

Japan's 1941–1942 Covert Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia: Evaluating the Role of Iwaichi Fujiwara and *F Kikan* in Retrospect

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Abstract

This paper delves into the life of Iwaichi Fujiwara (藤原 岩市), an officer in the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II, who later became a Lieutenant General in the post-war Japan Ground Self-Defense Force. Tasked with planning operations in South Asia and Southeast Asia, Fujiwara traveled to Bangkok in 1941 on an intelligence mission, and joined the Japanese Southern Expeditionary Army Group. He was the founding commander of the almost legendary *Fujiwara Kikan* (*F Kikan*), a Japanese special operations unit tasked with conducting covert operations supporting Japan's military operations in Malaya and Singapore. This paper evaluates Japan's 1941–1942 covert operations in Southeast Asia, and seeks to analyze the role of *F Kikan*'s intelligence mission network and its instrumental connection with the Indian independence movement spread across Southeast Asia during the critical pre-World War II years. The *F Kikan*, notably, developed and assisted the then ongoing independence movements in British India, Malaya, and Netherlands East Indies. Besides, the paper highlights the time when Fujiwara was into the thick of *F Kikan*'s intelligence operative tasks in Thailand in 1941, and undertook a rather interesting project on the sidelines named *Harimao* involving a Japanese in Malaya.

Major Iwaichi Fujiwara (藤原 岩市) was an officer in the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II, who later became a Lieutenant General in the post-war Japan Ground Self Defense Force. Fujiwara was the founding commander of the almost legendary *Fujiwara Kikan* (*F Kikan*), a Japanese special operations unit tasked with conducting covert operations in support of Japan's military operations in Malaya and Singapore, by means of developing and assisting independence movements in British India, Malaya, and Netherlands East Indies.¹ In September 1941, Fujiwara established the *F Kikan* in Japan. This step was also instrumental in the establishment of the Indian National Army (INA).

India gained freedom from the British rule following a long, protracted independence struggle, which had many phases, and defining moments. A significant one amongst them was the role of the Indian National Army under *Netaji* Subhash Chandra Bose with crucial assistance and aid from Imperial Japan. Bose's view of India's struggle for independence differed radically from *Mahatma* Gandhi's. For Bose, World War II presented a golden opportunity to reach out to the adversaries of Britain, namely Germany and Japan, and seek their assistance to free India from under the oppressive British rule.² The successful attempts of Fujiwara, Captain Hachirō Suzuki,

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¹ For detailed further reading, and additional references on the subject see, Monika Chansoria, "Japan, *Hikari Kikan*, and Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army: The Defining, Yet Unfinished 1940s Connect," *Policy Brief*, The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), Tokyo, February 5, 2021, available at https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/policybrief/pdf/PolicyBrief_Chansoria_210205.pdf

² Ibid.

and the *F Kikan* to enlist thousands of dissident Indians to fight against colonialism alongside the Japanese, and rallying up anti-British forces in Burma succeeded in laying the foundations of the INA in Singapore.³

It has often been argued that covert operations are the central pivot of intelligence services. This technique was widely practiced during World War II, wherein many organizations were formed by all belligerents. For instance, in the early phases of Japan's offensive in Southeast Asia, the strategic utility of Imperial Japanese Army's covert operations through its intelligence unit, *Fujiwara Kikan*, was striking. With the objective of conducting covert operations and fueling *Fifth Column* activities to aid Japan's military operations in Malaya and Singapore between late 1941 and beginning 1942, the *F Kikan* yielded mixed results in all.⁴ Besides, it reputedly gained the support of the local Malay royalty and the majority population of Malays for the Japanese cause, in addition to running a group of bandits who conducted sabotage behind British lines.⁵

