

Political and cultural aspects of Japanese war compensation to Indonesia.

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Introduction

The first decision regarding war compensation was made in 1951 at the San Francisco Peace Conference. It was stipulated in Article 14 of the peace treaty that the compensation would be paid in the form of “services of the Japanese people in production, salvaging and other work” (Nishihara:1975:86). With the economic development in Japan, there have been some changes in the originally planned “services”; most of the reparation went to the construction of monuments (“prestige objects”).

After the Second World ended, Japan agreed with the Southeast Asian countries to provide funds for the reparation of the damage which Japan caused during the war. The procedure of the agreement was focused on how much the compensation was to be and how it was to be paid. However, before the decision was made, there were a number of problems to be resolved. Even the question of whether Japan should pay compensation to Indonesia was also controversial. It took 8 years to get to the stage of the concrete planning of the compensation payment.

There are a number of documents, essays and books which discuss the compensation by relating it Soekarno’s politics and to the coup d’etat of 1965. Some of the writings describe the financial situation of the fund in detail (Nishihara:1975), others have described Soekarno more romantically and individually, like novels (Adams 1965 and 1967, Chow 1981, Rachmawati Soekarno 1984, Devi Soekarno 1977), and some journalists have tried to present hidden parts of the Soekarno regime as scandals and gossip (Omori 1967 and other magazines).

This paper will be somewhat multi-dimensional as I will try to describe different aspects of this compensation payment, that is, (1) how this procedure has demonstrated the cooperation among political, industrial, economic and bureaucratic leaders in both Indonesia and Japan, and (2) what this compensation fund meant for Soekarno’s Indonesia in terms of both international and internal politics, culture

and social structure. I will especially consider how the compensation meant for Soekarno's 'revolution', and how it worked for the formation of Soekarno's nationalism and patriotism. Further, from a different point of view, I will discuss how women's bodies have been involved and manipulated in these international political and economic matters, especially by focusing on woman who was sent to Soekarno as one of the gifts given by a Japanese trading company, and who was involved in the reparation fund.

The themes described above are closed connected to each other, so that they should be discussed as interweaving elements which finally subverted Soekarno's regime in *Gestapu*, the coup d'état on September 30, 1965, which brought Soekarno down.

1. The politics of war compensation

Nishihara, in *The Japanese and Soekarno's Indonesia*, objectively describes the procedure of decision-making on the compensation and the economic aspect of it (Nishihara 1975). According to Nishihara, the decision-making negotiations were conducted by two types of people. The first one was wartime members of the Japanese army and navy who were sympathetic to the Indonesian struggle for independence¹. Those members stated that their goal in being lobbyists for the compensation was to improve Indonesia's image of Japan and form a spiritual bond between Indonesia and Japan. The other group was that of Japanese industrialists and entrepreneurs who were aware of the opportunity to tie Japan's capital and technology to Indonesia's natural resources.

There were basically two problems in lobbying for the compensation. The first was that the original Indonesian demand, \$17.5 billion, was far beyond Japan's original plan (Nishihara 1975:35). The second problem was the attitude of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which claimed that Japan did not have to pay compensation for war damages because it had not fought with the Indonesians. The ministry stated in the official "Outline of Reparations Claim" that the damage caused by actual fighting was minimal, that the Japanese occupation had been beneficial, that the Indonesian had confiscated most of the Japanese army's four-year supply of food, clothing, and ammunition, that no more than 160,000 workers (*roomusha*) were sent out of Java (the reported loss of four million *roomusha* being merely an exaggeration), and that those *roomusha* were volunteers, not forced workers (Nishimura 1975:62). On

¹ After the war, they showed their affection for Indonesia by establishing Japan-Indonesia Association in 1947.

the other hand, those members of the navy and army who were sympathetic to Indonesia stressed the fact that the Japanese occupation had obstructed Indonesia's fight for independence by prohibiting such national symbols as flags and songs.

Despite these obstacles, with the beginning of the Cabinet of Djuanda, the process of determining the compensation proceeded and finally concluded in 1957. The factor which was most helpful in speeding this up may have been the Afro-Asian Conference, held in Bandung in 1955. At the conference, the head of Japan's delegation reported that Japan's payment to Indonesia would be between those to the Philippines and Myanamar (then Burma). Myanamar concluded a bilateral peace treaty with Japan and agreed to a compensation of \$200 million, and the Philippines agreed to accept \$550 million. Facing a new era for Southeast Asia which they felt was underway at the Conference, the Indonesian representatives finally realized that there should be a compromise between the two countries.

