

LIFE AND DEATH OF "ABDUL RACHMAN" (1906-49):
ONE ASPECT OF JAPANESE-INDONESIAN
RELATIONSHIPS*

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On January 9, 1949, in the remote village of Dampit near Malang in East Java, which was one of the fiercest battlegrounds of the Indonesian Independence War against the Dutch, an Indonesian independence fighter (*pemuda*)¹ was killed in the fighting. Several bullets had pierced his forehead. His name was Abdul Rachman, 42 years of age. Comrades who witnessed his death testified later that Abdul Rachman ran forward defiantly against the stream of Dutch bullets as if to encourage the Indonesian forces, who showed some hesitation in the face of intensified Dutch offensives.

Abdul Rachman was actually a Japanese called Ichiki Tatsuo. He was a true Japanese by birth and nationalist, and yet he renounced his Japanese nationality in protest against his motherland Japan and its people who broke their promise to assist Indonesian independence. His disappointment in his motherland was so great that he voluntarily threw his heart and body into the newly born Indonesian Republic's army and decided to die a "heroic" death as an Indonesian *pemuda*.

Preface

We have a saying in Japan that goes: "people in the North, materials in the South" (*Hokojin-Nanbutsu*), with the North representing the modernized West, and the South, backward Asia. For "modern Japan" the North has been the source of science and technology and the target to catch up and surpass, while the South has been considered her lifeline.

*This brief essay is a byproduct of the writer's studies on the history of Japanese-Indonesian relations and is intended to introduce one aspect of Japanese involvement in Indonesia before and during the war period through a biographical sketch of "Abdul Rachman," alias Ichiki Tatsuo, an advocate of Asianism (see footnote 2) of no distinction.

Ichiki Tatsuo has been practically unknown, except for the mention of his name in such scholarly works as Masuda Atō, *Indonesia Gendaishi* (Tokyo: Chūō-kōronsha, 1971), and George S. Kanahale, "The Japanese Occupation of Indonesia: Prelude to Independence" (Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1967; published in a Japanese translation by Shiraishi Aiko, Kondō Masaomi, and Gotō Kenichi late in 1976 by the Ōtori Publishing Co.). Therefore primary sources concerning Ichiki in this essay are derived from the writer's interviews with members of his family, colleagues, as well as friends in Japan and Indonesia.

¹On the politico-cultural implications of the word *pemuda*, see Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972).

Japan tried to get hold of the materials in the South by means of diplomacy, threats or the use of force, or by advocating Asianism.² The desire to obtain materials from the South marked "modern Japan's" behavior in Asia beginning with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 through the military occupation of the whole area of the South Seas (Southeast Asia).

On the other hand, there were tens of thousands of Japanese who went to the South Seas before the war with the sole objective of making a living there.³ They were men who did not belong in the main current of "modern Japan" and had little interest in her grand design. Most of them were small merchants or farmers who settled in the southern countries and merged into the native community. Many of them became aware that there were not only "materials" but also "people" in the South. Japanese involvement in the South Seas up to the mid-1930s was represented by such an outflow of the common people. In the late 1930s, however, the situation drastically changed as Japanese diplomacy noted the importance of the South Seas. Waves of Asianism welled southward from Japan. The Japanese residents in the South Seas, who were acutely aware of the wishes of the native people, longed for the liberation of the colonized peoples by Japan's military force and worked as a fifth column to bring about a military occupation, believing that it would lead to the materialization of their ideals. With Japan's defeat in the "Greater East Asian War," however, their hopes were ruthlessly crushed. "Modern Japan" declared that she had nothing to do with Asian liberation, unilaterally disclaiming all commitments in the past. Those Japanese, including Ichiki Tatsuo, who died for the cause of Asian liberation against the "national will" were treated as "deserters" in postwar Japan.

Now, thirty years after the War, "modern Japan" has again become a great power in Asia, and is again viewing Asian countries as sources of raw materials to sustain Japan's prosperity, claiming that Japan is contributing to the "modernization" of those nations.

²In Japan Asianism generally means the insistence that Asian peoples unite under the leadership of Japan in order to resist the intrusions of western powers.

