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# Japanese–Thai Materials and Scholarship Concerning the Second World War

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### I. Japanese Materials and Existing Scholarship

**1. Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** Documents (records) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan from the early years of the Meiji era have been compiled into the same collection according to a prearranged classification method and number and preserved based on the classification numbers. Most of them are drafts and final texts of official mails and telegrams and the relevant materials; however, the policymaking processes which produced many of these documents remain unclear.

The important documents containing confidential matters from the mid-1930s through the end of the war were systematically destroyed immediately after the war. The materials destroyed included those concerning political and military relations between Japan and Thailand from the mid-1930s until 1945. Subsequently, the remaining documents were confiscated by the American occupation forces and taken to the US, where many of them were microfilmed.

After the war, a number of official documents held privately by individuals (due to a lack of control over information on the part of Japanese government agencies) were donated to the government, returned to their original files and preserved in the Diplomatic Archives. However, such documents are few in number, and most of the files have only classification numbers and titles, but no contents.

Extant copies of official wartime telegrams between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies and consulates overseas are extremely scarce. E. Bruce Reynolds, in his book *Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance 1940–1945* (Reynolds 1994), often cites the “Magic” documents (SRDJ) held by the National Archives (NA) in Washington, DC, which are wartime diplomatic telegrams that were decoded and translated into English (though often incompletely and/or incorrectly) and supplement the lack of extant telegrams in Japan. His book is used as a fundamental reference book for this period. Reynolds wrote a second book (Reynolds 2005) with the Free Thai Movement as its subject, using the historical records of the American National Archives and the British archives in London.

Studies on the Free Thai Movement by Japanese include Ichikawa Kenjiro's 『日本占領下タイの抗日運動：自由タイの指導者たち』 [The anti-Japanese movement in Thailand under Japanese Occupation: Leaders of the Free Thai Movement] (Ichikawa 1987). However, the book is principally based on published English works and is far from a professional study. Access to historical records preserved at the

Academia Historica and Kuomintang Party History Institute in Taiwan should produce new studies of the Free Thai Movement. A young Thai historian, Wasana Wongsurawat, has used some Taiwanese records in her dissertation (Wasana 2007).

The index of diplomatic records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been published in a two-volume catalog (Gaimusho Gaikyo Shiryokan 1992-3). In addition, the Diplomatic Archives preserve private postwar documents such as manuscripts belonging to Yamamoto Kumaichi (A700, 9-69), an Ambassador in Thailand during the war.

## 2. Military Archives of the National Institute for Defense Studies

The generally careless approach to managing documents followed by civilian government agencies was prevalent in the military as well, and it seems that before the war a considerable number of military documents from the Meiji Era onward had already been removed from government offices and lost. Examples include reports to the General Staff Office by Fukushima Yasumasa (first Colonel and later General in the Imperial Japanese Army) on a number of overseas business trips between 1886–1897 (including a survey trip to Siam and Annam in early 1897) and by Uehara Yusaku (Major and later Field Marshal) surveying the military situation in Siam and Annam after the Franco-Siamese Paknam Incident in July–October 1893. Such reports were no longer available in the General Staff Office in 1930s, judging from the accounts in the biographies of these two men: Ota 1941 and Araki 1937.

The Japanese Army deliberately destroyed documents preserved from the Meiji Era between the surrender and the arrival of American occupation forces. While the destruction of essential diplomatic documents at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was limited to those from the 1930s, the military determined to get rid of all documents dating back to the Meiji period. Some documents were concealed in violation of the destruction order, however, including the written records of liaison conferences between the Government and Imperial General Headquarters, published as the “Sugiyama Memos” (Sanbo Honbu 1967) and a confidential war diary from Army Headquarters (Gunjishi Gakkai 2008). These documents contain quite a few materials related to Thailand and French Indochina. The present author has published an article (Murashima 2006) comparing Thai materials with this diary.

