

**Reminiscences of Tunku Abdul Rahman  
on the Japanese Occupation  
1941 - 1945**

(Siri Sejarah Lisan Pendudukan Jepun, no. 1)

*Interviewee:* Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Al-Haj  
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Profesor Madya Dr. Cheah Boon Kheng  
*Date & Time:* 9 September 1983; 11.00 a.m.  
*Place:* Tunku's House - Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman  
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*Jawatankuasa Sejarah Lisan 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 Kemasyarakatan), 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 Abas). 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 mendapatkan ingatan-ingatan 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.*

*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. Amatlah wajar sekali sekiranya penerbitan temubual-temubual ini dimulakan oleh bekas Perdana Menteri, Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman al-Haj. Ini akan disusuli oleh individu-individu lain yang merangkumi berbagai-bagai kaum. 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.*

*Akhirnya, saya ingin merakamkan rasa terima kasih kepada Universiti Sains Malaysia dan Muzium Negara bagi pembiayaannya, Perpustakaan USM, Pusat Teknologi Pendidikan dan Media, ahli-ahli Jawatankuasa Sejarah Lisan dan tidak lupa kepada Cik Yvonne R. Rasen dari Perpustakaan.*

*- Dr. Abu. Talib Ahmad -*

## Sinopsis

*Temubual ini merupakan pandangan Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj berkenaan beberapa perkara penting yang berlaku semasa pendudukan Jepun (termasuk juga pendudukan Siam) di Kedah. Ketika itu Tunku bertugas sebagai Pegawai Daerah dan kemudiannya sebagai Penyelia Sekolah-Sekolah Negeri Kedah.*

*Di antara peristiwa-peristiwa menarik yang telah disentuh termasuklah "penculikan" Sultan Abdul Hamid ke Kulim, kekejaman Jepun terhadap rakyat tempatan dan usaha Tunku untuk menghalang kemasukan pasukan Bintang Tiga ke Alor Setar selepas Jepun menyerah kalah. Tunku juga telah menceritakan keadaan sekolah-sekolah di kampung yang mempunyai kelengkapan yang serba kekurangan.*

*Cheah:* Tunku, Could you begin by telling us how you "kidnapped" your father, the Sultan of Kedah, when he was in the British convoy to Pulau Pinang.

*Tunku:* Oh, I was in Kulim. I was the District Officer in Kulim. One night just before the Japanese came, say about two weeks before the Japanese came into Kedah, I had a dream which was so vivid. In that dream, I heard my father call my name, "Putera, Putera". I was known as Putera. Only I changed, not changed, they used my correct name when I went to England - Tunku Abdul Rahman. In school and so on, I was known as Tunku Putera. So my father, I heard so vividly his call for me. "Putera, Putera, hang mari tolong aku, hang mai tolong aku." Come help me. And then I found myself in Rumah Pelamin Kota in Alor Setar. I was living in Kulim. So I followed where the voice, where I heard the voice [coming from], but he was not inside the house, he was outside in the yard. I rushed down into the yard and he dropped on my hand from a tree. Tree which we call *pokok jermai [cermai]*. You remember *pokok jermai, buah dia bulat-bulat, kecil-kecil*. You know *pokok buah jermai*. You'll find that as a result of this, wherever I go I plant the jermai tree but I have not done it here yet. I must do it. In Alor Setar, you see jermai trees everywhere. So I rushed and he fell on my arm. And I took him upstairs, placed him on the bed. He was a sick man already, and then I woke up. I told my wife, Sharifah Rodziah about my dream. And so that was all to it, I didn't do anything. I didn't follow it up or do anything at all. And then after two weeks I think, just before the Japanese invaded Kedah, I received a phone call from my brother-in-law, Syed Omar Shahabudin, who became Menteri Besar of Kedah. He rang me up. I was Deputy Passive Defence Chief of South Kedah [Perkhidmatan Pasukan-Pasukan Kawalan Am]. He phoned me at 8 o'clock at night when I was at the headquarters of the ARP to say that the British were taking my father away from Alor Setar.

*Cheah:* To Penang?

*Tunku:* To Singapore. But they were coming to Penang after the *Subuh* prayer. And so when I heard that, I was shocked. I said how can they take an old man like that to Singapore, he won't stand the journey. Then it's his place to be with the people.

And so, I said "let me know the exact time he is leaving Alor Setar". So early in the morning, after my *Subuh* prayer, he phoned me to say they are [were] leaving now [then]. So I called a friend of mine, Syed Abu Bakar who was a Health Officer in Kulim to come with me in the car. And I gave instructions to my Assistant District Officer to follow up with a few more ARP men to Province - Kepala Batas. And so when we got there we didn't have to wait very long, I think about half an hour or 40 minutes. Then I found [saw] a yellow, \_\_\_\_\_ first, the police was [were] there with their bayonets and so on in the open jeep, sitting facing one another. Pass one jeep, pass another jeep, pass \_\_\_\_\_ and, but at intervals, of about 2 minutes \_\_\_\_\_.

*Cheah:* You were waiting for the yellow car to come?

