

《研究ノート》

## The *Taihoku Nippo* and the Labor Movement in Washington, 1922-1924

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The purpose of this note is to introduce and examine some articles from the *Taihoku Nippo* (*Great Northern Daily News*) on the labor movement in Washington State just after the World War I.

The *Taihoku Nippo* was one of the two Japanese-language papers for the Seattle Japanese community in the 1920's. Though the *Hokubei Jiji* (*North American Times*), another Japanese-language paper in Seattle, was vying for Japanese readers and advertisers with the *Taihoku Nippo*, only a few issues of that paper still remain now<sup>(1)</sup>. On the other hand, issues of the *Taihoku Nippo* were reproduced on microfilm and we can currently read them at some libraries in Japan and the United States. Its articles were, therefore, the best historical sources available for us to examine the views of the Japanese community on the labor movement in Washington.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, organized labor in the United States had discriminated against Japanese immigrants. Most labor unions in Washington were, of course, no exception. The cooperation of the Japanese community with them during the Seattle General Strike, which happened in February 1919, however, changed the situation. The attitude of labor unions toward the Japanese took a turn for the better not only in Seattle but also in throughout Washington.

The policy of the Japanese community was, however, not the sole cause of the improvement in feelings of organized labor toward the Japanese. Since the influx of Japanese immigrants to the Pacific Northwest began, some leaders of the Japanese community who understood the great significance of the labor movement in the United States were making efforts to establish friendly relationships with labor unions. Their endeavors, however, had always been rejected by white labor organizations in Seattle and throughout Washington.

The appearance of James Duncan, the secretary of the Seattle Central Labor Council, and Harry Ault, the editor-manager of the *Seattle Union Record*, the organ of the SCLC, as leaders of the Seattle labor movement changed its atmosphere and policies in many ways. Though they belonged to the American Federation of Labor, they were not mere followers of its policies. They often challenged the leadership of Samuel Gompers, the strong chairman of the American Federation of Labor in those years. Their attitude toward the Japanese workers was also different from that of Gompers and the mainstream of the American labor movement. The leaders of the Japanese community requested their understanding on the position of the Japanese in Seattle and succeeded in establishing friendly relationships with them. Though the base of the activities of Duncan and Ault was in Seattle, their influence was not restricted to within the city's boundaries. It seemed that anti-Japanese feeling in

the labor organizations, therefore, weakened all over Washington, at least for a while.

Their strong influence, however, did not last long. James Duncan retired as the secretary of the SCLC in July 1923 due to the strong pressure from the executive council of the American Federation of Labor. Ault also fell into trouble over the drop in circulation and the financial difficulties of the *Union Record*. As a result, the influence of Ault in the labor movement had declined even before January 1, 1925 when the *Union Record* severed its relationship with the SCLC and the Labor movement in Washington<sup>(2)</sup>.

With this current of the times, the policies of the labor unions on the Japanese workers changed. So too did the attitude of the Japanese community toward the Labor movement in Washington. The articles from the *Taihoku Nippo*, which I will introduce here, reflect these changes.

### **Expectations and Sympathies, 1922**

In the New Year issue of 1922, the *Taihoku Nippo* published a long article, “A history of compatriots in the Pacific Northwest,” written by the Kurozokin (Black mask)<sup>(3)</sup>. In one part of it, the writer referred to the transition of the relationship between the Japanese and labor unions as follows :

Therefore, we could not have dreamed in those years that labor unions would admit the entry of Japanese workers. The trend of the times, however, changed the situation completely. The relationships between the Japanese and labor unions advanced from an easing of tensions to cooperation. This is especially true in Washington. That is, the working class changed their attitude to accept Japanese workers willingly, trained them, and made them one of the means for the success of the class movement because persecuting and leaving Japanese workers outside the range of labor unions would force them to become strike breakers even after the ban on immigration, the main aim of the exclusion movement, was carried out. On the other hand, Japanese workers have realized the importance of class interests and the foolishness of the destruction of economic order by low wages as they gained their experiences as workers in the United States, and they have shown attitudes which would be useful to class interests. Therefore, the relationships of the two parties were closely reconciled. Especially, friendly contacts between the two increased since the compatriot workers cooperated with the American Federation of Labor at the general strike that occurred in Seattle at the beginning of the 1919. Examples such as the testimony of the E.B. Ault, the editor of the *Union Record* at the Immigration Committee, invitations for compatriot workers from some unions that belong to the Washington local of the American Federation of Labor, and the statements of the central labor councils of Seattle and Tacoma against the Washington State Anti-Japanese Land act in its voting indicate the good relationships between both parties. Enemies in the past appear to have become intimate comrades today<sup>(4)</sup>.

