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# "Asia's" Transwar Lineage: Nationalism, Marxism, and "Greater Asia" in an Indonesian Inflection

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> In Europe traditional political and economic forms come crashing down, new ideas and ideals arise and collide against one another with a great noise and are in turn mercilessly ground to dust. There is an intense and bitter struggle over principles, a restless search for new life values; there is a hellish racket, mistrust, and envy between peoples, classes, and groups; a desperate and chaotic situation reigns in nearly all areas of life. With a stentorian voice, Russia preaches new thoughts and principles and incites all proletarians to a bloody revolution against the hated capitalism, with the aim of establishing a "dictatorship of the masses" upon the rubble of the old society. America lays the foundations for a new civilization with materialist-mystical tendencies and ethical and aesthetic norms that deviate from the old. It exports the products of the Hollywood Olympus in heaps, superficial "talkies" and sentimental "songs," threatening the Asian and European arts with ruin. . . .
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> In this chaotic, shaken-up, forward-driving world, amid nations and classes laying siege to one another, in this time of declining and rising worldviews, of the triumph of science and technology, the Indonesian *Volk* must find its way toward political freedom and national happiness. Will we, ignoring the lessons of European history and closing our eyes to the political, economic, and social failures of the West, steer our cultural course toward the Occidental model, thereby taking the risk, upon arrival, of finding that we have been left behind and in the meantime, Europe, having abandoned its previous position, has moved on? Must we forever be satisfied with what has been left behind by others and found worthless, trudging behind in the wake of other nations?
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> (Pané 1931, p. 1)

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So wrote Sanusi Pané, a rising young light of indigenous intellectual life in the Netherlands East Indies and an outspoken voice of Indonesia's fledgling, struggling nationalist movement, in November 1931, more than a decade before Japan's victorious imperial armies swept into Southeast Asia under the stirring banner of "Asia for the Asians." In a series of questions that could be read simultaneously as a lament and a call to arms, Pané thus articulated a perennial dilemma confronting all those in the so-called non-West who would seek to carve out an autonomous national subjectivity in the face of the Western political, economic, and cultural hegemony that is a key hallmark of the modern. It is a problematic whose global refrains have echoed uninterrupted from the earliest days of anticolonial resistance, through the two World Wars and the colonial liberation struggles of the mid-twentieth century, right up to the so-called postcolonial but still Western-dominated present. Its changing inflections through time and space, from lament to call to arms and back again, can be read as a barometer of shifting power relations between the West and the non-West, both real and imagined.

In global-historical terms, the political and cultural dynamic of the wartime encounter between Japanese and the "Asians" they claimed to liberate was, above all, distinguishable from that of earlier colonial occupations by the fact that this problematic was *shared* by both occupier and occupied.[1] Although it may seem ironic in the retrospective light of a thoroughly discredited Japanese empire, the period of World War II in Asia represented a peak of transnational optimism regarding a resolution to this perennial dilemma, heralding the imminent arrival of a non-Western, alternative modernity that would reap modernity's benefits while avoiding the perils and constraints associated with a Western derivation. Envisioned in national and transnational formats, this "Asian" alternative would harness up-to-date "Western"-style scientific rationality, meritocracy, industrialization, and socioeconomic planning to the imagined, time-honored "Eastern" strengths of community, morality, and spirituality. The combination would enable a controlled gallop toward national prosperity, social equity, and harmony that would steer clear of the evils, inequities, and social fragmentation of capitalism; break free of the fetters of an oppressive, static and colonially tainted "feudal tradition"; and avoid the cataclysmic social and cultural upheaval associated with communist revolution.

The optimism with which this vision of "Asia" was embraced in the period between the 1920s and the early 1940s, its specific combination of qualities, and its transnational social power reflected an interwar and wartime context in which the perennial certainties of global Western liberal-capitalist/imperial hegemony had never seemed more uncertain.[2] Belief in the potential for a world-historical sea change in the power balance between the Western imperial order and the rest forced to live under it was encouraged through the first decades of the twentieth century by such phenomena as the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Revolution, the horrors of World War I, postwar social unrest in Europe, the rise of anticolonial nationalist movements in India and elsewhere, the Great Depression, and the Axis victories against the Allied powers in Europe. It reached a climax with the historically unprecedented Japanese

[1]In this article, "Asia," "Asians," "Asian culture," and so forth are meant to refer to discursive constructs produced out of the interactive workings of the global-historical configuration of power in the age of empire. On "Asia" as an ideological and geographic construct, see Lewis and Wigen (1997).

[2]On the interwar and wartime eras as global crisis, see, for example, Hobbsbawm (1994) and Thorne (1985).

rollback of the Western imperial powers in Asia between December 1941 and March 1942.

In this distinctive combination of shared problematics and proposed resolutions—a combination that traversed cultural and political borders conventionally assumed to have divided nation from nation and colonizer from colonized—this article identifies the general outlines of a modern, transnational ideology that we shall call interwar Asianism. Acknowledging its many historical antecedents, including Orientalism in general and its particular expression in the nineteenth century doctrine of Theosophy, it locates interwar Asianism's crystallization in the overlapping worldviews and aspirations characteristic to a common social position—Asia's rising middle classes, broadly defined—facing the shared, distinctive challenges of a particular historical moment: the period of the twentieth century embracing the two World Wars. An initial discussion of interwar Asianism's formative context is followed by an attempt to offer a grounded and nuanced introductory exploration of "Asia" as expressed in a particular local inflection: the writings of Indonesian scholar and literary figure Sanusi Pané. This exercise is meant to suggest both the nature of interwar Asianism as an identifiable transnational ideology and the multiplicity of its forms of expression across the region's social and historical contexts.

The term *Asianism* has most commonly been associated with the late nineteenth–early twentieth-century concept of *Pan-Asianism,* employed alternately by Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and other nationalist spokesmen, usually connoting an essentially political vision of a united front of Asian nations against Western imperialism rather than an assault on Western modernity itself. Apart from this, the terms *Asianism* or *Greater* (East) *Asianism* have been associated with Japanese wartime imperialism and its ill-fated schemes such as the *Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.*[3] Focusing on the case of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo, Prasenjit Duara has recently offered a pioneering relational and transnational discursive genealogy of empire- and nation-building projects in Japan and China in the 1930s and 1940s, under the heading the "East Asian Modern" (Duara, 2003). To the extent that these discourses may also be seen as Northeast Asian inflections of interwar Asianism, this article seeks to continue this genealogical project within a frame that is regionally broader and at the same time more explicitly class-conscious, highlighting the wider transnational cultural lineage of "Asia," along with its specific formative relation to the position of Asia's middle classes in the interwar period.[4] Finally, I emphasize "Asia's" transwar progeny and resonances. By these I mean "Asia's" broad appeal and staying power—albeit in multiple domestic, changing forms—not only across Asia as a region, but across the longer twentieth-century historical continuum of the colonial, prewar, wartime, postwar, and postcolonial eras.

[3]Most postwar analysts in Japan, Asia, and elsewhere were dismissive of Japanese Asianism as little more than an ideological cover for Japanese imperialism, drawing a stark difference between it and the egalitarian, democratic "Pan-Asianism" of nationalists such as Sun Yat-Sen. Scholars who offered more nuanced interpretations of Japanese Asianism and its genuine links with Asian nationalism, such as Jansen (1954) and Takeuchi (1963), focused on the period between 1880 and 1920, before an increasingly aggressive Japanese imperialism and Asian anticolonial nationalism were seen to have hardened into implacable foes, and before the advent of the distinctive interwar form of Asianism I seek to describe here.

[4]It can be argued that Manchukuo represented a particularly compelling site of transnational coconstruction of discourses of "Asia" and "Asian Civilization" pioneered by representatives of the modernizing, nation-building middle classes of both Japan and China. Along with Duara (2003), see Young (1998, particularly pp. 241–303).

The particular constructions of "Asia" I identify here as crystallizing and gaining transnational momentum from the 1920s to the 1940s incorporated many elements of discourses of "The East" and "The West," of "Asia," "Japan," "Java," "India," and so forth evolved over the longer *durée* of interactions and negotiations of global and local power in the age of empire.[5] In terms of style and substance, I would argue that what most clearly distinguished interwar Asianism from these discourses already evolved prior to World War I and the October Revolution was, first, interwar Asianism's concern with, and debt to, the worldviews and categories of Marxism-Leninism. In their struggles to define and assert an autonomous realm of political and cultural subjectivity over and against a global Euro-American liberal capitalist/imperial order perceived to be increasingly vulnerable, interwar and wartime Asianists frequently appropriated Marxism-Leninism's powerful critiques of the workings of global capitalism and imperialism. At the same time, it can be argued that it was precisely via the medium of "Asia" that they sought to temper and tame Marxism-Leninism's more unsettling revolutionary implications—to define, that is, local exceptions to Marxism-Leninism's self-proclaimed universal principles of history and politics—where their own societies (or, in the Japanese case, their own empire) were concerned. Second and relatedly, the Asianist discourse of the interwar and wartime era was distinguished by an increasing stridence and militancy. Both of these qualities were particularly reflective of the special conditions of the interwar and wartime era, its instabilities, and its perceived revolutionary threats and possibilities.[6]

In the colonial Indies, as in imperial Japan and elsewhere across the region's colonies, republics, and royal states, the social strata most captivated by this shimmering vision of a transcendent, alternative Asian modernity, and in turn its most vocal driving force, were representatives of the rising middle classes, its bourgeoisies, or what we can also call modernizing, nation-building subelites. Schooled both at home and in the imperial classroom in the ostensibly universal, inclusive European bourgeois enlightenment ideals of social progress and equality, meritocracy, discipline, scientific rationalism, and international brotherhood, their horizons were also molded by equally hegemonic and contradictory, particularistic notions of essential racial, cultural, and civilizational difference and of correspondingly particular national his-

[5]On these sorts of evolutions, see, for example, Chatterjee (1986, 1993), Pemberton (1994), and Dirks (2001). In the Japanese context, links can be drawn, for example, between interwar and wartime Asianism and the cultural discourses purveyed in the turn-of-the-century works of art critic Okakura Kakuzô (or Tenshin), famous for his proclamation "Asia is One" (1903, p. 1). A concise discussion of Okakura's works can be found in Mayo (1967). For one of several Japanese works exemplary of the wartime revival of interest in Okakura, see Asano 1989.

