A BRIDGE TO THE NEAR NORTH:

The 1980s resurrection of Henry Black (1858-1923)

Toshiki Asakura-Ward

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Research

School of Humanities and Communication Arts

Western Sydney University, Australia

October 2017
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Toshiki Asakura-Ward

(Signature)
Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr Ian McArthur, Honorary Associate at the University of Sydney. Thanks to my former employment at Books Kinokuniya Sydney, I met Ian at his book launch of *Henry Black* on 1st August 2013. He kindly allowed me to interview him and borrow his photographs and documents.

I also thank Mr Shisei Higuchi, the manager of the Office of the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery Foundation who willingly shared stories about the cemetery.

I owe my heartfelt appreciation to Associate Professor Judith Snodgrass for her supervision during my candidature. I would like to thank Doctor David Walton and Doctor Peter Mauch for their comments and support. Their expertise and sustained encouragement were crucial to the completion of this thesis.

My sincere thanks go to Professor Eric Walz, my undergraduate academic advisor in the Department of History at Brigham Young University-Idaho. His encouragement for me to major in history and pursue postdoctoral research had a lasting impact.

I owe gratitude to Doctor Maher Said, my friend and podiatrist, who also encouraged me to become an educator and researcher.

My special thanks to Professor Chihiro Kinoshita Thomson who invited me to participate in Benkyokai, the Japanese Studies group at the University of New South Wales. This dedicated community of research students and academics motivated me with many valuable suggestions during my candidature.

I could not have completed my Master of Research without the support and scholarship from the Graduate Research School at Western Sydney University. My fellow students have been the source of inspirations during my candidature.

Ms Mayumi Shinozaki of the National Library of Australia helped me to locate many valuable Japanese resources. Her continued support was indispensable.

Lastly, I express my deepest gratitude to my family. I am grateful to my wife Yukie for her understanding towards my research. Our children reminded me of my responsibility at home. I wish to express my appreciation to my mother Junko Asakura and my late grandfather Toshio and grandmother Emiko Asakura, my parents-in-law Yukio and Hideko Kumazawa, for their constant encouragement from Japan. My late father Ian Ward is an example of life-long learning and teaching.
Note

I have followed the standard convention with Japanese personal names of placing the family name first. Persons with stage names are referred to by their stage names except for the stage name of Kairakutei Black to avoid confusion. I have used macrons for long vowels in Japanese words, except in the case of well-known place names such as Tokyo and Osaka. Unless otherwise stated, translations of original Japanese are mine. I bear the responsibility of translation.
A BRIDGE TO THE NEAR NORTH:
The 1980s resurrection of Henry Black (1858-1923)

Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................... 6
Chapter One: A Bridge to the Near North ....................................................................................... 7
Chapter Two: The Time, Life and Work of Henry Black ................................................................. 20
Chapter Three: Resurrecting Henry Black in the 1980s ............................................................... 48
Chapter Four: Consolidating Black’s Contribution ....................................................................... 74
Chapter Five: Henry Black, Hybridity, and Cross-culural Understanding ............................... 102
Bibliography .................................................................................................................................... 109
Abstract

This thesis is a study of Henry Black, a long-term Australian resident of Japan who became famous as ‘the blue-eyed story teller’, a performer of rakugo, a traditional Japanese art. His fluency in Japanese language and deep knowledge of both Japanese and Western cultures enabled him to make a strong contribution to cross cultural understanding in Meiji Japan. Though the thesis will necessarily document his life and achievements, and for this will build on Ian McArthur’s ground-breaking work, its main focus is on the resurgence of interest in Black in the 1980s that McArthur’s work belongs to. Though Black achieved a degree of fame during his life, he was largely forgotten after his death in 1923. What were the factors in the emergence and growth of interest in him so long after his death? In addressing this question, the thesis shows the complexity of cross cultural understanding, the intersection of personal contributions, academic and popular publishing, popular culture, the politics of soft diplomacy among other factors. It concludes with an account of the legacy set in train by the events of the 1980s and 1990s. This research aims to contribute to an increased appreciation for the individuals such as Black who made a lasting impact to cross-cultural understanding through their careers and legacy.
Chapter One: A Bridge to the Near North

This thesis examines Henry Black (1858-1923), an Australian who spent most of his life in Japan, as a model for mediating cultural differences. Black, a long-term Australian resident of Japan, became famous as ‘the blue-eyed story teller’ of rakugo, a traditional Japanese art.¹ His fluency in Japanese language and familiarity in both Japanese and Western cultures enabled him to make a strong contribution to cross-cultural understanding in Meiji Japan. This study will document his life and achievements, and will build on pioneering academic works of Sasaki Miyoko and Morioka Heinz, and the subsequent research of former Australian journalist Ian McArthur.

Though Black achieved a degree of fame during his life, he was largely forgotten after the height of his success in the 1890s and particularly so after his death in 1923. What were the factors in the emergence and growth of interest in him so long after his death? In addressing this question, the thesis will demonstrate the complexity of cross-cultural understanding, the intersection of personal contributions, academic and popular publishing, popular culture, the politics of soft diplomacy among other factors. It concludes with an account of how knowledge of Black is constructed and disseminated.

Important Literature on Black

Henry Black studies initially emerged as a Japanese phenomenon. Sasaki Miyoko, a scholar of humour, and Morioka Heinz, a scholar of rakugo studies, became the

¹ For a detailed history of rakugo, see, for example, Susumu Yamamoto, Rakugo no Rirekisho: Katari tsugarete yonhyakunen (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2012).
pioneers in studies of Black. They were interested in Black because he was the only foreign-born entertainer in Meiji Japan. In support of their claim, they examined Black’s extraordinary success in various performing arts, his unique position as a foreigner immersed in the traditional Japanese performing arts and how he adapted European novels for his storytelling to the commoners of the late nineteenth century Japan.\footnote{Heinz Morioka and Miyoko Sasaki, “Kairakutei Burakku to Meiji no Yose,” in \textit{Sophia Linguistica} 10, (1982), 5-82; Morioka and Sasaki, “The Blue-Eyed Storyteller: Henry Black and His Rakugo Career,” in \textit{Monumenta Nipponica} 38: 2 (Summer, 1983): 133-162.; Sasaki and Morioka, \textit{Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’}: \textit{Aoi me no rakugoka ga mita ‘Bunmei Kaika’ no Nippon to Nipponjin} (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūjo, 1986).} Their watershed work became the foundation for all subsequent researchers on Black because of their robust analysis of both Japanese and English-language newspaper articles and books, interviews, and firsthand account in the life of storytellers. They examined how Black was reported in Japan as well as how Black perceived Japan. A paramount contribution of their work was that they became the forerunners in acclaiming the significance of life of Black in Meiji Japan. In particular, their reference to the “remarkable resurrection” of Black in the 1980s inspired this thesis to investigate the possible reasons for such.\footnote{Sasaki and Morioka, \textit{Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’}, 4.}

Kojima Teiji, a writer and journalist of popular entertainment, passionately argued that Black’s success was unmatched. Kojima relied heavily on the work of Sasaki and Morioka to examine Black’s life. Kojima closely agreed with their assessment of Black’s contributions to Japan. In his 1984 book entitled \textit{Kairakutei Burakku: Bunmei Kaika no Iqirisujin Rakugoka} [Kairakutei Black: British Storyteller
of Cultural Enlightenment], Kojima concluded that there was no entertainer like Black since his time and was not likely be.⁴

Ian McArthur took a different approach to reconstructing Black’s life. He was living in Tokyo as a foreign correspondent for Australian newspapers. His book *Kairakutei Burakku: Wasurerareta Nippon Saikō no Gaijin Tarento* [Kairakutei Black: The Forgotten Greatest Foreign Talent in Japan], published in Japan, appeared in 1992. McArthur gave his work a contemporary relevance by comparing Black to the many foreigners on Japanese television (*gaijin tarento*) in the 1990s. He wrote this interpretive biography in English, employing fictitious dialogues and imagined scenarios involving Black. Nevertheless, his work became a crucial reference to gain insight in recreating the life and atmosphere of Black’s time. But this book was not published in English. It was first published in a Japanese translation in Japan. As the discourse on Black first began in Japan, his publication added to the existing literature in Japan.

The English-language title of McArthur’s book, *In Search of Kairakutei Black*, indicates his interest in recreating Black’s life. Like his predecessors, McArthur argued that Black was the first foreign-born entertainer in Japan and therefore deserved to be remembered. McArthur added to the literature through his extensive field trips ‘in search of’ Black’s birthplace in South Australia as well as places Black visited in Japan.⁵ Through such research, he was “retracing” the

---

footsteps of Black and developing a “dialectical relationship” with him.\(^6\) His pioneering efforts reconstructed the atmosphere in which Black spent his childhood and how he, as an Australian like Black, felt upon visits to various sites in Japan. Particularly, his original research both in Australia and Japan added to the previous body of work by others conducted in Japan. McArthur, like Sasaki and Morioka, interviewed storytellers and adoptive descendants of Black to examine Black’s contributions.

In 1997, Kojima published his second book *Kairakutei Burakku Den* [The Chronicle of Kairakutei Black] which included his criticism of the adoption of the title of Kairakutei Black by an emerging storyteller, Fukuda Hidefumi.\(^7\) This provided a scope for this thesis to further investigate this controversy. The details of this controversy will be discussed in chapter four. By that time, the publishers were aware that the previous books by Sasaki and Morioka, Kojima and Ian McArthur shaped a sufficient public interest in the story of Black. Because of the wide readership of his previous publications on a variety of popular entertainment, Kojima’s publications promoted publicity on Black beyond Sasaki and Morioka’s academic circle.

One of McArthur’s contributions was his correspondence and interview with Black’s niece, the closest firsthand account from a relative of Black. McArthur’s 2013 book entitled Henry Black: On Stage in Meiji Japan developed from his doctoral dissertation of 2002.\(^8\) This academic reassessment of Black’s life, his hybrid

---

performances and his role in bringing Western modernity to Meiji Japan further extended existing discourse. McArthur argued that Black embodied hybridity through his fluency in the Japanese language and his identity as a British subject who obtained Japanese citizenship. Those attributes enabled Black not only to amuse but also relate to his audiences as he mediated the West to the Japanese common folks.  

Around the turn of the century, when McArthur was writing his doctoral thesis, there was increasing academic attention to debates on modernity. In Japanese studies, this led to a focus on Meiji Japan’s rapid and successful transformation. McArthur’s research added to the discourse on how Japan embraced European culture, offering Black as one who helped Japan to make the transition through the popularity of his performances. McArthur’s 2013 book, which was developed from his doctoral thesis, became the first English book published on Black, and also the first published outside Japan.

A careful assessment of literature reveals scope for further research. This thesis differs from existing scholarship in its attempt to examine possible causes for the revival of attention to Black which emerged in the 1980s. This research will survey the life and times of Black to background this revival.

---

10 Other English publications of McArthur will be discussed in chapters three and four.  
11 Morioka and Sasaki point out much of Japanese source material on Black did not survive air raids in the Second World War. Morioka and Sasaki, “The Blue-Eyed Storyteller,” 133. Moreover, I had no remote access to Japanese newspaper articles and journals by regional publishers. Many of them are held in Japanese public libraries and the National Diet Library. Therefore, to combat this constraint, I have cited and translated the original sources as quoted in Sasaki and Morioka’s book. Where possible, I obtained and borrowed copies of Japanese books and journals.
Literature on Foreigners in Meiji Japan

As mentioned above, this thesis contributes to broader scholarship on foreigners in Meiji Japan. The pioneering work was by Henry Black’s father, John Reddie Black, which was published just after his passing in 1880. Pat Barr’s 1967 work was also on Western settlement in Japan in the nineteenth century. In the 1980s, two ground-breaking works on hired foreigners in Meiji were written by Hazel Jones in 1980 and Ardath Burks in 1985. In 1988, Robert Rosenstone published on American encounters with Meiji Japan. More recent works include Hirakawa Sukehiro’s 2007 book on Lafcadio Hearn, a famous foreigner in Meiji Japan. Hearn was renowned for his translations of Japanese ghost stories in the nineteenth century. In contrast to Black, his translations helped to introduce Japanese culture to the West in the English language.

Another important work is Tamura Keiko’s 2007 book *Forever Foreign: Expatriate Lives in Historical Kobe*. Tamura examined the significance of Harold S. Williams and other expatriates who arrived in Kobe also during time of much less

---


17 For example, see Yakumo Koizumi, *Kwaidan*. Trans. by Chōkō Takahama (Tokyo: Sumiya Shoten, 1910).
foreign settlement, and naturally, received less appreciation on the part of the Japanese towards them. It is important to note the similarity between Tamura’s research subjects and Black as foreigners who lived in Japanese port cities.18

There has also been a considerable amount of scholarship on the broader issue of the Australia-Japan relationship. The impact of such studies not only helped Australia to understand Japan during the time of increased trade and partnership between the two countries, but also Japanese people learned about Australians who appreciated Japanese culture, and the history of friendship among Australians and Japanese. Literature on the Australia-Japan relationship received intensified interest in the recent decades especially since the late 1980s. In the 1980s, there were studies by scholars such as Neville Meaney and Peter Drysdale which focused on bilateral political and economic relations.19 In the 1990s, Neville Meaney published his research on political aspects of the relationship. It was followed by Desmond Ball and Keiko Tamura’s biographical work on David Sissons, the late Australian political scientist.20 Also in 2003, William Coaldrake wrote a memoir of his parents who were Australian Christian missionaries in Japan from 1947 to 1956.21 There is

also a body of work on Japanese in Australia in social and historical studies. For example, Nagata Yuriko examined Japanese internment in Australia during the Second World War. More recent research by Tamura Keiko studied Japanese war brides in Australia. Most recently, Nagatomo Jun and Hamano Takeshi investigated the phenomenon of lifestyle migration and marriage migration among the Japanese permanent residents in Australia. The most recent work on the Japanese in Australia is the edited work by Nagatomo which includes essays investigating the transformations of Australia’s immigration policy and social history through past times to the present.

The study on Henry Black also adds to existing literature on hybridity. Black’s adoption of Japanese culture is best described in his obituary. On 11 October

---

22 For example, see Yuriko Nagata, *Unwanted Aliens: Japanese internment in Australia* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland, 1996). This title was later published in the Japanese language as Ōsutoraria Nikkeijin Kyōseishūyō no Kiroku: shirarezaru Taiheiō Sensō (Tokyo: Kōbunken, 2002).


1923, the *Japan Weekly Chronicle*, an English newspaper based in Kobe, reported his death. This article acclaimed his degree of immersion in Japanese life as follows:

> Many foreigners in the past have not only made Japan their adopted country but have also absorbed Japanese ways of life. We can hardly think of one, however, who so far cast aside his native influences and entered so thoroughly into Japanese life as Ishii Black.\(^{26}\)

This report was written in 1923. In current terminology, we would see Black as a hybrid personality. Black did not ‘cast aside’ his British heritage. In fact, it was what gave him an advantage over the other storytellers at that time. However, Black’s life stood as a testament that he was at home in Japanese culture. His tenacious effort in spite of family disapproval left a mark in the history of Japanese performing arts and Japanese popular understanding of the West through his performances. Had he not adopted Japanese lifestyle, he would not have succeeded in his introduction of the European modernity through his adaptive translations for storytelling and play. The hypothesis of this thesis is that Black’s thorough knowledge of both Western and Japanese cultures and languages enabled him to promote cross-cultural understanding.

Recent studies can shed light to such hybridity on Black. In 2009, Laurel Kamada, a sociologist, applied the notion of hybridity to more enabling qualities offering examples of hybrid cars and hybrid plants and extended the notions of such products to hybrid identities. This application asserted that hybridity enhances to the

---

\(^{26}\) “Ishii Black; A Romantic Career,” in *The Japan Weekly Chronicle*. October 11, 1923.
quality. In 2012, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, an American-Japanese scholar of psychology, discussed hybridity and multiculturalism. Murphy-Shigematsu examined the value of people like himself who have with mixed-race heritage.

Living in multicultural communities with the complexities of our times demands that we develop a perspective, a consciousness, a worldview, and identities that take into account the whole planet, acknowledging the interconnectedness of all beings.

