

## Looking at *DAI NIPPON*'s Footprint: Japan's Policies in Indonesia

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kebijakan pada sistem pemerintahan Jepang di Indonesia. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode sejarah yang terdiri dari empat tahapan yaitu heuristik, kritik sumber, interpretasi, dan historiografi sejarah dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui studi literatur. Berdasarkan penelitian yang telah dilaksanakan, dapat diketahui bahwa pada masa pendudukan Jepang di Indonesia banyak terjadi perubahan dalam kebijakan yang diterapkan terutama dihapuskannya sistem diskriminasi dan kebijakan-kebijakan lainnya baik di bidang militer, pemerintahan sampai dengan pendidikan. Namun semua pengembangan dan perubahan kebijakan yang diterapkan oleh pemerintahan Jepang difokuskan untuk kepentingan kemenangan militer Jepang sehingga tetap saja memberikan luka yang mendalam bagi bangsa Indonesia, karena adanya beragam eksploitasi dalam implementasi kebijakan yang diterapkan.

**Kata kunci:** indonesia, jepang, pemerintahan, politik.

### Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to identify the policy of the Japanese government system in Indonesia. The method adopted in this study is the historical method, which consists of four stages, namely, heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historical historiography, as well as techniques of data collection through literature research. According to the studies carried out, it can be seen that many political changes took place during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, especially the abolition of the discrimination system and other measures in the military, government and educational sectors. However, all the moves and policy changes of the Japanese government focused on the interests of Japan's military victory, so the various exploitations in the process of policy implementation still caused deep trauma to the Indonesian nation.*

**Keywords:** governance, indonesia, japan, politics.

### INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of World War II prompted the Japanese military to try to invade colonial countries in the Asian region. Starting from mid-1941, Japan realized that the United States, Britain, and the Netherlands had to face each other directly to control Southeast Asia's natural resources. The territory now known as Indonesia, which was under the control of the Dutch East Indies, was captured without much resistance.

The fall of Indonesian territory to the Japanese was marked by the signing of a statement of unconditional surrender by Lieutenant General ter Poorten, representing the Governor-General. That is, *de facto* and *de jure*, the entire territory of the former Dutch East Indies has since been under Japanese rule and administration (Husni, 2015). Soon, the Japanese army could take control of the former Dutch territories in the East Indies. The Japanese occupation of Indonesia

began with the liberation of the Dutch East Indies on March 8, 1942, surrender to the Japanese army without anything called Dai Nippon (Ishak, 2012; Praditya & Sunarti, 2022). Since then, Indonesia has been under Japanese rule, which was involved in the second world war in the Pacific region (Sasongko, 2013).

The territory of Indonesia, which has a critical land position, is the target of Japan. The Japanese achieved an easy victory by conquering Dutch-controlled Indonesia in January 1942. Control began from the Tarakan region (East Kalimantan) as the largest oil producer, followed by Balikpapan, Ambon, Kendari, and Pontianak in the same month. In February 1942, the Japanese managed to control Palembang. To control Indonesia, Japan used two routes: from the Philippines to Tarakan, Balikpapan, Bali, Rembang Indramayu, and from the Malay Peninsula to Palembang, Pontianak, and Tanjung Priok.

Based on this, it can be understood that the purpose of the occupation of Japanese troops in Indonesia was as a military base to defend Japan during the Pacific War. As well as being an economic center for the supply and supply of weapons, such as weapons and ammunition, including workers to build security facilities.

Japanese policy towards the Indonesian people has two priorities: removing Western influences among them

and mobilizing them for Japanese victory (Permadi, 2015). Japan conducted a political campaign called the Three A Movement, namely: (1) Japan is the light of Asia, (2) Japan is the leader of Asia, and (3) Japan is the protector of Asia (Fadli & Kumalasari, 2019). This Japanese campaign won the sympathy and support of the Indonesian people, who regarded the Japanese as brothers who freed them from the shackles of Dutch rule. Japanese rule in Indonesia is arguably short, only 3.5 years, with a military system of government (Mita, 2020).

