

JAPANESE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION IN MALAYA—ITS
FORMATION AND EVOLUTION IN REFERENCE TO SULTANS,
THE ISLAMIC RELIGION, AND THE MOSLEM-
MALAYS, 1941-1945

by

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ONE OF THE IMPORTANT PROBLEMS FOR THE JAPANESE MILITARY in the administration of occupied Malaya was the treatment of sultans and of the Islamic religion. Questions confronting the military were: (1) what should be the status of sultans as the heads of the Islamic religion and their political position in relation to the Malays; (2) how much power should they be allowed to retain as spiritual leaders of the sultanates; (3) how should they be persuaded to give up their authority and how induced to cooperate with the Japanese in order to win the confidence of the people of Japan through their prestige and power; and (4) how should the Islamic religion and its related tradition be treated. These questions were vital to the Japanese military if Japan wanted to remain the overlord of Malaya. They were more so as the war protracted, since Japan relied increasingly on Malays for the acquisition of resources vital to her national defense; and sultans offered, at least in the transitional period of the occupation years, a convenient utility value to the military for pacifying and winning the indigenous Malay Muslims. The importance of sultans in Malay society is seen in the following quotation.

The key political relationship of the contemporary Malaysian is with the sultanate. This relationship takes two forms. First, a Malaysian is a citizen of the country by virtue of being a subject of the sultan, and all his prerogatives as a citizen originate from this relationship. This is more than a mere formality since there usually is a strong bond of an earlier feudal relationship. There is a keen popular interest in the pomp and ceremony associated with the sultanate and in the general well-being of the ruler. The second form of the relationship is derived from the role of sultan as the protector of the Moslem establishment in each state. As protector of the state religion the sultan is linked to the Malaysian people of his state through imams, the religious ritual officials in the mosques, and through the *kadi*, the local Moslem functionaries. This link is not personal, but it is nonetheless of basic importance.¹

¹ Norton Ginsburg and Chester F. Roberts, Jr., *Malaya* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1958), p. 216.

This was the basic politico-religious relationship that existed between the sultans and the Malays in traditional Malay society before World War II.

The question of the treatment of the sultanate and religion weighed heavily on the minds of Japanese military planners in their preparations for occupation. But Japan's interest in the Islamic religion was of relatively recent history, dating back to the mid-1920's.² Further, this interest was largely confined to the geographical territory of the Middle East almost until the outbreak of the Pacific War. The earliest evidence of the Japanese military's concern for the sultan and Islamic religion in Southeast Asia was seen in a document prepared by a three man study group organized by the First Bureau (Operation) of the Army General Staff.³ This draft, *Principles of the Administration of Occupied Southern Areas*, was drawn up in March, 1941. According to this plan, "Malaya is to be placed under Japanese rule [as part of the Japanese Empire] and Malay states are to be guided by a supervisory military administration." "Sultans are to be left alone," it stated, "as the nominal rulers under the supervision of a military government, which shall be replaced by an advisory system once public order has been restored. Strict measures must be taken to respect the freedom of religion and belief as well as customs [in order to win the hearts of the local inhabitants]."

This draft became the basis for *Outlines on the Conduct of Military Administration*, which was formulated by the Headquarters of the Southern Expeditionary Forces (SEF) on November 3, 1941, and for *Principles Governing the Administration of Occupied Southern Areas*, which was adopted on December 20, 1941, at the Liaison Conference between the Imperial Headquarters and the Government.⁴ The section relative to sultans and religion in the former document was almost a carbon copy of

² Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun Indonesian Islam Under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945* (The Hague and Bandung, The Netherlands and Indonesia: W. van Hoeve Ltd., 1958), pp. 103-104.

³ Japan, Sambo Honbu Dai 1-bu Kenkyu-han, *Nampo sakusen ni okeru senryochi tochi yokoan*, (March, 1941), n.p. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo.

The study group was headed by Col. Obata Nobuyoshi, who became chief of staff of the Imperial Guard Division for the occupation of Northern Sumatra in February, 1942. The other two members were Lt. Col. Nishimura Otoji and Lt. Col. Tofuku. Lt. Col. Nishimura drafted the section on Malaya and he became chief of the General Affairs Department, Military Administration in Java, in 1944.

The draft was kept in a locked safe in the First Bureau until the Fall of 1941.

⁴ Japan, Nampogun Soshireibu, *Nampu gunsei shikko keikaku (an)*, November 3, 1941, n.p. Marked "Military Secret". Mimeo. Japan, Daihonei-Seifu Renrakukaigi, *Nampo senryochi gyosei jissai yoryo*, November 20, 1941. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo. The English translation of the document is found in Harry J. Benda, James K. Irikura, Koichi Kishi, *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia: Selected Documents* (New Haven, Conn.: Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, 1965), pp. 1-3.

See Introduction to *Nampo sakusen ni okeru senryochi tochi yokoan* for the document became the reference for the basic instrument of military administration in the Southern region.

the March draft, recognizing the utility value of the sultans for the pacification and restoration of public order as well as for getting popular support of the people. The sultan's religious position, and the indigenous customs based on religion should be respected for the sake of stabilizing public feeling and of inducing the people to cooperate with Japan's policy.⁵ This position was still immutable in March, 1942, by which time most of the Southeast Asian territories except the Philippines had fallen into Japanese hands, because the higher military circles reaffirmed the policy in March in a top classified position paper, *Fundamental Principle Relative to the Execution of the Military Government of Occupied Areas*.⁶ One note of interest in the document is that the military, for the first time, stated succinctly that the Philippines, the Netherlands Indies, and Malaya were to remain the "permanent possessions" of Japan.⁷ Such was the official policy of the Imperial General Staff and the Headquarters of the SEF in relation to sultans and religion in Malaya.

Malaya was assigned to the Twenty-Fifth Army under the command of Lt. General Yamashita Tomoyuki. Its military administrative matters were entrusted to Maj. General Manaki Keishin, deputy Chief of Staff of the invading army and concurrently chief of the military administration, but the real command of the administration was wielded by Col. Watanabe Wataru, deputy chief, who was given authority to formulate and execute administrative policies by General Yamashita.⁸ Before his departure for Saïgon on November 25, Watanabe had conversations with several knowledgeable persons on the sultan question, religion, and nationality. Among them were the Rev. Otani Kozui, the spiritual head of the *Jodo Shin* (True Western Paradise) Sect of Buddhism; Marquis Tokugawa Yoshichika, a well known tiger hunter in Malaya and a good friend

⁵ Japan, Nampogun Soshireibum *Nampo gunsei shikko keikaku (an)*, n.p.

⁶ Japan, Sambo Honbu?, *Senryochigunsei jissshi ni kansuru kisoyoryo*, March 1942, n.p. Marked, "Top Secret." Mimeo.

⁷ This position relative to the Philippines changed in January, 1943, when Premier Tojo announced that the Philippines was to gain independence. An undated Army document, possibly prepared no later than June, 1942, *Gunsei shido hosaku*, stated that the Philippines and Burma would be expected to gain independence in the future.

⁸ Interview with Col. Watanabe Wataru, July 9, 1966. Watanabe's military career was unique in the sense that he never commanded a field army until 1945. Instead, he spent most of the 1930's in China and in the political arena. He served as chief of the *Tokumu Kikan* (Special Agency) at Peking and Tsinan from 1937 to 1938 and was a political officer attached to the North China Liaison Office of the China Development Board, or *Koain*, from 1939 to early 1941, when he became a member of the Total War Institute. It was in his China years that Watanabe was acquainted with General Yamashita, working with him and becoming his trusted follower. See his unpublished memoirs, *Daitoa Senso ni okeru Nampo gunsei no kaiko*, in his possession. The memoirs were written in a post war year (1948) based on his diary, *Nichi-Bei-Ei Eenso sanka nishhi*, (unpublished) 5 vols. also in his possession.

of the Sultan of Johore;⁹ and Nakayama Tadanao, who wrote a treatise, *Policies Suited for the Southern Region*, at Watanabe's request.¹⁰

It is worthwhile to pause briefly to examine Watanabe's philosophy of military administration,¹¹ because he left an indelible imprint upon the first phase of the administration from February, 1942, to March, 1943. He held the view that it was necessary to "coerce the natives with resolution at the beginning of occupation in order to meet the requirements of military operation." It was not desirable, he insisted, to commence a military administration with "a claptrap policy by giving them rosy promises and sympathy. That they had been subjugated to British rule for so long was God's punishment. They must be made to examine themselves and to show their penitence." He concluded:

The fundamental principle of my policy to indigenous people is to make them aware of their past mistakes; they must atone and cleanse themselves of the past stains. They must be taught to endure hardship together with the rest of the Asiatic peoples for the construction of Greater Asia. This nationality policy was the essence that I derived from ten years of my political experience in China.

It seemed that Watanabe arrived at this conclusion because he had serious misgivings about the outcome of the war for Japan¹² and his thought was set on the principle that even a small concession to native autonomy would hamper military operation, particularly in the acquisition of war material and supplies, as it had happened in China. Watanabe must have learned a lesson in north China that the empty promise of autonomy would not only inhibit military operation but also would restrict the freedom of maneuverability in dealing with sultans and the indigenous. Therefore, he was convinced that it was not a good policy to promise natives, in advance, a paradise and a comfortable material life under Japanese rule as long as the war continued.

⁹ Interview with Col. Watanabe, July 9, 1966. The Rev. Otani just returned from a trip to Southeast Asia. Marquis Tokugawa had made a number of tiger hunting trips to Malaya. These trips were said to cover up his objective of collecting intelligence for the military. See Nakayama Tadanao, *Namyo ni tekisuru seiji*, March, 1942, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰ The identity of Nakamaya remains obscure. Judging from the context of the treatise, he appeared to be a man of various interests and a man who was well versed in astronomy, geography, and medicine. He had been to China a few times. Watanabe apparently invited Nakayama to become his staff member but Nakayama declined it on the ground that he disliked western oriented bureaucrats and capitalistic industrialists who had been selected by the Army to staff the Malaya Military Administration. Instead, he wrote the treatise and dedicated it to Watanabe. Some of Nakayama's ideas, i.e. the harsh treatment of the Chinese, may have strengthened Watanabe's own conviction.

¹¹ Watanabe Wataru, *Daitoa Senso ni okeru gunsei no kaiko*, pp. 12-13, 27-29, 36. Hereafter *Watanabe Memoirs*.

