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JAPAN'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH AFRICA BETWEEN THE WARS: A STUDY OF JAPANESE CONSULAR REPORTS

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ABSTRACT This study consists of a provisional synthesis of research on Japan's economic relations with Africa based on an extensive examination of the pre-war Japanese consular reports regarding economic conditions in Africa. The purpose of this study is to interpret how economic relations between Japan and Africa developed. After the First World War, the number of commercial reports from Japanese consuls in various parts of Africa increased and the range of topics grew as well. Consular reports played a critically important role in extending overseas commercial knowledge to merchants and industrialists in Japan. In these reports, special attention was paid to the number and tonnage of ships passing through the Suez Canal in Egypt, as well as to the production of cotton and wool in British East Africa and the Union of South Africa, and to the sales of Japanese merchandise such as cotton textiles, knitwear, matches and brushes that had been exported to those areas. Japanese merchants and industrialists who dealt in cotton textiles found the Japanese domestic market size to be insufficient and greater attention came to be paid to such new markets as the Balkan States, the Middle East, and Africa. Given this situation, the establishment of a shipping line from Japan to Africa played a significant part in advancing Japan's trade with Africa. One of the Japanese shipping companies, Osaka Shosen Kaisha (OSK), opened the first line to South Africa in December 1916, and then, the East African line in March 1926. This enabled three large Japanese trading companies to open their branch offices in East Africa and these played an active role in expanding the export of East African cotton and made great efforts to send Japanese cotton cloth and artificial silk into the East African market.

Key Words: Shipping line; Trading company; Commercial information; Japan; Economic relation; Between the Wars.

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the emergence of the economic relations between Japan and Africa. It investigates how and why these relations developed, and when and where they did. An attempt is made to identify the forms and structures upon which these historical relations were built and the question of whether these relations were characterized by equality/reciprocity or by imperialism/dependency is considered. Until recently, little attention has been paid to the subject of Japanese-African relations and, therefore, there are no set ideas or methodological approaches which have been established by academic circles with regard to this topic (Agbi, 1982; Kitagawa, 1988, 1989a, 1989b; Morikawa, 1985). This article consists of a provisional synthesis of research on Japan's relations with Africa based on an

extensive examination of pre-war Japanese consular and other investigative reports regarding economic conditions in Africa.⁽¹⁾

The historical development of relations between Japan and Africa are examined within two frameworks. The first is the growth of the global system of production and exchange, and the second is the internal dynamics of Japanese political economy. The order of discussion in this article is as follows: (1) a historical survey of Japan and Africa in the international economy between the Wars,⁽²⁾ (2) the emergence of the collection and dissemination of commercial information and an overview of Japan's pre-war economic reports concerning Africa, (3) the development of trade between Japan and Africa with special reference to the openings of shipping lines and the advance of Japanese trading companies into Africa.

JAPAN, AFRICA AND THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY BETWEEN THE WARS

The expansion of the Japanese economy into Africa during the inter-war period was fundamentally influenced by the economic situation prevailing within the European spheres of influence on the African continent, by changes in the nature of the international economy, and by changes in the internal political economy of Japan at this time.

In the mid-1880s, the "Partition of Africa" began. This was a product of and the last stage in the "Age of Empire" which resulted from long time rivalries between European Powers (Hobsbawm, 1987; Robinson, 1972). The integration of Sub-Saharan Africa into the global system of production and exchange under the colonial rule of European Powers was the last stage in this world-wide transformation process.

The international economy in the period between 1896 and 1914 was no fixed and static entity. This was a period of expansion but also of instability. On the one hand, there was a substantial increase in world trade and more investment in Africa, and also this period witnessed the construction of colonial economies reaching new heights (Munro, 1976). On the other hand, the diffusion of industrialization and competition among European industrial powers destabilized the hitherto existing framework of the international economy and it became a multi-centred, instead of a British-centred, system. European scrambles for new colonies contributed significantly to the outbreak of the First World War.

