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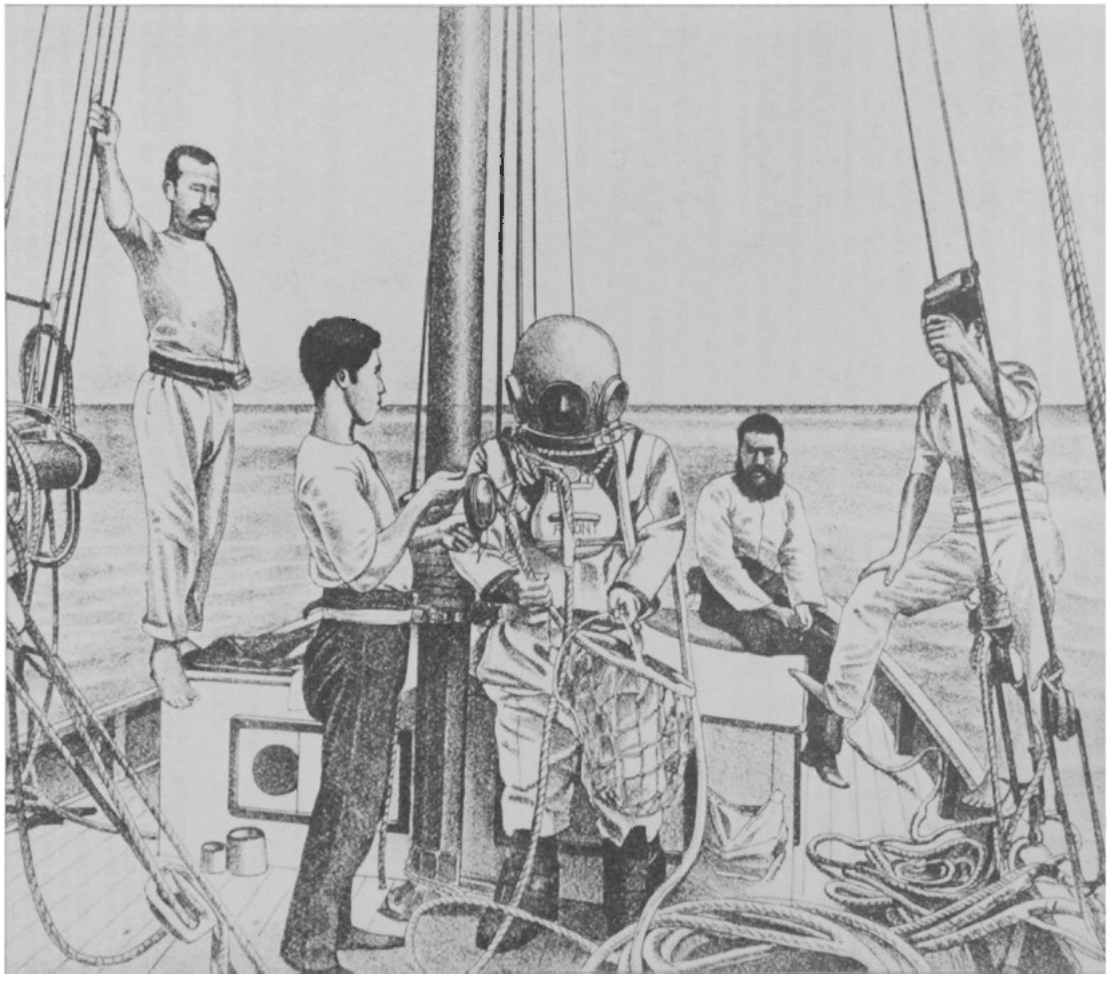

A diver and crew, Thursday Island, 1894
(Reproduced from K. Watanabe, *Gōshū Tanken Hōkokusho*, 1894)

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 pearl-shell in Australian waters commenced) until the early 1960s when the plastic button finally ousted it from the market. Taking mother-of-pearl, trochus, and trepang as a single industry, the value of its production in Australia in any year from the 1890s onwards was rarely lower than £250 000 and sometimes exceeded £500 000.[1] 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*[2] in 1901 these could be introduced in limited numbers by pearlers who were prepared to enter into a substantial bond with the Commonwealth Government, which was forfeited if the indentured man absconded.

Japanese began to appear among the luggers' crews in the late 1870s. From early in 1893 they were the largest national group employed in the industry at Thursday Island.[3] In 1908 they achieved the same predominance at Broome. In 1913 when the industry reached its peak, there were 1166 Japanese 'indents' at Broome and 574 at Thursday Island.[4] When the war broke out in 1941 the Australian pearling industry had about 500 indentured Japanese in its employment.[5]

Thursday Island, 1894
(Reproduced from Watanabe)

So far as is known, the first Japanese to be employed in the Australian pearling industry was Nonami Kojiro of Hirose 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 23 May of that year authorised the issue of passports to citizens wishing to go overseas for the purpose of study or commerce.[6] The scope of this exemption 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.[7] 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 unfavourable conditions. It was after several cases had come before the Melbourne police courts in which Japanese seamen, engaged as a result of such subterfuges, instituted criminal proceedings against their captains for various acts of ill-treatment[8], that the Japanese Government on 4 November 1879 appointed an Honorary Consul, Alexander Marks in that city.[9] This was one of the earliest Japanese consulates in the British Empire, preceded only by Hong Kong (1873), London (1876), and Singapore (April 1879).[10]

Nonami joined a British merchantman at Yokohama in this fashion and after a couple of years on the world's sea lanes took his discharge at Sydney. There in 1876, aged about 25, he signed on as a crewman on a Torres Strait pearling lugger.[11] It was just at this time that the first buildings were being erected at Thursday Island in preparation for the transfer of the port facilities and administrative centre from Somerset at the tip of Cape York Peninsula the following year.

Initially, pearling 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 seven or eight fathoms could be worked by this method. In about 1874 diving suits were introduced to Torres Strait.[12] This greatly enlarged the pearling area and called 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 Rotumah and the Loyalty Islands. By the time of Nonami's arrival several Malays and Filipinos were also being employed in this role.

Nonami 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 pearlers began to recruit Japanese overseas. First, they appear to have tapped the supply of discharged Japanese seamen in Hong Kong. The agents of Burns Philp and Company there, Gibb, Livingstone and Company, appear to have used boarding-house keepers as 'crimps' to deliver impoverished Japanese sailors to them.[13] In 1883 there were about fifteen or sixteen Japanese recruited in Hong Kong to work as pumpers on the Thursday Island luggers on eighteen-month contracts.[14] Later in that year the Torres Strait pearlers began to recruit in Japan itself when at Yokohama on 10 October Captain J. A. Miller[15] engaged thirty-seven Japanese (six divers, six tenders, twenty-four pumpers and an interpreter—all on two-year contracts).

The Miller contracts are 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 refusals were partly a reflection of their experience in 1868 and

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1869 when a number of labourers were beguiled to Hawaii, Guam, and California and left stranded there by unscrupulous foreigners, under 'contracts' which they did not carry out.[16] They also stemmed from Japan's conscious policy of adopting 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 were tantamount to slavery.[17]

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 at Yokohama. The latter wrote to the Foreign Ministry for guidance, inquiring whether 'the evil custom of slavery obtains in those regions and whether other unexpected misfortunes may befall Japanese who might go there'.[18] 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 permission. It justified its decision in the following terms:

> 'This contract with foreigners to work overseas in pearling is essentially different from a contract in which labourers go abroad to do ordinary menial tasks for foreigners. Only a small number will be employed and they are all skilled divers. Furthermore, if specific agreements are made as indicated in the documents tendered, there need be no fear that the employees may become like slaves'.[19]

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

In their contracts, the Australian pearlers were accustomed to the provisions required by the Singapore Government to safeguard the well-being 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 not confined to cases where the contract extended for its full term; but extended to cases where the employee was repatriated earlier on medical grounds.[20]

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 Sanjirō, sent home very disparaging remarks about some of the pumpers:

> 'In the early stages they were in dire straits. Among them were people who had never been in a boat in their lives. Seventy per cent were seasick. When aboard, their limbs ceased to answer. If there were any waves at all, they collapsed in the morning and remained in this condition all day. It was exactly as if we were taking the sick to sea . . .'.[21]

He notes, however, that within a few months, even these had for the most part settled down satisfactorily. Indeed, the performance of these men was such that Australian pearlers continued to seek labour in Japan. On 1 June 1885 Streeter and Company, the largest of the Western Australian pearlers, recruited at Yokohama six divers and an interpreter on contracts approved by the Foreign Ministry and the prefectural government.[22] The terms of these contracts were similar to the Miller contracts. And unbeknown to the Foreign Ministry another sixty-nine men had been recruited in Japan for Australian pearlers during 1884 by Fearon, Low and Company, a British firm in Kobe.[23] Of these, thirty came from Wakayama prefecture. These 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.[24] They also established what was to be a permanent characteristic of Japanese emigration to Australia—the preeminent position of Wakayama prefecture. The tombstones at Thursday Island and Broome provide stark evidence of this. Of the 930 cases where the inscription gives, as well as the name, the place of birth, 529 (57 per cent) are from Wakayama.[25]

Ogawa Taira, a local historian, has recently established that of these thirty men from Wakayama under contract to Fearon, Low and Company in 1884, at least twenty-five came from three villages at the southern tip of the prefecture—Shionomisaki (seventeen), Kushimoto (seven), Tanami (one).[26] There is a local oral tradition that links the departure of these men for Australia with Joseph Dick, one of a group of Scotsmen sent out to Japan to train Japanese lighthouse keepers. The lighthouse at Kashinosaki, about eight kilometres from Kushimoto, was built under the supervision of the British engineer, R. H. Brunton, in 1870.[27] Dick served in a number of Japanese lighthouses during the period 1869–79. It is not known how long he was at Kashinosaki, 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 compradores, Langfeldt's.[28] He seems to have returned to Kashinosaki at this time to try to induce some of his former servants to set up house for him in Kobe. 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 pearling contracts with Fearon, Low and Company. It is reasonable to suppose that either 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 abalone and took with them the chisels they used when diving for abalone at home.[29] Ever afterwards the overwhelming proportion of the emigrants from Wakayama prefecture to Australia continued to come from this part of the prefecture the eighty kilometre stretch from Shingū to Susami of the very narrow strip of plain between the sea and the mountains. Unless stated to the contrary, all of the town and village names appearing in this article are situated there. The prefecture is hilly even by Japanese standards—only 10 per cent of it is arable (compared with the Japanese average of about 15 per cent). As late as the 1930s the arable area per household was 1.5 acres, compared with the national average of 2.65 acres. About two-thirds of the farming households had to engage in non-farming activities to make a living. Most of those that emigrated came from villages that engaged jointly in fishing and farming. Today, thanks to refrigeration and good access by land to the avid Osaka market, fishing thrives throughout the area. This is a recent development. Until the railway between Shingū and Wakayama City was completed in 1940, there was no-one to eat 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 wholly agricultural villages from which, although their standard of living was equally low, there was very little emigration. According to local scholars, the additional factor was the traditional outward-looking attitude of these fisher-folk. Unlike the landsmen who saw the sea as a barrier, they saw it as a highway.[30]

Of the sixty-nine men recruited by Fearon, Low and Company in 1884, about forty-five[31] were sent to Thursday Island and fifteen[32] to Darwin. It appears that the prefectural government at Kobe issued the passports without examining the contracts. It certainly did not refer 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 recruited 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 been taken to court by his employer and sent to gaol.[33] 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.[34]

The jurisdiction of the Honorary Consul, Alexander Marks, did not 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 states. It also requested the prefectural authorities at Yokohama to provide it with all available information about 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.[35] 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.[36] 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 (ten bottles of whisky and the best part of a case of gin later) he was hoisted ashore in a chair at Prince of Wales Island. Though quite lucid, 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 dilatory in paying wages[37] and seems to have been by disposition critical and impatient with employees.[38]

The men on Fearon-Low contracts were distributed among a number of employers.[39] Some of these may, on occasion, have driven hard, men whom they considered were malingering.[40]

One grievance that was widespread was the high price of liquor, tobacco, and other items provided at sea from the employer's 'slop-chest'. These seem to have been charged at about 50 per cent above the prices prevailing ashore.[41] Some employers also paid wages, not in cash, but by orders on Brisbane and Sydney that could be cashed only at rates of discount that ranged from 5 per cent to 50 per cent.[42] It was treatment such as this that caused Masuda to describe the Australian employers as unfeeling and lacking in humanity. 'According to him the Malays were more successful than the Japanese in resisting such impositions because they had some knowledge of English.[43]

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

> 'I enclose two papers of two men engaged by Fearon, Low & Co. in Kobe to the order of Burns, Philp & Co. who speculate in men and make their profit by letting the men out to the pearl shell fisheries. It matters not how unsuitable the men are, as long as they are men and they can make their profit. The two men Tokugiro and Takichi are carpenters by trade and did not know the nature of the employment they were to be engaged in. There are about fifty engaged in the same way'.[44]

The Fearon-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 (this, in fact, was the custom in the sea-faring world). Some of the employers attempted to adhere to this interpretation.[45] The contracts contained no provisions dealing with sickness or medical treatment. Some employers seem to have taken advantage of this to charge for medicines and, where a Japanese was repatriated for medical reasons, to deduct from his wages the entire cost of the journey to and from Australia.[46] 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 Fearon-Low men, died in gaol three weeks after he had been convicted of having pearls in his possession (under the contracts all pearls remained the property of the employer). It was his reporting sick that originally attracted suspicions: this was regarded as part of a ruse to smuggle the pearls out of the pearling station.[47] The coroner's finding was that his death was due to pleurisy and could have been prevented if there had been a doctor on the island.[48] It was probably this incident that prompted Masuda to write:

> 'When a man became ill at sea and appeared unlikely to recover immediately, he would go ashore, explain the situation to his employer and ask for treatment. The employer did not always provide it. If the case were at all difficult to diagnose, he would accuse him of malingering and force him back to work. Where this was not possible he would push him into a jerry-built shed used for storing shell, give him some medicine inappropriate to the illness and take no further notice of him—almost as if he were an animal. All that the sick man could do was just wait for death'.[49]

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)[50]; four died of illness at shore-stations at Prince of Wales and Wei-Weer Island (two of them from dysentery); and one died on Thursday Island from alcoholic poisoning.[51]

Of the sixty-nine men sent to Australia by Fearon, Low and Company in 1884, we have no information on the number repatriated for medical reasons. The Thursday Island and West Australian death registers, however, indicate that up to February 1886, in addition to Nishi, 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 pearling off Derby (one from measles and one from 'dropsy' *i.e.* beri-beri).[52]

Early in 1886 the Foreign Ministry came to the decision that the situation on Thursday Island must not be allowed to continue. On 19 February it instructed Marks to advise all Japanese employed in the industry to return at once to Japan except where their contracts prevented this.[53] On 20 March it instructed prefectural governments to give the full picture to any citizens proposing to go there and, if this failed to dissuade them, to refer their contracts to the Ministry.[54] This, however, was closing the stable door after the horse had bolted: unbeknown to the Foreign Ministry, Fearon, Low and Company had despatched another group of about sixty or more during 1885.[55]

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, life there could be hazardous. Late in 1884 it had notified the prefectural authorities at Kobe of reports that an Englishman was recruiting people from the lower walks of life to be put on 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, wherever 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 subterfuge.[56]

Despite these precautions, early in 1886 an Englishman named Pemberton Willard managed to secure passports for some forty Japanese with whom he toured Australia as 'The Japanese Village'. This consisted of craftsmen pursuing such traditional avocations as screen-painting, wood-carving and the manufacture of cloisonne-ware; acrobats and jugglers; and waitresses who served Japanese tea to the audience. Willard appears to have hoodwinked the Japanese authorities by dividing the company into small occupational groups, drawing up separate contracts for each, and distributing the applications for passports between two ports, Yokohama and Kobe, and over a period of some weeks.