¹² Watanabe Wataru, *Nichi-Bei-Ei Senso sanko nisshi*, December 8, 1941. Hereafter *Watanabe Nisshi*.

With this frame of mind, Watanabe found that the *Principle Governing the Military Administration of Occupied Southern Areas* fell short of his expectation. "I could not find in the document," he wrote, "the principle for the construction of the Great East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere, nor the guiding spirit for the administration of Southern region." As for the policy toward sultans, he ridiculed it, saying that a policy to "give them due respect and to use them for achieving our objectives is absurd."¹³ Dissatisfied with the established policy of the General Staff, he set out to organize his own ideas for the military administration after having consulted with the Rev. Otani, Marquis Tokugawa, and Nakayama mentioned above. The Rev. Otani proposed as a remedial measure to create an "independent Malaya under a constitutional monarchical government" apparently in place of the sultanate. "The monarch was to be nominated by ten electors for the tenure of seven years. The first head of the state, however, was to be named by the Japanese government."¹⁴ Watanabe declined to incorporate the proposal into the scheme of his plan for the sultans because he and his superiors in the central Army authority were not prepared to go to such an extent in dealing with sultans. And it was incompatible, to say the least, with the established principles set by the Imperial Headquarters-Government conference. Marquis Tokugawa came up with the idea of creating "princely states loyal to Japan, recognizing her suzerainty." "Strategic sultanates such as Johore may be incorporated into the Japanese Empire." Japan, the Marquis recommended, would "conduct foreign relations of those kingdoms and appoint a governor general for a federation of the Malay principalities." Finally, he advised the military to respect the position and prestige of sultans.¹⁵

In the midst of preparations in Tokyo, General Suzuki Sosaku, Chief of Staff of the Twenty-Fifth Army, summoned Watanabe to proceed to Saigon where he arrived in late November. In the words of Watanabe, the training of personnel, indoctrination, and formulation of the military administrative policy had hardly started when the invasion took place in the early morning hours of December 8, 1941.¹⁶ Consequently, the Twenty-Fifth Army was not accompanied with personnel in charge of sultans and religion, in contrast to the Sixteenth Army whose military administration department had organized, prior to the landing of Java in March, 1942, a religious department staffed with a number of Javanese Islamic followers.¹⁷ For one thing, Watanabe did not have sufficient time in which

¹³ *Watanabe Memoirs*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁴ Otani kozui, *Marei hanto zengo hoan*, n.d. Mimeo. Marked "Top Secret."

¹⁵ Tokugawa Yoshichika, *Nampo shokoku no juritsu mokuhyo*, n.d. Mimeo. Marked "Top Secret."

¹⁶ *Watanabe Memoirs*, pp. 26, 28.

¹⁷ Waseda daigaku Okuma kinen shakai kagaku kenkyujo, ed., *Indoneshiya ni okeru Nippon gunsei no kenkyu* (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Shoten, 1959), p. 225. Hereafter Waseda. Okuma Kenkyojo, *Indoneshiya ni okeru Nippon no gunsei*.

to conceive policies and their ramifications for the vast and complicated operation of their military administration. It is moreover doubtful whether he would have given more thought to the sultan and religious affairs even if he were given time for preparations. My two conversations with Watanabe and reading of his diary and memoirs failed to elicit from him that he had entertained some concrete ideas in dealing with sultans and religion prior to the invasion.

It is necessary here to discuss the sultan operation of the *F Kikan*, a special agency organized to assist the Indian Independent League, since its sultan operation smoothed the way for winning the support of the native Malays to the Japanese side during the Nippon Army's military drive. The *F Kikan* was under the command of the Headquarters of the SEF and its sultan operation followed along the line of the Army's central authorities, i.e. sultans were important for the winning of the confidence of the people and for the maintenance of security and peace.¹⁸ Major Fujiwara Iwaichi, the leader of the *F Kikan*, was a romantic idealist. He took a conciliatory policy toward sultans and put Lt. Nakamiya in charge of the Sultan operation. Nakamiya was assisted by Shiba, the former Japanese proprietor of a general store in Alor Star, Kedah, who was said to be on good terms with the Sultan of Kedah.¹⁹ There was one complication for the *F Kikan* in having adopted the conciliatory measure. The *F Kikan* had already solicited assistance for the Malay Operation from remaining members of the *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* (KMM), many of whose leaders had been arrested by the British authorities simultaneous with the outbreak of the war. The KMM was a Malay youth nationalist movement formed by a group of indigenous intellectuals. Members of this group were opposed to the feudal structure of the sultanate²⁰ and others just wanted changes in the stagnant Malay society. Fearing that the Japanese policy of supporting the two incompatible parties might engender distrust in the sincerity of Japanese intention to liberate the Malays and thus creating an unnecessary friction, Fujiwara conferred with the rank-and-file of the K.M.M. who had joined the *F Kikan* in southern Thailand. He managed on the night of December 4 to win them over to his side, nipping in the bud the danger of a split among the Malays themselves.²¹ At this time, the armada of the Nippon Army was sailing southward through the South China Sea approaching landing points in southern Thailand and northern Malaya.

¹⁸ Maruyama Shizuo. *Nakano gakko Takumu kikan'in no shuki* (Tokyo: Heiwa Shobo, 1948), p. 90.

¹⁹ Fujiwara Iwaichi, *F. Kikan* (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1966), p. 84.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 85 [f. William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967)], p. 222.

²¹ Fujiwara, *F. Kikan*, p. 85.

The Japanese troops landed at several places a few hours earlier than the Pearl Harbor attack and advanced rapidly southward. On December 14, the Japanese occupied Alor Star and the city's peace was immediately restored. In Alor Star the F Kikan's first opportunity to deal with a sultan presented itself when Lt. Makamiya "rescued" family members of the Sultan of Kedah, who had been hiding to escape from the looting of natives and Japanese soldiers.²² The Sultan's family were brought back to Alor Star from Sungei Patani where they had taken refuge.²³ Fujiwara himself disciplined two Japanese soldiers whom he caught looting the property of the Sultan of Kedah.²⁴ These two incidents made a deep impression upon Tengku Rahman, the eldest son of the Sultan of Kedah whom Fujiwara met on December 20 at Kulim. After expressing his gratitude to Fujiwara for having rescued and protected his family, property and natives, Tengku Rahman offered his voluntary service to appeal from the Penang Radio Station to his fellow Malays to assist the Japanese troops.²⁵ It is difficult to probe into his motive as to why he offered his service on his own volition.²⁶ One may surmise that it was a mixture of

²² The detail of the rescue operation is described by Lt. Nakamiya who commanded the operation. See his article, "Sarutan Kyushitsu," in *Nippon no Himitsusen*, a special issue of *Shukan Yomiuri* (December 1956), pp. 81-84. For Tengku Abdul Rahman's account of the escape and rescue operation, see Harry Miller, *Prince and Premier: A Biography of Tengku Abdul Rahman* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1959), pp. 59-63. Rahman's version did not mention his encounter with Nakamiya and subsequent negotiations with Nakamiya and Shiba, at the end of which he succeeded in persuading court advisors and agreed to cooperate with the Japanese military.

²³ Fujiwara's version on this score differed from Harry Miller's. According to Miller as told by Tengku Rahman, the family of the Sultan of Kedah fled Alor Star by the urging of the highest Malay authorities in Alor Star.

Abdul Rahman, who felt that his father should stay in the capital for the sake of maintaining the morale of his subject, "kidnapped" his father who was on his way to Penang. The young prince then secluded his father in the village of Siddim, where he remained until the Sultan was brought to Kulim on December 10. Then "he signed an agreement with the Japanese Governor." Harry Miller, *Prince and Premier: A Biography of Tengku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj First Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya*. (London: George G. Harrap & Co.), pp. 59-63.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122, 123. Fujiwara reported the incident to a superior officer of the two looting soldiers. The officer told Fujiwara later that the two soldiers had committed suicide to atone for their unbecoming and dishonorable conduct. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

Fujiwara told me in an interview that this stern and immediate discipline made a lasting impression on Tengku Rahman, who is today the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Interview with Fujiwara, August 17, 1966.

Prince Tengku Rahman cooperated with the Japanese during the occupation years. He became a District Officer in Kedah. He also became well acquainted with Kubata Shun, Governor of Perak (March 1942 — April 1943). Rahman invited Kubata to Malaya in 1960 as his personal guest, and he also held a reception for Japanese who had participated in the Malaya Military Administration, when he made a state visit to Japan in 1963. Interview with Kubata Shun, August 30, 1966.

²⁵ Fujiwara, *F. Kikan*, pp. 140, 151; Interview with Fujiwara, August 17, 1966, Nakamiya, *Nippon no Himitsusen*, p. 84.

²⁶ There is no mention of Tengku Rahman's offer in *Prince and Premier*. The author attempted to see Prime Minister Rahman in August, 1968 but was not able to see him for clarifying the point.

his political acumen and patriotism to his own people. For, in the first place, the Japanese were not his enemies but they were ready, Fujiwara in particular, to accept any indigenous leader as one of them in order to expedite the military operations. Abdul Rahman was, it seems, just as in a good bargaining position as the Japanese in extracting a concession from the Japanese, namely the protection of property and lives. He had seen the destruction of the war during his journey from Kulim to Alor Star and must have been convinced that his first duty as a senior royal member of the Sultanate was to guarantee the safety of property and lives of his peoples. Under the circumstances, cooperation with the Japanese was the only recourse to achieve this end. It was not so much a case of collaboration as it was of political expediency combined with patriotism to his people. Abdul Rahman was not certainly a willing tool of the Japanese overlord during the occupation years. His speech urging his countrymen to cooperate with the Japanese and to fight against the British, according to Fujiwara, was one of the decisive factors in winning the indigenous inhabitants in Malaya and Sumatra to the Japanese side during the Malayan operation.²⁷

As F Kikan members were getting support from natives and Indians, Col. Watanabe accompanied by his hastily organized administrative personnel of sixty officers and civilians joined Yamashita's headquarters at the front. Soon after the fall of Taiping on December 23, he drew up plans for military administration at Taiping. In making plans, he was assisted by Takase Toru with whom he had become acquainted in Tokyo.²⁸

Takase, who had worked for the *Tokumu Kikan* in Hankow, China, became an indispensable member of Watanabe's staff and in fact, Watanabe called him his "chief of staff."²⁹ So came into being what may be called the Watanabe-Takase team for military administration, which lasted until October, 1942.

