

An Era of Two Images:

Japan in the Eyes of the Australian Public 1950-1960

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-Thesis Abstract-

Since Federation Australia had largely regarded Japan as a nation that posed a direct threat to its way of life, a view seemingly proved correct in World War Two. Yet by the end of the 1950s, a mere fifteen years after the war ended, Australians were more positive about their Japanese neighbours than ever before. This thesis seeks to explore why public opinion moved so dramatically over these years by studying a select series of events, ranging from the Treaty of Peace with Japan to art exhibitions, throughout the decade.

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-Introduction-

Shaping Public Opinion in the 1950s

In August 1958 Prime Minister Robert Menzies opened a display of Japanese Arts and Crafts at the famous Sydney department store Mark Foy's. Despite the somewhat eclectic nature of his audience, which ranged from the Japanese Ambassador to a six year old Australian boy who had won the exhibition's drawing contest, the message of his speech was received without any ambiguity. Menzies declared Japan to be an important partner in Australia's growth and called upon Australians to 'nurture every drop of friendship we can'.¹ However seven years prior to this speech friendship with Japan was a sentiment felt by very few Australians. Indeed, a completely different attitude was voiced when a group of Australian department stores refused to stock imported Japanese toys in 1951.² The stark contrast in the public response to these events indicates that the 1950s brought major change to not only how Japan was viewed by ordinary Australians, but also to the Australia-Japan relationship itself.

The refusal by Australian retailers in 1951 to accept Japanese toy imports stemmed not only from lingering wartime hatred of Japan but from a deeply ingrained conviction that Japan represented a threat to Australia, a conviction that had been forged at the time Australia became a nation. When Australia federated in 1901 it did so at a time when racial theories, such as Social Darwinism, were in wide

¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 August 1958.

² Reports of the boycott, its participants and its supporters can be found in the following newspapers: *The Sunday Herald*, 2 September 1951; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 August 1958.

circulation.³ Such racial theories became married to Australia's longstanding fears of Asia, born of its geographical isolation, with the result that Australian national identity was increasingly forged in opposition to Asia. Japan was an added stimulus to this process as its rapidly increasing political, economic and military strength raised Australian fears of a possible threat to their fledgling nation. These fears were brought to a head when, in 1905, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. The victory was the first defeat of a major European imperialist power by an Asian country and seemed to confirm Australia's worst fears; Asia was rising, and quickly.⁴ The following years saw fears of Japan become entrenched in Australian society, with the result that Japan was almost always represented in popular culture as a nation desiring to expand south in a movement that would threaten Australia's living standards and its identity as a racially and culturally homogenous nation.⁵ Over time these fears became an intrinsic part of the identity Australians ascribed to Japan, an identity that this thesis calls the 'antagonistic' image of Japan. Quite simply, from Federation onwards the image that Australians most commonly associated with Japan was one of a nation that posed a potential threat to Australian security and way of life. This image was reinforced in World War Two and remained a powerful influence on public opinion regarding Japan throughout the 1950s. The 1951 boycott attests to this influence and shows that for Australians at the beginning of the 1950s Japan remained a nation who threatened their own.

³ Neville Meaney, 'Britishness and Australia: Some reflections', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31, no.2, p.126.

⁴ Russell McGregor, 'The Necessity of Britishness: Ethno-cultural roots of Australian Nationalism', *Nations and Nationalism*, 12, no.3 (2006), p.500.

⁵ Pam Oliver and Michael Ackland eds., *Unexpected Encounters: Neglected Histories behind the Australia-Japan Relationship* (Victoria: Monash Asia Institute 2007), p.17.

Changing public opinion regarding Japan would subsequently prove to be a difficult task.

Change did come, however, and by 1958 Australians were not only buying Japanese goods but were seeing regular displays of Japanese culture at events such as Mark Foys Exhibition. It will be this thesis's contention that the principal reason for this shift in public opinion was that the decade had seen a new image of Japan emerge and begin to exert considerable influence over public opinion, an image this thesis calls the 'complementary' image of Japan. Whilst the fears that lay at the heart of the antagonistic image of Japan made changes, such as greater trade with Japan, distasteful to the Australian public, it could not remove the reality that such change was inevitable. What the influence of this image did do, however, was demand that where change must occur it should be limited to avoid threatening Australia, and thus greater trade was accepted under the condition it be strictly regulated. As more of these limited changes occurred they gave rise to a view that Japan did not necessarily threaten Australia, but rather could offer significant benefits to Australia's development. Thus the complementary image of Japan was born. Over time this image grew in influence as both the Australian and Japanese government adopted the image and began to vigorously promote it. The expansion of this new, positive image of Japan was also assisted by the ever present fears of Communism and Japan's startling economic growth, indeed by the closing years of the 1950s Australians frequently expressed admirations for Japan's achievements as a modern nation. Yet at no point did this complementary image entirely displace the older antagonistic image of Japan, instead the two were engaged in an exceptionally complex relationship. The growth in influence of the new image of Japan, which presented closer contact with Japan as a positive development, hinged on change

appearing limited and unthreatening. In short, its growth was both enabled and constrained by the influence of the antagonistic image of Japan. Whilst seemingly schizophrenic the association of multiple images with another nation is actually, as Akira Iriye has noted, quite common amongst individuals.⁶ Yet for over fifty years such plurality had been absent from the Australian public's perception of Japan. The emergence in the 1950s of the complementary image thus positioned the decade as a crucial one for public opinion regarding Japan. By the 1960s such plurality resulted in the Australian public simultaneously feeling sentiments of 'sympathy and satisfaction' as well as 'suspicion and fear' towards Japan.⁷

Today Japan is one of Australia's closest allies and consequently there have been a wide variety of historical accounts on the Australia-Japan relationship during the 1950s. Although this thesis undeniably owes much to the research of these historians, studies of the shifts in public opinion regarding Japan, and the reasons for them, have been conspicuously absent from the existing literature. Studies on the relationship have largely focused on the events which drove change at the Government level, and figures such as Alan Rix and Peter Drysdale have argued that the increasing value of the Australia-Japan trade drove the Australian government to foster a better relationship with Japan.⁸ Whilst largely eschewing discussion of public opinion Drysdale has noted that Australia and Japan shared certain cultural,

⁶ Akira Iriye ed., *Mutual Images: Essays in American-Japanese relations* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1975), p.20.

⁷ Richard Broinowski , 'Australian Perceptions of Japan', in Harold Bolitho and Alan Rix eds., *A Northern Prospect: Australian Papers on Japan* (Canberra: Japanese Studies Association of Australia, 1981), p.192.

⁸ Peter Drysdale and Hironuba Kitaoji eds., *Japan and Australia : Two Societies and Their Interaction* (Canberra : Australian National University Press, 1981.), p.5; Alan Rix, *Coming to Terms: The Politics of Australia's Trade with Japan 1945-57* (Allen and Unwin North Sydney Australia 1986), p.222.

institutional and strategic similarities that enabled rapid change in the relationship.⁹ In comparison, Rix focuses primarily on the trading relationship and has stated that where public opinion towards Japan did alter it was due to Australians experiencing the benefits of increasing trade; for Rix the role of government is, at best, subsidiary to such firsthand experience.¹⁰ This thesis rejects such a stance and argues that the leadership of Government was crucial to facilitating the shift in public opinion regarding Japan, a role illustrated by Menzies's exhortations to move beyond wartime animosity at Mark Foys 1958 exhibition.

Sandra Tweedie, like Rix, has argued that trade played a major role in stimulating changes in the Australia-Japan relationship; however Tweedie has cited the international context as the principal driver of change.¹¹ Tweedie, and others such as David Goldsworthy, believe the rising fear of communism and decolonisation of Asia made the government more receptive to change in the Australia-Japan relationship than it would have otherwise been. Whilst Goldsworthy extended his argument to point out that the communist threat made both the public and the Government more open to change in the Australia-Japan relationship, he has failed to explore the relationship between government and public opinion.¹² Such explanations also have shown a strong tendency to make change and public acceptance seem natural and inevitable, indeed throughout her book *Trading Partners* Tweedie has used a metaphor of 'adulthood' to explain Australia's

⁹ Drysdale Kitaoji eds., *Japan and Australia*, p.1.

¹⁰ Alan Rix, *Australia Japan Political Alignment: 1952 to the Present* (London: Routledge Australia Japan Research Centre, 1999).,p.104.

¹¹ Sandra Tweedie, *Trading Partners : Australia and Asia 1790-1993* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1994), pp.142-154.

¹² David Goldsworthy ed., *Facing North: A Century Of Australian Engagement With Asia* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2001), pp.184-190.

growing contact with Japan.¹³ Such a metaphor consequently tends to sideline the fierce debate in the public over the Australia-Japan relationship, a tendency this thesis stands in opposition to. However Tweedie's metaphor of adulthood and Goldsworthy's discussion of the decade have highlighted the major changes the decade saw for the Australian public, an argument that this thesis wholeheartedly agrees with.¹⁴

The works of Neville Meaney and Keiko Tamura stand in sharp contrast to the bulk of the literature on the Australia-Japan relationship due to their focus on the ways in which the lives of everyday Australians changed during the 1950s. Neville Meaney has highlighted the importance of the decade by arguing that the decade saw Japan assume a more positive place in the national life of Australia, a point illustrated by Mark Foys exhibition.¹⁵ Meaney has also importantly placed the decade in its proper context by noting that whilst changes were significant Australia's white, British national identity remained strong over this period, thereby demonstrating that change to the Australia-Japan relationship was only accepted under certain conditions.¹⁶ However, Meaney has not explained precisely where these limits to change lay nor how public acceptance was gained. Keiko Tamura has begun to fill this gap through her studies of public responses to the arrival of Japanese war brides. Tamura has argued that the public accepted the brides due to their unthreatening appearance and perceived ability to assimilate. Through this argument Tamura has

¹³The two principle chapters in which Tweedie discusses Japan are entitled 'Learning to Live with a Difficult Neighbour' and 'Towards an Adult Relationship': Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, pp.141-200.

¹⁴ Goldsworthy ed., *Facing North*, p.372.

¹⁵ Neville Meaney, *Towards a New Vision: Australia and Japan: Through 100 Years* (East Roseville: Kangaroo Press, 1999), pp.115-117.

¹⁶ Neville Meaney, 'The End of "White Australia" and Australia's Changing Perceptions of Asia, 1945-1990' *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 49, no. 2 (1995), pp 181-185.

acknowledged that there were limits to change and, importantly, presented a case for how public acceptance was gained. This thesis seeks to further explore this argument by analysing the ways in which the antagonistic and complementary images of Japan simultaneously shaped public opinion towards Japan.¹⁷

Structurally this thesis is arranged into three chapters. The first chapter will explore the public reaction to the 1951 Japanese Treaty of Peace and associated changes, such as the admission of war brides and the debate over trade with Japan. This chapter will show that whilst in the early years of the 1950s the antagonistic image of Japan was unquestionably dominant the foundations of the complementary image of Japan were being laid. Changes to the Australia-Japan relationship in these early years were only accepted by the public under assurances that they would be limited in scope and impact, thus the years mark the beginning of a decade long process of incremental change. This process ultimately resulted in the emergence of the complementary image of Japan and a major shift in Australian public opinion.

The second chapter will focus on the years 1953 and 1954 and the significant changes they brought to the Australia-Japan relationship. Events of these years, such as the increase in the Australia-Japan trade, the arrival of Japan's first post-war ambassador to Australia and public support of a Japanese baseball tour show that a more positive, complementary image of Japan was beginning to grow in Australia. Indeed it will be this thesis's contention that these years saw the full emergence of the complementary image of Japan. However other events, particularly public condemnation of a proposal to use Japanese crews in a defence survey of Australian

¹⁷ Keiko Tamura, 'Home Away From Home: The Entry of Japanese War Brides into Australia', in Paul Jones and Vera Mackie eds., *Relationships: Japan and Australia, 1870s - 1950s* (University of Melbourne, 2001), p.246.

waters, show that the antagonistic image of Japan remained influential and limits to change strong. The years also saw the Government begin to promote a more positive view of Japan, one which presented Japan anew to the Australian public and presented change to the Australia-Japan relationship as both beneficial and unthreatening.

The third and final chapter of this thesis begins with a discussion of the 1957 Commerce Agreement, arguing that it should be seen as indicative of the momentum that was steadily growing behind change and the complementary image of Japan. The chapter will then study a series of trade fairs and art exhibitions that occurred in 1958, at the same time of the Mark Foys Art and Crafts Exhibition, which show that the public was increasingly positive about an expansion of cultural and trade contacts with Japan; a nation whose rapid modernisation and industrialisation was increasingly regarded as beneficial to Australia's growth. These events showed that although the antagonistic image of Japan, and limits to change, remained strong a major shift in how Australians viewed Japan had taken place. The 1950s had seen the emergence of a complementary image of Japan which encouraged further change, shaped public perceptions of Japan and made possible the many changes that would take place in decades ahead.

In comparison to the majority of existing literature on the Australia-Japan relationship in the 1950s this thesis is concerned with tracing the changes in public opinion regarding Japan that resulted from the growing influence a new image of Japan which presented it as a modern and unthreatening nation. To trace such changes this thesis will use a variety of sources written by, and for, the Australian public such as newspapers, magazines, records of organisations such as trade unions and public opinion polls, specifically the Morgan Gallup Poll. Undoubtedly these

sources cannot fully reveal the complexity of public opinion and it is acknowledged that amongst many sections of the Australian public the new image of Japan as an industrialised and friendly nation grew much slower than elsewhere. What analysis of these sources can do, however, is illuminate the broad shifts in public opinion regarding Japan that the decade saw. Shifts that by the end of the decade had, as the 1951 boycott and 1958 Mark Foys Exhibition demonstrate, resulted in significant change in how the Australian public perceived and interacted with Japan.

-Chapter One-

The Legacy of the Past and the Hope for the Future: The 1951

Treaty of Peace with Japan

‘Men do not mind the rearmament, say, of Britain, for they trust the peaceable intentions of the British Government. But they have no such trust for Japan’

The Adelaide Advertiser 1951¹⁸

‘Strangely enough, there seems to be a lot in common between Japanese and Australian women. They are both hardworking, self-sufficient, possessing an innate love for children and their homes’

The Sydney Morning Herald 1952¹⁹

On September 8th 1951 Australia and eight other nations signed the Treaty of Peace with Japan, and officially brought an end to World War Two. In light of Australia’s wartime experience, and long standing fears of Japan, the Treaty was fiercely debated within the Australian public sphere, and strong opposition, which stemmed from the dominance of the antagonistic image of Japan, was expressed over the Treaty’s allowances for Japanese rearmament. Whilst this opposition never entirely disappeared from the debate it was, by the time the Treaty entered force in April 1952, gradually accompanied by a mood of begrudging acceptance. Whilst a variety of reasons gave rise to this mood it will be argued that Government explanations were absolutely crucial to its emergence. The Peace Treaty debate thus

¹⁸ *The Advertiser*, 21 February 1951.

¹⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 1952.

foreshadowed the important role Government would play in the promotion of the complementary image of Japan. Rearmament was the principal, and most controversial, subject of debate concerning Japan in these early years; however the admission of war brides and the expansion of the Australia-Japan trade were also sensitive topics. Surprisingly public opinion was in favour of these changes however it remained adamant that limits on such change must be imposed. The debate over the Peace Treaty and associated changes to the Australia-Japan relationship thus marked the beginning of a decade-long process of incremental change that ultimately would see a substantially more positive image of Japan come to exert major influence over public opinion.

Trepidation and Leadership: The Australian Government Response to the Peace Treaty

Japan's military conquests throughout South East Asia in World War Two, and especially the bombing of Darwin, had reinforced the legitimacy of Australia's fears of Japan and left an undeniable scar on the public consciousness. This legacy made the public, and Government, particularly concerned about any perceived revival in Japanese military might. As the Minister for External Affairs, Percy Spender, rather bluntly declared, it was 'asking too much of us to believe that the forces of militarism in Japan are completely dead'.²⁰ The result was that in 1951 the Australian Government and public remained adamant that if Japan was to rearm, it would be with strict limits. Thus from the beginning of treaty negotiations the Government petitioned for 'explicit restrictions on Japanese rearmament, especially

²⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 1951.

naval construction and rearmament'.²¹ However, as Treaty negotiations wore on it became obvious to the Australian Government that the United States, increasingly fearful of communism, intended to fully rearm Japan.