Finally the informal decision-making procedure was conducted by two figures. One was the head of the Japan-Indonesian Association, Nishijima Shigetada, who had been engaged in underground activities against the Dutch in cooperation with the Japanese consulates in Batavia and Surabaya before the war. The other was Ahmad Subardjo Djyoadisuryo, a Dutch-educated activist who had been active with Muhammad Hatta and Iwa Kusumasumantri².

After further negotiations concerning what proportion of the compensation should be reparation funds and what proportion should be reparation-secured loans, an official decision contracted between Prime Minister Kishi and Soekarno was released in November 1957. The war compensation consisted of \$223.08 million of reparation funds and \$80 million of reparation-secured loans.

2. The effect of the War Compensation

The compensation caused not only material changes in the newly independent nation, but also it gave birth to new aspects of Indonesian nationalism, patriotism, and also, neo-colonialism. From a different point of view, it reflected Soekarno's regime in the late 1950s.

The compensation of \$223.08 million was to be paid over twelve years in installments of \$20 million every year, and \$3.08 million in the last year. It was to be paid in the form of service and capital goods. Although the payment ended in 12 years as scheduled, the content of the payment did not follow the plan for a number

2 Nishijima helped Sukarno, Hatta and Subardjo to form the Proclamation text with Navy Liaison Office's printing machine. From 1945 to 1948 Nishijima was imprisoned by the Allies as a war criminal.

of reasons. For example, the approved payment for the fourth year, \$39.52 million, went far over that year's plan. At the same time, the characteristic of the compensation, the form of service and capital goods, naturally involved serious political aspects. Besides a few successful projects such as Musi River in south Sumatra which was finished in May 1965 and Neyama Water control tunnel in East Java, completed in 1961, "the reparation projects have had more negative aspects than positive if seen only in economic aspects" (Nishihara 90–91). Among seven paper mills completed, the first plant, built in Siantar, North Sumatra, stopped running in 1969 because of inefficient management and labor and lack of parts. A paper mill in South Kalimantan had not been completed as late as 1969 and there was no prospect that the construction would be continued (Nishihara:91).

As many of the large projects using reparation funds seem to have been proposed and negotiated by powerful politicians, there was competition among them to realize their own plans for the funds. The more powerful they were, the more opportunity they had to use the funds. As many of them were from Java, most projects were planned for Java. Nishimura reports competition between the Industrial Section of the Ministry of Veteran Affairs and the Ministry of Shipping, in which the latter proceeded to make a contract to use half of the whole budget so that the remaining six Ministries had to share the other half of it.

In terms of local distribution, there was undoubtedly a bias for Java. Approximately 60% of the cost for both reparation projects and reparation-secured loans was spent for Java and Bali. Even though from 1951 to 1957 Sumatra's Asahan electric power and oil projects were the major candidates for the reparation funds, only 8% of the expenditures for the reparation projects and another 8% of the reparation-secured loan projects were spent in Sumatra (Nishihara:101–102).

Even though the amount funded was helpful to the Indonesia economy itself, as 16% of the Indonesian economy was dependent on it, those projects which were on a large scale did not affect Indonesian society itself in a positive way. More importantly, the use of the reparation funds which was most visible for the Indonesian community as a whole was the building of Soekarno's "Prestige Projects", and this resulted in a generally negative perception of the use of the reparation funds.

3. Soekarno and the "Prestige Projects".

The service industry commitment took the form of "prestige projects" which the charismatic president Soekarno enthusiastically promoted to maintain the nation's worship for him and to convince the people of the power and stability of Indonesia. Even though economists limited the term "prestige projects" to monuments con-

structed, those which I describe below should also be interpreted as “prestige projects”, since monuments, hotels, and office buildings were constructed as new modern symbols designed to imprint the idea of “nationalism” in people’s spirits.

The hotel construction included four large hotels in Jakarta (such as Hotel Indonesia), Pelabuhan Ratu (West Java), Hotel Ambarrukma in Yogyakarta and Hotel Sanur Beach in Bali. One of the four hotels in Jakarta, the 14 story Hotel Indonesia, the tallest and largest hotel built in 1962, was an important source for Indonesia to acquire foreign currency, as customers had to pay in US dollars, that was, approximately 15 dollars. This hotel functioned as the center for Jakarta’s major diplomatic and social activities. On the other hand, because of the inaccessibility of the hotel for citizens caused by the high price and the foreign currency payment requirement, it stood like a palace of neo-colonialism, only for rich foreign businessmen, tourists, and a few Indonesian elite. Champagne, wine, and brandy at the bar Nirvana in the hotel had nothing to do with Indonesian life. I will again discuss the Hotel Indonesia below in the context of Devi Soekarno. The other three hotels build by the Japanese in Jakarta were unsuccessful because of the problems of the transportation system, their lack of entertainment and their inefficiency despite their high price. The modern concrete buildings were only for foreign tourists who arrived from the airport directly, dined there, and stayed at the shore (which was also banned for normal citizens), and were transported back to the airport.

