

Manuscripts relating to the January 1830 samurai repulse of
the piratically seized Van Diemen's Land colonial brig
Cyprus from Mugi, Awa Province (Tokushima), Japan.

Volume 5

The Hirota Manuscript



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5. The Hirota Manuscript

Eight manuscripts relating to the January 1830 samurai repulse of the piratically seized Van Diemen's Land colonial brig *Cyprus* from Mugi, Awa Province (Tokushima), Japan.

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5. The Hirota Manuscript

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this translation contains a range of material which may be considered culturally sensitive including descriptions of people who have passed away.

Author: Hirota Kanzaemon 広田勘左衛門.

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Translation

[Cover]

The 12th month of the 12th year of Bunsei, Year of the Ox,

A Foreign Ship Drifts to Mugi Cove in One Volume

Hirota Kanzaemon¹ [Signed with a Kaō]²

[Page 1 front]

Circular to Kaifu Gun County Samurai

Yesterday on the 12th in the final third of the hour of the cock [4.30-6.15 pm] off None Ura, Doshū [now Kochi Prefecture] about 3-4 *ri* [12-16 km] offshore a foreign ship, one large vessel, was sighted.³ A fisher from Shishikui Ura also witnessed its appearance. An official from the same cove was good enough to report it and you should be aware of the situation.

The end

Mima Katsuzō⁴

Delivered on the 13th day of the 12th month of the Year of the Ox in the hour of the dog [6.15-8.35 pm].

To everyone

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¹ Hirota Kanzaemon 広田勘左衛門.

² A Kaō is stylized signature.

³ The 12th day of the 12th month of the 12th year of Bunsei is 6 January 1830.

⁴ Mima Katsuzō 三間勝藏.

To this year's Kaifu County Samurai, Yamauchi Chūdayū Dono and Mima Katsuzō Dono.⁵

Regarding the above matter, Mima Katsuzō was despatched on the night of the 13th day of the 12th month, from the Hiwasa Garrison by express boat to Shishikui Ura. After staying for a few days, he returned to Hiwasa. I went to West Mugi to meet and question people about the situation regarding the foreign ship. On hearing it had drifted off None Ura and

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that it had set sail at a place called Ōshimo off the same province [Doshū], I returned to issue orders. Then, four or five days after that, on the 20th in the morning hour of 4 tolls of the bell [9.35-11.15 am], I heard that the foreign ship was drifting off our cove, I immediately summoned the official boat and went out to assess the situation. I saw one foreign ship just up from Senba-ga-Taki and another small boat which looked official. The small boat appeared to follow the foreign

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ship. My boat approached the small boat and found Nimi Sawarō, who like us was there in an official capacity to gather information.⁶ We helped each other, and our two boats approached the foreign ship to investigate. While we did not understand a word of their language, we saw and understood from the foreigners' gestures that they were suffering from a lack of rice, water, and firewood, especially water and firewood. I instructed each of the boats to give a little. Regarding the rice, I indicated that it would be provided from onshore in due course. I too used gestures.

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The foreigners beat the side of their ship and gestured that a boat should be sent

⁵ Yamauchi Chūdayū 山内忠大夫.

⁶ Nimi Sawarō 新見佐和郎.

to shore. I gestured that the appropriate course of action was for them to head out and set sail as soon as possible.

About that time, I saw an official boat that had come out from Hiwasa with Asakawa Ura Village Head Harada Sahē and Ikeuchi Sōjibē's son Sosuke.⁷ They both claimed that the foreign ship was the same one that had drifted off Doshū. They said that they had been sent out by the County Samurai Office to confirm this. The wind and waves picked up and the sea

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became rough. Lacking skill, their scullers struggled and the two of them asked to be transfer to our boat.⁸ I let both of them board, and after that we observed the foreign ship which was now drifting close to Ōshima. Our boat pushed forward to get nearer and obtain a better view. Harada said there was no difference from the ship that drifted off Doshū. At this time, the foreigners gestured that they were out of rice and water, and the foreigners then tossed some things down into our scull: something shaped like this, and what we took to be a small bell of finely worked gold.



