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Science

Doctoral Thesis

Colonial Settlement and Migratory
Labour in Karafuto 1905-1941

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The Department of Economic History
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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Steven Ivings, certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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Abstract

Following the Russo-Japanese War Japan acquired its second formal colony, Karafuto (southern Sakhalin), which became thoroughly integrated with mainland Japan, developing into an important supplier of marine products, lumber, paper and pulp, and coal. This sparsely populated colony offered the prospect of large scale settlement and over the course of the Japanese colonial period the population of the Karafuto increased to over 400,000 before the Pacific War. This thesis traces the course of migration to Karafuto and assesses the role of settlement policy, and migratory labour in colonial settlement.

Utilizing colonial media, government reports and local documents, as well as the recollections of former settlers, this study argues that the phenomenon of migratory labour acted as an indirect means for establishing a permanent settler community in Karafuto. This study stresses that the colonial government of Karafuto's efforts towards the establishment of permanent settlements based on agriculture largely failed. Instead, it was industries that involved the utilization of migratory labour which acted as base-industries for economic life in the colony, and helped support Karafuto's more enduring communities. Indeed, even in the few cases of successfully established government sponsored agricultural communities in Karafuto, seasonal migratory labour and non-agricultural activity were a persistently crucial component of the community's economic life.

A further implication of this study relates to the comprehensive integration of Karafuto with migratory labour markets in northern mainland Japan and Hokkaido. Evidence presented in this study allows us to question the prevalent notions that northern Japan was an isolated, or poorly connected, region. Instead, it is found that the prefectures of Japan's northeast were actively engaged in northward bound settlement and migratory labour circuits.

Acknowledgments

In the completion of this work I have run up so many of debts of gratitude that it would be impossible to mention them all. So as to avoid such a lengthy interlude here I would like to single out those who deserve special mention.

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Chronology

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Note on names and text

As is common practice Japanese names appear surname first and given name second. For Western names the order is reversed.

Japanese place names include macrons when the vowels ‘o’ and ‘u’ are extended except in the case of familiar names such as Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kyushu, Chugoku, Tokai, Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka.

There is a degree of variation in the use of one or two place names in Karafuto, e.g. one settlement is variously known as Shisuka, Shikka, or Shikuka. In this study when such doubt arises the following has been my reference guide: Nishimura, I. (1994) *Minami Karafuto, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei*

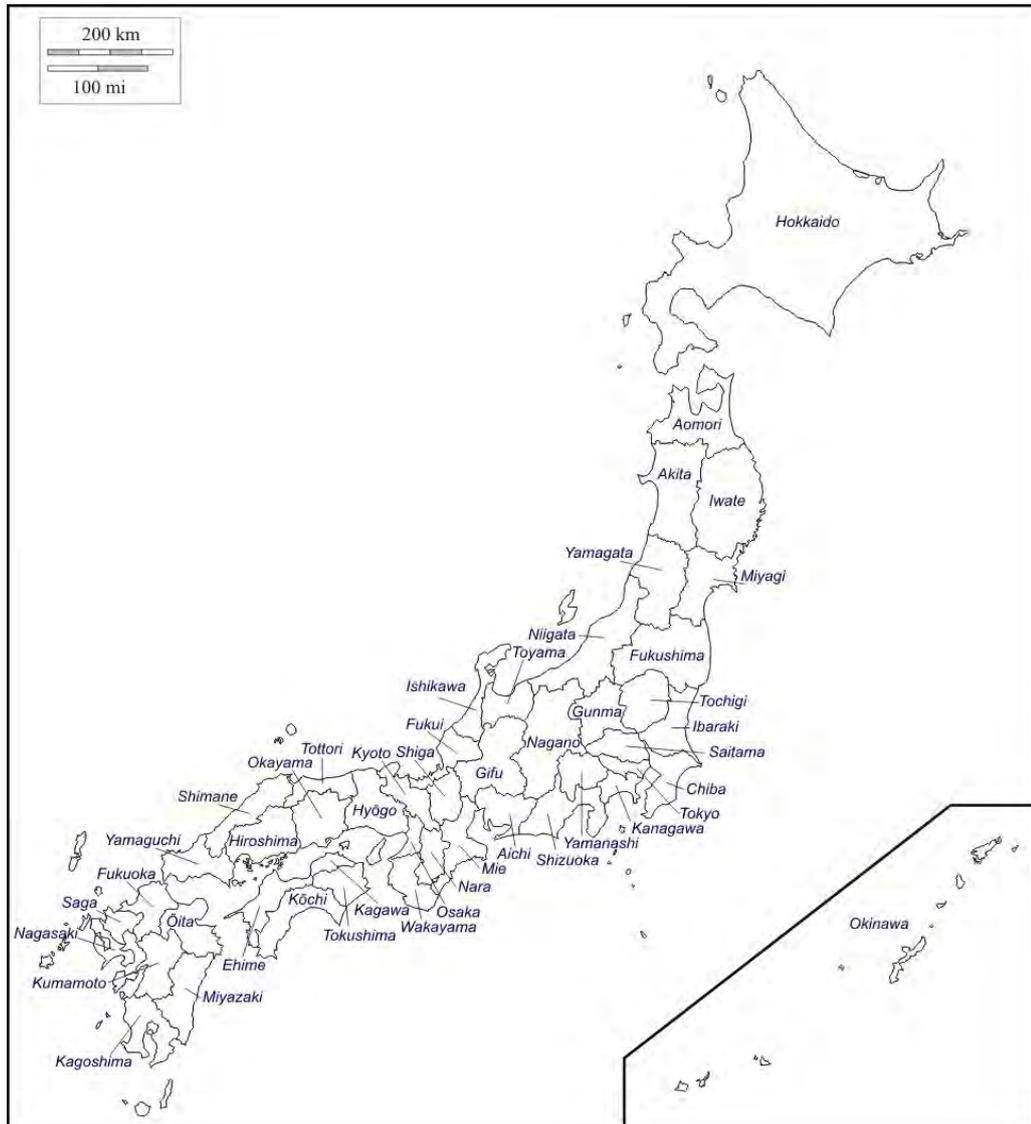
Today’s Sakhalin is referred to as such in time periods prior to and following the Japanese colonial period (1905-45). Karafuto is used to refer to the former Japanese colony on the southern part of Sakhalin Island. The usage of these terms is not an endorsement of either Japan’s or Russia’s claims to sovereignty over the island. It is merely for the purposes of clarity and simplicity for the reader in what was a region of shifting borders.

Newspaper articles are used throughout, and will be referenced with the following date format; Year-Month-Day, e.g. 1905-7-29 refers to 29th July 1905

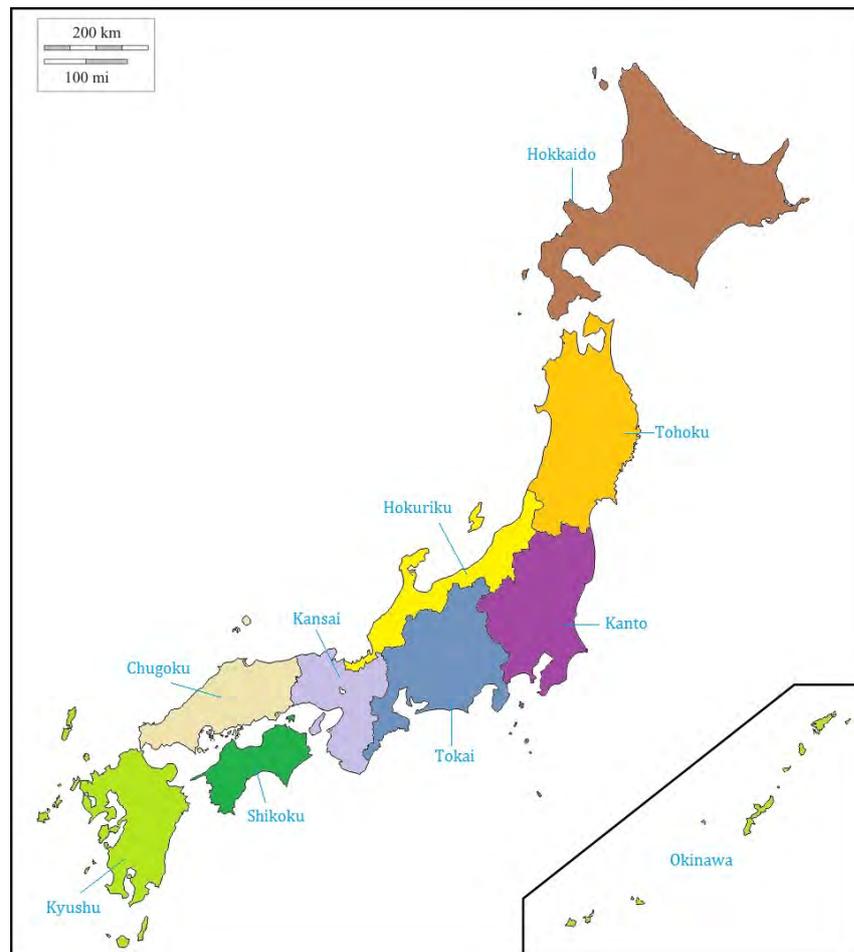
Abbreviations used throughout

<i>KCI</i>	<i>Karafuto Chōji Ippan</i>
<i>KNNS</i>	<i>Karafuto Nichi Nichi Shinbun</i>
<i>KTS</i>	<i>Karafuto Tōkeisho</i>
<i>KY</i>	<i>Karafuto Yōran</i>
<i>KZ</i>	<i>Karafuto Zasshi</i>
<i>OS</i>	<i>Otaru Shinbun</i>
<i>SCAP</i>	<i>Supreme Command of Allied Powers</i>
<i>TMNS</i>	<i>Tokyo Mai Nichi Shinbun</i>

Map of Japan's Prefectures



Map of Japan's Macro-regions



There is some variation in the usage of labels for Japan's macro-regions. In this study the labels which appear in the map above are, unless otherwise stated, applied throughout. The prefectures in each macro-region are as stated below:

Hokkaido refers to Hokkaido only

Tohoku refers to Akita, Aomori, Fukushima, Iwate, Miyagi, and Yamagata prefectures

Hokuriku refers to Fukui, Ishikawa, Niigata, and Toyama prefectures

Kanto refers to Chiba, Gunma, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tochigi, and Tokyo prefectures

Tokai refers to Aichi, Gifu, Mie, Nagano, Shizuoka and Yamanashi prefectures

Kansai refers to Hyōgo, Kyotō, Nara, Osaka, Shiga and Wakayama prefectures

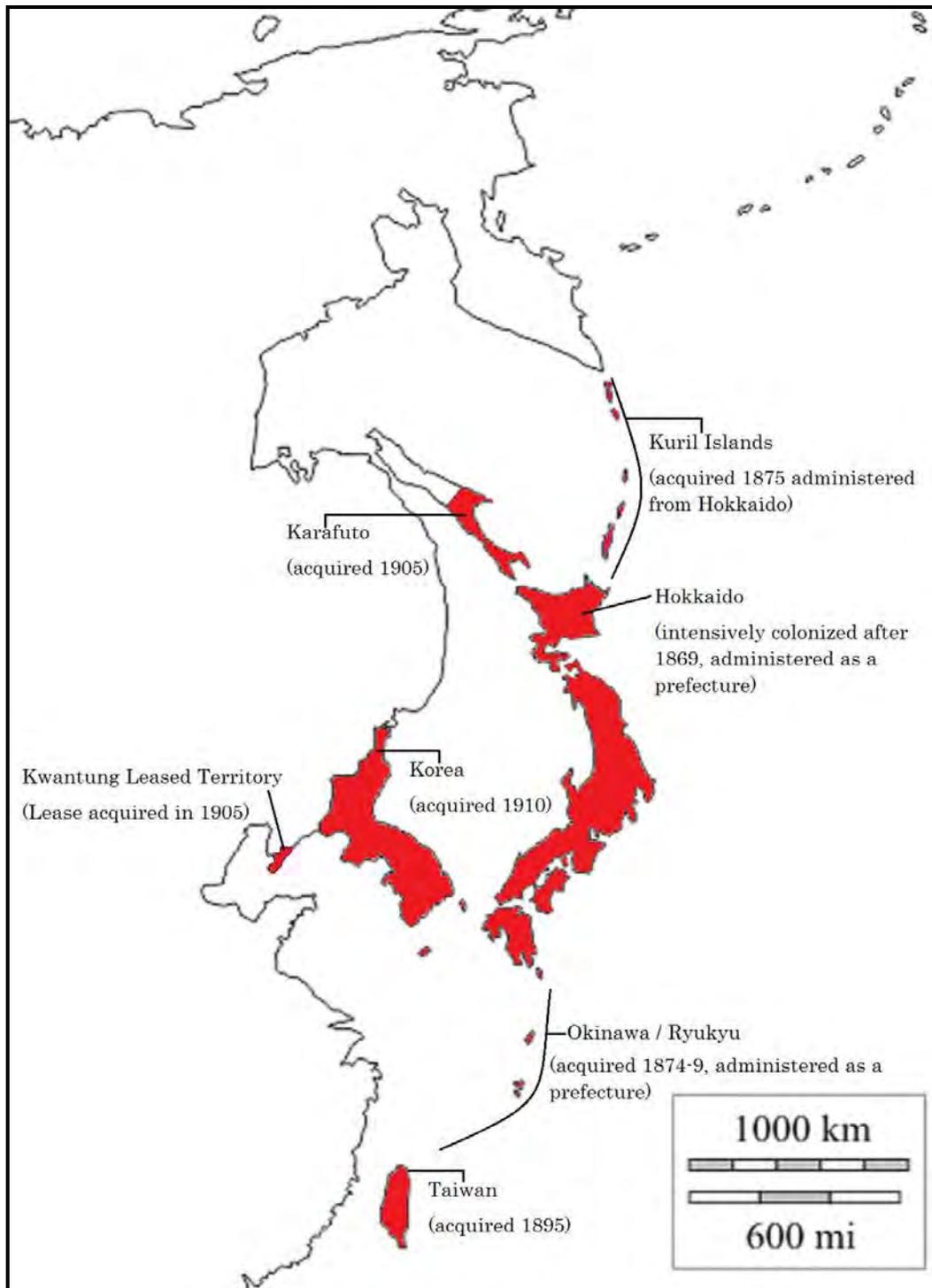
Shikoku refers to Ehime, Kagawa, Kōchi and Tokushima prefectures

Chugoku refers to Hiroshima, Okayama, Shimane, Tottori, and Yamaguchi prefectures

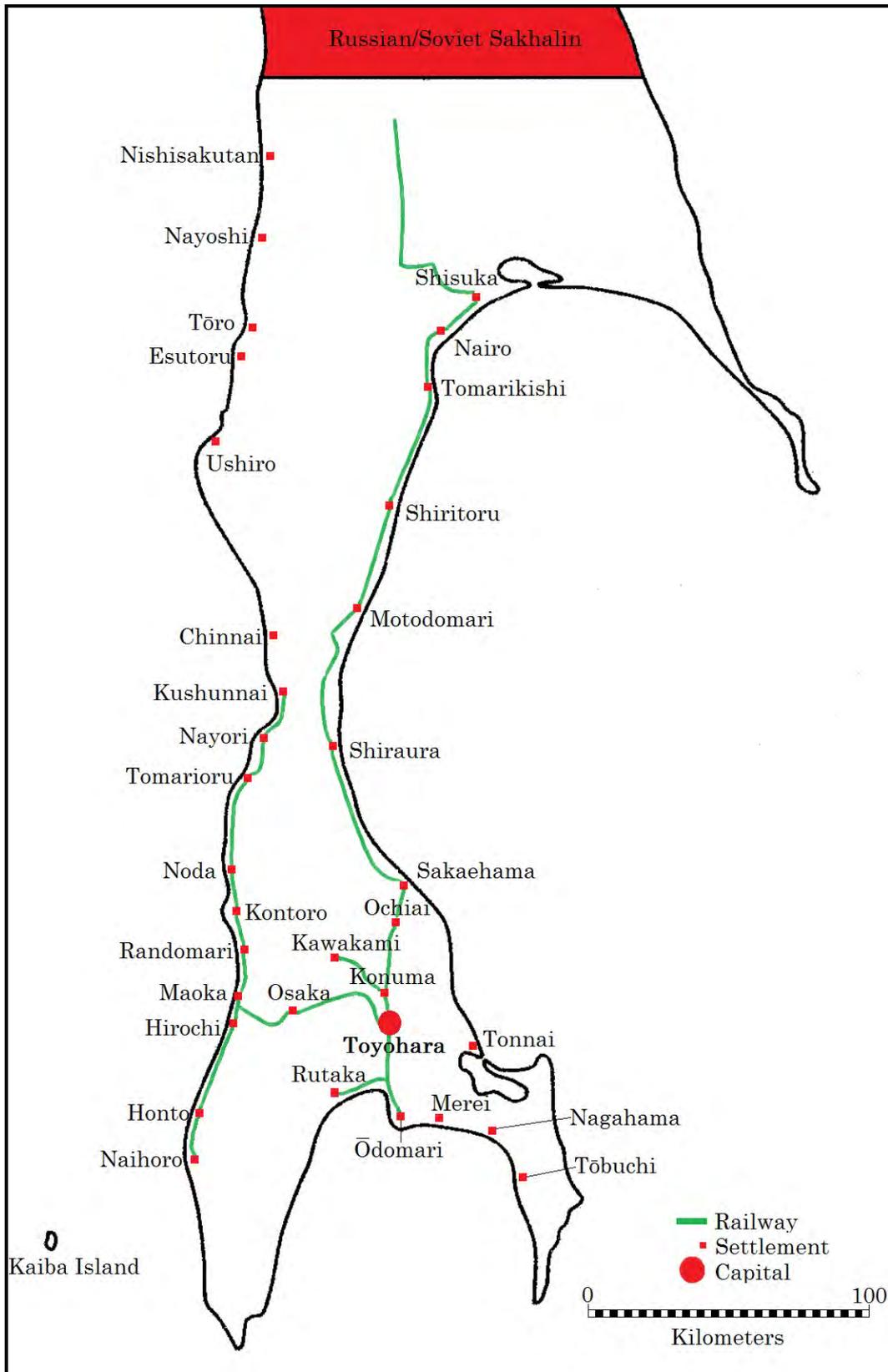
Kyushu refers to Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Kumamoto Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Ōita, and Saga prefectures

Okinawa refers to Okinawa prefecture only

Map of Formal Japanese Empire circa 1910



Map of Karafuto



Chapter 1

Introducing Karafuto

In this study I examine the colonial settlement of Karafuto (southern Sakhalin), which was a formal colony of Japan between 1905 and 1945. The chapters that follow examine the patterns and process of migration to Karafuto, the role of the agricultural and fishing sectors in providing a basis for settlement, and the nature of the migratory labour market for construction and forestry operations in the colony. Before proceeding to outline the contribution of this study, its driving research questions, main sources, and the existing literature into which it is to be placed, a historical background of the territory is necessary and immediately follows.

1.1 Introduction

Sakhalin is an island of 27,989 square miles located in northeast Asia, and extends to a total of approximately 593 miles from north to south. The island is mountainous, has a largely rocky coastline, few natural harbours, and a cold, humid climate. Sakhalin is today the largest island in the Russian federation, and together with the Kuril island chain it forms the *Sakhalin oblast* administrative region. The western coast of the island almost touches the Eurasian continent, and is positioned less than 50 miles from the mouth of the Amur River. To the east of the island is the sea of Okhotsk, and 25 miles to the south is Hokkaido, the northernmost

of Japan's main islands. The sea off the eastern coast of Sakhalin freezes over for about a third of the year, with drift ice as late as July not unknown. Even though the island is located at similar latitude to central Europe, Sakhalin's winters are much harsher, owing to the Siberian influence on its climate. Winter can bring temperatures as low as minus forty Celsius, but the summer is generally mild, with highs of no more than thirty five. On average today's administrative capital, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, sees daily mean temperatures at minus twelve degrees Celsius in January (the coldest month) and plus seventeen in August (the warmest month).¹

Sakhalin's location means that the island could be said to form a natural bridge between the northeast of the Eurasian continent and Japan. Yet for much of its history Sakhalin was a sparsely populated region, which was anything but properly integrated with the great civilizations laying in close proximity. Prehistoric migrations from Alaska, the Japanese archipelago, and Siberia gave the island a small population, but the harsh climate and topography inhibited its growth. Several archaeological finds on the island confirm that Sakhalin has been inhabited since at least the Neolithic age, but it is not clear who inhabited the island first. What is clear, however, is that Nivkh, Ainu, and Oroki people all inhabited the island long before either China, Japan, or Russia 'discovered' it. These peoples coexisted on Sakhalin with a mixed economy based on hunting, fishing, and small-scale vegetable farming for centuries before an association with China developed. The residents of Sakhalin

¹ Retrieved (June 15, 2014) from: <http://yuzhno.sakh.ru/>

engaged China at irregular intervals via trade, tribute, and sporadic warfare from at least the thirteenth century. Yet this association was neither persistent nor transformative, and until the nineteenth century Sakhalin remained a rather isolated periphery, with little known about it in the wider world. Nonetheless, with the eastern expansion of the Russian state, and the alarm this raised in Japan, Sakhalin Island became the scene of a Russo-Japanese territorial dispute.

1.2 The advent of the Russo-Japanese rivalry

There are a number of claims and counter claims with regards to whether it was Japanese or Russians who first set foot on Sakhalin. These stories of exploration and discovery, not to mention their debatable authenticity, are too numerous to summarize here. In fact Russo-Japanese narratives of the discovery of Sakhalin are beside the point, as whatever claims are made by both sides, the island was already inhabited. Indeed, it was only in the nineteenth century that the territorial claims of Russia and Japan became relevant to the point that they would transform Sakhalin.

The desire to control Sakhalin was for both nations a primarily strategic and defensive concern. Even though the potential for developing natural resources in the long run was recognized, it was the alarm raised by the increasing presence of their counterparts that escalated and intensified efforts to incorporate the island as either Japanese or Russian sovereign territory. For Russia, the territory was strategically essential as it offered control of access to the Amur. Thus without Sakhalin the Asian ambitions of the Russian state would have been significantly constrained, and the security of the Russian Far East put in jeopardy. Japanese contact

with the island, however indirect, had predated that of Russia, with Sakhalin nominally 'managed' by the Matsumae clan which based itself in a portion of the southernmost peninsula of Ezo (today's Hokkaido) to the south of Sakhalin.² Nonetheless, the Matsumae clan largely neglected the island, and indeed much of its knowledge of Sakhalin came not from direct exploration, but rather was passed on via trade and tributary relations with the Ainu who inhabited eastern Ezo, the Kuril Islands, and the southern part of Sakhalin. The Japanese interest in Sakhalin heightened drastically, however, as Russian excursions into the region increased in frequency. Sakhalin as a bridge between the Eurasian continent and northern Japan directly threatened Japan's territorial integrity. If Sakhalin were to become occupied by a powerful foreign nation, the door would have been open for further incursions into territory that Japan considered to be under its tutelage. The Japanese grip on sparsely populated Ezo would surely have loosened with a Russian expansion into Sakhalin, rendering the rest of Japan vulnerable to attack.

Russo-Japanese encounters dated back at least as far as 1697,³ but it was only in the late eighteenth century that reports of Russians being sighted on the Kurile islands, or on Ezo itself, became frequent enough to cause alarm. The late eighteenth century saw the Laxman mission (1792-93), which attempted to open up trade relations with Japan, and an

² The island was often referred to as northern Ezo (Kitaezo) in the earliest maps produced in Japan. For a copy of the first Japanese maps see: Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (1995) *Karafuto nenpyō*, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, Tokyo, p3

³ Lensen, G. (1959) *The Russian push toward Japan: Russo-Japanese relations 1697-1875*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p26

Ainu rebellion (1789) which was rumored to have had Russian backing.⁴ In response the Shogunate made the sudden decision to extend its direct rule to Ezo, the Kuril Islands, and in 1807 to Sakhalin itself. Nonetheless, the direct rule of the Shogunate did little to circumvent the fact that Japan had no more than a fragile foothold on the island, consisting of a few fishing and guard posts. The guard posts on Sakhalin were rudimentary, providing only the flimsiest solution to defensive concerns, whilst the handful of commercial fishing posts on the island were seasonal in nature, with few Japanese known to have passed the winter on Sakhalin.

The Shogunate's decision to involve itself in Sakhalin affairs directly followed a Russian raid on the Japanese post at Kushunkotan (today's Korsakov) in October 1806. The raid was carried out by two young lieutenants who had been attached to the mission of Nikolai Rezanov, who had spent 1804-05 in Nagasaki trying, without success, to establish formal trading relations with Japan. These young lieutenants carried out the raid without official direction from Moscow in the hope that a show of force would compel Japan to accept Russian demands. The raid involved the looting and burning of Japanese structures and vessels in and around Kushunkotan, causing much alarm in Japan as news of the raid spread, and prompting the Shogunate into action. Russian authorities, following an official inquiry, disassociated themselves from the actions of the young lieutenants, and an official apology from the Russian governor of Okhotsk was sent to the Shogunate in 1813, several years after the incident.⁵

⁴ Stephan, J. (1971) *Sakhalin: a history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p45

⁵ *Ibid* p48

Despite the damage caused in the unsanctioned Russian raid, the official apology served to create a temporary relaxation of the competitive posturing on Sakhalin. Japanese commercial fishing activities in the waters around Sakhalin continued to increase, and in 1814 the Shogunate felt assured enough to withdraw its garrison. Thereafter the burden of defence shifted to various domains, including the Matsumae, none of which had the adequate financial or logistical capacity to transform their efforts into a meaningful Japanese presence. Russia's interest in Sakhalin also cooled at this time as problems in the Balkans and Caucasus demanded more immediate attention. Russia's avoidance of conflict with Japan, as well as China, is best understood as part of broader efforts to engage these nations in trade. Territorial disputes would only undermine such efforts as they served to raise mutual suspicion. The issue of sovereignty over Sakhalin was thus left unsolved until interest again intensified in the 1840s and 1850s, when Western imperialism made its presence more broadly felt in northeastern Asia.

Russian interest in Sakhalin was renewed as its strategic value was demonstrated during the Crimean war (1854-6) when Russia supplied its garrisons in northeast Asia via the Amur River, the mouth of which Sakhalin encircled. In this period Japan's own sovereignty came increasingly under threat as Western gunboat diplomacy forced greater engagement in international trade, and the imposition of unequal treaties. During this period neither Japan nor Russia was in a strong position to project their power onto Sakhalin, but some sort of arrangement was required so that the island did not fall into the hands of another power. It was in this context that both parties agreed to coexistence on Sakhalin as

part of the 1855 Treaty of Shimoda, which marked the beginning of formal relations between Russia and Japan.

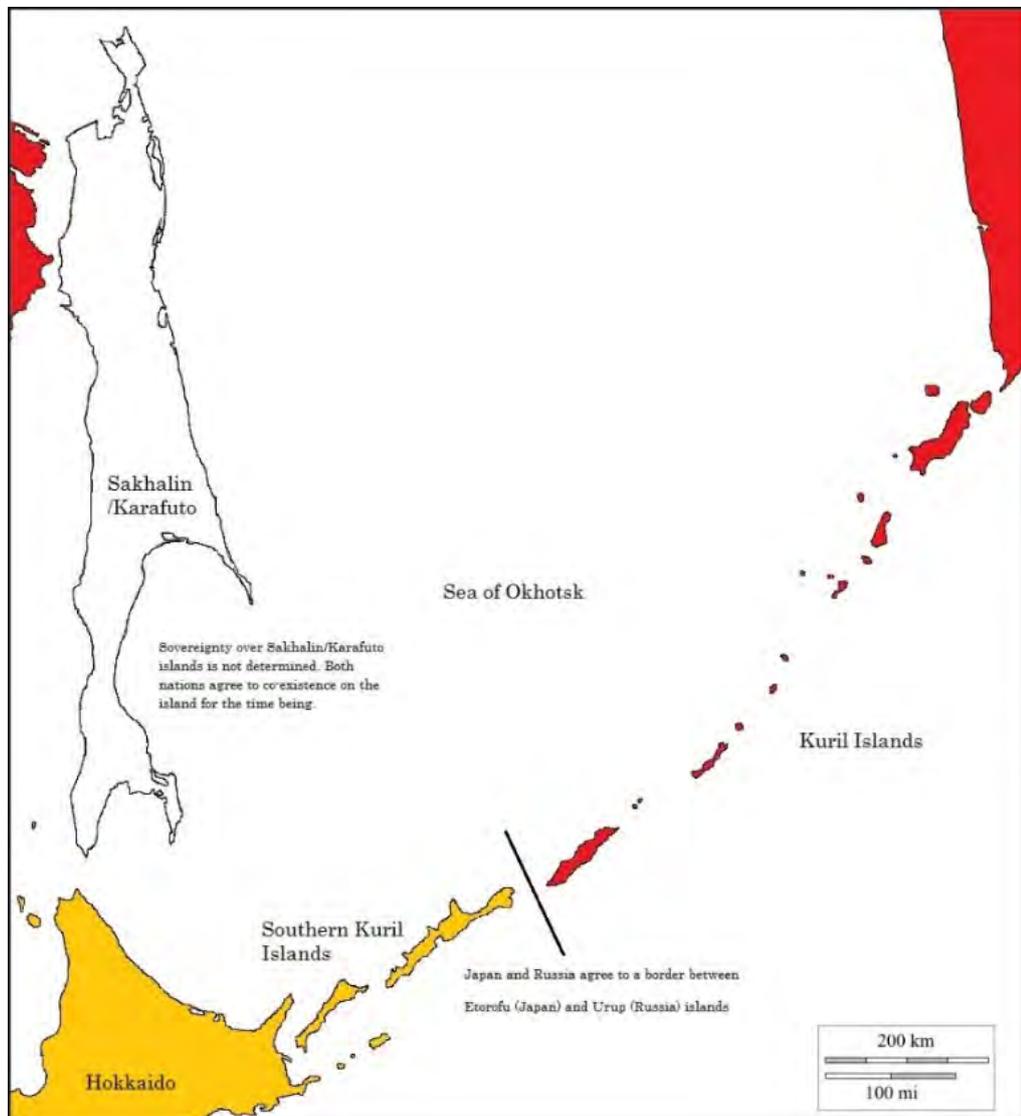
1.3 From Shimoda to St Petersburg

The treaty of Shimoda settled the issue of sovereignty over the Kuril Island chain by establishing a border between the islands of Etorofu and Urup. Sakhalin's status, however, was not indefinitely determined in the treaty, as instead only a temporary resolution was forthcoming. The Japanese had made the proposition of a border at the 50th parallel, which was rejected by Russia, but even if a formal border was not established at least both sides had recognised each other's rights on Sakhalin. The territory became a joint possession, allowing both nations to continue activities on the island, but simultaneously leaving plenty of room for friction to re-emerge in years to come.⁶ There were efforts on the Japanese side to settle and develop the island so as to prevent it being absorbed into Russia, but these met with little success. Both the Shogunate in Edo and the domains it entrusted with garrisoning Sakhalin found it increasingly difficult to sustain their efforts as domestic trouble intensified, culminating in the overthrow of the Tokugawa Shogunate in the 1868 Meiji Restoration. Sakhalin was not high on the agenda for the Meiji regime in its early years, and even had it been, the new regime lacked the means to renew and expand efforts at colonizing Sakhalin. There was a bold colonization effort led by an official by the name of

⁶ *Ibid* p198

Okamoto Kensuke, but this ultimately failed as settler groups sent to Sakhalin were ravaged by illness and death.⁷

Map 1.1 - Northeast Asia following the Treaty of Shimoda 1855



In 1872, following the precedent of the American purchase of Alaska from Russia five years earlier, Japan made an offer to purchase Sakhalin for two million yen, but this was promptly refused. Indeed, Russia made the counterproposal that Japan sell up, and it was clear that

⁷ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (1978) *Karafuto enkaku gyōseishi*, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, Tokyo

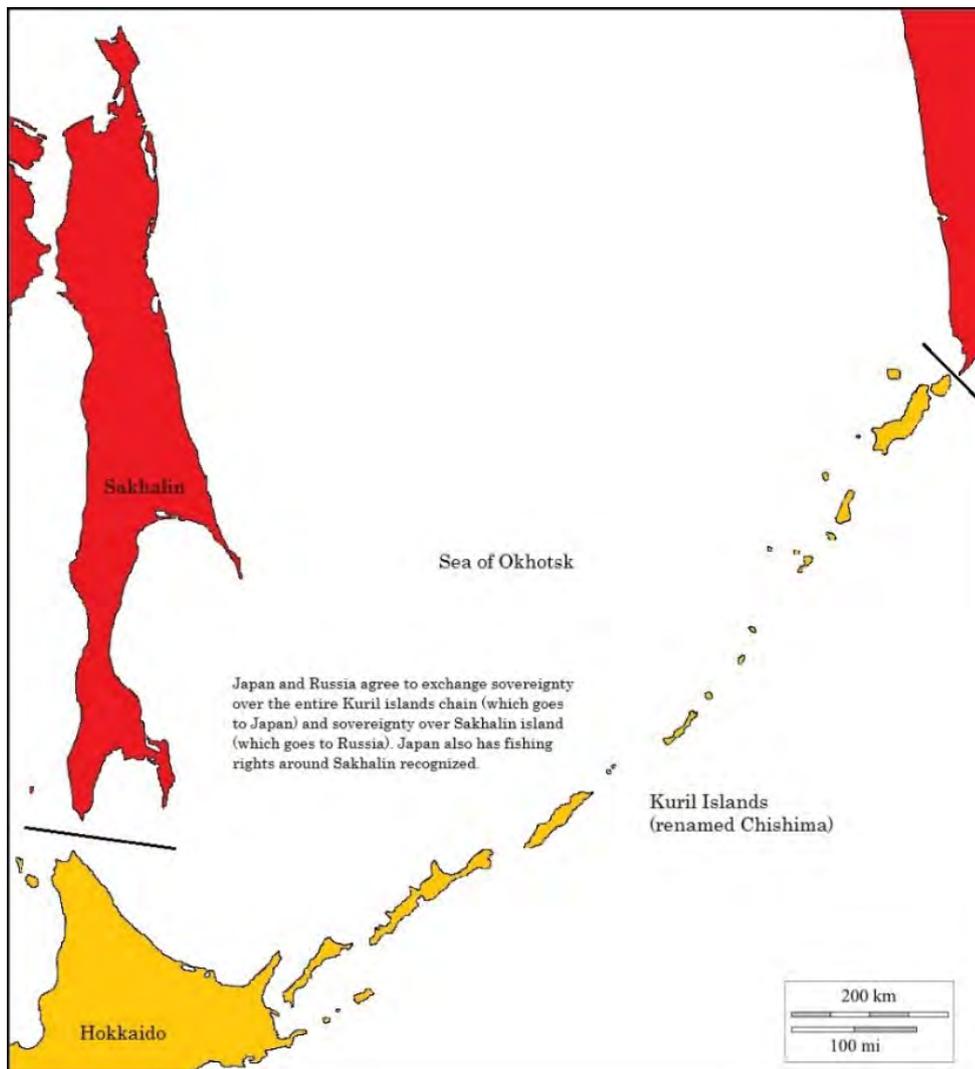
there would be no easy solution to the Sakhalin problem. Following the Crimean war, Russia had acted swiftly to reignite its efforts towards Sakhalin, transferring the administration of the island directly to the governor general of East Siberia in 1856. Coal deposits at a place the Russians named Dué had been discovered, and there were proposals to exploit Sakhalin's mineral wealth with convict labour. Most importantly, Russia began building military forts on the island at several locations, including rather provocatively, a fort adjacent to the most important Japanese post at Kushunkotan, which Russian forces had raided less than fifty years before.

The impetus to act on the Russian part was intensified by the conclusion of the 1858 Treaty of Aigun with China. The treaty secured the north bank of the Amur as Russian territory and as a result Sakhalin was now strategically indispensable. Furthermore, in 1860 Russia and China signed the treaty of Peking, which secured territory for Russia stretching from the Ussuri River to the Sea of Japan. At a time when Japanese efforts were constrained by the disturbances brought on by regime change, Russia was busy consolidating its gains in northeast Asia. Emboldened by its advances, Russia also increased the number of troops, settlers and convicts it had on Sakhalin. Tensions increased with a series of disputes between 1866 and 1873 over who had the right to fish, build or mine in specific locations on the island. There were also numerous incidents of theft, arson, and violence on Sakhalin, and in two of these incidents a Japanese national was murdered.⁸ Russia was showing that it was

⁸ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei. *Karafuto nenpyō*, p9

unlikely to relinquish Sakhalin, and in Japan some called for the total abandonment of efforts to colonize the island. In the 1875 Treaty of St Petersburg, Japan did just that, exchanging its claims to Sakhalin for the Russian part of the Kuril island chain.

Map 1.2 - Northeast Asia following the treaty of St Petersburg 1875



The governor of Hokkaido, and future prime minister, Kuroda Kiyotaka, was among those who led the call to abandon Karafuto. He

argued that the island was proving a financial burden, had little immediate economic value unless substantial investment was forthcoming, and invited conflict with Russia, which endangered Hokkaido. For Kuroda it was better to focus efforts solely on the development and colonization of Hokkaido rather than risk open conflict with Russia, and his arguments won out.⁹ The Treaty of St Petersburg was negotiated by Kuroda's political ally Enomoto Takeaki, and while it passed full sovereignty over Sakhalin to Russia, it did allow Japan to retain important privileges on the island including the continuation of fishing and navigation rights. These privileges meant that Japanese commercial fisheries on Sakhalin were actually able to expand under Russian sovereignty, and so Japan was able to benefit from the island without the costs and burdens associated with direct administration. In a broader sense, the settlement of the Sakhalin border dispute allowed Japan to avoid conflict with Russia for almost forty years, a period during which Japanese economic and military strength grew immensely.

1.4 From penal colony to battlefield

As Japan went from strength to strength, the colonization and development of Hokkaido really took hold.¹⁰ Meanwhile Sakhalin made little progress, becoming 'the most notorious penal colony in the world... a

⁹ Takakura, S. (1979) *Hokkaidō takushokushi*, Hokkaido University Press, Sapporo; Nagai, H. (ed.) (1998) *Kindai Nihon to Hokkaidō*, Kawade shobō shinsha, Tokyo

¹⁰ Ōnuma, M. (2002) *Hokkaidō sangyōshi*, Hokkaido University Press, Sapporo, pp13-16

land of moral darkness and abject misery.’¹¹ The years that Sakhalin was under the direct rule of the Russian Tsar have been labelled ‘Sakhalin’s Dark Ages’ by John J. Stephan a prominent historian of Russia’s Far East.¹² Stephan notes that initially there were high hopes for Sakhalin, which surveys confirmed to be ‘as rich in coal as Wales, in fish as Newfoundland, and in oil as Baku.’¹³ The problem was that to tap these resources labour was required, and the island was very sparsely populated. Russia had begun using convict labour to exploit the mines at Dué in 1861, and although it was not until 1881 that the island officially became a penal colony, a regular flow of convicts and exiles, besides a few free-settlers, long preceded that date. As a Russian penal colony the island of Sakhalin gained its dark image, which was made popular by the writings of Anton Chekhov and Vasilii Doroshevich, who visited the island in 1890 and 1903 respectively.¹⁴

In terms of economic development the experimentation with convict labour was largely a failure, and approaches made by American and British investors to develop the island’s mines were viewed with suspicion, and as a result were declined. It was only the fisheries of the island which really made a telling expansion during Sakhalin’s period as a penal colony. These were largely separate from the Russian economy, save for the licence fees operators paid, because they were under the management of Japanese operators, utilizing migratory labour from

¹¹ Stephan. *Sakhalin*, p74

¹² *Ibid* p65

¹³ *Ibid* p66

¹⁴ Chekhov, A. (2011 reprint, first edition 1895) *Sakhalin Island*, Alma Classics, London

Japan. Indeed, sustained economic development on Sakhalin Island beyond the fishing sector would not be seen until after the Treaty of Portsmouth, which granted Japan full sovereignty over Sakhalin Island south of the fiftieth parallel.

Image 1.1 – Japanese troops land at Merei on July 7, 1905



Source: Military Survey Department of Japan (1905) *The Russo-Japanese War Volume 21*, Ogawa, Tokyo, p4

The Japanese invasion of Sakhalin during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 in some ways resembled the later Soviet invasion of the territory in 1945. Both campaigns came at the very end of the conflict, were completed swiftly and as such, were decried as opportunistic by the defeated party. Another similarity between the conflicts was that in both cases the invading force proceeded on the back of claims that they were correcting historical injustices, and by implication ‘restoring’ the territory to its rightful owner.¹⁵ The Japanese invasion itself commenced as its

¹⁵ *Ibid* p142.

troops landed on Sakhalin at Merei (west of Korsakov) on July 7, 1905. The occupation of the entire island of Sakhalin was completed by the end of the month, and on August 1, 1905, a military administration was established by the Japanese occupying force.¹⁶ Although Japanese possession of Sakhalin had yet to be confirmed in a peace treaty, it was clear that Japan intended to retain its gains on Sakhalin. Ships carrying civilian settlers began departing for the island weeks before Japan formally gained any territory.¹⁷ Nonetheless, Japanese territorial gains on Sakhalin were confirmed in the Treaty of Portsmouth, which was concluded on September 5th, 1905.

1.5 The establishment of Karafuto, Japan's second formal colony

The Japanese had long referred to Sakhalin Island by the name Karafuto, but with the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth it entered the geographical lexicon the world over as Japan's second formal colonial territory, preceded by Taiwan. The Japanese press greeted the 'return'¹⁸ of Karafuto to Japan, and celebrated the military campaign on the island. However, prior to the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth, there was a wide expectation that Japan would retain all of Sakhalin Island. Instead

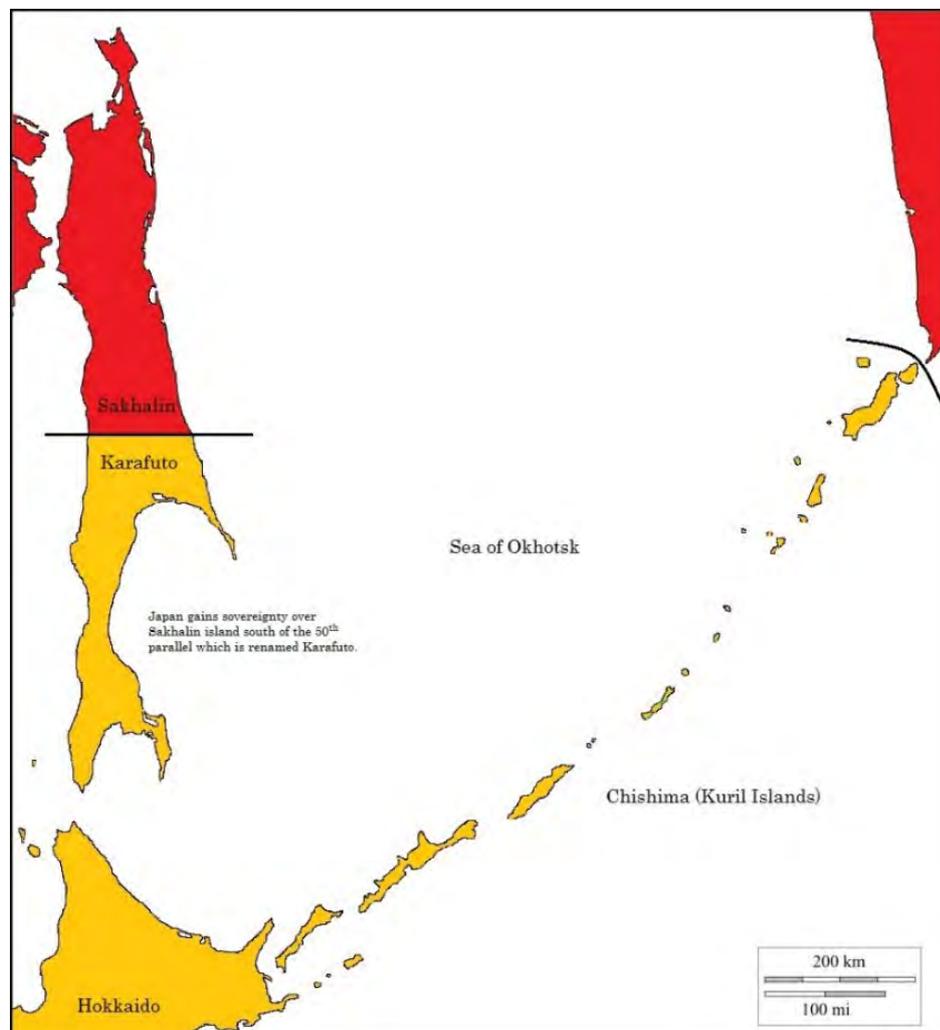
¹⁶ A civil administration was set also up to assist the military on August 23, 1905.

¹⁷ The first passenger ship bound for Karafuto, the *Tagomaru*, departed from Otaru (Hokkaido) for Korsakov on August 16, 1905. *OS* 1905-8-11, 1905-8-15; See the following for a discussion of this departure: Kudō, N. (2008) *Waga uchi naru Karafuto*, Ishibusha, Fukuoka, pp112-123

¹⁸ In most media outlets the word *kaifuku* (回復) was used to describe the acquisition of Sakhalin. See: Hakubunkan (August 1905) *Nichiro sensō shashin gahō - Karafuto kaifuku kinenchō*, Hakubunkan, Tokyo

the negotiations at Portsmouth resulted in a dividing of the island, with Russian Sakhalin in the north, and the Japanese colony of Karafuto in the south. Dissatisfaction with the terms of the Portsmouth Treaty, amongst other grievances, led to a public outcry and led to unprecedented rioting in the capital.¹⁹ Nonetheless, despite the unrest, Japan for the first time in history had its sole sovereignty over part of Sakhalin Island recognized in international law.

Map 1.3 - Northeast Asia following the Treaty of Portsmouth 1905



¹⁹ Okamoto, S. (1982) 'The emperor and the crowd: the historical significance of the Hibiya riot', in Najita, T. & Koschmann, J. (eds.) *Conflict in modern Japanese history: the neglected tradition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton

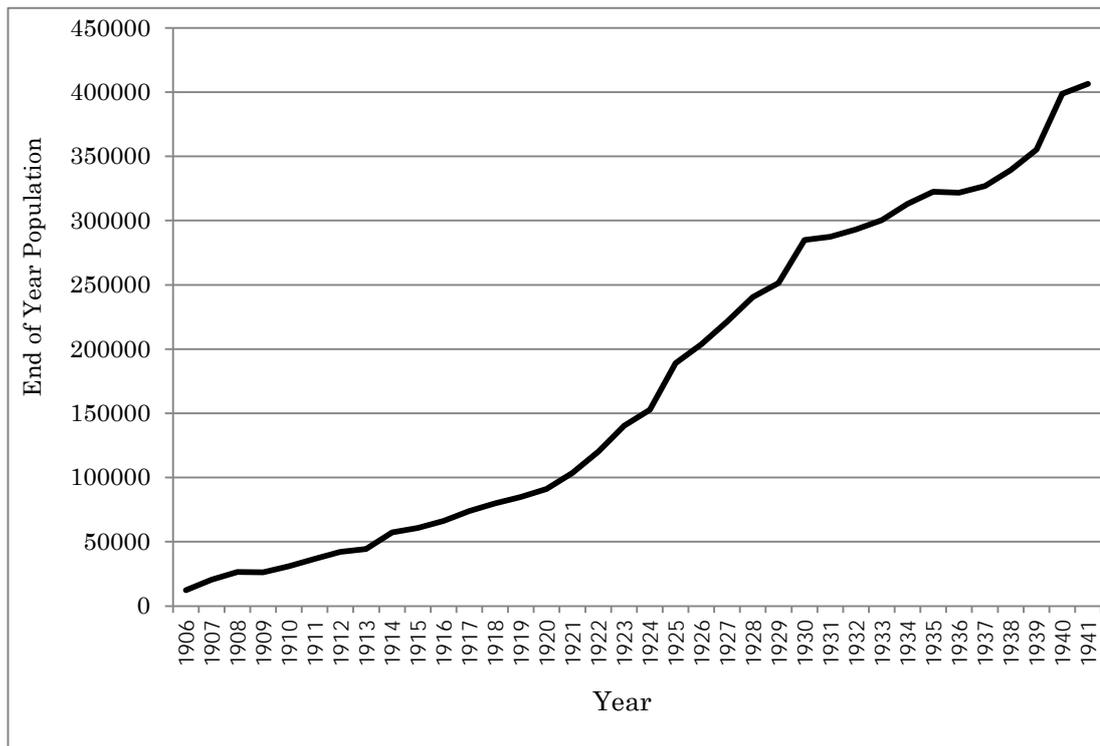
Prior to the Japanese invasion the Russian population of Sakhalin had reached around 35,000 by 1904,²⁰ but in 1905 it began to take a sharp nose dive. With the escalation of the Russo-Japanese war and a Japanese invasion of Sakhalin looming there was a flow of people attempting to escape the island for the Eurasian continent. As the Japanese invasion began, this flow became a flood. Japan, for its part, was keen to depopulate the island, and thus offered assistance to those who wished to leave.²¹ Resistance to the Japanese invasion of Sakhalin was limited, consisting of a hastily organized force of approximately 6,000 convicts. This force was organized by the Russian authorities, on the basis of a promise to trade the convict's freedom for immediate military service. Poorly equipped and trained, the Russian resistance was quickly on the back foot, torching the positions it abandoned when retreat set in, including setting fire to Korsakov. As the conflict progressed the majority of the Russian force came to surrender. Stephan's account suggests that 4,388 individuals of the Russian defence force surrendered, with 182 casualties, and 278 deserters. As Japan worked rapidly to 'repatriate' those captured the island was virtually depopulated, save for approximately 2,000 natives and a handful of former convicts who were somehow able to remain on the Japanese half of the island.²²

²⁰ Stephan. *Sakhalin*, p67

²¹ Amano, N. (2008) 'Sakhalin / Karafuto: the colony between empires', in Sevatinaov, S., Richardson, P. & Kireev, A. (eds.) *Borders and transborder processes in Eurasia*, Dalnauka, Vladivostok, pp125-126

²² Stephan. *Sakhalin*, pp78-79

Figure 1.1 – The end of year population of Karafuto, 1906-1941

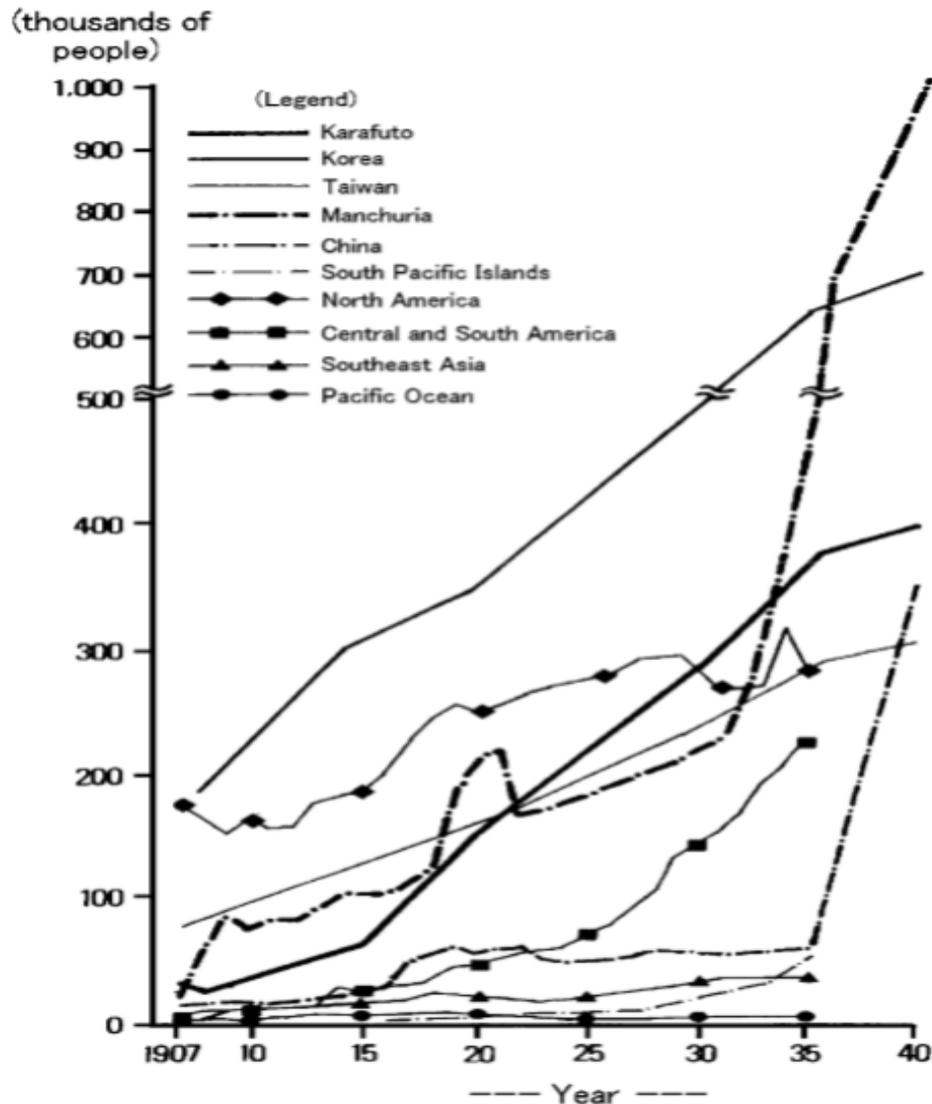


Source: KCI, KTS, KY (various years)

The establishment of Karafuto brought with it a profound change to the economy and population of the southern half of the island. The population very quickly exceeded its previous peak as a rapid influx of Japanese swarmed to Japan's newest colonial possession. The spring and summer months saw an influx of tens of thousands of migratory labourers from mainland Japan, but many of these returned home before the winter set in. Nonetheless, Karafuto's end of year population also rose rapidly exceeding 100,000 in 1921, 200,000 in 1926, 300,000 in 1934, and 400,000 in 1941 (see figure 1.1). Importantly, this flow of people to Karafuto was, in contrast to preceding decades, characterized by the free movement of people with travel restrictions removed and the complete abolition of the

penal colony. Never before had the island seen such a large community develop, and of its own free will.

Figure 1.2 – No. of Japanese in Japan's colonies and abroad, 1907-40



Reproduced from: Shiode, H. (2009) 'Nation or colony? The political belonging of the Japanese in Karafuto', *Social Science Japan Journal* 12/1, p102

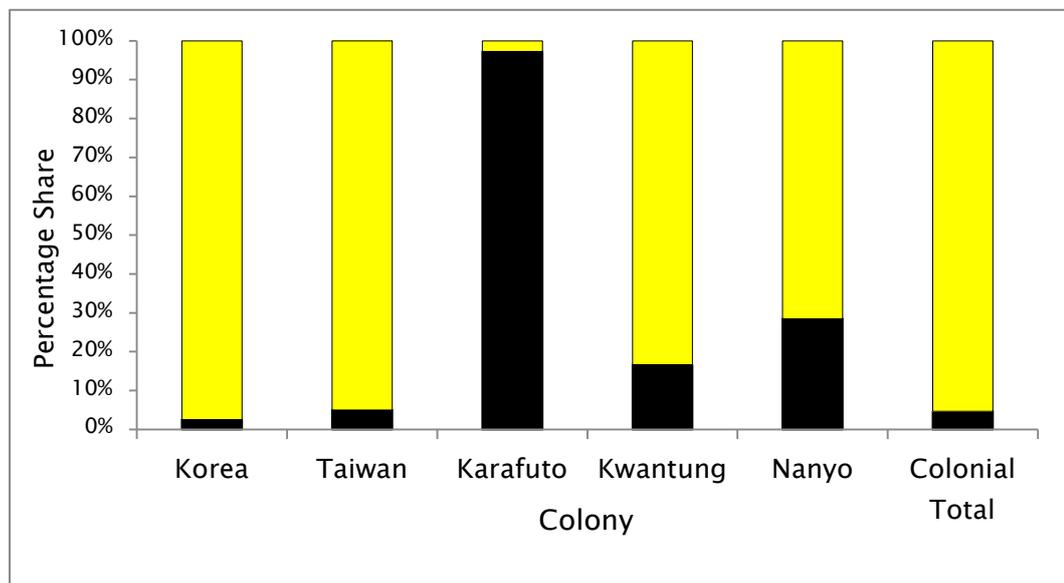
Figure 1.2 shows the number of Japanese citizens resident in the Japanese colonial empire and abroad over the years 1907 to 1940. It demonstrates that far more Japanese resided in the colonial empire than

in territories beyond. For most of the period Korea had the largest number of Japanese residents anywhere outside of Japan. Yet for our purposes it is worth noting that the rapid influx of Japanese to Karafuto meant that by the 1930s the Japanese settler community in Karafuto represented the second largest concentration of Japanese outside of mainland Japan. The overall size of Karafuto's population, of course, remained small when compared to Japan's other colonies, such as Taiwan and Korea, where the non-Japanese native populations were sizeable. However, the number of civilian Japanese who resided in Karafuto was only exceeded by Korea among the colonies, and by no territory outside of the Japanese empire, rendering this a highly important destination in the history of Japanese migration. Following the Manchurian incident, the Japanese population of Manchuria began to exceed that of Karafuto, but it must be remembered that much of this population transfer involved the movement of military personnel. Therefore, in terms of the settlement of a civilian population, comparisons between Manchuria and Karafuto are problematic. This is because the settlement of Manchuria, unlike Karafuto, involved an unprecedented national plan to relocate Japanese farmers to the newly acquired colony,²³ and because at 'every step it was controlled by the Japanese military'²⁴ the plan was carried out with a degree of coercion.

²³ Young, L. (1998) *Japan's total empire: Manchuria and the culture of wartime imperialism*, University of California Press, California

²⁴ Mori, T. (2003) 'Colonies and countryside in wartime Japan', in Waswo, A. & Nishida, Y. (eds.) *Farmers and village life in twentieth-century Japan*, Routledge, London, p197

Figure 1.3 – Japanese (in black) and non-Japanese (in yellow) share of colonial population, 1929



Source: Ishii, R. (1937) *Population pressure and economic life in Japan*, P.S. King & Sons, London, pp191-193

Japanese settlers made up the overall majority of the population of Karafuto, marking it out as a unique colony in terms of ethnic composition. Figure 1.3 shows that by 1929, a full 97% of Karafuto's population was made up of Japanese settlers, a number far in excess of the equivalents for Taiwan (5%) and Korea (2.5%), which were the other principal destinations for Japanese settlers at the time. The Nanyō islands (a Japanese mandate in the South Pacific) also had a large proportion of Japanese in the total population at 28.5%, but this was a minor destination, numbering no more than 20,000 Japanese residents in 1929.²⁵ The large Japanese share in the population of Karafuto of course

²⁵ Ishii, R. (1937) *Population pressure and economic life in Japan*, P.S. King & Sons, London, p191

was a result of the absence of a substantial native population as well as the rapid influx of settlers.

Regardless of the causes, the settler majority had implications for colonial governance. The military and police presence in Karafuto, for example, was relatively limited compared with either Taiwan or Korea, and in terms of colonial administration Karafuto was also different from the other formal colonies. The initial colonial administration in Karafuto was under the supervision of the Japanese military from August 1905 to April 1907, which also covered Karafuto's budget,²⁶ but a civilian colonial regime soon emerged with relatively restricted powers when compared to its equivalents in Taiwan and Korea. Following the withdrawal of the military from Karafuto in 1907, the new colonial administration, named *Karafuto-chō*, was set-up on similar lines to that of Hokkaido. The head of the colonial administration in Karafuto had the title of director (*chōkan*), and was accountable to the Home Ministry and Prime Minister as was the case with a governor of a prefecture on mainland Japan.²⁷ By contrast, Korea and Taiwan were administered under a governor general (*sōtokufu*), who had sweeping powers, and only answered directly to the Japanese emperor. In contrast to Korea and Taiwan, the overwhelming Japanese

²⁶ Hirai, K. (1994) 'Karafuto shokuminchi zaisei no seiritsu: nichiro sengō – daiichiji taisenki', *Keizaigaku kenkyū* 43/4

²⁷ The key difference with a prefectural governor was that the head of the Karafuto administration had the ability to legislate in the use of natural resources (mineral, forestry, and marine etc.). For a full discussion see: Yamamoto, Y. (1999) 'Japanese empire and colonial management', in Nakamura, T. & Odaka, K. (eds.) *The economic history of Japan 1600-1990 Volume 3: Economic history of Japan 1914-55 a dual structure*, Oxford University Press, Oxford

make-up of the population in Karafuto meant that despite the climatic differences and the remoteness of some parts of the colony, most commentators stated that Karafuto had a similar atmosphere to mainland Japan.²⁸ The settler majority and resulting similarity in administrative structures served to create a lobby that called for the dropping of colonial status, and the full incorporation of Karafuto into the mainland. This call became reality in April 1943, when Karafuto, uniquely among Japanese colonies, was incorporated as an integral part of the Japanese mainland (*naichi*).

Image 1.2 – Toyohara, the colonial capital of Karafuto



Source: Karafuto Gōdo Shashinkai (1936) *Karafuto gōdo shashinchō*,
Toyohara, (no pagination)

²⁸ Nishida, G. (1912) *Karafuto no fūdoki*, Kinkōdō, Tokyo, pp119-120

Image 1.3 – Ōdomari port, ‘Karafuto’s gateway’ (*Karafuto no genkan*)



Source: Karafuto-chō (1936) *Karafuto-chō shisei sanjū nenshi*,
Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, p64

Photographic evidence most clearly displays the remarkable socio-economic transformation which took place in Karafuto during its years as a Japanese colony. A number of settlements of various sizes sprang up, ranging from hamlets of a few hundred residents to towns of tens of thousands. Among these was the strikingly modern administrative capital, Toyohara (image 1.2), with its grid layout, grand shrine, department stores, and imposing offices of the colonial administration. There were also modern commercial ports such as Maoka, which was ice-free all year round, and Ōdomari (image 1.3), which supported the importation of consumer goods – most commonly rice, tobacco and

alcoholic beverages – and the exportation of lumber, marine products, as well as paper and pulp products.²⁹ Karafuto also had a number of ‘factory towns’ such as Ochiai, Shiritoru and Tomarioru, which expanded rapidly following the establishment of modern paper and pulp mills. In addition there were numerous fishing and farming settlements in Karafuto, dotting the landscape almost all the way up to the border with Russian Sakhalin at the 50th parallel.

1.6 Key industries and economic development in Karafuto

The economy of Karafuto progressed through a remarkable transformation as a Japanese colony, with a range of industries exploiting the island’s wealth in natural resources taking shape. This transformation can be seen most clearly in data which shows the expanding industrial output of Karafuto. In 1920 industrial output stood at 3.6 times its 1910 level in real terms, expanding a further 3.3 times by 1930, and 1.6 times by 1938. The industrial output of Karafuto in 1938 was in real terms 19.2 times the equivalent level of 1910.³⁰ Behind this rapid expansion of the colonial economy in Karafuto was the development of a number of important industries on the island. The chapters that follow discuss these industries in more detail, and more specifically relate

²⁹ The pattern and main products in Karafuto’s trade are well documented in: Katada, S. (1971) ‘Kyū Karafuto naikoku bōekishi’, *Hokkaidō chihōshi kenkyū* 17

³⁰ Hasegawa, S. (1988) ‘Minami Karafuto no keizai’, in Mizoguchi, T. & Umemura, M. (eds.) *Kyū nihon shokuminchi keizai tōkei*, Tōyō keizai shinpōsha, Tokyo, pp99-100

them to the process of settlement in the colony, but here it is worth briefly highlighting the main industries which developed in Karafuto.

The colony of Karafuto was covered in dense virgin forest, with the Yezo spruce, Sakhalin fir, Dahurian larch, and various types of Siberian birch most commonly found. Inevitably industries utilizing forest resources, which were increasingly scarce and in high demand in Japan,³¹ would form an important part of Karafuto's economy. A shortage of paper, pulp and lumber brought on by the disruption of World War One, which compromised Japan's importation of these products, led to a rush of activity in Karafuto to fill the gap. A building boom in paper and pulp factories ensued. The first of these factories were built in Tomarioru and Ōdomari in 1913-14. When it became clear that such enterprises were profitable in Karafuto these factories were expanded, and a number of new factories were built in quick succession. Karafuto's paper and pulp plants were regarded as the 'most modern pulp-making plants in the Far East,'³² and they came to supply Japan with about 70% of its paper and pulp requirements in the 1930s and 1940s.³³ Of course not all of the lumber from Karafuto's forests went directly to the paper and pulp mills, with much of it exported directly to Japan as building materials. From 1922 to 1934 Karafuto was the single largest supplier of lumber in the Japanese empire (Hokkaido was its main rival for this claim).³⁴ Indeed,

³¹ Totman, C. (1998) *The green archipelago: forestry in preindustrial Japan*, Ohio University Press, Athens Ohio

³² Friis, H. (1939) 'Pioneer economy of Sakhalin Island', *Economic Geography* 15/1, p64

³³ Karafuto Ringyōshi Hensankai (1960) *Karafuto ringyōshi*, Nōrin shuppan, Tokyo, pp306-7

³⁴ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei. *Karafuto nenpyō*, p218

some former residents of the colony boast that ‘Karafuto provided the lumber to rebuild Tokyo after the great Kanto earthquake, and the paper for Japan’s intellectual revolution during the Taishō period.’³⁵

Image 1.4 – Paper and pulp factory at Tomarioru



Source: as in image 1.2

The paper and pulp industry was dominated by the Ōji Paper and Pulp Company, which was affiliated to the Mitsui conglomerate (*zaibatsu*). Ōji was the main player in the market both in Karafuto and in mainland Japan, but there was competition in Karafuto from two other private firms. The largest of these was the Fuji Paper and Pulp Company, which established a mill at Ochiai in 1917, and the other was Karafuto Industries, which built mills at Tomarioru in 1915 (image 1.4) and Maoka in 1919. Nonetheless, these two firms struggled during the years following

³⁵ Interview with K-san, February 2012, Tokyo

the Wall Street crash of 1929, and eventually they were absorbed by Ōji in 1933. After this rationalization of the paper and pulp industry many referred to Karafuto as 'Ōji's Island,'³⁶ with the paper and pulp industry continuing as the colony's most important.

The sea of Okhotsk area, incorporating the waters around Sakhalin, western Kamchatka and northeastern Hokkaido, is often described as one of the world's three great fisheries.³⁷ In the 1930s this area was said to comprise 40% of the aggregate catch (in value) in the Japanese empire, making it 'the most important sphere of activity for Japanese fishermen.'³⁸ It was not surprising therefore that the rich fishing grounds around the island were to first gain the attention of Japanese seeking to utilize the territory's natural resources. The principal catches along the coasts and in the seas around Karafuto were herring, salmon, cod, and crab. Accurate data on fishing catches prove elusive, as there are numerous issues related to poaching and underreporting. Nonetheless, a Japanese government agency estimated that in 1923-25 Japan was catching 32.8% of the world herring catch, 14.1% in cod, and 35.8% in salmon.³⁹ Though it is difficult to assess how much of this was coming from Karafuto, it is known that the vast majority of Japan's catch in these three types of fish came from the far north, comprising the coasts and seas around Hokkaido and Karafuto.

³⁶ Group interview with N-san, K-san, and I-san, April 2012, Tokyo

³⁷ Nonaka, F. (1936) 'A profile of Karafuto' in *Dai Nippon*, Bunmei kyōkai, Tokyo, p177

³⁸ Oshima, K. (1936) 'The fisheries in the northern waters of Japan' in *Dai Nippon*, Bunmei kyōkai, Tokyo, p55

³⁹ Quoted in: Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku (1929) *Dekasegi gyofu kumiai chōsa*, Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku, Tokyo, pp1-2

Table 1.1 –The percentage share of various industrial sectors in
 Karafuto’s economic output*

	1910	1915	1920	1925	1930	1935
Agriculture & Livestock	2.8	4.6	2.8	3.9	3.1	3.8
Fishing	77.2	56.4	14.4	12.7	10.3	6.1
Forestry	8.6	12.2	12.3	29.4	14.4	15.8
Mining	1.8	1.4	3.7	3.5	4.7	8.8
Manufacturing	9.6	25.4	66.8	50.5	66.1	64.0
Other	-	-	-	-	1.4	1.5

* Output was calculated as the value of production in yen at constant prices (1934-36)

Source: Hasegawa, S. (1988) ‘Minami Karafuto no keizai’, in Mizoguchi, T. & Umemura, M. (eds.) *Kyū nihon shokuminchi keizai tōkei*, Tōyō keizai shinpōsha, Tokyo, p100

The poor development of refrigeration technology in prewar Japan meant that very little of the catch went for sales in fresh fish markets, except in Karafuto itself. Instead much of the catch was processed onshore – there were few factory ships in Karafuto⁴⁰ – into various marine products such as fish oils, fish meal, canned goods and dried food products. The largest of these marine products was traditional fish meal fertilizer, which was exported and used on farms throughout mainland Japan.

⁴⁰ In fact there were very few factory ships at all in the Japanese empire. Most operators could not afford the outlay required to purchase such ships, and those who could often found it more cost effective to keep marine product processing operations onshore. One famous exception was the crab canning factory ships operated by Nichiro, which caught crabs in the seas around Kamchatka. As Kamchatka was Russian (Soviet) territory onshore processing was impractical if not impossible. In this sense Nichiro had little option but to can the crab it caught aboard factory ships manned by workers brought from Japan. Life aboard the crab canning factory ships of Nichiro was vividly serialized in a short novel by the proletarian writer Kobayashi Takiji in 1929. See: Kobayashi, T. (1973 reprint) *Factory Ship & Absentee Landlord*, Tokyo University Press, Tokyo

There were numerous types of fish meal fertilizer, but the most common, and the mainstay of the fishing industry in Karafuto, was herring meal fertilizer, known as *nishinkasu*. Fishing and marine product processing initially dominated the colonial economy. Hasegawa estimates that in 1910, 77.2% of economic output (see table 1.1) in Karafuto was made up of the fishing catch alone. This share began to fall as forestry-related activities, including paper and pulp, which was enumerated in manufacturing, began to take off. One sector of the economy that failed to really take off during the Japanese colonial era was agriculture. This came despite the colonial administration actively promoting agricultural development in the colony via free land grants for settlers and various subsidies. Agriculture, including livestock, never exceeded much more than 5% of economic output in Karafuto, and fishing continued to be the more significant sector despite the colonial administration holding the hope that Karafuto could develop as an agricultural colony.⁴¹

It wasn't until the mid-1930s that fishing's position as the second largest sector in the colonial economy, following forestry-related industries, came under threat from the rapidly expanding mining industry. Karafuto had rich deposits of high quality coal, however the lack of a suitable harbour, and accessibility problems, meant that until the 1920s the colony was actually a net importer of coal.⁴² The first mine to open in the Japanese half of the island was operated by Mitsui mining at Kawakami in 1914. It was not until the late 1920s, however, that Mitsui

⁴¹ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (1978) *Karafuto enkaku gyōseishi*, pp629-635

⁴² Miki, M. (2005) '1930 nendai no Karafuto ni okeru sekitangyō', *Monthly Journal of Institute of Developing Economies* 46/5

mining's main rivals, Mitsubishi mining, opened their first mine in Karafuto. The heavy industrialization of Japan in the 1930s raised the demand for coal, and this led to a number of new mines opening in Karafuto throughout the decade. In the 1930s Karafuto became a major exporter of coal, and by 1941 it was supplying 9% of the total coal output of the entire Japanese empire.⁴³ The rapid expansion of the mine industry reflected a national push to ensure energy security in Japan as war with China loomed.

Table 1.2 – Gross domestic expenditure (GDE) per capita in Japan and its formal colonies (in yen and at 1934-36 constant prices)

	Japan	Taiwan	Korea	Karafuto
1920	205.98	129.89	80.39	434.73
1930	218.26	155.99	78.87	436.06
1938	287.91	184.60	119.39	476.94

Compiled from: Mizoguchi, T. & Umemura, M. (eds.) (1988) *Kyū nihon shokuminchi kezai tōkei*, Tōyō keizai shinpōsha, Tokyo, pp231-243

Karafuto's population remained small relative to its economic wealth, resulting in the highest levels of gross domestic expenditure per

⁴³ Cohen, J. B. (1949) *Japan's economy in war and reconstruction*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, pp160-163; Mitsubishi Economic Research Bureau (1936) *Japanese trade and industry: present and future*, Mitsubishi Economic Research Bureau, Tokyo, p207

capita anywhere in the Japanese empire – as can be seen in table 1.2. The high demand for labour, and low supply, meant that wages in Karafuto were high, and many activities depended on influxes of migratory labour.⁴⁴ Securing labour for the expansion of mining operations in Karafuto would prove difficult as it faced the dual problem of labour scarcity and high wages in the colony. Extraordinary measures were required to secure labour, and given the strategic importance of the mining industry in Japan's emerging war economy such measures were taken. Through the coordinated efforts of the colonial governments of Karafuto and Korea, as well as the central government in Tokyo, at least 16,000 Korean labourers were mobilized in the years 1939-1943 to work in mines and on construction sites in Karafuto.⁴⁵ When the war ended in defeat for Japan, the Koreans in Karafuto went unpaid, but worse still they lost their 'Japanese' nationality, excluding them from the repatriation process affecting Japanese citizens.⁴⁶ These Koreans were left stranded on Sakhalin, and with the Cold War intensifying into conflict on the Korean peninsula their chances of returning to their homeland became thinner. Remaining on Sakhalin meant that many Koreans became stateless persons, or took up Soviet citizenship. The end of the Cold War provided new opportunities to return to Korea, but even though

⁴⁴ Hasegawa. 'Minami Karafuto no keizai', p109

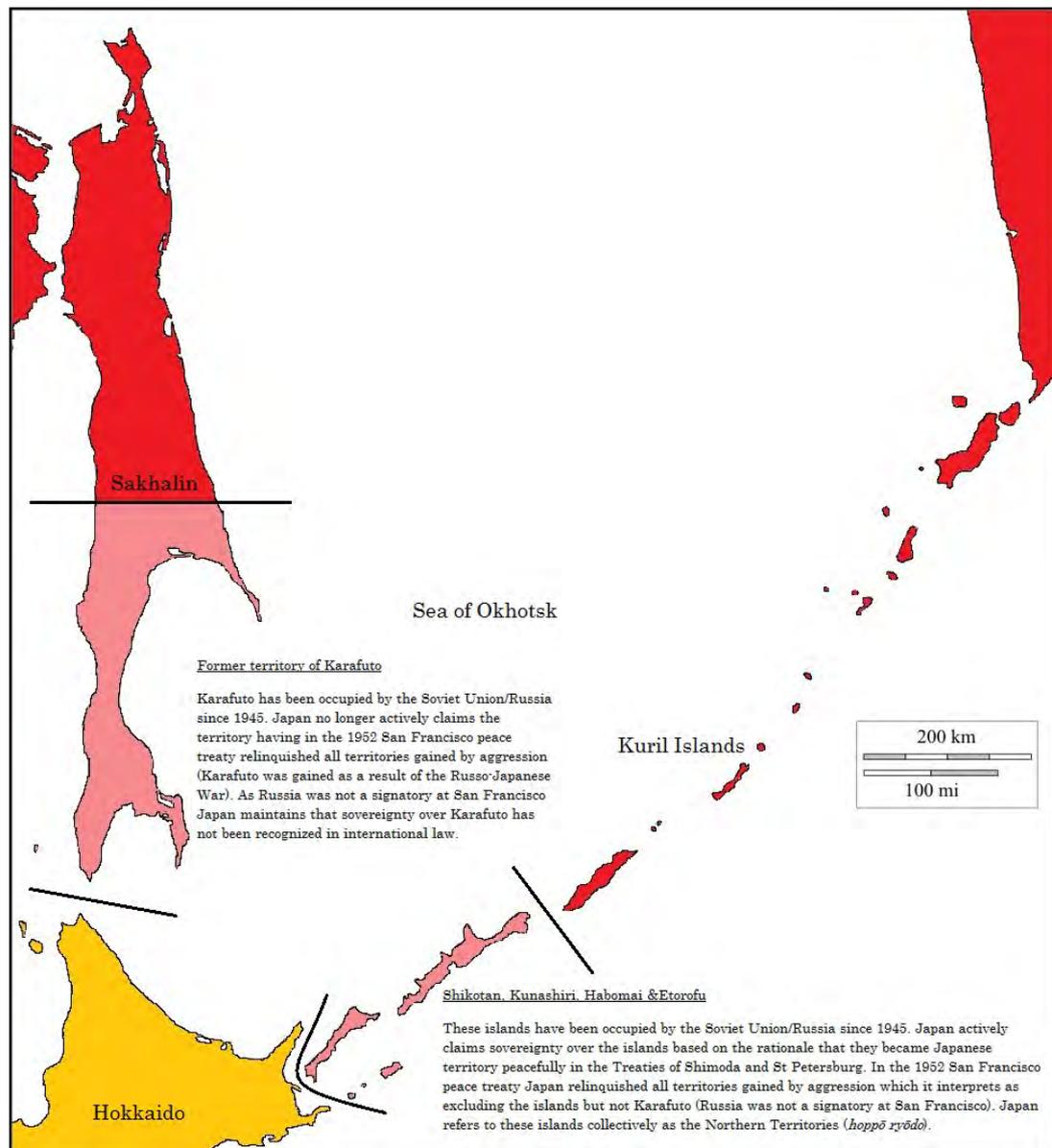
⁴⁵ Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō shinsō chōsadan (1974) *Chōsenjin kyōsei renkō kyōsei rōdō no kiroku – Hokkaidō Chishima Karafuto*, Gendaishi shuppankai, Tokyo, pp86-88

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: Hokkaidō Shinbunsha (1988) *Sokoku he! Saharin ni nokosareta hitotachi*, Hokkaidō shinbunsha, Sapporo

some have returned, to this very day the Korean ethnic group forms the largest minority in Sakhalin Oblast.⁴⁷

1.7 The end of Karafuto

Map1.4 - Northeast Asia post World War Two



For much of the Second World War Karafuto was ‘an island of calm in a sea of chaos,’⁴⁸ yet despite the calm there were warning signs that

⁴⁷ *Guardian* 1997-4-9 ‘The people the world forgot dream of home’

⁴⁸ Stephan. *Sakhalin*, p142

Japan's war efforts were faltering. Despite Japan's initial military success, the war intensified and the US military began to advance in the Pacific, slowly eroding Japan's initial gains. Japan's war effort became increasingly strained, and this was felt initially in Karafuto in the form of drastically reduced shipping availability in the colony, as vessels were requisitioned for other uses. Former residents of the colony attest to how Karafuto's peaceful calm suddenly became one full of anxiety. The shortage of ships meant that coal mines in Karafuto were no longer able to export their output, and as a result some workers and equipment were transferred to mines in Hokkaido and Kyushu. Once busy towns producing paper, pulp, marine products and coal for export suddenly found themselves stockpiling.⁴⁹ Clearly something was not right, but despite this unease most testimonies of former residents suggest that the end of Karafuto as a Japanese colony still came both swiftly and unexpectedly.

