



Vereniging J.I.N.

INFORMATION JIN
(Japans Indische Nakomelingen)

**(Association of Japanese Indonesian-Dutch
Descendants)**

WWW.JIN-INFO.NL

Background

Between 1942 and 1945 the former Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, were occupied by Japan. About 100.000 Dutch men, women and children were transported to internment and POW-camps. Dutch nationals with mixed European and Indonesian ancestors, in total about 200.000 persons, stayed outside these camps, in difficult conditions: many men were absent, no regular income was available, and the Indonesian environment was in general hostile towards former colonials.

Japanese military and civilian-military men developed relationships with local women and Indonesian-Dutch women, *outside* the camps. Children were born. After the Japanese capitulation in August '45 some women married and went with children to Japan, others stayed behind. Because of the Indonesian Independence War and its aftermath eventually all Indonesian-Dutch persons of Dutch nationality had to emigrate to the Netherlands. Among them were hundreds of Japanese Indonesian-Dutch children. Some estimations mention a number of 800.

Situation Children

Many of them were unaware of their Japanese descent. Mothers would keep silent for whatever reason there is. The truth would often be revealed by a far relative, by an aunt or uncle. This would cause a psychological shock with these children. Many of these children grew up in an environment full of anti-Japanese sentiments, caused by the memory of terrible years of captivity, forced labour and physical suffering in the internment camps. The children could not hide their Japanese features. At some point some descendants met and formed a contact group, called Japanese Roots (1983). They felt the need to support each other; to acquire more information about what happened; to seek social awareness and acceptance, including facilities for expert help; to organise the search for fathers in Japan; and to meet each other regularly in pleasant gatherings to share their experiences. All of these factors led to the founding of the association of JIN in 1991.

Development 1991-1995

When in 1991 the Dutch queen Beatrix for the first time was planning to visit Japan, JIN wrote a letter to her and the Dutch government, explaining its need for help. Her visit created a lot of publicity in Japan, and also JIN members were interviewed. A Japanese veteran became aware of JIN. He searched his daughter in the Netherlands, and succeeded in finding her with the help of JIN. It was an impressive story and as a consequence the number of members grew who wanted contact with their father too.

However, for many the search for the *unknown* father was unsuccessful. The Dutch and Japanese authorities were not helpful when the data were flawed or incomplete, and official papers were lacking, which was often the case. This delicate issue caused much frustration, members grew impatient, and in 1994 some personal relationships within JIN broke down. The board could not handle it, mediation failed, and it lost a vote of confidence in a General Members Meeting. Some board members left and started the Sakura Foundation (1995). This split-off is not a good thing of course, but attempts for reunification have failed.

Development since 1995 (search for fathers and Japan travels)

JIN's new board was unrelated to the preceding discussions, and started to work freshly on searches, and organising a trip to Japan. The members felt the need to go to Japan. In November 1995 in Osaka the secretary of the JIN board, Hideko, was introduced to Kaoru Uchiyama, a veteran and ex journalist from the Yomiuri Shimbun. He volunteered to help. JIN, Uchiyama and Father Salemink (Kyoto) worked out a framework for searches. Uchiyama turned out to be a very dedicated man and he succeeded in finding fathers and relatives for many JIN members. In 2013 a book about his life has been published in Japan, written by Yu Takei, a non-fiction writer. He received in November 2013 a *Letter of Gratitude* from the Dutch Ambassador in Japan. In addition since 2012 the searching descendants are helped by a foundation of Japanese women, experts in different fields, established in the Netherlands (Foundation S.O.O.) An important issue still is: getting (more) access to Japanese archives.

JIN organised a journey to Japan in 1997 for a large group of JIN members (on their own expense), in cooperation with the foundation EKNJ (ex-prisoners-of-war and their descendants). The founder of EKNJ was Dolf Winkler, who during the war had himself worked in the mines of Mizumaki (Kyushu). The EKNJ organised travels for ex-POW's. Winkler allowed the members of JIN to join in. This formula proved successful. Since 1997 the Japanese government began to finance these yearly travels fully in its Japan Netherlands Peace Exchange Program. For the members of JIN this became an unique opportunity to see the land of their fathers; some of them met their father and/or relatives. It has enriched their lives, and up to now members are still travelling to Japan. So far, in total approx. 100 descendants have made this journey with the help of the Japanese government.

Today

An important goal of JIN from its start has been acceptance, awareness and understanding in society. In this respect considerable progress has been made. JIN for example succeeded in becoming a member of the Indonesian-Dutch Platform (I.P.), in which a number of Indonesian-Dutch organizations is participating. It functions as consultation partner for the Dutch government. JIN is also taking part in the Foundation for the yearly Commemoration on 15 August 1945.

In recent years the Japanese Dutch descendants are confronted with shifting stereotypes. At first their mothers were 'collaborators with the enemy'. Now their mothers had 'relationships whether forced or not'. This has to do with the enormously grown attention for the issue of 'comfort women'. It is not easily accepted or understood that mothers of JIN children had more or less normal relationships.

The descendants are now approx. 70 years old. Nearly ten JIN members have passed away already, among whom Bauke Talens, who was chairman from 1995 until 2005. JIN is still working on friendly meetings; on the Japan travels with the Japanese embassy; and on searching in Japan for fathers or relatives with the Foundation S.O.O. and mr. Uchiyama.

One of the added motivations of the active group of members is directed to the care of their offspring. They have the right to be loved as well as to have correct information about the war and its circumstances. That is also why a new website was developed: www.Jin-info.nl.

If and when they want to know more about the lives of their grandmothers and grandfathers in Indonesia and Japan, it should be available and it is our duty to provide it.

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