



Portrait of General Imamura presented to him in 1942 by the Indonesian artist Basuki Abdullah.

GENERAL IMAMURA AND THE EARLY PERIOD
OF JAPANESE OCCUPATION

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Most post-war studies of Japanese policies in Southeast Asia during World War II are colored by the "moralistic" biases of their authors, which include apologists as well as critics.¹ But in fact many of the situations and events for which criticism is levelled at the Japanese occupying forces arise not from anything specifically Japanese but from the general nature of a military government of occupation in wartime: whether that government is established by a "fascist" nation, as in the case of Japan, or a "democratic" one, as in the case of the United States.² Military governments of occupation generally tend toward absolutism, and their rulers, backed by overwhelming force, often display an air of superiority and arrogance toward their subjects. Aid to combat units engaged in prosecuting the war becomes the supreme concern, while the civil rights of the civilian population are neglected. Utilization of the pre-existing forms of government in the occupied areas is preferred to imposing political and social changes, but often military governors find themselves facing barriers of cultural and linguistic difference which separate them from the governed. How much success the governors have in overcoming these barriers depends to a large extent on the personal character and training of the key administrative personnel. And however successful a military government may be in this regard, it is bound to invite resentment and hatred from the governed sooner or later.

Due consideration has been paid to the interaction between the Japanese military government and the Indonesian population, but previous studies have largely ignored the interaction within the Japanese occupying forces themselves.³ As a result "The Japanese"

1. I regard Muhamed Abdul Aziz, Japan's Colonialism and Indonesia (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955) as an example of moralistic criticism and Shigetada Nishijima et al., Indoneshia ni okeru Nihon gunsei no kenkyu [A Study of the Japanese military government in Indonesia] (Tokyo: Kinokuniya shoten, 1959) as apologetics.
2. See: John F. Embree, "American military government," in Meyer Fortes, ed., Social Structure: Studies presented to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949).
3. Notable exceptions are Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, Some Aspects of Indonesian Politics under the Japanese Occupation: 1944-45 (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1961) and "Japan: The Light of Asia," in Josef Silverstein, ed., Southeast Asia in World War II: Four Essays (New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1966).

have remained a monolithic and faceless entity. The point of this essay is to demonstrate that this monolithic entity was in fact composed of individuals and that, in spite of the overall *bakayaro*, authoritarian orientation, the Japanese military government was not run by troops of robots mechanically carrying out policies decided upon in Tokyo. Generally speaking, Tokyo decided only basic policies, which were then elaborated at the several intermediary decision-making levels: Saigon, later Singapore (Southern Regional Armies' Headquarters) and Djakarta (16th Army Headquarters) in the case of the Army occupied areas, or Makassar (Naval Civil Government Headquarters) and Surabaja (2nd Southern Fleet Headquarters) in the case of the Navy.

Moreover, those administrative personnel who were in direct contact with the local population had ample room for determining how and what parts of the given policies to implement. Actual execution of the policies was dependent not only on the organizational structures but also on personality factors in the field administration. The character and background of the individual military governors are thus crucial to an analysis of the administrative situation.

The experiences of the Japanese involved in the military government of Indonesia were unusual and exciting and had deep effects. Many have written personal memoirs and accounts since the war. Some of these have been published,⁴ but many remain in manuscript form or in private circulation.⁵ These memoirs provide rich information about how the Japanese personnel of the military administration were "prepared" for their duties, how they adjusted themselves to the situation, what they thought of their own policies, and how they evaluated the Occupation itself. Most of the accounts, especially those from the immediate post-war period, are written in an informal and personal style with little consideration for private or national interests; this makes them more useful than the information collected from post-war Allied trials, the major source for many authors dealing with the Occupation period. The interrogation documents tend to demonstrate what the Allied personnel wanted to know from the Japanese rather than what the Japanese involved thought important. Prefacing a compilation of English translations of Japanese documents on the military administration of Indonesia, Benda has complained: "Missing in their entirety [from the translations] are reports from field administrators . . . reporting on the policies decreed from headquarters . . . and for that matter on popular reactions to the military authorities."⁶ This gap is filled, to some extent, by the personal memoirs.⁷

4. Most recent publications include Keiji Machida, Tatakau Bunka-butai [Fighting Culture-Corps] (Tokyo: Hara-shobo, 1967) and Munenari Yanagawa, Rikugun Chohoin Yanagawa-chui [Army Intelligence Officer 1st Lt. Yanagawa] (Tokyo: Sankei-Shimbun Shuppan-kyoku, 1967).
5. For example, the memoirs of Maj. General Moichiro Yamamoto, a later 16th army commander, still remain private.
6. Harry J. Benda et al., eds., Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia: Selected Documents (New Haven: Yale University, South-east Asia Studies, 1965), p. v.
7. For some field reports written in the Occupation period, see: Mitsuo Nakamura, "Checklist of Microfilm Holdings on the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia in the Cornell University Library (Wason

War Policies in General

Japan's war policy for Southeast Asia had to meet two contradictory requirements. On the one hand Japan had to emphasize the cause of the "liberation of Asian peoples" in order to justify its operations in alien territories and to gain the support of their nationalist elements for the war effort. Less often noticed is the fact that this justification of the war was also necessary to secure the cooperation of the Japanese people with their own government. This campaign for the "liberation of Asia" succeeded in overcoming domestic suspicions about the prolonged war with China and a reluctance to fight against the technologically superior Allies. The ideology of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere developed into an indispensable tool for inspiring the Japanese population to fight and endure wartime difficulties.⁸ The vast majority of the Japanese people accepted this ideology.

On the other hand, the execution of war plans required that Southeast Asia fulfill particular roles. Japan needed the area's natural resources and manpower, without which the continuation of the hemispheric war was impossible; this meant the exploitation of the area's people. The contradiction between "liberation theory and colonial practice" haunted the Japanese throughout the war in Southeast Asia, and top policy planners as well as field administrators were well aware of it.

This contradiction and the necessity for political maneuvering were most keenly felt in Indonesia, especially in Java. In other areas under the Japanese occupation, the framework within which Japan dealt with the local political forces was largely predetermined. To secure the cooperation of the ruling oligarchy in the Philippines, Japan promised them an early independence. In Indochina, diplomatic relations with the Vichy Government limited the range for maneuver despite commitments to the nationalist movement. In Burma, a promise of independence proved necessary to help stabilize the internal political situation and to topple the old colonial order of British India. The Japanese Army's commitment to the independence cause reached the level of blood-brotherhood between some Japanese officers and local nationalist leaders and could not be betrayed. In the case of Thailand, friendly diplomatic relations, outwardly at least, prevented interference in internal politics except for the early days of the invasion and during the final moments before defeat. On the Malay Peninsula, Chinese guerrillas had to be crushed; conservative sultans were easily attracted to cooperation with Japan.⁹ Admittedly, the above

Collection)" (Ithaca: mimeo, 1970).

8. For specific cases of changes in attitude, after the declaration of war in the Pacific, by liberal-to-left intellectuals who had been critical of the war with China, see: Yoshio Iwamoto, "The Relationship between Literature and Politics in Japan, 1931-45," (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, 1964).
9. Takushiro Hattori, Daitoa-senso Zen-shi [History of the War for Greater East Asia] (Tokyo: Masu-shobo, 1953), I, p. 317.

characterizations are rough and very general, but it is my contention that the amount of room for political maneuvering is a useful variable for determining the common and diverse features of the Occupation in the various countries of Southeast Asia.

In Indonesia, the framework was relatively flexible, for Japan had made no official commitment to the nationalist movement before the war. Individual contacts and semi-official connections certainly existed, but in contrast to the cases of Burma and Indochina, there was no "Indonesian lobby" in any official circles, including the Army General Staff Headquarters (Sambo Hombu).

