



THE
JAPANESE
CULTURE OF
MOURNING
WHALES

*Whale Graves
and Memorial
Monuments
in Japan*

Mayumi Itoh



The Japanese Culture of Mourning Whales

Mayumi Itoh

The Japanese Culture of Mourning Whales

Whale Graves and Memorial Monuments in Japan

palgrave
macmillan

Mayumi Itoh
Princeton, New Jersey
USA

ISBN 978-981-10-6670-2 ISBN 978-981-10-6671-9 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-6671-9>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017956576

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2018

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover design by Fatima Jamadar

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore
189721, Singapore

Dedicated to the souls of whales

NOTES ON THE TEXT

All translations were made by the author in the form of paraphrases (not as literal translations) in order for the translations to make sense in English. For instance, the word “*kuyō-tō*” literally means a “memorial tower,” but this book gives it different translations depending on the nature of the monument. When the monument was erected in a temple and was made in the style of a stupa (a memorial stone in Buddhism), the word is translated as “memorial stupa.” In turn, when a monument was created in a park or at the shore, it is translated as “cenotaph” or “memorial tower” (for a taller one).

Regarding spelling in Japanese, the Hepburn style is primarily used, with macrons, but macrons are not used for words known in English without macrons, as in Kyoto and Tokyo. Another exception is that “n” is not converted to “m” for words where it precedes “b, m, and n”; for example, Tenpō era, instead of Tempō era (names for Japanese newspapers, such as *Asahi Shimbun*, are given ‘as is’ because they are their official English names). Also, names of Japanese persons are given with the surname first, except for those who use the reversed order in English. Honorific prefixes, such as doctor and mister, are not used in the text.

As with reading archival documents, deciphering the inscriptions on whale gravestones and monuments presented a challenge (many of the engravings have weathered away and become illegible). In fact, the more one reads documents on whale graves, the more contradictions and dis-

crepancies one finds. The study is complicated by the fact that the date of the inscriptions was recorded in the old calendar system, in which the imperial era name, as well as the lunar calendar, was used. The imperial era frequently changed during medieval times, and there are as many as thirty-six imperial eras for the Edo period (1603–1868) alone. Many of the names are similar and are easy to confuse with one another. Also, the lunar calendar usually lags a month (sometimes two months) behind the Gregorian calendar. For this book, the date was translated into the Gregorian calendar wherever possible.

In addition, the old age counting system (*kazoe*) used in Japan confuses the dates of birth of Buddhist monks or the dates of memorial services given for whales by Buddhist temples. For instance, the third-year anniversary memorial service is actually held on the second-year anniversary day of the death. For this book, sources were cross-examined and the *kazoe* date was adjusted to the Gregorian calendar wherever possible. When the exact date could not be determined, this book provides two dates, as in 1654/1655.

Further, the recent nationwide drastic changes in names of places add much confusion to the research. Due to the “Great Mergers of the Heisei [Era]” that began in 1999 and peaked in 2005, a number of existing cities, towns, and villages were abolished and absorbed into newly created ones. As of April 13, 2016, there are a total of 1718 cities, towns, and villages in Japan—790 cities, 745 towns, and 183 villages. This total number is a 1514 decrease from March 31, 1999—a 120 increase for cities, a 1249 decrease for towns, and a 385 decrease for villages. The problem is that most of the newly created municipalities were named without much regard to the names of the previous ones with roots that reflected their local history.¹

Consequently, the names for the new municipalities have lost the “colors of history” and traditional identities, and it is difficult to figure out the location of places by their new names. As documents on whale graves and monuments record the locations throughout Japan with the pre-Heisei merger names, matching the old names with the new unfamiliar ones presented a challenge.²