Fujiwara and *F Kikan*'s Bangkok Chapter: A Backgrounder

Fujiwara's journey can be traced back to the milestone year 1939, when he was transferred to the military intelligence unit within the Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ). Tasked with planning operations in South Asia and Southeast Asia, he later traveled to Bangkok in 1941 on an intelligence mission, and joined the Japanese Southern Expeditionary Army Group as its Chief of Staff. After its founding, the *F Kikan* was shifted to Bangkok and put under the overall command of the Southern Expeditionary Forces commanded by General Hisaichi Terauchi, and later under the operational control of the 25th Army under the command of Lieutenant General Tomoyuki Yamashita.⁶

In his memorandum as Chief of the *F Kikan* (*F Kikanchō no Shuki*) derived from his 1966 book entitled *F Kikan* [Jieitai, Tokyo 1959]⁷ Fujiwara recalled the day, 01 October 1941, as a hot, muggy day in Thailand when as a young Japanese major, he stepped out from a Douglas Dakota, only to be momentarily blinded by the rays of the scorching Bangkok sun. The officer was tense, given the nature of his mission as he drove to a Thai hotel. While he traveled to Bangkok under a civilian alias, Hirokazu Yamashita, he was in fact, Iwaichi Fujiwara, a young major in the 8th Section of the Second Bureau of the IGHQ.

Although Fujiwara was not a stranger to Bangkok, for he had been sent down on a brief secret mission⁸ about eight months ago in late March 1940, he remained awed by the importance of his mission, and moreover, by his own lack of experience in the field of international intelligence. The Imperial Japanese Army was known to assign key missions to middle-ranking officers, and provide them with plenty of leeway to use their own initiatives in executing tasks. In this aspect, the Japanese Army differed from the British or American armies, and even the army of the Third Reich.⁹ Earlier, when Fujiwara was posted in the propaganda broadcasting affairs in the 8th

³ For details see, Louis Allen, *War, Conflict and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific, 1941–1952, The Writings of Louis Allen Series*, vol. 4, (Global Oriental Ltd., 2011), p. xx.

⁴ As cited in, Adam Leong Kok Wey, "Japanese Intelligence and Covert Operations: A Strategic Evaluation of *Fujiwara Kikan* in the invasion of Malaya and Singapore, 1941–1942," *Journal of Intelligence History*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2018, pp. 52–64.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Iwaichi Fujiwara, *F. Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia during World War II*, Translated by Akashi Yoji, (Hong Kong: Heinemann, 1983).

⁷ For further details see, Joyce C. Lebra, "Japanese Policy and the Indian National Army," *Asian Studies*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1969, pp. 31–49.

⁸ Chansoria, "Japan, *Hikari Kikan* ...," *Policy Brief*, n. 1.

⁹ Lebra, *Asian Studies*, n. 7.

Section at the IGHQ in December 1940, he was responsible for providing safe passage to three Indian escapees from a British prison in Hong Kong on a Japanese ship bound for Bangkok. Upon reaching there, the exiles contacted the Japanese military attaché, and leaders of the Indian independence movement based and operating from Southeast Asia. The mission had been accomplished so discreetly that even the names of the three Indians were not recorded at the Headquarters.¹⁰

Subsequently, Chief of General Staff, General Hajime Sugiyama called in 33-year-old Fujiwara, and the five commissioned officers assigned to him on 18 September, 1941. Fujiwara was handed a typed directive:¹¹

You will assist Colonel Tamura in aiding movements in the Malayan sector, particularly in maintaining liaison with the anti-British Indian Independence League (IIL), the Malays, and the Chinese... Apart from your official duties, if an Anglo-Japanese war should break out, you will prepare to facilitate military strategy ... look at the total Indian situation ... and study the skillful organization and leadership of the British Indian army, which is designed to restrain any anti-British movements among the Indians.

