakamura described as a 'fire-breathing speech' at a three-hour rally attended by an overflow crowd at the Chulalongkorn University auditorium. After lunching with the German Minister, Bose hoped to meet Premier Phibun, but was told that Phibun was out of town and was received instead by a stand-in. Subsequently Bose held a press conference and attended a dinner given by Wichit, now the Thai foreign minister and his official host. Bose left for Rangoon on 28 July to participate in Burmese independence ceremonies.³⁵

When Bose returned to Bangkok on 4 August he succeeded in gaining an audience with Phibun. It is not surprising that the Thai premier had been less than eager to receive Bose, because the war had begun to turn against the Axis and Phibun's enthusiasm for the alliance with Japan had declined.

By one account the 'small, inscrutable' Phibun displayed his usual good manners in receiving Bose, 'but hardly committed to anything'. He did subsequently permit the passage of INA troops through Thailand en route to the front lines in Burma, but this privilege did not come free. In March 1944 the IIL 'donated' 100,000 baht to the Thai government, apparently a direct payment for services rendered to the transiting army.³⁶

Bose also lunched with Italian Minister Crolla, gave a public address, and met with local Indian community leaders on 5 August. During these early visits to Bangkok Bose achieved relative success in unifying the two main Bangkok factions, the Sikhs and the INC group. On 6 August Bose hosted a garden party for Thai, Indian, and foreign dignitaries, then attended a dinner hosted by Ambassador Tsubokami. A speech on 8 August commemorated the first anniversary of the Congress Party's launching of its anti-British 'Quit India' campaign. The next day Bose departed for a two-day visit to Saigon.³⁷ Noting his penchant for first-class travel and his large entourage, the veteran journalist Siviram, wrote:

In Bangkok and Rangoon where I was a member of Netaji's [Bose's] party, I had seen no state visit so glamorous. . . . In Thailand, the visit of the high-power Japanese goodwill mission, headed by Elder Statesman Hirota Koki [in mid-1942], was a tame show compared to the grand reception for Netaji. In political showmanship and the tactics of mass appeal, Subhas Chandra Bose was a real genius and an accomplished expert.³⁸

Under Bose's direction, the IIL set up territorial committees in each of the Southeast Asian states. In Thailand a Sikh businessman, Sardar Ishar Singh, assumed leadership, with Pandit R. N. Shastri as his chief adviser. Singh, who had participated in the Bangkok Conference, also served as an adviser to Bose's provisional government and later became a minister, in addition to his role as chairman of the Thailand committee. The INC group accepted the appointment of Singh because they considered him 'capable, hard-working and dedicated to the cause of India's freedom'.³⁹

The Indian residents in Thailand who had volunteered for INA military service began training under the command of Maj. Ganeshi Lal at Ban Suan, near Chonburi, on land provided by an Indian resident. Funds for this endeavour, apart from the training officers' salaries, were raised locally. A Thai intelligence report listed 983 soldiers at the camp in October 1944. Initially female volunteers went to Singapore for military training, but later a separate training camp was established for them in Bangkok.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the local IIL Publicity and Propaganda Department, led by Dr P. N. Sharma, a freelance writer, took responsibility for a daily 90-minute radio broadcast and issued *Azad Hind*, at first a weekly, then a daily newspaper. The IIL Social Welfare and Relief Department opened a school and operated its own hospital until Allied bombs destroyed it during a 1944

raid. Balak Saina, a Boy Scout-style organization for youth aged 5–17, launched in Thailand and other areas of Southeast Asia in 1943, would continue to operate even after the war's end.⁴¹

Determined to minimize the IIL's reliance on the Japanese, Bose made fund raising an immediate priority. He sought to garner sufficient monies from within the Indian communities in Southeast Asia to finance the civilian activities of the IIL and, so far as possible, to supply the INA. The latter was no small task, because expenses naturally would skyrocket as its activities expanded. When patriotic appeals failed to produce sufficient funds, Bose attempted to shame wealthy Indians by emphasizing the total sacrifice of the INA volunteers who were putting their lives on the line and the contributions made by poor Indians who had given what little they had to support the movement. He also added threats to the mix, declaring in a 25 October 1943 speech to Indian moneylenders and merchants that he would arrest as traitors those who failed to meet their patriotic obligations in wartime. As the fund raising became increasingly systematic, all Indians were required to declare their assets as a basis for the levies, and some recalcitrants were actually taken into custody. The Thailand IIL committee established 26 branches across the country and, according to one participant, these raised more than 15 million baht.⁴²

Bose re-visited Bangkok three times during the last four months of 1943. Returning from a second trip to Burma in late September, he stayed for several days at the Rattanakosin Hotel, again meeting with Phibun, and delivered a major radio address to mark Gandhi's birthday. In late October, just after Japan and the other states within the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere had recognized his newly established Azad Hind Provisional Government, he stopped off in Bangkok en route from Singapore to the Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo. Then, after a late December ceremonial visit to the Andaman Islands, Bose spent a week in Bangkok before proceeding to his new headquarters in Rangoon. The Japanese ostensibly had transferred the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to Azad Hind control, so Bose had gone there to raise his flag.⁴³

INA troops of the Bose Brigade (three battalions) passed through Thailand in late 1943 on the way to Burma, where in mid-March 1944 they would take part in Japan's Imphal campaign. Other INA units followed.⁴⁴ Ram Singh Rawal, who worked for Sharma's publicity arm of the IIL in Thailand, claimed:

The Units which went to Burma mostly went on foot. They out-japped the Japanese in covering the distances during their long marches toward Burma. The Jungle routes from Malaya leading through Thailand to Burma were thunderous with the shouts of 'Jai Hind', 'On to Delhi' and the sweet music of 'Sudh Sukh Chain Ki

Barkha Barse', the national anthem of Azad Hind, could be heard in every nook and corner.⁴⁵

Their high spirits notwithstanding, the INA troops suffered greatly on this long march. A. C. Chatterji acknowledged that the INA troops arrived in Burma 'markedly reduced in health, emaciated, and sick'. Once there, they faced additional problems mustering supplies and transporting them to the front.⁴⁶

Thailand served as the major supply centre for the IIL, as well as for the Japanese, because foodstuffs and other necessary commodities were more readily available there than elsewhere. Although most supplies were purchased, the IIL operated its own boot factory and a facility for producing condensed milk. Transportation proved to be a major problem, however, and shipments to the front took 'weeks and months'.⁴⁷

When disaster befell the Japanese army and its INA allies in the Imphal Campaign, dooming their effort to establish a foothold on Indian soil, it took every shred of Bose's formidable energy and optimism to rally his followers. In early October 1944 the Japanese Embassy in Bangkok reported sagging spirits and increased pessimism in the local Indian community. Nonetheless, the Indians dutifully commemorated the first anniversary of the establishment of the Azad Hind government on the 21st. The new Japanese Ambassador, Yamamoto Kuma'ichi, and General Nakamura appeared at a public meeting that morning at the Silapakon Theatre, as did German Minister Wendler. By this time, Phibun had resigned and Khuang Aphaiwong was Prime Minister. Khuang's foreign minister, Phraya Sisen, attended the meeting to reassure the Indians of Thailand's continued support. Six days later, Bose and his aides stopped briefly at Don Muang Airport enroute from Rangoon to Tokyo.⁴⁸

On his return journey, Bose paid an official visit to Thailand, beginning on 15 January 1945. Ambassador Yamamoto recognized that the Thai were not happy to host Bose because Allied victory increasingly seemed merely a matter of time, but Khuang had been chosen as premier in large measure because of his ability to humour the Japanese, and he put up a good front. Regent Pridi Phanomyong, who by this time had undertaken the organization of a Free Thai underground and was secretly communicating with both the Americans and the British, also received Bose warmly. In the end, Yamamoto evaluated the visit favourably, noting that Bose had said positive things about his reception in Japan and had devoted much of his time to bucking up the spirits of the local Indians. Yamamoto concluded that Bose's two banquet speeches 'demonstrating unshakable determination and firm belief in victory by our Axis allies, were such as to make a fine impression on the Thai'. Bose's aides, meanwhile, claimed success in their drive to collect donations in gold equal to their leader's weight.⁴⁹

Bose's next visit to Bangkok came under even less auspicious circumstances. At the urging of his ministers, Bose reluctantly agreed on

24 April 1945 to retreat from Rangoon, his headquarters for more than a year. With British troops poised to recapture the city, Bose embarked on a harrowing overland retreat to Thailand. His party, which included some of his ministers, staffers, a unit of about 100 women soldiers, and 800 INA men, travelled for nearly three weeks, walking a substantial part of the way.⁵⁰

At this point, the Thai were in no mood to roll out a red carpet for either Bose or Burmese leader Ba Maw, who also fled from Rangoon. The flow of refugees from Burma into Thailand signalled impending Japanese defeat. With Allied forces approaching, the Thai government, which had declared war on Britain and the United States and had accepted former British territory in the Shan States and northern Malaya from the Japanese during the war, did not wish to create further difficulties for itself by harbouring anti-British nationalists. Accordingly, Yamamoto requested that Bose and Ba Maw be sent on to Indochina. In fact, Ba Maw remained on the Burmese side of the border, but his wife and Bose's party arrived separately in Bangkok in mid-May.⁵¹

A representative of the Azad Hind Propaganda and Publicity Department who met Bose on the day of his arrival found him remarkably buoyant. 'I saw in him determination stronger than before, a stiffer stubbornness and a stronger will', Ram Singh Rawal wrote. 'He was however smiling as usual. Apparently there was no change.' Bose had this injunction for his followers: 'India fights on. The road to Delhi is the road to Freedom. But there are many roads to Delhi.'⁵²

Yamamoto, too, found Bose in remarkably high spirits when the two men met at the Bangkapi residence where he was staying. Like Ba Maw's wife, whom Yamamoto had visited earlier, Bose voiced numerous complaints about the Japanese army's actions in Burma, but he showed most interest in promoting his idea that Japan might avert impending disaster by striking a bargain with the Soviet Union. Because Bose had long seen the Soviets as potential allies against the British, he had disapproved of Hitler's attack on the USSR in 1941, and on 25 July 1943, the day he assumed formal leadership of the INA, he publicly praised the valour of the defenders of Stalingrad. During his late 1944 visit to Tokyo he had made unsuccessful efforts to meet the Soviet ambassador.⁵³

The recent San Francisco Conference had raised Bose's hopes that the Soviets could be utilized against Britain and the United States. Noting 'anti-American gestures' at the meeting by Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov, he suggested that the Japanese might get Moscow's attention by offering cooperation in settling various Asian problems, such as the hostility between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and Mao Zedong's Communists that portended civil war in China.⁵⁴ Bose implied that Japan might win Russian favour by modifying its traditionally hostile attitude toward the Chinese Communists, an approach Foreign Minister Shigemitsu Mamoru

had already tried, without success, the previous fall.⁵⁵ Bose seemed unaware that Tokyo had long been interested in Moscow's intercession and needed no prodding in this direction.

Yamamoto sent Bose's suggestions to Foreign Minister Tōgō, who had returned to the cabinet in April, but expressed anxiety about the negative impact Bose's presence might have on relations with Thailand. He disapproved of Bose's desire to hold a mass meeting in Bangkok, but when he met Foreign Minister Sisena on 17 May he did ask that the Thai government accommodate Bose until his departure could be arranged. The displeased Sisena responded that he intended to make Bose thoroughly familiar with the Thai government's views.⁵⁶

In a subsequent meeting with Yamamoto, Bose again pressed the urgent necessity for a Japanese-Soviet rapprochement, and offered to go to China to help bring it about. Bose had other reasons, however, for wanting to relocate to China. Not only did he feel increasingly unwelcome in Thailand, but the destruction of the two local power plants in April by Allied bombs had disrupted the broadcasts of Bangkok Radio. Although Singapore offered better radio facilities, it might be surrounded and cut off by the advancing Allies. Thus he requested re-location to a city in North China or Manchuria from which he could both speak regularly to India by radio and prepare to move into Soviet territory if an opportunity arose.⁵⁷ Eager to get Bose out of Thailand, aware of military opposition to a move of Bose's headquarters to Malaya, and perhaps even hopeful that something might come of the Soviet scheme, Yamamoto endorsed and passed on the proposal. Tokyo, however, showed no interest in facilitating Bose's transfer to China, a stance it maintained until the war's end.⁵⁸

Despite the increasingly negative Thai attitude toward the IIL, the desperate organization petitioned the Bangkok government for a loan of four million baht so that it might provide for its soldiers retreating from Burma. When Foreign Ministry officials stalled in responding to Sardar Ishar Singh's request, the proud Bose refused to approach the Thai government on bended knee. The task of making an impassioned appeal for aid fell to Bose's aide S. A. Ayer, who knew Prime Minister Khuang personally. Although Ayer received a noncommittal reply, the Thai government eventually did provide some assistance.⁵⁹

Disregarding Thai concerns about his presence becoming widely known, Bose delivered a public address on 21 May, the monthly Azad Hind Day. He acknowledged defeat in Burma, but described it as only the 'first round', citing the victory of the Young Turks in the wake of their nation's defeat in World War I and Ireland's successful 1919 rebellion after the failed uprising of 1916 as examples of victories snatched from the jaws of defeat. 'It may be that we shall not go to Delhi via Imphal', he declared in calling for perseverance in the armed struggle. 'But the roads to Delhi are many, like the roads to Rome. And along one of these many roads we shall travel and

ultimately reach our destination, the Metropolis of India.⁶⁰ Bose then turned to the Soviet victory at Stalingrad as another example of a reversal of fortune. He continued prophetically:

You know very well that I have always been of the opinion that if Germany collapsed, it would be a signal for the outbreak of an acute conflict between the Soviets and the Anglo-Americans. That conflict has already broken out and it will be intensified in the days to come. The time is not far off when our enemies will realize that though they have succeeded in overthrowing Germany, they have indirectly helped to bring into the arena of European politics another power – Soviet Russia – that may prove to be a greater menace to British and American imperialism than Germany was. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind will continue to follow international developments with the closest interest and endeavour to take the fullest advantage of them. The fundamental principle of our foreign policy has been and will be – Britain's enemy is India's friend.⁶¹

He predicted that the differences evident at the San Francisco Conference were 'only precursor of a much wider and deeper conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-Americans which the future has in store for the world'. Britain, 'a decadent and decaying empire', had lost its vitality and was merely being propped up by 'American crutches [that] cannot help Britain very long', Bose asserted, and he concluded: 'India shall be free and before long. With this unshakable belief, let us continue the struggle for India's emancipation.'⁶²

Bose sounded these same themes in a radio speech on 14 June, the same day that Lord Wavell, the Viceroy of India, offered political concessions to the Indian Congress Party in return for support of the war effort against Japan. This development caused Bose concern that Congress might accept the British proposal. After discussing the issue with his subordinates, he departed for Singapore on 18 June. The better radio facilities there would enable him to make regular broadcasts denouncing the British plan.⁶³

The Japanese, meanwhile, had grown concerned about the INA troops, now considered more potentially dangerous than useful after the evacuation of Burma. Minister Hachiya Teruo, a diplomat attached to Bose's provisional government by the Greater East Asia Ministry, recommended the dissolution of the INA in mid-July. He cited supply problems and the possibility that the INA, like the Burmese National Army, might revolt against the Japanese. Army authorities in Tokyo agreed, advising Southern Army Headquarters on 27 July to prepare to disband the INA, excepting a 200–300 man guard for Bose, who would either remain in Malaya or transfer to Indochina.⁶⁴

During Bose's prolonged stay in Singapore and Malaya, the headquarters of the Azad Hind Provisional Government remained in Bangkok. Shri

Parmanand, minister of supplies and vice president of the IIL, headed the organization in Bose's absence, and was in charge at the time of Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945. Other ministers included Sardar Ishar Singh from the local Indian community.⁶⁵

Bose decided in the small hours of 16 August to attempt to reach Soviet-controlled territory. He arrived unannounced at Bangkok's Don Muang airport that afternoon and, after a two-hour delay, a car transported him into the city for series of meetings. Bose did not get to bed until 5 A.M. on 17 August, but an hour later he was up again and off to the airport for an 8 A.M. departure for Saigon. In his wake, the Azad Hind Provisional Government issued statements in his name to INA soldiers and Indian civilians throughout East Asia. Describing the movement's failure as 'temporary', Bose again emphasized that 'many roads lead to Delhi', and reiterated his conviction that 'India shall be free and before long'.⁶⁶

Japanese assistance in Bose's efforts to get to the Soviet Union did finally materialize as a result of intervention by the ailing Southern Army commander, Field Marshal Terauchi Hisa'ichi. To Bose's disappointment, though, he was permitted to take only one aide with him aboard a bomber carrying Lt. Gen. Shidei Tsunamasa on a mission to negotiate with the Soviets in Manchuria. The plane reached Taiwan on the 18th, but crashed and caught fire that afternoon while attempting to take off. Bose and Shidei were among the victims.⁶⁷

Word of Bose's death reached Bangkok via the Dōmei News Agency on 23 August. Foreign radio broadcasts subsequently confirmed the shocking news. The Indian community and Japanese dignitaries gathered at the IIL headquarters for a memorial service the next day. General Nakamura feared that Bose's death might trigger disorder among INA soldiers in Thailand, but no problems arose as they awaited, with trepidation, the arrival of British forces. Almost immediately rumours began circulating that Bose had survived, a myth to which many Bose admirers would cling for decades thereafter.⁶⁸

Through their underground connections with the British and Americans, the Thai had lobbied to avert an Allied military occupation. They had indicated, however, that if an occupation became inevitable, they wished to receive American or European forces rather than Asian or African colonial troops. Most of all, though, they wanted to keep Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese troops out of Thailand lest they ally themselves with the large and economically powerful local Chinese community.⁶⁹ In the end, the Thai did succeed in keeping the Chinese out, but, to their chagrin, the bulk of the 7,000 British Army soldiers who arrived from early September were Indians and Gurkhas.

Thai and American observers severely criticized the behaviour of these Indian Army troops,⁷⁰ but Andrew Gilchrist, a pre-war staff member of the British Legation who was sent to Bangkok at the beginning of October 1945

as an adviser to the military command, had a different view. Attributing the Thai complaints to their 'considerable racial prejudice against Indians', Gilchrist, who had served with Force 136 of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during the war, said: 'In fact the disciplinary record of the Indian battalions was at least as good as that of the British contingent.'⁷¹

The resident Indians, meanwhile, had numerous complaints of their own about the occupation forces because the British gave priority to rounding up leaders of the Azad Hind Provisional Government. Ram Singh Rawal charges that not only were the detainees treated harshly, but that other Indian residents fell victim to British-condoned extortion and robbery. Some 100 leaders of the IIL were arrested and held for interrogation. The British sent the top officers of the Provisional Government to Singapore for further questioning, but all of the Thailand residents apparently were released in less than three months. In the meantime, Rawal had fled Bangkok in November. He reached India safely after a nearly two-month trek across northern Thailand and Burma. He exonerated the Thai government of any blame for the hardships that befell the Indian community at the end of the war, arguing that the Indians would have been properly treated if the Thai had not been under British orders.⁷²

Zakir Hussain's study of the Indians in Thailand during the 1980s suggests, however, that Rawal was overly generous in his assessment of the Thai attitude. In listing four historical reasons why the Thai have traditionally looked down upon members of the Indian community, Hussain mentions two based on the longstanding Thai perception of Indians as tight fisted and hardhearted. The other two factors he cites, though, directly relate to World War II: the perceived misbehaviour of the British Indian troops stationed in the country at the end of the war, and Thai resentment over 'wartime collaboration of the Indians with the Japanese occupation army'.⁷³

Japanese Ambassador Tsubokami had become aware of the latter sentiment as early as July 1942 when he reported Thai complaints that the Japanese were using both the Indians and Chinese as 'tools' to achieve their designs in Thailand. Research by A. Mani substantiates claims that Indian textile merchants did indeed benefit from their connections with the Japanese, profiting mightily as wartime scarcity pushed up the value of their stocks. Mani further notes that such financial gains enabled them to expand their operations and continue their domination of the textile business into the post-war years.⁷⁴

Hussain's conclusions, based largely on interviews with members of the Indian community, suggest that despite ostensible Thai support for the independence movement during the war, the activities of the IIL and the INA in Thailand failed to enhance the domestic standing of the Indian residents. On the contrary, the perception of Japanese favouritism toward the Indians, the ill-will generated by wartime profiteering by Indian cloth

merchants, and the much-resented post-war presence and perceived misbehaviour of the British Army's Indian soldiers, served to reinforce existing Thai prejudices against Indian residents, feelings that remain deeply imbedded in Thai society.

Notes

- 1 Ram Singh Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, Allahabad, K.P. Khattri, 1946, pp. 69–70; Zakir Hussain, *The Silent Minority: Indians in Thailand*, Bangkok, Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1982, pp. 3, 56–60, 88; and A. Mani, 'Indians in Thailand' in K. S. Sandhu and A. Mani, eds., *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, Singapore, Times Academic Press, 1993, pp. 910–927. Hussain notes that the true number of Indians in Thailand was difficult to determine because many had become Thai citizens. He settled for 'over 60,000' as the best estimate at the time his volume was published. As Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff note in *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1955, p. 125, pre-war estimates 'varied widely'. They provide the lowest figure found anywhere, a mere 5,000. This is so far below other estimates to suggest that a zero might inadvertently have been deleted. Mani acknowledges 'no consensus' on the number of Indian residents in Thailand, either in the past or at present.
- 2 For example, note the comment of a British official quoted in Richard J. Aldrich, *The Key to the South: Britain, the United States, and Thailand During the Approach to the Pacific War, 1929–1942*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 14.
- 3 Mani, 'Indians in Thailand', pp. 917–18.
- 4 Netnapi Nakavachara, 'Indian Communities in Bangkok' in Sandhu and Mani, eds., *Indian Communities in Southeast Asia*, p. 972 and Hussain, *The Silent Minority*, p. 89. Mani, 'Indians in Thailand', p. 942, similarly reports the persistence of derogatory stereotyping.
- 5 T. R. Sareen, *Japan and the Indian National Army*, Delhi, Agam Prakashan, 1986, p. 15 and Mani, 'Indians in Thailand', p. 926.
- 6 Quoted in Aldrich, *The Key to the South*, pp. 13–14. Also, on Thai cooperation with the British, see Walter Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1978, pp. 103, 110 and Hussain, *The Silent Minority*, p. 43.
- 7 Christopher Goscha, *Thailand and the Southeast Asian Networks of the Vietnamese Revolution, 1885–1954*, London, Curzon, 1999, pp. 23–24, 88, 114–118 and Aldrich, *The Key to the South*, p. 14.
- 8 Mani, 'Indians in Thailand', p. 919.
- 9 Fujiwara Iwa'ichi, *F-Kikan*, trans. by Akashi Yōji, Hong Kong, Heinemann Asia, 1983, pp. 11–70 and Joyce C. Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, Singapore, Asia Pacific Press, 1971, pp. 1–42.
- 10 *Bangkok Times*, 9 Dec. 1941.
- 11 M. Siviram, *The Road to Delhi*, Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle, 1966, pp. 15–63.
- 12 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, p. 99; K.K. Ghosh, *The Indian National Army*, Meerut, Meenakshi Prakashan, 1969, pp. 4–5; *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose*, ed. Sopan, Bombay, Azad Bhandar, 1946, p. 145; and Roger Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth: A Tribute to the Indian Independence Movement in Thailand*, Minerva Press, London, 1999, pp. 141–3, 160–1. The Cultural Lodge continues to operate today. Mani ('Indians in Thailand', p. 937) noted that it had 172 members in 1979.

