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Shooting and friendship over Japanese prisoners of war

Differences between Featherston, New Zealand and Cowra, Australia
in Japanese connections

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Japanese prisoners of war were interned in Featherston, New Zealand and in Cowra, Australia during the Asia-Pacific War. Because of cultural misunderstanding of military traditions, there were violent incidents between prisoners and guards. These were the Featherston Incident and the Cowra Breakout and each of these caused heavy casualties. Since the war, these tragedies have encouraged mutual understanding and then friendly relationships between Japan and Featherston, and Cowra. However, there is something different between Featherston and Cowra in terms of Japanese connections: While, it is said that Cowra is a symbol of peace between Japan and Australia, it is rarely heard that Featherston is that between Japan and New Zealand.

The researcher has had three questions since he visited Featherston in 2004 for the first time: What is the difference between Featherston and Cowra? What is the cause of the difference between them? How should friendship between Japan and Featherston develop in the future? These three questions were answered when similarities and differences between the two incidents were explored by literature analysis and ethnographic analysis. The most important difference is that while Japanese victims of the Featherston Incident were cremated, but their ashes are still missing, those of the Cowra Breakout were buried and their graves have been maintained with great respect.

The answer to the first question: Judging from the theory of the state of international exchange, the Japan-Featherston relationship is unique in that Featherston people have had a friendship with Japanese people through a Japanese choir, Chor-Farmer, whereas the Japan-Cowra relationship is a fraternal relationship that Japanese people and Cowra people have created. The answer to the second question: Japan-Cowra relationship was born from the fact that there were some who had something philanthropic in war memories, whereas Japan-Featherston relationship was influenced by that there were some who had ill-feeling toward the Japanese in war memories. The answer to the third question: Present unique friendships between Featherston people and Chor-Farmer representing the Japanese should be maintained in the future because that seems to be all Featherston people's wishes.

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In Featherston, my thanks are due to Joe Dittmer. He showed me the precious material relevant to the Featherston Incident at Heritage Museum and helped me conduct fieldwork there. My thanks are also due to the South Wairarapa district council, the Featherston RSA, JNL and the Japanese Embassy who helped me participate in events and gather relevant information. In Cowra, I wish to thank Sallie Thompson and Graham Apthorpe who became my host family and helped me gather the material related to the Cowra Breakout. I am grateful to those who helped me take part in events: members of the Cowra tourism, the Cowra Breakout association, the Cowra district council. I also appreciated Maurie Miles’ kindness: he told me about the day of the Breakout. I must thank Bill Cusack for his help, too: he sent precious material to New Zealand for me.

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Introduction

It has been 69 years since the Second World War ended. During that time, a large number of people, including historians, have referred to its sequence of events and its causes. However, there are some events that most of them have been silent on; these include the Featherston Incident in New Zealand and the Cowra Breakout in Australia. This is mainly because the governments of Japan, New Zealand and Australia had not disclosed official documents relevant to those incidents to the public for about 30 years. These little-known incidents are thought-provoking when people think about war and peace, because each of them is a microcosm of the Asia-Pacific War as a phase of World War II. A point in common is the issue of the prisoners of war (hereinafter shortened to POWs) which makes conflict inhumane. Another point in common is a lesson that “when there is little mutual understanding among peoples of the world who have different cultures, peace will be broken, and vice versa” (Reischauer, 1997, p. 1).

During the Asia-Pacific War, Japanese soldiers who had been taken prisoners by Allied soldiers, were involved in violent incidents in which some of them were killed. Some Japanese POWs were contained at a POW camp in Featherston, New Zealand. New Zealand soldiers as guards first encountered Japanese soldiers as prisoners there. In 1943, a conflict between the two groups led to a tragic incident in which 48 Japanese POWs and one New Zealand guard were killed. This was the Featherston Incident. Some Japanese POWs were also interned at a POW camp in Cowra, Australia. Japanese soldiers as captives met with Australian soldiers as captors there. In 1944, a breakout attempted by Japanese POWs resulted in a tragic incident in which 234 Japanese POWs and four Australian guards were killed. This was the Cowra Breakout. After the war, both Featherston and Cowra have had some friendly relationships with Japan.

Background

I am a Japanese national who has lived in both Australia and New Zealand. The reason for undertaking this project as part of the study of the relationship between Japan and Oceanian countries, began with my own experience at Cowra and Featherston. I first visited Cowra, Australia in 1999. The site includes a Japanese War Cemetery, a full-scale Japanese Garden and a Cultural Centre. A row of cherry trees connects the cemetery and the garden. These have become a significant tourist attraction. At that time, I did not know of the Cowra Breakout. A few months later I encountered a book, *Japan and New Zealand 150 years* (Peren, 1999), from which I learned of the Featherston Incident. My first visit to Featherston in 2004 was to research this incident which I chose as a topic for an undergraduate essay. In Featherston, I met an Australian couple at the Heritage Museum, and I first heard about the Cowra Breakout from them. Since then, a comparison of Cowra and Featherston has begun. Both Featherston and Cowra had Japanese POW camps, in which there had been shootings during World War II. That is why the two towns became twin towns in 1998 (Japanese Embassy report, 2001). However, while the Japanese connection is very visible in Cowra which is said to be a symbol of peace between Japan and Australia, in Featherston, there is only the Garden of Remembrance including the two small-scale monuments to the Japanese victims of the incident and the nameless Japanese garden, and so the Japanese connection is ambiguous.

Research questions

My questions are “What is the difference between Featherston and Cowra in Japanese connections?”, “What causes the difference between them?” and “How should friendship between Japan and Featherston be in the future?” My previous research

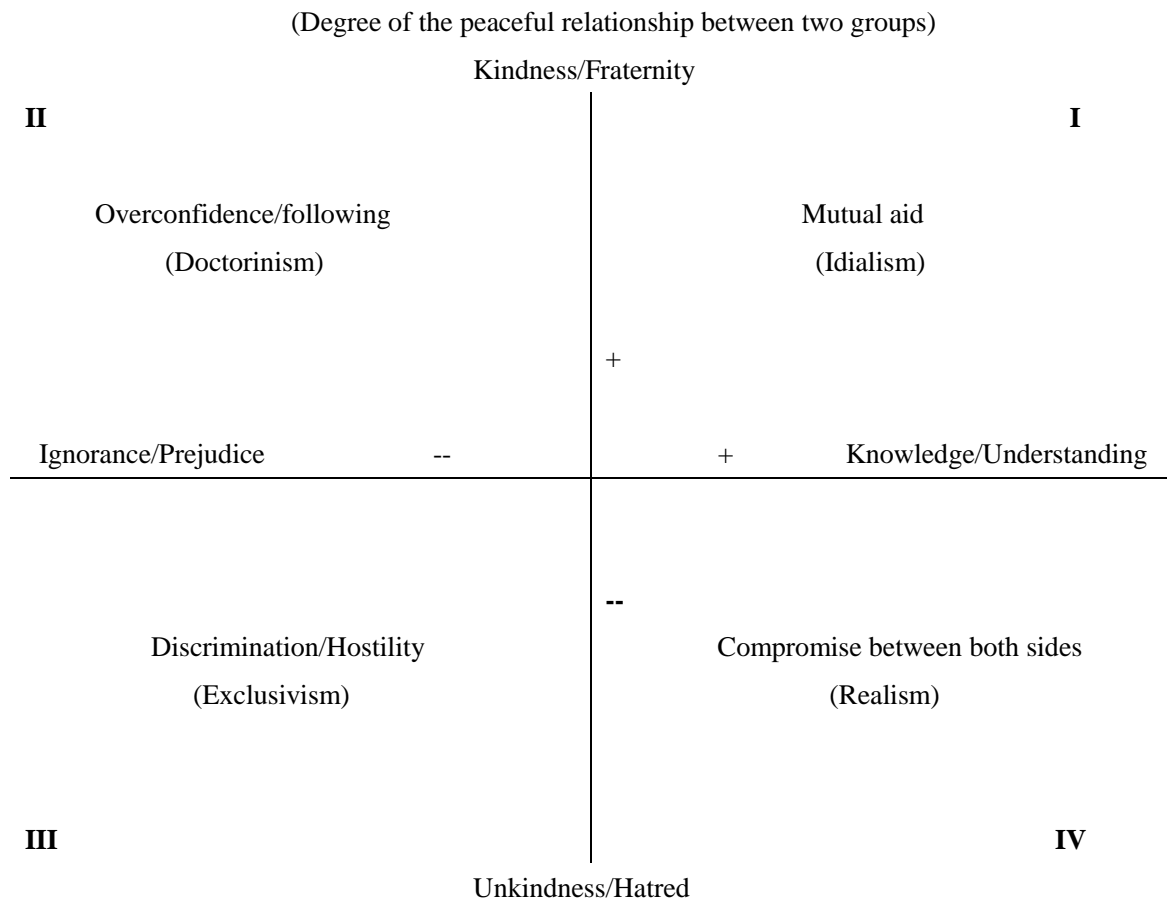
investigated only the cause of the Featherston Incident. This time, the research extends it to the Cowra Breakout and a comparison between the two incidents in respect of the past (the incidents and their causes) and the present (relationships with Japan and how to commemorate these events). By doing that, when the similarities and the differences between the two incidents are made clear, the three questions can be answered.

Theory of comparative study: Rectangular coordinate system

The central premise of my research is placed on the comparative study of international friendship between Japan and Featherston and that between Japan and Cowra as current issues by comparing the Featherston Incident with the Cowra Breakout. This comparative study is conducted on the basis of ‘theory of the state of international exchange’ that *Kyoichi Ishihara* refers to in his book, *Cultural friction and the Japanese* (2010, pp.43-52). What should we do to create peace without an appeal to arms? He argues the importance of mutual understanding and international exchange/international cooperation from viewpoints of culture. His theory explains how countries (regions) that have different cultures build peaceful coexistence relationships by using a set of rectangular coordinates. “Culture” which is used here is defined as the following: culture is the “broad-based concept including daily life factors such as language, dietary habits, manner and customs, social norm factors such as systems, rules, technology and behavioural patterns, and spiritual life factors such as philosophy, thought, ideology and religions” (*Ishihara*, 2010, p. 43). He argues that even former enemies can build a relationship of peaceful coexistence by compromise through mutual understanding and dialogue. The rectangular coordinates (see figure 1) have a vertical axis indicating the degree of kindness/fraternity (+) and unkindness/hatred (--) between the two and a horizontal axis indicating the degree of knowledge/understanding (+) and

ignorance/prejudice (--) between the two. A pair of coordinates in the first (I) quadrant means there is reciprocal assistance between the two (++): they have both mutual support and mutual understanding. That in the second (II) quadrant means there is a master-servant relation (+ -): kindness based on misunderstanding or ignorance forms their relationship. That of the third (III) quadrant means there are discrimination and hostility (- -): they have hostility to each other. That of the fourth (IV) quadrant means there is reciprocal compromise (- +): they still feel ill-feeling toward each other, but have mutual understanding of different cultures. As peaceful coexistence relationship between the two, the first quadrant (reciprocal assistance) is best and ideal. However, it is difficult for the two to have both mutual support and mutual understanding. Even though hatred or unkindness remains between the two because they have had war and conflict, the two can build peaceful coexistence relationship by reciprocal compromise based on understanding each other's different cultures and maintaining a dialogue and exchange between them. Therefore, the fourth quadrant is the second best and practical. The second quadrant (a master-servant relation) can be undesirable, because the feeling of kindness toward the other based on misunderstanding and/or ignorance tends to become the relationship like the coloniser and the colonised. The third quadrant is also undesirable, because if once cultural or economic friction between the two arises, it is likely to develop into disputes, by extension, war between those who have mutual hostility. On the basis of this theory, Japan-Featherston relationship (J-F) and Japan-Cowra relationship (J-C) will be comparatively examined. Concretely, both relationships will be located somewhere on the rectangular coordinates respectively according to the result of the comparison of the Featherston Incident and the Cowra Breakout.

Figure 1. **Rectangular coordinate system of international exchange**



Methodology

The comparison between the Featherston Incident and the Cowra Breakout is made by a combination of historical/documentary analysis and ethnographic analysis. The two incidents as local events are explored in the context of the global historical events, it is examined how each incident has been commemorated in the light of the memory of war by Japanese, New Zealanders or Australians and it is argued how Japan has been related to Featherston, or Cowra. To collect the historical information, I interviewed six witnesses (or their relatives) to the incident, observed the historical site associated with the incident and analysed relevant books and archives. To collect the present information, I did ethnographic fieldwork: I made efforts to put my position in

the same ground as local people and talked to them freely and observed their activities.

Literature analysis

The comparison of the Featherston Incident and the Cowra Breakout was made by comprehensive literature analysis and fieldwork. The only book, *Japanese prisoners of war in revolt* (Carr-Gregg, 1977) which referred to both incidents comparatively, is a good starting point for my comparative study. Carr-Gregg was interested in the two incidents which Japanese prisoners of war had caused in different places and in different times as a social anthropologist. She tried to pursue what made Japanese POWs attempt hopeless escape or riot/revolt to seek death and to establish a characteristic Japanese behavioural pattern by comparing the two events. However, I try to search into not only the cause of each incident, but also commemoration of each incident and Japan's relationship with Featherston or Cowra. That is, I tried to pursue what caused the difference between Cowra and Featherston in Japanese connections as a current issue.

One of my key books regarding the Featherston Incident is *The Featherston Chronicles* (1999) written by Nicolaidi, a New Zealander. In writing this book he collaborated with a former official interpreter at the Featherston POW camp after the Incident who had researched the Incident. He referred to the Incident as the 'shooting', which hinted the New Zealand side's fault for the Incident. As a result of his interviews with mainly New Zealand witnesses, he pointed out that it might be an issue of a national level beyond a local issue to come terms with the Featherston Incident. Another key book is *Missing ashes* (2005) written by Tsujimoto, a Japanese American. In writing this book her collaborator was the same as Nicolaidi's. She referred not only to the Japanese side's fault for the incident, but also the New Zealand side's fault through her interviews with mainly Japanese witnesses to the incident. She also emphasised a point

that the whereabouts of the Japanese victims' ashes were still unknown. The two books referred to the possible connection between the Tarawa Tragedy and the Featherston Incident and suggested that the military authorities might have undertaken a cover-up, fearing discovery of the truth of the Incident.

One of key books concerning the Cowra Breakout is *Blankets on the wire* (Bullard, 2006). This book was compiled as part of the Australia-Japan Research Project. It analysed the event at Cowra from a neutral and objective viewpoint and also referred to Cowra's pivotal role in the subsequent history of reconciliation and friendship between Japan and Australia. Another one is *A Town at War* (Apthorpe, 2008). This book mentioned that what happened at Cowra during World War II has decided much of what that town is today. It described the POW camp as the major event. In particular it referred to not only the breakout by Japanese POWs, but also the way Italian POWs lived there. The contrast between Japanese POWs and Italian POWs is interesting. Both key books gave me some clues such as sites to observe and figures to interview to facilitate doing fieldwork in Featherston and Cowra. To investigate the two incidents on the basis of old documents issued by the military authorities and/or government authorities of New Zealand, Australia, Japan and Swiss at that time, I examined closely relevant archives at the national archives of New Zealand, Australia and Japan. There were pieces of evidence of witnesses to the two incidents at the military courts of inquiry and documents indicating harsh exchanges of words between Japan and New Zealand, and Australia through Switzerland as a protecting country to Japan then. Those archives were helpful to imagine events at Featherston and Cowra vividly.

Fieldwork

I carried out fieldwork in New Zealand, Japan and Australia. Basically,

fieldwork was done on the basis of participant observation. In New Zealand, ten day field trips were made to Featherston and Wellington six times in September 2008, in September 2009, in February and May 2010, in February 2011 and in February in 2012. I attended the Annual Commemoration service of the Featherston Incident on 25 February and talked to local people including the president of the Featherston RSA, two elderly persons, two old couples and a Japanese woman who had been working as an interpreter at the local Japanese timber company. I also observed the old site of the POW camp and the town of Featherston with local people as a guide. I had already been in Featherston several times and visited the Heritage Museum. In Wellington, I visited the Archives New Zealand to read relevant documents. In addition to this, in Auckland, I made an interview in June, 2010 with the relatives of the person who had been a padre at the Featherston POW camp just after the incident. In Japan, one month research trips were made twice from 15 June, 2010 and from 20 August 2011. I interviewed a relative of the witness (ex-Japanese POW) to the Featherston Incident in *Kure, Hiroshima* and a 91-year-old witness (ex-Japanese POW) to the Cowra Breakout in *Shoyama, Tottori* in 2010. In *Tokyo*, I interviewed an 89-year-old witness (ex-Japanese POW) to the Featherston Incident, his wife and daughter and visited the *Yasukuni* Shrine, the *Chidorigafuchi* Cemetery for the War Dead and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to find out the whereabouts of ashes of victims of the Featherston Incident in 2010. In *Joetsu-shi (Naoetsu), Niigata*, I visited the Peace Memorial Park where there used to be the *Naoetsu* Australian POW camp in June 2010 and September 2011. At its pavilion at one corner of the park, I looked at exhibits related to the *Naoetsu* Tragedy. In *Yokohama*, I interviewed 90-year-old witness (ex-Japanese prisoners of war) to the Featherston Incident and his wife and visited the British Commonwealth Cemetery. In

Australia, a two-month research trip was made from 30 July, 2010 and a two-week one from 31 July 2011. In 2010, in Cowra, I stayed at the Japanese Farm for the first four weeks and had a homestay with a local family for the last three weeks. I attended the Annual Cowra Breakout Commemorations on 4 and 5 August and the Service of Respect on 26 September for the first time. I also interviewed several local people who are engaged in the Breakout related events. One week trip to Canberra was made. I visited the National War Memorial and the Japanese Embassy there. In 2011, I had a homestay with a local family nine days. I took part in the Annual Cowra Breakout Commemorations in which what impressed me the most was the Service of Reconciliation at the Catholic Church which I attended as the only Japanese. I had a chance to visit Cowra High School, in which I talked to an Australian Japanese teacher and two Japanese accompanying teachers for Japanese students over the Cowra-Seikei Exchange Programme.

Though my several-time stays in Cowra and Featherston were a relatively short term each time, I have had a homestay with Australian families at various towns for three years from 1997 and with New Zealand families at various towns for 12 years from 2000. Therefore, it can be said that I did ethnographic fieldwork (participant observation) in which the researcher conducts fieldwork for an extended period at the community studied, living the everyday life of the people studied in a broad sense. That is why I have come to approach my topic as an insider and as not only a researcher, but also one of Japanese. I have begun to recognise it as my own issue.

Order of discussions

Chapter 1 discusses the historical background of the two incidents: “How did the Asia-Pacific War developed?”, “How was the encounter between Japan and New

Zealand, and Australia in the war?” and “How did New Zealand, Australia and Japan respond to the 1929 Geneva POW Convention at that time?” Chapter 2 refers to the Featherston Incident and the Tarawa Tragedy to understand not only Japanese POWs, but also New Zealand POWs. Chapter 3 refers to the Cowra Breakout and the Naoetsu Tragedy to understand not only Japanese POWs, but also Australian POWs. Chapter 4 discusses the comparison of two incidents in respect of the past and the present: Similarities and differences between two incidents are made clear. Chapter 5 argues the state of international exchange with Japan: “Where are Japan-Cowra relationship and Japan-Featherston relationship located on the rectangular coordinates respectively?” and “What cause the difference between the two relationships?” “How should friendship between Japan and Featherston be in the future?”

1. Historical background

1.1. Asia-Pacific War and Japan and New Zealand, and Australia

World War II was between the Axis Powers including Japan, Germany and Italy and the Allied Powers including the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, France, and Netherlands. In the 1930s, Japan allowed the ascendancy of the military authorities, withdrew from the League of Nations after the Mukuden Incident and approached the Axis powers. Since then, Japan was drawn into the quagmire of war on the Chinese mainland.

In 1941, two years after the start of the war in Europe, Japan launched simultaneously a surprise attack at Pearl Harbour, Malaya and the Philippines. And then, Japan declared war against the Allies on 8 December. Against this, the United States declared war on Japan. Thus the Asia-Pacific War started in name and reality. Japan occupied in less than half a year a vast area of Southeast Asia and the Pacific which they designated as “the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere” (*Kodansha*, 1996, p. 149).

Japanese military forces extended its front by a succession of victories in the early days of the start of the war, but by the end of 1942 the Allies had stopped the Japanese advance and begun to force them back. Japanese military forces also took a huge number of Allied prisoners, and so had new problems such as management of prisoners and food shortage (*Joetsu Japan-Australia Association*, 2001, p. 92). And then, there were POW atrocities by Japanese forces in 1942: maltreatment of Allied POWs in track-laying the Thailand-Burma Railway (2001, p. 192) and Bataan’s death march of American POWs (*M. Yamada*, personal communication, 20 June 2010). In contrast, the US forces which recovered from a succession of defeats in the early stage of the start of the war, came to have overwhelming military potential, along with other Allied

countries, launched an offensive against Japanese military forces. Thus, Japan became inferior in strength. Japan failed in intercepting the sea-lane between the United States and Australia. This led up to Japan's defeat in the New Guinea Campaign later. The Battle of Midway in June 1942 became a turning point in the Asia-Pacific War.

On one hand, there was a series of battles fought for the control of Guadalcanal, an island in the Solomon Islands for half a year from August 1942, including a three-night sea battle. The Americans tried to stop the Japanese landing troops and supplies, and fought with the Japanese. Many Japanese and Allies' warships were sunk. Consequently, the Americans occupied the Japanese Army airport, some 30,000 Japanese died and a small group of survivors were found floating on the sea. Most of them, along with some labour forces and others captured at the army airport on the island, were taken as prisoners of war by the American soldiers and were sent to United States army camps in New Caledonia. Subsequently, some of them were sent to New Zealand. On the other hand, the New Guinea Campaign between Japan and Allies (The United States and Australia) had continued from March, 1942 to the end of the war. They fought fierce ground warfare where "the terrain, the climate, and disease were as much the enemy as soldiers of opposing armies" (Bullard, 2006, p.18). Some 150 thousand Japanese died, and some were captured and sent to POW camps in Australia by the Allied soldiers. Also, about eight thousand Australians and four thousand Americans died.

Afterward, Japanese forces had continued to reduce their lines of battle. In the Battle of Attu, the Japanese garrison suffered a crashing defeat from the Allied forces in May, 1943. In addition, as Germany surrendered to the Allies in May, 1945, Japan had to fight singlehanded against the United States, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, China,

France and Netherlands. Finally, the Allied forces with the United States at the centre launched air raids on major cities in Japan and succeeded in landing Okinawa, part of Japan's mainland. The United States issued the Potsdam Declaration to Japan on 26th July 1945. While Japan was hesitating to reply to it, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6th and 9th August respectively by the United States, and then, by Japan's acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, the Asia-Pacific War, accordingly the Second World War was closed on 14th August, 1945.

During the war, New Zealand and Australia encountered Japan as their enemy in their own ways respectively. New Zealand was never exposed to a Japanese direct attack although Japan launched spotter planes from their submarines which flew over Auckland and Wellington. While New Zealand as part of the British Commonwealth sent its armed forces mainly to Italy and North Africa, it did send a few of them to Southeast Asia and the Pacific. In late 1941, Butaritari in the Gilbert Islands was taken by Japanese troops and in 1942, the Tarawa Tragedy where 17 New Zealand coast watchers were killed by them took place there (Peren, 1999, p. 124). In early 1942, New Zealanders were involved in the Malayan campaign where they were taken prisoner by Japanese. In the Solomons campaign of 1943-44, New Zealand forces relieved the US forces on Vella Lavella and cleared it of Japanese (Peren, 1999, p. 105). It was as "captors and captives" at the Featherston POW camp in 1942 that New Zealand soldiers and Japanese soldiers first encountered on New Zealand soil.

Australia, along with Britain, entered a war with Germany at the European theatre and fought furiously with Japan at the Asia-Pacific theatre. In early 1942, Australia as a member of the British Commonwealth engaged Japanese at Malaya and many Australians were captured by the Japanese (the fall of Singapore) (Meaney, 1999,

p. 83). In the New Guinea campaign, Australians, coupled with the United States, were at harsh war with Japanese for more than three years from 1942 and took numbers of Japanese as prisoners. Australian soil was exposed to Japanese direct attack. In February 1942, the Japanese air raid on Darwin brought war for the first time to Australian shores. In May 1942, there was the Japanese submarines' surprise attack in Sydney Harbour, which hit one of the Australian warships and killed some sailors. From 1942 to 1945, Australian soldiers as guards first met Japanese soldiers as prisoners at POW camps in Australia.

1.2. Geneva POW Convention of 1929

In situations of war, the capturing country had to treat prisoners of war according to the 1929 Geneva POW Convention. It is argued how New Zealand, Australia and Japan responded to the Convention during World War II.

1.2.1 Geneva POW Convention

Main points related to the Incidents are as follows (for further details, see Appendix A):

Application

Article 2: ... Prisoners of war shall at all times be humanely treated and protected, particularly against acts of violence, from insults and from public curiosity.

Measures of reprisal against them are forbidden. (extract)

Living conditions

Article 10: Prisoners of war shall be lodged in buildings or huts which afford all possible safeguards as regards hygiene and salubrity... (extract)

Article 11: The food ration of prisoners of war shall be equivalent in quantity and quality to that of the depot troops.

...Sufficient drinking water shall be supplied to them. The use of tobacco shall be authorized. Prisoners may be employed in the kitchens.

All collective disciplinary measures affecting food are prohibited. (extract)

Article 12: Clothing, underwear and footwear shall be supplied to prisoners of war by the detaining Power... (extract)

Work

Article 27: Belligerents may employ as workmen prisoners of war who are physically fit, other than officers and persons of equivalent status, according to their rank and their ability... (extract)

Article 30: Each prisoner shall be allowed a rest of twenty-four consecutive hours each week, preferably on Sunday. (extract)

Article 31: Work done by prisoners of war shall have no direct connection with the operations of the war. In particular, it is forbidden to employ prisoners in the manufacture or transport of arms or munitions of any kind, or on the transport of material destined for combatant units... (extract)

Article 34: Prisoners of war shall not receive pay for work in connection with the administration, internal arrangement and maintenance of camps. Prisoners employed on other work shall be entitled to a rate of pay, to be fixed by agreements between the belligerents... (extract)

Representatives of prisoners of war

Article 43: In any locality where there may be prisoners of war, they shall be authorized to appoint representatives to represent them before the military authorities and the protecting Powers... (extract)

Deaths of prisoners of war

Article 76:..... The belligerents shall ensure that prisoners of war who have died in captivity are honourably buried, and that the graves bear the necessary indications and are treated with respect and suitably maintained. (extract)

Text

Article 84: The text of the convention shall be displayed in the native language of the prisoners of war. (condensed version)
(ICRC. (1929) Convention relative to the treatment of POW, Geneva)

1.2.2. New Zealand, Australia and Japan's response to the Convention

At the time of the Featherston Incident and the Cowra Breakout, New Zealand and Australia had already signed and ratified the 1929 Geneva conventions as British Dominions. The New Zealand military followed and instructed its servicemen in the rules (Sanders, 1990, p. 15). Accordingly, they treated Japanese POWs under these rules. Also, the Australian military recognised the spirit of the Convention and so the staff of the POW camp treated not only Japanese prisoners of war, but also other ones according to these rules (Bullard, 2006, p. 29). Members of any Western army who have fought with courage and done their best, but are faced with a desperate situation are likely to surrender to the enemy. Individual soldiers are not disgraced by being captives, neither as citizens nor fighting men by their own families (Carr-Gregg, 1978, p.25). They are instructed that they hold a status as prisoners of war who are internationally recognised and supervised by the 1929 Geneva Convention. This was part of cultural tradition based on the customs that the right of the POW should be guaranteed born from tragic war experiences in Europe since the Mediaeval period (Benedict, 1946, p. 20). Therefore, New Zealand or Australian guards could not understand that there might be perception gap between them and the Japanese prisoners of war on the concept of the prisoner of war and the Geneva Convention until the incident.

In contrast, Japan had signed but not ratified the 1929 Geneva Convention. The reason that it did not ratify was the objection of the Japanese army and navy at that time. Under the Constitution of the Empire of Japan the deified emperor commanded the Japanese armed forces independently of routine administration. To stress absolute loyalty to the emperor, Japanese military authorities issued the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (*Gunjin chokuyu*) in the 1880s (Ota, 2009, p. 32). All soldiers

ought to fight for the sake of the emperor and their families at their risk with the principle of death and not surrender (*Ubukata*, 2006, p. 3 & 16). Thus, the beliefs and principles of the Imperial Japanese military forces were incompatible with the spirit of the Geneva Convention that captives should be treated in a humanitarian way.

