

## Malaysia-Japan Relations; Historical Perspective

Nomura Toru Vimala,  
Professor Emeritus  
Keio University

Foreward;

It is my great honor to be able to speak in front of such distinguished people from Malaysia and Japan. Especially, I would like to show my deepest gratitude towards Mr. Seiji Masuda, who has kindly provided us all with financial support to have this wonderful symposium today. Were it not for Mr. Seiji Masuda's ardent support, we could not have gathered together here today.

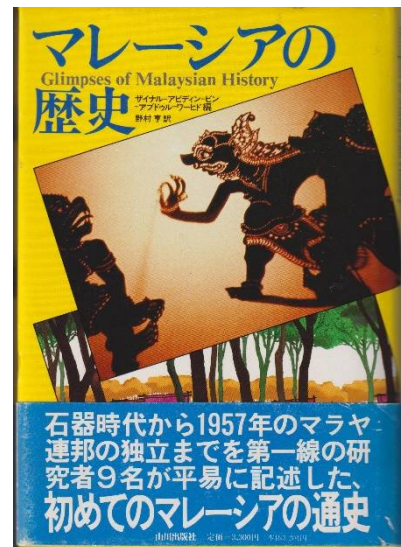
I would also like to show my deep gratitude towards the kind collaboration provided by the members of Malaysian side, especially the staffs of USM, Penang, Malaysia, who have kindly prepared for this symposium today.

Malaysia and I

Before I begin the major part of my speech, please allow me to tell you a little bit about my personal background and emotion towards our host country, Malaysia.

In July 1981, I visited Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Office and UKM campus, and met Prof. Zainal Abidin b. Abdul Wahid, UKM, to obtain the permission to translate the book "Glimpses of Malaysian History" into Japanese.

Two years later, in Aug. 1983, Japanese translation of "Glimpses of Malaysian History" was published by Yamakawa Publishing Co., Tokyo. It has been reprinted several times for the next two decades.



In about 1983, I got acquainted with Prof. Stephen Leong, University of Malaya, and he has kindly agreed to accept me as the Ph.D. candidate at his faculty.

Subsequently, between 1985 and 87, I was engaged in the study of Malaysian history at the Department of History, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, under the guidance of Prof. Stephen Leong as a Ph. D. candidate. It was the most brilliant part of my life and I still cherish much of the sweet memory of my young days in University of Malaya. I could meet many new

friends and I have had so many wonderful experiences there then for two years. Unfortunately, I failed to obtain the title of Ph.D. then, but I have never regretted it. In fact, for me, I assume that Malaysia has been always, and will be forever my second home after Japan.

In June 2001, I have published Japanese translation of “Hikayat Raja Pasai”, from Heibonsha Co. Tokyo.

In the meantime, I have been teaching Bahasa Melayu and Indonesia between 1990 and 2022 in Keio University, Kansai Gaidai University and several other institutions of higher learnings both in Japan and abroad.

Such being my background, you will certainly understand how happy I am to be able to come back here after so many years' absence.

### Today's Purpose

My task here is to give an overview of Malaysia-Japan relations in its historical perspective.

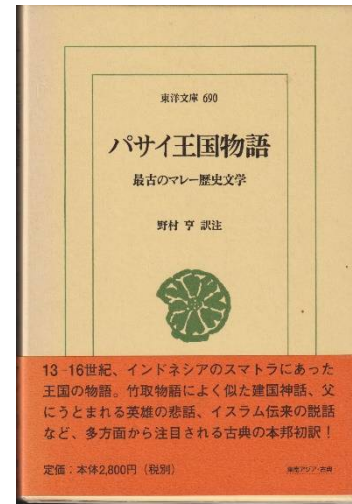
I would like to point out some of the most important events that have given major effects for the later history between these two countries.

Now, let us begin.

