



PROJECT MUSE®

---

Former Japanese Soldiers Who Joined Communist Guerrillas in  
Malaya: Reconstructing an Elusive History

Hara Fujio

Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Volume 89,  
Part 2, No. 311, December 2016, pp. 67-99 (Article)

Published by Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/ras.2016.0025>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/640447>

# Former Japanese Soldiers Who Joined Communist Guerrillas in Malaya: Reconstructing an Elusive History\*

*HARA Fujio*

## **Abstract**

At the end of the Pacific War, 200–400 Japanese ex-soldiers stationed in Malaya joined the Malayan Communist Party guerrillas out of fear of retribution by victorious Allied soldiers or to fulfil Japan's promise to liberate Malaya from colonial rule. However, the MCP led by Lai Teck decided not to wage armed struggle after the Japanese surrender, and Lai Tek ordered the execution of a number of Japanese. Those who remained fought for the liberation of Malaya during the Emergency, but by the late 1950s most of this group had either been killed in action, succumbed to disease, or surrendered. When the MCP ceased armed struggle in December 1989, just two Japanese remained with the group. This article uses Japanese and Malayan documents, including those of the Malayan Communist Party, to identify Japanese who joined the guerrillas as a first step toward allowing historians to evaluate their role.

## **The Author**

Hara Fujio earned his PhD from the University of Tokyo and after working at the Institute of Developing Economies from 1967–99, became a Professor at Nanzan University (1999–2012). Prior to his retirement he was at various times attached to Universiti Sains Malaysia, the University of Malaya, Xiamen University, and the Yusof Ishak Institute-ISEAS in Singapore. His main works include *The Japanese in British Malaya* (1986), *Malayan Chinese and China* (1997), and *The Malayan Communist Party as Recorded in the Comintern Files* (2016).

E-mail: yuanbu9er@yahoo.co.jp

## **Keywords**

Malaya, Malayan Emergency, Japanese soldiers, Japanese deserters, Malayan Communist Party, Lai Teck, guerrilla warfare in Malaya.

---

\* I am grateful to Dr Timothy Y. Tsu for translating this article from Japanese into English.

## Introduction

In December 1989 the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) signed separate peace agreements with the Malaysian and Thai governments ending decades of armed struggle.<sup>1</sup> Following the agreements, guerrilla fighters came out of the jungle and either lived in 'Peace Villages' in southern Thailand or returned 'home' to Malaysia. According to the announcement, there were 1,188 guerrilla members at that time, of which 494 were Malaysian and 670 Thai. In addition, there were 2 Japanese. In fact, the presence of 2 Japanese was already known. On 19 June 1975 the Malaysian Minister of Internal Affairs, Ghazali Shafie, had announced that there were 2,054 communist guerrillas, comprising 875 Malaysians, 1,177 Thais and 2 Japanese.<sup>2</sup> The 1989 announcement indicated that these two Japanese had survived the long guerrilla war.

Early in 1990 the two Japanese, Hashimoto Shigeyuki 橋本恵之 (1917–97) and Tanaka Kiyooki 田中清明 (1912–2000), who had fought on the MCP side from the beginning of the guerrilla war in Malaya, returned to Japan. Their homecoming was widely reported by the Japanese media and received mention in the international media as well.<sup>3</sup> They revealed that they knew by name at least 20 other Japanese who had joined the communist guerrillas. As this article will show, between 200 and 400 Japanese joined the guerrillas. Following Japan's surrender in August 1945, around 78,000 Japanese soldiers and civilians were concentrated in Malaya for repatriation (36,000 in Peninsula, 42,000 in Singapore).<sup>4</sup> The number who joined the guerrillas seems to be a small portion of the total number of Japanese, but considering that they would face severe punishment if they subsequently returned home because the Japanese military viewed them as traitors, this figure is rather significant. With the exception of Tanaka and Hashimoto, their very existence was not known in Japan. This is one reason for examining this subject.

Little is known about these men. By comparison, the case of former imperial Japanese soldiers who stayed behind in Indonesia after the Second World War to fight alongside the Indonesian independence force against the restoration of Dutch colonial rule is well known. Scholars have analysed the scale of their participation and the role they played in the armed anti-Dutch movement. Memoirs and detailed biographies of some of them have also been published. In 1979, the former Japanese soldiers still in Indonesia organized their own mutual aid association, Yayasan Warga Persahabatan (Friendship Welfare Foundation; Fukushi Tomonokai 福祉

---

<sup>1</sup> The MCP's armed struggle started in June 1948. In the mid-1950s, the MCP moved to southern Thailand and groped in vain for a way to negotiate with the Malayan government. Only resolute members remained in the base; others were urged to leave. As a result, guerrilla forces were tremendously reduced, leading to the end of the Emergency in 1960. In 1961, when the MCP Secretary-general, Chin Peng, moved to China, the Party re-adopted the aggressive armed struggle line and in 1968 re-started guerrilla war in Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup> Institute of Developing Economies, *Annual Report of Asian Affairs*, 1976, p. 401.

<sup>3</sup> With regard to reports by international media as well as guerrillas based in southern Thailand after their armed struggle re-started in 1968, see Karl Hack in Montesano and Jory (2008).

<sup>4</sup> Masuda (2013: 22).

友の会 in Japanese). According to the Foundation, 903 Japanese soldiers chose to remain in Indonesia. Of this group, 246 are known to have died in battle or due to disease, and another 288 went missing during the independence war. After independence, 45 returned to Japan and 324 remained in Indonesia, where most of them obtained Indonesian nationality, and some were honoured as national heroes by the Indonesian government.<sup>5</sup> The last of them, Ono Shigeru, passed away in August 2014 at the age of 95.<sup>6</sup>

So what is the story of the Japanese soldiers who remained in Malaya (after 1963, Malaysia) to fight alongside the communists? This article reconstructs part of the story, asking who these men were, why they joined, what they did, what happened to them, and what legacy they left behind. I began by assembling reports published in leftist Malayan Chinese newspapers published from the early post-War era until these papers were banned. These papers observed the communist activities more closely than the main commercial papers.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, I drew on the record of an interview with Hashimoto in June 1995. Thirdly, I consulted official Japanese military records to ascertain how many soldiers were known to have deserted the Japanese army to join the guerrillas, and who they were. Lastly, but not least, I drew on memoirs written by the former guerrilla leaders which include references to Japanese ‘comrades’. I compared the names found in these and other sources as much as possible, but because some MCP sources refer to Japanese by Chinese pseudonyms, it was difficult to collate names. Efforts need to be made to identify the Japanese names of Japanese guerrillas known by their Chinese pseudonyms.

From the Chinese newspaper reports, I got the number of about 100, but news reports do not reveal the overall picture. For that, I relied on the other sources mentioned above and arrived at the figure of 200–400 mentioned above.

From the newspapers produced before the Emergency was declared, I identified four reasons why Japanese soldiers deserted their units: (1) sympathy with the MCP and a resolve to liberate Malaya; (2) fear of punishment as war criminals by the Allies; (3) despair over the future of Japan; (4) a few married women from Malaya.<sup>8</sup>

The first group can be presumed to have joined the guerrillas, while some in the second and the third groups might or might not have done so. I excluded non-guerrilla deserters from my analysis. As mentioned above, just two Japanese guerrilla members remained in 1989, and I tried to determine what happened to the rest: how many died in the jungle and how many left the guerrillas (and for the latter group, when and why did they leave)?

In Indonesia, Japanese ex-soldiers participated in the nationalist war of independence led by Sukarno. The existence of a strong movement might be one of the reasons why hundreds of Japanese soldiers remained in the local people’s army to the end. However, a crucial point might be the prospect of winning the war, which in Indonesia grew steadily brighter, but in Malaya ever dimmer. This must also be examined.

<sup>5</sup> Ono Shigeru (2010: 2); Hayashi (2012).

<sup>6</sup> *The Jakarta Post*, 27 Aug. 2014.

<sup>7</sup> This first section repeats material I have published previously. See Hara (1991).

<sup>8</sup> Hara (1991: 87–9)

Moreover, people in Malaya, especially the Chinese, had experienced harsh persecution including massacres by the Japanese Military Administration (JMA),<sup>9</sup> a point mentioned by most memoirs written by former guerrillas. Given this background, it is necessary to consider why the guerrillas accepted Japanese members.

## Outline of Research of 1991

In search of information about these points, I initially turned to Chinese newspapers. I began by studying two Chinese newspapers that began publication in Malaya and Singapore after the war but were banned in 1948 and 1950 respectively. My objective was to find preliminary information about the Japanese soldiers and civilians who had joined the communist guerrillas after Japan's surrender. The *Nan Chiau Jit Pao* (NCJP 南桥日报) was an organ of the Malayan branch of the China Democratic League (中国民主同盟), a pro-Chinese Communist Party organization. It began publication in Singapore in November 1946 with support from Tan Kah Kee (陈嘉庚) and was banned in September 1950 by the colonial authorities. The *Min Sheng Pao* (MSP 民声报), an organ of the MCP, started publication in August 1945 in Kuala Lumpur and was banned in June 1948.

I specify Japanese soldiers and *civilians* because, in addition to military personnel, some Japanese (including the above-mentioned Hashimoto and Tanaka—both employees of Nichinan Seitetsu, an ironworks) worked for Japanese businesses in occupied Malaya before joining the guerrillas. What follows is the information I gathered from these sources.

## Details Gathered from Chinese Newspapers

There were an estimated 100 former Japanese soldiers and civilians among the communist guerrillas.<sup>10</sup>

1. Japanese identified by the British authority as 'Japanese bandits who fought against government force' and then disappeared into the jungle included: Hoshino/Hoshono 星野/细野, \* Hashimoto 桥本, \* Miyamoto 宫本, \* Ōzono 大园, Asano 浅野.\*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For details of persecution, including massacres of Chinese by the Japanese Army, see Xu (1984).

<sup>10</sup> For information on nos 1–8 below, see Hara (1991). This estimate of 100 was based on the Chinese papers' reports: (1) Minister of Internal Affairs of Thailand, Lieutenant Phibun, detected the presence of several tens of Japanese soldiers led by Asano lurking in border areas with Malaya and reported this information to the British Consul. (NCJP, 18 Oct. 1949); (2) Japanese suspected guerrillas reported in other articles of the two papers also roughly totalled several tens. These figures might merely be of Japanese soldiers accompanying the guerrillas.

<sup>11</sup> NCJP, 15 May 1947, 9 Feb. 1949, 18 Oct. 1949. Names marked with an asterisk are my reconstructions based on Chinese transliterations in the sources.