In the 1940s, with the military authorities ascendant and the war on China bogged down, War Minister *Hideki Tojo* issued the Military Field Code (*Senjinkun*) to enforce military discipline. It provided that “rather than live and bear the shame of imprisonment by the enemy, one should die and avoid leaving a dishonourable name” (Carr-Gregg, 1978, p. 25). To the inquiry about the convention from the Allies by the neutral country, Switzerland, the Japanese government replied that although it was not bound by the conventions at all, where POWs were concerned, these rules should be applied to American, Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand prisoners of war with necessary modifications. However, the Japanese government in practice really ignored them (*Joetsu* Japan-Australia Association, 1996). To begin with, the Japanese military did not teach members of armed forces how to behave if captured, nor did they inform them of the existence of the Geneva POW conventions (*Hata*, 1990, p. 243). Not only Imperial soldiers, but also ordinary people were instilled with *Gunjin chokuyu* and *senjinkun* through the military education and the school education. Therefore, they believed that becoming a POW was a great disgrace and foreign POWs should be treated with contempt. In fact, the Japanese in Featherston or Cowra had seen Japanese soldiers treating many soldiers of the Allied who were taken as prisoners with contempt and with cruelty at the early stage of the Asia-Pacific War. Therefore, they wondered why New Zealand guards or Australian ones had treated them so kindly at the initial stage. They also felt that they had violated military ethics by permitting themselves to

be captured alive (Carr-Gregg, 1978, p. 22) and by being made to work for the enemy and feared that they would be abused or executed by the camp authorities.

2. The Featherston Incident

2.1. Featherston prisoner-of-war camp

The Featherston prisoner-of-war camp was the first camp in the British Commonwealth to hold a large number of Japanese prisoners of war (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 18). In 1943, while in the European theatre the Axis forces were still on the offensive, in the Pacific theatre the Americans finally regained control of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands after a series of hard-fought naval battles with the Japanese. They had taken so many Japanese including navy men, army soldiers and labour forces as POWs. They planned to send some of those Japanese prisoners of war to a nearby allied country, and so requested a camp to hold 450 prisoners to be prepared in a week to New Zealand (Yerex, 2007, p. 138 & 149). The New Zealand war cabinet led by Prime Minister Peter Frazer undertook this pressing request as one of detaining powers under the 1929 Geneva Convention (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 17-18). On 4 September 1942 the Frazer government selected a former army training ground just outside the south Wairarapa town of Featherston as the camp site (p. 17-18). It was 69 kilo meters north-east of the capital, Wellington, from which it is reachable by road over the Rimutaka Range (NZMF, 1943, May 13). It was situated on the eastern foot of the Range. Although there was little left of the old buildings there, it seems to have been geopolitically suitable for the POW campsite.

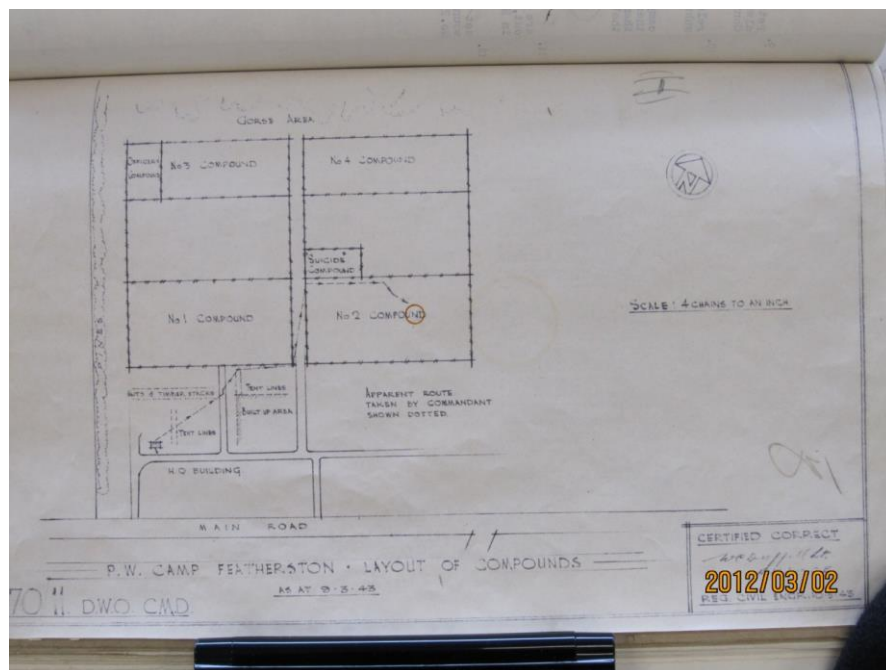
The camp authorities in Featherston were very busy preparing facilities and staff to intern a relatively large number of Japanese prisoners of war in an extremely

short period. Nicolaidi described this situation in his book, *The Featherston Chronicle* (1999, p. 19) as follows:

Just as the camp was established at short notice, so were guards and administrative personnel hastily recruited for a new and unfamiliar purpose. Many of the guards were men either not eligible on medical or other grounds for overseas service, or 18-year-olds too young to be officially sent away. They had received no special training for managing prisoners of war, nor had they been forewarned they were about to come face to face with the enemy on home ground.

To control these prisoners of war, a total of 122 New Zealand guards were deployed. Most of them could not be said to be men who were suitable both physically and mentally for work at the POW camp. This can be seen as one underlying cause of the Incident.

Figure 2. Layout of compounds at Featherston POW camp



The scene of the Incident in Compound No. 2 is circled. (New Zealand Military Forces 1943)

The camp site was divided into four rectangular compounds (see figure 2). A

barbed wire fence was erected to surround the site, which included a few buildings with old water and drainage systems. Another barbed wire fence was put around each compound. There were temporary cooking and bathing shelters, and tents (replaced with huts later) for the incoming prisoners. A neighbouring tent was set up for the guards. Thus the hastily built POW camp was opened somehow.

On 11 September 1942, the first group of some 500 Japanese prisoners of war arrived and was interned in the No. 1 compound. Most of them were non-combatants (construction parties for the airport at Guadalcanal) including Japanese of Korean descent, and others were army soldiers and crew from planes shot down (*Hata*, 1990, p. 236). In November, the second group of some 250 military force POWs arrived there. Of this group, 232 navy men, including a 120-man crew of the warship, “*Furutaka*,” and a small crew of “*Akatsuki*” which had been sunk at Guadalcanal (1990, p. 237), occupied a temporary compound (the No.3 compound), but they moved to the No.2 compound on 11 February, 1943.

Subsequently, several groups came to the camp, most of whom were suffering from malnutrition. Thus by the time of the “incident,” 812 Japanese prisoners of war were detained at the Featherston camp altogether (Yerex, 2007, p. 149). After the incident, life of these Japanese as POWs continued until December 1945 when Japan was defeated by the Allies and they were repatriated to Japan.

2.2. Situation of the POW camp before the incident

2.2.1. General treatment of Japanese prisoners of war in the camp

The most objective observers of Featherston POW camp operations according to the Geneva POW Convention were the Swiss Consul-General in New Zealand (representative of the protecting power of Japan) and the New Zealand representative of

the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). They reported that the general treatment was very good and the relations of the staff of the POW camp and the POWs appeared satisfactory to the New Zealand government after their visit. Their reports were sent by cable not only to the Swiss legation in London and ICRC headquarters in Geneva respectively, but also to the then Japanese government through each of them. The first reports on their visits there in the middle of December 1942 described the results of their inspections as follows (Bossard, 1942 & Schmid, 1943). Those reports were the closest ones to the day when the Incident happened.

General remarks (extracts)

Dr Bossard (his first visit on 15 December 1942):

The camp at Featherston produces a good impression....

The POWs are very satisfied with their clothing. Since having been taken prisoners of war their health has greatly improved through abundant food and good living conditions.

Dr Schmid (his first visit on 17 and 18 December 1942):

The thorough inspection of this camp left a very favourable impression both as regards the material conditions as well as the good spirit prevailing among the prisoners of war themselves and between them and the officers and men of the New Zealand.

Details (condensed versions) (see Appendix D 1)

Judging from their reports, Japanese prisoners of war were treated in a humanitarian way at the camp. The group life of POWs was run autonomously within the status of the POW. They were satisfied with their living conditions: housing, food, clothing and health care. You may think however why Japanese prisoners of war had trouble with New Zealand guards at that time. This is because they could not understand why Japanese POWs did not write to their families. Subsequently, this thesis will refer to what sequence of events led to the incident.

2.2.2. An unexpectedly comfortable POW camp life

At the initial stage, both labour force prisoners and military force prisoners were leading a more comfortable camp life than they had expected. They formed a small “democratic” community with a Camp Leader (so-called No. 1 man) as the central figure in their respective compounds. In each compound, No. 1 man was in turn elected by the council-men who were elected by the POWs themselves. He undertook negotiations with the camp authorities on behalf of the compound.

The first Commanding Officer, Major Perrett and his staff treated POWs, in particular, wounded and ill ones, very kindly and according to the Geneva Convention. When he had been wounded in the Battle of Gallipoli in World War I, he had had a good experience that a battle ship of their ally, Japan, *Ibuki* had escorted the New Zealand transport ship which had taken him and other soldiers to Europe (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 27-28). He had also known to some extent the education Japanese soldiers had received that they must kill themselves before they are taken prisoner. Therefore, while he was sympathetic about feelings of POWs, he had some concern about their disregard for the Geneva POW Convention and so posted its articles in English inside the compound to let them know. In fact, though he and his staff were dimly aware that Japanese prisoners were using false names and knew they were against the Geneva Convention, there is an indication that he and his staff acquiesced in this (*Ota*, 2009, P.9)

In the labour force compound (No.1 compound), most POWs who had been part of the Imperial Work Force, tended to follow the instructions of their guards conscientiously (Carr-Gregg, 1978, p. 41). They, who were called “workers” by guards, were generally willing to work and help clear the campsite. However, camp authorities

had been aware of the existence of a radical minority group which consisted of several army soldiers whose behaviour could damage the order of the camp. The camp authorities decided to shift them to the military force compound, in which they came to form the suicide group later (*Hata*, 1990, p. 234). Thus, the No. 1 compound became completely peaceful.

In contrast, in the military force compound (No. 3. later, No. 2 compound), “fighting men” (much more navy soldiers and less army ones), who felt more embarrassed at finding themselves prisoners of the enemy than “workers,” tended to be ‘troublemakers.’ They believed that everyone, to one degree or other, must resolve to die in order to erase a disgrace on their names of being captives somehow. Most of them who were not even informed of the existence of the Geneva Convention, intended to kill themselves before they would be executed by the enemy. However, life as POWs which Adachi, an officer (sub-lieutenant) of the navy warship ‘*Furutaka*,’ and his men experienced for the first time was completely different than they had expected. They were supplied with bed and blankets though those were not so good, and were able to have a shower and highly nutritious meals. It seemed to them that life in the POW camp and that in the battlefield were as different as Heaven and Hell. The more kindly they were treated both materially and morally, the more they had a guilty conscience. Being captured is a great disgrace not only to you, but also to your family and people of your hometown. You use a false name and never write home as you do not want them to be informed of a fact of being captured. Consequently, you are convinced that you cannot return to Japan whether it wins or loses. This sort of feelings was common among most Japanese prisoners of war in particular “fighting men” at that time.

There were two factions. One was the traditionalist (tough) elements which were the minor group including mainly army soldiers who intended to resort to impatient and radical measures such as an uprising or suicide to their end. The other was the moderates which were the major group including mainly navy soldiers who tried to find moderate means such as waiting for the time to be ripe, considering the camp side's humanitarian treatment to Japanese prisoners. There was likely to be a conflict between two factions. This is because while the tough elements planned to raise the uprising with poor hand-made arms on Christmas Eve in 1942, the moderates led by Adachi tried to prevent it because they could inevitably be embroiled in that uprising. However, a young soldier who belonged to the navy but one of the tough group, managed to prevent the conflict between the two factions (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 42). To do this, he reported the planning of the riot to the camp authorities just before it happened. Consequently, the riot was stopped by the camp authorities and accordingly the fight among Japanese prisoners themselves was prevented (2005, p. 42-43). Thus, the tough elements came to understand the idea of the moderates that they wait for the time to be ripe to the common end, and so the atmosphere in the compound 2 became calm again. This was warmly welcomed by the camp commandant.

2.2. 3. Tense atmosphere overspreading the camp

At first, the camp authorities demanded few work parties because of the poor physical condition of the POW's. However, as their health improved and the second CO, Lieutenant Colonel Donaldson, arrived in the camp in late December, 1942, this situation changed considerably. Until then, 45 prisoners were recruited into work every day: 30 of them were made to work outside the camp: weeding in its surroundings and gravel collecting at the riverside. The rest of them were made mainly to chop firewood

and fix meals inside the camp. This was as much as the prisoners could do because more than half of them used up their physical strength (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 55). The second camp commandant, who was a career Army officer in the English military tradition and a First World War veteran, was going to strictly implement the Geneva POW Convention to POWs in particular according to Article 27, 30, and 34 (Work of the POWs) (*Nicolaidai*, 1999, p. 20). He also intended to treat the fighting men and the workers equally in work (see appendix B-1: *Donaldson*, 1943). In mid-January, 1943, the camp authorities ordered prisoners to mow the lawn (gorse) outside the compound, but the fighting men refused this. The new commandant, fearing that a defiant attitude to his authority was rapidly spread among some of the prisoners, anew notified the persons responsible (the council-men) for No. 2 Compound of the existence and significance of the Geneva POW Convention (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 54). And then he explained in detail Article 27 of the Convention providing that capturing countries may employ as workmen POWs who are fit.

However, there was often trouble over the issue of work between the camp authorities and the fighting men. This is because there was no compromise between the claims of both parties. The camp authorities, as captor, ordered prisoners to follow the Convention. The fighting men, though being captives, believed that they deserved to die for being captured alive and so they were not allowed to be made to work for the enemy. They also had pride as Imperial soldiers, and so they could not work with workers together (*Hata*, 1990, p.244).

New tough elements which came to the camp in February, 1943, along with some of old ones, thought that they must die and sought for opportunities. First, they forced their officers to show a fine example of the Japanese soldier by committing

suicide, and if not they threatened to kill their officers. At that time, the camp authorities, having a talk with *Adachi*, officer prisoner, shifted officer prisoners to a separate place and isolated some tough elements, who were called the “Suicide Squad,” in a temporary compound to prevent an accident (Nicolaidai, 1999, P. 34). Since then, *Adachi* had been permitted to visit No.2 Compound to supervise the fighting men by the camp commandant. Secondly, even after the tough elements could return to the No 2 compound, they not only hampered work parties, but also left the compound in a mess and their manners came to be loose. On 23 February 1943, one of them (NCOs) came to the barbed wires and called out “*Teki wo risurumaneha suruna* (Don’t work for the enemy)” to their men who were labouring in a small group just outside the No. 2 compound fence in Japanese. And then they obediently stopped to work and marched back into the compound. New Zealand guards often lost their temper with such prisoners’ doings. Therefore, the camp commandant gave such Japanese NCOs a final warning that there were given three days in which to improve their own conduct and clean up their compound.

Trouble between them, likely leading up to the Incident, happened on 24 February 1943. The commandant demanded 105 men, more than two times the usual number of men for work parties (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 21). It was because he deliberately decided to shift several tasks from No. 1 Compound to No. 2 for the fighting men and the workers to share the work equally between them (Appendix B-1, Donaldson, 1943). It was also because there could be 130 men fit for work even if the number of the wounded and the ill was excluded from the total prisoners of 252 (1943). This demand seemed to be unacceptable to the fighting men. Petty officers for No. 2 compound went to the compound for officers to talk to them over the matter. *Adachi* met an official

interpreter of the camp, Ashton and requested him to understand that their demand for 105 men for work party was impossible for prisoners (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 56). This was because more than half of all the prisoners were those who were still poor in physical strength or just came to the camp with their wounds still not healed (2005, p. 56). However, the problem remained unsettled. Therefore, they decided to seek a meeting with the Commanding Officer on this matter on the following day (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 21).

2.3. The day of the Incident (25 February 1943)

On Thursday, 25 February, the incident occurred. In the early morning, the labour force compound sent a work party after calling a roll to work as usual. However, the military force compound was not in a mood to supply a work party. They could hardly convey their real intention to the staff of the camp. This may be because the communication between the No.2 compound and the camp authorities was awkward as the staff (in particular, the interpreter) in charge of that compound were different every day (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 60). Finally, fighting men sent a message to refuse the Commander's order of the work party and to seek a meeting with him, to the camp authorities several times through Number One *Miyazaki* and Officer *Adachi* (Nicolaidi, 1999, 21). Some 240 prisoners gathered in the yard of the compound and began to sit cross-legged in rows there (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 61). Then, the camp authorities ordered Number 1 man *Miyazaki* anew to send the smallest working parties, a party of five, out to work. However, he refused it, and so they took No. 1 man to the camp office (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 42). And then, the prisoners were waiting to see how things turned out. Two Japanese Officers, *Adachi* and *Nishimura* negotiated with Adjutant Malcolm about the "meeting". His response was not to accept it, but on the contrary it was to

send in an armed guard of 47 men, the number of whom was almost three times that of usual (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 21). Furthermore, they took up positions at ground level and on building roofs to aim at prisoners at very close range (p. 21). Then he ordered the two Japanese officers to return to their compound and other prisoners to parade to the usual assembly ground. Both prisoners refused his orders. There were brushes between the two sides. The tension in the scene suddenly rose. Synthesising the evidence of (ex-)New Zealand guards and (ex-)Japanese POWs at the Court of Inquiry (1943) and in the interviews with Nicolaidi (1999), *Tsujimoto* (2005) and Sanders (1990), the subsequent sequence of events leading up to the incident can be described as follows:

The Adjutant ordered some armed guards or unarmed ones to remove the officers running into the hut, from there. While there were an exchange of blows between guards and prisoners, a prisoner was stabbed with a bayonet of a guard prior to *Nishimura* re-emerging from the hut and being arrested (Appendix B-5: *Adachi*, 1943). This is likely to have incited the prisoners to change their passive resistance to the camp authorities to the active one. The Adjutant advised the arrest of *Nishimura* to the Commandant, who headed toward the scene (Appendix B-3: Donaldson, 1943). Then, *Adachi* came out of the hut and took a position in the centre of the POWs (Appendix B-6: *Adachi*, 1963). The Adjutant ordered some armed guards or unarmed ones to arrest *Adachi*, but they failed.

The Adjutant, who was standing unarmed between the guards and the prisoners, borrowed a pistol openly from an officer guard to frighten them (Appendix B-4: Malcolm, 1943). He beckoned to *Adachi* to come out. *Adachi* stood up and thumped his chest with both hands in a defiant manner. The Adjutant then fired a warning shot over *Adachi*'s head (Appendix B-6: six New Zealand guards, 1943). However, his first shot

went through Adachi's left arm and then hit a prisoner behind Adachi dead (Appendix B-6: Adachi, 1963, Saito, 2005, and one ex-New Zealand guard, 1990). This shot caused all the Japanese POWs to motivate active resistance to the Adjutant and guards: prisoners' stone-throwing at them. And then, some POWs stood up and *Adachi* repeated defiant gestures. The Adjutant beckoned *Adachi* to come out from among the men and brought the pistol to the ready. POWs began to roar and rush them while throwing stones. Simultaneously the Adjutant fired the second shot, which hit *Adachi* in the right shoulder. One of stone hit the Adjutant on the head, who fell to the ground. And then, the guard in a panic opened fire at prisoners without orders. One of guards on a roof of the latrine began to fire the Tommy gun at the very first and allegedly killed and wounded not a few Japanese (Appendix B-7: Dickson and James, 1943). A ricochet of his shot might have hit several guards one of whom died later (Appendix R-7: Martin and Patchet, 1943). His brother had been one of 17 New Zealanders killed by the Japanese troop in the Tarawa Tragedy in 1942 (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, pp. 102-106 and Nicolaidi, 1999, pp. 189-192). He may have shot Japanese to death in retaliation for his brother. After seconds, the Adjutant and the duty officer ordered the guard to 'cease fire'. Shooting lasted from 15 to 30 seconds. It had ceased before the Commandant arrived on the scene.

According to the explanation of the display for the Featherston Incident at the Army Museum Waiohuru (2008, September 17), the New Zealand and Japanese casualties were as follows:

New Zealand Military Forces casualties:

1 private	killed by a ricochet
1 officer.....	wounded by a ricochet
4 other ranks	wounded by ricochets

2 officers,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,injured by stones
8 other ranks.....injured by stones

Japanese POWs casualties

48 other ranks..... killed (31 of them were instant death)
1 officer.....wounded
78 other ranks.....wounded.

2.4. Aftermath of the Incident

2.4.1. Commemoration of victims of the Incident

The New Zealand camp authorities honourably burned the Japanese dead to ashes, which were stored in the funeral companies in Wellington. Initially, they enshrined the dead bodies of those prisoners who had been killed instantly at the dining hall, and then they carried their bodies to the Karori crematory in Wellington by truck (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p.173). Surviving Japanese POWs buried mementos of their deceased comrades instead of their dead bodies at a corner of No.2 Compound and created a shrine there to bless their memories (2005, p. 173). All the deceased were officially cremated “with military honours and appropriate religious services” a ceremony which was attended by the Swiss Consul-General in New Zealand, two Japanese civilian internees and a high ranking New Zealand officer there (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 136). And then, the two funeral companies in Wellington had kept their ashes with each of them in an urn on behalf of the Army until the conclusion of hostilities. The Army took away their remains from there on 16 October 1945, and then, according to the Army document (NZMF, 1953), their remains were sent back to Japan on the transport which carried Japanese repatriated soldiers. However, there has not been any evidence to support this matter: nothing showed signs of the International Red Cross Committee being involved in this

in Japan and in New Zealand (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 155 & Tsujimoto, 2005, p.178). Their ashes are still missing. Thus, The New Zealand camp authorities' treatment of the Japanese dead was against Article 76 of the Geneva POW Convention (see 1.2.1).

2.4.2. Surviving prisoners' camp life

Settling the chaos

Directly after the Incident, both New Zealand guards and Japanese prisoners of war got into a panic under the pressure of cleaning up after the unexpected happening. The camp staff asked for help of unwounded Japanese POWs in giving first aid to the wounded and then took them to nearby hospitals by ambulance. The wounded Japanese POWs received good care at each of hospitals. Those who were taken in ANZAC Hall as a specially-set-up hospital in Featherston, were treated considerately by doctors and nurses (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, pp.80-81). To their surprise, local people visited there one after another, and they decorated sickrooms with flowers and encouraged Japanese inpatients (2005, pp. 80-81). According to *Adachi's* daughter, he thought he could have died when he was shot on that day, but he found himself on the bed of the hospital. When he said "I desire to die," a doctor answered "Will you please to be treated by me, please?" (*Fukie Adachi*, personal communication, 17 June 2010). Japanese POWs wondered why New Zealanders had given such kind treatment to Japanese as their enemy, though they expected to be executed by New Zealand captors. They, having thought that they did nothing but die, began to awake the instinct for survival gradually.

Budding mutual understanding between the two

The camp authorities took some measures in order to prevent a recurrence of events. Those guards who had been involved in the incident were sent on leave and were not made to work in the compounds even after returning to the camp (Nicolaidi,

1999, p. 51). This must have made it impossible for both parties to the incident to meet together again, making it possible for them to reduce the trauma they had suffered from the incident. The camp authorities also made efforts to improve the living conditions of the POWs through Dr Bossard (I CRC) (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, pp. 134-135).

Dr Bossard (IRCC), coupled with some staff of the Swiss Consulate, visited the camp every month to inspect its conditions. In particular, they checked requests of the POWs for treatment and made efforts to realize them as much as possible (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p.132). Some officer and non-commissioned officer prisoners requested spiritual advice related to Christian faith which may underlie New Zealanders' way of life (*Shinya*, 2001, p.147). This is because Japanese prisoners of war wanted to know why New Zealand doctors and guards gave kind treatment to prisoners. Accordingly, the camp authorities recruited a padre and Japanese-English interpreter for Japanese POWs. And then, Rev. Troughton, who had been a missionary in Japan for over five years, was appointed as a padre at the Featherston POW camp in July 1943 (2001, pp.148-149).

According to Troughton's daughter (D. Payne, personal communication, 14 May 2010 in Auckland), he did his best for the Japanese POWs, some of whom were depressed, not to cause such trouble again. He encouraged them to take part in sports by preparing sports equipment including ping-pong tables and to read books by offering Japanese ones. He also passionately spoke to them about the true and living God not as the religion, but as the way of life. The meeting to read the Bible was held by him at regular intervals. Several of those who attended the meeting were baptised by Padre Troughton. They, including two officer prisoners, Shinya and Adachi, believed firmly that New Zealanders' kindness originated from faith in Jesus Christ, which set them free from distress that those who must have died as the Japanese POW were living.

Accordingly, they must have become aware that such beliefs and principles of the Imperial Japanese military forces were peculiar to them, too self-righteous and not universal.

The camp authorities complied with other various requests from prisoners of war through Dr Bossard. As for work (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, pp. 134-135), they did not make unreasonable demands, but prepared a suitable environment for Japanese POWs to work. The prisoners were imposed a 33-hours work week. Some work parties worked at the camp workshop, in which they were so absorbed in making joinery like school desks and chairs that they often forgot closing time. Others did work such as pig farming, loading river gravel, making concrete blocks, and stone crushing. Outside the camp, some work parties were involved in market gardening in the nearby town Greytown. Some did work repairing and maintaining roads or clearing the edge of a street in the Wairarapa. When necessary, face-masks and sunglasses were provided to protect workers from dust and sun (Sanders, 1990, p. 39).

Regarding food, the camp authorities prepared Japanese style food for prisoners instead of dairy food (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p.119). Sometimes, they could have Japanese meals of California rice and sea food. They could serve up vegetables which were grown with great care by them in the camp garden. In free time, prisoners were allowed to enjoy a variety of activities (2005, p.136). Some of them produced Japanese traditional dramas by using self-made set pieces. On the days of their performance, not only prisoners, but also even New Zealand guards enjoyed watching them. Maybe, as a return favour, the camp authorities sometimes showed mini-films about New Zealand for prisoners. Japanese POWs tried to create a variety of things from limited materials in their prison life (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p.136). Some of them enjoyed creating reliefs of

birds and drawing pictures of animals. The prisoners often presented the New Zealanders with their craft work. With Japanese activities before their very eyes, New Zealand guards revised their opinion of the Japanese. Circle activities including the above-mentioned reading circle for the Bible and the English conversation class also started. These circles provided prisoners with an opportunity to understand the New Zealand culture. Thus, the exchange between Japanese POWs and New Zealand guards progressed at a good pace and they came to know each other's mind well.

2.4.3. New Zealand authorities in the aftermath of the Incident

Prime Minister's statement on the Incident

The New Zealand Government was going to justify the Incident hastily. A statement by Prime Minister Fraser appeared in the 1 March 1943 edition of the *Evening Post*, some seven days after the incident occurred:

A serious disturbance occurred in a prisoners of war camp in New Zealand on Thursday, following upon the refusal of a large number of Japanese prisoners of war in one compound to obey the orders of the camp authorities.

The situation finally resulted in the prisoners, who had armed themselves with stones, tools, and other improvised weapons rushing and attacking the guard after a warning shot had been fired by the officer in command.

The guard thereupon fired on the prisoners of war with the result that 48 were killed or later died of wounds and 63 were wounded. Two officers and five of the guards were also injured, one guard having since died.

The unfortunate results of the incident are to be regretted, but in the circumstances firm action on the part of the guards was necessary to quell the riot and restore order. None of the prisoners of war escaped and the camp was soon normal and has since remained quiet.

An official inquiry is being held immediately. In the meantime, the injured men are receiving all necessary medical attention.

After considering very carefully the influence of the Incident on New Zealand POWs overseas, New Zealanders and the international community, the Government made the above statement to the public. It stressed that the use of arms by the guards was inevitable to suppress the uprising and re-establish order and that no prisoners escaped.