The Soviet Union had agreed with its allies at Yalta in February 1945 to enter the war against Japan within a few months of a German defeat. True to its word the Soviet Union mobilized its forces for an invasion of the Japanese empire in Northeast Asia including Manchuria, Korea, Karafuto and the Kurile islands in July-August of 1945. Prior to the Soviet invasion, the United States had torpedoed some Japanese fishing vessels in Karafuto at Shisuka and Maoka, as well as conducting a landing mission that led to the exploding of a train in July 1945.⁵⁰ These

⁴⁹ Interview with I-san, February 2012, Tokyo

⁵⁰ *New York Times* 1945-7-5, 1945-8-11, 1945-8-21

incidents were not well reported in the colony, and appear insignificant when compared to the Soviet invasion which began on August 9, 1945, the very same day on which a second atomic bomb was dropped by the United States on Japan. The start of the Soviet invasion preceded the Japanese surrender, which came with the acceptance of the Potsdam declaration on August 14, and was announced to the Japanese public, Karafuto included, the following day by the Japanese Emperor in his first ever radio broadcast.

The Japanese have viewed the invasion as opportunistic on the part of the Soviet Union, because much of the fighting in Karafuto came after Japan surrendered. From the Soviet point of view, the invasion of Karafuto provided revenge for the Japanese invasion of the island which came in the closing stages of the Russo-Japanese war forty years earlier. Indeed, Stalin announced the Soviet Union's intention to absorb the territories of Karafuto and the Kuril islands to the Soviet people with reference to 'settling an old account with Japan.'⁵¹ The legitimacy of such claims is not the concern of this study, but the fact is that conflict on Karafuto continued until August 23, 1945, when the Soviet Union announced the full occupation of the Japanese half of Sakhalin. Initial conflict broke out on August 9, at the border area around Handezawa, Koton, and Kamishisuka, where Japanese troops held out until August 18. Once resistance in this area had been broken Soviet forces were able to quickly occupy the rest of the island. Soviet naval assaults were made on the northwest coast at Esutoru, followed by troop landings on August 16.

⁵¹ *Guardian* 1945-9-3

The main port on the western coast, Maoka, was bombarded and occupied on August 20, resulting in over 1,000 casualties, and a stream of refugees headed towards the capital Toyohara.⁵² Confusion reigned as many could not comprehend the continued Soviet attack having heard of the Japanese surrender. Pockets of Japanese resistance contributed to the continuation of violence beyond the official surrender. Soviet forces continued aerial bombardments, notably around Toyohara station, until finally Japanese and Soviet officials were able to organize a ceasefire on August 22-23.⁵³ Soviet troops were able to land without any resistance at Ōdomari on August 24, the day following the official announcement of the Soviet occupation, and as a result almost 350,000 Japanese now found themselves living under a Soviet occupation.

Before the Soviet occupation was announced there were some hastily arranged efforts to evacuate Japanese residents from Karafuto. This mostly prioritized women, children, and the elderly, but there is also the suggestion of favouritism being shown to the families of military officers, officials, and other members of the colonial elite.⁵⁴ A total of 92,639 people⁵⁵ were said to have been evacuated to Japan by such efforts, or by their own means, boarding overcrowded fishing boats in an attempt to escape.⁵⁶ Not everyone who boarded these evacuation ships made it

⁵² Stephan. *Sakhalin*, pp154-155

⁵³ *Ibid* pp154-155

⁵⁴ *Ibid* p153

This point was also confirmed to me by K-san who admitted to having benefited from such favouritism.

⁵⁵ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei. *Karafuto nenpyō*, p13

⁵⁶ Interview with N-san, March 2012, Sapporo, who escaped in such a manner

home. On August 22, 1945, three ships carrying evacuees were torpedoed off the coast of Hokkaido. Many of the 5,082 passengers aboard the three ships were recovered, but the death toll was high, with 1,558 confirmed deaths and 150 unaccounted for.⁵⁷

Those who remained on what was now Soviet Sakhalin were permitted to continue with their ordinary activities, but faced an uncertain future. The Soviet Union began to send settlers to the southern half of Sakhalin almost right away, and a shortage of housing meant that Russian families often shared accommodation with Japanese. After much negotiation, the Soviet Union, Japanese government, and American occupying forces agreed to the repatriation of Japanese nationals, which commenced on October 15, 1946. The repatriation process was supervised and assisted by American forces, and was largely complete by June 1949. A total of 310,804 individuals went through this official repatriation process boarding ships at Kholmsk (previously Maoka) then disembarking at ports such as Hakodate, Wakkanai, and Maizuru. Not all Japanese returned in this way; many of those who had been taken prisoner during the invasion and occupation were sent to work camps in Siberia or Khabarovsk. Some of these never made it home, perishing under the harsh regime of the Soviet *gulag*. Nonetheless, a number of survivors managed to return during the 1950s, mostly bitter about the experience of detention.⁵⁸ Many repatriates returned to Japan with next to nothing,

⁵⁷ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei. *Karafuto nenpyō*, p125

⁵⁸ For a collection of the testimonies of former detainees see a series published by the Tokyo Peace Memorial Museum (Heiwa Kinenkan) entitled *Heiwa no ishizue*. The series is available for download at the following website:

dependent on the good will of friends and relatives, and facing a degree of discrimination. For one thing, there was much suspicion in Japan with regards to the political leanings of repatriates. Those from Karafuto had, of course, been living under Soviet administration and had come into contact with Soviet propaganda. More generally repatriates carried a tainted image because of their association with a failed empire, which most Japanese wanted to forget.⁵⁹

The struggles of repatriates are well documented in Japan, but there is less recognition or public awareness of the plight of the Koreans who were left behind on Sakhalin as the Japanese empire disintegrated around them. A large proportion of the Korean population in Sakhalin had been brought in as conscripted labourers for industries crucial to the Japanese war effort. With promises of high pay-outs when the war was over they were simply abandoned with defeat. The Soviet Union could make use of their labour and the Japanese government did little to repatriate these Koreans, with cold war politics sealing their fate. It is true that some Koreans were able to 'repatriate' by passing off as Japanese,⁶⁰ but most were stuck on the island. Karafuto's Korean population had been overwhelmingly male as many were brought in to

<http://www.heiwakinen.jp/library/shiryokan/heiwa.html>

⁵⁹ Watt, L. (2009) *When empire comes home: repatriation and reintegration in postwar Japan*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, especially Chapter 3; Dower, J. (2000) *Embracing defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, pp54-58

⁶⁰ The Zainichi writer Lee Hoe-sung (Ri Kaisei in Japanese), who in 1972 became the first ethnic Korean to win the Akutagawa prize, was one such case. For Lee's thoughts on Karafuto see: Lee, H. (1983) *Saharin no tabi*, Kōdansha, Tokyo

work in hard labour jobs in the mining and construction sectors. The gender imbalance meant that a number of Koreans had married Japanese wives, complicating the repatriation of their spouses. This tore some families apart with some Japanese abandoning their Korean spouses, but there were also some who remained in Sakhalin and officially lost their nationality. For this reason Sakhalin censuses consistently reported that there were no Japanese on Sakhalin, but through the efforts of a group formed by repatriates the few hundred Japanese who were left behind have gained some recognition alongside Sakhalin's Koreans.⁶¹

It would be no exaggeration to say that Karafuto has been largely forgotten by most people in Japan, even though away from the public eye at least, the memory of Karafuto was kept alive amongst its former residents via informal networks and gatherings. In addition, there were efforts made to promote public awareness of Karafuto's past by an organization called the National Karafuto League (*Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei*), which was initially set up to support the welfare of Karafuto repatriates. Despite the efforts made by the National Karafuto League, as Japan came to prosper in the post-war period there was little desire among the majority of the public to reflect on the empire that had been lost.⁶² For the Japanese state, at least, Karafuto has not been completely forgotten. Yet although Japan has never officially given up its claims to Southern Sakhalin, neither does it actively seek the return of the former colony. The San Francisco peace treaty in which Japan relinquished its

⁶¹ See the following for an introduction to their history and some oral histories: Ogawa, Y. (2005) *Karafuto Shiberia ni ikiru: sengō 60nen no shōgen*, Shakai hyōronsha, Tokyo

⁶² Dower. *Embracing defeat*

claims to Southern Sakhalin was not signed by the Soviet Union, and thus Japan maintains that Sakhalin's position has not yet been determined in international law. Stephan relates this to an attempt to improve Japan's bargaining position in the dispute over the southern part of the Kuril Islands, which Japan does actively claim, referring to these islands as its northern territories (*hoppō ryōdo*).⁶³

Whatever residual claims are maintained by the Japanese side, the reality was that in 1945, Sakhalin Island became united under the flag of the Soviet Union, and thereafter came to occupy a position as a strategic outpost in the Soviet Far East. The island initially attracted much attention, with the Soviet Union keen to settle, develop and fortify the region. The population of Soviet Sakhalin, i.e. Northern Sakhalin, in 1941, stood at 106,000,⁶⁴ barely one fourth of the equivalent in the Japanese half of the island. Nonetheless, despite a heavy outflow of population in the initial postwar period due to the repatriation of Japanese nationals, remarkably in 1957 Sakhalin's total population stood at a historic high with approximately 660,000 residents.⁶⁵ The economy of Sakhalin developed initially utilizing the same industries that had become successful under the Japanese – lumber, fishing and coal mining – but there was also a growing oil and gas sector. The strategic location of the island meant that the Soviet Union located a number of military

⁶³ Stephan. *Sakhalin*, pp168-169 & 203

⁶⁴ *Ibid* p127

⁶⁵ *Ibid* p177

facilities on the island, including observation and air defence bases, with Korsakov, in particular, developing as a naval supply base.⁶⁶

The Soviet development of the island was not always smooth, but the most abrupt interruption of this process came with the collapse of the Soviet Union itself, which brought considerable socio-economic dislocation to Sakhalin and the wider Russian Far East. The region depended on state contracts, military spending, and central government investment, which were all curtailed in the transition to the Russian federation.⁶⁷ The economy suffered as a result, and the most obvious effect was the flight of population from Sakhalin. In 1989 Sakhalin had 709,629 residents, but this number dropped dramatically and in 2010 Sakhalin was home to only 497,973 people;⁶⁸ a number below the combined populations of the Soviet and Japanese halves of the island in 1945. Despite the decline, there have been signs that the economy in Sakhalin is picking up, alongside significant investments from Russian and foreign (including Japanese) firms in oil and gas projects around the island. Indeed, the oil and gas sector is said to make up 90% of industrial production in Sakhalin,⁶⁹ but it remains to be seen whether this can bring about a period of sustained economic growth and development on the island.

⁶⁶ *Ibid* pp174-175

⁶⁷ Akaha, T. (ed) (1997) *Politics and economics in the Russian Far East*, Routledge, London, especially see chapter 3; Stephan, J. (1994) *The Russian Far East: a history*, Stanford University Press, Redwood, pp264-276

⁶⁸ Federal State Statistics Service (2011) *2010 All-Russia Population Census*, Federal State Statistics Service, Moscow

⁶⁹ According to the Sakhalin regional government: <http://en.admsakhalin.ru/> accessed June 17, 2014

Chapter 2

Introduction and Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study examines colonial settlement and migratory labour in Karafuto, seeking to contribute to our understanding of two broader themes in the socio-economic history of modern Japan. The first of these broader themes concerns the history of Japan's colonial empire, conventionally dated from the acquisition of Taiwan in 1895 to the Japanese defeat in World War Two in 1945. In recent decades there have been a number of works treating imperial Japan's colonial empire, however, these have yet to provide a fully satisfactory account. The contribution this study seeks to make in this regard is twofold. Firstly, it provides an examination of the largely disregarded case of Karafuto, which was nonetheless an important part of Japan's colonial empire, and secondly, the study works towards answering Peattie's call to 'populate the Japanese colonial landscape with living, acting individuals.'¹ These tasks are achieved through an analysis of migration and settlement in Japan's northernmost colonial territory, and by taking an approach that incorporates evidence produced by migrants and settlers themselves.

The second broader theme to which this study seeks to contribute concerns the socio-economic history of modern Japan, and more specifically the role of migratory labour in Japan's prewar economy. In the

¹ Peattie, M. (1986) 'Introduction', in *The Japanese colonial empire 1895-1945*, Myers, R. & Peattie, M. (eds.) Princeton University Press, Princeton, p52

past scholars viewed rural Japan as a clear cut victim in the nation's process of industrialization, with the distress of rural areas conventionally given a central place in accounts of the drift towards militaristic government and war in the 1930s.² This negative assessment of the fortunes of the countryside in the face of industrialization has not been without its critics. Nonetheless, the view of an exploited peasantry and low rural living standards has proved somewhat persistent. One of the issues which academic enquiry has come to focus on has been how to interpret the prevalence of migratory labour in the Japanese economy. Some scholars have even suggested that migratory labour's pervasiveness was *the* defining feature of the labour market in prewar Japan.³ The main point of contention regarding migratory labour has come to centre on its role in the economic life of rural households. Some scholars view its prevalence among rural households as a kind of necessary evil, allowing families to reduce the number of mouths to feed (*kuchi-berashi*), and providing a crucial supplement to pitifully low incomes, which facilitated the payment of extortionate land rents. Other scholars are more inclined to view migratory labour as a rational response to attractive and ever-increasing opportunities as the industrial economy expanded, as well as a means of diversifying the household economy.

² Maruyama, M. (1963) *Thought and behaviour in modern Japanese politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. In Maruyama's argument the agrarian strand (*nōhonshugi*) that can be found in the ideology of Japanese Fascism helps to explain its radicalism.

³ Ōkochi, K. (1950) 'Chinrōdō ni okeru hōkenteki naru mono', *Keizai ronshū Tōkyō daigaku keizai gakkai* 19/4. Ōkochi famously stated that the Japanese labour market in the prewar period took a 'migratory labour form' (*dekasegi-gata*) as its main characteristic, especially when compared to the European equivalent during industrialization.

In this study migratory labour in the context of colonial Karafuto will be examined. The focus on Karafuto is justified by the fact that it was an important destination for migratory labourers from the prefectures of the Tohoku and Hokuriku macro-regions, which have conventionally been viewed as economically backward (*ura-nippon*).⁴ The demand for migratory labour to work the forests, mines, factories and seas of Karafuto was considerable, owing to the colony's small population and natural resource abundance. This gave the prefectures of Tohoku, Hokuriku and Hokkaido, all in relatively close proximity to Karafuto, a potentially rich source of migratory labour opportunities. An examination of what migratory labour in Karafuto entailed will help us to appreciate the nature of the migratory labour market for some of Japan's most rural and backward regions.

Migratory labour was not the only opportunity available in Karafuto, as settlement of this northern colonial frontier was also an option for those struggling to maintain their rural households. The colonial administration of Karafuto offered appealing terms to would-be agricultural settlers, including the granting of free land, tax exemptions and subsidies. This study will therefore extend its focus beyond migratory labour, and also examine colonial settlement. By 1930 Karafuto had come to have the second largest Japanese settler community, following Korea, amongst the colonies of the Japanese empire, and thus the development of a settler community which was over 400,000 strong by 1945 warrants our

⁴ For an account of one of these prefectures see: Lewis, M. (2000) *Becoming apart: national power and local politics in Toyama 1968-1945*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA

attention.

2.2 State of the field: the absence of Karafuto in the study of the Japanese colonial empire

In recent decades there has been a growing volume of literature on the Japanese colonial empire, in both English and Japanese, yet work on Karafuto is remarkable for its absence.⁵ The influential 1986 study, *The Japanese Colonial Empire 1895-1945*, edited by Myers and Peattie, remains the standard text on the subject in English, but contains no chapter on Karafuto. Indeed, this is also true of the most influential series in Japanese, the *Iwanami kōza kindai Nihon to shokuminchi* series, edited by Ōe Shinobu (et al). Before summarizing the literature that does exist on Karafuto, it is necessary to examine whether existing studies on the Japanese colonial empire are justified in overlooking Karafuto, and then suggest why they have done so.

Karafuto deserves our attention for a number of reasons. Firstly, in comparison with Japan's other colonies, formal and informal, Karafuto is noted to have been the colony which most resembled, and was most integrated with the home islands in terms of its administrative/legal system.⁶ This integration extended to Karafuto's trade, with all but a couple of percent of Karafuto's imports and exports occupied by exchange with the metropole.⁷ Indeed, Karafuto became the only external territory

⁵ Miki, M. (1999) 'Ijūgata shokuminchi Karafuto to Toyohara no shigaichi keisei'. *Jinbun chiri* 51/3, p218; Takeno, M. (2000) 'Jinkō mondai to shokuminchi 1920-1930 nendai no Karafuto o chūshin ni', *Keizaigaku kenkyū* 50/3, p122

⁶ Yamamoto, Y. (1993) *Nihon shokuminchi keizaishi kenkyū*, Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, Nagoya, pp67-68

⁷ Yamamoto, Yūzō. (2003) 'Japanese empire and colonial management', in Nakamura, T

(*gaichi*) in the Japanese colonial empire to be fully incorporated into Japan proper (*naichi*), a process that had been on the debating table since at least the 1920s, but was only formally completed in 1945.⁸

Secondly, Karafuto deserves scholarly attention because it attracted a large settler population. Karafuto is usually characterized by scholars as a settler colony (*ijūgata shokuminchi*),⁹ in contrast to the cases of Taiwan and Korea, where the penetration of Japanese capital has been viewed by scholars as more profound than the presence of Japanese settlers (*tōshigata shokuminchi*).¹⁰ As was shown in chapter one of this study, excepting Korea, there was no other territory outside of Japan which boasted a larger Japanese community than Karafuto. Yet the development of a settler community in Karafuto is not only of significance to the history of migration and settlement in the Japanese empire. At over 400,000 settlers in the 1940s, the size of the settler community and the speed of its growth are striking by global standards, and are comparable to some of the largest and most well-known settler colonies. Figure 2.1 (below) compares the increase in the settler population of various settler colonies over similar time frames in terms of length. It shows that in the

& Odaka, K. (eds.) *The Economic history of Japan 1600-1990 Volume 3: Economic history of Japan 1914-55 a dual structure*, Oxford University Press, Oxford

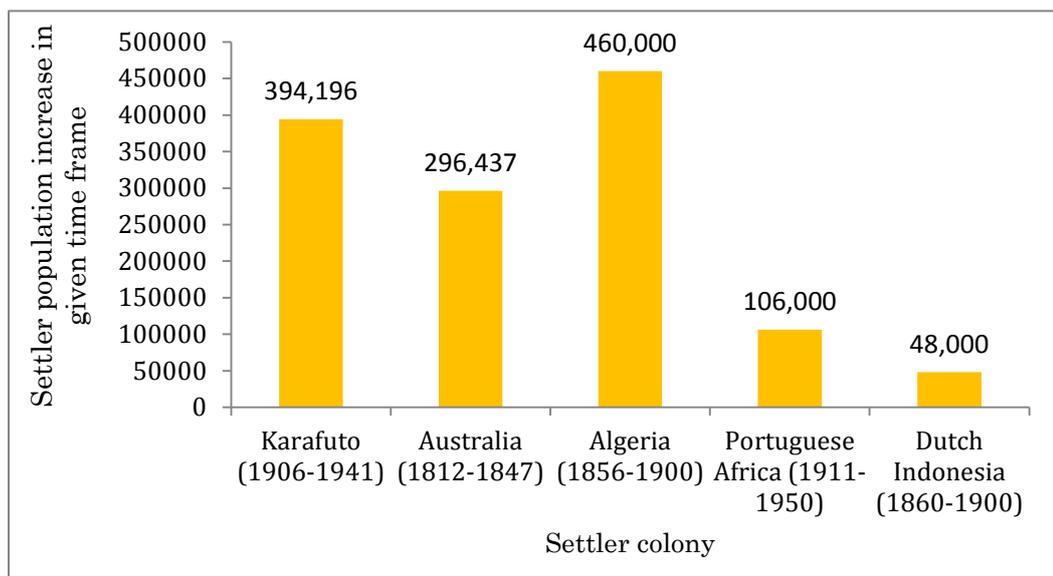
⁸ Shiode, H. (2009) 'Nation or colony? The political belonging of the Japanese in Karafuto', *Social Science Japan Journal* 12/1, pp114-116

⁹ Many of my interviewees, who were former residents of Karafuto, questioned the use of the term colony at all, stressing that they felt like they were living in Japan. Nonetheless, as contemporary documents almost unanimously refer to Karafuto as a colony this study has stuck with the term, accepting that at times the colonial label had a contested and ambiguous meaning.

¹⁰ Miki, M. (2012) *Ijūgata shokuminchi Karafuto no keisei*, Hanawa shobō, Tokyo

thirty five years between 1906 and 1941, Karafuto's Japanese settler population grew by 394,196, equating to an annual average increase of 11,263 persons. This rate of annual increase far exceeded the growth of a number of European settler communities in Asia and Africa, such as Portuguese Africa and Dutch Indonesia. The rate of increase of Karafuto's settler population is also comparable to the most rapid period of expansion in the European settler population of French Algeria,¹¹ where the annual average increase was 10,454 persons over the years 1856 to 1900.

Figure 2.1 – Growth of settler population in various settler colonies and time periods (years given in parenthesis)¹²



Source: for Karafuto as in figure 1.1. For Australia; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004) *Australian historical population statistics*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. For all others; Butlin, R. (2009) *Geographies of empire: European empires and colonies c. 1880-1960*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp153-157 & pp160-163

¹¹ Butlin, R. (2009) *Geographies of empire: European empires and colonies c. 1880-1960*, Cambridge University Press, pp153-157

¹² The growth of colonial settlers presented in Figure 2.1 indicates a total which includes all types of European settlers, i.e. not just those from the colonial metropole. The dates shown above have been selected on the basis of data availability, and as much as possible, to give a comparison of time frames when each colony had a similar starting population.

The same is true when Karafuto is compared to the early period of free settlement in Australia,¹³ one of the more enduring settler colonies. In 1812, Australia's settler population stood at 12,630, a level similar to Karafuto's equivalent in 1906.¹⁴ In the thirty five years that followed 1812, Australia's population grew at an unprecedented rate. The arrival of convicts still continued, but this flow was now exceeded by the rapid growth of free settlers. In 1810, 76.9% of Australia's settler population were either convicts or ex-convicts, but in 1850 this number stood below 30%,¹⁵ even though convict numbers had in aggregate terms grown by a factor of ten in this period. In 1850, a combination of free settlers and the colonial-born made up the majority of the Australian settler population.¹⁶ Yet despite this unprecedented expansion in Australia's settler population, and its shift towards free settlement, figure 2.1 shows that the settler population of Karafuto expanded more rapidly in the thirty five years after its population reached 12,000. There are of course numerous problems in making these kinds of comparisons, including the different time periods being compared, the different migration regimes in place, and the distances between colony and metropole. Nonetheless, it should be clear that even if Karafuto was a short-lived settler colony, the scale and rapid growth of its settler community warrants the attention of

¹³ Jackson, R. (1977) *Australian economic development in the nineteenth century*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, p30; Butlin, N. (1994) *Forming a colonial economy: Australia 1810-1850*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp19-28

¹⁴ Data sources as in figure 2.1

¹⁵ Butlin. *Forming a colonial economy*, p37

¹⁶ *Ibid* pp37-39

scholars of settler colonialism.

In contrast to densely populated Korea and Taiwan, Karafuto had a small native population and as a result was soon dominated by Japanese settlers. Seen as a *tabula rasa*, Karafuto offered a territory in which 'a free and magnificent new Japan' could be constructed, according to Yanaihara Tadao, the chair of colonial policy at Tokyo University.¹⁷ Nevertheless, it would be wrong to characterize Karafuto as solely a settler colony, because just as in the other formal colonies, the scale of investment in the region was considerable. Major firms, such as the Mitsui-affiliated Ōji Paper and Pulp Company, as well as the Mitsubishi and Mitsui mining concerns, were active in the colony, and Karafuto came to play an important role in supplying the Japanese economy with vital resources such as coal, paper and pulp, timber, and marine products. Karafuto may have been located in the northern periphery of the Japanese empire, but it was still an important and well integrated part of the empire's wider economy, and thus warrants our attention.

From the brief outline given above it should be clear that the absence of Karafuto from most accounts of Japan's colonial empire is not justified, especially from the point of view of colonial migration. Why then has the case of Karafuto largely been ignored in the historiography of Japan's colonial empire? The answer to this question lies largely within the broader shifts in the focus of historical enquiry which occurred in the post-war period. Initially, interest in the colonial empire was low in postwar Japan, and it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that studies on

¹⁷ Quoted in; Takeno. 'Jinkō mondai', p125

the former colonial empire emerged in great numbers. Reconstruction following defeat in World War Two was the pressing concern, and there was a pervading sense of wanting to forget, rather than reflect on, the imperial past.¹⁸

As Japan recovered and later excelled economically a number of new works emerged. To begin with, much of this literature was focused on the impetus and motivations which led to Japan's imperial expansion. Given the pervasive influence of Marxist academics in much of the postwar period, whether Japan fitted into a Marxist-Leninist framework of imperialism became a crucial issue for academic enquiry.¹⁹ Many of these earlier studies also highlighted the injustice of imperial expansion, and its oppressive nature towards the colonized. These themes of oppression and exploitation, often focusing on the colonizer-colonized dichotomy, were to continue to attract attention as the field diversified in the 1970s and 1980s. In these decades, reflecting currents in historical studies elsewhere, cultural history, post-colonialism, social history, gender studies, and the study of the history of policy (industrial, educational, medical etc.) emerged as active fields.

With Japan's postwar economic success being replicated in Taiwan and Korea, the theme of colonial development began to attract a larger part of the attention of scholars. Phenomenal rates of economic growth in South Korea and Taiwan led many to ask whether the roots of this success

¹⁸ Dower, J. (2000) *Embracing defeat: Japan in the wake of World War II*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York

¹⁹ Inoue, K. (1968) *Nihon teikokushugi no keisei*, Iwanami shoten, Tokyo

were to be found in the colonial past.²⁰ In addition to the heightened interest in their economic growth, scholars from these former colonial territories began to play a more prominent role in the academic debates on the former Japanese empire. This body of literature helped to bring out the view from the colony itself, giving a voice to the colonized, though often in staunchly nationalist terms.²¹ In this way comprehensive research into Japan's colonial empire has come to be centred on two main issues; the oppression of the colonized under Japanese rule – and those who downplay it – as well as the legacy of colonial development – positive, ambiguous, or negative.²² The centring of the field on these two issues has created a rich literature, which is still expanding rapidly.²³ In recent years, this surge in historical enquiry into the Japanese colonial empire has finally extended to Karafuto. For a long time however, it was the primacy of studies that were driven by an interest in the issues of oppression and development, which provided the main reason for why Karafuto was only mentioned in passing, or completely left out of the

²⁰ Kohli, A. (1994) 'Where do high growth political economies come from? The Japanese lineage of Korea's 'Developmental State', *World Development* 22/9; Eckert, C. (1991) *Offspring of empire: the Koch'ong Kims and the colonial origins of Korean capitalism*, University of Washington Press, Seattle; MacNamara, D. (1990) *The colonial origins of Korean enterprise*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

²¹ Nahm, A. (1973) *Korea under Japanese colonial rule: studies of the policy and techniques of Japanese colonialism*, Kalamazoo, Michigan

²² Cumings, B. (1986) 'The legacy of Japanese colonialism in Korea', in Myers & Peattie (eds.) *The Japanese colonial empire 1895-1945*, Princeton University Press, Princeton

²³ This paragraph and the next have relied heavily on the account presented in Yanagisawa, A. & Okabe, M. (2001) 'Kaisetsu: teikokushugi to shokuminchi', in Yanigisawa, A. & Okabe, M. (eds.) *Tenbō nihon rekishi 20: teikokushugi to shokuminchi*, Tokyodō shuppan, Tokyo

discussion altogether.

With a population which was overwhelmingly Japanese in its ethnic composition, Karafuto seemed of little relevance to literature that examined the colonizer-colonized dichotomy, and thus Karafuto was 'easy to leave out' from the discussion of oppression under colonialism.²⁴ Additionally, the characterization of Karafuto as a settler colony, rather than one in which capital formed the most obvious presence of the metropole, set it apart from Manchuria, Korea and Taiwan. This served to exclude Karafuto from the debate on whether the Marxist-Leninist model, in which imperial powers export surplus capital to colonies in order to exploit their resources and labour, applied to Japan. The unremarkable performance of the Sakhalin economy, especially when compared to Korea and Taiwan, in the postwar period has also served to detach Karafuto from discussions of the developmental legacy of Japanese colonial rule.

The difficulty in relating Karafuto to the central themes of debate was not the only reason it was long overlooked. There are also practical concerns related to conducting research on the territory, which have proved problematic. The strategic location of Sakhalin and its Soviet occupation made it virtually impossible to travel there for research purposes. Indeed, the author of the main text on the history of Sakhalin Island in English was not even able to visit the island once before his book was published.²⁵ In Soviet times, virtually the only foreigners to visit the Island were occasional groups of former Japanese residents, who were

²⁴ Takeno. 'Jinkō mondai', p118

²⁵ Stephan, J. (1971) *Sakhalin: a history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, see preface pp vi-vii

allowed to travel for the purpose of visiting family graves. Since the fall of the Soviet Union it has become possible for foreign researchers to visit Sakhalin, and some Japanese scholars have managed to conduct fieldwork on the island and establish links with researchers at Sakhalin University. Nonetheless, this has come after considerable effort as the island was designated a special border region, requiring special arrangements for foreign visitors and with some restrictions placed on travel outside of the capital Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.²⁶

In the next section a review of the literature that has been written on the Japanese colonial period in Karafuto is offered. The relevance of this literature to wider debates is stressed, and is followed by an outline of this study, its approach, sources, and specific academic contribution.

2.3 **State of the field and contribution: existing literature on colonial Karafuto**

English language studies on the Japanese colonial empire have emerged

²⁶ In 2013, most travel restrictions were lifted and the standard Russian tourist visa became accepted in Sakhalin – although it remains to be seen what effect the Ukraine crisis will have on this loosening of travel restrictions. In the course of this research I have not made a trip to Sakhalin. Budget, visa, and language constraints were the principal barriers, but during my fieldwork in Japan I had held hope that a trip to Sakhalin could be arranged. I eventually decided against making such a trip, having consulted several scholars at Hokkaido University who have travelled to Sakhalin for research purposes. During our consultations, the difficulty in getting the required travel documentation, the costs involved and the types of archival materials that are readily available in Sakhalin were intimated to me. I was advised that seeing as my research topic was limited to Sakhalin's years as a Japanese colony, it would be possible to find all of the relevant archival materials in Japan. Given my research theme it was suggested to me that any trip to Sakhalin would primarily serve the purpose of satisfying my individual curiosity, rather than as a means to obtain research materials.

in numbers only from the 1980s onwards, with Karafuto rarely being treated at all in English. One exception to this trend is John Stephan's 1971 publication, *Sakhalin: a history*, which provided the first authoritative account. Nonetheless, due to its position as the ground-breaking account of the history of Sakhalin, Stephan's scope was deliberately broad, and gives primacy to the issues of territorial claims through a narrative of the discovery and exploration of the island. As a result the work is limited in its coverage of the period of Japanese rule over the southern part of the island. Stephan tends to discuss Japanese territorial acquisition and eventual loss, rather than seek to locate Karafuto in the context of the history of the Japanese empire. Furthermore, the themes of migration and settlement, and the economic linkages between Karafuto and mainland Japan are brief, or entirely absent.

In more recent decades a limited number of articles and book chapters have appeared in English. Amongst these are a chapter in David Howell's study of the development of the fisheries of Hokkaido in the Meiji period,²⁷ an article by Morris-Suzuki concerned with settler identity,²⁸ and more recently an article by Shiode Hiroyuki, which seeks to locate Karafuto's political identity.²⁹ Shiode's study focuses on the process by which Karafuto was incorporated into the home islands of Japan,

²⁷ Howell, D. (1995) 'A right to be rational: Karafuto 1905-35', in *Capitalism from within: economy, society, and the state in a Japanese fishery*, University of California Press, California

²⁸ Morris-Suzuki, T. (2001) 'Northern lights: the making and unmaking of Karafuto identity', *Journal of Asian Studies* 60/3

²⁹ Shiode. 'Nation or colony?'

including a multitude of public responses to this process. Shiode examines the political debate and opinions of various groups as expressed in local newspapers and journals, finding that most Japanese settlers accepted incorporation into the mainland as a long term goal, and regarded it as fully justifiable given the ethnic composition of the 'colony.' Nonetheless, the threat that full incorporation posed to the continuation of the colony's special budget to fund major construction and development projects led to a clash between divergent interest groups within Karafuto. Morris-Suzuki's article is more concerned with cultural, rather than explicitly political, dimensions of identity. She examines contemporary colonial fiction and visual representations of Karafuto, such as those in guidebooks and films, in order to articulate how a 'Karafuto identity' was formed and represented. Despite their different approaches, both scholars find a dual sense of belonging amongst settlers, who felt a tension between forming a distinctive colonial identity and integrating as just another part of the mainland. These studies have shown that Japanese colonizers were far from being a homogenous group, as has often been assumed in much of the literature on the Japanese colonial empire, and were characterized by a diversity of interests.

Howell's chapter on Karafuto, which appears in his book *Capitalism from within*, focuses on the trials and tribulations of small-scale fishermen who came to Karafuto. Howell documents their struggle with the colonial government over fishing rights in the early years of colonization. With the inconsistent and declining catch off the Japan Sea coast and Hokkaido, fishermen from this area were increasingly driven northwards to places like Karafuto in search of a

better catch. These independent fishermen came into conflict with a colonial government that sought to restrict their activities, and favoured large-scale fishing operators in order to generate greater tax revenue from fishing licences, and help maintain fish stocks. The colonial government also wished to promote the permanent settlement of the colony along agricultural lines, and distrusted small-scale fishermen, who were viewed as transients, seeking a quick fortune and with no plans to settle down in Karafuto.

Taking Howell's chapter as a departure point, in chapters four and five of this study I will examine whether the colonial government's vision for agricultural settlement and dismissiveness of settlement based on fishing were justifiable. The main theme with which Howell's book is concerned, however, is not the theme of colonial settlement in Karafuto as such, but the process by which capitalism emerged indigenously in Japan and the effects thereof. Through a case study of the development of the fishery and fish fertilizer industry across the Tokugawa and Meiji periods, Howell traces the commodification of labour (i.e. proletarianization) which occurred in the industry's capitalist development. In Howell's overall schema, the significance of the story of conflict between the Karafuto colonial administration and the small-scale independent fishermen was as a kind of final struggle for economic independence on the part of the fishermen, so as to avoid becoming wage labourers in larger commercial fisheries. Despite the divergent theme with this study, Howell has demonstrated that Japan's peripheral regions and colonial empire are highly relevant to many aspects of its modern history. This study will attempt to relate the analysis provided in Howell's account to colonial

settlement, contrasting the relative contribution of both fishing and agricultural communities to the process of fostering permanent settlements in Karafuto.

The body of literature in the Japanese language which examines the former Japanese colonial empire is huge. Nonetheless, as has been discussed, treatment of Karafuto within this literature has been minimal and Karafuto as an object of study has only recently begun to gain attention with a number of articles published in recent years. This recent activity has been the result of thematic diversification of research into the colonial empire, and the easing of restrictions regarding travel to Sakhalin. Before this the only studies of note which examined Karafuto, even in Japanese, were those conducted by the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (National Karafuto League), a group of those formerly connected with, or repatriated from Karafuto. The publications of the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, whilst informative, tend to shy away from critical discussion and enquiry. Indeed, the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei's history of the colonial administration, published in 1978,³⁰ tends to borrow heavily – in content, style, and rhetoric – from an official history of the colonial administration published in 1936. The group's history of the war's end in Karafuto,³¹ published in 1973, remains the most extensive account of the Japanese version of events during Karafuto's final days, but provides little of relevance to this study which focuses on the period before the Pacific War.

³⁰ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (1978) *Karafuto enkaku gyōseishi*, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, Tokyo

³¹ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (1973) *Karafuto shūsenshi*, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, Tokyo

The approaches taken by Japanese scholars of the former colonial empire have increasingly diversified, and as a result a number of hitherto overlooked aspects of the colonial past have attracted research interest.³² This has meant that gradually Karafuto is becoming a case considered in independent academic enquiry. A more diversified field has not meant that research on Karafuto has ignored the tension between the colonized and colonizer, which characterized much of the literature on Japan's colonial empire. Indeed, treatment of the fate of the island's natives, though small in numbers, has generated much interest, especially among scholars working on local history in Hokkaido to the south of Sakhalin Island. The Ainu in particular have gained much of the attention in this regard,³³ as have Sakhalin's Koreans – despite not being native to Sakhalin.³⁴

Tamura's research, in particular, has documented the history of Sakhalin Ainu during the years of Russo-Japanese rivalry over the territory. His research has highlighted the forced relocation of Sakhalin Ainu, following the ceding of Sakhalin to Russia in the 1875 Treaty of St. Petersburg. At that time Japan had maintained that the Ainu were part

³² Yanagisawa & Okabe. *Kaisetsu*'

³³ Morris-Suzuki, T. (2000) *Henkyō kara nagameru – Ainu ga keiken suru kindai*, Misuzu shobō, Tokyo; Tamura, M. (2008) 'Karafuto Ainu no hikiage', in Araragi, S. (ed.) *Nihon teikoku wo meguru jinkō idō no kokusai shakaigaku*, Fufuta shuppan, Tokyo; Akizuki, T. (2003) *Saharin senryō nikki 1853-54: Roshiajin no mita Nihonjin to Ainu*, Heibōsha, Tokyo

³⁴ Hokkaidō Shinbunsha (1988) *Sokoku he! Saharin ni nokosareta hitotachi*, Hokkaidō shinbunsha, Sapporo; Abe, Y. (2001) '1920-nendai no Karafuto chiiki kaihatsu ni okeru chūgokujin rōdōsha koyō seisaku', *Jinbun chiri* 53/2; Miki, M. (2003) 'Senkanki Karafuto ni okeru Chōsenjin shakai no keisei', *Shakai keizaishigaku* 68/5

of the Japanese nation, and as such forcibly relocated a large number of Sakhalin Ainu to Hokkaido, where a new mode of living and disease environment meant that the Sakhalin Ainu population suffered heavy losses.³⁵ As Japan established the colony of Karafuto in 1905, a number of Sakhalin Ainu returned to the island, where Japan established ‘reserves’ to manage, and ‘protect’, the natives of Sakhalin.³⁶ Morris-Suzuki considers the complex identity of Japanese settlers in Karafuto, but also dedicates much space to the ambiguous position of Karafuto’s natives in the wider empire. Japan had forcibly relocated the Sakhalin Ainu based on inclusive rhetoric, but then continued with discrimination, operating a reserves policy for the sake of ‘protection’, and enumerating the Ainu separately from Japanese. The Ainu would eventually campaign successfully for their recognition as ordinary Japanese in the 1930s, gaining various rights such as inclusion in the Japanese family registration system, and ceasing to be enumerated separately in the national census – as Koreans and other native groups continued to be.³⁷ This did not bring a total end to discrimination, and other native groups were unable to gain the same level of recognition in Japanese society as the Ainu had done. Nonetheless, Japanese defeat in World War Two

³⁵ Karafuto Ainu-shi kenkyūkai (1992) *Tsuishikari no ishibumi: Karafuto Ainu kyōsei ijū no rekishi*, Hokkaido shuppan kiga sentaa, Sapporo

³⁶ Tamura, M. (2007) ‘Shirahama ni okeru shūjū seisaku no ito to Karafuto Ainu’, *Bulletin of Historical Museum of Hokkaido* 35, pp87-100; Tamura, M. (2010) ‘Karafuto-chō ni yoru dojin gyoba wo chūshin toshita senjūmin seisaku no kiyō’, in Historical Museum of Hokkaido (ed.) *Modern and contemporary history of indigenous peoples and immigrants over the resources of northern regions: reports of joint research on northern cultures*, Historical Museum of Hokkaido, Sapporo

³⁷ Morris-Suzuki. *Henkyō kara nagameru*

meant that the ‘assimilation’ of the Sakhalin Ainu served to sever them from their homeland for a second time. Sakhalin Ainu were included in the official repatriation of Japanese citizens as Sakhalin was unified under the Soviet flag, resettling in clusters across remote parts of Hokkaido, such as at Tokoro and Wakasakanai.³⁸

The prominence of research which reveals the fate of Sakhalin’s Ainu and other natives does not mean that academic research on Karafuto has been dominated by the colonized-colonizer dichotomy, with scholars directing their attention to various aspects of the socio-economic landscape of Karafuto. Itani has published various papers on architectural history and urban planning in Karafuto, revealing much about the intentions of the colonial government for development in the colony.³⁹ Hirai has analyzed the financial aspects of the colonial government of Karafuto, revealing the dependence of the colonial regime on the exploitation of Karafuto’s fisheries and forests as a source of revenue.⁴⁰ In two separate articles, Koiwa has examined legal aspects of the management of fisheries in Karafuto, as well as the operations of one particular commercial fishery owner in the colony, showing that operations were complex and not always highly profitable.⁴¹

Takeo Manabu discusses Karafuto in the context of the debate on

³⁸ Tamura. ‘Karafuto Ainu no hikiage’

³⁹ A synthesis of his articles is provided in: Itani, H. (2007) *Saharin no naka no Nihon-toshi to kenchiku*, Tōyō shoten, Tokyo

⁴⁰ Hirai. ‘Karafuto shokuminchi zaisei’

⁴¹ Koiwa, N. (2008) ‘Meiji gyogyōhō taiseika no Karafuto gyogyō to Noheiji shusshin shōnin no katsudō’, *Hirosaki daigaku keizai kenkyū* 31; Koiwa, N. (2010) ‘Nihon tōjika no Karafuto gyogyō to gyogyō seido no tenkai’, *Tokyo kokusai daigaku ronsō keizai gakubun* 42

Japan's prewar population problem, where he highlights its importance to this debate as a settler colony.⁴² Takeno has also examined the performance of the agricultural sector in Karafuto in a series of articles, arguing that it ultimately failed to really take off in the colony. Despite nominally focusing on policy, Takeno does not really question the overall validity of the plans to make Karafuto into an agricultural colony, or discuss the relation of agriculture to the production of 'settled' communities, choosing instead to focus on the sector's performance.⁴³ Nonetheless, Takeno's research has revealed a degree of tension between the goals of agricultural settlers and the designs of the colonial government, mostly concerning the cultivation of cash crops, which the settlers pursued and the colonial government discouraged in favour of subsistence farming.⁴⁴ In this sense, Takeno's study strengthens the picture of a settler population not always able to see eye-to-eye with the colonial government, a picture which resonates with the works of Morris-Suzuki, Howell, and Shiode. In a similar vein is Nakayama Taishō's 2013 publication, which updates his doctoral thesis and takes up the theme of the evolving national identity of Karafuto's settler population.⁴⁵ Nakayama highlights tension between the colonial authorities' ideology of creating a self-sufficient colony in food, and the

⁴² Takeno. 'Jinkō mondai', p131

⁴³ Takeno, M. (2005) 'Karafuto nōgyō to shokumin-gaku', Sapporo University Regional Economics Research Centre 1; Takeno, M. (2009) '1940 nendai ni okeru Karafuto nōgyō imin seisaku no tenkai', *Nōgyōshi Kenkyū* 43, pp14-25

⁴⁴ Takeno, M. (2001) 'Shokuminchi Karafuto nōgyō no jittai; 1928-40 nen no shūdan imin ki wo chūshin to shite', *Shakai keizai shigaku* 66/5

⁴⁵ Nakayama, T. (2013) *Akantai shokuminchi Karafuto no imin shakai keisei – shūokuteki nashonaru aidentitii to shokuminchi ideogii*, Kyoto University Press, Kyoto

reality that Karafuto's settlers ate white rice as the staple of their diet, even though it could not be produced in Karafuto, and was thus imported from Japan.⁴⁶

The most active scholar in recent years has been Miki Masafumi, who published a series of articles on Karafuto, and a book-form historical introduction.⁴⁷ In 2012 Miki published a collection of his numerous articles, including work on topics such as the development of the coal industry, migration patterns of agricultural settlers, the emergence of a Korean community in Karafuto, and the migratory labour phenomenon.⁴⁸ Throughout the work Miki refers to Karafuto as a settler colony, as do most Japanese scholars, without really questioning whether this label is appropriate, or to what extent the Karafuto population could be described as 'settled'. This study will seek to ask these questions so as to further our understanding. Nonetheless, Miki's work has provided a useful reference point from which to base this study, and a number of his findings are expanded upon here. The first of these relates to his chapter on migration patterns in which he utilizes life stories of agricultural settlers in order to examine the migration process. Miki finds that a majority of agricultural settlers came to Karafuto following a period of work, often as migratory labourers, or residence on Hokkaido. The representativeness of Miki's finding could be questioned on the basis of the size of his sample, a mere

⁴⁶ *Ibid* pp242-243

⁴⁷ Miki, M. (2003) 'Senkanki Karafuto ni okeru chōsenjin shakai no keisei', *Shakai keizaishigaku* 68/5; Miki, M. (2006) *Kokkyō no shokuminchi Karafuto*, Hanawa shobō, Tokyo

⁴⁸ Miki. *Ijūgata shokuminchi Karafuto*

13 individuals, and the fact that he examined only agricultural settlers.⁴⁹ Additionally, the main source for his study was an official publication of the colonial administration, which gives the recollections of ‘exemplary farmers’ in order to encourage farming in the colony. This is hardly a representative source as it presents only a handful of successful agricultural settlers, whose stories passed through the filter of the colonial administration’s publications section. Despite these problems, in chapter three of this study I validate Miki’s finding by increasing the size of his sample, and broadening its scope to include settlers from a number of different occupational groups.

Miki was the first among scholars treating Karafuto to think seriously about the migratory labour phenomenon, highlighting its importance to Karafuto’s economy, and its role in connecting the colony to various localities in mainland Japan.⁵⁰ In his study, Miki examined the social background of a handful of skilled carpenters, who travelled to Karafuto in the first few years of Japanese colonial rule. His study is based on a chance discovery of papers related to migratory labour in Karafuto in the Iwate prefectural archives, and tentatively suggests that migratory labourers going to Karafuto from Iwate were from relatively deprived areas. The documents he utilizes are limited in a number of ways, which undermine Miki’s ability to claim his findings are

⁴⁹ As well as the book chapter see the original article: Miki, M. (2003) ‘Nōgyō imin ni miru Karafuto to Hokkaidō’, *Rekishi chirigaku* 45/1

⁵⁰ The fuller original chapter may be of interest: Miki, M. (2008) ‘Meiji makki Iwate-ken kara no Karafuto dekasegi – kenchiku ginō shūdan no tanki kaikikei tokō no bunseki o chūshin ni’, in Araragi, S. (ed) *Nihon teikoku o meguru jinkō idō no kokusai shakaigaku*, Funi shuppan, Tokyo

representative. Firstly, the documents he examined are limited to a period of four to five years at the outset of Japanese rule on Karafuto.⁵¹ Secondly, the geographical scope of the documents limits Miki's analysis to Iwate prefecture, and at present there have been no similar documents uncovered for other regions or time periods. A further limitation is the size of the sample, which at only a handful of individuals limits Miki's ability to draw general conclusions. Further still, the occupation of the migratory labourers is far from representative, as the sample is limited to a number of skilled carpenters. Unskilled positions in the fishing and forestry sectors were the predominant occupations for migratory labourers in Karafuto, and Miki recognises that the labour market for the skilled workers which make up his sample may have differed from the general unskilled one.⁵² Despite these shortcomings Miki has made a useful attempt at linking the migratory labour phenomenon in Karafuto to economic conditions in the sending prefectures of northern Japan.

Miki also correctly highlights that many studies of Karafuto have failed to examine migratory labour, despite frequent, if tacit, recognition of its importance to the colonial economy. Migratory labour is often passed over, and excluded from a discussion of settlement, with scholars uncritically accepting the contemporary bureaucratic distinction between transient, 'get-rich-quick' migrants (*imin*), and the permanent, laudable settler-colonist (*ijū shokumin*).⁵³ This study seeks to rectify this problem by examining settlement alongside migratory labour, and questioning the

⁵¹ Miki. 'Meiji makki Iwate-ken kara no Karafuto dekasegi', pp408-409

⁵² *Ibid* pp427-428

⁵³ *Ibid* pp403-405

rationale for rigidly categorizing settlers and migratory labourers separately. This study shows that to do so is to ignore the processes and mechanism by which a large share of Karafuto's population came to reside in the colony. Chapter three of this study examines the backgrounds of settlers, finding that a migratory labour experience often preceded lasting settlement. Chapters four and five question the rationale and results of official programmes to encourage the agricultural settlement of the colony, suggesting that the fishing industry played a more important role as an economic basis for settlement. Additionally, extensive utilization of migratory labour in the fishing industry indirectly acted as a vehicle towards settlement by keeping Karafuto connected with northern Japan. In such a way the fishing industry served to familiarize potential settlers with the colony, and provided crucial supplementary income to Karafuto residents in other occupations.

2.4 State of the field and contribution: Japanese colonial migration and migratory labour in the Japanese economy

The discussion thus far highlights that Karafuto, despite being largely overlooked, has a justified place in the literature on Japan's colonial empire. In recent years Karafuto has begun to attract some attention, however, the study of its history remains in its infancy. This study seeks to join these recent works, and help to bring the case of Karafuto out of the footnotes of most discussions of the Japanese colonial empire. Nonetheless, the historiography of the colonial empire is not the only field in which I hope to locate this study. Karafuto is interesting in the sense that it speaks to some broader themes in Japanese history, providing

fresh perspectives which have important implications for our understanding. One such theme is the phenomenon of migratory labour in the prewar Japanese economy. According to a central government publication, in 1924 Karafuto was the eleventh most common destination for Japanese migratory labourers in the entire Japanese empire.⁵⁴ In all likelihood the government survey underestimated the scale of the migratory labour flow to Karafuto, as it was known that many travelled to the colony for work without submitting the proper documentation (see chapters three and six). Issues with data and documentation aside, it is clear that Karafuto was an important part of the wider migratory labour market, which was one of the defining features of the prewar Japanese economic system.⁵⁵

The pervasiveness of migratory labour in Japan's prewar industrialization process, and what it implied about the Japanese countryside, has been the subject of considerable debate. Those that have portrayed rural Japan as a victim in the modernization process have stressed the disproportionate price that rural areas paid. The countryside is variously said to have contributed the larger part of the necessary tax revenues for state developmental projects, provided an unlimited supply of cheap labour for industry, fed the population at low prices, and suffered under the burden of high-rents and semi-servile conditions in a countryside gripped by abusive landlords.⁵⁶ Yamada Moritarō famously

⁵⁴ Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku (1927) *Dekasegimono chōsa*, Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku, Tokyo, calculated from statistical table 3 (no pagination)

⁵⁵ Ōkochi. (1950) 'Chinrōdō'; Umemura, M. (1961) *Chingin koyō nōgyō*, Iwanami, Tokyo, pp192-208 for a discussion on this point

⁵⁶ Ōuchi, T. (1969) *Nihon ni okeru nōminsō no bunkai*, Tokyo University Press, Tokyo;

argued that despite the Meiji Restoration, relations of production in the countryside in Japan remained essentially feudal.⁵⁷ For him rural Japan was characterized by the non-economic power of landlords over their tenants, and the high rents, which left tenant farmers with virtually no surplus after their subsistence needs had been met. For Yamada, Japanese capitalism developed precisely on the basis of the persistence of semi-feudal relations in the countryside. These relations facilitated accelerated capital accumulation in the hands of economic elites through a cruel extraction of economic rents, and created a situation in which peasant families were willing to dispatch members to dangerous factories, construction sites, or brothels in order to obtain pitifully low wages just to make ends meet.⁵⁸

There are a number of studies that have argued that, on balance, the Japanese countryside was largely a beneficiary of the nation's modernization and industrial growth. These tend not to take issues such as tenancy disputes – i.e. class struggle – or the relations of production as the principal foci of analysis, and instead treat a whole range of other phenomena such as economic growth, productivity/technological change, the standards of living, and consumption levels. Scholars and participants at a conference held in Tokyo, which produced the work; *Agriculture and economic growth: Japan's experience*, found that Japan provided a 'model'

Nakamura, M. (1976) *Rōdōsha to nōmin*. Shogakkan, Tokyo

⁵⁷ Yamada, M. (1934) *Nihon shihonshugi bunseki*. Iwanami, Tokyo, pp186-188

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the debate between Japanese scholars in the interwar years please refer to: Yasuba, Y. (1975) 'Anatomy of the debate on Japanese capitalism', *Journal of Japanese Studies* 2/1; Hoston, G. (1987) *Marxism and the crisis of development in prewar Japan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton

for developing countries to follow.⁵⁹ This work suggested that Japanese agricultural development, in contrast to North American and European models, occurred without the emergence of significant economies of scale or capital intensity. As a result the Japanese agricultural sector was neither remarkable for its concentration in land ownership, nor highly mechanized. Instead agricultural productivity growth in Japan came in the form of the dissemination of knowledge and best-practice techniques that were labour-intensive in nature, and thus tended to favour the small-scale farmer.⁶⁰ The significance of these innovations is that they benefited all cultivators, with landlords actually playing an active role in the dissemination of techniques, as they and their tenants stood to gain from the resulting production increase.⁶¹ Thus the scholars that contributed to the 1969 publication edited by Ohkawa, Johnston and Kaneda were advocating a model whereby agriculture could grow alongside industry. The Japanese model, it was argued, offered developing countries a blueprint, whereby agricultural growth could take place without competing for the scarce resources and capital that were required for investment in industrial concerns. Agricultural development, in such a model, came 'on-the-cheap' and provided a stabilizing influence on society during the dislocations of industrial change.

⁵⁹ Ohkawa, K., Johnston, B. & Kaneda, H. (eds.) (1969) *Agriculture and economic growth: Japan's experience*, Princeton University Press, Princeton. In particular see the chapter by Johnston.

⁶⁰ Francks, P. (1992) *Japanese economic development: theory and practice*, Routledge, London, pp120-123

⁶¹ Dore, R. (1959) 'The Meiji landlord: good or bad?', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 18/3; Waswo, A. (1977) *Japanese landlords: the decline of a rural elite*, University of California Press, California

Industrialization could also contribute to agricultural growth and scholars have been quick to suggest the numerous linkages and complementarity between the different sectors of the economy.⁶² Urban industrial centres were a large market for primary products, and industrial output could provide cheaper and more effective agricultural inputs, such as chemical fertilizers. Nonetheless, this more positive view of Japan's pre-war agricultural development is not without its flaws. For the most part the focus has been on the macro-economy, and thus it has tended to direct attention away from the significant levels of regional variation that existed.⁶³ Francks has shown the positive story on a local level with her study of the Saga plain, but knowledge that the conditions in Saga are not necessarily representative of the country as a whole detracts from our ability to extrapolate her detailed study onto a national scale.⁶⁴ Another one of the key problems in analysing prewar rural Japan has been that of how to characterize the agents themselves, as peasants or farmers, passive or active, vulnerable to the market or liberated by it.⁶⁵

⁶² Hayami, Y. & Kikuchi, M. (1978) 'Agricultural growth against a land resource constraint: a comparative history of Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and the Philippines', *Journal of Economic History* 38/4

⁶³ Francks. *Japanese economic development*, pp126-7; Waswo. *Japanese landlords*: This was true in terms of environmental conditions, which in the colder northeast were a barrier to the spread of higher-yielding rice varieties that facilitated double-cropping. It was also true in terms of the nature of landlord-tenant relations, which in the northeast still resembled the more paternal relations of the early-modern period.

⁶⁴ Francks, P. (1984) *Technology and agricultural development in pre-war Japan*, Yale University Press, New Haven

⁶⁵ A good review of this problem is to be found in the following review article: Bowen, R. (1988) 'Japanese peasants: Moral? Rational? Revolutionary? Duped?', *Journal of Asian Studies* 47/4

Francks has argued that farm families were able to actively engage in sophisticated local industrial production alongside farming,⁶⁶ pursuing multiple sources of income as a deliberate strategy which balanced income maximization with mitigating risk (chapter four in this study indicates Karafuto agricultural settlers did the same). This positive portrayal of the strategy of Japanese farm families, what Francks terms ‘pluriactivity,’ has also been used as evidence of poverty by other scholars. Nakamura Masanori is among them, and although he acknowledges that these income sources made a significant contribution to family budgets, he argues that the contribution facilitated the payment of high rents to parasitic landlords. Payment of high rents prevented the alienation of tenant farm families from their land, but in sustaining poor families in the countryside, it also served to perpetuate the chronic poverty of agricultural villages.⁶⁷ Nakamura’s work makes use of contemporary press reports on the conditions in the villages, but it does not account for the extent to which poor farmers had control over their own destinies, nor does it explore the alternatives they had to remaining in the village.

Most scholars agree that migratory labour and by-employment played a very important role in the economic activity of many a rural family, however as yet there is no clear consensus on whether this was related to poverty. Contemporaries largely accepted the link with poverty, and examinations of conditions for migratory female textile workers have provided plenty of horror stories, leading scholars to question why anyone

⁶⁶ Francks, P. (2006) *Rural economic development in Japan: from the nineteenth century to the Pacific War*, Routledge, London

⁶⁷ Nakamura. *Rōdōsha to nōmin*, pp169-170

would engage in such work if not out of desperation.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, a number of scholars, notably Taira and Hunter,⁶⁹ have found much evidence to suggest that migratory labour was neither cheap nor always connected to the rural poor. Hunter, for example, notes that there were conspicuously few migratory workers from the relatively poor northeast working in the textile mills of central Japan – a finding that appears counterintuitive if migratory labour is expected to be associated with the push of poverty. This study seeks to expand on the revisions offered by Hunter and Taira, by specifically examining the migratory labour phenomenon in Karafuto, a destination which attracted a great number of migratory labourers from the ‘backward’ northeast.

Somewhat inevitably much of the attention given to migratory labour has examined the phenomenon in the context of central Japan, because this is where the modern silk and cotton textiles production centres emerged. Although the focus on the textiles industries is to some extent justified by the important role these sectors played in Japan’s industrialization, in this study a de-centring of our understanding of migratory labour is pursued with an examination of migratory labour in the colonial periphery of Japan’s far north. Admittedly, the industries which attracted migratory labourers to Karafuto were in relative decline; however, they continued to make up highly significant segments of the

⁶⁸ Tsurumi, E. P. (1990) *Factory girls: women in the thread mills of Meiji Japan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Hosoi, W. (1954 reprint of 1925) *Jōko aishi*, Iwanami shoten, Tokyo

⁶⁹ Hunter, J. (2003) *Women and the labour market in Japan’s industrializing economy: the textile industry before the Pacific War*, Routledge, London; Taira, K. (1970) *Economic development and the labour market in Japan*, University of Columbia Press, New York

overall migratory labour market. As late as 1924, for example, approximately one in ten migratory labourers (nationwide) headed for work in the fishing industry alone, with Karafuto the second most popular destination, throughout Japan and its empire, for migratory labour in the fishing industry.⁷⁰

Considering the fact that many of the migratory labourers – not to mention settlers – going to Karafuto came from what have been considered the poorer agricultural regions of Japan – the northeast (Tohoku) and Japan Sea coast (Hokuriku) ⁷¹ – the case of migratory labour in Karafuto seems highly relevant to wider debates. Karafuto's location close to regions noted for their relative poverty means that it can offer a particularly interesting perspective from which to view outlets for poverty – be that migratory labour or colonial settlement. This study does not seek to dismiss the poverty argument outright, which would require another project entirely, but it does seek to deepen our understanding of the broader picture of migratory labour in the Japanese empire. This task is achieved in chapter six of this study, which provides an analysis of the structure, and conditions in the migratory labour market in Japan's northern periphery. Chapter six presents evidence to suggest that in contrast to prevailing notions, migratory labourers from the northeast were able to participate on their own terms in what was a very active migratory labour in Japan's far north. Migratory labour encompassed a certain degree of danger and risk, but it appears that in Karafuto at least,

⁷⁰ Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku. *Dekasegimono chōsa*, see tables 3 and 4

⁷¹ Taeuber, I. (1958) *The population of Japan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p178; Miki. *Ijūgata shokuminchi Karafuto*, p224

migratory labourers from the more 'advanced' regions of Japan were the most at risk from exploitation and abuse, as opposed to those from the 'backward' northeast.

Before proceeding to outline the approach of this study, its sources, and research questions, it is worth highlighting the contribution it can make to colonial studies, beyond simply bringing Karafuto out of the footnotes. The first of these contributions is, as we mentioned in the introduction, to better 'populate the Japanese colonial landscape with living, acting individuals.'⁷² In the seminal edited volume, *The Japanese colonial empire 1895-1945*, Peattie acknowledged that there was a major weakness pervading the work to which he was contributing. This was that the contributors had essentially focused on super-structures and state activity in the colonial empire, failing to give any account of ground-level agents. Indeed, despite the influence of this volume there was much criticism of the approach taken, with Schmid noting that the colonized were almost entirely absent from the discussion.⁷³ Nonetheless, since *The Japanese colonial empire 1895-1945* a number of works have done much to examine the colonizer/colonized dichotomy, and bring out the voice of the colonized. This body of literature has shed light on various aspects of the everyday experience of the colonized under colonial rule, exploring oral histories, assimilationist policies, resistance to – as well as collaboration with – the colonial state, discrimination and education

⁷² Peattie. 'Introduction', p52

⁷³ Schmid, A. (2000) 'Colonialism and the 'Korean problem' in the historiography of modern Japan: a review article', *Journal of Asian Studies* 59/4

amongst other themes.⁷⁴ In these studies the voices and activities of the colonizer have rarely been examined, with the focus very much being on the relations between the colonial state and the colonized mass. Japanese colonial settlers – their agendas and activities – have as a result been assumed to go hand-in-hand with the colonial state, leaving little room for the possibility of a heterogeneous colonizing group. Many studies in this tradition sought to emphasize heroic nationalist resistance and the exploitative nature of Japanese rule, a task readily achieved when pitting David – the helpless colonized – against Goliath – the colonial state – in an unlikely narrative of the weak overcoming the all-powerful. This type of narrative may have served a purpose, but it also largely failed to explore everyday interactions between ordinary Japanese and the colonized, which a range of sources indicate were far more complex than otherwise suggested by conventional narratives.⁷⁵

A notable exception to this trend of assuming a homogenous Japanese colonial presence, and omitting ordinary Japanese settlers from the grand-narrative can be found in Jun Uchida's *Brokers of Empire*.

⁷⁴ Examples include: Kang, H. (2001) *Under the black umbrella: voices from colonial Korea 1910-1945*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca; Shin, G-W. & Robinson, M. (2001) *Colonial modernity in Korea*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA; Ching, L-T. (2001) *'Becoming Japanese': colonial Taiwan and the politics of identity formation*, University of California Press, California; Chou, W. (1993) *The kominka movement: Taiwan under wartime Japan 1937-1945*, Ann Arbor, Michigan

⁷⁵ Yuasa, K (trans. Driscoll). (2005) (first published 1934 & 1935) *Kannani & Document of flames: two Japanese colonial novels*, Duke University Press, Durham & London; Duus, P. (1995) *The abacus and the sword: the Japanese penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*, University of California Press, California; Uchida, J. (2011) *Brokers of empire: Japanese settler colonialism in Korea 1910-1937*, Harvard University Asia Centre, Cambridge MA; Kimura, K. (1989) *Zaichō Nihonjin no shakaishi*, Miraisha, Tokyo

Uchida takes to task conventional studies of Japan's colonization of Korea, offering us an original analysis of the Japanese settler community in Korea – the largest of Japan's overseas communities. In contrast to many previous scholars, she does not limit her study to an exploration of the colonized-colonizer dichotomy in colonial Korea, nor focus exclusively on the relationship between the colonial state and Korean society. Instead Uchida adds the obscured history of the Japanese settlers to the picture, allowing us to appreciate the sheer diversity of interests that characterized the settler community. Furthermore, without presuming the settler community's subservience to the colonial state, Uchida is able to elucidate how the presence of a heterogeneous group of Japanese settlers complicated the operation of colonial rule and implementation of colonial policy.⁷⁶

This study seeks to extend the work of Uchida to some extent by examining the case of Karafuto. The nature of Karafuto as a settler colony populated overwhelmingly by Japanese settlers is particularly useful in this regard, as it allows us to examine the Japanese settler community in a setting where there was no majority native population. The case of Karafuto, as an outlier, ensures that the focus of enquiry is directed towards the Japanese settlers themselves, without the issue of the colonized-colonizer dichotomy dominating discussion, and directing attention to ethnic conflict. This is not to suggest that Karafuto was uninhabited before the Japanese colonial period, however, as was elucidated to in chapter one, the native population of the colony was small

⁷⁶ Uchida. *Brokers of empire*, pp394-397

and soon to be overwhelmed by Japanese settlers. When the territory became a Japanese colony in 1905 the natives soon became a minority, which ‘almost disappeared from sight, inundated by waves of Japanese settlers.’⁷⁷ The 1930 national census records a total of 10,998 non-Japanese in Karafuto, which had a total population of 295,196. Most of the non-Japanese residents of the colony were Koreans, who were also migrants, with ‘natives’ numbering only 2,164 in 1930.⁷⁸ Quite clearly, in contrast to Japan’s other colonial territories, Karafuto offers a case in which Japanese settlers dominated the colony demographically, as well as politically.

The case of Karafuto can also make a useful contribution to a body of literature which analyses the overseas migration of Japanese. This literature has tended to focus on cases of non-colonial migration, despite the fact that the colonies attracted more migrants (see figure 1.2 in chapter one for an overview). The literature which has examined Japanese colonial migration has tended to focus on the case of Manchuria, in which the promotion of large-scale resettlement of Japanese farmers became a prominent national policy in the 1930s.⁷⁹ This focus on Manchuria is in many ways misleading, as it has limited chronological coverage, but also because it is coloured by the coercive nature of the Manchurian migration movement, occurring as it did during the

⁷⁷ Stephan. *Sakhalin*, p90

⁷⁸ Kokusei Chōsa (1931) *Kokusei chōsa kekka hyō – Karafuto chō*. pp616-648

Of the 10,998 non-Japanese, there were 8,306 Koreans, 2,164 Natives (1,681 of which were Ainu), 319 Chinese, 170 Russians, 21 Poles, 2 Lithuanians, 2 Turks, a German, and a Swede.

⁷⁹ Young. *Japan’s total empire*

exceptional circumstances of Japan in the late 1930s and early 1940s.⁸⁰ This focus on Manchuria has served to provide an unrepresentative account of what was driving colonial migration, and meant that stereotyped images of the Manchurian migrant have also dominated postwar discourse on repatriates from the former colonial empire.⁸¹ Migration to Karafuto has yet to be examined in great detail, and offers a useful corrective to such accounts. It offers a case in which migration extended over a 40 year period, and was characterized by the free movement of settlers, with the (non-coercive) encouragement of authorities in both the colony and metropole.⁸²

2.5 Research questions and approach

Tracking the movement of over 400,000 people across a thirty seven year period (1905-1941),⁸³ and with the three aims outlined at the beginning of this chapter, is a task that requires a number of approaches. Inevitably many questions will need to be addressed in the course of the study, but

⁸⁰ Mori. 'Colonies and countryside in wartime Japan'

⁸¹ Tamanoi, M. (2008) *Memory maps: the state and Manchuria in postwar Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu; Watt, L. (2009) *When empire comes home: repatriation and reintegration in postwar Japan*, Harvard University Press, Honolulu; Bull, J. (2014) *The making of Karafuto repatriates*, unpublished PhD thesis Hokkaido University, Sapporo

⁸² Takeno. 'Jinkō mondai'

⁸³ The time frame of this study does not include the years 1942-1945. The reason for this omission is that the Pacific War provided a huge disruption to Karafuto's settlement programme. With a shortage of shipping due to war losses, national policy firmly behind settling Manchuria, and the arrival of forced labour from Korea, the Japanese settlement of Karafuto was more or less put on hold. Additionally, the main source materials on which this study is based are mostly unavailable for the years 1942-45.

the basic research questions from which this study begins are as follows:

- What were the overall patterns of migration to Karafuto, and the backgrounds of migrants/settlers?
- What were the motivations and circumstances which led Japanese to migrate to Karafuto (as seasonal workers and/or as permanent settlers)?
- How 'settled' was Karafuto, and which economic activities provided the basis for settlement?
- Did the colonial administration's vision and policy play a leading role in settling 400,000 Japanese in the colony, or were there other more important dynamics/mechanisms, independent of policy?
- What was the structure of the migratory labour market in Karafuto, and what were conditions like at Karafuto worksites?

Working towards providing answers to the major research questions outlined above requires the examination of a wide range of primary sources materials, and the application of a number of historical approaches. Nevertheless, the various parts of this study are united by one overarching principle/approach, namely to wherever possible utilize the source materials which bring us closest to the agents involved. Thankfully, during the forty year period when Karafuto was a Japanese colony, a whole range of contemporary source materials were produced. Furthermore, these sources have survived and are available in various archives across Japan, making such a study like this possible. These source materials will be outlined after a brief discussion of the approach

taken to the main research questions outlined above.

The first and second questions above treat the courses and patterns of migration to Karafuto, as well as the motivations behind the migratory flow. In anticipation of a diversity of experience, this study attempts to address the possibility that there were various migratory courses, and a diverse set of motivating factors. In order to explore this possibility, an examination of the profiles and migration backgrounds of a large number of individual settlers will be pursued, utilizing contemporary local guides to settlements, and the oral and written testimonies of former settlers. This approach is very much in line with the aim of 'populating the Japanese colonial landscape with living, acting individuals,' and exploring the individual agency of Japanese settlers. Such an approach adds a level of detail, particularly on the motivations and backgrounds of migrants, which would not otherwise be possible with the alternative of utilizing population data presented in the colonial yearbooks and national census.

The approach is similar for the third and fourth questions, which examine the degree to which Karafuto's population was 'settled', the economic basis for settlement, and the degree of success of settlement policy. Here too, I will utilize the memoirs of former settlers, but there will be much effort to demonstrate empirically the degree of settlement, and its economic basis, by utilizing data from colonial government reports and colonial media. The fortunes of agricultural and fishing settlements will be directly compared to gauge the extent to which the settlement policy of the colonial government, which specifically favoured agricultural

settlement, was successful.⁸⁴ A critical analysis of the debate regarding colonial settlement in Karafuto that appeared in the colonial press, and official publications, is pursued alongside the presentation of data related to the household registration system. This data, published in census reports and colonial yearbooks, is indicative of whether would-be settlers had made Karafuto their permanent home, and therefore provides a rudimentary measure of the degree of settlement.

For the final question, which examines the structure of the migratory labour market in Karafuto and conditions in the colony, the experiences of a number of former migratory labourers are utilized alongside contemporary social research and reports on migratory labour in the colonial press. The colonial press in particular provides a useful source to construct an outline of the conditions at Karafuto worksites, labour management and recruitment methods, the frequency of conflict and abuse in the workplace, and the types of workers associated with it.

2.6 Source materials

This study has made use of a wide range of source materials, which were collected from various archives spread across Japan. The majority of these materials were gathered or consulted during a research trip between September 2011 and May 2012. Among the various archives visited, the unrivalled 'Northern Studies Collection' at Hokkaido University, and the

⁸⁴ The forestry industry and related manufactures (paper and pulp) also contributed greatly to the settlement of the colony. Nonetheless, the importance of forestry is well appreciated in the literature and so it is not examined. See: Karafuto Ringyō Shi Hensankai (1960) *Karafuto ringyōshi*; Miki. *Kokkyō no shokuminchi Karafuto*; Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei. *Karafuto enkaku gyōseishi*, pp648-659

private archives of the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, located in their Sapporo and Tokyo offices, proved particularly useful for the collection of rare and unpublished materials. In addition the National Archives of Japan (Tokyo and Tsukuba), the National Diet Library Archives (Tokyo), various libraries at Tokyo University, the Hokkaido Prefectural Library (Sapporo), and Wakkanai City Library provided access to a number of informative source materials. It would be too lengthy to outline all the source materials utilized in this study, but here it is worth outlining those which have proved particularly useful.

One of the most important source materials utilized in this study is a daily newspaper entitled, *Karafuto Nichi Nichi Shinbun* (hereafter *KNNS*). The *KNNS* enjoyed the largest circulation of any media source published in the colony of Karafuto, and operated as a media outlet from 1908 to 1945 – almost the entire Japanese colonial period.⁸⁵ Furthermore, all editions between the years 1910 and 1941 are available as microfilms at the ‘Northern Studies Collection’ of Hokkaido University, and the National Diet Library in Tokyo. This is a unique source not only in its chronological scope, but also in the variety of its daily news coverage. The pages of the *KNNS* included the daily news and events in the colony; provided Karafuto angles on wider national and imperial developments; contained investigative journalism into a number of important issues in

⁸⁵ All other newspapers in Karafuto were compelled to merge with *KNNS* in 1942 under a wartime directive. In reality, the result of this directive was that the staff and offices of more localized newspapers in Karafuto came to be absorbed by the *KNNS*. Following the merger the name of the *KNNS* was changed to *Karafuto Shinbun*. The daily circulation of this newspaper following the merger was estimated at approximately 65,000 copies a day. Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei. *Karafuto shūsenshi*, p34

colonial society; and included comment/interviews with the colony's residents. This source provides the historian with unrivalled access to Karafuto's social landscape, and therefore allows a much greater appreciation of the issues that mattered to, and most affected the colony in all their complexity.

The *KNNS* is not the only Karafuto-based print media that this study has utilized. Local newspapers including the *Esutoru Mainichi Shinbun*, magazines such as *Zasshi Karafuto*; and official colonial government media, such as *Karafuto Jihō*, *Karafuto Jichi* and *Hoppō Seikatsu*, have all provided supplementary sources to the *KNNS*. Beyond Karafuto, a number of national and Hokkaido-based newspapers have been consulted. These include the influential national dailies, *Asahi Shinbun*, *Yomiuri Shinbun*, and *Tokyo Mainichi Shinbun*, as well as Hokkaido's main papers *Otaru Shinbun*, and *Hokkai Shinbun* (later renamed *Hokkaidō Shinbun*), amongst others. It is hoped that by incorporating such a variety of mass media a good sense of what was happening in Karafuto on a daily basis, as well as how the settlement of the colony and its migratory labour market were viewed locally, in the wider region of northern Japan, and also nationally.

In addition to these source materials, I have utilized numerous publications from the colonial administration, which produced a wealth of readily available sources. In particular, the yearbooks of the colonial administration – *Karafuto Yōran* (An outline of Karafuto, hereafter KY), *Karafuto Chōji Ippan* (Karafuto yearbook, hereafter KCI) and *Karafuto-chō Tōkeisho* (Karafuto statistical yearbook, hereafter KTS) – have provided a rich source. These volumes, stored in various libraries

and archives, give a wealth of statistical data for the analysis of the settlement of the colony. These are utilized alongside a number of irregular publications by the colonial administration, which examine in more detail various aspects of the industries of the colony. Another notable official publication utilized here is a history of the first thirty years of the colonial administration, which was published in 1936, and reveals much on the official vision of the colonial administration with regards to colonial development in Karafuto.⁸⁶ In addition to these publications from the central colonial administration, based in Toyohara, a number of sources produced by village and town-level administrations and settler groups have been used. These include a number of local guides to villages or towns in the colony, business directories, and local histories – some of which introduce the profiles of settlers and ‘who’s who’ lists.