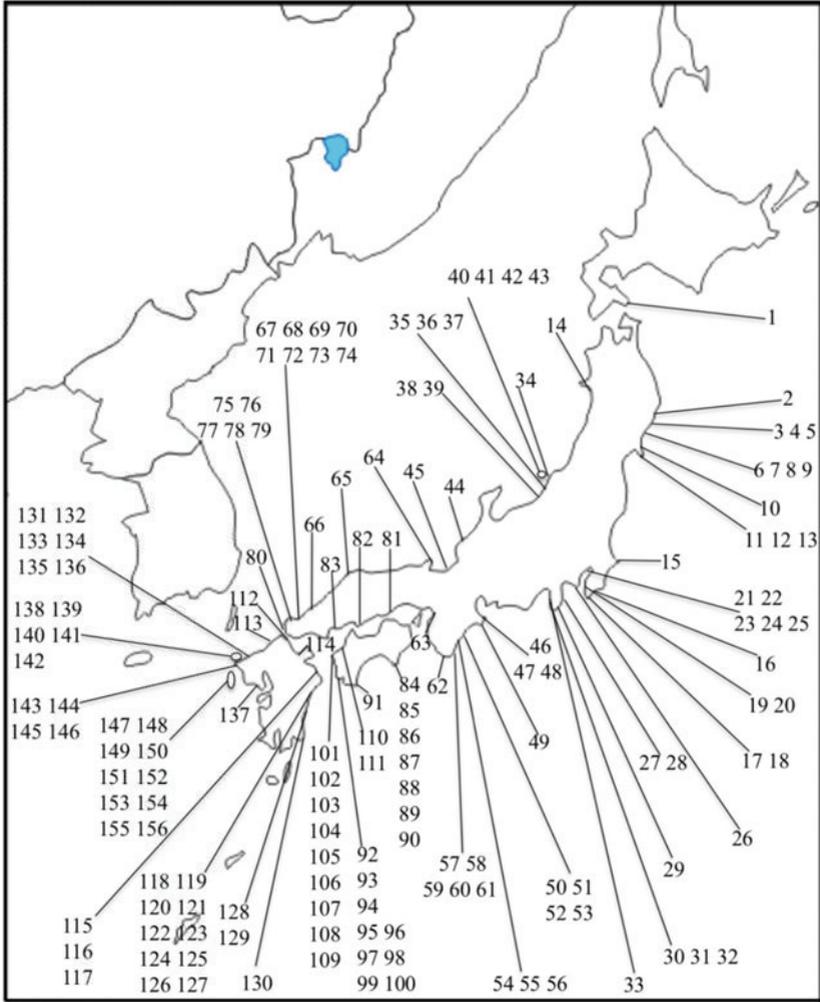
Citation numbers for sources of information are normally given at the end of each paragraph, instead of at the end of each sentence, in order to enhance the smooth reading of the text and also to limit the number of

citations. Regarding online sources, the dates of actual access are given unless the sources give the posting dates.

NOTES

1. “‘Heisei no dai-gappei’ tettei tsuiseki” (Full Investigation of “Great Mergers of Heisei [Era]”), April 13, 2016, <http://www.8toch.net.gappei/>
2. Ibid.

MAP: WHALE GRAVES AND RELATED MONUMENTS IN JAPAN



Note: The numbers correspond to those in Table A.1

Source: Constructed by author from blank map of East Asia, courtesy of Daniel Dalet, http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=77&lang=en

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Among the many people who encouraged me in writing this manuscript, I would like to thank Sara Crowley-Vigneau, Rachel Crawford, and Connie Li for editorial work; Fujii Fuminori, Furuyama Keikō, Hayakawa Yoshikatsu, Kawamura Shigeyoshi, Ken Kawata, Kumi Katō, Mori Tetsuo, Nakazono Shigeo, Ochiai Kanji, Seiji Ohsumi, Sakurai Hayato, Sasaki Katsutaka, Suda Keiko, Kyōko Suda, Usui Tsutomu, and Yasunaga Hiroshi for valuable information; and Daniel Dalet for the loan of a map. I also thank Tsuneo Akaha, Kent Calder, Toshiko Calder, Steve Clemons, Gerald Curtis, Joshua Fogel, Sheldon Garon, Ronald Hrebenar, Donald Keene, Ellis Krauss, David Leheny, Mike Mochizuki, T. J. Pempel, Stephen Roddy, Gilbert Rozman, Richard Samuels, Vicki Wong, Donald Zagoria, and Quansheng Zhao, as well as Gregory Rewoldt and Megumi Itoh, for continuous encouragement and inspirations.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
2	Historical Background	11
3	Whaling Culture and Whale Graves in the Hokkaidō and Tōhoku Regions	33
4	Whale Shrines and Temples in the Kantō Region	57
5	Whale Graves and Monuments in the Chūbu and Hokuriku Regions	71
6	Sacred Mountains of Buddhism and Shintoism and Whaling Culture in the Kansai-Kinki Regions	85
7	Pure Land Buddhism and Whaling Culture in the Chūgoku Region	115

8	Pilgrimage of Eighty-Eight Temples and Whale Graves in the Shikoku Region	145
9	Buddhism, Catholicism, Shintoism, and Whaling Culture in the Kyūshū Region	171
10	Conclusion	209
	Appendix 1	223
	Appendix 2	231
	Appendix 3	235
	Appendix 4	239
	Appendix 5	241
	Selected Bibliography	243
	Index	251

