

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF INDONESIA, 1944-1947

By Sadao Oba

Originally presented at a Symposium of Indonesia, organised by the International Centre for Economics and Related Disciplines at the London School of Economics, 12th January 1979

I. Prologue.

At the beginning of March 1942, the Japanese 16th Army, 55,000 strong, occupied Java in 10 days capturing 80,000 Allied Prisoners of War, losing 255 killed and 702 injured. The unexpectedly rapid collapse of the Allied Forces was caused by their fear of a possible general uprising of Indonesians and their overestimation of the number of Japanese army. Several months later, the core of the Japanese occupation forces were sent to Guadalcanal and Timor.

After their departure, the 13th Independent Defence Unit (HQ in Bandung) was assigned to defend the Western half of Java, and the 14th Independent Defence Unit (HQ in Surabaya) was assigned to defend the Eastern half of Java. Those two defence units were re-organised as the 27th Independent Mixed Brigade (Bandung) and the 28th Independent Mixed Brigade (Surabaya) in the beginning of 1944.

When the island was occupied, the Japanese Military Government Head-Quarters (Gunseikanbu) was set up in Djakarta with branch offices in each state of Java. Imperial HQ (Tokyo) gave guidelines for the 16th Army (a) to ensure their popularity with the people (b) to ensure their own security (c) to obtain and send to Japan essential commodities and products. These 3 guidelines were incompatible with each other and the 16th Army HQ and Military Government tried to balance the demands (a.b.&c.) from Tokyo and at the same time (d) tried to ease the pressure on the daily life of the people so as to achieve (a) and (b) The Java Military Government was said later to have been the most successful Military Government in territories occupied by Japan. The success may be attributable to (a) the general situation in Java which I describe later (b) the Commander in Chief of the 16th Army and his subordinates.

I reported to the 16th Army HQ's on January 5th, 1944 and was assigned to the 27th Independent Composite Brigade HQ. I arrived at Bandung the same day. I was a 21 year old Officer Cadet (Supply).

II. Java in Early 1944.

In Singapore, soldiers said "It's Hell in Burma, Paradise in Java." It was really a paradise where beautiful flowers were blooming; there were ample supplies of food, there were still many manufactured products, people were moderately clothed. Security was kept and it was not dangerous to walk out in the night. People were enjoying Pasar

malam (evening festival). There were no air raids. It was really a phony of a war which lasted more or less until the autumn of '45. Officials of the Military Government were annoyed by a series of requests from Indonesians to be allowed to go to Mecca. Indonesians believed that Japan had destroyed the Allied Army completely and, therefore, it was free for them to make their annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Another interesting thing for me was to see Heiho (Indonesians hired in the Japanese army and ranked as Privates) wearing similar uniforms to the Japanese soldiers, but with different badges.

III. Establishment of PETA (Sukarela Yentara Pembela Tanah Air: The Java Homeland Defence Volunteer Army).

PETA was established at about the same time as I began working in Bandung. PETA was established by acceding to the sincere and ardent aspiration of Indonesians to defend their homeland. The unit in the PETA was called Daidan (which originated from the word Daitai, which means battalion in the Japanese army) and it was 500 strong. 33 Daidans were organised initially. Daidan Commanders were the prominent persons in the community, such as Politicians, Islamic leaders or teachers. For the 16th Army, PETA was necessary to supplement the small Japanese army (15,000 strong, including 8,500 combat troops) and to keep internal security. I didn't know if the 16th Army HQ planned to make PETA the core of the future Indonesian army, but I myself imagined so.

The Officers and soldiers of the Daidan wore green uniforms which were the same colour as the uniforms of the Dutch East Indies Army; and the majority of the weapons they used were also captured ones. The ordinary Indonesians were therefore, surprised to find very similar soldiers and weapons to those they had seen in colonial days.

In each Daidan, a Japanese Officer and a few NCO's were provided to supervise the training of the soldiers. Actual training was carried out by the Daidancho (battalion Commander), Chundancho (Company Commander) and Shodancho (Platoon Commander). As in the Japanese army, first priority was given to acquiring a fighting spirit.

In the Spring of '44, the training of Pay-Masters and Supply Officers of PETA started in Bandung in order to prepare for the increase in the number of Daidan and this lasted until the Autumn. I was asked to educate and train them in the organisation of clothing and food supplies to troops. As I was nearly the same age of those Indonesians cadets, I was very happy to spend my time with them. My knowledge of supply was limited to the knowledge I had obtained in the Pay-Masters School (Keiki Gakko) in Tokyo as I had had very little experience. I, therefore, trained those young cadets not only in supply, but in physical exercise or visiting the Victory Museum and in seeing Japanese films.

Through this training activity I began to feel that we had “something in common” between Japanese and Indonesians. They are very responsive. They were enthusiastic to learn. They were proud of being selected as cadet supply officers. Such sympathy was common among the instructors in the Daidan. I believe this ‘sympathy’ or ‘response’ between Indonesians and Japanese lasted even after the war in spite of several mishaps which followed.

The training of PETA progressed smoothly, and by and by, small Japanese Sentry posts in remote areas, such as on the coast, were replaced by PETA units.

In August 1944, PETA was increased to 67 Daidans (3 in Bali) with a total strength of 38,000 (twice the strength of the 16th Army) and the total of weapons possessed by Daidans was rifles (17,218), short rifles (1,550), light machine guns (197), heavy machine guns (697), Dutch mortars (93), anti-tank guns (20), jeeps (132), trucks (330) and armoured carriers (20). The Japanese army had little anxiety about any possible mutiny of PETA in the future. The feeling of affinity between the Japanese army and PETA was everywhere so strong.

