

FORCE 136 (2)

(Siri Sejarah Lisan Pendudukan Jepun, no. 3)

Interviewee: Mr. Lim Hong Pei
Interviewer: Mr. Tan Kim Hong
Date: 12 November 1984 and 13 November 1984
Place: 67, Jalan Sg. Kelian, Tanjong Bungah,
Pulau Pinang

Penyelaras: Abu Talib Ahmad
Penyunting: Sakinah Che Embi



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Penerbitan ini merupakan keluaran ketiga Siri Sejarah Lisan Pendudukan Jepun di Tanah Melayu. Temubual ini merupakan temubual dengan Encik Lim Hong Pei tentang pengalamannya sebagai seorang pegawai di dalam Pasukan 136 semasa pendudukan Jepun. Keluaran ini adalah hasil daripada Jawatankuasa Sejarah Lisan yang telah ditubuhkan pada bulan April 1982 dan dianggotai oleh Timbalan Naib Canselor (Penyelidikan dan Pembangunan), Profesor Sharom Ahmat sebagai Pengerusi serta ahli-ahlinya yang terdiri daripada wakil dari Bahagian Sejarah (Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Kemanusiaan), Perpustakaan dan Pusat Teknologi Pendidikan dan Media. Mereka ialah Encik Abdul Rahman Ismail (digantikan oleh Dr. Abu Talib Ahmad), Dr. Cheah Boon Kheng, Encik Mohd. Lazim Hamid (kemudiannya digantikan oleh Encik Merza Abbas). Dr. Paul Kratoska, Dr. Yuen Choy Leng, Dr. J.S. Sidhu dan Cik Tang Wan Fong (digantikan oleh Puan Sakinah Che Embi). Profesor Sharom kini telah dipinjamkan ke Universiti Brunei Darussalam dan telah digantikan oleh Dr. Abu Talib Ahmad sebagai Pengerusi sementara Dr. Yuen, Dr. Kratoska dan Dr. Sidhu telah menamatkan perkhidmatan mereka dengan Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Tujuan utama Jawatankuasa ini ialah untuk mengumpulkan maklumat tentang zaman Pendudukan Jepun di Perak Utara, Pulau Pinang, Kedah dan Perlis. Aspek-aspek yang dijadikan tumpuan termasuklah kemasukan tentera Jepun ke Tanah Melayu, hal-hal ekonomi, dasar-dasar sosial dan ketenteraan, pentadbiran, pergerakan penentangan, serta peristiwa-peristiwa yang berlaku di sekitar tahun 1944-45 dan kedatangan semula askar-askar British.

Sejarah Lisan kini dianggap sebagai satu sumber penting yang dapat memperlengkapkan gambaran berkenaan peristiwa-peristiwa sejarah tanah air. Pengumpulan sejarah lisan dilakukan dengan cara menemubual orang-orang tertentu untuk merekod pengalaman mereka tentang peristiwa-peristiwa yang telah mereka alami sendiri. Temubual ini merangkumi berbagai-bagai lapisan masyarakat agar satu perspektif baru tentang peristiwa-peristiwa sejarah dapat dihasilkan.

Dalam sejarah lisan sangat penting bagi penyunting merakam sejauhmana yang boleh, suasana interaksi di antara pencerita dengan penemubual, keadaan kesihatan dan ingatan pencerita pada hari itu, perasaan pencerita tentang sesuatu isu, iaitu sama ada beliau berasa gelisah atau pun senang dengan topik-topik tertentu. Keadaan ini harus dipelihara seberapa yang boleh. Perasaan dan keadaan sebegini cuma dapat dibayangkan oleh pendengar/pembaca melalui cara pencerita menjawab dan bercerita. Oleh itu, sekiranya terdapat kejanggalan dalam teks monograf ini, ianya adalah

disebabkan oleh usaha kami untuk memelihara keaslian temubual ini dan arus pemikiran pencerita.

Setakat ini pihak Jawatankuasa telahpun berjaya mendapatkan lebih daripada 25 temubual dan adalah menjadi harapan Jawatankuasa agar kesemua maklumat ini akan dapat disebarkan tanpa penyuntingan yang besar kepada para pembaca yang lebih luas. Harapan Jawatankuasa ialah dengan penerbitan maklumat-maklumat ini masyarakat akan lebih sedar tentang masa lampau mereka dan seterusnya dapat merangsangkan minat dan penyelidikan dalam sejarah tempatan.

Akhir kata, saya ingin merakamkan terima kasih kepada Encik Tan Kim Hong yang telah menguruskan temubual ini dengan jayanya dan menterjemahkannya pula dari Bahasa Mandarin ke Bahasa Inggeris. Ucapan terima kasih juga diberikan kepada Cik Yvonne Rasen dari Bahagian Malaysiana dan Arkib, Perpustakaan Universiti Sains Malaysia dan Unit Percetakan Pusat, Universiti Sains Malaysia yang telah menguruskan penerbitan temubual ini.

- Dr. Abu Talib Ahmad -



Mr. Lim Hong Pei was formerly of Force 136 which parachuted into the Baling area in 1945. After an honourable discharge from the force, he joined the commercial world as a business executive and subsequently became a member of the staff of Hongkong & Shanghai Bank, Kuala Lumpur, a supervisor in the 1957 Census of Population, and later as Assistant Resettlement Officer in the Kinta District, Perak. Before his retirement in 1978, he was the Manager of the Hai Seong Transport Company in Kuala Kurau, Perak.