³For example, compare the following statistics:

Occupation and Territorial Distribution of Japanese
Residing in the South Seas in 1932

	Philippines and Guam	French Indochina	British Malaya and North Borneo	Thailand	Dutch East Indies	Total
Agriculture	6,045	13	262	2	137	6,459
Fisheries	1,113	16	1,010	2	599	2,740
Manufacturing	1,263	9	367	14	335	1,988
Commerce	3,081	62	1,250	73	2,415	6,881
Others	597	38	808	67	430	1,940
Without occupa- tion (mostly dependents)	8,217	127	2,749	132	2,958	14,183
Total	20,316	265	6,446	290	6,874	34,191

Source: *Nanpō Nenkan* (Tokyo: Tōhō-sha, 1943), p. 305.

However, Southeast Asia's anti-Japanese sentiments have mounted in the past few years, as can be seen in the January 15, 1974 Incident in Indonesia, which in essence was a typical manifestation of politico-economic nationalism.

It seems very important now for us Japanese, who are again talking about "advancing southward," to look back upon the life and death of Ichiki Tatsuo who knew that there were "people" in Indonesia, not only "materials," and who identified himself with them and their nationalism.

In Search of a New World

Ichiki Tatsuo was born in 1906 in the small town of Taraki, Kumamoto prefecture in the southern part of Kyūshū. He was born as the third of six children into a family of long standing, whose ancestors were *samurai* (warrior class) serving the Sagara clan. The members of this clan were influential as feudal lords from the twelfth to the mid-nineteenth century. The Ichiki family, however, was poor, with many children. Furthermore, when Tatsuo was a child, his parents were divorced, and his mother had to take responsibility for bringing him up. Thereafter she sought consolation in Catholicism, and Tatsuo was also baptized when he was five years old. His Christian name was Sebastian.

Ichiki grew up in his home town when Japan was in transition from the Taishō period (1912-26) to the Shōwa (1926 to the present). The Taishō period is noted for its so-called Taishō Democracy. The freedom of this period was fully enjoyed by intellectual elites who studied in major cities of Japan. But as the Shōwa period began, this Taishō Democracy crumbled under the growing pressure of militarism.⁴ Among the young people of rural areas like Ichiki, who lived a life entirely different from that enjoyed by the urban elite, there was an aspiration to leave the small country of Japan to seek a new life in South America or the South Seas, that is, Southeast Asia.⁵

Magazines like *Shin-Seinen* (New Youth) which were very popular among rural youth in those days, frequently carried the success stories of Japanese who went overseas, and they encouraged young men to go abroad to seek a new world. There were also songs which were very popular among those young men, such as *Bazoku no uta* (Song of Horse-riding Bandits) with the words: "I will go, so you come with me. We are tired of living in small Japan." Another was *Rurō no uta* (Song of Wandering) which went like this: "Roaming and wandering, some go up

⁴The formation in 1927 of the Tanaka Giichi cabinet, which adopted a harsh policy towards China, has often been seen as symbolizing the beginning of Shōwa militarism.

⁵Till then the primary destination of Japanese emigrants was the United States, but the U.S. Immigration Act of 1924 (the so-called anti-Japanese Immigration Act) inevitably turned the attention of the Japanese emigrants towards the South Seas and South America. While the emigrants to South America were mostly farmers who took their whole families with them to seek a new life in the new land, those who went to the South Seas were mostly young single males interested in making money through small-scale commerce and agriculture.

north to Siberia while others go down south to Java." These passages inspired many ambitious young men toward life across the seas.

Becoming a Photographer

It was when such an atmosphere prevailed in the country that Ichiki Tatsuo received a letter from an older friend⁶ from his home town, inviting him to come and work at the rather prosperous Miyahata photo studio in Palembang, South Sumatra. The friend himself was also successfully operating a grocery store in the town of Pagar Alam near Palembang.

Ichiki was then 21 years old. He had left middle school without graduating and was working as an apprentice at a photo studio near his home town. On January 22, 1928, Ichiki set out for the South Seas, leaving wintry Japan behind. He dreamed of operating the largest photo studio in the South Seas. The town of Palembang, where Ichiki Tatsuo sought to find his "blue bird,"⁷ was a major city in Sumatra, comparable to Medan to the north and prosperous as a center of the petroleum industry. There lived a great number of white men, mostly Dutch, forming "a prosperous white community." Since the beginning of the Taishō period, some Japanese had come to settle down in this town. Most of them started as peddlers selling medicines, toys, and other miscellaneous goods, and quite a number of them were successful enough to open small shops. Gradually these Japanese merchants and other residents came to form a Japanese community. (Miyahata Seiichi, the owner of the photo studio where Ichiki was employed, was one of the senior leaders of such a Japanese community in Palembang.)

