# Persons in Uniform

## The Meaning of Clothing for Japanese Prisoners of War in China

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Uniforms, and the related concepts of uniforming and uniformity, have negative connotations in modern western societies, and in German society in particular. Uniformity is considered the great enemy of individuality; in foregrounding belonging to an organization, institution, or state, uniforms are thought to come at the expense of the individual. The standardization of uniforms highlights this self-effacing belonging to the utmost degree.[1] At the same time, however, insignia, medals and other variations found in uniform dress serve to *differentiate*, signaling the rank of the individual within the institution and thus revealing a hierarchy amongst those 'uniformly' dressed. Differentiation should not, therefore, be separated from standardization, especially with regard to military uniforms. Standardization *and* differentiation are of equal importance in understanding uniform dress.

Uniformity can be expressed not only in clothing in the strictest sense, but also in hairstyles, headdresses and other external markers. For that reason, a broad definition of dress will be used here. Heide Nixdorff, an ethnologist who has researched clothing extensively, defines it "as every form of intervention shaping the appearance of a person," including hairstyle, facial hair, make-up and tattoos.[2] Although this very broad definition has sometimes been criticized for "not allowing a clear distinction between what is and is not clothing,"[3] it is highly appropriate in the case of the group of people examined here.

As a member of the German Research Foundation's research group, "Self-Narratives in Transcultural Perspective," I have examined the personal accounts of Japanese prisoners of war who, following the termination of World War II in August 1945, spent five years in Russian prisoner of war camps, and then six

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1 Cf. Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms: Communication Through Clothing* (New York: Grennwood Press 1986), 66–68. A critique of the negative connotations of uniformity can be found in Gabriele Mentges, "Die Angst vor der Uniformität," in *Schönheit der Uniformität: Körper, Kleidung, Medien*, ed. Gabriele Mentges and Birgit Richard (Frankfurt am Main: Campus 2005), 17–42.

2 Heide Nixdorff, "Kleidung," in *Wörterbuch der Ethnologie*, ed. Bernhard Streck (Wuppertal: Hammer, 2000), 117–120 (p. 117).

3 Iris Hopf, *Uniform in der Kulturrevolution? Über den Zusammenhang von Schnitttechnik und Ideologie im China der 1960er und 1970er Jahre* (Alltagskulturen Chinas und seiner Nachbarn 4, ed. Mareile Flitsch) (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz Verlag, 2011), 10, note 1.

more years (1950–1956) in a Chinese camp for the reeducation of war criminals. Although for many years the men refused to give any information about their war crimes, they finally submitted confessions to Chinese federal prosecutors and wrote several self-narratives about the atrocities committed in Chinese territory. Of the more than one thousand prisoners of war, only forty-five high-ranking prisoners were tried in court and given prison sentences; no one was given the death penalty. All the other prisoners were released in the summer of 1956 without a trial. Even after their return to Japan, these individuals did not deny the confessions they had made in the Chinese camps. Rather, many wrote additional memoirs in which they confirmed their guilt and described their experience of the Chinese reeducation process.[4]

In order to understand the meaning of clothing, and especially uniforms, for this particular group of people in this period in East Asia, I will – after a short examination of the Japanese and Chinese concepts of 'uniform' – treat the meaning, development and modernity of western-style uniforms in Japan and China. Using several passages from the self-narratives of Japanese returnees from China, I will then examine the meanings these individuals ascribed to the various uniforms prescribed to them.

## *Uniformity in Japan and China*

The term 'uniform', used widely in German, English, and French alike, has its origins in Latin (*uniformis*), and contains the associations of 'homogenous' and 'invariable' – or, with a generally negative connotation – 'monotonous' or 'standardized.'

The word for 'uniform' used both in Japan and in China still today was adopted by the Japanese from Chinese more than a thousand years ago. Originally, it referred to the clothing required for visitors to the imperial court. As in the Latin, the Chinese/Japanese concept is composed of two lexemes, each of which is communicated by one character. While the written form and the meaning are the same in both languages (制服), the pronunciation of the two characters is different (Chin. *zhì-fú*; Jap. *sei-fuku*).