This study aims to examine settlement and migratory labour in Karafuto with an eye to ‘peopling the Japanese empire.’ To some extent, such a task can be achieved by incorporating local media sources, but extra effort needs to be made so as to integrate into the study those sources which are most closely connected with the settlers themselves. In this regard, I have conducted interviews with repatriates (*hikiagesha*) from Karafuto, and collected a large number of their published and unpublished written testimonies. These have been collected with the cooperation of the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, who kindly allowed me to access their collections of documents, including numerous private publications of former residents of the colony. These publications were

⁸⁶ Karafuto-chō (1936) *Karafuto-chō shisei sanjū nenshi*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

produced by local sub-groups of the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei – or their individual members – and represent an important supplementary source which informs and adds color to this study. The personal experiences of those who were directly involved in the colonial venture in Karafuto can enrich this study, offering insights into the motivations behind colonial migration, and the processes by which families came to settle in the colony. Personal experiences shed light on a number of aspects of life in Karafuto in ways which are not captured in either official documents, or even in the contemporary colonial newspapers and magazines. Personal testimony, oral or written, is a type of source that by its very nature carries with it a number of flaws. The distance between recollection and event, and the problem of nostalgia are only two of the more obvious reasons why personal testimony can produce an inaccurate account, or worse still, prove misleading altogether. Nonetheless, oral history and written recollections, despite their inherent flaws and biases, provide an opportunity for the historian to gain a first-hand insight like no other source can offer.⁸⁷ In recognition of both the value and limitations of personal testimony, these sources are contextualized within a thorough evaluation of the contemporary written records, and as such provide a useful supplementary source of information.

2.7 Study outline

The remainder of this study is divided into four original research chapters. Chapter three examines the backgrounds and courses of migration of a

⁸⁷ Thompson, P. (2000) *The voice of the past: oral history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp23-24

large number of Karafuto settlers. It finds that the majority of Karafuto settlers came originally from the various prefectures of Tohoku and Hokuriku, more often than not, following a period of either living or working on Hokkaido. The motives behind migration varied considerably, however, it is possible to see that the majority of settlers came from relatively modest backgrounds, and were attracted to Karafuto by the prospect of improving their situation.

Chapter four examines the development of agricultural settler communities in Karafuto, and the wider contribution of agriculture to the creation of a permanent settler community in the colony. The colonial administration was insistent that agriculture provided the most solid basis for cementing Japan's position in Karafuto, and made continuous efforts to specifically attract agricultural settlers to the colony. Chapter four, however, finds that agricultural settlements, despite official encouragement, encountered various problems, and that the agricultural settlement of the island was largely a failure. Agricultural settlers drifted away from their farms, and those that remained became heavily dependent on non-agricultural activities, which provided a decisive supplement to their farm income. Additionally, the colonial administration was ultimately unable to attract many agricultural settlers to Karafuto, and among those who did settle very few remained committed to full time farming. Furthermore, this study finds that by most measures Karafuto's agricultural settlements cannot be considered particularly 'settled', especially when compared to the colony's fishing settlements – a theme developed in chapter five.

Fishing was initially the most important economic activity in Karafuto, but the colonial regime associated the industry, and those who engaged in it, with transience and flux. The initial dominance of fishing was a cause for concern for the colonial administration, which doubted the will of fishermen to settle down permanently in the colony, and questioned whether the industry could provide a long term basis for settlement. Nonetheless, as chapter five reveals, such a stance was a considerable oversight, and underestimated the actual contribution the industry made to the colonial economy and settlement. The fishing industry, directly and indirectly, supported the livelihood of a considerable number of permanent settlers, including fishing families, but also those from other occupations who were able to take advantage of seasonal employment opportunities in fishing. Furthermore, the fishing industry contributed substantial tax revenues, and generated significant export earnings, the positive impact of which was felt throughout the wider colonial economy. The seasonality of the fishing industry also made an indirect, perhaps even counterintuitive, contribution to colonial settlement. Surges in the demand for labour during the major fishing seasons in Karafuto, meant that fishing operators depended on the extensive utilization of thousands of migratory labourers from Japan. The migratory labour experience in Karafuto served to introduce mainland Japanese to the colony, and familiarize them with conditions and opportunities there. Migratory labour in fishing thus served as a mechanism, unrelated to any official policy, which brought large numbers of potential settlers to the colony for the first time. Conventionally, scholars of settler colonialism have tended to make a clear distinction

between migrants and settlers – based on the intention to settle or to return.⁸⁸ The case of Karafuto, however suggests that such a distinction does not reflect the reality of the process of colonial settlement. Experiences as migrants often provided the basis upon which those who travelled to the colony made their decision to remain there – if indeed they consciously made a decision at all.

In chapter six, I shift my focus to a different kind of migratory labour experience, examining coercive labour practices in Karafuto's forestry and construction industries. This chapter provides a corrective to the argument that migratory labour provided the principal means for settling the colony, by offering an examination of the 'darker side' of the migratory labour market in Karafuto. Both forestry and construction played important roles in Karafuto's development, and as was true with fishing, depended heavily on seasonal influxes of migratory labour. Forestry provided Karafuto with an important source of taxation,⁸⁹ as well as the raw materials for paper and pulp manufacturing – Karafuto's largest industry – whilst construction was more obviously related to 'empire building', involving large scale infrastructural development projects, such as railway, road, harbour and port construction.

Construction projects and forestry operations often took place in remote locations, and as such utilized the *hanba* system (worker lodge) to manage and house groups of migratory labourers. Relations between

⁸⁸ Lloyd, C., Metzger, J. & Sutch, R. (eds.) (2013) *Settler economies in world history*, Brill, Leiden, pp xvii-xviii; Elkins, C. & Pedersen, S. (eds.) (2005) *Settler colonialism in the twentieth century*, Routledge, London, see introduction; Veracini, L. (2010) *Settler colonialism: a theoretical overview*, Palgrave Macmillan, London

⁸⁹ Karafuto Ringyō Shi Hensankai. *Karafuto ringyōshi*,

workers and management were weak in these industries leading to various problems related to the recruitment, maintenance, and discipline of workers. Chapter six finds that in extreme cases, managers responded to these problems with a coercive form of *hanba* management – known popularly as *kangoku-beya* (prison cells) or *tako-beya* (octopus rooms). Through an analysis of incidents reported in the *KNNS*, I argue that these coercive *hanba* were not particularly common. Instead, I find that they existed very much at the margin of the labour market, and generally targeted vulnerable labourers, who either lacked contacts in Karafuto, and/or were recruited in locations at considerable distance from the colony. In contrast, the majority of workers – who came from regular recruiting grounds in north-eastern Japan – very rarely ended up in coercive *hanba*. This implies that a different dynamic existed in regular areas of labour recruitment for Karafuto operators, which was otherwise absent further afield. Evidence presented in chapter six suggests that the key to this difference was a mutual dependence, between regular recruitment grounds and Karafuto recruiters, which fostered trust and therefore ensured the enforcement of contracts. In locations where a mutual dependence between migratory labourer and recruiter was weak, or non-existent, abuse, coercion and the non-fulfilment of contracts were more common. To conclude, chapter seven offers a summary and discussion of the principle findings of this study, and their wider implications.

Chapter 3

‘Crossing two salty rivers’: the patterns and processes of migration to Karafuto¹

3.1 Introduction

As a result of a tense victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the southern half of Sakhalin Island became Japan’s second formal colony, and was renamed Karafuto. The remoteness, unforgiving winters, and limited infrastructure, were some of the many obstacles that were faced in developing the colony, but nonetheless, Karafuto emerged as an important supplier of natural resources and manufactured goods, with an economy thoroughly integrated with mainland Japan. The colony’s relative ‘emptiness’ offered the prospect of large-scale colonial settlement, and the population of Karafuto expanded rapidly as a Japanese colony. In 1906, Karafuto had a population of no more than 12,500, yet on the eve of the Pacific War the population exceeded 400,000² – making Karafuto the scene of the second largest concentration of civilian Japanese outside of mainland Japan. Despite the remarkable numbers of Japanese who came to reside in the colony, very little academic research has examined the case of Karafuto, let alone the processes of migration to and settlement of the territory. This chapter seeks to help address this conspicuous absence,

¹ The ‘two salty rivers’ mentioned in the title refers to ocean straits. The first of these is the Tsugaru straits, which separate Japan’s main island, Honshū, and its northernmost, Hokkaido, whilst the second is the Sōya straits which separate Hokkaido and Karafuto. This phrase has been used by some former migrants to Karafuto to describe their migration process, for an example see: Sōka gakkai seinenbu hensan shuppan iinkai (1976) *Kita no umi wo watatte – Karafuto hikiagesha no kiroku*, Daisan bunmeisha, Tokyo

² See chapter 1 figure 1.1 for source and full picture of population growth in Karafuto.

with the modest aim of tracing the course of migration to Karafuto with evidence from a large number of detailed profiles of individual settlers, who came to Karafuto between 1905 and the late 1920s.

In what follows, I analyze the major patterns underlying the migration movement, examine the personal backgrounds of settlers, and tentatively gauge what factors were behind their relocation to Karafuto. Evidence presented here, on the courses of migration taken by settlers, suggests that in many ways Karafuto was an ‘extension’ of the project to colonize and develop Hokkaido, which had taken off in the Meiji period (1868-1912). I argue that the vast majority of Karafuto’s settlers came to the colony after an extended period, of work or residence, on Hokkaido, directly to the south of Karafuto. Additionally, in this chapter I argue that the prefectures of northeast Japan and the northern-central Japan Sea coast – i.e. the Tohoku and Hokuriku macro-regions – were not insignificant senders of settlers/migrants, as has been suggested by prominent scholars of Japanese migration such as the late Okabe Makio.³ I stress here that the incorporation of destinations in the far north of Japan’s empire into the overall picture has considerable implications for our understanding of the geography of Japanese migration – both internally and overseas.

In the remainder of this chapter, I first make the case for better incorporating northern destinations into our wider understanding of Japanese migration, and then I proceed to examine migration to Karafuto in more detail. This examination of migration to Karafuto begins with a discussion of the particular problems and challenges, which are involved

³ Okabe, M. (1992) *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*, Yamakawa, Tokyo, pp13-21

in such a task, suggesting the use of detailed case studies as a way of mitigating these problems. This is then followed by an analysis of the family background, course of migration, occupational changes, and circumstances surrounding the migration of settlers to Karafuto whose profiles are found in a pair of local documents.

3.2 The case for better incorporating north-easterly migration

The conventional approach of historical enquiry into Japanese migration, for the prewar period at least, has been to treat separately instances of internal migration, emigration – especially to Brazil and the United States⁴ – and colonial migration – most often treating Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria.⁵ To some extent each case is treated separately due to practical concerns, but only rarely have individual studies at least related their case to the overall picture of migration from Japan. Nonetheless, numerous studies have shown that western Japan – particularly the Kyushu and Chugoku macro-regions – provided the principal sources of overseas emigrants, and colonial settlers. This conventional understanding is misleading, because it is based on studies which have

⁴ Azuma, E. (2005) *Between two empires race, history, and transnationalism in Japanese America*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; Endoh, T. (2009) *Exporting Japan: politics of emigration toward Latin America*, University of Illinois Press, Champaign; Lone, S. (2001) *The Japanese community in Brazil, 1908-1940: between samurai and carnival*, Palgrave, London; Moriyama, A. (1986) *Imingaisha: Japanese emigration companies and Hawaii 1894-1908*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

⁵ For Korea see: Duus, P. (1995) *The abacus and the sword: the Japanese penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*, University of California Press, California; Uchida, J. (2011) *Brokers of empire: Japanese settler colonialism in Korea 1876-1945*, Harvard University Asia Center, Cambridge MA; Kimura, K. (1994) *Zaichō Nihonjin no shakaishi*, Miraisha, Tokyo. For Manchuria: Young, L. (1998) *Japan's total empire: Manchuria and the culture of wartime imperialism*, University of California Press, California; Araragi, S. (1994) *Manshū imin no rekishi shigaku*, Kōrosha, Kyoto. For Taiwan: Ching, L-T. (2001) *'Becoming Japanese': colonial Taiwan and the politics of identity formation*, University of California Press, California; Matayoshi, S. (1990) *Nihon shokuminchika no Taiwan to Okinawa*, Okinawa Akishobō, Naha

not incorporated northward bound migration to Hokkaido and Karafuto. As we have shown in chapter one (see figure 1.2) Karafuto was a significant destination for Japanese migrants, whilst Hokkaido – rather awkwardly labelled an ‘inner-colony’⁶ by some – provided an even more substantial destination for Japanese migrants.

From the Meiji period onwards, sparsely populated Hokkaido developed rapidly as a settlement frontier, expanding from its 1869 population of approximately 58,000⁷ – including 11,000 Ainu – to over 2,400,000 in 1920.⁸ Not all of this increase in Hokkaido’s population was a direct result of migration from mainland Japan, as over time there was a growing contingent of Hokkaido-born residents.⁹ Nonetheless, data from the statistical yearbooks of Hokkaido prefecture suggest that migration to the northern frontier of Hokkaido was substantial. Between 1882 and 1935, a total of at least 711,412 migrants/settlers came to Hokkaido, a number that exceeded any of the overseas Japanese resident populations – either abroad or within the Japanese empire (compare with figure 1.2 in chapter 1). In terms of migration history at least, Nagai Hideo’s assertion that our understanding of modern Japan requires a more comprehensive incorporation of Hokkaido’s experience into the wider context seems appropriate.¹⁰ The same is true of Karafuto, which, as will become clear in the course of this chapter, was from 1905 onwards an extension of Hokkaido’s colonization. When Hokkaido and Karafuto

⁶ Tamura, S. (1992) ‘Naikoku shokuminchi toshite no Hokkaidō’, in Ōe, S. (ed) *Kindai Nihon to shokuminchi: 1 shokuminchi teikoku Nihon*, Iwanami kōza, Tokyo

⁷ Ōnuma, M. (ed) (2002) *Hokkaidō sangyōshi*, Hokkaido University Press, Sapporo, p90

⁸ Nagai, H. (ed) (1998) *Kindai Nihon to Hokkaidō*, Kawade shobō shinsha, Tokyo p22

⁹ Of course many Hokkaido-born would have been the offspring of migrants/settlers.

¹⁰ Nagai. *Kindai Nihon to Hokkaidō*, pp7-8

are combined, the significance of northern settlement in the overall picture of Japanese migration is striking. By 1935, these two northern settlement colonies were home to 3,390,757 Japanese,¹¹ a number which far exceeded the total of 1,977,644 Japanese who were living elsewhere in the empire or abroad.¹² The sheer magnitude of this resettlement led the Office of Population Research at Princeton University to state that ‘the demographic safety valve for Japan during the early decades of her period of industrialization and technical modernization was neither inter-empire migration nor movement outside the empire. Rather, it was a process of frontier expansion into the frontier of Hokkaido and Karafuto.’¹³

This quote is revealing in two ways. First, it highlights the necessity of incorporating the ‘northern frontier’ into our analysis of Japanese migration. Settling Japan’s far north was not a side show in the wider picture of accelerated people flows that accompanied Japan’s modernization – it was the main event. Secondly, the quote hints that the far north eludes neat categorization and for that reason attracts little attention despite its importance. For the Office of Population Research, migration to Hokkaido and Karafuto were neither ‘inter-empire’ or emigration flows, and instead were best categorized as an ‘internal frontier’ – perhaps because they were both eventually incorporated into mainland Japan, and had population structures dominated by Japanese

¹¹ Hokkaido’s population was 3,068,282 and Karafuto’s (Japanese population) was 320,689 in 1935. Karafuto-chō (1937) *Shōwa 10nen kokusei chōsa kekka hōkoku*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, p19; Naikaku tōkei kyoku (1937) *Shōwa 10nen kokusei chōsa kekka hōkoku - Hokkaidō*, Tokyo tōkei kyōkai, Tokyo p1

¹² Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*, p16; Gaimushō Chōsabu (1936) *Kaigai kakuchi zairyū honhō naichijin shokugyōbetsu jinkōhyō shōwa jūnen jūgatsu tsuitachi genzai*, Gaimushō chōsabu, Tokyo, pp1-6

¹³ Office of Population Research (1946) ‘Hokkaido and Karafuto: Japan’s internal frontier’, *Population Index* 12/1, p7

settlers. This categorization of the far north, as part of Japan itself, has meant that most scholars of colonial and overseas migration have found it appropriate to exclude both Hokkaido and Karafuto from their analysis. Yet by the same token, scholars of internal migration have also tended to exclude Hokkaido and Karafuto, albeit on the basis that they were colonies – internal or otherwise. Karafuto, despite its settler majority, was referred to both officially and popularly as a colony (*shokuminchi*), a label which lasted from its acquisition in 1905 until it was eventually incorporated into mainland Japan during the closing years of World War Two. In many ways the colony was administered differently from the prefectures of Japan; it had an extraordinary budget for colonial development; enhanced powers for its director over the use of natural resources; and a legislative system that blended a complex fusion of colonial and mainland Japanese law.

Hokkaido too was administered in a different way to Japan's other prefectures, though admittedly the story is more complicated than that of Karafuto. The island was long considered to fall outside of Japanese sovereign territory, and despite a long history of trade and tributary relations, before the Meiji period Japanese settlement on Hokkaido (then referred to as Ezo) was limited to the island's southern tip. The remainder of the island was inhabited by various groups of Ainu, who engaged in trade with Japan and sometimes worked in Japanese fisheries, but otherwise managed their own affairs in the land they called Ainu Mosir.¹⁴ It was only after the Meiji restoration that a sustained effort to colonize

¹⁴ Walker, B. (2006) *The conquest of Ainu lands: ecology and culture in Japanese expansion, 1590-1800*, University of California Press, California

the island was made, seeing the establishment of a development agency (*kaitakushi*) on Hokkaido after the last remnants of major resistance to the new regime were defeated at Hakodate in 1869.¹⁵ The Hokkaido development agency was charged with developing and settling the territory, and granted a generous budget from the central government for the task.

Hokkaido went through several administrative changes in the decades that followed, but as late as 1947 it maintained varying degrees of special region status.¹⁶ The sense that Hokkaido is different from the rest of Japan persists today, and people in Hokkaido still refer to the Japanese islands to the south as ‘the inner land’ (*naichi*), and Hokkaido as ‘the external land’ (*gaichi*) – terms which were also used to distinguish colony and metropole in the prewar period.¹⁷ Historians of Hokkaido do not shy away from referring to the territory as an ‘inner colony,’¹⁸ which are the two words that have served to exclude it – and Karafuto too – from the wider scholarship. Karafuto and Hokkaido were too ‘internal’ for scholars of emigration, and as ‘colonial’ territories too distinct for scholars of internal migration. Tessa Morris-Suzuki argues that ‘because Japan’s empire (unlike those of Spain, Britain, the Netherlands, and France) was a contiguous realm spreading out geographically into surrounding

¹⁵ Irish, A. (2009) *Hokkaido: a history of ethnic transition and development on Japan’s northern island*, McFarland & Company, North Carolina, see chapters 5 & 6

¹⁶ Tabata, H., Kuwabara, M., Funatsu, I., & Sekiguchi, A. (2000) *Hokkaidō no rekishi*, Yamakawa, Tokyo, appendix pp16-21

¹⁷ Mason, M. (2012) *Dominant narratives of colonial Hokkaido and imperial Japan: envisioning the periphery and the modern nation-state*, Palgrave-Macmillan, New York, pp1-6

¹⁸ Nagai. *Kindai Nihon to Hokkaidō*, Takakura, S. (1979) *Hokkaidō takushoku-shi*, Hokkaido University Press, Sapporo; Tamura, S. (1992) ‘Naikoku shokuminchi toshite no Hokkaidō’, in Ōe, S. (ed) *Kindai Nihon to shokuminchi: 1 shokuminchi teikoku Nihon*, Iwanami kōza, Tokyo, pp92-94

territories, it was always haunted by the problem of drawing dividing lines between the ‘mother country’ and the colonies.’¹⁹

In the above discussion I have argued that the ‘problem of drawing dividing lines’ in imperial Japan which Morris-Suzuki elucidates, has also come to haunt postwar scholarship on Japanese migration, leading to the exclusion of the far north of Japan’s empire from most academic enquiries. As will become clear below, overlooking the northern part of imperial Japan has led to a significant misunderstanding of the overall picture of migration in prewar Japan.

Okabe in his analysis of the prefectural origins of Japanese migrants/settlers noted a ‘clear pattern of high levels of emigration from west Japan and low levels from east Japan.’²⁰ To explain these patterns Okabe makes reference to the concept of relative backwardness. From the Edo period onwards western Japan – particularly Kyushu and Chugoku – could be characterized as more advanced than the east, in terms of the degree of commercialization, and the extent of the differentiation of the peasant class. According to Okabe and Kimura, the opening of Japan to international trade, and the development of modern industry had a pronounced effect on local production in western Japan which rapidly integrated with the world economy.²¹ The results of this process were not all positive, with a number of traditional industries such as shipping, shipbuilding, marine products, and local textile production suffering from heightened competition and vulnerability to international market

¹⁹ Morris-Suzuki, T. ‘Northern lights: the making and unmaking of Karafuto identity’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 60/3, p252

²⁰ Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*, p18

²¹ Kimura. *Zaichō Nihonjin no shakaishi*

fluctuation.²² The collapse of the many long-standing industries in western Japan, and accelerated differentiation of the peasant class – particularly during the Matsukata deflation years – created a stream of emigrants.²³

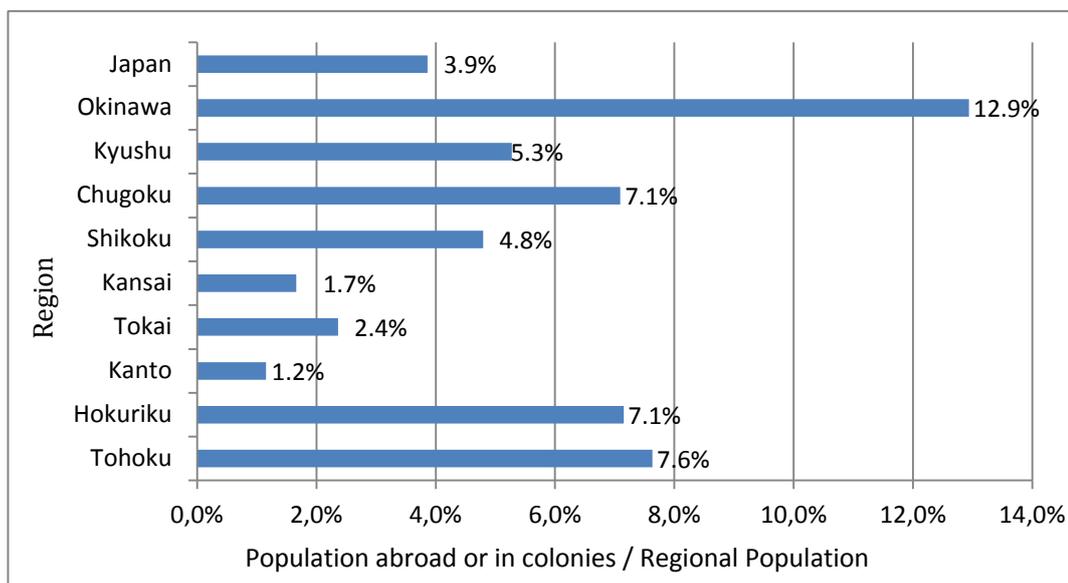
For Okabe, eastern Japan – particularly Tohoku and Hokuriku – had lower numbers of migrants due the relative commercial backwardness of these regions, and their relative isolation. Relative backwardness is associated with fewer out-migrants, according to this line of thinking, because it meant that fewer peasants had been isolated from their land by the spread of capitalist relations. Furthermore, the damage that international trade had on ‘advanced’ western Japan’s long-standing industry was limited in the ‘backward’ east due to a lack of industry in the first place. Okabe’s argument, however, is limited by the geographical scope of his data, which is restricted to colonial Korea and Taiwan, as well as overseas emigration – based on passport issuance data.²⁴ The result is that Okabe suggests that eastern Japan was a low sender of migrants, whilst omitting from his analysis precisely those destinations which were favoured by migrants from eastern Japan. Including the settlement frontiers of Japan’s far north as colonial territories in our analysis drastically alters our overall picture of migration to Japan’s empire and abroad.

²² Dusinberre, M. (2012) *Hard times in the hometown: a history of community survival in modern Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, chapter 6

²³ Kimura. *Zaichō Nihonjin no shakaishi*, pp36-45; Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*, pp20-21

²⁴ Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*, p17; Note that passports were required for migration to territories outside of the Japanese empire but not within it. This means that emigration data is based on passport issuance, with many travelling back and forth, whilst colonial migration data is based on the registered Japanese resident population of each colony.

Figure 3.1 –Emigrant²⁵ and colonial resident²⁶ population from each region as a percentage of the actual population of that region, 1935



Source: Naikaku tōkei kyoku (1935) *Kokusei chōsa sokuhō*, Tokyo tōkei kyōkai, Tokyo, pp4-5; Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*, Yamakawa, Tokyo, p17, Karafuto-chō (1937) *Karafuto kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara; Taiwan Sōtokufu (1937) *Taiwan kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*, Taiwan sōtokufu, Taihoku; Chōsen Sōtokufu (1937) *Chōsen kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*,

²⁵ For overseas destinations the number of passports issued to immigrants is used to due to data availability. This data carries the problem that it does not account for return migration, because it counts passports issued and not residence abroad. This creates an overestimation bias with regards to the size of the population resident abroad, as some migrants inevitably returned. To some extent, this bias is offset by an underestimation bias, as passport data does not pick up persons born overseas. Okabe suggests these problems tend to cancel each other out.

²⁶ The colonies included here are Hokkaido, Karafuto, Korea, Manchuria, Taiwan and the Nanyō islands. The data used for all colonies in this figure, excepting Hokkaido, is the number of people who have a family register (*honseki*) in a particular region, but who are registered as resident of a colony. Karafuto was the only formal colony where Japanese could transfer their family register, and so I had to omit those persons who did so, because I cannot otherwise ascertain which regions they came from. This lowers the numbers counted for Karafuto, and as we know that most Karafuto migrants/settlers came from Hokkaido, Tohoku and Hokuriku this understates the ratio presented in figure 3.1 for these regions.

For Hokkaido, the number of ‘settlers’ from a particular region who relocated to Hokkaido between 1882 and 1935 is utilized in place of family register data. It was possible to transfer the family register to Hokkaido too, rendering it difficult to assess the regional origins of its migrant population. The data used here for Hokkaido represents a very conservative figure as it includes only 711,412 individuals, when the actual population of Hokkaido stood at 3,068,282 in 1935.

Chōsen sōtokufu, Keijō; Hokkaidō-chō (various years) *Hokkaidō-chō tōkeisho*,
Hokkaidō-chō, Sapporo

Figure 3.1 shows the ratio – expressed as a percentage – of a region’s actual population in 1935, compared to the number of people from that same region resident abroad, or in one of Japan’s colonies (including Hokkaido). Presenting data in this way allows us to relativize the scale of out-migration to the size of each sending region, going further than a simple listing of which regions sent the most people to the empire and abroad. The average across Japan, for example, stood at 3.9%, indicating that almost 4% of Japan’s total population was resident outside of Japan in 1935 – either in a foreign land or a colonial territory. Figure 3.1 reveals that in contrast to Okabe and Kimura’s assertions, the regions of Tohoku and Hokuriku had a considerable population outflow. The number of people from these regions resident in the colonies or abroad equaled 7.1% in Hokuriku and 7.6% in Tohoku respectively. These are levels approaching double the national average, and interestingly they exceed both the Kyushu and Chugoku regions, which conventional studies have suggested were the biggest senders of migrants.

In actual fact, the biggest sender as a proportion of its population was Okinawa, the southernmost prefecture of Japan’s main islands.²⁷

²⁷ Similar to Hokkaido, the territory we know as Okinawa prefecture (formerly the Kingdom of Ryūkyū) today was only formally incorporated into Japan in the Meiji era, and as such has also been labeled an ‘inner colony.’ See chapter 5 in: Ōe, S. (ed) (1992) *Kindai Nihon to shokuminchi: 1 shokuminchi teikoku Nihon*, Iwanami kōza, Tokyo. Despite being given the same label Okinawa, in contrast to Hokkaido, was a major sender of migrants/settlers, and not itself a settlement frontier (see figure 3.1). For an account of the migration of Okinawans see: Rabson, S. (2012) *The Okinawan diaspora in Japan: crossing the borders within*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu; Kokusai Kyōryoku Jigyōdan Okinawa Shibu (1982) *Okinawaken to kaigai ijū*, Kokusai kyōryoku jigyōdan Okinawa shibu, Naha

That Okinawa was a large sender of migrants has long been recognized, as Okinawans were prominent in a number of destinations which have generated scholarly attention, such as Hawaii, Latin America, Taiwan and the Nanyō islands. The major finding of this analysis, however, is that the regions of northeastern Japan (Tohoku and Hokuriku) were not isolated from the increased mobility which came with Japan's modernization. Instead, there was an active out-migration from northeastern Japan directed towards the northern frontier of Hokkaido, and also by extension towards Karafuto – at least from 1905 onwards. Clearly more research is required to understand the process of migration to this northern frontier, and better incorporate it into the broader picture of Japanese migration. Scholarship on migration to Karafuto in particular is limited, and the remainder of this chapter works towards starting to rectify that fact.

3.3 Tracing migration to Karafuto: problems and prospects

Studies of population flows within the prewar Japanese empire are almost invariably based on family registration (*koseki*) data. The system of family registration came into effect in 1872, and required families to maintain a register of family members in the locality in which they were resident. The family register provided a record of births, deaths, marriages, adoptions, and changes of residence. As part of the family registration system, each individual family was required to notify the authorities when family members left their locality for a period of ninety days or more. In such cases families were supposed to submit a notification of temporary residence (*kiryū todoke*) to the town or village

hall. These notifications included details such as the migrant's name, date of birth, the name and occupation of the household head and their relationship to the migrant, as well as the intended destination.²⁸ The statistics generated from these forms were utilized in national and prefectural statistical yearbooks, which listed in-migration (*iri-kiryū*) and out-migration (*de-kiryū*), and have thus allowed historians to get some idea of the population flows within Japan and its empire.

In contrast to emigration, passports were not necessary for migration within the Japanese empire, and thus historians have had to rely on *kiryū* data when examining internal and colonial migration.²⁹ Nonetheless, data based on *kiryū* statistics come with a number of inherent limitations, which are important to consider when examining migration flows in the prewar Japanese empire. Indeed, these limitations render the use of *kiryū* statistics totally inadequate for the purpose of tracing migration from Japan to Karafuto. The major problem with the data is that they are understood to significantly understate the extent of migration. Firstly, temporary migration for a period of less than ninety days required no notification, and thus much short-term migration – especially seasonal labour migration – went unrecorded.³⁰ Furthermore, many of those out-migrants who were leaving their locality for more than

²⁸ Tanimoto, M. (2010) 'Trends and patterns of migration in rural Japan: an analysis of movement notifications from an agrarian village', working paper presented at the 2010 Rural history conference at Sussex University; Taeuber, I. (1958) *The population of Japan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp21-23, 64, 101 & 168

²⁹ Statistics based on *kiryū* notifications have also allowed historians to separate migration based on efforts to obtain long term jobs, temporary work away from the home (*dekasegi*), and education, from that which occurs due to marriage, adoption or divorce which would have required updating the family register itself rather than completing *kiryū* paperwork.

³⁰ Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku (1927) *Dekasegimono chōsa*, Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku, Tokyo

ninety days failed to complete the necessary procedures, and thus went unrecorded. Nominally, at least, the failure to notify the local authorities could result in a fine, but in reality the difficulty and costs involved in chasing up offenders and prosecuting them meant that enforcement was weak or non-existent. We cannot be sure what percentage of actual migrants completed the necessary procedures, but authorities on the topic have tentatively suggested that it was something in the region of 50-60%.³¹

The problem with *kiryū* based data is not limited to underreporting and non-compliance. The data also fails to capture re-migration, i.e. those moving to a second or third location before returning home. This problem is not unique to *kiryū* based data, and is instead a common limitation of studies that rely on information collected from the sending region itself. With *kiryū* based data in particular, if we accept that around half of the migrants, departing for 90 days or more, went unrecorded, then we can assume that a much lower percentage would inform the authorities if they moved on again before returning. As is clear from Miki's study, and many of the written/oral testimonies utilized in this research project, the migratory flows to Karafuto were largely made up of people who were re-migrating, especially from Hokkaido.³² In this sense, a sample collected from sending regions – which utilizes local *kiryū* based data – would likely fail to account for many of the people who eventually went on to Karafuto. These

³¹ Tanimoto. 'Trends and patterns of migration in rural Japan', p4
For further discussion see: Saitō, O (1973) 'Migration and the labour market in Japan 1872-1920', *Keio Economic Studies* 10/2

³² Miki, M. (2003) 'Nōgyō imin ni miru Karafuto to Hokkaidō', *Rekishi chirigaku* 45/1

settlers/migrants would therefore most likely have been enumerated as leaving for Hokkaido, if indeed recorded at all.

A further problem in examining the northward bound migration is that Hokkaido and Karafuto were not incorporated into the family registration system in the same way as other parts of Japan. In the early Meiji period Hokkaido was a sparsely populated settlement frontier – an ‘inner colony’³³ – which was administered in a way which differed from the other prefectures of Japan. Karafuto, needless to say, was under Russian occupation until 1905, was even more sparsely populated than Hokkaido, and as a result was thought to warrant a colonial administration. Due to the differences in administration the family registration and *kiryū* system were not applied to Hokkaido until 1896, and to Karafuto until as late as 1924. This means that it was not essential to submit the *kiryū* forms if leaving for Hokkaido or Karafuto until after these dates,³⁴ nor was it possible to establish a Karafuto address as one’s permanent residence (*honseki*) until 1924. In the case of Karafuto, where it appears that many came after an extended period in Hokkaido, there is the danger that both their migration to Hokkaido, and then to Karafuto are not picked up in the *kiryū* data because of the late incorporation of these territories into the family registration system. This is not to say that neither Hokkaido nor Karafuto appear at all in *kiryū* data. In fact, both destinations are listed just like any other destination in most prefectural

³³ Nagai. *Kindai Nihon to Hokkaidō*

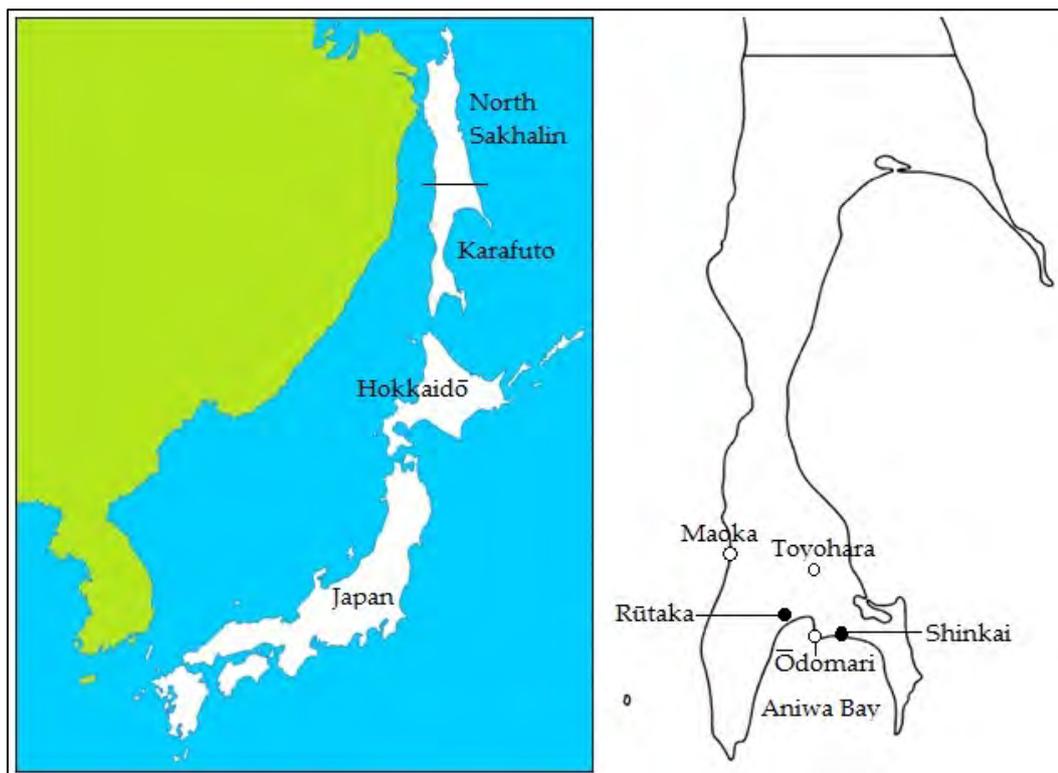
³⁴ Shimizu, Y. (1981) Tōhoku suitō tansaku chitai ni okeru nōson rōdōryoku no ryūshutsu kōzō’, *Shakai kagaku kenkyū* 32/4 & 33/1, pp114-116. Shimizu warns us about the reliability of the data in his study of a village in Akita, for precisely this reason, and considering that Hokkaido and Karafuto were important destinations for the villages’ migrants.

statistical yearbooks, so clearly some people did fill in the forms when travelling despite these destinations not being fully incorporated into the system. However, the delayed incorporation of these territories into the system is likely to have produced an even more pronounced gap between the reported and actual numbers of migrants, and thus the data appear inadequate for a comprehensive understanding of migration to Karafuto.

In order to avoid these problems this study utilizes information which was contained in a couple of local guides/histories, published in 1923 and 1930 respectively. These destination-based source materials each contain a section which profiles a large number of individual settlers, and discusses their migration backgrounds, current activities and in some cases their motivations for coming to Karafuto. The wealth of information contained in these works is based on personal interviews with settlers, so to some extent it allows us to hear the voices of settlers themselves. Elsewhere in this research project, interviews and written testimonies of former settlers are incorporated into the analysis, but these rarely capture the early settlers, tending instead to be focused on migrants in the 1930s, or the Karafuto-born second generation. Though the information in these guides is not the direct voices of the settlers, it is probably the closest we can get to such evidence. The authors of both guides interviewed the settlers themselves, asking a consistent set of questions, and the information that they collected was then summarized so as to fit on one or two pages per settler interviewed. Though these sources are unique in terms of the insight they give into the backgrounds and experiences of the early settlers, as with practically any source they contain some inherent biases. The following section briefly outlines these

issues, explains the context in which these local guides/histories were produced, and introduces the two settlements which were covered in these sources.

Map 3.1- Location of Rūtaka and Shinkai



3.4 Rūtaka & Shinkai as case studies

The settlements introduced in the two guides were a fishing village called Shinkai (also pronounced Fukami), and a primarily agricultural district named Rūtaka.³⁵ These two settlements were among the older areas of settlement in the colony, enjoying greater accessibility from Hokkaido due to their position on the Aniwa bay in the southernmost part of Karafuto (see map 3.1). As the colony of Karafuto grew, administrative districts

³⁵ Sakamoto, S. (1923) *Karafuto no Rūtaka*, Karafuto chōsonshi kankōkai, Ōdomari; Takada, K. (1930) *Shinkaimurashi*, Shinkaimura hensankai, Ōdomari

were reorganized, creating new villages (*mura*), towns (*machi* or *chō*), and districts (*gun*). The guides were commissioned in each settlement by the local authorities, in order to celebrate the progress each had made and its administrative reorganization – Rūtaka becoming a district (previously it had village status) and Shinkai a village (previously it was a loose group of hamlets). This gives the guides a somewhat self-congratulatory tone, when they outline the achievements of the settlement in its short history, describe current conditions there, and introduce the reader to 'local notables' and pioneer settlers.³⁶

The fact that the guides focus on achievements, and select those settlers that made something of themselves in the colony means that they give a potentially biased picture. They may, for example, fail to capture those unsuccessful settlers who returned home, or left the settlement for pastures new, and the result is a focus on the local elite, rather than the ordinary settler. Nonetheless, as these were relatively minor settlements, and the number of individuals introduced in each guide rather large (129 and 83), the majority of these 'local notables' were not necessarily well known or influential beyond their small settlements. Indeed, when examining the guides it appears that in order to qualify as a local notable no more was required than to run a small shop, have served in the volunteer fire brigade, or, as a pioneer, simply to have been there in the 'early days.' The definition of 'local notable' as applied in these guides was far from exclusive, with fishermen and farmers, alongside the local doctor

³⁶ Takada refers to local notables as *risshi* (立志) and Sakamoto as *yūshi* (有志). Sakamoto and Takada both refer to the early settlers as *senkusha* (先駆者) and *kusawake* (草分), whilst Sakamoto also borrows the English word 'pioneers' albeit in Japanese pronunciation (パイオニアース).

and teacher, included among their ranks. The most influential and privileged of Karafuto settlers were more likely to reside in the well-to-do neighborhoods of the larger, better-connected settlements, such as the capital Toyohara, and the principal port towns Ōdomari and Maoka. The two settlements we examine here were less prestigious locations, and both were without a train station at the time the guides were produced.

The Rūtaka guide was published in 1923 by a writer named Sakamoto Sōsuke, who had previously written two other guides – one on Toyohara and another on Ōdomari³⁷ – and was thus an experienced hand at researching local conditions in the colony. In contrast, the Shinkai guide was written in 1930 by Takada Kinjirō, who was producing his first publication. Despite being a relative amateur, there is no questioning the quality of Takada's work; he clearly used Sakamoto's earlier works as his template, because the content and format of the two authors is almost identical. Takada's writing career in Karafuto may have begun with a volume that introduced one of the more minor colonial settlements, but he was a talented researcher, and went on to publish a history of the colony's education system, commissioned by the colonial administration itself.³⁸ Both guides provide rich information and local detail. As long as due consideration is given to their inherent biases and celebratory tone, then they represent a valuable historical source material for the study of migration and colonial settlement in Karafuto.

³⁷ These guides are not utilized here as the 'local notables' introduced in each are mostly government officials and the business elite, rather than the more modest settlers profiled in the Rūtaka and Shinkai guides.

³⁸ Takada, K. (1936) *Karafuto kyōiku hattatsushi*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

Table 3.1 – Employment structure of Karafuto as a whole, and the specific settlements of Rūtaka and Shinkai in 1930

	Karafuto	Rūtaka	Shinkai
Agriculture & Forestry	26.4%	45.9%	13.8%
Fishing & Marine Products	10.4%	16.8%	53.2%
Mining	1.2%	0%	3.0%
Manufacturing & Construction	16.7%	6.9%	11.1%
Commerce	17.6%	9.4%	8.4%
Transport	11.6%	11.4%	2.6%
Professional	6.8%	4.5%	2.8%
Other	9.3%	5.0%	4.9%

Source: Karafuto-chō (1934) *Karafuto kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*,
 Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

In 1930, when the guide was published, Shinkai had only just been established as an administrative village through the amalgamation of a number of minor fishing hamlets that were stretched along the coast to the east of Ōdomari. The largest among these hamlets was a settlement called Merei, which was well-known in Karafuto because it had served as the initial landing post of Japanese forces during the invasion of the island in the closing phase of the Russo-Japanese war. Despite this fame and its favorable location – close to the bustling port of Ōdomari – the area which became Shinkai village did not become a major area of settlement. The area's prospects were limited by the fact that it was not heavily forested (by Karafuto standards), lacked fertile land or mineral wealth, and was only rich in marine resources – as admittedly was most of Karafuto. The settlement's location to the east of Ōdomari also served to cut it off from the main transport networks. The railway which linked Ōdomari and Toyohara, for example, extended northwards out of the port

town, and although the railway was extended further northwards on numerous occasions, an extension eastward from Ōdomari never materialized. As a result, Shinkai retained a sense of remoteness despite the fact that it was close to one of the colony's commercial centres. The population of the hamlets which eventually became Shinkai totaled 881 in 1920, and in the next decade grew rapidly, reaching 2,570 by 1930. As can be seen in table 3.1 the economy of Shinkai was heavily dependent on fishing activities, with over half of those in employment engaged in the activity as their principal occupation. Yet, as the guide makes clear, the importance of fishing was far greater than this, with many engaged in fishing as a side occupation, or as seasonal employment aboard local fishing boats.³⁹

The subject of the other guide, Rūtaka, was a district containing remote hamlets that spread across the western part of the Aniwa bay and a town, also called Rūtaka. The town of Rūtaka had started as a Russian farming village, and its hinterland was a relatively fertile plain, which eventually became one of the principal areas of agricultural production in Karafuto. Similar to Shinkai, at the time of the publication of the local guide (i.e. 1923) the district of Rūtaka was not yet served by rail, and as a result much of the district remained relatively remote. The population of the district as a whole numbered 5,990 in 1920, and reached 18,431 by 1930, when some 45.9% of the population reported they were employed in agriculture and forestry. As can be seen in table 3.1, neither of the two settlements could be described as the average settlement in terms of occupational structure. Shinkai clearly depended on fishing, with five

³⁹ Takada. *Shinkaimurashi*

times the colonial average occupied by this activity, whilst Rūtaka was primarily based on agriculture but also had more residents employed in fishing than the colonial average. Though neither of the settlements can be considered ‘average,’ the two cases provide an opportunity to examine in detail the settlers of two different types of settlement – one agricultural and one based on fishing.

3.5 A profile of the settlers’ family background

This section examines socio-demographic information compiled from the profiles of settlers contained in the two guides, including the date and place of birth of settlers, their age when first coming to Karafuto, family position at birth, and the occupation of the family they were born into. Before proceeding, however, it is worth noting the gender bias of the samples, which are overwhelmingly male, with only three women included – two from Shinkai and one from Rūtaka – in a sample of two hundred and twelve settlers. Although this gender imbalance significantly limits our ability to appreciate the experience of female settlers, it is also unavoidable considering that the sample is made up of household heads. In fact, given that prewar Japanese family relations were unmistakably patriarchal, the male-dominated sample carries the benefit that it allows us to focus on those who were most likely to have made the decision to migrate to Karafuto in the first place.

Table 3.2 - Age of settlers upon their first arrival in Karafuto (percentage share in parenthesis)

Age	Shinkai	Rūtaka
1-10	4 (5.1)	1 (0.9)
11-20	12 (15.4)	10 (8.8)
21-30	26 (33.3)	51 (44.7)
31-40	26 (33.3)	46 (40.4)
41-50	10 (12.8)	5 (4.4)
Over 50	0 (0.0)	1 (0.9)
Unclear Cases	5	15

Source: Compiled from Takada. *Shinkaimurashi*

Sakamoto. *Karafuto no Rūtaka*

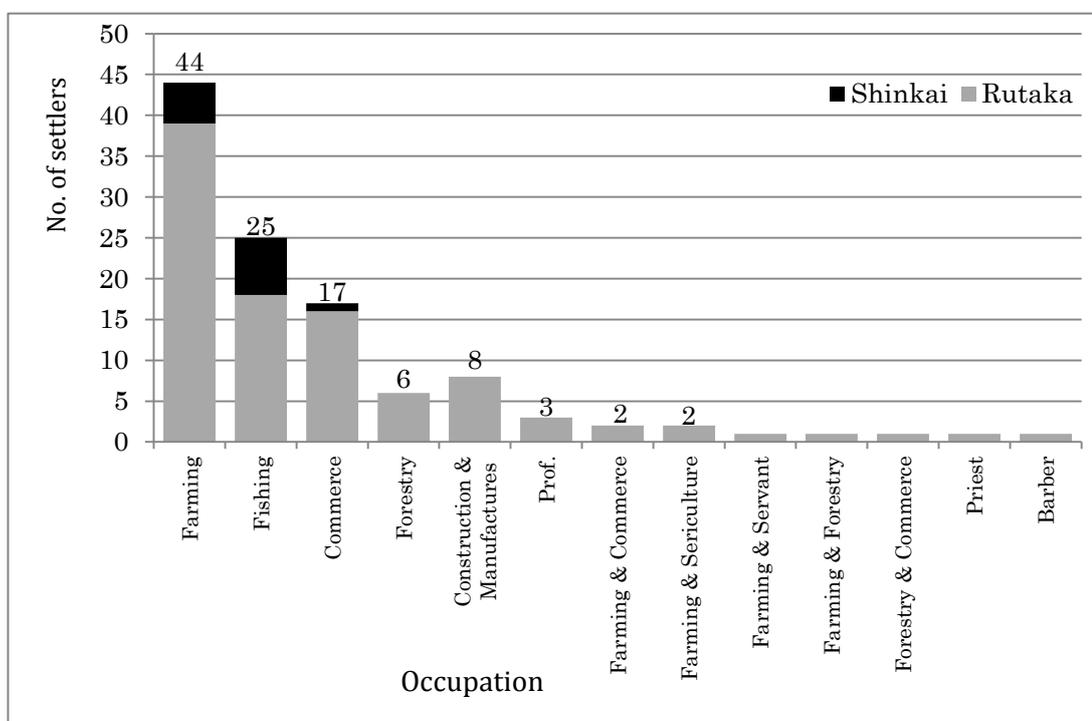
Table 3.2 shows the age of settlers when they first came to Karafuto's shores. The data in the table suggests that the vast majority of settlers were over twenty years of age, confirming that most settlers were old enough to have made the decision to relocate to Karafuto. Moreover, around 45% of those who came to each settlement were already over thirty when they first arrived in Karafuto. This suggests that most settlers had considerable working experience, and many would have already established a family. This point is confirmed by a number of the detailed settler profiles, and it is worth giving a few examples here. Ishigaki, from Akita prefecture, who came to Shinkai in 1921 to start up in fishing, was such a case. He was born into a family of farmers, who fished on the side, and after his compulsory schooling Ishigaki worked as did any member of

his family before being drafted. During his military service Ishigaki participated in combat in the Russo-Japanese war, and eventually returned to his village in 1906, at which point he was twenty five years old. After military service Ishigaki married and began working as a miner at Kosaka mine in his native Akita prefecture. He later moved on to a number of other mines, including the famous copper mine at Ashio in Tochigi prefecture, and then the booming Sorachi mine in Hokkaido. It was in Hokkaido that Ishigaki's eyes turned to Karafuto. At the Sorachi mine he came into contact with colleagues who had worked in the colony as seasonal fishing labour, and attested to the impressive catch to be had there. Ishigaki first set foot on Karafuto in 1917, by which point he was thirty six, and he tried his luck fishing first at Nakasōya, before eventually coming to reside in Shinkai.

Moriya was a native of Toyama prefecture, and was born as the fourth son of a farming family. When Moriya first came to Karafuto he was already married, and had just entered his thirties. At a young age, Moriya knew that he wanted to start up on his own, and try his luck opening up land in the north. This wish to find his own land may have been recognition that, as fourth in line to the family headship, he was unlikely to inherit any. Nonetheless, Moriya was a sturdy young man, and after completing his compulsory education he took up a job as a policeman in neighboring Ishikawa prefecture, later transferring to his native Toyama where he married. In 1907, three years after entering the service, he was offered a new post in the coast guard at Ōdomari, which came with an increased pay packet. Moriya took up the offer, and a year after going to Ōdomari he was transferred to various parts of the colony including

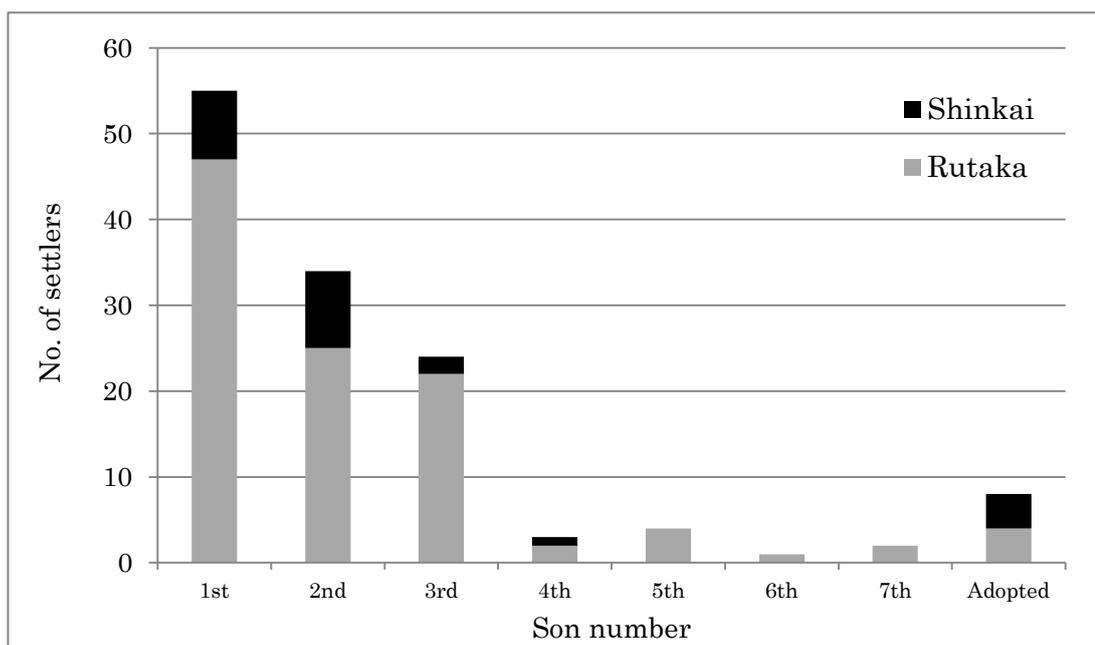
Rūtaka. In 1912, Moriya left the coast guard and decided to settle in Rūtaka, having seen with his own eyes the area's potential as an agricultural settlement. About a year after he had settled in Rūtaka, Moriya invited his parents to join him in Karafuto, and as a result all three generations of his family now resided together in the colony. In Rūtaka, Moriya and his family engaged in commerce, and from 1920 onwards they established a *sake* brewery, utilizing rice imported from their native Toyama. There are many other cases like those of Ishigaki and Moriya, but they are too numerous to list here. Nonetheless, the profiles of settlers contained in the guides to Rūtaka and Shinkai make clear that most settlers were not particularly young, were married, and had considerable working experience – often in a number of locations.

Figure 3.2 – Birth families of Shinkai and Rūtaka settlers by occupation



Source: as in table 3.2

Figure 3.3 – The family position at birth of male settlers



Source: as in table 3.2

Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show information relating to the family background of settlers, including data on the occupation of the family which each settler was born into, and the position at birth of each settler within that family. Here, the data primarily comes from the Rūtaka guide as such information was rarely included in the settler profiles contained in the guide to Shinkai. In figure 3.2 above we can see that farming (agriculture) was the principal occupation of the households which settlers were born into. Forty four of the one hundred and twelve (i.e. 40.2%) settler profiles which contain such information, reported that the occupation of the family they were born into was agriculture – this number rises to 51 when those who combined agriculture with another activity are included. Although most settlers came from agricultural households, the share of agriculture does not seem particularly high when considering that at the time these settlers were born – the 1880s to 1910s

– Japan was still primarily an agricultural economy. Indeed, in 1885 agriculture employed over 70% of the total labour force of Japan,⁴⁰ and continued to employ around five and a half million households into the 1940s, when – because of industrial and population growth – its share of total employment fell below 40% for the first time.⁴¹ In this sense, the share of non-agricultural activities among the occupations of the families that settlers were born into appears relatively high. Fishing, at 22.3% of the total, and commerce at 15.2% were also highly significant.

It has often been argued that the prewar Japanese countryside suffered from acute overpopulation, which served to keep labour productivity low, and as a result wages too.⁴² This meant, so the argument goes, that there was an availability of a huge reserve army of surplus labour – made up of women, second and third sons etc. who would usually have had no claim on family land holdings – providing the growing cities, and the industrial sector, with an elastic supply of labour at wages barely above subsistence levels. Other than relocating to urban centres and joining the expanding industrial labour force, establishing a new household in Japan's expanding empire was another option for those who were not in line to succeed to their family's headship. Karafuto too offered these second and third sons the opportunity to establish their own household, with land readily available on very favorable terms. If we accept the overpopulation hypothesis – and let's not forget that many

⁴⁰ Francks, P. (2006) *Rural economic development in Japan: from the nineteenth century to the Pacific War*, Routledge, London, see table on p84

⁴¹ Macpherson, W. J. (1995) *The economic development of Japan 1868-1941*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p46

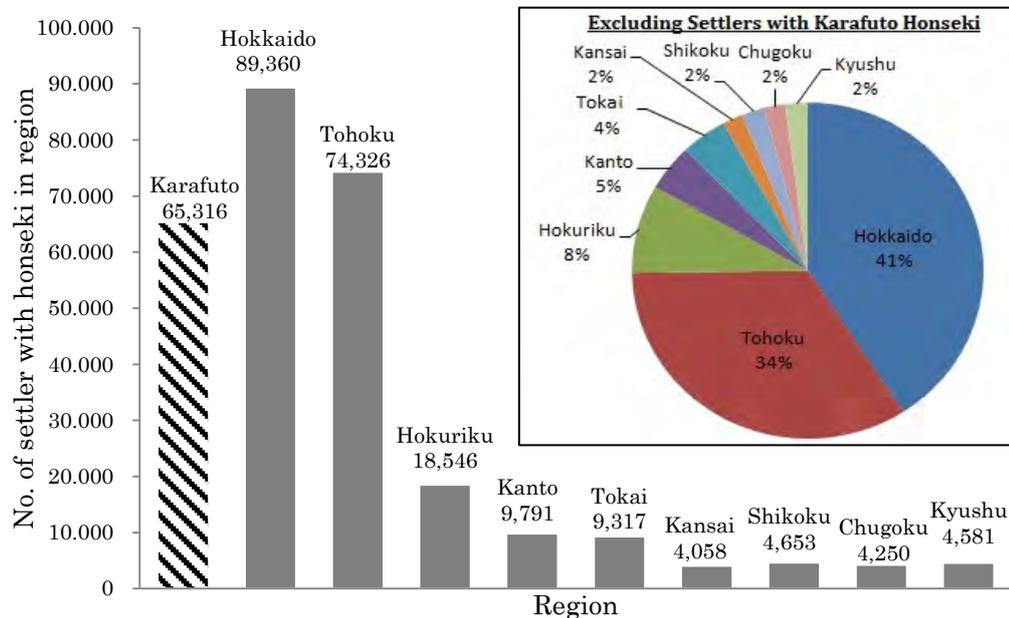
⁴² Crocker, W. (1931) *The Japanese population problem: the coming crisis*, Allen & Unwin, London; Nakamura, M. (1976) *Rōdōsha to nōmin*, Shōgakkan, Tokyo

contemporaries did – then we would expect Karafuto settler households to be headed by those who were not in line to succeed to the headship of the households which they were born into. Yet despite this expectation, figure 3.3 shows that first sons were actually very common amongst the Karafuto settler population, with just as many first sons as there were second and third sons combined in the Rūtaka sample.

The profiles of settlers contained in the two guides when combined reveal the family position at birth of 125 individuals – with 8 others intimating only that they had been adopted. Of this total 44% were first sons at birth, 29% second sons, 19% third sons, and the remaining 8% even further from the position of heir to the family headship. This data does not suggest we can dismiss the idea that non-heirs were common among Karafuto settlers, indeed, with 56% of the sample having such a background they were in the majority. Nonetheless, the evidence does highlight that eldest sons were prominent among those who had migrated to and come to settle in the colony, and thus the factors driving migration to Karafuto seem more complex than simply overpopulation. From the evidence presented in figures 3.2 and 3.3 we can suggest that the typical male Karafuto settler was in his twenties or thirties, and came from primarily agricultural households, with those from fishing or trading households also prominent. Nonetheless, the evidence also suggests that the idea of a ‘typical’ settler is misleading, and instead due recognition should be given to the diversity in the family backgrounds of settlers. The settler community in Karafuto was by no means a homogenous group.

3.6 The prefectural origins of settlers

Figure 3.4 - The registered place of permanent residence (*honseki*) of Karafuto settlers, 1930



Source: Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*

Data collected from the 1930 Karafuto census (presented in figure 3.4) is based on Japan's family registration system (*koseki*), and as such lists a settler's 'home' prefecture as the place where they were permanently registered (*honseki*) at the time of the census. Using this data to understand where Karafuto settlers came from can prove misleading, as place of birth and place of permanent registration may differ. Moreover, the place of permanent registration does not necessarily correspond to the actual place of residence – as evinced by the fact that most Karafuto residents did not have their place of permanent residence transferred to the colony in 1930. The census data is also problematic as an indicator of the 'origins' of settlers as it is affected by histories of intermediate migration. For example, one of the former settlers I interviewed told me

that his family *honseki* was registered in Shizuoka prefecture, even though his father had been born in Nagano prefecture and his mother in Tochigi. After their marriage, his parents resided first in Tokyo with his father working as a teacher, and then Sapporo before coming to Karafuto, where my interviewee was born. The reason that the family was registered in Shizuoka was that his father had spent some of his youth in that prefecture, living with his grandmother and afterwards it was where he gained his first teaching job.⁴³ Whether my interviewee's father kept the family register in Shizuoka because of an intention to return there, we will never know. Nevertheless, this example highlights the problem that *honseki* data does not necessarily tell us accurately where a population is from, or where it has been. The family my interviewee was born into had moved across the country several times along with the household head's teaching appointments, and had never lived in Shizuoka together, as a household unit. As such, *honseki* data only states where a family is registered, proving inadequate as an indicator of the 'origins' of settler's, let alone their migration courses.

There was no legal requirement for a family to transfer their place of permanent residence to their current or even long term address. In fact, as was indicated earlier, due to Karafuto's colonial status the family registration system was not fully applied to the territory, and only after 1924 was it possible for a family to permanently register in Karafuto. Nominally, many settlers had been separated from their ancestral homes for a number of years, or even generations, but despite this separation it was possible – and indeed quite common – to maintain the family

⁴³ Interview with H-san, Feb 2012, Tokyo

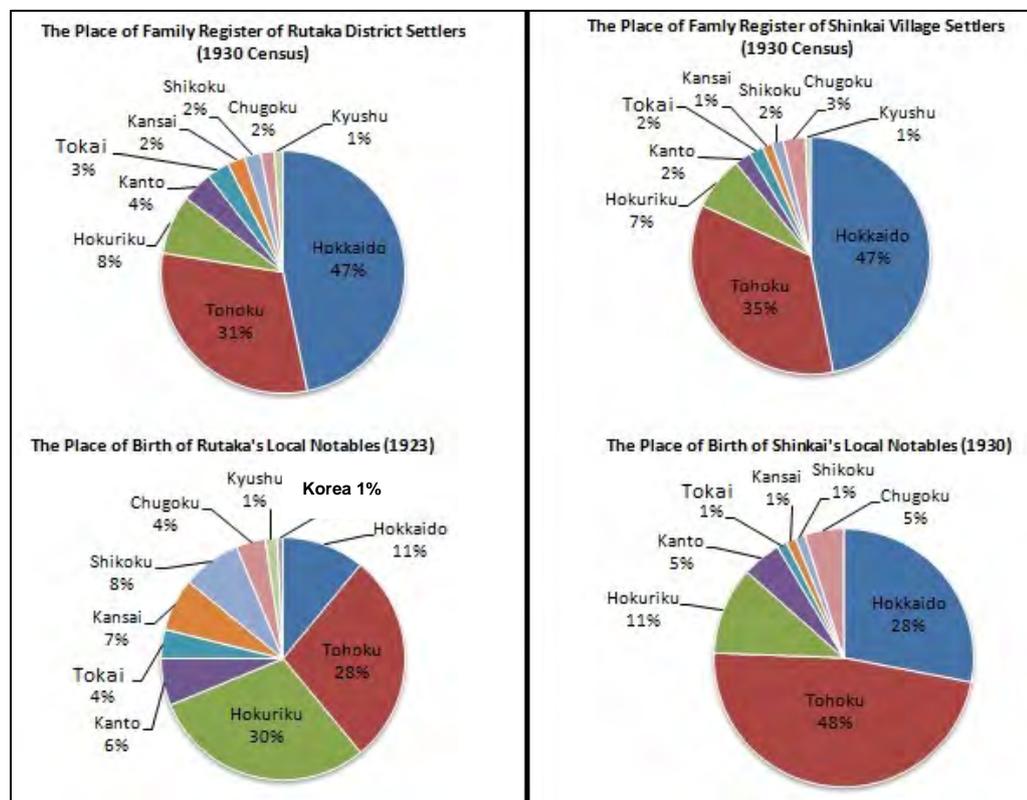
permanent registered domicile (i.e. *honseki*) in their 'native' district. Though this data is imperfect, figure 3.4 indicates that the vast majority of Karafuto's population came from – or at least held their family register in – Hokkaido and Tohoku, followed by the Hokuriku region. If we exclude the 65,316 settlers who by 1930 had transferred their family register to Karafuto, then these three regions – making up 11 of Japan's 47 prefectures – accounted for the permanent domicile of 83% of Karafuto's settler households. Such a representation is, however, overly simplistic, as it fails to account for remigration, and especially downplays the role of Hokkaido as an intermediate location for many of those who eventually migrated to Karafuto. Although figure 3.4 correctly indicates that Hokkaido was the largest sending region of settlers to Karafuto, its role in the course of migration to Karafuto was far greater than the census data in figure 3.4 suggest.

In the half a century preceding Japan's acquisition of Karafuto, Hokkaido had served as a major destination for out migrants all over Japan, especially for the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions which neighbored the island. The legacy of Hokkaido's history as a settlement frontier in the early years of Japan's industrialization was observable in its population. Even as late as 1920, only 53% of Hokkaido's population was Hokkaido-born,⁴⁴ which implies further problems in the use of family register data for the study of migration to Karafuto. This is because those who came to Karafuto with a Hokkaido-based family register were not necessarily native to the prefecture, and were just as likely to be migrants

⁴⁴ Office of Population Research. 'Hokkaido and Karafuto', p7; for an extended discussion see: Taueber. *The population of Japan*

from another part of Japan. Such data therefore plays down the role of other sending regions whose migrants travelled first from mainland Japan to Hokkaido, crossing the Tsugaru straits, and then at a later date crossing the Sōya straits to settle in Karafuto. This effect is somewhat offset by the existence of migrants who came via Hokkaido, but continued to maintain their family register in their native prefecture or some other intermediate location. Nonetheless, it is clear that Hokkaido's history as a settlement frontier complicates the picture, and furthermore, the peculiarities of the Japanese family registration system render the use of census data on Karafuto wholly inadequate for gaining a full appreciation of the course of migration to Karafuto.

Figure 3.5 - Comparison of the family register of Shinkai and Rūtaka settlers with the place of birth of settlers in local source materials



Sources: as in table 3.2 and figure 3.4

One way to circumvent the issues related to the use of census data is to supplement it with information on the places of birth of the settlers contained in the two guides. Figure 3.5 compares 1930 census data regarding the locations of the family register (*honseki*) of settlers in Rūtaka and Shinkai (excluding those registered in Karafuto), with data on birthplace which I have compiled from the guides to these settlements. The comparison of these two types of data confirms that the family registration data used in the census is inadequate at providing a fully accurate picture of where settlers were originally from. The divergent set of results seen between the census and local data also point to the likelihood that many settlers were re-migrants. In Rūtaka, 47% of settlers had their family register in Hokkaido, but as little as 11% were actually born there, with corresponding figures of 47% and 28% for Shinkai. The imbalance is of course not restricted to Hokkaido, with only 8% of Rūtaka settlers registered in the Hokuriku region, and as much as 30% of the sample in Sakamoto's guide to that settlement claiming to be Hokuriku natives by birth. In Shinkai, an imbalance was also visible with Tohoku natives accounting for almost half of the settlers, whilst only 35% maintained their family registers there. In order to gain a clearer picture as to where settlers were from and where they had been, the next section examines the migration background of the settlers in the Shinkai and Rūtaka guides.

3.7 The course of migration and settler migration background

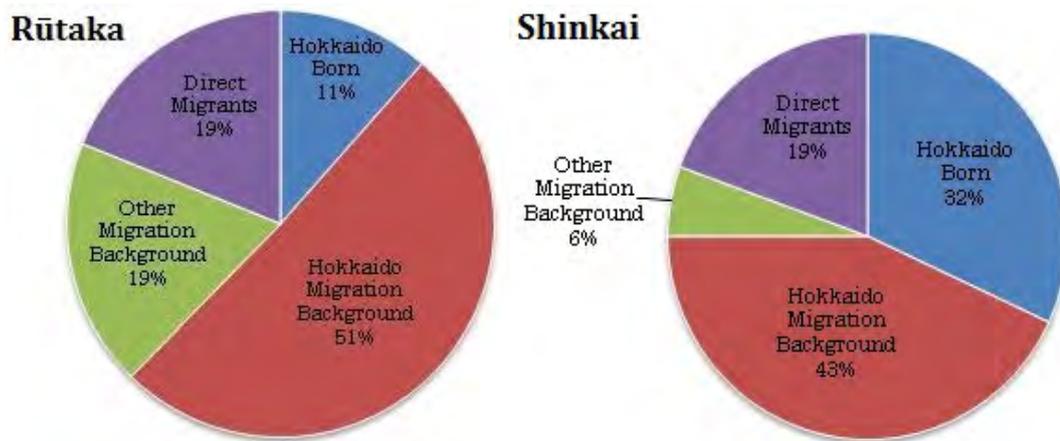
As should now be clear tracing the flow of population to Karafuto is a challenging task, fraught with problems related to the prevalence of

remigration and peculiarities of data collection, which render it difficult to ascertain the actual native prefectures of settlers. On the latter point, figure 3.5 highlights the extent to which existing data can prove misleading, and thus a different approach is required to make clear the course of migration to Karafuto. It is apparent that migration to Karafuto was strongly connected to Hokkaido, even though the nature of this relationship is complicated by Hokkaido's own history as a settlement frontier. From existing data it is clear that Hokkaido natives were present in large numbers in Karafuto, but the gap between the number of settlers born in Hokkaido and those with family registers there, suggests that in actual fact many came to Karafuto from other prefectures having spent an extended period in Hokkaido.

In order to comprehend the extent to which the settlement of Karafuto was an 'extension' of that of Hokkaido, this section utilizes the relatively detailed information given on the migration background of settlers in local guides from Shinkai and Rūtaka. The sample these guides provide is much smaller than that of the census returns, however, the detail which they provide allows us to comprehend the entirety of the migration course of settlers, and therefore they represent a most revealing source of information. The guides offer a window into the life histories of 212 individual Karafuto settlers, forming a detailed and sizeable sample, which extends back to the early days of colonial settlement. A word of caution is nonetheless necessary, as there is no way of knowing if settlers mentioned every migration they engaged in before coming to Karafuto. It seems likely that, in a few cases at least, settlers may have forgotten to mention a certain place they had spent a few months, even years, or

perhaps even deliberately chose to withhold such information. Nonetheless, on the whole the cases examined appear to be remarkably full accounts, and in this sense prove revealing.

Figure 3.6 - Migration backgrounds of Rūtaka and Shinkai settlers



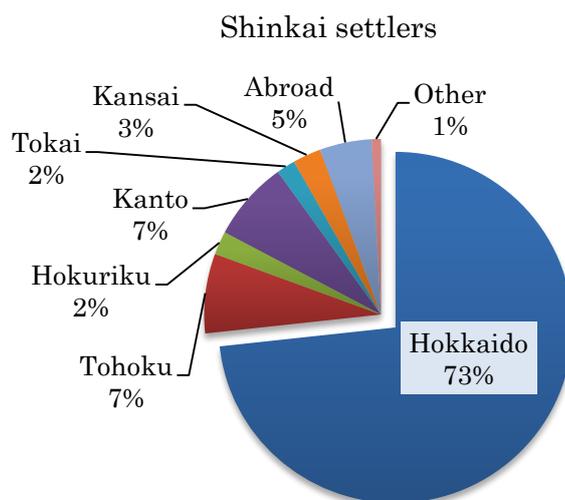
Source: as in table 3.2

Figure 3.6 presents the results of the examination into the migration background of Rūtaka and Shinkai settlers, confirming two principal findings. Firstly, the prevalence of Hokkaido in the migration backgrounds of Karafuto settlers is confirmed, with the vast majority either born in Hokkaido, or having spent some time on the Island before migrating to Karafuto. In particular the remigration via Hokkaido stands out. In the Rūtaka sample, only 11% of settlers had been born in Hokkaido, but a further 51% of settlers had a Hokkaido migration background, making for a combined total of 62% of Rūtaka's settlers who we can confirm had some experience of the settlement frontier of Hokkaido, before heading further north. In the Shinkai sample this figure was even larger, with the Hokkaido-born contingent making up 32% of Shinkai's

settler population, and a further 43% having been born elsewhere but with a Hokkaido migration background. According to the sample, exactly three quarters of Shinkai's settlers had some experience of Hokkaido prior to their migration to Karafuto. It must also be noted that these numbers represent a cautious estimate, and may actually understate the percentage of Karafuto settlers who had a Hokkaido migration background. There is a possibility that some migrants failed to mention their time in Hokkaido when interviewed, or that the editor omitted the information in the final draft of the settler's profile.

The second finding from the examination of settler's migration backgrounds is that remigration was incredibly common. Figure 3.6 shows that the number of settlers migrating directly from their home prefectures in mainland Japan was rather small. Indeed, in both samples such cases accounted for no more than 19% of settlers. For the same reasons outlined above this number is a conservative estimate, as the possibility remains that in a few settler profiles some information on migration was either forgotten or withheld during the interview, or that the editor omitted such information. Nonetheless, such problems are unlikely to detract significantly from the overall picture that the sample portrays, especially because if anything the problem serves to understate the prevalence of remigration. On this basis it would be no exaggeration to suggest that, in both Shinkai and Rūtaka at least, approximately four-fifths of settlers had migrated to Karafuto via Hokkaido or some other intermediate location. The overwhelming majority of Karafuto settlers were experienced migrants.

Figure 3.7 – The regional shares of the intermediate migrations of Rūtaka and



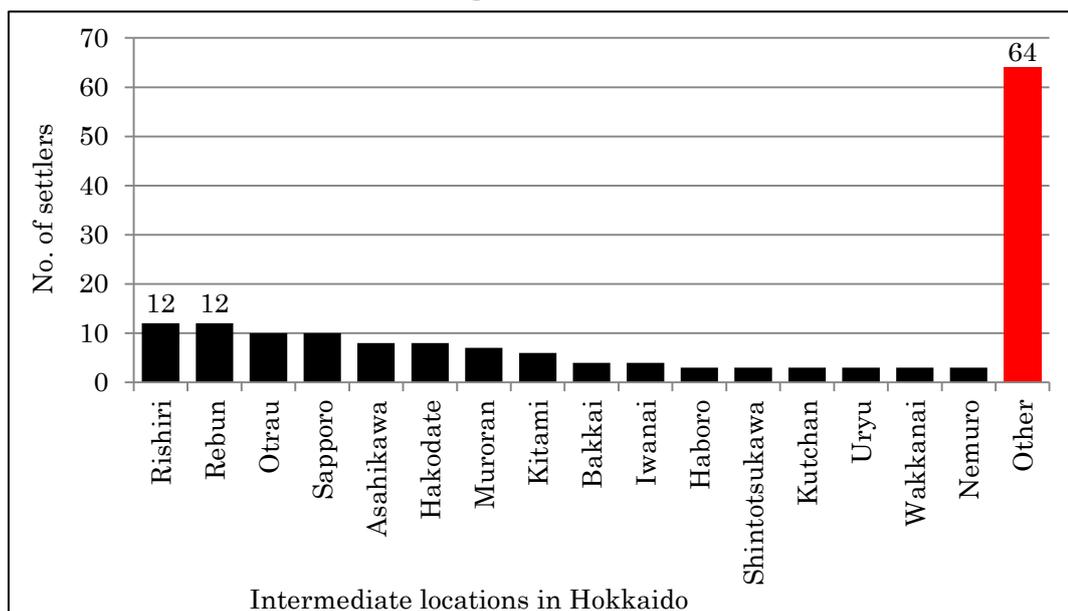
Source: as in table 3.2

Figure 3.7 presents the regional shares of all intermediate locations mentioned in the settler profiles contained in the guides for Shinkai and Rūtaka. The sample size of re-migrants totaled 152 individuals, and in combination they made 232 migratory movements prior to their arrival in Karafuto.⁴⁵ This equaled only 1.52 migratory movements per settler, indicating that most migrants made only one or two pre-Karafuto migrations. As figure 3.7 indicates, the most likely intermediate location was Hokkaido, which accounted for 73% of all intermediate locations mentioned by Karafuto settlers. That Hokkaido was the main intermediate destination comes as no surprise based on the discussion thus far, but nonetheless the extent of its share of intermediate locations is striking. Equally striking is the small share of Japan's industrial heartland, which otherwise attracted large numbers of migrants. The Kansai, Tokai and Kanto regions, which made up this

⁴⁵ Some settlers migrated a few times within the colony before coming to Shinkai or Rūtaka, but such cases have not been included in the numbers produced here. Only the pre-Karafuto migrations of these settlers have been included.

industrial heartland, account for only 12% of intermediate migrations. Furthermore, the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions – where 58% of Rutaka and 59% of Shinkai settlers were born (see figure 3.5) – provided 9% of intermediate migrations. A further 5% of intermediate migrations were made to locations outside of the Japanese empire, with one settler having spent a few years in Brazil and others having served abroad during the Russo-Japanese war. Bearing in mind the places of birth of Karafuto settlers, the data on intermediate locations suggests that very few settlers moved south before coming to Karafuto. Instead, Karafuto was the next destination on what was a largely northward bound migratory flow.

