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Forgotten Forced Migrants of War: Civilian Internment of Japanese in British India, 1941–1946

‘Sudden fall of the grave situation,’ wrote Fukuda Kurahachi in his diary on 8 December 1941.¹ He was one of numerous Japanese arrested by the British in Singapore, many of whom subsequently endured internment in British India for the next four and a half years. Between December 1941 and May 1946, around 2700 Japanese and others from Japan’s empire based across British South and Southeast Asia were interned in camps in New Delhi and Deoli. Overshadowed by the horrific conditions of Prisoners of War under the Japanese, research on civilian internment during the Second World War has long taken a back seat, though cases of Japanese internment have been documented in, for instance, the United States, Canada and Australia.² Little attention, however, has been paid in English language research to those interned in India.³

¹ Imperial War Museum, London (IWM), Document 11359, Fukuda Kurahachi, ‘Private Papers of K Fukuda’, 8 December 1941 (hereafter, Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’).

² For example, Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York 2010); Pamela Sugiman, ‘Memories of Internment: Narrating Japanese Canadian Women's Life Stories’, *The Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, 29, 3 (2004), 359–388; Yuriko Nagata, *Unwanted Aliens: Japanese Internment in Australia* (St Lucia 1996).

³ The internees are mentioned in passing as part of a larger story from that conflict, for example in the following: Felicia Yap, ‘Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese in British Asia: The Similarities and Contrasts of Experience’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 47, 2 (2012), 326–7; Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941–1945* (Cambridge 2005), 337–8; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, ‘You Don't Want to Know About the Girls? The “Comfort Women”, the Japanese Military and Allied Forces in the Asia-Pacific War’, *Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus*, 13, 31, 1 (3 August 2015), 2, <https://apjif.org/2015/13/31/Tessa-Morris-Suzuki/4352.html>; Yasmin Khan, *India at War: The Subcontinent and the Second World War* (Oxford 2015), 112; Henry Frei, *Guns of February: Ordinary Japanese Soldiers' Views of the Malayan Campaign and the Fall of Singapore 1941–42* (Singapore 2004), passim. A more focussed, but literary rather than scholarly, publication is Raghu Karnad’s, ‘The Ghost in the Kimono’, *Granta*, 130 (Winter 2015), 148–66. There are some in-depth studies in non-English language research or former internee memoir: Mine Toshirō, *Indo kokunetsu sabaku ni nihonjin shūyōjo ga atta* [In the Heat of the Indian Desert there was a Japanese Camp] (Tokyo 1995); Katō Hisako, “‘Indo yokuryū’ to “‘ruson sen tōhikō’” no michi’ [The Road to ‘Indian Internment’ and ‘Escape to Luzon’], *Rindas Working Paper No 27*, March 2017, <https://rindas.ryukoku.ac.jp/english/outcome/RINDAS%20Series%20of%20Working%20Papers%2027.pdf>; Ōtani Yukio, *Omoi wa haruka: Watashi no senchū sengo* [Far Away Feelings: My War and Postwar] (Tokyo 1983); Ōba Noboru, *Karayuki-san Okiku no shōgai* [Life of Okiku, Overseas Prostitute] (Tokyo 2001); Chung Shu-min, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù jízōngyíng jūliú jì’ [Taiwanese Interned in India during World War II], *Taiwan Historical Research*, 24, 3 (2017), 89–140; and Karuna Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice* (Bangkok 1991).

The relative invisibility of Japanese incarceration in India no longer extends to POWs, the subject T.R. Sareen's *Japanese Prisoners of War in India*.⁴ In order to likewise document the civilian story, this article takes an empirical and narrative-driven approach, intersecting official documentation from archives in London and New Delhi with three individual experiences of internment. The first of the latter is Fukuda Kurahachi, cited in the opening, who was a Japanese businessman in Singapore. While incarcerated he kept a diary written in English, most likely to demonstrate its innocuity to the British and therefore minimise the possibility of confiscation. That the diary now resides in the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London suggests it eventually was, offering unique insights into real-time captivity. The second is Norah Newbury Inge, a British woman who worked as a camp guard in Delhi and Deoli, who brings a female view from the other side of the camp power divide. An oral interview with Inge, based on her memories later in life, also resides in the IWM. Third is the perspective of non-Japanese internee Karuna Kusalasaya, a Thai man who published his memoir in the 1990s to share his life story with his family. Weaving together these voices with the archival evidence conveys the impacts of wartime incarceration on individual lives.

While a fundamental aim of the article is to reveal a hidden history, another is to present the internees as forced migrants of war. Kobayashi states that the Second World War created 'unprecedented' movement, that '[w]ar is indeed a compilation of various kinds of mobilities'.⁵ This evokes images of moving militaries, refugees, expellees and forced labour, but perhaps less so civilian internees. As is well known, after the end of the war in Europe around 60 million people were homeless, living in camps or on the move.⁶ This speaks to the movement of people that occurred *before* and *during* that war to create the postwar refugee

⁴ T.R. Sareen, *Japanese Prisoners of War in India, 1942-46: Bushido and Barbed Wire* (Kent 2006).

⁵ Yasuko Hassall Kobayashi, 'Crossing Boundaries to Survive: Japanese POWs' Experiences through the Allied Interrogation Reports', *International Journal of Diaspora & Cultural Criticism*, 9, 1 (2019), 7 & 11.

⁶ Jenny Edkins, *Missing: Persons and Politics* (New York 2011), 38; Gören Rystad, 'Uprooted by the War: Refugees, Displaced Persons and Expellees after World War II', *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 8, 3 (1989), 7-8.

and displaced persons crisis. Less is said about the situation in South and Southeast Asia, which too faced large numbers of displaced and expelled persons. Civilian internees were part of this, forced to move across land or sea, both internally and beyond borders. Their agency disintegrated as the State defined the parameters of mobility and motility, incarceration merging with *enforced* migration. Internees had no control over their destination, and shared the traumatic impacts of dislocation experienced by other forced migrants, from abrupt loss of homes, work and possessions, to estrangement from familiar networks, to involuntary adjustment to new places within an uncertain context. Key aspects to address in this paper, then, are *who* the internees were and *how* they lived their lives within imposed constraints that defined both motion and immotility. Guided by the archives and infused with memoir, and utilising non-English sources, this article creates a more nuanced picture of internment for those who were, like Fukuda, uprooted from homes and workplaces in British South and Southeast Asia and, as forced migrants of war, transported to India for part or all of that conflict.

Norah Newbury Inge, who worked as a British Christian missionary in Singapore in the early 1940s, remembered Malaya and Singapore as ‘thick with Japanese’.⁷ As Bayly and Harper describe,

[i]n every small town on the Malay peninsula there were Japanese photographic studios, chemists and taxidermists. Japanese hotels serviced the growing tourist trade. In Singapore, a fleet of 100-odd motorized fishing boats and 1500 fishermen supplied the larger proportion of the colony’s needs.⁸

‘If you wanted a good photographer,’ said Inge, ‘you went to the Japanese.’ She also liked to shop in the Japanese quarter in Singapore on Middle Road, known as Little Japan or

⁷ IWM: Oral History 8636, Norah Newbury Inge, ‘Interview’, 5 November 1984, Reel 1 (hereafter, Inge, ‘Interview’).

⁸ Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, 6.

Nihonjingai (Japanese Street), as ‘their things were so cheap’.⁹ Especially after the First World War, Japanese businesses entered the region, from banks to textile stores, mines to rubber plantations.¹⁰ The real pioneers, though, were the *karayuki-san*, the Japanese prostitutes from poverty-stricken rural families and regions who were trafficked to Southeast Asia and elsewhere.¹¹ Over time, these expatriate communities became integral local ones, embedded in the economy with new generations born there. In the months prior to the outbreak of war when relations were deteriorating and conflict expected, the exact numbers of Japanese in South and Southeast Asia fluctuated due to a flurry of evacuations in the region. Official estimates in August 1941 put the figure at 300 in India; in Malaya, it was closer to 3600.¹²

Fukuda Kurahachi arrived in Singapore in 1916 at the age of 13 to work in Echigoya Gofukuten, a textile store selling kimono primarily to the *karayuki-san*. However, after licensed Japanese prostitution ended from 1920, the store adapted to a European clientele and continued to prosper. After the owner’s death in 1933, Fukuda became Echigoya’s manager and oversaw its expansion.¹³ He was one of those planning to evacuate Singapore and return to Japan at the end of 1941. He could not leave, though, without tying up the concerns of the business – legal advice needed to be sought, and employees paid. Finally, on Sunday 7 December he closed the business. He held a small dinner party that evening to prepare for his

⁹ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 1; Kevin Blackburn, ‘Heritage Site, War Memorial, and Tourist Stop: The Japanese Cemetery of Singapore, 1891-2005’, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 80, 1, (292) (2007), 17–18.

