Ichiro Kagiyama in Early Twentieth Century Sydney

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Abstract: The recent discovery of a personal photograph album belonging to Ichiro Kagiyama offers new insight into this notable photographer’s work, biography and the Australian-Japanese community in Sydney in the 1910s. As a Japanese resident of Sydney from the early to mid-twentieth century, where he was an active member of the Photographic Society of New South Wales, a regular contributor to The Home magazine and a professional photographer operating his own commercial studio, Kagiyama made a valuable contribution to Australian visual culture. Regrettably very few examples of Kagiyama’s photographs are known to survive today. The rare personal album of 154 photographs examined here for the first time begins to address this paucity of material. This album presents images of important public moments of intercultural encounter between Australia and Japan, and reveals how Kagiyama used photography as an interpretive instrument to negotiate his own place amongst Anglo- and Japanese-Australian communities. The album also includes family photographs from Japan and hometown souvenirs, thus underscoring the mobility of photographs as material objects that can bridge the geographical and cultural distance between Australia and Japan.

Introduction

The now tattered, dark floral cloth that covers Ichiro Kagiyama’s personal photograph album belies the wealth of photographs assembled within its pages. Made during his time in Sydney, Australia, during the mid-1910s, the album juxtaposes photographs of Sydney city, its parks and residents with Japanese family portraits. A formal Japanese wedding portrait is pasted next to photographs of Sydney’s Royal

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2 In this article, Kagiyama’s name is presented with the family name last (rather than according to Japanese conventions in which the family name appears first) to reflect how it was used in Australian historical documents, and by Kagiyama himself while in Australia.
Easter show and a ship carrying Japanese people throwing streamers as they wave goodbye to their family and friends (Figure 1). On another page a commercially produced souvenir photograph of an ornate Takayama Matsuri [festival] float, or yatai, is placed next to photographs of Japanese and Anglo-Australians enjoying picnics in a New South Wales (NSW) national park (Figure 2). Other family photographs are scattered throughout Kagiyama’s Sydney album, attesting to the value of photographs as highly portable objects of material culture that can bridge peoples and places across vast geographical distances. By placing these Japanese photographs alongside views of Sydney, its people, gardens and bridges, Kagiyama integrates his cultural, social and familial ties with Japan into his experiences and memories of Australia to create a compelling document of cross-cultural connection.

Much of the historical significance of this album lies with its maker. During the last 15 years, Kagiyama has attracted increasing attention in histories of Australian-Japanese relations for his important but hitherto little acknowledged contribution to Australian cultural history. Kagiyama developed his photography skills after joining the Photographic Society of NSW around 1914. He contributed to exhibitions in Australia and Japan, and operated his own commercial studio in Sydney in the 1920s and 30s where he counted Japanese traders, consular officials and

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3 Still the source of immense civic pride in Takayama, Gifu Prefecture, these floats have been carried in Takayama’s Spring and Autumn festivals since the seventeenth century. The floats are designated by the state as one of Japan’s significant intangible folk cultural assets. Eder, ‘The Folk Customs Museum in Takayama (Hida, Gifu Prefecture)’, 147–148; Thornbury, ‘The Cultural Properties Protection Law and Japan’s Folk Performing Arts’, 216–7.

4 Ebury, ‘Making Pictures’, 39; Oliver, ‘Japanese Relationships in White Australia’, 5.6, 5.10–11; Eccles, Hirodo, 44; Oliver, Raids on Australia, 169–70; Butler and Donaldson, ‘Ten Rooms’, 212;
Australian businesses amongst his clients. Between 1935 and 1938, Kagiyama was also a regular contributor to *The Home* magazine, which published his photographs along with work by celebrated Australian photographers such as Harold Cazneaux and Max Dupain. His record for traversing Anglo- and Japanese-Australian communities during the era of the so-called White Australia policy has made Kagiyama a fascinating subject for historical research. His story demonstrates that the exclusive spirit of the White Australia policy did not necessarily reflect the character of personal and professional Australian-Japanese relations.

Although Kagiyama has been included in several histories of Australian-Japanese relations, discussion of his work and biography have been limited due to the paucity of accessible source material. A short artist’s biography is included in Yuri Mitsuda’s comprehensive exhibition catalogue on the work of Kiichiro Ishida, who was and one of Kagiyama’s friends and a fellow photographer in Sydney. This catalogue builds on Francis Ebury’s brief mention of Kagiyama in his PhD on the history of Australian Pictorialist photography, a movement dedicated to the development of photography as an art. Mitsuda’s work informs Rex Butler and A. D. S. Donaldson’s short discussion of Kagiyama in their article on Asian-Australian artistic interaction. More recently, I contributed a lengthy article on the photographer to the journal *History of Photography*, which offers an analysis of Kagiyama’s work for *The Home* and his life in Australia during the 1930s. Historians of Australian-

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Japanese relations refer to Kagiyama in their publications, pulling together some of the known threads of Kagiyama’s biography to propose an outline of his arrival and life in Sydney. In these histories, however, Kagiyama’s photographs tend to be treated as illustrations for other narratives about Japanese merchants in Sydney, or not addressed directly. Like written documents relating to the photographer, Kagiyama’s original photographs remain scarce. Apart from the reproductions of his work that survive in *The Home* and the Japanese journal *Asahi-Camera*, an album produced for a private commission, and a handful of prints in the Shotō Museum in Tokyo and the National Archives of Australia, very little of his work is known to exist today.

This lack of material makes the recent discovery of Kagiyama’s Sydney album especially valuable. The album of 154 photographs offers new insight into Kagiyama’s life and the Japanese-Australian community in Sydney during the 1910s. The album was bequeathed to one of Kagiyama’s close friends in his hometown and final place of residence, Takayama, where it was to remain in that family’s possession. Like many personal photo albums, it brings together a mix of photographic genres and authors, including photographs of Kagiyama and his social group, photographs taken by him, commercially produced photographs and professional family portraits from Japan. Consequently, the historical and cultural value of this album is not limited to an art historical context as evidence of his developing oeuvre. Rather, this album stands as a striking testament to photography’s

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11 This family generously provided the author with access to the album for this research project.
concurrent operation across multiple genres and fields, including the personal, the official, the artistic and the souvenir.