Based on such an opportunistic view on the situation of Washington, an article of April 3, 1922 argued that the Japanese communities of Oregon and California should follow the line that had proved to be effective in Washington :

### Approach to Labor Organizations – Now is the best time for it

The voice of the Japanese exclusion started from San Francisco and San Francisco became the center of exclusion twenty or fifteen years ago. At first, labor organizations used the same method they had used against the Chinese to exclude the Japanese. It was a psychological exclusion in a sense.

The situation became clear as researches developed. White workers understood the fact that Japanese workers are not their real rivals because the Japanese direct their labor toward agriculture, especially jobs that would be done by bending over, or would need hand-centered skills. They also understood that low wages and cheap ways of life that were their excuses when they had excluded the Chinese were not applicable to the Japanese. The wages of the Japanese are not so low and their ways of life are not so cheap. This was made clear by a report by a special commission established recently in California.

In fact, the influx of Japanese workers rarely reduced jobs of white workers.

Now workers do not exclude Japanese so much due to of above reasons. They are thinking, however, that the existence of the Japanese would not be of much benefit to them, if at all. Therefore, they are opposed to introducing more workers from Japan.

Moreover, out of habits of exclusion of fifteen or twenty years ago, they still dislike the Japanese. Because the national convention of labor organizations continues to preserve the exclusion of the oriental immigration as one of its programs, their general principle is the exclusion of Japanese immigrants even in regions where anti-Japanese feelings are not high.

On the other hand, the labor organizations of Seattle have a very good feelings for the Japanese. They have come to feel that the Japanese are trustworthy people because the Japanese had joined forces with them and had not changed their attitudes to the end in the recent general strike.

For this and many other reasons, the relationship between the Japanese and labor organizations in Seattle is very good today, and we keep in touch with each other.

The *Record* of this city, the organ of labor organizations of Washington, argued that Japanese residents should be treated equally to residents from other countries in a recent article. When a person asked Mr. Ault, the editor of the paper, whether the Legion would attack the paper if it publishes the opinion of equal treatment for the Japanese, it is said that he replied that the Legion would not attack the *Record* because they know that they would lose if they would dispute against the *Record*.

Though labor organizations in various places have had a proper understanding about the Japanese and have begun to stop excluding them as mentioned, above labor organizations of Oregon and California still enforce the policy of exclusion. The residents of these places do not keep in touch with them as the residents of Seattle do. Ambitious politicians exist everywhere and they always instigate the Legion and other patriotic organizations. It would be effective to move these organizations to carry out their aims because the Legion and patriotic organizations have a large number of members. The labor parties also have a large number of members. Therefore, it would not be difficult to counter the Legion if we acquire these as our supporters.

Even in this city, ambitious politicians such as Mr. Tindall appear and make the Japanese foot balls of political disputes and use them to instigate the Legion. The Japanese, therefore, must approach labor organizations more closely and establish better terms with them.

In Oregon and California too, it would become a step in preventing the deterioration in feelings of people against us if we

could approach labor organizations and establish good relationship with them.

We think that today is the best time to approach the labor organizations. Because they are losing their forces and are pressed by the capitalists, they would gladly welcome us if the Japanese approach them of our own accord. Now is the best time for approaching them<sup>(5)</sup>.

It was not long before an opportunity for the Japanese community to test their determination to get on more intimate terms with labor unions presented itself.

The year 1922 saw two nationwide strikes in the United States. First, the coal strike started on April 1 in both the bituminous and anthracite fields by the order of the United Mine Workers. Second, under the leadership of the Railway Employees' Department of the American Federation of Labor, workers of the six railroad shop crafts went out on July 1. Both strikes were large ones and extended over a long period. As a result, Japanese workers were confronted with difficult state of affairs in many places. Then how did the *Taihoku Nippo* advise them to cope with the situation?