This office had started collecting military information on the Dutch East Indies in 1939. At the same time and probably in coordination with the military, the Asian Economic Research Bureau of the Southern Manchuria Railroad Company, one of the best staffed semi-government research agencies in pre-war Japan, began publishing a journal entitled *Shin-Ajia (New Asia)*. It covered contemporary politics, economics and culture in Southeast and Southwest Asia and was under the general editorship of Shumei Okawa, a renowned Pan-Asianist scholar and politician. Many research and survey articles on the Indonesian nationalist movement appeared in this journal prior to the war. Both these efforts, however, remained on the "intelligence" and "intellectual" levels.

There was also a group of Japanese journalists (Tatsuji Kubo, Tatsuo Ichiki, Tomegoro Yoshizumi and several others) who had maintained close contacts with Indonesian nationalist circles before the war, but they were either removed to Australia or relegated to obscurity after hostilities began. Those detained in Australia were later repatriated in the exchanges of civilians between Japan and the Allies, or else returned home by other routes. Almost all of them eventually participated in the occupation administration of Indonesia. But apparently none of them had been involved at the top levels in pre-war policy-making for the Dutch East Indies. They had operated as private individuals and served at most an intelligence function.¹⁰

Among the military, apparently only Army Lt. Col. (later Colonel) Yasuto Nakayama had some first-hand knowledge of pre-war Indonesia. He had served in Batavia from 1940 to 1941 as the military attaché to the Japanese consulate, but his contact with the Indonesians had been severely restricted by ever-increasing Dutch surveillance. For whatever reason, he took no significant political action. Navy

10. It has been contended that the detention in Australia of pre-war Japanese residents of the East Indies, combined with the losses suffered by the Japanese invading fleet in the Battle of the Java Sea, created a substantial lack of "Indonesian experts" among the early occupation forces. (See: Harry J. Benda, "The Beginnings of the Japanese Occupation of Java," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 15 (August 1956), pp. 541-560, esp. p. 543.) Post-war Japanese sources do not substantiate this belief. Many of the Japanese detained in Australia, including the corps of journalists mentioned above, were repatriated. (Machida, *Tatakau*, pp. 151-152.) The torpedoing of the Japanese ships inflicted very few casualties among the civilian group accompanying the 16th Army; a reporter from the *Mainichi-Shimbun* was killed. (*Ibid.*, p. 55.)

Captain (later Rear-Admiral) Tadashi Maeda also served as a military attaché in Batavia in the 'thirties. But there is no evidence to suggest that he played a role in the policy-planning and decision-making of the central military offices prior to the war. There were, in short, no "political officers" in top military and government circles in Tokyo who were personally and organizationally committed to Indonesia, as was the case for other Asian nations. In preparing occupation policies, Tokyo policy-makers worked without being well informed about the power or trustworthiness of Indonesian nationalist leaders, the efficiency and loyalty of the civil service, or the political usefulness of the Islamic leaders. Partly as a result of this ignorance, but mostly because of the Army's preoccupation with the crucial role of Indonesia as a base camp and supply center for the Southeast Asian theater, the future political status of Indonesia was never clearly defined, except for the tacit agreement which existed among those concerned that the "Greater Indonesia movement should be curbed as much as possible."¹¹ Only in the last stage of the war in Southeast Asia did this change.

Because of these uncertainties, those Japanese who ran the military government of Indonesia faced an enormous task of learning, analyzing, and interpreting information about Indonesia on the spot before using it for planning and implementing policies. It was a matter of trial and error. The organization of Indonesian leaders and masses into the Three-A, Poetera, and Java Hokokai movements, the creation of Boei-giyugun (Peta), and special emphases placed on the youth and Moslems all display the experimental nature of the administrators' approach.

Administrative Organization on Java

The basic assumptions of Japanese occupation policy were articulated in a document entitled the "Principles Governing the Administration of Occupied Southern Areas" which was adopted at the Liaison Conference between the government and the Imperial General Headquarters (Daihonei) on November 20, 1941; it became the official policy binding in both the Army and Navy territories. The Army and Navy then adopted more specific policy documents for the administration of territories under their respective jurisdictions.

In each regional unit of military administration in both the Army and Navy territories, the respective regional headquarters drew up and adopted even more specific policy documents for the military administration in that particular area. All these policy documents invariably emphasized three main goals: first, restoration and maintenance of peace and order; second, securing vital war resources; and third, self-sufficiency of combat troops in the respective areas.¹²

11. Sambo-Hombu [Army General Staff Headquarters], "Daitoa minzoku shido yoko" [Principles for the guidance of the peoples in Greater East Asia], August 6, 1942, contained in: Wason Film 905, reel no. 1, Cornell University Library.

12. For English translations of some of these, see: Benda et al., Selected Documents.

The first requirement for the new government, that of maintaining peace and order, proved relatively easy and was not a major concern for the military government of Java. Already in the early days of the war, a legend about Japan's almost supernatural supremacy had been created and impressed upon local people by the quick and total subjugation of the Allies in Indonesia, and elsewhere. Few Indonesians dared to defy the Japanese authorities nor were any subversive activities attempted. In spite of their notoriety, the Kempeitai (Military Police) were only active in arresting people in the chaotic days during the early period of the Occupation and in the last several months of general disintegration. Their main function consisted of collecting intelligence information from among the people and conveying it to the top administrative circle. Judicial and police activities increased only after petty robbery, corruption, and blackmarketeering became prevalent, coincident with the deterioration of the economy and the strict regulations imposed on economic activities in the latter half of the Occupation. Small scale revolts occurred in Tasikmalaja, Tjeribon and Blitar, but though alarmed, Japanese authorities did not retaliate indiscriminately on the Indonesian population as a whole.

The troops of the 16th Army, the main force concerned with peace and order and the one in direct contact with the Indonesian population, had not been recruited with any consideration for their fitness for, or previous experience in, Indonesia. However, there was virtually no turn-over among the non-commissioned officers and soldiers, and during the more than three years they were stationed in Java they became fairly familiar with the Indonesian environment and its people. Miyamoto, a staff member in charge of military operations of the 16th Army, thinks that this was one of the reasons why many of the Japanese troops would not comply with post-war Allied orders to use fire-arms against the Indonesians.¹³ In striking contrast, the commissioned officers were changed almost annually, according to the promotion system of the military hierarchy. No single military officer known to us remained in the same position throughout the forty months of the Occupation, making it more difficult for officers to accumulate experience. The military and civil police corps also seem to have possessed no significant contingents of Indonesian experts. The higher positions in the civil judicial offices were manned by a few score attorneys and assistant-attorneys from the equivalent judicial offices of Japan. There were no experts on Dutch law or *adat* among them. Few official documents or personal accounts of judicial corps activities have survived, apparently the result of efforts to destroy evidence before the Allied war criminal trials.¹⁴

13. Shizuo Miyamoto, Jawa shusen shori-ki [Records of the cessation of hostilities on Java] (mimeo, [1955?]), contained in Wason Film 905, reel no. 2, pp. 37, 48 and 66.

14. Two exceptions which have come to my attention are: "Osamu Military Operation Order No. 854," [Order of the 16th Army concerning the incorporation of the command of the Military Police] (September 22, 1942) in Wason Film 905, reel no. 2 and "Report on the Military Administration Police" [Explanatory Material] (September 1942) in Wason Film 905, reel no. 2. For brief annotations to the two items, see my Checklist items no. 139 and 147.

The main concerns of the military administration were in the fields of exploitation and persuasion. The specific tasks associated with exploitation changed over time according to the vicissitudes of the war. At first, in 1942, when Japan had enough ships and naval forces, the administrator's primary duty was to meet Tokyo's demands for supplies. From 1943 to 1944 exploitation policies had shifted to the pursuit of self-sufficiency for the armed forces in the South. From 1944 to 1945, after Java had begun to prepare for its own self-defense, the administration worked for regional autarchy and local stockpiles of war supplies. Throughout these stages, the emphasis was on exact statistics and material objects, not on people. Human beings came into consideration only when it became necessary to determine how much they could produce or how little they could consume. Major Miyamoto, who later took charge of the Logistics Section of the Staff of the 16th Army, stated that, as basic information for planning, "[I] had only to know how much exploitation the native population could endure."¹⁵ Otherwise, the reaction of the Indonesian population was outside the concern of the administration; it had only to execute its duties in a businesslike and rational manner.

