

Hirohito, Emperor of Japan

A forgotten war criminal?

by Lydia Chagoll

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April 29, 1987. According to the radio, you Emperor Hiro-Hito, you the oldest reigning monarch, would have felt unwell during an official meal offered for your 86th birthday. But your state of health did not seem to be of great concern. It was only an indisposition. There is certainly more important than the fortunes and misfortunes of royal personages. Personally, I am not interested in it. But you, Emperor of Japan, are an exception to the rule. You, Emperor Hirohito, do not leave me indifferent. Do you not have millions of deaths on your conscience? Millions of people who, in your name, by the hands of your servile subjects, have been martyred to death, beaten to death, trampled to death, crucified, hanged, beheaded, drowned, buried alive, burned alive, finished by the bayonet.

I have decided to send you an open letter. A letter begins courteously with Monsieur, dear Monsieur, Sire, dear Sire, Excellency. In your case by Majesty. Majesty, as for you, proves impossible. For more than three years I had, under duress, to show you respect. You were, at that time, Emperor of *Dai-Nihon* (Greater Japan). The ceremonies of bowing the head in front of you have been taught to us by means of beatings, kicks, punitive constraints, reductions made to our already so meagre ration. We have bowed to you, literally and figuratively, to the point of vomiting. Always the deepest inclination because it was addressed to the Emperor. I no longer wish to pay tribute to you. Never again.

Are you wondering what I am talking about? I am one of those millions of Southeast Asian children whose lives you have poisoned during World War II. And again, I was lucky. I have only been to five camps. Five women's camps in Java. While in the Philippines, in Malaysia, in the other conquered and occupied countries, and especially in China, the native population was exterminated in a bestial way, or reduced to the state of slaves, under your reign of the Dai-Nihon. One million five hundred thousand Koreans were transported to Manchuria, Japan, and elsewhere. Millions of Chinese people have been deported. Thousands of Filipinos, Malays and Burmese, hundreds of thousands of Javanese have been requisitioned under threat or taken away in raids. The recalcitrant, the fugitives taken back, the rebels have been beheaded in mass, for example. This was the fate of the natives.

The thousands of prisoners of war, the British, Australians, New Zealanders, Dutch and Americans, did not have a better fate. All these people, considered beasts of burden, were under permanent military control. Real slaves in the service of your imperial army. All were treated infamously, exhausted, starved, punished by torture and mutilation, or put to death. And these requisitioned and these prisoners had to build railroads, construct new airfields, put ravaged industries in working order. All this in the name of your Imperial Majesty. An example? My father, who was a prisoner of war, was transported as one would not transport cattle, from Java to the island of Flores. He and his companions had to make an airfield from scratch. The "journey" lasted seventeen days. When they arrived, they were completely dumbfounded, at the end of their strength. They were divided into groups of a few hundreds around the island. My father's group met among the coconut palms. As for the camp? Non-existent! There were no barracks or buildings. Nothing.

After the surrender, you were never held to account. You never had to explain yourself on how this war was fought. You never at any time had to provide clarification on all the facts and gestures of this period, about which you were constantly informed with fidelity and precision and of which you had often taken the initiative. During the *International Military Tribunal for the Far East*, you were never questioned, not even as a defence witness. And you never pretended to talk about it either. After the occupation of Japan by the Allies, you never wanted to elucidate the past either.

Then you let the world know that you would never write your memoirs. Is silence your motto? Does it calm your conscience?

Are you a war criminal? You, who once was a ruler of a military empire. You, the symbol of Japanese unity. You, who have tolerated that your descent and your exceptional priesthood in Shintoism, be exploited for propaganda purposes. You, who have authorised your people to recognise your absolute power. You, who have never opposed the mass mobilisation in your honour. You, who considered the cult of personality to be normal. You, who have accepted the exaltation of youth towards your person. You, who have encouraged the extravagant belligerent mood of your male population. You, who since 1936, appeared in public only wearing a uniform. You, who agreed to occupy this central place. You, who agreed that the Japanese people should be manipulated and indoctrinated in your name. You, who agreed that all the fanatic worshippers of the Emperor, all the soldiers in your army, considered it a favour to die for you and on your behalf. In your name other persons have been oppressed and millions of lives destroyed. But you also sent your own people to their deaths. Without mercy. Without respect. You, Emperor Hirohito, are you a war criminal?

In my memories, now, after so many years, all the days spent in Japanese camps seem to be endless. To be afraid, to be hungry, to have to work, not to be able to sleep. It went like a cyclical movement, day after day, for three years. And yet, I know very well that there was a holiday on Sundays. With the exception of the two daily roll calls where one had to bow to you, you Emperor of Dai-Nihon. You the Shining Sun represented by officers and soldiers. Whenever

one of them came before us, he had to bow down deeply with deference. It was very strictly forbidden to watch them. The Sun could have dazzled us!

In your name, Emperor Hirohito of Japan, a war has been broken out to gain more living space. It was to conquer more living space that Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich declared World War II. Both of you were anti-Communists, and both of you have signed the anti-Komintern pact. You both wanted to save the world. Your maxim was that of the New Order. In Germany, since 1933 there was only one political party: National Socialism. In 1940, in Japan, the parties merged into the National Alliance in the Service of the Throne, the Taisei Yoku-sankai. Neither of you have ever signed a death sentence, but you have allowed millions to be sent to their deaths. You were both convinced of the purity of your race, the Japanese race, the German race. You boasted of being at the head of a people of lords, made up of supermen. You allowed your subjects to be fanatic to endorse the slogan "one people, one nation, one leader" until they believed in it themselves. You live, Hitler committed suicide. Japan and Germany lost the war. Japan is now the richest country in Asia just as Germany is the richest country in Europe.

Were millions of lives to disappear from the face of the earth to serve the present greatness of Japan and Germany?

I am drawing from the stash of quotes meant to persuade your male population to engage in combat:

- War is at the origin of creation, like the mother is at the origin of all culture.

- Until now it has been about Japan and foreign countries. From now on, there will be only one country: Japan.

- Japan is a nation born of the Gods. Japan is a mother nation. Those who are born in Japan are children of God. We are the greatest people in the world.

- Heaven has given Japan a great mission to save humanity.

- Japan's goal is to create a new world order, which helps all nations to occupy their rightful place, in a spirit of universal brotherhood. — The Japanese nation is predestined to complete the revolution in the world.

Do you still remember those war currencies? And what did they lead to?

Why did you allow yourselves in making a peaceful people a bellicose people? Why did you allow it to come to this? And after the war started, why did you wait and hesitate to end it? From the naval battle of Midway from June 3 to 7, 1942, Japan was no longer on the offensive but on the defensive. If you had put an end to it, many lives would have been saved. Is it a lack of responsibility or a lack of human feelings? I have to reformulate my question: are you not as well an accomplice in the deaths of millions of soldiers and civilians — Japanese and "non-Japanese" — as of the thousands of victims of the atomic explosion?

This year, I attended a meeting in Zwolle (Netherlands) for ex-prisoners from Tjideng camp (Java). This is, as you well know, the camp made famous by its Japanese commander, Captain Sonei. An executioner. The Tjideng camp was planned for around 2,000 detainees. The size of the camp kept shrinking, the number of detainees kept increasing. Ultimately it stood at 10,000. Ten thousand emaciated human beings, piled on top of each other. Women, children - boys must have been under ten - and very old men, usually disabled. All lived in constant anguish. They were madly afraid of Sonei's monstrous measures, of his savage interventions. Sonei, a Japanese officer of your Imperial Army. Sentenced by the allies and executed in 1946.

During this meeting I was struck by how emotionally, those who were young children at the time of the events reacted. The anguish is deeply rooted. It is overwhelming moods that dominate formerly not understanding the why, and now disappointment, because it was useless — there are still children behind barbed wires. Most of these camp children find it difficult to come to terms with the past. They usually subsist on medication and therapy. And in the meantime, you have published books on your hobbies, biology, and above all underwater biology. Crabs, starfish and a whole host of wildlife and marine flora have caught your attention. Your first book was published in 1949. Others followed: 1953 - 1955 - 1962 - 1965 - 1967 - 1968 - 1969 - 1973 - 1974. For you, this war is completely a thing of the past? Is a marine animal more important to you than a human being? Are you never plagued by remorse? Do you ever have nightmares?

Your biographers tell us that even during your childhood you were convinced of your exceptional position as Emperor. A situation which you tolerated, from that time, to be fully exploited. Later, whenever you wanted to get something at any cost, you would have a private audience with the person who could help you. Impossible to refuse anything to the Emperor. You knew it. In the highest degree, you have used it, you have abused of it. Knowingly you accepted your position above or beyond as obvious. You, Emperor of Japan, have you shown any empathy towards the suicide bombers, these young suicide fighters, who felt honoured to lose their lives on your behalf? You, Emperor, didn't that affect you? Isn't the indifferent man the most dangerous being on earth?

When the war was over, you let it to be known that you were stripped of all power. A toy in the hands of the military clique. Soldiers who carried out your orders, who had sworn loyalty to you, who, according to ancestral principles, took full responsibility on them. Soldiers, obeying the Japanese code of honour, who tried to exonerate you, their Emperor, by taking upon themselves the burden of war crimes and crimes against humanity, without you feeling guilty! To tell the truth, you accepted that your government during the war was entangled by your very silence. Were you a toy in their hands? Were you, are you apathetic? Your teachers, your collaborators, however, all agree to speak of your strength of will, your perseverance, both in the physical and intellectual realms. Or is it exaggeration to write that they just wanted to please you?

Basically, you were very lucky. For the fear of communism, for the fear of anarchy, for the fear of chaos, the Americans, after the war, took up your defence, and this, against the will of the English, the Australians, the Chinese and the Soviets. According to the Americans, the Japanese people were so riveted to your power that only *you* could neutralise your subjects. They only obeyed to *you*. Only *you* were able to lead them in the direction the Yankees had drawn for them. It was especially General MacArthur, the Supreme Allied Commander in Japan, who saved *your* life and *your* throne. General MacArthur with his morbid aversion to anything leftist, seemed somewhat progressive. General MacArthur with his unique American admiration for an unbroken Empire of two thousand six hundred and five years. And, out of gratitude, you collaborated. To save your skin?