Both Kamada and Murphy-Shigematsu extended the theory of hybridity that Homi Bhabha coined in the 1980s. Drawing on his experience in British India, Bhabha explained hybridity by defining it as the “mixing” of people and cultures. He also identified ‘the third space’, one which differed from both the original country of birth and the country in which he lived. Similarly, the twenty-first century studies of hybridity, although explained in the context of mixed-race heritage, focused on empowering aspects. This study views people such as Henry Black and Ian McArthur who have a deep immersion in two cultures and language proficiency in both, as contributors to cross-cultural understanding. They have the ability to contribute to multicultural complexity. McArthur asserted that Black’s hybridity as a Japanese citizen who was originally a British subject enabled him to adapt European sensation and detective stories to Japanese storytelling. Through such narrations,

---

Black taught the Japanese mass audience “the lessons” from Europe that Japan was eager to learn and emulate.\textsuperscript{30}

The career and contributions of Black need to be understood in an historical context. Henry James Black was the larger-than-life Australian \textit{rakugo} storyteller who lived in Japan from 1865 to 1923. He became the first foreign-born practitioner of \textit{rakugo}, a distinctive form of Japanese storytelling with over four hundred years of tradition. He was born in 1858 in South Australia\textsuperscript{31} and moved to Japan with his family when he was seven. He became a Japanese citizen in 1893 and remained there until his death on 19 September 1923. Black helped Japan in its imperative of learning about Western civilisation in the late nineteenth century. He made a number of contributions in Japan. First, he told adaptive translations of English and French novels in Japanese. He attracted audiences by using Japanese names and places to give the stories of Victorian London or Paris a local relevance. Through his performances, he brought the notion of European modernity to Japanese audiences. He also performed in \textit{kabuki}, the Japanese traditional theatre. At the height of his success, in 1891, he adopted the stage name Kairakutei Black I. Later, he was instrumental in making the first voice recordings in Japan in 1903. When Fred Gaisberg of The Gramophone Company from London visited Japan to record traditional Japanese performing arts, Black was his interpreter and facilitator.\textsuperscript{32} However, after his death in 1923, he was forgotten until a 1977 Japanese history of \textit{rakugoka}, the storytellers, mentioned his name.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{31} McArthur, \textit{Henry Black}, 3.
\bibitem{32} Ibid., 250-252, 217.
\bibitem{33} Morioka and Ssaki, “The Blue-Eyed Storyteller,” 134.
\end{thebibliography}
Chapter overview

This thesis examines not only the lives and careers of Henry Black but also Ian McArthur and others who have written of Black. Both Black and McArthur exemplify hybridity. They were deeply immersed in both cultures and possessed facility in both languages. Just as the notion of hybrid identity is not static, neither is the notion of culture or citizenship. It is the aim of this research to demonstrate what an important contribution people such as these two individuals can make to cross-cultural understanding.

Chapter two will examine the life, work and times of Henry Black. His career as a performer of traditional Japanese performing arts provides insight into his life and his outlook. His adoption of Japanese dress and appreciation of Japanese culture will be discussed. He was largely forgotten even during his lifetime. Black’s role as a narrator will be examined in relation to his audience, the commoners, who took in knowledge of the West as they enjoyed his performances.

Chapter three will investigate the reasons for the 1980s revival of interest in Henry Black. Various efforts to preserve the memory of Black include the scholarly interest, academic associations, publications and commemorations. Necessarily, there will be a study of various factors for why such a rapid resurgence of curiosity came about six decades after Black’s death. The place of rakugo in Japanese popular culture and the centenary of the Meiji Restoration will be discussed to comprehend the cultural atmosphere of the time. Then, the chapter will discuss how the revival of Black led to extending the knowledge of him beyond academic circles.

Chapter four will trace the consolidation of public interest in Black. In so doing, tensions between individuals who claim the legacy of Black will shed new
light on the phenomenal attention Black has received since his resurrection in the 1980s. There is an absence of narrative for such claims in the existing literature. The trajectory of Black’s influence both in Japan and abroad will be explored.

Finally, the conclusion will bring the focus of the thesis back to Black’s contribution to cross-cultural understanding. With the increasing mobility and exchanges of people and ideas, individuals who have extended lived experience in two very different cultures are prevalent in the twenty-first century. Black and the subsequent history generated around him provide a case study to examine how hybridity contributes to bridging cultural understanding.
Chapter Two: The Time, Life and Work of Henry Black

Introduction

This chapter will survey the life and time of Henry Black. His storytelling contributed to modernisation in Meiji Japan but his success did not last long. He helped Japan, an emerging economic power, to learn about Western civilization in the turbulent period of the late nineteenth century through his adaptive translations of European literature. The central question of this chapter is: what did Henry Black do to contribute to Meiji Japan?

Constructing Early Life

Henry James Black was born the eldest son of John Reddie and Elizabeth Charlotte Black in North Adelaide on 22 December 1858.\(^1\) Black’s parents departed from London in late 1854 lured by the prospect of gold in Adelaide. Although it is not clear why they chose Adelaide over other Australian destinations, there is an indication that the family wished to avoid convict destinations such as Sydney and Melbourne. However, by the early 1860s, the family struggled to make a living and

---

\(^1\) The exact date of his birth date and place were unknown until David C. S. Sissons independently obtained the birth certificate of Henry Black on 18 February 1972. Thanks to Sissons’s effort, in 1975, Harold S. Williams reported Black’s exact birthdate in “Two remarkable Australians of old Yokohama” in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, Third Series, xii, (1975): 52. However, Black’s gravestone in the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery showed that he ‘died 1923, aged 66’, thus, wrongly suggesting that he was born in 1857, as cited in Heinz Morioka and Miyoko Sasaki, “The Blue-Eyed Storyteller,” 134. The incorrect year of Black’s birth was reported as 1857 in “Gaijin Tarento Shimatsusho,” in Chūnichi Shimbun, 17 February 1979, as cited in Miyoko Sasaki and Heinz Morioka, “Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’ Urabanashi,” in Hōsho Gekkan 6 (1993): 14. This demonstrates the long lack of attention to the details of his birth even six decades after his death.
planned to move back to England. John went ahead and stopped over in Nagasaki. In early 1865, Albert Hansard, the owner of the English-language newspaper *Japan Herald* offered John Black a position as editor-in-chief of the newspaper in Yokohama. Then, he wrote to his family in Adelaide to join him in Yokohama where they would make their new home. Henry Black was seven years old at the time. He spent his subsequent childhood years immersed in Japanese culture and he became fluent in Japanese language. The successful Black family lived in a nicer part of Yokohama separated from the Japanese commoners in their ‘unclean’ neighbourhood.

The use of hired foreigners was an important enterprise in Meiji Japan. That a Japanese government official described hired foreigners as ‘live machines’ symbolised the Japanese view of expending them as dispensable for the purpose of the government to learn from Western ideas and skills. They were hired on good salaries, but were expected to train Japanese to replace them. The Meiji period saw exchange of peoples and ideas between Japan and the West. In particular, the Japanese government welcomed hired foreigners and supported Japanese to study abroad in North America and Europe. These exchanges had the common goal of bringing Western ideas to Japan. Scholars and officials such as Nitobe Inazō visited America as exchange professor from Japan to several American universities as a sign.

---

of such an initiative. Yokohama thrived with a foreign population in excess of 3,000 by the late 1870s over a decade prior to the height of Black’s career success.

Unlike other foreigners in Yokohama who mingled and worked within the Anglophone community, Black and his father had strong links among Japanese. As an editor of an English-language newspaper, John Black reported on the political climate as well as other relevant news for his Anglophone readers. As his father’s Japanese was limited, it was suggested that Black helped his father’s speech for the People’s Freedom Rights Movement around 1880. John and Henry Black’s desire to help Japan led to their political involvement to promote human rights as well as John’s commitment to join “the debate over modernity” with his newly established newspaper the *Japan Gazette*, which was first published on 12 October 1867.

**The Life of John Reddie Black (1826-1880)**

John Reddie Black earned a place in Meiji history as an influential journalist. He was, in fact, more important than his son Henry Black. John Black was British, born in Scotland. After attending Christ’s Hospital, an elite school in London, he joined

---

10 There is ambiguity about the extent of his involvement and assistance to his father. See McArthur, Ian. *Henry Black*, 53.
the navy. However, unlike his ancestors, he gave up the hope to succeed as a naval officer in the Royal Navy in 1854 and moved to Australia with his wife. Unable to achieve prosperity with the Gold Rush, he became a singer in the mining town. He saw opportunity to succeed in Japan as a journalist and used his education to his advantage. He is remembered for his contribution to Japanese journalism in Bakumatsu and early Meiji periods. Henry Black’s aptitude in public speaking and performance was attributable to his father’s singing career.

Between 1865 and 1867, John Black worked for *Japan Herald*, an influential English-language newspaper “representing British interests in Japan.” He founded *Japan Gazette* in 1867 and reported on the developments of the Meiji Restoration and rapid changes in Japanese society. Subsequently, in 1870, he published *The Far East* with the intention of introducing Japan to the world. However, a decisive change came with his move from the foreign community in Yokohama where they had resided for the past seven years. In 1872, the Black family moved to Tokyo, the capital and the hub of politics, where the young Henry Black became intrigued by the varieties of popular entertainment. There, John Black founded the *Nisshin Shinji Shi* (Reliable Daily News), a Japanese-language newspaper, with the help of a Macao-born Portuguese Francisco da Rosa who spoke Japanese. The name of the paper reflected his dissatisfaction with existing Japanese newspapers and desire to report

---

16 Kojima, *Kairakutei Burakku*, 57, 64-68.
18 The English name for *Nisshin Shinji Shi* was provided in Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, 421.
‘reliable’ news. This became the first Japanese newspaper published by a foreigner. John Black’s prominence in journalism and da Rosa’s connection with the officials enabled them to gain an approval from Sa-in, a government administrative agency. This authorisation granted his paper as the government organ to publish government meeting notes and reports on policies.

John Black’s open support for freedom of speech and egalitarianism annoyed the government. In 1875, the government appointed him as an advisor to the agency and demanded that he resign from the newspaper. This effectively silenced him; he was fired from the government position seven months later. Unlike other hired foreigners, John Black’s service was not required. However, the common purpose of hiring foreigners in government position applied to John Black’s case also. The government hired him as long as necessary to achieve their aim. In John Black’s case, he was to learn the lesson that he cannot act contrary to the government’s agenda of controlling the press. A year after he sold the Nisshin Shinji Shi to be hired by the government, and only five months after losing the advisory position of the government, he established another paper the Bankoku Shimbun (News of the World). However, this was closed down within a month as the Japanese government prohibited British subjects, including John Black, “to publish any Japanese-language newspapers in Japan.” This ultimately led to the government’s determination to abolish extraterritoriality of foreigners in Japan. These series of events resulted in John Black fleeing to Shanghai in that same year, 1876. He returned to Yokohama to

19 Black, Young Japan, vol 1, 364.
recuperate but died from cerebral haemorrhage on 10 June 1880 while writing his autobiography *Young Japan*.\(^{22}\) This was published in the same year he died. The book was reprinted in 1968, the year of the Meiji Centenary and a Japanese translation was released in 1970.\(^{23}\) John Reddie Black was a significant figure of the time of the Meiji Centenary.

**Turbulent Meiji**

Japan was in a state of political unrest throughout the 1860s when John Reddie Black and his family arrived. It was only ten years since Commodore Matthew Perry (1794-1858) had sailed into Edo Bay demanding Japan open her ports for trade. Importantly, anti-foreign sentiment was rampant as indicated by the Namamugi Incident of 1862 in which British subjects, including Charles Richardson, were attacked by a group of armed samurai.\(^{24}\)

The anti-foreign sentiment eventually decreased with the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate and the installation of the Meiji Emperor in 1868. In the Boshin War period (1868–1869), a major civil war, the revolutionary samurai and nobles became victorious over the old regime. The political slogans changed dramatically within two decades from *Sonno Jöi* (revere the emperor and expel the barbarians) of the 1850s to 1860s, to *Wakon Yōsai* (Japanese spirit and Western techniques) in 1867, and then *Bunmei Kaika* (cultural civilisation) in 1875.\(^{25}\) *Jöi*

\(^{22}\) Sasaki and Morioka, *Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’*, 17.
\(^{23}\) Black, *Young Japan*, 2 volumes, originally published in 1880 in London.
\(^{25}\) *Sonno Jöi* was a Chinese Confucian thought imported to Japan which was used to defeat Tokugawa Shogunate and restore imperial power. *Wakon Yōsai* was invented by Yoshikawa Tadayasu in his *Kaika Sakuron* (Questions and Themes on Progress). *Bunmei Kaika* was coined by Fukuzawa Yukichi in his *Bunmeiron no Gairyaku* (The Outline of the Theory Civilisation) as a Japanese word for ‘civilization’.
(expel the barbarians) had close connection to the atmosphere that led to the assault on foreigners in the Namamugi Incident. *Wakon Yōsai* captured the spirit of utilising hired foreigners to promote Japan’s modernisation. *Bunmei Kaika* was the culmination of the government’s effort to bring Western modernity and in effect, Westernise Japan. In short, those who actively attempted to expel and assassinate foreigners changed their attitude drastically once they were placed in positions of power. They became fervent promoters of bringing Western thoughts and technology to modernise Japan.

Meiji Genrō, the Imperial advisors

The woodblock print above also signifies the degree of Westernisation of Japanese imperial advisors in the Meiji Period. In particular, their military uniform followed the British manner. However, in contrast, the chrysanthemum motif in the background demonstrates the clear connection with the Japanese imperial family and that these advisors had such a crucial role as the imperial advisors.

---

It is essential to understand the place of Black among other foreigners who lived in Japan in the late nineteenth century. The Meiji government employed over three thousands of foreigners as advisors to support the nation’s agenda to modernise Japan by importing Western ideas between 1868 and 1912.\textsuperscript{27} The government employed only those who seemed useful in advancing the cause of furthering learning in the Western arts, philosophy, engineering and so forth. This was all part of Japan’s nation building to follow the model of the West and become the leading nation in Asia.

\textbf{Yokohama as Foreign Enclave}

Although many expatriates in Japan endeavoured to retain the lifestyles of their homelands, Black’s family also held onto Christian values of “a newly literate middle class” which included a desire to help the needy.\textsuperscript{28} Yokohama played an important role in the cultural climate of Japan in Black’s time. The Japanese people in Yokohama were not rich when Yokohama Port was opened in 1859. It was not a sophisticated place, but through the presence and work of the foreigners, the village became a town and then a city exhibiting Western ways. Unlike bureaucrats far removed from the commoners in Yokohama, Black went native and brought the West to the commoners.

When Henry Black arrived in Yokohama Port by ship in 1865, he was seven years old. This was just six years after the Japanese government strategically opened Yokohama Port to the foreigners in 1859. Japan, fearing excessive interactions with the foreigners, confined them away from the nation’s capital. Yokohama was

\textsuperscript{27} Jones, \textit{Live Machines}, xv.
\textsuperscript{28} McArthur, \textit{Henry Black}, 14, 22.
originally a village, therefore, the government believed the foreign influences will not disrupt population at large.

Foreign marching bands in Yokohama in 1861.29

The woodblock print from the Bakumatsu period shows Yokohama Port as a foreign enclave, filled with foreigners with their naval marching bands. The bands and their clothing are indicative of the Westerners’ effort to preserve their own cultures. At that time, all foreigners needed travel permits to visit areas beyond the foreign resident areas that were port towns such as Yokohama and Kobe. The flags of the United States, England, Holland, France and Russia suggest how the dominant Western nations sought to capitalise on Japan through the forced trading treaties.

Foreigners in Demand?

Henry Black’s name first appeared in the Yomiuri Shimbun on 8 July 1876 when he was eighteen. It was reported as “Hāru Burakku” (Hal Black), a performer of

Western magic. Soon, thereafter, on 15 October 1876, the *Tokyo Hanauta Shimbun* reported shortcomings of “Haru Buruku” (Hal Black) as a magician: not only were his audiences too small, but also his debts prevented him from continuing in his profession. Even the differing reference to his name demonstrated how obscure he was. That Black was first introduced as a magician caught attention which was a peculiar entertainment for Japan at that time. And, the combination of Western magic and a British performer made a newsworthy story. Despite his failure, the setting was just right for Black to capture the attention of Japanese people with a keen interest in the West.

The next occasion Black’s name was reported was with his involvement in the People’s Freedom Rights Movement from 1879. A newspaper article by *Yūbin Hōchi* on 12 February 1880 reported that “Englishman Black” impressed the audience through his speech in Yokohama. As his father could not speak Japanese, the report was about Henry Black. The role of speech and storytelling were vital at the time as the eighty per cent of the residents of Tokyo were illiterate. The commoners who could not read announcements from the officials had to rely on storytellers as the source of new knowledge. There were also *kawaraban*, which were “crude woodblock print sheets or broadsheets” to display events relevant to the townspeople. As such displays were located in public places, along with *rakugo*

---

30 *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 8, 1876 as cited in Sasaki and Morioka, *Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’*, 18. Where I had no access to the primary source, I have cited and translated from the original as they appeared in Sasaki and Morioka’s Japanese book rather than quoting or paraphrasing McArthur’s translation.


held in entertainment halls, the commoners had ways to learn and respond to new information.

