The Japanese in the Australian pearling industry

A diver and crew, Thursday Island, 1896
(Reproduced from K. Watanabe, Gōshō Tonbo Hokokusho, 1896)
THE JAPANESE IN THE AUSTRALIAN
PEARLING INDUSTRY

by

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The diver and the industry that grew up around him were important elements in the economy of tropical Australia from the late 1860s when the commercial exploitation of pearling in Australian waters commenced until the early 1920s when the bulk of the industry had moved from Victoria to Queensland. The industry was an exception to the White Australia Policy. Throughout its entire life it depended on coloured immigrants for both its skilled and unskilled labour. After the enactment of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901 these could be introduced in limited numbers by pearl-sellers who were prepared to enter into a contractual bond with the Commonwealth Government, which was forfeited if the indentured man absconded.

Japanese began to appear among the hucksters' crews in the late 1860s. From early in 1863 they were the largest national group employed in the industry at Thursday Island. In 1866 they achieved the same predominance at Broome. In 1911 when the industry reached its peak, there were 1166 Japanese 'indentures' at Broome and 714 at Thursday Island. When the war broke out in 1941 the Australian pearling industry had about 300 indentured Japanese in its employment.

Japan, as we know, the first Japanese to be employed in the Australian pearling industry was Nozomi Kajiya of Hirosa in Shimane prefecture.

In 1866 the Japanese Government had lifted the edict that, on pain of death, forbade Japanese subjects to depart from their native land. A proclamation of 21 May of that year authorised the issue of passports to citizens wishing to go overseas for the purpose of study or commerce. The scope of this emancipation was broadened a month later when the Treaty Powers secured the right for their merchant vessels to sign on Japanese as crew at any of the Japanese Treaty Ports. British captains made extensive use of this privilege. Sometimes they did so unscrupulously and took advantage of the Japanese recruits' ignorance of the English language to bind them to very onerous conditions. It was at this stage that the Melbourne police courts in which Japanese seamen engaged, as a result of such subterfuges, instituted criminal proceedings against various agents of 'transit men', as the Japanese Government on 4 November 1879 appointed Honorary Consul, Alexander Marks in that city. This was one of the earliest Japanese consulates in the British Empire, preceded only by Hong Kong (1871), London (1876), and Singapore (April 1879).

Nozomi joined a British merchantman at Yokohama in this fashion and after a couple of years on the world's seas took his discharge at Sydney. There in 1875, aged about 25, he signed on as a crewman on a Torres Strait Pearling lugger. It was at this time that the first buildings were erected at Thursday Island in preparation for the transfer of the port facilities and administrative centre from Broome to the tip of Cape York Peninsula the following year.

Initially, pearl-fishing in Australian waters had been carried out without the aid of the diving suit, using small boats manned predominantly by South Sea Islanders. Depths of up to seventy fathoms could be worked by this method. In about 1874 diving suits were introduced to Torres Strait. This greatly enlarged the pearling area and made for larger boats that could remain at sea, independently, for longer periods. For the crews of these off-shore vessels Malays and Filipinos came to be preferred. As regards the divers, initially only Caucasians donned the suits, but they soon trained Pacific Islanders from such places as Rotuma and the Loyalty Islands. By the time of Nozomi's arrival several Malays and Filipinos were also being employed in this role.

Nozomi was ambitious and hard-working. He learnt to dive from a Malay and soon achieved a high reputation as a diver. During the next few years several other Japanese sailors arrived in similar circumstances and some of these became divers. These men performed so well - both as crew and as divers - that the pearl-sellers began to recruit Japanese overseas. First, they appear to have handed the supply of discharged Japanese seamen in Hong Kong. The agents of Burnham and Company there, and of Livingstone and Company, appear to have used boarding-house keepers as 'stumps' to deliver impoverished Japanese sailors to them. In 1885 there were about fifteen or sixteen Japanese recruited in Hong Kong to work as divers in the Thursday Island campers. Again in the summer months contracts. Later in that year the Torres Strait pearl-sellers began to recruit in Japan itself when at Yokohama on 10 October Captain J. A. Miller engaged thirty-seven Japanese (six divers, six tenders, twenty-four pumpers) for two-year contracts.

The Miller contract is important in the history of Japanese emigration overseas. They are a significant change in the policy of the Japanese Government, which hitherto had consistently refused to approve the emigration of contract labourers to any destination. These refusal were partly a reflection of their experience in 1888 and
1869 when a number of labourers were sent to Hawaii, Guam, and California and left stranded there by unscrupulous foreigners, under "contracts" which they did not carry out. 11 They also stemmed from Japan's conscious policy of adhering to the standards of the advanced countries. In accordance with this policy the Japanese Government had in 1872 enacted legislation prohibiting contracts of service for periods exceeding one year, on the ground that such contracts were tantamount to slavery. 12

The negotiation of the Miller contracts took six months, during which period the Japanese provincial and central authorities subjected them to close scrutiny.

Miller's agents made their initial approach through the British consul to the prefectural authorities in Yokohama. The latter wrote to the Foreign Ministry for guidance, inquiring whether "the evil custom of slavery obtains in those regions and whether or not the circumstances under which some Japanese youths were sent to Kobe are the same as or less serious than those on which the ponders were based." 13

The Foreign Ministry, after due consideration of the terms of the draft contract drawn up by the agent selected by the prefectural government to recruit the labour, gave its approval. It published its decision in the following terms:

"The contract with foreigners to work overseas in pechewi is essentially different from a contract which affects the freedom and personal rights of the foreigner. Even a small number will be employed and they are all skilled workers. Furthermore, specific agreements are made as to the treatment to which the employees are to be subjected at home."

The Foreign Ministry insisted that, since Torres Strait was far from the consulates (Melbourne), some resident in Japan must go to ensure that the employer fulfilled his obligations. It also required that the signatures be witnessed by the British consul.

In their contracts, the Australian pechewi were accustomed to the provisions required by the Singapore Government to safeguard the wellbeing of its people. For example, the employer was to provide medical treatment. The Miller contracts in addition specified the ration scale in considerable detail and made clear that the employer's liability to provide transport to and from Australia was subject to cases where the contract extended for six full years; it was extended to cases where the employer was repatriated earlier on medical grounds. 14

The thirty-seven Japanese arrived at Thursday Island on 14 November 1883. The Foreign Ministry was mistaken in its belief that all of them were experienced seamen. One of the tenders, Masuda Sango, sent home very disparaging remarks about some of the ponders. 15

The early years they were in dire straits. Among them were people who had never seen a boat or even a beach. Seventy percent were seasick. Without a doubt, they suffered severe duress. There were very few who did not continue in the same condition at night. It was exactly as if we were taking the sky to sea. 16

He notes, however, that within a few months, even those had for the most part settled down satisfactorily. Indeed, the performance of the crew was such that Australian employers continued to seek labour in Japan. On 1 June 1885 Street and Company, the largest of the Western Australian ponders, recruited at Yokohama six divers and an interpreter on contract approved by the Foreign Ministry and the prefectural government. 17 The terms of these contracts were similar to the Miller contracts. And unknown to the Foreign Ministry, another thirty-six men had been recruited in Japan for Australian masters during 1886 by Pearson, Low and Company, a British firm in Kobe. 18