IV. Harbinger of Independence.

Although General Tojo had said on June 13th 1943 that the Japanese would be allowed to participate in politics and government in the future, any talk of “Independence” was officially taboo when I arrived at Java. The red and white flag (San Merah Puti) and the national anthem (Indonesia Raja) were still prohibited by the Military Government. This was because there was no definite policy in Tokyo on how to deal with the independence issue.

For the 16th Army in Java, however, the cooperation from Indonesians in carrying out their responsibility, such as collecting paddy and recruiting labour (Romusha) became increasingly vital. The 16th Army were, therefore, obliged to accept, very gradually, the demands of the Indonesians to participate in politics; but in such a way as not to upset 7th Area Army Command (Shonan-Shi), Southern Army Command (Saigon) and Imperial Head-Quarters (Tokyo).

Major-General Moichiro Yamamoto (who had spent a few years in Aldershot Military Academy and who was Governor-General of the Military Government), was sympathetic to the desires of Indonesian politicians, like Mr. Sukarno or Dr. Hatta. According to his recollection sometime in '43 when Marshal Terauchi, Supreme Commander of the Southern Army Command visited Java and the two generals were touring in Java (Marshal Terauchi had been Major-General Yamamoto's instructor in the Japanese Army Academy many years before) the Marshal abruptly asked searchingly, “Yamamoto! Which direction are you facing?” It was apparent that the Marshal didn't like the way the Major-General had been working in relation to the problem of independence.

The loss of Saipan Island in June '44 forced the 16th Army to restructure their strategy to defend Java. Until Saipan, the assumption was that the enemy would land on the Southern coasts of Java. Defence fortresses had been built along the southern shore of Java in order to counter possible landings of Allied forces based in Australia. Because the shores were infested with malaria, the casualty rate among the Japanese soldiers was high. The new situation, however, obliged us to think the enemy would come from the North and the construction of defence fortresses had to be undertaken along the northern coast of Java.

The Japanese Government hastened to allow the Philippines, Burma and Indian National Armies to declare independence, in Burma on 1st August, '43 and in the Philippines on October 14th. The Indian National Army was given the Andaman/Nicobar Islands for their territory.

On September 7th, '44, Premier Koiso announced that Japan would permit the 'East Indies' (he did not say as 'Indonesia') to become independent in the future. I heard this news when I was making a tour and it was a surprise. The first thing I imagined was that the war situation was going so unfavourably to Japan that Japan had to allow Indonesians their independence.

The announcement was naturally welcomed by the Indonesians. The red-white national flags were hoisted on many buildings and places in Bandung. Newspapers reported that Mrs. Hartini Sukarno was swing red-white flags. "Merdeka (independence)" which had been the national goal for many years was coming nearer. In Djakarta, the city authorities celebrated by allowing the public to ride free on the trams. It was reported that many Indonesians, therefore, thought "Merdeka" meant a free tram service. A committee was set up to study the future political system. It was reported that the Japanese army preferred a Kingdom to be set up in Indonesia. After the war, Major-General Yamamoto said "At the time I hoped that a country which would cooperate with Japan to win the war would be established, but if it was not possible, I sincerely wished for the birth of a country which was, at least, not anti-Japanese."

Curiously enough, however, the hoisting of the national flags and singing the national anthem were only allowed on Japanese national holidays afterwards.

V. Preparation for the "decisive battle."

The 16th Army HQ expected that the enemy (10 divisions strong) would land in East Java in the middle of '46 and, as noted earlier, the construction of a defence fortress along the northern coast had been progressing. The strategy of the 16th Army for the decisive battle in Java was that the far weaker Japanese army should fight and retreat from East Java gradually to the Bandung area; and finally a combined Japanese army (about 80,000 strong including naval units, army units transferred from Timor, and Japanese civilians) would fight a war of attrition in the Malabar Highlands south of Bandung city. In order to protect the Japanese army retreating from the East, a new Central Java Unit was established in Sumarang in the Spring of '45. A big scale field

exercise was carried out for two months in February- March '45. The 27th Independent Compound Brigade went to East Java and the counterpart 28th Independent Composite Brigade came to West Java in order to make them familiarised with the future battle field. My Headquarter spent a month in Central Java, then went to East Java and stayed in Pati and Bodjonegoro States. Those two states were poor areas. The inhabitants were all Javanese, different from the Sundanese who live in the Western part of Java. During the exercise, my colleague who had been listening to Australian broadcasts told us that they had broadcast the "In Java, released Japanese POW's are engaged in field manoeuvres in the East and the West." Our enemy must have obtained accurate information on the development in Java.

Another important measure to prepare for the decisive battle was to establish a multi-tier defence fortress in the Malabar Highlands. The strategy of the 16th Army was to keep 50 to 60 thousand Japanese troops and civilians in the fortress and to continue the war of attrition as long as possible. Huge mountains of food, weapons, ammunition, which would last for several years, were stored in the Highlands. Big naval guns from battleships were brought up into the Highlands. On August 15th, '45, about 80% of the plan was completed. The 16th Army had also planned to leave guerrilla units inside the occupied areas. If the war had been prolonged and the expected invasion had taken place, there would have been several new legends born to match those of Lawrence of Arabia or Lieutenant Onoda of the Philippines.

For this strategic plan, the 16th Army did not count on cooperation from PETA because 50 to 60 thousand Japanese were enough to defend the limited area of Malabar. Naturally, the Army thought that it would be fortunate if the cooperation proved feasible. The Army wished that PETA would choose their own role in the decisive and final battle in Java.

The 16th Army also was afraid of the possible casualties and damage which would be inflicted on Indonesians if they were involved in the battle. This was another reason why the Army declined to count on cooperation from PETA.