Before the war, the Japanese communities in various parts of Southeast Asia were mostly built up by Japanese who had come overseas as poor men and who succeeded almost single-handedly. They were people who came over to the South Seas as though pushed out of "modern Japan," their motherland. They could not adapt themselves to the rapid changes taking place in "modern Japan." Most of them were younger sons from rural communities, and thus not the heirs of their respective families. Their feelings are well expressed by one ex-*toko Jepang* owner in Java who wrote:

I was born as the fifth son of a poverty-stricken farmer in a remote mountain village of Kyūshū, grew up hearing my parents constantly saying "it is hard to make a living," and experienced the poverty and hopelessness of life in the stagnant countryside of the Meiji

⁶His name was Tsuruoka Kazuo, and he was born in 1896. After graduation from the Kuma Agricultural High School, he was employed in 1915 by the Mitsui Gōmei Kaisha, one of the big companies interested in tropical agriculture. In the same year, he was sent to join the company's Johor Baru branch. In 1917, he resigned from the company and decided to work as an independent merchant. After studying English for three years at the Rappa private school in Singapore, he went to Pagar Alam near Palembang to open a *toko Jepang* (Japanese shop). Interview with Tsuruoka, February 11, 1976.

⁷"To find one's bluebird" is a translation of a Japanese expression implying a combination of "fortune" and "destiny."

and Taishō periods. As a result I was determined to go overseas and live a new life. . . .⁸

However, when they drifted to these remote lands, they still felt proud of their country, which had accomplished modernization in contrast with these southern countries, and they lived with a strong sense of pride that Japan was a first-class nation comparable to those of the white peoples. In the one and a half years after Ichiki arrived there, he wrote a total of 35 letters to his mother in Japan.⁹ These letters reveal his ambition to build up the finest photo studio in the South Seas and his hope of inviting the family to join him in Palembang to accomplish the revival of the Ichiki family which was then in decline.¹⁰ The fact that Ichiki's life in Palembang during this early period is marked by his strong consciousness of being a member of a first-class nation and by an intense aspiration to succeed is indicated in his letters to his mother. He describes the Indonesian people as "lazy" and speaks of the Chinese as "extremely dirty" people; he looked down on the native community with a mixed sense of superiority and irritation over their backwardness.

However, as he wrote in one of his letters to his mother, he was more inclined toward thinking and reflecting than others, and he liked to read religious and philosophical books, thus developing his own inner world. To a man like Ichiki, the way of life of the Japanese around him, whose sole desire was to succeed commercially, seemed unsatisfactory and wanting in something. Ichiki, who was now quite versate in the Indonesian language, must have sensed the sprouting nationalism of the Indonesian youth through such resolutions as the Sumpah Pemuda made at the second National Youth Congress in 1928.

Several years passed. Ichiki now grew whiskers, wore a *topi* and smoked home-grown tobacco like Indonesian youth. Gradually Ichiki found more pleasure in associating with Indonesian people than in joining the Japanese community or making friends with white men at the Catholic church, in which faith he had been raised. He now observed weekly holidays together with Indonesian friends.

Compilation of an Indonesian-Japanese Dictionary

In 1933, Ichiki Tatsuo left Palembang, where he had spent six years, for Bandung, a military base town in West Java.¹¹ This city of

⁸Jagatara Tomono-Kai (ed.), *Jagatara Kanwa* (Tōyama: Jagatara Tomono-Kai, 1968), p. 176.

⁹These letters were bound by his mother as *Letters from the South Seas*. After her death in May 1945, this collection was kept by Tatsuo's older sister and later was given to the author.

¹⁰For example, in the letter of September 9, 1928, he wrote as follows: "First of all, I want all my family to come here and make a happy home together, for my family, both parents and brothers, have had such a miserable life for so long."

¹¹He went to Bandung because of his youngest brother Naohiro's death there. Naohiro had been invited to Palembang by Tatsuo in late 1929. However, sometime around the year 1933, he went on to Bandung and worked at a Japanese-owned photo studio.

Bandung is located on a beautiful plateau and is called "Kota Kembang" by the Sundanese people who live there.