Tan: Good morning, Mr. Lim.

Lim: Good morning.

Tan: We understand that you were formerly a liaison officer in *Force 136* and we are honoured and glad to have an interview with you today. We would like to know, first and foremost, when and where you were born?

Lim: I was born on 18 August 1922 in Nibong Tebal, Province Wellesley.

Tan: Where were you educated?

Lim: I had my English primary education in the A.C.S. (Anglo-Chinese School), Nibong Tebal. After Std. 5, I went to the Tong Hwa School, Bagan Serai, Perak. I then pursued my secondary education in Chung Ling High School, Penang, till Junior Middle Two in 1939. This was the year when the resistance war against [the] Japanese invasion was in full swing in China.

Tan: Were you affected by the anti-Japanese movement in Chung Ling when you were studying there?

Lim: As I had just entered the school, I must admit that I wasn't involved much in the movement. Nevertheless, there were all kinds of campaigns going on in the school.

Tan: What then was the main factor that influenced you to go to China?

Lim: There were several reasons. First, the return of Mr. David Chen to China. He was, you know, our Principal in Chung Ling.

Secondly, my father's failure in making good in his business (charcoal trade).

Tan: Other than these two, were there any other important factors that encouraged you to make your trip to China?

Lim: As a matter of fact, I was involved in the sale of medicine and performance of patriotic drama for months in Bagan Serai. There was at the same time an exhibition of photos on Japanese War Crimes in China. It was organised by a certain Loh Chen-hsing. I signed up with Loh immediately after the exhibition.

Tan: You mean you were spurred by the exhibition and decided to partake in the anti-Japanese War in China?

Lim: Yes.

Tan: Was there any objection from your parents?

Lim: No, as my father had not been doing well in his business, the Headmaster of Tong Hwa School, Mr. Liu Chih-lung then passed the hat round and collected over a hundred dollars to subsidise my trip.

Tan: Could you please tell us about your application for visa and those lads who went to China together with you?

Lim: There were sixteen of us who had voluntarily signed up with Loh, namely Pai Ch'un-yu (Taiping), Cheng I-feng (Perak), Teng Meng-fa (Bukit Mertajam), T'an Sien-yen (Ipoh), Hsieh Ping-tung (Kedah), Ch'en Shih-chang (Perak), Wang Chih-te (Taiping), Ch'ih Yeh-ch'en (a student from the Fukien Girls' School, Penang), Liu Chih-fang (a Penang lady teacher), Feng Swee-wei (a Penang-born, girl student), Chang Han-seng (North Malaya), Hwang Che-ch'u (a relative of Hwa Lian School's headmaster in Taiping), Lin Tao-hsiung (Kedah), Chang Cheng-ru (Kedah), Chiu Chin-hsing (Singapore) and myself. We assembled at the Hooi An Association, Penang. My visa was issued on 21 December 1939 by the Assistant Chinese Consul to Penang, Mr. Hwang Yen-kai.

Tan: Where did you all embark?

- Lim:* We boarded the ship for the China-bound trip in Penang. We sailed via Teluk Anson and reached Singapore.
- Tan:* What did you all do in Singapore?
- Lim:* We did sight-seeing in Singapore by taxis and trams.
- Tan:* Did the Chinese Consulate in Singapore hold any party in honour of you all?
- Lim:* Yes. Our leader Mr. Loh had close connection with the Chinese Government. He was from the Chung Tung Department (Anti-Espionage and Propaganda Department). He took us to the Consulate on 5 January 1940 where we listened to some speeches by the Consul General and consulate officials.
- Tan:* How long did you all stay in Singapore?
- Lim:* About one or two weeks.
- Tan:* So, when exactly did you all leave for China?
- Lim:* We took a French cargo ship and first arrived at Saigon where we were ill-treated by the French harbour officials. For instance, we were not allowed any access to our own medicine until we had reached China. It was all sealed up by them. Fortunately, the Chinese Consul in Saigon had come to our rescue at this crucial moment. We then visited and stayed in Cholon (Saigon) for about four days, before we boarded a train to take us to Hanoi and the Sino-Vietnamese border at He-kou near Yunnan.
- Tan:* After which?
- Lim:* We began to enter China proper but unluckily, one bridge had been bombed and we were compelled to walk across it and go by train. It was a long way to Kunming.
- Tan:* You mean that was your destination?
- Lim:* No, we were supposed to go to Chungking.

- Tan:* When did you reach Chungking?
- Lim:* We first arrived at Kweiyang from Szechuan and finally, reached Chungking by boat in February, 1940.
- Tan:* Immediately after your arrival there, were you all sent to where you were destined to go?
- Lim:* We were welcomed and entertained to parties by military and civilian personnel for about 10 days in Chungking.
- Tan:* Where were you sent to?
- Lim:* Some had been sent to pursue their higher education, some as war-front reporters like Cheng I-feng. I was sent for military training at Ch'ih Chiang's (province), Kwang Hsing Ch'ang (village).
- Tan:* What was the name given to the training?
- Lim:* It was known as the Wartime Cadre Training Corps under the Military Affairs Bureau. It lasted for one and a half years (sic). I was recruited on April 1, 1940 and graduated on 20 March 1941.
- Tan:* Which batch did you belong to?
- Lim:* Oh, I belonged to the sixth batch of Unit 6, Division 1.
- Tan:* Did any of your classmates from Malaysia receive the same training together with you?
- Lim:* All of us overseas Chinese who had returned to China.
- Tan:* How many of you were in the first batch?
- Lim:* I don't know the exact number. But one single unit was 117 men. There were nine units in all.
- Tan:* Could you enlighten us on aspects of your training programme?
- Lim:* We woke up at six and had our wash in the river. The training

programme started off immediately after our not-so-nourishing breakfast. It ended at nine at night and after some singing sessions, we broke off and went back to our respective dormitories.