VI. Major-General Itsuo Mabuchi, new Commander of the 27th Independent Composite Brigade.

In April, '45, our Bandung HQ welcomed Major-General Mabuchi as the new Commander. He had been the Chief of Staff of the 5th Division located in Aru and Kei Islands in the Arafura Sea. On the first day of his arrival, he appealed to his subordinates to try to win the confidence of the Indonesians and to make the Japanese forces popular. He often quoted an old Chinese proverb that says "to govern people by force does not last long; to govern them by culture lasts long." He was strongly convinced that Japan could not win the war if the Japanese armies in the occupied countries could not obtain the cooperation and goodwill of the people. This belief must have emerged and grown through his experiences in China, (as Chief of the Press Department of the Japanese Expeditionary Army), in Tokyo, (as Chief of the Press Department of the Imperial Headquarters), in Korea, (as Regimental Commander in Seoul) and in the Arafura Sea

Islands. He stressed the need to put confidence and trust in the Indonesians, to love them and to do away with racial prejudice. He himself began to make contact with Indonesians politicians, like Sukarno.

This confidence and trust in Indonesians elicited the confidence of the PETA and the Indonesians in the General Mabuchi; and this became an important factor in dealing, very successfully, with the very difficult post-war situation in the Western part of Java. He was not just a General; he was also an able politician and a man of letters. He was really an appropriate person to become president of a multi-national company after the war. My sincere respect and deep affection for him will last till my death.

VII. Pressure and difficulty in the daily life of Indonesians.

As the War progressed and time passed, the shortage of goods and food gradually emerged; the first item being clothes. Because there was no cotton production in Java, with its huge population of 50 million, the shortage of clothes was apparent when I first came to Bandung. The 16th Army had been ordered to supply rice to Malay and Singapore in '45 and to send Romushas (labourers) to various countries. The Military Government allocated the responsibility of collecting rice and recruiting labour (Romushas) to the village masters. One day I heard a grievance of a village master about how he was annoyed by the ever increasing quotas of rice and labour demanded.

As to the Romushas concerned, the 7th Army (Singapore) ordered the 16th Army to supply 228,000 labourers in 1944 for Malay, Sumatra, North Borneo, the Lesser Sunda Islands, Celebes etc., and Lt. Col. Miyamoto estimates that about 150,000 were actually sent and the remaining labourers could not be sent because of the shortage of ships. Many of those labourers had a very difficult time in foreign countries and a portion of them died. This is still one of the main causes of complaint by Indonesians against the Japanese occupation.

In 1945, the Djawa Shimbun (the daily Japanese newspaper published by Asahi Shimbun) reported a saying to be heard on the streets- "Toean Nippon prumpan sadja; Orang Tjonhowa wang sadja; Orang Indonesia susah sadja (Japanese only seek girls; Overseas Chinese only seek money; Indonesians only complain about difficulties.)"

The 16th Army had also sent various essential commodities to other parts of South-East Asia since the early days of the occupation. For instance, in 1943 they sent to Malay 70,000 tons of corn; 37,000 tons of salt, 30,000 tons of sugar, 720 million cigarettes; to Sumatra 24,000 tons of salt; 20,000 tons of sugar; 360 million cigarettes, to North Borneo 800 tons of salt; 60 million cigarettes. These supplies, on a smaller scale, continued till the end of the war.

The shortages gradually extended to more commodities. The shortage of transportation facilities was also responsible for the shortage of some products in some specified areas. It was quite strange to hear of local shortages of sugar in spite of huge

stock of sugar in the Army stockyard and in the refineries. As a reward for the cooperation received from the community in which we stayed during the above-mentioned big field exercise, we distributed sugar and salt to those villages. Because of the shortages of trucks, those villages were suffering from shortages in sugar and salt. I can still remember the happy faces of Indonesians when we presented them with a truck full of sugar and salt in a remote village in East Java.

A battalion on the southern coast reported to me that from Spring of '45 they could not purchase cows or money. The Indonesians did not sell cows in exchange for money. They requested sarongs. That was the first sign of barter and in the Summer of '45, even Egg-pedlars in Bandung refused to accept money, but asked for clothes. In Induraaju (Tjirebon State) peasants refused to submit paddi as allocated by village masters and there was some small scale violence.

Inflation, as a whole, however, did not become serious until just before the end of the war. I believe this was because Java still produced the main essential commodities and because of the lack of purchasing power of the majority of Indonesians.

VIII. The increase of PETA and emerging problems.

The training of PETA progressed smoothly and their numbers were increased to 67 Daidans, numbering 38,000 soldiers, which out-numbered the 15,000 of the Japanese army; and because of this increase, with the unfavourable development of the war and increasing difficulty in the daily life of their parents and brothers it raised various problems. PETA began to complain. One complaint ran:- "Why do Indonesian Officers have to salute the Japanese NCO instructors?" My guess is that this originated from the usual practice in the Japanese army schools. In the Pay-Masters' School we were instructed to salute NCOs even if they were lower in rank. Another complaint was that their badges were different from Japanese Army badges. Because I was responsible for supplying badges, I was often asked why they must wear different badges from the Japanese army?

This complaint was not as serious as the other social matters which led to the murder of the Japanese NCOs or organised mutiny. In the beginning of '45, a Japanese NCO in Malabar was murdered by a PETA. The reason was that the Japanese took a girl from the PETA. This incident was not so unusual, but the mutiny unexpectedly organised in Blitar in East Java on February 14th, '45, was unusual. Suprijadi (a young Shodancho) and his groups led an organised mutiny and murdered some Japanese Officers, NCOs and a few Japanese civilians who were working in a nearby sugar refinery. Suprijadi had made contact with other Daidans to get them to rise up simultaneously, using the opportunity offered by the big field exercise of the Japanese army; but the other Daidans didn't follow. The Japanese army managed to control the revolt by sending on battalion of troops, and through negotiation with leaders. I heard of the revolt when we were in Pati State, but we continued our exercise as usual and there was no special alert ordered.