Meanwhile, the meager knowledge of the staff of the Twenty-Fifth Army and of the Headquarters of the SEF about the actual situation of Malaya under wartime conditions and the sultans' ability to restore order proved to be far from adequate and impractical.³⁰ On December 31,

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

²⁸ *Watanabe Memoirs*, p. 25; Interview with Takase Toru, August 30, 1966.

Takase was introduced to Watanabe through Lt. Col. Tsuji Masanobu, a staff officer in charge of operation, Twenty-Fifth Army. Takase was not a novice in Malayan affairs. During 1940, he was in Malaya for the investigation of overseas Chinese affairs. The result of his intelligence work was a report on the Chinese in Malaya, which was submitted to and approved by the Army Chief of Staff. He was prominent in coercing the Chinese to "donate" fifty million yen to the Japanese military as a token of their atonement of their past sins in resisting the Japanese. Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down* (Singapore: Jitts & Co., 1946), pp. 72-73.

²⁹ Interview with Watanabe, July 9, 1966.

³⁰ Interview with Mahaki Keishin, July 10, 1966.

General Tsukada Osamu, Chief of Staff of the SEF, sent a cable to the Vice Minister of the Army, observing the lack of the political leadership of sultans. He requested the Vice Minister to arrange the recruitment of more administrative personnel both civilian and military.³¹ In order to press the demand, the Headquarters of the SEF dispatched Col. Watanabe to Tokyo. During his stay in Tokyo, Watanabe conferred with the central Army authorities on short and long term problems of military administration. One of the urgent questions he discussed was the question of the sultans. Watanabe was dissatisfied with the political ineptitude of sultans, and he wanted someone who could persuade them to relinquish their political power to the Japanese military.³² As pointed out earlier, the general principle governing the treatment of a sultan was to leave him as the nominal religious head of his state, somewhat comparable to the British practice with the sultans in pre-war years and to the Japanese dealing with the Emperor of Manchukuo.³³ But Watanabe had wanted to strip sultans of all their political power, reducing them to the status of newly acquired subjects (*Shimph no tami*) of the Japanese Empire. To fulfill this objective, Watanabe requested on December 23 that Col. Ishii Akiho appropriate one million yen as discretionary funds (*kimitsuhi*); that is, at about the same time he and Takase were plotting the scheme of military administration at Taiping. Col. Ishii turned down the demand.³⁴

Failing to obtain the funds for the political purpose, Watanabe modified his position. *Principles Governing the Military Administration of the Twenty-Fifth Army*,³⁵ a document that he had been working on since December 23 and that was approved by Generals Yamashita and Manaki on February 8,³⁶ declared: "For the time being, the sultans who do not resist shall be allowed to maintain their political and social status. They are to be supervised, however, by a Japanese advisor and their police power is to be exercised in conjunction with a Japanese police inspector." He was still opposed to using the political power of sultans

³¹ *Marei ni okeru gyosei*, Riku A Mitsu Dai Nikki, vol. 1, 1942, no. 50, in *Archives of the Japanese Army, Navy and other Government Agencies, 1868-1945*, Reel 118, F. 31116, 31121-31122. Hereafter *Army and Navy Archives*.

³² Kushida Masao, *Kushida Nikki*, (Unpublished) January 18, 1942. This diary is in the possession of Col. Kushida. He was a staff officer at the Army General Staff in charge of the mobilization of materials and in 1943 he was a staff officer in charge of military operations attached to the Headquarters of the SEF.

³³ Ishii Akiho, *Nampo gunsei Nikki* (Unpublished), pp. 151-152. Hereafter *Ishii Nikki*. This memoir was written in 1957 based on his unpublished diary. The Nikki is in the possession of the Historical Section of the Defense Agency, Japan.

Col. Ishii was a senior staff officer at the Headquarters of the SEF in charge of military administration.

³⁴ *Ibid.* In my interview with Watanabe on July 9, 1966, he denied that he requested the funds.

³⁵ Dai 25 gun Shireibu, *Dai 25 gun gunsei jisshi yoko*, n.d. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo., n.p.

³⁶ Watanabe Memoirs, pp. 25, 43.

for winning the confidence of the people, for the policy nowhere mentioned the established principle. On the question of religion and customs, Watanabe conformed with the directive of the higher Army circles in "respecting and protecting them in order to put the people's mind at rest and to induce them to cooperate with the Japanese."

Once the Malay Military Administration (MMA) rolled on its wheels, it planned to induce sultans to surrender their autonomous power to the Japanese. Preparations seemed to have begun in mid May when General Suzuki made a trip visiting sultans for the purpose of acquainting himself with the present status of sultans and of getting information for their future treatment.³⁷ Two weeks after his return to Singapore, Marquis Tokugawa, who had been appointed to the position of supreme advisor to the Twenty-Fifth Army responsible for sultan affairs,³⁸ went to Tokyo at the request of the Malay military authorities. He talked with General Sugiyama, Army Chief of Staff, about the question of how to deal with sultans. Tokugawa proposed that sultans must be coaxed to give up their autonomy and to become new subjects of the Empire but their lives and property must be guaranteed, and they might be given some honorable position. Although the sultans' religious position must be respected, he said, they should not be regarded as heads of autonomous principalities. It was advisable, Tokugawa suggested, to re-educate the Malays along this line of policy, inculcating the Japanese spirit into their minds. They must be made to realize that they would be a united people under the Emperor of Japan.³⁹

General Sugiyama must have approved Tokugawa's proposal in principle, for in July the Military Administration Department of the Tomi Group Army, i.e. Twenty-Fifth Army, prepared a document concerning the *Disposition of Sultans*.⁴⁰ The policy contained essentially the ideas of Tokugawa which he had proposed to the Army Supreme Command, but Watanabe's hand in it was evident. The objective of the policy, it stated, was to remove sultans as heads of autonomous states. But, in the view of practical politics, it was not wise "to dispose of them abruptly by force; hence, special plans shall be formulated on the basis of which the heads of autonomous areas shall be induced to surrender voluntarily

³⁷ Tomi Shudan Shireibu, *Senji geppo*, May, 1942. Marked "Military Secret". Mimeo. Sultans were invited to meet with dignitaries of the Tomi Group Army on April 11-13. There was no written record of the meeting. It was presumably calculated to impress them with Japanese dignitaries and to ask them to help organize an impressive celebration for the Japanese Emperor's birthday on April 29.

³⁸ Tokugawa was appointed to the post in March. The appointment must have been made in response to Col. Watanabe's request made earlier. Cf. Interview with Kushida Masao, August 8, 1966.

³⁹ *Kushida Nikki*, June 2, 1942.

⁴⁰ Tomi Shudan Gunseikanbu, *Oku shori ni kansuru ken*, July, 1942, n.p. Marked "Top Secret". Mimeo. The English translation is found in Benda et al., *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia*, pp. 184-186.

their political privileges." In short, the Japanese military wanted them to relinquish their political prerogatives to the Japanese Emperor as the Tokugawa Shogunate had surrendered its power to the Throne at the Meiji Restoration in 1868, since Malaya had become "an integral territory of Japan when it came under Japanese occupation." To fulfill these objectives, no coercive measures must be taken against sultans for submission. Instead, the goal would be realized by re-educating them that "the future of a Malaya under Japanese sovereignty shall be a united land and people under benevolent Imperial rule, and (by convincing) them gradually of the concept of *Hakkoichiu*, the rule of all peoples under one sovereign." The Military Administration must make clear to sultans that it would not "permit their existence" in Malaya unless they would cooperate, and the military authorities should induce them to undertake voluntarily the positive implementation of the following:

- (1) To offer their titles, lands, and peoples to His Imperial Majesty through the Japanese military commanders;
- (2) Voluntarily to set an example for the people by swearing loyalty as Japanese subjects.

Only then, would sultans be granted status as religious leaders "under the concept of the unity of religion and government" They were also guaranteed income with the assurance of financial inheritance for their descendants, "necessary to the maintenance of their name and position" at a minimum level. In addition, "a specific annuity shall be distributed to the heads of autonomous areas from local administrative funds, thus ensuring direct contact with the administration of Malaya. This will not only give them the satisfaction of enjoying a special position but will also enable their utilization for civil administrative purposes." As a means to implement these policies, negotiations with sultans should proceed on an individual basis, and in a later stage an influential sultan like the Sultan of Johore should be induced to "assume a major role in gradually bringing about the collective support of all the heads of autonomous areas." These plans must be approved by "the top military and Central authorities prior to the full implementation" The M.M.A., however, went ahead implementing the policy; Marquis Tokugawa succeeded in persuading the sultans to relinquish their autonomous authority to the Japanese.⁴¹ It appears that he pacified them with a largess of money.⁴²

⁴¹ *Ishii Nikki*, p. 151.

⁴² *Kushida Nikki*, June 2, 1942. For instance, Marquis Tokugawa disclosed that as of the end of May, 1942, the Sultan of Johore had been paid 48,000 yen, the Sultan of Kelantan 12,000 yen, the Sultan of Trengganu 10,000 yen, the Sultan of Kedah 30,000 yen, the Sultan of Perak 40,000 yen and the Sultan of Pahang, 14,000 yen.

It was shortly thereafter that the Army held a conference of executive administrators of military government in Tokyo on July 14. In his speech to the assembled administrators, War Minister Tojo Hideki touched upon the treatment of sultans, saying in effect that the policy was to give them titles and honors in order to reap fruit.⁴³ In other words, Tojo did not want to deal with sultans as harshly as the M.M.A. of the Tomi Group Army. Tojo's message was conveyed to Lt. General Kuroda Shigenori, who was slated to become the Director General of Military Administration and concurrently Chief of Staff of the SEF. Tojo picked the right man at the right moment to transmit his message to military administrators in the Southern region, for Kuroda was generally regarded as Tojo's protege, and he liked to meddle with politics more than attend to military matters.⁴⁴ In his first speech as the Director General, Kuroda cautioned extreme measures against sultans saying that:

. . . in general it is deemed suitable that they be granted status, name, and stipend for their religious functions but that their political authority be nullified. However, changes from past treatment should be carried out gradually. Especially where stipends are generally concerned, consideration shall be given so that there will be no obstacle to the maintenance of their previous standard of living and care should be taken that such practices as the detailed examination of their use of allotted sums be avoided.⁴⁵

And on religion and customs, he reiterated the established principles of noninterference.⁴⁶ Specifically, he instructed them to use extreme circumspection not to impose Buddhism or other religions or Japanese morality and customs, and not to change names hastily or to institute public holidays. Nowhere was it mentioned that sultans be asked "to offer their titles, lands, and peoples to His Imperial Majesty" and be told that their existence would not be permitted, as stated in the *Disposition of Sultans*.