2. Former military doctor captain Takahashi Ryūtarō 高橋柳太郎 was arrested on 20 June 1948 when the British authority made mass arrests of leftists across Malaya.<sup>12</sup>
3. A former Japanese military doctor was captured in August 1948 while training with the guerrillas near Pontian, Johor. The authorities considered that many more Japanese were lurking nearby and training the guerillas.<sup>13</sup>
4. Kedah police were pursuing a Japanese named Ōzono who had a bounty of 10,000 Straits Dollars on his head. On 13 January 1949, leading 20 bandits, he ambushed the British army and killed 11 Gurkhas in Padah, Kedah.<sup>14</sup>
5. A Japanese named Ōno 大野 aka Hosono 细野\* was wanted by Kedah and Perlis police. He was a native of Tokyo, age 46, height 160 cm. He spoke Japanese, English and Malay, and had worked as a bank employee in Japan before the war, and had been a clerk at a timber plant in Kedah. He had stomach problems and ate little. His hobbies were reading and exercise. He was wanted for four murders, one of which involved him throwing a grenade at police in 1947. He was last sighted on 13 January 1949 in Bata in northern Kedah. As a 'bandit [guerrilla] leader' he had a bounty of 10,000 Straits Dollars on him.<sup>15</sup>

**Other information appeared in my earlier work:**

6. One Miyatani Isamu 宮谷勇 was killed during a clash between communists and the British forces in 1956. He was buried near the border with Thailand.
7. According to a former member of the Japanese Military Police (Kempeitai), in November 1944 Sergeant Maeda Mitsuo 前田光男 of the military police at Taiping 'deserted'. He left behind a 'letter to volunteer' in which he stated his intention to join the 5th Independent Regiment of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). There is no information on him after the war.<sup>16</sup>
8. Another communist source indicates that a leader of the MCP (Malaysian Communist Party) splinter group,<sup>17</sup> Zhang Zhong Ming 张忠明, stated after his guerrilla members came out of the jungle that his father-in-law had sheltered 15 Japanese soldiers after the war, and that two of them survived.<sup>18</sup>

Newspaper reports after the declaration of Emergency provide information on how many Japanese guerrillas the colonial authorities had identified, including

<sup>12</sup> *NCJP*, 21 June 1948. Evening edition.

<sup>13</sup> *NCJP*, 22 Aug. 1948.

<sup>14</sup> *NCJP*, 9 Feb. 1949.

<sup>15</sup> *NCJP*, 10 Feb. 1949.

<sup>16</sup> Ishibe (1990: 124–7). See Hara (1991) for the information in items nos 1–8.

<sup>17</sup> Owing to mass purges of dissidents by the MCP Central, two guerrilla groups split from the MCP in 1970. One formed the Revolutionary Faction, the other a Marxism-Leninism Faction. These factions merged to form the Malaysian Communist Party in 1983. They were also based in southern Thailand. After the Peace Agreement with the Thai government of 1987, they laid down their arms and settled down in the Peace Village there.

<sup>18</sup> Takeshia (1990: 134).

their names. I compared these names with the names of deserters recorded in the official Japanese lists. The colonial authorities identified a Japanese guerrilla leader as Ōzono in 1949. As this pronunciation resembles ‘Hosono’, who also had a bounty of \$10,000, and Hashimoto referred to a leader of his original group as Hosono (see below), he might be the same person.

## Testimony of Former Japanese Guerrillas

In my research, I also used the personal testimony of Japanese former guerrillas to contextualize further some of these details on individuals. In 1995, in connection with a Forum for Gathering Information on the Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore (FGIJOMS; Nihon no Maraya Shingapōru senryōki shiryō chōsa forum), I interviewed Hashimoto Shigeyuki on 10 June 1995 in Chiba Prefecture where he was then living.

Hashimoto provided the following information on that occasion.

1. He and Tanaka had worked for the military-linked business Nichinan Seitetsu in Sungai Patani, Kedah.
2. There were more than 200 Japanese with the communist guerrillas. The majority were former soldiers.
3. Hosono Eijirō 細野栄次郎 (a native of either Gunma or Gifu prefecture), who worked for Daimaru [a Japanese trading company which set up its branches in occupied Malaya] in Kedah, urged his colleagues to ‘change the bad image of Japanese by joining the independence movement’. As a result, seven colleagues who were close at work joined the guerrillas on 17 September 1945.
4. Most Japanese who joined the guerrillas were killed. Others died from disease. Some became stragglers and were captured. Those captured by the British were returned to Japan. One Japanese was considered too old and the guerrillas told him to leave. The head of Daimaru’s Sungai Patani office left in 1952 or 1953. One former Japanese soldier returned home after serving time in a Thai prison. Some of those who joined the guerrillas later deserted.
5. Hosono died of illness three years after joining the guerrillas.
6. Hashimoto’s family learned that he was with the guerrillas from a news agency, possibly Reuters. His younger brother went in search of him around 1956 and scattered 50,000 fliers from an aeroplane.
7. Only 2 Japanese participated in a general meeting of the communist guerrillas in 1960 or thereabouts. Another 3 or 4 Japanese were unable to attend, and left the movement soon thereafter.

After the interview, Hashimoto gave us a handwritten letter firmly stating ‘Fought for 45 years in order to liberate Malayan people and to wipe off the disgrace of wicked Nippon. I have no repentance in my life.’<sup>19</sup>

After Hashimoto gave his testimony, Professor Murashima Eiji of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University, told this author that the National Archive of Thailand held a report dated 26 March 1954 on a ‘Japanese-Chinese

<sup>19</sup> FGJOMS (1998: 423–41).

bandit Gui Long' who had given himself up to the police.<sup>20</sup> I spoke with Hashimoto on the phone about Gui Long and received this reply on 2 February 1996.

Gui Long was a private first-class (*jōtōhei*) and a medic. He came from somewhere near Takamatsu [Kagawa prefecture in Shikoku]. I think his name was Iwasaki岩崎. He escaped to Thailand due to some misunderstanding and went to prison there. He did not betray any secret. A number of others surrendered, but he was not one of them. I wanted to visit him in Japan but could not get in touch with him.

For more about Gui Long, see below.

Some Japanese memoirs also contain useful information, such as the postwar memoir of Honda Tadanao 本田忠尚, a former agent of the 'Ibaraki Kikan (Agency)' 茨木机关, an intelligence operation under Major Ibaraki Seiichi 茨木誠一 with the official name Oka Kikan 岡机关.<sup>21</sup> Honda's memoir sheds light on the various motives that Japanese had for joining the guerrillas:

In early July 1945, Yabe Takashi 矢部敏, one of our agents at Kota Tinggi, Johor was captured by the 1st platoon of the 7th company of the Malai [sic] communist force [the 4th Independent Regiment of the MPAJA]. He was taken into the mountains where he met two Japanese deserters. One was about 27 or 28 and claimed to be from Matsuyama in Shikoku. He had fled Singapore to join the communists. He appeared to have been a communist pacifist and was a rather gloomy person. The other said he became a fugitive after stealing money from fellow soldiers. He had no particular ideology and seemed to be a shady individual.<sup>22</sup>

The author of this memoir appears to be biased, for it is unlikely that anyone would admit to a stranger that he has stolen money. Notwithstanding that doubt, the passage does make it clear that, even before the war's end, there were Japanese soldiers among the communist guerrillas.

There is only one piece of information on a Japanese who had once participated in the guerrillas and later returned to Japan safely. Miyasaka Takayasu, by pure coincidence one of my own high school classmates, took a part-time job with a company belonging to a certain Fujioka Hironori 藤岡寿典, who had fought on the side of the MCP for two or three years after the war before returning to Japan. He was from Iyadani, Miyoshi city in Tokushima prefecture, Shikoku.<sup>23</sup>

A man named Sasaki joined the MCP guerrillas after the war but later left the group and found work in Malaya and Singapore. His interview record, as published in 1978 in a book of the Singapore Japan Club, *Minami Jūjisei kinen fukkōkuban*, provided the following details.

1. Sasaki Ken'ichi 佐佐木賢 was born in 1916 in Shizuoka prefecture. Upon graduating from Nihon University, he joined Mitsui & Co. He participated in the 25th Army's landing at Singora [Songkhla, Thailand] in December 1941.

<sup>20</sup> National Archives of Thailand Mo.To.0201.2.1.57/18; Hara (2009: 75, 77, 83, 84).

<sup>21</sup> Honda (1988: 25).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 81–6.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Miyasaka Takayasu, 1 August 2009.



After the fall of Singapore, he was discharged and rejoined Mitsui & Co. After the war, when awaiting repatriation in Kuala Lumpur, he responded to the MCP's call and joined the armed struggle. He fought the British in the mountains near the Thai border.

2. As many as 300 former Japanese soldiers fought alongside the guerrillas and many died during the first two and a half years of fighting against the British.
3. Feeling that there was no longer a reason to fight after Malaya became independent [in 1957] as well as feeling homesick, Sasaki returned to Kuala Lumpur.
4. He married a Chinese woman with the surname Lin and took the Chinese name Lin Qingrui 林慶瑞.
5. He identified himself to the Embassy of Japan in 1960 and started work for Mitsubishi Corporation. In 1969 he set up a tourist company in Singapore.<sup>24</sup>

According to Hashimoto, most Japanese who joined the guerrillas were killed. Sasaki also indicates that many died during the first two and a half years of the Malayan Emergency (that is, between the middle of 1948 and the end of 1950), which suggests that the number of deserters was not large. Sasaki himself left the guerrillas after Malayan independence (1957), and some other Japanese might have done the same. Hashimoto testified that the last remnant, three or four individuals, left soon after 1960. It seems clear that some left the guerrillas between the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Coincidentally, the MCP adopted a more moderate policy in 1958, ordering its members to 'Lower the banners and muffle the drums',<sup>25</sup> and made arrangements to let those who were old and sick, as well as those who wished to be demobilized, to leave the guerrillas and lead a simple village life in southern Thailand. Hard-core guerrilla strength rapidly dropped from a peak of 6,500–8,000 in 1951<sup>26</sup> to a little more than 300 in 1960–1.<sup>27</sup> This new policy might have propelled some Japanese who were not sufficiently committed to the MCP cause to leave.

## Japanese Sources in Japan's Defense Studies Institute

I next consulted official military records of the Japanese forces stationed in Malaya towards the end of the war respecting soldiers who deserted, including those who joined the guerrillas. These official documents are kept in the library of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) in Tokyo. There I found a file that contained brief histories of each corps, recorded in the last months of the occupation and the early post-war days. The Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare (Kōseishō 厚生省), which was in charge of ex-soldiers after the end of the war, compiled these accounts in 1961. The NIDS collection also contains the memoirs of an artillery battalion (see below), which was not a part of the official corps histories. I used one article in it.

<sup>24</sup> Osame (1978: 556–7).

<sup>25</sup> Chin and Hack (2004: 366).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid: 5, 151.

<sup>27</sup> Chin (2003: 435).

The Japanese government and the military officially regarded deserters as traitors before and during the war, so it is natural that these documents refer to them in harsh terms. The list below is only roughly chronological according to the time of the desertions recorded since the documents cited overlap with each other in time.

1. 28 June 1944: 1 soldier deserted in Johor Baru.<sup>28</sup>
2. 10 September 1944: 1 soldier deserted in Johor Baru city.<sup>29</sup>
3. 20 August 1945: 1 petty officer went missing in Jemaluang(?), Johor. His fate is unknown.<sup>30</sup>
4. 11 September 1945: lance corporals Nishijima Yoshiyuki 西島美之 and Kumagaya Kumaichi 熊谷熊一 deserted. Nishijima deserted when his unit was moving materiel in preparation for the arrival of the Allied forces. He left a note behind saying 'he was troubled by the future of his country and decided to desert'. It was determined that 'Kumagaya deserted together with Nishijima'.<sup>31</sup>
5. 11 September 1945: 1 soldier deserted in Sungai Patani, Kedah. His fate is unknown.<sup>32</sup>
6. 14 September 1945: 1 officer, 8 petty officers and 5 soldiers deserted.<sup>33</sup>
7. 15 September 1945: 1 petty officer and 2 soldiers deserted.<sup>34</sup>
8. 16 September 1945: 1 soldier deserted.<sup>35</sup>
9. 21 September 1945: 1 soldier deserted during internment at a Malay primary school in Alor Gajah, Malacca.<sup>36</sup>
10. One engineering corps listed the following deserters.
  - a. 16 September 1945: Army special company private first-class Onodera Hatsuo 小野寺初男 and Maeda Hachirō 前田八郎 deserted in Guren [Gurun, Kedah?], northern Malai [Malaya].
  - b. 20 September 1945: Army 2nd company medic private first-class Iwasaki Tetsuo 岩崎哲夫, private first-class Oshita Masami 尾下正美, Matsushita Tomoichi 松下友一, and Hōjō Kikuo 北条菊雄 deserted in Bedong, Kedah. Hōjō Kikuo returned to the unit on 1 Oct 1945. Oshita and Matsushita were confirmed dead on 1 November 1945.<sup>37</sup>
11. An army infantry regiment's brief history contains this information: 6 petty officers and soldiers have deserted since the end of the war (between 15 Aug 1945 and 1946). Their whereabouts are unknown.<sup>38</sup>
12. A brief history of the 94th field artillery regiment contains the note 'Names of diseased and deserters as attached'.<sup>39</sup> There is, however, no attachment.

