

The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War: In cooperation with the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation. Edited by Peter Post (general editor), William H. Frederick, Iris Heidebrink, and Shigeru Sato. Co-edited by William Bradley Horton and Didi Kwartanada. Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2010. 700 pp. and numerous illustrations.

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Introduction

The publication of *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War: In cooperation with the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation* will be welcomed by scholars, students, and those concerned with the period of Japanese occupation, not only in Southeast Asia, but throughout Asia and the Pacific. Certainly an important reference work, this book can also be essential reading for students, scholars, and researchers in understanding the influence of the Japanese occupation on Indonesia. The volume provides substantial historical information on the social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of the Japanese occupation in the region. The publication of this book, with contributions from scholars who specialize in various regions, is, indeed, useful and significant in linking the Dutch colonial and Japanese occupation eras, especially the years 1942 to 1945. Indeed, there are few readily available books that cover the topic in the same depth and scope as this new volume.

The book's presentation is very attractive. It is cased in the very best quality hardcover and illustrated with numerous, interesting photographs. One photograph shows an Indonesian woman gazing at her young son dressed in a soldier's uniform. There is also an image with a statement on *Djawa Baroe* (New Java) pointing out the differences in lifestyle between the *Djawa Baroe* and the *Djawa Lama* (Old Java). In *Djawa Baroe*, we can see the strong influences of the Japanese on the local people of Asia in general, and of Southeast Asia in particular. There is also a snapshot of a diligent-looking Javanese worker, or *Perdjoerit Pekerdja* (working soldier); some Javanese were very loyal to the Japanese, who were seen as "liberators" of the Asian people from Western influences. The strong impact of the Japanese on Asian people can also be seen on the book's cover in a reproduced Japanese "Triple-A" propaganda flyer: "*Asia tjahaja, Asia pelindoeng, and Asia pemimpin*" (Japan is: Asia's Light, Asia's Protector, Asia's Leader). There is also an illustration of a nationalist leader wearing Japanese dress and a black *kopiah*, symbolizing that the nationalist figure appreciates the arrival of the Japanese in Java.

Structure of the Book

Anyone who carries out research on the period of the Japanese occupation in Indonesia will doubtless be helped by this book, since it analyzes many aspects of this difficult period of life in the region. Indeed, Japanese occupation influenced the formation of modern Indonesian nationalism, which brought about Indonesian independence.

Structured on the basis of significant topics and time periods, the encyclopedia is classified into eight chapters.¹ Due to its substance and organization, the book is more useful and comprehensive than books published in previous years. This volume provides different perspectives, little bias, and great objectivity, since the writers are not only Japanese but also Western and Indonesian scholars. It fills some research gaps since the extant books on the Japanese occupation in Indonesia stress political issues (such as the structure of the Japanese military system and the influence of that system on emerging Indonesian youth movements geared toward independence), with little analysis of social, cultural, and economic issues. I consider the historical analysis provided by this book to be very valuable, as it provides a context for understanding Japan's role in the future development in the region.

The Japanese Occupation in Indonesia: Perspectives and Changes

The volume's varied contributors provide multiple perspectives and refreshing objectivity on issues pertaining to Indonesian history during the Pacific War. The book also contains important explanations of what happened at the local level, particularly in outer Java, besides covering events in Jakarta and Tokyo. This encyclopedia is completed by some important maps showing the Japanese conquest of the Netherlands East Indies in 1941–42, as well as a map of allied military operations and positions, mid-July to August 1945. Thanks to the maps, we can grasp what happened at the beginning of the Japanese landing on the west coast of Sumatra (including the dates). Still, we do not know much about what happened in the regions outside Sumatra and Java, including at Nusa Tenggara, where the Japanese landed before crossing to Australia and Java.²

Also included are useful tables; figures; rosters of people, events, and institutions; Indonesian and Japanese glossaries; a bibliography; and an index. There is also a diagram of the hierarchical structure of the Japanese military force in the Netherlands East Indies, which is very effective in illustrating the arrangement of the Japanese occupation in the colonized countries, which lasted for approximately three and a half years. This wealth of information distinguishes this volume from other books on the same topics. A study of the contents of this text will provide important insights regarding what was changed by and during the Japanese presence, particularly at the beginning of the occupation; what Japanese influences were adopted and, later on, adapted; and what kinds of policies were instituted during the Japanese occupation. How did the Japanese oppose the Dutch colonial rulers, and how did they defeat the Dutch and later persuade the local inhabitants to join in with the Japanese imperial power? The relations between the Japanese and Southeast Asian young people, for