Here, the album is treated as far more than a collection of photographs; it is an object with its own history and materiality. Ewa Domanska has described the widespread ‘return to things’ in the humanities since the 1990s, as a means of countering the perceived over-emphasis upon discourse, narrativism and textualism.\(^\text{12}\) This article furthers this trend by complementing analyses of the ‘image’ with discussion of the material qualities of the photographs and album. By focusing on Kagiyama’s personal album, this article also builds on an existing body of research that examines Australia-Japan relations from the grassroots level as an alternative to histories structured around political, military and economic relations.\(^\text{13}\) It similarly develops research on cross-cultural photographic relations. Modes of photographic encounter between Japan, Europe and the United States have been the subject of numerous books and articles.\(^\text{14}\) Some historians have interpreted Anglo-European appetites for late nineteenth century Japanese photographs as a sign of prevailing romantic impressions of Japan as a land of cherry blossom and geisha.\(^\text{15}\) The thriving Yokohama trade in studio photographs has represented a particularly appealing


\(^{13}\) See Jones and Mackie, Relationships; Jones and Oliver, Changing Histories; Ackland and Oliver, Unexpected Encounters; Jones, Number 2 Home.


subject for historians, who have examined the production and consumption of these images in Europe, Britain and the United States. However, the ways in which Japanese people used photography to forge their own place in Australia has received far less attention. Kagiyama’s photographs of Sydney, the Japanese-Australian community and public spectacles not only provide new insight into this significant photographer’s life, they contribute to photography’s history by revealing another way that photography served as a medium for social and cultural connection.

Kagiyma’s Uncertain Arrival

Although this album provides clear evidence of Kagiyama’s presence in Sydney in the mid-1910s, the year and circumstances of his arrival in Australia remain uncertain. Some historians estimate that Kagiyama sailed to Sydney as a teenager in 1906 or 1907. However, these accounts do not acknowledge important immigration documents in which Kagiyama offers an alternative narrative. In an interview with Detective Inspector Maher in 1934 as part of his application under Australia’s Immigration Restriction Act 1901 (Australia) to return to Japan for a temporary visit, Kagiyama described how he first landed on Thursday Island as an infant with his parents. His accompanying statutory declaration notes that he was born in Gifu Prefecture in 1890, and that he came to Thursday Island when his father took work in

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19 NAA SP42/1 C1934/4618.
the pearlshelling industry. Kagiyama describes being taken to live with family friends in Mackay on the eastern coast of Queensland after his father’s death in 1897 or 1898. At this time, many Japanese people were moving south from Thursday Island to Queensland’s sugar growing regions, including Mackay, where employment opportunities were more plentiful. Kagiyama claims that he spent 14 years in Mackay, before moving to Adelaide for one year, and then Sydney around 1913 where he remained resident until he returned to Japan in 1941 amid rising tensions between Japan and the Allies. Although the officials charged with assessing his 1934 application could find no surviving records of Kagiyama’s formal registration in Sydney, they concluded that there was ‘no reason to doubt the bonafides [sic.] of [the] applicant’.

The difference in arrival dates between those estimated by historians and that described by Kagiyama is significant; Japanese people were subject to a very different set of immigration laws in Australia in the mid-1890s and 1907. The time that Kagiyama claimed he and his father arrived at Thursday Island coincided with a period of relatively relaxed travel requirements, when the movement of individual indentured labourers was not as well documented as it was after 1898 when no

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21 NAA SP42/1 C1934/4618. There are inconsistencies in some of Kagiyama’s official documents produced in Australia. Some suggest that Kagiyama was born significantly earlier in 1882; Kagiyama’s marriage certificate lists him as being aged 34 in 1916, and the birth certificate of his son lists him as 38 in 1920. Restrictions on accessing family documents in Japan make it currently impossible to verify the correct birthdate.
22 Armstrong, 'Aspects of Japanese Immigration to Queensland before 1900', 3.
23 Ibid.
Japanese was permitted to land in Queensland without a passport. During the mid- to late 1890s, anxieties about Japanese control over the pearling industry were growing, and some Australians feared that Thursday Island was in danger of becoming a Japanese colony. New federal legislation imposed additional restrictions on Japanese immigration after Australian Federation in 1901. The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* (Australia), generally known as the White Australia policy, was one of the first bills passed by the new federal parliament. The Act was written in response to a desire to protect the local labour market, but it was also informed by racist ideologies, placing restrictions on the immigration of ‘coloured races’ to Australia by requiring them to sit a convoluted dictation test in any European language.

Restrictions on Japanese immigration were eased slightly in 1904 when laws were changed to allow tourists, students and merchants from Japan to enter for one year on passports without being subject to the dictation test. After that time, exemptions could be made through the Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test, which allowed Japanese people to stay in Australia for up to three years. If Kagiyama had arrived in Sydney around 1907, as has been suggested, it is unlikely

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26 Deakin, ‘Second reading speech’: 4804; *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* s 3a.
28 Ibid.
29 Hise and Oliver, 'Kiichiro Ishida', 4. Oliver proposes that despite these restrictions, Kagiyama would have been able to stay in Sydney if he was well connected with Sydney trading firms and the Japanese Consulate. Oliver, *Raids on Australia*, 88.
that he would have been permitted to stay because he was not a tourist, student or merchant. The absence of official immigration documents for Kagiyama’s initial arrival in Australia, and current restrictions on accessing personal family records in Japan make it impossible to confirm the veracity of his story. A descendant of one of Kagiyama’s friends in Takayama suggests that he did arrive in Australia illegally as a young man. Despite the lack of evidence to support his alternative account to immigration officials in 1934, Kagiyama’s story satisfied these men enough to allow him to remain resident in Australia.