⁷ Harada Sahē 原田佐兵衛, Ikeuchi Sōjibē 池内宗次兵衛, Ikeuchi Sosuke 池内祖助.

⁸ To scull is to propel a boat with an oar designed to move from side to side while never leaving the water. The OED definition refers only to stern mounted oars, but larger Japanese sculling boats also had side-mounted oars with their thole pins set in outriggers. Awa Province samurai patrol boats had seven oars in this configuration.

[Courtesy of private collection.]

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They held up a 6-*sun* [18cm] square icon of a woman in a black painted frame fitted with glass. They pointed to it and spoke gibberish, but we understood not one word. They had the build of foreigners, were redheads with red curly hair and all had oval faces. One was about 30 years old, the rest over 40. One dog and nine crew were seen, but it was a large vessel that looked capable of

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carrying tens of people, so we know not their number. To the foreign ship, we returned each item that had been tossed into our sculling boat. I enquired of Harada again whether there was any difference from the boat that drifted off Doshū. Observing the crests, he was sure there was no difference. I conferred with Nīmi, and he went to Hiwasa County Samurai Office and there Mima-Shi, Cove Magistrate Hama Shōsuke, and various other officials were stationed on the beach.⁹ On hearing our report about approaching and observing the foreign ship, Mima-Shi said if this was the situation, we had to remain vigilant, so

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I immediately returned to strengthen the defences of the two coves at Mugi. On my way back, I observed the foreign ship from Kobari Hama beach of our cove [Higashi Mugi Ura] and saw that they had dropped anchor. Sawarō was ordered to defend the land at Nish Mugi Ura, and I defended Higashi Mugi in the same way. I immediately had the local officials organize banners, conch horns, drums, enclosure curtains, and the beating of fire bells, etc.¹⁰ The village officials were

⁹ Hama Shōsuke 浜庄助.

¹⁰ Enclosure curtains were the fabric screen erected around a samurai tactical command post, but decorative ones were also used at local events. Banners resembled samurai battle standards in size and shape.

informed and over eighty district musketeers and hunters were called up.¹¹ They were divided between Higashi and Nishi [Mugi Ura]:

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an armed person was stationed about every 2 *ken* [3.6 m] along the foreshore, on Kobari Hill a banner was raised, and conch shells and fire bells sounded, ten hunters were deployed, blanks were fired, and at night at two locations on the hill large cressets were lit. At three places on land to the east and west cressets never went out. Teba Jima was defended by Aoki Torajirō.¹² On the 20th around midnight Mima-Shi arrived in Nishi Mugi with the large bores, etc. from Hiwasa. After midnight on the 21st Yamauchi Chūdayū-Dono arrived at this cove [Mugi Ura] from Tokushima. On the 22nd in the morning hour of 4 tolls of the bell [9.35-11.15 am], [Domain] Overseers Hayami Zenzaemon-Dono

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and Murase Kahē-Dono, and Deputy Overseers Kurano Matagorō and Yamauchi Ryūtarō, and a large number of retainers arrived at this cove.¹³ On the 23rd, the balls were loaded and a repulse with the large guns was decided on. The circumstances of the foreign ship being the same as above, village officials were dispatched to investigate. They requested to stay two or three more days and showed no sign of setting sail. In light of this, there was now nothing more to be done other than to repulse them. The foreign ship appeared to be only a few *chō* [109m] off Higashi Kobari Saki.

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I went there to survey the target. The head of the Higashi Mugi Fishery Tax Office,

¹¹ Most musketeers fired muskets, but some fired cannons.

¹² Aoki Torajirō 青木虎次郎

¹³ Hayami Zenzaemon 速水善左衛門, Murase Kahē 村瀬嘉兵衛, Kurano Matagorō 倉野亦五郎, Yamauchi Ryūtarō 山内隆太郎.