<sup>28</sup> Kōseishō Engokyoku (1961: 18).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.: 18.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.: 263.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.: 194.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.: 234.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.: 191–3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.: 18.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.: 217–19.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: 229–33.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: 254–5.

<sup>39</sup> Kōseishō Engokyoku (1961: 225–8).

13. 24 November 1945: Kuramochi Kihachi 仓持喜八, native of Tokyo and a technician in the army accounting department, deserted in Renggam, Johor. A note to this entry reads:  
Kuramochi spent many years when young in Malai [sic] with his parents. He is fluent in Chinese and befriended local people during the war. He has worked in the accounting department, but because of his local knowledge and fluency in Chinese, he volunteered for intelligence work. Because of his character, the unit had warned him that, as a married man, he should not take reckless action. However, he went out at 17:00, 24 Nov 1945 with Taiwanese army paymaster second lieutenant Nagaoka Ryō 长冈亮 (repatriated through the Taiwanese camp) and failed to return. The unit reported his desertion immediately and searched Layang Layang district in Renggam in vain.<sup>40</sup>
14. The list of deserters compiled Singapore's Japanese military police has the following entries.<sup>41</sup>
- 13 September 1945: Military police private first-class Okamoto Takeshi 岡本 escaped from Jurong internment camp and crossed over to the Malay Peninsula. Rumor has it that he has returned to Japan.
  - Corporal Tanzawa Ryōzō 丹泽良三, desertion, circumstance of desertion same as above. Rumored to have been killed by local people in Air Hitam on the Malay Peninsula.
  - Private first-class Ōno Ryōichi 大野良一, desertion, circumstance of desertion same as above. Rumored to have committed suicide in Segamat on the Malay Peninsula.
  - Military police private first-class Miyamori Shigeru 宫森茂, desertion, circumstance of desertion same as above. He crossed over to the Malay Peninsula but was later detained at Rempang Allied internment camp. He later returned to Japan.
15. One former soldier in an artillery battalion offered this recollection.

Right after the war, thinking that returning British soldiers would mistreat us, we approached the MCP. We understood that there was a Taiwanese by the name of Lin who was an MCP leader in northern Malai [sic]. A dropout of Nihon University, he had been deported from Japan. We began by contacting him. Since the MCP wanted weapons, we thought that since all our weapons would be surrendered to the British, we could pass some of our redundant weapons to them in exchange for secret food supplies should our life become hard under the British. The liaison person in this case was Second Lieutenant Onitsuka 鬼塚, who was transferred from the 29th Army. Just as the negotiation was progressing smoothly and some pistols were being handed over, an accident happened. At that time the MCP vigorously persuaded us to join them. Second Lieutenant Onitsuka became sympathetic to the communists and wanted to join the guerrillas. Even though we prevented it, Sergeant Major Kitagawa 北川, a clerk with the headquarters, and seven others loaded two heavy machine guns onto a truck and left for the guerrillas in the mountain. Before we could

<sup>40</sup> Dai 7 hōmengun shireibu (1946).

<sup>41</sup> Shōnan kempeitai (1946).

contact them and try to bring them back, the British ordered us to gather at Bidor [Perak], and our whole plan to link up with the communists came to naught. Among the deserters, Sergeant Major Hori 堀 and Private First Class Murakami 村上 became sick and died in the mountains. Later, when we were interned on Rempang Island, we were informed that six deserters led by Sergeant Major Kitagawa and Sergeant Nishinaka 西中 had turned themselves in and will be court-martialed. Most of these eight people had not understood what they had been doing. The driver Miki Zentarō 三木善太郎 was approached by the MCP and relayed the message to Sergeant Major Kitagawa. Without thinking seriously about what they were doing, the eight simply got onto the truck and drove away.

At the time, there were rumors that when the British returned, officers will be hanged, non-commissioned officers will be castrated, and soldiers will be repatriated. Whatever the officers felt, the non-commissioned officers were greatly shaken and had to think about protecting themselves. In the midst of all this, Hori, Kitagawa, and Nishinaka got in touch with the Malai [sic] communists and swiftly deserted.<sup>42</sup>

Not all deserters joined the communist guerrillas. From the above information, I can identify 41 deserters (39 in the official documents and 2 in battalion records), 12 of whom are named and 29 are anonymous (see Table 1). Of the named persons, Iwasaki is probably the guerrilla Gui Long mentioned above. These records suggest that Onitsuka, Miki and Kuramochi joined the guerrillas. Because the Japanese military police unit in Singapore was so deeply hated by the communists and by the ordinary people, it is unlikely that members of this unit deserted to join the guerrillas. I have excluded them from the list of those who may have joined the communists. With regard to the remaining 4 named and 29 anonymous persons, there is no evidence to indicate whether or not they joined the guerrillas.

Table 1 shows that most of the Japanese soldiers who abandoned their original units did so soon after the Japanese surrender. This might have been because the Army discipline and supervision were extremely loose during this period.

Out of those named in this section, Hashimoto survived to the end. Hosono and Miyatani died during war. Sasaki, Fujioka and probably Iwasaki left the guerrillas. No further information is available for the others.

## Malayan Communist Party Records and Memoirs

Japanese sources only provide a partial picture of those who joined the guerrillas. More recent publications by individuals involved with the MCP's armed struggle also shed light on Japanese participation in the guerrilla war. These mainly consist of:

1. Memoirs of party leaders including the Secretary General Chin Peng, Chairman Abdullah CD, and Politburo members (commanders of the guerrilla force) A Chen and Chen Kai.

<sup>42</sup> Morikai (1982: 174–5, 183–4).

**Table 1: Deserters Noted in Japanese Military Records**

Official Records										
June, Sep. 1944		20 Aug. 1945		Sep. 1945		Nov. 1945		Aug. 1945-1946		Total
Place	No.	Place	No.	Place	Name or No.	Place	Name	Place	No.	
Johor	2	Johor	1	KL	Nishijima, Kumagaya	Johor	Kuramochi**	NA	6	
				Kedah	1					
				Kedah	Onodera, Maeda, Iwasaki*					
				Malacca	1					
				Singapore	Miyamori, Okamoto,					
				(MP)	Ōno (Ryoichi), Tanzawa					
				NA	18					
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>29</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>39</b>
Unofficial Battalion Records										
Aug.-Sep.1945										
Place	Name									
Perak	Onitsuka**, Miki**									
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>									<b>41</b>

\* Most probably joined the guerrillas.

\*\* Possibility of affiliation with the guerrillas is discerned from the files.

2. Various records compiled by the former Party cadres who had settled in Malaysia after the Peace Agreement.
3. Interview records with former guerrillas which were published recently in Malaysia.
4. Memoirs of former guerrillas who were deported by the colonial authorities to China. These were published in Hong Kong, also after the Peace Agreement.

I have examined these sources to determine the identity of Japanese guerrillas, their activities, and their motivation for choosing a course of action that involved such hardship. I deal first with how the Japanese military made contact with the communists, then give an overview of Japanese participation in the armed movement, and finally discuss the experience of individual Japanese guerrillas.

## Contact with Communist Guerrillas

According to Japanese testimonies, before and after the war communist guerrillas made contact with the Japanese to negotiate the transfer of weapons or Japanese help in fighting the British. The above-mentioned book by Honda Tadanao 本田忠尚 (1988) records that when a communist guerrilla squad leader delivered a captured Ibaraki Kikan member named Yabe to the Japanese force in Kota Tinggi, he asked

to negotiate for the transfer of weapons.<sup>43</sup> Military policeman Seki Michisuke 关道介, who was stationed in Perak during the war, claimed that he entered guerrilla-controlled areas in Taiping and met with commander Chin Peng 陈平 and agreed to hand over redundant weapons.<sup>44</sup> However, based on other evidence, it is clear that he got the name of his negotiating counterpart wrong.<sup>45</sup>

Communist records confirm that some Japanese units sought contact with the guerrillas after the surrender. A former guerrilla leader named Zhang Mingjin 张明今 testified in 1991 that a representative of the Japanese 29th Army Headquarters in Taiping came to see MCP representative Fang Chunlai 房春来 after the surrender with a proposal to transfer the command of the Japanese force and the Indian National Army to the MCP in order to continue the fight against Britain. The party leadership refused, as doing so would breach its prior agreement with the British.<sup>46</sup>

Another former guerrilla's memoir published in Hong Kong in 1992 refers to what must be the same event.

The Japanese army in Tapah and Teluk Anson [now Teluk Intan] made contact with the 4th company of the 5th Independent Regiment of the MPAJA to propose that they and the Indian National Army join the communists in the fight against the British. The leadership of the 5th Independent Regiment appointed Fang Chunlai as the negotiator. It was eventually decided that the guerrillas would accept weapons from the Japanese but that cooperation would be a breach of the agreement with the Allied forces.<sup>47</sup>

The Military Administration in Taiping ordered Japanese negotiators to propose a joint-resistance against the British with the communist guerrillas. But after assessing the circumstances, the leadership of the 5th Independent Regiment concluded that the Japanese only wanted to continue to fight the British rather than desiring to assist in the communist struggle. It therefore resolutely turned down the proposal. The same source continues:

There were cases of small groups of Japanese soldiers led by low-ranking officers who came over to guerrillas with their weapons. In many cases, they were accepted. Some of the Japanese could speak Hokkien or Mandarin, and they were disguised as civilians and sent to the countryside to work in the fields or to faraway places.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Honda (1988: 77–8).

<sup>44</sup> Seki (2002: 257–77).

<sup>45</sup> While Chin Peng says Ai Ke, his deputy, negotiated with a Japanese representative, Zhang Mingjin, and another former MCP guerrilla says the negotiator was Fang Chunlai. Both Zhang and Fang were expelled from the MCP later (see Hara, 2001). If these were not two different negotiations, Chin Peng might have intended to erase Fang's activities as other Stalinist or Maoist Communist Parties' official histories erased devotions of the dissidents. On the other hand, after meeting Chin Peng in Bangkok in the early 2000s, Seki acknowledged that he was wrong.

<sup>46</sup> Hara (2001: 435).

<sup>47</sup> XinMa qiaoyouhui (1992a: 300–1).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.: 106–7.