Fujiwara's 1941 Bangkok assignment was a direct result of the increasing probability of an imminent war that was about to break in the Pacific. Bangkok, a key listening post for all of Asia, was already infested with British, American, Chinese, and German intelligence agents. Quite naturally, Japan stepped up its intelligence operations in Southeast Asia, which was a major source of tin, rubber, and oil supplies for Japan.¹² In the event of war in the Pacific, the Indian, Burmese, and Malayan [now western Malaysia] independence movements would assume greater importance for Japan. In that, the latter could recognize the aspirations for independence in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and substantially weaken Britain, the common adversary.

Fujiwara, though involved in an ideological warfare in Bangkok, was unable to speak Malay, or *Hindi*, with only a bit of English that he remembered from high school. Besides, he was rather disappointed on going through the library of General Staff Headquarters to find only an Indian travelogue by a Japanese, and a few other scattered references to India.¹³ It was quite apparent that given its push into Manchuria and China, the headquarters had not paid adequate attention to India, and had bypassed Southeast Asia. This became a primary driver for Fujiwara's sense of mission towards India and the Indian independence movement.¹⁴ He was quite certain from the very outset that political warfare had to be waged without pushing one's own interests too hard. He advocated that Japan must display genuine sympathy for the liberation movements in these regions, especially in British India. And thus, was born the *Fujiwara Kikan*. Fujiwara, undoubtedly, was instrumental in bringing India to the attention of the IGHQ in Tokyo and helping organize the INA. Research at archives reveals that it was Fujiwara who in 1941 established the initial credibility of Japanese aid for the Indian independence struggle, as well as established its critical liaison with the ongoing Indian independence movement activities in Southeast Asia at that time.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For detailed further reading and references on Rash Behari Bose of Nakamura, see, Monika Chansoria, "Rash Behari Bose of Nakamura: From Being Exiled in Japan to Founding the Indian National Army and Promoting a Pan-Asianist Discourse," *Policy Brief*, The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), Tokyo, August 16, 2021, available at https://www.jiia-jic.jp/en/policybrief/pdf/PolicyBrief_Chansoria_210816.pdf

¹³ For details see, Joyce Chapman Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, (Singapore: Asia Pacific Press Pte. Ltd., 1971).

¹⁴ Chansoria, "Rash Behari Bose of Nakamura ...," *Policy Brief*, n. 12.

F Kikan's Intelligence Mission Network: Connect with Indian Independence League's Pritam Singh

When Iwaichi Fujiwara took over the assignment to manage key intelligence operations in Bangkok in 1941, spreading from Thailand, to Malaya, and Burma, he was fully sensitive to the Thai government's response to competing foreign intelligence activities on their soil. While the Thai government maintained friendly ties with Britain, it simultaneously remained cordial in its relations with Imperial Japan. For Fujiwara, maintaining this fine political balance was essential, and he thus, he set out to maintain liaison with the Chinese, Malays, and most significantly, the Indian independence movement spread across Southeast Asia.

Given that Thailand was the central base for all these activities, Fujiwara's operations encompassed several projects including the Indian independence project, the Sumatra project, the Malaya Youth League project, and the overseas Chinese merchant's project. He was aware of the mammoth responsibility placed on his shoulders. For, the Japanese military strategy would not succeed in Malaya and Thailand unless Fujiwara delivered successfully. When he began interacting with his senior officer in Bangkok, Colonel Tamura, the latter directed Fujiwara to work closely on three specific projects: 1) the Indian independence movement; 2) the overseas Chinese merchants; 3) and the Malay organizations and royalty (*sultans*). Incidentally, there were many Japanese working in Bangkok, be it training the Thai army; doing business via the Mitsui Trading Company; or on political assignments such as arbitrating the Thai Indochinese boundary dispute. All along, Fujiwara remained cognizant that the Japanese should not appear as subjugators¹⁵ and that all Asian people should work together with mutual respect and harmony. Japan sought to encourage independence movements, without a hint of constraint.