Ikeuchi Okuemon accompanied me.¹⁴ We observed at night, but from there the target acquisition was bad. On reporting this, it was then observed from Shima-no-Hira, Nishi Ura by Nimi accompanied by Musketeer Ikeuchi Yasuzō.¹⁵ The target was unobstructed, and the two county samurai led the many musketeers to Shima-ga-Hira and Teba Jima. The field commander of Shima-ga-Hira was Yamauchi-Shi and the field commander of Teba Jima was Mima-Shi, and the repulse

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was to be made with cannons and large guns. The distances are as recorded on the drawing. From Teba Jima the smoke signal rose, and from Shima-no-Hira the same. Yamauchi told I and Nimi to take our orders from the overseers. Then, once again we improved our land defences. I and Nimi divided the district musketeers and hunters between Higashi and Nishi Ura and we told the district musketeers to take care never to allow the foreigners to land. After that, Overseer Murase Kahē-Dono said someone should go and inform Hiwasa Ura of the

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repulse, and accordingly Wada and Hirose took word by way of an urgent letter.¹⁶

On the 23rd in the final third of the hour of the sheep [1.00-2.45 pm] after fire from both of our positions, the foreign ship inevitably had to raise its sails to escape. From in front of Teba, down the coast they sailed offshore in order to evade, until night fall when they drifted back and eventually we lost track of them. We did not even know where they had gone. Until their presence or departure had been confirmed, it could not be said that we were at ease. Early on the morning of the 24th official boats were despatched, and I went to [Mugi] Ōshima beacon station. From there I could survey out to sea, to the east, to the west and to the

¹⁴ Ikeuchi Okuemon 池内奥右衛門.

¹⁵ Ikeuchi Yasuzō 池内安蔵.

¹⁶ Wada 和田, Hirose 広瀬.

south

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but I could not locate the ship. This was reported to the county samurai. This same day the overseers and County Samurai Yamauchi and all the deputy overseers withdrew to Hiwasa. However, they said not to extinguish the cressets. Mima-Shi stayed at Nishi Ura. On the 25th Mima visited Nada Mura and after inspecting the village, he relaxed by hunting rabbits. On the 26th, I and Sawarō stood down. However, as duty bound me, from time to time I visited the Fishery Tax Office.

Illustrations of the foreign ship's overstay, and its set sails

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are on a separate sheet, as are registers of the district musketeers' and hunters' names. When spotted at Senba-ga-Taki, the foreign ship was painting everything black, had seven sails and was overstaying its welcome off our coast. As in the illustration, it was changing its appearance. They were some kind of miscreants. It was all very suspicious, and to say otherwise would be negligent. They were of the barbarian class.

Later, Mima-Shi returned to his lodgings. I paid him a visit that evening, and we talked. Mima said that this time

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everyone had worked hard performing their duty, and that the system of stationing samurai at remote borders introduced by the first Hachisuka Lord had great significance and should be saluted with due respect and appreciation. Ashamed of my innate inability, with due respect I felt undeserving of any declarations of thanks or praise.

However, he said we did well. I suggested that everything went well due to the Domains show of strength and appropriate orders from the County Samurai

Office. Mima-Shi

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repeated that we deserved praise for our efforts on this occasion. On the 26th, he withdrew to Hiwasa Ura.

I heard that a samurai force of over 10,000 led by First Field Marshal and Deputy House Elder Yamazaki Shōgen and the gunnery head had paid an official visit to Hiwasa from Tokushima.¹⁷ This number should have come down to our cove. However, the outcry over billeting during the repulse was really quite unprecedented, so the military force

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withdrew from Hiwasa with thousands of baggage-train porters while the official boats moved up and down the coast day and night for five days, constantly with fast boats and express messengers. For the first time in a little over two hundred years of peace since the first Hachisuka Lord peacefully entered the province, the reports of guns and large bore cannons used against an enemy ship were heard.¹⁸ It is the first such commotion since the Siege of Ōsaka, so it was a rare occurrence. For our descendants to know of this, I record and leave these confused remnants for the future.