**Sydney and a burgeoning interest in photography**

Elements of Kagiyama’s biography become clearer from the mid-1910s. Working as a laundry worker, presser and dyer in the Sydney eastern suburb of Waverley, Kagiyama advertised his services under the name K. Yama in the *Sunday Times* in 1915.\(^{30}\) Kagiyama was one of many Japanese people to establish residences in Sydney in the early twentieth century. Japanese trading firms such as Kuwahata, Kanematsu, Nakamura, and Iida all had offices in Sydney. Pam Oliver has described how the senior merchants of these firms were well connected with the Japanese Consul and Sydney society, and many of their families made homes in the leafy suburb of Cremorne and the adjoining north shore suburb Mosman.\(^{31}\) Kagiyama’s surroundings in Cowper Street Waverley were less salubrious than those of these merchants, yet Oliver argues that laundrymen remained well-respected in their local communities in


Sydney due to the contemporary Australian understanding of business as a service to the community.\textsuperscript{32}

The mid-1910s was a pivotal period for Kagiyama in which he developed his skills and interest in photography. Through this interest, he began to mix socially with Sydney’s photography community. Kagiyama joined the Photographic Society of NSW around 1914. The Society was established in 1872 in response to the growing popularity of photography amongst amateurs.\textsuperscript{33} Increased leisure time, the expanding photography industry and the mass production of photographic equipment saw amateur photography flourish. Members of the Photographic Society of NSW exchanged photographs, gained feedback on their work, and attended monthly meetings where they would ‘receive hints and otherwise improve their knowledge of the art’.\textsuperscript{34} As a member of this Society, Kagiyama would have been invited to attend exhibitions and lectures by leading Australian photographers such as Norman Deck, who lectured on ‘practical points’ in May 1914.\textsuperscript{35} The Society also organized social gatherings and outings to the parks surrounding Sydney so that members could practice their craft, and consider questions of lighting, subject matter and composition together. A photograph of one of these outings taken by Cazneaux in 1915 (Figure 3) shows a young, dapper Kagiyama posing with other members of the Photographic Society with his hefty camera bag over his shoulder.

\textsuperscript{32} Oliver, ‘Japanese Relationships in White Australia’, 5.8.
\textsuperscript{33} ‘Amateur Photographic Society of NSW’, 7.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{35} Reflex (Caznaux) ‘Photography’, 50.
The photographs in Kagiyama’s album were produced at this important time in his technical and creative development. Many of the photographs are undated, but several are dated ‘Taishō 4’ (1915), while one photograph is captioned ‘1914’ and another six ‘1915’ in Arabic numerals. The album contains photographs that were likely taken on Photographic Society excursions, including some landscapes that feature his fellow photographers. At this time, the Photographic Society was heavily focused on Pictorialism. This mode of photography was popularised in Europe, the United States and Britain in the 1890s, and soon gained a following in Australia. Although Pictorialism has now become synonymous with aesthetic qualities such as low-tone and soft, romantic ‘fuzzy’ effects, in early twentieth century Australia the term referred more broadly to the art of photography.

Reflecting his association with the Society, Kagiyama’s album begins with a group of three atmospheric Pictorialist landscapes taken as the sun sat low in the sky and transformed trees and grasses into silhouettes. Although unsigned like all of the photographs in the album, the three photographs’ comparable scale, composition, tone and lighting suggest that they were made by the same photographer, most likely the album’s owner. The placement of Pictorialist landscapes at the beginning of the album, where they are glued in permanently like all of the other photographs, suggests that Kagiyama may have used the album initially as a place to collect his creative work. The inclusion of English language captions in its early pages, alongside Japanese captions written in the same ink, also indicates that Kagiyama intended to share his album with his Australian photography peers.

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36 See Newton, Silver and Grey; Ebury, ‘Making Pictures’; Miles, The Language of Light and Dark: 27–76.
These and other landscapes in Kagiyama’s album attest to the photographer’s appreciation for formal photographic considerations, such as the use of tall trees to structure the composition, and picnickers or boating parties to add narrative interest. Traces of housing or industry, including plumes of smoke and suburban skylines, remain visible in the vast majority of the landscapes, revealing that they were taken on the urban fringe. Amongst the identifiable sites and subjects are Manly Beach, the historic sandstone suspension bridge at Northbridge, the Thirroul coalmine and beach, and picnic grounds at Audley in the Royal National Park. These photographs are noteworthy because they reflect Kagiyama’s early interest in Pictorialism. The earliest known record of Kagiyama exhibiting his work publicly is 1917, when he contributed two photographs titled Evening on the Sand and Homeward to the Exhibition of Australian Pictorial Photography. A portrait in Kagiyama’s album, taken on 14 March 1915 (Figure 4), demonstrates that he identified as a photographer at an earlier stage. The carefully composed portrait shows Kagiyama seated, with his back to a tree and a picnic lunch arranged artfully in the foreground, while his camera stands prominently on its tripod next to him.

Reflecting his interest in a variety of subjects, Kagiyama’s album is also replete with photographs of modern Sydney, showing pedestrians rushing about and cars sharing the roads with electric trams, horses and carriages. A high profile member of the Photographic Society of NSW, Harold Cazneaux, actively promoted city photography in his two articles ‘In and About the City with a Hand-camera’ published in Australasian Photo-Review in 1910:

37 Mitsuda, Modernism / Japonism in Photography, 198.
In a big city we have the humour and pathos of life, the ease or struggle for existence illustrated every day in our streets; also man’s handiwork in the shape of buildings, etc., which, curiously enough, reflect the character in old and young, erect and noble, wreck and ruin.

Whereas Cazneaux and other members of the Photographic Society of NSW were also drawn to the areas of old Sydney slowly being overtaken by new development, Kagiyama’s album celebrates the city’s modern industry, architecture and crowded streets. One photograph captioned ‘Busy Sydney’ (Figure 5) shows York Street near the magnificent Queen Victoria Market Building bustling with pedestrians, cars and horses. The dramatic diagonal created by the Market Building as it recedes down York Street emphasises its mighty scale, while cables hang overhead and enormous telegraph poles punctuate the street.

Other photographs of the Art Gallery of NSW, the Domain, Hyde Park, the University of Sydney and St Mary’s cathedral collectively create the impression of a roving photographer eagerly exploring the city. These city views stand in contrast to the ‘tourist gaze’, described by John Urry as a means of controlling the unfamiliar world from afar, and ‘combining detachment and mystery’. As a resident of Sydney, Kagiyama was no tourist. His photographs demonstrate that he was thoroughly immersed in the city, part of the crowd on a curbside, in a park or amidst the throngs in Central Station. Several subjects, including the Art Gallery of NSW and the Robert Burns memorial in the Domain, were photographed from different angles and in

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38 Cazneaux, 'In and About the City with a Hand-Camera', 426.
39 Urry, The Tourist Gaze, 147.
different weather conditions, affirming Kagiyama’s interest in photographic experimentation.

