

JAPANESE OCCUPATION GOVERNMENT POLICY IN INDONESIA ON CULTURE AND LITERATURE: A CASE STUDY OF ASIA RAJA NEWSPAPER (1942-1945)

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ABSTRAK

Ada tiga pandangan yang ditampilkan dalam pergerakan Indonesia dalam menanggapi kedatangan Jepang ke Indonesia. Pertama, kelompok yang menyambut dan mendukung kedatangan Jepang atas keberhasilannya mengusir Belanda. Kedua, kelompok yang belum menentukan sikap mendukung atau menentang. Dalam hal ini, mereka masih ingin melihat bagaimana Jepang akan menjalankan pemerintahannya di Indonesia. Ketiga, kelompok yang menentang kehadiran Jepang, meski belum berani melakukan perlawanan. Mereka yang menentang kedatangan Jepang di Indonesia terdiri dari dua kelompok, yaitu (1) dari keluarga ambtenaar, kaum bangsawan, dan pegawai pemerintah, dan (2) para pejuang pergerakan yang menempatkan pemerintah Jepang sebagai imperialis baru menggantikan Belanda. Bagaimana sebenarnya politik pemerintah pendudukan Jepang dalam melaksanakan pemerintahan pendudukannya? Berdasarkan data yang terdapat dalam surat kabar Asia Raja (29 April 1942 sampai 7 September 1945), penelitian ini mencoba mengungkap politik pemerintah Jepang di bidang sosial-budaya dan sastra. Bagaimana pula surat kabar itu dimanfaatkan pemerintah pendudukan Jepang untuk memperoleh dukungan masyarakat Indonesia dalam menghadapi perang Asia Timur Raya?

Kata Kunci: *budaya, kebijakan pemerintah, pendudukan Jepang, politik kolonial, sastra, surat kabar Asia Raja*

ABSTRACT

Three groups of people in the movement of Indonesia were involved in responding to the arrival of Japan in Indonesia. The first group include those who welcomed and supported the arrival of Japan because of its success in expelling the Dutch from Indonesia. The second are those who had not made up their minds whether to support or to oppose the Japanese presence in Indonesia. That is, they wanted to see how the Japanese would run their administration in Indonesia. The third consist of those who opposed the presence of the Japanese although they did not yet have the courage to fight them. Those who opposed the Japanese arrival in Indonesia consist of two groups, namely (1) the aristocrats, *ambtenaar*, and government employees, and (2) those who fought and regarded the Japanese arrival as an act of an imperialist occupation. Actually, how was the politics of the Japanese government in its colonial administration in Indonesia? On the basis of data obtained from the *Asia Raja* newspaper from April 29, 1942 to September 7, 1945, this paper attempts to investigate the Japanese political government in socio-cultural and literary fields. How did the Japanese make use of the newspaper to gain Indonesian public support in the face of the Greater East Asian war?

Keywords: *Asia Raja* newspapers, colonial politics, culture, government policy, Japanese occupation, literature

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INTRODUCTION

In early March 1942, the Japanese landed in Java. Soon after that, the Japanese began their occupation of Java island (Indonesia) and at the same time terminated the long Dutch colonial government in the Archipelago. Unlike the Dutch, the Japanese conducted a more sympathetic approach as if bestowing enlightenment of awareness about the need of “liberating” Indonesia and other Asian nations from the West (Dutch) imperialism. Based on the “Triple A” program, Japanese, more or less, successfully enhanced the sense of confidence that Asia, particularly Indonesia, actually had the power and capability to liberate itself from the domination of the colonialism.

During its reign, through its education policy, government policy, and colonial politics, on the one hand, the Dutch colonial government had successfully developed its image as the developing nation, having high culture and superiority, and regarded itself as a messiah. On the other hand, it had also successfully implanted the stigma of the native as the underdeveloped, inferior, and uncivilized race. The Japanese policy, on the other hand, went to the different direction. With the hope that the Indonesians would help them to win the Pacific war, the Japanese intended to destroy all the images presented by the Dutch. Therefore, the Japanese arrival in Java was in the beginning responded to in various ways. At least, three responses were exposed by the Indonesian people movement.

First, they enthusiastically supported the Japanese arrival due to their success in expelling the Dutch from Indonesia. Capt. R.P. Suyono (2005, p.198—199), writes as follows: “... *penduduk pribumi menyambut gembira kedatangan tentara Jepang dengan mengibarkan bendera Jepang di mana-mana...*” (‘the native enthusiastically welcome the Japanese soldiers by raising the Japanese flags everywhere’). Second, some people had not determined whether they were pros or cons to the Japanese arrival. They were still curious on how they would run their government in Indonesia.

Third, some people were against the Japanese arrival, although they had no courage to fight against them. The people who were against the Japanese occupation were (1) the new-noblemen, *ambtenaar*, and civil servants whose privileges were threatened by the Japanese existence in Indonesia and (2) the Indonesian independence movement who considered the Japanese occupation as closely similar to that of the Dutch – it was going to hamper Indonesian sovereignty and in turn led the Indonesians to agony.

Because of these various responses, the Japanese initially responded positive. Through the “Triple A” movement, i.e., Japan as the Leader, Japan as the Protector and Japan as the Shine of Asia, was then applied in the Japanese various policies. From the beginning, the Japanese was actually aware of the necessity of having an institution to translate the Japanese colonial policy as well as conducting public persuasion. Therefore, on landing in Java, the Japanese invited the propaganda officers belonging to the Propaganda Group (*Sendenhan*), consisting of 11 military officers, 100 civilians, and 87 military service officers.

In August 1942, The Japanese colonial government officially established a propaganda institute called *Sendenbu*, an organ in the Japanese colonial government assigned to spread the Japanese colonial policy in the Great East Asian war. This board tried to develop the government image with the purpose that the nation not only received but also supported the government policy in the colony by giving anything – property and human resources to the Japanese colonial, in facing the war against the allied nations in the Pacific war.

