

# Significance of Promoting International Exchange through Tourism in Light of the Emigrants' History<sup>1)</sup>

## -A New Relationship between *Nikkei* People and People Living in the Homeland

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This paper discusses the significance of promoting international exchange through tourism between 'emigration prefectures' and the host countries. Over 100 years have passed since the first emigrants crossed the Pacific Ocean to various areas of the world from Japan, producing so-called *Nikkei* (Japanese heritage) people around the world. Wakayama is one of the prefectures which produced a large number of emigrants. The number of people who remember the history of our ancestors is however decreasing rapidly, and a method to record it for future is urgently needed. The paper suggests that it would be useful to develop a new relationship between *Nikkei* people and people living in the hometown based on the emigrants' history and that efforts to strengthen such ties would result not only in accurate documentation of the emigration history but also promoting tourism and mutual understanding.

Keywords: History of emigration, International exchange through tourism, Association for *Nikkei* people

### 1. Introduction

In the history of Japanese emigration, certain regions of the country have sent forth a remarkable number of emigrants. Along with Okinawa and Hiroshima prefectures, Wakayama Prefecture is one such region identified as an 'emigration prefecture'. Throughout the pre- and post-war periods, it held the 5th or 6th position nationally in terms of the number of emigrants, with areas of high emigration known as 'emigrant mother villages'. Wakayama is also the birthplace of many innovative and well-known emigrants including Fred Isamu Wada,<sup>2)</sup> who worked tirelessly to bring the Olympics to Tokyo in 1964, and Minami Yaemon,<sup>3)</sup> who gained fame as the 'Lettuce King' of Santa Maria, California, USA.

The history of Japanese emigration began in 1868, the year of Meiji Restoration, when 153 emigrants went to Hawaii to work in the sugar cane fields. Although these particular emigrants made the voyage for work, varied factors drove numerous people to leave their hometowns for the USA, Canada, Australia and South American countries such as Brazil. Emigration continued until briefly after World War II, more than 100 years after it began. Having settled in their respective

destinations, the emigrants established *Nikkei* (Japanese heritage) communities all around the world, and currently the 6th generation lives in Hawaii. With each passing generation, for *Nikkei* people, Japan and Wakayama prefecture are becoming their 'roots' rather than a 'hometown' where they are born. Similarly, in Japan, which now itself accepts foreign workers to fill in its labor shortage, the history of the first-generation emigrants who made the long ocean voyage and the second-generation emigrants who were born in distant lands is gradually being forgotten, even in the emigrants' mother prefectures. It is clear that as time moves forward, passing down the history of emigration will become increasingly difficult. From a historical viewpoint, reclaiming and recording these memories is an urgent task, even more so because there are still individuals capable of telling this history. Additionally, we must formulate strategies for preserving precious historical material and artefacts such as diaries, letters and everyday items as aspects of a regional legacy, before their inheritors decide to discard them as worthless.

Although the history of emigration lies in the past, it is a vital tool for establishing the present bond between *Nikkei* people worldwide and the

people of the mother villages and prefectures. A global exchange between the two parties will allow Japanese people who visit former emigrant destinations to witness the pioneering spirit, struggles and endeavours of their predecessors -aspects which are not ordinarily visible. On the other hand, by visiting Japan, the motherland of their ancestors, and the mother prefectures or villages from which their ancestors originated, *Nikkei* descendants will gain a stronger sense of their roots and perhaps even have an opportunity to establish a second home in the land of their grandparents.

This article first gives a brief overview of the emigrants who travelled from Wakayama Prefecture to destinations all around the world. Next, it describes the small number of institutions in regions with deep ties to Wakayama Prefecture, as well as in Wakayama Prefecture itself, which aim to preserve and pass down history. The article also discusses other efforts related to emigrants or emigration. Furthermore, on the basis of the example of Okinawa Prefecture, one of the prominent emigrant prefectures in Japan, this article examines the influence and significance of the *Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival*, an event held to strengthen ties between *kenkeijin* - members of *Nikkei* society who share the same hometown. Finally, this article addresses the question of how to form a regional legacy by passing down emigrant history in Wakayama Prefecture and how to strengthen the networks of the associations of people from Wakayama Prefecture in various parts of the world. In doing so, this article examines the possibilities and significance of international exchange through tourism and cultural exchange with the organisers of prefectural associations, as well as exchange targeting young generations responsible for the global society of the future.