Figure 3.8 – Frequency of various intermediate locations in Hokkaido mentioned in the course of migration of Shinkai and Rūtaka settlers⁴⁶



Note: ‘Other’ refers to destinations that were mentioned fewer than three times as intermediate locations.

Source: as in table 3.2

⁴⁶ In total, settlers mentioned 170 cases of intermediate migration to Karafuto via Hokkaido; however, in 7 cases the specific location in Hokkaido was not given. As a result these 7 cases have been omitted from the data in figure 3.8, whereas they were included in figure 3.7.

Thus far it has been established that most Karafuto settlers were re-migrants, the majority of whom had come via Hokkaido – which alone accounted for almost three quarters of intermediate migrations. The concentration on Hokkaido as an intermediate location is clear, but on a more local basis, i.e. within Hokkaido itself, can we observe such a concentration? Figure 3.8, presents the principal intermediate locations in Hokkaido, listed by the number of settlers that had previously resided or worked in each location. The most frequented intermediate locations were Rishiri and Rebun – two islands in northern Hokkaido from which Karafuto is visible on an exceptionally clear day – which each hosted twelve future settlers from our sample. The size and terrain of Rishiri and Rebun meant that they did not have large communities, but as the islands are located in important fishing grounds they attracted hundreds of migratory labourers from mainland Japan each year. Their proximity to Karafuto, as well as this migratory labour link may have served to connect the islands to the northern colony, and hence produce more settlers.

Following these small islands in the remote northern corner of Hokkaido, the other main intermediate locations found in the settler profiles are the more famous urban centres and commercial ports of Hokkaido. Sapporo, the prefectural capital, and Otaru, the principal Japan sea coast port, were each mentioned by ten different Karafuto settlers. Additionally, the main port of southern Hokkaido, Hakodate, and Asahikawa, where an imperial army division was based, were each mentioned by eight different Karafuto settlers. These were the largest urban settlements on Hokkaido – not to mention the most significant

politically and economically speaking – and as such we would expect that they would have been among the most common intermediate locations for Karafuto settlers. Instead, what is most striking from the data presented in figure 3.8 is the absence of a major concentration of Karafuto settlers' intermediate locations, in any specific area of Hokkaido – excepting Rishiri and Rebun at least. The settler profiles make reference to a total of 62 different intermediate locations in Hokkaido, which were visited by 163 individuals in the sample who had migrated to Karafuto via Hokkaido. This dispersion of intermediate locations within Hokkaido indicates that most of the island was linked to the migratory circuit to Karafuto. Rather than one area serving as place where knowledge of the prospects, opportunities, and conditions in the colony to the north was passed on, it appears that such information was well diffused throughout Hokkaido.

In fact, many of the settler profiles of those who had been to Hokkaido intimate that it was knowledge of prospects in Karafuto – often gained in Hokkaido – which drew them to the colony in the first place. One such example was Andō Kunosuke, who in 1910 came to settle in the Rūtaka district, at a hamlet called Fushiko. Andō was born in Akita prefecture, and was the seventh son of a fishing family. After completing his compulsory education, he learned the fishing trade working alongside his father. In 1900, now aged 30, Andō decided to strike out on his own, and just like many other Tohoku fishermen the obvious place to start up fresh was Hokkaido – in his case Rebun Island. Located in the sparsely populated northern corner of Hokkaido, Rebun enjoyed a good catch in most years. However, in the years when the catch was poor around the island, it was common for fishermen on Rebun to travel to Karafuto,

where they would engage in seasonal work at one of the fisheries there. Karafuto's southern shores were very accessible to Rebun fishermen. On a clear day they could see the colony, and needed only cross the Sōya straits to find work there. Andō had been residing on Rebun for ten years before he made the decision to try his luck as a fisherman in Karafuto and relocate to Fushiko. His decision did not come out of the blue, because he had previously worked a number of times in the colony during the fishing season before making it his home. With his experience of seasonal employment in Karafuto, Andō was well-informed of the conditions and prospects in the colony. Therefore, whilst relocation always carries with it a degree of risk, having once travelled from Akita to Hokkaido's far north, the short trip across the Sōya straits to Fushiko on the Aniwa bay would not have been particularly daunting for Andō.

Both permanent residents of Hokkaido, as well as those who visited the island for migratory labour, had several advantages over potential Karafuto settlers from other areas. Firstly, they were well accustomed to the climate and realities of living in the relatively remote northern extremities of the Japanese empire. Secondly, they tended to have working experience in industries such as fishing and forestry, which were key industries in Hokkaido, and also eventually developed as the principal economic activities in Karafuto. Settlers who came from Hokkaido brought with them transferable skills and knowledge, which allowed them to participate in an expanding colonial economy made up of industries with which they would have been familiar. Moreover, proximity to Karafuto also kept those in Hokkaido well-informed of opportunities in the colony, and as such they were especially well-placed to succeed if they

decided to migrate further north.

Numerous works in the field of migration studies have stressed the importance of networks and chain migration in determining migratory flows. Networks spread information and provide all important connections for potential migrants, which serve to smooth the migration process and reduce the inherent risks involved. These networks are said to produce chain migration, whereby a relationship between a sending area and a destination are established and then 'locked-in' by ties of kin and native place. This relationship serves to create an enduring flow of migrants between the two locations, with each set of migrants increasing the likelihood that more from the same area will follow. The existence of such 'chains' has been used by scholars to explain a key puzzle in migration studies: why one village sends a large number of migrants and an otherwise socially and economically identical village does not.⁴⁷ So far, we have observed that whilst Hokkaido acted as a kind of 'feeder' for migration to Karafuto, there was no obvious chain migration from the island, and instead information and connections to Karafuto appear diffused throughout Hokkaido.

Nonetheless, we may ask whether such chain migration is observable in other regions to the south of Hokkaido. In order to observe such a trend, I have mapped the birthplaces of Shinkai and Rūtaka settlers – reproduced in figure 3.9 – who were from Toyama, Ishikawa, and Akita. These prefectures were selected because they provided a considerable number of settlers to Karafuto, with the benefit that we can

⁴⁷ For a discussion of these issues please refer to: Baines, D. (1994) 'European emigration, 1815-1930: looking at the emigration decision again', *Economic History Review* 47/3

observe numerous cases, even when applying the smaller samples compiled from the settler profiles in the guides to Rūtaka and Shinkai. The picture that emerges from figure 3.9 is of a relatively wide dispersion of the locations of settler birthplaces throughout these prefectures. The implication of this is that chain migration, or network effects, appears weak in the birth prefectures of settlers. If chain migration was significant, then we would expect to see a concentration in the locations of both settlers' birthplaces, and destinations. Considering that the sample used here is based on two specific destinations in Karafuto, and not the colony as a whole, we would expect a more concentrated cluster of birthplaces for chain migration to be observable than is the case in figure 3.9. Instead, whilst there is a degree of concentration of settlers' birthplaces in coastal areas – which were the most populous areas of these prefectures anyway – it is their dispersal which stands out. From an examination of these three prefectures only one case was found in which two settlers shared the same town of birth – the fishing town of Kitaura, located on the Oga peninsula in Akita prefecture. Nonetheless, even in this case the two settlers appear unrelated. They had different surnames and made no mention of each other in their profiles which appear in the Shinkai guide. Additionally, they travelled entirely different paths to Shinkai. The first of these settlers from Kitaura left his hometown to become a miner and worked in four different prefectures – including of course Hokkaido – before coming to Karafuto, first to Nakasōya then to Shinkai. The other settler travelled directly to Karafuto, at first residing in Maoka, then Ōdomari, before eventually coming to Shinkai.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Takada. *Shinkaimurashi*, pp216 & 283

Figure 3.9 - Birthplaces of Shinkai and Rütaka settlers from Toyama, Niigata, and Akita

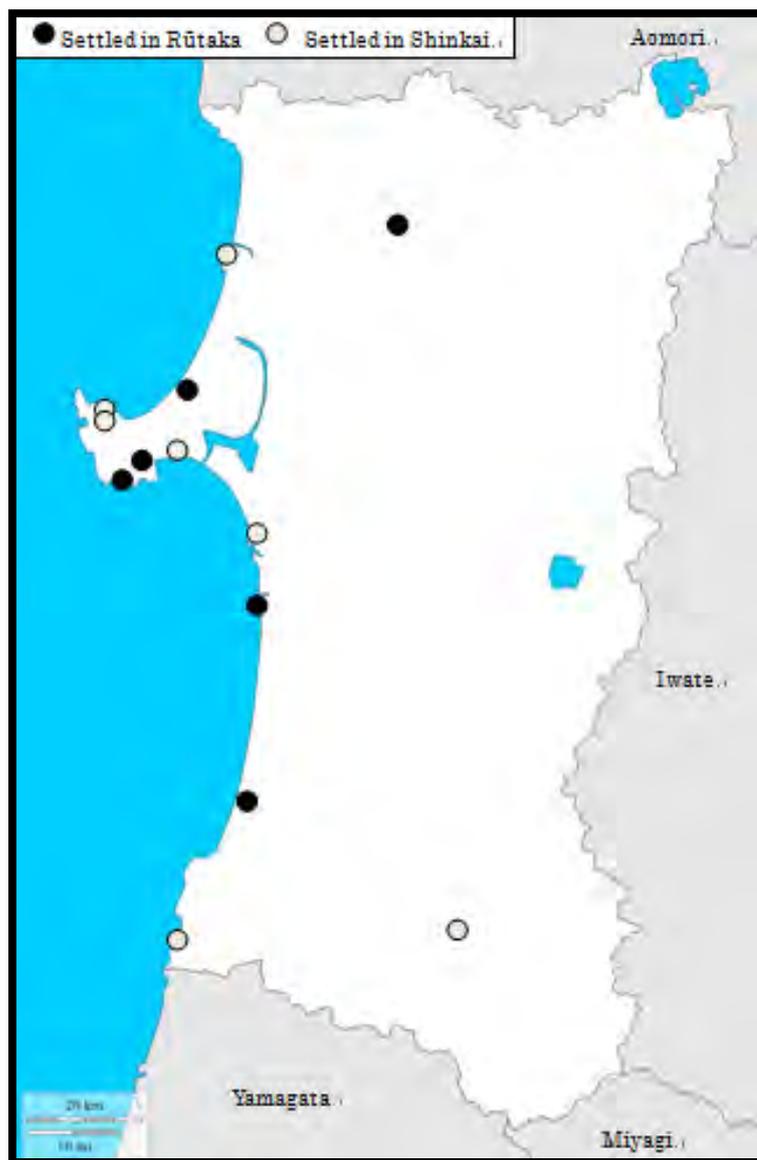
1) Toyama



2) Ishikawa



3) Akita



Source: as in figure 3.5

The apparent weakness of a chain migration effect in the prefecture of birth – at least in Akita, Niigata and Toyama – is most likely a result of two factors. The first of these is the prevalence of re-migrants among Karafuto settlers, and the second is the widespread diffusion of information regarding Karafuto in these prefectures. Regarding the former point, this chapter has already shown that many Karafuto settlers

migrated to the colony after having previously migrated to Hokkaido or elsewhere. Having already left the prefectures of their birth, these individuals would have suffered a weakening of their connections to their native prefecture. A migrant's ties to their native place may not have been severed entirely, but simply being somewhere else entailed a reduction in the frequency and convenience of contact. As time passed, and as migrants moved on elsewhere, these ties – or at least the frequency of contact – are likely to have deteriorated further, and new connections would have been built outside of the migrants' native prefecture. This served to weaken the extent of chain migration from a migrant's native prefecture, and instead network effects may have been more pronounced in the intermediate locations of migrants, especially Hokkaido – where information on, and connections to the Karafuto were well diffused.

Chain migration may also appear weak in the prefectures of Tohoku and Hokuriku, due to the possibility that in these regions too, information on, and connections with Karafuto were widespread. As later chapters will confirm, these prefectures sent a large number of migratory labourers to Karafuto, which facilitated the dissemination of information regarding conditions in the colony. Moreover, frequent experiences of migratory labour in Karafuto, and the dependence of Karafuto-based business on that migratory labour (see chapters five and six), served to keep the colony connected to numerous localities in the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions. The implication of this interconnectedness meant that rather than settlers coming from a cluster of communities, there was a dispersion of sending areas across the main sending prefectures.

Table 3.3 - Settler's stated reasons/circumstance by which they came to settle in Karafuto

Reason / circumstance	No. of settlers	Percentage share
Prior information & experience on Karafuto	61	39.3%
As a migratory labourer	35	
Word of mouth	46	
Participated in military occupation of Karafuto	4	
Job lined up (may also include migratory labour)	39	25.2%
Push factors	39	25.2%
Failed business	14	
Flooding	3	
Poverty	6	
Lack of land available at home	18	
Family related	16	10.3%
Came at request of family member already in Karafuto	13	
Brought by family when young	3	
No reason given	56	N/A

Note: the percentage share excludes the 56 settlers for whom no information was given. The totals do not always add up, because some settlers gave multiple reasons for their migration, and in such cases all stated reasons have been counted equally.

Source: compiled from Sakamoto. *Karafuto no Rūtaka*; Takada. *Shinkaimurashi*

Before this chapter concludes, it is worth commenting on the reasons/circumstances by which settlers came to Karafuto. This subject was touched on in many of the settler profiles contained in the guides to Rūtaka and Shinkai. However, a note of caution is due, because in the guides the level of discussion on the subject of why they had come to Karafuto varied considerably. Some settlers went into great detail about their migration background and the circumstances which brought them to the colony, others made no more than a brief statement, and some passed

over the subject altogether, preferring to focus on what they had achieved in the colony since their arrival. Therefore, the data presented in table 3.3 – which gives the reasons/circumstances settlers came to Karafuto – should be treated as indicative rather than definitive. In their interviews with the authors of the guides, settlers may not have been totally open about the circumstances behind their past migration, especially if it included past failures that reflected badly upon them. The potential sensitivity of this information requires that we do not read too much into the data presented in table 3.3, especially as within the sample 56 individuals provided no information at all regarding the reason they came to the colony. Nonetheless, table 3.3 indicates that 25.2% of the settlers in the two guides came to the colony having already lined up employment in Karafuto through connections with organizations or individuals already located there. This group included individuals coming to work at commercial fisheries, as managers and labourers, and also included those who would work in some form of public service, as teachers, Shintō priests, and in the local police force.

Another significant minority of settlers, also at 25.2% of the total, are those who I have identified as having come to Karafuto due to ‘push factors.’ This category includes cases of business failure, flooding, poor land availability in a settler’s home prefecture, and in six cases the settler simply stated that poverty made them migrate. Although these push factors do not represent the main reasons for migration to the colony, it is clear that around a quarter of settlers openly related their relocation to the colony to destitution. If we assume that push factors were prevalent among the 56 individuals who withheld information on the circumstances

of their migration, then push factors were more prevalent in Karafuto migration than is suggested by data in table 3.3. However, this is no more than speculation, as a variety of reasons – besides the shame of having come to the colony because of poverty – could have made settlers keep quiet about their past circumstances.

Almost 40% of settlers came to settle in Karafuto, with some kind of prior knowledge, information, and/or first-hand experience of Karafuto. This category included a handful of settlers who had served in the Russo-Japanese war, and were involved in the Japanese occupation of the island in the closing stages of the conflict. Most prominent in this category, however, were those who had first-hand experience of the territory as migratory labourers, or who had heard about the opportunities in Karafuto through the word-of-mouth of trusted acquaintances – in Hokkaido or their home prefectures. In this way, migratory labour was serving to introduce people to the colony, and spread information about opportunities there across Hokkaido and mainland Japan. A further 10.3% of the sample stated that they had come to Karafuto for family related reasons. This included those coming at the request of a family member already resident in the colony, and those who were brought to Karafuto by relatives when they were still children.

3.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has examined the migration backgrounds of over 200 settlers, from two separate Karafuto settlements, finding that the settlement of Karafuto was, in some ways, an extension of Hokkaido's own colonization. Evidence presented in this chapter suggests that upwards of 62-75% of

those who came to settle in Karafuto, had done so after having spent an extended period of time on the island directly to Karafuto's south, as either residents or migratory labourers. Many of these settlers were originally from the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions, and had crossed the first 'salty river' – the Tsugaru straits – to Hokkaido, where they gained experience with life and work in Japan's far north, and became well-informed of opportunities across the second 'salty river' – the Sōya straits between Hokkaido and Karafuto.

In this chapter I have also stressed the importance of northern migration in the wider picture of prewar Japanese migration. The proper incorporation of Hokkaido and Karafuto into the overall picture allows us to question the conventional wisdom that western Japan was a large sender of migrants, and eastern Japan was not – due to its isolation and alleged backwardness. Instead, this chapter has suggested that the people of the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions were extremely mobile, first settling Hokkaido, and then playing an active role in the settlement of Karafuto. The common image of this part of Japan in the prewar period is of a remote, poorly connected region, characterized by a risk-averse people who were resolute in their traditional values, and bound to their native place.⁴⁹ Challenging this rendering of Japan's northeast is not the task of this chapter, however, based on the findings in this chapter it is sufficient to question the stereotype. I have suggested that part of the problem has been that scholars have tended to treat migration to Hokkaido separately,

⁴⁹ Lewis, M. (1992) *Rioters and citizens: mass protest in imperial Japan*, University of California Press, California; Lewis, M. (2000) *Becoming apart: national power and local politics in Toyama 1868-1954*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA; Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*,

from emigration and colonial migration, and usually overlook the case of Karafuto entirely. Including these destinations suggests that many of the people of Japan's northeast were resourceful, dynamic, and mobile, albeit with their activities focused on the north.

Chapter 4

Settling 'farmers' in Karafuto

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined the personal backgrounds of Karafuto settlers, analysing information contained in guides to two specific settlements, and highlighting the various processes by which people came to the colony. It was found that the settlement of Karafuto can be viewed as something of an extension of the colonization of Hokkaido, with many Karafuto settlers having spent extended periods there, before heading further north.¹ In this chapter, I shift the focus away from the overall trends in the migration process to a more specific examination of agricultural settlement in Karafuto.

The establishment of permanent agricultural communities in Karafuto was the foremost goal of settlement policy in the colony. Throughout the entire Japanese colonial period, agriculture was singled-out for subsidy and promotion, but despite official support, agriculture in Karafuto failed to really take hold. This chapter builds on existing literature on agriculture in Karafuto, which highlights poor agricultural performance, but does not consistently relate findings to attempts at colonial settlement.² The aim of this chapter is to determine the extent to which agriculture, broadly speaking, and the colonial administration's agricultural settlement programme, contributed to the growth of a 'settled' population in Karafuto. In order to carry out this task, the performance of agriculture, and the settlement programme, as well as their impact on 'settlement' will be gauged through an analysis of a number of source materials. These include the official reports of the Karafuto colonial administration, articles and reports in the colonial

¹ Miki, M. (2003) 'Nōgyō imin ni miru Karafuto to Hokkaidō', *Rekishi chirigaku* 45/1

² Takeno, M. (2001) 'Shokuminchi Karafuto nōgyō no jittai: 1928-40 nen no shūdan imin ki wo chūshin to shite', *Shakai keizai shigaku* 66/5

press, contemporary academic enquiry, and the recollections of former agricultural settlers.

This chapter proceeds by outlining the major policies of the colonial administration towards agricultural settlement, and then assesses the general performance of the settlement programme. This is followed by an examination of evidence from a group of 'exemplary farmers,' who were decorated by the colonial administration for their contributions to the growth of agriculture in Karafuto. Thereafter, I offer a case study of an instance of group migration from Shikoku to the settlement of Konotoro, located on Karafuto's western coast. This case study is useful, because it allows us to incorporate both press reports and the recollections of former residents of Konotoro into the analysis, adding individual detail to the broader discussion of the general performance of agricultural settlement. This chapter concludes by offering an assessment of the role of the agricultural settlement programme in fostering the permanent settlement of the colony.

In this chapter, I argue that even though some macro indicators point to a degree of success in fostering agricultural settlement in Karafuto, a closer examination of the available evidence reveals a different reality. Agricultural settlements were neither particularly 'settled' in comparison with non-agricultural settlements, nor were they able to establish the viable agricultural economy which the settlement programme aimed to create. Indeed, Karafuto's agricultural communities were unable to shake-off an enduring dependence on non-agricultural activities, with seasonal work as labourers in the forestry and fishing sectors particularly common. This dependence on side-work was to some extent inevitable, as Karafuto's climate made for a long agricultural slack season, but agricultural households engaged in such work even during the agricultural peak season. This chapter finds that active engagement in such side-work was primarily a rational response to the availability of lucrative non-agricultural activities, as households sought diverse

sources of income and economic stability. The additional income gained from non-agricultural activities served to balance household budgets, allowing Karafuto's farm families to purchase imports of rice – which could not be produced in Karafuto – and more importantly to sustain themselves in the colony.

4.2 Agricultural settlement in Karafuto prior to 1905

When Karafuto passed into Japanese hands in the late summer of 1905, it was by all accounts a relatively 'empty' colony. This meant that with a sudden influx of Japanese migrants the ethnic composition of the newly acquired colony changed rapidly, becoming dominated by Japanese. In 1906, only one year after the establishment of Japanese colonial rule, there were already 10,806 Japanese residing in Karafuto, making up 87% of the colony's total population – the other 13% consisted of 1,291 natives and 264 'foreigners,' mostly Russians who had avoided repatriation.³ The relative emptiness, and indeed the 'emptying,'⁴ of the colony presented Japan with something of a blank canvas, with which it was to have a free hand in building colonial society, and in transforming 'frontiers into assets.'⁵ Nonetheless, the acquisition of Karafuto did not ensure it would permanently be under Japan's orbit, as it continued to share a border with Russia, which, it was feared, might in the future seek reprisal for its defeat in the war of 1904-05. Therefore, in Karafuto – as in many settler colonies – there was an urgency to establish communities of settlers, so as to entrench the sovereignty of the metropole, and provide a bulwark

³ Karafuto-chō nōrinbu (1929) *Karafuto shokumin no enkaku*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, pp58-59

⁴ Japan deliberately attempted to empty the colony by repatriating survivors, and killing Russian convicts/settlers, both during and just after the short conflict on Sakhalin in the closing stages of the Russo-Japanese war. See: Amano, N. (2008) 'Sakhalin / Karafuto: the colony between empires', in Sevatinaov, S., Richardson, P. & Kireev, A. (eds.) *Borders and transborder processes in Eurasia*, Dalnauka, Vladivostok, pp125-126

⁵ Weaver quoted in Veracini, L. 'The imagined geographies of settler colonialism', in Banivanua Mar, T. & Edwards, P. (eds.) (2010) *Making settler colonial space: perspectives on race, place & identity*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, p182

against foreign aggression.⁶ Settler communities would reshape the newly acquired land, transforming its landscape, whilst integrating its socio-political and economic realms with the metropole, and providing an outlet for the excess of metropolitan people and capital. In this way the development of settler communities could, in theory at least, contribute to imperial defence and prosperity, to the mutual benefit of colony and metropole.

Following the Treaty of Portsmouth the settlement of a Japanese population in Karafuto was both the immediate and long-term priority of the newly established colonial administration. However, 1905 did not mark the beginning of Japanese attempts to secure Karafuto through settlement. Instead, it represented the first time that Japan simultaneously held sovereignty over the territory, and maintained the capacity to transform it, following the remarkable growth of the economy during the Meiji period. During the nineteenth century, Japan made sporadic attempts to establish communities in Karafuto, with various domains entrusted first with exploration and surveying tasks, and then with establishing a permanent presence, in order to counter Russian excursions in the region. These efforts came to very little, and the most prominent Japanese presence was a number of seasonal fishing posts, which did not provide for a year round presence. With such a limited foothold on the island, and given the broader context of the rise of Western imperialism in East Asia, Japan moved to compromise on Sakhalin. The result was the 1855 Treaty of Shimoda, in which Russia and Japan agreed – for the time being at least – to coexistence and joint-possession of Sakhalin Island. In the treaty both sides recognized each other's rights, but by shelving the question of territorial demarcation it also served to intensify the competition to establish a stronger foothold on the island.

⁶ *Ibid* p182

With the danger that the territory would eventually be lost to Russia, a bureaucrat – who had previously surveyed the island – named Okamoto Kensuke (1839-1904, born in Mima, Awa province) was stirred into action. He organized a group of approximately two hundred settlers, who were accompanied by a handful of officials, in order to build a permanent Japanese presence on the island through the establishment of a farming community. This group departed from Hakodate in June 1868, and was joined in September of the following year by a further three hundred settlers, who were drawn from the Tokyo poor, also to settle as farmers. Upon relocation to Karafuto, these settlers were to be granted the free title to farm land, lifelong tax exemption, and use of fishing grounds, as well as three years of rice supplies and other provisions.⁷ The efforts of Okamoto, however, in the end came to nothing. The harsh climate of the island coupled with an outbreak of disease ravaged the settler group in its first years. In 1870, one hundred and thirty five of the group returned to Japan due to illness or poor health, and as a result the recruitment of additional settlers was suspended in late 1871. That year, a Scotsman named John Baxter-Will, who was in the employ of the Japanese government as a ship's captain, transported some of the settlers back, and described them as 'a sickly, dirty lot... all glad to be going back to Japan.'⁸ In late 1873, the number of Japanese in Karafuto stood at six hundred and sixty, of which two hundred and thirty five were classified as settlers, fifty nine were officials, and three hundred and sixteen were simply migratory labourers.⁹

This first Japanese attempt at establishing an agricultural community on the island had run into considerable trouble, whilst at the same time Russia – which had already begun sending convicts to

⁷ Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei (1995) *Karafuto nenpyō*, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei Tokyo, pp90-98

⁸ Baxter-Will, J. (1968 reprint) *Trading under sail off Japan 1860-99*, Diplomatic Press Sophia University, Tokyo, p63

⁹ Karafuto-shichō (1874) *Meiji shichinen Karafuto shichō chō*, reproduced in; Nishimura, I. (1994) *Minami Karafuto*, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei, Tokyo, no pagination

Sakhalin – had almost twice as many people on the island. Continuing setbacks and the growing Russian presence led to a reconsideration of Japan's colonization efforts on the island. In 1870, Kuroda Kiyotaka, an influential figure in the new Meiji government – who later became the head of the Hokkaido development agency and Japan's second prime minister – was charged with the task of developing Karafuto on behalf of the new regime. Kuroda visited the island and observed the desperate state of Okamoto's colonization efforts. Upon his return from the island, Kuroda submitted a report to the central government in which he recommended abandoning Karafuto, and redoubling efforts on Hokkaido. After this, Karafuto slowly slipped off the agenda, and in 1875, Japan relinquished its claims to the territory by signing the Treaty of St. Petersburg. Up until that point, the Meiji government had expended ¥771,901 on the Karafuto colonization project, only for the settlers to be returned to mainland Japan – mostly the worse for wear.¹⁰

After 1875, the island was remade as a penal colony of the Tsarist regime, with a contingent of peasant settlers among the convicts destined for hard labour. There was a limited degree of development in the next forty years, with the population expanding to 36,595 by 1902.¹¹ Indeed, the first Japanese surveys, after the Japanese invasion of the island in 1905, revealed that there were fifty nine separate farming hamlets, and approximately two thousand three hundred farming households in Sakhalin.¹² Nonetheless, agricultural production techniques remained basic and produce of poor quality, with a mere 10,192 acres¹³ having been rudimentarily brought under cultivation by 1905. As produce from farms

¹⁰ 1874-7-5 Cabinet Office Papers 'Karafuto imin Hakodate Otaru he tenkyō,' There was also a forced migration of some of the Karafuto Ainu population, who were resettled in Hokkaido; Karafuto Ainu-shi kenkyūkai (1992) *Tsuishikari no ishibusi: Karafuto Ainu kyōsei ijū no rekishi*, Hokkaidō shuppan kiga sentaa, Sapporo

¹¹ Amano. 'Sakhalin / Karafuto: the Colony between Empires', pp123-124

¹² Karafuto Minseisho (1907) *Nanbu Karafuto nōji kikyō chōsasho*, Karafuto Minseisho, Ōdomari, pp 1-3

¹³ Jitsugyō no Nihonsha (July 1905) *Karafuto senryō kinenchō*, Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, Tokyo, p62

on the island was mostly for the subsistence of the producers themselves, the rest of the population still depended heavily on imported goods for its food supply. Yet even though this was an admittedly limited agricultural base, Japan's newest colony was, from day one, able to accommodate a small number of agricultural settlers. The land brought under cultivation and the accommodation built by Russian settlers could be turned over to Japanese hands, and it is with these foundations that agricultural development and settlement in Karafuto proceeded. The scale and pace of agricultural development accelerated in the Japanese colonial era, but much of the produce remained the same as during the Russian period with wheat, barley, oats, rye, and potatoes being cultivated, as well as vegetables such as carrots, beet, and cabbage etc.¹⁴

4.3 Visions and policy of agricultural settlement

Despite the failure of Japan's initial efforts to establish an agricultural community on the island, as is expressed time and again in the official publications of the colonial administration, agriculture remained very much at the heart of the vision for the colonial development of Karafuto. The urgency of embedding a permanent Japanese presence in its newest territorial acquisition meant that, from the very start of the Japanese colonial period, agriculture was the focus of settlement policy. Indeed, barely a month had passed since Japanese troops had landed at Merei, before the *Tago-maru* left Otaru for Karafuto, carrying a number of officials, and a small contingent of agricultural settlers. This voyage preceded the conclusion of the Treaty of Portsmouth by almost a month, reflecting both Japan's confidence that it would be able to take over the territory, and the urgency of the task of making it Japanese. By early 1906, the fledgling colonial administration – still subordinate to the army – had already compiled settlement guides, which were distributed throughout Japan, and talked up Karafuto's potential as an agricultural colony. Besides promotional activities, the colonial administration invited

¹⁴ Takeno. 'Shokuminchi Karafuto nōgyō no jittai'; Karafuto Minseisho. *Nanbu Karafuto nōji kikyō chōsasho*, pp2-12

experts from Hokkaido University and the Ministry of Agriculture to assist with land surveys, and recommend land fit for agricultural settlement. The emphasis on agriculture continued as the last remnants of the army were withdrawn on March 1, 1907. Within twenty days of the military withdrawal, the colonial administration, known as Karafuto-chō, issued its first set of new regulations, which aimed at encouraging agricultural settlement, and built on those already put in place under the military occupation.

In line with their vision of Karafuto as an agricultural settler colony, in 1908 the colonial government relocated its headquarters from coastal Ōdomari to the inland settlement of Toyohara, which was located in an area expected to become the agricultural heartland of Karafuto.¹⁵ This move highlighted the commitment of the colonial regime to building Karafuto's agriculture, as it placed the administration in an area which had considerable promise as an agricultural plain. Indeed, this move replicated the precedent of Hokkaido a generation earlier, when the newly established inland village of Sapporo became the capital at the expense of the commercial port of Hakodate, which was much larger and was the long-standing centre of Japanese activity on Hokkaido.¹⁶ Besides the relocation of the administrative capital, the colonial administration also made efforts in its early years to establish immigrant processing and information centres. These were established in Hokkaido at Otaru and Hakodate, in the Tohoku region at Aomori, and in the colony itself in Ōdomari and Toyohara. By this time, the programme to recruit and settle people from mainland Japan as agricultural settlers in Karafuto was in full swing, and it continued to be the main thrust of settlement policy until the very final days of the Japanese colonial era. Before summarizing the main settlement policies and appraising their successes

¹⁵ Miki, M. (1999) 'Ijūgata shokuminchi Karafuto to Toyohara no shigaichi keisei'. *Jinbun chiri* 51/3, pp217-219

¹⁶ Itani, H. (2007) *Saharin no naka no Nihon: toshi to kenchiku*, Tōyō shoten, Tokyo, pp22-27

and failures, it is worth underlining the persistence of this policy, and reflecting on the rationale behind it.

As part of the fanfare surrounding its thirtieth anniversary, the Japanese colonial administration in Karafuto published an official history of its first three decades. The official history stated that ‘in order to develop this virgin land and increase the national wealth... the first, and most important task, [of the colonial administration] was the promotion of immigration for the purpose of agricultural settlement.’¹⁷ The rationale behind this specific focus on agricultural settlement was explained with reference to the ‘lower mobility’ of farmers, who ‘held a desire to settle permanently, and make this island their final resting place.’¹⁸ Taniguchi, a former editor of the *KNNS*, and a contemporary commentator on colonial policy, stated that ‘agricultural immigration is promoted with the aim of establishing a substantial population [in Karafuto],’ as the alternative was drawing settlers from those working in fishing – Karafuto’s principal industry in the early years of the colony. According to Taniguchi, as ‘coastal settlers,’ fishermen ‘are concerned only with making exorbitant profits, and do nothing except deplete the natural resources of this land.’¹⁹ He added that although some fishermen did try their hand at farming on the side, due to the poor quality of coastal land, and the ‘poor spirit of the fishermen’, this was ‘unlikely to provide a solid foundation for development.’²⁰

Proponents of the need to establish agriculture in Karafuto, and look beyond fishing as a means of settling the colony were common in the colonial administration. Hiraoka Jōtarō, who served as the head of the Japanese administration in Karafuto²¹ from June 1908 to June 1914, was

¹⁷ Karafuto-chō (1936) *Karafuto-chō shisei sanjū nenshi*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, p565

¹⁸ *Ibid* p568

¹⁹ Taniguchi (1914) *Karafuto shokumin seisaku*, Takushoku shinpōsha, Tokyo, pp179-181

²⁰ *Ibid* p220

²¹ Incidentally, Hiraoka was also the grandfather of well-known novelist Mishima Yukio.

among the most prominent and influential advocates of this view. During a special House of Representatives Diet committee meeting, which discussed reforming the fishing industry in Karafuto so as to favour small fishing operators, Hiraoka spoke out on the inadequacy of settlement and development based on small-scale fishing stating:

‘Though it is important to encourage as many people as possible to go to the colony, this does not necessarily equate with colonization and development... All they [the independent small-scale fishers] do is make quick money from their fishing boats, and the result is that it falls into the hands of small traders such as the barber and the local bar... the essence of colonization and development is not about making a quick buck... real colonization and development will stem from agriculture.’²²

Hiraoka continued his attack on the idea of small-scale fishing operators as suitable material for settlers, likening the nature of their use of resources to an ‘octopus eating its own tentacles.’²³ He went on to state that ‘our principal objective of populating and developing Karafuto revolves around settling farmers and not fishermen... 300,000 chō²⁴ of land has already been selected for this purpose, and on a basis of 7.5 chō per household can easily support 17,000-18,000 farm households.’²⁵ The suspicion held by Hiraoka, and others, was that those in industries such as fishing would plunder Karafuto’s natural resources, failing to produce a sustainable basis for economic life in the colony, and therefore ultimately undermining the long-term basis for settlement. In the eyes of the colonial administration, fishermen were prone to move around, and would only come to the colony temporarily. It was anticipated that fishermen would return to their home prefectures in the winter months, and not return at all when the catch fell off. Farmers, on the other hand,

²² House of Representatives 30th session committee papers no.27 1913-3-25;

‘Karafuto gyogyō seido kaisei ni kan suru kengian iinkai’ p2 & p15

²³ *Ibid* p2

²⁴ 1 hectare is equivalent to 1.0083 chō

²⁵ *Ibid* p3

were more likely to 'settle on the land' and feel an attachment to it, investing in its long term improvement, and establishing permanent roots in the colony. These preconceptions were what justified the provision of 'special protection and support' for agricultural settlers on the part of the colonial administration, and led to the 'expense of much effort to encourage the agricultural development of the colony.'²⁶

The view outlined above was both pervasive and persistent, not only within the colonial administration, but also among scholars of colonial policy. Indeed, in the 1930s Nakajima Kyutarō, a Professor at Hokkaido University and an advisor to Karafuto's colonial administration, reiterated this stance in a publication in which he put forward his views on colonial development in Karafuto. For him farmers, as opposed to fishermen, tend not to move around, and furthermore he stated that 'fishing and forestry are primitive industries, based solely on natural resource extraction, and as such they will not be able to ensure the indefinite prosperity of Karafuto. This is why we should look to agriculture and livestock as the principal foundation of industry on this island.'²⁷ There were, of course, doubters regarding the prospects of agriculture in Karafuto, especially given the harsh climate, the need for considerable investment in infrastructure, and the impossibility of growing rice – the preferred staple food of the Japanese diet – in the colony. Such views were, however, rare among policy makers, and were instead expressed by some residents of the colony. One Tokyo based journalist noted during a visit to Karafuto in 1913 that 'there are those among the residents [of Karafuto] who think agriculture has no chance.'²⁸ Nonetheless, in his interviews with officials he was informed on numerous occasions that 'encouraging the immigration of agricultural settlers is the main element of the colonial administration's mission to

²⁶ Karafuto-chō Shokusan-ka (1925) *Karafuto no nōgyō*, Karafuto-chō, Sapporo, pp3-4

²⁷ Nakajima, K. (1934) *Karafuto no takushoku oyobi nōgyō ni tsuite*, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, pp50-51

²⁸ *TMNS* 1913.8.6 – 1913.9.26 (Part 8)

develop this colony.’²⁹ For the colonial administration and scholars of colonial policy at Hokkaido University, at least, agriculture and colonial development were synonymous.

In spite of the existence of many obstacles and some doubters, there were high hopes for agricultural settlement in Karafuto, and these hopes were maintained throughout the colonial period – even in the face of the agricultural sector’s sluggish performance. In 1914, Taniguchi estimated that with existing land available for agriculture – not to mention that which could be converted to agricultural use – the colony would be able to absorb between 100,000 and 150,000 farmers. Reflecting on the approaching anniversary of the first decade of Japanese colonial rule on Karafuto, Taniguchi stressed the progress that had already been made, and anticipated that ‘in the next ten years, agriculture in Karafuto will make exceptional progress.’³⁰ Two decades later, Takaoka Kumao, a leading expert on agricultural and colonial policy and the newly appointed director of Hokkaido University, estimated in his 1935 work that Karafuto could easily host an agricultural population of 56,000 households, with a full time farming population 225,000 strong.³¹ These were among the more modest estimates, and there were more ambitious plans within the colonial administration, with some suggesting that ‘a total of 1,250,000 [agricultural] immigrants will be recruited to Karafuto over a twenty five year period.’³² These varying estimates of Karafuto’s potential to absorb an agricultural settler population aside, whether for ambitious bureaucrats of the colonial regime, or for respected scholarly figures such as Takaoka, agriculture remained at the heart of visions for colonial development.

²⁹ *TMNS* 1913.8.6 – 1913.9.26 (Part 28)

³⁰ Taniguchi. *Karafuto shokumin seisaku*, p215.

³¹ Takaoka, K (1935) *Karafuto nōgyō shokumin mondai*, Nishigahara, Tokyo, chapter 3

³² Ōsaka Mainichi Shimnbunsha (1927) *Japan today and tomorrow*, Ōsaka Mainichi Shinbunsha, Osaka, p142

The persistent drive to make agriculture in Karafuto successful was not just talk; it also made its way into economic planning, such as in the colonial administration's fifteen year development plan, which came into effect in 1934.³³ In this plan, the task of raising Karafuto's agricultural output was marked out as the priority, and the agricultural sector was identified as the one that would make the most rapid progress. The plan envisaged raising Karafuto's agricultural output by a factor of 15.5 and livestock by 18.6, far above what was anticipated for any other sector. Mining, for example, was the next in line with the expectation that its output would grow to 7.1 times the 1933 levels over the duration of the plan. Such a rapid growth in agriculture entailed a shift in the structure of the colony's economy away from manufacturing and forestry. It was anticipated that manufacturing would expand by 14% over the 15 years, whilst forestry was not supposed to grow at all. The re-structuring of the colony, which the plan sought, would have seen agriculture increase its share of total output from a mere 3.9% in 1931, to 28.1% in 1948.³⁴ Even though agriculture had made relatively little progress since the beginning of Japanese colonial rule, as late as the 1930s it remained at the centre of the colonial administration's vision for colonial development.

In terms of the distribution of funds to bring about this economic restructuring, the majority of spending would be directed towards infrastructural development, to the benefit of all industries. Nonetheless, a disaggregation of the plan's budget indicates that 20.5% of the planned spending was directly for promoting the agricultural sector, and encouraging agricultural settlement. This spending included large outlays on land improvement and irrigation works, subsidizing incoming agricultural settlers, promoting agricultural production, and supporting

³³ The plan was eventually abandoned due to the intensifying war situation.

³⁴ All data in this paragraph has been calculated from: Karafuto-chō (1934) *Karafuto takushoku keikaku setsumei kiyō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, p93

agricultural research. In contrast, a mere 4.8%³⁵ of the total budget was set aside for supporting fishing, with no settlement component to the spending at all. This is not surprising, as whilst the colonial administration placed no direct restrictions on the occupations which Japanese migrants and settlers in the colony engaged in, agricultural settlement remained the only component of the official settlement programme. As a result, agricultural settlers were the only settler type to receive any form of official support, financial or otherwise.

Agricultural settlement was thought to offer Karafuto a more sustainable and permanent basis from which to build colonial society, helping to solidify Japan's position in the territory. In addition there was some hope that agricultural settlement in Karafuto could contribute towards alleviating some of the pressing issues of the day in Japan, such as the so-called 'overpopulation' problem.³⁶ In its promotional material that it published throughout Japan, the colonial administration often put out the appeal to 'go to Karafuto, young man!' where 'a land awaits in which you will be able, not only to amass wealth, but also solve some of the problems confronting the nation.'³⁷ This was at once both an appeal to nationalistic heroism, and to the individualistic urge to rise in the world, in which colonial migration to Karafuto could simultaneously help 'solve' national problems and allow the migrant to get rich. In addition to such appeals, a number of exaggerated claims were in circulation about the potential of the colony, including that Karafuto offered the expanding Japanese race a 'northern lifeline' (*hoppō nihon no seimeisen*) where it was destined to extend its civilization.³⁸

It was unlikely that these extraordinary claims were taken seriously by most, especially given the size and climatic conditions of Karafuto. Nonetheless, there was some hope that the colony could at

³⁵ *Ibid*, disaggregated from data on pp4-92

³⁶ Takeno. 'Jinkō mondai'

³⁷ Ōsaka Mainichi Shimnibunsha. *Japan today and tomorrow*, p142

³⁸ Karafuto-chō. *Sanjū nenshi*, p569

least contribute towards relieving some of the nation's problems. The relative emptiness of the territory compared to Japan's other colonial possessions meant that Karafuto offered the opportunity for large-scale resettlement, and the idea that Japanese settlers could convert the 'virgin' territory into a kind of 'Karafuto farming paradise' (*Karafuto nōgyō rakuen*).³⁹ Taniguchi explained that 'for farmers struggling in the mother country as a tenant under the strains of the rampant landlord system, Karafuto is heaven.'⁴⁰ For another commentator on the colony, in Karafuto 'tenant farmers could escape from poverty for the first time in their lives,' and furthermore escape tenancy altogether and become 'large land owners' themselves.⁴¹ As will become clear later in this chapter, agricultural settlers in Karafuto were not relocating to a farming paradise as large landowners. However, this is not to deny an essential truth in these commentators' statements, namely that in Karafuto it was possible to gain free access to farmland, and obtain ownership rights to that land after bringing it under cultivation. The result of this was the highest levels of owner-cultivation in either Japan itself, or anywhere else in its empire, as well as an absence of the landlord-tenant disputes⁴² which were rampant in mainland Japan at the time.⁴³

Table 4.1 (below) summarizes the main changes over time in the agricultural settlement programme. The table shows that there was a major policy shift from the mid-1920s onwards. Prior to this shift, a policy of unrestricted immigration was in place, allowing settlers to make the majority of decisions themselves with regards to where to settle. Gradually, however, the colonial administration increased its involvement in the process of selecting settlers and areas for settlement. Eventually, the colonial administration created designated settlement areas, limited the number of settlers who were to receive subsidy and

³⁹ Taniguchi. *Karafuto shokumin seisaku*, p217

⁴⁰ Karafuto-chō. *Sanjū nenshi*, p569

⁴¹ Nishida, G. (1912) *Karafuto no fūdoki*, Kinkōdō, Tokyo, pp150-151

⁴² Nakajima. *Karafuto no takushoku*, p13

⁴³ Nakamura, M. (1976) *Rōdōsha to nōmin*, Shōgakkan, Tokyo

support, and from the 1930s onwards put its weight behind the settlement of larger groups, as opposed to individual families. This major policy shift, what was behind it, and its implications for the performance of the agricultural settlement programme, will become clear in the sections which follow. However, before proceeding to such a discussion it is worth noting the overall continuities in the policies of recruiting and settling an agricultural population in Karafuto. The first point to note is that immigration and travel of Japanese to Karafuto faced no restrictions, and no passport was required throughout the colonial period.

Table 4.1 Principal features of policy towards agricultural immigration in Karafuto

<p>1906-1918 Early years of unrestricted immigration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initial settlers allocated existing Russian houses, buildings, and cultivated land ● 20-60% subsidy for travel expenses to colony, free transportation on railway within Karafuto (this continues throughout) ● Establishment of services for the handling of Karafuto bound immigration in most prefectural offices in Japan. ● General promotion of Karafuto settlement across Japan using travelling agents and public events.
<p>1919-1925 Peak years of unrestricted immigration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subsidy of ¥5 per person and ¥15 per household for transport to Karafuto for new immigrants. ¥10 subsidy to new immigrants for bringing land into cultivation. ● Sale of some unopened land for the development of a food processing industry (most of this goes unutilized). ● Concern over fake agricultural settlement conducted to gain access to lucrative lumber.
<p>1926-1928 Emergence of planned immigration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planned immigration introduced for official settlers and given priority, unrestricted immigration continues alongside. ● Official new arrivals given designated land, offered grants up to ¥300. ● Unable to generate half the planned immigration
<p>1929-1933 Early selective group migration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Immigration of groups on preselected land, with 1 chō (2.45 acres) 'prepared' (i.e. cleared) by the Karafuto government. ● Official group migration limited to 300 households a year ● For new immigrants (not from within Karafuto) a ¥300 year subsidy is provided over the first 2 years.
<p>1934-1945 Late selective group migration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Settlers recruited within Karafuto included into the group migration programme in order to make up the numbers. ● To improve the level of pre-settlement facilities the number of planned settlers is reduced to 150 households per annum.

Source: Adapted from Karafuto-chō (1936) *Karafuto-chō shisei sanjū nenshi*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara; Takeno, M. (2001) 'Shokuminchi Karafuto nōgyō no jittai; 1928-40 nen no shūdan imin ki wo chūshin toshite', *Shakai keizai shigaku* 66/5

Indeed, this freedom in the movement of people was not the only constant component of the agricultural settlement programme; it was joined by the free access to land.⁴⁴ Admittedly, in the later decades of the Japanese colonial era access to land and subsidy was given on a priority basis to pre-selected settlers, but the principal that anyone from the mainland could go to the colony and start up a new life farming in Karafuto endured. Throughout the Japanese colonial era would-be settlers could go to a district office of their choice in Karafuto and enquire about land availability. Having selected a plot of between 5 and 10 chō of farmland – depending on local conditions – the settler was free to try their luck at farming in the colony. In this way settlers who were in no way attached to the official recruitment drives could still participate in agricultural settlement. Alternatively, would-be settlers could go through official channels prior to their arrival in Karafuto so as to participate in the official settlement programme. This could be done by making a request to apply as an ‘official settler’ via the would-be settler’s home district/prefectural office, or via official recruiting agents who travelled across mainland Japan promoting agricultural settlement in Karafuto. Prior to the mid-1920s official settlers – just like unattached settlers – made the ultimate choice regarding where in Karafuto to settle. After the shift in policy towards selective group migration, however, official settlers went to areas that had been predetermined by the colonial administration. This decline in freedom of locational choice was, in some way, compensated for by the more generous subsidy that was limited to official settlers. Nonetheless, the principal of access to land for all agricultural settlers was maintained throughout Karafuto’s period as a Japanese colony.

Another enduring part of the agricultural settlement programme was that the land grant was itself initially ‘loaned’ to settlers, without

⁴⁴ This discussion is based on the following sources: Karafuto-chō nōrinbu shokuminka (1936) *Shūdan shokuminchi annai*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara; *KZ* August 1930 pp16-24; Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto gyōsei sanjūnenshi*; Karafuto-chō (1931) *Ijūsha annai kikyō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

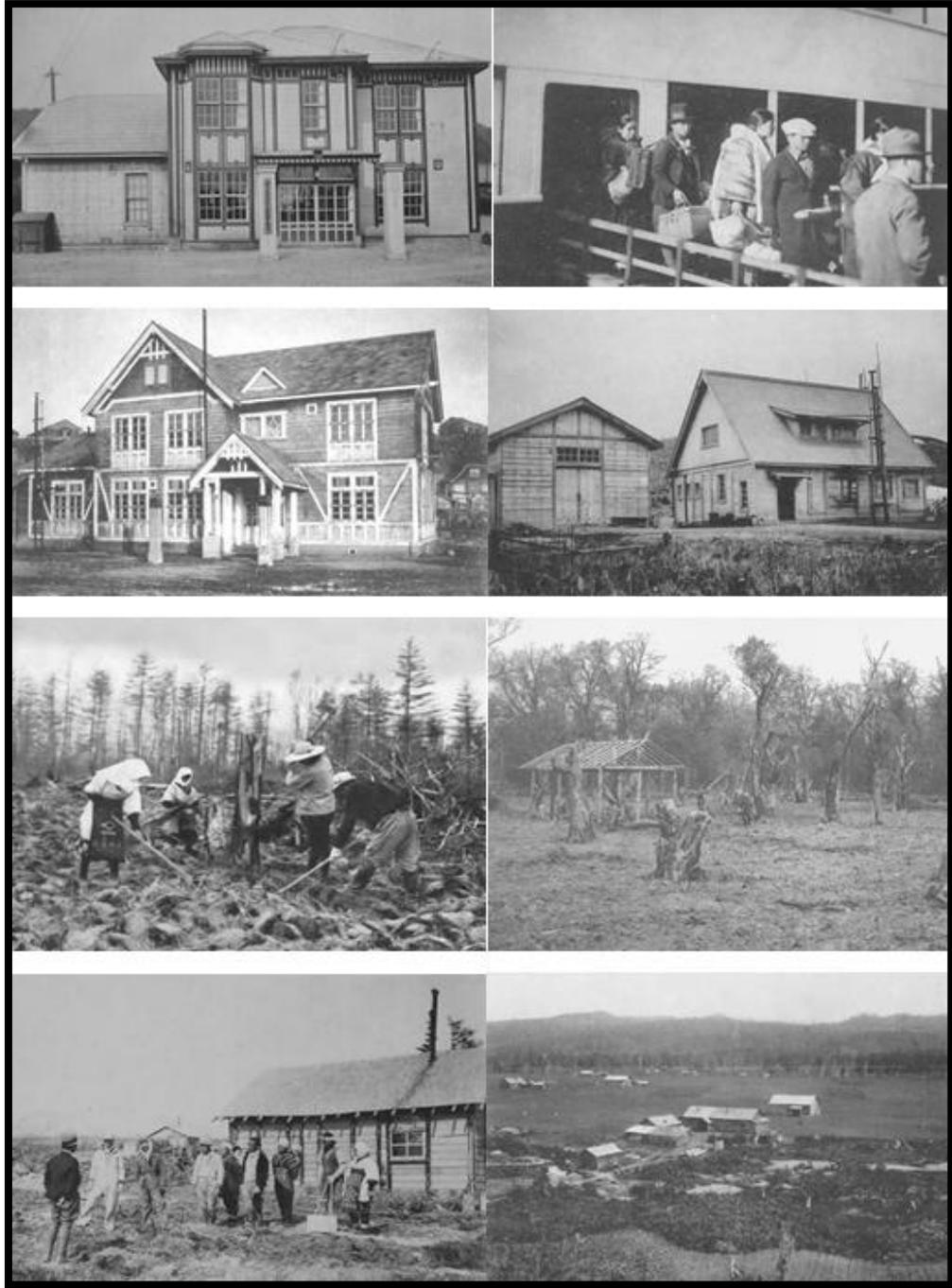
any rent payments for a period of three to five years. If after this period the settler family had been able to cultivate 60-70% of the total area, or otherwise satisfy the official inspector, they would be granted ownership rights at no cost. In theory, at least, no would-be settler was denied the opportunity of forging out their own farm in Karafuto. The one – virtually unenforceable – condition regarding access to land was that settlers should have the intention of settling there permanently as farmers. The free access to land was of course not the only type of support offered. Provision was made for all settlers to receive seeds, tools, fertilizer, and other farming equipment, either without charge or at heavily discounted rates. This came alongside a general allowance in the first years of settlement, and a subsidy for house building which continued throughout the colonial period – though from the late 1920s onwards unattached settlers received much less than official settlers.

The cost of transportation to the colony was also subsidized, either through payments upon arrival, or, as was more often the case, through discount vouchers for transport by ship or rail. These did not cover the total cost of relocation, but did offer substantial reductions on a number of different rail and shipping routes. An article in an edition of the *KNNS* that appeared in December 1913, for example, listed seventeen different railway companies, and nineteen different shipping companies that accepted such settler discount vouchers, entitling the holder to a ticket at half the price of the standard fare. Transport within the colony, where available, was free to incoming agricultural settlers, between the port from which they disembarked and their new home, provided they had the correct documentation at hand.⁴⁵ Travel subsidies made it possible to travel from Fushiki port in Toyama prefecture to Karafuto for as little as ¥2.50; from distant Yokohama for ¥2.88; and from Nagoya for ¥3.78, no

⁴⁵ *KNNS* 1913-12-4

more than two or three days wages as a general labourer in Karafuto in 1913.⁴⁶

Image 4.1 - Agricultural settlement in Karafuto



Top left – Karafuto immigration centre in Wakkanai, Top right – Settlers disembarking at Odomari, Upper middle left – Odomari immigration centre, Upper middle right – Agricultural guidance station, Lower middle left – settlers clearing their plot, Lower middle right – construction of temporary housing, Bottom left – visit from an agricultural advisor, Bottom right – an established farm

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

Source: Karafuto-chō (1936) *Karafuto shashin chō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara; Karafuto-chō. *Sanjū nenshi* (no pagination in photo section of source)

Official efforts at the dissemination of information on agricultural settlement also remained relatively constant throughout the Japanese colonial era. Various pamphlets and settlement guides which were distributed via recruiting agents and various prefectural/district offices were the principal means used. Additionally, 'recruitment tours' led by Karafuto officials and successful settlers were carried out in targeted areas – usually places where the tour group had local connections. The *KNNS* occasionally reported on the progress of such recruitment tours. From these reports we can see that these tours involved the distribution of guides and pamphlets, and public events such as question and answer sessions, and lectures, usually held at venues such as local agricultural associations, schools, and village/town halls. These tours could sometimes be quite successful. In late 1910, for example, the colonization bureau chief travelled to Yamagata, and in January 1911, the district chief of Ōdomari travelled to Fukushima prefecture on such tours, with the *KNNS* reporting a 'considerable increase in the number of agricultural settlers from these two prefectures' by May 1911.⁴⁷

Some recruitment tours, however, revealed that a lack of knowledge on conditions in Karafuto was a considerable obstacle to attracting agricultural settlers. On one tour, the colonization chief lamented that 'many villagers thought convicts lived in Karafuto in great numbers, and that it was still in the possession of Russia'⁴⁸ – of course the northern half of the island still was. A paucity of accurate information regarding Karafuto in some areas of recruitment was, of course, not the only barrier to the successful development of Karafuto as an agricultural settler colony. For those settlers that did come to the colony, there was the considerable challenge of opening up and then cultivating land in a remote territory with a harsh winter climate. Whilst

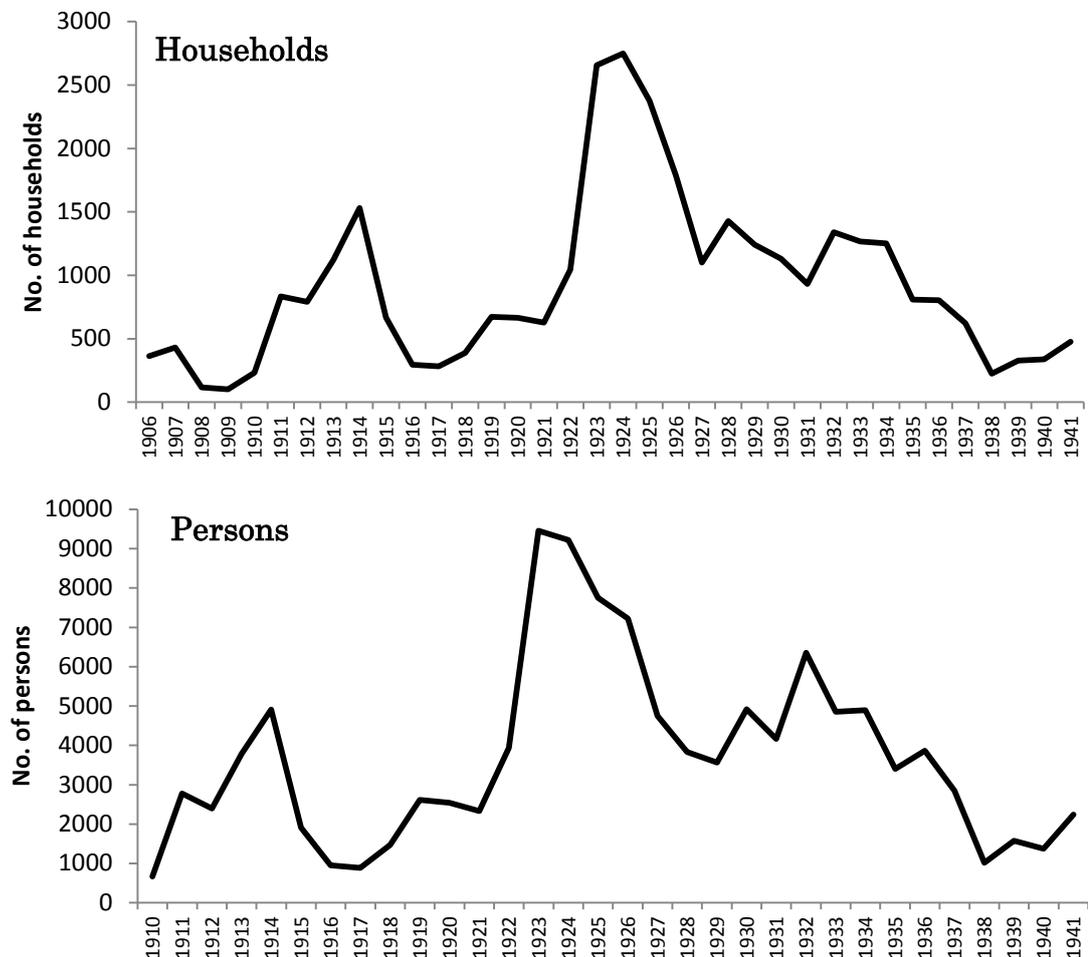
⁴⁷ *KNNS* 1911-1-21, 1911-2-28, 1911-5-26, 1911-6-3

⁴⁸ *KNNS* 1911-2-28

subsidy and a degree of technical guidance from the colonial administration could, to some extent, help alleviate the weight of this challenge, there is no denying that establishing a farm in Karafuto would have been a daunting task. Nonetheless, the colonial administration was endeavouring to make sure that the potential for a ‘wonderful, free, new Japan,’⁴⁹ which Yanaihara Tadao – the chair of colonial policy at Tokyo Imperial University – saw in Karafuto, was also an agricultural one. We now turn to an appraisal of its record in doing so.

4.4 Trends in agricultural settlement

Figure 4.1 - No. of incoming agricultural settlers to Karafuto 1906-1941



Source: Data for number of incoming households in 1906-7 taken from; Taniguchi. *Karafuto shokumin seisaku*, p239; all other data taken from; KTS, KCI, KY, Karafuto-chō (1933) *Karafuto-chō ruinen tōkeihyō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara; Karafuto-chō. *Sanjū nenshi*

⁴⁹ Quoted in Takeno. *Jinkō mondai*, p125

The number of Japanese agricultural settlers who came to Karafuto in the first few months of Japanese rule is not known. The only indication we have comes from the record of a lecture given by Kumagai Kiichirō, the head of the Karafuto civil administration, to the Japanese Geographical Association in Tokyo in early 1906, in which he indicated that between fifty and sixty farmers had passed the year in the colony.⁵⁰ Leaving aside these first few months, it is possible to put together a general trend for the number of households, and from 1910 the number of people coming to the colony as agricultural settlers in any given year. The picture that emerges – presented above in figure 4.1 – is of great fluctuation in the numbers of incoming agricultural settlers from year-to-year, with a low of 102 households in 1909, and a peak of 2,479 in 1924.

Image 4.2 – A depiction of a Karafuto settler close to starvation as goods from Japan (behind him) arrive to save the day



Source: *Shōkō seikai taiheiyō* (May 1908) 7/11, p73

The years up to 1908 saw an initial interest in agricultural settlement in Karafuto, with the vacant homes and farmland (left by Russian settlers) readily available for immediate occupation. Nonetheless,

⁵⁰ *Tōhōkyōkai Kaihō* no.125 1906, pp27-28

this modest spurt in the immigration of agricultural settlers was short-lived, as poor weather affected the colony in 1907 and 1908, leading the number of incoming settlers to drastically tail off for a few years. In fact, the immediate effects of the poor weather were so strongly felt that in 1908 the colonial administration had to temporarily suspend its plans to receive new agricultural settlers. Additionally, the destitution of existing agricultural settlers prompted the colonial administration to begin providing relief, with some settlers on the brink of starvation due to crop failure (see image 4.2). Agricultural settlement under the Japanese colonial administration had not got off to the most auspicious of starts, and it was not until 1911 that the number of incomers began to exceed the levels seen before the weather induced crisis. Thereafter, the number of incomers rose steadily reaching a total of 1,532 households, and 4,311 individuals in 1914.

Nonetheless, this expansion was halted by World War One, which provided a massive boost to the Japanese economy, and increased the demand for labour. The war boom saw both wages and primary product prices increase substantially, and with this the number of those seeking a new life in Karafuto slumped. This trend suggests that agricultural settler numbers moved countercyclical to the Japanese economy. During the war, alternative employment opportunities proliferated and farmers benefited from improved prices for their produce, meaning that becoming a farmer in a remote northern colony seemed a far from alluring prospect.⁵¹ This was compounded by the fact that the war boom failed to benefit Karafuto's agricultural settlers, as commercially speaking Karafuto agriculture was still in its infancy. Land had not been developed much beyond subsistence needs, and the transport network was not yet to the standard that would have made extensive commercial sales of produce feasible.⁵² Hokkaido, on the other hand, was much further along

⁵¹ Takakura, S. (1979) *Hokkaidō takushokushi*, Hokkaido University Press, Sapporo pp285-286

⁵² Nakajima. *Karafuto no takushoku*, p5

with its agricultural development, enjoyed a more extensive transport network, and was better integrated with the mainland market, resulting in a very different experience of World War One. In Hokkaido, the number of incoming settlers actually rose to almost 60,000 people in 1915, as both agriculture and industry boomed on the island.⁵³ Just as good times in the Japanese economy could play a role in depressing the numbers going to Karafuto, so too could sudden shocks lead to a larger influx. Crop failures in northern Tohoku and Hokkaido in 1913, for example, were partly behind the record numbers going to Karafuto the following year.⁵⁴ Similarly, a fire in Wakkanai in June 1911 meant that around eighty families, who had lost their homes in the blaze, were simply absorbed into Karafuto's agricultural settlement programme as they sought to rebuild their lives.⁵⁵

As the World War One boom in Japan tailed off, and was superseded by a decade of economic instability, the numbers of agricultural settlers bound for Karafuto started creeping back up, reaching a peak in 1923-24. Part of the reason for this surge in interest was to be found in 'the economic muddle'⁵⁶ of the Japanese economy after World War One, but it was also due to several other factors. Among these factors was the improvement of the transport connections to the colony. In 1922, for example, the railway network in Hokkaido was extended to the northern tip of the island at Wakkanai, and then in 1923 the Chihaku (Wakkanai-Ōdomari) steamship line was inaugurated. This better connected northern parts of Hokkaido with Karafuto,⁵⁷ but the improvements in transportation connections were not limited to this region alone. In fact, the 1920s also saw a number of other lines opened

⁵³ KNNS 1915-12-15

⁵⁴ KNNS 1913-12-4; Takakura. *Hokkaidō takushokushi*, p285

⁵⁵ KNNS 1911-6-3

⁵⁶ Patrick, H. (1972) 'The economic muddle of the 1920s', in Morley, J. (ed.) *Dilemmas of growth in prewar Japan*, Princeton University Press, Princeton

⁵⁷ Previously many from the northern parts of Hokkaido would need to venture south to either Otaru or Hakodate in order to board a regular service steamship to the colony.

between various ports in Japan and Karafuto. Moreover, many of these now called at multiple Karafuto ports rather than just Ōdomari or Maoka, aiding the settlement of more remote parts of the colony. Another reason why the number of agricultural settlers rose in the first half of the 1920s was because of a flurry of interest in Karafuto during the occupation of the northern – i.e. Russian/Soviet – part of the island during the Siberian intervention. Following the occupation of northern Sakhalin, newspapers throughout Japan suddenly reported frequently on the island, giving it unprecedented publicity, and there was, for a time at least, an expectation that the whole island would finally be absorbed by Japan. Whilst these expectations were never realized, they did spark a rush for the potential spoils of newly acquired territory.⁵⁸

The primary reason for the explosion in new agricultural settlers in the early 1920s, however, was the booming economy in Karafuto itself. In particular, the lumber trade was flourishing, following the opening of a number of paper and pulp factories in the colony –which required lumber as their basic raw material.⁵⁹ This boom in lumber for the manufacture of paper and pulp was reinforced by a surge in demand for lumber as a building material, especially in the wake of the great Kanto earthquake of 1923. At first sight, the boom in lumber appears unrelated to agriculture, but there is much to suggest that it actually raised the numbers of incoming agricultural settlers considerably. The problem was that many of these so-called ‘agricultural settlers’ had come to the colony without holding any intention to settle, let alone farm. Instead, many of the newcomers in these years were part of ‘unsavoury groups,’ who desired the access to land that being an agricultural settler brought, if only for the purpose of obtaining the lucrative lumber on that land. According to Takakura these ‘settlers’ cleared the land of its trees – an otherwise standard part of its conversion into farmland – then ‘after the

⁵⁸ Takeno, M. (2013) ‘Hoshō senryōka Kitakarafuto ni okeru Nihonjin no katsudō’, *Hokkaidō daigaku keizaigaku kenkyū* 62/3

⁵⁹ Takakura. *Hokkaidō takushokushi*, p256

sale of the lumber, they would simply disappear, abandoning the land that they were supposed to settle.’⁶⁰ In some cases a labour boss would use the gang of labourers attached to him as ‘mock settlers,’ preparing their application documents so as to gain access to land that would then be plundered of its lumber, and abandoned, as the group moved onto the next place. Needless, to say the surge in newcomers of this kind did not serve agricultural development well, and in this period it was reported that only 45% of newcomers actually settled in Karafuto.⁶¹

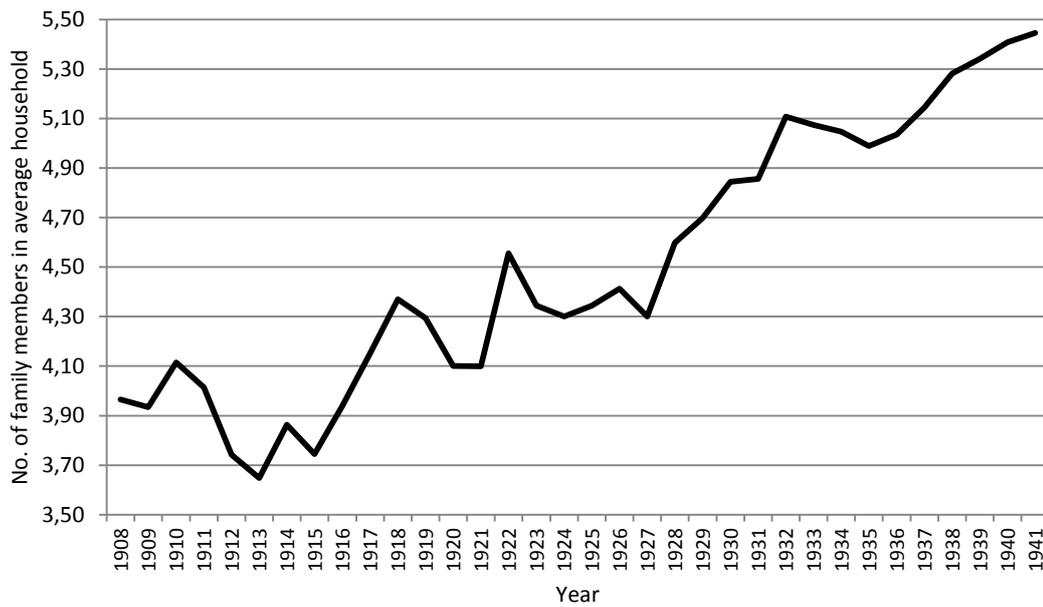
In response to this alarming development, the colonial administration began to consider regulations to prevent such profiteering, and it was at this point that it started to intervene more in the selection and screening of settlers. The result was a system in which the number of ‘official’ settlers would be reduced to an intake of three hundred – later reduced to one hundred and fifty – households a year so as to provide enhanced support to a select few, increasing their chances of success, and perhaps so as to better monitor their activities.⁶² In theory, this did not restrict incoming ‘unattached’ settlers, but it clearly had an impact on the overall number of incomers which began to fall. During the great depression the numbers were kept at a reasonably high level of between 4,000 and 6,500 incoming agricultural settlers a year, but after 1934 they never exceeded 4,000 again. Instead, as the economy in mainland Japan picked up, fewer were interested in settling as farmers in a colony in the far north. Moreover, the attention of colonial settlement had shifted decisively to Manchuria by the mid-1930s, further intensifying the decline in numbers of agricultural settlers coming to Karafuto. By 1938, barely a thousand people came to the colony as agricultural settlers, and in the 1940s, with the disruptions of Total War in Asia and the Pacific, the flow of settlers to Karafuto was reduced to no more than a trickle.

⁶⁰ Takakura. *Hokkaidō takushokushi*, p287

⁶¹ Karafuto-chō. *Sanjū nenshi*, p574

⁶² *Ibid* pp285-294

Figure 4.2 - Average size of agricultural households in Karafuto

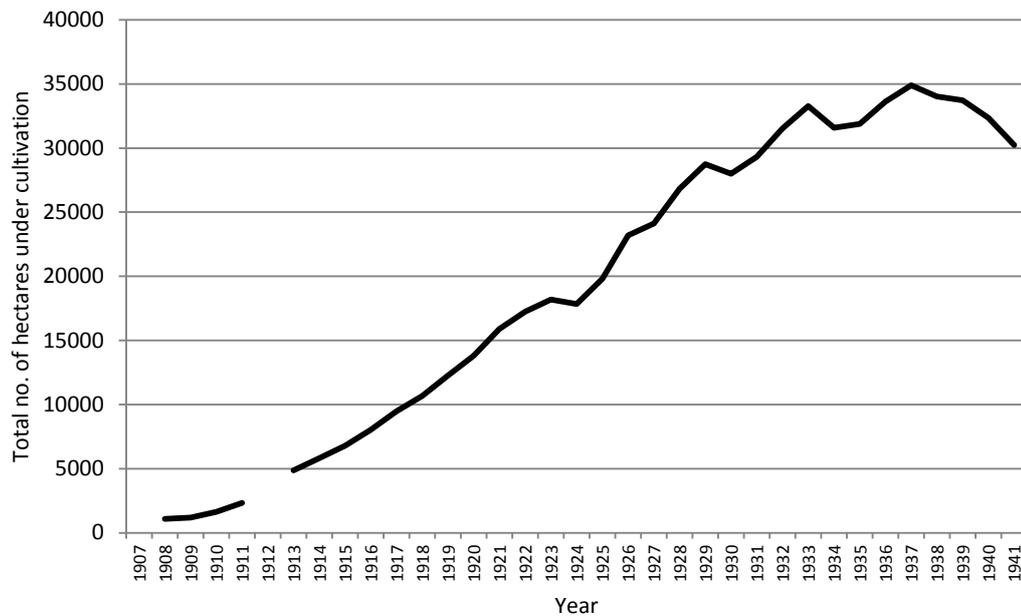


Source: KTS, KCI, KY, Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto-chō ruinen tōkeihyō*

Successful colonization, as Hiraoka had stated to members of the imperial diet, required more than just bringing people to the colony. The agricultural settlers who came to Karafuto could only be deemed a success if they cleared their land, brought it under cultivation, and then persisted in their endeavour, making Karafuto their permanent home. There are some indicators which suggest that considerable progress was being made in Karafuto's agricultural development, and that the permanent settlement of an agricultural population in the colony was proceeding reasonably well. The average number of members per farm family (figure 4.2), for example, increased over time from an average of 3.65 members per household in 1913, to 5.45 in 1941. It was common practice among incoming agricultural settler households to first send one or two family members – usually males of working age – to Karafuto in advance of the whole family. This initial party (or individual) would engage in the strenuous task of clearing the land and bringing some of it under cultivation, and only after a degree of progress had been made would they then invite other family members to join them. The increasing size of the average agricultural household was a positive sign in this

regard, as it suggests that increasingly farm families were able to relocate their entire family to the colony, and thus settlement was progressing with entire families willing to reside in the colony.

Figure 4.3 - Total no. of cultivated hectares in Karafuto 1907-1941



Source: as in figure 4.2

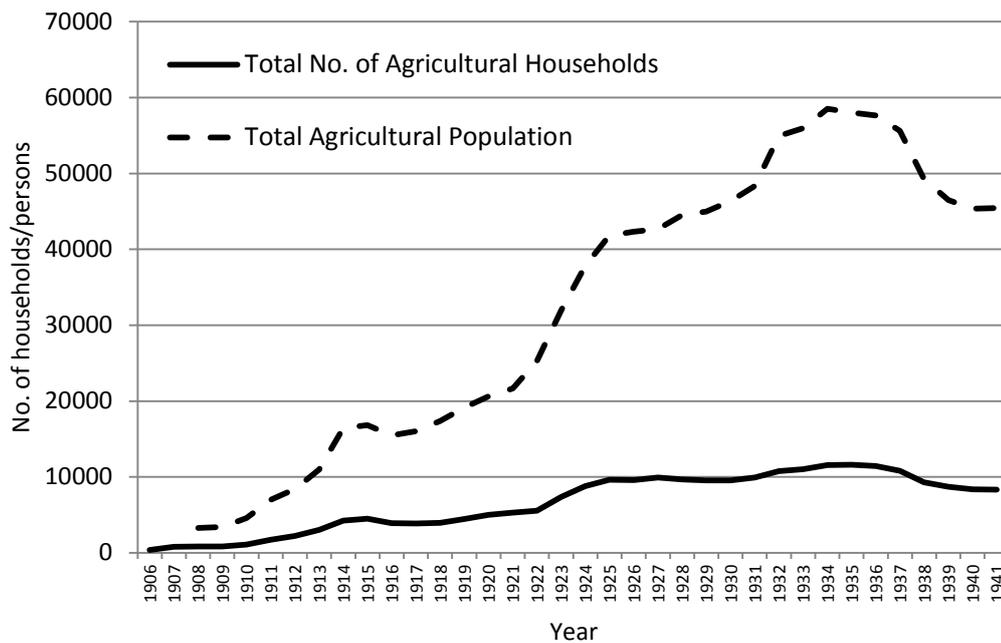
Not only did it seem that families were willing to commit all of their members to a life in Karafuto, but there were also signs that they were able to convert Karafuto's land to productive use. The area of cultivated land in Karafuto – presented in figure 4.3 – rose steadily. In 1908, a mere 1,096 hectares was under cultivation, but by 1937, this number had been raised more than thirty fold, reaching 34,888 hectares. Moreover, by the time of the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, Karafuto had become the colony with the largest number of Japanese agricultural settlers anywhere in the empire. In 1936, Karafuto was home to 11,445 Japanese agricultural households, exceeding the 8,301 in second placed Korea.⁶³ Yet whilst these figures suggest a general success

⁶³ Mizoguchi, T. & Umemura, M. (eds.) (1988) *Kyū nihon shokuminchi kezai tōkei*, Tōyō Keizai Shinpōsha, Tokyo, refer to section with statistical tables

story for agricultural settlement in Karafuto, in actual fact, a closer examination reveals that agricultural settlement was far from a smooth process. For one, the agricultural sector was only a minor component of the colonial economy, and indeed, the same could often be said for the economic activities of agricultural settler households. In the sections that follow I offer a closer examination of the problems of agricultural settlement, first looking at a number of macro-indicators, and then taking a closer look at the individual experiences and economic activities of agricultural settlers themselves.