What Japan did was merely its strategy to win the table over the allied forces, similar to what was conducted by the German Nazi. Prof. Kazuaki Kimura (1994) said that Kenzi Takahashi, who wrote “The Germany Propaganda Legion”, was the key person who managed the Japanese Propaganda Troops to support the Japanese soldiers to win the battle against the Allied Forces. Prof. Kamia,

as cited by Prof. Kazuaki Kimura, stated that the functions of intellectuals, during the war, was to support the government strategy. Therefore, the “Propaganda Legion” consisted of artists, cultural experts and journalists. Based on the reason of having state assignment (*Nanpo Choyou Sakka*), one month military training was prepared for them before they joined the Army and Navy to be sent to the Philippines, Burma, Malaysia including Singapore, and Indonesia.

How well did the Indonesian culture and literature develop during the Japanese occupation? Is it true that the Indonesian literature did not develop well, as A. Teeuw, H.B. Jassin, and Ajip Rosidi claimed, because of (1) the tightness of the Japanese censors under Pusat Kebudayaan (*Bunka Keimin Syidosyo*), (2) an emphasis on literature and culture just to be a propaganda tool by the Japanese? How did the *Asia Raja* newspaper as the mouthpiece of the Japanese government provide news and information with the purpose of carrying out the Japanese policy? These are some questions that this article attempts to address.

This study aims to examine the policies of the Japanese government on literature and culture as presented in the *Asia Raja* newspaper. The primary data source of this study is all editions of the *Asia Raja* newspaper, from the first to the last editions published from April 29, 1942 to September 7, 1945.

The method used in this research is descriptive method with quantitative data processing. The research was carried out by directly examining primary sources *Asia Raja* (April 29, 1942 to September 7, 1945). To support the description or analysis of the primary sources data, other relevant literature sources were required as references.

THE ASIA RAJA NEWSPAPER

The Japanese Propaganda Legion sent to Indonesia was coordinated by its leader Lieutenant Colonel Keiji Machida. It had 190 members, including, among others, Aki Asano, novelist Tomoji Abe, Uio Tomizawa, N. Suimizu, and Tatsuo Ichiki.

One month after the Japanese Propaganda Legion was established in Jakarta, they published a four-page newspaper called *Asia Raja*. Involving some Indonesians, this daily was first published on Wednesday, April 29, 1942. The committee was as follows:

Badan Pengarang: A. Asano, N. Suimizu, Uio Tomizawa.

Anggota Kehormatan: R. Soekardjo Wiryo-pranoto

Pemimpin Redaksi: T. Ichiki

Bagian Politik dan Umum: Winarno

Bagian Sosial dan Pemuda: Mr. M. Samsudin

Bagian Kehormatan: Sanusi Pane

Bagian Ekonomi: Setijono

Alamat Kantor: Molenvliet Oost No. 8 Jakarta

Tiras: 15.000 eksemplar

Harga: 10 sen/eksemplar

This newspaper regularly appeared every day, except holiday and Sunday. But, if important events occurred on Saturdays, *Asia Raja* was also published on Sundays. For instance, when the first meeting of *Cuo Sangi-In* was arranged on Saturday, October 16, 1943 (2603 in Japanese calendar), the following day (Sunday, October 17, 1943) this event became the headline. The same thing happened to the speech of the Prime Minister Koisho about the preparation for Indonesian independence. The news was presented in the specific pages called “Soerat Selebaran Soera Asia” (The Bulletin of Asian Voice). In addition to presenting the speech of the prime minister, several commercial ads were also published in the newspaper. Until the end of February 1943, *Asia Raja* was still regularly published in four pages for each edition. However, on Saturday, February 27, 1943, *Jawa Syimbun Kai*, a censor institute of the Japanese colonial government that was responsible for any activities in the publishing field made the following decision:

Poetoesan “Jawa Sjimboen Kai”

Moelai tanggal 1 Maart (: Maret) j.a.d. semoea s.k. di Djawa akan terbit 2 halaman tiaptiap hari, tetapi seminggoe sekali diizinkan terbit 4 halaman. Harga langganan saban boelan ditetapkan bagi “Asia Raja” f.1.50, bagi s.k. daerah f.1.30.

It was stated that the reduction of the page numbers and the increasing monthly subscription price were caused by the scarcity of paper because of the war. On Monday, March 1, 1943, *Asia Raja* still had 4 pages. From Tuesday to Friday (2-5 March), it then was published with 2 pages and the following Saturday, March 6, it was again published with four pages.

In the beginning of 1944, the format of *Asia Raja* changed. The price remained the same, but there was some contribution for the Romusha workers and the National Guard (Tentara Pembela Tanah Air) as follows:

*Alamat Kantor Redaksi & Administrasi:
Yamato Bashi Kita Doori 8, Djakarta
Telepon : 3250 dan 3270, Djakarta
Pemimpin Oemoem : R. Soekardjo
Wirjopranoto
Harga Langganan 3 boelan f. 4.50 ditambah
10 sen seboelan oentoek Roomukyokai dan
Tentara Pembela Tanah Air
Pentjetak Hookabe Masaji*

Several days after the independence of Indonesia, August 17, 1945, *Asia Raja* was still published. The news about the Indonesian Independence Proclamation was put as the headline, in a bigger font size than that of the newspaper's name. On August 18, 1945 the appointment of Ir. Soekarno and his vice president Moh. Hatta appeared on this newspaper. And even, in the following day, the application of Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 as the Constitution was also presented in this newspaper.