It is customary for the Emperors of Japan to express their feelings and ideas in poetry. Respectful of tradition, you therefore write poems. On the occasion of the New Year's celebration at the Court, it is always recited, for a handpicked audience. In January 1946, four and a half months after the surrender, your hosts must hear the following poem:

Even in those days
notwithstanding defeat
of their own accord
people still come
to cultivate our gardens.

Indeed, volunteers came to maintain the gardens of your imperial palace in Tokyo and considered it a sacrosanct duty. You, who belong to one of the richest Japanese families, did no object.

Several years after the war, Ida Kalmijn, a Dutch woman, who had been confined in a Japanese camp at the age of five to eight, wrote:

I'm afraid to sleep
I'm afraid of the night
and when I wake up
I'm afraid of the day

I'm afraid of the other
I'm afraid of his voice
and when I'm alone
my anguish still persists.

The uranium bomb on Hiroshima and the plutonium bomb on Nagasaki raise questions of conscience. The explanations on this subject abound. The atomic bomb would have been used to teach the yellow race a lesson. It would have been criminal. The atomic bomb would have been used to demonstrate Western superiority to the Soviets. It would have been criminal. The atomic bomb was reportedly used as revenge for the attack on Pearl Harbor. It would have been criminal. But I wonder when we switched to the use of these weapons, if you yourself, as supreme commander of the Japanese armed forces, were not in large part, co-responsible, because of having deferred the surrender? You and the Allies knew that in the months to come, continued hostilities in the Pacific would cost millions of lives. To what extent can the death of thousands of people be compared to the deaths of millions of others, when we have decided to engage war all the same?

Only hand-to-hand combat on Japanese territory could end the war. In each camp, a respective loss of one million soldiers was taken into account. Two million dead in a battle that military experts say would last six months, if not more. We were silent about the number of Japanese civilian casualties. There is the same silence about the certain death of starving detainees in camps in occupied regions. The Allies were sure of victory. The head of the Japanese government was convinced that it was going to lose this war. But your propaganda deceived the people and encouraged them to face the fight - rather called the butchery - and to defend, in your name, every square metre to death. Preferably no Japanese at all rather than defeated Japanese? Do you really stop at nothing?

Again, after the fall of the second atomic bomb, the fight to the last man was maintained by Japan as the only solution to capitulate in all honour, without losing face. Japan assumed that because of the fearlessness displayed, it was going to obtain from the Allies a surrender with conditions, rather than a surrender without conditions. You and your government demanded:

1 - maintenance of the monarchy

2 - no military occupation of Japan

3 - complete independence in the disarmament and demobilisation of the Japanese armed forces in Japan, and in the countries and territories still occupied and annexed.

4 - judgment of war crimes exclusively by Japanese courts.

The judgment of war crimes by a Japanese court was a precautionary measure, a clever calculation. According to the Japanese constitution, the Emperor did not have to justify himself. He was above justice. However, I do not understand why the Japanese dared to demand conditions. What the height of indecency! Japan plundered, devastated, reintroduced slavery, exploited, killed, murdered, but demanded a capitulation with favourable conditions.

In the end, you personally make the decision to end the war on August 14, 1945. You, personally, accept the surrender unconditionally. Why not earlier? Why not long before the first atomic bomb on August 6? Why not after the second atomic bomb on August 9? Why not when the Soviets declared war on Japan on August 8? Why have

still insisted on August 10 to obtain a conditional surrender? Why give in on August 14? Was it due to the anguish over the threat of an atomic bomb on Tokyo, the imperial city? A downed American pilot, Lieutenant Marcus Mac Dilda had, in order to escape, revealed an alleged secret: the next atomic bomb would fall on Tokyo. In reality, the Americans did not yet have the third atomic bomb, but only a few people at the head of the Allied headquarters knew about it.

I have already asked you why you did not end the war sooner. Have you waited, in a diabolical way, for the country to be so devastated and impoverished, for the people to be so degraded, to die to this point of hunger, that they could no longer behave except as a victim of war whose fate you feel sorry for? Did you want to present yourself at the last moment as a liberator? Did you want your subjects to believe that you care about them by showing them the end of their ordeals? Did you want to put the blame for the conflict back on the military clique? You, the priest-emperor, you the emperor-priest, did you want to enter the history of Japan as the saviour who had brought his people out of misery? Or were the two atomic bombs for you just a wonderful excuse to end the war? It seemed really impossible to fight such a weapon. The people had therefore not shown cowardice, there was a case of *majeure force*. The armed forces were not losing either; there was a case of *force majeure*. You yourself were certainly not a coward, there was a case of *force majeure*. Whatever happened, regarding your intentions, I believe you have achieved your goal. The Japanese are convinced they are victims of war. The Japanese are convinced that only the military clique is responsible. The Japanese are convinced that they have not lost face. Long live the atomic bomb?

Only one idea fills my head: the trivialisation of the past of the war, gave a human face to the executioners. We welcome you to Europe, America. You, yourself, receive sovereigns in your imperial palace. King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola have officially visited Japan. You and your wife paid this visit to Belgium. Our royal couple is probably unaware of what happened in the Pacific and the existence of the Japanese camps where some Belgian subjects were also retained. The royal house of the Netherlands is perfectly aware of this, and yet is astonished that fellow citizens refuse familiar conversations, friendly visits, between the respective dynasties. It should, of course, be known that Queen Béatrix was still only a child during the Second World War. But we were also children. Children behind barbed wire. In truth, as far as you are concerned, we seem to be suffering from amnesia. Even the Pope is visiting you. No one refuses to give you a hand. No one seems to get chills when you touch them. Are you not a lovable character, small, frail, old, with this unique passion for marine biology?

September 1, 1923. Tokyo became in the middle of the day the centre of one of the most violent earthquakes that Japan has known. In a few moments the whole town was in flames:

most of the dwellings were made of wood and, due to the time of this happening, the small open fires which served for meals were lit. Two thirds of Tokyo burned. There were more than 130,000 victims. In the days that followed, this natural disaster served as a pretext for the cold assassination of many leftists and more than 4,000 Koreans. They were accused of having caused the catastrophe. How does this relate to the war or to yourself? A lot! It is an indication of the general political climate, of the xenophobia of your subjects and above all of the danger of a thoughtless obedient mass. At that time, you were young, twenty-two and Regent for two years. Your father, Emperor Taisho, was still alive, but he had been declared mentally unfit. Already, your personal preferences went to ultranationalist governments. In 1925, you signed a law against intellectuals stating that "thinking is dangerous". This law has cost many Japanese people their freedom or their lives. In 1926, you became Emperor. Your experience as a Regent had lasted five years. According to competent people, you were up to your task, you really wanted to rule the country, you often acted on your own and you easily adopted an authoritarian attitude in your interventions. You have inaugurated the Showa period, that of the Radiant Sun, of the Luminous Peace, of the Sparkling Harmony. Sun, peace, harmony, for whom?

Over the centuries, the Japanese people have been cruelly oppressed. Obedience was instilled in him by the most barbarous means. Completely dominated by the aristocratic caste and enslaved, he had no other way out than to resign himself to his fate. And, as he had to endure the worst natural catastrophes without being able to defend himself, he was forced to submit to the ruthless dictatorship of the nobility. During the era of your father, Emperor Taisho, intellectuals attempted some changes. We tried to get the human being recognised as an individual. The man was encouraged and encouraged to think for himself. Alas! This period was short-lived. Under your government we have again come to put behind bars and torture the adversaries, the progressists, all those who did not agree to take the "imperial path". These "dangerous thinkers" (official denomination) failed with the famous Kampeitai, the military police, which can be put on the same footing as the Gestapo of the Nazi regime. Have you ever, in your own country, in the occupied territories and in the annexed regions, criticised, rejected, condemned Kampeitai and its methods?

From 1931, after the Manchurian incident - the start of the 14 Years' War - your compatriots were regularly informed about the aims and victories of the Imperial Japanese Army in the overseas territories, and dazzled by verbal violence.

- Once we are in possession of all the Chinese riches, we will continue to conquer India, the Archipelago, the islands of the South Seas, Asia Minor, Central Asia and even the 'Europe. (The conquest of Europe was scheduled for 1990 L.Ch.)

- The Emperor's divine mission is to win Asia for the Asians under the leadership of Japan.

The workers and the petty bourgeoisie found themselves in Japanese fascism. Encouraged by right-wing newspapers with militaristic leanings, zealous and enthusiastic workers, as well as office workers, gave up their one-day pay to the Japanese occupation army in China. By idealism they gave up part of their meagre salary to promote the industries managed by the army. It went without saying that the man in the street was praised by name in the press for this financial commitment. This press that you dutifully read every morning and where your people could read daily how glorified the war was in your name. 1931! The good old days, Emperor Hirohito?

Learning to submit to authorities until it became second nature was, and often still is, the basis of the Japanese education system. And yet your compatriots welcome children very favourably. At least the little ones. Then takes place a reversal. A rigorous education begins. Without any excuse, without mercy, we instil respect for authority. The obligations to parents, employers, political clan and the Emperor are presented as a pinnacle in Japanese society. This duty of recognition takes precedence over Japanese pedagogy. And the child is trained to this point that he accepts docility as obvious. In the army, this kind of educational system was extended with unlimited brutality. Violence and humiliation were never lacking. It showed discipline. In addition, in the barracks it was considered a duty to be cheerful, never to complain, never to ask questions. The purpose of the staff was to train the soldiers to such an extent that the obligations inculcated in them seem, in the long run, to be manifestations of their own will. Like never surrendering: losing face is not manly. The moral of the fight was based on "a combination of aggressiveness and a sense of sacrifice". The battlefield was "especially the place where the spiritual content of obedience developed into a practical ideal". Without a doubt, you still remember the song "Umi Yukabi," that your soldiers of the imperial army sang with all their soul:

"That we were fighting at sea
or in the mountain.
That we were to perish in the water
or be buried.
At the feet of His Majesty the Emperor
We lay down our body and our soul. "

And the slogans of military propaganda kept coming back. Do you still know them?