When Ichiki came to Bandung, there were many toko Jepang around the *alun-alun* (town square) in the central part of the city, and it looked almost like a Japanese town. The local Japanese had even built an elementary school there in 1932.¹² These Japanese were active and prosperous and lived happily together with the native people.¹³ There were three photo studios operated by Japanese in Bandung, and Ichiki worked at the one run by Hoshina Katsukichi, a native of Hyōgo prefecture near Ōsaka.

In this period of his life, Ichiki was unhappy and dissatisfied. He was even more taciturn than before, had few friends, and was frustrated because his hope for success had not been realized. Furthermore, he could not quite get along with his employer Hoshina, who was more of an artist than a commercial photo studio operator. So he left this photo studio in less than one year.

After that, he was found working as a conductor for a Japanese-owned bus company in the suburbs of Bandung. But such a job did not suit Ichiki, who was not sociable to begin with. So he soon left this job and found refuge in the home of Iti, the daughter of a very poor family in the small town of Sumedang near Bandung, with whom Ichiki had been going for some time.

According to the standards of the Japanese community in those days, to marry a native woman meant "degradation" from first-class nation status. Iti and her family lived in an *atap*-roofed (thatched) hut in a poor *kampung* of the town of Sumedang. She and her mother earned just enough money to live on by working for the neighboring farmers or as maids. And they accepted Ichiki without complaining at all. In the meantime Ichiki, while resigning himself to such a miserable life dependent on the women's kindness, resumed compilation of an Indonesian-Japanese dictionary, working at a wooden box in place of a desk.

Ichiki Tatsuo was no longer a member of the proud first-class nation who looked down on Indonesians as lazy people. He now shared the life of the poverty-stricken *kampung* people of native society, but his heart was filled with such peace. He felt almost completely identified with the Indonesians. It was the birth of a new Ichiki Tatsuo. It was in this hard life in the *kampung* that his love and sincere affection for the Indonesian people and his profound knowledge in the Indonesian language was fostered and grew up.

Although Ichiki had sort of turned his back on "modern Japan" and also against the local Japanese community, which was partly a replica of his motherland, he was greatly interested in the destiny of Japan in the 1930s. Ichiki held a profound belief in the eventual "libera-

¹²This Japanese school in Bandung was the fourth Japanese school set up in Indonesia, coming after those in Surabaya (1925), Batavia (1928), and Semarang (1929).

¹³Generally speaking, the Japanese of the toko Jepang were considered even by the Dutch to be mild and honest merchants who sold their goods at reasonable prices.

tion of Asian peoples by Japan." He was confident that it was the only means to liberate colonized peoples from foreign rule, and every time he came across this slogan he felt his heart throbbing fast with passion. Ichiki was now virtually becoming a member of the helpless people in the colonies. Growing in his mind were anti-western, anti-colonial feelings in a naive form, and excessive expectations of Japan, which he deemed the liberator of oppressed peoples.

Ichiki's interest in Japan's changing political situation was so great¹⁴ that he visited Bandung several times a month, going to the Japanese Club in the very early hours of the morning when scarcely any people were there, and devouring the Japanese newspapers and magazines sent from Japan and locally produced Japanese-language newspapers such as the *Jawa Nippō* (Java Daily) and the *Nichiran Shōgyō Shinbun* (Japanese-Dutch Commercial Times).¹⁵ Sometimes he translated newspaper articles on such subjects as the Japanese spirit of Bushidō (chivalry) and sold them to indigenous newspapers, thereby getting a small amount of money.

Becoming a Journalist

Back in Japan in the mid-1930s there was a growing interest in the South Seas area among the advocates of Asianism.¹⁶ Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933 and in the same year the first Pan-Asian Conference was held in Tokyo under the sponsorship of Iwata Fumio and others. Iwata was a strong supporter of Asianism who established the Greater Asia Society. Several delegates from Indonesia attended this conference. In the next year Kainan Dōmei (Open South League) was organized with the purpose of liberating the southern peoples through cooperation between them and the Japanese.¹⁷ The attention of Asianists was increasingly clearly directed toward the South Seas. In June of 1934, the Dutch East Indies government, which was becoming wary of Japan's rapid economic advance, held the first Japan-Dutch Indies Commercial Conference in Batavia.¹⁸ The following year, a

¹⁴For example, in a dialogue with Yoshizumi Tomegorō in the latter days of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, he disclosed that, "After the Manchurian Incident [September 1931], the Japanese communities in Indonesia paid close attention to the changing international situation and anticipated the growth and development of Japan's national power." *Shin Jawa*, II, 1 (January 1945), p. 12.