*Tunku:* Yah, I was waiting. I didn't know what happened you see. I only saw the police escort coming, so obviously the royal car must be somewhere at the back. Not long afterwards the royal car came through - the yellow Rolls Royce. I rushed into the centre of the field with my steel helmet. You know the ARP Kulim didn't have enough cloth, the khaki cloth, we had military cloth - green. So I looked really like a military man. I was young at that time. So I waved my pistol overhead and the car stopped. I rushed into the car and told them to turn towards Kulim. I got instructions to take them to Kulim. They immediately went to Kulim and so when we got to Kulim, the Japanese started to come afterwards to bomb Penang.

*Cheah:* What happened to the escorts, the two escorts?

*Tunku:* They all came to Penang. When they came to Gurun, they decided not to go in a convoy but to take two minutes interval. I was lucky. If they had come in convoy, they would have caught me then. I wouldn't have been alive. In the excitement of the moment you can't think clearly. They decided, the British Military escort decided, that they should go at two minutes interval because the Japanese were coming already directly overhead. And so, when I got the Sultan to Kulim, I received a message, telephoned from Penang. The Regent then, Tunku Badlishah, was not very friendly with me. My half brother, the father of the present Sultan, rang me up to say I had to deliver the Sultan to Penang. If I don't they'll have me arrested. I said

"you can have me arrested, you can come and take father over my dead body. I am not surrendering him at all". So at that time the Japanese came and bombed Penang. So I got no more message from him until at 5 o'clock he said he was also coming to Kulim to take shelter in Kulim because there was bombing in Penang and his children didn't want to stay anymore in Penang. I said, "you are welcome to come to Kulim". So when he arrived, I took them all. I took my father earlier, the day before, as soon as he arrived, I took him to Sedam, ... Sidim, S-I-D-I-M. They built a memorial there, to mark the time, the date he was taken there and I told the people of Sidim to look after him. And then I came back and the Regent, Tunku Badli Shah, arrived in Kulim and so I took him there too. And so everything ended up well there. And that's when the Japanese came into Kedah. Few days afterwards my other brother, Tunku Mohammad Jawa, my real brother, was made the Regent of Kedah. When the Fujiwara Kikan came to Kulim, they made a big thing of what I had done, taking my father, kidnapping him from the hands of the British - and they asked me to speak on the radio in Penang. I had to come to Penang with them to speak on the radio in which I told the people who had evacuated from this northern part to Singapore and to K.L. to come back. I said, "There is law and order now in this part of the world, the north Malaysia [Malaya], there is no point your running away". So many of them started to come back. And they treated me quite well at that time.

*Cheah:* So you met Major Fujiwara, the Head of the F. Kikan?

*Tunku:* Yes, yes. Fujiwara Kikan. He gave me a certificate and so on. And what I had done was broadcast in Tokyo and so on. So all the Generals when they came they treated me quite well, with great respect at first. The second month they \_\_\_\_\_. In the meantime, the Japanese took my brother-in-law's brother, Raja Shaad Shah. My brother-in-law is Raja Aman Shah. He was the District Officer, [of] Port Dickson and also the Captain of the Volunteer Force [Negeri-Negeri Melayu Bersekutu] and the Japanese took him and his men prisoners. When the Japanese wanted to release him without releasing all the other military people whom they had captured, he refused to leave. And so he disappeared, nobody knew what happened. I asked for Fujiwara's help to get me to Singapore to look for my brother-in-



law. I went twice in fact. The second time I nearly died because I was given a pistol to carry. When we came across the Causeway to come back here at night, the Japanese who was guarding the frontier - the Causeway, he came and stopped my car and then opened the door, put his hand in the dashboard - that was where I put the pistol. He took the pistol out, kept it and wanted to shoot me. Nearly shot at my brother-in-law who was with me - Syed Omar, he came in between, that gave me time to pull out the certificate where they allowed me to hold a pistol, to possess the pistol.

*Cheah:* It was in Japanese, the certificate?

*Tunku:* Yes, all in Japanese, two or three certificates saying who can carry the pistol. He didn't ask for it. Took the pistol and kept it. If that Syed Omar hadn't gone in between, I would have been shot dead. Didn't have time even to think but when he came in between, I put my hand in the dashboard [and] brought out the documents [and] opened them for him. And then after that he kept me in the ..., you know, where they have like a ....

*Cheah:* Sentry post, is it?

*Tunku:* Yah, the post. Kept me inside there for some minutes and when they had read all the documents, they decided to let me go but they took my pistol. That was the most exciting period. I couldn't find out what happened to my brother-in-law until after the war. All the volunteers were shot and buried in one grave in Singapore.

*Cheah:* Was he dead?

*Tunku:* Yes, the whole lot of them. All the volunteers were shot.

*Cheah:* By the Japanese?