During the coming decades, Kagiyama made the most of his connections in Australia and Japan to exhibit his photographs of Sydney and its people in both countries. He successfully submitted work for exhibition in the ninth, tenth and eleventh Tōkyō Shashin Kenkyūkai (Tokyo Photographic Study Group) between 1918 and 1921, and in 1922 exhibited four works at the Exhibition of Camera Pictures by the Photographic Society of NSW again under the name K. Yama." Around this time Kagiyama also developed a friendship with another Japanese resident of Sydney, Kiichiro Ishida. The men met in 1919 after Ishida was transferred to Sydney as an employee of the Okura Trading Company. Ishida brought a camera with him so that he could send snapshots home to his parents, but took up photography as a creative practice after he received some lessons from his new friend. Kagiyama encouraged Ishida to join the Photographic Society of NSW, and by 1920 Ishida had received recognition in national and international photography competitions, exhibitions and salons including the tenth Tōkyō Shashin Kenkyūkai and the 1920 London Salon." In return, Ishida provided Kagiyama with introductions to Sydney’s Japanese trading networks, which proved useful in the coming years as he developed his commercial photography business.

Kagiyama did not enjoy the same degree of critical success as Ishida. Only two months after Ishida was accepted as a member of the Sydney Camera Circle – a highly exclusive group affiliated with the Photographic Society of NSW – Kagiyama

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40 Webster, ‘Photographic Society of New South Wales’, 15.
41 Mitsuda, Modernism / Japonism in Photography, 192–5.
also made an attempt to join by presenting the requisite number of six photographs for review at the group’s meeting on 20 June 1921. However, the members concluded that ‘this gentleman’s work was not up to standard’. Although Kagiyama was invited to resubmit his work in six months time, he never took the Circle up on this offer.

Two years after Ishida returned to Japan in 1923, he recommended Kagiyama as a Fellow of the Japan Photographic Society. Ishida’s involvement with the Japanese photography journal Asahi-Camera also helped to support the publication of work by Kagiyama and members of the Sydney Camera Circle in that journal in 1926 and 1927.

These patterns of photographic connection between Australia and Japan are striking, because they occurred in the context of ongoing diplomatic disputes between the two nations regarding the White Australia policy. According to historian Henry Frei, ‘The immigration dispute with Australia from 1897 to 1921 fills nine thick volumes of documents in Japan’s diplomatic Record Office’. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902–23) between Britain and Japan necessarily made Australia an ally of Japan, but this status was at odds with Australia’s exclusive immigration policy. At the heart of the dispute was the categorisation of the Japanese as a ‘coloured race’.

42 In 1921, the Sydney Camera Circle had only 14 members including Ishida. Sydney Camera Circle. *Meeting Minutes*. 20 June 1921, unpaginated.

43 Ishida also took 25 prints from members of the Sydney Camera Circle back to Japan, and exhibited 15 of them at the Shiseido Gallery in Ginza in March 1924 alongside 31 of his own photographs. Mitsuda, *Modernism / Japonism in Photography*.

44 The following Kagiyama photographs were published in Asahi-Camera: ‘The Way Home. Asahi-Camera, May 1926, 86; ‘A Girl on the Sand’, Asahi-Camera, September 1926, 241; ‘Shadow Play,’ Asahi-Camera, October 1926, 339; and the cover photo of Peter, Asahi-Camera, November 1926.

45 Frei, *Japan’s Southward Advance*, 83.
Hisakichi Eitaki, the Japanese Consul in Sydney, explained his country’s position in a letter to Australia’s first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, in 1901:

The Japanese belong to an Empire whose standard of civilisation is so much higher than that of kanakas, negroes, Pacific Islanders, Indians, or other Eastern peoples, that to refer to them in the same terms cannot but be regarded in the light of a reproach, which is hardly warranted by the fact of the shade of the national complexion.«

Rather than challenging the racist ideologies that underpinned the Act, the confronting language used by the Consul suggests that his dispute was with the place of the Japanese within the offensive racial hierarchy, rather than the hierarchy itself.

This immigration policy encouraged Anglo-Australians to view the Japanese as inherently different, and such views were evident in the reception of Kagiyama’s photographs. A reviewer in Australasian Photo-Review noted the incongruence between this policy and Ishida’s and Kagiyama’s participation in the 1922 Photographic Society of NSW exhibition:

By way of diversion, the White Australia policy in the dark-room seems to be in danger; I refer to the work of Messrs. K. Ishida and K. Yama. They have eyes to see and things to say, those men. […] Very thoughtful work, gentlemen.»


These comments suggest that despite the admiration that they earned for their work, at least some of the locals saw Kagiyama and Ishida as distinctly different to their Anglo-Australian photography peers. Photography allowed Kagiyama to mix with Anglo-Australians and Japanese people, and to develop an extraordinary catalogue of images of his new city, but this review is a reminder that ideological barriers and racial prejudices also remained prevalent in Sydney.

**White City and Japanese Public Spectacles in Sydney**

Some early twentieth century Australian stereotypes of Japan and Japanese people arise in Kagiyama’s album. A particularly fascinating group of five photographs was taken at White City, an amusement park that operated in Sydney between 1913 and 1917. Sydney’s White City was one of dozens of similarly named amusement parks established in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia.

Inspired by the White City and Midway Plaisance sections of Chicago’s World’s Columbian Exhibition of 1893, White Cities typically combined entertainment with ‘educational’ displays and experiences such as a ‘native village’. Sydney’s White City was built in the suburb of Rushcutters Bay, and operated for a relatively short period until it burned to the ground in 1917 as a result of a lightning strike. Its attractions – many of which feature in Kagiyama’s photographs – included a miniature Mt Kosciusko,

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* Littlefield, ‘White City: The Art of Erasure and Forgetting the Olympic Games’, 70-77; Reed *All the world is here!: the Black presence at White City*; Burg *Chicago’s White City of 1893*; Samuelson, *The American Amusement Park*.
* Werry, *The Tourist State*, 83.
scenic railway, pleasure palaces, fun factory, carousel, canals and an enormous central fountain."

