

Research Note on Pearling and Japanese Contribution to Local Society in early 20th century Australia

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1. Preface

This is an interim report of the field survey conducted by the author under the sponsorship of the research grant by JSPS to the *Research of the Regional Transformation in Australia Resulting from Closer Relationship with Asian Countries* (representative of Shinsuke Minamide, professor of Otomon Gakuin University, Osaka, Japan).

The purpose of the paper is to introduce briefly the research design, significance of the documents regarding the above topic and the field works held in Darwin, Broome and Perth in Australia during July-August 2006 and January-February 2007. and also in Ehime Prefecture in Shikoku Islands, Japan during December 2006.

In the present paper I shall introduce some historical documents and contemporary field documents in accordance with some of the research approaches. The documents collected in Broome and Darwin under the present research works are partly listed in the *<Selected Documents>* at the back of the paper

2. Research Approaches to the Topic

2-1. Pearling-Migrants and Contribution to the Local Society

In terms of the study of migration of Asian peoples including Chinese, Japanese and other “nations” of Asian regions, we have quite many research products of the detailed studies. However, if we try to focus on the topic of pearling industry and labour migration of Japanese peoples in Australia in late 19th and early 20th centuries, we do not have many detailed research works.

As generally introduced in the preceding works both in Japanese and in English, many of the migrant labour from Japan were from Wakayama, Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Hiroshima and Ehime

1) 遠山嘉博「第2次大戦前のオーストラリアへの日本人移民の諸問題」『追手門経済論集』xxxx 卷, 第1号, 2005年9月

Prefectures¹⁾. Such topics as the Japanese communities, economic activities and the social life in Australia were recorded by Sissons Shnukal and in the Chronicle of local history of Wakayama Prefecture²⁾. However Matsumoto mentions in his interesting and detailed paper that the research works regarding the Japanese pearling labour are quite many in the past³⁾, I have found that the contribution of Japanese migrants in these periods are not properly recognized or evaluated both by the Japanese and Australian scholars except for the economic profits of pearling industry brought into N.T. and W.A. And also, the research analysis are few in terms of the interrelation or networks between Japanese migrants communities in Australia and the sending places in Japan.

Further research works would be rather aimed at the aspects of the relations of person(s) to local region and person(s) to local peoples in Australia than the statistical account or gross economic status in the macro-analysis.

In this regard the recent work written by an Australian author, Noreen Jones⁴⁾ is interesting and valuable documentary history of not-well-known but quite pioneering persons who lived in northern Australia, and contributed to local economies and cultures. The book also traced the background of their native land in Japan, depending on the detailed interview and field survey on the spot.

When I visited Pioneers Cemetery in Broome in W.A. [photo 1], I found an extraordinarily tall memorial or tombstone-like stone statue on the top of the small hill in the Town Bay Beach Park [photo 2], and the pure-red coloured Torii (鳥居) or Shinto Shrine Gate, [photo 5] facing on the pure blue seas. However the inscription on the stone was difficult to read, I traced the fringed letters in Japanese and could read it as “Mr. H.”, “born on 18th November 23rd year of Meiji” and 「東予縣喜多郡今坊」. Nobody in the town knew the details of the matters, when, why and who this statue is. The scenery of standing of a Japanese Pioneer looked rather unusual in the circumstance around this area. Who is the Japanese as a pioneer sleeping surrounded by all the Britishers and western people on the top of this hill?

When I came back to Japan, I visited the village in Kita-gun in Shikoku, and found the facts in the temple record of Rinzai-Zen Buddhist Temple about the name of the person and he was a member of hill and forest owner's family around the village. It is expected to understand why he was buried as a pioneer, what kinds of contribution to the local society he did and when and by whom the stone memorial was erected and what is a response of local people to the stone and

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- 2) Sissons, D. C. S. “The Japanese in the Australian Pearling Industry”, Queensland Heritage., 1974.
Shnukal, A. *et al.* eds. Navigating Boundaries: The Asian Diaspora in Torres Straits., Pandanus Book 2004.
- 3) 松本博之「アラフラ海と真珠貝—世界システムの視点から」『アジアの歴史地理 3, 林野・草原・水域』所収, 2007.
- 4) Noreen Jones, Number 2 Home. A Story of Japanese Pioneers in Australia., Fremantle Arts Center Press, 2002.; 邦訳『第二の故郷, 豪州に渡った日本人先駆者たちの物語』北条・白旗・菅共訳, 創風社出版, 2003.

wooden Torii.