[6]This article concerns itself with Asianism in the Indonesian interwar context. As brief illustration for the Japanese context, Kita Ikki's 1919 "Plan for the Reorganization of Japan," Ôkawa Shûmei's 1924 *Fukkô ajia no shomondai (Issues of a Resurgent Asia),* and Takahashi Kamekichi's late 1920s writings on "Petty Imperialism" represent outstanding, influential early examples of an Asianist discourse that gained increasing momentum through the 1930s and early 1940s. Despite great differences between them, each of these texts were profoundly informed by Marxist-Leninist worldviews and categories, even as each characterized the Japanese case as an exception to the standard Marxist-Leninist model. On these texts and their political impact, see for example Wilson (1969), Ôtsuka (1995), and Hoston (1984). For contrasting Japanese views on "Asia" in the period before the watersheds of 1917/1918 and the turbulent 1920s, note, for example, the relatively *low* receptivity among Japanese intellectuals to Rabindranath Tagore's critiques of Western material culture and praise of Eastern spiritual culture during Tagore's visit to Japan in 1916, as cataloged in Hay (1970, pp. 82–123).

tories and destinies—expressed and mutually reinforced in such diverse cultural forms as imperial administrative encodings, education, public discourse, and Orientalist scholarship.[7]

According to their respective histories, the social groups that I place in this category differed substantially from one society to another in terms of their social position, political strength, and internal social differentiation as well as in their proportion within the overall population. In some ways, these differences were nowhere more pronounced than between the tiny indigenous nation-building subelite of the colonial, mainly agrarian Netherlands Indies—where effective control of the state and most of the economy remained in foreign hands—and the burgeoning middle classes of the imperial, industrializing Japan that conquered and occupied the Indies in 1942. Being born into a middle class "native" home in the Netherlands Indies meant being on the subordinate end of the colonial equation and receiving an education in a Dutch inflection of the imperial state/bourgeois-nationalist world view that differed in many respects from that prevalent in imperial Japan. For their part, Japanese arguably had as much invested in the comforts of dominance over Chinese, Koreans, Taiwanese, and Pacific Islanders as their Dutch imperial counterparts had over the "natives" of the Indies.[8] At the same time, to the extent that differences between the Dutch and Japanese imperial worldviews were determined by Japan's subordinate outsider position in the Euro-American–dominated global hierarchy of race and culture—as opposed, that is, to the global political-economic-military hierarchies within which Japan may be seen to have ranked at least alongside the Netherlands by the early twentieth century—these very differences also represented potential areas of ideological common ground between Japanese and "fellow Asians" under Western colonial rule. In both Japan and the Netherlands Indies, as in many other places, the interwar period was, moreover, witness to domestic power struggles between older, vested imperial orders and rising, modernizing nation-building middle classes in various incarnations. In the period leading up to and including World War II, we can identify in both Japan and the Netherlands Indies attempts to manipulate global questions of power and history between the West and the rest—questions that had never seemed riper for the answering—toward the resolution of these fundamentally domestic, national-level struggles for social power and social harmony.

The alternative route to modernity depicted by "Asia's" interwar and wartime spokesmen seemed to offer the elusive, transcendent so-called third way by which the rising, nation-building middle classes of both Japan and the colonized Indies could mobilize the power of the masses in a shared national battle against the illegitimate vested interests of the old (colonial/imperial) order and powerful foreign interests while reining in potentially divisive and destructive popular social-revolutionary impulses, a process that would end with the modernizing, nation-building class in deserved control of the state. As such, it held as great (or even greater) appeal for those historically on the left of the conventional political spectrum as those on the right. At the same time, in its insistence on a harmonious society transcendent of class antagonisms, Asianist rhetoric also functioned to acknowledge and accommodate the

[7]Chatterjee (1986, 1993), Wallerstein (1991), Cooper and Stoler (1997), Mehta (1990, 1999), and Dirks (2001) are among those offering compelling historical explorations of these contradictory impulses and interwoven logics of empire-building, nation-building, capitalism, and contending class interests.

[8]This arguably applied as much to Japan's middle and working classes as to its imperial elites. See, for example, Young (1998) and Gordon (1991).

establishment and the state, whose preponderant power Asia's spokesmen ignored at their peril—and whose power was in any case seen as indispensable in the national struggle against foreign domination. Ideally, representatives of the state and the establishment would be converted and co-opted into the shared national cause. This compromised political positioning, however, also opened Asianists and their rhetoric to state and establishment co-optation.[9]

Asianist discourse was not only transnational in its shared qualities, it was also transnational in the ways that it employed the purportedly shared identities, histories, and desires of fellow Asian brethren to shape and strengthen its own national legitimacy. Although it evolved along separate trajectories in different domestic contexts, it also sometimes drew upon common inspirations, such as the works of India's Rabindranath Tagore.[10] Overlapping worldviews, the perception of participation in a common, world-historical struggle against Western domination, and the sense of fulfillment involved in defining oneself in relation to an Asian "brother"—as opposed to a Western "other"—defined Asianism's appeals as a transnational cultural force. Still, in Asia's varying conceptions, the transnational was almost always dependent on, and subordinated to, the national; even among the most committed of Asianists, it was almost always the national problematic that circumscribed and prefigured the ways in which "Asia" was perceived and put to use.

Peaking with Japan's stirring victories over the Western colonial powers in 1941–42, the legitimacy of Japanese constructions of "Greater Asia" were subsequently increasingly undermined by profound contradictions between the promises and realities of popular experience under Japanese rule. For the former colonized, and indeed for the majority of Japanese as well, Japan's resounding defeat at the hands of the Western powers and the collapse of the Japanese empire in 1945 decisively condemned these constructions to history's dustbin. In public discourse across the former empire, the militant racial and cultural exceptionalism and anti-Westernism emphasized during the war years now gave way to a universalist modernism and internationalism that rejected racism, fascism, and imperialism in all its forms, whether Japanese or Western. Yet in many postwar and postcolonial national contexts, Asianism as transnational ideology—defined, that is, as a worldview with a lengthy historical lineage not limited to or originating out of Japanese experience alone but rather out of a regionally shared political, social, and cultural problematic—proved of more lasting durability. Now in a position of domestic dominance but still continuing in their quest to secure political hegemony and cultural subjectivity in the face of continued Western global domination, colonial legacies, and threatening domestic social tensions of class, culture, region, and gender, Asia's modernizing nationalist bourgeoisies often continued to return to "Asia," albeit in modified packaging reflective of changed postwar and postcolonial circumstances.

## An "Asian" Template

An examination of the transwar historical experience of one of "Asia's" most outspoken wartime missionaries, Sanusi Pané (1905–68), Indonesian nationalist poet,

[9]For an example of this dynamic in the context of Manchukuo, see Young (1998, pp. 268–303).

[10]Highlighting an important early transnational linkage, Japan's Okakura Kakuzô/Tenshin was an enthusiastic devotee of Tagore, whose Asianism and its influence in the Indonesian case is further discussed later. Okakura wrote *The Ideals of the East* while visiting Tagore in Calcutta in 1901–2, and their association prompted exchanges of artists from their respective schools. See Hay (1970, p. 6).

journalist, playwright, teacher, historian, and political activist, serves as an illuminating microlocation from which to conduct an introductory exploration of "Asia" and its varied nuances as expressed in a particular place, form, and history. Pané served as wartime cultural commentator for the Japanese-sponsored *Asia Raya (Greater Asia)* newspaper in 1942 and subsequently as codirector of the Indonesian-initiated and Japanese-sponsored Center for the Guidance of Popular Culture and Enlightenment (Keimin bunka shidôsho), in Indonesian simply the Center for Indonesian Culture (Poesat Keboedajaan Indonesia) from 1943 to 1945 (Mark 2003, pp. 422–23, 526–28). During these years, he also authored a four-volume history of Indonesia that remained a standard textbook in Indonesia's schools through the mid-1960s and represented a foundational text of the nationalist historiographical orthodoxy still dominant today.

In today's Indonesia, Pané is more generally remembered for his prewar literary and dramatic works (which were still reprinted during Suharto's New Order, 1966–1998) than for his historiography (which was not). Forgotten by all but the occasional specialist was Pané's important role as an outspoken journalistic representative of the political left of the mainstream nationalist movement in the last decade of Dutch rule. Pané's journalistic work during the Japanese occupation itself, and the remarkable series of essays he produced in this context, have meanwhile languished in complete postwar obscurity. Rediscovered and juxtaposed against conventional postwar narratives of national history and Pané's place within it, the stories these essays tell of Pané's forgotten experience of the Japanese occupation—including a remarkable moment at which, for him, the historical logic of Japan's Greater Asian order appeared to trump even that of "Indonesia" itself—appear awkward, demeaning of Pané's national reputation, suggestive of cynical, superficial "collaboration."

Placed within the context of a longer and broader historical continuum embracing the prewar, wartime, and postwar periods and informed by a transnational perspective as opposed to a nation-centered one, however, Pané's wartime experience reveals a different, more significant and lasting historical and social logic. It highlights the general nature of Asianism and its transnational and transwar appeals. At the same time, the specific quality, intensity, and modulations of Pané's relationship with "Asia" begin to point to the fascinating multiplicity of "Asias" that must be acknowledged as collectively constituting the broader, generalized story of Asianism as modern ideology.

An analysis of Pané's story confirms that the history of Asianism, like that of other transnational ideologies, must ultimately be understood at the local level, or more precisely in terms of an ongoing political and cultural negotiation within and between the micro (subnational) and the macro (national and transnational) contexts, between the personal/local and the national, the regional, and the global. As is so often the case in postcolonial narratives of prominent national figures, the scholarly literature on Pané and his work has neglected the peculiarities of Pané's positioning in the subnational context, overwhelmingly categorizing him in the generic terms of Indonesian nationalist and limiting attention to his specific cultural, religious, and geographic location within the Indies and its nationalist movement, if any, to a routine introductory background sketch. To be more precise, works dealing with Pané generally begin by taking notice of Pané's Sumatran background—a background shared with many of Indonesia's most prominent nationalists—but rarely note Pané's non-Muslim orientation or make much of his hailing from the religiously diverse Batak region of Sumatra, important points of contrast with the vast majority of Sumatran nationalists active in the political center of Java/Batavia, who hailed instead from the

(Muslim) Minangkabau region. Pané himself would not have wanted it otherwise, and his own writings reinforce this tendency.[11]

Yet even as factors of class, education, and career path indeed confirmed Pané's status as a natural and an insider within the nationalist movement, insofar as he was a non-Javanese and a non-Muslim, the consummate nationalist Pané can nevertheless be seen as a relative outsider within that same movement. Perhaps the relative inattention to this point in the existing literature is best explained by the fact that the full significance of Pané's inside-outside positioning stands in sharper relief when exploring Pané's relationship to "Indonesia" via his engagement with "Asia" than via more conventional analytical frameworks such as those of tradition versus modernity, East versus West, or social/class struggle alone.[12] Certainly I would argue that it is precisely attention to this inside-outside positioning that offers one way of accounting for some of the strikingly distinctive features of Pane's local engagement with "Asia," even as his experience simultaneously so vividly highlights fundamental aspects of Asianism as an ideology of broad transnational and transwar appeal and experience.

## Beginnings

Born in the period of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), Sanusi Pané came of age after World War I, a time of growing global antagonism between the representatives of capitalism in the West and communism to the East, rising anticolonial nationalism in the Netherlands East Indies and elsewhere, global economic instability, and dizzying socioeconomic and cultural change and dislocation in the industrializing imperial metropoles, including Japan. He was born into a prominent local family in Sipirok in the Batak hinterlands of North Sumatra, far from the Indies' central island of Java, a place whose so-called primitive, animist culture was often regarded with disdain by both Dutch colonials and the (mostly Muslim) indigenous elites in the presumably more civilized center but whose people nevertheless nurtured a deep sense and pride of place.[13] His father, Soetan Pangurabaan Pané, was an accomplished man of letters and print capitalist, owner of a publishing house (as well as a transport company) in the city of Sibolga, founder and editor of the *Surya* newspaper printed there, and a promoter of local culture.[14]

[11]In surveying Pané's journalistic and literary writings, I located no reference to his Batak heritage and almost none to his personal religious commitments. On the latter, an extremely rare and revealing exception is Pané's early reference to the "difficult dilemma" he faced during his 1929–30 journey to colonial India in choosing between restaurants meant for Muslims, Hindus, and English in railway stations, a dilemma prompted by the fact that he was "neither a follower of any particular religion nor an Englishman" (Pané 1930a).