After the War, it became evident that the predominant position in the international economy had shifted from Great Britain to the United States, and the distinctively self-sufficient Soviet system emerged along side the capitalist world economy. In the period between the Versailles Conference and the outbreak of World War II, it should be noticed that confidence in capitalism waned and colonialism faced a crisis as Africans created disturbances by resisting colonial rule (Munro, 1976; Aldcroft, 1987; Adu Boahen, 1987). European imperial powers responded by attempting to protect their colonial markets for themselves and by increasing the exploitation of their colonies by the implementation of a variety of land and labor policies. Many African societies were thus brought to the brink of destruction as

they were further incorporated into the exploitative and dualistic structure constructed by European settlers.⁽³⁾

It is in this context that the expansion of the Japanese economy overseas must be seen. This expansion was closely related to the development of Japanese capitalism. From the mid-1850s Japan was forced to link her political economy to the international economy on the basis of unequal treaties forced upon her by European Powers. The predominant ideology of free trade and the principle of comparative advantage in the middle of the nineteenth century seriously affected Japan. When she finally joined the ranks of imperial powers, she was a latecomer. It was not until after the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars that Japan's modernization was sufficient to allow large scale overseas imperial expansion. Japan's failure to grasp the nature of the structural changes underlying both European and non-European imperialism led her to the belated attempt at a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The enthusiasm with which Japan undertook this eventually led to the destruction of the Japanese Empire in the late 1930s (Beasley, 1987; Irie, 1966).

From the beginning of the Meiji Era, Japan's domestic policy had been guided by the concept of "Fukoku Kyohei," the need to enhance the wealth of the country and to strengthen the nation's military capacity. This meant that serious attention had to be given to national defense against the neighboring countries, particularly Russia. There was an urgent need to overcome a position of weakness in the international economy by modernizing the national economy. While Japan might logically have been regarded as a latecomer imperial nation along with Russia, her strategic considerations forced her to promote an argument for working with the advanced European imperial powers. Two complementary aspects of the Japanese overseas policy can be identified. One was the formal and strategically inspired policy that was backed by militarists, colonial bureaucrats and chartered companies such as the Manchurian Railway Company which had special interests in Manchuria and thus wanted to limit Russia's southward advance into that region. The other was an informal economic imperial policy promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, private industrialists and trading companies that aimed to establish favorable trading conditions in China and other overseas areas through an economic alliance with Great Britain, the United States and other countries⁽⁴⁾ (Beasley, 1987; Martin, 1986; Nish, 1986; Nagaoka, 1976; Murakami, 1984; Ono, 1985; 1920 Nendai Kenkyu Kai, 1983; Shakai Keizaishi Gakkai, 1982).

COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION OF COMMERCIAL INFORMATION REGARDING AFRICA

It was generally believed in Japan that, in order to compete with European nations, the development of trade was not really an option, but rather, a dire necessity. Being an island nation devoid of adequate natural resources for capitalist development, Japan had to depend heavily on foreign trade to acquire raw materials, fuels and agricultural products which it lacked (Moss & Ravenhill, 1985). Japan's survival as a latecomer imperialist depended upon the development

of an institutionalized system for the collection and dissemination of commercial information throughout the country. In order to collect overseas commercial information, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs founded the Consulate System and Consular Reporting System, and also the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce opened the Overseas Commercial Museums and dispatched Students of Practical Studies Overseas as well.⁽⁵⁾

I. Japanese Consular Reports

Japanese scholars have recently come to appreciate the value of consular reports as invaluable historical sources (Tsunoyama, 1979, 1981, 1986; Barker, 1981; Takashima, 1979, 1986). They have been used effectively, for instance, to clarify the information strategy of the so-called "Commercial State of Japan (Tsusho Kokka Nihon)" (Tsunoyama, 1988). Unlike various other kinds of diplomatic documents sent from government establishments abroad, consular reports provided detailed information on a wide variety of commercial topics by agents stationed all over the world who carried out regular investigations. These reports contained the names of local traders and commercial houses, indications of changing prices or demand for various goods, information about changes in consumer tastes, expected crop yields for agricultural products, import and export duties, foreign exchange rates and the like.

Japanese consular reports were printed and made available to merchants and businessmen from 1881 to 1943. The titles of these reports changed frequently and

Table 1. Japanese Consular Reports.