¹⁰ For example, see Yuen Choy Leng, ‘The Japanese Community in Malaya before the Pacific War: Its Genesis and Growth’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 9, 2 (1978), 166–7 and *passim*.

¹¹ James Francis Warren, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-san: Prostitution in Singapore 1870-1940* (Singapore 1993), 47; Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, 6.

¹² National Archives of India (NAI): No. 35(10)-W1941 War Branch: Evacuation of British and Japanese subjects on a reciprocal bases and matter connected thereto, ‘Interview with Mr K. Okazaki, Japanese Consulate General on questions of evacuation, by Caroe’, 22 August 1941 and ‘Governor Straits Settlements to Secretary of State for Colonies, Government House and Tokyo’, 8 September 1941.

¹³ Nor-Afidah Abd Rahman, (2004) ‘Echigoya’, Singapore Infopedia, National Library Singapore, http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_980_2006-06-01.html (accessed 15 January 2020); Warren, *Ah ku and Karayuki-san*, 42; Shimizu Hiroshi and Hirakawa Hitoshi, *Japan and Singapore in the World Economy: Japan’s Economic Advance into Singapore* (London 1999), 36–37. There is also a photo of Echigoya Gofukuten, c.1920s, in plate 2.3 of the Hiroshi and Hitoshi text.

impending departure, at the very moment the Japanese fleet was nearing Hawai‘i.¹⁴ Fukuda may not have been prepared for what happened next, but the British colonial authorities certainly were, having made plans for the internment of regional Japanese since at least 1940.¹⁵

The British made arrests right from 8 December 1941 as the bombing of Pearl Harbour was barely ending. All Japanese, men women and children, along with others from Japan’s empire like Koreans, Taiwanese (Formosans) and even some Chinese and Malays, were forcibly removed from their homes and businesses. Fukuda recorded the raids beginning at 3.15 am, with himself arrested in the second round at 6 am. He was taken, along with other males, to the immigration depot at Singapore’s East Wharf, and from there shipped on the *SS Klang* to Port Swettenham Quarantine Station, arriving on 9 December. Just 11 days later, they were transferred on the *SS Perak* back to Singapore, possibly due to the progress of Japan’s invasion of Malaya. There they were interned in Changi prison, infamous for a different and later set of internees and POWs.¹⁶

Meanwhile, the women and children were taken to another quarantine station on Saint John’s Island, off the coast of Singapore. They slept in long sheds, with outside cooking stoves and spaces for cooking pots, wood and charcoal. Inge travelled with them after the British head of military police informally appointed her as guard of the female internees. While the interned women mostly organised themselves and took care of each other, this latter was not always the case, especially between different political or ethnic groups. Mine

¹⁴ Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, up to entry 7 December 1941.

¹⁵ NAI: No. 67(5)-W/40(Secret), Preparation of treatment of Japanese nationals, ‘Secret Intelligence Bureau (Home Department) Government of India 7 March 1941’, Staff comment, 24 March 1941, 32.

¹⁶ Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, 8, 9, 18 and 20 December 1941. In Singapore time, the bombs at Pearl Harbour would have stopped falling around 3.25 am. Note there were other shiploads of internees moving between Port Swettenham (now Port Klang) and Changi. According to Chung, 19 Japanese and Okinawans, seven Taiwanese and one Korean were still interned in Changi when the Japanese arrived and released them. Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 110.

Toshirō claims there were five Chinese communist girls from Ipoh who were forced to serve the others food. On one occasion they spat into the food served to some Japanese women.¹⁷

The internees, however, were not to stay long at their new accommodation. Back in September 1941, the Governor of the Straits Settlements queried the Indian government about the possibility of receiving its Japanese internees in the event of war. He expected 2000 men and 750 women, and that 'expenses would be borne by Malayan Governments'.¹⁸ When the Japanese invasion did arrive, the British feared internees in Singapore would be 'released by the enemy to whom, owing to their knowledge of the country...would be of great assistance.'¹⁹ While the Indian authorities agreed to take the internees, they warned the accommodation was unlikely to be ideal:

We have replied that while 3 to 4 weeks would be necessary to make normal suitable arrangement, we can make improvised arrangement which will involve crowding and possibly exposure for a few days and on this understanding can accept males in advance. We presume others and that internees should be sent to Calcutta.²⁰

The temporary arrangements were implemented in the Old Fort in New Delhi, Purana Qila, even while admitting this makeshift situation denied application of 'the principles of the [Geneva] convention in full to the Japanese in Delhi'.²¹

On 7 January 1942, Fukuda and his fellow internees were again on the move, herded onto a steamer with no explanation of where they were being taken. They arrived in Bombay on 19 January, disembarked two days later, were fed and given basic supplies, and loaded into

¹⁷ Inge, 'Interview', Reel 2; Mine, *Indo kokunetsu sabaku ni*, 30 and 40; Yap, 'Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese', 326. The island is also known as Pulau Sakijang Bendera.

¹⁸ NAI: No. 54(8)-W(Secret), Reception of Japanese internees, 'Secret Telegram No. X, Governor of Straits Settlements to Secretary Defence Department Simla', 2 September 1941.

¹⁹ British Library (BL): IOR/L/PJ/7/4979, Telegram from Singapore to India Office concerning shipment of Japanese internees to India, 'No. 104 Cypher from Singapore to India Office', 24 December 1942.

²⁰ The National Archives, Kew (TNA): FO 916/477, Welfare of Japanese in India: General Questions 1942, 'Decypher of Telegram from Governor General to Secy. of State for India', 26 December 1941.

²¹ NAI: No. 30(2)-W1942, Japanese interests – application of principles of Prisoner of War convention on reciprocal basis, 'Copy of notes from Home Department File, H.J Frampton', 14 January 1942. The Geneva convention did not refer to civilian internees, only POWs. However, in the absence of a guiding document for internees, there was a general understanding amongst warring parties that the relevant parts of the Convention would apply to internees. The same British document cited here suggested they would also have trouble applying the Convention to the German POW camp at Deoli.

3rd class train carriages for a journey that ended with a walk to the Fort in Delhi. The winter weather, having come from warmer climes, was a shock: ‘everybodies suffering from cold...climate like October in Japan during the night and daytime May [sic]’.²²

The women and children, along with Inge, travelled later and separately, likewise not knowing their destination: first heading south, they guessed it might be Australia. One difficult task Inge remembers was protecting young Japanese women from the sailing crew, who enticed them into their quarters with cigarettes exchanged for sexual favours. On ‘several occasions [we] found Japanese girls in crews’ quarters which was completely forbidden,’ she says. One child died on the voyage that took almost two weeks to complete; another was ‘born on the wharf’ when they arrived in Calcutta. Likely Rin Katsuko, she was the first of many children born into the captivity of camp life, albeit en route.²³

The forced migrants of war who eventually assembled at Purana Qila in January 1942 were a varied group. More men, women and children continued to arrive, not just from Malaya, Singapore and India but Burma, Ceylon and even Iran. Seven Thais joined them, all but one arrested after the Thai declaration of war on 25 January 1942.²⁴ Karuna Kusalasaya, one of those Thais, described Purana Qila as ‘turned into a crowded place of detention for the Japanese as well as other nationals among whom were men of all classes, occupations, ages, not to speak of varied levels of education and culture.’²⁵ The numbers swelled to over 2689 internees, although by the end of 1942, with various comings and goings, was just over

²² Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, 7, 8, 9, 16, 19 and 22 January 1942.