Personnel in charge of exploitation activities came from two groups. Middle-level officials of the Imperial Government who held the ranks of section and subsection chiefs in Ministries such as Finance, Industry and Commerce, Agriculture, Postal Services, and Railroads were transferred to the corresponding offices in Indonesia without relinquishing their status in the Imperial civil service. Businessmen and engineers from the major private companies of Japan, who had the skills and knowledge necessary to run economic enterprises, also served the occupation regime.¹⁶

In contrast to the exploitation activities, the task of persuasion was closely involved with human concerns. Here the administrator had to persuade or to dissuade, in short, to "win the hearts of the people"--a vague task at best. The vagueness resulted partly from the fact that Tokyo made no explicit decision on the political status of Indonesia until the last year of occupation. Until then, the task was defined vaguely as "cultivating among the native population the consciousness of belonging to Greater Japan and the ability for self-rule" and inducing "a sense of trust in Imperial forces."¹⁷ Beyond this, no definite general guidelines seem to have been sent out from Tokyo, except for the proscription of a small category of tabooed subjects. For instance, the slogan "independence for Indonesia" was not to be used since the "premature encouragement of native independence movements shall be

15. Miyamoto, Jawa shusen, p. 3.

16. Very little is known about the activities of this element of the administrative personnel in spite of the fact that they were directly responsible for the material quality of Indonesian life. One of the reasons why they have kept silence about their experience during the Occupation must be that many of them have continued an active role in economic relations between Japan and Indonesia.

17. Sambo-Hombu, "Daitoa minzoku," and Benda et al., Selected Documents, p. 2.

avoided."¹⁸ The achievements of the propaganda activities are very difficult to measure. Success in a goal might be gauged by the number of people who could be rallied under a particular slogan, and by the number of resolutions supporting that slogan, but there is no way to measure the intensity of the people's support. The task required not so much rationality as emotion, not so much planning as imagination. The personnel also had to persuade themselves of the correctness or necessity of a particular propaganda line before being able to persuade others, and further, they were the most sensitive and vulnerable among the administrative personnel to popular reactions against the military authorities. The result of these conflicting pressures was often cynicism and despair.

Those engaged in propaganda displayed the widest variety of backgrounds in the military administration. They included newspaper reporters and editors (mainly from *Asahi Shimbun*), writers, novelists, poets, essayists, musicians, painters, radio announcers, film-producers, and a contingent of teachers from various academic levels. They had been conscripted by the military to participate in the administration. The conscription of civilian intellectuals was widely used to force their cooperation with the military and in this regard liberals and ex-leftists were more often conscripted than were those openly sympathetic. In addition to the actual utilization of their intellectual abilities for military purposes, the practice was apparently intended both as a loyalty test and as a form of brainwashing for sceptics.¹⁹ Although some of them worked to propagandize the Japanese community in Indonesia, most of them came into direct contact with the Indonesian population. A few of them had a previous knowledge of the Indonesian language, but many had learned it after arrival in Java.²⁰

The size of this group indicates how much the military expected of it. The Sendenhan (Propaganda Corps) which accompanied the landing of the 16th Army in March of 1942 already had eleven officers, about one hundred soldiers, and eighty-seven conscripted intellectuals, the last group being by far the largest among the similar corps attached to the occupation forces anywhere in the South.²¹ Some of them returned to Japan, being released from duty after one year, but many volunteered to remain longer and also more recruits arrived. Their activities, in many senses unique in the performance of psychological warfare, left a deep impression on the minds of the Indonesian people. All the more deeply affected by the contact with the Indonesian population were the intellectuals themselves. Although part of the Japanese military government, they were not entirely locked up in it. They often played, because of their own ideals and aspirations, a role distinct from the official lines of

18. Benda et al., Selected Documents, p. 2.

19. Hidetoshi Kuroda, Gunsei [Military Government] (Tokyo: Gakufushoin, 1952), pp. 73-76.

20. For example, Hitoshi Shimizu started learning "Malay" on the boat to Java. Machida, Tatakau, p. 65.

21. Masaaki Tanaka, Hikari mata kaeru--Ajia dokuritsu hiwa [The Light returns--Secret story of the independence of Asia] (Tokyo: Nihonshuho-sha, 1958), p. 75. Also, Machida, Tatakau, passim.

the military administration. Many of those Japanese who later fought for the Indonesian Republic against the returning Dutch came from this group.

Finally, but not less importantly, there was a small but distinct administrative unit on top of the functional groups. It could be called a staff corps, in the sense that the "staff" is distinguished from the "lines" It represented the power and authority of the 16th Army to the public, planned over-all policies, supervised policy implementation, and coordinated the different sections of the administration. The personnel of the staff corps were divided into three different units. One was a section of the Headquarters of the 16th Army (the Commander-in-Chief, the Chief-of-Staff, the Vice Chief-of-Staff, and a member of the Staff responsible for the military administration); another was composed of civilian officials in the General Affairs Department of the Java Military Administration. In actual practice these two units merged into a single body because the Army Chief-of-Staff was also the Superintendent-General of Military Administration, and a member of his military staff was Head of the General Affairs Department. In terms of recruitment, the formal distinction was important, for the military personnel changed periodically while the civilian officials remained the same.

The third unit of the staff corps were the advisors to the military administration, senior bureaucrats and established politicians appointed directly by the home government. In addition to its advisory function, this unit served as an alternative to the military chain of command as a channel of information between the central offices in Tokyo and the 16th Army.

General Imamura's Experience in Java

During the twelve months from November 1941 to November 1942, (Lt.) General Imamura served as the Commander-in-Chief of the 16th Army, the man responsible for forming the structure of the military government and for decisions on basic policy toward civilians. His personal memoirs, originally written in 1948, give us a fair amount of information about this early period of the Occupation.²²

22. There are three editions of the memoirs written by Imamura: the original manuscript, its English translation, and a later Japanese publication. In May of 1948, Imamura was transferred from an Australian jail in Rabaul to a Dutch jail in Batavia (Djakarta). While he was there awaiting trial by the Dutch, he started to write an autobiography in diary form. The jail authorities gave him official encouragement to do so and had a Japanese interpreter (Masatsugu Morita) translate the manuscript into English. The translation was then typewritten in several copies and circulated among the Dutch court and jail personnel. This English translation, which is entitled A Tapir in Prison, is now to be found in the Indische Collectie at the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (Amsterdam). The original manuscript and a copy of its English translation were later returned to Imamura himself. He then reworked it and published it under the title, Imamura Hitoshi Taisho Kaikoroku [Memoirs of General Hitoshi Imamura] (Tokyo: Jiyu Ajia-sha, 1960), 4 vols.

His memoirs are also among the most detailed autobiographical accounts ever written by a member of the military elite of pre-war Japan. For our background knowledge here, however, it will suffice to say that he was educated in the Army College and in the Army Staff Academy in the first decades of this century. He then went to England as a Military Attaché, served in various positions with the Army troops stationed in Korea and Manchuria as well as in the central offices of Tokyo, and was involved in the fierce battles against Kuo-Min-Tang troops in South China just before the outbreak of the Pacific war. He was said to belong to the Tosei-ha, the "Discipline Faction" of the Army. However, he maintained a rather strong non-, or anti-factionalist stand during the internal Army turmoils of the 1930s, on the principle that the Army should not be used as a political instrument against the will of the Emperor, the only morally and constitutionally legitimate Supreme Commander. He was very much impressed by the strength of the popular support behind the Chinese nationalist troops and placed a much higher evaluation on the ability of China to resist foreign invasion (including that from Japan) than the so-called "China-experts" in the Army did:

More than ten officers from the Army had been sent to China annually as military attachés. Thus in the past fifty years several hundred "China experts" were created. I knew personally some fifty members of the total group but they were more or less of the same opinion that the defeat of China by the western powers as well as Japan was caused by the defeatist ideology of 'mei-fa-tu' [can not help]. However, from my experience in Manchuria and China, I would rather maintain that the ideology strengthens the persistent resistance of the Chinese people by preventing them from desperation and self-destructive tendencies.²³

In early November of 1941, Imamura was recalled to Tokyo from China in order to command the newly formed 16th Army which had been assigned to attack the Dutch East Indies. In the following two months the Headquarters of the group, including that of the prospective military administrative personnel, was located in Tokyo. Imamura led his troops in the landing on Java in early March of 1942 and set up the headquarters of the military government in Batavia on March 10.