4.5 Problems with agricultural settlement

Figure 4.4 - Agricultural population of Karafuto 1906-1941



Source: as in figure 4.2

As Japan neared total war, Karafuto was home to more Japanese agricultural settlers than anywhere else in the colonial empire, however, by this time decline had already set in. As figure 4.4 shows, the peak in Karafuto's agricultural population was reached in 1934-35, with 58,514 persons in 1934, and 11,628 households in 1935. However, after this

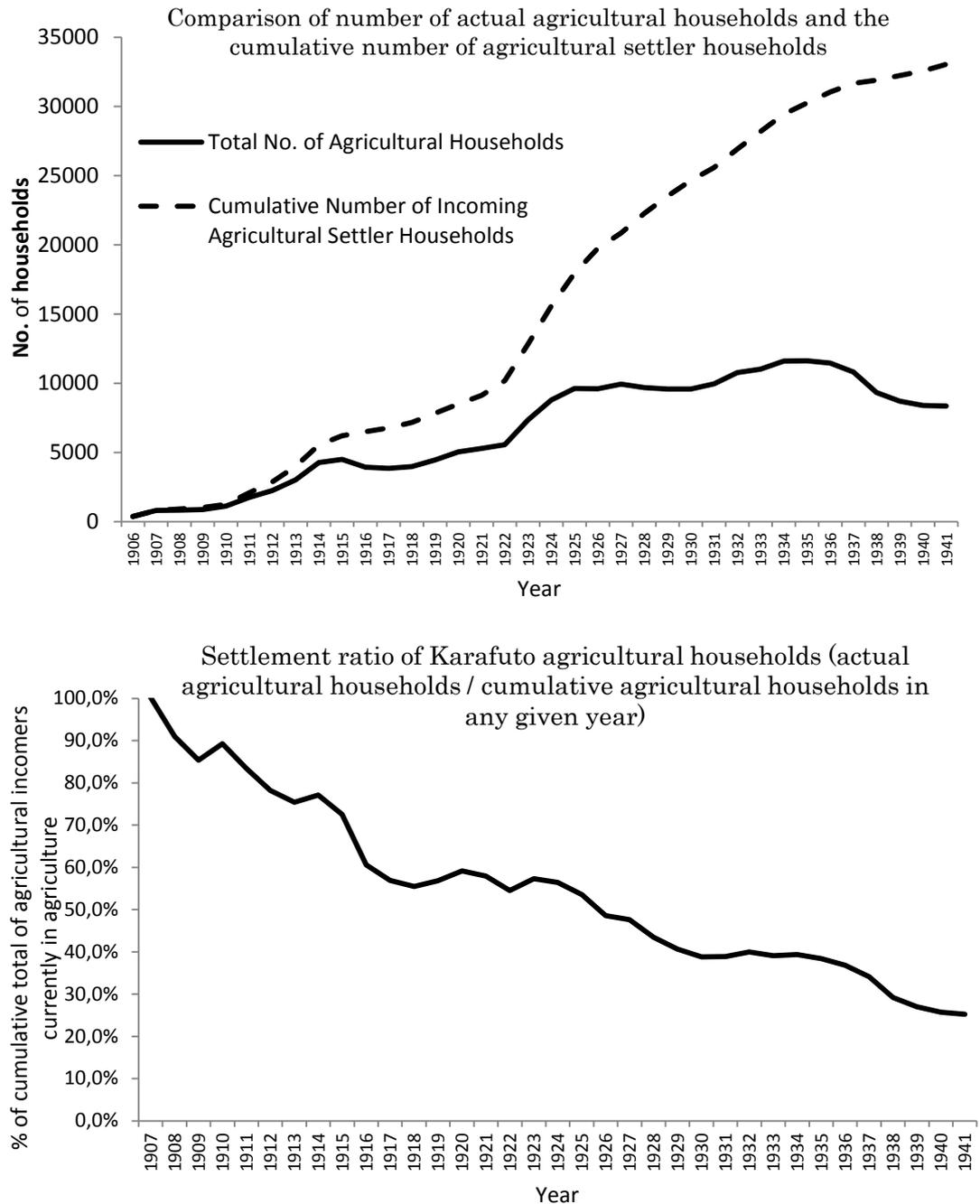
there was a steady decline, and in 1941 only 45,427 people, who made up 8,342 households remained as farmers in Karafuto, meaning that the agricultural population had fell below the levels seen in 1930. This decline was not restricted to the number of people engaged in agriculture; it was felt throughout the agricultural sector and the settlement programme. As is indicated in figure 4.3, the area of agricultural land under cultivation also began to fall, and in 1941 it was at a level below that of 1932. Moreover, this decline did not represent a depleted settlement frontier, as much of the land that had been identified as suitable for agriculture remained unoccupied. In the 1930s agricultural settlement was clearly facing some difficulties, in fact, as will become clear in the discussion that follows, it always had done.

The articles in the *KNNS* give an idea of each year's target number of settlers, and indicate that in almost all years the actual number of incomers fell short. In 1913, the head of the colonial administration, Hiraoka, when pressed by ministers in a House of Representatives committee, told of plans to settle 3,000 agricultural households each year in Karafuto over a fifteen year period. This plan entailed a total 45,000 increase in the number of agricultural households in the colony, and on the basis of an average of just over four family members per household, Hiraoka anticipated approximately 200,000 incoming agricultural settlers over the course of his plan.⁶⁴ Needless to say, this plan never came to fruition, and the number of incoming households never once exceeded 3,000 in any year of the Japanese colonial period – the highest level seen was 2,479 households in 1924. The actual performance of the recruitment and settlement of agricultural households would prove disappointing, remaining far below Hiraoka's targets. The number of agricultural households resident in Karafuto more than trebled in the fifteen years following Hiraoka's statements, increasing from 3,016 in 1913, to 9,678 in 1928. Nevertheless, this increase was only 14.8% of the

⁶⁴ House of Representatives 30th session committee papers no.27 1913-3-25; 'Karafuto gyogyō seido kaisei ni kan suru kengian iinkai', pp11-12

expansion envisioned, indicating that both the number of recruits and their successful settlement were falling far short of expectations.⁶⁵

Figure 4.5 – Settlement rates of agricultural settlers in Karafuto



Source: Calculated from data presented in figures 4.1 & 4.4

⁶⁵ *Ibid* p 11-12; KTS

The overall numbers of incoming agricultural settlers each year was one indicator, but more important was the rate at which these newcomers actually settled – i.e. remained in the colony over the long term as farmers. Data presented in figure 4.5 gives some indication of the actual rate of settlement of Karafuto's agricultural settlers. This rate is calculated by adding together the number of incoming agricultural settlers from year-to-year to give a cumulative total, and then comparing this to the actual number of agricultural households recorded as being resident in the colony in any given year. As a measure it is by no means perfect, because it is unlikely to account for farming families that were established by those who were already resident in Karafuto, moving into farming from another occupation. These families joined the ranks of the total number of agricultural households resident in the colony, but did not appear in the total number of newcomers, and as a result, they are likely to contribute to an overstatement of the actual rate of settlement among newcomers. Articles in the *KNNS* indicate that such transfers to agriculture from within the colony were far from rare,⁶⁶ thus the data presented in figure 4.5 should be taken as an overestimate of the rate at which newcomers actually settled.⁶⁷

Leaving aside minor caveats with the data, figure 4.5 makes clear that the overall rate of agricultural settlement in the Japanese colonial period was unimpressive. Between 1906 and 1941, a total of 33,044 households participated in Karafuto's agricultural settlement programme; however, only 8,342 agricultural households were recorded as actually resident in the colony in 1941. This suggests that no more than 25.2% of all households, who had participated in Karafuto's

⁶⁶ *KNNS* 1914-7-5 reports that 128 of a total of 1,054 agricultural households that were set up between January and the end of June 1914 were transfers to agriculture of households already resident in Karafuto. These transfers were not included in the statistics on incoming agricultural settlers until the mid-1920s.

⁶⁷ Additionally, there is the problem that some agricultural households may have ended because they were unable to find a successor. The impact of this problem, however, is likely to have been limited as social practice provided scope for families to adopt-in successors.

agricultural settlement programme actually remained engaged in the same pursuit in 1941.⁶⁸ It is true that the long-term picture portrayed in this data may serve to obscure the year-on-year performance of agricultural settlement. However, I would argue that a long-term perspective is particularly indicative, because ultimately the success or failure of settlement needs to be judged on more than if settlers were able to pass one winter. Even in the face of considerable hardship, settler households may have been able to keep going for a year or two, but in measuring settlement, the real concern is whether these households could establish a viable place for themselves, and endure in the long run.

As we have mentioned previously, the colonial administration eventually came to favour group migration, with further intervention in selecting migrants, and giving targeted subsidies to those selected. This policy shift can be interpreted as a response to the disappointingly low rate of settlement of agricultural households in the colony. This preference for group migration was shared by virtually all of the agricultural and colonial studies experts of the time who were following the Karafuto case. Group migration was, of course, not a new phenomenon in Karafuto; there were examples of group migrations of various sizes going back to the first few years of the colony⁶⁹ – though they do not appear to have been the norm. Moreover, there had been proponents of group migration since at least 1912, who stressed its benefits over individual migration in policy circles long before group migration became official policy. The logic for favouring group migration was complex, and was partly based on the precedent set in Hokkaido's colonization during the Meiji period.⁷⁰ The basic logic was, however, quite

⁶⁸ Takeno also calculated a settlement rate on a cumulative basis, albeit for a shorter period. Takeno. 'Shokuminchi Karafuto nōgyō no jittai'

⁶⁹ See *KNNS* 1912-4-13 for an example of a group of thirty households that migrated as a group.

⁷⁰ Sapporo-shi Kyōiku Inkai (ed.) (1985) *Tondenhei*, Sapporo bunkō, Sapporo
In Hokkaido a number of types of group settlements were seen over the course of its colonization. Most notable was the flagship programme of the Hokkaido development agency, in which groups of farmer-soldiers (*tondenhei*) – often former

simple: group settlers would be able to rely on each other for support. Furthermore, the presence of familiar faces in the colony would help settlers overcome the sense of dislocation and isolation, which would likely have been felt by settlers migrating to remote Karafuto.⁷¹

Table 4.2 - Settlement rate of group migrations in 1934

Settlement name	Existing households (A)	Incoming settler households in 1934 (B)	Total (C)	Actual no. of households at the end of 1934 (D)	Settlement rate in source (D÷C)	Alternative settlement rate ([D-A]÷B)
Ōtoyo	150	112	262	235	89.7%	75.9%
Toyosakae	225	119	344	302	87.8%	64.7%
Kiminai	99	226	325	276	84.9%	78.3%
Konotoro	124	97	221	195	88.2%	73.2%
Chikahoro	4	28	32	29	90.6%	89.3%
Mizuho	110	71	181	175	96.7%	91.5%
Kashiho	0	132	132	120	90.9%	90.9%
Takarazawa	57	107	164	149	90.9%	86.0%
Horochoi	153	120	273	263	96.3%	91.7%
Nakazawa	168	190	358	339	94.7%	90.0%
Esutoru	134	61	195	194	99.5%	98.4%
Tarannai	51	66	117	117	100.0%	100.0%
Total	1,275	1,329	2,604	2,394	91.9%	84.2%

Note: all columns are taken from the above source, except for the column on the far right which has been highlighted, and is the author's own calculation.

Source: reproduced from Karafuto-chō. *Sanjū nenshi*, p591

The notion that group migration was more likely to produce permanent settlers was not just pure speculation; there was some

samurai – were settled in designated areas of Hokkaido, with varying degrees of success. These groups usually consisted of around two hundred households, and were granted special privileges by the Hokkaido development agency in return for contributing to the island's defence force.

⁷¹ *KNNS* 1912-6-17

evidence to back up the claim that settlers were stronger in numbers – i.e. as a group. Nakajima Kyūtarō, for example, found that between 1928 and 1932, group migration had brought in a total of 2,170 households, with only 178 of them abandoning their farms in that time period. Furthermore, Nakajima stated the rate of desertion in Karafuto – at eight percent – compared favourably with other colonial territories, such as Manchuria, where around eighteen percent of agricultural settler households quit within the first two years.⁷² The colonial administration was keen to portray its policy shift in favour of group migration as ‘successful.’ In the official history of the first thirty years of the Japanese colonial administration, the ‘results’ of this policy shift were celebrated, and are reproduced in table 4.2 above. The evidence put forward in the official history suggested a remarkably high settlement rate of 91.9%, across a total of 1,329 incoming agricultural settler households.

Nonetheless, this data presented in table 4.2 is misleading for three main reasons. Firstly, the data is limited to the 1934 intake, assessing only if the new arrivals were still present in the colony at the end of that year. This data can therefore be deemed a poor indicator of the long term settlement rate, because it does not allow us to see how households fared beyond their first year, let alone after their subsidies expired – usually after their third year. Secondly, the data provided in the official history is given in isolation of the general trend, suggesting that over 90% of families settled among the intake of 1,329 households, when in that very same year the total number of agricultural households in the colony as a whole increased by only 566. Indeed, the following year the number of agricultural households in Karafuto increased by only 35, and thereafter a consistent decline set in, with a 27.8% reduction in the number of agricultural households over the five years to 1940.⁷³

⁷² Nakajima. *Karafuto no takushoku*, p47

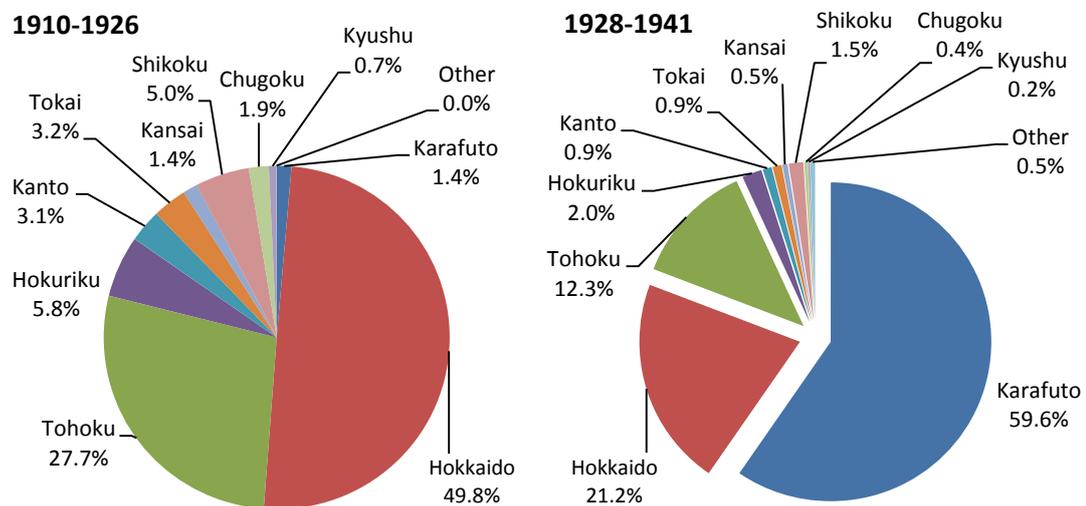
⁷³ From data presented in figure 4.4

The third problem with the data presented in table 4.2 is that it provides what could be described as an 'upper estimate' of the rate of settlement of incoming settlers, due to its incorporation of each settlement's pre-existing population into the calculations. As including pre-existing settlers inflates the total population of each settlement, it also serves to reduce the relative share of those who abandoned their farms within the first year. In table 4.2 I have calculated an alternative 'lower estimate' in which pre-existing households have been removed from the total, before the rate of settlement is calculated. This does not necessarily provide a more accurate picture, as removing pre-existing households also means that we assume all pre-existing settlers stayed in their respective settlements, and thus it can be given only as a lower estimate. Nonetheless, this alternative does allow us to suggest that between 84.2% and 91.9% of the incomers participating in group migrations in 1934 remained in their respective settlements at the turn of the year. The latter of these three points is of relatively minor concern, but the former – i.e. calculating the settlement rate with a short time frame, and failing to contextualize within the broader trend – suggest that the data produced to celebrate the success of group migration was misleading. This is not to say that group migration as a method of encouraging settlement, and producing a higher settlement rate had no logic. However, it is clear that the policy shift of the colonial administration was not able to raise the numbers of agricultural settlers, and coincided with a period of overall decline.

The low rate of settlement of agricultural households was not the only sign that the agricultural settlement programme was not proceeding smoothly. As data presented in figure 4.6 below shows, over time the programme was becoming less able to attract settlers from a wide geographic range. For example, between 1910 and 1926, the share of agricultural settlers coming from regions other than Tohoku and Hokkaido was already low at 21.1%, but for the period 1928-1941 it fell

even further, accounting for only 6.9% of the total.⁷⁴ Bringing in settlers from as wide a range of locations as possible, was among the goals of the agricultural settlement programme, as in this way Karafuto could make a greater contribution to reducing over-population throughout Japan. Nonetheless, the geographical reach of the programme narrowed over time, and perhaps even more alarmingly, it came to be dominated by a contingent of settlers who were recruited from within the colony itself. Indeed, recruits of agricultural settlers from the ranks of Karafuto's existing population made up the main source of new participants in the agricultural settlement programme between 1928 and 1941, accounting for a majority 59.6% share of the total. Furthermore, in some years (1933-35, 1938), internal sources provide over three quarters of 'new' settlers, and by this point Karafuto's agricultural settlement programme was barely making any contribution to alleviating population pressure in mainland Japan.

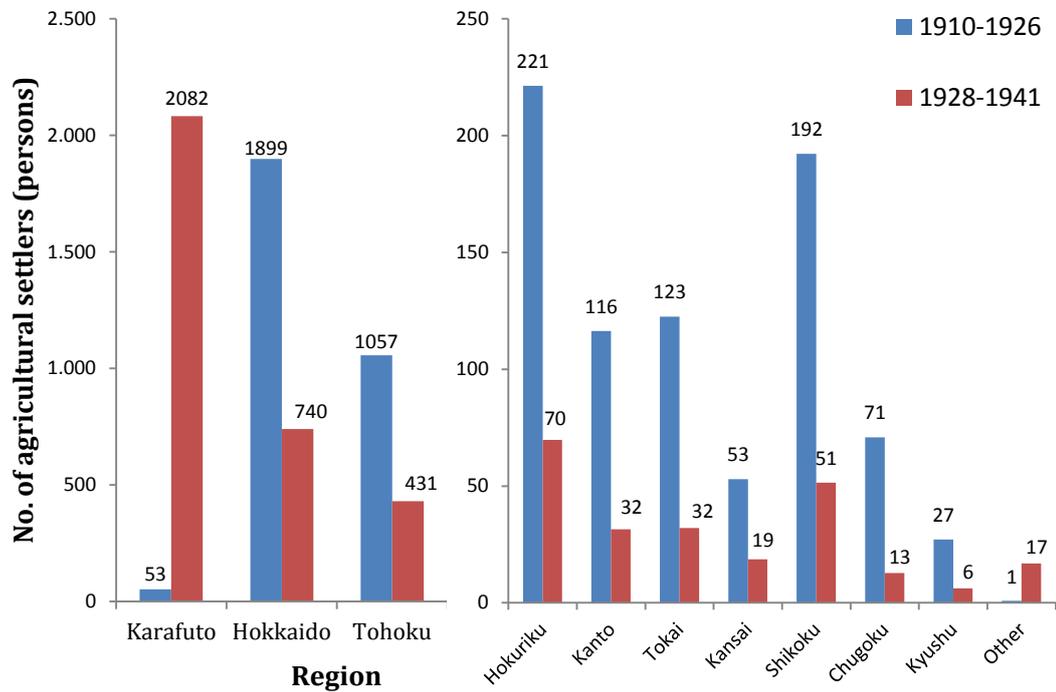
Figure 4.6 – Regional composition of the origins of incoming agricultural settlers to Karafuto 1910-1941



Note: data is unavailable for the year 1927. The 'other' category represents other parts of the Japanese empire, in this case mostly Korea.
 Source: KTS, KCI, KY (various years)

⁷⁴ Unfortunately data for 1927 other than the total number of incomers is unavailable.

Figure 4.7 – Annual average number of agricultural settlers coming to Karafuto by region of origin

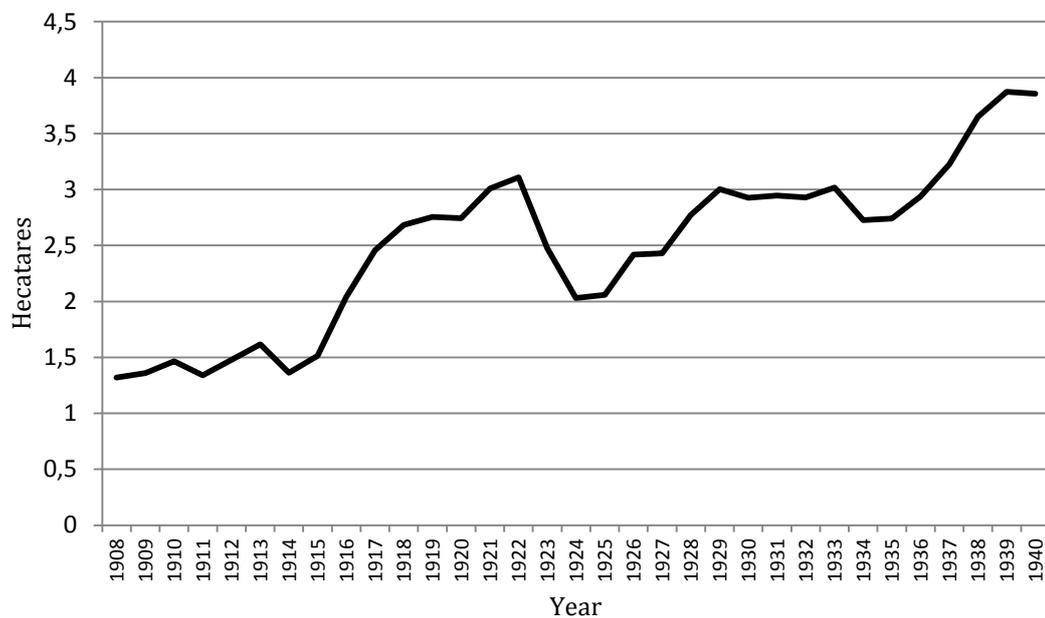


Source: as in figure 4.6

In the 1930s agricultural settlement in Karafuto drew increasingly from within its own resident population for ‘new’ settlers, with around two thirds of agricultural settlers coming from this cohort. The share of settlers coming from mainland Japan – including Hokkaido – stood at 98.6% between 1910 and 1926, but declined drastically to 39.9% between 1928 and 1941. However, the narrowing of the regional sources of new agricultural settlers was not the greatest cause for alarm, more worrying was the fact that an absolute decline in the number of incoming agricultural settlers was being felt across all regions of mainland Japan (see figure 4.7). The number of recruits coming from within Karafuto saw a drastic increase after the mid-1920s, but this came as the colonial administration increasingly struggled to attract settlers from outside, forcing it to be more receptive to internal applicants so as to make up the numbers. Among the contingent recruited from mainland Japan, it was the northeast that continued to be the main recruiting areas from which

Karafuto settlers were drawn. Nonetheless, here too the number of settlers was declining, with the annual number of agricultural settlers from Hokkaido in the period 1928-41 falling to 38.9% of their 1910-26 levels, and a similar decline in Tohoku to 40.8% of the 1910-26 levels. Data presented in figure 4.7 indicates that the fall in the number of agricultural settlers was even more pronounced in those sending regions most distant from Karafuto.⁷⁵ In the Chugoku region, for example, the annual average number of agricultural settlers fell from seventy one in 1910-26 to thirteen in 1928-41, and over the same period the equivalent for Kyushu fell from twenty seven agricultural settlers per year to six. With a declining number of overall settlers, an increasing difficulty in recruiting over a wide geographic range, and a low rate of settlement among those recruited, it was clear that the agricultural settlement programme was facing a number of difficulties.

Figure 4.8 - Average area cultivated per agricultural household in Karafuto, 1908-1940 (in hectares)



Note: 1 hectare is equivalent to 1.0083 chō

Source: calculated using data from figure 4.4; KTS; Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto-chō ruinen tōkeihyō*

⁷⁵ The 'other' category (other parts of the Japanese empire [mostly Korea]) is a notable exception to this trend.

The performance of agricultural settlers in clearing land for cultivation, and then keeping it under productive use was very mixed, revealing much about the reality of agriculture in Karafuto. In figure 4.8 the average area of cultivated land per agricultural household is presented, and the data here suggests that progress was being made. The average farming household in Karafuto was able to increase the area it cultivated from 1.32 hectares in 1908 to 3.85 hectares in 1940. Figure 4.8 suggests that this almost trebling of the average land cultivated per household came with considerable fluctuation; however, this fluctuation is understandable when we consider that this increase came alongside a continual influx of new settlers, who, starting from scratch, would pull down the average. By the same token, as the number of incomers began to drop off the average area cultivated per household began to rise steadily again. In this sense 'progress' was being made in one indicator, but in part this could be attributed to an overall decline in the number of agricultural households in Karafuto from the mid-1930s onwards. Any indication of 'progress' needs to be qualified in this wider context, and in this sense it also needs to be remembered that from 1937, whatever the average farm size, the total area of agricultural land cultivated was also in decline (see figure 4.3).

At the household level there was a much more fundamental problem; the average area of land cultivated by Karafuto agricultural households was below what all commentators considered to be the economically viable size, and never reached this level throughout the Japanese colonial era. Nakajima Kyūtarō, for example, having made several research trips to Karafuto, believed the appropriate size of a Karafuto farm to be 20 chō (almost 20 hectares).⁷⁶ Needless to say the data in figure 4.8 suggests that the average farm in Karafuto never reached more than one fifth of this size. The views of agricultural economist Nakajima aside, the actual land grant offered by the colonial

⁷⁶ Nakajima. *Karafuto no takushoku*, p21

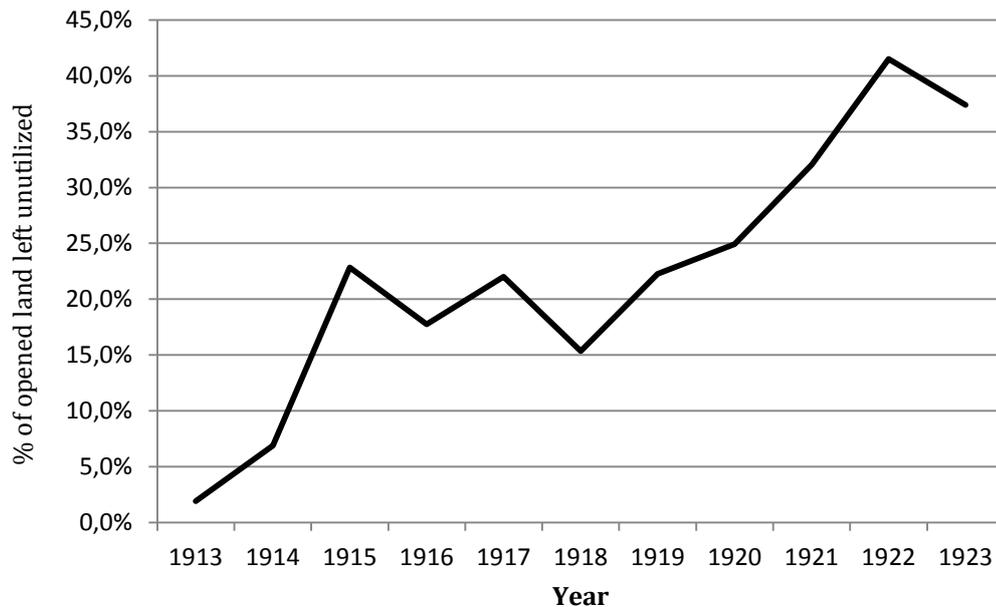
administration was never at this level, and varied over time between 5 and 10 chō. Initially, the colonial administration offered a 7.5 chō land grant per family, which was later reduced to 5 chō in late 1911 by Hiraoka, putting the Karafuto land grant on a par with that on offer in Hokkaido. Thereafter, it remained at this level – except in the most marginal areas – until 1928 when the land grant was raised to 10 chō, following much debate in policy making circles and discussion in the colonial press. An agricultural expert writing in the *KNNS*, for example, called for raising the land grant, stating that ‘the 5 chō land grant is simply not enough to keep a family going, and leads to the eventual abandonment of land.’ According to this commentator ‘farmers can only produce ¥1000 of income from 5 chō of land, but they require a ¥2000 income to keep a farm and family going.’⁷⁷ Whatever we accept as the optimal farm size for Karafuto, as can be seen in figure 4.8, the reality was that the vast majority of Karafuto agricultural households failed to cultivate at a scale consistent with the lowest land grant of 5 chō – let alone the 20 chō recommended by Nakajima.

How were agricultural households in Karafuto able to survive, given that cultivation was taking place on farms at a scale below the economically viable level? Later in this chapter, I will argue that the agricultural households were able to survive in Karafuto through a strategy of combining agriculture with lucrative work in other sectors of the colony’s economy. As we shall see, Karafuto’s agricultural households were far from the ‘pure farmers’ that the colonial authorities wished them to become. Before proceeding to expand on the diverse household economy of Karafuto’s agricultural households, it is worth stressing here that the low levels of land cultivated by agricultural households were not related to the availability of land. Indeed, large swathes of land suitable for agricultural production went unutilized, and as we have shown the total area of land being cultivated began to decline after 1937, at a time

⁷⁷ *KNNS* 1923-1-20

when there was 'still room for tens of thousands of agricultural settler households with existing [i.e. already reclaimed] agricultural land.'⁷⁸

Figure 4.9 - Percentage of land unutilized despite having been opened for cultivation 1913-23



Source: Karafuto-chō Shokusanka. *Karafuto no nōgyō*, p34

Agricultural settlers officially gained the ownership title to the land they were granted, on the condition that they could cultivate 60-70% of that land within three to five years of their arrival. On the basis of a 5 chō land grant, a settler household would therefore need to bring between 3 and 3.5 chō under cultivation within their first five years. However, as can be seen in the data presented in figure 4.8, the average area cultivated per agricultural household only exceeded 3 chō in the years 1921, 1922, and 1929, and then on a consistent basis from 1937 onwards. This indicates that on average agricultural households were cultivating on a scale below what was required to gain ownership over it. Nonetheless, in none of the source materials utilized in this research was there ever a single mention of an agricultural household failing their

⁷⁸ *KNNS* 1937-11-3

inspection and unable to gain land ownership. The land ownership regulations were one thing, but in reality, the land inspector was able to overlook a household's shortcomings in cultivating land, as they had the discretion to award ownership rights anyway if they were otherwise persuaded of the household's efforts. Nonetheless, Nakajima suggests that most settlers were able to pass their inspection, through the haphazard clearance and cultivation of about 70% of the total land grant, specifically for the purpose of passing the inspection. Thereafter, having gained ownership over their land, many households let a part of the land they had brought under cultivation become overgrown once more.⁷⁹ This was a common practice among agricultural settler households, and resulted in an increase in the percentage of nominally reclaimed agricultural land which went unutilized – presented in figure 4.9. Unfortunately, this data is only available for the years 1913 to 1923 – perhaps it was becoming too embarrassing to publish – but the trend, with some fluctuation, is clear: the underutilization of land was rising. In 1913, only 1.9% of land that had been cleared for agriculture was not in productive use, a decade later it stood as high as 37.4%.

Thus far, I have revealed that the agricultural settlement programme increasing failed in its attempts to attract settlers from a wide range of sending regions. Furthermore, those who did come to the colony appear to have made only haphazard efforts at converting their land grants into productive assets, and agriculture was being pursued at a scale which was not considered sufficient to sustain full-time farming households. In the sections that follow, I will argue that amongst the households who did settle and persist as farmers in Karafuto, the vast majority were able to do so because of their involvement in non-agricultural activities. In order to highlight this point, I present evidence from what the colonial administration considered to be success stories in the colony's agricultural settlement. The focus on 'successful' cases is

⁷⁹ Nakajima. *Karafuto no takushoku*, p7

pursued as it shows that even in these cases agricultural settlers remained dependent on non-agricultural economic activities, allowing us to question the extent to which their livelihood stemmed from agriculture at all.

4.6 Karafuto's exemplary farmers and assessing the importance of agriculture

In 1929, the agricultural section of the colonial administration published a thirty six page pamphlet, containing the recollections of ten prominent agricultural settlers – hereafter *tokunō* – who retold the stories of how they became successful Karafuto farmers.⁸⁰ The pamphlet was intended to encourage new agricultural settlers, putting forward the personal experiences of successful settlers to provide a kind of inspirational blueprint of how to make it in the colony.⁸¹ The ten *tokunō* who retold their stories in the pamphlet were certainly not ordinary settlers. Indeed, as part of the fanfare that surrounded the visit of crown prince Hirohito to Karafuto in 1925, they all received decorations from the colonial administration for their exceptional contribution to developing Karafuto's agriculture. Whilst this group of ten success stories provides anything but a representative case, for our purposes it offers hard to come by detail on early settlers – four had come to the colony in 1905-07, four in 1912 and two in 1914. Additionally, this source can be used in combination with another report that offers some information on their income sources, and as such, allows us to question the extent to which the *tokunō* were really successful as agricultural settlers.

Who were these *tokunō*, and how had they come to Karafuto? Most of the ten *tokunō* had some experience of life in Hokkaido before coming

⁸⁰ This source also gained the attention of Miki who used it to trace the course of migration from Japan to Karafuto. Miki. 'Nōgyō imin ni miru Karafuto to Hokkaidō'

⁸¹ See foreword in: Karafuto-chō (1929) *Karafuto nōka no kūshindan*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

to Karafuto. One was actually born there, and six of the ten had come to Karafuto after having lived or worked in Hokkaido. Not all of the *tokunō* include information on their family background, or express the reason they left home, but those who do indicate that the *tokunō* were mostly born into farming families that had fallen on hard times. Sakuma Kishirō, who ran in to trouble trying to establish a farm in Hokkaido, was one such case, as was Suga Seijirō, whose family's side business in sericulture went bust.⁸² Rather than elaborate in detail on the early life of these settlers, the recollections are more focused on the years after they came to the colony. Eight of the ten *tokunō* go into some detail on their work situation in the early years, with six making reference to their dependence on side work in activities such as forestry labour, snow clearance work for the railway, day labour, fishing labour, marine product processing, and charcoal making.

Suga Seijirō, the leader of a group migration from a village in Aichi prefecture, recalled that in the early years his group were 'close to starvation,' and as a result, had to survive based on labour in road construction. Thirty of the group's thirty seven members engaged in this type of work in the first few years, helping them to make ends meet. Even as the group's members established their farms, they were unable to shake off their dependence on other sources of income, relying on occasional remittances from their home village in Aichi, and more regularly on wage labour in forestry.⁸³ Despite this clear dependence on side activities, especially in the early years, almost all of the *tokunō* – Suga included – expressed their support for the colonial administration's stance that agriculture should be the sole activity of Karafuto's farmers. The experience of Fujimoto Eikichi was similar, with his group members coming close to starvation on three separate occasions, and each time relying on forestry work to pass the winter.⁸⁴ Matoba Iwatarō, the oldest

⁸² Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto nōka no kūshindan*, pp1-11

⁸³ *Ibid* pp1-6

⁸⁴ *Ibid* p26

among the *tokunō* settlers, also depended on cash income from off the farm to make ends meet, engaging in regular seasonal work either in forestry, or as a day labourer.⁸⁵

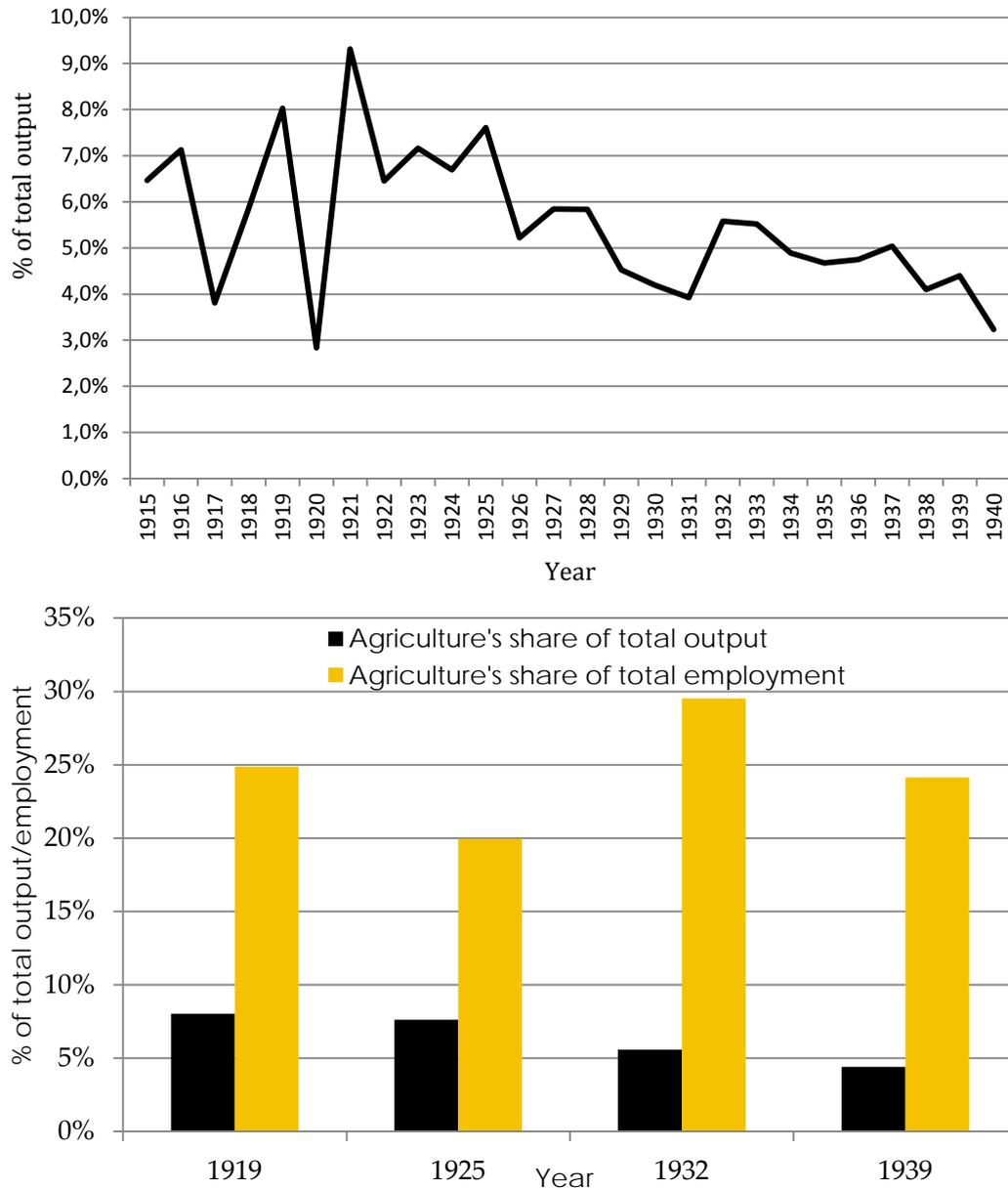
The importance of side work for the *tokunō* was not just limited to the early years of settlement, enduring long after they had established themselves – if indeed it ended at all. In another report, the colonial administration outlined the basic household budgets of the *tokunō* for 1929, allowing us to determine their main sources of income. The report reveals that eight out of ten *tokunō* households continued to gain income from non-agricultural activities in 1929, even though fifteen years had passed since the last of them had arrived in the colony. In the most extreme case, non-agricultural activities accounted for 50.4% of total household income, and the average across the ten households stood at 23.9%.⁸⁶ This data suggests that whatever these ‘exemplary farmers’ said about the need to focus purely on agriculture, in actual fact they had a long – even prolonged – history of engagement in diverse economic activities. The *tokunō* were clearly not the pure agriculturalists that the Karafuto colonial administration had wished to portray them as in its report. Additionally, the active engagement in non-agricultural activities of the *tokunō* was accompanied by a far from impressive record in cultivating agricultural land. According to data in the report, on average the *tokunō* only cultivated 31.8% of the land that they owned, failing to put more than two-thirds of it into productive use. The colonial administration consistently stated that ‘agriculture is one of the most important industrial undertakings in Karafuto.’⁸⁷ However, the evidence from the *tokunō* suggests that, even in these special stories of success, it did not make sense for agricultural settler households to focus solely on agricultural pursuits.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*

⁸⁶ Karafuto-chō (1933) *Karafuto nōka keizai chōsa*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, p15

⁸⁷ Ōsaka Mainichi Shimnibunsha. *Japan today and tomorrow*, p141

Figure 4.10 - Agriculture's share in Karafuto's total economic output and employment

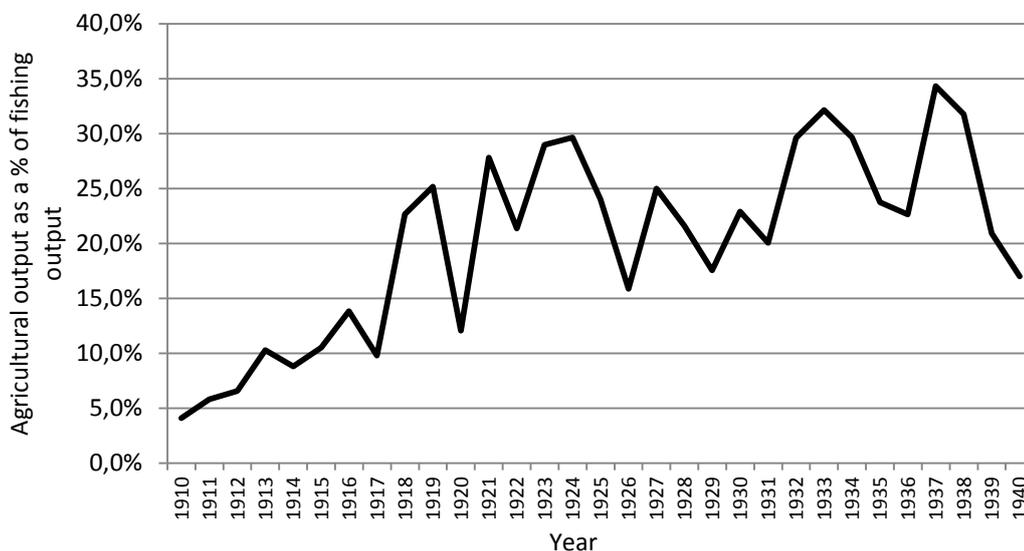


Source: KTS; KCI; KY

Despite the exaggerated statements in official publications regarding the importance of agriculture, in reality it made up only a minor part of the colonial economy. Indeed, as is shown in figure 4.10, the share of agriculture in Karafuto's total economic output never exceeded 10%, peaking at 9.3% in 1921. In most years, the agricultural sector's share of total economic output hovered between 4 and 7%, and seemed to

be in relative decline in the 1930s, despite the colonial administration anticipating the sector's rapid growth in its fifteen year plan mentioned earlier. The bottom half of figure 4.10 contrasts agriculture's share of employment and economic output, and indicates that agriculture, despite its small share of output, was still a significant employer, accounting for between 20 and 30% of the workforce. Nonetheless, this data is also misleading, and simply highlights a major problem with the way households were categorized in the surveys which generated such statistics. Households were often identified in surveys as simply 'agricultural' when in reality the diversity of their economic activities rendered such a rigid categorization redundant. Even exemplary farmers were engaged in non-agricultural activities, and, as will become clear, many nominally 'agricultural' households devoted as much, or sometimes more, time and effort to other activities as they did to farming.

Figure 4.11 – Value of agricultural output as a percentage of value of fishing output, 1910-1940



Source: as in figure 4.10

One activity that a large number of agricultural households engaged in was fishing and marine product processing, which was conducted either seasonally as wage labour or on the side as independent

operators. Earlier in this chapter I outlined the colonial administration's lack of enthusiasm for the idea that fishing could be a contributor to colonial settlement. Nonetheless, despite the preconceptions of the colonial administration, in reality fishing's economic importance continued to exceed that of agriculture throughout the Japanese colonial era. Data presented in figure 4.11 shows the value of agricultural output relative to output in the fishing sector between 1910 and 1940. These data suggest that agricultural output never exceeded 35% of the equivalent in fishing, underlining its minor role in the colonial economy. The data in figure 4.11 shows considerable variation, as output in both industries was prone to fluctuations caused by the climate, but it is clear that agriculture was, for some time at least, growing in importance relative to fishing. However, with poorer data availability for the early 1940s we will never know how sustained this was, and after 1937, at least, the signs were not encouraging, as the value of agricultural output relative to fishing output fell from 34.3% to 17.0% in 1940.

4.7 Side work, migratory labour and agricultural settlement

Due to the limitations of Karafuto's climate, agriculture in the colony was based on a relatively short farming season. In most years, planting would begin in mid-to-late April, and by the end of October the slack season would set in. This meant that for about five months of the year agricultural households were restricted to activities such as farm maintenance, the care of their livestock – if they had any – and of course land clearance, so as to expand the cultivatable area for next year. Given the long slack season it was somewhat inevitable that side work would become an important component of the household economy of agricultural families. The colonial administration, for its part, was not totally opposed to the idea of non-agricultural side work⁸⁸ as long as it did not impede

⁸⁸ In fact, Hiraoka saw the need for winter work, and he endeavoured to attract paper and pulp manufacturers to Karafuto so as to strengthen demand for forestry

the process of building a primarily agricultural settler colony. As such, the frequent antipathy expressed by the colonial administration towards the non-agricultural activities of farmers was not mere dogma; it came on the back of evidence that suggested non-agricultural work was disrupting agricultural production. This created a notion that non-agricultural side work was holding back the realization of the administration's vision of a colony based on self-sufficient agricultural settlements, which advanced the frontier of cultivation. There is some truth to this notion, however, at the same time non-agricultural side work provided an essential source of cash income, without which many of the 'agricultural' communities in the colony could not be sustained.

The famous folklorist, Yanagida Kunio, made a tour of Karafuto in 1906, when he was an official of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. During his tour, Yanagida kept a diary in which he made note of how the engagement of Karafuto's agricultural households in other activities led them to neglect their farms. On a day in which he visited a farming village, he wrote that 'after repairing their homes and planting their crops, many villagers, faced with insufficient funds, seek profits elsewhere, and leave for temporary work. Looking at the crops planted in this village, I see that oats and wheat are grown, but they are left unattended and impeded by thick grass and weeds.'⁸⁹ Yanagida's comments came in 1906, but this was not a phenomenon limited to the first few years of the colony. The neglect of the farm so as to engage in non-agricultural activities persisted, and was most likely a rational choice on the part of agricultural settlers, allowing them to generate a higher income than they would have done as diligent full-time farmers. Indeed, this much was clear in a December 1910 edition of the *KNNS*, which reported on the results of a colonial administration investigation into agricultural conditions in the colony. The investigation concluded

operations, and thus provide employment opportunities in winter forestry work for agricultural settlers. *KNNS* 1911-4-1 & 1913-5-9

⁸⁹ Yanagida, K. (1962) 'Karafuto kikō', in Yanagida, K. *Yanagida Kunio zenshū daikan*, Chikuma Shobō, Tokyo, p130

that ‘even though five years have passed since agricultural settlement began, it is the areas where less land has been brought under cultivation which are more prosperous... because non-agricultural side work is common there.’⁹⁰ Farmers were temporarily deserting their farms, even during the peak season, so as to take up work in industries such as fishing. This was a worrying development for a colonial administration which saw agriculture as the only way to properly settle the colony, and even restricted the activities of family-based fishing operators because it felt ‘we can’t have a situation in which the level of living of small fishers exceeds that of farmers.’⁹¹

In spite of the support and subsidy that agricultural settlers received, many agricultural households prioritized their non-agricultural activities, and continued to do so throughout the Japanese colonial period. Indeed, even as late as the mid-1930s, Nakajima observed that ‘large numbers of farmers travel elsewhere for work in the fisheries and forests, which provide an extra source of income.’ In their absence, he noted, the farm suffered ‘a shortage of labour and thus did not generate enough income,’ deepening the dependence of Karafuto’s farmers on non-agricultural sources of income.⁹² Agricultural household surveys conducted by the colonial administration confirm the persisting importance of non-agricultural side work. A 1932 survey, for example, tracked the fortunes of eight agricultural settler households, who had arrived in 1928. The survey suggests that these agricultural settler households were, on average, able to raise the share of their income coming from agricultural activities between 1928 and 1931 from 28.5% to 52.2%. Yet this came about largely because of the reduction in their subsidy – which was always higher in the first few years – rather than a notable decline in their engagement in side work. The survey indicates that income from non-agricultural activities remained a hugely important

⁹⁰ *KNNS* 1910-12-15

⁹¹ Hiraoka, J. (1913) *Karafuto no gyogyō seido*, Shokumin mondai kenkyū shiryō 1, Tokyo, p16

⁹² Nakajima. *Karafuto no takushoku*, p7

component of their total income, falling only marginally from 44.9% in 1928, to 42.5% in 1931.⁹³

Table 4.3 - 1940 Income and expenditure of Karafuto farm households

	Small-Scale Farmers	Large-Scale Farmers
Household Information		
No. of households in sample	30	30
Average cultivated land per household (chō)	3.14	5.43
Average family size (Persons)	6.08	6.50
Average number of family members per household who are economically active (Persons)	2.90	3.06
Agricultural Activities (¥)		
Income	1,150.83	1,699.49
Expenditure	575.17	946.29
Balance	575.66	748.20
Other Activities (¥)		
Income	1,098.26	633.71
Expenditure	27.03	9.99
Balance	1,071.24	623.72
Net Income & Household Expenditure (¥)		
Gross income from all activities	2,249.09	2,333.20
Net income from all activities	1,646.90	1,371.92
Total non-production related household expenses	1,319.65	1,095.13
Remainder	327.25	276.79
Other Information (¥)		
Household expenditure per person	217.05	168.48
Income generated per economically active person	775.55	762.48

Note: large-scale farmers were defined as those cultivating more than five chō, whilst small-scale farmers cultivated less than five chō.

Source: calculated from data reported in *KNNS* 1941.2.22

A 1940 investigation by the colonial administration – presented in table 4.3 – highlights further the persisting importance of side work in the budgets of Karafuto’s agricultural households. The 1940 survey

⁹³ Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto nōka keizai chōsa*, p8

covered the income and expenditure of sixty agricultural households, which were separated into two categories, each containing thirty households. The first category consisted of 'small-scale farmers', who were defined as cultivating at a scale less than five chō – 3.14 chō on average – whilst the second category consisted of 'large-scale farmers,' defined as those who cultivated more than five chō – 5.43 chō on average. The results from the survey are revealing in a number of ways. Firstly, it can be seen that whilst small-scale farmers had significantly lower agricultural income, their income from non-agricultural activities more than made up for the shortfall. On average, small-scale farmers were able to generate an income of ¥1,646.90, after subtracting production related costs, compared to the ¥1,371.92 made by large-scale farmers. Although this data is limited to 1940, it does at least suggest that greater engagement in non-agricultural activity was a rational household strategy, which allowed agricultural households to obtain a greater income than they would have done if they had committed themselves to farming at a larger-scale. In short, 'pluriactivity'⁹⁴ appears to have been an income maximization strategy for agricultural households in Karafuto.

A second point that the survey reveals is that this greater income is also likely to have translated into a better living standard for small-scale farmers. On average, members of small-scale farming households enjoyed ¥217.05 per person on personal consumption expenditure, as opposed to the ¥168.48 equivalent in the large-scale cultivating households. Thirdly, it is worth noting that non-agricultural activities carried with them a degree of convenience related to the low costs involved. In the small-scale cultivating households, non-agricultural income made up 48.8% of total income, but only accounted for 4.5% of total production related costs. In the households of large-scale cultivators the corresponding figures were 27.2% of total income, and 1.0% of production related costs, highlighting that side work in forestry, fishing,

⁹⁴ Francks, P. (2006) *Rural economic development in Japan: from the nineteenth century to the Pacific War*, Routledge, London

and other activities, brought in a significant level of income and required very little financial outlay. This is not to say that we can understand the cost of engaging in non-agricultural activity purely in terms of financial outlay, as side work entailed opportunity costs such as the loss of farm labour. Nonetheless, side work did not mean a neglect of farming altogether, as through the family unit farming could continue on a smaller scale, conducted by those family members who did not leave for other paid work. The data in table 4.3 suggests that such a strategy paid off. Furthermore, we may speculate – existing evidence allows us to do no more – that the diversification of agricultural activities was not just an income maximizing strategy; it was also a risk minimizing one. With diverse sources of income, agricultural families would be less at risk from the effects of a bad harvest, flood damage, or a fall in agricultural product prices etc. In this sense, the cash income gained from non-agricultural activities could help reduce the vulnerability of agricultural households from market and climatic fluctuations which were beyond their control.

The final point worth noting from the results of the 1940 survey regards the effect of scale on the productivity of Karafuto farms. The evidence suggests that small-scale farming households were also more productive, generating output valued at ¥366.50 per chō, which compared favourably with the ¥312.98 per chō produced by large-scale cultivators. This is not necessarily a surprising result, as agriculture in Karafuto did not make extensive use of draft animals, nor was it particularly mechanized, and thus if labour intensive methods were the norm we would expect small-scale farming to provide a better yield per unit. Small-scale farmers could focus their efforts on the superior parts of their land, whilst large-scale farmers cultivated even their more marginal land, giving them a lower yield per unit. Leaving aside the reasons for this gap in productivity, the data suggest that, at the level of five chō, economies of scale were not being felt, and thus there was little to incentivize agricultural households to increase the amount of land they cultivated, if that in turn led to a reduction in their non-agricultural activities. As such,

non-agricultural activities remained an integral part of the economic life of agricultural households in Karafuto, and this was true even for the households of large-scale cultivators. A colonial administration report from 1925, which outlines the household budget of an agricultural family cultivating 8.80 chō of land, underlines this point. Even though this family was cultivating on a scale that was four times above the average at this point – i.e. 2.05 chō according to the data in figure 4.8 – it still relied on side work for 20.6% of its total income.⁹⁵ Quite clearly, non-agricultural activities played an important role in sustaining even the most successful agricultural households. In the next section I introduce the specific example of an agricultural settlement called Konotoro, which underlines this point.

4.8 Voices from the agricultural settlement of Konotoro

Konotoro was a primarily agricultural settlement, located approximately thirty kilometres north of Maoka, the most important port on Karafuto's western coast. With no Russian precedent, the agricultural settlement of Konotoro emerged in a largely uninhabited area, where – save for a few fishing huts – there were no man-made structures.⁹⁶ Nonetheless, the population of Konotoro stood at 3,476 at the end of 1934,⁹⁷ with approximately three quarters of residents categorized as farmers. Konotoro was one of the most celebrated cases of agricultural settlement in Karafuto's history, a darling of the colonial administration, and referred to in the colonial media as a place where 'pure farmers have succeeded'.⁹⁸ The settlement was thought to be home to a number of successful, committed, full-time farmers, and the average area of land cultivated in Konotoro was relatively impressive, standing at 5.04 chō per

⁹⁵ Karafuto-chō Shokusanaka. *Karafuto no nōgyō*, pp94-97

⁹⁶ Konotoro-mura no enkakushi henshū iinkai (1992) *Karafuto Konotoro-mura no enkakushi*, Konotorokai, Kōchi, pp31 & 262

⁹⁷ Karafuto-chō (1935) *Jinkō tōkei shōwa kyūnenmatsu genzai*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, pp5 & 8

⁹⁸ *KNNS* 1936-4-25

household in 1940, in excess of the Karafuto average at 3.80 chō.⁹⁹ The contemporary admiration for Konotoro's agricultural success aside, its own former residents refer to the settlement as 'Karafuto's only pure farming village', expressing a sense of pride in their achievements at forging farms out of the wilderness.¹⁰⁰ Konotoro's success was not limited to its record of cultivation and the predominance of farming; it was able to draw a large number of its settlers from the island of Shikoku, which was not among the major senders of agricultural settlers to Karafuto – refer to figures 4.6 and 4.7. On the surface Konotoro represents a success story, in which settlers were attracted from distant Shikoku, and were able to establish themselves in a settlement that developed primarily based on agriculture. Nonetheless, a closer examination reveals that Konotoro was also an agricultural settlement, that remained dependent on side work.

The settlement's contemporary fame means that it provides a particularly useful case for examination. As a success story, the settlement received plenty of attention in the contemporary colonial press, and thus a number of reports survive. Additionally, in 1992 former settlers of Konotoro produced a collection of their reminiscences, which give us first-hand accounts of the socio-economic life in the settlement. This type of source material must be approached with caution; the distance in time from the actual events and the recording of 'memory' mean that a degree of inaccuracy in recollection is likely. Additionally, a strong sense of nostalgia among many of the former settlers who were recalling their hometown (*furusato*) could generate a biased account. However, for the purpose of this research, former settler recollections remain a valuable source material, as the information with which I am concerned relates to the general economic activities of settlers, rather than more contestable or discursive concerns such as settler identity for example. Therefore, former settler recollections are utilized with their

⁹⁹ Konotoro-mura no enkakushi henshū iinkai. *Karafuto Konotoro-mura*, p100

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid* p213

inherent limitations in mind, and as a complementary source to documents contemporary to the colonial period.

The immigration of agricultural settlers to Konotoro began in earnest from 1912 onwards, with the arrival of a few individuals from the Isawa district of Iwate prefecture. In the early part of the following year, this first group was joined by some of their family members, as well as an additional group of settlers from Ichinoseki, Miyagi prefecture. The arrival of these initial groups meant that Konotoro was already home to around twenty five households by the spring of 1913, when settlers from Shikoku began arriving.¹⁰¹ The influx from Shikoku changed the pace of immigration to Konotoro dramatically, and came about largely due to the efforts of an individual named Kanosue Kazu, a native of Kōchi prefecture in Shikoku. Kanosue served as the police chief of the district in which Konotoro was located,¹⁰² before becoming involved in agricultural settlement. He was one among a number of people from Kōchi, who held roles in the police force in early years of the colony. This prevalence of people from Kōchi was due to the influence of fellow Kōchi native, Kusunose Yukihiro (1858-1927), who was the first head of the colonial administration. A decorated military man, having served in Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria and then as the head of the army in Karafuto, Kusunose was effectively in charge of the colony from September 1905 to April 1908.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, despite his utilization of Kōchi natives – including Kanosue – in the colonial police force, Kusunose is not known to have had any direct involvement in the efforts to settle people from Shikoku in Konotoro.¹⁰⁴ However, as a prominent Kōchi native, his involvement in Karafuto is likely to have raised the profile of the colony in Kōchi, and he did eventually visit Konotoro in 1923, praising the progress of the settlement.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* p34

¹⁰² *KNNS* 1923-12-13

¹⁰³ Kusunose later became a cabinet member as Minister of War in 1913.

¹⁰⁴ *KNNS* 1924-12-23

Having worked for a few years as the police chief around Konotoro, Kanosue had knowledge of local conditions, including the area's agricultural potential, and the processes involved in settlement. Additionally, he also had a useful set of working connections with the local authorities in Karafuto and in Kōchi, which would allow him to smooth the process of recruiting settlers, getting access to land, and processing the required documentation. In June 1912, Kanosue wrote an article in the *KNNS* in which he announced his intention to start an immigration company that would bring settlers to Karafuto. He decided that he would focus his efforts on Shikoku, and in particular Kōchi, due to his hometown connections, and planned to settle 3,000 households from this area over a fifteen year period, so as to create a model farming settlement in Konotoro.¹⁰⁵ Needless to say, Kanosue's plan did not come to fruition on the scale that he envisaged, as in 1930 Konotoro had only 3,496 residents, with a contingent from Shikoku of 738 – of whom 706 were from Kōchi. Nonetheless, this did represent a significant concentration of Kōchi natives, and Konotoro was at that time home to just over a third of the people from Kōchi who were resident in Karafuto. Most others resided in the urban settlements of Toyohara, Esutoru, Maoka, Noda, and Ōdomari.¹⁰⁶

Kanosue followed up on the plans he announced in the *KNNS* in 1912, establishing links with the Kōchi agricultural association, and travelling to his home prefecture to begin recruitment. The first group he organized numbered almost 250, and they boarded the *Kōchi-maru* – chartered specially for the purpose – which departed from Kōchi on April 21, 1913, and arrived in Karafuto at Noda¹⁰⁷ on May 2. The group then walked about ten kilometres to nearby Konotoro, where they immediately began clearing and cultivating land. The work took its toll on some

¹⁰⁵ *KNNS* 1914-6-19

¹⁰⁶ Karafuto-chō (1934) *Karafuto kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, pp688-697

¹⁰⁷ Konotoro-mura no enkakushi henshū iinkai. *Karafuto Konotoro-mura*, p38

members of the group,¹⁰⁸ but in the meantime Kanosue was busy again with recruitment, and travelled back to Kōchi. On his next recruitment tour Kanosue was accompanied by officials of the Kōchi agricultural association, and a group of seven recruiting agents in the employ of the colonial administration. They reported the favourable progress being made by the first group from Shikoku to various audiences at youth organizations, agricultural association meetings, and in town/village halls. These efforts and the publicity they got in local newspapers, resulted in a further growth in the number of recruits.¹⁰⁹

The next group arrived in Karafuto – again in a chartered ship – on April 23, 1914, causing a stir in the *KNNS*, which followed their progress during the year with much interest.¹¹⁰ The *KNNS* began to speculate on the reasons why such large groups could be attracted from distant Kōchi. The daily's journalists reasoned that the main factors were poor land availability in Kōchi – due to the mountainous terrain and overpopulation in the prefecture – and the deterioration of traditional industry, notably local paper making. The *KNNS* also gave much credit to the 'extraordinary efforts' of Kanosue, who had 'travelled to seven districts and thirty six villages in order to spread the messages of the previous group of settlers, and their stories of success.' The *KNNS* also noted that because of the striking success of Konotoro, discussions and preliminary preparations were being made by Kanosue and the colonial administration to start another Kōchi settlement upstream near Rūtaka.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, such plans never materialized, as the World War One boom in the mainland caused a drastic cut in the numbers of people signing up for Kanosue's group settlements.

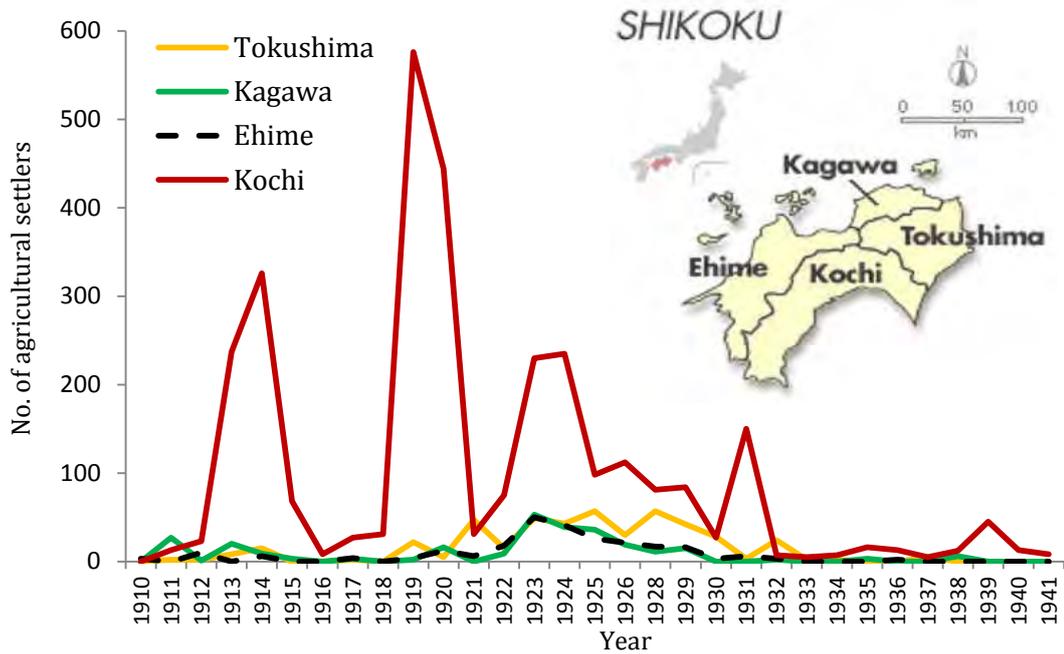
¹⁰⁸ *KNNS* 1914-2-3 Reports one settler passing away having overworked and fallen ill.

¹⁰⁹ *KNNS* 1914-3-18

¹¹⁰ *KNNS* 1914-4-24

¹¹¹ *KNNS* 1914-5-6

Figure 4.12 – The influx of agricultural settlers into Karafuto from the four prefectures of Shikoku



Source: as in figure 4.6

Available data do not make it possible to know the exact numbers of agricultural settlers who came from Shikoku to Konotoro, as all we have are scattered reports in the *KNNS* which only occasionally report the number of settlers. Nonetheless, it is possible to get a rough guide by looking at the colonial administration's official statistics for the overall number of agricultural settlers coming from Shikoku, which is presented in figure 4.12. With no other agricultural settlements attracting large numbers of settlers from Shikoku, it is likely that the vast majority of those in the overall statistics were actually Konotoro-bound. Figure 4.12 shows that agricultural settlement from Shikoku was dominated by the contingent from Kōchi prefecture. Furthermore, it also suggests that in terms of the time trend in agricultural settler numbers, there is little divergence from the overall picture in Karafuto (see figure 4.1), with an initial enthusiasm for agricultural settlement being interrupted by mainland Japan's economic expansion during World War One. The number of incomers rose again in the immediate post-World War One years, staying relatively high until the mid-1920s, after which a steady

decline set in, and was only briefly interrupted by a modest upturn during the great depression. One notable difference in the pattern of incoming agricultural settlers from Shikoku and the general Karafuto-wide pattern is the year 1921, which saw a sharp drop in the numbers of settlers coming from Shikoku. This drop was most likely the result of flood damage in the Konotoro area in 1920, which is mentioned in the recollections of former settlers.¹¹² This episode had a lasting impact on the flow of migrants to Konotoro, with the number of incomers never recovering to the pre-flood levels, which had seen groups of over three hundred people arriving at one time under Kanosue's scheme in 1919-1920.¹¹³ Nonetheless, the broad pattern is the same in Konotoro as in the rest of the colony; initial enthusiasm petered out, and there was a difficulty in producing a steady stream of settlers over an extended period.

Konotoro, like the colony as a whole, was unable to generate a long-term stream of agricultural settlers, but what can be said about the idea that Konotoro was a 'pure' agricultural settlement, as had been suggested by the contemporary colonial media and some of the former residents of Konotoro? Evidence contained in the articles published in the *KNNS*, and the recollections of former settlers, call into question such claims. Whilst it was true that Konotoro had a high proportion of settlers employed in agriculture, and that the average area cultivated by Konotoro's farmers exceeded the colonial average, even in this relative success story there was a persistent importance of – perhaps even dependence on – non-agricultural activities. Additionally, in line with developments in the rest of the colony, the mid-1930s saw agriculture begin to decline in Konotoro. Available data do not allow us to construct a consistent time series for the number of cultivating households in Konotoro, however the scattered evidence that does exist suggests a clear downward trend. In 1934, for example, there were 547 farm households

¹¹² Konotoro-mura no enkakushi henshū iinkai. *Karafuto Konotoro-mura*, pp94-5 & 274

¹¹³ *KNNS* 1919-5-14

in Konotoro, but four years later there were only 374, and this decline continued, with only 315 agricultural households left in 1941.¹¹⁴ In the collection of their recollections, a number of the former agricultural settlers of Konotoro are adamant that their families had come to the colony committed to agriculture and determined to make it their permanent home ¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, with a fall in the number of agricultural households in the mid to late 1930s it appears that at least some settlers were quite willing to move on, or into other occupations.¹¹⁶

One former settler recalled that her family arrived in 1926 with the intention of opening up land and starting a farm, having been persuaded to relocate to Konotoro by a relative already resident in the settlement. Even though they had come to start a new farm, before long the family got involved in forestry work on the side – which was not uncommon for new settlers. The work paid well, and the idea was that it would provide vital cash income to tide them over until the farm was properly established. Nonetheless, the progress in eking out a farm was slow, and somehow along the way forestry work began to take up most of the time of her family's labour.¹¹⁷ The outcome was virtually the same in the case of a settler family who relocated to Konotoro in the preceding decade. The Takahashi family arrived in Konotoro in 1914 as part of one of the large groups arriving from Kōchi prefecture. They too, had come to establish their own farm in Karafuto, taking up forestry work in order to provide cash income whilst they got their farm up and running. Nonetheless, as time went by, the Takahashi family were devoting less and less time to farming activities. The boom in the paper and pulp industry had made forestry work a lucrative business, and eventually the

¹¹⁴ Konotoro-mura no enkakushi henshū iinkai. *Karafuto Konotoro-mura*, p100; *Karafuto-chō. jinkō tokei showa kyunenmatsu genzai*, pp10-11

¹¹⁵ Konotoro-mura no enkakushi henshū iinkai. *Karafuto Konotoro-mura*, pp227 & 291. One former settler stated that his family came with the 'intention that Konotoro would become the place in which they would live and forever keep their ancestral grave.'

¹¹⁶ *Ibid* p317

¹¹⁷ *Ibid* p277

Takahashi family opened their own lumber business, moving out of farming entirely in 1921.¹¹⁸

A June 1919 article in the *KNNS* revealed that many of Konotoro's new settlers took on side work almost immediately after arriving in the colony. According to the article, 114 of the approximately 250 new arrivals from Kōchi that year were engaged neither in land clearance, nor agricultural activities. Instead, they were found to be in the employ of construction contractors, as labourers on a railway construction project.¹¹⁹ The Sasaki family, who came to Konotoro from Akita prefecture in 1913, also took on non-agricultural work before attempting to set-up their farm. In this case the whole family worked as fishing labour in the nearby fishing village of Randomari, so as to earn some extra money before the spring came, when land clearance could begin in earnest.¹²⁰ Just like the *tokunō*, Konotoro settlers also took advantage of other available work, as they waited for the right season to begin opening their land. This side work, however, continued thereafter as a source of supplementary income, even as agricultural settlers slowly expanded the scale of their farming operations. In other cases, it was agriculture that could be more accurately described as the 'side activity.' The Kikuchi family, who came to Konotoro in 1930 as agricultural settlers, saw their fortunes progress from living 'in a rudimentary hut like something from the Jōmon era' to 'a big house with tatami matting.' Yet despite this improvement, the Kikuchi family only farmed on a very small-scale, with little more than one chō of land under cultivation, and the majority of their income coming from work in the fisheries of nearby villages.¹²¹ According to this former settler, even though 'a large number of people came in from mainland Japan to work the fisheries', these were joined by 'the local farming households, who were all able to take up work in

¹¹⁸ *Ibid* pp219-221

¹¹⁹ *KNNS* 1919-6-26

¹²⁰ Konotoro-mura no enkakushi henshū iinkai. *Karafuto Konotoro-mura*, pp224-225

¹²¹ *Ibid* pp265-266

fishing... my mother made lunches for fishermen, my father and I boiled the herring meal onshore, and even the local children were allowed time off school to help out during the peak season.’¹²²

Forestry work was also an important pillar of the local economy, as other former settlers recalled. Shimamoto Momoko, who arrived with her family in 1929, recalled that as relative late-comers her family were only able to acquire marginal agricultural land, leading her father to dedicate most of his time and effort to working in forestry.¹²³ In her recollection, another settler remarked that ‘the people of the village did a lot of work as river transporters of lumber, and this was a really good business for them.’¹²⁴ Others explicitly link the growth of the forestry industry with that of the settlement, describing Konotoro as ‘a farming village that prospered on the lumber trade.’¹²⁵ One of the early settlers, named Wakahara, whose family ran a small store and inn alongside their small farm, suggested that it was the opening of the Maoka pulp factory in 1916-17 that really got the Konotoro settlement going. He noted that ‘after the factory opened the demand for local lumber increased and thereafter economic conditions just got better and better.’¹²⁶

Occasional reports in the *KNNS* also attest to the prevalence of forestry work in the Konotoro area.¹²⁷ In one October 1925 report, the journalist lamented the situation in Konotoro where ‘many farmers had turned into forestry labourers in recent years, abandoning their farms.’¹²⁸ These reports in combination with the recollections of former settlers indicate that despite the relative success of Konotoro as an agricultural settlement, it was by no means a ‘pure’ farming village. A closer examination of the economic activities of Konotoro’s agricultural settlers

¹²² *Ibid*

¹²³ *Ibid* p274

¹²⁴ *Ibid* p268

¹²⁵ *Ibid* p268

¹²⁶ *Ibid* p234

¹²⁷ *KNNS* 1923-12-13

¹²⁸ *KNNS* 1925-10-21

suggests that farming was pursued alongside a diversified household economy, which included forestry and fishery related labour. The agricultural settlers of Konotoro, just like those elsewhere in the colony, were unable to shake off a dependence on side activities. Additionally, the progress of agricultural settlement in Konotoro did not generate enough momentum to maintain a sustained influx of people. Konotoro was supposed to be able to support three thousand farming households,¹²⁹ but in reality barely reached one sixth of this level. Indeed, the number of farm households in Konotoro had declined to a mere 311 by 1943, so as the colony entered its twilight years only around a tenth of Konotoro's agricultural settlement capacity was fulfilled.

4.8 Conclusion

The colonial administration of Karafuto expressed a continued preference for the development of Karafuto as an agricultural settler colony. The resulting programme for agricultural settlement however, failed to bring about the vision which planners had for Karafuto. Policy shifts over time did not alter this fact, and indeed by the 1930s the settlement programme increasingly resorted to finding new agricultural settlers from within the colony itself. There was some progress made in developing agriculture, in terms of the land brought under cultivation for example, and on the eve of war with China no colony in the Japanese empire had as many Japanese agricultural settlers as Karafuto. In 1938, however, this claim passed to Manchuria, the settlement of which had been made a national priority, and was implemented with relatively coercive methods of recruiting settlers.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, whatever the methods used, between 1937 and 1938, the number of Japanese agricultural households in Manchuria rose by 10,346 – a number greater than the total number of

¹²⁹ *KNNS* 1925-10-21

¹³⁰ Mori, T. (2003) 'Colonies and countryside in wartime Japan', in Waswo, A. & Nishida, Y. (eds.) *Farmers and village life in twentieth-century Japan*, Routledge, London, p197

agricultural households in Karafuto at that time.¹³¹ In Karafuto, the 1930s saw the area of land cultivated and the number of households engaged in agriculture begin to drop off significantly. Nonetheless, the interruption of World War II, and the focus of efforts on Manchuria in the final decade of the Japanese empire render it difficult to assess whether by the 1930s, Karafuto's agriculture was consolidating, or simply in prolonged decline.

What is clear is that agricultural households in Karafuto remained very much engaged in non-agricultural activities throughout. Evidence presented in this chapter shows that this was true even in the case of Konotoro, and among the *tokunō*, which were being held up as models to follow. Throughout the colonial period agriculture was only making a small contribution to the colonial economy, whilst non-agricultural activities played an important role in sustaining those agricultural settlements that did exist. This chapter therefore concludes that despite the colonial administration's prolonged efforts to bring about agricultural settlement, we have to look elsewhere to appreciate how over 400,000 Japanese came to reside in the colony.

¹³¹ Takeno. 'Shokuminchi Karafuto nōgyō no jittai', p128

Chapter 5

Settlement and migratory labour in Karafuto's fishing industry

5.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that fishing and related industries played a key role in the development of Karafuto's colonial economy. In the early years of Japanese rule fishing dominated the colonial economy, but with the rapid development of the paper and pulp industry in the late 1910s and early 1920s its relative size declined substantially. Nonetheless, through linkages to other sectors in marine product processing and commerce, fishing remained an important staple industry. In addition to its industrial significance, fishing played an important role in settling the colonial landscape. In this chapter evidence is presented highlighting that contrary to the presumptions of the colonial regime, fishing settlements tended to be more 'settled' than their agricultural counterparts, even though the colonial administration offered them no support. Additionally, through the widespread use of migratory labour, the fishing industry brought in tens of thousands of workers to the colony each year, and kept the colony connected to regions on the mainland that sent many settlers. Additionally, the fishing industry provided seasonal employment opportunities for the colony's residents, which were a crucial source of supplementary income that helped to sustain settlers from other occupations.

In the previous chapter it was highlighted that the colonial regime held very little hope for the permanent settlement of the colony based on fishing, instead throwing the weight of its efforts behind the promotion of agricultural settlement – albeit with little success. The credentials of fishermen as long term settlers were questioned with reference to the tendency of individual fishermen to maximize short term profits, which in

turn endangered the sustainability of the catch, and therefore the basis of the fishing economy. This tendency, it was feared, would create a tragic race to the bottom among fishermen, and as such they were not considered to be settler material. When catches fell off, it was anticipated that they would 'abandon ship', leaving Karafuto altogether, with its fisheries depleted and the territory thinly populated.

