

The Japanese Experience
of North Queensland's
Mother of Pearl Industry

A Report Submitted to the Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority

by
Regina Gauer

Institute of Applied Environmental Research
Griffith University
Brisbane, October 1988

GBRMPA
639.412
GAN

**The Japanese Experience
of North Queensland's
Mother of Pearl Industry**

**A Report Submitted to the Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority**

**by
Regina Ganter**

**Institute of Applied Environmental Research
Griffith University
Brisbane, October 1988**

639. 412
GAN

LMS 1978

Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Historical Overview	2
The Japanese Experience	16
Travelogue and Interviews	23
Bibliography	59
Appendix I: Press Coverage	61
Appendix II: A Sample Passport	69
Appendix III List of Interviews	70

Acknowledgements

This is an account of a journey made possible by the engagement and enthusiasm of a small handful of people. The journey took me not only to some remote fishing villages in Japan, but back to the time when the enterprising young men of some Japanese prefectures came to Thursday Island at the tip of Australia's Cape York to make their fortunes as their forefathers had been doing since late last century. They were the pearl-shell divers and trochus fishermen who participated in what was one of the most important export industries of North Queensland.

I started to research Queensland's mother-of-pearl industries in 1986 and interviewed over 100 people in the Torres Strait and Queensland who had been significantly involved in this industry which is now largely defunct. But without the Japanese pearl-shellers, who played a central part in it, any account of the industry would be incomplete.

The handful of people who realized the necessity of including the Japanese perspective in my study of the pearl-shell industry and whose assistance propelled me into this journey were Dr. Leon Zann and Graeme Kelleher of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority which financed the study; Dr. Tor Hundloe, Director of the Institute of Applied Environmental Research at Griffith University which advanced the grant; Dr. Yamaguchi Masashi who initiated a search for surviving pearl divers through the Japanese press and convinced the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority that it was still possible to find and interview former divers there, and whose unflagging encouragement sustained me; Yamaguchi Mariko who offered to accompany me and became my interpreter and organiser; and Kyuhara Shuji and Watanabe Fumiya, two highschool teachers with publications in local history who acted as guides and informants in Wakayama and Ehime Prefectures respectively.

Historical Overview

The Mother-of-Pearl Industry

The pearl-shell and trochus fishery was the first marine industry based in Northern Queensland. Its workforce gained intimate knowledge of reefal conditions from their daily experience and annual rounds, so that the people employed in responsible positions in the mother-of-pearl industry are in a unique position of knowledge concerning the Great Barrier Reef province prior to World War II.

The Pearl-Shell and Beche-de-Mer Fisheries Act was passed in 1881, and pearl-shell inspectors were appointed in 1891. While oyster and fin-fishing were still part-time occupations, the gathering of mother-of-pearl represented a fully-fledged industry with fairly concentrated ownership patterns and full time, albeit seasonal wage labour by the 1880s. Trochus gatherers in particular may be seen as the pioneers of the Great Barrier Reef. They kept their own charts, often jealously guarded, and the fishermen who ventured into the reefs in the late 1950s and early 1960s sometimes obtained advice from former trochus skippers concerning navigation.

Mother-of-pearl was exported unprocessed primarily for the button industry in Europe and America. Pearl-shell was obtained in the Torres Strait area, Broome and Darwin by diving with hard-helmet equipment to which air was supplied from a lugger, at first by handpump to a single diver, and as engines were introduced, diesel motors pumped air to the divers via tanks. There are two species of pearl-shell in Australia, the black-lip (*pPinctada margaritifera*), and the gold- or silver-lip (*Pinctada maxima*) which is more common in Australia and grows at depths below 13 meters. Their nacreous internal lining is what is referred to as mother-of-pearl, and if impurities enter the shell they are enclosed by this lining and sometimes form a pearl. Less than one in one hundred oysters contains a natural pearl, and in the Australian pearl-shelling industry, pearls were a by-product. *Trochus niloticus* is a conical shell which inhabits the shallow areas of the outer edges of reefs in depths of up to 8 meters. This shell started to be commercially used in 1912. It bears no pearls and came to replace pearl-shell for the cheaper type of buttons used on shirts. It was obtained by swimming diving with goggles or wading, and was sent to Japan for processing. Rather than refer to the pearling industry, which includes the cultivation of pearls,

this report therefore refers to the mother-of-pearl industry, that is, to the collection of mother-of-pearl shell on the Great Barrier Reef and in the Torres Strait.

The mother-of-pearl industry was of the greatest importance for several areas in Northern Australia, where whole townships depended on it for their existence, and was considered one of the most important single units of Australian marine industries even after World War II when production was almost at a stand-still.¹ The introduction of plastic buttons finally spelled the demise of the industry in the 1960s. Many Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders were engaged in these industries, as well as Papua New Guineans, Malays, and people from "all kind of country".²

Of all the cultural groups engaged in the Great Barrier Reef industries, the Japanese continued to appear the most successful and caused the most resentment. They seemed indomitable by adverse regulations, exploitative arrangements and squalid working conditions, managing to appear strong and content with what financial gains could be made, partly perhaps because they were a transient labour force. Even those who stayed "most of their working lives" (e.g. Miyamoto Sadakichi and Shiosaki Mantaro), thought of themselves as temporary visitors at Thursday Island. Until the outbreak of World War II, the Japanese were recognized as the backbone of the mother-of-pearl industry.

As skippers and head-divers they were in command of the boat and crew with responsibility for recruiting, provisioning, boat maintenance, and navigation. The skipper interpreted and maintained charts, located and tested shell-beds, observed tidal and weather patterns and based his day-to-day decisions on his intimate knowledge of reefal conditions. In order to gain an insight into the mother-of-pearl industry, the Japanese experience is invaluable.

Early Japanese Arrivals

Japan was in a sense completely sheltered from the world until 1866, when the Japanese government for the first time issued passports to authorize overseas travel for Japanese, and Japanese workers began to be signed on as crew by British captains. One of the first Japanese consulates in the British Empire was established in Melbourne in 1879 to

¹H.C. Coombs (Chairman), Northern Australian Development Committee "Pearl-Shell, Beche-de-Mer and Trochus Industry of Northern Australia" Australian Parliamentary Papers, 1946.

²A phrase used commonly by indigenous participants in the industry. E.g. interview with Rocky Ahwang, in Regina Ganter, "Oral History of Human Use and Experience of Crown of Thorns Starfish on the Great Barrier Reef" -Appendices. Townsville: GBRMPA, 1987, p. 96.

protect Japanese seamen from excessive exploitation in the world of capitalist colonialism which they were newly entering. The first recorded Japanese diver in the Torres Strait was Nonami Kojiro from Shimane Prefecture arriving in 1876 at the age of about 25, who learned dress diving from a Malay. Several other former Japanese sailors also became Torres Strait pearl divers or crew, and performed so well that Burns Philp and Co. commenced to recruit discharged impoverished Japanese sailors in Hongkong.³ The Japanese first arrived in numbers in the 1880s when master pearlers started to recruit in Japan directly. In late 1884, one hundred Japanese were at Thursday Island, and in 1885 the Honorary Consul at Melbourne Alexander Marks went to Thursday Island to hear grievances. The Japanese foreign ministry had reservations about Japanese employment in Australia, particularly after some men had returned to Japan and a Tokyo newspaper gave an unfavourable account of the working conditions on Thursday Island. Beri-beri was rife because the rations provided by the master pearlers constituted an unbalanced diet and there were some casualties from racial conflicts. The foreign ministry prohibited contracts which made provision for the employer to cover the cost of passage, so that it became difficult to recruit divers - the passage cost more than the annual Japanese wage of ca. 40 Yen. Pearlers again recruited from Hongkong and Singapore, and the number of Japanese at Thursday Island dropped slightly from 200 in 1886 to 170 in 1890.⁴

The Japanese government continued to take a negative attitude towards emigration to Australia until 1891. In that year a new Foreign Minister was appointed who encouraged emigration and later became a founder of the Colonists Society. Moreover, in 1890, ten Japanese on their way back to Japan won £ 22,500 in the Melbourne Cup sweepstakes.⁵ They started a rush from Wakayama Prefecture to a land of bounty and promise. At this time wealthy notables began to finance groups of Japanese who were each advanced 100 to 130 Yen. By now the shallower grounds of 10 to 20 meters had been depleted and pearl-shell was obtained from depths of 35 to 40 meters. Diving had become hazardous with increasing mortality rates. The emigrants were required to take out a life insurance for the benefit of the creditor, and each member vouched for the whole group. After repaying the principal, usually within one year, 40% of the combined overseas earnings of a group was due to the creditor. David Sissons estimates that the compound interest was at least 27% and up to 106%.⁶

³David Sissons, "The Japanese in the Australian Pearling Industry", Queensland Heritage, 3 (10) 1979, p.9; and Fumiya Watanabe, Japan-Australia Relations in Ehime Prefecture - The Pearl-Shell Industry and Immigrants, Ehime Books (n.d.).

⁴Sissons, op.cit., p.12.

⁵ibid., p.13. Cf. also interview with Ogawa Taira below.

⁶ibid., p.13.

The Move Towards Indentured Labour

From 1891 to 1893, 376 Japanese arrived at Thursday Island, mostly members of such privately financed groups, and the Japanese population at Thursday Island approximated the Caucasian population. Japanese became the proprietors of luggers so that they started to stand in competition, instead of in the service of, the master pearlers. The Government Resident at Thursday Island John Douglas and James Clark, the foremost among the master pearlers, claimed that the whole pearl-shelling industry was passing into Japanese hands ⁷

Now the Queensland Government began to oppose the flow of migration from Japan. The Queensland Premier Sir Hugh Nelson requested the Japanese government to restrict emigration to Australia. Nevertheless, the Japanese presence increased and an over-supply of labour led to the migration of Japanese to the mainland labour markets, particularly in the sugar plantations. The Hamilton Commission was appointed in March 1897 "to inquire into the working of the pearl-shell and beche-de-mer industries of Queensland." The commissioners recommended to restrict the operations of Japanese, and as a result the Pearl-Shell and Beche-de-mer Fishery Act was amended in December 1898 so that aliens could not rent boats or be issued boat licences. This amendment was openly directed against the Japanese, and it was the government's intention that Asians would be excluded from naturalization so that they could not circumvent these restrictions by taking on citizenship.⁸ In addition, the Queensland Government considered the enactment of an immigration restriction act, but meanwhile any Japanese entering the State now required the prior approval of the Queensland Government, and all applications for entry of Japanese were rejected until October 1900. During this time other coloured races were beginning to be employed such as Filipinos and Torres Strait Islanders,⁹ and the number of Japanese on shipping articles declined from 472 to 318 between 1898 and 1901. In 1900, responding to pressure from the Japanese Government and from master pearlers, the Queensland Government started to permit replacements of Japanese to the level of 1898, but requests to introduce new crew members were only complied with if they were made by White master pearlers.¹⁰ Master pearlers were granted twenty- to thirty-year permits to indenture Japanese on three-year contracts. ¹¹ After 1900, only indentured pearl-shell divers were

⁷Douglas to Colonial Secretary, 2/10/1893 - Queensland Votes and Proceedings 1894, vol.II, p.909.

⁸Townsville Daily Bulletin, 20/12/1897.

⁹Judge Dashwood, "Investigation into the Condition of the Pearl-Shell Industry at Port Darwin and Thursday Island", Commonwealth Parliament, 1901/02, vol. III, App.O, p.149

¹⁰Queensland Votes and Proceedings (QVP) 1901, vol.IV, p.1141ff. Sissons, op.cit., p.16.

¹¹Evidence by Bleakley, Clerk to the Chief Protector of Aborigines, in "Royal Commission to Inquire into the Workings of the Pearl-Shell and Beche-de-mer Industries" John Mackay (Chairman) QPP 1908, p.33.

permitted into Australia, and master pearlers used indentured labour from the Phillipines, Malaya and Japan on fixed-term contracts (normally three years). The recruits were issued with an identification certificate showing their fingerprint and two photographs which was only valid for the purpose of diving in Australia. (Cf. Appendix II). The employer covered the cost of passage and deposited a bond with the Queensland Government to safeguard that indentured labourers did not penetrate the mainland workforce, so that they were a captive workforce as the following letter from the Wyben Pearling Fleet (Burns Philp) to the Sub-Collector of Customs at Thursday Island illustrates:

February 8th 1910
Kato Waichi

Dear Sir,

We have to thank you for information regarding the arrest of this man, and last evening we also received advices from our Cairns Solicitors on the matter. We are advised that he has been sentenced to twelve weeks for ships' desertion, having pleaded guilty. Our object in futher addressing you on the matter being to point out that we have gone to endless trouble to follow up the question of this man's arrest now for many months, and finding that our first reward of £10 had no results we renewed efforts and increased the reward to £20 for information that would lead to arrest, also at the same time bringing the fact under notice of those friends that were assisting us, at regular intervals. Seeing that our efforts have been successful we are most anxious to have an example made of this man as a lesson to others. If he is to get off with light punishment others may not fear so much absconding, and further, we are inclined to think that one or two others belonging to other fleets have now absconded thinking that our man in question had got clear and that we had abandoned hope of successful arrest.

We consider it is very advisable, and beg to ask that further action be taken by the Department of external affairs in having Kato Waichi prosecuted under the Alien Restriction act, and we beg to suggest that under this Act he again be brought before the Court at Cairns and remanded to Thursday Island to take the necessary proceedings, that he fulfil his full term of sentence in our local prison, and, at the Expiry of the sentence to be deported. Serving his imprisonment in our local Gaol will impress and be an example to others here, whereas if further action is not taken and he is deported from Cairns, it will have little or no effect in preventing others from attempting to get away.

We further beg to state that we are prepared to guarantee and pay the Government all expenses in having the man transferred here under Police Escort, further prosecution, and the cost of Deportation.

Our expenses have been and will be very heavy, but we consider it is necessary so as to impress on all indented (sic) seamen here that they are not at liberty to enter the Commonwealth and must adhere to the terms of their Agreement.

Trusting that the Department will take the necessary action

We are

Yours sincerely,¹²

¹²Australian Archives ACT CRS AI Item 10/3885

The contracts of indenture made the minutest stipulations concerning rations, number of meals, meal-times, the standard and size of sleeping quarters, working hours, the mode of payment, holidays, and so on. Kanakas who were indentured for work on Queensland sugar plantations were required to sign similar contracts. But the actual treatment received by indentured workers depended not on written agreements which were made to satisfy government regulations in the country of origin and in Australia, but on the presence and influence of interest representatives.

After the federation of the Australian colonies, immigration restriction was high on the list of priorities of the new federal government. However, pearling was exempted from the White Australia Policy, as it came to be called. The federal government initially accepted the 1902 population of coloured persons as a ceiling up to which replacements could be made and granted additional permits for new boat licences in order to permit the industry to grow, but in 1905 the immigration of coloured persons was restricted to replacements of departing workers.¹³ At this time shell beds were getting depleted so that luggers had to go further afield and the work became more difficult. The Clark fleet demonstratively left for the Aru Islands in New Guinea, arguing that the government had caused a shortage of labour and was the cause of the severe slump which the industry was suffering in 1906. This crisis cut the fleet by half and wages dropped dramatically.¹⁴

The White Australia Objective

Low wages and more difficult working conditions led to an increasing predominance of Japanese who had started to buy luggers and boatslips by "dummying". (The characteristic design of pearl luggers is popularly attributed to the Japanese refinements of boat design made according to local requirements.) The employment of Japanese was held to be a drain on the national wealth because they exported their savings and were suspected of smuggling pearls. It was argued that their employment constituted an opportunity cost for local labour because they had displaced White divers by working for low wages.

A further public inquiry in 1908 sought to devise strategies to replace Japanese with White or indigenous labour. The Mackay "Royal Commission to inquire into the workings of the Pearl-Shell and Beche-de-mer industries" in Queensland accepted that "so far as wage earners

¹³ Sissons, *op.cit.*, p.16.

¹⁴ Evidence by Mitchell in Royal Commission (1908), *op.cit.*, p.97.

are concerned, pearl-shelling in Torres Strait is very largely a Japanese Industry". The witnesses were nearly unanimous in their explanation of the disappearance of white divers, that they had been pushed out of the industry. The massive entry of Japanese which commenced in 1891 led to a labour surplus in 1893 which caused a fall in wages, and all other nationalities well-nigh abandoned diving, so that the explanation put forward by the witnesses appears reasonable. Only one witness dared to disagree and was severely criticized by the Commissioners. The Japanese had organized a strike and the Committee strongly recommended their replacement with white divers. Committee chairman John Mackay expected the arrival of 5000 Scottish fishermen into New South Wales for whom land grants were envisaged to combine farming with fishing, and hoped to recreate the former state of the industry, before Japanese divers arrived, back when White owner-operators, mostly from Scandinavia, had small stations on the islands of the Torres Strait. The commissioners repeatedly drew the comparison of pearl-shell fishing with fishing off Brittany or in the North Sea - presumably mulling it over as a drawcard slogan in a future immigration prospectus - and witnesses agreed that of these two options, Torres Strait life was the more agreeable. The witnesses, who personally remembered the beginnings of the industry (one of them was Yankee Ned Mosby from Boston who settled on Yorke Island in 1873), differed greatly in their estimates of the numbers of former white divers, and possibly over-estimated the number in hindsight. One thought that there had been nearly 100, one had known 40 to 50 but never more than 20 to 25 in any one year. John Bleakley (Clerk for the Chief Protector of Aborigines) thought there had been 34 at one time, but Andrew Sinclair, a former diver, said there had been ten at most at any one time. According to the reports of the Government Resident at Thursday Island, 13 was the highest number of White divers licenced between 1896 and 1914.¹⁵ However, some were also working out of Cooktown.

The government's objective was to prevent the dominance of Japanese by substituting Malay and White divers, and in 1911 instructions were issued that after 1913 only 5 Malays per lugger could be indentured, and only if the diver and tender were both White men. This deadline was later deferred to 1915, and then to 1918, and finally the White Australia objective was abandoned for the pearl-shell industry.¹⁶

In 1912 the superior merit of White divers was tested by recruiting ten British certified deep-sea divers who were familiar with the Navy's staging techniques. Three died from divers' paralysis and the others gave up, and none of them had raised more shell, according to James

¹⁵*ibid.*; Gaynor Evans "Thursday Island 1878-1914 - A Plural Society" Honours thesis, Griffith University, 1972.

¹⁶Sissons, *op.cit.* p.16.