### Prince Takaoka

Many of you may wonder, who was the first Japanese person ever landed on Malay Peninsula. So far as we know from various historical sources, the honor of the first Japanese ought to be attributed to the Japanese prince in the middle of the 9th century, or about 1100 years ago. His name is Prince Takaoka (高丘親王), alias Shinnyo hosshinno (真如法親王). Let me introduce to you about this person and what has brought this ancient Japanese prince to Malay Peninsula. He was born in 799 AD. as the third son of the emperor Heizei (平城天皇 reigned 806-809), the 51<sup>st</sup> emperor of Japan. His grandfather was the emperor Kammu (桓武天皇 reigned 781-806), who constructed the capital city of Japan at present day Kyoto. In 809, he was appointed as the heir apparent for his uncle, the emperor Saga (嵯峨天皇), but due to the factional fighting among the royal family, his father, the emperor Heizei, renounced his post and became a Buddhist monk, and his son, Prince Takaoka, was obliged to follow his father and lost his post as the heir apparent in 810. He was but an eleven years' old boy by then.

Later in 822, his honor was eventually restored, but he never showed his attachment toward the affairs in the royal court any more. He renounced his post and became a Buddhist monk after his father's manner.



Prince Takaoka then proceeded to go to Mt. Koya(高野山), in Wakayama Prefecture, to study esoteric Buddhism under the guidance of the Master Kukai (空海), alias Great Master Kobo (弘法大師). He had eventually become one of the major disciples of Master Kukai. He opened his own temple in Mt. Koya and named it Shinnoin (親王院) Temple, or Prince's Temple. The temple remains there till today.

After his master's demise in 835, he wanted to realize his life-long dream of studying Buddhism in China, and he joined the official mission of the Govt. and went to China in 862. He was already 63 years' old, quite senior at that time. In the following year, he had arrived in the capital city of Chang' an (長安, present day Xi'an 西安). However, emperor Wuzong (武宗)(reigned 840-846) , the 18<sup>th</sup> emperor of Tang Dynasty had previously oppressed Buddhism and other foreign religions, and Buddhism in China suffered the decline very much. Realizing that not much could be studied from



Chinese Buddhism, Prince Takaoka made up his mind to proceed further to India to study Buddhism in its original place. He set sail from Chinese port of Canton in 865 for India accompanied by three attendants. After this year, he was lost forever.

16 years later, in 881, a Japanese monk in Chang' an(長安) by the name of Chukan (中瓘) reported back to Japan about the whereabouts of Prince Takaoka. According to Chukan, the prince had arrived at the country of Luo Yue (羅越国) on the way to India. While he was waiting for the favorable wind to proceed to India, he was devoured by the wild tiger and lost his life in the jungle. According to the British historian, Paul Wheatley, Luo Yue should be identified in the vicinity of present-day Johore<sup>1</sup>.

While I was engaged in the study of Malaysian history at University of Malaya in the 1980s, my good friend, Datin Patricia Lim Pui Huen, the historian and the librarian in ISEAS, Singapore, one day asked me to visit together the Japanese cemetery in Johore Bahru. There, to my surprise, I found a big stone monument of a modern Japanese style with the epitaph about Prince Takaoka. In fact, the stone monument was established there by the abbot of Shinnoin Temple, Mt. Koya, in 1970. to commemorate Prince Takaoka's demise there. Nowadays Prince Takaoka is not necessarily well known among Japanese people. He never intended to visit Malay Peninsula either, but simply waited there for the departure for India. However, he left his name forever here in Malaysian history as the first Japanese man. What an irony it is! I would like to introduce to you here about this person as the pioneer Japanese to Malay

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Wheatley, *Golden Khersonese*;1961, p.53. He is of the opinion that Luo Yue appears to be the transliteration of the Malay word, "laut" (sea).

Peninsula some 11 centuries ago.

#### Kingdom of Malacca and Ryukyu Kingdom; Trading Relations

Nowadays, Okinawa Prefecture comprises the southernmost part of Japan. But, in premodern times, prior to Meiji Restoration in 1868, Okinawa had been an independent kingdom known as Kingdom of Ryukyu.

Kingdom of Ryukyu was founded by King Sho Hashi (尚巴志) in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and they had been actively engaged in maritime trade with Mainland Japan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, China, and host of kingdoms of Southeast Asia including Kingdom of Malacca in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Central to the kingdom's maritime activities was the continuation of the tributary relationship with Ming Dynasty China, begun in second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Ryukyuan ships traded at ports across the entire region of the Ryukyu Islands as well, plying to ports in Korea, China, and mainland Japan, as well as Siam, Malacca, Java, Sumatra, Vietnam, Patani, and Palembang, among others in the region.