However, most local people felt that this statement was different from what they expected. This may be because those in Featherston who offered to nurse the wounded of the Incident at hospitals as volunteers day after day, thought that it was too cruel to have shot unarmed men dead, even if they were hostile country's captives, and this was just like massacre (Tsujimoto, 2005, p. 80). New Zealanders nationwide who knew the fact that there were Japanese POWs in New Zealand for the first time through this statement, had had a greater anti-Japanese feeling than before. Most New Zealanders knew that their servicemen had been taken prisoner by Japanese troops in battle and been ill-treated by them. Therefore, it was a great shock to them that their troops shot Japanese prisoners of war to death this time. This fact kindled their fear that Japan, which occupied a vast area of South Asia and the Pacific just after Pearl Harbour, might invade New Zealand.

The New Zealand media also had a large number of doubts about this statement in which there were no details of the Incident at all. It did not explain how the relationship between both sides developed into the uprising (Tsujimoto, 2005, p. 79). It also described one guard died from a ricochet wound as if prisoners had killed him. In the final analysis, considering the gravity of the Incident, the New Zealand war cabinet desired to insist on the legitimacy of the camp authorities' action toward the Incident

without delay. Therefore, it might have deliberately obscured the truth of the matter.

The Military Court of Inquiry and Court-Martial

The Military Court of Inquiry was to judge whether the party to the Incident should be tried by court-martial. It was held from 2 March to 13 March 1943 in Wellington. The hearing of evidence from 27 witnesses, ten of whom were Japanese prisoners of war, was conducted. As a result, the Court of Inquiry concluded that the Incident could be invited by cultural misunderstanding between captor and captive (NZMF, 1943, May, 13). This means that the camp authorities failed to understand feelings and beliefs, coupled with language, peculiar to the Japanese POWs. They were not aware that POWs' complete refusal of work parties resulted from their ignorance of the Geneva Convention, the fighting personnel's pride being wounded because of working together with the labour personnel, and being captured deserving to die. On the other hand, Japanese POWs could hardly understand not only English, but also the reason for the camp authorities' kind treatment and orders of certain work to them. Thus there was the inextricable standoff between captor and captive. The Court of Inquiry regarded such Japanese prisoners' refusal of the orders as the motive for the camp authorities to use arms (NZMF, 1943, May, 13). That is why it considered that such situations rendered the tragedy unavoidable. It recognised that the adjutant's two shots might have been the direct trigger for the Incident, but had been necessary in order to maintain authority being threatened by concerted action of the prisoners. It also considered that the guards and escorts had opened fire "without and in fact contrary to orders," but these men "may be likened to a large jury, for they are substantially drawn from the same ranks whence juries are drawn. By common consent they deemed it necessary to open fire and they did so" (NZMF, 1943, May, 13). The court of inquiry

considered that collective insubordination of Japanese POWs greatly contributed to the Incident, but recognised that the Japanese officers and other ranked POWs acted within their particular service traditions. It also recognised that by European standards, the two Japanese officers and other ranks seemed to be guilty and one of officers admitted his responsibility for the Incident, but Japan had not ratified the Geneva Convention.

To sum up, The Court of Inquiry suggested that the greater portion of responsibility for the Incident had lain with the prisoners. That is, there had been a little fault on the part of the New Zealand side, too. Despite being in wartime, it treated captor and captive fairly, though it did not refer to a prisoner who had been killed by the first shot of the adjutant and an guard who had fired at random from the roof on that day.

Its relevant report was secretly given to the British government on 22 March 1943. Unexpectedly, it made a demand for rewriting of the report to New Zealand. The British government interpreted the expression in the report that the greater part of responsibility lay with the prisoners to mean that New Zealand also had some responsibility (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 110). The British government in wartime could hardly accept the report of one of British dominions as it were from a political view point. Consequently it was rewritten as if the full responsibility for the happenings of 25 February 1943 lay with the prisoners' side (2005, pp. 110-111). Concretely, the edited version deleted the part of any justification in actions of prisoners, on the contrary, added that the prisoners were "in a state of open munity on that day" (NZMF, 1943, May, 18). It made up a story that the prisoners had been planning a revolt beforehand by emphasizing discovering improvised weapons after the Incident. It concluded that there had not been any flaw in the Incident on the part of New Zealand, unlike the full

original report. This may be because the British government feared that the Allied prisoners of the Japanese Army would face its cruel retaliation, if the Japanese government knew the fact that the New Zealand side had opened fire on unarmed Japanese prisoners.

The full original report of the Court of Inquiry's minutes and decisions remained under a 30-year secrecy rule (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 28). Therefore, official documents relevant to the Incident were not disclosed to the public as a general rule until 1974. This, along with its rewritten version which was sent to Allied countries and Japan and the Prime Minister's ambiguous statement, made all sort of inaccurate information fly around.

Court-Martial

According to the edited report of the Court of Inquiry, the British government ordered the New Zealand government to take Japanese ringleaders of the Incident to military tribunal on charges of mutiny and incitement to mutiny (Nicolaidi, 1999, P.116 & Tsujimoto, 2005, p.121). The British government was going to show that shooting was totally justified and the fault was completely with prisoners. Prime Minister Fraser took the decision to conduct legal proceedings against *Adachi* and *Nishimura* because if such legal actions were not taken, the Japanese government might regard the New Zealand authorities as responsible for the incident. However, the trial was postponed three times and then suspended indefinitely.

This was because a fair and disinterested lawyer, the Swiss Consul-General and the camp commandant lent their support to *Adachi* and *Nishimura* through statements to the court: Camp Commandant Donaldson firmly claimed that it was the petty officers in No.2 compound, not *Adachi* and *Nishimura*, who were ringleaders of the Incident.

Swiss Consul-General Schmid had a strong doubt about the court-martial and appealed its unjustness to the legal authorities (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p.123). Similarly, prominent Wellington lawyer Gordon Watson designated as their counsel, stated his cases for the Japanese prisoners (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p.124). First, even though Japanese prisoners had incited New Zealand guards to use arms, with the result that the Incident had occurred, they had not attempted to kill guards and escape, and sought simply their own opportunity to die. Secondly, they had been nearly unarmed, but 48 of them had been nevertheless shot to death by guards. He also insisted on the unjustness of court-martial because there should be no ground for thinking that the New Zealand Army Act must be applied to Japanese POWs.

From the first, the full original report of the Court of Inquiry must have not intended that the Incident would be tried by court-martial. It was not clearly declared that the two Japanese officers, *Adachi* and *Nishimura*, were “culpable parties” and the Incident was “a case of Mutiny” (Nicolaidi, 1999, p.116). Therefore, the British government could not help making a complete change of the policy to one of dominions because of in particular the counsel’s convincing case for Japanese officer prisoners in New Zealand. It must have understood that no trial would make the possibility of reprisals by Japan on British POWs minimum. And then, the New Zealand government finally decided that proceedings against Japanese officer prisoners would be dropped.

Japan’s reaction to the Incident

The Japanese government gained information about the Incident unofficially from the media and officially from the New Zealand government via the British government and Switzerland as protecting country for Japan. Each time, the Japanese government had made a protest against indiscriminate shooting of unarmed Japanese to

the New Zealand government via Switzerland and the British government. The New Zealand government retorted that it had just responded to the mutinous attitude of POWs under the Geneva POW Convention through the British government and Switzerland. Such an exchange of words continued several times, and then with the end of war, it died on the vine.

The Japanese government found out about the incident for the first time from a Reuter telegram reporting PM Fraser's statement on 2 March 1943 (*Tani*, 1943). It was next when the Japanese government received a first copy of the report of Military Court of Inquiry (the rewritten version) from the New Zealand government on 15 July 1943 (*Sakamoto*, 1943).

It was the closing days of the Asia-Pacific War when the Japanese government lodged a virtual final comprehensive protest against the Incident (*Togo*, 1945). Receiving this, the New Zealand government prepared an official reply to the protest from Japan until October 1945 when it was more than two months after the Japanese surrender (Nicolaidi, 1999, p.129). However, it is unclear whether the reply was received by Japan, or not.

Judging from the exchanges of sharp words between the two, it seems that the New Zealand government strove mightily to defend its position against the Japanese government. The New Zealand government's reply to the Japanese reaction was based on the rewritten version of the report of the Court of Inquiry. The Japanese government must have seen through some rewritten parts (false ones) of this report. For example: when Japan pointed out the fact that New Zealand guards had opened fire on nearly unarmed Japanese POWs on that day, New Zealand replied that Japanese POWs had been in a state of open mutiny and so guards had been forced to use arms for

self-defence. And then, New Zealand produced a number of improvised weapons discovered after the Incident as evidence to show that POWs intended to mutiny. However, Japan pointed out that this evidence was not true, because it was reported to the Court that defensive weapons were taken from POWs before the adjutant fired. Therefore, the Japanese government must have not thought of the Incident as a mutiny by Japanese POWs.

It is extraordinary that the Japanese government which had not recognised the existence of the Japanese POWs had an exchange of sharp words over the Incident with the New Zealand government frequent times. The Japanese side might have been convinced that the New Zealand side was blamed for the Featherston Incident, unlike the Cowra Breakout.

2.5. Cause of the Incident

What underlie the Incident are cultural differences between the New Zealanders and the Japanese. That is, the lack of mutual understanding between the two people with different cultures resulted in the happening as shown in the New Zealand Military Forces original proceedings of a Court of Inquiry, 1943. The Western soldiers as well as New Zealanders who were instructed in the existence of the Geneva Convention, did not see becoming captives as the disgrace at all because POWs were thought to be soldiers who fought until an utmost limit (several New Zealanders and Australians, personal communication in 2010). In contrast, Japanese soldiers who were not instructed in that, regarded becoming captives as the greatest disgrace, because Japanese soldiers should not surrender, but die for the country as mentioned before. There are several frictions between New Zealand guards and Japanese POWs: solo escapes (*Sakurai*, 1995, p. 142), attempted riots (see 2.2.2.), and the issue of work such

as hampering work parties and refusing work parties (see 2.2.3.) in particular in No.2 Compound.

The New Zealand camp authorities strictly demanded work parties of Japanese POWs according to the provisions of the Geneva POW Convention of 1929, whereas Japanese POWs, particularly the fighting men (the military force prisoners) firmly refused their demand because the fighting men believed such work benefited the enemy and the fighting men were reluctant to work with or before the workers. The commandant and the adjutant made a sudden demand for unexpectedly big working parties on the fighting men of No.2 compound by force, ignoring Japanese military traditions: in particular the superiority of the fighting men over the workers. While the camp authorities assumed that even the fighting men must obey the order by intimidating with arms as the “workers” had done (Appendix B-4, Malcolm, 1943), the fighting men who sought an opportunity to die, they, unlike the “workers”, had nothing to fear. The fighting men continued to maintain that they would not accept the unexpected demand until having a meeting with the commandant, by a sit-in strike, ignoring the existence of the Geneva Convention. Therefore, in the negotiations, both sides held their respective grounds. In other words, there was little mutual understanding between the two sides. The incident occurred right in the middle of such a hair-trigger situation.

The direct trigger for the Incident was Adjutant’s first warning shot and the indirect trigger was Camp Commandant’s refusal of the conference with the POWs. The direct trigger: The first shot which Adjutant Malcolm should have fired as a warning shot went through Adachi’s left upper arm and hit a young prisoner behind Adachi to death. This triggered off prisoners’ throwing stones, the adjutant’s second shot and

prisoners' concerted rush to the adjutant and guards, who reflectively fired fusillades (including shots by the Tommy gun of the guard on the roof of the latrine) at prisoners. The reason that the adjutant and guards had shot prisoners contrary to their initial intention must be to have become panicked because of the following two factors. Firstly, they feared the attitude and behaviour peculiar to Japanese soldiers who were prepared for death. Secondly, the camp staff's lack of experience in treating POWs with different culture, as mentioned in 2.2. This means that the adjutant's first shot which had been fired to frighten and warn prisoners happened to hit the young prisoner dead and pulled the immediate trigger for the happening causing terrible casualties.

The indirect trigger: if Camp Commandant Donaldson had had a meeting with POWs, the shooting would not have happened. The commandant intended to treat the fighting men and the workers equally as shown in his evidence at the Court of Inquiry (see Appendix B-1). As a result, he suddenly demanded an unusual number of men for working parties from the No.2 compound. The fighting men could hardly accept this unreasonable demand and staged a sit-in in order to request a meeting with the commandant. While he made efforts to make prisoners understand the POW Convention, he did not listen to their opinions to understand them. If the commandant had had a talk to Adachi who he designated as a spokesman in the presence of the prisoners on the scene over the issue of work, including his unexpected demand, such bloodshed would not have happened. Therefore, the commandant's refusal of the conference with the POWs was the indirect trigger for the Incident.

Where the responsibility lay: objectively, it can be said that most responsibility for Incident lay with the New Zealand side. The Court of Inquiry concluded that most responsibility for the Incident lay with Japanese (NZMF, 1943, May 13) and Japanese

officer prisoner *Adachi* testified that he admitted his responsibility for the Incident because their dogmatic belief of the POW had caused the Incident at the Court of Inquiry. However, judging from the following two factors, the fault might have lain with the New Zealand side. The first one is that two Japanese officers, *Adachi* and *Nishimura* were taken to military tribunal on charges of mutiny and incitement to mutiny, but the trial was suspended. This is because even though Japanese POWs had incited New Zealand guards to use arms, they had not attempted to kill guards and escape and because Japanese POWs had been nearly unarmed, but 48 of them had been nevertheless shot to death by guards (see 2.4.3). The second one that New Zealand guard Owen's shooting of Japanese by a Tommy gun was allegedly to avenge his brother's death at Tarawa on Japanese (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, pp. 102-106 and *Nicolaidi*, 1999, pp. 189-192). This was against the 1929 Geneva POW Convention.

2.6. Recent relationship between two peoples involved

In peacetime after World War II, how have Japanese and New Zealand peoples reflected on the Incident? This section will examine it from the relationship between the two before the 1990s and after the 1990s.

2.6.1. Before the 1990s

An ex-prisoner of war's appearance to the Tokyo Trial

Ex-Japanese officer POW *Adachi* was summoned to appear as a witness in the *Tokyo Trial* some days after his repatriation from New Zealand to Japan. His memoir (Appendix C) described this fact as the following. When *Adachi* was mobilised on 16 February 1946, the *Tokyo Trial* was still in session. After a while, he received orders to appear in court as a witness to the Featherston Incident in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East from the Navy Department. On the designated day, he

appeared in court and was taking the witness stand. A judge questioned him about what case he was a witness to. He answered, “I and my men had been captured by Americans when my warship *Furutaka* had been sunk by them at the Battle of Guadalcanal, and then I and my men had been sent as POWs to New Zealand. On 25 February 1943, a happening with its origins in the issue of work occurred at the Featherston POW camp there and consequently, 48 Japanese POWs had been killed and about 90 ones wounded by shooting of New Zealand guards. I was a witness to that incident.” And then the judge declared that to judge such a major case, a person responsible from New Zealand must be summoned, and so he could not be accepted as a witness.

Adachi closed his memoir with the following words: “I was surprised at the unfair decision in the *Tokyo* Trial that the judge overruled any case which was unfavourable to the Allied Powers.” The researcher made inquiries at the National Institute for Defense Studies about this case which should be supported officially, but they could hardly find out relevant old documents as evidence of the case. However, *Adachi*’s memoir shows that though *Adachi* had emotionally admitted his responsibility for the Incident at the Court of Inquiry (see 2.4.3.), but he might have rationally recognised that New Zealand side was at fault. It also shows that the *Tokyo* Trial must have been the trial in which victorious countries judge defeated countries. Therefore, the Featherston Incident would not have become a legal wrangle, and so this may be one of reasons that the Incident has still remained obscure.

First revisit to Featherston by an ex-prisoner of war

Tamotsu Fujita was the first ex-Japanese POW to revisit Featherston. It was in February 1974, 31 years after the Incident. He was standing calm on the old camp site and remembered happenings during his prisoner’s life: his resistance as one of tough

elements, his wound in the horrible disaster, and his defiant behaviour and local people's hospitality in the hospital (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, pp. 182-184). That reminded him of the death of his comrades there, and he shouted in his mind "All of you forgive me. I have been living shamelessly in this way, as I should have long since died" (2005, pp. 182-184). And then, he resolved to build a monument to his deceased comrades there. His visit there became the topic of a conversation and he was welcomed by local people, even the nurse who had been slapped by him. He made a comment saying "Here in Featherston, I was born again and I could start my second life. People in New Zealand gave me a second life" (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p.184). This moved local people.

Small-scale monument to Japanese victims

Since 1974, *Fujita* and his comrades had made great efforts to build the monument to their deceased comrades. First, they rushed around the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Health and Welfare¹, which rejected their petition, because of difficulty in maintaining the monument after building. Just at that time, Featherston was carrying forward a plan to create the War Memorial Park at the old POW camp site and its environs (*Sakurai*, 1995, pp. 189-190). It requested Japan as well as the then Allied countries to donate for the plan. It turned out that Japan would donate for one bench and table. They took this opportunity to propose building the monument to the Featherston authorities and obtained their approval on the condition of being small-scale (*Sakurai*, 1995, p. 190).

1: This Japanese Government's response was different from the case of Cowra, Australia in which the Australian Commonwealth War Graves Commission has held the land of the Japanese War Cemetery in trusteeship for the Japanese government and the Japanese government shouldered its construction costs in 1964.

Then they made a collection for donations from their veterans associations for the ex-soldier prisoners and for the ex-labour force prisoners. And they sent part of donations for the bench and table, and one plaque in which the Japanese characters of 鎮魂 (Repose of Souls) was engraved, another plaque with Basho's *haiku* (short Japanese poem of 5-7-5 syllables) inscribed on it and cherry seedlings together to Featherston (*Sakurai*, 1995, p. 190). In the meantime, there were some local people who firmly objected that the Featherston Incident was taken up for discussion again.

Figure 3. The monument to Japanese victims (centre) and the monument with the haiku (left)



Two people are paying their respects to Japanese victims. (Photo: Yasuhiro. Ota, 25 February, 2011)

Finally, in 1979, the War Memorial Park opened and the unveiling of the monument to Japanese victims in the Incident and the monument with the *haiku* of “夏草やつはものどもが夢の跡” (Behold the summer grass all that remains of the dreams of warriors)

carved in its surface took place (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 185). The scene at the old site of the POW camp seemed to associate with the image of “The country is in ruins, but its mountains and rivers remain”. The *haiku* of *Basho* which matches with this image came to be engraved on the monument.

Memorial ceremony

On 15 December 1986, *Toshio Adachi*, ex-Japanese officer prisoner, 79 at the time, along with his two comrades, came back to Featherston. After walking the old camp site with deep emotion, they were quietly standing in front of the monument of “鎮魂 (Repose of Souls)” for a good while, thinking of their comrades who had died there (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 188). *Sakurai* (1995, p. 191), one of *Adachi*’s comrades, wrote this revisit as a “visit to the grave²” for their comrades died in the POW camp in his memoir. Then, they happened to see a person, who was ex-Second Lieutenant Ken Martin who had given a pistol to Adjutant Malcolm on the day of the Incident. *Adachi* and Martin shared the joy of their reunion, by hugging each other, only with few words (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 188).

On the following day, *Adachi* conducted a one-hour memorial ceremony based on the tradition of new Shintoism (Japanese native religion) in front of the monument of “Repose of Souls” at the War Memorial Park (LaHatte, Dec. 15, 1986). In attendance of not only people concerned in the POW camp, but also many local people, it became the solemn ceremony in which everyone prayed for the souls of the departed, humbly offering flowers there (*Sakurai*, 1995, p. 191). After that, local people held the welcome party for the three Japanese at the ANZAC Hall which had been the field hospital in those days. On the occasion, while Mayor of Featherston Bill Mckerrow (also the major

2. In fact, there is no their graves in Featherston, let alone anywhere. These former Japanese POWs assumed that there were graves of their deceased comrades in Featherston at that time.

member of Returned Services Association) expressed his appreciation for the Japanese cooperation in creating the War Memorial Park, *Adachi*, as the representative of ex-Japanese POWs, gave the following words of thanks:

The February 1943 incident had happened because of “the severe attitude” of the Japanese towards prisoners of war. I think that the responsibility was entirely ours. We Japanese thought that, having become prisoners of war, we were obliged to die, but New Zealanders had thought it rather to be an honour to be a POW and they treated us kindly, for which magnanimous national characteristic I pay my deep respects.

If you people had dealt with us in a contemptuous manner, I think that very likely we would not have returned alive to Japan.

Thanks to you people, we have lived to see the present prosperous state of Japan and could also conduct this memorial ceremony for the victims of the Incident. For this, I would like to express my thanks to the people of New Zealand.

(LaHatte, Dec. 15, 1986)

Thus, ex-Japanese POWs' revisit satisfied not only themselves, but also ex-POW camp staff. *Adachi* was convinced that the former adversaries met as friends in Featherston and so thought of realising an idea of extension of the existing War Memorial Park he had been nursing (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 191). He deeply desired that it becomes the symbol of peace between Japan and New Zealand, which would repay the death of his comrades there. After their return to Japan, one of them received one letter from a daughter of Ken Martin. It said, "...I heartily appreciate your return to Featherston and your giving my father a chance to meet you again....After the reunion, my father Ken Martin has come to spend every day more peacefully than before...." (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, P. 192). Martin, who must have had a guilty conscience about the unexpected consequence on that day, heard *Adachi's* apology and thanks to New

Zealanders and he would have felt relieved. Their reunion must have been the moment when they unloaded their heavy ‘burden’ to each other.

2.6.2. After the 1990s

Mayor of Featherston Bill Mckerrow

Bill Mckerrow had been Mayor of Featherston for 15 years from 1974. He also had served in the Pacific and Middle East theatres of war between 1941 and 1945, and so was an active member of the Returned Services Association (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 93 and Yerex, 2007, p. 229). In 1991, he was decorated with the fourth Order of Merit with the Order of the Sacred Treasure by Emperor of Japan (J. Dittmer, personal communication, 1 March 2012 at the Heritage Museum with its certificate as an exhibit). This was because of his work in easing the post-war tension between the two countries (Yerex, 2007, p. 229). He had led from the front in welcoming Japanese to Featherston from the mid-1970s and in spite of local mixed feelings.

In July 1977, he organised the visit to the site of the old Featherston POW camp by the training squadron of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (R. Scrimshaw, personal communication, 1 March, 2012). One of officials of the Japanese Embassy in Wellington requested him for young Japanese to visit the site in which the Featherston Incident had occurred. He helped them hold the wreath-laying ceremony for victims of the Incident there. Since then the visit to Featherston has become an official event of the Japanese training squadron, and ex-Japanese POWs, their families and tourists have visited there. When the War Memorial Park was memorialised mainly as a training camp for the 30,000 New Zealand soldiers sent to fight the 1914-18 war in Europe, he engraved the Japanese POW connection on his heart and never forgot it. He appreciated the Japanese cooperation in creating the War Memorial Park and allowed

ex-Japanese POWs to build a small-scale monument to the Japanese deceased there at that time. The mayor also helped *Adachi* hold the memorial ceremony for his fallen comrades there in 1986 and supported *Adachi's* dream that a new monument and a cemetery for his deceased comrades would be created there (*Aoyama*, 2003, pp.183-186).

Thus, Bill Mckerrow was awarded the Order of Sacred Treasure by Japanese government. The reason he bore the Japanese POW connection in mind was that the two countries could not be enemies forever because hostilities had come to a close a long time ago (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 93). He suggested that the fault for shooting at the camp had lain with the New Zealand authorities of the time and that the Japanese were helping New Zealanders allay their guilt over the occurrence during the post-war time (1999, p. 93). The latter means that each of ex-Japanese POWs *Fujita*, *Shinya* and *Adachi*, who revisited Featherston expressed his appreciation for New Zealanders' kind treatment to them and apologised for inflexible attitude of the Japanese toward the POW which had caused the Incident at Featherston.

Dreamlike plan for a Japanese war cemetery

Initially, *Adachi* wished to create both a new monument to and a cemetery for the Japanese dead in the camp at the War Memorial Park (*Aoyama*, 2003, p. 184). The female official of the Japanese Embassy conveyed *Adachi's* request to Featherston Mayor Mckerrow in 1987. The mayor responded positively to his request, saying that if the Japanese side provided funds for the construction, the New Zealand side would offer its building site (p. 184). He mentioned that the creation of the monument could be consented by both the South Wairarapa District Council and the RSA, but the construction of the cemetery at the site of the old POW camp might meet the opposition

of members of the RSA. He added that some of them still bore ill-feelings against the atrocities of Allied POWs by Japanese troops during World War II (*Aoyama*, 2003, pp. 185-186).

To erect tombstones there must be remains of the Japanese deceased to be buried. The female official of the Japanese Embassy first made inquiries about the whereabouts of their remains to relevant organisations in New Zealand and Japan. Finally, nobody knew where their ashes were. What she found was that the oldest mortuary in Wellington had kept their remains until the New Zealand Army took them away and then the Army sent them to a neutral country Switzerland, through which their ashes should have been returned to Japan (*Aoyama*, 2003, pp. 189-190). The official of the Japanese Embassy asked her boss if she could examine relevant records in the Swiss International Red Cross Committee. He answered that this case had been settled diplomatically and so the necessity to examine it now was not recognised at all.

It can readily be imaged that their ashes would have been passed into the possession of the Japanese government of the time, but could have been irresponsibly disposed of without having been returned to their bereaved families. This is because the Japanese government smothered the fact that officers and men who had been sent notification of death in action, were captured alive by the enemy. When each of ex-Japanese POWs *Adachi*, *Shinya* and *Sakurai* whose family had received such notification were repatriated to Japan and saw his family, they were surprised at his unexpected appearance before them. They assumed that he had been killed in action, and so they had created his grave. It was natural that his family were astonished at his presence or kept standing in a daze with half in doubt about such good news (*Sakurai*, 1995, p. 183). The official of the Japanese Embassy reported the result of her inquiries

as there were to *Adachi*. Finally, *Adachi* could not help giving up the plan to raise tombs of his deceased comrades.

New plan for a Japanese peace garden with a monument

In 1992, there was an official plan afoot to extend the War Memorial Park (Peace Garden) and build a new monument in which the names of the victims in the Incident were engraved there, with *Adachi* as the central figure (Japanese Embassy, 2001). He lobbied for this plan in cooperation with many supporters (Peren, 1999, p. 115). To this end, *Adachi* left millions of yen in the Japanese Embassy to donate it to the South Wairarapa district council. His leading supporter, *Toshio Nakamoto*, President of the Juken Nissho (hereinafter shortened to JNL) (Japanese-owned timber company in Masterton) also bought adjacent land of 2,000 square metres and donated it to the district council (Japanese Embassy, 2001). There was a local controversy over Japanese company's purchasing land (Pugh, 2010): some local people made protests against selling land and the district council had called for objections to the cutting up of the block, and so it took nearly one year to transfer title to the land to a new holder. And then, the JNL made the new holder the South Wairarapa District Council, not JNL itself (JNL, 1994). Furthermore, even after it was finalised, some locals' protests continued, and so it took an unexpected long time until the land was fenced off and the trees planted. However, the mayor of the district and people concerned were pleased about *Adachi's* plan because the emergence of such a beautiful garden should make Featherston vitalise and develop. *Adachi* and other ex-Japanese POWs who were gradually aging, were also longing for this plan to be completed day after day (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 193). The Embassy of Japan gave willing cooperation. The district council was steadily making preparations for realising their plan. Thus everything

seemed to be going well.

Opposition to the plan

In 1995, when it was the 50th year after the end of the war, however, the project met opposition by returned soldiers all over New Zealand. Just before August 15, the Anniversary of the victory of World War II, the plan for extending the War Memorial Park in Featherston was televised nationwide, whereupon unexpectedly deep resentment developed covering the whole country (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 194). The Featherston council was under heavy pressure of how to cope with such opposition, as local Return Services Associations (RSAs) which had once taken the affirmative, also launched counterattacks. The district council employed a last desperate resort: they sent out questionnaires to local residents to survey the pros or cons of the plan and its reason. The results were “inconclusive: out of 657 responses, 363 supported the plan and 282 opposed it” (Peren, 1999. P. 115).

There were some opposing opinions which were too influential to ignore (*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 195). One was that if names of only 60 odd victims in the POW camp including ones in the Incident were carved as glorious death in war in the monument, names of Chinese soldiers who had been slaughtered by Japanese armed forces in Nanjing should be carved there, too. Another opposing opinion that if the district council forces its way through the opposition, it should do that after New Zealand demands the official apology for the cruel behaviour of the Japanese armed forces during World War II to the Japanese Government.