[12]I would like to thank Rikki Kersten for helping to draw out this point. Among scholarly works approaching Pané and his work from tradition/modernity and East/West frameworks, I would include Nasution (1963), Rosidi (1969, pp. 30–34), Foulcher (1977, particularly pp. 52–58), and Teeuw (1979, particularly pp. 24–28). Bodden (1997) analyzes Pané's prewar stage plays within a Marxian social history framework inspired by that of Frederic Jameson.

[13]On the formation of colonial perceptions of the Batak, see, for example, Andaya (2002).

[14]Pangurabaan Pane, who was "particularly active in Sibolga book publishing circles," authored the romantic novel *Tolbok Haleon (Season of Want)* in the local Angkola language and founded a famous local dance troupe. See Rodgers (1991, p. 87), http://www.gramedia.com/author_detail.asp?id=ECDI2502, and http://www.asiafinest.com/forum/lofiversion/index.php/t18958–100.html. The term *print capitalist* is derived from Anderson's *print capitalism* (1991, particularly chap. 3), and is meant to bring to mind Anderson's association between print capitalism and modern nation-building.

Pané was an excellent student, and he was successful in availing himself of new if limited opportunities for talented, socially and financially privileged "native" children to attend Dutch elementary and secondary schools. In his early teens, he departed his native Batak homeland to attend Dutch-language secondary school in nearby Padang, the largest city in the Minangkabau region of West Sumatra. The Minangkabau region was distinguishable from Pané's neighboring Batak homeland by a more exclusive devotion to the Muslim faith, a more robust economy, and—related to both—a cosmopolitan cultural and political sensibility.[15] Along with Java, it was subsequently to produce the lion's share of Indonesia's nationalist leadership. The years in Padang appear to have helped nurture in Pané a pride in the island of Sumatra and an interest in gaining greater recognition for it in the heretofore Java-centered, protonationalist project of indigenous cultural awakening and modernization, along with early leanings in a literary direction. Both were on display in Pané's lyrical poem entitled "Homeland" *(Tanah Air),* first published in a school magazine and subsequently reissued in the Sumatran nationalist journal *Jong Sumatra (Young Sumatra)* in Batavia in 1921, when Pané was only 16 (Foulcher 1977, p. 52).

At the age of 17 in 1923, Pané made his second educational pilgrimage, this time to the political center of the realm to attend the elite Dutch-sponsored teacher-training school Gunung Sahari in the colonial metropole of Batavia. For Pané as for many others, this was a modern ritual that confirmed inclusion among the colony's "native" best and brightest.[16] As Benedict Anderson has observed, in its assembling of an Indies-wide educational elite at the center of the realm, this ritual also conjured the sense of an Indonesian nation waiting in the wings, even as it highlighted the many obstacles to this project that still remained (Anderson, 1991, p. 121).

Pané proved a model student at the Gunung Sahari, a fact reflected in his joining of the school's teaching staff in 1926, the year after his graduation. An essential point here, key to understanding Sanusi Pané's subsequent intellectual evolution, is that the Gunung Sahari was founded and run by the Netherlands Indies Association of East and West according to its guiding principles of Theosophy. This spiritual-scientific creed was first propagated in late nineteenth-century colonial India and claimed both English and Indian adherents before spreading overseas to places that included the East Indies, where it found a receptive audience among both Dutch and elite indigenous social reformists.[17] Proponents of Theosophy combined a firm nineteenth-century faith in science, positivism, and evolutionary theory with a proposed reawakening to the timeless spiritual truths contained in the shared religious heritage of all mankind, as expressed in ancient Eastern texts such as the Bhagavad

[15]On Minangkabau, see, for example, Laffan (2003, pp. 142–80).

[16]Pané never reached that most elusive pinnacle of the Dutch system, universities located not in the Indies but in the Dutch metropole, and never attended by more than a handful of chosen "natives," mostly of high aristocratic descent.

[17]The Theosophical Society was founded by the Russian spiritualist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and her American associate Henry Olcott in New York in 1875 after a stay in Tibet from 1868–1870. They claimed common cause with the contemporary Hindu modernizing/religious study group the Arya Samaj and briefly allied themselves with the Arya Samaj after relocating their movement to India in 1878. In the Indies, the association between the leading Dutch theosophist D. van Hinloopen Labberton and the elite Budi Utomo reformist group—later regarded as a pioneering icon of Indonesian nationalism avant la lettre—dated to at least as early as 1909, one year after the Budi Utomo's founding (Hinloopen-Labberton, 1909). In 1918, Hinloopen-Labberton and Budi Utomo cosponsored a Congress for Javanese Cultural Development (Sears 1996, pp. 144–45). For more on Theosophy, see Sears (1996, particularly pp. 126–29), Tollenaere (1996), and Van der Veer (2001).

Gita. Only through a marriage of the best of old and new, of East and West, of science and religion, they claimed, could mankind light a way beyond both the aspiritual materialism of modern life and the irrational, static dogma of religious institutions and outdated traditions, eventually reaching a naturally predestined world of justice, plenty, harmony, and fulfillment for all. These ostensibly universalistic arguments found their most profound Indian expression in the writings and educational practices of Rabindranath Tagore, who appeared as a central curricular inspiration in the Gunung Sahari's charter (Foulcher 1977, p. 52).

For would-be Indonesian nation-builders in search of a way to mobilize and unify a diverse, religiously, culturally, and ethnically divided colonial polity, Tagore's focus on the historical and cultural unity of "the East" held great potential interest.[18] Many nationalists, particularly those of the secular stream represented by Sukarno, were at home with an emphasis on "Indonesia's" cultural traditions as essentially Hindu-Buddhist—as opposed to Islamic—as a rhetorical means of opposing political Islam and skirting the specter of a national polity divided along religious lines.[19] For Pané, whose nationalist constructions were always enlivened by a latent concern with resolving the problem of his own personal cultural and geographical de-centeredness in a realm dominated by Java and by the religion of Islam, the appeal of an Indonesia that represented part of a wider Asia, with a center outside of Java and with a historical cultural essence that was Hindu-Buddhist rather than Islamic, would appear to have been particularly potent.[20]

Theosophy was a creed born of the moral and spiritual tensions evoked in the interaction of colony and empire, seeking an elusive unity between dominator and dominated based upon a shared faith in progress and justice, under the umbrella of a universal cultural and spiritual tradition: "The vast, and under any other doctrine unjust, difference between the savage and the civilized man as to both capacity, character, and opportunity," wrote one of the movement's founding members in 1893, "can be understood only through this doctrine" (Judge 1893).[21] Theosophy's idealism and optimism was born of an age in which both progressive Western colonials and members of the Western-educated "native" elite subscribed to the idea that the great gap between the uplifting, progressive, unifying promises and the oppressive, divided, inequitable realities of colonial rule could be addressed within the structure of colonial

[18]See, for example, Subardjo (1978, p. 206). In turn, one might relate the shape of Tagore's constructions of "Asia" and "India" to Tagore's own "local" situation and interests as a Hindu aristocrat in predominantly Muslim Bengal (e.g., Sen 1997).

[19]In so doing, they were able to draw upon a great body of Orientalist literature built up since the nineteenth century by both Dutch and aristocratic native Javanologists, who, for their own political reasons that included a shared interest in containing the contending power of local Islam, generally reproduced a similar historical storyline (e.g., Pemberton 1994; Sears 1996). Dutch and other European scholarship on the ancient Hindu-Buddhist empires of Sriwijaya (centered in Sumatra) and Majapahit (centered in Java), which appeared as if on cue in the late 1910s and 1920s, were also readily incorporated into nationalist narratives of "Indonesia" (Reid 1979).

[20]On Pané's views of Java, see, for example, his acknowledgement of the idea that Java's ancient culture, rather than that of his native Sumatra, was Indonesia's highest and most evolved, and his ready appropriation of its symbols in his artistic and nationalistic strivings, even as he argued the importance an equal role for the "hinterlands" in the national project, in Pané (1931). On his religious orientation, see n. 11.

[21]Theosophy Society founder Helena Blavatsky maintained that in contact with the "heathen" of the colonies, modern Christianity had revealed itself thoroughly corrupted, not only incapable of solving the social problems it claimed to address but even, in its failure to do so, encouraging revolutionary social unrest (Blavatsky 1878).

rule itself. Sanusi Pané partook of this creed just as this period of optimism was coming to a decided end in the Indies and elsewhere, and he made the transition to anticolonial nationalism readily; throughout his career, however, his approach to the problems of (Western) modernity remained informed by the tenets of Theosophy.

The late 1920s was a time of excitement and expectation for the educated indigenous elite of the Netherlands East Indies, in particular the ambitious but frustrated colonial subelite of which Sanusi Pané was a member. Encouraged by developments in struggles for national independence in such places as China and India, liberal U.S. rhetoric of the right to national self-determination, and Soviet predictions of the imminent downfall of the imperialist system, the newly christened Indonesian nationalist movement blossomed quickly—at least among this small elite.[22] Pané, now a teacher at the Gunung Sahari, joined Sukarno's new nationalist party in 1927. Still, difficulties in mobilizing the masses and the growing specter of government suppression were to cast an increasingly somber pall over the movement.

In 1928 Pané published his first two full-length literary works, the first a collection of poems in his native Malay and the second a historical stage play in Dutch entitled *Airlangga,* named after the eleventh-century ruler of the Malay kingdom of Sriwijaya. It depicted Airlangga in a struggle of conscience, torn between a personal desire to withdraw from the throne to pursue writing and meditation and the social and political need to fight threats to the unity of his kingdom, chiefly in the form of successional squabbles within his family. As Michael Bodden argued in a recent analysis of Pané's prewar stage plays, the story line of *Airlangga,* like those of the four subsequent stage scripts Pané wrote in the years between 1928 and 1940, represented a thinly disguised allegory of the Indonesian nationalist movement of the moment and of Pané's own relation to it: problems of internal organization and disunity, social isolation, growing political suppression, and the dilemmas of the artist confronted with the perceived duties of social responsibility and leadership adhering to those in a privileged social position in a time of national crisis (Bodden 1997).

## "India's Message"

It was in the interest of gaining deeper inspiration and perspective on these sorts of pressing issues both national and personal that Pané departed Java in 1929 for an extensive, long-awaited pilgrimage to India—home of Asia's most accomplished anticolonial nationalist movement and origin of some of its most ancient cultural traditions. The experiences of this journey were later described by Pané and others as intellectually and artistically formative (e.g., Rosidi 1969). "Already in Ceylon I felt myself another being. The last connection to the past was broken with my disembarkation from the Dutch steamship in Colombo harbor," Pané wrote at the time in one of a series of correspondences published in the nationalist journal *Timboel* in Batavia. "It is as if I stand before a new life, a life full of beautiful promises. I feel like a youngster who proceeds toward the place where he shall meet his beloved, where he can hold her in his arms for the first time" (Pane 1930c).

[22]The self-consciously political use of the term *Indonesia* is variously dated to 1922–24, although the roots of Indonesia's nationalist movement are generally traced to the period of the formation of the political groupings Budi Utomo, Sarekat Islam, and the Indisch Partij in Java in the period between 1908 and 1913. See, for example, Shiraishi (1990) and Dahm (1971).