Three of Kagiyama’s photographs focus on an especially popular part of the park: the Japanese Village. This attraction followed the success of another Japanese Village that toured Australia in 1886 and 1887 featuring examples of Japanese architecture, performing acrobats and Japanese artisans who made curios that were sold to visitors. White City’s Japanese Village followed a similar model, and was described in the press as a place where Sydneysiders could have an ‘authentic’ Japanese experience. The Truth promoted the Japanese Village as one of the most interesting spots in the ‘City’. There has been no attempt at artifice in the creation of this model village – everything is real and directly imported. Real Japanese houses, flower gardens, museums, temples, workshops, lily ponds, and the innumerable crazy, curved, and twisted bridges, without which no Japanese picture would be correct."

The presence of acrobats, contortionists, sword swallowers and ‘Samurai sword-dualists’ did not dampen enthusiasm for the supposed realism of the Village."

Referring to the pagodas, gardens and bridges, a contributor to the Evening News claimed that ‘Everything seems grotesque to the European eye’, ‘but it is really typical of Eastern life’."

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54 ‘The Jap and White City’, 3.
Stereotypes of a feminine, artistic and childlike Japan pervaded other descriptions of the Japanese Village. The ‘woman’s page’ in Freeman’s Journal noted that the Village was ‘very fascinating’:

Several Japanese families are in actual residence there, and one may wander through the quaint little houses and carry on a conversation with the inmates ... There is a tea-house where a charming Madame Butterfly dispenses tea in truly Japanese fashion, whilst her little son, six or even seven years old, talks to the visitors and begs them to come again with a perfectly delightful accent."

The author’s reference to Madame Butterfly underscores the importance of theatre in propagating certain impressions of Japan in Australia in the early twentieth century. David Belasco’s play Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan toured Australia early in the century, while Puccini’s opera, which was based on the same story, made its Australian debut in 1910.* Reflecting the contemporaneous fashion for Japanese decorative arts, prints and fabrics in Australia, Japanese-inspired performances of this period including The Mikado, The Geisha, Moonlight Blossom, The Japanese Nightingale and The Darling of the Gods were immensely popular.* Along with the supposedly ‘authentic’ experience of Japan offered at White City, these performances helped to cement romantic notions of Japan as a feminine and artistic land in the minds of many Australians.* Such enthusiasm for the Japanese Village may seem at

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55 ‘Woman's Page’, 29.
* ‘Mme Butterfly’, 6.
* Collins, ‘Emperors and Musume’.
odds with the contemporaneous desire to build a White Australia, but it indicates the ambivalent attitudes towards Japan in Australia at this time.

It is intriguing to imagine how Kagiyama responded to the Japanese Village. The photographs in his album seem to treat the Village and its hordes of visitors as a curiosity; they are photographed in a somewhat stark manner rather than as a subject for creative expression to be artfully composed. One photograph (Figure 6) centres on a house in which kimono clad Japanese women sell fans, bowls and mobiles to visitors. It is telling that emphasis is placed on the large sign proclaiming ‘This is an actual Japanese House built in Tokio’, which could have easily been cropped out of the photograph. Kagiyama would have perhaps found these claims for authenticity amusing. The other two Japanese Village photographs show the large crowds that flocked to the attraction, and its teahouse, garden, pond, bridge and buildings decorated with Japanese flags and painted lanterns (Figure 7). Murals depicting a sailboat on water and a Japanese figure with irises, painted in a style that crudely interprets Japanese prints, create decorative backdrops for the visitors who stand patiently in long queues.

Kagiyama was drawn to other Japanese-inspired public spectacles in Sydney. Several photographs celebrating Japanese military strength feature in his album. Some photographs centre on First World War military parades, in which Japanese flags decorate the city amongst the flags of other allied nations. Another pair of uncaptioned and undated photographs focuses on a parade in a Sydney street and the crowds watching a convoy of cars decorated with Japanese flags and flowers (Figure 8). The visit of the Japanese naval cruisers Aso and Soya to Sydney in 1915 was another source of great fanfare. This was one of a number of visits of Japanese naval
squadrons to Australian ports between 1878 and 1935, including visits in 1906, 1910, 1913, 1915 and 1916. Newspapers described the excitement accompanying the arrival of the ships in 1915, and the official functions held in honour of the Japanese visitors.

A photograph of Kagiyama posing proudly on board the Aso with the ship’s crew places him in the heart of the celebrations (Figure 9). The very formal composition, in which a life preserver held prominently by one of the crew is emblazoned with the ship’s name, suggests that this photograph was produced as a souvenir for visitors on the ship’s official open day, Saturday 3 July 1915. Ten thousand people lined the sea wall near the dock to catch a glimpse of the cruiser and crew on that day, and several hundred took the opportunity to go on board. As described in the Sydney Morning Herald: ‘On Saturday afternoon HIJMS Aso was converted into the Land of the Cherry Blossom’. Pink and white blossoms, flags and banners decorated the ship, while a band entertained the crowds, and exhibitions of Japanese martial arts and sumo were presented. Visitors toured the ship with English-speaking guides, and were given tiny British and Japanese flags, a fan and a ‘programme of the day’s amusements’ as souvenirs. The article also noted that the visitors included ‘a large number of Japanese residents of Sydney’.

Not all Australians were comfortable with such spectacular displays of Japanese naval power in the Pacific region. The Japanese Navy’s defeat of the

61 Ibid.
Russians at Tsushima in 1905 received extensive attention in the Australian press.\(^6\)

Former Sydney paperboy, Frank Clune, recalls earning four times his usual profit from sales of the *Evening News* and the *Star* on the day of Japan’s victory at Tsushima.\(^6\) The events attracted concern as well as admiration. Three weeks after the Battle of Tsushima, soon-to-be Prime Minister Alfred Deakin expressed his unease that Australia was within ‘striking distance of no less than sixteen foreign naval stations’, noting that the strongest was Yokohama.\(^6\) The then deputy Prime Minister Allan McLean similarly warned:

> that sense of security we have always considered we derived from our great distance from the bases of all the great military or naval powers of the world has now been removed. We now find one of the great naval and military powers of the earth within a very short distance of our shores. That puts us in a very different position from that which we considered we occupied heretofore … It is fortunate for us that the great Power that has recently arisen in the East is an ally of the Empire. Of course, that condition of things might not always continue, and we must be prepared for what might happen.\(^6\)

Such a view was certainly not unanimous, and Australians differed widely on how to respond to Japan’s growing strength in the region. While some saw it as a threat,

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\(^6\) ‘Important Statement by Mr Deakin’, 5.