¹⁵The *Jawa Nippō* was established by Tsukuda Tekigai in Jakarta in 1920 and the *Nichiran Shōgyō Shinbun* by Kubo Tatsuji in the same city in 1934. The latter is said to have been more politically oriented than the former.

¹⁶For example, expressing the desire for a "new order" in Asia, one of the active Asianists wrote, "While peoples in Northern Asia are rejoicing under the flag of the rising sun, our brethren in the South Seas are still suffering under capitalist fetters, but we hear their cries for national determination getting stronger and louder." Tsujimori Tamizō, *Kokka-no Minami-Taiheiyō* (Tokyo: Kainan Dōmei Shuppan, 1935), p. 3.

¹⁷The central figure in this movement was Yokomori Yoshinori who had become increasingly familiar with Indonesian affairs ever since his first visit to Indonesia in 1927. He was also a close friend of Joseph Hassan.

¹⁸The background for this conference is sharply revealed by the following

Japanese inspection team headed by Mochizuki Genji, who was a close associate of the influential Asianist Iwata Ainosuke, visited Java to make surveys of the various local Japanese communities, getting in touch with leaders of these communities. Kubo Tatsuji, a native of Kagoshima prefecture, a man of strong Asianist inclinations and the head of the *Nichiran Shōgyō Shinbun*, was one of these leaders.

Ichiki's secret but frequent visits to the Bandung Japanese Club to read Japanese newspapers and magazines thus came at a time when the international environment around the Dutch East Indies was delicately swaying, and Japan's interest in the South Seas was becoming increasingly apparent. It was just at this time that Ichiki made a second start in his life overseas--as a journalist. It was Machida Taisaku, a native of Okayama prefecture and a senior leader of the Bandung Japanese community, who recommended Ichiki to the *Nichiran Shōgyō Shinbun*, recognizing a burning passion and real talent in this taciturn young man. This occurred early in 1936 when Japan was in turmoil after the February 26 Incident, an abortive coup staged by young right-wing military officers. In August that same year the policy of advancing southward was publicly announced for the first time.¹⁹

The *Nichiran Shōgyō Shinbun*, which was run by Kubo, an ardent advocate of Asianism, had on its staff several talented and courageous

statistics:

Sources of Imports of the Netherlands East Indies (as Percentages of Total Imports)

Country	Year								
	1905	1913	1923	1930	1932	1934	1936	1938	1940
Singapore	33.6	18.7	18.3	10.6	12.5	11.3	10.0	7.6	3.2
The Netherlands	31.0	33.3	21.0	18.9	15.8	13.3	16.7	22.2	12.5
U.S.A.	1.7	2.0	5.5	10.5	6.7	6.2	7.7	12.6	23.1
India	3.6	5.2	4.8	7.3	4.7	2.8	3.1	3.8	3.6
Japan	1.2	1.6	8.1	11.6	21.2	32.5	26.7	15.4	23.3
Britain	16.3	17.5	15.1	10.2	9.6	8.2	7.8	8.0	8.3
China	1.1	2.1	1.5	2.1	1.6	2.3	2.1	1.7	4.0
Australia	1.4	2.4	3.9	2.9	3.3	3.3	3.0	2.8	3.8
Germany	2.7	6.6	8.0	10.0	7.7	7.4	9.1	10.3	2.9
Others	7.4	10.6	13.8	15.9	16.9	17.7	13.8	15.6	14.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	105.0	100.0	100.0	99.2

Source: *Nihonjin-no Kaigai katsudō-nikansuru Rekishiteki-Kōsatsu Vol. 33* (Tokyo: Ministry of Finance, 1947), pp. 22-24.

¹⁹This southern policy was stated in the *Kokusaku-no Kijyun* (Basis of Foreign Policy of Japan) as follows: "On the one hand, take measures for national development overseas, especially in the South Seas, laying most emphasis on the Outer South Seas, and strive to extend our influence gradually through peaceful means so as to avoid provoking other nations as much as possible. With this we may fully strengthen our national power together with the completion of the building up of Manchukuo, on the other." For the detailed contents and background of this policy, see for example Kajima Kenkyū-jo (ed.), *Nippon Gaiko-shi Dai-22* (Tokyo: Kajima Kenkyū-jo, 1974), introduction.

young men such as Yoshizumi Tomegorō²⁰ and Kaneko Keizō, as well as Ichiki. It became a sort of gathering-place for young Asianists in Java. In July of 1937, this newspaper absorbed another Japanese newspaper, the *Jawa Nippō*, and changed its name to *Tōindo Nippō* (East Indies Daily); but its tone did not change much. It continued to express strong anti-Dutch feelings in direct terms. Indeed, after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War on July 7, 1937, it increased its attacks on the western colonial powers, which were considered by Japan as blocking her attempts to establish a new order in Asia.