- The Emperor led the people to war and it is my duty to obey him.
- It is not by thinking of returning that one fulfils a mission.
- Consider an order from your superior as coming from Us.
- My very first duty is to sacrifice my body and my mind for the salvation of the Emperor.
- It is better to die fighting than to survive without honour.

- When you find yourself facing the enemy, think that you are meeting your father's killer, and avenge him.

- Japan's destiny is to spread the imperial dominion and glorify it to the ends of the four seas.

Japan wanted to liberate the Far East from Western colonisation. A magnificent project! Alas! Western imperialism has been replaced by greater imperialism. The Westerner subdued the native population. With a few exceptions, the native rarely received the opportunity to do higher education. You and your government have followed a whole different policy. Japan viewed the natives as serfs, liable to be moved to where you could best use them. The Japanese power tried to make of each conquered territory a Japanese colony - after the capitulation 6,600,000 Japanese were repatriated, among whom some 2,800,000 soldiers (including the 600,000 prisoners freed by the Soviets in 1950), the others, 3,800,000, were civilians. Obviously, the raw materials, agriculture and industries of the conquered and annexed countries exclusively served Japanese interests. That the indigenous population suffered from famine was irrelevant. It even came under a calculation imagined by the Japanese extermination tactics. And is that what you and your people were looking for when they talked about "The Common Prosperity Sphere in the Great East of Asia"?

You who boast of having always been a staunch Democrat, why haven't you moved to put an end to this infamous behaviour towards the "non-Japanese" of the occupied overseas territories? In their desire for enslavement your compatriots have surpassed the Western colonialists. The Chinese, the Korean, the Mongolian, the Malay, who once contributed to the birth of Japanese culture and civilisation, are and remain for you and your people a barbarian, that is to say a "no- Japanese"? Should we really believe that the Japanese see himself as a unique case?

You, and your male population, certainly do not agree with the Burmese partisan Ba Maw, who, in his memoirs, expresses his opinion about this Japanese liberation from the Western yoke: "In This Concerning the Japanese military, few people were so closely related to their race, so one-dimensional in their thinking and therefore also incapable of understanding others or making themselves understood by others. This is why their initiatives, during the war in Southeast Asia, whether good or bad, were always detrimental to the people of those areas. The military saw everything from a Japanese perspective and, worse, insisted that anyone who had to deal with it. Them, act in the same way. For them, there was only one method to undertake something: the Japanese method. Only one goal and interest: the Japanese interest. Only one destiny for the countries of the East-Asian: become so many Manchukuo (Manchuria r nicknamed L.CH.) and Korea, forever riveted in Japan. Racial discrimination - that's what it was all about - made any sincere understanding between the Japanese military and the people of our regions virtually impossible. "*Japan über alles*, was that your dream?

For what reason, as soon as they seized a territory, did the Japanese authorities put everything, literally and figuratively, in Japanese time? Out of contempt? Was it according to your instructions? In any case, and it seemed absurd, your hour became ours. In Java, suddenly, the sun rose ninety minutes later, in perfect harmony with the sun in your country. Overnight we added 660 years to our calendar. We jumped from 1942 to the year 2602. Alas! At the same time, we went back centuries: corporal punishment was reintroduced. As for the word "Japan", it became taboo. We had to designate your country in your language. But we were given the choice between Nihon and Nippon. Not to mention the cult of adoration to the Emperor. In Japan it had become a state religion. Did your subjects pass in front of your photo a hundred times, each time they almost bowed deeply. From the first day of the occupation, we were brutally taught to salute: *kiwotsuke* (attention) *keirei* (bow) and one, two, three, here is Japan's enrichment. More bows and too bad if it is under threat.

As soon as your troops occupied the country, the schools were closed. Sometimes reopened, after a while, sometimes for the natives or for the Indians, and not for the Chinese; sometimes the reverse. It was complicated, without any system. The program included Japanese, arithmetic, learning Japanese songs, and of course, for the boys, war games. Subjects should not know more. What about the children of the West? The latter were in camps. They had to remain completely backward. Of God! I wanted to learn.

I am one of the many children who for years have lived apart from the normal world. Exceptionally long in my case: six years and six months. It all started on May 10, 1940, with the arrival of the Nazis who cursed the "non-Aryans." My parents, sister and I fled. Passing through reception centres and refugee camps around the world, we were finally admitted to the Dutch East Indies, just a month before the start of the war with Japan (December 8, 1941). We were locked up by the Japanese fascists, who despised the "non-Japanese". After the end of the Second World War (August 15, 1945) the struggle for independence raged in the colonies of the Dutch East Indies. We stayed behind the barbed wire. Safe protection against the native population, who hated the white colonials. As the fighting continued, the repatriation of women and children was as difficult as it was. In any case, the army had priority over us. It was not until November 1, 1946, six years and six months later, that we were able to live again as a normal family.

The big problem that faced the children in the camps after the liberation was the following: how to catch up after so many years? Physically we were weakened, exhausted, sick, and morally everything had been turned upside down. For children of high school age, added to all this was a lack of basic knowledge. In the Netherlands and Belgium, nothing has been done to welcome these children from the camps. Governments had other concerns: restoring the country, restoring the economy. Immediate priority was given; children were only a distant future. On the other hand, in Japan, the Allies immediately adopted the measures essential for the well-being of children and youth. Teaching was deeply restructured and, royally, a large sum of dollars was invested in it. You yourself are full of praise for the studies undertaken by your sons under the American system. Who lost the war?

We foreigners need to familiarise ourselves with the meaning that you and your people give to the word *kami*. A *kami* - often mistakenly translated as divinity - refers to something exceptional, elevated, something worth considering. A *kami* can just as easily be an old oak tree, a waterfall, a war hero, a beautiful prospect, ancestors, a slain enemy. There are thousands of *kamis*. All are honoured with equal respect. You alone are an exception. Until December 31, 1945, you were an *arahitokami*. A super *kami*. You were the only *kami* living in human guise. You were, according to Shintoism, through your 123 imperial predecessors, the direct descent of the goddess *Amaterasu*, the solar divinity. This is why you were worshiped as a deity. Furthermore, you were, and still are, as Emperor, the supreme priest of Shintoism. You alone, by reason of your rank and your situation, are likely to enter into communication with the gods and your imperial ancestors. Under the era of your grandfather, the Meiji Emperor, Shintoism became a state religion. After World War II, at the request of the Americans, it was separated from the state. But from 1952, as soon as Japan became master again, you played in Shintoism the sublime role you were accustomed to. Again, you preside over a number of religious ceremonies each year in which state and government dignitaries participate.

What bothers me the most is this comedy of your divinity. Under the pressure of General MacArthur you agreed, in a radio address - the second in your life - to let it be known that in the future you will renounce your status as *arahitokami*. You proclaim yourself a man like any other, who has always strived to act as a democrat. But before and during the war, you wanted to be considered *arahitokami*. Therefore, first clothed in the divinity, then, in a jiffy, stripped of this divinity. Were you wrong, yourself? Are you fooling your people? Who are you kidding? And when? Before 1945? After 1945?

A year after the accession to the Throne of your beloved grandfather, the Yasukuni temple was built. Literally, Yasukuni means peaceful nation, or the land of rest. The purpose of this Shinto temple was, and still is, to venerate military heroes, to unite the people more closely to the throne. Any Japanese soldier who, on the battlefield, sacrificed his life for the Emperor, can have his name engraved on a tablet and, in this temple, be venerated as a *kami* alongside hundreds of thousands of other friars' weapons.

Every country has the right to regret its fallen soldiers, no one will dispute that. However, the Yasukuni Temple is a thorn in the eye of all the "non-Japanese" who suffered under your war government. Not because your dead soldiers are considered *kamis*, but because, as soon as the Allies left, the Japanese authorities rehabilitated all those condemned to death for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and had them enrolled in the temple. Yasukuni to be ostentatiously worshiped there. Is Sonei, the camp executioner, mentioned at Yasukuni temple, a hero to the Japanese? Is your former commander-in-chief of the army in China, General Matsui, a hero to your subjects? This is apparently the opinion of members of your government, parliamentarians, senior officials and other very important figures. They consider it their duty to make a private visit to the Yasukuni Temple in mid-August, the day of surrender. Each year, they affix their signature in the register, generally with all their titles. Two years ago, the visit took on an official appearance with Prime Minister Nakasoné presiding, in full dress!

The media gave the event great publicity. Since then, the ambition is to organise in this temple, each year, on August 15, a national day of mourning, in honour of the Japanese who succumbed during and following the Second World War. Already more than 300 parliamentarians have signed a petition. Veterans, extremists, ultranationalists, fascists and your Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasoné also collect signatures, and although according to the post-war constitution there is a separation between the Church and the Church. State, they are trying to make again depend on the State, at least, the temple Yasukuni, the "Holy of the Saints", the "Mecca of the nationalists", the "Mecca of militarism". They also wish you to honour this temple again with your august visit, and preferably, that you preside over this national service of remembrance, as High Priest of Shintoism.

It is the presence in this temple of those condemned to death for war crimes and crimes against humanity, which makes us consider this a second murder against the "non-Japanese" murdered in your name. Why should we forgive when we never recognise that inhuman pain has been caused? But I still have other questions. If you do not respond favourably to this desire to visit Yasukuni Temple and preside over a national day of mourning there, is it because you feel too old or too ill, or do you feel that this request is just too indecent? Would I be an optimist to dare to hope that once stripped of your divinity, you would experience a human feeling of shame?