The Australian Government itself had long seen communism as a menace to Australia, declaring in 1950 that communism was 'the present military threat to the Pacific'.²² However this fear of communism sat alongside the older more ingrained fear of Japan rather than supplanting it. Consequently Australia was faced with a dilemma. The U.S argued Japan must be rearmed to fight against communism, yet to Australia this rearmament was a direct threat of the same magnitude as that of communism.²³ Under significant international pressure, and aware that the Treaty would be ratified with or without them, the Australian Government ultimately accepted U.S reasoning and Japanese rearmament.²⁴ Aware that public opinion remained vigorously opposed to the Peace Treaty the Government immediately embarked on a campaign to explain why the Treaty should be accepted. Upon introducing the Treaty into Parliament Richard Casey, Percy Spender's successor as Minister for External Affairs, declared that the Treaty aimed to prevent 'a defenceless and economically prostrate [Japan] that will present an easy prey to communism' from emerging.²⁵ Prime Minister Robert Menzies also weighed in on

²¹ 'Views of Australian Government Given to Mr Dulles 6th March 1951 (US Head Of Negotiations)', A5954, 1682/12, NAA.

²² 'Appendix A - Peace Treaty with Japan – Defence Aspects (Paper by Australian Defence Committee 27th April 1950)', A5954, 1682/12, NAA.

²³ N. D. Harper, 'Australia, Japan, and Korea', *Far Eastern Survey*, 20, no. 8 (April, 1951), p.70.

²⁴ Neville Meaney, 'Japan and Australia's Foreign Policy, 1945-1952', *The Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines*(March 2000), Discussion paper no. IS/00/384, p.77.

²⁵ Richard Casey, 'House of Representatives', *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (13 July 1951).

the debate, and declared in 1951 that ‘Australia's position in the free world depends on Japan and West Germany not going behind the Iron Curtain.’²⁶ The Government thus moved to position the Treaty, in the eyes of the public, as a necessary change due to the threat of communism, and in doing so aimed to gain public acceptance of the Treaty. Such leadership would be invaluable in changing public opinion regarding the Peace Treaty.

Regardless of the Treaty’s necessity the Government, and public, remained concerned and felt that limits to Japanese rearmament must be imposed. These limits came in the form of the September 1st signing of the ANZUS Pact by the U.S, Australia and New Zealand, an Agreement which stipulated in the event of an armed attack in the Pacific area on any signatory the three nations would ‘consult together’ to decide a coordinated response.²⁷ Whilst for the United States ANZUS was a valuable way in which its influence could be extended into the Pacific, for Australia ANZUS was perceived first and foremost as a guarantee for American aid in the event of a revival in Japanese militarism.²⁸ Whilst the close signing of the Treaty and the ANZUS Pact signified the intimate relationship between the two, the Australian Government moved to render such a connection explicit through its statements on the Pact. As Percy Spender declared following negotiations for ANZUS, it was a ‘safeguard’ against the rearmed Japan that the Treaty enabled.²⁹

²⁶ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 September 1951.

²⁷ *Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America - ANZUS* (Signed 1st September 1951, Entry into Force 29th April 1952). accessed online at the Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLii), < <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/1952/2.html>>, viewed 12/9/2011.

²⁸ David McLean, ‘ANZUS Origins: A Reassessment’, *Australian Historical Studies*, 24 (April 1990), p.5.

²⁹ Percy Spender, ‘House of Representatives’, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (14 March 1951).

Richard Casey continued this approach, and stated that ANZUS protected Australia against ‘renewed Japanese aggression’ and ‘any other country’ that threatened Australian security.³⁰ ANZUS was thus viewed by the Government, and presented to the public, as a crucial safeguard against a feared post-treaty revival of Japan. It was, as historian Hiroyuki Umetsu has noted, another in a long line of agreements designed ‘to protect Australia from Asia’.³¹ The need for such safeguards show the significant influence the antagonistic image of Japan continued to exert over Government and public opinion. Such influence would continue throughout the decade to demand change to the Australia-Japan relationship be limited in nature and scope.

Fear and Suspicion: Initial Public Response to the Peace Treaty

The public response to the Peace Treaty was exceptionally strong, as individuals voiced their disapproval through established advocacy groups, such as trade unions, and newly founded anti-Treaty groups that ranged from the nationwide ‘Society for the Non Ratification of Japanese Peace Treaty’ to the more geographically confined ‘North Shore Committee Against the Japanese Peace Treaty’ . A Gallup Poll conducted in August 1951 showed this widespread disapproval with 62.5% of those surveyed against the treaty and a mere 21.4% in favour of the Treaty.³² Particularly virulent in their opposition were the newly formed anti-Japanese rearmament groups such as the ‘Society Opposed to the Ratification of the Japanese Peace Treaty’ who saw the treaty as placing ‘on a war footing the only Asian power capable of a

³⁰ Richard Casey, ‘House of Representatives’, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (21 June 1951).

³¹ Hiroyuki Umetsu, ‘From ANZUS to SEATO-A Study of Australian Foreign Policy, 1950-54’, PhD Thesis, the University of Sydney (June 1996), p.10.

³² Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.788-790 (August-September 1951).

seaborne or airborne invasion of Australia'.³³ The Treaty was vehemently opposed by the Labor opposition whose leader, H.V. Evatt, declared the Treaty 'menaces the physical and economic safety of the peoples of the South Pacific'.³⁴ Trade Unions rallied behind Evatt with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (A.C.T.U) going so far as to telegram U.S President Truman and the Australian Government to communicate its belief that rearming Japan was a mistake and would result in Japan again becoming 'an aggressor nation'.³⁵ The A.C.T.U also passed a motion at its national congress which declared that 'The remilitarisation of Japan would be a constant menace to the security of Australia'.³⁶ The Prime Minister's office received a deluge of individual protest letters from a variety of citizens that testified to the strength of wartime memories, illustrated by one housewife's letter in which she declared that the spectre of a rearmed Japan meant 'I couldn't tuck my children in bed safe this night'.³⁷ The emotive nature of this plea demonstrated how deeply ingrained fears of Japan were amongst members of the Australian public, as well as the huge influence that the antagonistic image of Japan, bolstered by wartime experience, exerted upon public opinion. These influences and fears consequently made the public intensely suspicious of any change to the Australia-Japan relationship, especially where war was concerned. If change was to occur in the

³³ 'Letter to Prime Minister Menzies from the The Society Opposed to the Ratification of the Japanese Peace Treaty 4th February 1952', A462, 619/1/3, NAA.

³⁴ Dr. Herbert Evatt, 'House of Representatives', *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (21 February 1952).

³⁵ 'Telegram 3rd September 1951', A462 619/1/3, NAA.

³⁶ A.C.T.U National Congress, *Decisions of the All Australian Trade Union Congress: September 3-7 1951* (Melbourne: Industrial Printing and Publicity, 1951), Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University, S784, box 1.

³⁷ 'Letter to Prime Minister Menzies, signed Mrs L Hall 1st September 1951', A462, 619/1/3, NAA.

Australia-Japan relationship, and the complementary image of Japan emerge, it evidently had to do so within the strict limits that resulted from such suspicion.

Australian newspapers throughout the 1950s regularly discussed the issue of Australian-Japan relations and thus offer a valuable, and exceptionally vivid, source of public opinion regarding the Japanese Peace Treaty. Newspaper responses, like individual and group protests, condemned Japanese rearmament and showed the huge impact the antagonistic image of Japan exerted upon Australians. This sense of fear and distrust is captured at its most extreme by the Darwin's *Northern Standard* which declared that the Japanese could not be trusted to rearm as they represented 'a barbaric, inhuman race'.³⁸ Whilst not nearly as bombastic as this, most Australian newspapers largely agreed with the anti-Japanese sentiment expressed by the *Northern Standard*. Brisbane's *The Courier Mail*, for example, declared that the treaty provoked 'grave doubt in many minds', and published letters from citizens which argued that rearmament was a great 'danger to our country'.³⁹ Editorials in southern city papers such as Sydney's *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Adelaide's *The Advertiser* and Hobart's *The Mercury*, although less extreme, expressed the same distrust of Japanese rearmament with Melbourne's *The Age* stating that 'No peace treaty with Japan ought be acceptable to an Australian Government unless it embraces assurances that, firstly, any rearmament of the former enemy is strictly limited'.⁴⁰ Whilst newspapers varied in their level of opposition, with rural newspapers and those of Queensland the most extreme, they all showed an intense suspicion of the Japanese and a belief that a rearmed Japan would inevitably

³⁸ *Northern Standard*, 4 April 1952.

³⁹ *The Courier Mail*, 18 December 1951; *The Courier Mail*, 5 January 1951; *The Mercury*, 28 February 1952.

⁴⁰ *The Age*, 2 April 1951.

threaten Australia. The strong opposition of Queensland and Northern Territory newspapers was undoubtedly the legacy that decades of fears concerning Japanese movements in Australia's north had left. Indeed as Megumi Kato has noted the most common representation of Japanese activity in Australia's north for much of the early twentieth century was as a prelude to invasion.⁴¹ Experience of the northern states during the war, especially Darwin who had been bombed in 1942, only appeared to strengthen the validity of such fears. This legacy of 'bitter wartime hatred' and the strong influence of the antagonistic image of Japan consequently led to strong public opposition to the Peace Treaty, opposition that would remain strong throughout the Peace Treaty debate.⁴²

Begrudging Acceptance: Changes in Public Response to the Peace Treaty

Whilst this opposition remained strong throughout the Peace Treaty debate, a change in public opinion occurred from late 1951, which was brought about by the influence of Government explanations and the presence of limits to change, such as the ANZUS Pact. The signing of ANZUS was supported by both sides of politics and the majority of the public with a Gallup Poll showing 50% of Australians support the Pact with only 18% opposing. Furthermore the poll returned the results of 44% seeing ANZUS as a credible safeguard against Japanese rearmament, with 39% opposed.⁴³ Whilst the poll illustrated that overwhelmingly Australians remained cautious about Japan, it also indicated that the Peace Treaty and the ANZUS Pact

⁴¹ Megumi Kato, *Narrating the Other: Australian Literary Perceptions of Japan* (Victoria: Monash University Press, 2008), p.122.

⁴² Tatsuo Akaneya, 'The Development of Postwar Japan-Australia relations and the Impact of American Declining Hegemony', *Pacific Economic Papers*, no. 153 (Published by Australia-Japan Research Centre, ANU 1987), p.8.

⁴³ Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.788-790 (August-September 1951).

were thought of as connected, so much so that ANZUS had a tangible impact upon responses to the Treaty. Newspapers were united in their support of the ANZUS Pact, as shown by *The Courier Mail* who simply thanked the United States and Perth's *The West Australian* who regarded the Pact as 'an indispensable complement of the Japanese treaty'.⁴⁴ This sentiment was shared by the *Australian Women's Weekly* who supported the pact but also maintained that Australians 'cannot feel secure' with a rearmed Japan so close, clearly the antagonistic image of Japan remained strong.⁴⁵ Such statements were echoed by *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* which declared 'Our own dislike of the treaty is greatly abated, if not wholly removed, by the Pacific Security Pact'.⁴⁶ Regional papers largely agreed. Broken Hill's *The Barrier Miner*, for example, held that the only reason Australians would accept the treaty was 'because the dangers will be offset by a pact of mutual assistance with the United States'.⁴⁷ *The Townsville Bulletin* struck on a similar note and *The Launceston Examiner*, like its Broken Hill brethren, saw the Pact as going 'a long way toward meeting Australian and New Zealand objections to unlimited Japanese rearmament'.⁴⁸ Support for the Pact also came from community organisations such as the R.S.S & A.I.L.A whose NSW State President, Mr. W. Yeo, saw it as a much needed safeguard against a rearmed Japan.⁴⁹ Whilst the antagonistic image of Japan made the Australian public opposed to the very concept of a rearmed Japan, it is also clear that by 1952 the public was coming to

⁴⁴ *The West Australian*, 4 September 1951; *The Courier Mail*, 16 July 1951.

⁴⁵ *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 1 August 1951.

⁴⁶ *The Age*, Sept 4 1951.

⁴⁷ *The Barrier Miner*, 21 August 1951.

⁴⁸ *The Launceston Examiner*, 16 July 1951.

⁴⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 1951.

begrudgingly accept the Treaty and its provisions, however distasteful they may be. Such acceptance was undoubtedly due to the Governments positioning the ANZUS Pact as a constraint on the threat of a rearmed Japan; for the ever wary Australian public ANZUS provided comfort akin to a security blanket.⁵⁰

Whilst the perceived limitations that the ANZUS imposed on a rearmed Japan were central to gaining public acceptance of the Peace Treaty, the Government's explanation of the Treaty's necessity in the face of the communist threat was also a significant factor in changing public opinion. For several months a heated campaign had been fought over the Government's proposed referendum to ban the Communist Party, indeed the referendum took place a mere two weeks after the Peace Treaty was signed. Thus at the time of the Peace Treaty debate the Australian public was acutely sensitive to the prospect of a communist threat, indeed communism was the most contentious and divisive political issue of 1951.⁵¹ Whilst communism would remain a significant influence on how the public viewed Japan throughout the decade it would never be as a strong and explicit shaper of opinion as it was in 1951 and 1952. This sensitivity was captured by an August 1951 Gallup Poll which showed nine out of ten Australians believed that Russia was uncommitted to world peace.⁵² Government explanations of the Treaty's necessity due to the Communist threat thus gained support from substantial sections of the public such as the R.S.S & A.I.L.A whose NSW State President Mr. W. Yeo succinctly declared 'we could

⁵⁰ Goldsworthy, *Facing North*, p.187.

⁵¹ John Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties: Private Sentiment and political culture in Menzies Australia* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2000), p.97.

⁵² Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll Subscribers Report*, 793 (Sydney : Australian Gallup Polls, September 1951).

not allow the communists to control the Japanese Islands'.⁵³ From late 1951 onwards newspapers, such as *The Age*, *The Canberra Times* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, also spoke of the treaty as having 'no alternative' due to 'Russia's proselytising and expansionism'.⁵⁴ *The Launceston Examiner* and the Adelaide's *The News* similarly called on Australians to 'take a realistic view' of the treaty in light of the communist threat.⁵⁵ Two letters to *The Launceston Examiner* in 1952 sparked a heated debate amongst readers with their disapproval of the Treaty rejected by numerous responding letters, all of which held the Treaty to have 'no alternative' considering the immediate threat of communism.⁵⁶ These letters showed the significant influence that Government explanations had exerted over public opinion, with the ANZUS Pact and communism featuring strongly in public responses to the Treaty. The letters also illustrated that as April 1952 grew closer a mood of begrudging acceptance increasingly dominated public opinion regarding the Peace Treaty. Whilst the antagonistic image of Japan remained strong and a major influence on public opinion regarding Japan, the Peace Treaty debate demonstrated that this image did not completely rule out change, but rather imposed firm limits as to its scope and nature.

In February 1952 a protest group of individual Australians and trade union representatives travelled to Canberra to present a petition to Prime Minister Menzies to reject the Peace Treaty. Whilst ultimately unsuccessful the protest showed the key features of the Peace Treaty debate such as Government leadership and the strength

⁵³ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 August 1951.

⁵⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 April 1952; *The Canberra Times*, 23 February 1952; *The Age*, 4 February 1952.

⁵⁵ *The Launceston Examiner*, 15 January 1952; *The News*, 23 February 1952.

⁵⁶ *The Launceston Examiner*, 12 February 1952; *The Launceston Examiner*, 24 March 1952.

of an antagonistic image of Japan. Upon receiving the protest group Menzies again put forth the Government's reasons for acceptance, stating that ANZUS and U.S strength would ensure the danger posed by Japan remained limited whilst the threat of communism made the Peace Treaty a necessary evil. In a testament to the influence these explanations had, in the preceding months, exerted upon public opinion *The Barrier Miner*, once a major opponent of the Treaty, agreed with Menzies and pointed out the 'naiveté of the petition'.⁵⁷ Other newspapers also ran accounts of the protest and paid particular attention to Menzies comments about the Treaty's necessity in the face of the communist threat.⁵⁸ These responses showed the important influence Government leadership could, and did, exert on public opinion and thus foreshadow the central role Government would play in the promotion of the complementary image of Japan from 1953 onwards. The protest also showed that the antagonistic image of Japan remained a major influence on public opinion and in 1951 its dominance was largely uncontested; even Menzies was reported to have stated that no one 'liked' the Japanese.⁵⁹ Writing in 1957 historian and foreign affairs commentator Gordon Greenwood noted that whilst ANZUS had allayed the public's fears of Japan it did not remove them, or the influence they exerted.⁶⁰ However it is undeniable that by allaying such fears and gaining public acceptance of the Peace Treaty a process of incremental change was begun and the foundations for the complementary image of Japan were laid.