Trading goods included Japanese products—silver, swords, fans, lacquer ware, folding screens—and Chinese products—medicinal herbs, minted coins, glazed ceramics, brocades, textiles—were traded within the kingdom for Southeast Asian sappan wood, rhinoceros' horn, tin from Malaya, sugar, iron, ambergris, Indian ivory and Arabian frankincense.

On the whole, 150 voyages between the kingdom of Ryukyu and Southeast Asia on Ryukyuan ships were recorded in the *Rekidai Hoan* (歴代宝案), an official record of diplomatic documents compiled by the kingdom, as having taken place between 1424 and the 1630s, with 61 of them bound for Siam (Ayutthaya), 10 for Malacca, 10 for Patani and 8 for Java, among others.

According to Nobu Asato, the *Rekidai Hoan* records altogether 19 missions had been dispatched by the Kingdom of Ryukyu to Malacca between 1463 and 1511<sup>2</sup>. We have the records that the first exchange of the royal mission was held in 1461 when King Sho Toku(尚徳) was enthroned. King Sho Toku was the 7<sup>th</sup> and the last king of the first Sho dynasty. However, the extant oldest record about the exchange of the mission between Ryukyu Kingdom and Malacca can be found in the King Sho Toku's official letter addressed to the king of Malacca dated on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1463. In this letter, Ryukyuan mission Go Jikken(呉実堅) and two other vice envoys and two interpreters went to visit Malacca on board the ship with the

---

<sup>2</sup> Asato Nobu:1941, p.249-287.

name of “koshiramaru”(控之羅麻魯). Second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century accounts for Sultan Mansur Shah’s reign (1459-77) in Malacca. Both Ryukyu and Malacca were eager to carry out trade by then. Malacca imported gold, copper, Japanese swords and paper from Ryukyu. In exchange, Ryukyu imported tin, ivory, clove, pepper, nutmeg and other spice and medicinal herbs from Malacca. Last mission from Ryukyu to Malacca is recorded in August 1511. However, on August of the same year, Malacca was conquered by the Portuguese armada led by Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque and Sultan Mahmud Shar, the last king of Malacca, fled to Muar. Therefore, the last mission from Ryukyu must have reached Malacca in vain. This marked the end of the Ryukyu-Malacca trade.



Malacca Port today

REKIDAI HOAN records six official letters from the king of Malacca, dated in 1467, 69, 70, 1480(twice) and 1481. King’s personal names are not recorded in the document, but the last two letters mention the name “raku saku ma na”(樂索麻拿) together with King of Malacca. It is apparently the transliteration of “laksamana”, or the admiral.

Throughout this period, Ryukyu side had been always very positive about the trade whereas Malaccan side had been rather inactive about the trade.

Kingdom of Patani and Tokugawa Shogun Govt.

In the year 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu finally won the battle of Sekigahara and succeeded in unifying most of Japan and opened a new military government in Edo, i.e., present day Tokyo. This new government is known as Tokugawa Shogunate Government and it had lasted till the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

The first Shogun, or literally “General”, but de facto “Sovereign Ruler of Japan”, was eager to open the foreign trade with the Dutch East India Company (VOC), British East India Company and other Asian kingdoms, such as Kingdom of Ayutthaya, Thailand, and Vietnam. He established the Vermillion Seal Boat (shuinsen, 朱印船) system and allowed Japanese merchants to go abroad for trading.

Among the Asian kingdoms which had diplomatic relations in the early 17th century, we find the Kingdom of Patani.

Nowadays, Patani has been incorporated into the southern part of Thailand, but in the 17th century it was the independent Malay kingdom.

Muslim kingdom of Patani was established in the middle of the 13th century. Between mid-16th and mid-17th century, Kingdom of Patani enjoyed her golden age under the successive four queens. The four queens tried to obtain military aids from sultanates of Johore and

Pahang to fight against Thai kingdom of Ayutthaya in the north.

Patani was then known as “Tai ni” (太泥) for both Japanese and Chinese. Apparently, it is the incomplete transliteration of “(pa) tani”.