ABBREVIATIONS

ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRW	International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling
IWC	International Whaling Commission
JNR	Japanese National Railways
JR	Japan Railways
SCAP-	General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander of the Allied
GHQ	Powers
STCW	Small-Type Coastal Whaling
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 3.1	Whale grave (second from left), Hirota, Rikuzen-Takata, Iwate prefecture, 1905	40
Photograph 3.2	New gold-painted statue of the thousand-armed goddess of mercy for whales, Kan'non-dō, Hirota, Iwate prefecture, circa 1965	43
Photograph 3.3	Grand memorial tablet for the souls of whales (first on left, back row), Kan'non temple, Ayukawa, Miyagi prefecture	49
Photograph 6.1	Whale Stone, Nakiri Shrine, Daiō, Mie prefecture, circa 1700	88
Photograph 6.2	Whale Grave (1768, left), memorial prayer stone (circa 1800, right), and new stone statue of guardian deity of unborn children for the souls of whales (1986, center), Tōmyō Temple, Taiji, Wakayama prefecture	98
Photograph 6.3	Memorial rite of sending off the souls of whales to the sea, Taiji, Wakayama prefecture, August 2012	105
Photograph 6.4	Memorial boat for sending off the souls of whales to the sea, Taiji, Wakayama prefecture, August 2012	106
Photograph 7.1	Grand memorial tablet for whales, Kōgan Temple, Kayoi, Yamaguchi prefecture, 1692	123
Photograph 7.2	Death register for whales, Kōgan Temple, Kayoi, Yamaguchi prefecture, 1692–circa 1908	126
Photograph 7.3	Stone statue of guardian deity of unborn children for the souls of whales, Kōgan Temple, Kayoi, Yamaguchi prefecture, 1863	131

- Photograph 9.1 “Picture of Memorial Service for Whales at Ryūshō Zen Temple” in Chronicle of “Whale Battles at Ogawa Island,” Yobuko, Saga prefecture, 1840 181
- Photograph 9.2 “Picture of Memorial Rite of Transferring the Souls of Whales by Sending Them off to the Sea” in Chronicle of “Whale Battles at Ogawa Island,” Yobuko, Saga prefecture, 1840 182

LIST OF TABLES

Table A.1	Whale graves and related monuments in Japan	223
Table A.2	Memorial rites for whales and other related intangible cultural properties	231
Table A.3	Selected monuments dedicated to Ebisu god and other tangible cultural properties related to whaling	235
Table A.4	Selected intangible cultural properties dedicated to whale god	239
Table A.5	Selected folklore legends concerning whales	241

Introduction

In nature one form of life must always prey upon another. However, human consciousness holds an awareness of, and sympathy for, the will of other beings to live. An ethical human strives to escape from this contradiction so far as possible.
—Reverence for Life, Albert Schweitzer (1923)

On March 31, 2014, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Japanese whaling operations in the Antarctic Ocean were not for “scientific research” but were de facto commercial whaling. Japan thus lost the case that the Australian government had filed in May 2010. The Japanese government responded immediately by stating that it would abide by the ruling. This is not news. Earlier in 1982, the International Whaling Commission (IWC), based in Cambridge, England, which was established under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW) in 1946, adopted a regulation to implement a moratorium on commercial whaling beginning in the 1985–1986 season. However, along with other whaling countries such as Norway and Russia, the Japanese government, which had joined the IWC in 1951, objected to its decision.¹

The IWC has no power to enforce its decisions on its members, and any member nation can opt out of any specific IWC regulation by submitting a formal objection to it. Canada even withdrew from the IWC entirely in 1982. Japan in the end succumbed to international pressure (of the United States specifically) and withdrew its objection and stopped commercial whaling completely in the Antarctic in 1986. Nevertheless, Japan soon began whaling

operations in the Antarctic in 1987 under the “scientific research” provision of the ICRW (which also allows whaling under the “aboriginal-subsistence” provision). The “scientific research” provision allows governments to issue special permits to their citizens to engage in whaling for purposes of scientific research. Japan also began small-type “scientific research” whaling in the Japanese coast and off northwestern Pacific Ocean in 1994.²

Thus, unlike other whaling countries, such as Norway, Iceland, and Russia, that had opted out of the moratorium on commercial whaling and have engaged in commercial whaling on their own, Japan has engaged in “scientific research” whaling through the management of a government-supported non-profit organization, the Institute of Cetacean Research based in Tokyo. In turn, international environment protection groups, such as Greenpeace and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, condemned the Japanese government asserting that it was allowing commercial whaling in the name of the “scientific research.” Their anti-Japanese whaling campaigns escalated to the extent that they attacked the Japanese whaling factory-ship *Nisshin-maru* in the Antarctic Ocean in 2006 and 2007. Then came the ICJ’s ruling of 2014. These controversies are public knowledge.³