## **2. Worldwide Emigration from Wakayama Prefecture**

Wakayama Prefecture is located on the western side of the Kii Peninsula, the largest peninsula in Japan, bordering Osaka Prefecture to the north, Nara Prefecture to the east and Mie Prefecture, which extends in a long and narrow line, from north to south. With mountains lying to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west, the prefecture is

naturally blessed with a warm climate. The areas referred to as 'emigrant mother villages', which sent emigrants to the USA, Hawaii, Canada and Australia, include Kushimoto-chō, Taiji-chō and the neighbouring areas of Higashimuro District, as well as Mio, Mihama-chō, Hidaka District - all located along the coast with a view of the Pacific Ocean. Here, I will briefly describe the former emigrant destinations, including Brazil.

### **2.1 USA–Hawaii**

Emigration from Japan began in 1868 (the first year of the Meiji Era). The first Japanese people to settle overseas are said to be 153 contract emigrants who made the voyage to Hawaii to work in the sugar cane plantations. Subsequently, in February 1885, the first wave of 953 government-contracted emigrants arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii, of which 22 were from Wakayama Prefecture. Later, in June 1885, a second wave of 983 government-contracted emigrants made the voyage. Of these, 33 were from Wakayama Prefecture.

In 1900, the Kingdom of Hawaii was annexed by the USA, and the Japanese were able to freely travel and choose their lines of work. Consequently, many fishermen from the Kinan (South Wakayama) region, including Kushimoto, put their techniques and knowledge to use, becoming involved in the fishing industry and greatly contributing to the subsequent development of the Hawaiian fishing industry.

### **2.2 USA–California**

Many emigrants who travelled to the USA made the voyage to California because the state welcomed emigrants owing to a shortage of labour in the newly settled areas. Many people from Taiji and its surrounding areas chose California. The occupations were varied, ranging from domestic to farm labour; however, most of the emigrants from Wakayama Prefecture took advantage of their skills as fishers. Beginning in 1900, a community consisting of approximately 3,000 Japanese people was established on Terminal Island (East San Pedro), located off Los Angeles Harbor. Most of them were first-generation emigrants from Wakayama Prefecture; the males worked on the sea as fishermen while the females worked in canneries.

### 2.3 Canada–Steveston

Emigration from Mio to Canada began with Kuno Gihei's<sup>4)</sup> journey to Steveston on the west coast in 1888. After seeing a large school of salmon in the Fraser River, he invited his fellow villagers to join him. This was the beginning of group emigration centred on fishing. People who returned to Japan following their success in Steveston spoke Japanese mixed with English and brought back Western lifestyles. Thus, Mio came to be referred to as 'America Village [Amerika-mura]' Although 'Amerika' in Japanese generally means USA today, this term loosely referred to regions in North America (See 4.2 for more detail).

### 2.4 Australia–Thursday Island, Darwin, Broome

Emigration to Australia began around 1878. Nakayama Kiryū<sup>5)</sup> from Wakayama Prefecture and his fellows, known as the pioneers of the development of Thursday Island<sup>6)</sup> travelled to north coasts of Australia in 1882. The main job performed by these early emigrants was harvesting pearl oysters which were used to make high-class buttons. In particular, Darwin, Broome and Thursday Island were renowned areas for harvesting these precious shells. In 1897, the number of Japanese residing in Australia exceeded 2,000. The number of people working to harvest oysters on Thursday Island reached 900, and approximately 80% of them came from Wakayama Prefecture. Many of them came from Taiji, Shimosato and other locations in the Kinan region and worked as highly skilled divers.

### 2.5 Brazil–Matsubara emigrant area

On 28 April 1908, Japanese emigration to Brazil began when 781 Japanese contract emigrants set out from the Kobe harbour aboard the Kasatomaru to work in the coffee fields. Emigration from Wakayama to Brazil began in 1916, but was temporarily halted when the Brazilian government broke off diplomatic relations with the Axis Powers in 1942; the emigration resumed in 1953, when diplomatic relations recommenced after the end of the war. On July 7 of the same year, the first group of post-war emigrants from Wakayama to Brazil, a total of 112 people from 22 families, entered the Dourados colony in the state of Mato Grosso. This was also referred to as the Matsubara emigrant area, after Matsubara Yasutarō,<sup>7)</sup> who contributed

to the revival of emigration after the war. In total, both before and after the war, approximately 6,000 people from 1,600 families emigrated from Wakayama to Brazil. Japanese emigrants have particularly contributed to the agricultural development in Brazil.