According to Tsuko Ichiran (通航一覽), the collection of the official documents of Tokugawa shogunate government’s foreign relations, in 1599, a ship from Patani came to visit Japan with the official letter from the king. In July, the same year, Tokugawa Ieyasu replied to this letter with some ammunitions. In Ieyasu’s letter, he addressed to Patani’s king with the name of “悉里達那李桂”(xi li da na li gui). Patani’s ruler at this period is known as Rajah Hijau or Queen Green (1584-1616). The name “xi li da na li gui” appears to be a royal title, containing Sanskrit word “shri” (brilliant), not a personal name<sup>3</sup>.

In the 16th and 17th century, Patani thrived as the entrepot. Portuguese, Spanish English and Dutch have opened their factories in Patani one after another. However, After Rama I opened Chakri dynasty in 1792, he sent troops to Patani between 1795 and 96, and subjugated it. Ever since then, Patani has been governed under the rule of Thailand.

Raffles' plot to take over Dejima, Nagasaki, 1813

In the year 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu(徳川家康) finally won the battle of Sekigahara(関ヶ原) and succeeded in unifying most of Japan and opened a new military government in Edo, i.e., present day Tokyo. This new government is known as Tokugawa Shogunate Government and it had lasted till the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

Although the first Shogun, Tokugawa Ieyasu was rather positive about the foreign trade, the successive Shogun had become more conservative, or inward-looking about the foreign relations, mainly due to the strong influence of European Catholic powers, especially Spanish and Portuguese. They never missed to notice the fact that Kingdom of Melaka was taken over by the Portuguese in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. They began to realize that the Catholic missions will be followed by the Spanish and Portuguese armed forces. Then, their suspicion was reinforced by the Shimabara Rebellion (島原の乱) (1637-38) all the more.

Eventually by 1639 the Tokugawa shogun Govt. declared the total ban of foreign contacts except the Dutch East India Company’s annual visit to Nagasaki and Chinese trading ships. This policy is nowadays known as “sakoku”(鎖国) or “closed door policy”, but throughout the Tokugawa period, the term “sakoku” has never been used officially by the Tokugawa authorities. It was named by the German scholar and medical doctor, Engelbert Kaempfer. He stayed in the Dutch Factory, Dejima(出島), Nagasaki, in 1690 and 1692. His work was

---

<sup>3</sup> In my opinion, there is a possibility that this name would contain such elements as Shri tanah Ligor.





factory in Hirado(平戸) in 1623, after defeated by the Dutch competition.

However, during his career as lieutenant-governor in Java, i.e., between 1811 and 16, Raffles tried to open the trading relations with Tokugawa Japan in vain.

While Raffles was the lieutenant-general of Java, in June, 1813, he sent Willem Wardenaar, a Dutchman, and Dr, Daniel Ainslie, the Scottish surgeon, to Nagasaki on board the chartered American ships, *Charlotte* and *Mary*, to take over Japan trade by appointing his man, Antonie Cassa as the captain at Dejima(出島)<sup>5</sup>. They arrived at Nagasaki on July 24<sup>th</sup> 1813. However, Hendrik Doeff, the incumbent Dutch captain at Dejima did not believe in Wardenaar's explanation about what had happened in Java and Europe and refused to give up his post to Cassa. Doeff asked the collaboration of the Dutch language interpreters in Nagasaki, too. They were afraid if the Nagasaki magistrate and Tokugawa shogun govt. would become aware that Wardenaar's delegate is not genuine Dutch but dispatched by Raffles, the British. If this fact become known to Japanese side, it will surely deal a fatal blow on Japanese trade. As a result, both Wardenaar's delegate and Doeff collaborated together to conceal the reality. They carried out the usual transaction and they set sail on November 25<sup>th</sup> and returned to Batavia by the end of that year. The Japanese side never knew the reality except a few Dutch language interpreters in the Nagasaki magistrate office.

Next year, i.e., in 1814, Raffles dispatched Antonie Cassa to Nagasaki again on board the same ships. Cassa insisted on Doeff to resign the post of the captain at Dejima, but Doeff refused to give up his post to Cassa and remained in Nagasaki. Cassa had no way to take over the captain's post. This time, too, Cassa, after the usual transactions with the Japanese side as if they were usual Dutch ships. They returned to Batavia by the end of that year.