In 1877, Black attended public speech meetings among famous speakers and eventually became acquainted with Shōrin Hakuen, a prominent teller of historic and political tales. Hori Ryūta, a retired naval officer and a friend of his father John Black, knew Hakuen well. Although Black was only around twenty at that time, he used such connections and became more enthused and involved in the People’s Freedom Rights Movement. In fact, in December 1878, Black’s first narration on stage was in the style of historical and political storytelling (gundan) which occurred thanks to the invitation of Hakuen to perform at Tomitake Theatre in Bashamichi, Yokohama. He was twenty. Subsequently, Black told the stories of Charles I and Joan of Arc – cementing his fame as a storyteller. By the end of May 1880, Black registered his stage name as “Englishman Black” with the endorsement of the union of gundanshi (historical and political storytellers) and support of Hakuen. He became a novelty of Tokyo. This was a politically charged time, therefore, it was necessary for the storytellers to circumvent restrictions placed by the government on public gatherings. The program in the theatre was designed to circumvent the restrictions. The audience was legally gathered to hear the story told in the theatre, and this was then followed by political speeches.

The guild of rakugo storytellers saw Black along with his father speak about the people’s rights in Japanese around 1880, prior to his father’s death. There is,

35 Sasaki and Morioka, Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’, 27-31. For this storytelling, Black received a salary equivalent to ten times the starting salary of a police officer at that time.
36 There is ambiguity about exactly how the storytellers approached him besides the aforementioned account about Hakuen.
however, some ambiguity about the extent of Henry Black’s involvement and impact in such activities.\textsuperscript{37} That Black performed and by the autumn of 1890 officially affiliated with the San’yū guild of storytellers was important. One of the most prominent performers at that time was San’yûtei Enchô, who was popular for telling Western novels and a member of the same guild.\textsuperscript{38}

It was crucial for Black to refer to Britain as his birthplace. The Meiji government adopted the British institutions because of the great respect they had for the Empire as the dominant Western power at the time. The British Empire was the admired destination for Japanese intellectuals such as Natsume Soseki, an English literature scholar. Even in 1905, Black commented in an interview that he was born in ‘Brighton of London in England’.\textsuperscript{39} It is debated why Black referred to London as his birthplace. As an Australian-born British subject, and knowing that he fabricated a story about his birthplace, it is doubtful that he ever set foot in England.\textsuperscript{40} His knowledge of London was limited to what he heard from his parents and others in Yokohama. Brighton is actually located about 65 kilometres south of London.\textsuperscript{41}

For several years, Black did not refer to Australia as his birthplace as Australia was an obscure destination unknown to the Japanese in Meiji-era. It was not a civilised place, whereas Black had British heritage at hand conveniently

\textsuperscript{37} McArthur, \textit{Henry Black}, 53.
\textsuperscript{38} Sasaki and Morioka, \textit{Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’}, 42.
\textsuperscript{40} There is ambiguity about this. However, Black claimed to have lived in England with his family for a few years in his youth. For details, see Morioka and Sasaki, “The Blue-Eyed Storyteller,” 136. All Australians born in Australia were British citizens until the Nationality and Citizenship Act 1948 was enforced on 26 January 1949. There was no Australian citizenship arrangement until then. Australia did not exist as a political entity until Federation much later. South Australia was a colony of Britain; John Black reported to the British ambassador in Japan.
\textsuperscript{41} Sasaki and Morioka, \textit{Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’}, 12.
through his parents and through his legal status as a British subject. It was not until 1894 that Black was confident enough as a prominent storyteller to reveal that he was born in Adelaide, Australia.\(^{42}\)

Among other foreigners in Japan at this time was Greek-born Irish writer Lafcadio Hearn. Although Hearn served as a professor of English literature at Tokyo Imperial University (now University of Tokyo), Natsume Soseki studied in London for two years and returned to Japan, then replaced Hearn at the university.\(^{43}\) Foreigners such as Black and Hearn were useful to Japan until Japanese could do those tasks rather than relying on external sources. While Hearn promoted Japanese ghost stories to the West because of his obsession with Japan. Black, on the other hand, introduced Western modernity to Japan through adaptive translation because he knew Japan had much to learn from the outside world. However, they no longer received attention as soon as Japan had replacements.

**Rakugo**

*Rakugo* is a 400-year-old distinctive form of traditional Japanese comic storytelling. The storyteller acts in various roles by using different voices. The storyteller kneels on a cushion, performs with exaggerated gestures and a minimal prop of a fan and a hand towel. It is a popular entertainment held at small performance halls called *yose*. With a cheap entry fee, it was one of the few entertainments accessible to illiterate commoners in previous centuries including Henry Black’s time.


Now, there are rakugo storytellers in various parts of the world with a keen following. Black, however, was the first foreigner to take up this profession. In 1880, within two weeks after Black adopted the stage name of Eikokujin Burakku (Englishman Black) for his political and historical storytelling (gundan), his father passed away. And subsequently, he faced opposition from his friends toward his ‘lowly’ occupation in vaudeville.\textsuperscript{44} Black taught English and published adaptive translations before he would return to the stage. He began performing rakugo in 1889 and reached the status of shin’uchi or principal performer in March 1891.\textsuperscript{45} He was thirty-three at this time. For Black to attain the highest rank as a rakugo performer in two years demonstrates his aptitude and endorsement from his master. Also as mentioned earlier, Black had previously told historical and political stories in vaudevilles by the end of 1878 and had already achieved some fame. Upon reaching the rank of shin’uchi, Black performed rakugo in Japanese under the stage name of Kairakutei Black I, a name that takes a dynastic form of Japanese traditional performing arts. It is argued that he had selected that title and kairaku which means pleasure, would be a reference to hedonistic lifestyle prevalent in Meiji.\textsuperscript{46} This adoption of the title demonstrates his commitment and immersion into the profession which only Japanese citizens had previously performed. Rakugo performers who reach the status of shin’uchi are referred to with the title of shishō or master. Only after reaching that rank, can storytellers take disciples. To date, the Japanese Ministry of Education have certified prominent storytellers as the Living National

\textsuperscript{44} Sasaki and Morioka, \textit{Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’}, 30-31.
\textsuperscript{45} McArthur, \textit{Henry Black}, 84. Shin’uchi is the highest rank a rakugo storyteller can reach after zenza (the first seat who performs the opening act) and futatsume (the second who follows the opening act) – indicative of the order of performances with shin’uchi as the main and the last act of the show.
Treasures who preserve the intangible traditional culture. Although during Black’s time such certification did not exist, the fact that he had disciples signifies his prominence in the profession.

![Studio portrait of Henry Black estimated to be in his forties.](image)

Black also used the Japanese surname, Ishii, as a sign of his immersion in Japanese lifestyle. Various newspaper articles referred to him as Ishii Black rather than Henry Black. The above photograph shows Black comfortably seated on a padded mat, a traditional way the Japanese storytellers would be seen on stage. Given the isolation of the foreign communities in Japan at that time, it is interesting that Black’s contact with the Japanese people enabled him to learn the language and traditional culture.

As McArthur explains, in Meiji Japan *rakugo* saved “the debate about reform and modernity from domination by the government and an educated elite.” The storytellers of both *rakugo* and *gundan* had considerable influence over the audience.

---

47 www.henryblack.com.au
However, they were not regarded highly in still socially stratified Japan. This was much as it was in Britain, the basis of the Black’s family value systems. Black was a “black sheep” and ‘oddity’ in his family unlike his father who became an influential publisher and had connections with prominent politicians.\(^5\) In 1895, *Tokyo Asahi Shim bun* reported that Black’s younger brother John Reddie, shouted at Black to stop the performance or he would inform this to their uncle in England. Black had been receiving financial assistance from his uncle, so he had no choice but to leave the stage that day and to stop performing for some time.\(^5\) Black’s sister Pauline was a Christian missionary and some scholars indicate that her displeasure towards Black’s profession was evident in the arrangement of his family grave.\(^5\) The Black family’s grave has a cross, symbolic of the family’s Christian faith. The family rift caused significant pressure on Black. He knew his family did not support his ‘lowly’ profession and therefore, he was ostracised by his British family and relatives. Nevertheless, Black would be eventually buried alongside his parents despite of the rift.

Black’s success as a *rakugo* storyteller corresponded with Japan’s desire to learn from the West after Japan’s treaties with foreign powers which led to the opening of Yokohama Port in 1859. Therefore, Black’s ability to bring Western ideas to Japan became his strength as a storyteller. Despite his family’s opposition to him taking up the profession perceived as precarious and lowly, he was determined to use

---


his nationality and language skills as a storyteller. Although performers like Black won popularity among the commoners, they were not esteemed highly either by Japanese or foreigners.\(^53\) Moreover, actors along with mendicants, outlaws and prostitutes were outcasts known as hinin, or non-human.\(^54\) After many years of aristocratic values embedded in the Japanese society, such stereotyping still had an impact in the worldview of the people. The height of his success was in the 1890s when his fame matched and eventually surpassed that of aforementioned Enchō.\(^55\)

**Temporary English Teaching before Rakugo Career**

Henry Black’s career path took a different turn when he stopped actively narrating in vaudeville and taught English from 1886 to 1887. There were several English teachers around in the Meiji Period due to the desire to learn the English language. He taught English to earn money and to ease the tension between his family who were opposed to his profession as a narrator. When Black left teaching, he was thirty years old and there is no record that he went back to teaching after this short period. However, this time also gave him an opportunity to mend the family rift temporarily while he prepared to return to storytelling. In reality, he kept in contact with narrator friends. Therefore, there is enough indication that he intended from the beginning that his teaching would be temporary.\(^56\)

What set him apart was the passion that he had for rakugo. Black became the first storyteller in Japan as a foreigner. He was successful in his performing career in

---

\(^{53}\) Sasaki and Morioka, *Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’*, 5.

\(^{54}\) Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 7.


the 1880s and 1890s. Then, he made his fame by his adaptation of Western classic literature into Japanese traditional theatrical plays “where being foreign-born and able to adapt English-language works into Japanese worked to his advantage.” Black became an agent of cultural exchange, which was very timely for Japan’s increasing demand for modernisation.

Black performed rakugo to explain Western modernity to audiences in the late nineteenth century Japan. Black adapted and translated famous English novels into Japanese, for example, Mary Braddon’s Flower and Weed in 1886 and Charles Dickens’s A Tale of Two Cities in 1891, among many other works. Since affiliating with the San’yū Guild, Black chose Flower and Weed by Braddon (1837-1915) as his first series novel adaptation and called it Kusaha no Tsuyu (Dew by the Graveside). The original story is described as ‘a romantic yet tragic novel’. Black’s narrations were transcribed and published as sokkibon or stenographic books. This was the popular way to circulate stories beyond the audience who were in the entertainment hall to watch his live performance. For example, in 1897, Black adapted Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens as Minachigo (The Orphan) in which he began the story by introducing the type of adaptations he made. Black gave Japanese names to English characters and places. The audience enjoyed the English story while feeling familiar with the names as well. Certain Japanese names carry qualities either positive or negative; Black took advantage of his sound knowledge of Japanese names to produce characters “ironically” different to assumptions of such

57 McArthur, Henry Black, 39.
58 Ibid., 71, 103.
59 The synopsis is found in McArthur, “Mediating Modernity,” 291.
60 McArthur, Henry Black, 68, 115.
names. For example, his use of name Tanaka Seiemon for the master of the orphanage manufactured an assumption that the character possesses a kind nature. However, contrarily, his role was that of a typical villain. However, Black also adapted the stature and qualities of some characters to be less evil. Black added Buddhist-like colours of morality to the story which were not in the original *Oliver Twist*; Black chastised evil characters and an old businessman taught the orphan to be “patient” and “honest”. It indicated that Black understood his vaudeville audience expected that even the villain of the story possessed some “redeeming” qualities in a human drama of *rakugo*. Such adaptations to the original were possible because of Black’s hybridity and immersion in Japanese culture and knowledge of what his audience wanted to hear from his stories.

Black’s choice of this story by Dickens reflects his interest in the social justice in the face of adverse effects of modernity such as “urban poverty, unemployment and the abuse of women’s rights”. As McArthur agrees, Black’s adaptation of *Oliver Twist* did not deviate from the original story. However, Black used his adaptive translations for the audience to become familiar with the story while teaching lessons from it.

**Black’s Marriage and Naturalisation**

1891 proved to be a fruitful year for Black: he told several stories and claimed the title of Kairakutei Black in March, five out of his nine *sokkibon* were published within the year. However, while his popularity increased, there was an obstacle for him that foreigners at that time needed permits to travel beyond strictly designated

---

areas of the country. Foreigners were not allowed to perform outside selected three cities (Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka) and five ports (Hakodate, Niigata, Yokohama, Kobe, Nagasaki). Therefore, only after his naturalisation, could Black legally tour to perform in Nagoya after his acquisition of the citizenship.\textsuperscript{66} The early 1890s was the time of great change and increased opportunity for Black.

On 24 March 1891, \textit{Yamato Shimbun} reported Black’s adoption of the title as follows: “Kairakutei Burakku – Mr Englishman Black who made a debut among the \textit{rakugoka} with his unique hair colour, seeing that it was inconvenient not to have a house name as the number of disciples increases, newly obtained the title of Kairakutei.”\textsuperscript{67} Black’s adoption of the title was expedient not only as a sign of his immersion into the traditional Japanese art, but as one following the convention that becoming a master required him to take a title. However, as seen in this report, Black received much attention with reference to his citizenship and appearance. Despite Black’s commitment to and prominence in \textit{rakugo}, such news reminded the public that he was not Japanese.

On 6 August 1891, \textit{Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun} reported that “the \textit{rakugoka} and Englishman Black” had his storytelling suspended by the Shizuoka police authority on the grounds that his travel permit showed his purpose of travel was “\textit{manyu}” (touring for pleasure).\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Yamato Shimbun}, March 24, 1891 as cited in Sasaki and Morioka, \textit{Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’}, 43.
\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Tokyo Nichinichi Shimbun}, August 6, 1891, as cited in Asaoka, “Kairakutei Burakku no “kekkon/kika” mondai kō,” 13.
As discussed above, travel restrictions for foreigners in Japan was an impediment to Black’s career. Black’s marriage to a Japanese woman was a solution to removing the restriction. His marriage to Ishii Aka in 1893 eventually led to his application to obtain Japanese citizenship. There is little known about his motive for marriage, married life, whether they separated, continued their marriage or whether they had biological children.69

There is also a debate whether Black had married life with Aka. The police were aware that at the time of Black’s application for citizenship he was residing with a Japanese male partner in what seemed like a married relationship. However, the authority did not prohibit the naturalisation process of Black, although with all the necessary information about Black, the officials had grounds to reject the application.70 However, they approved the application, thus granting Black Japanese citizenship with its accompanying rights and privileges.

Despite Black’s sexual orientation, his marriage demonstrated his desperate wish to travel freely and perform outside restricted areas for foreigners. The adoption into a Japanese family through marriage granted Black his much desired Japanese citizenship, and ultimately, the removal of restrictions on his travel. Black’s naturalisation enabled him to freely travel and perform in rural areas of Japan outside the few designated locations. That he was seen performing in Nagoya as discussed earlier, was evidence that he utilised his newly obtained Japanese citizenship.

69 For discussions of Black’s marriage, see for example, Sasaki and Morioka, Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’; McArthur, ‘Australian, British, or Japanese?: Henry Black in Japan’, in Japanese Studies, 22:3 (2002). However, Asaoka, Sasaki, Morioka and McArthur could not trace Aka. McArthur’s attempt to understand about Black’s marriage was constructed from his personal interviews with Black’s adoptive descendants such as Ishii Kiyoko.
On 24 May 1893, *Yamato Shimbun* reported the completion of his naturalisation as follows: “[he] attended the [Tokyo] prefectural office, executed a sworn ceremony in the presence of Governor Tomita in order to complete the naturalisation… he vowed to observe the duty of a Japanese citizen”.

On the following day, “Black’s change of surname notification. An Englishman, Henry James Black who became naturalised to our nation, notified to the [Tokyo] prefectural government that he will henceforth call himself Ishii Burakkū”.

His adoption of a Japanese surname was the proof of Black’s commitment to live and die as a Japanese.

Although there is no record that Black had any biological child of his own, after Black obtained Japanese citizenship, he adopted a Japanese man named Seikichi (1879?-1945). By 1916 Seikichi was also one of Black’s disciples and adopted the stage name of Hosuko. Seikichi also trained under master of Western magic Shōkyokusai Ten’ichi who gave him the stage name Tensa suggesting that he was Ten’ichi’s trusted left arm.

