

Fune Ni Miru Nihonjin Iminshi: Kasato Maru kara kuruzu kyakusen e
[“Japanese Emigration History As Seen Through Ships:
From the *Kasato Maru* to Passenger Cruisers”]
by Michio Yamada

Article 6

“The *Kasato Maru* and the First Emigrants to Brazil”
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The Steamship *Tosa Maru* and the first Emigrants to Brazil.

Think of Brazil, and probably coffee would be the first thing that comes to mind. Coffee was first grown in Brazil in the early 19th century and became Brazil's most important product within 50 years. Slaves were the initial labor force on the early plantations. After 1889, European immigration increased under the Republic. However, as there was insufficient labor to expand plantation production, in 1892 the government of republican Brazil passed an immigration law (number 97) to recruit workers from Japan and China. In November 1895, diplomats of Japan and Brazil signed a treaty of friendship, and in February of 1897 both governments ratified it. The Kissa Emigration Company was the first to enter the emigration market to Brazil. Kissa was affiliated with the Nihon Yusen Kaisha (referred to as NYK) at that time, and early on it saw the potential of the migration business.

As soon as Japan and Brazil established diplomatic relations in January 1897, Tadaoke Aoki, one of Kissa's employees, was sent to Sao Paulo to negotiate immigration issues with Brazil's Prado Company. In February, Kissa officially changed its name to the Oriental Immigration Investment Company [in the following paragraphs, referred to as OIIC--trans.]. The company prospered under the sponsorship of Kanehira Kondoh, president of NYK. According to the *Nihon Yusen Goju-nen Shi* (Fifty Year History of the Japan Mail Steamship, 1935), it was in 1895 that Kissa changed its name and I (Michio Yamada, author) used this source in article number 4 of this series, *Meiji no Goshu-imin* “Japanese Emigration to Australia in the Meiji period.” However, here I rely on *Hojin Kaigai Hatten Ki* (1942) by Japan's

foremost emigration historian, Toraji Irie, and Irie states in his book that it was February 1897. Further evidence is that the company was referred to by the name Kissa in minutes of the Board meeting of December 25, 1895. Thus, February of 1897 seems accurate to me. OIIC (the former Kissa Co.) successfully negotiated an initial agreement with the **Prado** Company of Brazil to send an initial 1,500 to 2,000 Japanese to Brazilian coffee plantations.

In the first half of 1897, most Japanese immigrants to Hawaii were refused entry. A number of emigration agencies tried to have the emigrants sent back to Kobe. OIIC undertook to send the 1,500 Hawaii rejected emigrants to Brazil on the steamship *Tosa Maru* (5,789 t) on August 15, 1897. Unfortunately, OIIC received a telegram from the Prado Company on August 5 saying that they were postponing accepting the emigrants because of high inflation.

The emigration contractors incurred substantial losses from inflation. Not only the companies, but also Japanese emigrants who had paid application fees, remodeling the steamship *Tosa Maru*, and various preparatory costs. Shinichi Sakuma, Executive Manager, asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to investigate Prado and claimed damages of approximately 290,000-yen in 1897. Despite these efforts, nothing was recouped. Minutes of the directors' meeting on August 7th, 1897, state that "The ship *Tosa Maru* spent approximately 20,000 yen on anchorage, renovation of passenger's rooms, and provisions." It suggests that the *Tosa Maru* was equipped with additional rooms to handle 1,500 passengers. The *Tosa Maru* was recognized as one of the finest steamships sailing between Japan and Europe in 1896 (Meiji 29) and was well known in maritime transportation history.

The Kasato Maru and Family Emigration

The Kasato Maru left Kobe with 781 contract emigrants on April 28, 1908 (Meiji 41). The newspaper *Osaka Asahi Shimbun* reported this event the next day with the headline "Great Hopes for Brazilian Emigration. The unfortunate incident of the

Tosa brought good luck to the *Kasato Maru*. The first 781 contract immigrants went aboard on April 28, at 2:00 in the afternoon, and were sent to Brazil, 18,000 miles away. The significance of this emigration is that they are families. They are well prepared and most of them are dressed in western clothing. They are quite different from labor emigrants of the past. Therefore, I assume that these well prepared immigrants will give Brazilians a good impression of our country and people."



A remarkable characteristic of the *Kasato Maru* was that its emigrants came as families, unlike the seasonal workers sent to Hawaii and North America.

It was the same spirit and idea of pioneers permanently moving from old Europe to the new lands of America or Australia. According to the Japanese Immigration Law (number 1), single workers, as well as their families could be considered emigrants. Seasonal workers are also called "emigrant" regardless of temporary or permanent contract. Emigration by family unit became popular for South America in particular. Because of the dynamics and dramas created by the hardships that entire families experienced, contemporary Japanese immediately associate South America with the term "emigration".