It is not difficult to find the reason why the Army High Command had been compelled to modify its position. First, the deterioration of the

⁴³ *Kushida Nikki*, July 14, 1942.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mori Shozo, *Senpu nijunen kaikin Showa rimenshi*, vol. II (Tokyo: Masu Shobo, 1951), p. 119; Inada Seijun, *Inada Nikki I*, (unpublished) p. 157.

Lt. General Inada was a deputy Chief of Staff of the Tomi Group Army from March to June, 1943. The *Inada Nikki* was edited in 1958 in the form of memoirs based on his diary. It is in the possession of the Historical Section, Japan Defense Agency.

⁴⁵ [Nampogun] Gunseisokanbu, *Gunseisokan shiji*, August 7, 1942. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo., n.p.

About a week earlier, General Imamura Hitoshi of the Sixteenth Army in Java issued an order to the Sultan of Soerakarta allowing him to retain his prerogatives that he had enjoyed and his administrative machinery, although he was required to disband his own army. Waseda Okuma Kenkyujo, *Indoneshiya ni okeru Nippon no gunsei*, pp. 146-148.

⁴⁶ Cf. Col. Watanabe, in his speech delivered at the Governors' Conference of July 20-31, stressed the policy of non-interference in religion but of promoting the culture of the natives by establishing research institutes and museums. *Syonan Times*, August 2, 1942.

war situation partially accounted for the change; in June the Japanese Navy met a disastrous defeat at the Battle of Midway and the Allied Forces had gradually recovered from the initial setbacks and were beginning to prepare a counter-offensive in the Pacific. Second, the pacification campaign of guerrillas had been running into difficulty and the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army had been harassing the Japanese in Malaya.⁴⁷ Finally, the indigenous people were beginning to complain of economic difficulties, spiraling inflation, and scarcity of daily necessities.⁴⁸ It had become more and more difficult for the military to win the confidence of the people in support of Japanese objectives.

The war situation made it necessary for the Military Administration authorities to pay more attention to the problem of gaining popularity among the people.⁴⁹ To demonstrate Japanese sympathy and respect for indigenous customs, the M.M.A. acknowledged an anticipated decline in working efficiency of Muslims employed by Japanese government agencies during the fasting month of *Hari Raya* beginning on September 11. Col. Watanabe⁵⁰ also issued a directive to governors and mayors asking them to pay Muslim employees wages for the month of October, together with a bonus, before October 10, since October 12-13 were their religious holidays.⁵¹ To follow up the policy, Watanabe cabled to governors and mayors directing them to communicate a message of felicitation for *Hari Raya Besar* from the Director of the M.M.A. to all Muslims who had fallen in battle for the Japanese and asked them to cooperate with the Imperial Army for the construction of Greater Asia.⁵² Reaction of the indigenous people was favorable to such conciliatory policy, even discounting a diplomatic nicety. "I am grateful," said the Sultan of Perak, Abdul Aziz, "for the freedom allowed by Nippon Government in the matter of religion. I am inclined to say the Nippon Government must took [sic] a great deal of interest in the fasting month of Hari Raya." The Sultan also commended the Governor of Perak, Kubota Shun, for having taken a keen interest in religion by attending the mosque. He was very happy with the Nippon Administration, the Sultan added, because he had no

⁴⁷ Cf. [Tomi Shudan] Gunseikanbu Keimbu, *Marei ni okeru chianjo no ichi kosatsu*, November 27, 1942, n.p. Appendix I. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo.

⁴⁸ For economic conditions and the people's reactions, see Tomi Shudan's monthly and ten-day reports.

⁴⁹ *Ishii Nikki*, p. 9.

⁵⁰ Watanabe became chief of the General Affairs Department in April. In that capacity he was the executive director of the Military Administration for Malaya and Sumatra.

⁵¹ Tomi Shudan Shireibu, *Senji geppo*, October, 1942; Watanabe Umeo and Nagaya Yuji, *Shukyo shukan seisaku* (1944), pp. 12, 21. Marked "Secret." Mimeo. This study was prepared by the Research Department for the M.M.A.

On March 21, 1943, the M.M.A. also promulgated the observation of Moslem holidays: the Islamic New Year (January 7); January 16 for the tenth day of the New Year; Mohammed's Birthday (March 18); the Ascension Day of Mohammed (July 30); Hari Raya Besar (September 30); and Hari Raya Haji (December 7).

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

fear of religious interference. And he "had always found Nippon officials easily approachable and eager to be helpful."⁵³ The statement does not tell his latent displeasure with Japan's religious policy, as it will be discussed. And Kubota resigned his post in April, 1943, in disagreement with the M.M.A.'s policy.⁵⁴

Sultans did not fare well with the Administration, despite the prudent measures advised by Tokyo in August. As was pointed out, Marquis Tokugawa had induced the sultans to surrender their political authority and, to some extent, religious authority to the Japanese, and Japanese governors had been exercising power in the sultans' stead.⁵⁵ Also Takase, Watanabe's brain trust, was very much in favor of such disposition, and he reported his support for the policy at a meeting with Col. Kushida when he returned to Tokyo after having finished his tour of duty.⁵⁶ Sunada Shigemasa, supreme advisor to the Headquarters of the SEF, likewise had an unkind word for Malay sultans with the exception of the Sultan of Kedah, saying that "they alienated themselves from the masses, and the people were resentful of having paid heavy taxes to sultans."⁵⁷ Whatever the feeling of the Social Administration toward sultans, the Army Supreme Command in Tokyo recognized the importance of sultans as a matter of military necessity, especially in view of the coming invasion of India which was being planned. Earlier in August, the Army General Staff prepared a draft for the guidance of policy toward nationalities in Great Asia,⁵⁸ apparently to be used for a coming conference of Directors of Military Administration, which was held on October 5 in Tokyo.⁵⁹ Although this document did not mention specifically what sultan policy was to be pursued, it stated implicitly the need to treat sultans with circumspection.

Subsequently, the Army High Command directed military commanders and directors of military administration to be more generous toward sultans. On November 9, Lt. General Saito Yaheita, Commander-in-Chief of the Tomi Group Army, ordered that no hasty change be made in dealing with sultans in consideration of Japan's policy toward India, and that sultans be accorded religious position and honors and provided

⁵³ *Syonan Times*, October 20, 1942; Interview with Kubota, August 30, 1966.

⁵⁴ Interview with Kubota, August 30, 1966.

⁵⁵ *Ishii Nikki*, pp. 13, 152.

⁵⁶ *Kushida Nikki*, October 21, 1942.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, October 27, 1942. Sunada was not the only one who possessed this opinion. Lt. Col. Otani Keijiro, a military police officer and chief of the Police Department of the M.M.A. recalled that sultans were unpopular among natives. He reached this conclusion after having talked with representatives of the old and young Malay people. See his unpublished memoirs, *Dai 25 gun Marei, Sumatora gunsei no ichi kosatsu*, pp. 84-85. Hereafter, *Dai 25 gun gunsei*.

⁵⁸ Japan Sambo Honbu, Dai 14-ka. *Daitoa minzoku shido yoko (an)* August 6, 1942, n.p. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo. This document seemed to have been based on lectures given by Professor Oka. Cf. *Kushida Nikki*, July 2, 1942.

⁵⁹ *Ishii Nikki*, p. 107; *Osaka Mainichi* (Osaka), October 10, 1942.

with stipends.⁶⁰ Maj. General Nishioeda Hitoshi, a new Director of the M.M.A., at the conference of governors of Malaya and Sumatra held at Shonan on November 27, reiterated the points that General Saito had made three weeks before.⁶¹ Nishioeda's instructions were more specifically to the point. Opening his speech with the remark that he was conveying directives given to him at the October meeting of directors, Nishioeda gave the governors an order "to utilize (sultans) to the fullest advantage. Since our dealing with sultans will affect profoundly the decision of five hundred Maharajas of India (whether to take our side or to remain loyal to the British should Japan invade India), we must treat them with utmost circumspection and must not be stingy in giving them honors and stipends." Col. Watanabe, who had not seen the point of using sultans for achieving his own objectives of military administration, was reconciled conditionally with the view of the High Command. "Sultans," he told the governors in the same conference, "must be utilized for inducing the natives to cooperate with the military. They shall also be given stipends equal to the sums they received (from the British) in pre-war years, but the stipends and treatment must be differentiated according to the extent of their cooperation. The policy shall be determined on the basis of how useful they prove to us."⁶²

It is patent that the policy for the sultan had measurably changed as a result of the worsening of war conditions and of the impending military invasion into India. A tangible evidence in the transformation of the M.M.A.'s sultan operation can be observed in a gradual increase of stipends.

According to the budget for the first quarter of 1942 (April to June), the M.M.A. appropriated 90,000 yen for sultans as a special allowance. But this sum was never spent for an unexplainable reason, as evidenced by the balance sheet of expenditures that appeared in the budget table for the second quarter of 1942 (July to September),⁶³ for which period the Administration also recorded 90,000 yen as having been spent.⁶⁴ It presumably did not give 90,000 yen in the first quarter because

⁶⁰ *Marei, Sumatora tochi ni kansuru ken*, Tomi shusei mei no. 28, 25 gun meirei, November 9, 1942. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo.

⁶¹ Shonan Gunseikanbu, *Marei, Sumatora kaku shu (shi) chokan kaigi* (November 26-28, 1942). n.p. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Tomi Dai 8990 Butai, *Showa 17 nendo dai ichi shihanki (4 gatsu—6 gatsu) gunsei kaikei sainyu saishitsu yosan*. n.p. Marked "Secret." Mimeo.

⁶⁴ Dai 25 gun Gunseibu, *Showa 17 nendo dai ni shihanki (7 gatsu—9 gatsu) gunseihonbu gunsei kaikei sainyu saishitsu yosan*. n.p. Marked "Secret." Mimeo.