Of these, thirty came from Wakayama prefecture. They were the first group of labourers from this prefecture to seek employment overseas. They began an exodus that continued until after World War II. In 1940, according to a survey by the Foreign Ministry, some 22,000 people from this prefecture (more than 2 per cent of its population) were living abroad. 19 They also established what was to be a permanent characteristic of Japanese emigration to Australia—the preeminent position of Wakayama prefecture. The predominance at Thursday Island and Broome provides stark evidence of this. Of the 925 cases where the inscription gives, as well as the name, the place of birth, 529 (57 per cent) are from Wakayama. 20

Ogawa Taro, a local historian, has recently established that of these thirty men from Wakayama under contract to Pearson, Low and Company in 1884, at least twenty-five came from three villages at the southern tip of the prefecture—Shinomiya (seven), Kushimoto (seven), Tanami (one). 21 There is a local oral tradition that links the departure of these men for Australia with Joseph Dick, one of a group of Seabornen sent to Japan to train Japanese lighthouse keepers. The lighthouse at Kangaroo Island, about eighty kilometers from Kushimoto, was built under the supervision of the British engineer, R. J. Brunton, in 1870. 22 Dick served in a number of Japanese lighthouses during the period 1877-1880. It is not known how long he was at Kushimoto; but he certainly was resident there in 1875. On the termination of his contract in 1879 Dick remained in Japan. In the early 1880s he joined a Kobe firm of engineering, Langeland's. It seems he has returned to Kushimoto at this time to try to induce some of his former tenants to go to Japan to serve as workers in the fisheries. Following this a number of local youths went to work for foreigners in that city. Some of these were among the thirty who signed the pechewi contracts with Pearson, Low and Company. It is reasonable to suppose that other Dick or these youths suggested to the latter firm that they could obtain additional recruits in this district. It is said that, when they were told that they would be diving for shell, they thought that this must be absolutely dangerous and took with them the chuck they used when diving for abalone at home. 23 Ever afterwards the overwhelming proportion of the recruits from Wakayama prefecture to Australia continued to come from this area of the prefecture, the eighty kilometer stretch from Shingi to Sokusui of the very narrow strip of plain between the sea and the mountains. Unlike the centres of the countryside, all of the towns and villages names appearing in this article are situated there. The prefecture is fully in keeping with Japanese standards—only 10 per cent of it is arable (compared with the Japanese average of about 15 per cent). As late as in the 1930s the area per household was 1.2 acres, compared with the national average of 2.55 acres. About two-thirds of the farming households had to engage in non-farming activities to make a living. Many of these engaged commercially in fishing and farming. Today, thanks to refrigeration and better access by land to and from Osaka markets, fishing thrives throughout the area. This is a recent development. Until the railway between Shingi and Wakayama City was completed in 1949, there was no means to catch the fish but themselves. The roads did not come until much later still. Without this economic pressure there would not have been emigration. But, though it was a necessary condition, it was not a sufficient condition. There were households from villages which, although their standard of living was equally low, were very little emigration. According to local scholars, there was no additional factor was the traditional outward-looking attitude of these fisherfolk. Unlike the landmen who saw the sea as a barrier, they saw it as a highway. 24

Of the sixty-nine men recruited by Pearson, Low and Company in 1884, about forty-nine were sent to Thursday Island, and fifteen to Darwin. It appears that the prefectural government at Kobe issued the passports without examining the contracts. It certainly did not refer to them to the Foreign Ministry. Accordingly it was with some surprise and concern that the latter, late in 1884, received a report to the effect that there were about a hundred Japanese at Thursday Island, that many of them had been overlooked as a result of misrepresentations about local conditions and the nature of their duties, and that partly as a result of language difficulties one Japanese had even been taken to court by his employer and sent to gaol. 25 This was the very situation that the Foreign Ministry had, for so long, tried to prevent—the presence of a large group of Japanese of the lower classes, employed to perform physical labour for foreigners whose language and customs they could not understand. 26
The jurisdiction of the Honorary Consul, Alexander Marks, did extend beyond the confines of Victoria. The Foreign Ministry, regarding the matter as one of some urgency, instructed him to visit Thursday Island in his private capacity, investigate the situation there and do what he could to assist any Japanese subjects in need of protection. At the same time it initiated the formal procedure to extend his jurisdiction to cover all the eastern islands. It also requested the mediating authority of Yokohama to provide it with all available information on how the men under contract to Captain Miller were faring.

The situation as it emerged from these and subsequent reports was that, with occasional exceptions, the men were not subjected to cruel treatment. Captain Miller in particular appears to have gone to some trouble to provide eggs and other specially nutritious food for those of his men who were sick. But he soon departed from the scene. In September 1884, when he cleared Sydney in command of the barque, Star of Peace, bound for Torres Strait, he started drinking. On 2 October two bottles of whisky and the last part of a case of gin later he was housed aboard in a chair at Prince of Wales Island. Though quite inebriated, he was depressed by the erroneous belief that he had not been to the toilet for ten days and by the fear that he had accidentally taken poison. He retired to bed with a pistol under his pillow and, during the night, shot himself. Unfortunately his successor was often inebriated and suffering from injuries and seemed to have been able to sustain the work of inspection and control. He was clearly more successful than the Japanese in resisting such situations because they had some knowledge of English.

A considerable amount of criticism was directed against Pearson, Low and Company, and some of the employers to whom they provided labour. According to Marks, they restricted to misrepresentations and provided a number of men quite unsuited to the rigours of sea-faring life.

When two men engaged by Pearson, Low and Company, were discovered by Batters, Plaiz and Co. to be incapable in men and made their profit by selling them to the worst of the worst shipbuilders. It has not been possible to find out how many men the company has treated in this way. There are about fifty engaged on the same job.

The Pearson-Low contracts appear to have been very sketchy and unsatisfactory documents. They were capable of the interpretation that the wages were due only at the completion of the period specified in the Articles, that is at the end of three years, and, in fact, the custom in the sea-faring world. Some of the employers attempted to adhere to this interpretation. The contracts contained no provisions dealing with sickness or medical treatment. Some employers seem to have taken advantage of this to charge for medical attention and to deduct from his wages the entire cost of the journey to and from Australia. Captain Miller, as we have seen, did what he could if any of his men became sick; but in the absence of any hospital or medical practitioner on the island there was not a great deal that he could do.

Nishi Isokichi, one of the Pearson-Low men, died in gaol three weeks after he had been convicted of having pearls in his possession (under the contracts all pearls retained the property of the employer). It was his report that originally attracted suspicion; this was regarded as part of a plot to smuggle the pearls out of the penal colony. The convict's statement was corroborated and could have been prevented if there had been a doctor on the island. It was probably this incident that prompted Masuda to write:

When a man becomes ill and is not provided with proper medical care, he would go anywhere to avoid such treatment. The employer did not always provide this. If the convict were not difficult to manage, he would send them away and have him back to work. Where the convict was difficult to manage, he would put him in a place that he should work for the same wages, give him medical treatment and as much food and kindness as possible.

Of the thirty-seven men under contract to Captain Miller, about ten were sent back to Japan sick, before the expiry of their contracts. Most of these were suffering from beri-beri. Four died of influenza and pneumonia at destinations as far apart as Niuatp散户 and Waipapa Island (two of them from dysentery), and one died on Thursday Island from alcohol poisoning.