The overflowing inspiration that Pané took from his journey to India, revealed in dispatch after dispatch on subjects ranging from art to politics to social issues, was perhaps best illustrated in an analysis of "India's Message" written for the readers of *Timboel* early in 1930 (Pane 1930d). Here Pané argued that India's contemporary struggle for freedom, as expressed in the person and the movement of Mahatma Gandhi, represented much more—indeed had to represent much more—than a mere battle for national political independence. "A free India, built upon a Western basis," he wrote, "would be of little worth in the light of eternity." Rather, Gandhi's struggle was "inspired by a higher ideology: [that of] saving the world from the iron grip of materialism." As such it represented "a great hymn upon the soul of the world, a powerful continuation of the dithyrambs of the Vedic Resi's, of the elevated songs of Krishna, the Buddha, Mahavira, Sankaracharya." Pané acknowledged Gandhi's weak position in the face of overwhelming global Western power, but this only made the battle the more urgent. "In this time of European and American political and economic triumph, in this time in which the Westerner, when he comes into contact with other races, puts almost all ethical principles out of action" he wrote,

> The figure of this Eastern Maharishi, in his limitless love, is positively tragic. Yet behind this Mahatma lies a past that stretches out over thousands of years and comprises in its entirety a nation of three hundred million. . . . Behind Gandhi stands India, the East. This is why his struggle is a wonderful world-historical event, a reflection of the struggle between two cosmic principles: spirit and matter in the battleground of the manifest.

Of interest is a brief juxtaposition that Pané inserted here regarding Asia's most powerful nation as defined in Western terms, a nation that clearly remained only of peripheral interest to Pané at this time. It would remain so until the momentous events of late 1941 and early 1942 forced a shift in his field of vision.

> Japan has secured a significant place among the great powers but does not appear capable of bringing changes to the world political or economic structure; in fact, where the lighting of new paths and the opening of new perspectives is concerned, it has achieved little. The task of leading a searching mankind, of laying new social foundations in the light of the eternal, falls to India. It will undoubtedly fulfill this calling, because the powerful Hindu spirit, still unbowed, still alive, mute witness of the rise and fall of so many realms and cultures . . . causes the nation of India to march forward with pounding steps as a living, compact mass, while endowing the Hindus—with a religious character that can never be lost even to the most fanatical atheism—a great, dynamic inner strength.

"With interest," concluded Pané, "we await the end, or the apparent end, of the great world event taking place over there in the motherland of Indonesia." He was convinced, he wrote, that once India's struggle had been resolved, "the most important terrain of the immediate struggle between East and West will shift to another point of encounter between two worlds—Indonesia-Netherlands—and that in this inevitable showdown, "our nation will reveal itself, just as in the past, as Hindustan's greatest son." In the meantime, there was much for Pané's countrymen to learn—or rather relearn—from the example of an Indian culture that had proved superior to that of Indonesia in resisting the Western cultural onslaught and thus in retaining its precolonial, purely Asian cultural essence.

Although the Indian example was widely known and admired among Pané's nationalist fellows, the degree to which Pané embraced it was exceptional. This may

well have been encouraged not only by Pané's background in Theosophy and his particular concerns and interests as a poet and dramatist but also, again, by his relative outsider status among the nationalist elite at home in terms of geographic, religious, and cultural background.

For all his enthusiasm, however, Pané's emotional firsthand identification in India of the authentic Asian motherland he had so longed for also smacked of something anticipated, something prefigured and rehearsed. He seemed to stand at a distance from—and suffer from a selective myopia toward—the contradictions and complexities of the modern Indian colonial society in which he found himself. A series of narrative juxtapositions that appeared in Pané's extended account of a visit to the holy city and temples of Benares—the climax of his journey and the realization of a "long-cherished desire"—may serve as one example of this problem. I cite this passage in some detail because I believe it highlights many of the central themes, and latent contradictions, that informed Pané's Asianism, and indeed those of Asianism more generally as transnational and transwar ideology.

Making his way up the hill to the temple, wrote Pané, he had stopped at one of many roadside shops, asking to be introduced to the wares.

> Out of a cabinet came a Gânesha, covered in rust. The man triumphantly told me that it was of inestimable value because it had only just been dug up and was most definitely hundreds of years old. I looked at the object, thought back to experiences in certain shops in Sala and Jogja[23] where people deal in "antiques from yesterday," and asked with a smile how long it had been buried in the ground. At first the man didn't know whether to smile or look angry. Because I smiled, in the end he smiled, too, and told me that he could get a lot out of American tourists for such "archeological works of art."

The elephant-headed statue, a modern capitalist commodity masquerading as Asian antiquity, might conceivably have represented ammunition for a universal skepticism toward the modern uses of the old within the new. Alternatively, however, the anecdote could be read to underscore Pané's identity as a fellow Asian insider who, unlike the ignorant, self-absorbed Western tourist, was able to use his intuition and a shared Asian cultural code to tease out the difference between a fake and the real thing. It is rather this reading that seemed to enable the shift into the passage that immediately follows, and to enable many of the more general premises of Pané's Asianism. For here, shifting undaunted from the realm of the profane to the sacred, Pané resumed his narrative journey to a genuine, timeless Asian antiquity, highlighting its imagined contrast with the chaos and superficiality of the (Western) modern.

> We continued our walk. It was busy in the narrow, steep, picturesque streets. You could see proud Bengalis and Punjabis, with high white turbans, women from the United Provinces in tasteful multicolored saris, widows from the northern districts with fine, white faces in dark clothing, all with large glittering or dreamy eyes. It was a celebration of colors, of lines and gestures, which even the most gifted poet could not describe. In these surroundings, who would think of smoking factories, exploiting capitalists, noisy people's assemblies, motions and amendments, screaming movie advertisements, shouting radio units, the bloody wars of the future? Here people tread in a land of peace and quiet, of beauty and mercy. . . . Before the entrance

[23]The reference is to Surakarta and Jogjakarta, the two main cities of central Java, home to the royal courts maintained under Dutch rule and also known as the centers of Javanese culture.

> I stand still for a time, overwhelmed by deep emotion. Above my dreams the copper lotus knobs and spires in the opal sky. The sonorous tones of countless temple bells, echoing through the air, over the Ganges, and the city of cities as a powerful song of sorrow, of melancholy, set my soul to a shiver of sudden longing for times gone by. Oh, where was it that I too once stood like this, with flowers as offering in my hands, with the lonely, pearl-emerald sky above me, listening to the elegy of the evening bells? Was it perhaps at the edge of this same holy stream, in lives long past?
>
> (Pane 1930c, p. 108)

It might be argued that Pané, like so many visitors to foreign lands in search of themselves, had found in India little more than his own idealized, uncorrupted (Asian) reflection. Still, if the term *selective* may be applied, perhaps the term *myopia* is not entirely accurate. For it was not so much that Pané was oblivious to, or deliberately chose to ignore, contemporary India's darker side. Midway through his dispatches, Pané paused to acknowledge an Indian society beset with poverty, class tensions, exploitation, "backward superstition," and prejudices along lines of caste, religion, and gender. Here—and again in his 1940 drama *Manusia Baroe (The New Man),* which took contemporary India as its subject—Pané associated these problems and injustices not only with the forces of colonialism and capitalism but also the weighty, oppressive influences of "religious excess" and ossified "tradition."[24]

> Not only in foreign lands does Hindustan have a holy mission to fulfill, but at home as well, as certain strata of its population have a definite need of modernization, in the form of spiritual and material uplift. Such misery as I have witnessed in many Indian villages, confounding all description, is difficult to find in our country, and from the viewpoint of hygiene, the cities strike me as merely middling. . . . An example of [religious] excess is the institution of the normal *sadhu,* or "world-renouncing" begging monk, the mistaken application of a holy idea. The average *sadhu* is a parody of a *reshi. . . .* Another, greater [social] ailment is the caste system in its current form, just as in the normal *sadhu*–ship the [mistaken] interpretation of a good principle. A good principle, that is, in the so-called Vedantist period, when it was still applied in the spirit of the old law-givers, [and] it appeared to be capable of representing a sturdy social foundation. . . . [It was only] after the Vedantist period, through the disproportionate pride of the higher castes, [that] the socially so fatal, ethically so degenerate delusion of caste *(kastenwaan)* made its appearance.

The worship of the cow among lower-class Hindus—even to the point of drinking its urine and eating its feces, despite these practices being nowhere advised in the ancient holy texts—was another example of "Oriental cultural elements that we, as fighters for the renewal and deepening of our civilization, must bravely stare in the face." The institution of the purdah, or enforced seclusion of women, too, wrote Pané, had "a destructive effect on the body and soul," and contributed to the "backwardness" of India's women. "Indonesia's" comparable *pingit* system, while "not as inhibiting of women's individual development," also discouraged interest, even among "the (average) educated woman," in "problems and ideas of politics, science, art, and philoso-

[24]At one early point in Pané's dispatches, even Tagore himself came in for a bit of earthy, socially informed teasing: "I had once read that the poet lived in a hut," noted Pané. Yet "the building that people indicated to me as his current residence, at a remove of some distance from the rest, bore a far greater resemblance to a palace than to a humble shelter" (Pané 1930a, p. 34).

phy," let alone participation in "sport." "What a woman needs before anything else, before politics and other rights," Pané submitted, was "individuality, personality, which allow her to think independently of men, to live, because the greatest cause of her unfreedom lies in her lack of *internal* independence" (Pane 1930b; emphasis in the original).

In attempting to salvage India as a transcendent Asian model from the troubled India of the here and now, Pané's texts revealed a process of mental compartmentalization akin to that recently observed in the writings of Pané's Indian icon Rabindranath Tagore—although somewhat differently described—in Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000).[25] By this I refer to the simultaneous apprehension of what were, in effect, two Indias, coexisting as contemporaries and yet operating on mutually exclusive temporal planes—the lower India of the surface, prisoner of a corrupted, fragmented, colonized present and feudal past, and the higher India, an eternal, enchanted land of timeless beauty, truth, unity, and humanity. Pané's juxtaposition of "smoking factories, exploiting capitalists, noisy people's assemblies, motions and amendments, screaming movie advertisements, shouting radio units" and "bloody wars" with "a land of peace and quiet, of beauty and mercy" can thus be read not simply as a facile contrast of West and East but as an evocation of two worlds he imagined residing alongside one another within India itself. The latter, albeit apprehended only in glimpses, shined through as a hopeful, reassuring beacon for the former and for the rest of the world as well. The suggestion, most clearly enunciated in the gendered packaging of Pané's prescription for Asia's women—but also suggested, for example, in his attribution of the historical corruption of the caste system to the "disproportionate pride of the higher castes"—was that internal enlightenment to these eternal, liberating truths was a prerequisite to Asia's successful resurrection, without which participation in a Western-style political struggle for rights alone would yield little more than an empty, copycat facade.

## Orienting Marxism

Pané returned to the Indies in mid-1930, full of inspiration and energy for the national battle ahead. Shortly upon his reentry to Java, he assumed joint and subsequently sole editorship of the pioneering (Dutch-language) nationalist journal *Timboel,* to which he had submitted the previous essays.[26] His journalistic writings during his period as editor until 1933, and again between 1935 and 1941 as editor of *Kebangoenan,* a nationalist Indonesian-language daily newspaper published in Batavia and founded in part by Pané, revealed an intense intellectual, political, and social engagement, both as an astute follower and interpreter of global developments and as analyst and spokesman on urgent questions of nationalist policy and strategy.

If Pané's writings from India reflected an Asianist doctrine already well-formed by the beginning of the 1930s, in his writings in the years following his return,

[25]Chakrabarty identifies a similar sort of dualism operating in Tagore's writings—expressed through the vehicle of a "division of labor between poetry and prose, or, more accurately, between the prosaic and the poetic"—as a " 'romantic' strategy" for "reconciling the need for . . . two different and contradictory ways of seeing the nation: the critical eye that sought out the defects in the nation for the purpose of reform and improvement, and the adoring eye that saw the nation as already beautiful and sublime" (2000, p. 151).