¹ Peter Post, general editor, wrote Chapter I, General Introduction, and Chapter II, Historical Overview. The topical chapters, each with its own introduction, are: Chapter III, Occupation: Administration and Policies; Chapter IV, Occupation: Coercion and Control; Chapter V, Occupation: Economy; Chapter VI, Occupation: Society and Social Change; Chapter VII, Occupation: Culture; and Chapter VIII, Culture Post-war: Burdens and Memory.

² I Ketut Ardhana, "Nusa Tenggara nach Einrichtung der Kolonialherrschaft 1915 bis 1950," (Eastern Indonesia after the Establishment of the Dutch Colonial Policies, 1915–1950; dissertation, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Passau, 2000).

instance, are discussed in this volume by William H. Frederick.³ There is also an explanation of the relationship between the Muslims and the Japanese contributed by Yasuko Kabayashi, on pages 300–311.

Shigeru Sato, co-editor, developed numerous chronological tables for this volume, making it easy for readers to understand in great depth what really happened during the Japanese occupation period. Readers will see how one historical event affected others, thus revealing the web-like impact of military and political developments.

Local, National, and Regional Perspectives

From this book we can also see how the Japanese acknowledged and, to a degree, respected, the unique culture and traditions of the indigenous inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago. In Indonesia, the dominant population is Muslim, and this group is commonly described in Dutch colonial sources as anti-Dutch, while non-Muslim groups, like the Christians, are commonly described as pro-Dutch. Thus, Indonesian Christians found themselves in a precarious situation, as the Japanese perceived them as being pro-Dutch (p. 80). Nevertheless, the Japanese paid serious attention to all the various population groups in order to reassure them and win their support, with particular consideration given to Muslims. Due to the necessity of obtaining Indonesian cooperation, the Japanese attitude toward Indonesian independence was consistent and the Japanese invaders actively introduced a more ethnically sensitive or liberal policy regarding self rule than that imposed on any other occupied area in Southeast Asia (p. 41).

This volume includes many important contributions on how Indonesian Muslims dealt with the Japanese policies in their daily lives. Here are some samples: Taufik Abdullah, on "Nationalist Activities during the Japanese Period"; Mestika Zed, on "Giyugun: The Indigenous Defence Force in Sumatra"; Erwiza Erman, on "Under the Mitsui Zaibatsu Coal and Labour in Sumatra"; Gusti Asnan, on "Sumatra's Regional Governments"; Didi Kwartanada, on "Chinese Socio-Cultural Life in Java during the Occupation" and "The Road to Resinification Education for the Chinese during the Japanese Occupation"; and P. J. Suwarno, on "Romusha from Yogyakarta." To reiterate, however, what is lacking in this book is that it does not touch upon the important and interesting issues of what happened in outer Java and Sumatra in the eastern parts of the Indonesian archipelago, namely the Island of Timor (part of the province of Nusa Tenggara). Since Timor, because of its strategic location and resources, was the first Indonesian region to be occupied by the Japanese, this volume might have given Timor more consideration. Moreover, Timor had long played a major role with regard to commerce, not only for the Dutch colonial power but also for neighboring countries, such as Australia.

We can trace Timor's importance back to the 1930s, when, through diplomatic suppression and military aggression, the Japanese government tried to establish the concept of a Greater East Asia under Japanese leadership. First came the attack of

³ William H. Frederick, "Oral Tale of the Invasion Gorontalo (North Sulawesi)," p. 20.

Manchuria,⁴ then, in 1937, the Japanese began spreading their influence in the Pacific region. In Indonesia, the Japanese even promised to assist Indonesians in gaining independence from the Dutch.⁵

Early in 1941, Japan was interested in establishing a direct air route to Portuguese Timor. This, of course, caused worries to both the Australians and the Dutch. In the previous year, in October, at a meeting of the Australian Cabinet, it was stated that the Japanese occupation of Timor was a direct threat both to Australia and Portuguese Timor.⁶ By occupying Timor, Japan would cut the air corridor between Australia and Java. Thus, it can be understood why Timor was occupied by Japan in February 1942, while Java was not occupied until a bit later, in March 1942.