The *Taihoku Nippo* told Japanese workers not to become strike breakers and cooperate with unions. In a part of an article of July 6, it insisted as follows :

Of course, it is unreasonable for the unions to try to bring the Japanese to their side despite the fact that they have always neglected or refused to admit us. At the moment, however, it is a most appropriate measure to cooperate with white workers and let them recognize our capacities to coexist with them. It would be a very dangerous step for our compatriot workers to take a wrong course due to temporary profits and to suffer disgraces<sup>(6)</sup>.

In many articles in those days, the *Taihoku Nippo* repeated the same opinions, though some leaders of the Japanese community did not agree with it. I wish to introduce an article of July 13, 1922 as one of the articles that suggest such divisions of opinions in the Japanese community.

#### Attitudes of the Japanese—on the railroad strike

The Japanese workers deserve our sympathy because they are driven into corners by pressures both from unions and from companies at the strikes of union men.

In the coal union men's strike, about three hundred Japanese workers working at the coal mines of Utah and Montana have their backs to the wall.

In the railroad shopmen's strike, about two hundred Japanese working as shopmen helpers in Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and Washington were cornered too.

According to what Mr. Katsuki, the secretary of JANA, who came back from an investigative tour of Idaho and Montana, tens of workers have already cooperated with unions and stopped working, but most workers have not yet decided which course to choose.

This is natural. Theoretically they can neglect unions because they are not members of them. However, actually they are

pressed hard by the union men to cooperate with them.

Even if we insist that pressure is unreasonable, it is only discussion and actually useless in this case.

On the other hand, companies implore them not to stop working.

They are afraid that companies may have enmity against them and will refuse to employ Japanese after the strike is resolved if they take side with the unions. They are worried that the union men may force them out after the strike if they continue to work against the pressures of unions.

I think that, as the policy for Japanese residents to take, Japanese workers should cooperate with white workers and should try to approach whites at every opportunity. Therefore, I wish to insist that Japanese workers working as helpers make it their principle to cooperate decisively with union men in the case of the railroad shop strike. A certain person is opposing this and is pointing out the following as reasons : (1) the Japanese are not members of unions, (2) union men have guarantees of their livelihoods if they go on strike but the Japanese do not , and, (3) the Japanese are not treated as skilled workers. However, the reasons of opposition seem to depend on situations and conditions because he also says that they should cooperate with unions in principle.

(1) On the opinion that the Japanese need not cooperate with unions because they are not members, I do admit that this is true in theory. But theory is useless in this case. Unions are placing great pressure on them and any discussion cannot relieve their pressure.

(2) The opinion concerning the guarantees of livelihood is very important. A person who made inspections on the spot is telling that union men are putting pressure on the Japanese to stop working because they would give expenses for their livelihood and some Japanese stopped working on such conditions. Therefore, it would be possible to make union men secure such conditions when they stop working.

(3) Though the Japanese are not treated as skilled workers, they are helpers and even if four organizations have not yet walked out, it is a different kind of problem. Actually union men are putting pressure on the Japanese to stop working. Besides, there is another opinion that actions of the Japanese do not affect the general situation of the strike. Though this is a fact, it is natural that union men try to win all people who would be allies over to their sides according to their sentiments, and they consider it important as strategy to make the Japanese strike in company with them. Whether it affects the general situation is practically irrelevant, other than being a theoretical question.

I heard that union men in a round house are saying that if the company forces the Japanese out after the solution of the strike, the local would strike against it. Moreover, I heard that they are saying that they would welcome the entry of the Japanese to the union now.

If this is true, it is the most sensible way for the Japanese to cooperate decidedly with union men after securing sufficient guarantees<sup>(7)</sup>.

It was very difficult for workers on the spot, however, to act appropriately in the situation relying on only their own judgments. In articles of July 15 and 21, therefore, the *Taihoku Nippo* requested the Japanese Association of North America in Seattle to take on the job of leading workers. The following is the text of the article of July 15 headlined “The Situation of Labor and the Japanese Association of North America.” In one

part of it, the writer referred to the role that JANA had played at the time of the Seattle General Strike :

The United States is now on the verge of a great crisis of industry. Workers in some railroad shops and coal mines went on strike and institutions for national transportations and supplies of fuel for lives and industries stopped or are in the process of stopping. The situations in the South and the Mid-west, the centers of strikes, is deteriorating day by day, armed forces were sent out for suppression, and every moment the turmoil is escalating to an emergency.