In the meantime, the Dutch East Indies government, which had already banished major nationalist leaders like Sukarno and Hatta from Java, thereby incapacitating the nationalist movement on that island, increasingly came to regard Japan as the greatest menace to its power. Accordingly, the Dutch stepped up their surveillance of local Japanese leaders. The colonial authorities were shocked to discover the agents of an abominable imperialist state behind the owners of toko Jepang, whom they had hitherto considered as hard-working oriental petit-bourgeois. It was only a matter of time before the activities of Ichiki and others who were in contact with various Indonesian nationalist leaders fell under suspicion. In 1938, Ichiki devoted more and more of his energy to the project of publishing, with Japanese support, an Indonesian newspaper designed to influence the native population.²¹ In order to discuss this project more concretely, Ichiki returned to Tokyo in August 1938. But before leaving for Indonesia again, he received a telegram from the Dutch authorities in Batavia forbidding his re-entry to Java because of his anti-Dutch activities.

Thereafter, Ichiki was employed in Tokyo as a part-time researcher at the South Seas Bureau of the Foreign Ministry and at Section Six of the Second Section of the Army General Staff, which was in charge of collecting information on the western colonial powers in the South Seas. He obtained these research assignments on the recommendation of Iwata Ainosuke, who was an influential "string-puller" among political and military leaders.

During his stay in Tokyo in the fall of 1941, Ichiki married a girl who was a distant cousin and who had a home in the suburbs of Tokyo. These married days represented the most peaceful and secure part of his brief but eventful life.

In the spring of 1941, the second Japan-Dutch Indies Commercial Conference, which had opened in September 1940, came to a rupture; the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands gradually strengthened their economic embargo against Japan. War in the South came to be talked about widely in Japan. Under such domestic and international circumstances, Ichiki's ability in the Indonesian language and his

²⁰For a brief introduction to Yoshizumi in English, see Anderson, *Java*, pp. 457-58.

²¹This project was promoted by Kubo Tatsuji, Kaneko Keizō, and some government officials in Tokyo. Saeroen, the editor of *Pemandangan*, was expected to be editor-in-chief. Concerning this project, see *Ten Years of Japanese Burrowing in the Netherlands East Indies* (New York: The Netherlands Information Bureau, 1942), pp. 66-78. In this report, Ichiki is referred to as Mominoki, his mother's family name, which he used in those days.

local experience were highly valued. He spent busy days involved in preparations for the war and the coming military administration of Java. He was full of hope that his long-awaited liberation of Indonesia by Japan was finally approaching. Both his public and private life were full and satisfactory. He lived a most worthwhile existence at this time.

It was now that Ichiki became a close friend with Joseph Hassan.²² Hassan was an Indonesian independence-fighter who had been secretly sent to Japan by his Japanese comrades in Java, such as Machida Taisaku and Satō Nobuhide, to broadcast appeals to his people back home over the Japanese Navy's shortwave radio transmitter. Hassan would sing *Indonesia Raya* and ardently talk about his country's approaching liberation by Japan. Ichiki and Hassan would spend many hours enthusiastically talking about the tomorrow of the Indonesian people after they were liberated. Ichiki was convinced that the war that eventually would break out would be a true "Greater East Asian War" to liberate the Southern peoples under Japanese leadership. By means of this war the myth of the superiority of the white men would be destroyed and the colonized peoples would be freed from centuries-old oppression. Ichiki's sincere passion for the Indonesian people and their independence was often expressed in his conversations with other members of the Sixteenth Propaganda Group of the Japanese Army, including such famous writers as Ōya Sōichi, Ōki Atsuo, and Tomizawa Uio. This team, popularly called the "Culture Corps," was headed by Colonel Machida Keiji, a military officer with literary inclinations.²³ Machida recalled later that Ichiki was the "conscience of the Propaganda Group" and the man who fully and truly understood Indonesia and its people. He added that during the voyage south and at the staging camp in Taiwan Ichiki always sang *Indonesia Raya* or the folk songs of Java and that he talked about nothing but Merdeka.²⁴