Tan: Did the training include any practicals in the battlefields?

Lim: Oh, it was all similar to actual military training in the regular force, including use of arms. Besides, there were lectures on politics, international relations and diplomacy.

Tan: After your graduation, did you immediately join the regular military rank?

Lim: I must say that we graduated before the scheduled date. I was first invited to become an instructor at a school for the overseas Chinese. Meanwhile, I also went into partnership with my course mates in running a small shop dealing with secondhand goods at Ch'ih Chiang. As this was not the line I was suited to I subsequently went to Chungking to seek my fortune. I met my eldest blood-brother from Bagan Serai who was a military driver, by chance, and took a lift from him.

Tan: What did you do when you were in Chungking?

Lim: I went to report to the Overseas Affairs Department (*Hai-Wai-Pu*) where a few of my course mates of the 5th batch were working. I put up in their hostel for a short period. I had no job. Meanwhile, I was given to understand that Malaya had fallen into Japanese hands. I met five Chinese Community leaders there. They were Mr. Lau Pak-kuan, Mr. Fung Seong and others. I accompanied a friend of mine, Shih Ling-sing, to meet one of them who was his relative. We also had the opportunity to meet Mr. Chou En-lai, a leader of the Communist Party.

Tan: Did you then formally join the Military Service of the KMT (Kuomintang) Government?

Lim: I stayed for a few months there. I met my course mates at Ch'ih Chiang; Wu Chai-hsin, Ch'en Ch'ang-chih and dined with them regularly. They were all kind to me. I also met Mr. Lin Chin-tien who worked in the Military Affairs Bureau. He was an

overseas Chinese from Muar. I then wrote officially to the Bureau to ask for employment with my detailed personal resume. They then instructed me to report to the Fifth Army (*Ti-Wu-Chun*) in Kunming. Prior to this, I had met Lin Lung-hwa from Penang. He was then working in the Chung Nan Rubber Factory. I went in one of the factory lorries to Yunnan. The driver fed me well throughout the journey. Drivers of those lorries had ample sideline income and they spent lavishly. As I could not locate the whereabouts of the Fifth Army, I decided to enrol myself as a student in the Oriental Languages Training School, run by the Ministry of Education. The class was supposed to be in Tali. Tali was a beautiful garden city, famous for its scenic lake known as *T'ien-chih* and for marbles, after which it was named. But unfortunately war was drawing near and we had to be on the run again to Kunming. We squatted in the Hua-Chiao Middle School in Cheng-Can for a four months course. In addition to the language lessons, we also had three military personnel from the Military Affairs Bureau who conducted military training.

Tan: So you were assigned your duty after completing the course?

Lim: No, there was no vacancy whatsoever in any army unit. Some, again were sent for further studies. As for myself, T'ang Yung-fei, Wu Kuo-chen, Chang Chih-yun and two other overseas Chinese, we were sent to form the National College of Oriental Studies (*Kuo-li Tung-fang Yu-wen Chuan-ke Hsueh-hsiao*). There were four departments catering for the study of Indian, Burmese, Siamese and Vietnamese languages. It was a two-year course conducted in a temple - the Sui-yeh-an in Tou-nan-chun village. It was a building of simple structure. There was not much furniture and facility. Our first Principal was Chang Yen-hsuen who was later promoted to assume the post of Chancellor, at the University of Kweichou. His successor was Wang Wen-hsuen.

Tan: What course did you take up at the Institute?

Lim: Indian language.

Tan: Did you make use of the language after graduation?

Lim: I studied it for more than a year but never practised it, as shortly after that, my friend in the Yunnan University, Miss Lee Shao-mong invited me to join *Force 136* under Lim Bo Seng. As it had always been my cherished dream to join the military service, I accepted her kind offer willingly. Her boyfriend, Ch'en Chu'ung-chih had already been in the *Force* for some time.

Tan: Was that the very first time that you had heard of *Force 136*?

Lim: Yes.

Tan: Could you briefly describe the kind of training that you received?

Lim: As a matter of fact, prior to joining the *Force*, I attended a memorial service in honour of a fellow overseas Chinese killed in the resistance war against Japan near the Sino-Burmese border. It was held in Kunming. I met several old pals there such as Wu Chai-hsin, T'an Hsien-yen and others. I never knew that they were already in the *Force* known as *Dragon 1*. After being approached by Miss Lee, I then made the necessary arrangements. I had my travel documents done at the British Consulate before undergoing my medical examination. I then took a flight over the Himalayas to India.

Tan: Approximately when?

Lim: Early December of 1944 [sic](actually 1943) I first reached Calcutta. A special P.O. Box numbered 9.51 had been set aside for liaison purposes. Soon I received order to report to Colombo, Ceylon. I went by train together with a Chinese cook and commenced my training at Trincomalee (Ceylon). This was on December 7 of 1944 [sic].