During the brief military campaign on Java, which ended with the unconditional surrender of the Allied forces, Imamura had come into contact with the Indonesian population for the first time. He was surprised by the enthusiastic welcome of the people. He writes: "I became convinced from the second day of the landing that the Indonesian and Japanese are certainly people of the same race and common stock. If not, how was it possible for them to show so much goodwill and cooperation to the Japanese troops!"²⁴ This conviction was widely shared among the Japanese in Indonesia and had a significant effect on the policies of the military administration.²⁵

23. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, p. 11.

24. Ibid., p. 148.

25. For similar statements, see: Miyamoto, Jawa shusen, p. 3, and Machida, Tatakau, pp. 60-61.

The pervasiveness of this conviction on the part of the Japanese may be accounted for by the fact that the invading Japanese troops had already been psychologically prejudiced in favor of the Indonesians from prior propaganda in Japan. In the 1930s a group of anthropologists in Japan had supported a theory, based on the common occurrence of some physical and cultural traits among Japanese and Malayo-Polynesian peoples, that considerable numbers of the prehistoric ancestors of the Japanese must have migrated to Japan from the south on the Black tides. The military adopted this theory, and with the collaboration of some anthropologists, such as Masao Oka and Kenji Kiyono, elaborated it into official propaganda at home and abroad.

The goal of the occupation of Java was phrased as the "rebirth of a Japan" in the South, ancient homeland of the Japanese.²⁶ The current "backwardness" of the "brothers in the South" was explained by the Dutch colonial policy of keeping them ignorant for three hundred years; henceforth, education and enlightenment by the Japanese should provide the means to cultivate potentialities similar to those found among the Japanese.²⁷ The feeling was created that this was a reunion of a long-separated family, and it prevailed, at least among the Japanese, until the later period of the Occupation when military authorities shifted the propaganda line to the encouragement of nationalist sentiments. At the same time, the Japanese felt a sense of indebtedness to the Indonesians for their cooperation in winning the battles against the Dutch and this indebtedness had a lasting effect in shaping further occupation policies. For example, Imamura rejected the harsher occupation policies suggested by Singapore and Tokyo on the grounds that the 16th Army could not betray the goodwill of the Indonesians whose cooperation had supplied him half of the power which he used in his victory over the Dutch.²⁸

Criticism of Imamura's "Soft-line" Policies

The early policies of Imamura were strongly criticised by some of the military, especially from outside Java. It may seem strange to learn that his actions were considered "too mild," since a number of suppressive measures--including prohibiting any political activities or organizations, banning the use of the Red and White flag and the song "Indonesia Raja," as well as pressuring Indonesian newspapers--were taken in the early days of the Occupation in the name of Imamura. As a consequence, the aspirations of Indonesian nationalist leaders for the immediate independence of Indonesia under Japan had been flatly crushed.²⁹ In order to explain this apparent discrepancy, it is necessary to know what the Japanese military meant by "harshness" or "mildness" in

26. Benda et al., Selected Documents, p. 238.

27. Ibid.

28. Imamura, [Memoirs], p. 148.

29. Benda, "Beginnings of the Japanese Occupation," passim.

occupation policies. Imamura devotes many pages to describing his own conceptions about the spectrum of opinions on this issue and the interactions among the various levels in the military chain of command.³⁰ For the sake of the clarity I will trace below the series of events chronologically.

As mentioned above the principles of government to be followed by all military units in the occupied areas had already been decided by the central office of the Imperial General Headquarters, and by the Ministries of Army, Navy, and Foreign Affairs. But specific details and the method of implementation was mostly left to each individual unit, which caused differences in actual occupation policy among the various military groups.

In the case of the 16th Army, Imamura convened the first meeting of his staff on March 10, 1942, the day when the Military Administration Headquarters was established in Batavia. Its purpose was to determine the principles of occupation policy for Java. According to Imamura, the younger members of the Staff favored beginning with a series of repressive measures to impress the powerfulness of Japan upon the population, lifting the pressures gradually later according to developments. Major Yasuto Nakayama, who was in charge of military administration, insisted on following the already established "Outline"³¹ which stipulated that administration aims should be to impress the people with the "virtues of the fairness and dignity of Japan" and to facilitate economic reconstruction in order to acquire vital war resources. Senior members of the Staff, such as Major Tatsuhiko Takashima (Chief of the Military Operations Section), Major-General Yoshikazu Harada (the Vice-Chief-of-Staff), and Major-General Okazaki (the Chief-of-Staff), agreed with Nakayama.

Imamura ended the discussion by saying that the Java military administration should follow the previously-established directions as strictly as possible. In his view, it was necessary to erase erroneous impressions concerning Japanese aggressiveness to show that the principle of *Hakko-ichiu* ("all worlds under one roof") meant not aggression but "pan-familialism." Moreover, initial repressive measures were unnecessary, he said, because the Army already possessed overwhelming force and could use it unilaterally at any time. Hence, the 16th Army decided to adopt a "mild" policy.³²

This "mild" policy took shape in such measures as: giving priority to immediate economic reconstruction and the reestablishment of normal civilian life by utilizing Dutch expertise and Chinese economic organizations; reappointing and confirming the status of Indonesian officials; reopening Indonesian schools; and developing a propaganda format which emphasized friendship and cooperation between the Japanese and Indonesian peoples. All this was swiftly implemented in the early months of the Occupation.

30. Imamura, [Memoirs], pp. 146-169, 205.

31. "Outline of Administration in Occupied Areas" [Senryochi tochi zantei yoko]. This was the principal policy document for the Army territories. Unfortunately the text has not yet been found.

32. Imamura, [Memoirs], pp. 146-147.

The first criticism of this policy line arose from an unexpected source--the Japanese population in Java. A number of private Japanese businessmen had spread out over the newly occupied areas on the heels of the invading Army.

These included two different categories: people sent by large enterprises at the request of the military and individual volunteers, most of whom had had previous colonial experience. A journalist described the passengers on the boat he travelled to Singapore on in October of 1942:

There were some one thousand civilians on the 'hospital' boat. They were of very mixed trades. In addition to a team of entertainers, who were in fashion, there were mistresses of Japanese restaurants with *geishas* and cooks, managers of coffee-shops, welders, clock-workers, automobile-drivers, *shamisen* [traditional Japanese stringed instrument] repairmen, carpenters, and wall-painters for Japanese-style houses, *tatami* [mattress] workers, businessmen who had firms in the South, and waitresses who were going to work in the military commissaries and in hotels.³³

Entry into particular occupied territories by such private businessmen was regulated by the central offices of the Army and Navy,³⁴ and often without taking into consideration the wishes of the local administration. In Java, the Army would not easily consent to the opening of private Japanese firms, especially for the restoration of semi-public sectors of the economy. The 16th Army preferred to continue using the Dutch engineers and executive personnel, believing that these people, having undertaken the destruction, were more capable of the reconstruction. Also Chinese and Dutch merchants were allowed to remain in business in order to avoid a sudden increase in unemployment and to continue a normal flow of necessary commodities. The Japanese businessmen started to complain about the situation on Java. This had immediate repercussions in Singapore, where their colleagues were given much more freedom and protection by the Army, which had repressed the Chinese and had totally removed the British from the public scene. The Army in Singapore and, later, Tokyo joined in the criticism: "All white people are free everywhere in Java. It doesn't look like an occupied area at all."³⁵

The first official pressure to change Imamura's policy came after the arrival of three political advisors to the Java Military Administration in mid-April.³⁶ They delivered suggestions from

33. Kuroda, Gunsei, p. 60.

34. Army Lt. Colonel Koji (Mitsutsugu) Takeda, Nampo no gunsei [Military Administration in the South] (Tokyo: Senryu-do, 1943), pp. 244-246.