Suspension of the plan

Consequently, the district council decided to suspend the project because of the mixed feelings of the local people (Peren, 1999. P. 115). One of the supporters who

were disappointed with the suspension of the project, made the following comment:

Though it has been 50 years since the end of war, there are many citizens in our country who do not recognise that they live in an island country in the Pacific Ocean! ...The Japanese think with all their heart that they keep their comrades who spent a time with them and died in this country in their mind... The Japanese have no other intention and no designs on anything. Even if there is any problem, it is in the New Zealand side, not in the Japanese side. (Tsujimoto, 2005, p. 196).

Opponents stuck to the past and supporters had a wish for the future. It could be argued that opponents who 'believed' that the New Zealand side had had no responsibility for the Incident, which had not been the "massacre," did not agree with the Japanese project which seemed to deny their belief. The 50th anniversary of the victory of World War II might remind returned soldiers of the war time and so they saw the Incident as part of the Pacific War, not as a local event. They thought that Japan shut its eyes to its own brutality in the Pacific War in requesting such a project.

On the other hand, supporters who understood *Adachi* and his comrades' feelings and efforts, wanted to make the peace garden the foundation to develop prosperity and friendship between two countries, overcoming the regrettable event in the past. They thought that at the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, New Zealanders need to not only look back to the past, but also look steadily at the future and so they had to free themselves from an insular spirit and be open-minded to the world.

In 1998, Featherston became the twin-town with Cowra. This Australian town had also been the site of a Japanese POW camp in which a breakout took place in 1944 and already had a peace garden (Yerex, 2007, p. 172). Yet, the former opponents to the

peace garden did not prevent this. It may suggest that opposition to the peace garden softened gradually.

Practicable plan

Adachi's leading supporters, *Toshio Nakamoto*, President of the JNL requested to John Read, South Wairarapa Mayor to realise *Adachi's* wish of creating the peace garden. They settled on a practicable plan which was easy to be accepted by local people, instead of the original one: a simpler garden (the word 'peace' was not used), "with no memorial, no wartime atmosphere--just a garden on the land the JNL had donated, planted with cherry trees" (Ditchburn, 2001, pp. 1&19 and JNL, personal communication, 26 February 2010). The mayor had continued to persuade Featherston residents and the district council to agree with the plan since the middle of 1999, from a viewpoint that Japan and New Zealand should establish a new relationship toward the future (Japanese Embassy, 2001, p. 1). Just at that time, a Japanese male chorus group Chor-Farmer, which had already experienced successful performances for victims of the Breakout in Cowra, Featherston's twin town, visited Featherston for the first time (since then, they have visited there every two years). They had very friendly exchange of music with Featherston people: they offered flowers and songs for the fallen in World War I and World War II in front of each monument at the War Memorial Park and then they held a goodwill concert at ANZC hall (*A. Togashi*, personal communication, 12 September 2008). Thus, Chor-Farmer's music performance encouraged local people to entertain friendly sentiments toward Japan and the Japanese. In early June 2001, the mayor assessed that the plan could be understood by local people including RSA members and decided to hold the tree-planting ceremony on 6 July 2001 (Japanese Embassy, 2001, p.1). JNL finally completed the simple Japanese garden by using the

knowhow of the previous project of the peace garden which had never been realised. The ceremony was held in the presence of the South Wairarapa mayor, district councillors, RSA members, the author of *The Featherston Chronicles*, the chief for the Wairarapa factory of JNL and other people concerned. The Japanese Ambassador to New Zealand *Koichi Matsumoto* planted a cherry tree and made a speech, and those present had a friendly talk (2001, p.1). However, on the day following the tree planting, vandals pulled out 42 of the 63 newly-planted cherry trees (Anderson, 2001). It is still not known who did this. Fortunately, the trees were replanted, and have grown well and blossom in every spring. The vandalism might imply that ill-feelings against the Japanese garden were still smouldering.

2.6.3. Researcher's recent visit to Featherston

I have been to Featherston six times over the last five years. I describe what I have imagined in my mind through interviewing local people and observing their locality. First, Featherston is the closest to Wellington among three regions of South Wairarapa. I happened to commute to Archives New Zealand in Wellington from Featherston for four days by train in March 2012. I had unexpected experiences in Featherston. I had a chance to take a train to visit Archives New Zealand. In those days, Japanese POWs had been taken to the POW camp from Wellington by this train. Now, there are three trains in the morning and evening respectively, which carry many of local residents each day to their workplaces in Wellington. 60 per cent of the residents go to work in Wellington (Owner of the hostel, personal communication, 3 March 2012). That is why while there are no large-scale supermarket and no bank (only one ATM) and few people on the street in the town, the railway station is full of commuters in the morning and evening of the week days. I recognised that Featherston was a commuters'

town of the capital city, Wellington, and so local people, in particular the young generation, might have had little interest in local history, including the Featherston Incident and thus Japanese connections.

Secondly, there are little remains of the former POW camp at the site. My Kiwi friend, his son and the present land owner guided me to the site of the old POW camp in May 2010. While looking at a sketch map of the POW camp and imaging where Compound No. 2 was and where the scene of the shooting was, we walked around the extensive paddock. However, there were not any remains of them. I felt as if the paddock said “Nothing has happened here”.

Thirdly, I have attended the Annual Commemorative Wreath Laying service of the Incident at the Featherston Garden of Remembrance on 25 February every year since 2010. It reminds me of the missing Japanese victims’ ashes. The service originated from the personal prayer of two Japanese women for the “souls” of those who had died at the POW camp before the monuments to them. They are Japanese permanent residents in New Zealand: a former official of the Japanese embassy and a staff member of JNL. It is said that their personal prayer has been developed into the present annual service (One of those women, personal communication, 25 February 2011). Now, this service is held in the presence of the mayor of South Wairarapa, the representative for Embassy of Japan, the representative for Cowra Australia (military officer), the Featherston Heritage Society, JNL and local people and some Japanese visitors. In 2012, those present laid wreaths to remember victims of not only the Featherston Incident but also the recent great earthquakes. The speech of the mayor was impressive: “...I have attended these memorials for over 10 years: the first couple years was like a “skeleton in the closet” or guilty secret that we had to acknowledge, but didn’t want to. There has

been a change. Today, we gather as friends and allies to appreciate comradeship. We have a good relationship with Japan”. I interpret her speech as that the relations between two peoples were awkward over the war time at the initial stage, but with the passage of time, they have become good friends through mutual understanding. I also promised myself to locate where ashes of the victims of the Incident are somehow to their souls.

Fourthly, the Japanese garden with 68 cherry trees is thought-provoking. “The Japanese garden, which looks quiet or peaceful, is alongside the War Memorial Park, along the State Highway Two and opposite the site of the former World War II Japanese POWs camp, 3km north of Featherston. It has a total of 68 cherry (*sakura*) trees: 34 trees on each side in symmetry of the central pavement and arbour with a seating area and a bench.” (Ota, 2009, p.42). Now, the combination of the War Memorial Park and the Japanese garden is called the Featherston Garden of Remembrance. This is my description of the Japanese garden when I visited there in September 2008. Most *sakura* trees were in full bud. It was witnessed that it was not a peace garden, but just a garden. There was not any sign to express what this garden is: neither monument nor plaque existed. So it seemed to be obscure, though Yerex described that “the site attracts many Japanese and other visitors” in his book, *Featherston* (2007, p. 171). In the next year, I could view the cherry trees in full bloom and a married couple with a young girl and a baby enjoying lunch time under cherry blossoms there as shown in the picture above. The Japanese garden seemed be peaceful. Each cherry tree represents one soul of those who died in the camp. Now that their ashes are still missing, I expect that the significance of the Japanese garden with 68 cheery trees is recognised sometime.

Figure 4. The Japanese garden



The Japanese garden has 68 cheery trees and an arbour, but without any monument and plaque. The cheery trees are in full bloom in every spring. (Photo: Yasuhiro Ota, 19 September 2009)

Figure 5. New Japanese POWs arrived at the Featherston station in January 1943.



(Hatch, 1999)

Fifthly, there are not only exhibits but also collected items related to the Incident at the Heritage museum. In March 2012, I had interesting still pictures of the POW camp at Featherston shown there. Those pictures were taken by a representative of the U.S. Office of War Information in January 1943 (Hatch, 1999). The purpose was to document how well the Japanese POWs were being treated to counter the propaganda war by the Axis forces (Hatch, 1999). Therefore, they are very precious to understand the life of the Japanese POWs at the camp of the time. One of them is Figure 5 above.

Sixthly, the Chor-Farmer choir is indispensable for friendship between Featherston and Japan. I saw the Chor-Farmer choir for the first time and talked to its leader *Togashi* about their goodwill concert tours in 2008. This was the Chor-Farmer's fifth visit to Featherston since 2000. It had very friendly exchange of music with Featherston people. First, they performed songs for the fallen in World War I and World War II in front of each monument at the Featherston Garden of Remembrance. And then, they held a goodwill concert with a local male chorus group, who had been formed encouraged by Chor-Farmer, in the ANZAC Hall full of local people and there was an unveiling of a new Japanese piano for the hall which was bought by Chor-Farmer's advice. In the evening, members of Chor-Farmer and local people were sharing a pleasant time at the dinner party. Thus, mutual understanding between Chor-Farmer and local people would be deepened. I felt keenly that Featherston people did feel closer to Japan and the Japanese through Chor-Farmer than before.

Seventhly, there is the Featherston Incident and its aftermath in my interviews with local people. **An encounter with Japanese POWs:** "We saw a train with all the blinds pulled down having arrived on the Featherston Station, then Japanese POWs having left the train and taken to Tauherenikau (the POW camp) in the army trucks at

that time” (100-year-old woman and 86-year-old one). **An Incident happened:** “When shooting, guards had taken injured POWs in the hospital (ANZAC Hall) and orderlies had looked after them there, and I had been cooking for them as staff of the Red Cross”. “I heard that the Incident had occurred because Japanese POWs had first attacked NZ guards from her husband who had fought with Japanese as an airman” (100-year-old woman). “I was working at the post office when Incident happened. Although I saw New Zealand guards coming, and posting and collecting relevant mail every day, but any guards did not appear there on that day, and so I felt it’s strange”. “As Japanese POWs were treated very well by the camp authorities, I never expected riot happened. The town was stirred up, because many wounded POWs and guards were taken to hospital” (86-year-old woman).

Suspension of the Japanese Peace Garden: “The proposed Japanese Peace Garden had been cancelled because the local government had not had enough funds to maintain it and there had been some resident who had had ill-feelings about the Japanese” (mayor of South Wairarapa). “Some of local people who had initially supported a plan began to oppose it partially because of influence of articles of the local newspaper” (staff member of JNL). “RSA members opposed the plan in 1995, because they would become bigoted. They were acting as a group and tended to be against everything. However, there were some whose relatives had been killed or ill-treated by Japanese in the Pacific War. So they had ill-feelings toward Japan and the Japanese” (86-year-old woman). **The present Japanese garden:** “The Japanese garden was completed by the combination of steady efforts of JNL and an experienced music performance of Chor-Farmer. JNL had made efforts for local people to understand a “simple Japanese garden” and to complete it somehow by using the knowhow of the previous project,

while Chor-Farmer encouraged local people to nurture friendly feelings toward Japan and the Japanese through their goodwill concert” (staff member of JNL). **The present Featherston RSA members:** “I did not know the reason for RSA members’ opposition to the plan for a Japanese Peace Garden in 1995, but they had had animosity toward Japan and Japanese, because of Japan’s cruelties to the Allied POWs during World War II” and “Nowadays, members of those generation have all gone and present members have not had such feelings, but have never forgotten the Incident” (President of Featherston RSA). **Chor-Farmer’s biennial visit to Featherston:** “We don’t need any Japanese sister town, because we have had Chor-Farmer already” (Mayor). “Chor-Farmer, whose music performance and donation helped local people become friendly with Japan and the Japanese” (President of Featherston RSA). My other interviewees mentioned unanimously that they were looking forward to enjoying Chor-farmer’s goodwill concert every two years.

2.7. An unfortunate connection of Featherston with Tarawa

There can possibly be a cause-and-effect relation between the Tarawa Tragedy in October 1942 and the Featherston Incident in February 1943. In the early stage of the Asia-Pacific War, the Japanese occupied the Gilbert Islands north-west of Fiji as a strategic point (see 1.1.). The Japanese troops first took seven New Zealand coast watchers and radio operators as prisoners there and sent them to Japan in January 1942. And then they captured the remaining 17 coast watchers and radio operators who had been sending reports of enemy movement under cover and took them to Tarawa (Story of the 34th, 2012, pp. 33-34). On the afternoon of 15 October 1942, the Island was bombarded by American ships and planes. That evening, the 17 New Zealanders, along with five other Europeans, were executed by the Japanese armed service (2012,

pp.33-34). Subsequently to the war, the New Zealand authorities conducted a massive search to locate their remains, but could not find (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 190). This is called “the Tarawa Tragedy”.

Although the British and New Zealand authorities tried to cover up the incident, persistent rumours seem to have reached the families concerned. It is believed by some that the shooting of Japanese POWs at a Featherston POW camp in New Zealand was done in retaliation for this atrocity (Wikipedia, 2012). One of New Zealand guards who fired Tommy gun unrestrainedly and killed not a few Japanese then was the brother of one of the coast watchers executed by Japanese on Tarawa (see 2.3.). Furthermore, with the same logic, remains of those New Zealanders who were executed in Tarawa are lost, and so remains of those Japanese who were killed in Featherston are missing. While the Tarawa Tragedy was taken to the Tokyo Trial and its truth was disclosed (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 190), the Featherston Incident was rejected to examine in the *Tokyo* Trial (see 2.6.1), and so its truth is still hidden in obscurity.

The Tarawa Tragedy seems to cast a dark shadow over the Incident and aftermath. However, it can be said that the tragic shooting and ill-feelings toward the Japanese, with the passage of time and with mutual understanding deepened, have been transformed into a unique friendship between two peoples. In the next section, this thesis will refer to the Cowra Breakout from a comparative viewpoint.

3. Cowra Breakout

3.1. Cowra prisoner-of-war camp

The Cowra prisoner-of-war camp was one of three POW camps which the Australian government built urgently in 1941 at the request of Britain (Apthorpe, 2008,

p.10). At that time, the British forces had to hold large numbers of Italian prisoners captured in the North African theatre to which Australia sent its armed forces as a member of British Commonwealth. The camp first interned Italian civilians, followed by Indonesian merchant sailors and then Indonesian political prisoners. Subsequently, it held the group of Albanians, followed by Italian POWs and Japanese POWs including Koreans, Chinese, Thai and Malaysians (2008, p. 18). In 1946, POW numbers peaked at 4,600. In the South Pacific theatre where Japan and the Allies (Australia and the United States) had fought from 1942 to the end of the war, early in the war, there were a number of Japanese prisoners who were captured after their ship was sunk or their aircraft was downed. Among the first prisoners in Australia, were naval airmen taken prisoner after the air raids over Darwin on 19 February 1942 (Bullard, 2006, p. 20). Thereafter, in the fierce ground war, many of the Japanese who became prisoners were captured in battle in New Guinea or islands of the Pacific as a result of wounds, illness or malnutrition which made them incapable of further resistance (Gordon, 1994, p. 56). The number of Japanese POWs increased as the tides of war turned against the Japanese and their positions were overwhelmed by the Allied forces. Prisoners were often sent to Cowra after detention for a while at holding station, intelligence offices or hospitals. In January 1943, the first group of Japanese POWs arrived at Cowra. In mid-1944, more than 1100 prisoners of non-commissioned officers and other ranks were held (Bullard, 2006, p. 22). Also some officer prisoners and labour force ones including Japanese of Korean or Taiwan descent were detained there.

The town of Cowra which is situated about 365 kilometres west of Sydney in the state of New South Wales and 200 kilometres north of the capital, Canberra, was a typical Australian country town with a population of 3,000 people. In addition to this,

there were some 1,000 soldiers involved in the military training camp and the POW camp (Gordon, 1994, p. 52). According to Bullard (2006, pp. 22-23), the POW camp, officially called No. 12 Prisoners of War Group, Cowra, was described as follows. It lay some 3 kilometres northeast of the town and 1.5 kilometres from the military training camp.

Figure 6. Guideboard indicating the layout of No 12 POW camp in Cowra



The diagonal bold line is the Broadway. Arrows indicate routes for Japanese to escape on the day of the breakout.

(Photo: Yasuhiro Ota, 21 August 2010)

It was enclosed by three rows of barbed-wire fence within a twelve-sided perimeter. “Two large open spaces ran diagonally across the camps, dividing it into four equally sized camps (A, B, C and D). The main thoroughfare through the camps ran from the south-east to the north-west, and became known as “Broadway” because it was brightly

lit during the night. The other grassy strip was known as “No Man’s Land”, and was generally inaccessible except to regular guard patrols. The entrances to each of the four camps opened into Broadway, which had large wooden gates at its northern and southern ends. Each of the camps was initially designed for around 1,000 men, and contained up to twenty barrack-like huts in rows. There were also various other buildings: kitchen, mess halls, hospital facilities, recreation huts, showers and latrines, canteens, and a theatre. Barracks and facilities for the guards were contained in compounds outside the camps”. The group headquarters were located on high ground on the western side of the four camps and overlooking the whole area.

At the time of the incidents the following categories of POWs were held in each camp: Camp A held Italian POWs (other ranks). Camp B held Japanese POWs (other ranks). Camp C held Italian POWs (other ranks). Camp D held Japanese POWs (Korean and Formosan race) in Compound 1, Fascist Italians in Compound 2 (vacant then) and Japanese POWs (officers) in Compound 3. The number of POWs held in Camp B was 1104 then (Apthorpe, 2008, p. 111).

The camp was commanded by Group Commandant Lieutenant Colonel Brown who had a long experience of military discipline through both World War I and II but was too old for field combat. Each of four camps is under the command of a Camp Commandant, accompanied by approximately 100 guarding soldiers. However, the guards were mainly older men from World War I, some of whom had sons who were POW of the Japanese. There were also younger men not fit for active service but still wanting to play their part (Apthorpe, 2008, p. 18 and Gordon, 1994, p. 56). Some infantrymen of the military training camp walked to the POW camp to patrol every weekend (M. Miles, personal communication, 5 August 2011).

3.2. Situation of the POW camp before the Incident

3.2.1. General treatment of Japanese prisoners of war in the camp

The most objective observers of Cowra POW camp operations according to the Geneva POW Convention were the representative of the protecting power of Japan (the Swiss Consul-General in Australia) and the Australian representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The camp was at all times open for inspection by both of them: they had access there and freedom to interview POWs without the camp authorities in attendance when they desired (AMF, 1944). Their reports were sent by cable not only to the Swiss legation in London and ICRC headquarters in Geneva respectively, but also to the then Japanese government through each of them.

General remarks

Swiss Consuls General Black (report on 27 January 1944)

The housing, bedding, sanitary and washing arrangements were completely satisfactory being similar to the facilities provided for Australian troops. The rations were on a liberal scale being equivalent to those supplied to the guards, but changed to meet the food preferences of POWs.

Details (see Appendix D-2)

Judging from the report, Japanese POWs were treated in a humanitarian way at the camp. They were satisfied with their living conditions at the POW camp: housing, food, clothing and health care. The camp authorities showed a generous attitude to the issue of work. Nevertheless, why did Japanese POWs attempt a mass escape at that time? I will argue that the deeper cause lies in a gap of understandings: while Australian guards could not understand why Japanese did not write to their families, Japanese POWs could not understand why Australians treated them so kindly. Subsequently, this paper will refer to what sequence of events led to the Breakout.

3.2.2 An unexpectedly comfortable POW camp life

From May or June 1943, the number of Japanese POWs at Camp B had increased and was exceeding its capacity of 1,000. They were living a comfortable life, forming a small “democratic” community with the camp leader from the Navy, *Minami*, as the central figure (NHK, 2004). It was comprised of 40 groups, each of which was led by the “hut leader”. The camp leader and each hut leader were chosen by an internal vote respectively, regardless of military ranks. The camp leader represented the whole group and undertook negotiations with the Australian camp authorities (NHK, 2004).

At the beginning, all the Japanese POWs looked as if they were just waiting to die because of being captured by the enemy. The Military Field Code forbade them to be prisoners. They should not have been alive now, but while they were, most of them were using false names or ranks (NHK, 2004). They were not executed by the Australian camp authorities. On the contrary, they were well fed, clothed, housed, and treated for diseases and wounds. While Italian POWs worked happily on the farm outside the camp, Japanese POWs did not work there. They had been forced to work, but most of them had not done according to camp authorities’ instructions. This is because they believed that such an act benefited the enemy. Some of them had intended to take weapons from guards (G. Apthorpe, personal communication, 16 September 2010). Whenever they were warned to be serious by guards, they had said “Kill me” (NHK, 2004). Finally, the camp authorities gave up making Japanese work outside. Therefore, Japanese POWs had enough time when they could do what they liked. They sought amusement to conceal their mixed feelings about the “prisoner of war”. They tried to create a variety of things from limited material according to their favourite techniques. Some grew their own vegetables inside the camp. Some brewed secretly raw

sake from leavings of cooked rice and had a drinking party. Some made gloves and bats and enjoyed baseball. Some produced Japanese traditional dramas by using self-made set pieces. Many others enjoyed them. Some made mah-jongg tiles and *hanafuda* cards, and played their respective games. Many of them made daily necessities such as clogs, which were sold and bought among them using cigarettes as money. That is, there was a small economy in the camp. Thus, Japanese POWs were living in peace and quiet though they had no hope in their future.

3.2.3. Complete change in the atmosphere of the camp life

In 1944, however, the atmosphere in the camp began to change (NHK, 2004). Japan lost its foothold in the south including the Philippines and Saipan and was decisively outnumbered by the Allies. Thereupon, some 300 Japanese army soldiers captured by Americans there arrived in Cowra. Among them, a fanatic group led by a sergeant major looked at those veteran prisoners who were enjoying baseball at the camp and blamed them for being against the Japanese military spirit (Kennedy Miller, 1984). The sergeant major also boasted to hut leaders about what had happened in New Zealand. Saying, “There is a Japanese POW camp with a strong camp leader in New Zealand. The Japanese POWs there didn’t forget their honour. They rebelled against the guards and died like soldiers. If you have courage “we can fight with the enemy and die even now” (Kennedy Miller, 1984), he stirred other prisoners’ mixed feelings that they should die, but are still alive. He and his followers also opposed the camp leader from the navy and the Australian camp authorities on every occasion: they often absented themselves from the morning roll call. Thus, with the army outnumbering the navy, the atmosphere of the camp was growing strained and accordingly, the camp leader changed from the Navy man, *Minami*, to the Army man, *Kanazawa*.

3.2.4. Separation of NCOs and soldiers as the camp security policy

The camp authorities should have reinforced the camp security with reference to secret information on a plan of mass escape from a Korean informant, some information on the Featherston Incident from the Allied forces and Camp B exceeding its capacity. In May 1944, a Japanese POW of Korean descent, *Matsumoto*, informed the Australians of a conversation between a veteran POW and two new POWs he had recently overheard. It was to the effect that “a mass escape had been planned and that Japanese POWs intended to attack the garrison battalion and seize their arms and ammunition” (AMF, 1944). While the guards could not think about why the Japanese would try to escape with so little chance of success (Bullard, 2006, p. 50), Commandant Brown made an urgent request for reinforcements to prepare for an unexpected accident to Army Headquarters. As a result, two powerful Vickers machine-guns were placed anew on the most vulnerable parts of the camp perimeter (around Camp B), though there were no additions of personnel to enable the guns to be manned day and night (2006, p. 50). However, a watch was maintained by recruits from the military training camp who undertook patrols outside the perimeter of the camp each night from retreat to reveille (AMF, 1944). The camp authorities also made efforts to improve prisoners’ life: baseball gears, gardening tools, selected Japanese books and a piano were provided for Japanese POWs (Kennedy Miller, 1984).

Army Headquarters should have received a notification from the Allied ground army that there could be a similar incident in any other Japanese POW camp to the Incident at Featherston in March 1943 (*Nakano*, 1984, p.187). Headquarters considered that the Featherston Incident had been led by NCOs and other ranks being interned together in the same compound (1984, p. 187). Thereupon, they decided in early June

1944 to reduce members in Camp B which was already beyond its capacity and separate NCOs from other ranks of prisoners at the same time. And then on 4 August 1944, Camp B Commandant Ramsay requested Camp Leader Kanazawa, Assistant Camp Leader Kojima and former Camp Leader Minami to come to his office and announced them that Japanese POWs below the rank of lance corporal would be transferred to Hay POW camp (AMF, 1944).

Thus, the camp authorities were going to have strengthened camp security by combining hard and soft approaches. However, despite the fact that the transfer of prisoners to Hay on Monday was imminent, the Australian guards were not taking special precautions: they left the Vickers guns unmanned after sunset (Bullard, 2006, p.54). The Japanese thought that the splitting up of NCOs and privates neglected their relationships as the two formed bonds of blood brotherhood between them. The Australians could not understand this fact and that it would lead to the Japanese mass breakout with the objective of dying in battle. Signs of an uprising appeared that night: the unusual mood and activities in the camp must have been overlooked.

3.2.5. Voting for death or life

Kanazawa opened a hut leader's meeting at 6 pm of August 4 to discuss the response to the proposed move of other-rank prisoners. There were two opinions. Some prisoners insisted that "the separation of NCOs and soldiers is a tragedy almost equal to the breakdown of the Japanese family system" (*Moriki*, 1998, p. 29), and so that order could not be accepted. Some claimed that the camp authorities could not understand what this separation meant to Japanese, but they had no choice but to accept this move as captives (Kennedy Miller, 1984). Accordingly, one of those who rejected the captor's order said "...There is no argument. Our duty is clear. This is our chance to die with

honour. You know we can't go home alive. ...Our parents must believe we died with honour in the Pacific. So what are we doing here? Living in shame! The only way open to us is to die an honourable death. We have to fight. Let us show our parents that we are still men! ” (Kennedy Miller, 1984).

One of those who accept the captor's order said “Look at this picture in which there is a dead soldier. He must have had a wife and child. His parents must be alive, too. Yes, he died an honourable death. But what good is that if he's dead? In order to help our beloved families and homeland in this crisis, we have to be alive. We have to live! Live! Shame isn't important. Please don't die. Don't die! Let's stay alive.” (Kennedy Miller, 1984).

One of those who rejected it said “I, too, have left my loved ones behind. But I could never show them this face of mine twisted in shame.” (Kennedy Miller, 1984).

One of those who accepted it said “We have had a narrow escape from death. I want to treasure this life.” (Bullard, 2006, p. 52).

The leader group decided to consult all the prisoners and then comply with the will of the majority. Each hut voted separately. Each man had two choices. In principle, for-or-against voting was used, with each man recording his vote on a sheet of toilet paper: a circle means to join in mass breakout to death and a cross means to reject the breakout and live (Gordon, 1978, p. 126). It was said that the members of some huts were forced to support the breakout (death), but most gave a vote. The results were reported at the second hut leader's meeting. According to evidence from several Japanese survivors from Cowra, in total, around 80 per cent of prisoners voted for the breakout. Before voting, judging from the atmosphere of the camp, it seemed that the hard-line prisoners who were strong supporters of the breakout, were a minority group

and the moderates who accepted the captor's order, were a majority one. However, the result was that the overwhelming majority chose "death", not "life". Therefore, this can be said to be an unexpected result. *Masayoshi Yamada* who is an ex-POW and was not a hard-line prisoner, told me, "From the first I was going to do something: to retaliate for an insult, and so drew a circle. I had thought I was a POW for a long time, someday I would be made to work in New Guinea or Australia, and I could not go back to Japan. And so, if the prisoners rose in the breakout, I'd join in!" (*M. Yamada*, personal communication, 20 June 2010). There must have been not a few prisoners like *Yamada*. Most prisoners had mixed feelings: longing for home and family, desire to live, a sense of obligations to their captors' kindness to them, and a sense of the disgrace of prisoners of war. When they were driven by making a very bitter decision whether they live or die, it was the sense of disgrace of POWs that must have remained in their mind to the end. Thus, they drew the "circle". Consequently, the overwhelming majority of the prisoners resulted in supporting the breakout. This implies that how deeply Japanese soldiers were imbued with the notion of "being captives deserves to die."