This caused the situation to become an emergency as the legal and political situation did not develop compared to the previous regime (Dutch et al.). However, Japanese and Indonesian projects influence the government-dominated constitutional sector differently. It influences various policies sent to the people by politics, politics, and other fields. Based on the explanation above, the author is interested in discussing various policies implemented during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia.

## **METHODS**

This research is qualitative with descriptive analysis techniques with literature studies using historical research methods. This historical or historical research method can be understood as a system of principles and rules to facilitate the search for historical sources, provide

explanations and analyze relationships that are collections in text form to achieve good results (Sukmana, 2021). In implementing this research, several stages are used that align with historical research, including heuristics, source criticism, interpretation and historical historiography that focuses on literature studies (Kuntowijoyo, 2005; Azizah et al., 2021). The following is the implementation flow:

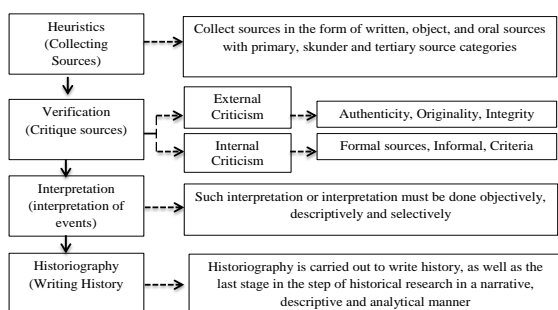


Figure 1. Historical Research Flow

In the first stage, heuristics, researchers try to collect various information from the literature related to the research topic. Researchers carefully examine the source or information obtained in the second stage, namely criticism. In the third step or interpretation, the researcher seeks to find historical facts to determine the meaning of the data obtained. The last stage is historiography; researchers combine descriptions of facts obtained in written form in the form of scientific work.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out by literature study. According to (Qorimah & Sutarna, 2022), literature studies are used in analyzing a

research topic that is organized chronologically. This is in line with Hermawan's opinion (2019), which states that a literature review is an effort to collect information relevant to the topic or research problem; this literature study stage includes identifying studies and topics, reference materials, choosing references, grouping sources based on criteria, compiling article synthesis matrices, writing reviews and concluding review results (Prasetyo, 2017).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Legal Basis of the Japanese Reign

Japanese rule in Indonesia lasted three and a half years and established a military regime (Mita, 2020). Although initially, the Japanese government was predicted to create security and welfare of the people, the content of the sentence was intended to pursue colonial power; in fact, Indonesian independence did not enter the minds of the Japanese army (Husni, 2015).

Based on this, it can be said that Japanese soldiers could not come to Indonesia to liberate the Indonesian people from Dutch colonialism. This is stated in Osamu Seirei (Osamu Law) No. 1 of 1942 as follows (Sufianto, 2020):

#### Article 1

"Contains about the Japanese Army who wanted to provide peace for the Indonesian nation based on defending Greater East Asia together and

dividing the territory of the former Dutch East Indies into:

1. Areas controlled and supervised by the Army include: Sumatra, controlled by the 16th Army (Riku-gun); Java-Madura, controlled by the 25th Army;
2. The area controlled and supervised by the Navy (Kai-gun) covers the rest of the former Dutch East Indies.

This division gives rise to various forms of local government legislation. Because the administration that is organized for the benefit of the Japanese army is essential. The simplest form of government is to continue the existing government.

This system was approved and supported by the official system during the Dutch East Indies era. As is known, during the Dutch East Indies, there were two lines of government in the region: *Nederlandse Binnenlands Bestuur* (N.B.B.) and *Inlandse Binnenlands Bestuur* (I.B.B.). Without N.B. and I.B.B. resources, they can work effectively because all managers are citizens. The idea of continuing the existing government is affirmed in articles two and three of *Osamu Seirei No. 1/1942*, quoted below:

#### Article 2

The Dai Nippon army held the highest power of military government and all power previously in the hands of the Governor-General.

#### Article 3

All governmental bodies and their powers, laws, and

statutes of the former government remain recognized as valid for the time being, provided they do not contradict the rules of military rule.

Although it is said that "all aspects of government and power are always recognized as useful," in reality, this is not true. Many things have been removed and changed in the release and release channels, as will be explained later. Indonesia was freed from the shackles of the Dutch and received a new kind of shackles.