*Tunku:* Yah, they made them dig their own graves. They machined gun them and buried them alive, some of them before they were dead. There was one Chinese who escaped, one officer in the Volunteers from Singapore or from Malaya, I can't remember what [which]. But he was the man who told the story. That is [was]. how we got to know about it. In Singapore they built a

memorial to this war dead. That's what I heard. Another interesting part of the same trip ... [was when] I went to pick my sister, the wife of Raja Aman Shah who is [was] the Undang of Jelebu, who was taking shelter in Jelebu. And I picked a person on the way, who asked for a lift. He was going to Jelebu. I didn't look at him carefully and drove him all the way from somewhere near Malacca right to Jelebu or was it Sungei Beluah? I can't quite remember. And then when we stopped, I was in front with one friend called Ramzan Din. I looked at him when he came out. I found he had no nose, he had dark glass [glasses], he had no fingers. He was a leper in the worst stage of leprosy. What to do, here he was sitting inside there, he must have dropped all his ... *nanah-nanah* (pus) .... It was shocking. So when we got finally to Jelebu, with the little petrol we possessed, we had to use it to clean the inside of the car. It was terrible.

- *Cheah:* When you stopped to pick him up, you did not look at him?

*Tunku:* I didn't look clearly. I was in front there, just to give him a lift. Asked him where he was going. He was going to Jelebu. I said alright, step in. Then I found it's leprosy in the worst stage. I have never seen anything like that. It sickened me.

*Cheah:* Tunku, you were saying that this shooting of the volunteers by the Japanese .... It would appear to be a very cruel ....

*Tunku:* They did that in Kulim. When I returned to Kulim. When I was in Kulim as District Officer, I had this disbanded volunteers, to serve me as my Riot Squad. I'll give you a picture of the riots before. These were the discarded volunteers. So I formed what I called Riot Squad and refused and won't allow any - any, even the smallest of crime to be committed in Kulim. Anybody who offended the law were taken into custody. So I gave them instructions whoever offends, you've got to take them into custody and I went off to Singapore. When I came back that morning, I was asked to go to hospital. There was one Indian-Muslim - Punjabi I think, Punjabi-Muslim, what we would now call Pakistani. He was in hospital with eight bayonet wounds in his body. So he told me the story. He was picked on the roadside by some passing Malay bicyclists and taken to the hospital. He had eight bayonet wounds. He told the story of

how he was one of the offenders who was locked up in the Police Station for riding a bicycle without lights. Most of them were small offenders. But I gave them instructions, to take these people. So they were all taken in. And the Japanese when they heard there were people in the lock-up, they thought they were all bad people. They took them all and asked them to dig four trenches. Then they bayoneted them. Bayoneted them inside and then covered the grave up. So this is the story and I went to see it. It was true.

*Cheah:* How many were killed?

*Tunku:* In Junjong, 40 of them. Only this one escaped. He crawled out onto the roadside. These people were killed in the same circumstances as my brother-in-law and the other volunteers in Singapore, only these others were a lot. I think a thousand or so.

*Cheah:* Tunku, in fact, during the Japanese Occupation especially the early part, after the fall of Singapore there were massacres of Chinese all over the country ....

*Tunku:* There's a lot.

*Cheah:* About 60,000. Were there any in Kulim?

*Tunku:* Yes. Everyday you see this. We have got no Kempetai in Kulim but they came from Sungei Petani and took them. And then in Kulim, there was a Military Garrison, they also take people in when there have been reports by the Commissioner of Crime. I saved one or two fellows. There was one Malay called Said, he is still alive. One Taiwanese who was working with the Japanese - he was a scoundrel, one of the worst scoundrels I have ever come across in the world. He used to beat people up, extract money from all these Chinese business people \_\_\_ and he gave permission for them to distill \_\_\_ *samsu* and so on and this is one of my riot squad [Said is a member of the Riot Squad]. This Said is still alive in Kulim. You go to Kulim, you can still talk to him. One day I was near my house facing a road that leads to the garrison. I found a man was being led by the neck by one of [the] two Taiwanese. So I rushed out and said - "why are you leading this fella by the neck, *apa pasal?*" "*Oh, dia jahat punya*

orang." "Jahat pasal apa?" So I took the rope from him and brought this man back to my house. This man told me what happened. He stopped one or two of this illicit *samsu* \_\_\_\_\_. So this man came, beat him up \_\_\_\_\_ *tahi penuh badan. Kain, semua busuk, bagi mandi, bagi baju, pakai salin semua.* Then certain, these Taiwanese to be the mark - but luckily he didn't go to the garrison, he turned back. And then, the other one was a Chinese lorry driver whom I used to know. He was also led up the same way. Somebody asked me to go to the garrison or take him to the garrison, to say that he possessed some bayonet which he buried in his garden outside his hut. I said, "it can't be, if he buried this in his garden nobody else would know except him, so somebody must have buried, must be somebody who did that". True enough - his enemy did it. So I saved him too and a few others. One or two of them are alive today that is why I suggest that you go to Kulim.

*Cheah:* Tunku, during the Japanese Occupation, the first part, just before the transfer to Siam, what did you do? I mean, did you hold any public office?

*Tunku:* First I was District Officer, that was the most horrible job one ever had the misfortune to do. Everyday, at all times day and night you'll find the passing, \_\_\_\_\_? because Kulim was, *apa nama?* the route then. All this way - Penang way ....

*Cheah:* Trunk road?