[26]During Pané's editorial tenure, an Indonesian-language version of *Timboel* also saw brief publication.

another element, of a contrasting and potentially subversive nature, also came to stand out in almost equally sharp relief: a fascination with Marxist ideas of historical materialism and class struggle.[27] Sympathy with Marxism as such was hardly an unusual attribute among Indonesia's nationalists of the day, particularly in the wake of the imminent collapse of global capitalism that the Great Depression appeared to many to signal, and particularly among those who numbered among what I call Indonesia's educated subelite. This in contrast, that is, to members of the higher-status upper *priyayi* aristocracy, whose members held a monopoly on the highest native positions in the colonial administration and whom Pané often criticized as representing feudal and/or capitalist elements of native society. But Pané's Marxist commitments went a bit farther than those of many of his nationalist colleagues. This was reflected, for example, in the platform of the nationalist Gerindo party that he founded with fellow Sumatrans Amir Sjarifuddin and Mohammad Yamin in 1937. Gerindo supported, for example, the notion of cooperation with the Western democracies, including the Netherlands Indies colonial government, in an international antifascist front. Pané's Marxist convictions also seem to have informed the cautious attitude that he adopted toward Japan and its expansionist activities and rhetoric in East Asia throughout the 1930s—even as many of his nationalist colleagues, particularly those to his political right, were warmer to Japanese advances (Gotô 1997, pp. 361–88; Mark 2003, pp. 129–49). This may also help to explain Pané's tendency toward openness and understanding with regard to the position of the Chinese community both in Asia and locally, again a quality not generally shared among Pané's nationalist colleagues or, in this case, among the indigenous society as a whole, among whom resentment of the so-called foreign Chinese as small-scale "exploiting capitalists" and "Dutch lackeys" ran high.[28]

Striking in Pané's case, however, is the comfort and conviction with which he developed and deployed the universalist, scientific approaches of Marxism to interpret and develop a course of action regarding the national and international issues of the day, even as he continued to produce works of poetry and drama based on the notion of a pure, spontaneous artistic creation "from the soul," ostensibly unaffected by "the era, society, or the format of writing," and even as he continued to hold tightly to a framework of Asianist/national racial and cultural essentialism (Pané 1935a, p. 173).[29] I would argue that the coexistence of these elements should not and cannot be simply reduced to a shallow or insufficient grasp of Marxist principles, as reflective of a political immaturity characteristic to Pané himself, or—in the baldest Orientalist reading—as reflective of a derivative, never entirely modern and never entirely mature Asian intellectual life more generally. First, these contradictions can and should cer-

[27]Pané's mid-1932 series of *Timboel* cover essays entitled "National Controversies," which provided a systematic breakdown of the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of the various strands of the Indonesian nationalist movement and their social bases, for example, represented a model of Marxist-informed social and political analysis.

[28]For Pané's skeptical views of Japanese imperial designs in the context of the Tripartite Alliance and the Sino-Japanese War, see, for example, the series of editorials he authored as well as the generally pro-Chinese coverage of the war that he oversaw as editor of *Kebangoenan* beginning in autumn 1937. *Kebangoenan*'s coverage of the conflict portrayed Japan in such a negative light that local Japanese interests made unsuccessful attempts to purchase the newspaper. See Gotô (1997, chap. 7) as well as Mohammad Yamin's public denial of these advances (1937).

[29]The division of nation-building labor between (worldly, political, critical) prose and (timeless, romantic, transcendent) poetry, suggested in Pane's comments here and reflected in his writings, again recalls the strategy of Rabindranath Tagore as identified in Chakrabarty (2000; see n. 25).

tainly be seen as reflective, in part, of Pané's class position within Indies society. They are also reflective of another problem, however, one for which Marxism not only appeared to provide no answer or acknowledgement but a problem within which Marxism, as a product of the West, could even be seen to be implicated: the hegemonic cultural power of the West, which perpetually condemned those in the non-West to the identity of second-class, derivative global citizens, "trudging behind in the wake of other nations" (Pané 1931).

In sum, even as it represented the most incisive modern mode of identification, analysis, and critique of domestic and international systems of capitalism and imperialism—and held a powerful appeal to the disenchanted in the non-West for this reason—Marxism was itself permeated with Orientalist cultural and racial assumptions. In the form of the so-called Asiatic mode of production, for example, these assumptions reinforced the notion of an Asian cultural and racial heritage that predisposed a historically static Asia to an alternative economic logic from that which governed in the dynamic West (Fogel 1988). As global views of the workings of Western capitalism darkened during the global economic crisis of the 1920s and 1930s, Marxist-influenced Western scholars such as the economist Professor Dr. J. H. Boeke, whose views were extremely influential among both Dutch and nationalist intellectuals, produced a more positive if equally Orientalist picture of the precapitalist Indies economy as representing, at the village level, a form of spontaneous, organic socialism of a nature unknown in the West (Boeke 1934, pp. 20–21, 37, 61–62).[30] Furthermore, in analyzing the basis of the West's global dominance, not only nationalist but also left-leaning Western observers—even those who acknowledged the importance of the economic factors stressed in historical materialist analyses—were often prone to fall back upon the explanatory power of essentialized Western racial and cultural traits. As summed up by Bertrand Russell in 1922 in a memorable assertion that was later cited by both German and Indonesian commentators: "Taken as a whole, Europeans have an easier time shooting Chinese than vice-versa."[31] The fact that the capitalist economy, in the Indies as in other colonies, remained almost entirely in the hands of nonnatives, represented yet another enabling factor in imagining that Indonesians, if only given the opportunity, might naturally do things differently. Taken together, it becomes easier to understand how Sanusi Pané could (1) assert that "socialism is not alien to Indonesia," (2) acknowledge the persuasive power of Marxist social analysis, and yet still insist (3) that many of the problems Marx described were not native to the Indonesian case and might thus logically be circumvented or transcended via an alternative route to the socially apocryphal one that Marx described: the path lighted by a restored, renovated Asian cultural and racial essence.[32]

Testimony to the depth of Pané's engagement with Marxism is the fact that even as Asianism informed his Marxism, his acute Marxist sensibility also informed his Asianism, making him, for example, an incisive critic of those who would seek to offer an Asian counterfeit masking as the original. This healthy and informed skepticism and Pané's three-dimensionality as political thinker were both on full display

[30]In the prewar and occupation years, Boeke's works were frequently cited by Pané and other prominent nationalists, including Mohammad Hatta.

[31]Original quote in Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), cited in E. & E. Lederer-Seidler, *Japan-Europa: Wandlungen im Fernen Osten* (Franfurt am Main: Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei, 1929), which was in turn cited by the Indonesian editors of *Timboel* 4 (1930):3–4, 38).

[32]Pané's comment on socialism appears in Pané (1935a, p. 176).

in an early 1932 essay entitled, "The International Proletariat and the National Movement," which I cite here at some length because it represents perhaps Pané's most succinct political testament (Pané 1932). "Spiritual nationalism based upon vague sentiments and sparkling with rhetorical phraseology," he wrote,

> cannot perpetually energize the impoverished masses politically, given that they, with the sober view of things inherent to those in miserable poverty, swiftly see through the superficiality of its patriotic slogans and turn [rather] toward a movement, half-rooted in the popular instincts, that gives form to their semi-or unconscious longings. The party that will have the people behind it and will be able to realize the urgent, historically important reforms demanded by the spirit of the times will *not* be the one that strives for Indonesia's political independence yet thereby loses sight of the socio-economic interests of the masses, with capitalist elements adhering in its aims and activities, but [rather] the one that is able to concretely formulate the potential aspirations of the people—which nowadays have the same character in every nation—and to act faithfully toward these principles within the framework of the modern day struggle for a politically independent Indonesia.

Equally visible here, however, was Pané's fundamental discomfort with the notion of class struggle and his desire to combine Marxist social understandings with both liberal humanism and an Asianist cultural essentialism as the ultimate means not toward the undesired violent overthrow of the established social order but rather toward reforming and rectifying its inequities, defanging its class tensions, and restoring a long-lost sense of national community and harmony. For the movement that Pané described here, the movement "capable of synthetically unifying the legitimate national inspirations of today with the socio-economic ideals of the international proletariat" was also one that would represent

> the longed-for social organization, wherein class struggle cannot exist ideologically or factually, while class antagonism is renounced by force of the principles that then apply, more precisely: [the principles] of mankind.

Pané explained the basis of his position as follows:

> Historical-materialism is one-sided in its treatment of history, and in the conception of its economic ideas it takes no account of certain racial differences determined by psychological, climatological, and other influences nor of psychological differences among individuals, so that, as expressed in the treatments of Karl Marx, Bebel, Liebknecht, Kautsky, and the First International, it can assuredly be placed among the utopias. Historical idealism is also guilty of the same one-sidedness and is, where it conjures with metaphysical terms as *world-spirit* and *world-soul,* a delicate complex of speculative ideas that leave room in reality for capitalist-imperialist actions. . . . What mankind desires is a social system wherein the individual takes part in production in the way that best fits his psychological and physical constitution and receives in goods as much as is needed to maintain his living and spiritual requirements. Man's individuality is not denied, and the accumulation of capital is made impossible. As the state recognizes man as an individual, so, in the international organization, must the race *(ras)* be honored as a psychological unity. Summarized in brief, the task of the national movement is: to strive for an independent Indonesia, with a socialist-collectivist political ordering, in which psychological factors are taken into account in the organization of production and distribution.[33]

[33]On the international front, Pané argued: "As an Indonesian state of this sort cannot be an isolated unity and remains exposed to foreign influences, it is necessary for its existence that other states rest upon the same socioeconomic principles. The national movement must therefore continue to think of the future Indonesian state as part of an international organization, to take internationalist conceptions on board, and to maintain a feeling for the international proletariat" (Pané 1932).

Pané's proposed state program was, in sum, a form of national socialism, or what he himself later referred to as *socio-nationalism,* perhaps to avoid confusion with the white-supremacist, imperialist Nazi German model that he explicitly rejected (Pané 1937a, 1937b). In what he frequently described as a meeting of the West's Faust and the East's (Bhagavad Gita warrior) Arjuna, the progressive, dynamic modern ideals of both socialism and liberalism were to be combined with, and tempered by, a resurrected, distinctively Asian national essence. The combination would produce the national social power, security, and harmony necessary both to defeat and transcend Western imperial modernity and the unfortunate, divisive legacies it had left to the East and, second, to coexist in a postcolonial world of competing but like-minded nations (e.g., Pané 1935b, p. 23). These ideas, restated in writings from the prewar through the postwar period, received their most elaborate artistic expression in Pané's 1940 drama "The New Man" *(Manusia Baru),* set in modern-day India. Its central character is the daughter of a native capitalist. She is courted by, and eventually marries, a nationalist union organizer who is engaged in a bitter struggle over worker's rights with her father and his capitalist colleagues. Compensating for the extremism and limitations of these two earnest but implacable modern male foes, and reconciling their seemingly irreconcilable positions, she personifies a harmonization of ancient domestic traditions and modern progress. Thus does her character enable a gendered resolution of the tensions inherent in the opposing constructs of a competitive, individualistic, masculine West and a peaceful, communal, feminine East.

## The Japanese Occupation: "Asia" Drawn Northward

For Sanusi Pané as for many others, the dramatic Japanese arrival in the Indies in March 1942—billed and perceived as the harbinger of a world-historical change in the balance of power between East and West—set in train a profound psychological adjustment. Publicly at least, reservations that Pané had nurtured regarding Japan when it was still at a distance—and while global Western hegemony was still a given—were quickly abandoned in favor of an all-out embrace. In fact, as much as any public figure in Indies society, it was Pané, as cultural commentator of the new Japanese-sponsored *Asia Raya* newspaper, who took an early lead in connecting Japan and Indonesia in past, present, and future and in promoting Indonesia's cultural Asianization under Japanese stewardship.