It seems that readers are well acquainted with the processes of strikes because this paper has reported them in detail daily. One of the big problems for compatriots which we must study here is the relationships between the compatriot workers and labor unions or their members. According to information, not a few compatriot railroad workers have something to do with shop labor. Some of them left their jobs to support unions and are under the protection of unions. Some of them continue working under the special consents of unions by appealing the destitution of livelihoods. Some of them are ignorant of the strike situation, have nothing to do with unions, and have been regarded as enemies of unions by working willingly under the commands of companies and actually disturbing the actions of strikers.

The situations of compatriot workers are indeed unstable ones. They are not admitted to skilled workers' unions at shops on the one hand, yet it is impossible to be independent of their actions on the other. If unions request them to participate in sympathy strikes, they cannot refuse it plainly as other people's affairs. Japanese workers may have many words to say on the theory and the logic. However, unions are fighting this railroad shop strike for the principle of workers by using wage problem as a fuse. Therefore, there will be a bill to pay some time in the future if Japanese workers state only the problem of their livelihoods and turn deaf ears to the offers of unions.

The general situation at the present time is complicated like this, and compatriot workers are forced into a tight corner where they are unable to make a decision on which course to choose. If the state of affairs could not be solved in a short time and the railroad maintenance union would declare a strike, the problem concerning compatriot workers will enlarge further and we cannot guess its effects.

On the other hand, what kind of attitude is the Japanese Association of North America, which has many railroad workers as its members, assuming now? What kind of investigations is the labor section, which was established to take an active part in this sort of case, doing on this great labor problem? Unfortunately, we have never heard that the association is ready to conduct investigations or lead compatriot workers in the situation. We cannot see why the same association is so indifferent to this crisis that has direct and indirect effects on workers who account for the majority of the compatriots and the large group of American labor unions may begin to regard us with hostility if they miss their course of action on it.

When the General Strike happened in Seattle a few years ago, the Japanese Association of North America established a special committee in view of the situation, selected people who had a relationship with unions as its members, and led compatriot workers to the side of unions by judging that such action would have good effects on the whole situation. Since then, unions have been grateful to our compatriots and the feeling between both parties improved. So far only the organ of unions has made their attitude clear and has continued to oppose the Japanese exclusion movement.

We suggest that JANA to open its eyes to this grave situation and take concrete measures at once. That is to say, it should set up a special committee and have it study the situation and should try to lead compatriot workers not into taking a wrong

course. It is also a good way to let unions admit compatriot workers based on special rules by taking advantage of this opportunity. In short, it is the key point to find the best way through the whole situation. JANA is responsible for solving the problems concerning the life of the compatriots. It should not neglect this problem, which is important for the future of not only railroad workers but also all compatriots<sup>(8)</sup>.

It was not long before JANA took up the problem for discussion. The *Taihoku Nippo* welcomed the news and published an article headlined “At last, the JA Stood up.” Seattle’s Japanese community, however, could not boast of monolithic solidarity as the *Taihoku Nippo* had expected. One contracting company in Seattle soon sent some Japanese workers to Auburn as strike breakers. The Auburn Japanese Association, which feared angering unions, asked for the help of the United Northwest Japanese Association, confederation of Japanese Associations in Washington, but the UNJA could not work out effective measures to pull out workers from the railroad shops of Auburn.

It seems that, however, most Japanese workers cooperated with unions to the end. The *Taihoku Nippo* praised Japanese workers for their self-sacrifices in an article of January 15 of 1923.

#### The End of the Strike – the Compatriots Chose Death before Dishonor

This paper of late Friday published the fact that the agreement of shopmen strikers of the Great Northern Railroad and company was concluded and the strike came to end was reported at Saint Paul. This news was informally confirmed as a fact according to the coverage of the *Times* of this city, though it has not yet been announced formally.

Though conditions of the agreement have not yet published : (1)wages will be the ones decided by the Railroad Board, (2) strikers will lose the privilege of seniority wages and pensions, (3)reinstatements will be done by seniority as soon as jobs would be found, (4) they will work with non-union men.