- 13 *Bangkok Times*, 30 Mar. and 9 Apr. 1942; Kesar Singh Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, Anarkali, Singh Bros, 1947, 1: 16, 62; Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 10-1, 71-2; Mani, 'Indians in Thailand', p. 926; and Siviram, *The Road to Delhi*, p. 43; Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 118-20, 136-9. The journalist Siviram was another Indian resident who gained favour with highly placed Thai in the late 1930s, in large part it seems because of his enthusiastic support for the post-1932 government.
- 14 E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994, pp. 106-8.
- 15 *Bangkok Times*, 24 Dec. 1941. Wichit had been a thorn in the side of British Minister Crosby for years prior to the war because of his promotion of chauvinistic Thai-nationalism in his role as head of the Fine Arts Department, his known interest in cooperation with Japan and the Axis, and his involvement with anti-British activists in Burma. Once the Japanese army arrived, Wichit emerged as a strong advocate of alliance with Japan and also pushed unsuccessfully to gain full Axis membership for Thailand. On Wichit's role and views, see Reynolds, *Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance*, pp. 17-18, 32-3, 78, 111, 114. On Wichit's involvement with Burmese nationalists, also see the *Bangkok Times* of 25 Dec. 1941.
- 16 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 99-100 and Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1981, p. 411.
- 17 British reports of Gandhi's and Nehru's statements on the Japanese in *The Transfer of Power*, 1942-7, ed. Nicholas Mansergh, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970-1971, 1: 692-3 and 2: 128-32, 978-81; Fujiwara, *F Kikan*, pp. 31-2; Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, pp. 5, 41; Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy*, pp. 411-2; and Manot Wutthathit Report, October 1945, OSS Record Group (hereafter, RG) 226 XL14550, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter, USNA).
- 18 Fujiwara, *F Kikan*, pp. 201-20; Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, pp. 41-4; and Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 188-90. Premier Phibun Songkhram, who knew of the Swami's differences with the Japanese, was among those who suspected that his disappearance was not accidental. See Khuang Aphaiwong, *Kantosu khong khapachao* (My Struggles), Bangkok, Jareentharn Press, 1958, pp. 166-7 and Shahnawaz Kahn, *I.N.A. and Its Netaji*, Delhi, Rajkamal Publications, 1946, p. 24. Prince Wan represented the Thai government and read a message from Premier Phibun at a memorial service in Bangkok for the plane crash victims. *Bangkok Times*, 20 Apr. 1942.
- 19 Fujiwara, *F-Kikan*, pp. 209-10; Lebra, *Jungle Alliance*, pp. 45-52; 'Southeast Asia Command and India Command Weekly Security Summary No. 194', 20 July 1945 in *The Transfer of Power*, ed. Mansergh, 5: 1284-5; and proceedings of the meeting in Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 1, pp. 44-60.
- 20 Siviram, *The Road to Delhi*, p. 71.
- 21 Quoted in Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 1, pp. 61-62. The scene is described in Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 112-3 and Siviram, *The Road to Delhi*, p. 71.
- 22 A.C. Chatterji, *India's Struggle For Freedom*, Calcutta, Chuckeveretty, Chatterjee and Co., 1947, p. 23.
- 23 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 118-24; A.M. Nair, *Indian Freedom Fighter in Japan*, Sahabad, Vikas Publishing, 1985, pp. 192-201; Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 1: 79-88, which contains the resolutions and constitution; Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 196-9; and *Bangkok Times*, 12, 13 and 15 June 1942. An important biography of Subhas Chandra Bose,

- particularly strong on his pre-World War II career, is Leonard A. Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1990. Insight into Bose's personality and activities in Southeast Asia is provided by Ba Maw, *Breakthrough in Burma*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1968, pp. 348–59. Generally the voluminous memoir literature from the IIL and INA casts Bose in a highly favourable light. Exceptions are Siviram's *The Road to Delhi* and particularly Nair's critical assessment in *An Indian Freedom Fighter in Japan*.
- 24 Tsubokami to Tokyo, 3 July 1942, A700 9–63, Japan Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo.
- 25 Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy*, pp. 411–12 and Ishii to Tokyo, 5 June 1942, A700 9–63, Japan Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo.
- 26 Mohan Singh, *Soldiers' Contribution to Indian Independence*, New Delhi, Army Educational Store, 1974, pp. 127–8.
- 27 Tōgō to Berlin, 3 July 1942, SRDJ 024651; Tōgō to Bangkok, 9 July 1942, SRDJ 024617; and Tōgō to Bangkok, 18 July 1942, SRDJ 025138, RG 457, USNA.
- 28 Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy*, pp. 377–493 and *The Transfer of Power*, 1942–7, ed. Mansergh, 4, pp. 74–5. The latter, a report from military intelligence dated 14 July 1943 states: 'Fortunately public morale and internal security in India are now fairly steady and the Japanese widely feared. Bose will undoubtedly be able to make some capital out of the economic distress and the political deadlock but unless he can win Congress *en bloc* his chances of stirring up a major revolt would appear to be small. Had he arrived in East Asia last August or even during Gandhi's fast his prospects would have been much better.' Also see Bernd Martin, 'The German-Japanese Alliance in the Second World War,' in *From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima*, ed. Saki Dockrill, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1994, pp. 153–173.
- 29 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 125, 126; Nair, *Indian Freedom Fighter in Japan*, p. 202; and Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, pp. 28–9; Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 199–202.
- 30 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 132–38; Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 1, pp. 90–137; Nair, *Indian Freedom Fighter in Japan*, pp. 202–209, 220–25; and Chandar S. Sundaram, 'A Paper Tiger: The Indian National Army in Battle, 1944–1945', *War and Society*, 13, May 1995, pp. 37–8.
- 31 Nair, *Indian Freedom Fighter in Japan*, pp. 209–19 and Siviram, *The Road to Delhi*, p. 99. The *Bangkok Chronicle*, 18 Mar. 1943, reports that Colonel Iwakuro marked the departure from Bangkok by inviting local journalists to lunch at the Hoi Tien Lao Chinese restaurant to thank them for their cooperation in promoting the IIL.
- 32 Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2, pp. 10–43 and Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', p. 38.
- 33 *The Transfer of Power*, 1942–7, ed. Mansergh, 4, p. 75.
- 34 Nakamura Aketo, *Hotoke no shireikan* [The Buddha's Commander], Tokyo, Shūhōsha, 1958, pp. 82–4. Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, p. 547 notes how some Japanese officers have praised Bose's samurai-like spirit. A further reason for his appeal to the Japanese is suggested in Ivan Morris' *The Nobility of Failure*, New York, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1975. Bose's character and career pattern coincide with those of other 'failed heroes', the figures Morris argues the Japanese traditionally have most admired over the centuries.
- 35 Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2, pp. 43–4. This book, which contains Bose's itinerary in Thailand, indicates that he met with Premier Phibun for an hour and a half on 26 July, but this is contradicted by the *Nippon Times* of 10 August and Fred Saito and Tatsuo Hayashida, 'To Delhi! To Delhi!'

- in *A Beacon Across Asia*, ed. Sisir K. Bose, Alexander Werth, and S. A. Ayer, New Delhi, Longman, 1973, p. 184. The latter sources make clear that Bose did not meet Phibun on the first trip to Bangkok.
- 36 Saito and Hayashida, 'To Delhi! To Delhi!', pp. 185, 201-2. For more on Phibun's changing attitude toward Japan, see Reynolds, *Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance*, especially ch. 6.
- 37 Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2, p. 45; Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, p. 150; Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 219-22.
- 38 Siviram, *The Road to Delhi*, pp. 139-40.
- 39 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 167-71; Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, pp. 116, 128; Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2, pp. 134-5; Thompson and Adler, *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia*, p. 126; and Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 221-2.
- 40 Ibid., and Manot Wutthathit Report, RG 226 XL14550, USNA.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, 216-9, 240; S. A. Ayer, *A Witness Unto Him*, Bombay, Thacker and Co., 1951, pp. 185, 244-7; Hugh Toye, *The Springing Tiger*, London, Cassell, 1959, pp. 93-5; Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, ed. Sopan, pp. 408-17; and Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, p. 169.
- 43 Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, p. 112; Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, p. 186; Subodh Markandeya, *Subhas Chandra Bose*, New Delhi, Arnold Publishing, 1990, p. 216; and Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia* 2, p. 118. Giani indicates that Bose visited the Andamans on 29-30 Dec. 1943 and arrived to set up his headquarters in Rangoon on 7 Jan. 1944. The *Bangkok Chronicle* states that Bose had an interview with Phibun in Bangkok on 31 Dec. 1943.
- 44 Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', pp. 40-1, 48.
- 45 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, p. 193.
- 46 Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, p. 158 and Sundaram, 'Paper Tiger', p. 42.
- 47 Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, pp. 116, 158, 167 and Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, p. 169. The main route of transportation of supplies to Burma was the Thailand-Burma Railway. Thousands of displaced Indian plantation workers from Malaya laboured in the construction of this railway in 1942 and 1943. Many perished from disease and overwork. For more on the Bangkok boot factory, see Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 242-9.
- 48 Bangkok to Tokyo, 7 and 25 Oct. 1944, SRDJ 74712-13 and SRDJ 76204-5, RG 457, USNA.
- 49 Bangkok to Tokyo, 13 and 22 Jan. 1945, SRDJ 91108-09 and SRDJ 88253-54, RG 457, USNA; Chatterji, *India's Struggle for Freedom*, p. 249; and Yamamoto Kuam'ichi Memoir, p. 71. The page numbers from the latter source are according to a handwritten copy in the author's possession. This document is also held by the Japan Foreign Ministry Archives.
- 50 Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2: 145 and Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 208-209.
- 51 52. Bangkok to Tokyo, 21 May 1945, SRDJ 100653, RG 457, USNA and Yamamoto Memoir, p. 108.
- 52 53. Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 208-209. Sources date Bose's arrival in Bangkok variously as 13 May, 14 May and 15 May 1945.
- 53 Bangkok to Tokyo, 21 May 1945, SRDJ 100653, Record Group 457, USNA; Yamamoto Memoir, p. 109; Gordon, *Brothers Against the Raj*, pp. 450-1, 517-58; Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy*, pp. 243, 357; and the text of the 1943 speech in Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2, p. 42.
- 54 Yamamoto Memoir, pp. 110-11.

- 55 E. Bruce Reynolds, 'The Yenian Path to Moscow: A Dead-end in Japan's Desperation Diplomacy', *The Journal of International Studies* (Tokyo), 19, July 1987, pp. 27-48.
- 56 Bangkok to Tokyo, 21 May 1945, SRDJ 100653, RG 457, USNA and Yamamoto Memoir, pp. 110-1.
- 57 Bangkok to Tokyo, 4 June 1945, SRDJ 102325-27, RG 457, USNA; Yamamoto Memoir, pp. 111-2; and Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, p. 214.
- 58 Bangkok to Tokyo, 4 June 1945, SRDJ 102325-27 and MAGIC Far Eastern Military Summary, 16 Aug. 1945, RG 457, USNA and Yamamoto Memoir, pp. 111-12.
- 59 Ayer, *A Witness Unto Him*, pp. 42-6.
- 60 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 229-33.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 234.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 236.
- 63 Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2, pp. 148-50.
- 64 MAGIC Far Eastern Military Summary, 16 Aug. 1945, RG 457, USNA.
- 65 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 2-3.
- 66 *Ibid.*; Ayer, *A Witness Unto Him*, pp. 61-5; and the texts of the statements in Giani, *Indian Independence Movement in East Asia*, 2, pp. 156-7.
- 67 Saito and Hayashida, 'To Delhi! To Delhi!', pp. 220-30 and Far Eastern Military Summary, 22 Aug. 1945, RG 457, USNA.
- 68 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 3-5, and Nakamura, *Hotoke no shireikan*, pp. 86-7.
- 69 Coughlin to Ryan relaying a message from Palmer in Bangkok, 20 Aug. 1945, Folder 802, Box 66, Entry 136, RG 226, USNA and Donovan to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 Sept. 1945, Folder 84, Box 120B, William J. Donovan Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.
- 70 'The Negotiations Leading to the Cessation of a State of War with Great Britain', an English translation of an article by M.R. Seni Pramoj held by the Thailand Information Service Library, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, pp. 14-5; the comments of Thawi Bunyaket in Jayanata K. Ray, *Portraits of Thai Politics*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1972, pp. 107-8; and interview with Jorge Orgibet, Bangkok, 18 Aug. 1984.
- 71 Handwritten marginal note to Andrew Gilchrist, 'Bangkok Again', a chapter from an unpublished autobiography. A copy is in the author's possession. Gilchrist acknowledged that some members of the British army engaged in selling goods commandeered from the Japanese on the black market. He indicated that some goods were sold to Thai buyers, but that some cars and refrigerators were illicitly shipped to Singapore.
- 72 Rawal, *I.N.A. Saga*, pp. 1-62 and Beaumont, *The Hidden Truth*, pp. 277-9.
- 73 Hussain, *The Silent Minority*, p. 90.
- 74 Tsubokami to Tokyo, 4 Aug. 1942, A700 9-63, Japan Foreign Ministry Archives, Tokyo and Mani, 'Indians in Thailand', pp. 919-20. Mani notes, however, that poorer Indians were disadvantaged by the disruptions of the war and subsequently suffered from renewed Thai nationalist efforts to limit non-citizen access to employment. Many older males, he notes, returned to India.

Chapter Twelve

The Thai-Japanese Alliance and the Chinese of Thailand

Eiji Murashima

The position of the Chinese in Thailand during the time of the Thai-Japanese alliance cannot be explained simply in terms of a two-way relationship between the Japanese and the Chinese as was the case in territories occupied directly by the Japanese army. In Thailand, Japan concluded an alliance with an independent state, and the Thai government stood between the Japanese and the local Chinese. The Thais were extremely sensitive about maintaining their independence and sovereignty, and opposed Japanese moves to deal directly with the country's Chinese population. The Japanese for their part wanted to maintain good relations with Thailand and so avoided such direct dealings, leaving policy toward the Chinese in the hands of the Thai government. Some Chinese leaders, however, turned to the Japanese to seek assistance in countering that government's repressive measures. Thus there existed in Thailand during the period of the Thai-Japanese alliance a complicated and delicate three-way relationship involving the Japanese, the local Chinese and the Thai government. (For Thailand, see Map 5).

These relationships varied in accordance with the changing state of Thai-Japanese relations. Through the treaty of alliance signed on 21 December 1941 and a number of supplementary agreements between the two countries, Japan secured Thailand's cooperation for the duration of the war. Nevertheless, relations between the two powers did not progress smoothly. The time covered by the alliance can be divided broadly into two intervals: one when the Axis powers were in the ascendant and the other when they were on the defensive. Each of these intervals can be divided into two shorter periods, creating a four-part framework. The first period extended from the signing of the alliance treaty until mid-1942 and was a time when Thailand, anticipating great benefits from its alliance with Japan, willingly endured the sacrifices that accompanied Japan's demands for cooperation. During the second period, which lasted from mid-1942 until May or June 1943, Thai leaders came to feel a sense of betrayal because they had not obtained the expected returns from the Japanese alliance, and grew increasingly wary of Japan's single-minded pursuit of its own interests in

Thailand. The major cause of Thailand's alienation from Japan during this second period was not the changing war situation outside the country but the behaviour of the Japanese inside Thailand. The third period commenced around June 1943 when Prime Minister Plaek Phibunsongkhram (Phibun), aware of the Axis' deteriorating war situation, began developing plans to defend the country. Especially after December 1943, when Allied air raids on Bangkok began in earnest, Phibun became openly uncooperative toward the Japanese, causing a further deterioration in Thai-Japanese relations; by February 1944 Phibun was contemplating armed resistance, and attempting to contact the Chungking government. This period ended in July 1944 when anti-Phibun forces in Parliament forced his resignation as prime minister. The fourth period ran from August 1944, when the Khuang Aphaiwong government was formed, until the end of the war in August 1945. Phibun's dictatorial politics during the second and third periods had driven many members of parliament from the Phibun camp, and these people formed an anti-Phibun group centred on Pridi Phanomyong and his Free Thai movement. The new government, fearing a Japanese *coup de force* against Thailand, tried to improve Thai-Japanese relations, but also allowed the Free Thai movement to develop contacts with the Allies. In an attempt to improve relations with the Chinese in Thailand, the new government abolished many of Phibun's oppressive policies.

Background

W. D. Reeve, a long-time advisor to the Thai government who served both before and after the war, declared in 1951 that the Chinese in Thailand were the only fundamental issue affecting the government's control of the country. According to Reeve, 20 per cent of the country's population was of Chinese ancestry; the Chinese controlled most of the country's commerce, finance and trade; and essentially all of its labourers and artisans were Chinese. While the Chinese were industrious and full of entrepreneurial spirit, they regarded themselves as Chinese, spoke Chinese in daily life, maintained Chinese customs, and were loyal to China rather than to Thailand. Meanwhile, Reeve said, the Thai population had little political consciousness and few problems in their daily lives, and seemed unlikely to cause political instability.¹

The government had begun limiting the inflow of Chinese in the late 1920s. The political conflict in China, where the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) and the Communist Party competed for political dominance, was mirrored among the Chinese in Thailand. Both had local branches formed by overseas Chinese, although because all political party activity was banned, a prohibition that remained in force until 1946, they had to operate illegally.² During the 1920s the local branch of the KMT, led by Seow Hoot Seng and his supporters, developed vigorous anti-British and anti-Japanese

movements in response to developments in China, but in the 1930s – at least until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 – the party was divided between a Xinan faction (under Seow Hoot Seng) and a Chiang Kai-shek faction. This split, along with repression by the Thai government, impeded the work of the KMT. Communist activity among the Chinese in Thailand from its beginnings in 1924 was suppressed by the government, which acted in many cases on the basis of information received from the British. Nevertheless, during the early 1930s the Communist Party of Siam, most of whose members were Chinese, conducted a vigorous propaganda campaign calling for a revolutionary soviet government in Thailand. The party also organized a Communist Youth Group, an Anti-Imperialist League, and a General Labour Union. Following a change of policy by the Comintern in 1935, communists in Thailand shifted the focus of their activities from promoting revolution to opposing the Japanese.

With the outbreak of a full-scale war between China and Japan in 1937, KMT and communist activities in Thailand, fuelled by strong anti-Japanese feeling within the local Chinese community, took on a new urgency. For its war effort, the KMT set up organizations such as the Association of Siam Chinese for National Resistance and Salvation, the Siam Chapter of the Association Encouraging Bond Subscriptions, and the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People. These movements drew primarily on a group around a leading Bangkok merchant named Tan Siew Meng, who had connections with Chiang Kai-shek, and on the Teochew (Chaozhou) Assembly Hall under Hia Kwang Lam and his followers, who had ties with Seow Hoot Seng and the Xinan faction. The Communist Party of Siam reshaped its mass organizations, and under the leadership of Liu Shu-shi, Qiu Ji (Khu Kip) and Li Hua set up the Anti-Japanese National Salvation Alliance of Siam Chinese from Differing Walks of Life (Khang Lian), which drew on anti-Japanese groups that the party had formed among labourers, students, women, merchants and intellectuals.

Outside the two parties, a number of politically unaffiliated patriotic youth organizations came into being. These groups helped mobilize the Chinese community in Thailand against the Japanese by collecting money and selling bonds to help finance the war in China, sending rice and clothing to China, despatching volunteers for military and medical service in the homeland, boycotting Japanese goods, and punishing Chinese businessmen who continued to handle Japanese merchandise or supply Thai products to Japanese trading companies. Some large merchants, particularly those who supported the KMT, were subjected to terrorist acts carried out by Khang Lian and the patriotic youth groups in league with secret societies (*ang ji*) when they failed to break off their business dealings with the Japanese.

In June 1932 the People's Party had carried out a constitutional revolution curbing the authority of Thailand's absolutist monarchy. With its strident nationalism, the People's Party was much less permissive toward

non-Thai elements within the country than the monarchical government it replaced, and introduced tighter restrictions on the activities of the Chinese. For example, a new compulsory education law for Bangkok, where many of the Chinese in Thailand lived, imposed limits on Chinese schools and Chinese-language education, and in 1933 the new government enacted anti-communist laws that were effectively directed against the Chinese.

In response to an upsurge of anti-Japanese activity among the Chinese in Thailand in 1937, the People's Party government enacted legislation banning fund-raising that was injurious to the country's foreign relations. The government also deported several thousand local Chinese accused of involvement in acts of terror against Chinese merchants. From the end of 1938, when Plaek Phibunsongkhram became prime minister, repression against the Chinese grew more severe. In 1935 the Chinese had operated more than 250 schools, and supported more than 10 newspapers. In 1939-40 the Phibun government closed all Chinese schools, and all but one Chinese newspaper, the *Tong Guan Pao*. It also created new companies in the distribution sector to 'put businesses into the hands of the Thais', thereby displacing Chinese merchants. In 1941, for security reasons, the government declared large areas of the country off-limits to all foreign residents, and gave Chinese living in these places, some of them long-term residents, 90 days to move out. Lastly, the government began reserving certain categories of jobs for Thai nationals, citing the need to guarantee employment for the Thai people. However, during this time of increasing repression, the government also took a positive step in April 1939 when it opened the way for Chinese nationals to obtain Thai citizenship, something previously denied to them.

The Phibun government's policy of eradicating Chinese loyalty to China while at the same time making it possible for the Chinese to become Thai had nothing to do with Japan, but rather was a Thai nationalist backlash against a perception that the Chinese felt they could do as they pleased politically and economically, despite being foreigners in the country. Even the British minister in Bangkok expressed sympathy for the Thai government's intentions in suppressing the Chinese. The Chinese criticized Phibun's policies, and linked them to Thai efforts to cultivate ties with Japan, but this assessment is hardly correct, for Phibun resisted Japanese demands, such as recognition of the Wang Ching-wei regime in Nanking, until July 1942. His government's general objective in foreign affairs prior to December 1941 was to avoid becoming caught up in the competition between Britain and Japan that was swirling around Thailand, and wait and see how events would develop; Thailand's relations with China were determined by this larger objective. Thus, the Phibun government's policy toward the Chinese in Thailand was already well established before December 1941 and remained basically the same even after Thailand's alliance with Japan.

There were, by and large, three responses within the Chinese community to the government's forced 'Thai-ification' policy. Some Chinese carried on as much as possible with China-related political activities; some chose to assimilate and become Thai nationals; and some cooperated with the Thai government. The latter group – which included most of the prominent figures connected with the KMT – did not shy away from the benefits of doing business with the Japanese, although many of them also gave active or passive support to the anti-Japanese movement. For example, the Chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Thailand, Tia Lang Sing (Sahat Mahakhun) contributed money to the Thai government and cooperated with the cultural programme Phibun instituted with his 1939 Ratthaniyom proclamations concerning 'Thai-ness'. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce even sent telegrams to Chungking calling on it to exercise caution when criticizing Thailand in its radio broadcasts, noting that harsh commentary only worsened the situation for the Chinese living there. By the time Japanese forces attacked Thailand, a majority of the Chinese leaders in the country had submitted to the dictates of the Thai government, and there was little opposition when the Thai government allied itself with Japan and called on the Chinese to cooperate with the Japanese.