Even before the Japanese victory was assured, Pané was already busying himself with a study entitled "The Japanese Language and the Austronesian Language Family." Its first installment was published in the nationalist daily *Pemandangan* on March 12, 1942, just three days after the Dutch surrender. A month afterward, this appeared as an introduction to Pané's forty-eight-page booklet entitled *A Guide to the Japanese Language.* In his research, despite any apparent previous familiarity with the Japanese language, Pané made an attempt to reveal that Japanese was not an Altaic language, as maintained by many Western linguists, but was rather an Austronesian language—the language family in which linguists had placed Malay and other local languages including Javanese, Sundanese, and the Jakarta Malay dialect Betawi (Pane 1942a). His claim had the effect not simply of stressing the Asianness of Japanese but of specifically linking them to the maritime southern world, as opposed to the continental Eurasian world of the Mongolian and Turkic peoples.[34]

[34]I would like to thank Lewis Mayo for highlighting this point.

In subsequent weeks and months, Pané continued to seem comfortable in this sort of blurring of the internal and external boundaries of Japan and Indonesia. In his contribution to the first issue of the *Asia Raya* newspaper on the emperor's birthday of April 29, 1942, entitled "The Culture of Greater Asia," he proposed a virtual grocery list of cultural traditions supposedly shared by Japanese and Indonesians alike (Pané 1942b). Both honored their ancestors. Both built monuments to dead kings—a phenomenon also found in the West, he admitted, but "without the sense of religion as in the East." Both shared a Buddhist tradition. Japan's warrior code of *bushidô* could be compared to the Bhagavad Gita and the stories of Sri Krishna. While Westerners considered themselves apart from nature, employing science as a weapon to "make Nature their servant" and to "add to their pleasure and their wealth," he wrote, Japanese, Indonesians, and other Easterners aspired to "become one with Nature." Westerners, he argued, were the prisoners of a materialism and greed that had possessed their spirit, their society, and their economy. Now the West was falling into a chasm of confusion *(kekaloetan)* and death *(kebinasaan);* worse, it sought to take the rest of the world down with it. Crisis followed upon crisis, malaise upon malaise, but the West had been unable to solve these problems because it had neglected to "change the basis of its culture."

At the end of this passage, Pané took up a question of perennial delicacy when it came to the constructing of an "Indonesian" national identity, all the more so now, with the (non-Muslim) Japanese rulers claiming a shared Asian history and culture. What of Islam, and the alternative global and Asian order that it suggested? Pané chose to play down this potential source of tension: True, he noted, Islam had "left its mark" *(memberi tjoraknja)* upon Indonesian culture, and in contrast "there are few Muslims in Japan and China." But this, he suggested, was but a ripple on the surface. "In its basis," he continued, "Indonesian culture is not different from those of Japan, China, or India."

Over the period in which he served as *Asia Raya* cultural commentator, Pané continued to elaborate almost daily upon the themes of Eastern and Western distance and of Indonesian and Japanese proximity. In another classic essay, Pané took aim at what he called "The Mistake of Vulgar Marxism," lambasting those who would "believe only in material life and material conditions," whose story of history was "merely that of changing means of production," who sought only to achieve "equality in all things," and whose

> realm of thinking allows no room for the great beauty of nature. . . . They fail to sense the miraculous in the beauty of the poems of Kalidjasa (India) and Li Tai Po (China), the *manyôshû* poets (Japan), or Pushkin (Russia). They approach society . . . like a warehouse of machines. Mankind cannot attain an identical level, an identical ability, an identical character. What can be imagined and aimed for is to accord as good a place as possible to every person, according to his temperament, his character, and his ability.
>
> (Pané 1942c)

The incisive weapons and analyses of Marxism had had their place in the Western-dominated colonial world, Pané asserted, but their continued unrestrained application now represented a hindrance to building of an improved, post-colonial Asian order.

> It is imaginable that in times past the hearts of many Indonesians were drawn to Marxism (vulgar Marxism), as a [form of] resistance against an arbitrary colonial regime, but they must now be aware that the times have changed. We no longer face

> a colonial order. . . . What is important is to release one's self from the old thinking like that contained within (vulgar) Marxism . . . because this sort of thinking is at odds with the soul of the East, which cannot forget the spiritual *(kerohanian).*

The answer to Indonesia's many remaining social problems, wrote Pané, was to be one of national unity rather than personal or class antagonism: "Indonesians who had a good position in the old order—good in a limited sense," he noted, "because in fact in the colonial order no one had it good—must find a way to put a greater priority upon the aspirations, aims, and interests of the whole rather than upon [those of] themselves alone." In so doing, he argued here and elsewhere, they would discard the divisive social legacies imported and imparted to Indonesia by an egoistic and materialistic West.[35] With the help of the Japanese, wrote Pané, things would now be different: "The new era will place culture in the center of society and radiate it into all branches of life."

Noteworthy in this essay, too, however, was Pané's consistent attachment of the parenthetical distinction *vulgar* to the Marxism he criticized, indicating a bold refusal to surrender Marxism and its social relevance to Asian experience in toto, even at the possible risk of provoking the military censors.[36] Perhaps out of concern for this risk, no elaboration was provided. The qualification alone was enough, however, to suggest that a conditional and selective appropriation of Marxist theories and principles, judiciously tempered with an ample dose of Eastern spirituality and culture, might yet have its place in a new, postcolonial and postcapitalist Asian order.

Here as elsewhere in Pané's wartime writings, correspondences to his prewar positions were striking, but with two critical distinctions: First, Japan, rather than India, was now being foregrounded as Asian representative and, more importantly, as Asian success story. Second, in the context of Japanese hegemony, the theme of culture as the answer to the challenge of Western modernity, within the aim of modern nation-building, had been brought into sharp relief, presented with a new conviction and intensity. Pané was no chameleon in the manner of the classical paradigm of wartime or colonial collaboration, simply changing his shallow surface colors to ensure survival in a changed environment. The stir to Pané's thinking imparted by Japan's presence, and the manner of its arrival, was profound. At the same time, if we regard these wartime writings within the context of Pané's longer, transwar intellectual trajectory, the shift that they represent would appear to have more the quality of an inflection and a modulation than any fundamental, paradigmatic change. These ar-

[35]Social problems introduced by corrupting Western influences, Pané noted in another essay, could be attributed to Dutch educational policies that emphasized only cleverness and ignored spiritual education. "Character, love of society, deep sentiments—these were ignored" (Pané 1942f). In another essay Pané added that alongside an essential Western inattention to matters of the spirit, this oversight was also motivated by a fear that spiritual learning would only strengthen the spirit of Indonesian opposition to imperialism (Pané 1942e).

[36]In occupied Java—as in prewar and wartime Japan itself—the Japanese military authorities instituted a regime of stringent prepublication censorship. This stringency was to some degree mitigated, however, by a variety of factors, such as a severe shortage of Japanese functional in the Indonesian language, the presence of Indonesian nationalists among the native staff at the military censor's office, a relative hands-off approach among several Japanese members of the Propaganda Department, and tolerant, sympathetic attitudes toward Indonesian nationalists among those Japanese on the *Asia Raya* staff who did speak Indonesian (Ichiki Tatsuo and Nakatani Yoshio, both prewar Indies residents). See Mark (2003, particularly pp. 322–29.

guments were striking not so much for their introduction of themes new to Pané as in the confidence and aggressiveness with which they were deployed.

In a sense, this modulation, too, should not be entirely surprising, for under Japanese rule, it was, after all, open hunting season on the West and its problems. Furthermore, in this period of dazzling Japanese triumph and Dutch disgrace, interest in the lessons Japan's experience might hold for Indonesia, and a corresponding openness to the idea of a shared racial and cultural heritage, was widespread among Indonesia's nationalists.[37] Nor, as noted previously, was Pané alone among Indonesian nationalists in emphasizing "Indonesia's" cultural traditions as essentially Hindu-Buddhist rather than Islamic. Still, the particular eagerness with which Pané promoted the links between Japan and Indonesia suggested something more than the ordinary: It was as if, with Japan's arrival in Indonesia, everything had fallen into place.

In this regard, one remarkable essay entitled "One Ancestry, One Race," written two months after the Japanese arrival, stood out from the others (Pané 1942d). Here, in rhetoric strikingly reminiscent of conservative Japanese statements, Pané demonstrated so deep a faith in Greater Asia as to suggest the possible sacrifice of the sacred concept of Indonesia itself. Was "Indonesia," he argued, not itself in fact a foreign inheritance, a product of Western colonialism, in contrast to a natural, preexisting Asia? His open embrace of the Japanese brand of Greater Asianism extended even to the use of Japanese imperial terminology *sumera mikuni* (the imperial realm) and *sumera mitami* (imperial subjects).[38]

> If we do not believe that the Indonesian race can enter *Sumera Mikuni* and become *Sumera Mitami,* then we are denying the true story and the true situation. For thirty years we have aspired to a unified Indonesia, to a Great Indonesia *(Indonesia Raya),* such that it is understandable that there are Indonesians who are startled to hear of *Sumera Mikuni* and *Sumera Mitami.* But when we think deeply, we must admit that what we considered our homeland for the last thirty years, and what we call Indonesia, is only a coincidence, merely the area corresponding to that under Dutch control.
>
> It may be assumed that if the [Malay] Peninsula, the Philippines, Madagascar, and New Zealand, too, were included within the realm of Dutch control, we would view these areas, too, as part of our homeland! In truth the original inhabitants of the [Malay] Peninsula, Madagascar, and New Zealand are [indeed] of the same ancestry and the same race as us. The Malay language of the Peninsula, the Malagasi language, and the Maori language belong to the same family as the Indonesian language. It is easy for us, too, to feel as one race with the Japanese—suppose that Japan and Indonesia had both been under the rule of, for example, the English. Under these circumstances, we would have [already] been aspiring to *Sumera Mikuni* from before. It is thus clear that our denial of the possibility of being the same race as the Japanese and becoming *Sumera Mitami* is in essence completely hollow *(kosong belaka),* based only upon an unnatural situation; that is, upon Dutch hegemony.

For any who might have remained in the dark about what Pané was driving at, his subsequent conclusion left little room for second-guessing.

[37]Prominent nationalist political, cultural, and religious figures such as Sukarno, Anwar Tjokroaminoto, H. B. Jassin, Achmad Subardjo, Soekardjo Wirjopranoto, and Asmara Hadi emphasized this interest and openness in their public writings and addresses, particularly in the early stages of the Japanese occupation. See their numerous submissions to the newspapers *Asia Raya* and *Pemandangan* as well as the arts and culture magazine *Pandji Poestaka* in the years 1942–1943, discussed in Mark (2003, particularly pp. 280–356).

[38]Pané's essay appeared immediately alongside a lengthy excerpt from Rabindranath Tagore's "Hope" *(Harapan),* the third of four to appear in *Asia Raya* that same week.