Defender in charge of Shishikui Ura, Kiuchi Ujinosuke;

of Tomo Ura, Kiuchi Yajibē and Takeda Masuzō;

of Asakawa Cove, Gotō Jutta;

of the two Mugi Uras

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¹⁷ Yamazaki Shōgen 山崎将監.

¹⁸ Hachisuka 蜂須賀.

Nimi Sawarō and Hirota Kanzaemon;
of Hiwasa Ura, Wada Genzaemon and Hirose Teizō;
of Ebisu Hama, Hirota Shichiemon;
of Yuki Ura, Ikeuchi Sōjibē;
Stationed at the same cove, Yoneda Jinbē;
and stationed at Hiwasa Ura, Hama Shōsuke.¹⁹

This incident was resolved as above, but it is difficult to know when a foreign ship might drift here in the future. To prepare against a landing, both county samurai said that I should put together a plan and to that end I provide the following.

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Memo (on Chikuzen writing paper and enclosed)

In the 12th month of the Ox, last year, a foreign ship drifted to Mugi Ura. The above ship could not be allowed to land and we, of both Higashi and Nishi Ura, were ordered to prevent it. This happened after edicts had been made regarding recent incidents of foreign ships repeatedly drifting into sight along the Doshū coast. Regarding the handling of this incident of the 12th month of last year, Kaifu Gun is connected to the Doshū coast and off this cove there are four islands, Ōshima, Teba Jima, Tsushima and Kozushima

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that can be clearly seen from off Doshū. The location is favourable for uninvited ships to overstay and we think that other ships could arrive here

¹⁹ Kiuchi Ujinosuke 木内氏之助, Kiuchi Yajibē 木内弥二兵衛, Takeda Masuzō 武田益蔵, Gotō Jutta 後藤述太, Wada Genzaemon 和田源左衛門, Hirose Teizō 広瀬程蔵, Hirota Shichiemon 広田七右衛門, Ikeuchi Sōjibē 池内宗次兵衛, Yoneda Jinbē 米田甚兵衛.

at any time.

Therefore, this office's most pressing issue is the lack of musketeers: there are but five or six district musketeers. From our aforementioned duty, and as we were asked to offer our knowledge of defence, we humbly request the following:

Paper lanterns emblazoned with the Hachisuka crest, two

Enclosure curtain emblazoned the same, two

30-*monme* bore [27 mm calibre], one

20-*monme* bore [23 mm calibre], the same

All the district musketeers [of the coves and villages] of Shimonada

The district musketeers from the office

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All the hunters of the same coves and villages

The scullers of the official boat that passes up and down the coast

Village express messengers

Bamboo shields

Pine torches

One peon

Soldiers' rice rations

End of list

Provided with the above, if a foreign ship drifts here again, a rigorous defence can be made. Also, if you could kindly instruct the local officials that on despatch of an express message from us to their office, the district musketeers and hunters should immediately deploy to the two Mugi Ura

Fishery Tax Offices.

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If provided with instructions beforehand, we will follow them to defend the land until the county samurai deploy at station.

Our understanding is extremely poor, and we know we have missed many other important points. Perhaps after you have discussed it, we could be given instructions.

The end

New Year, Year of the Tiger²⁰

[From:] Nimi Sawarō

Hirota Kanzaemon

For the cannon and large bore musketeers - various rewards prepared:

To the skippers of six small boats working as official boats - 1 *koku* of rice each, prepared.

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To the Higashi Ura community - 40 *koku* [7,200L] of rice, prepared and sent.

To the Nishi Ura - 20 *koku* [3,600L] of the same, prepared and sent.