The first lexeme *sei* carries the meaning of control or regulation as well as organization and system. It is used in the combinations shown in the table below, as well as in many others.

The second lexeme *fuku* has two meanings, both in Japanese and in Chinese: clothing, apparel or item of clothing on the one hand, and obedience or submissiveness on the other. This lexical element also occurs in many other combinations, some of which are listed in the table below.

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4 Cf. Petra Buchholz, *Vom Teufel zum Menschen. Die Geschichte der Chinaheimkehrer in Selbstzeugnissen* (München: Iudicium, 2010).

# 制服

sei – fuku

the uniform, the standard dress

制 **control; system, organisation**

服 **1. dress, clothes;**
**2. obedience**

*compositions*:

制圧 **mastery, control**

制規 **rules, regulations**

制限 **restriction, restraint, limitation**

制式 **formal, official**

制する **suppress, restrain, control**

1. 青服 **blue work clothes, an overall**

学生服 **student uniform**

軍服 **military uniform**

洋服 **Western (European) dress**

2. 服する **obey; serve (in the army, one's term in prison)**

服役 **penal servitude**

服従 **obedience; submission; subordination**

In contrast to the European concept, the Japanese and Chinese word emphasizes not the uniformity, but the control associated with clothing, that is, its inextricability from power: an individual demonstrates his obedience to a certain organization or state by wearing the uniform it has prescribed.

Throughout Japanese and Chinese history, authorities have given numerous directives concerning uniform clothing or headdress: after the Manchu conquered China in 1644, they ordered that the now subject Han Chinese would adopt their customary hairstyle, known as the Manchu queue, as a sign of submission.[5] The Han Chinese were given ten days to shave the front of their heads and to tie the rest of their hair back into a braid. Failing to conform to this decree was punished by death, and Chinese self-narratives of the time report that massacres associated with the decree claimed countless lives.[6] Adopting the Manchu hairstyle was to signal loyalty towards the new rulers; rejecting it symbolized rebellious tendencies. The braid was a symbol of the Qing dynasty until the founding of the Republic of China in 1911, which marked a radical shift not only in politics, but in hairstyle: no time was lost in "cutting off the old braids." In 1929, the braid was prohibited by law.

In Japan, the relationship between compulsory uniform dress and power became particularly evident during World War II, known in Japan as the Greater East Asia War. During this period, there was a mandatory civil uniform (*kokuminfuku* = folk dress) consisting of khaki-colored overalls for men and wide pants (*monpe*) for women. Wasting valuable resources for more elaborate clothing was to be avoided, and anyone who disobeyed the law was branded a "traitor to the people" (*hikokumin*). This directive was accompanied by the widely announced slogan, "luxury is our enemy!" (*Zeitaku wa teki da!*). To this day, uniforms are well liked in Japan. Children in school uniforms define the cityscape, and even taxi drivers and elevator-girls wear standard clothing. That sartorial regulations have wide acceptance in Japan is visible from the transitions from summer to winter clothing, which take place on particular, pre-assigned dates (October 1st and April 1st, respectively). Although Japan can be quite warm in early October, it is difficult to find people wearing short sleeves or sandals. The same phenomenon exists in reverse on the first of April: although the weather is often still relatively cool, winter clothing is stowed away and light summer garments are worn.

In both China and Japan, as in many other non-European countries, the adoption of Western clothing had great symbolic value. Wearing it represented an opening to the West and functioned as a public sign of modernization. When Japan emerged from its two hundred year period of isolation, opening up at the beginning of the Meiji era (1868) under the pressure of American warships off of

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5 Joseph Guter, *Lexikon zur Geschichte Chinas. Sieben Jahrtausende im Überblick* (Wiesbaden: Marix Verlag, 2004), 67.