JAPANESE CLASSICAL WHALING

Little known is the fact that the Japanese have had a tradition of whaling since ancient times. The *Man’yō-shū*, the anthology of poems that was compiled from the late seventh century to the late eighth century, uses the word *isana-tori* (“*isana*” literally means “brave fish” and refers to whale, while “*tori*” means “to catch”) in describing the ocean. This suggests that the Japanese had already engaged in a rudimentary form of whaling by the Nara period (710–794). However, the practice remained sporadic.⁴

Centuries later, with the invention of manual harpoons in the late sixteenth century, Japanese classical whaling began in earnest at the beginning of the seventeenth century during the Edo period (1603–1868). Unlike modern Western-style whaling, Japanese classical whaling only involved coastal whaling, catching whales that migrated off the Pacific Ocean or the Sea of Japan and using only rudimentary tools. Moreover, what is almost unknown to the non-Japanese speaking world is the fact that the Japanese conducted ceremonies after the deaths of whales and took care of their “afterlives.”⁵

JAPANESE CULTURE OF MOURNING THE DEATHS OF WHALES

The memorial rites for whales began with creating whale graves by burying a part of their bones and erecting gravestones. Then, the Japanese conducted funeral services and mourned their deaths according to the Buddhist percept. Afterwards, they performed seasonal and annual memorial services for whales and continued to pray that their souls would rest in peace in heaven. They also erected memorial stupas (cenotaphs created at Buddhist temples and elsewhere) for whales and continued to pray that their souls would attain the enlightenment of Buddha. Surprisingly, these memorial rites have been observed not only in whaling communities but also in non-whaling communities where villagers caught whales that had been stranded ashore. Even more surprisingly, after the classical whaling had ended more than a hundred years ago, the Japanese have maintained this tradition to this day.⁶

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature in English

There is a diverse literature in English on whaling in general and on Japanese whaling in particular. Some of the notable recent works on whaling include *The International Politics of Whaling* (1997) written by Peter J. Stoett; *Trying Leviathan: The Nineteenth-Century New York Court Case That Put the Whale on Trial and Challenged the Order of Nature* (2007) and *The Sounding of the Whale: Science and Cetaceans in the Twentieth Century* (2012), both by D. Graham Burnett; and *Unveiling the Whale: Discourse on Whales and Whaling* (2009) by Arne Kalland. Meanwhile, two books in English have been published on Japanese whaling: *Japanese Whaling: End of an Era* (1992) by Arne Kalland and Brian D. A. Moeran, and *Whaling in Japan: Power, Politics, and Diplomacy* (2009) by Jun Morikawa.⁷

There are also two book chapters on Japanese whaling: “Japanese Perceptions of Whales and Dolphins” by Arne Kalland in John Knight, ed., *Wildlife in Asia: Cultural Perspectives* (2004); and “The Ambivalence of Whaling: Conflicting Cultures in Identity Formation” by Jessamyn R. Abel in George M. Pflugfelder and Brett L. Water, eds., *JAPANimals: History and Culture in Japan’s Animal Life* (2005).⁸

None of the entries above mention Japanese belief systems about whales or memorial rites for whales, with the exception of works by Arne Kalland.

In addition, there is a conference proceeding entitled *Small-Type Coastal Whaling in Japan: Report of an International Workshop* published by the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, the University of Alberta (1988), which has a short chapter, “Whaling Beliefs and Japanese Worldview.” Although this publication does not provide the author’s name for each chapter, the twelve participants in this workshop include such prominent anthropologists and Japanologists as Tomoya Akimichi, Pamela J. Asquith, Harumi Befu (deceased), Theodore C. Bestor, Milton M. R. Freeman, Helen Hardacre, Arne Kalland, and Brian D. A. Moeran. The significance of this highly specialized study is unquestionable, but some of the content is now outdated. More recently, *Bones of Contention: Animals and Religion in Contemporary Japan* (2012) by Barbara R. Ambros touches on the subject.⁹

Accordingly, there is no book in English, to the knowledge of this author, that has devoted its entirety to the study of Japanese whaling culture in general, let alone the Japanese memorial rites for whales specifically. Regarding academic journal articles, only one article in English has examined Japanese memorial rites for whales for one specific locale, “Prayers for the Whales: Spirituality and Ethics of a Former Whaling Community—Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainability” (2007) by Kumi Kato.¹⁰

Literature in Japanese

In comparison, literature on Japanese whaling in general as well as on the Japanese whaling culture abounds. Regarding classical literature, *Saikai geigei-ki* (Record of Whaling in West Sea), compiled by Tanimura Yūzō in 1720, is considered the oldest solid study of whaling, chronicling classical whaling also in the Kinki and Inland Sea regions. This was followed by the publication of *Geishi-kō* (Manuscript on History of Whaling), compiled by Ōtsuki Seijun in 1808. This six-volume work is the oldest encyclopedia of whaling in Japan.¹¹