Although there was no source indicating Black and Aka had a married life, Black raised and trained disciples. Black was devoted to training young apprentices as a rakugo master and lamented those who did not.

**As a Kabuki Actor**

Black’s passion for rakugo was not exclusive during the height of his success in the

---


72 *Yamato Shimbun*, May 25, 1893 as cited in Sasaki and Morioka, *Kairakutei Burakkū no ‘Nippon’*, 44.


1890s. In 1892, a year after he reached the status of principal performer in *rakugo* in 1891, Black also acted in *kabuki* or theatrical plays. In the photograph below, Black posed as Banzuiin Chōbee, a samurai role which was the signature role by a prominent *kabuki* actor of the time, Ichikawa Danjūrō IX (1838-1903). It is important to note Black’s talent was evident not only in storytelling but also in plays as a conduit of knowledge to the mass audience. Although the audience for *rakugo* was the commonfolk, *kabuki* had more sophisticated fans.

![Henry Black, dressed to play as Banzuiin Chōbee, a samurai.](image)

On 3 September 1892, *Japan Weekly Mail* praised Black’s performance as follows: “Black had evidently made a study of Danjūrō in the part, and every successful imitation of that popular actor evoked a spontaneous burst of applause”. The fact that this English-language newspaper based in Yokohama reported Black disseminated the ‘spectacle’ by this ‘Englishman’ from the stage of Tokyo to the

---

foreign community in Yokohama. Such settlement undoubtedly had links with their source country, thus further spreading the news of Black.

**His Contributions to Meiji Japan**

Black made two significant contributions in his career in Japan. First, he told adaptive translations of English and French novels into the Japanese language. Although he was not the only storyteller who excelled in the genre, Black’s advantage was his personal tie with England through his parents. He excelled in attracting his audience by using Japanese names and places to give the stories of Victorian London or Paris a local relevance. Through his performances, he brought the notion of European modernity to Japanese audiences.\(^{77}\) Second, he was instrumental in the first voice recordings in Japan in 1903. When Fred Gaisberg of The Gramophone Company from London visited Japan to record traditional Japanese performing arts, Henry interpreted for him and introduced the right people for the recordings.\(^ {78}\) Sasaki and Morioka noted that nine records by Black were listed among the 1903/1904 catalogue of Gramophone including Black’s signature performance as Banzuiin Chōbe.\(^ {79}\) In fact, Black’s voice, with his fluent commoner’s accent of Tokyo of the time, is among the recorded disks that offer insights of this period for both historians and linguists. Black’s recorded voice shows that he retained an accent as a native English speaker but spoke the Edo dialect of his time.\(^ {80}\)

---


\(^{78}\) Ibid., 217.

\(^{79}\) There is uncertainty about which records have been preserved to date. For details, see Sasaki and Morioka, *Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’*, 60-61.

Black’s appearance and ancestry proved to be newsworthy. The Japanese newspapers referred to him as ‘the blue-eyed storyteller’ and early in his career he used ‘Briton Black’ as his stage name. It was natural that Black wished to capitalise on his ancestry to gain publicity and popularity. Despite his success as a go-between for Gaisberg in 1903, his waning popularity coupled with reckless drinking worsened his on-going depression. On 26 September 1908, a Japanese newspaper Miyako Shimbun reported Black attempted to commit suicide by drinking arsenic trioxide. There is no evidence whether he actually intended to die or if it was an accident.81 Although he survived, the incident demonstrated his fallen state after the height of his career in the 1890s.82 Black was only forty-nine at that time, but long past his fame after the turn of the century and his producer role for Gaisberg’s voice recording in 1903.

On 5 December 1910, Tokyo Asahi Shimbun featured an article by a journalist who saw Black’s performance after Black’s recovered from the reported suicide attempt. The journalist praised Black’s energetic stage expressing, “Black is not dead.”83 During the 1910s, the press did not report on Black very much. However, Black was reportedly on tours performing conjuring and magic in western Japan. Between 1916 and 1917, Black visited Shanghai and Hong Kong with a troupe including his adoptive son Seikichi and his French daughter-in-law Julie V. Pequignot. By this time, Seikichi was known by his stage name Shōkyokusai Tensa

81 Sasaki and Morioka argued that arsenic trioxide when administered in a small portion was tonic. For details, see Sasaki and Morioka, Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’, 60-61.
Question of Identity and Citizenship

Black is remembered now for his immersion into Japanese culture. He performed rakugo storytelling in Japanese. He lived ‘between’ two worlds in an attempt to meet two-fold expectations: one of meeting his mother’s by teaching English for a period; another of his rakugoka friends by performing on stage. In March 1891, he was officially granted principal performer status and adopted the stage name Kairakutei Black I, a name that takes a dynastic form of Japanese traditional performing arts. He also used the Japanese surname, Ishii, as a sign of his commitment and adaptation to Japanese lifestyle.

Nevertheless, three decades after his naturalisation in 1893, he was buried in the Foreigners’ Cemetery in Yokohama alongside his British parents. That he was buried as a foreigner upon his death signified the complexity surrounding his life being born of British parents in Australia. He had been granted Japanese citizenship three decades previous to his death. He died of stroke on 19 September 1923 which was less than three weeks after a great earthquake destroyed much of Tokyo and Yokohama. Due to the calamity of the earthquake, Black’s death went unnoticed in rakugo circles. Kojima concluded that Black’s death was unknown to his colleagues in rakugo until their charity performance after the disaster on 1 October. Six months after Black’s death, a book by rakugo critic Sekine Mokuan mentioned that

---

85 Makkasā, Kairakutei Burakku, 117-118,
86 McArthur, Henry Black, 84,
87 Kojima, Kairakutei Burakku, 227.
Black was living a retired life in a remote village. However, the fire caused by the earthquake burnt the publishing company and Sekine died two months after the disaster. Therefore, the publisher could not afford to check whether Black was alive after the calamity. On 11 October 1923, the *Japan Weekly Chronicle*, an English newspaper in Kobe, reported his death and noted his adoption of Japanese lifestyle as discussed in the previous chapter.

Henry Black’s gravestone was initially buried and hidden by the soil and weeds at his family grave; his sister Pauline’s grave was just in front of Black’s. This parallels how his life was utterly forgotten for many decades. Therefore, the attempts to research and remember Black meant uncovering and “resurrecting” his story that his family evidently tried to bury. What caused Black’s family to treat Black’s memory in such a way? The answer is found in their family background as well as the way society viewed Black’s occupation.

**Conclusion**

Those who have studied Black see that he made a contribution to Meiji Japan. His adaptive translations introduced European modernity to Japanese mass audience. He was also instrumental in the first voice recording in Japan in 1903, a key event in the history of Japanese performing arts. The recorded voices provide insight for two
parties in particular: historians investigating the lasting traditions in performing arts;
and linguists listening to the Edo dialect of the time.
Chapter Three: Resurrecting Henry Black in the 1980s

Introduction
As demonstrated in chapter two, Henry Black’s fame did not last and his name was forgotten by the Japanese public long before he died. This chapter will argue that the revival of interest in Black emerged in the 1980s as a consequent of resurgence of interest in rakugo and Meiji-era foreigners. The discourse around Black was formed as a part of the wider trend of interest in the earlier history of Japan’s international contact. It will be argued that the 1980s revival of interest in Japan’s cultural past led to a renewed commitment by Yokohama Municipal Council to showcase its past history through commemorative events. Fascination within Japan about the Meiji centenary allowed for the phenomenon of Henry Black studies and renewed interest in the Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery.

Atmosphere of the 1980s
There was a revival of interest in Meiji-era foreigners due to the centenary of the Meiji Restoration (1968) and on-going international and domestic interest about Japan as a model for economic success. The centenary of Meiji Restoration in 1968 preceded research efforts on Black. There has been resurgence of interest in the Meiji-era and its products as evident in various international scholarships on the cultural and social history of Japan.¹ This attention to the source of Japanese

traditions signified the emergence of public commemoration for the Meiji centenary. In Japan, *Monumenta Nipponica*, the publication by Sophia University, dedicated a special issue to commemorate the centenary of the Meiji Restoration. This book featured nine articles on the history and literature of Meiji by Japanese, American and Australian scholars. Interest in the Meiji-era received notable attention in scholarly circles and also in popular culture with the revival of traditional performative arts. The 1980s also marked the centenary of various political events of the 1880s. The cabinet system was instituted in 1885 and the Meiji Constitution came into effect in 1889. These significant milestones were remembered in the 1980s when there was a revived interest in the Meiji-era and their legacies.

It was against such a background that foreigners of Meiji Japan received attention. It is important to understand the place of Black among other foreigners who lived in Japan in the late nineteenth century. The Meiji government employed over three thousand foreigners as advisors to support the nation’s agenda to modernise Japan by importing Western ideas between 1868 and 1912. It is vital to note, however, that the government hired only those believed to be useful in advancing Japan’s cause. The government’s agenda was to learn from the Western arts, philosophy, engineering and so forth – as part of Japan’s nation building. Their ultimate aim was to follow the model of the West and become the leading nation in Asia.

---

A few of the foreigners in Meiji Japan, such as Greek-born Irish writer Lafcadio Hearn\(^4\) (1850-1904), American philosopher and art historian Ernest Fenollosa\(^5\) (1853-1908), and American zoologist Edward Morse\(^6\) (1838-1925) became famous during their own time, but most did not. As discussed in the previous chapter, Black was neither a government employee nor an important political figure. There were other foreigners who were not famous but received scholarly attention in the 1980s such as Clara Whitney (1860-1936), a former English teacher and wife of Kaji Umetarō, the son of renowned Japanese naval officer Katsu Kaishū.\(^7\) Among the thousands of foreigners who had lived in Japan in the late nineteenth century, why did Black receive so much attention in the 1980s?

**The Revitalisation of Rakugo in the 1980s Japan**

One crucial factor for the revival of Black after his death was the resurgence of interest in **rakugo** as a popular entertainment by 1968. Despite the shortage of English-language scholarly books on **rakugo**, there are an abundance of Japanese publications and media coverages on **rakugo**.\(^8\) This demonstrated that **rakugo** was

\(^4\) See for example, Sukehiro Hirakawa, ed., *Lafcadio Hearn in International Perspectives* (Folks tone, Kent: Global Oriental, 2007).


\(^8\) There have been only two English-language scholarly books on **rakugo** published prior to McArthur’s *Henry Black*. The first was Heinz Morioka and Miyoko Sasaki, *Rakugo: The Popular Narrative Art of Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
underrepresented in the shadow of internationally accepted other forms of classical Japanese performing arts, such as *kabuki* (theatrical play), *noh* (musical drama), and *bunraku* (puppet theatre). These arts were ‘high culture’ unlike *rakugo* which during the Meiji period provided entertainment for uneducated commoners.

The popularity of *rakugo* dwindled between 1958 and 1968 during the closure of Rakugo Kenkyūkai, the key association furthering the *rakugo* scholarship and concerts. Television contributed to the resurgence of interest in *rakugo* by reaching the viewers who had not been fans earlier. A key factor in the resurgence of popularity in *rakugo* was a television comedy program, entitled *Shōten* (which translates as ‘the Laughing Point’). It introduced popular storytellers to television audiences in 1966. Previously, fans had only two ways to enjoy the storytelling: going to entertainment halls to see the live performances, and listening to the radio. The former required an entry fee, the latter was free, but did not allow for visual enjoyment of the story. Television enabled the audience not only to experience both visual and audio effects of the arts, but they could now do so for free and from the comfort of their homes. By the late 1960s the revitalised attention afforded *rakugo* coupled with the centenary of the Meiji Restoration, instigated keen interest among *rakugo* aficionados for Meiji-era storytellers. The first mention of Black’s name since notification of his death by newspapers in 1923 was by Kojima Teiji (1919-2003) in his 1966 anthology entitled *Rakugo Sanbyakunen: Meiji, Taishō no maki*

---


9 For details of these arts, see Toyotaka Komiya, ed., *Japanese Music and Drama in the Meiji Era*, trans by Edward G. Seidensticker and Donald Keene (Tokyo: Ōbunsha, 1956).

The fact that Henry Black performed rakugo in the Meiji-era aroused curiosity. Although there were thousands of foreigners in Meiji Japan, Black is the first recorded foreign-born entertainer in the Meiji-era. His profession entertained popular audience not through ‘high culture’ but through popular culture in the form of rakugo. Black’s storytelling caught international attention through the English-language reports discussed in the previous chapter.

Notably this movement of revival took place one decade before robust research on Black began in 1980 and coincided with the Japanese government’s endeavour for greater levels of internationalisation. In many respects, kokusaika or internationalisation echoed from the previous century and is the testament to the fact that Japan’s internationalisation was done in their own term through carefully selecting what ideas would support the nation’s agenda. Such efforts became intense following Japan’s recovery since the defeat in the Second World War.

Moreover, since the end of the occupation of Japan by the Allied Forces, many universities included the word international (kokusai) in their name such as International Christian University (established in 1953). By the 1970s, Japan had become the world’s economic power house and was conscious of its status and reputation in the international community. Japan’s economic success in the world proved substantial and showcasing its modern technology and ‘festive’ atmosphere at

---

11 Teiji Kojima, ed., Rakugo Sanbyakunen: Meiji, Taishō no maki (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1966). This was the second of the three-volume series. The first was on rakugo in Edo-era and the third was Shōwa-era.
the Osaka Expo in 1970 was a symbol of the nation’s recovery since the nation’s defeat in the war in 1945. The expo welcomed in excess of six million visitors.\textsuperscript{12}

On 25 January 1985, Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, shared his resolve for Japan’s internationalisation. He used the words such as \textit{kokusai} (international), \textit{kokusai}, \textit{kokusai shakai} (international community) repeatedly. He stated:

\begin{quote}
In order for the international community to overcome many difficulties and open the door of the twenty-first century with the principle of cooperation and solidarity and filled with hope, the establishment of mutual understanding and relationship of trust between the citizens of each country is essential, and I am hoping to continue broadening the circle of international exchange in every field such as sports, arts and culture.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

This signified the nation’s efforts on internationalisation not only in political spheres but also in the cultural arena. However, it was in such an atmosphere that the government led the campaign to increase Japan’s presence in the world as well as welcoming foreigners to Japan. During the 1980s, Yokohama boasted its position as Japan’s gateway to the outside world through several events and developments such as Yokohama Exotic Showcase in 1989 called YES ’89 for short. This undertaking asserted a positive and enabling image of the city to the visitors. That, according to

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{12} Shunya Yoshimi, \textit{Hakurankai no Seijigaku: manazashi no kindai} (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsho, 1992), 221,226. \\
\end{flushright}
official statistics, attracted more than thirteen million (13,337,150) visitors. This was more than four times the population of Yokohama. This attendance was testament to people’s interest in the city’s past as an international gateway, the main port of Meiji modernity, and signalled a vision of its future in facilitating Japan’s global prosperity.

Accordingly, a movement to study Yokohama's past emerged in 1984. Suzuki Takashi (1946-), the president of the publishing company Tangram, advocated for Yokohama Studies and Yokohama Studies Association. This was just a year before the first commemoration of Black. He knew Oizuru Yoshiya (1934-), a former journalist and historian who was influential in lobbying for awareness for Yokohama’s Foreign General Cemetery. They held lectures together to further their mission of bringing attention to the rich past of Yokohama.

The Emergence of Discourse on Henry Black

There have been more than a dozen studies on Black published since the 1980s. While the English titles were scholarly works, books in Japanese were written for a general readership at the time when the revived popularity of rakugo allowed them to highlight Black as a source of curiosity. The authors’ focus on the ‘oddity’ of Black’s life as a foreign-born storyteller of the Meiji-era became a story to sell. Therefore,


15 One of the flyers for the showcase has a phrase “Mirai ni aini, Yokohama he oide yo!” (Come to Yokohama to meet the future!) boasting the city’s prominence as the gateway to the future. Kanagawa Shimbunsha, ed., *Yokohama Hakurankai Kōshiki Kiroku*, 23.

16 Suzuki’s naming of Yokohama Studies was inspired by Koga Jujiro, the founder of Nagasaki Studies as area study. https://www.tangram-net.com/fr_yokohama.html List of publications on Westerners who lived in Japan are listed here. http://rainichi20072.blog106.fc2.com/blog-date-200707.html
popular Japanese books allowed for awareness of Black by the general public.

Pioneering academic work was written by the Japanese humour studies professor Sasaki Miyoko (1931-2017) and professor of rakugo Morioka Heinz (1932-) in Japanese and subsequently in English.