The other news in *Asia Raja* after the independence was still around the independence days, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the allied forces, and the result of the bombing. On Friday, September 7, 1945, this newspaper presented the title "*Asia Raja Minta Diri*" (*Asia Raja 'resigned'*). And that was the last publication of this newspaper. Under the name of *Asia Raja* it was written: *Djumat, 7 September 2605*. The last number, the IV year, No. 216. The notes of the termination, as cited for the first paragraph, are as follows:

"Asia Raja jang djoega mempoenjai sifat dan tjorak sebagai alat bagi pemerintah Bala Tentara, kini menghadapi kesoekaran jang sangat penting dalam melangsoengkan kewadjibannja. Inilah alasan jang memaksa kami mengachiri penerbitan Asia Raja."

In short, *Asia Raja* was published from April 29, 1942 to Friday, September 7, 1945. During this time, *Asia Raja* had published 216 editions.

GOVERNMENT MESSAGES IN THE ADVERTISEMENTS

Considering the background of *Asia Raja* establishment, we can clearly see that *Asia Raja* was used by the Japanese Government as propaganda of the government in his colony. It is more obviously seen when we comprehend the content of the newspaper.

Most of the news, for example, showed the Japanese troop sensation and the defeat of the Allied Forces. In addition, the East sentiment was visibly exposed. The riot in India, for instance, was exposed as the form of the Indian dissatisfaction against English colonialism. Jose Rizal mortality ceremony, the Philippine hero and the speech of Benigno Aquino, was extensively reviewed to show the awareness of the East against the west colonization as shown at the Japanese bravery and victory in various battles.

If the Dutch, with their colonial politics, tried to create the self image as the Europe civilization, the Japanese positioned themselves as the liberator of East Asia and the whole Asia from the English, American and Dutch imperialism. Look at the "New Year Address" from the Prime Minister Hedeki Todjo as the headline of *Asia Raja* January 1, 1943 (2603 according to the Japanese calendar) that Japan intended to continue the war until the final victory. This was clearly emphasized by Prime Minister Todjo in his new year address to the Japanese as follows:

"Ditahoen ke-18 Sjowa ini maka tepat setahoen lamanja sedjak peperangan Asia Timoer Raja

moelai mengamoek. Kemenangan jang diperoleh dalam waktoe jang singkat itoe soenggoeh menta'djoebkan dan ta'ada bandingannja diriwajat doenia dan memboektikan dengan sedjelas-djelasnja ketjakapan dan ketjerdasan angkatan darat dan laeet Nippon sertapoen djoega ketangkasan barisan negeri. Segala pengaroeh Inggeris, Amerika dan Belanda telah terapoes dari Asia. Nippon memperoleh kedoedoekan jang setegoeh-tegoehnja dan ta'dapat digontjangkan sedikit djoega poen. Dengan demikian dasarnja pendjelmaan tjita-tjita lingkoengan kemakmoeran di Asia Timoer Raja bertambah kekal dan koeat, maka diatas dasar jang setegoeh beton itoe bangsa Asia akan hidup dalam keamanan dan kesedjahteraan."

Similarly, the news on the decision of the Low Chamber of Parliament can clearly arouse the abhorrence against English and the US, as follows:

"Hasrat moesoeh kita, Inggeris/Amerika, oentoek tetap mengoerasi Asia Timoer telah dihantjoerkan; pembangoenan Asia Timoer Raja tiap hari mendapat kemadjoean pesat; pembentoeakan tiap-tiap negeri anggota Asia Timoer Raja lebih dipertegoeh lagi; Birma dan Filipina telah mentjapai kemerdekaannja jang telah lama diidam-idamkan; India telah membentoeak pemerintahan sementara jang siap berdjoeng melepaskan diri dari tindasan Inggeris jang soedah berabad-abad lamanja; sementara itoe Tjoengking tak lagi mempoenjai alasan-alasan oentoek teroes melakoekan perlawanannja, dengan pertimbangan semoea itoe, maka kini kami poetoeskan: 1000 Djoeta bangsa Asia serentak mempersatoekan diri oentoek menghantjoerkan Inggeris/Amerika, melepaskan Asia Timoer Raja dari tindasan mereka dan dengan demikian membentoeak kesentosaan doenia jang kekal."

(Asia Raya, October 28, 1943).

Hence, everyday the news of war everywhere was publicized through *Asia Raja*. This is an

attempt to create the sentiment of the Asian in order to obtain the support of the whole Asia.

As the mouthpiece of the Japanese, we certainly would find the Japanese cruelty against Indonesian. The human trafficking for slavery, Romusha, for example, should be pointed out as the patriot who should get the support to many sides. Even, the Japanese themselves give the appreciation of the ex-Romusha, who successfully returned. The news, along with the photograph during the delivery of the price, was presented on the first page of *Asia Raja*.

The language and diction of *Asia Raja* also reflect that the newspaper was really the tool of the Japanese to legitimize their power. Such words as "Pasukan Amerika lari kocar-kacir" (American troops run away), "Inggris bertekuklutut" (England kneeled down); "Kapal Amerika porak-poranda" (American fleet turned into debris), "Pasukan kita dengan gagah berani berhasil ..." (Our troops bravely won ...), "Angkatan Udara Jepang, meraja lela" (Japanese Air force dance in the air), "Menyongsong dunia baru yang gemilang" (Welcoming the bright new era), "Masuklah Barisan Pekerja (Romusha) untuk masa depan yang cerah" (Join the Work Legion (: Romusha) for the better future), and other similar slogans were everyday words flourishing in *Asia Raja*.