Ryu Mizuno, founder of *Koukoku Shokumin Goushi Gaisha* (roughly, the Imperial Investment in Colonization Company, IICC) made emigration on the *Kasato Maru* possible. He negotiated a contract with the Sao Paulo provincial government in November 1907 (Meiji 40). According to the contract, the stipulation was that "for

farmers, a family consists of more than three and less than ten members", and it strictly excluded single farm worker emigrants but included a few carpenters, blacksmiths and masons. The Sao Paulo provincial government was willing to financially support those immigrants who met the requirement. The Government's intent was to increase the number of immigrants who would permanently work on plantations. The financial support was 10 British pounds per person (about 100 yen, of which 4 pounds was considered a loan) for children 12 years or older, 5 pounds (2 pounds loan) for children 7 to 11 years old, and 2 pounds 10 shillings (1 pound loan) for children 3 to 6 years old. The loan repayment usually began when an immigrant farmer took ownership of a piece of farmland. The loan was paid to the provincial government by the farm owner first, and then the money was taken directly from farmers' salaries.

The contract between IICC and the Sao Paulo provincial Government was for three years. They were to recruit 1,000 people each year. When they began the project the plan was to send emigrants in May 1908. In following years, they changed the arrival schedule to April to coincide with harvests on coffee plantations. In February 1908, IICC successfully carried out the first recruitment. In the IICC recruitment flyer *Brazil Koku Joukyou Sho -Tokousha Kokoroe* (Brazil, A to Z), it was stated that:

- Passage on the *Kasato Maru* is at the applicants' expense except for the subsidized portion.
- Salary is 450 to 500 **lance** (30-sen=0.3-yen, it said 5 to 6 bags average per a day) per bag of coffee beans (500 liters). For a day contractor, it was 2 to 2.5 **millraces** (1.2 to 1.5-yen/day).

Unlike the seasonal workers, permanent immigrants were less subject to restriction. As the idea was for emigrants to become independent farmers, IICC and the Sao Paulo provincial government were rather busy making plans to settle the farmers. The flyer also gave details of expenses. 1. Boarding fee/passage, 150-yen (the provincial Government paid 100 yen, and applicants actually paid 65 yen as the company had not met its quota), 2. Service fee, 25 yen, 3. Preparation fee, 20 yen, 4.

Suggested miscellaneous costs 20 yen, 5. Customs fees, 7 yen. That totals up to 122 yen. In addition, applicants had to pay for their own transportation to Kobe and other miscellaneous travel costs. They needed at least 150 yen.

With the short recruiting period, the first emigration cohort to Brazil did not reach the goal of 1,000 people. Only 781 people (about 160 families) were settled, most of whom were from Okinawa and Kagoshima. The population distribution is shown in the accompanying chart. The diagram is based on Rokuro Kayama's *Imin-shi Yonjunen* (Forty-Years of Japanese Emigration, 1949). Kayama traveled on board as one of the executives representing the IICC administration.

On April 28, at 5:55 in the evening, the first Japanese emigration ship sailed to Brazil. The captain was A.G. Stevens of England.

A Voyage of 29,000 miles in 52 Days

There is detailed documentation of the Kasato Maru 's journey. We start by looking at *Koukai Nikki* (The Voyage of the Kasato Maru) by Ryu Mizuno. (Note: they took their position at noon and recorded the amount of distance they had sailed each day.

- May 5th (8th day of the trip), in latitude 15o 33' north, longitude 113o 5' east, 274-*ri*. (approximately 1068.6 km or 667.9 miles, 1-ri = 3.9 km = 2.4 miles, reference: *Iwanami Kokugo Jiten, Fourth Eddition*) The heat makes sleeping difficult.
- May 7th (10th day of the trip), Lat. 8° 15' N., Long. 108° 48' E., 254-*ri* (619.1 miles). A sailor disturbed [bothered?] the emigrants while he was on night guard duty (the lower ranking crew, such as cooks/cleaners, sneak into the emigrants' rooms and attack and rape women and children.)
- May 9th (12th day) at 2:00 p.m., arrived Singapore. There is a rumor that a crewman will attack Haruyoshi Kataoka (a free emigrant from Kochi prefecture). We must keep an eye on him.