35. Hitoshi Imamura, A Tapir in Prison, p. 128 (Wason Film 905, reel no. 5, Cornell University Library).

36. These three advisors to the Java Military Administration were Count Hideo Kodama (ex-Minister of Internal Affairs), Kyujiro Hayashi (ex-Ambassador to Brazil), and Kenichiro Kitayama (ex-Vice Minister of Colonial Affairs). Hayashi played a vital

Tokyo and Singapore that the power of the occupying forces should be more openly displayed in Java in order to make the indigenous population rely on and trust in Japan. Imamura disagreed. He had come to the conclusion that the Indonesian people were of the same race as the Japanese and thus no repressive measures were needed to secure their brotherly cooperation. Moreover, he believed that indiscriminate repression of the Dutch civilian population was against the moral code of the *Senjinkun*,³⁷ and that curbs on Chinese and Dutch economic activities and organizations would surely stop the normal flow of goods, including war supplies. After a one-month inspection tour of Java, the three advisors returned to Batavia. They decided that Imamura was correct and that criticism of his policy stemmed from ignorance about the actual situation on Java. One of the advisors then immediately returned to Japan via Singapore to report their conclusions.³⁸ Tokyo, however, was not convinced and the criticism was retransmitted to Imamura through another channel.

In late April, General Hajime Sugiyama, Chief of the General Staff of the Army, made a trip to the South to evaluate past military operations and to collect information for future defense plans. He expressed deep satisfaction with the operation in Java but at the same time warned Imamura that criticism of his policy for military administration was widespread in Tokyo and that he, Sugiyama, had no direct jurisdiction since he was only responsible for general military operations. He warned that the critics might ruin Imamura's career. Imamura replied frankly that he was following officially-established directions, modified only by his own judgment and conscience about what was best suited to Java. He indicated he would have no choice but to resign if ordered to change his policy.³⁹

At almost the same time as Sugiyama's visit, Imamura experienced pressure from another quarter, in the form of a real confrontation. An inspection team headed by Lt. General Akira Muto, Chief of the Military Affairs Department of the Ministry of the Army (under whose jurisdiction all the military administrations of the Army-occupied

role in the later period of the Occupation in resuming the discussion of the issue of the amount of independence to be allotted to the Indonesians.

37. The *Senjinkun* [Instruction on the Soldier's Conduct on the Battlefield] was written by Imamura in 1940, while he was the Superintendent of Military Education in the Army, on the request of Tojo, then Minister of the Army. It may be regarded as an expression of the *Tosei-ha's* (Discipline Faction) efforts to restore hierarchical order and command in the army in anticipation of a major war. It was phrased in a simple but beautiful neo-classical style. After the war Imamura regretted that the *Senjinkun* was too abstract in expression to be effective in properly sanctioning individual soldiers' conduct. See: Imamura, [Memoirs], III, pp. 111-116.
38. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 148-150. Also, Imamura, *Tapir*, p. 148.
39. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 151-152. Also, Imamura, *Tapir*, p. 130.

areas came) arrived in Java accompanied by Tominaga, Chief of the Personnel Affairs Department of the same Ministry. After a short trip through Java, Muto and Tominaga met with Imamura, at which time Muto repeated the criticism and suggested that the example of Singapore be followed. Muto also asserted that the "Outline" decided upon in the early days of the war need not be followed too strictly now since the overall situation had changed very much in Japan's favor. The Army no longer needed to pay much attention to the sentiments of the native populations in order to solicit their cooperation. What was necessary was to impress them with the power and authority of the Imperial Forces so they would obey the will of Japan; this would facilitate future military operations and ensure a stable supply of war goods. Before the final decision was made on revisions of the "Outline," the central office of the Ministry wanted to reach an agreement about the new policy with the Army groups actually in charge of the military government.⁴⁰

Imamura was stubborn. He said that he did not know whether the situation had changed, because the consequence of the Occupation could not be judged on the basis of only a few months' experience. If a repressive policy were undertaken, the failures in China, which had resulted from arousing of popular resentment, would be repeated in Java and then the reconstruction of the economy would be totally out of the question. He also told Tominaga that he was determined to continue his policy and that he would rather be removed from his position as Commander-in-Chief of the 16th Army than to see any official revision of the policy made from the center.⁴¹

While travelling in Java, Muto and Tominaga had voiced their criticism to various local officers. On the subject of the treatment of P.O.W's, for instance, they had charged Imamura with being too "soft," setting an example of how to treat the P.O.W's by slapping the face of an Allied officer in an internment camp when he failed to give them a proper military greeting. Later, during a monthly meeting of garrison commanders, Imamura had to re-emphasize strongly the correctness of his own policy in order to prevent unrest among the local military leadership.⁴²

The treatment of Allied P.O.W's was one aspect of the "mildness" issue, although Imamura does not mention it himself. According to Kuroda: "The P.O.W's were forced to do various kinds of work in Singapore, while in Java they were not. This was due to the policy of the first Commander-in-Chief General Imamura. . . . On April 29, 1942, a routine conference of the Bureau and Department Chiefs of the Ministry of the Army under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and Minister of the Army Hideki Tojo was convened. The most important agendum at this meeting was the treatment of the P.O.W's in the South . . . then about one hundred thousand in

40. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 153-155; and Tapir, pp. 129-130.

41. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 154-155; and Tapir, pp. 129-130.

42. Ibid.

all." Lt. General Mikio Murakami, Chief of the Bureau of P.O.W's, insisted on honoring the stipulations of the Geneva and the Hague Treaties. Tojo, however, dismissed this on the grounds that the "war in Greater Asia" was a war for the liberation of Asia and was racial in nature. In order to demonstrate the superiority of the Japanese people to the whites, the P.O.W's were to be used in China, Korea, and Manchuria; they were to engage in manual labor before the public. "The conference decided to adopt Tojo's line, but Imamura ignored this and continued to honor the international treaties."⁴³ Since Muto and Tominaga visited Java right after Tojo's decision, their confrontation with Imamura was not so much a matter of a difference in opinions (which is the way Imamura describes it) as it was the latter's rejection of an order decided upon at a higher level of the military bureaucracy. Imamura maintained his own policy.

In late May, the news of changes in Tokyo attitudes reached Imamura when the Chief of the Military Hardware Department of the Ministry of the Army visited Java. He informed Imamura that Muto and Tominaga had not recommended that Tojo replace him. Rather, they suggested a delay until the overall achievements of the 16th Army's military administration could be assessed, implying that it was natural for differences to occur between Singapore and Djakarta because of variations in the ethnic composition of the populations concerned. Tojo agreed and decided not to interfere with Java for the time being.⁴⁴

The attitudes among the personnel on the intermediate levels were also changing. When Count Marshal Terauchi, General Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Area Army Corps in Singapore, visited Java in June as the head of an inspection team, he briefly told Imamura that he had no comment on the military operations, defense plans, and military administration of the 16th Army other than that they were all proceeding satisfactorily. This was something Imamura had not expected to hear from Terauchi, for he knew that Terauchi had concurred with criticism about the "mildness" of military administration policy in Java. However, Major Akiho Ishii, who accompanied Terauchi, told Imamura that Terauchi had changed his previous view as a result of his trip to Java. Ishii related that he himself had drafted the "Outline" of military administration while he had been in the office of the Military Affairs Department of the Ministry of the Army. After he was transferred to the General Headquarters of the Southern Area Corps, he had insisted on observing the "Outline" as strictly as possible although very few listened to his opinion. They maintained that the situation had changed drastically. However, through this inspection trip, Ishii continued, Terauchi was deeply impressed by the situation on Java and had even become inclined to regard Imamura's policy as a model for military administration elsewhere. Ishii appreciated Imamura's efforts to adhere to the original "Outline" and asked him not to abandon the current policy in Java.⁴⁵ Imamura was much encouraged by Terauchi's words and Ishii's information. At the official level, at least, the criticism of Imamura subsided. However, the Kempeitai reported to

43. Kuroda, Gunsei, pp. 95-97.

44. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, p. 155; and Tapir, p. 131.

45. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, p. 159; and Tapir, p. 132.

Imamura that among the officers and civilians staying at the Hotel Des Indes, which was used to accommodate visitors from outside Java, criticism of the "soft-line" of the 16th Army was still being openly voiced.⁴⁶

In July, while the top military leaders of the 16th Army were still at odds with Singapore and Tokyo, a disturbing incident occurred. Ir. Sukarno, who had just returned from Sumatra, was beaten by a Japanese officer, and Imamura and Nakayama feared that the officer might have been motivated by anger against the "mild" policy of the leadership. It turned out, however, that the officer, without knowing who Sukarno was, had been personally "reprimanding" him for violation of the civil defense rules concerning air-raids and had gotten too wild because of intoxication. Moreover, he was not an officer connected with the administrative unit but was under the Logistics Department. The officer, now sober, realized how serious the consequences of his conduct could be, and he had apologized to Sukarno. Imamura, who was relieved that a potentially serious incident had been avoided, joined with a personal apology to Sukarno. Imamura believed that beatings, which had been a vicious habit in the Army for more than thirty years, should be strictly forbidden, especially in dealing with Indonesian wrongdoers. He asked Sukarno to report to him any other similar occurrences.⁴⁷ Imamura was generally successful in keeping his staff and officers obedient to this policy.

In June two significant events occurred outside Java. First, the Imperial General Headquarters (Daihonei) decided to take a generally defensive posture in the newly occupied territories in the South in preparation for new military operations on both the eastern and western fringes of these areas.⁴⁸ As a direct consequence, the number of troops on Java was drastically reduced from 50,000 to 15,000, of which only 8,500 (two brigades) were combat units.⁴⁹ Second was the establishment in June of 1942 in Singapore of the General Headquarters of the Military Administration for the Southern Areas. This new headquarters was expected to plan and execute well-coordinated regional policies regarding military economy, administration of civilian populations, and transportation and communication systems.⁵⁰ As a consequence, pressure was exerted on Java to follow policies bringing a regional uniformity.

The reduction in troop size had direct repercussions on security measures concerning the Allied civilian nationals in Java who were thought to be potentially dangerous. They were not openly hostile to Japan for they no longer considered any significant organized hostility feasible. But they were regarded as a potential source of unrest in that their conspicuous presence tended to irritate the sensibilities of the Indonesian population. In order to

46. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, p. 160.

47. Ibid. For the incident as viewed by Soekarno, see: Sukarno, An Autobiography as told to Cindy Adams (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

48. See: Hattori, Daitoa-senso, II, pp. 167-168.

49. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, p. 150; Tapir, p. 132. Also Miyamoto, Jawa shusen, p. 17.

50. Hattori, Daitoa-senso, II, p. 174.

maintain public order, then, the old colonial rulers and the ruled had to be separated. In order to make them economically self-sufficient and to prevent them from becoming a financial burden on the military government, these Allied nationals were expected to produce their own foodstuffs. To prevent espionage, it was considered advisable to keep them under the direct and constant surveillance of the military. To achieve these aims with a minimum of troops, the only solution possible was to concentrate them in restricted residential areas and relocation camps, preferably in rural areas which had available farm land. In his memoirs, Imamura emphasizes the humanitarian motivations behind this measure as well as the necessity for these precautions in wartime.⁵¹ Because this policy reduced the number of Dutch nationals visible on the public scene, it helped neutralize some of the criticism against Imamura.

The new General Headquarters in Singapore soon began to demand uniformity in policy throughout the region, especially in the field of economics. At a meeting of the area Commanders-in-Chief, called by the new Headquarters in July of 1942, Imamura demanded the revocation of two of its directives--one concerning the reopening of elementary schools and the other on the establishment of a uniform sale price for petroleum products. The Vice-Chief-of-Staff for the Southern Areas Headquarters had previously suggested to Imamura that his emphasis on education for the native population in Java might have dangerous consequences by tending to encourage aspirations for independence. Imamura asked Terauchi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Area Corps, whether this was the official attitude of the Headquarters. Terauchi replied that it was not, and stated that he agreed with Imamura's policy for the immediate reconstruction of native educational systems. Terauchi said the criticism was only a matter of personal opinion. Imamura also demanded relaxation of uniform price controls on petroleum products since the Java Military Administration had already reduced the prices to half of those of the Dutch period. He maintained application of uniform prices, which would be twice as much as those of the pre-war period and four times above the current prices, would make the native population highly distrustful of Japan's economic policy. Terauchi was surprised by this and ordered an immediate revision of the price policy.⁵²

The contrasts between the 16th Army and the 25th Army (Malaya and Sumatra) now became so obvious to the local populations that the 25th Army became annoyed because popular criticism termed the occupation policies on Malaya unreasonably harsh. However, Terauchi and the Southern Areas Headquarters were no longer pursuing a uniform occupation policy for the area so long as regional coordination was achieved in the acquisition of war supplies through a well-functioning transportation system. Because of this situation, the 25th Army proposed bilateral negotiations with the 16th Army in order to work out "a middle-of-the-way" policy between the two. Imamura, however, turned down the proposal on the grounds that he had nothing to concede.⁵³ Thus the regional differences in occupation policy continued unchecked.

51. Imamura, Tapir, p. 132.

52. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 163-165.

53. Ibid., pp. 165-166.

In October, the final word was issued from Tokyo about the "mildness" of Imamura's policy. In that month Major-General Okazaki, Chief of Staff of the 16th Army, was ordered to report to Tokyo immediately. There he was notified that the 16th Army's achievements in the past six months were by far the best of the occupied areas in terms of pacification, economic reconstruction and war supplies, and therefore there was no need to change the Java policy. The military administrative personnel of Java were much encouraged by this judgment and determined to continue the "mild" policy.⁵⁴

In November, Imamura was suddenly ordered to assume a new position in the 8th Area Corps which was to be deployed in New Guinea to prevent American counterattacks. This unexpected transfer of Imamura caused rumors that he was being dismissed as Commander-in-Chief of Java because of his policies. However, Imamura states in his memoirs that the appointment was made very hastily to check the unexpectedly early counterattacks by the U.S. in the area, and was not a political maneuver designed to reprimand him.⁵⁵ While on a quick trip back to Tokyo, Imamura stopped over in Singapore to see Terauchi. Imamura asked him, among other things, to prevent any attempts to change the Java policy by taking advantage of his replacement, a request which Terauchi promised to honor.⁵⁶

Relations With Indonesian Leaders

Sukarno had returned to Djakarta in early July of 1942, only four months before Imamura left. Despite the short period, however, the two men came to know and make deep impressions on each other. Since contacts with Indonesian leaders were all dealt with by Major Nakayama,⁵⁷ it is most likely that Sukarno was the only prominent Indonesian with whom Imamura personally became acquainted. According to Imamura, Sukarno's return to Java was explicitly decided upon and arranged by the 16th Army Headquarters. While his whereabouts were still unknown, the Military Administration had received many letters from Indonesian youths and student groups requesting the Army to find him and allow him to return to Java. Eventually he was discovered to be under the protection of the Japanese troops in Sumatra. The Sendenbu of the 16th Army favored his return to Java because his cooperation would be advantageous to the Military Administration. Imamura accepted this view in spite of the cynical and critical attitude of Singapore that Imamura's troops would eventually be troubled by this enthusiastic advocate of independence.⁵⁸

54. Ibid., pp. 166-167.

55. Ibid., pp. 168-169. Also cf. Hattori, Daitoa-senso, II, p. 209.

56. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, p. 205.