Tan: Would you mind telling us some details of your training?

Lim: I was one of the second batch volunteers to receive intensive training there. Lim Bo Seng and Wu Chai-hsin have had their training at the same place before me. Apart from being a trainee, the higher authorities also wanted me to be an interpreter. My predecessor was someone from the MPAJA (Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army) who had left for his new mission. The training proper included all the so-called

Black arts such as use of arms, ammunition, spying and anti-sabotage activities, etc. There were about eight of us in the 2nd batch which was quite few indeed.

Tan: After training what did you all do?

Lim: We were sent to the forests in Trincomalee and Central Ceylon for combat practicals. We were also taught the Japanese language and the art of disguising ourselves in times of need.

Tan: How long was the whole training programme?

Lim: More than a month for one batch.

Tan: I understand that you were parachuted into Malaya. So was there any actual training to cover the air-drop?

Lim: Originally, we were expected to infiltrate into Malaya by submarine. We were despatched to Perth, Australia - Ch'en Kuo-ying, Chang Ch'ao-kuo, myself and many others. Oh, we were very close with each other and I was glad that we had been sent for the same mission in Malaya. At this juncture, when we were in Perth, we were told to stay put as the 'sub' was too small for all of us. It was supposed to take us to Johore for landing. Our leader, Major Martin went with it but was killed by the Japs (Japanese) upon landing. While waiting for further instructions from SEAC (Southeast Asia Command), I must admit, we had a gala time in Australia for a few months. We befriended many Malaysians and Australians. We then took a flight back to Colombo. I was sent to Meerut near Delhi (India) with two wireless operators, by an RAAF plane, for training and then adjourned again to Calcutta for a series of parachute training. We were considered qualified only after seven tries. We were then specifically told of our mission in Malaya. We were air-dropped at night into the forest of Kampung Mong Gajah Ulu in Kedah on 26 February 1945 after an eight-hour flight. We had left Calcutta at 2.00 p.m.

Tan: How many were there in the team?

Lim: There were six of us - Capt. Jimmy Hislop, Chang Ch'ao-kuo, Ch'en Kuo-ying, Tsang Jan Nam, Hwang Swee-seng and myself.

Hislop was a snobbish Scot who always looked down upon us, the Chinese. He had to tolerate our company to make the mission a success. Ch'en Kuo-yin was a graduate of the Military College of Ch'entu. He always kept a low profile, and remained silent at all times. Chang Ch'ao-kuo was a graduate of the same college. [He was] versatile and vocal. Tsang Jan Nam hailed from Sabah and had worked with the Yeh-hua Electrical Supplies Co. I have no knowledge whatsoever of Huang Swee-seng.

Tan: What did you all do after landing?

Lim: I was the only one trapped hanging from a tree, but nevertheless I managed to 'touch down' finally. The rest were all safe. But Huang's and my knapsacks were lost. They just disappeared into thin air literally. We buried some of the equipment lest it should be discovered by the Japs and also for future use or for replacement. We carried a knapsack each weighing about 70-80 pounds. It contained a pistol, a carbine, grenades, ammunition, food and clothing, etc. After checking with the map, we realized that we had landed in Kampung Mong Gajah Ulu. It was some distance away from Sungai Lasor, our destination. Hislop was the commander. He led the way. I was at the very end of the file.

Tan: You mean you were ?

Lim: I was the second-in-command. I was at a disadvantage. By the time they cleared all the obstacles and undergrowth and walked the smooth path I was lagging far behind.

Tan: Why did you all want to go to Sungai Lasor?

Lim: We had contacts there. They were farmers. We could get our information about the MPAJA from them.

Tan: You mean you were instructed to make contacts with the MPAJA?

Lim: Precisely. We walked for a few days and were lost in the jungle. We had eaten practically all our food. We wired Colombo for fresh supplies. Later, we did hear the plane circling over our

head but no supplies had landed. We had misinformed them of the exact location.

Tan: Did the plane come back again?

Lim: Yes, we were given our food supplies eventually after having starved for more than a week.

Tan: What sort of plane?

Lim: The largest of its kind at that time - B-24.

Tan: Was it a bomber?

Lim: Yes.

Tan: Did you try again to establish contacts with the MPAJA guerrillas in Sungai Lasor?

Lim: Yes. Capt. Hislop had sent Chang Ch'ao-kuo and Ch'en Kuo-yin to do the job. But Ch'en came back with one of his legs sprained and I had to take his place. I climbed up the highest point in the locality and discovered to my great dismay that we had taken the wrong way. I reported it to Hislop. Fortunately we met a Malay later on. He told us of the correct way to Sungai Lasor. I made an attempt to go to the place in ordinary civilian clothing. Not armed. Chang was supposed to wait for my return the following day in the jungle at a certain point. But what happened was that I had to wait for three days before the guerrillas arrived at the pre-arranged farm house.

Tan: How did the MPAJA know that you were waiting there?

Lim: I first asked around about them. One of the farmers was then sent to contact them. He returned with more than ten guerrillas who immediately surrounded me at gun point. They searched my body thoroughly and found nothing. I told them to step backwards and confided that I was sent by SEAC to liaise with them. I wanted to know their exact number so that assistance could then be arranged.

Tan: Who was the leader of the MPAJA guerrillas?