Many of the materials preserved at the Military Archives of the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), Ministry of Defense are private and official documents collected after the war in the 102-volume series 『戦史叢書』 [Collected documents on the history of the war] (Boeicho Senshishitsu 1966–1980). Careful reading of private documents (such as operational records of the General Staff officers) reveals events related to Thailand (particularly those before and after the outbreak of war) that were deliberately omitted from this compilation, as well as accounts that were included but are frankly inaccurate; this leaves room for further study.

### 3. Published and Unpublished Materials

#### Publications (in Japanese)

There are several important memoirs and collections of unofficial wartime documents. Nakamura 1958 is the memoir of Nakamura Aketo, the Bangkok-based Commander of the 39th Army and 18th Area Army. The author and Dr Nakharin Mektrairat have translated this book into Thai (Nakamura 2012). The published version was based on Nakamura's unpublished account 「駐泰四年回想録」 [A memoir of four years in Thailand] (held in the Library of National Institute for Defense Studies, South-West/Thai–French Indochina/5–7). Nanpokai 1969 is a collection of accounts from Bank of Japan workers dispatched to Thailand during the war, while Miyazaki 1985 is written by a wartime employee of the Bangkok branch of the Mitsui firm and Iwasaki 1992 tells the story of a graduate of Okawa Shumei's private school who was sent to Thailand. Other published accounts include Fukino 1983 (by a former war correspondent), Katayama 1986 (stories by a group organizing pilgrimages to battle sites in Thailand), and Moto Nampogun dai 16 Rokugun Byoin Senyukai (1991) by the association of former staff of the Southern Command 16th Army Hospital.

Mention should also be made of two historical novels which are fictionalized accounts and not suitable as genuine historical sources: Iwaki 1963 and Byodo and Byodo 1979.

#### Unpublished documents (Owned by the author)

Horii Ryuji 堀井龍司, a former military police officer stationed in Thailand 「憲兵隊勤務の回想, 第二部, タイ国駐屯憲兵隊勤務の思い出」 [Military police memoirs, Part 2; Memories of Military police stationed in Thailand]

Hara Toshio 原寿雄, former staff officer with the 18th Area Army 「備忘録, 青年将校時代」 [Memorandum: My years as a young officer]

Nitta Yoshimi 新田義実, wartime President of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Thailand 「新田義実日記」 [Diary of Nitta Yoshimi]

Sakasegawa Sumio 逆瀬川澄夫, dispatched to Thailand after graduating from Okawa's private school Okawajuku, 「私の一生 前期 (戦前篇)」 [My life: The early part (pre-war period)] (3 volumes). This biography is introduced in Tamaiko 2012.

## II. Thai Materials and Existing Works

### National Archives of Thailand (NAT)

#### 1. NAT *Bo.Ko. Sung Sut* (Supreme Command Documents)

During the Pacific War, communications between the Thai and Japanese militaries were handled through a Liaison Office that was placed under the Thai military's General Headquarters. The enormous quantities of extant documents encompass a wide variety of information, including local bilateral military agreements and minutes of meetings between the two sides (covering many topics including military affairs, economy, culture and crime). These documents were organized and made available

to the public around 1990, through the arrangement of the late Professor Yoshikawa Toshiharu, who discussed the matter with a Japanese foundation and subsidized the costs of organizing the materials by the NAT.

Professor Yoshikawa worked hard to make Supreme Command Documents publicly available and also produced a book, 『泰緬鉄道：機密文書が明かすアジア太平洋戦争』 [The Burma–Thailand Railway from the secret documents of the Asia-Pacific War] (Yoshikawa 1994). However, on the whole his study is quite general in scope, and a number of inaccurate interpretations of the Supreme Command sources have been pointed out in Murashima 1996 (footnote 69) after comparisons with the original texts. Moreover, Yoshikawa’s use of these documents is limited to the topic of the Burma–Thailand Railway. Using the Supreme Command archive, the present author wrote an article on the Chinese community in Thailand during the war (Murashima 2002), an expanded version of which appeared in Thai (Murashima 1998).