Fujiwara's staff included a small unit of 12 members, along with a *Hindi*-speaking interpreter for the India project. Fujiwara named this group, the *F Kikan*, or *Fujiwara Kikan*¹⁶ (the word *Kikan* meaning "agency"). While his immediate objective was to familiarize and coordinate cooperation with all the above-mentioned groups, the final objective, of course, was facilitating Japan's military offensive in Singapore. To fulfill their mission of gathering intelligence, the *F Kikan's* staff undertook a variety of disguises including that of businessmen, watchmakers, druggists, hotel boys, mining engineers in mountain areas, and rubber merchants and brokers on plantations. The *F Kikan* members also became scouts for Japanese units, engaged in espionage, disrupting communications, collecting provisions and military material. When the Malays, Thais, Chinese, and Indians worked for the *F Kikan*, the effectiveness of the operations got amplified substantially, and the network spread from Bangkok through Thailand and Malaya, and further down south towards Singapore.

Later, while recording *F Kikanchō no Shuki*, the Memorandum of the Chief of the *F Agency*, [Jieitai, Tokyo 1959] Fujiwara recalled his memorable first meeting with an Indian leader of the Indian independence movement.¹⁷ He met a young turbaned Indian Sikh named, Pritam Singh, who greeted Colonel Tamura and Major Fujiwara with the traditional Indian salutation of hands clasped before him. Fujiwara was gripped by the Sikh's idealism, sincerity, and enthusiasm for India's liberation from British rule. Fujiwara conveyed to Singh, "I have come to help you realize your lofty ideal ... I have confidence that Indian independence will be achieved through devotion and friendship."

Though Pritam Singh shared with Fujiwara, India's antagonism towards the Japanese actions

¹⁵ For details see, the *Untitled Review Work* by Kernial Singh Sandhu of *Jungle Alliance: Japan and the Indian National Army* by Joyce C. Lebra, published in the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, March 1973, pp. 141–143.

¹⁶ Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan...*, n. 13.

¹⁷ As cited in Lebra, *Asian Studies*, n. 7.

in China, he simultaneously conveyed the hopes of millions of Indians for their independence, while Britain was fighting in Europe. It appeared to be the perfect time for Fujiwara to begin his mission and for Indo-Japanese cooperation in Southeast Asia. This was also the time when Fujiwara decided to move out of the Thai hotel into a modest house near the Bangkok railway station. He usually met Pritam Singh in an unusual venue. It was the house of an Indian cloth merchant situated above a Japanese pickle factory, and regularly transmitted detailed reports of his meetings with Singh and the others through Colonel Tamura to the IGHQ in Tokyo.

Pritam Singh explained to Fujiwara about the two Indian organizations that were primarily active in Bangkok: 1) the Indian Independence League comprising mostly of Sikhs; and 2) an Indo-Thai cultural organization. Pritam Singh was associated with the former, with its men scattered through southern Thailand, and north-east Malayan coastal cities. Singh further apprised Fujiwara of the strong anti-British sentiment nurtured by Indian soldiers who were serving in the British-Indian Army.

Pritam Singh struck a deal with Fujiwara wherein the former, in the event of a Japanese offensive into Malaya, will attempt to sow discord within the Indian Army ranks by raising Indian nationalist and anti-British sentiments. The IIL would also appeal to the Indian population in Malaya to support the Japanese. The defected Indian soldiers would be sent back to the front lines to spread disaffection within the ranks of British Indian soldiers and undermine their morale, thus enticing them to defect to the Japanese side.¹⁸ Pritam Singh was promised that the defected Indian soldiers would later be organized into an independent free Indian army, used to fight for the cause of India's independence with the support of Japanese forces after the successful capture of Malaya, Singapore and Burma.¹⁹ This was an important facet of *F Kikan's* propaganda campaign as two-thirds of the British forces based in Malaya and Singapore, i.e., about 58,000 out of 86,895 soldiers were from the British-Indian Army.²⁰