The Thai-Japanese alliance and Asian Solidarity

On 8 December 1941 the Fourth and Fifth regiments of the Imperial Guard Division moved into central Thailand from Cambodia. The leading unit was the Fifth Regiment's First Battalion under the command of Colonel Iwakuro Hideo, whose assignment was to occupy Don Muang, the airport serving Bangkok, and then move on to Bangkok, which it did on the 9th. Iwakuro's orders were to hold the city and operate as its security force; among other tasks, the unit was to watch over the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and see to the cleansing of stories published in the newspaper affiliated with Chungking, the *Tong Guan Pao*.³ Other units under the Imperial Guard Division reached Lopburi, Saraburi and Prachinburi on the same day, and by 10 December the Japanese army had essentially completed its occupation of Thailand.⁴

On 11 December, Phibun concluded a 'Provisional Agreement of the Treaty of Alliance Between Thailand and Japan', and the following day he delivered a radio address to explain the change in policy. Later the Publicity Department issued a declaration that read:

The Government wishes to inform the people that the Agreement with the Japanese Government has been arrived at in view of the fact that, after careful consideration, it is deemed the best course to follow in the interests of the country in such circumstances. Hence from now on

please rest assured that Japan is Thailand's friend and that together we shall cooperate in enhancing honour.⁵

On 13 December (Thai official records say 14 December) the Thai and Japanese military signed a set of 'General Principles for Thai-Japanese Cooperation in Military Operations', which established guidelines for cooperation between the Thai and Japanese armies against the British and Chinese armies in Burma.

On 21 December the two countries signed a treaty of alliance under which Thailand pledged to support Japan 'in all political, economic and military ways'; a secret understanding attached to the alliance stipulated that 'Japan should cooperate in fulfilling Thailand's demands for the recovery of its lost territories'. On 25 January Thailand declared war on Britain and the United States, and on 3 February Wichitwathakan, the deputy foreign minister, sent a telegram to Direk Jayanama, the Thai ambassador in Tokyo, telling him to sound out the Japanese about Thai participation in the Axis.⁶ This correspondence shows a considerable change in the way Thailand viewed its alliance with Japan. Phibun was no longer treating it as something forced upon him but as an arrangement he had entered into voluntarily; and beyond this he now intended to join the tripartite Axis alliance.⁷

Phibun also suddenly became an advocate of the principle of Asia for the Asians. In his mind the establishment of a common Asian identity as proposed by Japan was in accord with Thailand's own interests. In a telegram to Chiang Kai-shek dated 22 December (which could not be sent by wire and was broadcast by national shortwave radio), Phibun called upon the nationalists to see the folly and the calamity of Asians fighting Asians in China, and told the Chinese leader that what he was saying was a genuine expression of his own thoughts and not something he was being forced to say. He urged Chiang to make peace with Japan for the betterment of Asians who were all brothers, and said that the Thai people concurred in the alliance with Japan because the Japanese, who were highly virtuous people, had genuinely good intentions for the peoples of Asia. The slogan for the times was 'Asia for the Asians', and Phibun called on China to join this new tendency.⁸

Within Thailand, the government began to cooperate fully with Japan in providing rail transport, constructing roads, supplying materials and equipment, disseminating propaganda and the like. The Thais expected to benefit from this cooperation, and their views were expressed by Lt. Col. Chai Prathipasen, a Phibun confidant, at a meeting of government officials dealing with the Japanese military that he called on 1 January 1942.

We should go along with Japan's military operations and give the Japanese army the things it demands. But at the same time we should not forget that there is not loss to us. Our helping Japan does not make

us Japan's servants or slaves. It's the same as providing someone with a tool if we want to get him to do something for our benefit. If we help Japan today, we'll get our repayment another day.⁹

The Thai government's decision to cooperate with Japan made it easier for the Japanese military to deal with the Chinese in Thailand. The basic direction of their policy can be seen from a set of notes made by Lt. Gen. Tanaka Shin'ichi, chief of the First Section of the General Staff and the officer in charge of operations planning for the Army, in his daily log on 27 October 1941. They included the following points: 'Chinese organizations will be left as they exist and we will take control of these in accordance with the overall situation; we will get these to support the Nanking government'; 'We will use their [Chinese] unity, business acumen, and acquisitiveness for wealth and guide these in line with our national policy'; and, 'For making our acquisitions we will rely on business transactions and appeal to their particular character.'¹⁰

Japanese operations involving the Chinese of Thailand were handled by Japanese embassy officials in Bangkok, and directed by the military attaché, Colonel Tamura, whose duties covered political, economic and propaganda aspects of Chinese affairs.¹¹ In a memorandum dated 9 December 1941, Tamura put down the names of the Chinese crusade groups, the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People, and the Lan Yi She (headed by Gen. Tai Li) as three hostile elements to be suppressed.¹² They were led by operatives infiltrated by Chungking to carry on underground anti-Japanese activities, and there was no doubt that the Japanese would take action against them. At the same time, however, as indicated by the principles set down by Lt. Gen. Tanaka, Tamura also hoped to win over the Chinese. Phibun, however, did not want the Japanese directly involved with the local Chinese population, and told Prime Minister Tojo, 'As Thailand has its own policy toward the Chinese, I would like you to be in harmony with it; of course I will not permit any sort of Chinese actions that would cause harm to the Japanese.'¹³ With this message Phibun sought to contain Japanese initiatives directed toward the Chinese, but at this stage of the war, with Phibun waving the banner of 'Asia for the Asians' and being cooperative, Japan's Chinese policies met little opposition from the Thai government.

With the arrival of Japanese forces in Thailand, Chinese leaders went underground. Based on their guideline of using existing institutions, the Japanese did not destroy Chinese organizations, but they immediately commenced reorganizing the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, whose chairman, Tia Lang Sing, was in hiding and would not reappear for some time. The Japanese approached a former chairman, Tan Siew Meng, to take Tia's place, but he declined on grounds that he was not a member of the standing executive committee. Finally Chu Tia Sua, who was recommended by the head of the Japanese Commerce Promotion Office, agreed to become

interim chairman.¹⁴ On 25 December, Chu along with chamber executive committee members Hun Kim Huat (Kosol Huntrakul), Nai Kur Tai (Luang Sitsuropakon), Tan Chin Keng, Tan Ek Yu (Ekyu Chansu), Tan Yong San and other leaders of the Chinese community accompanied Wanit Phananon, a minister without portfolio and a central figure in the government pro-Japanese faction, to visit the prime minister.¹⁵ The group told Phibun that the Chinese community in Thailand wholeheartedly supported the alliance with Japan, and said the Chinese Chamber of Commerce believed that Thailand's alliance with Japan and its participation in the building of a new order in East Asia would benefit all Asians. They conveyed their sense of profound gratitude for the protection the Thai government provided the Chinese of the country, and promised wholehearted support for the government's policies.¹⁶ Three days later, Chinese leaders convened an All-Thailand Overseas Chinese Assembly at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, with over 10,000 local Chinese in attendance along with officials from the Japanese embassy, officers from the Japanese army and representatives of the Indian Independence League. The chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Tia Lang Sing, came out of hiding to read an opening speech, and Wanit delivered a speech prepared by the prime minister. Tia Lang Sing, as chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of the six Chinese assembly halls (Teochew, Hakka, Hainanese, Cantonese, Fukienese, and Shanghaiese), expressed support for Thailand and for Japan, and the assembly resolved to defend Thailand's national policy, to cooperate in the building of the new order in East Asia, and to organize a fund raising drive on behalf of the Thai government.¹⁷

The Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the six assembly halls represented the greater part of the Chinese community in Thailand, and a gathering of representatives of these groups could accurately be called an All-Thailand Overseas Chinese Assembly. On 2 January 1942 the same group jointly sent a message (via shortwave radio) to Wang Ching-wei, chairman of the national government in Nanking, announcing that the Chinese community in Thailand had resolved to support the Thai government's policy of cooperating with Japan in the building of a new order in East Asia. The statement said that Wang's efforts to rescue China and his cooperation with Japan had brought safety and security to great numbers of his countrymen and for this he was to be greatly admired, and had the support of all overseas Chinese. It added that Japanese forces had maintained strict discipline when they entered Thailand and had committed no crimes, for which the Chinese community was grateful. Another message directed to Chiang Kai-shek in Chungking appealed to the generalissimo to make peace with Japan and join in eliminating the influence of the Anglo-Saxons from East Asia and in building a new order.¹⁸ On 18 February, the day the Japanese army triumphantly entered Singapore, the Chinese

Chamber of Commerce issued a statement calling on the Chinese community to celebrate the occasion by flying the three flags of Japan, Thailand and China – the latter referring to the flag of the Nanking government.¹⁹

Having gained the full cooperation of the Thai government and at least superficial cooperation from leaders of the Chinese community, the Japanese then revamped the *Tong Guan Pao* newspaper, the only surviving Chinese-language paper, which they regarded as pro-Chungking. This newspaper had been founded in 1939 by a group of Teochiu Assembly Hall leaders that included Hia Kwang Iam (who was assassinated on 21 November 1939), Tan Keng Chuang (Chuan Tanthana), Lio Kong Phow (Khun Sertphakdi) and Ua Chu Liang, all prominent figures in the anti-Japanese movement. When the Japanese army entered Bangkok, these men went into hiding, and the paper ceased publication. The Japanese embassy, using a lawyer as an intermediary, contacted Ua Chu Liang²⁰ and Hia Mui Kao, who had taken over Hia Kwang Iam's business affairs,²¹ and through them arranged to purchase the newspaper. They then forced Tan Keng Chuang, the chairman of the Teochiu Assembly Hall, and Nai Kur Tai, a widely respected figure in the Chinese community, to persuade the paper's reporters and staff to return to work.²² The head of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Tia Lang Sing, became the new director of the *Tong Guan Pao*, and Fujishima Ken'ichi from the embassy its editor.²³ With this newspaper in their hands, the Japanese were able to control information reaching the Chinese community.

There was no overt opposition to these Japanese measures on the part of the Chinese, and the community experienced only minimal repression by the Japanese military police, the Kempeitai.²⁴ On 17 January 1942 the Japanese military police, the Thai military police and the Thai national police concluded a 'Pact Concerning the Liaison Council for Police Affairs' which stipulated that 'police matters affecting the Japanese military and persons legally under the authority of Thailand (with the exception of persons who are hostile nationals) will be dealt with through liaison between the Japanese Military Police and the Thai National Police through the intermediation of the Thai Military Police'. On 7 October 1942 the commander of the Japanese military police and the Thailand-Japan Coordination Committee Office (set up by the Thai military to handle liaison work between the armies of the two countries) reaffirmed that investigations and arrests of Thais or Chinese involved in theft or espionage would be done as joint Thai-Japanese operations.²⁵ The Japanese military police were in principle to act in cooperation with the Thai authorities, and a massive document entitled 'Concise Report of the Joint Thai-Japanese Military Police' provides details of incidents involving Japanese soldiers and Thais or Chinese that range from minor offences – traffic accidents, drunkenness and riding public conveyances without paying – to acts of

torture.²⁶ On occasions when the Kempeitai ignored the agreement and unilaterally arrested a Chinese suspected of working for Chungking (often someone with Thai nationality), the Thais protested.²⁷ According to a list prepared at the end of 1942 by the Thai Foreign Ministry to document ill-treatment of Thais and Chinese, there were 22 cases in Bangkok and 26 cases in the provinces where the Kempeitai was thought to have used torture. In eight of the 22 Bangkok cases, Thai authorities took part in the arrests; in the remainder the Kempeitai acted on their own. Six cases involved arrests of suspected Chungking spies (14 individuals with Chinese nationality and one with Thai nationality),²⁸ most of them members of an espionage organization infiltrated into Thailand by General Tai Li, Chiang Kai-shek's aide-de-camp.²⁹ The Kempeitai also arrested a first lieutenant who worked as a wireless operator for Chungking and turned him into a counterspy, using him until around March 1945 to collect information coming from Chungking.³⁰

According to information assembled soon after the war ended, the Kempeitai arrested some 300 Chinese for anti-Japanese activities.³¹ One well-known case is remembered by the Chinese as the 'Arrest of the Five Big Leaders Incident', and by the Thais as the 'Thai Isara Incident'. On 17 January 1942 the Thai police seized Tan Keng Chuang, chairman of the Teochiu Assembly Hall, Lio Kong Phow, and other prominent local Chinese leaders along with a number of Thai journalists; many of those arrested received life sentences. The *Tong Guan Pao* wrote after the war, 'Because these people were secretly leading the anti-Japanese national-salvation movement, they were arrested by the Phibun government which was a lackey of the Japanese. This incident was the most splendid page in the history of the Thailand Chinese anti-Japanese national-salvation movement.'³² However, Thai government documents indicate that the Japanese were not involved in the affair, and in fact had been making use of Tan Keng Chuang and his colleagues.³³ The arrests were the result of political infighting and the need of the ruling faction to suppress anti-Phibun forces.³⁴

To the extent that it produced no overt Chinese opposition, Japan's policy toward the Chinese in Thailand during this period can be regarded as a success. However, there was another aspect to the Chinese relationship with the Japanese, an attempt on the part of the Chinese to use the Japanese and their power to counter the repressive policies of the Thai government. In March 1942 Wichitwathakan, the deputy foreign minister, and Prince Wan, the advisor for foreign affairs, called attention to the danger that the Chinese would seek shelter under the Japanese,³⁵ and the following month Lt. Col. M. C. Phisitdisaphong Disakul (M. C. Phisit, a son of Prince Damrong), who handled Thailand's military liaison with the Japanese, was reported as saying,

Japan's way is to try to get on the good side of the Chinese while tramping on the heads of the Thais. The Japanese are showing the Chinese that the Thais are hostile to them and trying to make the Chinese rely on the Japanese. From what I have heard, the chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce [Tan Siew Meng] has been flattering the Japanese as never before while showing no attitude at all of trying to rely on the Thais. To make the Chinese understand that we Thais have no particular ill-will against them, we should maintain friendly contact with the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.³⁶

Wisut Athayuk, Director of the Eastern Political Affairs Department of the Foreign Ministry, supported this view, as did the Governor of Bangkok.³⁷

At the start of the war, as Japan gained supremacy over Southeast Asia, the Axis Powers were prevailing in Europe, and it seemed to the Thai leaders that Japan's ascent would continue for some time to come. Their strategic objectives were to limit Japan's influence within Thailand, and to use Japan's growing hegemony to expand Thailand's territory and increase its influence across the region, making Thailand the central nation of Southeast Asia. This sort of thinking can be seen in statements made by Wichitwathakan, who was promoted from deputy foreign minister to foreign minister on 19 June 1942, and also by Phibun. In May 1942, when the Japanese proposed a cultural treaty between the two countries, Wichit suggested that any such agreement should not be confined to relations between Thailand and Japan, but should establish Thailand as 'the cultural centre of Southeast Asia'.³⁸ And in a note on the construction of the Thai-Burma railway, Phibun wrote, 'It's all right for Japan to build it. We will follow behind the Japanese army and spread our culture. That's cooperating as an ally.'³⁹ Concerning an inspection trip by Japanese agricultural experts to an experimental farm on the outskirts of Bangkok, the Prime Minister commented that, 'Japan wants to learn about agriculture and other things from Thailand. . . . we lead [in various types of cultivation and cattle-raising], and we must with great speed become the school for all Asians.'⁴⁰

In pursuit of these objectives, Phibun hoped to see Thai forces embark on a foreign military campaign to expand Thailand's territory as promised in the Thai-Japanese Treaty of Alliance. On 2 March 1942 the Interior Ministry had announced that the Shan, Karen and Mon peoples in Tenasserim were part of the Thai race, and would be given Thai nationality should they migrate to Thailand.⁴¹ Some two years earlier, during Thailand's dispute with French Indo-China, the Thai government had made a similar point regarding Thai peoples living in Lao and Khmer territory, and this statement clearly signalled Thailand's interest in territory belonging to Burma. The Japanese accepted in principle Phibun's desire to begin the Thai military campaign in Burma, but withheld permission to take action. The Southern Army, which felt that Thailand had submitted only in

the face of Japan's superior military force, wanted Phibun to apologize for the armed resistance against Japanese troops at the start of the war,⁴² while the Japanese government demanded that Thailand recognize the Nanking government before consenting to any foreign campaigns.⁴³ However, following the conclusion of the 'Supplementary Agreement Concerning Joint Thai-Japanese Military Operations' on 5 May 1942, a Thai expeditionary force entered the Shan states east of the Salween River, where it chased away Chiang Kai-shek's army and occupied the region. Japan's stand on formal reversion of this territory to Thailand, as set forth on 30 June 1942, was as follows: 'Concerning the restoration of lost territory to Thailand, you will avoid any definite statements; you will let it be known that whether or not the Thais can recover any territory will depend on the degree of their cooperation, and you will take care not to make any commitment.'⁴⁴ Thus, a victorious Japan was disregarding Thailand's expectations of marching along with its ally and benefiting from the new order in East Asia.

The Chinese in the period of cooling Thai-Japanese relations

From mid-1942 Thai-Japanese relations cooled rapidly. In a message dated 4 August, the Japanese ambassador in Thailand, Tsubokami, reported: 'Frankly there is nothing that could be regarded as a pro-Japanese faction existing right now, and especially among the young officers there are many who are against the policy of relying on Japan; the situation now is one of a gradually rising anti-Japanese atmosphere.' Tsubokami listed five causes for this state of affairs: (1) the economic inroads of Japanese companies in the wake of Japan's military success, (2) the Japanese Army's disregard of Thai laws and its contempt for Thai officials and people, (3) Japan's meddling in the Thai government's domestic policies, (4) the failure of Japan to transfer enemy assets in Thailand to the Thais, (5) Japan's practice of treating Thailand like an occupied territory or even a colony.⁴⁵ Thai sources indicate that this assessment was correct. Moreover, Japan remained reluctant to discuss the issue of territorial reversion even after the Thai army's invasion of the Shan states, despite the promises made in the treaty of alliance.

To protect Thailand from 'loss and damage' at the hands of Japan, Phibun ordered on 13 May 1942 that every ministry, department and bureau set up foreign relations committees 'to examine competition from new businesses, and interference and profiteering' by foreigners (meaning the Japanese), and 'devise preventive measures'. The results of their discussions were to be reported to the prime minister.⁴⁶ However, with Japanese power still overwhelming, Phibun sought to avoid any reckless moves that would worsen Thai-Japanese ties.

In January 1943 Thailand's relations with both the Chinese and the Japanese changed abruptly when the Thai government declared a 'restricted

zone' in the six provinces of northern Thailand (Lampang, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phrae, Lamphun, and Utharadit), and declared them off limits to 'foreign nationals' – a term that included both the Chinese and the Japanese.⁴⁷ Citing the National Defense Preparedness Authorization Act promulgated on 6 December 1941, Adun Adundetcharat, the commander of the National Police and one of Phibun's most trusted subordinates, announced on 20 January that foreign nationals had 20 days to leave the designated area.⁴⁸ Less than a month earlier, on 28 December, Chinese in the Ban Pong District in Ratburi province and in Kanchanaburi province had received a similar order following an incident in Ban Pong, in which the Thai police killed six Japanese soldiers. The reason given was that the Chinese had tried to destroy Thai-Japanese friendship by spreading rumours that 'the Thais harboured ill-will toward the Japanese'.⁴⁹ This earlier order had affected some 7,000 Chinese, but in the six northern provinces tens of thousands of Chinese were forced to move. Since most of the rice mills and sawmills in northern Thailand were operated by Chinese, the policy threatened to cause a great deal of inconvenience and trouble for rice farmers and consumers, and also for the Thai expeditionary army stationed in northern Thailand. On 27 January an emergency cabinet meeting decided that the quasi-governmental Thai Rice Company would replace the Chinese rice dealers.⁵⁰

Only a few dozen Japanese were affected by the expulsion order, and some of them ignored it. On his return to Chiang Mai from the Shan states on 7 February 1943, Phibun wired Adun in Bangkok, saying,

The Japanese still have not left. Go through the Foreign Ministry and tell the Japanese embassy to comply with the evacuation order like the other foreign nationals have. If they do not comply, Japan will not be observing Thai laws, and it will be seen by the public that they are not honouring Thai sovereignty. . . . I hear that with the other foreigners gone, the Japanese are bringing in a lot of money and doing a lot of business. In this case it is better to have the Chinese and Indians stay and compete against the Japanese. Order the governor of Chiang Mai to expel the Japanese, or if Japan opposes this, then let the Chinese and Indians compete against them. There is no problem in the other provinces.⁵¹

Three days later, Phibun sent similar instructions to the Interior Minister and Foreign Minister.⁵²

Along with making the north off limits, Phibun showed antipathy toward the Chinese in another way as well. On 2 March 1943 the Japanese military attaché sent a message to the Thai-Japanese Coordination Committee Office that read: 'In order to accelerate construction of the railroad linking Thailand and Burma, the Japanese Army is urgently organizing personnel and equipment as set forth below, and it would like

your office to help facilitate this organizing in a timely manner.' The message asked the liaison director to provide construction equipment and 13,000 coolies to work on the project along. Anticipating that most of the work force would consist of Thai coolies, the Thai army officer in charge of mobilizing labour referred the request to the Public Welfare Department of the Interior Ministry. The railway was being constructed in Kanchanaburi, and he considered that the use of Chinese coolies would be unacceptable in view of the order expelling the Chinese from this province. However, upon learning of the plan, Phibun said, 'It's better to use Chinese and foreigners; we shouldn't make Thais go.'⁵³ On 25 March, Phibun told the Ministers of the Interior and of Defense, who were charged with raising Chinese levies:

Many of the people in Kanchanaburi, Ratburi and Phetburi have already been forcibly recruited and put to work building the military railroad, and this has caused great difficulties in the lives of the people in those provinces. To my thinking the Chinese should share pleasures and pains together with the Thais, for like the Thais they have long lived happily and comfortably. Now in this time of crisis, it's urgent that we ask for as much cooperation as possible from the Chinese. For this reason use whatever means you can devise to levy as many Chinese as needed for construction of the military railroad.⁵⁴

The aide to the Japanese military attaché opposed Phibun's scheme, and told the Thai officer in charge that the Japanese wanted to recruit not only Chinese but also as many Thais as possible. Moreover, the Japanese disapproved of Phibun's plan to recruit Chinese workers through government departments because they needed a large number of labourers as soon as possible and were concerned about delays arising from Thai bureaucratic procedures. To collect workers quickly, the aide proposed that the Thais ask for the voluntary cooperation of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, but the Thais responded that the government did not have the authority to force a private organisation such as the Chamber of Commerce to act. They added that if the government sought the Chamber's cooperation for something that could be refused, it would become more difficult to control the Chinese in future, and suggested that the Japanese speak directly with the Chamber. The Japanese insisted that the Thai government act as an intermediary, and the reason, it transpired, was that the Japanese military police had already approached the Chinese Chamber of Commerce about this matter, only to be told that it operated under Thai laws and could not offer cooperation without an order from the Thai government.⁵⁵

Phibun, as supreme commander of Thailand's military forces, initially ordered the Ministries of the Interior and Defence to carry out the forced recruitment of Chinese labour, but in the end Thai officials had to seek help from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. A meeting of provincial

governors and other officials under the Interior Ministry held on 3 April decided that the governors of Nakhon Pathom, Suphanburi and Ratburi provinces would each be assigned a quota of 500 Chinese coolies, and that another 9,850 coolies would be collected from Bangkok and Thonburi. The superintendent-general of the capital's metropolitan police, Phra Phinitch-onkhadi (whose Chinese name was Tan Yok Seng), was given the task of contacting the Chamber of Commerce, and later the same day he and the governors of Bangkok and Thonburi met with Tan Siew Meng, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. Tan said that the chamber would cooperate, but asked the government to negotiate with the Japanese army regarding the conditions of employment. This was done on 5 April, and that evening the Japanese embassy hosted a dinner party for Tan Siew Meng, Hun Kim Huat, Tae Kia Hung, Tia Lang Sing and other leading members of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.⁵⁶ On 6 April Phibun confirmed the modification of his earlier recruitment order, saying, 'We'll talk about doing regular hiring first, after that forced recruitment is OK.'⁵⁷

The Chamber of Commerce put Tia Lang Sing in charge of a worker employment committee that began recruitment activities on 12 April, and raised the 200,000 baht needed to cover costs by collecting funds from the Chinese community.⁵⁸ In Bangkok the Chinese assembly halls and business associations supplied substantial numbers of workers, as did coolie contractors, attracted by daily wage rates that were substantially higher than the prevailing market rate. However, the Chamber also carried on semi-forced recruiting as well.⁵⁹ By noon on the 14th, 1,080 recruits had signed up,⁶⁰ and a first contingent of 467 men left Bangkok three days later. By 26 May the Chamber of Commerce had supplied 11,577 coolies to the Japanese army, and another 1,500 coolies from outside of Bangkok had been placed under the Chamber's supervision and protection.⁶¹ Many of the workers had been recruited against their will and quickly escaped, and even among those labourers who had not been coerced there was a high rate of desertion owing to abysmal living conditions at the work sites.