#### Article 4

Employees and ordinary residents are required to obey the Japanese government. The Japanese army must be able to respect employees and people loyal to Japan. However, anyone who disobeyed the orders of the Japanese army or caused chaos related to Japan was severely punished under military law.

At first, it was explained that there had been a change in the management of the local government, although the Japanese army had declared that all parts of the Dutch East Indies government were legally recognized. One such change was the removal of the Dutch line of deconcentration (N.B.B) and its successor; all that remained of this continuity was the I.B.B line plus one level of the Syuu staircase (house, dwelling), which could be alone. Japanese at ground level I.B.B (ground level). During the Japanese colonial period, the highest level of local

government was Syuu (residence, karisedenan), which the Japanese administered. Government and regional systems under Japanese rule in Indonesia.

Table 1. Local Government Structure of the Japanese Occupation Period

Phase	Region Name	Chief Officer
1	Syuu (residency)	<i>Syuucokan</i> (resident: held only by Japanese)
2	<i>Ken</i> and <i>Si</i> (counties and municipalities)	<i>Ken-co</i> and <i>Si-co</i> (natives may hold reagents and intermediate mayors)
3	<i>Gun</i> (kawedanan or distirik)	<i>Gun-co</i> (wedana)
4	<i>Son</i> (subdistrict)	<i>Son-co</i> (subdistrict)
5	<i>Ku</i> (village)	<i>Ku-co</i> (Village Head)
6	<i>Azazyookai</i> (RK)	<i>Azazyookai-co</i>
7	<i>Tonarigumi</i> (RT)	<i>Tonarigumi-co</i>

Source: Surianingrat (1981)

The name "co-kan" and Syuu-kan, meaning "young," signify that the Japanese are taller and more respected than the natives. Citizens are not chosen to be leaders but are called "co," which means leader. For example, Ken-co means local ruler, and the word "regent" is a folk word that goes back in time, the kingdom's heyday before the Dutch rulers.

### Japanese Government System in Indonesia

The constitutional system under Japanese rule in Indonesia was different from the system formed by Western colonizers. The Japanese government in Indonesia used a constitutional system to govern half of the

military. At first when the Dutch East Indies government only had one civilian government; during the Japanese occupation, there were three military governments operating, namely: 1) Military Government (Force 25), this Force had a coverage area for the province of Sumatra centered in Bukittinggi, 2) Java-Madura Army Government (Sixteenth Force) with its headquarters in Jakarta, 3) Naval military administration (South II Fleet) for areas that included Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Maluku with their headquarters in Makassar (Poesponegoro & Notosusanto, 2008; Fadli & Kumalasari, 2019). The implementation of government in each region is as follows:

#### 1. Government System in Java

Lieutenant General Hitoshi Imamura led the 16th Army in Java, and his chief of staff was Major General Seizaburo Okasaki, who was responsible for establishing the government in Java and commanded Osamu Seirei No. 1 on March 7, 1942. Lieutenant General Hitoshi Imamura was appointed *Gunseikan* and Major (type of major), which included *Soomubu* (General Affairs Department), *Zaimubu* (Finance Department), *Sangyiobu* (Department, Company, Industry, and Handicrafts) Moreover, *Kotsubu* (Cross Department), to which *Shihoobu* was later added. (Department of Justice) (Suwarno, 2003).

The pangram is called *Gunseibu* and is trained in West Java with its center in Bandung, Central Java with its center in Semarang, and East Java with its center in Surabaya. In addition, two unique regions (Kooci) were also formed, Surakarta and Yogyakarta. On each cannon sat several local commanders. They are responsible for restoring peace, order, and security and instilling temporary rights. In addition, they were given the power to dismiss Dutch workers and establish local governments. However, due to the shortage of human resources, Japan was forced to fill the workforce by recruiting workers from among Indonesians.

