

Abstract of Doctoral Thesis

Title: Historical Geographical Research of Japanese Fishing Immigrants on the West Coast of Canada before the World WarII

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The research purpose of this book is to clarify the history of Japanese fishing immigrants in Canada in terms of time and space by utilizing the historical geographical approach. The research period is about 50 years from the end of the 1800s to the outbreak of the Pacific War and the space scale is their birthplaces and places of migration, considering village, family, and individual levels, and looking into their living spaces on land and fishing spaces on the sea in a complementary manner. Thus, the author examine a social and economic division of labor system based on their birthplaces in Japan and the distinctive use of living space in relation to other ethnic groups.

The author would like to discuss several points in this book: a division of work between Japanese immigrants and other ethnic groups, in association with the role of Japanese traditional fishers in the canned-salmon industry; migrations of Japanese fishers to the west coast of Vancouver Island and activities of Japanese shipbuilders; the salted herring industry which became the exclusive industry of Japanese immigrants, and Japanese fishers involved in the whaling industry that collected whale oil.

For the analysis, the author used the list of the Japanese Directory and reports in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce or Trade, and the Japan Fisheries Association. In particular, “Plans of Salmon Canneries in British Columbia together with Inspection Reports on Each” (1923) which has large scale maps and explanations was useful for consideration of living spaces. In addition, the author utilized archival documents such as “debits” and “checks”. The author described the life histories of Japanese people with their photographs and diaries. The interview surveys for this were significant.

In the canned-salmon industry and the whaling industry, Japanese immigrants were separated from First Nations, English, Norwegian, and Chinese people. However, it was not necessarily all due

to exclusion but was a reasonable spatial arrangement associated with the development of the industries. Before long, Japanese immigrants who had the capital expanded their business to the salted herring industry and also developed fishing villages on the west coast of Vancouver Island. In the Japanese living quarters, compartmentalization occurred according to territorial and blood relationships. From this research, adopting the historical geographical approach in terms of time and space, an unexplored history of Japanese fishing immigrants has become apparent.

In the future, the author will look into the transition to the fishery business made by Japanese immigrants who migrated to Canada in the early 20th century as contracted immigrants. The transfer from fishers to gardeners due to the reduction of fishery licenses in the 1920s should be examined as well. To understand the history of Japanese fishing immigrants in Canada, it is necessary to grasp it in a comprehensive way, including the expansion into other industries after the war.