The instruction of the Dai Nippon Armed Forces commander which was presented in the first edition of *Asia Raja* (April 29, 1942/2602), for example, was clearly the announcement of the Japanese policy in Indonesia. The 6th item of the announcement reads as follows: "Nama-nama negeri dan kota diseloeroeh poelaoe Djawa jang mengingatkan kepada zaman pemerintah Belanda almarhum ditoeak dengan nama-nama menoeroet kehendak ra'jat." Similar announcements, either related to the Japanese policy, instructions, rules, or the arrangement of the holiday celebration considered to boost the spirit for the national Asian struggle (i.e., the Japanese) colored the pages of *Asia Raja*, as stated in the article "Garis-garis Besar dari Toedjoean-toedjoean merentjanakan oesaha-oesaha oentoek merajakan pembangoenan Asia-Raja," (*Asia Raja*, April 29, 2602)

When the Japanese needed a large number of jatropha trees (*ricinus communis*), the order, the way of planting, and the advantage of the trees were published everyday in various articles in the newspaper. On this subject, Ibrahim Julianto (2004:42) said: “*Setelah kedatangan Jepang, tanaman jarak merupakan primadona yang harus ditanam oleh penduduk Indonesia. Tanaman ini mengandung biji yang bisa menghasilkan minyak yang berguna untuk bahan bakar pesawat terbang.*” Therefore, it is natural that *Asia Raja* were keen in publishing news about the importance of jatropha.

In consequence, the articles in *Asia Raja* had to be in line with the Japanese colonial politics. This can be seen from the commercials attached to the newspaper. The herbal medicine, *Tjap Potret Njonja Meneer*, for example, has the picture of the Japanese fighters doing the bombing to the enemy fleet (the US and English). Advertisement in the movie in 1942 mentioned only the name of the theater, the film, the stars and the time, along with the propaganda pictures. One of the film commercials seems to be in line with the Japanese government in *Asia Raja*, June 29, 1944, as follows:

“Musuh kita ialah Inggeris, Amerika dan Malaria.”

Semuanya harus dibasmi!

Lihatlah pilem Malaria

Dibuat oleh Nippon Eiga Sha

Various films played in the 1944 and 1945 were mostly Eastern films (Japanese, Malay, Indonesia, Chinese, India) and the western films were mostly from the pro-Japanese countries. Yet, cowboy films and other American films were also played still. However, films from the pro-Allied forces countries were no longer played. The films were mostly related to the Japanese war, “Malaria”, and other Malayan films.

In addition to film commercials, daily advertisements for drama flourished in the newspaper from 1944 to 1945. Even, the synopses

of some plays to be performed were attached to the newspaper. The synopsis of the five-act play “Mekar Baoenja Madjapahit” (The Fragrance of Madjapahit) performed by the “Persafi” artist groups Nippon Eiga Sha (performed from 1 to 7 of June 1945, at 20.00), was also advertised (*Asia Raja*, Wednesday, June 6, 1945).

The advertisement of the performance of *Noesa Penida* reads as follows:

“NOESA PENIDA”

Pertoendjoekan istimewa oentoek pematja Asia Raja. Diselenggarakan oleh Sandiwara Bintang Soerabaja

Dioesahkan oleh harian Asia Raja

Dibawah pimpinan Andjar Asmara

Pada petang Minggoe 24 Januari 2603 Di roemah Komidi BesarH

arga tempat f. 1.50 dan f. 0.75

And the news for Noesa Penida reads as follows:

Pemoetaran film Noesa Penida, Senin 24 djalan 25 Djanuari 2603 ... Pematja Asia Raja mendapat potongan harga 20 %.

After the performance, Darmawidjaja made his review entitled “Bahasa Indonesia di atas Panggoeng: Soeatoe Pekerdjaan Merambah” (The Indonesian language on the Stage: The Extensive Activity) (*Asia Raya*, January 25, 1943). Along with the article, on page 2, the news about the performance was presented. It was stated that from two performances, day and night, the producer earned a net profit of about f.868.65 from the sale of tickets, which cost f.1.50 and f.0.75 each. Therefore, it could be concluded that at least 800 audiences much have watch the play in two performances (day and night), a quantity which at the time was considered to be extraordinary. Some other play companies were also used by the Japanese to show their propaganda. One of them was Perserikatan Oesaha Sandiwara Djawa (Javanese Play Company). Below is an advertisement of the play:

Perserikatan Oesaha Sandiwara Djawa dengan bantoean Warna Sari mempersembahkan:

“Moesim Bunga di Asia: 8 Pemandangan”

*Karangan Boenga: Sakoera dari Nippon
Melati dari Djawa Mawar dari Bali Bunga
api dari Andalus Terate dari Hindia Fusoka
dari Birma Kesmak dari Tiongkok*

*Dipersembahkan di bawah hadirat pahlawan-
pahlawan kita Main 5 -- 7 Juni - Gatsu 2604
di Djakarta Gekijo (Sin-ka Mangga Besar),
Pukul 8 tepat. (Asia Raya, December 4,
2604).*

Several commercials appearing in *Asia Raja* show how the daily really took advantage of everything for the sake of the Japanese. In this case, the Propaganda Legion made use of *Asia Raja* as a tool for their propaganda. For the advertisement of Djawa Baroe calendar, this propaganda was addressed in the form of poetry. Here is the commercial:

*Kalender Djawa Baroe
Harga 15 sen
Kalender dinding oentoek tahoen 2603
Ingatlah
Orang Nippon--Orang Indonesia
Sebarisan, sepenangoengan, senasib
Makin lama makin njata
Kemenangan di pihak kita
Djagalah poelaoe Djawa
Pangkalan daerah Selatan
Persatoean tenaga rakjat
Memoedahkan kemenangan perang
Kemenangan di pihak kita
Keradjaan seloeroeh Asia
Berbaris berdjoelang
Menoedjoe kemenangan*

ARTICLES

If from the commercials alone, we can grasp various propaganda it goes without saying that the articles published in the newspaper *Asia Raja* were even more adapted to such a purpose. Since 1942 *Asia Raja* had published several regular articles. Three of them ran until the end of the *Asia Raja* publication, namely, articles on the Japanese language, a women column, and a

religious column devoted to Islam. Of course the Japanese language had a very significant value because only a small number of Indonesians could speak Japanese. Advertisements related to Japanese courses, Japanese textbooks, and skillful Japanese speakers were simultaneously published in *Asia Raja*. This shows that mastery of the Japanese language was really recommended by the Japanese government. Therefore, the examination of the language, news and announcement about the language were always published in the newspaper. The announcement of examination results, for example, was published in *Asia Raja* in three full pages, despite the three-page publication. Therefore, only the results were published.