As a theatrical performance 'The Japanese Village' appears to have been a considerable success. It remained in Australia for fifteen months and performed in each capital except Perth.[57] Its season in

Melbourne extended for more than five months, during which time it was visited by the Governor, and (if one may believe the advertisement) by upwards of 317 000 people. Willard was no purist 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 banjo and occasionally with considerable amiability 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 palpable difference of opinion . . . particularly in the time of the waltzes played'.[58]

Beneath the surface, however, all was not well. Its arrival in Australia had called forth a series of despatches from Marks in which he was very critical of the contracts. He considered the wages (for example $15 a month for the makers of cloisonne-ware) far too low in terms of local prices (including the price of foreign luxuries to which members of the company were exposed).[59] 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 soon after their arrival in Australia).[60]

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 the legend of a monolith in Tasmania bearing the *hiragana* inscription 'kashiu zeniya gohei riyouchi' [this is the domain of Zeniya Gohei of the Province of Kaga].[61] Zeniya (1773-1852) appears to have been the Reg Ansett of Japan in the early nineteenth century. He went into the marine transport industry in 1811 and is said to have established thirty-four branches throughout Japan. He was also an early victim of the anti-pollutionists. He died in prison where he had been consigned when a reclamation project for which he was contracting had poisoned the fishes. It seems very likely that Zeniya's activities extended as far south as the Philippines. The story of his annexation of Tasmania, however, appears to have originated with Willard's acrobats.[62] My theory is that on their journey from Melbourne to Hobart some of them were routed through Devonport and were shown the petroglyphs on Mersey Bluff.[63] At that time many Japanese acrobats were illiterate. To such the Aboriginal rock carvings may well have resembled *hiragana*.

On 7 April 1887 a Tokyo daily, the *Chōya Shimbun*, published a very unfavourable account of conditions among the Wakayama-men at Thursday Island. Although the prefectural government at Kobe found that it was a garbled version of exaggerated complaints circulated by one of the Fearon-Low men who had returned to Japan more than eighteen months previously, the Minister for Foreign Affairs himself on 1 July used it as an opportunity to issue 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.[64]

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 1887 aboard the lugger, *Gamecock*, off Banks Island when the cook, a Malay, ran amok with a hatchet. Two of the deceased, Kasuga Chōsuke and Maruyama Iwakichi (both from Shionomisaki), were from the sixty-nine recruited by Fearon, Low and Company in 1884. The other two, Akimoto Chuzaburō (Ehime prefecture) and Kawasaki Kōsuke (Osaka prefecture), were from the group of similar size provided by the same company in February 1885. The Foreign Ministry, accordingly, in the press release that it issued on the incident (19 September 1887), drew attention to the fact that all four of the dead men had been recruited by Fearon, Low and Company, and in the following words sought to discourage further immigrants:

> 'To become a ghost in a foreign land at the hands of savages is a piteous thing. Nor can we bear to think of the grief of the families they left behind them.
> 'It is not long since we first established diplomatic relations with foreign countries. As a result movement into and out of Japan has become easy and the number of our nationals who go and work in foreign countries is increasing every day. This is not something to be regretted. People, however, are at a serious disadvantage when they go to a country whose language and conditions they do not understand and have no contracts to protect them. When circumstances like the above are encountered the consequences are manifold and unfortunate. People wishing to go overseas should therefore in future thoroughly acquaint themselves with the conditions prevailing at their destination. They should also consult the governmental authorities here and secure contracts that specify the obligations of the parties in precise detail'.[65]

It was probably because of the Foreign Ministry's attitude that the numbers of Japanese in Torres Strait fell from about 200 in 1886[66] to about 170 or 180 at the end of 1890.[67] No pearling contracts appear to have been signed in Japan during this period (or, indeed, for several years afterwards).[68] No doubt, Gibb, Livingstone and Company continued to provide a trickle of Japanese labour from Hong Kong. There is also evidence that pearlers operating off the Western Australian coast recruited some Japanese at Singapore at this time.[69] Whether they were seamen locally discharged or whether they were brought from Japan, we do not know. The latter, however, seems the more likely. Certainly, in later years, most of the Japanese employed in the industry in Western Australia were signed on in Singapore and went from Japan to Singapore for that purpose.

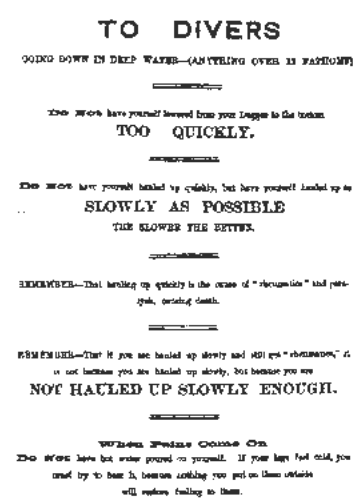
With few exceptions, the men who returned were obvious proof of the considerable savings that could be amassed out of wages. Masuda in 1886 reported from Thursday Island that when Nonami returned to Japan for a visit the previous year he had several thousand yen to his name. Late in 1887 two Fearon-Low men, Miyanoshita Kyuemon and Ogawa Ryūzō, returned to Wakayama prefecture at the completion of their contracts with about £400 (¥2250) each.[70] According to Watanabe it was rare for a man to send home less than ¥100 a year (even in his first year). At home he would have earned about ¥40 a year and out of this have had to buy food.[71] Even the reports of the men who were repatriated sick were favourable. There was as much rice and other free rations as they could eat and, for those who did not drink, it was easy to save.[72] A rice diet was what all Japanese aspired to. In the villages in Wakayama where the emigrants came from it was a luxury reserved for the sick—the staple diet was the cheaper barley and sweet potatoes.[73] At Miwasaki today, former divers remember how, before they went to Thursday Island in the 1920s, they had eaten unadulterated rice only at the time of the annual *bon* festival. For the rest of the year it was always mixed with barley.[74]

It is unlikely that Marks was able to prevail on many of the Japanese already at Thursday Island to return home. The proportion who were bound by contract to remain probably 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 that some of the Fearon-Low men remained at Thursday Island at the end of their engagements.[75]

In 1891 only twelve Japanese arrived at Thursday Island. In 1892 and 1893 the figures were 100 and 264 respectively—almost all of them from Wakayama prefecture.[76] The following appear to have been among the factors that contributed to restoring and expanding this flow.

The first was the devising of local machinery to finance the passage now that the Foreign Ministry had closed the door 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).[77] 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 lien on their wages, the more substantial citizens were prepared to advance the necessary funds to a group of ten or more going jointly from their village provided that the group accepted joint responsibility for the debt.[78] Writing at the end of 1893, Watanabe claims that most of the 300 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 this field in about 1897.[79] The amount advanced was usually about equal to ¥100 ¥130 a member. With this they were first required to take out life insurance for the period of



TO DIVERS

GOING DOWN IN DEEP WATER—(ANYTHING OVER 10 FATHOMS)

DO NOT have yourself lowered from your Luggers to the bottom

TOO QUICKLY.

DO NOT have yourself hauled up quickly, but have yourself hauled up as

SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE

THE SLOWER THE BETTER.

REMEMBER—That hauling up quickly is the cause of "decompression" and paralysis, causing death.

REMEMBER—That if you are hauled up slowly and still get "decompression," it is not because you are hauled up slowly, but because you are

NOT HAULED UP SLOWLY ENOUGH.

Burdekin Brudenell Diving Co.

DO NOT have hot water poured on yourself. If your legs feel cold, you must try to bear it, because nothing you put on them outside will restore feeling to them.

A. H. SALTER, M.B.,
Govt. Medical Officer.

By Authority,
JOHN DOUGLAS,
Government Resident.

Thursday Island, July 18th, 1888.

Notice 'To Divers Going Down in Deep Waters', Thursday Island, 1893

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 contracts it was not. Pearling in Torres Strait was then conducted at depths of five to ten fathoms[80] and it was unnecessary to search for shell at greater depths. The physiology of decompression and the technique of staging were then not understood; but from later research we know that at depths of less than six fathoms decompression can have no ill-effects and that at ten fathoms no staging is required if the duration of the dive does not exceed twenty minutes.[81] Similarly in Western Australia, so long as the industry was centred at Cossack, 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 most of the shell was obtained at depths of twenty to twenty-five fathoms and that the deep diving had produced a number of deaths.[82] The first recorded death from diver's paralysis of a Japanese employed in the Australian pearling industry was off the Eighty Mile Beach in Western Australia on 26 August 1890.[83] By September of the following year there appear to have been a number of severe cases among Japanese divers in that region.[84] In Torres Strait it was not until a rich deposit of shell was discovered near Darnley Island in 1893 that such depths were worked. The result was that twenty divers died there within a year – among them five Japanese.[85]

To return to the collective loans in Wakayama villages. After the payment of the insurance premiums the remainder of the loan was sufficient to cover the return fare to Thursday Island (about ¥100), the purchase of clothing and kit for the journey, and board and accommodation at Kobe during embarkation. The debt was to be discharged in instalments. First the principal was to be repaid 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 whole group made the position of the lenders relatively secure, the rate of interest, as Watanabe observed at the time, was enormous. According to our calculations, over three years (the normal period for such agreements) it would, provided employment was available, have been at the least 27 per cent a year compound interest. But insofar as the principal itself would usually have been repaid in about a year, the return would actually have been about 106 per cent.[86] The lender's position was not, of course, absolutely secure. For example, in 1893 and 1894 there was a surplus of labour at Thursday Island as a result of which the wages of crewmen fell by 50 per cent (from £3 to 30s a month) and there were more than 100 Japanese (many of them recent arrivals) unemployed.[87]

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 wage earners. For example, the Vice-Minister on 11 November 1891 informed Marks that:

> 'The Government's present policy towards emigration is not to restrain our labourers by severe laws from going overseas. If they are able to make proper arrangements and work overseas, it places no obstacles in their way. Indeed, our attitude is to assist them as best we can'.[88]

This may have been in part the result of the appointment as Foreign Minister of Enomoto Takeaki, who later founded the *Shokumin Kyokai* [Colonists Society]. In retrospect, the fifteen months during which he held that portfolio appears to be the only period when a Japanese cabinet showed any positive enthusiasm for emigration.[89]

A third factor was the return to Japan early in 1891 of the ten Japanese from Thursday Island who had drawn *Carbine* in the 1890 Tattersall's Melbourne Cup sweepstake and won £22 500. The leader of the group, Nakagawa Tamiji, or 'Tommy Japan', served the local Japanese community in a number of roles—as boarding-house keeper, proprietor of a billiard saloon and shooting gallery, court interpreter and, when occasion demanded it, as undertaker. Born in Shizuoka prefecture, he was one of the first Japanese to settle in Australia. He probably came to Sydney as one of the crew of an overseas vessel. He achieved some fame as the steward of the *Ripple*, an island trading vessel based in Sydney, when she was attacked by natives near Cape de Gros on Bougainville in August 1880. According to the report of the incident given to the *Sydney Morning Herald* by the Reverend George Brown of Duke of York Island (where the survivors and the bodies of those killed were landed) Nakagawa performed most creditably:

> '. . . The steward was down the after hold engaged in handing up some stores by the captain's orders. He heard the captain call out "I'm killed" and immediately

received himself a dreadful wound in the neck from a tomahawk. He fell back, but recovered, and, with his revolver shot the two men who were standing over the hatchway; one of whom, it is pretty certain, was the man who struck down the captain. . . . The steward (a Japanese) is praised by all for his bravery; though wounded in the most dreadful manner in several places, he fought until the ship was clear and the natives driven away, when he fainted from loss of blood; and now the poor fellow wins the respect and love of us all by his care of the poor men who are fellow-sufferers with him'.[90]

He moved to Thursday Island the following year.[91] There, it seems, the fighting spirit of the hero of the *Ripple* sometimes reasserted itself. He must have celebrated Christmas 1888 too well; for he spent Christmas Night in the watch-house and was fined 5s the next morning for being drunk and disorderly.[92] Although his marriage (to Shime, a Nagasaki woman, in 1885) was the first in the Japanese community to be solemnized in the Roman Catholic Church[93], 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.[94]

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[95]: Hiramatsu Gorobei and Urita Jin'emon from Shionomisaki, Ebina Torakichi from Tanami, and Nakamura Yasubei from Arida. Hiramatsu invested his winnings in mountain land. He continued to prosper and became known as 'the forest king of the Kinan district'. His eldest son, an idler who liked expensive pleasures, squandered the lot. Urita put his money into a boat for deep-sea tuna fishing. He also rebuilt his home and put a fine stone 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 belfry of the local temple. He donated half the cost.