6 See, for example, the massacre of Yangzhou, in Patricia Ebrey, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: The Free Press, 1993), 271.

the Japanese coast, the still very young Meiji-Tenno had himself photographed in a Western-style suit. The photo was distributed to government agencies, military facilities, universities and schools, where it was to be displayed publicly. It eventually became a symbol of modern Japan.

It is the father of the Chinese Republic, Sun Zhongshan (or Sun Yatsen), who is credited with the design of the Zhongshan suit, later known in the West as the Mao suit or Mao jacket.[7] Aiming to signal modernity without the wholesale adoption of Western style, the suit quickly made a triumphal procession through the whole country, standing for loyalty to the new China and the renunciation of the imperial state.[8] When Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China in October 1949, he did so in the suit designed by Sun Yatsen, thereby linking the new Republic to its great founding father. From then on, it became the Mao suit.

Although several forms of the suit exist (a matter I will not treat here[9]), it was often perceived abroad as a uniform. This may have been the result of its muted coloring, but could also reflect the untrained eyes of the observers. In any case, nowhere else in the world did the clothing of the population reflect national identity and the political process of a society as much as it did in China. Nevertheless, the "uniformity of clothing in large parts of society was not the result of any party directive, but stemmed much more from an insecurity regarding what was politically acceptable. In this sense it was a preventative strategy. Uniform clothing was used by large sectors of society to express an active repositioning."[10] Indeed, a general clothing regulation would not even have been feasible at the time, as Chinese clothing production was not developed enough to supply the entire population with uniform dress. Even the complete standardization of the military uniforms of the People's Liberation Army was never achieved.[11] So too was civil dress far from homogenous, at least in the 1950s, since it was produced for the most part at home.[12] Professional clothing was sometimes distributed by businesses,[13] and new, industrially manufactured clothing was given to youths sent to rural areas at the end of the 1960s.[14] Normally, though, clothing was produced in private households, which naturally relied on available fabrics and patterns.

In short, it should be kept in mind that both Japanese and Chinese uniforms were based on western clothing styles and were viewed in both countries as sym-

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7 Hopf, *Kulturrevolution* (see note 3), 62–74.

8 Similarly, the Indian statesman, Jawaharlal Nehru, created the Nehru jacket that became the dominant dress in India (and is still worn today by Homi Bhabha, for instance, one of the most important figures in contemporary post-colonial studies).

9 Cf. Hopf, *Kulturrevolution*, 54–103.

10 Ibid., 5.

11 Ibid., 69.

12 Ibid., 85.

13 Ibid., 91.

14 Ibid., 95.

Fig. 1: The CPC party leaders in the 1950s: variation and subtle differentiation in uniform dress.

bols of the modern. For those individuals who grew up in the first half of the 20th century – like the Japanese prisoners of war treated below – this type of clothing, in all its uniformity, represented the clothing of a generation, distinguishing them from their parents and grandparents who generally wore more traditional clothing (or were at least represented in photographs wearing this kind of clothing).

## *The Meaning of Uniform Clothing for Japanese Prisoners of War*

Having given a short description of the cultural context that shaped Japanese soldiers' perceptions of uniform clothing and its relation to power, we can now turn to the treatment of clothing in the self-narratives of China returnees.[15] We can assume that this group of men, whose average age at the time of arrival in China was between thirty and thirty-five, was well acquainted with uniform clothing. Having been drafted into the army shortly after the completion of their primary education, many of them passed seamlessly from school uniforms to military uniforms. Their families, for the most part, would have worn the national "folk dress" mentioned above. The men knew from their daily experiences that uniforms signaled

15 The special group of prisoners of war who spent six years in Chinese reeducation camps before returning to Japan founded the "Association of China Returnees" (*Chūgoku kikansha renrakukai*). Whenever the term "China returnees" is used in the following, it is always in reference to this group of about 1000 men.

belonging: modernity consisted not of the individualized manipulation of personal appearance, but of the adoption of standardized, western-style clothing.[16]

One can assume that what initially mattered most to these men, who had just spent five years under extreme conditions in Russian prison camps, was the very existence of clothing as protection from the cold.