A former member of the 4th Independent Regiment offers this recollection:

After Japan's surrender, commander Loh Seng 卢成<sup>49</sup> of the 4th Independent Regiment ordered the delivery of five Japanese prisoners of war to the Oka Kikan in Kota Tinggi. There I had a conversation with the Japanese commander, a major general, by means of writing Chinese characters. In response to our request for weapons, the Japanese commander said: 'We would cooperate with your fight against Britain to establish an [independent] state, but there are conditions. (1) After founding the state, you must accept tens of thousands of Japanese soldiers as citizens; (2) establish a joint command in which I would have a position since the communists, not speaking Japanese, would not be able to command Japanese soldiers. Unless these conditions are met, there would be no transfer of weapons.' After reporting back to Loh Seng, I returned to the Japanese and told them we could not accept their conditions. The major general then ordered some soldiers to deliver to us clothes, food, 27 rifles, and 10 cases of ammunitions.<sup>50</sup>

Another author's recollection of events in Kedah is as follows:

After Japan surrendered, some Japanese soldiers stationed at Baling came to us with weapons and asked to join us. The guerrillas asked only for their weapons but the Japanese refused. The guerrillas tried to ambush the Japanese on their way back for their weapons but failed. The relation between the two sides broke off. On the basis of this experience, guerrillas in central Kedah adopted a more flexible approach, accepting some 10 Japanese soldiers (including Tanaka Kiyooki and Hashimoto Shigeyuki). They actively moved weapons into the guerrilla camp. Communist guerrillas also asked the Japanese garrisons in Kulim and Kuala Ketil for weapons, but they refused on the ground that they had no order from their superiors. After repeated negotiations, the guerrillas obtained about 100 rifles and a large amount of ammunition. Meanwhile, since the central leadership has been slow in giving its order, the guerrillas changed its name from Kedah People's Anti-Japanese Army to the Liberation Army for the founding of the Malayan Democratic Republic. This name change was made on the basis of the party's 1943 '9 Point Anti-Japanese Program.' However, in August 1945, on the order of Chin Peng, who was then visiting the force, the Liberation Army changed its name again to the 8th Independent Regiment of the MPAJA. Though the guerrillas had an agreement with the Japanese in Baling to receive some of their weapons in the name of the Liberation Army, when they changed their name again, the Japanese became unhappy and refused further contact from the guerrillas.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Loh was the deputy commander of the 4th Independent Regiment. He later became the chairman of the Pan-Malayan General Labor Union (PMGLU) from February to April 1946. He was deported to China in April the same year and died in Beijing in 1991.

<sup>50</sup> Jianzheng congshu bianweihui (2005: 16–17).

<sup>51</sup> Chen (1999: 52–6).

Another source states: 'After Japan's surrender, some 200 Japanese soldiers in central and southern Kedah gave themselves up to the guerrillas expressing the wish to fight the British together. However, the guerrillas did not trust them and only took some of their weapons.'<sup>52</sup>

Chin Peng, who was secretary-general Lai Teck's right-hand man and the secretary of the Perak MCP state committee before becoming secretary-general following Lai's dismissal in 1947, summed up the situation this way.

A few hours after the Emperor's surrender announcement on the radio on August 16 [sic], Japanese commanders in Negeri Sembilan, Perak, and Kedah contacted our Party proposing to form an alliance to fight the colonial army. In Johor, it was lower-ranking officers who made the proposal. There was heated debate at the meetings of each state committee. In Kedah, A He 阿和 (alias of Chen Kai 陈凯) negotiated with the local commander with the aim to establish a unified force. In Perak, the deputy secretary of the state committee, Ai Ke 爱克, held talks with a high-ranking officer at the Military Administration in Taiping (which had relocated from Singapore) about taking control over all Japanese units on the peninsula. The officer, a major general, offered 'full cooperation with the communists in their fight against the British.' Ai Ke asked him to wait for two or three days for an answer. Soon the party central decided to terminate armed struggle and the Japanese proposal came to naught.<sup>53</sup>

Quan Zhongren 全仲仁, leader of the Revolutionary Faction that split from the MCP in 1970, wrote: '[The Japanese] proposed that twenty thousand Japanese soldiers with their weapons would surrender to us and together we would fight the returning British on behalf of all Asians. But the Party Central resolutely turned this down.'<sup>54</sup>

Thus, MCP sources claimed that the Japanese high command in Malaya offered to surrender the entire Japanese force to them or establish some kind of alliance with them. By contrast, Japanese sources mentioned only low-ranking officers entering into such negotiations, and even these officers represented but local units. It cannot be ascertained which version of the events is true, but there is no doubt that, as in the case of central Kedah, such contacts between Japanese and communist guerrillas became one of the main reasons for some Japanese soldiers to join the guerrillas.

## Japanese Soldiers Imprisoned for Anti-War Behaviour

Despite the enmity with the Japanese, some MCP members learnt early on that there were potential allies amongst them.

From the beginning of the Japanese occupation of Malaya, there were Japanese soldiers who disobeyed orders because of their doubts about the war. According to former members of the MCP, when 24 of its cadres were imprisoned in Singapore's Outram Prison in August 1942, there were

<sup>52</sup> XinMa qiaoyouhui (1992a: 368).

<sup>53</sup> Chin (2003: 123–4).

<sup>54</sup> Quan (1998: 108–9).



five rooms in the prison, of which two held Japanese guilty of anti-war or other unacceptable behavior.<sup>55</sup>

No reference to these Japanese prisoners, however, can be found in Japanese sources.

During the same period, the secret record kept by an MCP leader who was later executed provides the following information.

The number of Japanese inmates imprisoned for anti-war behavior or insubordination increased from 24 [June 1945?] to 82 [August 1945]. Among the prison guards were Japanese 'brothers' who were against the war. When our comrades were sick and could not get out of bed, these guards secretly delivered medicine and food to them. We were convinced that we could work closely with Japanese 'anti-war brothers' during our revolution.<sup>56</sup>

It was probably because of experiences like this that the communists at the end of the war approached the Japanese about a joint struggle against the British and accepted Japanese soldiers into their ranks.

## Overview of Japanese Guerrillas

I will now turn to the overall situation of those Japanese who fought alongside MCP guerrillas. Zhang Mingjin sent me a letter dated 25 February 1996 in which he wrote that a number of Japanese belonging to the Japan Anti-war League surrendered to the guerrillas during the war, but Lai Teck ordered their execution for fear that they knew he was a spy.

On the other hand, Chin Peng made the following comments during the Malayan Emergency Workshop at the Australian National University on 22–23 February 1999, in response to a question which pointed out that, based on Hashimoto's testimony, at least 200 hundred Japanese military officers and civilians joined the MPAJA.

According to British statistics, about 200 Japanese soldiers joined the communist guerrillas. There were about 20 to 30 in Kedah, but other than two all the rest either surrendered or died fighting or of illness. In Perak, there were two Japanese groups, one large and one small. The smaller group had at most 10 men stationed at Sungai Siput. They were brave and always fought in front. One or two of these soldiers surrendered to the British. The larger group had at first more than 100 men at nearby Kuala Kangsar and created a problem for us. They did not know that our policy had changed. When they discovered we did not want to fight the British, gradually, some ran away. Perhaps some surrendered to the British, some went to Thailand and went back to Japan from there, and some went to Indonesia and joined the fighting there. The remaining about 60 or 70, how to deal with this group? The Perak state committee made a report to Lai Teck. Lai Teck gave the order: finish them off. Kill! Besides that we still

<sup>55</sup> XinMa qiaoyouhui (1992b: 217–18).

<sup>56</sup> Chen (1999: 73–81).

harboured about a hundred more Japanese soldiers.<sup>57</sup>

As for the total number, it should be noted that 200 was not shown as the figure Chin Peng himself accepted. Chin Peng's memoir also touches on this, and the following is a summary of his recollection.

As the MCP had decided not to fight the British after the war, the prospects of a broad alliance with the defeated Japanese vanished. Even so this did not prevent some 400 Japanese being quietly accepted into our ranks. Being naturally racist, they were appalled at the prospect of being subjugated by whites. Teaming up with us was the formation of an acceptable Asian alliance against the white colonial intruder. Unless the issue of cooperation was solved quickly, the CPM [MCP] would likely split in two. Those in favour of association would have comprised the overwhelmingly larger faction. The directive from Lai Te [Lai Teck] ordering the disbanding of our [Japanese] forces settled the matter.<sup>58</sup>

He continues in his memoir:

The inter-related problems of poverty and food shortages that intensified throughout the final months of 1945 would impact seriously on Party projects, but none more tragically than on our newly acquired Japanese volunteers.

When it became obvious the CPM [MCP] would not be continuing the war, many of them just disappeared. I got the impression most were hoping to move north and perhaps try to get home through Siam, Laos and southern China. The odd one or two were certainly caught and interned by the British. A number probably died in the jungle. But a hard core remained with us. They were scattered among our supporters in squatter villages. When the time came, the Japanese would join us in the jungles.

In most areas, the job of blending them into our racial surroundings and supporting them was comparatively easy. This was not the case, however, in the Kuala Kangsar area where some 100 had initially come across. When more than half departed, we still had to create social camouflage for some 20 to 30, none of whom spoke Chinese, Malay or English. Perak state secretary, Ai Ker [Ai Ke], was forced to take up the issue directly with Lai Te [Lai Teck]. He explained that local communists were running the risk of being discovered harbouring the Japanese. A week or so later the order came through: Eliminate the Kuala Kangsar Japanese. Ai Ker instructed to remove the Japanese from the squatter villages in small groups of no more than two or three so as not to raise suspicions. The order made clear that the Japanese, on the pretext of training exercises, were to be led to isolated jungle positions for their executions. This massacre occurred in either the final days of 1945 or the first days of 1946. Lai Te would never have issued these orders had he not first discussed the matter thoroughly with his spymaster.

He further claims in his memoir:

<sup>57</sup> Chin and Hack (2004: 95–6).

<sup>58</sup> Chin (2003: 124–5).

As far as other Japanese were concerned, there were some 20 in Kedah, another Perak group of about 10 and a small number in Johor. They were in smaller numbers and thus had not become a burden. There was no need for state committees to bring them to the attention of Lai Te. When the Emergency began they joined our guerrillas and became fighters once again. Some got killed. Some surrendered. Those whom the British identified as operating with us became targets for heavy psych-operations. Their families and friends were contacted and induced to write letters imploring them to surrender. These letters were printed into leaflets and dropped over sections of jungle. These secured a handful of Japanese surrenders. But for all the money and effort spent in this pursuit did not satisfy the expenditure. The majority of the Japanese died in action.<sup>59</sup>

There are discrepancies among the numbers of Japanese soldiers given in the above quoted passages from Chin Ping's memoir of 2003, but it suggests that some 400 Japanese joined the guerillas and at least 20–30 of those around Kuala Kangsar were executed under orders from Lai Teck. When we compare the figure 200 in the 'Dialogues' with the figure of 400 in 'My Side of History', it seems that 400 might be the number used by the MCP Central and as such might be more accurate. Nonetheless, combining Chin Peng's two memoirs and recollections both of Hashimoto (more than 200) and Sasaki (300), we can safely conclude that 200–400 Japanese joined the guerrillas.

Besides the total number, it should be noted that Chin Peng regarded Japanese as racists aiming to form an Asian alliance against the West. Chin Peng also recalled that the hard core remained with the guerrillas; the majority died in action and only a handful surrendered. This might suggest that many shifted their stand to pro-MCP later and the main reason that many Japanese had disappeared by around 1960 was not surrender or desertion but that they were deceased.