Kanazawa declared, "The decision had been made. We'll reject the enemy's order and avenge his insult by launching a mass attack! The next question is "when" (Kennedy Miller, 1984). They decided to carry out tonight unanimously. They intended to attack at 2:00 am on Saturday morning: they rush the gates and fences at the first blasts of the *Minami*'s trumpet. In the hours before the breakout, on one hand, the leader group planned a three-pronged attack on the camp fences around Camp B after firing their huts: through the gates into Broadway, over the fence to the north in front of the Vickers guns, and over the fence to the north-east near F tower (Bullard, 2006, p.56). Those who breach the fences of the camp move to a place on the high ground to the

west of the camp, but after this there was no plan (2006, p. 62). On the other hand, other prisoners had exchanges of farewells, and great feasts of raw *sake*, and prepared for the breakout: improvised weapons such as kitchen knives, baseball bats, matches, gardening tools, sticks and fire woods, and tools to scramble up the fences including the blankets, baseball gloves and gloves and towels (2006, p. 56). Also, those who were too ill or too injured to be involved were given the opportunity to die by their own hands (Gordon, 1978, p. 128). *Yamada* told me, “At that time, I offered to die with one of my comrades from the same village who had been injured in the leg in action. He was given a deadly poison, but insisted that he could clamber up the fence and wanted to take part in the mass escape, too. So, we, the two, decided to try it” (*M. Yamada*, personal communication, 20 June 2010). In *Yamada*’s mind, his feeling to care about the disabled childhood friend must have outweighed his wish for death in the future. The Japanese soldiers would have prepared themselves mentally to act and redeem their honour by dying as Japanese soldiers.

3.3. The day of the Breakout (5 August 1944)

On 5 August 1944, at the sound of the trumpet just before 2:00 am, more than 900 Japanese POWs rushed from the huts and attacked the series of fences at two places on the perimeter and two places on Broadway. However, Japanese suffered a fierce Australian counterattack at each place, and even those who were able to escape from the camp were recaptured. Finally, the Japanese failed in their attempt at the mass breakout in nine days with considerable casualties.

At about 1:40 am, there were two warning shots, the arranged signal for an “incident”. The guard witnessed a Japanese POW climbing over the gates leading to Broadway and rushing to him (AMF, 1944). The prisoner must have not wanted to die

and so became an “informer” to avoid a tragedy. Thereupon, *Minami* sounded a blast on his burgle a bit earlier than the scheduled time (Gordon, 1978, p. 142).

Before leaving the huts the POWs fired them. Eighteen of the twenty sleeping huts and two administrative buildings were completely burnt (1978, p. 145). The subsequent “attack and defence” between the Japanese POWs and the Australian guards is described as follows (AMF, 1944 and Bullard, 2006, p. 56):

One party of Japanese rushed the No.2 Vickers gun, killed the crew, Privates Hardy and Jones, and escaped into the paddock north of the camp area. And then they attempted to infiltrate into the areas of “A” and “B” Companies lines, but failed because the Vickers gun Japanese captured did not work. Those who escaped through the northern break of the perimeter moved in a south-easterly direction and attacked “C” and “D” Companies lines, but were driven off by fire.

Those POWs who escaped into Broadway divided into two parties. One party turned north to storm the northern gates to Broadway and killed a guard, Private Shepherd, but was held by fire from the watch towers (A and B) and guards. The party which turned south down Broadway rushed the southern gates of Broadway to intend to overpower the guards, but was held by fire from “C” and “D” Companies. Those POWs who were not shot in these attacks sought shelter in the open storm water drains on either side of Broadway. *Yamada* must have been one of them. He said “At that time, I could climb up two barbed-wire fences covered with the blanket without being injured in a hail of bullets, but did nothing but lay down in the ditch of Broadway until dawn (*M. Yamada*, personal communication, 20 June 2010). About fifty escapees entered the Japanese officers’ compound and remained within the huts until daybreak when they were marched out.

There were 334 Japanese POWs who could breach the perimeter of the camp, but were finally recaptured. Many of them gathered at a previously arranged spot on the high ground to the west of the camp. After dawn, they were marched back into the camp without any resistance by a troop of Australian soldiers. Camp Leader *Kanazawa* who was one of them, was captured on a road north of the camp. He said, "I am to blame for the whole things and I must be executed" to Camp B Commandant Ramsay, by whom he was taken to the detention barracks (Gordon, 1978, p. 247). Others proceeded aimlessly away from the camp. While they happened to encounter local farmers, residents and the search parties, there were a heart-warming incident and tragic ones (Bullard, 2006, pp. 62-64). Some three prisoners approached the farmhouse at Rosedale, in which they were treated to fresh scones and hot tea by its owner May Weir, while her daughter went to alert the camp authorities. The Japanese were moved by the Weir family's warm treatment, which made them forget about death. Some six Japanese encountered a local farmer and his son on a rabbiting trip. The farmer felt threatened and shot two of them dead in self-defence. The prisoners would have not lifted their hands against the farmer because of their belief that Japanese soldiers should not harm civilians of the enemy. A group of prisoners made a raid on an officer from Army training camp, Doncaster, searching for Japanese escapees and clubbed him to death. It is said that he was forbidden to carry any arms other than bayonets. Those Japanese also hanged themselves from nearby trees. They must have thought that they could die honourable death.

Thus, after the initial shock to the Japanese desperate attack, the counterattack by the Australian guards was heavy. They managed to hold back a Japanese breakout by using all the weapons, including Vickers guns, and by reinforcements of about 150

infantry from the nearby Army training camp (Bullard, 2006 p. 58 & p. 60). Finally, the uprising by Japanese POWs was suppressed in nine days.

According to the Australian Military Forces Proceeding of a Court of Inquiry, the Australian and Japanese casualties were as follows.

Australian Military Forces casualties:

1 officer..... killed
3 other ranks.....killed
4 other ranks.....wounded by ricochets

Japanese POWs casualties

1 officer.....killed
230 other ranks.....killed
1 officer.....wounded
107 other ranks.....wounded

Of the number of those who died, 31 were killed by themselves. Assistant Camp Leader *Kojima* who was one of them, had voted for “death”, but did not want to attack the Australian guards (Bullard, 2006, p. 62). He may have felt indebted to Australians for their good treatment. Therefore, he took his own life by hanging in the hut, without joining in mass escape. Not a few prisoners would have been like him. In the case of former Camp Leader *Minami* who was shot down in an attack on Broadway, he also took his life by cutting his throat in the drain.

3.4. Aftermath of the Breakout

3.4.1. Commemoration of the Japanese deceased

The Australian camp authorities laid the Japanese dead to rest taking every consideration. The Japanese dead bodies were gathered in a mortuary field for coroner’s examination as to causes of death. Bodies were identified by surviving prisoners and by

their official records and pictures, but this work ran into difficulties because of their false names and badly damaged bodies (Bullard, 2006, p. 70). The surviving Japanese also assisted in preparing the bodies for burial. The dead were buried with all due respect and reverence in the war cemetery in Cowra (AMF, 1944). This was in accordance with Article 76 of the Geneva POW Convention at that time. Just after the war, local Returned Services League (RSL) members began maintaining not only the Australian war graves, but also the Japanese war graves regularly. Consequently, the existence of the Japanese war graves in Cowra has nurtured friendship between Cowra and Japan which were enemies.

3.4.2. Surviving prisoners' camp life

The surviving POWs were interned temporarily in the remaining buildings and in tents set up in Camp B for some weeks until the clean-up and investigations into the events were concluded (Bullard, 2006, p. 70). Among the wounded Japanese, the slightly wounded were carried to the camp hospital by the unwounded ones and the seriously wounded were taken to the Cowra Hospital, where they received dedicated treatment (Gordon, 1999, pp. 188-189).

Most of them were resolved to be executed for their role in mass escape. To their surprise, they were acquitted by the Australian camp authorities. Some of them thought Japanese authorities in a similar position would have been much more severe. According to some ex-POWs (Bullard, 2006, p. 70), one of hard-line prisoners was made to take the responsibility for his words and deeds by other surviving prisoners. He had threatened those of moderate views to join in the breakout and then encouraged the sick and disabled to commit suicide. Despite that fact, he survived and came back to the camp, saying "When the time came...I was afraid to die" (Kennedy Miller, 1984).

Finally, he did, by hanging himself in the boiler room.

After that, surviving POWs accepted “transfer and separation” without any resistance. All of them were moved to Hay camp and Murchison camp. In Hay, the camp authorities made meals for the prisoners of only bread and water for three days as a penalty for the mutiny. From the fourth day, they served not only bread and water, but also vegetables and meat to prisoners, saying, “Your sin was paid, do not start the mutiny again and please live in peace” (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, P. 199). It seems that such tragedy made prisoners prefer life over death. The camp leader elected by everyone was the first to create an environment in which they could enjoy sports, entertainments and growing vegetables. There was a woodworking group which made toys and articles of folkcraft at the request of the ICRC. The camp news was also issued to know how the world was moving (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 199). Thus, it is said that they had spent their days in peace and quiet without any trouble there until the war ended.

3.4.3. Australian authorities in the aftermath of the Breakout

The Australian government held a military court of inquiry without delay and then made a public statement concerning the breakout, followed by the Court-Martial.

The Military Court Inquiry

The Military Court of Inquiry ran from Monday 7 to Tuesday 15 August 1944. More than 60 witnesses including seven Japanese POWs joining the breakout gave evidence to the court. Its report (AMF, 1944) concluded that shooting was fully justified and placed the onus for the mutiny entirely on POWs (Bullard, 2006, p. 72). This was led by the following findings. (1) The treatment of the Japanese POWs has been humane and generous. The conditions in the camp were “exemplary” and completely in accordance to the Geneva POW Convention. There had been no serious events of

ill-treatment by the captors or complaints from the prisoners. (2) The plan to the breakout was formed beforehand. The date and time on which the plan was to be carried out was decided at midnight on 4 August 1944 at a meeting secretly held in the camp. (3) The firing on prisoners was necessary. Unless the firing was done, overwhelming numbers of escaping and escaped prisoners armed with fatal weapons would have been able to quickly overpower the guard, secure the garrison's weapons and firearms and use them against not only the nearby Army training camp, but also civilian people in Cowra. However, the firing was not directed on any Japanese POWs who remained in Camp B during the mutiny. At that time there were 118 prisoners there, who did not participate in the breakout. Therefore, the firing was controlled and not excessive. (4) The Camp Leader of Camp B, *Kanazawa*, the Assistant Camp Leader, *Kojima* (deceased), the former Camp Leader, *Minami* (deceased) and various other Japanese NCO's and/or hut leaders did plan the mutiny. They did incite the other Japanese POWs within Camp B to illegal violence against the soldiers of the guard, and to the deliberate destruction of property of Australia for the sake of honourable death.

This report did not refer to the cause of the incident. The direct trigger for the breakout was the planned transfer and separation of prisoners (see 4.2.5). However, the relation between the planned separation and the breakout was not mentioned in the report. The Court did not adopt the first half of *Kanazawa's* written statement to the court that:

...This question of the separation of NCOs and ORs offered an opportunity to carry this out (die), and this action is the result of the unanimous conclusion of the 1104 men...

...

My desire towards the new leader is that he should lead spiritually, so that there will be...no recurrence of a similar incident in the future...determination as one who was responsible for the incident: I desire that I will be sentenced (to the death penalty)...

(AMF, 1944).

The Australian Army Headquarter and camp authorities worked out this separation as a means of preventing a breakout, but would not think of what the separation meant to the Japanese.

Australian government desired to avoid any influence of the incident on many thousands of Australian POWs held by the Japanese. Gathering its intention, the Military Court of Inquiry tried to find a conclusion that full responsibility for the incident lay with the Japanese POW. Though Camp B Commandant Ramsay's evidence (AMF, 1944) referred to both the separation of NCOs and other ranks and information on a planned escape from a Korean informant, the Court took up only the latter as one of findings. Consequently, it saw the breakout as a premeditated one, which it assumed had been executed by over 900 prisoners led by Camp Leader *Kanazawa* on 5 August 1944. It also recognized that the use of arms had been inevitable in order to suppress the mutiny by such a great number of prisoners. Thus, the Court can be said to have drawn the conclusion that using arms was justified and the fault for the incident lay fully with the Japanese POWs.

Prime Minister's statement on the Incident

The Australian Government was to release Prime Minister Curtin's statement on the basis of the report of the Court of Inquiry, considering carefully how and when best to release it not to lead to reprisals on Allied POWs (Gordon, 1978, p. 260). The statement was announced on 9 September 1944 just after the British Government had confirmed that Japan had received the report from the Protecting Power, Switzerland. It stated as follows (Curtin, 1944):

*...about two o'clock on the morning of 5 August,
over 900 Japanese prisoners of war in a camp in Australia
made a mass attack on their guards. The Japanese had armed*

themselves with improvised weapons...

Large numbers who escaped through the outer (fence) of the camp, attacked and killed an Australian machine-gun crew. These attacks were met by fire from the Australian guards...

...an Australian officer was murdered by a party of Japanese.

...

In burned huts incinerated bodies of Japanese were found.

...One officer killed, 230 other ranks killed or died of wounds or died by suicide, one officer wounded, 130 other ranks wounded.

...

The extensive preparations made by the Japanese... proved that the onus for the incident rests entirely upon the prisoners of war themselves, and that it was ...suicidal combat with their guards.

This statement seemed to be pointless. It emphasised that the onus of the incident lay fully with the Japanese POWs. To this end, it averted referral to what might have been considered as Australian side's fault.

Official Japanese attitudes to the statement

On the following day, the Japanese Government made the following first comment (main points) to the Australian statement through a propaganda broadcast from Radio Batavia, a Japanese occupied radio station in Netherland East Indies (Gordon, 1978, pp. 263-264) :

1. Bursting with indignation at the cold-blooded murder of Japanese civilian internees, the Japanese demanded to know the true story of the midnight murder of more than two hundred innocent Japanese,...
2. These unfortunate Japanese who were murdered in the prison camp cannot have been prisoners of war. They were internees, because the Japanese soldier never allows himself to be taken prisoner.
3. We appeal to Archbishop of Gilroy of Australia to insist upon a thorough

investigation of this matter.

After that, however, the Japanese authorities had no more to say about the matter. Judging from the fact that the National Archives of Japan (1942-1944) had kept the considerable amount of relevant documents which the Japanese authorities had received from Protecting Power Switzerland at that time, they had known the existence of not a few Japanese POWs in enemy hands. Accordingly, they had recognised that Japanese POWs, not civilians, had created the mass escape at Cowra. Therefore, the Japanese authorities made no more protest to the counterpart of Australia, unlike the Featherston Incident. They had also kept the existence of the Japanese POW secret to the public to preserve existing Japanese attitudes to the shame of surrender and capture.

Civil Coronial Inquiry and the Swiss report

The civil coronial inquiry was held in camera on 31 October and then on 11-15 December in 1944 to find out the causes of death of the four Australians and the 234 Japanese POWs (Bullard, 2006, P. 76). The coroner, Arnold, heard a number of testimonies by witnesses including military personnel (Australian guards and Japanese POWs), police officers, doctors and civilians, with the result that he formed the following judgment on 15 December. It said that the whole incident was preconceived and prearranged by the Japanese POWs themselves (Gordon, 1978, p. 278). It also criticised that the decision to send Doncaster unarmed after “prisoners who were desperate men” (Bullard, 2006, p. 76).

The Swiss representative in Australia had made a request for attending the “secret” hearing, but been refused by the Australian authorities. Thereupon, the Swiss intended to create their own report as the Protecting Power. When they visited for the unsupervised inspection of the Hay camp, two Japanese POWs were instructed to

prepare and submit a report about the reasons for the breakout. The two Japanese concluded that “the whole incident was a particular tragedy brought on by the Japanese national character” (Bullard, 2006, p. 78). The two claimed that “the incident was not premeditated, but spontaneously erupted because of the planned move and separation” (p. 78). This was significantly different from Australian side’s inquiry findings.

Court-Martial

As a result of the Military Court of Inquiry, two Japanese POWs, *Kanazawa Akira* who was the former camp leader and *Yoshida Hiroshi* who was the new camp leader and the former No. 28 hut leader, stood court-martial. They were indicted for the murder of Ben Hardy, one of the crew of the Vickers gun who was killed during the night of the breakout. They were also prosecuted for “conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline among POWs” (Bullard, 2006, p. 78).

Their trial took place on 24 January 1945 at Cowra. First, it was argued whether this court had jurisdiction to hear the case. It was decided that because murder was a civil offence, a court-martial had the same power to deal with a civil offence as any civil court (Gordon, 1978, p. 279). Next, the first charge was not that they had directly killed Hardy, but that they had taken part in a group action which led to his death. Because their group had comprised about 1,000 people, not a few ones, they were not accused of murder, that is, were acquitted of this charge. And then, the second charge was that *Kanazawa* led other prisoners to the mass escape as the camp leader: he alone was found guilty of the charge and sentenced to 18 months detention (Bullard, 2006, p. 78). However, the war ended before the expiration of his term. In March 1946, *Kanazawa* was repatriated with his surviving comrades to Japan on board No. 1 *Daikan Maru*. At that time, Ramsay who had retired from the Camp B commandant, came to

the Port of Sydney to see repatriated Japanese off. He approached *Kanazawa*, saying “KANAZAWA”, and introduced him to his ex-staff, saying “This is Mr *Kanazawa* renowned for the Cowra Breakout. He was an excellent leader with the spirit of the way of the warrior”. And then, when *Kanazawa* apologised “I was afraid I had put you to a great deal of trouble”, Ramsay laid his own watch on *Kanazawa*’s palm and grasped them with his both hands, saying “This is a sign of friendship between us” (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 202). This was the moment when *Kanazawa* and Ramsay were completely reconciled.

3. 5. Cause of the Breakout

What underlie the incident are cultural differences between the Australians and the Japanese. That is, the lack of mutual understanding between the two people with different cultures resulted in the uprising. The Western soldiers as well as Australians or Italians who were instructed in the existence of the Geneva Convention, did not see becoming captives as the disgrace at all because POWs were thought to be soldiers who fought until an utmost limit (several New Zealanders and Australians, personal communication in 2010). In contrast, Japanese soldiers who were not instructed in that, regarded becoming captives as the greatest disgrace, because Japanese soldiers should not surrender, but die for the country as mentioned before. There was not any friction between Australian guards and Italian POWs because both of them shared Western culture and the concept of the prisoner of war. Italian POWs were felt to be culturally familiar: an almost known, understood and comfortable ‘enemy’ and they enjoyed their POW camp life at Cowra (Nicolaidai, 1999, p. 198 and Gordon, 1994, p. 67).

Against this, Japanese POWs were felt to be culturally alien: an unknown, formidable, uncomfortable enemy and they could hardly enjoy their POW camp life

wholeheartedly, because their mind sought an opportunity to die. There were some frictions between Australian guards and Japanese POWs: solo escapes (Gordon, 1994, p. 63), skipping morning roll call (Kennedy Miller, 1984) and the issue of work (see 4.2.3.), which was decided by not making Japanese work outside. Under such circumstances, a mass breakout happened.

The trigger for the incident was the separation of NCOs and other ranks planned for Monday 7 August as shown in *Kanazawa's* evidence at the Court of Inquiry (see 4.4.3.). The order of the move of soldier prisoners meant that the Australians ignored one of the Japanese military traditions (see 4.2.4). And so, it was rejected and the mass breakout was carried out by the general will of Japanese POWs. The Australian official inquiries concluded that the incident was premeditated, that any responsibility for the incident did not lie with the Australian guards and camp authorities, and that "Japanese fanaticism" resulted in the suicidal mass attack (AMF, 1944). However, if the Australian camp authorities as the captor had explained the "order" to the Japanese POW, there would have been some solution to it and then the incident might have been avoided (see 4.4.3.). Two peoples did not come to a mutual understanding at that time. The phrase of "Japanese fanaticism" implied that the Japanese behavioural principle was beyond Australian comprehension. There would be unexpected cultural differences between two peoples. The Japanese behavioural principle was based on the Military Field Code (see 1.2.2.). The Japanese military authorities had beaten this code into their soldiers' head by the severe military training. They, even captives, followed this to the letter and would not listen to the enemy as captors. Since Japanese soldiers were taken prisoner, they had been experiencing not only life as POWs, but also their captors' kind treatment, an encounter with Italian

POWs and nostalgia for their home at the camp. Consequently, their desire to live was revealed and their duty to die became latent. And then, the Australian military authorities' order of the move of soldier prisoners to Hay woke their sleeping duty to die again, which led to the incident as their place to die.

Thus, the Cowra Breakout resulted from the lack of mutual understanding between the Australians as captor and the Japanese as captive because of cultural differences. The camp authorities' order of the separation of NCOs and ORs, which was against the Japanese military traditions, triggered off a mass breakout to kill Japanese themselves by the collective will of the Japanese POWs. The responsibility for the incident would have lain with the Japanese side: in fact, *Kanazawa* admitted his responsibility for the incident as the then camp leader and he was also tried by Court-Martial and found guilty of the charge of conduct as camp leader leading other POWs to the incident. However, the Australian camp authorities who gave the order of the transfer of the soldiers could not have escaped their responsibility to some extent unlike the findings of the Court of Inquiry.

3.6. Recent relationship between two peoples over the incident

In 2001, the ambassador of Japan called Cowra the “spiritual home of Australia-Japan relations.” In the days after World War II, how have Japanese and Australian peoples reflected on the Breakout? This section will examine it from relationships between the two.

3.6.1. Before the 1990s

The Japanese War cemetery

There is one of the few Japanese war cemeteries outside of Japan, contiguous to the Australian war cemetery in Cowra (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare,

2012). This took shape thanks to an Australian veteran's experiences on the battlefield and a remaining military tradition peculiar to Japan during World War II. Just after the end of war, the Cowra Sub-branch of the RSL (Returned Services League) decided to organise working parties to maintain the Australian graves at the local war cemetery every weekend (Bullard, 2006, p. 92). In 1948, when the working parties began planting trees around the cemetery, some members happened to see nearby the unkempt graves of Japanese who had died at the Cowra POW camp (2006, p. 92). Since then, they have come to clean up and maintain the Japanese graves as well as the Australian graves regularly despite some reported resistance among the members.

At that time, the president of the Cowra RSL was Albert Oliver who had taken part in various battles: the Middle East, Borneo and New Guinea, in which he had fought with Japanese (Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984). He thought about the futility of war and had a clear memory that when he had visited War Cemeteries in the Middle East, he was moved with the demeanour in which Jews, Arabs and Turks had maintained cemeteries of Australian soldiers (1984). He desired eagerly that Australians should do the same for their former enemies in Australia (1984). Thereupon, he encouraged members of the RSL to look after the graves of Japanese. His spirit not only brushed aside the deep-rooted anti-Japanese mood of the time, but also became motives for extending graves of Japanese and subsequently constructing a Japanese garden.

After relations between Japan and Australia had been normalised by the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty and Embassy of Japan was newly established, several officials were dispatched to Cowra in 1955 for the first time (Bullard, 2006, p. 92). They could pay their respects to their fallen countrymen and conduct a survey of the graves in the Cowra cemetery with the generous assistance of the Cowra RSL members (2006, p.

92). Their report that the Japanese graves were looked after by local RSA members and so their condition was satisfactory, encouraged the Japanese ambassador at that time to make several visits to Cowra (2006, p. 92). And then, he proposed to the Japanese government that all Japanese nationals buried in Australia during the war time be transferred to the Cowra cemetery (2006, p. 92). However, there were complicated circumstances before that offer became a reality.

Initially, according to the official communication between the Welfare Ministry and the Foreign Ministry (Welfare Ministry, 1959), there were following circumstances. In 1957, the Japanese Welfare Ministry had decided to collect remains of Japanese POWs and civilians in Cowra and other areas and to send them back to Japan, in consideration of an embassy official's report. However, the Welfare Ministry changed its mind because of the following reasons. (1) As shown by the investigation of lists for those buried in Australia by graves, the ratio of their bereaved families who were identified was only 15 per cent of the total of them because many of them had used false names. (2) It had been more than 10 years since the Australians began to tend Japanese graves with respect. (3) It was not always to attend to their bereaved families' wishes to send back their remains to Japan (because it would have been better for them to have died in New Guinea as notification of death in action had indicated.). (4) There was a financial problem. (5) Australia's attitude was that whether the Japanese remains should be sent back to Japan, or not, depended on Japan's wishes. In short, the remaining military tradition (being the POW is great disgrace) peculiar to Japan and Australia's generous attitude made the Welfare Ministry in charge of Japanese veteran's affairs change its mind. Thus, the Welfare Ministry and Japanese Embassy in Australia proposed a new plan to build a Japanese war cemetery in Cowra to which all Japanese

remains in every grave in Australia are transferred.

In November 1963, the Australian government approved this Japanese proposal. It was carried out on the following lines (Bullard, 2006, p. 94). (1) The Australian Commonwealth War Graves Commission holds the land of the Japanese War Cemetery in trusteeship for the Japanese government (that is, the land of the Japanese War Cemetery is the Crown land but the War Graves Commission maintains graves of Japanese on behalf of the Japanese government (D. Kibbler, personal communication, 11 September 2010)). (2) The graves of all 522 Japanese nationals who had died in Australia during the war are centralised at Cowra. (3) The War Graves Commission maintains the Japanese War Cemetery to the same standards as the Australian war cemeteries.

Albert Oliver who was elected Mayor of Cowra in 1963, along with the Cowra Municipal Council, supported energetically the War Graves Commission and the Japanese government to establish the Japanese War Cemetery (Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984). The cemetery was designed by Japanese architect *Shigeru Yura* who was lecturing in architecture at Melbourne University and its building funds were financed by the Japanese government (Bullard, 2006, p. 94). Some of ex-POWs also donated to purchase plants, trees, and paving and decorative pebbles (Carr-Gregg, 1978). It has the simple black granite shrine in its centre and comprises 30 cm strips of concrete marked the rows of graves, each carrying metal plates bearing the name, date of death and age of the deceased.

The inauguration of the Japanese War Cemetery took place at a solemn ceremony on 22 November 1964, attended by Ambassador Saburo Ohta and Brigadier A. Brown director of the War Graves Commission (Bullard, 2006, p. 94). After the official

Figure 7. Japanese War Cemetery with the black granite shrine in its centre in Cowra.



The memorial tree at the front was planted by Japanese Crown Prince Akihito (present Emperor) in 1973. “The Cemetery is a place of great beauty, simplicity and tranquillity and is cared for and maintained by the staff of the Cowra Municipal Council” (Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984).

(Photo: Yasuhiro Ota, 5 August 2010)

Figure 8. Tadao Minami’s grave (It is said that his real name is Hajime Toyoshima.)



ceremony, the people of Cowra held a very warm reception to welcome their distinguished guests from Japan (Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984). It was suggestive of the growing friendship between Cowra and Japan. The Cemetery has become a symbol of reconciliation between two countries which were enemies. It has also led to an original link between Cowra people and all of Japan. The Cemetery has become the first essential of Breakout Commemorations and Service of Respect for both Japanese and Australians which take place every year. In June 1965, three bereaved families, one of whom had lost his father in the breakout, attended a ceremony to pay their respects at the Cowra Cemetery for the first time (Bullard, 2006, p.12). The existence of his father's grave in Cowra encouraged him to accept the fact that his father had died in the incident and have the first opportunity to hold a memorial service for the war dead in 20 years. Afterwards, bereaved families from various parts of Japan have visited Cowra to console the souls of their relatives who fell in Australia. These Japanese felt the gratitude for Cowra people who have maintained the graves. Cowra people felt a sense of relief and pride to touch such Japanese attitude. Thus, reconciliation and friendship between Japan and Cowra, and thus Australia have been cultivated through the Japanese War Cemetery.

Australian Father Tony Glynn and Japan

Father Tony Glynn devoted himself to philanthropy in and reconciliation with Japan between 1950s and 1990s. He went over the Pacific to Japan in 1952 and first made efforts to aid the poor in post-war *Nara* and then helped lay the foundation for today's strong friendship between Japan and Australia as a priest of the *Nara* Catholic Church (Japan Local Government Centre, 2004). He had had a dream of going to Japan as a father because he had been moved by perseverance and courage of Japanese

Christians who had not given in the religious suppression by the government in *Edo* (1600~1867) through his father's story in his childhood (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 254). It was also "the philanthropic efforts of Father Lionel Marsden towards Japanese people that inspired young Father Glynn to travel to Japan" (Japan Local Government Centre, 2004). Father Marsden was a surviving POW who was forced to assist construction of the 'death railway in Burma' which was the symbol of anti-Japanese feelings for the Australians (Japan Local Government Centre, 2004). Even in adversity, he determined to go to Japan, turning hate into love, if he return to his country alive (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 256). In 1949, he left for Japan and began a rescue operation in war-devastated *Nara* for reconciliation as a priest of the *Nara Chuch* (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 257). Thus, Father Glynn who deeply appreciated such his way of living, put 'forgiveness and reconciliation' into practice, and encouraged former Japanese POWs to direct their eyes to 'Cowra' by saying "Reconciliation between Japan and Australia begins by telling the truth of the Breakout and praying God to forgive you" (2004, p. 262). Father Glynn held the Japanese-Australian joint services for the breakout dead with other Christian priests and Buddhist monks for reconciliation at the Australian and Japanese graves several times.