In West Java, the appointed governors were Colonel Matsui and Vice Governor R. Pandu Suradiningrat, and Vice Governor Atik Suardi. In Batavia province, H. Dahlan Abdullah was appointed head of local government, and Mas Sutandoko as police chief. In Central Java, the government cooperated with a Japanese, namely Lt. Col. Moved and headquartered in Semarang, Yogyakarta; Governor L. Adam downgraded his status to residency under the Governor of Semarang to maintain order. With the establishment of a new provisional government to alleviate Japan's labor shortage, on April 1, 1942, the Japanese labor government issued a decree on wage standards for civilians and civil servants. Currently, the salary of Indonesian workers is less than 100 f. Each month will be paid as before, but for

those who receive the first payment of more than 100 f., a 5% to 20% discount applies prohibited, so that no Indonesian employee receives a salary of 500 f, etc.

In August, the Japanese military government successfully recruited Japanese civil servants to replace civilian administrative positions assigned to Indonesian citizens. For this reason, Law No. 27 of 1942 (concerning the constitution of local government) and the national constitution. 28 (on the rule of the *Shu* and *Tookubetsu shi*) governments that marked the end of the provisional government.

The newly arrived Japanese workers were placed under new rules and regulations to organize their workers to collect weapons in Java as much as possible. According to national law. 27/1942, since August 8, 1942, the province of Java was divided into 17 *Syuu* (settlement levels), namely Banten, Batavia, Bogor, Priangan, Cirebon, Pekalongan, Semarang, Banyumas, Pati, Kedu, Surabaya, Bojonegoro, Madiun, Kediri, Malang, Besuki and Madura. Although the area is similar to the previous settlement, the system of government is different. Suppose the local government was only an assistant to *the governor*. *In that case, Syuu is now the highest local government and has authority under Syuucookan*, who has legislative and executive powers, just like the governor in Dutch times. In



carrying out his duties, Shuukookan assists the *Cookankanbo* (Cookan assembly), which has three bu (parts), namely:

- 1) *Naisebu* (general government department).
- 2) *Keizaibu* (Economic sector).
- 3) *Keisatsubu* (Police Department).

Ryuu is divided into many of these (cities) and ken (counties) with spice and kango chieftains. Ken e kee gebe (kawedanan) is ruled by guns, gebe is a son (regency) ruled by a son and a son to ku (village) ruled by such. Yogyakarta Sultanate and Surakarta Kasunan called Kooi and Koo as the head of government. The Japanese elected the sultan Yogya Kooi in Jakarta on August 1, 1942. After that, in Sept 1942, Gunseikan appointed Shucookan, while Japanese authorities represented Indonesian workers. Therefore, Japan began to rule Java with Japanese labor.

## 2. Government System in the Sumatra region

Sumatra Province is the military jurisdiction of the army under the command of twenty-five warriors. The whole of Sumatra is divided into *syu* (residence), namely Aceh, East Sumatra, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Bengkulu, Jambi, Palembang, Lampung,

and Banga-Belitung. A Shuukookan leads each Shuukookan. Every you have many busy (*sub-lives*), every busy has many canons, and each book has many sons. In 1943, a new artillery unit was established in Bukittinggi with the following ten units:

- 1) Ministry of Internal Affairs.
- 2) Police Department.
- 3) Ministry of Justice.
- 4) Industrial sector.
- 5) Financial sector.
- 6) Public Sector.
- 7) Department of Transportation.
- 8) Firefighter.
- 9) Shipping department.
- 10) Shipping and handling.

## 3. Government System in the East

In eastern Indonesia, during the Japanese occupation under naval support. The Southern Fleet II (Minseibu) is in Makassar, and the offices below it (Minseifu) are in Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Seram. The administrators under his leadership are Syuu, Ken, Bunken (area), Gun, and Son. As in Java after August, Indonesian officials were finally removed and replaced by the Japanese because the capital Makassar, Manado, Banjarmasin, and Pontianak surrendered to the Japanese. Where Indonesians are at the highest level to go and son.

The above system lasted briefly as Japan's position in the Pacific War became increasingly tense. This prompted Japanese Prime Minister Tojo to issue a

decree allowing Indonesians to participate in the country's government. This decision followed the announcement by Saiko Sikikan of a list of plans to join the promised government of the country on August 1, 1943. Those allowed to enter the government are advisory bodies at the regional and central levels and high positions for Indonesians, such as advisors and military administration.