²³ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 2; TNA: FO 916/775, ‘Formosan (children) internees from the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Singapore’, 1943, 8; BL: IOR/L/PJ/8/405 Anglo-Japanese exchanges: lists of Japanese interned in India, 1944. The link between Inge’s comment and the name is surmised from the data in these latter two documents, Katsuko being the only child on the lists born in Calcutta on 22 January 1942, the place and date of the internee ship arrivals.

²⁴ TNA: FO 916/775, Welfare of the Japanese in India: General Questions Jan 1st-Feb 23rd 1943, ‘Japanese Internees from the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Singapore who do not desire their names to be transmitted to their government – Thai internees from India’, 1943, 53 and ‘Japanese female internees from the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Singapore who desire their names to be transmitted to their government – Siamese female internees’, 1943, 20.

²⁵ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 97. Karuna Kusalasaya is likely to be Samanera Karuna Goetrakula on the internee list. It is not unusual for Thai persons to change their names.

2100.²⁶ This did not include consular staff; rather than interned, the Japanese consuls from across Britain's Asian empire were placed under house arrest, complete with servants, in Mussoorie, near Dehradun.²⁷

The Japanese at Purana Qila included executives of the Yokohama Specie or Taiwan Bank, Mitsui, Mitsubishi and other key *kaisha* or companies, and over 400 Okinawan fishers who had operated out of Singapore (the largest group). Other male occupations included a few rubber plantation planters, hundreds in the mercantile area, a number of carpenters and engineers, and more photographers (over 70) than hairdressers and barbers (over 60) and dentists (around 45). There were tailors and teachers, farmers and foremen, cooks and a confectionist, brokers and a bean paste maker.²⁸ In effect, men from different classes who had previously led separate lives were thrown together, a situation exacerbated by the tensions between class and ethnicity – the colonising Japanese interned alongside their colonised subjects from Taiwan, China and Korea.²⁹

Most women were listed in the documents as having 'nil' occupation – they were the homemakers, mothers and wives who had followed their husband's employment opportunities. While housewives formed the majority, there were also many with other occupations. More women stated they were hotel proprietors (c.13) than did men (c.2). There were also proprietors of other establishments, like coffee shops and restaurants. Almost 20 were merchants or grocers, and there was a smattering of nurses, masseurs, photographers and barber/hairdressers. Over 20 were domestic workers or worked in hotels, three identified as planters, and one as a dancer. Considering the previous

²⁶ TNA: FO 916/775, 'Statement showing the actual number of Japanese internees, in the Purana Qila camp, New Delhi, on 31st December 1942'. The number was made up of 1718 men, 725 women and 246 children.

²⁷ See for example NAI: No. 6(12)-W/42, War Branch, request of the Japanese Consular Officials at Mussoorie for permission to visit Japanese internees in India before their departure for Japan, *passim*.

²⁸ TNA: FO 916/775, 'Japanese Internees from the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Singapore who desire their names to be transmitted to their government', 1943, *passim* and 'Names of internees whose repatriation has been expressly asked by the Japanese Government (the original priority list)', 1943, *passim*.

²⁹ Chung, 'Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù', 97.

importance of the *karayuki-san* in Singapore, a question to ask is about sex workers. Licensed Japanese prostitution ended in Singapore in 1920, but some of those who remained continued to operate unlicensed.³⁰ It is impossible to tell from the available data as they would not have given their actual occupation – possibilities might include dance, massage, hospitality work, or simply ‘nil’. One known former *karayuki-san* on the internee list was Zendo Kikuyo, also known as Okiku, her life later documented on film and in text. Her occupation is recorded as ‘nil’, but she was not involved in the industry at that time.³¹ The largest occupational group, aside from homemakers, was that of ‘actors’, numbering around 22 and all Taiwanese.³² These actors, along with 23 male actors and other entertainment categories, were likely members of Taiwanese traditional opera troupes that relocated to Southeast Asia, at least partly due to the Japanisation of cultural performance in Taiwan.³³ From the varied group outlined above, one could make a whole functioning town, and so the internees embarked on organising their new life within the enclosure of a 400-year-old fort.

Purana Qila was expected to be a temporary camp, a ‘Durchgangslager’,³⁴ to deal with the sudden influx of internees, particularly from the Malayan colonies. This was reflected in the principal form of accommodation: tents. The camp was divided by gender, women and children housed in the more protected arcades along the Fort’s wall, with sections separated by curtains. For the men it was military-style tents, the same used by Indian sepoy. Fukuda

³⁰ James Francis Warren, ‘Karayuki-san of Singapore: 1877–1941’, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 62, 2 (257) (1989), 59, 61; Hayashi Hirofumi, ‘Japanese Comfort Women in Southeast Asia’, *Japan Forum*, 10, 2 (1998), 216.

³¹ TNA: FO 916/775, ‘Japanese female internees from the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Singapore who desire their names to be transmitted to their government’, 1943, 18; Karnad, ‘The Ghost in the Kimono’, 151–53, 164.

³² TNA: FO 916/775, ‘Japanese female internees from the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Singapore who desire their names to be transmitted to their government’, 1943, 17 and *passim*, and ‘Japanese Internees from the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements Singapore’, 1943, 48–51.

³³ Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 104, 109.

³⁴ TNA: FO 916/776, Welfare of Japanese in India: General questions 1943, ‘Copy of letter J.A. Rikli, Delegate in British India, International Red Cross Committee, Geneva, to the International Red Cross Committee’, 28 March 1943, 1.

described about 300 tents, with around six to eight men in each, the whole camp divided into three wings.³⁵ Almost immediately, the internees organised themselves, establishing *shingikai* or councils, which had three tiers: an executive committee, the wing leaders, and team leaders. They held elections for many of these roles and formed night patrols to keep order in the camp.³⁶ Internees with leadership roles were more likely from the Japanese elite – the *kaisha* and bank managers. Indian guards patrolled the Fort under the supervision of British officers, and roll calls were held every morning and early evening.³⁷ Shared kitchens, washing areas, and basic medical facilities were established. All internees received allowances for clothing and coupons for the canteen, where such items as tobacco, beer, wine and sweets could be purchased, and the Japanese government provided its own nationals with a further stipend sent via the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).³⁸

It was the mismatch between the style of accommodation and the Delhi weather that caused the first of several problems between the Japanese and British governments. As Kusalasaya recalls, '[i]n northern India, February is still cold. So, for us who had to live in tents in open space, conditions were far from comfortable. I remember that our hands, feet and faces – especially our lips – were cracked and blistered on account of cold.'³⁹ The authorities were aware of this, stating in early 1942 that the 'male Japanese will find it cold in the tents when they first arrive but the temperature in Delhi rises after the end of January.'⁴⁰ Fukuda began every diary entry with a weather report, whether fine or stormy or hot, thus suggesting the significance of the tough climate on the internee experience. The

³⁵ Fukuda, 'Private Papers', 25/ January 1942; Karnad, 'The Ghost in the Kimono', 157.

³⁶ Chung, 'Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù', 97; Fukuda, 'Private Papers', 28 January 1942 and 25 February 1942.

³⁷ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 98; Chung, 'Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù', 120.

³⁸ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 96; TNA: FO 916/776, 'Outward Telegram Foreign Office to Berne', 11 January 1943. Fukuda notes they received five rupees for the month of February 1942. Fukuda, 'Private Papers', 10 February 1942.

³⁹ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 96.