Clark, than an untrained Asian try-diver. Clark argued that "the best diver in the world for getting shell was the Japanese", and that it took a special gift for recognizing shell on the sea floor.¹⁷

The Bamford Royal Commission on the pearl-shelling industry (1913-16) eventually rejected the notion that white Australians could replace coloured divers. As in the sugar industry, the replacement of coloured with White labour would have meant an increase in production costs, but unlike sugar, mother-of-pearl was a luxury item already in danger of substitution by other materials, so that the increased cost could not be passed on to the market without endangering the industry as a whole. Moreover, the Bamford Commission pointed out that White divers were not attracted to the industry because of the harsh working conditions and health risks. The annual death rate among Japanese divers was over ten percent. The Japanese did not intend to settle in Australia, and were prepared to take high risks for a number of years. Japanese casualties ran high from Malaria, dysentery (especially in a 1911 epidemic), diving accidents, and beri-beri, to such an extent that nutritional advice was sought in Japan by the Queensland Health Commission in 1924.¹⁸

During World War I (1914-18) Malayan and Papuan labour was often in short supply and the government was cautious not to offend Japan by discriminating against Japanese. All other nationalities abandoned diving. The only further governmental action to restrict Japanese dominance was to limit the number of indentured men from the same ethnic background to a maximum of five on the same boat. This restriction was implemented in 1923 after Japanese had taken to the streets during annual wage negotiations.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the number of divers from other nationalities continued to dwindle, and from 1925 to 1934 all but one of an average of 126 divers licenced at Thursday Island were Japanese, and from 1935 to 1940 Japanese made up some ninety percent of pearl-shell divers licenced at Thursday Island (cf. Table 1).

Japanese and Indigenes

With ownership of luggers and recruiting firmly in the hands of White master pearlers, the implementation of a White Australia policy ceased to be an issue except for the Torres Strait Islanders. The Papuan Industries Limited encouraged skindiving among Torres Strait Islanders in order to provide some economic basis for the Islanders and operated a scheme whereby island families purchased luggers on a time-payment basis to integrate themselves into the Western world of which they were

¹⁷Evidence by Clark in Royal Commission (1908), op.cit.

¹⁸Sissons, op.cit. p.19.

¹⁹ibid., p.17.

legally a part.²⁰ It objected to the diving boats fishing in shallow waters in close proximity to Islander-owned boats, and sought to reserve shallow waters and beche-de-mer and trochus gathering for the Torres Strait Islanders. The following comments were made in a report by Sgd. D. Coulter Harman from the Industrial Mission at Badu (1/9/1926):

"... Whereas before the war the Japanese Divers use(d) to devote their time and energy to much deeper diving, they are now diving in much shallower water, in fact getting Shell from the Reefs and Sandbanks that at one time was only worked by the Natives Skin Diving. As there is plenty of Shell to be had at greater depths beyond the reach of the Native it is quite unnecessary for the Japanese Divers to dive in the shallow water and thus deprive the Native of good catches of Shell. ...

... When the Island Boats find a good patch of Shell, the Japanese Divers come along and are able to clear the patch in much quicker time than the natives, and when there are a number of Diving Boats, the air bubbles attract the inquisitive shark and make it dangerous for the natives to work, besides having so many air pipes and life lines about as to hinder the natives in their swimming. "²¹

The Badu Islanders apparently felt that the Japanese divers deliberately threw grease and meat into the water to attract sharks to keep the skindivers away. (Cf. also interview with Shiosaki Mantaro.)

In the 1930s the Japanese began to bring their own luggers to operate outside the three-mile limit and started another wave of protest. ²² (Cf. also interviews with Shiosaki Mantaro and Ogawa Taira). With the approach of World War II, Australians feared that these Japanese constituted a defence risk, and it was alleged that they were charting the reefs on behalf of the Japanese Navy. (Cf. also interview with Ogawa Taira.) Added to this was the concern that natives preferred to work with Japanese skippers, so that it was feared that they might fraternize with the invaders.

The fear that Japanese pearl-shell divers may be acting as spies dates back much further, however. The Bishop of North Queensland wrote the following letter to the Department of External Affairs:

²⁰But cf. Nonie Sharp for the failure of this scheme due to intervention from the Queensland Government: "Culture Clash in the Torres Strait Islands - The Maritime Strike of 1936" Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 11 (3) 1981/82, pp.107-126..

²¹Australian Archives ACT CRS A1 27/21645.

²²Maurice Yonge, A Year On the Great Barrier Reef, London: Putnam 1930, p.168.

May 20th 1909
Private and Confidential

My dear Atlee Hunt,

There have been a great many vagrant rumours in North Queensland about Japanese beche-de-mer boats systematically taking soundings of the reefs and channels in our waters. We have a beche-de-mer boat in connection with our mission station at Yarrabah, and this week I questioned the Captain, a highly intelligent Torres Strait Islander called Douglas Pitt, as to whether he has seen anything in this way. I was surprised to find that he had done so and frequently, but only in one case could I get any definite evidence. A big boat of about 40 tons, he said, manned altogether by Japanese, and called the "Defender", was for some months hanging about the outside of the reef between Cooktown and Townsville. Small boats were sent out day after day sounding near the barrier reef. They apparently took no steps to hide the charts they were using as our boat was manned entirely with aborigines, but perceiving once that Pitt had noticed the chart they asked him not to talk about the matter ashore. I have no doubt as to Pitts veracity.

I am in doubts as to whether this information is of any use, but if you consider it is worth showing the Minister of Defence please do so. It has occurred to me that our aborigines may be used as 'scouts' along the coast so long as the Japanese do not consider them worth noticing. As you know a Yarrabah boy is many points ahead of the ordinary black both as regards intelligence and reliability.

If what I have told you is of no use please tear this letter up. 23

In December 1942 all Japanese, including those who were indentured, were sent to internment camps in Hay, New South Wales, and Tatura, Victoria. Even the Aboriginal mission at Cape Bedford (now Hopevale), from where Japanese had recruited (and which had the added distinction of being under the direction of a German missionary, Father Schwarz) was moved to Woorabinda with disastrous results for the Hopevale Aborigines who suffered dramatic casualties from the move.²⁴

Post-War Resumption of Pearl-Shelling

During the war, only small quantities of shell were raised, by Torres Strait Islanders, and after World War II, master pearlers sought to resume the employment of Japanese divers. But the Torres Strait Islanders had now established themselves as capable shell divers and allied themselves with the Australian Legion of Ex-Servicemen and Women:

²³AA ACT CRS AI 09/13685

²⁴Interview with Ted Bowen, in Ganter, op.cit., p. 67.

25th December 1951

Dear Sir,

There are six hundred Torres Strait Islanders, all ex-servicemen, employed in the Pearling Industry in Queensland- mainly at Thursday Island. It is now learned that the Commonwealth Government and the local Pearl Shellers Association are conferring with a view to having Japanese labour introduced into the Pearling Industry, and we strongly protest against this.

At a meeting held in Thursday Island on 21st December, it was decided to write to you and appeal to your members to help us, the Torres Strait ex soldiers, in our fight against the introduction of Japanese. We claim that if the Japanese come into the country they will do as they did before, i.e. push the Islanders out of their jobs.

We claim that the Torres Strait Islanders are doing a good job in the Pearl Shell and Trochus Industries and will continue to do so. If, however, the Japanese are allowed to come into the country there must be trouble between them and the Islanders. Because of this we earnestly appeal to you and your members to use your power with the Commonwealth Government to prevent Japanese labour coming here. 25

This resistance was successful, and only a group of 35 Japanese were permitted to work in the 1952/53 season at Broome on a trial basis (cf. interview with Oku Saioshi). However, the Japanese government initially declined passports to the group while Japanese luggers were refused entry into the Northern Australian waters.²⁶ This pressure placed the Australian government agencies in a difficult position. Production of pearl-shell had dwindled, and Australians showed no disposition to enter the industry, except in the Torres Strait.²⁷ Australia was in the process of extending its jurisdiction from the traditional three-mile limit to the continental shelf, and was tabling the matter of international fishing rights before the International Court of Justice. An interdepartmental memorandum summarized the position:

... Australia is faced with a dilemma. If Japanese were admitted, Japan would be able to point to this as evidence of Australia's inability to exploit the resources of the area. If Japanese were not admitted the Australian industry would be likely to decline further and Japan could use this to contest our claims. Attorney-General's believe the first alternative preferable. It has also been suggested that the problem might be met by recruiting Okinawans who could be easily obtained. ...

It is suggested that we should not oppose this opportunity of co-operating with Japan on a matter which is of clear economic advantage to Australia and which can be justified to the Australian public on that ground. However, we would need to ensure that adverse public reactions were guarded against so that decisions on other more important issues between

²⁵AA ACT CRS A1838/T184.

²⁶Melbourne Herald, 6/6/1953.

²⁷AA ACT CRS A1838/T184 - memo.

Japan and Australia (such as the proposed war dead mission) would not be prejudiced. ...²⁸

The Australia-Japan agreement formalized the presence of Japanese vessels in Australian waters. and at the same time created an export market for Australian meat. An Australian observer cynically analyzed this agreement as the victory of the cattle interests over the needs of Northern Queensland, which is a "marine state".²⁹

Eventually the master pearlmen also succeeded in pressing their case and were permitted to obtain 106 divers from Okinawa which was an American mandated territory, so that it could be argued that these people were not actually Japanese. However, the Okinawan recruits had no prior experience of diving and were unfamiliar with Australian conditions. They found the equipment outdated and felt that their contracts had not been honoured. Master pearlmen remember this experiment as a disaster, and Torres Strait Islanders who were engaged in the industry saw the arrival of this workforce as a hilarious reversal of pre-war relations: they didn't know anything - we had to teach them!"³⁰ The Okinawans were repatriated before the expiry of their contracts but some of them stayed behind at Thursday Island and are employed by Japanese-owned pearl-culture farms which have replaced the former mother-of-pearl industry.

²⁸AA ACT CRS A1838/T148.

²⁹Interview with Keith Bryson in Ganter, op.cit., p.50.

³⁰Interviews with Harold Hockings, Jack Kennell, George Kaddy, Kyoza Hirakawa, ibid.

**Table 1 - Japanese participation in pearl-shell diving
at Thursday Island, 1895-1940**

Divers licenced at Thursday Island

(Reports of the Inspector of Pearl-Shell and Beche-de-Mer Fisheries, Thursday Island, Queensland Votes and Proceedings)

Year	Total	Japanese	Others
1895	242	120	122
1896	275	139	130
1897	304	179	125
1898	331	211	120
1899	362	331	31
1900	390	234	156
1901			
1902	319	239	80
1903	354	252	102
1904	357	282	75
1905	367	291	76
1906	173	157	16
1907	180	174	6
1908	174	172	2
1909	155	142	13
1910	160	150	10
1911	190	172	18
1912	200	171	29
1913	175	168	7
1914	158	154	4
..... (no figures available for years 1915 - 1924)			
1925	183	181	2
1926	143	143	0
1927	172	171	1
1928	212	212	0
1929	214	214	0
1930	95	95	0
1931	52	52	0
1932	103	103	0
1933	94	93	1
1934	95	94	1
1935	185	162	23
1936	246	211	35
1937	256	238	27
1938	246	232	14
1939	233	226	7
1940	195	175	20

The Japanese Experience

Most pearl-shell divers at Thursday Island came from Ehime and Wakayama Prefectures. Their villages are perched precariously on the extremely narrow coastline between rugged mountains and rocky shores, and the connecting road which threads through them is hewn into the rock at times for lack of space. Competition for arable land is fierce, and the villagers eke out an existence with a combined fishing/farming economy.

Before World War II, Wakayama had no infrastructural link with Tokyo, and had therefore no access to the Japanese domestic market for its produce. An inward-looking economy developed. Tokyo, as one interviewee said, was further away in the imagination of these villagers than was Thursday Island. The young boys, who at age 17 had been neither to Tokyo nor abroad, may not have had any conception of the distances involved. In some villages it was the common thing for the more enterprising among them to go to Thursday Island if they had the chance, whereas other villages looked to America or Brazil to escape the narrow career opportunities and poverty at home. The interviewees leave no doubt that they were attracted to Thursday Island in the quest for fortune.

The inexorable appropriation of pearl-shell diving by the Japanese is explained by the Japanese interviewees who describe how it was the prerogative of the head-diver to nominate new recruits, who were usually relatives of the diver. The written nomination of recruits is translated as "letter of calling" in the interviews. These letters of calling were the result of ceilings applied by the Commonwealth Government to the entry of Japanese, but rather than placing a check on the dominance of Japanese, this system further entrenched their appropriation of the diving role through nepotism.

The new recruits were generally assigned to the captain who had nominated them, so that the Japanese lugger crew tended to form a close-knit group. Considering the small size of the villages from where they came, and the familial relationships among them, one gains an impression of the catastrophe created when a boat had an accident at sea. When 76 Japanese died in a cyclone off Cape Melville in March 1899, one of the Australian master ~~pearlers~~ came to Shinonomisaki, from where eight of the victims had come, to erect a monument. (Cf. interview with Ogawa Taira.)

"Letters of calling" were sent to recruiting firms in Japan such as the Morishima Immigration Company in Kushimoto, or the Kobe Industrial Immigration Company. Morishima is a large landholder, so that these companies represent the latter-day version of the wealthy notables who

started to finance group migration in the 1890s. The recruits were assigned to "Free Pensions" in Kobe, i.e. the immigration companies paid their expenses in special guest houses. The firms arranged for medical examinations, the signing of contracts and the issue of identity papers. The contracts they signed were meant to safeguard the recruits from exploitation but as in the case of Kanaka indentured labour, these contracts were a mere formality, and the workers themselves accepted that the company was not bound by them. (Cf. interviews with Wabuka Kiyomi and Horimoto Shinichi).

Divers who were in charge of boats had a high standing in the industry. The head-divers stayed in boarding houses called Iyo House for those from Ehime Prefecture, and called after the village of origin of its residents for those from Wakayama Prefecture, such as Susami House, Kushimoto House, Izumo House, etc. During lay-up season from December to March, the Japanese crew, who normally stayed on the luggers and only used the boarding house for recreation, also usually stayed there.

A lugger captain was in total command of his crew who were like personal servants for him. Although in the interviews the master pearlers are referred to as *oyakata*, the role of *oyakata* was more closely approximated by the captain (head-diver) or the proprietor of the boarding house, such as Yamashita whom the Ehime divers refer to. They handled the money and transmitted savings of the younger crew, issued work clothes, and stipulated for example the standard of dress required to go to town. It was the captain who nominated new recruits from Japan, and throughout their career at Thursday Island, until they themselves became captains, crew members had a great degree of personal dependence on the captain.

A divers' club, or *Doshi-kai* was formed in 1917, and was a fraternity of divers of which Japanese crew were not properly speaking part. The *Doshi-kai* led the annual negotiations with the master-pearlers in which the price of shell was agreed. The wages of the Japanese crew then depended on the price of shell determined during those negotiations and on the tonnage raised.

Because of the consultative nature of wage fixing procedures, industrial action was not generally considered a fruitful avenue among the Japanese. Head divers felt bound by the annual negotiations, and crew considered it a matter of loyalty to abide by the conditions negotiated by the head divers. Nevertheless, there were exceptions. The reports of the Department of Harbours and Marine make reference to the fact that in 1919, "much time was lost through labour troubles"³¹, and in 1927 a

³¹Queensland Parliamentary Papers, 1919, Vol II.

photo was taken at Thursday Island which shows Japanese marching through the main street. Some respondents identified this march as a celebration, indicated by the fact that all participants were wearing white shirts (e.g. Takenaka Yasuichi). Those who had never participated in a strike, expressed disbelief that such a thing had ever taken place. However, two who were at Thursday Island at the time explained the photograph as a strike by the crew. The divers, who had led the negotiations, had no business taking to the streets, but the crewmen marched to the house of Burns Philp manager Adams to demand higher wages. (Takemoto Iwakichi, Shiosaki Mantaro). Further reference to industrial action is made in the Report of the Department of Harbours and Marine for the year 1934/35 which states that temporal dissatisfaction of divers regarding their terms of agreement led to a slight delay in the commencement of operations, and that some employers dismissed their Japanese divers and laid up their luggers, and recommissioned them later in the season with Malay divers. This response by employers to industrial action broke the almost absolute monopoly which the Japanese had exercised over the role of diver since before World War I (cf. Table 1). The renewed attempt to replace Japanese with indentured Malay divers resulted in the arrival of Japanese-owned fleets in Australian waters. ³²

To correlate the testimony of different ethnic groups is particularly exciting. Torres Strait Islanders, who started to compete for the status of divers with Japanese, tend to be somewhat critical of the harshness of Japanese captains. Aborigines, on the other hand, are more likely to praise their Japanese captains. They preferred to work with Japanese because they were not "flash", i.e. they were willing to eat and sleep with Aborigines, and their word could be trusted³³. Aborigines and Japanese refer to each other as "honest", a term that expresses mutual respect.³⁴

The Japanese divers had close relationships with White master pearlers. Ogawa Taira explained that "The captain and *oyakata* had to be on good terms, there was a relationship of trust. The *oyakata* always listened to the captain." He related the story of Hiramatsu Shimpachi who was engaged as 'boy' to babysit the daughter of the Burns Philp manager in South Australia to protect him from immigration restrictions. Ogawa has a photograph of this girl dressed in Japanese clothes. She would often stay at Hiramatsu's place instead of with her parents, and called him 'Papa', and she once came to Shionomisaki to visit Hiramatsu. Wabuka Kiyomi recounted with amusement that he used to enter the master pearler's house barefooted.

³²Queensland Parliamentary Papers, 1935 - 1938, Vol II.

³³Athol Chase, "'All Kind of Nation' - Aborigines and Asians in Cape York Peninsula", Aboriginal History (5)1, 1981, pp.7-19.

³⁴Cf. interviews with Tatsuno Ryuhichi and Seike Ukio. Reference to this term is also made by Chase, op.cit., and Sissons, op.cit., p.22.

Unlike the Australian respondents, the Japanese used no particular terms to refer to different pearl-shelling grounds, such as the evocative "Darnley Deep", "cemetery", "Old Ground" and "New Patch" in currency among Torres Strait Islanders. The Japanese had relatively little understanding of the conditions under which Australian natives lived and were engaged in the mother-of-pearl industries. Several interviewees were unclear about the origin of their crew, referring to Papua New Guineans, Torres Strait Islanders, and mainland Aborigines as negroes. They were at a loss to explain why Aborigines absconded from the boats - after all, they would lose their wages - and few knew of the fleet of boats operated by Torres Strait Islanders under the Papuan Industries Ltd. (now Island Industries Board), so that the swimming diving which the Torres Strait Islanders were engaged in was simply not seen as a serious activity. It lacked the status associated with hard-helmet diving. Some master pearlers referred to it as saucepan diving.³⁵

Among Aboriginal interviewees Captain Kono, a *beche-de-mer* captain, has almost legendary status. Kono Tesaburo from Ehime is also well-known among the Japanese divers. He fished illegally in New Caledonian waters, avoiding the regular patrols, and for the Australian indigenous crew, who were not permitted outside Australian borders, a trip with Captain Kono was both adventurous and perhaps slightly traumatic.³⁶ Aborigines also remembered the names of Captain Taima and Captain Shimakami mentioned by Japanese interviewees.³⁷

David Sissons refers to the effects which their close links to Australia had on some villages. In parts of Wakayama it became habitual to include quantities of bread in the normal diet and to have tea with milk, to wear foreign clothes and use Australian words such as "tucker".³⁸ Several interviewees interspersed their accounts with English expressions, sometimes referred to as "Sandalwood English"³⁹, such as *baikep* for basket, *haus* (boarding house) *sekonin daiba* (second diver, second in-charge), *turai-daiba* (try diver) and *tucker-taim*. Miyamoto Sadakichi, 45 years after leaving Australia, said, for example, "Mainland boys, blacks, everytime run away. Night time. Dinghie take. Never come back. - Never pay!"