## Japanese Guerrillas in Different Places

Previously I examined a general view of how Japanese joined the guerrillas all over Malaya. In this section, I will draw on MCP sources to discover more details about Japanese who operated in various places. The MPAJA established eight regiments covering the whole of Malaya, but the MCP's records relating to the Japanese participants are those relating to Kedah, with a few references to Perak, Kelantan and Pahang. Unluckily, apart from Chin Peng's recollections, only one testimony is available for Perak, a state where more than 100 Japanese may have joined the guerrillas. The MPAJA's Perak unit, the 5th Regiment, was the strongest of the eight regiments, and the number of Japanese in Perak might be equivalent to, or even greater than, the number in Kedah. The lack of information might be because Lai Teck ordered many of them to be executed.

Also unavailable is the precise distribution of Japanese participants by state. From the early 1950s, guerrillas shifted to southern Thailand. Some Japanese ex-soldiers who remained in the Jungle subsequently contacted the MCP guerrillas there, and were mentioned by them.

<sup>59</sup> Chin (2003: 145–8).

## (1) Kedah

MCP sources explain how Japanese, both soldiers and civilians, joined them in different places of Kedah and on different occasions. These sources provide more detail about the groups, their positions in the JMA, their work before the armed struggle started, their roles in the guerrilla war and so on.

1. The Japanese owner of Jinjang sawmill (a major in the Japanese army going by the Chinese name Wen Heji 温和记 and whose wife was Chinese) delivered his Austin to the guerrillas. Later, he took with him 12 Japanese soldiers, including a captain, a military doctor, a mechanic, an engineer, a driver, and others to join the communists. They all took Chinese names and lived under disguise among Chaozhou [Teochew] vegetable farmers.<sup>60</sup>
2. In late August 1945, a major assuming the name Jinzhi 金枝 along with 13 soldiers surrendered to the guerrillas. In August 1948, after living as farmers and miners for 3 years, they joined the People's Anti-British Army. They clashed with the British in December the same year at Sentok, inflicting more than ten injuries and fatalities on the enemy. In subsequent clashes, four of them were killed. Seven surrendered to the Thai authority after Malaya's independence and returned home with the help of the Japanese embassy in Thailand. The two remaining Japanese were Tanaka and Hashimoto.<sup>61</sup>
3. After Japan's defeat, 8 Japanese including Tanaka Kiyooki, Hashimoto Shigeyuki, and Tsuneoka Tatsukichi 常冈达吉 joined the MPAJA's underground organization and operated in the countryside. After the armed struggle against the British began, they participated in the anti-British force.<sup>62</sup> A Nagaoka Tatsukichi 长冈达吉 was referred to by another guerrilla as killed in action, and is presumably the same person.
4. There were about 20–30 Japanese working with the communists in secret in the countryside of Kedah. One of them was comrade Qing [sic] De 清德 [Tanaka]. Some of the Japanese later surrendered to the British, others were exposed and taken away by the British. At the time, the British would have a village surrounded and take away any villager who could not speak Chinese or Malay.<sup>63</sup>
5. On 25 June 1948 the 3rd independent squad of the Penang-Kedah People's Anti-British Army<sup>64</sup> was established in Sentok in northern Kedah. It had about 40 fighters, among them some 10 Japanese soldiers. The Japanese had joined the MPAJA secretly after the war and were sent by it to work in mines on the Thai border. These Japanese made the landmines used by the 8th Regiment<sup>65</sup> to which the 3rd independent squad belonged.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>60</sup> XinMa qiaoyouhui (1992a: 368).

<sup>61</sup> Zuyin congshu bianweihui (2008: 193).

<sup>62</sup> Fang (2002: 204–7).

<sup>63</sup> Qaiu (2004: 81, 98).

<sup>64</sup> In February 1949 it became the 8th Regiment of the Malayan National Liberation Army [MNLA].

<sup>65</sup> When the Malayan National Liberation Army was formed in February 1949, there were 9 Regiments. The number was later increased to 12. By the late 1950s, however, only the 8th, 10th, 12th, and 13th remained. The 10th Regiment was an all-Malay force.

<sup>66</sup> Chen (1998: 78); Fang (2005: 79–81).

6. In Malaya about 30 Japanese participated in the anti-British military campaign, and 17 or 18 of them were in Kedah. Most of these respected Japanese friends were killed in the long struggle. Fortunately, Tanaka and Hashimoto survived.<sup>67</sup>
7. In the early period of the anti-British war there was a Japanese unit in the 8th Regiment in northern Kedah. Tanaka was the most respected among them. He was an engineer and manufactured powerful landmines. He studied at the First Party School that opened on the Thai border in 1961. Afterwards, he taught cadres how to make and repair firearms.<sup>68</sup>
8. A few months before the start of the anti-British war [20 June 1948], some 30 Japanese with hundreds of rifles joined up. As fighting with the British broke out, they were deployed by the MCP to work among the masses and were given just a few grenades. One day, responding to a tip-off by some peasant, the British and their mercenaries came for them. Jin Qian 金钱, the leader of the Japanese, asked the British, in English, what they wanted, and the British, not realizing that he was Japanese, replied that they were here to arrest the Japanese. Jin raised his voice and told the British to come with him to the house of the Japanese. Having heard Jin's loud conversation with the British, the 7 or 8 Japanese in the house left just in time. After making sure that the British were in the house, they threw in grenades, wounding and killing 3 or 4. The rest of the enemy retreated. After this, the Japanese comrades were given guns. In the beginning they acted very much like samurai, and the MCP had a hard time controlling them. Tanaka was also their leader.<sup>69</sup>
9. After returning to Japan, Tanaka told his daughter that there were about 20 Japanese with him in the guerrilla force, and they had expertise in surgery, engineering, and weaponry. He also said that the armed struggle had erased from him the conviction of the superiority of the Yamato race, teaching him the need to learn from other people.<sup>70</sup>
10. In central Kedah there were about 10 Japanese with the communist guerrillas as Chin Peng's above quoted comment at the Australian National University shows.

On 25 June 1948 the 3rd independent squad of the Penang-Kedah People's Anti-British Army<sup>71</sup> was established in Sentok in northern Kedah. It had about 40 fighters, among them some 10 Japanese soldiers. The Japanese had joined the MPAJA secretly after the war and were sent by it to work in mines on the Thai border. These Japanese made the landmines used by the 8th Regiment to which the 3rd independent squad belonged.<sup>72</sup>

From these 10 sources, which overlap to some degree, we can tell that there were several tens of Japanese, beginning with two majors, who joined the communist guerrillas in Kedah. Four Japanese names are known, out of whom

<sup>67</sup> Fang (2000: 34).

<sup>68</sup> Lei (2010: 28–9).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.: 121–2.

<sup>70</sup> He (1999: 243).

<sup>71</sup> In February 1949 it became the 8th Regiment of the Malayan National Liberation Army [MNLA].

<sup>72</sup> Chen (1998: 78); Fang (2005: 79–81).

Tanaka and Hashimoto survived throughout the guerrilla war. It is conceivable that even Tanaka had been convinced of Japanese supremacy at first, a point that endorses Chin Peng's observation mentioned earlier.

## (2) Perak

In Taiping, 29 Japanese joined the MPAJA at the end of the war. Among them were an officer named Chin Kian 陈建? and a military doctor. Later, these two leaders died and many surrendered.<sup>73</sup>

## (3) Kelantan

In Kelantan there is this information on a 'prisoner of war' and 'surrender.'

In July 1945 after a clash with the Japanese, the MPAJA captured a wounded Japanese who gave his name as Yamada 山田. He was not a soldier but was involved in education and cultural matters. After Japan's defeat, the commander of the local Japanese force, Minami Yūichi 南勇一, refused to surrender to the British. He gathered a few spies and collaborators and went to the mountains with weapons and food. The guerrillas made Yamada write them a letter urging them to surrender to the MPAJA. In the end, Minami and another officer Ishikawa Shingo 石川信吾 gave themselves up to the guerrillas. They expressed the wish to join in the fight against the British, but because of the agreement with the Allies, the guerrillas handed Yamada, Minami, and Ishikawa over to the British in September 1945.<sup>74</sup>

In 1991, after my Japanese-language article 'Japanese Soldiers who remained in Malaysia' (*Mareishia no zanryū Nihonhei*) was published, the following story appeared in the *Asahi Shimbun*.

Minami Yūichi was a sergeant in the Military Police who was stationed in Kota Baru, Kelantan from January 1942. Due to his severe approach to the local Chinese, he was called the 'supreme emperor.' He was married to a Chinese woman, who protected her friends. Minami was arrested after the war as a war criminal but died of illness. His family back in Miyagi received notice of his death on 18 August 1946. He was 27.<sup>75</sup>

Minami escaped from the British in June 1946 while he was en route from Kuala Lumpur to Kota Baru to be tried for war crimes. He was re-captured on 7 August and later died in prison in Taiping.<sup>76</sup> Minami had killed over 100 Chinese in Kelantan,<sup>77</sup> so it was quite inconceivable that the MCP would have accepted him as a comrade in their struggle against the British.

<sup>73</sup> This author's interviews with Xiao Qiang 小強, and Huang Jian 黄坚 in Heping Village, southern Thailand on 2 September 2003.

<sup>74</sup> XinMa qiaoyouhui (1992b: 173–6).

<sup>75</sup> *Asahi Shimbun* (5 November 1991, evening edition).

<sup>76</sup> Hara (1991: 83–5).

<sup>77</sup> *Min Sheng Pao* (民声报), 1 July 1946. This was the MCP's official newspaper.

#### (4) Pahang

In Pahang in early June 1948, when Malay youths received military training at a private military camp, their instructors were members of the former Malay Regiment or former Japanese soldiers.<sup>78</sup>

#### (5) Southern Thailand

The following information is available for guerrilla bases in southern Thailand.

1. In 1952 the 3rd independent squad under the 8th Regiment stationed in a village in southern Thailand took in several Japanese. These Japanese did not want to surrender to the British and had been hiding in the jungle. They often approached villagers for rice, who were afraid of them but were also sympathetic. One day, the MCP was informed that the Japanese wanted to get in touch with it. When the Party made contact with them, they immediately gave up their weapons and asked to join the guerrillas. The Party put them up temporarily in a rubber factory, delivering to them water and food every day. Later, the guerrillas received order to take them to the Regiment command. The Japanese worked hard there and were known for their bravery. A Japanese doctor called Gui Long 鬼龙 took good care of the peasants and was welcomed by the people.<sup>79</sup>
2. One guerrilla arrived at the communist base in 1950 in southern Thailand where he received two years of military training and then training in medicine. His teacher was a Japanese. According to him, there were over 10 Japanese with the force; among them Hong Guang 宏光 was a vet and Gui Long was a military doctor. Many of them had been professors. A Fu 阿福 [Hashimoto] was an expert in weaponry. He could also do acupuncture and play music and taught us Japanese songs and dance as well as jūjutsu. It seems that the Party did not treat them properly, so some of them left. Some were killed in clashes with the enemy. A Fu and 3 or 4 Japanese left to try to form their own unit but failed. Short of food, they stole tapioca from the peasants or begged, spending over a year on their own. Later, the peasants informed the Party of their whereabouts and the latter took them in again. They were thin and had long hair and nails. Their leader was executed and the rest also punished. It was later concluded that although they should have been punished, it was wrong to have executed their leader. A Fu and the other Japanese kept his trimmed hair and nails; it was probably a Japanese custom.<sup>80</sup>
3. Another former guerrilla recalled that when a unit including Japanese company under the command of Jin Qian 金钱 set up a temporary camp in the jungle of southern Thailand in order to go south, some were sick. But they were ordered by the command to work nonetheless. This created a deep division and the Japanese deserted en masse. They did not surrender to the enemy but continued to fight on their own. They went into Thai villages to

<sup>78</sup> Ibrahim (2004: 67).