The first article on Black written by Sasaki and Morioka appeared in Sophia University’s Japanese journal Sophia Linguistica in 1982 entitled Kairakutei Burakku to Meiji no Yose [Kairakutei Black and Yose of Meiji]. This essay examined Black’s life and career with extensive comparison between the original European novels and his adaptive translations. Sasaki and Morioka next published an English-language scholarly article in the journal Monumenta Nipponica, in 1983 entitled ‘The Blue-Eyed Storyteller: Henry Black and His Rakugo Career’. This essay discussed Black’s life in the context of the turbulent changes in Meiji-era and rakugo in yose, or entertainment halls. The authors analysed Black’s adaptive translations of European novels in great detail. This article covered Black’s career and concluded that Black was admired by Japanese commoners for his performances and candidness.

Sasaki and Morioka’s ground-breaking academic research on Black was inspired by Kojima’s mention of Black’s name among a list of storytellers in Meiji Japan. They acknowledged the aforementioned Kojima’s 1966 work Rakugo Sanbyakunen as one of their first encounters with Black’s name. The fact that the scholars began research on Black and that Kojima shifted the audience from the scholarly arena to the popular readership is significant. Although Kojima was among

---

17 Morioka and Sasaki, “Kairakutei Burakku to Meiji no Yose,” 5-82.
the first to notice Black’s name, the scholars’ contribution of robust research with extensive referencing to newspaper articles from the Meiji-era is significant.

In the following year, 1984, Kojima Teiji, a writer on Japanese performing arts and sumo, wrote *Kairakutei Burakku: Bunmei Kaika no Igirisujin Rakugoka* [Kairakutei Black: British Storyteller of Cultural Enlightenment]. This book was published after Sasaki and Morioka’s academic works which as a scholarly work did not reach Japanese general readership. Therefore, this book became the first popular book on Black written for a general readership. He described Black’s life from childhood to his successful career as a ‘British’ storyteller. He discussed the contribution of Black’s father John Reddie in great detail as he was an influential editor in the history of Japanese newspaper industry and Black inherited talent for entertainment from his father.\(^{20}\) He summarized Black as an archetype of *henna gaijin* (odd foreigners) relating to a prevalent 1980s term used to describe foreigners who were fascinated with Japan.\(^{21}\)

According to Ian McArthur, Sasaki and Morioka contended that Kojima referenced their works without adequate acknowledgement. However, they did not accuse him openly, to allow for more publicity about Black who they believed was forgotten and received little attention among legendary storytellers of Meiji.\(^{22}\) Their motive was not self-gratification as ‘the authors of the first biography on Black’ but to research and share Black’s contribution among the general public. Kojima was previously an editor in a publishing company and a journalist for newspapers, thus he was skilled in writing styles for a general audience. Moreover, Kojima had a

---

\(^{20}\) Kojima, *Kairakutei Burakku*, 57, 64.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 255-256.

\(^{22}\) Personal communication with Ian McArthur (31 May 2017).
substantial audience based on his previous popular books on rakugo, sumo and variety entertainment (engei). His biography on Black therefore circulated far beyond academic circles.

In 1986, Sasaki and Morioka wrote Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’: Aoi me no Rakugoka ga mita ‘Bunmei Kaika’ no Nippon to Nipponjin [‘Nippon’ of Kairakutei Black: Japan and Japanese of ‘Cultural Enlightenment’ that the Blue-Eyed Rakugoka Saw]. They focused on Black’s career in relation to Meiji Modernisation, again, noting the turbulent time of change in Japanese history. They attempted to add to Nihonjinron, or the discourse on Japanese uniqueness, through the eyes of Black describing Japan and its people in the Meiji Era. They praised Black as a unique ‘entertainer of cultural enlightenment’.

Their attempt to study Meiji Japan through Black’s eyes differentiated their work from Kojima’s book published two years earlier. The authors concluded by agreeing with the phrase by a journalist in the previous chapter saying, “Black is not dead.” This statement signified their focus that Black made a lasting contribution to popular entertainment in Meiji Japan and the memory of Black has been revived through the efforts to commemorate his life since the 1980s.

By the early 1990s we see several publications. In 1992, Ian McArthur published a Japanese book which will be discussed in detail in the following section. In 1993, the resurgence of interest in Black led to a special issue of a Japanese monthly magazine Hōsho Gekkan featuring Black and his father John Reddie in its ninety-third issue. The featured issue had the title Aoi me no Nipponjin Burakku

---

23 Sasaki and Morioka, Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’, iii.
24 Ibid., 210.
*Oyako* [The Blue-Eyed Japanese Black Father and Son]. This title is in reference to the focus on their ‘oddity’ of having blue-eyes yet being named ‘Japanese’ due to their degree of immersion into Japanese culture. It included articles by thirteen people including Sasaki, Morioka and other Black experts.

In 1997, Kojima wrote *Kairakutei Burakku Den* [Chronicles of Kairakutei Black] to retell Black’s life and legacy, which once again focused on his biography. The second publication by Kojima indicated two key inter-related points. First, by that time, a greater public awareness of Black existed through previous publications and media coverage on Black. Second, curiosity about Black was significant enough for a publisher to anticipate that another book on Black was a lucrative venture. Kojima’s two popular works were pivotal in extending the discourse on Black beyond the academic appreciation that Sasaki and Morioka established.

**Ian McArthur**

Ian McArthur’s discovery of Henry Black was serendipitous. In 1983, McArthur, then an Australian journalist in Tokyo, purchased a copy of an academic journal of Sophia University *Monumenta Nipponica*. He intended to read an article by an old University of Queensland colleague. There, unexpectedly, he came across the article by Sasaki and Morioka. He became fascinated with Black. Both McArthur and Black had Scottish ancestry. And, McArthur, then a journalist in Tokyo, was excited to learn that Black’s father was a prominent journalist in Meiji Japan. McArthur decided to share the story with his readers in Australia – something different from his routine reports on bilateral trade relationship between Australia and Japan.26 He

---

26 Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
began researching Black and conducted an interview with Sasaki and Morioka, then made a field trip to North Adelaide where Black was born.

McArthur became the first Australian researcher of Black and introduced Black’s story to Australian audience through his original research. McArthur first interviewed Sasaki and Morioka on 26 June 1984. They noted that McArthur “idolised Black and understood the facts well”. In 1985, they invited McArthur to the first Henry Black commemoration held at the cemetery. There, he made connections for his further research.

In 1992, McArthur published his Japanese book on Black entitled *Kairakutei Burakku: Wasurerareta Nippon Saikō no Gaijin Tarento* [*Kairakutei Black: The Forgotten Greatest Foreign Talent in Japan*]. In the same year, he was invited to tell about his experience of finding Black and writing his biography to an audience gathered at the seventh annual commemoration of Black. That McArthur published the book in Japanese demonstrates sufficient interest to justify publication from Kodansha, one of the major publishers in Japan. Also, the book was published on 17 September 1992, only two days before the annual commemoration of Black held on 19 September. The timing enabled McArthur to launch his book at a gathering held in a café near the cemetery following the annual commemoration. McArthur spoke to the attendees about his encounter with Henry Black story and his publication. He signed copies of his book for those who purchased it. The rakugoka and his friend San’yūtei Tonraku gave a performance which also served to raise awareness of the Black’s lasting his legacy as a storyteller.  

---

28 Personal communication with McArthur (25 June 2017).
Ian McArthur’s Japanese Book *Kairakutei Burakku* (1992)\(^{29}\)

The title of McArthur’s book is a reference to the Japanese term *gaijin tarento*, the many foreigners with fluent Japanese who appeared on the Japanese television programs by the 1990s. McArthur’s book reminded a general Japanese audience that Black was the first of those ‘odd’ *gaijin tarento* in Japan a century earlier than those who succeeded in the Japanese entertainment industry.\(^{30}\) The interest in foreign-born entertainers in Japan at that time was one of the factors contributing to the emergence of interest in Black.

**Commemoration and Study Group**

Following their article in 1983, Morioka and Sasaki lobbied storytellers, the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery and diplomats to celebrate Black’s life and contributions. They led the movement by raising funds for a memorial metal plaque, organising and sending invitations for the first annual commemoration at Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery.\(^{31}\) By 1985, they formed a group called *shinobukai* (The Group

---


to Remember) to hold annual commemorations of Black with journalist Oizuru Yoshiya, and Yokohama Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) secretary Ohtou Hiromichi (1937-2009).

On 19 September 1985, they hosted the first annual Henry Black commemoration called *Kairakuki* (Pleasure Mourning), a fitting name for the eventful life of Black who enjoyed his career yet struggled in so many ways. This was the sixty-second anniversary since the passing of Black. According to Sasaki and Morioka, about 120 people attended the ceremony including scholars, Black’s adoptive family in Shizuoka Prefecture, diplomats, storytellers and the media. The weekly magazine *Focus* reported the commemoration with the title ‘*Henna gaijin*’ no ganso: Meiji no itanji, Kairakutei Burakku wo ‘shinobukai’ (The Pioneer of ‘Odd Foreigner: ‘The Group to Remember’ Kairakutei Black, the maverick of Meiji). This media description made a reference to the already emerging number of foreigners appearing in the Japanese mass media while noting the uniqueness of Black in Meiji Japan.

Oizuru had also contributed to the resurrection. He was born in Yokohama and spent the last 15 years of his career with *Mainichi Shimbun* at its Yokohama Office. Prior to forming the group, he authored two Japanese books: *Yokohama Rekishi Sanpo* [Yokohama Historic Walk] in 1983; *Yokohama Yamate Gaijin Bochi* [Yokohama Yamate Foreigners’ Cemetery] in 1984; and later, *Yokohama-shi no Shō wa* [Shōwa Era of Yokohama City] in 2012. In the 1984 publication, Oizuru

---

32 Sasaki and Morioka, *Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’*, i.
documented about one hundred and forty foreigners at rest in the cemetery including Henry Black and his father, John Reddie Black.

Ohtou was also an active local historian. He was a devout Christian and secretary of Yokohama YMCA who assisted with the establishment of Yokohama Protestant History Studies Group. In 1988, he contributed to the emerging interest in earlier foreign residents in Japan by publishing two books about missionaries who had advanced friendship between America and Japan. Since retiring from the YMCA, Ohtou dedicated himself to ground maintenance, research and promotion of Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery.

Following the first commemoration, shinobukai renamed itself as Kairakutei Burakku Kenkyūkai (Kairakutei Black Studies Group) with Oizuru as president. They planned to publish a small pamphlet for each commemoration in order to avoid the memorial becoming predominantly a festive event. When introducing the guest lecturer for the second commemoration, Oizuru coined the term Burakku kenkyūka (Black researcher). From 1986 to 1993, they published this annual journal as a pamphlet to distribute to the commemoration attendees. Each volume contained about 8 short articles contributed by scholars, journalists, and writers. In the editorial note of the seventh issue, there was no mention of the publication ceasing, but this was to be the last issue. As Oizuru revealed in the editorial note of the second issue of the journal, the group struggled to fund the publication and its dissemination.

35 Hanashima, ibid., 8.
37 Ibid.
Also, there were difficulties finding a sufficient number of suitable articles for each issue. In a recent interview, McArthur revealed that he did not know why the publication ceased. He kept in touch with Sasaki and Morioka through nengajo (New Year’s Greeting card) and met them during family trips to Tokyo. However, there was no other ongoing activity or association between the members of the study group except for the annual commemoration.

**Foreign General Cemetery**

The grave of Henry Black is located in Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery in Motomachi-chikagai (Motomachi Chinatown), in the affluent and foreign enclave of Yamate district of Yokohama. Black’s name is among the cemetery’s open day route for visitors. Diagonally across from the cemetery stands Yokohama International School (YIS) established in 1930 – a testament the enduring presence of foreign community there to this day.

At the front entrance gate of the cemetery, there are a few lines from the 1751 poem *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* by the British poet Thomas Gray (1716-1777) engraved in the stone pillar.

> And all that beauty, all that wealth e’er grave,  
> Awaits alike th’inevitable hour.  
> The Paths of glory lead but to the grave.  
> Thomas Gray (1716-1777)

---

39 Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
The Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery Main Gate (Yamate-mon)\textsuperscript{40}

It symbolises the cemetery as a depository of memory at the centenary of the Meiji Era. And, noteworthy differences exist between the Japanese inscription on the right pillar and the English counterpart on the left pillar at the front gate. While the Japanese placed the above poem at the top, the English counterpart placed a \textit{memento mori} which reminds visitors that their mortal lives must eventually come to an end.

The year 1968 not only marked the centenary of the Meiji Era, but also the reflection for those who rest in the cemetery. That there are Latin inscriptions of \textit{Memento mori} (Remember that you have to die) and \textit{Requiescat in pace} (Rest in peace) also demonstrates the degree of Western influence in the cemetery.

The cemetery struggled financially as the annual maintenance cost doubled between 1972 and 1977 due to the 1973 Oil Crisis, in which the price of oil quadrupled. In response to the financial strain, in 1978, a grass-roots movement of volunteers emerged with the support of Junior Chamber International (JCI) Yokohama culminating with the formation of the \textit{Gaijin Bochi wo Aisurukai} (The

\textsuperscript{40} Accessed 30 August 2017. http://kitahara.co/blog/20151121_yokohama/
Group That Loves Yokohama Foreign Cemetery). The group’s aim is to preserve the cemetery where the foreigners who contributed to Japan’s modernisation are located. The Prefecture of Kanagawa and City of Yokohama also provided the financial assistance.⁴¹

The city and prefecture agenda was to preserve their heritage and identity as the gateway to the world. The cemetery was expedient for their purpose with the growing interest by various parties and widespread public knowledge of those who contributed to Meiji modernisation. That the municipal government agenda matched the volunteer group’s passion saved the cemetery from imminent closure. Also, notably, JCI Yokohama is located within a walking distance from the cemetery.

The first open day with entry fee donation began on 22 November 1981. Initially, the entire cemetery was accessible to the public on open days, however, consideration to safety necessitated several changes to the route over the next 17 years. The current route was determined in July 1998 and has not been changed since. However, there is no record of how the original routes have changed prior to May 1991.⁴²

The fact that Henry Black’s grave is included among the twenty-eight tombs marked on the route map handed out at the entrance of the foreigner cemetery is significant. At the time of Oizuru’s publication of Yokohama Yamate Gaijin Bochi [Yokohama Yamate Foreigners’ Cemetery] in December 1984, some 4,300 people

⁴² Personal communication with Higuchi Shisei (27 July 2017). There is no record of the exact timing when the cemetery started giving out the route map. When Higuchi began his employment with the cemetery in May 1991, he learned that the route map has been handed out to the visitors previous to his employment.
were buried in the cemetery.\(^{43}\) He documented sixty-one tombs of which some have more than one soul at rest in the same tomb. Among those documented includes foreigners killed during the final years of Tokugawa shogunate, as well as Meiji-era hired foreigners, entertainers, business people, missionaries, educators, those in the YMCA, arts and sports, victims of crimes and accidents, and women. One common thread is that they played a role in modern Japanese history since the turbulent Bakumatsu Period and many became cultural bridges between Japan and the West in the Meiji Era.

While the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery has a long history, the Yokohama Foreign Cemetery Museum opened in 1994, nine years after the first commemoration of Black in 1985. This was also ten years after the public opening of the cemetery. The museum’s major donors include government and educational organisations as well as religious organisations, community groups and individuals.

The first 3 major donors listed are Prefecture of Kanagawa, City of Yokohama, and Aisurukai of Yokohama Foreign Cemetery (The Group That Loves Yokohama Foreign Cemetery). The metal plaque of the museum stands as a testament that the cemetery received donations as the sign of support from the local community. Some old photographs in the museum houses displays relating to the Christian churches and Christian schools in Yamate district. Importantly, there is a picture with an explanation how the Yokohama Foreign Cemetery was first established in 1861 as several foreigners died in Yokohama and a series of murders of foreigners led to the cemetery to be built.

\(^{43}\) Oizuru, *Yokohama Yamate Gaijin Bochi*, Preface.
The cemetery initially opened to the public on limited days on 29 April 1984. However, at this stage, the collection of donation was encouraged, however, not yet mandatory. Twenty-eight tombs are marked in the Open House Route Map handed at the entry in exchange of the entry fee donation.

More recently, in 2009, Higuchi Shisei, the manager of the Office of the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery Foundation, stated that there were over 4,870 individuals buried in the cemetery, of which only some 400 descendants receive their annual notice to update their contact details. As many of the burial records were burnt in the Great Kantō Earthquake on 1 September 1923, the cemetery does not have complete list of the individuals. Therefore, Black’s annual commemoration attended by his adoptive descendants is remarkable.