⁴⁰ NAI: No. 30(2)-W1942, 'Copy of notes from Home Department File No. F 32/3/42-Poll (EW), E Conran-Smith', 17 January 1942.

temperatures did rise, and by April it was ‘too hot now to stay in camp’. Bricks were used to create cooler flooring inside the tents.⁴¹

But the temperature was yet only 100 Fahrenheit (38 Celsius): by the end of April it was hitting 110F (43C), and by June 115F (46C), and storms caused substantial damage to tents on 15 April and at the end of May.⁴² The Japanese government made not one but two démarches to the British Government via its protective power, Switzerland, which included complaints about the accommodation – the ‘temperature in the tents rises as high as hundred and twenty degrees F [49C]’, said one.⁴³ While the British Indian authorities declared the accommodation adequate – Indian sepoys had the same accommodation in the same kinds of weather – and said the Japanese complaints were exaggerated propaganda, others were not so sure.⁴⁴ Reprisals on interned British civilians and POWs were feared, and previous British complaints to the Germans and Italians about tented accommodation for its own nationals recalled.⁴⁵ A handwritten note observed it was ‘doubtful whether India is the best place to go for details of the treatment of Japse [sic] civilian internees as a standard by which our own civilians in Singapore should be held.’ The Japanese physical constitution was, in an extraordinary statement, also blamed: ‘The Japse [sic] are notoriously unable to cope with the extremes of heat or cold and I have no doubt that they do find conditions in Delhi with canvas very trying’.⁴⁶ The British responses were thus confused – officially rejecting the Japanese accusations, while privately, at least in London if not Delhi, admitting they had a point. Regardless, an educated middle-class manager from Mitsui in early 1942, when Japan was

⁴¹ Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, 21 February, 19 & 28 March and 24 April 1942; TNA: FO 916/477, ‘Gilchrist to the Under Secretary of State’, 29 October 1942.

⁴² Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, 15 & 26 April, 25–27 May and 9 June 1942.

⁴³ TNA: FO 916/477, ‘Swiss Legation Special Division to Foreign Office’, 7 November 1942.

⁴⁴ TNA: FO 916/776, ‘Telegram Government of India Home Department to Secretary of State for India’, 5 December 1942 and Gilchrist to Satow, 8 December 1942.

⁴⁵ TNA: FO916/477, Welfare of Japanese in India: General questions 1942, ‘Handwritten note Japan protest to USA, Canada and Britain regarding treatment of Japse P/Ws & internees, G.C Whitteridge’, 21 November 1942; TNA: FO 916/775 ‘From Foreign Office Stockholm’, 14 January 1943.

⁴⁶ TNA: FO 916/477, ‘Handwritten Memo paper, G. C. Whitteridge’, 12 December 1942.

experiencing military success, would hardly consider Indian sepoy-style accommodation of an appropriate standard. And neither did his government – especially when European internees in India were housed in permanent buildings.

If weather and accommodation were related matters of concern, food was another. British Indian authorities provided rations, which could be supplemented by one's own means. The Japanese government was not pleased, however, and protested the rations thus:

apart from question of its quantity and calories contained in it, it is of inferior quality and is lacking in variety; owing to insufficiency of seasoning necessary for Japanese taste, many internees have almost completely lost their appetite and consequently fallen into a state of general exhaustion.⁴⁷

An ICRC inspection report claimed the food sufficiently corresponded to an Asiatic diet, suggesting a form of culinary racism.⁴⁸ But the authorities only provided raw food – it was the internees who organised themselves into cooking shifts to turn it into meals. The kitchens also came under attack by the Japanese government, being 'ill ventilated', the cooking utensils 'imperfect' and cooking done 'on the ground' which, on rainy days, 'makes it the same as cooking in the open air'.⁴⁹ Again, the British rejected these claims, countering that there was one kitchen for every 50 internees and leaks were fixed as soon as noticed – a usual circumstance in the monsoon season.⁵⁰

Despite the above problems, eating also acted as a form of entertainment in the camp via social dinners and parties, especially for the wealthy elite who could supplement their diet from other financial sources. Communal eating was incorporated into weekly concerts and special events, such as celebrating the Emperor's birthday. Sporting events were another form

⁴⁷ TNA: FO 916/477, 'Swiss Legation Special Division to Foreign Office', 7 November 1942.

⁴⁸ Karnad, 'The Ghost in the Kimono', 157. As further evidence of such differentiation, the one European in the camp, a Russian married to circus actor Yamane Hisakichi named Elizabeth Yamane, was permitted to draw her rations in cash to enable self-purchase of foodstuffs. TNA: FO 916/775, 'Express letter H.J. Frampton to The Secretary of State India', 2 February 1943.

⁴⁹ TNA: FO 916/477, 'Swiss Legation Special Division to Foreign Office', 7 November 1942.

⁵⁰ TNA: FO 916/776, 'Telegram Government of India Home Department to Secretary of State for India', 5 December 1942.

of entertainment, especially baseball, at least for the male internees. The baseball season commenced on 20 February 1942, and over time the internees formed various teams. Next to the weather, baseball results are the most frequently recorded topic in Fukuda's diary, giving some sense of its importance to surviving internment. Not even the weather could dampen the baseball spirit, with games held on days when the temperature was in the hundreds and between showers on rainy ones. Poignantly, after the death of a 14-year-old boy from chronic appendicitis, a baseball prize was named for him – the George Sakai Prize.⁵¹

It was not all about dinner parties, baseball and concerts. Internees had to share the workload, taking turns at various jobs. Fukuda writes of spraying water for half a day – the reason is unclear, perhaps for cleaning, watering, or keeping things cool. He seemed to enjoy it, writing 'this is my first job I ever had arrived camp and completed with much pleasure'.

Other shared jobs included kitchen duty and night patrol.⁵² Kusalasaya too remembers kitchen duty, writing '[w]e internees of both sexes were put on duty to do the cooking in turns every day by groups composed of five or six persons.'⁵³ Those with useful skills to share soon set up shop, Fukuda recording the opening of a 'tailoring Dept' by March, where he had a pair of shorts made, and getting his hair cut. The middle-class businessmen kept themselves occupied in committees, establishing positions like cashier and treasurer.⁵⁴

Women stayed busy with childminding and kitchen duties, while visual sources, like ICRC photographs, suggest it was they who bore the bulk of washing responsibilities.⁵⁵ While evidence has not yet been located, it is reasonable to assume that sex was exchanged for

⁵¹ Fukuda, 'Private Papers', 20 & 21 February, 26 April, 13 & 14 June and 5 July 1942; TNA: FO 916/775, 'List of Japanese internees who have died in the internment camp Purana Qila, New Delhi (up to 31.12.1942)', 1943, 2. George was the anglicised form of Joji.

⁵² Fukuda, 'Private Papers', 25 March, 8 May and 23 June 1942.

⁵³ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 96.

⁵⁴ Fukuda, 'Private Papers', 10 February, 3 March and 15 & 17 May 1942.

⁵⁵ For instance ICRC photograph of Deoli camp V-P-HIST-03478-02A, find at <https://avarchives.icrc.org/Search/AdvancedSearch>.

goods and services in the internment camps, especially considering Inge's earlier comments about cigarettes on the transport ship.

George Sakai was not the only one, child or adult, to spend the last days of their life in Purana Qila. The health of the internees was another point of contention between the Japanese and British governments. While inadequate food and inappropriate accommodation were two concerns here, sanitation was another. There was 'neither a proper bathroom nor laundry,' claimed the Japanese government, nor any 'accommodation for hot baths', and 'waterclosets [were] badly equipped and insufficient in number.' The toilets were so far away from tents that 'aged people and children experience difficulty in using them.' The situation not only created 'hardships to the internees' but was 'dangerous from a sanitary point of view'. When internees sought medical help, 'the camp hospital [was] poorly equipped their medical supply scanty and treatment of patients unkind'.⁵⁶ While there were at least two Japanese doctors and an isolation tent, the main hospital was not in the camp grounds – those internees who needed urgent medical help, like George, were sent off-site to the better equipped Irwin (Lok Nayak) Hospital.⁵⁷

The British defended bathing and laundry arrangements as 'similar to those for Indian troops' and gave some attention to health and sanitation. One response to the démarche said 'even the Japanese government should realise that we would not endanger health of New Delhi by retaining large insanitary camp in our midst'.⁵⁸ Health inspections – what Fukuda called public health days – were held almost every week and involved internees putting their possessions, such as 'beds, blankets, pillows, mosquito-nets and clothing', in the sun, cleaning the tent and having everything checked for cleanliness. Those who did not cooperate

⁵⁶ TNA: FO 916/477, 'Swiss Legation Special Division to Foreign Office', 7 November 1942.

⁵⁷ Chung, 'Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù', 100.