According to Otani Keiji, sultans were invited in April and August, 1942, by Generals Yamashita and Saito, Yamashita's successor, and were given 10,000 yen each time. There is no record of the monetary gift given to the sultans in April. The 10,000 yen given in August could be the 90,000 yen that appeared on the itemized expenditure for the second quarter period of 1942. Otani, *Gai 25 gun gunsei*, pp. 90-91.

of its chastizing policy toward sultans, as reflected by Watanabe's attitude toward them. Also the sultans' monthly allowance paid by the M.M.A. was sharply reduced. A detailed study of stipends is made available by the Research Department of the M.M.A. conducted in March and May, 1944. This study covers only the three sultanates of Pahang, Selangor, and Perak, but it is sufficient to reveal a change in the policy of the Administration.⁶⁵

The Sultan of Pahang was paid the monthly allowance of 4,000 yen first in April and thereafter until December, 1942, in addition to other expenses. Altogether the Administration gave 78,551 yen for that year, or 28 per cent of what the British had appropriated for the 1942 fiscal year. After January, 1943, the Sultan received 8,000 yen every month until March, 1944. He got 196,785 yen including other allowances in 1943, or 65 per cent of the 1942 level. Only in 1944 did the allowance (301,533 yen) almost match the amount paid by the British (303,012 yen); but in the actual monetary value, it must be said that the 1944 figure was far less because of a rampaging inflation. The Sultan of Selangor received 1,000 yen in March, and 10,000 yen for April, May and June. The sum was raised in July to 15,000, and he received in addition 15,000 yen as a supplement. Beginning in April, 1943, the Japanese paid 25,000 monthly. His total receipt for 1942 was 196,960 yen, 46 per cent of what he used to receive under British rule; for 1943 (332,800 yen), it was 78 per cent; and in 1944 (530,124 yen) it exceeded the allowance he received from the British (427,416 yen). The Sultan of Perak fared no better in 1942. His monthly income, beginning in April until November, was 2,000 yen, which was only one sixth of what the British paid in 1941. His allowance, however, increased to 6,250 yen in December, or about a half of what he used to receive. Only in April, 1943, his allowance equalled with the pre-war monthly figure. His total receipt for 1942 was 165,122 yen, or 33 per cent of what the British appropriated for 1942 (498,806 yen); for 1943, it was 66 per cent; and 85 per cent for 1944.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Yamashita Kakutaro and Itagaki Yoichi, "Pahan, Serangoru shu ryoshu sshucho hokoku," *Chosabuho* no. 1 (May 1, 1944); Itagaki Yoichi, "Pera Doko jijo ni tsuite," *Chosabuho*, no. 4 (June 20, 1944).

The authors of these studies used the dollar monetary unit but this writer prefers to use the yen unit. However, the dollar and the yen were on par during the occupation years.

⁶⁶ According to the 1944 budget, sultans were paid allowance comparable to pre-war figure. The Sultan of Johore received 430,000 yen; the Sultan of Negri Sembilan, 304,000 yen; the Sultan of Perak, 455,000 yen; the Sultan of Pahang, 304,000 yen; and the Sultan of Selangor, 378,000 yen. In addition, the military paid 170,000 yen for the construction of a residence for a sultan. The 1944 budget for sultans was an increase of 400,000 yen over the previous year's budget. Marei Gunseikanbu, [Showa], *19 nen gunsei kaikei yosan, setsumeisho*, n.p. Marked. "Top Secret." Mimeo.

In the case of Negri Sembilan, it was corroborated by an interview with Hatta Saburo, August 6, 1966. Hatta was the Governor of Negri Sembilan from March, 1942 to the end of the war.

From this study, Watanabe's instruction in November, 1942, that sultans be remunerated with a sum equal to that they received before the war was not fulfilled in 1943. It is plain that the M.M.A. did not pecuniarily treat the sultans well in 1942 and 1943, though some improvement was made in the latter year.⁶⁷ The evidence leaves some room to raise doubt if the M.M.A. had attempted to coerce them to cooperate with the Japanese, using the allowance as an inducement to achieve the objective. The disparity of the annuity, as seen in the three examples, also suggests that the Administration was not about to restore the pension and other allowance unconditionally to the pre-war level. It did not follow the British practice of paying sultans in accordance with their importance and prestige. It is recalled that Watanabe said in November that his Administration would treat sultans individually in the payment of allowances, depending upon the degree of their cooperation. This policy became official when his office prepared the basic and most important document relating to nationality policy, *Reference Material and the Explanation for Nationality Policy*, on November 28, 1942.⁶⁸ "Sultans shall be utilized," it said, "in such a way as to be the central driving force for reconstruction and the leaders for inspiring an Asian consciousness. Those sultans who are proved to be less useful to us and less enthusiastic shall be treated coldly and ignored as a warning to others."⁶⁹ Therefore, an increase in remuneration was conditional on good conduct, although the High Command said nothing about it in an earlier instruction. Watanabe's sultan policy was one of carrot-and-stick; a conciliatory sultan was given a better treatment at the expense of a recalcitrant sultan. A somewhat more generous pension given to the Sultan of Selangor than to the Sultan of Pahang could be explained in this light. The sultan of Selangor was installed in his position by the Japanese military,⁷⁰ therefore, he was more friendly to Nippon officials. The Sultan

⁶⁷ Cf. Interview with Sukegawa Seiji, July 22, 1966. Sukegawa was a reserve Maj. General and the Governor of Kedah from March, 1942, to August, 1943, when the state was incorporated into Thai territory. He told me that he cut the sultan's allowance in half, as directed by the Administration, though it was "a little bit cruel thing to do."

⁶⁸ [Tomi Shudan Gunseikanbu] Somubu Somuka, *Minzoku taisaku sanko shiryo oyobi setsumei*, November 28, 1942. n.p. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo. This document appeared to have been prepared on the basis of *Guiding Principles for Nationality Policy in Greater Asia*. See footnote 53.

⁶⁹ For sultans in Sumatra, the policy specified the educational support to be given for their children in order to train them to become administrators and to use them for future guidance of the people. Generally, the Administration seemed to have a better opinion of sultans of Sumatra and the Sumatrans of the Minangkabau region and the Achehnese. The Acheh Moslem Association for the Development of Asia organized on March 20, 1943. Cf. Sunada's report in *Kushida Nikki* October 27, 1942.

⁷⁰ Interview with Katayama Shotaro, July 28, 1966. Katayama was a reserve Lt. General and was the Governor of Penang from March, 1942, to April, 1943, and the Governor of Selangor until the end of the war; Interview with Manaki, July 10, 1966; Sir Harold MacMichael, *Report On A Mission To Malaya* (London: Colonial Office, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946), p. 134.

of Perak was at least acquiescent, if not hostile, to the Japanese authorities, partly due to his role as the spokesman of the sultan, as evidenced by his remark at the time when the Administration issued orders to governors, directing them to treat Islamic religious holidays with a special consideration and by his active cooperation with the Japanese.⁷¹ On the other hand, the Sultan of Pahang was known to have been a man of strong character and individuality, harboring ill-feelings toward the Japanese overlord. Reportedly he rebelled against the Japanese in the summer of 1945 and “. . . narrowly escaped capture by the Japanese when cooperating with our (Allied) forces . . .”⁷²

It is in this context that we can understand why the Vice Minister of War sent an urgent telegram on December 4 to the Director of the Military Administration of the Tomi Group Army at Shonan. Reminding him of “the importance of the policy for the rulers of princely States in India” in connection with the about-to-be taken India Operation, the Vice Minister said:

For the administration of occupied Southern areas, it is extremely important to win the confidence of the peoples under our control in order to execute the war. High government officials have reiterated the need to utilize existing administrative organizations, to exercise circumspection in dealing with customs, religion, and sultans, so that they are not changed and interfered in without good reason. Nevertheless, it is reported lately that contrary to the policy of the Center, sultans' allowances such as administrative subsidy and remuneration that they received prior to the war have been reduced sharply, or changes in the treatment of sultans have been made in such a way as to damage their honor. Under the present condition, it is all the more vital to win the hearts of the indigenous peoples. The treatment of sultans must be accompanied with special circumspection. Not only hasty changes should not be introduced but the policy of giving more honors should be pursued with greater efforts—the policy based upon an over-view that will yield real results in the long run. Accordingly, you are requested to report back to me the present condition of sultans with respect to their political, religious, social status, and allowances as compared with those in pre-war years.⁷³

The Vice Minister's memorandum was in effect a concession to sultans, who had been demanding the restoration of power as the supreme authority of the Islamic religion they had enjoyed, however nominally and formally, under British rule.⁷⁴ Consequently, the M.M.A. invited representatives of sultans in Malaya and Sumatra to Shonan to hold a

⁷¹ See footnote 49.

⁷² MacMichael, *Report On A Mission To Malaya*, p. 6.

⁷³ *Doko (Sarutan) no toriatsukai ni kansuru ken*, Riku A Mitsu Dai Nikki vol. 64, 1942, no. 13, Reel 119, F 31973, *Army and Navy Archives*.

This writer could not ascertain who initiated the change in the policy toward the sultans. Marquis Tokugawa did not know the existence of the Vice Minister's cable until much later, as he told me in an interview on August 31, 1966. It is likely that someone in the Headquarters of the SEF brought the Vice Minister's attention to the problem at the Conference of Directors of Military Administration held in October, 1942, in Tokyo.

⁷⁴ Itagaki, *Chosabuho* no. 4 (June 20, 1944).

meeting on January 20-21.⁷⁵ The purpose of the conference was to ask them "to do everything to facilitate the permeation of the Military Administration into the States as widely as possible and to get . . . (the) people to unite together with a common aim so as to stabilize their feelings. . . ." Both Generals Nishioeda and Saito, the Director of the M.M.A. and the Commander-in-Chief of the Tomi Group Army respectively, addressed the representatives, enjoining them to have "faith in the Great Nippon" and to "lead the people to submit with heart and body to the policy of the Military Administration." In return for their cooperation, the Administration officially reaffirmed the position and honor of sultans as the supreme heads of the Islamic religion, and their rights to the ownership of private property, and, for the first time, the Administration pledged that it would pay the sultans the same sum of allowances and pensions as they had received in pre-war years. As it was discussed, not all sultans during 1943 received the annuity comparable to the amount they received from the British and only in 1944 did they get the amount of remuneration equivalent to the pre-war level. The Administration's promise for the payment moreover, did not mean that sultans would be fully compensated in cash, but rather the balance of the annuity would be supplemented by the sultan's rights to own property. This point was made clear in a speech of General Nishioeda when he said: "[since] . . . the people are still suffering from the horrors of war and, as a fine gesture on your part to share love and sorrows with Nippon, your remuneration will be on a lesser scale than before Of course, we will acknowledge you as owners of properties which you possessed and in view of this we trust that you will not feel the reduction to your income." At the conclusion of the conference, Marshal Terauchi Hisaichi, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the SEF, received the sultans and gave a Japanese sword to each of the eleven sultans. This was a shrewd step to impress them with their importance and dignity. Later, they contributed 60,000 yen to the military for the erection of a memorial for war dead.