The revolt in Blitar was a serious blow to the Japanese army's trust in PETA. For the first time since the decision to establish PETA 18 months earlier, there was serious re-thinking in the 16th Army HQ on how to deal with PETA. The news of the bigger and more organised uprising against the Japanese army by the Burma Volunteer Army in March '45 had a decisive influence on the decision making of the 16th Army which came to the conclusion that the Japanese army could not rely on PETA in the coming battle with the invading Allied Army. The Japanese army determined to fight alone and to let the PETA choose their own way as they wished.

According to this decision, the restructure of PETA started. The Japanese army recovered some of the offensive weapons which had been released to PETA i.e. rifles (1,109), short rifles (986), light machine guns(197), heavy machine guns (563). For replacement of these weapons, Jeeps, trucks and other transport were given to them. The official explanation was that this would give better balance between weapons and transportation equipment. The training of PETA, however, continued on schedule.

The Blitar incident and the following restructure of the weapons system seemed to have no significant impact on PETA. I can say this is because (a) there were no more incidents until the end of the war and (b) when PETA was disbanded on August 18th/19th, there was no trouble and the feeling of affinity was again in evidence between the two armies (refer to next paragraph). I believe therefore, we should be careful not to exaggerate or over-value the effects of the Blitar revolt.

IX. Declaration of defeat.

The Emperor's declaration accepting the Potsdam Agreement on August 15th came abruptly and suddenly. Auguries of the defeat, however, had been observed for a few months before the declaration. Since the loss of Okinawa there had been signs of deterioration of morale and discipline inside Brigade HQ. For example, when we were on duty on Sundays when NCOs and Privates were allowed to go out, we were annoyed by late-comers who had been rare up to then in the Japanese army. There were sporadic rumours of the birth of babies of Japanese soldiers and half-castes or Indonesians. Of course, marriage with the natives was prohibited to the Japanese military. Navy personnel appeared in large numbers on the streets of Bandung, which is 760 meters above sea level, as fewer and fewer ships for accommodating them became available.

In these gloomy days, I concentrated in my free time on acquiring the Indonesian language because I believed that in the coming decisive battle we would fight together with Indonesians. In that situation and especially in carrying out my own duty of purchasing necessary supplies, it was most important to speak Indonesian. I began to learn Sundanese too. Because Bandung is the centre of the Sundanese race, I was received by Sundanese in a more friendly manner if I spoke even only a few Sundanese words.

On August 15th, there was a contest of Indonesian language ability among the officers of the whole Brigade and I obtained the first prize. At noon the Emperor's

broadcast was made. Major-General Mabuchi heard the broadcast in the Bandung Broadcasting Station, but he said it was very difficult to hear because of the noise. In the afternoon, he made a speech in front of all the officers, NCOs and soldiers of the HQ. He said “We have been defeated, but we shouldn’t be desperate. In 30 years time, Japan will recover from the defeat. We should have the spirit of the 47 Ronins.”

For me, it was the greatest shock I ever had. I felt as though a lump of lead had been put into my head, where mixed feelings were running. If I analyse now these mixed feelings they can be classified as (a) shame at having failed the Emperor, the Nation and Indonesians by a surrender before waging any fight, (b) a feeling of remorse towards friends and classmates who had been killed in action, especially remorse towards Makino, my class-mate of Otaru College of Commerce who had made a suicide attack on U.S. ships in Leyte as a member of the second Army Special Attack Unit, (c) growing fear of the uncertainties of the future (a rumour was spreading that all officers were to be “castrated”), (d) sympathy for Indonesians who would be again put under the yoke of Dutch colonialism and (e) in spite of the above feelings, there flashed through my mind a streak of hope that I could return to Japan, which previously I had not thought possible.

The feeling of the shame at the Emperor, Nation and Indonesians, and the feeling of ‘failure in the causes’ drove 60 Japanese in Java to suicide – mostly killing themselves by Harakiri. I was very sad to hear the news of the suicide of the officers in our Brigade whom I had known.

On August 18th, Marshal Terauchi ordered all his subordinate units to surrender to the Allied Forces. For the 16th Army in Java there were three big issues, i.e. (a) the disbanding and disarmament of PETA, (b) preparation for the arrival of Allied occupation forces and (c) helping Indonesians to rehabilitate and revitalise industrial production.

The disbanding of PETA was decided on the 17th and undertaken on the 18th and the 19th. We were very much afraid that this would lead to a revolt by PETA. In the early mornings the convoys of trucks were sent to the barracks of PETA to collect the weapons. It was the longest day for us until the convoys returned carrying the arms. That was a great relief. A few days later, Heihos (25,000 strong) were also released from service. When PETA and Heiho were released they were given as much clothes and rice as they could take home. I was relieved to observe that they left the barracks in a cheerful mood.

A few days after the disbanding of PETA, Major-General Mabuchi invited Daidanchos to a dinner in Bandung. All of them came. One Daidancho thanked the Major-General for his courtesy and said that Japan would certainly recover from the defeat because Japan had a symbol of unity i.e. the Emperor. It was an affectionate farewell party.

Why was there neither any trouble nor clash between the Japanese army and PETA? Why did PETA willingly return their weapons to us? One reason must be that

action was taken very quickly before the majority of the PETA knew of the defeat in War and the Indonesian declaration of independence. Another reason may be that there was still a very strong mutual trust and confidence between the Japanese army and PETA.

The second issue for the 16th Army was to prepare camping sites for the Japanese army and civilians until they could be repatriated. In order to avoid friction with the coming Allied occupational forces, the Japanese army decided to establish camps outside the big cities like Djakarta, Bandung and Surabaya. For about 15,000 soldiers, sailors and civilians who were stationed in the Bandung area, several camps had to be constructed in the mountain area, like Garoet (for the army and civilians) and Lembang (for the navy) and very big scale of supplies of foods, medicines and other necessities were transported by convoys marked with a red cross. The reason why we constructed these camps was that it was reported that to transport all the Japanese in the Far East and South-East Asia in the available ships and vessels possessed by Japan, would take 5 to 6 years. I thought, therefore, I should be lucky if I could be in Japan by 1950. In reality, the U.S.A. released a fleet of liberty ships and began to repatriate Japanese from Java in the Spring of '46, and finished in about one year. I had no chance therefore, to go to the mountain camps.