Title	Period	Publishing House	
Report of Commerce (Tsusho Ihen)	1881-1886 (Meiji 14-19)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	semiannually
Commercial Reports (Tsusho Hokoku)	1886/12-1889/12 (Meiji 19-22)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	every three month
Official Gazette (Kanpo)	1890/1-1905/12 (Meiji 23-38)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	daily
Journal of Commercial Reports (Tsusho Isan)	1894/1-1913/3 (Meiji 27-Taisho 2)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	monthly
Official Commercial Report (Tsusho Koho)	1913/4-1924/12 (Taisho 2-13)	Keiseisha Publishing Co. (first half) The Imperial Local Administration Society (Teikoku Chiho Gyosei Gakkai) (second half)	twice a week
Daily Overseas Commercial Reports (Nikkan Kaigai Shoho)	1925/1-1928/3 (Taisho 14-Showa 3)	The Imperial Local Government Administration (Teikoku Chiho Gyosei Gakkai)	daily
Weekly Overseas Economic Conditions (Shukan Kaigai Keizai Jijo)	1928/4-1934/12 (Showa 3-9)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	every Monday
Overseas Economic Conditions (Kaigai Keizai Jijo)	1935/1-1943/10 (Showa 10-18)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	twice a month

Source: Tsunoyama, 1981.

difficulties arise when one attempts to assemble a complete series for study (See Table 1).

Although only a small number of early reports regarding Africa appeared initially in the *Journal of Commercial Reports*, it was not until after the First World War that a variety of reports on economic conditions in Africa began to appear. However, these reports were neither sent directly from Africa nor based on field surveys. They came, instead, from various locations in Asia, Europe and North America where the information was gleaned from local newspapers, reports issued by colonial governments, conversations at international conferences of imperial powers and the like.

During World War I, commercial information on the African continent began to be collected by Japan's Honorary Consul at Cape Town in South Africa. The first Japanese government establishment had been opened in Cape Town in August, 1918. A Consulate was then opened at Port Said in December 1919. The Japanese government clearly regarded Egypt and South Africa as Japan's most important trading partners on the African continent. In March 1926, a Consulate General was opened in Alexandria, after which the following were established in this order: a Consulate in Mombasa (1932), Legation in Cairo (1936), a Consulate in Addis Ababa (1936), a Consulate in Casablanca (1936), and a Legation in Cape Town (1937). This new information-oriented commercial strategy that was based

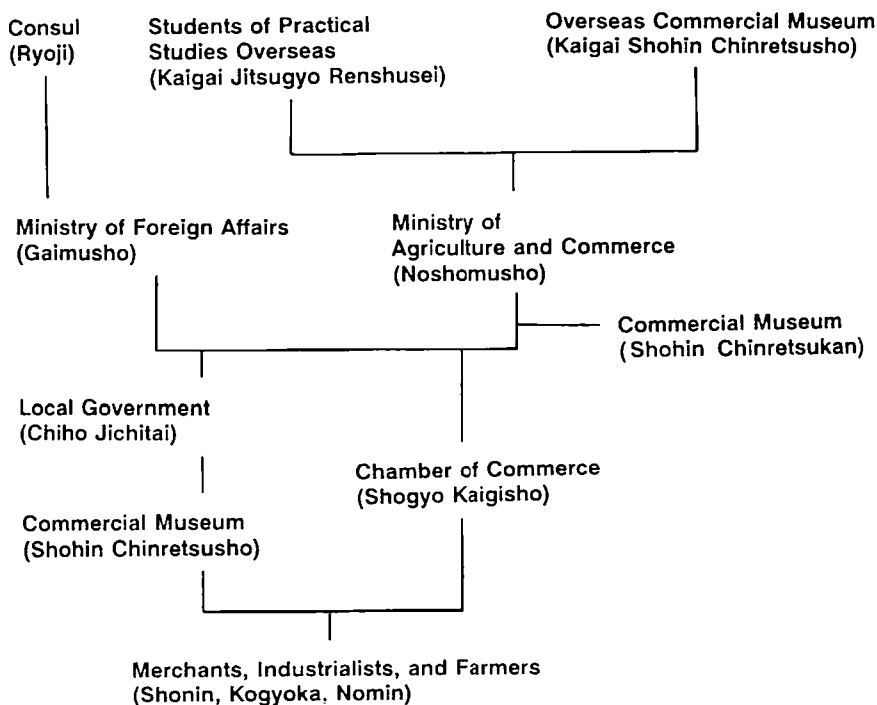


Fig. 1. Collection and Dissemination of Commercial Information (Source: Tsunoyama, 1981).

upon local data provided by a network of consular agents was successful in increasing the extent and quality of commercial information sent directly from Africa.⁽⁶⁾

The commercial information which was sent in from around the world, including Africa, was initially collected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. This information was then disseminated to local governments, chambers of industry and commerce, and local commercial museums by various offices including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Bureau of Trade and Commerce (Gaimusho Tsushokyoku) and the Ministry of Commerce's Bureau of Trade (Shomusho Boekikyoku).⁽⁷⁾ Relevant information was finally passed on to small and middle-sized industrialists, traders and farmers. To a surprising degree, these offices in charge of handling the information attempted to reply as often as possible to inquiries by people at the lowest level (See Fig. 1).