As for the provision of a column on Islam which was entitled “Recollection” (usually published on Friday), the Japanese seemed to have a strong tendency for the particular political interest. The material for that column dealt mostly with the religion, while any political and social matters were hardly discussed. In this case, the Japanese colonial government had an interest in enhancing support from the Moslems, particularly from the clerks. First, this was shown by the absence of columns devoted to other religions. Second, every Islamic holiday (Maulid, Iedul Fitri, Iedul Adha, and Islamic New Year) was specifically celebrated. Third, weekly articles about Islamic heroes (either from Indonesia or from other countries) were always found. Fourth, the meeting between Islamic clerks or Islamic organization leaders and the representatives of the Japanese government were exposed weekly. Even the contribution and the success of Hizbullah organization to the colonial government was also explicitly exposed. *Asia Raja* close relation to Islam was seen when on the death of HAMKA, *Asia Raja* published its condolences. It also published an article about his death and biography. Actually, the Japanese attitudes to Islam in Indonesia, either explicit or implicit, is very interesting to investigate. However, this article focuses only on examining columns in *Asia Raja* which were in line with the Japanese attitudes in running their politics in the colony.

Since its first publication on April 29 1942, *Asia Raja* provided columns dealing with culture and women. In the early period of *Asia Raja* publication, Sanusi Pane wrote the culture column. Other writers then handled the column "Roeangan Poetry". The women column was filled with various issues, or other material related with women problems. Along with the development at that time, a new column appeared to expose social issues. Such columns dealing with contemporary social issues as *Rubrik Tanggapan Kalbu, Sepanjang Jalan, Nyiur Melambai, Mata Hari, Sambil Lalu, Kisah Selayang Pandang* (Heart Response, Along the Way, Waving Coconut Leaves, Sun, For Fun, Passing Sight Story) were published. Various problems were pointed out. Even in the For Fun column, the writer created Odji character. This is the character who gave the comment on any social issue.

LITERARY AND CULTURAL ISSUES

Since the beginning of *Asia Raja* publication, cultural problems seems to have been given serious emphasis. The culture column which was formerly managed by Sanusi Pane, disappeared in 1944. However, discussions about literature and culture, including the announcement of contests, received good responses from the readers. Sanusi Pane's article *Keboedajaan Asia Raja* (The Great Asian Culture) was published on April 29, 2602, followed by another articles entitled *Ilmoe Semangat* (Spirit Knowledge) appearing two days later (May 1, 2602). These articles reflected attitudes which were in line with the Japanese policy in literature and culture. Furthermore, they demonstrated the greatness of Indonesian, Japanese, and other Asian cultures. Having great civilizations, Asians must raise their cultures to be equal or even higher than those of the western countries, i.e. the Allied Nations.

Like the Dutch colonial regime, the Japanese Propaganda Legion, through *Djawa Hoookoo Kai*, under the Cultural Center (*Keimin Bunka Syidosyo*), also created images and stigma. The difference is that the imagery was emphasized

on the Japanese and the native, while the stigma was applied to the Dutch and its *ambtenaar* (new noble). Therefore, the *Asia Raja* editors not only conducted the selection and censorship of any writing and advertisement, but also made textual changes and improvements in order to align them with the Japanese colonial policies. In this case, the imagery and stigmatization were conducted through propaganda by evoking the spirit of nationalism, heroism, and readiness to sacrifice for the nation and country, as well as making various imagery of tremendous victory of the Japanese troops in the battle against the Allied forces. Literary texts, articles, pictorial advertisements and texts, and a number of opinions in various columns in *Asia Raja* were produced mostly for this purpose. A play entitled *Pandoe Partawi* by Merayu Sukma, which was awarded the first prize in the drama writing competition arranged by *Asia Raja—Djawa Shimbun*, for example, was changed by the editors for the sake of publication. Look at the following citation (*Keboedajaan Timoer*, No. 3, Th. 2, 1945):

PANDOE PARTIWI

Sandiwara dalam 5 babak

(Sandiwara jang mendapat hadiah pertama dalam sajembara "Asia Raja—Djawa Shimbun")

Oleh Merayu Sukma (Diperbaiki oleh Poesat Keboedajaan, Bagian Kesoesteriaan)

Para Pelakoe:

Dainip DjajaPahlawan Budiman

Pandoe SetiawanTemannja

PartiwiBekerja diroemah Dainip Djaja

Nadarlan..... Orang kaja jang kejam

Priajiwati Bekas toenangan Pandoe

Setiawan, dan perempoean

Nadarlan

Doea orang polisi

Beberapa orang tetangga.

At the end, a note was given, which reads as follows:

"Karangan ini disana-sini perloe kami oebah, dalam oesaha kami hendak mendaki jang kami terangkan diatas tadi. Kesalahan-kesalahan

jang bersankoetan dengan teknik dan komposisiinja telah kami keloearkan sedapat-dapat kami. Segala peroebahan ini kami lakoekan dengan mengingat tjara penoelis mengarang, bagaimana djalan pikirannja, agar soepaja djangan sampai meroesakkan soeasana jang ditjita oleh penoelis. Sesoedah diadakan peroebahan itoe dapatlah kiranja dimainkan.”

Considering the articles, poems, short stories, and three continued stories in *Asia Raja* and comparing them with the government announcements, competition criteria, the results of meetings and conferences of the artists, which could be considered as reflecting the Japanese policies, some issues actually ran counter to the Japanese policies on culture and literature in particular. This could be seen from a number of articles and literary works published in *Asia Raja*. Writers whose works had been published there were Bahrum Rangkuti, Mohammad Yamin, Amal Hamzah, Bahroem Oedaya, Darmawidjaja, Soebrata Arya Mataram, Basoeeki Abdullah.