\(^6\) ‘Mr M’Lean’s View. Old Sense of Security’, 3.
leading to strategies of racial exclusion, others like Senator Edward Pulsford saw it as an opportunity for trade and other forms of mutually beneficial exchange.\textsuperscript{66}

Memories of Japan’s victory over Russia were refreshed by the visit of the \textit{Aso} and \textit{Soya} in 1915. The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} reported how both ships were once part of the Russian navy, but were sunk by the Japanese in Port Arthur and Chemulpo during the Russo-Japanese War, and then raised and repaired so they could become part of the Japanese fleet.\textsuperscript{67} It was also noted that around 50 of the ships’ crew who were present in Sydney saw service during the Russo-Japanese War.\textsuperscript{68} Japan’s status as an ally during the First World War may have tempered anxieties like those expressed by McLean and Deakin a decade earlier, but they were to remain an undercurrent in Australia throughout Kagiyama’s residence in Sydney, as I detail later in this article.

\textbf{Photography, Mobility and Social Connection}

As well as representing spectacular public Australian-Japanese encounters, Kagiyama’s album offers insight into the operation of Australian-Japanese relations at the personal, grassroots level. There are many photographs of people in the album, including Kagiyama’s Australian friends, fellow photographers, and members of the Australian-Japanese community. Photographs of Japanese people accompanying Kagiyama to Sydney’s parks and Northbridge confirm that he mixed with Sydney’s wider Japanese community in the years before he met Ishida. Other photographs depict unnamed Japanese-Australian families (Figure 10), and Anglo-Australian and Japanese people picnicking together in a National Park while looking into

\textsuperscript{66} Pulsford, \textit{The British Empire and the Relations of Asia and Australasia}.
\textsuperscript{67} ‘Aso and Soya’, 8.
\textsuperscript{68} “‘With Us’” Japanese Admiral on the War’, 11.
Kagiyama’s lens with a sense of relaxed familiarity (Figure 2). These photographs reflect the intercultural friendships and intimate relationships that flourished in Kagiyama’s social circles despite the racially exclusive ideologies of the White Australia era.\textsuperscript{69}

Dispersed amongst the pages of the album are 12 family portraits taken in Japan of men and women of different ages and young children. Also included is a moving post-mortem photograph of a young girl lying on a bed of flowers with her eyes closed and tiny hands clasped over her chest. As they are undated and uncaptioned, it is impossible to confirm whether these family portraits were posted to Kagiyama as a memento from home during his time in Sydney or were added to the album at a later date. The fact that three of these Japanese portraits overlap Sydney prints suggests that at least some were included after the Sydney photographs were glued in, perhaps for safe-keeping or ease of transportation. The inclusion of these Japanese portraits in the album is a potent reminder of the photograph’s cultural and social role as a highly portable object that can be moved easily between geographical, material and personal contexts. Photographs have circulated across vast physical distances within social and familial networks, as well as imperial and institutional ones, since the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{70} The presence of family and souvenir photographs from Takayama (Figure 2) in Kagiyama’s Sydney album moreover underscores the mobility of the makers and owners of photographs by charting their movement for

\textsuperscript{69} For accounts of other relationships between Anglo-Australian and Japanese people see Oliver ‘Japanese Relationships in White Australia’; Noguchi and Davidson ‘Melbourne Friends of the Mikado’s Navy’ in Jones and Mackie, \textit{Relationships: Japan and Australia}, 15–44.

\textsuperscript{70} For example, for a discussion of postcards and mobility see Gillen and Hall, ‘Any Mermaids? Early Postcard Mobilities’, 20–35.
work, migration or pleasure. Photographs from Japan would have provided a connection to home while Kagiyama lived in Sydney, and when he returned to Japan his album travelled with him as a material and highly personal connection to the life and people that he had left behind.

The cuts in the corners of one family photograph, as well as the folds, tears, finger prints and scratches that mark other photographs, also bring to mind what Elizabeth Edwards refers to as the photographs’ ‘social biography’. Such marks accumulate in photographs as they are circulated by post, held, passed from person to person, or exposed to damaging conditions. These marks are important, argues Edwards, because the materiality of a photograph has affective qualities that extend well beyond the subject pictured to testify to different stages in the photograph’s material existence. A formal portrait of Kagiyama as an adolescent is edged with the traces of other paper, as though it had been removed from a document or identification papers. Yet in the album, where it has been pasted next to photographs of a NSW national park, the photograph becomes a poignant keepsake from another life and place. Edwards argues that such material details reveal processes of refinement, erasure and uncertainty in the role of photographs as historical documents and as evidence. Consequently, photography must not be read simply as a visual medium, but as a medium with evidential value that lies in a series of fragmented, overlapping and changing material and representational discourses. The arrangement

71 See also Andriotis and Mavrie, ‘Postcard Mobility’, 19–20.
72 Edwards, ‘Entangled Documents’, 334. For more on photography and materiality see Edwards and Hart (eds), Photographs Objects Histories.
73 Ibid., 336–7.
of photographs in an album and the type of album itself are also important, as they govern the photographic narrative, ‘the social relations of viewing,’ and viewers’ embodied relationships with the photographs. The simple soft cloth cover, string binding, moderate scale and paper pages of Kagiyama’s album imply that the social relations of viewing for this album were deeply personal and intimate. This is an album to be handled with care as it sits on a lap or at a table in front of one viewer at a time.