The cemetery is spacious with 18,500 square metres of land. The above-mentioned Higuchi stated that the route was decided based on where the visitors can safely walk within the cemetery, and tombs that would generally attract the visitors’ interest. If that was the only possible route, the selected route included significant figures. As a contingency, if this route was on a lower section of the bluff or on the slope, it would have been impossible to hold the annual commemoration of Black. There are thousands of foreigners that lie at rest there, however, only some graves are open publicly. Other graves are only accessible to family members. During the week, the cemetery is open only to the family members. Therefore, opening the cemetery to the public encouraged tourism to the City of Yokohama.

45 Ibid.
Included in the route are notable figures. The common thread is that the individuals at rest in the cemetery all contributed to the Meiji modernisation at a pivotal time in Japanese history. They, like Henry Black, are bridging figures between Japan and the West. The missionaries, engineers, architects, doctors, diplomats and so forth all contributed to the modernisation and industrialisation of Japan. The list of major donors seems to have connections with the names on the list of the selected tombs. However, as the cemetery states that they chose which tombs to be on the route map, they seemingly selected those they had connections with as the donors would also visit the cemetery.

It is of interest to discuss why Henry Black’s father John Reddie Black is not mentioned among the twenty-eight tombs or even with his son Henry. In fact, the Harold S. Williams Collection of the National Library of Australia holds the birth certificate of Henry Black because of the prominence of John Reddie Black as the editor-in-chief of Japan Herald, the first English newspaper in Yokohama. As discussed in the previous chapter, John Black was remembered as a symbolic figure of Meiji Japan earlier than his son Henry. What is it then that made Henry’s contribution to Japan more noteworthy than his father?

It seems that Henry Black is included among the twenty-eight names on the route map handed at the entry of the cemetery because of his contribution to the commoners of Meiji Japan through his love for and success in Japanese traditional performing arts - rakugo. As discussed earlier, the popularity of rakugo received considerable attention at the centenary of Meiji Restoration in 1968. Therefore, Black’s profession as rakugoka justified his name to be included in the map.
The cemetery’s annual financial report revealed that it secures its existence thanks to the open day donation of 200-yen entry fee from each entrant. Without the entry fee totalling more than 4.7 million yen in 2016 as a source of income, the cemetery would be bankrupt.\textsuperscript{46} Although the cemetery does not keep official statistics of the open day entrants, it is estimated that approximately 23,640 visitors entered the cemetery open days in 2016.\textsuperscript{47}

Notably, volunteers manage the reception and ushering in and around the cemetery as well as asking for donation to maintain the cemetery. However, the cemetery is incorporated as a foundation and pay staff of the foundation most likely including the manager of the office of the foundation - they incur salary as expense in excess of eight million yen in 2016.\textsuperscript{48} This represents the significant efforts of the City of Yokohama and other donors that fund the existence of the cemetery to preserve the memory of Meiji-era foreigners and the city’s profile as the gateway to the outside world. The grave of Henry Black is one of the graves that are marked on the route map.

**Other Foreigners at the Cemetery**

In the climate of promoting Yokohama as the gateway to the outside world, Black, an early and long-time resident of Yokohama, received much attention in the 1980s. There were of course other deceased foreign residents of Japan given attention during this decade of Japan’s internationalisation.

\textsuperscript{47} Personal communication with Higuchi.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
Since 1986, the year following the first commemoration of Black, an annual Scidmore Cherry Blossom Group remembers Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore (1856-1928). The ceremony has been also held at the Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery every April when Japanese cherry blossoms are ripe. Scidmore, an American travel writer, visited Japan between 1885 and 1928. She was instrumental in lobbying for the cherry blossoms planted in Washington D.C. symbolising the friendship between America and Japan.  

![Left) Tombstone of Scidmore and Her Brother George.](image1)

![Right) Monument to Commemorate Scidmore.](image2)

A commemorative stone erected on 27 March 1987 have the engraved words dedicated to her in Japanese which reads: “The woman who loved Japan’s cherry blossom rests here.” That her brother George Scidmore was an American Consul General based in Yokohama in 1890 had a strong influence on Scidmore’s desire to travelling and her love for Japan’s cherry blossoms moved her to action. She became a bridge between their home country America and Japan. Although she died in

---

49 The author has visited Yokohama Foreign Cemetery to visit Black’s family grave, Scidmore’s grave and the cemetery museum on 15 July 2017.
50 Photographs taken by the author on 15 July 2017.
Switzerland, the Japanese government paid a tribute upon her death and moved her body to the foreign cemetery where her mother and older brother rest.\textsuperscript{51}

Also of interest was Felice Beato (1832-1909), an Italian-British war photographer who lived in Yokohama between 1863 and 1884. He was an influential photographer who left a lasting impact on emerging photographers of Japan. In 1987, the Yokohama Archives of History compiled a pamphlet of photographs of his work.

\textbf{Extending Knowledge through Performance}

Following his Japanese book on Black in 1992, Ian McArthur received a phone call from the above-mentioned storyteller San’yūtei Tonraku, asking whether he might be interested in participating in a stage play in the role of Black. Importantly, the film director Fujii Tomonori scripted and produced the play entitled \textit{Between} based on McArthur’s book. McArthur agreed and in the coming weeks, lost weight in the intense practice every night after work.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{52} Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
That McArthur learned *rakugo* and performed it on the stage meant that he followed in the footsteps of Black. He wore a *kimono* and sat on a padded mat as Black did and all the storytellers do. Previous to this watershed event, McArthur associated with storytellers professionally only as a journalist. They were his interviewees and acquaintances. However, through his participation in the play, he became a performer in the centre of the stage. He developed a deeper and first-hand understanding for *rakugo* as well as a sense of what Black would have felt performing as an Australian in Japan one century earlier. It was also at this stage that McArthur not only appreciated *rakugo*, but became passionate about it. That he calls Tonraku his friend is also indicative of his comradery with the guild of storytellers through his co-stirring in the play with Tonraku. This distinctive insight ‘between’ a journalist and performer ignited his increased commitment for further research.

---

53 Courtesy of Ian McArthur.
54 Personal communication with McArthur (25 June 2017).
Conclusion

This chapter focused on the resurgence of interest in Henry Black in the 1980s and associated movements in resurrecting him. There were several reasons for such movements. The academic interest in Black led to efforts to commemorate his life and to disseminate the knowledge of him through journals. The 1980s was marked with the revival of interest in foreigners who lived in Japan in the Meiji Era and now lie at rest in Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery. This revival of Black received a further boost because it coincided with the public fascination with the *gaijin tarento* on Japanese television and other media. Now, a greater awareness of Black became pervasive through the performers who extended his legacy. This study will add to the current discourse about foreigners in Japan. The next chapter will examine the consolidation of Black’s contribution.
Chapter Four: Consolidating Black’s Contribution

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, there was a revival of interest about Henry Black in Japan in the 1980s. Before then, he was a forgotten figure. This chapter will argue that the interest in Black was consolidated by key individuals, several of whom claimed Black’s legacy through scholarly, diplomatic, familial and professional linkages.

Sasaki and Morioka’s Contributions

The pioneering scholarly research of Sasaki Miyoko and Morioka Heinz contributed to the emergence of discourse on Black, an annual commemoration of Black and the establishment of Kairakutei Black Studies Group as an academic association. Sasaki and Morioka established the discourse on Henry Black in 1982 through their research and their subsequent publications. Since then, Kojima and McArthur followed their path in researching and publishing about Black. As discussed in the previous chapter, it was Kojima who was responsible for popularising the story of Black through his books. It was, however, McArthur who carried out their task to promote the

---

1 Sasaki Miyoko passed away in Tokyo on 14 April 2017. My recent research about her work led me to find out this news. On 2 May 2017, I informed McArthur of this news. McArthur did not know this as they had been communicating only through the New Year’s greeting card. I discovered this news on the following website. Sasaki Miyoko Sensei tsuitou misa no oshirase [Notice of Professor Sasaki Miyoko Memorial Mass], 27 April 2017. Accessed 2 May 2017. (Archived now after the Mass was held.) http://www.shirayuri.ac.jp/news/2017/2017.04.27.eiken.html
Active link: http://www.lys-blanc.info/branch/home.html
awareness of Black internationally through his journalistic and academic publications.

Sasaki Miyoko spoke in a meeting after the commemoration in 1992.²

As seen in the above photograph, Sasaki spoke in a gathering held following the annual commemoration service of Henry Black in 1992. It was held at a café just across at the Yokohama Foreign General Cemetery. Sasaki and her long-term collaborator Morioka were influential in promoting the knowledge of Black through their scholarly works and presentations on various occasions.

Like Sasaki’s, Morioka’s academic interest and expertise in rakugo was instrumental in their joint research. That Morioka was a German citizen who adopted a Japanese surname³ and became an academic of Japanese traditional storytelling is noteworthy.⁴ Morioka, like Black, immersed himself in Japanese culture through life and adoption of a Japanese surname. They both arrived in Japan as foreigners, made their careers closely related to the Japanese traditional performing arts, adopted Japanese surnames and resided in Japan permanently.

² Courtesy of Ian McArthur.
³ Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
⁴ He published under the surname Balkenhol at least until 1979, but he adopted a Japanese surname Morioka by the time his and Sasaki’s collaborative essay was published in Sophia Linguistica in 1982.
The forerunner in Henry Black studies and Morioka’s long-term collaborator Sasaki Miyoko passed away on 14 April 2017. Upon her passing, McArthur paid respect to her through his website dedicated to the study of Henry Black. It was Sasaki and Morioka’s pioneering academic study and lobbying efforts that led to the annual commemoration of Black at the cemetery. They also contacted and invited Black’s adoptive descendants to the first commemorative ceremony in 1985.

The Family Saga of Black

McArthur’s biography on Black published in 1992 led to an unexpected encounter. Joy Currie, the daughter of Black’s younger brother, John Reddie Black, contacted McArthur. Currie and McArthur exchanged letters and McArthur visited her in her home in Laurieton, New South Wales on 16 July 1993. That she as the niece of Black shared personal accounts about Black and her father John Reddie shed new light onto their lives. Until then, the scholars relied on newspaper articles and interviews with Black’s adoptive descendants in Shizuoka Prefecture. Currie provided an intimate memory of meeting and playing with Black. Because of McArthur’s publication, knowledge of Black reached an international audience – even to Black’s niece in Australia.

Another important event related to Black’s legacy was that Sasaki and Morioka located the adoptive descendants of Black in Shizuoka Prefecture in 1985. Through invitation, they became regular attendants of the annual commemoration at

---


the cemetery. Moreover, they had a reason to draw strength from Black’s fame which had just been revived through the efforts of the organisers of the memorial service for Black.

On 27 November 2016, Mainichi Shimbun reported the tragedy of Sudo Mitsuo, the eldest son of Black’s adopted son Ishii Seikichi. In 1950, Sudo was falsely accused for a famous murder case known as Futamata Incident and sentenced to death. He was found innocent eventually after a police constable revealed that the police interrogated him and forced a confession. Sudo’s wife, Sudo Haruko, continues to attend the commemoration of Black which her husband attended until his death in 2008. Oizuru commented that Sudo researched about Black to draw on the pride for Black and mend the damage of the false accusation. Grasping on to his lineage, Sudo found social acceptance through his participation in the Kairakutei Black Studies Group and in the commemoration. Although he did not write for the studies journals, Sudo’s membership is noted in the seventh journal of the Studies Group. It is significant he was Black’s last adoptive descendant in Japan associated with those who studied his ancestor.

---

7 For details, see Sasaki and Morioka. “Kairakutei Burakku no ‘Nippon’ Urabanashi,” 12-16.
Sudo Mitsuo next to Black’s grave, date unknown.\(^{10}\)

The photograph demonstrated Sudo’s connection with Black and pride as his heir. He welcomed the invitations of the organisers and was accepted into the circle of those who respected Black’s life and participated in his resurrection in the 1980s. The annual commemoration stopped between 2007 and 2012 but began again in 2013. McArthur upon publishing the English version of book in 2013, sent a copy to Sudo Haruko.\(^{11}\) As adoptive descendants of Black, McArthur understood their role as ‘custodians’ of the title of Kairakutei Black.\(^{12}\)

The Legacy for Australia

Prior to the first commemoration of Black in 1985, the Australian government was seeking ways to strengthen cultural ties with Japan. The economic relationship was strong due to the Australia-Japan Commerce Agreement signed in 1957 and the


\(^{11}\) Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).

\(^{12}\) Personal communication with McArthur (21 September 2017).
Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Australia and Japan signed in 1976. Also in 1976, the Australia-Japan Foundation was established within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Its chief aim was to support “people-to-people” ties in the bilateral relationship with its headquarters in Canberra and an office at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo. The foundation also vigorously encouraged Japanese journalists to visit Australia to report about Australia to the Japanese audience.

Sir Currie (middle) with Enraku V (right) and a Buddhist Priest

The keen interest in developing bilateral cultural connections prepared the way for the then Australian Ambassador to Japan, Sir Neil Currie (1926-1999), to seize the opportunity. Currie was photographed laughing with San’yūtei Enraku V (1932-2009) at the first commemoration of Black in 1985. Currie served as the ambassador between 1982 and 1986 during the time Japan was Australia’s largest trading partner.

---

14 Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
15 Courtesy of Ian McArthur
Australia intended to deepen established networks through the aforementioned Australia-Japan Foundation. In this context, Black was a perfect candidate to bring the two nations together through his lasting contributions to Japan as a storyteller. Black, an Australian-born entertainer who worked in Japanese traditional performative arts, became a useful tool for soft diplomacy.

As mentioned above, until Black’s contribution was publicised through publications and the annual commemorations, the bridge between Australia and Japan was largely viewed as an economic one. Following Japan’s rise as one of the world’s most affluent nations by the 1970s, Japan became both economic and political partner for Australia. Thanks to Black, a cultural bridge was recognised in the 1980s in the midst of the Japanese public fascination for the many foreigners appearing on the television speaking fluent Japanese. The bridge, or “people-to-people” ties that the Australian government earnestly wished to establish, had been in existence for more than a century. However, Black’s short-lived fame was not utilised for politics or diplomacy during his lifetime. Thus, when the organisers of Black’s commemoration contacted the Australian Embassy, Currie seized the chance to strengthen cultural ties with Japan through Australia-born Henry Black.

The Henry Black story became expedient for Australia to emphasise the longevity and strength of the bilateral relationship between Australia and Japan. Ambassador Currie’s presence marked the pivotal point of remembering Black as an ‘Australian’ storyteller although, as discussed, Black capitalised on his British ancestry and did not openly announce himself as ‘Australian’. Currie’s attendance demonstrated that Australia made a diplomatic effort to preserve the memory of Black. And, such a deliberate effort of Australia stood out especially in the absence
of the British counterpart at the commemoration despite invitation from the organisers.\textsuperscript{16}

Although all Australians were British at the time of Black’s birth in South Australia in 1865, Currie’s presence at Black’s commemoration officially claimed Black as an Australian who became a go-between between Australia and Japan. Another sign of the increasing interest in the Australian-Japanese link in the 1980s included the growth in government organisations. While Australian government instituted the aforementioned the Australia-Japan Foundation in 1976, the Japanese counterpart installed Japan Foundation Sydney office in 1978.\textsuperscript{17} The bilateral relationship was set for further intellectual and cultural exchanges.

On the other hand, Enraku was one of the most prominent storytellers in the late twentieth century and a member of the same guild as Black. Therefore, Enraku’s attendance represented the guild’s renewed interest to connect with one of the most prominent storytellers of their group. Between 1983 and 2006, Enraku was the fourth host of a television comedy program \textit{Shōten}. As discussed in the previous chapter, the program was one of the key factors in the revival of interest in rakugo before the resurgence of attention on Black in the 1980s.

Notably, a Buddhist priest attended the commemoration signifying Black’s connection to his profession as a storyteller. \textit{Rakugo} evolved from the eighth-century “sermon stories” by the Buddhist priests to teach “uneducated” commoners.\textsuperscript{18}

Although the Blacks were Christians, not Buddhists, it was significant that Black as a storyteller was remembered by a Buddhist ceremony. Moreover, it is appropriate that

\textsuperscript{16} Makkāsā, \textit{Kairakutei Burakku}, 16-17.
\textsuperscript{17} Japan Foundation Headquarters was established in Tokyo in 1972.
\textsuperscript{18} Sasaki and Balkenhol, “\textit{Rakugo},” 153.
Black as a Japanese citizen was paid respect with a Buddhist style commemoration. Despite the cross on the grave as the evidence of the family’s Christian faith, Henry Black died as a naturalised Japanese but was buried in a foreigners’ cemetery. Black was an oddity and became famous as a foreigner who could speak Japanese fluently and perform *rakugo* at a time this was rare. Prior to his legal naturalisation, Black “figuratively” became Japanese in two ways: by his adoption of the stage name Kairakutei Burakku as a performer of distinctively Japanese traditional storytelling; and by being adopted into a Japanese family through his marriage to Ishii Aka.  