In the latter twentieth century, notable publications came out, which include *Nihon hōgeishi-wa* (History of Japanese Whaling, 1960) by Fukumoto Kazuo; *Saikai geigei-ki* (Record of Whaling in the West Sea, 1980) by Hirado-City Board of Education; *Kujira to hito no minzoku-shi* (Ethnography of Whales and People, 1994) by Tomoya Akimichi; *Kujira to hōgei no bunka-shi* (Cultural History of Whales and Whaling, 1994) by Morita Katsuaki. This was followed by *Kujira-tori no keifu: Gaisetsu Nihon hōgei-shi* (Genealogy of Whaling: Introduction to the History of Japanese Whaling, 2001) by Nakazono Shigeo; *Kujira to Nihonjin* (Whales and the Japanese, 2003) by

Ohsumi Seiji, then director general of the Institute of Cetacean Research; and *Kujira sono rekishi to bunka* (History and Culture of Whales, 2005) by Komatsu Masayuki, former official at Japan's Fisheries Agency and acting Japanese representative to the IWC; and *Kujira-tori e-monogatari* (Picture Tales of Whaling, 2009) by Nakazono Shigeo and Yasunaga Hiroshi.¹²

Further, Watanabe Hiroyuki added a sociological perspective to the subject in *Hogei-mondai no rekishi shakaigaku: Kingendai Nihon ni okeru kujira to ningen* (Historical Sociology of Whaling Problems: Whales and People in Modern Japan, 2006). In addition, there are a plethora of documents, such as the official history of local classical whaling, compiled by local governments respectively, where classical whaling bases had existed.¹³

Regarding the Japanese culture of mourning the deaths of whales specifically, Shindō Naosaku made a pioneering study in *Seto-naikai no kujira no kenkyū* (Study of Whales in the Inland Sea, 1968) and *Seto-naikai shūhen no kujira no kenkyū* (Study of Whales Surrounding the Inland Sea, 1970). Following in the footsteps of Shindō, a scholar at Tokyo University of Fisheries (currently Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology), Yoshihara Tomokichi visited most of the fishing communities in Japan that are known to have preserved whale graves and monuments and updated the data collected by Shindō. Yoshihara's extensive field research culminated in "Kujira no haka" (Graves of Whales), which was compiled in *Nihon minzoku bunka shiryō shūsei* (Collection of Documents on Folklore Culture in Japan, 1997) edited by the renowned Japanese anthropologist Tanigawa Ken'ichi.¹⁴

In his painstaking and tireless study, Yoshihara identified about sixty whale graves and monuments in Japan. However, he omitted some of the significant ones because information was limited when he conducted his research. Actually, the total number in earlier times would have been more than 100, because many have decayed and disappeared.¹⁵

SCOPE OF THIS BOOK

The purpose of this book is not to study modern Japanese whaling. Instead, this book examines the lesser-known aspects of Japanese whaling, specifically the cultural and religious aspects of Japanese classical whaling regarding how Japanese mourned the deaths of whales. Given the paucity of studies in English of Japanese classical whaling and its culture, this book also mentions other aspects of Japanese whaling culture, such as folklore legends about whales, as well as the history of Japanese classical whaling,

and thereby fills the vacuum in studies in English of Japanese whaling. For this purpose, this book investigates various forms of memorial rites for whales, as manifested in whale graves, cenotaphs, and other monuments.

Unfortunately, many of the whale graves and monuments do not exist today because they have weathered away due to exposure to high waves and inclement weather; however, this book tries to be as exhaustive as possible (updating the existing data collected by Yoshihara Tomokichi and others) and studies all of the known cases for which records and relics of memorial rites for whales have been preserved. This author visited about a dozen fishing communities in Japan (most of which were located in remote regions with difficult access by public transportation) and interviewed officials at local whale museums and temple head priests. There are also monuments for other marine mammals, including dolphins (marine mammals were considered species of fish). This book includes these cases because information about them is rare.

It will be best to examine the subject matter in the eight regions of Japan from northeast to southwest—in the order of the Hokkaidō Region, the Tōhoku Region (northeastern Honshū, the largest island of Japan), the Kantō Region (central-eastern Honshū), the Chūbu Region (central Honshū), the Kansai-Kinki Region (central-western Honshū), the Chūgoku Region (western Honshū), the Shikoku Region (Shikoku Island), and the Kyūshū Region (Kyūshū Island). This study excludes Okinawa prefecture, because the region was an independent state—the Ryūkyū Kingdom—and few documents are available about whaling there. It had a suzerain-vassal relationship with Satsuma province and the Tokugawa shogunate government after Satsuma province invaded the kingdom in 1609, but remained a tributary state of China. Then, in 1872, the Meiji government incorporated the islands into Japan as Ryūkyū province at first and then as Okinawa prefecture in 1879.