⁵⁸ TNA: FO 916/776, 'Telegram Government of India Home Department to Secretary of State for India', 5 December 1942.

were disciplined.⁵⁹ But India is a land of many diseases, and living a crowded life in the relative open could only increase the chance of exposure, particularly for the elderly and the very young. This is exemplified by the first two deaths in the camp on 7 February 1942: a 68-year-old man from an appendicular abscess, and an unnamed 10-day-old baby, one of twins born in the camp.⁶⁰

Fukuda kept tabs on the weather, baseball scores and the number of deaths.⁶¹ Fourteen perished that first February, many from pre-existing conditions like heart failure, tuberculosis and cancer, but also bronchitis and pneumonia. Dysentery made its first regular appearance, including in a 10-month-old baby with rickets.⁶² In March, there were just three deaths, thereafter averaging seven to 10 per month. This changed considerably in September, which saw 20 deaths, followed by 15 in October. The first increases were in dysentery and diarrhoea, with many more cases where the patient recovered – Fukuda mentions numerous friends going to hospital with dysentery and returning to camp, or being confined to their tents with ‘loose bowels’.⁶³ Monsoon season is generally from May to October, and this is when dysentery is most common in India. The British used this to explain the number of cases as ‘inevitable’;⁶⁴ the Japanese blamed the camp conditions. Concurrent with dysentery was an increase in fatal cases of malaria. Like dysentery, non-fatal cases are not officially recorded, but Kusalasaya called malaria ‘a scourge to us internees’.⁶⁵ The British issued internees with mosquito nets, but tented accommodation could hardly have helped the situation.

⁵⁹ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 112.

⁶⁰ Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, 7 February 1942; TNA: FO 916/775, ‘List of Japanese internees who have died in the internment camp Purana Qila’, 1943, 1.

⁶¹ Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, *passim*.

⁶² TNA: FO 916/775, ‘List of Japanese internees who have died in the internment camp Purana Qila’, 1943, 1.

⁶³ Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, *passim*.

⁶⁴ TNA: FO916/477, ‘Gilchrist to The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office’, 29 October 1942.

⁶⁵ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 98.

Despite British defence of rations, there was soon further evidence for the Japanese complaints. As dysentery and malaria stabilised, they were replaced by a new killer: beriberi. The first fatal case occurred on 1 October 1942, followed by eight more over the remainder of the year. Beriberi is caused by a nutritional deficiency of vitamin B1 (thiamine). Kusalasaya described the situation as follows:

Life in civilian internment camp was not subjected to physical labour as practised in prisoners-of-war camp, but the food they gave us was very poor, both in quantity and quality. This resulted in, after about nine months of incarceration, most of the internees above the age of 40 becoming victims of a disease called beri-beri. In its acute stage, limbs of patients suffering from this affliction get swollen; at night patients see halo resembling rainbow around electric lights, and sooner or later they succumb to death.⁶⁶

One British official was ‘shocked to see that several have died of beriberi. There have also been a number of deaths due to dysentery and diarrhoea, which would seem to be a reflection on the medical attention.’⁶⁷ Diseases also affected camp staff – Inge recalled having mild beriberi and malaria, but was full of praise for the doctors who treated her.⁶⁸ By the end of 1942, 106 internees had perished in the camp – 55 men, 42 women and nine children. As noted by Bayly and Harper, during the same period the number of European civilian deaths in Changi under the Japanese was 29.⁶⁹ In response, the British Indian authorities expanded the medical facilities and added barley, high in thiamine, to the rations list.⁷⁰

Conditions steadily improved from May 1942 after it became obvious the stay at Purana Qila was more than temporary. The original plan was to move internees to Deoli in Rājasthān, which had permanent buildings, as soon as they could transfer the German POWs housed there to new facilities at Dehradun. On 4 March 1942, the authorities notified internees they would move to the new camp in early April. The internees set about preparing,

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ TNA: FO 916/775, ‘India Office, Conditions of Japanese in India’, 26 February 1943.

⁶⁸ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 4. Inge tended to blame her own poor health rather than camp conditions, and does not refer to the health of the internees.

⁶⁹ TNA: FO 916/775, ‘Statement showing the actual number of Japanese internees’; Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, 337; Yap, ‘Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees of the Japanese’, 327.

⁷⁰ TNA: FO916/776, ‘Order Government of India Home Department, Japanese internees – Rations and allowances’, 26 February 1943.

organising who would go with whom in the new barracks, and holding fresh elections for wing leaders and team representatives. Fukuda was in Wing 4, the one selected as the advance party, scheduled to leave at 6.15 am on Tuesday 14 April; he attended a farewell tea party on the Monday.⁷¹ On the day of departure, they were told the move had been indefinitely postponed. While no one informed the internees, there were multiple reasons for the delay, from failure to complete the buildings at Dehradun to a fire in the barracks at Deoli.⁷²

The hope of leaving Purana Qila, for at least some internees, then took a different turn: the First Anglo-Japanese Civilian Exchange.⁷³ In 1942, the Japanese and British, along with several British Dominions, negotiated an exchange at Lourenço Marques in neutral Portuguese East Africa. The Japanese consuls under house arrest, a committee of internees from amongst the camp leaders (nominated by the Japanese consuls), and the British and Japanese authorities involved in the negotiations determined the final list of repatriates, on which there was not a fisher or tailor to be found. In response, some Okinawans and Taiwanese committed acts of violence against certain camp selection committee members which ‘almost led to riots’ – the charge being that members selected only from their own class and race.⁷⁴ Inge recalled that in the nights before the repatriates were to leave, some had to hide in trees to escape the attacks from those being left behind. This is confirmed in Ōtani Yukio’s memoir of internment, who writes of a complete breakdown in law and order just before their departure.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, 4, 11 & 13 March and 4, 12 & 13 April 1942.

⁷² Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, 14 April 1942; TNA: FO 916/776, ‘Copy of letter J.A. Rikli’, 1.

⁷³ For a more detailed discussion about this and the failed second exchange, see Rowena Ward, ‘The Asia-Pacific War and the Failed Second Anglo-Japanese Civilian Exchange, 1942-45’, *The Asia-Pacific Journal – Japan Focus*, 13, 12, 4 (March, 2015), 1–17, <https://apjif.org/2015/13/11/Rowena-Ward/4301.html>; and Kent Fedorovich, ‘Doomed from the Outset? Internment and Civilian Exchange in the Far East: The British Failure over Hong Kong, 1941–45’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 25, 1 (1997), 113–40. The United States also had two civilian exchanges.

⁷⁴ Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 101, 113.

⁷⁵ Ōtani, *Omoi wa haruka*, 180.

Consular staff from Singapore, Bombay, Colombo, Addis-Ababa, Calcutta, Rangoon, Karachi and Baghdad, along with their families and some employees, had priority in the repatriation list. Next were the key civilians managing the banks, rubber companies, newspapers and *kaisha* and their families. A second list included teachers and another the sick, aged and infirm. Fukuda was amongst those nominated by the consular officials, No. 480 on a list of 784.⁷⁶ The repatriation went ahead: over August and September, the exchange repatriated 1800 Japanese from across the British empire and Dominions, including 780 civilians and consular officials from India.⁷⁷ There were a further six deaths on the journey, and verbal reports about the camp conditions from the repatriated internees fuelled the protests from the Japanese government referred to earlier.⁷⁸ With the departure of 720 from Purana Qila, congestion slightly eased and the class and ethnic balance shifted.

The British were still keen to move the internees to Deoli as the situation was fast becoming an embarrassment: 'I feel myself that tents in India are hardly good enough & although meant to be temporary, a year has already elapsed since the camp was started,' said one British official.⁷⁹ 'Until the tented accommodation is replaced by something better,' wrote Sir Harold Eustace Satow of the Foreign Office, 'I am afraid that complaints are bound to arise and the efforts of India to meet the recommendations of the Protecting Power will not

⁷⁶ TNA: FO 916/775, 'No. I List of Japanese consular officials detained in India to be repatriated by the first exchange vessel', 'No. II Names of persons on the original priority list to be repatriated by the first exchange vessel', No. IV Names of persons on the second priority list to be repatriated by the first exchange vessel', 'No. IV(a) List of sick, aged and infirm people to be repatriated on the first exchange vessel', 'No. VI List of persons suggested by the Japanese consular officials to be repatriated by the Japanese consular officials', and 'No. VII List of persons selected by Mr Okamoto from the list of 826 names of Japanese internees transferred from Malaya to be repatriated on the first exchange vessel', c. 1942; Fukuda, 'Private Papers', 1 June 1942. Fukuda's diary stops 13 July, about nine days before the exchange ship left Bombay, possibly confiscated by camp officials.