Nishihara states that the department store Sarinah which was build in Jakarta in 1964, a 14-story tall building on Jalan Thamrin, first attracted Indonesians as “the site of the national first escalator rather than as the nation’s first modern department store.”(Nishihara: 95) However, the high price of the merchandise, even though the quality was good enough, and more importantly, the system of fixed prices in the department store was not familiar to Indonesians. Again, like hotels, it became shopping center only for the rich and tourists who did not know the system of bargaining in Indonesia. In 1969 the top floor was remodeled into a casino, and in 1972 the next three upper floors were remodeled as a hotel (Nishihara: 94).

The constructin of Sarinah can be categorized as one of Soekarno’s “prestige projects”. When Soekarno visited Moscow, he was highly inspired by Gum, the palacial-looking and largest shopping center in the Soviet Union. Since that time, the opening of a Gum-like department store was one of Soekarno’s plan to show the nation’s development and modernization. The design of the building was decided through a public competition in which a young architect Ciptra’s plan was chosen. However, at the first stage of the contract between Japan and Indonesia, there were a few problems. From Japan’s side, it was a question of whether Japan should fund the construction of department stores in Indonesia under the name of

war compensation. There was also a large gap between the Indonesian estimate and the Japanese estimate. Japan claimed that it would be impossible to build a department store which is like Gum on the Indonesian estimate of only \$9 million. Japan's constructions estimated as much as \$14 million, insisting that they would never be able to build a department store like gum or like Japan's first class department stores and that under the Indonesian estimate, only something like Indonesian market would be possible. When Soekarno visited Tokyo in 1962, the final compromise was concluded of \$13 million.

Among the office buildings constructed, the 29-story Wisma Nusantara, also on Japan Thamrin, was and still is the tallest building in Indonesia. The first contract for this construction was awarded in 1964 for \$5.8 million but the construction was interrupted by a decline of the rupiah and the coup d'état. It was finally completed by the Mitsui Construction Co. in 1972 after a recontract, but again, because of the considerably high cost of renting office space, it is only used by Japanese companies. On top of the building, there is a large neon sign of Suzuki, which stimulates the antipathy of Indonesian citizens. In the last scene of the film directed by Sjuman Djaya, / Budak /Nafsu/ (1984), a young woman was raped by Japanese and became their concubine during the war, having lost her energy for life, wanders around Jakarta. The scene of neon signs of Japanese enterprises on Jalan Thamrin overlaps with her exhausted body and face. This film, which received Citra³, clearly blamed Japanese entrepreneurship and led the Japan Embassy in Jakarta to send a letter of criticism to the press.

Other projects such as the installation of TV towers and the construction of a huge stadium, Senayan were significant, too. There seems to be a close relationship between TV tower installation, the construction of Senayan Stadium, and the construction of the largest hotel, the Hotel Indonesia in Jakarta. These were constructed at the time when Soekarno was preparing to host the Asian Games, which were held right after Indonesia acquired Irian Jaya, that is, in 1962. Soekarno's plan was to make the people imagine that Indonesia has gone through high development and modernization under his guidance by hosting these games.

The year of 1962 was "the year of victory" as Soekarno called it. In this year, Soekarno's Indonesia succeeded in acquiring Irian Jaya, and in the anniversary ceremony of Republic of Indonesia, his moving speech was broadcast for the first time over the nation. This must have been an occasion on which his extraordinary skill as a speaker was clearly proved through television broadcasting. Not only his energetic voice but also his visual image was projected all over the country. A few

3 Indonesian version of Oscar.

days later, the meeting of Asian countries, the Asian Games, at the magnificent Senayan Stadium, was broadcast throughout Indonesia to emphasize the nation's success. In this year, Asia's athletes and guests traveled to Jakarta and stayed in the most modern hotel, the Hotel Indonesia. Through the construction of those modern buildings and TV sets, Soekarno seems to have tried to strengthen the people's nationalistic feelings. Later, the construction Lapangan Merdeka (The Independence Square) and some other magnificent monuments followed. The idea of Lapangan Merdeka and its design reminds me of both L'enfant's plan in Washington D.C. and Moscow's Red Square, which were also constructed for the demonstration of national prestige.