The above is a summary of areas known as destinations for emigrants from Wakayama Prefecture. The distinguishing characteristics of the emigrants may be summarised as follows: (1) Most emigrants possessed the techniques and knowledge for fishing and diving. In many cases, this was due to a lifestyle shaped by the geographical conditions of the emigrant mother villages in the coastal region of the Kii Peninsula. (2) Invitations by earlier emigrants helped forming the communities of people from the same areas at emigrant destinations, indicating that they shared strong geographic connections. (3) Key people such as Kuno Gihei, who pioneered emigration to Canada, and Matsubara Yasutarō, who contributed to the revival of emigration to Brazil after the war, played important roles.

## 3. Preserving and Passing down *Nikkei* History

How has *Nikkei* history been preserved and passed down in the various areas in the world which accepted Japanese emigrants? What is the status of such efforts in Wakayama Prefecture, where the areas known as emigrant mother villages are located? Here, I will briefly discuss several examples based on my own visits to museums and other locations.

### 3.1 Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii

On 24 September 2009, I visited the Japanese Cultural Centre of Hawaii<sup>8)</sup>. The exhibition room is divided into exhibition corners pertaining to eleven different themes. The exhibits are arranged chronologically, beginning with the arrival of the first Japanese emigrants in Hawaii. The centre is equipped with a theatre where documentary films explain the experiences of the first-generation *Nikkei* sent to internment camps during the war, as well as the identity struggles experienced by the second-generation *Nikkei* raised in Hawaii.

The theme of the centre's permanent exhibit is 'I am what I am because of you', and the values of the people who came to Hawaii as emigrants are presented through eleven monuments in both

Japanese and English: 'Sacrifice', 'Duty', 'Honour', 'Shame/pride', 'Responsibility', 'Gratitude', 'There's no other way', 'Trying your best', 'Endurance', 'Obligation' and 'Filial piety'. Although arranged in accordance with historical periods, the exhibit is not confined to simple explanations of emigrant history or everyday objects; rather, as the symbolism of the monuments attests, the exhibit is unique in emphasising emigrants' mindsets and the Japanese beliefs upon which they were founded.



Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii

### 3.2 Hawaii's Plantation Village

On 22 September 2008, I visited Hawaii's Plantation Village<sup>9</sup>). On the village grounds are recreated homes of many types of people who worked on the sugar cane plantations, including the Japanese, Chinese and Portuguese, and the objects on display offer a vivid view of the lifestyles of the time. Shops, the *furo* (public bathing area), a clinic and a barbershop are recreated as well. At this facility, while objects are displayed for viewing, actual community meetings are also held in an assembly area and the pots kept within the facility are used to cook food. At the expansive grounds of the facility, a locomotive used to transport goods on the sugar plantation is on display. Within the buildings, visitors can view videos about the labourers on the plantation, and in the exhibition room, visitors can learn about plantation workers



Plantation Village, Representation of a Japanese house

through the clothes, tools and other objects they used while working. At this facility, actual plantation life is recreated, and the lifestyles and customs of the people who worked on plantations are passed down to the community members who make use of parts of the facility.

### 3.3 Broome Historical Society Museum

On 5 March 2007, I visited the Broome Historical Society Museum in Western Australia. Broome was once famed as a location for harvesting the pearl oysters used to make high-class buttons. Many Japanese people travelled to this distant land to work as divers. This museum displays the diving suits worn by the pearl divers along with the helmets used underwater. Exhibits detail the situation of the Japanese labourers during the golden age of pearl oyster cultivation, as well as the attack by Japanese troops during World War II. The small-scale museum nonetheless holds precious historical records. In addition, a Japanese cemetery lies adjacent to the museum, where 919 people are interred and 707 markers have been erected, many of which bear the names of people from Wakayama Prefecture. Additionally, artefacts related to pearl divers can be seen at many locations, such as a pearl lugger which represents contemporary pearl-diving ships and the partly-outdoor movie theatre Sun Pictures which was originally built as a Japanese general store. The ambience of the past is also preserved in many places throughout the town of Broome.



Japanese Cemetery (Broome)

### 3.4 Terminal Island

On 16 November 2010, I visited Terminal Island. A stone *torii* gate and a monument to the fishermen have been erected on the island. As described in section 2.2, a community of around 3,000 Japanese people began to form there in the early 1900. At the time, the streets were full of canneries,



residences and schools, but during World War II, the people were confined to internment camps and the town was destroyed. In memory of the people who once lived there, a stone torii and a monument to the fishermen were built on the site. A panel of photographs showing the town as it was at the time is on display as well.