Japan Cowra Society

In 1965, Japan Cowra Society which was comprised of some former prisoners, was formed. While many who joined in the breakout and survived did not talk over their experience as a POW after returning to Japan, some did relate their experience to families, friends and thus the public (Bullard, 2006, p. 14). A former naval officer who researched the Cowra Breakout and published as a book for the first time, encouraged the former POWs to take pride in themselves because they had endured such adversity

and survived (2006, p. 106). And so they created the Japan Cowra Society as their place to call their own. It came to be easy for them to gather, discuss old times and remember their comrades who had died in the breakout, but also to pass on their experience to a postwar generation (2006, p. 108). In 1980s, the members of the Society were encouraged by Father Tony Glynn to set foot on the path to friendship between Japan and Australia. And so they went to Cowra to attend the breakout commemorations 1984, 1994, 2004 and fraternise with former guards and local people there.

In 1984, *Susumu Kawaguchi*, one of the party, revisited the Wier family after an interval of 40 years. At that time, he and his two comrades had been treated to fresh scones and hot tea by Mrs Weir at the farm house. Her warm treatment reminded them that they were still alive. Since then, he had never forgotten her kindness. He regretted being unable to express his heartfelt gratitude to her because of her death but his thought that thanks to her he was now living a happy life in Japan would be understood by her son and daughter. In 1986, they were also present at the Japanese-Australian joint services for the breakout dead for reconciliation. However, while there were about 250 members at the peak of the society, nowadays, there were only five or six members who regularly attended the annual meeting, because of old age and illness (*Masayoshi Yamada*, personal communication, 20 June, 2010 at *Shoyama, Tottori*).

Symposium on the Cowra Incident in Japan

According to *the record of the movie and witnesses gathering on the Cowra Incident* (*Sueyori*, 1990, pp. 161-167), the symposium is described as follows. There was a symposium on the Cowra Incident by movies and witnesses in *Kurashiki*, Japan in August 1988. As the Japan Cowra Society general assembly was planned in *Kurashiki* in August, this opportunity was taken to have a conference to listen to the

truth of the Cowra Incident from the people concerned. It was aimed to deepen friendship between Japan and Australia through this symposium. There was a movie “The Cowra Breakout” (75-minute edited version) which helped participants know the outline of the Incident at the first session. There were a silent prayer for 231 Japanese POWs and 4 Australian soldiers who had died in the Incident, and witnesses and reports of three former Japanese POWs and three Australians concerned at the second session. Margaret Weir, daughter of Mrs Weir, accepted an invitation to the symposium of the Japanese sponser, encouraged by her reunion with *Kawaguchi* (Tsuchiya, 2004, p. 189). She testified to the incident happened at her farmhouse immediately after the breakout there. She said that...just as her mother treated her own countrymen (swagmen), she offered help to those Japanese POWs (Tamura, 2011). This means that Australians are ready to provide help when they see someone in need (2011). At the third session, there was a reception in which mutual understanding between Japanese and Australians was deepened through learning about the Cowra Breakout.

Margaret Weir knew that Japanese reflected on what they had done in the war through the symposium (Tsuchiya, 2004, p. 190) and subsequently, she visited *Kawaguchi* in *Kobe*, who held a welcome and birthday party for her. Thus, she discovered “Japanese” who have a beautiful nature different from “Japanese POWs” whom she had seen shaking with fear at that time during her stay in Japan.

Students exchange between Cowra and Japan

Mayor of Cowra Oliver felt keenly that the close ties with Japan built up through the War Cemetery had to be passed on properly to the next generation. To this end, he made great efforts to interest young people in the ideal of goodwill and understanding between Japan and Australia (Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984). And then, he suggested

the establishment of a private exchange of students between Cowra and Japan. When he and his wife visited Japan at the invitation of the Japanese Government in 1969, he not only met members of the Japan Cowra Society, but also visited some schools for a student exchange programme: *Seikei* High School in *Tokyo* and *Ichijo* High School in *Nara* (Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984). In 1970, the student exchange between Cowra High School and *Seikei* High School started under the principle that one Cowra student and one *Seikei* student travel and study each year (*Seikei* High School, 2010, p. 46). This programme has continued for more than 40 years and now *Seikei* also has a short stay programme in which much more *Seikei* students can enjoy Cowra life (Accompanying teachers of *Seikei*, personal communication, 9 August 2011 at Cowra High School). In the student exchange between Cowra High School and *Ichijo* High School, a Cowra student spent 10 months at *Nara* in 1971 and one *Ichijo* student visited in 1972 and 1973 respectively.

Generally speaking, student exchange programmes aim to nurture world citizens through cross-cultural experience (*Seikei* High School, 2010 p. 17). However, this programme originated from a history of conflict between Australia and Japan, that is, looking back on how two countries have changed a tragic event to a symbol of peace and goodwill. This programme has given the students opportunities to experience not only a different culture and lifestyle, but also, a talk about the breakout with their host families. It has also encouraged many families in Cowra and Japan to include their former students in their family members. Thus, the goodwill and peace between two countries have been maintained and extended by Cowra High School and the School of *Seikei* and *Nara*.

Japanese imperial visit to Cowra

Several members of the Japanese Imperial family have been to Cowra to visit the Japanese War Cemetery. In 1971, Prince and Princess *Mikasa* visited and laid a wreath at the Cemetery. In 1973, the present Japanese Emperor and Empress, as Crown Prince and Crown Princess, visited and laid a wreath there and planted a Japanese Cherry Tree there. Subsequently, their only daughter, Princess *Suga* and their second son, Prince *Akishino* visited there in 1992 and 1995 respectively. The present Emperor must have regretted bitterly that “3,100 thousands lives of the Japanese” (Ministry of Health, labour and Welfare, 2012) were lost by the last world war since his Crown Prince days. He also grieved that “remains of half of the 2,400 thousands dead overseas in the war have not returned to Japan yet” (2012). In such a time, He found the graves of Japanese POWs and civilians who died in Australia during World War II have been maintained by local members of RSL in Cowra. He was moved by the fact and has fixed firmly in his memory the tragic incident the war brought and the friendship between Japan and Australia created by the tragedy. And then, he was going to carry on his memory to the young generation, first of all, to his children. Thus, his visit to Cowra came to trigger for durable friendship between Japan and Cowra, and thus Australia.

The Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre

The completion of the Japanese War Cemetery was followed by a project for creating another memorial for the former enemy. When there was a plan afoot to build a hall in memory of the POW Breakout, Former Mayor Albert Oliver suggested a Japanese garden which suits to introduce Japan to Australians rather than an exhibition hall of the unhappy memory (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 219). The Japanese Garden was first proposed by the Cowra Tourist and Development Corporation led by Don Kibbler in

1971 (Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984). Work at Bellevue Hill began in 1977 under the direction of Japanese landscape architect *Ken Nakajima*. Its purpose was to offer a sanctuary for the spirits of Australian soldiers, and Japanese soldiers and civilians who had died in Australia during the Asia-Pacific War. Overcoming numerous obstacles through financial and cultural collaboration between Australians and Japanese, it was in 1986 when the Japanese Garden and the Cultural Centre was completed according to the original plan.

With his knowledge of Japan increasing, Don Kibbler came to promote this project not only as the centrepiece of tourism, but also as a symbol of friendship with Japan (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 226). He persistently persuaded local people and council by using a model of the Japanese garden made by a Japanese designer for him (2004, p. 226). Finally, the project was approved by council in principle though there were concerns over funding in 1975 (Bullard, 2006, p. 98). Funds for construction of the first stage of the project eventually came from both Australia and Japan: Federal and state government grants, the Japanese World Exposition Commemorative Fund, Private donations from Australian and Japanese businesses and individuals and a loan from Cowra council. And then, any shortfall was funded by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry through the Japanese ambassador of the time, *Yoshio Okawara* who was a strong supporter of the project (2006, p. 98). The first stage of construction included mainly a cultural centre and tea house and over 6000 plants were used. This project involved cultural exchange on a practical level from the beginning. A local nurseryman travelled to Japan to study plant care and maintenance for the Japanese garden (p. 98). Local builders and architects also studied how to adapt Japanese designs to Australian building standards and materials (2006, p. 98). Thus, the Garden was

inaugurated in November 1978, in the presence of Ambassador *Okawara* and the deputy Prime Minister Doug Anthony, and former POW *Shiro Asada* who first revisited Cowra (2006, p. 98).

However, it was not sure whether the young garden was successful, or not, because of lack of funds for maintenance and expansion, and of uncertainty about the number of attendance at the garden (Bullard, 2006, P. 98). Also, four-year drought from 1980 damaged the young plants in the garden, but they were saved by local volunteers who made selfless efforts to water them by hand (Bullard, 2006, p. 100). In mid-1980s, visitors at length reached required numbers because of the following reasons (2006, p. 100). The Garden was rated highly in a symposium of the International Association of Japanese Garden in 1982. It also became known to the general public through the movie, *The Cowra Breakout* released in 1984 and large-scale Commemorations of the 40th anniversary of the Breakout held that year.

To seek funds to complete the garden, members of the garden committee, Don kibbler and Tony Moony, visited Japan in 1984 (Bullard, 2006, p. 100). Being timely, the New South Wales government and the *Tokyo* government were seeking to have a sister relationship with each other (2006, p. 100). Also, how mightily Cowra people struggled in their attempt to create the Japanese garden had been picked up by the Japanese media (2006, p. 100). Consequently, *Tokyo* Metropolis and Japan's Expo Fund furnished further funds to extend the lake and construct a *bonsai* house as the second stage of the Garden (2006, p. 100). Construction started in 1985 and was completed the next year. Thus, the inauguration ceremony of the full Japanese Garden, along with the Japanese-Australian joint services for the breakout dead at the War Cemeteries, was held in November of that year (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 267).

This is the Australian version of the Japanese garden which is the style of the traditional garden with a path around a central pond, over the bridges, and past arbours. When he encountered a five-hectare site on Bellevue Hill which was the rolling land with rocks, trees and native shrubs, *Ken Nakajima* thought that this was the divine providence: there were two rocks on the top of the hill which seemed to be suitable for the *shugoseki* (“protective rock”) and the *yogoseki* (“god-descent rock”) of traditional Japanese gardens (Bullard, 2006, p. 100 & Cowra Japanese Garden, 1984).

Figure 9. Cowra Japanese Garden



You can see the protective rock on the left hand side of the top of the picture and the god-descent rock on the centre of the top of the picture. (Photo: Yasuhiro Ota, 5 August 2010)

He also intended to keep the natural features of the site by incorporating native plants and rocks in his landscape gardening: for example, the garden features trees that change

colour with the season (Carr-Gregg, 1978, p. 15). The cherry trees which blossom in the spring are imported from Japan and also those Australian trees which turn gold in the autumn are used (1978, p. 15). Thus, the traditional design of the garden are associated with Japan's cultural traditions and festivals of each of the four seasons. This is an ideal place to appease the spirits of Japanese soldiers and civilians as they can stare down at the "scene of their homeland" out of the "god-descent rock". That is why it can be said that the Cowra Japanese Garden is the product of the cultural, spiritual and financial collaboration between Australian and Japanese peoples. It is also the symbol of friendship between the two.

Now, a *Sakura* avenue connects the Japanese War Cemetery, the old site of the POW Camp and the Japanese Garden and Culture Centre. This project has been promoted by Don Kibbler since 1988, the 200th anniversary of the founding of Australia: Its purpose is to nurture peace and friendship between two peoples through the cherry trees planted by Japanese or Australian owners and tended by local school children. Thus, the souls can go along the avenue, remembering the old days at the camp, to the "god-descent rock" on the Japanese Garden. Every spring, the Sakura festival is opened there.

Chor-Farmer's biennial visit to Cowra

Chor-Farmer, a male voice choir from Tokyo University of Agriculture has made a concert tour to Cowra every two years since 1977. At first, they held a concert at the civic hall, and then, visit only the Japanese War Cemetery and offer incense there. While repeating the visit, led by gentle suggestions from Albert Oliver who took charge of them, they came to visit first the Australian War Cemetery and offer a wreath and a song, then, visit the Japanese War Cemetery. Finally, they knew a "checkered relation"

between Cowra and Japan. Now, they have had a role to play in goodwill and friendship between Japan and Cowra, and thus Australia through the reunions with local residents and the pilgrimages via music.

3.6.2. After 1990s

World Peace Bell

The Australian World Peace Bell was gifted to the people of Cowra, not Canberra or Sydney, in 1992. This is a replica of the World Peace Bell located in the United Nations' headquarters in New York. The World Peace Bell originated from a Japanese individual who presented a bell as a representation of peace to the United Nations (WPBA, 2012). To make his huge bell, he encouraged 65 member countries of the new United Nations to donate their coins and medals (WPBA, 2012). His private mission was to remind the world of the importance of peace, saying that no nation should experience an atomic bomb attack as his country did in August 1945 (WPBA, 2012). On 8 June, 1954 his bell was presented to the United Nations as a symbol of lasting world peace. This became known as the World Peace Bell (WPBA, 2012).

And then in 1982 a World Peace Bell Association was formed in Tokyo to succeed this outline with cooperation from ambassadors representing 128 nations (WPB for New Zealand, 2012). The association has a duty to promote a world free from the evils of nuclear war and with lasting peace, and present replica World Peace Bells to nations of the world (WPBA, 2012). Recipient countries have had to be great contributor to world peace. Twenty two World Peace Bells have been gifted through 18 countries and four in Japan (WPB for New Zealand, 2012). Therefore, it means what the people of Cowra have done for peace and international understanding was officially recognised that the town was awarded the Australian World Peace Bell.

Emperor's words of appreciation for efforts of Don Kibbler

Chairman of the Cowra Japanese Foundation and Chairman of the Cowra-Japan Society, Don Kibbler had audience with the Japanese Emperor and Empress at the Imperial House on October 2010. He was given a word of the gratitude for what he has done for the Japanese war dead by the Emperor and Empress. Since the Emperor and Empress visited the Japanese War Cemetery in Cowra in 1973, he has fixed in his memory the graves of Japanese POWs who had died in the tragic incident during the war have been tended by Cowra people. In 2009, they learned from the consulate general in Sydney that Don Kibbler played an active role in building a Japanese garden to seek reconciliation between Japan and Australia and console the Japanese war dead and is now making every effort to maintain the Japanese War Cemetery and the Japanese Garden. Therefore, they delivered the expression of appreciation for his efforts to him through the consulate general in Sydney then. In 2010, the Emperor and Empress heard of his short visit to Japan from him and so wished to have an opportunity to see and express their gratitude to him. For them who have grieved that remains of half of the 2400 thousands dead overseas in the war have not returned to Japan yet, what a Cowra man has done for the Japanese war dead must be worthy of respect. Thus the Emperor and Empress must have wanted to bid him “thanks” directly.

3.6.3. Researcher's recent visit to Cowra

My visit to Cowra after a ten-year interval

I made two research trips to Cowra: a two-month one from 30 July 2010 and a two-week one from 31 July 2011. I describe what I have imagined about “Cowra” in my mind through interviewing local people and observing their locality. Firstly, Cowra

seems to be an isolated spot for tourists with no car. Cowra is about 365 km west of Sydney and about 200 km north of Canberra. The Cowra's nearest railway station or airport is not Cowra itself, but Burthust or Orange. Even by car, it will take 3.5 or 2 hours to get to Sydney or Canberra from Cowra respectively. I thought that Cowra was not suitable for a commuters' town of the big cities, Sydney or Canberra, in other words, Cowra had to depend on not only farming, but also tourism and business, which encouraged cultural ties with Japan. It was suggested by the fact that the first proposer of the Japanese Garden was the Cowra Tourist and Development Corporation.

Secondly, the Cowra Visitors Information Centre is the gateway to the Cowra Breakout. I stayed at the Japanese farm for one month and with two local families for the rest of time. I learned outlines of "Cowra" from the Japanese host and local host families. I first visited the Cowra Visitors Information Centre in which one of my host mothers is its information officer. It has made efforts to promote public awareness of the 1944 Cowra Breakout. There is a POW Theatre in which visitors can hear the story of the Breakout, told using a unique nine-minute hologram-style production in the Centre. I enjoyed it. Also there are exhibits related to the Breakout, including a model of the POW camp and the Vickers Gun at the corner and several relevant books to sell there. My fieldwork started from the Centre.

Thirdly, I attended the Cowra Breakout commemorations 2010 and 2011 on 4-5 August. The first day's major event, the reconciliation service at the St Raphael's Catholic Church made me really realise "reconciliation" over the incident. There were Japanese collection corners in front of the left and right altars on the stage. Both corners were full of Japanese traditional goods, through which "Japan" could be understood by Cowra people. The white banner with emblem of reconciliation was hung from the left

altar as shown in the picture (Figure 10).

Figure 10. The inside of the St Raphael's Catholic Church in Cowra



Reconciliation service is being held. This corner is a Japanese collection one, including various Japanese traditional goods. (Photo: Yasuhiro Ota, 4 August 2010)

I was an only Japanese there, and so I assumed the role of Japanese flag-bearer for the service. I carried a Japanese flag, along with an Australian flag-bearer, to the stage. The Australian national anthem was sung by all participants, and then, the service in commemoration of reconciliation between Australia and Japan regarding the Cowra Breakout began. I was introduced as a special Japanese guest from an academic by the chief priest. I became tense, but I really felt that I took part in the reconciliation service.

Fourthly, the wreath laying at Cowra POW campsite was impressive. In particular, I remember that former camp guard Ron Ferguson laid wreath on the monument with profound emotion. While looking at guide boards of the former POW camp site and imaging where Camp B was and where the Broadway was, I walked around the extensive site. A few remains encouraged me to recall the story of the Cowra Breakout.

Fifthly, the wreath laying at the Australian and Japanese War Cemetery was the highlight of the events. First of all, the ceremony at the Australian War Cemetery began. The mayor of Cowra, representatives of the Japanese Embassy, the representatives of the Cowra RSL and students of schools in Cowra laid wreaths on each of four Australian victims of the Breakout. And then, the ceremony at the Japanese War Cemetery was held: after laying wreaths, the Japanese Buddhist priest and his Australian followers chanted sutras before the simple black granite shrine in the centre of the cemetery. Souls of 234 Japanese who had died in the Breakout must have been consoled. This reminded me of the original point of the original relationship between Cowra and Japan: members of Cowra RSL tended unkempt graves of their former enemies immediately after the war.

Sixthly, the day of “Cherry Blossom Festival” and “Service of Respect” in September 2012 was quite like “Japan day” in Cowra. Unlike 5 August, a great number of Japanese came to Cowra from Sydney by buses. On the first day, “*Sakura*” Festival took place at the Cowra Japanese Garden with cherry trees in bloom. Each of Japanese was working hard to introduce Japan and the Japanese to Australians in his/her specialty. There were traditional musical performances including Australian *Shakuhachi* performance and *Bon* Festival dance, traditional martial arts including *Sumo*, *Origami*, Calligraphy, Tea Ceremony, *Bonsai* and Japanese food. I assisted a Japanese Calligraphist.

“Service of Respect” was held on the next day for consoling Australian war dead and 522 those Japanese who had died during the last war. The attendees were local Australian and a large Japanese group. First, at the Australian War Cemetery, after laying wreaths on graves of four victims of the POW Breakout, people remembered

Australian war dead by sounding the Last Post and decided to go forward a new day with something precious they had left by sounding the Reveille. People moved to the Japanese War Cemetery. After laying wreaths, each of Japanese attendees must have soothed spirits of the 522 Japanese dead and resolved to do something for their spirits through sutras-chanting of the Japanese Buddhist priest and his followers before the shrine there. Japanese and Australians seem to share something in common in consoling the spirits of the dead, though they have different religions.

Seventhly, there is the Cowra Breakout and its aftermath in my interview with local people. **POW camp life:** “I was working at the Training Camp. Every weekend I walked to the POW camp and patrolled there. Observing the barbed fences, while Japanese POWs looked busy physically with baseball with an expressionless face, Italian POWs looked happy in their camp life, enjoying singing and working” (M. Miles, former volunteer infantry man). “The camp authorities gave up making Japanese POWs work outside because they caused trouble with guards” (G. Apthorpe & T. Moony). “Japanese POWs were provided with fish and rice” (L. Ryan & G. Apthorpe).

The day of the Breakout: “On that day, I heard the sound of the shots which Australian guards fired. It was full moon, and it was bright like daytime, coupled with burning huts” (M. Miles). **Why the Incident happened:** “The trigger for the Incident was the Australian decision to transfer soldier prisoners to Hay (M. Miles, G. Apthorpe, L. Ryan & B. Cusac). “The cause of the Incident was the Japanese belief that being captured is great disgrace” (M. Miles, G. Apthorpe, L. Ryan & T. Moony). “It was Bushido (the way of the warrior)” (D. Kibbler & B. Cusac). **Those Japanese who died in the Breakout were buries with respect:** “The camp authorities buried the Japanese deceased in graves adjacent to the Cowra cemetery and representatives of the surviving

POWs were allowed to visit their graves soon after the burial” (L. Ryan).

Immediately after the war, when the RSL members looked after the unkempt graves of Japanese, did anyone oppose it? : “Someone opposed it, but they respected the wishes of the RSL (its president was A. Oliver)” (T. Moony & L. Ryan). **Which side first proposed to construct a Japanese garden?** : “It was the Australian side: Don Kibbler was the first proposer” (D. Kibbler). **Were there opposition campaigns against “the Japanese War Cemetery”, and “the Japanese Garden and Culture Centre”?**: “There was some opposition to the Japanese Garden. We just ignored the opposition” (D. Kibbler & T. Moony).

What do the Japanese War Cemetery and the Japanese Garden mean to Cowra and you? : “They mean the symbol of reconciliation between Cowra and Japan” (D. Kibbler). “A former Japanese Ambassador to Australia once mentioned that the Japanese War Cemetery makes Cowra “The spiritual home of Japanese in Australia” (L. Ryan). “The Japanese Garden and Culture Centre, the student exchanges and our current relationship are a true expression of friendship and understanding” (A. Apthorpe).

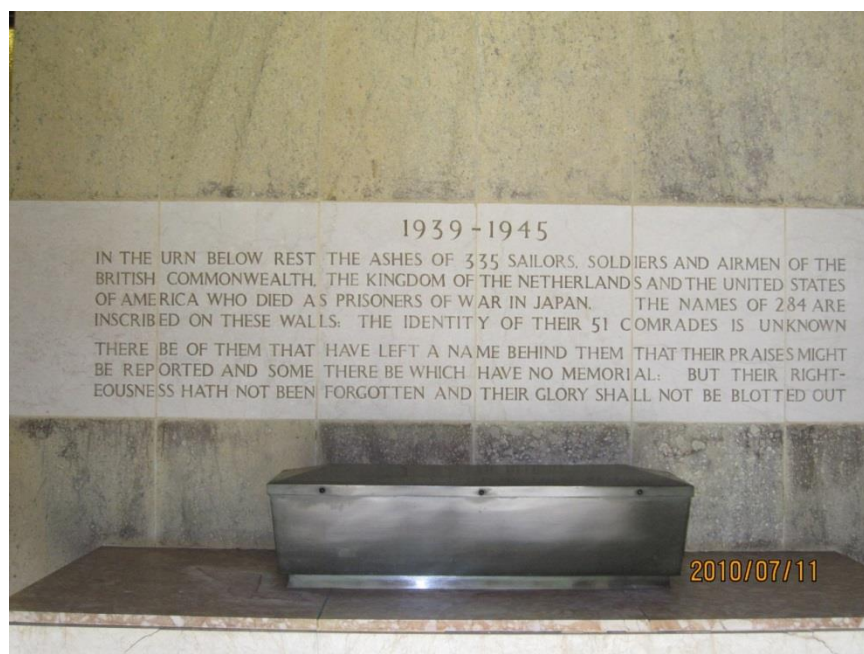
At that time, Australians recognised that the Japanese POWs were different from the Italian ones. However, the Japanese hopeless escape to death was something that defied their imagination. After the war, the simple act of the Cowra RSL whose members tended the unkempt Japanese graves resulted in transforming the tragic Breakout into friendship between Cowra and Japan.

3.7. Special relationship between Cowra and Joetsushi

Cowra is maintaining a special relationship with the town of *Joetsu* (*Naoetsu*) in Niigata Prefecture. While there was the prisoner-of-war camp for Japanese POWs, some of whom died in the Breakout in Cowra, there was the prisoner-of-war camp for

Australian POWs, some of whom died of ill-treatment in *Naoetsu*. Cowra man Tony Mooney laboured to build bridges between Cowra and *Naoetsu* (*Joetsu Japan-Australia Association*, 1996, p. 21). *Naoetsu* had been the site of *Tokyo No. 4 Branch Camp*, a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp (commonly referred to as the *Naoetsu Camp*), where 300 Australian POWs had been interned during war. Sixty of them had died there because they had been forced to live under severe living conditions and to work at munitions factories. After the war ended, their remains were buried at the Commonwealth War Graves in *Yokohama*, Japan (*Tsuchiya*, 2004, p. 230) (figure 11) and eight of Japanese camp guards were executed after being found guilty of war crimes in the *Tokyo Trial* (*Joetsu Japan-Australia Association*, 1996, p. 162). I refer to the *Naoetsu* POW camp related issues as the *Naoetsu Tragedy*.

Figure 11. Commonwealth War Graves in *Yokohama*, Japan



The ashes of Australian POWs who died in *Naoetsu*, Japan, rest in the urn there, too. . (Photo: Yasuhiro Ota, 11 July 2011)

After hostilities ended, there were individual exchanges between former POWs and

local people. A former Australian officer POW revisited Buddhist monk *Enri* at *Kakushinji* Temple to appreciate his kindness. *Enri* had performed memorial services for unclaimed remains of the Australian dead, saying that there is no distinction of friend or foe about the dead persons during the war (*Joetsu* Japan-Australia Association, 1996, p. 133). Tony Mooney (Cowra-Japan Society) learned this fact from another Cowra man who had been a POW at *Naoetsu*. He approached the Mayor of *Joetsu-shi* and requested him to hold a service for ex-Australian POWs who had died there. Consequently, the first memorial service for them was held there in 1988. This encouraged *Joetsu* people to construct a Peace Memorial Park commemorating the deceased Australian prisoners and Japanese guards, and world peace (*S. & Y. Ishizuka*, personal communication, 4 July 2010). Now, there have been friendly exchanges between Cowra people and *Joetsu* people .

4. Comparison of the two incidents

Similarities and differences between the two incidents are made clear by comparing the Featherston Incident and the Cowra Breakout in terms of the past and the present.

4.1. Similarities

What underlies the shooting

The comparative study found two similarities between the two incidents. Firstly, the Featherston Incident and the Cowra Breakout have what underlies the shooting in common. It is cultural differences between Japanese and New Zealanders or Australians. In particular, the Japanese belief of the prisoner of war was considerably different from the New Zealand belief or the Australian one as mentioned before. Japanese as captives

did not intend to understand New Zealand or Australian guards' position, whereas New Zealanders or Australians as captors could not understand mental attitude of Japanese POWs. Thus, little mutual understanding between the two resulted in two incidents. On the one hand, initially, New Zealand or Australian guards did not meet the requirement the Geneva Convention demanded: mature and objective judgment as captors and a high degree of skill in handling POWs from a different culture (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 192). On the other hand, the Japanese ringleaders of the two Incidents, *Adachi* and *Kanazawa* made almost the same statements at the respective court of inquiry that the Japanese unique view of the POW had caused the incident and so it had been their responsibility. Former Japanese POW at Cowra, *Yamada* also said that the Cowra Breakout had been caused by Japanese military education (Personal communication, 20 June 2010 in Tottori). Therefore it can be said that each of two incidents was the event just waiting to happen, but occurred separately in terms of time and place and specific circumstances and actions that triggered the incidents.