⁵⁷*The Barrier Miner*, 29 February 1952.

⁵⁸*The Canberra Times*, 28 February 1952; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 February 1952; *The Argus*, 28 February 1952; *The Mercury*, 28 February 1952.

⁵⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 February 1952.

⁶⁰ Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harper eds., *Australia in World Affairs 1950-55* (Melbourne: Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1957), p.208.

Goods and People: Public Opinion on Japanese Immigration and Trade

Whilst rearmament was the principal focus of debate over the Peace Treaty other issues attracted considerable attention and controversy, particularly the sensitive topics of Japanese immigration and increased imports of Japanese goods. The debate over these issues was particularly prominent following the Government's decision in 1951 to allow certain Japanese imports into Australia and the 1952 decision to admit Japanese war brides. Interestingly public opinion was largely positive to both decisions. Whilst fears of Japanese immigration and the threat Japanese trade posed to Australian jobs lay at the heart of the antagonistic image of Japan, these changes fell into the range of what the public would accept due to their appearance as limited and unthreatening; the war brides promised to come in small numbers and assimilate, whilst trade was to remain strictly regulated. The need, first articulated in the Peace Treaty debate, to keep Japan from turning towards communism also undoubtedly played a factor in public support for the changes. Although these changes were limited they must also be understood in their proper context. Australia in the 1950s remained firmly committed to maintaining its 'White Australia' immigration policy and protecting jobs, indeed a bipartisan consensus on these points existed within Australia.⁶¹ Thus whilst public acceptance of change was only given under the condition that these changes would be limited they remained a significant step forward for the Australia-Japan relationship. As these changes proved successful, momentum for further change also began to build as the Australian public found its fears remained unrealised. As historian Keiko Tamura has noted the successful integration of the war brides into Australian society played

⁶¹ Jenny Stewart, 'Trade and Industry Policies', in Scott Parker (with J.R. Nethercote and John Warhurst) eds., *The Menzies Era: A Reappraisal of Government, Politics and Policy* (Victoria: Australian Print Group, 1995), p.187.

a significant role in breaking down misconceptions about the Japanese.⁶² Similarly the success of imports helped break down fears that Japanese goods would swamp the Australian market. These events thus marked the beginning of the emergence of the complementary image of Japan by showing the Australian public that Japan did not always threaten, but conversely could offer substantial benefits to Australians and their ordinary lives.

The Benefits of Trade: Public Acceptance of Change in the Australia-Japan Trading Relationship

Trade with Japan grew prodigiously throughout the 1950s and played a crucial role in triggering a significant shift in public opinion regarding Japan, a role that was foreshadowed by the 1951 debate over Japanese trade. Fears of Japan's trading power lay at the heart of the antagonistic image of Japan and consequently public opinion was intensely suspicious of rumours that the Treaty would see an expansion in trade, fearing it would damage Australian jobs and living standards. The Government moved quickly to quash such rumours and assert its control over the situation. The Minister for Trade and Customs, Niel O'Sullivan, showed such leadership when he declared, days after the Peace Treaty's signing, that 'We [The Government] have the power to stop the flooding of home markets with imported goods'.⁶³ However, memories of when cheap Japanese goods actually had flooded the markets in the 1930s and threatened the future of Australian industries made such fears difficult to dislodge, as demonstrated by the *Australian Financial Review* when it ominously noted a revival of industries in Japan that had 'successfully

⁶² Keiko Tamura, 'War Brides Break Barriers', *Wartime*, 20, pp.49-51.

⁶³ *The West Australian*, 14 September 1951.

flooded world markets before the war'.⁶⁴ The influence of the antagonistic image of Japan was further bolstered by both wartime memories and Australia's own economic difficulties of the post-war years which made the public acutely sensitive to any threat to Australian jobs.⁶⁵ Thus *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian* declared that Japanese imports could lead to a breakdown of 'working and living conditions' and called for strict limitations.⁶⁶ *The Townsville Daily Bulletin* also demonstrated the strength of the antagonistic image of Japan declaring that the Peace Treaty would herald the start of Japans 'Trade War', a sentiment *The Courier Mail* echoed when it described a 'flood of Japanese trade circulars' in Brisbane and demanded Japanese imports be heavily restricted.⁶⁷ Again demonstrating Darwin's strong dislike of Japan the *Northern Standard* went a step further and declared that if Darwin businesses attempted to bring Japanese goods, or labour, to Australia they 'will have no alternative but to change their minds or get out of Darwin'.⁶⁸ These reactions once again showed the dominance of an antagonistic image of Japan, with rumours of Japanese imports reviving long held fears of Japan's threat to Australia and consequently being staunchly opposed by the public. Such reactions demonstrated that changes to the Australia-Japan relationship would have to be incremental in scope and pace if public support was to be ensured. Whilst the complementary image of Japan had not yet become a major influence over public opinion in 1951 it was slowly beginning to emerge, as demonstrated by

⁶⁴ *Australian Financial Review*, 20 September 1951.

⁶⁵ Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties*, p.6.

⁶⁶ *The West Australian*, 16 November 1951; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 1951.

⁶⁷ *The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 11 September 1951; *The Courier Mail*, 13 September 1951.

⁶⁸ *The Northern Standard*, 7 March 1952.

the public debate over the Australia-Japan trade. During the Peace Treaty debate Japan's value as a purchaser of Australian wool had often been remarked upon with many, especially the *Australian Financial Review*, which expressed fears that unless the trade imbalance between Australia and Japan was rectified disaster loomed.⁶⁹ Indeed as historian Neville Meaney has convincingly argued, this fear that Japan would cease purchases of Australian goods, with disastrous consequences for the Australian economy, would remain strong well into the 1970s.⁷⁰ Australia was also under significant pressure from its international allies who feared that without an expansion in trade Japan may turn to the communist nations to buy its goods; an event the Australian government agreed must be prevented at all costs.⁷¹ Consequently the Government moved in 1951 to allow some Japanese goods, notably a significant number of Japanese toys, into Australia as an attempt to correct the trade imbalance. The public largely understood and accepted the decision along with Government assurances that the imports would be limited. Indeed a Gallup Poll on the issue revealed 52.2% were in favour of accepting a LIMITED (Emphasis of the Poll) number of toys.⁷² However, many sections of the public, such as toy manufacturers, were less sure and their reaction again showed the strength of the antagonistic image of Japan. The Australian Chambers of Manufacturers (A.C.M) protested against the imports whilst toy manufacturers and retailers began an intense campaign against the imports, printing a pamphlet fronted by a photo of emaciated POWs captioned 'Have you forgotten? Ban Jap Toys' (**Fig.1**).⁷³ However the

⁶⁹ *Australian Financial Review*, 20 September 1951.

⁷⁰ Meaney, *Towards a New Vision*, p.118.

⁷¹ Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, p.142.

⁷² Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.809-821 (November 1951).

⁷³ *The West Australian*, 30 August 1951.

campaign backfired badly and was cancelled after the R.S.S & A.I.L.A labelled it ‘Vile Propaganda’ whilst the wider community, shown in several newspaper letters, also rejected the campaign as nothing more than a ‘hate campaign’.⁷⁴ Other newspapers condemned the pamphlet campaign with *The Advertiser* and *The Argus* condemning the revival of wartime ‘passions’ for such a purpose.⁷⁵ Alongside rejecting the pamphlet campaign many commentators argued that the toy imports were unthreatening and beneficial to Australian’s and thus should be accepted. As two commentators noted ‘Australian mothers and fathers’ were positive about the toys and ‘will be glad to buy them’.⁷⁶ *The Barrier Miner* agreed and declared buying Japanese imports was a ‘matter for each person to decide’.⁷⁷ The debate over the toys thus shows that limited change would be accepted by the public and, moreover, that there was a growing view within the public that certain interactions with Japan, such as trade, could be beneficial to Australia; the beginnings of a new, more positive, complementary image of Japan were emerging.

⁷⁴ *The Advertiser*, 30 August 1951; *The Advertiser*, 1 September 1951; *The Advertiser*, 6 September 1951; *The Advertiser*, 8 September 1951

⁷⁵ *The Courier Mail*, 31 August 1951; *The Argus*, 31 August 1951; *The Advertiser*, 31 August 1951.

⁷⁶ *The Advertiser*, 6 September 1951; *The Sunday Herald*, 2 September 1951;

⁷⁷ *The Barrier Miner*, 31 August 1951.



Fig.1 Front cover of the pamphlet toy manufacturers and retailers published in 1951 opposing Japanese toy imports. It reads ‘Ban Jap Toys: Have you Forgotten?’.

The Courier Mail, 31 August

Defending ‘White Australia’: Public Opposition to Japanese Immigration

Whilst fears of Japan’s economic strength had long been part of the antagonistic image associated with Japan by Australians it was not the most powerful fear; the dubious honour of this title instead belonged to the issue of Japanese immigration. One of the principal ways in which Japan appeared as a threat to Australia was a belief that it sought to move south and populate Australia. Indeed the White Australia Policy, whilst targeting all non-European migrants, was something of a ‘shield forged’ against the specific threat of Japanese immigration.⁷⁸ Whilst explicitly racial explanations for the policy had fallen out of favour by the 1950s there remained a strong cultural explanation for its maintenance. It was argued by

⁷⁸ Henry P. Frei, *Japans Southward Advance and Australia: From the Sixteenth Century to World War II* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991), p.67.

many in Australia that Asian and Australian peoples were culturally incompatible, and that if immigration was allowed social cohesion would be lost.⁷⁹ Combined with the bitter legacy of war this made public opinion in the early 1950s extremely hostile to Japanese immigration, as demonstrated by *The Sydney Morning Herald* who feared that the Peace Treaty would see the Japanese walk upon ‘the bloody road’ towards Australia they had just been driven back from.⁸⁰ Similarly Sydney’s *The Daily Telegraph* argued Australia and New Zealand acted out of experience in their anti-Japanese immigration policies, after all ‘The yellow tide had lapped at their shores before’.⁸¹ The R.S.S & A.I.L.A continued to back the policy and attacked the Government in 1952 for what it believed were attempts to ‘water down the White Australia policy’; cultural unity must be preserved.⁸² Clearly public opinion, shaped by the antagonistic image of Japan and wartime experiences, was convinced that if Japanese immigration was permitted it would not only damage Australia’s living standard but the very cohesion of society itself.

The Importance of Women and Complementarity: Public Acceptance of the Japanese War Brides

In the face of such opposition it seems surprising, miraculous even, that public opinion strongly supported the Government decision of 1952 to allow the entry into Australia of Japanese war brides, a move that has been called a ‘chip, albeit a tiny

⁷⁹ Meaney, ‘The End of “White Australia” and Australia’s Changing Perceptions of Asia’, p.178.

⁸⁰ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 May 1950.

⁸¹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1951.

⁸² The Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen’s Imperial League of Australia, *Thirty Seventh Annual Report and Balance Sheet* (P.P, 1952), p.30.

one, in the White Australia policy'.⁸³ Although negative opinions concerning the brides did exist, such as one contributor to *The Cairns Post* who declared 'We do not want Eurasian Children to mix with our children' and a *Woman's Day* writer who expressed 'disgust' at the decision, they were largely outweighed by positive reactions.⁸⁴ Indeed, a Gallup Poll in March 1952, the same month the policy change was announced, showed 60% of surveyed Australians supported the brides.⁸⁵ In response to negative opinions voiced within their pages the *Australian Women's Weekly* and *Women's Day* both supported the brides immigration and argued that 'the numbers [of marriages] are very few' and that the brides 'devotion and struggle' showed they posed no threat to Australians.⁸⁶ Other newspapers, notably regional newspapers such as *The Townsville Bulletin* and *The Barrier Miner*, also supported the brides, whilst *The Courier Mail* found 8/10 Brisbane residents supportive.⁸⁷ The acceptance of the brides thus simultaneously asserted the limits to change, which resulted from the influence of the antagonistic image of Japan, and marked the beginning of a decade-long process of incremental change.

Whilst public opinion supported the entry of the war brides it was not given unconditionally, and was instead dependent on the brides being perceived as unthreatening, and the change they would bring as being limited. Central to this perception was the ways in which the brides were presented to the Australian public.

⁸³ Julie Easton, 'Japanese War Brides in Western Australia: Immigration and Assimilation in the Nineteen Fifties', *Studies in Western Australian History*, no.16 (1995), p.14.

⁸⁴ *The Cairns Post*, 10 April 1952; *Woman's Day*, 7 April 1952.

⁸⁵ Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.835-844 (February-March 1952).

⁸⁶ *Woman's Day*, 7 April 1952; *The Argus*, 5 April 1952.

⁸⁷ *The Courier Mail*, 31 March 1952; *The Barrier Miner*, 15 July 1952; *The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 2 July 1952 .

Beginning with the first war bride, Cherry Parker, and her long yet successful fight for acceptance newspapers placed a strong emphasis on the war brides' ability to assimilate. *The Advertiser* and *The West Australian* captured this focus particularly well through their favourable commentary on the brides' western dress and desire to adopt Australian culture whilst leaving their own behind. As *The West Australian* noted, the brides were eagerly adopting 'the Australian way'.⁸⁸ These stories of easy assimilation were often false, the brides constantly faced a struggle against blatant racism and the difficulties of learning a new language and culture, however they were crucial to garnering public acceptance of the brides due to the strong focus at the time on the ability of 'new Australians' to assimilate.⁸⁹ The brides' ability to assimilate was bolstered by their identity as family based women. Whilst reality often fell short of expectations the image of the ideal Australian wife in the 1950s was one of dedication to the home environment and family.⁹⁰ The brides' stories were tales of love, dedication and family and thus they were easily ascribed a role within Australian society as Australian housewives. Consequently the brides were seen by the Australian public as an affirmation of the ideal of Australian womanhood, not a threat to it. As *The Sydney Morning Herald* declared, the brides had 'a lot in common with Australian women'.⁹¹ Indeed photographs of the brides deliberately focused on their identity as housewives and as mothers, whilst also paying attention to their western appearance that demonstrated their desire to assimilate (**Fig.2**). It should also be noted that this representation of Japanese

⁸⁸ *The Advertiser*, 9 August 1952; *The West Australian*, 21 April 1953.

⁸⁹ Keiko Tamura, *Michi's Memories* (Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2001), pp.35-47.

⁹⁰ Murphy, *Imagining the Fifties*, p.42.

⁹¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 1952; Tamura, 'Home Away From Home', p.260.

women as unthreatening had far deeper roots than the war brides; indeed, since before Federation Japanese women were usually presented in Australia as docile and alluring. It was men who were the symbol of the antagonistic image of Japan, an association deepened by war.⁹² This public support of the war brides showed that the antagonistic image of Japan did not prohibit change, but rather demanded that such change be strictly limited. However the impact of the brides, along with other changes, extended beyond such limits as the change they brought helped to pave the way for the emergence of the complementary image of Japan and, subsequently, a major shift in public opinion regarding Japan. Writing in 1965, Isabel Carter noted that the brides were for many Australians the first Japanese person they had met and happily noted the positive impression they made.⁹³ Beyond personal contact the successful assimilation of the war brides demonstrated to the public that change to the Australia-Japan relationship did not necessarily threaten, but rather could complement Australian society and values.

⁹² Kato, *Narrating the Other*, p.190.

⁹³ Isabel Carter, *Alien Blossom* (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1965), p.139.



Fig.2 A picture of Cherry Parker, Australia's first Japanese War Bride. Note her identification as a housewife and her western appearance.

The Courier Mail, 5 July 1952.

The Foundations Laid: Public Response to the Japanese Peace Treaty 1951-1952

Historian Alan Rix has argued that the Peace Treaty was important as it marked the 'point from which Australian policy could not retreat; it had eventually to come to terms with Japan'.⁹⁴ This thesis agrees wholeheartedly with this view and argues that the Peace Treaty, and associated changes, marked the beginning of a process of incremental change and the emergence of the complementary image of Japan. The issues of Japanese rearmament, the admission of war brides and expansion of trade showed the important impact Government leadership could exert over public opinion and also demonstrated that change could occur as long as it was perceived as limited in nature and scope. By adhering to such limits these changes proved to

⁹⁴ Rix, *Coming to Terms*, p.126.

the Australian public that Japan did not necessarily always threaten but rather could enhance its future economic and even cultural, development. Whilst it is undeniable that the antagonistic image of Japan remained dominant during these years it is equally undeniable that a process of change in public opinion regarding Japan had begun. This process would gain pace in the following years and result in the emergence of a new image of Japan, one which would exert significant influence over public opinion regarding Japan.