The stone wall, all that remains of Urita Jin'emon's fortune

Worldly pleasures, however, were closer to his nature. His fortune went on gambling, drink, and women. Among the latter, O-kuma, the beautiful Fukuhara *geisha* whom he married, is still remembered by people who as school-children used to dawdle in the street near her house hoping to catch a glimpse of her when she came out.

The belfry at Tanami, to which Ebina Torakichi contributed
(Photograph by courtesy of Mr S. Kyuhara)

In 1954 I came across a Japanese, Suzuki Sakuhei, who was working as the caretaker of a flour-mill at Burnley in Melbourne. He was born in Shionomisaki in 1883 and came to Thursday Island in 1899 shortly before his sixteenth birthday. He volunteered the remark that it was *Carbine*'s win that formed his own determination to come to Australia. It was he who first gave me Hiramatsu's name. He had seen him after his return. Suzuki was a small boy at primary school at the time. He was told that in Australia, whenever it rained, nuggets lay uncovered all along the river-banks. One of the *Carbine* syndicate in a neighbouring village was said to be so wealthy that he used to fill the bath with sake instead of with water. Suzuki wanted to go to Australia there and then, but his mother made him wait until he had finished school.[96]

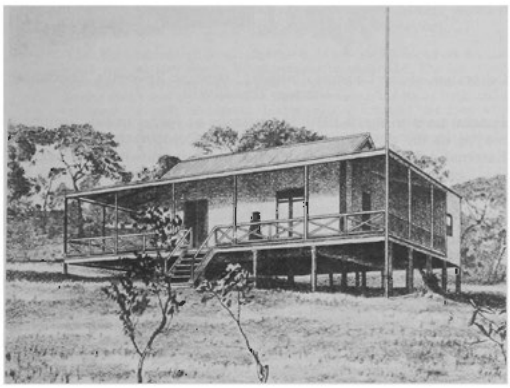
Writing at the end of 1893 Watanabe claimed that because of the savings that people (including the *Carbine* syndicate) were bringing home, there had been a rush to Australia from the prefecture:

> 'Crying out "Me, too", one after the other they would mortgage their houses and their fields and embark. At Shionomisaki, for example, almost the whole

village went *en masse*. It is said that things have reached the stage where, in estimating a man's worth, instead of enquiring whether he has made any money, they ask whether he has ever worked in Australia, and that the same question is asked when marriages (or the adoption of an heir into a family with no sons) are being negotiated'.[97]

In these circumstances the Japanese population at Thursday Island increased in under two years from less than a hundred at the beginning of 1892 to 466 in October 1893[98] — a total close to that of the Caucasian population (475). Over the same period the number of luggers owned by Japanese had increased from two to about thirty. When Watanabe visited Thursday Island in September and October 1893 this had produced the following atmosphere:

> '. . . The whites are beset with fears which they cannot put aside. I was told that there had been a number of closed meetings of the town council at which they discussed outrageous proposals like refusing boat licences to us or lowering the price paid to us for shell in order to convince us that to own a boat was less remunerative than working for wages. Justice, however, was not yet dead; the view prevailed that, when we were acting without malice, it would be a bad policy for them to appear selfish. My informants said that initially the whites had regarded us in the same way as they did the Malays and the Manilamen; but whereas the combined population of the latter had stood stock still at about three or four hundred, it looked as if business conditions were such that, in a few years time, the Japanese, under the same circumstances, would draw ahead of the other races and there would be a considerable number of up-and-coming Japanese settlers each of whom owned a number of boats. As evidence of this trend there was the Japanese Club (as yet nothing much to speak of) and the Japanese hospital—they could not look down on these.
>
> 'In the course of my visit to the Island I often heard that the more influential among the natives were discussing what would happen in circumstances such as the following—if we invested big sums and set up large agencies there; if we exported shell to London without going through middlemen; or if our government sent several hundreds more of us there. It was obvious that our latent strength was causing fear among the Island's principal merchants and shopkeepers . . .'.[99]



The Japanese Club, Thursday Island, 1894
(Reproduced from Watanabe)

That officialdom was at this time becoming concerned at the Japanese presence on the Island is confirmed in a letter despatched by the local magistrate, John Douglas to the Colonial Secretary on 2 October 1893. Douglas reported that there was 'more than a possibility of the Japanese coming down in such numbers as to render it probable that the Pearl Shelling industry will to a great extent pass into their hands'.[100] On 11 November he wrote again:

> 'There are now about 50 boats worked by Japs, and if more come down there will be a howl and agitation which ought to be avoided.
>
> 'I am most decidedly of the opinion that all boats in this Fishery should be owned by British Subjects and that no boats except those belonging to British Subjects should be licensed'.[101]

Acting on Douglas's advice, the Premier, Sir Hugh Nelson, on 21 November through the Honorary Consul requested the Japanese Government to limit the number of emigrants.[102] The flow, however, continued. In March 1894 the number of Japanese on Thursday Island had risen to 720 and, as we have already observed, this increase had been attended by extensive unemployment and a sharp fall in wage rates.[103] This figure does not appear to have been exceeded until 1897. More than 100 of the unemployed Japanese moved to the mainland in search of work during 1894 and there were few new arrivals.[104] This may have been due partly to the natural adjustment of supply to demand[105] and partly to the efforts of the Japanese Foreign Ministry which in July 1894 issued instructions to the Governors of Hyōgo and Wakayama prefectures to restrain emigration to Thursday Island.[106]

Conflicting evidence makes it particularly difficult to form an accurate estimate of the extent of boat ownership by the Japanese. Those who feared its consequences tended to overestimate its extent. Similarly, the largest of the Australian pearlers, James Clark, appears to have produced inflated figures in order to support his counter-attacks against his wholesale removal of immature shell for cultivation purposes. His argument was that the opposition to him was organised by the store-keepers who, he claimed, secured high profits by selling boats to the Japanese on time-payment.[107] In a letter to the *Brisbane Courier* on 17 November 1893 Clark asserted that the Japanese owned 'sixty-seven boats, which number they are constantly adding to'.[108] Insofar as there were at that time only 210 boats licensed, this would have constituted a significant proportion.[109] Douglas in July 1895 conducted an investigation and, as a result, was inclined to accept a considerably lower figure: eight owned and twenty-nine hired by Japanese[110] (out of a total of 183 boats licensed). The twenty-nine would have included some in process of being bought under hire-purchase agreements. Naturally the Japanese exercised their options to purchase, only when the boat performed well. Clark claimed that the Japanese purchased about one in eight of the boats that they hired.[111] In March 1897 the Queensland Government appointed the Hamilton Commission to inquire into the operation of the pearling legislation. The evidence presented to it indicated that the Japanese population had reached roughly 1000 and that, of the 231 pearling boats licensed, twenty-two were owned by and forty-six were rented to Japanese.[112] The Commission recommended *inter alia* that in future no boat licences be issued to aliens and that the renting of boats to aliens be made illegal. In December 1898 the *Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Fishery Act*[113] was amended to give effect to these two recommendations. No attempt was made to disguise the fact that the legislation was aimed at the Japanese. It was common knowledge that Ministerial discretion would be exercised both to grant naturalisation to European aliens seeking to place themselves outside the ambit of the restrictions and, as in the past, to withhold naturalisation from Asians.[114] In the course of his Second Reading speech the Premier quoted with approval a sentence from Clark's evidence to the Commission: 'this is a British Colony, and I think the profits made should belong to white men instead of the Japanese'.[115] An Opposition speaker, William Kidston, described the spirit of the legislation in less flattering terms:

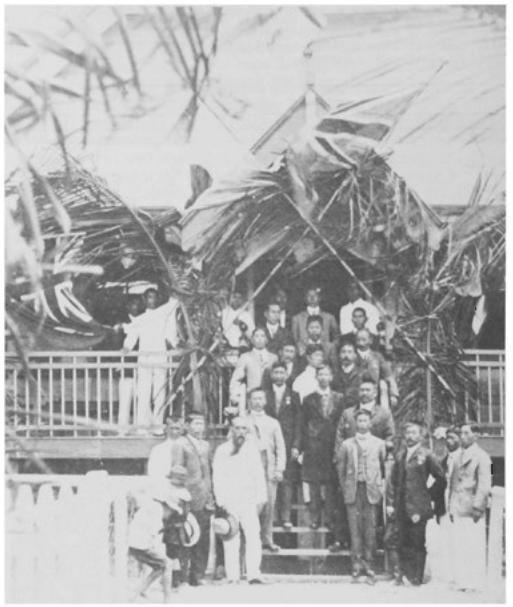
> 'It is the recognition . . . that there are and there ought to be two races in Queensland — one a privileged race having all the rights and protection of the laws, and the other an alien serf race, not permitted to do the best they can for themselves — and only permitted to live here if they will work and make profit for someone else'.[116]

The Japanese had opened a regular consulate in Townsville in March 1896. In response to the advice of the consul that, unless the flow of emigrants diminished, the Queensland Government in the atmosphere generated by the proceedings of the Hamilton Commission was likely to introduce an immigration restriction bill, the Japanese Government issued instructions to prefectural governments on 9 June and 9 August 1897 aimed at preventing the issuing of passports to persons seeking employment at Thursday Island.[117] The

intention was that these restrictions should be temporary; but in fact this proved to be the end of unrestricted emigration to Thursday Island. In August 1898 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.[118] Initially the Queensland Government used this power to reject all applications to import Japanese labour from all pearlers - both Caucasian and Japanese alike - even for keeping the crews of already licensed boats up to strength.[119] The Caucasians met the situation by making greater use of other coloured races.[120] The Japanese, however, appear always to have been reluctant to employ any but their own countrymen. This virtual prohibition on the recruitment of Japanese labour appears to have continued until 30 October 1900 when, under sustained pressure from the Japanese Government, Queensland agreed to accept the Japanese population in 1898 (3247) as a ceiling up to which replacements could be made—provided that no more than twenty-five arrived on the one ship.[121] Even under the new agreement, however, the Queensland Government appears to have approved requests to introduce Japanese crewmen only when they were made by Caucasian pearlers.[122]

This policy on the part of the Queensland Government appears to have been successful in reducing Japanese influence in the local industry. Between 1898 and 1901, while the number of licensed boats increased from 216 to 225, the number of Japanese 'employers or owners' declined from twenty-one to eleven and the number of Japanese crew on shipping articles declined from 472 to 318.[123] It was during this period that the only man of capital among the Japanese community, Satō Torajirō, became insolvent and returned to Japan permanently. In March 1900 when his petition was filed he was the owner of twenty-nine luggers, and the lessee of a general store, a boat-building yard and slipway, and five boarding-houses for pearling crews. In the affidavits accompanying his petition, he gave as the causes of his insolvency 'inability to collect book debts, falling off in shell returns consequent on bad seasons, pressure of creditors'. The book debts, which amounted to £13 659 were estimated to produce only £3517.2s.6d.[124] It may well be that a significant proportion of the bad debts due to him were the result of the effect of the Queensland Government's policy on the level of business activity among the Japanese community. Satō returned to Japan in 1901. From 1903 to 1909 he was a member of the Japanese House of Representatives. In 1910, following the Japanese annexation of Korea, he transferred his energies to agriculture in that country and acquired large estates there. He died in 1928 as a result of injuries sustained from a bomb attack by a Korean nationalist who mistook him for the Governor-General.