Those who went overseas to work are referred to in Japan as 'emigrants' although this term does not mean to suggest, as it does in English, that they went to start a new life. The interviewees represent the last generation of

³⁵Interview with Harold Hockings in Ganter, *op.cit.*

³⁶Interviews with Sandy Yiela and Robert Baird, *ibid.*

³⁷Imasu Waigana from Saibai Island worked with Captain Taima on the *Galton*, a Burns Philp boat, and it is likely that he was part of the same crew as interviewee Morishita Kazuo. Sandy Yiela at Lockhart River remembered Captain Shimakami of Morey Company's *Alexia* whom interviewee Horimoto Shinichi describes as a captain from Susami. Australian interviews in Ganter, *ibid.*

³⁸Sissons, *op.cit.*, p.18-19.

³⁹Dorothy Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, Melbourne University Press 1967.

'immigrant divers' and most were interned at Hay from 1942 to 1946. They arrived back in war-torn Japan with their Australian savings, which should have been the foundation for a prosperous future, but rampant inflation rendered their fortunes worthless. The interviewees made very little in the way of critical comments about their Australian experience, neither concerning their work nor their imprisonment at Hay. Their accounts have overtones of quiet acceptance.

Some Australian interviewees have indicated that the Japanese knew of the impending war. However, according to the Japanese testimony, the declaration of war took them by surprise. They saw themselves as civilians and felt protected in the knowledge that they were not properly speaking prisoners of war.

Methodology

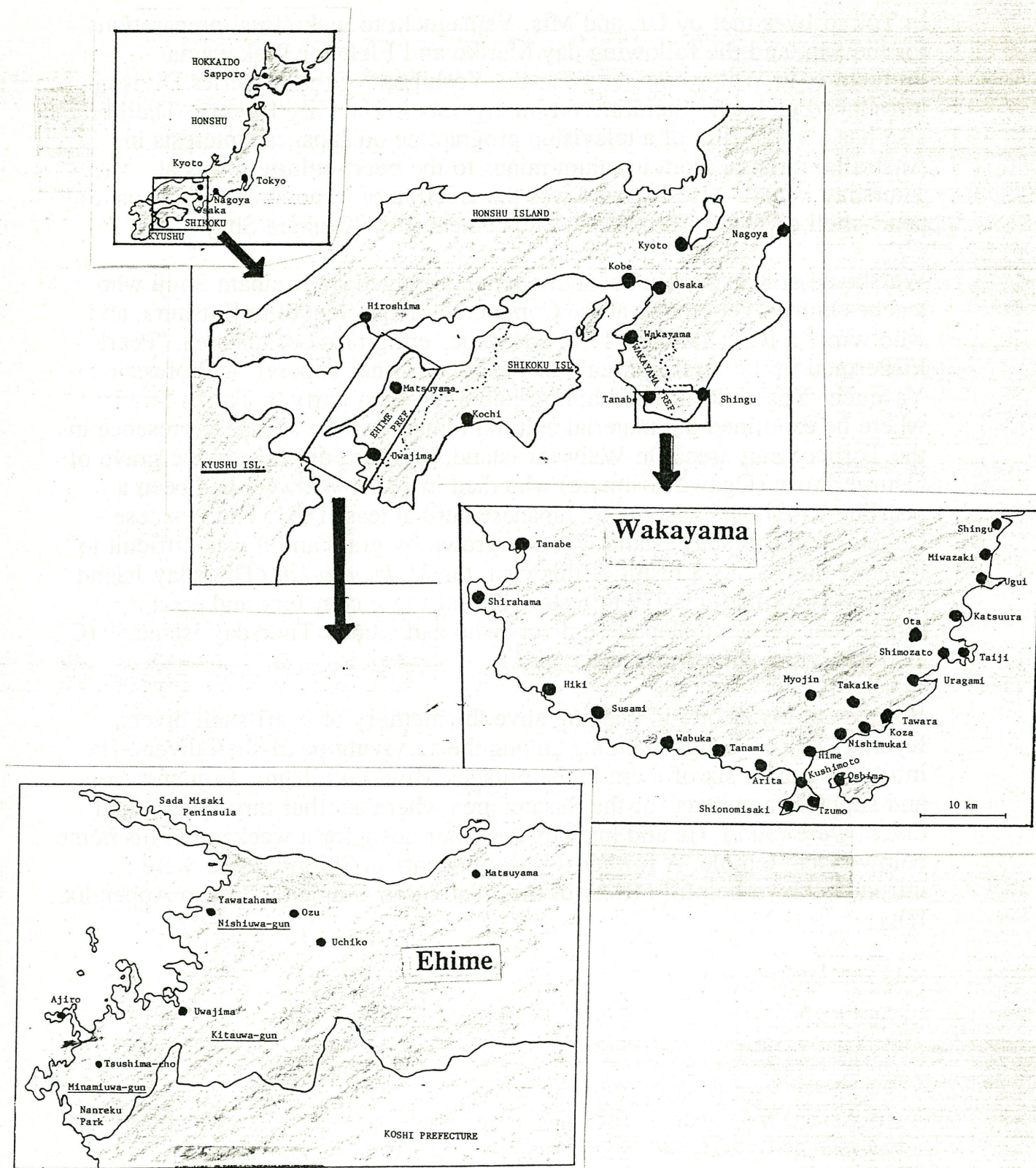
The following travelogue details the way in which interviewees were located after Dr. Yamaguchi had established key contacts. Unless otherwise indicated, the two local historians who acted as my guides had made arrangements for my visit, so that when I arrived, interviewees were well prepared and informed of my project. They responded to a range of questions in a loosely structured interview, so that their accounts were not locked into a rigid question-and-answer structure, but were assembled around a set of topics which permitted both the individual reminiscence of each respondent and a comparison between the experiences of interviewees. The interviews were translated simultaneously and tape recorded, and the tape recordings will be lodged with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

The following excerpts from interviews are presented in the first person although of course they are not *verbatim* reproductions of what was said, since the divers spoke in Japanese. Because the interviewing situation, particularly a multilingual one, consists of more than verbal interaction, I do not find it useful to transcribe the interviews in full. This would render them almost unintelligible and certainly tedious. I have taken the liberty to re-structure the accounts at my discretion in order to form a more readable account. Of course, much information was gained outside of the formal interviewing situation. Some of this is included in summary form as a comment on the interviewee. Issues of potential interest to marine scientists are also presented in summary form to facilitate access to them.

As it is the practice in Japan to state one's surname first, I have retained this method in this report. The age of interviewees indicated refers to the age at the time of the interview, that is, October 1987.

In the Japanese calendar the reign of each emperor constitutes an era, so that Japanese will refer to an era, rather than, say, "the nineteen-forties", or to "the postwar period". The Meiji era spans the 44 years from 1867 to 1911. Taisho era refers to the 14 years from 1912 to 1925, and the Showa period is the reign of emperor Hirohito since 1926, so that 1988 is Showa 63. This makes an interesting comment on the arbitrary nature of periodization in Western historiography.

Areas of Recruitment - Location Map - Ehime and Wakayama Prefectures



Travelogue and Interviews

In Tokyo I was met by Dr. and Mrs. Yamaguchi to make final preparations for the trip, and the following day Mariko and I left for Wakayama Prefecture. In Wakayama city Tanaka Yoshiharu of the Fisheries Division introduced us to the literature on immigrants in the City Library. The library also has a video film of a television programme on Japanese interests in Australia, ranging from uranium mines to the pearl-culture farms at Thursday Island. Also featured was the erection of a monument for Japanese pearl-shell divers at Thursday Island cemetery by Kyuhara Shuji.

We stayed at Katsuura in accommodation arranged by Kyuhara Shuji who teaches human geography at the Commercial High School in Katsuura, and who wrote a B.A. thesis in 1952 about the "emigrants" of his area, "Pearl Fishermen in the Arafura Sea". In 1975 his former supervisor Professor Yasuuchi Yoshihiko invited him to join a research party to Torres Strait where he examined the material cultural remains of the Japanese presence in the Torres Strait area. On Waiweer Island, Kyuhara discovered the grave of George Japan (Ogawa Yoshitara) who died in 1887. Waiweer had been a pearling base housing some 57 Japanese until at least 1891. The Japanese cemetery at Thursday Island was overgrown by grass and it was difficult to identify graves. As a result of this visit, the *Mokuyoto-kai* (Thursday Island Club) was formed in 1979 to restore the Japanese cemetery and erect a monument to honour Japanese divers who had died at Thursday Island.⁴⁰ (Cf. also interview with Wabuka Kiyomi.)

Because of his efforts in keeping alive the memory of pearl-shell divers, Kyuhara enjoys a high standing among the surviving pearl-shell divers. He introduced us to six of them in the villages Miwazaki, Ugui, Taiji and Arita, and supplied a contact for the Susami area where another three pearl-shell divers were found. He and his wife were our hosts for a weekend in his home below Nachi temple. A further two respondents in Shionomisaki were introduced by a helpful officer of the Kusimoto Council. (Cf. also Appendix III.)

⁴⁰Shuji Kyuhara, "Remains of Japanese Settlers on the Torres Strait Islands" 1977 (unpubl.)

On 15 October the coastal villages of Wakayama were celebrating the fishing deity and small groups of dancers were practising everywhere in the streets for their procession to bless the fishing fleet. We found Oku Saioishi (56) by meeting his younger brother among the dancers in Taiji. He was the youngest of those interviewed. He is well off and has travelled to Australia for holidays.

I was a pearl-shell diver in Broome from 1953 to 1962, working for Streeter and Male and for Morgan. My father had worked for Male in Broome on and off since 1919. Actually, he was in charge of the first group of 35 immigrants who returned to Australia after World War II to resume pearl-shelling, and I went with them. We were all from Taiji, Susami and Wabuka (villages in Wakayama Prefecture). Our government was reluctant to permit the recruiting of Japanese nationals to Australia. Civilian air traffic had not yet been established, so we travelled by Qantas via the American airbase in Iwakuni. The cost of the voyage was met by the employer. Our three-year contracts provided for regular transferral of part of our wages to our homes. During the stop-over in Darwin we were met with protests from Australians and found the airport barricaded. We had a police escort, but we didn't really know what it was all about, we couldn't understand what they were shouting.

It was a time of acute food shortages at home, so we appreciated the conditions in Australia, having meat was like a feast. Sunday was a rest day even when the luggers were out, what a luxury. Compared with Japanese boats, the Australian equipment was poor. Some ships had no lights or sometimes the engine failed. Our engineers demanded repairs and improvements of the luggers and we wanted better food rations, but we spoke little English and had a dispute with Mr. Costella, the manager for Male at Broome. He thought he could treat us like the Australian natives, keeping us on low rations. He said: "Back home in Japan you'd be eating sand, wouldn't you". He was not a very competent people manager, and we finally staged a strike.

We always competed for the biggest hauls of pearl-shell, not so much because it meant more money, but for prestige. We knew about the staging guidelines but we didn't observe them because it would have been too time-consuming. There were many cases of minor bends, I got pain in the joints at night, but no Japanese divers died during my experience. There were some Malaysian and Chinese casualties.

On the same afternoon, teacher Kyuhara took us to Arita to meet two former divers. It was common for young men from Arita to go to Thursday Island, whereas those from nearby village Hime went to America and Brazil.

Nakamura Unosuke's (69) account is coloured by vocabulary adapted from English. He also remembers the commands "up", "down" and "sail up".

I was twenty when Ohara who was a diver at Thursday Island from Arita recruited me for Hockings' Wanetta Station. I arrived in December 1937 and stayed to the outbreak of World War II. We had no forewarning of the imminent war. The fleet was called back from the shellbeds and we were taken directly onto a launch to Sydney, we didn't even have time to get our belongings. There were about 500 of us, mainly single young men, who were sent to Hay concentration camp west of Sydney. I stayed for four years and two months. Women were kept at another camp at a secret location. In order to become a diver, you are first employed as a cook, engineman, tender and try diver. By the time I was second-in-charge, the war was declared. During lay-up time we stayed in Arita House, our boarding house. Other villages also had their own boarding houses, Susami House, Kushimoto House, Ugui House, Izumo House. We went to the hotels and the picture theatre with Europeans, but not with black people. There was no racial tension, although once two Japanese had a knifing.

I am a builder by trade. During lay-up I did some construction work at Thursday Island, and when I came back home after the war I built my own house, this house. (His house comfortably accommodates three generations, with a European style bathroom.) I would have liked to go back to Thursday Island after the war, but it was not possible.

Nakamura had seen crown of thorns starfish but thought they were sea-urchins. He considered triton shells as rare shells and said divers would pick them up and take them home to Japan.

Tada Tomiharu (72) arrived at Nakamura's house from the festivities in his *happi* and in high spirits from a little *sake*. He still speaks some English.

I was also recruited by Ohara. I was in Australia for six years, first in 1934 as a cook (*koku*) under Tom Fuji, and then I went trochus fishing on Charlie Sinclair's *Acton* with Fuji's younger brother Yaijiro and eight Aborigines from Cape Melville. The Aborigines were very quiet. They drank the beer which was carried on the lugger and filled the bottles with water. Once the lugger sheltered on an island and in the morning five Aborigines had absconded with the dinghie and the provisions, even the bread was gone. They must have gotten homesick and returned to their camp. But when we went to their camp to get them back, they came with us quite willingly! Yes, that's what they used to do. They had no sense of responsibility like us.

Later I changed to Wyben boats (Burns Philp) to become a diver. It was fairly difficult to become a diver, and to wear the diving helmet was quite something. Living on a lugger was similar to military service, with strict hierarchies and lines of command. The captain was obeyed at all times. It is a Japanese tradition to live in a hierarchy. The wages were fixed in annual negotiations between a representative for the divers and a representative for trochus divers with the *oyakata*. (These representatives were not elected.) If more than a certain amount of shell was collected the surplus was divided among the crew.

In 1938 trochus shell became difficult to sell. That year three divers, among them Fuji Yaijiro, died of divers' bends, and I decided that if I continued diving I wouldn't live long. I feared for my life. I went back to Japan. Then I worked on a cargo ship for over a year, and then I was drafted into the army.

Tada had seen crown of thorns starfish, but did not know its name. He did not know of any dangers associated with it. He had an interest in shell-collecting and picked up triton shells if he found any, because they are very rare. Some divers used to sell them in the island shops, others kept them.

At Katsuura we were confined to our hotel for two days due to a typhoon. When we went to a deserted beach to inspect the damage, a fisherman appeared out of nowhere and started talking to us. His father had been to Thursday Island and was willing to see us. Unfortunately, when we visited the father, he had just left for Wakayama city and we missed this opportunity. However, a young council officer at Kushimoto introduced us to two of his relatives.

Takemoto Iwakichi (81) did not know crown of thorns starfish. He collected some triton shells, but small ones.

I spent a total of twelve years at Thursday Island. I married the daughter of a Kushimoto family, Takemoto Yaeno, who was born at Darwin. Her family had immigrated to Australia before the immigration restriction act of the Meji period (1892). One of my daughters was born on Thursday Island, one at Tatura concentration camp, and one in Japan.

The first time I went to Thursday Island was in October 1922, before engines were introduced onto the pearl luggers. Each lugger only had one diver, and air was supplied by handpump with a handle and wheels. The two pump operators and the cook got £4 per month. At first I was a deckie on the *Floria* and *Mesia* owned by Burns Philp, but the second time I went I became a skipper on a Carpenter boat. When engines were introduced on the luggers, you could have two divers down simultaneously, and also we started to dive with helmet and corselet only, so that we could move more freely, although it was more dangerous. Sharks didn't come too close because of the air bubbles but gropers could be a problem. A Susami man had his hand bitten off by a groper. Sharks were more dangerous for trochus divers. Trochus and beche-de-mer fishermen were different from pearl-shell divers, they were skin divers only. Most pearl-shell diving was done west of Badu and near Moa Island, only the very good divers went to Darnley, some from Shionomisaki.

My uncle had been working on Thursday Island and arranged for me to come, he sent a "letter of calling", and taught me to dive. He later went to Manila because in Australia we were not allowed to work on land. My only brother also went to Thursday Island before the war. There was no income here, you could only be a fisherman, farmer or carpenter, and on Thursday Island you earned twice as much.

In 1927 we had a protest march for higher wages. Deckies and divers had different fraternities, and there was a dispute over wages, so the deckies took to the streets.

At Hay camp we were gardening and farming. There was food and medicine and a hospital. The guards had rifles but I didn't fear for my life, I knew I was an immigrant, not a prisoner of war, and no harm would come to us. Some of us could talk to the guards. We were not allowed to have sharp implements, but I fashioned some slippers from cardboard and sent them to my children at Tatura. I still have the release papers from the camp, see? My wife and children were at Tatura, Victoria, No 4 Camp, B section. I had to make a last will. I was discharged in February 1946.

Shiosaki Mantaro (82) lives by himself in Shionomisaki. He was one of those divers whose marriage had been arranged by his parents.

I spent almost my entire working life in Australia. I worked there from 1922 to 1929, 1933-38, 1939-41, was released from Hay in 1946, and returned in 1955 to work in Darwin for three years. I was a diver for Wanetta, Cleveland, Charlie Sinclair and Norm Hockings. When I finally came home it was getting high time for me to quit. I didn't like diving any more and started to feel the cold of the water. But I was still healthy and worked on an oil tanker. In the Showa period the Japanese ship *Taiga Maru* was caught fishing illegally for trochus all along the Queensland coast. It was taken to Thursday Island and that was the first time in a long while that I saw a Japanese ship. Most of the crew were from Okinawa.

I married in 1929 and my wife stayed with my parents to look after them in my absence. My first child wasn't born until 1947! About one hundred people from Shionomisaki were at Thursday Island.

Once the crewmen marched to the house of Mr. Adams, the manager of Burns Philp which was the leading company, to demand higher wages. That was the only strike we ever had. Every company used black labour, from the Torres Strait, New Guinea, Malaysia, the Phillipines, Indochina, Thailand, Java, and Sulawesi. They got £3 in the Taicho era (1912-25). This was raised to £5 after a strike.

Sometimes the luggers would trespass into New Guinean waters but had to be careful to avoid patrol boats. The pearl-shell grounds at Badu are shallow and could be worked at any time. I didn't dive very deep. The Badu Islanders also took shell by hanging off their canoes, skindiving.