Divorce from Japan

In March 1942, the Sixteenth Army was dispatched to Java and overthrew the "350-year-long" Dutch rule over Indonesia with unexpected ease. The troops were given an overwhelming welcome by the Indonesian people, who had secretly regarded Japan as their liberator even before the outbreak of the war. However, pro-Japanese Indonesian nationalist leaders were soon to be disappointed by victorious Japan. Although they were ready with a list of ministers to run their independent Republic of Indonesia, the Japanese Sixteenth Army, far from accepting their list, from the start gave them a series of harsh directives. These directives included a prohibition on all activities related to politics--speeches, rallies, propaganda, etc. Even the singing of *Indonesia Raya* and hoisting the Merah-Putih flag were banned. To

²²The spelling of Joseph is based on his brief handwritten autobiography (in English). This autobiography is now kept by Yokomori Yoshinori. Usually Joseph is written in the more Indonesian-style Jusuf.

²³The "Culture Corps" came into being at the suggestion of Lieutenant-General Yamashita Tomoyuki, who had just returned from a trip to Germany and Italy. He had been impressed with the activities of the German Propaganda Company.

²⁴Interview with Machida Keiji, December 23, 1974.

Ichiki, who had hoped from the bottom of his heart for an independent Indonesia through the aid of Japan, this was a great shock and disappointment.

The Japanese military administration's most urgent priority was the acquisition of those key national defense resources essential for the waging of war; and this policy was quite evident from the very beginning of the occupation. Ichiki's outlook on the "Greater East Asian War" was thus shaken to its roots. Prime Minister Tōjō made no further reference to Indonesian independence, not even when he promised, at a session of the Imperial Diet in early 1943, that he would give independence to the Philippines and Burma by the end of the year. Hassan, who had earlier broadcast enthusiastically from Tokyo promising Japanese assistance for Indonesia's independence, was furious at the attitude of the Japanese government. Shouting "I have been lying to my people, Japan has betrayed Indonesia . . .," he burst into tears and embraced his Japanese comrades. Ichiki was one of them. As he became more and more frustrated over Japan's conduct toward the Indonesian people he gradually came to resent his own country.

As the war proceeded, the Japanese military administration on Java came to mitigate its initial stern attitude to some extent. It admitted some Indonesian leaders to senior administrative positions as a form of political participation in place of granting independence. In October 1943, it organized the Peta Army, which later became the core of independent Indonesia's armed forces. After the Peta was set up, Ichiki worked as a part-time officer at its Education Division, located in Bogor. He built a secluded house on a rubber plantation and called himself, on account of his rather dark skin, the "crow of Bogor." His job was to translate Japanese Army manuals such as the *Rikugun Hohei Sōten* (Infantry Manual) into Indonesian and to edit *Pradjoerit*, a magazine for the *Heihō* (Indonesian auxiliary forces attached to the Imperial Army). The quiet environment and type of work suited Ichiki, who preferred to be alone absorbed in solitary thinking. He found satisfaction in his work despite his deep sense of distrust toward the basic principles of the Japanese military administration. Through his work, he felt he could still be of some service to the Indonesian people.²⁵

However, after the end of 1944, no marked progress could be observed in terms of concrete measures toward granting independence. Meanwhile the military situation in other parts of the South Seas theater deteriorated steadily. As a result many *rōmusha* (forced laborers) and essential commodities such as rice were compulsorily extracted from Indonesia and sent to the war-zones, causing small-scale anti-Japanese armed resistance in various parts of Java.

It was under such circumstances that news of Japan's defeat reached Ichiki on August 15, 1945. The Japanese military authorities in Indonesia, who had imposed unlimited personal and material sacrifices upon