I named Nakasoné, your Prime Minister (1982-1987). I can't stand this man. I have a little idea of him and his political game of chess makes me nauseous. It is at the basis of the appointment of the ultranationalist Fujio, as Minister of Education. Poor Japanese youth! Minister Fujio is the man who for years has trumpeted that Japan has no responsibility for World War II. Under his aegis, Japanese textbooks are far from objective. Will the teaching of the history of the Pacific war be even more camouflaged in the future? Will one grant an official right of existence to the revisionists? What do your own children know about war? Do they know the role you played there?

So, few who know, so few who want to know. And from you, no explanation, no regrets no self-criticism. Nothing but silence. Sometimes discouragement comes over me. And, at other times, I feel the need to shout the breeze on the rooftops.

Does the conquest of the city of Nanjing (China) in 1937 by Japanese troops mean anything to you? And his occupation? A carnage of six weeks. A ruthless extermination. A huge bloodbath. Thousands of women and girls raped. Thousands of soldiers and civilians buried alive. Thousands more executed with bayonets or used as targets during exercises. In total, more than 200,000 murdered civilians, men, women, and children. And yet your subjects impute the responsibility to the Chinese. At least, this is what can be found in the history textbooks used in Japan: "Due to the vigorous resistance put up by the Chinese army and which caused heavy losses to the Japanese army, the Japanese armies killed many Chinese soldiers and civilians in Nanjing. " But why, then, was your Japanese armed forces in China imposed a strict duty of silence when they wrote home or returned on leave to Japan? You must still

remember that in 1937 you signed the order to send troops to China. It was under your authority that the fighting began. You have appointed your uncle, Prince Asaka, to command the attack on Nanjing. Neither Prince Asaka nor General Matsui, supreme commander of your imperial troops in central China, punished the soldiers for their "serious transgressions". But, when they returned to Japan, they were both personally received in audience. They were both distinguished by the presentation of decorations. Decorations for the murders committed against the civilian population of China, against Chinese soldiers taken prisoners? Does your conscience never wake you up?

The city of Harbin (China) has built a museum in memory of the victims of your Imperial Unit 731. Under the guise of "prevention against the epidemic and supply of drinking water", this unit made use of, in Manchuria, military prisoners and civilians as human guinea pigs. Chinese, Americans, Koreans, British, Russians were infected with cholera, typhus, syphilis, plague. Blood transfusions were carried out using horse blood. Men were exposed to freezing, X-rays, exhaustion of all kinds. These experiments were taking place to see if Japan could possibly derive military benefit from them. So, the Japanese were curious about how the "barbarians", the "non-Japanese", would react to such treatment. In addition, the vivisection was carried out regularly. Such lethal involvements were also carried out in Japan, but only on downed American pilots.

On August 8, 1945, the day the Soviets entered Manchuria, the camp and laboratory near Harbin were hastily evacuated, 3,000 prisoners were poisoned with cyanide mixed with food or shot dead with machine guns, and their corpses sprayed with gasoline. The charred bones are crushed in a pulveriser. Japanese personnel are given priority rights in evacuation to Japan.

Right after the war, there was a Russian trial in Khabarovsk and an American trial in Tokyo, some doctors committed suicide. Lieutenant General Medic Ishu Shiro, who headed the Unit, was not sentenced. The Americans wanted to use his knowledge.

In Japan, we really did everything to cover up the case of Unit 731. In 1982, the Japanese newspaper

Akahata brought out these monstrous events, in connection with a Japanese publication concerning these trials. The newspaper revealed that with your knowledge of the facts, you affixed your imperial seal to the bottom of the decision creating this Unit 731. Parliament admitted the existence of this unit. It appears that the Court has neither denied nor confirmed this article. She just didn't react. And to think that international law grants no immunity to sovereigns for war crimes or crimes against humanity. Really you must owe General MacArthur a lot of gratitude.

Live! Living in rebellion hurts. Sometimes I want to hide behind clouds to live. Sometimes I get tired of life. I know, the past life cannot be revived. I know; today I have to live with a view to the future. The future? It is a certainty to be soon deprived of life.

This morning I woke up to these dark thoughts. Having them expressed and written down does not improve my mood at all. How could things be otherwise? Your presence in my mind cannot give me peace. I am a stranger to you. You are hell to me.

I never understood why, as a child, I had to enter the camp hanging on my mother's hand. In silence, I reproached him for it, and this reproach still weighs on me. As an adult, I wanted ten children: five of me, five adopted. I have often thought about it. But each time I was held back by my memories of the war, of the camps. I couldn't stand the idea that my children, one day, verbally or silently, address the same damn reproach to me.

So, I have no children. I still have a feeling of emptiness, the impression of being naked.

Will I never get rid of my past? Am I forever marked? What have you lost? What have you gained? Does this weigh on you? Is that perhaps why you keep silent?

The Westerners locked in the territories occupied by the Japanese did not all know an identical regime. We were prisoners in a residential area, or in camps, or in prisons. Women and men were or were not separated; Christians and Jews were or were not together; the prisoners were either under the "protection" of the navy or, worse, under the "protection" of the army. What all white inmates had in common, however, was hunger. All camp was a slow death camp. In your country, the people made sacrifices themselves so that the Japanese soldier would be fed enough, so that he could give free rein to his combativeness. It was therefore perfectly normal that we, the Westerners, the enslaved, the prisoners, brought our quota to the offering. Slowly, but surely, we were starving. In particular during the last two years. In this tactic of reduction by starvation, or if you will, in this Japanese measure of economy, regularly intervened the sanctions which consisted in being completely deprived of food. It was not always clear why we were being punished, but as Kafka wrote: "The sanction was like proof of fault."

Your grandfather, Emperor Meiji, and later yourself, loved the word "unbearable". I draw your attention to the fact that in the camps, everything was almost forbidden to us. The only thing we were allowed to do was endure the unbearable.

In your country, the country of Yamato, the faulty social attitude is not blamed on the person who behaved badly, but rather on the *kamis* who deserted this person. They left her for the good reason that this person is unclean. She can reconcile these *kamis* again by purifying herself. After this purification, the *kamis*, these spirits to be respected, can take pity on it. In these purifications, water plays the main role. And the Japanese always resort to abundant

ablution. So far, this is the only system: purification, and the problem is solved. It does not matter which person or company suffered the damage. You have to be pure in your own eyes. That is what matters. Especially since the inhabitants of Yamato are convinced that the victims, or the company, are never completely innocent!

Japanese ethics are very particular. An assassin — in your language, the one who destroys life? — Redeems himself by praying every day for the salvation of the victim he has elevated to the rank of *kami*. On the one hand, murder, on the other hand, pray for the soul of the victim. Clapping the hands twice, head tilted, and the *kami*, the victim's lofty spirit, appears in thought. Then comes a prayer, and by clapping the hands twice again, we take leave of the same *kami*. You only need to clap your hands four times, Japanese style, to sleep calmly on both ears. Do we still need to insist on the politeness, kindness, sociability and sympathy proper to yourself and your subjects? Don't you think that hundreds of thousands of children, women, mothers, husbands, would have preferred to find, in flesh and blood, their father, their husband, their son, their wife, rather than to have to console himself by the idea that the Japanese assassin prays for the soul of the victim?

In a fit of anger, I wished you a more painful death than that of my father on his deathbed. A long agony with a lot of suffering. How appalling my rebellion must be! Can revolt remove all restraint? But that is not my nature. I am revolted but I do not wish anyone a painful death. What I want is for people suspected of war crimes to be tried! Let at least one trial take place.

How long will you still live? Long enough to read this open letter? Or at least learn about its content through a third party? Basically, it doesn't matter. For you, in absolute terms, it is too late. You don't know repentance, much less respect. On the contrary. And as if that weren't enough, you didn't even have to apologise. In addition, with a few exceptions, in all languages your behaviour under the empire before and during the war has been ignored. In the end, we hardly dared to express any suspicion about you. All the same, I would like so much that this letter, which is addressed to you, still appears during your life. So, I have to hurry. Suppose I die before you do.

No, my epistle must be finished on time. I want and must honour my father. He, a man of progress, concerned with probity. Him, who didn't like ambiguity. Probably I inherited from him his sense of justice and rectification. What will your son and successor inherit from you?

From year to year, you have always been full of praise and admiration for your grandfather, Emperor Meiji. In all his undertakings, large and small, you have faithfully imitated him. The same was true of foreign policy. As Emperor Meiji had declared war on China and Russia only after the attack on those countries by Japan, so did you first allow Pearl Harbor to be bombed before declaring war? War on America. Before, and even without ever declaring war, you invaded Manchuria and China. In Japan, this way of waging war is called the surprise

attack tactic. I call this the backstab tactic. What also dates from the Meiji period is the annual resumption of reading of imperial poems. Your grandfather was fighting a war and, in the meantime, wrote a New Year's poem:

It's like a family that I consider the peoples of the earth. Why this violent fight between the countries which rages like the rustling swell!

While you were fighting the war, you wrote:

On this New Years day,
we pray for the next day
when East, West and the whole world will come to terms
to share in a prosperous future.

Belligerent, on one hand, and partisan of peace on the other. This is what "non-Japanese" call Janus behaviour.

If you were so utterly peaceful, if you really found war violence so "unbearable", and if you absolutely disagreed with your government, why didn't you stand up against it with all your might? Why have you not reacted energetically against the policy pursued by your military clique? Why haven't you abdicated? Why haven't you left this land? You, who according to the statements are an intelligent man, with scientific aptitudes, one would have, during all these years, until the end of the war. And against your will, abused you? You, secular and sacred character, Emperor and supreme priest of Shintoism, you, who according to the Meiji constitution held the executive power, you, who were inviolable, you would have served as a puppet? The Japanese may swallow such nonsense. A "non-Japanese" is more sceptical.