Here I would like to insert a short linguistic remark: there is a word, common both to Chinese and Japanese, which means "basic necessities" or "that which is required to live." The word (Japan. *i-shoku-jū*, Chin. *yi-shi-zhu*) consists of three characters signifying clothing, food, and shelter. The indispensability of these three basic elements has thus entered daily language and become common knowledge.

The China returnees gave these basic needs varying levels of importance in their self-narratives. Accommodations were often described in great detail, and many even included a sketch of their living quarters.[17] Descriptions of food included everything down to consistency, quantity, and any special additions to a meal; a change in menu often warranted its own chapter. The third of the basic necessities, on the other hand, was all but ignored. There are no sketches of clothing, and few bothered to report that they were given any garments at all.

In the account of Yagi Haruo[18], however, we learn not only that clothing was distributed, but what kind:

> "Each year we were given the following items of clothing:
> Summer clothing – a jacket and pants, an undershirt and long underpants, short underpants
> Winter clothing – a jacket and pants (both lined, distributed four times in six years)
> Fabric shoes for the summer, lined winter shoes, winter socks
> Two large blankets (futons), a pillow.
> In addition, products for daily use: a hand towel, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a pen, ink, paper, toilet paper, a broom, a fly swatter, a floor rag."
> In addition, Yagi notes thankfully, "every month tobacco and rolling papers were distributed."[19]

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16 McVeigh has studied the meanings of uniform dress in Japan from a social psychological perspective, and comes to the conclusion that uniforms can be viewed as material markers of a life cycle managed by powerful politico-economic institutions: Brian McVeigh, *Wearing Ideology. State, Schooling and Self Representation in Japan* (Oxford; New York: Berg Publishers, 2000).

17 Cf. Petra Buchholz, "Geständnisse japanischer Kriegsgefangener im geschlossenen Raum. Einsicht unter Zwang," in *Räume des Selbst. Selbstzeugnisforschung transkulturell*, ed. Andreas Bähr, Peter Burschel and Gabriele Jancke (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna: Böhlau, 2007), 197–216 (pp. 205–215).

18 Yagi Haruo was a former officer in the army of the "Manchu State," the Northern Chinese puppet state established by Japan in 1937. After his return, Yagi wrote a two-volume account of his time as a prisoner of war in Russia and China: Yagi Haruo, *Yokuryūki – Miketsu kōryū jūichi-nen* [Chronicles of Captivity: Eleven years of confinement without a trial], Kasuya: Fukuoka keimusho sagyōka 1972 (vol. 1) and 1979 (vol. 2).

19 Ibid. vol. 2, 25-26.


Fig. 2: This poster shows how young students from the cities arrive in the country during the cultural revolution; on point of arrival they are presented with new working clothes. (Chinese poster from the late 1960s)

Mizuguchi Takao, a former federal prosecutor for the Manchu state, was also one of the few who described his joy and surprise at the clothing allowance.[20]

From Uno Shintarō[21], however, we find out that already in the Soviet Union, just a few days before being extradited to the newly founded People's Republic of China, prisoners received "new, if very simple, clothing." The prisoners took this to be an unmistakable sign that they were returning home.[22] Most likely, the new clothing aimed to discourage the impression that the prisoners had been mistreated in the Soviet camps.

The distribution of clothing upon arrival in the Chinese reeducation camps did not, therefore, aim to redress any particular deficit – the prisoners had, after all, just been re-clothed. Rather, the clothing functioned as a symbol of incorporation, comparable to the practice, universal then as now, of assigning prison uniforms. In the Chinese context, this practice may best be compared to the ini-

20 Mizuguchi Takao, "Geständnis eines Staatsanwalts," in *Vom Teufel zum Menschen. Die Geschichte der Chinaheimkehrer in Selbstzeugnissen*, ed. Petra Buchholz (Munich: Iudicium, 2010), 236–266 (p. 237).