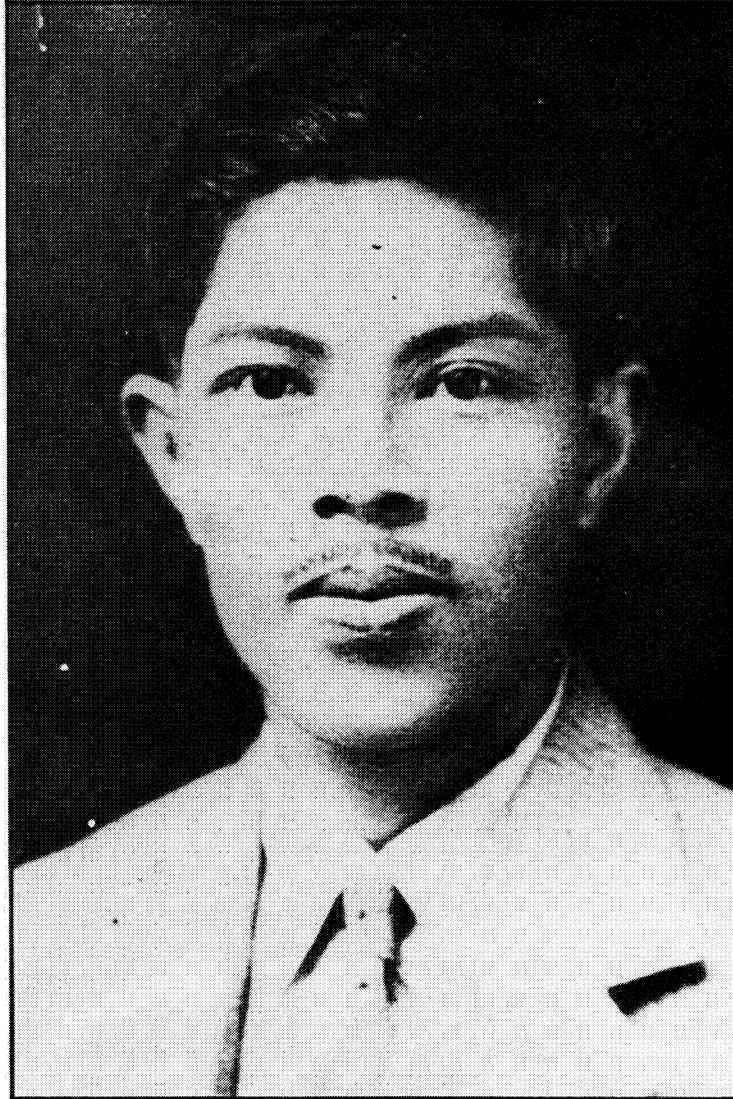
²⁵In a letter to his wife written in early October 1944, he wrote, "I am filled with deep emotions at this time of the first anniversary of the formation of Peta and hearing about Prime Minister Koiso's announcement approving the independence of the East Indies [September 1944] . . . I feel especially clear-headed of late, with the translation and the writing progressing so smoothly. It is now easier to write in Indonesian than in my native language."

the Indonesians in exchange for promises of independence, now made a turnabout and, subserviently abiding by the orders of the victorious Allies, declared they would have nothing more to do with Indonesian independence. Furthermore, they disbanded the Peta on the pretext that there was a great possibility that the Allies would recognize Indonesian independence and it would be better for Indonesia not to have arms and weapons since this might damage the image of Indonesia as a peace-loving nation.²⁶ The most urgent concern of the Japanese military authorities was to avoid anything that might cause harm to the "national polity" of Japan.

During the brief military administration that lasted three and a half years, Ichiki Tatsuo saw with his big, clear eyes that Japan had betrayed the Indonesian people twice, once at the beginning of that period and once again at the very end. So, on August 15, 1945, the day of Japan's surrender, Ichiki said farewell to Japan. He also opposed the Allied Forces which were taken to represent "justice" in those days; he resisted the landing Dutch forces and was determined to share with the Indonesians the destiny of his new motherland, the Republic of Indonesia, not as the Japanese Ichiki Tatsuo but as the pemuda Abdul Rachman.²⁷

²⁶This is the claim of Miyamoto Shizuo, one of the staff officers of the Sixteenth Army at the end of the war, in a speech to the meeting of the Japanese South-east Asian History Association held on June 30, 1973, in Tokyo.

²⁷Concerning the activities of Ichiki Tatsuo after August 15, 1945, see Soekardi (ed.), *Sekitar Perdjuangan Sumeru Selatan* (Jakarta: ?, 1950). The name of Abdul Rachman was given to Ichiki by H. Agus Salim who had worked as an adviser to the Education Division of the Peta during the Japanese occupation. This type of name-giving was not unusual among Japanese who had won the respect of Indonesians whom they themselves looked up to and honored. Another example of this is Yoshizumi Tomegorō who was given the name Arif by Tan Malaka.



A Photograph of "Abdul Rachman"
(1906-49) in late 1941