-Chapter Two-

Steps and Stumbles: Changes in Public Opinion Towards Japan, 1953-1954

*'The happiness of the future depends upon the future, and not upon nursing the
bitterness of the past'*

Prime Minister Robert Menzies, 1954⁹⁵

*'What ARE we going to do about Japan, and the Japanese? Are we going to hate
them forever, or are we going to receive them back into our company as a civilised
people?'*

The Argus, 1954⁹⁶

The years 1953 and 1954 saw the complementary image of Japan fully bloom and begin to exert considerable influence upon public opinion, a turn of events that was to a large extent the result of Government leadership. As a result, public opinion of Japan was increasingly shaped by two quite different images. The influence of these two images was shown by the positive reception given to Japan's first post-war ambassador to Australia, Mr. Haruhiko Nishi, and the subsequent vigorous public condemnation of his comments concerning possible Japanese immigration to Australia. Similarly, the steady expansion of trade with Japan between 1953 and 1954 was largely well received by the public, although limitations remained crucial even in this most beneficial of developments. The continuing strength of public suspicion and fear of Japan was rendered explicit by the public furore surrounding the 1954 proposal by the United States to use Japanese crews to survey Australian

⁹⁵ Sir Robert Menzies quoted in, Sir James Plimsoll, 'Towards a Wider Conception of Our Common Humanity', in *The Emerging World: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Volume* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p.196.

⁹⁶ *The Argus*, 28 October 1954.

waters; the survey proposal exceeded the limits to change, revived decade old fears of Japanese immigration and consequently was opposed by the public. Yet by December 1954, when a Japanese baseball team visited Australia, it was evident that Australian public opinion regarding Japan was slowly growing more positive under the influence of a recently emergent, and Government endorsed, beneficial image of Japan; a trend that would continue throughout the remaining years of the 1950s.

Renewing Contacts: The 1953 Public Response to the Arrival of the Japanese Ambassador

Eight months after the Peace Treaty came into effect Mr. Haruhiko Nishi stepped off a plane in Canberra to take up his position as Japanese Ambassador to Australia. On arrival he was greeted by members of the press who reported positively on the event, as demonstrated by *The Courier Mail's* declaration that Mr. Nishi's arrival was an attempt at friendship that Australia 'should not deny these former enemies'.⁹⁷ *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Canberra Times* similarly expressed a hope that, over time, 'it may become possible for Australians in the future to re-establish friendly associations with a Japan'.⁹⁸ The sentiment was echoed by Richard Casey, Minister for External Affairs, who hoped that Ambassador Nishi would assist in fostering friendship and expressed a hope that relations 'between the two countries will continue to improve'.⁹⁹ Whilst wartime experiences, and the older fears of Japan, had not yet disappeared the dominant view of the Ambassador's arrival was that it was a necessary and positive step forward for the two nations.¹⁰⁰ Even Darwin's the *Northern Standard* was positive about the Ambassador's arrival and

⁹⁷ *The Courier Mail*, 7 January 1953.

⁹⁸ *The Canberra Times*, April 2 1953; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 1953.

⁹⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 1953.

¹⁰⁰ *The Launceston Examiner*, 8 January 1953.

looked forward to further trade as a result, although it remained sceptical about Japan's true intentions.¹⁰¹ This positive response to Ambassador Nishi's arrival showed that public opinion was not solely shaped by the antagonistic image of Japan, and that there was, in fact, an ever growing view that certain changes to the Australia-Japan relationship could be mutually beneficial for Australia and Japan.

Whilst the public response to Ambassador Nishi's arrival was largely positive it did not come without conditions, and indeed throughout the Ambassador's time in Australia his activities remained tightly constrained by ongoing public suspicion of Japan. The limits to what change the public would accept were made clear when the Ambassador was reported to have remarked in April 1953 that Japanese migrants could be used to develop Australia's north. The public response to the remarks was overwhelmingly negative, and showed that if the complementary image of Japan was to emerge and grow it would need to do so under the stringent limits imposed by the influence of the antagonistic image of Japan. *The Canberra Times* led the charge and harshly rebuked the ambassador in a lengthy editorial where it labelled his comments 'astonishingly naïve' and noted the 'intensity of the feeling of this country for the maintenance of a white Australia'.¹⁰² *The Canberra Times* also ominously remarked that 'There have been hints from time to time that Japanese eyes are again on New Guinea', in a comment which showed how deeply entrenched fears of Japan had become.¹⁰³ *The Courier Mail* agreed and declared that Australia remained opposed to the 'immigration of all Asians' and helpfully supplied a map to allow Australians to understand where the Japanese might settle, although at no

¹⁰¹ *The Northern Standard*, 9 January 1953.

¹⁰² *The Canberra Times*, 2 April 1953.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

point had any areas been specified (**Fig.3**).¹⁰⁴ Melbourne's *The Argus* declared that the memory of the war remained strong and advised Mr. Nishi 'to discuss such ideas in private with representative Australians before again publicly expressing them'; a polite, albeit clear, rebuke.¹⁰⁵ *The Mercury* agreed and supported the Tasmanian R.S.S & A.I.L.A President Mr. N.D. Wilson's statement that such large scale Japanese migration would 'never be welcome in Australia'.¹⁰⁶ Rural papers similarly rejected the Ambassador's remarks, although many remained positive about the relationship on the whole with Tasmania's *The Advocate* enthusiastic about the development of 'friendly trading relations' with Japan.¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that Mr. Nishi denied making such inflammatory comments and wrote publically to *The Canberra Times* to declare that an Australian reporter had asked if Japan could send migrants to Australia, to which the ambassador responded 'Yes. But, I repeat: if invited'.¹⁰⁸ Regardless of the truth of the newspaper reports it is, for this thesis's purpose, the public response that is most important. The widespread public disavowal of Mr. Nishi's reported comments show that whilst a new image of Japan, as a modern and valuable partner in Australia's development, was emerging it remained constrained by the dominant antagonistic image of Japan. If public acceptance and support was to be gained, change would have to remain incremental

¹⁰⁴ *The Courier Mail*, 2 April 1953.

¹⁰⁵ *The Argus*, 6 April 1953.

¹⁰⁶ *The Mercury*, 2 April 1953.

¹⁰⁷ *The Advocate*, 2 April 1953.

¹⁰⁸ *The Canberra Times*, 8 April 1953.

and limited. Japanese immigration in 1953, and for many years to come, remained well beyond such limits.¹⁰⁹



Fig.3 The Front Page story of *The Courier Mail* in which it discussed Ambassador Nishi's reported comments

The Courier Mail, 2 April 1953.

Promoting the Complementary Image of Japan: Government Leadership and Change to the Australia-Japan Trading Relationship

One of the most important developments that Ambassador Nishi saw in his tenure as Ambassador was the gradual expansion of bilateral trade between Australia and Japan from 1953. Japan's value as a trading partner to Australia had skyrocketed since 1951 and by 1953 the Japan trade was running at a ratio of 19:1 to Australia's favour.¹¹⁰ This absurdly lopsided trading relationship reached a crisis point in 1953 when Japan stated publically that unless Australia allowed more Japanese imports it would run out of the funds to buy Australian goods. If such an event was to take place the results for the Australian economy, which was increasingly dependent on

¹⁰⁹ Yuriko Nagata, 'Certain Types of Aliens?': The Japanese in Australia, 1941–1952', in Paul Jones and Vera Mackie, *Relationships: Japan and Australia, 1870s-1950s* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 2001), p.233.

¹¹⁰ Rix, *Coming To Terms*, pp.135-137.

Japanese purchases, would have been devastating; consequently the Government announced a substantial relaxation in import restrictions in 1953.¹¹¹ The Government was also driven by pressure from allies that feared Japan may begin to turn to the communist nations unless its trade balance was rectified.¹¹² Thus, as historians Alan Rix and Sandra Tweedie have argued, 1953 and 1954 represented the ‘crucial period’ in the Australia-Japan trading relationship that saw the foundations laid for future expansions in economic, and cultural, contacts between Australia and Japan.¹¹³ Importantly, these changes also triggered a wider Government reevaluation of the Japanese relationship and saw the Government begin to actively project a new image of Japan as a nation of great benefit for Australia, and one which complemented Australia’s own development. 1953 thus stands as an important year for the Australia-Japan relationship as it marked the year in which substantial changes occurred and the Government adopted a new approach towards Japan, an approach which was regularly and enthusiastically conveyed to the public. As in the Peace Treaty debate, the Government moved quickly after deciding to expand trade with Japan to explain its reasoning to the public, an attempt to gain public acceptance of the changes and make public opinion more receptive to further changes. One of the most direct and emotive explanations of the trade changes occurred in a September 1953 radio speech delivered by Prime Minister Menzies as part of his ‘Man to Man’ series. These broadcasts were simulcast around Australia and used Menzies’s famed oratorical skill to talk directly to Australians, usually on the more contentious political issues of the day. Menzies opened his speech simply,

¹¹¹ Rix, *Coming To Terms*, pp.169-171.

¹¹² Gordon Greenwood and Pamela Bray eds., *Approaches to Asia: Australian Post War Policies and Attitudes* (Sydney: McGraw Hill, 1974), pp.189-191.

¹¹³ Rix, *The Australia Japan Political Alignment*, p.10; Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, p.155.

by declaring that Australia ‘must allow Japan more trade’. However, he soon expanded and began to position Japan as a nation which benefitted and enhanced, rather than threatened, Australia’s development. Indeed, Menzies even declared if Australia was to remain ‘a great trading nation’ more Japanese imports were a necessity.¹¹⁴ The speech represented an important milestone in the development of the complementary image as it marks the moment at which the Government began, in a coordinated manner, to publically promote it. As Clem Loyld has noted Prime Minister Menzies was an ardent believer in the power of speech to enable Governments to lead public opinion.¹¹⁵ Such leadership was, according to Menzies, one of the principal roles of politicians, indeed in 1947 Menzies had declared in an essay that the ‘art’ of politics was to ‘provide exposition, persuasion, and inspiration’.¹¹⁶ Menzies 1953 ‘Man to Man’ speech thus showed that the Government was beginning to commit itself to a longer term approach to Japan and sought to lead public opinion in a more optimistic direction. The effects of such political leadership should not be underestimated, indeed as historian James Curran has noted, speeches in the post-war era performed a crucial role in ‘leading the people to a new understanding of themselves and their place in the world’.¹¹⁷ The leadership that emerged between 1953 and 1954 similarly helped the Australian public come to terms with the major changes the Australia-Japan relationship was

¹¹⁴ Sir Robert Menzies, ‘Australia – Man to Man: Trade with Japan, 16th September 1953’, A571, 1946/1931 PART 19, NAA.

¹¹⁵ Clem Loyld, ‘The Media’, in Scott Parker (with J.R. Nethercote and John Warhurst) eds., *The Menzies Era: A Reappraisal of Government, Politics and Policy* (Victoria: Australian Print Group, 1995), pp.111-118.

¹¹⁶ Sir Robert Menzies, ‘Politics as an Art’, *New York Times Magazine* (28 November 1948), accessed online at The Menzies Virtual Museum, <http://www.menziesvirtualmuseum.org.au/transcripts/Speech_is_of_Time/401_Politics_Art.html>, viewed 12/9/2011.

¹¹⁷ James Curran, *The Power of Speech* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), p.18.

undergoing and also played major role in promoting a new image of Japan, an image that highlighted the increasingly reciprocal nature of the Australia-Japan relationship.

Menzies was not alone in his statements concerning the Australia-Japan relationship and indeed it is a parliamentary speech by the intensely anti-Japanese Alexander Downer (Snr) that perhaps best captures the slow, and highly contested, shift in the Government's approach towards Japan and the influence of the two images of Japan. In the very opening sentences of his speech Downer declared 'There is probably no member of this chamber who has as good a knowledge or as great a detestation of the Japanese as myself'; a sentiment derived from both Downer's wartime experience as a Japanese POW and the influence of the antagonistic image of Japan. Yet Downer then declared that the Australia-Japan relationship needed to be deepened due to its obvious benefits to Australia, he repeated Menzies argument that Japan was vital to Australia's future and asserted that if trade restrictions were not eased the wool industry, 'the foundation of the prosperity of this country', would be imperilled.¹¹⁸ Downer's speech demonstrates that whilst the antagonistic image of Japan remained strong opinions were now also being shaped by a more positive, and increasingly influential, image of Japan.

Government influence over public opinion was in the 1950s substantially different from what it is today. Indeed, historian Judith Brett has argued that the 1950s was one of the final eras in which Australians routinely put the national interest ahead of

¹¹⁸ Alexander Downer, 'House of Representatives', *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (25 September 1953).

individual interests; it was an era of duties and not of rights.¹¹⁹ Consequently Government promotion of the complementary image of Japan exerted major influence over public opinion. This is not to say that the influence of the antagonistic image of Japan disappeared under the weight of Government explanations. Indeed groups such as the A.C.M condemned the trade changes as a threat to Australian jobs.¹²⁰ Rather, it is this thesis's contention that 1953 saw the two images begin to simultaneously shape public opinion, the effects of which were demonstrated by groups such as the Queensland Woolgrowers who enthusiastically greeted the trade changes.¹²¹ A 1953 Gallup Poll also showed the influence of these two images on public opinion with 57% of those questioned supporting imports from Japan 'to help them pay for our wool'.¹²² The clarification is important, although change was increasingly accepted by the public the fears associated with the antagonistic image of Japan meant that the public remained adamant that limits to change exist.¹²³ The trade changes of 1953 thus mark the moment at which the process of incremental change and the growth of a new image of Japan began to accelerate, although it would be many years before the antagonistic image of Japan met its demise.

The Limits to Change Reasserted: Public Response to the 1954 Defence Survey

Under an agreement signed in 1947 the United States and Australia had agreed to jointly survey, for defence purposes, islands to Australia's north and in September

¹¹⁹ Judith Brett, *Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class: from Alfred Deakin to John Howard* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.132.

¹²⁰ *The Canberra Times*, 10 December 1953

¹²¹ *Queensland Country Life*, March 25 1954.

¹²² Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll Subscribers Report*, 941(Sydney : Australian Gallup Polls, August 1953).

¹²³ Pam Oliver, *Allies, Enemies and Trading Partners* (Canberra: National Australian Archives, 2004), p.22.

1953 the U.S. announced its intent to use expert Japanese surveyors to do so. The Australian Government initially accepted the proposal on the proviso that a series of conditions to limit the movements and information gained by Japanese surveyors be adhered to, conditions that the U.S accepted.¹²⁴ However in late January 1954 news of the Survey leaked to the public, the subsequent wave of condemnation shocked the United States and forced the Government into retreat; a mere week after the story broke the Government rejected the Survey.¹²⁵ This controversy has commonly been cited as a demonstration of Australians ongoing suspicion of Japan and relegated to a brief sentence in studies of the Australia-Japan relationship, yet this labelling does not fully explain the public furore around the Survey.¹²⁶ In actuality, the Survey was rejected because it exceeded the limits of change by reviving the age old fears concerning Japanese activity in Australia's north, such fears would continue to be a brake on the development of the Australia-Japan relationship until the 1970's.¹²⁷ Thus the Survey controversy should be recognised as a testament to the ongoing influence of the antagonistic image of Japan and an assertion of where the limits to change laid in 1954, limits that would define the future growth of the complementary image of Japan.

Much of the reason for public condemnation of the 1954 Survey lay in its perceived threat to Australia's identity as a White British nation, an aspect of Australian identity that had long ago been forged in opposition to Japanese migration. At the

¹²⁴ 'Cabinet Submission 612 – Cooperative Mapping Agreement Between the United States and Australia: Use of Japanese Personnel 1st of February 1954', A4905, 612, NAA.

¹²⁵ Greenwood and Harper eds., *Australia in World Affairs 1950-55*, p.214.

¹²⁶ T.B. Millar, *Australia in Peace and War: External Relations Since 1788* (Botany, NSW: Australian National University Press, 1978), p.271; Rix, *The Australia Japan Political Alignment*, p.49.