At Hay everyone had to wear a red outfit. There were constant dust-storms. But I am not bitter about it, they did everything they could for us. We were supposed to be fingerprinted, but we refused, because we were not prisoners of war or soldiers, but immigrants. They pleaded with us and the commanding officer ordered that we be locked up, so finally we had to comply and were fingerprinted. I was able to buy this farm and build the new house because of my work in Australia.

Takenaka Yasuichi and Inoue Ushimatsu came to see us at teacher Kyuhara's home below the picturesque Nachi temples. Kyuhara had also invited three journalists to cover the story of my visit (cf. Appendix I). Takenaka Yasuichi (80) from Miwazaki comes from a family of divers:

I received a letter of calling in 1927 by a relative on Thursday Island. My older brother dived there from 1912 to 1925, and my younger brother went to Broome. I wasn't told much about it, only that there was a lot of money to be earned. I stayed for about 16 years. After my first year as *kuk-san* (cook) I became a diver straightaway, without having to be an engineer and tender first, I asked to be a diver. A cook earned £5 per month, whereas divers could earn as much as £200 per year. The Papuan crew were on very small wages. They were easier to work with than Island boys. Island boys were more intelligent, they had a hot temper and might argue. Papua New Guineans were obedient and sincere. The *oyakata* (master pearler) subtracted £2 per month for each Papua New Guinean from the diver's income, but whether they actually got the £2 or maybe only £1, who knows.

The Japanese on the boat were the first diver, second diver and two try divers. The Heincke diving equipment was quite safe, there was never any trouble, and we had a spare tank of air and German diesel engines. That was standard equipment on the Thursday Island boats. The usual grounds were some twenty minutes west of Badu. Shell was not too plentiful but it was safe and shallow, like a paddyfield with grass growing in the sand. The area had no special name. We also went to Moa and behind the islands between Thursday Island and Badu, and to Cape York. Staging was only used for diving more than twenty meters. Of course, I got bends, but it was cured by immersion in water for a few hours. I never actually lost consciousness but experienced the pain in the joints. In serious cases a diver would have to be suspended in the water for two or three nights, with one diver assisting. There were no doctors to help, we had to do everything ourselves, and by the time we got back to Thursday Island the pain had usually gone. Bends causes rheumatism, arthritis, or one leg might become shorter. We used to have a lot of men in Miwazaki with lame legs or one leg shorter than the other. Most old divers are dead now, possibly from all that diving. It is a wonder that we two are still alive. You know, we still sometimes dream of picking up shell.

From December to February you get the *Nor-wester*. The *Doshi-kai* (diver's club) negotiated the prices of shell with the *oyakata*. The *oyakata* had the ships repaired but the divers were responsible for equipment, tools, food, and everything used by the divers. We negotiated our wages among ourselves, there was never any trouble. There were no problems at Thursday Island. Not like Broome.

In 1935 we started to cut back the sleeves from the diving suits to move more freely. We just wore pants and a pair of rubber *tabi* (Japanese socks). This reduced pressure on the body and made movement under water as easy as walking on land, and reduced the chance of getting bends. To dive with a helmet only is too dangerous because it can come off. Many divers died like that, Matsuno Masauji died like that, he was six years younger than me. That's why we cut off more and more of the diving suit to make the "half-dress".

If anyone died we'd all go back to Thursday Island to have a funeral. The boats had no radio communication but if you saw a boat go back you knew, and if you knew the man, we'd go back with them. Nobody ever blamed the tender if a diver died, not overtly anyway. The tender only obeys the diver's commands.

This photo here (p.58) shows when all the fleets came in in 1926, they wore white shirts and celebrated.

Captain Kono was a nice, kind man from Ehime. He was at Hay with us. His ship was very big, the *Mildred* owned by Morey Company. He always had lots of trochus shell and beche-de-mer. He got it from places where other people never went, from New Caledonian waters. He knew when the patrols would come around and took his chances. He was fluent in English, everybody knew him. He was famous.

Nobody went abroad for fun or adventure. It was money we wanted, so you could eat. After the war I went to Burma for ten years when Takashima Shinjku of Tokyo established the South Seas Pearling station there. They have pearl cultures in Nagasaki, and Kyushu, too. They were the second biggest pearl producers after Kishimoto, with stations in Burma, Japan, and the Phillipines. My last two years abroad I spent in the Phillipines, I was already 57, it was during the election of Marcos. For one week before the elections you couldn't buy alcohol. I didn't like Burma. The communists burned our ships and established a military regime, and we had to come back just as we were getting established. Also we had to come back to Japan every raining season. The conditions at Thursday Island were much better. It is a small island with a pleasant environment and atmosphere. Very quiet and no violence, it was our second home.

Takenaka did not recognize crown of thorns starfish. He has many shells at home from Burma, the Phillipines and Thursday Island, but says the triton shells are mainly form the Phillipines.



Takenaka Yasuichi diving with the half-dress in Burma, 1956. Courtesy of Ogawa Taira.

Inoue Ushimatsu (72) also comes from a family of divers. He went to Thursday Island in 1934 and was sent to Hay concentration camp at the outbreak of World War II.

My father had been to Thursday Island before me and my younger brother went there, too. My grandfather Inoue Genshiro died at Thursday Island, and my great-grandfather had been to Thursday Island as well. My cousin sent me the letter of calling. The *oyakata* arranged everything and subtracted the cost of the ticket from my wages. It took three years to pay off. It was all conducted with honesty.

Hockings went bankrupt when they tried to extend to the South Pacific Islands with rubber plantations. The plantation they bought was in bad condition, and they didn't have enough money to pay the divers' wages. That's why they engaged Malaysians as divers.

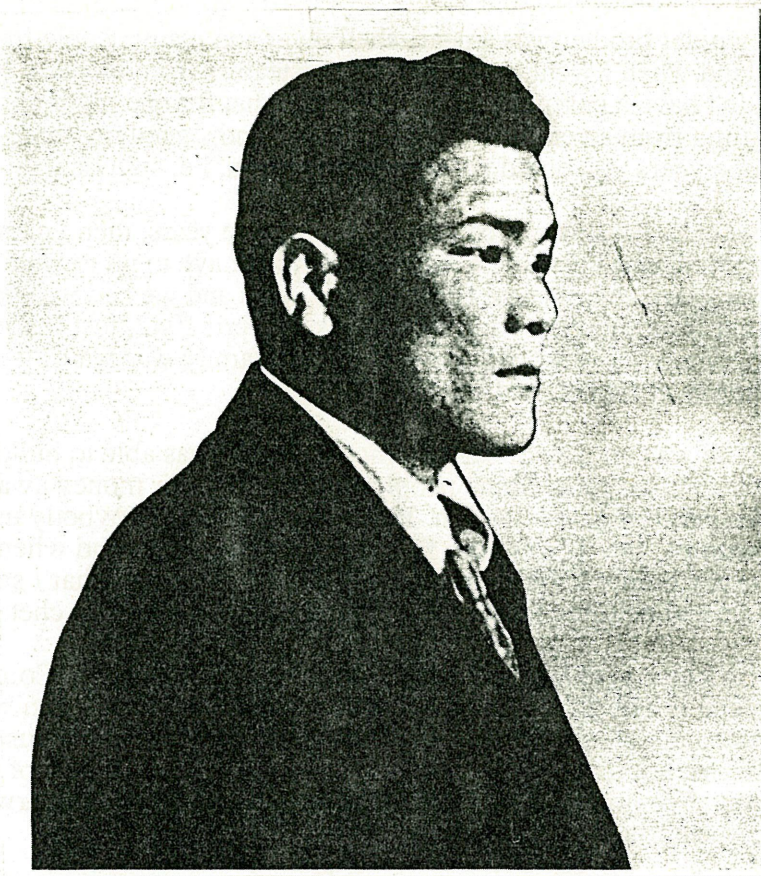
The *Galton* was the fastest ship I worked on, it was easy to work. Going out to the pearlbeds was a little like racing. The luggers didn't go as fleets and only met accidentally at sea, but if two arrived on the same pearlbed they shared it. There were a lot of divers and shell was getting a little scarce. They are easily depleted, not like fish. Once you take them they are gone. We used to go to Cairnscross Island, it took about two days. The tides in Torres Strait are very strong. We never went beyond the reef itself. You looked for new patches of shell all the time, and you just tried your luck. Matsushita from Miwazaki taught me how to find good patches. Some divers dived to thirty meters at Darnley Island. One of them is still alive, Kamei Hideo in Ugui, but he is deaf and his memory is gone. His father Kamei Kinzaemon dived with helmet only to sixty or seventy meters at Darnely. He died of bends.

We never trained any indigenous divers, we didn't need them, there were enough Japanese divers. The boys were happy with their wages. I did hear about some Island boys who wanted to be independent and learn to dive. They didn't have any luggers, only small boats, half the size of a lugger, and they picked up trochus and pearl-shell in shallow water with goggles.

We didn't know there was a war coming but we felt the air of the approaching war. Six of us were drinking at Yorke Island, and we ran out of alcohol so we went back to Thursday Island. We were met there by a police launch and they told us that war had been declared. They put us in a barbed wire enclosure. We had no belongings. After a few days we were allowed to get our belongings from our *haus*. The whole Japanese settlement was fenced, but actually it didn't feel all that bad, because that's where we would have stayed, anyway. After two weeks, towards Christmas, a cargo boat shipped us to Sydney. The conditions were terrible. We were in cowpens, there were no toilets and everything was so dirty, we got diarrhoea from the water. It took one week to get to Brisbane, and on New Year's Eve we got to Sydney and saw the Harbour Bridge for the first time, how big it was. The *Queen Elizabeth* was anchored in the harbour, and all the other ships looked tiny next to it. Then we went by train and arrived next morning at Hay, a town of about one hundred people. The concentration camp was just a fenced-in area with barracks and red soil, and there were dust-storms all the time. You couldn't do anything with that soil. We weren't afraid because we ~~knew~~ the Australian people at Thursday Island and we knew nothing bad would happen to us. We never complained and there was no trouble. We got enough rice but we were worried that when the Japanese army landed in Australia - as we knew they eventually would - there might not be enough rice left to feed the prisoners. So everytime we got rice we hid some of it under our beds. The Australians found out about it and asked us not to do that. They said they would always feed us no matter what happened but if we stashed rice away they would have to cut the rations.

After the war we sometimes thought about how much shell must be there now, when nobody was diving. If I were younger, I'd go back now.

Kamei Kinzaemon. This portrait is captioned: "King" Kinzayamen Kamei, the most famous Japanese diver at Thursday Island. (Norman Bartlett, The Pearl Seekers, London 1954.)



Below: Yamaguchi Mariko, Regina Ganter, Inoue Ushimatsu and Takenaka Yasuichi at the Nachi temple and waterfall. "We still sometimes dream of picking up shell."



Teacher Kyuhara took us to meet Miyamoto Sadakichi (87) in Ugui. He is the brother-in-law of Kamei Kinzaemon and speaks broken English.

My older brother was a pearl-shell diver and many people from Ugui were at Thursday Island when I went in 1916. I took a steamer from Kobe to Nagasaki and Hongkong. I didn't have a passport. I waited in Shanghai for one night until I got a certificate of calling from an employer in Hongkong, and signed my three-year contract there. After three years you could go home or oversign, i.e. sign on again.

I went to Australia three times, first for five years, then I came back for two years and married, and I became a soldier but didn't have to go to war. The second time I went for four years, then I came back for two years and we had two babies. And the last time I went for seven years and came back in April 1942, just before the war started. I didn't know that there would be a war but my family was waiting for me, my 'babies' were already at school, and I was 42.

There was no way of earning money here. I was able to build this house because of my work in Australia. Some people gambled all their money away and had nothing left. I like gambling, too, it's fun. But I don't gamble. Everybody used to gamble. Island boys - women, too. It was very funny. Every New Year and when the fleets came in I'd send money home. If I had no money I'd ask for a loan. What I sent was enough for my wife and children to live. Everything in Japan was very cheap.

I collected beche-de-mer and trochus shells for Bowden Company. We left Thursday Island in February and travelled for up to six months. Then we came back for *tucker-taim* and then go out again, maybe two trips per year. We used to go to the reefs outside Cairns, not to any islands. There were no names for most of the locations where we went. We just went by the charts. We also went to Port Darwin and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

There were seven or eight of us. If we went to collect trochus we'd take Island boys along, too. We dived with goggles and used a looking glass to see through the water. To spear beche-de-mer we'd fix a spear into an empty milk can with lead. We made that ourselves. We got any kind of beche-de-mer: big water black, they were most plentiful, teatfish, mamafish, or prickly. The beche-de-mer was boiled on deck in saltwater. We boiled several times a day. When you boil the beche-de-mer it cries, did you know that? The smoking took all day, you had no time to sleep, you have to make money, see? The oldest men on board did the boiling, the younger ones were swimming. Some captains swam, too. In those days the captain was your comrade.

If we got trochus shell we'd break the staghorn corals and the mucus on them stings your hands and they cut your skin. Trochus and beche-de-mer take a long time to recover, once a boat has been through, there is nothing left to take, so you go further and further out. If you found a patch you'd go over it from all angles, the lugger went down along one side of the reef and up again on the other side, and you're swimming around again and again until it is clean. If you don't catch enough you make no money at all.

On trochus and beche-de-mer boats you get wages, not like pearl-shell divers. We delivered the shell to the *oyakata* and he subtracted the cost of food supplies. By the time all the fees were subtracted there was nothing left if you didn't have a good tonnage.

Sometimes we had dirty water and filtered it through cloth. Only the captain and diver had a cup of fresh water to wash their face, one cup, that's all. If we came to an island,

we'd wash properly. We wore flannel clothing, it dries very quickly. We caught a lot of fish and turtles. There are four types of turtles in Australia, in Japan there is only one kind. We got the turtles when they come up on land and lay their eggs. We got the eggs, too. And we caught dugong at night, you can follow their trails. We knew all about that. For breakfast we had rice, then *pan* (bread) and for supper we had rice again. We bought onions and potatoes from the Chinese at Thursday Island.

We picked up mainland boys (Aborigines) in Cairns. They used to get tired of working and ran away at night with the dinghie. If they ran away they didn't get paid at all. They didn't get paid much. You'd only employ those who had worked before. They were difficult to work with and if you scolded them they would run away. New Guinea boys signed up for one year, they didn't run away. There were special recruiters to get them and the *oyakata* signed them on. They didn't speak English but they learned very fast.

Miyamoto onced touched a crown of thorns starfish and found it very painful. Not many people were injured by them because they only live near trochus shell, not near beche-de-mer. He didn't see many of them and didn't notice any damaged reefs.



Miyamoto Sadakichi and his wife, from Ugui village. He spent 16 years in Australia between 1916 and 1942, collecting trochus and beche-de-mer.



Wabuka Kiyomi and (below) the house he built with savings from pearl-shelling in Australia
(Courtesy Wabuka Kiyomi).



On 20 October Mariko and I shifted our headquarters to Susami where we were met by Wabuka Kiyomi (67). He arranged our accommodation at *Iko Nomura* (Village of Rest - a health farm) and guided us around the Susami area where we conducted four interviews. Wabuka is a very busy man. He has an eel farm and timber plantations in Kuchi-Wabuka (Susami), acts as caretaker for holiday villas, and is a political lobbyist. He is the acting president of the *Mokuyoto-kai* which was formed in 1978.

Many people from Susami used to go to Thursday Island. When they came home after the war everyone was too busy making a living, and we had no time to meet. Everybody was forgetting the story of this link, until teacher Kyuhara went to Thursday Island and found the cemetery in such a bad condition. He called everyone together and the *Mokuyoto-kai* was formed to erect a big monument. It was too difficult to repair all the graves so we gathered all the names to make a monument. Everybody contributed according to their means. One family in Osaka whose brother died at Thursday Island contributed two million yen. The old monument was already fifty years old, it was there when we were diving. It was the 50-year anniversary of the old monument when the club was formed. We met periodically to remember the old days, so the young people could remember their footsteps in Australia. Hamaguchi Unojiro in Miwazaki is the president for the whole Wakayama area, he is the oldest living diver, but he is sick. I am the president of the Susami chapter. We had about 47 members in Susami, circa 60 came back after the war. Today there are about 30 left. I am one of the youngest. We are not meeting any more at present, the club was at its peak when the monument was being erected.

I have always been fascinated by the South Sea. I went to Australia to make money. If I worked as a cook for two years I could build a big house, it was big money for a seventeen-year-old. In Japan it would take you fifty years to earn that sort of money. I endured for ten years - yes, endured. My elders at Susami House were very strict. They wouldn't let me gamble, and sent my money home. I never saw my money for three years, the first time I saw any money was in my fourth year. My uncle, my father's brother supervised me. It was very strict but still I enjoyed it. The movies were one of my weaknesses - Cowboy movies. I used to go to the picture theatre with the black boys, I didn't like to discriminate. (I would like to meet them and bring them a present when I go to Australia next year.) Whites and Blacks were not allowed to sit together in the picture theatre, the difference is very obvious, but as a Japanese you could sit anywhere. Everybody used to know me because I took black boys to the pictures. Their wages were one tenth of ours.

I first went in 1937, arriving in November. I left from Kobe where I stayed at the Free Pension where all the arrangement were made. We signed two different contracts. One at Kobe which was negotiated between the two governments, this was just a formality so that we could leave Japan. The second contract was signed when we arrived at Thursday Island, it was a contract between the workers and the company. It was not a matter of cheating. Our elders had described to us what to expect. The first contract was too specific, it would have made it hard for us, too. We had very good relations with the *oyakata*, he invited us to tea or coffee, we even went into his house barefooted! I worked for Cleveland. I was a cook, engineman, and try diver. I worked on the *Haurakki*, *Haku*, *Waitoa*, and *Waikari*.

What do I remember most about Thursday Island? I had beri-beri (*kake*). My legs were swollen and lame. I was in hospital for forty days shortly after I arrived. There were no vegetables except onions and the water was bad. I only ate rice all the time, no bread, that's why I got it. Many of us had beri-beri, my uncle Horimoto died from it. It was

the most common cause of death. Oatmeal saved most of them, they gave us oatmeal and milk in the hospital. I didn't like the bread we made on the boats from flour, yeast and water. Every time I got to Thursday Island I'd buy some good bread from the White baker, and eat a whole loaf with tin beef. On the boat we had bread and tea for lunch and miso soup and rice for dinner, even the Blacks ate it. We had butter, too.

When the war started I didn't hear about it until I arrived at Thursday Island, and was ordered onto a launch. Suddenly the black boys we used to work with appeared in uniforms - we were at war with each other. I thought I was going to be killed. But the Cleveland *oyakata* came and said 'you are not prisoners of war, you are employed by an Australian company'. He wrote a certificate of protection. An electric fence was erected around Susami House. We stayed there for two months until all the others arrived back from sea, and during that time I was a dentist's assistant. One of the soldiers was a dentist.