From 1939 — and you found that an excellent idea — loudspeakers were installed in all official buildings, ministries, universities, schools, clinics, post offices, train stations, squares and parks. The smaller village had a radio at its disposal. Businesses as individuals were encouraged, by means of posters, to obtain a radio. The Japanese swore by it. At the end of 1940, a new radio commission was formed with the aim of "establishing a military state by promoting the unity and solidarity of the public and the ambition to improve the morale of the peasants and youth". Another aspiration was the information "of the true intentions of the Emperor". Anything that might resemble Western culture in any way was banished, except the music of Wagner. The high points of the programs were: "The hour of government" - "The victories" - "Our determination" - "The will of the people". Listening to the radio together became a new popular custom in Japan. When the situation worsened, it was through the radio that the population was encouraged to increase production, and to work for the honour of the country, fifteen hours a day. During the work your subjects were entertained by series on

Buddhism, Zen, Japanese folklore and revitalised by the feats of arms of the Samurai. It goes without saying that a great deal of devoted attention was paid to the heroic suicide fighters, the suicide bombers. Reality was passed over in silence.

Enslaved to authority, your subjects slavishly took lies for the truth. Tenno Heika, being the Divine Covenant, the Heavenly Ruler, could not mislead his people. This ancient religious term designating the Emperor had been reused since Meiji and it was especially before and during the war, under your empire, that it was sung in all tones. "Tenno Heika has pity on all mankind who still lives in turmoil, which is to say on a war footing. And Tenno Heika wants to put clarity in this disorder. What Tenno Heika wants is real peace. This divine word from Tenno Heika moves the respectful hearts of all the Japanese people. These people shed tears of joy, respect the divine will of Tenno Heika and they have stood up for Holy War. "I read. I reread and I cannot believe my eyes. What nonsense! What a contradiction! What a contradiction! What a contradiction! Verbalism! What stupid reasoning! And that's how people spoke of you. And that's how you read yourself in the newspapers!

As the Japanese wonder if the "non-Japanese" really has a soul, I wonder if the Japanese have a conscience, especially with regard to the "non-Japanese". You and your subjects do not seem to clash with your conscience about the war events, despite all the bloodshed, exterminations, and bestial interventions in areas of south-east Asia. Remorse? Why? On the contrary, we should give thanks to the Japanese for having delivered the people from colonisation. Especially since they paid a heavy price for it. They suffered endless suffering. First these atomic bombs, then the unconditional surrender, and, on top of the bargain, this catastrophe: for the first time in the history of Japan, an occupation by the *gaijin*, foreigners, barbarians, "non-Japanese". In addition, Japan was deprived of its *arahitokami*. You, the divine Emperor, you have been degraded, placed in the rank of a human Emperor. Then, Japan was given a new constitution in which you were nothing more than an operetta Mikado. Humiliation upon humiliation. And suddenly, they were no longer insults? You would you agree with everything if no questions were asked?

A few years after the war, when the frightening consequences of the atomic bomb began to be known to everyone, you and your people did all that was necessary to make world opinion convinced that the Japanese were the only and true ones. Victims of the Second World War. Your war, from 1931 to 1945, is brought back, in the "Land of the Rising Sun" and by your diplomats abroad, to four dates:

August 6, 1945: atomic bomb in Hiroshima August 9, 1945: atomic bomb in Nagasaki

September 2, 1945: military occupation of Japan by the Allies

April 28, 1952: The San Francisco Pact comes into effect. The occupation army leaves Japan.

If the former territories occupied by you in South-East Asia do not protest too much, a fifth date is added: the national day of mourning of August 15. This commemoration is envisaged from 1990. The repulsive actions of your armies, your ruthless operations, in short, the whole of your war, have been brilliantly concealed. Without your collaboration?

Over the centuries, your people have been completely indoctrinated by Confucianism and Shintoism. Confucianism with its respect for hierarchy: praise of authority, ethics of obedience, and honour of duty accomplished. Each in his place assumes his role, taking into account the character absolute of the relation: lord-vassal, father-son, elder-younger, man-woman, and at the top, the Emperor-subject relation. Shintoism with the dogma of the Emperor's divine origin, the "Land of the Rising Sun", given by the gods to the Japanese people, who are a people chosen because they are descendants of the gods. This triad created by the gods: Throne, Country, People, and the teaching of Confucius adopted in Japan, are already described in the Japanese Constitution of the year 604. All these doctrines were fanatically exaggerated under the government of Emperor Meiji and have reached a climax during your reign.

That millions of Germans let themselves be seduced by Hitler's political program and that his charisma made them active Nazis, is a phenomenon which still amazes Germans today. The Japanese are quite different. Totalitarian conceptions had been current for centuries in Japanese society - it was based on the caste system - and it did not need a Führer like in Germany or a Duce like in Italy at all. The Japanese fascist military clique addressed the people on behalf of the Emperor, on your behalf, and with your knowledge of the facts. Besides, your charisma was based on the sacred, that of an inaccessible divine person, the Dazzling Sun, the *arahitokami*. The Japanese who disagreed ended up in prison. We had the choice between absolute obedience or repression. This although you have assumed your imperial office under the motto of Showa: Luminous Peace, Sparkling Harmony, Radiant Sun.

Since the industrialisation of Japan and the lack of raw materials, your grandfather moved to a policy of expansion, with a preference for China. You took over this policy and continued with it. Convincing the people cost you no trouble, especially since your imperialism was presented as a crusade. An evangelisation of Japanese morality. The absolute right of the chosen people to announce the New Order to others. Megalomania?

Why this letter. Why forty-two years after the end of the war? To honour my father, a Japanese prisoner of war. He who, like all other prisoners of war, has been treated monstrously on your behalf. He who, according to companions of fate, behaved in such an exemplary and courageous manner.

But I have doubts, I wonder if I should not be more incisive. Instead of writing so many question marks, wouldn't I be better off using exclamation marks? Maybe I am asking questions out of a spirit of contradiction. I know a Japanese never asks direct questions. I know a Japanese never responds directly. This is not part of Japanese customs.

July 11, 1943. On this date a new camp was opened near Batavia (Java) for white women and children without means of subsistence. The Japanese love to divide people into classes. And the Europeans took their side. The rich understand each other, the poor find each other.

The new camp (our second camp) was before the war a lunatic asylum for natives. It consisted of rudimentary barracks: four walls, a tiled roof, a stone floor.

No window. However, it was not dark in these barracks. Holes gaped there, ready to receive windows. We stayed there. Full freedom for draughts! Initially, we expected to put 400 white women there, with or without children. Then this number was increased to 2,000. Five times more! My mother, my sister and I were part of the first convoy. When we arrived it was disgusting, filthy and smelly. There was no water. There was no lighting. Even the Japanese officer on duty, who accompanied us, was surprised. What was he thinking about? His family? To the imperial family? How would it end if Japan lost the war? What if you or he were also stranded in such a pigsty?

Whether one dies of hunger, exhaustion, disease, or all three at the same time, it has never prompted a Japanese camp commander to correct the regime of detainees somewhat. On the contrary, their incomparable indifference became more and more conscious. But — and this really got on our nerves, these same commanders each time paid an official tribute to the prisoners who had just died. In full pageantry, sword on hip, they greeted the deceased with a deep inclination, looked very seriously and then disappeared as if nothing had happened. Were your officers really touched or were they acting? Was it clever hypocrisy or, in your opinion, Japanese sincerity?

So far, I have spoken of you, your government and your men. Never a word from the Japanese woman. I did not know her. The only thing I can remember is that, at the very beginning, in Batavia, I met at the same time, and in the same place, a few Japanese nurses who were giggling. I do not remember ever having seen a Japanese laugh or smile in the camp. In my childish naivety, I concluded that the Japanese soldier could not, should only be severe and irascible 24 hours a day.

It seems that during the First World War, the Imperial Japanese armies — at that time, in the English camp — were strictly contained. It was about forcing respect for "Western civilisation" so that during the negotiation of peace treaties, Japan could be considered as an equal partner. From 1931 to 1945, the commanders of your troops considered that this was superfluous. Whoever, during all this period, had to support the men of your imperial army, can hardly show understanding for the Japanese mentality. Your occupying army presented

itself largely as a troop of excited. Incompetent and destructive individuals. A bunch of frenzied and frustrated sadomasochists. A bunch of immature adults. A legion of insolent, uneducated, brazen, crooked ... And you were proud of your army?

"*Haragei* is the art of hiding one's thoughts. The Japanese who practices *haragei* is someone who says this and thinks that because he believes he cannot achieve his goal by revealing his inner thought and because he knows or suspects that others understand his real thoughts very well. " (D. van Velden) In short: we say something and we imply the opposite. *Haragei!* A typical Japanese design. And very skilful. You can use the formula in all directions. Every Japanese exercise diligently in the art of *haragei*. And you yourself seem extremely gifted in this area.

The ambivalence of your subjects seems quite strange to us. The Japanese are kind and cruel. He is belligerent and an art lover. He is sensitive and sadistic. He is both, and this is where his originality lies. In general, man is trained to curb all impulses which are not accepted by his community. The Japanese are trained to obey and above all, yes above all, not to have to lose face. Rather leave an accident victim lying around in the street than to bring him assistance because by helping each other, we contract lifelong obligations. If the circumstances do not allow it, we lose face, which must be avoided like the plague. If the Japanese observe these two principles of behaviour: obedience and maintenance of the face, he can be as ambiguous as he wants. In war, he kills a Chinese at 2 p.m. and at 2:30 p.m. he takes part in a tea ceremony. In both cases he acts with dedication and conviction. It does not cause any problem. For no Japanese. A fortiori, therefore, not for you?

The Yamato damachi, the Japanese soul, is complex and contains a paradox. Are you not giving the best example? You coldly bomb the civilian populations of Shanghai, Rangoon and other cities, but on April 13, 1942, when American pilots, for the first time, drop bombs on Tokyo, you personally announce that they must be prosecuted and executed for their crimes against the Japanese civilian population. The American pilots, who left an aircraft carrier, were tasked with landing in unoccupied China. Alas! Fifteen planes met in occupied territory. Chinese patriots helped them to return to nationalist China. But eight of them fell to the Japanese. After the torture, one died, three were executed. In addition, Japan took revenge on the Chinese population of the provinces of Che-Kiang and Kiang-sou. Two hundred and fifty thousand Chinese civilians were brutally murdered by 100,000 soldiers of your Imperial Army. Yamato damachi, the Japanese soul?