Lim: He was Hsiao-yang. He spoke to me at length and was satisfied with my identification as a *Force 136 Liaison Officer* parachuted into the area. We spent the night together. At daybreak, I quickly made my way to meet Chang at the pre-arranged point. He was not there. He had in fact gone back to the company under Hislop and reported me as lost. Hislop immediately ordered a withdrawal and thus when I went there with the guerrillas I could not find them. I wrote a small chit and hung it on a tree before we went back again to the small farm. Then I brought along with me some food and decided to go back to the camp to search for the party. Guess what happened next? On seeing someone approaching they pointed their guns at me and questioned me of my delayed return. I asked them whether they had read my short note. The answer was no. At this point, the leader of the MPAJA informed us of the existence of another platoon of guerrilla forces in North Kedah, near Sintok. They were short of food and military supplies. A date was immediately arranged for possible air-drop by Capt. Hislop with the Colombo HQ (Headquarters).

Tan: You mean at Sintok?

Lim: Yes. I went along with them from station to station and through secret jungle path. We finally reached a small village dotted here and there with a few thatch huts. I stayed with an MPAJA guerrilla in one of the huts. I met a lad nicknamed the *Little Devil (Hsiao-kui)* ... Oh, yes. I've almost forgotten to narrate to you that while taking the guerrillas to see Hislop we met a band of Sino-Siamese bandits. They had plans to carry out their lootings in Baling. I reprimanded the leader in my capacity as an Allied Officer. While setting off to the north we again met this leader in the jungle.

Tan: Do you mean that you were escorted to Sintok by different groups of MPAJA men?

Lim: Precisely. There were many of them. They took shifts at different secret points of liaison.

Tan: Did Hsiao-yang follow you there?

Lim: He accompanied me on the first leg of the journey. In fact, I

suggested to him to change the official name for his troops. I told him they were then subordinate to the Perak Regiment. As Force 136 was there to fully support them it might be opportune to change it to the Eighth Regiment to cover the whole of Kedah. I believe such a suggestion had been discussed by the MPAJA and thus the name was adopted.

Tan: When you had reached Sintok, whom did you see?

Lim: Well, the robbers (bandits) we met on the way accompanied me on the second leg of the journey before they returned to their base. The leader even presented me with beautiful kampung dames but I had to turn down his kind gesture politely, because of my important mission to the north.

Tan: By the way, how long did it take you to reach your destination after setting off from Sungai Lasor?

Lim: About seven to eight days.

Tan: Did you meet anyone of note there?

Lim: I met a lady guerrilla who had been brutally tortured by the Japs. Just imagine, her breasts were chopped off by them! Later, I met many of her comrades.

Tan: About how many of them?

Lim: Approximately 200 or maybe slightly more. A small group of them were instructed to guard the main entrances to the base and the rest were told to meet at a clearing to pick up whatever air supplies that might be brought by plane.

Tan: You mean another air-drop had been arranged?

Lim: Yes, of course. It was arranged after I had left Sungai Lasor.

Tan: Can you recall the name of the MPAJA leader at Sintok?

Lim: Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I just can't. He was very young, well-mannered and soft spoken.

- Tan:* Any idea where they had come from?
- Lim:* From all parts of Kedah, like Gurun.
- Tan:* Can you now say something about the plane and the fresh supplies?
- Lim:* More than a hundred guerrillas were ordered to carry out the task, men and women. As soon as I heard the plane approaching, I let the smoke smoulder in the air to give the necessary *Okay* signal. Two B-24 planes came. Soldiers were parachuted in. They were Gurkhas, English Officers and two Canadian Chinese.
- Tan:* Any equipment and supplies?
- Lim:* Oh, yes. Arms, grenades, 0.32 pistols, 0.38 revolvers and 0.99 carbines, Japanese notes and medicine like aspirin, etc.
- Tan:* One question about the notes. Were they genuine notes issued by the Japs?
- Lim:* They were printed in India, all ten dollar counterfeit notes.
- Tan:* About the military personnel, did they stay together with the guerrillas?
- Lim:* No. They stayed in a separate camp.
- Tan:* Do you mean that they were a totally different unit but based similarly in North Kedah?
- Lim:* You are right. They were responsible for the liaison job in the north.
- Tan:* And you all?
- Lim:* We were for the South. It was the HQ of the Eighth Regiment.
- Tan:* How long did you stay there?
- Lim:* About eight days. They wired me to return immediately after

the mission had been accomplished. Meanwhile I had been given my fresh supplies also from India.

Tan: Did you then have a walkie-talkie with you?

Lim: No.

Tan: Then how did you notify them of your needs?

Lim: It was Capt. Hislop who did it.

Tan: So that was your mission to the north. What happened after that?

Lim: I made my way to the south.

Tan: One question about your dealings with the MPAJA. How did you all liaise with them when needs arose?

Lim: The MPAJA were known to be at Weng. They knew of our whereabouts. We made contact with each other through an intermediary from their side.

Tan: Did you ever use wireless or any other means to establish direct contact?

Lim: The wireless was only meant for *Force 136* and its Colombo HQ. It could not be used for other purposes.

Tan: Incidentally, did the Japanese know of your presence in the Baling area?

Lim: I guess they knew of us when the plane flew over. But they had no means of locating us.

Tan: Do you mean that the Japanese had not taken any military action against your unit?