Until Black’s legacies were deemed useful and noteworthy by the researchers, media and diplomats, Black’s name did not receive public recognition. As discussed in the previous chapter, it was in 1966 when an anthology of *rakugo* by Kojima Teiji, a writer on entertainment, included Black’s name among the list of Meiji-era narrators. By the time Japan had become one of Australia’s closest trading partners, the Henry Black story started receiving attention through Sasaki and Morioka’s lobbying efforts.

**The Legacy for Britain**

The British Embassy did not attend Black’s first commemoration in 1985 despite an invitation from the organisers. A possible reason for the absence of a British delegation at the ceremony was due to distance and hot weather in September. Another potential reason for the absence was that the British diplomats were discreet in claiming Black as one of their own and wished to avoid tension with the

---

20 Kojima, *Rakugo Sanbyakunen: Meiji, Taishō*.
21 Personal communication with McArthur (7 August 2017).
Australian delegation over Black’s legacy. Subsequently, the British Embassy had seen the success of the Australian Embassy in claiming Black’s legacy at the first commemoration in 1985. Black’s annual commemoration as well as publications and media reports on Black provided impetus for the Britons. They decided to assert their right to Black’s legacy following Australia’s success.

Moreover, the British absence from the commemoration might also suggest that Black was not considered important. By the time of the first commemoration of Black in 1985, Britain and Japan had already enjoyed a lasting trade partnership since the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1858. The bilateral relationship between Britain and Japan had been characterised by elite diplomats such as Ernest Satow (1843-1929), the British diplomat and scholar who first arrived in Japan in 1865.\(^{22}\) Therefore, the British had no need to claim Black, an obscure figure with a lowly profession of a stage narrator whose fame lasted only for one decade in the 1890s. Moreover, Black relinquished British citizenship in order to obtain Japanese citizenship to travel in Japan freely for his performances.

Nonetheless, the British Embassycapitalised on Black when convenient to promote their agenda to highlight their lasting relationship with Japan. The British Embassy in Tokyo, for example, produced a life size poster of Black for Mitsukoshi Department Store around 1990 to commemorate the bilateral relationship between

\(^{22}\) Satow first arrived in Japan a week before the Namamugi Incident of 1862 discussed in chapter one. His diaries, letters and guidebooks have been reprinted several times indicating his legacies. For Satow’s career, see Ernest Mason Satow, *A Diplomat in Japan* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1921). It was later reprinted in 1968 from Oxford University Press and in 1983 from Charles E. Tuttle Company. Ernest Mason Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1917) is now in its sixth edition as *Satow's Diplomatic Practice* edited by Ivor Roberts and from Oxford University Press (2009).
Britain and Japan.\textsuperscript{23} While there is ambiguity about the exact timing, 1988 would have been the one hundred and thirtieth year since the above-mentioned treaty of 1858 which conveniently coincided with the year in which Black was born. The British viewed the Black story as useful. And the department store’s status justified the venue to showcase the longevity of bilateral relationship between Britain and Japan. In 1988, the British Embassy made a decisive move to claim Black as one of their own despite the fact that Black gave up his British citizenship in 1893.

**The Rightful Heir?**

In terms of diplomatic efforts, Australia and Britain both claimed Black. Notably, in the profession of *rakugo*, Fukuda Hidefumi claimed Black’s title and lineage as a ‘foreign’ entertainer. Fukuda was the son of an American soldier and a Japanese mother, born in Tokyo on 26 May 1952, only four weeks after the Allied Occupation of Japan ended. Therefore, he was among one of the ‘children of the occupation’ who suffered discrimination and marginalisation in the Japanese society.\textsuperscript{24}

Fukuda’s sense of identity calls for a scholarly examination. A scholar with a similar background was Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, also one of the children of the American Occupation, born to an Irish-American father and a Japanese mother in Tokyo. After he became a scholar and psychologist, he developed deeper appreciation for his roots, “to balance their influences and blend them into a synergistic whole. While others may see me as ‘half,’ I know that I am whole.” Mixed heritage people dedicate their lives to understanding themselves and to


\textsuperscript{24} For an extensive study of conditions of such children in Japan, see Walter Hamilton, *Children of the Occupation* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2012).
connecting with communities.\textsuperscript{25} This positive notion of mixed race and sense of purpose rings true with how Fukuda found his life’s purpose.

Kairakutei Black II on stage on 8 January 2017.\textsuperscript{26}

In the above photograph, Kairakutei Black II is seen dressed in Japanese traditional clothing – 	extit{kimono} – printed with the Union Jack, a reference to Henry Black’s British ancestry, not his own American heritage. His strategic choice of dress demonstrates his efforts to live the spirit of Henry Black. Fukuda deliberately placed himself to follow Black’s legacies.

Fukuda reflected on his long-term respect for Henry Black as a foreign-born entertainer in the journal 	extit{Hōsho Gekkan}, a featured magazine mentioned in the previous chapter. Fukuda grew up watching Japanese 	extit{samurai} films and hoped to become a film actor. However, because of his appearance as a ‘foreigner’, he gave up that dream. He subsequently took an interest in 	extit{rakugo}, a distinctively Japanese performing art. Fukuda was fascinated with the potential roles a storyteller can perform – across various social classes and genders. Like Black, he was a Japanese on the inside but a foreigner on the outside. It is significant to note that unlike Black,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{25} Murphy-Shigematsu, \textit{When Half Is Whole}, 2, 5.
\textsuperscript{26} http://ameblo.jp/kamapihaha/entry-12236345536.html
\end{flushright}
Fukuda was raised by a Japanese mother. Therefore, Fukuda lived a Japanese lifestyle, but he was aware of his limitations because of the social stigma placed on ‘foreigners’. Fukuda knew of no foreign-born storyteller until he came across the story of Kairakutei Black I. That he found a connection with Black as a foreigner in the traditional arts gave him strength. He trained as a storyteller for twenty-three years from 1969 under a renowned rakugo master, Tatekawa Danshi VII.

Fukuda learned about Black before the pioneering academic work of Sasaki and Morioka, and before the two popular works of Kojima and a book by McArthur extended a wider awareness of Black. Therefore, the only resource in the 1960s that Fukuda could access to learn about Black had to be Kojima’s 1966 book which lists Black among the Meiji-era storytellers. Fukuda knew about Black before the discourse on Black emerged in the 1980s. This suggests Fukuda’s ownership to the title of Kairakutei Black in his based on his personal experiences and training.

Through his rakugo master Tatekawa Danshi, Fukuda became associated with the Tatekawa guild of storytellers. It was not the San’yū guild which Henry Black belonged to. It is a convention among the storytellers that the succession of the title occurs within the same guild. However, the Tatekawa guild was the only school of rakugoka that welcomed new disciples at the time Fukuda studied. Also, the guild was one of the emerging guilds. Such prominence was indicated by Danshi’s involvement in planning and hosting the aforementioned television program Shōten between 1966 and 1969. This popular show cemented Danshi’s fame as television

27 Fukuda’s American father died on the ship to serve in the Korean War (1950-1953). Therefore, Fukuda, being born in 1952, grew up with his Japanese mother.
reached a mass audience for the first time. It was also during this period that the popularity of *rakugo* was revitalised.

Later, Fukuda and his master’s differences led to Fukuda’s excommunication by Danshi within three years of his training. Fukuda exposed his rifts with Danshi in a biography *Tatekawa Danshi no Shōtai* [The True Identity of Tatekawa Danshi]. Danshi was notorious for his bold attitude with disciples along with numerous excommunications of disciples. Fukuda criticised Danshi’s thriftiness as obsession for money. Therefore, like the original Black, Fukuda became renowned for his eccentric *rakugo* career. They both performed *rakugo* with a ‘foreign’ appearance and defied the norms of the storytellers through their lifestyle.

Following the excommunication from Danshi, Fukuda became the disciple of Katsura Sanshi, another prominent narrator, but of another guild, between 1972 and 1979. It was not until 1979 that Danshi readmitted Fukuda to his guild. In 1990, Fukuda won the first prize in the category dedicated to young emerging performers at the National Engei Theatre. In the following year, he won the annual special recognition award at the same venue. That those two awards were funded by the Japan Arts Council demonstrated Fukuda’s aptitude. Danshi recommended him to claim the title of Kairakutei Black II when he reached the status of *shin’uchi*, the principal performer, in 1992. Fukuda’s long-term dream came true. His respect for the original Black was to be publicly recognised with his succession to the title. He

---


30 *Engei* means variety entertainment which are traditional Japanese performing arts such as two mainstream styles of storytelling (*rakugo* and *kōdan*), *manzai* (stand-up comedy), magic, vaudeville and so forth.

believed that he had prerogative to place himself in the lineage of Black with a wide recognition among the narrators and the appearance as a ‘foreign’ storyteller like the original title-bearer.

The rakugo performers are publicly acknowledged and referred to by their stage name, not by their legal name. The stage name represents “an official membership” in that particular household of storytellers. And, traditionally, the stage names are inherited along with the history of the profession of rakugo performers. and intensified through successions with an “immortal” value. The names are considered as the storytellers’ trademark, asset and authority as well as a validated identity. Therefore, Fukuda’s succession to the title had a significance beyond critics figuratively acclaiming an emerging performer with a reference to a prominent predecessor. Fukuda sought not only to inherit one stage name but build on the very life and achievements of Kairakutei Black, and authenticate his ambition publicly.

Despite Fukuda’s commended performances, however, his succession stirred controversy among those who valued the tradition of rakugo. In the convention of storytellers, one must bow to the family of the title-holder to seek their permission to succeed that dynastic lineage. However, Fukuda adopted the title without consulting Black’s adoptive descendants in Shizuoka. Consequently, Fukuda met disapproval from Black’s descendants as well as from the aforementioned Kairakutei Black Studies Group for not following the convention to seek consent. This event indicated that Fukuda felt that he followed Black closer than others who were remotely related to Black by adoption. Fukuda’s acts demonstrated that he felt no

32 Brau, Rakugo, 90.
34 Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
obligation to visit Shizuoka to seek permission to claim the title from people who are not direct descendants.

Kojima Teiji, an author of two books on Henry Black, also disapproved of the action. He candidly objected to the “selfish” appropriation by Fukuda. While “the resurrection of prominent title” ought to be celebrated, the process of succession needs to be conducted properly by first paying respect to the descendants before receiving approval of his own master or others.\(^35\) Evidently, Fukuda’s claim to the title was contested by those who wrote about and respected Black. However, it was evident that he had known about Black for a longer period than those involved in the Studies Group who began their research in the 1980s. He had trained over two decades in the strict discipleship of rakugo to claim the title. It seems he felt he had a legitimate claim to the title.

Fukuda’s choice of stories and styles also indicated his claim to the title. His signature stories featured risqué themes challenging the conventions for the storytellers. In other words, by breaking rules, traditions and norms, Fukuda followed Henry Back’s maverick footsteps. Fukuda also attempted to justify his unique position by referencing the original Black being despised because of his impolite words to his fellow narrators. Then, Fukuda attributed his lack of manners to his master Danshi as a characteristic of the guild. Fukuda succeeded the title of Black and tells stories orthodox narrators dare not.\(^36\) As seen in chapter two, Black was a ‘black sheep’ and ‘oddity’ as the first known foreigner in rakugo. Fukuda emulated the life of Black by virtue of his adoption also as an ‘outsider’ to the San’yū guild.

---


Black was always considered as ‘foreign’ and ‘outsider’ by virtue of his foreign birth.

Ironically, the more Fukuda emulated Black’s life by defying the norms of this distinctively traditional profession, the more disapproval he received. Furthermore, Fukuda’s substantial debts, the records of excommunication and readmission to guilds of storytellers all led to much publicity and naturally, lasting disapproval by Black’s descendants and the orthodox storytellers.\(^{37}\) However, even the controversies served to raise public awareness of the legacy of Henry Black.

In 1993, the year following Fukuda’s contested appropriation of the title, Oizuru Yoshiya, the chairperson of Kairakutei Black Studies Group, openly expressed his opinion that McArthur was the one worthy to use the title of Black II.\(^{38}\) There was a precursor for this statement. Just three months before Oizuru’s remarks, McArthur performed as Black in a stage play *Between* as discussed in the previous chapter. Although Oizuru did not condemn Fukuda in the journal, his endorsement of McArthur confirmed his displeasure with Fukuda. Moreover, as the chairperson and editor of the studies group, Oizuru’s comment inevitably represented the view of researchers on Black.

Kojima differed from Oizuru’s view in his resolution that there was only one Kairakutei Black. Kojima’s knowledge about Black dates back to approximately 1955 – forty-two years at the time of his statement.\(^{39}\) For Kojima, neither Fukuda nor McArthur was a worthy candidate for the succession. Since the death of Kojima in

---


\(^{39}\) Kojima writes he is not sure of the exact year, but he stated approximately 1955. For details, see Kojima, *Kairakutei Burakku Den*, 275.
2003, the overwhelming view is that Fukuda is not the rightful heir to Henry Black’s legacy.

As discussed earlier, those who loved Black and the tradition of rakugo will approve succession if the heir demonstrated respect to the virtue of courtesy and reverence to the surviving family of the previous title-bearer. To date, there is no record that Fukuda sought approval from the Sudo or Ishii families as the surviving descendants and keepers of Black’s lineage.40

Kairakutei Black II (left) and Ian McArthur (right) by Black’s grave, 199241

The commemoration of Henry Black in 1992 was eventful, or rather, indicative of the lasting legacy of Black. On that occasion, Kairakutei Black II was photographed with McArthur by Black’s grave. That Fukuda took the title just before McArthur’s first book on Black appeared, and not long before the annual gathering, fuelled the controversy. The timing also suggests that Fukuda wished to be referred to by his newly claimed title Kairakutei Black, not by his legal surname Fukuda, at following commemorative services. The timing was just perfect for Fukuda as McArthurs’s

40 Kojima, ibid., 282. McArthur recently confirmed this to be still the case. Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
41 Courtesy of Ian McArthur
biography on Henry Black was to be launched at the commemoration. Fukuda’s strategy was to use McArthur’s book launch at the commemoration to promote himself as the logical heir to Henry Black and to infer that McArthur supported this appropriation.

That Fukuda and McArthur draw on strength from Black, and simultaneously, sustained the movement to remember Black through their own storytelling is the paramount legacy. Twenty-five years since assuming the title, Kairakutei Black II continues to claim his lineage dressing in the *kimono* with the Union Jack. Black’s legacy inspired Fukuda to rise above the ubiquitous stereotype and prejudice towards ‘foreigners’ in Japan. The wide curiosity about the first title holder of such a controversial figure created significant public interest to seek out Black’s legacy and impact on cross-cultural understanding.

**Ian McArthur Extends Knowledge of Black Abroad**

During the revitalised interest in Black in the 1980s, McArthur sent articles from Japan to Australia about Black spreading knowledge of Black in Australia. Following his biography in 1992 and his stage performance as Black in 1993, McArthur continued to work as a journalist. Prior to the first commemoration of Black in the Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery in 1985, McArthur’s article on Black appeared in four different Australian newspapers. First, on 20 July 1985, the Melbourne-based *The Sun*. Then, on 8 August, in the Perth-based *The West Australian* newspaper noting Black’s Japanese language ability that enabled him “to cross cultural barriers easily” and to gain popularity among the mass audience in

vaudeville. His article also appeared in the Adelaide-based *The Advertiser* on 10 August and the Brisbane-based *The Sunday Mail* on 11 August. McArthur’s articles disseminated the story beyond the Japanese audience Black originally reached or the scholarly works of Sasaki and Morioka in the early 1980s in Japan.

Examining the careers of McArthur in Japan and abroad provides important insight into his fascination of Black. As Allen Hibbard argued, scholarship can lead to a very close connection between biographer and research subjects. Since McArthur’s encounter with the story of Henry Black in 1983, and especially since the publication of his Japanese book in 1992, his chief research interest has not shifted to other biographical subjects.

By the 1990s there had been several Australians who wrote about Japan – some contributing to cross-cultural understanding, others strengthening stereotypes of Japanese culture from the Western gaze. Moreover, attempts to analyse Japanese economic success afforded various international publications both scholarly and non-scholarly.

---


45 Hibbard, “Biographer and Subject,” 19.


In 2000, McArthur’s continuing interest in Black and desire for a career change led to his doctoral research at the University of Sydney. In 2002, McArthur completed his thesis entitled *Mediating Modernity – Henry Black and narrated hybridity in Meiji Japan*.48 It focused on the role of Black’s narration to contribute to the Meiji modernisation. His emphasis on modernity as indicated in the title also fits with emerging literature around that time.49

Upon graduating with Doctor of Philosophy in Japanese Studies, McArthur’s academic research yielded six academic journal publications of which four extensively discussed Black. Publications examined Black’s identity and citizenship, his contributions in Meiji Era as a storyteller and his adoptive translations.