The 16th Army and Military Government planned to divert the economy from production for war purpose to normal production for civilian uses. Rehabilitation plans were made for closed factories, such as an electric lamp factory of Philips. The plan was not carried out, however, because of the general disturbances which followed.

X. “Merdeka” (birth of a Nation).

From March '45, the preparations for the independence of Indonesia progressed rather rapidly and I thought Indonesia would be granted independence on September 9th, just one year after the declaration of Premier Koiso. Then it was rumoured that there had been serious differences between the Imperial HQ (Tokyo), Southern Army Command (Saigon), 7th Area Army Command (Singapore) and 16th Army (Djakarta). Differences were also observed between Army and Navy. For the Indonesians the process was too slow and they were disappointed. In July '45, I heard from a PETA Officer that the “Angkatan Muda (young generation)” who were radical in demanding independence quickly, would gather in Bandung and they would march to Djakarta, but nothing happened.

On August 9th, just after the second atomic bomb on Nagasaki and the invasion of the Soviet Army in Manchuria, Marshal Terauchi invited Mr. Sukarno and Dr. Hatta to Saigon and officially told them that independence was to be granted quite soon. The two leaders made a heroes' return to Djakarta on the 10th. It was a very bright event during the very gloomy days when I felt we were approaching doomsday.

On the morning of the 17th, Sukarno and Hatta declared Indonesia's independence. It was my 23rd birthday. I am always proud of the coincidence of the birthdays of the Republic of Indonesia and myself. In the night of the 17th, I was on duty in Brigade HQ. It was very calm. Lieutenant Col. Miyamoto, Senior Staff Officer in

Djakarta, 'phoned me to ask if there was anything happening in Bandung. I replied "All is quite quiet in Bandung." The constitution of the Republic of Indonesia was announced on the 18th. In the morning of the 19th, I saw a copy of a newspaper attached to a roadside tree proclaiming the Oedang-Oedang Dasar (constitution). I was surprised to find in it the word "Republik" because I had been told that the Japanese Military Government had preferred "Kingdom". The full text of this declaration of the formation of the Republic of Indonesia, printed in Tjahaja (a daily newspaper published in Bandung) is kept in the Imperial War Museum, London. It is signed by Sukarno and Hatta and dated "Djakarta, August 18th, year 2605 of the (Japanese) Imperial reign."

I observed increasing numbers of Indonesian national flags on the streets. One Indonesian couple with whom we had been good friends, visited me one evening bringing a big paste cake shaped like a gold fish and said "We heard that your Japanese army will return to Japan because Indonesia has secured independence, so we have come to bid you farewell." I couldn't utter a word in reply.

On August 22nd, the Tjahaja reported for the first time the full text of the Imperial Rescript accepting the Postdam Declaration, the announcement of Premier Kantaro Suzuki and the proclamation of Lieutenant-General Nagano, Commander in Chief of the 16th Army. It was 7 days after the end of the War. I imagine there had been effective control of the information.

Indonesian nationalists seemed to be eager for their independence to be acknowledged by the coming Allied Occupation Forces. In Bandung, I observed increasing numbers of banners hung on streets described in English 'Down with Dutch Colonialism' and 'We expect British Labour Party.'

As the days passed by, the word "Merdeka" became so popular that we had it use it as a salute, rather like "Heil Hitler," and it was used in letters in place of "Dear Sir." Simultaneously, I observed the explosion of energy of a nation acting to secure its independence. It was like a big wave. As the battle between the British Occupation Forces and the newly established Indonesian army was intensified, the Indonesians seemed to think that "If you are not my allies, you are my enemies." The Japanese army who had to remain neutral had to pay a big sacrifice.

XI. Struggles for weapons.

It was natural the Indonesians were very much afraid of the return of the Dutch colonialists. On August 31st, a B-24 bomber marked with a Dutch flag, flying over East Java, dropped placards praising the Indonesians their loyalty to the Netherlands and seeming to expect the return of the Dutch. The Indonesians were furious. On the streets of Bandung the released POW's and internees were displaying Dutch flags. A clash between the Indonesian army and the coming Dutch army seemed to be the inevitable.

In September, as the days passed, the Indonesians pressed their demands to the Japanese army to hand over their weapons. The Japanese army had received orders from

the Allied Forces to deliver all weapons, ammunition, clothing and food-stuffs to the coming Allied Forces and to maintain the de facto situation. Armies are usually punctilious in obeying an order; so was the Japanese army. Troubles followed from this.

Indonesians began to extort, by force, weapons, ammunition and trucks possessed by those Japanese units, which were stationed in places remote from the cities. There were inevitable clashes with killings and injuries. They had also begun to induce Japanese officers and soldiers to hi-jack weapons and trucks and to desert to the Indonesian side. Indonesians appealed to the feelings of having a “common cause,” which the Japanese had promoted during the war. A number of serious Japanese officers and civilians followed the cause and fought with the Indonesians. There were a few, like Messrs. Ichiki and Yoshizumi who were killed and buried as ‘heroes’ by the Indonesians; Indonesians also tried to induce the Japanese to come to them with weapons and trucks by offering rewards, such as a high rank in the army, or simply girls. A beautiful lady officer visited the remote camps and asked the Japanese “Why don’t you join us. I am yours.” According to the records of the 16th Army HQ, 4 Officers, 55 NCOs, 118 Privates, 26 Civilian employees and 31 Civilians (total 277) deserted and have never returned. Most of them fought in the independence war. About 15 years ago those who were lucky enough to survive were given Indonesian nationality and they are called ‘Japindos.’