On 9 June 1943 the Japanese asked the Thai government to supply an additional 23,000 labourers (later reduced to 13,000), and the Thais again sought assistance from the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. In the outlying provinces where the chamber had no branches, the Interior Ministry ordered the provincial governors to send representatives of the Chinese merchants in their provinces to Bangkok for a conference. Delegates from 22 outlying provinces attended, and agreed to help the Interior Ministry enlist workers. Between 15 July and 31 August recruited around 13,000 labourers, but just 43 per cent of them arrived at the work sites, while the rest fled en route.⁶² This second recruiting drive again concentrated on signing up Chinese rather than Thai labourers. According to the deputy governor of Chachnsao province in central Thailand,

Gathering up Chinese labourers is part of a policy of not having the Thais do hard labour. In the war now going on, we Thais are being worn out and exhausted from protecting the country's borders to maintain our independence. Meanwhile the foreigners are living comfortably on the home front, and they are exploiting us besides. However, if you get inquiries about why the Chinese are being taken, answer in some other way to avoid creating ill-feelings in the minds of the Chinese. . . . We can include Thai labourers, but make sure there is no mistake about them signing up voluntarily.⁶³

For the second recruitment drive the Chinese Chamber of Commerce used the same methods as before.⁶⁴ Lt. Col. M. C. Phisit told a meeting of the public relations committee on 28 July 1943 that,

The Chinese are in a difficult position and are discontented. We have relied on the Chamber of Commerce for collecting labourers, but this is leading to such things as the Chinese coercing the Chinese, the Japanese coercing the Chinese, and the Japanese flattering the Chinese. By the Chinese coercing the Chinese I mean the mounting costs of the Chamber of Commerce's recruiting drives being forced onto well-known Chinese. By the Japanese coercing the Chinese I mean the Japanese threats to punish Chinese community leaders who are sympathetic to Chungking. The Chinese are very frightened of this. By the Japanese flattering the Chinese I mean the Japanese-controlled *Tong Guan Pao* posing as a mouthpiece working for the benefit of the Chinese. The purpose of that newspaper is to make the Chinese pro-Japanese while at the same time it has tended to incite the Chinese to hate the Thais.⁶⁵

Some Chinese benefited from the construction of the Thai-Burma railroad. Tia Lang Sing, for example, supplied the Japanese army with gravel.⁶⁶ In general, however, the Chinese position was extremely difficult, for they were caught between the Phibun government and the Japanese army, with the former doing its best to exclude Thais and supply only Chinese to satisfy the Japanese demands for labour, and the latter threatening to punish the Chinese for being pro-Chungking if they did not cooperate.

The Chinese and worsening Thai-Japanese relations

From March 1943 Phibun's discontent with the Japanese grew apace, and the alliance with Japan deteriorated, as can be seen from the following examples. After the Japanese set up their garrison army command in Bangkok in January 1943, Phibun abolished the Thai-Japanese Coordination Committee Office responsible for military liaison with the Japanese army, and replaced it with an 'Allied Liaison Office' (Krom Prasangan

Phanthamit), a name that omitted any reference to Japan.⁶⁷ Phibun explained, 'The name Thai-Japanese Liaison Office makes it appear that the Japanese will be remaining in Thailand permanently and that it has been set up specifically for the Japanese. As such it's just too narrow.'⁶⁸ After the war he would point to the choice of name as evidence of his anti-Japanese proclivities, but he gave the Japanese a different explanation at the time, claiming that the new arrangement provided a more powerful organization for the smooth and speedy execution of joint military operations.⁶⁹ The Japanese referred to the body as the Thai-Japanese Allied Liaison Affairs Office until 1945, when Hamada Hitoshi, then military attaché in Bangkok, adopted the usage Allied Countries Liaison Affairs Office.

In early May, Thailand's Ambassador in Tokyo, Direk, reported that, 'Some officials in the Greater East Asia Ministry and the newspapers are saying that if the Thai people do not cooperate resolutely with Japan for victory in the war, it is questionable whether Thailand can maintain its independence and sovereignty.' Phibun responded to this threat by saying that Thailand was already cooperating to its utmost. On 5 May the Thai cabinet did discuss the need to strengthen public relations efforts in Japan, but six days later, the deputy director of the Allied Liaison Office, M. C. Phisit, stated at a meeting chaired by the foreign minister:

There's a great difference in the positions of Thailand and Japan. They never defer to us at all, but we defer to them. Our best policy is neutrality, not taking sides with either Japan or the other side.⁷⁰

Phisit had openly suggested a policy that ran directly counter to the principles of the Thai-Japanese alliance, and none of the high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials or military officers at the meeting raised any objections.

For their part the Japanese launched an effort to improve relations with Thailand, entrusting the task to Lt. Gen. Nakamura Aketo, commander of the Thailand Garrison Army. Nakamura resolved the problem of enemy assets, and worked out a settlement for the Ban Pong incident that called for condolence money the Thais had paid for the deaths of Japanese soldiers in the country to be returned in the form of condolence money for the families of Thais killed at the time of the Japanese invasion at the start of the war.⁷¹ In July, Prime Minister Tojo visited Bangkok, and presented a memorandum to the Thai prime minister which read in part:

What the Empire expects of Thailand is Your Excellency's understanding of the Empire's true intentions, and assured of its full support, will vigorously execute all measures necessary for heightening the nation's fighting spirit, strengthening its wartime structure, and for prosecuting the common war.

Critically for the Thais, Tojo's memorandum recognized the incorporation of four Malay states and two Shan states into Thailand.⁷² The retrocession of

lost territory had long been one of Phibun's aspirations and Japan's acceptance of the change presumably pleased him, but as a measure to draw out greater cooperation from the Thai leader it had come too late. The war was going badly for Japan, and on 12 May 1943 the Thai cabinet called on the Foreign Ministry to examine the war situation. In June Phibun ordered that civilians be given military training, and that a resistance organization be formed.⁷³ The fall of Mussolini in July followed by the accession to power of the Badoglio government and Italy's break with the Axis reinforced the point that the Allied Powers were winning.

As part of his new approach, Phibun began making efforts to establish contacts with the Chungking government and eased his severe policies toward the Chinese. On 15 October 1943, he went so far as to ask Prince Wan whether there was any way to give all Chinese in the country Thai nationality *en masse*.⁷⁴ At the same time he sought to reduce his cooperation with the Japanese to the lowest level possible without inviting Japanese retaliation. Relations with the Chinese improved as a result of these changes, while relations between the Japanese and both the Thais and the Chinese grew increasingly strained.

In January 1944 Phibun ordered the expeditionary army in the Shan states to make contact with the Chungking army in Yunnan (the 93rd Division), and in mid-March he instructed Maj. Gen. Luang Hansongkham, commander of the expeditionary army's Third Division, to negotiate an arrangement for joint military operations with the Chungking army against the Japanese. He also initiated discussions with General Lu, the Chinese 93rd Division Commander at Da Luo (Thai name: Cheng Lo), to seek Chinese assistance in building up the Thai air force, and asked that the Chinese act as intermediaries with the British and Americans on Thailand's behalf. Lu promised to deliver the Thai requests directly to Chiang Kai-shek, and in late April the Chinese told the Thais to prepare to send a delegation to Chungking. Phibun appointed Adun to lead the group, but was still awaiting further instructions from Chiang Kai-shek when his government was forced from power at the end of July.⁷⁵

The launching of a new Chinese-language newspaper symbolized the improving relationship between the Thai government and the Chinese. Preparatory talks began in March 1943 between Li Chek Sin (Ari Livira) and Phraya Prichanusat,⁷⁶ owner of numerous other newspapers, and Phibun eventually approved publication of the *Thai Hua Siang Po* ('Thai-Chinese Commercial Newspaper') under the supervision of the Publicity Department director, Phairot Jayanama. Phairot, a Phibun confidant who was also in charge of espionage operations against the Japanese, appointed Li Chek Sin to take charge of the newspaper and see that it adhered to government policies.⁷⁷ Management was in Thai hands, but editorial control rested with Li Chek Sin, Lian Yin Xiao and Meng Xiong, whose sympathies lay with Chungking. As reported in one of its post-war issues, the

newspaper served as an 'anti-Japanese element', by arousing the patriotism of the Chinese and providing a corrective for distorted information that appeared in the 'deceiving *Tong Guan Pao*'.⁷⁸ However, the *Thai Hua Siang Po* carried its share of the flattering, sycophantic articles and commentaries that characterized wartime journals in general. For example, at the time of the signing of the China-Japan alliance on 30 October 1943, it joined with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the six Chinese assembly halls and the *Tong Guan Pao* in transmitting a message of congratulations to Wang Ching-wei:

The conclusion of the alliance between China and Japan has further deepened the amicable relations between the two countries, has further promoted the building of the new order in Asia, and our country (China) has now acquired complete independence and freedom. These are the products of Chairman Wang Ching-wei's hard-fought struggle for the nation. As representatives of all the Chinese in Thailand, we wish to express to the Chairman our greatest homage.⁷⁹

After the war Lian Yin Xiao recalled feeling concerned that members of the Chinese community might misunderstand the newspaper's intention to resist the Japanese, and regard joining hands with the Thai government in publishing a Chinese-language newspaper as a traitorous act. Given the ill-feeling in the Chinese community against the Phibun regime, collaboration with the government could easily have been seen in that light.

The Japanese complained that the *Thai Hua Siang Po* published material suggesting that the Allied Powers would triumph and that confrontation existed between Thailand and Japan. The Kempeitai took strong exception to these articles, and at their request the Thai military police on 14 October 1943 took Li Chek Sin into custody. However, before he could be turned over to the Japanese, he managed with Thai help to escape.⁸⁰ After receiving a report of this incident, Phibun instructed his Publicity Department director on 28 November to 'Talk with the police and have them guard *our* newspaper. Say the reason is to protect intelligence information. That way the Japanese can't interfere either. Because we're protecting *our* sovereignty. Report back to me how you took care of it.'⁸¹ The Japanese continued to make frequent complaints about articles in the *Thai Hua Siang Po*, both through diplomatic channels and at regular meetings between the public relations officers of both armies. For example, on 5 April 1944 Tsubokami protested to Foreign Minister Direk that,

Since the startup of the *Thai Hua Siang Po*, we have frequently noticed editing deviating from accepted standards and a nonsensical way of featuring photos; and the way the Domei Wire Service story on Prime Minister Churchill's speech was carried on page one of the 28

March issue, especially the large printing of the headline 'More Self-Confident Britain Sure to Gain Victory', there can be no other inference than that such editing advantageous to the enemy is the result of the infiltration of Chungking and other reactionary elements into this newspaper. If this is true, it is a grave problem to be existing at this stage of decisive warfare. Therefore we want you to take strict disciplinary action against this newspaper and this sort of behaviour that benefits the enemy.

In response Direk simply informed the ambassador that an investigation by the Director of the Publicity Department showed that the newspaper had no ulterior motives. In reality, however, the Director had made it known at an internal meeting of the department that 80 per cent of the workers at the *Thai Hua Siang Po* were Chungking sympathizers.⁸²

A further example of Phibun's changing attitude toward the Chinese was his practice of conferring decorations on local Chinese leaders. Ung Tek Lim (Chulin Lamsam), the general manager of the Thai Niyom Company, received the King's Crown Decoration Third Class on 10 December 1943, as did Tan Siew Meng on 26 January 1944.⁸³ A third-class decoration in Thailand is an honour given to people at the level of lieutenant colonel or colonel in the military, provincial governors, or government ministry department directors. While Chinese routinely received extremely high decorations after the war, at the time it was an epochal event, and the *Tong Guan Pao* commented ebulliently: 'The glory at this time with the conferral of these decorations is a brilliant record and historic first for the Chinese living in Thailand. It is an honour conferred on the whole of the Chinese society.'⁸⁴

On 19 December 1943 the Allies carried out their first air raid on Bangkok, signalling the start of concerted attacks against the capital. Two days later, on the 21st, a ceremony celebrating the second anniversary of the Thai-Japanese alliance took place, and Phibun took the bold step of absenting himself from this important occasion.⁸⁵ Thai-Japanese relations continued on a downward path, and the studied uncooperativeness of Phibun's closest cohorts grew more pronounced. On 5 February 1944, Nakamura Aketo, Supreme Commander of the Imperial Japanese Army in Thailand, demanded that Phibun, in his capacity as Supreme Commander of the Thai Armed Forces, ensure Thai cooperation with Japan.⁸⁶ Phibun's government procrastinated over meeting Japanese requests, which would have entailed enormous military expenditures, and finally the situation reached the point where Phibun was ready to issue a temporary recall of his ambassador in Tokyo, Wichitwathakan (the previous foreign minister, who had switched posts with Direk).⁸⁷ However, before Wichit could be recalled, the political situation in Bangkok changed. Through his dictatorial political methods, Phibun had lost the confidence of the majority of the parliament, and a succession of bills his government submitted for passage

was voted down. During this confrontation the Japanese army took a neutral position, which worked in favour of the anti-Phibun side by restricting the movement of military forces under Phibun's command. At the end of July 1944, the Phibun cabinet was forced to resign.

The Khuang Aphaiwong government and the Chinese

Uneasiness in Thai-Japanese relations made the new Thai leaders all the more cautious in their dealings with the Japanese. The challenge facing the new Khuang Aphaiwong government was to protect Thailand's independence and minimize war damage. The Japanese found the Khuang cabinet a marked improvement over the departed Phibun regime. The new policy toward Japan was summed up in a comment by M. C. Phisit: 'We will perform our duty to Japan faithfully and completely which is also to our honour; what we cannot do is speak our mind candidly and seek Japan's sympathy.'⁸⁸ In line with this new approach, the Khuang government quickly completed negotiations for an agreement on Japanese military expenditure, an issue upon which the two sides had come to an impasse during the last stage of Phibun's rule.

Along with adopting a conciliatory approach toward the Japanese, the Khuang government further relaxed restrictions on the Chinese. On 11 September 1941 Phibun had promulgated a law reserving certain jobs exclusively for Thais, and on 9 June 1942 the government had announced 27 categories of reserved occupations.⁸⁹ This measure together with the order expelling Chinese residents from certain restricted zones and the conscription of Chinese labour for the Thai-Burma railroad epitomized the anti-Chinese policy of the Phibun government. Immediately after coming to power, the Khuang government set up a Committee to Examine National Economic Problems, headed by Thongpleo Chonphumi, which advised that occupational restrictions should 'be abolished in accordance with circumstances that could arise in the future, and the antagonism caused to the Chinese should be reduced'.⁹⁰ On 18 October 1944 the cabinet decided to rescind the order reserving certain occupations for Thais with a few minor exceptions such as lawyers, and artisans making statues of the Buddha. The changes took effect on 24 November.

Thongpleo's committee left the expulsion order in effect. The chairman announced on 21 February 1945, 'Given the tense circumstances, Thai residents are afraid of foreigners', and said that 'some quarters' (a clear reference to the Japanese) might see abolition of the regulation as a sign of Thai and Chinese uncooperativeness. However, the cabinet increased the exemptions that allowed foreigners to reside in restricted zones on an individual basis.⁹¹

There remained the issue of labour for the Thai-Burma railway. In April 1944, the Japanese army asked the Thai government to facilitate recruitment

of an additional 5,000 workers for the railway.⁹² The Japanese wanted to pay a daily wage of one baht plus rations, but labourers already working on the line were getting three baht a day (without rations), and with the cost of living rising the proposed wage was much too low. Under these circumstances recruitment proved so difficult that the Thais could not fulfil the Japanese request. At the end of July the Japanese Army asked for another 6,800 labourers. On 2 August Tan Siew Meng, chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, agreed to the request, but said the chamber wanted labourers to be paid a daily wage of 6.5 baht, with no rations.

After protracted negotiations the two sides agreed on a daily wage of 6 baht, from which the Japanese army would deduct 1.5 baht for rations and other expenses. According to Thai figures, recruitment exercises in Bangkok netted 2,032 workers (Japanese figures showed 2,001), but after receiving a ten baht advance intended to cover departure arrangements, most of the recruits ran away. Only 61 of the 718 workers recruited for the third delivery reached Kanchanaburi, and the 405 in the fourth delivery all disappeared while still in Bangkok. As of 19 January 1945 only 170 new recruits were actually at the work sites. Thus the chamber's 'Third Drive on Behalf of the Thai Government to Employ Workers' supplied almost no labour at all. As a result, the Japanese abandoned recruitment through the Chinese Chamber of Commerce altogether.⁹³

In the meantime, the KMT and the communist party had launched underground operations against the Japanese. On 6 March 1944, five Thailand-born Chinese army officers parachuted from a British aircraft into the Nakhon Pathom area near Bangkok, marking the start of operations using Allied aircraft to infiltrate agents into Thailand. The previously mentioned spy organization run by Lan Dong Hai, which operated out of the office of Chiang Kai-shek's aide-de-camp, General Tai Li, had been active in Bangkok since before the war. On 26 August 1944 the Kempeitai, after giving notice to the Thais, raided the group's radio communications centre in Thonburi and captured the radio operator, Li Shen. On the morning of 27 August, another four members of the group were caught. Perhaps because of confessions extracted from these people, the Kempeitai arrested 45 Chinese agents during the next 10 days, but Lan Dong Hai managed to evade capture and returned for a time to Chungking.⁹⁴ He later slipped back into Thailand, and immediately after the Japanese surrender appeared in public as the Director of Mission (or Director of Party Affairs) in Thailand for the Kuomintang.

In the latter part of the Occupation, the Military Statistics Office in Chungking sent a number of small groups into Thailand, each unknown to the others. One group was commanded by Major Tan Yi, a Thailand Chinese and a graduate of the Huang Pu Military Academy. Tan's five-man party slipped into Bangkok in 1944, and for the duration of the war radioed information on the Japanese army back to the Military Statistics Office. Tan

sent agents into military bases disguised as coolie labourers, and these people talked to cooperative Koreans and Taiwanese in the Japanese army. The Tan Yi group was strictly a secret espionage organization; its job did not include organizing the masses or publishing newspapers, and the Japanese never uncovered its operations.⁹⁵

Another secret organization was the Huang Lu Feng group, which received its orders from the headquarters of the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People in Chungking. It entered Thailand along with soldiers under Zhuo Xian Shu, chief of the Thailand Military Affairs Special Missions Office, and set up a Thailand branch of the Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People; it also conducted propaganda activities through its newspaper, *Jing Pao*, and organized and trained combat units.⁹⁶

The communist party under the leadership of Li Qi Xin, with Qiu Ji, Li Hua,⁹⁷ and a few others, began publishing an underground newspaper called *Zhen Hua Bao* (*The Truth*) on 25 July 1942.⁹⁸ On 23 December 1944 the party held the First All-Thailand Congress of Representatives of the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance (Saha Samakhom Totan Yipun). Preparations for this Alliance had taken place on 25 November at a gathering of seven Chinese and Thai groups (the *Zhen Hua Bao*, the *Ren Min Bao*, the Thai-language newspaper *Mahachon*, the Thai Ekarat group, the Southern Thai Anti-Japanese Alliance General Union, the Bangkok League of Workers from Differing Walks of Life, and the Study Group for the Masses). The membership included both organizations and individuals, and it claimed to have enrolled as many as 11,000 people.⁹⁹ At the Second All-Thailand Congress of the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance that began on 31 October 1945, 142 members attended representing 53 groups.¹⁰⁰

On 12 September 1945, soon after the war ended, Qiu Ji gave Chinese, Thai and British journalists an extravagant account of the communist party's anti-Japanese activities during the war.

After the Japanese army's advance into the south, the Chinese and Thai peoples cooperated in anti-Japanese activities, and these were carried out in various parts of Thailand. The Chinese and Thais both carried on these anti-Japanese activities for the homeland's independence and freedom, and to liberate it from the shackles of slavery. . . . In southern Thailand the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance and the Anti-Japanese Volunteer Army carried on an anti-Japanese war, and they always had the cooperation of the Thai army and police. The anti-Japanese Thai and Chinese workers rose up in various places and destroyed Japanese military warehouses and other things.¹⁰¹

Such rhetoric notwithstanding, it seems that apart from publishing the *Zhen Hua Bao*, communist party initiatives were limited to thefts from Japanese military warehouses and acts of sabotage at Japanese-run factories. In view of the way the communist party (composed largely of overseas Chinese) and

the Thai Communist Party (established and made independent of the former on 1 December 1942) cooperated in the Grand Siam Anti-Japanese Alliance (the Chairman, Qiu Ji was from the Overseas Chinese communist party, and the Secretary General, Wirot Amphai, from the Thai Communist Party) and other undertakings, they can be considered as essentially the same body.