Torii Gate, Terminal Island

### 3.5 Manzanar War Relocation Center

On 15 November 2010, I visited the Manzanar War Relocation Center. During World War II, ten internment camps existed in the USA, of which Manzanar is one. It continues to stand as a historic site, and a memorial tower has been constructed there. The museum displays photographs of the former internment camp and the lives of the people there. Also displayed are goods of their everyday use. One can also find on display the wooden birds painstakingly carved by the internees, as well as their larger creations such as chests and other furniture. On the grounds, one of the barracks in which the people lived has been recreated, and the wooden signs indicating the building numbers of the barracks in which 10,000 people lived still stand. Ruins of a Japanese garden, a baseball field and a *kendo* training hall can also be seen here. Although watched over by armed guards and forced to live in a confined area, the people remained active in many ways, even creating a Japanese garden despite the lack of greenery on the grounds of the camp.

In addition to the above-mentioned sites, I visited the Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, Photo 6), as well as the Museum of Japanese Immigration and Japan Town (both in Sao Paulo). Needless to say, many historical materials and artefacts remain at the emigrant destinations, and most of the museums and other facilities appeared to be well maintained. In many cases, the employees or volunteers were people of

Japanese heritage, and they explained the exhibitions or performed other tasks. At almost all facilities, materials such as books and DVDs about the emigrants and study materials for children are available for purchase.

Although it may be impossible to build a grandiose facility, I was at least able to gain from my visit a wide range of ideas for passing on history, including: training staff capable of educating others about history, recording history in books and developing educational materials which enable children to learn about their ancestors' history while enjoying themselves.



Manzanar historical site

## 4. Emigrant History in Wakayama Prefecture: Preserving it and Passing it Down

### 4.1 Wakayama Civic Library Emigrant Resource Room<sup>10)</sup>

The Wakayama Civic Library opened in 1981, and the Emigrant Resource Room opened subsequently in 1984. The library holds about 10,000 documents including the microfilm of overseas Japanese-language newspapers, photographs and paintings in addition to approximately 8,000 books. Furthermore, documentary paintings by Henry Sugimoto<sup>11)</sup>, known for depicting Japanese internment camps during the Pacific War, are on permanent display. It is the only collection which gathers and displays historical material on



Japanese American National Museum

emigrants in any public library in Japan<sup>12)</sup>.

#### 4.2 Canada Emigrant Museum, Wakayama Prefecture

On 2 June 2008, I visited the Canada Emigrant Museum at America Village [Amerika-mura] (Mihama-chō, Hidaka District, Wakayama Prefecture). The Mio area of Mihama-chō sent many emigrants to Canada and the USA from the Meiji Era onward. The museum sits on a mountaintop with an excellent view, and the ocean spreads its beautiful expanse below. In the museum, exhibits feature the tools used by emigrants to Canada while they fished for salmon, with panels depicting workers in the canning industry and daily goods used in the Westernised lifestyles of the time. Visitors can also view videos which compactly summarise the lifestyles of the Canadian emigrants. Even now, Western-style houses emblematic of the lifestyle of the people who returned from Canada, as well as a sign reading 'America', remain in the Mio area. The people who returned from Canada at the time mixed English words into their speech, wore Western-style clothes and ate at high Western-style tables rather than low Japanese tables. This Western-style culture was brought back by the people who journeyed to Canada, and in the Taishō Era, the area came to be known as 'America Village [Amerika-mura]'.



Canada Emigration Museum

#### 4.3 Programs by Taiji-chō, Higashimuro District, Wakayama Prefecture

In Taiji-chō, one of the emigrant mother villages, surveys on emigration have been enthusiastically conducted and efforts are being made to preserve and present historical materials through measures such as emigration exhibits and lectures. Furthermore, in 1981, a sister town relationship was established with Broome, Australia, where

people from the area had once worked as pearl divers. This partnership includes youth educational and cultural exchange programs, including a home stay program. These programs provide an opportunity for the youth from both areas to learn about the history of their emigrant ancestors and deepen the bonds between the areas through face-to-face interaction. A Historical Resource Room was also established at the Taiji-chō Community Centre, where information is disseminated to citizens and requests for materials are made, onsite surveys are conducted both domestically and overseas and efforts are made to collect and preserve emigration-related materials.

#### 4.4 Programs at Wakayama University

Since 2009, in cooperation with international exchange organisations and local groups in the area, Wakayama University has held exhibits and symposiums with the theme of emigrants and emigration. This provides the general population as well as college students and young people with the opportunity to both learn about the history of emigration and seek out new information. Below, I will summarise the content and results of prior exhibits and symposiums.