If this is true, the strike came to an end with the complete defeat of unions. Though it is very unfortunate for union men, there is nothing for it because they lost a war.

Since the start of the strike on June 1, I have sympathized with the unions and secretly wished for their victory. I feel very sorry now to hear the news that they were utterly defeated but I cannot help but give up gracefully now that things have come to a pass. It is an especially regrettable thing that many Japanese workers were torn between companies and unions, and Japanese organizations such as Japanese associations sat by and watched them without giving any advice or counsel and acted cold-heartedly as if it were no business of theirs.

Most Japanese workers positively made a decision to take the union side, withstood for long seven months, and died a hero’s death. Their spirit to stick to the principle is laudable.

If they hold fast to only their own interest, there might be other ways to take. If they became strike breakers as a small group of corrupt men, it might be possible for them to be arrogant with immoral prosperity. In fact, every Japanese worker had opportunities to become a strike breaker. However, the Japanese men with chivalrous spirits detested to leave their disgraces in labor history. They did not have the hearts to betray union men. They respected justice at the sacrifice of themselves and gave up profits. This relentless righteousness is the true characteristic of the Japanese men and the essence of the Japanese race.

Because of their existence, there is brilliance in Japanese history and there is hope in the future of Japanese race.

If corrupt men who wish to become strike breakers and wish to be happy with immoral prosperity account for the majority of the Japanese race, the days of Japan as a remote islands in the eastern sea would be numbered.

According to the report of the newspapers, strikes at N.B. and other railroads will come to a close in a few days as well as the one at G.N.

I feel wholehearted sympathy toward Japanese workers who took part in the railroads strike, awakend to the characteristics of workers, fought with many troubles for a long time and died the death of warriors to the end and I am afraid that my words of praise may be not enough for them. Though you paid a heavy price materially, you rendered meritorious for the general workers, and for us, the Yamato race. I believe that you would satisfy yourselves by this fact and would face this severe defeat with a smile as brave warriors who fell in battle after having fought until all resources were expended<sup>(9)</sup>.

### Disappointments and Doubts, 1924

Such friendly articles of the *Taihoku Nippo* of 1922 and 1923 were based on the conviction that the policies of organized labor in Washington had changed and the expectation that the situation would improve further as long as Japanese workers continued to show their sympathy to the white labor movement. In 1923, however, the tide turned against the progressive or radical factions of the labor movement in Washington. James Duncan retired as secretary of SCLC in July 1923. Though the *Union Record* continued to publish friendly articles for the Japanese, the influence of Harry Ault, its editor-manager, in the Labor movement in Washington gradually weakened. Though it is difficult to define the relation of cause and effect, the Japanese exclusion case of Lake Stevens broke in such a state of affairs.

Although the *Taihoku Nippo* had realized the change of the situation, at the beginning, it continued to advocate the necessity of labor organizations for Japanese workers.

#### The pressing need to organize a labor union

The exclusion case against Japanese workers which happened at a sawmill at Lake Stevens the other day was a matter which involved only a handful of people. However, we should not neglect it because it was a confrontation between Japanese workers and white citizens, or the sawmill and the labor union.

There are various views about the origin of the case such as a movement of a manager of a restaurant or the opposition of a store, but the cause of the deterioration in the situation was a lack of communication between the sawmill, the Japanese, white workers and local people.

In the said region, there are sawmills and farms where many Japanese are working. It is difficult to understand the reason why they excluded Japanese as anti-unions only at Lake Stevens. Besides, flames might leap to unexpected lines even though the origin of the fire was the Japanese, because the sawmill is regarding this as an important case in confronting the union, and is insisting that it would fight to the end. Every time this kind of problem occurs, we regret the fact that there are no firm labor organizations among our compatriots. We believe that mutual understanding and a solution profitable for our compatriots



would be possible in the case of Lake Stevens so long as we have authoritative organizations for negotiations.

On the contrary, the situation of labor negotiations of today is no better than vacant houses. Even if we wish to go, there would be no backup and if they would come, there would be no one among us to deal with them. As a result, compatriot workers are forced into the corner and die uselessly. The scopes of activities gradually decrease.

Nowadays Japanese residents are gradually being turned out from farms and are forced into corners where they must find means of escape in the field of labor. If they encounter barriers in the stages of labor, which are their last resorts, their positions would become untenable ones. It is a serious matter for fellow countrymen.