Both the communist party and the KMT energetically pursued people they considered traitors. These activities dampened the willingness of the local Chinese leadership to cooperate with the Japanese during the last stage of the war, and helped draw funds to the anti-Japanese movement. On 17 April 1944 the *Zhen Hua Bao* carried an editorial headlined: 'Beware of Treacherous Chinese Profiteers Who Help Bandits'. Written by Li Qi Xin, the editorial attacked big Chinese merchants such as Jip In Soi, whom it mentioned by name, and said in part:

Thailand is Japan's follower, and so there is no denying that Japan can plunder Thailand's goods and resources in great quantities. However, if unscrupulous Chinese merchants didn't do the purchasing and manufacturing for the Japanese, they could never get the large quantities they do, and this would do much to obstruct and delay them. For this reason we call on all labourers and company workers to stop cooperating and helping to produce the fortunes of these profiteering merchants who are working against the good of the nation, and to attack and prevent their traitorous dealings in every possible way.¹⁰²

On 5 September 1944 the *Zhen Hua Bao* carried another critical article reading:

The two traitors, Tan Siew Meng and Tia Lang Sing, have always disregarded the nation's laws and been contemptuous of their fellow Chinese; and at a recent meeting of the Japanese puppet of a Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the two called for recruiting 5,000 workers for the Japanese.

The article noted that despite a 12 July warning broadcast by the Chungking central radio station directed at Tan Siew Meng, Tia Lang Sing, Ung Tek Lim, Hun Kim Huat and three others, when the Japanese again asked for more workers for the Thai-Burma railroad, 'the traitor Tan Siew Meng immediately called a meeting [of the Chamber of Commerce]; the majority of the chamber opposed the request, and only the two traitors Tan Siew Meng and Tia Lang Sing insisted that the chamber had to accept'. The paper reported that Tan Siew Meng told the other members, 'If the central government [Chungking] sends out a warning, let it send out a warning; if our fellow Chinese criticize us, let them go ahead and criticize; but it is impossible not to obey the Japanese demands.'¹⁰³ This comment gives an indication of the stress the chairman was feeling due to the pressure from

the Japanese army; it also indicates the close links the communist party had to the leadership of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

In June 1945, *Tong Kok Nang*, the underground newspaper of the KMT's Lan Dong Hai group, reported in grandiose prose an attack on Lio Chia Hong, a leader in a Japanese-run counter-espionage organization¹⁰⁴ whose job was to break up anti-Japanese groups. In an article headlined 'Big traitorous slave, Lio Chia Hong, punished; severely wounded in unprecedented attack that has reverberated throughout Thailand', the paper declared, 'On the 5th of this month [June] at one o'clock in the afternoon at the intersection in front of the Læm Thong Restaurant, a traitor was punished in a sacred attack. After fulfilling his heroic duty, the noble patriot calmly left the scene.'¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Phibun actively supported Japan until mid-1942, and expected to reap substantial rewards for his loyalty. He then grew disenchanted with the alliance, which provided few benefits for Thailand and entailed an alarming degree of Japanese influence in the country, and his government began to distance itself from Japan, ultimately trying to position Thailand as a neutral power. By the time Phibun was forced out of office, he had begun preparing to resist Japan. His successor, Khuang Aphaiwong, created an anti-Phibun civilian cabinet that attempted to improve relations with the Japanese while allowing the Free Thai movement to operate behind the scenes.

The changing state of Thai-Japanese relations during the war years had a great effect on the Chinese in Thailand. During the first stage, when Phibun had visions of Thailand becoming a major power within Japan's new order for East Asia, he proclaimed his backing for the principle of 'Asia for the Asians'. Thailand's Chinese, who backed the Chungking government, found themselves compelled to show support for the Wang Ching-wei government in Nanking. The Chinese in Thailand had by and large submitted to the severe policies of the Phibun government before the war began, and most of the community's leaders obediently followed its pro-Japanese line, particularly when confronted by the presence of the Japanese army in Thailand. Having obtained the cooperation of the Thai government, the Japanese army had few difficulties putting its Chinese policy into place, and in the absence of strong resistance from the Chinese, there was no need for any large-scale Japanese suppression of the Chinese community. The Japanese made some small alterations to organizations like the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and took control of the *Tong Guan Pao* newspaper, but for the most part simply used existing Chinese organizations. The Thais continually worried about the possibility that the Japanese would gain influence over the Chinese to the detriment of the Thai government; they never liked the Japanese dealing on their own directly

with the Chinese, and regarded with suspicion any relations between the Japanese and Chinese.

Phibun subsequently came to see the Japanese and the Chinese in the same light: both were irksome, unwelcome foreigners. The Prime Minister declared wide areas of the country off limits to foreigners – a measure that affected both Chinese and Japanese – and expelled Chinese from certain occupations that were henceforth reserved for Thais. Asked by the Japanese to supply Thai labour for constructing the Thai-Burma railroad, Phibun recruited Chinese workers instead, using the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and employing semi-coercive methods. The Chamber of Commerce ultimately supplied more than 20,000 labourers – the great majority of them Chinese – to Japanese military construction projects. In effect Phibun shifted onto the Chinese the burden of the Thai-Japanese Alliance, which obliged the Thais to meet the labour requirements of the Japanese army. Phibun's policies left a deep bitterness in the minds and hearts of Thailand's Chinese.

During the latter part of Phibun's time in office, relations with Japan deteriorated badly, but this did not seem to concern Phibun. Meanwhile he became more flexible and conciliatory toward the local Chinese. As Japan's deteriorating war situation became increasingly apparent, the Japanese began reinforcing their Thailand Garrison Army, and there was growing danger of a Japanese *coup de force*. After Phibun's resignation in July 1944, the Khuang Aphaiwong government adopted a more conciliatory attitude toward Japan and worked to improve Thai-Japanese relations. It also continued to pull back from Phibun's earlier harsh anti-Chinese policy, and built contacts with Chinese underground operations, along with the Free Thai movement. By the spring of 1945, the cooperation of the Chinese community with the Japanese was little more than a hollow pretence. During this period, the overseas Chinese involved in both the KMT and the communist party increased their anti-Japanese underground activities, albeit still on a small scale. For the Chinese in Thailand, however, terrorist attacks by these two groups against people they regarded as traitors caused considerable distress.

Notes

An earlier version of this article was published in Japanese in the *Review of Asian and Pacific Studies*, Seikei University, No. 13, Jan. 1996. I would like to thank Dr. William Swan for preparing the English translation. Most Chinese names have been transliterated in accordance with their Thai pronunciation, but in cases where this pronunciation is unknown the Mandarin transliteration is provided.

The activities of the Chinese in Thailand from the time Japanese forces entered the country until the end of the war have received little scholarly attention, apart from an article by E. Bruce Reynolds entitled 'International Orphans – the Chinese in Thailand During World War II', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 28, 2, Sept. 1997, pp. 365–88. In recent years a number of supporters of both the KMT and communist party who participated in the political movements during this period have published memoirs and reminiscences, while documents relating to the subject preserved in the

Documents Section of the Thai Foreign Ministry, and also materials from the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Armed Forces held in the National Archives of Thailand (henceforth NAT), are open to the public. In addition, primary documents originating with the Japanese military forces remain largely unused in research on Thailand, and are a useful source for information on the Chinese. I have supplemented these official documents with articles from newspapers and magazines, and have drawn on my own research into political movements among Thailand's Chinese before 1941.

- 1 W. D. Reeve, *Public Administration in Siam*, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1951, pp. 8–9.
- 2 For a detailed account of the political activities of the Chinese in Thailand and the reaction of the Thai government before the advance of the Japanese army into Thailand, see Murashima Eiji, 'Tai kakyō no seiji katsudō – 5/30 undo kara nitchu senso made' [Political Activities of the Overseas Chinese in Thailand – From the May 30th Movement until the Sino-Japanese War], in *Tonari Ajia kakyō to Chugoku – Chugoku kizoku ishiki kara kajin ishiki e* [China and the Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia – From Attachment to China to a Consciousness of Being Local Residents], ed. Hara Fujio, Tokyo, Ajia keizai kenkyūjo, 1993, pp. 263–364. A revised and expanded Thai-language version of this article entitled *Kanmuang Chin Sayam* was published in 1996 as a monograph of the Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University.
- 3 These duties were set forth in Order/Shin saku mei kou no. 308, issued in Bangkok by the Imperial Guard Division at 1900 hours on 9 Dec. 1942.
- 4 'Showa 16.12.8–12.15, Konoe yahouhei rentai Taikoku shinnyū sakusen sentou shōhō' [Battle Report on Thailand Invasion Operations for the Field Artillery Regiment of the Imperial Guard Division], Nansei/Mare-Jawa/291, in the library of the Research Center of the Japanese Self-Defense Agency (henceforth JSDA).
- 5 Diplomatic documents in the Documents Section of the Thai Foreign Ministry (henceforth FMT DD), WW2/2:16/5.
- 6 WW2/1:2/3, WW2/1:8/4, FMT DD.
- 7 The Tripartite Alliance, concluded by Germany, Italy and Japan on 27 September 1940, was joined in November of that year by Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. From 1943 as Thai-Japanese relations worsened, Phibun returned to the explanation of his 12 December 1941 declaration that the alliance had been the only possible choice for preserving Thailand's independence (see, for example, NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.6/31); after the war he repeated the same argument. However, this explanation intentionally ignores Phibun's voluntary cooperation with Japan at the start of the war.
- 8 *Prachachat*, 29 Dec. 1941.
- 9 WW2/2:2/2, FMT DD.
- 10 'Tanaka Shin'ichi chuujō gyōmū nissai hachi bun satsu no hachi' [Lt. General Tanaka Shin'ichi daily operations log, 8/8], Chuujō/Sakusen shidō nikki/16, JSDA.
- 11 The Hainan Naval Special Services Bureau, Political Affairs Section, First Research Office, 'Kohatsu gōshi' [Operations Group for Thailand Chinese], Aug. 1942.
- 12 'Taikoku kankei, Tamura Bukan memo sono ichi' [Concerning Thailand, Military Attaché Tamura Memorandum No. 1], Chuujō/Sensō shidō jūyō kokusaku bunshō/829, JSDA.
- 13 Message dated 9 Jan. 1942 sent via Tamura, 'Taikoku kankei, Tamura Bukan memo sono san' [Concerning Thailand, Military Attaché Tamura Memorandum No. 3], Chuujō/Sensō shidō jūyō kokusaku bunshō/831, JSDA.
- 14 *Tong Guan Pao*, 20 Jan. 1942.

- 15 For information about relations between Wanit Pananon and the Japanese, see Benjamin A. Batson and Shimuzu Hajime, *'The Tragedy of Wanit': A Japanese Account of Wartime Thai Politics*, Singapore, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* Special Publications Series No. 1, 1990.
- 16 *Prachachat*, 27 Dec. 1941; also NAT, SoBo.9.2.3/4.
- 17 *Tai Mai*, 30 Dec. 1941; *Tong Guan Pao*, 5 and 26 Feb. 1942. By 25 Feb. this drive had raised 131,128.50 baht.
- 18 *Prachachat*, 5 Jan. 1941.
- 19 *Tong Guan Pao*, 18 Feb. 1942.
- 20 Fujishima Ken'ichi, *Gekidou suru sensou no urabanashi (waga kaikoroku)* [Exciting Inside Story of the War (My Reminiscences)], Bangkok, Kokusai Insatsu, 1977, pp. 126–7.
- 21 Inamine Ichiro, *Inamine Ichiro kaisouroku, sekai wo butai ni* [Inamine Ichiro Memoirs: the World as My Stage], Okinawa Times, 1988, pp. 189–191. Hia Mui Kao personally asked Inamine, who headed the Mantetsu (Southern Manchuria Railway Co.) office in Bangkok, for protection to escape the pursuit of the Kempeitai after Japanese forces entered Thailand, and Inamine hid him at his official residence for about a month. After the war Hia Mui Kao returned to Communist China and held various posts, including that of vice-chairman of the All-China League of Overseas Chinese.
- 22 Lim Chen's short article in *Cong zhongyuanpao dao xinzhongyuanpao 1938–1988* [From *Tong Guan Pao* to *New Tong Guan Pao* 1938–1988], Bangkok, Xinzhongyuanpao, 1988.
- 23 The holdings of the reorganized *Tong Guan Pao* in the Thai National Library begin with 19 Jan. 1942, and the newspaper seems to have resumed publication around this time.
- 24 Initially a detachment of the Kempeitai attached to the 15th Army was stationed in Thailand, but from the middle of March 1942 the Kempeitai under Southern Army command became responsible for the whole of Thailand.
- 25 WW2/2:11/20, WW2/2:2/5, FMT DD.
- 26 WW2/2:4/4, FMT DD.
- 27 One example was when 60 Kempeitai soldiers unilaterally arrested ten members of the anti-Japanese faction in the Indian Independence League as espionage agents (three of the arrested being Sivaram, Ramachan and Amar Singh). WW2/2:2/6, FMT DD.
- 28 WW2/2:11/20, WW2/2:2/5, FMT DD.
- 29 The head of this organization was Seow Song Khim, the son of Seow Hoot Seng, the former chief of the Siam general office of the KMT. Seow Song Khim's wife, Chiu Siu Lang, and an operative named Lan Dong Hai were key members. The Kempeitai learned of this group through its wireless transmissions, and on 28 September 1942 rounded up most of those involved.
- 30 Nakamura's account in *Buddha's Commander* was modified following a check of Thai document NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/86.
- 31 On 9 and 17 Oct. 1945, local Chinese led by Chiu Siu Lang, a leader in the KMT's anti-Japanese movement, carried out an inspection of 800 Kempeitai and other people suspected of war crimes, and identified 11 people as having maltreated Chinese detainees. *Tong Guan Pao*, 10 Oct., 16 Oct., 18 Oct. 1945.
- 32 *Tong Guan Pao*, 15 Feb. 1946.
- 33 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.2/2, 2.10/10. Message No. 1173, dated 11 June 1942, from the Japanese ambassador in Thailand to the Foreign Minister, and decoded by the U.S., confirms that the Japanese did not know the reason for these arrests. (US National Archives, SRDJ Box 28, p. 23868). As noted in this article, Tan

- Keng Chuang, seen as representative of those who were non-cooperative *vis-à-vis* the Japanese, did comply with Japanese demands; after the war when heated argument took place in the Chinese community over the issue of punishing traitors, the example of Tan Keng Chuang was brought up. The 12 Oct. 1945 issue of *Thai Hua Siang Po* pointed out that 'The day after the Japanese army invaded Thailand, Tan Keng Chuang, chairman of the Teochew Assembly Hall, was responsible for sending the first telegram to the Nanking government.' Like so many others in the Chinese community, he was far from innocent, and the debate showed that it was difficult to find anyone within the local Chinese leadership who was blameless.
- 34 One target of the roundup was Li Khi Yong (Yong Lertbannaphong), a former editor-in-chief of the *Tong Guan Pao* newspaper, but he evaded arrest and went underground. He was accused of rebellion, and the Thai police announced a reward for his arrest. *Prachachat*, 12 Apr. 1942. After the war he and Chiu Siu Lang became leading activists pursuing traitors in the Chinese community. For example, both of them criticized the six assembly halls, the central organizations of the local Chinese community, for being 'deceitful, puppet-like organizations for the Japanese'. *Quan Min Bao*, 17 Oct. 1945. The *Thai Hua Siang Po* declared that the number of community leaders who went into hiding after the war was a hundred times greater than at the time Japan invaded Thailand. *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 12 Oct. 1945.
 - 35 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.77/2.
 - 36 WW2/2:2/2, FMT DD.
 - 37 A report to the governor from the district chief of Samphanthawong, where many Chinese lived, said in essence that from 21 April, when the government devalued the baht at the demand of the Japanese to make it equal to the yen, the Chinese merchants were saying among themselves that the Thai government was under the control of the Japanese government and from now on they had to rely on Japan. Accordingly, they adopted a scornful attitude toward the Thai government. NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/143.
 - 38 WW2/2:4/1, FMT DD.
 - 39 Note dated 11 June 1942, NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/1.
 - 40 Note dated 31 July 1942, NAT, (2) SoRo.0201/98/9.
 - 41 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.82/20.
 - 42 Arai Okikatsu, 'Nampou sougun no tousui (shinkou sakusenki)' [Southern Army High Command: the Period of Offensive Operations], Nansei/Zenpan/33, JSDA.
 - 43 Sambouhonbu, *Sugiyama memo*: ge, Hara Shyobou, 1967, p. 122.
 - 44 'Summary of Instructions from the Army Minister to the Chief of General Staff of the Southern Army', 'Senryouchi gyousei kankei tsuzuri' [Documents of the Administration of the Occupied Territories], Chuuo/Gunji gyousei sonota/133, JSDA.
 - 45 Tsubokami to Foreign Minister Togo, No. 1657 in 'Kanchō fugō raiden tsuzuri' [Arriving ambassadorial messages folder], A700, 9-63 in the Diplomatic Archives of the Japanese Foreign Ministry.
 - 46 WW2/1:21/1, FMT DD.
 - 47 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/303.
 - 48 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/309.
 - 49 WW2/2:2/5, FMT DD.
 - 50 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1/339, 341.
 - 51 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.16/84.
 - 52 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.76/14.
 - 53 Tai Riku Bu no. 37. NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.

- 54 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.1/121 and WW2/1:21/15, FMT DD.
- 55 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.
- 56 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.
- 57 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.1/121.
- 58 *Tong Guan Pao*, 4 Aug. 1943.
- 59 WW2/2:2/10, FMT DD, provides information on a meeting of the provincial foreign relations committee in the province of Yala on 5 May 1943, which discussed the problem of forcible recruiting in that province.
- 60 *Tong Guan Pao*, 14 Apr. 1943.
- 61 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12.
- 62 Ibid. Japanese figures show 12,968 labourers; the highest Thai figure is 13,097, with 5,320 coming from Bangkok and Thonburi.
- 63 WW2/1:21/13, FMT DD.
- 64 *Tong Guan Pao*, 4 Aug. 1943.
- 65 WW2/2:2/10, FMT DD.
- 66 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/7; also Boko Sungsut 2.9/8. This is but one example of the profiteering by local Chinese leaders who cooperated with the Japanese. After the war Tia Lang Sing feared assassination and long remained in hiding. He was later reinstated as chairman of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and developed major contacts with Taiwan.
- 67 WW2/2:2/13, FMT DD. The new office began functioning on 18 Mar. 1943.
- 68 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.9/98.
- 69 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2/67. See message (Tai Riku Bu No. 60) dated 25 March 1943 from Yamada Kunitaro, the Japanese military attaché in Bangkok, to the director of the new liaison office. Yamada's message quoted and acknowledged Phibun's explanation.
- 70 WW2/2:2/4, FMT DD.
- 71 WW2/2:11/45, FMT DD.
- 72 WW2/2:17/1, FMT DD.
- 73 NAT, Sungsut 1.16/94.
- 74 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.76/15.
- 75 *Chiwaprawat Phon ek Luang Hansongkhram* [Autobiography of General Luang Hansongkhram], Bangkok, Hanghunsuanamkat Siwaphon, 1969, pp. 122-7.
- 76 Phraya Prichanusat's son later married Phibun's eldest daughter.
- 77 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/24.
- 78 *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 10 Oct. 1945.
- 79 Ibid., 2 Nov. 1943.
- 80 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/24.
- 81 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.98.1/14. Emphasis added.
- 82 Gai no. 38, WW2/2:12/4, FMT DD.
- 83 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.46.3/31.
- 84 *Tong Guan Pao*, 27 Jan. 1944.
- 85 NAT, KoTo73.6/24; *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 22 Dec. 1943.
- 86 NAT, Boko Sungsut 1.12/265.
- 87 WW2/2:4/25, FMT DD.
- 88 WW2/2:2/10, FMT DD.
- 89 *Prachachat*, 11 Jun. 1942.
- 90 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.22.4/7,13.
- 91 NAT, (2) SoRo.0201.76/14.
- 92 Tai Riku Bu no. 159.
- 93 NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.9/28; Boko Sungsut 2.6.8/1. See also NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.4.1.2/12, and *Tong Guan Pao*, 4 Jan. 1945.

- 94 WW(Bettalet) 18.5 FMT DD; NAT, Boko Sungsut 2.7.4/34,44,60,67,68,75; interview with Lan Dong Hai, 19 July 1992. On 7 July 1944 Lan began an underground newspaper, *Tong Kok Nang* (The Chinese), but it stopped publication at the end of August during the Kempeitai's wave of arrests. He restarted the paper on 20 May 1945, and it appeared three more times before the war ended. Lan has a copy of every issue of *Tong Kok Nang*.
- 95 Interview with Tan Yi, 29 Dec. 1993.
- 96 Thailand Huang Pu Military Academy Alumni Association - Editing Committee, *Tie xue xiong feng* [Iron, Blood, Heroic Wind: Anti-Japanese Activities of the Thailand Chinese], Bangkok, Thailand Huang Pu Military Academy Alumni Association, 1991, pp. 323-4. According to Ung Lip Ming, who helped publish it, the *Jing Pao* was printed twice a week in a forest in Nakhon Pathom, on the outskirts of Bangkok. Interview with Ung Lip Ming, 6 Jan. 1994.
- 97 *Taiguo guihao yinghunlu* [Heroic Record of Chinese Returned from Thailand], vol. 1, ed. Editorial Committee of the Friendship Association of Chinese Returned from Thailand, Beijing, Zhongguo huaqiao chuban gongsi, 1989, p. 411.
- 98 Du Ying, 'Recollections of Thailand Chinese who participated in anti-Japanese national salvation movements', *Wenshi ziliao xuanji* [Selected Historical Documents], vol. 5, Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 1986, p. 90.
- 99 Li Qi Xin, *Mei jiang liu yan* [Newspaper articles once written near the Mænam River], Beijing, 1990, pp. 107-8; *Mahachon*, 26 Dec. 1944.
- 100 *Quan Min Bao*, 2 Nov. 1945.
- 101 *Thai Hua Siang Po*, 13 Sept. 1945.
- 102 *Zhen Hua Bao*, 17 Apr. 1944.
- 103 *Ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1944.
- 104 The leader was Oh Kyo Shu, a Taiwanese doctor assassinated on 11 Aug. 1945.
- 105 *Tong Kok Nang*, 20 June 1945.

Chapter Thirteen

The Battle of Tamparan A Maranao Response to the Japanese Occupation of Mindanao

Kawashima Midori

Introduction

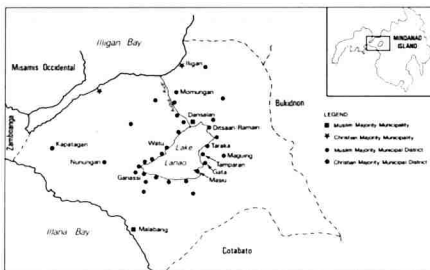
In September 1942 the people of Tamparan, an area on the eastern shore of Lake Lanao in the southern Philippines, attacked and nearly annihilated a Japanese infantry company. For many years historians of the Philippines largely ignored this incident, for there was little interest in the wartime experiences of minority groups, and scholars sought the significance of such affairs in the history of the nation as a whole. In the Philippines new research on Lanao Province during the war years began appearing in the 1980s,¹ and the Tamparan Incident has since undergone historical re-evaluation as part of a movement to study local history and ethno-history.² In Japan there has been virtually no re-consideration of this episode. It is mentioned in the memoirs of military personnel involved, but these accounts reveal little more than anger and resentment over the whole affair.³

The Tamparan Incident was a spontaneous episode of armed resistance against the Japanese military occupation, and provides considerable insight into the reaction of Muslims in the southern Philippines to Japanese rule. The present paper will attempt to piece together an account of the incident by drawing on three different sources of information: interviews with people living in the vicinity of Tamparan, an account by an American who was in the area when the incident occurred, and Japanese military reports and memoirs. The purpose of this examination is to examine the motivations behind anti-Japanese resistance on the part of village leaders and peasants, and more broadly the impact of the Occupation on Maranao society.