Though the Japanese government viewed Timor as the most suitable place to land its aircraft and troops, it also paid serious attention to other islands, like Java, due to the need to mobilize a labor force. In addition, the Japanese administration reached out to local Islamic leaders (*kiyai*) by promoting an “anti-Western” war. Japan’s allure to Islamic groups was significant, particularly to the pre-war, nationalist Majelis Islam A’la Indonesia (MIAI, Islamic Association), which was allowed to exist as the sole Islamic organization until October 1943, after which time it was joined by Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia (Masyumi, Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims). The Japanese even provided training for Muslim militias, like the *Hizbullah*, and other training programs for local youth (p. 41). To my mind, however, this book does not draw a link between what happened in Java and what happened in other areas, such as Nusa Tenggara.

While much that has been written about Bali under Japanese occupation focuses on political themes, I note that Bali’s economic, social, and cultural issues during that period are seldom discussed in this volume or elsewhere. This kind of perspective would have added to the strength of this encyclopedia.

Moreover, I would have liked to see more explanation on how important the Japanese occupation was for the people in the region. Tambaland Island, which is located in West Kalimantan, was the first region of the Netherlands Indies occupied by the Japanese, on December 27, 1941. Tarakan island, in East Kalimantan, was occupied on January 11, 1942.⁷ We do not have sufficient information on why those two islands were invaded by the Japanese army. Subsequently, there were many impacts on developments in the region, when the areas were occupied and, later, liberated. For instance, it can be said that the Japanese occupation unsettled the dynamics of the region and opened a window into the highlands, where the local people live.⁸ This occurred when the region became, first, a center for covert military operations. Then, as Jay Crain argues, the arrival of Western allied units also brought significant changes

⁴ Christopher C. H. Wray, *Timor 1942: Australian Commandos at War with the Japanese* (Canberra: Hutchinson, 1990), p. 4.

⁵ Bernhard Dahm, *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), p. 79.

⁶ Lionel Wigmore, *The Japanese Thrust* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1957), p. 46.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

⁸ I Ketut Ardhana, Jayl Langub, and Daniel Chew, “Borders of Kinship and Ethnicity: Cross-Border Relations between the Kelalan Valley, Sarawak, and the Bawan Valley, East Kalimantan,” *Borneo Research Bulletin* 35 (2004): 144–78.

to the area.⁹ In this case, the effects of the Europeans, with their extraordinary amount of goods, medicines, weapons, and other technology, initiated a level and quality of communication previously unknown between various Lun Dayeh settlements. Thus, one result of the Japanese occupation might have been to give borderland communities a common bond and a feeling of togetherness.¹⁰ It would have been wonderful if this book had provided such information in order for students and scholars to better develop their research on the period of Japanese occupation.

A Significant Contribution

Peter Post, as general editor, noted that not all themes and topics that had been planned could be covered in this large volume (p. 4). Thus, the editors sought a fine regional balance, paying equal attention to developments in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and the islands of the eastern archipelago. However, in fact, it was difficult to achieve that balance. Post writes that scholarship and resources on Java and Sumatra are much more sophisticated than those that exist for the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago (*ibid.*).

In other words, the editor recognized that it is difficult to collect quality information on the Indonesian archipelago as a whole. I concur, and suggest that if we want more sources on the period, we could start by interviewing people, perhaps retired government officials, in order to be able to record and report on what they experienced when they were young. In addition to interviews, scholars could hold seminars to collect and share material on the role of the local people in Indonesia during the occupation. Last, but not least, of course, new students can be motivated to carry out research in relation to the Japanese occupation, especially in those regions that have yet to be studied in-depth.

The lack of information and sources on the period of Japanese occupation in the region is one reason why there are not many students or researchers carrying out their work on the period. In my experience, many students ignore this topic, as they consider that there are only a few books available in the libraries to guide their research. Additionally, there are not many informants still alive to interview regarding this research topic. Thus, I think the publication of this book is significant and will be very useful in filling the gaps between what happened before and after the Japanese occupation in the Netherlands East Indies.

⁹ Jay Crain, "The Lun Dayeh," in *World Within: The Ethnic Groups of Borneo*, ed. Victor King (Kuala Lumpur: Abdul Majeed, 1994), pp. 123–42.

¹⁰ I Ketut Ardhana et al., "Borders of Kinship and Ethnicity," p. 150.