There have been some organizations among our compatriot workers until today. These were, however, only hobbies of capricious persons and there was little enthusiasm for loyalty to the compatriot working class, to strive for their progress, and to defend their interests. All disappeared as suddenly as they appeared and did not give light from the base.

Since the downfall of Mr. James Duncan, the state of labor unions has changed against our compatriots. Judging from this tendency, our compatriot workers would suffer defeats everywhere unless they would organize powerful organizations and make them prepare to enter into negotiations. It is the duty of the Labor Section of JANA to provide this kind of service<sup>(10)</sup>.

This article, probably written by Kojiro Takeuchi, kept calm. A reporter in Mukilteo, however, could not restrain his anger against white unions :

It is the stupidity, obstinacy and selfishness of white workers that irritated and annoyed us. How will we be happy if they show their will to unite, to cooperate and to struggle jointly with us on the broad base as laboring class irrespective of race, nationality, politics and religion?

The person who does not wish to organize unions or to join it is an old-fashioned fool or a coward. If the American Federation of Labor accepts us as their members freely, we would be ashamed of ourselves by being low workers who are excluded from them.

In this sense, we cannot help being angry, detesting and despising the strength of ignorance, prejudice and selfishness of white labor unions. Especially when we think of their shameful conducts at Lake Stevens, we wish to say that their stupidity is extraordinary<sup>(11)</sup>.

Moreover, flames of the Japanese exclusion at Lake Stevens soon started another fire on Mukilteo. This gave a far more serious shock than the case of Lake Stevens to the Japanese community.

The Japanese excluded at Lake Stevens were newly employed workers at the time when the mill reopened. On the other hand, the Japanese had been working at Mukilteo for about twenty years and over a hundred and fifty workers were working in 1923 there, too. Both favorable mentions of labor unions and lectures about the need of organizations of Japanese workers disappeared from the following article of the *Taihoku Nippo* that argued the situation in Mukilteo :

### New Japanese exclusion movement – against Mukilteo sawmill

...

What started the movement to exclude the Japanese from the Mukilteo sawmill is Lodge No.1 of the Lincoln Invisible Pathfinders of Everett city and it seems to be receiving support from labor unions and veterans. How bigoted they are!

They may think that the Japanese exclusion at Lake Stevens has proved successful. If there were not such a movement, however, the sawmill was to be opened now and a few Japanese and many white workers was to be working there. Because of their absurd exclusion movement, the company has not yet opened the sawmill and both the company and workers suffered a loss.

We think that their words would not be accepted so easily in Mukilteo because the Japanese who have been employed for many years there have been deeply trusted and the company is powerful. However, if they use patriotism as a pretext and if it becomes the voice of local residents, the difference between the right and wrong would be bypassed and the Japanese who are foreigners, especially foreigners who cannot naturalize, would always be sacrificed. We cannot be, therefore, optimistic.

Yesterday, we made a long distance call to the Japanese foreman in the Mukilteo sawmills, asked the state of affairs, and advised him to come to Seattle to consult and devise measures. We think that the attitudes of union labor have changed for the worse against the Japanese. We are afraid that the state may become a complicated one if unions start a big movement. If it is not confined to a region such as Lake Stevens or Mukilteo or a scene such as a sawmill and develops into an opposition movement against all Japanese workers, it would be a big problem to all Japanese. Even if the opposition is limited to a region such as Mukilteo or a scene such as working at sawmills, we think that its effects may extend to all Japanese and this is a problem that we should not overlook carelessly.

It is not a time to be contented with useless discussions now but a time in which we must argue thoroughly to make a practical plan for the prevention of exclusion and put it into practice<sup>(12)</sup>.

JANA sent two officers to Mukilteo to investigate the local situation. Their report further changed the attitude of the *Taihoku Nippo* toward organized labor of Washington.