Furthermore, Pritam Singh suggested that anti-British broadcasts should be beamed from Tokyo across India, given that the listening audience would be limitless. Singh was already in contact via telegraph with the Indians in Shanghai and Tokyo. The Japanese technical assistance in this regard was to be instrumental in unifying the entire movement. Incidentally, Fujiwara recalled noticing a young Sikh officer after delivering a speech²¹ to the Indian prisoners of war, which was being translated into *Hindi* by Pritam Singh:

Among four company commanders, one small Sikh captain whom I took to be a senior officer drew my attention. This was because his attitude was dignified and he was brisk and smart (*kibikibi*). His gaze revealed a sharp intelligence, unalloyed enthusiasm, and a strong will. You could see at a glance he was a first-rate young officer... After he received the battalion commander's orders, with an energetic and simple gesture he gave a grave and dignified salute, and shot me a glance full of friendliness... The battalion commander introduced the captain to Pritam Singh and myself. This was Mohan Singh who was to become the historic founder of the Indian National Army.

As per Louis Allen's account, when it came to addressing the higher authority, Fujiwara acted throughout as a negotiator for the Imperial General Headquarters. His personal involvement with the first INA and its commanding general, Mohan Singh, was intense. However, Mohan Singh, subsequently, came into conflict with the Japanese authorities, was arrested, and removed from

¹⁸ Wey, *Journal of Intelligence History*, n. 4.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ For more details see, Harchand Singh Bedi, "Forgotten Deeds of Sikh Heroism: The Battle of Malaya," May 19, 2010, available at <https://www.sikhnet.com/news/forgotten-deeds-sikh-heroism-battle-malaya>

²¹ Fujiwara, *F Kikan*, pp. 118–119, cited in Allen, n. 3.

his command.²²

In the backdrop of all the above developments, the British Government, by the end of 1941, wanted to negotiate with the Indian leadership how to prevent Japan's aggressive movement towards British-India's eastern frontier.²³ However, this move was countered by the narratives of *Netaji* Bose, Iwaichi Fujiwara, Pritam Singh, Mohan Singh, Rash Behari Bose of Nakamura, and many others who were based in Japan, and across Southeast Asia. They all were critical in telling the other side of the story, in terms of how the counter-narrative to the British was gaining ground. And thus, the British feelers failed. India was firm on its stand of non-cooperation with the British. By August 1942, *Mahatma* Gandhi launched the *Quit India Movement*, a non-violent protest movement demanding an end to the British rule in India.²⁴

Fujiwara's 1941 *Harimao* Project involving a Japanese in Malaya

By the time Iwaichi Fujiwara got into the thick of *F Kikan*'s intelligence operative tasks in Thailand, he undertook a rather interesting project on the sidelines named *Harimao*. It involved a Japanese contact in Malaya. *Harimao* was the Japanese translation for "Tiger" in Malay, and the project revolved around a passionate [bordering on being fanatical] young Japanese man, who later earned Fujiwara's respect immensely. Known as the "Tiger" of Malaya, this was the story of Yutaka Tani.

When Tani was an infant, his parents moved from Japan and arrived in Malaya in 1911. They prospered by opening a barber shop in Kota Bahru and began raising their family. By 1932, Japan had taken over Manchuria, and a gush of anti-Japanese sentiment ran across China's merchant community. This gradually spread among the Malays as well. The Chinese merchants began organizing boycotts, and harassing customers at Japanese shops, with the support of the local police. The situation reached a point when mobs began targeting and killing the Japanese upon sight, including infants and young children. One such victim in November 1932 was the eight-year-old sister of Yutaka Tani. The shocking murder of his sister infuriated 21-year-old Tani, who went on a revenge spree following the brutal incident by planning retaliatory strikes with the support of a group of Malays and Thais.