- May 10th (13th day) at 3:00 p.m., leaving for Cape Town. The hot weather is not as bad as we expected and sick passengers are many fewer than we had expected.
- May 16th (19th day), Lat. 0o 44' S., Long. 86o 40' E., 204-**ri** (497.3 miles). A strong wind from the south shakes entire ship for 3 days. Many passengers are sick.
- May 27th (30th day), Lat. 28o 52' S., Long. 46o 31' E., 271-**ri** (660.6 miles). We saw Madagascar Island first light.
- June 2nd (36th day), at 10 p.m., arrived Cape Town, cast anchor outside the bay (went ashore the next morning at 7:00 a.m.)
- June 4th (38th day), at 9:00 a.m. stayed outside the bay and weighed anchor at 1 p.m.. Waves are extremely high.
- June 8th (42nd day), Lat. 28o 10' S., Long. 0o 36' E., 222-**ri** (541.1 miles). Waves caused the ship to shudder and some objects fell from shelves.
- June 15th (49th day), Lat. 24o 57' S., Long. 33o 8' W., 260-**ri** (633.8 miles). Things get worse. A sailor tried to attack me. Luckily I was saved by one of the officers, but he got stabbed.
- June 18th (52nd day), at 9 a.m. finally arrived Santos after 12,000-**ri** of journey (29,250 miles).

Although they encountered heavy seas in the Indian Ocean, , overall the trip went smoothly. The longest they sailed was 275-**ri** (670.3 miles at 11.5 knots) on May 9th, and the shortest was 184-**ri** (448.5 miles, at 7.7 knots) on May 15th. They sailed an average of 230-**ri** (560.6 miles) at 10 knots/ a day.

Singapore and Cape Town were the only ports of call. Each port call was strictly for the purpose of taking on fuel, water, and food; the emigrants were not allowed to go ashore. Going ashore was prohibited because they were afraid that with the emigrants' inability to speak English they might get lost and not return.

The emigrants stayed in the steerage passenger quarters. One of them was located fore and the other one aft, and there were the Spar Deck on above and the Main Deck on below. Each room was like a big warehouse with a honeycomb of bunk beds filling the entire room. According to Rokuro Kayama's memoirs, there was also a huge wood-floored room. However, as there is no official layout of the *Kasato Maru*, we don't know the detailed room arrangement. The emigrants from Okinawa, Hiroshima, Kumamoto, Yamaguchi, and Ehime were placed in the forward steerage, and those from Kagoshima in the stern. There were separate rooms in the very rear of the stern (the numbers unknown) that were especially designed for the free emigrants, such as Rokuro Kayama. He shared the room with 15 other passengers, bunk beds having been provided for them. A doctor's office was right next door.

The first class rooms were located below the bridge. There were three rooms on each side of the ship, with the first class dining in the middle. Each room could accommodate two passengers with a bunk bed. Ryu Mizuno and his assistant, ICC representative Shuhei Uezuka, and two female translators stayed in the first class rooms.

The meal plan was poor and basic. They had wheat[?], fish, pickles, and sometimes *miso* soup. The emigrants usually ate in bed or on the floor, even though a small dining room was provided for them. A gong sounded at mealtime. There might have been a steerage bath for bathing.

After sailing through the Formosa Strait, they set up an awning for shade on both fore and aft decks. Many emigrants spent time in the shade, escaping from the hot, stuffy passenger rooms. The fore deck especially became a communal space for the emigrants where they did Sumo and Kenjutsu (a martial art). In the South China Sea, a swimming pool made from canvas was also used on the deck.

It was May 15th, 18th day after leaving Kobe. The *Kasato Maru* was in the Indian Ocean at latitude 10 25' north, longitude 89o 24' east. They celebrated Neptune's

crossing and numbers from each prefecture were performed on deck. The Okinawa party were extremely talented entertainers, with their traditional songs and dances accompanied on the *Jabisen* (a stringed musical instrument made from snakeskin). Young emigrants helped prepare the feast for the celebration. Later on, Osaka Commercial's steamships adopted the tradition of Neptune's revel. The *Kasato Maru* became the model for ships taking emigrants to South America.

4. Background to the first mate's murder

The journey went smoothly, without any severe illness or deaths among the passengers. However on June 15th, three days before the end of the trip, there was, according to Mizuno's journal, a terrible incident.

They had an end-of -trip celebration party all afternoon and night on the open deck. The Kagoshima party showed up in a fashion show, and the Kochi party put on a Kabuki play. There was a big feast and good *sake* . The free emigrants and the ship's officers had a private party in the first class dinning room. After 10 p.m., a drunken sailor shouted, "Mizuno, I'll kill you!" and climbed up to the first class area. The first offocer, Kiyozo Yokoyama, blocked him and was stabbed in the abdomen. As soon as the *Kasato Maru* arrived in Santos, the drunken sailor escaped and Yokoyama died in hospital. The incident aroused the crew and encouraged them to rebel. The ship's officers took up arms in order to keep the sailors under control. Nonetheless, the crew continued to attack the officers.