### The Attitude of Mukilteo sawmill is very firm — Yesterday Directors of the JA Investigated on the Spot

On the 9th of this month, Lodge No.1 of the Lincoln Invisible Pathfinders of Everett city carried a resolution to expell Japanese workers from the Crown sawmill in Mukilteo and sent copies of it to labor organizations such as the *Union Record* of this city and others. We published the threatening situation in this paper on the 12th, obtained the information from the Japanese bookman of Mukilteo by telephone at once, and encouraged him. The Japanese Association of North America opened the meeting of the Fourth Section on the 13th and decided to send a director and the chief of the section to investigate the situation and Director Kanbe and chief of the Fourth section Hosokawa left for Mukilteo at twelve on the 13th. They told us of the situation as follows. The two visited president Scott at sawmill but he was in Port Angeles on business. They met only Mr. Lister who is the vice-manager and who is undertaking the responsibility of management of the same sawmill and asked about the situation concerning the Everett resolution. He showed the firm decision and told that he had read it in the newspapers but had not yet read official document, that this sawmill is by nature open shop and is employing everyone

without any restriction from unions, that this open shop principle would be reversed and be turned to closed shop if it would accept the union opinion by admitting the resolution, and it would be very serious problem for the company especially because the company has employed the Japanese for twenty years and a third of workers are diligent Japanese and they are working peacefully, that the Japanese are very diligent and always loyal to the United States and subscribed on the invitations for the Freedom Bonds more than other whites, therefore we should not fire these diligent and loyal workers by outrageous resolutions of a small group<sup>(13)</sup>.

They understood the situation in Mukilteo clearly. The labor unions were excluding Japanese workers there and the management was resisting their pressures as seen before World War I. The expectation of the *Taihoku Nippo* and the Japanese community was betrayed.

Even after the Mukilteo case, JANA continued to assist the organization of Japanese workers as the *Taihoku Nippo* had once insisted in many articles. The opinion of the *Taihoku Nippo* on the problem, however, changed. Let me introduce some parts of two articles which indicate the change of the opinion of the *Taihoku Nippo* :

### Three measures of JANA

The conference of representatives of JANA made three measures to propose to the United Northwest Japanese Association. We remark on them, though the said measures should receive the approval of the conference of counselors.

...

The second measure : To encourage union organizations of workers of railroads, sawmills and others and strive for cooperation between the Japanese and whites. Though the purpose is very fine, various obstacles would occur if it would be put in practice. As a matter of fact, Japanese workers are favored because they stand by the cooperation between labor and management in both railroads and sawmills.

In order to make the union and join hands with whites, railroad workers have only to enter the railroad maintenance employees union, nay, it is the right way. Japanese railroad employees on the north shore of the Columbia River had already joined the union some years ago and are sending a representative to it.

Railroad companies are displeased at them. Especially because compatriots are working by paying commissions to contractors, the cooperation with white unions is fundamentally difficult. Inconsistent organization of labor unions would become base of the disorder on the contrary.

Many sawmills are employing Japanese to oppose unions and to stick to the open shop, whereas they organize unions and act in concert with whites. It seems that this action would betray capitalists. It is nominally beautiful but actually unfavorable<sup>(14)</sup>.

### The problem to consider

In both the Pacific Coast Japanese Associations Deliberative Council and the Fourth Section of JANA, they are often conferring to encourage the organization of labor unions or Japanese workers to join them. It is a good thing for the working class to cooperate through their crafts.

However, it will be fruitless if we rush imprudently. We must make up our minds beforehand how to cope with various problems that we would encounter after we join labor unions or organizations.

Once railroad workers become members of the brotherhood of maintenance ways, they must observe the orders of the headquarters and obey decisions of the national convention or the executive committee. How should they behave when their standpoint as Japanese and their position as union members conflict with each other? The examination of this problem is important, too.

The Japanese who belong to the Columbia River north shore line local are actually caught in a dilemma by the Japanese exclusion policy of its headquarters. Though they must be obedient to principles of the headquarters as members of a railroad labor union, it is impossible for the Japanese to exclude the Japanese.

So long as the labor unions in the United States are not international labor unions, and so long as the labor leaders under the command of Gompers are trying to correct the tyranny of capitalists and preserve favorable wage rates by the obstruction of immigration, it is only natural that they would agree to the enactment of the immigration law against us.

Likewise, in sawmills, capitalists in Washington are trying to preserve their interests by opposing labor organizations stubbornly and utilizing the open-shopism. The reason why they welcome Japanese workers is not only the diligence and the skill of Japanese workers. At the heart of sawmill companies, the strategy to confront labor unions is latent.