*Tunku:* Yah, all this was ruined and so they were using Kulim Road. They used to come [at] all times of day and night knocking at my door demanding *makan*, demanding this and that. It was terrible. Finally, I was happy, when the Japanese asked us to plant cotton in Henrietta Estate, today [is] Padang Serai and asked me to, what do you call, mobilise the labour force for the planting of this. I said, "that I cannot do because in the first place Kulim is one of the wettest area in Malaya and cotton won't grow well here. Second place I can't go [and] mobilise the labour force, impossible to do it. They won't take any notice of me. You have to do it."

*Cheah:* Why did they want cotton to be planted?

*Tunku:* They wanted to make cloth. They wanted cotton to be planted in Kulim. I refused and they gave me notice to get out of Kulim within 12 hours. So I thank God for this. They thought I was very \_\_\_\_\_? Then I went to Alor Setar. Then there was the transfer in name from Japan to Siam and the Siamese, they sent all those people to take over ....

*Cheah:* Your Cambridge friends?

*Tunku:* Who were educated with me in Cambridge. Most of them. One of them was the Ambassador - Narunong. He was one of them. The other one my friend Tawin who was in school with me in the young days. They were all my old friends, so it was alright. So they just stayed in the Residency that used to be occupied by the British Adviser before. Beyond that, they don't do anything, the Japanese still run the place.

*Cheah:* Oh, the Japanese were still there?

*Tunku:* Yes.

*Cheah:* So they did, it was ....

*Tunku:* Only the Governor was transferred. But their military men are [were] all over the place.

*Cheah:* It was just in name then.

*Tunku:* Ah, Name. I was Superintendent of Education, another bad job because we got no books, we got no paper, we got no slates, we got nothing with which to teach the boys. And then all you got was trouble from the Japanese. They come [came] to look for the Superintendent of Education to get eggs, to get fowls. I said "how can I supply." "You must supply!" So what to do. Very hard to tell the father, mother of *kampung* boys to ask their parents, fellows to send me chicken, eggs and so on to the school. They just went to collect the fowls, the eggs from the schools and pay what they like.

*Sharom:* My father-in-law worked under you, Tunku.

*Tunku:* Who?

- Sharom:* Darus.
- Tunku:* Darus, your father-in-law! Oh! Dolah Ahmad married another younger or older sister?
- Sharom:* Younger sister.
- Tunku:* Oh you are Darus .... There is Wahlad and Darus. Wahlad is Sa'ad's father. All working under me. But he is very clever, Darus - always you see his writings - visiting that, visiting this. He is at home all the time. Visiting that school, visiting this school, then he is at home. So if I want him, I just say, "go and see him at home". There you [can] find him alright.
- Cheah:* Generally Tunku, how would you regard the Occupation - it was a period of hardship, was it?
- Tunku:* Naturally. Hardship which we never experience. But we who are [were] peacefully occupied, kept very much to ourselves. So we daren't risk going out of our way to do anything. And I had nasty experiences too, because they made me a Director of Passive Defence during Japanese time, .... During Siamese time, we had strays of this Death Railway, Siam Death Railway, coming into Kedah. They had no place to go, they were full of sores, wearing rags and so Khir Johari, Senu, Aziz - Tan Sri Aziz and a few, Wan Omar - Wan Ahmad bin Wan Omar and a few others. I think you get the name from Senu or from Khir Johari and these - I collected all these young people and got them to help me look after all these stray death railway workers. Most of them had malaria, and sores all over and so we asked the government for the Zakat House in Jalan Putra today - off Jalan Putra where we put them and looked after them. And we had to do the cooking in my house. Not very long after, all - my wife, those who lived with me, got sores - *kudis buta* between the finger, all sore [s]. And so it was terrible, we had to look after them.
- Cheah:* These were Malays, or Javanese or Indians?
- Tunku:* Malays, mostly. Ex-soldiers.
- Cheah:* Ex-soldiers?

*Tunku:* Yah, ex-soldiers. And then after that, when we were looking after these people and looking well, looking after them well, people from the State, women, divorcees, old people, they also came in to seek help - you can't turn them out. So I had to look, we had to look after all these people again. And while we were working together, looking after people, it was then that we formed the political party ....

*Cheah:* SEBERKAS?

*Tunku:* It was called SEBERKAS. Before that we didn't name anything. We just decided to do something when the Japanese surrendered. But the Japanese was still there. And then towards the end, I can't remember the year, I received a message that my nephews, two nephews had jumped - parachuted into Kuala Nerang.

*Cheah:* Force 136?

*Tunku:* Yah, afterwards, was formed, Force 136. Then I went to see them and then [again] that night. Afterwards, the communist set sights on coming into Alor Setar.

*Cheah:* This was just before the surrender or after the surrender?

*Tunku:* Before the surrender. The Japanese had already surrendered in Tokyo, but the Japanese garrison was still in Alor Setar. And so in the meantime we refused to allow the Communists to come in Alor Setar, so I got all the *kampung* people to promise help. I will take position. So that night late ... dark - in the dark, I went to Kuala Nerang and met all the Force 136 people under Major Hesler. And then, one of them was Burr, Major Burr and one is [was] a Frenchman, I can't remember his name. And so we told them, first about my son-in-law's father, my very close friend Syed Bakar who was a District Officer, Baling. He was taken by the Kuomintang, there are [were] two, Communists and Kuomintang. By the Kuomintang on a report that he was ....