Lim: They did try to get us. For instance, I was once out in Weng on a bicycle. Before I had reached the village, somebody raised the alarm warning me of some three hundred Japanese soldiers who were there for a search-and-kill mission. I quickly abandoned

my bicycle and sought refuge in the nearby household otherwise I would have been killed on the spot.

Tan: What was the overall relationship between *Force 136* and the MPAJA units? Was it cordial and even very close with one another or otherwise?

Lim: It was very cordial, friendly and cooperative between the two. They provided us with all important information. They even informed us of their capture and torture of local collaborators (*Han-chien/running dogs*).

Tan: Was there any kind of mistrust, suspicion or ill- feeling over certain issues?

Lim: Not that I know of.

Tan: We would like to know some details of what you described just now, namely the exchange of military information.

Lim: This is a good question. Well, I could quote you a vivid example of how cooperative we were with each other. The guerrillas once captured a Japanese spy. They extracted valuable information from him pertaining to the military defence of Penang. We wired Colombo and bombers were later sent to destroy all the strategic points including the Japanese naval HQ in Penang.

Tan: You mentioned just now that the locals had tried their best to safeguard you all especially your movements. Could you describe their general attitude towards the MPAJA?

Lim: It was all fine. They welcomed the MPAJA to their houses and entertained them with food without fear or grumbles.

Tan: Did they give them any concrete support, such as money?

Lim: Yes, they provided them with all the necessary financial and material support.

Tan: How was this done? Did the guerrillas send their men to go round and collect the money and what not?

- Lim:* Yes, they had their own secret cells and back-up units to do it. They practically had their own men in each and every house.
- Tan:* One more question about the local villagers. Were they of any help to the MPAJA guerrillas in terms of collection and dissemination of information?
- Lim:* There was not much information to be collected except for the military movements of the Japanese. They were useful only in this respect.
- Tan:* To the best of your knowledge, what was their attitude towards the Japanese?
- Lim:* They lived under duress. They were cold to the Japanese but they had to show their *goodwill* when the Japanese came. Nevertheless they never talked about us in the jungle to the Japanese.
- Tan:* You mean the Japanese were generally less receptive to the local people?
- Lim:* Yes, and the Japanese knew about it too. That's why sometimes they had to resort to cruel means to get what they wanted.
- Tan:* Did you ever learn of the crimes and brutality committed by the Japanese?
- Lim:* Yes, of course. They committed brutality and used all means of torture to extract information.
- Tan:* Was this reflected to you by the MPAJA?
- Lim:* We got it from the captured Japanese and also from the people themselves.
- Tan:* We wish now to hear from you a brief account of the Japanese surrender. How did you all know of the surrender?
- Lim:* We heard it through the wireless from HQ. We were instructed to make contact with the local Japanese authority.

- Tan:* According to the order given, did you have to contact the MPAJA guerrillas?
- Lim:* We didn't inform them of the Japanese surrender
- Tan:* I mean, did your HQ leave you with any explicit and specific instructions on how to treat the guerrillas and the Japanese?
- Lim:* The MPAJA were told to restrain their military action against the Japanese.
- Tan:* Does it mean that your job was to maintain peace and balance of power between the two parties?
- Lim:* You're right. But if the guerrillas wished to avenge on the collaborators and *running dogs*, well, we had no say at all.
- Tan:* Did you all leave the forest immediately after receiving orders from headquarters?
- Lim:* We emerged from the jungle and put up at Weng police station for two to three days. This had been arranged before hand through community leaders who then approached the Japanese in Baling. They then used a lorry to send us to Baling to stay in a Malay school.
- Tan:* What about the Japanese? Where did they stay?
- Lim:* They stayed nearby in Baling, heavily guarded by their own soldiers.
- Tan:* Did you have your own bodyguards?
- Lim:* No, we didn't bother. After all, there were only six of us.
- Tan:* Did you all possess any special weapons when out in town?
- Lim:* Only carbines and grenades, and of course, pistols.
- Tan:* Did the MPAJA attempt to occupy Baling?
- Lim:* I did hear so. Not only Baling but the whole of Malaya.

However, there was no sign of this in Baling.

Tan: So, it was all peaceful in Baling?

Lim: Yes.

Tan: How long were they camped in Baling?

Lim: They did come out in ordinary clothes but were not armed. There was no trouble at all.

Tan: What happened next?

Lim: A Japanese officer came and stood in front of the school where we had been based. He stood there for quite some time without saying a single word. I approached him and he handed me a letter from the Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Army (*Hua Ch'iao K'ang Jih Chian*).

Tan: From where and which unit did he belong to?

Lim: From Kroh, Perak. The letter was sent to the Japanese troop commander.

Tan: What sort of organisation was this so-called OCAJA (Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Army)?

Lim: It was formed by the Kuomintang of China.

Tan: What was the contents of the letter?

Lim: The letter urged the Japanese to cooperate with the OCAJA to eliminate the MPAJA. This was aimed at preventing the latter from taking over Baling.

Tan: What action was taken then?

Lim: I discussed with Hislop and he maintained that it was nothing spectacular. He wanted the Japanese to ignore the letter.

Tan: Did the Japs surrender officially to your Force?