Of the sixty-nine men sent to Australia by Pearson, Low and Company in 1884, we have no information on the number employed for medical reasons. The Thursday Island and West Australian death registries, however, indicate that up to February 1886, in addition to Niitu, three had died in Torres Strait (two of heart disease on Prince of Wales Island and one of fever on Thursday Island) and two on a Darwin lugger pearl fishery (one from measles and one from dysentery). The other men died on Thursday Island from alcohol poisoning.

Early in 1885 the Foreign Ministry came to the conclusion that the situation on Thursday Island could not be allowed to continue. On 12 February it instructed Marks to advise all Japanese employed in the industry to return at once to Japan except where their contracts prevented them from doing so. On 20 March it instructed prefectural governments to give full support to any citizens proposing to go there and if this failed to dissuade them, to refer their contracts to the Ministry. This, however, was only the first step. After the horse had bolted, it was too late to unhang the horse in the Foreign Ministry. Pearson, Low and Company had despatched another group of about sixty or more during 1885.

The events of the next two years did nothing to weaken the view of the Foreign Ministry that contracts for employment in Australia had to be looked at very carefully and that, for Japanese workers, there could be no better place than Japan. Late in 1885 if had notified the prefectural authorities at Kobe of reports that an Englishman was recruiting people from the lower walks of life to be put up in public display as a Japanese exhibition in London. Emigration for such a purpose was not something that the Government would permit. If anyone accepted such employment, the Ministry was to be promptly informed. Similarly, whenever there were a large number of applications for passports in which the stated purpose of the travel was education, commerce or the arts, there was to be careful scrutiny to ensure that this was not a substitute.
Melbourne extended for more than five months, during which time it was visited by the Governor, and if one may believe the advertisements by upwards of 317,000 people. Willard was not averse and by the time it reached Brisbane for its fortnight's season in the Exhibition Building it had also acquired half-a-dozen performing dogs and a small elephant. The Brisbane Courier was much impressed by the 'very charming Japanese lady, who plays a musical instrument in the form of a koto and occasionally with considerable assurance sings in the soft, monotonous minor key common to the singers of the East'. It found these efforts more to its taste than the musical interludes provided by a local band among whose performers there was a very pronounced voice of opinion—partly in the nature of the visiting press. 34

Beneath the surface, however, all was not well. Its arrival in Australia had caused a series of departures from Marks at which he was very critical of the contract. He considered the wages (for example $15 a month for the makers ofDoing one way) far too low in terms of local prices, including the price of foreign luxuries to which members of the company were exposed. 35 This had made the Japanese very discontented. It could also bring down on Japan the hostility of organised labour throughout Australia. Marks also considered that Willard was indifferent towards the health and welfare of his employees. In the Melbourne winter they had threatened desertion unless they were provided with more blankets. (Two of their members had died of consumption after their arrival in Australia. 36

In Japan, Willard's venture appears to have had two consequences. It increased the reserve with which the Foreign Ministry regarded Australia as a suitable place for employment and it provided the basis of a McConnell of Tatsun in Tasmania bearing the kigama inscription, 'لاتش زننا يوشياوуст. This is the domain of Zenzia Golf of the Province of Kagoshima. Zenzia (1773-1852) appears to have been the Reg Vicente of Japan in the early nineteenth century. He went on the main transport industry in 1811 and is said to have established thirty-four branches throughout Japan. He was also an early victim of the anti-137 nationalism. He died in prison where he had been confined when a realistic project for which he was contracting had poisoned the fish. It seems very likely that Zenzia's activities extended as far south as the Philippines. The story of his annexation of Taiwan, however, appears to have originated with William's accouls. 38 My theory is that on their journey from Melbourne to Hobart none of them were routed through Devonport and were shown the petrolyphic on Mery's Bust. 39 At this time many Japanese ascetics were literate. To such an Aboriginal rock carving may well have been the original. 40

On 7 April 1867 a Tokyo daily, the Chūsha Shinbu, published a very unfavourable account of conditions among the Wakayama men at Thursday Island. Although the provost government at Kobe found that it was a garbled version of exaggerated complaints circulated by one of the Pearson-Low men who had returned to Japan more than eighteen months previously the Minister for Foreign Affairs assured on 11 July that he was an opportunity to state a private instruction to the Governor of Wakayama prefecture that whenever someone applied for a passport to go to Thursday Island every effort should be made to discourage him. 41

The Foreign Ministry's apprehensions about Australia had recently been strengthened by the arrival in Tokyo of reports of the murder of four Japanese on 22 February 1867 aboard the lugger, Gannet, off Bass' Island when the crew, a Malay, his wife, with her child, two of the deceased, Kusugah Chikako and Yawasa Takemasa (both from Shimonoseki), were from the sixty-nine recruited by Pearson, Low and Company in 1865. The other two, Akimoto Chūtaro (Shizuoka prefecture) and Kawasaki Kōza (Osaka prefecture), were from the group of similar size provided by the same company in February 1865. The Foreign Ministry, accordingly, in the press release that it issued on the occasion (19 September 1867), drew attention to the fact that all four of the dead men had been recruited by Pearson, Low and Company, and in the following words sought to discourage further emigration.

'It is not likely that they were able to prevail on many of the Japanese already at the island to return home. The proportion who were bound by contract remain to have exceeded 50 per cent. But both for those who had come under contract and those who had come independently, there was little reason to be much influenced by the Foreign Ministry's wishes—particularly as it was not offering to repatriate them at Government expense. They were on the spot and knew better than anyone else whether it was to their financial advantage to stay or to return. We know some of the Pearson-Low men remained at Thursday Island at the end of their engagements. 42

In 1891 only twelve Japanese arrived at Thursday Island. In 1892, and 1893 the figures were 109 and 264 respectively—almost all of them from Wakayama. It is possible that the number of Japanese who have been among the factors that contributed to restoring and expanding this flow.
The first was the devising of local machinery to finance the package plan that the Foreign Ministry had closed the doors on contracts in which this was provided by the Australian employer. The cost of a single passage to Thursday Island for a Japanese labourer at this time was about £7 or £8 (say ¥50). The typical emigrant did not have sufficient security to raise a personal loan of such proportions.

It was found, however, that in return for a loan on their wages, the more substantial earners were prepared to advance the necessary funds in a group of ten or more going jointly from their village, provided that the group accepted joint responsibility for the debt. Writing at the end of 1893, Watanabe claims that most of the 100 Wakayama men at Thursday Island had gone there as members of such groups. This may, indeed, have remained the typical method for Wakayama men to join the pearling industry until the Japanese emigration companies entered the field in about 1897. The amount advanced was usually about equal to ¥100 = £3 and a member. With this they were first required to take out life insurance for the period of

TO DIVERS

SLOW DOWN IN DEEP WATER—CATCHING SHELLS IS FORBIDDEN

This notice was posted in a bond pile by stabley to prevent divers to SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE.

TOO QUICKLY.

This notice was posted earlier in the season when divers had been killed by

NOT HURLED UP SLOWLY ENOUGH.

WAKAYAMA

Where's the shell? (1900)

Two years have passed since you began the task. The pearler is

leaves you on board up deep, but he never...

LEAVES—The feeling up is quite the same of "upscramble"... and say,

where's the task.