Thus, it took nearly one year to establish a definite policy for the sultan. Throughout 1942, opinions among the High Command in Tokyo, Headquarters of the SEF, the M.M.A., and provincial governments on the disposition and treatment were not always in agreement.⁷⁶ The Gen-

⁷⁵ *Syonan Shinbun*, January 22, 1943; Itagaki Yoichi, "Some aspects of the Japanese Policy for Malaya under the Occupation, with Special Reference to Nationalism," Paper presented to the First International Conference of Southeast Asian Historians, Singapore, 1961; Waseda Okuma kenkyujo, *Indoneshiya ni okeru Nippon gunsei*, p. 152; *Asahi Shimbun* (Tokyo), January 21, 1943.

⁷⁶ Interview with Tanabe Toshio, July 20, 1966; Interview with Maruyama Shizuo, August 5, 1966; Interview with Kushida Masao, August 8, 1966; Interview with Kubota Shun, August 30, 1966.

Lt. Col. Tanabe was chief of the Planning Section of the M.M.A. from March 1942, to March, 1943. Maruyama was an *Asahi Shimbun* correspondent covering Malaya and Burma during the war.

eral Staff and the SEF were inclined to be a little more lenient than the M.M.A. The former group saw the utility value in sultans for achieving the objectives of occupation. The latter, represented by Watanabe, while reluctantly accepting the usefulness of sultans, insisted that they must first be chastened and must atone for the parasitic way of the past life. It did not see any need to pamper them with a preferential treatment and only after they proved themselves useful was Watanabe prepared to grant some benefit while maintaining the attitude of sternness. There was a dichotomy of the view throughout 1942. Watanabe's view retreated in the face of the deterioration of the war situation, which forced the High Command to re-examine its policy for indigenous peoples in the Southern region.⁷⁷

Once principles for the sultan operation became official, the M.M.A. adopted gradually a positive attitude in relation to sultans and to religion, although troubles did develop when the policy was put into effect, as will be discussed. The change in the policy became more facile with the reorganization of the M.M.A. and the transfer of personnel at the top hierarchy in March and April, 1943. The Tomi Group Army moved to Sumatra, and the Oka Group Army assumed the responsibility of Malaya under the direct command of the SEF. Also, Watanabe was replaced by Maj. General Fujimura Masuzo in March. Fujimura was not a politico-military officer as his predecessor was, and he appeared to get along better with civilians.⁷⁸

With the end of what might be called the Watanabe *gunsei* era and the reorganization, a new Administration took a more constructive but cautious step in support of the Islamic religion. One of the notable events in its religious program was the convening of a conference of representatives of Mohammedans of Malaya and Sumatra, held at Shonan on April 5-6. Ostensibly, the conference was made to appear to have been voluntarily organized by Mohammedans themselves, but it was planned

⁷⁷ Premier Tojo already made public in his State of the Union message in January, 1943, that Japan planned to give independence to the Philippines and Burma. The Army drafted *Principles for the Administration of Southern Occupied Areas*, promulgated in February. This new *Principles*, for instance, stressed the need to place able local inhabitants "in the right places for the satisfactory operation of the Administration" and "to enlist the aid of overseas Chinese" for reconstruction. The Chinese had been most ill-treated by the Administration. The new policy promised protection for their rights and interests. See *Syonan Sinbun*, February 3, 1943; *Ishii Nikki*, p. 131; Lt. Kato Akihiko, "Nampo gunsei wo genchi ni miru," *Nanyo* (February, 1943), vol. XXIX, no. 2, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁸ *Watanabe Nishi*, October 15, 1942; *Watanabe Memoirs*, pp. 70-80; Interview with Watanabe, July 9, 1966; Interview with Ogita Tamotsu, August 2, 1966. Watanabe criticized the sectionalism of the bureaucrats surrounding Otsuka Isei, a supreme advisor, and the bureaucrats resented the arrogance of the Watanabe-Takase faction. Watanabe's diary (January 21, 1943) shows his growing disgust with his job. Anticipating his transfer, he had sent home his hand-picked staff. Ogita was chief of the Finance Department of the Shonan City Municipality from 1942 to 1944.

and sponsored by the Planning and Education sections of the M.M.A.⁷⁹ The purpose of the meeting was to win the confidence of the people through Muslim leaders, to inject the Japanese view of the world into the people's minds, and to unite all religious groups, including Mohammedans, Christians, Buddhists and Hindus.⁸⁰ Delegates were received in a pompous ceremony and entertained lavishly by dignitaries of the Administration. Maj. General Isoya Goro, a new Director of the Administration, delivered an opening message to the Moslems, emphasizing Japan's respect for local religions, customs and cultural heritage and asking them to "share the burden of the war to its end and share difficulties of food shortage and daily necessities." To demonstrate Japan's interest in the desire of the Muslim faithful for making a pilgrimage to Mecca, Isoya indicated that the Japanese government was trying to communicate with the Holy Land so that Muslims in Asian countries could fulfill their religious duty.⁸¹ Marquis Tokugawa, chairman of the conference, assured delegates of the freedom of worship and laid stress upon their commitment to "live and die together" with Japan.⁸² After paying a tribute to native Muslims who had died for Japan, several Muslims were commended and awarded with citation and gifts for their meritorious conduct in cooperating with the Japanese. The conference closed with a declaration:

We strongly believe that Dai Toa Senso is a holy war for the freedom of our peoples who have been oppressed and exploited by the British, Americans, and Dutch, and for the establishment of a new Asia.

We, the Muslim people, hereby declare that we will unite with all our strength and power to serve Dai Nippon in fulfilling the aim of this holy war.⁸³

Following the conclusion of the meeting, each day a reception was given by Marquis Tokugawa and Odachi Shigeo, the mayor of Shonan. The conference appeared to be a resounding success in impressing natives with Japan's genuine interest in religion and with an easy access to Japanese dignitaries. The Conference evoked many favorable comments from participants and religious leaders of communities. One representative was reported to have said that he was greatly impressed by the fact that he was privileged to be able to attend the reception together with Japanese high officials, for natives were never invited to such a party under the colonial rule of the British and the Dutch.⁸⁴ Syed Ibrahim bin Omar

⁷⁹ Watanabe and Nagaya, *Shukyo shukan seisaku*, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁰ The M.M.A. had treated various religions separately. The attempted unity of these religious groups appeared to have been patterned after the Japanese example at home.

⁸¹ *Syonan Sinbun*, April 6, 1943. *Marei Gunseikanbu*, *Senji geppo*, April, 1943. *Marei Gunseikanbu*, *Marei, Sumatora kakushi doko daihyosha Shonan kaido kankei shorui tsuzuri*, April 1-6, 1943. n.p. Mimeo. Hereafter *Marei, Sumatora doko kaido*.

⁸² *Marei Gunseikanbu*, *Marei, Sumatora doko kaido*.

⁸³ *Syonan Sinbun*, April 6, 1943.

⁸⁴ Watanabe and Nagaya, *Shukyo shukan seisaku*, p. 25; Cf. Interview with Kubota, August 30, 1966.

Alsagoff, president of the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society of Shonan, said: "Muslims here are very grateful for the encouragement given to them by the Nippon Government in all matters relating to religion."⁸⁵ A number of meetings to report on the Conference were held throughout Malaya and Sumatra. In Medan, Sumatra, ten thousand persons were reported to have attended such local meetings, and Muslims in Shonan were preparing a mass thanksgiving demonstration on the Emperor's birthday.⁸⁶

The successful conference of April encouraged officials. Some of them were prepared to take a more positive stride in reaching the hearts of the people by giving native Muslims some voice in their politico-religious affairs, in conformity with *Fundamental Guiding Policy for Political Strategy in Greater Asia*, which was adopted by the Government of Japan on May 31 soon after Premier Tojo returned from his trip to the Philippines.⁸⁷ Sometime in the summer of 1943, the *Hikari Kikan*, the special agency working with the Japanese sponsored Indian National Army, requested the Headquarters of the SEF to draw up a plan to give a limited politico-religious power to Muslims, obviously intended to strengthen propaganda activities of the *Hikari Kikan* for the war of the liberation of India which was being planned. Marquis Tokugawa, who was responsible for persuading sultans to relinquish their authority to the military, drafted a plan, which envisioned the creation of a supreme Islamic religious council for Malaya. The council was an advisory body to help the M.M.A. maintain security, deal with human affairs of the Muslims, restore Moslem organizations that had been destroyed in the war, and formulate policy for the pilgrimage to Mecca.⁸⁸ The draft did not say explicitly that the Muslims would be granted some political power, but it was drawn with the idea that they would be given some degree of political freedom, because in the Islamic religion the exercise of religious authority could not be separated from secular power, and because Tokugawa had clearly calculated the political mileage such a religious council would produce for Japan among the Muslims when the Japanese-Indian armies were thrusting into the Burma-Indian territory. The proposal, however, was turned down for the time being without an explanation.⁸⁹ One can only speculate that the military might have been afraid of being

⁸⁵ *Syonan Sinbun*, April 9, 1943.

⁸⁶ Watanabe and Nagaya, *Shukyo shukan seisaku*, p. 25.

⁸⁷ *Documents relating to the Assembly of the Greater East Asiatic Nations*, May–November, 1943, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan, 1868-1945. Reel 584; Sato Kenryo, *Daitoa Senso kaikoroku* (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1966), pp. 314,317; Tanemura Sako, *Dai Hon'ei kimitsu nisshi* (Tokyo: Daiamondosha, 1952), Entry May 31, 1943.