<sup>79</sup> Cao (2008: 33–4).

<sup>80</sup> Qaiu (2004: 216).

steal food and wandered around. In the end, they could not continue and had no choice but to return to the guerrillas. Initially, they refused to submit to the discipline of the guerrillas, saying that both parties should refrain from criticizing each other. The Party leadership recognized that Japanese way of thinking was different from Chinese and educated them with sincerity. This was difficult in the beginning, but some of them soon became receptive to the Party's education. In the end, Jing De 精德 (Tanaka), A Fu (Hashimoto), Hong Guang 红光 and a few others became excellent comrades. Hong Guang was later killed.<sup>81</sup>

4. Comrade Miyatani Isamu (nom de guerre Hong Guang 洪光) [presumably the same person as 红光 and 宏光 above] joined the Malayan people's struggle against the British after the end of the war. He participated in the fierce guerrilla war against the British that started in 1948. He fought bravely and endured adversity together with other comrades. In the end of 1959, he was killed in an ambush by the enemy at Sadao in southern Thailand near the border with Malaya.<sup>82</sup>

It is astonishing that some Japanese soldiers hid in the jungle of southern Thailand for some seven years and thereafter fought alongside communist guerrillas. The above-mentioned Gui Long was one of them. Meanwhile, Miyatani's correct year of death should be 1959, not 1956 as reported in an earlier quoted source.

## Japanese Roles in Guerrilla Combat Units

Having established that between 200 and 400 Japanese joined the guerrillas and that most of them were gone by 1960, we can ask what these men actually did. What value did they have for the guerrilla forces? What sorts of actions did they participate in? Former Japanese soldiers and other Japanese served in the guerrilla force in varying capacities. Most of them, though they remained part of the rank and file, played an important role as technicians and doctors.

### A Japanese Cadre

According to Zhang Zuo 张佐, a former communist cadre, in 1952 a Japanese deputy squad leader named A Shan 阿山 led some 10 fighters to work among the peasants in Malim Nawar, Perak. Within a month of their arrival, however, the British launched a campaign against them. In the subsequent battle, A Shan led his men in fighting back gallantly.<sup>83</sup>

Former MCP politburo member Shan Ruhong 单汝洪 (aka A Hai 阿海 and A Cheng 阿成) provided this recollection of A Shan.

A Shan or 'Japanese (Riben) Shan 日本山' was a technician. After Japan's defeat, he asked to join the 'old force'.<sup>84</sup> Disguised as a peasant, he operated

<sup>81</sup> Lei (2010: 122–3).

<sup>82</sup> 21 Laoyou (2014).

<sup>83</sup> Zhang (2005: 310–12).

<sup>84</sup> At the time of the Japanese defeat, the MPAJA was divided into two: the 'old force' or secret corps and the 'new force' or open corps.



with the support of our organization in villages. After the uprising of 20 June 1948, he joined the Anti-British Army. He was a university graduate and could repair guns. He was assigned to a weapons factory and helped in the laying of landmines. When the factory came under attack soon after, A Shan fought bravely while assisting in removing the factory deep into the jungle.<sup>85</sup>

During her time as a guerrilla with the 12th Regiment, Li Ming 李明 met A Shan.

Around 1949 Japanese comrade A Shan singlehandedly overcame many enemies in an ambush in Perak and was later commended for it. He alone performed the dangerous task of retrieving the weapons the guerrillas buried at the time of Japan's defeat. These weapons he then cleaned, checked, and repaired. He had great technical skills, and he repaired many small bombs for our use. The work was very risky and he refused others' offer to help. His bravery and sense of responsibility moved many comrades. The weapons he repaired were sent to all the fighting units where they were put to good use.<sup>86</sup>

In November 1949, when the 3rd independent squad of the 8th Regiment established a 'special area organization' in Perak, one of its three leaders was an 'A Shan' who was a member of the Kedah-Penang liaison committee.<sup>87</sup> This source does not mention that this 'A Shan' was a Japanese, but as other sources<sup>88</sup> state that there were some 10 Japanese in the 3rd independent squad of the 8th Regiment, it is most likely that this was the Japanese person mentioned by Shan Ruhong and Li Ming. If so, it seems to indicate that a small unit of Japanese operated together in Perak before the guerrillas shifted to southern Thailand.

According to a source who was with the Marxism-Leninism Faction, which split from the MCP in the early 1970s, A Shan was killed fighting the British in Perak.<sup>89</sup> This person may have been Hosono (Ôzono).

A later publication that gathered recollections of ex-guerrillas who had been deported to China contains this information on A Shan.

At the end of the Second World War, a Japanese soldier in central Perak refused to surrender to the British and joined the revolutionary force, taking the name A Shan. After the anti-British war started, he joined the anti-British guerrillas. The guerrillas in the region had buried 90% of their weapons from the Second World War, which they later retrieved. A Shan checked and repaired these weapons. As a result this force came to possess outstanding equipment.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Shan (2002: 246–9); A Cheng (2006: 108–12).

<sup>86</sup> Zheng (2007: 26). Li Ming was captured in 1954 and sentenced to death, but the sentence was later commuted and she was deported to China in 1963.

<sup>87</sup> Chen (1998: 125).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.: 78; Fang (2005): 79–81.

<sup>89</sup> Cai (2000: 269). In 1983 the Marxism-Leninism Faction joined another splinter group, the 'Revolutionary Faction,' in forming the Malaysian Communist Party.

<sup>90</sup> Zuyin congshu bianweihui (2008: 95). Another source states that in 1972, when the 2nd District under the 12th Regiment plotted to rebel against the Party central, district leader

## Japanese Doctors

It seems that several Japanese doctors worked with the guerrillas and were highly valued. Abdullah C.D., Chairman of the MCP, refers to one of them in his memoir.

[In 1949] a Japanese doctor (Doktor Jepun) going by the nom de guerre Saat became the doctor of Abdullah. This doctor also looked after the cadres of the 10th Regiment. During the battles on 12 and 30 September 1949, he fought bravely on the frontline. He later left the 10th Regiment.<sup>91</sup>

Ibrahim Chik's memoir refers to a Japanese doctor, Sama, providing medical and educational service in Pahang when the 10th Regiment, after its creation in 1949, fought the British.<sup>92</sup> A former female fighter offered this recollection.

When she joined the communist guerrillas in Kemayan, Pahang in April 1949, she was weak and emaciated, but she quickly recovered after a Japanese doctor called Ya Ren 亚仁 had attended to her. She then learned medicine from him for three months. According to this woman, the Japanese doctor was kind and attentive and was fluent in Hakka and Mandarin. The leaders told her not to ask the doctor about Japan, as he did not want to be reminded that he was Japanese.<sup>93</sup>

## Tanaka Kiyooki and Hashimoto Shigeyuki

MCP sources provide the following information on Tanaka and Hashimoto, the two Japanese who survived to the end of the armed struggle, explaining their contribution and how they were viewed and valued by their 'comrades'.

Tanaka Kiyooki (nom de guerre Jing De) joined the MPAJA with several fellow Japanese soldiers on 16 September 1945. After the start of the Anti-British war, he put his scientific knowledge to the design and production of light weapons. He fought bravely in many anti-siege battles and was given the duty of laying landmines. In January 1949 he was commended by the high command of the Anti-British Force (Kang Ying budui) for his role in the fighting in northern Kedah. In 1975 he received from the high command of the National Liberation Army (Minzu jiefangjun or NLA) the title 'warrior of internationalism'.<sup>94</sup>

As Tanaka served in the army before joining a military-sponsored company in Malaya, it is natural that he developed expertise in working with various weapons. But it was not only his technical knowledge that won high respect from the guerrillas.<sup>95</sup> According to the 5 April 2000 reports of Tanaka's death in

---

A Ling 阿凌 (aka Zhang Zhong Ming 张忠明) urged someone named 'A Shan' to join in the effort (Fang, 2004: 22–7). This person is unlikely to be the 'A Shan' we have been discussing because their periods of activity were different.

<sup>91</sup> Abdullah (2007: 131–3, 268). Part 3 of Abdullah's memoir has a reference to a 'Saat' in the 10th Regiment in 1955 (Abdullah 2009: 58), but this person is not called 'Doctor' and is likely to have been another person.

<sup>92</sup> Ibrahim (2004: 109).

<sup>93</sup> Zuyin congshu bianweihui (2008: 157–8).

<sup>94</sup> Fang (2006: 43–50).

<sup>95</sup> Lei (2010: 121–2).

*Nanyang Siang Pau* and *Sin Chew Daily*, he initiated contact with the underground MCP soon after he was assigned to Nichinan Seitetsu in Malaya in August 1944. Shortly before Japan's surrender, he and several colleagues gave the MPAJA a considerable number of firearms kept by the Japanese military police at the factory to the MPAJA.<sup>96</sup> It is not clear if the newspapers obtained this information from former MCP members, but if this information is true, then it suggests that Tanaka had contacts with the MCP before the war ended. If so, it is understandable why he would later be so valued by the MCP.

MCP sources offer little additional information on Hashimoto Shigeyuki (nom de guerre A Fu) beyond what is provided above. Like Tanaka, he was also lauded as a 'warrior of internationalism'. He introduced Japanese songs such as *Aiba Shingunka* (*Marching Song of Beloved Steeds*) and *Kitaguni no Haru* (*Spring of Northern Country*) to fellow guerrillas, translating the latter song into Chinese with a new title: *Riben ming'e: rongshu xia* (*Japanese Folksong: Under the Banyan Tree*). It became popular among the guerrillas.<sup>97</sup>

## Japanese Killed in Action

MCP sources include records of a few Japanese who died heroically amid fighting against colonial forces.

### Rong Guang 荣光.

Chen Kai (aka A He), a former politburo member of the MCP, wrote this about Rong Guang in his memoir.

In January 1949 the 3rd Independent Squad of the 8th Regiment engaged in fierce fighting with British and Gurkha soldiers in northern Kedah. Japanese comrades Rong Guang and Gui Long fought bravely. On 18 December Rong Guang was killed while fighting bravely at Rambutan in Perak.<sup>98</sup>

Another former guerrilla provides additional information.

Nagaoka Tatsukichi 长冈达吉 (nom de guerre Rong Guang) participated in the anti-colonial struggle after the war and the independence war after June 1948 and was gravely wounded on 18 December 1949 when fighting against British mercenaries. Supported by comrades, he struggled to return to base but died on the way.<sup>99</sup>

Earlier in this paper I mentioned the name Tsuneoka Tatsukichi. The Mandarin pronunciation for the Chinese characters (kanji) for 'Naga 长' (=chang and zhang) and 'Tsune 常' (=chang) are similar, which could explain the variations of this Japanese person's name in Chinese sources.

<sup>96</sup> Reprinted in Fang (2006: 47). The fact that a book by a former MCP member reprinted the two newspaper stories shows that the communists affirm their veracity.

<sup>97</sup> Fang (2002: 198–203).

<sup>98</sup> Chen (1998: 78–80, 126).

<sup>99</sup> 21 Laoyou (2014). Based on this, Nagaoka should be the correct name.

### 木松 (Kimatsu in Japanese, Musong in Mandarin)

Chen Kai's memoir also records that 'submachine gunner (platoon leader) comrade Kimatsu (Musong)' was killed in action on 30 December 1950.<sup>100</sup> Musong could not be a real Chinese name, but a Chinese pseudonym. It is not clear if Kimatsu was Japanese although the name would suggest that this was the case.