Thursday Island, Dec. 27, 1899

John Doolan.

Notice 'To Divers Going Down in Deep Water, Thursday Island, 1899

the loan. This was a prudent precaution on the part of the lender for pearl diving had recently become a dangerous task. At the time of Captain Miller's contract it was not. Preying in Torres Strait was then conducted at depths of five to ten fathoms and was unnecessary for shell at greater depths. The physiology of decompression and the technique of staging were then not understood, but after later research we know that at depths of less than ten fathoms decompression has no ill-effects that at ten fathoms no staging is required if the duration of the dive does not exceed twenty minutes. Likewise in Western Australia, so long as the industry was centred in Coolibah most of the diving there was conducted in relatively shallow water. It was in the 1888-89 season that the centre of activity moved to Broome. The Inspector of Pearl Shell Fisheries in his report for that year noted that much of the shell was obtained at depths of twenty to twenty-five fathoms and that the deep diving had produced a number of deaths. The first recorded death from diver's paralysis of a Japanese employed in the Australian pearl industry was that of a man on Thursday Island in 1890. The death of a Japanese diver there resulted in the death of a second diver.

To recover the collective loans in Wakayama villages. After the payment of the insurance premium the remainder of the loan was sufficient to cover the return fare to Thursday Island (about ¥100) and the purchase of clothing and kit for the journey, and board and accommodation in Kure during embarkation. The loan was to be secured by the Japanese emigration companies and then, as interest, 40 per cent of the combined overseas earnings of all members of the group (including the insurance money of any who had died) after deducting the principal. Although the collective responsibility of the group made the position of the leaders relatively secure, the rate of interest was Watanabe obtained at the time, was enormous. According to our calculations, over three years (the normal period for such agreements) the interest on such employment was available, there had been at least 27 per cent a year compound interest. But to the present, as the principal itself would usually have been repaid in about a year, the return would actually have been about 106 per cent. The leaders' position was not, of course, absolutely secure. For example, in 1893 and 1894 there was a surplus of labour at Thursday Island in the years when the number of crewmen fell by 50 per cent (from £3 to £1.50 a month) and there were more than 100 Japanese (of them, many of them) available. A second factor contributing to the increase in the number of Japanese going to Thursday Island may have been the adoption by the Foreign Ministry of a more favourable attitude to the emigration of Japanese. For example, the Vice-Minister on 11 November 1893 informed me that the Government was willing to receive Japanese immigration to the island provided that they were not entered as labourers.
He moved to Thursday Island the following year. There, it seems, the fighting spirit of the hero of the *Ripple* sometimes reassumed itself. He had been identified with the Christmas festivities in the watch-house and was fined $5 for the next morning for being drunk and disorderly. Although his marriage (to Shime, a Nagasaki woman, in 1885) was the first in the Japanese community to be solemnized in the Bogue Catholic Church, this did not prevent him and his partners in the Carbine syndicate from marking their departure with a donation to the Anglican cathedral building fund that exceeded those of the Governor, the Bishop, and the Government Resident combined.

It was, however, the expenditure of these men back in Japan that influenced Japanese immigration to Australia. At least four of them are still remembered in Wakayama prefecture: Hisamatsu Gorosaburo and Urata Isassan from Shimonoseki, Ebina Toshiichi from Tanami, and Nakamura Yosaburo from Aida. Hisamatsu invested his winnings in mountain farming. He continued to prosper and became known as "the forest king of the Kisan district." His oldest son, an able but also reckless Savage, squandered the inheritance. His father put his money into a hotel for deep-sea fishing. He also rebuilt his home and put a fish store wall around it. The fishing venture failed and everything he had was sold. The house is gone, and only the stone wall remains. Ebina's return to Tanami coincided with the periodic rebuilding of the hall of the local temple. He donated half the cost.

Worldly pleasures, however, were closer to his nature. His fortune went on gambling, drink, and women. Among the latter, Okuma, the beautiful Fukushima geisha whom he married, is still remembered by people who at schoolchildren used to dodge in the street near his house hoping to catch a glimpse of her when she came out.

In 1954 I came across a Japanese, Suzuki Sakuchei, who was working as an assistant teacher of a flourmill at Burnley in Melbourne. He was born in Shimonoseki in 1885 and came to Thursday Island in 1896 shortly before his sixteenth birthday. He volunteered the remark that it was Carbine's wish that formed his own determination to come to Australia. It was he who first gave Ne Isamatsu's name. He had seen him after his return. Suzuki wanted to go to Australia there and then, but his mother made him wait until he had finished school.

Writing at the end of 1895 Watanabe claimed that because of the savings that people (including the Carbine syndicate) were bringing home, there had been a rush to Australia from the prefecture.

"Crying out "No teas," one after the other they would mortgage their houses and their fields and embarks. As Shimonoseki, for example, without the whole..."
The Japanese Club, Thursday Island, 1894
(Reproduced from the Australian)
intention was that these restrictions should be temporary but in fact this proved to be the end of unrestricted immigration to Thursday Island. In August 1938 the Queensland Government adopted the policy of permitting the entry of Japanese "labourers and artisans" only when their employment had in each case received the prior approval of the Queensland Government. Initially the Queensland Government used this power to reject all applications to import Japanese labour from all ports, both Caucasian and Japanese alike, even for keeping the crews of already licensed boats up to strength. The Queensland Government met the situation by making greater use of other coloured peoples, however. These people, however, have never been reluctant to employ any but their own countrymen. This virtual prohibition on the recruitment of Japanese labour appears to have operated for over 6 months, that the Queensland Government, Queensland agreed to accept the Japanese population in 1938 (244) as well as up to which replacements could be made—provided that on more than twenty-five
Although at the elections in May a conservative government had achieved office, there was no reversal of policy on this issue. The Department of External Affairs used the Royal Commission's resolution as an opportunity to ingrate the West Australian Pearlers Association into its position, and a meeting was arranged with the representatives of the Association on 11 May. The meeting proved fruitful, and the Association offered to send a representative to the Commission for a personal interview. This was agreed to, and the Association was subsequently invited to attend the hearings in Sydney.

The Commission heard evidence from the Association on 11 May, and its representatives were also granted an interview with the Minister for External Affairs on 16 May. The Association expressed its satisfaction with the Commission's approach and its willingness to cooperate in any way necessary to achieve a fair and effective solution to the pearling industry's problems.

The Commission's report was released on 29 August, and it recommended the establishment of a Commonwealth Pearling Industry Board to regulate the industry. The Board was to be composed of representatives from the pearling industry, the Commonwealth government, and the States, and it was to have the power to make regulations for the management of the industry.

The report was well received, and the pearling industry was generally satisfied with the recommendations. However, there were some criticisms of the report, particularly regarding the role of the Commonwealth government in the management of the industry. The Commission's recommendations were eventually implemented, and the Commonwealth Pearling Industry Board was established in 1924.