A word of threat emanating from the Japanese is not an empty word. It is carried out. We take action. Japanese acts: criminal acts. The following prose appeared in a special issue of the Japanese Official Gazette, published in Java, March 9, 1943, addressed to the people of the country: "On your loyalty to the Imperial Army will depend how in the future, you will be treated. In the meantime, remember that those who disobey orders will be severely punished. They will be thrown into an ocean of sufferings from which they will not escape. " And the

inhabitant of Java fell into an ocean of miseries. Didn't you know? Did you not know everything? And if you had known, would you have intervened?

Despite this threatening language, your Ministry of Greater East Asia did everything to instil in the occupied indigenous population the particular spiritual values of Japanese civilisation. The press and radio spread ideas like

1. The Japanese people are firmly convinced of their responsibility for world peace. So, he knows that Japan rules the whole world, as sure as the sun is in the sky.

2. When the world was created, there was first the earth. The first country was Japan, the 'Land of Sunrise.' It is clear that Japan is the land of dawn, the land that protects.

1. No one can measure themselves against the sun. By resisting it, we suffer the fate of the snow which melts on its rays.

2. Tenno Heika takes the people under his protection and until death the people are loyal to Tenno Heika. Tenno Heika considers the people as his child and the people see him as a father. The people have always been honoured to die for Tenno Heika. The weight of his life serving Tenno Heika is lighter than a feather.

1. As there are not two suns in the sky, so on earth there is only one Tenno.

2. When the Tenno promulgates an order, the people must follow it. If, for example, it is recommended to run into the fire or jump into the water, this order must be observed.

I have to admit that all this prose is written with more poetry than that of the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, Goebbels. Yet its content contains the same nonsense of the Ubermensch doctrine and the results for the vanquished populations have been equally disastrous.

1942. Lembang (Java). Eighty soldiers of the Royal Dutch East India Army surrender. Tied by three, but in addition each with their hands crossed on their backs tied with a rope, they were machine-gunned. The one who still gave a sign of life was killed with a bayonet. However, two soldiers survived. Any war crime, whether committed on a small or large scale, always has a witness. The world must know.

1944 Pontianak (Borneo). One thousand two hundred Chinese suspected of conspiracy and concealment of weapons are tortured and then beheaded, without further trial. Decapitated with a katana. **One thousand two hundred!**

Perhaps you only know Singapore from the horrors of war. February 13, 1942, the staff and patients of Alexandra Hospital are put to death with bayonets by the unit under the command of Colonel Tsuigi. A group of nurses, 65 women, from the General Hospital, are murdered on the beach. The next day, 5,000 Chinese civilians were massacred. And in the same way there were still a few series of killings - large and small - to teach the people of Singapore a lesson. When you ask how it happened that such a large number of victims fell, there is a very simple Japanese excuse: "It is the enemy who was coming to crash under our arms."

From 1931, that is to say as soon as your expansion policy began, your occupation troops engaged in extortion. In Manchuria, in China, in Burma, in the Philippines, in short, wherever your army was installed, the Chinese and the well-off Jews had to fill the coffers. If that didn't happen willingly, your soldiers would take people hostages. Already at that time, hostages. The case of Simon Kaspé moved the world press in 1933. This young Jew, of French nationality, piano virtuoso, had studied at the Paris Conservatory. On vacation with his parents in Harbin (then Manchukuo) he was kidnapped and tortured to death for 95 successive days. They pulled out his fingernails and cut off his ears. At one point his cell was just a narrow open pit. We unmask the culprits. A Chinese court sentenced them after a two-year trial. Two days after the trial, the Chinese judges and lawyers were arrested by your imperial army and amnesty granted to the culprits. Once released, they were presented as good patriots and put back to work elsewhere. The local press, which criticised this way of acting, was banned and the editors deported. The vice-consul of France, Mr. Chambon — who had advised against paying the ransom — was expelled as *persona non grata*. Thus, in Manchukuo, for the Japanese army of occupation which acted on your behalf, this business ended. That simple! According to your biographers, you read the press daily. Did you read such information? Or did you not consult foreign newspapers?

"How well the Japanese knew the standards, to which prison camps had to meet, emerge from the films which were shot, by order of Tokyo, for propaganda purposes inside and outside the country. As seen on film, a number of prisoners of war and internees were well dressed and transferred to a more pleasant environment. They were given appetising meals in front of them and, after the shooting, everything was removed. If the detainees refused to collaborate in these falsifications, the entire camp was threatened with reduced rations and the withdrawal of all drugs. "

The Nazis did exactly the same, for example in the film *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt*.

Did you encourage the shooting of films like this? Did you admire the result? Have you wondered if you were being cheated on? Or is the Japanese not cheating on his Emperor? But to present war as an idyll, who is fooled? The Nazis? The fascists? The ultranationalists? The racists?

April 1942. Bataan (Philippines). During three days, under atrocious and morally humiliating physical circumstances, 11,000 of the 53,000 Allied prisoners of war set off to meet death. Was this death march a mistake? An event that only happened once? Far from there. June 1945. Sandakan-Ranau (North Borneo). So that 2,796 Allied prisoners of war do not fall into the hands of the liberators, all are, literally and figuratively, sent to their deaths by your imperial officers. Six soldiers survived this march. I ask you the question: how many deaths do you have to have on your conscience to be denounced as a war criminal?

"... The suffering of the dying is terrible to see. Death comes slowly, people lie down for days on end, usually conscious, and wait for the end. Swallowing is almost impossible due to the suffering, Bedsores are full of larvae, the wounds spread under the skin, the incontinence of the sick spread excrements and urine in the blankets and threadbare clothes. Japanese doctor Morioka told me that the hospital should jump. Because the goal of the Japanese was victory and not the treatment of patients. "

This was written on July 22, 1943, by Dutch doctor R. Springer, prisoner of war. These dying were fellow inmates who had to set up an air camp in Haroekoe, an island located south of Ceram Island. On May 10, 1943, in response to his request for help from the Japanese doctor Shimada, the same Doctor R. Springer noted in his logbook the following refusal: "*Als Doctor ich verstehe, als offizier nicht.*" The Japanese physicians were faithful and servile subjects of your majesty. Heinrich Mann wrote: the Germans are "*ein Herrenvolk von Untertanen*". Does this not also apply to the Japanese?

"There is an essential difference between crimes perpetrated by the military, against the will of the state, and crimes committed by the military in accordance with the principles of the state."

Does this reflection by French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet have any meaning for you?

In the past Hitler said: "One does not ask the victor if he has told the truth."

You confided to your technical advisor, General Honjo, on February 25, 1936: "What is important is not what we do, it is the reaction of the world to our actions."

August 29, 1944. We are 2,000 women and children to be transported. The commander of the new camp is the executioner Sonei. I have already spoken about it. My mom, sister and I,

along with two other people, crammed into a tiny room. The furniture? A mattress that covers the entire floor. In the first week, outside of the morning and evening calls, we had three endless punitive calls. For hours we were exposed to the tropical sun, without food, without drink. We see women with shaved hair. We see women with puffy cheeks by slaps given with both hands. During this week we are not given anything to eat. I am devastated. I am stupid. I can't say a word. A contained rage boils in me, an immense despair, repressed anxieties. I don't want anyone to notice it. Sonei, the camp commander, sentenced and executed in 1946, has his name on a tablet in the Yasukuni temple in Tokyo. He is honoured as a fallen hero for the glory of the Japanese nation. I spit on the grave.

You decorated General Matsui and you received him personally because of the heroic deeds accomplished in China! Do you remember? This was in 1938.

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East sentenced him and six other accused to hanging for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Do you remember? This was in 1948.

General Matsui and his family were large landowners. The family generously ceded a plot of land, beautifully situated in Atami, near Tokyo, to erect a memorial column, in memory of the seven condemned. Seven tablets mention their names. In a small Shintoist temple, on the site, a priestess prays for them but also for murdered souls. In a peaceful place is the stone stele with a very legible inscription "the seven martyrs". Do you remember the inauguration? This was in 1952.

During the reign of your grandfather, Emperor Meiji, whom you honour, Japan began a fight against European civilisation. The slogans of the time were meant to catch up with it, to equal it and, to preferably, to overcome it — your people have always suffered from pre-eminence syndrome. The Japanese have imitated the West even in their anti-Semitism. Little has changed since then. Momentarily Japan is engaged in a trade war against America. Immediately appear numerous poisonous articles in which all the responsibilities are attributed to the Jews. The quintessential anti-Semitic book, *The Protocol of the Sages of Zion*, translated more than half a century ago from Russian into Japanese, is once again in the marketplace throughout Japan. Again, millions of your subjects may wear their eyes reading such literature — Japan has the largest number of *papivores* in the world. To be true to the truth, we must recognise that under your reign, the military clique has never been so far in its anti-Semitism as the Nazis or the Italian fascists. Neither one nor the other exterminated the Jews. But ... Jews are Jews all the same. In September 1944, at the age of 13, with many other children and mothers, I was sent to a retaliatory camp, because the Jews were not allowed to share their fate with the fate of Christians. Although Japanese, the leader of this new camp, an officer of your Imperial Land Army, was human. Either way, it was a relief after the Sonei diet.

In our last camp, the fifth in three years, my sister, a 16-year-old girl, worked on a team that hammered pigs buried in sacks. Animals whose flesh was, alas! not intended for our

stomachs, but for those of the Japanese quarter. It was the responsibility of the same team of young girls to make the coffins for the prisoners.

Dead ringers.

My father certainly had other plans for my sister's future, besides killing pigs and making coffins.