II. A Brief Survey of Commercial Information in Japanese Consular Reports

As time passed, the number of commercial reports coming in from Japanese consular officers residing in various parts of Africa increased steadily and the range of topics grew in number as well. The following brief survey of subjects covered in the series of Consular Reports mentioned earlier will suffice to show what these reports focused on.

The reports on North Africa initially focused entirely on Egypt, but afterwards, occasional reports on Tunis, Algeria, French and Spanish Morocco were added. Special attention was frequently paid to the number and tonnage of ships passing through the Suez Canal, but there were also reports on prospective cotton crops, on Japanese merchandise such as cotton textiles and knitwear, matches and brushes.

Reports on South Africa focused on the Union of South Africa, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and South West Africa. The high priority of this area for the Japanese government and businessmen was due to the large scale demand there for Japanese goods. The particularly wide range of reports on the Union of South Africa included reports on foreign trade, on mining, on the market for wool and wool products, on port and harbor facilities, on expected yields of cotton crops, and on the sale of Japanese general merchandise such as cotton goods, medicines, glass bottles, matches, textiles, cement, fishing instruments, etc.

In East Africa the main areas where Japanese goods were sold included Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Portuguese East Africa, Zanzibar, Nyasaland and Madagascar. In these areas as well, special attention was paid to cotton crop prospects, and the potential East African markets had to absorb Japanese goods. In contrast, Japanese interest in West African markets was delayed. Nevertheless, there were Japanese who were attracted to the possibility of markets in the Gold Coast, Belgian Congo, Nigeria, and French West Africa. In these markets, Japan's most promising exports were cotton goods.

III. A Brief Survey of Japan's Pre-War Governmental Investigative Reports Regarding Africa

In the pre-war period government investigation of economic conditions in Africa were focused almost exclusively on Southern and Eastern Africa and in particular on the Union of South Africa and British East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika).

The earliest economic research report on South Africa was published in 1903 by the Consul in Singapore and a person employed temporarily by the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (Hisamizu & Katsube, 1903). They spent two months in South Africa immediately after the end of the Boer War, almost a decade before the establishment of the Union of South Africa. In 1917, report on the foreign trade in South Africa was published by the Department of Agriculture and Commerce (No Shomusho) as one of its industrial and commercial reports (Shoko Isan) (Nunokawa, 1917). This was written by Magoichi Nunokawa who was sent to South Africa in order to investigate the possibility of sending Japanese immigrants to Southern Africa, as well as more Japanese merchandise. His report frankly admitted that the 1913 Immigration Act directed against Asians would undoubtedly hinder the development of increased trade with Japan. In 1927, research report on the Union of South Africa was sent to and published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Bureau of Trade and Commerce (Gaimusho Tsushokyoku) (Imai, 1927). This was intended to provide commercial information regarding South Africa to traders and industrialists who wished to develop ties with counterparts in South Africa.

The earliest report on the economic conditions in Eastern Africa was written and published by the Consul at Cape Town in 1924 (Imai, 1924). It surveyed major industries and the nature of trade in British East Africa, and reported that there was plenty of potential for increasing exports of Japanese cloth to East Africa but that there were also some difficulties due to the financial and credit systems of Indian merchants (Imai, 1924). In 1927, the Japanese government wanted to encourage the development of trade with East Africa and sent an investigative commission headed by Ujiro Oyama. The Oyama team conducted research in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Madagascar, Abyssinia, and Portuguese East Africa from September 1927 to February 1928. Their three volume report was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Bureau of Trade and Commerce⁽⁸⁾ (Oyama, 1928a, 1928b; Irie, 1928). K. Irie, an investigator of the Oyama team, argued that in order to encourage the development of Japan's trade with East Africa it was necessary to shorten the time of the voyage between Japan and East Africa, to establish a Japanese Consulate, and to open local branch offices of business banks (Irie, 1928). In addition to these, the investigative report on Portuguese East Africa, the research report on the economic conditions of the Middle East and Africa, and the report on the maritime products industries in Africa were published one after another by the government offices concerned⁽⁹⁾ (MFA, 1936; MLBWA, 1927; MFA, 1930).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE BETWEEN JAPAN AND AFRICA

I. General Trend

It was not until the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War that Japan's overseas trade underwent a fundamental change, as ventures in direct trade were launched. At the same time, Japanese traders themselves gained more control over external commerce. Until then, most of Japan's trade was handled by European and Chinese merchants residing in specified treaty ports. By the end of the Russo-Japanese War, there had evolved two distinctive areas and styles of overseas trade: (1) trade with Europe, North America, Australia, and British India which was generally handled by large trading companies engaging almost exclusively in this kind of commerce, and (2) trade with Korea, China, and other areas, including Africa and the Middle East, which tended to be handled more by small and middle-sized merchant houses. It was only after the outbreak of the First World War that a spectacular but short-lived advance of Japanese merchandise into Africa was seen.