We were taken to Sydney on a cattle ship. We arrived in Sydney on New Year's Day. It was very hot on the ship, it took twenty days to Sydney. There were already mines in the Torres Strait waters. Horimoto marked the mines on the charts. The first year at Hay went by very slowly but the next three years passed quickly. You could play tennis and do what you liked. They never told us how the war was going. They would not have told us if they were about to loose the war. After four and a half years we saw a Japanese ship in Sydney on our way back. They told us that we had lost the war. We couldn't believe it, we started crying. We knew there would be very little food.

We heard about the nuclear bombing on the ship home. I thought I would not see my relatives again, but when I got back I found them well. We had no idea how big the blast might be.

We were farmers and had hidden away some rice and wheat, and a farmer did not really have to fear, but the people from Susami village and Osaka and Tanabe used to come down to the farms, they were undernourished and came stealing from the fields. If you let them they would have stolen everything. We started sweet potatoes in the mountains and made salt from the seawater. There was a great shortage of salt.

The banks just closed, and the currency was devalued. All my savings from Australia were devalued. And then the inflation started. The money I had saved during four years at Hay bought three tickets to the movie theatre in Tanabe. There was nothing left. That was just our luck. Fishermen and farmers were lucky, but of those who returned and had no land, some died from malnutrition.

Wabuka was once stung by a stonefish as he was spearfishing at Naghi Island. Black blood oozed from the wound and his heart started to race. He became paralyzed and dizzy. He mixed ashes with hot water and put dried white radish in the boiling water. That stopped the pain very quickly but as soon as it cooled down he became paralyzed again. He was unconscious for three hours. He stopped the blood from circulating by tying a rope around his hand. He never saw crown of thorns starfish. He once saw a crocodile in the ocean while collecting shell. It was sleeping, and he thought it was a log until it took off suddenly, that was one of his scariest experiences. Sharks were like flies to him.

Horimoto Shinichi (75) from Susami knows crown of thorns starfish and calls them *uni*, sea urchin. He saw them but was not interested in them, and knew they were poisonous. They were strange things. They lived in the sandy patches. He used to see dead patches of coral as big as this room, but does not know what killed them, they were dry, completely without mucus. But even in those dead places one could find a few trochus shells. He used to break off staghorn corals when collecting trochus shell, and once he hurt himself on the coral and it took one month to heal. It was swollen, and he put ashes on it mixed with hot water to relieve the pain. If the water cools down more hot water is applied. His Japanese elders had told him about the ashes, it is a Japanese treatment. Rice treatment is used for divers' bends: cooked rice is put on the diver. If he wore a diving suit he has to be kept warm, if he was diving with helmet only, he has to be kept cool.

Triton shells were found inside the reef in the calm shallow waters, like beche-de-mer. The priests in the temples used them as horns.

I left from Kobe and arrived at Thursday Island in March 1929 with a group of ten others on the passenger ship *Tango Maru*. It took one month, we went via Palau, Manila, and Sydney. Four or five were from Miwazaki, some were going for the second or third time. Everyone had a letter of calling, from different companies, mine was from Morey Company who owned ten

In Kobe I had to sign a three-year contract, it was very minutely detailed, how much food you would receive each day, how much water supply, how much tea, everything was spelled out in detail. But when we arrived we signed another contract, because the conditions on the boats were different from what the first contract stipulated. The Kobe contract was a mere formality. It had been negotiated between the Japanese and the Australian governments, it was just a show-piece. But at Thursday Island things were different - you didn't know beforehand how much water supply you needed or how much of anything - it's just like war, you can't tell what will happen next.

I had no passport when I left Susami. There was an immigration firm in Kushimoto who gave me a certificate, they took care of the people who went abroad. They also arranged immigration to other places. At that time there was a great immigration wave to Brazil from this area. Morey advanced the money for a one-way ticket, circa 105 Yen. They sent the letter of calling to Kobe, and from there it was sent to Kushimoto, and the Kushimoto firm advised me that there was a job. I signed a temporary contract in Kushimoto and then I was sent to a hotel in Kobe which specialized in taking care of immigrants, the Free Pension. They made all the necessary arrangements.

The Susami police came and asked whether I was being forced to go or going voluntarily. I had to explain that I was going of my own free will in order to earn money. My uncles and cousins were at Thursday Island. It was good money, and if you got the chance to go there, you went. I had been communicating with them waiting for a chance to go there, for one year, until I finished junior high school.

Miwazaki House called me as a pearl-shell diver, but I was signed on as a trochus diver, because that's what was needed. I stayed at Thursday Island for one week and then went on the *Catalina* to Flinders Island, an uninhabited island. I was the only Japanese there, and there was a man called White Malcolm who took care of the station with more than twenty Aborigines. White Malcolm gave me water and food, and I spent

one week alone there waiting for the ship to pick me up. During the daytime black people came to see the "Japanese man", it was new for them. They brought girls to me from Campbell Point. On the trochus boat we were two or three Japanese and perhaps twenty Aborigines. They made fires on the mainland to call the boats in. They came by canoe to the boat and brought pigs and chicken, and bartered for rice, bread, flour, sugar, tea and tobacco.

The Aborigines were good swimmers, they were not veterans but they got used to swimming diving, and once they got used to it they were even better than the Japanese divers, because they were indigenous people and were used to the water. We had four or five dinghies and would divide up a reef between us and assign an area to each dinghie. A reef might cover three miles. It is hard to work one reef in one day.

We would leave Thursday Island around March, go towards Cairns, then to Flinders Island, then west to the Great Barrier Reef. We always stopped at Campbell Point. I did that for seven years. I know every reef between Townsville and Cairns, on which parts of it you get the trochus, where the beche-de-mer is, everything. The trochus are near the breakers. In certain places you get big and small shells together. If you took all the big shells it would get depleted, but if you went several times and picked up a few each time it would always be there. You must leave some big shells. The little ones are not worth anything. They grow fast, one centimetre in one week. You can read their age when you turn them upside down.

Most Australian beche-de-mer is edible, for example bigwater black, teatfish, mamafish, red fish, this one is kala-kala. They live 20 feet down. The big ones live on sand, the ones on rocky ground are smaller. Skindivers can't go down to 20 feet, so we used to spear them with a milk-can with lead and a spear on a rope. In winter when it is too cold to swim you used a glass to look down from the dinghie with one hand, and with the other hand you gradually lowered the spear, while two people are rowing, and you'd give them handsignals to indicate which way to go. You strike the beche-de-mer at the end, not in the middle, so that if you pull it up it comes up straight. If you strike it in the middle it fills up with water. You boil it and it shrinks and becomes small and wrinkled, then you slice it across the back, and pin it down with splints to straighten it so it can dry. Finally you smoke it.

We never left Australian waters. One man from Susami went to the Solomon Islands for trochus, but with a different company, they smuggled beche-de-mer. We used to go from Thursday Island to Flinders Island, to Cape Melville, to Cooktown. That was our working area. We went to Bloomfield, Cairns, Low Island where the lighthouse is, then Batt Reef, Tongue Reef. At Tongue Reef two fleets sank in a cyclone. Only three Blacks survived, they swam from Tongue Reef to Low Island, through all those sharks. We were south of Cairns at the time and cut the mast, that saved us. Other boats used to go as far as Mackay. We went as far as Townsville. We sold the beche-de-mer and trochus to the agent who sent it to China. When we left Thursday Island, the company gave us food and equipment, and it was all recorded, and the agent at Townsville subtracted those costs from the sale price. The final calculation was done at the end of the year in Thursday Island, a profit/loss calculation. The captain might borrow money in Townsville, and each of us got £ 66 per year (not the crew), and if there was a surplus we divided it among us. Sometimes we had a loss of £40, sometimes a profit of £100.

From Townsville to Thursday Island took about one month. We kept riding at night-time, taking turns at navigating. We used charts and a compass. The charts were very reliable, they indicated the depths, and we had a watch on the mast. A trip used to take two months. There was no fear of food-shortage. You could go to any port where there were agents, in Cooktown, Cairns, Townsville. Water used to run out pretty quickly, but you could get it anywhere. The mainland water is very dirty. You filtered it by

putting ricesacks in the water, and the movement of the ship filtered it, the dirt sticks to the sacks as the ship rolls. We worked that out by ourselves. Nobody ever put saltwater into the drinking water. Once I saw a giant clam as big as two tables. Sometimes at high tide you can't see them and the dinghie runs into them. Japanese don't like to eat clams, you only eat a small part inside, not the fleshy lips. We prefer trochus meat, it tastes like Japanese abalone.

At Bloomfield there was a farm with horses and Whites. We stayed a week and rented horses from a mailman. There were some Malays who got pigs for us, two big pigs. They cooked them and exchanged them for flour and rice and we ate together. Other ships came to recruit, too.

My captains were Kosaka Eiki, he died in a cyclone, then Ogura Fukumatsu, then Shimakami Toraji, they were all from Susami. There used to be many Japanese in Australia who owned boats, but they sold them to Australians. The Japanese names were retained. That's why my boat from Morey Company was called *Igawa*. There were *Koza*, *Arita*, *Barama* or *Palama*, *Arana*, they were the Morey Company boats. *Aniki* means 'brother'. Shimakami was a beche-de-mer captain from Susami. He was much older than me, he is dead now.

I was in Australia for about 17 years, of which I spent four years and three months in Hay concentration camp. I was near the coast at Papua New Guinea when war was declared and a launch came to look for us. All the boats were in the harbour when we came back. There were mines in the Torres Strait waters. Most had been taken to Sydney, only 47 of us were left at Thursday Island. We waited for a week and then a passenger ship took us. It was very comfortable, they brought us the menu to choose from and an interpreter translated for us. He was a shop-owner at Thursday Island, Saka Kibara, he was sent to Tatsura with his wife. In Sydney the officers told us that we'd be better off staying in Sydney, because Japan was being bombed.

All our savings were in the bank, and the banks simply closed. When we got back we came with nothing. At home they said we should have bought things, goods, but we brought our money with us and it was not worth anything. Two days of saltmaking made as much as ten years of working at Thursday Island.

Horimoto Shinichi, a trochus collector, became a novelty for the Campbell Point Aborigines in 1929.



Morishita Kazuo (65) is a cousin of Wabuka and came to see us in our hotel. He uses the term *oyakata* to refer to the captain.

I had been wanting to go abroad since I was a little boy. I wondered whether to go as a soldier or as a diver. My grandfather had been to America and used to tell me stories from far-away. I was 17 when I went in 1939.

The first year I went trochus fishing for Burns Philp on the *Galton* and *Frampton*. We only had sails, no engines. There were 3 Japanese and 11 or 15 mainland Blacks. We used to fish on the inner reef between Cooktown and Cairns and Thursday Island, stopping on the coral reefs at low tide. Sometimes we stopped at a creek along the way. Beyond the There are very fast currents. Three would be diving and one rowing the dinghie. The dinghies were about 80 kilometers apart, the Japanese went further away and the blacks stayed closer to the boat. In a good wind we could sail 40 kilometers. The dinghies always found their way back, you just waited for the wind. The *oyakata* Taima didn't worry too much about that. The boat had a lamp on the mast and each dinghie had a compass. We knew the reefs in our heads. There are some 300 reefs between Cairns and Thursday Island, and we knew them all. We could navigate at night. We'd sail for eight hours from Thursday Island and spend the day at a reef, and go to another reef the next day. After a month or so we went home and out again on the same pattern. We'd stay on Thursday Island for a week, deliver the shell, get supplies, maybe rest for three days, but we stayed on the ship. Between December and the end of February we'd all be at Thursday Island in Susami House. We'd celebrate Christmas and New Year, repair the lugger, it was painted about three times a year. About two thirds of the time during lay-up we'd be working, otherwise gambling and playing *Hanafuda*. I don't smoke or drink. My skippers were Tomihari Taima and Matsumoto and Kazuo, all from Susami. The blacks signed on for one year. People from the same villages worked together on trochus boats, not like the pearl boats. The Shingu people also worked together on one boat. The *oyakata* organized it.

Normally one month's pay at Thursday Island was as much as the mayor of Susami got. We were earning that at age 16, 17, making money like a high school principal. I always sent money to my father who put it in the bank. At the time when I left, in 1939, Wabuka's house would have cost 2000 Yen, but when I came back that money would have bought a shirt.

We didn't see many sea urchins. No, we don't eat them. We picked up some beautiful triton shells. I used to give them to the blacks, they were on low wages, and they liked to take them home. They got two sticks of tobacco as ration and were not allowed alcohol or access to hotels. I was sorry for them. They were very kind. If they got homesick we'd take them for a visit to their home. We even went as far as New Guinea but we were not allowed to enter, we had to anchor outside. Our crew were from Badu, Naghi, Horn Island, and Murray Island. Each island was home to about 200 to 300 people. Some of them were working on the boats and would go home at night-time to their families. We didn't have mainland Blacks.

I wouldn't want my son to go to Thursday Island. There was no freedom on the boat. Could three Japanese and 11 blacks live together without understanding each other's language? It hardly seems possible.

Morishita made the following observations about crown of thorns starfish:

I swam every day for four hours, about one to four meters deep. The first time we went to C-Reef it was beautiful, but when we came back to it after four years, it was white, something had eaten it. There were big dead patches. I saw crown of thorns starfish, even in Japan when I was small. I call them *hitode* (starfish). They are not dangerous unless you touch them. They prevent the staghorn corals from growing. The only time I saw aggregations like that was when I was catching beche-de-mer. They live in sandy areas with slow currents. After ten days if you came back to the spot they would be gone, they migrate or move. We never stepped on them, we were wearing goggles.



Morishita Kazuo was assigned to a sailing boat without engine for trochus fishing in 1939, but his earnings were comparable to those of a high school principal at home.

At Susami we were able to meet Ogawa Taira (74) the author of Pearls of Arafura (1976), a study of the Japanese emigrants to Australia. He took much trouble to drive with his wife from Tanabe to Susami, and arrived in the hotel lobby with a bundle of books and albums wrapped in a *furoshiki*, a black cloth, the Japanese equivalent of the Australian swag. He gave me a complimentary copy of his book and very generously offered many historical photographs. Many of them referred to people from the area who were somehow instrumental in establishing links with abroad, such as captain Takaoka from Shionomisaki who delivered a trading ship to Tonga in order to open trade between Tonga and Japan in 1928, or Wada Gikei who was a trader in Papua .

Our area has many links with overseas. Japanese *samurai* went to New Guinea as early as the sixteenth century, and people from our area stepped in their footsteps when they went to New Caledonia, Samarai, and New Guinea to catch beche-de-mer. This is how our divers went to Australia: As long as immigration to Australia was free (before 1902), divers went through the immigration firm in Kushimoto, the Morishima Immigration Company, a private firm. After three months they could go to Kobe where most of them stayed at the *Ryukan* which arranged the tickets and customs procedures. After the immigration restrictions, emigrants went straight to Kobe, and the Kushimoto firm would inform the police that so-and-so went without proper papers, and the police would catch them.

Before letters of calling were introduced, the Japanese would carry certificates of identity. Sometimes they would lend them to each other to smuggle people in and out of the country. (A Brisbane laundryman Kumatsu Rinosuke hid in a boat from Kobe for 20 days.) When the immigration of Yellow people to Australia was restricted, letters of calling became necessary, because the pearl-shellers needed the Japanese. If labour was needed, the white *oyakata* would ask the ship captain, and the captain would recommend a nephew, brother, son, or someone. A letter of calling would be sent to the person, and he would take it to the immigration firm.

The captain and *oyakata* had to be on good terms, there was a relationship of trust. The *oyakata* always listened to the captain. The captain could ask the *oyakata* to hire an illegal immigrant before the letters of calling were introduced. The first diver had a lot of power and prestige. The White women at Thursday Island lifted their hats if a good Japanese diver went by!

A new immigration law was introduced around 1926, and the fishing boats went directly from Kushimoto to Arafura Sea without going to Thursday Island. They stopped in Palau which was Japanese territory in Micronesia. They were circa 30-ton ships whereas the Thursday Island luggers were about 10 tons. They didn't have to get permission, because they fished outside the three-mile limit. Several fleets totalling about 50 or 60 boats went every year, from Kushimoto and Ehime, until the beginning of World War II, and in 1953 or 54 they started going again from Kushimoto. *Taiga Maru* was the first ship that went to the Arafura Sea, then there were *Taiga I, II, III*, belonging to the Osaka Trading Company. *Kumano Maru* was another one, Kumano is a place in Wakayama Prefecture. After World War II they also went from Kushimoto to Burma to do pearl-shelling. It was financed jointly by the Burmese and Japanese governments.

These ships were requisitioned by the Japanese navy as spy ships to Palau, the Phillipines, New Guinea, Borneo, Java, etc. They carried cargo and personnel, and

made charts of the foreign ports, noting where water, bananas, potatoes and so on could be obtained. They were instructed to do so three years before the outbreak of war. I spoke to one of the captains myself.

Hockings (a Thursday Island master pearler) came all the way to Shionomisaki to erect a monument after eight people from Shionomisaki died when a beche-de-mer boat sank in a cyclone near Cooktown on 23 January 1899. The inscription on the monument is a translation of what Hockings wrote in English: "If you had obeyed the words of Hockings you would not have died like that." Hockings used to tell them to be careful, not to work so much, but the Japanese had to work hard to get money and did not care about the cyclone. At New Year or Christmas Hockings would give his men pocketmoney to celebrate, so they tried very hard to please him. He came to Shionomisaki to recruit, and he used to throw coins to the boys. Everybody knew grand old Hockings.

The Shionomisaki divers were first class divers. They earned more than TV stars. One good diver would pick up fifty tons of pearl-shell a year, whereas a normal diver might get five to ten tons. Shionomisaki divers had their own club to which everyone contributed £10 each year to pay for the ticket if someone had to go home with bends or to pay a funeral. They were the only village that had that kind of club, that's why so many graves on Thursday Island are for people from Shionomisaki.

Shiba Iwakichi from Shionomisaki formed the *Doshi-kai* in 1917. Takimoto Mainkichi from Susami was its president and left behind diaries which I used for my book. The annual negotiations would take up the best part of two months. They had violent demonstrations like they did in Japan at the same time, where they wore their *Hachimaki* (red head-towels) and shook the house of the master pearlmen. This towel signifies power, strength, fierceness, our students wear it for competitions, it gives them fighting power.

After the union was formed the divers owned all the shells and pearls, which put an end to the problem of smuggling pearls off the luggers. Captain Mantaro (one of the interviewees, p.28) had about 15000 Yen worth of pearls in 1926/27, that is about £1000, which would be worth ten billion Yen today. But he spent all the money, he has nothing now.