Similar names for gravestones and for memorial rituals for whales are cited throughout Chaps. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, and this might give an impression of repetitiousness. However, references to similar names are inevitable, because this is the first comprehensive study in English of memorial rites for whales in Japan. The existence of similar monuments and services in different regions is actually a testament to the fact that fishing communities in various parts of Japan shared the same sentiments toward whales and mourned in similar ways the deaths of the whales they had caught.

Japanese whaling culture is remarkably rich, and many of its “relics” are designated as tangible and intangible cultural assets of the nation or local

governments. For instance, there are several picture scrolls vividly depicting scenes of classical whaling. One of them, *Nankai tokugei zue* (Picture of Whaling in the South Sea), is preserved at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in Massachusetts, which was a major American whaling base, along with Nantucket.¹⁶

Regarding intangible cultural assets, there are whale dances and whale songs, as well as folklore legends about whales in many fishing communities. Among them, the culture of mourning the deaths of whales stands out because it directly concerns such profound matters as reverence for life and benevolence for life and death that many religious people, including Albert Schweitzer, have contemplated. It is an epitome of how the Japanese dealt with the contradiction of taking the lives of other animals for their own survival and how they tried to coexist with nature.

* * *

The sorrowful relation between the whalers and whales is poignantly expressed in the poem written by Kaneko Misuzu (April 1903–March 1930), who grew up in a former whaling community in Senzaki, Yamaguchi prefecture (see Chap. 7):

“Kujira-hōe” (Memorial Service for Whales)
 A memorial service for whales, in the late spring,
 when the flying fish are caught in the sea.
 When the sound of the bell at a temple by the beach
 reverberates across the sea,
 When fishermen in the village hurry to the temple by the beach
 wearing formal kimono jackets,
 A lone whale calf hears the sound of the bell in the sea,
 and cries out loud, missing its dead father and mother.
 I wonder how far the sound of the bell reverberates across the sea.¹⁷

(In reality, a whale calf cannot survive without its mother.) What was it about the belief system of Japanese fishing villages that infused a sense of benevolence into the deaths of the whales they had caught? What was the culture that nurtured the pure mind of Kaneko Misuzu, who embraced genuine empathy for whales? This book is a “pilgrimage” in search of that spirit.

NOTES

1. “Whaling in the Antarctic (Australia v. Japan: New Zealand intervening),” March 31, 2014, <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/148/18136.pdf>
2. Ibid.; Isao Miyaoka, “State-Society Relations Under Foreign Pressure: Two Contrasting Cases in the Japanese Fisheries Policy,” http://www.dijtokyo.org/doc/dij-jb_11-miyaoka.pdf, downloaded February 24, 2016. For details of *gaiatsu* (foreign pressure) politics, see Kent E. Calder, “Japanese Foreign Economic Policy Formation: Explaining the Reactive State,” *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 4, July 1988, 517–541.
3. Miyaoka; Ian Hurd, “Almost Saving Whales: The Ambiguity of Success at the International Whaling Commission,” March 29, 2012, <http://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2012/almost-saving-whales-the-ambiguity-of-success-at-the-international-whaling-commission-full-text/>
4. Nakazono Shigeo and Yasunaga Hiroshi, *Kujira-tori e-monogatari* (Picture Tales of Whaling), Fukuoka: Gen-shobō, 2009, 8–20; Kumano Taiji-ura hogei-shi hensan-iinkai, ed., *Kumano no Taiji: Kujira ni idomu machi* (Taiji, Kumano: Town That Challenges Whales), Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1965, 4–16.
5. Ibid. (both).
6. Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, ed., *Small-Type Coastal Whaling i00n Japan: Report of an International Workshop*, Edmonton, Alberta: Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, the University of Alberta, 1988, 53–54.
7. Peter J. Stoett, *The International Politics of Whaling*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997; Arne Kalland, *Unveiling the Whale: Discourse on Whales and Whaling*, New York: Berghan Books, 2009; D. Graham Burnett, *Trying Leviathan: The Nineteenth-Century New York Court Case That Put the Whale on Trial and Challenged the Order of Nature*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007 and *The Sounding of the Whale: Science and Cetaceans in the Twentieth Century*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012; Arne Kalland and Brian Moeran, *Japanese Whaling: End of an Era*, London: Curzon Press, 1992; Jun Morikawa, *Whaling in Japan: Power, Politics, and Diplomacy*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
8. Arne Kalland, “Japanese Perceptions of Whales and Dolphins,” in John Knight, ed., *Wildlife in Asia: Cultural Perspectives*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004, 73–87; Jessamyn R. Abel, “The Ambivalence of Whaling: Conflicting Cultures in Identity Formation,” in George M. Pflugfelder and Brett L. Water, eds., *JAPANimals: History and Culture in Japan’s Animal Life*, Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2005, 315–340.
9. Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, ed., “Whaling Beliefs and Japanese Worldview,” 52–65; Barbara R. Ambros, *Bones of Contention: Animals and Religion in Contemporary Japan*, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012, 57–62.