4. Competitions for the Preparation Funds Projects

There was keen competition among Japanese companies in their bids for the reparation projects. In the context of the Japan reparation fund for Indonesia, it clearly took the form of donations "*komisi*" (commissions). There are some reasons for this phenomenon to be emphasized. First, Japanese companies were especially enthusiastic about participating in this business as the reparation fund business was secure because the payment was going to be made by the Japanese government, not by "Indonesia's unstable government" (Nishimura 102). Second, both Indonesia and Japan have "gift cultures", that is, they make connections among people, companies and nations through gift change. For both Indonesia and Japan, gifts should be given as a token of acquaintance and regulation of gift exchange means the establishment of firm networking.

Nishihara describes keen competition among Japanese companies in their bids for the reparation funds as follows:

The reparation was of interest to Japanese businessmen because they involved large sums of money, and because, as many told me, they could easily persuade Indonesian businessmen to overprice their products and share the large profits with them.

—According to news reports, company officials frequently visited the Reparations Missions office, hoping to establish good rapport and thus perhaps to receive special consideration. They would go directly to Jakarta to lobby with reparation officials there. Company officials would even suggest products and services "beneficial" to Indonesia. In other words, the basic negotiations were carried out before the official requests were filed in the reparation mission office. ————Many Japanese firms tried to establish direct communication routes with Soekarno himself, his Japanese Dewi, or influential figures in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (Nishihara 102).

It also should be added that many of the companies were connected to Chinese international traders who had experienced the Dutch East Indies period and the

Japanese occupation, and who knew both Japan and Indonesia in terms of business and trading. These Chinese merchants such as Chow functioned as mediators between the Indonesian government and Japanese businessmen (Masuda 1981).

Interestingly enough, companies which succeeded in taking part in the reparation business were not the largest companies such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi or Sumitomo Trading Co., but middle-sized companies Kinoshita and Tonichi should be noted. Both of these companies are not large scale companies but succeeded in acquiring huge benefits from their participation in the reparation fund. This shows that large scale companies did not necessarily succeed in acquiring business contracts, but through some other devices, small or middle-sized companies succeeded in doing so. To interpret this procedure, it is necessary to consider personal rapport among Japanese politicians, Japanese businessmen and Indonesian politicians. Nishihara, Chow, and Omori point out that the president of each company, i.e., Kinoshita Shigeru of Kinoshita Co. and Kubo Masao of Tonichi, established similar powerful connections with Soekarno and other high-ranking officials in Jakarta, and that both got involved in the reparation through Indonesia's internal political troubles (Nishihara 1975, Masuda 1981, Omura 1967). In the next sections, I will discuss the personal relations among them.

5. Kinoshita Trading Company

The negotiations for the contract for the reparation fund were conducted between Japanese and Indonesian high-ranking politicians, above all, Soekarno. Among the businessmen, those who were supported by powerful politicians had first priority for contracting with Indonesia. Kinoshita Shigeru (1899–1967) of Kinoshita Trading Company, established in 1932, was their representative. He was a “shred businessman” (Nishimura 1975:107). The personal relationship between Kinoshita and the then Prime Minister Kishi should not be ignored. Kinoshita was a successful wholesale business dealer of iron ore and steel products in Manchuria before the war and in the Philippines after the war. Gradually he extended his business even to machinery, lumber, textiles and chemicals. Since the Manchuria era, Kinoshita got closer to the largest iron and steel companies, Fuji Iron and Steel and Yawata Steel Company. At the same time, he met the then vice-minister of Commerce and Industry Kishi Nobusuke, who through his government position had close contacts with the iron and steel industries.

From 1943 to 1944 Kishi was the state minister in General Tojo's Cabinet and after the war he was arrested as a class A war criminal suspect. When Kishi was released from Sugamo Prison, Kinoshita, knowing that Kishi was not allowed to

hold a public office again until 1952, asked him to become the president of the company. Later, in 1952, the so-called “monster of Japan’s politics”, Kishi, became Prime Minister and as stated above, made a contact with Soekarno for the reparation fund. At the same time, a Chinese merchant, Chow, was working as a spokesman for Soekarno and acted as his go-between with Kinoshita and Kishi (Masuda 1981, Nishihara 1975, Omura 1967).