(1) Special Exhibit 'Emigration from the Kii Peninsula to California: The Japanese Village in San Pedro' (16 November–18 December 2009, Hosted by Wakayama University Institute of Kishu Economic and Cultural History Research) Number of attendees: approximately 350

(2) Symposium 'Emigration from Wakayama to the world: Understanding our ancestors' history and moving towards new cultural exchange!' (28 November 2009, Hosted by Wakayama University Faculty of Tourism) Number of attendees: approximately 120

(3) Panel photograph exhibit 'Rainbow Bridge: Emigrants from Wakayama to Brazil' (6–27 October 2010, Hosted by Wakayama University Institute of Kishu Economic and Cultural History Research, Wakayama Prefecture Central and Southern America Exchange Association) Number of attendees: 57 (registrants)

(4) Travelling panel exhibit 'Exchanges with the associations of people from Wakayama which connect the world' (29 August–14 September 2011, Hosted by Wakayama University Institute of Kishu Economic and Cultural History Research) Number of attendees: 308 (registrants)

(5) Project exhibition 'The jobs and lives of emigrants' (18 October–22 November 2011, Hosted by Wakayama University Institute of Kishu Economic and Cultural History Research) Number of attendees: 308 (registrants)

(6) Symposium 'Emigration from Wakayama to the World II: From the Past to the Present' (29 October 2011, Hosted by Wakayama University Faculty of Tourism Symposium Execution Committee) Number of attendees: 48 (registrants)



Symposium attendees viewing exhibits

The outcomes of the above exhibits and symposiums are discussed below, including feedback and comments from the attendees.

- *Recalling memories:* The objects on display and the discussions by the panellists brought back memories related to emigration, thus assisting with the collection of new information. As examples of the types of information provided, one person stated that his/her father-in-law worked as a diver in Australia while another shared that his/her grandfather fished for sardines on Terminal Island.
- *Passing down history:* It is possible to pass down a facet of history to the younger generations who are not aware that Japanese people once emigrated to other countries.  
Feedback: 'I learned new things about emigration from Wakayama. Even though I live in Wakayama, I didn't have a clue about any of these things. More people should know about and be proud of these things'.
- *Cooperative relationships:* The theme of emigrants and emigration enables the formation of

cooperative relationships between museums, groups and organisations involved in international exchange and the cities, towns and villages in Wakayama which are known as emigrant mother villages. These projects have expanded networks and have begun to establish collaborative systems. Members of the Southern California Wakayama *Kenjinkai* [Prefectural Alumni] in the USA provided photographic data as well, indicating that global networks may form in the future.

- *Sharing ideas and thoughts:* Unlike academic gatherings, exhibits and symposiums draw attendees of varied ages and backgrounds. For this reason, exchanges of opinions regarding the theme of emigration were conducted from the viewpoint of individual experiences rather than academic research. The theme of emigration can now be regarded as 'our theme' - a theme which belongs to those of us who live in the foremost emigrant prefectures throughout Japan rather than belonging to researchers alone.

Feedback: '*I was happy to learn that the diligence, seriousness and greatness of the Japanese people have flowered in countries around the world*'.

- *Towards new exchanges:* These projects provided the young people who will lead the globalised society of the future with the opportunity to learn about how their ancestors stayed strong despite dealing with countless troubles after crossing the ocean to distant lands, eventually laying the foundation for important *Nikkei* communities around the world. Based on this history, we should have high hopes that new exchanges will continue to occur in the future between Wakayama Prefecture and emigrant destinations around the world.

The Wakayama Prefecture International Exchange Society foundation has already established opportunities for exchange with people from the local area. These include receiving children of the members of Southern California Wakayama *Kenjinkai* in summer the Brazil *Kenjinkai* in winter and showing them their ancestral home of Wakayama.