Should we control the Japanese exclusion movement by decidedly opposing capitalists, organizing unions, cooperating with white unions and making the basis of Japanese workers? Should we protect our positions as workers by joining the American labor unions and obeying their directions? Or should we act skillfully by pursuing the cooperation of labor and management?

In the case of handling labor problems, we must choose the best course by considering our position as pure laborers, position as supporters of labor-management cooperation, and position as minority workers prudently<sup>(15)</sup>.

Just after World War I, many Japanese leaders in Seattle, including Kojiro Takeuchi, the editor of the *Taihoku Nippo*, thought that the friendly relationship between the Japanese and the labor movement had at last been established and wished that this situation would extend to all states of the Pacific coast. The results, however, failed to come up to their expectations. After the demise of James Duncan, even in Washington, anti-Japanese feeling in the labor movement revived<sup>(16)</sup>. Disappointed at the revival of the exclusion movement, they lost their enthusiasm for the cause of the labor movement by the end of 1924.

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1. Some issues of the *Hokubei Jiji* are in the custody of the Center for Research Libraries at Chicago and once I read some of them. My stay at Chicago at that time was, however, a short one and I could not examine them in detail.
2. There are many books and articles on the Seattle labor movement in those years. For example, Richard Berner, *Seattle, 1921–1940 : From Boom to Bust*, Seattle : Charles Press, 1991, Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power : Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919–1929*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.
3. Many reporters, writers, and readers wrote and sent articles for the *Taihoku Nippo*. Most articles which I introduce in this paper,

however, seem to have been written by Kojiro Takeuchi, the editor–manager of the *Taihoku Nippo*. He wrote many articles and essays anonymously or pseudonymously and the Kurozakin seems to have been the one of his pen names.

4. *The Taihoku Nippo*, January 1, 1922. The writer was not perfectly opportunistic about the situation. In a part of the conclusion of the same article, he declared as follows : “Besides, racial prejudice, which is the biggest basis for the Japanese exclusion, is one of the most difficult things to remove, and the reason why the labor union that excluded Japanese once is receiving us as their members is due to the necessity to defend their interests as a class against capitalists. We should not jump to the conclusion that they gave up their racial prejudice and rued their former errors.” Still it seems that he was thinking that the source of the exclusion movement was changing over from workers to farmers and small businesspeople.
5. *Ibid.*, April 3, 1922.
6. *Ibid.*, July 6, 1922.
7. *Ibid.*, July 13, 1922.
8. *Ibid.*, July 15 1922. See also an article of July 21 headlined “Stand up! JANA — Stand up and serve your members.”
9. *Ibid.*, January 15, 1923.
10. *Ibid.*, January 29, 1924.
11. *Ibid.*, January 28, 1924.
12. *Ibid.*, February 13, 1924.
13. *Ibid.*, February 15, 1924
14. *Ibid.*, March 16, 1924. The Japanese branch of the Brotherhood of Maintenance Way Employees was organized by Yoshiaki Yamane and other Japanese activists at Roosevelt, Washington in 1919. At the Pacific Coast Japanese Associations Deliberative Council in 1924, the activity of this organization was reported by the representative of the Oregon Japanese Association as follows : “Railroad workers joined to the Railroad Union of the United States and established a local. Its location is in Roosevelt, Washington. The relationship with Americans is very good and very hopeful. For example they are playing baseball with Americans on Labor Day.” (*Ibid.*, April 10, 1924)
15. *Ibid.*, April 11, 1924. An article of the first page on March 19 also discusses the proposal of organizing unions among Japanese workers at railroads and sawmills.
16. Even after the exclusion at Lake Stevens and Mukilteo, the *Taihoku Nippo* seems to continue to put faith in the *Union Record* and unions of Seattle. When the *Union Record* published an article opposing the enactment of the Japanese Exclusion Act, the *Taihoku Nippo* thanked it as follows : “Generally speaking, workers of Seattle understand the Japanese exactly and unions of Seattle, unlike those of California, also understand the position of the Japanese. We are always thankful to the Record which often publishes sound arguments on the Japanese problem”(ibid., March 14, 1924). It seems that the situation in Seattle was rather different from the rest of the Washington State, even after the downfall of Duncan, because many Japanese unions had already established friendly relationships with white unions there during the years when he was the secretary of SCLC.