Mutual understanding and peace

Secondly, after each of the two incidents was settled, mutual understanding grew and so no further conflict ever happened at either of two POW camps. After the war, Featherston and Cowra have had some friendly relationships with Japan. Those are good examples which support Reischauer's view above-mentioned: "When there is little mutual understanding among peoples of the world who have different cultures, peace will be broken, and vice versa". Two tragic shootings had a traumatic effect on both prisoners and guards in Featherston and Cowra: prisoners were released from the dogmatic belief and guards were woken to what they should be. The camp authorities listened to any request from POWs and POWs readily followed them. They came to

understand each other's mind well. And then, the peaceful POW camp life continued until the end of the war. After the war, there were reunions between former POWs and former guards. And then cultural and spiritual exchanges between local peoples and Japanese were held. Now, the people of Featherston and those of Cowra have been deepening friendships with Japanese in their respective ways as mentioned before. .

4.2. Differences

Responsibility for the incident

In respect of the past: which side was responsible for the incident, the Japanese side or the New Zealand side, or the Australian side? The responsibility for the Featherston Incident lay with the New Zealand side, whereas the responsibility for the Cowra Breakout lay with the Japanese side. In the case of the Featherston Incident having its origins in an issue of work, New Zealand guard Owen's shooting of Japanese which was allegedly to avenge his brother's death at Tarawa on Japanese, was against the Geneva Convention and might have tempted other guards' volley of fire against Japanese (see 2.3. & 2.5.). Also, two Japanese officers, *Adachi* and *Nishimura* who were taken to military tribunal on charges of mutiny and incitement to mutiny were not submitted to any legal action. This means there was no fault on the Japanese side (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 119 and see 2.4.). Also, *Adachi* might have rationally recognised that the New Zealand side was at fault. Though he had emotionally admitted his responsibility for the Incident not only at the Court of Inquiry, but also at Featherston and in Japan after the war, judging from his attitude at the *Tokyo* Trial (see 2.6.), he might have not thought that there was any fault on the Japanese part. What is more, Bill McKerrow, Mayor of Featherston between 1974 and 1988, suggested that the fault for the shooting at the camp had lain with the New Zealand side and that some ex-Japanese

POWs' words of appreciation and apology to New Zealanders helped them reduce their guilt over the shooting during the post-war time (see 2.6.). Thus the New Zealand side can be responsible for the Incident,

In the case of the Cowra Breakout having caused despite not making POWs work, *Kanazawa* admitted that he was responsible for the incident as the camp leader and desired to be sentenced to the death penalty at the Court of Inquiry (see 4.4.3.). This is because the incident was caused by the desperate escape which Japanese POWs attempted. *Kanazawa* also faced a court-martial for leading other POWs to the mass escape as the camp leader. He was found guilty of the charge and sentenced to 18 months detention (see 4.4.3.). Thus, the Japanese side must be responsible for the Cowra Breakout.

New Zealand and Australian POWs in Japanese hands

During World War Two, 121 of New Zealand's 9,000 prisoners of war had been in Japanese hands and 37 of them had died (the death rate 30.6%), whereas Australia had had 22,376 prisoners of the Japanese, 8,031 of whom had died (35.9%) (Peren, 1999, p.124, *Utsumi*, 2005, pp. 3-4 and *Aburai & Kosuge*,1993). Also, there were some Dutch New Zealanders who had fought for years to get the Japanese to make reparations for their atrocities in Indonesia during the war (Nicolaidi, 1999, p. 162).

In the 1942 Tarawa tragedy, 17 New Zealand coast watchers and radio operators were executed by the Japanese and their remains were lost, and so it is believed that in retaliation for that, the New Zealand side caused the shooting of Japanese and lost their ashes. In the Naoetsu tragedy, 60 Australian POWs died of ill-treatment by Japanese guards, who were executed in the Tokyo trial after the war. Now, there is the Peace Memorial Park to commemorate Australian and Japanese

victims of the war and reconciliation between Australia (Cowra) and *Joetsu-shi* (*Naoetsu*) came true.

Japanese War Cemetery

Regarding the present (how to commemorate the incident), whereas the main annual commemorative Wreath Laying ceremony for the Cowra Breakout is held at the Australian and Japanese War Cemeteries, that for the Featherston Incident takes place at the Featherston Garden of Remembrance. There is the Japanese War Cemetery next to the Australian War Cemetery in Cowra. The Japanese breakout dead were buried with respect in the war cemetery in Cowra after the incident. Since just after the war, local RSA members have maintained not only the Australian graves, but also the Japanese graves, which were extended to the Japanese War Cemetery in 1965. This official war cemetery was completed by Australian generosities and collaboration between Australian and Japanese (see 4.6.1.). Thereupon, members of the Japan Cowra Society have had an opportunity to visit Cowra for consoling the spirits of their comrades who had died there and meet former guards again. Bereaved families from various places of Japan also have visited Cowra for pacifying the souls of their relatives who had fallen in Australia during the war and associated with local people. Thus, the Japanese War Cemetery has encouraged reconciliation between Cowra and Japan which were enemies and two people have believed that this reconciliation would repay the death of victims of the incident.

There are the monuments to the former World War One Training Camp, the monument to Japanese victims in the Incident, the monument with the *haiku*, the monument to one New Zealand victim in the Incident and the Japanese garden with a shelter in the Featherston Garden of Remembrance, but there is no cemetery for the

Japanese deceased in the POW camp. Their bodies were officially cremated in Wellington after the Incident and the two funeral companies there had kept their ashes on behalf of the Army until the end of the war. And then, the Army document (see 2.4.1.) mentioned that their ashes were sent back to Japan on the transport which carried Japanese repatriated soldiers. However, there has not been any evidence to support this (see 2.4.1.). Former POW *Adachi* could not help giving up the plan to create a Japanese war cemetery for his dead comrades because nobody knew where their ashes were. I tried to make inquiries about the whereabouts of their remains to relevant organisations in Japan in 2010, but I did not have any clues as to their whereabouts. Their ashes are still missing. It is beyond comprehension that the New Zealand authorities of the time intended to cremate bodies of Japanese victims and send their ashes back to Japan after the war against the Geneva Convention (see 1.2.1. and 2.4.1) and that no one knows the location of their remains.

Thereupon, while bereaved families of those who had died in the Incident have never visited the Garden of Remembrance in Featherston, former Japanese POWs, their families, crews of the Japanese training squadron and tourists have visited to commemorate the Incident. Thus, unlike Cowra, there has been a little exchange between two peoples. Nothing seems to repay the death of Japanese victims of the Incident.

Japanese Peace Garden

While the plan for a Japanese peace garden in Cowra proposed by a Cowra man took shape with the cooperation of Australia and Japan, but with little opposition, the plan for a Japanese peace garden in Featherston proposed by a former Japanese POW failed because of opposition by returned soldiers in all over New Zealand. In

Cowra, like the maintenance of Japanese graves by RSL, opposition to the Japanese garden did not spread. First, in the course of construction, there were cultural exchange in terms of landscaping and architecture between Japan and Australia, and financial collaboration between two countries on both official and private levels. After completion of the garden, not only former guards and local people but also former POWs and bereaved families have had a sense of relief out of recognition that the spirits of those who died far from home would be soothed by the Japanese Garden. Also, Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre have helped Australian people understand Japanese culture. Thus, Japan and Cowra, and thus Australia have deepened friendship with each other, and this would repay the death of Japanese and Australian victims of the Breakout, too.

In Featherston, in late-1970s, the local authorities made a plan to create the War Memorial Park at the old POW camp site and its environs (see 2.6.1). This plan was seemingly to commemorate mainly the training camp for 30,000 New Zealanders sent to fight World War One in Europe, although it granted the former Japanese POWs' request to build a small monument to their comrades having died in the Incident (see 2.6.1. & Nicolaidi 1999, p.93). Another former Japanese POW who gave up constructing the Japanese war cemetery, planned to create a Japanese peace garden with a monument to his deceased comrades, replacing the small monument. His plan seemed to start work with a blueprint, funds and a piece of land prepared through Japanese supporters and with the approval of the local council and citizens. However, when this project was televised nationwide in 1955, there was the opposition to it among members of RSA across the country (see 2.6.2). This is because the 50th anniversary of the victory of World War II reminded them of negative feelings toward Japan (Peren, 1999, p. 124).

As a result, the district council decided to suspend the project. Subsequently, instead of the Japanese Peace Garden, a Japanese garden acceptable to any local people was created by the district council and the local Japanese timber company, and by the backing of Chor-Farmer. It is the Japanese garden with 68 cherry trees. While the Cowra Japanese Garden is dynamic and attractive to not only both Australians and Japanese, but also souls of the war dead, the Japanese garden in Featherston is static and simple, but thought-provoking.

The role of Chor-Farmer

In Cowra, Chor-Farmer has played an active part in maintaining friendship with Cowra as one of various Japanese groups through music. In Featherston, it has played an essential role in promoting goodwill between Japan and Featherston as a Japanese representative via music. When Chor-Farmer began to make a concert tour to Cowra as a mere choir, Cowra had deepened friendship with the group of former Japanese POWs, bereaved families of those who had died in Australia during the war and officials of the Japanese embassy. With long and repeated biennial visits to Cowra, Chor-Farmer has learned the Breakout and the manner of international goodwill from local people. Now it has shared with other Japanese groups a role in lasting friendship between Japan and Cowra as an international specialist in music.

Their experience in Cowra encouraged Chor-Farmer to make a goodwill concert tour to Featherston. It has played a central role in deepening friendship between two peoples through music in Featherston. Chor-Farmer has helped the ANZAC hall buy a Japanese piano and some local people form a choir. They sing both Japanese songs and New Zealand songs and so they can understand local people and local people can understand Japanese. Chor-Farmer sing requiems in front of monuments and mourn

the war deceased. Thus, Chor-Farmer have been warmly welcomed by Featherston people after tragic memories. Featherston people have been satisfied with understanding Japan and the Japanese through Chor-Farmer.

World Peace Bell: Cowra/Christchurch

The Australian World Peace Bell was gifted to the people of Cowra in 1992. That means that the people of Cowra, along with the Japanese, transformed the tragic event into the symbol of peace which was officially recognised. The New Zealand World Peace Bell was gifted to Christchurch, not Featherston, in 2006. It was believed that Christchurch could make a bold statement in support of world peace which could be realised by the New Zealand anti-nuclear foreign policy. The state of friendship between Featherston and Japan did not attract people's attention.

Student exchange

There has been student exchange between Cowra and Japan, because the close ties between them built up through the Japanese War Cemetery had to be passed on to the next generation. Former guards, war veterans, former Japanese POWs, and bereaved families who had contributed to firm ties between two peoples were gradually aging. Thereupon a programme for the private exchange of students between Cowra and Japan was thrashed out. It has been over 40 years since the student exchange between Cowra High School and *Seikei* High School started in 1970. Both student groups have experienced different cultures and shared the history attached to the Breakout. Thus such close ties between two peoples must be perpetuated through these young students.

There is not such student exchange between Featherston and Japan, unlike between Cowra and Japan, though there might be general student exchange programmes between them which aim to nurture world citizens through cross-cultural experiences.

Therefore, the change of generations may make their memories of the Incident fade away.

5. State of international exchange with Japan

In the light of those similarities and differences, this thesis tries to locate the relationship between Japan and Featherston (J-F) and relationship between Japan and Cowra (J-C) at the present time on the rectangular coordinates (see Figure 12).

5.1. Japan-Cowra relationship at the present time

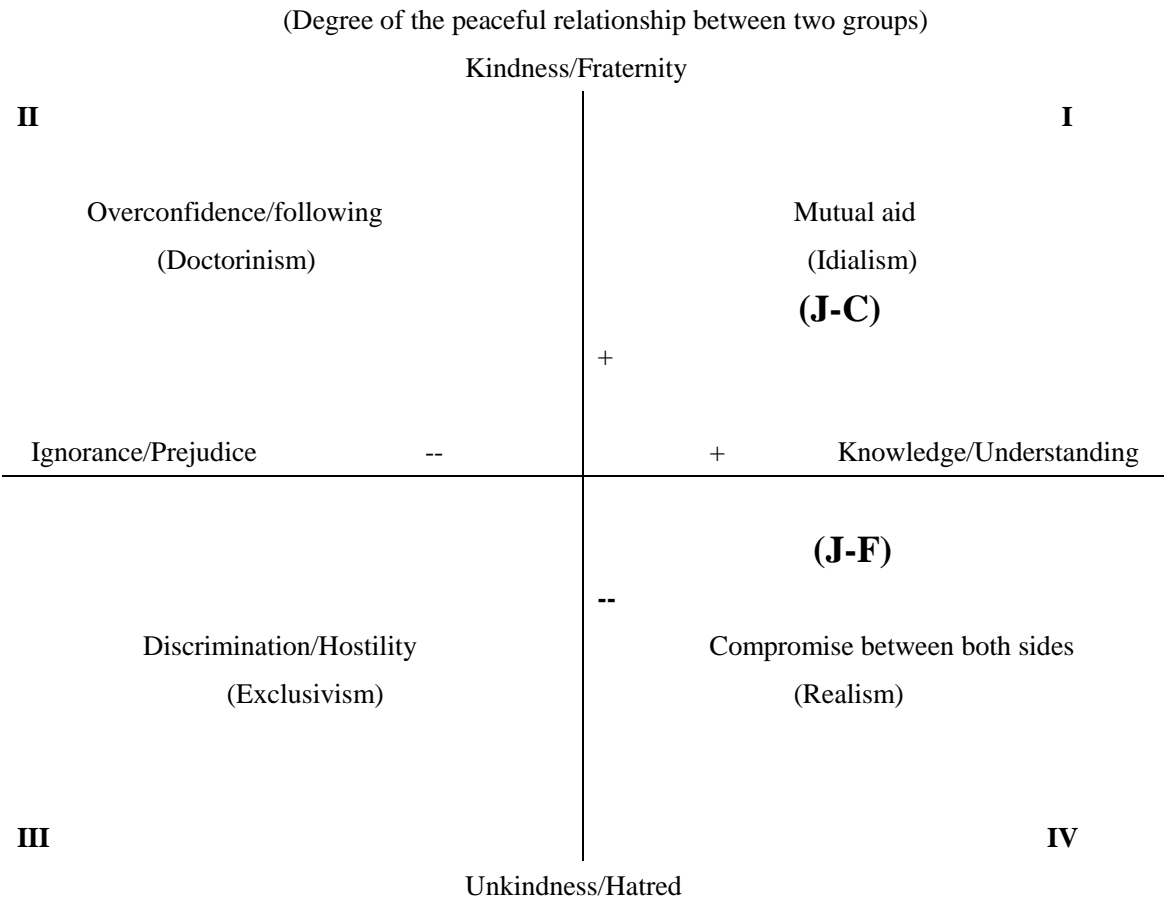
Japan-Cowra relationship (J-C) is situated on the first quadrant in which there is mutual aid based on fraternity and mutual understanding (ideal peaceful coexistence relationship). That is, J-C is fraternal relationship that two peoples have provided support and assistance when the others needed help. There has been the spiritual connection between Japan and Cowra through the Japanese War Cemetery. If consoling the spirits of the dead is seen as behaviour in which the living can communicate with the dead by supposing the spirits of the dead in the graves (Nishimura, 2007, p. 94), former POWs and bereaved families can soothe the spirits of the war deceased who would have rage or sorrow and can resolve to do something (e.g. a peace campaign) to satisfy those spirits. On the other hand, through having created the final resting places for the Japanese war dead and maintaining them, and seeing their comrades or bereaved families pacifying their souls, Cowra people can allay their remorse that their guards killed 234 Japanese POWs, even though the fault was with Japanese.

The Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre proposed by the Australian side deepened mutual understanding between Japan and Cowra. In the course of construction, there were cultural exchange and financial collaboration between two countries on both official and private levels. After their completion, both peoples have deepened their

spiritual connections more because local people and Japanese have recognised that the souls of those who died far from home would be soothed by the Japanese Garden. Also, the Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre have encouraged not only Cowra people, but also other Australians to feel closer to the Japanese and Japanese culture.

The people of Cowra were awarded the Australian World Peace Bell in 1992 by the World Peace Bell Association. The Australian bell symbolises a willingness to establish understanding and friendship between Cowra and Japan. The Cowra and Japan’s fraternal ties were internationally recognised.

Figure 12. Rectangular coordinate system of international exchange



There has been student exchange between Cowra and Japan. That is to pass on the close ties between them built up through the Japanese War Cemetery to the next

generation. It has been over 40 years since the student exchange between Cowra High School and Seikei High School started in 1970. Thus the fraternal connection between two peoples must be perpetuated through these young students.

5.2. Japan-Featherston relationship at the present time

Japan-Featherston relationship (J-F) is positioned on the fourth quadrant in which there is reciprocal compromise based on mutual understanding and persistent dialogue even though they have had mixed feelings (practical peaceful coexistence relationship). That is, J-F is unique relationship that Featherston people feel closer to the Japanese through Chor-Farmer. There is not the spiritual connection between Japanese and Featherston people unlike in Cowra. There is neither Japanese war cemetery in Featherston, nor in any other places. As mentioned before, ashes of the Japanese dead are still missing. Therefore, bereaved families of those who died in the camp have never visited Featherston. Though local people and Japanese can visit to commemorate the “Incident” before the small monument, it is impossible to console the “spirits” of Japanese victims of the Incident.

There seemed to have been reconciliation between local people and former camp guards, and former Japanese POWs who revisited Featherston after an interval of over 40 years on the local level. At the old POW camp site, the Former Japanese POW and the former camp staff happened to see and longed for their reunion. Japanese POWs having returned to Japan had felt that their survival was not fair to their dead comrades and realised that they were at fault for the Incident because of their dogmatic belief. On the other hand, New Zealand camp guards had been tormented by remorse for their actions in the Incident in the days after the war. They met again, understood their thoughts and so felt that old foes became old friends to each other. At the memorial

ceremony which the former Japanese POWs conducted in front of the small monument to their comrades who had died in the camp, not only people concerned in the POW camp, but also many local people prayed for the deceased. Also, at the welcome party which Featherston people held for them, local people accepted warmly Japanese thanks for the kind treatment and apology for the happening to New Zealanders.

Suspension of the plan for a Japanese Peace Garden made complete reconciliation between Featherston and Japan hopeless. New Zealand veterans opposed the plan. They still had ill feelings toward Japanese because of their memories of Japanese POW atrocities during the Asia-Pacific War. Unlike Australian veterans, they could hardly become tolerant toward Japanese. The district council could not help suspending the plan despite the existence of many local supporters of the Japanese Peace Garden.

However, a local Japanese timber company proposed a “Japanese garden” which most people can accept to realise the ex-Japanese POW’s wish to the district council. The “Japanese garden” became a reality despite having vandalism. It is the present Japanese garden next to the War Memorial Park. It has 68 cheery trees with no sign, no monument and no plaque. It is expected that the Japanese garden become the symbol of reconciliation between Featherston and Japan over the Incident one day.

Chor-farmer, Japanese male-voice choir, has served as a bridge of mutual understanding between Featherston people and Japanese. It encouraged people to support a “Japanese garden”. Local people look forward to listening to their biennial goodwill concert. Now, they are satisfied with unique friendly relations with Japanese through Chor-Farmer.

The New Zealand World Peace Bell was gifted to Christchurch, not Featherston.

This may be because the anti-nuclear foreign policy was more attractive to the public than the state of friendship between Featherston and Japan in terms of world peace.

5.3. Cause of the difference between (J-C) and (J-F)

(1) Memories of war

It is important how the war remains in people's memory for their way in which to have international exchange with former enemies. In Cowra, one of the leaders, Oliver's war memory was that the Australian graves in the Middle East had been maintained by local people. He desired that Australians should do the same for their former enemies in Australia and encouraged Cowra people who had had ill feeling toward Japanese to respect the Japanese war dead.

Also, Father Lionel Marsden, when he was a POW forced to assist construction of the death railway in Burma, determined to turn hate into love and go to Japan, if he returned to Australia alive (see 4.6.1). After the war, he said that he forgave the Japanese and went to Japan for reconciliation and began a relief operation in war-damaged *Nara*, Japan in 1949. Father Tony Glynn, inspired by such Marsden's philanthropic efforts, aided the poor in *Nara*, Japan and encouraged the former Japanese POW to visit Cowra.

Also, *Susumu Kawaguchi*, former Japanese POW in Cowra, never forgot that he and his two comrades had been treated to fresh scones and hot tea by Mrs Weir at the farm house while wandering to die after having escaped (see 3.3.). His revisit to Cowra to express his gratitude to Mrs Weir encouraged him and her daughter, Margaret to be reconciled (see 3.6.1.). This motivated her to attend the symposium on the Cowra Incident in Japan (see 3.6.1), which promoted friendship between Cowra and Japan. Thus, those memories of war have underlain two peoples' relations that they have offered support and aid when the others needed help.

However, in Featherston, most war veterans, except McKerrow, Former Mayor of Featherston (see 2.6.2.), had had only dreadful memories of Japanese troops in the Asia-Pacific War: the Tarawa Tragedy, the death railway in Burma or Nanking Massacre. They had hung up on the past that two countries were enemies. And so, local people could hardly erase ill feelings toward the Japanese. As a result, it was not easy for Featherston and Japan to have friendly relationship.

(2) Responsibility for the incident

Which side was responsible for the incident, the Japanese side or the Australian side, or the New Zealand side? In the case of the Cowra Breakout, the Japanese side was responsible for the incident (see 3.5.). This means that Australian side as captor coped with “the Japanese escape” according to the Geneva POW Convention. In particular, they had the courtesy to bury the Japanese escape dead taking every consideration and have maintained the Japanese graves in the days after the war. This Australian behaviour reduced their remorse for heavy casualties in the incident. It also was gratefully appreciated for former Japanese POWs who had felt ashamed to look Cowra in the face, though remembered their comrades who had died in Cowra,

In the case of the Featherston Incident, the New Zealand side was responsible for the Incident (see 2.5.). This means that the New Zealand side as captor could hardly cope with the issue of work and caused shooting of Japanese POWs against the Geneva POW Convention. In particular, it was alleged that one of the guards shot many Japanese dead in retaliation for his brother who had been killed by Japanese in the Tarawa Tragedy, and also that Japanese victims of the Incident have never had their final resting places recognised as if New Zealanders repaid Japanese in the same coin as New Zealand victims in Tarawa. Now, the truth about what happened at Featherston in

February 1943 is still in the dark. Seemingly, not only New Zealand authorities, but also the Japanese counterparts do not wish for it to become a topic of conversation.

Locally, there seemed to be reconciliation between Japanese POWs and New Zealand guards at the camp after the Incident, and between former Japanese POWs, and former New Zealand guards and local people at Featherston in the 1980s because their mutual understanding was deepened in the respective period of time. Now, the memorial service for the victims of the Incident is held on 25 February every year. Also, Chor-Farmer holds a goodwill concert trip every two years. However, there is not any nationwide connection between two countries concerning the Featherston Incident.

(3)Geo-economic background

The economic conditions for location are vital to the town. Cowra is not suitable for a commuters' town of the big cities, Sydney or Canberra, because it is too far from those big cities to commute (see 3.6.3.). To revitalise the town, independent policies were needed and one of them was a Japanese connection. This became one of the impetuses for Cowra to transform the tragic events of 1944 into a symbol of peace.

However, Featherston is a commuters' town of Wellington. It takes about one hour get to there from Featherston (see 2.6.3.). More than half of the population go to work in Wellington. The Featherston economy is mainly dependent upon the economy of the capital city. Therefore, geo-economically, the town and local people feel not much interest in Japanese connections. They have advanced international goodwill with Japan at their own pace.

5.4. State of friendship between Featherston and Japan in the future

The present Japan-Featherston relationship was located on the fourth quadrant of the rectangular coordinates. This is a second best and practical peaceful coexistence

relationship. Here is the most suitable place for the J-F. Concretely, the J-F is unique friendly relationship between Featherston people and Chor-Farmer representing Japanese people. This is expected to continue in the future. After Japan-Featherston relationship became awkward because of suspension of the project for the Japanese Peace Garden”, Chor-Farmer, coupled with local council and JNL, encouraged local people to accept a “simple Japanese garden”. Most of my interviewees unanimously mentioned that most Featherston people could personally contact Japanese through Chor-Farmer which is a lovely choir. The mayor told us that Featherston did not need any Japanese sister town because it had had Chor-Farmer. Thus, there are firm ties between Chor-Farmer and Featherston to cherish Japan-Featherston relationship.

What I want Chor-Farmer to do is to sing a song under cherry trees (in full bloom) at the Japanese garden when Chor-Farmer visits the Featherston Garden of Remembrance. It is said that each of 68 cherry trees represents each of 68 victims of the POW camp. Now that Japanese victims’ ashes are still missing, it is significant for Chor-Farmer to sing each of cherry trees songs.

Conclusion

There should have been no Japanese POWs in any battle field during the Asia-Pacific War because of the issue of *Senjinkun* (Military Field Code) and the non-ratification of the Geneva POW Convention by the Japanese government of the time. In reality, Japanese POWs who should not have existed were interned at the Featherston POW camp in New Zealand and the Cowra POW camp in Australia.

Japanese POWs had no objection to the living conditions of the camps both in Featherston and in Cowra. However, they felt a sense of hopelessness, because they

believed they, POWs, deserved to die. Mentally, they were seeking opportunities to die with honour. Physically, they were very busy in playing baseball. Doctors' and guards' kind treatment encouraged POWs to doubt their belief and to revive their will to live. While camp guards could not understand such mixed feelings of Japanese POWs, Japanese wondered why the camp staff treated them very kindly.

In Featherston, there had been the friction over the issue of work between the military force prisoners (fighting men) and the camp authorities. While the labour force prisoners (workers) were willing to work, even if not so, they followed the order at gunpoint, fighting men refused work to benefit the enemy and the same work as workers *did*. The camp authorities managed to make fighting men work outside under the same conditions as workers' ones by sheer strength, ignoring the Japanese military traditions. Fighting men who resolved to honourably die, requested the camp commandant to have a conference with him before sending working parties, by sitting in strike. On the day of the Incident, the three key actions taken by the New Zealand side: Adjutant's first warning shot killing a prisoner, guards' fusillades led by Owen without the order and Commandant's refusal of the proposed conference resulted from their treatment dependent upon only the Geneva Convention, without understanding Japanese prisoners' position. The three key actions taken by the Japanese side: their refusal of work parties, request for the conference and continuing defiant behaviour arose from their firm belief without understanding the captor's position. Consequently, the Incident accidentally occurred, 48 Japanese POWs and one New Zealand guard died there on 25 February 1943, but the ashes of Japanese victims are still missing.

In Cowra, unlike Italian POWs, there was the issue of work between Japanese POWs and Australian guards, which was decided by not making Japanese work outside.

However, the camp authorities decided to transfer only soldier prisoners of Camp B which was beyond its capacity to the Hay camp as their security policy, ignoring the Japanese family tradition. This order aroused Japanese POWs' desire to seek opportunities to die. Japanese decided to reject the enemy order and launch a mass escape to die by for-or-against voting with about 80 per cent of the prisoners drawing the "circle". They also decided unanimously to carry it out on the following early morning. Thus, on 5 August 1944, just before 2:00 am, more than 900 Japanese POWs rushed from burning huts and attacked the series of fences of the camp. The Australian guards managed to hold back a Japanese breakout by using all their weapons. Finally, the Japanese failed in their attempt at the mass escape in nine days with heavy casualties: 234 Japanese POWs and four Australian soldiers died, all of whom were honourably buried in the war cemetery in Cowra.

The three countries concerned had not disclosed the incidents to the public for about 30 years since they took place. The Japanese government feared their people's awareness that Japanese POWs existed. Both the New Zealand and Australian governments desired to keep the fact of having shot a large number of unarmed Japanese POWs to death confidential. However, after the war, those tragic incidents have encouraged the people of Japan and the people of Featherston, and Cowra to develop friendly relationships in their respective ways.

In Featherston, in the 1980s, the reunion of former Japanese POWs and former camp guards encouraged them to settle their differences at a personal level because they reflected each other's thoughtlessness had invited an unexpected tragedy at that time. In the 1990s, the former POW's plan for creating the Japanese peace garden with a new monument to Japanese victims of the Incident was cancelled by opposition of RSA

members across the country. They might have thought that Japan shut its eyes to its own brutality in the Asia-Pacific War in requesting such a project. In the 2000s, a simple 68-cherry-tree Japanese garden (not a Japanese peace garden) was somehow completed. This was the product of efforts of concerned parties, including the local council, JNL and Chor-Farmer, who respected the former Japanese POW's last wish. Now, Featherston people have cherished friendship with the Japanese through Chor-Farmer.