In a short span of time, *Harimao*'s legend spread throughout Malaya. By November 1941, *Harimao*, who spoke Malay and Japanese fluently, was brought to the attention of the *F Kikan* members especially Captain Kamimoto. According to Shizuo Maruyama, who wrote "*Himitsu no Tatakai*" (Secret Struggle) in the *Biruma Hen* (Burma Volume), *Hiroku Dai Toa Senshi*, edited by Yu Ikeda (Tokyo 1953), Kamimoto apprised Fujiwara about Tani and showed the latter's photo. Initially, Fujiwara was not too impressed. In the photo, Tani's rugged, unshaven look in torn clothes was not a sight to be beholden. Tani had collected a band of between 1,000 and 3,000 bandits from Malays in the northern state of Malaya, Kelantan, and Southern Thailand. Kamimoto described the actions of Tani and his gang and convinced Fujiwara that in Tani, the *F Kikan* had found a readymade agent, and an ideal operative. The *F Kikan* and Kamimoto rescued Tani from a jail in southern Thailand, and decided to co-opt Tani as an *F Kikan* asset.

Soon Fujiwara and the *F Kikan* members discovered that Tani was constantly being tailed by the Japanese-speaking Thai police.²⁵ Tani used to remain in hiding during the day, and came

²² Allen, *War, Conflict and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific...*, n. 3, p. 272.

²³ For details see, Sudheshna Bhattacharya, "The Making of a Popular Base for the Quit India Movement: The Impact of the Pacific War on the People and the Colonial State in India (1941-42)," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 63, 2002, pp. 683–694, available at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44158136>

²⁴ For further details, references, and reading on India's 1942 *Quit India Movement*, see, Bipan Chandra, Mridula Mukherjee, et al., *India's Struggle for Independence*, (Penguin Publishers, Reprint Edition, 2016).

²⁵ Lebra, *The Indian National Army and Japan*, n. 13.

out in the guise of a fish vendor at night. Hidden under the pile of fish, were hand grenades and explosives. The *F Kikan* benefitted from the valuable intelligence inputs provided by Tani on the local terrain and routes into north Malaya, which apparently speeded up Japan's Malaya operations substantially. In another incident, the British-sponsored *Malay Volunteer Army* was confronted at Ipoh by "Tiger" Tani.²⁶ This army of young Malays acted as railway guards for the British army and coordinated sabotage activities behind British lines with a group of anti-Chinese and anti-British bandits (composed majorly of Malays) led by *Harimao* of Malaya, Yutaka Tani. Dressed in Malay guise, Tani encouraged the volunteers to return home. The volunteers were reorganized later to assist the Japanese army in defense of their occupied areas. Tani, in the meantime derailed British trains, and cut numerous British communication lines.²⁷

In the subsequent months, Tani's group had spread out in the central mountain ranges, through jungles, and rivers. These heavily-forested areas were infested with poisonous snakes and insects. Soon enough, malaria caught many members of the Tani gang, and finally hit Tani too. Upon arriving at Johore Bahru at the rear approach to Singapore, Tani collapsed. Being a patriot, Tani wrote a letter to his mother describing his love for his nation, and his family. Meanwhile, his work as an undercover for the *F Kikan* during the final years of his life somewhat redeemed him.²⁸ Major Fujiwara met Tani when the latter was on his deathbed owing to malaria. Fujiwara brought with him a letter for Tani from his home, seeing which, both could not hold back their tears.²⁹ Association with the *F Kikan* made Yutaka Tani a legend in the Japanese army. A wartime song "*Harimao*" took Tani's story forward, spreading it across the Japanese fighting forces.