Background

Pre-war Maranao society

While the population of the Philippines is overwhelmingly Christian and mainly Roman Catholic, there were at the time of the Japanese Occupation



Map 6 Lake Lanao area

about 678,000 Muslims (some 4.2 per cent of the population) living in the South, mainly on the island of Mindanao and in the Sulu archipelago.⁴ They were known to both Americans and Christian Filipinos as 'Moros', and the Japanese also adopted this term. The so-called Moro people comprise as many as thirteen separate ethno-linguistic groups, characterized by distinct social structures and varying levels of Islamization. The people of Tamparan were Maranao, a group that resides on the shores of Mindanao's Lake Lanao.⁵ This area, geographically part of the inner island highlands, relies mainly on farming and the lake's aquaculture for its economic livelihood. The traditional Maranao political structure lacks centralized authority, and the area is divided into a number of districts headed by village chiefs bearing inherited titles such as Sultan or Datu.⁶

The United States of America, which acquired the Philippine Islands from Spain in 1898, established a 'Moro Province' in the southern Philippines and created a military administration there in 1903. During the early years of American rule, the Maranao staged continuous armed uprisings, but the Americans used their superior military strength to quell such rebellious activities, and at the same time introduced policies to 'civilize' the Maranao. Many of the village chiefs finally concluded that armed resistance was futile and American colonialism unavoidable, and turned their efforts to maintaining their privileged status under the new regime. A number of headmen began actively cooperating with the Americans and in return obtained appointments as petty colonial officials, some even as members of Provincial Boards or of the Philippine legislature.

Having adapted themselves to the secular political system introduced by the Americans, they sent their children to schools taught along Western lines, and with their families established a new style of political elite.⁷

By the 1920s large-scale armed rebellions in the Maranao area had given way to an uneasy peace built on a fragile alliance between the village chiefs, who relied on the Americans for the maintenance of their traditional authority, and a militarily superior colonial government that sought political stability by selectively incorporating these Muslim leaders into the administration. Under the surface, however, the Maranao felt dissatisfied and insecure. One source of unhappiness was the American government's policy of promoting the colonization of Mindanao by Christian Filipino settlers, resulting in the formation of Christian communities on the northern coast of the province made up of migrants from Cebu (see Map 6). During the 1930s, natural increase in such communities and further colonization brought a southward movement by Christian settlers into areas the Maranao considered their own, although their ancestral land rights were not recognized under the land registration system adopted by the American colonial government. When a Maranao bandit named Dimakaling took advantage of popular hostility against Christian Filipinos and with his followers went on a rampage of killing and marauding directed against them, he was hailed locally as a Robin Hood figure.

The Philippine Commonwealth, which placed power in Filipino hands subject to a modicum of American oversight, was established in 1935. That same year, in reaction to the passing of a Philippine National Defense Act that made military training obligatory, various Maranao retreated to their *kota* (forts) and prepared to resist the state. The Commonwealth government arrested some of these rebels and quelled the uprising by force, and then passed legislation prohibiting the construction or maintenance of *kota*.⁸ On the whole village leaders continued to operate as they had during the American colonial period, serving as local administrators and petty officials, but they retained a capacity to mobilize their people in armed resistance in defence of traditional rights and privileges.

In 1939, the Commonwealth government created a National Land Settlement Authority, and this body began planning colonization projects in the Kapatagan lowlands adjacent to Zamboanga Province on the western border of Lanao, raising the prospect of an even greater Christian presence in the Maranao area. The national census carried out in that year showed that of approximately 240,000 residents of Lanao Province, about one-third were Christian and the rest Muslim.

Maranao Society at the Start of World War II

Immediately after the outbreak of war between Japan and the United States, General William Sharp, Commander of the Visayas-Mindanao Forces of the

United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE),⁹ created the 81st Division to defend Lanao and Misamis Occidental provinces and adjacent areas. The commander, Brigadier General Guy Fort, organized a Maranao fighting force that was commanded by local leaders but paid by USAFFE when on active duty. The Provincial Commander opposed supplying firearms to the Moros, so members of the 81st Division carried bolo knives and other bladed weapons, and they came to be known as the Moro Bolo Battalion. Some armed themselves with hand-crafted guns made from metal water piping, and they were allowed to keep any rifles they took from the Japanese. USAFFE forces broke up in May 1942, and the Bolo Battalion then obtained rifles from former USAFFE soldiers.¹⁰

A Japanese advance force under Army Major Kawaguchi Kiyotake landed at Parang, Cotabato, at the end of April 1942, and on 4 May reached the provincial capital of Dansalan after marching through Malabang. Both the Lanao provincial government and USAFFE forces withdrew into the hinterland prior to the arrival of the Japanese, and Christian administrators serving in the Commonwealth government fled from Dansalan, resulting in a complete collapse of government authority.¹¹ Taking advantage of the political vacuum, some Maranao launched attacks on Christian settlements, killing and wounding residents and abducting a number of people as slaves.¹² Christian settlers and USAFFE soldiers carried out retaliatory actions, and the atmosphere became very tense.¹³

Around the middle of June, a battalion of the Japanese Army commanded by Lt. Col. Tanaka Yoshinari¹⁴ set up its headquarters in Dansalan, and the following month the Japanese Military Administration (JMA) established a Davao Branch that began organizing a pro-Japanese provincial government. The law-and-order situation among the Maranao around Lake Lanao worsened during this period; the JMA reported killings and counterattacks against the Japanese, and described Lanao province as a 'potential cancer in restoring law and order to the Island'.¹⁵

Recognizing that ex-USAFFE officers might organize the 'pernicious Moro' into a resistance force, the Japanese attempted to appease Maranao leaders and village chiefs. They succeeded in winning the cooperation of the Sultan of Ramain, Senator Alauya Alonto, and also appointed several village chiefs to positions as petty officials within the pro-Japanese provincial government. At the same time, however, the Japanese military was carrying out punitive actions against the lakeshore villages, and imposed severe punishments in the name of suppressing anti-Japanese guerrilla activities. For example, the records of the Manila War Crimes Tribunal indicate that Japanese troops killed 24 people, including women, and burned eight houses to the ground in the village of Wato in June 1942.¹⁶ Japanese sources state that the punitive force trapped villagers against the shore of the lake and bayoneted them.¹⁷ The Wato action was the first of its kind in Lanao by the Japanese Army, and must have



Figure 13.1 Ceremony 'welcoming' the diversionary Japanese force at Taraka, a municipality near Tamparan, on the very morning of September 12th, 1942 (taken by former 2nd Lieut. Takai Naoji)



Figure 13.2 'Shinshu maru', a newly-built Japanese launch, which was later used in transporting the Yoshioka company to Tamparan. When the pilot of this launch found out that the Japanese were being outnumbered, he left Tamparan and successfully returned to Dansalan to report the incident, dodging bullets from the shore (Takai Naoji)

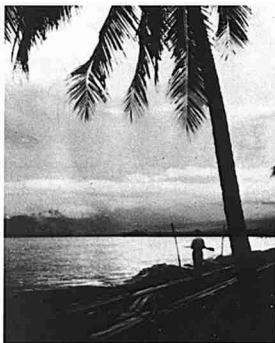


Figure 13.3 A Japanese sentry on duty on the lake side of the Japanese garrison in Dansalan (Takei Naoji)



Figure 13.4 'Jimmu Jinja', a Shinto shrine constructed as a place of worship for the Japanese soldiers within the Japanese garrison in Dansalam (Takei Naoji)

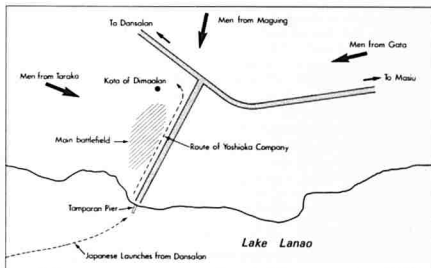
convinced the Maranao that the image of the fearsome and cruel Japanese soldier being spread by USAFFE was correct.

It is difficult to understand why the Japanese would risk negating their efforts to build relations with Maranao leaders by carrying out such acts of violence. However, Japan's occupation strategy in the Philippines consciously combined military superiority and the use of force with conciliatory gestures directed at the Filipino political elite to create 'local administrative mechanisms that would not oppose the Japanese Empire'.¹⁸ The behaviour of the Japanese in the province of Lanao, where they attempted to placate local leaders while subjecting the general populace to harsh punishments, clearly reflects this dual approach.

The tactics of the Japanese military caused a great deal of suffering and produced strong feelings of hostility. Fear of the military strength of the Japanese and their willingness to use it unsparingly had prevented displays of popular anger against the Japanese until September 1942, when a group of Maranao rose in a spontaneous rebellion in Tamparan, a municipal district on the eastern shore of Lake Lanao.

The Tamparan Incident

The Tamparan Incident began when the headquarters of the Tanaka Battalion received information that a Moro guerrilla leader named Busran Kalaw,¹⁹ who independently resisted the Japanese in the vicinity of Momongan after USAFFE's surrender, was agitating among residents in



Map 7 Site of the Battle of Tamparan

and around Tamparan.²⁰ On the night of 11 September, a company led by First Lt. Yoshioka Sunao was despatched to the area. The force consisted of some 90 soldiers accompanied by headquarters personnel, interpreters, Maranao guides, and Christian Filipino prisoners-of-war who served as carriers (*cargadors*²¹) – a total of 120 to 130 persons. The party embarked from Dansalan on three launches and headed south across the lake, reaching the Tamparan wharf at dawn on the 12th. After landing, the whole retinue headed in the direction of the local settlements, and upon arriving at the road junction noticed a red flag flying above a *kota*, in Maranao society a signal that an enemy is present. At this point the Yoshioka party heard a gunshot and took up battle positions. They were soon attacked from all sides by the Maranao, who engaged them in hand-to-hand combat (see Map 7). Yoshioka's men were outnumbered, and after the Maranao chased them into marshlands along the shore of the lake they ran out of ammunition; almost the entire company perished. Some sources say the battle lasted less than an hour, others that it went on for several hours. On the Japanese side only a small number of soldiers survived, along with a handful of Christian Filipinos and Maranao guides.²²

Contemporary Japanese sources describe the mission of the Yoshioka Company as a 'pacification' effort. It is, however, difficult to understand why a peaceful propaganda mission would have required a fully armed company of troops. The Japanese may have intended to intimidate defiant Maranao villagers with a show of military strength.²³ The Japanese tended to look down upon Filipinos generally, and written accounts from the period portray the Moro as savages and inferior to the Christian population. Such perceptions made it difficult for the Japanese to understand the feelings of the local people, or their reaction to the presence of Japanese forces. A letter sent by Lt. Col. Tanaka Yoshinari, Commander of the Japanese Forces at Dansalan, to the family of one of the dead soldiers explained the affair by saying that 'local natives yet uncivilized in the ways of the Empire' had been incited by ex-USAFFE soldiers to resist Japanese troops.²⁴ A similarly negative perception appears in memoirs written by members of the Tanaka Battalion, which depict the Moros as a fanatic and ferocious people capable of just about any nefarious act imaginable. These memoirs attribute events at Tamparan to the violent and unmanageable nature of the people living there.²⁵ According to an analysis of the Tamparan Incident by the Japanese Fourteenth Army command, a gang of Moro bandits in the Lake Lanao region had combined forces with the residents of Maguing and Tamparan, and attacked a company of Japanese troops sent to make peace with them.²⁶

An account of the Tamparan incident written by an American named Edward Kuder provides a different perspective. Kuder, a former Division Superintendent of Schools for Lanao province, was taking refuge at the time near Nunungan, a village on the opposite shore of the lake. He later became Director of Civil Affairs in the Free Lanao civil government organized by



Figure 13.5 A traditional Maranao-style mosque by the lake near the Dansalan wharf (Takei Naoji)



Figure 13.6 Lt. Col. Nobuhiko Jimbo (left) of the Brigade command headquarters at Davao arrived at the airstrip at the Japanese garrison in Dansalan (Takei Naoji)



Figure 13.7 Maranao women in the municipal district of Pantar (Takei Naoji)



Figure 13.8 Japanese soldiers holding manoeuvres at Signal Hill in the Japanese garrison in Dansalan (Takei Naoji)

Col. Wendell Fertig, Commander of 10th Military District of the United States Forces in the Philippines, and after escaping from the Philippines in 1943 prepared a report on Mindanao for Joseph R. Hayden,²⁷ an advisor on Philippine Affairs to General Douglas MacArthur. Concerning the Tamparan incident, Kuder wrote:

A patrol of 129 Japanese led by Captain Takeuchi landed at Tamparan and were traversing the side road to the main road. Then, they sighted an American flag flying from the *kota* of Dimalaan Manking and began firing at the *kota*. The Moro swarmed in from all sides, eventually annihilating the patrol.²⁸

Kuder's account differs in some particulars from the accounts found in Japanese sources. First, it mistakenly names the commander of the Japanese patrol as Captain Takeuchi, not First Lt. Yoshioka. In fact, a first lieutenant named Takeuchi Atsuo was a member of the Yoshioka Company and was killed in the battle. Takeuchi had previously been very active in propaganda efforts among the Maranao. Kuder states that Takeuchi on several occasions had bragged that the Japanese were different from the Americans and Filipinos in that they never surrendered. During the battle of Tamparan, when the Japanese were pinned helplessly up against the shore of the Lake, this same Takeuchi is reported as having raised his hands in a gesture of submission. One young Moro, remembering Takeuchi's previous boasting, reportedly yelled 'No surrender, Takeuchi!' and struck him with a bolo knife. Kuder reports that Takeuchi had claimed to be the hero who had led the sixth and final attempt to cross the Mataling river near Malabang during the initial invasion of Lanao by the Japanese, but since the invasion was carried out by the Kawaguchi Battalion, Capt. Takeuchi of the Tanaka Battalion would have been nowhere near the Battle of Mataling River. Lt. Yoshioka, who was also killed, was probably mistaken for Captain Takeuchi, because the Japanese found his body severely mutilated with knife wounds.²⁹

Second, Kuder indicates that the Yoshioka company fired first, although he later wrote in a popular magazine that the first shot came from Dimalaan's *kota*.³⁰ In any case, Kuder was not present at the battle, and would not have had clear evidence concerning which side fired first.

Third, Kuder says that a US flag was flying above Dimalaan's *kota*, raising the important question of just what motivated Maranao anti-Japanese resistance. There is no reference in Japanese sources to an American flag, but according to Busran Kalaw, the Maranao guerrilla leader, Dimalaan displayed 'all kinds of flags' in connection with the inauguration of his *kota* on 11 September, the day before the Tamparan Incident.³¹ By openly inaugurating a *kota* at a time when the Japanese military was waging an all-out campaign to disarm the civilian population, Dimalaan made a clear public statement that he intended to resist the occupation of his territory. In this sense, whatever flags he chose to fly above his

encampment, Dimalaan was openly challenging the authority of the Japanese military.

Information provided by Maranao who were present in Lanao during the Tamparan incident, including both pro-Japanese collaborators and members of the anti-Japanese resistance, generally agrees that events did not follow any predetermined plan, but were a spontaneous response to the arrival of the Japanese patrol.³² When they heard gunfire or received word of the fighting, many Maranao within reach of Tamparan, including residents of Taraka, Maguing and Gata, ran to take part. A farmer from Tamparan named Abubakar relates that he was at home on the morning of the Incident. When the gunfire began he grabbed a bolo knife and went to the place, which was close to his house, and found that a great crowd gathered from the surrounding villages; he joined the fighting, narrowly escaping death. He recalls that many people died, not only Japanese soldiers but also Maranao. For two days after the battle the stench of the corpses was so horrible that it was impossible to go near the battleground. Like Kuder, the Maranao recall that the Japanese commanding officer was named Takeuchi. Asked why the body of 'Takeuchi' had been mutilated, Abubakar answered that people felt angry seeing so many of their friends injured or dying.³³ Estimates of Maranao dead range between 200 and 300, substantially more than the number killed on the Japanese side.

The motivation behind the Tamparan Incident

Published accounts on the Tamparan Incident emphasize that the Japanese violated the value system of the Maranao, particularly a principle known as *maratabat* (dignity, prestige), and suggest that this was an important cause of the violence. The Yoshioka Company offended Dimalaan's *maratabat* when they failed to seek permission to pass in front of his *kota*.³⁴ However, a consideration of the social, economic and religious situation in Lanao at the time suggests further explanations of why people responded to the Japanese presence with violence.

Village Leaders

Among the leading figures in the uprising were Dimalaan, the owner of the *kota*, and Kakay Dagalangit, an influential leader in Maguing. Although many village leaders accepted the authority of the militarily superior Japanese and served as petty officials in the pro-Japanese provincial and municipal governments, Dimalaan and Dagalangit both refused to cooperate. Dimalaan, who held the title of *datu*, had served as vice-president of the local municipal district during the Commonwealth period. Dagalangit held no post in the Commonwealth government, but was an important figure in the Maguing municipal district, the largest of several

municipal districts comprising a rice growing area situated on the eastern lake shore (called *basak*). An influential village leader with many wives and a substantial entourage linked to him by marriage, Dagalangit was the most powerful person on the eastern shore. Under the Commonwealth he had helped to arrest outlaws and maintain law and order in the region, and had been pivotal during elections owing to his ability to control the majority bloc of votes in his district.³⁵ Thus, while continuing to enjoy special privileges as a leader of traditional Maranao society, Dagalangit had also become an unofficial point of contact between Maranao village society and the colonial state, and had used this political connection to enhance his power. For leaders such as Dimalaan and Dagalangit, the challenge posed by the Japanese Occupation was how to preserve traditional institutions as well as their own elite positions within Maranao society.

The Peasantry

Japanese military personnel from the Tanaka Battalion claim that they treated the Moros with the utmost care. For example, a strictly-enforced standing order issued at the very beginning of the Occupation warned that under no circumstances were soldiers to lay a hand on a Moro woman, and while there was some abuse of women in the region, few instances occurred in Lanao. Torture of civilians was also relatively uncommon in comparison with other regions of the Philippines. However, punitive expeditions against alleged guerrillas resulted in damage to property, arrests and some deaths, and these actions infuriated the community.³⁶ Because of the intricate network of kin and trade relationships that characterized Maranao society, Japanese action against even the smallest hamlet in the Lanao lakeshore region affected many people; news of Japanese attacks spread quickly and helped create an image of the Japanese soldier as a brutal foreign enemy.

Although the Christian settlements in Lanao Province along the northern coast experienced serious food shortages when the flow of food from outside the island was cut off, the Maranao lived in a rice growing area and were less seriously affected by the loss of imported food.³⁷ However, in the year that the Japanese arrived, there were difficulties of another sort in connection with food supplies. A rise in the water level of Lake Lanao caused excessive flooding of rice fields in the low-lying Tamparan region, and the floods, together with illness and labour shortages caused by men being forced to serve in the militia, not only delayed the rice harvest but also resulted in reduction of the area planted with rice, probably by a factor of one-third. The Maranao blamed the high water levels on debris left in the Agus River, the only outlet for the lake, after sappers destroyed a steel bridge across the river during the USAFFE retreat from Dansalan.³⁸ Although the Japanese repaired the bridge, they failed to clear the river. There are no reports of starvation, but rice accounted for a large share of the

livelihood of the Maranao lake dwellers, and the situation caused anxiety and insecurity, and contributed to anti-Japanese feeling.

The role of ex-USAFFE Officers

Guerrillas in Lanao province were only unified into a formal organization under the command of Col. Fertig in December 1942, three months after the Tamparan Incident. Contrary to the opinion of some Japanese military personnel, the attack on the Yoshioka Company could not have been a product of organized, American-led guerrilla activity. However, many Maranao village leaders were pro-American because the American colonial regime, while maintaining a strong military presence in the area, had respected traditional social institutions and the local authorities. During the Occupation, ex-USAFFE officers and their organization provided the military, political and economic resources village leaders needed to maintain or strengthen their own power and authority. After the Tamparan Incident Col. Fertig rallied the island of Mindanao to the anti-Japanese resistance by appointing various local guerrilla leaders, including Busran Kalaw and Manalo Mindalano, to be commanders of the Maranao Militia Force, thus incorporating them into the formal guerrilla organization. Nevertheless, the force remained more of an association of free-lance fighters than a unified, coordinated military body.³⁹ Anti-Japanese village leaders among the Maranao allied themselves with the ex-USAFFE officers and their organization according to their own principles and political interests.

The role of Islam

The Tamparan Incident took place on the first day of the fasting month of Ramadan, when religious fervour was high among the local Muslims.⁴⁰ Muslims who die in battle against an enemy of Islam are considered martyrs and assured of a place in heaven, and people are particularly conscious of this principle during Ramadan. To stand openly against a fully armed company of Japanese regulars meant almost certain death, but the notion of martyrdom helped the fighters overcome fear by giving a positive meaning to dying. Abubakar said that because 12 September was the first day of Ramadan he had no fear of being killed on the battlefield.

The aftermath of the Tamparan Incident

The events at Tamparan shocked the Japanese military, and left them apprehensive about the possibility of further Maranao uprisings. The annihilation of the Yoshioka Company greatly depleted the strength of the garrison force, and the remaining troops established battle positions and maintained a high state of readiness.⁴¹ In retaliation for the Incident, the

Japanese bombarded the Tamparan area with artillery for 25 days, and Japanese sources indicate that the headquarters of the 75th Independent Combined Brigade (commanded by Col. Ikuta Torao) in Davao planned a punitive mission 'in mourning for the Yoshioka company and to quell lawlessness among the Moro'. Japanese reinforcements arrived in Dansalan from Zamboanga and Cotabato in early October, and were placed under Lt. Col. Jimbo Nobuhiko, Adjutant to Col. Ikuta at the Brigade command headquarters. Later in the same month, a company led by Lt. Col. Tanaka, the Battalion Commander, arrived in Tamparan and held a memorial service at the battle site, at the same time bombarding neighbouring settlements.⁴² Takei Naoji, who took part in the mission, relates that the bombardment consisted of several shots fired from field artillery with no intention of actually engaging the enemy, and claims the exercise was merely a symbolic show of force. The Japanese troops did not wish to arouse the Moro any further, but felt it necessary to carry out a 'ceremonial attack in memory of the dead'.⁴³ Another source reports that when the artillery turned in readiness to fire at a *kota*, a cease fire order was suddenly issued.⁴⁴

According to Jimbo Nobuhiko, Brigade Commander Ikuta favoured a retaliatory attack, but the head of the JMA's Davao Branch, Maj. Gen. Morimoto Giichi, who was Ikuta's superior, insisted on propaganda activities instead.⁴⁵ Shiobara Yû, former internal affairs chief of the Fourteenth Army's military administration, relates that when the JMA Headquarters heard that Brigade Commander Ikuta was contemplating punitive action, they dissuaded him, pointing out that history showed that fighting against the Moro would create an unmanageable situation.⁴⁶ The fact that JMA Headquarters took an interest in the affair demonstrates the degree to which it alarmed the occupation forces.