In the aftermath of the war, however, Japanese trade suffered a severe setback as European powers regained their markets and adopted measures in keeping with increasingly popular ideas of imperial self-sufficiency. The newly-founded Republic of China also adopted high tariff policies to hurt its rivals, as did British India. The British Empire as a whole moved towards greater protection of its commonwealth markets. At the same time, Japanese industrialists and merchants who made or dealt in cotton textiles and other miscellaneous merchandise and who had increased in number during the war, now found the domestic market in Japan insufficient to absorb their surplus goods. Given this situation, it was inevitable that greater attention came to be paid to new markets which had not received much attention in the past. These included the Balkan States, the Middle East, South America and Africa. With the abolition of the gold standard in 1931, the value of the Japanese yen fell and set the stage for the promotion of Japanese exports (NBSK, 1941).

This situation strengthened Japan's potential relations with various areas in Africa. Despite the temporary increase in exports to Africa which resulted from the dislocation of trade between Europe and Africa during the First World War, at which time the quantity of Japan's exports to Africa exceeded her imports for the first time, it was not until after 1923 that Japan's exports to Africa consistently exceeded her imports. This regular state of unbalanced trade, always in Japan's favor after 1923, reflected the extraordinary efforts of the Japanese government and traders to penetrate African markets. The percentage of Japan's total exports to Africa also rose temporarily during the First World War, but declined quickly thereafter. It was only in the 1920s and 1930s that there was a substantial increase in Africa's proportion of Japan's exports.

Both before and after the First World War, until 1936, Egypt was always at the top of the list among African countries importing Japanese commodities (See Table 2). In that year, South Africa rose to first place as an export market for Japanese goods in Africa. Egypt was also at the top of the list of countries from which Japan imported goods until the latter half of the 1930s. Imports from South Africa also rose considerably in the 1930s, but the increase in imports of cotton

Table 2. Japan's Trade with Africa, 1912-1939 (100,000 Yen).

Year	Egypt		Cape/Natal, Union of South Africa		East Africa/Others			
	Ex	Im	Ex	Im	Ex	Im	Ex	Im
1912	8	63	4.5	0			—	—
1913	13	71	4.7	0.4			—	—
1914	18	63	4.9	0			—	—
1915	9	61	10.0	0.1			—	—
1916	53	58	42	0.07			4	2
1917	135	109	67	188			5	100
1918	284	91	183	294			13	6
1919	159	161	81	371			6	14
1920	305	132	82	738			8	12
1921	49	122	38	28			2	19
1922	64	105	48	37			4	26
1923	180	206	47	6			24	14
1924	270	170	57	9			83	40
1925	252	326	95	13	—	—	81	75
1926	230	319	107	9	—	—	93	84
1927	290	246	116	10	—	—	105	106
1928	237	203	116	13	64	62	20	42
1929	313	258	131	14	131	114	28	38
1930	289	162	141	16	106	44	31	16
1931	228	135	192	13	108	22	58	10
1932	418	197	164	26	157	34	116	16
1933	556	264	267	43	231	143	317	32
1934	729	462	295	82	374	213	424	37
1935	538	513	327	47	223	26	746	105
1936	409	457	415	225	270	291	882	106
1937	327	741	537	888	401	241	1160	191
1938	139	363	352	95	225	60	655	87
1939	156	503	468	92	228	196	675	135

Source: Naikaku Tokeikyoku, 1916, 1920, 1925, 1930, 1939, 1940.

Note: After 1925, others is divided into East Africa and others. East Africa includes Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika. After 1930, Union of South Africa is used instead of Cape/Natal.

from East Africa during this decade is the most noteworthy development in Japanese African trade. On the whole, Japan's exports to Africa consisted mostly of cotton textiles and miscellaneous merchandise such as woolen goods, shirts, knitwear, bedding and the like. Imports from Africa were chiefly composed of ginned cotton and other raw materials.