In this way, the Kinoshita Trading Company acquired the first right to sell merchandise to Indonesia, including ships, the most expensive products. However, according to Nishihara, after acquiring enormous benefit, Kinoshita failed in the competition with large companies such as Mitsui because of “Kinoshita’s extravagance in entertaining potential and actual customers and those whose influence might help him (Nishimura 1975:111). For example, when Soekarno and his party came to Japan in 1958, Kinoshita spent more than \$100,000 for their stay. More importantly, hearing Soekarno’s interest in women, Kinoshita introduced a fashion model called Kanase Sakiko, to Soekarno in Kyoto in 1958. At the end of 1958, Kanase was sent to Jakarta as Soekarno’s mistress, officially as a “tutor” for one of Kinoshita’s employee’s daughters in Jakarta. She was called Mrs.Basuki since it was easier for her to stay as the wife of an Indonesian. It is said that in 1959 Ms.Kanase became an official wife of Soekarno (Nishimura 1975).

6. Tonichi Trading Company and Kubo

Kubo Masao’s Tonichi was a new (established in 1954) and small company which handled both trade and construction. Despite its size, it had prominent figures on its board of directors such as Kono Ichiroh, one of the leaders of the Liberal Democratic Party, and the rightist leader Kodama Yoshio.

At the first stage, the liaison between Kubo and Soekarno was rather incidental. When Soekarno was visited Japan in the beginning of 1958, there was a rumor that anti-Soekarnoists had sent assassins to Tokyo. However, the Tokyo Metropolitan Police, who were responsible for the city security, refused to assume responsibility for Soekarno on the excuse that it was not an official visit, he was reckless in his personal affairs, and he might not follow the schedule. Accordingly, the rightist leader Kodama Yoshio and his affiliated underworld organization known as the Ginza Police agreed to take responsibility. Kubo got assigned to cooperate in this plan as he spoke English and Kodama was one of the board of directors of his company. When Soekarno’s group was in Tokyo, a six-man group of Sumatran rebels secretly entered Tokyo and stayed at a hotel near the Imperial Hotel where

Soekarno's party was staying. Kodama's rightist group and Kubo succeeded in protecting Soekarno from the Sumatran Rebellion by staying close to Soekarno. From that time, Kubo gained personal access to Soekarno (Nishihara 1975:111–113).

The most important step in Kubo's success was introducing a nineteen year old night club hostess, Nemoto Naoko, to Soekarno when Soekarno revisited Tokyo in the following year. This action was clearly a counter action against Kubo's rival Kinoshita Trading Company, who had previously sent a fashion model Kanase to Soekarno. Nishimura explains the first meeting between Soekarno and Nemoto Naoko as follows:

(After the first meeting) according to her own notes later made public, Miss Nemoto met with the president two more times at the Imperial Hotel before his departure.

From Jakarta, Soekarno sent "affectionate" letter to Miss Nemoto through the Indonesian embassy in Tokyo. They exchanged letters a few times before Soekarno, in a letter dated August 18, invited Miss Nemoto to Indonesia for a two-week trip. Soekarno also notified Kubo Masao of this. On September 14 Miss Nemoto left for Indonesia, disguised as an employee of Tonichi and accompanied by Kubo himself. Only after they had arrived in Jakarta on September 15 did she realize, as she wrote in her letter, that Kubo was using her to enhance his business interests in Indonesia. Kubo denied in 1966 that he had used her to gain Soekarno's favor, although he admitted that his company had provided housing for her in Jakarta where Soekarno had visited her (Nishimura 1975:114).

With the visit of Miss Nemoto to Soekarno, his third wife Kanase started grieving and sixteen days after that, she committed suicide (Chow, Nishimura). According to Chow, Kubo sent not only Kanase but also two other women. Kubo, realizing that Soekarno was very weak with women, especially Japanese women, started planning a strategy to use women as a tool to get access to Soekarno (Masuda 1981).

Even though the death of Kanase made Soekarno cry, it seems that it gave Kubo an excellent opportunity to start business with Indonesia. After Nemoto visited Jakarta for the first time, Kubo promised her that he would build a house in Tokyo for her poor family, which consists of only her disable mother and her younger brother Yasuo. However, two years after that, he mother died and the following day Yasuo committed suicide. With the loss of her own family, she decided to become an Indonesian by taking Indonesian nationality and she married Soekarno in 1961 as Dewi Ratna Sari Soekarno. Through this procedure, Kubo acquired huge benefits, even though he denied that he planned to use her for his

business (Masuda 1981).