Following Federation, the control of immigration was in 1902 transferred from the States to the Federal Government. The latter took the number of coloured persons then employed in the industry and allowed replacements up to that level. Within these limits no restrictions were placed on particular nationalities. Initially, its policy was to grant additional permits for crews for any new boats added to the pearling fleets. In November 1905, however, when the Senate passed a resolution that no coloured labour be admitted except to fill existing vacancies, this dispensation was discontinued.[125] This fixed the maximum number of coloured persons for temporary admission to serve on luggers at about 4000 for the Commonwealth as a whole, of whom about 2500 were at Broome.[126] There, over the period 1905 to 1910, the proportion of Japanese rose from 32.6 per cent to 51.3 per cent.[127] At Thursday Island, in the latter year the proportion of Japanese was 55.3 per cent and, of the 160 licensed divers there, 150 were Japanese.[128] Since the time of the Hamilton Commission, the belief that the pearling industry should not be an exception to the White Australia Policy had extended considerably beyond the membership of the Labor Party and the trade unions. This belief, however, was tempered by the realisation of the demonstrated fact that life aboard the pearling luggers did not attract Australian workers. When Labor secured its first long term of office at the



Celebration of the Emperor's birthday, Japanese Resident's Association, Thursday Island, 1910

Federal level in April 1910, the balance of forces in this argument moved in the direction of ideology. In October the Minister for External Affairs, Egerton Batchelor, made it known to the pearlers that, unless they took steps to introduce white labour into the industry, the Government would take action.[129] On 2 January 1911 he issued the following instructions:

> 'My ruling on the subject now is that owners of pearling vessels may have permission to indent Asiatics, preferably Malays, to work in their vessels for a period of two years from the 1st January 1911, but after that date all engagements shall terminate and no permits for admission for further employment shall be given except in the cases of boats in which the diver and tender are both white men. In those cases permits to introduce Malays to the number of five per lugger will be granted, provided that the local authorities certify that local labour suitable for employment as crews is unprocurable'.[130]

The two references to Malays in this passage indicate that the Minister, like many people in the community, was concerned with the rise in the proportion of Japanese to other coloured indents, and that he wished to do something about it. Indeed, he appears to have been quite frank about this in his remarks to the pearlers in October.[131] In April Cabinet, as a result of representations by the industry and by the Western Australian Government, deferred the introduction of the new system until 31 December 1913.[132] In June 1912, it was further deferred until 1 January 1915.[133]

In July 1913 the federal Royal Commission on the Pearl-Shelling Industry (the Bamford Commission, appointed by the Government in 1912) strengthened the Government's hand by passing a resolution 'that the special attention of the Department of External Affairs be drawn to the question of the preponderance of Japanese in the Pearling Industry . . . with a view of taking into consideration the possibility of preventing any race preponderating in the Industry'.[134]

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 inquire of the West Australian Pearlers Association their attitude on the question of 'arranging for a certain proportion of Malays and Japanese to be maintained'.[135] This was considered at a general meeting of the Association on 5 September and a motion was carried in favour of 'meeting the wishes of the Federal Government in connection with the substitution of more Malays for Japanese . . .'.[136] From the detailed report of the meeting given in the daily press it is apparent that the motion was supported even by pearlers who used wholly Japanese crews. Their more immediate worry was that their livelihood depended on their continuous recruitment of crews overseas. The mechanics of the industry required this to be done on three-year contracts. With the embargo on the employment of coloured divers and tenders beyond 1 January 1915, they had been unable to recruit for some months past. Their primary need was therefore to secure a further deferment of this deadline. They argued that there was no hope of the Government's granting this unless they met it half-way on the question of reducing the proportion of Japanese.[137] This argument may have been well based: the following June (1914) the deadline was moved to 30 June 1918, thereby enabling the pearlers to continue until 30 June 1915 to enter into their customary three-year agreements. In February 1915 one of the factors that influenced the Federal Government in allowing James Clark (who since 1905 had conducted all his pearling activities from Dutch territory) to operate fifty of his luggers from Broome was his readiness to enter into an engagement that he would 'not employ more than fifty per cent crew of any one nationality except Malays'[138] on each vessel.

The entire policy of white labour for the pearling industry was abandoned during the last weeks of the Labor Cabinet when the Royal Commission on 17 July 1916 issued its final report:

> 'Your Commissioners have decided that diving for shell is not an occupation in which our workers should be encouraged to undertake. The life is not a desirable one, and the risks are great, as proved by the abnormal death rate among divers and try divers. The work is arduous, the hours long, and the remuneration quite inadequate. Living space is cramped, the food wholly preserved of its different kinds and the life incompatible with that a European worker is entitled to live. Social life is impossible and enjoyment out of the question . . .'[139]

It pointed out that any man with the qualities necessary to become a diver could earn as much working shorter hours in a more congenial atmosphere ashore. Accordingly, there was no incentive for him to enter an occupation in which he would 'in a few years become practically a physical wreck, unfitted for any other occupations, and unless more than ordinarily fortunate, likely to become a burden upon his friends, or upon the community'.[140] The Commission rejected the analogy of the sugar industry. There Australia had been able to replace coloured labour with Caucasian labour by passing on to the Australian consumer in the form of higher prices the additional costs entailed in the higher wages that had to be paid. Sugar, however, was a necessity of life: mother-of-pearl was a luxury and the home market for it was negligible; any considerable rise in its price would result in its being replaced by substitutes.[141]

Although the Commission did not elaborate on this point, the additional cost was greater than the mere difference in the level of wages that would have to be paid. The evidence presented to the Commission indicated that the annual death-rate among the Japanese divers at that time was more than ten per cent.[142] Had these men been Australian, the total amount due under Workers Compensation legislation would have been considerable. In the case of indentured foreign labour, however, such compensation was not payable.[143]

One reason for the Commission's unequivocal abandonment of the white diver objective was evidence presented to it during its 1916 hearings at Broome showing the dramatic failure of a group of ten divers recruited in the United Kingdom by some of the Broome pearlers in 1912. These men were selected from volunteers among certified deep-sea divers on the books of Britain's two leading firms of submarine engineers: Siebe, Gorman and Company and Heinke and Company. These two firms were intimately acquainted with conditions in the Australian industry and, throughout its history, had between them supplied all the diving suits and equipment. The selection committee included the physiologist, Professor L. H. Hill (a world expert on divers paralysis), and Lieutenant Damant R.N. who had played a leading role in the compilation and testing of the Navy's tables of staged ascents for deep diving.[144] The English divers arrived in Broome in February 1912. Within a short period of time three of them had died of divers paralysis and the remainder had admitted failure and moved to other jobs.[145] None had managed to raise more shell than an untrained Asian donning the dress for the first time.[146]

Although it was now accepted that the industry must continue to be worked with coloured labour, the policy objective of reducing the proportion of Japanese labour continued. It was not for some time, however, that any positive steps were taken in this direction. During the war years, 1914–18, the Australian Government was careful to avoid discriminatory action likely to offend Japan. Another reason was that labour from other areas (for example Malaya and Papua) was often not available.[147] In November 1923, however, the Minister for Home Affairs and Territories finally issued instructions that in future the customary allotments of permits for coloured labour (*i.e.* eight for compressor-boats and seven for hand-pump boats) would continue only where the number of the same nationality did not exceed five in the former and four in the latter.[148] The principle underlying this was that the diver must be free to select from his own compatriots the men on whom his life depended (*i.e.* the tender and the men providing the air supply) and that one member of the same nationality could double as 'try-diver' to learn how to dive and to relieve the diver.

It is possible that among the factors which influenced the Minister eventually to take action of this nature was the cohesiveness and truculence demonstrated by the Japanese indents in the riots at Broome in December 1920 in which they fought a pitched battle with the Timorese[149], and in their militant demonstration against the employers at Thursday Island at the time of the annual negotiation of wages in February 1923.[150]

The ruling meant that in effect the diver and the majority of the crew in most of the luggers continued to be Japanese. At Thursday Island, for example, the proportion of divers' licences held by Japanese was 90 per cent in 1919–20 and 99 per cent in 1925–26.[151]

In his testimony before a Queensland Royal Commission (the Mackay Commission) in 1908, the doyen of the Australian pearlers, James Clark, referred to the 'well-understood fact' that the best diver in the world for getting shell was the Japanese.[152] It is, perhaps, appropriate at this stage to examine why, throughout the history of the industry, the majority of the Australian pearlers preferred Japanese to other races as divers.

An employer's receipts were directly proportional to the quantity of shell raised by his divers. The qualities looked for in a diver were therefore the ability to detect shell where it existed and the willingness and capacity to work long hours under water looking for it.

The weight of the evidence presented to the Bamford Commission suggests that the ability to recognise shell on the bottom and predict the pattern of its deposit is, like the bushman's 'feel' for terrain, something that can be acquired only by those who have a special innate quality of perception.[153] According to one witness, something like one in four people had it.[154] According to another, the figure was more like one in ten.[155] Its distribution had nothing to do with race. Any diver who did not have it was a dead loss. When the industry followed its normal method of recruiting there were no problems. It engaged people initially as crewmen—people to turn a

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.[156] It usually took three years of this to turn him into an efficient diver who could be sent out on his own.[157] From the law of averages one might infer that one, or perhaps two, of the ten English deep-sea divers brought out in 1912 would have had this innate quality of perception. But in less than eighteen months three of them had died of paralysis. None of the rest remained long enough to enable such theories to be verified.

It appears that many of the Wakayama-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 Miwasaki one is told how before World War II the only way for a younger son to earn enough money to set up a house of his own was to spend a few years at Thursday Island.[158] I heard the same when I visited Susami in 1974. When Yamamoto Kenkichi turned 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 Susami Primary School with a monthly 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 diver in charge of a lugger, he would get several times that amount. He chose Thursday Island. Wages at home continued to be low throughout the period. In 1936 the monthly salary of the Headmaster (aged fifty) at Susami was ¥70—which is what his former pupils (now aged twenty) were getting at Thursday Island as tenders.[159]

Some went to Australia to free the family property of debt. Hamaguchi Unojiro and his brother went to Thursday Island from Miwasaki 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 them contributing ¥1000 each year.

These men did not come as settlers. Their object was to earn the necessary sum as quickly as they could in order to return home[160] and pursue their traditional occupations of fisherman or farmer. 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 venture, nothing gain' was part of the culture of the Kumano district from whence they came.[161] Thus, to the locals at Thursday Island, they appeared 'very keen to make money'.[162] The Australian concept of the Japanese diver is summed up in John Douglas's reference to the death from paralysis of a Japanese diver in his report for 1894–95:

> 'Such is the craving for "more shell" when it has once got possession of a diver's imagination. -I held an inquiry a few days ago into the causes connected with the death of one Wattanabi, an old and experienced diver. His last remark was . . . "I'm sorry I am going—the water is clear, and I could have got plenty of shell".' The ruling passion is thus evidenced as strong even in death'.[163]

The Royal Navy's 'staging' tables were published in 1907[164] and appear to have been adopted in Australia in about 1912.[165] These enabled the diver to work in deep water for relatively long stretches 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 'dip' very short for example at twenty-five fathoms, five minutes[166] –and to take a long time over descending[167] 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;[168] nine descents in a day was considered an achievement.[169] As Frank Summers, an experienced diver, ruefully told 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" '.[170] This is easy enough to understand. Not only was a diver's pay proportional to the amount of shell he raised; but in addition there would always have been the feeling that the shell one left behind contained the pearl of a lifetime. An additional element that encouraged foolhardiness was the fact that some individuals were more tolerant to decompression than others. This, no doubt, prompted the carelessness that goes with the feeling that 'It won't be me'. When there were white divers in the industry, they appear to have been just as ready to take risks, no doubt for motives similar to those of the Japanese. Summers was lucky enough to escape with minor symptoms of 'the bends'.[171] 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.[172] Similarly, nothing could have been more reckless than the behaviour of Webber, the most senior 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.[173] The death of his compatriot, Besley, the following year appears to have occurred under similar circumstances.[174] Unfortunately very few divers in the industry, Japanese or Caucasian, appear ever to have taken the staging tables seriously. In 1978 at Miwasaki 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.[175]

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 quite unlike anything he and his colleagues were used to. At Dover he would have been making four or five dives a day and would have slept at home.[176]

Shiba Ryotarō, 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 Goza-gawa in Wakayama prefecture who were divers 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 *Mokuyōtō no Yakai* [A Party at Thursday Island] he puts the following words into the mouth of 'Miyaza', a sometime champion diver:

> 'At first it was the money; but as time went by you got away from this, and what mattered was beating your own record or the chap in the other boat. When you were on the sea-bed the thought of money didn't enter your head – it was just "How many tons will my tally be?". We men from Wakayama prefecture and the men from Ise worked like demons . . .'[177]

I would agree with Shiba 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 'Darnley Deeps' the previous year: 'such . . . is the eager desire to make a good score, and such is the rivalry between competing divers . . . that risks are rashly encountered and precautions disregarded'.[178]

Shiba 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 *Gishi Wajin Den* compiled in China in the third century records how the Japanese gathered fish and clams under water and how, while engaged in this activity, they tattooed their faces and bodies to scare away large predators.[179]

Iwasaki in his field research in Wakayama prefecture in 1936 stressed the value of improvements to local property that had been financed from overseas earnings. In particular he noted how the cluster of poor bark-roofed dwellings built low for protection against the wind, which had constituted Shionomisaki had been replaced by imposing tiled houses surrounded by high stone walls. He also noted that foreign clothing, foreign habits (for example, punctuality) and

foreign words (like the Australian 'tucker') had come into daily use.[180] Similarly when Father Cairns, an Australian priest, was posted to that district as a missionary in the early 1960s he was surprised to find that the people were great bread eaters and that some of them put milk in their tea. At that time the first 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 (Nishimuro-gun) emigration to Australia began before emigration to North America and even as late as 1940 the number of menfolk absent in Australia and the Arafura Sea (535) was a close second to the number absent in the United States (666).[181]

An early Japanese grave at Thursday Island —Chino Risuke and Chino Matsunosuke. Thursday Island (died 19 April 1888 and 25 July 1894)

A price was paid for this prosperity. In the Japanese cemetery at Broome there are 788 tombstones still standing. On these, 1002 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, 28.3 per cent; aged 40–49, 10.7 per cent; aged 60 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 562 Japanese tombstones still standing at Thursday Island. On 150 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; under 20 years, 5.3 per cent; aged 50–59, 4.0 per cent; aged 60 and over 2.6 per cent.[182] We know from the evidence tendered to the Bamford Commission that, at Thursday Island during 1911, of the 172 Japanese holding diving licences 19 (11 per cent) died either from paralysis or in the diving suit.[183] Two years later there were fourteen such deaths among the Japanese at Broome.[184] 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 ineligibility of the dead men's dependants to receive compensation under the State[185] workers' compensation acts continued throughout the history of the industry. In Queensland a Japanese who was injured was entitled the same compensation as other workers but, in the case of death, compensation was payable only to dependants resident in Australia.[186] In Western Australia the Workers Compensation Act was deliberately drafted to exclude compensation either for death or injury suffered by indentured labour in this industry. The Western Australian Government sought to justify this policy as follows:

> 'The insurance of indentured labour would mean a heavy burden on the Pearling Industry which burden was not warranted when the standard of living of these men was taken into account and contrasted with the benefits of the Workers Compensation Act'.[187]

Both in the negotiations with Sir John Latham's good-will mission in Tokyo in 1934[188] and in the trade treaty negotiations with Sir Henry Gullett in Canberra in 1935[189] 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 never more than a wooden post with the name painted on it and these did not survive the ravages of time. Although there is a monument bearing the names of the Japanese who perished in the three great cyclones in Western Australia—26 April 1908 (thirty-four) 19 November 1910 (seventy-six) and 26 and 27 March 1935 (sixty, of whom seventeen were from the same town, Taiji[190]; in Wakayama prefecture) there is none for the seventy-six Japanese who perished near Cape Melville in the Queensland cyclone of 4 and 5 March 1899. There were other cemeteries. For example, Kyūhara Shūji has recently established that, over the years 1896 to 1913, seventeen Japanese divers were buried at Darnley Island.[191] There must also be many like 'Sataro' of Yokohama (who according to the Register of Deaths for the Broome district died of paralysis on 16 November 1897 and was buried at Whistler's Creek, Admiral Bay) resting close to where they died, far from human habitation.