In this chapter I argue that such a view was mistaken, and failed to appreciate both the potential and actual contribution that fishing could make to colonial settlement. Fishing was in actual fact making a number of contributions, including through the taxation of the fishing industry – which provided the funds to promote settlement – as well as through profits gained through trading marine products, and wages paid to fishing labour which were a major boost to the colonial economy. In addition, the idea that fishing families were less rooted than farmers in the colony appears simplistic, as they had to expend substantial sums in order to establish themselves in the colony. Whilst it was of course true that much of their work was at sea, fishing families invested heavily onshore, building homes, boathouses, wharves, storage sheds, marine product processing stations, and other assets. As this chapter shows, with such a large stake invested in Karafuto, fishermen were unlikely to just up and leave at the first sign of a poor catch. Indeed, relative to their agricultural counterparts they appear to have been more willing to accept Karafuto as their permanent home. This chapter questions the validity of the 'anticipatory geography'¹ of the colonial regime – which envisaged a future for Karafuto as an agricultural settler colony – by pursuing a comparative analysis of the degree to which agricultural and fishing settlements were actually 'settled'.

In what follows, this chapter first outlines the history of the fishing industry in Karafuto, the policy towards Karafuto's fisheries, and then its

¹ Veracini, L. (2010) 'The imagined geographies of settler colonialism', in Banivanua Mar, T. & Edwards, P. (eds.) (2010) *Making settler colonial space: perspectives on race, place & identity*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, p180

economic importance in terms of exports, taxation, employment etc. Then the chapter proceeds to discuss the importance of migratory labour to the operation of the fisheries in Karafuto. This is worth our attention because the prevalence of migratory labour tainted the image of fishing as a basis for settlement, due to the fact that the majority of migratory labourers returned to mainland Japan after the fishing season. However, this chapter highlights that, contrary to this perception, migratory labour functioned as a means to spread information on the colony, and could eventually lead migratory labourers to settle in Karafuto. Seasonal work as migratory labour in Karafuto provided an opportunity for many potential settlers to familiarize themselves with the conditions in the colony, and thus reduced the risks and psychological barriers to making the decision to settle permanently in Karafuto. In the final part of this chapter, a comparison between the degree to which agricultural and fishing settlements were 'settled' is made, utilizing various demographic indicators and family registration data.

5.2 Fishing in Karafuto before 1905

Fishing had long been one of the mainstays of economic life on Sakhalin. The Ainu, Nivkh and Oroch people engaged in fishing as part of a mixed economy that included herding, hunting, and vegetable farming long before any sustained contact with either Russia or Japan. The waters surrounding Sakhalin Island are some of the richest on the planet, and as Japanese explorers came into contact with the region their attention was taken by the richness of the catch. During the Edo era, Japan 'managed' the territory through the Matsumae domain, as an extension of Hokkaido,² maintaining exclusive rights to trade with the Ainu and licence fishing activities in Japan's northern frontier. Nonetheless, the Matsumae were protective of their privileges,³ and to some extent limited the commercial use of the waters around Sakhalin, rendering it

² During this era Hokkaido was referred to as Ezo and Karafuto as Kita-ezo.

³ Howell, D. (2005) *Geographies of identity in nineteenth century Japan*, University of California Press, California, pp112-118

vulnerable as Russians began to frequent the region more regularly and in greater numbers. Until this point the island had been nothing more than a base for the fishing operations of those licensed by the Matsumae, with the result that there was no Japanese presence on the island that could be deemed either permanent or even year-round at a time when Western imperialism was on the march in Asia.⁴

In 1855, Japan concluded the Treaty of Shimoda with Russia, which marked the beginning of formal relations between the two nations, but did not resolve the issue of sovereignty over Sakhalin Island. Instead, both nations agreed to a temporary co-existence (*zakkyō*) on the island, shelving the issue of full sovereignty for the time being, and granting quasi-recognition of each other's rights on Sakhalin.⁵ Given this situation, a more concerted effort was required on the Japanese side if it harbored any hope of maintaining a claim to the territory, and it therefore ordered a number of domains to contribute towards the garrisoning of the island. For Japan's domains, however, maintaining a presence in a distant northern outpost was a significant financial burden, and so clans such as the Ōno sought to cover part of their costs through operating fisheries on Sakhalin – often utilizing Ainu labour – and licensing commercial fishing operations.⁶ Domain-led fishing operations had not always been profitable as domains lacked the experience in running commercial fisheries, let alone in such a harsh climate, and because operations were often disrupted by the priority given to meeting garrisoning obligations.⁷ Nonetheless, on the whole fishing activity, especially by commercial operators, had met with some success.

The promise shown by these Japanese-run fisheries meant that even though Japan relinquished its claims to Sakhalin in the 1875 Treaty

⁴ Stephan, J. (1971) *Sakhalin: a history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p45

⁵ *Ibid* pp53 & 196

⁶ Azuma, S. (2009) 'Kita Ezochi ni okeru jikisabiki no tenkai to Echigō sahaijin no gyoba kaisetsu', *Hokkaidō kaitaku kinenkan kenkyū kiyō* no.37; Azuma, S. (2007) 'Bakumatsuki kita Ezochi ni okeru Ōno han no ushoro basho keiei', *Hokkaidō kaitaku kinenkan kenkyū kiyō* no.35

⁷ Azuma. 'Kita Ezochi ni okeru jikisabiki no tenkai', p172

of St. Petersburg in exchange for the Kuril Islands, it pushed for, and successfully obtained, a special clause in the treaty which recognized the right of Japanese operating in Sakhalin to continue fishing operations there.⁸ Following the treaty, a consulate was set up in Korsakov (the precursor of Ōdomari) in order to oversee the activities of Japanese operating in Sakhalin. In this way, despite the transfer of sovereignty to Russia, Japanese fishing activities on Sakhalin were not extinguished; in fact they slowly began to flourish, even as the Tsar turned the island into a penal colony described as ‘a monument to human misery.’⁹

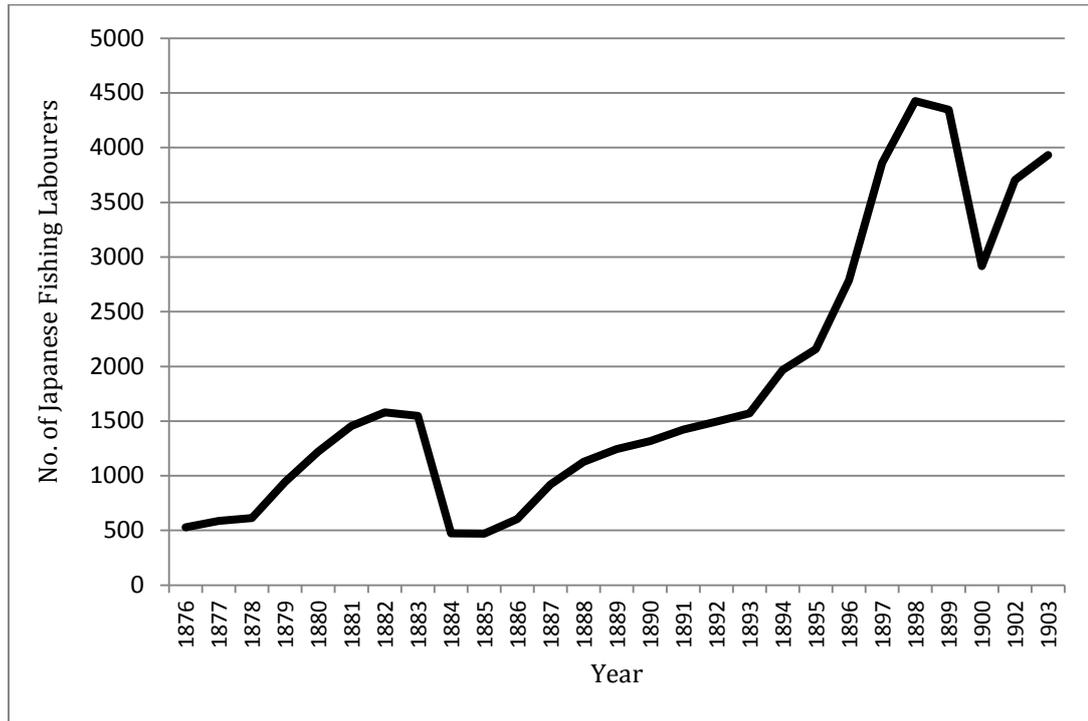
This is not to suggest that fishing based on Sakhalin was easy, as despite the treaty rights from which Japanese operators benefited, they were still dependent on the goodwill of the Russian authorities. Indeed, as Japanese fishing activities increased in scale, the Russian authorities became alarmed by this expansion, and as a result proceeded to obstruct Japanese operators by imposing arbitrary taxes and duties in some cases, and ordering the closure of Japanese fisheries in others. Such impositions were not met lying down. In 1899, following a Russian decree, which ordered the majority of Japanese fishery interests on the island to close, Japanese operators bound together, and organized the Sakhalin Marine Products Union (*Sagaren suisan kumiai*) to protect their interests.¹⁰ The union used its members’ influence to cut-off the supply of Japanese migratory labourers to Russian fishing operators on the island, forcing the Russian side to retreat from the measures that sought to exclude Japanese operators for Sakhalin altogether. This showed the extent of the Japanese encroachment on Sakhalin’s economy, as not only had the scale of Japanese fishing operations become a cause for alarm, but Russian operators had also become dependent on Japanese labour – the alternative on thinly populated Sakhalin was a workforce made up mostly of convicts.

⁸ Stephan. *Sakhalin*, pp196-197

⁹ *Ibid* p65

¹⁰ *Ibid* pp76-77; for a full (if one sided) account see: Karafuto Teichi Gyogyō Suisan Kumiai (1931) *Karafuto to gyogyō*, Karafuto teichi gyogyō suisan kumiai, Hakodate

Figure 5.1 - No. of Japanese fishing labourers working at Japanese fisheries on Russian Sakhalin, 1876-1903



Source: Karafuto Teichi Gyogyō Suisan Kumiai. *Karafuto to gyogyō*, pp132-135

As can be seen from the data presented in figure 5.1, the number of Japanese working in Sakhalin fisheries – mostly as migratory labourers – increased dramatically during the island’s era as a Russian penal colony. In 1876, the year following the treaty which saw Japan relinquish claims to the island, 530 Japanese worked at Sakhalin fisheries operated by their fellow countrymen. By 1903, however, this number had grown almost eightfold to 3,931. Yet even more remarkably, almost the same number – 3,251 to be precise – were employed at fisheries owned by Russian individuals that year, bringing the total number of Japanese working at Sakhalin fisheries to 7,182.¹¹ Even in the absence of Japanese sovereignty, Sakhalin had become an important destination for Japanese migratory fishing labour, and merchant capital. This meant that

¹¹ Twenty five of seventy eight Russian operators leased their fisheries that year to Japanese operators; *Ibid* p112.

although the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 interrupted fishing operations, as the southern half of the island became the Japanese colony of Karafuto in 1905, a large number of fishing operators were well-placed to expand their operations on the island, having already experienced operating there. In this sense, the year 1905 does not represent the genesis of Japanese fishing activities on Karafuto, like it did in other industries such as agriculture, and as a result fishing operators were well-placed to hit the ground – or water – running as sovereignty passed to Japan. Instead the year 1905 freed Japanese operators from the difficulties of operating in a foreign penal colony, and thus offered up new opportunities for the commercial exploitation of the island's marine life.

The membership of the Sakhalin Marine Products Union was made up of large merchant fishing houses, many of whom had made their fortune in Hokkaido before expanding further north. The Meiji era had seen the dismantling of Japan's domains, including that of the Matsumae clan, which also saw its right to license fishing operations in Hokkaido evaporate. With the Matsumae removed, Hokkaido was now open to capitalist development, and the exploitation of its resources, including its fisheries, was actively encouraged by the new Japanese government. As a result, many of the merchant houses who had operated under the restrictive licensing system of the Matsumae were now able to rapidly expand their fishing operations in Hokkaido, accumulating vast sums of capital in the process. The main activities of merchant fishing households in Japan's north were related to catching and then processing herring, so as to produce herring meal (*nishin-kasu*), a traditional fertilizer used in Japanese agriculture. The profits from the trade in herring meal made possible the expansion of operations into Sakhalin, a territory difficult for the large merchant fishers to ignore, as fisheries there often yielded a herring catch that compared favorably with fisheries in Hokkaido. By this process of expansion, the advance of Japanese merchant fishing capital to the island long preceded the establishment of Karafuto as a formal colony of Japan.

5.3 Fishing in Karafuto as a Japanese colony and the absence of fishing in settlement policy

In 1905, when Karafuto became a Japanese colony, an organized group of wealthy fishing operators was already well-entrenched in the colony's fisheries. These operators were not small players, as given the levels of risk involved and logistical capacity required, only large-to-medium scale merchant fishing operators could have operated in Russian Sakhalin's fisheries. Operators in Sakhalin needed to recruit, transport, equip and maintain a large workforce of migratory labourers in a foreign land, as well as process, distribute and market the catch thereafter. Given the strength of this group of large-scale fishers, their existing claim to ownership – or at least tenancy – of fisheries in Sakhalin, and their first-hand experience operating in the territory, it was perhaps inevitable that they would seek to maintain and push forward their initial advantages.

Image 5.1 - A magazine's interpretation of the Portsmouth treaty



Source: *Daikokumin* 1906-4-25, p5

One Tokyo magazine, the *Daikokumin* (see image 5.1), interpreted the Portsmouth Treaty – which created the colony of Karafuto and expanded Japanese fishing rights in the maritime province of the Russian Far East – as a windfall for Japanese fishing capitalists. This

was an apt image, as the colonial administration in Karafuto decided to recognize and prolong existing fishery leases there, and put up for auction those fisheries that were previously in the hands of Russian operators. In total, one hundred and eight fisheries saw their lease continue, whilst one hundred and twelve went to auction to be purchased by a total of fifty seven different operators, most of whom already possessed a lease to a Karafuto fishery. In actual fact, the auction deliberately favored operators who would utilize the fixed pound trap (*tateami*) fishing method, which was a more capital intensive form of fishing, and thus favoured the 'big fish' among those bidding. In all the auction of these one hundred and twelve fisheries brought in a combined sum of ¥481,146, adding significantly to the fledgling colonial administration's coffers.¹²

In its recognition of existing leases, and auction of the remainder to a select few, the colonial regime had expressed a clear preference for the development of Karafuto's fisheries at the hands of large commercial fishing operators. This was not inconsequential, as it came at the expense of thousands of smaller-scale family fishers, who operated less capital intensive gill net (*sashiami*) fishing methods, and viewed the extension of Japanese sovereignty to Karafuto as a major opportunity.¹³ The preference for large-scale pound trap operators extended beyond leaseholds, as the fishing system enforced in Karafuto came to outlaw fishing of herring, salmon and trout – all Karafuto's principal products – with gill nets. This contrasted with the fishing law as implemented in both mainland Japan and Hokkaido, where gill nets were permitted allowing small-scale operators to survive utilizing less capital intensive, traditional fishing methods.¹⁴ As the work of David Howell has made clear, unlike in Japan there was no room in Karafuto for sentiment

¹² *Ibid* p42

¹³ Howell, D. (1995) 'A right to be rational: Karafuto 1905-35', in *Capitalism from within: economy, society, and the state in a Japanese fishery*, University of California Press, California

¹⁴ Koiwa, N. (2010) 'Nihon tōjika no Karafuto gyogyō to gyogyō seido no tenkai', *Tokyo kokusai daigaku keizaigakubu*, pp11-13

towards the small-scale operator and traditional gill net methods, as after all there had been no truly settled Japanese population before 1905, and as such there was no basis for the protection of age-old customs. Moreover, tradition and sentiment aside, Howell makes clear that the colonial regime was suspicious of the intentions of small-scale independent fishing families in Karafuto. Instead, it backed large-scale pound trap operators as a means of producing a rationally managed fishery system, which would simplify stock maintenance and taxation – the latter in particular a key concern for the fledgling colonial administration.¹⁵

Nonetheless, in spite of the cold reception they had received, a number of small-scale independent gill net fishing operators had come to Karafuto in anticipation of great opportunities in the colony. Though the fishing system established left little room for them to make the fortune they dreamed of, they did not go down without a fight. They resisted the system, which banned their operations in herring, with widespread poaching activities, rioting on occasion – notably in 1909 – and several petition campaigns to the Imperial Diet, drawn out over the best part of a decade. Eventually the fishery law in Karafuto was reformed on July 3, 1915, to allow gill net operators to fish herring, salmon and trout, alongside the private pound trap fisheries. New fisheries were created, and small-scale independent operators were organized into fishing cooperatives, which were established to effectively manage the use of the fisheries by co-operative members. In 1926, use of the small pound trap (*kotateami*) was also permitted, and by this time small-scale operators in the cooperatives had come to dominate the herring industry. Between 1927 and 1932, for example, the annual catch of cooperatives ranged from 229,000 to 439,000 tons, with corresponding figures of between 65,000 and 95,000 tons for pound trap operators.¹⁶ Moreover, in 1932 all restrictions were lifted, with private pound-trap operators and the fishing

¹⁵ Howell. 'A right to be rational'

¹⁶ *Ibid* p169

cooperatives agreeing to joint management of the fisheries via a fishing conglomerate, the Karafuto United Fisheries (*Karafuto kyōdō gyogyō*), which was set-up as a response to a declining catch.

Howell interprets this outcome as a logical conclusion to the struggles of Karafuto's small-scale fishing operators, because for him it represented recognition of their efforts and rights, as well as their 'arrival as capitalists.'¹⁷ This chapter is less concerned with class struggle within the Karafuto fishing industry, and instead seeks to examine the role of the fishing industry and fishing families in colonial settlement. What concerns us here, therefore, is the colonial administration's low rating of fishermen as settlers, which was part of the rationale it expressed for designing a fishery system that would discourage the migration of numerous small-scale fishing families. Encouraging the settlement of fishing families had no place within the colonial administration's settlement programme. The notion that small-scale fishing families could become settlers was constantly written off by the colonial regime, contemporary commentators, and pound-trap operators alike, who described them as 'gamblers' and 'vagrants', who would not – but by implication should – settle down to a respectable life in agriculture.¹⁸ In this chapter I ask whether this view of fishermen was justified, or were Karafuto's fishing families actually more committed to the long term settlement of the colony than their detractors gave them credit.

If fishing was to contribute to the settlement of a year round permanent population in the colony, it is clear that the policy of backing the pound trap operators, who already had a foothold on the colony, was counterproductive. Many of the pound trap operators in Karafuto had become accustomed to operating on a seasonal basis before the territory had become a Japanese colony. These operators utilized migratory labourers during the fishing season, and largely abandoned their posts

¹⁷ *Ibid* pp170-171

¹⁸ *Ibid* pp148 & 157

during the winter months, at most leaving behind a few caretakers.¹⁹ Indeed, leaseholders of Karafuto fisheries commonly left the management of their sites to such caretakers, with Karafuto fishery leaseholds just one of a whole range of activities and investments engaged in by these merchant households. In a 2008 article, Koiwa traces the activities of one such merchant household from Aomori, whose main activity was soy sauce brewing, but also held fishery leaseholds in Karafuto. Indeed, this merchant household operated three Karafuto fisheries through managers based in the port of Hakodate in Hokkaido, and caretakers who were dispatched to the actual sites. Relocation to Karafuto was never on the agenda of this merchant household, who struggled to turn a profit with their Karafuto-based fisheries, before pulling out of Karafuto operations altogether in the 1910s.²⁰

Table 5.1 - Resident address of owners of Karafuto's fisheries, 1912

	Percentage share
Hokkaido	67%
Aomori	6%
Tohoku (excluding Aomori)	4%
Rest of Japan	8%
Karafuto	15%

Source: compiled from a list of names and addresses in *KNNS* 1912-1-1

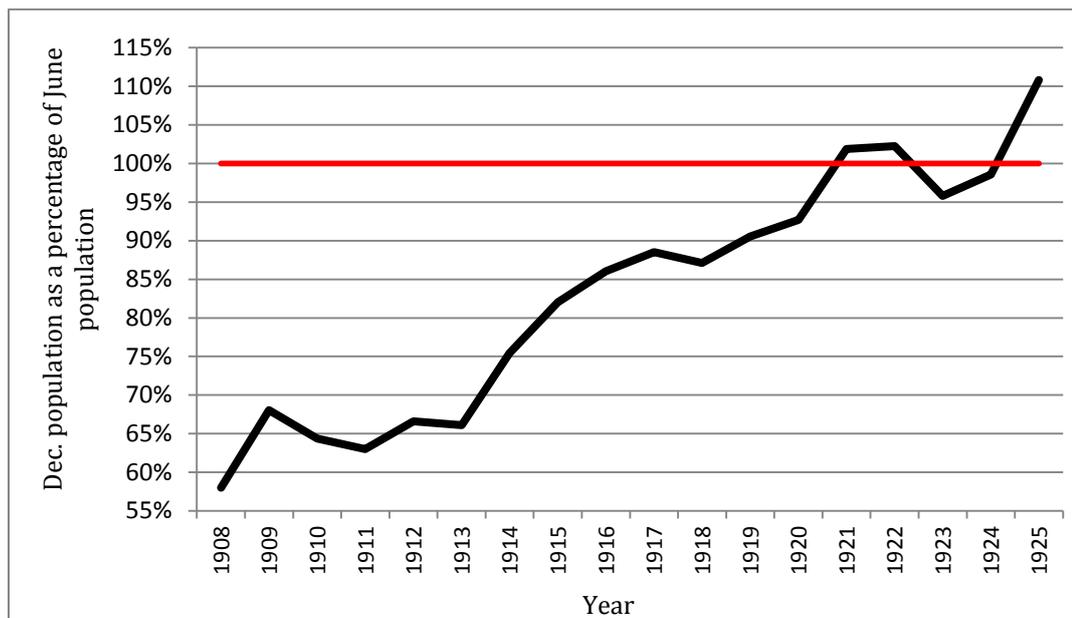
The arrangements of the Aomori-based merchant household which Koiwa examined were not uncommon, as a directory of the leaseholders of private pound trap fisheries published in *KNNS* shows. This information is presented above in table 5.1 which gives the resident addresses of the

¹⁹ See the example of a fishermen named Horitani in: Koiwa. 'Nihon tōjika no Karafuto gyogyō', pp11-12

²⁰ Koiwa, N. (2008) 'Meiji gyogyōhō taiseika no Karafuto gyogyō to noheji shusshin shōnin no katsudō', *Hirosaki daigaku keizai kenkyū* no. 31

leaseholders of Karafuto fisheries by prefecture, and shows that they were overwhelmingly non-residents of the colony. In 1912 only 15% of leaseholders had actually become residents of the colony itself, with 67% of leaseholders residing in Hokkaido, 10% in Tohoku, and 8% elsewhere in Japan. Therefore, favouring the pound trap method of fishing and existing leaseholders meant that 85% of Karafuto fisheries were managed by non-residents, even as Karafuto entered its seventh year as a Japanese colony. This was hardly a strong basis for settling a permanent population in Karafuto based on fishing, and thus the early policy towards the fisheries can be interpreted as a deliberate attempt at discouraging settlement based on fishing. Why was it that the colonial regime saw fishing as a poor basis for settlement, and viewed small-scale independent fishermen as gamblers, only concerned with getting rich quick? In order to answer these questions we need to appreciate the initial type of society which emerged in Karafuto, and in which the colonial regime sought to pursue settlement and empire building.

Figure 5.2 – Karafuto’s December population as a percentage of the preceding June population 1908-1925



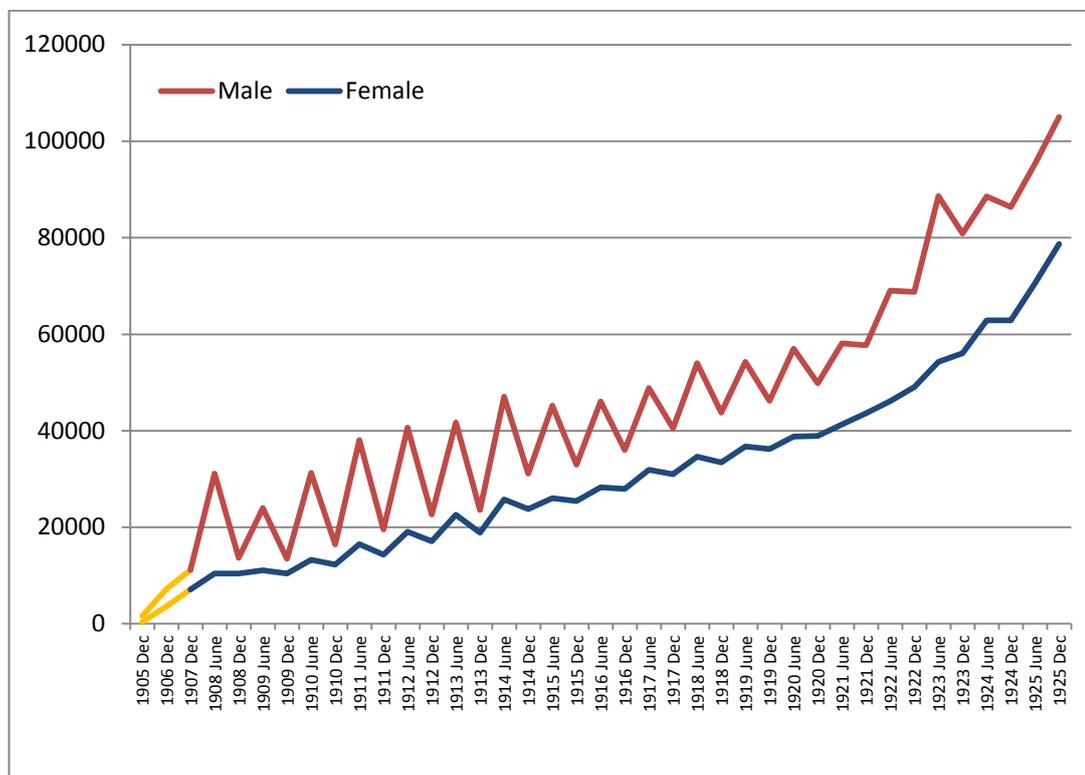
Source: KY, KCI, KTS various years

With a small population and only the fishing industry properly established in the first decade of colonial rule, the seasonality of the fishing industry and its predominance were viewed as having a negative impact on colonial society. To all intents and purposes, Karafuto's population and society in its first few years as a Japanese colony were characterized by a high degree of fluidity and seasonal flux. Karafuto saw new settlers arriving throughout the year; however, as the herring season came to an end, and Karafuto's harsh winter drew close, the outflow of people suddenly began to surpass the inflow. The result of this outflow can be seen in figure 5.2, which shows that, in its early years, Karafuto had a winter population that was substantially lower than the level in the preceding summer. Unfortunately, data does not exist for the December and June populations of Karafuto in the years 1905 to 1907, but it was likely that the winter population in these years was an even smaller percentage of the summer population than the 58% level seen in 1908. The summer population in Karafuto continued to exceed the winter equivalent throughout the 1910s, and it was not until 1921 that the winter population exceeded the summer level for the first time.

The substantial seasonal swing of Karafuto's population in the early years of the Japanese colonial era was a result of the predominance of the fishing industry in the economic life of the colony. Karafuto's small population meant that during the spring and summer peak season the industry was dependent on male migratory labourers from mainland Japan. As a result, thousands of migratory labourers came to Karafuto to work in fishing during the spring and summer months, only for the vast majority of them to leave the colony as the last herring runs finished, long before the first snowfall. Fishing activities continued in Karafuto in the winter months with cod and crab among the main catches, but this was on a much smaller-scale, and thus did not serve to keep many migratory labourers in the colony through winter. In figure 5.3 the seasonal fluctuation of Karafuto's male and female populations is shown, making clear the effect that male migratory labour in fishing had on the

colony's population in the early years. Figure 5.3 shows that the colony's female population, which was not connected with migratory labour in fishing, fluctuated little between June and December, and rose steadily as the colonial population expanded. This was in stark contrast to the male population, which sometimes saw a violent fluctuation between June and December, especially in the early years when fishing dominated, but even continued into the 1920s.

Figure 5.3 - Seasonal movement of the Japanese male and female populations of Karafuto, 1908-1925



Note: the yellow part of the series indicates the years in which only the winter population is known

Source: KY, KCI, MTS various years

In the colony's early years fishing's predominance meant that the seasonality of fishing operations projected onto the wider colonial economy and society. Accurate output data for all of the sectors of Karafuto's economy does not exist for the first decade. However, even as

late as 1915 fishing activities continued to make up at least 64.3% of total economic activity.²¹ The sudden influx of migratory labourers destined for Karafuto's fisheries brought with it a surge in demand for the services of eateries, bars and brothels. Whilst this was a boon to the service industry in the colony, the flipside of course, was that it left a vacuum in clientele when the fishing season was over, and the migratory labourers returned to their home villages in mainland Japan. Just like frontier towns elsewhere, a Karafuto port or fishing village could in one month appear vibrant, with the hustle and bustle that accompanied a rush of commercial activity, but in the next it could have the air of a desolate ghost town. Furthermore, whilst the fishing season did raise the local economy, some commentators complained that migratory labourers' wages represented a drain on Karafuto's wealth, as these incomers often came with the intention of saving their wages and taking them home so as to supplement their family's budget. Others complained that the arrival of a large mass of migratory labourers was a social nuisance, rather than just the root of volatile swings in business.

Indeed, migratory labourers in Karafuto's fisheries were commonly associated with a rise in crime and a decline in public morals. Such an association lasted even as late as 1932, when fishing was no longer the leading sector of the colonial economy, with a *KNNS* article declaring that 'Karafuto's crime season starts with the herring runs,' and noting that 'local police are always nervous before the herring season begins.'²² Fights between fishermen, who both worked and drank hard, were not unknown, nor were disputes between them and their employers.²³ In addition to the physical violence and rowdy verbal disputes of migratory labourers, fishing was also associated with the crime of poaching,

²¹ Karafuto-chō (1933) *Karafuto-chō ruinen tōkeihyō*, Toyohara, no pagination calculated from table in section three in this source

This figure is likely an underestimate, as at least part of the 23.5% of economic output classified as manufacturing, the next largest sector, would have been the processing of marine products.

²² *KNNS* 1932-4-14

²³ *KNNS* 1913-7-10, 1910-7-16, 1910-5-13

particularly of herring, salmon and trout, which were supposed to be the reserve of large-scale pound trap operators. Indeed, poaching was an 'open secret,' with all evidence suggesting that it was widespread among small-scale gill net fishermen who were unable to resist the lucrative catch in herring²⁴ – denied them in the initial fishing system of the colony. This defiance of the law regarding fishery use, and an association with crime, meant that fishing was viewed by colonial officials as a destabilizing element in colonial society. Especially in the early years of the colony, the fishing industry was strongly associated with violent fluctuations in the population, economic activity, and public order in the colony.

The negative impact of fishing on colonial society was also extended as an explanation of the sluggish progress in Karafuto's agricultural development. Indeed, the *KNNS* from time to time reported on farmers being caught poaching, either as part of a crew working for a fishing operator, or as in one report, in groups composed solely of farmers.²⁵ Whether farmers engaged in poaching due to the negative influence of fishing, or simply because the catch was too lucrative for them to ignore – and perhaps enforcement too weak – is a moot point. The fact was that the colonial administration had made the catch of herring, salmon, and trout, with anything but a pound trap a crime. That poaching was widespread, and carried out by farmers, as well as gill net fishers, could be interpreted as a common – even moral – rejection of the fishing law as applied to Karafuto. Indeed, as the fishing system was reformed and inclusive cooperatives began to dominate the fisheries, the *KNNS* could report with confidence that poaching had seen a substantial decline.²⁶ Nonetheless, the negative impact of fishing on agriculture was not solely related to making criminals out of honest farmers. In a view that was quite commonly found in official publications, an agricultural

²⁴ *KNNS* 1911-7-9, 1911-5-27, 1917-9-9; Howell. 'A right to be rational'

²⁵ *KNNS* 1913-5-2

²⁶ *KNNS* 1920-4-29

expert from Hokkaido University expressed the opinion that participation in fishing activities by farmers disrupted their work in farming, and led to their moral decline. Whilst he admitted that farmers could make good money working at the fisheries, he felt that this was often ‘squandered on bad habits’ – presumably alcohol and gambling – that were not befitting a diligent farmer, and therefore did not lead to long term prosperity.²⁷ The same agricultural expert also observed that fishing households were in some ways making a contribution to the colony’s agricultural development and food supply, through the production of herring meal fertilizer, and by opening up small plots of agricultural land – sometimes as large as one hectare.²⁸ This was an admission that fishing families, whatever their reputation as settlers, could contribute to development in the colony in rather unexpected ways. In the next section I will outline the contribution of the fishing industry to development and settlement in Karafuto, showing that, despite a lack of official support, the industry itself continued to be an important base industry with significant direct, indirect, and demand impacts.

5.4 Fishing in the development of the colonial economy

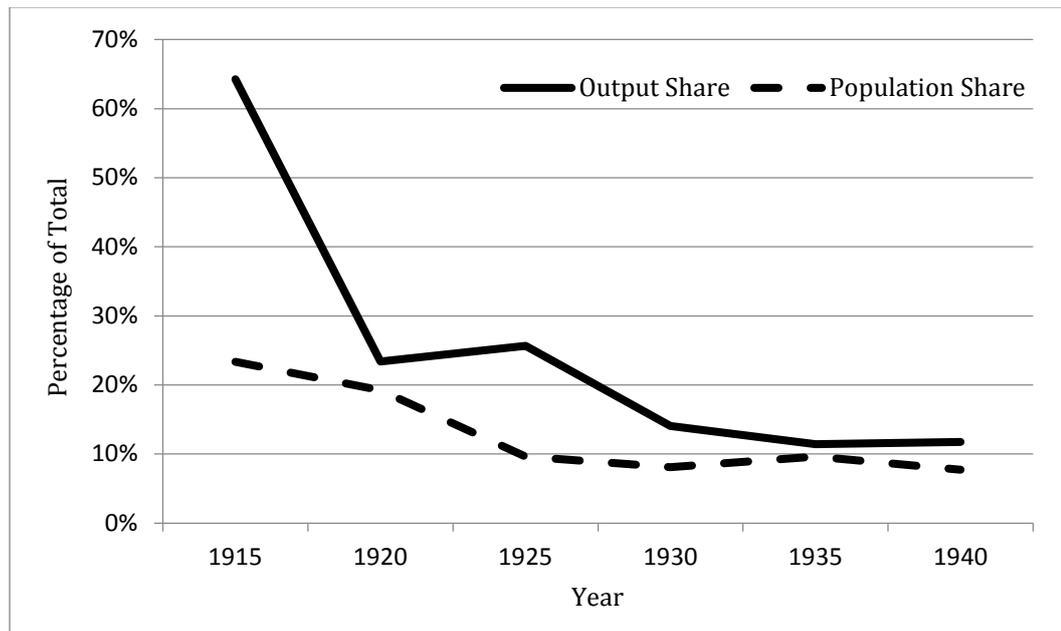
There is no doubt that the fisheries were the pillar of Karafuto’s economy both before, and in the early years of Japanese rule. Nonetheless, this centrality was not to last, as Karafuto’s economy expanded and diversified, seeing the manufacture of paper and pulp products emerge as the leading sector by the 1920s, and mining rapidly expanding in the 1930s (refer to chapter one). This diversification of Karafuto’s economy by the 1920s worked well to stabilize the colony’s population, which continued to grow, but with less violent fluctuation between the winter and summer populations, as can be seen in figures 5.2 and 5.3. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that the fishing industry had done

²⁷ Nakajima, K. (1934) *Karafuto no takushoku oyobi nōgyō ni tsuite*, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, p52

²⁸ *Ibid*

much to bring people to the colony in the crucial first decades of Japanese colonial rule, and furthermore had made a telling contribution to Karafuto's development and settlement. Moreover, even though the fishing industry's relative importance declined over time, as will become clear, it still continued to have significant impact on colonial development.

Figure 5.4 – The share of fishing in Karafuto's economic output by value and total household population



Source: KTS; Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto-chō ruinen tōkeihyō*

The most obvious direct impact that the fishing industry had on Karafuto's development can be seen in its share of industrial output and employment which are presented in figure 5.4. Unfortunately, accurate data on the economic output of the colony does not exist prior to 1915 – when fishing made up 64.3% of the total – however, we can be sure that before this date fishing's share was even higher. After 1915 the colonial economy was already in a process of diversification, and thus fishing entered a period of relative decline. Its share of total economic output by value in Karafuto fell to 25.7% in 1925, and fell further to 11.7% in 1940, having long been surpassed by the paper and pulp industry. Nonetheless, the share of the fishing sector appeared to stabilize in the late 1930s,

when it still made up a significant sector in its own right, at just over a tenth of the colony's economic output by value. In terms of employment the significance of fishing is incredibly difficult to assess. We know, for example, that the industry provided seasonal work for residents of the colony who normally worked in another occupation, as well as thousands of migratory labourers from mainland Japan. However, the actual number of those who worked in fishing in this way is unknown, and because this group does not represent a population of year-round fishing households, it went unrecorded in the statistics produced by the colonial administration which only list a household's 'main' occupation. Therefore, due to the prevalence of seasonal employment in fishing the industry's real impact on employment cannot be accurately identified.

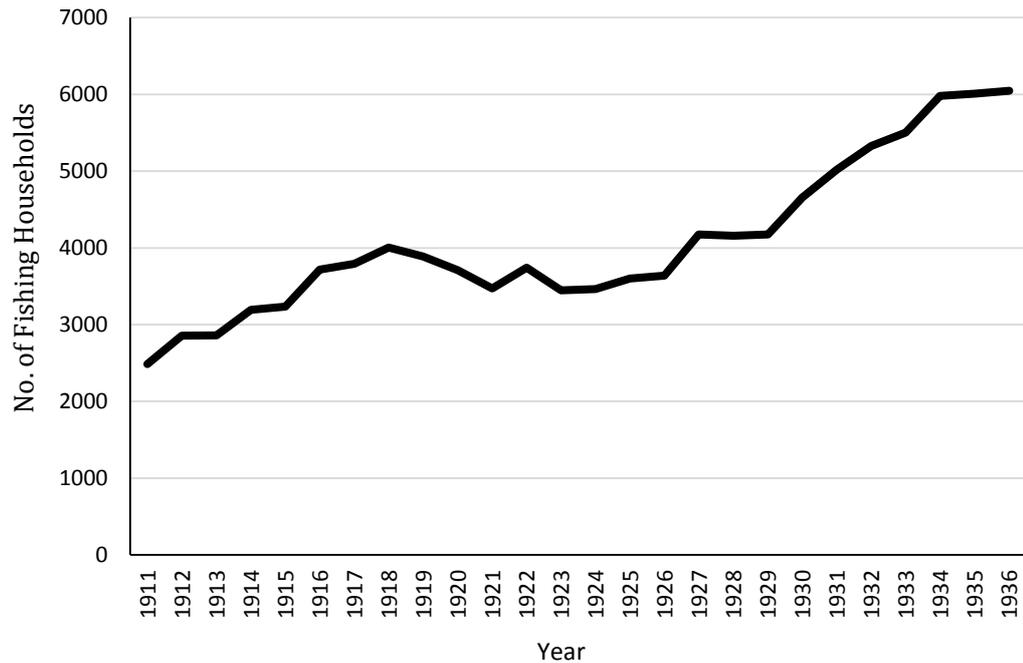
In the previous chapter I stressed the dependence of agricultural households on non-agricultural side activities, and prominent among those activities was work at the fisheries. The *KNNS* occasionally carried articles on this phenomenon, and in one report in 1915 the journalist noted that 'the villages have emptied, with at least a third and at most half of the farming population absent, having left the village for the herring fisheries by April 23.' The report noted that households left one or two family members behind in the village, so as to tend to the farm and home, and in this journalist's view 'as planting has been completed, work at the herring fishery is not really an obstacle to farming activities'.²⁹ In other reports it appears that forestry workers also took advantage of the employment opportunities during the herring season, with one report running the headline 'To the fisheries! To the popular fisheries! Lumberjacks and farmers are leaving the farm villages and forests'.³⁰ Data on the percentage of non-fishing households who engaged seasonally in fishing is non-existent. Nonetheless, the recollections of former settlers, such as those from the farming village of Konotoro mentioned in the previous chapter, and articles in the colonial press,

²⁹ *KNNS* 1915-4-30

³⁰ *KNNS* 1916-5-5

make clear that fishing provided vital seasonal employment opportunities, which helped settler families maintain a livelihood in the colony. Whilst official statistics almost certainly understate the employment impact of the fishing industry, they do at least indicate the number of people employed in fishing as a year-round occupation.

Figure 5.5 – No. of fishing households in Karafuto 1911-36



Source: as in figure 5.4

The data in figure 5.4 indicate that in 1915, a total of 23.4% of Karafuto's households listed fishing as their principal occupation, and this number declined thereafter, standing at 9.6% in 1925, and 7.7% in 1940. Yet this decline in the share of the colonial population which listed fishing as its principal occupation was no more than a relative one, and as is shown in figure 5.5, the actual number of full-time fishing households resident in the colony continued to expand. In 1911, 2,487 full-time fishing households resided in the colony, and this number more than doubled before the second Sino-Japanese war, reaching 6,048 in 1936. Figure 5.5 shows that there had been a degree of fluctuation in the fishing population in the early to mid-1920s when the catch was unusually poor. Nevertheless, in contrast to the expectations of the

colonial regime these poor years were not accompanied by a mass exodus of fishing families from the colony. Indeed, as the catch normalized, the fishing population soon recovered to its previous levels, and thereafter continued to expand. Fishing households were able to recover from setbacks, displaying that, even without any official encouragement, settlement based on fishing held promise. There would of course be ecological limits on the number of people who could make their livelihood from fishing in Karafuto, but the evidence suggests that this limit had not yet been reached by the time Japan approached total war.

When assessing the full contribution of the fisheries to Karafuto's economy it is important to look beyond the simple activity of catching fish. The catch of the fisheries added much value to the economy and created jobs, but so too did a number of activities related to the processing of that catch. Rows of thousands of cod, trout, herring, salmon, and other marine products, hung up to dry on racks over fields and open spaces, was a common sight – and smell – in Karafuto's coastal settlements. So too was the boiling of herring to make herring meal fertilizer (*nishin-kasu*) for export to the mainland. Another important component of the economy and source of employment were the numerous canneries in Karafuto which processed salmon, crab, and roe, as well as factories that produced various marine products, including *kanten* (agar), and fish oil.

Detailed employment data for Karafuto is a rarity; however, we can get some indication of the importance of industries with strong linkages to fishing as a source of employment from a 1935 survey of factories in Karafuto. The survey defined factories as processing and manufacturing plants which employed five or more workers, and identified 226 establishments in Karafuto which met this criteria in 1935.³¹ The mid-1930s is an appropriate time to examine the employment impact of fishing related industries, because by this time the fishing industry had already passed through relative decline. Nonetheless, even as the colony entered the final decade of Japanese colonial rule the

³¹ Karafuto-chō (1935) *Kōjō meibō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, pp3-15

impact of fishing and related industries on employment in the wider economy remained considerable. There were a total of 795 people working in seventeen canning factories, and 298 working in seven other marine product processing factories in 1935. Some of these factories had been operating since 1908, yet even if the sector had some of the oldest plants in the colony; this was equally an industry in expansion, with the survey reporting that three factories had also been established in the year of the survey itself. The largest of these factories had 153 employees;³² however, in reality much of the catch of fishermen in Karafuto was not processed in factories at all, and was thus not covered in the survey. Instead, a large portion of the catch was processed as soon as it was brought ashore by a fishing household's family members, and the hands they employed. Such an arrangement was especially common for the production of two of the more lucrative Karafuto products, herring meal and dried fish products – see images 5.2 and 5.3 – and thus the employment impact of marine product processing was greater than the 1935 factory survey suggests.

Image 5.2 – Drying of herring catch for in a fishing hamlet near Honto



Source: Karafuto-chō (1936) *Karafuto shashin-chō*, Karafuto-chō,
Toyohara, p57

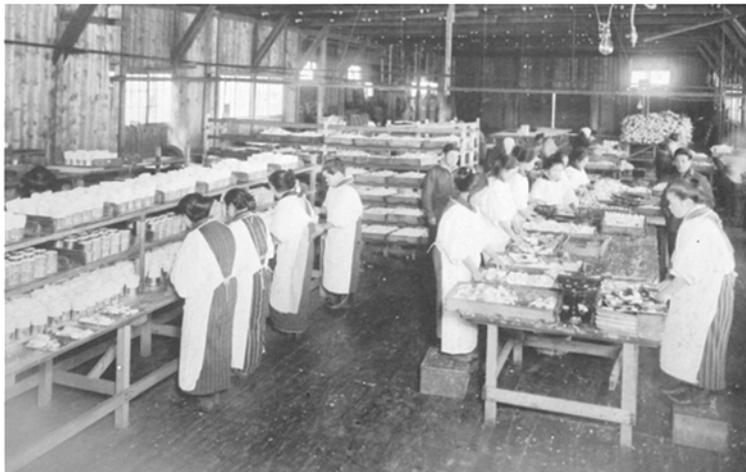
³² *Ibid* pp3-15

Image 5.3 – Boiling of herring to make herring meal (*nishin-kasu*) which was used as a fertilizer



Source: Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto shashin-chō*, p82

Image 5.4 – A Karafuto canning factory - sorting crab meat (above) sealing the cans (below)



Source: Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto shashin-chō*, pp60-61

The manufacturers of marine products were not the most numerous type of factory in Karafuto, nor were they the largest employers. This mantle was held by factories which were related to forestry products. According to the factory survey, in 1935 there were nine paper and pulp factories, employing a total of 4,065, and sixty eight wood materials factories, where 478 individuals found their work. The largest among these operators was the paper and pulp manufacturing plant at Ochiai, which employed 791 – almost the same number as the total for all of Karafuto’s canneries combined.³³ Whilst factories linked with either fishing or forestry were large employers, those with linkages to Karafuto’s agricultural sector, on the other hand, were relatively insignificant. There were, of course, sake and soy sauce brewers in the colony, but these utilized imported rice and soy, meaning that they were unconnected to Karafuto’s agriculture. Indeed, in 1935, there were only seventeen factories related to the processing of Karafuto’s agricultural produce, and put together they employed no more than 124 workers. Moreover, all of these factories were starch/wheat paste processing plants of recent origin, having all been built between 1932 and 1935, and so this was an industry in its infancy.³⁴ Of course, there were some instances of small-scale plants in agricultural product processing – notably dairy – that were not covered by the survey because they employed fewer than five workers. Yet overall, the employment impact appears to have been negligible, and the agricultural product processing sector could not boast the track record or scale of marine product processing in providing employment opportunities over time.

The fishing and marine products industries also made an indirect contribution by raising demand in the wider economy. This was particularly the case for industries which supplied goods and services to fishing operators, including manufacturers and repairmen of fishing boats, nets, and other equipment. But the same could be said for the inns,

³³ *Ibid* p6

³⁴ *Ibid* pp14-15

restaurants, brothels, and bars, which housed and served the migratory labourers during the fishing season. The testimonies of former settlers and the *KNNS* are full of references to the excitement and rush of activity that greeted the large numbers of incoming migratory fishing labourers. One article that appeared in the *KNNS* in April 1915 described such a scene, observing that 'Ōdomari was abuzz with three thousand migratory labourers to be catered for. A number of inns, restaurants and drinking establishments have sprung up almost overnight.³⁵ During the fishing season, year-round residents of the coastal settlements were able to profit from the sudden increase in the settlement's population, offering up spare rooms, barns and sheds as lodgings for migratory labourers in exchange for a fee. Others profited by opening up makeshift bars and restaurants during the fishing season, or selling boxed lunches to migratory labourers, who may have come to Karafuto to save money, but in the meantime had more immediate needs.

Another aspect of the contribution of the fishing industry to the colony's development was its contribution to the coffers of the colonial administration. In the early colonial period fees for fishing licenses made up the single most important source of revenue for the colonial administration. In 1907, the first year in which Karafuto's budget was independently calculated – previously it was covered in the military budget – as much as 39.1% of total revenue came from fishing licenses alone. Moreover, if the subsidy from the central government in Tokyo is removed from the colonial administration's revenue sources, then the share of fishing licenses in total receipts rises to 62.9%.³⁶ In the first decade of Karafuto's independent budget – i.e. 1907-1916 – the direct taxation of fishing operations was the single largest source of revenue, accounting for approximately 40% of all non-subsidized revenue.³⁷ It is therefore no exaggeration to claim that revenue from fishing licenses was

³⁵ *KNNS* 1915-4-22

³⁶ Hirai, K. (1997) *Nihon shokuminchi zaiseishi kenkyū*, Mineruva shobō, Tokyo pp182-183

³⁷ Hirai, K. (1994) 'Karafuto shokuminchi zaisei no seiritsu: nichiro sengō – daiichiji taisenki', *Keizaigaku kenkyū* 43/4, calculated from p114

providing the finances which underwrote a number of the colonial administration's infrastructural development projects in Karafuto's first decade as a Japanese colony.

Apart from the direct taxation of the fishing industry, there was additional revenue gained from those engaged in fishing through household taxes, business taxes, and also through the use of government owned railways. After 1916, direct taxes on fishing ceased to be the largest source of revenue, as revenue generated from forestland leases and felling licenses took up this position. Nonetheless, taxation of fishing operations continued to be an important revenue source, and still exceeded revenue gained from the taxation of agriculture. The amount of revenue raised from the taxation of agricultural land, for example, was marginal, and increased from as little as ¥7,000 in 1923, to a total of ¥11,000 in 1940. This revenue source was far outstripped by that gained from fishing licenses, which increased from ¥185,000 to ¥256,000 over the same period.³⁸ The role of fishing in the development of the colonial economy in Karafuto was varied, and therefore it is difficult to assess the enormity of its impact, but that its impact was highly significant is beyond doubt. Fishing provided a major source of revenue for the colonial administration, created employment for residents – both fishing and non-fishing households alike – and added much value to the economy at large.

5.5 Migratory labour in Karafuto's fishing industry

Until this point, I have made much reference to the importance of the influx of large numbers of migratory labourers to the operation of Karafuto's fisheries. In this section I will attempt to give a sense of the scale of this migratory labour market, emphasising that fishing brought in large numbers of people to the colony throughout the colonial period. Moreover, whilst it is true that the majority of migratory labourers returned to Japan each year when the fishing season ended, this is not to say that the experience of migratory labour did not feed into settlement.

³⁸ Hirai. *Nihon shokuminchi zaiseishi kenkyū*, pp210-211

In the sections that follow, the role of migratory labour in creating a settled population in the colony is elucidated with reference to the experiences of former migratory labourers, and evidence from a survey of the fishing economy conducted by the colonial administration. It is found that the migratory labour experience did more than simply bring people to the colony temporarily; it also provided an indirect means to colonial settlement. Migratory labour networks served to maintain migration channels and connections between Karafuto and local areas in northern Japan. These networks spread information on conditions in the colony throughout northern Japan, and helped familiarize potential settlers with life in Karafuto, helping them establish connections and reduce the psychological barriers to eventual relocation.

What was the scale of the migratory labour market for Karafuto fisheries? The short answer is that we do not know, even if we can gauge the impact it had on Karafuto's summer and winter populations – as seen in figures 5.2 and 5.3. No accurate data was collected on a consistent basis in the colonial period that incorporated all aspects of the market. Additionally, most data that is available carries the problem that it includes only those migratory labourers who were coming in from mainland Japan, and as a result fails to account for residents of the colony who spent part of the year working as migratory fishing labour. Moreover, some data sets include only those labourers who were recruited for pound trap fisheries via local fishing cooperatives, failing to capture those who were recruited by small-scale operators utilizing personal connections. These issues with data mean that all we are left with is a fragmentary picture, but it is one that still highlights the remarkable scale of the market for migratory fishing labour in Karafuto.

It is possible to get a sense of the scale of the market for migratory fishing labour, and its wider significance for the colonial economy, from the numerous reports in the *KNNS*. Especially in early spring the daily newspaper carried articles which announced the arrival of ships full of

migratory fishing labour, often referred to popularly as *yanshū*.³⁹ Whilst it was the herring season from spring to summer that attracted the largest numbers of *yanshū*, it was the cod season beginning in February that brought in the boatloads, which arrived in numbers that were sometimes upwards of 900 per ship.⁴⁰ A 1916 *KNNS* article reported that by mid-February that year, a total of just under 2,000 *yanshū* had already arrived in the colony for work in cod fishing, and that more were expected in the few days before operations began.⁴¹ Migratory fishing labourers for herring operations began arriving in late March to early April, generally at a rate of 500 at a time.⁴²

Another report in the *KNNS*, from 1916, lamented the difficulty that year in attracting migratory fishing labourers, due to the economic boom in mainland Japan during World War I. The competition for labour which the boom on the mainland entailed was, according to the journalist, forcing Karafuto operators to drive up already high wages, and he remarked that ‘in normal years around 18,000 come from mainland Japan to work in the herring season, as well as an additional 3,200 who work the cod season.’⁴³ These numbers indicate a substantial annual inflow of migratory labour in the 1910s, but this was by no means limited to the first decades of colonial rule. In 1930, it was found that ‘15,000 fishing labourers have come to the Aniwa bay area alone’ by the end of March, even though this was described as ‘a poor year for fishing’ by one journalist, and came at a time when fishing had already passed through a relative decline.⁴⁴ This was quite clearly a large market for migratory labour in fishing, but it was not one that was oversupplied with labour either. Indeed that same year, as some fishing operations bound for Kamchatka were cancelled, the 800 or so fishing labourers who were

³⁹ *Yanshū* (ヤン衆) was a term used to describe migratory fishermen throughout northern Japan. The term carried a slightly negative connotation, as some of these migratory labourers were associated with drunken brawling.

⁴⁰ *KNNS* 1915-2-12

⁴¹ *KNNS* 1916-2-16

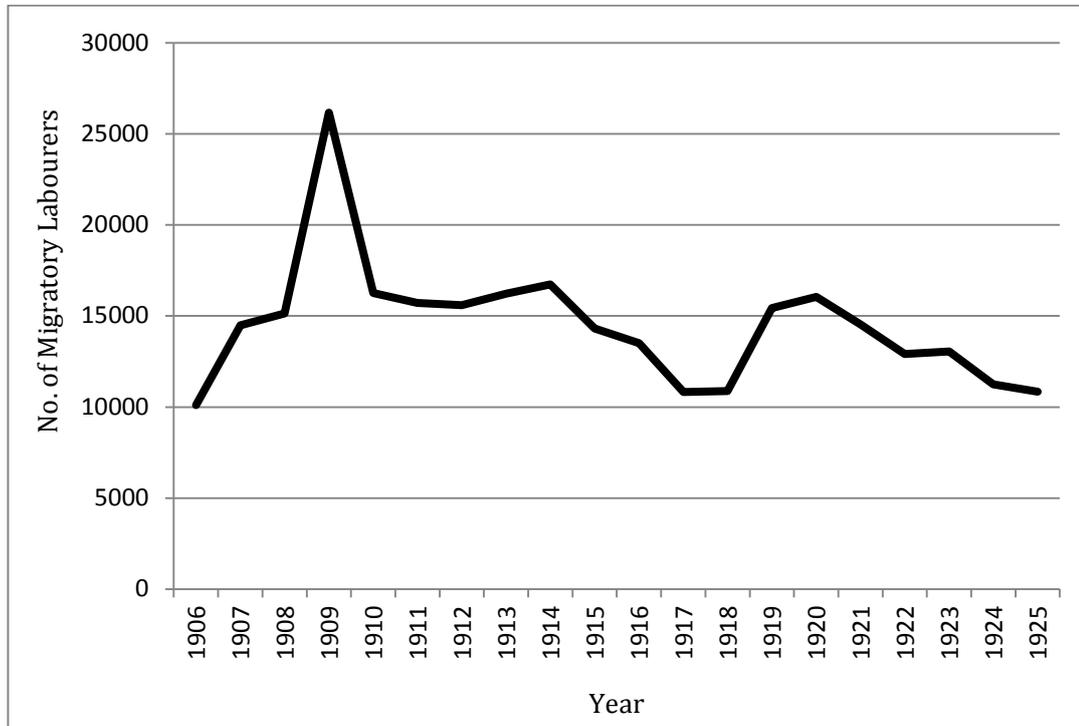
⁴² *KNNS* 1926-3-24, 1931-4-14

⁴³ *KNNS* 1916-2-2

⁴⁴ *KNNS* 1930-3-27

made unemployed by the cancellation were able to take up work in Karafuto instead.⁴⁵

Figure 5.6 - No. of migratory labourers working at pound-trap fisheries, 1906-1925



Source: KY (various years)

The most consistent series we have for Karafuto is presented in figure 5.6, which shows the number of labourers who came in to work pound trap fisheries. This data is limited in a number of ways, most notably in the fact that it does not include small-scale operators, who are known to have employed migratory labour, nor does it incorporate Karafuto residents who took up seasonal work at the pound trap fisheries. In terms of timescale as well the data is limited to the years 1906 to 1925, after which such data was no longer included in the yearbooks produced by the colonial administration. Nonetheless, the data does indicate that in most years between 1906 and 1925, there was an influx of between ten and twenty thousand migratory labourers destined for work at the pound

⁴⁵ *KNNS* 1930-3-19

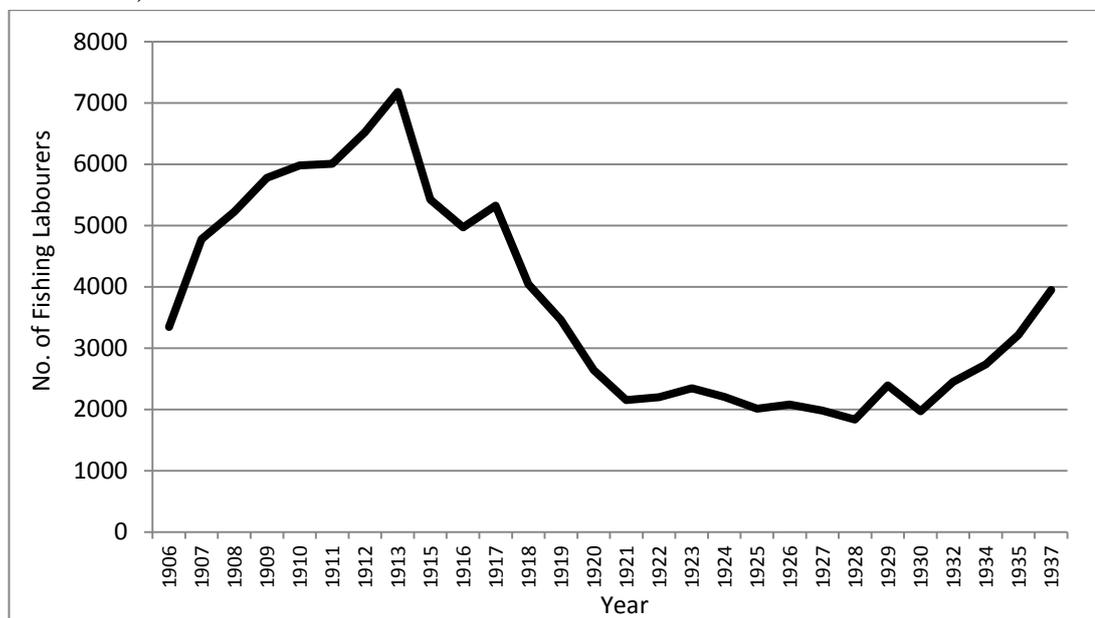
trap fisheries. The only year which sat outside of this range was 1909, which saw as many as 26,165 arrive in Karafuto for seasonal employment in a pound trap fishery. In addition to this data the central government of Japan occasionally conducted relatively comprehensive investigations into the migratory labour phenomenon, however, these investigations only partially included Japan's colonies, if at all. The survey which most fully incorporated data on Karafuto was that from 1924, but even this was clearly an underestimate of the actual numbers involved. The survey suggested that 8,737 individuals – 93% of whom were male – participated in migratory labour in Karafuto's fishing industry, when we know that at least 11,238 worked at the pound trap fisheries alone. In spite of this clear underestimation, the national survey still suggests that Karafuto was the second most important migratory labour destination for fishing in the entire Japanese empire, behind only Hokkaido, and as such made up 11.4% of the total market. This survey also indicated that fishing was an important component of the overall market for migratory labour, accounting for the employment of 76,678 out of a total of 785,204 migratory labourers who travelled for work outside of their prefecture of residence in 1924 – i.e. 9.8% of all migratory labour.⁴⁶

Aggregate data on the scale of migratory labour in Karafuto's fishing industry produced by either central government ministries in Tokyo, or the colonial administration in Toyohara, were inconsistent, incomplete and fragmentary, but they do at least provide a sense of the whole. To this overall picture we can add some local data which were produced in the regions that sent migratory labourers to places like Karafuto. In this regard, Aomori prefecture provides the most consistent source of data, and allows us to produce a continuous series from 1906 to 1937, which is presented in in figure 5.7. If the central government's migratory labour survey is accurate, then in most years Aomori was the second largest sender of migratory labourers to Karafuto – following

⁴⁶ Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku (1927) *Dekasegimono chōsa*, Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku, Tokyo, calculated from statistical table 1 & 4.5 (no pagination)

Hokkaido. According to Aomori prefecture's own statistical year books, 7,178 people from Aomori travelled to Karafuto for work in the fisheries in 1913 – the peak year. In most years this number exceeded 2,000, and only briefly in 1928 and 1930 did it fall marginally below this level. Nonetheless, the 1910s saw numbers usually exceeding 4,000, and the 1920s saw a significant drop, with numbers hovering around 2,000 a year. This was most likely a result of the lower catch in these years, but also there was a substitution of migratory labour with local labour at Karafuto fisheries as the population grew in the colony. As the catch picked up in Karafuto we see that the number of migratory labourers arriving from Aomori responded, but could not regain former levels. The increase in migratory labourers from Aomori in the 1930s, may also have been a result of the poor economic conditions in northern Japan during the Great Depression,⁴⁷ however, it is also notable that the numbers continued to rise after the worst effects of the downturn had passed.

Figure 5.7 - No. migratory fishing labourers from Aomori at Karafuto fisheries, 1906-1937



Source: Aomori-ken (various years) *Aomori tōkeisho*, Aomori-ken, Hirosaki

⁴⁷ Hane, M. (1982) *Peasants, rebels, & outcastes: the underside of modern Japan*, Pantheon, New York

Aomori was a very important source of fishing labour for Karafuto, but there were others, especially in the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions. For these regions there is only fragmentary evidence of the number of migratory fishing labourers bound for Karafuto, such as a reference to 2,106 individuals travelling to Karafuto fisheries from Toyama in 1932.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, the largest sender of migratory labour to Karafuto was neighbouring Hokkaido, but here again we only have fragmentary evidence of the actual numbers involved. According to Ikeda, who researched the migratory labour phenomenon in Hokkaido extensively, a total of 9,540 fishing labourers from Hokkaido went to work in Karafuto's fisheries on a seasonal basis in 1937.⁴⁹ That people travelled from Hokkaido to Karafuto for work in fisheries, when Hokkaido itself was the largest source of such employment opportunities in all of Japan, is testament to the appeal of Karafuto as a destination for migratory fishing labour. One Hokkaido-based union of fishing labourers explained that Karafuto was an attractive destination for migratory labourers as it had the 'same atmosphere as the mainland [*naichi*] and most decisively it offered high wages.'⁵⁰

The wage on offer in Karafuto for fishing labourers was competitive when compared with other destinations. According to data produced by a central government organization in 1928, on average fishing labourers earned ¥103 in Karafuto, ¥99 in Kamchatka, and ¥59 in Hokkaido over the course of a fishing season.⁵¹ Indeed, by the late 1930s migratory fishing labourers in Karafuto were able to make between ¥300 and ¥400 out of a three month fishing season. This total was composed of upwards of ¥180 paid in the form of wages, which came on top of a ¥150 advance payment, received before the migratory labourer

⁴⁸ Toyama-ken tōkei kyōkai (1934) *Tōkei shoran*, Toyama-ken tōkei kyōkai, Toyama, pp57-58

⁴⁹ Ikeda, Y. (1938) 'Dekasegi igi narabi ni sono shakai teki gyōsō: toku ni Hokkaidō ni okeru jūjitsu wo shiryō toshite', *Nihon shakai gakkai nenpō* 6, p16

⁵⁰ Hokkaidō dekasegi rōmusha hogo kumiai rengōkai (1941) *Hokkaidō gyogyō rōmu jijō*, Hokkaidō dekasegi rōmusha hogo kumiai rengōkai Sapporo, p16

⁵¹ Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku (1929) *Dekasegi gyofu kyōkyū kumiai chōsa*, Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku, pp9-10

departed for Karafuto.⁵² Wage payments were determined by a combination of a basic daily wage rate and a form of commission, known as the *buai* system. In this system, fishing labourers gained a share of the profit from a catch – usually amounting to a 30% share – and this served to incentivize workers to maximize the catch. In some seasons there were different arrangements for wage payment, such as during the winter cod season when a fishing labourer took home approximately ¥150 – which was a 10% profit share – on top of their advance payment. ‘Wages’ from such a season would in effect equal around ¥2.50 per day.⁵³

5.6 Migratory labour and settlement

Yoshimatsu Miyoko was a former resident of Ōdomari, where her father operated a fishery. Whilst she herself was born in Ōdomari, her father had first come to Karafuto in the years before it became a Japanese colony. He was not a migratory fisherman, and instead came in the employ of the foreign ministry, working as a clerk in the Japanese consulate at Korsakov. When the island passed to Japanese hands, Yoshimatsu’s father quit his white collar government post, and rather than leave Karafuto he became a fishery operator in the newly established colony, importing labour from Toyama and Aomori in the peak season. Yoshimatsu states that her father made the decision to leave his white collar profession in order to become a fisherman simply because he was drawn to the ‘rich herring catch, and the fortune to be made’ fishing in Karafuto.⁵⁴ Yet Yoshimatsu’s father was an exception among Karafuto fishermen, not because he was drawn to the rich catch in Karafuto, but because his first encounter with Karafuto was not through the fisheries, even though this was what made him stay.

For most people who came to the colony fishing was their first point of contact, and this much is clear when comparing the number of

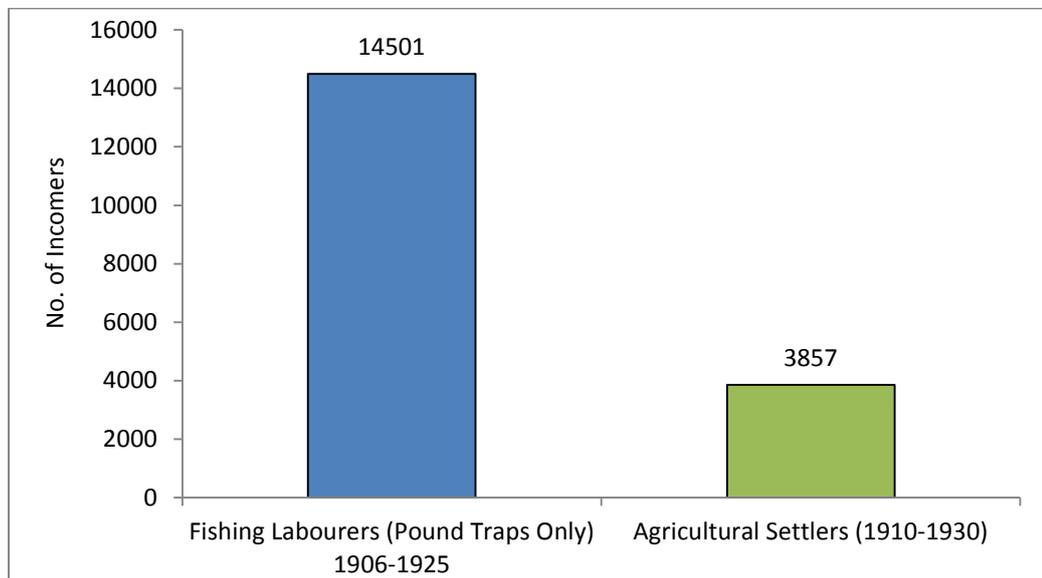
⁵² Hokkaidō dekasegi rōmusha hogo kumiai rengōkai. *Hokkaidō gyogyō rōmu jijō*, p15

⁵³ *Ibid*

⁵⁴ Nankei-chō omoide no bunshō henshū shūiinkai (1987) *Kaisō nankei-chō*, Nankei-kai nankei shōgakkō dōsōkai, Tokyo, p142-143

people who came to the colony as migratory labourers at pound traps with those who came as agricultural settlers. Figure 5.8 presents this comparison in the form of annual averages for the years for which we have data, i.e. 1906 to 1925 for migratory labour bound for work at Karafuto pound traps, and 1910 to 1930 for agricultural settlers. The data indicates that on average a total of 14,501 migratory labourers came to the colony to work in pound trap fisheries each year. When making the comparison, however, it must be remembered that this number understates the total of those who came for fishing work as it is limited to pound trap fisheries, and thus does not include the recruits of small-scale operators who also used migratory labour. Nonetheless, despite this important caveat, the 14,501 still far exceeds the annual average of 3,857 individuals who came to the colony as agricultural settlers during the peak years of the agricultural settlement programme.

Figure 5.8 – Annual average number of incomers to Karafuto via pound-trap fisheries and the agricultural settlement programme



Source: calculated from KY; Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto-chō ruinen tōkeihyō*

The number of migratory fishermen coming in each year far exceeded the equivalent for agricultural settlers. However, surely in terms of settlement this did not matter, as migratory fishermen came

with the intention of returning and agricultural settlers in the hope of establishing a new life in the colony. In this section I will argue that in fact it did matter, as a considerable number of migratory labourers, whatever their initial intentions, were known to eventually settle in the colony. In the previous chapter it was shown that a large percentage of agricultural settlers were not able to settle as farmers in the long run. Many of these families who failed to make it as farmers in Karafuto would have returned to mainland Japan, bringing with them stories of their difficulties in Karafuto, which in turn would serve to discourage others to venture north. In contrast, migratory labourers who visited Karafuto for seasonal employment would often return to their home villages having made considerable money, and once there they would spread information on conditions and work opportunities in the colony. Many of these migratory labourers would repeat the cycle each year and in doing so became acclimatized to life in the colony, often leading into permanent relocation.

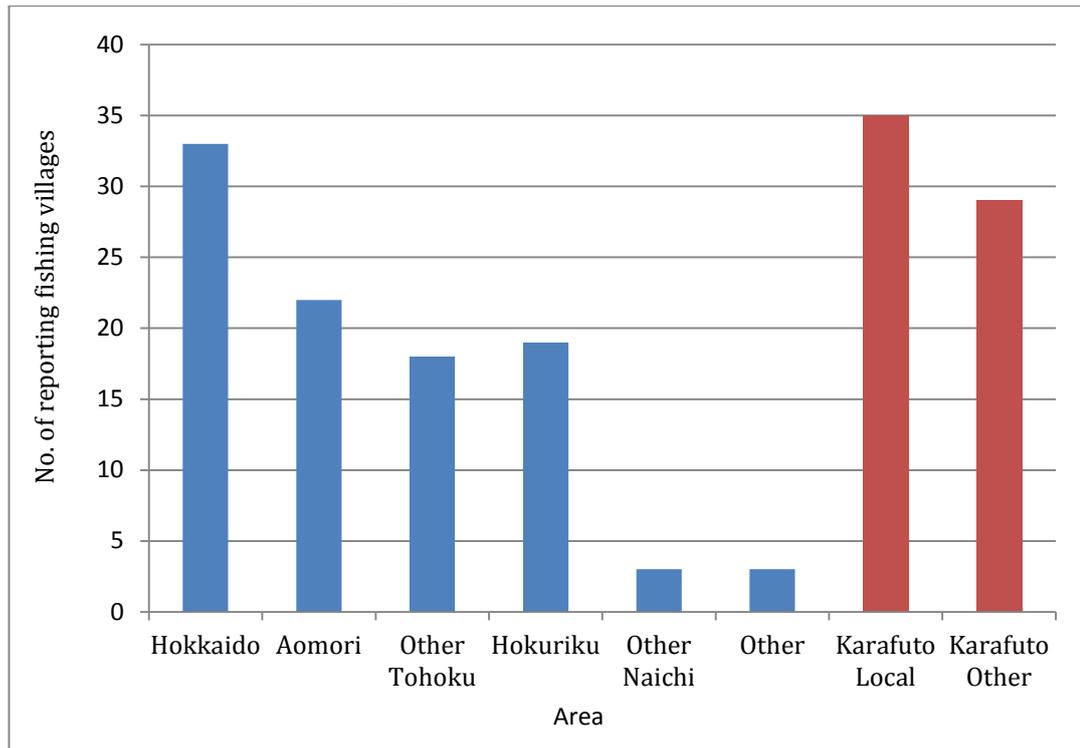
Unfortunately, very little research has examined the migratory labour market in Karafuto, with the notable exception being an article by Miki Masafumi, who examined the migratory labour of skilled construction workers from Iwate prefecture. This work focused on the first few years of the colonial administration, and whilst it is revealing in a number of ways, the fact is that only approximately 3% of migratory labourers from Iwate went to Karafuto in the occupations Miki examined – whilst fishing made up 87%.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, in his research Miki highlights that it is incorrect to examine the colony of Karafuto from the perspective of settlement only, as the migratory labour market was such an important part of Karafuto's socio-economic life.⁵⁶ I sympathize with this view, and in this section I highlight that settlement and migratory labour often overlapped, even if they were viewed as polar opposites.

⁵⁵ Calculated from data presented in: Miki, M. (2008) 'Meiji makki Iwate-ken kara no Karafuto dekasegi – kenchiku ginō shūdan no tanki kaikikei tokō no bunseki wo chūshin ni', in Araragi, S. (ed) *Nihon teikoku o meguru jinkō idō no kokusai shakaigaku*, Funi shuppan, Tokyo, p411

⁵⁶ *Ibid* p428

Migratory labour served to keep Karafuto connected to areas from which settlers came, and provided an opportunity for potential settlers to first reach Karafuto and then familiarize themselves with conditions in the colony.

Figure 5.9 – Areas of recruitment of seasonal fishing labour among forty one Karafuto fishing villages, 1923-24

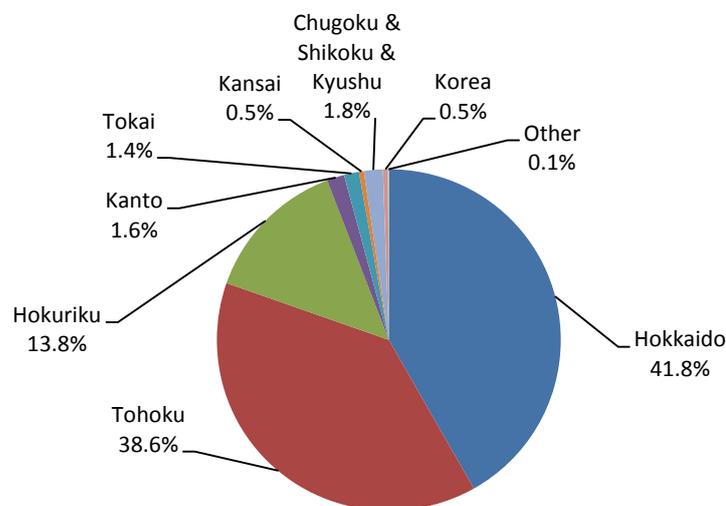


Note: ‘Karafuto local’ refers to labour recruited in the same district as the village, ‘Karafuto other’ refers to labour recruited in Karafuto but from another district, ‘Other Tohoku’ refers to Akita, Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima and Yamagata prefectures, ‘Other naichi’ refers to all of mainland Japan excluding Hokkaido, Hokuriku and Tohoku, ‘Other’ refers to other parts of the Japanese empire, in this case mostly Korea.
Source: Compiled from Karafuto-chō (1925) *Karafuto gyoson keizai chōsa*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

The degree of connectedness of Karafuto fishing villages is difficult to assess over time, however, a survey into economic conditions in Karafuto fisheries conducted by the colonial administration during 1923 and 1924 offers us a glimpse. The survey contains information on the areas from which fishing labour was recruited for the fishing operators in

forty one of Karafuto's fishing villages. This information is reproduced in figure 5.9, and provides a rare insight into the degree to which Karafuto fishing villages maintained connections with various locations, specifically for the purpose of obtaining labour for the fishing season. Figure 5.9 shows that thirty five out of the forty one fishing villages in Karafuto for which we have information were providing seasonal employment to residents within the same district, and twenty nine employed Karafuto residents from another part of the colony. Furthermore, every one of the forty one fishing villages had some connections outside of Karafuto, which came via the recruitment and employment of migratory labour. Amongst these fishing villages, 80% had such connections with Hokkaido, 54% with Aomori, 44% with other parts of Tohoku, and 46% with Hokuriku. Yet only three out of the forty one villages reported having any connections via the migratory labour market with areas outside of Japan's northeast and central Japan sea coast – i.e. beyond Hokkaido, Tohoku, and Hokuriku. Although the typical Karafuto fishing village was not connected with the southern prefectures of Japan, it was more often than not connected with the areas from which Karafuto drew the vast majority of its settlers.