In Bandung, the negotiation between the Indonesian nationalists and Major-General Mabuchi began in the latter part of September. After several days of hard negotiation the Major-General agreed to allow the hoisting of Indonesian flags on all Japanese army properties and barracks, and to share the responsibility for maintaining order in the city.

In spite of this agreement, Indonesians continued to attack the Japanese Army Ordinance, Andir Air Field, the Kempeitai, transport regiments etc, in the Bandung area. In the early morning of October 10th, General Mabuchi decided to make a coup de main on the Head-Quarters of the BKR (Indonesian special police force which was most militant) and disarm the members of BKR. The attacking Japanese force recovered weapons and trucks which had been captured by the Indonesians. The attack was really a blitz lasting only 30 minutes; and security and peace were restored in Bandung.

In the east of Bandung and in central Java, tragedies followed. In the middle of October there were two mass murders of Japanese in Garoet (42 soldiers) and Semarang (149 civilians). By the decision of Major-General Mabuchi, peace and order were maintained in Bandung. In the middle and Eastern part of Java there was increasing disorder. If General Mabuchi’s decision hadn’t been made, all the installations and property of the Japanese army in Bandung would have been taken over by the Indonesians, and there must have been many deaths and injuries on both sides.

By force, and sometimes through negotiation, Indonesians obtained rifles (51,698), machine guns (1,704), infantry guns (48), trench mortars (201), anti-tank guns (56), field guns (64), 100mm Howitzers (27), cannons (31), AA weapons (437), and

corresponding ammunition for the above weapons, tanks (50), armoured cars (159), cars and trucks (5,431), dynamite (7624 kg), hand grenades (318,454), gun-powder and materials for making gun-powder (statistics by 16th Army). These weapons and this ammunition must have helped their struggles against the British and Dutch Armies.

XII. Arrival of British Occupation Forces.

27th Brigade HQ were most anxious that the Allied Forces should proceed to Bandung to keep order and to repatriate the Japanese soldiers and civilians. Even one month after the surrender there was neither information nor any member of the Allied Forces in Bandung.

On September 17th, Major Gray (RAF) parachuted into the Andir Airport (Bandung) as the representative of Rapwi (Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees) and took an office in the Hotel Priangan. He was the first allied soldier which we and the Indonesians saw in Bandung. My job was to supply beds, blankets and food for the POWs and internees. Major Gray seems to have worked not only for the repatriation of POWs and internees, but also he seemed to have had various contacts with the Indonesians. He made very difficult demands of General Mabuchi, including telling him to shoot Indonesians in order to protect POWs and internees. His orders sometimes involved very delicate political problems and those annoyed General Mabuchi. I still recall his English, which was very difficult to understand, and also his moustache.

On October 17th, just two months after the surrender, the 37th Gurkha Brigade arrived at Bandung. The first orders to the Japanese army were that (1) maintaining security is the responsibility of the Japanese army, (2) Japanese must not ride horses.

The Brigade started operations to rescue the POWs and internees who had been interrogated in the camps outside Bandung; and they suffered severe loss because of the unexpectedly stubborn resistance by the Indonesians. On November 23rd, they ordered the Japanese army to participate in the rescue operation. Everyday, early in the morning, several hundred Japanese infantry and artillery gathered in front of the Brigade HQ and went to the operation under the command of the 37th Brigade. It was the first operation since March '42. My colleague who participated as the liaison between the British and the Japanese army said "My great sorrow was to have to see the Indonesian Pemuda (youths who were the core of Indonesian fighters) rush at the British tanks carrying explosives with them. These suicide attacks were made just as we trained them to do a few months ago."

On November 30th, Japanese artillery was ordered to shell Lembang where Indonesian extremists were located. The Illustrated London News (December 8th, '45) reported "At the moment, Bandung is in the news, and it is reported that rocket firing Mosquitoes and dive bombing Thunderbolts have been used to strafe an Indonesian Head-Quarters while Japanese gunners, under British command, have been shelling Indonesian string points. There are 50,000 Dutch internees at Bandung." I had my first thrilling experience of seeing the air raids by Mosquitoes and Thunderbolts in the

Southern part of Bandung. In Semarang, Japan's Kido battalion participated very actively and effectively in rescuing operations of POWs and internees in Ambalawa. The use of the surrendered Japanese army for military operations was reportedly criticised by the U.S.S.R. in the United Nations; and after some days there was no further order for us to participate in rescue operations.

My work under the British forces was to maintain liaison between the two armies. I also worked to supply goods, food and even fire-wood and vegetables to the British army because these could only be bought in Indonesian occupied districts where the British army could not go. Everyday the British army issued a PD (Procurement Demand) which included nearly everything for daily use. The most difficult product to procure was a lady's bicycle. They also requested many carpenters and painters. Fortunately, the Japanese soldiers were generally skilful and therefore, we could satisfy these demands.

Generally speaking, the British army was gentle. There were no complaints or criticisms of maltreatment. There was no repetition of the hardships of "Arlon Camp" in Burma, described in the book by Professor Yuji Aida. I thought that the reasons why the British occupation force in Bandung was not so strict were (a) Java was not their colony, (b) through their experiences in Burma, Malay and Singapore they had realised that the Japanese army was not dangerous but obedient and (c) they couldn't keep security unless they used the Japanese army. The expected disarmament ceremonies took place only once or twice for disarming the Kempaitai (army police). The weapons and pistols which the rest of us had were only collected and handed over to the British army just before our departure to Djakarta.