II. The Opening of the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (OSK) Line and other Shipping Lines to Expand Japan's Trade with Africa

The opening and development of shipping lines from Japan to Africa played a significant part in advancing Japan's trade with Africa. The OSK opened the first shipping line to South Africa in December, 1916. The ships on this line called at Durban, Cape Town, East London and Port Elizabeth, and this contributed considerably to the development of trade with South Africa. Japanese traders also felt the need for a direct route to East Africa, however. Exports from Japan were being

re-exported via Bombay or Aden and the traders were eager to have a direct Japan-East Africa shipping route established. Their requests helped convince the OSK to send teams of investigators to the East African coast, as did the growing general interest in East Africa as a new market. Particular attention was paid in OSK's investigative reports to agriculture and industry, to commercial structures and port facilities of East Africa. Finally, in March 1926, the OSK decided to open the East African line and the *Kanada-Maru* was sent on a trial run.⁽¹⁰⁾

The Japanese government authorized the East African line that same year which made it possible for ships such as the *Kanada-Maru*, the *Panama-Maru*, the *Shikago-Maru* and the *Mekishiko-Maru* to begin regular services once a month to East Africa. These ships departed from Kobe and turned around in Cape Town, making calls along the way in Moji, Hongkong, Singapore, Colombo, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Beira, Delagoa Bay and Durban. When the Japan Steamship Company (NYK) withdrew its ships from a line to the eastern coast of South America in April 1931, the OSK decided to allocate seven larger ship, such as the *Hawai-Maru*, or the *Arizona-Maru* to make brief stops at various ports on the east coast of South Africa once a month on the way to South America. This regular service started in Yokohama and turned around in Buenos Aires.⁽¹¹⁾ Although the volume of goods to be transported to and from the East Coast of Africa appeared at first insufficient to justify the launching of this new route, the OSK's determination to survive and prosper led it to undertake this risk. In doing so, it helped to make a significant contribution to the development of Japan's trade with Africa. By 1923, Japanese cotton goods and general merchandise had advanced not only to South Africa but also to the coastal zone of East Africa.

The development of Japan's trade with East Africa from 1931 to 1937 owed much to the principle of free trade established for East Africa initially at the Berlin Conference of 1885.⁽¹²⁾ In contrast, South Africa discriminated against Japanese goods by imposing high tariffs and practicing the kind of protectionism associated with the British imperial preference system (OSMSKK, 1966). OSK's shipping line between Japanese and various East African ports had to compete with the Japan Steamship Company (NYK), the Bank Line, Andrew Weir & Co., the British India Steamship Navigation Co., Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij, Messagerie Maritime and Norddeutsch Lloyd. But OSK had the good fortune to monopolize the Japan-Southern African route and to compete effectively on the Japan-East African route, because the growth of the commercial traffic and increase in the tonnage and number of ships was marked during this period. After 1932, there were, in addition to the regular routes, special ships sent to East Africa. Between 1934 and 1937, ships owned by Kawasaki, Kokusai and Yamashita Steamship Company were allocated to this route under the control of OSK.

After investigating the state of affairs in West Africa, OSK opened a new line in November 1933 to Lagos, Accra, and Dakar via South Africa. The *Arasuka-Maru* was sent on an initial trial run. Before this, Japanese exports to West Africa arrived via two routes. They were either trans-shipped at European ports or at New York. Maritime transport from Europe to West Africa was at this time still preserved for European capitalized shipping lines such as Elder Dempster, Woermann, Deutsch Ost-Afrika, and Hamburg-Bremen-Africa. From New York to West

Africa, there was the American East Africa Line. Also, almost the entire import and export business in West Africa was under the control of larger European trading houses, in particular, the United African Company and *Compagnie Française de L'Afrique Occidentale*. It was, therefore, nearly impossible for OSK and Japanese traders to gain access to West African markets (Munro, 1990).