⁷⁷ Ward, 'The Asia-Pacific War and the Failed Second Anglo-Japanese Civilian Exchange', 1; TNA: FO 916/775, 'Government of India Home Department to His Majesty's Under Secretary of State for India, Political Department, India Office, London', 19 January 1943. Four on the original list were struck off by British Indian authorities. Note that the number 780 includes consular officials who were not at Purana Qila, hence the later figure of 720 for the Fort.

⁷⁸ Karnad, 'The Ghost in the Kimono', 159–60.

⁷⁹ TNA: FO 916/477, 'Handwritten memo G.C. Whitteridge', 12 December 1942.

be more than palliatives.⁸⁰ Finally, in March and April 1943, one year after they were first promised and fifteen months since they arrived in New Delhi, the internees moved to the camp in the Rājasthān desert. After a journey of over 16 hours, the civilian internees were assigned three barracks, Wings 1, 2 and 4, families and single women in the first two and single men in the latter.⁸¹ The barracks were white-washed brick with stone-tiled roofs, each housing around 700 of the total 2100-odd internees. While there was an open area where internees could mingle at certain times of the day, unlike the layout at Purana Qila they could not go into each other's quarters – gates and barbed wire fences surrounded each wing. While this was a vast improvement on the Delhi facilities, the internees had to confront not only the increased architectural barriers, but sandstorms, high summer temperatures and low water supplies.⁸²

The broad improvement in conditions was reflected in reduced numbers of deaths⁸³ and glowing reports from visiting ICRC representatives, the latter accompanied by photographs of seemingly happy internees. There were now proper medical facilities in the camp: the hospital was 'well supplied with medicines and has up-to-date installations and equipments [sic] to deal adequately with any case of disease'. Apart from four Japanese doctors, there were three European doctors (two of whom were German internees or refugees), four Indian doctors, one European matron, seven Indian nurses, 14 Japanese male ward orderlies, seven Japanese female nursing volunteers and two Japanese dentists.⁸⁴ There was a functioning

⁸⁰ TNA: FO 916/776, 'Prisoners of War Department to Gilchrist', 30 December 1942.

⁸¹ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 100, 104–5; Inge, 'Interview', Reel 3; TNA: FO 916/776, 'Japanese Civil Internment Camp at Deoli/Ajmer visited by J.A Rickli [sic] and A. de Spindler 24th to 26th August 1943', 1943, 1; Chung, 'Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù', 114. Chung says the internees left 13 March; Kusalasaya states, from notes he kept at the time, they arrived 12 April.

⁸² Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 99–101, 104–5; Inge, 'Interview', Reels 3 and 4.

⁸³ This is anecdotal – there are no official statistical reports found thus far. Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 111. A partial account could be surmised from the list of internees for the aborted second Anglo-Japanese civilian exchange, which has those who have died crossed out in red. The list can be found in BL: IOR/L/PJ/8/405.

⁸⁴ TNA: FO 916/1103, Welfare of Japanese in India: General Questions 1944, 'Japanese Civil Internment Camp at Deoli/Ajmer visited by Mr. J.A. Rikli from 14th to 17th December 1943', 1943, 1–2; TNA: FO 916/776,

school for the children, ranging from first to eighth class plus a kindergarten, taught by 10 teachers.⁸⁵ There were set recreation programs, including ping-pong, baseball, badminton, football and sumo wrestling.⁸⁶ Religious services were held, including Christian ones – at Delhi a Catholic priest visited the camp, at Deoli the internees borrowed an Italian one from amongst the POWs. A Japanese internee sent to India from the Isle of Man, Eguchi Takayuki, taught English classes using the Bible.⁸⁷ But it was the work situation that most impressed the ICRC:

The question of mental depression due to unemployment does not arise in this camp. A fair percentage is engaged in daily administrative work (Canteen, Kitchen, Sanitary squad, library, storekeeper, medical staff etc.) others exercise their profession as barbers, shoemakers, tailors etc., many have built nice rock-gardens in front of their dwellings (there are about 230 of these rock-gardens) but a good number are not interested in any kind of work, they prefer pastimes, table tennis, Majong, open-air sports, fishing in the near lake, bathing.⁸⁸

The nearby lake was an oasis in the desert landscape, which internees could visit 100 at a time to fish or swim. Inge admired the gardens the internees created in the desert, with the likes of Chinese cabbage, carrots and broccoli, all fertilised by night soil.⁸⁹

In May 1943, the internees numbered 2101, made up of 1889 Japanese (including Okinawans), 184 Taiwanese, 10 Chinese, seven Thai, five each Malay and Korean, and one Russian.⁹⁰ But new internees continued to arrive, now from the battlefield. While Japanese, Korean and Chinese POWs went to other places of incarceration like Bikaner, captured

⁸⁵ ‘Japanese Civil Internment Camp at Deoli/Ajmer 24th to 26th August 1943’, 1943, 4. Chung points out that the ‘Japanese’ doctors were actually Taiwanese. Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 116.

⁸⁶ TNA: FO 916/776, ‘Japanese Internment Camp Deoli/Ajmer visité par N.A. de Spindler les 11 et 12 mai 1943’, 1943, 9 [translated from French]. Chung states the teachers were amateurs as the professionals had already been repatriated. Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 122.

⁸⁷ TNA: FO 916/1103, ‘Japanese Civil Internment Camp at Deoli/Ajmer 14th to 17th December 1943’, 1943; Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 120.

⁸⁸ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 5; Edna Read Neal, ‘Takayuki Eguchi’, in J.E. Hoare (ed.) *Britain & Japan: Biographical Portraits Vol III* (Richmond 1999), 254.

⁸⁹ TNA: FO 916/776, ‘Japanese Civil Internment Camp at Deoli/Ajmer 24th to 26th August 1943’, 1943, 4.

⁹⁰ TNA: FO 916/1103, ‘Japanese Civil Internment Camp at Deoli/Ajmer 14th to 17th December 1943’, 1943, 3; Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 3; Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 118. Night soil is, of course, human excrement.

⁹¹ TNA: FO 916/776, ‘Japanese Internment Camp, Deoli/Ajmer 11 et 12 mai 1943’, 1. The Malays were mostly women and likely in a relationship with a Japanese.

Japanese nurses were sent to Deoli.⁹¹ Another 22 women from Burma soon joined them, mostly Korean and widely known as ‘comfort women’. Like the German and Italian POWs, the ‘comfort women’ were not permitted to interact with other internees and were instead kept in a separate compound.⁹²

Discipline and punishment were not often mentioned in ICRC reports, nor in official correspondence, especially at Purana Qila. Kusalasaya provides a glimpse into discipline practices in a comment about cleaning inspection days: those who did not comply were sent to ‘a prison inside prison’.⁹³ Some issues arose between the different racial groups in the camp, particularly Taiwanese and Japanese. An intelligence report in May 1942, three months into their Indian internment, noted that

[r]elations in the camp between the Formosans and the Japanese proper are apparently not good. Formosans have been often concerned in the various quarrels and fights which have occurred in the camp; they are called ‘Chinese’ by the Japanese internees, which is an offence in Formosa.⁹⁴

Inge recalled the tensions between internees as a constant presence.⁹⁵ There are more recorded details about the discipline carried out at Deoli, which was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel R.F Craster.⁹⁶ Inge depicts Craster in unflattering terms, describing a discipline culture where guards bragged about how many internees they sent to the Commandant on any given day. The Commandant reprimanded Inge for not sending enough internees, insinuating she was soft on discipline. She found the culture distasteful and refused to participate – ‘I [didn’t] care whether [the internees] bowed to me or not’.⁹⁷ One ICRC

⁹¹ Sareen, *Japanese Prisoners of War in India*, 100. The nurses were from Japan Red Cross Wakayama Relief Unit No. 490.