In 2002, he published ‘Australian, British, or Japanese?: Henry Black in Japan’ in *Japanese Studies* which argued that Black became Japanese by adoption of a stage name for a distinctively Japanese traditional performing arts of rakugo and by being adopted into a Japanese family by marriage. In support of his argument, he referred extensively to both Japanese and English sources as well as conducting interviews on scholars on Black as well as adoptive descendants of Black.50

---

48 Personal communication with McArthur (31 May 2017).
He also wrote in 2004 an article entitled ‘Henry Black, Rakugo and the Coming of Modernity in Meiji Japan’ in *Japan Forum*. He discussed Black as a vehicle for bringing the notion of European modernity to the Japanese public.\(^{51}\) He extended that discussion in other publications in 2006 and 2007.\(^{52}\) In 2009, McArthur won the prestigious Inoue Yasushi Award for Outstanding Research in Japanese Literature in Australia with his 2008 article *Narrating the Law in Japan: Rakugo in the Meiji Law Reform Debate*.\(^ {53}\) This signified his academic contribution was paramount among the Japanese Studies scholars in Australia.\(^ {54}\)

McArthur’s work created international interest. French comedian and storyteller Stephane Ferrandez and his producer Sandrine Garbuglia, for example, were inspired by McArthur’s scholarship on Black and visited Japan to deepen their understanding for rakugo in 2009. In the following year, they took rakugo lessons. This resulted in McArthur applying for and receiving Japan Foundation funding to present his talks in France, Germany and England in October 2011. That the Japan Foundation supported the promotion of Japanese scholarship abroad by an Australia-

---


\(^{54}\) McArthur continues to speak as guest lecturer at various events. Most recently, he was invited as a guest lecture at a seminar of the Oriental Society of Australia at the University of Sydney on 28 August 2017. He has been invited to speak about Black’s adaptive translations in Italy next year, 2018.
born scholar and performer of Japanese storytelling showcases McArthur’s standing as a leading specialist on Black.

McArthur with Garbuglia (centre) and Ferrandez (right), in Paris, October, 2011.55

In the photograph above, McArthur and the producer Garbuglia were dressed in suits while Ferrandez was in a Japanese costume for storytellers. It is significant that during the event, McArthur, who performed storytelling on stage in Japan in 1993, became a lecturer. His role shifted from a performer to a scholar. At the presentation, McArthur spoke about Black’s contribution to Japanese commoners through adaptive translations of European literature into rakugo.56 Solidifying his scholarship, in 2013, McArthur published a French article based on his presentation in Paris in a Japanese Studies journal in France called Cipango.57 He showcased how Black’s adoptive translations influenced debates on European modernity in Japanese society and legal systems.

56 Personal communication with Ian McArthur (31 May 2017).
57 In medieval mythology, an island off the eastern coast of Asia, perhaps modern-day Japan. A poetic name for Japan, used by Italian trader and explorer, Marco Polo (1254-1324), was Zipangu.
Ian McArthur’s Solidifying His Position

In 2013, Ian McArthur wrote Henry Black: On Stage in Meiji Japan. This historical study focused on Black’s career and facility in Japanese and English language as contributing factors to narrating European modernity to Japanese commoners. This encapsulated thirty years of McArthur’s research as the first English book on Black and the first title on Black published outside Japan. The publication from Monash University Publishing showcased McArthur’s scholarship. While his first book was published in Japanese intended for the Japanese readership, his English book demonstrated that there was interest among the Anglophone readership.

McArthur spoke about Black and his book to an audience gathered at Books Kinokuniya Sydney on 1 August 2013. Kinokuniya is located in the heart of Sydney Central Business District across from the historic Queen Victoria Building. McArthur’s book launch at Kinokuniya, a Japanese major book chain, is symbolic of McArthur’s role in spreading the knowledge of Black overseas, but in a Japanese

---

bookstore. As the event was in English, it was an opportunity for McArthur to showcase his scholarship to the general public.

McArthur wearing a yukata and talking about Henry Black on 1 August 2013.\(^{59}\)

As seen in the photograph above, McArthur wore the yukata, a Japanese traditional clothing the storytellers wear on stage. This indicated his affinity not only with Black but also with rakugo. The aforementioned San’yūtei Enraku, the leader of the San’yū guild, gave McArthur this fabric. McArthur impressed on the minds of the attendees that he followed Black faithfully as a scholar as well as a friend to narrators. This was another evidence of McArthur’s affiliation with the guild Black once belonged to. In 1986, Enraku commended Black’s creativity as a required attribute for storytellers.\(^{60}\) In 1992, McArthur interviewed Enraku about Black’s life and contribution.\(^{61}\) Enraku passed away in 2009, only four years before this book launch.

\(^{61}\) For details, see Ian Makkāsā, “Enraku shishō Burakku wo kataru,” 1-11.
McArthur’s wearing of the *yukata* paid homage not only to Black but also to the profession of narration and the guild. The pattern on the *yukata* contained the Chinese characters for Enraku’s name, openly acknowledging McArhur’s respect and love for the late master of the guild. He had the privilege of writing about Black and wearing a narrator’s clothing that a *rakugo* legend personally presented him, retelling and extending the knowledge of the ‘forgotten’ storyteller of Meiji Japan.

Enraku argued that Black differed from foreign-born *tarento* on television because Black enlightened his audience with international perspectives. He praised Black stating that he loved and understood Japan so much so that there is no match to him.\(^{62}\) While Black’s success has a parallel to the 1990s foreign-born personnel in the entertainment industry, the 1890s was much more conservative and intolerant to foreigners such as Black. McArthur’s wearing of Enraku’s clothing represented their joint effort to preserve the memory of Black even by discussing both the rise and fall of Black as well as extending his legacy.

It is significant that some key figures attended the book launch. One of them was Alison Broinowski, who was in attendance at the first commemoration of Black in 1985 as the cultural attaché of the Australian Embassy in Tokyo. Between 1987 and 1988, she served as the director of Australia-Japan Foundation mentioned in the previous chapter. Another was Walter Hamilton, the former ABC Tokyo correspondent.\(^{63}\) The attendance of these Japan experts at McArthur’s book launch also demonstrated the longevity of their interest in Australia-Japan relationship as well as McArthur’s sustained effort.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., 8.
\(^{63}\) Personal communication with McArthur (21 September 2017).
Milestone of the Commemoration

The annual commemoration of Henry Black stopped for six years between 2007 and 2012 due to the ageing attendees of the ceremony. Then, in 2013, *Kairakuki* was held for the ninetieth anniversary since the death of Black. Oizuru Yoshiya, the organiser of the commemoration, hosted the event as the representative of the Henry Black Studies Group.\(^6^4\)

The members of the Studies Group wished to hold the ceremony again.\(^6^5\) Despite ageing attendees, the very resurrection of the commemoration provided impetus for those involved for decades since the first of the commemoration in 1985. After over three decades of history, the annual graveside ceremony continues to attract not only regular attendees but those who learned about Black more recently through McArthur or Kairakutei Black II perpetuating the legacy.

---


Conclusion

Black’s legacy continues in Japan and in various parts of the world. The diplomats claimed him as their own. McArthur’s research as well as stories surrounding Black continue to add to the discourse Sasaki and Morioka began. The controversy to the succession of the title of Black also raised the profile and increased publicity about the story of Black in Japan. On the other hand, McArthur’s sustained efforts to disseminate knowledge of Black through publications and presentations extended the interest in Australia and Europe. As the annual commemoration of Black reached the ninetieth anniversary since the passing of Black, public interest in Black continues to reach beyond the academic circles and adoptive descendants of Black.
Chapter Five: Henry Black, Hybridity, and Cross-cultural Understanding

The contributions made by Henry Black extends well beyond the height of his career in the Meiji-era. Through his hybrid identity, Black’s adaptive storytelling brought the Western modernity constructs to the general public of Japan. Black’s command of both the English and Japanese language as well as his knowledge of both Japanese and Western cultures enabled him to contribute to Japan’s understanding of the West.

The impact of Black’s contribution has been more fully appreciated since the revival of interest in foreigners in Meiji Japan in the 1980s – six decades after his death in 1923. It is important to note that revival of general interest in rakugo prepared the way for Black to receive attention as the foreign-born rakugo performer. Kojima Teiji mentioned Black in his history of the performance genre, Rakugo Sanbyakunen: Meiji, Taisho Volume 1 in 1966. In the same year, the television show began entitled Shōten, a popular comedy show featuring famous storytellers, re-introduced rakugo to the Japanese public. The re-opening of Rakugo Kenkyūkai to promote rakugo and the centenary of the Meiji Restoration in 1968 moreover, demonstrated the rising popularity of this genre.

Further, historical studies of Black since the 1980s have revealed forgotten aspects not only of Black’s life but also of the times and contexts in which he worked. This study has showcased the intricacy of information and dissemination of knowledge on Black, and ultimately, of cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, the

1 Kojima, Rakugo Sanbyakunen: Meiji, Taishō.
studies of Black were located in two distinct literatures: Australia-Japan relationship; and foreigners in Meiji Japan. Scholarship on Black has extended Japanese-Australian history beyond political and diplomatic history that Neville Meaney and David Sissons investigated. Also the research on Black has provided additional insight on cultural and social history of the two nations and has added to existing literature. Further, the studies on Black have expanded the scope of focus on foreigners in Japan beyond famous figures such as Lafcadio Hearn and Ernest Fenollosa.

As seen in previous chapters, the story of Henry Black attracted substantial traction through its initial appeal to scholars and those interested in the legacy of rakugo. The preliminary motives for Sasaki Miyoko and Morioka Heinz were twofold: to spread knowledge about the contribution of Black to the popular audience in his translation and formation of understanding about European modernity; and to lobby for a wider acknowledgement of the contribution of storytellers in the understanding of Japanese society and history. However, their reach in extending the knowledge of Black was limited to their academic circle of associations as well as storytellers who welcomed the ‘resurrection’ of Black in the 1980s. Their pioneering academic work influenced further disseminations as the story of Black sparked the interest of many. The pivotal nexus in the formation of discourse was Kojima, a writer, as well as Japanese publisher, who capitalised on the ‘oddity’ and uniqueness of what had become a movement to remember the life of Black. Notably, the attempts by Kojima and the subsequent media interest allowed the story of Black to be accessible to a wider audience in Japan.

A crucial force in the spread of the knowledge of Black was Ian McArthur, then an Australian journalist in Tokyo. McArthur’s effort to spread the reporting of
Black was pivotal in the dissemination of the news of Black to his Anglophone audiences about Black and his contribution as an ‘Australian’ in Japan. Like Black, McArthur’s hybrid identity formed through his career in Japan enabled him to promote a deeper understanding of the story of Black. McArthur figuratively brought Black back to Australia across the borders and to the motherland of Black and McArthur, a nation distant and vastly different from Japan. The timing in the 1980s was significant as Australia was eager to learn more about Japan due to the burgeoning trade relationship and desire to broaden the base of the bilateral relationship. This has included an increased number of student exchanges and two-way tourism as part of enhanced cultural understanding.

After the organisers of Black’s commemoration contacted Australian and British embassies in 1985, both embassies capitalised on the legend of Black. Australia readily welcomed the opportunity to claim Black as its own as a ‘bridge’ to their neighbour in the ‘Near North’. Subsequently, like Australia, Britain saw the usefulness of employing the story of Black as part of diplomatic engagement with Japan. In essence, both Australia and Britain sought to expand not only their economic and commercial relationships, but also their cultural connections with Japan. That ‘their’ citizen, Henry Black, had succeeded in the traditional Japanese art of rakugo caught the attention of diplomats looking for opportunities to add depth to diplomatic engagement initiatives.

It was not only diplomats who sought to claim the story of Black as useful for their cause however. A new generation of rakugoka sought to claim the title of Kairakutei Black, the stage name Henry Black used during his life. The issue surrounding the succession became a controversy and stirred significant excitement among the rakugo community as well as the aforementioned Kairakutei Black
Studies Group and the adoptive descendants of Black. As the knowledge of Black spread, ‘arbitrary’ appropriation of Black’s legacy challenged a protocol in the rakugo tradition. Until the emergence of Fukuda Hidefumi, the contested successor to the name of Black, no attempt had been made to claim the title.

One of the questions this thesis explored was “Why study Black among thousands of other foreigners who lived in Meiji-era Japan?” As demonstrated in the thesis, Black wholeheartedly embraced Japanese culture by working exclusively in the Japanese profession of the performative arts, and by his marriage and adoption into a Japanese family to obtain Japanese citizenship.

In the period Black lived in Japan, the West was yet to experience a pivotal change in their perception towards the ‘Orient’ or the East. As Edward Said contended in Orientalism in 1978, the Europeans created the notion of the ‘Orient’ and it became “an integral part of European material civilization and culture” since the late eighteenth century.² As mentioned in chapter one, the Westerners maintained their value system, and clung to their own cultures. Therefore, the degree of Black’s adoption of Japanese culture was unusual.

This study also adds to the body of scholarship on Australia-Japan contacts including those discussed in chapter one. The degree of Black’s adoption of Japanese culture contributed not only to Meiji Japan but also to future research on bilateral relations between the two nations in which Black and McArthur lived. McArthur’s encounter with Australian sources on Black such as through his field trip and communication with Joy Currie, Black’s niece, were useful in deepening the knowledge of Black. As mentioned earlier, McArthur’s Japanese book served to

remind the Currie family about their past connection with Japan through Black. Such intersections provided a scope for this thesis to examine the value of encounters and nexus of events surrounding Black.

The tension between Kairakutei Black II and Ian McArthur over the claim of Henry Black’s lineage discussed in Chapter Four, has not been examined elsewhere. Because of his profession as a storyteller, Kairakutei Black II is recognised in Japan as a contested successor of Black. He also shares a similar maverick life and career to that of Black as a ‘foreign’ storyteller. His claim to the title outside of the San’yū guild in which the original Black belonged to, and without seeking approval of the adoptive descendants of Black made his claim controversial. However, his life and controversy are important part of the dissemination of knowledge of and raising the awareness of Black in Japan.

McArthur took a different approach. He developed close associations with the Black researchers, the San’yū guild, Black’s relatives and adoptive descendants. While McArthur’s earlier work in 1992 was published in Japanese for popular audiences, his subsequent perseverance as a scholar to bring the stories of Black abroad in the English-language placed him in a unique position as a mediator of cross-cultural understanding like Henry Black. McArthur became the favoured heir in the views of Kairakutei Black Studies Group, Black’s family and descendants as well as his supporters outside Japan. That McArthur has been invited to speak about Black in Europe is evidence of the versatility of the legend of Black in crossing the boundaries of conventional limitations or prejudice as a foreign-born entertainer.

This thesis adds to the discourse that Morioka and Sasaki began in 1980 and was extended by McArthur and others. Although this case study is small, it is
intended that its scope and potential extends to future research about the Meiji-era foreigners who made a lasting contribution to Japan’s modernisation. Their contributions were forgotten, yet a renewed attention called for public interest in their legacy through commemorations and other efforts.

This study also builds on the notion on hybridity as a vehicle to facilitate cross-cultural understanding. Kamada in 2009 examined positive and enabling notions of hybridity through reference to hybrid cars and hybrid plants as well as hybrid identities. Kamada’s study of hybridity, although explained in the context of mixed-race heritage, can apply to Black or McArthur’s acquired hybridity through their lived experiences in two cultures. The twenty-first century notions of hybrid identity provide useful insights into understanding the experience of people who work between two cultures such as Black and McArthur in this study.

As Japan approaches the sesquicentennial anniversary of Meiji Restoration in 2018, there will be a renewed interest in Meiji-era foreigners both in public and scholarly spheres. The need for cross-cultural understanding calls for attention in the twenty-first century. While Black’s success in storytelling was brief in the 1890s, the public interest in his story since the 1980s is significant.

The knowledge of Henry Black was extended not only in Japan and Australia, but presently in Europe through existing literature and presentations of Ian McArthur. This thesis demonstrated that although there is on-going controversy over the claim of the name of Kairakutei Black, such debates have served to raise the

---

profile of Black in contemporary Japan and internationally. The works by Black scholars reprise the one message, “Black is not dead.”
Bibliography

Primary Sources


Books, Articles, and Unpublished Studies


Nagata, Yuriko. Ōsutoraria Nikkeijin Kyōseishūyō no Kiroku: shirarezaru Taiheiyō Sensō オーストラリア日系人強制収容の記録—知られざる太平洋戦争
[Record of Japanese Internment in Australia: The Unknown Pacific War].