In Cowra, just after the end of the war, members of the RSL tended the unkempt graves of their former enemies. This is the original point of the present very close ties between Cowra and Japan. In the 1960s, a new Japanese War Cemetery in which the graves of all 522 Japanese nationals who had died in Australia during the war were centralised was established at Cowra through cooperation of concerned parties from the two countries. There were Breakout Commemorations and a Service of Respect for both Japanese and Australians which take place there every year. In the 1970s, the student exchange between Cowra High School and *Seikei* High School began under the principle that one Cowra student and one *Seikei* student travel and study each year. The very close ties between Cowra and Japan created through the Japanese War Cemetery would be passed on to the next generation by the young people. In the 1980s, the full Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre was completed by cultural and financial collaboration between two countries. The Japanese Garden is the place to comfort souls of Japanese soldiers and civilians and for the annual *Sakura* Festival to be held. It is also a work of Japanese culture, which encourages Australians to feel familiar with Japan and the Japanese. Thus, Cowra people and the Japanese have transferred the tragic events of 1944 into a symbol of peace and reconciliation.

Both incidents have something in common: Cultural misunderstanding caused

the shooting, which resulted in cultural understanding, which has brought friendship. On the other hand, there are the following differences between the two incidents. 1. Judicially, while the Japanese side was not responsible for the Featherston Incident, the Japanese side was responsible for the Cowra Breakout. 2. While Japanese victims of the Featherston Incident were cremated, but their ashes are still missing, those of the Cowra Breakout were buried and their graves have been maintained with great respect. 3. While there is a static small-scale Japanese garden commemorating the Featherston Incident, there is a dynamic large-scale Japanese Garden in memory of the Cowra Breakout. 4. While the Chor-Farmer choir have played a central role in friendship with Featherston people, Chor-Farmer look like relatives of the Cowra family because of their long acquaintance. 5. Unlike Featherston, there has been original student exchange between Cowra and Japan, which pass on their close ties to the next generation.

This thesis tried to answer three research questions which I have had as a researcher since I met the Australian couple at the Featherston Heritage Museum in 2004. My first research question is: What is the difference between Japan-Featherston relationships (J-F) and Japan-Cowra relationships (J-C)? In the light of these similarities and differences between the two incidents, the J-F and the J-C were located on the rectangular coordinates showing the state of international exchange between the two groups. While the J-F was situated on the fourth quadrant of the rectangular coordinates which means practical peaceful coexistence relationship, the J-C was located on the first quadrant which means ideal peaceful coexistence relationship.

In the case of the J-C, there has been the spiritual connection between Japan and Cowra through the Japanese War Cemetery and the Japanese Garden. That spirits of those Japanese who had died in the Breakout attained eternal rest in Cowra encourages

the Japanese to feel gratitude to Cowra people. It also makes Cowra people feel a mixed sense of relief and pride. Also, the Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre was the product of cultural and financial collaboration between Australia and Japan. Now, they have an active role in introducing Japanese culture to Australians. They are the stage of the *Sakura* Festival and usually a place where local people and tourists can relax and enjoy themselves in a Japanese atmosphere. Thus, two peoples have had fraternal relationship that Cowra people and the Japanese have provided support and aid when the others needed help. The first quadrant in which there is reciprocal aid based on fraternity and mutual understanding is suitable for J-C.

In the case of Japan-Featherston relationship (J-F), unlike Cowra, there is no spiritual connection between two peoples. No graveyards of those Japanese who died in the POW camp exist in Featherston, nor in any other place. Their ashes are still missing. Therefore, though local people and Japanese can commemorate the Incident before the small monument, it is impossible to console their spirits. There seemed to have been reconciliation between local people and former camp guards, and former Japanese POWs who revisited Featherston for the first time in over 40 years on the local level. Their reunion urged them to feel that old foes become old friends. Former Japanese POWs were allowed to build two monuments to their deceased comrades and the annual memorial ceremony has been held there.

In the 1990s, relations between Featherston and Japan were awkward. This was because of nationwide opposition to the former Japanese POW's plan to construct a Japanese Peace Garden with a new monument by RSA members. However, through the labours of the local council, JNL and Chor-Farmer, a simple small-scale Japanese 68-cherry-tree garden was built. It has been welcomed by almost all local people. Now,

Featherston people have cherished unique friendly relationship with the Japanese through the Cho-Farmer's goodwill concert. The fourth quadrant in which there is reciprocal compromise based on mutual understanding and dialogue even though they had had awkwardness is applicable to J-F.

My second research question is: What is the cause of the difference between the two relationships? There are three factors: memories of war, responsibility for the incident and the geo-economic background. First of all, people's memories of war influence their way to have international exchange with former enemies. In the J-C relationship, people have had memories of something philanthropic: One of the leaders in Cowra, Oliver's memory of well-kept Australian graves in the Middle East led RSL members to respect the Japanese war dead. Father Marsden (Glynn)'s memories of Japanese POW atrocity led people to forgive the Japanese. Kawaguchi's memory of hot scones from Mrs Weir, led Japanese people to respect Australians. Thus, Australian philanthropism has reconciled Cowra people with the Japanese. However, in the J-F relationship, most war veterans had had only terrible memories of Japanese troops in the Asia-Pacific War. And so, local people could hardly erase ill feelings toward the Japanese. As a result, it was not easy for Featherston and Japan to have a friendly relationship.

Next, which side was responsible for the incident? In the case of the Cowra Breakout, it was the Japanese side's fault. The Australian side coped with the Japanese mass escape as captor. After the incident, they buried the Japanese dead with great respect and have willingly maintained their graves until now. This Australian behaviour not only moved the Japanese deeply, but also allayed their remorse for considerable casualties in the incident. In the case of the Featherston Incident, the New Zealand side

was responsible. The camp authorities could hardly cope with the issue of work as captor and caused the shooting of Japanese POWs illegally. The Tarawa Tragedy seemed to have cast a dark shadow over the Featherston Incident: A Tommy gunner's wild shooting and missing ashes of Japanese victims of the Incident. This makes the truth of the Incident hidden out of sight. I remember that I was told at the Japanese Embassy in Wellington that the Featherston Incident was still a delicate subject. However, the annual memorial service for the Incident is held on 25 February. Local people enjoy friendship with the Japanese through Chor-Farmer.

Then, the geo-economic background of the town is essential. Cowra is not suitable for a commuters' town of Sydney or Canberra. To revitalise the town, the centrepiece of tourism was needed and it was encouraging cultural ties with Japan. In contrast, Featherston is a commuters' town of Wellington. Geo-economically, Japanese connections have attracted little interest of the town and local people.

My third research question is how the Japan-Featherston relationship should be in the future? While the Japan-Cowra relationship was located on the first quadrant, Japan-Featherston relationship was located on the fourth quadrant of the rectangular coordinates. Their respective quadrants are respectively their suitable places. The J-F is a second best and practical peaceful coexistence relationship. Concretely, The J-F is a unique friendly relationship between Featherston people and Chor-Farmer representing Japanese people. This is expected to continue in the future. Chor-Farmer has played a role as a bridge between Featherston and Japan through music. Local residents have given a warm welcome to Chor-Farmer. The local council has recognised Chor-Farmer as the equivalent of the Japanese sister town. Therefore, Featherston people expect to continue enjoying unique friendships with the Japanese through Char-Farmer.

Unlike Cowra, there is no Japanese cemetery in Featheston because ashes of Japanese victims are missing. It is impossible to console the souls of them in a true sense. Fortunately, there is the 68-cherry-tree-Japanese garden, in which each of the 68 trees is said to mean the soul of the 68 victims in the POW camp. It is thought-provoking for Chor-Farmer to sing requiems under each cherry tree at the Japanese garden.

(39,793 words)

Appendices

Appendix A 1929 Geneva POW Convention (main articles)

Application

Article 1: This convention shall apply to the armed forces of fighting countries, both combatants and non-combatants. (condensed version)

Article 2: Prisoners of war are in the power of the hostile Government, but not of the individuals or formation which captured them.

They shall at all times be humanely treated and protected, particularly against acts of violence, from insults and from public curiosity.

Measures of reprisal against them are forbidden.

Living conditions

Article 10: Prisoners of war shall be lodged in buildings or huts which afford all possible safeguards as regards hygiene and salubrity... (extract)

Article 11: The food ration of prisoners of war shall be equivalent in quantity and quality to that of the depot troops.

Prisoners shall also be afforded the means of preparing for themselves such additional articles of food as they may possess.

Sufficient drinking water shall be supplied to them. The use of tobacco shall be authorized. Prisoners may be employed in the kitchens.

All collective disciplinary measures affecting food are prohibited.

Article 12: Clothing, underwear and footwear shall be supplied to prisoners of war by the detaining Power...

In all camps, canteens shall be installed at which prisoners shall be able to procure, at the local market price, food commodities and ordinary articles...

(extract)

Work

Article 27: Belligerents may employ as workmen prisoners of war who are physically fit, other than officers and persons of equivalent status, according to their rank and their ability... (extract)

Article 30: The duration of the daily work of prisoners of war, including the time of the journey to and from work, shall not be excessive and shall in no case exceed that permitted for civil workers of the locality employed on the same work. Each prisoner shall be allowed a rest of twenty-four consecutive hours each week, preferably on Sunday.

Article 31: Work done by prisoners of war shall have no direct connection with the operations of the war. In particular, it is forbidden to employ prisoners in the

manufacture or transport of arms or munitions of any kind, or on the transport of material destined for combatant units... (extract)

Article 34: Prisoners of war shall not receive pay for work in connection with the administration, internal arrangement and maintenance of camps.

Prisoners employed on other work shall be entitled to a rate of pay, to be fixed by agreements between the belligerents... (extract)

Representatives of prisoners of war

Article 43: In any locality where there may be prisoners of war, they shall be authorized to appoint representatives to represent them before the military authorities and the protecting Powers... (extract)

Deaths of prisoners of war

Article 76..... The belligerents shall ensure that prisoners of war who have died in captivity are honourably buried, and that the graves bear the necessary indications and are treated with respect and suitably maintained. (extract)

Bureaux of relief and information concerning prisoners of war

Article 77: Each of the belligerent Powers shall inform its Information Bureau as soon as possible of all captures of prisoners effected by its armed forces, furnishing them with all particulars of identity at its disposal to enable the families concerned to be quickly notified, and stating the official addresses to which families may write to the prisoners.

Text

Article 84: The text of the convention shall be displayed in the native language of the prisoners of war. (condensed version)

Repatriation

Article 75: When belligerents conclude an armistice convention, they shall normally cause to be included therein provisions concerning the repatriation of prisoners of war... In any case, the repatriation of prisoners shall be effected as soon as possible after the conclusion of peace... (extract)

(ICRC. (1929) *Convention relative to the treatment of POW, Geneva*)

Appendix B

Evidence of eyewitnesses at the Court of Inquiry (Report and findings of the Court of Inquiry, 1943) and in the interviews by researchers (Nicolaidi, 1999, Tsujimoto, 2005, and Sanders, 1990).

1. Why did the camp authorities demand 105 men for working parties from No.2 Compound on 25 February?

Camp Commandant Donaldson who was not present at the scene when the Incident happened:

“...I had discussed the matter of working parties with the camp S.M. ...,examining the strength in both compounds. On the 25th No.1 compound was to supply an additional party of 15 men ((229+15) men/504 men =54%). I determined to transfer several tasks from No.1 to No.2 so as to even the matters up....We reached the conclusion that at least 130 men were available for work in No.2 compound, exclusive of NCOs, sick, or excused duty, and I was therefore satisfied they could easily provide the 105 men (105 men/296 men=42%) demanded”.

“...Orders, once issued, must be carried out and any points they wished to raise, raise afterward...”.

“...The course of events in No.1 compound led me to believe that only time was required to secure similar results in No.3 (No.2).... ”

(March 1943: at the Court of Inquiry)

2. Why did prisoners stage a sit-in on the scene on that day?

Adachi who had been Officer (Lieutenant) of the cruiser, “Furutaka”, was allowed to visit No.1 Compound to supervise fighting men and negotiated with the adjutant about the “meeting” on that day:

“...I think it was a mistake by the officer commanding to give order to make men of the armed forces and labourers go out to work together....I claimed that a few days before the incident I requested to have an interview with the commandant through Interpreter Ashton but it came to nothing...”.

“...I knew the working party for that morning had refused to go out. The eight officers in the officers’ compound had decided that the men should not go out to work until there had been a conference with the camp Commandant and orders were issued to the men...”

(27 February 1943: at the hospital established in ANZAC Hall, Featherston)

“...It was my intention to wait until the three days were up and then have a consultation between the Japanese officers and the camp Commandant. But as so many men (105)

were demanded from the compound before the expiry of the three days, this incident occurred.”

(10 March 1943 at Wellington Public Hospital)

3. Why did not Donaldson go to the scene before the Incident happened?

Camp Commandant Donaldson:

“...The first message to me on 25 Feb with reference to not being able to get the working parties out was nothing more than a routine message. Following the first message I thought it unnecessary to go to the compound because, amongst other reasons, I had given my ultimatum and an entry might have suggested over-anxiety. Secondly, there was no real suggestion of danger in any report that had reached me at that time. Thirdly, I had confidence in my officers who were on the spot handling the situation. When I told them that I had given them three days, I had definitely made up my mind that I would not go near the compound until the three days were up.”

“UP till this time I had had no reason to believe that the situation really abnormal. I now realised that it demanded my presence, and at once left for No 2 compound.... I was some 30 or 40 yards from the compound gate when I heard the guard open fire. I at once broke into the double and rushed into the compound. Before my arrival fire had ceased. I saw when I reached the spot a number of bodies on the ground between the two groups of huts....I at once gave instructions to summon the camp medical staff..., and then ordered the guards to clear the unwounded prisoners from the huts and round them up in the open....”

“...I asked Mr Malcolm for a resume of events... Then, seeing that the situation was in hand,... I...reported the matter to Army HQ by telephone.”

(March 1943: at the Court of Inquiry)

4. Why did Adjutant Malcolm decide to use arms on the scene?

Adjutant Malcolm who had been engaged in the New Zealand Army for 17 years, was taking responsibility as the adjutant in command for the negotiations with Adachi on the scene on that day:

“...In determining my next move I think I was influenced by recollection that a few weeks ago in a case of some trouble with the men of No. 1 Compound I had succeeded in carrying my point with them by a show of arms. On that occasion I had paraded a guard armed in his immediate vicinity of the men and thereupon the men had complied with orders. So I decided upon a show of arms as my next move, there being no remaining expedient apparent to me to get over the situation ...”

(March 1943: at the Court of Inquiry)

5. Was there any bloodshed between prisoners and guards before the shooting on the scene?

Adachi:

“...A POW was stabbed in the thigh with a bayonet prior to *Nishimura* re-emerging from the hut and being arrested.”

“...The non-commissioned officer who had been stabbed winced with pain, and more or less spontaneously grasped the bayonet with both hands. The New Zealand soldier hurriedly pulled the bayonet up and out. ...ten blood- stained [severed] fingers spread on the ground....”

(Nicolaidi, 1995, p. 86: *Adachi* recounted the fact in the enlarged edition of *Bungei Shunju* (Saito, 1975)).

6. How was the first shot of the Adjutant?

Regimental Sergeant Major **Richardson**, Captain **Ashton**, Sergeant **Morris**, Duty officer Second Lieutenant **McLean**, Lieutenant **Martin** and Second Lieutenant **Gardiner** testified at the Court of inquiry the following effect in a respective mode of expression. The adjutant fired the first shot over *Adachi*’s head and then his second shot, which entered *Adachi*’s right shoulder. Spontaneously, prisoners threw stones at and rush the adjutant and guards, who opened fire on prisoners from the instinct of self-preservation. (March 1943: at the Court of Inquiry)

A former **guard** at the Featherston POW camp who recollected the Incident 30 years later:

“They were gathered on a large slab of concrete and when it was found they were gathered there, guards were posted on the huts on either side. When two unfortunate shots were fired, which happened to hit two Japanese, they started to scatter. The guards naturally started to shoot.”

(Sanders, 1990)

Adachi:

“I then started to return to my previous position right in the middle of the men. After taking two or three steps forward, staring down and taking care not to tread on the hands or legs of my men, I felt a violent shock on my left arm and after that lost feeling in it.”

“For some reason I did not realize that the hot blast on my left arm had been a bullet piercing it. Nevertheless I came to hear later that the bullet happened to hit the head of a seaman behind me, killing him instantly.”

(Nicolaidi, 1995, p.109: *Adachi* recounted this in the magazine *Bungei Shunju* (Saito, 1963))

Saito who had been a seaman of the destroyer, “*Shogetsu*”, recalled clearly the moment when Mr *Adachi* was hit by Malcolm’s first shot:

“...Mr *Adachi*, saying, “All right; go ahead and shoot, then”, advanced. Just then, Malcolm fired a revolver at him. The bullet shooting through his left arm hit the forehead of a prisoner behind him. He was instantly killed.”

“The minute prisoners looked at the blood from the forehead of the prisoner behind *Adachi*, all of them rose to their feet and rushed the guard while raising a queer voice and throwing stones from their pockets at them.”

“Following this, the second shot Malcolm fired went through *Adachi*’s right shoulder. *Adachi* groaned, “You’ve finally hit me!...”

“Guns of some 50 guards emitted fire simultaneously. Some 240 unarmed prisoners rushed in a body towards guards, who were panic-struck and began to open fire at random on prisoners....”

“A moment, the shots died down. When I looked around, thinking as if I was going to be delayed, there went up a shout, “Long reign the Emperor! The Empire of Japan forever!” from among prisoners. I got up on my feet and cried so, too.”

“And then, the shots roared up again. After suddenly lying down, when I stood up with my friends, there were the shots once more....I plunged into the guards who were firing shots on us, persuading myself “Finally all of us can die here...”

“In a moment, prisoners were being mowed down by guards’ shooting. It had been only 50 seconds since Malcolm fired the first shot. It was a split-second battle.”
(*Tsujimoto*, 2005, p. 69)

7. How did the guards opened fire spontaneously at prisoners?

Corporal Dickson who was mobilised in November 1942, was in charge of No.1 relief of the guard at the POW camp on that day:

“...I was ultimately posted on top of the second building (a latrine) from the right facing the compound....I was armed with a Tommy gun and 50 rounds of ammunition....On the building on my right there were three men with rifles. On the building next but one on my left Corporal Owen was stationed. On the building on his left there were two men with rifles....Owen had a Tommy gun.”

“...I opened fire, myself, after the guards had open fire....Out of that 50 rounds I expended 9 (on single shot)....I fired into the body of prisoners approximately to the left of where the man (*Adachi*) standing....”

(March 1943: at the Court of Inquiry)

Lieutenant Martin who had been a guard officer at the POW camp since September 1942, gave a pistol to Adjutant Malcolm on the scene on that day:

“Most of the Japanese fell in front of the slab but some behind the slab and thus nearer the guard....Someone shouted “stop” and I gave the order “cease fire”....”

“...I assisted lining up the prisoners who were still alive. Before doing this, I had found one of our men Private Pelvin lying in one of the mess rooms wounded. He had been previously standing immediately behind me and I am of opinion that he had been shot by a bullet ricocheting after having been fired from the roof of the latrine....”

(March 1943: at the Court of Inquiry)

Corporal Patchet who had been stationed at the No.1 POW camp, Featherston, since the camp started, was orderly corporal on that day:

“...I was ordered to take up a position on top of an ablution stand roof....I was armed with a Tommy gun, and 50 rounds of ammunition.... I did hear another shot (Malcolm’s) fired, and in the rush there was a volley of fire from our boys... I heard no order given to our men to fire...There were a lot of bullets flying...but whether there were two volleys or not I don’t know...I

believe that firing on these prisoners was the only alternative....”

“...It might be possible for a Tommy gun bullet to wound one man, and then ricochet and wound another.”

“I did not fire any shots at all. My own troops were in danger from any shots I might have fired.”

(March 1943: at the Court of Inquiry)

Len James who was eighteen at the time of the shooting, was one of a small group of guards ordered to take Adachi out from among the seated POWs:

“On the morning of the shooting, I had taken out ‘a lot of coolies (workers in No.1 compound)’ in a work party. I heard this commotion (disturbance in No.2 compound) going on....I rushed my coolies down to the coolie compound. I then ran into No.2 compound with another member of the guard and joined the righthand end of the arc of guards....” (Nicolaidi, 1999, p.71: he interviewed L. James on 6 October, 1991)

“A member of the guard, armed with a machine gun on one of a latrine roofs behind the seated POWs, was ‘trigger happy’.” (Nicolaidi, 1999, p.52: he interviewed L. James on 24 March 1991)

“Well, Wally Pelvin, he said something like, ‘I’m getting out.’ And he turned and got it in the back. It was a ricochet from a bullet....The only person who had a chance of getting us was Corporal Owen.”

“This NCO (Owen) not only wounded me and killed another guard but began firing before the rifles went into action from the arc of guards in front of Japanese.”

“...our ceasefire had stopped but there was still shooting going on.

(Nicolaidi, 1999, p.73 &77: he interviewed L. James on 6 October, 1991)

Appendix C: Adachi's memoir

Picture of Adachi's memoir



(Photo: Yasuhiro, 25 January 2013)

Nonliterel translation of Adachi's memoir above

When I was mobilised on 6 February 1946, the Tokyo Trial was still in session. After a while, I received orders to appear in court as a witness to the Featherston Incident in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East from the Navy Department. On the designated day, I appeared in court and was taking the witness stand. A judge questioned me about what case I was a witness to. I answered, “I and my men had been captured by Americans when my warship *Furutaka* had been sunk by them at the Battle of Guadalcanal, and then I and my men had been sent as POWs to New Zealand. On 25 February 1943, a happening with its origins in the issue of work occurred at the Featherston POW camp there and consequently, 48 Japanese POWs had been killed and

about 90 ones wounded by shooting of New Zealand guards. I was a witness to that incident.” And then the judge declared that to judge such a major case, a person responsible from New Zealand must be summoned, and so I could not be accepted as a witness. I was surprised at the unfair decision in the Tokyo Trial that the judge overruled any case which was unfavourable to the Allied Powers.

Appendix D 1 The Featherston Incident:

Details (Bossard and Schmid’s reports in December 1942) (condensed versions)

(1) Accommodations

Compound No.1: 487 non-combatant POWs are interned with eight persons in a sleeping tent.

Compound No.3 (temporary one): 196 combatant POWs are interned with eight persons in a sleeping tent.

Officer’s Compound: four officer POWs are interned in a tent. Each officer has an orderly.

This kind of sleeping accommodation is only temporary as tents will soon be replaced by wooden huts. Each compound has a bath shelter.

(2) Interior Organisation

The interior organisation is controlled in the following way. For every eighty POWs there is one council-man, elected by the POW themselves. Complaints made to the Council-men by the POW pass to the Commanding-Officer through the Camp-Leader (the so-called No.1 man) who is in turn elected by the Council-men. Each compound has its separate No.1 man. The Council-men organise all working-parties and elect the men for the routine work in camp in rotation.

(3) General routine

Japanese prisoners of war lead an everyday life according the following the general routine under the 1929 Geneva Convention:

Reville	6 a.m.
Roll Call	6.30 a.m.
Sick Parade	6.45 a.m.
Breakfast	7.30 a.m.
(work and/or recreation)	
Camp Inspection	10. a.m.
(work and/or recreation)	
Dinner	12. noon
(work and/or recreation)	

Tea	5. p.m.
Roll Call	6. p.m.
Light out	8. p.m.

(4) Food

The food supply as well as quantity and quality are concerned is good. It is prepared by the Japanese cooks according to their taste, and they appear to be satisfied with their rations. For breakfast, bread, butter and milk (daily), and boiled rice (at least three times a week). For dinner (midday), bread, butter and fruit (daily), and boiled rice and milk (at least twice a week). For tea (evening), vegetables (potatoes (daily), turnips, peas, beans, cabbage etc, according to season) and meat (pork, mutton, beef, stew, or corned beef). There is tea with every meal.

The only thing which prisoners seem to miss is fish (ether dried, smoked or fresh).

The POWs will be able to have vegetable garden for each compound with they can add to their food.

(5) Health (Schmid)

The medical treatment of sick prisoners of war is well organised.

...

Most of the sick POW have their illness as a consequence of having been wounded in action or from exposure and malnutrition or tropical diseases before they had been taken prisoners. Any POW who feels himself sick will be visited by the medical officer, besides there is also the daily sick parade for all.

All patients from Compounds Nos. 1 and 3 are admitted to the Infirmary in Compound No. 1, whereas those from Compound for officer prisoners of war would be sent for the treatment to the Public Hospital. Clothing (Bossard)

The clothing arrangement can be stated to be good for summer months. The clothing is distributed free to the POW. They are clothed in blueish-black costume and hats, the standard Army wear dyed. Other clothing including four blankets and two towels, and necessities are supplied to the POW. They appreciate the special effort made on their behalf when received.

(6) Work (Bossard)

At present most of the prisoners of war are occupied with regular camp duties which are not paid for, for instance, cutting gorse, messing, cooking, gardening or clearing compounds of stones. This work is mostly done in the morning, leaving most of the afternoon free for recreation. At present only 80 prisoners are on remunerative work. They are occupied in vegetable growing at Greytown, about 5 miles north of Featherston. They are working under the supervision of the Agricultural Department

staff and armed guards for 6¼ hours from 8.15 a.m. during which there is 1 hour free for lunch. The New Zealand Government was still considering the nature of the work most suitable for the POW.

(7) Recreation and Sport (Bossard)

Prisoners are able to organise their own sports-meetings, such as tug-of-war, quoits, football or baseball, which they like best. The sports-articles are supplied to them by the Authorities without any cost. Special areas for such sports are made available to the POW within the camp, 450 POWs have physical exercise every morning in No.1 Compound. In bad weather the prisoners of war play cards, draughts, Chinese Chequers, darts, in their tent. If the POWs are not on camp-duty, they are able to move freely within their compound during the whole day.

The POW receives 5 cigarettes a day and is allowed to smoke during special hours of the day.

(8) Religious Services (Schmid)

According to advice received by the POWs themselves, most of them are Shintoists and Buddhists, and there are one Catholic and two Protestants among the POW. A prisoner who is Catholic, can be visited sometimes by a Catholic priest from Featherston.

(9) Correspondence Facilities (Bossard)

Prisoners of war are permitted to send a letter to their families informing them of their whereabouts not later than one week after their arrival in camp, or any time in case of sickness. However, it seems that they are reluctant to write home, fearing that having been captured as POW is a disgrace to their families. Up to the present time the neither letters nor postcards have been posted by them for Japan.

Appendix D 2: The Cowra Breakout

Details (Swiss Consuls General Black's report on 27 January 1944)

(1) Accommodations

There are some new galvanised sheet iron huts with electric lights and glass windows for Japanese POWs. NCOs and others are housed there with 56 persons in a hut. One straw mattress and five blankets are supplied and a shelf is available for personal effects per person. Officers are housed with one or two persons in a room of the hut. Two sheets, one down mattress and five blankets are provided.

(2) Correspondence Facilities

All the POWs have still refused to inform their families of having become POWs. Thereupon, no letters or parcels still get to them. They do not also expect to receive

such mail from their relatives in Japan.

(3) Food

Three leaders of Japanese POWs do not make any complaint about rations: they say again that they will be very happy if typical Japanese seasonings such as soy source are available. They are satisfied with rations of rice and fish. They are also satisfied with cooking facilities. Each of POWs receives 35 cigarettes a week.

(4) Clothing

They appear to be satisfied with the clothing arrangement and so make no complaint.

(5) Health facilities

These are completely hygienic.

The camp commandant promises to consider Japanese prisoners' request to permit them to establish a communal bath of Japanese style.

(6) Labour

The numbers of those prisoners who are on remunerative work extremely few. They form a working group and are engaged in farming.

(7) Sports and recreation

At the present moment, only officers are allowed to take a walk outside the camp. The camp commandant states that he wishes to immediately allow other ranks to regularly go out of the camp if they keep general orders. In particular, Japanese soldiers' regular refusal of work and Korean working party's strike in various ways made him furious.

Japanese POWs have played sports including baseball, handball, volleyball and sumo wrestling. The camp commandant encourage them to build a sports ground by their own labour.

(8) Discipline

A Japanese POW was indicted for injuring a guard with an axe.

(9) General situation

Most Japanese POWs do not want to do remunerative work. This is because provisions are ample and they can receive 35 cigarettes a week.

They do not need any money to buy them.

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