### Manap Jepun (also Manaf Jepun)

This person often appears in the sources as a Malay hero, although he was neither a Japanese soldier nor a Japanese civilian working for a Japanese enterprise during the war. As the 'Jepun' component of his name means Japan, I became curious and found the following information after some research.

Comrade Manap's mother was Japanese and unusually for Malays in those days he had a middle-school education in English. He joined the NLA after the anti-British war broke out and became a sergeant in the 5th squad of the 10th Regiment. In 1951, wearing the uniform of a high-ranking British officer and speaking English, he passed through British army checkpoints to enter a Malay village where he demanded ammunition for subjugating guerrillas. The ruse worked and he brought back some 20 guns and ammunition to the guerrillas. His derring-do became a legend in the area.<sup>101</sup>

When the 10th Regiment was established in May 1949, Manap became one of its assistant leaders.<sup>102</sup> According to former comrades from the 10th Regiment, he was born in Pahang and his mother was Japanese. He was killed when fighting colonial Gurkha soldiers in a rubber plantation in Kuantan on 25 January 1952. At the time, he was about 20 years old and a sergeant.<sup>103</sup>

The autobiography of Ishak bin Haji Muhammad, the 3rd chairman of the Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya (Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya) and one-time chairman of Malaya's Socialist Front, also mentions Manap. 'Hero Manap comes from the Hj. Hussin family whose ancestors came to Pahang from Sulawesi in 1800. [...] Manaf Jepun was among those killed when fighting the British.'<sup>104</sup> Thus Manap's father's side was a family with an anti-British tradition, and Manap is also remembered for anti-colonial activity.

A recently published source states that Manap was born in 1919 and became the secretary of the Temerluh [of Pahang] branch of the Malay Nationalist Party of Malaya after the Second World War. According to this source, he was killed on 25 May 1952 in a clash with Gurkha soldiers, and was 33 at the time.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Chen (1998: 88).

<sup>101</sup> Jianzheng congshu bianweihui (2008: 127–31).

<sup>102</sup> Ibrahim (2004: 100). Here the name is given as 'Manaf Siwang (Manaf Jepun)'.

<sup>103</sup> Personal communication from Fang Shan, 7 September 2008.

<sup>104</sup> Ishak (1996: 38, 198).

<sup>105</sup> Zuyin congshu bianweihui (2008: 252).

## Japanese Guerrillas Who Left the Guerrillas

Though Chin Peng recalled that some Japanese surrendered, others went back to Japan through Thailand and some joined the Indonesian independence struggle (see above), MCP sources noted the name of only one Japanese who had left them.

Chen Kai's memoir cited above contains a note that reads: 'Gui Long later left the force.'<sup>106</sup> However, since Chen calls him 'Japanese comrade', it seems that he does not regard his departure as betrayal. This agrees with Hashimoto's testimony cited above.

According to Cao Qizhu 曹启竹, Gui Long joined around 1952, but Chen Kai says that he participated in fighting in January 1949. It could be that, unlike a group of several Japanese who joined in 1952, Gui Long had joined in an earlier period of the guerrilla war because Cao does not directly mention that Gui Long was in the group.<sup>107</sup> Besides Gui Long, an MCP source states that seven Japanese subsequently surrendered to the Thai government and eventually returned to Japan.<sup>108</sup>

Former cadre Fang Shan 方山, who in recent years has been working on compiling MCP sources and relevant memoirs, states that two Japanese members of the communist guerrillas returned to Japan in the 1950s, and that there were news reports on them.<sup>109</sup> However, I have not been able to confirm this information.

## Conclusion

Japanese military records can be construed to include five Japanese guerrillas whose names are known and another seven who are designated 'unknown' (See Table 1). Hashimoto's testimony lists four, and other Japanese sources show four more; Chinese newspapers identify 6 or 7, and MCP records another 12 or 13 (besides them, one Malay whose mother was Japanese). Hashimoto, Tanaka, Miyatani, Nagaoka (Tsuneoka), Hosono, and Gui Long (probably Iwasaki Tetsuo) are mentioned repeatedly. Two survived to the end, six died due to the guerrilla war or disease, three left the guerrillas along the way (two of them returning to Japan), and one was executed.

All told, about 200–400 Japanese joined the MCP guerrillas. It appears that, like Tanaka and Hashimoto who fought alongside the guerrillas until the end of the communist armed struggle, the majority of Japanese guerrillas were motivated by the recognition that the Japanese military had gone back on its promise to liberate Malaya from colonial rule by imposing severe military rule, and they were determined to make good on the promise by fighting for Malayan independence after the war. Some sought contact with the MCP even before the war's end. Hashimoto Shigeyuki suggested that his group led by Hosono considered Japan's slogan calling for Pan-Asian solidarity deceitful. Their motivation can be verified by the fact that the autocratic head of the MCP, the double agent Lai Teck, ordered the execution of a number of determined Japanese.

When the MPAJA approached the Japanese for weapons, it opened the way for Japanese to join their struggle. The existence of imprisoned anti-war Japanese

<sup>106</sup> Chen (1998: 80).

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.; Cao (2008: 33–4).

<sup>108</sup> Zuyin congshu bianweihui (2008: 193).

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Fang Shan in Kuala Lumpur on 30 December 2005.

**Table 2: Recorded Japanese Names**

Source	Japanese Military Records	Hashimoto	Other Japanese Sources	Chinese Papers	MCP Records
	<b>Official Records</b>	<b>(named persons)</b>			
<b>Deserter/ Guerrilla</b>	<b>Deserters</b> Iwasaki Tetsuo**(?) Kumagaya Kumaichi Kuramochi Kihachi# Maeda Hachiro Nishijima Yoshiyuki Onodera Hatsuo Ōno Ryoichi (MP) Miyamori Shigeru (MP) Okamoto Takeshi (MP) Tanzawa Yoshizo (MP) (Beside them, 29 anonymous soldiers were missing)  <b>Memoir of a Battalion Guerrillas (possibly)</b> Miki Zentaro# Onitsuka#	<b>Guerrillas</b> Gui Long (Iwasaki)** Hashimoto Shigeyuki Hosono Eijiro* Tanaka Kiyooki	<b>Guerrillas</b> Fujioka Hisanori** Miyatani Isamu* Sasaki Ken'ichi** Maeda Mitsuo#	<b>Guerrillas</b> Asano Hashimoto Hoshino (Hosono? Ōno?) Miyamoto Ōzono Takahashi Ryutarō***	<b>Guerrillas</b> Hashimoto Shigeyuki (A Fu) Miyatani Isamu (Hong Guang)* Nagaoka (Tsuneoka) Tatsukichi (Rong Guang)* Tanaka Kiyooki (Jing De)  <b>Only Chinese pseudonyms are known</b> Chin Kian (Chen Jian?)* Gui Rong (Iwasaki Tetsuo?)** Jin Qian (company commander)**** Mu Song (Kimatsu? Chinese?)* Ya Ren Dr.Saat Dr.Sama A Shan (deputy squad leader)* Wen Heji (Jin Zhi. Japanese major)  <b>Mother was a Japanese</b> Manap Jepun*
	Total number of the named guerrillas				
	5 (possibly)	4	4	6	12 or 13
	Total number of the guerrillas	200	300	100	200-400

\* Died in the guerrilla war or due to disease in the jungle.

\*\* Left the guerrillas.

\*\*\* Arrested on 20 June 1948.

\*\*\*\* Executed by the guerrillas (not by Lai Teck's directive).

# Possibility of affiliation with the guerrillas is discerned from the files.

A Shan might be Hosono (or Hoshino or Ōzono).

soldiers might also have paved the way for the MCP to accept Japanese. On the other hand, from Japanese sources we know that concerns about retribution from the Allies caused some Japanese soldiers to join the guerrillas. There was also a group of Japanese soldiers who stayed in the jungle after the war, sustaining themselves by pilfering from the local people before finally joining the guerrillas in 1952.

It is not known how many Japanese guerrillas died of disease and how many left the movement or surrendered. According to Sasaki Ken'ichi, one of those who left the guerrillas, many Japanese were killed in the first two and a half years of fighting. Hashimoto contended that most of the Japanese who joined the guerrillas were killed or died from disease, and that by the early 1960s only two Japanese remained.

Chin Peng said that knowing the MCP would not wage an anti-British war, some Japanese left soon after the end of the war. He added that the majority of the Japanese who remained with the guerrillas died in action, although some surrendered.<sup>110</sup> Apart from those who were executed or disappeared shortly after the end of the War, most Japanese continued to participate in the guerrilla war until the early 1950s, and many died in action or from disease. Some left the guerrilla force before the aggressive armed struggle line was re-adopted in 1961. The restrained struggle line of the late 1950s might have affected their thinking and behaviour. The absence of any prospect of victory might also have been a decisive reason why some left the guerrillas in the earlier period.

Tanaka Kiyooki, who was praised later by the MCP as a 'warrior of internationalism', was said to have recalled that at first he had the conviction of the superiority of the Yamato race (Japanese). This idea is endorsed by Chin Peng, who in his memoir characterized the Japanese as natural racists.

Meantime, regarding the Japanese who joined their struggle, MCP cadres said, 'In the beginning they [Japanese] acted very much like samurai, and the MCP had a hard time controlling them ... but some of them soon became receptive to the Party's education and became excellent comrades.'<sup>111</sup>

Some Japanese might not have fully agreed with the communist cause. At first, some believed in Pan-Asianism (the liberation of Asia led by Japan), and those who retained this belief might have rejected the communist leadership and left the guerrillas earlier. Sasaki Ken'ichi noted that the goal of fighting against colonial rule disappeared after Malaya gained independence in 1957, which may have prompted the departure of other Japanese. Those who had merely intended to support the independence of Malaya might have left the guerrillas soon after Malaya became independent in 1957. Others, including Tanaka, might have gradually forsaken Japanese supremacy and resolved to sympathize with the communists. These Japanese might have fought till the end. Taking all information into account, we can conclude that many—probably a large majority—of the Japanese who joined the guerrillas became sympathetic to the communist cause and devoted their lives to the guerrilla war.

From the end of the War until the beginning of the Anti-British struggle, or more precisely until Lai Teck's defection after he was exposed as a double agent, at least 20–30, and possibly as many as 60 or 70 (both sets of numbers come from MCP secretary-general Chin Peng) Japanese defectors who had joined the communists were executed at Lai Teck's order. These Japanese, who had joined the guerrillas to fight against the British, became a burden to the MCP high command, not least because they added to the difficulty of securing food, when after Japan's surrender the party decided not to wage an armed struggle against the British. This was the greatest tragedy for the Japanese who had participated in the liberation war of Malaya. It is not known precisely how many were executed. Moreover, even after the armed struggle started, one Japanese was executed for disobeying orders and forming an independent unit.

In the guerrilla force Japanese often served as doctors and technicians, playing critical roles in the repair of weapons and the making of landmines. As the

<sup>110</sup> Chin and Hack (2004: 95–6); Chin (2003: 124–5, 145–8).

<sup>111</sup> Lei (2010: 121–3).

Japanese grew old, were killed in action, or left the movement, they were replaced by younger guerrillas trained in China and Vietnam. It cannot be ascertained how many of them were military personnel and how many were civilians, but many were familiar with weapons and we may presume that those men at least had experience with the Japanese military.