In 1894/95 ten divers bought a ticket in the Melbourne Cup and won 20,000 Yen (it would be billions of Yen now). A teacher got 6 or 7 Yen per month. Three of them from Shionomisaki gambled all their money away. One went girl-hunting to Kobe, and came back to Kushimoto in a chartered (!) boat. He left his own wife and met girls everywhere, and had children everywhere. Within ten years he had lost all his money, even sold his own house and went to Singapore as a sweet-bread seller (*manju*). The other two started tunafishing but the boat sank in a typhoon. A fourth winner was Haramatsu Gorobei. He bought whole mountains of cedar trees. He was a good man. He used all his money to buy mountains in Shionomisaki, Koza, Shingu, and he became the biggest mountain owner, the richest man in the area, and sent his children to university. His second son went to maritime college and became a captain, but his oldest boy was stupid. When the father died, he had geisha girls in Osaka and sold off land to finance himself. He went to Tokyo and Atami, and everywhere, buying girls. He had not one, but three or four girls together. I knew him. He was famous.

But the lasting effect of immigration was education for their children. It was a dangerous job, they didn't want their children to do it. They wanted them to be teachers, doctors, and so on. Even the nieces and nephews were sent to school. Shionomisaki is famous for its high level of education. My family are all teachers.

Ogawa Taira discussing historical photographs with Yamaguchi Mariko at Ikoi Nomura.



On 22nd October we left Wakayama Prefecture and flew to Matsuyama, the capital of Ehime. Watanabe Fumiya, the co-author of a several-volume history of the prefecture, became our guide, and was granted leave of absence from his teaching duties to take us on a three-day trip through Iyo country. He arranged our accommodation in a hostel for handicapped, and the second night we stayed in Mangan-ji temple at Tsuchima-cho at the courtesy of Sudo Shuji and his wife. The temple is one of a string of temples around the prefecture which have extended hospitality to pilgrims for centuries. The third night was spent in Uchiumi-mura (Minamiuwa-gun) by courtesy of Nakagawa Ukimasa. We also visited the beautiful Nanrakuen Park. It was the mandarin season in Iyo which is famous for its plantations, and we always had a good supply of the fruit in our luggage, provided by interviewees.

Teacher Watanabe took us to see the Tatsuno brothers at Kawano-ishi in Honai (Nishiuwa-gun), Tatsuno Matsuo (65) and Tatsuno Ryuhichi (68). Not only had the brothers expected my arrival and borrowed a painting of the lugger *Mildred* which had been drawn on a piece of cloth at Hay internment camp, but the family were preparing a feast and a journalist stood ready to cover the story of my visit. The journalist very patiently sat through the entire interview, but could not help remark in his article that the interview seemed 'interminable'. We spoke to the older brother first, and then the younger one:

I was 17 when I went to Thursday Island in 1936 to work for Morey Company on the *Koza* to catch trochus and beche-de-mer. My captain Kono Tesaburo was from Ehime, too. Nobody knew as much about the Great Barrier Reef as him, he was on the reef for thirty years. He took great care of the natives on his ship. He was like a Governor to us and the natives. He used to go to New Caledonia, and ride on top of the mast to navigate. He only had a ten-ton ship and a small compass. The last of those who went to New Caledonia with him died three years ago, Yamato, he came back before World War II started. Kono was at Hay concentration camp with us. He died ten years ago. At the camp someone drew a picture of the *Mildred*, Kono's boat, on a piece of cloth. I borrowed it for today. I have been waiting every day to tell you the story. The red and black colour was the trademark of Morey Company boats. Every company had a different colour scheme. The *Mildred* sank near Cooktown in a cyclone. This painting has stains from incense on it. (It must have been on an altar -

I went to Australia because I had to earn money. I was the eldest son. Kono took five or six men from this area, including me. We went to Kobe for immigration and customs and came via Hongkong, Manila, and Rabaul to Thursday Island. From there I went to Cairns and Townsville on the same ship to meet my trochus boat at Townsville. We went towards the barrier reef, to a different reef every day. The beche-de-mer boats have no engines or equipment, only the pearl luggers had engines.

There were only three Japanese on the boat, including the captain, and 17 indigenous people. The Japanese and one of the native leaders slept in the cabin, the others in the cargo area on bunks. We even stashed trochus shells under the bunks to keep the balance of the ship. While everyone was diving the cook boiled the trochus on the ship and extracted the meat and dried it. By the time we reached port it was dry enough to sell to the Chinese in Chinatown. The cook was the lowest paid and this way he could make some money for himself.

The captain hired the boat and the Japanese had a fixed salary. The natives were really honest and hardworking, they were from islands in the Torres Strait. We also had maybe one or two Mainland boys, they were lazy. They got £3 or £4, about half the Japanese wage. I received £6 in the first year. But the company made all those decisions, it was not up to the captain. The captain paid all expenses of the ship and kept the remainder. It was not because of any unions that our wages were so high. The pay was according to the responsibilities. The natives had no responsibility on the job, they slept when we navigated at night, and they just did what they were told. They didn't want to learn to dive, they were afraid.

The food on board was divided evenly among everybody. There was enough water. If we didn't have water we'd have to go back. We also had a rainwater tank. There were cockroaches in the water, and you had to hit the tank to get them out. That problem didn't exist on pearl boats. There was no shower, of course. On beche-de-mer boats you never washed your face, on pearl-shell boats you had one cup to wash your face. Everybody watched their water, even Thursday Island only had rainwater which was collected from the roofs. Nobody used much water.

After three years Kono's boat *Koza* sank and he started pearl-shelling with the *Taka* and we went with him. He was too old to dive but the two of us dived. It was more hazardous, you could get bends and rheumatism. I sometimes lost consciousness on the boat. I dived to 47 feet, some 100 miles from Thursday Island, at Darnley. Near Badu and the Arafura Sea the ground is shallow. Only five or six dived at Darnley. I almost died there. About thirty meters from the reef the ground drops off sharply to about 40 feet. The water beyond the reef is simply a cemetery, Darnley is no different.

When the war broke out I was on Yorke Island, and an Islander came from the mainland, he used to work with us, and said "I have sad news, war started. So when you get back to Thursday Island a launch will pick you up.". When I got there my savings had been confiscated by the Australian government and they were getting interest. I was supposed to build a house with it, but all you could buy with it when I got back was two *tetami* mats.

We never saw crown-of-thorns starfish. We had no diving equipment when we picked trochus shell, so you wouldn't waste your breath looking around. It meant nothing to us, and we had no name for it.

Tatsuno Matsuo:

I went to Thursday Island in 1938, I never worked on trochus boats, always on pearl boats, with my brother on Morey Company's *Taka*. We had three divers - Kono didn't dive - and I was the third diver and my brother was the first diver. We took turns to dive near Darnley. In the first year the second diver, Shimizu Kazuwa, died of bends. It happened in the morning dive. I signalled to him but he didn't answer, he was already limb, his bubbles were very faint, there was no high and low pitch to his bubbles. I took him underwater for immersion but water kept getting into the helmet, we tried to revive him for about four or five hours. We took him to Thursday Island and an autopsy was performed, and the inspector came to the boat. It was commonplace to die of bends, the investigation was not an accusation against the captain. There were a lot of graves of young boys. You can get bends even in shallow water, it depends on the person's physical make-up, staging tables don't prevent it. I dived with helmet only, with ordinary pants and shirt. You can't dive more than 30 meters with the full dress, it puts too much pressure on your body, and you can stay only five minutes. But with the half dress you can stay fifteen minutes.

At Thursday Island we stayed in Iyo House, the accommodation for Ehime divers. We didn't have separate accommodation for each village, like those from Wakayama. Iyo House was owned by Yamashita from Ehime. He was the leader of our club and sent the money home for us. Just before the war we couldn't send money or letters because the two governments severed their economic ties.

Why did I go to Australia? Everyone has to build their own castle. If you were a diver and saved your money you could return to Japan quickly. All the young men wanted to be divers. While you were on the lugger you had nothing more heavy to carry than your ricebowl and chopsticks. You were not supposed to exhaust yourself so that you wouldn't get bends. Even older people would assist you. That's why there were many accidents among young divers, they wanted to make money fast. It is a Japanese trait to be greedy. We want everything quickly. The Chinese would bury their bone on Thursday Island and make a fortune, but the Japanese are not like that, they want to go home again quickly.

We didn't go to the land except sometimes in the evening, but at night we returned to the lugger. Not because of any prohibitions. If you wore a white shirt and pants and walked around on Thursday Island you'd never be able to go back to Japan again. Unless you were at least a tender you couldn't afford to go to the movies. Even after three years we wouldn't even buy a fruit juice on the land. We had to sleep on the boat, and just go to the island to visit a sick friend in hospital. We only went to the boarding house to have a bath (*ofuro*) because there's no water on the boat. Only divers and tenders slept in Iyo House. There was space for maybe 15 to 20 people. We only stayed there during the cyclone season, although we did ride out some cyclones on the boat in port.

We were the inferiors of Kono, he could order us to wash his clothes. The youngest on the ship worked for the eldest. You rowed him ashore and picked him up again if he wanted to go to a movie, and if guests came the youngest cooked and tried very hard - you were cooking for the reputation of the boat. We wouldn't like our sons to do that work, it is a very lowly experience.

The Tatsuno brothers hold up a painting of Captain Kono's lugger *Mildred* which had been painted on a handkerchief at Hay internment camp.



Also in Ehime Prefecture, we met **Seike Ukio** (67) in Arashi (Kitauwa-gun). He is completely lame from a viral infection which entered the nervous system. Since his short stint in Australia, he had been working as a mailman for 35 years.

I worked for Morey Company on the *Alexa* from 1937 to 1939, first as a cook, then as engineer, tender and diver, I did everything. I dived to forty feet.

The captain Ariuke Toraji was my cousin, he sent my letter of calling. His family owned a hotel. I took a ship from Uwajima to Kobe and stayed at Tanya Ryokan. Every day there were different medical examinations at the hospital in Kobe to test the emigrants: eyes, lungs, internal organs, VD. There were people from Wakayama at the same Ryokan, they made all the arrangements for people going to Australia. I got a passport with a chrysanthemum as its mark. It had two photos and a thumb-print for identification. It was only valid for Australia. I paid my own ticket to Kobe, and from there the company paid. I had to pay it back from my wages, it was subtracted in monthly or annual instalments. All that was agreed in the contract. I left Kobe on 18th February and arrived at Thursday Island on 10th March.

Going to Australia was good for me. The whole village sent me off when I left, I was the only one going at the time. It was even in the newspaper. It was a unique thing to do, fifty years ago.

There were six Japanese on the boat, four New Guineans and two Island boys. The crew changed each time we came to port. If they heard of a good ship with good conditions, they left. We tried to keep the good ones by giving them tobacco or a flannel wrap-around (it was like a blanket). They called the captain "boss", and I was still young, they called me "boy". I called them by name. Island boys were very honest and obedient. New Guinea boys were a little bit difficult, maybe because of the language, they didn't speak English. I didn't speak a word of English, either, we used sign language. New Guinea boys were very superstitious. On a full moon they'd spread the coconut mats on deck and started dancing like a festival for the moon or something. They'd strike the tin-cans for drums. This was in the middle of the night, mind you, when everyone was sleeping. I got very angry with them.

During lay-up we worked all the time, we cut mangrove wood, repaired the mast, repaired the ship. Some men from Wakayama were very fierce, they'd drink and fight. I was on the boat all the time, I didn't gamble, I only went to the cemetery. Gamblers would go to the grave of the "Fox", a notorious gambler, and chip off a bit from the gravestone in order to be as lucky as him. ⁴¹

My mother was always sick in hospital, and we were in debt and needed the money. It was a bad time for everybody, the silk industry was in recession (ca. 1935-37). I was under the care of Yamashita Haruoshi, the president of the Japanese Club. He was in his 40s or 50s and took care of everybody, also concerning the wages. He sent my money home, I never had any money. We had no need for spending money. Even clothes were supplied by the elders. It is the cook's privilege to clean the meat off the ~~trochus~~ shells and dry the meat on the mast and the elders sold it at Chinatown to get the cook some pocketmoney. The only money I needed was for postage stamps. The money I sent home might have been 200 Yen per month, but I really can't remember, I never saw the money, only the receipts. We never doubted Yamashita, he was like a father, and anyway, the family wrote back saying how much they received and I had a notebook to keep track of the money.

⁴¹Possibly Yagura Taroichi from Kushimoto, referred to by Sissons, op.cit., p.21.

Life in Australia was of a very high standard for us. At home we had no food. In Australia we had meat every day, and white rice as much as we wanted. In Japan we didn't get white rice, however much you washed it. We even threw away the cold rice! I'd make a porridge with miso soup from the rice because bread by itself didn't fill you. Vegetables were scarce. The company supplied the food on the luggers, corned beef, and tinned meat. We had butter, jam of many varieties like watermelon, raspberry, etc., I couldn't read the labels. At Ehime house we played billiards and had dinner and a bath, on the boat we only had saltwater showers.

If we got good pearls we got a bonus. The captain got the pearls, and if they sold at a good price we'd divide the profit among the Japanese and bought the black boys something. There were agents at Thursday Island to buy the pearls, it was a ship that went to London. But I don't know much about that, I was always on the boat keeping watch. The older diver went on land first, and when he came back I could go to Ehime house. I'd have to pick him up and row the dinghie, and the current at night is faster than a river, it was a great effort. I couldn't sleep at night, I never knew when they would call me to row them. If I didn't come I'd get abused, but they wouldn't hit me or anything. I drank tea or coffee and had those good Australian biscuits to stay awake with.

We used to get taro and mangoes from the islands, the elders knew where to go for water and food. The Island boys speared turtles with a rope attached to a spear, and they caught dugong. The dugong used to be near the reef where the grass grows and as far as you could see with your eyes they would come. Once you eat dugong, you won't like pork or beef anymore.

Nobody on my ship got malaria or beri-beri. We only got seasick all the time, and were afraid the boat would sink, when the waves were coming over the boat. Once I got a heatstroke, when it was very hot in March. My joints stiffened and I had high fever, and was in hospital for a week. I was very thirsty and asked for water, and they brought me tank water that had mosquito larvae in it. They said, don't worry, drink it, that only means it's good water - if it was dead you'd be worried! I'll never forget that, the rainwater.

The Australian soldiers at Thursday Island started practising for war, so I knew a war was coming. I intuitively felt that I should go back to Japan, so I came back in October 1939, and had to register as a soldier. I was stationed in Northern Kyushu in Self Defence in the mountains attacking American planes.

Seike Ukio and his wife. "The whole village sent me off ... It was even in the newspaper."



Takao Koonosuke (68) was the last of those interviewed in Ehime. He lives in picturesque Ajiro village on a peninsula in Uchiumi-mura which depends largely on pearl culture for its existence.

I went in 1939 to work for Morey Company. My father Takao Iwaichi had been to Thursday Island but came back in 1914 because shell became hard to sell before the war. Ariuke Toraiji sent my letter of calling. He owned the Hotel Ariake. Seike also worked for him, we went together to Kobe Industrial Immigration Company, they made all the arrangements. There were six hotels in Kobe to take care of divers, they were not owned by the immigration company, but the company told us which hotel to go to. There were a lot of immigrants to Asia and America at the time. The companies had to be licenced by the government and charged a little money for the contract. There were about eight such companies at the time in Kobe, Yokohama and Nagasaki.

My mother's cousin, my father's cousin, and about three or four elders from this area were at Thursday Island. I was the last one from this area to go, and that meant that I was a cook for four years and nine months, on a different boat every year. The first year I worked under Captain Shimizu Kumaichi, the second year under Captain Kono. Then Yamashita's nephew Yamashita Kyuharu got a boat and I worked for him and finally became a diver. A cook got £5.10 per month, the second tender and engineman got £6.10, the second diver and first tender got £7.10. Every year we had a £1 raise. When I became a second diver I got £10.10. The first diver gave our pay directly to Yamashita, four times a year.

Most of my time was spent on the boat, but on Thursday Island I stayed at Iyo House run by Yamashita who manufactured soya sauce and miso soup. The other divers stayed in Uano House, Susami House, Kushimoto House, Miwazaki House, Hiroshima House, Izumo House. Most divers from this area were from Nishiumi, and the Tatsuno brothers from Kawano.

Yamashita sent my money home. I bought clothes with the pocket money. I needed a white shirt and pants if I wanted to go to the movies. Yamashita made sure we kept good appearances if we went to town, no shorts were allowed. We didn't need clothes to work, only if we wanted to go to the movies or drinking. We didn't have any contact with black people except on the boat.

We had three-year contracts, so it was very rare to change company. But we were assigned to different boats according to experience and tonnage, and depending on the vacancies that occurred if someone went back to Japan. As a cook, I cleaned the shells, held the lifeline, and learned to dive. I got up at 2 or 3 a.m., made a yeast dough, cooked rice and miso soup, then baked the bread. The divers were down before sunrise. We had a *Kama* (large saucepan to boil rice on open fireplace) below deck. At 10 am. we had tea or coffee and at 2 pm. tea with bread. We ate four times a day.

The divers had great respect. They could walk around town, whereas deckies couldn't go on land. They had one cup of water to brush their teeth under the main mast. I had to bring him the water. Deckies used saltwater.

I didn't speak English, so I couldn't talk to the Blacks, and we had nothing to dispute. We treated them like one of the family. Everyone had their own work to do, we didn't have to communicate very much. I was the only one who made any mistakes, anyway, because I was the cook. There was no corporal punishment, only verbal abuse, if something went wrong. The people on the boat were like one family. I didn't experience any fights. You were only scolded if you made a lot of mistakes, not normally.