Doeff remained at Dejima as a Dutch captain. Meanwhile in Europe, by 1815, Napoleon lost his position and went to exile in St. Helena and the United Kingdom of Netherlands regained her independence. The England consented to return Java back to the newly formed United Kingdom of Netherlands. Doeff had remained in Nagasaki for as long as 17 years and finally he could go back home by way of Batavia. In reality, Raffles succeeded in having a trade with Japan though Japanese side assumed them to be usual Dutch traders. Were it not for the skillful tactics of Doeff, Dutch Japanese trade would have become more complicated and might have been severed, if not for good.

Sultan Abu Bakar's State Visit to Japan, May 1883

In Malaysian history, Maharaja Abu Bakar is known as the great leader of the modernization of Johore Sultanate in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

---

<sup>5</sup> Wurzburg:1984, p.282-4



Sultan Sir Abu Bakar Al-Khalil Ibrahim Shah ibni Almarhum Temenggong Seri Maharaja Tun Daeng Ibrahim (1833 – 1895) was the Sultan of Modern Johor, the 21st Sultan of Johor and the first Maharaja of Johor from the House of Temenggong. He is often styled as the enlightened monarch and is compared to the contemporary Emperor Meiji of Japan and King Chulalongkorn of Siam (Thailand), or King Rama the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Towards the end of his career, he has visited many countries all over the world, including England, France, Austria in Europe, Ottoman Turkey,

In 1881, Sultan Abu Bakar visited Java, the Dutch East Indies. Subsequently, in 1883, after visiting Saigon, French Indochina, British Hongkong and Shanghai, China, he proceeded to visit Japan in May, 1883. He arrived at Nagasaki port on May 17<sup>th</sup> and thus began his



official visit to Japan. He then proceeded to visit many places along the way to Tokyo, including Kyoto, Osaka, Nara and Hakone. He has arrived at Yokohama on June 13<sup>th</sup> 1883. On June 26<sup>th</sup>, he proceeded to visit the Imperial Palace in Tokyo to meet Emperor Meiji. He was one of the earliest foreign monarchs who visited Japan and met Emperor Meiji. His journey has been meticulously recorded by his entourage, Encik Mohamed Salleh bin Perang, Datuk Bentara Luar Johore. His writings have been studied and published by Amin Sweeney in his work “Reputations Live On: An Early Malay Autobiography”, 1980, University of California Press. Encik Mohamed Salleh’s description about Maharaja’s meeting with Emperor Meiji is very short and simple, as he himself did not seem to accompany Maharaja to Tokyo. His record is as follow;

“Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June, Met the Mikado at his palace. At 1:00 visited the four princes.” (p. 118, Amin Sweeney, 1980).

Japanese Foreign Office Record did not show much interest about his visit either.

In his book, Amin Sweeney quoted the Japanese Foreign Office Record as saying on the footnote in page 118 as follow;

“The Japanese Foreign Office Records, which contains details of Abu Bakar’s visit, do not reveal very much of interest, the only noteworthy matter being Abu Bakar’s reply to the Imperial Edict, in which he states that, “In my country, I often met the people from your country, but I had never seen your country.” He then thanks the emperor for his hospitality.”

It is very interesting to note that Abu Bakar’s remarks about the “Japanese people” whom “he met in his country” might have suggested the existence of the Japanese prostitutes, or *Karayukisan* in Singapore. I am not sure if emperor Meiji was aware of the existence of the Japanese prostitutes in Singapore by then. Most likely he was not.

Upon his return to Johore Baru, Maharaja Abu Bakar ordered to construct a Japanese garden

with tea house in his palace premise. It suggests Maharaja's enthusiasm about Japanese culture. It remains there till today, though much dilapidated by storms and rain for many years.

#### Karayukisan and Japanese workers

Right after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Govt. of Japan began to allow their own people to go abroad after almost three centuries. Who were the first people going abroad? They were by no means the upper strata of the society, but on the other hand, they were mostly the people for the lower strata of the society. Among them were many young Japanese girls of late teens and in the twenties. They are nowadays known as "karayukisan" (唐行きさん). Karayukisan refers to the young Japanese girls from Shimabara Peninsula, Nagasaki Prefecture, and Amakusa Islands, Kumamoto Prefecture, Kyushu. In fact, their families could not support their life so that the young female members of the poor families agreed to engage in the prostitution business in such places as Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and other Asian ports and remitted their earnings back to their families back in Japan. We have a record that in Singapore, there were already some Karayukisans in as early as 1870s.