> The desire for *Sumera Mikuni* and *Sumera Mitami* is based not upon facts of coincidence but upon facts that are visible and real. The fact that we share the same ancestry with the Japanese race is not something merely temporary like Dutch rule. The wall that for so long kept us apart from Japan has now collapsed, and in this era the unification of the region of the Pacific Ocean—our ocean—is no longer simply a dream. Is it still appropriate that we nurture the old ideals, that we aim for Great Indonesia *(Indonesia Raya),* when we can now aim for ideals more in harmony with the desires of nature, more pure, that is to unify the *Sumera Mitami* once again and to purge foreign power from our homeland, from the Pacific Ocean? We understand that it is difficult for the inhabitants of Indonesia, who have for so long struggled to free themselves from imperialism, to immediately return to these proper ideals, to suddenly expand their aims. But the principles of *Sumera Mikuni* and *Sumera Mitami* must begin to be realized in Indonesian society, must become a guideline for us in all fields.

Even when set alongside the many enthusiastically pro-Asian texts produced by the *pribumi* intelligentsia in this period, Pané's readiness to reject the notion of Indonesia outright as "coincidental," and his seemingly unconditional, even slavish embrace of the logic of *sumera mikuni,* stand out as exceptional and also exceptionally unsubtle. From the standpoint of the committed Indonesian nationalist, Pané's assertions amount to heresy, particularly in the historical hindsight of Indonesia as an established fact.

What had prompted Pané, a man historically to the left of the nationalist political spectrum, to go this far in embracing Japan and its particular version of the Asian project? I would suggest that at least one part of the answer lies, once more, in Pané's relative inside-outside origins in relation to the national movement. Put another way, although Pané's class and educational background propelled him profoundly in the nationalist direction, it can be argued that Pané's non-Muslim and non-Javanese identity had always made the question of what it meant to be "Indonesian" a particularly sensitive, difficult, and urgent one. Thus the exceptional eagerness with which Pané had earlier reached out to an India-centered Asian model within which his own decenteredness vis-à-vis the dominant cultural qualities of his nationalist colleagues, and the masses they were supposed to represent, was made largely irrelevant. And thus, I would argue, one reason that Pané, with the extra push provided by the dazzling display of Japanese power against the forces of the enemy West, embraced the Japanese and their Greater Asian mission with such exceptional conviction. In sum, the idea of a Japanese-sponsored Greater Asia carried, for Pané, an especially profound resonance with the national and personal problematic with which he had already long been concerned. It was this comfort zone, combined with the seductive power with which Japan made its entrance, that made it so easy for Pané to embrace Japan's arrival as heralding something more than just another colonial occupation, despite his prewar skepticism on the subject.

The strength of Pané's conviction in an Indonesian-Japanese linkage might also be attributed to one further local factor. Not only did Pané's Batak home region share with Japan a relative absence of Muslim religion and identity, but the two cultures could also be construed to share a common presence as well, in the form of what sociologists call animist spiritual belief systems. Animist practices were also seen to persist in other parts of the archipelago—having mixed with Islam, for example, in Java—but to have retained their purest expressions in places untouched by Islam, including parts of Pané's native Batak region of Sumatra and the Toraja region of

Sulawesi.[39] Japanese observers were quick to note similarities between Japan's Shinto and these ancient local beliefs and practices, and they were quick to interpret these as proof of a common ancient racial and cultural history (and, correspondingly, to downplay the more recent influence of Islam in determining Indonesia's, and Asia's, cultural essence).[40] They were not always alone in doing so. In an October 1942 conversation in Jakarta with a Dutch acquaintance, Hoesein Djajadiningrat, a Leiden-educated expert on Islamic law and former advisor to the Netherlands Indies Internal Affairs Department then working as a high-ranking advisor to the Military Administration's Religious Affairs Department, complained that Japanese religious policymakers "had hoped to find a starting point in animism," which some "clumsy Indonesian advisor had depicted as the nucleus of Indonesian culture," and "continue to [try to] pry this loose" (Jansen 1988, p. 59). The advisor in question remained unnamed, but it is not difficult to extrapolate sympathy for such ideas on Sanusi Pané's part, sympathy most clearly implied in the essay "One Ancestry, One Race."

## *Sedjarah Indonesia*: Back to India

In the extent to which it expressed a readiness to abandon even the hallowed tenets of Indonesian nationalism itself on the altar of a new, Japan-centered Asian polity, "One Ancestry, One Race" represents an important statement deserving of special attention. Still, although he remained extremely positive about Japan in his statements up to the end of the war and occupation in August 1945, even for Pané, the temporary abandonment of Indonesia-centrism in this essay proved an exception to the longer-term rule. Within just a few months of the start of the Japanese occupation, his rhetorical ammunition for the present apparently spent, Pané stepped back from public view and turned most of his productive energies toward a project of long-standing interest: the authorship of a multivolume history of Indonesia for use as a

[39]Describing the archipelago's earliest history in the first volume of his *History of Indonesia,* Pané wrote:

> The people of the archipelago of those times were active in sailing, they already knew how to work the *sawah,* and they already had knowledge of astronomy. Their civilization was already high. What their religion and society was like can be studied today in those areas completely untouched by the influence of Hindu, Muslim, and Western culture. Our ancestors *(nenek-mojang kita)* worshipped the spirits of deceased people in general, and the builders of tribes or lands in particular. . . . The sun, too, was worshipped. The earliest people were descendents of the sun *(Manoesia jang pertama toeroenan matahari).* They also believed in creatures that were invisible *(haloes)* and good [called] *hijang-hijang* or *jang-jang* and in creatures that were invisible and evil *(djahat).* These creatures inhabited the heavens, mountains, trees, large rocks, etc. The ancestors were included with the *hijang. . . .* The world was considered to contain "spirit" *(semangat),* incarnated in all creatures, plants, and things.
>
> (Pané 1942g, pp. 5–7)

An almost identical text appeared in Pané (1952, pp. 124–25).

[40]This was contended in the wartime work of Bekki Atsuhiko, a geographer attached to the Sixteenth Army Propaganda Unit in Java, whose assertions in this regard were enthusiastically accepted and propagated by, among others, Lt. Col. Machida Keiji, commander of the unit (Machida 1967, p. 274). In his published memoirs, Fusayama Takao, who was stationed in the Batak region during the war and emerged as one of the most active and outspoken of Japan's so-called "Greater Asia War" revisionists in the 1980s and 1990s, narrates his excited wartime recognition of a common Japanese-Batak cultural tradition and, by extension, a common Japanese-Indonesian tradition (1993).

textbook in the schools of the independent Indonesia to come, a history from which Japan was, remarkably, almost entirely absent.[41]

Although it lacked bibliographical citations, Pané's *Sedjarah Indonesia (History of Indonesia)* was no simple propaganda exercise but a serious work of scholarship grounded in the methods of scientific positivism.[42] As one result, as Pané noted in his introduction, it was an often dry text full of unsatisfying "maybes and unknowns." The documentary record, however, was clearly being plumbed for—and employed to give scientific credence to—a quintessentially national project: the depiction of "Indonesia" as both a social and cultural unity from the beginnings of recorded history, now fragmented by outside forces and the passage of time, but naturally predestined for a modern restoration. It was a construction that Pané had been formulating since his teaching days back at the Gunung Sahari and that he had articulated on numerous occasions in the years before the war.[43]

Pané opened volume 1 of his *History of Indonesia* with the assertion that modern-day Indonesians could trace their ancient origins to a common locale—India Minor (Hindia Belakang), or present-day northern Vietnam and Laos—from which immigration to various parts of the archipelago had begun around 2,500 years BCE. This could be confirmed, he wrote, by "comparing the cultures and languages of the archipelago with those of the surrounding areas." "Because our ancestors did not leave their original lands together, because their locations in the archipelago varied, and their subsequent relations with foreign races varied, differences in ways and customs and languages arose," acknowledged Pané, "but up until today it is also clear, that almost all of the ways and customs and languages in the archipelago are of a single basis and a single descent." These primeval ancestors, he wrote, already practiced a communal form of landholding and social life: "The land surrounding the villages was the property of the village and was worked together. In other matters, too, for example in the building of houses, the residents helped one another and also worked together (Jv. *gotong rojong*)." Pre-Western waves of foreign influences and immigration, most notably from India, had been peacefully assimilated into the culture and spirit of the archipelago without overwhelming its original essence. Aspects such as sun worship, for example, continued to inform the local interpretation of Hinduism; Buddhism and Hinduism had mixed with local beliefs "without ever coming into oppo-

[41]While writing this history, Pané also took up leadership of the Center for Indonesian Arts (Pusat Kesenian Indonesia) in October 1942 and later coleadership of the Japanese-sponsored Center for the Guidance of Popular Culture and Enlightenment (Keimin bunka shidôsho) in March 1943, where he stayed until the end of the occupation (Mark 2003, pp. 422–23, 526–28).

[42]By *positivism* I mean a strict adherence to the early-to-mid-twentieth-century conventions of history as objective social science, based upon a close, painstaking, and critical scrutiny of primary historical texts, as advocated by leading European and American Orientalist scholars. See, for example, Pané's careful description of historical sources—and, by intimation, Orientalist scholars—that disagreed with one another regarding the important question of the timing and scope of the empire of Sriwijaya, and his corresponding refusal to commit himself to one particular standpoint (1942g, p. 33). The lack of footnotes would appear to have partly functioned to distance Pané's *History* from the work of European Orientalists, upon whose research much of his history was unavoidably based, but who were not cited by name.

[43]Pané made a robust defense of this position in a widely publicized debate on national culture with fellow Sumatran nationalist man of letters Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana in 1935. The debate involved a number of other nationalist prominents and carried on for several months across the pages of several nationalist journals. The texts were later collected together as "The Debate on Culture" *(Polemik Keboedajaan)* in Mihardja (1949). For an earlier statement, see also Pané (1930e).

sition with one another"; and "the villages generally did not change their [social] structure," with "the principle of *gotong rojong* also remaining in force" (Pane 1942g, pp. 3–8, 117–18, 120–21).

Although volume 1 of Pané's *History of Indonesia* was devoted almost entirely to the Hindu-Buddhist age and the ancient and medieval empires of Sriwijaya and Majapahit, volume 2 onward shifted to the colonial era and to a narrative of national struggle for liberation and the restoration of national unity in the face of the divisive, oppressive, corrosive policies and influence of Western imperialism. In between, the arrival, spread, and history of Islam in the archipelago was given only marginal coverage, with a promised in-depth treatment in a later volume postponed on two occasions and never, in the end, materializing.[44] The emphasis on culture and religion in the first volume, meanwhile, gave way to a focus on the military, political, and economic realms as the preeminent sites of oppression and resistance in the struggle against the Dutch.[45] Where cultural issues did receive treatment here, they assumed a mostly somber, negative enframing: The assimilation of Western "individualism," "materialism," and "Western ways of thinking (emphasizing analysis, the concrete, and the real) and placing importance on the ephemeral *(mementingkan sa'at sa'at),*" wrote Pané, was accompanied by a "loosening of family ties," a "dimming of faith in the spirits *(hijang-hijang),*" and a fragmentation of the communal spirit. "On top of this, because of state policies, economics, Dutch education, in sum, because of the array of forces called colonial domination," wrote Pané, "Indonesian culture could not grow in a healthy way" (Pané 1944b, pp. 74–75).[46]

Although the assault on colonialism's cultural influences, the backgrounding of Islam, and the foregrounding of older Hindu-Buddhist influences in the making of "Indonesia" were nothing new to Pané's historiographical repertoire, another aspect of Pané's narrative in *Sedjarah Indonesia* did seem to represent a striking break with the past—at least, that is, with the more immediate past. In the volume dealing with Indonesia's ancient history, first published in late 1942, there were no references to *sumera mikuni* or, for that matter, to Japan at all. Indeed, Japan did not make an appearance in Pané's narrative until the final two pages of the final volume, first published at the end of 1944, under the heading of "The Arrival of the Japanese Imperial Army." Even here, the text consisted only of a narration of ill-fated Dutch-Japanese prewar negotiations, a list of Japan's victories in its subsequent military advance southward in the months prior to March 1942, and a single closing sentence: "Thus did the Dutch government fall and the new era in Indonesia begin." For Pané,

[44]See the respective prefaces to *Sedjarah Indonesia,* vols. 2 and 3 (Pané 1943, 1944a).