¹²⁷ Drysdale and Kitaoji eds., *Japan and Australia*, p.6.

time of the Survey this identity was being emphatically reasserted due to the impending tour of Australia by Queen Elizabeth II, which promoted ‘the greatest outpouring of British race sentiment in the history of Australia’.¹²⁸ If Australia’s white British identity was, as Neville Meaney has argued, a ‘national religion’, then the Survey had shaken the church at the very height of a particularly captivating sermon.¹²⁹ Responses from the public showed how strong fears of Japan remained with groups such as The Air Force Association declaring that the Survey showed that ‘there is an obvious feeling in Japan that they want New Guinea’.¹³⁰ *The Advertiser*, *The Mercury*, *The Argus* and *The Age* argued that the survey presented ‘a danger to Australia’ and its national security whilst *The Canberra Times* decried the survey for utilising ‘personnel who would otherwise be ineligible to enter Australia under our immigration policy.’¹³¹ The language of these responses was exceptionally vivid, and was highly reminiscent of wartime comments regarding Japan. As *The Sydney Morning Herald* emotively declared, Japan was clearly looking south ‘with covetous eyes’.¹³² Indeed, a poll of Melbourne citizens by *The Argus* found nine out of ten opposed the Survey plan. One of those Melbournians questioned declared that the Japanese ‘still have their eyes on Australia’, whilst another commented that ‘letting them into New Guinea would only be the thin end of the wedge of infiltration’.¹³³ Such responses showed that the Survey revived fears

¹²⁸ Brett, *Australian Liberals and the Moral Middle Class*, p.175.

¹²⁹ Meaney, *Towards a New Vision*, p.31.

¹³⁰ *The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, Jan 29 1954.

¹³¹ *The Mercury*, 29 January 1954; *The Advertiser*, 28 January 1954; *The Age*, 29 January 1954; *The Argus*, 28 January 1954; *The Canberra Times*, 29 January 1954.

¹³² *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1954.

¹³³ *The Argus*, 29 January 1954.

of spying and infiltration that had dominated representations of the Japanese in popular culture for decades. The memory of the war was also often invoked, and letters to newspapers commonly rejected the survey as ‘an insult to our dead’, whilst The Australian Workers Union, one of the few unions who publically spoke on the controversy due its short duration, agreed and called the Survey a ‘betrayal’ of the Australian people.¹³⁴ Rural and city newspapers were united in their disapproval with *The Barrier Miner*, who labelled the issue a ‘political bomb’ and the *Rockhampton Daily Bulletin*, who declared it a threat to Australia’s ‘defence line’.¹³⁵ Perhaps the best summary of public opinion regarding the Survey came from *The Cairns Post* who declared ‘trade relations are one thing – permitting the Japanese to survey our potential defence areas is quite different’.¹³⁶ This public response to the survey shows that where changes to the Australia-Japan relationship lacked limits and revived fears that lay at the heart of the antagonistic image of Japan they would be rejected; the 1954 survey was quite simply too much, too soon. Whilst public response to the survey was overwhelmingly negative it was interesting that these responses did not disavow the Australia-Japan relationship itself, or previous changes. The issue was clearly one of the limits to change, rather than change itself. This state of affairs, resulting from the influence of the two images of Japan, was neatly encapsulated by a statement made by R.S.S & A.I.L.A Federal President Sir George Holland that his organisation had been ‘most reasonable in its approach to the question of Japanese rearmament, but this move brings too close to

¹³⁴ Raymond Baxter and Co. Industrial Consultants, *Monthly Digest of Labor and Union Journals in Australia*, 7, no.2 (February 1954).

¹³⁵ *The Barrier Miner*, 27 January 1954; *The Morning Bulletin*, 28 January 1954.

¹³⁶ *The Cairns Post*, 3 February 1954.

our own doors our former enemies'.¹³⁷ The survey was decried by the public because it was perceived as a threat to fundamental aspects of Australian life, clearly if Japan was to approach Australia's door it would have to do so slowly. *The Courier Mail* and *The Daily Telegraph* also showed this response with both papers printing comics portraying the survey as the first step in a Japanese infiltration of Australia whilst simultaneously advocating 'trade and friendly relations with Japan' (**Fig.4**).¹³⁸ Similar opinions are contained in a special page of letters *The Mercury* devoted to the Survey issue. Writers acknowledged the need to move beyond the war, with one commentator drawing a parallel between France's difficulties coming to terms with a Germany's revival, whilst another disliked Labor's 'capitalising on the war-time prejudices of the average Australian to win votes'. However all were adamant the Survey be rejected, quite simply, no Japanese 'should be permitted to survey inside Commonwealth boundaries'.¹³⁹ Whilst the tone of the letters was a testament to the ongoing influence of the antagonistic image of Japan it was also clear that it was the type of change that the Survey represented which was rejected, not change to the Australia-Japan relationship itself. Indeed a Gallup Poll taken less than a month after the survey affair found 52% of Australian's remained in favour of increased trade with Japan.¹⁴⁰ These responses showed that, as Gordon Greenwood has noted, the public had not yet reached a consensus on how Japan should be approached.¹⁴¹ The 1954 Survey should thus be understood as an event which

¹³⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1954.

¹³⁸ *The Courier Mail*, 28 January 1954; *The Courier Mail*, 2 February 1954; *The Daily Telegraph*, 29 January 1954; *The Daily Telegraph*, 31 January 1954.

¹³⁹ *The Mercury*, 2 February 1954.

¹⁴⁰ Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.988-998(March 1954).

¹⁴¹ Greenwood and Harper eds, *Australia in World Affairs 1950-55*, p.127.

displays the increasingly complex nature of public opinion regarding Japan, a complexity that resulted from the influence of the two images of Japan.



Fig. 4 A cartoon detailing the public response to the 1954 Survey, the depiction of Japan is strongly reminiscent of wartime and pre-war cartoons. The Japanese figure in the boat, labelled ANZUS, declares ‘Just making harmless little charts of Hon. Northern approaches to your highly esteemed country!’

The Courier Mail, 28 January 1954.

In the face of such overwhelming negative public opinion regarding the survey the Australian Government was forced to act, calling a special cabinet meeting to decide the Government’s stance. Cabinet notebooks showed the debate was extremely heated, and all Ministers acknowledged that the situation was ‘terribly explosive’. Cabinet on the whole remained supportive of change to the Australia-Japan relationship but appears to have felt that, in light of the public reaction and the impending election, the Survey was a step too far; as Menzies noted ‘We have no

time for a campaign of persuasion'.¹⁴² The involvement of the Japanese in the Survey 'even as members of the crew' was thus rejected by cabinet.¹⁴³ On the whole the Survey controversy showed that whilst the complementary image of Japan was growing the public remained heavily influenced by the antagonistic image of Japan; changing public perceptions of Japan was clearly to be a long and arduous process.

A Nation to Complement Australia: The 1954 Trade Relaxations and the Growth of the Complementary Image of Japan

The Survey controversy did not spell an end to the process of incremental change in the Australia-Japan relationship; on the contrary, the rest of 1954 saw the Government increase its promotion of the benefits a closer relationship with Japan offered for Australia. Fears of communism again drove the Government to relax trade with Japan in early 1954, but so too did Japan's own circumstances. By 1954 the divide in Japan over economic direction had been resolved with a dedication to expanding exports, increasing living standards and investing heavily in technology.¹⁴⁴ Thus by 1954 Japan's value as a buyer of Australian goods and its commitment to a path of development that did not threaten Australia had been cemented. Whilst the existence of this path would only become evident to the public in years to come it undoubtedly contributed to the Australian Government's increasing attempts to promote an image of Japan which portrayed it as unthreatening and beneficial for Australia's own development.

¹⁴² A.S.Brown, 'Cooperative Mapping Agreement, 2nd February 1954', *Cabinet Notebook August 1953- February 1954*, A11099, 1/17, NAA.

¹⁴³ 'Cabinet Decision No. 924 - Cooperative Mapping Agreement Between the United States and Australia: Use of Japanese Personnel 4th of February 1954', A4905, 612, NAA.

¹⁴⁴ Laura E. Hein, 'Growth Versus Success; Japan's Economic Policy in Historical Perspective', in Andrew Gordon ed., *Post War Japan As History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp.100-105.

One of the most important articulations of this new image of Japan came when Prime Minister Menzies delivered another ‘Man to Man’ speech in March 1954. The speech demonstrated that the antagonistic image of Japan had, by 1954, lost its official status and that the Government was committed to fostering public acceptance of change. In his speech Menzies declared that although Japan had been a ‘cruel enemy’ Australia acknowledged that ‘the greatest stumbling block to peace is the perpetuation of enmities’. Menzies also stated that if trade with Japan ceased ‘our income and standards of living would fall’.¹⁴⁵ This was a statement of significant gravity and demonstrates that the Government had adopted a new image of Japan. For decades Japan had been perceived as antagonistic to Australia’s living standards, now it was presented as fuelling their rise. This call for a movement beyond the past was similarly advocated by The Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, John McEwen, who had declared in early 1954 that the Government had ‘no desire to perpetuate an atmosphere of enmity towards the Japanese’.¹⁴⁶ The public again proved receptive to the message, as demonstrated by the Legion of Ex Servicemen and Ex Servicewomen who declared, rather bluntly, that Australians should ‘bury the hatchet’.¹⁴⁷ *The Mercury* also accepted Menzies’s argument and asserted that if trade and ties with Japan were not increased, a fall would be seen in ‘national income, and in the living standards of Australians’.¹⁴⁸ *The Courier Mail* was strongly supportive of the Government’s new position and also noted the valuable role Australia could play in keeping Japan out of the ‘anti-Western

¹⁴⁵ *The Argus*, 19 March 1954.

¹⁴⁶ John McEwen, House of Representatives, *House of Representatives Parliamentary Debates*, February 25 1954.

¹⁴⁷ *The Argus*, 28 October 1954.

¹⁴⁸ *The Mercury*, 22 March 1954.

Communist bloc'.¹⁴⁹ Regional newspapers, such as *The Cairns Post* and *The Advocate*, supported Menzies speech and declared maintaining hate of Japan would be 'injurious in the long run to Australia'.¹⁵⁰ The Australian Chambers of Commerce and the *Australian Financial Review*, long supporters of the Australia-Japan trade, applauded the relaxation of restrictions yet asserted that 'due precautions' were indispensable to any expansion; limits to change thus remained strong.¹⁵¹ These public demands for limitations on change were heard by the Government with the Minister for Trade and Customs, Niel O'Sullivan, again stating that Japan would remain one of the most regulated of Australia's trading partners.¹⁵² The Public response to the March 1954 round of trade relaxations showed that the previous changes to the Australia-Japan relationship had led to an increasingly strong belief that certain changes, if limited, could offer reciprocal benefits Australia and Japan.

The Acceptance of Change: Public Support for the 1954 Japanese Baseball Tour

As 1954 drew to a close a Japanese baseball team journeyed to Australia to begin national tour. This event offered an insight into the distance travelled in the relationship since the beginning of the decade and a demonstration of the now significant influence of the complementary image of Japan. The tour was also part of a new change in the Australia-Japan relationship as sporting contacts between the countries dramatically expanded. Australian sportsmen competed in Japan, a

¹⁴⁹ *The Courier Mail*, March 19 1954.

¹⁵⁰ *The Advocate*, 19 March 1954; *The Cairns Post*, 29 March 1954.

¹⁵¹ Australian Associated Chambers of Commerce, *Canberra Comments*, 8, no.1 (21 April 1954); *The Australian Financial Review*, 1 April 1954

¹⁵² *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 April 1954.

Japanese team participated in the Davis Cup and Japan was invited to the 1956 Melbourne Olympics.¹⁵³ The tour was, however, marred with controversy from its outset due to an unwittingly insensitive decision made by tour organisers to commence the tour on Armistice Day. Due to this blunder the R.S.S & A.I.L.A, at its annual congress, conducted a debate that resulted in a boycott against the tour. The NSW State President, Mr. Yeo, vigorously opposed the tour and sensationally declared that no Japanese should be allowed into Australia until ‘the last relatives of the nurses and men who were butchered by the Japanese had passed on’. However he was opposed by the Federal President Sir George Holland who, whilst opposing the tour beginning on Armistice Day, held that the tour itself should be allowed as a positive step beyond the war and one which reflected Japan’s value as a trading partner; after all, Sir George noted, ‘we have the future generations to think of’.¹⁵⁴ This debate showed that, for many members of the Australian public, the complementary image was exerting considerable influence over their perceptions of Japan. Equally, as demonstrated by Mr. Yeo’s comments, the antagonistic image of Japan remained influential over public opinion and continued to demand change be limited in nature and scope.

Prior years of change had shown the Australian public that Japan did not, contrary to the view presented by the antagonistic image of Japan, always threaten Australia but rather under certain conditions could benefit Australia and its people. The baseball tour met these conditions and consequently public opinion was immensely hostile to the R.S.S & A.I.L.A boycott. Whilst negative responses to the tour did occur, for

¹⁵³ William Macmahon Ball, ‘Australian Policy Towards Japan Since 1945’, in Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harper eds., *Australia in World Affairs 1956-60*, (Melbourne: Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1957), p.265.

¹⁵⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October 1954.

example the baseballers were denied entrance to the Brisbane Shrine of Remembrance and refused accommodation by some Darwin hotels, the majority of public opinion supported the tour. However on a symbolic level Australians widely supported the tour as shown by *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Argus* and *The Age* who argued that whilst the war should never be forgotten the boycott merely encouraged ‘perpetual hatred’, a new approach should instead be sought out.¹⁵⁵ The Methodist Church and The Church of England also supported the tour, and declared that ‘sooner or later former enemies have to be included in those who visit us either on business or pleasure’.¹⁵⁶ Indeed months prior the Catholic Church had called for a new era ‘of goodwill with Tokyo’.¹⁵⁷ *The Age* agreed and declared Australians should not attack the young Japanese baseball team that was attempting to redeem ‘the faults of an unpleasant past’.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, the young age of the players often received attention, as demonstrated by *The Courier Mail* who pointed out that their youth made them victims, not perpetrators, war. *The Courier Mail* also noted their coach was a Japanese-American soldier with two purple hearts, and as such the boycott was not only unjustified but was an insult to an Australian ally.¹⁵⁹ In its report on the Brisbane baseball game *The Townsville Daily Bulletin* applauded the team’s ‘world class form’ and happily noted that the Queensland crowd ‘gave the Japanese a good reception throughout’.¹⁶⁰ Overall public opinion over the baseball

¹⁵⁵ *The Argus*, 28 October 1954; *The Age*, October 27 1954; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 October 1954.

¹⁵⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October 1954.

¹⁵⁷ *Australia’s National News Weekly*, March 15 1954.

¹⁵⁸ *The Age*, October 27 1954.

¹⁵⁹ *The Courier Mail*, 10 November 1954.

¹⁶⁰ *The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13 November 1954.

tour was positive, and the tour was perceived as unthreatening with its sporting nature undoubtedly striking a chord with Australia's own love for its 'national institution' of sport.¹⁶¹ Whilst a commercial failure, due to its high ticket prices and the small following baseball had in Australia, the positive public response given to the tour shows that the increasing influence of a more positive image of Japan had resulted in growing public acceptance of change to the Australia-Japan relationship.

Whilst affirmations of the tour were common the majority of the public response was focused on condemning the R.S.S & A.I.L.A. boycott. Such condemnation demonstrated that limits were imposed both upon the growth of the complementary image of Japan and upon the influence of the antagonistic image of Japan. *The Barrier Miner* attacked the R.S.S & A.I.L.A. boycott and declared that it was 'carrying the matter a stage too far' and that Australia must begin to 'resume both trade and social relations with Japan'.¹⁶² The opinion was shared by one commentator who emotively declared the treatment of the baseball team was 'one of the most disgusting exhibitions of personal slight ever accorded visitors to Australia'.¹⁶³ A Darwin resident similarly decried the 'cold courtesy' Australians had shown to the tour. The letter also mentioned declared 'the only other countries which adopt the Australian attitude towards the Japanese are Russia and Red China'.¹⁶⁴ Whilst less explicit in other responses this letter shows that the communist threat continued to make the Australian public aware of the need for more positive relations with Japan. Indeed the influence of communism on opinion

¹⁶¹ Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country* (Victoria: Penguin Books, 1968), p.28.

¹⁶² *The Barrier Miner*, 30 October 1954.

¹⁶³ *The West Australian*, 3 December 1954.

¹⁶⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 1954.

was particularly strong at this time due to the May 1954 ‘Petrov Affair’, whereby two Soviet agents defected to Australia, and the ongoing ‘Royal Commission on Espionage; events which, as Robert Manne has shown, captured the public imagination.¹⁶⁵ Other responses echoed the sentiments of Prime Minister Menzies and felt that a movement beyond the war was now needed, with one commentator arguing that if German visitors were welcomed, so should the Japanese.¹⁶⁶ These responses showed that the complementary image of Japan, born from the success of prior changes, was slowly altering how Australians responded to change in the Australia-Japan relationship and to Japan itself.