21 Uno Shintarō, a former Japanese intelligence officer who wrote an eight-hundred page autobiography: Uno Shintarō, *Kiku to Nihontō jō / ge* [The Chrysanthemum and the Japanese Sword], 2 vols. (Tokyo: Tanizawa shobō 1985).

22 Ibid., vol. 1, 389.

tiation ceremonies of the nineteen-sixties, in which urban youths were given farmer's clothing upon their arrival in the countryside.

None of the China returnees described the specific character of the clothing they received – its style, whether it was new or used, or how comfortable it was. However, such details can be deduced from photographs, which reveal blue work uniforms and peaked caps similar to those worn by the working class and by the staff of the reeducation camp. The clothing, therefore, did not serve to distinguish the prisoners, or to set them apart from the prison personnel; if one of the men had escaped, he would have blended seamlessly into the crowd.

As Yagi Haruo's above list suggests, however, these blue worker uniforms constituted only a small part of the generous package given to the men upon their arrival in China. While the clothing was received with astonishment, the disbursement of items for personal hygiene (which I consider part of the basic necessity of clothing) was met with explicit joy: "a toothbrush again for the first time in years!" [23]

The main reason for the generosity of the camp's authorities was the pacification of the newly arrived prisoners using a "strategy of leniency."[24] The men had believed until shortly before their arrival in China that they were on their way home, and unrest was to be avoided at all costs. Thus, it was repeatedly emphasized both through words and through deeds that, in great contrast to the Soviets, the Chinese would tend to the basic necessities of "food, accommodation, and clothing."

At the same time, however, providing Japanese prisoners with Chinese uniform dress constituted a self-conscious ritual emphasizing that now that they had arrived in the new China, the men were to adjust themselves to Chinese legal precepts and to the revolutionary claims of the people. Did any of the prisoners make note of or bristle at the ideological incorporation suggested by their new uniforms? Or was the acceptance of the clothing of the former enemy, the so ideologically laden Mao suit, a first sign of submission? None of the China returnees addressed these questions. Rather, the most important thing about the new clothing and a great source of common dismay at the time was the small but significant *difference* between their clothing and that of Chinese citizens: the jackets of the locals featured name tags, whereas the labels on the lapels of the Japanese prisoners displayed a number. The number was considered disgraceful, a sign of discrimination and of the men's branding as prisoners.

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23 Mizuguchi, *Geständnis*, 237.

24 For this "strategy of leniency" see: Petra Buchholz, "Die 'Strategie der Milde' gegenüber japanischen Kriegsverbrechern in China: Japanische Selbstzeugnisse," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung (BJOAF)* 31 (2008): 117–141.