As mentioned earlier, *Asia Raja* was published with the same mission as that of the Propaganda Legion, with the involvement of A. Asano, N. Suimizu, Uio Tomizawa as the Board of Writers and Tatsuo Ichiki as the Chief Editor who was a member of the Propaganda Legion. Therefore, it is difficult to separate *Asia Raja* mission from that of the Japanese Regime. However, in terms of culture, particularly literature, this mission was not altogether supported by the writers.

Discussions about Asian cultures and literary works of the Asia nations such as Indonesia, Japan and India, along with articles written by Sanusi Pane, Amal Hamzah, Darmawidjaja, and B. Rangkoeiti, seemed to be in line with the mission of the Propaganda Legion, namely enhancing the richness of culture and literature of (East) Asia. However, Darmawidjaja's and Sanusi Pane's articles emphasized on the significance of truth and gracefulness. This means that an artist should emphasize more on his works than his mission or message of the works, which also ran counter to

what was emphasized by the Propaganda Legion. For example, in the article “Seni oentoek Seni” by Soebrata Arya Mataram (*Asia Raja*, November 23, 2602), “Kesoesteraan” by Amal Hamzah (*Asia Raja*, October 14, 2602), “Kesenian Kita di masa jang akan datang” and “Peperangan di Medan Keboedajaan” both by Darmawidjaja (*Asia Raja*, January 14 and 18, 2603), showed that arts for arts was more emphasized than arts for society as proposed by the Propaganda Legion. At the end of his article, Soebrata Arya Mataram said, “*Kaoem seni jang soenggoeh-soenggoeh insjaf dan bekerdja oentoek seni tentoe mengerti jang sedalam-dalamnja akan maksoed ini. Di dalam seni kita haroes bekerdja: “Seni oentoek seni.” Bekerja* (Work) here means being part of the Propaganda Legion. Thus, arts should be used as a propaganda tool.

Similar articles such as “Tangisnja Seorang Poedjangga” by R. Soe... (unreadable) Sastrosoewijnjo (*Asia Raja*, January 1, 2603), several articles by Darmawidjaja, among others, “Bahasa dalam Sajembara” (*Asia Raja*, January 11, 2603), “Sedikit tentang Kalidasa dan Zamannja” (*Asia Raja*, May 18, 2602), “Djiwa Barat, Semangat Nippon dan Kita” (*Asia Raja*, May 2, 2602), “Bahasa Indonesia di Atas Panggoeng” (*Asia Raja*, January 25, 2603), did not put too much emphasis on the role of literature in the society, except the discussion of literature itself.

However, this does not mean that all the articles about literature published in *Asia Raja* did not relate literature to the mission of the Propaganda Legion. An article entitled “Toedjoean dan Kewadjiban Sandiwara dalam Zaman Baroe” (*Asia Raja*, May January 1, 2603), by Andjar Asmara, for example, discussed the importance of drama to enhance the spirit for developing social ideals. The more straightforward statements can be read at the HR's (initial name) appeal, stating: “*Dalam masa perang ‘mati-matian’ ini kita dengan bekerdja bersama-sama dengan kaoem sasterawan dari negeri-negeri Timoer jang lain, wadjiblah mendjadi pradjoerit, mendjadi pahlawan di atas medan roehani.*” (*Asia Raja*, November 10, 2602).

Meanwhile, seen from the literary works, we can also see that

Some literary works such as poems, short stories, and continued stories published in *Asia Raja* could be seen as being aligned with the Propaganda Legion, and others were not. So, what A. Teeuw, Ajip Rosidi, and even H.B. Jassin said about Indonesian literature in the Japanese era was not fully correct. For example, A. Teeuw (1978: 150) stated:

“Pemerintah itu mendirikan sebuah Pusat Kebudayaan, Keimin Bunka Syidosyo yang digunakan untuk mengorganisasi sekalian seniman Indonesia. Melalui Pusat ini dikenakan penyaringan yang amat ketat, yaitu penyaringan yang bukan saja melarang segala sesuatu yang dianggap bermusuhan atau berbahaya terhadap perjuangan Jepang, tetapi juga menuntut hasil kesusastraan yang mendorong cita-cita peperangan Jepang yang dengan pintar sekali diperkenalkan dengan nama Lingkungan Kemakmuran Bersama Asia Raya. Tidak lama kemudian sebagian besar bangsa Indonesia mulai insyaf bukan saja akan kekosongan cogan kata itu, tetapi juga akan bahaya besar yang timbul dari kesusastraan yang secara berterusterang tunduk kepada cita-cita politik.”

In addition, Ajip Rosidi (1976:79—80) said:

“Terhadap perbudakan kesenian buat tujuan propaganda perang ini, banyak para seniman yang keberatan. ... Usmar Ismail yang pada mulanya sangat percaya kepada janji dan slogan-slogan buatan Jepang, kemudian merasa curiga juga. Chairil Anwar, Amal Hamzah dan beberapa orang kawannya lagi yang sejak semula menaruh curiga kepada Jepang, mengejek para seniman yang berkumpul di Kantor Pusat Kebudayaan.”

Moreover, H.B. Jassin (1954:8—9) argued:

“... kebebasan berpikir di zaman Jepang tidak ada. ... Diminta sajak-sajak yang berisi artinya yang ada mengandung cita-cita, yang menimbulkan cinta kepada tanah air, yang mengobarkan semangat kepahlawanan, yang

menganjurkan semangat bekerja. Tangisan anak dagang di tanah rantau yang beribababab, tangisan karena jauh dari ibu dan sanak keluarga, sajak persembahan kepada kesuma hati menyatakan rindu berahi semata-mata, umumnya sajak yang hanya mengenai diri sendiri, kesedihan diri sendiri ataupun kegembiraan diri sendiri, oleh badan Pusat Kebudayaan yang disamakan orang dengan Kulturkammer Jerman, dinasihatkan supaya disimpan untuk diri sendiri saja.