Figure 5.10 - Home prefectures (by *honseki*) of fishing families in the 1923-24 economic survey of Karafuto fishing villages



Source: as in figure 5.9

That these fishing villages held such connections with Hokkaido, Tohoku and Hokuriku was not particularly surprising, as Karafuto's fishing households were either first or second generation settlers, and thus they would be expected to maintain a degree of connection with their 'hometown' on the mainland. Figure 5.10 presents the home prefectures of the fishing families contained in 1923-24 survey, and confirms that the areas from which fishing settlers were drawn, were also the areas from which migratory labourers came. The survey indicates that in combination Hokkaido and the prefectures that make up Tohoku and Hokuriku made up 94.9% of the home prefectures of Karafuto's fishing families, whilst these same prefectures accounted for the location of the family register of 87% of Karafuto's total population in 1925, indicating that the fishing villages were connected by ties of native place to the areas from which Karafuto's residents were being drawn. For fishing operators who required a steady source of migratory labour, making use of these native place connections was just as much a practical as a sentimental arrangement. Native place ties and regular contact with a recruiting area incentivized contract fulfillment on both sides of exchange, as both employer and employee would be less likely to cheat people they knew, or people who know where to find them. As fishing operators required a steady source of labour each year, and migratory labourers a steady source of work, this was a repeat transaction and as a result could be enforced via a reputation mechanism. On the one hand, if operators broke the terms of contracts – be it written or verbal – they would have suffered a loss of reputation, running the risk of losing their labour supply, and may have faced ostracism in their native place. On the other hand migratory labourers breaking their contracts, or failing to show up at the worksite having received a wage advance, would not have got away with it lightly. The fishing operator would have been able to follow up on the offending labourer, and potentially recoup any loss because local connections in their hometown enabled them to do so. In addition, the fishing operator may have been able to get the village to sanction the

offending party, because not doing so could endanger an important source of income for a number of other villagers. In this way, ties of native place helped enforce contracts by firming up the importance of reputation to the transaction, and providing a more enforceable punishment mechanism.

In the case that labour recruited from the native place of operators did not reach the required number, operators could advertise in neighboring villages. It is known that local newspapers in Aomori prefecture, for example, often carried advertisements seeking fishing labourers for a month to three months at a time, and reporting the times and locations for ships departing for Hokkaido and Karafuto.⁵⁷ Alternatively, migratory fishing labour was recruited via local fishing cooperatives or, as was often the case at larger pound trap operators, through recruitment agencies based in Hokkaido – usually at Hakodate or Otaru – which utilized further contacts of native place via individual recruiting agents. The 1923-24 survey into the economic conditions of fishing villages in Karafuto only provides us with a picture of the situation in the mid-1920s, but there is evidence to suggest these connections persisted. Indeed, according to a Hokkaido labour organization for migratory labourers, in 1940 ‘the districts around Maoka, Honto, and Tomarioru have almost twenty thousand fishing families recruiting labourers, mostly from Hokkaido, Aomori, Akita, Niigata etc... with strong local connections, and high wages on offer, about 90% of the vacancies are filled.’⁵⁸ This is a testament to the strength of connections between Karafuto fishing villages and northern Japan, because in 1940 when Japan’s war was intensifying and creating a labour shortage – particularly of males who made up the overwhelming majority of fishing labourers – filling 90% of vacancies was no mean feat.

⁵⁷ Yamashita, Y. Sakamichi, S. & Sugiyama, Y. (eds.) (2008) *Tsugaru kindaika no dainamizumu*, Ochanomizu shobō, Tokyo p345

⁵⁸ Hokkaidō dekasegi rōmusha hogo kumiai rengōkai. *Hokkaidō gyogyō rōmu jijō*, p11

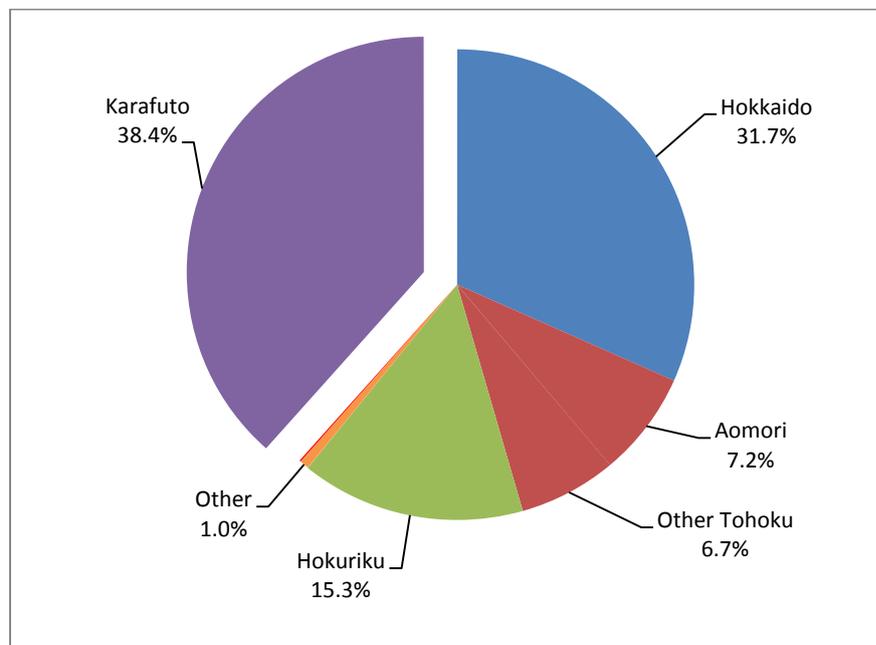
That strong and persistent connections based on migratory labour networks existed between Karafuto's fishing villages, and the main areas of Japan from which Karafuto derived its resident population, suggests a relationship between migratory labour and settlement. Nevertheless, if this relationship was not coincidental then the question remains, how could seasonal/migratory labour lead to permanent settlement? One important part of this process has been outlined already, namely the source of supplemental income migratory labour provided for non-fishing households, and the wider impact that it had on the colonial economy. The 1923-24 survey into the economic conditions of fishing villages in Karafuto contained budget information for ninety nine fishing households across the colony, and among these households it was found that eighty one employed non-family fishing labour in their fishing operations. This number seems remarkable when considering that the survey was limited to relatively small-scale operators. Moreover, across the ninety nine households an average of ¥1,247.73 was spent on hired labour per household, making up 25.4% of the average fishing family's total expenditure – even including household related expenditure – and in the process creating many jobs.⁵⁹

The fact that many of these jobs went to non-residents was lamented by some as a drain on the local economy, however there is evidence to suggest that by the 1920s Karafuto fishing families also employed a large number of residents. The colonial administration's survey into the economic conditions in Karafuto's fishing villages contained information on the sources of non-family labour employed in eighteen different fishing villages, and is presented in figure 5.11. These data show that by 1923-24, Karafuto itself had become the most important source of seasonal labour for fishing operators in the colony's fishing villages, providing 38.4% of the total non-family labour force. Whether conducted utilizing pound traps or gill nets, fishing demanded a

⁵⁹ Data calculated from information in: Karafuto-chō (1925) *Karafuto gyoson keizai chōsa*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

sudden and large influx of labour to meet the concentrated rush of activity that came with the fishing season. The seasonally concentrated demand for labour that came with the fishing season provided lucrative employment opportunities for non-fishing families resident in the colony, helping these families to settle and maintain themselves. This work provided additional income in the crucial first years after relocation, and thereafter provided a welcome supplementary income to a family's main occupation, be it commerce or farming etc.

Figure 5.11 - Source of seasonal fishing labour in eighteen Karafuto fishing villages, 1923-24



Source: as in figure 5.9

Another aspect of how migratory labour was linked with permanent settlement involves the thousands of labourers that fishing brought to Karafuto each year. Contemporary commentators viewed these migratory labourers as highly unlikely to settle in the colony. A report from a Hokkaido based labour association, for example, noted that 'hundreds of thousands of migratory fishermen have come into Karafuto over the years, but so few of them settle or stay on until the end of the year... most return home, or move on to fisheries in Kamchatka and

elsewhere.’⁶⁰ Even though we have no way of knowing the exact numbers of migratory labourers who stayed on after the fishing season, it seems more than likely that the report was correct in suggesting that the majority returned each year. Nonetheless, not *everyone* who visited Karafuto had to stay for migratory networks to contribute to settlement. Indeed, evidence from the life stories of those who came to the colony as migratory labourers in fishing suggests that migratory labour could provide a vehicle to settlement.

In the 1970s two local historians named Nozoe Kenji and Tamura Kenichi recorded the testimonies of a large number of former migratory labourers from Akita prefecture, located on the west coast of the Tohoku region. Among the testimonies they collected were seven from former migratory labourers who worked at fisheries in Karafuto. Nozoe and Tamura collected the testimonies for publication in a local history series that stressed ‘history from below,’ and placed value on recording the actual life experiences, culture, and customs of local people. These authors had no intention to write a history of colonial settlement, and instead they aimed at recording the life experiences of Akita’s former migratory labourers – migratory labour having been a common phenomenon in Akita until recent decades. Nonetheless, despite the limited interest in narratives of colonial settlement, the seven testimonies, from former migratory labourers at Karafuto fisheries, provide plenty of evidence to suggest that migratory labour could provide a pathway into settlement. Indeed, five of the seven people interviewed were still resident in the colony at the end of World War Two in 1945, and certainly could be described as settled. Although there is no uniform pattern of settlement in their stories, it is clear that work in Karafuto’s fisheries provided an entry point, and in some cases the basis on which they settled in the colony.

⁶⁰ Hokkaidō dekasegi rōmusha hogo kumiai rengōkai. *Hokkaidō gyogyō rōmu jijō*, p12

Nakatsuka Genkichi⁶¹ was one of many young people from Akita who travelled to Japan's far north each year, so as to make money and supplement the family budget back home. In 1926, when he was aged nineteen, Nakatsuka already had a couple of seasons working herring fisheries in Hokkaido behind him, when his labour boss from the same area of Akita asked if he wanted to come to Karafuto. Hearing that the wages there were higher, Nakatsuka took up the offer and worked at a Karafuto fishery for a while before his attention turned to the paper and pulp factories. In this case too, Nakatsuka was attracted by rumours of higher wages, and he landed a job in the office attached to a paper and pulp factory owned by the Ōji company. Work in the office did not turn out to be as lucrative as Nakatsuka had hoped, but after gaining a driving license he was able to get another job there, this time as a chauffeur for the factory chief. Unfortunately for Nakatsuka, the factory chief did not stick around for Karafuto's harsh winter every year, and because of the heavy snowfall, even if he did there was no need for a chauffeur in the winter months. In order to make ends meet over the winter, Nakatsuka began to work for a construction company on a road building project. During his time on this project Nakatsuka met his wife, who was the daughter of a fisherman in one of the villages where the road building work was taking place. After getting married, Nakatsuka decided to settle down, and start up on his own as an independent fishing operator.

In order to obtain the right to fish in an area it was a requirement that the applicant had lived in the said location for at least two years. For a newcomer like Nakatsuka, such a requirement meant that he had no choice but to engage in poaching. Fishing under the moonlight he was able to catch enough to survive, but his poaching activities were still known to the local fishing cooperative. Nonetheless, the cooperative's members decided to 'tolerate' his poaching, because they knew he

⁶¹ Nozoe, K. & Tamura, K. (1978) *Karafuto no deka-segi - gyogyō-hen*, Akita shobō, Akita, pp33-50

intended to settle in the village. After the two year residence requirement had been met, Nakatsuka's fishing operations became legal, and he began employing four people – all invited from Akita – during the peak season. Nakatsuka's family was very much settled in Karafuto, when in 1938 he was conscripted by the military. By this time, Nakatsuka and his wife had four children, whom he left behind in Karafuto to the care of his wife's family, and with the family able to draw on the savings they held at the fishing cooperative. After two years of service at various battlefronts in China, Nakatsuka returned to Karafuto in 1940, beginning fishing operations all over again, until he was called up a second time in January, 1945. This time Nakatsuka would not return to Karafuto, as the Soviet invasion came before he was able to return. Instead, he was reunited with his family in Hokkaido – where they had been evacuated.

Just like Nakatsuka, Sugehara Yasuzō⁶² married the daughter of a fishing operator in Karafuto. His wife's family had moved there right after the Russo-Japanese war, when she was aged seven, settling in a place where there was hardly any other human activity in the area. Here they engaged in fishing, and like most fishing operators they employed migratory labour during the peak season. Sugehara's elder brother was one of the migratory labourers employed at their fishery, and he came back for the fishing season every year until one year this was interrupted by his military service. We do not know if Sugehara's family needed the money, or if they just did not want to let the Karafuto fishing operator down, but either way they sent Sugehara in his brother's place. Like his older brother, Sugehara also began to go every year, and eventually he ended up marrying the fishing operator's daughter, having got to know her family well. Initially, Sugehara's new wife returned with him to Akita, and he continued to work seasonally at his father-in-law's fishery every year. Nonetheless, his father-in-law was getting older, and struggled to run the fishery, so in 1928 Sugehara took over the management of the family fishery, bringing his wife back to Karafuto, along with their

⁶² *Ibid* pp51-66

newborn child, and they ‘somehow became settled in Karafuto.’⁶³

Sugehara employed a number of local residents to help during the peak season at his fishery, but this was never sufficient labour, so he also brought in people from Hokkaido and mainland Japan. Fishing was not their only economic activity, as they also grew potatoes on a small plot of land near their home. As a fishing family, they already produced their own herring meal fertilizer, which could be applied generously to their small plot of land, making it quite productive. During the war years in particular, when imported rice became scarce, the family were able to get by with the potatoes they grew, and of course the fish they caught. With Japan’s defeat in World War Two, and the Soviet invasion of the colony, the Sugehara family lost everything that they had built up in Karafuto. In his interview, Sugehara expressed a sense of bitterness towards his loss, stating that when he finally left Karafuto he felt as if he was ‘throwing away thirty years of his life.’⁶⁴

Not everyone who came to work Karafuto’s fisheries ended up staying there through marriage into a fishing operator’s family. Miura Rihichi,⁶⁵ for example, could be described as a bit of a wanderer. He was the son of the village head in his home town in Akita prefecture, but despite his family’s status like most young men in his village he left for migratory labour. However, unlike many of his peers who travelled north for work, Miura went to Tokyo at first, at a time when he had only just turned seventeen. In the capital, he drifted between a number of different jobs. He tried his hand at working in a brush factory, in food delivery, book binding, and working at a textile mill, but nothing really lasted. After a few years in Tokyo, Miura got the feeling that the capital was not for him, but rather than return to Akita, he wanted to try his luck somewhere else. He saw an advert for work aboard a canning ship bound for Kamchatka, and decided to give it a go. Nonetheless, Miura found the work aboard canning ships to be tough going, and the pay was not as

⁶³ *Ibid* pp54-55

⁶⁴ *Ibid* p55

⁶⁵ *Ibid* pp81-100

expected, so he decided not to return to Kamchatka for the next season.

Still determined to try his luck at something else, Miura became a construction worker in Hokkaido, however the financing of the project he worked on ran into trouble. After a few weeks Miura realized he was not being paid properly, leading him to quit the worksite, and turn his attention to Karafuto. Miura had previously heard that wages were good at Karafuto fisheries,⁶⁶ thus when an opportunity arose to work at a fishery whose operator hailed from the same neighborhood in Akita as Miura himself, he jumped at the chance. It was the mid-1920s when Miura began to work at a fishery near Shisuka – in Karafuto’s remote northeast – during the spring and summer, and as a lumberjack in the same area during winter. Miura stayed in the area around Shisuka for five years, continuing this cycle of switching between fishery and forestry work, before he decided to leave the colony. This decision came after Miura felt he had accumulated enough funds to return to Tokyo, and start up as an independent fish monger in the capital. Miura and his wife ran the business for about six years in Tokyo before deciding to return to Karafuto again. Even when running his fish monger business in Tokyo, Miura continued to keep up-to-date with prospects in the colony via regular correspondence with his acquaintances there. A friend in Shisuka told him that business was now really good in the area, as the town had expanded rapidly in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This friend of his was a marine products wholesaler, and he offered Miura the chance to return to the colony as the head of his dealership in the Shisuka area. Miura took up his friend’s offer, remaining in Shisuka for over ten years until his life in the colony was interrupted by the Soviet invasion. It is not clear if Miura was actually settled in Shisuka. In his interview he did not explicitly say that he intended to stay there, and with a track record of wandering from place to place we may doubt that he would ever stay settle in one place. Nonetheless, even if Miura had not put his wandering behind him, his time as a marine products wholesaler in Shisuka was

⁶⁶ *Ibid* p86

certainly the longest he had stayed in one place since his childhood.

Of course not everyone among the migratory labourers became residents of the colony – let alone long term settlers – and two of the seven testimonies recorded by Nozoe and Tamura offer such cases. Kasahara Ichizō,⁶⁷ for example, came from a poor farming family in the Yamamoto district of Akita, and was the eldest son among six siblings. His father squandered too much money on drink, and bit-by-bit Kasahara's family began to lose their farmland. The decline of his family's fortunes prompted Kasahara to engage in migratory labour, and in December 1917, when he was aged just sixteen, Kasahara travelled to Hokkaido to work as an agricultural labourer on a thirty hectare farm near Sapporo, which was owned by an Akita native. Kasahara found the work to be tougher than expected, so he briefly returned home to Akita before travelling to Hakodate where he joined a crew of fishing labourers bound for Kamchatka. Kasahara had heard people in Akita and Hokkaido say that 'you could make serious money in Karafuto and Kamchatka,'⁶⁸ so off he went. Indeed, this time he was able to make good money in the waters off Kamchatka, but still decided to try his luck in Karafuto next. Kasahara worked a few fishing seasons in Karafuto, but he found that he made more in Kamchatka, and so more often than not he went there instead, returning to Akita when the fishing season was over.⁶⁹

Edo Hachijūhachi⁷⁰ was another of those that travelled to Karafuto for migratory labour, but in the end did not settle there. The second son of a fishing family, Edo began working as a migratory labourer in fishing from age 25 onwards. At first, he worked seasonally, catching squid in the waters between Hokkaido and Aomori. Then three years later a relative, who worked seasonally in Karafuto, asked whether Edo was interested in joining him next time he travelled to the colony. Edo too had heard that

⁶⁷ *Ibid* pp119-30

⁶⁸ *Ibid* p123

⁶⁹ *Ibid* p129

⁷⁰ *Ibid* pp67-80

good money could be made working in Karafuto,⁷¹ so he took up his relative's offer, and travelled each year for three consecutive years, working at various fisheries and also on occasion in forestry. Edo had married into a farming family as an adopted son in law (*muko*), and the wages he made went straight to his in laws, as they sought to supplement their farm income. Settling down in Karafuto or Hokkaido was not on the agenda for Edo, because he had a responsibility to uphold his adopted household's farm in Akita.

Cases like Kasahara and Edo would not have been uncommon. Both were attached to a farm household, which their earnings from migratory labour helped maintain. Kasahara and Edo were both heirs to their household's headship, and so they both had the responsibility to maintain the family, as opposed to striking off on their own. In Kasahara's case he may have wanted to escape from his family's situation, as well as support it. His family was losing more and more of the land that he was due to inherit from his drunken father, and this situation may have irritated him, but his response was both to get away, and to do something about it. His response was to engage in migratory labour, which by allowing him to send wages home could help the family to avoid repossession of their land, and allow him respite from the situation at home. Kasahara was in search of the highest return, which meant he moved between Hokkaido, Karafuto and Kamchatka according to where he could find the better wage. He clearly hadn't given up on his family's farm in Akita, and thus until things were no longer workable at home, permanent relocation to Karafuto was unlikely. Both Edo and Kasahara had too much of a stake in their hometown to contemplate permanent relocation. Nonetheless, if their situation became unbearable in Akita, Karafuto would have been a familiar and practical option for relocation.

The migratory labour market in Karafuto was dominated by men, who made up as much as 98% of recruits coming from the mainland.⁷²

⁷¹ *Ibid* p71

⁷² Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku. *Dekasegi gyofu kyōkyū kumiai chōsa*, pp9-10

With so few females coming to the colony for migratory labour in fishing how could it be that the migratory labour experience could lead into settlement? The short answer would be that decisions on relocation were ultimately made by male household heads in prewar Japan's patriarchal society. This is not to say, however, that female members of a household could not influence the decision of the household head, but ultimately the small number of female participants in the migratory labour market in Karafuto must have had a negative impact on the settlement in Karafuto of those who came for migratory labour. If more females were able to see that it was possible to build a livelihood in the colony, and that parts of Karafuto had better social amenities than much of the countryside of Tohoku, then it would have increased the interest in settling in the colony. Nonetheless, there are a few cases of women who came to the colony to work in industries connected with fishing, and also eventually settled. Aoyama Tsuno from Konoura in Akita prefecture offers one such case.⁷³ Aoyama first went to Karafuto in 1932, where she took up work as a domestic servant for a marine products trader and fishery operator. Her family's headship was occupied by her older brother, following the death of their father when Aoyama was only two years old. Her older brother was able to keep the family going catching flounder as his main activity, however, he injured himself, and as a result was no longer able to support the family on his own anymore. Aoyama, now aged 14, was required to contribute to the family budget, and took up migratory labour. She could have worked as an agricultural hand in Akita, for example, but for women the wages in such a line of work were incredibly low, making migratory labour a more attractive option. Luckily, a marine products dealer from Konoura was looking for a live-in maid for domestic work and babysitting at his residence in Ōdomari, and through local connections Aoyama was able to get this higher paying work in Karafuto.

Aoyama had worked for a total of six years at the marine products dealer's residence in Ōdomari, when the trader pulled out of Karafuto,

⁷³ Nozoe, K. & Tamura, K. *Karafuto no dekasegi - gyogyō-hen*, pp13-29

having run up large debts. The trader sold up what he had in Ōdomari in order to pay off his debts, and thereafter returned to Konoura. At this point Aoyama was without a place to work, so she also returned to Akita. Nonetheless, her family's situation had not changed, meaning that when the next spring came, Aoyama was off to Karafuto again, so as to earn extra income for the family back home. This time she went to work as onshore labour for cod fishing operations, and later in the year she worked in marine product processing for another Konoura native who ran a fishery in the colony. It was during this stint of migratory labour that Aoyama got married to a fisherman from Konoura, who had settled in the port of Shiritoru on the east coast of the colony. Aoyama's brother had promised her hand in marriage to the man from Konoura, and so she moved permanently to Shiritoru, where her new husband caught herring, squid, and cod, alongside a side business repairing boats and fishing equipment. Aoyama helped out her husband wherever needed, and cultivated potatoes on a field near their home until the Soviet invasion, and eventual repatriation to Japan in 1948. Aoyama had not made the ultimate decision to settle in Karafuto herself, and instead it was the circumstances surrounding her marriage that kept her in the colony.

Women such as Aoyama were not the only individuals who were settled in Karafuto without necessarily having decided to do so themselves. Those who had come as children also fell into this category, and Miura Katsutarō,⁷⁴ who was taken to the colony in 1913 by his father when he was just two years old, provides such a case. Katsutarō's father engaged regularly in migratory labour, going to Hokkaido's outlying islands such as Yagishiri and Teuri for fishing work. One year he went to Karafuto to work in the fisheries, and 'saw that it was a place that had good prospects as a new home, and decided to settle the family there.'⁷⁵ Katsutarō's family stayed in Karafuto from 1913 onwards, mainly fishing herring, and their residence was only interrupted by the Soviet invasion

⁷⁴ *Ibid* pp101-118

⁷⁵ *Ibid* p103

in 1945. This is not to say that the family enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity in the colony, as many of the fishing households in the village of Tōbuchi where they settled suffered consecutive poor herring seasons in the mid-1920s. Nonetheless, many households in the area, including Katsutarō's, did not just up and leave, and instead they managed to diversify their operations, producing *kanten* (agar) on the side utilizing locally picked *tengusa*.⁷⁶

The testimonies collected by Nozoe and Tamura make clear that migratory labour in fishing could lead into settlement, even if initially many went to Karafuto just looking to make as much money as possible. Migratory labour at Karafuto's fisheries or in work connected to the fishing industry, brought these people to the colony, and familiarized them with it. Some got married; some shifted in and out of various occupations in Karafuto; some went back and forth between the colony and home; some moved on elsewhere; and some made Karafuto their home. There is great variety in their personal stories, but the testimonies of these former migratory labourers do suggest that knowledge of the money to be made in Karafuto was widespread in somewhere like Akita. Furthermore, the testimonies indicate that fishing villages in Karafuto were well connected with the mainland, and those who settled in Karafuto played a role here, because they tended to bring in migratory labourers from familiar sources in their home prefectures. The existence of this kind of relationship between Karafuto fishing families and places like Akita meant that migratory labourers often came back to the colony, which further strengthened the relationship. Indeed, even the two migratory labourers who did not settle in the colony – i.e. Edo and Kasahara – still came back for a few seasons, and became familiar with Karafuto. Had their situation in Akita worsened it is not inconceivable that they could have ended up in the colony permanently. The other five former migratory labourers, on the other hand, could more or less all be described as 'settled' in the colony, as they remained in Karafuto until

⁷⁶ *Tengusa* is a type of algae/seaweed known as gelidiaceae.

war's end. Whilst migratory labour did not make settlers out of all *yanshū*, there were numerous cases where it did. Indeed, even Miura Rihichi, the perennial wanderer, came back from Tokyo to settle down in Karafuto's northeast.

5.7 How 'settled' were farming and fishing families?

How can we determine the extent to which a population can be considered settled? In this section I consider this question, and compare the degree to which farming and fishing villages were 'settled,' utilizing a number of indicators. According to one work, 'settlers [as opposed to sojourners] intend to, and in most part do, become permanent residents in their new home.'⁷⁷ The emphasis in this rendering of what it means to be a 'settler' is on the initial intentions of people as they move from one place to another. Intentions, however, are difficult to gauge in a concrete way, as migration often takes place without record being made of the objectives and intentions behind that migration – if indeed, these are consciously known at all. The oral and written testimonies utilized in this work have the problem that they were recalled at a distance, in space and in time, from the events taking place and decisions being made. On the one hand, those recalling their past migration may simply forget what they were thinking, and some of the circumstances of that time in their life. Yet on the other hand, they may also be constructing – consciously or subconsciously – part of the story in order to justify the course they took in the past, and/or link it to events thereafter. Indeed, the historical narrative of a settler colony, evident in the literature it produces about itself, can often be characterized as an attempt to legitimize a settler group's claims to a territory, and by implication downplay the displacement of indigenous peoples, who 'are portrayed as roaming the land, flitting nomadically among impermanent settlements, ignorant or

⁷⁷ Lloyd, C. Metzger, J. & Sutch, R. (2013) *Settler economies in world history*, Brill, Leiden, pp xvii-xviii

wasteful of a colony's natural resources.'⁷⁸ In order to legitimize the settler group's possession of a territory, it is important to distance the settler from the transience it associates with the indigenous population, and thus the narrative necessitates an intention to settle amongst the now dominant group.

The testimonies of former Karafuto residents can be thought to contain two essential biases, that distort their views on how 'settled' the Japanese population of Karafuto actually was. The first bias relates to their – or if they were Karafuto born, their parents' – recent arrival in the colony, which adds a layer of insecurity to claims that Karafuto represented the 'place of their ancestors,' rather than a scene of dispossession of native peoples. The second bias relates to Karafuto as a scene of intense nostalgia, which is especially strong among the generation of former residents who spent their childhood in the colony. Many of these former settlers describe Karafuto as their homeland (*furusato*), and feel nostalgic about the former colony, which has been denied them since the Soviet invasion. Given this nostalgia for a homeland lost, and the sensitivity about the legitimacy of their 'ancestral home,' the objectivity of former residents' views on how settled the Japanese on Karafuto were must be treated with caution. With this in mind, it made sense to attempt to examine the degree to which a population was settled utilizing contemporary empirical sources, rather than relying on settler testimony.

Given that no contemporary surveys were made into the settlement intentions of people travelling to Karafuto, an accurate analysis along such lines is almost impossible. Nonetheless, the question of a gap between memory and reality aside, we have seen in the discussion of testimonies of former migratory labourers that an initial intention to settle may prove irrelevant to actual settlement outcome. In this sense intentions are at best a misleading indicator, because, quite

⁷⁸ Bateman, F. & Pilkington, L. (eds.) (2011) *Studies in settler colonialism: politics, identity and culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, p1

simply, things do not always go according to plan – that is if there was a plan in the first place. As we have seen in chapter four, some agricultural settlers gave up after trying to establish a farm in Karafuto's wilderness. They abandoned their farms even though it is likely that most of them had come with the intention to build a new life in Japan's far north. By the same token, some migratory labourers' seasonal sojourns helped them secure work, and familiarize themselves with the conditions of life in the colony, in some cases eventually leading to permanent settlement, however unintentional that may have been at the outset.

Settlement can best be viewed by examining whether an incoming population actually become, or at least resemble, long term residents. In this view, intentions are of secondary importance, and are superseded by the actual outcomes of migration. This focus on outcomes allows us to incorporate a range of indicators into an analysis of the degree to which a population is settled. Demographic indicators such as the number of dependents per family, and the ratio of men to women allow us to gain some appreciation of the extent to which a population has become settled. The process of settlement involves a population shedding its sense of transience, and as such Veracini identifies the moment a colony becomes a settler colony – i.e. a place to live, rather than simply exploit through colonial relationships – with reference to a painting by William Ludlow Sheppard, portraying the arrival of 'wives for the settlers at Jamestown.'⁷⁹ This moment is important because it signals the point at which the colony has been sufficiently established, and the initial settler group – dominated by men – has gained enough confidence to bring the rest of their family to the edge of their nation's sovereign power. In addition to the gender ratio, which in some ways is an indicator of the extent to which 'wives' had arrived in the colony, an important aspect of settlement is whether the whole family relocated to Karafuto. If the extended family relocates to the colony, the place begins to be more than

⁷⁹ Veracini, L. (2010) *Settler colonialism: a theoretical overview*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, p vii, the painting itself is reproduced on the cover of Veracini's book.

just a scene of economic production; it becomes a scene of reproduction, and a place of family life. With wives, children and the elderly present in the colony, a number of schools, hospitals and graves are built, alongside the sites of economic production, with the colony gaining the institutions that support birth, life, and death. In this regard the number of dependent family members – essentially meaning children and the aged – per economically active household member can prove illustrative for examining settlement.

In the colony's early years, the population of Karafuto, just like many settler colonies, was made up mostly of men. In the case of Karafuto, however, this initial male majority was accentuated by the predominance of the fishing industry, which was principally based on male labour. Karafuto's gender ratio stood at an astonishingly high 429 males per 100 females at the end of 1905, but thereafter fell rapidly to 198 at the end of 1906, and 155 at the end of 1907.⁸⁰ As families actually settled, the gender ratio did improve significantly over time, reaching 117 males per 100 females in 1937, but it never normalized around 100.⁸¹ In the early years fishing was dominated by large-scale pound trap operators, who were absent during winter, and whose labour was overwhelmingly drawn from mainland Japan. As the fishing system was reformed, legalizing the catch of herring, salmon and trout by small independent fishing operators, the long-term settlement of these fishing families became possible, but did it lead to their long term settlement? The evidence suggests it did, and on balance, settlements where fishing was the main occupation had relatively high numbers of dependents per family, and a more balanced gender ratio than farming villages. In order to compare fishing and farming settlements an examination of data produced in the 1930 census for Karafuto is pursued. This census is

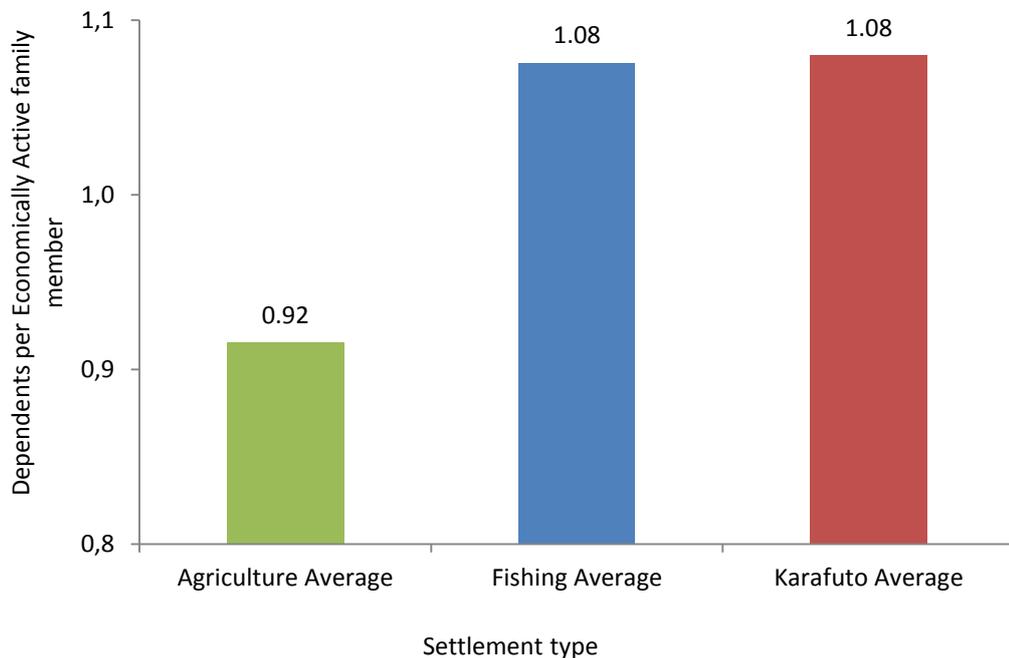
⁸⁰ Karafuto-chō (1908) *Karafuto annai*, Karafuto-chō, Ōdomari, pamphlet with no pagination

⁸¹ *KTS* (1937 edition) p28

The gender ratio in mainland Japan in the 1935 national census, for example, was 100.62 males per 100 females. Naikaku Tōkei Kyoku (1935) *Kokusei chōsa sokuho*, Tokyo tōkei kyōkai, Tokyo, p6

selected because it was the first full census in Karafuto, following the extension of the family registration law to the colony in 1924, and the only full census conducted in peacetime.⁸² Importantly, the census also included occupational data at the village level, which makes it possible to identify which towns and villages could be characterized as fishing or farming based, and thus opens up the possibility for various comparisons.

Figure 5.12 - No. of dependents per economically active family member by settlement type, 1930



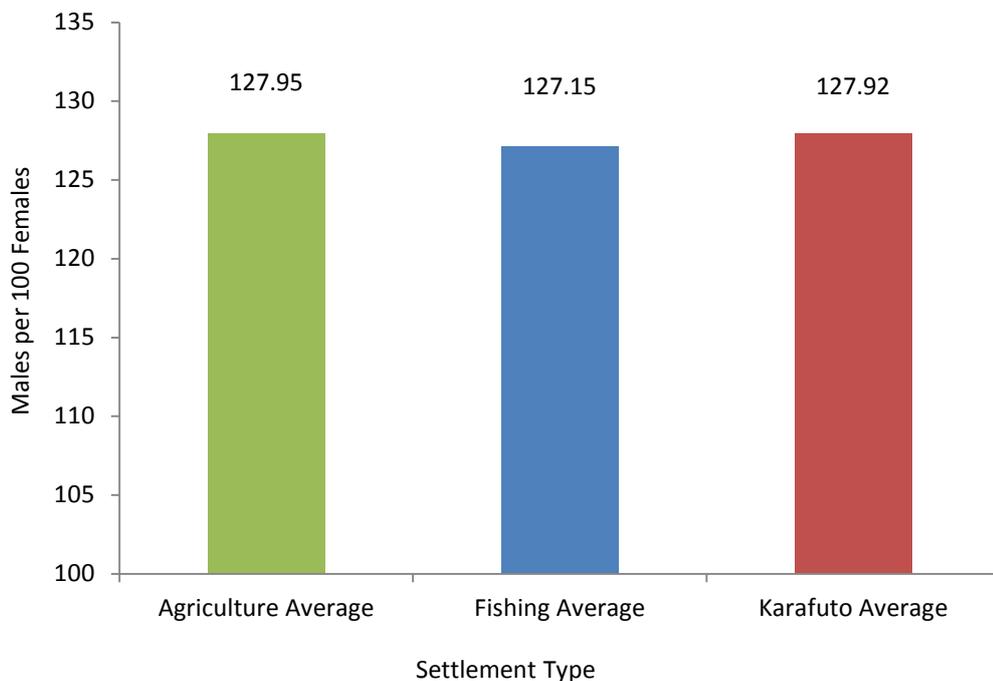
Source: calculated from Karafuto-chō (1934) *Karafuto kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

In this analysis, fishing and farming settlements are defined as areas where the said occupation is both the main occupation, and accounts for more than 40% of total employment. The first comparison made between fishing and farming settlements regards the average number of dependents – i.e. non-economically active family members –

⁸² Two intermediate censuses were conducted in 1925 and 1935, in addition to full censuses in 1920, 1930, and 1940. The 1920 and 1925 censuses are not quite adequate for our analysis here as they came before the application of the family registration law to Karafuto, and the 1940 census came three years into the second Sino-Japanese war.

per economically active family member, and is presented in figure 5.12. The data here indicates that by 1930 fishing settlements were characterized by a higher number of dependents per economically active family member, than was the case in agricultural settlements. Furthermore, the data indicate that fishing settlements, with 1.08 dependents per economically active family member, were in line with the Karafuto average, whilst agricultural settlements at 0.92 were significantly below that average. This comparison allows us to question the idea that fishing families were less likely to bring their family to settle in the colony, and indeed that agricultural households were more likely to do so.

Fig. 5.13 - No. of males per 100 females by settlement type, 1930



Source: as in figure 5.12

Comparison of gender ratios across different settlement types also allows us to further question the notion that agriculture was associated with settlement, and fishing with transience. This data is presented in figure 5.13, and suggests that there is not much difference between the Karafuto average, and either settlement type, with all registering a

gender ratio of between 127 and 128 males per 100 females in 1930. Whilst the margins are admittedly small, fishing settlements had a slightly more balanced gender ratio at 127.15, than either the colonial average at 127.92, or in comparison with farming settlements at 127.95. The 1930 census also includes data on the location of family registers (*honseki*) of the colony's residents. This provides us with further indication of the degree to which Karafuto's various settlements were permanently settled – or at least saw themselves as such. The dependency and gender ratios indicate whether households had taken the steps to relocate their full family to the colony. This was an important part of the settlement process, but it does not say anything about whether psychologically a household had accepted Karafuto as its permanent home. In this regard the location of the family register can provide a useful indicator for two reasons. The first relates to the strong association of the family register with a household's native place, and ancestral home. Relocation of the family register in this sense represents something of a symbolic break with the native place, or a previous home, and an acceptance of Karafuto as the household's permanent home.⁸³ The second reason that the location of the family register provides a useful indicator for the degree of permanent settlement is simply that such data are available for Karafuto. In 1924 the family registration law (*kosekihō*) was applied to Karafuto, meaning that from that point onwards it was possible to relocate a household's family register to Karafuto. This came in contrast to any of the other colonies of Japan, and was primarily a result of the fact that Karafuto's population was overwhelmingly composed of Japanese.⁸⁴

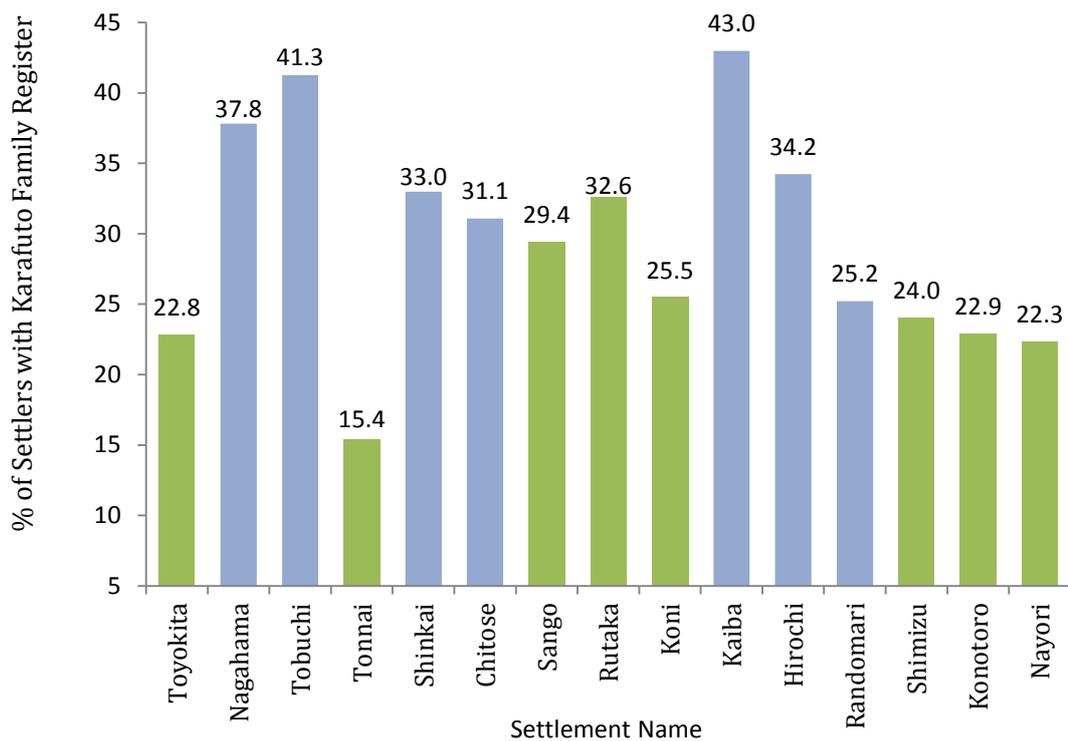
The availability of data on the transfer to the colony of the family registers of Karafuto residents, therefore, provides a unique opportunity among Japan's colonies to gauge whether colonial residents were willing

⁸³ Indeed, some former residents of Karafuto – including a number of my interviewees – to this day have their family register 'located' in Karafuto, as they do not want to cut their ties with their former home.

⁸⁴ *KNNS* 1924-8-3

to commit their family to the colony. The family register data produced in the 1930 census allow us to relate the prevalence of households relocating their family register to Karafuto with different settlement types. This data is illustrative in understanding the extent to which the residents of each settlement felt Karafuto was their permanent home, twenty five years into colonial rule, and six years on from when relocating the family register to the colony had become possible. This did not mean, however, that such a transfer was a necessity, and in fact the majority of households did not transfer their family register to the colony. The 1930 census, for example, indicates that only 23% of households resident in Karafuto had transferred their family register to the colony.⁸⁵

Figure 5.14 – Percentage of households in selected fishing (blue) and farming (green) settlements with a Karafuto family register in 1930



Note: Green - Agricultural Settlement [40%+ Occupied in Agriculture],
 Blue - Fishing Settlement [40%+ in Occupied in Fishing]

Source: as in figure 5.12, pp402-411 & 668-697

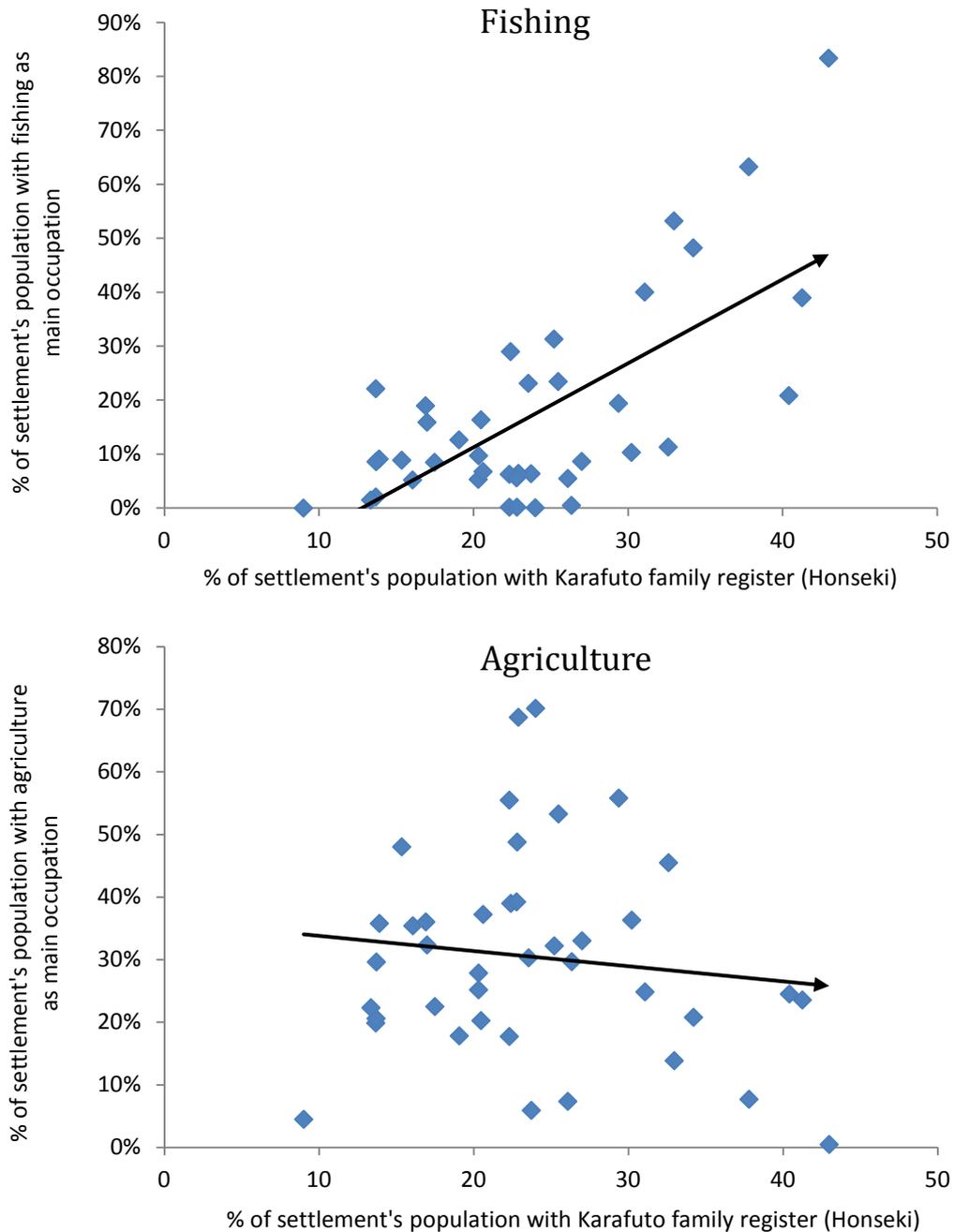
⁸⁵ Karafuto-chō. *Karafuto kokusei chōsa kekkahyō*, p688

Nonetheless, there was considerable variation across settlements in the colony, with in the lowest case only 9%, and in the highest case 43% of households possessing a Karafuto based family register in 1930.⁸⁶ The settlement with the lowest percentage of households with a Karafuto family register was a mining town called Kawakami, but interestingly the highest case was a remote island called Kaiba where 83.4% of households worked in fishing.⁸⁷ Data presented in figure 5.14 show the percentage of households in a number of farming and fishing settlements who transferred their family register to Karafuto. The data here make clear that the fishing settlement of Kaiba was not an isolated case, as in general fishing settlements were more 'settled' than their farming counterparts, as reflected in a higher percentage of households registering their household's permanent domicile (*honseki*) in the colony. The percentage of residents of farming settlements who transferred their family register to the colony ranged between 15.4% and 32.6%, whilst the equivalent range in fishing settlements was higher, ranging between 25.5% and 43.0%. Notably, the lowest level of family register transfers to Karafuto of any fishing settlement was to be found in a town called Randomari, located on Karafuto's west coast, which with a registration rate of 25.2% still exceeded the Karafuto average of 23%. The data presented in figure 5.14 points to the comparatively settled state of fishing towns and villages in the colony, contradicting their stereotype as transient, and suggesting that fishing was providing a basis for permanent settlement. Nonetheless, the picture which emerges from this data is slightly misleading as it does not incorporate all settlements in Karafuto. Additionally, it identifies fishing and farm settlements based on whether 40% of households are occupied in these activities, when in reality a large number of settlements were characterized by a mixed economy, rendering this categorization problematic.

⁸⁶ *Ibid* pp688-697

⁸⁷ *Ibid* pp402-411 & 668

Figure 5.15 - Correlation between rates of Karafuto family registration and occupation group in all forty settlement districts in the 1930 census



Source: as in figure 5.12, pp402-411 & 668-697

In order to circumvent this problem, in figure 5.15, I present data which covers all forty of the district level settlements in Karafuto. This data correlates the percentage of a settlement's population engaged in fishing or agriculture, with the percentage of residents in that same settlement who had transferred their family register to the colony. The

picture which emerges in this correlation is very clear, and confirms the trend indicated in figure 5.14. The prevalence of fishing among a settlement's residents was positively correlated with the transfer of those residents' family registers to Karafuto, and in this sense fishing appears related to settlement. In contrast, the data presented in figure 5.15 indicates that a higher share of farmers in a settlement's population was associated with lower levels of family registration in Karafuto, and thus by implication suggests a negative relationship between agriculture and settlement. The correlation with regards to farming is somewhat problematic, as the data appear considerably scattered across the plot area – suggesting a weak relationship if any at all. Nonetheless, for fishing, at least, a positive association with a settled population in the colony is observable in the 1930 census data, despite the colonial administration doubting its worth as a means for colonial settlement.

Table 5.2 - Gender ratio of households in the 1923-24 fishing survey

	Gender Ratio (males per 100 females)
Total fishing	111.7
Settled fishing households	108.9
Non-settled fishing households	246.7
Karafuto average in 1924	138.5

Source: as in figure 5.9; Karafuto average for 1924 comes from 1925 edition KCI, p9

The colonial administration's 1923-24 survey into the economic conditions of fishing villages in Karafuto provides some further evidence to support the claim that fishing households were committed to life in the colony. The survey itself covered a large number of fishing villages spread across the colony, including settlements in the Aniwa bay area, and both the east and west coasts, and involved the collection of basic information on a total of 1,582 fishing households, and more detailed budget

information for ninety nine fishing households. As part of the survey, investigators were asked to categorize fishing families as either ‘incoming’ (*nyūkasegi*) or ‘settled’ (*teiju*), and astonishingly they categorized 97.2% of the 1,582 fishing households as settled. Furthermore, as we can see in Table 5.2, fishing households had – by Karafuto standards – an incredibly balanced gender ratio, with 111.7 males per 100 females, comparing favourably to the Karafuto average of 138.5 in 1924. The survey’s investigators did, however, find a huge discrepancy in the gender ratio of settled and non-settled fishing households in Karafuto, but by 1923-24 the non-settled households had become a small minority, and the average gender ratio across fishing households was impressive.

Aside from a more balanced gender ratio, the survey results also indicated that fishing households displayed a commitment to the colony, even when faced with economic difficulties. The survey found that on average – across the ninety nine households for which household budgets were collected – fishing families made ¥123.60 in profit, after all business and household expenses had been subtracted. Nonetheless, whilst the average household was ‘in the black,’ the average masks the considerable difficulties that many fishing families faced in these years. Indeed, thirty nine of the ninety nine households examined were found to be operating at a loss in the year that they were surveyed. In these difficult years some fishing families had no choice but to give up and try something else in the colony, or perhaps leave Karafuto altogether. As the herring catches had been poor in consecutive years, there was a resulting fall in the number of fishing households resident in the colony from 3,743 in 1922, to 3,462 in 1924.⁸⁸ Yet whilst we know that the number of residents who derived their livelihood from fishing quickly recovered, what seems even more striking is the fact that investigators described 97.2% of fishing households as ‘settled’ at a time when the industry was in the midst of a crisis.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ See figure 5.5

⁸⁹ Karafuto-chō (1925) *Karafuto gyoson keizai chōsa*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has emphasized the continued importance of the fishing industry in Karafuto's economy, and its role in advancing settlement. As Karafuto was under Japanese rule for only 40 years it is difficult to assess whether it could continue to play this role in the long run. Nonetheless, evidence from economies such as Iceland suggests that the durability of the fishing industry, as a key component of a peripheral northern island economy, should not be underestimated. The University of Iceland and an industry-led research group called 'Iceland Ocean Cluster' estimate that fishing made a direct contribution of approximately 12% to Iceland's GDP in 2011, and when indirect and demand effect contributions are factored in the figure rises to 27.1%. Iceland today is an economy with a high per capita GDP, but fishing continues to be an important sector, and also an important employer. In 2011 it directly employed approximately 5% of Iceland's workforce, and if the entire 'ocean cluster' is considered this figure rises to between 15 and 20%.⁹⁰

In Karafuto the direct, indirect, and demand impacts of fishing on the wider economy were initially dominant, and even as Karafuto's economy expanded and diversified they remained considerable. The marine sector in Karafuto also played a key role in settlement, even if the colonial regime and contemporary commentators associated it with transience, and believed that it had a negative effect on colonial society.⁹¹ Evidence presented here has suggested that fishing settlements in Karafuto provided a mechanism to bring large numbers of people to the colony, familiarize them with it, and then provide a basis for their settlement. Indeed, it also provided essential sources of supplementary income for the non-fishing residents of Karafuto. It was true that like other economic activities, the fortunes of the fishing industry fluctuated, but in Karafuto, fishing settlements appeared resilient and committed to

⁹⁰ Iceland Ocean Cluster (2012) *Iceland's ocean economy: the economic impact and performance of the ocean cluster in 2011*, Iceland Ocean Cluster, Reykjavik, pp4-5

⁹¹ Nakajima. *Karafuto no takushoku*, p50

their new homes in the colony. The fishing settlement on Kaiba Island, which had the highest rate of families transferring their family register to Karafuto in the entire colony, provides a case in point. One 1935 report on the worsening of economic conditions on Kaiba Island, noted that ‘the once plentiful herring have not run at all since 1929 [i.e. for six years]; a few have left [fishing], but most continue to eke out a meagre living collecting sea urchins and seaweed.’ Indeed, despite the persistently poor herring catch, membership in the local fishing cooperative had fallen by only one person by 1935, as Kaiba fishermen showed resilience in the face of adversity.⁹²

The case of Karafuto offers support for an assertion by Veracini, who states that ‘the traditional narratives of empire... have generally underrated sometimes clamorous contradictions between colonial imaginings and practices: not only did imperialisms compete with each other, colonial forms also had to contend with alternative projections of colonial rule within each specific imperial context.’⁹³ In Karafuto agriculture continued to be at the centre of plans to settle the colony, whilst fishing families were given no support, or were, at times, actively discouraged. Fishing was viewed as a destabilizing element in colonial society, and for the colonial administration it was of no use, except as a source of taxation. The colonial regime supported non-resident fishing operators in the early years for this reason, and continued to discourage settlement of families based on fishing via regulations such as the withholding of the right to fish, until a family had endured two years of continuous residence in a specific location. Yet whatever the colonial administration and the central government in Tokyo imagined, the practice of settlement in Karafuto appeared differently. In reality, agricultural settlers struggling to make ends meet turned to the fisheries for a source of additional income, and fishing families, despite the obstacles, came to Karafuto anyway, opposing and ignoring regulations,

⁹² Howell. ‘A right to be rational’, p168

⁹³ Banivanua Mar. & Edwards. *Making settler colonial space*

whenever they threatened their livelihood.

The colonial regime could have taken the resolve of fishing families as proof that they were serious about settlement, but suspicions towards non-agricultural occupations remained strong, and in part they were based on the experience of Hokkaido a generation earlier. Such sentiment is obvious from statements made by Kinoshita Seitarō – a big name in Hokkaido politics – speaking as a participant in the March 1913 special committee on Karafuto's development and fishery system, which was held in the House of Representatives in the imperial Diet. Kinoshita warned his colleagues of the influence of fishing, stating that:

'Settling farmers in Karafuto does not ensure that they will become permanent farmers in the colony. This is especially the case for farmers who cultivate land near to the sea. In Hokkaido, there are a number of examples, such as villages near Nemuro, Akkeshi, and Muroran, where former samurai farmers (*tondenhei*) were settled, and supported by the state for 3 years, only for them to abandon their farms during the fishing season, so as to make higher earnings in the fisheries doing various on-shore jobs. Whenever the herring came, they were pulled away from their farms by the prospect of making money, and step by step they became fishermen'.⁹⁴

Kinoshita was articulating the view common in Karafuto's colonial administration that fishing was a destabilizing element in Hokkaido's development, and that there was a danger that in Karafuto too it would obstruct agriculture. Yet such a view is contestable even in the case of Hokkaido. One journalist noted on a visit to Karafuto that 'in Hokkaido the development of fishing preceded that of agriculture, with fishers eventually turning their interests to the interior, and contributing to

⁹⁴ House of Representatives 30th session committee papers no.27 1913-3-25; 'Karafuto gyogyō seido kaisei ni kan suru kengian iinkai,' pp7-8

agricultural development.’⁹⁵ Indeed, Hokkaido became a major agricultural region in Japan, providing about 26% of the calorie base produced in Japan’s agricultural sector in the year 2000.⁹⁶ Though it was unlikely that Karafuto’s agricultural sector would go on to play such a role, there is evidence to suggest that fishing was keeping farming families in the colony, and that fishing families were starting up small farms themselves. Regardless of whether or not agriculture would have succeeded in Karafuto in the long term, in the short time that Karafuto was a Japanese colony, it was fishing that provided a mechanism to bring people to the colony – without governmental support. Moreover, evidence presented here suggests that fishing provided an economic basis for the colony’s most enduring communities.

⁹⁵ *TMNS* 1913.8.6 – 1913.9.26 (Part 16)

⁹⁶ Hokkaido’s share is boosted by its production of high calorie dairy products, as well as grains such as rice and wheat. Ōnuma, M. (ed) (2002) *Hokkaidō sangyōshi*, Hokkaido University Press, Sapporo, p43

Chapter 6

Working hell on treasure island? – Migratory labour in Karafuto's forestry and construction industries

6.1 Introduction

In previous chapters an assessment of the patterns and processes of migration to Karafuto, the performance of the agricultural settlement programme, and the role of fishing in colonial settlement have been pursued. The results of this analysis have stressed the role that migratory labour played in colonial settlement, with migratory labour serving as a mechanism to bring people to the colony and familiarize them with it, as well as providing a crucial source of supplementary income for settlers. Moreover, the utilization of migratory labour in the fishing industry served to keep Karafuto well connected with regions that eventually provided a large number of settlers, and facilitated the spread of information on the colony in these regions – including positive stories of the money to be made there. In this chapter I examine in more detail the recruitment of migratory labourers from mainland Japan, but rather than examining this phenomenon through the lens of the fishing industry, I take up the case of the forestry and construction industries. The use of migratory labourers in these industries was extensive; however, as incidents of abuse were more prominent here than in fishing, their examination provides a minor corrective to the idea that colonial settlement and migratory labour were related. Forestry and construction, unlike fishing, involved the mobilization of large teams of unskilled manual labourers to work in remote locations, away from the principal

ports and towns of the colony. As will be seen, this provided the managers of these labourers with particular challenges, and led to the emergence of distinctive labour practices, including in some cases the use of coercion.

Karafuto was a colonial frontier region, rich in marine products, timber, and coal amongst other natural resources, which meant that it had the potential to be of considerable economic value to Japan. However, as a remote frontier region, Karafuto was characterized by an incredibly low density of population, and thus despite the influx of people to the colony, it remained a region of acute labour shortage. Some scholars have posited that when an extremely high demand for labour is combined with an extremely low supply, coercive methods of labour utilization are the likely result.¹ Indeed, Karafuto's combination of resource richness and labour shortage mirrored such conditions, and a degree of coercion could be seen at some Karafuto worksites, especially those utilizing migratory labour in remote areas for construction and forestry operations. Contemporary social reformers referred to the organization of work at some of these work sites as resembling a 'slavery system,'² and further described the conditions that workers faced there as a 'living hell.'³ This chapter seeks to verify these claims, and examine the operation of the labour market for migratory labour in Karafuto.

Labour markets are made up of a number of agents, who do not equally leave behind traces of their activities, and indeed in some cases,

¹ Domar, E. (1970) 'The causes of slavery or serfdom: a hypothesis', *Journal of Economic History* 30/1

² Kokusaku Kenkyūkai (1925) *Kangoku-beya haishi yori dorei kaihō he made: kyōsei keiyaku rōdō seido*, Kokusaku kenkyūkai, Tokyo, foreward p4

³ Takeya, G. (1931) *Kangoku-beya haishiron*, Hokkaidō-chō gakumubu shakaika Sapporo, p2

they will endeavour not to. This fact has made the task of bringing out the parts played by the various agents of the labour market a considerable challenge, and has required the examination of a whole host of historical source materials. In order to get as close as possible to the activities, motivations, and mentalities of these multiple agents, central government reports, the surveys of social reformers, local and national newspaper articles, written testimonies, and oral interviews have all been employed. Though these sources are not without their biases, it is hoped that they can improve our understanding of the migratory labour market in Japan's far north, and provide an appreciation of individual agency in this context. The next section briefly outlines the scale and importance of the far north as a destination for migratory labour, as well as Karafuto's place within it. The sections that follow thereafter treat the motivations of workers engaging in Karafuto migratory labour, their work patterns, the recruitment system for migratory workers, and the problems faced by both employer and employee in this context, before concluding. The overarching questions which guide the enquiry in this chapter are as follows: What were the reasons and processes by which migratory labourers came to Karafuto? What were their experiences? What were the particular challenges labour bosses faced in the recruitment, maintenance and management of labour, and how did they respond? And finally, were conditions faced by migratory labourers at construction and forestry worksites in Karafuto as bad as the 'living hell' described in the accounts of contemporary social reformers?

What I find is that work in Karafuto offered comparatively high wages, which provided the main attraction of work in the north. In

addition, migratory labourers for construction and forestry work – just like in fishing – predominantly came from Hokkaido and the prefectures of northeastern Japan, which were well integrated with the labour market in Karafuto. This integration came about as a result of geographical proximity and connections with Karafuto residents, the majority of whom, as we have seen previously, came from precisely these prefectures. Economic integration and native place ties provided the basis from which labour recruiters could create a long term relationship with the regions of northeastern Japan, which in turn served to reduce the likelihood of abuse in the labour market. When the recruits from the northeast fell short, however, labour contractors were compelled to cast the net further afield, and in such instances they utilized recruiting agents who were based in and around the slums of far off Tokyo and Osaka. The dubious practices of these recruiting agents, who were often connected to organized crime, meant that a dual track system of labour recruitment existed for Karafuto worksites. These recruits from further afield, despite making up only a small minority of the migratory labourers in the colony, were much more likely to end up paired with exploitative labour contractors, and as a result were more likely to suffer coercion or abuse.

Workers recruited from these far off casual labour markets were unlikely to be disciplined, and their contracts too were unlikely to be renewed, resulting in lower incentives for both parties to maintain contractual agreements. In contrast, there were stronger incentives for all parties to uphold contracts among those recruited from Japan's northeast. This was because any form of abuse could undermine the relationships which had developed between these regular recruiting grounds, and the

labour bosses in Karafuto. The breaking of contracts and abuse of labour would affect the reputation of a labour boss, and as a result, it would undermine their ability to tap labour from these areas again, putting future operations in jeopardy. Similarly for the migratory labourers themselves, failure to fulfil contracts could affect their – and their community’s – reputation as a reliable source of labour, endangering future employment opportunities. A further finding of this chapter relates to the prevalence of labour coercion and abuse. I argue that as only a small part of the migratory labour market ended up in the clutches of abusive labour bosses, the ‘living hell’ described by some social reformers was not a fair reflection of the labour market in Karafuto as a whole.

6.2 Karafuto as a destination for migratory labour

The importance of migratory labour to the functioning of the Japanese economy in the prewar period has long been recognized by scholars of Japan’s economic development. In 1934, for example, as many as 1,010,428 people – 603,431 men and 406,997 women – engaged in migratory labour outside the prefecture of their registered domicile.⁴ This total is without doubt an understatement of the extent of migratory labour, because it does not include those who migrated for work within their home prefectures, or those who left their home without informing the authorities – which as discussed in chapter three was not an uncommon phenomenon. The vast majority of studies that examine the migratory labour phenomenon in the context of prewar Japan have focused their

⁴ Naimushō Shakai Kyoku Shakaibu (1937) *Shōwa kyūnenchū ni okeru dekasegimono ni kansuru chōsa gaiyō*, Naimushō shakai kyoku shakaibu, Tokyo, p5

attention on the textile industries, and female labour which was particularly prevalent in this sector.⁵ To some extent this is understandable, given that these industries played a key role in Japan's industrial development. Nonetheless, the textile industries, located in the urban centres and industrial districts of central Japan, give us a limited understanding of the overall workings of the migratory labour market. A number of industries and regions attracted migratory labourers, besides the textile industries of central Japan, and therefore to better appreciate the dynamics of the migratory labour market, this chapter offers a view from the northern periphery of the Japanese empire, providing a decentering of the literature on migratory labour.

Table 6.1 - Share of far northern destinations in the overall extra prefectural labour migrations of Japanese nationals in 1924

	Male labour migrants		Total labour migration	
	No. of migrants	Share of national total (%)	No. of migrants	Share of national total (%)
Karafuto	14,767	3.25	16,343	2.08
Hokkaido	55,039	12.12	69,287	8.82
Hokuyō	10,303	2.27	10,376	1.32
Northern Subtotal	80,109	17.64	96,006	12.22
National Total	454,066	100.00	785,376	100.00

Source: calculated from Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku. *Dekasegimono chōsa*, no pagination

⁵ Tsurumi, E. (1990) *Factory girls: women in the thread mills of Meiji Japan*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey; Nakamura, M. (1976) *Rōdōsha to nōmin*, Shōgakkan, Tokyo; Taira, K. (1970) *Economic development and the labour market in Japan*, University of Columbia Press, New York; Hunter, J. (2003) *Women and the labour market in Japan's industrializing economy: the textile industry before the Pacific War*, Routledge, London

The focus on Karafuto also adds to our understanding of gendered aspects of the labour market, as unlike the textile industries, migratory labour bound for Karafuto was dominated by men. Indeed, a 1924 government survey indicates that 90.3% – i.e. 14,767 of 16,343 – of migratory labourers who travelled to Karafuto were male.⁶ The predominance of male migratory labour was a feature of migratory labour across the far north, with a 79.4% male share of migratory labourers headed for Hokkaido, and 99.2%⁷ in the northern seas between Karafuto, Hokkaido and Kamchatka – known as, and referred to hereafter as Hokuyō.⁸ Table 6.1 indicates the combined share of these three northern destinations in the total migratory labour market, which stood at 12.22% in 1924. The far north was clearly a significant part of a labour market, which was in addition composed of Japan's other forty six prefectures, as well as the colonies of Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria, and overseas destinations such as Hawaii and Brazil. As a destination for male migratory labour, the far north is even more conspicuous with its share standing at 17.64% of the national total. Table 6.1 indicates that among the destinations in the far north, Hokkaido was the most popular, attracting 72.2% of the northern total and 8.8% of the national total in 1924. Karafuto and Hokuyō were more minor destinations, yet they both attracted numbers in excess of 10,000 on a consistent basis, according to most of the data we have available. With such large numbers of incoming

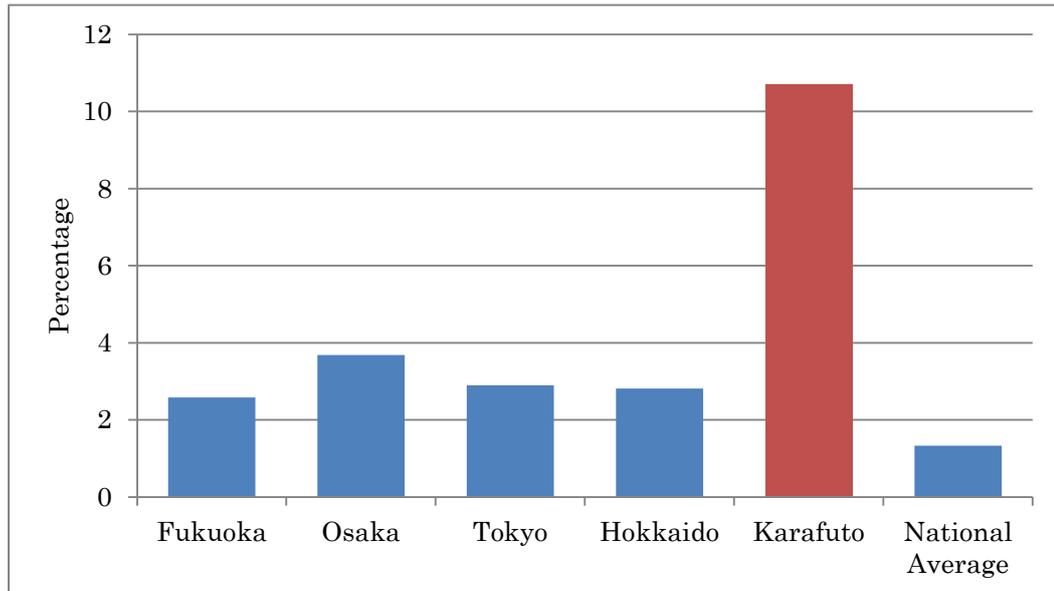
⁶ Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku (1927) *Dekasegimono chōsa*, Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku, Tokyo, calculated from statistical table 1 & 4.5 (no pagination)

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ Japan had gained the right to fish in the seas around the Russian Far East, especially around Kamchatka, and as a result this area became a scene of seasonal fishing activity.

migratory labourers and a small resident population, the colony of Karafuto was synonymous with migratory labour,⁹ which gave its society a sense of impermanence and flux.¹⁰

Figure 6.1 – Incoming migratory labourers as a percentage of resident population, 1924



Calculated from: Chūō shokugyō shōkai jimukyoku. *Dekasegimono chōsa*

A sense of the influence of migratory labour on Karafuto's society can be gained from the many memoirs of former colonial settlers,¹¹ and the colonial media (please refer to chapter five, especially pages 234-239). Figure 6.1 provides an empirical indication of the significance of migratory labour for colonial society in Karafuto, presenting the share of incoming migratory labourers in the total population of the colony, and for the purpose of comparison, the national average and equivalent for the

⁹ Interview with K-san, February 2012, Tokyo

¹⁰ Morris-Suzuki, T. (2001) 'Northern lights: the making and unmaking of Karafuto identity', *Journal of Asian Studies* 60/3

¹¹ A good example of this is: Sekiguchi, K. (1981) *Karafuto ryūmin keifu*, Momyōsha, Akita

most popular destinations for migratory labourers in 1924, namely Osaka, Tokyo, Hokkaido and Fukuoka prefectures. These data indicate that in 1924 the number of migratory labourers in Karafuto was equal to 10.7% of the resident population, a figure not matched anywhere else in the Japanese empire, with the national average standing at 1.3%, and Osaka a distant second at 3.7%. This huge gap was, of course, as much a result of Karafuto's small population, as it was the popularity of the colony as a destination for migratory labour. Nonetheless, one result of the high ratio of migratory labourers in Karafuto's population is that one of the principal source materials for this study – the *KNNS* – is littered with articles concerning the phenomenon of migratory labour, and its employment in the context of Karafuto. The pervasiveness of migratory labour in the socio-economic landscape of the colony has thus provided plenty of material for research into the workings of the migratory labour phenomenon.

In this chapter, migratory labour in the forestry and construction industries is examined because – just like fishing which was examined in chapter five – both industries were of crucial importance to the economy of Karafuto. The forestry industry provided lumber for export, and supplied the raw materials for the paper and pulp industry, which was the pillar of Karafuto's economy in the 1920s and 1930s. Whilst the construction industry, on the other hand, was less of a constant than forestry, as it depended on the commissioning of major projects – often related to infrastructural development – it was nonetheless central to the process of 'empire building' in such a remote frontier region. Indeed, large construction projects became a feature of Karafuto's economy and from

the very beginning of Japanese rule required the import of labour from the mainland. In 1906, for example, Yanagida Kunio, during a trip to the colony, noted that a construction rush was well underway. In his diary he wrote that ‘there are huge numbers of labourers in the area, who work on road improvements, and rail construction. Tents have been put up all along the road, and one is struck by the hundreds of comers and goers, carrying their futons and clothes on their backs.’¹² What Yanagida was witnessing that day was the construction of Karafuto’s first railway, connecting Ōdomari with Toyohara, and commissioned by the military before it withdrew from the colony in 1907. Such major construction projects were not limited to the first years of colonial rule, and were instead littered throughout the course of the Japanese colonial period.

Image 6.1 – Tunnel construction on the Hōshin railway project



Source: pictures courtesy of the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei

¹² Yanagida, K. (1962) ‘Karafuto kikō’, in Yanagida, K. *Yanagida Kunio zenshū daikan*, Chikuma shobō, Tokyo, p443

One particularly famous project was the construction of the Hōshin railway line – see image 6.1 – which cut through treacherous mountain terrain to connect Toyohara and Maoka. Construction of railways, roads, port facilities, and factories, required the importation of large numbers of workers for an extended period. The aforementioned Hōshin line construction project, for example, required that six thousand labourers be mobilized each year, for a project that took several years to complete. This was not an exceptionally large project either, as some other construction projects, such as a road building project commissioned by the military in the early 1920s, required the mobilization of a workforce numbering between ten and fifteen thousand.¹³ These industries required large numbers of low-skilled casual labourers, and as such were less likely to be accounted for in the official surveys into migratory labour by the central government. Casual labourers were constantly moving between jobs, and this made them the least likely among migratory labourers to fill in and submit the proper documentation when departing for migratory labour. In fact, it seems that many of them did not want anyone to know of their whereabouts. The testimony of a former resident of Shimizu village in Karafuto makes this point clear:

‘My toughest job during my first years after settling in Karafuto was the work I did collecting information for the first national census in 1920. There was a large work camp (*hanba*) for forestry workers, located somewhere between Kumasenzawa and

¹³ Kokusaku kenkyūkai (1925) *Kangoku-beya haishi*, pp17-21; Tokyo-shi shakai kyoku (1923) *Chihō ninpu-beya ni kan suru chōsa*, Tokyoshi shakai kyoku, Tokyo, pp39-40

Mitobenzawa, where a large number of labourers were staying at that time. Most of them were migratory labourers from various parts of the mainland, and they didn't want their whereabouts to be known to the authorities. So whenever I came by and asked people to fill in the required forms, they would all just hide, or pretend I wasn't there. This meant that it was only with great difficulty that I completed the survey. I had to keep returning to the area on a daily basis, as part of the fire safety rounds [he was part of the volunteer fire brigade], and each time I made sure to show my face at the work camp. After many attempts at persuading them, eventually I got to know them better, and they finally relented, allowing me to complete the survey.¹⁴

The difficulty the authorities faced in keeping track of the whereabouts of casual workers means that it is very difficult to give a concrete figure for the number of construction and forestry workers entering Karafuto each year. As a consequence of this difficulty, national surveys into the migratory labour phenomenon are very likely to understate the actual levels. In a more detailed local study of migratory labour in Hokkaido – including both those arriving and those departing – Ikeda suggested that a total of 18,374 Hokkaido residents left for Karafuto as migratory labourers in 1937. Ikeda's evidence suggests that of this total 9,540 (52%) travelled for work in the fishing and marine products sector, 7,418 (40%) in forestry, and 1,416 (8%) as

¹⁴ Osaka Shōgakkō Dōsōkai & Osaka-shi Hensan Iinkai (1973) *Karafuto Maoka-gun Shimizu-mura daiji Osaka*, Private publication available at Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei offices in Tokyo and Sapporo, p54

general labourers – mostly employed in construction projects.¹⁵ These numbers are, of course, limited to just one prefecture and one year, and thus they do not show us the full picture. Yet even though we cannot know the exact figures for the nation as a whole, it is clear from Ikeda's detailed study of Hokkaido that forestry and construction labourers made up a very large part of the migratory labour flow into Karafuto, and these industries were a vital cog in the colonial economy.

6.3 Migratory labour motivations

The comparatively high financial gain from work in Karafuto was what drew unskilled migratory labourers to the colony as lumberjacks and construction labourers. This much is clear in the testimonies of former forestry and construction migratory labourers, which were collected by Nozoe and Tamura (see chapter five, especially pages 264-274 for a discussion of the testimonies of migratory labourers in fishing). These lively testimonies add immensely to our understanding of what working in Karafuto was like for migratory labourers from the mainland, and tell us much about their motivations for doing so. Almost without exception, the testimonies indicate that people decided to go north as migratory labourers for the simple reason that wages there far exceeded those available at home. They also make clear that, compared to home, work opportunities were abundant in Karafuto, reflecting the severe labour shortage in the colony, which came as a result of its geographical remoteness, richness in natural resources, and because it was an area of recent settlement.