## 5. Okinawa Prefecture: Uchinanchu Festival

Every five years since 1990, Okinawa, one of

## Reference Document 1

## Achievements of the fourth Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival (Question 15)

| Selection (multiple selections possible)  | Number of responses | Response rate |
|---|---------------------|---------------|
| (1) I gained a deeper understanding of the history of emigration.   | 449                 | 58.9          |
| (2) I recognized my Okinawan heritage.  | 451                 | 59.2          |
| (3) I gained a deeper understanding of Okinawa's tradition, culture and general climate.  | 567                 | 74.4          |
| (4) There was deeper interaction between overseas participants and residents of the prefecture.                                     | 412                 | 54.1          |
| (5) There was deeper interaction between <i>uchinanchu</i> from around the world.   | 436                 | 57.2          |
| (6) Interaction between generations deepened.   | 351                 | 46.1          |
| (7) I was able to introduce the culture of my own country to the residents of Okinawa Prefecture.                                   | 199                 | 26.1          |
| (8) The festival encouraged business interaction.   | 51                  | 6.7           |
| (9) I discovered the attractiveness of Okinawa as a tourist destination.  | 415                 | 54.5          |
| (10) I sensed the importance of peace.  | 368                 | 48.3          |
| (11) The festival provided an opportunity to cultivate the next generation which will take charge of the <i>uchinanchu</i> network. | 266                 | 34.9          |
| (12) Other  | 30                  | 3.9           |

[Units: Questionnaires, %]

Reference document: '4th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival' Questionnaire Survey

Note: With regard to the response rate, 100% was designated as 762 responses, which was the number of valid responses to Question 15.

(Source: 'The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival and Okinawa Kenkeijin Networks (I)—Impact upon Okinawan Society'—p. 89)

Japan's foremost emigrant prefectures, has held the Uchinanchu Festival (*uchinanchu* is a word in the local dialect, meaning 'person from Okinawa') to bring people together in their home prefecture. The festival organisers state, 'Amid a history of emigration which goes back to the first century, many *kenkeijin*<sup>13)</sup> have overcome countless troubles in the areas to which they emigrated through their indomitable spirit and natural open-mindedness. While remaining active today in such diverse areas as government, economics, culture and academics, as members of society in the countries to which they have emigrated, they have contributed to the growth and development of these countries, building an excellent reputation and earning trust'. The festival was started with the aim of 'building a worldwide network of overseas *kenkeijin*, the living assets who are the pride of *Okinawa Prefecture*<sup>14)</sup> and was held for the fifth time from 12 to 16 October 2011. The numbers of attendees at the first through the fourth festivals are listed below.

1st Festival (1990): 2,397 people from 17 countries and 2 regions around the world (overseas)

2nd Festival (1995): 3,922 people (3,409 from overseas, 513 from Japan)

3rd Festival (2001): 4,325 people (4,025 from overseas, 300 from Japan)

4th Festival (2006): 4,937 people (4,393 from overseas, 544 from Japan)

During the fourth festival, many functions and

events were held. These included a parade on the eve of the festival, Okinawa traditional performing arts and karate, a symposium on *kenkeijin* networks and a panel exhibition. The number of attendees, which had increased each year, rose that year to a total of 4,937. Concerning its economic effects, 'the prefecture has performed test calculations regarding the economic effects of the 4th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival held in October 2006. According to these calculations, the direct demand (direct effect) was ¥635 million, and the secondary effects, including direct effects, were ¥1.157 billion. The calculations indicate that in the process of the production of the secondary effects, an effect inducing the employment of 95 people was produced as well' (Ryukyu Shimpō homepage). The purpose of the festival is to strengthen networks and deepen bonds with emigrants, but we should also be aware that the festival has significant economic effects by encouraging inbound travel from overseas.

How about the effects of the festival upon the attendees? Kinjō (2008) summarises the results of a questionnaire survey of attendees (Reference Document 1) as follows: 'I believe that as the phenomenon of emigration from Okinawa drops off and family relationships with overseas communities grow weaker, the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival, which continues to grow larger, plays the role of an incubator which nurtures the identity of *uchinanchu* while strengthening ties across national boundaries'.

According to the questionnaires, more than 70%



of respondents gained a deeper understanding of Okinawa's traditions, culture and atmosphere. Furthermore, nearly 60% of respondents recognised their Okinawan heritage, deepened their understanding of the history of emigration and enjoyed deeper interaction with other uchinanchu from around the world. Because these emigrants seem to be influenced solely by social state of affairs but also significantly by the culture and the general climate, I conjecture that the answers above influenced one another. We should also pay attention to the fact that more than 50% of attendees stated, 'There was deeper interaction between overseas participants and residents of the prefecture' and 'I discovered the attractiveness of Okinawa as a tourist destination'. In other words, interaction based on the history of emigration - a thing of the past - seems to have taken on new meaning in the present. As stated by Kinjō, the festival not only strengthens ties between people across national boundaries but also nurtures the identity of uchinanchu. In addition, it seems to be effective economically and with regard to Okinawa's image as a tourist destination.