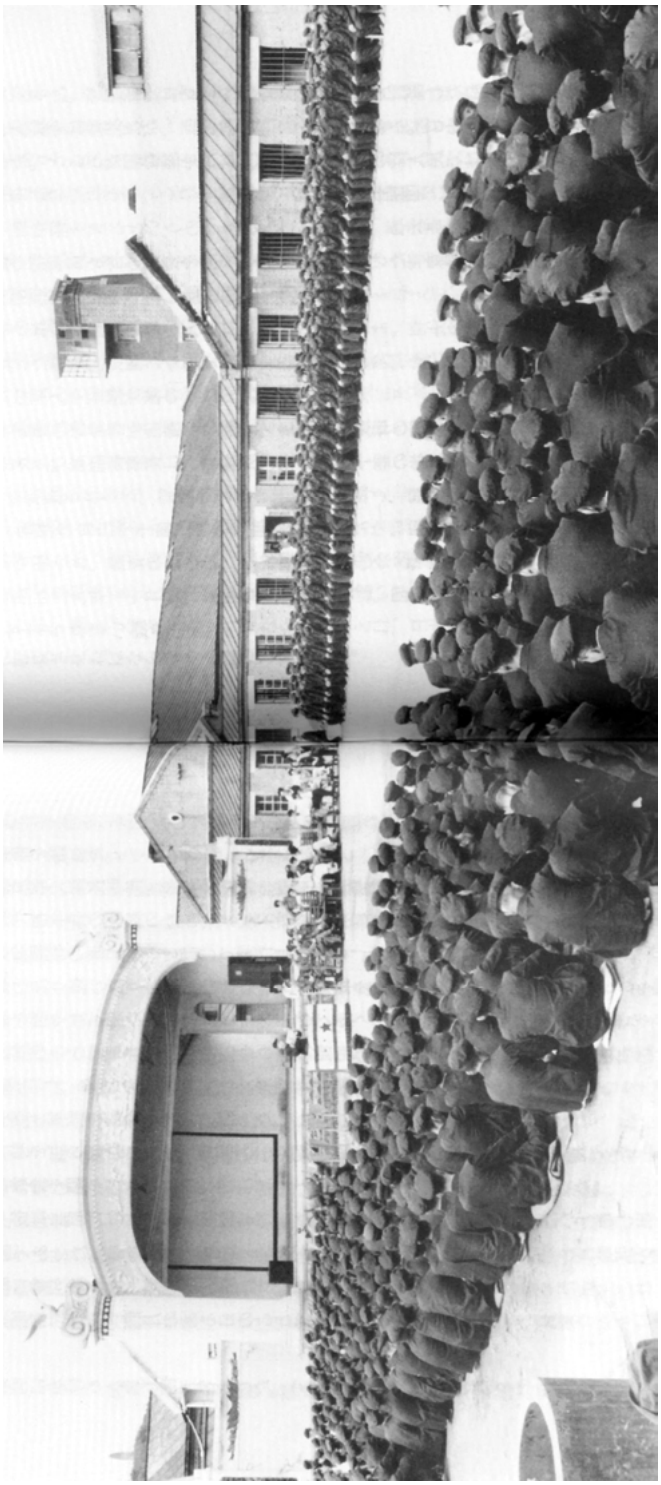

Fig. 3: Prisoners gathered in the courtyard of a reeducation camp (in Fushun in northeastern China). (Kindly supplied by "Bujun no kiseki o uketsugu-kai," Tokyo)

Shimamura Saburō, the former chief of the secret police under the Manchu government, recounts the following:

> "One thing, in any case, was not funny at all: each of us had to fasten a tag with a number on it onto our jackets, about at the level of our chests. We were then photographed in the prison yard. In the Soviet Union we were not really prisoners, but more like forced laborers. Now we had become real prisoners. I got the number 895. From that day onwards, for almost ten years, that number was my name."[25]

Sawada Jirō[26] expressed this even more clearly:

> "We went from being 'prisoners' to being 'war criminals.' From that point on, Japanese people were no longer addressed by their name, but by their number. Sawada's number was 265. Everyone had to wear the blue Chinese national dress."[27]

For Sawada, the new Chinese clothing was obviously not a charitable gift, but a compulsory measure. Though Sawada was surely not alone in this perception, there are no further references to uniform dress and its ideological implications in the self-narratives of the China returnees. Yet this does not mean – at least during the first two years of their reeducation – that the clothing was necessarily 'internalized,'[28] the prisoners submitting themselves willingly to their new status. Rather, the opposite was the case. As we learn from subsequent interviews with the prison staff, there was great protest against the new clothing regulations: high-ranking prisoners, especially generals, marched proudly through the camp wearing their former uniforms, complete with badges signifying their rank.[29] Clothing itself functioned as a means of protest.

