

Speech at a Ceremony Offering Flowers to the Statue of General Sudirman

August 17, 2020

KATSURAGI Nami, Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the Ceremony of Offering Flowers to the Statue of General Sudirman

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for gathering here today in this heat wave and despite the Wuhan virus calamity.

In the presence of Indonesian Acting Ambassador Tri Purnajaya, and Mr. Watanabe Koichi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Defense, the flower offering ceremony has been performed with solemnity today and I am sincerely grateful. I would like to also offer my appreciation to Diet members Mr. Yamada Hiroshi and Ms. Sugita Mio, who have made an appearance despite their busy schedules.

Until last year, I presided over this flower offering ceremony. Starting this year, I serve as the representative of the Executive Committee for the ceremony and now I would like to share some of my thoughts with you.

Regarding my involvement with the Ministry of Defense's Self-Defense Forces, I was "anti-Self-Defense Forces" for a long time as a consequence of the postwar education I was given. However, thanks to engagement with environmental issues, which is my lifework, and the influence of martial arts that I took up in my university days, I was awakened to the importance of national defense in the latter half of my 20s, though a little too late. I wished to become a bridge between people like myself of the past and the Self-Defense Forces. My first involvement with the Ministry of Defense's Self-Defense Forces was to serve as an Ichigayadai Tour guide, which was conducted every weekday, including the Ichigaya Memorial Hall, which is right before us. I was a guide for three years, starting in 2001.

A little after I started as a guide, I found out that open recruitment would begin for the Self-Defense Force Reserve and the Self-Defense Force Reserve Candidates. I became one of the first to join and completed the 50-day training that stretched over three years in Camp Takeyama, Yokosuka City. Sixteen years have passed since I was commissioned as a Self-Defense Force Reservist in 2004. Beginning around five years ago, I have also served as the President of an association, *Sakimori to Ayumu Kai*, literally the Association to Walk Together with Soldiers, which was established with the

aim of becoming a bridge between the people and the Self-Defense Forces.

Representative of my involvement with Indonesia is a visit to places including Madura Island, which is among the neediest regions of Indonesia, three years ago as an Assessment Committee member of the Green Fund. At that time, I was assisted by the Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement-International, or OISCA, a representative from which is here today. On my own, I visited Kalibata Heroes Cemetery and PETA Pembela Tanah Air Museum. There, as I learned about General Sudirman's achievements, to whom we offered flowers today, a newspaper article caught my attention. It said that the Statue of General Sudirman was sent from the Indonesian Ministry of Defense to Japan and displayed on the premises of the Japanese Ministry of Defense. I never knew that and was very surprised.

According to what was subsequently revealed, the Statue was initially displayed in the Memorial Zone but became a nuisance due to the deployment of the PAC-3 missiles and was put in a warehouse. At the strong request from a nongovernmental group (that is, Mr. Kase and other people here), the statue came to see the light of day again and was placed next to Ichigaya Memorial Hall.

Since 2018, the year after I found the newspaper article in Indonesia, I have been involved with this flower offering ceremony. I can never forget the impact I felt when I saw this statue for the first time. I felt as if General Sudirman was standing there, scowling at the Memorial Hall, which was a part of the former Imperial Japanese Army Academy auditorium where the Tokyo Trial took place, the root cause of the masochistic view of history that tamed the postwar Japanese people.

Let me go back into time a little. I was totally steeped in the masochistic view of history. Then I was enlightened by several things--one of which was a movie released in 2001 called "Merdeka 17805." In fact, I did not know until long after that the movie was made by Mr. Kase Hideaki, who is here, but *merdeka* means independence in the Indonesian language and "17805" indicates the date on which the first Indonesian president Sukarno declared independence: 17 for the 17th day, 8 for August and 05 for 2,605th year of the Japanese Imperial reign. Until then, I had simply assumed that the Japanese Imperial Army did cruel things to the people of Asia. On the contrary, I found out that as many as 2,000 Japanese soldiers chose to stay in Indonesia rather than return to Japan after the war to shed their blood with Indonesians to gain independence from

350 continuous years of Dutch colonial rule. I was deeply moved and for the first time proud of the history of my country.

That is exactly why I wish to make known the existence of these Japanese and PETA, or Defenders of the Homeland, including General Sudirman, which was trained by the Imperial Japanese Army--and historical facts such as this. At first, the Statue of General Sudirman was not included during the Ichigayadai Tour, although it is located on the side of Ichigaya Memorial Hall. I found it very regrettable and wrote in the serial column *Chokkyu & Kyokkyu* of the *Sankei Shimbun* and elsewhere that “the Statue of General Sudirman should be part of the Ichigayadai Tour” and asked Upper House member Yamada Hiroshi, who was then a parliamentary official, to have the statue included in the tour. Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Yamada and other people concerned, this statue is now for tour participants to view. (For that matter, I intend to make inquires so that the Memorial Hall, the venue of the Tokyo Trial, which marked a major turning point in the history of Japan, will be made separate from the Ministry of Defense so that it is open to visitors on weekends. This will make the Memorial Hall available not only for tour participants but also for visitors in general. This is sure to be a long story and I will refrain until another time.)

At any rate, I am vigorously encouraged by General Sudirman when I stand here. “People of Japan, how much longer do you need to stay under the spell of the Tokyo Trial? People of Japan, *merdeka!*”

I would like all of you who are present here to learn about the deep ties between Indonesia and Japan, bound by the blood of our forefathers. I would be grateful if you could also share the awareness that we must restore Japan, which is still unable to wake up from the GHQ’s WGIP (war guilt information program for implanting a masochistic sense in the Japanese mind) after 75 long postwar years, as a country of *merdeka*, or independence, in a true sense.

Thank you very much.