A New Way of Looking at Japan? Public Response to the Changes of 1953 and 1954

The years 1953 and 1954 saw the complementary image of Japan grow steadily in influence alongside the older, stronger antagonistic image of Japan. The controversy over Mr. Nishi’s immigration statements and the 1954 survey show that whilst the public was increasingly open to change in the Australia-Japan relationship, it remained adamant that change be limited to areas where it was beneficial or did not threaten. The Government also altered its own view of Japan and began to put forth, in a coordinated manner, a new image of Japan that saw developments in the relationship, such as relaxing trade, as advantageous to Australia’s interests and development. The new Government approach to Japan, and its dedication to lead public opinion, was demonstrated by a November 1954 cabinet decision to adopt a new ‘liberal policy’ towards Japan; a decision stemming largely from two factors.

¹⁶⁵ Robert Manne *The Petrov Affair* (Melbourne: Text Publishing Company, 2004, First published 1987), pp.85-152.

¹⁶⁶*The Advertiser*, 29 October 1954; *The West Australian*, 3 December 1954.

Firstly, the ever increasing value of the Australia-Japan trade demanded Government adopt a more positive approach towards Japan,¹⁶⁷ Secondly, the ‘the very real danger of Japan becoming aligned with Communist China’ demanded Australia be more proactive in encouraging Japan to remain in the anti-Communist ‘camp’.¹⁶⁸ One of the most important parts of this new approach was, for this thesis’s purpose, the Government’s commitment to lead public opinion. The Government acknowledged the strength of the antagonistic image of Japan and specified that consultations with the community, along with Government explanations, would accompany change to ensure the ‘maximum support of the public’.¹⁶⁹ Whilst far from dominant by the end of 1954 the positive reception given to the Japanese baseball team who toured Australia in December 1954 shows that Australian’s increasingly perceived closer relations, under certain circumstances, with Japan as mutually beneficial. The result was that by May 1955, as Ambassador Nishi departed Australia, Richard Casey could remark with confidence that ‘Australian-Japanese feeling is a great deal better than it was when he arrived two and a half years ago’.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Tweedie, *Trading Partners*, p.142.

¹⁶⁸ Submission 30 – Australian Policy Towards Japan’, A4912, 2, NAA.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Richard Casey quoted in, Stephen Smith, *Inaugural Crawford-Nishi Lecture on Australian-Japanese Relation: ‘Japan and Australia: A Vision for the Future’* (2006), <http://www.crawford.anu.edu.au/research_units/ajrc/papers/2009/Hon%20Stephen%20Smith%20M%20Minister%20for%20Foreign%20Affairs%20lecture.pdf>, viewed 9/09/2011.

-Chapter Three-

An Image in Ascendancy? Australia Views Japan Anew, 1958-1960

'The Arts can play a most significant role in furthering goodwill and understanding amongst people everywhere, and I hope that with this exhibition our countries will come more closely to understand and appreciate one another'

Mr. Tadakatsu Suzuki, Japanese Ambassador to Australia¹⁷¹

'The Commonwealth has a neighbour of immense achievement and power of recovery and potential, almost without limit.'

The Bulletin¹⁷²

As the end of the decade approached a series of new contacts between Australia and Japan were forged, ranging from a new trade Agreement to a series of art exhibitions. These events demonstrate that whilst the antagonistic image of Japan remained influential it was increasingly being rivalled in importance by the new, complementary image of Japan that was enthusiastically promoted by the Australian, and from 1957, the Japanese Governments. From 1955 onwards Japanese economic development had rapidly accelerated and by 1958 Japan was in the midst of its second great boom period, a period in which its commitment to expanding its heavy industrial and technological exports began to bear fruits.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ 'Contemporary Japanese Art Catalogue', Art Gallery of New South Wales Archives.

¹⁷² *The Bulletin*, January 28 1959.

¹⁷³ Yutaka Kosai, 'The Post War Japanese Economy: 1945-1973', trans. Andrew Goble in Peter Duus eds, *The Cambridge History of Japan: The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.495-501.

Consequently Japan sought both new markets and new sources of raw materials. Australia was well placed to supply both and in 1957 ‘The Agreement On Commerce Between The Commonwealth Of Australia And Japan’ was signed. The Commerce Agreement was undoubtedly important however it must not be viewed in isolation or allowed to overshadow the contributions of other changes, a tendency which many studies of the Agreement unfortunately succumb to. Indeed J.G. Crawford, a former senior member of the Department of Trade, writing in 1968, saw it as the dominant driver behind the expansion of contacts with Japan in the 1960s.¹⁷⁴ In contrast it will be this thesis’s argument that the Agreement should be seen as part a far longer process of change, it resulted from the success of prior limited changes and like them remained limited by the antagonistic image of Japan.¹⁷⁵ This is not to say that the Agreement was not important but rather that it should be seen as one of many developments that helped foster the growth of the complementary image of Japan. The Commerce Agreement, art exhibitions, and trade fairs thus resulted from the growth of a new image of Japan and served to promote this image of Japan, an image which presented Japan as a modern nation who benefitted Australia’s own development economically and culturally.

The Continuing March of Incremental Change: Public Response to the 1957 Australia-Japan Commerce Agreement

Government leadership had assisted in the emergence of the complementary image of Japan throughout 1953 and 1954 and it remained important in the debate over the

¹⁷⁴ J.G. Crawford, *Australian Trade Policy 1942-1966: A Documentary History* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968), p.354; Drysdale and Kitaoji eds., *Japan and Australia*, p.421.

¹⁷⁵ Rix, *The Australia Japan Political Alignment*, p.53; Goldsworthy ed., *Facing North*, p.374.

Commerce Agreement. The Government continually argued that the Agreement was necessary to safeguard Australia's markets in Japan which, by 1957, were increasingly important to the national interest.¹⁷⁶ Throughout discussion of the Agreement the Government depicted Japan as a nation who complemented Australia's development, as Prime Minister Menzies declared simply in 1957 the Agreement was 'a sound step in Australia's march to a great economic future'.¹⁷⁷ Similarly the Minister for Trade, John McEwen, stated that the Commerce Agreement would help foster 'a trading relationship that would endure'.¹⁷⁸ However despite this constant stream of assurances the influence that the antagonistic image of Japan exerted remained strong and fears were voiced that the Commerce Agreement would see Japanese goods flood the market and threaten Australian jobs.¹⁷⁹ In response to such claims McEwen argued the Agreement's requirement that the Japanese exercise 'voluntary restraint' and limit the quantity of exports to prevent harm to Australian industry would be sufficient to show that such fears were ungrounded.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, the success of the Japanese in exercising such self restraint undoubtedly helped further expand the influence of the complementary image of Japan by proving that Japan did not aim to threaten Australia. However in 1957 such a clause did little to soothe public discontent, and as a result McEwen detailed other safeguards, such as his declaration that the government could, if needed, 'act in a

¹⁷⁶ Rix, *Coming to Terms*, p.223.

¹⁷⁷ Sir Robert Menzies, quoted in, *Canberra Comments: Official Organ of The Associated Chambers of Commerce Australia*, 11, no.10 (October 15 1957), p.2.

¹⁷⁸ Meet the Press, 21st July 1957, National Library Manuscript Collection MS 4654, Box 65.

¹⁷⁹ Ball, 'Australian Policy Towards Japan Since 1945', pp.265-267.

¹⁸⁰ 'Agreement on Commerce Between Australia and Japan', in Crawford, *Australian Trade Policy 1942-1966*, pp.356-360.

day' to stop Japanese imports from damaging Australian jobs and industry.¹⁸¹

Talking on television in late 1957 McEwen continued to emphasise that Australian jobs were the Government's priority; 'it's my job', McEwen declared, 'to see they [the Japanese] don't succeed [in increasing imports] to the point of damaging our industry'.¹⁸² However the limits placed on the Commerce Agreement were not just empty rhetoric, as an 'Industry Panel' was established to enable affected industries to appeal for protection from Japanese imports.¹⁸³ Such consultation undoubtedly helped foster public acceptance of the Agreement by showing the government was indeed committed to protecting Australian jobs. The Government thus moved quickly to explain the Commerce Agreement to the public, emphasising change would be limited and beneficial. Such explanations demonstrate that rather than a watershed moment, in and of itself, the Commerce Agreement was the result, and a continuation, of prior changes that the 1950s had seen occur to the Australia-Japan relationship and public perceptions of Japan.

The necessity of the Government's explanations of limitations was highlighted through the strong opposition to the Agreement voiced by many sections of the Australian public. Tellingly the majority of such opposition focused primarily on the threat Japanese goods posed to jobs and living standards. Textile manufacturers particularly feared Japanese competition, and The Associated Woolen and Worsted Manufacturers of Australia attacked the Commerce Agreement for lacking sufficient safeguards whilst the Associated Chambers of Manufacturers, who ran an extensive

¹⁸¹ John McEwen, 'Meet the Press Transcript, 21st July 1957', National Library Manuscript Collection MS 4654, box 65.

¹⁸² John McEwen, 'Meet the Press Transcript, 8th December 1957', National Library Manuscript Collection MS 4654, box 65.

¹⁸³ John McEwen, 'House of Representatives', *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates* (9 October 1957).

campaign against the Agreement, argued that relying on the Japanese to exercise voluntary restraint was ‘to say the least, an extraordinary situation’.¹⁸⁴ John Crundall Knitting Mills went a step further and deliberately invoked wartime memories declaring in a full page advertisement that ‘The Japanese didn’t beat us by the sword but they appear to have beaten U.S.A, Canada, and now Australia, by the pen’.¹⁸⁵ The A.C.T.U travelled to Canberra to discuss the Commerce Agreement with John McEwen, where it rather bombastically declared that ‘in this trade war the Japanese cannot be trusted any more than they could be trusted in military warfare’.¹⁸⁶ These responses showed that the antagonistic image of Japan still remained a powerful influence upon public opinion regarding Japan in 1957, and such influence subsequently demanded that changes be limited and beneficial in nature. However, it is important to note few rejected the need for the Commerce Agreement. Indeed at its 1957 Annual Congress the A.C.T.U demanded rejection of the current Agreement whilst calling for a trading relationship ‘more in keeping with the mutual interests of both countries’; at no point did it argue that the Agreement, in principle, was not needed.¹⁸⁷ The issue was clearly, as in the 1954 Survey controversy, not so much change itself but where the limits to change lay.

Whilst the continuing influence of the antagonistic image of Japan made opposition to the Agreement inevitable it was also clear that the public was increasingly influenced by a new, Government endorsed, image of Japan. A July 1957 Gallup

¹⁸⁴ *The Age*, 2 September 1957.

¹⁸⁵ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 August 1957.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Submission by the ACTU to be Presented to the Minister of Trade on the effects of the Japan-Australia Trade Agreement’, M58, 326, NAA.

¹⁸⁷ A.C.T.U National Congress, *Decisions of the All Australian Trade Union Congress: September 23-27 1957* (Melbourne: Industrial Printing and Publicity, 1951), Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University, S784, box 2.

Poll captured the complexity of public opinion through its discovery that although only 17% of the public opposed the Commerce Agreement, support was far from comprehensive with only 38% in favour. The remaining 45% declared they were undecided.¹⁸⁸ Under the influence of the two images of Japan public opinion remained cautious until proof of the Agreement's benefits was clearly demonstrated. Interestingly, newspaper opinion was significantly less cautious, as *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* declared that safeguards were sufficient and that Australia was sure to 'reap the benefits'.¹⁸⁹ Melbourne's *The Catholic News Weekly* was similarly positive and applauded McEwen for 'his firm stand against the noisy warnings and threats' being voiced.¹⁹⁰ The Associated Chambers of Commerce was also a major supporter of the Commerce Agreement, and lauded it as 'a major achievement'. Primary producers were, as in 1953 and 1954, extremely supportive, and the Graziers Federal Council of Australia stated rather bluntly that Mr McEwen 'has done a good job'.¹⁹¹ These views demonstrate that whilst the public remained cautious it was increasingly open to change in the Australia-Japan relationship. Whilst the process of change begun in 1951 was ongoing it was undeniable that by 1957 a significant change in how Australian's viewed Japan had occurred.

Public support for the Commerce Agreement increased markedly as the Commerce Agreement entered operation, as demonstrated by a September 1957 Gallup Poll which showed that support had grown to 45% of respondents. This number

¹⁸⁸ Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.1264-1277 (August-October 1957).

¹⁸⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 June 1957; *The Age*, 8 July 1957.

¹⁹⁰ *Australia's News Weekly*, 3 July 1957.

¹⁹¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1957.

continued to grow, and by April 1959 it was shown that 52% of those questioned supported the Commerce Agreement with only 24% opposed.¹⁹² Even the A.C.T.U, at its 1959 Congress, felt compelled to declare that Japanese self-restraint had ‘been beyond criticism’ and thanked John McEwen for his consultation.¹⁹³ Consequently the renegotiation of the Commerce Agreement in 1963 was enthusiastically supported by the public.¹⁹⁴ This support undoubtedly stemmed from the success of the Commerce Agreement however it must be noted that this success was dependent upon the existence of appropriate limitations, such as Japanese ‘voluntary restraint’ and the ability of the Government to stop imports. The public demand for such limitations demonstrates that the antagonistic image of Japan remained a force to be reckoned with. However it also clear that from 1957 the public were increasingly associating a new image with Japan, an image which depicted Japan as a modern, unthreatening nation whose relationship with Australia was characterised by reciprocal benefits. These two images would continue to shape public opinion regarding Japan for the remaining years of the 1950s and demonstrate that, whilst important, the Agreement neither marked the end of animosity nor the beginning of an era of uninhibited expansion of contacts with Japan.

¹⁹² Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.1264-1277 (August-October 1957).

¹⁹³ A.C.T.U National Congress, *Decisions of the All Australian Trade Union Congress: August 31-September 3 1959* (Melbourne: Industrial Printing and Publicity, 1951), Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University, S784, box 2.

¹⁹⁴ Greenwood and Bray eds., *Approaches to Asia*, p.191.

The Continuing Growth of the Complementary Image of Japan: Art Exhibitions and Popular Culture Representations of Japan in 1958

Following the Commerce Agreement the Australia-Japan relationship continued to grow, most notably in the burgeoning interest the Australian public showed in Japanese culture. This new change was highlighted by the popularity of two art tours that took place in 1958 which, as David Sissons has noted, demonstrated that the more difficult changes of prior years had led to increasing acceptance of Japan within the Australian public.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore the art tours also served to further reinforce and promote the complementary image of Japan through their promotion of a positive view of Japanese culture and Japan itself. Whilst such promotion of Japan was not unprecedented, the art exhibitions showed that the Japanese Government was increasingly making a concerted effort to ‘sell’ itself to the Australian public. It must be noted that the exhibitions only visited the State Galleries of Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales. They were not attended by all Australians and thus their impact must be appraised realistically. However the very fact that such exhibitions took place, with Government support and public acceptance, demonstrates that Australian’s view of Japan had changed significantly since the beginning of the decade. By 1958 the public was increasingly accepting of change to the Australia-Japan relationship and, in some areas of the community, was openly enthusiastic about closer cultural and economic ties with Japan

The late 1950s saw Asia assume a greater presence in the national life of Australia, as interest in Australia’s northern neighbours grew and the need for a new,

¹⁹⁵ David Sissons, ‘Immigration in Australia Japanese relations 1871-1971’, in James Stockwin ed., *Japan and Australia in the Seventies* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1972), p.206.

constructive approach to Asia was increasingly acknowledged by many Australian intellectuals.¹⁹⁶ Due to the increasing trade relationship with Japan and the long, albeit turbulent, history of the Australia-Japan relationship, Japan was at the forefront of this movement and by the end of the decade a positive image of Japan was regularly seen in popular culture. American movies such as ‘The Barbarian and the Geisha’ (1958), the Academy Award Winning ‘Sayonara’ (1957) and Jerry Lewis’ ‘The Geisha Boy’ (1958) all brought Japan into the daily life of Australians and encouraged them to perceive Japan as an alluring and exotic nation. Whilst achieved through a variety of means one of the most significant manners in which films promoted this image was the role played by women. Just as the romantic tale of the war brides had done much to increase public acceptance of them so too did the romantic tales of films such as ‘Sayonara’, where an American GI and a Japanese girl fall in love, help further a positive image of Japan.¹⁹⁷ The *Australian Women’s Weekly* full colour review of ‘Sayonara’ paid particular attention to the films romance and alluring Japanese setting, demonstrating their role in promoting a complementary image of Japan (**Fig. 5**).¹⁹⁸ Whilst it is difficult to completely gauge the effect of these films, it is undeniable that they sparked greater interest in Japan and presented Japan as unthreatening and alluring. In doing so they formed a valuable part of the contemporary environment in which the influence of the complementary image of Japan over public opinion was growing.

¹⁹⁶ Nicholas Brown, *Governing Prosperity: Social Change and Social Analysis in Australia in the 1950’s* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.16.