⁹² Katō, “‘Indo yokuryū’ to ‘ruson sen tōhikō’”, 45; Karnad, ‘The Ghost in the Kimono’, 164; Morris-Suzuki, ‘You don’t want to know about the girls?’, 2; Sareen, *Japanese Prisoners of War in India*, 100; Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 3.

⁹³ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 112.

⁹⁴ BL: IOR/L/PJ/12/510, Activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India May-Dec 1942, ‘Survey No. 21 of 1942 for the week ending 30th May 1942’, 6–7. ‘Taiwanese’ is used here to differentiate those indigenous to Formosa from the colonising or diasporic Japanese, but they were technically also ‘Japanese’ as subjects of Japan’s formal empire and its *dōka*, or assimilation, policy.

⁹⁵ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 3.

⁹⁶ TNA: FO 916/776, ‘Copy of letter J.A. Rikli’.

⁹⁷ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reels 4 and 5.

representative noted increased disciplinary problems at Deoli and blamed the skewing of classes since the first civilian exchange:

It seems that several groups of internees, especially among the fishermen, have very little discipline and lack even the sense of solidarity with the internees themselves. The Commandant, as well as the former Commandant in Delhi, complains that he had to take punitive measures to maintain discipline at the camp; it is more difficult to do since the repatriation of all the Japanese who previously helped to contain their compatriots.⁹⁸

The comments suggest that the night patrols and *shingikai* did not continue, or were not as effective, after the Japanese elite left in July 1942. The less privileged, denied the opportunity for repatriation precisely due to their class and, in many cases, ethnicity and colonised status, were blamed for any disorder. That they could organise gardens, schools and meals paints a contrasting picture.

Causes for discipline were mostly minor – leaving a kitchen door open that could let in mosquitoes, a dispute with a neighbour, caught in a night-time gambling raid – or could be more serious, like the Taiwanese who tried to buy opium in a nearby village while on a permitted walk outside the camp.⁹⁹ Punishment might involve a reprimand or being sent to a cell – Kusalasaya's 'prison inside prison'. He experienced the latter firsthand for a more common discipline problem: being found out-of-bounds in someone else's barracks. Inge said the barbed wire between buildings was not foolproof as there was 'nothing to stop you going over or underneath'.¹⁰⁰ Thus Kusalasaya, a single man from Wing No. 4, was visiting his Japanese girlfriend in Wing No. 1 when alarm bells rang in response to an attempted escape by POWs and the gates between barracks closed. He was thus, along with others, 'caught red-handed' and marched in line towards the solitary confinement cells.¹⁰¹

Kusalasaya's experience gives some insight into the practice of discipline at Deoli. At night-time, those caught were placed in solitary confinement. By day they undertook

⁹⁸ TNA: FO 916/776, 'Japanese Internment Camp, Deoli/Ajmer 11 et 12 mai 1943', 1943, 10.

⁹⁹ Inge, 'Interview', Reels 4 and 5; Chung, 'Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù', 123.

¹⁰⁰ Inge, 'Interview', Reel 5.

¹⁰¹ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 106.

labouring tasks, a kind of community service for their keepers, including ‘cutting grass, watering flower plants, cleaning up the sewerage system’ in the residences of British officers. The captured men were denied sharp objects, like scissors or razors, so emerged from their four weeks of confinement ‘not only skin and bone, but...also covered with long hair and beards’. Kusalasaya notes that, unlike the rest of the camp, there were only British guards at the cells, allegedly ‘for fear of the Indians showing sympathy towards us’.¹⁰² While not on the same brutal scale as that endured by POWs, the above shows the use of forced labour and double incarceration inside civilian camps. Until this point, aside from the almost-riots of Delhi before the repatriation, the causes for disciplinary action were isolated or minor. That is, at least, until the war ended.

When the ICRC visited the Deoli camp in August 1943, they reported the ‘spirit in the camp was rather high in expectation of the repatriation’.¹⁰³ After the relative success of the first Anglo-Japanese Civilian Exchange, the British were negotiating a second. At Deoli, the authorities put forward 934 names for the next repatriation, and Inge remembered that those nominated ‘had everything ready to go’.¹⁰⁴ It must have been a bitter disappointment that, after multiple postponements, the second exchange never occurred. The internees were still waiting when the war came to its abrupt conclusion in August 1945; it was soon afterwards that discipline disintegrated altogether.

Japan’s defeat created the first disciplinary challenge. Newspapers such as *The Statesman* were provided to the internees throughout the war, and Japan’s progress followed with deep interest in the early stages of internment. Fukuda noted key military moments throughout his diary – Battle of the Coral Sea, Fall of Singapore, the first attacks on India – though these

¹⁰² Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 106; Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 125.

¹⁰³ TNA: FO 916/776, ‘Japanese Civil Internment Camp at Deoli/Ajmer 24th to 26th August 1943’, 1943, 4.

¹⁰⁴ See the list at BL: IOR/L/PJ/8/405, ‘Nominal Roll of Japanese Internees in the Internment Camp Deoli (Ajmer) who are willing to have their names communicated to their Government’, c. 1944; NAI: No. 31(14)-W(Secret), Internees exchange proposal to approach Japan, ‘Telegram Governor General, War Department, New Delhi to Secretary of State for India, London’, 9 November 1944; Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 3.

entries decreased towards the middle of 1942.¹⁰⁵ Kusalasaya wrote of Japanese group meetings in the evenings, some internees translating the news for others, with glee in the early stages and disbelief in the latter. He recalls other patriotic acts, as does Inge – after morning roll call the internees ‘would stand up straight facing the East, and then bowed their heads in reverence to their Emperor. In the evening, a group of youths frequently walked friskily [sic] around singing their National Anthem or militant songs arousing patriotism’.¹⁰⁶

At the end of the war, those ‘patriots’ refused to believe that Japan had lost the war (the *kachi-gumi*, or victory group), and came into conflict with those, fewer in number, who accepted the news (the *make-gumi*, or defeat group). The former accused the British of deliberately creating ‘fake news’ newspapers to deceive the internees. Tensions increased, with the *kachi-gumi* refusing to play sport with the *make-gumi* and attacking its members, including by physical violence, splattering of faeces on doors, and tipping urine over individuals.¹⁰⁷ To help settle the situation, the Commandant brought in Japanese POW military officers to explain that defeat and occupation were real, but to little avail. One evening in February 1946, the *kachi-gumi* assaulted the *make-gumi*: they ‘broke in on and attacked the others, whom they outnumbered. They dragged some out into the open fields and beat them, causing injuries. It was lucky that no-one died.’¹⁰⁸ On 20 February, around 80 internees sought protection from camp authorities against the *kachi-gumi*.¹⁰⁹ The ICRC’s assessment that work alleviated the psychological effects of incarceration without known end proved premature. After over four and a half years of imprisonment, the long wait to move to Deoli, the false hope of the second exchange, and now the end of the war and its debates over defeat, it is no wonder that, as Inge put it, the internees ‘were boiling’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Mine, *Indo kokunetsu sabaku ni*, 113; Fukuda, ‘Private Papers’, passim.

¹⁰⁶ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 110–11; Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 3.

¹⁰⁷ Mine, *Indo kokunetsu sabaku ni*, 290 and 297; Neal, ‘Takayuki Eguchi’, 255.

¹⁰⁸ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 112–13; Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 3.

¹⁰⁹ Chung, ‘Erzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 128.

¹¹⁰ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 5.