10. Kumi Kato, “Prayers for the Whales: Spirituality and Ethics of a Former Whaling Community—Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainability,” *International Journal of Cultural Property* (2007), No. 14, 283–313.
11. “Kujira: Nihon no koshiki-hogei to zusetu” (Whales: Japanese Classical Whaling and Illustrations), 2011, <http://www.lib.u-tokyo.ac.jp/tenjikai/tenjikai2011/kujira.html>
12. Fukumoto Kazuo, *Nihon hōgeishi-wa* (History of Japanese Whaling), Tokyo: Hōsei daigaku-shuppankai, 1960; Hirado-shi kyōiku-iinkai, ed., *Saikai geigei-ki* (Record of Whaling in the West Sea), Hirado: Hirado-shi kyōiku-iinkai, 1980; Akimichi Tomoya, *Kujira to hito no minzoku-shi* (Ethnography of Whales and People), Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku-shuppankai, 1994; Morita Katsuaki, *Kujira to hōgei no bunka-shi* (Cultural History of Whales and Whaling), Nagoya: Nagoya-daigaku-shuppankai, 1994; Nakazono Shigeo, *Kujira-tori no keifu: Gaisetsu Nihon hōgei-shi* (Genealogy of Whaling: Introduction to the History of Japanese Whaling), Nagasaki: Nagasaki Shimbunsha, 2001; Ohsumi, Seiji, *Kujira to Nihonjin* (Whales and the Japanese), Tokyo: Iwanami-shinsho, 2003; Komatsu Masayuki, *Kujira sono rekishi to bunka* (History and Culture of Whales), Tokyo: Goma-shobō, 2005; Nakazono and Yasunaga.
13. Watanabe Hiroyuki, *Hōgei-mondai no rekishi shakaigaku: Kingendai Nihon ni okeru kujira to ningen* (Historical Sociology of Whaling Problems: Whales and People in Modern Japan), Tokyo: Tōshindō, 2006.
14. Shindō Naosaku, *Seto-naikai no kujira no kenkyū* (*Study of Whales in the Inland Sea*). Kobe: Kobe-shi ishi-kyōdo-kumiai, 1968 and *Seto-naikai shūben no kujira no kenkyū* (*Study of Whales Surrounding the Inland Sea*), Kobe: Ikuta-ku ishikai, 1970; Yoshihara Tomokichi, “Kujira no haka” (Graves of Whales), in Tanigawa Ken’ichi, ed., *Nihon minzoku bunka shiryō shūsei* (Collection of Documents on Japanese Folk Culture), Vol. 18, Tokyo: San’ichi-shobō, 1997, 409–478.
15. Yoshihara.
16. Taiji-chōritsu kujira no hakubutsukan, ed., *Kujira-bune: Katachi to ishō* (Whale Boats: Styles and Designs), Taiji: Taiji-chōritsu kujira no hakubutsukan, 2011, 3; “New Bedford Whaling Museum,” <https://www.whalingmuseum.org>, accessed February 24, 2016.
17. Kaneko Misuzu, *Kaneko Misuzu zenshū* (Complete Work of Kaneko Misuzu). Vol. 3, Tokyo: JULA shuppan-kyoku, 1984, 221–222.

Historical Background

The Japanese engaged in classical whaling (*koshiki hogei*) for more than three hundred years, from the late 1500s to the early 1900s. Japanese classical whaling differed in many ways from modern whaling. The former was coastal whaling (*kinkaki hogei*) and thus was limited to operations in coastal areas using rowboats and rudimentary tools such as manual harpoons and hand-knit fishing nets. In contrast, the latter involves large-type, pelagic whaling (open-sea, long-distance whaling, or *enyō hogei*) employing a fleet of factory ships and several catchers equipped with bomb lance harpoons and guns, which were invented by Svend Foyn in 1870—the “Norwegian method.”¹

In addition, other than classical whalers, Japanese fishermen in non-whaling communities took part in so-called “passive whaling” as they caught whales that had been separated from their pods and had drifted into local bays, or those that were stranded ashore after being chased by orcas (killer whales). Pods of whales passed through the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan during their migration seasons. They migrated from the south to the north in the spring after female whales gave birth in warm waters (“*nobori kujira*,” the ascending whales) and then migrated back to the south in the fall (“*kudari kujira*,” the descending whales).²