Although a Medical Officer was appointed at Thursday Island in 1886 (a year after Marks' visit), disease continued to take its toll, as it had among Captain Miller's original 'indents'. For example, five Japanese died there of malaria in 1894[192] and, of the forty-one in the pearling fleets who died in the 1910–11 dysentery epidemic, twenty-six were Japanese.[193] Beri-beri remained a serious problem until well into the 1920s. In 1924, among the 434 Japanese engaged on the luggers in Torres Strait, forty-four were suffering from it.[194] 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 a proportion of the rice with other readily available Japanese foodstuffs.[195] This early example of Australian-Japanese scientific co-operation appears to have been very successful—by 1933 the total among all races suffering from beri-beri had fallen to six.[196]

Some of the deaths were homicide. The *Gamecock* was not the last lugger whose decks ran with blood. On 30 October 1899 a diver, Andō Taiji, of Oita prefecture, was murdered by Petrodelo Cruz aboard the brigantine, *Ethel*, in Western Australia.[197] In May 1893 Yamazaki Kamematsu and Hagimoto Sanzo (both from Shionomisaki) were murdered on the *Miranda* when four Aboriginals armed with tomahawks boarded her in search of plunder as she lay at anchor

near Cape Melville. They did not die unavenged. 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.'[198] Marks, in his despatch to Tokyo on the subject, asked the Vice-Minister not to embarass 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 by armed horse-police and shoot them at once, otherwise they escape to the mountains. It is very difficult to capture them alive or even to identify any particular one. So therefore the tribe is punished for the wrong doing of its members. They cannot be caught and tried like ordinary criminals . . .'[199]

Better known are the attacks on the Japanese crews of Australian luggers in the Northern Territory. Early in 1923 Captain H. C. Edwards sent two of his trepang luggers to Caledon Bay with three Japanese and two Aboriginals aboard each. Some days after landing they were attacked by local natives. Two Japanese and one of their Aboriginal crewmen were killed. The others managed to escape in the dinghy to Groote Eylandt, about 136 km. distant.[200] On 20 July 1931 Nagata and two other Japanese from Victor Clark's lugger, *Ouida*, were murdered at Port Keats (Treachery Bay).[201] In 1932 it was Caledon Bay once again. The crews of V. R. Keppert's luggers, *Myrtle Olga* and *Raff* were attacked by the Balamumu tribe while curing trepang ashore. They were very unwise to have 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 licence. Five of the six Japanese—Kimishima, Tanaka, Inamori, Shibasaki and Higashi—were killed. There was some evidence that they may have provoked the attack by beating some of the tribe, who were providing labour in return for rations. One of the Japanese, Kinjō, escaped and with six Aboriginal members of the crews walked 185 miles to the mission at Millingimbi.[202]

Kawano Yoroichi of Fukuoka prefecture and Kusano Sōnosuke of Nagasaki prefecture died of head wounds in the battle between the Japanese and the Timorese at Broome in December 1920.[203] Japanese were involved in a number of serious mêlées with other races in the pearling towns: with Malays at Darwin (December 1895)[204], Broome (December 1907)[205], Thursday Island (May 1912) and Port Hedland (September 1919)[206], with Timorese at Broome (December 1914)[207], and with Papuans at Badu Island (September 1918).

That it was only in the 1920 clash that lives were lost (two Japanese and one Timorese) speaks well both for the skill and courage of the very small police detachments in these outlying districts and for the authority and restraint of the leaders of each racial group. The causes of these outbreaks have yet to be studied. The Broome pearler, A. C. Gregory, in his report to the Navy Office after the 1920 riot gave the following explanation of its origin:

> 'Practically all the pearling crews were in Broome, it being the lay up season. The origin of the trouble has not yet been thrashed out, but it is fairly certain that a section of the Timorese had a grievance against the Japanese for their ill-treatment on the pearling grounds during the last pearling season. They commenced proceedings at about 8.30 p.m. by raiding a camp at the south end of the town looking for a certain Japanese tender whom they considered had caused the death of one of their number during the working season . . .'[208]

Elaborating on the ill-treatment received by the Timorese while at sea, he remarked that they 'cannot do the amount of work that the average Jap can, and on boats that do not carry a white man they frequently get knocked about'. Gregory had a Japanese partner and, among the Broome pearlers, was the last man one could call anti-Japanese. His explanation may eventually be found to be a reasonable hypothesis to account for the other racial clashes in the pearling towns that we have listed. In a lugger with a mixed crew, the minority races could, while at sea, do little but grin and bear it. Their only chance to settle the score was ashore, where there were opportunities– with the help of their compatriots—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, Lowe Bongoe, by a Japanese aboard the lugger, *Freya*.[209] Little has been discovered about the clash between the Japanese and the Papuans in September 1918.[210] Although unconnected with that particular incident, there are scattered pieces of evidence of ill-treatment of Papuan members of luggers' crews. In 1907 when three Japanese were charged with the murder of Guari on Burns, Philp and Company's lugger, *Teazer*, near Booby Island, a Queensland jury accepted the argument of the defence counsel that Guari had been taken by a shark. There are, however, people still living in Wakayama prefecture who believe that he was beaten to death for stealing the salted fish for the next day's meal.[212] In November 1908 a jury at Townsville found Hamaguchi Muramatsu guilty of the manslaughter of the Papuan, Matabu, aboard the trepang lugger *Kaipunan* in waters off the Barrier Reef.[213] Old-timers in Wakayama prefecture also say that when Burns Philp and Company's trepang lugger, *Rockton*, was wrecked on the Barrier Reef on 4 April 1921, the nine Japanese members of the crew made off in the only dinghy leaving two Papuans to drown.[214]

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 result in death, were nevertheless grievous enough.

The Bamford Commission saw the diver who survived as likely to become practically a physical wreck—a burden upon his friends or upon the community. This was the fate that eventually overtook Furuta Otomatsu. In 1914, at the age of twenty, he performed a memorable feat of courage and endurance. When the lugger, *Vida*, capsized and sank near Travers Island[215] he and another member of the crew managed to tread water until the current deposited them after eighteen hours on an uninhabited island. They survived by eating native plants and were rescued by islanders a week later. Furuta continued in the industry and became a diver. He suffered paralysis twice.[216] He died in his home village, Ōshima, in 1976, an old man much respected for his kindliness and cheerfulness. Although both legs were permanently affected, he endeavoured to make himself useful up to the end by helping his son's widow with the cooking.[217]

Among the hardships suffered by the Japanese 'indents', exploitation and ill-treatment by their Australian employers was, as we have seen, often alleged in the days of the Fearon-Low contracts. There are some indications that, at least in the years immediately following, this did not entirely die out.

For example, from a letter from Nonami to the Shipping Master at Thursday Island dated 9 April 1892 it appears that his employer was rather like Dearsley Sahib in Kipling's *The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney*. In the letter Nonami complained that he had forced him to contribute £2 (for which he had received no receipt) for a Sydney sweepstake and £5 for a raffle of a billiard-table that had not taken place.[218]

In 1891 the Crown Law authorities in Western Australia took a serious view of the complaints of Nagano Chotarō and Kato Sadakichi, who had been recruited at Singapore by the Australian pearling firm, James Clark and Company, in July 1890. At Broome the following month these men were taken to court by Clark's manager, Captain Coventry, and sentenced to twelve weeks imprisonment under the *Merchant Shipping Act* for refusing duty. At the end of their sentence they refused to return to the lugger and were again charged with refusing duty and sentenced to imprisonment. This was duly repeated at the end of each subsequent sentence. At the fifth of these trials (at Derby on 18 June 1891) they complained of ill-usage by their employer and, on the advice of the Resident Magistrate, put their grievance in writing. They claimed that they originally refused duty because the rations were insufficient and that

they were then strung up by the thumbs, with their toes barely touching the ground, for four days. In his written report the Resident Magistrate commented that the fact that the two men preferred continual imprisonment to returning to work and were quiet and hard-working in prison tended to confirm their story. The Crown Solicitor urged that the men should be released:

> '. . . It seems to me a most extraordinary[sic] way of doing justice between employer and employed and if the magistrate will take my advice he will dismiss the next charge that is laid against these men. It appears to me that they have practically been punished five times for the same offence. . . . Fancy 15 months for refusing to work, a mere breach of contract. I think the Governor should be asked to discharge the men'.

The Governor was so advised and the men were released on 4 September. Katō by this time had had enough and promptly left the district. Nagano remained and was duly charged again on 27 October. Although this time the Resident Magistrate merely imposed a bond of £20, this brought a sharp reproof from the Attorney-General who drew his attention to the fact that Section 159 of the *Merchant Shipping Act* required the master of the vessel to prove that the accused had been properly signed on in the presence of the local shipping-master and asked for an explanation why the Resident Magistrate had failed either to charge the master of the vessel with assault or to cause the Sub-Collector of Customs to conduct an inquiry with a view to revoking his ticket on the ground of tyrannous behaviour.[220]

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 subjects, most of whom employed by the Pearl Shelling companies in Broom and Cossack. I received many reports of complaints from the leading Japanese residents in the said districts and also in Roebourne, the main points of which are as follow. Generally the Japanese people are not treated fairly by the people in these localities, especially by their employers, and as there are no protectors of the Japanese labourers they are often treated in a very cruel manner like an animal and compelled often to work overtime without extra pay. As the whole of the Japanese are unable to speak English, several misunderstandings and disputes are of frequent occurence between the employers and employees and some were sent back to Singapore or other places while others were imprisoned for two or three months. . . . Through the fraud and deceit on the part of the employers some Japanese were compelled to continue their service with no wages for a year after the expiration of their agreement . . .'.

Insofar as the Consul gave only one example in support of these allegations, one suspects that much of the information that he had received was mere rumour and gossip and that it was therefore as exaggerated and one-sided as such material tends to be. Be this as it may, the report of the Resident Magistrate at Roebourne on the case cited by the consul, *Shotaro*[221] v. *Dennis*, indicates an appalling situation at Cossack, where an employer, with almost unbelievable effrontery, in defiance of a court order, had little 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 lugger, *Swallow* (then at anchor at Cossack), was served with a summons to attend Roebourne Courthouse (some 12 km. distant) to answer a claim brought by Higashi for £50 due to him as a diver on that vessel. Higashi set out on foot for Roebourne to confer with his lawyer regarding the case, whereupon Dennis informed the police that he had deserted and at 2.00 a.m. the following morning sent the *Swallow* to sea. In the opinion of the Resident Magistrate, Dennis's intention in sending the lugger to sea was to remove Higashi to prevent his being able to prosecute his claim in court on the 30 November and Higashi deserted because he had got wind of this. Such action by Dennis constituted an offence under Section 211 of the *Merchant Shipping Act* which required that when a seaman wished to make a complaint to a Justice of the Peace the Master of the vessel should permit him to go ashore.

The court at Roebourne on 30 November heard Higashi's claim, admitted several counter-claims by Dennis and disposed of the case by awarding Higashi £25 10s of the £50 he claimed. They also awarded him £4 8s. 6d. costs. Dennis was ordered to pay the £29 18s. 6d. within seven days.

On 7 December Dennis took Higashi to the Customs House at Cossack ostensibly to receive the £29 18s. 6d. On arrival there, although the terms of the order of 30 November were that the money be paid into court at Roebourne, 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, thereupon, heard the counter-claims and admitted them to the extent of £37 19s. Thus, instead of coming out the Customs House with £29 18s. 6d., Higashi left it £8 6d. in debt! Insofar as Section 137(2) of the *Merchant Shipping Act* empowers such officers to adjudicate wages disputes only with the written consent of both parties, Brown's action was patently illegal.

That night Higashi once more walked 25 km. to try and find out from his solicitor what was going on. The following day no sooner had he arrived back at Cossack than he was arrested, taken before a Cossack Justice of the Peace and sentenced to one month's imprisonment for his 'desertion' of 29 October!