What work has the American occupiers forced on your four daughters? Should they also greet the President of the United States, twice a day, turning to Washington? Were they also starving? Were they also given water instead of quinine when they had attacks of malaria? Did they also suffer from ulcers that did not heal in a tropical climate? Furthermore, they didn't know where their father was being held and if he was still alive?

Forty-two years ago, on July 26, 1945, the Potsdam Declaration, in which the Allies demanded thirteen points for the surrender of Japan, was communicated to your government and to the world press. In the last article, the Allies warned Japan to expect swift and total destruction if it does not surrender. Your government did not respond to this warning, nor indeed to the rest of the declaration. He even felt that a negative answer was quite unnecessary. The word *mokusatsu* was used in this circumstance. Both by the government and the Japanese press. This word means not to pay attention, to ignore, to treat with contemptuous silence. And you let it happen?

After the two atomic bombs and the outbreak of hostilities between the Soviets and Japan, your government nonetheless informed the Allies on August 10, 1945, that it accepted the Potsdam Declaration, provided that His Majesty Emperor could retain his prerogatives as Head of State. The Australian government responds with violence. By telegram he addressed the Allies General Staff: "We insist that the Emperor, as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armies, be held responsible for acts of aggression and crimes Japanese war. As a result, we demand his dismissal. " In the following telegram, the Australians clarify: "The Emperor cannot enjoy any immunity." The telegrams did not fall into the hands of your spy service. Did you still suspect what plan was hatching about you?

Do you sometimes think of Mussolini's execution on April 28, 1945? Do you sometimes think of Hitler's suicide on April 30, 1945? Is it true that the execution of Mussolini would have made you very uncomfortable and that you could not understand Hitler's suicide? Is it true that afterwards you were very worried to see that your birthday, April 29, fell precisely between the dates of the death of your two war allies?

"The millions of men, women, children of devastated China, tortured Philippines and plundered East Asia, will not be satisfied with the punishments imposed only on imperial subjects for crimes committed on explicit orders from the Emperor and in full knowledge. They

will rightly demand the death of the Emperor who caused the death of their fathers, mothers, wives and children. They will demand the confiscation of the domains of the Empire. Fear, as well as partial compensation for the houses he burned, the villages he devastated, and the towns he destroyed. But, above all, they will insist that the absurdity of this outdated imperial regime, the basis of the Japanese plan to conquer the world by armed aggression. "(Letter from Dr. B.A. Liu, mentioned in Japan, the problem of Asia, D. Woodman).

On August 14, 1945, your subjects were warned by radio that the next day at noon would take place an extremely important broadcast. Everyone prepared for it mentally. In small or large company, we meet, on the 15th, around loudspeakers or a radio set. It was indeed an exceptional program. For the first time, your subjects heard your voice. Respectfully, with bowed heads, in the utmost silence, they listened to your radio message. But this outdated language of the Court was not understood. Immediately after the speech, the content had to be specified. Did you know that you were unintelligible to your people? Did you really feel elevated above everything?

"Loyal Subjects, after a careful examination of the world economy and the conditions which prevail today in **Our** empire, **We** have, today, taken the resolution to put an end to the present situation by taking an unusual decision. **We** have instructed **Our** government to let those of the United States, Great Britain, China and the U.S.S.R. that the empire is prepared to accept the terms of the joint declaration. (Potsdam Declaration, July 26, 1945 - L. Ch.).

From **Our** august ancestors, **We** have solemnly learned to strive with all **Our** soul to strive not only for the common good and for the prosperity of all nations, but also for the safety and well-being of **Our** own subjects. If **We** declared war on the United States and Great Britain, it was, in reality, in order to ensure the sovereignty of Japan and to consolidate its position in East Asia. Far be it from **Us** any idea of undermining the sovereignty of other countries or of thinking of territorial enlargement.

For four years now, hostilities have continued and, although everyone has done their best, the fate of arms has not always turned to Japan's advantage, despite the bravery of our forces on land and sea, despite the untiring dedication of the servants of the State and despite the efforts of **Our** people of one hundred million individuals. The general development of the conflict had no other effect than going against the interests of the country. Finally, the enemy began to use a new and singularly cruel weapon, the effects of which seemed to be as terrible as they were unforeseeable. Many innocent victims have just lost their lives. By persisting in wanting to fight, **We** were heading not only towards the complete collapse and the disappearance of the Japanese nation, but also towards the total annihilation of humanity and of civilisation.

Faced with such a situation, it was advisable to come to the aid of **Our** so many subjects and also to reconcile **Us** with the Holy Spirits of **Our** august ancestors. That is why **We** have

given the order to accept the terms of the joint declaration of the powers. With regard to the allied countries of East Asia who have never ceased to bring their collaboration to the Empire in the search for the emancipation of this region of the world, **We** can only express **Our** deepest regrets.

Our moved thoughts turn to the officers and to the soldiers, to all those who have fallen on the field of honour in the performance of duty, to those who have died prematurely, to the fate of their near relatives. So many matters of concern for **Us**, day and night! With equal compassion, **We** lean towards the wounded and the civilian victims of war, towards those who no longer have either home or property. Certainly, **We** know that the sufferings and trials that the nation is called upon to overcome from now on are great and **We** fully understand the feelings that each of you is experiencing. Now, the demands of the hour and of destiny have led **Us** to choose the path which leads to great peace for the benefit of future generations. **We** must therefore endure what seems unbearable, tolerate what seems intolerable.

Having thus safeguarded and maintained the (institutional) framework of the Imperial State, **We** remain with you unceasingly, Loyal Subjects, and **We** count on your sincerity and your uprightness. Take care that the slightest emotional shock does not give rise to unnecessary complications and that the slightest fraternal quarrel does not lead to an unfortunate disorder which will deprive you of the confidence of the world, for you will be on your way to life delusion.

May the entire nation therefore continue to live as one family from generation to generation, may it keep its faith in the sustainability of the Divine Lands, may it be aware of the weight of responsibilities and of the long road that lies ahead, present in front of her. Unite all your forces to build the future. Cultivate righteousness, have a broad mind and work with relentless ardour to raise the prosperity of empire by keeping pace with universal progress.

Signature of the Emperor
Imperial Seal
the 14th day of the 6th month
of the XXth year of Showa

(translation of an adaptation from old Japanese into modern Japanese in Histoire du Japon, Fr. Toussaint).

In your speech not a word about defeat. Not a word on surrender. Not a word on unconditional surrender. But well: we have taken the resolution, we have charged our government, we have given orders and we are counting on you.

After your radio talk, hundreds of your subjects committed suicide. They could not bear to lose face. Above all, they despised themselves for having caused the suffering of capitulation in you. Over to you, their Tenno Heika! They felt that they were so imperfectly committed that they deserved death. And you, Tercio Heika, the Celestial Sovereign, the personified authority, you, the only living *kami*, were you not overwhelmed by this loss of a few hundred suicides who begged your forgiveness, who died with your name on their lips? Did the rest of your subjects live on because you begged them to come together to build the future, to restore the glory of the Imperial State? In any case, from August 15, 1945, in accordance with tradition, your people were advised to obey. This time it was necessary to scrupulously follow the directives of the occupier, to cooperate with him, not to give in to rebellion or resistance, and only to have in view the common good of national unity. So that the Empire that has existed since 2605 is perpetuated? To ensure the future of your son and successor?

Five days after the surrender agreement, the following telegram was sent by the War Ministry in Tokyo to all the commanders of Japanese overseas camps: "Documents which may appear unfavourable to our cause are 'they came into enemy hands, should be treated the same as secret documents and, after consultation, be destroyed. Personnel who mistreated prisoners of war or detainees, or who may be presented as on an unfavourable day in their eyes, is authorised to take the precautionary measures which consist of immediate displacement or flight without leaving any trace. "

Does this telegram not reveal the complicity of leading officials? Were they all the same aware that they had not acted according to international standards? Were they still aware of the crimes committed? "No," replied General Tojo — among other prime minister and minister-of-war — while the *International Military Tribunal for the Far East* sat, "... the character of the Japanese people is such that he believes that neither Heaven nor Earth would allow such acts ". Other defendants nodded and claimed to have been unaware of the crimes perpetrated in the camps. On their honour!?! But what do we mean by that? What does that mean? The mafia also knows the word of honour, a code of honour.

And, as usual, there was no reaction from you. No disapproval. No approval. Nothing. Perhaps a god can be above everything, but a desecrated god?

The Allied occupation of Japan did not actually begin until September 2, 1945. Between August 14 and September 2, there are nineteen full days. We will give you, your staff, your government, your armed forces and your Imperial Secret Police 19 days to prepare for surrender. The gift was gratefully accepted. Nineteen full days was more than enough time to destroy all important files, documents, logs, reports and minutes. In 19 days, you could rewrite new reports and falsify others. The ultranationalists had a period of nineteen days to avoid losing face and to unhurriedly make testimonial arrangements before committing seppuku (*hara-kiri*) or some other kind of suicide. A new government was formed. At its head was an Imperial Prince. In your name, the unconditional surrender was signed on September 2, 1945. Was it too humiliating for an *arahitokami* to admit defeat and sign a surrender himself?

You know better than anyone the vast expanse of the Pacific War. So vast that it took weeks and weeks for the Allies to settle everywhere. These were generally colonised countries and regions whose indigenous populations fought for their independence. Rightly, the natives were far from favourable to the West. And especially in the Dutch East Indies, the interned civilian and the prisoner of war had to be protected against extermination. So, we continued to live in the camp and the liberation was not a celebration. But what is abject, unfair, and insane, is that the Japanese commanders of the camps did not announce to the detainees the end of the war until several days, if not several weeks after August 15. Can you explain such monstrous behaviour?

Were you behind this initiative? What was the intention? Push sadism to the extreme? Further increase the number of deaths in the camps?