The establishment of the Board marked a significant step forward in the regulation of the pearling industry. It provided a framework for the industry to operate within, and it helped to ensure that the industry was managed in a fair and effective manner. The Board remained in operation until 1939, when it was dissolved due to the outbreak of World War II. During its existence, the Board played a crucial role in the development of the pearling industry in Australia.
pump handle or haul up an anchor. There were five or six of these to every diver and their wages were much less than a diver's. It was from among these that divers were recruited. If the volunteer showed the necessary potential he was encouraged and given opportunities to learn as a try-diver. It usually took three years of this to turn him into an efficient diver who could be sent out on his own. From the law of averages one might infer that none, or perhaps two, of the ten English deep-sea divers brought out in 1812 would have had this innate quality of perception. But in less than eighteen months three of them had died of paralysis. Most of the rest remained long enough to enable such theories to be verified.

It appears that many of the Wakanaya men who went to Thursday Island and Broome were younger sons. According to Japanese custom, all property was inherited by the eldest son. Today in Okinawa one is told before World War II the eldest son was only five or younger sons to earn enough money to set up a house of his own was to spend a few years at Thursday Island. I heard the same when I visited Okinawa in 1974. When Yamamoto Kobusita, aged seventeen in 1918 he had two choices. He could stay at school and prepare for the entrance examination for the Teachers Training College. If successful he would five years later become a teacher at the Okinawa Primary School with a meagre wage of ¥17. Alternatively, he could leave school immediately and go to Thursday Island. There his starting wage as a crewman would be ¥25. As soon as he became a tender, it would be 40 or 45 yen. If, eventually, he became a tender in charge of a lugger, he would get six times that amount. He chose Thursday Island. Wages there continued to be low throughout the period. In 1936 the monthly salary of the master (aged fifty) at Suwari was ¥70—which is what his former pupil (who earned twenty) was getting at Thursday Island as a tender.

Some went to Australia to free the family property of debt. Hamauchi Umajo and his brother went to Thursday Island from Miyazaki in 1927 in order to pay off a debt of ¥20,000 contracted by their father in 1913. It took them twenty years, each of these contributing ¥1000 each year.

These men did not come as settlers. Their object was to earn the necessary sum quickly as they could in order to return home and pursue their traditional occupations of fishermen or farmers. To this end they were prepared to take risks. In their occupations at home death was no stranger to them. Furthermore the spirit of "nothing ventured, nothing gained" was part of the culture of the Okinawan ethnic group from whom they came. Thus, to the local Japanese, they appeared "very keen to make money." The Australian concept of the Japanese diver is summed up in John Douglas's reference to the deaths from paralysis of Japanese divers in his report for 1904-05.

Such is the craving for "more shell" that the last one goes by possession of a diver's body. The evidence of this is to be found in the reports of the deaths of one Watanabe, an old and experienced diver. His last remark was: "I won't be going into the water this time, and I could have got plenty of shell. I think the passion to the end was stronger in death." The Royal Navy's staging tables were published in 1917 and appear to have been adopted in Australia in about 1912. These enabled the diver to work in deep water for relatively long periods for example for twenty minutes at twenty-five fathoms. Under the procedures in use before this, the temptation to recklessness on the part of the diver was considerable. The old theory was to make each "dive" very short for example at twenty-five fathoms, five minutes and to take a long time over descending as well as ascending. This was time consuming and, as a result, the diver was sometimes unable to spend more than half an hour on the bottom looking for shell during the whole day. Nine descents in a day was considered an achievement. At Frank Summers, an experienced diver, reported at the Mackay Commission: "A man will see a few shells within a yard or two of him and he says, 'I will get them before I go up.' This is easy enough to understand. Not only was a diver's pay proportionate to the amount of shell he raised, but in addition there would always have been the feeling that the shell one left behind concealed the pearl of a lifetime. An additional element that encouraged foolhardiness was the knowledge that the Japanese Summers was lucky enough to escape with minor symptoms of the 'blues.' A number of others were not so fortunate. The death-rate among the Caucasian divers in Torres Strait in 1893 was never exceeded by the Japanese. 11 Similarly, nothing could have been more reckless than the behaviour of Webley, the most successful of the English divers, on the day of his death in Western Australia in 1912. He was repeatedly coming straight to the surface after dives of an hour's duration in fifteen fathoms. 12 The death of his comrade, Jenky, the following year appears to have occurred under similar circumstances. 13 Unfortunately very few divers in the industry, Japanese or Caucasian, appear ever to have taken the staging tables seriously. In 1978 at Miyazaki I had the good fortune to meet seven men who had been divers or tenders at Thursday Island in the 1920s and 1930s. None of them had ever used staging tables, but worked entirely according to his own personal judgement and experience. 14

If there was little to choose between the Japanese and Caucasian divers in their foolhardiness, the former appear to have brought much greater energy and endurance to the task. They would commence at dawn and continue until dusk. They might make fifty dives a day. Sometimes they would be at sea for four months on end. In the words of one of the English divers, this was "skull cracking work." It would have been worse were it not for the fact that some individuals were used to. At Dover he would have been making four or five dives a day and would have slept at home. 15

Shibukawa Ryoitaro, the famous contemporary Japanese novelist, has addressed himself to the task of explaining the superiority of the Japanese diver. From his discussions with men at Okinawa, Shibukawa prefaced his divers were at Thursday Island and Broome before the War, he considers that the competitive spirit that existed among the Japanese divers was an important factor. In his recent book, Shibukawa Kasumi (A Party at Thursday Island) he puts the following words into the mouth of "Myzaki," a sometime champion diver:

"When I was a boy I was very fond of diving, and what mattered was just to beat your own record of the day and the toke of the shell. When you worked on the sea you thought of nothing else except how you had worked. How many you could catch. We were from Wakanaya prefecture and the same from he worked like demons."

I would agree with Shibukawa on this point. Interestingly enough, although it is a point that has been overlooked by later observers, it was noted by Douglas in 1894 in the context of the succession of fatalities that followed the discovery of shell in the Daintree area the previous year: "...the eager desire to make a good score, and in the rivalry between competing divers...that risks were mainly encountered and precautions disregarded." 16

Shibukawa also makes the observation that the prowess of the Japanese in the water was nothing new. It had surprised the Chinese from very early times. The Gushi Wajin Den compiled in China in the third century records how the Japanese gathered fish and shell under water and how, when engaged in this activity, they tattooed their faces and bodies to scare away large predators. 17

Iwasaki in his field research in Wakanaya prefecture in 1916 stressed the value of improvements to local property that had been financed from overseas earnings. In particular he noted how the cluster of poor and middle-class buildings built for protection against the wind, which had constituted Shiranomatski had been replaced by imposing tiled houses surrounded by high stone walls. He also noted that foreign clothing, foreign habits (for example, penmanship) and
foreign words (like the Australian 'tucker') had come into daily use. Similarly when Father Carr, an Australian priest, was posted to that district as a missionary in the early 1860s he was surprised to find that the people were gross bread eaters and that some of them put milk in their tea. At that time the last was unusual outside the big cities. The second remains unusual today anywhere else in Japan. Much of this must have been the result of the Australian connection. In that district (Nishinotóro-gumi) emigration to Australia began before emigration to North America. As early as 1840 the number of menfolk absent in Australia and the Aotadura Sea (535) was almost equal to the number absent in the United States (666). 43

An early Japanese grave at Thursday Island—Clara Risako and Chino Matsumura. Thursday Island (died 19 April 1888 and 25 July 1899)