With the greater international influence of Japan as it became a Great Power, the situation began to change, and soon karayuki-san became considered shameful. During the 1910s and 1920s, Japanese officials overseas worked hard to eliminate Japanese brothels and maintain Japanese prestige, although not always with success. Many karayuki-san returned to Japan, but some remained.

After the WWII, the topic of karayuki-san was little known as Japan's pre-war shame. But, in 1972, a female writer, Tomoko

Yamazaki(山崎朋子), published a book "Sandakan Brothel No. 8" based on the extensive interview with a retired karayukisan living in Amakusa in solitude. This documentary work raised much awareness of the existence of karayuki-san among Japanese society outside Kyushu, and encouraged further research and reporting.

In the late 19th century Japanese girls and women were sold into prostitution and trafficked from Nagasaki and Kumamoto to cities like Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore and then sent to other places in the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Western Australia.

Nowadays, we still find some of the tomb stones of late karayukisan in Japanese cemeteries in Johore Bahru, Sandakan, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, to mention but a few. Names of the deceased and her age are inscribed on the stone. Many of them are known to have passed away at late teens or in their twenties apparently due to the venereal diseases, maltreatment or poor



Karayukisan's Tombs,  
Sandakan, Sabah, M'sia.

environments. They are but definitely the witnesses of the history between our two countries.

Japanese occupation 1942-45; its effects on post war period

We cannot but avoid referring to the most bitter part of our bilateral relations, i.e., the Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia including Malaysia, which lasted for about 4 years between 1942 and 45.

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Japanese forces suddenly attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. At the same time, Japan started the Malayan campaign on the Malay Peninsula, and declared war against the U.S. and Britain. This Japanese action marked the beginning of the Pacific War.

Within six months from the beginning of the war, Japan steadily occupied the Malay Peninsula, British Hong Kong, Singapore, the Netherland Indies (Indonesia), the Philippines, and the Solomon Islands, and conquered British Burma, too. Upholding the vision named the “Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,”(大東亜共栄圏), Japan set up pro-Japan regimes in the Philippines and Burma under Japanese occupation, and a pro-Japanese organization in Indonesia. Japan also had French Indochina and Thailand under Prime Minister Pibulsonggram’s regime announce cooperation with Japan.

The Japanese operation in Malay Peninsula is notable for the Japanese use of bicycle infantry, which allowed troops to carry more equipment and swiftly move through thick jungle terrain. The Japanese had air and naval supremacy from the opening days of the campaign. For the British, Indian, Australian, and Malayan forces defending the colony, the campaign was a total disaster.

Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita (山下奉文) had advanced with approximately 30,000 men down the Malay Peninsula in the Malayan campaign.

Singapore was considered so important that Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered the British Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival to fight to the last man.

Soon after the British surrender in February, 1942, the Japanese military authorities began the *Sook Ching* (肅清)purge, killing thousands of civilians. The Japanese held Singapore until the end of the war.

*Sook Ching* was a mass killing in Singapore after it fell to the Japanese forces in early 1942. It was a systematic purge and massacre of 'anti-Japanese' elements in Singapore, with the Singaporean Chinese particularly targeted by the Japanese military during the occupation.

The *Sook Ching* was subsequently extended to include the Chinese population in Malaya, too. The fall of Singapore in 1942 severely undermined British prestige, which contributed to the end of British colonial rule in the region after the war.

I do not have enough time to describe the nature of the Japanese occupation during WWII in

detail here. I will just point out some of the most important factors.

Generally speaking, during the four-year occupation, the Japanese military authorities in Malaya took a kind of divide-and-rule policy towards different ethnic groups in Malaya. They tried to encourage nationalism among ethnic Malay and Indian peoples. They had advocated such slogan as “Asia untuk orang Asia” (Asia for Asian people) to gain support from among Malay community. Japanese allowed Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian political leader in exile, to form Indian National Army to collaborate with Japan and fight against the Allied Forces.