*Cheah:* Collaborator?

*Tunku:* Ah, collaborating with Japanese, and the Penghulu was taken. So I asked for Major Hesler to help release him, this man

was harmless, he was an opium smoker. He can't collaborate with anybody. And so Major Hesler promised to go and see this Kuomintang, [to] get this man released and that he'll [would] go next day. In the meantime, that night we asked that he contact the Japanese Garrison to stop the communists from getting to Alor Setar. If they got in, there will [would] be bloodshed. And so they sent Major Burr, the same evening, with one inan whom I chose to pick as the guide, Syed Mansor. Syed Mansor, is Syed Kechik's cousin. So he saw the Japanese and they promised to stop the communists from coming in. The Garrison sent the soldiers immediately to guard the entrance.

*Cheah:* Halfway.

*Tunku:* Yah. In Kuala Nerang area called Pokok Sena, 12 miles from Alor Setar. They were there. The headquarters of the Communists. When we went to the Malay Force 136 we got to pass through them. But they never interfered with us. And then I sent four lorry loads of young people to serve in Force 136 ....

*Cheah:* Tunku, the Communists, you mean the Bintang Tiga, isn't it?

*Tunku:* Yes.

*Cheah:* They were going to take over Alor Setar?

*Tunku:* Alor Setar, but they didn't until Force 136 had come in first. And then they were allowed to come in. But [when] they came in, they took their headquarters in Jalan Rajah. Jalan Rajah [is] not far from Balai Besar. And they did one good thing, they gave value for the Japanese notes. One of the two Punjabi, Punjab regiment officers kept gunny bags of Japanese money in my house. I took charge of them [the money] for them. So when the Communist were giving value for the money, I said "Take half, you can't count, [there was] too many [much]. Take half the gunny bag and take it there and whatever they pay take it. The other half we keep, in case the British give value for this" I didn't want to change them all. Lucky we did that; after British came, no value and when the war was over I sent whatever I cashed in, to this man - who became my very good friend. He was here, Jelani, Major Brigadier Jelani. He was here only a



few days ago. And then the other man, Dara, the best hockey player in the world, he was manager of Pakistan. So they all got some money from what I changed for them.

*Sharom:* What sort of value ...?

*Tunku:* I can't remember. Not very much I think about, less than half, less than half. But it helped some of these poor *kampung* people, ... business people. When they could get something for the Japanese currency, they all went to change. Otherwise they would have nothing left.

*Cheah:* Tunku, were the Kedah Malay people scared of this takeover by the Bintang Tiga? Was it something the Malays really feared?

*Tunku:* They were afraid. I said they had better fight it out and so on with the \_\_\_\_\_. And my Lieutenant was Haji Hussain Mat Dol. He became Head of Persatuan Melayu, Kedah. He [was] a religious leader in Guar Chempedak and he had a lot of command over the *kampung* people there. So at my word they all will come. Lucky there was no bloodshed, no fight, nothing. The Communists behaved themselves.

*Cheah:* In Harry Miller's book, he describes an account where there was, what you call it, a supporter of the Bintang Tiga in the Police Station and you went there, you ....

*Tunku:* Ah, I took over all the Police Stations. The Central Police Station with our chaps, who later on became members of *SEBERKAS* like Senu and so on. All the young chaps took over the Police Station. That stopped the Communists from taking it over. And then when we surrendered, there was an incident. Only after we surrendered.

*Cheah:* To the British!

*Tunku:* To the British. When the regular police came back, then the Bintang Tiga people attacked the Police Station and shot - shot it out with the policemen. One policeman, I remember called Omar, he was wounded. He was a very brave boy. He became Sergeant afterwards, very brave man. He fought it out.

- Cheah:* In this account, it was said that *SEBERKAS* also mobilised youths to surround the palace and the Balai Besar.
- Tunku:* Oh, that was the fight against Malayan Union.
- Cheah:* Was that the Malayan Union? Oh, not during the Japanese Occupation?
- Tunku:* No, they were ordered to go out there, but they got the worse. They all agreed. When Gammon and Rees-William [two British MP's] came to investigate the wishes of the people about the Malayan Union, we had a very big demonstration where I addressed the crowd on a platform. And then afterwards there was the biggest demonstration in this country when [Sir Harold] MacMichael came there and made the Sultans sign the Malayan Union Plan.
- Cheah:* Tunku, could you say something about your father's death during the war?
- Tunku:* Yes. My father died [when he] was 79 years old, in Malay [calculation] he was 83. But in Gregorian calendar he was 79 and this was another strange thing. He was living with the Regent, Tunku Badlishah, in the Istana Anak Bukit. I was sleeping one afternoon, I heard the same voice, "*Putera. Putera, aku sakit*". And so I got up and told my wife [that] this was another time I heard from my father, calling my name again. But I have never heard that he had been ill, or he was ill. Anyway, we will [would] go to Alor Setar, but we didn't have petrol. Got the car, no petrol. And so I had to go round hunting for some buried petrol somebody had, and they gave me enough to go to Alor Setar. When I got to Alor Setar, it was rather dark in the evening and then went straight to the Istana. The Regent was not there. He was holidaying with his family in Tanjong Dawai. And so I went up to my father's room where he was sleeping. There was a nurse looking after him, and said he's got fever and he was not eating. He couldn't eat, he was very, very far gone. And so I said "they never even told me, never told the family who lived outside of the Istana, nobody knew." And I was very angry. Luckily the Regent was not there. Otherwise there would be a quarrel between the Regent and I. He was in Tanjong Dawai. And so, not long afterwards he [my father]

died.