In this document, the Japanese government spelled out its intention to permit natives to participate in local councils. It was promulgated in October, 1943.

⁸⁸ Watanabe and Nagaya, *Shukyo shukan seisaku*, p. 28; Tokugawa Yoshichika, *Kaikyo shukyo kaigi*. n.d. Stenciled.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

too partial to the Moslem-Malays and that a grant of political power, even if it was implicit, to the Muslims exclusively would open up a whole complex problem of the nationality question. The military had not been prepared to deal with the problem. The point is corroborated by the decisions that had been made by the Army authorities and the M.M.A. in June and July. Premier Tojo had already enunciated that Japan would permit natives to participate in local councils and directed on June 8 the chiefs of the general affairs department of military administration to prepare the ground. Subsequently, in July, General Fujimura told governors and mayors as well as chiefs of the general affairs department of states in Malaya to plan for the participation of natives in a consultative council.⁹⁰

As it was put into practice, the Japanese granted the political privilege to *all* racial and religious groups. It is plain that the military was obliged to modify its policy toward various racial groups in Malaya, particularly the Chinese and Indians, in view of the critical war situation. Since the summer of 1943, there had been a definite shift in the attitude of the military toward the Moslem-Malays in relation to the ethnic Chinese,⁹¹ because the military had realized that the Malayan economy would grind to a halt without the Chinese business cooperation. It seems that this change may have something to do with the decision of the military of not having granted a special, even though limited, political privilege to the Moslem-Malays alone. Only after the decision had been made that all racial and religious groups were allowed to participate in the forthcoming consultative conference, the M.M.A. authorized on September 14 the establishment of a religious committee which included Malays, Chinese, Indians and Eurasians representing various religious groups, but it was geographically limited to the Shonan district,⁹² an organization far from what Marquis Tokugawa conceived at first.

Not only was the military hesitating to take a decisive step in dealing with the Muslims because of its fear of opening the Pandora's box of native nationalism, but also it was over-zealous in imposing Japanese customs and morality. The military required natives to bow their heads to the

⁹⁰ Marei Gunseikanbu, *Marei kakushu (shi) chiho chokan kaigi no kaido shorui toji*, July 11, 1943, n.p. Marked "Secret". Mimeo; Marei Gunseikanbu, *Marei kakushu (shi) Somubuchō kaido kankei shorui toji*, July 20, 1943, n.p. Marked "Secret". Mimeo.

⁹¹ For instance, the M.M.A. lifted in April, 1943, the ban on the Chinese remittance to China which had been suspended since the beginning of the occupation. General Fujimura instructed governors and mayors to take more positive measures to promote Chinese activities at the Conference of Governors and Mayors in May, 1943. In July, at the Conference of Provincial Administrators, General Isoya repeated to them the essentially same theme Fujimura had told the governors, but Isoya stressed that he was conveying Premier Tojo's directive. See Marei Gunseikanbu, *Senji geppo*, April 19, 1943; *Marei kakushu (shi) chokan kaigi kankei shorui toji*, May, 1943; Marei Gunseikanbu *Marei kakushu (shi) chiho chokan kaigi shorui toji*, July 11, 1943.

⁹² Watanabe and Nagaya, *Shukyo shukan seisaku*, p. 29.

Japanese and to the direction of the East, where Japan was situated, to pay their homage to His Majesty and to pay a visit to the Shonan Shrine, a shinto shrine for the war dead, and they taught them the divinity of the Emperor and the *Hakkoichiu* (Universal Brotherhood). Moslem-Malays resented these imposed practices and indoctrination as they were incompatible with the monotheistic Moslem religion.⁹³ In other instances, the Japanese intervened in sultans' religious administrative affairs, despite their declared policy of non-interference. Professor Itagaki, who made a field study of sultans for the M.M.A., concluded that repeated Japanese enunciations for the respect of the sultans' religious position were "merely declarative" and hollow, and the Japanese policy flouted the principle of non-intervention.⁹⁴ Serious problems that were creating a chasm between the M.M.A. and sultans were, Itagaki observed, an insufficient attention given to the Islamic education and an interference in the religious prerogatives of sultans. In Pahang and Selangor, the sultans and Kadzis, as well as people in general, were reportedly dissatisfied with the Japanese because of their inadequate financial aid given to religious schools and their lack of interest in the curriculum. In both states, the Islamic education had been slighted and the Sultans were said to have been providing, out of their own pockets, money to run Arabic schools for the training of Islamic religious functionaries.⁹⁵ Another thorn in the flesh that irked the Sultan of Perak was that the M.M.A. forced him to relinquish his prerogatives of appointing kadis and assistant kadis to the Japanese governor. Only after several petitions did the governor restore the Sultan's former authority on February 28, 1944.⁹⁶ The Sultan of Perak, together with other sultans, also demanded the re-opening of the Chief Ulama Council, the central executive body for religion and customs, whose functions had been suspended by the military since the beginning of the occupation. Kawamura Naooka, the governor of Perak, finally agreed to remove the ban on the Council on April 4, 1944, thus setting a precedent for other sultanates.⁹⁷

⁹³ Cf. Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, pp. 148-165; 168-177; Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun*, p. 123.

⁹⁴ Itagaki, "Some Aspects of the Japanese Policy for Malaya under the Occupation," Itagaki Yoichi, "Sarutan seijiteki kengen," *Chosabuhō* no. 1 (May 1, 1944), n.p.

Many Japanese were so ignorant of the religious customs of the Islamic religion that *Shonan Hokokai*, a society formed by Japanese for the promotion of solidarity, issued pamphlets telling them "don'ts" of Moslem customs.

⁹⁵ Yamashita and Itagaki, *Chosabuhō* no. 1 (May 1, 1944), n.p. The religious education policy varied from one state to another. In Perak, Arabic schools had been operating and a course in the Koran had been taught since October 16, 1942, at government expense. Also the Sultan of Perak enjoyed his prerogative to issue the license to religious functionaries as he did in pre-war years. Security conscious Perak allowed Roman Catholics to hold a preaching service, even though other states prohibited this on the ground of security.

⁹⁶ Itagaki, *Chosabuhō*, no. 4, (June 20, 1944), n.p.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

From the preceding study, it is patent that the M.M.A.'s policy was vacillating and hesitating in giving political and religious power to sultans and Muslims. On the other hand, the Japanese were too eager to make the natives conform with the Japanese way and its religious and moral precepts and doctrine, and not infrequently they infringed upon the sultans' religious position making their own policy of non-interference a lip-service. It is also evident that there was no uniform policy; the policy differed from one state to the other. By all indications the sultan policy in Perak was more progressive, while that in other sultan states administered by military-governors appeared to be retrogressive.⁹⁸ The lack of a central policy led to contradictions between declarative statements and deed. This stemmed from the expediency and haphazardness with which the M.M.A. dealt with sultans and religion and from the absence of a clear-cut statement on the ultimate disposition of sultans. The central Army authorities laid out general principles for the M.M.A., which in turn authorized local governors to execute the policy within the framework of utilizing sultans for winning Islamic support. The result was a highly individualistic policy of reflecting the governor's own character and background. Military-governors tended to be unpopular among sultans. This uncoordinated policy gradually improved contributing to the emergence of a more rational policy for sultans and the Islamic religion. The turning point seems to be the establishment of consultative organs in states and cities, which was announced on October 2, 1943.⁹⁹ The Japanese appointed sultans as vice-chairmen of their respective state councils. However nominal their position in the council,¹⁰⁰ the Japanese formally gave the sultans a specific position adding prestige to the council. They were also prepared to accord honors in recognition of the sultans' dignity in order to induce them to work wholeheartedly with the Military Administration and to lead Moslem inhabitants in their states. In this new-look policy, Tokugawa became the spokesman for the sultans, and the M.M.A. relied increasingly on his advice. He and General Fujimura who became the Director of the M.M.A. in August, 1943, had been convinced that the Moslem-Malays could not be won without the sultans'

⁹⁸ Interview with Tokugawa, August 30, 1966. Friction between a sultan and a governor occurred more often in a state where the governor was a military officer.

⁹⁹ *Syonan Sinbun*, October 3, 1943.

¹⁰⁰ Itagaki Yoichi, "Malay Nationalism no tenkai," *Hitotsubashi Ronso* XXVII, no. 2 (February, 1952), p. 144.

The Consultative Council was a disappointment for the sultans and Malays. The council was not the restoration of the former State Council, a legislative body in which the sultan was the chairman and presided over the meeting. Also laws enacted by the State Council were promulgated in the name of the sultan. In the new councils, Chinese were given a larger proportion in representation in Shonan, Malacca, and Penang and, even in the sultanates, the ratio of representation was not particularly favorable for the Malays in comparison with the Chinese and Indians.

cooperation.¹⁰¹ Tokugawa was now in favor of preferential treatment of sultans by giving them "a membership status in the Japanese Imperial family," as were the Emperor of Manchukou and a former member of the Korean court, and by awarding them princely titles and medals, as were former *daimyos* of the Tokugawa period after the Meiji Restoration had been completed.¹⁰² Accordingly, the Japanese government conferred decorations upon the sultans in recognition of their past contributions to the M.M.A.¹⁰³

The M.M.A. meanwhile had accelerated the study of the Islamic religion and customs of the indigenous people by creating a study group on nationality to investigate their religions, customs, education, and administration. The military had been persuaded that native customs and manners detrimental to military administrative objectives could only be corrected through education, not through coercive measures and frontal attack. The change in the attitude of the military was evident in an instruction given in January, 1944, by the Headquarters of the SEF to directors of military administration. ". . . sultans and influential religious leaders," it said, "must be re-educated in such a manner as to change voluntarily their customs and religious precepts, and habits of the Moslem-Malays such as disinclination to savings, [which were incompatible with administrative objectives], must be rectified through the education of children."¹⁰⁴

The education meant a training in the Japanese language and in the Japanese spirit through language teaching, in military service, and in labor service. The M.M.A. directed to redouble efforts to strengthen Japanese language training and created the Volunteer's Army and Corps for the Malay youths as well as the Labor Service Corps for Islamic men and women in December, 1943.¹⁰⁵ The military assigned sultans a role to play

¹⁰¹ Interview with Tokugawa, August 30, 1966; Interview with Fujimura Masuzo, July 11, 1966.