Diminta kepada pujangga, terutama pujangga-pujangga muda kita, supaya insaf akan artinya bagi masyarakat. Hasil ciptaannya harus dapat membimbing masyarakat... Sajak-sajak dan hasil kesusastraan yang menimbulkan keraguan dan kebimbangan harus dijauhi, sehingga jangan turut pula “meracuni” jiwa masyarakat.”

In his Foreword in *Gema Tanah Air*, H.B. Jassin (1959:5) emphasized his statement about the Japanese literary condition, as follows:

“Tiga setengah tahun pendudukan Jepang merupakan masa perubahan dalam corak kesusastraan Indonesia. Oleh perkenalan dengan kejadian-kejadian yang hebat dan juga oleh larangan sensor Jepang, kesentimenan yang dianggap melemahkan semangat, dilempar ke keranjang sampah.”

What A. Teeuw and Ajip Rosidi argued seemed to have been based on Jassin's books *Kesusastraan Indonesia di Masa Djepang* (1948; 1954) and *Gema Tanah Air* (1948; IV, 1959) except that A. Teeuw who accomplished with the explanation from Bujung Saleh (i.e. Bujung Saleh) (1954) and Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana (1948). Meanwhile, Jassin himself seemed not to carefully read *Asia Raja* that several short stories and poetry were not included in Jassin two books mentioned above. Therefore, it is natural that Jassin stated that: *“Selama pendudukan Jepang, tidak ada ditulis buku-buku yang tebal dan dua roman yang*

diterbitkan Balai Pustaka, penuh tendensi dan berat sebelah." (1954:26; 1985:163).

If Jassin had closely read *Asia Raja*, he would inevitably have found three continued stories: (1) *Kartinah* (*Asia Raja*, April 1942–June 25, 1942) by Andjar Asmara, (2) *Noesa Penida* (*Asia Raja*, June 30, 1942–September 14, 1942) by Andjar Asmara, and (3) *Roekmini* (*Asia Raja*, January 1943–February 19, 1943) by E.S.N. Even if we trace further what is mentioned in *Asia Raja*, Monday, March 13, 1944, page 1, Indonesian novels may more than that. The news entitled "Sajembara Tjerita Roman" contained among others five participants who got runner up prize from Dai Nippon government. Completing the news, the photograph of the government representatives were shown giving the prize to the romance writers. In addition, several poems included in Jassin two books have no mentioned sources, except "Bunglon" by Gegap Gempita which *Gema Tanah Air* stated *Asia Raja*, November 28, 1942. Gegap Gempita poems stated in *Asia Raja*, June 1, 1942 was entitled "Soenting Melati" (Jasmine Picking) which is neglected by Jassin to be included in his two books. While the poem "Pentjalang" and "Gita Negara" (Song of the Nation)'s sources are not mentioned.

That the statement of A. Teeuw, Ajip Rosidi, and Jassin could not be accepted is that they do not closely read *Asia Raja*. They also missed several short stories in *Asia Raja* which from the very beginning until the end of its publication at least there are 15 short stories, including Karim Halim, Rosihan Anwar and Usmar Ismail's short stories, H.B. Jassin's own poem "Doa" was also mentioned in *Asia Raja* (Saturday, August 25, 1945). A week after Indonesia proclaimed the independence.

Talking about theme, the Indonesian literature during the Japanese periods, as stated by Jassin that romantic poem should only be kept for oneself, as advised by the center of culture, is not exactly true. Just check Darmawidjaja poetry at the early period of *Asia Raja*, here the sentimental style of Pujangga Baru still existed. Similarly, the many short stories did not express what

Propaganda Legion expected. The same thing happened to that of the novel. If we had found out several plays performed during the Japanese Era, the same thing might have happened.

WRITING CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT

Considering various announcement for writing competition has been published by *Asia Raja*, I think that many more novels, short stories or poems were published at that time. They are more than what have been written by H.B. Jassin in his two books. *Asia Raja* itself frequently announced that the news needs various writing to fill in the available column. Two citations below are the example of announcement published in *Asia Raja* related to those matters:

"DITJARI

Kira-kira 20 orang boeat Barisan Propaganda jang pandai berbitjara dan bertjerita oentoek mendjalankan propaganda. Baik djoega kalaoe ada ahli tjerita sematjam dalang. Sebagai sjarat orang haroes beristeri. Penghidoepan akan ditanggoeng.

Barang siapa jang ingin melamar haraplah datang pada Koningsplein Zuid no. 4 bagian film dari Barisan Propaganda."

(*Asia Raya*, May 5, 2602)

"DIMINTA

Karangan2 tjerita pendek, gambar2, leloetjon, toelisan2 oentoek roengan poeteri, halaman kanak2, tjerita2 perdjalanen, tjerita2 bergambar keindahan alam ataoe orang dan lain2 bantoean oentoek roengan gembira dari soerat kabar kita.

Bantoean2 jang dapat dimoeat mendapat honorarioem baik. Segala toelisan2 diharap soepaja sedapat-dapat ada duplikatnja, dan selain itoe soepaja penoelis2 joega masih mempoenjai toeroenannja sendiri, hingga kalaoe tidak dapat dimoeat, tidak perloe kita haroes kirimkan kembali."

(*Asia Raja*, May 10, 2602)

The emergence of variously new articles in *Asia Raja* might be caused by the emergence of the above advertisement. It is assumed that the similar advertisement or announcement would appeal a lot of responses. Hence, the results were probably quite a lot.