Anglo-Japanese History and Reconciliation:

A Review of the Works of Ian Nish and Louis Allen on Fujiwara and the *F Kikan*

World War II shaped up many prominent scholars who were deeply versed in history, culture, and society of former adversarial states. In 2011, two books by Ian Nish and Louis Allen, providing personal histories of these two historians were published consecutively by *Global Oriental*. Although these two books are of different character, they display similar intellectual trajectory emanating from their own firsthand experiences during the mid-1940s.³⁰

Ian Nish, a leading historian of Anglo-Japanese relations, published meticulously researched books on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. These include, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894–1907*, and *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations, 1908–23*. These have long been considered as the most authoritative works on the subject. In particular, Ian Nish's remark about historians' role for reconciliation at an Anglo-Japanese conference remains etched in the memory of many, for times to come. Nish commented:

Historians should resist politicization, sensationalization, and fragmentation of history. Historians should continue to ponder how they can contribute to reconciliation without being self-complacent.³¹

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Fujiwara, *F Kikan*, n. 6, pp. 191–192.

³⁰ Ian Nish and Louis Allen's works, reviewed by Yoichi Kibata, (Professor, Faculty of Law, Seijo University, Setagaya, Japan) which has been published in the *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, vol. 14, no. 1, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 151–154.

³¹ For further reading see, Phillida Purvis, "Kioku, rekishi, wakai... Louis Allen to Nichi-ei wakai (*Memory, History and Reconciliation... Louis Allen and Anglo-Japanese Reconciliation*)" in Fumitaka Kurosawa and Ian Nish, eds., *Rekishi to Wakai* (History and Reconciliation), (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2011).

Nish was mobilized in Edinburgh, and after being taught Japanese in India, began working in Singapore as an interpreter-translator. Subsequently, he was sent to Japan as a junior officer of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in October 1946. His main task in Japan was to translate newspaper articles and documents.³² Ian Nish's work³³ majorly comprises materials collected by the author during his stay in Japan as a member of the BCOF between 1946–1948.

Besides, Louis Allen's book is a collection of his articles and papers. It also includes an autobiographical essay by Allen³⁴ where the specialized subject of military intelligence from the point of view of Allen's personal experiences in Southeast Asia has been discussed at length. In his analysis of the various Japanese intelligence systems, including signal intelligence, field security, police (including military police (*Kempei*)), Allen found it difficult to draw any comparisons given the stark differences from the Western systems. Louis Allen, remained famous in Japan as an author of a detailed history of the Burma campaign, *Burma: The Longest War 1941–1945*.³⁵ However, this volume clearly demonstrated that Allen's research interest in the history of the Asia-Pacific War covered many other aspects as well. Allen was mobilized as a student of Manchester University in 1942. He was sent to the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London to study Japanese. In 1944, he was attached to the British-Indian Army in Delhi, and began work on the translation of documents captured from the Japanese.³⁶ Thereafter, he joined a translation section in Burma and continued his work there after the Japanese surrendered. He interrogated Japanese, including members of the Burma *kempei-tai* (military police).

In his autobiographical essay, Allen narrated of the time when he moved to Singapore. At Changi, he was engaged in the interrogation of surrendered Japanese, including Iwaichi Fujiwara who was the central figure of *F Kikan*, the famous Japanese intelligence organization.³⁷ Allen collaborated with Hugh Cortazzi, who later became Britain's ambassador to Japan in the 1980s. Allen recalled Fujiwara as the real co-founder of the Indian National Army itself, which would have got nowhere without the latter's energy and drive. Allen got to know Fujiwara very well in the post-war years, when Fujiwara returned to the uniform in the Self-Defense Forces. In the 1960s, he became Lieutenant General in command of the 1st Division at Nerima, Tokyo.³⁸ During post-war interrogations conducted at Changi by Cortazzi and Allen, Fujiwara spoke of his views on the war, Burma, India, *Netaji* Bose, and the future of world politics. Allen preserved the

³² For further reading and related references see, Ian Nish, "Britain and the Occupation of Japan... Some Personal Recollections," *Proceedings of the British Association for Japanese Studies*, vol. 4, 1979; and see, Ian Nish, "Early Experiences in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan," *Proceedings of the Japan Society*, vol. 128, 1996.