The Broome Historical Museum [photo 3] is a quite small and snug cottage near the Town Beach. The Museum reserves quite good collections of pearling records such as the written documents of newspaper scrapping file, several tombstones of Japanese, [photo 4] historical photos, legal documents of Acts and Regulations, all of them related pearling industries and labour <Selected Documents, I-3~12>. Among these historical records some noted Japanese biographies are listed. Some of them are read as follows:

SHINGORO TOKUMARU 1873-1916

SHINGORO TOKUMARU was born in Japan in 1873. He arrived in Broome in 1890 where he started trading as a Merchant and Money-Lender. He was joined by his brother, Toyo Tokumaru in 1895. "The Tokumaru Brothers Store" was first located near the corner of Short Street and Carnavon Street.

In 1911 there were 1,203 Japanese men and 154 Japanese women residents in Broome. On the 22nd. July 1915 the brothers moved to their Store to new premises next to the Roebuck Bay Hotel. Chief partner Shingoro died at his Singapore Rubber Estate on 16th December 1916. His brother carried on the business until the start of W.W.2.

We may wonder that some Japanese had moved up to Singapore where he managed plantation of rubber.

Another Japanese pioneer is introduced:

YASUKICHI MURAKAMI 1880-1944

YASUKICHI MURAKAMI was born in Japan on 19th December 1880.

He was a businessman, community leader, inventor, photographer and Cultivated Pearl Industry pioneer. He arrived in Cossack, Australia in 1897 and there he met Taisuke & Eki Nishioaka, a childless business couple who adopted him. Yasukichi studied Maritime Law and Bookkeeping where he became very fluent in English language. He moved to Broome with his new parent where they transferred their business here. When Taisuke passed away, Yasukichi assisted Eki in their business. He also went into Partnership with Captain A. Gregory. Yasukichi married an Australian girl of Japanese-descent and they had 9 children. His partnership with Captain Gregory resulted in an experiment to Culture Pearl. This was considered a threat by other pearlers to the industry and the experiment was disbanded. Yasukichi then moved to Darwin in 1934. He was a prominent and respected member of the Japanese Club.

He was interned at the outbreak of W.W.2 to Tatura Camp, Victoria where he passed away on 26th June 1944 in Australia.

Some of the notable Japanese are recorded in the Australian National Biography edited by Central Government, and buried at the Japanese cemetery in Broome [photo 7] and Darwin. [photo 8 & 9] but we may excavate more unknown Japanese names and activities which had contributed to local society.

2-2. Pearling-Migrants and Official and Private Documents

The period of 1901 was a historical turning corner of the domestic and international policy of Australia. As Tōyama mentions in his paper⁵⁾ three Acts were regulated in this year to implement the White Australia Policy: that is, Immigration Restriction Act, Pacific Island Labourers Act and Commonwealth Post and Telegraph Act. Since then till 1973 the Federal Government continued the notorious white-chauvinistic policy. Naturally this policy, especially the Immigration Restriction Act affected Japanese migration to pearling areas.

The document of *Pearl-Shelling Industry Port Darwin and Northern Territory Report by His Honour Judge Dashwood* is a valuable one which explains the process of implementation of the Act and the responses of local people in various kinds of occupations and socio-economic roles in the pearling areas in Darwin to regulation of the Act.

We shall overview the contents as follows:

Main contents of the document are the inquiry by the Judge Dashwood in Port Darwin and Thursday Island, and another inquiry by M.S. Warton in Broome regarding 12 questions in terms of pearling industries and related matters. The more interesting and voluminous contents are the examination on people of various occupations and their witnesses.

1) 12 Questions are as follows: (**bold letter** by Shigematsu)

1. **Number of men** engaged in the (pearling) industry, employers or owners, masters, crew, divers.
2. **Nationality** of the above.
3. **The quantity and value** of the annual take. . .
4. **Rates and wages** for each class of employees.
5. **Customs returns** from stores, . . . **License fee** amount.
6. **Probable permanence of industry.**
7. **Nature of appliances**-boats, diving gear, conditions of standard of living.
8. **History of the trade** as regards employment of white men. Profits, increased depths, qual-

5) 遠山嘉博「白豪主義の台頭・拡大と日本人契約労働者」『追手門経済論集』xxxx 卷, 第2号, 2005年12月

ity of shell.

9. **Prospects of trade if such regulations are made** as will compel it to be carried **on by white labour only**.

10. **Comparative extent pearling** grounds within and outside of a line 3 miles from the shore of mainland or any islands. . .

11. To visit Marouke for the purpose of ascertaining the suitability of that part as headquarters for Torres Straits pearling trade. . .