In the years that followed, the prisoners were continually forced to face their personal guilt in the war crimes committed by the Japanese army. For the most part, the prisoners did not do this willingly or eagerly, let alone linearly; they acted strategically and sometimes deceptively. In order to assess and engage with their interlocutors, however, it was crucial for the prisoners to understand the meanings of the variations of Chinese uniform dress. These were manifold, and included insignia, the form of the collar, the quality and color of the fabric, and the number of buttons and pockets (see image one). The affiliation and rank associated with various colors or badges constituted critical, basic knowledge both for the prisoners and for the Chinese population as a whole. The focus was not on the standardized aspects of the uniform, but on its distinguishing elements.

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25 Shimamura Saburō, *Chūgoku kara kaetta senpan* [The Prisoners of War Who Returned from China] (Tokyo: Nitchū Shuppan, 1975), 18.

26 Sawada Jirō was drafted into the army after graduating from college and had the rank of lieutenant by the end of the war. He is the author of a two-volume autobiography: Sawada, Jirō: *Hōkō* [An Itinerant Life]. Vol. 1: "Shiberia" [Sibirien]. (Tokyo: Jihi shuppan, 1988); vol. 2: "Chūgoku" [China]. (Tokyo: Jihi shuppan, 1991).

27 Ibid., vol. 2, 4.

28 For the function of clothing in identity creation, see Hopf, *Kulturrevolution*, 11.

29 For more details on this see: Buchholz, *Teufel*, 26–29.


Fig. 4: High-profile prisoners in court (1956 war crime trials in Shenyang).

This emerges clearly from Uno Shintarō's description of the "sessions for self-accusation," small groups in which individual prisoners reported on their activities during the war. As the participants waited for the Chinese instructor,

> "suddenly, the sound of footsteps could be heard in the prison corridor, then the rattle of doors as several people entered the neighboring cells. Finally, our door, too, was unlocked, and two people entered silently, with a faint smile on their lips. One of them was wearing a dark blue Mao suit, like the one worn by the cadres. […] The other man followed him and carried several folders under his arm; he seemed to be the assistant, and wore the greenish uniform of the "Chinese Liberation Army" with the name tag on the left side of his chest and the cap with the red star on his head. He was thin, but of robust stature."[30]

Uno's description suggests the extent to which four years of detention had cultivated his ability to 'read' signs expressed in the particularities of uniforms.

Only towards the end of the six-year reeducation process did clothing again become an issue: shortly before the war crimes tribunals in Shenyang (1956), as we learn from several of the some forty-five individuals tried, new clothing was once again distributed.[31] Indeed, it is clear from image four that the defendants

30 Uno, *Kiku*, vol. 2, 111-112.
31 For example, Shimamura, *Chūgoku*, 218.

were not wearing the blue worker's clothing that they had worn in the prison, but freshly ironed suits made from better material.

Shortly before their release and return home, all the prisoners were once again re-clothed. When Uno Shintarō was given notice of his discharge, the prison director ceremonially removed his number from his jacket.[32] The prisoners re-entered the outside world well-fed, clean-shaven, and, of course, with Mao suits. By this time, after six years of reeducation, all the men had confessed their crimes and sworn to never again support a war of aggression.

After one and a half decades abroad, the men returned to Japan. No sooner had they returned than a conflict erupted over clothing, what one might call a "clash of affiliations." Upon their arrival, the men were given the uniforms of the so-called "Japanese self-defense forces." Their reabsorption into their home country – and their rejection of the ideological influence of China – was to be sealed through a change in uniform. The men indignantly refused. Rather, it was the blue uniform dress associated with the Chinese "strategy of mildness" that had become their garment of choice. They wore this clothing as an expression of their newly gained pacifism and as a sign of their connectedness with the Chinese people, generous as they had shown themselves to be to the men.

In a conversation recorded fifty years after his return home, Sawada Jirō recounted the incident in the following manner:

> "We had no sense for the value of money. It was meaningless to us, even if we were told that it was worth this or that. Yet when we were given the military uniforms, we knew exactly what was going on. We were being treated like idiots. We had suffered enough as a result of such things, and it was a disgrace to now so shamelessly give us something like that."[33]

Surely some of the men did not refuse the warm boots of their new uniforms, and the majority of the returning prisoners, many of whom had to look for employment, did not wear the Chinese national uniform in their daily lives in Japan.