*Cheah:* That was in 43 or 44? Probably I can look up the record.

*Tunku:* The date is not easy for me. But he - it was after the Japanese Occupation.

*Cheah:* It was during the Siamese period wasn't it?

*Tunku:* No, no, no.

*Cheah:* During the Japanese?

*Tunku:* It is when the British had .... Oh, he died, during the Japanese time.

*Cheah:* Japanese time, 43?

*Tunku:* 43, I think 43. The war ended 44 ....

*Cheah:* No, 45. In fact during the Siamese period, Tunku Badlishah had already been installed as ....

*Tunku:* Sultan, oh.

*Cheah:* Do you remember the installation, how it was done?

*Tunku:* There was no installation. That time there was a declaration, I think, I can't remember. Afer my father's death, he was immediately declared the Sultan. For the rest, I don't remember very much except that when he was installed the Sultan, I was living in ... I can't remember where I was ... in K.L. or in Alor Setar. But I think, this man Miller mentioned something about this. I think it's more or less correct what he said because he went to Alor Setar to find out.

*Cheah:* But there was no ... sort of the ... in terms of succession, it was quite smooth?

*Tunku:* Smooth. There was no ....

*Cheah:* He was the rightful [heir to] contest for that ....

- Tunku:* No other contender. Though he was not very popular. He hasn't got my father's ways about him. My father when he was young, he liked to mix with people, he liked to go to picnic[s] and he liked to ... when he gives a big function, he used to provide food for the people who come to attend, [people] from the *kampung*. He would slaughter buffaloes and cattle[s].to feed the people, separate from those who were given the invitation to the banquet. The people were given free food. During the marriage of my eldest brother Tunku Ibrahim, they said the river ran red with the blood of the cattle[s] slaughtered.
- Cheah:* It was celebrated for some time, wasn't it?
- Tunku:* 40 days. My father got into debt and we had to borrow from the Thais 1,400,000.
- Cheah:* The *kampung* people still remember that.
- Tunku:* Yes, they were very fond of him.
- Cheah:* Your father was ill for a long time, Tunku.
- Tunku:* He became ill when he visited Petani. He used to drink a lot in the old days. And in the heat, they went on elephant[s], in the heat of the day they were drinking day and night. When he arrived back to Kedah he got a stroke that incapacitated him for three years. There was ... my mother was looking after him. Those days, he got four wives. But when he was ill he was always with my mother. And so she used to massage him day and night and finally he became well again. During his illness, his brother Raja Muda Tunku Abdul Aziz was the Regent. And so after Tunku Abdul Aziz died, his eldest son Tunku Ibrahim became the Regent. So my father always had the [a] Regent. He didn't have much of control or rule over the state after I think, he was 36. When he recovered, about then, I was then born, that is why, you know they call me Itam, Ayah Itam because I am dark. So my father, my mother explained, questioned her "How is it among my children this one is so black". So my mother explained "Because I lied to you. When he was conceived, he was ... actually not conceived because they were going to amputate the thumb of this Keeper of the Ruler's Seal". I mentioned it in my book. For using the seal for ....

- Cheah:* Wrongful purpose?
- Tunku:* Ah, and so when all the family came to my mother for help, she couldn't do anything except to go to my father and say "you cannot amputate the thumb of this family because I've conceived. My child born will have no thumb. So the child was born very black. So my father said "what's happened here, something is wrong". She said "Yah, I went to lie to you".
- Cheah:* Tunku if I could refer back to the early period of the entry of Japanese troops into Kulim, the Kulim period, do you remember whether this Kesatuan Melayu Muda, you know, the Ibrahim Yaacob's party ...?
- Tunku:* They were not working with us, they were all working with the Japanese.
- Cheah:* I know, were they around at that time?
- Tunku:* I never saw them. I first met Ibrahim ... I think the British had taken them and put them into detention.
- Cheah:* That's right, yes, they were in Singapore.
- Tunku:* Yah, I only met them in Singapore, when I went to look for my brother-in-law.
- Cheah:* You met him.
- Tunku:* Yes.
- Cheah:* In fact it's in the ....
- Tunku:* In Fujiwara Kikan's Headquarters.
- Cheah:* That's right. I have that in the previous interview.
- Tunku:* Ah.
- Cheah:* But what I was wondering is that from the Japanese accounts, they said that the Kesatuan Melayu Muda people accompanied the Japanese Army into the town.