The second disciplinary challenge to camp authorities was that, with the end of the war, the internees wanted to be released. The main problem preventing repatriation was a shortage of transportation, which meant the guards of the camp also could not leave. These two aspects, defeat/victory and the desire to leave, fused to create a toxic environment. The Commandant sent a few key rebellious individuals to the cells, but, as tensions continued, decided to widen the scope of arrest. He instructed Wing Commanders to call out names on their list of *kachi-gumi* ringleaders at the next roll call, who would be told to visit the Commandant but were instead to be taken to the cells. Inge refused to comply with the trickery, so the Commandant gave the job to her Czech deputy. As soon as the internees in Inge's wing realised what was happening, they took matters into their own hands, charging at the deputy before they too could be sent to the cells. Inge and the deputy ran for their lives, jumped on their bicycles, and eventually made it to the sentries. Inge felt terrified as the internees picked up rocks and water pipes from their gardens, anything they could find, and threw them. A tin of butter hit the deputy. The internees of that wing took control and refused to let anyone into their compound or to take roll call for the next few days.¹¹¹

Being a civilian camp, police forces guarded Deoli, but the Commandant decided things were so out of control he must call in the military. What became known as the '226 Incident'¹¹² began with a military general from Ajmer arriving to read the 'Riot Act' and demanding the internees disperse. The internees stood firm, refusing to yield. Tanks arrived to patrol the camp's perimeter. The guards left the camp and the military entered, threatening to shoot if the internees continued to defy orders. Still the internees refused to give in, so the military made good on their threat; Inge remembered the sound of the guns. When she and the others returned to camp, they found 15 internees killed and around 14 injured, including

¹¹¹ Inge, 'Interview', Reel 6.

¹¹² Mine, *Indo kokunetsu sabaku ni*, 326; Chung, 'Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù', 125. '226' stands for February 26, an infamous date in Japanese history that marks an attempted coup carried out by young Japanese officers in 1936.

women and children. Four more later died from their injuries.¹¹³ The camp guards rounded up the men most responsible for the riot and put them into a separate wing. Inge was placed in charge of them, all 300-odd, a task she did not relish as the final scene of her war.¹¹⁴

Tensions remained for the next and last few months, including an attempted escape several weeks after the riot.¹¹⁵ The internees could finally leave in May 1946, nine months after Japan's surrender. Kusalasaya was escorted by armed police via train to Bombay, and ended up, along with other Thai internees, stranded in a displaced persons camp in Singapore. The camp was filled with destitute and ill former forced labourers of the Japanese. He eventually made his own way to Thailand.¹¹⁶ Inge left the camp a little earlier than the internees, but waited five weeks in Bombay for a passage back to England.¹¹⁷ Other groups were separated in Singapore while awaiting deportation to different destinations – the Japanese went to Jurong camp, the Taiwanese to Bukit Timah.¹¹⁸ Fukuda, having left in the first and only Anglo-Japanese Civilian Exchange, survived the war and subsequent military occupation. He again returned to Singapore in 1954, reopened Echigoya as the first Japanese business permitted there in the postwar period, and ran the business for the next 23 years until its closure in 1977.¹¹⁹ War and internment had ended, but the journeys continued, whether through State control or neglect, whether via voluntary or involuntary deportation. And some, like Fukuda, eventually made it back to South and Southeast Asia.

¹¹³ Katō, “‘Indo yokuryū’ to ‘ruson sen tōhikō’”, 7; Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 128. The deaths included one child, five women and 13 men. The statistics vary between 14 and c.20 deaths, depending on the source. Those used here are taken primarily from Katō, which is the most detailed source.

¹¹⁴ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 6; Morris-Suzuki, ‘You Don't Want to Know About the Girls?’, 18; Eguchi records the number as 350. Neal, ‘Takayuki Eguchi’, 255.

¹¹⁵ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 6.

¹¹⁶ Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, 116–17, 124–30.

¹¹⁷ Inge, ‘Interview’, Reel 6.

¹¹⁸ Chung, ‘Èrzhàn shíqí táiwān rén yìndù’, 129.

¹¹⁹ After the civilian exchange, Fukuda first returned to Singapore/Syonan, with the Japanese occupation forces, in September 1942 as a procurer of commodities. Hiroshi and Hitoshi, *Japan and Singapore in the World Economy*, 127, 160, 168; Blackburn, ‘Heritage Site, War Memorial, and Tourist Stop’, 35; Abd Rahman, ‘Echigoya’.

To conclude, documenting the experiences of internment in India reveals the effects of forced migration and incarceration during that war, and the remembering and forgetting of those experiences. The war forced these Japanese and other Asian civilians onto a path of migration, whether moved within India or from other British Asian colonies to India. For reasons of British security, they were taken from their homes, separated from family and friends, removed from places of work or business, or had other journeys interrupted, denying a sense of individual agency. They attempted to continue life in a fort or behind barbed wire as 'normally' as such an abnormal situation allowed. While there was much to their shared experience, it was also a divisive one; gender, class, ethnicity, race, colonial status, repatriates/remainers and ideological rivalry intersected with confined living conditions to incubate outbreaks of friction as much as disease.

Internal divisions accompanied the racialised policies of the architects of internment, as internees were subject, especially in Purana Qila, to different conditions and fed different rations to western internees, the latter justified as appropriate for an 'Asiatic diet'. In defending the conditions of internment against the complaints of the Japanese government, the British Indian authorities were wont to declare them comparable to those of Indian sepoys, not, say, German civilian internees. Complaints from the Japanese government about the treatment of its civilian nationals led to speculation then and since as to whether it directly affected Japanese treatment of British civilians.¹²⁰ While more research is required to determine this, clearly some British authorities in London were concerned, and this perhaps reveals a divergence in views between the colony and the metropole, the former less concerned about Japanese accusations than the latter. This too, however, requires further interrogation.

¹²⁰ For instance, see Karnad, 'The Ghost in the Kimono', 163; Bayly and Harper, *Forgotten Armies*, 377.

We know little about the scars of incarceration on the Japanese and other civilian internees in India, but captivity without visible end takes its toll, and the violence at Deoli after Japan's surrender, even considering its multiple causes, gives some insight into that stress and frustration, and of the desire to return to one's life outside the camp. It also cannot help that the internee story has remained relatively invisible. In the United Kingdom, the attacks on home soil, the triumph over fascism, and the returning POWs who had suffered horrifically under the Japanese overshadowed even the return of its own civilian internees. In Britain's relationship with India, postwar negotiations for independence eclipsed memory of its use for the internment of both POWs and civilians. For Indian history, that story too takes priority; the Second World War was integral to the struggle to create the new nation. For both British and Indian history, then, stories of internment are part of a troubled and even embarrassing colonial past, for Britain as coloniser and for India as the colonised. In the Japanese story, internment is perhaps the most troubled of all. A defeated and occupied nation, there was hardly space to acknowledge the impacts of internment. According to Katō, the internees were reluctant to share their experiences in such a context, at least partly due to the 'embarrassment' of captivity tainted by the *kachi-make* rivalry.¹²¹

It is this juncture of three forgettings, combined with the subsequent disintegration of British India and the rest of Britain's SEA empire, from which many of the internees came, that perhaps makes the case of internment in India rather unusual. Other examples of the internment of Japanese are more widely known, especially in Canada and the United States where former internees have received apologies and compensation.¹²² Unlike these examples, clearly framed by national boundaries, those interned in India were more mobile, coming

¹²¹ Katō, ““Indo yokuryū” to “ruson sen tōhikō””, 7.

¹²² Matthew McRae, (©2019) *Japanese Canadian internment and the struggle for redress*, Canadian Museum of Human Rights, <https://humanrights.ca/story/japanese-canadian-internment-and-the-struggle-for-redress> (accessed 15 January 2020); John Leo, 'An Apology to Japanese Americans', *Time*, 24 June 2001, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,149131,00.html>.

from a range of places across South and Southeast Asia, and many of whom were part of earlier migrations from Japan or its colonies. In the civilian exchange or at the end of the war, they were then sent to Japan, Taiwan or elsewhere, though many, like Fukuda, made their way back. This region was thus part of the wider displacement and forced movement of peoples wrought by the Second World War, though the European context is better documented. The civilian journeys before, during, and after the war as part of this wider phenomenon were intrinsically entangled with the rise and fall of empires and the creation of new nations. These civilians were thus repeatedly dislocated, creating in turn a fractured history that has eluded documentation and acknowledgement; a story inherently mobile has been met by transnational silences. Giving greater visibility and voice to these forced migrants of war, then, as this article has attempted to do, provides some insights into the structures, challenges and effects of wartime civilian internment in British Asia.