To Teba Jima - 5 *koku* [900L] of the same, prepared.

²⁰ New Year Day of the 13th year of Bunsei, Year of the Tiger was 25 Jan 1830

As an official requisite, those receiving the above should come in formal attire.

The end

The 14th day of the 5th month.²¹

[From:] Yamauchi Chūdayū

Mima Katsuzō

To everyone

PS Furthermore, attendance should not interrupt normal duties.

Received the 17th day.

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Every person below, when the foreign ship drifted here last winter, was deployed to locations in Kaifu Gun and performed their duty with the greatest diligence under the circumstances. The following persons were praised by Kaifu Gun and Naka Gun county samurai. This message should be successfully conveyed at your convenience to the persons who were in charge of the repulse.

The 20th day of the 5th month

[List:] Nīmi Sawarō

Hirota Kanzaemon

²¹ The 14th day of the 5th month of the 13th year of Bunsei was 4 July 1830.

The aforementioned deployed to both Higashi and Nishi Mugi Ura with the hunters and, at the moment of the repulse, were at the same location receiving orders from the [domain] overseers and made earnest efforts to improve the defence of the land throughout.

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Rural Samurai Reservists [List:]

Umazume Zentabē²²

Kiuchi Ujinosuke

Hirose Teizō

Takeda Masuzō

Kiuchi Yajibē

Wada Genzaemon

Hirota Shichiemon

Gotō Jutta

Ikeuchi Sōjibē

The aforementioned are the district musketeers and hunters who were deployed and made earnest efforts to defend the coves.

The end

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The memoranda of those on the monthly duty roster [for the repulse]: Hachisuka

²²Umazume Zentabē 馬詰善太兵衛

Shinano-Dono; Aide-de-Camp Ise Mokusuke-Dono; [Domain] Overseer Mori Hēma-Dono.²³ The memoranda are as follows:

I, on account of the arrival of a foreign ship off Mugi Ura last winter, was deployed in defence. It was my greatest honour to receive words of praise for the efforts we made in this defence. I give thanks for the aforementioned praise.

The 20th day of the 5th month.

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Memo

I, on account of the arrival of a foreign ship off Mugi Ura last winter, was deployed to both Higashi and Nishi Mugi Ura and was in charge of hunters with muskets at the moment of the repulse in the same location while receiving orders from the overseers and performed tasks defending the land throughout. That is why on the 20th of this 5th month, I was summoned to the Domain Office in Tokushima, to receive words of appreciation for my efforts.

By way of official notice, I report the above. The end.

[From:] Hirota Kanzaemon

The 7th month²⁴

[Signed]

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[To:] Yamauchi Chūdayū-Dono

²³ Hachisuka Shinano 蜂須賀信濃, Ise Mokusuke 伊勢黙助, Mori Hēma 森平馬.

²⁴ The 7th month of the 13th year of Bunsei started on 18 August 1830.

Mima Katsuzō-Dono

Honjō Shichibē-Dono²⁵

Attached on separate paper, the proxy approval of Hiwasa.

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Short and Long Months of The Next Year of The Tiger

Be anxious if the ship that floats at the three big rocks

Escapes loneliness, our victory is more than complete.

At New Year, our Province's prosperity returns

We delight at the arrival of an incomparable whale.²⁶

²⁵Honjō Shichibē 本庄七兵衛.

²⁶ Mnemonic for the lunisolar calendar's 13th year of Bunsei, year of the Tiger, 1830.

This is a local Edo Period version of 'Thirty Days Have September' in a historical event format like that of 'Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain'. A new mnemonic was required every year due to annual changes in the length of months and the bi or triennially need for the addition of an extra intercalary or 'leap' month. The 13th year of Bunsei had an extra 3rd month. This composition, possibly by Hirota, draws on the historical events of the repulse of the foreign ship. Using numeric homophones, the first half covers the long months and the second half the short, including the extra 3rd month. These do not survive translation.