A cause was paid for this prosperity. In the Japanese cemetery at Broome there are 788 tombstones still standing. On these, 1,002 names are still legible. In the case of 410, the person's age is given. The distribution of the ages is significant: aged 20-29, 47.1 per cent; aged 30-39, 57.5 per cent; aged 40-49, 10.7 per cent; aged 50 and over, 5.6 per cent. Under 20 years, 5.3 per cent; aged 50-59, 2.9 per cent. The pattern is the same with the 3,982 Japanese tombstones still standing at Thursday Island. On 130 of these the ages are given. The distribution is: aged 20-29, 52.0 per cent; aged 30-39, 28.6 per cent; aged 40-49, 7.3 per cent; aged 50-59, 5.3 per cent; aged 60-69, 4.6 per cent; aged 60 and over, 6 per cent. 44 We know from the evidence tendered to the Bundnuk Commission that, at Thursday Island during 1911, of the 172 Japanese holding diving licences 15 (8.7 per cent) died either from paratyphus or in the diving suit. Two years later there were fourteen such deaths among the Japanese at Broome. 45 The age distribution of the tombstones that we have given suggests that a large proportion of the deaths at both places continued to be of this nature. The illegibility of the dead men's dependants to receive compensation under the State workers' compensation act continued throughout the history of the industry. In Queensland a Japanese who was injured was entitled to the same compensation as other workers but, in the case of death, compensation was payable only to dependants resident in Australia. 46 In Western Australia the Workers Compensation Act was deliberately drafted to exclude compensation either for death or injury suffered by indentured labour in that industry. The Western Australian Government sought to justify this policy as follows:

The inconvenience of indented labour would cause a heavy burden on the Western Industry which burden was not warranted when the number of deaths of these men was taken into account and compared with the benefits of the Workers Compensation Act. 47

Both in the negotiations with Sir John Leatham's good-will mission in Tokyo in 1934 and in the trade treaty negotiations with Sir Henry Gullett in Canberra in 1935 the Japanese Government sought, unsuccessfully, to secure compensation for injury or death equal to that given to Australian workers.

The names on the graves do not, of course, give the complete death roll. In the cemeteries the registers have been lost. Some of the tombstones have been broken or have otherwise become illegible. Often there was more than one wooden post with the same name painted on it and these did not survive the ravages of time. Although there is monument bearing the names of the Japanese who perished in the three great cyclones in Western Australia—28 April 1948 (thirty-four) and 26 and 27 March 1952 (thirty-six), of whom seventeen were from the same town, Taikomitsu in Wakayama prefecture—the name for the sixty-six Japanese who perished near Cape McIvor in the Queensland Cyclone of 3 and 4 March 1899. There were other cemeteries. For example, Kyskara Shinto has recently established that, over the years 1900 to 1913, seventeen Japanese divers were buried at Darley Island. 48 There may also be many like Sato's of Yokohama who according to the Register of Deaths for the Broome district died of paratyphus on 16 November 1897 and was buried at Whistle's Creek, Admiral Bay, reining close to where they died, far from human habitation.

Although a Medical Officer was appointed at Thursday Island in 1886 a year after Mark's' disease continued to take its toll, so it had among Captain Millin's original 'inmates'. For example, two Japanese died there of measles in 1894 and, of the forty-six in the peeling beasts who died in the 1910-11 dysentery epidemic, twenty-six were Japanese. 49 Bedlam remained a serious problem until well into the 1920s. In 1924, among the 414 Japanese engaged on the huggers at Forster Strait, forty-four were suffering from it. 50 One of the difficulties in combating it was the Japanese attachment to unpolished rice. In 1925, a former head of the Queensland Health Commission took advantage of a visit to Tokyo to seek the advice of Japanese nutritional experts on amending the ration scale to replace the proportion of the rice with other readily available Japanese foodstuffs. 51 This early example of Australian-Japanese scientific cooperation appears to have been very successful—by 1932 the total among all races suffering from beriberi had fallen to six. 52

Some of the deaths were homicide. The Gumarek was not the last hagger whose decks ran with blood. On 30 October 1899 a diver, Andö Taiji, of Ottó prefecture, was murdered by Petronela Cruz aboard the brigantine, Ethel, in Western Australia. 53 In May 1893 Yamazaki Kusunokuma and Hayakawa Susumu (both from Shimonoseki) were murdered on the Minami when four Aborigines armed with tomahawks bade her in search of painter as she lay at anchor.

Queensland Heritage Page Nineteen
near Cape Melville. They did not disavow any. A party of police was sent to investigate and, in the words of the Sub-Inspector who commanded it, "we discovered the tribe of blacks that committed the murder and punished them accordingly." 14

In his dispatch to Tokyo on the subject, as the Vice-Minister noted to embarrass the Queensland Government by asking for further details and gave his own interpretation of the Sub-Inspector's report:

The mode of dealing with these people is to follow them up armed with muskets and shoot them at once, otherwise they escape to the coast and it is very difficult to capture them alive or even to identify them, as a particular one. So far as the report gave the wrong story to the members. They cannot be caught, and tried like ordinary criminals."

Better known are the attacks on the Japanese crews of Australian lugger in the Northern Territory. Early in 1923 Captain W. C. Edwards sent two of his fishing crews to Caledon Bay, where the Japanese and two Australian crews were pitted against each other in the dinghies to Groote Eylandt, about 136 km. distance. On 20 July 1931 Nagata and another Japanese from Captain Clark's lugger, Orulo, were murdered at Port Keats (Tracy Bay). In 1932 it was Caledon Bay once again. The crews of V. R. Keppel's lugger, Matix Oza and Ral, were attacked by the Balamarkis tribe while curing trepang. They were very serious and had to be landed there. The tribe already had twenty-one known murders to its credit and, largely for this reason, the area had been gazetted an Aboriginal reserve into which entry was prohibited without a license. Five of the six Japanese, Kiinendu Tama, Jomuro, Shohataki and Higashi were killed. There was some evidence that they may have provoked the attack by beating some of the tribesmen, who were provisioning labourers at the Japanese, Kiin, escaped and were arrested. With an Aboriginal member of the crew went 185 miles to the mission at Mittagong. 20

Kawano Yozoku of Kincsokn prefecture and Kenmato Sawaki of Nagashima prefecture died of heart wounds in the battle between the Japanese and the Timorese at Brome in December 1920. 21 Japanese were involved in a number of serious incidents with other races in the pearl-fishing areas with Malay and Dutch in Darwin (December 1895), 22 Brome (December 1897), 23 Thursday Island (May 1912) and Port Darwin (September 1912), 24 with Timorese at Brome (December 1914) 25 and with Papuans at Bush Island (September 1918).

That it was only in the 1920s that these incidents were of any significance for the skill and courage of the very small police detachments in these outlying districts and the authority and respect of the leaders of each racial group. The cause of these outbreaks have yet to be studied. The Timorese, the Dutch and the Malays, had until the 1920s not given the following explanation of its origin.