A protest drafted by Higashi's solicitor was immediately telegraphed to the authorities in Perth. A fortnight later, on 22 December, when Higashi's sentence had still seventeen days to run, the Minister for Justice called for a report. On 23 February, seven weeks after Higashi had completed his sentence, the report was presented. On 23 March, the Consul was informed that 'if Shotaro Higashi's detention in gaol was illegal as suggested by the Resident Magistrate, he had his proper remedy at law which he did not take.'[224] Higashi did, however, get some satisfaction. It seems that he eventually received his £29 18s. 6d.- in view of the fact that Dennis had not paid this into court as ordered, a warrant of distress was issued for the seizure and sale of his schooner, *Daisy*.[222]

Some of the hardships were self-inflicted. By no means all the money earned was remitted home. Oku Yuhito, who first went to Broome in 1920 and whose experience as a diver continued there after World War II, is definite that only the divers and tenders were able to save money and remit it home.[223] There is fairly general agreement that gambling was a great problem.[224] For example, Ishikawa Shimpei of Izumo (whose father recruited labour for Hockings at Thursday Island from about 1902) considers that most of the men from the village lost their money in this fashion.[225] Conversely some, like Gon of Taiji, made gambling their occupation and, by the look of the houses they built on their return to Japan, did well out of it. Another renowned gambler, Yagura Taroichi, of Kushimoto did not return. He died at Thursday Island in the dysentery epidemic in 1911. The quality of his grave—one of the best preserved in the cemetery—attests the extent of his winnings. In 1919 one Miyata appears to have come to Broome solely for the purpose of milching his compatriots of their earnings at the Christmas lay-up. To enter Australia it was, of course, necessary for him to sign on as a member of a lugger's crew. This he did on 19 December. He was so useless afloat 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), Miyata had already remitted to Japan winnings amounting to £1000![226]

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, Sunter writes that 'they -or most of them, at any rate—imbibe intoxicating liquor freely'.[227] He was fair enough also to point out that this was a habit well represented among the other races. Life on the luggers would certainly generate a thirst and there would be little other entertainment available at lay-up time. Scattered evidence does survive of

Grave of Yagura Taroichi, Thursday Island

heavy drinking. For example, as we have already noted, one of the original group recruited by Captain Miller, died of alcoholic poisoning after two years at Thursday Island.[228] In Broome in 1896 the beheading of Takishita and subsequent suicide of Nakashima took place in the course of a child's birthday party when all the adults were under the influence of liquor.[229] Similarly, at Broome in February 1913 it was at a party on the foreshore after several hours hard drinking that Nishimura was stabbed to death in the course of a dispute over how to sing a song.[230]

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 employment by Australian pearlers 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 high proportion among illegal immigrants of people who had served in the industry before[231] or who were close relatives of people who had done so.[232] 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 Susami in 1973 Kosaka Seikichi spoke to me in warm terms of the kindness he received from the Jardine family for whom he had worked in Torres Strait before World War I.[233] Similarly Ogawa records how Hiramatsu Shimpachi, 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.[234] There was often mutual respect. When one speaks to former pearlers and former divers it is interesting to observe that when each searches for a word to describe the other race they often come up with 'honest'.

ENDNOTES

1. Northern Australia Development Committee, *Pearl Shell Beche-de-Mer and Trochus Industry of Northern Australia* (Melbourne, 1946), p. 42.
2. '*Immigration Restriction Act*, 1901 (No. 17 of 1901)', *The Acts of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia . . . 1901–02*, pp. 252–6.
3. 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1892–3', *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland*, 1894, vol. II, pp. 908–9.
4. Memorandum by A. Peters, 12 January 1915 [Australian Archives (hereafter cited as A.A.) A1 38/2336].
5. A.A. MP742 255/2/283.
6. A translation of the proclamation is given in John R. Black, *Young Japan. Yokohama and Yedo . . .*, vol. I (London, 1880), pp. 416–17.
7. Article X of 'Convention. . . . Modifying the Tariff of Import and Export Duties in the Trade Regulations of Japan. Signed . . . June 25, 1866' in Edward Hertslet (comp.), *A Complete Collection of the Treaties and Conventions and Reciprocal Regulations at Present Subsisting between Great Britain and Foreign Powers . . .*, vol. XII (London, 1871), pp. 603–4.
8. For example *Argus*, 5 August 1878.
9. Notification of Alexander Marks' appointment as Consul for Japan in *Victoria Government Gazette*, 13 February 1880, p. 359. See also the Archives of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter cited as J.M.F.A.) 6.1.3.9.7 (Australian National Library microfilm collection (hereafter cited as ANL microfilm) reel G16175).
10. Japan. Ministry of Foreign Affairs *Nihon-Gaiko Nempyo*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Rengo Kyokai, 1955), pp. 98, 101.
11. T. Hattori, *Nankyū no Shinshokumin Thursday Island* (Tokyo: Hakubunsha, 1894), pp. 9–10 and K. Watanabe, *Goshū Tanken Hokokusho* (Tokyo, Gaimushō, 1894), p. 194.
12. Police Magistrate, Somerset to Colonial Secretary, 18 February 1875 [Queensland State Archives (hereafter cited as Q.S.A.) CPS 13C/GI]. The author is indebted to Sr Mary Albertus O.P. for bringing this document to his attention.
13. Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne to Vice-Minister Foreign Affairs, No. 1, 24 February 1885, *Nihon Gaikō Bunsho* (hereafter cited as *N.G.B.*) 1885, pp. 524–31.
14. Masuda Sanjirō to Masuda Mankichi, 19 March 1884, *N.G.B.*, 1884, p. 487.
15. J. A. Miller, manager of the Australasian Pearl Company, was born in Newburg, Fife in 1842 and settled in Australia in about 1876 when he was captain of one of the Eastern and Australian Mail Company's ships operating between China and Australia. In this capacity he achieved some distinction in 1877 when, as Captain of the *Bowen*, he pioneered a shorter north-south route through the Louisiade Archipelago to the Jomard entrance to the Coral Sea. Although it is not clear exactly when he turned to pearling, the move appears to have brought him substantial profits. As well as the Australasian Pearl Company (which operated from Prince of Wales Island) he also had shares in

the Queensland Pearl Fishing Company. In conversation with fellow pearlers he put his assets as 'worth about £8000 or £9000 cash besides land and shares'. *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 11 October 1884; 'The New Track from China to Australia', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1877; and Inquest Number 440 of 1884 (Q.S.A. JUS.N108).

16. For details of these ventures, see T. Irie, *Hojin Kaigai Hattatshashi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Ida Shoten, 1942), pp. 25–6.

17. Law 295 of 1872. For the text of this law see *N.G.B.* 1883, p. 442. For the *Maria Luz* case which gave rise to this legislation see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1873*, vol. 1 (Washington, 1874), pp. 533–52. For the causal relationship between this case and the legislation see the editorial in the *Japan Weekly Mail*, 9 November 1872.

18. Governor, Kanagawa Prefecture to Asada, 2 May 1883, *N.G.B.*, 1883, p. 440.

19. Asada to Governor, Kanagawa Prefecture, 6 August 1883, *N.G.B.*, 1883, p. 440.

20. The English and Japanese texts of the Miller contracts are available in J.M.F.A. 3.8.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G16174).

21. As for endnote 14.

22. J.M.F.A. 3.8.4.4. (ANL microfilm reel G16174).

23. S. Kyuhara, 'Toresu Kaikyō ni okeru Shinjukai Gyogyo to Nihonjin no Iseki'. *Chiri*, vol. 22, no. 2 (May 1977), p. 78. The author is indebted to Mr. K. Kyūhara for providing him with the list of the names and prefectures of origin of these sixty-nine, which he compiled from the Foreign Ministry's register of passports issued at Kobe in 1884.

24. H. Ikemura (*ed.*), *Wakayamaken Imnshi* (Wakayama Kenchō, 1957), p. 1099.

25. N. Oshimoto, 'Tasuke Monogatari', *Iju Kenkyu*, 11 (February 1975), pp. 91–108.

26. T. Ogawa to Sissons, 30 March, 1974

27. R. H. Brunton, 'The Japan Lights', *Minutes and Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 1876–77, Part 1, pp. 1–41.

28. *Japan Chronicle*, 26 September 1914. The author is indebted to Mr. H. S. Williams of Kobe for this information.

29. For the varying versions of the local oral traditions see Ikemura, p. 191; K. Iwasaki, *Chinjaku Hyōron*, vol. 13, no. 3 (1937), pp. 123–4 and *Gōshi no Katsuru Zadankai* [Proceedings of a Discussion on Local History held in the Assembly Hall of Kushimoto Primary School, 16 September 1940]. The author is indebted to Mr. Ogawa for drawing his attention to the latter document.

30. Ikemura, pp. 79–97, 124–6.

31. As for endnote 14.

32. D. Sissons, 'Japanese in the Northern Territory 1884–1902', *South Australiana*, vol. 16, no. 1 (March 1977), pp. 4–5

33. Yamamato (Thursday Island) to Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne, 18 July 1884, *N.G.B.*, 1884, p. 479.

34. Vice-Minister to Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne, no. 17, 14 November 1884, *N.G.B.*, 1884, p. 483; Minister for Foreign Affairs to Governor, Hyogo Prefecture, 31 October 1884, J.F.M.A. 3.8.4.7 (ANL microfilm reel G16163).

35. Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne to Vice-Minister, no. 1, 24 February 1885, *N.G.B.*, 1885, pp. 524–31; Report by Governor, Wakayama Prefecture to Governor, Hyōgo Prefecture, 11 June 1887 on interrogation of Ogawa Kichibei and three other men on Fearon-Low contracts who had returned from Australia, J.F.M.A. 3.8.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G16174); Report by Governor, Kanagawa Prefecture to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 13 December 1884 on interrogation of Takizaki Takejiro, a pumper under contract to Captain Miller who arrived at Yokohama 29 November 1884, repatriated on medical grounds, J.F.M.A. 3.8.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G16174).

36. Takizaki interrogation cited in endnote 35.

37. Report by Governor, Kanagawa Prefecture to Minister for Foreign Affairs, 17 March 1885 on interrogation of Taniguchi Magoshichi and Morishita Senkichi, a diver and tender under contract to Captain Miller and repatriated on medical grounds, J.F.M.A. 3.8.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G16174). See also Takizaki interrogation cited in endnote 35. It appears that failure to pay wages when due was a problem that continued in later years. For example, in 1914 at Broome there were some cases where crews' wages were eight or nine months in arrears (Sub-Collector of Customs, Broome to Collector of Customs, Fremantle, 28 January 1915, A.A. A1 17, 122251).

38. W. T. Boore to Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne, 23 June 1885, J.F.M.A. 3.8.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G16174). On 2 October 1885 in his evidence in Nakayama *v.* Boore, Boore admitted striking Nakayama. See Court of Petty Sessions, Thursday Island, Deposition and Minute Book (Q.S.A. CPS 13D, Pl, pp. 504–7).

39. Marks reported [J.F.M.A. 3.8.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G16174)] that at the time of his visit to Thursday Island in January 1885, in addition to the thirty-four men contracted to Miller and then working for his successor, Boore (Prince of Wales Island) Japanese were employed in the industry as follows:

Prince of Wales Island	
R. Williams	15
J. A. Reddell	13
Bruce	3
Longley	2
Kirkpatrick	2
Smith and Rickinson	1
Friday Island	
O'Hagan and McAllister	13
Clark	12
Mott	7
J. Brennan	3
Dubbins	3
Wer-Weer Island	
F. Summers	17
Hammond Island	
Parkyns	3
Goode Island	
Pearson	1

40. Ogawa interrogation cited in endnote 35

41. Masuda Sannosuke to Governor, Kanagawa Prefecture, 9 March, 1886, *N.G.B.*, 1886, pp. 508–11; Ogawa interrogation cited in endnote 35; Taniguchi and Morishita interrogation cited in endnote 37.

42. Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne to Vice-Minister, 24 February 1885, cited in endnote 35.

43. Stated by Masuda in correspondence cited in endnote 41.

44. As for endnote 42

45. First two sources cited in endnote 35.

46. Ogawa interrogation cited in endnote 35.

47. Williams *v.* Nishi, 29 August 1885 in Court of Petty Sessions, Thursday Island, Deposition and Minute Book (Q.S.A. CPS 13D, Pl, pp. 461–3)

48. Inquest no. 510 of 1885 (Q.S.A. JUS.N124).

49. As for endnote 41

50. From Taniguchi and Morishita it is evident that seven had been repatriated sick by March 1885. According to Masuda ten had been repatriated sick by October 1885. The latter figure, however, includes at least one who was discharged and repatriated for misconduct.

51. Nakao Kensosuke (Yagasiera Kerchers, 18 May 1884, inflammation of the bowels, Wer-Weer Island)
Asafuru Genzo (Asafuru Kewyo, 13 June 1884, 'after twenty-one days illness', Prince of Wales Island).
Taniguchi Hachigoro (Taneguche Hachigoro, 16 November 1884, dysentery, Prince of Wales Island).
Nakamura Kyazo (Makiamon Koyo, 6 March 1885, dysentery, Prince of Wales Island)
Sugai Ryosuke (Sejia Joskie, 22 September 1885, alcoholic poisoning, Thursday Island)
(The material in brackets is taken from the State Registers of Deaths).

52. Uemura Kajiro (Nyomura Kajuro, 5 February 1885, fever, Thursday Island)
Takida Ichisaburo (Takada Ichisahuro, 9 January 1886, heart disease, Prince of Wales Island).
Takadani Chasaburō (Takadaschi Sabaro, 9 January 1886, heart disease, Prince of Wales Island).
Miyamoto Kamekichi (Miyamoto Kamikichi, 17 April 1885, dropsy, Derby).
Nishimoto Naosaburō (Nishamoto Naosaburo, 29 April 1885, measles, Derby).

53. Vice-Minister to Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne, no. 10, 19 February 1886, *N.G.B.*, 1886, p. 507

54. Minister for Foreign Affairs to Governors of Kanagawa and other Prefectures, 20 March 1886, *N.G.B.*, 1886, p. 511.

55. The passport of Akemoto Chuzaburō who was murdered on the lugger *Gamecock* off Moa Island on 22 February 1887, was issued in Kobe on 9 February 1885 in response to an application by him in which he stated that he intended to leave for Thursday Island from Kobe on the S.S. *Thibet* that day to work for Fearon, Low and Company. A copy of his contract survives, bearing the serial number 60. The Australian firm originating this order was Scott, Henderson, and Company [J.F.M.A. 4.2.5.11 (ANL microfilm reel G16165)].

56. Foreign Minister to Governor, Hyogo Prefecture, 31 October 1884. This is the first paper in the Ministry's file on the Villiard venture [J.M.F.A. 3.8.4.7 (ANL microfilm reel G16163)] from which, except where it is stated to the contrary, the information that follows is derived.

57. Its itinerary as indicated in the 'Amusements' columns of the metropolitan press was

Sydney	24 April–10 July 1886
Melbourne	24 July 1886–13 January 1887
Hobart	15 January–8 February 1887
Brisbane	22 April–7 May 1887
Adelaide	18 June–23 July 1887

58. *Brisbane Courier*, 23 April 1887, p. 5, col. 2.

59. Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne to Vice-Minister, no. 26, 29 July 1886; no. 27, 27 August 1886.