Comparing official Japanese records on 'deserters' and the memoirs of former MCP members, not even one name common to both sets of sources can be definitively identified. According to Hashimoto, 'Gui Long' in MCP sources was the Japanese Iwasaki. If that is true, then Gui Long could be the person Japanese records identify as 'private Iwasaki Tetsuo, medic of 2nd army company, who deserted in Bedong, Kedah'. Also, Hosono (Ono, Hoshino or Ōzono), a leader in Perak/Kedah area, might be a person known as A Shan. If so, at least two individuals could be coincided through Chinese papers, Japanese official records and MCP sources.

Since the late nineteenth century, bilateral relations between Japan and the people in the rest of Asia have not always been friendly, and in fact for much of the time were hostile. Even so, some Japanese were friendly to other Asians. The fact that some Japanese soldiers joined the anti-British guerrillas in Malaya demonstrates this point. However, these Japanese were exceptions and a small minority among the large numbers of Japanese who went to Southeast Asia as soldiers and civilians. They maintained tenuous contacts between the Asian and Japanese peoples when the relations between their countries endured great difficulties. Hiding their Japanese names, most of these Japanese guerrillas have simply vanished, and their history remains largely unknown. Although their lives were neither happy nor properly rewarded, their choices and action deserve the attention of historians.

## References

- 21 Laoyou (2014), KangYing zhanzheng zhong xisheng de Changgang Daji tongzhi. <http://www.of21.com/doku.php>. Accessed on 26 August 2014. 21老友〈抗英战争中牺牲的长冈达吉同志〉
- A Cheng [Shan Ruhong] (2006), *Cong '8 kuo' dao kangYing zhanzheng: Magong zhongyang zhengzhiju wei yuan A Cheng huiyilu zhi 3*, Kuala Lumpur: 21 shiji chubanshe. 阿成[单汝洪]《从'8扩'到抗英战争:马共中央政治局委员阿成回忆录之三》
- Abdullah C.D. (2007), *Memoir Abdullah C.D. (Bahagian Kedua): Penaja dan Peminpin Rejimen Ke-10*, Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development.
- (2009), *Memoir Abdullah C.D. (Bahagian Ketiga): Perjuangan Sempadan dan Penamatan Terhormat*, Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development.
- Cai Qiuzhen (2000), *40 nian senlin youji zhanzheng shenghuo huiyilu*, Betong: Tainan wudong diyi youyicun. 蔡求真《40年森林游击战争生活回忆录》泰南勿洞第一友谊村
- Cao Qizhu (Selamah binti Abdullah, Mrs Rashid Maidin) (2008), *Zhandou de banshiji: Rashid Maidin furen Cao Qizhu huiyilu*, Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development. 曹启竹《战斗的半世纪:拉普邁汀夫人曹启竹回忆录》
- Chen Kai (1998), *Wei duli er zhan*, Hong Kong: Nandao chubanshe. 陈凯《为独立而战》南岛出版社
- (1999), *Huiyi BingjiPo renmin kangRi douzheng*, Hong Kong: Nandao chubanshe. 陈凯《回忆檳吉坡人民抗日斗争》



- Chin, C.C. and Karl Hack (eds) (2004), *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party*, Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Chin Peng (2003), *My Side of History*, Singapore: Media Masters.
- Dai 7 hōmengen shireibu (1946), *Tōbōsha meibo*. Original kept in the Military Archives of the National Institute for Defense Studies. 第7方面軍司令部〈逃亡者名簿〉藏在防衛省防衛研究所資料閱覽室。
- Fang Shan (ed.) (2002), *Jianzheng hejian hejie yu huiMa*, Kuala Lumpur: Fangshan chuban. 方山編《見證和解與回馬》
- (2004), *Lishi de gaobai*, Kuala Lumpur: 21 shiji chubanshe. Penerbitan Abad 21. 方山編《歷史的告白》21世紀出版社
- (2005), *MaTai bianqu fengyunlu di 1 ji, genjudi chongzheng qigu: xinshiqi, xinfangzhen*, Kuala Lumpur: 21 shiji chubanshe. Penerbitan Abad 21. 方山編《馬泰邊區風云錄 第1集 根據地重整旗鼓：新時期·新方針》21世紀出版社
- (2006), *MaTai bianqu fengyunlu di 3 ji: guangrong jianju de renwu*, Kuala Lumpur: 21 shiji chubanshe. Penerbitan Abad 21. 方山編《馬泰邊區風云錄 第3集 光榮艱巨的任務》21世紀出版社
- Fang Zhuangbi (2000), *Ma Tai bianqu fengyun: senlin youji shenghuo pianduan*, Selangor: Syarikat Kebudayaan Gunung Tahan. 方壯璧《馬泰邊區風云：森林游擊生活片斷》
- Forum for Gathering Information on the Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore (FGIJOMS. Nihon no Maraya Shingapōru senryōki shiryō chōsa forum) (ed.) (1998), *Interview Records*, Tokyo: Ryukei Shosha. 「日本のマラヤ・シンガポール占領期フォーラム」編《インタビュー記録》龍溪書舍
- Hara Fujio (1991), 'Mareishia no zanryū Nihonhei', *Ajia kenkyū*, 38(1): 79–94. 原不二夫〈マレーシアの残留日本兵〉《アジア研究》
- (2001), *Maraya kakyō to Chūgoku*, Tokyo: Ryūkei shosha. 原不二夫《マラヤ華僑と中国》龍溪書舍
- (2009), *Mikan ni owatta kokusai kyōryoku: Maraya kyōsantō to kyōdaitō*, Tokyo: Fūkyōsha. 原不二夫《未完に終わった国際協力：マラヤ共産党と兄弟党》風響社
- Hayashi Eiichi (2012), *Zanryū Nihon Hei*, Tokyo: Chuukou Shinsho. 林英一《残留日本兵》中公新書
- He Jin (1999), *Zhengrong de shuiyue suiyue*, Hong Kong: Nantao chubanshe. 賀中《峥嵘的岁月》南島出版社
- Honda Tadanao (1988), *Ibaraki kikan senkōki*, Tokyo: Tosho shuppansha. 本田忠尚《茨木機関潜行記》图书出版社
- Ibrahim Chik (2004), *Memoir Ibrahim Chik: Dari API keRegimen Ke-10*, Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Ishak Haji Muhammad (1996), *Memoir Pak Sako: Putera Gunung Tahan*, Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan.
- Ishibe Tōshirō (1990), *Seishun kempei kashikan ishibe memo*, Private publication. 石部藤四郎《青春 憲兵：下士官石部メモ》
- Jianzheng congshu bianweihui (ed.) (2005), *Jiqing shuiyue suiyue*, Hong Kong: Jianzheng chubanshe. 見證叢書編委會 編《激情歲月》見證出版社
- (2008), *Gucheng xiaoyan*, Hong Kong: Xianggang zuyin chubanshe. 見證叢書編委會 編《古城硝煙》香港足印出版社
- Kōseishō Engokkyoku (1961), *Marai Boruneo hōmenbutai ryakureki*, Tokyo: Kōseishō (Ministry of Health and Welfare). 厚生省援護局〈マライ・ボルネオ方面部隊略歴〉

- Lei Yang (ed.) (2010), *Zhouguo Zouguo xiaoyan de shuiyue suiyue: Magong bufen zhongji ganbu fangtanlu*, Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development. 雷阳 编《走过硝烟的岁月: 马共部分中级干部访谈录》
- Masuda Hiroshi (2013), *Nihon koufukugo niokeru Nampōgun no fukuin katei 1945–1948*, Tokyo: Toyo Eiwa Jogakuin. (file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/GK-V9\_P1-159.pdf accessed on 26 July 2016. 増田弘《日本降伏後における南方軍の復員過程1945年-1948年》東洋英和女学院
- Min Sheng Pao (民声报), August 1945–June 1948, Kuala Lumpur.
- Montesano, Michael J. and Patrick Jory (eds) (2008), *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, Singapore: NUS Press.
- Morikai Noriyoshi (ed.) (1982), *Kakan hōheitai no omoide: taiin no sh uki shuki*, Place of publication unknown: Kakan hōheitai no kai. 森开纪良 编《果敢砲兵隊の思い出: 隊員の手記》果敢砲兵隊の会
- Nan Chiau Jit Pao (南侨日报), November 1946–September 1950, Singapore.
- Ono Shigeru, Rahmat (2010), *Indonesia zanryū Nihonhei no shakaishi: Rahmat Ono Shigeru no Jijoden*, Tokyo: Ryūkei Shosha. 小野盛《インドネシア残留日本兵の社会史》龙溪书舎.
- Osame Shinji (1978), Chūgokusei de ikinuita 30 nen. In Yokobori Yōichi et al. (eds), *Minami jūjisei kinen fukkōkuban: Shingapōru Nihonjin shakai no ayumi*, pp. 556–7, Singapore: Shingapōru Nihonjinkai. 纳信二《中国姓で生き抜いた30年》横堀洋一 他编《南十字星記念復刻版: シンガポール日本人会の歩み》シンガポール日本人会.
- Qiau Yihong (ed.) (2004), *Shengming ru heliu: Xin Ma Tai 16 wei nüxing shengming gushi*, Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development. 邱依虹 编《生命如河流: 新马泰16位女性生命故事》
- Quan Zhongren (1998), *Magong neibu fengbao*. Khao Nam Khang: Kaonankang didao weiyuanhui. 全仲仁《马共内部风暴》考南康地道委员会
- Seki, Michisuke (2002), *Sei mo shi mo*, Tokyo: Bungeisha. 关道介《生も死も》文艺社
- Shan Ruhong (2002), *Huiyi wangshi*, Hong Kong: Nandao chubanshe. 单汝洪《回忆往事》南岛出版社
- Shōnan kempeitai (1946), *Shōnan kempeitai tōbōsha meibo*. Original kept in Bōeikenkyūjo toshokan shiryōshitsu. 昭南宪兵队《昭南宪兵隊逃亡者名簿》藏在 防卫省防卫研究所资料阅览室
- Takeshia, Hidekuni (1990), 'Malaya Kyosantou no Shuuen', *Ajia Torendo*, 49, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan. 竹下秀邦《マラヤ共産党の終焉》《アジアトレンド》
- XinMa qiaoyouhui (ed.), (1992a) *Malaiya renmin kangRijun*, Hong Kong: Xianggang jianzheng chuban gongsi. 新马侨友会 编《马来亚人民抗日军》香港见证出版公司
- (1992b), *Malaiya renmin kangRi douzheng shiliao xuanbian xuanji*, Hong Kong: Xianggang jianzheng chubanshe chuban gongsi. 新马侨友会 编《马来亚人民抗日斗争史料选集》香港见证出版公司
- Xu Yun-qiao (ed.) (1984), *Malayan Chinese Resistance to Japan 1937–1945: Selected Source Materials*. (Xin Ma Huaren Kangri Shiliao), Singapore: Wenshi chuban she. 许云樵 主编《新马华人抗日史料 1937-1945》文史出版
- Zhang Zuo (2005), *Wo de banshiji: Zhang Zhuo huiyilu*, Kuala Lumpur: Zhang Yuan. 张佐《我的半世纪: 张佐回忆录》张元
- Zheng Zhaoxian (2007), *Chen Tian furen Li Ming koushu lishi*, Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development. 郑昭贤《陈田夫人李明口述历史》
- Zuyin congshu bianweihui (ed.) (2008[?]), *KangYing zhanzheng he duli*, Hong Kong: Xianggang zuyin chubanshe. 足印丛书编委会《抗英战争和独立》香港足印出版社