II. War compensation and women

The significance of Dewi Soekarno can be considered on many dimensions, i.e. in terms of economy, politics, and culture. Her entrance into the Indonesian world caused a scandal in both Indonesia and Japan, although the marriage was not publicized throughout Indonesia before the coup d'état. It was publicized later as a tool of Soekarno-bashing. It seems that only close politicians knew about their marriage at the beginning. Even Rachmawati Soekarno's daughter from his first wife Fatmawati, recalls that Dewi was introduced to her as Mrs. Kubo (Fatmawati 1984). However, it should be noted that the relation between Dewi and Kubo later changed. After Dewi Soekarno realized that she had been sent to Soekarno as Kubo's tool, marrying Soekarno and gaining power as the first lady, she fired Kubo and threw him out of Indonesia. She became closer to Kubo's rival Kinoshita Trading Company. "Through Kinoshita Trading Company, as she wrote, she also cultivated a friendship with Japanese Ambassador Oda Takio and gradually acquired prominence in Japan's and Indonesia's political and business circles (Nishimura: 1975:115)"

1. Economic and political aspects of Dewi

Undoubtedly Dewi Soekarno became the central figure in business in Jakarta. Even though she denies that like other Indonesian politicians, she received a commission from Japanese companies. No business could be started without her permission in Indonesia. It is said that every businessman had to go to Wisma Yasoo (the House of Yasuo), which was built for Dewi Soekarno and named after her dead brother. This action was called *Dewi Moode* 'pilgrimage to Dewi'. The office building Wisma Nusantara was also contracted to Kinoshita through Dewi's intervention. Furthermore, Dewi and Soekarno's second wife Hartini fought over two rival Japanese automobile companies who sought Soekarno's approval of their exporting vehicles to Indonesia (Nishimura 1975). When Dewi found that Soekarno still had a contract with Kubo to buy jeeps from Tonichi, and did not listen to her request to cancel it, she attempted suicide in Tokyo 1964 (Chow).

Nishimura describes how Dewi started being concerned with the economic and political world as follows:

....as early as June 1961 she was introduced to the Liberal Democratic Party's future

vice-president Kawashima Shojiroh by a wartime propaganda officer, Shimizu Hitoshi. On a 1962 trip to Japan, Dewi met Takemi Taroh, the president of the Japan Medical Association and the president of the Kajima Construction Company, with whom she discussed plans to build a hospital in Jakarta. In September 1963 she was introduced by President Soekarno himself to Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato and his wife at a private gathering during their official visit to Indonesia (Nishimura 1975:115).

Thus, it can be said that even though the reparation fund contract was started between Kishi and Soekarno, Dewi was the product of the time of the post-Prime Minister Kishi, that is, the Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato. As Dewi was close to Ikeda, her participation in the Indonesian world gave Indonesia access to the Western world. It seems that Japanese politicians and businessmen enthusiastically attempt to orient Soekarno toward the West and away from USSR. Dewi was used for this purpose. Dewi herself too thought that she was a Japanese woman from West side as an counter part of Soekarno's second wife Hartini who was pro-Soviet, the then head of Gerwani, Women's Communist Organization⁴. In this sense, Soekarno's position in the Japan-Indonesia relationship was ambiguous and full of contradictions. As stated above, when Soekarno visited Japan in 1958, he was ironically protected by the rightist group led by Kodama.⁵ Soekarno's contract on the reparation was made with Kishi who had been imprisoned as rank-A war criminal. Later, Kishi's cabinet was criticized by the Japan socialist Party in the Diet for having taken bribes from Japanese businessmen for the reparation project. However, Soekarno kept accumulating commissions from Japanese businessmen, even officially claiming that they were indispensable "Revolution Fund"(Masuda 1981).

2. Compensation projects, neo-colonialism, and women

Like the Sarinah Department Store and the Hotel Indonesia, Dewi herself brought about neo-colonialism. She became a center of high society often appearing at the bar Nirvana at the Hotel Indonesia where she met businessmen. She often invited over European and American ambassadors to her Wisma Yasoo which was filled with Japanese ceramics and lacquerware, and surrounded by a Japanese garden (Adams 1967).

Even though she was sent from the Capitalist side as opposed to the Socialist

4 Even though many writers talk about this fact, many Indonesians deny it.

5 Later Kodama became the central figure of Lockheed Scandal which led the arrest of the then Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei.

and Communist side, it is important to note that she was not a Western woman. The “revolutionalist” Soekarno repeatedly pointed out how he had struggled against the Dutch for Independence, how hard it had been to be imprisoned in Flores and Benkulu by the Dutch, and also how he disliked Western women, especially American women, who make their husband do the dishes (Adams 1967).

On the other hand, Soekarno’s attitude toward Japan was complex. First of all, because of the timing, Japan behaved as though they were Indonesia’s /saudara tua/ “older brother”, in helping the people to get independent from the Dutch. Soekarno’s proclamation of independence was planned and helped by the Japanese. On the other hand, he knew how violent and vulgar the Japanese military was. Once he had his face hit by one of them, and he had heard that *roomusha* who Soekarno had recruited and sent to Sumatra never came back to their homes in Java again, and that many Indonesian women got raped by the Japanese military (Adams 1967).