III. The Advance of Japanese Trading Companies into African Markets

The First World War provided a good opportunity for the Japanese cotton industry to make great strides and thus become competitive in the world market. The cotton industry's sudden rise was made possible by the existence of cheap and good quality labor, a neighboring Asian market, the development of maritime transport and the activity of trading companies. There were also many innovations in the domestic machine industry, in the rationalization of management practice, in the mix of technology, capital and labor, and in the founding of associations of cotton industrialists and traders. It was critically important for the cotton industry to secure cheap labor, to import sufficient quantities of high quality cotton, and to find favorable outlets for its manufactured goods. Progress in the technology for mixing cottons made it possible to employ almost any kind of cotton from abroad to produce high quality cotton yarn (Yoshida, 1974). This is one reason that increasing attention was paid to East African cotton as well as to American and Indian cotton. In Uganda, cotton growing had developed extensively since it was introduced in 1903. By the mid-1920s, the number of Indian cotton ginneries had increased to the point that the colonial government tried to enforce a Cotton Ordinance aimed at regulating their number. Ugandan cotton was originally exported to Japan through the Bombay cotton market via Indian and British commercial houses. It was inevitable that the Japanese industrialists, in their efforts to cut costs, would attempt to purchase cotton directly from Africa, especially with the opening of shipping routes to this area.

In those days 80% of Japan's raw cotton was imported by three large trading companies: Nihon Menka (Nichimen), Toyo Menka (Tomen), and Goshō. Nichimen opened a branch office in Mombasa in 1919 and in Dar es Salaam in 1927. Tomen opened an office in Jinja in 1920 and Goshō opened an office in Kampala in 1926. These Japanese trading houses, together with British and Indian merchant houses such as Baili Brothers and the Liverpool Uganda Company, played an active role in expanding the export of Ugandan cotton to China, Europe and Japan. Japanese companies not only offered financial credit to small and middle-sized Indian cotton ginneries but also entered into the direct management of cotton ginneries themselves. Of the three companies dealing in cotton, Nichimen was the most involved in the cotton trade and industry in East Africa. As early as 1917, Nichimen sent a team of investigators from their Bombay branch office to East Africa in order to survey conditions in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, the Belgian Congo, Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. In 1926, as soon as OSK line from Japan to East Africa was opened, Nichimen set up an office in Mombasa. At this time, Nichimen not only bought cotton in Mikese in Tanganyika but also six cotton ginneries in Uganda (in Kamuli, Namaganda, Namirumba, Naminaga,

Namwendwa and Irapa). The British government prohibited Japanese management of local cotton ginneries and the sale of their ginned cotton abroad in 1933, after which Nichimen limited its activities in this region to buying cotton alone. On the other hand, Nichimen made great efforts to sell cotton cloth, artificial silk, and general merchandise in East African markets (NJKK, 1962; Yoshida, 1974). These trading companies thus played a significant role in the pre-war period in developing the Japanese cotton industry as well as in helping to promote Japan's trade with East Africa.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A detailed and positive description of the African continent as a Japanese commodity market was given in *A View of Economic Conditions in Africa (Ahurika Keizai Jijo Tenbo)* published in 1932.⁽¹³⁾ In this report, African markets were divided into four regions. Group A included Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, French Morocco, Spanish Morocco, Tunis, Tripoli, Tangier, Rio de Oro and Eritrea. Group B consisted of British, French, and Italian Somaliland, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Madagascar, Portuguese East Africa, Ethiopia, and Nyasaland. Group C comprised the Union of South Africa, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and South West Africa. Group D included the Belgian Congo, Portuguese Angola, French West Africa⁽¹⁴⁾ and British West Africa.⁽¹⁵⁾

From the Japanese perspective, Group A and C were regarded as the most important. Various government agencies were therefore established quite early in the Group A area to promote the development of trade. For instance, a Consulate General was established in Alexandria, a Consulate at Port Said, Honorary Consuls were named in Tunis and Algeria, and a Commercial Museum was opened at Cairo. Japan also attempted to lay firm foundations for trade relations with countries in Group C. This area looked so promising to many officials that they worked especially hard to eliminate various difficulties which hindered the development of trade. Despite discrimination against "coloreds" in the Union of South Africa, the Consulate, established in Cape Town at an early date, managed to expand its activities year by year. Nevertheless, in addition to the prohibition against the entry of Japanese immigrants, which made it difficult to promote trade, many South African whites came to regard Japanese goods as a threat to South African laborers. There are indications that the South African government was on the verge of prohibiting extraordinary low price Japanese goods not only once (Nunokawa, 1917). It was thus recognized that Japan would have to make great efforts in order to avoid suffering from unfair competition.

It was partly for this reason that more attention came to be focused in the 1930s on Group B, or what was essentially East Africa. Areas of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and Nyasaland were already known to many Japanese industrialists and traders because of the efforts of previous commercial pioneers there, and because of the visits of commissions of economic investigation. The opening of a Consulate in Mombasa and the assignment of trade correspondents there was one way in which the Japanese attempted to promote exports to this area.