[45]Volume 2, dealing with the period through 1800, carried the subheading "The Struggle Against the [Dutch East India] Company," and in his foreword to volume 3—devoted to the years 1800–1870—Pané wrote, "The Diponegoro War [in Java] and the Pidari War [in South Sumatra], along with the Minangkabau War [in West Sumatra], are discussed at greater length in this volume than any other developments. The reason is clear: These three wars, together with the Atjeh War [covered at length in volume 4], were the pinnacle of resistance against the Dutch" (Pané 1943, 1944a). In a fourth and final volume that appeared at the end of 1944—added to the original plan of three volumes, Pané noted, due to "interest in the first two volumes that was much greater than I had anticipated"—Pané covered "The Period of the New Imperialism through the Arrival of the Japanese Army." Here, as in volumes 2 and 3, the story was primarily one of Western oppression and local resistance in military, political, and economic terms (Pané 1944b).

[46]The one major exception to this pattern of enframing was a closing chapter in Pané's final volume on positive prewar trends in his specialty—nationalist cultural education—focusing on language, literature, and *wayang* drama.

*Sedjarah Indonesia* represented a return to an Indonesia resting on the more secure historical bedrock of an indigenous, Hindu-Buddhist tradition. More secure because it was more easily verifiable in scientific terms, because it was a narrative of longstanding familiarity to Pané, and because—amid an Indonesia society whose early embrace of the Japanese as brotherly liberators was now giving way to broadening antipathy toward the Japanese as arrogant occupiers—it was also less politically controversial.

In retrospect, Pané's return to a primarily India-centered Asian imagining of a naturally preordained Indonesia in *Sedjarah Indonesia*—and the ease with which he made this return to his longer-term themes—only highlighted the extraordinary nature of his momentary 1942 opening to both a naturally Japan-centered historical Asian order and to a corresponding undermining of the fundamental tenets of Indonesian nationalism to date, as revealed in "One Ancestry, One Race." This opening can perhaps best be read as a reflection of the destabilizing effects of Japan's stunning victory—of Japanese global-historical power at its short-lived 1940s pinnacle—upon the mind of one of Asia's most dedicated Asianists. "One Ancestry, One Race" remains remarkable not only for its overt embrace of Japan but also for its startling interrogation of "Indonesia" and the latent and unintended, but inevitably subversive, by-product of this interrogation: its identification of nations and empires more generally not as heavenly ordained entities but as man-made, mutually implicated, historically and politically contingent, "coincidental" entities. Briefly reflecting on the occupation period in a 1952 work, Pané later acknowledged that Japanese occupiers and Indonesian nationalists had shared enough common interests in opposing "the imperialism and capitalism of Holland, England, and America" to work together "to a point" (Pané 1952, p. 122). That the heady mood of Japanese victory, in combination with Pané's personal history and agenda, had prompted him to go far beyond this mode of pragmatic cooperation alone in May 1942—indeed, to move to a questioning of the very legitimacy of the national project itself—was, needless to say, omitted.

## Transwar Resonances

As Japanese rule gave way to the liberation struggle against the returning Dutch in 1945 and to subsequent attainment of national sovereignty in 1949, it was the nationalist historical narrative of *Sedjarah Indonesia*—along with Pané's prewar works of poetry and drama—that remained as Pané's postwar legacy. Amid the greatly changed circumstances of late 1945–46—with the Japanese occupation a memory and national revolution against the Dutch now in full swing—Pané and his publishers found little wanting in *Sedjarah Indonesia,* with the changes deemed necessary from the first edition amounting to little more than the deletion of its final two pages (Pané 1945–46). In subsequent years, with its eminently scholarly presentation of Indonesian history as a story of national unity threatened by Western colonialism but predestined, through ongoing struggle, for a modern restoration—a narrative in which domestic factors standing in the way of this organic historical predestiny, including religious, regional, ethnic, and class divides and tensions, were either played down or ascribed to unnatural contaminants of foreign, Western derivation—*Sedjarah Indonesia* proved of remarkable durability. Traversing the political chasms separating the Japanese occupation period, the revolutionary period, and the postindependence periods with little difficulty, it saw seven printings between 1945 and 1965 and served as the standard history text in Indonesia's secondary schools during the Sukarno years. Although *Sedjarah Indonesia* went out of fashion with the arrival of Suharto's New

Order regime after 1965, it was never formally banned, and its gradual disappearance from Indonesia's schools and bookstores from this time onward would appear to have had as much to do with its general association with the previous regime, and perhaps a perception of datedness, as with any official objection to its contents (Christina 2002).

The end of the war marked the end of Sanusi Pané's most innovative, productive period as artist and scholar. His occasional postwar offerings looked more backward than forward. *Indonesia through the Ages (Indonesia Sepandjang Masa),* a book-length study published in 1952 that mixed theoretical discussions with historical narrative, was offered as a supplement and a clarification of some of the self-acknowledged shortcomings of *Sedjarah Indonesia.* Writing in "the atmosphere of wartime," Pané acknowledged that he had been overly concerned with "the need at that time to emphasize spirit and Indonesian culture," at the expense of a more objective and holistic approach. The bombastic voice of the war years had softened. In essence, however, the contents represented little more than a fine-tuning of Pané's longer-term ideas of history, culture, and society (Pané 1952, pp. 4–5, 7–8, 139–141).[47]

In light of this, we may locate an appropriate end to this discussion in a speech entitled "Service, Familiality, and Independence," which Pané delivered at the Center for Direction of Popular Cultural Enlightenment in September 1944, just after he had completed work on the third volume of *Sedjarah Indonesia* and just after the issuance of a long-awaited Japanese promise of Indonesian independence at some point in the future. Here, as in *Sedjarah Indonesia,* the longer-term, transwar continuities in Pané's thinking shined through. As he had since the early 1930s, Pané argued that Hegel's (and, by implication, Marx's) idea of the dialectic of history was not in itself wrong nor incompatible with the Asian spirit. Rather, in partnership with Japan, Indonesia would bring to its national development "a sense of unity with nature, the creations of God, and morality" lacking in the West's exclusive concern with "individualism and rationality," thereby "controlling (not weakening or killing) its thoughts and its movements, its dialectic, as opposed to being at [the] mercy [of the dialectic], as in the philosophy of Hegel" (Pané 1944c).

At the outset of this discussion, I argued that the opening of Asia's nationalizing, modernizing subelites to notions of an alternative Asian model of modernity, distinguished and empowered by a renovated originary cultural and racial essence—and the particular ways that this model was envisaged in the interwar and wartime years—was conditioned and prefigured primarily by factors of class position, global Western liberal-capitalist/imperial hegemony, and the global crisis of this hegemony from the 1920s to the 1940s. The writings of Sanusi Pané represent an exceptionally vivid example of this phenomenon. I have argued that this vividness may be attributed in part to Pané's particular inside-outside situation within the mainstream of the Indonesian nationalist movement. His case, however, should be seen not so much as

[47]See here, for example, Pané's reprise of the now familiar characterizations of the West as Faust and the East as Arjuna; of the penetration of Western colonialism as signaling the end of Indonesia's originary communal values; of the attractions and limitations of the dialectics of Hegel and Marx; his conviction that "the study of history means making an effort, within our limited powers, to understand the desires of God"; and his assertion of the need for history writers to acknowledge and incorporate into their work the "science of the races of man" *(ilmu djenis-djenis manoesia)* and geopolitics—the studies, that is, of racial characteristics and national boundaries as "defined by nature" *(ditentukan oleh alam)*—even has he acknowledged that these sciences had "up until now" been inappropriately employed to promote notions of racial supremacy.

unique but rather as representing an exceptionally dramatic and illuminating play on the more general refrains of interwar and wartime nationalist Asianism, which, like Pané's *History of Indonesia,* continued to resonate in the postwar, postcolonial order.

Pané's proposal to quarantine class struggle as a characteristic of the Western (as opposed to a universal) modern and to transcend or gain control over history's dialectic through the return to an authentically non-Western cultural heritage was expressive of the basic tenets common to twentieth-century Asianism, particularly in its interwar and wartime incarnations. It is a construction whose appeals crossed national boundaries and embraced the range of the conventional left-right political spectrum. The transwar perspective provided in this essay and its specific focus on a non-Japanese participant in the Greater Asian project are meant not only to highlight Asianism as a transnational and transwar ideology but also to illuminate some of the basic problems and contradictions characteristic to it. Whether under colonial or national regimes, across the region's domestic contexts, the continued search for this sort of solution to the problems of modernity—combined with the assumption that necessary social and political reforms will, upon its realization, effectively take care of themselves—in fact served as legitimation for conservative social policies, enabling the continuance of essential structural aspects of colonial orders into postcolonial ones. The social idealism of its many exponents notwithstanding, Asianism helped enable the indefinite postponement of resolutions of the very domestic social and political problems and tensions to which it promised, and promises, a transcendent answer.

Coming full circle, it might be argued that the limits and contradictions that define Asianism were contained in the original conjuring trick of Theosophy, itself the product of a lengthier Orientalist intellectual heritage, as old as colonialism itself. By this I mean the construction of an Oriental other that is itself a product of, and ultimately in connivance with, the very modern, Western-dominated, capitalist global order of things that it so desperately sought to overcome.

By 1945, with the global illegitimacy both of (formal) Western colonial dominance and of the Japanese Empire assured, the colonial version of Theosophy was largely forgotten, and the tenets of Japanese Asianism appeared as little more than imperialist trickery.[48] Yet in the postcolonial period, domesticated national versions of Asianism in the non-West remained, and remain, a powerful force. Despite its checkered history, the idea remained extremely tempting that an Asianist nation-building program that failed when its protagonists were limited to the role of junior partner (first with the West and then with Japan) might yet succeed with custodianship fully in domestic hands. Particularly among the modernizing, nation-building bourgeoisies now dominant in Asia's newly independent nation-states.[49]

[48]Japanese imperial Asianism was more unambiguously discredited than Theosophy, which continues to have a small worldwide following. In correlation with the Japanese economic miracle of the 1970s and 1980s, however, Japan as a peaceful Asian model did make a regional and even global reemergence; in the last decade, in tandem with continued postindustrial recession, it has again receded from this role—everywhere, that is, except among Japan's own resurgent right wing.

[49]The "Asian Values" discourse that peaked in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly associated with spokesmen of the so-called Asian Tiger nations and meant perhaps most importantly for foreign consumption, is a ready example. It can be argued, however, that Asianism in more subtle and diversely domesticated national incarnations held much broader sway. For the Indonesian case, the language of Megawati Sukarnoputri's first presidential address is suggestive.

> I, as President of the Republic of Indonesia, have assembled a government whose

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cabinet I call the Mutual Cooperation (Gotong-Royong) Cabinet. This title is more than just a name. Indeed, it precisely represents the life-essence of the Indonesian Nation as family-society. We must therefore continue to preserve *gotong-royong* with care. Because only by discarding all personal interests, can we work together shoulder-to-shoulder in mutual cooperation to escape from the crisis that has concerned us for so long. (Radio Nederland Warta Berita, August 12, 2001).

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