60. Marks to Willard, 13 August 1886.

61. W. H. MacFarlane, 'Stories of Japanese Discovery in Australia', *Papers and Proceedings [of the] Tasmanian Historical Research Association*, vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1955), pp. 15–17.

62. S. Kaburagi, *Zenlya Gohei no Kenkyu* (Tokyo: Zenigo Kenshokai, 1954), pp. 169–70.

63. The 'Shipping Intelligence' column in the *Argus* indicates that some members of the company crossed *via* Launceston on 11 January (S.S. *Flinders*) and on 14 January (S.S. *Pateena*). But some could also have travelled *via* Devonport on 12 January (S.S. *Mangana*).

64. J.M.F.A. 3.8.4.4 (ANL microfilm reel G16174).

65. J.M.F.A. 4.2.5.111 (ANL microfilm reel G16165).

66. Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne to Vice-Minister, 7 February 1889, *N.G.B.*, 1889, p. 569; Nakayama Yasubei to Japanese Consul, Hong Kong and Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne, 27 July 1885, *N.G.B.*, 1885, p. 541.

67. Watanabe, p. 196.

68. Although after 1892 a number of large 'emigration companies' were floated in Japan and although from that year some of these handled contract emigrants for the Queensland canefields, the first contracts for the pearling industry handled by any of these companies were in 1898. These 1898 contracts involving a total of 282 emigrants appear to have been for Western Australia and Darwin. The first Thursday Island contracts handled by these companies were at the end of 1901. (Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Imin-toriatsukomin ni yoru Iriun no Enkaku* (1909), pp. 55–70).

69. The Colonial Secretary's Office file 1612/91 in the Western Australian State Archives (hereafter cited as W.A.S.A.) contains a contract signed in Singapore by 'The Pearling and Trading Company' of Western Australia and five Japanese on 12 July 1890.

70. Japanese Consul, Hong Kong to Vice-Minister, no. 34, 16 September 1887, *N.G.B.*, 1886, p. 512.

71. Watanabe, p. 197. A short article appearing in the *Yamuru Shimbun* on 19 April 1893 was even more encouraging, claiming that emigrants were sending home from ¥300 to ¥900 each a year.

72. Takizaki interrogation cited in endnote 35; Tanaguchi and Morishita interrogation cited in endnote 37.

73. Iwasaki, p. 123.

74. Interview by D. C. S. Sissons with Hama, Iwaki, Kishino, Hamaguchi, Unojiro, Takenaka Yasuichi, Oku Fujinosuke, and Yasui Masao, at Miwasaki, 27 December 1978.

75. Examples are Ozaki Kihei whom Hattori (cited in endnote 11) mentions as owning a lugger at Thursday Island in 1893 and Eōina Torakichi and Urita Jin'emon who were members of the Thursday Island syndicate that drew *Carbine* in Tattersall's 1890 Melbourne Cup sweep.

76. Hattori, p. 18. 106 passports for Australia were issued to applicants from Wakayama prefecture in 1892 (Ikemura, p. 304). According to Watanabe (p. 196) ninety per cent of the 1893 arrivals were from that prefecture.

77. Evidence of W. J. Boore in Nakayama v. Boore, 2 October 1885 cited in endnote 26.

78. The information that follows about these groups is derived from the text of a contract signed in Wakayama prefecture on 13 December 1892 reproduced in full in Watanabe (pp. 197–200) together with his comments on it.

79. *Imin-toriatsukainin . . .*, pp. 55–70. This also seems to be indicated by the evidence presented to the Hamilton Commission *Q.V.P.*, 1897, vol. II, pp. 1273–350). For example at p. 31 (Question 909) Sato Torairō testifies that the Japanese who came to Thursday Island came 'by themselves' and not 'under engagements'.

80. Masuda Sanjirō to Masuda Mankichi, 19 March 1884, *N.G.B.*, 1884, pp. 485–9.

81. *Report of a Committee Appointed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Consider and Report upon the Conditions of Deep-Water Diving . . .* (London, 1907), p. 63.

82. Inspector of Pearl-Shell Fisheries, Report for the Season 1888–89 (W.A.S.A., CSO 240/89).

83. 'Tanaka' aged 38 died 26 August 1890. The death was registered by Captain E. L. Parkes of the schooner *Willie* on 22 July 1891. This may be the 'Tanaka' whose tombstone (26 June 1890) survives in the Cossack cemetery.

84. See note on "Diver's Paralysis" sent from Admiralty Gulf, Western Australia by P. W. Bassett-Smith (Surgeon aboard H.M.S. *Penguin*), printed in *Lancet*, 6 February 1892, pp. 309–10).

85. 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1892–3', *Q.V.P.*, 1894, vol. II, p. 911. The details derived from the Somerset Register of Deaths are

Name	Date	Vessel and Place	Place of Burial	Age and Birthplace	Duration of stay in Queensland
Numba, Toyokichi	11 March 1893	*Motomachi* Darnley Island	Thursday Island	27 Osaka	7 years
Yoshioka	21 June 1893	*Nana* Banks Island	Thursday Island	27	13 months
Shimamoto, Otomatsu	29 July 1893		Thursday Island	25 Kushimoto	
Nakagawa, Toyokichi	30 September 1893	*Emerald* Darnley Island	Thursday Island	25 Danbarramura Hiroshima	2 years
Hamada	? October 1893	Apparently death was not registered.			

86. These calculations are on the basis of the wages in the Miller and Pearson-Low contracts: £2 a month. Since the employer did not have to provide the passage, the wage secured would probably have been about £2 10s. Furthermore, in a group of ten, after the first year at least one could be expected to become a diver (£10 a month plus £10 a ton) and nominate one of his colleagues as tender (£4 a month). With wages of this order the return to the lenders in the contract cited by Watanabe would be 41 per cent compound interest for a three-year loan.

87. 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1892–3', *Q.V.P.*, 1894, vol. II, p. 909 and Ishihara Kōzo to Mayor of Kushimoto written at Thursday Island in February 1893. Quoted Ikemura, p. 578.

88. *N.G.B.*, 1891, p. 442.

89. Professor Y. Wakatsuki makes this point in 'Imin Seisaku Hyakunenshi' (one of the very few treatments that have been written of the history of Japanese emigration policy), *Rekishi Koron*, vol. 5, no. 1 (January 1979), p. 48. See also D. C. S. Sissons, 'The Immigration Question in Australian Diplomatic Relations with Japan' presented at the 43rd ANZAAS Congress, Brisbane, 1971 (ANL ms 3092).

90. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 September 1880, p. 8, col. 2.

91. Hattori, pp. 10–11.

92. Court of Petty Sessions, Thursday Island, Deposition and Minute Book, 26 December 1888, p. 193.

93. The author is indebted to Mr. S. Kyūhara of the Shogyō Kōtō Gakkō at Shingu, Wakayama prefecture for this information.
Nakagawa's association with the Catholic faith appears to have been quite atypical. The answers given by the Thursday Island Japanese in the Queensland census of 1901 suggest that of Christian denominations, the Church of England had a virtual monopoly.

Religious Denomination	Males	Females
Pagan (and Mahometan)	254	
Church of England	71	4
Wesleyan	1	4
Other Protestants	0	0
Other religions	510	37

A check of the Register of Deaths for the Somerset District up to 1899 indicates that most of the Japanese at Thursday Island, irrespective of whether or not they were Christians, had Church of England funerals! (Perhaps this was included in the undertaker's standard fee?) The only Japanese to be buried by

the Catholic priest was Shime herself. She was shot by a diver named Yosuke on 26 October 1895 during a visit to Thursday Island to wind up the estate of Nakagawa who died in Japan on 12 December 1893. That Shime was a Catholic may probably be attributed to the fact that she came from Nagasaki, a stronghold of Japanese Catholicism.

94. *Queenslander*, 6 December 1890, p. 1060, col. 3; 13 December 1890, p. 1108, col. 3.

95. The information that follows was kindly provided by Mr. T. Ogawa of Tanabe-shi in a letter dated 30 March 1974.

96. Interview with Suzuki Sakuhei, at Jackett's flour-mill, Burnley, 27 June, 1954; 7 November 1954.

97. Watanabe, pp. 195–6.

98. Watanabe, p. 161.

99. Watanabe, pp. 206–7.

100. Government Resident, Thursday Island to Colonial Secretary, 2 October 1893 (Q.S.A. TRE/102).

101. Government Resident, Thursday Island to Colonial Secretary, 21 November 1893 (Q.S.A. TRE/30).

102. Chief Secretary to Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne, 21 November 1893 (Q.S.A. TRE/102).

103. 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1892–3', *Q.V.P.*, 1894, vol. 2, pp. 907–21 and Ikemura, p. 578.

104. Government Resident, Thursday Island to Colonial Secretary, 12 July 1895 (Q.S.A. PRE/102).

105. 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1894–95' *Q.V.P.*, 1896, vol. 1, pp. 501–11. For additional evidence of the manner in which the supply of labour from Japan adjusted itself to a fall in the rate of wages at Thursday Island see Evidence of Forbes Hudson to Hamilton Commission on 28 April 1897, at p. 11, Question 262. 'Report together with Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings of the Laws Regulating the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Fisheries in the Colony', *Q.V.P.*, 1897, vol. II, p. 1273–1350 (hereafter cited as the Hamilton Commission).

106. Vice-Minister to Governors, Hyōgo and Wakayama prefectures, Shinden 59, 13 July 1894. *N.G.B.*, 1894, p. 659.

107. For example, Pilot Cultivation Company to Colonial Treasurer, 4 December 1893 (Q.S.A. TRE/30).

108. *Brisbane Courier*, 17 November 1893.

109. 'Pearl Shell Statistics, Thursday Island, for the Year 1889–96, Inclusive' published as Appendix Z to Hamilton Commission Report, *Q.V.P.*, 1897, vol. II, p. 1351.

110. Government Resident, Thursday Island to Principal Under Secretary, 18 July 1894 (Q.S.A. PRE/102 Col. Sec. 95-9193).

111. J. P. S. Bach, The Pearling Industry of Australia. An Account of Its Social and Economic Activity [A.A. CDS/33, p. 96].

112. Hamilton Commission Report, *Q.V.P.*, 1897, vol. II, pp. 1302, 1309.

113. '*Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Fishery Acts Amendment Act of 1898* (63 Vic., No. 31)' *Q.G.G.*, vol. LXXII, no. 65 (29 August 1899), pp. [549]–50.

114. See for example the remarks of the Government Resident at Thursday Island as reported in the *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 20 December 1897.

115. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, vol. LXXX (1898), p. 1620.

116. *Q.P.D.*, vol. LXXX (1898), p. 1622.

117. Vice-Minister to Superintendent of Police and Prefectural Governors, 9 June 1897, *N.G.B.*, 1897, pp. 602–5; Vice-Minister to Superintendent of Police and Prefectural Governors, 9 September 1897, J.F.M.A. 3.8.2.33 (ANL microfilm reel G4974).

118. Text of memorandum to 'Employers of Japanese Labour' approved by Queensland Cabinet, 16 August 1898 (Q.S.A. PRE/102).

119. Minutes on applications by Bowden Brothers, 20 September 1898 (Q.S.A. 55-1 in-letter 2393 of 1898), and 14 April 1899 (Q.S.A. 55-1 in-letter 2903 of 1899) to recruit crewmen in Japan.

120. Sato Torajiro, the principal Japanese boatowner on Thursday Island in a letter dated 19 September 1899, addressed jointly to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, claimed that seventy-two indentured Filipinos were landed on 26 August 1899 and fifty-two on 3 September 1899 [J.F.M.A. 3.8.2.33 (ANL microfilm reel G4975)]. The statistics collected by the Dashwood Commission in 1902 indicate that greater use was made of Pacific and Torres Strait islanders, whose numbers on the shipping articles rose from 210 and 150 in 1898 to 331 and 230 in 1901 ('Statistics of Pearl-Shell Fishery in Torres Straits for years 1897–1901', published as Appendix O to 'Report [of the] Pearl-Shelling industry in Port Darwin and Northern Territory by . . . Judge Dashwood . . .', *Printed Papers Presented to the Commonwealth Parliament*, 1901–02, vol. II, p. [1010]).

121. Chief Secretary, Queensland to . . . Japanese . . . Consul, Townsville, 3 October 1900, in 'Admission of Japanese into Queensland (Further Correspondence relating to) Return to an Address . . .', *Q.V.P.*, 1901, vol. IV, pp. [1140]–1, vol. IV, pp. [1140]–1.

122. Statement Showing Number of Japanese Indented for, and Approved of, since October 1900 [Q.S.A. PRE/106].

123. Appendix O to Dashwood Report (cited in endnote 120).

124. Supreme Court, Townsville Registry, Liquidation Files 1900, No. 8 [Q.S.A. SCT 11/W24].

125. 'Royal Commission on the Pearl-Shelling Industry—Minutes of Evidence, Appendices and Indices', *C.P.P.*, 1913, vol. III, pp. 593–805 (hereafter cited as Bamford Commission—Minutes), Evidence of Alfred Hunt, Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 5 August 1912, p. 138, Question 3590.

126. Appendix D to Bamford Commission—Minutes.

127. 'Return of Coloured Seamen Engaged in the Pearling Industry', enclosed in External Affairs memorandum by A. Peters, 12 January 1915 [A.A. A1/38, 2536].

128. Bamford Commission—Minutes, Evidence of R. H. Allen, Shipping Master at Thursday Island, 10 May 1912, p. 40, Question 936.

129. Note on the file by E. B[atchelor], 10 October 1910 [A.A. A1/14-2487].

130. Memorandum by E. B[atchelor], 2 January 1911 [A.A. A1/11-17516]. This was quoted in the House of Representatives by Frederick Bamford on 26 October 1911 (*Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, vol. 61 (1911), p. 1867).

131. Remarks by the President, Western Australian Pearlers Association at its meeting, 5 September 1913. *West Australian*, 15 September 1913, p. 7, col. 6.