Practically all the pearl luggers were in Brome, being the lay-up season. The origin of the conflict has not yet been thoroughly studied, but it is fairly certain that a series of interchanges with the Japanese had given rise to the Timorese people. The situation in the flying boats is still the same, by studying a series of the records of the court for a certain Timorese who committed the death of a police officer during the working season. 26

Elaborating on the ill-treatment received by the Timorese while at sea, he remarked that they "cannot do the account of work at the average rate as the white men who frequently get knocked about." Gregory had a Japanese partner and, among the Japanese, was the last man one could call anti-Japanese. His explanation may eventually be found to be a reasonable hypothesis to account for the racial clashes in the pearl-fishing sector of the industry. They could easily settle the score was always a threat, where there were opportunities for the help of their competitors. - to attack an enemy when he was temporarily separated from his fellows. This explanation appears to fit the 1912 clash between Malays and Japanese at Thursday Island, which immediately followed the killing of a Malay, Louis Bonacionales, by a Japanese aboard the lugger, Freya. 27

Little has been discovered about the clash between the Japanese and the Papuans in September 1918. 28 Although unconnected with the particular incident, there are scattered pieces of evidence of ill-treatment of Papuan members of lugger crews. In 1905 when three Japanese were charged with the murder of a Papuan, Burns and Company's lugger. Kerkko, near Booby Island, a Queensland justice accepted the arguments of the defence counsel that the Papuan had been taken by a shark. There were, however, people living in Wakayama prefecture who believe that he was taken to death for stealing the sacred fish for the next day's meal. 29

In November 1916 a party at Townsville found Haraguchi Muramatsu, a member of the staff of the newspaper. But they abandoned the trepang lugger Kajima in waters off the Barrier Reef. Old accounts in Wakayama prefecture also say that when Burns and Company's lugger, Rokkens, was wrecked on the Barrier Reef on 4 April 1921, the two Japanese members of the crew made off in the only dinghy leaving two Papuan members to drown. 30

So far, as evidence of the price paid by the Japanese for whatever gains they won from their employment in the industry, we have considered only death. There were, however, hardships which, though they did not entail death, were nevertheless grievous enough.

The Banford Commission saw the diver who survived likely to become practically a physical wreck—a burden upon his friends or upon the community. This was the fate that eventually overtook Furuta Ootani. In 1914, at the age of twenty, he performed a memorable feat of courage and endurance. When the lugger, Vix, capsized and sank near Trespassers Island 31 and another member of the crew managed to tread water until the current deposited them after eight hours on an uninhabited island. They survived by eating native plants and were rescued by a light vessel after a week. The community in the industry and became a diver. He suffered paralysis twice. 32 He died in his home village, Oshima, in 1978, an old man much respected for his kindness and cheerfulness. Although both legs were permanently affected, he endeavoured to make himself useful to the end by helping his son's widow with the cooking. 33

Among the hardships suffered by the Japanese workers, exploitation and ill-treatment by their Australian employers were, as we have seen, often alluded to the days of the former Labour contract. These are some indications that, at least in the years immediately following this did not entirely die out.

For example, from a letter from Nomura to the Shipping Master at Thursday Island dated 9 April 1892 it appears that his employer was rather like Drury's Schip in Kipling's The Impression of Krishna Mahavir. In the letter Nomura complained that he had forced him to contribute £2 for which he had received no receipt for a Sydney sweepstakes and £5 for a raffle of a billiard table that had not taken place. 34

In 1891 the Crown Law authorities in Western Australia took a serious view of the complaints of Yuzuhara Chou and Rato Sadatsuda, who had been reputed at Singapore by the Australian pearling firm James Clark and Company. In July 1890. At Brome the following month these men were taken to court by Clark's manager, Captain Cochrane, and sentenced to twelve weeks' imprisonment under the Merchant Shipping Act for refusing duty. At the end of their sentence they began to return to the lugger and were again charged with refusing duty and sentenced to imprisonment. This was duly reported at the end of their sentence without comment. At the finish of these trials (at Derby on 18 June 1891) they complained of ill-treatment by their employers and, on the advice of the Resident Magistrate, put their grievances in writing. They claimed that they originally refused duty because the reasons were insufficient and...
they were then string up by the thumbs, with their ears barely touching the ground, for four days. In his written report the Resident Magistrate commented that the fact that the two men preferred criminal complaint to working and were quite and hard-working as employer and employee, indicated a want of sensitivity and humanity in their actions. The Crown Solicitor urged that the men should be released.

"It seems to me a most extraordinary way of doing justice between employer and employee and if the magistrates will liberate the four men, I shall do the next judge that is in the same position a great service. I hope it is true that they have practically been punished this night for the same offence. If..."

On 17 February 1905 the Japanese Consul in Townsville addressed the following complaint to the Western Australian Colonial Secretary:

"I have the honour to address you respecting the Japanese subject, Mr. Nakama, a resident of the town of Rockhampton, Queensland. I have been informed by several reputable persons in Rockhampton that the said Mr. Nakama has been arrested for the theft of a horse. I am also informed that the said Mr. Nakama had been detained for some time in Rockhampton and that he is now in police custody. I beg to state that the said Mr. Nakama is a respectable citizen and that he has always been in good standing with the police. I am therefore of the opinion that he is not guilty of the theft for which he has been arrested and that he is entitled to the protection of the law. I have therefore the honour to recommend his release on bail and to request that you will take such steps as may be necessary to effect his release.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

In as far as the Consul gave only one example in support of these allegations, one suspects that much of the information that he had received was more rumour and gossip and that it was therefore exaggerated and concluded so that it is not possible to be sure that this is not the case. However, the report of the Resident Magistrate at Rockhampton on the case is that the summons, Shihou v. Dennis, indicates an appalling situation at Rockhampton, where an employer with almost unbelievable efficiency, in defiance of a court order, has had difficulty in manipulating the Sub-Collector of Customs and a Justice of the Peace to deprive a Japanese employee of his wages.

On 28 November 1904 Frank Dennis, the owner of the bigger, Swallow (then at anchor at Cooktown), was served with a summons to appear at Rockhampton Court House (next 12km) to answer a claim brought by the Japanese resident, Nakama, for $50 due to him as a diver on the vessel. The claim was based on an incident at Rockhampton where, with two others, he had been working on the construction of the Rockhampton Jetty. The accused, Nakama, stated that on 20 November his employers, Dennis and his partner, deserted him because he had got wind of this. Such action by Dennis and his partner was illegal under Section 21 of the Merchant Shipping Act which required that when a term is fixed to make a complaint to a Justice of the Peace the Master of the vessel should permit him to go aboard.

The court at Rockhampton on 30 November heard Nakama’s claim and admitted several counter-claims by Dennis and disposed of the case by awarding Nakama $25 10s for the $30 he claimed. They also awarded Dennis $8 6s 6d costs. Dennis was ordered to pay the $25 10s within seven days.

On 7 December Dennis took Nakama to the Customs House at Cooktown to receive the $25 10s due. On arrival there, although the terms of the order of 30 November were that the money be paid into court at Rockhampton, Dennis handed the cheque to the Sub-Collector (F. Z. Brown) and himself presented counter-claims additional to those that he had presented to the court on 30 November. Brown, however, held the counter-claims and admitted them to the extent of $5 10s 6d. Thus, instead of coming out the Customs House with $25 10s, Nakama left it £3 6s in debt. In view of Section 1745 of the Merchant Shipping Act, such officers are empowered to adjudicate wages disputes only with the written consent of both parties. Brown’s action was perfectly legal.

That night Nakama once more walked 25 km to try and find out from his solicitor what was going on. The following day his son had arrived back at Cooktown, as he had been arrested, taken before a Consular Court in Jepson, and sentenced to one month’s imprisonment for his desertion on 29 October.