On the other hand, Japanese military authorities took an oppressive policy towards the ethnic Chinese people in Singapore and Malaya. The reason for anti-Chinese policy was that many of them had relatives and families back in China so that they had anti-Japanese sentiment. Based on this reasoning, estimated 50,000 ethnic Chinese people were massacred by “kempeitai” (憲兵隊), Japanese military police.

This divide-and-rule policy towards different ethnic groups in Malaya by the Japanese occupation left negative impacts on the post-war Malaysian society. It has become a hindrance against national unity of independent Malaysia, as is seen in the case of May 13<sup>th</sup> incident in 1969.

I will never justify the Japanese occupation and its negative impact in the post-war Southeast Asia. In spite of the slogan by the wartime Japanese Govt. claiming “Japan will liberate Asian brothers from the European colonial yoke.”, Japan’s real intention in the wartime was to exploit the resources of Southeast Asia, and they were simply another colonialist to replace European colonial powers. However, on the other side, when we look at the process of Japanese occupation and its impact on post war Southeast Asian societies, we may be able to say that Japanese occupation *unintentionally* had helped Southeast Asian peoples get rid of the European dominance over the Asian countries since several centuries ago. Were it not for Japanese invasion, the liberation from the European colonial rule might have continued till the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or even later. I assume that this is the most unbiased, fair view about the Japanese occupation during World War II.

I am very much relieved to know that majority of Malaysian people now show friendly attitude towards Japan and its people, in spite of the negative image of the past.

For example, in August 1994, the Japanese Prime Minister, Tomiichi Murayama, visited Malaysia and showed his apology towards the past Japanese acts. In reply to Murayama’s remarks, Prime Minister Datuk Dr. Mahathir Mohamed replied as follow;

“I can't understand why Japan continues to apologize for what took place 50 years ago. Japan should put its past behind it and strive to play an active role in the peace and stability of Asia.”

I feel very much grateful for his kind and hospitable remarks and cherish it in my mind at all times.

Unlike some countries, no country of Southeast Asia including Malaysia and Singapore tries to make use of the history as a means of politicking.

Nowadays, Malaysian people in general have a favorable image towards Japan and its people. For example, some census indicates in 2013 that over 80% of the Malaysian citizens have a favorable image whereas only 6% are anti-Japanese.

We find both positive and negative aspects in the course of the bilateral history. We cannot hide what has happened in the past nor should we hide it. We should rather learn a lesson from it. We should never forget the history, but we can overcome it and become friends.

#### Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's Look East Policy

Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed became deputy prime minister in 1976 before being sworn in as prime minister in 1981, succeeding former Prime Minister Hussein Onn.

During Prime Minister Datuk Dr. Mahathir Mohamed's first tenure, Malaysia underwent modernization and economic growth, and his government initiated widespread industry privatization and a series of bold infrastructure projects.

Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed announced a "Look East" policy in 1982. Under "Look East", he has particularly given priority to the relations with Japan, hoping this would bolster Malaysia's economy and that Japanese work ethic, values and moral norms would have a positive influence on Malaysians. Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed also strengthened political and economic cooperation with China, while maintaining diplomatic ambivalence on security issues to avoid escalating territorial disputes in the South China Sea. He openly criticized China's involvement in Malaysia's communist insurgency, but downplayed any military threat from China after the Cold War ended. Amidst the Asian financial crisis, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed also led several large delegations to China and Russia to seek regional economic cooperation.



Author presenting his book to Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed

In June 2004, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed was conferred Honorary Doctorate by Keio University. By this auspicious occasion, I had a great honor of presenting my work to Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed at the celebration ceremony held in Mita campus, Keio University.

Later, as you all know, he has returned to the political scene in 2015 after 12 years' retirement. In the 2018 general election Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed became the world's oldest serving state leader (at the age of 92 years' old, at the time), and the first Malaysian prime minister not to represent UMNO.

I am sure that Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed will be remembered as the most important key

person in post-war period to enhance and deepen the bilateral relations between Malaysia and Japan.

Future perspective

I have hereby given the overview of the relations between our two countries.