57. Ibid., p. 160.

58. Ibid., p. 182.

The first meeting of Imamura and Sukarno took place at Sukarno's request shortly after his return. The informal meeting was attended by only two other people, Major Nakayama and Imamura's personal interpreter, a 16-year-old Indonesian-born Japanese. Imamura started the meeting by stating that he was well acquainted with Sukarno's career and prominent position in the Indonesian nationalist movement, and that he had no intention of coercing Sukarno into any kind of action against his will. Imamura, furthermore, made it clear that he had no authority to discuss the issue of the political status of Indonesia with Sukarno, since the matter had to be negotiated directly between Indonesian leaders and the Japanese government; he pointed out that the Java Military Administration could only promise that it would endeavor to improve the people's welfare. Sukarno could either cooperate with the Military Administration or remain a neutral observer. In either case, Imamura promised, the Army would do its best to protect his life, property and honor. Sukarno was warned that criticism or action against the Military Administration would not be tolerated and that his freedom would be restricted although he would not be jailed as in the Dutch period. Imamura then suggested that Sukarno reply after he discussed the matter with his colleagues.

A few days later, Sukarno informed Imamura that he would cooperate with the Military Administration because of its promise to better the conditions of the Indonesian people but that he would not let this restrict his freedom of action after the war. Sukarno and Nakayama then worked together to create an organization for implementing cooperation between the nationalist leaders and the Army. Imamura kept in close contact with Sukarno through this organization.⁵⁹

On the later occasion, Imamura discussed two proposals with Sukarno. The first concerned the appointment of Indonesian civil servants. Imamura noted that the home government had decided to send out considerable numbers of Japanese civil servants to staff administrative positions in residencies, regencies, and large municipalities. The decision, based on military considerations, was aimed at coordinating the administration and the military in expectation of defense operations and was intended to apply to all the occupied areas.⁶⁰ Imamura said he would employ as many Indonesians as possible below the regency level as part of his policy to further the welfare of the Indonesian people. The second proposal concerned the Military Administration's wish to establish an organization through which the voice of the Indonesian people could be channeled to the Administration. Because of the wartime situation

59. Ibid., pp. 185-187.

60. There seemed to be another reason for sending a large number of Imperial civil servants abroad, that is, reducing the size of the civil service at home to "rationalize" the Imperial bureaucracy. By the end of 1942, all together about 25,000 civil servants apparently received overseas appointments in the South. For the figures, see: Mantetsu Toakeizai Chosa-kai [Southern Manchuria Railway Company Asian Economic Research Bureau], Nampo seisaku gaiyo [Overview of the Southern Policies], (Tokyo: mimeo., 1943), pp. 245-246 and pp. 248-249.

establishment of a parliamentary-type organization was impossible. A substitute suggestion proposed establishing a body of advisors consisting of a score of top Indonesian leaders. Sukarno agreed with Imamura's two-point proposal and within a month the Gyosei-shijun-in (Administration Advisory Body) was established; this body had convened for three or four sessions before Imamura left Djakarta.⁶¹

Imamura describes Sukarno's personality as gentle and elegant, a man who spoke quietly but revealed himself to be a man of strong will and dedication to his cause.⁶² Imamura obviously liked and respected Sukarno who returned the sentiments.⁶³ Acquaintance with Imamura must have been one of the major reasons for Sukarno's trust in Japan and her military elites through the final period of the Occupation. As a measure of his respect for Imamura, in 1946 Sukarno reportedly ordered the Republican troops to rescue Imamura from the Dutch jail if he were sentenced to death.⁶⁴

Views on the War in General

By May of 1942 most of the former colonies in Southeast Asia had been "liberated" by Japan. At this stage, Imamura believed that the War would soon be over with favorable results for Japan. He definitely opposed expanding the battle front beyond Burma to the west or Indonesia to the east. As far as the areas within these two front-lines were concerned, he thought that the Japanese armed forces were capable of effectively preventing the Allied counter-offensives and bringing the war to a victorious conclusion. Hence, when General Sugiyama, General Chief-of-Staff, came to Java in 1942, Imamura strongly protested the inclination among the military leaders in Tokyo to expand the battlefronts before firmly stabilizing areas already occupied. He especially criticized the order removing two-thirds of his original troops from Java to the east. He asked Sugiyama why the Army Staff Headquarters had changed the original strategic task of the 16th Army, implied by its code-name "Osamu," which meant "to settle" or "to restrain" the war by its occupation of the main parts of the Dutch Indies.⁶⁵ Sugiyama replied that the

61. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 188-189. No other information is available on this organization. However, this certainly seems to have been a predecessor of the Chuo-sangiin (Central Advisory Council) and the Sanyo-kaigi (Body of Advisors).

62. Ibid., p. 183.

63. Adams, Sukarno, p. 175.

64. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 191-194.

65. I can find no other sources which indicate that the strategic tasks of the Army groups in the South were implied by their code-names. However, as to the literal meanings, "Nada" (Army in North Borneo) means "straits" which might be a proper geographical characterization and "Tomi" (25th Army in Sumatra) has a meaning of "wealth" which might have implied the task of extracting natural resources there.

task had not been changed but that the necessity for new operations had arisen in the fringe areas.⁶⁶

Many of the top military personnel shared with Imamura this rosy perspective on the war. But two contrasting conclusions about future policy for the newly-occupied areas were drawn from this perspective. One was to "colonize" these areas following previous Western patterns: territorial incorporation; administration by Japanese personnel; colonization by the Japanese civilian population as the ruling class; and "Japanization" in culture, especially by education. The other conclusion was to regard the indigenous population as capable of eventual political independence after the wider participation and training of indigenous leaders in administration, and by measures to insure the future friendly cooperation of these countries in a Greater Commonwealth of Japan. As was briefly mentioned in the introduction, however, the two alternatives were limited by pre-existing factors and Japan had to pursue the second course elsewhere than in Indonesia. In Indonesia itself, the two conclusions were sharply debated.

Imamura definitely advocated the second viewpoint. He had told Sukarno that he could not decide the issue of independence, but that did not mean that he had no opinions on the problem, although we have no explicit explanation of ideas other than those scattered among what has been presented above. If speculation is allowed here, however, I wish to present an important document which has no personal name or definite date to indicate by whom and when it was written other than the vaguely anonymous designation "Headquarters of Osamu Group."⁶⁷ It was apparently written as a report on the opinion of the Osamu Group Headquarters about the future political status of Indonesia, and was sent to the central authorities in Japan. The contents of the document suggest that it was written during the very early period of the Occupation, before Allied counterattacks and the resultant economic hardships on the Indonesian population had made themselves felt. The brief but clear-cut sentence structure and straightforward logic of the argument have almost convinced me that the writer was no other than Imamura.

Even if the hypothesis about authorship is incorrect, the document undoubtedly was written by one of the highest military leaders of the 16th Army and before February, 1943. Two clues, admittedly small, seem to support this dating of the document. One is the seal and the other the numbers, both found on the front page of the original mimeographed booklet. The name on the seal is read as "Nakayama" which undoubtedly means the booklet was once in the possession of Colonel Yasuto Nakayama, a member of the Central

66. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, p. 150.

67. For the Japanese text of this document, see Nishijima et al., Indonesia, pp. 559-561. For an English translation, see Benda et al., Selected Documents, pp. 237-239. The Cornell University Library has a microfilmed copy of the original document (Wason Film 905, reel no. 1).

Staff of the 16th Army and the Chief of the General Affairs Department of the Military Administration until February 1943 (when he was replaced by Colonel Moichiro Yamamoto). This suggests that the document was produced not later than that date. The second clue reads "number three of five copies" which seems to be the serial number of this top secret document. It seems reasonable to assume that only five copies of this document were produced. However many of the above conjectures are untrue, it still seems certain that the document was drafted by one of the top military leaders of the 16th Army and circulated among a very limited number of policy-makers in the field and in Tokyo. The document is thus one of the most important sources available from which to learn the position of Imamura and his immediate subordinates with regard to the issue of independence.