During all of Mizuno's journey, he seems to have been extremely wary of the ordinary seamen. He said in his journal of May 7th, "...the crew sneak into the immigrants' room and attack and rape women and children." It shows Mizuno's disgust for the ordinary seamen. Their quarters were located atop the Spar Deck, right next to the steerage quarters where the emigrants (including women and

children) were housed. Mizuno and Uezuka forbade women and children to leave the room at night.

On the other hand, the crew viewed Mizuno with disdain.. Masajiro Suzuki, an expert on the history of emigration to Brazil, writes that "...Mizuno did not give tips to the crew." (*The Kasato Maru*, the Committee of Japanese Immigration 50th Anniversary, 1958). Suzuki also finds the lower sailors' antipathy to Mizuno in the unpaid tips. Tipping was common in a chartered ship, and Suzuki writes that "Mizuno hardly ever had anything in his pocket."

In addition to the tips, Mizuno's idea of prohibiting the women and children from leaving their rooms irritated the crew. They would say, "Mizuno looks down on us." and spread rumors such as, "Mizuno is going to sell you in Brazil, and the female translators in Singapore." The crew made the emigrants quite nervous.

These are some of the facts behind the murder of the first officer. Today, it is hard to imagine sailors committing a serious crime against passengers or officers. It would be easy to say that the crew's morale was poor at that time, but considering that the *Kasato Maru* was the best trans-oceanic emigration steamer, one must assume that the British captain and his officers did not run their ship very well.

Although the *Kasato Maru* was Japan's first and best long distance ship, the quality of the crew members was just as bad as on short distance ships, where the crew would smuggle young women aboard and sell them in China. By the early 1910's (the end of Meiji period) NYK only employed carefully selected captains, officers, and sailors from Japanese applicants for the *Koutou Maru's* sailings via Bombay. If the *Kasato Maru* were the ship of a major company, such as Japan Mail or the Osaka Commercial Steamship Line, such incidents would not have happened.

The *Kasato Maru* completed the 12,000-ri (29,250 miles), 52-day journey on June 18th at 9:30 a.m. After clearing quarantine at 5:30 p.m. that same day, the *Kasato Maru* cast anchor at the new pier 14. Arajiro Miura and Sadajiro Suzuki, both

Japanese diplomats, and IICC employees welcomed the *Kasato Maru* at **Santos** Bay. The local newspaper *Coreio Paulistano* commented favorably on the *Kasato Maru*: "The passenger rooms and other facilities are clean and well organized." Although there were problems caused by the crew members, the emigrants were a good model for Brazil.

The following morning at 3 a.m. the emigrants got up, had breakfast by 5 a.m., and debarked by 7 a.m. They hurried to board the train to the Sao Paulo Immigration Camp with scarcely a moment to enjoy the feel of the new land.

5: The *Kasato Maru* 's Background

The truth about the the *Kasato Maru* is not widely known, except for its being the first and best Japanese long distance international steamship. The paucity of historical sources make further research on the *Kasato Maru* difficult. It is commonly said to have originally been the *Kazan*, a ship of the Russian Volunteer Fleet. It was re-modeled to be used as a hospital ship during the Russo-Japanese War. The ship was sunk, found under water after the war, and re-floated.

However, the *Kasato Maru* does not have the build of a military ship. Actually, the *Kasato Maru* was originally the *Potosi II*, of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company (PSNC) in Newcastle, England. *Potosi II* was built and owned by the Wigham Richardson Company's (now known as Swan & Hunter) Neptune facility, where many shipyards flourished along the River Tyne. The Neptune branch was adjacent to Wallzent branch, which became famous seven years later as the birthplace of the steamship *Mauretania* (31,938-tz). There was Armstrong Mitchell Company's Walker branch, where they built the Hawaii emigration ship *Yamaguchi Maru* , just upstream from the Neptune.

The *Potosi II* was launched on June 13th, 1900 (Meiji 33). It was supposed to sail between Liverpool and Valparaiso with a sister ship, the *Galicia*, but lack of demand after a trial sailing led to the *Potosi* being sold for 110,000 pounds to the Russia Volunteer Fleet Association. The *Potosi* was re-modeled and became the *Kazan* on September 1st, 1900. The *Kazan's* first voyage was from England to the Volunteer Fleet's home port in Odessa, Russia.