There were several things regarding the behaviour of the British army which surprised us. One thing was that they were very kind to women. They ordered priority repatriation to Japan of so-called mixed married couples (Japanese married to half-castes or Indonesians). The wives appealed to the British army to repatriate them with their Japanese husbands to Japan. For the Japanese husbands (mostly civilians, NCOs and Privates), many of them faced the problem of bigamy. How could they bring wives and children to Japan where their Japanese wives and children were looking forward to their return? The British army forced even these Japanese to take their wives and children to Japan. Major General Hawthorn who arrived in Bandung in February '46 with his 23rd British-Indian Division, used to drive round the city in a convertible car every evening with a beautiful young blonde girl-friend and a dog. A bigger surprise was that several British Officers brought wives. It was said that they were married during the war.

On April 3rd '46, in Djakarta, the British Commander in Chief, Java, released Major-General Yamamoto from the duty of Acting Commander of the 16th Army because he was not cooperative in dealing with the Japanese Navy in the Lemband area and also because Yamamoto was responsible for the delivery of ammunition and weapons to Indonesians. Another reason must have been that Yamamoto was very sympathetic to the cause of Independence.

In place of Major General Yamamoto, our Commander Mabuchi was ordered to succeed to the job of Acting Commander of the 16th Army. When General Mabuchi left Bandung for Djakarta, the British army (perhaps the Chief of Staff of the 23rd Division) wrote him a cordial letter congratulating him on his promotion, praising him for his success and cooperation in Bandung and expressing their hope to repeat this success in Djakarta where the relations between British and Japanese armies had not been so good as in Bandung. I was very much surprised to read the letter. Where in the world would an Occupation Army write a letter to the surrendered Commander praising his success and thanking him for his co-operation. That was a model instance of a 'fair deal'.

As the British army in the Bandung area was strengthened in numbers, the repatriation of Japanese by Dakota transport planes began from the Spring and in a few months they transported to Djakarta, 15,000 Japanese soldiers and civilians. In June, I had my first flight to Djakarta and joined the labour camp in Tanjong Priok Port.

XIII. Life in Tanjong Priok and Djakarta.

I worked in Tanjong Priok for about 8 months as an interpreter, a steward in an Officers' Mess of the Royal Engineers Corps and as a member of a labour unit. Afterwards, I was transferred to the 16th Army HQ in Djakarta for liaison with the Dutch army. During this period, the British army was gradually replaced by Dutch and we were put under the control of the Dutch army. We thought that we might be treated more strictly under the Dutch than we had been under the British.

In July '46, while I was serving in the Officers' mess, Major-General Mabuchi was shocked at being ordered to transfer a few hundred Japanese for labour in Hollandia (New Guinea). He was told that the transfer was made under an Anglo-Dutch agreement in Europe in order to cover the critical shortage of labour in Hollandia. Undoubtedly, no Japanese wished to go to New Guinea for an unknown period. My colleagues who had been in Bandung volunteered and spent several months in hard labour. One friend of mine was killed during the work. He left a diary covering both a precise report of the hard life in Hollandia and his love for the music of Wagner.

In October '46, 150 Japanese soldiers were transferred to Molotai. In November, 202 soldiers were transferred to Pandung (Sumatra) for labour. Otherwise, the labour conditions were gradually eased and we didn't need to work on Sundays. More and more liberty ships, as well as former Japanese naval ships came to repatriate the Japanese.

The British and Dutch armies continued to fight against the Indonesian army in various places in Java and, on the other hand, high level diplomatic negotiations between the Anglo-Dutch group and Indonesia continued. It was rumoured that the British had been trying to keep their influence and rights in Indonesia and secretly supplying weapons to the Indonesians. On November 15th, '46, a provisional agreement between Dutch and Indonesians was signed at Linga Djati where Indonesia was recognised for the first time in history by the Dutch as a sovereign state.

In Tanjong Priok I observed the increasing signs of growing power of Indonesia. One thing which I was watching for was when Indonesia would issue its own currency. The British and Dutch army had been using Japanese Military Government currency. It was said that in less than one year after the war, these occupation forces used several times more currency than the Japanese Military Government (the issuing bank was the Nampoh Kaihatsu Kinko) had issued during the preceding 42 months. Inflation was very severe. We couldn't know how it was as we did not spend any money in the labour camps. When we worked on a ship or wharf, Indonesian labourers asked us to exchange our shirts etc. for their Japanese money. In the beginning of '47, they began to use the new Indonesian currency.

Tanjong Priok was one of the main centres of the Japanese soldiers and civilians. One day a Chinese mother and daughter came from a remote city to the camps and asked if there was a Japanese soldier there who was the husband of her daughter. The Chinese seemed to be a rich family and they were well dressed. I also heard that when a Japanese convoy went to the Eastern part of Java to transport the interned Japanese soldiers to the ports, they were warmly welcomed by the Indonesian girls. To win popularity from the Indonesians, which was the slogan during the war, seems to have been successfully accomplished, at least in relation with Indonesian girls.

From the Spring of '47, there were increasing landings of Dutch soldiers, weapons and heavy trucks. Dutch soldiers landed always in the nights. It was surprising that young Dutch female soldiers were driving very heavy trucks. I imagined something would happen.

To fix the priority of repatriation among the Japanese was a most difficult task for the 16th Army HQ. Everyone stressed their hardship and merit. Sick people, women and the aged were the first to have been repatriated. The young officers like us, who had no wife nor child, had to be left. When a repatriation ship entered Tanjong Priok in early April '47, several tens of Japanese were obliged to be left for service for a few more months. I volunteered together with my colleagues from Bandung, to be left in place of younger colleagues who had to be repatriated as soon as possible to resume their study in the University. We did this very willingly as our last service to the Japanese Empire. The last repatriation ship, Kumano-Maru, left Tanjung Priok on the 4th May, '47. I was on board. With this sailing all Japanese, except war criminals and a small guard unit for the criminals, left Java.

In 21 months after August 15th, '45, there were 1057 deaths, including 544 killed in action among Japanese in Java.