Kakizaki Ichiro has written several articles on wartime rail transportation using the aforementioned documents, notably Kakizaki 2014 and Kakizaki 2015. Kakizaki is supported by KAKENHI (Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, JSPS) for a five-year period (2016–2020) for “Studying the Truth about the Thai–Japanese Alliance during World War Two” (Scientific Basic Research (c), Project Number 16K01993).

Phanni Bualek used the Supreme Command Documents in her study of “Japanese Imperialism and the Evolution of Thai Capitalism between the Two World Wars” (Phanni 1997), examining one aspect of Japanese economic activity in Thailand during the war. There is still much room for further scholarship in this field. More details can be uncovered by doing research using records of registration of Japanese companies published in the Thai official gazette and lists of passports issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, along with further exploration of the Supreme Command Documents.

The Supreme Command Documents include various bilateral military agreements drafted locally in Thailand. These are valuable because only a limited number of such records were preserved in Japan. In the Thai Navy Archives, there are many documents relevant to Japanese and Thai military affairs, separate from those found in the NAT. Using both sets of resources will allow more nuanced interpretations of the complexities of wartime military cooperation. The author has already collected a number of these materials, but has not yet published them.

## **2. Documents of the Prime Minister’s Office (*So. Ro.*, and *So. Ro.* [2]) and other Thai Ministries**

Studies using these files include the author’s two articles regarding the relations between Thailand and French Indochina during and after the war: Murashima 2005 and Murashima 2015, as well as a third piece (Murashima 2009) examining contacts between Thai Communists and the Khmer Rouge leader Nuon Chea. This article, which also includes interviews with Communist Party of Thailand leaders, was translated into Thai (Murashima 2011).

Studies using NAT documents concerning wartime Japanese cultural policies include the doctoral

thesis by Kano Hiroshi (Kano 2004). Kano was supported by KAKENHI for a three-year study of “Aspects of Propaganda Activities in Thailand and the Thai Response; Japanese Involvement with South-East Asia during the Wartime and Its Changes” (Project Number 15K02876). Kishimoto Masaya’s study (Kishimoto 1995) is also valuable, but it uses only Japanese sources.

### **3. World War Two Documents Moved from the Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand to the National Archives**

The Thai diplomatic documents from World War Two were transferred from the Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the National Archives about a decade ago. When those documents were stored at the MFA Library, they were collectively labelled as “World War Two documents.” The author spent a great deal of time at the Library in 1992–1994 to examine these documents closely and wrote two pieces related to economic and financial affairs: Murashima 1992 and Murashima 2000. Damri Ruangsutham, an important member of the CPT Politburo, has written on CPT sabotage of Japanese military factories in Bangkok and also of the destruction of Japanese assets in Thailand immediately after the war (Damri 2001).

NAT has completed the index of World War Two documents and it is expected to be available to the public soon. As far as the author has been able to determine, no material concerning negotiation of the Thai–Japanese Alliance Pact from December 1941 to January 1942 exists among the Thai official documents in either NAT or the MFA Library. These documents seem to have been destroyed or concealed by the persons involved, or else are extant but handled on a non-disclosure basis by the MFA Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs. The same department still manages all diplomatic documents concerning border demarcation since the 19th century, which are generally not available to the public; this is true for border-related documents that have been transferred to NAT as well.

In Thailand, minutes of Cabinet meetings are kept in the General Bureau of the Cabinet Office; these are available to Thai researchers but not to foreigners. The minutes of Cabinet meetings from December 1941 to January 1942 (including negotiation of the Thai–Japanese Alliance Pact) were printed by a private publisher in the past, but it seems that the original documents have been lost. The Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs preserves documents concerning the Thailand-Indochina War of 1940–41.

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