According to Shouzo Usami, an expert on the *Kasato Maru* and professor at Komazawa Women's University, Tokyo, the re-modeling process was described in a Swan & Hunter document. It largely involved re-configuring the interior and focused on creating a medical facility. It suggests that the Russia Volunteer Fleet anticipated using the *Kazan* as a hospital ship should the need arise.

A ship of the Volunteer Fleet was usually a commercial ship, but during wartime used as a patrol ship. Such ships would be built with donated funds, and thus called *Volunteer Fleet*. Most Volunteer Fleet ships were fast, while the *Kazan* was an ordinary ship, originally designed for carrying passengers. However, the *Kazan* had an excellent cruising range. With a total fuel capacity of 1,480 tons total, it used 39 tons a day at a speed of 10 knots., giving the *Kazan* a cruising range of 9,100-ri (22,181 miles).

The Russia Volunteer Fleet placed the *Kazan* into service on the Odessa-Nagasaki-Vladivostock route. Perhaps their intention was to have a dependable ship on the Far East route. However, the *Kazan* did not remain on that route for long. After several voyages the Russo-Japanese war broke out in February 1904 (Meiji 37). The *Kazan* served as a hospital ship during the war and was hit. Luckily, it sank in a shallow bay and was retired from hospital service in November. The following May, the Japanese Navy took over the *Kazan* and re-named it the *Kasato Maru*. In July 1906 (Meiji 39), Toyo Kisen Kaisha (Oriental Steamship Company, or TKK) first leased the *Kasato Maru* from the Japanese Navy. The fee was 4,253-yen and 20-sen (1,253.20-yen)-- not expensive for the time. The next month, *TKK* put the *Kasato*

Maru into service on their route to the West Coast of South America. However, that route was closed in 1908. Coincidentally, IICC carried out its Brazilian emigration plan at about the same time and the first Brazil emigration dream came true with the help of with the *Kasato Maru* .

The specifications of the *Kasato Maru* 's were as follows:

6, 167 tons, 121.1 m/132.5 yd (length) by 15.2 m/16.6 yd (width) by 7.2 m/7.88 yd (depth), 2?????, 2 propellers 3,586 h.p., 13 knots/hr top speed, 10 knots/hr cruising speed; passenger capacity 12 in first class), 2,056 in steerage), and an unknown number in “special steerage.”

There is no documentation on the interior of the *Kasato Maru* , so those details remain unknown. However, I have provided a simple diagram of the room layout, based on Usami's general interior plan made for the first re-modeling of the *Kasato Maru*.

[translation of the terms provided with the diagram on the page 116,

1. Special steerage rooms, steerage dining room, nursing/medical room, 2. Steerage passengers' quarters (stern), 3. Ship's officers'quarters, 4. Bridge, 5. Captain's cabin, 6. First-class cabins, dining room, 7. Bathroom, 8. Crew's quarters, 9. Steerage bathroom, 10. Steerage passengers' quarters (bow)]

The Toyo Kisen Kaisha (TKK) returned the *Kasato Maru* to the Japanese Navy in December 1908 (Meiji 41). The following year, Osaka Sho-sen (Osaka Commercial Steamship Company, or OSK) leased the *Kasato Maru* from the Navy and re-modeled it at Mitsubishi's Nagasaki shipyard. It was put into service on the Taiwan route in 1910 (Meiji 43). A shipping company was normally responsible for returning a leased ship to the Navy in its original condition. However, Osaka Commercial received a waiver due to the extraordinary amount of work put into the re-modeling.

In 1912 (Meiji 45), the *Kasato Maru* was sold to Osaka Commercial and in 1916 (Taisho 5) became the first ship put into commercial service on the route to the East Coast of South America.). This later became the major route for emigration to South America.

The *Kasato Maru* was sold again to the independent ship buyer Koukichi Kanzaki in 1930 (Showa 5) and became the first sardine fishery ship in Japanese history. Unfortunately Kanzaki lost his business in a year and a half when the sardine population in the Sea of Japan suffered a dramatic decrease. The *Kasato Maru* was passed on to several different owners, eventually being used in the North Pacific as a **Meal Ship**. Nippon Suisan (Japan Seafood) owned the *Kasato Maru* during the Second World War and used it for crab catching.

Recently, the *Kasato Maru* 's final ending came to light. It was sunk by the Soviet Union while at anchor at the Nichiro GyoGyou U-toka Factory (Nichiro Fishery Factory) on the west coast of Kamchatka Peninsula on August 9th, 1945, at the end of the Second World War.

I heard an old song playing on TV the other day. It told of the *Kasato Maru* 's last years as a fishing ship. I could not help but think back on the long, poignant history of the the *Kasato Maru*