The social process of taking photographs is also underscored in Kagiyama’s album. Featuring prominently in the album is Mikado Farm, an important social site for Japanese residents of Sydney at this time. Mikado Farm was located in Broughton Street, Guildford and owned by Hideo Kuwahata. After Kuwahata arrived in Australia in 1888, he established a small import business in Sydney that soon expanded to supply shipping companies and the Japanese Navy. Kuwahata welcomed Japanese visitors and residents of Sydney to Mikado Farm for weekends of fishing, photography and picnics. As a member of the Horticultural Society of NSW and a bonsai enthusiast, Kuwahata also gained a reputation for the gardens at Mikado Farm. The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate described Mikado Farm in 1930 as ‘packed with beautiful Japanese prints, dwarfed trees, goldfish, water bowls and miniature gardens’. Kuwahata is described as ‘a courteous Japanese gentleman’ who ‘takes a delight in showing the visitor over his nursery at Guildford’.

75 NAA A981/1 JAP 55; SP42/1 C1929/9909.
76 ‘Mr H. Kuwahata’, 17; ‘News of the Week in Picture’, 26; ‘Died in Nagasaki: Local Japanese Resident’, 1; NAA A981/1 JAP 55; SP42/1 C1929/9909.
A group of six photographs in Kagiyama’s album place him at Mikado Farm in 1915, where he spent time with Kuwahata and his family. Kagiyama is photographed in the farm’s gardens and greenhouse (Figure 11), alongside Kuwahata, his English born Australian wife Mary, their sons Thomas and Frederick and other guests. The photographs of the gardens are a tribute to Kuwahata’s Japanese heritage; the Japanese flag flies on a flagpole, bonsai trees sit on the greenhouse window frame, and a paper lantern hangs overhead. One photograph of Mikado Farm featuring Kagiyama, Hideo and Mary Kuwahata and an unidentified guest, has been hand-coloured in an effort to communicate some of the vibrancy of the gardens (Figure 12). Although the result is somewhat crude, the use of this time-consuming process to colour the flowers, grass, trees, bridge, greenhouse and items of clothing worn by the sitters suggest the personal value that this place held for the photographer.

Kagiyama’s social relationships with Anglo-Australians similarly feature in his album. Like Kuwahata, Kagiyama married an Anglo-Australian woman. Kagiyama had known Cicelia Howard Walker for three years before the couple married in Woollahra, Sydney in December 1916. Cicelia was 19 years old and Kagiyama was still working as a cleaner and presser at the time of their marriage. Relationships between Anglo-Australian women and Japanese-Australian men were not uncommon in Sydney in the early to mid-twentieth century, despite xenophobic fears of ‘miscegenation’ and the potential for mixed marriages to undermine White Australia. An uncaptioned photograph on the penultimate page of the album shows a formally dressed Kagiyama wearing a three-piece suit, standing in the garden beside a

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79 Oliver, ‘Japanese Relationships in White Australia’, 5.16.
seated Anglo-Australian woman. The very formal, hierarchical composition was common in Anglo-European and Japanese wedding and family portraiture of this period, and is also illustrated in the Japanese wedding portrait in Kagiyama’s album (Figure 1). Although it is not currently possible to confirm whether the woman posing with Kagiyama is his wife, the care taken to compose this photograph demonstrates that it was produced as a tribute to the personal relationship between the sitters. Kagiyama and Cicelia had a daughter who died in infancy and then a son, Harno, who was born in 1920. The final page of the album includes a photograph of the same young woman seated on a picnic rug with two other Anglo-Australian women, possibly the woman’s family, while Kagiyama holds a baby that may be his daughter or son.

Kagiyama’s marriage ended in 1932 and divorce was finalised in 1934. This was also the period when Kagiyama’s career as a photographer took another step forward when he began work for The Home magazine. The Home was renowned for commissioning some of Australia’s leading photographers, including Cazneaux and Max Dupain, to produce photographs that celebrated the very best and most beautiful that modern Australia had to offer. Kagiyama’s initial contributions were framed according to his Japanese heritage. A spread of photographs of shrines, theatre, temples and bustling streets in contemporary Tokyo – taken during Kagiyama’s return trip to Japan in 1934 – was published in the May 1935 issue, and his first contribution of photographs of Sydney was headlined ‘Sydney Seen Through Japanese Eyes’.

80 ‘In Divorce’ 1932, 10; ‘In Divorce’, 1933, 5; ‘In Divorce’ 1934, 8; NSW Records Office 1127/1932 and 73/1933.
81 Miles, ‘Through Japanese Eyes’.
Later issues featured his photographs of Sydney, its suburbs and architecture, the Australian bush, the properties of well-known graziers, and an Australia Day Parade without reference to his Japanese heritage. Kagiyama’s commercial studio was also thriving at this time, with clients including *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the Atlantic Union Oil Company and consular officials who hired him to photograph social events at the Japanese Consulate.82

During his trip to Japan in 1934, Kagiyama re-married, this time to a woman from Takayama named in Australian immigration documents as both Sadako Kagiyama and Sata Kagiyama.83 Immigration restrictions meant that she was not permitted to accompany her husband on his trip back to Australia or to stay indefinitely. A 1905 amendment to the *Immigration Restriction Act* removed the provision for wives and children of non-Europeans residing in Australia to join their spouses,84 but exceptions could be made on a case-by-case basis for Japanese people who applied through the consulate.85 Upon Kagiyama’s return from Japan, the Japanese Consul applied on Kagiyama’s behalf to have his new wife exempted from the dictation test to allow her entry into Australia. The request was granted in 1935. Kagiyama paid a substantial bond of one hundred pounds as part of this process, and thanks to his connections to the Japanese trading networks an unnamed ‘reputable Japanese merchant of Sydney’ accepted surety for that bond.86 His new wife eventually landed in Australia in August 1939, just two weeks before Great Britain

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82 NAA SP42/1 C1934/4618.
83 NAA A12508 32/128 and NAA C123 9904.
84 *Immigration Restriction Amendment 1905* s 4c.
85 Oliver, ‘Japanese Relationships in White Australia’, 5.5.
86 NAA SP42/1 C1934/4618.
declared war on Germany, bringing Australia as part of the Commonwealth into the Second World War."