132. Note on the file by E. B[atchelor], 1 April 1911 [A.A. A1/11/17576].

133. Secretary, Department of External Affairs to Collectors of Customs, 11 June 1912 [A.A. A1/11-17576].

134. Secretary, Royal Commission to Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 14 July 1913 [A.A. A1/38-2336].

135. Secretary, Department of External Affairs to Sub-Collector of Customs, Broome, 22 July 1912 (A.A. A1/38-2336).

136. As for endnote 131.

137. As for endnote 131.

138. A.A. A1/23, 2606.

139. Pearl-Shelling Industry. Report and Recommendations of (the Bamford) Royal Commission, *C.P.P.*, 1914–15–16–17, vol. V, p. [836].

140. As for endnote 139.

141. As for endnote 139.

142. Bamford Commission—Minutes, Question 607.

143. Bamford Commission—Minutes, p. 43, Question 1004.

144. Evidence of Secretary, [Western Australian] Pearling Association (Stanley Pigott) before the Bamford Commission, *West Australian*, 1 May 1916, p. 6, cols. 2–3.

145. Evidence of C. B. Alexander to the Bamford Commission, *West Australian*, 27 April 1916, p. 8, col. 5–6.

146. Evidence of Pigott (endnote 144), Alexander (endnote 145), Challanor (*West Australian*, 27 April 1916) and Stuart (*West Australian*, 29 April 1916).

147. Prime Minister to Premier, Western Australia, 22 October 1919 [A.A. A1/38-2336].

148. Minute by G. F. Pearce, 27 October 1923 upon A. R. P[eters] 'Pearling Industry—Indented Crews', 11 October 1923 [A.A. A1/38-2336].

149. See for example pp. 3–4 of the report by A. C. Gregory (Lieutenant, R.A.N.R.) to Secretary, Navy Office, 7 January 1921 [A.A. A1606/SC C18/1].

150. A.A. 24/4618.

151. 'Report of the Marine Department for the year 1919-20', *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, 1920, vol. II, p. [574]. 'Report of the Marine Department for the Year Ended 30th June, 1926', *Q.P.P.*, 1926, vol. II, p. 933.

152. 'Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Working of the Pearl-Shell and Bêche-de-Mer Industries . . .' (hereafter cited as the Mackay Commission) p. 30, Question 802, *Q.P.P.*, 1908, vol. II, pp. 395–796. See also the testimony of E. Munro (p. 18, Question 428), K. O. Mackenzie (p. 116, Question 3714) and J. Mitchell (p. 92, Question 2816).

153. Evidence of J. W. Tilley before the Bamford Commission, *West Australian*, 19 April 1916, p. 7, col. 1.

154. Evidence of Inspector of Fisheries and Pearling, Broome to the Bamford Commission, *West Australian*, 19 April 1916, p. 7, col. 1.

155. Evidence of W. Banger to the Bamford Commission, *West Australian*, 19 April 1916, p. 7, col. 1.

156. As for endnote 155. See also memorandum from Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 8 March 1911 [A.A. A1 11/17576].

157. Evidence of E. W. Cleveland, Mackay Commission, p. 143, Question 4554. See also evidence of A. Sinclair, Bamford Commission—Minutes, p. 55, Question 1362.

158. As for endnote 74.

159. Interview of 19 January 1974. A report of this interview is given in Oshimoto, p. 98.

160. Evidence of T. Kashiwagi, Mackay Commission, p. 641.

161. Iwasaki, p. 124.

162. Evidence of W. Noetke, Dashwood Commission, p. 84, Question 2090.

163. 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1894-95', *Q.V.P.*, 1896, vol. I, p. 503. Captain Mackay's more colourful picture of other Japanese vying to put on the dead man's dress as soon as he was brought to the surface (see Bamford Committee—Minutes, Question 4753), should, perhaps be treated with some reserve. He appears to be relying on the evidence of H. A. Collis (Question 3171). As his employer had never used Japanese divers (Mackay Commission, Question 5856), this could not have happened on any boat on which Collis himself was working. His memory may have been inaccurate: it was nine years since he had been a diver. A more typical response appears to have been that described by W. M. Hayne to the Bamford Commission (Question 1593): all the boats carry a Japanese flag, and when for instance, a Japanese diver dies, the flag is hoisted half-mast. We all know what that signal means'.

164. *Report of a Committee Appointed by the . . . Admiralty . . . upon the Conditions of Deep-Water Diving*, pp. 64–6.

165. Report and Recommendations of the Bamford Commission, *C.P.P.*, 1914, 15–16, 17, vol. V, p. 835, and evidence of A. C. Gregory, *West Australian*, 3 May 1916, p. 7, col. 9.

166. Bamford Commission—Minutes, Questions 1335–7; Hamilton Commission, Question 819; Mackay Commission, Question 2265.

167. 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1892–3', *Q.V.P.*, 1894, vol. II, p. 911.

168. Hamilton Commission, p. xxxvi and Question 820.

169. Bamford Commission—Minutes, Questions 1335–7.

170. Mackay Commission, Question 2281.

171. Mackay Commission, Question 2283.

172. To the three white men mentioned by Douglas in his 'Report of the Government Resident at Thursday Island for 1894–95', *Q.V.P.*, 1896, vol. I, p. 505)—H. Allen (d. 15 May 1893), W. Mapplebeck (d. 3 July 1893), E. Buffet (d. 7 September 1893), one can add A. Eeklund (a Swede) (d. 24 September 1893). It is also probable that J. Joyce (of Norfolk Island) (d. 30 April 1893) was preponderantly Caucasian (see endnote 167).

173. *West Australian*, 15 June 1912. According to the Haldane tables the stages should have been at 30 ft., 3 minutes; at 20 ft., 10 minutes; at 10 ft., 14 minutes.

174. Bamford Commission, Evidence of A. C. Gregory, *West Australian*, 3 May 1916.

175. As for endnote 74. Particulars are

Name	Date of Birth	Employer	Date of first arrival at Thursday Island
Hama	1897	Waiben Co. (Burns Philp & Co.)	1913
Iwaki	1909	Farquhar & Co.	1922
Kashino	1907	Hennessy & Co.	1922
Hamaguchi Unojiro	1911	Burns, Philp & Co.	1927
Takenaka Yasuichi	1908	Burns, Philp & Co.	1927
Oku Fujinosuki	1911	Wanetta Co. (Hockings)	1929
Yasui Masao	1914	Waiben Co. (Burns, Philp & Co.)	1937

176. Bamford Commission, testimony of J. Challoner and J. Olson, *West Australian*, 27 April 1916, 19 April 1916. See also Bamford Commission—Minutes, evidence of T. J. Farquhar, 14 May 1912, Questions 1862–4.

177. *Bessatsu Bungei Shunju*, No. 137 (August 1976), p. 68.

178. As for endnote 167.

179. Shiba, p. 28.

180. Iwasaki, pp. 118–24.

181. Ikemura, p. 1100.

182. Oshimoto, pp. 102–3.

183. 'Causes of Deaths of Coloured Seamen Engaged in the Pearling Industry from 1st January, 1910, to 30th June, 1912' published as Appendix E to Bamford Commission—Minutes.

184. 'Return . . . [on the] Pearling Industry, Broome, Western Australia', *C.P.P.*, 1913, vol. III, pp. [571–6].

185. Apparently under the Commonwealth Workmen's Compensation Ordinance of the Northern Territory Japanese employed in the industry at Darwin were covered in the same manner as Australian workers (Secretary, Department of the Interior to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 26 September 1934 [A.A. 981, Far East 5 Part 16]).

186. Premier, Queensland to Prime Minister, 8 November 1934 [A.A. 981 Far East 5 Part 16].

187. Acting Premier, Western Australia to Prime Minister, 1 December 1934 [A.A. CP 327/5 Folder 4 Bundle 1 C500.14].

188. Australian Eastern Mission: Report on Trade between Australia and Japan, 30 July 1934, p. 16 [A.A. A981 Far East 5 Part 16].

189. Despatch from Minister for Foreign Affairs to Japanese Consul-General, Sydney, Tsu J Kimitsu No. 38, 20 October 1934. Telegram from Japanese Consul-General, Sydney to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Kansho no. 26, 21 February 1935 [J.M.F.A. B.2.0.0. J/Bl, vols. 5–6 (ANL microfilm reel G16169)].

190. E. Hamanaka, 'Kaigai Hatten no Tembo, Part 5', *Geiha: Taijimachi Kominkan-ho*, (1976).

191. Kyūhara to Sissons, 26 July 1976.

192. Somerset Register of Deaths.

193. As for endnote 183.

194. A.A. A1928 70/2.

195. A.A. A1928 927/14.

196. A.A. 1928 70/1.

197. Register of Deaths, Broome, No. 30 of 1900.

198. Sub-Inspector of Police, Mellvor to Inspector of Police, Cooktown, 7 October 1893 filed with Honorary Japanese Consul, Melbourne to Chief Secretary, 27 November 1893 [Q.S.A. COL/A755, in-letter 14020 of 1893]. Other papers relating to this incident are filed with the letter.

199. Honorary Japanese Consul Melbourne to Vice-Minister, No. 11, 14 March 1894, J.M.F.A. 4.2.5.144 (ANL microfilm G16166).

200. A.A. A452/53/104. See also G. H. Sunter, *Adventures of a Trepang Fisher . . . of Northern Australia* (London, 1937), pp. 162–4.

201. A.A. A461 L. 300/1.

202. A.A. A432 35/646; A.A. A431 47/1434.

203. Japanese Society, Broome to Japanese Consul-General, Sydney, 8 January 1921, J.M.F.A. 4.2.5.168 [ANL microfilm reel G16166].

204. *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, 20 December 1895; 27 December 1895.

205. A.A. (Melbourne Office) MP84 1877/3/8.

206. A.A. A1606 C18/1.

207. W.A.S.A. Police C.O. no. 7641/1914.

208. A.A. A1606 SC C18/1.

209. Sub-Inspector of Police, Thursday Island to Inspector of Police, Cairns, 20 May 1912 [Q.S.A. Police 907 inj.

210. T. Ogawa, *Arafura-kai no Shinju* (Tokyo: Miyuki Shuppan, 1976 at pp. 88–9) quotes the diary of an eye-witness, Takimoto Manichi for 27 September and 1 October 1918 (?). According to Takimoto the incident began in the lugger 'Kyatton' [Japanese phonetic spelling] and, as a result, the latter's Japanese diver was in danger of being prosecuted and deported. If the year of the diary entry is 1919, then this could be the incident referred to in Sub-District Naval Officer, Thursday Island to Naval Board, 19 February 1920 [A.A. A1 38/2336.]

212. Ogawa, p. 197. For a newspaper account of the trial see *Brisbane Courier*, 20 November 1907, 21 November 1907.

213. *Brisbane Courier*, 24 October 1908.

214. Ogawa, p. 122. The Japanese came ashore at Manifold Island (south of Port Clinton). There they split into two groups: one arrived at the lighthouse on Pine Islet in the dinghy on 13 April; the other reached civilization at Raspberry Creek on 27 April after having walked overland for ten days (*Morning Bulletin*, 22 April 1921; 7 May 1921; 11 May 1921 and *Capricornian*, 28 May 1921). The fact that the stories given by the two groups of survivors regarding the fate of the islanders do not quite tally gives additional weight to Ogawa's account.

215. Inquest No. 346 of 1914 (Q.S.A. JUS/N557).

216. Ogawa, pp. 124–8.

217. Ogawa to Sissons, 19 September 1974.

218. Q.S.A. TRE/30.

219. It would appear that the Crown Solicitor was here using the word 'extraordinary' to mean 'outrageous' rather than 'unusual'. At Thursday Island, Sano, engaged on 24 June 1884 on a three years' contract, and deserted on 3 November 1884, was sentenced to four weeks gaol. He refused to return to duty and on 1 December 1884 was sentenced to eight weeks gaol. On 26 January 1895 he was again charged by the same employer for refusing to return and was sent to gaol for another five weeks [Q.S.A. CPS 13/D/PI, pp. 313, 323, 351]

220. W.A.S.A. CSO 1612/91.

221. Actually Shōtarō was the plaintiff's given name. His surname was Higashi.

222. J.M.F.A. 4.2.8.22 (ANL microfilm reel G16164)

223. Interview by D. Sissons with Oku Yuhito at Taiji, 26 December 1978.

224. Sumer (p. 178) speaks of gambling as an 'obsession' among the Japanese in the industry at Darwin. Similarly at Broome, according to the late H.V. Howe (master pearler, 1907–26) 'most of their money went on gambling' (Interview by D. Sissons with H. V. Howe at Sydney, 9 August 1973).

225. Interview by D. Sissons with Ishikawa Shimpei at Izumo, 29 December 1978. Born in 1886 Mr. Ishikawa was throughout his working life postmaster at Izumo. Both his father and brother were in Thursday Island for long periods. He is a mine of information on immigrants from the village.

226. A.A. A1 20/3155.

227. Sumer, p. 178.

228. See Endnote 51.

229. *Brisbane Courier*, 17 June 1896.

230. A.A. A1 17/8520, *Argus*, 21 February 1913.

231. For example in Queensland: S. Tachibana and G. Nagane, 1912 [A.A. A1 14/6129]. O. Matsumoto and G. Yasui *Cairns Post*, 6 February 1919); M. Saikai and C. Nakashiba, 1918–20 (A.A. A1 21/24449). In Western Australia: T. Yoshida and Y. Shiosaka, 1913 [A.A. A71 'Acts, Regs' Sec. 8 Cases]. S. Yamane and T. Sakai, 1915 [J.M.F.A. 3.8.8.4, vol. 6 (ANL microfilm G16164)].

232. For example R. Kojima who entered clandestinely at Thursday Island, about 1906 (Interviewed at Owano, 25 December 1978).

233. Interview by D. Sissons with Kosaka Seikichi at Susana, 19 January 1974. A report of the interview is given in Oshimoto, p. 98.

234. Ogawa, p. 75.

END OF REPRINT

The Japanese in the Australian pearling industry

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