12. As to the Beche-le-mer and Tortoise-shell fisheries.

2) Examination and Witness of Local People of various occupations

We can get ideas about what local people responded to Japanese pearling fishers and/or the Japanese migrants communities in their own words and phrases in front of the Judge.

Examinees were totally 30 persons and questions were 31 times (one person was reexamined).

The items of questions were 2,256. The category of occupations of the examinees is as follow:

| | |
|--|---|
| • Pearl-shell fishing (including owners) | 9 |
| • Master Mariner | 2 |
| • Merchant | 1 |
| • Ship builder (including shipwright) | 3 |
| • Proprietor of Gazette [photo 6] | 1 |
| • Custom Officer (Custom Collector) | 3 |
| • Trepan (Beche-le-mer) fisher | 1 |
| • Manager of the pearling company | 6 |
| • Diver | 2 |
| • Secretary of the labour Union | 1 |
| • Timber merchant | 1 |

Each content is to be further analyzed, in the paper..

Another official document is *The Pearling Industry of Australia, An Account of Its Social and Economic Development* by Bach, J.P.S.

2) This document contains 38 Chapters, 295 pages of historical materials mainly regarding labour issues. The period of issues is classified by the subjects of pre-1901, 1901–1918, 1923–1939, and areas covered are Thursday Island, Queensland, and Northern Territory. Main focus of the Report is on Japanese labour issues as chapters of the following: (**bold letter** by Shigematsu)

XVII. **Queensland Pearling** to the War of 1914–1918

XVIII. **Labour problems** and the Commonwealth to 1918

XIX. Queensland: **White Labour** and effects of Commonwealth Legislation to 1918

XX. **Coloured Labour** in Queensland 1901–1918

- XXI. History of **Western Australia in Labour Problems** 1901–1918
- XXII. Northern Territory Labour 1901–1918
- XXIII. **Japanese Riots** in the Pearling towns 1920–24
- XXIV. Attempts to Reduce or Replace **Japanese Labour** after the War 1914–1918
- XXV. **Labour and Associated Problems in Western Australia** and Northern Territory 1923–39
- XXVI. **Labour and associated Problems in Thursday Island** 1923–39
- XXVII. Economic Crisis 1915–1938
- XXXVIII. Commonwealth and State Assistance to the Industry 1938–41
- XXIX. Fishing in Australian Extra-Territorial Waters by Foreign Vessels-the first phase to 1931
- XXX. The Appearance and Activities of **Japanese-owned** vessels off Northern Australia 1931–6
- XXXI. **Organised Japanese Activities** off Northern Australia 1936–37
- XXXII. Activities of the patrol and the Aboriginals: Ordinance of 1937
- XXXIII. **Japanese Extra-Territorial Fishing**-the last phase 1938–41
- XXXIV. Some Aspects of Contacts between **Pearlers and Natives**
- XXXV. Effects of **Japanese Operations** upon Australian Shell Resources
- XXXVI. The Revival of the Industry 1946–55, a Summary
- XXXVII. Post-War Labour Problems

We shall over view the opinion and attitude of Australian Federal and State Governments toward Japanese development into the areas.

As above overviewed, the analysis is not yet completed, and we shall in more detail study the topic on the Japanese migrants in Australia, especially in N.T and W.A., their contact with local communities and contribution to the local society in further article in Japanese or in English.

Selected Documents

I. 第一次史料 (Primary Documents)

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2. Bach, J.P.S. *The Pearling Industry of Australia, An Account of Its Social and Economic Development.,* for the Department of Commerce and Agriculture, N.S.W. University of Technology, 1935. (NT Library, Darwin)
3. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1884–85.,* Western Australia, 1885. (Broome Museum Document File)
4. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1885–86.,* Western Australia, 1886. (Broome Museum Document File)
5. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1887–88.,* Western Australia, 1889.

(Broome Museum Document File)

6. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1887–88.*, Western Australia, 1889.
(Broome Museum Document File)
7. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1890.*, Western Australia, 1890.
(Broome Museum Document File)
8. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1891.*, Western Australia, 1892.
(Broome Museum Document File)
9. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1892.*, Western Australia, 1893.
(Broome Museum Document File)
10. *Report by the Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries, for the Season 1906.*, Western Australia, 1907.
(Broome Museum Document File)
11. Document File of “*Early Lugger Crews*” in Broome Museum
12. Document File of “*Pearling 1921–1956*” in Broome Museum.

II. 日本人墓地・墓碑銘 (Epitaph of Japanese Tombstones)

1. Inscriptions of Epitaph in the Japanese Tombstones, Japanese Cemetery in Broome.
2. Inscriptions of Epitaph in the Japanese Tombstones, Japanese Cemetery in Darwin, Garden Hill Road.
3. Inscriptions of Epitaph in the Japanese Tombstones, Chinese Cemetery in Darwin, Francis Bay Drive.