Asia Raja also produced the advertisement for the coming magazine to be published. Look at the advertisement below:

“Oentoek majjalah setengah boelanan jang akan diterbitkan oleh Asia Raja, Tjerita soepaja terbagi djadi enam sampai 8 bagian (oentoek dimoeat setjara serie 8 kali bertoeroet-toeroet). Tiap-tiap bagian soepaja achirnja ditoelis begitoe menarik hingga orang ingin akan batja lanjoetnja di penerbitan jang akan datang. Tiaptiap bagian soepaja sebanjak-banjaknja 4 atau 5 folio tik-tikan. Honorarioem bagoes sekali. Toelisan diminta selekas-lekasnja dikirim kepada Redaksi Asia Raja.”

(*Asia Raya*, November 28, 2602).

In addition to the requirement of writing for *Asia Raja* newspaper and magazine, there were some writing or making art and craft contests or competition announcement. August 7, 1943, *Asia Raja* edition, for example, announced competition for making ballads (syair) on cotton planting. The prize will be f.20 for the first winner, f15 for the second, and f.5 for the runner up. In addition, there was also a scenario writing competition. As follows:

SAJEMBARA MEMBOEAT SCENARIO
PILEM, LAKON, SANDIWARA, SJA'IR DAN
SEMBOJAN

Bahasa jang dipakai adalah bahasa Indonesia.

Hadiah:

<i>Film</i>	<i>: I f. 200</i>	<i>Sjair: I f. 100</i>
	<i>II f. 150</i>	<i>II f. 70</i>
	<i>III f. 50</i>	<i>III f. 30</i>
<i>Sembojan</i>	<i>: I f. 50</i>	
	<i>II f. 30</i>	
	<i>III f. 10</i>	

Badan Pemeriksa:

1. *Djawa Roomukyokai*
2. *Keimin Bunka Shidosho*
3. *Engeki Kyokai*

The other contest is “Sajembara Kesoesteraan Radio”. Then result of the contest was announced by *Asia Raja*, July 23, 1943. The winner from Hosokyo Kyokoe is Arifin Koesoemo ... (unreadable) upon his play entitled “Dharma Bhakti”. The poetry writing competition was also arranged by *Djawa Hookoo Kai* and Himpunan Kebaktian Rakjat. The jury is as follows:

Ketua: Fuku Sosai

Ketua Moeda: Chunoo Honbuccho, Chunoo Honbu Zidoo

Anggota: Zjumin Zimukyoko Kuchoo, Sendenbuccho, Hosokyo Kuchoo, Somu dan Sonyo, “Djawa Hoko Kai”, Iida, N, Namura, Aoki, Oetojo Ramelan, Samsuodin, Sanusi Pane, Darmawidjaja

Meanwhile, “Sajembara Mengarang Keboedajaan dan Kemerdekaan” arranged by Literary Division, Cultural Center (*Asia Raja*, September 17, 2604), did not appear in the following day. Similarly, the competition with the theme “Menjoesoen Lingkoengan Kemakmoeran bersama di Asia Timoer Raja” as announced in *Asia Raja*, January 7, 1943 showed no result announced.

Beside competition announcement, *Asia Raja* also exposing news as outlined by Propaganda Legion. The announcement of *Hodoka* (*Asia Raja*, January 20, 1943) for example, was clearly the formal government announcement about censorship. In addition, there was also an announcement made by Propaganda Legion related to the *Indonesian Independence Magazine* (*Majalah Indonesia Merdeka*). This was announced in *Asia Raja*, Wednesday, July 11, 1942, as follows:

“Ada. Madjallah Indonesia Merdeka minta kita oemoemkan bahwa moelai saat ini sampai pada waktoe jang ditentoekan nanti. Madjallah Indonesia Merdeka tidak dapat lagi menerima

abodemen baroe. Hal ini berhoeboeng dengan banjaknja permintaan jang beloem dapat diselesaikan.”

CONCLUSION

Research on the *Asia Raja* actually presents a lot of problems related to the Japanese colonial policy in Indonesia from 1942 to 1945. *Asia Raja* was formally run by the Japanese government. However, its attitudes were ambiguous. On the one hand, it ran its policies in accordance with the Propaganda Legion. On the other hand, the Propaganda Mission was not procedurally conducted. Some of them was even controversially conducted. The controversial policy was seen in the Japanese attitudes in culture and literature. It is argued that the involvement of Indonesians such as Sanusi Pane, for example, was the main reason. This might also been caused by the fact that the Propaganda Legion basically consisted of non-military people, but cultural-experts, intellectuals, and artists instead. As a whole, *Asia Raja* as the formal newspaper of the Japanese colonial government represented the Japanese policy in facing the Great East Asian War. In order to gain wide support, the Japanese colonial government gave emphasis on the following:

- (1) raising the image of Japan, East Asia, and Asia as a whole as nations which must be liberated from Western colonialism (English and American) and obtaining capability to gain victory. The Japanese had proved this capability.
- (2) raising the greatness of East (Asian) culture to create the Asian sentiment.
- (3) positioning the Japanese as an inspirer for implanting a sense of self-esteem.
- (4) creating an image that Japan was the big brother who would liberate East Asia and Asia from English, American and Dutch imperialism.
- (5) making a good relationship with Islamic clerks in order to get support from the Indonesian majority.
- (6) removing any Dutch influence.

Actually, many interesting thing can be used as materials for this research. This writing is only a small part from the many fascinating thing. It is expected that this paper will enhance other researcher to make a deeper research related to *Asia Raja* news and other media published during the Japanese colonial period in order to evoke other aspects which loose from our view.

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Jakarta National Library has microfilmed the newspaper since the beginning of its publication until the end:

1. Asia Raja: April 29, 1942 – August 31, 1942, micro-film roll number 41.
2. Asia Raja: September 2, 1942-December 31, 1943, microfilm roll number 36
3. Asia Raja: April 29-August 31, 1942 and June 1-December 30, 1943, microfilm roll number 916.
4. Asia Raja: January 1 – December 30, 1944, micro-film roll number 42.
5. Asia Raja: January 1-September 7, 1945, micro-film roll number 43.