Edward Gibbon, the historian and the writer of the great work, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", once said, "History.....is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." It may be true, but we need more positive view for the future. I do hope that our friendship among us will remain unchanged forever in the future.

#### Reference

(English and Malay works)

Amin Sweeney, *Reputations Live On: An Early Malay Autobiography*, 1980, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1980

Andaya, Barbara Watson and Leonard Y., *A History of Malaysia*, Macmillan Asian Histories Series, London, 1982

Braddell, Roland, *The Lights of Singapore*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1982(orig. 1934)

Collis, Maurice, *Raffles*, Graham Brash Pte. Ltd., Singapore, 1982(orig. 1966)

Gullick, J.M., *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1987

Gullick, J.M., *They Came to Malaya: A Travellers' Anthology*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1993

Gullick, J.M., *Old Kuala Lumpur*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1994

Hall, D.G.E., *A History of South-East Asia*, Fourth Ed., Macmillan Asian Histories Series, London, 1981

Purcell, Victor, *The Chinese in Malaya*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1967 (orig. in 1948)

Raffles, Thomas Stamford, *The History of Java*, 2 vols., London, 1817 (Reprinted, Oxford University Press, 1965)

Teeuw, A, and Wyatt, D.K., *Hikayat Patani*, Bibliotheca Indonesica 5, KITLV, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1970

Teeuw, A, and Wyatt, D.K., *The Story of Patani*, Bibliotheca Indonesica 5, KITLV, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1970 (English translation)

Turnbull, C. M., *A History of Singapore 1819-1975*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1977

Wheatley, Paul, *The Golden Khersonese*, Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500, University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1961



Winstedt, R.O., *A History of Malaya*, Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Raffles Museum, Singapore and Luzac and Co., London, 1935

Wultzburg, C.E., *Raffles of the Eastern Isles*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1984

Yen Ching-hwang, *A Social History of the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya 1800-1911*, Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1968

Zainal Abidin b. Abdul Wahid, ed., *Glimpses of Malaysian History*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur, 1970

(Japanese and Chinese works)

安里延(Asato Nobu)、「**沖縄海洋発展史：日本南方発展史序説**」(Okinawa kaiyo hattenshi)、沖縄県海外協会、昭和 16 年(1941 年)(昭和 42 年、1967 年再版)

郡司喜一(Gunji Kiichi)、「**徳川時代の日暹国交**」(Tokugawa jidai no Nissen kokko)、東亜経済調査局、昭和 13 年(1938 年)

コリス、M.(Collis, Maurice)、根岸富二郎訳、「**ラッフルズ：その栄光と苦悩**」(Raffles: sono Eikou to kuno)アジアを見る眼 34、アジア経済研究所、1969 年

ザイナル・アビディン・ビン・アブドゥル・ワーヒド編(Zainal Abidin b. Abdul Wahid, ed.)、野村亨訳、「**マレーシアの歴史**」(Malaysia no rekishi)、山川出版社、1983 年

信夫清三郎(Shinobu Seizaburo)、「**ラッフルズ伝：東南アジアの帝国建設者**」(Raffles den)、東洋文庫 123、平凡社、昭和 43 年(1968 年)(初版、昭和 18 年、1943 年)

スウェッテナム(Frank A. Swettenhan)、阿部真琴訳、「**英領マライ史**」(Eiryō Malay shi)、北海出版社、昭和 18 年(1943 年)

野村 亨(Nomura Toru)、「**古代日本南洋文化交流史初探**」(A Preliminary Study on the History of Cultural Interaction between Ancient Japan and Southeast Asia)、「**亜洲文化**」第 20 期、1996 年 6 月号、Singapore Society of Asian Studies, June 1996

野村 亨訳注(Nomura Toru tr.)、「**パサイ王国物語：最古のマレー歴史文学**」(Pasai Okoku Monogatari: Saiko no Malay rekishi bungaku)、東洋文庫 690、平凡社、2001 年

馮承鈞(Feng Cheng-jun)、「**中国南洋交通史**」(History of the Exchange between China and the South Seas)台湾商務印書館、民国 65 年(1976 年)(初版、民国 26 年、1937 年)

山崎朋子(Yamazaki Tomoko)、「**サンダカン八番娼館**」(Sandakan hachiban shokan)筑摩書房、1972 年