- Lim:* No. Only the commander did so but not all his men.
- Tan:* When did the Japanese leave Baling?
- Lim:* After the surrender was known. Before that, we wanted the people of Baling to know how we had lived. We wired HQ to send a plane, B-24, to fly over Baling.
- Tan:* At the end of the War, how long did you stay there?
- Lim:* More than ten days, I think, waiting for the arrival of British troops.
- Tan:* After which?
- Lim:* I knew my classmate in Chung Ling, (Dr.) Chang Ch'ing- chuan, was then staying in Baling. He got me a car to go back to Bagan Serai.
- Tan:* You mean after your stay in Baling?
- Lim:* No, when I was still there. I was in simple ordinary clothing. We stopped at Sungai Bakap to look up my cousin and brother-in-law and finally reached my hometown.
- Tan:* So you were back home once again. Did you then see both your parents?
- Lim:* My mum couldn't recognise me anymore. She told me that my dad had passed away 41 days ago. I was very sad.
- Tan:* Did you stay overnight in Bagan Serai?
- Lim:* I visited the headmaster of Tung Hwa Primary School, Mr. Liu and all the others who had helped me before. In the course of conversation, I understood that a certain Japanese old lady helped them a great deal to escape from any possible sufferings during the Occupation period. She was largely responsible for the peaceful life there. I didn't stay long, one night only. The next morning, I set off for Baling once again.
- Tan:* Back to Baling again?

- Lim:* Yes, Baling. Then came the day when the other five all went to Kuala Lumpur. As for myself, I went with a certain Capt. Munro to Lao Hui Ka, Kulim. He was one of the first to arrive in Malaya. We stayed in a Malay school, and slept in the headmaster's office. There were also about 100 MPAJA guerrillas, both men and women, staying in the same school. We supplied them everything, such as 60 cigarettes per head each week. Most of them didn't want it and so I collected some and sent to Bagan Serai. It was \$15 a tin in those days.
- Tan:* So you stayed with the MPAJA.
- Lim:* Yes. There was a Mr. Ch'en Chin-wen, my classmate at the military college who appeared suddenly. He was a spy sent to Malaya by the KMT (Kuomintang) Government before the Occupation. He was paid a good salary - \$350 per month. I was shocked to see him in Kulim. He told me that his partner was killed in Johore and he managed to escape to stay with his brother in Kulim. I stayed one night in his brother's house. They were kind to me.
- Tan:* What then?
- Lim:* Many relatives and friends visited me. I stayed in Kulim for more than a month.
- Tan:* You mentioned just now about the MPAJA who stayed with you in the same school building. Did you issue any order to them to behave in a disciplined manner?
- Lim:* Yes. We even gave them military training, especially in marksmanship. I then led them to Sungai Petani to observe the official surrender of the Japanese Army. The weapons and *samurai* swords turned in, heaped up like a small hillock. So many of them.
- Tan:* The rest of your colleagues were in K.L., right?
- Lim:* Yes.
- Tan:* After the surrender ceremony, where did they go?

- Lim:* The Japanese were regarded as P.O.W.'s (Prisoners of War) working under close British supervision. Not armed, you know.
- Tan:* Were you discharged honourably from the service only after all the P.O.W.'s had left Malaya?
- Lim:* The Japanese left in batches by ship. I applied to go to Kuala Lumpur. I got someone to replace me as an interpreter.
- Tan:* Who did you meet in K.L.?
- Lim:* I took off in a plane from Butterworth. I checked into the Rex Hotel where many people stayed.
- Tan:* What was the reaction of the Chinese community there towards you all?
- Lim:* They were greatly astonished to see Chinese soldiers in full uniform. They respected us greatly. As I was late [in arriving] there, I didn't really know how they had entertained all our comrades in *Force 136*. I met T'an Hsien-yen, Wu Chai-hsin and Ch'en Ch'ung-chih. I also met Yu T'ien-hsung. He and Ch'en had been imprisoned by the Japanese. We all tried to recount our experiences in the jungle.
- Tan:* After the *get-together*. where did you go?
- Lim:* Mrs. Lim, Col. Chuang Hui-ch'uan and the comrades who had been imprisoned went to Batu Gajah to look for Lim Bo Seng's remains. He had died in the prison. We made arrangements for his remains to be sent to Singapore. A few days later, a grand memorial service was held in his honour. Priests from all religions were there to attend the service. It was packed to capacity at the Seletar reservoir.
- Tan:* Let us now touch on what you did after being discharged.
- Lim:* After staying in Singapore for about three weeks we were discharged honourably. Each of us received some money. I received only \$600 as I had taken all my living allowance. Many of my colleagues returned to China and only a few of us stayed behind in Malaya.