## 6. Towards a global exchange against the background of emigrant history

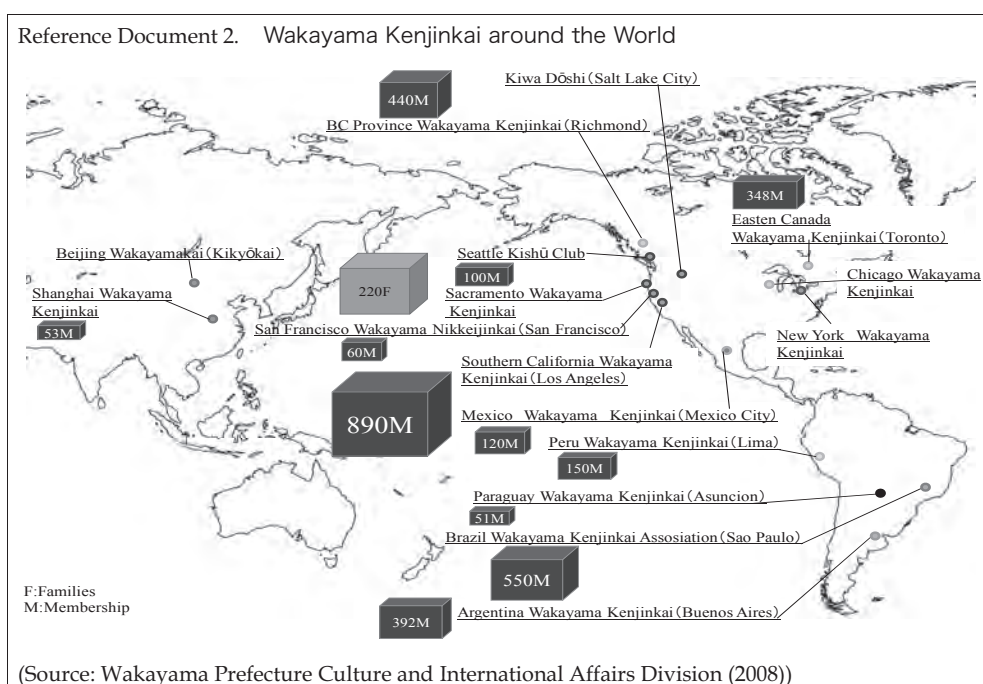
It is now over 100 years since our ancestors from Wakayama Prefecture crossed the ocean to a distant land, and even in the emigrant mother villages, it is not easy to protect, preserve and pass

on records of the paths taken by these ancestors. Simultaneously, in *Nikkei* societies worldwide, the first and second generations of emigrants are ageing, and some areas already have the 5th and 6th generations. In the future, how will these generations regard Japan, the land of their roots? I believe that in order to nurture their desire to visit Japan or Wakayama, the land of their roots and their second home, we should not regard the history of emigration as 'things of the past', but instead, shine a new light on this history as an aspect of our regional legacy of which we should be proud.

### 6.1 Creating ties with *Nikkei* society

The worldwide distribution of Wakayama *kenjinkai* provides proof of the numerous people who crossed the ocean to a distant land (Reference Document 2). The *kenjinkai* with the largest number of members is the Southern California Wakayama Kenjinkai (hereafter the SoCal Kenjinkai), which has 890 members, with the Brazil Wakayama Kenjinkai (hereafter the Brazil Kenjinkai) being the second largest with 550 members.

The Brazil Kenjinkai, which was established in 1954, celebrated its 55th anniversary in 2009. On 10 November of the same year, a grand memorial ceremony was held in Sao Paulo, which was attended by a delegation of several dozen people from Wakayama, including the governor. The



SoCal Kenjinkai held its 100th anniversary celebration on 13 November 2011, with more than 70 attendees from Japan among the 451 guests.

From 30 August to 15 September 2011, I had the opportunity to perform onsite research in Brazil, and from 13 to 17 November of the same year, I visited Los Angeles to participate in the 100th anniversary celebration of the SoCal Kenjinkai. In the course of these two overseas research trips, I met members of the Brazil Kenjinkai and the SoCal Kenjinkai and gained an understanding of one facet of the role which kenjinkai have played.