### **Policies during Japanese rule**

Japanese policy towards Indonesia has two essential objectives: eliminating Western influence and mobilizing the Indonesian nation for Japanese interests. This influenced Japanese policies and procedures in controlling Indonesia, starting from the Dutch mistake in implementing the colonial system on the islands, which led to widespread resistance. Japan has built a highly effective system of government by achieving economic and political development to support its war against its allies and maintain security stability by supporting the ideals of Indonesian nationalism. Politically, the Japanese government and occupation succeeded, but in the economic and social situation, it failed miserably due to looting and exploitation.

#### **1. Economic and Social Sector**

The practices of regulating and taking over the people's economy are carried out

by forcing government programs that have a broad impact on meeting clothing and food needs, including:

- 1) *Auterki* system (all needs are intended for war and people must be able to meet their needs and support the war).
- 2) *Tenarugumi* system (there is a system of neighborly harmony that is required to collect deposits in Japan and each *tenarugumi* consists of 10-20 households).
- 3) The existence of a monopoly on plantations by the Japanese government.
- 4) Exploitation of human resources for Japanese war interests (Zulkarnain, 2012).

The existence of this policy has an impact on the trade of foodstuffs, especially rice, in the prohibited public market; the harvest is collected by the government and food needs for individuals are rationed through distribution in RTs and RWs with very minimum rations, for example, for rice only 200 grams per person for one day. As a result, the plague exploded, hungry oedema and starved to death.

The confiscation of possession of goods was also carried out by the collection of gold, silver, and jewellery, as well as the dismantling of iron fences from houses and the surrender of private cars, all declared for war financing. In addition, there was also a sealing of the radio so



that people could only listen to broadcasts of certain waves used for war propaganda. In the social field, exploitation is also carried out on labour to become Romusha. Romusha is a term for forced labour in projects for war needs without adequate health care benefits and food distribution, so thousands of people died and were buried en masse. In addition, fraud was committed against female workers who were mobilized to become nurses in the army, which led to being comfort women for Japanese soldiers.

A series of economic and social policies implemented by the Japanese government also increased inflation in 1943 and beyond due to the outbreak of the Japanese currency (Ricklefs, 2005). In addition, it added to this the general chaos due to food regulation and forced labour exploitation that led to the famine problem in 1944-1945. With rising mortality and declining fertility, the Japanese occupation period was the only period in two centuries that the population did not increase significantly. This made Indonesia like other occupied territories whose suffering, inflation, tailoring, profiteering, corruption, black market and death was extreme during the Japanese occupation.

## 2. Politics

In the political field, the Japanese government manoeuvres competition among the factions and forces in society.

This was done with the release of nationalist political prisoners who were exiled by the Dutch colonial government in exile, such as Soekarno, Hatta, Syahrir, Syarifuddin and others. Japan embraced these figures and established an organization engaged in the socio-cultural field under the People's Power Center (PUTERA) (Setyohadi et al., 2002).

The scope of this organization is limited to Java, so the terms Indonesia, the national anthem Indonesia Raya and the red and white flag are not allowed. In addition, the Japanese government also embraced Islamic groups with the aim that existing organizations such as Masyumi and Nahdatul Ulama which had been established in 1937 and PSII in 1939, remained united in the federation and were willing to help Japan in the war against the Allies.

There are several policy programs in the political sphere during the Japanese occupation that can be known, namely:

- 1) There is a ban on the use of Dutch and English.
- 2) Forms a three-A movement.
- 3) Indonesia is divided into three parts of Japan's military power.
- 4) The system of government is military rule with civilian government.
- 5) Trying to attract the attention of Muslims in the territory of Indonesia.
- 6) Cooperated with nationalist figures and formed Japanese political organizations.

### 3. Education

In the field of education during the Japanese government, there was a change in the education system, namely eliminating discrimination in education, meaning that all people could feel formal education. Abbas (2018) stated that during the Japanese rule, the education applied wanted to remove Islamic religious lessons by replacing them with Shinto Religious Lessons.