After the Incident the Japanese military sought to appease the Maranao political elite through a variety of gestures, such as the appointment that December of Senator Alauya Alonto's son, Domocao, to be mayor of Dansalan.⁴⁷ These measures accomplished little. Inspired by the resistance at Tamparan, which helped destroy the myth of Japanese invincibility, other Maranao residents in the Lanao lakeshore region fought with Japanese troops. For example, a Japanese platoon sent to reinforce Dansalan was attacked on the west shore in the vicinity of Ganassi, and fighting continued until the beginning of January 1943.⁴⁸

The fighting at Ganassi appears to have been connected with the execution of Brig. Gen. Guy Fort. Fort, the organizer of the Moro Bolo Battalion, had surrendered to the Japanese at the end of May 1942, and for a brief period was incarcerated in the POW compound of the Dansalan garrison. In July he was moved elsewhere, probably to Malaybalay in Bukidnon, and later was moved again, probably to Cabanatuan, Luzon. Morimoto had him returned to Dansalan in late October or early November in connection with the propaganda effort among the Moro. Accounts differ

about what followed. According to Japanese Military Police (Kempeitai) records, Battalion commander Tanaka accused Fort of urging four of his junior officers to escape during his earlier imprisonment in Dansalan, with specific instructions to organize anti-Japanese guerrilla activities. Claiming that the annihilation of the Yoshioka company at Tamparan was the direct result of this instigation, Tanaka had Fort executed.⁴⁹ However, Tanaka Battalion sources state that Fort was bayoneted to death as an object lesson for guerrillas and other anti-Japanese resistance elements in the area.⁵⁰ Variations on this story include bayoneting followed by a quietus administered by firing squad,⁵¹ and vice-versa.⁵² The execution was probably carried out on 11 November, and took place without a court martial or other legal proceedings. After the war Tanaka was indicted for war crimes as the result of his involvement in Fort's death as well as other offences. He pleaded guilty to nearly all of the charges laid against him, and was sentenced to death by hanging.⁵³

News of Fort's execution spread rapidly among the local residents of the lakeshore through Maranao informants who passed in and out of the Japanese garrison. Fort was regarded as a hero by certain elements of the Maranao population, and his execution brought retaliatory attacks against Japanese troops. Maranao sources say that anger and the hope of avenging Fort's death lay behind the attack on Ganassi garrison, and this explanation seems plausible since the attack took place two weeks after Fort's execution.⁵⁴

Maranao resistance activities kept Japanese forces largely confined to their bases for the remainder of their stay in Lanao. In September 1944 American aircraft began flying unopposed over Lanao Province, and the following month Japanese forces started to evacuate the area, attesting to the success of the local guerrilla forces and the local residents in liberating themselves from Japanese rule without having to wait for the Americans to reoccupy the country.

Conclusion: the Japanese occupation and Maranao society

The motivation of the Maranao who fought against the Japanese on 12 September 1942 may be summarized as follows. Village leaders provided a link between the colonial state and rural Maranao society. Their special privileges within traditional society gave them power and wealth, and they used the resources of the colonial state to strengthen their positions. It was not in their interest to cooperate with a Japanese occupation force that was both unpopular and seemed to offer no benefits, and leaders along the eastern shore of Lake Lanao had sufficient resources to challenge the Japanese. Guerrilla activities in northern Lanao gave them encouragement, and they could draw on the anger of the local community against the Japanese military in connection with inundation of the fields by rising lake

waters, and arbitrary punitive actions. Landing at Tamparan at the start of Ramadan, the Yoshioka Company found the villages at an emotional and spiritual peak, and when a gun was suddenly fired it provided the spark that detonated all the dissatisfaction and anger that had been building up over the preceding months.

The policy of the Japanese military was to neutralize the Moro people and then intervene as little as possible. Nevertheless, the Occupation had a deep impact on Maranao society. During the power vacuum that existed from just before the start of hostilities through the early Occupation period, the militarization of the Maranao progressed rapidly, the slave trade revived, and village chiefs gained substantial military, economic and political autonomy. At the same time, tensions grew between the Maranao and Christian settlers encroaching on their lands. The Japanese made overtures to local leaders, but accompanied these with demonstrations of military force. They maintained a fragile order around Dansalan, but could not govern areas outside of the provincial capital. Attempts to cultivate powerful Maranao leaders gave rise to political competition among them, and heightened tensions within Maranao society. The Japanese met resistance with military action, which fostered further violence and generated hostility among the local people. In short, Japan's occupation strategies produced little popular support, brought out inner contradictions that characterized Maranao society, and served to complicate and deepen existing divisions.

Confusion and uncertainty continued to plague Maranao society after the War, when disarmament came to a standstill and village leaders struggled to maintain their positions.⁵⁵ New leaders, who had acquired wealth and arms during the Occupation and its chaotic aftermath, and in some cases had gained prestige and authority as publicly acclaimed heroes in the anti-Japanese resistance movement, rose up to compete with the existing elite.

The Japanese occupation was an important phase in Maranao social history, for it brought to the surface social contradictions that were previously dormant. The passion and enthusiasm with which the battle of Tamparan was fought became deeply etched in the collective memory of the Maranao people, and by strengthening their activism and confidence through shared experiences and memories of resistance against a common enemy these events have influenced the way they view and interact with the world around them.

Notes

This is a revised version of my paper in Japanese, 'Nihon senryoka Mindanao to ni okeru musurimu nomin no teiko: Tamparan jiken o megutte', in *Tonan ajia shi no naka no nihonsenryo* (The Japanese Occupation in Southeast Asian History), ed. Kurasawa Aiko, Tokyo, Waseda Daigaku Shuppanbu, 1997. I would like to thank

the Esso Study Grant Program for Women, and the Niwano Foundation for Peace, of Japan, for a grant that supported my field work in the Philippines. I would also like to thank the Toyota Foundation for a grant that enabled me to translate this paper into English.

- 1 The following titles represent the most important research done to date on the Philippine Muslim community during the Japanese Occupation. Ralph Thomas, 'Muslim but Filipino: The Integration of Philippine Muslims, 1917-1946', Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1971; *idem.*, 'Asia for Asiatics?: Muslim Filipino Responses to Japanese Occupation and Propaganda during World War II', Dansalan Research Center Occasional Paper No. 7, 1977; Evelyn Mallillin-Jamboy, *The Resistance Movement in Lanao, 1942-1945*, Iligan City, Iligan Institute of Technology, Mindanao State University (henceforth MSU-IIT), 1985; *idem.*, 'A Fragile Unity: A Look at the Resistance Movement in Lanao during the Japanese Occupation', *Dansalan Quarterly*, 14.2 (1994); Abdulsiddik Abbahil, 'The Political, Economic, and Socio-Cultural Situation of the Maranao during the Japanese Occupation', *Proceedings of the Fifth National Conference on Local History*, Iligan City, MSU-IIT, 1982; Kawashima Midori, 'Japanese Administrative Policy towards the Moros in Lanao', in *The Philippines under Japan: Occupation and Reaction*, ed. Ikehata Setsuho and Ricardo Trota Jose, Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999.
- 2 See, for example, Jamboy, *The Resistance Movement in Lanao*; *idem.*, 'A Fragile Unity'; Abahil, 'The Political, Economic, and Socio-Cultural Situation of the Maranao during the Japanese Occupation'.
- 3 The memoirs of the battalion of the Japanese army assigned to the province of Lanao appeared in 1973 as Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki: Sensensoki* (Memoirs of survivors: memories of the battle line), private printing, 1973.
- 4 These figures are based on the 1939 national census.
- 5 Other major ethno-linguistic groups of the Philippine Muslims include the Maguindanao of the Pulangi river basin on Mindanao, and the Tausug and the Samal in the Sulu Archipelago.
- 6 The typical Maranao social unit possesses four distinct levels: *agama* (the smallest), *inged*, *suku*, and *pongampon* (the largest), with sultans, datus and other noble title holders at each level. The higher the level the greater the prestige attached to its title holders. On the highest level, Maranao society is divided into four *pongampon*. See Melvin Mednick, 'Encampment of the Lake: The Social Organization of a Moslem Philippine (Moro) People', Chicago, Research Series No. 5, Philippine Studies Program, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1965.
- 7 See Peter Gowing, *Mandate in Moroland: The American Government of Muslim Filipinos, 1889-1920*, Quezon City, New Day Publishers, 1983, and Thomas, 'Muslim but Filipino'.
- 8 Commonwealth Act No. 280.
- 9 USAFFE was formed in July 1942 under a presidential order issued by Franklin Roosevelt that merged American and Filipino forces into a single army under the command of Douglas MacArthur and charged it with the task of defending the Philippines.
- 10 Statement of Edward M. Kuder to Dr. Joseph R. Hayden Regarding Events and Conditions in Lanao Immediately Preceding the War and from 8 December 1941 to 29 September 1943, with Appendices on Problems of Government in the Predominantly Moslem Provinces and Other Subjects, in Hayden Papers, Folder 41-17 (hereafter referred to as The Kuder Statement).

- 11 A village leader from Wato interviewed by American forces after the Japanese evacuation expressed disdain for those Christian Filipinos who ran away when the Japanese arrived. Philippine Research and Information Section, Counter-Intelligence, GHQ, AFPAC, APO500, 'Conditions Affecting Domestic Order in the Moro Provinces of Mindanao and Sulu', 28 Aug. 1945, App. B: Lanao Province, p. 14.
- 12 Jamboy, *The Resistance Movement in Lanao*, p. 29; The Kuder Statement; *Busran Kalaw Papers*, p. 31. I am grateful to Evelyn Mallillin-Jamboy, professor of history at Iligan Institute of Technology, Mindanao State University, for allowing me to study a copy of the Kalaw Papers in her possession.
- 13 A USAFFE captain named Lewis Morgan carried out a particularly violent attack on a Maranao village in the Kapatagan lowlands, incurring the wrath of the Maranao people. See Jamboy, *The Resistance Movement in Lanao*, p. 29, and Abbahil, 'The Situation of the Maranao during the Japanese Occupation', p. 47.
- 14 Independent Infantry 31st Battalion under the Independent Combined 75th Brigade.
- 15 Daijuyon-gun Shireibu [Fourteenth Army Command Headquarters], *Gunsei Jisshi Gaikyo Hokoku* [Report of the general situation of military administrative implementation], no. 17 (30 June 1941), p. 49.
- 16 Report No. 227, Japanese War Crimes Trials Records, Closed Reports, Philippine National Archives. On-the-spot interviews conducted after the war by the US military indicate that the action caused the deaths of 28 villagers, including women and children. Philippine Research and Information Section, Counter-Intelligence, GHQ, AFPAC, APO 500, 'Conditions Affecting Domestic Order in the Moro Provinces of Mindanao and Sulu', p. 12.
- 17 Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, p. 40, and the author's interview conducted in Nagoya on 9 July 1993 with Takei Naoji, a former First Lt. of the battalion stationed at Dansalan.
- 18 Nakano Satoshi, 'Appeasement and Political Suppression' in *The Philippines under Japan*, ed. Ikehata and Jose.
- 19 Kalaw was in Tamparan to attend an inauguration ceremony for a *kota* erected by Dimalaan Manking, chief of a settlement called Lalabuan, and that evening he lodged at the nearby village of Gata. He did not participate in the battle of Tamparan, but his speech at the *kota* called on village leaders to resist the Japanese. Busran Kalaw Papers. There is no doubt that the village leaders of Tamparan who met Kalaw, a well-known thorn in the side of the Japanese owing to his hit-and-run attacks in the northern part of the province, drew inspiration from his presence.
- 20 This account is based on the memoir of Takei Naoji contained in Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, a 1993 interview with the same man, and an interview conducted by this author with Kamiya Tomi at Toyohashi on 1 March 1993. Takei was an officer in the 3rd Company led by First Lt. Nakamura, while Kamiya, a sergeant affiliated with the battalion headquarters' intelligence section, received reports about what happened. The Japanese military obtained information on the Tamparan Incident from the few Japanese survivors and from collaborating Maranao.
- 21 The Tanaka Battalion put into service Christian Filipino prisoners of war who had fought and surrendered with USAFFE, calling them *heiho* [support troops].
- 22 By piecing together information from several memoirs in Kyo-10621, *Seikansha no Shuki*, the author was able to pick out the names of five survivors from among the Japanese soldiers.

- 23 See Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no shuki*, p. 41; The Takei interview; Daijuyon-gun Shireibu [Fourteenth Army Command Headquarters], Gunsei Jisshi Gaikyo Hokoku [Report on the general situation of military administrative implementation], no. 24, Sept. 1942, pp. 35–36.
- 24 Tanaka Yoshinari Butaicho [Battalion Commander Tanaka Yosinari], 'Ko-Rikugun Gunso Mizuno Fusakichi Sento-shi' [an account of bravery in the line of duty shown by the late Army Sergeant Mizuno Fusakichi], in Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, p. 156.
- 25 For example, see Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, p. 156.
- 26 Daijuyon-gun Shireibu [Fourteenth Army Command Headquarters], Gunsei Jisshi Gaikyo Hokoku [Report on the general situation of military administrative implementation], No. 24, 10 Sept. 1942, pp. 35–36.
- 27 Hayden was a political scientist from the University of Michigan who served as vice-governor of the Philippine Islands from 1933–5.
- 28 The Kuder Statement.
- 29 Hito Kenyukai [Philippine Kempei Society], *Hito Kenpeitai-Shi* [History of the Japanese imperial military police in the Philippines], 1992, p. 114.
- 30 Edward Kuder, 'The Philippines Never Surrendered', *The Saturday Evening Post*, 24 Feb. 1945, p. 90.
- 31 Busran Kalaw Papers.
- 32 Interviews with Malamit Umpa (Iligan City, 24 Jan. 1994), Mangorsi Mindalano (Metro-Manila, 22 Aug. 1993), Mamarinta Lao (Marawi City, 10 and 23 Jan. 1994), and Domocao Alonto (Metro-Manila, 9 Feb. 1994). The author would like to thank Sheik Usman Imam and the many other people who contributed so much in facilitating interviews and other field survey work.
- 33 Interview conducted by the author in Tamparan in January 1994. At the time of the incident the informant was known by the name Macolindang Krang.
- 34 See Jamboy, *The Resistance Movement in Lanao*, and Abbahil, 'The Situation of the Maranao during the Japanese Occupation'.
- 35 *Manila Bulletin*, Mar. 26, 1936, Folder 28–17, Hayden papers.
- 36 From the author's interview with Abubakar, who was personally acquainted with a Maranao from the nearby village of Lumbatan who suffered ill-treatment.
- 37 Abbahil, 'The Situation of the Maranao during the Japanese Occupation', p. 45.
- 38 Ibid. See also Philippine Research and Information Section, Counter-Intelligence, GHQ, AFPAC, 'Conditions Affecting Domestic Order', p. 30. Kuder, however, felt that 'the destruction of the bridge had nothing to do with the rise of the water level'.
- 39 The Kuder Statement.
- 40 See *ibid.*, and Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, p. 42.
- 41 The Japanese offered rewards for the return of the bodies of Japanese killed at Tamparan, and Maranao collaborators assisted with this matter. *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43. Kuder states that villagers, hoping for monetary rewards, stole the bodies and sold them to the Japanese. The Kuder Statement.
- 42 Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, p. 43.
- 43 From an interview with the author.
- 44 Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, p. 149.
- 45 Headquarters Eighth Army, U.S. Army, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, United States of America vs. Yoshinari Tanaka, 22 Nov. 1948, pp. 5–6. (Contained in the National Diet Library's Kensei Shiryu-shitsu Yokohama Trial Records Microfilm Collection, Case 347, Role No. 5)
- 46 *Showa-shi no Tenno* [The Emperor in Showa Era History], ed. Yomiuri Shinbunsha, vol. 10, 1970, p. 368.

- 47 The Kuder Statement; interview with Domocao Alonto.
- 48 Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, pp. 119–20.
- 49 Hito Kenyukai, *Hito Kenpeitai-shi*, pp. 114–16.
- 50 Kyo-10621 Butai, *Seikansha no Shuki*, p. 98.
- 51 Interview with Takei Naoji.
- 52 Testimony given by Peronio C. Encabo who was on duty at the time at the Intelligence section of the Battalion Headquarters. (Yokohama Trial Records, Case 347, p. 8).
- 53 Yokohama Trial Records.
- 54 From an interview with Mangorsi Mindalanao, an officer of the Moro Bolo Battalion and the brother of a well-known guerrilla leader and former congressman, Manalo Mindalano, in Metro-Manila in August 1993.
- 55 The following sources report a further breakdown in public safety after the Japanese evacuation: Philippine Research and Information Section, Counter-Intelligence, GHQ, AFPAC, 'Conditions Affecting Domestic Order'; CIC Area No. 30, Iligan Office, APO 159, 'Weekly Intelligence Summary', 2 Feb., 1946, p. 5, Junius A. Everett Papers, Hoover Institution Archives.

Index

- Abdilllah, Datu Patinggi Abang Haji, 136
 Abdul Rahman, Haji, 138
 Abubakar, 234, 236, 242 n. 36
 Adun Adundetcharat, 204, 209
 Agus River, 235
 Ai Shung Chi, 71
 Airfields, 117, 136
 Akashi Yoji, 102
 Allied Liaison Office (Krom Prasangan Phanthamit), 207-8
 Alonto, Senator Alauya (Sultan of Raman), 229, 237
 Andaman Islands, 180
 Ang Ping Gwan, 66, 69
 Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League, 34
 Api, 111, 117, 119, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126
 see also, Jesselton
 Api rebellion 111-32
 Arabujin Shidô Iinkai, 71
 Arakan State, 33
 Ari Livira, *see* Li Chek Sin
 Army, Japanese, *see* Japanese Army
 Attiwill, Kenneth, 99
 Aung, Bo (Thakin Thit), 26
 Aung San, Bogyoke/General, 24, 27
 Australian forces in Malaya, 99
 Ayer, S. A., 173, 177, 183
Azad Hind newspaper, 179

 Ba Maw, 3, 23-4, 27-8, 35 n. 8, 182
 Ba Sein, 27
 Baho administration, 27
 Balak Saina, 180
 Ban Pong incident, 204, 208

 Bandjermasin, 158
 Batu Pahat, 106
 Bay, Eliab, 139, 144, 149 n. 29
 Benda, Harry, 107
 Bennett, Lt. Gen. H. Gordon, 107 n. 1
 Bharno, 42, 46
 Bintulu, 140
 Black market, 59
 Blood Army (*Thway-tat*), 36 n. 28
 Bo Mogyo, *see* Suzuki, Colonel Keiji
 Borders, 5, 7
 Burma-China 39-40, 46, 50-1
 Borneo, 3, 4
 trade of, 113-5, 155, 157, 166 n. 8
 see also, North Borneo, Western Borneo, Sarawak
Borneo Shimbun newspaper, 160
 Bose, Rash Behari, 175, 176-85
 Bose, Subhas Chandra, 170, 175, 176, 177, 189 n. 34, 190 n. 43
 Boycotts of Japanese goods, 155, 172
 Brand, Brigadier Adam Wilson, 48-50
 Brandah, Edward, 144
 British administration in Burma, 21-2
 Brooke, James, 134-5
 Brunei, 111, 113
 Bujang, Tuanku, 138
 Bukit Doeri gaol, 58
 Burma Independence Army 4, 24, 26-7, 34, 35 n. 14
 Burma Karen Central Organization 28, 32
 Burma Rifles 21
 Buxton, Harry 149

 Cambodia, 172
 Central Karen Board, 28

- Chai Prathipasen, Lt. Col., 197
 Chatterji, A. C., 181
 Cheah Loong Ghee, 119, 120, 128
 Chen Su Lan, 102
 Cheng Chiu, 45
 Chia Yik Teck, 123, 124, 126, 127
 Chiang Kai-shek, 44, 49, 194, 197, 199, 209
 Chin people, 21, 33
 China, military forces, 43, 49, 185
 China Relief Fund, 57, 63 n. 13, 135
 Chineesche Burgerfront Organisatie, 67
 Chinese
 in Borneo, 111-32, 142-3, 153-69
 in Java, 55-80
 in Malaya, 97-110
 in Sarawak, 135, 142-3, 150 n. 36, 151 n. 50 and n. 51
 in Southeast Asia, 3, 4, 18
 in Thailand, 105, 170, 192-222
 peranakan, 4, 56, 58, 60, 65-6, 67, 68, 69, 72, 73, 76, 154, 164
 population figures
 in Borneo, 154-5
 in Java, 62 n. 4, 65-6, 77 n. 3
 in Malaya, 105
 totok, 4, 56, 60, 66, 67, 68, 76
 Chinese assembly halls (Thailand), 199
 Chinese Chamber of Commerce
 in Thailand, 196, 198, 199-200, 205-7, 213, 215-6, 217
 in Yogyakarta, 66, 67, 72
 in Western Borneo, 158
 Chinese Volunteer Force, *see* Dalforce
 Chiu Siu Lang, 219 n. 29 and n. 31, 220 n. 34
 Chong Soon Leong, 123
 Chu Tia Sua, 198-9
 Chu Yu Piao ('Dr Watt'), 53 n. 29
 Chuan Tanthana, *see* Tan Keng Chuang
 Chulin Lamsam, *see* Ung Tek Lim
 Chung Hwa Hui (CHH), 57, 58
 Chung Hua Tsung Hui (CHTH, Chinese Central Organization), 74, 75
 Chung Hsioh, 71
 Chuo Sangi-in, 60
 Churchill, Winston, 103, 210-11
 Cimahi Camp, 58, 68
 Cloth, 89-90
 Colonial regimes
 Japanese, 9-10
 Western, policies toward minorities, 2, 4, 5, 34
 Comfort women, 59, 73
 Communist Party, Communists
 in Malaya, 98, 100
 in Sarawak, 135
 in Thailand, 193, 194, 213, 214-5
 Constitutions, Burma 23
 Cotton production, 82, 89
 Crolla, Guido, 175, 179
 Crosby, Josiah, 172
 Crosthwaite, Sir Charles, 39
 Cruikshank, Charles, 32
 Dagalangit, Kakay, 234-5
 Dalforce, 97, 98-100, 103, 104
 Dalley, Lt. Col. John D., 97, 99
 Dansalan, 226, 229, 230, 237-9
 Das, Debnath, 173, 177
 Davao, 10
 Davies, H. R., 40, 43
 Dimakaling, 225
 Dimalaan, *see* Manking, Dimalaan
 Direk Jayanama, 197, 208, 210-11
 Djawa Hokokai, 59
 Dohbama Asiatyone, 23, 27
 Donations, forced, 97, 119-21, 131 n. 33
 Du Bois, Cora, 33
 Duallis, 125, 128
 Ekyu Chansu, *see* Tan Ek Yu
 Elsbree, W. H., 107
 Epposhio (Information Office), 104
 F Kikan organization, 170
 Fertig, Col. Wendell, 233, 236
 Firearms, 137
 Food shortages, 44, 89, 137, 235
 see also, rice
 Force 136, 31, 48
 Fort, Brig. Gen. Guy, 226, 237-8
 Free Thai, 181, 193
 Freedom Bloc, 24
 Fujishima Ken'ichi, 200
 Fujiwara Iwa'ichi, 170, 173
 Ganassi, 237-8
 Gideon, Guru, 89
 Gilchrist, Andrew, 186, 191 n. 71
 Giyu Gun (Volunteer Corps), 106
 Gold, 153-4