¹⁹⁷ Tamura, ‘Home Away From Home’.p.249.

¹⁹⁸ *Australian Women’s Weekly*, 30 April 1958.



Fig.5 An image from the *Australian Women's Weekly* review of the film 'Sayonara'. From 1958 onwards Australians increasingly were exposed to an alluring, romanticised view of Japan.

The Australian Women's Weekly, 30 April 1958.

A month prior to the release of 'Sayonara' Australia saw the first of several major tours of Japanese Art when the Hiroshima Panels visited Australian capital cities. The Hiroshima Panels were a series of charcoal drawings that told the story of the direct aftermath of the Hiroshima Atom Bombing as Japanese civilians searched for survivors and survival in the ruins of what had been, moments prior, their homes. The Panels touched on one of the most contentious aspects of the Australia-Japan relationship, the war, and their positive reception was not only a testament to Australian's strong sense of sympathy to victims of war but was also illustrative of a desire to move beyond the antagonistic image of Japan. The Panels were visited by hundreds of thousands of Australians with *The Australian Women's Weekly* reporting that the Adelaide crowds were the biggest on record, whilst the Art Gallery

of New South Wales called the exhibition one of the year's most 'impressive and popular'.¹⁹⁹ This popularity shows that under the influence of a new, positive and government endorsed image of Japan the Australian public was beginning to move beyond the legacy of decades of anti-Japanese sentiment and engage in a variety of contacts with Japan. The Hiroshima Panels also show that the fear of communism remained a powerful influence on public opinion in 1958. The Panel's presented a horrifying warning to the Australian public on the dangers of a nuclear war; a war that many Australians feared could begin at any moment.²⁰⁰ Indeed, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, *The Bulletin* and *Daily Telegraph* called upon Australians to see the panels for their high quality and sincere warning to the world of the 'horrors of modern war', whilst a letter to *The Age* applauded the panels 'horrifying lesson' on the impacts of 'vile war'.²⁰¹ The positive public reception given to the Hiroshima Panel's, the result of continuing fears of communism and the success of prior changes, demonstrates that by 1958 common ground was increasingly being found between Australia and Japan.

Whilst the overwhelming interest shown in the Panels illustrated that Australians had, by 1958, come to acknowledge the benefits of close ties with Japan it must also be acknowledged that the antagonistic image of Japan remained strong and approval of the Exhibition was not universal. One letter to *The Sydney Morning Herald* questioned the catalogue's, written by an Australian, 'strong words' and argued that

¹⁹⁹ *Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales for 1958* (Sydney: Victor C.N. Blight Government Printer, 1959); *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 9 July 1959.

²⁰⁰ 'The Hiroshima Panels', Art Gallery of New South Wales Archives.

²⁰¹ *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 9 July 1959; *The Age*, 10 April 1958; *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 July 1958; *The Bulletin*, 16 April 1958.

we should never forget the thousands killed by ‘the knights of Bushido’.²⁰² Whilst the statement was refuted by other letters to the paper, such as one commentator who declared that ‘here is no cry for tears on behalf of the Japanese people’ but rather ‘two artists sincere warning to humanity’, the comment showed wartime memories remained strong.²⁰³ Whilst such negative opinions were in the minority they remain important and demonstrate that public opinion in the late 1950s was shaped by two quite different, yet interrelated, images of Japan; one spoke of Japan’s threat to Australia, whilst the other argued the Australia-Japan relationship was reciprocal and a force for good.

Building upon the success of the Hiroshima Panels Australian tour November 1958 saw another artistic tour, this time of Contemporary Japanese Art. The Exhibition showed that Australians were increasingly accepting of greater contact with Japan and viewed Japanese culture with growing interest. Notably, the Exhibition was the result of attempts made by the Japanese Ambassador, beginning in 1956, to organise an exhibition of modern Japanese art and was funded by both the Australian and Japanese government.²⁰⁴ This involvement demonstrated that by 1958 both the Japanese and Australian governments were active in promoting a complementary image of Japan, a significant break with the past. The exhibition was touted as an unprecedented insight into the art and culture of modern Japan, which was presented at the exhibition and elsewhere as unthreatening and complementary to Australia. Indeed the Ambassador for Japan, Mr. Tadakatsu Suzuki, made such a purpose explicit when, in his forward to the exhibition’s catalogue, he expressed hope that

²⁰² *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 July 1958.

²⁰³ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 July 1958.

²⁰⁴ ‘Letter from Art Gallery of NSW Director Hal Misingham to Prime Minister Menzies 9th April 1956’, A463, 1956/1176, NAA.

the exhibition would allow Australians and Japanese to ‘more closely understand and appreciate one another’.²⁰⁵ The tour was accompanied by both the Japanese Ambassador and a noted Tokyo Art Critic, Mr Kenjiro Okamoto, who gave lectures on contemporary Japanese society and Japan’s artistic history, all of which aimed to foster interest in Japan.²⁰⁶ Such a goal was shared by the principal Australian organiser, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, who called it ‘large and important’ due to its encouragement of friendship and understanding between the two nations.²⁰⁷ Although newspaper reviews were mixed, with many critics less than enthused about the art itself, the vast majority were positive about the concept of the exhibition and noted its importance in furthering understanding between Australia and Japan and hoped for further exchanges.²⁰⁸ Upon the Contemporary Art Exhibition’s return to Japan, the director of the Art Gallery of NSW, Hal Misingham, stated that the state galleries all agreed the exhibition had been of immense value to the Australian public on both ‘its artistic level and on the undoubted influence it could have in the fostering of a more amicable relationship between Japan and Australia.’²⁰⁹ The Contemporary Art Exhibition showed that Australians were increasingly interested in Japanese culture and were far more accepting of change to the Australia-Japan relationship than they had been in the opening years of the 1950s. Whilst the antagonistic image of Japan remained

²⁰⁵ ‘Contemporary Japanese Art Catalogue’, Art Gallery of New South Wales Archives.

²⁰⁶ ‘Letter from Art Gallery of NSW Director Hal Misingham to Prime Minister Menzies 2nd December 1957, A463, 1956/1176, NAA.

²⁰⁷ *Report of the Trustees of the Art Gallery of New South Wales for 1958* (Sydney: Victor C.N. Blight Government Printer, 1959)

²⁰⁸ *The Daily Mirror*, 6 November 1958; *The Age*, 9 December 1958; *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1958; *The Bulletin*, 19 November 1958.

²⁰⁹ ‘Letter from Art Gallery of NSW Director Hal Misingham to Prime Minister Menzies 30th October 1959’, A463, 1956/1176, NAA.

influential the exhibition should be seen as both the result and a further promotion of the complementary image of Japan. Indeed by 1958 it was clear that some segments of the Australian public, such as the art community, were campaigning for closer ties with Japan.

‘See Japan as it Really Is!’²¹⁰ – Promoting the Complementary Image of Japan at the 1959 Japanese Trade Fair

In January 1959 Sydney and Melbourne played host to an immensely popular Japanese Trade Fair, an event which attested to the significant influence the complementary image of Japan now exerted over public opinion. This thesis has argued that change in the Australia-Japan relationship was an incremental process, characterised by precise limits to change and Government leadership. Whilst much distance had been covered these same aspects of change in the Australia-Japan relationship were on show at the 1959 Trade Fair. The Australian Minister for Trade, John McEwen, opened the Fair in Sydney and his speech again put forward an image of Japan as a modern and growing nation who offered great benefits to Australia. The Fair was also used by its Japanese organisers as an opportunity to promote the complementary image of Japan with the Fair presented, and received, as demonstrative of Japan's unthreatening nature. The 1959 Trade Fair thus showed that by the end of the decade public opinion in Australia regarding Japan was increasingly positive, a shift that was undeniably due to the path of incremental change that the Australia-Japan relationship in 1950s had followed.

²¹⁰ ‘See Japan as it Really Is!’ was the slogan for the Trade Fair and features on advertisements in newspapers: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 January 1959.

A decade of incremental change had brought about major changes to public opinion, changes which the leadership of government played a crucial role in bringing about. Indeed writing in 1965 Sir James Plimsoll, a noted Australian diplomat and head of the Department of External Affairs, considered the shift in Australian public opinion regarding Japan an example of the valuable role government could play in promoting goodwill between nations.²¹¹ The 1959 Trade Fair demonstrated that the Government remained a crucial advocate of the new, positive image of Japan in the final years of the decade, a task which the Japanese themselves now took up with gusto. In his opening speech John McEwen placed emphasis on the reciprocal nature of the Australia-Japan relationship by pointing out that as Japan grew it consumed more Australian primary resources, whilst Australia's growth in turn demanded more Japanese heavy industrial machinery. Indeed Japan's commitment to heavy industrial growth and its consequent rapid growth was, by 1959, capturing the imagination of Australians; a nation who found its own economy benefitted from, and fuelled, such development. From 1955 onwards Japan had rapidly urbanised and industrialised and seen a dramatic rise in wages, living standards and prosperity; by 1959 Japan was rapidly becoming regarded as a fully fledged modern nation.²¹² Such development sparked greater interest in Japan amongst the Australian public; it demonstrated that Japan's rise was not necessarily antagonistic to Australia's prosperity and safety.

²¹¹ Plimsoll, 'Towards a Wider Conception of Our Common Humanity', p.196.

²¹² Peter Duus, 'Introduction' in Peter Duus eds, *The Cambridge History of Japan: The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.13.

By 1959 Japan was beginning a new phase in its rapid economic growth, chief of which was a concerted drive to expand economically overseas.²¹³ Whilst Japan had begun as early as 1957 to promote itself in Australia the Fair saw a far more focused effort to demonstrate that Australia's 'increasing development and prosperity' would not be threatened by Japan whose goods were of 'the highest international standards'.²¹⁴ It was joined in this effort by McEwen even went so far as to describe the Australia-Japan trading relationship as 'comparable to the relationship of the Australian economy to the United Kingdom'. Such a comment, at a time when Australia remained fiercely protective of its white British identity, was undeniably a testament to just how far public opinion regarding Japan had shifted during the 1950s. However McEwen's speech was also a testament to the ongoing influence of the antagonistic image of Japan with the limits to change constantly asserted and the Government emphasising that action had been, and would continue to be, taken whenever threats emerged.²¹⁵ In his own opening speech the Japanese organiser, Mr. S. Tanabe, similarly acknowledged the impact of the antagonistic image of Japan by noting that the 'cheap and nasty' goods of pre-war days had damaged Japan's reputation and dramatically affected Australian's responses to Japan and its goods. However, for Tanabe these were the 'old days'.²¹⁶ The Japan of the 1959 Trade Fair was thus positioned as beneficial to Australia's own interests, a message which, after a decade of incremental change, the public was increasingly receptive to.

²¹³ Seiyama Takuro, 'A Radical Interpretation of Post-War Economic Policies', in T. Morris Suzuki and T. Seiyama eds., *Japanese Capitalism Since 1945* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), p.56.

²¹⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, January 19 1959.

²¹⁵ John McEwen, 'Speech at Opening of 1959 Sydney Trade Fair', National Library Manuscript Collection, MS 4654, box 34.

²¹⁶ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 January 1959.

The 1959 Trade Fair was undeniably only made possible by the shift in public opinion that had resulted from the ever growing influence of a new image of Japan. However it was also clearly an event which sought to promote this image by showing visitors that the rapidly industrialising Japan, far from being antagonistic, complemented their daily lives and living standards. The goods displayed at the fair covered a wide ground and ranged from Japan's most traditional export, textiles, to its increasingly renowned expertise in electronic and heavy machinery industries. Newspapers were particularly interested in the amount of household items, such as televisions and fans, and luxury items, such as cameras, cigarette lighters, on display. By the late 1950s Australians were increasingly able to afford such luxury goods, and the displays thus struck upon the growing consumerist instinct of Australians.²¹⁷ Rather than threatening the Australian 'way of life', Japan was now presented as a modern nation offering goods to complement it. The high quality of the goods on display was often noted by visitors and seen as indicative of Japan's modernity and further proof that it was not antagonistic to Australia. *The Bulletin* noted that Japan's name was no longer associated with 'shodiness and extreme cheapness' whilst Japan's conduct as a trading partner was held by the *Daily Telegraph* to be exemplary and it was acknowledged as 'one of our most valued customers'.²¹⁸ Perhaps the best summary of the impact of the Fair's display of goods can be found in *The Sydney Morning Herald* who, in its special report on the Fair, noted Japan's goods filled gaps 'not already covered by home manufacturing'.²¹⁹ The antagonistic image of Japan had demanded at the beginning of the 1950s that

²¹⁷ Nicholas Brown, *Governing Prosperity: Social Change and Social Analysis in Australia in the 1950's* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.123.

²¹⁸ *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 January 1959; *The Bulletin*, 28 January 1959.

²¹⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 January 1959.

change, such as trade, be restricted to filling these gaps, and it remained so. Yet it was clear that by 1959 the success of Japan in filling these gaps had led to a significant change in public opinion, and as the decade drew to a close Japan was increasingly perceived by the Australian public as a nation which complemented their own.

Whilst goods were the central aspect of the Trade Fair, Japanese culture also played an important role in promoting an image of Japan as unthreatening and alluring. On the whole 1959 saw a rapid expansion in the presence of Japanese culture in Australia with a variety of fashion parades, arts exhibitions and even a visit to Australia by fifteen Japanese University students.²²⁰ The Fair was thus riding a wave of growing interest in Japanese culture, interest that undoubtedly owed much to the success of previous changes. Each day of the Fair saw three sessions of Japanese films, parades of fashion, traditional dancing and flower arrangement with all three amongst the most popular aspects of the Fair.²²¹ Newspapers commented favourably upon the impression they gained of Japanese culture from these events and the Fair more generally, with *The Daily Telegraph* noting that Japanese architecture could offer great lessons to Australian architects.²²² The cultural aspects of the 1959 Trade Fair also showed that the momentum behind change in the Australia-Japan relationship continued to grow. In 1959 Japan was increasingly seen by the public as not only as a nation of economic significance but one of significant cultural worth.

²²⁰ Meaney, *Towards a New Vision*, pp.111-113.

There are a variety of official Government and press photos of these events, they can be found in the National Archives of Australia. 'Photographic negatives, single number series with 'A' [Asian] prefix', A1501, NAA.

²²¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 January 1959.

²²² *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 January 1959.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Japanese Trade Fair was the heavy presence of Japanese women, who were used by the Fair to present Japan as unthreatening and exotic. Japanese women at the Fair, like their war bride predecessors, were perceived as symbolic of a modern Japan and the complete reverse of the antagonistic, masculine image that had dominated earlier representations of Japan.²²³ The models received rave reviews from both female and the arguably more eager, male audiences; as a reporter from Sydney's *The Sun* succinctly put it, 'Interested in the mannequins? Yes! Like the Japanese Dancer? My word – a little gem!'.²²⁴ Photographs of the models were widely circulated in the press and television broadcasts drew attention to the culture on show and the role that Japanese women played in such culture (**Fig.6**). Newspaper reports were also attracted to the models who often received a favourable section devoted entirely to them; 'the only action which broke the poise', declared the *Sydney Morning Herald*, was a 'giggle stifled by a delicate hand'.²²⁵ Whilst much of the models' appeal hinged on the allure of the feminine form, their role in furthering a positive, attractive and unthreatening image Japan should not be underestimated; if visitors encountered one Japanese person at the Fair, it was likely to be a demure and alluring model.

²²³ Kato, *Narrating the Other*, p.190.

²²⁴ *The Sun*, 30 January 1959.

²²⁵ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 1959.

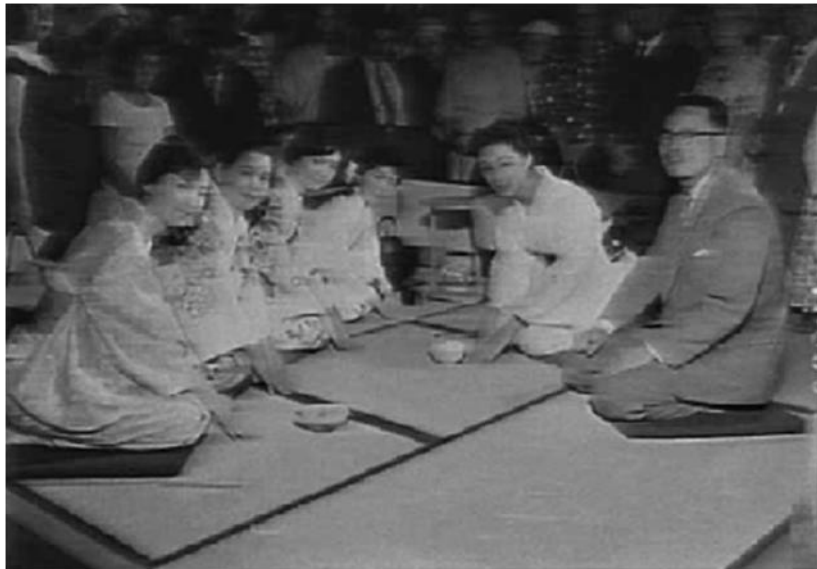


Fig.6 A still taken from a television broadcast of the Japanese Trade Fair. The Japanese models are performing the traditional Japanese tea ceremony. The ceremony was performed three times a day and attracted considerable attention from onlookers, as shown in the still.

Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW, Australian Photographic Agency - 06264

The value of the models in promoting the complementary image of Japan was further demonstrated by an interview with the models in the *Australian Women's Weekly*. The interview opened by remarking that the famous Trocadero dance hall was 'rapidly being transformed into a scene like a set from the film 'Sayonara', a comment which showed the major influence the positive image of Japan present in films had exerted upon public opinion. The models were then asked, and answered, questions on daily life in Japan and their 'European dress', which was naturally from the dresses on display at the Fair.²²⁶ The models' responses not only gave Australians a glimpse into the increasing alluring world of Japan, but also showed that Japan was far from antagonistic to Australia. On the contrary, Japanese women had much in common with Australian women and were presented as complementary to Australian life. Such a representation was undoubtedly reinforced by the models

²²⁶ *The Australian Women's Weekly*, 4 February 1959.

occupation. The message was clear, the model's posed no threat but rather brought benefits to enrich the lives of Australian women.

The popularity and success of the Trade Fair was built on the success of years of incremental change which had demonstrated to Australian's that Japan did not necessarily threaten their way of life. The image that had steadily grown since 1953 was vigorously promoted at the 1959 Trade Fair and aimed to convince Australian's that Japan was a modern, rapidly growing nation who benefitted their own country's development. Yet regardless of this image's growth, and its increasing allure as Australian's watched the 'economic miracle' of Japan begin in earnest, it had not yet displaced the older antagonistic image of Japan. This image remained a powerful influence on public opinion in 1959 and continued to place limits on the pace and extent of change.

'A New Japan'²²⁷ – The 1960 Aki Maru Floating Fair and Japan's Rising Popularity

December 1960 brought another Japanese exhibition of culture and trade to Australia, this time in the form of the 'Japanese Industry Floating Fair' (JIFF). The Fair took place on a Japanese ship, the Aki Maru, which visited Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, and received rapturous welcomes at all ports with crowds waiting for hours to enter the exhibition (**Fig.7**). The Aki Maru was seen by Japan as an opportunity to promote a new and attractive image of itself with the Fair's organiser, Mr. Michisuke Sugi, declaring the Aki Maru showed Japan's potential to

²²⁷ One of the central slogans of the Aki Maru was 'A New Japan'; a slogan which demonstrates the Trade Fair's goal to promote a new image of Japan to Australians. The interior of the ship was adorned by this slogan and features prominently in articles on the Fair. *The Daily Telegraph*, 7 October 1960.

‘contribute materially to Australian development and production’.²²⁸ The Australian government also remained active in propagating such an image in 1960 with the Aki Maru attended by a variety of figures such as the Federal Treasurer Harold Holt and Minister for Trade John McEwen. McEwen again used the Aki Maru to demonstrate and promote the reciprocal relationship between Australian and Japan, however he remained adamant that trade would be restricted to goods which ‘would not damage Australian industries’.²²⁹ By 1960 the majority of public opinion agreed with McEwen, as shown by a 1960 Gallup Poll that reported that 81% of those who had bought Japanese goods found them to be as good, or better, than other nations.²³⁰ The fears of the past were slowly being left behind whilst the image of Japan as a modern and unthreatening nation increasingly took hold. The movement beyond the fears of the past is shown by *The Advertiser* and a correspondent from Brisbane who noted ‘the real surprise is the range and sophistication of the Made-In-Japan goods’.²³¹ Significant attention was also given to the amount of trade, and the goods it consisted of. *The Sydney Morning Herald* drew attention to Japanese machinery and electronics whilst stating that Japan was Australia’s second best customer.²³² *The Advertiser* and *The Daily Telegraph*, who declared the Aki Maru’s focus was ‘tyres, transistors, turbines and ships’, also saw the trade as complementary and saw great hope for future expansion.²³³ These reactions show that the antagonistic image

²²⁸ Japan Export Trade Promotion Agency, *Japan Trade Bulletin*, 1, no.3 (October 1960), p.1

²²⁹ A draft of McEwen’s speech can be found at the National library: ‘Speech at Opening of Japanese Industry Floating Fair’, National Library Manuscript Collection MS 4654, Box 34; The speech was also widely reported in the media: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 December 1960.

²³⁰ Australian Public Opinion Polls, *Morgan Gallup Poll*, no.1458-1469 (May-June 1960).

²³¹ *The Courier Mail*, 29 November 1960; *The Advertiser*, 19 December 1960.

²³² *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1960.

²³³ *The Advertiser*, 19 December 1960; *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 December 1960.

of Japan, whilst remaining influential, was increasingly being rivalled in importance by the complementary image of Japan. Public opinion towards Japan was in 1960 more positive than it ever had been before.



Fig.7 A photograph of crowds in Brisbane waiting to enter the Aki Maru Trade Fair.

John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, ID No: 144040.

Whilst the Aki Maru itself was the result of a decade of incremental change and steady growth in the new, Government supported, image of Japan it also served to promote this image by presenting Australian's with a wide display of goods that benefitted, rather than threatened, their daily life. Whilst the Aki Maru focused heavily on industry it also had a substantial section dedicated to household goods and curiosities which appealed to ordinary visitors. Household appliances, such as irons, televisions and ovens, gained significant attention as did the wide range of Japanese automobiles.²³⁴ These items were deliberately aimed at particular sections

²³⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 December 1960.

of Australian society, particularly women, and sought to show the benefits to be gained from the Australia Japan relationship. As the Japan Trade Bulletin tellingly stated in its review of the household appliances on display, ‘The Australian housewife will find this section of particular interest, because it introduces a remarkable number of quality products’.²³⁵ The Aki Maru also sold a variety of souvenirs and held explosively popular firework exhibitions at each port of call, further courting public interest in both the Fair and Japan.²³⁶ Newspapers ran many articles, all positive, on products such as cameras and demonstrate that public opinion increasingly saw Japan as a source of benefits, not of fears, with *The Daily Telegraph* marvelling at the ‘astounding technique and quality’ of Japanese cameras.²³⁷ Similarly *The Courier Mail* and *The Advertiser* were infatuated with the ‘gadgets’ on display, such as a portable television set, a fish detector and a ‘matchbox size’ transistor radio.²³⁸ The Aki Maru thus showed the decade of prior, limited changes had created an ever increasing enthusiasm amongst the Australian public for further contacts with Japan. However this public support remained reliant on such changes appearing unthreatening and beneficial.

A Nation to Benefit and Complement: Public Opinion Regarding Japan after a Decade of Change

Over the 1950s a series of changes had occurred to the Australia-Japan relationship that had in turn led to changes in how Australians saw their northern neighbour. The

²³⁵ Japan Export Trade Promotion Agency, *Japan Trade Bulletin*, 1, no.4 (November 1960), p.5.

²³⁶ ‘Commonwealth of Australia Minute Paper – Exhibition Details and Custom Requirements’, D596 1960/1444, NAA.

²³⁷ *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 1960.

²³⁸ *The Courier Mail*, 29 November 1960; *The Advertiser*, 19 December 1960.

antagonistic image had reigned supreme at the beginning of the decade and had stipulated changes occur slowly and with precise limits. Yet as these changes occurred and proved beneficial a new complementary image of Japan began to emerge, and by the time the Aki Maru arrived in Australia it was exerting considerable influence on public opinion regarding Japan. By 1960 Japan was regarded as a modern nation who offered great benefits to Australia, as shown by *The Sydney Morning Herald* who noted Japan's 'increasingly high living standards'.²³⁹ Similarly *The Advertiser* held the Aki Maru as indicative of Japan's modernity and 'high standing in the world', a standing Japan was 'entitled' to.²⁴⁰ Whilst slowly emerging throughout the 1950s this interest in Japan's modernity would grow rapidly in the years to come as Japan's 'economic miracle' captured the imagination of Australians. Indeed by 1965 Donald Horne would remark 'Australia is not the most "modern" nation in "Asia"; Japan is'.²⁴¹ Whilst fears of Japan had not yet met their demise by the time the Aki Maru visited Australia, it was clear a fundamental shift in Australian public opinion regarding Japan had taken place. By 1960 Australians not only regarded Japan as a new, modern and complementary nation, they were also increasingly enthusiastic about the future prospects of the Australia-Japan relationship.

²³⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1960

²⁴⁰ *The Advertiser*, 19 December 1960.

²⁴¹ Horne, *The Lucky Country*, p.113.

-Conclusion-

The Results of a Decade of Change

The post-war era of Australian history has been widely studied and the Australia-Japanese relationship has been no exception. However the overwhelming majority of studies have focused on changes in governmental policy, and the question of public opinion has remained sadly underexplored. This thesis has sought to fill such a gap by exploring the shifts in public opinion regarding Japan that the 1950s brought and has argued that the principal reason for these shifts was the emergence of the complementary image of Japan. Once a nation who had inspired fears in the Australian public, and its leaders, the 1950s saw the Australian public readjust its view of Japan. By the close of the decade the image Australians were increasingly associating with Japan was one of a modern, unthreatening and culturally sophisticated nation who offered benefits to Australia's own economic and cultural development. Whilst the influence of the complementary image of Japan had grown greatly over the 1950s it remained in a complex and intimate relationship with the antagonistic image of Japan. This older, negative image of Japan, formed at the beginning of the century and reinforced in wartime, continued to limit the extent of change to the Australia-Japan relationship. Thus even after a decade of pronounced and positive change to the Australia-Japan relationship the Australian public remained fearful of any rumours that Japan was seeking to migrate south. Regardless of its limitations the large scale emergence of a new, positive and alluring image of Japan was without precedent and shows that the 1950s was a time of great and important change for the Australia-Japan relationship, an era in which long held assumptions about Japan were questioned and in some cases overturned.

The first foundations for a new image of Japan were laid in 1951 and 1952, when the dominance of the antagonistic image of Japan was largely uncontested. The Peace Treaty revived fears of Japan and was universally disliked; however it was begrudgingly accepted by the public all the same. Crucial to this acceptance was the perceived threat of communism, Government leadership and the limitations, especially the Pacific Pact, accompanying the Peace Treaty; all of which would remain prominent features of change in the Australia-Japan relationship in the years ahead. The acceptance of Japanese war brides and Japanese imports also demonstrated that the public was prepared to accept change, even though it remained fearful of Japan. Such changes marked the beginning of a process of incremental change that would characterise the decade, result in the emergence of a new image Japan and trigger a shift in how the public perceived, and interacted with, Japan.

The years 1953 and 1954 saw the complementary image of Japan emerge fully and steadily expand its influence over the Australian public, although it did so alongside the still strong antagonistic image of Japan. The Government began in 1953 to promote the image in earnest, and spoke regularly to the public on the need for changes to the Australia-Japan relationship. Central to the Government's message was the notion that change to the Australia-Japan relationship was beneficial and, due to the strong limits placed on such change, was unthreatening. Where change exceeded such limits and revived fears of Japan the result was public condemnation, thus in 1954 the U.S proposal for Japanese crewed surveys of Australian waters was universally rejected by the public. The years of 1953 and 1954 continued the process of incremental change and saw a new, positive and attractive image of Japan emerge

and gain public acceptance, however its influence remained constrained by the antagonistic image of Japan.

As the end of the decade approached further growth in the influence of the complementary image of Japan was seen as Australians began to interact with Japan in new and diverse ways. The 1957 Commerce Agreement showed fears of Japan remained strong yet the Agreement was accepted by the public due to its built in limitations, Government explanations and the proven success of prior changes in trading arrangements. The years that followed saw a series of Japanese art exhibitions and trade fairs take place around Australia that were used by both the Australian and Japanese Governments to promote Japan as a modern and alluring nation. These cultural events showed that the new image of Japan was gradually expanding in influence and made the Australian public open to greater ties with a nation who was increasingly regarded as a beneficial and sophisticated neighbour.

The rise of the complementary image of Japan and public acceptance of change owed much to Government leadership over the course of the 1950s. Perhaps the most important affect of government leadership was that it helped Australians understand the changes occurring around them and place them in a wider context. Prime Minister Menzies addressed the public on Japanese trade, yet he placed such changes in a wider context of moving beyond wartime animosities. Such speeches undoubtedly helped the public redefine its views and position on the Australia-Japan relationship. Whilst it is difficult to completely gauge the effect of such leadership it has been this thesis's contention that the role of government was instrumental in enabling the emergence of an image of Japan that presented it as alluring, beneficial and unthreatening; an occurrence that was undoubtedly crucial to the subsequent growth in positive public opinion regarding Japan

Another crucial development which helped the complementary image of Japan grow was the conduct of Japan itself. Sadly this thesis has unable to fully delve into this issue, but it has sought to make clear that Japan played a leading role in shaping Australian perceptions of Japan and which increased in decades since. From 1957 onwards the Japanese exercised a strict policy of self-restraint on trade which not only negated fears of dumping but boosted public confidence in Japan and the Australia-Japan relationship more generally. It is also clear from 1957 onwards that the Japanese began a concerted effort to sell their nation to Australians. Events such as trade fairs and art exhibitions promoted Japan as a nation of benefit and allure for Australians. Thus as the end of the decade approached Australians were increasingly influenced by a new, complementary image of Japan.

Also important were developments within Japan over the course of the decade, again an aspect which this thesis has been unable to fully explore. Japan's early commitment to raise living standards through trade, which focused on Japanese technological and heavy industrial exports, both allayed Australian fears that Japan would remilitarise and also resulted in Australian and Japanese economic development becoming mutually beneficial and reinforcing.²⁴² Whilst historian Laura E. Hein has convincingly shown Japanese post-war growth was far from the effortless task it has been made out to be it remains that for many observers at the time Japan's revival was seen as a story of uninhibited success.²⁴³ Whilst always tempered by remaining suspicion this view gained widespread currency within Australia from 1957 onwards as Japanese growth, and demand for Australian goods, accelerated. Consequently the image of Japan as a modern, powerful and

²⁴² Rix, *The Australia-Japan Political Alignment*, p.4.

²⁴³ Laura E. Hein, 'Growth Versus Success; Japan's Economic Policy in Historical Perspective', p.99.

complementary nation grew ever stronger in Australia. In short Japan, both self consciously and unwittingly, found itself expanding the influence the complementary image of Japan exerted upon Australian public opinion.

It should also be acknowledged that the shift in public opinion regarding Japan was assisted by the Cold War backdrop against which changes to the Australia-Japan relationship took place. Fears of communism had helped immensely in gaining public acceptance of the Peace Treaty and they continued to exert a significant influence on public opinion regarding Japan throughout the decade. The Menzies Government continually restated the threat posed by communism and events such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Petrov Affair made the Cold War a constant present in the lives of Australians.²⁴⁴ Whilst the Government was particularly influenced by these concerns in its policy towards Japan it is difficult to gauge the precise impact upon public opinion. However it can be safely assumed that Japan's position as an ally in the fight against communism assisted in decreasing Australian's perceptions of Japan as an antagonistic nation and made public opinion more open to change than it ordinarily would have.

The complementary image of Japan has continued to develop since the end of the 1950s, indeed today the image Australians most commonly associate with Japan is one a friendly, powerful and beneficial. A recent Lowy Institute Poll found that 83% of surveyed Australians trusted Japan to 'act responsibly' in the world; the same amount who trusted the United States. Furthermore Australians ranked Japan fourth out of the nations they felt most favourable to.²⁴⁵ As Australia and Japan enter what

²⁴⁴ Murphy, *Imaging the Fifties*, p.130.

²⁴⁵ Fergus Hanson, *The Lowy Institute Poll 2011 : Australia and the World* (2011), The Lowy Institute <<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/Publication.asp?pid=1617>>, viewed 09/09/2011.

is undoubtedly destined to be an era of great change, tension and progress for their shared region, it is important to understand the origins of Australian public support for the Australia-Japan relationship. Through understanding the difficulties overcome and the distance travelled we not only gain a greater appreciation of the importance and ongoing value of the Australia-Japan relationship but derive invaluable lessons concerning Australia's long and tumultuous engagement with Asia.

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