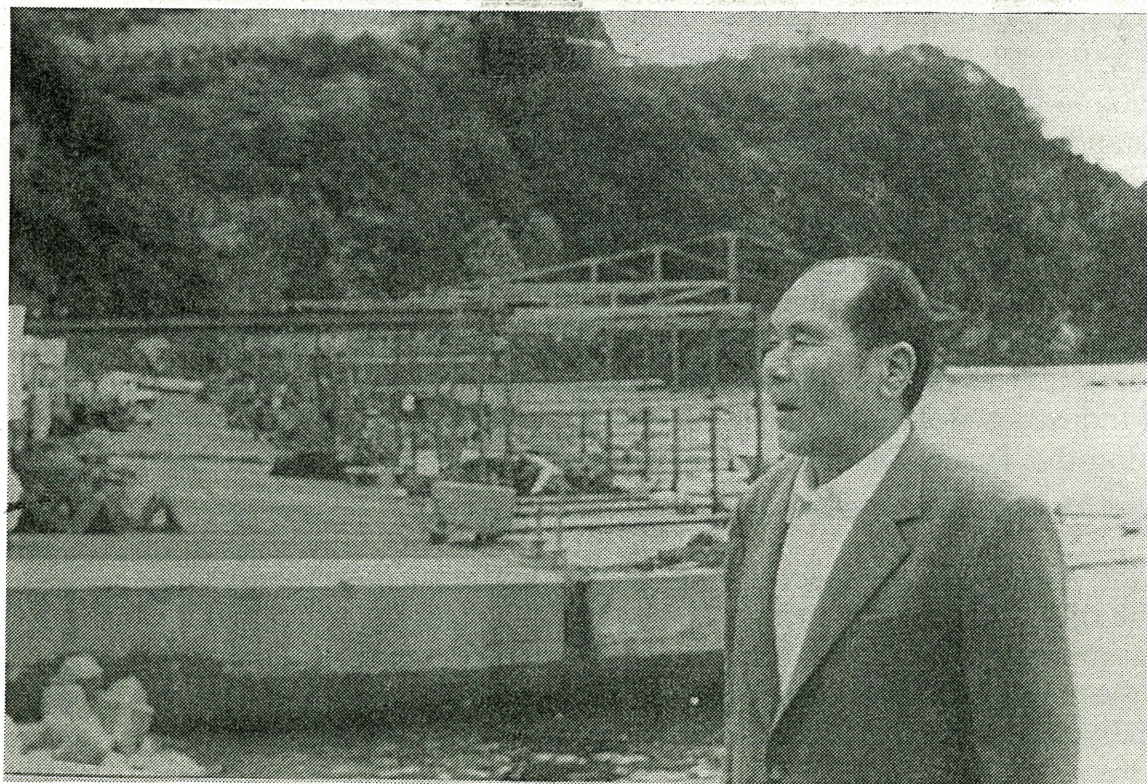
We were fishing everywhere between Thursday Island and the mainland, or half a day south from Thursday Island, near Badu, or west of the mainland. The furthest place we went to was English Company Island in the Arafura Sea, that took two nights, and it took seven nights to go home. We worked to the three-mile limit, so we went to the border of New Guinea at the northern tip of the Great Barrier Reef, we could see the mainland and called out *Yaro*, really loud. (A rude address. This may have been in the Aru Islands, so that the name of the Islands triggered this verbosity.) In Kono's boat I went to Cooktown for pearl-shells.

Nobody had beri-beri. I got malaria, or some fever near Darnley the first year I was there, and went to hospital, I was the only one to get it. I don't know what medicine they gave me. I had bends, too, and lost consciousness, everything went round and round in front of my eyes, I thought I was dying. The first diver took me back to the depth where I got it, 40 meters down, for two hours. It was at *Yaro*. It was a hilly slope and I kept going down without noticing until my helmet made noises and my lungs hurt. I came up in 5 minutes instead of 30 minutes. My back became paralyzed and I was hung in the water for three hours in a fast current. It was not the tender's fault, because I had asked him to pull me up. There were no deaths on my boat, maybe there were two deaths a year all told.

Captain Kono was adventurous and very kind, he had had a hard life which made him kind to others, he took care of others. He used to be a crew on a Japanese coalboat, and had to sleep on the floor, and suffered hardships before he went to Thursday Island. He couldn't swim, and he never dived. He had been in Australia since 1916. He was a gentle teacher. At Hay I was unwell and Kono arranged for me to work in the kitchen (instead of on the farm).

Of my savings, I spent 500 Yen in the camp and brought back 800 Yen with me, that's all they'd let you bring back due to economic regulations. But when I came back with my savings a packet of Peace cigarettes cost 7 Yen. I couldn't keep up with Japanese life any more. I didn't know what was going on, I was lost.

Takao Koonosuke in front of a pearl culture farm at Ajiro.



The interviews offer a variety of valuable glimpses. For example it is reassuring to be able to contextualize "Captain Kono", whom every Australian in the industry appeared to know, as Kono Tesaburo from Ehime who was interned with the other Japanese pearl-shellers at Hay, and who is well-known among the Japanese respondents as well. From the Australian interviews it had sometimes appeared as if Captain Kono was a more symbolic than real figure. I was somewhat surprised at the descriptions of life at Hay camp. Interviewees showed hardly a resentment at their treatment, which apparently differed greatly from that received by *bona fide* prisoners of war. It was also surprising that a Japanese historian confirmed the Australian concern that Japanese pearl-shell crews acted on behalf of the Japanese military some years before Japan's entry into World War II.

A valuable insight into the indenture system was provided by descriptions of a double contract. The official contract negotiated between the Japanese and Australian governments provided strong safeguards for the workers but was replaced by another one signed at Thursday Island, highly favourable to the employer. Obviously the Japanese pearl-shellers and Australian employers reached their own *modus vivendi* to their mutual satisfaction. Apart from a few incidents where Japanese resorted to organized industrial action, their relationships with white master pearlers were amiable.

The Japanese respondents did not exhibit the same familiarity with the pearl-shell grounds as the Australian interviewees. They did not refer to them by names such as "Darnley Deep", "Graveyard", "Old Ground", or "New Patch". This may be indicative of a more instrumental approach to the shell-beds. They also showed a fairly superficial understanding of the conditions under which the natives, with whom they worked, lived and were employed. Those who were aware that Torres Strait Islanders ran their own vessels for pearl-shelling (under the Island Industries Board) indicated that these were not proper luggers, and that the Islanders were only skin-diving, an activity which is considered inferior to dress-diving, so that the Islanders were not taken seriously as pearl-shellers. This attitude led to conflict between the Island Industries Board and Japanese divers, who were accused of depriving the Torres Strait Islanders of their livelihood by harvesting the shallow beds near islands.

From the Australian perspective, where the mother-of-pearl industry is an issue of marginal relevance, it is somewhat surprising to realize the lasting import in Japan of immigration to Australia. Former divers enjoy the status of a kind of national hero, and the Japanese press was extremely receptive to news relating to them. The ceremony with which

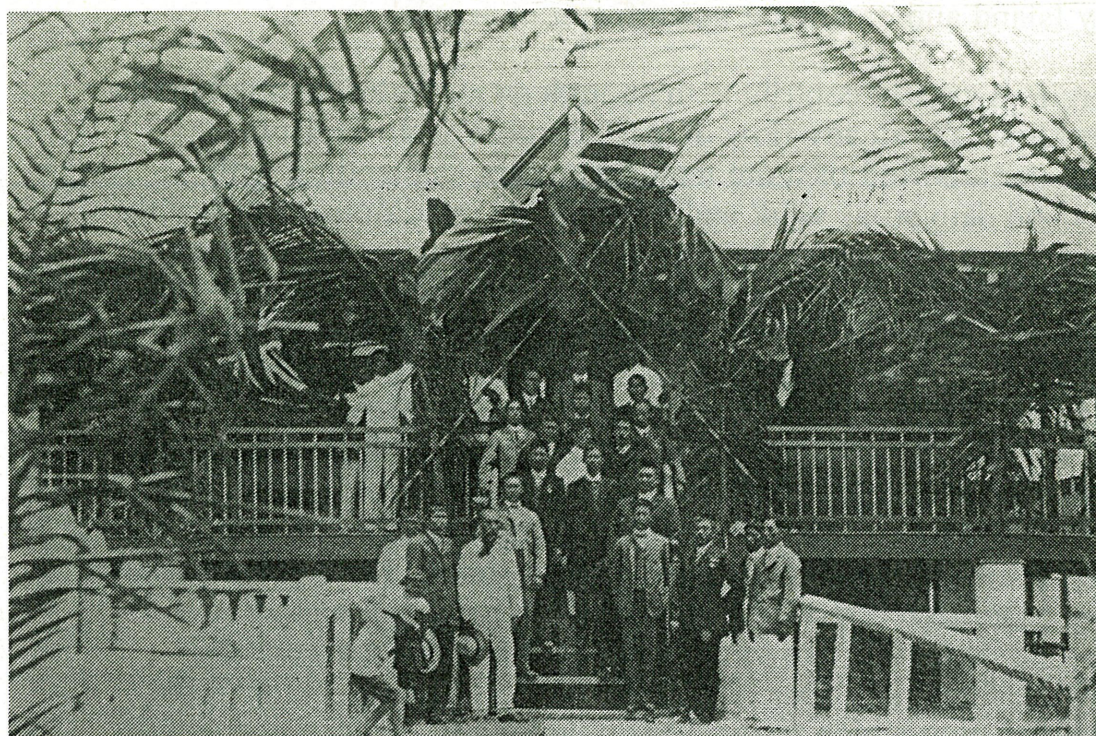
Japanese pearling fleets were farewelled in Kushimoto after the war illustrates the significance attached to overseas pearling, and so do the efforts of the *Mokuyoto-kai* in restoring the Japanese cemetery at Thursday Island and erecting a magnificent memorial.

The interviews greatly contribute to an understanding of the motivation which sustained the steady flow of 'gastarbeiters' from Japan to Australia over a period of more than fifty years, contending with strenuous and dangerous work and harsh living conditions, which white Australians were unwilling to accept. The tight social organisation of Japanese at Thursday Island served as a basis for their success in the mother-of-pearl industry. Particular villages had long-standing links with specific recruitment destinations. New recruits were nominated by head-divers who normally recommended someone whose family was familiar. At Thursday Island, the younger crew were under the care of elders in terms of both their social and occupational life-worlds. The social cohesion of the Japanese workforce enhanced their discipline and reliability, attributes which Australian employers valued highly. Because they were eager to return to Japan quickly with enough money to improve their economic and social position, the Japanese were also hardworking. Generally speaking, they were a transient labour force, but the explanation which respondents unanimously offer as the reason for going to Thursday Island, to earn money quickly, does not account for the fact that several of them stayed for extended periods, of up to 16 years, and few actually returned home after the expiry of their initial three-year contract. The role of diver itself carried certain privileges and considerable prestige, both while in Australia and at home, and it was the aim of every recruit to become a diver, so that pearl-shelling offered more than pecuniary incentives, it was a career.

The interviewees represent the last generation of divers in Australia. Most of them were interned at the outbreak of World War II and lost their savings through inflation. After the war, indigenous and white Australians resisted the reintroduction of Japanese divers and Japan negotiated rights of entry to the Australian pearl-shell grounds for their own fleets. The loss of the Japanese diving expertise and the competition offered by Japanese companies in the raising and cultivation of mother-of-pearl contributed strongly to the decline of the industry as an Australian activity.

During my visit to Japan I experienced the sharp contrast between tradition-bound villages and the high-powered cities. I had a glimpse of the regimentation of their daily lives with which Japanese live, and of the relationships of obligation which men of influence can command. I gained a faint impression of the pressures under which the young men may have been who went to Australia.

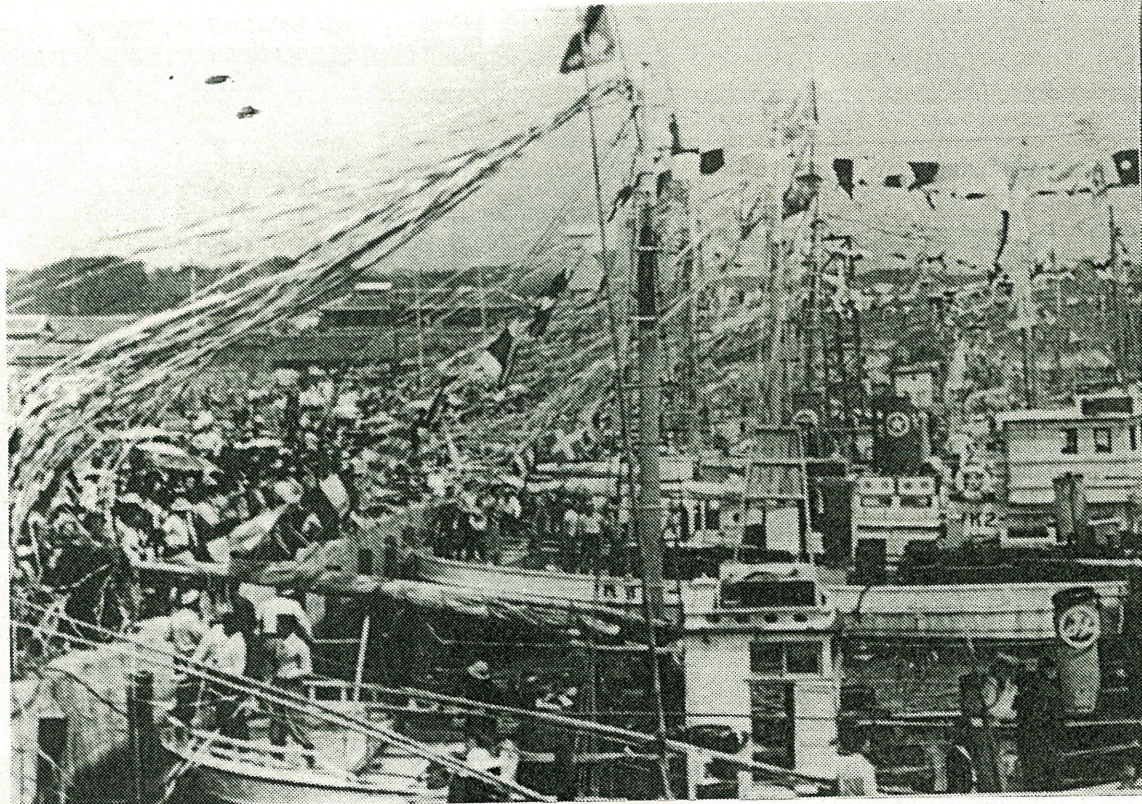
The Japanese Club at Thursday Island on Culture Day (Birthday of the Meiji emperor, 3 November) 1910.
Courtesy Ogawa Taira (photo obtained from Hiramatsu Shimpachi).



The Japanese Monument
at the Thursday Island
Cemetery



The grave of George
Japan (Ogawa
Yoshitara) on Waiwee
Island. (Courtesy
Hubert Hofer)

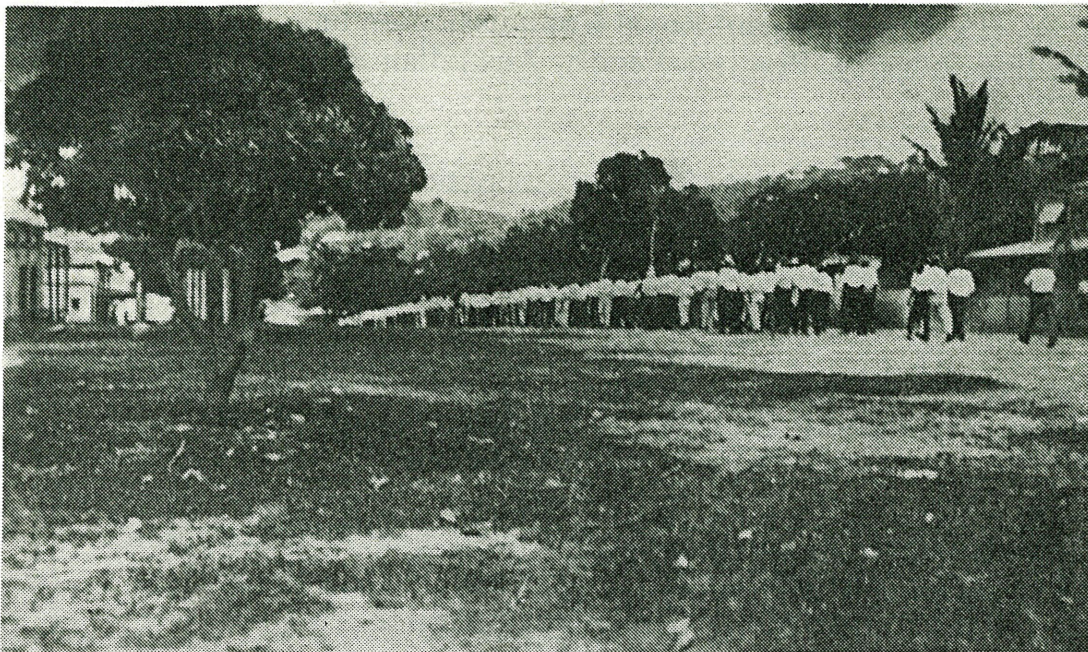


Above: Kushimoto farewells the fleet of boats who set out for Thursday Island in 1954. Courtesy Ogawa Taira (obtained from Takemoto Iwakichi).



Right: A memorial to pearl-shell divers in Ehime.

This photo elicited mixed reactions from interviewees. Some said it was a protest march of crew to achieve higher wages, others explained it as a celebration. Comments were made by Takemoto Iwakichi, Shiosaki Mantaro, and Takenaka Yasuichi. At Oxley Library it is dated as 1927. Courtesy: Oxley Library, Brisbane.



Japanese marching to Pearls' Assoc.
Office Thursday Is.

Bibliography

- Bamford, F.W. (1913) (Chairman) Royal Commission on the Pearlshelling Industry. Progress Report. Australian Parliamentary Papers, 2 parts.
- Bartlett, Norman (1954) The Pearl Seekers. London: Melrose.
- Chase, Athol (1981) "'All Kind of Nation' - Aborigines and Asians in Cape York Peninsula" Aboriginal History 5 (1):7-19.
- Coombs, H.C. (1946) (Chairman) Northern Australia Development Committee "Pearl-Shell, Beche-de-mer and Trochus Industry of Northern Australia. Australian Parliamentary Papers.
- Dashwood, Judge (1901/02) (Chairman) Investigation into the Condition of the Pearl-Shell Industry at Port Darwin and Thursday Island. Commonwealth Parliament, 1901/02, Vol.2, App.0.
- Evans, Gaynor (1972). "Thursday Island 1878-1914 - A Plural Society". Honours thesis, University of Queensland.
- Ganter, Regina (1987) "Oral History of Human Use and Experience of Crown of Thorns Starfish on the Great Barrier Reef".- Appendices. Townsville: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- Kyuhara, Shuji (1977) "Remains of Japanese Settlers on the Torres Strait Islands" (unpubl.)
- Kyuhara, Shuji (1977) "Toresu Kiakyo ni Okeru Shinjukai Gyogyo to Nihonjin no Iseki" (Traces of the Pearl-Shell Industry and Japanese in the Torres Strait) Chiri (Geography), 22 (5):74-80.
- Mackay, John (1908) (Chairman) Royal Commission to Inquire into the Workings of the Pearl-Shell and Beche-de-mer Industries. Queensland Parliamentary Papers, vol.II.
- Murakawa, Yoko (1956) The Village Where the Winds of America Blew. Ehime Books (in Japanese).
- Ogawa, Taira (1976) Arafura-kai no Shinju (Pearls of Arafura). Tokyo: Aiumi.

Sharp, Nonie (1981/82) "Culture Clash in the Torres Strait Islands: The Maritime Strike of 1936" Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland 11(3):107-126.

Shineberg, Doroty (1967) They Came for Sandalwood: A Study of the Sandalwood Trade in the South-West Pacific 1830-1865. Melbourne University Press.

Sissons, David (1979) "The Japanese in the Australian Pearling Industry". Queensland Heritage 3 (10):9-27.

Watanabe, Fumiya (n.d.) Japan-Australia Relations in Ehime Prefecture - The Pearl-Shell Industry and Immigrants. Ehime Books (in Japanese).