- Tunku:* No, they were in detention.
- Cheah:* No, they were supporters, they were supporters, acted as guides.
- Tunku:* No.
- Cheah:* Do you remember them?
- Tunku:* No. I didn't see any of them. When they came to Kulim there was not one Malay with them. No, no. They didn't do very much.
- Cheah:* Soon after the takeover, did they emerge, any of their supporters?
- Tunku:* They didn't appear in Kedah. They were mostly in the Federated Malay States in Singapore. I met Ishak Haji Ahmad [Mohamed] in Singapore when I was looking for my brother-in-law. And they said he might know, so I went to his little room somewhere in Geylang. I can't quite remember. Yah. He was there smoking a pipe acting very big. So I said never mind-lah. I don't want to seek help from these people. I don't like them.
- Cheah:* Do you remember one chap by the name of Mustafa Hussain?
- Tunku:* I don't quite remember. He was in that crowd?
- Cheah:* He claims to have helped a lot of people like you.
- Tunku:* No.
- Cheah:* But he doesn't mention you by name.
- Tunku:* Yah, what's the help they gave me? One of the things that annoyed me about this Ishak was this - "Why did your brother-in-law work with the British?" - That is not a question I [you] want to hear when you are looking for your brother-in-law. "Why you work with the British, why you work in the civil service, why you work in government service". Not my business. My business is [was] to know where he was. He [Ishak] also worked with the British, at one time, Ishak and so on. They were ... State Service.

- Cheah:* Malayan Administrative Service.
- Tunku:* Yah, whatever. Afterwards they left and joined the Japanese.
- Cheah:* Tunku, if you were asked to compare between the Japanese period and the Siamese period, was there a slight difference?
- Tunku:* There was actually no Siamese period. Only the officers were there, they didn't do anything. I told them why don't you use your money here in Kedah. They said "why should we take the bone and give you the meat."
- Cheah:* I see. So you found it tolerable because at least your friends were in ....
- Tunku:* They were all my friends. I was there with them. My God, one incident I'll never forget is this. My brother, my real brother, Tunku Mohamed Jewa, we went for a picnic with the Governor-General of Kedah, Thai Governor-General in Yan. Yan is the famous place for *durian*. And so that morning we were having *durians* and then my brother brought some *samsu* and fed the General with *samsu*. *Samsu* and *durian* don't get on, don't pull along. And by the afternoon or before lunch time, this man had already collapsed, the Governor-General .... My word, the Thai officers were very angry.
- Cheah:* Do you remember any Japanese Officers vividly, I mean - Shiba for example!
- Tunku:* Shiba, he was a shopkeeper. He'd been there many years.
- Cheah:* He was an agent actually. Was he a Fujiwara agent?
- Tunku:* No. They were all Japanese agents of course, which ever Japanese came they joined them-lah. They were used as interpreters. Hopeless interpreters and there was another man who was a dentist and then the other fellow .... I got a licence [for him] to be a dentist too. But he was taken prisoner by the British. The man is in K.L. today.
- Cheah:* Mori, is it? No?

*Tunku:* No, no. Ala, his name ... He is famous in ... he was trained by this other dentist and then another tennis player who used to take part in the ... he was a barber. He was a nice chap - Ortar. Yah, Ortar. What is the name of this dentist? He is still practising in K.L. We played golf always with his wife. Mori, I didn't know until I became President of football. Mori was a footballer, school-teacher [of] Methodist.

*Cheah:* Was there a difference in the behaviour of the Japanese Civilian Administrators and the Military Administrators?

*Tunku:* The Civilian Administrators!

*Cheah:* They were very few?

*Tunku:* In Kedah?

*Cheah:* In Kedah.

*Tunku:* No, there were some ... when they first came. The worst fellow was .... let me tell you this story. The worst fellow was by the name of Hanga, Hanga, a scoundrel. He always slapped people. I was the only District Officer who sent all these looted articles to the Japanese, to Kedah Government then ... in eight lorries, silverware and so on. And so one day they asked me to come to Kulim. So I had to make my way to Kulim and when I got there, this Hanga called me a thief. "You are a thief". Thief! I am [was] only a District Officer who gave them all these loots [and] he called me a thief. "How do you mean to call me a thief". He says, "Of the list you prepare there are 10 or 9 knives missing. You must have stolen that". If I wanted to steal the thing, why do I want to put it in the list. These were transferred to the lorries provided by the government from Kulim, from my house, from the storeroom, right - directly transferred to the lorry. I had my men to check that all were transferred. And then from Kulim to Alor Setar. From Alor Setar to their office - one whole room full, full of the looted articles - and he called me a thief. I was mad. But if he had slapped me, I don't know what would have happened to me.

*Cheah:* But were you ever slapped?