One of the returnees, Yokoyama Teruhiko, a former judge in the Japanese puppet state, was sentenced to imprisonment in China and returned to Japan only a number of years after the others. He reports in his memoirs that upon his arrival in the Japanese harbor, his family rushed onto the ship to give him neutral clothing, demanding he change into them then and there so that he wouldn't meet the cameras of the reporters in the infamous Mao suit.[34]

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32 Uno, *Kiku*, vol. 1, 1.

33 Sawada Jirō, "Haisen kara kikoku made" [From Defeat to the Return Home], *Kikan Chūkiren* 1 (1997): 3–25 (p. 5).

34 Yokoyama Teruhiko, *Bōkyō – Moto-Manshūkoku saibankan no yokuryū jukei-ki* [Homesick: A judge in former Manchuria reports on his time in captivity] (Tokyo: Saimaru shuppansha, 1973), 225.

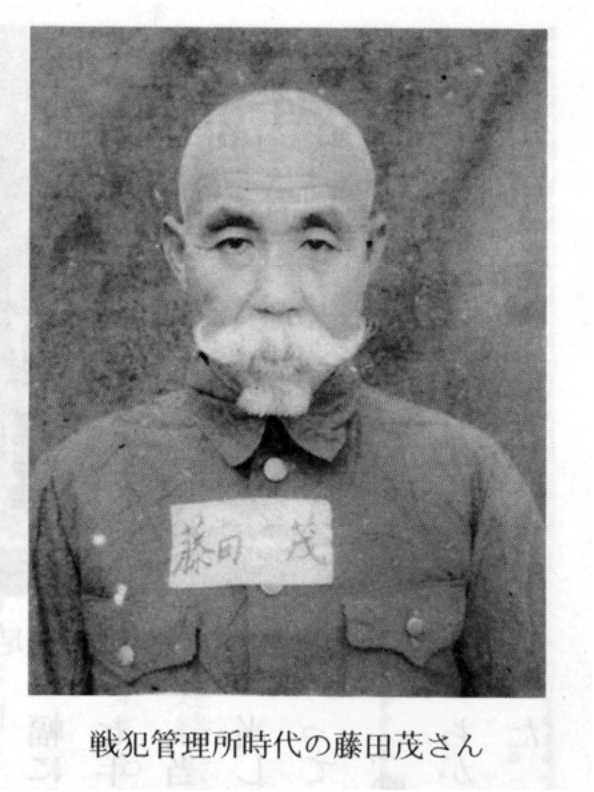


Fig. 5: Fujita Shigeru, 1950; identification photograph, taken of each prisoner after the distribution of uniform clothing; numbers were attached to the uniforms shortly thereafter.

In 1965, after all those who were convicted of war crimes had returned to Japan, the first delegation of the Japanese-based "Association of the China Returnees" traveled to the People's Republic of China. Fujita Shigeru, a former general in the Japanese army and the elected president of the association, led the delegation. Zhou Enlai, then prime minister of the People's Republic, received the men and presented Fujita with a gift from the Chinese people: a dark blue Mao suit. The suit signaled that the prime minister welcomed the repentant war criminals as friends of the Chinese people. It was a token of forgiveness and a gesture of acceptance. Fujita, who had been one of the generals to protest his prisoner of war status and the uniform that represented it by parading through the camp in his japanese military uniform and with an upturned moustache, accepted the gift with delight and gratitude. He even asked that he be buried in exactly this Mao suit; when he died fifteen years later, his relatives fulfilled this wish.

Although on first impact, clothing seems to be neglected in the self-narratives of China returnees, their repeated "incorporation through uniform dress" was

significant and marked various phases of their lives. Yet the fact that Fujita decided of his own free will to don Chinese clothing should not be seen as a sign of thankfulness alone. It was also an act of control over his own appearance. He represented himself through the choice of a uniform.

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