- Goto Ken'ichi, 153, 165 n. 3
 Greater East Asia Ministry, 12
- Haga, Dr B. J., 159, 160
 Hakka dialect, 155
hakko ichiu, 55, 62
 Hall, John Maxwell, 121, 124-5, 126-7
 Hamada Hitoshi, 208
 Hamengku Buwono IX, Sultan, 74
 Hansongkhram, Maj. Gen. Luang, 209
 Hauner, Milan, 177
 Hayden, Joseph R., 233, 242 n. 27
 Hia Keng Iam, 200
 Hia Kwang Iam, 194, 200
 Hia Mui Kao, 200, 219 n. 21
 Hla Pe, U, 24, 27
 Ho Ying Ching, General, 48
 Hoa Kiao Societeit Mataram, 71
 Hokkien dialect, 155
 Hoo Hap Hwee Koan, 71
 Hiap Gie, 71
 Hsiao I-hsu, General, 46, 50
 Hua Chiao Tsing Nien Hui, 71
 Hua Chiao Tsung Hui (HCTH, Federation of Overseas Chinese Organizations), 58-9, 71-3, 74, 75
 Huang Lu Feng group, 214
 Hun Kim Huat (Kosol Huntrakul), 199, 206, 215
 Hung Ai, 49
- Iban people, 18, 135, 137-40, 144-5
 Iijima Kimata, Lt. Col., 36 n. 22
 Ikeno, Captain Ryujii, 141
 Ikuta Torao, Col., 237
 Imamura Hitoshi, Gen., 11, 58, 69-70
 Imaoka Yutaka, 121
 Imphal campaign, 180-1
 Indian Independence League (IIL), 71, 173, 176, 177, 179, 180, 181, 185
 Indian National Army (INA), 170, 177, 180, 181, 182, 185
 Indian National Council (INC), 173, 174, 176, 179
 Indians
 in Burma, 34 n. 1
 in South-East Asia, 4-5
 in Thailand, 170-91
 Indochina, 2
 Indonesia, 3, 66-96, 153-69
 independence for, 61
 see also, Netherlands Indies
- Insinyur, 77
 Insol, Juing, 144
 Inter-Services Liaison Division (ISLD), 48
 Ishii Ko, 176, 177
 Iwakawa Takashi, 153
 Iwakuro Hideo, Col., 177, 178, 189 n. 31, 196
 Izeki Tsuneo, 160-1, 164, 165 n. 2, 167 n. 29, 168 n. 46
- Jakarta, 58
 Japan
 concept of the southern regions (*Nanpo, Nanyo, Tonan Ajia*), 10-11
 in Thailand, 172
 Policies in occupied territories, 1-2, 4, 55-64, 62 n. 5, 63 n. 25, 70, 81, 83-4, 88-9, 101-5, 118-22, 138-41, 156-8
 Racial attitudes, 2, 7, 10, 11, 15-18, 20 n. 12
 Japanese Army, 12-5, 156-7, 223-43
 Japanese Commerce Promotion Office, 198
 Japanese expansion, 1, 9
 Japanese Navy, 12-4, 156-7, 158
 Java, 2
 Jesselton, 111, 124, 148, 150 n. 36
 Jikeidan 141, 150 n. 46
 Jimbo Nobuhiko, Col., 231, 237
Jing Pao newspaper, 214
 Jip In Soi, 215
 Jitam, Philip, 138
 Jiu Zai Hui (Association for Relief of Calamity), 118, 122, 123, 131 n. 46
 see also, Kinabalu Guerrilla Force
 Jugah anak Barieng, 138-9
- Kachin people, 21, 27, 33
 Kaigun Tokubetsu Keisatsu (Naval Police Force), 158-65
 Kakyo Seinen Dojo, 60
 Kakyo Toseikai (Chinese Control Association), 158, 162
 Kalaw, Busran, 229, 233, 236, 241 n. 19
 Kamiya Tomi, 241
 Kanahele, George, 153, 160
 Kandi Chujian Lizhi Tuan, 123
 Kanowit, 144, 151 n. 66
 Karen Central Organisation, 33

- Karen Conference (1945), 34
 Karen Home Guards, 25
 Karen National Defence Organization, 34
 Karen National Organisation, 33
 Karen National Union, 33
 Karen people, 4, 21–38
 military activities of, 21
 population figures, 21, 23, 34 n. 1, 34 n. 4
 relations with the British, 21–2
 religious patterns, 23, 34 n. 4
 residence patterns, 23
 Karenistan, 33
 Kaulback, Lt. Col. Ronald, 49, 50
 Kawaguchi Kiyotake, Major, 226
 Kawaguchi Kiyote, Maj. Gen., 101, 102
 Keibodan, 60
 Keibotai, 60, 75
 Kempeitai, 103, 111, 200–1, 219 n. 29 and n. 31, 238
 Keng Hung, 40
 Khang Lian, 194
 Khu Kip, *see* Qiu Ji
 Khuang Aphaiwang, 181, 183, 193, 212, 216, 217
Kiao Seng newspaper, 66
 Kinabalu Guerrilla Force (KGF), 123–29
 Ko Siok Hie, 72, 73, 75
 Kokang, 3, 39–54
 Self Defence Force, 43, 44, 49
 Geography of, 41
 Komite Nasional Indonesia (KNI, Indonesian National Committee), 68, 74
 Kong Khauw Hwee, 71
 Kong Sze Fui, 128
 Konketsu Jūmin linkai, 71
 Korea (Chosen), 15, 85
 Korean people, 18
 Kosol Huntrakul, *see* Hun Kim Huat
 Kota Kinabalu, *see* Api, Jesselton
 Kuala Lumpur, 104
 Kuching, 111, 134, 136, 139, 143, 145, 146
 Kuder, Edward, 230, 233–4, 240 n. 10
 Kumiai, 60
 Kunlong, 42, 43
 Kunming, 48
 Kuomintang, 66, 69, 73, 98, 104, 106, 135, 193, 213
 Kwee Liang Kie, 168 n. 31
 Kwee Liang Tjip, 168 n. 31
 Kwok, Albert (I. N. Kwok), 111, 113, 121, 122–3, 125, 126–7, 128
 Kyaukkyi, 29
 Kyoa Sokai (Asia Cooperative Organization), 158, 162
Kyodotai (North Borneo Volunteer Corps), 140–1, 150 n. 40
 Labour, 117–18, 121–2, 137, 140, 205–7, 212–3, 217, 221 n. 60 and n. 62
 Labuan, 113, 122
 Lai Piang Wun, 166 n. 10
 Lake Lanao, 223, 224, 229, 235, 238–9
 Lal, Maj. Ganeshi, 179
 Lalabuan, 241 n. 19
 Lan Dong Hai, 213, 216, 219 n. 29, 222 n. 94
 Lan Yi She, 198
 Lanao, 3, 223
 Land Dayaks, 137
 Lane, Lt. Col. C. M., 136
 Lao Kai, 43
 Lao States, 172
 Lashio, 42, 46
 Lau Lai, Dr, 119, 120, 128
 Laua, 94
 Lawas, 142
 Lebra, Joyce, 173
 Lee Kuan Yew, 108 n. 14
 Leitch, Major, 50
 Leong, Cecilia, 128
 Li Chek Sin (Ari Livira), 209, 210
 Li Hua (Khang Lian), 194
 Li Khi Yong (Yong Lerbannaphong), 220
 Li Qi Shin, 215
 Li Shen, 213
 Li Tek Phui, 122, 124
 Lian Yin Xiao, 209, 210
 Liao Chung Kiong, 123
 Lie Giok Gak, 75
 Lie Liang Sing, 72
 Lie Tjik Khiang, 74
 Liem Ing Hwie, 66, 68, 69, 72, 75, 76, 80 n. 63
 Liew, David, 128
 Lim Keng Fatt, 124
 Lio Chia Hong, 216
 Lio Kong Phow (Khun Sertphakdi), 200, 201

- Liu Ja-chiu, General, 45
 Liu Shu-shi, 194
 Lo Fang Pai, 161, 164
 Low, Hugo, 140
 Lu An Houyuan Hui, 122

 MacArthur, Gen. Douglas, 233, 240 n. 9
 Maguing municipal district, 234-5
Mahachon newspaper, 214
 Mahgabama Asiayone 27
Malai Simpo newspaper, 106
 Malaya, 2
 Malay people, 104, 105-6
 in Sarawak, 137, 146, 151 n. 57
 Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese Army
 (MPAJA), 106, 107 n. 6
 Malipa, 43
 Manaki Takanobu, General, 119, 120-1,
 130 n. 31
 Manchuria/Manchukuo, 10, 15
 Mandalay, 30, 42
 Mani, A., 186
 Manking, Dimalaan, 233-4
 Marajukin, Imam, 124
 Maranao people, 223-9, 239, 240 n. 6
 Maranao Militia Force, 236
Maratabat, 234
 Mason, Charles, 138
 Masuko Tsunesuke, 153, 164
 Maung Maung, Brigadier, 24
 Maung Maung, Thakin (Bo Nya Na), 26
 Mawchi, 31
 Meiktila, 30, 31
 Melanau, 135, 137
 Meng P'eng District, 48
 Meng Xiong, 209
 Mica, 81-96
 Minami, Colonel, *see* Suzuki Keiji,
 Colonel
 Mindalano, Manalo, 236, 243 n. 54
 Minority groups
 definition of, 2, 7
 and independence, 5-6
 Miri, Sarawak, 113
 van Mook, Governor H. J., 75
 Morgan, Lewis, 241 n. 13
 Morimoto Giichi, Maj. Gen., 237
 Moro Bolo Battalion, 226, 237
 Moro Province, 224
 Moros, 3, 224
 Morrison, Ian, 32, 100
 Moulmein, 32

 Muar, 106
 Muhammadiyah, 70
 Munglam, 40
 Munro Faure, Lt. Col. P. H., 48, 49
 Musah, 125, 128
 Muscovite, 84
 Mustapha, Abang Haji (Datu
 Pahlawan), 138, 149 n. 25
 Myaungmya, 26-7, 36 n. 20
 Myitkyina, 46
 Myochit party, 35 n. 9
 Myosa (title of Kokang ruler), 40

 Nai Kur Tai (Luang Sitsuropakon), 199,
 200
 Nakamura Aketo, Lt. Gen., 178, 181,
 185, 208, 211
 Nakatani, 161, 168 n. 36
 Nam Kaw (Kokang), 41
 Nam Ting River, 42
 Navy, Japanese, *see* Japanese Navy
 Nationalism, 1-3, 5, 67-8
 Ne Win, 51
 Nee, Oscar Loo, 27
 Netherlands Indies, 2
 see also, Indonesia
 Ng Leong Khoi, 168 n. 31
 Ng Ngiap Kan, 168 n. 31
 Ng (Wong) Ngiap Soen, 167 n. 22, 168
 n. 31
 Nobuhiko Jimbo, Lt. Col., 231
 Noma, 160-1
 North Borneo, 3, 4, 111
 see also, Borneo
North Borneo Yearbook, 126, 127
 North Hsenwi, 40, 47, 51
 Northern Borneo Chinese Association,
 120
 Nu, U, 51

 Oei Tik Giau, 75
 Office of Strategic Services (OSS), 33
 Ogawa, 167 n. 29
 Oh Kyo Shu, 222 n. 104
 Oho Masuo, 113
 Okada Fumihide, 81-4, 90
 Okajima Riki, Captain, 153, 162-4
 Okazaki Seizaburo, Lt. Gen., 70
 Ong Kee Hui, 169 n. 49
 Ong Tjang Swee, 120
 Ong Tjoe Kie, 168 n. 31
 Openg, Abang, 138

- Operation Character, 32, 37 n. 42
 Operation Hunger I, 38 n. 51
 Operation Mongoose, 32
 Oriental Mission, 31
 Oversea Chinese Association, 142
- Pak Ho Tong, 71
 Pakempalan Kawula Ngajogjakarta, 70
 Paku Alam VIII, 74
 Papun, 25, 26, 32
 Partai Islam Indonesia, 70
 Partai Tionghoa Indonesia, 57, 61
 Patani, 3
 Penang, 104
Penang Shimbun newspaper, 106
People's Daily newspaper, 127
 Peoples Party, 194-5
 Percival, Gen. A. E., 103
 Peter, Charles, 125, 126, 128
 Petroleum, 113
 Phairot Jayanama, 209
 Phibun Songkram, Premier Plaek, 3, 174,
 175-6, 178-9, 181, 188 n. 18,
 193-217
 Philippines, 2, 3
 Philippine Commonwealth, 225-6
 Phinitchonkhadi, Phra (Tan Yok Seng),
 206
 Phisitdisaphong Disakul, Lt. Col. M. C.,
 201, 207, 208, 212
 Plaek Phibun Songkram, Premier *see*
 Phibun Songkram, Premier Plaek
 Po, Dr San Crombie, 23, 28, 29, 33, 34,
 35 n. 5, 36 n. 27
 Pontianak, 153-69
 Pontianak War Tribunal, 164
 Pratap, Raja Mahendra 175
 Prichanusat, Phraya, 209, 221 n. 76
 Pridi Phanomyong, 181, 193
 Puri, Swami Satyananda, 173-4, 175,
 177, 188 n. 18
 Pyagawpu, 29
- Quezon, Manuel, 3
 Qiu Ji (Khu Kip), 194, 214-15
- Railway, Thailand-Burma, 202, 204-7,
 212-13, 215, 217
 Rangoon, 30-2
 Rawal, Ram Singh, 180, 182, 186
 Red Bands of the Sabilillah, 106
 Reeve, W. D., 193
- Religion
 Protestantism in Central Sulawesi,
 82, 83, 91-5
Ren Min Bao newspaper, 214
 Rice, 44, 89, 91, 116-17, 137, 158, 204,
 235-6
 Rida', Tina, 88-90, 93
 Road construction, 117
 Rukun Kampung Tionghoa Tugu, 71
- Sabah, *see* North Borneo
 Sahat Mahakhun, *see* Tia Lang Sing
 Sahay, Anand Mohan, 175, 177
 Sahetappy, Adjutant, 93
 Salvation Army, 91-5
 Salween River, 40, 42, 43
 San Min Chu I Youth, 73
 San Francisco Conference, 182
 Sandakan, 122
 Sarawak 3, 18, 111, 133-52
 Population, 134
 Sarawak Dayak Association (SDA), 144
 Sarawak Forces (SARFOR), 136
 Sasuga, 160-1
 Saw, U, 35 n. 9
 Saw Aung, Bo (Thakin Ngwe), 25
 Schools, *see* education
 Scott, J. G., 40
 Sea Dayaks, *see* Iban
 Seagrim, Captain Hugh, 25, 29-30
 Sen, Prafulla Kumar, 173
 Seow Hoot Seng, 193, 194, 219 n. 29
 Seow Song Khim, 219 n. 29
 Serang (West Java), 58
 Sertphakdi, Khun, *see* Lio Kong Phow
 Services Reconnaissance Department
 (Australia) (SRD), 138, 141, 146,
 148 n. 181, 151 n. 66
 Shan people, 27, 34 n. 1
 Shan States, 33, 203, 208, 209
 Sharma, Dr P. N., 179, 180
 Sharp, Gen. William, 226
 Shastri, Pandit R. N., 179
 Shidei Tsunamasa, Lt. Gen., 185
 Shigemitsu Mamoru, 182
 Shinozaki Mamoru, 102, 120, 130 n. 31
 Shobara Yû, 237
 Shwin, Saw Marshall, 25-6, 29-30, 35 n.
 15
 Shwegyin, 24-5
 Simanggang, 148 n. 17
Sinar Matahari newspaper, 73

- Singapore, 10, 104, 155, 158
 Singh, Giani Pritam, 173, 175
 Singh, Mohan, 176-7
 Singh, Sardar Ishar, 179, 183
 Singh, Subedar Dewa, 125, 128
 Sino-Japanese War, 1, 4, 155, 194
 Sisena, Phraya, 181, 183
 Sitsuropakon, Luang, *see* Nai Kur Tai
 Sittang River, 32, 37 n. 45
 Siviram, M., 173, 175, 179
 Slim, General William J., 30-1
Socara Mataram newspaper, 66
sook ching, 97, 100-4, 142
 Soon Teck Kongs, 142
 Soong, Dr T. V., 46
 Southeast Asia Federation of China
 Relief Funds, 122
Southseas Yearbook, 126, 127
 Soviet Union, 182, 185
 Special Operations Executive (SOE), 31,
 48
 Spiers Mission, 48-50
 Stephens, Jules P., 125, 128, 132 n. 56
 Straits Settlements Volunteer Force, 98,
 103
 Suarez, Lieut. Col. Alejandro, 124-5
 Sugita Ichiji, 102
 Suleiman, Abang Haji (Datu Amar), 138
 Sultans in Western Borneo, executed,
 167 n. 30
 Sultan of Raman, *see* Alauya Alonto
 Sun Yat Sen, 49, 56
 Surabaya, 60
 Suzuki Keiji, Colonel (Colonel Minami,
 Bo Mogyo), 26, 36 n. 21
 Suzuki, S., 148 n. 17
 Sweat Army (*Kywe Tat*), 28
 Synyetha Wunthanu, 23
 Syonan Oversea Chinese Association, 120

 Tabata Shun'ichi, 161, 168 n. 36
 Tae Kia Hung, 206
 Tagore, Rabindranath, 173
 Tai Li, Gen., 198, 201, 213
 Takei Naoji, 237, 241 n. 20
 Takeuchi Atsuo, 233, 234
 Taman Siswa, 70
 Tamparan (Mindanao), 3-4, 223-42
 Tamura Hiroshi, 173, 198
 Tan Chin Keng, 199
 Tan Keng Chuang (Chuan Tanthana),
 200, 201, 219 n. 33

 Tan Ek Yu (Ekyu Chansu), 199
 Tan Kah Kee, 103-4, 109 n. 31
 Tan Kim Hong, 123
 Tan Siew Meng, 194, 198, 202, 206, 211,
 213, 215
 Tan Yi, 213-4
 Tan Yok Seng, *see* Phra
 Phinitchonkhadi
 Tan Yong San, 199
 Tanaka, Lt. Col., 237
 Tanaka Battalion, 235, 238
 Tanaka Shin'ichi, Lt. Gen., 198
 Tanaka Yoshinari, 226, 230
 Tavoy, 33
 Tayagon, 26
 Tenasserim, 202
 Teochew Assembly Hall, 194
 Terauchi Hisa'ichi, Field Marshal, 185
 Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge, 173, 174,
 177, 187
Thai Hua Siang Po (Thai-Chinese
 Commercial Newspaper), 209-11
 Thai Isara Incident, 201
 Thai Niyom Company, 211
 Thai Rice Company, 204
 Thailand, 3, 4, 5, 105, 109 n. 35, 170-222
 Annexation of neighbouring
 territories, 182, 208-9
 Definition of Thai race, 202
 National Defense Preparedness
 Authorization Act (6 December
 1941), 204
 Supplementary Agreement
 Concerning Joint Thai-Japanese
 Military Operations (5 May 1942),
 203
 Treaty of Alliance with Japan, 192,
 196-7, 202, 203, 217
 Thailand-Japan Coordination
 Committee, 200, 204, 207
 see also Allied Liaison Office
 The Bik Tjwan, 72
 The Hong Oe, 69, 72, 73, 74, 75
 Theng Soea Teng, 168 n. 31
 Thibaw, King of Burma, 39, 52 n. 1
 Thio Thiam Tjong, 75, 80 n. 62 and n. 63
 Thirty Comrades, 24
 Thji Boen Khe, 168 n. 31
 Thongpleo Chonphumi, 212
 Tia Lang Sing (Sahat Mahakhun), 196,
 198, 199, 200, 206, 207, 215, 221
 n. 66

- Times of India*, 46
 Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan, 71
 Tjin Tjai Hwee, 67, 69, 72
 Togo Shigenori, 177, 183
 Tojo Hideki, 12, 178, 198, 208
 Tokkei, *see* Kaigun Tokubetsu Keisatsu
 Tokubetsu Kakyō Keibotai, 60
 Tokugawa Yoshichika, Marquis, 55
Tong Guan Pao newspaper, 195, 196, 200, 207, 210, 211, 216, 219 n. 23, 220 n. 34
 Tong Ek Company, 166 n. 8
Tong Kok Nang newspaper, 216, 222 n. 94
 Toungoo, 31–2, 37 n. 40
 Towulu' village (Kulawi District, Sulawesi), 81–96
 Toyoshima (Japanese Vice Consul in Java), 58, 63 n. 19
 Tripartite Alliance, 218 n. 7
 Ts'in Ts'ung Ji, 158, 162
 Tsubokami, Teiji, 175, 176, 179, 186, 203, 210
 Tsuda Fumio, 71
 Tsuji Masanobu, 101, 102
 Tun Oke, Thakin, 27
 Twang Peck Yang, 59, 60

 Ua Chu Liang, 200
 Ung Lip Ming, 222 n. 96
 Ung Tek Lim (Chulin Lamsam), 211, 215
 United States Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), 226, 229, 235, 236, 240 n. 9
 United States Forces in the Philippines (USFP), 124, 127
 Usman Imam, Sheik, 242 n. 32
 Uttar Pradesh, 170

 Wa States, 40
 Wan Wathayakorn, Prince, 201, 209
 Wang Ching-wei government, 67, 195, 199, 210, 216
 Wanit Phananon, 199

 War Crimes trials, 101, 102, 229
 Ward, Ian, 101–1
 Watanabe Wataru, 104, 120
 Wathaiyakon, Prince Wan, 174
 Wato, 229, 241 n. 11
 Wavell, Gen. Sir Archibald, 103
 Wendler, Ernst, 175, 177, 181
 Western Borneo, 4
 see also, Borneo
 Wichit Wichitwathakan, 174, 175, 178, 188 n. 15, 197, 201, 202, 211
 Wirot Amphai, 215
 Wisut Athayuk, 202
 Wong Tze An, 128
 Woodward, Leonard and Maggie, 93–4
 Wu, Dr K. C., 47
 Wyld, Col. Cyril, 102

 Xinan faction, 194

 Yamada Kunitaro, 221 n. 69
 Yamamoto Kuma'ichi, 181, 182, 183
 Yamamoto Soichi, 160
 Yamashita Tomoyuki, General, 101, 102
 Yang Kyein Sein, 44, 45, 51
 Yang Wen Pin, 40, 41, 43–6, 48, 51
 Yang Wen Tai, 44, 47
 Yang Wen Tsan, 47, 48
 Yap Pheng Geck, 103
 Yogyakarta, 65–80
 Yogyakarta Sendenbu, 71
Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper, 101
 Yong Lerbannaphong, *see* Li Khi Yong
 Yong Muk Fi, 162
 Yoshioka Company, 230, 234, 236, 237–8
 Yoshioka Sunao, First Lt., 230, 233
 Youth Group for the Three Principles of the People, 194, 198, 214
 Yunnan, 39, 42, 44

 Zakir Hussain, 186
 Zhang Qian, 122, 131 n. 41
Zhen Hua Bao newspaper, 214–5
 Zhou Huan Lai, 122
 Zhou Xian Shu, 214