**Rising Tensions and Return to Japan**

Kagiyama’s album speaks to the changing attitudes towards Japanese photographers in Australia in the decades leading up to the Second World War. Although the five photographs of Australian naval facilities and ships in Kagiyama’s album imply a certain level of photographic freedom around these sites in the mid-1910s, the presence of Japanese photographers around Australian ports and navy bases gradually became a matter of serious concern. David Walker argues that after Japan’s victory over Russia, ‘It became a general assumption that one of the principal occupations of the Japanese in Australia was espionage’. By the 1910s, this paranoia was fuelled by the considerable popularity of spy novels and reports of espionage in Australian newspapers. One Japanese diplomat commented on the suspicion with which Japanese photographers were treated in Australia in the early twentieth century: ‘If they see our tourists taking photographs in the streets, they immediately think that they are spies. They fear Japan in the way you fear a bogeyman in the dark’.

By the 1920s and late 1930s, the Australian Department of Defence was keeping a close eye on Japanese activities in Australia, and photographers were placed under particular scrutiny. Captain Longfield Lloyd, a member of Australian Army Intelligence, commented on what he described in 1920 as ‘an epidemic of photography by the officers of Japanese vessels in Sydney’ at the end of the First

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87 NAA A12508 32/128.
89 Sissons, ‘Australian Fears of Japan as a Defence Threat 1895–1971’. 
World War. These officers were typically placed under surveillance, and if they were seen photographing within the Port of Sydney, the War Precautions Act 1914 (Australia) was invoked to seize their cameras, destroy their negatives and forward their empty cameras to the Japanese Consul-General with a written reprimand for the Captain and crew. Longfield Lloyd was concerned that ‘with constant photography on the part of almost every Japanese officer who comes to the port, some negatives at least would be valuable to an Intelligence Bureau engaged in building up a complete system of local knowledge’.

This atmosphere of paranoia eventually reached Kagiyama, who was placed under surveillance by Australian security authorities in 1938. Interestingly, it was not Kagiyama’s photography that attracted their attention. A neighbour who operated a tobacco kiosk under Kagiyama’s King’s Cross flat reported that between October and December 1938, Kagiyama would leave a parcel on his doorstep between 8 am and 8.10 am each morning. Another man collected that parcel between 8.45 am and 9 am the same day. Upon investigation, these packages were found to contain wax cylinders for sound recordings, reportedly of ‘overseas broadcasts from Tokyo’. The Australian security report conceded that there was a possibility that coded messages were being exchanged through the cylinders ‘wrapt up in simple announcements’, but determined that ‘there is nothing to prevent such a procedure’.

Drawing on the recollections of three of Kagiyama’s elderly Japanese friends, Mitsuda writes that, ‘As a photographer, he [Kagiyama] had been approached by the

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91 NAA SP42/1 C1934/4618.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
Japanese army to work as a spy and this he did’. However, access to additional evidence that could either confirm or refute this suggestion is currently impossible.

As tensions between Japan and the Allies escalated in the lead up to the Pacific War – including the US government’s freezing of Japanese assets in retaliation for Japanese incursions into French Indochina – many Japanese merchants and diplomats returned to Japan. Kagiyama left Australia with his new wife on 15 August 1941 on board the Japanese repatriation ship the *Kashima Maru*. Had the couple remained in Australia, they would have been arrested and interned in one of several internment camps where those classified as ‘enemy aliens’, including thousands of men, women and children of Japanese, German and Italian origin, were detained until the end of the War. Back in Takayama, Kagiyama was able to capitalise on the language and photography skills he had developed in Australia. He worked as an interpreter for the forces of the American-led military occupation of postwar Japan, in which Australia played a substantial role. The former Mayor of Takayama, Shūzō Tsuchikawa, described Kagiyama as a significant support during these years:

He was a gentle, earnest person with a strong sense of responsibility.

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94 Mitsuda, *Modernism / Japonism in Photography*, 31

95 For Australian commentary on these rising tensions in the months prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbour see: ‘Warning of Danger’, 6; ‘Trade with Japan’, 6; ‘Japan Apologises to U.S.A.’, 7; ‘U.S. Warning to Japan’, 10.

96 NAA SP1148/2. In this ‘Passenger List – Outgoing Passengers’ document, the ship’s name is misspelled as Kasima Maru

97 Nagata, *Unwanted Aliens*. 
The fact that the city of Takayama was well-liked by the Occupying Forces, and got by with no problems, was entirely thanks to this one man’s beautiful, passionate interpreting. I will never forget him."

Kagiyma also gave a presentation to the city council, presidents of neighbourhood associations, school staff, and the head of the Ladies’ Association in Takayama regarding what to expect from the Allied Occupying Forces and how to interact with them, given their cultural differences.

In 1947, Kagiyama was one of a group of ten professional photographers to establish the Hida Photographers Group. The group held annual exhibitions, taught photography skills and assisted the city by promoting Takayama as a tourist destination. Kagiyama also opened his own professional studio in Takayama, and maintained a profile in photography competitions in the area where he won prizes for his photographs of the Takayama Spring Festival. Photography continued to serve as a medium of intercultural connection for Kagiyama. A letter to Kagiyama from an American tourist, dated 1951, describes her appreciation of his hospitality, alongside their mutual interest in photography:

I have sent my colour film to San Francisco, and expect the photos will be here in a month or so, so will send some to you. I do hope the photos we took turn out well, because I remember that day as the most enjoyable of our whole stay in Japan … The wonderful kindness and consideration that you all showed us that day was such that we completely forgot that we

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98 Tsuchikawa, ‘Episodes from the War’s End’, 434.
were foreigners, different to all of you. I believe this will be one of the
treasured memories of my lifetime."
The publication of Caddler’s letter in the newspaper Takayama Shiminjihō suggests
that there was wider appreciation for the intercultural photographic connections that
Kagiyma helped to forge in Takayama.

After Kagiyma died of heart failure on 11 May 1965, his album of Sydney
photographs was bequeathed to one of his long-time friends in Takayama.
Kagiyma’s close engagement with both Anglo- and Japanese-Australian
communities, and his curiosity about Japanese spectacles in Australia help to make
this album historically significant. However, far more than simply a collection of
historical documents of Australian-Japanese relations or an account of a developing
creative practice, his album offers fresh insight into the role of photography as a
medium for reflection, creativity and intercultural connection between Australia and
Japan. Above all, Kagiyma’s album stands as a striking reminder that the history of
Australian photography was not a purely Anglo-Australian one, and that despite the
prejudices of the White Australia era Japanese people made a critical contribution to
Australian culture and society.

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