III. 刊行書 (Books and Articles)

1. Anderson, Lois P., *The Role of Aboriginal & Asian Labour in the Origin and Development of the Pearl-
ing Industry, Broome, Western Australia 1862–1940.*, Murdoch University, 1978. (Broome Museum
Document File)
2. Benham, Clarence., *Diver's Luck, A Story of Pearl-
ing Days.*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1951.
3. Edwards Hugh, *Port of Pearls.*, Tangee Publishers, Western Australia, 1984.
4. Lance, Kate., *Redbill From Pearls to Peace – The Life and Times of Remarkable Lugger.*, Fremantle
Arts Centre Press, 2004.
5. Jones Noreen., *Number 2 Home, A Story of Japanese Pioneers in Australia.*, Fremantle Arts Centre
Press, 2002 (邦訳『第二の故郷 豪州に渡った日本人先駆者たちの物語』北條正司／白旗佐紀枝
／菅 紀子 共訳, 創風社出版, 2003)
6. 遠山嘉博「第2次大戦前のオーストラリアへの日本人移民の諸問題」『追手門経済論集』第XXXX
巻第1号, 2005年9月
7. 遠山嘉博「白豪主義の台頭・拡大と日本人契約労働者」『追手門経済論集』第XXXX巻第2号,
2005年12月
8. 松本博之「アラフラ海と真珠貝」『アジアの歴史地理3, 林野・草原・水域』小長谷有紀, 中里
亜夫, 藤田佳久編, 朝倉書房, 2007

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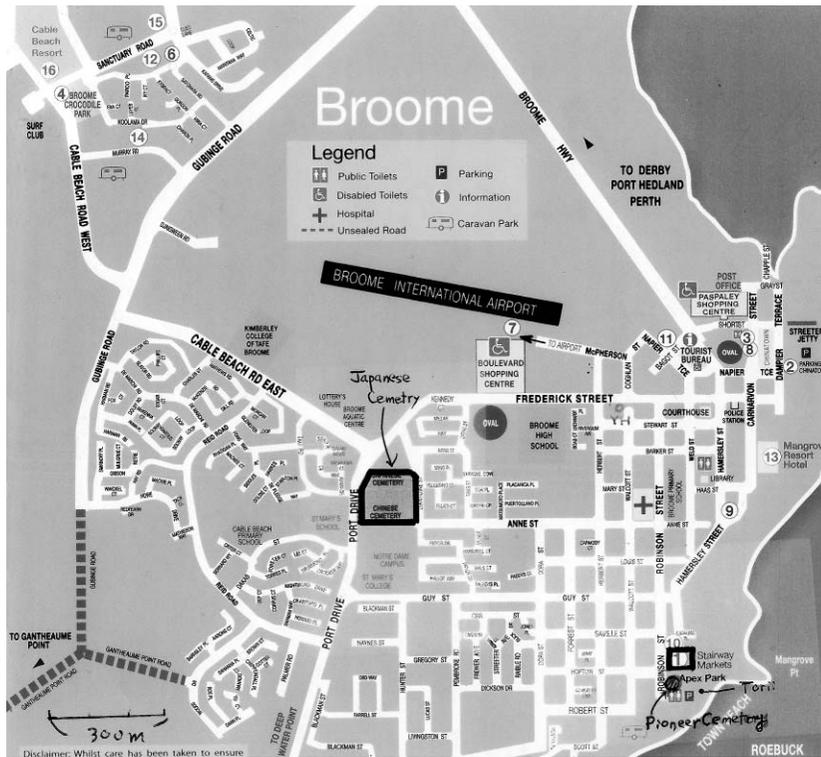


Photo 1 Japanese Cemetery and Pioneer Cemetery in Broome, W.A.
 (Map revised from the guide book of “Broome”)



Photo 2 Tombstone or Memorial Stone of Mr. H. on the top of Pioneer Cemetery in Broome



Photo 3 Broome Historical Museum



Photo 4 Japanese Tombstone (fragments) in Broome Historical Museum



Photo 5 Torii (鳥居) or Shinto Shrine Gate on the Town Beach Park in Broome



Photo 6 Lugger ship in Broome China Town



Photo 7 Japanese Cemetery in Broome



Photo 8 Japanese Cemetery in Darwin 1



Photo 9 Japanese Cemetery in Darwin 2

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Photo 10 Poster of Shinju Matsuri in Broome, August 2006