- Tan:* Who were those who returned to China?
- Lim:* They were Lung Ch'ao-ying, Ch'en Ch'ung-chih, Ch'en K'un, Ch'ao Te-ming, Chang Ch'ao-kuo, Ch'en Kuo-ying, Li Hui-chung, Li Ch'en-yen, Liang Ch'ao-cheng, Ch'en P'ei-kuang, Chung Shih-chien, Liang Shih-ming, Li Po-chung, Ho Shih-shan, Liang Yen-ming, Ch'en Yi-yu, Hsieh Ch'ung-sui, Liang Min-chang, Huang Swee-seng, Hsia Shih-hsing, Chiang Po-chun, Yuen Wei-ch'ang, Hu Kuo-chü, T'ang Shao-shan, Lin Ch'ing-yung, Hung Ling-chuh, Liao Shih-shih, P'eng Kai, Ch'en Chuo-sheng, Ch'ing Wen-ying, Wang Shao-hua, Li-chun and Ch'en-lai.
- Tan:* Who were those who had opted to stay in Malaya?
- Lim:* They were myself, Wu Chai-hsin, T'an Hsien-yen, Yu T'ien-hsung, Cheng Ch'ung-chun, Ch'en Chao-yung, Huang Yi-hsia, Huang Jen-ta, Tsang Jan Nam, Hsieh Ching-tung, Li Han-kuang, Chang Te-chueh, Chang Wen-sun, Lu Yeh-chuan and Mo-ching.
- Tan:* Why didn't you then choose to go to China?
- Lim:* Mainly because I was born in Malaya and my home is here.
- Tan:* Do you mean that those who had gone to the mainland were members of the *Force* who had been sent here to take part in the anti-Japanese movement?
- Lim:* Yes. They assembled in Hongkong and were discharged at Kunming.
- Tan:* When you had been discharged honourably, what next?
- Lim:* I partnered Ch'en Ch'ung-chih in running a shipping company ...
- Tan:* But you mentioned earlier on that Ch'en had gone back to China, didn't you?
- Lim:* Yes, I managed the company on his behalf. He went to China to bring back his fiancée, Miss Li Shao-meng who was then in the

Yunnan University at Kunming. I stayed there but often came back to Bagan Serai to see my mum. Once I was in Ipoh to visit Yu T'ien-hsung after my brief stay in my hometown. When we had dinner together we saw a big send-off for Wu Chai-hsin and T'an Hsien-yen to London for a victory parade. I was greatly surprised. Why couldn't they send somebody else? I was very unhappy with the choice of Wu. I boarded a train to Singapore that very night. While I was having my bath after a tedious journey, Hsieh Chin-t'ung came and visited me. He informed me that Flight Lt. H.T. [Pagden] was looking for me for the parade in England.

Tan: Who was this Flight Lt. H.T. [Pagden]?

Lim: He was an officer in Colombo. He once took me to extract a tooth. Very friendly to me. He once had served as an agricultural officer in Parit Buntar.

Tan: So he was looking for you?

Lim: Yes. I was indeed quite surprised to hear of it as I had seen the send-off in Ipoh. I rushed to see him after my bath. He told me that he had to submit the name list to the Governor's Office by 2 p.m. Hsieh was not able to make it because he had to assist in his father's business. I was asked to go in his place. I also suggested the name of T'an Hsien-yen when asked to nominate another member for the victory parade.

Tan: So, two of you were sent to London?

Lim: Yes, only two of us.

Tan: When was it approximately? And could you please tell us what you saw in England when taking part in the victory parade?

Lim: About April 1946. T'an and I represented *Force 136*. We were accompanied by two attendants.

Tan: Was there any other from Malaya who also took part in the parade?

Lim: Yes. There were also representatives from the MPAJA.

- Tan:* Could you tell us more about it, please.
- Lim:* There were eight of them, each representing an independent regiment; Liu Yaw, Chou Yang-ping, Ch'en T'ien, Pai Shih-mu, Teng Fu-lung, Liao Wei-chung, Sun Wen-ching and Wang-ch'ing. They had also three attendants namely Lao-ma (Ch'en Wei-hsiang), Wang Ch'en-hua and Ah Yao. Lao-ma was a great orator. Very famous in Perak, you know.
- Tan:* Who was the representative from the Eighth Independent Regiment?
- Lim:* You mean the regiment in Kedah? He was Pai Shih-mu.
- Tan:* How long did you all stay in England?
- Lim:* Oh, more than three months.
- Tan:* One important question. It has been said that the Secretary-General of MCP (Malayan Communist Party), Ch'en P'in also went to England to take part in the victory parade. Can you confirm this?
- Lim:* Ch'en was a man of importance. He had no reason to join the parade.
- Tan:* You mean he was not in England for the parade?
- Lim:* Exactly. He was not there at all.
- Tan:* During your stay in England, did you meet any others, say the representatives from China?
- Lim:* We met the Chinese Military delegation headed by Kwei Yung-ch'ing. He was the Chairman of War Time Cadre Training Corps under the then Military Council. I met him often in Chee-chiang in Szechuan. When asked, I told him what I knew of what's going on in Malaya. He mentioned casually that should my service be needed again, he would look for me.
- Tan:* Did he ever directly or indirectly encourage you to go to China?

- Lim:* No, he didn't. We had met at the dinner he hosted. There were representatives from all over the place. He didn't either explicitly or otherwise ask me to go to China.
- Tan:* So you all returned to Singapore after your three-and-a-half months stay in England?
- Lim:* Yes. We met King George VI and Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret and many other important personalities.
- Tan:* When you returned to Singapore, what form of welcome was given by the local Chinese community?
- Lim:* They held a welcome parade right up to the naval base. At night, the T'ung Te Philomatic Society entertained us to a dinner.
- Tan:* About your positive contribution towards the British war efforts, were you given any award by the authorities?
- Lim:* Our names, more than ten, I believe, were made known in the *Mention in Despatch*. One was awarded the *O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire)*. Nothing very glamorous.
- Tan:* Then you became active in the business world, right?
- Lim:* Oh, yes.
- Tan:* Thank you so much for granting us the interview.
- Lim:* Welcome.

END