When Soekarno was invited to Japan to see Tojo and the emperor for the first time, he was impressed with their polite manner and etiquette, which was like Japanese /*priyayi*/, and with Japanese women’s submissive attitude which he saw among /*geishas*/. Soekarno saw Japanese men as swords and Japanese women as chrysanthema. The violent image of men was contrasted with the soft submissive image of women⁶. For Soekarno’s Indonesia which was suffering from economic disaster, the aggressive attitude of Japanese businessmen was needed, but at the same time, he himself needed an obedient and faithful Japanese women. Dewi Soekarno appeared to fit to this category. This opposition, being hit and sleeping with Japanese women, is clearly observed in Soekarno’s life.

As we can observe from his enthusiasm at the Asian Games or the Asia–Africa Conference, Soekarno seems to have tried to become a leader of Asia. For this reason, too, acquiring an Asian woman from another country was more significant, especially a woman from the ex–/Saudara Tua/.

However, for Indonesian society itself, especially when it was more publicized by anti–Soekarnoists, it caused anger among people and became one of the main themes for students’ protests. After the coup d’etat, students paraded the streets in Jakarta with placards which said “Don’t import Japanese women”. Dewi was regarded as a symbol of Soekarno’s flirting attitude toward Japan, and became a proof of Soekarno’s womanizing (Omori: 1967).

For Japanese society, Dewi became the center of gossip and scandal. For example, in weekly or monthly magazines from 1963 through 1973, there were at

6 Indonesian films which describe the war also show this paradox. For example, in both films *Budak Nafsu* and *Kadarwati*, the female protagonists are beaten and raped by Japanese soldiers. After that, Japanese women come to them, feel sorry and cry for them.

least 80 special issues on Dewi Soekarno. The titles are, “A beautiful Japanese woman who became Mrs. President Soekarno”, “The secrets of Dewi”, “The night when President Soekarno met Nemoto Naoko”, etc. Some of them are essays by Dewi herself such as “My husband, my love, and my life”. Many of the magazines are women’s magazines and made women readers imagine that Indonesian men have as many wives as possible, living in harems. Also, as it was the period of fast development for Japan, many women longed for Dewi’s life as the first lady.

Japanese men, especially businessmen who knew Dewi, or at least had business relations with Indonesia, looked at her as a prostitute, a woman who had sold her body for business. They talked about Dewi as a product of plastic surgery, an underhanded woman, a bitch and so on, and even claimed that Dewi’s only child Karinah born in 1967 in Tokyo, was not Soekarno’s daughter but Pakistan’s Ali Bhutto’s. This kind of rumor which is related with her body and sexuality has been especially emphasized in men’s magazines and businessmen’s informal conversations.

There are two reasons for these scandals. First of all, she is a Japanese woman who slept with “primitive” Southeast Asian brown skinned man. Those Japanese women who went to Southeast Asia first were *Karayukisans*, who worked hard as prostitutes for the national development. Dewi’s image as a night club girl who was sent to Indonesia as a gift for the reparation project overlapped with those *Karayukisans*. If she had become a concubine for European or American politicians, things would have been different.

Secondly, her attitude of intervening in Soekarno’s business and politics disgusted many men. She was beyond the category of Japanese women. Her appearance, which was non-Japanese but more Caucasian-like, her clothes, which were not Japanese but always European or Indonesian, and her past as a night club hostess, not /geisha/, made Japanese feel uncomfortable. Unlike other Japanese conventional women who do not get involved with their husbands’ business but take care of them silently, she was aggressively concerned with the Japanese–Indonesian liaison as well as with Soekarno’s affairs. Adams describes her accurately.

Dewi is a smasher. She affects false hairpieces and false eyelashes. She wears couturier clothes. She greeted me in a black chiffon from Fontana and stiletto French heels covered in a matching fluted chiffon. She looks like a model and thinks like an IBM machine. She is bright, outspoken, and chillingly frank. She knows exactly what’s going on (Adams 1967:301).

It was Dewi who threw Kubo out of Indonesia, even though it was Kubo who sent Dewi to Soekarno, and it was Dewi, who was so furious about Soekarno’s autography narrated to Cindy Adams, which did not mention anything about her

(Adams 1967), and it was also Dewi who got angry with Soekarno for having accepted another woman from Kubo, then escaped from Jakarta and made Prime Minister Sabur pick her up. Japanese men called her an obtrusive woman and disliked her.