Yonge, Charles Maurice (1930) A Year on the Great Barrier Reef: The Story of Corals and of the Greatest of their Creations. London: Putnam.

Appendix I Press Coverage

Translation from national daily newspaper Mainichi, 21 October 1987:

Pearl Divers in Arafura Sea of the Taisho to Showa Era Requested

Woman Researcher from Australia to Gather Data on Great Barrier Reef

Photo Caption: To visit divers who worked on the Great Barrier Reef -
the world's largest reef - Mrs. Ganter gets instructions from Mr.
Kyuhara.

Mrs. Regina Ganter (30) a researcher from Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, is visiting the southern cities of Wakayama Prefecture to conduct research on the condition of the Great Barrier Reef by talking to the former divers from southern Wakayama who used to work in pearl-shelling in the Arafura sea in Northern Australia from the early Taicho era to World War II. Mrs. Ganter will stay in this area until 21st October. With the assistance of Mr. Kyuhara (56) who has been researching the pearling industry of pre-war days, Mrs. Ganter has been introduced to seven former divers whom she interviewed. Any former divers are requested to call Mr. Kyuhara to be interviewed.

Mrs. Ganter is studying the Great Barrier Reef which spans 2000 miles and which is the greatest barrier reef in the world. It is famous for its great variety of living organisms but during recent years natural resources have been depleted. It is necessary to compare this state with the conditions of pre-war days.

Mrs. Ganter entered Wakayama on the 14th, and by the 18th she had been able to meet Mr. Takinaka of Miwasaki Shingu city who used to be a diver from 1927 to 1941, and a second-generation diver of Taichi village, Mr. Oku Saioshi (56). Mrs. Ganter showed them pictures of *Acanthaster planci* and asked whether these organisms had been there at that period, and other questions. Mr. Oku said "I have been in the waters of Broome but I have not seen *Acanthaster*. The coral reefs nearby have always been colourful."

Several thousand people from Wakayama Prefecture went to Northern Australian waters for pearl-shelling. They were collecting pearl-shell for the button and accessories industry. After the war in 1953 the pearl industry was revived but Australia enacted strict legislation in 1962 and the pearl-shell industry came to an end. For these reasons it has been difficult to find divers, and interviews have been scarce up to now. For more information call Mr. Kyuhara at phone no. 07355 5 0067.

(第三種郵便物認可)

昭和62年(1987年)10月21日(水曜日)

採貝移民のルーツ探る

オーストラリア移民について話し合う
レジナ・ギャンターさんと久原さん



オーストラリア東部・クイ
ンズランド州の沿岸に広がる
世界最大のサンゴ礁・大堡礁
(だいぼしょう)の漁業史を
研究している同州・プリスベ
ーン市のクリフ・ス大学人文
科学部のレジナ・ギャンター
講師(○)が紀南地方を訪れ、
大堡礁で戦前まで活躍した日
本漁民の足跡をたどり、三十日
まで紀南で調査したあと、愛
媛県にも足を延ばし、三十日
帰国、来年、博士論文として

豪州から女性大学講師

紀南などで聞き取り調査

本人採貝ダイバーの聞き取り
調査をしている。
同講師は、当時の採貝移民
が産業活性化に貢献した功績
を取る採貝移民は明治十八年
に始まり、最盛時には数千人
にのぼった。この移民の中心
が、新宮市から白置川町にか
けての漁師だった。

同講師は、当時の採貝移民
が産業活性化に貢献した功績
を取る採貝移民は明治十八年
に始まり、最盛時には数千人
にのぼった。この移民の中心
が、新宮市から白置川町にか
けての漁師だった。

Translation from regional newspaper Minami-Kishu Shinbun, 25
October 1987:

Mrs. Ganter from Australia
Research on Immigration History
Japan International Cooperation Agency Contacted Mr.
Kyuhara

Mrs. Ganter(30), a researcher and tutor of the School of Humanities at Griffith University in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, visited Mr. Kyuhara (56) of Shingu High School who is famous for his Thursday Island expedition and research on the Japanese divers and first immigrants to Australia.

Since last week she has been travelling in southern Wakayama to meet and interview former divers to gather information of the reef history and compare the condition of pre-war days with the present. Mrs. Ganter from Australia is interested in the living organisms of the Great Barrier Reef and interviewed the former divers of southern Wakayama, the pioneers in this field, in connection with this. Later she will move on to Ehime Prefecture. She visited Mr. Kyuhara through the help of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JAICA) and the assistance of Professor Yamaguchi of Ryukyu University, a coral reef scientist.

Mrs. Ganter said that since she arrived on 14th, she had been able to meet seven former divers in Taichi, Kushimoto, Ugui and Miwasaki, and on the 18th after the interview she made a tour of the Nachi mountain enjoying the scenery. This is her first trip to Japan, and Mrs. Ganter has expressed admiration for the mountainous Nachi area and beautiful scenery of the ocean, and expressed gratitude for the beautiful dinner Mrs. Kyuhara had prepared.

南 紀 州

第9161号

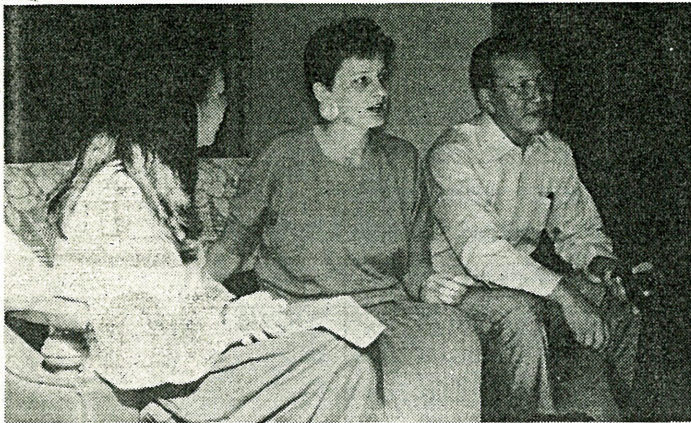
昭和 25年 10月 3日 第三郵便物認可

(3)

移民史などの調査に

オーストラリアからレジナさん

国際協力
事業団 通じて久原脩司教諭宅へ



女性研究者のレジナさん(中央)と久原さん
(18日午前10時那智山麓の久原氏宅で)

「木曜島の調査」などの元ダイバーたちに会
ど、かつての日本人ダイバー、当時のサンゴ礁の生
物関係の話や活躍した日
の研究で有名な那智山麓
の久原脩司さん(五六)
〓新宮高校教諭〓宅へ、
オーストラリア・クイ
ンズランド州ブリスベン
からグリフィス大学大
院人文科学部の講師・研
究員であるレジナギン
ターさん(三〇)が通訳
と共に十四日来宅。約一
週間滞在して当地方出身
の元ダイバーたちに会
い、当時のサンゴ礁の生
物関係の話や活躍した日
本人ダイバーの歴史など
を聞き取りながら、今昔
を比較しての調査研究の
資料集めをしている。
キャンターさんは、
オーストラリアのバリ
ア・リーフ(世界最大の
サンゴ礁)の生物などを
研究調査中だが、それに
関連して、明治、大正か
ら戦前にかけて真珠貝な
どの採取に活躍、オース
トラリア海域のバイオニ
アとなった紀南地方出身
の元ダイバーに会い、直
接話を聞きたいと、来日
したもので、那智勝浦町
での調査後は愛媛県へ向
かうという。

久原教諭宅へは、国際
協力事業団を通じての依
頼と、やはりサンゴ礁の
研究者である沖縄の琉球
大学山口教授の紹介によ
り来宅したもので、通訳
として山口教授夫人が同
行した。

レジナさんは、十四日
来日以来、久原教諭の紹
介で既に七人の元ダイ
バー(太地、串本方面、
宇久井、三輪崎など)に
聞き取り調査を終え、十
八日の日曜日には那智山
を観光くつろぎのひと
ときを過ごした。
日本は始めてというレ
ジナさんは、那智山周辺
や海辺の景色に、スバラ
シイの連発。また、久原
教諭夫人、心づくしの日
本食もオイシイと食し、
日本への関心を、いちだ
んと高めた様子。

Translation from national newspaper Yomi-Uri, 21 October 1987:

Attempt to Discover History of Divers
**Woman University Tutor from Australia Interviews in
Southern Wakayama**

Photo Caption: Mrs. Ganter and Mr. Kyuhara discuss Immigrants to
Australia

Mrs. Regina Ganter (30) from the Division of Humanities at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia is researching the marine history of the Great Barrier Reef which lies on the East coast of Australia and has come to southern Wakayama to research divers who were at the Great Barrier Reef before World War II. The divers started to immigrate to Australia in Meiji 16 (1883) and about five- to six-thousand people went there at the peak of the industry. Most of them were fishermen in Shingu-city and Hikigawa-machi (town).

Lecturer Ganter came to Japan on the 14th sponsored by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and was guided by Shingu High School teacher Shuji Kyuhara who has been researching the history of divers for more than thirty years. She is in southern Wakayama until the 22nd and will then go to Ehime to do more research. She will return to Australia on the 30th to write her thesis to be finalized next year. She said that the divers made a great contribution to the development of the pearl-shell industry. "I want to find out how they coped with the different lifestyle and how corals have changed since then."

大正、昭和にアラフラ海の真珠貝採取

元ダイバーから話聞きたい

豪から女性研究者

サンゴ礁調査資料集め



世界一のサンゴ礁調査へダイバー訪問のため来日したレジーナさん(左)と資料で説明する久原さん

大正初期から戦前にかけて、海などで真珠貝採取に従事し、オーストラリア北のアラフラ

でいた紀南地方出身の元ダイ

バーを、当時のサンゴ礁の海
の美態調査のため、同地方を
訪れているオーストラリア・
ブリスベン市のクリフ・グ
スの女性研究者、レジーナ・ギ
ャンターさん(左)が捜してい
る。ギャンターさんは二十一
日まで同地方に滞在。戦前の
真珠貝採取業などの研究をし
ている那智勝浦町那智山、新
宮高教諭、久原修司さん(右)
の紹介などで、既に元ダイバ
ー七人から聞き取り調査した
が「できるだけ多くの元ダイ
バーから話を聞きたい」と訴
えている。

ギャンターさんは同国北の
珊瑚海に、約三千キロに広がる
世界最大といわれるサンゴ礁
・グレート・バリア・リーフ
の生物を研究調査中。同サン
ゴ礁付近は世界一の海洋生物
の宝庫として知られている
が、近年、減少傾向にあり、
生物資源保護のためにも、過

去の同海域との比較調査をす
ることになった。

十四日に紀南入りしてか
ら、十八日まで、昭和二年

から十六年までダイバーをし
ていた新宮市三輪崎二、竹中
は、同地方から延べ数千人が
保さんや親二代のタ
イバーだった太地町、奥敏さ
んを訪ねて、調査。オ
ニヒトデの写真など見せ、通
訳を通してこのような生物は
当時いたか、質問。奥さ
んは「私の見たのはアルトム
の海だが、オニヒトデはいな
かった。付近のサンゴ礁は緑
色だった」との証言を得た。

オーストラリア北の海域に
は、同地方から延べ数千人が
出漁。ボタンなどの装飾品に
加工するため、真珠貝を採取
していた。戦後は二十八年に
出漁再開、その後、同国の規
制強化などで三十七年から出
漁は打ち切られた。それだけ
にダイバー捜しは難航、思う
ように調査は進んでいないと
いう。連絡先は久原さん(0
7355・5・0067)。

Translation from Ehime regional newspaper, 24 October 1987:

Research on Pearl Divers
Australian Woman Ganter visits Honai
Surprising Discovery of New Information

Photo Caption: Mrs. Ganter listening to Tatsuno brothers

Regina Ganter (30), a postgraduate student of Griffith University, Australia, is visiting Nishiuwa-gun, Honai-machi (town) to research pre-war divers in Australia. She enthusiastically interviewed Mr. Ryushi Tatsuno and Matsuo Tatsuno in Kawano-ichi in Honai who were divers in Australia in 1935. People from Ehime and Wakayama went to Thursday Island in Northern Australia after 1890 to catch pearl-shell, trochus shell and beche-de-mer. These three products contributed to the development of industry, culture and politics in Queensland. Mrs. Ganter who specializes in social sciences came to Japan for two weeks to research the labour conditions and the relationships between natives and Japanese, and the condition of the sea. Mrs. Ganter was conducting the interview with interpreter Mariko who is the wife of Professor Masashi Yamaguchi of Ryukyu University. She was nodding as she listened to the stories of the two brothers: They described the boats which they had worked on. Their ship was only a sailing ship or cutter of ten tons. They often suffered from deep-water disease. The Aborigines and Papua New Guineans were doing lowly labour and their wages were half, but at meal-times everything was shared and was peaceful and friendly. There were no unions and the reason why Japanese won the competition against white people was because they worked hard. If one risked the adventure and went deep diving there were lots of shells. The brothers were not treated badly at the prisoner of war camp.

She was surprised to learn that Captain Kono, who is famous for his contribution to the improvement of the conditions of local workers, was from Honai, and that the Tatsuno brothers had worked on the same ship with him. The interview seemed interminable and she asked them to comment on photos of rare sailing ships which she had brought from Australia. Mrs. Ganter said that after the war the Japanese went back to Japan but their way of catching pearl, their ships, their way of travelling the sea and their skills of diving were still used. Japanese immigration to Thursday Island gave the impact to legislation concerning immigration, native protection and environmental protection. By visiting Japan she found new facts because her previous records were biased from the perspective of White people. She will interview a total of four people in Uwajima city (Kitauwa-gun) Tsuchimatso (Minamiuwa-gun) and Uchi Umimura on the 24th and 25th.

真珠採取の様子取材

豪州女性ギャンターさん、保内訪問

「新しい事実も」と大喜び



辰野柳七さん(中央)、松夫さん(右)
兄弟から話を聞くギャンターさん

オーストラリアでの戦前の真珠採取の様子を調査するため、同国グリフィス大学院研究生、レジナ・ギャンターさんが二十三日、西宇和郡保内町を訪問。昭和十年代に現地でダイバーをしていた同町川之石、漁業辰野柳七さん(中央)、松夫さん(右)兄弟から熱心に取材した。

島周辺では、一八九〇年以後、愛媛や和歌山の人々がタカセガイ、ナマコ、真珠員を採取、クイーンズランド地方の産業・文化・行政面に大きな影響を与えた。人文科学を専攻するギャンターさんは、当時の労働条件、現地人との交流や雇用関係、海の様子を直接聞くため約二週間の予定で来日した。

ギャンターさんは、山口正士・琉球大教授の眞理子夫人(妻)を通じて会談。辰野さん兄弟から「船は十ほどの帆船が機船。軽い潜水病には何度もかかった」「アポリシニ、パプアニューギニア人は下働きで給料は半分。しかし、食事は一緒でなごやか」「組合はなかった。白人との競争に勝ったのは勤勉さが原因」「少

し冒険をして深い海に潜ると貝はゴロゴロしていた」「戦時中の収容所の待遇は悪くなかった」など、興味ある話を聞き、大きくうなずいていた。

また、現地人労働者の待遇改善や行動力でいまも地元の名の通るキャブテン・ユウノ(河野貞三郎さん)が保内町出身で、その船に辰野さんらが乗っていたと知らされビックリ。珍しい当時の帆船の絵に見入ったり、持参のアルバムの説明を求めるなど、話は尽きなかった。

ギャンターさんは「戦後、日本人は引き揚げたが、彼らが築き残した真珠目採取業、操船・航海術、ダイビングの技術は受け継がれている。日本人の進出は、移民、現地住民保護、自然保護の法律制定にインパクトを与えた。これまでの記録は白人の目で見ただけで、偏見もある。来日して新しい事実がつかめた」と喜んでいた。二十四、二十五日は宇和島市と北宇和郡津島町、南宇和郡内海村で計四人に話を聞く。

Appendix II A Sample Passport:

LEFT HAND IMPRESSION of Unosuke Shimomura Japanese, who landed at
DEC 31 1912 Thursday Island on the Kumano Maru 1912, ex S.S. "Kumano Maru"
 from HONGKONG, for MESSRS. MOREY & COMPANY.

14/21985



-----PARTICULARS-----

Left Hand Impression of Unosuke Shimomura, Japanese, who landed at Thursday Island on the Dec.31 1912, ex S.S. "Kumano Maru" from Hongkong for Messrs. Morey & Company.

Particulars: Nationality: - Japanese. Birthplace: - Wakayama Ken. Height: - 5ft 3 1/2". Age: - 24. Complexion: - Copper. Colour of Hair: - Black. Colour of Eyes: - Brown. Build: Slender. Special Marks: - 2 small scars on back of neck.

Deserted by "Deana" July 1913. Bond paid (date illegible). arrested.

Returned to Japan by "S.S. Tango Maru" 8.11.14.

(Australian Archives,
 ACT, CRS A1, Item
 1921/22488.)

Appendix III List of Interviews

	Tape Name of Interviewee	Page	Age	Place of Residence	Date of Interview	Experience in Australia
1	Oku Saioshi	24	56	Taiji	15/10/87	1953-62
2	Nakamura Unosuke	25	69	Arita (Kushimoto)	15/10/87	1937-46
3	Tada Tomiharu	26	72	Arita (Kushimoto)	15/10/87	1934-38
4	Takemoto Iwakichi	27	81	Shionomisaki(Kushimoto)	17/10/87	1922-46
5	Shiosaki Mantaro	28	82	Shionomisaki(Kushimoto)	17/10/87	1922-58
6	Takenaka Yasuichi	29	80	Miwazaki	18/10/87	1927-46
7	Inoue Ushimatsu	31	72	Miwazaki	18/10/87	1934-46
8	Miyamoto Sadakichi	33	87	Nachi (Ugui)	19/10/87	1916-42
9	Horimoto Shinichi	38	75	Susami	20/10/87	1929-46
10	Wabuka Kiyomi	36	67	Kuchi Wabuka (Susami)	20/10/87	1937-46
11	Morishita Kazuo	41	65	Kuchi Wabuka (Susami)	20/10/87	1939-46
12/13	Ogawa Taira	43	74	Tanabe	21/10/87	(author)
14	Tatsuno Ryuhichi	46	67	Honai (Nishiuwa-gun)	23/10/87	1936-46
15	Tatsuno Matsuo	47	65	Honai (Nishiuwa-gun)	23/10/87	1938-46
16/17	Seike Ukio	49	67	Arashi (Tsushima-cho)	24/10/87	1937-39
18	Takao Koonosuke	51	68	Ajiro (Minamiuwa-gun)	25/10/87	1939-46



GBRMPA
639.412
GAN

THE JAPANESE
EXPERIENCE OF NORTH
QUEENSLAND'S MOTHER
OF PEARL INDUSTRY

By: Regina GANTER ~~B64207~~ 7978

GBRMPA
639.412
GAN