¹⁵ Ikeda, Y. (1939) *Dekasegi mure no shogyōsō*, Shakai seisaku jihōsha, p14

One of the informants, named Matsubashi, said that ‘if I had to explain why it was that we left our families [at home in Akita] over the winter for Karafuto, then I would say it was because of the high earnings (*kasegi*) we could make there. In Karafuto you could quite easily make three or four times the earnings that you could make in Japan (*naichi*).’¹⁶ Work in Karafuto was especially attractive when the economy in mainland Japan was in a recession, which made work at home relatively scarce. Another informant, called Miura, noted that ‘in 1931 and 1932 the economy in Japan was in a slump, but this didn’t matter for us, because if you went to Karafuto you could still make good money. There was a lot of work available there too, so many people from around here crossed over to Karafuto for work.’¹⁷ As we have seen in chapter five with migratory labour in the fishing industry, knowledge of employment opportunities and wages available in Karafuto was well diffused in places such as Akita prefecture, and what was true for fishing was also true for work in the forestry industry.

Recruiters regularly visited areas such as Akita, and perhaps more importantly, friends and relatives returned from the colony with stories of their experiences. These stories, from trusted sources, reduced the fears that potential new recruits had about going to work for a few months away from home. Moreover, due to the large number of migratory labourers who travelled to Karafuto from areas such as Akita, in these regions there was the possibility of travelling together with friends, relatives, or people from the same village, and then working at the same

¹⁶ Nozoe, K. & Tamura, K. (1977) *Karafuto no dekasegi ringyōhen*, Akita bunko, Akita, p117

¹⁷ *Ibid* p129

worksites. Travelling and working alongside familiar faces would provide a sense of assurance for migratory labourers, and it could also provide them the security which came from being part of a group. One informant, who went to Karafuto for the first time aged 16, travelled there and worked alongside his father, 'at a time when many villagers went to Hokkaido or Karafuto to make good money.'¹⁸ For another migratory labourer named Kaneya, it was the chance to go together with his brother-in-law that convinced him to leave home for the first time, and engage in migratory labour in Karafuto. Kaneya's brother-in-law had already been to Karafuto to work in forestry, and testified to the 'stories of substantial money pickings (*kanetori*) that could also be heard in the conversations of other people around the village.'¹⁹

Though the wages on offer were comparatively high, one question of interest is whether migratory labourers went to Karafuto due to the push of poverty – i.e. because wages were too low at home. Although this question is not the primary concern of this chapter, it is nonetheless worth noting that the evidence available is mixed, and it is often difficult to disentangle push and pull factors. The high earnings that could be had in Karafuto could be said to have constituted a clear pull factor. Yet on the other hand, they may only have been so attractive in the first place, because wages in the mainland were so low. Whether a large number of farm families on the mainland required that family members engage in migratory labour strictly for the purpose of covering basic living costs is unclear. The evidence from the testimonies of former Karafuto migratory

¹⁸ *Ibid* p16

¹⁹ *Ibid* p41

labourers suggests that some migratory labourers did come from poor farming families, who had only minor land holdings, and required family members to engage in migratory labour. Nonetheless, among the migratory labourers for whom we have testimonies, there were also comparatively well off farming families, who had substantial landholdings, and no obvious need to supplement the family income with migratory labour.²⁰ Indeed, the economic situation of the families of the migratory labourers who were interviewed by Nozoe and Tamura, show no clear pattern. Nor is there a pattern in their family position – with household heads, first, and even fifth sons, amongst others – or their age when they first engaged in migratory labour in Karafuto. The youngest was aged sixteen and the oldest was thirty five, suggesting a varied picture in the household situation of migratory labourers.

Whether one views it as poor peasants being pushed, or as rational enterprising farmers being pulled, it is clear that financial gain was the principal motivating factor behind Karafuto migratory labour. Besides the high wages, the sense of assurance that came from positive stories, and the chance of going together with friends and relatives, the low skilled nature of the work, and the familiarity²¹ of migrants with it, further reduced the psychological barriers to engaging in migratory labour in Karafuto. Indeed, even though all seven of the informants stated that they were from farming households, five of them had experience working in

²⁰ *Ibid*

See page 74 for an example of a small holding family with an expressed need to engage in migratory labour. On page 92 there is an example of someone from a well off family, who went to Karafuto for migratory labour without saying a word to his wife, and stole his father's wallet, just because he had grown tired of farming, and wanted to get away from it all.

²¹ *Ibid*

forestry on the side, or as a migratory labourer in Hokkaido, before going to Karafuto, whilst, of the remaining two, one worked as a charcoal maker on the side – work very much connected to forestry – and the other, although engaging in wage labour for the first time, was travelling with his father, who did have forestry work experience. Moreover, even if potential migratory labourers were not particularly experienced, they were often assured by recruiters that they did not require any particular skills, as long as they were confident in their strength – which recruiters also assured them of – they would do just fine.²²

Due to the casual nature of labour markets for seasonal migratory labour, contracts would often be based on no more than oral agreements. This has meant that it is difficult to give an accurate picture of what migratory labour wage rates actually were in Karafuto, and how they compared with wages elsewhere. With such data hard to come by, and complicated by the institutions of wage payment, we can only rely on the accounts given by the former workers themselves, which unanimously confirm the comparatively high wage rate in Karafuto. One piece of evidence that is at least suggestive of the wage gap is the wage rate for day labourers, the majority of whom picked up jobs in construction, forestry, or various haulage tasks on a temporary/casual basis. In this case the evidence suggests that wages in Karafuto were just over one and a half times the equivalent wage in Tokyo.²³ Given that Tokyo wages were, more often than not, considerably higher than the equivalent rates in

²² Yuge, S. (1940) *Hokuhen no rōdō to dekasēgi kankei: kore ni motozoku hanzai genjō*, Shihōshō chōsabu, Tokyo, pp201-222

²³ The daily wage for day labourers in 1925 were 2.80 yen in Toyohara and 1.82 yen in Tokyo. See: *Toyohara shōkō kaigishohō*, April 1925, p21

smaller urban areas or the countryside of mainland Japan, it is safe to say that Karafuto offered a well-paid destination for migratory labourers.

The institutions of wage payment also had a bearing on how attractive migratory labour work in Karafuto was. The accounts of contemporary social reformers, reports in colonial media, and the testimonies of former migratory labourers depict the main features and common practices which emerged in Karafuto regarding wage payment for migratory labour. These accounts reveal that recruitment and payment practices in Karafuto were similar to those found in mainland Japan in other industries that utilized migratory labour. The most important of these practices was an advance payment to the labourer or their family, which was advanced either directly by the employer, or through a recruitment agent. These wage advances would appeal to those with little capital or in need of quick cash – perhaps to pay off a debt – and thus could provide a quick injection of cash to a strained household budget. Additionally, employment agreements/contracts almost invariably stipulated that the employer would advance money to cover the cost of transport to the worksite, which would eventually be deducted from the labourers' final wage payment at the end of the project. In this way, employment agreements – in which employers advanced funds and covered transportation costs – reduced the barriers to participation in the migratory labour market for potential recruits, as no initial outlay on was required on their part.

Advance payments enabled participation in the migratory labour market, but on the other hand, these advances also provided the potential for both employer and employee to cheat the other party. Advance

payments meant employers could withhold final wage payments, and use the debt incurred by the employee as a result of the advance to keep labourers bound to a worksite, beyond what was originally stipulated in the employment agreement. For employees, having taken a large part of their wage before even arriving at the worksite, there was an incentive to desert the worksite, or not show up altogether, making off with the wage advance. As we shall see later in this chapter, wage advance payments did lead to plenty of conflict at Karafuto worksites, with reports appearing in the colonial press of abuse by labour bosses and runaway labourers. Before analyzing these conflicts, we now turn to an examination of the work itself, the institutions which grew up around it, and the actual process of recruiting migratory labourers for construction and forestry operation in Karafuto.

6.4 Work practice and work place – the *hanba*

The pattern of work in the construction industry would vary to some extent, depending on the type of project. Yet for the majority of labourers in this sector – be they working on harbour, railway, or road construction – it involved manual labour, with little or no aid from mechanized equipment – see image 6.1 for example. Moreover, as construction work became nearly impossible in winter, project schedules demanded that workers labour for long hours, in what were often very remote locations – even by Karafuto’s standards. In contrast, forestry operations varied very little, and involved a regular cycle of felling timber, and then transporting it (see image 6.2), either to paper and pulp factories in Karafuto itself, or to the coast, where it was loaded onto ships for export to Japan as building

materials.

Image 6.2 - Log conveyance work in springtime



Source: pictures courtesy of the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei

Image 6.3 – Temporary worker lodge (*hanba*) in Karafuto during a road construction project commissioned by the military in early 1920s

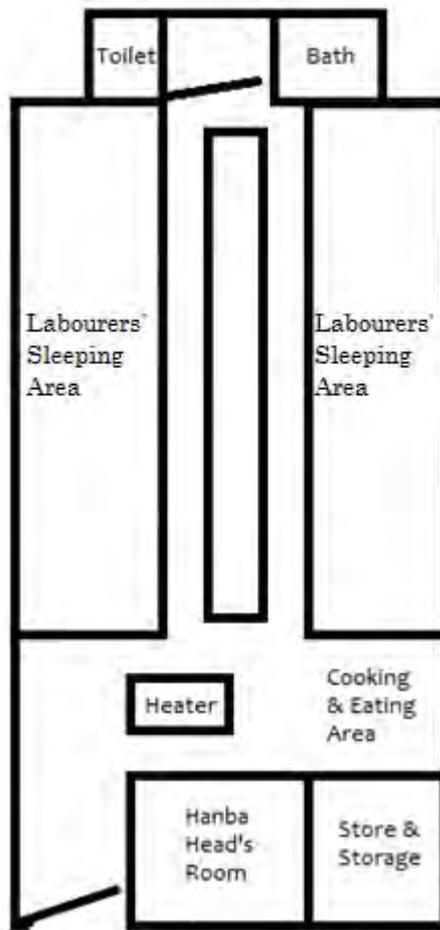


Source: Karafuto-chō (1921) *Minami Karafuto gunyō dōro kōchiku kinen*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara, no pagination

Forestry subcontractors, having made an agreement with a client – usually a paper and pulp factory – to supply lumber, identified the work site, sent out requests for workers, and then made preparations, such as building makeshift lodgings, preparing tools, and stocking provisions. When everything was in place, the recruits would arrive, and felling operations could commence. Felling operations often took place in the winter season, as although it was desperately cold, the smooth snow made easier the transportation of logs to rivers, where they would be piled up until spring came. In spring the snow melted and the iced-over rivers thawed, at which point the logs were released into the river, tied together like rafts, and transported downstream to factories, or ships bound for the mainland. In forestry, just like in construction projects, the operations

were often conducted in relatively remote and isolated parts of Karafuto, and as such they required that lodgings be made for the incoming laborers. These temporary lodges were known as *hanba* – literally ‘eating place’ – which served as the place where workers ate, slept, washed, and spent their leisure time – see image 6.3.

Image 6.4 - Interior of a typical *hanba* in Karafuto



Based on: Kokusaku Kenkyūkai (1925) *Kangoku-beya haishi*, p13

The size of a work camp would vary according to the scale of the project, and it could be composed of several large temporary lodges (hereafter *hanba*), which typically housed between forty and fifty workers, although those housing as many as eighty to one hundred were not

unknown. These were rather rudimentarily constructed, utilizing logs from the surrounding area, and so as to save on time, they were typically located right next to – or at least within short walking distance from – the work site. In image 6.3 we can see the exterior of one such *hanba*, which in this case was used on a road building project commissioned by the Japanese military, and conducted by private contractors. There are very few images of *hanba* that remain, and virtually none which give us a clear view of the interior, however from the investigations of social reformers, newspaper reports, and the testimonies of former workers, it is possible to gain an appreciation of what it was like in a *hanba*, and how the interior was organized (see image 6.4).²⁴ Typically a *hanba* would be composed of a sleeping area/dormitory for ordinary laborers, a bath/washing area, a rudimentary toilet, rooms for storage of tools and provisions, a cooking and dining area, heating stove, and a room for the labour bosses – referred to as the *oyakata* or *hanba gashira*. Given their remote location, and the fact that they would only be temporarily utilized, *hanba* were without electricity and thus poorly lit, besides being cramped and unhygienic. Rudimentary toilets were in some cases located inside the *hanba*, perhaps as a way of preventing runaways. The workers' dormitory area would typically be composed of a long raised wooden platform, which ran along each side of the *hanba* walls, and was separated by a thin strip of earthen floor, running through the centre of the dormitory area to the eating space. Workers would sleep side by side on top of this wooden platform, which was covered by coarse straw matting, and any bedding which workers had

²⁴ A particularly vivid account is provided in: Takata, T. & Furukawa, Y. (1974) *Jitsuroku dokō Tamakichi – tako-beya hanseiki*, Taihei, Tokyo

either brought with them, or rented from the *hanba* head.

Hanba were built and run by independent labour bosses – or subcontractors (*ukeoishi*) – who took on contracts for projects commissioned by large companies, such as the Ōji Paper and Pulp Company, and organizations such as the colonial administration itself. These companies and organizations sought to outsource the troublesome tasks of recruiting, supervising, paying, and maintaining a temporary workforce, or simply lacked the capacity to handle such a task. For the labour bosses of these construction and forestry operations, the *hanba* was more than just a temporary abode; it was a method of labour management. Indeed, *hanba* had long been utilized in mainland Japan, especially in the construction and mining industries, and this system of labour management is referred to by Japanese labour historians as the *hanba* or *naya seido*. Subcontracting of tasks related to the recruitment and management of labour for temporary or low-skilled operations was common in prewar Japan, and allowed large firms the flexibility to expand or curtail operations according to market conditions. If a recession hit, the use of subcontracted labour allowed for immediate cutbacks to be made, as large firms could not easily be held responsible for the fate of temporary staff or non-official staff.

In Nimura's detailed study of the 1907 riot at the Ashio copper mine – Japan's largest mine at the time – it is evident that the use of the *hanba* system was crucial to the operation of the mine. Nimura notes that the *hanba* boss 'mediated between the mine's management and the mass of the workers. It was this boss, and not the mine's white collar managers, who was responsible for recruiting and hiring workers, distributing their

pay, overseeing their daily lives, and distributing their work assignments. Each of these bosses housed and fed the men he had recruited and hired in a lodge, which he also managed.²⁵ What was true for Ashio, was also the case in Karafuto, as labour bosses who ran *hanba* in Karafuto acted as an intermediary between a mass of informal labour and major firms, a position they held through project-based contracts with these major firms. In this sense, the widespread use of subcontracting for such operations in Karafuto was an extension of the institutional norms of the *hanba* system which existed on the mainland.

6.5 Recruiting labourers

The recruitment of labourers and their passage to the worksite provided considerable challenges for construction and forestry subcontractors in Karafuto. Accomplishing such a task was no mean feat, as these projects often involved the mobilization of hundreds – sometimes even thousands – of labourers at any one time. Projects at such a scale required that the recruitment net be cast far and wide, so as to obtain the required number of labourers. First subcontractors received requests for their services from a larger company or organization, which outlined the project's proposed budget, completion schedule, and labour requirements etc. Once a subcontractor had decided to take on a job, following negotiations on the project's fees and finer details, it was up to him and the members of his group (*kumi* or *gumi*) to get together the required labour force to complete the task. The search began immediately, with each group of

²⁵ Nimura, K. (1997) *The Ashio riot of 1907: a social history of mining in Japan*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, p37

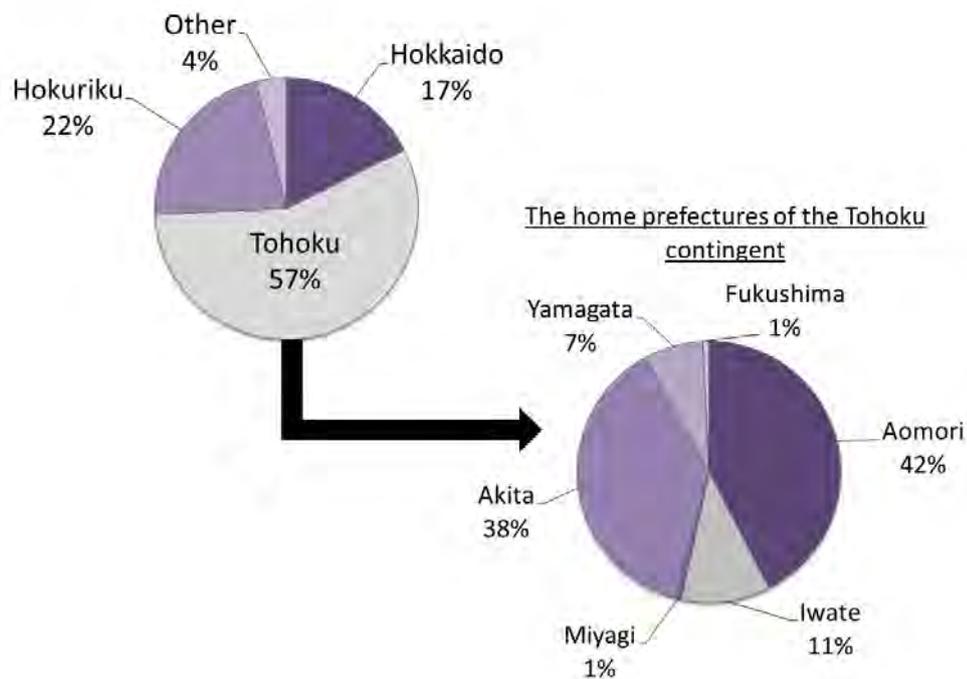
subcontractors utilizing a vast network of recruiting agents in order to reach its recruitment target.

Some of the labour needs of a project would have been filled with recruits from within the settler population of Karafuto. In particular farming households, from settlements such as Konotoro for example, provided a number of recruits in forestry, because the winter slack season coincided with the majority of felling operations. The major subcontracting groups of Karafuto, such as the Endō-gumi of Endō Beishichi, had branches or agents in all of the major settlements across the colony, and when they took on a large project, they would quickly be able to ‘ask around,’ and advertise locally, utilizing signboards or local media. In fact the colony’s major newspapers often included advertisements for work opportunities in forestry or on large construction projects.²⁶ Nonetheless, it was very rare that the labour requirements of a large project could be met solely with local recruitment, and inevitably subcontracting groups needed to utilize their connections in the prefectures of their birth or former residence. In the accounts of the former Karafuto migratory labourers from Akita there are a number of references to recruiting agents (*tehaishi*), who regularly visited their villages in order to hire groups of labourers.²⁷ These agents tried to build up a regular recruiting ground based on local connections, which would allow them to establish a degree of trust and rapport between themselves and local families, and help establish a regular stream of recruits from certain localities.

²⁶ *KNNS* 1910-5-14

²⁷ Nozoe & Tamura. *Karafuto dekasegi ringyōhen*, pp42 & 76

Figure 6.2 - The home prefectures of Karafuto's migratory labourers in the forestry and construction industries, 1924



Source: as in figure 6.1

Previous recruits often returned from Karafuto having made a handsome profit from their migratory labour, and spread interesting stories about their experiences in their home villages. This meant that it made sense for recruiters to target the same areas each year, as there were labourers living there they had already dealt with, and also because of the information spread by these labourers a more positive response from first time recruits would be expected. As we have seen in chapter three, the majority of Karafuto's settler population – including the colony's subcontractors – hailed from Hokkaido and Japan's northeast, in prefectures such as Akita, Aomori, Iwate and Yamagata, so it followed that these areas also became the major recruiting grounds. Indeed, the data presented in the 1924 government investigation into the migratory

labour phenomenon confirms this much, and is presented in figure 6.2. The data indicates that the prefectures of Japan's northeast and central Japan sea coast – i.e. Hokkaido, Tohoku and Hokuriku – accounted for 96% of the total number of recruits, and thus connections with the resident population and geographic proximity appear important factors in making these regions the main labour recruiting grounds for Karafuto worksites.

The use of recruiting agents was also common in the recruitment of textile workers, amongst other occupations, to be employed in the various production centres in mainland Japan.²⁸ Recruiting agents connected to Karafuto subcontractors also drew up contracts similar to those which were signed with textile workers, paying an advance on wages, and making a promise to pay the transport costs of the worker to the worksite. As we have discussed, such contracts generally stipulated that the worker would be responsible for paying back these costs via deductions from their wages. This could be seen as a kind of debt bondage; however, the wage advance may also have been an attractive option for many as it produced an immediate return, and meant that the worker did not incur any immediate costs in getting to the worksite. Despite the efforts made to recruit workers in the areas where Karafuto contractors had the strongest connections, and indeed within Karafuto itself, the numbers recruited often fell short of the actual requirements, especially on the large-scale projects. Construction on the Hōshin railway in 1922, for example, required the mobilization of 6,000 labourers, but by August of that year only around 2,100 had been mobilized, and as a result the

²⁸ Hunter. *Women and the labour market in Japan's industrializing economy*

planned operations that year had to be cut back.²⁹

Given this kind of shortfall, it is not surprising that some Karafuto labour contractors maintained a relationship with recruiting agents based in the major informal labour markets of mainland Japan, which were often located in and around noted slum districts of major urban areas. A report into the market for informal labour by the Association for National Policy Research in 1925, found that Karafuto labour contractors had connections with recruiters in Tokyo, Hakodate, Otaru, Osaka, Kobe, Yokohama, Nagoya, and Sendai amongst others. This association was based in Tokyo, so the majority of its investigation was focused on conditions in the capital, and it reported in some detail on the questionable activities of recruiting agents, who were operating in and around Tokyo slums – notably in the wards of Shitaya, Asakusa and Honjō. These wards drew large numbers of casual labourers, due to the lower rents available at bunkhouses there, and the existence of large day labour markets (*yoseba*) nearby, where labourers could go to sign up for whatever work was available that day.³⁰ Unlike other recruiting agents, those based in the major urban centres – known as *shūsenya* – did not travel around the countryside looking for labourers, as they did not have to. They were based in the national centres of the informal labour market – some of which still exist in the same locations today – where casual labourers from nationwide gathered, and so they had access to a large pool of labour.³¹ The use of this route for recruiting labourers would have been

²⁹ Tokyo-shi shakai kyoku. *Chihō ninpu-beya ni kansuru chōsa*, pp39-40

³⁰ Kokusaku kenkyūkai. *Kangoku-beya haishi*, p23

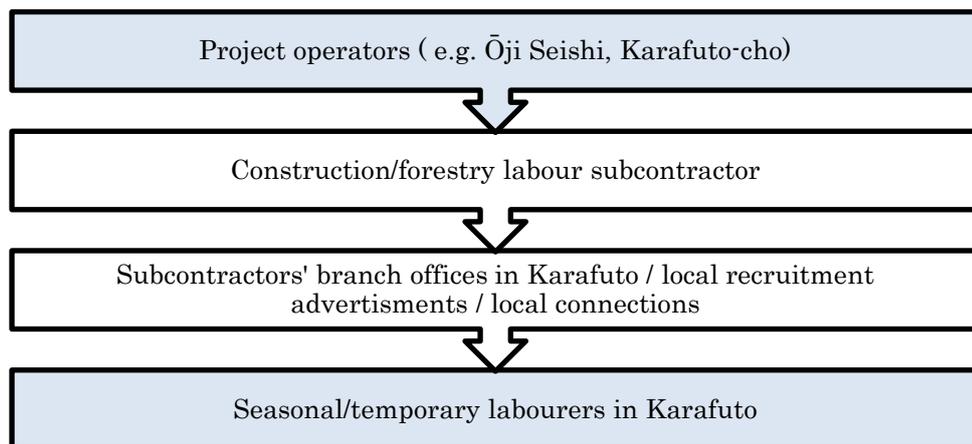
³¹ Fowler, E. (1998) *Sanya blues: laboring life in contemporary Tokyo*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca; Gill, T. (2001) *Men of uncertainty: the social organization of day laborers in contemporary Japan*, State University of New York Press, New York

limited as much as possible by the subcontractors in Karafuto, as it required them to pay an additional fee to these *shūsenya*, but also because there was less certainty about the quality of recruits from the large casual labour markets. As we shall see, issues relating to the quality and reliability of labourers created a dual track system of recruitment for Karafuto projects – presented in figure 6.3 – which had implications for the conditions that awaited recruits in the *hanba* and at the worksite.

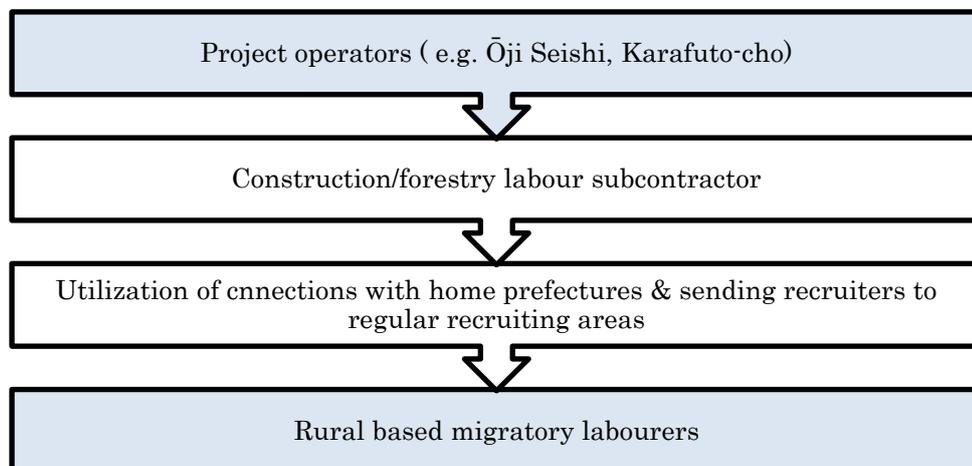
Figure 6.3 - Dual track recruitment system of the construction and forestry industries of Karafuto

Track 1 – ‘Trusted’ Labourers

Recruitment in Karafuto

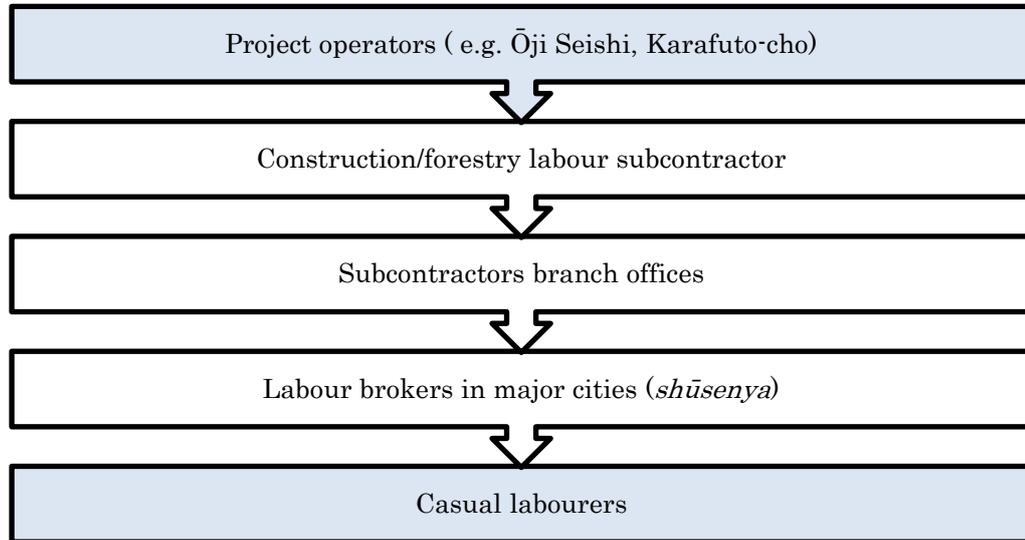


Recruitment in the northeast (Hokkaido, Tohoku & Hokuriku)



Track 2 – ‘Ponbiki’

Recruitment in casual labour markets in mainland Japan



For those recruited in the major recruiting grounds with which the Karafuto based subcontractors had ties of native place, the need to maintain the relationship was stronger on both sides. Recruits were incentivized to fulfill their contracts and work well, as if they did not, they could suffer sanction. Failure to fulfil the terms of their contract would mean that recruiters would not hire them in the following year, and they may even give their village a bad name, putting in danger what could be a valuable source of additional income. On the part of the Karafuto subcontractors, abuse of employees from these regular recruiting grounds could equally give them a bad name, and reduce their capacity to recruit in the same areas in following years. In this way a degree of ‘trust’³² was built up between Karafuto subcontractors, and their major recruiting grounds, based on the potential for a repeat transaction, which raised the

³² For a discussion of this see article entitled ‘Kankoku-beya to sono torishimari’ by Wakaizumi Kōtarō in *Zasshi Karafuto* February 1932, pp56-61

importance of the reputation on both sides of the exchange. This went some way to ensuring better 'quality' labour from these areas, and as a result, reduced the need to use extraordinary methods – i.e. coercion – in order to enforce contracts. With the long-term supply of labour/work a concern for each party in the exchange, a reputation mechanism served to help overcome the principal-agent problem, however, this was often not the case for recruitment in distant informal labour markets, where recruitment proceeded in the knowledge that transactions were most likely to be one-off affairs.

Recruiters based in Japan's main urban areas were not dependent on supplying Karafuto projects. The majority of their recruiting activities focused instead on projects in the area in which they were based, i.e. in Osaka and Tokyo, where they served clients spread across the Kansai and Kanto regions. As the country's main centres of economic activity, Tokyo and Osaka provided a regular stream of projects which required casual or temporary labour. In this sense there was not much incentive to ensure that quality labour would be directed to Karafuto projects, as pleasing regular clients in their own area would have been a more important concern for these recruiting agents. Moreover, the location of these recruiters in close proximity to the nation's largest casual labour markets meant that they could tap an abundant supply of day labourers. This mass of readily available labour meant that recruiters had little need to maintain a relationship with individual casual labourers, as there were always others who could be recruited. This situation was well known to subcontractors in Karafuto, and so they used these recruiting agents based in *yoseba* more out of desperation than as a preferred arrangement.

Casual day labourers who frequented urban *yoseba*, much unlike their counterparts recruited in the northeast, were at a disadvantage as they had little or no information regarding conditions in Karafuto. Another difference was that these casual day labourers were not concerned about their – or their home community's – reputation with Karafuto subcontractors, and as a result they had little incentive to fulfill their contracts.

In terms of the actual recruitment and transportation of labourers from distant *yoseba*, the system was maintained by a lump sum payment made to recruiting agents by Karafuto subcontractors upon the delivery of the labourers to the worksite. This meant the recruiting agents in the cities would first gather a reasonable number of labourers then travel together with them to Karafuto. In order to gather a group of labourers, *shūsenya* sent out staff to go around the *yoseba* and look for casual labourers who needed work, or alternatively they would invite passersby into their office, where they would serve tea and try to get them to sign up – a process they referred to as *ponbiki*.³³ Recruiters in these urban areas also offered a wage advance to entice workers to sign up, which would later be deducted from their wages, along with their transport fee, and other – often undisclosed – charges such as the recruiters' transport costs, and board fees etc.³⁴ There are also reports that these recruiters would be called in by brothels, when a customer who had run up a large tab was unable to pay, and then the customer would be compelled to go to Karafuto – or another destination – with their wage advance used to cover the debt

³³ Yuge. *Hokuhen no rōdō*, p35

³⁴ Yamashita, T. (1995) *Karafuto no tako-beya*, Private Publication, Morioka, p28. This term was also used to describe pimping activity in the sex trade.

incurred at the brothel.

Table 6.2 - Examples of early 1920s construction projects utilizing migratory labourers on which *kangoku-beya* were used

Project type (Location)	No. of labourers required	Wage advance & project length information from a Tokyo <i>Shūsenya</i>
Hydroelectric plant construction (Miyagi)	3,000	30~35 Yen (3 Months)
Railway construction (Yamagata)	4,000	50~60 Yen (4 Months)
Land reclamation (Hokkaido)	300	70 Yen (4-6 Months)
Military road construction approx. 310km (Karafuto)	10,000~15,000	120 Yen (6 Months)

Source: Kokusaku kenkyūkai. *Kangoku-beya haishi*, pp17-21

Table 6.2 lists information that was advertised by *shūsenya* for various projects throughout Japan, which required labour for a number of months. It is worth noting that of all the jobs being advertised at this *shūsenya*, the road building project in Karafuto was both the most lucrative in terms of wage advance, and the largest in scale, requiring over ten thousand labourers. Advertisements like this were about the only information on Karafuto that recruits in distant *yoseba* had, which was in stark contrast to the situation in the northeast, where many had prior experience of migratory labour in Karafuto, and lived in areas where close connections were maintained with Karafuto subcontractors. This served to diffuse knowledge of conditions in the colony, and furthermore, migratory labour from these areas often involved family, friends and

people from the same village travelling together to the worksite in the colony. Travelling and working as part of a group that had common ties was likely to reduce the risks of engaging in migratory labour, because strength in numbers and group solidarity made it less likely that its members would be victimized or exploited at the hands of their labour boss. The same could not be said about the recruits from distant Tokyo and Osaka, who as casual labourers travelled as part of a rather anonymous group of people, who had come to the *yoseba* – usually as individuals – from surrounding regions in search of work. The combination of the higher cost of recruiting these casual labourers – due to the fee Karafuto subcontractors had to pay *shūsenya* – and the lower incentives for contract fulfillment, ensured that recruits from these areas were more likely to be involved in incidents of coercion and desertion.

6.6 Migratory labour and its discontents: *kangoku* / *tako-beya* and runaway labourers

This point is illustrated by a case of three Tokyo students – who were struggling to cover the cost of their studies – and two casual labourers, who had been recruited in Tokyo to work on the Hōshin railway construction project in Karafuto. They had signed-up for the project having been attracted by the high wages on offer, and travelled with their recruiter to the colony. However, on the final leg of their journey to Karafuto – a ferry between Otaru and Ōdomari – they had suddenly felt the attitude of their recruiter change, and became suspicious. Sensing that something was up, and wondering what they had got themselves into, they planned an escape, deciding to jump into the water as the ferry left

Otaru harbor. The escape did not go as planned, and three of the five recruits drowned before they could be rescued.³⁵ The tragedy of this story aside, the question needs to be asked: what was it that they thought they were getting themselves into when they decided to jump overboard? Most likely they feared that they were destined for a worksite utilizing prison-like *hanba*, referred to by most officials as *kangoku-beya* – literally prison cell/room – or popularly as *tako-beya* – literally octopus room.³⁶

Kangoku-beya first emerged in Hokkaido, which like Karafuto had been a remote settlement frontier in the Meiji period. Faced with the need to develop the frontier so as to counter Russian encroachment, the Meiji state was very eager to push through major infrastructural development projects in Hokkaido. The reality was, however, that the settlement of Hokkaido had only been a recent phenomenon, and as a result, most of the island suffered a tremendous labour shortage. In response to this the Hokkaido development agency (*kaitakushi*) utilized convict labour in a number of important railway and road building projects.³⁷ The use of convict labour was eventually phased out, and the development agency took a less direct role in the economy, as there was an easing of the perceived threat from Russia, following the signing of the 1875 Treaty of St. Petersburg. Nonetheless, this was only a temporary easing in relations,

³⁵ Shiraishi, T. (1926) *Kangoku-beya no shinsō to sono bokumeshisaku: idō ninpu kyōkyūjō setchi ni kan suru iken*, Sanshinsha, Tokyo, pp192-194

³⁶ The origin of the term *tako-beya* is not known, although a number of explanations have been put forward. One explanation has it that the debt incurred by labourers and the threat of violence rendered it near impossible to leave the *hanba*, and that this was like trying to escape the clutches of an octopus. Another explanation is that labourers in *tako-beya* were likened to an octopus eating its own tentacles, as through overwork these labourers were essentially slowly eating themselves. See the following for a fuller discussion; Yuge. *Hokuhen no rōdō*

³⁷ Koike, K. (1983) 'Shūjin tako rōdōsha', in Takakura, S. & Kuwabara, M. (eds.) *Hokkaidō no Kenkyū 5 Kin-Gendai*, Saibundō, Osaka

and a new construction boom was soon underway in Hokkaido, especially following on from the establishment of a permanent army division in Asahikawa in 1896, and the extension of Hokkaido's railways in the lead up to the Russo-Japanese war. During this boom a number of private construction subcontractors set up in Hokkaido. Faced with an acute labour shortage, they began to utilize the *hanba* system, whilst incorporating some of the violent and coercive methods of labour management that had been seen on past Hokkaido construction sites, where convict labour had been utilized.³⁸ As Japanese rule commenced in Karafuto in 1905, many of the subcontractors in Hokkaido anticipated a new construction rush further north in Karafuto. Indeed, an examination of the backgrounds of seventy five individual subcontractors for forestry and construction projects, who are listed in an index of Karafuto businessmen published in 1924, confirms this point.³⁹ The profiles in the business index indicate that at least two thirds of Karafuto subcontractors had a background of operating in Hokkaido before coming to Karafuto.⁴⁰ These subcontractors were well-placed to take advantage of new opportunities further north, especially when we consider that they were experienced in operating construction and forestry projects in remote areas. Therefore, it is no surprise to find that the prevailing systems of labour management found in Hokkaido, were essentially transplanted to Karafuto, as construction and forestry subcontracting groups established

³⁸ Hippō. 'Kensetsugyō ni okeru rōshi kankei seido,' pp108-123

³⁹ Tazawa, M. (1924) *Karafuto kigyōka no shishin*, Kōshōdō, Sapporo

⁴⁰ We cannot be sure that the remaining third of subcontractors in the business index did not have a period in Hokkaido prior to coming to Karafuto. There is a possibility that some of them did have Hokkaido experience, but did not include this information in their profile.

branch offices in Japan's latest colony.

Kangoku-beya were prison-like *hanba*, which used extremely coercive methods to retain labour, including violence and debt-bondage. These emerged first in Hokkaido, but could also be found in other frontier regions of Japan's empire, including Karafuto and wartime Manchuria.⁴¹ Working hours at work sites with *kangoku-beya* were often between thirteen and sixteen hours a day, exceeding the twelve hours maximum stipulated in labour regulations. Food at these worksites was invariably of poor quality, with often nothing more than rice gruel, miso, and perhaps a few pickles for most meals. Despite the poor quality of food and accommodation in the *hanba*, the *hanba* head subtracted a large *hanba* fee from labourers' salaries, which covered food and board. Moreover, *hanba* heads ran small stores, overcharging labourers for a number of daily essentials, and goods necessary for use in the workplace, which was again subtracted from labourers' salaries. As mentioned previously, some contemporary social commentators referred to *kangoku-beya* as a 'modern slavery' system, and described conditions within them as 'a living hell.'⁴² They were poorly constructed, filthy places, where riots, fights, intimidation, injury, and cruelty were commonplace, and in some cases murder of runaways was known. A newspaper report from the *Asahi Shinbun* about a labourer who escaped from a *kangoku-beya* gives us a sense of the conditions at that particular *hanba*:

⁴¹ Usually *kangoku-beya* are associated only with Hokkaido and Karafuto. However, many of the labour camps utilized by Japan in World War Two to mobilize Asian and prisoner of war labour resemble those in found in Hokkaidō and Karafuto. For a discussion of labour mobilization in the wartime Japanese empire see; Kratoska, P. (ed.) (2005) *Asian labor in the wartime Japanese empire: unknown histories*, M. E. Sharpe, New York

⁴² Yuge. *Hokuhen no rōdō*, p 1

Man escapes from *Kangoku-beya* (*Asahi Shinbun*, Aug.10, 1927)

(Special telegram form Ōdomari)

‘Around 10a.m. on the ninth a young passerby came into the Ōdomari town hall requesting help. According to the person in charge, the man – aged twenty seven – goes by the name of Sudō, and his registered address is in Tochigi prefecture. He was recruited in May at Yokohama as a general labourer, and then brought to Karafuto to a site near Notoro village, Rūtaka district, to work in a forest in which the felling operations were under the management of a resident of Ōdomari, named Kikuya Gyūnosuke. At the worksite near Notoro, Sudō was not given adequate food, and suffered rough treatment at the hands of his labour boss. Despite developing beriberi, he received no medicine and was still put to work. In the two months before the end of July, Sudō claims that ten of the labourers, whose fate it was to end up at this worksite, have died. The list of those who have died includes Tokyo-born Nakaya (aged 23); Osaka-born Saiki (aged 25) and Nishikawa (aged 21); Kitagawa (25) from Haneda in Tokyo prefecture, and some others, including Korean labourers recruited in Osaka. Faced with this deplorable situation, Sudō had no choice but to steal away from this prison (*kangoku*), and he made his escape. He says that there are others being held at the worksite, but whose condition renders them unable to flee. The police in Ōdomari have been informed of these claims, and are beginning investigations accordingly.’

This report was rare in that it reached the national media, however, the local Karafuto media is also littered with stories about labour troubles, and exposé reports covering incidents at *kangoku-beya*.⁴³ One significant point about the report carried in the *Asahi Shinbun* was that among those listed as victims none were from the major recruiting grounds utilized by Karafuto subcontractors – i.e. Hokkaido and the northeast. Instead, all of the victims came from in and around the major urban centres, in which large casual labour markets were located, suggesting that these labourers were most likely recruited via distant *shūsenya*. Indeed, the Korean labourers mentioned in the report were also recruited in Osaka, which was home to substantial Korean communities, with casual labour among the most common occupations the community's members engaged in.⁴⁴

Reference to the problem of *kangoku-beya* was not limited to newspaper reports. A number of social reformers and commentators also researched and wrote about the problem, usually calling for labour market reform, stricter regulation to protect labourers, and the outright abolition of *kangoku-beya*. Neither the subcontractors nor the individual *hanba* heads, who were involved in large construction and forestry operations in Karafuto, were likely to keep records of their activities, because it could prove incriminating. This means that it is largely thanks to the investigations of the social reformers that we have some sense of how labour was tied to the workplace.

⁴³ KNNS 1913-12-3

⁴⁴ Kawashima, K. (2009) *The proletarian gamble: Korean workers in interwar Japan*, Duke University Press, Durham & London

Table 6.3 – Daily wages and deductions in a Karafuto *hanba* (¥)

	Incoming	Outgoing
Daily wage	1.50	
Daily repayment of wage advance (¥25 paid at outset)		0.20
Straw sandals		0.12
<i>Hanba</i> fees (board, meals, and tool rental)		0.85
Subtotals	1.50	1.23
Remainder	0.27	

Source: Tokyo-shi shakai kyoku. *Chihō ninpu-beya ni kan suru chōsa*, pp36-37

Table 6.4 – Comparison of *hanba* prices and local Karafuto retail prices (¥)

	<i>Hanba</i> Price (¥)	Local Store Retail Price (¥)
Alcohol (Karafuto made)	0.37 (0.306 Liters)	0.30 (0.361 Liters)
Hand Towel	0.20	0.15~0.16
Loincloth (<i>fundoshi</i>)	0.45	0.26
Japanese work shoes (<i>jikatabi</i>)	1.50	1.00~1.15
Socks	0.80	0.50~0.60
Egg	0.12	0.08
Straw Sandals	0.12	0.10

Source: as in table 6.3, pp 37-38

Tables 6.3 & 6.4 present some of the results of the Tokyo Social Affairs Bureau's investigations into the worksites utilizing *hanba*, or *kangoku-beya*. No doubt the investigation was in part motivated by the disproportionate number of Tokyoites falling victim to *kangoku-beya* in places such as Hokkaido and Karafuto. Table 6.3 shows data regarding the wages and deductions of labourers at a Karafuto *hanba*. At this *hanba*

a daily wage of ¥1.50 was reduced to as low as ¥0.39 following compulsory charges – such as the *hanba* fees and the daily repayment of the wage advance which had been made at the beginning of the contract. According to Table 6.4 – which presents a comparison of prices for selected items at *hanba* and regular stores – this remainder of ¥0.39 is barely enough to enable a labourer to purchase 0.3 liters of alcoholic beverage at the *hanba* store, which was priced at ¥0.37. Moreover, as we can see in table 6.3 further non-compulsory deductions were made, such as a ¥0.12 deduction to pay for straw sandals – essential as basic footwear for work – reducing the remainder to a mere ¥0.27, no longer enough for a single drink at *hanba* prices. The price list comparison presented in table 6.4 indicates that labour contractors sought to profit from sales of provisions and equipment to the labourers attached to their worksite. The prices on offer at *hanba* represented a considerable mark-up on local store prices in Karafuto, and for labourers who had little left of their wages after compulsory deductions had been made, it was easy to rack up a huge tab with their *hanba* head just out of the necessity to replace some of their work wear. Debts incurred by labourers provided the excuse that *hanba* heads needed to compel labourers to stay on beyond their initial agreements, and as such served to bind labourers to the worksite.

It is impossible to really know how common *kangoku-beya* – as opposed to ordinary *hanba* – were, however, the newspaper reports appearing in the *KNNS* are not regular enough, and seem to cause too much of a sensation, to suggest that they were the norm. In my own interviews with former Karafuto settlers, only one out of eight interviewees said that they had ever seen a *kangoku-beya*. Nonetheless,

all of these interviewees had at least heard stories of *kangoku-beya* when they were growing up in the colony, and had seen various *hanba* around Karafuto. Not all *hanba* in Karafuto, or Hokkaido for that matter, were *kangoku-beya*, but neither were all of the practices listed above limited to *kangoku-beya*. The testimonies of the seven Akita migratory labour labourers discussed earlier are full of vivid depictions of *hanba* life over a number of years, yet not a single one of them stated that they had experienced staying at a *kangoku-beya*. Their recollections do make note of the high prices, and *hanba* fees charged by *hanba* heads, but for most of them, it was not the exploitation of the *hanba* head which removed a large chunk of their wages. Instead the testimonies suggest that labourers' wages were often squandered on excessive drinking, gambling, and women, either in the *hanba* itself or, having received their final wages, at a red light district somewhere on the journey home. Instead of trouble with their *hanba* head, it was usually trouble with fellow labourers that seemed to be the major source of violence at *hanba*, as fights broke out because of excessive alcohol consumption and gambling disputes.⁴⁵

What set *kangoku-beya* apart from ordinary *hanba* was not the existence of violence within the *hanba*; it was the use or threat of violence as a mechanism for labour control. In *kangoku-beya* runaway labourers would be beaten so as to make an example of them, discouraging others who were contemplating an escape. Additionally, in *kangoku-beya* labourers were warned that it was futile trying to escape, because the subcontractors had people on the lookout in every town around the colony, and the police were on their payroll. Additionally, labourers at

⁴⁵ KNNS 1913-10-30

kangoku-beya were told that they had little chance of survival if they ran deep into the forests of the colony, because they would either be eaten by bears, or suffer from starvation.⁴⁶ The conditions in a limited number of *hanba* aside, the use of physical violence by labour bosses on their labourers does not appear to have been anywhere near the norm at Karafuto worksites. Indeed, the threat of physical violence would have been difficult to maintain given that *hanba* operators would have been far outnumbered by their labourers. Instead of violence, labour bosses attempted to keep labourers attached to the worksite until the end of their contracts by withholding their final wage payments – i.e. the remainder after the initial advance and other charges had been deducted – until the contract was complete. Judging from newspaper articles that discuss labour in Karafuto and cover the local *hanba*, there appear to have been very few quarrels regarding such practices. An advance payment combined with a withholding of wages until the completion of the project could be interpreted as a compromise solution for both parties. In this arrangement the employer does not suffer the maximum loss if the labourer flees the worksite, and on the other side of the exchange, the employee receives an initial down payment, ensuring that they get some return even if the employer flees or refuses final payment. This arrangement, however, did not always prevent abuse and the flight of labourers remained a persistent problem for labour bosses.

We do not have any accurate figures for the number of labourers in Karafuto who, for whatever reason, ran away in the middle of a project.

⁴⁶ This information comes from; Yamashita. *Karafuto no tako-beya*, available at the Tokyo office of the Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei

However, local newspapers do indicate that the problem persisted throughout the colonial era, even if it was not widespread.⁴⁷ Some articles refer to workers who ran away before operations even began, taking their advance wage payment, and then building up a large tab with the labour boss on the journey from the mainland to Karafuto before making an escape.⁴⁸ Other articles detail the theft of the labour bosses' money and personal possessions,⁴⁹ and refer to 'suspicious types,' who walk into the town office pleading for money, food, and shelter, whilst claiming that they were victims of mistreatment at the hands of their labour boss – but are otherwise unable to provide any evidence to support their claims.⁵⁰

Table 6.5 - Construction labourers' circumstances at contract's end in Hokkaido in 1915 & 1925 (percentages in brackets)

	No. of labourers employed	Died on job	Runaway / left	Arrested	Completed contract
1915	16,808 (100)	90 (0.5)	4,817 (28.6)	130 (0.8)	10,907 (64.9)
1925	23,280 (100)	120 (0.5)	4,517 (19.4)	118 (0.5)	18,178 (78.0)

Note: Totals may not add up. Source: Takeya. *Kangoku-beya haishiron*, pp12-13

Table 6.5 presents Hokkaido police data⁵¹ on the circumstances of temporary construction labourers at the end of their contracts. Although this data is from Hokkaido, the similarities of recruiting and labour management systems in Hokkaido and Karafuto mean that it is likely to

⁴⁷ *KNNS* 1916-8-10

⁴⁸ *KNNS* 1911-7-9

⁴⁹ *KNNS* 1914-3-24

⁵⁰ *KNNS* 1910-6-30

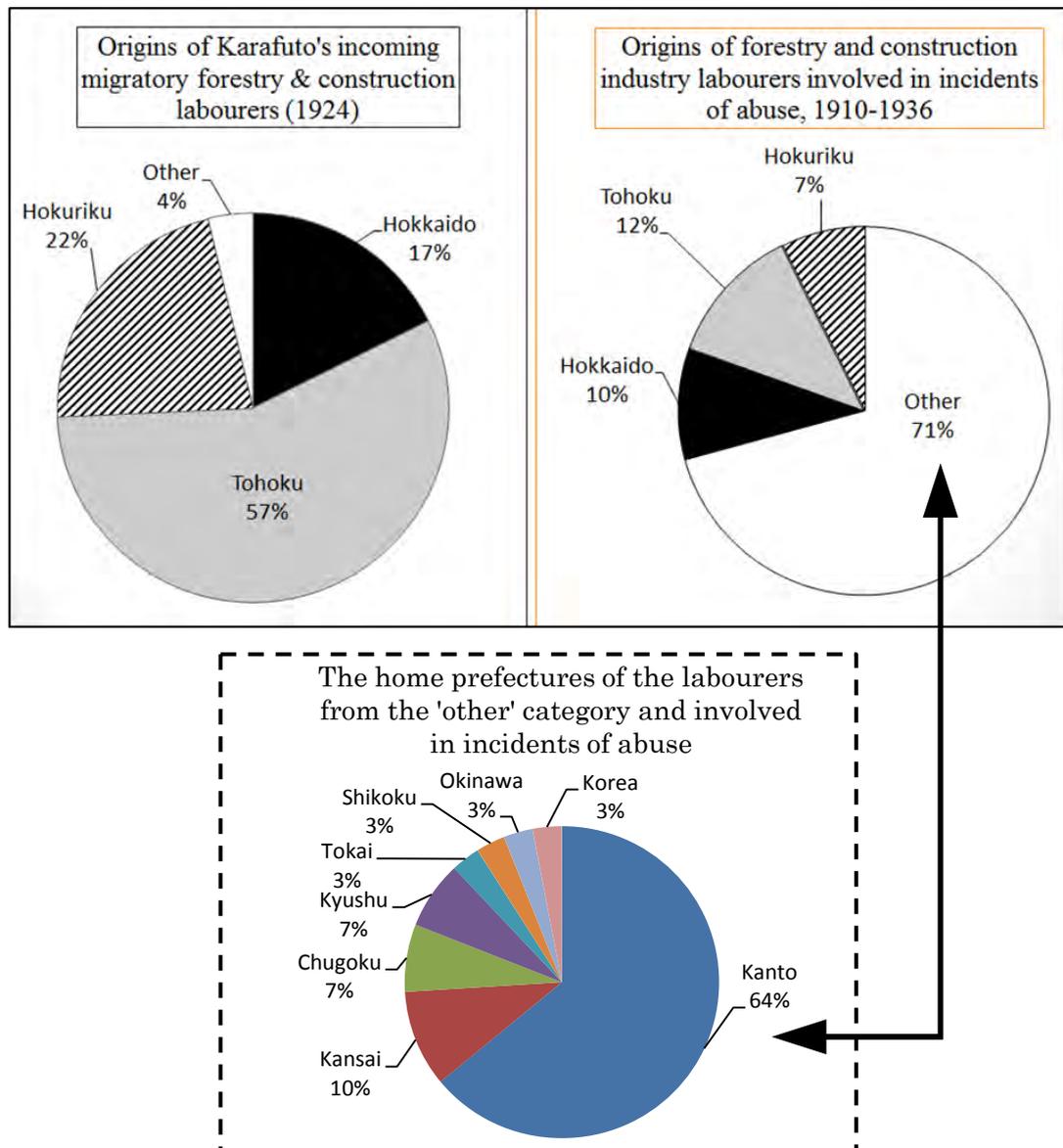
⁵¹ Such data is not available for Karafuto.

be at least indicative of the scale of the problem of runaway labourers in the colony. The data indicate the number of runaway labourers was decreasing in the decade between 1915 and 1925, from 28.6% to 19.4% of the total. However, despite this improvement, the level of labour turnover – at around a fifth of the total – suggests that this was a very inefficient method of maintaining labour. It would be all too easy to attribute these runaways to the prevalence of abusive *kangoku-beya*, even if this was the case for some labourers. Nonetheless, the vast majority of runaways are likely to have been labourers who just got up and left a certain *hanba* if they had found a better alternative. Indeed, one of the informants from Akita admits to doing just that, stating that ‘they were short of workers all over the island, so if you didn’t like the place you were working then off you went, to the next mountain and worksite. Here another labour boss would, without hesitation, lend you thirty to fifty yen in cash as an advance payment, as well as the tools for your work etc. Then after two or three days, if for whatever reason you just couldn’t get along there, then you moved on to the next *hanba*.’⁵² At this point it is worth asking who was running away, and who was suffering abuse? This question is again difficult to answer due to a lack of available police data for Karafuto, and because some of those involved in incidents of abuse would have wished to cover their tracks. Nonetheless, utilizing the reports of such incidents in the *KNNS*, which frequently gave details such as the name, and home prefecture of those involved, we can gain some insight into who was involved in such incidents. The picture that emerges from such an analysis – presented in figure 6.4 – is of an overwhelming predominance

⁵² Nozoe & Tamura. *Karafuto dekasegi ringyōhen*, p59

of those from prefectures 'other' than the regular recruiting grounds of Hokkaido, Tohoku, and Hokuriku, in incidents of abuse and worksite desertion.

Figure 6.4 - Home prefectures of migratory labourers in the forestry and construction industries who were reported in the colonial press to have run away or suffered abuse, 1910-1936



Source: the upper-right hand and bottom charts are constructed using 114 reports from the *KNNS* in the years 1910-1936; the upper left-hand chart is the same as presented in figure 6.2

Figure 6.4 shows, quite clearly, that even though these ‘other’ prefectures accounted for a minor part of the of the migratory labour force – at 4% of the total – it was recruits from these prefectures that made up a vastly disproportionate share of those involved in incidents of reported abuse or desertion – at 71% of the total. Within this other category the Kanto area – most likely recruits from Tokyo’s *yoseba* – accounts for 64% of the labourers involved in incidents, whilst the Kansai area accounts for a further 10%. The share of those recruited in the Kansai area is likely to be higher than these data suggest, as Osaka – where the Kansai’s largest *yoseba* were located – had sizeable communities of migrants from Korea⁵³ and Okinawa,⁵⁴ and drew in labourers from the surrounding regions of Shikoku and Chugoku. In stark contrast to this ‘other’ category, labourers from the regular recruiting grounds in Hokkaido, Tohoku, and Hokuriku were underrepresented in incidents of abuse, as they accounted for 96% of the migratory labour force in Karafuto, but less than a third of that number of incidents – at 29% of the total.

Such evidence provides grounds for the idea, put forward earlier in this chapter, that a dual structure in the migratory labour market for Karafuto existed. One track of the labour market focused on casual labour markets in urban areas that were not well connected to Karafuto, such as Tokyo and Osaka, and recruits from these areas were much more likely to suffer abuse, or break off their contracts by fleeing. In contrast the northeast of Japan, which was well-integrated with Karafuto, provided

⁵³ Weiner, M. (1989) *The origins of the Korean community in Japan 1910-1923*, Manchester University Press, Manchester

⁵⁴ Rabson, S. (2012) *The Okinawan diaspora in Japan: crossing the borders within*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

the regular recruiting grounds for Karafuto subcontractors. This integration came about through personal connections between Karafuto-based subcontractors and these localities, and operated without the added intermediary of the *shūsenya* found in Tokyo and Osaka. Connections with regular recruiting grounds were based on the dual pillars of native place connections and mutual dependence, as both parties sought repeat transactions in the future. In order to secure a repeat transaction it is essential for both parties of an exchange to maintain their reputation. This reputation mechanism provided a disincentive to the application of abusive methods of labour management on the part of employers, and reduced the likelihood that labourers would abandon the worksite before the end of their contract. The result was that regular recruiting grounds in the northeast of Japan provided Karafuto worksites with a comparatively (self) disciplined workforce, who were in turn much less likely to be found in coercive *hanba* such as the *kangoku-beya*.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to further our understanding of the workings of the migratory labour market in prewar Japan. It has approached this task by focusing on an important – yet rarely considered – component of that market: the forestry and construction industries in Japan's far north. Whilst it is clear that migratory labour was an important part of Karafuto's socio-economy, contributing to economic development and indirectly colonial settlement (see chapter five), this chapter has sought to understand how migratory labourers were recruited and managed.

As Karafuto was a remote, sparsely populated territory, operators

of large-scale projects in the colony had no real choice but to utilize migratory labourers from distant locations. The strong bargaining power of labourers based on the scarcity of their labour, and the abundance of available alternative work in Karafuto, increased the likelihood that labourers would challenge their boss. Another result of the relative scarcity of labour was the comparatively high wage rates on offer in the colony for incoming workers. The high cost of labour, however, also served to increase the potential loss for employers should their labourers decide to leave the job before the completion of a contract. In response to this situation Karafuto labour bosses adopted the *hanba* system, especially in the form in which it had developed in Hokkaido a generation earlier. The *hanba* system gave labour bosses an enhanced ability to monitor and regulate the everyday lives of workers, and was based on contracts which bonded labourers with advance wage payments. The *hanba* system also provided space for several coercive measures designed to prevent worker flight from emerging, including the creation of debt at the *hanba* store, a high charge for food and board, the withholding of wages until the completion of operations, strict supervision, and in extreme cases physical violence. *Hanba* in which physical violence was utilized for the purposes of labour management appear to have been in the minority, and evidence presented in this chapter suggests that they were associated with the 4% of the work force that hailed from prefectures to the south of Tohoku and Hokuriku. This allows us to tentatively suggest that in the majority of Karafuto *hanba* at least, conditions were not as appalling as suggested in the reports of social reformers, who, being based in the capital, were more likely to cover those recruited there.

At Karafuto construction and forestry sites the work was tough, but for most migratory labourers the reward justified the effort and hardships. Indeed, some migratory labourers suggested that they preferred going to a *hanba* than spending the whole year at home.⁵⁵ The lifestyle of migratory labourers often involved drinking, singing, and gambling, providing much excitement for those used to a life in their home village. Moreover, whilst the family at home could benefit from a wage advance, the migratory labourer could look forward to receiving the final lump sum at the end of the contract, part of which they could splurge on a visit to the pleasure quarters on the way home.

Nonetheless, even if *kangoku-beya* were rare, they never really disappeared in Karafuto.⁵⁶ Indeed, as war broke out between Japan and China in the late 1930s things undoubtedly took a turn for the worse at Karafuto *hanba*. The war economy demanded more from Karafuto's natural resources – especially coal – but also intensified the labour shortage, as young men amongst the Karafuto settler community, and those who normally came to the colony as migratory labourers, were drafted into the military. In order to deal with this situation, forced labour camps resembling *kangoku-beya* became the norm, and required the mobilization of thousands of forced labourers – most of whom came from Korea, only to be left behind in Sakhalin as the Japanese empire evaporated.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Nozoe & Tamura. *Karafuto dekasegi ringyōhen*

⁵⁶ Shiraishi. *Kangoku-beya no shinsō*

⁵⁷ As a result the Korean population of present day Sakhalin forms its largest ethnic minority. Hokkaidō Shinbunsha (1988) *Sokoku he! Saharin ni nokosareta hitotachi*, Hokkaidō shinbunsha, Sapporo

Chapter 7

Concluding remarks

This study has focused on the colonial settlement of Karafuto, with an approach that aimed to simultaneously ‘populate the Japanese colonial landscape with living, acting individuals,’¹ and bring Karafuto out of the footnotes of the history of the Japanese colonial empire. In order to complete this task, the study has examined the processes that underlay the movement of over 400,000 people from mainland Japan, and their settlement in its northernmost colony over the period 1905-1941. The overall guiding principle in this study has been to utilize, wherever possible, source materials which bring us closest to the agents involved in these historical processes. The result has been a study which incorporates individual testimony and experience, alongside locally produced guides and documents, daily reports from the colonial press, as well as more conventional sources such as government publications.

Migration to Karafuto was the result of a number of circumstances and motivating factors, however, the main patterns in this migratory flow are clear. In chapter three of this study, an analysis of the individual experiences of over two hundred settlers demonstrated that migration and settlement in Karafuto are best understood as an extension of the settlement of Hokkaido. This argument echoes that put forward by Miki Masafumi in an earlier article,² but in this study, Miki’s argument has been validated by the use of a larger and more diverse sample. The

¹ Peattie, M. (1986) ‘Introduction’, in *The Japanese colonial empire 1895-1945*, Myers, R. & Peattie, M. (eds.) Princeton University Press, Princeton, p52

² Miki, M. (2003) ‘Nōgyō imin ni miru Karafuto to Hokkaidō’, *Rekishi chirigaku* 45/1

analysis of this sample suggests that at least two thirds of Karafuto settlers had experience of Hokkaido, either living and/or working there, before venturing further north.³ Furthermore, an analysis of settlers' origins and intermediate migrations shows that network effects in migration were relatively weak, in both Hokkaido and in settlers' home prefectures. The geographical dispersion of settlers' hometowns and intermediate migrations, across northern Japan and Hokkaido, indicates that there was a wide dispersion of information on Karafuto in these regions, and that connections with the colony were also widely spread.

Whilst it is clear that the typical Karafuto settler was not migrating for the first time, in terms of the family background and age of migrants when coming to the colony, there was more diversity in the settler group. Moreover, the circumstances/reasons for migrating to the colony were also diverse, and this study has tentatively suggested that approximately a quarter of settlers migrated to Karafuto because of push factors. Nonetheless, knowledge of the prospects in the colony was more prominent among the reasons settlers migrated, and this knowledge was usually obtained through either first-hand experience of Karafuto during a period of migratory labour, or through the word of mouth of trusted sources. Evidence from chapter five, which examined the role of the fishing industry in colonial settlement, underlined this point, stressing that migratory labour circuits allowed potential settlers to gain first-hand experience of the colony, and spread information on conditions there in their home prefectures. Furthermore, migratory labour brought tens of

³ See figure 3.6 on page 125

thousands of people to the colony every year, serving to keep Karafuto connected with the areas that provided the majority of Karafuto's residents.

Although this study could not develop the following theme in full – as it would require another study entirely – it has hinted that the people of the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions were extremely mobile, and actively engaged in northward bound colonial settlement and migratory labour circuits. This depiction comes in contrast to prevailing notions that these regions were remote, poorly connected, economically backward, and populated by people who were bound to their native place.⁴ The prevailing notion that the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions were economically backward has been used to explain the low levels of engagement of their people in migration, especially to the modern industrial centres of the Kanto and Kansai regions, as well as to Japan's colonies and beyond.⁵ I have suggested that better incorporation of northern destinations, such as Hokkaido and Karafuto, into the wider picture allows us to challenge this stereotype. Indeed, when these territories are considered, the people of Japan's northeast suddenly appear resourceful and dynamic agents in the prewar Japanese empire, only with their activities focused northward.

This study also examined the fortunes of agricultural and fishing settlements in Karafuto, directly comparing the degree to which they were

⁴ Lewis, M. (1992) *Rioters and citizens: mass protest in imperial Japan*, University of California Press, California; Lewis, M. (2000) *Becoming apart: national power and local politics in Toyama 1868-1954*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA; Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*, Yamakawa, Tokyo

⁵ Shimizu, Y. (1981) 'Tōhoku suitō tansaku chitai ni okeru nōson rōdōryoku no ryūshutsu kōzō', *Shakai kagaku kenkyū* 32/4 & 33/1; Okabe. *Umi wo watatta Nihonjin*

‘settled,’ and examining the effectiveness of the settlement policy of the colonial administration. In chapter four of this study, I argued that the colonial administration’s vision for the development of Karafuto as an agricultural settler colony did not become a reality, and by implication, agricultural settlement was largely a failure. Karafuto’s agricultural households were dependent on non-agricultural activities – even in the case of what were considered model farmers and agricultural villages – allowing us to question whether they could accurately be described as farmers at all. Furthermore, agriculture remained only a minor part of the overall colonial economy, providing few economic linkages to other sectors, and ultimately produced villages characterized by a low rate of long-term settlement. The colonial administration’s persistent focus on agricultural settlement as the cornerstone of its settlement policy, despite the sector’s poor record in this regard, highlights a considerable gap between colonial policies and outcomes. In this sense, Karafuto provides a case which allows us to question whether Japanese colonial administrations were ‘generally effective,’ a notion that is otherwise pervasive in the historical literature.⁶ The conclusion here is that, rather than being effective, the colonial administration of Karafuto could better be described as wasteful, inflexible, and stubborn – at least with regards to its policy of colonial settlement. The colonial administration of Karafuto stuck doggedly to a vision of an agricultural colony even as the results of agricultural settlement continued to disappoint, remaining largely aloof to the realities of colonial settlement in Karafuto.

⁶ Peattie, for example, argues that there was a ‘general effectiveness of Japanese colonial administration’ throughout the colonial empire: Peattie. ‘Introduction’, p27

Chapter five highlighted the continued importance of the fishing and marine products industry in the colonial economy, and how as a base-industry it provided one of the main foundations for colonial settlement in Karafuto. The direct, indirect and demand impacts of fishing on the wider colonial economy dominated in the early years, but even as the colonial economy expanded and diversified over time, fishing maintained a prominent position. Fishing was associated with migratory labour, and as a result the colonial administration believed that this brought to fishing settlements a sense of impermanence, which was then radiated onto colonial society as a whole. In this case too, the colonial administration of Karafuto failed to comprehend the reality, focusing rather shortsightedly on the constant inflows and outflows of migratory labourers as a negative phenomenon. Instead, migratory labour, which was extensively utilized by fishing settlements, served as a mechanism to bring people to the colony, acquaint them with it, and then provide a basis from which to settle. Moreover, as chapter four made clear, seasonal employment in fishing was also providing an essential source of supplementary income for farming families, who were otherwise struggling to maintain themselves in Karafuto.

Chapter six of this study continued with the theme of migratory labour, but departed somewhat from the examination of colonial settlement. Part of the reason for this was to add a corrective to the argument, put forward in previous chapters, that migratory labour was an essential mechanism for colonial settlement. Instead, chapter six examined the darker side of the migratory labour market, with an

analysis of the recruitment and management of labourers in Karafuto's forestry and construction industries, which were known to utilize coercive labour practices. This chapter found that a dual track recruitment system for Karafuto worksites existed. In this system, recruits from northeast Japan, who were well connected with the colony, provided a regular stream of labour for Karafuto worksites, and likewise, Karafuto worksites provided a regular source of employment for communities in northeastern Japan. The long-term relationship established between Karafuto-based project operators and their regular recruiting grounds was based on mutual dependence – for labour or work – and ties of native place, meaning that both sides were unlikely to cheat or abuse each other, as doing so would damage their reputation, jeopardizing their future ability to secure labour or work. In contrast, recruits from outside of northeastern Japan were generally poorly connected with the colony, decreasing the importance of reputation in exchange for both parties, and as a result, increasing the likelihood that they would end up at a worksite in Karafuto where violence and coercion were used to maintain labour discipline. Chapter six showed that it was rare to find migratory labourers from the northeast caught at such a worksite, implying that this darker side of the migratory labour market was unlikely to have significantly discouraged settlers from the northeast to go to Karafuto, although admittedly it may have done so in regions further afield.

This study has been limited in time and scope, leaving plenty of room for future research. In this study I have analysed migratory labour and colonial settlement in Karafuto – and the links between the two –

until 1941, but this is only half of the story of migration for the 400,000 or so Japanese who came to reside in the colony. As was briefly outlined in chapter one, which outlined the history of Karafuto, almost all of Karafuto's Japanese population was repatriated in the wake of Japan's defeat. What the evaporating empire meant for these people, and how they adjusted in postwar Japan, are also topics which deserve academic attention.⁷ In future research it is my intention to take up this case.

⁷ Some work has begun in this regard from the angle of repatriates 'memory' of the colony, see: Bull, J. (2014) *The making of Karafuto repatriates*, Unpublished PhD thesis Hokkaido University, Sapporo

Select Chronology

The following select chronology is based on the following two works:
Stephan, J. (1971) *Sakhalin: a history*, OUP; Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei
(1995) *Karafuto Nenpyō*, Zenkoku Karafuto Renmei Tokyo

- | | | |
|------|---------|--|
| 1855 | 7 Feb | Treaty of Shimoda, Japan and Russia begin formal relations and decide on a border between Etorofu and Urup in the Kuril chain but do not decide upon sovereignty over Sakhalin |
| 1875 | 7 May | Treaty of St Petersburg gives Russia possession of Sakhalin and Japan possession of the entire Kuril chain |
| 1905 | 7 July | Japanese troops land on Sakhalin |
| | 31 July | Sakhalin Island completely occupied by Japan |
| | 1 Aug | Military administration established on the Island |
| | 16 Aug | The first passenger ship bound for Karafuto, the Tagomaru, departs Otaru (Hokkaido) |
| | 23 Aug | Civil administration of Karafuto established in Ōdomari to support the military administration |
| | 5 Sept | Treaty of Portsmouth grants Japan Sakhalin Island south of the 50 th Parallel which becomes the colony of Karafuto |
| 1906 | 1 Dec | Railway line connecting Ōdomari and Toyohara opens |
| 1907 | April | Military administration is abolished and a civil colonial administration comes into force |

- 1908 24 Aug The colonial administration of Karafuto relocates to Toyohara which now becomes the capital
- 1910 29 July The Karafuto grand shrine opens
- 1911 17 Dec Railway extension from Toyohara to Sakaehama is completed
- 1912 Autumn Colonial Exhibition takes part in Ueno park (Tokyo)
- 1913 Dec Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Oji in Tomarioru
- 1914 Apr Kawakami coal mine (Mitsui) opens and the railway from Toyohara is extended there
- Dec Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Oji in Ōdomari
- 1917 Jan Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Oji in Toyohara
- Apr Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Fuji in Ochiai
- 1918 May Construction begins on a railway linking Honto and Noda on Karafuto's west coast
- June Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Oji in Maoka
- 1919 The number of marine product canning factories/workshops reaches 145
- 1920 July Japanese troops occupy Soviet Sakhalin following the massacre of Japanese at Nikolaevsk (the Nikolaevsk incident) earlier in the year

- 1 Nov The west coast railway between Honto and Noda opens
Construction begins on extensions to Ōdomari harbour
- 1921 Feb The paper and pulp factory in Tomarioru burns down in
a fire
- 17 Sept Construction begins on the Hōshin railway line to
connect the capital Toyohara with the principal west
coast port Maoka
- Nov Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Oji
in Noda
- 1922 Large scale damage to forests caused by a disease spread
by moths, the damaged trees are still suitable for lumber
so felling operations are expanded
Karafuto becomes the most important source of lumber
for the Japanese economy a position it maintains until
1934
- 1923 1 May The Chi-haku (Wakkanai-Ōdomari) passenger shipping
line is established
- Sept Following the great Kanto earthquake
- 1924 17 Apr The household register law (*kosekihō*) is extended to
Karafuto making it possible to hold permanent domicile
in the colony
- May Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Oji
in Shiritoru
- 1925 May Japanese troops pull out and return Soviet Sakhalin,
Japan gains oil exploration and development rights

around Soviet Sakhalin

- 5 June Construction begins on a railway to link Rūtaka with the
Ōdomari-Toyohara line
- 6-9 Aug Crown prince Hirohito visits Karafuto
- 1 Oct Construction begins on a railway between Ochiai and
Shiritoru
- Nov Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established by Oji
in Esutoru
- 1926 1 Oct The railway extension to Rūtaka is completed
- 25 Nov Construction begins on extending the railway from Noda
to Tomarioru
- 1927 20 Nov The railway extension to Shiritoru is completed
- Operations begin at an Esutoru coal mine
- 1928 3 Sept The entirety of the Hōshin railway line is completed
linking Toyohara and Maoka
- The extensions of Ōdomari harbour are completed
- 1929 May Forest fires break out near Esutoru and Rūtaka 39
deaths, 173 injured and 1079 destroyed buildings are
reported
- Aug Mitsubishi mining begins operations at a coal mine in
Horonai
- Mining begins at Naikawa coal mine and construction
begins on Maoka harbour extensions
- 1930 Sept Construction begins on extending the railway from
Honto to Horonai coal mine

- 1931 1 Oct Railway extension to Horonai coal mine is complete
- 1932 20 May Strike at Ōji's Esutoru factory
- 1933 18 May Ōji, Fuji and Karafuto Kōgyō paper and pulp companies merge under Ōji's name.
- The 15 year development plan for Karafuto is drawn up and anticipates the rapid development of mining and agriculture.
- 1934 June Ainu resident in Karafuto are incorporated into the family registration system.
- 1935 12 Dec It becomes possible to telephone the Japan mainland from Karafuto.
- Construction begins on harbour extensions at Honto and Shisuka.
- A number of coal mines (notably Chinnai and Nayoshi) open.
- Aug Rayon, Paper and pulp factory in Karafuto is established in Shisuka.
- 1936 Aug Railway extension to Shisuka completed.
- 1937 29 June Toyohara officially becomes a city.
- 1938 3 Jan Famous actress Okada Yoshiko comes to Karafuto with her lover and crosses the border to the Soviet Union to start a new life.
- 1939 20 Nov Nomonhan incident which sees clashes between Soviet and Japanese forces in Mongolia, 60 soldiers from Karafuto are among the Japanese dead.

- 1940 8 Feb Samukawa Kōtarō from Karafuto wins the prestigious Akutagawa prize for his novel *The Poacher*.
- 1941 13 Apr Soviet-Japanese neutrality pact.
- 22 Apr Results from census of previous year are published indicating the population of Karafuto exceeds 414,000.
- 3 June Construction begins on a railway extension from Kushunnai to Esutoru.
- 1943 1 April Karafuto is administratively integrated with mainland Japan (*naichi*).
- 1944 4 Feb Military airport built near Kamishisuka.
- 1 Oct Railway extensions from Shisuka to Koton completed.
- 1945 July United States torpedoes a few ships in Karafuto ports and the ferry service between Hokkaido and Karafuto is cancelled as a result.
- 6 Aug The United States drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima
- 9 Aug The Soviet Union enters the war against Japan and a second atomic bomb is dropped by the United States (this time on Nagasaki).
- 10 Aug The Soviet Union begins its attack on Karafuto.
- 14 Aug Japan accepts the Potsdam declaration indicating its surrender.
- 15 Aug Emperor Hirohito announces Japan has lost the war via a radio broadcast.
- 22 Aug Three ships (Ogasawara-maru, Shinko-maru Taitō-maru) carrying evacuees from Karafuto are

torpedoed by a Soviet submarine. 1,558 out of the 5,082 individuals who were aboard the ships died, whilst 150 were still missing after rescue efforts came to a close.

- 23 Aug The Soviet Union announces its occupation of Karafuto.
- 1947 27 Feb Soviet Union formally decides to annex Karafuto and the Kuril islands.
- 1949 June The official repatriation of Japanese from Sakhalin comes to an end.
- 1951 28 Apr The San Francisco peace treaty is concluded, and Japan renounces claims to territories obtained through aggression. The Soviet Union is not among the signatories.

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<i>Otaru Shinbun</i>	小樽新聞	<i>OS</i>
<i>Tokyo Mainichi Shinbun</i>	東京毎日新聞	<i>TMNS</i>
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<i>Shokumin Kōhō</i>	植民公報	
<i>Shokumin Sekai</i>	植民世界	
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Interviews

In order to ensure confidentiality I told all my informants that I would not be referring to them by name in my study. I have named each informant with either of their initials followed by ‘san.’ My interviews were conducted as follows:

Interview with Y-san, December 2011, Yokohama

Interview with W-san, January 2012, Tokyo

Interview with K-san, February 2012, Tokyo

Interview with I-san, February 2012, Tokyo

Interview with H-san, Feb 2012, Tokyo

Interview with N-san, March 2012, Sapporo

Interview with S-san, March 2012, Sapporo

Interview with T-san, April 2012, Tokyo

Group interview with N-san, K-san, and I-san, April 2012, Tokyo

Interview (follow-up) with N-san, May 2012, Sapporo

Interview with O-san, May 2012, Sapporo

Interview with A-san, May 2012, Otaru

Interview with M-san, May 2012 Wakkanai

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KY Karafuto-chō (1909-1930) *Karafuto yōran*, Karafuto-chō, Toyohara

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