Your commanders and camp supervisors have masterfully demonstrated how the Japanese can switch from one behaviour to another. As soon as they decided to announce the end of the war to us, they showed themselves to be civilised in their social relations. Not only did they show their respect by greeting us deeply in their turn, but they ended up providing us with some medicines and, what was so necessary, a little more food. Above all, out of duty, they protected us against the native independence fighters, in accordance with the directives of General MacArthur and Admiral L. Mountbatten. Since you were ordered to follow the orders of the victors and they used to obey you, we were saved! So, it was with customary ceremonial that many camps were handed over from the Japanese to the Allies, weeks after the actual surrender. The absolute absurd was reached: the bellicose overseers of the Japanese camps became peaceful jailers in the service of the Allies. Thanks to you?

When the Americans occupied your country on September 2, 1945, your subjects were stunned. Do you remember? These occupants who behaved like men, like disciplined soldiers. They were not barbarians. They did not assassinate, they did not rape, they did not emulate, they did not strike or stomp, they did not enslave your people. During the Allied occupation your country was not plundered, the Japanese people did not live in a state of danger, they were not depressed psychologically, not humiliated, not exploited, nor starved. And yet what lamentations formulated by your subjects about this occupation which helped Japan to emerge from it and to become what it is now: one of the richest countries in the world. Apart from charitable aid amounting to millions of dollars, America granted Japan a loan of 1,470,000,000 dollars. In June 1961 this sum, too close to one third, was definitely abandoned. Or a gift of \$980,000,000!

For our repatriation from Singapore to Amsterdam, the Dutch government later presented the invoice. No question of discount. We had nothing to do in the Pacific. Should we have let ourselves be beaten down by the Nazis?

I met a lovely Japanese lady, a freelance journalist. During dinner she chatted non-stop. This allowed me to know, without having given anything about myself, that during the war her father and grandfather had been interned in Japan. They were part of that group of "dangerous thinkers" like socialists, communists and other progressives who did not agree with your policies, and refused to renounce their ideology. Between 1928 and 1945, 80,000 Japanese, including 74,000 from before 1941, rotted in your prisons. Locked up for years, most often without any form of trial, most were not released until October 1945. After the war, their resistance was never recognised in any way. Once and for all the duty of the Japanese was to submit to social norms and to follow the directives you gave him, the Emperor.

Immediately after the war, 2,400 Japanese were sentenced to prison terms for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Eight hundred and nine of them were sentenced to death in Tokyo, Singapore, Batavia, and Manila or even in Russia, China. This gives some idea of the criminal behaviour of your men towards prisoners of war and civilians. One hundred and eighty-seven thousand your Majesty's subjects have been sidelined by the Allies. But no sooner was the occupation over than they resumed their place in the intellectual, political and economic world. The same was true for war criminals sentenced to prison terms. Released between 1952 and 1956, each of them again received a responsible function, as before. One of them, Nobusuke Kishi, amnestied after three years of detention, even became Prime Minister. All to the glory of the Japanese Nation! In the end, it makes sense. If you could continue to wear the crown, despite your political past, why not show so many leniencies towards your former collaborators?

After the war, many Germans lived with guilt complexes. The Japanese don't know anything like that. They certainly never had a sense of collective guilt. But your subjects reacted collectively as follows: the military clique misinformed our Emperor, they misinformed us, the people. The fault of the war does not lie with the Emperor, nor with us. We just obeyed; it was our homework. From now on we are starting a new life as the Emperor ordered us. We must build a new Japan as the Emperor ordered us to. What about the war? A mistake! This is how you and your subjects simply buried the war in the Pacific and its attendant problems in the abyss. Forever. Those who, very exceptionally, did not react in this way were the "dangerous ex-thinkers".

Historian Hiroshi Tanaka notes that, from the Japanese perspective, the problems related to the war were resolved by the end of the American occupation: "At this point, we turned to the West. Asia and our responsibility, except trade. We have not prosecuted our war criminals. United in the war, we have also been united in forgetting our responsibilities. "

The principles of Bushido, the warrior code of honour, were spelled out in the book Hagakure. Immediately after the war it ceased to be a bestseller. In 1967, the fascist writer Mishima once again gave him all his attention in the work: Modern Japan and the Ethics of the Samurai, the way of the Hagakure.

Mishima, who during the war and against people of his generation preferred to keep away, in the 1960s, became a supporter of imperial power prior to August 1945. Fervent worshipper of tradition, with the ardent desire of 'an Empire purified from Western influences; he revered you as a father figure. In 1970 he made seppuku (hara-kiri). In turn, he is idolised as a worthy son of Japan. Had he been influenced by the *Nihonjinron* (Japanese specificity)? Under this name hides an ultranationalist tendency which has been rife for years. The *Nihonjinron* is based on the publication of works which demand a return to Japanese traditions and where the imported ideology - democracy - is seen not only as totally useless but also as harmful to Japanese civilisation. We want to go back to the past, to hyper nationalism, to a state religion, to a strong man. Japan wants more power. And you, what do you want? Your war regime was based on one idea: religious patriotism. Mishima was a supporter. Isn't this idea ingrained in your people?

"Japan has Pearl Harbor on her conscience. The United States has Hiroshima and Nagasaki on their conscience. We are even," claim the Japanese revisionists. Only fascists can assert such theories. The war has been fought in your name. It is your person that has been sung, honoured, glorified. You have authorised this worship. At no time did you oppose it. You wanted the economic exploitation of the occupied territories for the well-being of Japan. You, Emperor Hirohito, have started the war. They say you were not very favourable to him. We forget to add that it was not dictated by your love of peace, but because of your anxiety about losing the war.

Both in Europe and in Japan, the ultra-nationalists, the extreme right-wingers, and the sort of people, who dare not openly display these views, use exactly the same methods to overturn the war's past. They disarticulate, they deny, they slander, they curse, they ridicule, they defile, they denigrate, they poison, they consciously forget, they remove the facts from their context. For them all the testimonies are false, all the documents are falsified, and all the accusatory evidence is based on pure lies. Their policy is to deny, to hide. They get to the point where the victim would have to prove that she is not guilty. Personally, you prefer to be silent. Like a tomb. Are not these two extreme behaviours as cynical one as the other?

Never a word of remorse, never a word of apology for the immense suffering caused to millions of the oppressed in the occupied and annexed countries. Never a word of sympathy for a "non-Japanese". Neither then nor now. During the official visit of the President of South Korea, Chum Doo Hwan, in 1984, you did not express a word of regret, not even a simulated regret passed your lips. To achieve the expected turnover with South Korea, your Prime Minister Nakasone finally took the floor and offered the expected "unequivocal" apologies: "For a certain period of time, during this century, Japan has inflicted great hardship on your country and your people. I wish to tell you that the Japanese government and people deeply regret this mistake. "Thus, all was said!

A year ago, you said: "My heart is still pained by the memory of this million eight hundred thousand people who died in my name." You were talking about the Japanese. Naturally! Only

from them! One million eight hundred thousand? Do you not realise that in your name, 2,400,000 soldiers of the armed forces of land, air and sea lost their lives that more than 400,000 civilians were killed? In total more than 2.8 million deaths if not more than 3 (it is these last two figures that are most often cited). Why are you lying? Why do you mimic the number of Japanese victims? Why never a word, just one, on the millions of adversaries suppressed by your imperial army? Of course, as the reigning ruler, you please that the number of war dead is limited to 1.8 million. But in the past, when you knew that this war was irretrievably lost, did you not let your compatriots fight uselessly for months - kill each other, more exactly - with the intimate wish to lose a few thousand more?? So much less for a devastated country where overpopulation was still rife, especially when Dai-Nihon (Greater Japan) found itself reduced to Japan itself. He could not feed all these Japanese mouths enough nor provide decent housing for the population. He had no more reserves of ships, gasoline planes, in short, nothing to transport food and raw materials from occupied countries to the Nihon. And the few means of transport you had left were scuttled or shot down by the Allies. What you also want to ignore is that your rescue boats only picked up the Japanese castaways. The "non-Japanese" had only to drown in your name and in peace?

Are you interested in statistics?

Number of deaths among Dutch prisoners of war after five years in Nazi Germany: 3%
Number of deaths among prisoners of war

Dutch during the Japanese occupation, this lasted three years and five months: 19.4%.

Total European prisoners of war who died in Japanese camps: 25%

European prisoners of war who died during construction of the Burma-Siam railway:
26.5%

European prisoners of war who died during the construction of the Pakan-Baroe
(Sumatra) railway: 35%

European prisoners of war who died during the construction of airfields in the Moluccas
and the island of Flores: 26.5%

European prisoners of war who died during sea transports organised by your imperial
army: 10%.

Dutch citizens detained and deceased in Japanese camps: over 13%

After the capitulation, you violently opposed, but to no avail, the new Constitution. To change anything in the Meiji Constitution was unthinkable for you. Not an iota. What suited Emperor Meiji was in your eyes sacrosanct. I can easily see it. All the advantages were on your side: all the powers for the Throne, and for the people nothing but duties. According to the Meiji Constitution, only you could decide on peace and war. According to the same Constitution, you were also supreme commander of the Japanese armed forces. In short, master and lord of the country and the people. Why didn't the *International Military Tribunal for the Far East* remember it, why did they forget it?

In 1937, from October 28 to November 3, the "*Conference of the Nine Powers*" was held in Brussels in correlation with your war in Manchuria and China. The words destruction, carnage and occupation were the order of the day. In 1937, the powers decided that you were going too far. But in 1945 there were still millions more assassinations. Yet, you and your throne were saved. Where does the logic lie?

Hitler never signed a mission, or a law, or a command, or a decree. You do! Anything that should or could be ratified by an imperial signature obtained your seal. And your blessing? Often, I wonder what would have happened if Hitler did not kill himself and appear at the Nuremberg trial? Would it have been used for the rehabilitation of the German nation like you for the Japanese nation? I believe all the same that Europe and the world would have reared up in horror. Why have we not felt the same indignation towards you?

29.4.1987 - 3.10.1987

Note

The passages quoted without references concerning the Dutch East Indies of the time are mostly taken from the work "*Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*", volumes IIa and IIb, by L. de Jong, Edition of the State, Netherlands.