Group D was unfamiliar territory for most Japanese, except for the Belgian Congo into which the import of Japanese merchandise, including cotton goods, was more or less handled by European merchants. If Japanese traders were to compete successfully and survive severe European competition in this area where there were no Japanese consuls or honorary consuls, constructive efforts had to be taken in order to overcome European economic domination in West Africa (MFA, 1932).

Professor Tsunoyama, an editor of *A Study in Japanese Consular Reports (Nihon Ryoji Hokoku no Kenkyu)* made the following suggestions with regard to consular reports: there should be (1) a general evaluation of consular reports as a historical source; (2) biographical studies of consuls themselves; (3) a concrete analysis of consular reports focusing on geographical areas, on commodities, on commercial museums, on exhibitions and on immigration; and, finally, (4) comparative studies at the international level of consular reports to fill an important gap in historical studies (Tsunoyama, 1986). This study of pre-war consular reports and the findings of economic investigations of Africa by Japanese in the pre-war period is a step in that direction. The aim of this study is both ambitious and modest, ambitious in the sense that any brief review of vast amount of scattered literature upon which one might try to fill this gap in the historical study of Japan's relations with Africa must be regarded as premature, modest in the sense that this study has attempted to do no more than provide an account of the broad trends of commercial relations between these countries and to begin to bring them into historical perspective. The result of this may be meager, but the field is fertile.

NOTES

- (1) In this article, pre-war indicates the period before World War II.
- (2) This means the period between World War I and World War II. It usually indicates the two decades of the 1920s and 1930s.
- (3) Colonial governments employed a variety of active economic and political measures to extend their influence over indigenous peoples in Africa. These include taxation, the reapportionment of land, the promotion of mono-culture crop for exports, the importation of manufactured goods, the inducement of investment in mining and plantations by metropolitan capitalists, and the provision of infrastructure. Their common goal was to build a financial base for the privileged relations of their metropolitan countries with their colonies, and to extend colonial rule beyond the existing boundaries of their political and economic influence. Because of these policies, the autonomy of African societies was seriously undermined and local African economies became highly dependent upon overseas metropolitan economies. Few links were developed between African economies so that little economic integration of these dependent colonies was generated. As a result, a great deal of uneven development took place in these indigenous societies (Munro, 1976).
- (4) It should be added that both policies were closely connected to each other. Further consideration is necessary on this point.
- (5) Therefore, in order to clarify the whole system of collecting overseas commercial information, it is essential to investigate not only reports sent from Students of Practical Studies Overseas and Overseas Commercial Museums but also various kinds of publications from the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce.

- (6) In addition to these consulates, trade office correspondents and trade mediation centres were also established at Mombasa (1927), Nairobi (1933), and Casablanca (1934) to provide various kinds of services and information to Japanese traders and industrialists visiting these locations.
- (7) Others include the Bureau of Colonization (Takushoku Jimukyoku), the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce's Bureau of Commerce and Industry (Noshomusho Shokokyoku), and the Ministry of Communication's Bureau of Waterways Administration (Teishinsho Kansinkyoku).
- (8) The first two volumes, both published in 1928, were written by Ujiro Oyama and the third volume was written by Kanae Irie.
- (9) Investigations by the Japanese government into the economic conditions in West Africa were rare, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Bureau of Trade and Commerce did publish a report entitled *Economic Conditions in the Belgian Congo (Berugiryō Kōgo Keizai Jijō)* in 1927.
- (10) OSK dispatched an investigative team to East and West Africa to collect information on foreign trade, shipping, and on port and harbor facilities (OSK, 1924, 1934).
- (11) Ports of call along the way were Nagoya, Osaka, Kobe, Moji, Hongkong, Singapore, Colombo, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Laurenço Marques, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Rio de Janeiro, and Santos.
- (12) Japan's earliest economic interest in Black Africa was in the so called Congo Basin Area which was accorded the status of a free trade area by Article III of the Berlin Act of 1885 (Morikawa, 1985).
- (13) The most voluminous report on Africa in the pre-war period was a general overview of the economic situation published in 1932. This report incorporated information from all reports published up to that time on Africa as well as on current reports from the field. This is an invaluable historical source for those interested in the economic conditions in Africa in the period immediately preceding the Wall Street Crash of 1929.
- (14) French West Africa included French Equatorial Africa as well as Niger, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Sudan, and French Togoland.
- (15) British West Africa included Nigeria, Gambia, Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone.

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