¹⁰² Otani, *Dai 25 gun gunsei*, pp. 88-90; Interview with Tokugawa, August 30, 1966.

¹⁰³ Marei Gunseikanbu, *Senji geppo*, October, 1943.

¹⁰⁴ Nampogun Soshireibu, *Showa 19 nendo gunsei shisaku ni kansuru ken*, January, 1944. n.p. Marked "Top Secret." Mimeo; Watanabe Umeo, "Gunseika ni okeru shukyo, shukan no riyō," *Chosabuhō*, no. 4 (June 20, 1944), n.p.

¹⁰⁵ The Volunteers' Army was created at the suggestion of General Inada, Deputy Chief of Staff of the SEF, and at the encouragement of Premier Tojo. *Inada Nikki II*, p. 410; Imaoka Yutaka, *Nansei homon Rikugun sakusenshi*, pp. 147-148. (Unpublished). Col. Imaoka was a senior staff officer of the SEF from 1943 to 1945.

On December 12, 1943, Col. Okubo Koichi, chief of the Propaganda Department of the SEF, admonished the Malays for being lazy and exhorted them to lead an industrious life and to grow more foodstuffs. His speech laid the ground work for the formation of the Labor Service Corps. Later in January, 1944, the M.M.A. announced the recruitment of women into the labor force. One writer said that this policy of recruiting Moslem women into the labor force from the secluded life customary for them contributed in part to the breakdown of the Moslem feudal custom of secluding the women. Lee Tin Hui, "Singapore Under the Japanese 1942-1945," *Journal of the South Seas Society XVII* (April, 1961),

in these tasks. In a meeting with General Doihara Kenji, Commander-in-Chief of the Seventh Area Army, on April 15, 1944, Doihara asked the sultans "to devote their efforts to waging this war till victory." In reply, the Sultan of Perak representing his colleagues read resolutions. "The sultans, each as the leader of his respective province," he declared, would "henceforth strive doubly hard for the realization of a completely self-sufficient Malai." "The sultans having been fully cognizant that the true objective of Nippon in the War of Greater East Asia lies in the establishment of an Asia for Asiatics," he continued, "have agreed also among themselves to do their utmost in leading inhabitants in their respective provinces to cooperate and collaborate fully with Nippon in the war until final victory is achieved." They agreed further that "youth be spiritually and morally trained and be imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to duty for the good of the entire community as a whole."¹⁰⁶ The military had succeeded in inducing the sultans to subscribe to the Japanese way and to throw their support behind the "war of emancipation of all Asia" and "the establishment of the New Order in Great East Asia."

In this context we can better appreciate why the M.M.A. had offered to sultans beginning in 1944, an increment in allowances and pensions equal to the pre-war level, commensurate with their positions and contributions. The Administration not only rewarded the sultans with the largesse but also it authorized in the summer of 1944 the establishment of a religious administrative organization to enhance their religious position. The new Religious Council was created to correct shortcomings of the Religious Committee for the Shonan district formed in September, 1943.¹⁰⁷ Beginning in August, religious councils were created in Perak (August 12), Johore (September 21), Negri Sembilan (September 23), Selangor (September 24), Pahang (October 7); and Shonan, Penang, and Malacca all in October.¹⁰⁸ As a result, the organization of Mohammedan law, Mohammedan religious courts, religious education and religious charity were considered improved, and the sultans regained some religious and political authority.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the Administration started the re-training of Islamic religious functionaries at a Japanese training school, patterned after the re-educational program of the Islamic *kiats* which had been underway in Java.¹¹⁰

Part I, pp. 68-69. Hereafter JSSS. Cf. *Syonan Times*, October 31, 1942. The Governor of Kedah, Sukegawa Seiji, urged as early as in October, 1942, that the Moslem women be emancipated.

¹⁰⁶ *Syonan-Sinbun*, December 9, 1943.

¹⁰⁷ Watanabe and Nagaya, *Shukyo shukan seisaku*, pp. 8, 34. For the Religious Council, see footnote 82.

¹⁰⁸ Itagaki, *Hitotsubashi Ronso*, pp. 144-145; Itagaki, *Some Aspects of the Japanese Policy for Malaya Under the Occupation*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Watanabe and Nagaya, *Shukyo shukan seisaku*, pp. 8, 35; Waseda Okuma kenkyujo, *Indoneshiya ni okeru Nippon no gunsei*, pp. 234-235.

The innovation in the policy culminated in the convening of a three-day Malay Conference of Religious Councils at Kuala Kangsar on December 13, presided over by the Sultan of Perak. High priests and representatives from Perak, Johore, Selangor, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Shonan, Malacca, and Penang attended the meeting and discussed Moslem customs, administration, and religious courts. The conference was fruitful and the representatives freely debated and reached decisions without interference from the M.M.A. It was also a "singularly significant event" for the Religious Councils, because no similar meeting was ever held under British rule.¹¹¹ Summing up the importance of the gathering, Professor Itagaki said that with the convocation of the conference, "... the minimum step was taken by the Japanese Military Administration to appease sultans, who had been deprived of all political rights as rulers since the suspension of the State Councils . . ." ¹¹² For the rest of the war years, the Administration's policy for sultans and religion remained substantially unchanged, while it gave more attention to the Malay youth nationalist movement of Ibrahim bin Jaacob, reviving it into the KRIS (Kesatuan Ra'ayat Indonesia Semenanjung)¹¹³ Movement.

In the earlier stages of the occupation, Japan had every intention of retaining Malaya as part of the Empire. Therefore, the M.M.A. deprived sultans of their political authority and banned the activity of the nationalist Malay Youth Movement. The deteriorating war situation compelled the military to modify the original plans for Malaya. The worsening war condition and the reversion of the northern four provinces to Thailand in August, 1943, created an acute food shortage and manpower problem disenchanting the indigenous people with the Japanese. Winning the minds of the Moslem-Malays through sultans and religion became essential for the military. The sultans must be satisfied not only with the assurance of the minimum level of livelihood, but also with a grant of politico-religious authority. Islam is a religion in which the realms of religion and politics make little distinction; politics and religion are one and inseparable. The military therefore had to be cautious in the treatment of sultans and religion, treading on the thin ice of a potentially dangerous question that might confront the military with Malay nationalism.

¹¹¹ Itagaki, *Hitotsubashi Ronso*, p. 145; Syonan Sinbun, December 27, 1944; Fujimura Masuzo, *Marei gunsei gaiyo*, n.p. This was prepared by the Historical Research Section of the First Repatriation Ministry (formerly War Ministry) in 1946 on the basis of Fujimura's recollection.

¹¹² Itagaki, *Some Aspects of the Japanese Policy for Malaya Under the Japanese*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* The KRIS Movement was a political organization preparatory to the independence of the Malays and for the unification of Malaya and Indonesia. Interview with Itagaki Yoichi, June 26, 1966; Interview with Kushida, August 8, 1966. Kushida said that the military was prepared to give the Malays independence at an indefinite future date.

To compound the difficulty, Malaya is a multi-racial and a multi-religious society. In the early stages of the occupation, the M.M.A. seemed to regard "the Malays as the rightful owners of Malaya"¹¹⁴ and the Chinese and Indians as subordinate races.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, the M.M.A. was obliged to re-evaluate its policy toward the Chinese and Indians for economic and political considerations. The preferential treatment of the Malays and Islam must be carefully weighted against the adverse reactions from Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists it could possibly generate. The Administration therefore ought to "avoid an undisguised partiality to any one of the races and religions,"¹¹⁶ the Headquarters of the SEF warned in 1944, lest it would create communalism. In dealing with sultans and the Moslem-Malays, the Japanese faced another problem. Many Moslem-Malays harbored latent ill-feelings against sultans, according to reports of the Japanese military police.¹¹⁷ On the basis of intelligence information from the military police and his conversations with young and old indigenous people, Col. Otani maintained that they were unhappy with the favoritism given to sultans by the M.M.A., complaining that "the military was not after all our friend."¹¹⁸

The dilemma that the Administration faced was its own making, largely the consequence of ill-preparedness and expediency and of the unforeseen development of the war which forced the military to improvise the policy to appease the people and the sultans. The seeming conciliatory policy toward them and their religion in the later stages of the occupation did not appear to have emanated from Japanese sympathy for them but from the bankruptcy of the policy.¹¹⁹ More fundamentally, the failure of the military in reaching a consensus on the ultimate disposition of Malaya was the root of all ills. The higher military authorities could not agree upon the principal question of whether Malaya be given independence and the M.M.A. was unable to formulate a suitable policy for the sultanate, the indigenous Malays, and the Islamic religion. The result was the pursuit of a policy without direction with the consequence that the M.M.A., though it took more positive steps in the last phase of the war, was never able to formulate an imaginative plan beyond

¹¹⁴ Lee, JSSS, XVII, p. 59; Cf. Japan, Sambo Honbu, Dai 14-ka, *Daitoa minzoku shido yoko (an)*, August 6, 1942, n.p.; [Tomi Shudan Gunseikanbu] Somubu Somuka, *Minzoku taisaku sanko shiryō oyobi setsumei*, November 28, 1942, n.p.

¹¹⁵ Japan, Sambo Honbu, Dai 14-ka, *Daitoa minzokushido yoko (an)*, August 6, 1942; Somubu Somuka, *Minzoku taisaku sanko shiryō oyobi setsumei*, November 28, 1942.

¹¹⁶ Nampogun Soshireibu, *Showa 19 nendo gunsei shisaku ni kansuru ken*, January, 1944, n.p.

¹¹⁷ Otani, *Dai 25 gun gunsei*, pp. 91-92. Cf. Frank H. H. King, *The New Malayan Nation A Study of Communalism and Nationalism* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951), p. 10. Mimeo.

¹¹⁸ Otani, *Dai 25 gun gunsei*, p. 92.

¹¹⁹ Cf. M. A. Aziz, *Japan's Colonialism and Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1955), pp. 206-207.

the framework of "using sultans and religion" for winning the minds of the Malays. It may be an exaggeration to say that the M.M.A. "did nothing for the sultans and the Islamic religion,"¹²⁰ as Marquis Tokugawa reminisces; its record "can not be complimented as being a success,"¹²¹ as Col. Otani concludes. Very few people disagree with Otani's conclusion.

¹²⁰ Interview with Tokugawa, August 30, 1966.

¹²¹ Otani, *Dai 25 gun gunsei*, p. 130.