To months after I arrived in Japan, the Dutch army started the first "police action" on July 21st. News Week reported that the "Barisan Mati (suicide squad)" of the Indonesian army were attacking invaders. I thought the Indonesians were still following out what they had been trained in during the war.

XIV. Epilogue.

1) Relations between Indonesians and Japanese.

July 1954, Major B, Head of Residential Indonesian Army Purchase Mission in Rotterdam, invited me to his flat over-looking the lights of Rotterdam and said, "The Japanese trained us how to fight and we were able to fight a very hard war against the Dutch. We had to hide in the mountains and wage guerrilla war. We ate everything that could be eaten, including snakes. In those difficult days, we sang "Umi Yukaba" which raised the morale of our army. We appreciate your training during the war which enabled us to fight. On the other hand, during your occupation, the education system was destroyed and Indonesian youths haven't had the opportunity of education. It was a very bad policy of your occupation." Major B was a Keiri Chudancho from Banjumas State. He was the most intelligent cadet I trained in '44.

One day in the early 1960's Crown Princess Michiko was very happy to be welcomed by a mass of Indonesians in Bandung who sang all together 'Hamabe-no-Uta', a Japanese song Indonesians were very fond of during the war.

One day in the 1960's a Japanese retired agricultural expert was delighted to see a television film on Indonesia in which Javanese farmers were bedding out young rice plants using exactly the same method (Seijoo-Ue) as he had taught them 20 years before in Java.

August 17th, '78 about 50 former Japanese Officers who were instructors of PETA were invited to the Independence Ceremony in Djakarta. One of my colleagues took part in the trip and he reported that they were given also an affectionate welcome reception by the Mayor of Bandung, as well as by the Governor of Preanger State.

Asahi Shimbun, November 28th, '78. During the War, more than 200,000 Japanese soldiers, army civilian employees and civilians were stationed in the whole area of Indonesia. There are now in Japan more than 160 reunion groups of those Japanese with 50,000 members. (I myself had worked as a permanent secretary to one group for about 20 years before I came to London). Indonesian Ambassador Witono, who has recently left Tokyo, was eager to attend those reunions even in places faraway from Tokyo. He arranged a number of sentimental journeys of Indonesia for those reunions. A farewell party for the Ambassador was held recently in Tokyo at which it was decided that a Council of Friendship Associations with Indonesia should be established.

The above-mentioned 5 stories are only a few examples of the close, friendly relations between Japanese ex-soldiers and Indonesians. I doubt if there are similar examples in other countries. What are the reasons? The biggest reason must be that Java and most other areas of Indonesia were not a battle ground during the war. The life of

Indonesians, especially of Javanese, was not as bad as life in other occupied areas in the South-East Asian countries. Another reason could be that without the training of PETA during the war and without the weapons they got from the Japanese army after the war, they must have had to struggle with the Dutch many years longer. Another reason could lie in the kind of 'liberalism and idealism' inside the 16th Army, as Joyce C. Lebra writes in her "Japanese Trained Armies in South-East Asia."

Beyond these tangible reasons, I strongly believe there is an intangible 'something' which consolidates the relationship. In one instance, it resulted in the notorious relationship between President Sukarno and the Japanese 'Indonesian Lobby' and the related business interests. It has also exploded in the anti-Japanese riot when Premier Tanaka was in Djakarta in 1974. This may be called a 'love-hate relationship' but I think it is a very particular feeling which may only be able to be analysed by a third party such as European scholars.

2) The prevailing political and economic relations between Indonesia and Japan are to be considered on the basis of past history. There have been problems of over-presence of Japanese industries in Djakarta and we understand there is still strong ill feeling against the Japanese on account of the conscription of labourers (Romushas), who were sent to other countries during the war. In spite of these issues and problems, the Japanese, especially those who were in Indonesia during the war, have a strong feeling of affinity with Indonesia and Indonesians, as the above stories verify.

3) Japanese Military Government and Multinational Companies.

Sometimes I reflect on what is the difference between what the Japanese Military Government undertook during the war and what the Multinationals are doing in various parts of the world now. Both were/are aiming at the optimum utilisation of resources. Both are eager to win popularity from the overseas Nations. As I have said earlier, the senior staff of the 16th Army and Major-General Mabuchi were very much concerned to win popularity with the Indonesians during the war. Japanese Officers, soldiers and civilians were eager to win popularity in general, or, at least, were cautious not to insult the Javanese then. How are the Japanese company staff in Indonesia doing now?

4) Information.

Earl Mountbatten of Burma wrote in his Memoirs that the trouble he had with Indonesia just after the war was due to the shortage of information on the nationalist movement. Apparently, the British and Dutch occupation forces under-estimated the seriousness of the nationalism which had grown during the war. The same thing is said of the American army in Vietnam and today of the CIA in Iran. We who stayed in Java during the war also could not obtain enough

knowledge nor accurately forecast the development of the nationalism of the Indonesians. Does it mean no Nation can forecast the urges and trends of another Nation?

5) Acknowledgements.

This paper is based on my own recollections. I must thank, however, the following authors for their books from which I have learnt their views and obtained figures, dates and statistics, and corrected my misunderstandings.

- a) 'Djawa Shusen Shoriki (How we managed in Djawa after the War)' by Lt. Colonel Shizuo Miyamoto (published by Djawa Shusen Shoriki Kankoo-kai, 1973).
- b) 'Java – in a time of Revolution' by B. Anderson, Cornell University Press, 1972.
- c) 'Japanese Trained Armies in South-East Asia' by Joyce C. Lebra, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1977.
- d) 'The End of the War in Asia' by Louis Allen, Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1976.

I extend my thanks to Mr. R.S. Milward who took the trouble to correct and refine this paper and Mrs. Ellen Hazzard who typed it.