III. Conclusion

In sections I and II, I described the contract for the compensation fund was processed and what the projects meant for both Indonesia and Japan. In Section III, I described how the Japanese companies competed to acquire contracts for the projects by involving women. In this specific context, even though the project itself was a project involving nations, we cannot understand what happened unless we interpret and analyze personal discourse both in Indonesia and Japan.

An international perspective is also needed to interpret the war compensation. When Japan and Indonesia contracted for the reparation funds, it was the time when Soekarno declared *Marhaenism*, Communism à la Indonesia.

After the AA Conference in Bandung in 1955, the non-block countries (Nehru's India, Bhutto's Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Soekarno's Indonesia) became the center of interest in international relations. Several years later, Cuba declared itself to be a Socialist Nation belonging to the Soviet Block. Considering that Indonesia might follow Cuba, both the USSR and the United States started watching Indonesia carefully. The Reparation Projects were by no means incidental products, but planned projects for international politics. It was one of the ways for America and its ally Japan to orient Soekarno towards the Western Block and away from Soviet Blocks. Dewi Soekarno was used as lubricating oil in this strategy. That is the reason for the paradox we saw when the communists-oriented Soekarno was protected and supported by Japanese rightists, not by Japanese liberal politicians.

For Soekarno's Indonesia, it was the time when the economic situation was disastrous. The foreign debt had accumulated and inflation had gotten worst than ever. Soekarno seems to have assumed his position not as a politician who achieves but as the center of the nation who excites people, demonstrating the prestige of the nation and avoiding dealing with actual problems. Later, through conflicts with Malaysia, he seems to have lost face in the Western Block. Then, the fall of his personal heroes, that is, the assassinations of Kennedy and Ghana's Nkrumah shocked Soekarno (Masuda 1981, Omori 1967).

As Legge 1977 mentioned, Soekarno can be interpreted as having tried to

express the Javanese idea of state. Soekarno's attitude in the late 1950s and the early 1960s was that of a Hindu–Javanese king whose role is to exist rather than act, a manifestation of the universe rather than a politician who works for certain goals (Anderson 1970, Mudjanto 1986).

I would like to suggest that essentially all of Soekarno's public and private policy decisions were designed to portray him as having the attitudes of a traditional Hindu–Javanese king, including his use of the Japanese war reparation funds and also his dealings with women. The large buildings, department stores, hotels and other magnificent monuments, TV installations as well as a number of slogans were designed to represent Soekarno as the center of the nation, and even of Asia.

In his autobiography, Soekarno emphasized that he had meditated under banyan trees a number of times in order to acquire *wahyu*, the manifestation of the spiritual power, from God (Adams 1965). This story reflects one of the *wayang* stories, *Arjuna Wiwaha* ('Arjuna marries'), in which after a period of extreme asceticism the hero Arjuna succeeds in acquiring *wahyu*, which can be acquired by the king who sits at the center of the universe (Anderson, 1972, Mudjanto 1986). During this asceticism, many *widadaris*/ 'nymphs' try to seduce him one after another in vain. Arjuna finally meets God, Betara Guru, who gives him a magical weapon. With this weapon, Arjuna later defeats an ogre who has been annoying the deities of heaven. As a reward for the victory, Betara Guru gives him 800 *widadaris*.

The worse the economic and political situation became, the more strongly Soekarno tried to imagine a state based on the Javanese myths. Also, as the manifestation of Ratu Adil, the King of Justice as predicted by the diviner Jayabaya, he seems to have tried to construct objects which justified his position as the head of the state.

In this context, the question of whether the reparation projects would work effectively for Indonesia itself was not of interest for him. The existence of the objects was more significant than the function of the objects.

I did not treat Dewi Soekarno as a manipulated and exploited victim; instead, I tried to interpret politics and racism using her as an example. Soekarno's womanizing has been always exaggerated by the Western and Japanese side. Western and Japanese outsiders, even anthropological researchers such as Anderson, thought that he was simply obsessed with sex, but I would argue that actually, for Soekarno, women were gifts for those who have *wahyu*, rather than purely sexual objects. Again, in this context, young women should be interpreted as a manifestation of his *sakti*. Therefore, he thought of women as decorations, like flowers and art work, rather than as sexual objects. The more women he had the more felt he himself to be the center of the state. It was not a concrete matter, so it is not appropriate that Anderson emphasized the sexual power of Soekarno, and accordingly it should be noted that

Japanese businessmen used women as a means of gaining access to Soekarno because they misunderstood Soekarno's concept of women. As long as we maintain cultural approaches to Indonesia, like other conventional researchers, we should interpret Soekarno's slogans, prestige projects and women in this context.

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