The basic activities of the Brazil Kenjinkai, for example, involve a regular general meeting and New Year's party, picnics to show respect for the aged and provide recreation for families, women's travel outings to Japan and participation in karaoke competitions, festivals with food stands and other Japanese festivals. I became aware that the *kenjinkai* organised a range of lively activities and that the purpose of these activities was socialisation between members and their families. Fifty-five years after its establishment, the *kenjinkai*, whose original purpose was to provide a meeting place for the initial group of emigrants, has inevitably changed. Yet, I found that it has remained a pillar of the community, building solidarity between emigrants and encouraging mutual aid. The situation appeared to be the same at that of the SoCal Kenjinkai, as indicated by the large number of attendees at the 100th anniversary celebration. However, one problem was shared by both *kenjinkai*: the advancing age of the members. It is important to cultivate interest among the next generation, which will form the core of the *kenjinkai* in the future. Regarding this point, I believe that an active exchange between the youth of the mother prefecture and the emigrant destination will provide an opportunity for Nikkei youth to gain a deep sense of their ancestors' history, motivate them to recognise their roots and serve as a bridge between the two countries and regions in the future, thus playing a central role in adding greater vitality to the activities of the *kenjinkai*.

## 6.2 Possibilities for exchange through international tourism

Following the feedback from attendees, it seems that the exhibitions and symposiums provided an opportunity for people to get a sense of how their

emigrant predecessors lived, to be moved emotionally, to think about what it means to be alive and to keenly feel the importance of bonds between people. Thus, emigration is not only a historical fact belonging to the past but a reality that speaks to those of us living at present and has the power to move some aspect of our internal selves. I believe that imbuing artefacts related to our predecessors' lives with a new sense of value and recognising them as the legacy of our region will create added appeal for Wakayama Prefecture, one of the prominent emigrant prefectures in Japan, and draw many people to the area.

In Japan, the Visit Japan Campaign has initiated various programs encouraging foreign tourists to visit at both the governmental and non-governmental levels since 2003. Among the programs which aim to increase the number of foreign tourists are those that propagate the appeal of the area overseas, encourage international exchange and cooperation at the local level, and disseminate information about Japanese culture, both traditional and popular. Moreover, to promote international exchange, sister and friendship cities are established to foster exchange between Japanese and overseas communities, and youth exchange are encouraged through programs such as the JET Program and the Foreign High School Student (Japanese Major) Short-Term Invitation Program (2011 Tourism White Paper).

The interaction with *Nikkei* people who share the roots leads to deeper mutual understanding against the backdrop of emigrant history, and I believe that people engaging in such interactions will act as a bridge between the two countries and provide the driving force behind the promotion of future exchange through tourism. I believe that in the future, there will be deeply interesting exchanges involving the unique features of the local area and these will have benefits other than simply preserving and passing down history. By positioning Wakayama's unique status of an emigrant prefecture as an aspect of the cultural and historical legacy of the area, we should be able to create opportunities for international exchange, as Okinawa Prefecture has done. These opportunities will provide motivation not only for foreign tourists to visit Japan but also for Japanese tourists to travel overseas.

## Notes

- 1) This article includes parts adapted from the papers written by the author (Higashi, 2009a; 2009b).
- 2) Fred Isamu Wada (1907-2001, Gobō, Wakayama)
- 3) Minami Yaemon (1879-1973, Esumi Village (presently Susami-chō), Nishimuro District, Wakayama). All Japanese names appear with surname-first.
- 4) Kuno Gihei (1854-1917, MioVillage (presently Mihama Town), Hidaka District, Wakayama).
- 5) Nakayama Kiryū (Wakayama City, went Australia in 1875)
- 6) Thursday Island, Located in the Torres Strait Islands between Queensland and New Guinea.
- 7) Matsubara Yasutarō (1892-1961, Minabe-chō, Hidaka-gun, Wakayama)
- 8) Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, 2452 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii
- 9) Hawaii's Plantation Village, 94-695 Waipahu St, Waipahu, Honolulu
- 10) Wakayama Civic Library Emigrant Resource Room <http://www.lib.city.wakayama.wakayama.jp/>
- 11) Henry Sugimoto (1900-1990, Wakayama-City)
- 12) Reference: On the Wakayama Civic Library Emigrant Resource Room [*Wakayama shimin toshokan imin shiryōshitsu ni tsuite*] *Emigration from Wakayama to the World [Wakayama kara sekai e no imin]* p. 118)
- 13) For example, the term 'Okinawa kenkeijin' indicates a person from Okinawa or his or her descendant.
- 14) The citations appear on the Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival official homepage <http://www.chimugukuru.com/>

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*machi* (Illustrated book for special exhibit: Emigration from the Kii Peninsula to California - The Japanese village in San Pedro).

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