The report requests that the central authorities, on the earliest possible occasion, officially declare their intention of granting high level autonomy to Indonesia. It advocated this goal on two grounds: first, "a common ideality under the name of 'Indonesia'" combined with considerable high achievements in traditional culture were sufficient to create a politically autonomous entity; and second, the difficulties of full independence in the context of fierce international power politics and the inevitability of regional bloc formation were well-recognized among the nationalist leaders. The report demanded the immediate declaration of this goal while the Indonesian people's appreciation for the Japanese defeat and removal of the previous colonial masters was still high and the hardships of the war economy were still slight. If Japan delayed this declaration until the Allies began counterattacking, the report argued, Japan would lose the basis of its moral stand which would create a feeling of contempt among the Indonesians towards the Japanese. The report concluded with the serious warning that Japan's continuous failure in China and "the same bitter cup suffered by the former Dutch regime at the time of its collapse" would unavoidably be repeated in Indonesia, if Japan set inadequate goals or erred in its timing in this matter.

We have no first-hand information about how Tokyo responded to this report. The response can only be conjectured from the following events. In January of 1943, at a speech to the 81st Session of the Imperial Diet, Premier Tojo hinted at Tokyo's intentions concerning the future status of Indonesia by the very fact that he did not mention the issue at all.⁶⁸ In May of 1943, when basic policies towards Asian countries were discussed and decided at the joint meeting of the highest level leaders of the Cabinet and the General Imperial Headquarters in the presence of the Emperor, it was established that Java was to be allowed some degree of participation in its own administration. This formally ended the discussion of the issue of Indonesian independence for at least a year.⁶⁹ The decision, which resembled Imamura's report in allowing participation in administration, was actually a rejection of Imamura's ideas. In his view,

68. For the text and the background of the speech, see: Sambo-Hombu [Army General Staff Headquarters], ed., Sugiyama Memo--Daihonei. Seifu renraku-kaigi to hikki [Notes by Sugiyama--Records of the Liaison Conference between Imperial Headquarters and the Government] (Tokyo: Hara-shobo, 1967), II, pp. 348-355.

69. Cf. Benda et al., Selected Documents, p. 240.

participation was only a means to an end (political autonomy), but the May 1943 decision set no goals and participation was conceived as nothing more than a device to elicit more cooperation from the Indonesian people without promise of future reward. It seems likely that if Imamura had continued his commandership of the 16th Army, he would have eventually come into more serious conflict with the home government than that which he had already experienced.

A few things about Imamura's personal ethics and moral standards should be mentioned. He was a traditional "samurai" whose ethics are represented by the common Japanese proverbs which he himself often quoted. One such is: "The strong should never show arrogance before the weak." When Batavia fell to the Japanese, Imamura did not allow the main body of his troops to enter the city until the Military Administration had established order, and he also decided not to hold the usual march-in ceremony by the victorious troops. His reasons were based on his ethical convictions.⁷⁰ Another of his favorite proverbs was: "The warrior should be frugal in the midst of affluence." As an expression of adherence to this code, Imamura refused to live in the official residence of the Dutch Governor-General in Batavia, but instead preferred a more humble residence.

In Java where the Dutch and Chinese had been flaunting their wealth before the impoverished Indonesians, he felt that the Japanese occupation troops could easily be corrupted as new masters. He eventually conceded to the argument of his subordinates that he ought to reside in the official residence for the dignity of the Japanese Army. Nevertheless, he never agreed to use the luxurious palace-type residence of the former Governor-General in Bogor (Buitenzorg).⁷¹

The basis of his moral standards rested in the Emperor and the constitution of Japan, from which came his sense of "calling" as a warrior to defend his Fatherland. He believed in Japan. He was born to be a patriot as was his generation. Imamura spent his teens in the middle of the Meiji era (1868-1912). For his generation, things Japanese were taken for granted and the traditional values were only to be supplemented by modern western technology. He had no problem of national identity. Imamura favored the teaching of Japanese language and songs to Indonesian children, although at the same time he paid due consideration to the teaching of the Indonesian language and the encouragement of national culture. He was, for instance, much delighted with Indonesian children singing Japanese songs when he visited a school run by the Sendenbu.⁷² Furthermore he suggested that the Sendenbu hold a contest for a new song of Japanese-Indonesian friendship to be sung by both Japanese and Indonesians on ceremonial occasions.⁷³

70. Imamura, [Memoirs], II, pp. 136-137.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid., pp. 172-173.

73. Ibid., pp. 196-200. See also: I.J.Brugmans et al., eds., Nederlandsch-Indië onder Japanse Bezetting, Gegevens en Documenten over de jaren 1942-1945 (Amsterdam: 1960), pp. 484-485.

He seemed to have had no doubts about the necessity of Japanization nor felt anything excessive in it.

It is no wonder that the early period of the military administration of Java under Imamura was characterized by swiftness, decisiveness, and pervasiveness.⁷⁴ However, if we regard this as an expression of Japan's intention to make Java "a Japanese colony pure and simple,"⁷⁵ we will be mistaken. The matter was by no means so simple or so pure, as we have seen. Above all, we have seen the impossibility of positing such a monolithic entity as "Japan's intention." Decisions made by the central offices could easily be modified by top military leaders in the field. And in the case of Java, Imamura's intention was certainly not colonization but, in its own way, was something quite the opposite. We know very little about how Imamura's successor behaved and thought. Evidence suggests that the leaders of the 16th Army retained more or less the same attitude toward the political status of Java as we have outlined above for Imamura.⁷⁶ However, Imamura's successors apparently lacked his articulated perspective, his sense of timing, his determination (and readiness) to sacrifice position and self for the benefit of Japan.

Because of his early departure from Java, Imamura managed to escape being identified with many of the "wrong-doings" committed by his successors. At the same time, however, the account of the journalist, Kuroda, who visited Java from November 1942 to January 1943, indicates that Imamura's account may have been somewhat embellished and that things had already begun to deteriorate.

On the surface Java was affluent in low-priced goods and certainly was a paradise in the occupied areas. However, in fact, this was nothing but a paradise built on sand. The symptoms of inflation were already visible but no remedy had yet been taken. The hotel [Des Indes] where I stayed was said to be the best in Java, and the luxurious accommodations and food this hotel offered made me almost forget that I was living in an occupied area from which the battlefronts were not far away. Whenever I was fed up with the rich western dishes in the hotel, I could easily step out to find, a few feet away, superb *sukiyaki* and *sushi* restaurants run by Japanese on the main street of Koningsplein. However, since rice was the main staple for the indigenous people, too, Java's self-sufficiency was impossible; a huge quantity of rice had to be imported from Malaya, whereas in Malaya itself rice fields were being changed over to the cultivation of rubber trees. Thus, no optimism should have been allowed concerning the future supply of rice. The supply of clothes was also solely dependent on the stocks in Java and there was little hope of fresh imports from Japan. However, no definite plan had ever been worked out here either. In short, the affluence and prosperity [of Java] were only maintained on a day-to-day basis. . . . Major Nakayama, the Chief

74. Cf. Benda, "Beginnings."

75. *Ibid.*, p. 551.

76. Cf. Benda *et al.*, *Selected Documents*, p. 243.

of the General Affairs Department, told me proudly that the trains were running regularly on schedule, that the normal supply of electricity was maintained to light every lamp, and that Java had, in this respect, best achieved economic reconstruction of all the occupied areas. However, [he failed to mention that] there had not been much destruction in Java from the outset. Furthermore, the points Major Nakayama made were of rather secondary significance in the occupied areas while the war was still going on. Instead, the fundamental problem was how to utilize the resources at hand for immediate war demands and how to maintain the stability of the economy in spite of this. That the trains were running regularly and every lamp was lit did not mean the availability of sufficient stocks for replacement, nor was there any guarantee of the continuous functioning of these facilities in case of damage or trouble. Here I recognized a unmistakable lowering in morale among the military leaders on the spot, due to their overestimation of the military successes achieved in the initial period of the war. . . . Java was said to be enjoying the best peace and order in the occupied areas. Certainly security and safety prevailed there except for those places where the Japanese were present. They were the trouble-makers, since they were quick to be intoxicated and quick to quarrel. Japanese soldiers were even worse, since they became arrogant. . . . Thus, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere was turning into a Co-Poverty Sphere and the hearts of the indigenous people were rapidly turning against Japan.⁷⁷

77. Kuroda, Gunsei, pp. 82-83, 219.