A protest drafted by Nakama’s solicitor was immediately telegraphed to the authorities in Perth. A fortnight later, on 22 December, when Nakama’s sentence had still nineteen days to run, the Minister for Justice called for a report. On 29 December, seven weeks after Nakama had completed his sentence, the report was presented. On 23 March, the Consul was informed that Shihou Nakama’s detention in gaol was illegal as suggested by the Resident Magistrate. Since he had his proper remedy at law which he could not take, Nakama did, however, get some satisfaction. It seems that he eventually received his $25 10s 6d in view of the fact that Dennis had not paid into court as ordered, a warrant of distraint was issued for the seizure and sale of his schooner, Dalah.

Some of the hardships were self-inflicted. By means of all the money earned was remitted home to Okinawa, where he went to Bronco in 1920 and whose experiences a father continued after World War II, is that only two wives and senders were able to save money and remit it home. There is fairly general agreement that gambling was a great problem. For example, Shikawa Shimpo of Mounts (whose father recruited labour for Rockhampton) has also been mentioned as having come from the village lost their money in this fashion. Conversely some, like Chon of Talji, made gambling their occupation and, by the look of the houses, they built on their return to Japan, did not get out of it. Another mentioned gambler, Yakuza Tsuru, of Kuremoto did not return. He died at Thursday Island in the dysentery epidemic in 1914. The quality of his grave—one of the best preserved in the cemetery—attests the extent of his earnings. In 1914 one Miyada appears to have come to Bronco solely for the purpose of baking his companion’s of their earnings at the Christmas lay-up. To enter Australia at this, of course, necessary for him to sign on as a member of a tugger’s crew. Thus he did on 19 December. He was so restless about that on 22 December his master discharged him and made arrangements for his repatriation on the next ship. By the time the ship sailed (10 January), Miyada had already remitted to Japan winnings amounting to $11000.

Another cause of hardship was drink. Some of the Japanese would have spent a fair amount of their pay on this. Referring to the Japanese in the Northern Territory, Somers writes that they are of them, at any rate—likely in maintaining liquor freely. He was fair enough also to point out that this is a habit well represented among the other races. Life on the tugs did not certainly generate a thirst and there would be little other entertainment available at lay-up time. Sustained evidence does survive of..."
Grave of Yagura Tsurichi, Thursday Island

Heavy drinking. For example, as we have already noted, one of the original group recruited by Capt. Miller, died of alcoholic poisoning after two years at Thursday Island. In 1936 at Bromo in 1936 the head of the Nakanishi and subsequent sole of Nakashima took place in the course of a child's birthday party when all the adults were under the influence of liquor. Similarly, at Bromo in February 1933 it was at a party on the foreshore after several hours of hard drinking that Nishimura was stabbed to death in the course of a dispute over how to sing a song.

Historical research, of its very nature, has to rely chiefly on written records. These tend to record misfortunes—the deaths, the crimes and the disputes. The positive side of life is less documented. Many Japanese found that unemployment by Australian porters suited their needs better than life in Japan. This is demonstrated by the large number of men who re-engaged when their contracts expired and who, after returning to Japan for a break, signed up again. It is also demonstrated by the fact that many labourers were employed on the railways, where they were less likely to work on a long-term basis. Men from Thursday Island that one meets in Wakayama prefecture today look back with considerable pleasure on the years spent there. There appears to be much more to this than the houses and parcels of land purchased with the proceeds. Despite the numerous strikes for higher wages (the Japanese assimilated this element of Australian culture very rapidly and effectively), there seem often to have been strong ties of affection between the Japanese employee and the Australian employer. At Santun in 1935 Kosaka Seichi, speaking in warm terms of the kindness he received from the Jardine family for whom he had worked in Torres Strait before World War II, similarly Ogawa records how Hara Shigeharu, who was employed by Burns Philp and Company at Thursday Island in 1901, told him that the local manager and his wife treated him like one of their own children. There was often mutual respect. When one speaks to former porters and former drivers it is interesting to observe that when each speaks for a word to describe the other race they often come up with 'honest'.

Endnotes

1. Northern Australia Development Committee, Price Shell Baked-Cake and Tobacco Industry of Northern Australia (Melbourne, 1940), p. 82.


5. A.A. MP02 255 72 123.

6. A translation of the submission as given in John B. Black, Young Japanese and Trade in the Australian Islands ... (London, 1898), pp. 461-17.


8. See below, A. Peterson, 18 January 1915 [Australian Archives (hereafter cited as A.A.) A1 72310].


12. Police Magistrates, Report to Colonial Secretary, 18 February 1913 (Queensland State Archives [hereafter cited as Q.S.A.] CPS 1330). The identity remains to be firmed. Note that it is cited on 1 July 1897 (Q.S.A. M 11755).


the Queensland Pearl Fishing Company. In conversation with fellow pearl growers, he heard stories of a wealth worth about $1000 in $1000 cash before land and shares. The Queen pearl trade was then at its height. The Queen pearl trade was then at its height.


18. As for make up the 14.


26. Japan Census, 1 May 1894, the author no evidence to 10, Wilson of the case for the information.

27. For the making of the local food traditions see: H. T. S. J. N. M. 3: 4.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G163). At N. G. J. B. A., p. 446.


31. As for make up the 14.


34. Viceroy, Governor, Kamagawa Prefecture, 21 October 1894, N. G. J. B. A., p. 446.


38. The material for this section was taken from the State Records of Japan.


43. As for make up the 14.


87. In a report as indicated in the "Announcements" column of the metropolitan press we saw:
Sydney 26 April 1949
Melbourne 26 July 1949
Nairobi 13 January 1949
Adelaide 31 July 1949

88. A brief letter to the editor - 23 April 1949: "The prices of foodstuffs have increased considerably.
89. "Newspaper reports indicate that the situation is serious." - 30 July 1949.
90. "Local reports suggest that the situation is improving." - 24 September 1949.

93. "Teacher's report dated 30 August 1949." - The report was submitted by Mr. W.R. Robinson to the Secretary of Education.

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93. "Teacher's report dated 30 August 1949." - The report was submitted by Mr. W.R. Robinson to the Secretary of Education.
the Catholic press was silent. She was buried at the Oura Church in 15 December 1610, age 36. It is said that the only Japanese Catholic who was present at her burial was the Governor of Kagoshima, Ishii Tadamasa.


As for endnote 54. Particulars are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Date of first association with the Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hino</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Watanabe Co (Hina)</td>
<td>1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ippei</td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Inamori &amp; Co</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inoue</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Inoue &amp; Co</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakane</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Nakane &amp; Co</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakamura</td>
<td>1907</td>
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Page Twenty six Queensland Heritage
218. Q.S.A. TRE 39

219. It would appear that the Keeper Suckling was not using the word "extraordinary" to mean "unusual" but rather "unusual." As Thursday Island was engaged in a major operation from 11th to 18th of July, and again 27th to 31st of July, the latter being the main occasion, the incident was not noted.

220. Q.S.A. A 645 (2) 35640.

221. Actually Suckling was the chief officer's name. His surname was Hugel.

222. J.M.A. A 645 (2) 35640.

223. Interview with R. Sussman and O. Yoshida at Townsville, 26th December 1971.


228. Nagumo, p. 428.


The Japanese in the Australian pearling industry