The development of schools that existed during the Japanese occupation consisted of folk schools (Koto Gakho), junior high schools (Shotu et al.), and high schools (Koto et al.) (Mulyahardjo, 270). However, during the Japanese occupation, the education system implemented a semi-military education system with a learning system and curriculum that had been adapted for the benefit of the Japanese war. The existence of this semi-military education system makes the content of learning, that is, knowledge and science, still not optimal because both students and teachers have obligations that must be carried out, as follows:

- 1) Students are required to memorize the Japanese national anthem and are required to attend military training.
- 2) Japanese must be used by teachers in the learning process while Indonesian is used as the language of instruction.

- 3) Teachers are required to take Japanese language courses.

- 4) Veneration of the sun god (Seikerei).

- 5) Singing the Japanese national anthem (Kimigoyo).

According to (Karwana, 2021), there is an Indonesian education figure, Hasyim Asy'ari, who opposes the Japanese policy, so he received threats from Japan. He was even detained for six months in Jombang, Mojokerto and Bubutan. One of the important relics of the Japanese education system that is still felt today is the change in school names. (Zuriatin, 2022) stated that in the newspaper Asia Raya dated September 7, 2602 (1942), the opening of the Secondary School on Tuesday, September 8, 2602, from 9 am by changing the name of the Dutch school such as HIS, changed to Sekolah Rakyat (SR), the three-year MULU School and HBS was changed to Junior High School (SMP). AMS and HBS schools converted into Higher Secondary Schools (SMT).

### 4. Military Fields

In the military field, the Japanese rule in Indonesia focused on establishing various military movement organizations to support Japan which was increasingly desperate in the Pacific war. This was done by gathering strength from Indonesian youth and students facing the Allies (Fadli & Kumalasari, 2019). On March 8, 1942, the Japanese military

government issued the Osamu Seirei policy, which implemented Law No. 1 of 1942 to provide direction for the implementation of government (Mulyawan & Tiara, 2020). The role of the Japanese military during its reign in Indonesia became very influential in every policy set in Indonesia (Munawaroh et al., 2022). The Japanese government's policy is carried out by establishing military-based movements, including:

- 1) *Seinendan*, which is a movement that contains a line of young people aged 14-22 years.
- 2) *Losyi Seinendan*, i.e. the movement containing the reserve line or the princess version of *Seinendan*.
- 3) *Bakutai*, which is a movement consisting of brave troops to die in aid of the Japanese war.
- 4) *Keibodan*, which is a movement consisting of police auxiliary ranks with an age range of 23-25 years.
- 5) *Hezbollah*, which is a movement that contains semi-military ranks whose members are Muslims.
- 6) *Heiho*, an auxiliary Japanese soldier aged 18-25 years.
- 7) Jawa Sentotai/Hokokai, which is the stronghold of Javanese struggle.
- 8) *Fujinkai*, a women's association movement intended as nurses (Yasmis, 2007)., that is, the vanguard.

9) *Peta or Defender of the Fatherland*, which is a regional army formed by Kumakichi Harada.

10) *Gokutokai*, that is, the student corps.

11) *Fujinkai*, yaitu gerakan himpunan wanita yang diperuntukan sebagai perawat (Yasmis, 2007).

## CONCLUSION

The Japanese occupation period in Indonesia lasted for approximately 3.5 years which was initially well received by the Indonesian people because it used different methods from Western countries. However, it brought misery to the people and various policies were implemented. This policy stems from the foundation of the legal system used under the Osamu Seirei (Osamu Law) of 1942, which regulates security matters and civil procedure. Regarding the government system in Indonesia, under Japanese rule, there have been many changes. The government system is divided into three government systems, namely: (1). Military Command (25th Army) for Sumatra Province. (2). Army Corps (TNI 16) for Java and Madura. (3). Naval Command (Second Southern Fleet) for Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Maluku.

During the Japanese rule in Indonesia, to overcome the sympathy of the Indonesian people to help Japan, which at that time began to face the pressure of the Pacific War, various

policies were implemented, which included the abolition of the social class system, freedom of education for all but focused on military interests, economic policy by launching the Japanese currency, dividing Indonesian territory into three military bases and all these policies were directed to Japanese military interests.

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