Accordingly, Japanese classical whalers engaged in coastal whaling only during whales’ migration season. They were seasonal rather than fulltime whalers, who worked as ordinary fishermen for most of the year. They normally lived at a subsistence level, because the terrain in fishing communities was not suited to produce rice, the Japanese staple. This was also true

for most of the professional members of classical whaling guilds, with the exception of a few families that had organized large whaling guilds. Although there is a saying, “The catch of a whale made seven bay villages prosper,” the prosperity brought by the catch was only temporarily.³

While a few *amimoto* (owner/managers of boats and fishing equipment) enjoyed a wealthy lifestyle during good seasons, they soon fell into debt during bad seasons because the maintenance of whaleboats and equipment cost dearly. In turn, local provinces imposed high taxes on catches of whales, because they brought an enormous amount of revenue, so whale guild heads often borrowed money from private lenders (an early form of banks) and also sought for financial assistance from the province.⁴

FOUR MAJOR CLASSICAL WHALING BASES

Toward the end of the sixteenth century, active large-type whaling using the manual harpoon method (*tsukitori-hō*) emerged. Some of the earliest classical whaling guilds were organized in Owari (the western part of the current Aichi prefecture) around 1570–1573, in Ogawa Island (Saga prefecture) in 1594, and then in Taiji (Wakayama prefecture) in 1606. In the seventeenth century, the manual harpoon method spread through wider regions of Japan, and four major classical whaling bases were established: the Kishū Classical Whaling Base in Taiji (in current Wakayama prefecture), the Chōshū Kitaura Classical Whaling Base in Kayoi on Ōmi Island, Nagato (Yamaguchi prefecture), the Tosa Classical Whaling Base in Muroto (Kōchi prefecture) on Shikoku Island, and the Saikai Classical Whaling Base that encompassed Yobuko (Saga prefecture) and Ikitsuki Island (Nagasaki prefecture) in Kyūshū.⁵

Then, in 1675, Wada Kakuemon in Taiji revolutionized Japanese classical whaling by inventing a net method (*amitori-hō*), in which a number of chaser boats surrounded a whale on three sides and chased it toward large nets. This was much more effective and less labor-intensive than the manual harpoon method. As Wada did not monopolize his invention, the net method spread rapidly throughout western Japan, so that the net method combined with the harpoon method became the dominant form of whaling in the Tosa and Saikai Classical Whaling Bases.⁶

Meanwhile, whalers in the Chōshū Kitaura Classical Whaling Base developed a simpler net-drive method, in which they drove a whale into a bay and then closed the bay by casting nets. The fishermen in Ine, Kyoto prefecture, adopted this net-drive method. Elsewhere, in Katsuyama, in Awa (southern

part of Chiba prefecture), whalers continued to use the manual harpoon method and maintained its tradition of catching Baird's beaked whales since the early seventeenth century, because Baird's beaked whales tend to dive deep in the sea and the net method was unsuitable to catch them.⁷

WHALES CAUGHT BY JAPANESE CLASSICAL WHALERS

Japanese classical whalers identified six major species of whales to be hunted: blue whales, fin whales, North Pacific right whales, humpback whales, sei whales, and sperm whales. Because they were easier to catch, the North Pacific right and sperm whales were most frequently taken (also by American whalers). Unlike larger whales, such as blue whales and fin whales, these medium-sized whales do not sink after being killed. The English name for right whales derives from the fact that they were the "right" whales to hunt, because they were easy to catch. In turn, the Japanese name for right whales is "*semi-kujira*" (*lit.*, "whale with a beautiful back"), because they have a smooth back without a dorsal fin. The Japanese also caught gray whales and Baird's beaked whales.⁸

The introduction of the net method enabled the Japanese to catch humpback whales—which are fast swimmers and sink after death—and sei whales. Nevertheless, blue whales and fin whales were simply too big for classical whalers, and they could only watch a pod of blue whales or fin whales migrating off the coast of Japan. Therefore, Japanese fishermen only caught blue whales and fin whales that were stranded ashore.⁹

Thus, as the Inuit in North America did for centuries, the Japanese fishermen-whalers engaged in seasonal whaling equipped only with rudimentary tools. It was a daunting task for small Japanese men to confront a huge creature in the sea. This was especially the case for the *bazashi* (*lit.*, "blade thruster"), who risked his life each time by being the first crewman to jump onto the whale's back, naked in the freezing water, to make a cut in the whale's blowhole through which a fishing net was tied. Because of the sheer size and might of whales, Japanese fishermen-whalers held them in awe and admired them.¹⁰

Today, the Inuit are still permitted to catch whales under the "aboriginal-subsistence" provision of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). Accordingly, the Japanese government has requested that small-type coastal whaling (STCW) conducted in several Japanese fishing communities be recognized as "aboriginal-subsistence" whaling under the ICRW. However, this was rejected. Nevertheless, there