³³ For further details see, Ian Nish, *The Japanese in War and Peace, 1942–48: Selected Documents from a Translator's In-tray*, (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2011); also see, Ian Nish and Mark Allen, eds., *War, Conflict and Security in Japan and Asia-Pacific, 1941–52: The Writings of Louis Allen*, (Folkestone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2011).

³⁴ Louis Allen was a Reader in the School of Modern Languages at the University of Durham (1961–1991). He served during WWII as a Japanese-speaking Intelligence Officer in India and Burma, and after the war in Malaya, Thailand, and French Indochina (Vietnam). His books include *Sittang* (1973), *Singapore 1941–1942* (1977) and *Burma: The Longest War, 1941–1945* (1984); for more see, Kibata review, *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, n. 30.

³⁵ For further details see, Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War 1941–1945*, (Cassell/Phoenix Press, 2000).

³⁶ See Kibata review, *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, n. 30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Louis Allen, *Autobiographical Essay*, "Innocents Abroad: Investigating War Crimes in Southeast Asia," cited in Allen, *War, Conflict and Security in Japan and Asia Pacific...*, n. 3, p. xxviii.

original Japanese manuscript for decades, until handing it back to Fujiwara many years later at the latter's house in Musashino.³⁹ Allen described the essays to be particularly interesting since they provided a version of Fujiwara's views on people like Bose much nearer in time to the views he actually held.

Many years later, when Allen happened to read *F Kikan* incidentally, he became aware that Fujiwara's response on being interrogated in Singapore, did not, in the least, match Allen's own recollections of what they were like. Fujiwara's account stated how intensely he resented being held in Changi, for being interrogated instead of being sent home to Japan.⁴⁰ Allen accepted that Cortazzi and he were only interested in knowing of the historical and background aspects of Fujiwara's activities. He was held in Malaya on his way back from acting as a witness in the Red Fort INA trials. He had been flown from Delhi to Malaya partly because he was the only surviving member of General Yamashita's 1942 staff that was readily available.⁴¹

Allen's manuscript contained 24 articles written by him that were divided into three parts: 1) the Asia-Pacific War; 2) Japanese military intelligence; and 3) national security and post-war conflicts in Burma, Malaya and Indochina.⁴² Though many of them are taken from published sources, few papers are from academic meetings and some are unpublished typescripts. In his review, Professor Kibata highlighted the chapters concerning Japanese intelligence. Allen was familiar with various aspects of Japanese intelligence, and utilized his wartime experience effectively in researching and writing about the subject.

Besides, according to a 1987 article titled "Japanese Intelligence Systems" published in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, an early and succinct overview of Japanese warfare has been presented.⁴³ Allen's own experience of interrogating Japanese intelligence officers in Singapore can also be detected in the background of other articles titled "Fujiwara and Suzuki: The Lawrence of Arabia Syndrome" and "The Nakano School" (the Japanese intelligence training establishment at Nakano, Tokyo). Kibata's review highlights Allen's dexterity in the former article, wherein Iwaichi Fujiwara and Keiji Suzuki, the head of the *Minami Kikan* (another intelligence organization) have been compared with the Lawrence of Arabia.⁴⁴

The debate on the role and net strategic effectiveness of Iwaichi Fujiwara and the *F Kikan*'s covert activities in the run up to World War II shall remain open for historians and analysts. In all, the *F Kikan*'s covert operations were influential towards achieving Japan's military success in the Malaya and Singapore sector, given that British armed forces' heavy commitments in the European and Mediterranean theatres of operations in 1940 were severely limiting Winston Churchill's strategic options in defending Malaya and Singapore.⁴⁵ Moreover, there were enough indicators that the *F Kikan*, through its propaganda and subversion campaigns, caused quite a few British-Indian soldiers to defect to the Japanese side, which was instrumental in forming the first INA, and setting up the foundation for future Indian nationalism.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Kibata review, *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, n. 30.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ See, Wey, *Journal of Intelligence History*, n. 4.