- Tunku:* No.
- Cheah:* During the Japanese Occupation.
- Tunku:* Never. Only one man nearly did, because the Governor came, they told me the Governor was arriving and [but] I went to play golf. So he was very angry. *Ada padang ... kecil tu*, just for exercise.
- Cheah:* Tunku do you remember the Indian National Army, Subhas Chandra Bose? Was there a branch in Kulim or in Kedah?
- Tunku:* Alor Setar. First I knew them in the British time... some of the officers. And then, one of them is [was] Jelani. He went to Singapore as Head of the Indian INA. He was very nice. That was the man I told you was here. Always come here for a holiday. And then the other one - there are [were] two or three or four of them in the Headquarters in Jitra. They had their Headquarters there. They had no place to go, they all used to come to my house in the evenings.
- Cheah:* I see, but do you remember attending any of the rallies where Bose spoke - Subhas Chandra Bose?
- Tunku:* I don't remember. I never met him, you know. Not Chandra Bose but I met a Sikh fellow.
- Cheah:* Pritam Singh, is it?
- Tunku:* Pritam Singh?
- Cheah:* Mohan Singh?
- Tunku:* Ah, Mohan, Mohan, yes. At the Headquarters. They invited me there when he came. I think ... I can't remember whether I did meet Chandra Bose. I can't remember.
- Cheah:* They say he was a very charismatic figure! Good speaker.
- Tunku:* He was. They are all good speakers - the Indians. Oh, I use to hear this man who became Foreign Minister under Nehru. Krishna Menon. Yah, Krishna Menon in London, who speaks

very well. They are blabbers, they can speak ....

*Cheah:* Tunku, could I ask you a little bit about the ...

*Tunku:* Ramani, remember!

*Cheah:* Ramani, yes, yes, he was also a good speaker.

*Tunku:* He nearly got me into trouble with Pakistan. When he was out representing us at United Nations, he went and supported India. Pakistan broke off diplomatic relations with Malaysia, with Malaya.

*Cheah:* Tunku, during that period did you study Japanese language?

*Tunku:* No. I just cannot. Impossible.

*Cheah:* So as an administrator you used English.

*Tunku:* English and Malay, mostly English.

*Cheah:* They, the Japanese themselves did they use English?

*Tunku:* I can't remember. They use their own and translated into Malay I think or English.

*Cheah:* Correspondence [was] mainly Malay and English ... or in Japanese!

*Tunku:* I can't quite remember but I think, Malay. In Kedah they always used Malay, translated into Malay.

*Cheah:* So when you were Superintendent of Education what were the ... languages?

*Tunku:* Malay.

*Cheah:* Malay. Siamese - was it taught?

*Tunku:* Siamese - they gave lessons but it was not ... they were not doing very much about it ... because they know [knew] they are not [would not be] there for long. And they haven't got their

hearts in it. They know that if the Japanese transferred them, they want to be on terms of friendship with the Japanese. So they just came. Other than that they were making money through these Chinese agents giving them license for the rice and that sort of thing.

*Cheah:* I see. So there was a lot of rice trade going on then?

*Tunku:* Oh yes. Because Kedah was the granary of rice at that time. We had the people from here go there to buy rice and so on. And ... the Siamese was in charge and that's where they made money, giving licenses and so on.

*Sharom:* When you were Superintendent of Education, Tunku, what was the state of education like then?

*Tunku:* Ala .... It was difficult to carry on. In some *kampung* schools they got nothing to wear. Of course, you got no paper to write [on], no pencil, nothing at all. Just teachers giving them lessons more or less oral. And then towards the end I had to cut slate in Bukit Meriang to give, whatever we can. Slates for the boys to write, it was so difficult, also impossible.

*Sharom:* Do you remember what sort of curriculum?

*Tunku:* I don't remember much. But I think your father-in-law will be able to help. He continued [in] Education when I left. When the British came - B.M.A. Brickworth took over, he was a good friend of mine. And so I left. I was very happy. I just got \_\_\_\_\_ of job in the office which was just a table and I used to go and keep office hours. That's all, I didn't do any work when the British came.

*Sharom:* During the Japanese period Tunku, were there acts of kindnesses from the Japanese?

*Tunku:* It's very hard to say, but I think one man, the Superintendent of Education, from whom I took over, he was quite a nice chap.

*Sharom:* Is it Kudora?

*Tunku:* I can't remember the name. There I think, your father-in-law would know better because I wasn't there. I came ... when Siamese took over. Yah, I think something like that Kudora or something. And then, another kind fellow, because the Japanese here were very nasty - who used to be here before Japanese came. They turned nasty mostly like Shiba and so on. But Hota, who used to play tennis with me was good .... I stayed in Singapore where he was and he used to help me, travel with me to look for my brother-in-law.

*Cheah:* Oh, he went along.

*Tunku:* Yah, he went along. But none of these Malays ... who [was] called Ibrahim Yaacob [was also] gone. They were on their own now.

*Cheah:* Tunku, there are some Alor Setar Malays who said that during the Siamese period, there was a lot of crime. The Siamese were very *ganas*, is that true?

*Tunku:* Yes, the Siamese soldiers.

*Cheah:* I don't know, they were looting, they would go to the *kampungs* and ...

*Tunku:* Yah, they would go to the *kampungs* looking for women and so on. But they are no worse ...

*Cheah:* No worse than the Japanese.

*Tunku:* Than the Japanese. Yes. They came to my *kampung* one night - a few soldiers.

*Cheah:* Which *kampung* is it?

*Tunku:* I lived in Kampung Perak behind the mosque. My father-in-law's house which I bought. I stayed there, very small house with one bedroom. The rest all slept on the floor, all scattered all over the place. And then, they came in there. But I spoke Siamese to them and they left. They thought I was Siamese too. Oh they've got very little discipline.

**END**