



## Two Kamesaburos in Japanese marine industry

Yukio Hato

### 1. YAGI, Kamesaburo

Kamesaburo Yagi was a businessman in Imabari. He was born in 1862 and died in 1938. He built a ship on which people could can crab meat.

His family kept salt pans in the Hashihama area in Imabari. He had business ability and somehow his eyes were on the north. He bought a freighter to sell salt to Russia. He assumed the post of president of a local bank too.

In 1905, Japan won the war against Russia. Then, Kamesaburo got the fishing rights around Vladivostok, the Russian city facing the Japan Sea. In 1912, he built a big luxurious house in Hashihama. People call it "Yagi-kame mansion."

He then became interested in crab fishing in Hokkaido. He came up with the system of "fishing with a fleet vessels with a flagship." He thought that if fishermen caught crabs on small boats and then gathered in a mother ship, then workers could can the crabs right there. He soon built a mother ship which was equipped with a cannery soon. He made loads of money on the crab cans and became one of the richest people in Ehime prefecture. He left his lasting mark on the local industry and business community in Imabari. The large residence in Hashihama is not occupied now. It stands quietly and with ivy twining over its walls.

### 2. YAMASHITA, Kamesaburo

Kamesaburo Yamashita was a great businessman in the shipping industry. He is from Yoshida Town in Uwajima City, Ehime. He was born in 1867 and died in 1944. He established Yamashita Kisen, a maritime company. His company changed its name to Shosen Mitsui and developed into an international marine operator. He was known as the founder of the Yamashita conglomerate.

He ran away when he was around 15. He went to Osaka, Kyoto, and then Tokyo. He entered a law school, which is now Meiji University. In those days, his nickname was "Doro-game", or "muddy turtle." A few years after his graduation, he started his own coal company and extended into the marine industry. He earned a lot of money during the Russo-Japanese War, because he had strong connections in the former Japanese Navy. Later, he earned more money during the First World War. He became one of the three greatest businessmen in the marine industry of Japan.

## 二人の亀三郎 日本海運業に足跡を残した愛媛県人

羽藤 由喜夫

### 1. 八木 亀三郎

八木亀三郎（やぎ かめさぶろう、1862-1932）は今治の実業家で、蟹工船を考案した人です。

彼は、波止浜で塩田を経営する家に生まれました。彼は商才に長（た）けた人物で、なぜかその眼は北を向いていたようです。彼は船を買々と、波止浜の塩をロシアへ売りに行きます。そして今治商業銀行の頭取に就任します。

1905年、日露戦争で日本が勝利すると、彼はウラジオストク周辺の漁業権を手に入れます。1912年には、波止浜に豪邸を建てます。通称、八木亀邸です。

そうしているうち、彼は北海道の蟹漁（かにりょう）に興味を惹（ひ）かれます。「数隻の小さな船で蟹を獲（と）り、大きな船に集めてその場で缶詰に加工すれば、効率がいいのではないか」と思いつき、船内に缶詰工場を備えた、いわゆる「蟹工船」（かにこうせん）を建造します。

「これで巨万の富を得た亀三郎は、大正時代には愛媛県でも有数の富豪となり、今治の産業・経済界に大きな足跡を残します。波止浜に彼が残した家は、今は空き家となり、蔦（つた）に覆（おお）われてひっそりと建っています。

### 2. 山下 亀三郎

山下亀三郎（やました かめさぶろう）は、海運業における偉大な実業家でした。1867年に宇和島市の吉田町で生まれ、1944年に歿しました。あの山下汽船の創業者です。山下汽船は、のち商船三井と名を変えて国際航路に就航し、山下財閥の礎（いしずえ）を築きました。

山下は、15歳で家出して、そのまま大阪、京都、東京へと流れて行きます。そこで明治大学の前身となる法律学校に入学します。

その頃、彼のあだ名は「泥亀」と言いました。卒業後しばらくして、彼は自分の石炭会社を設立し、海運業にも手を伸ばします。

彼は旧日本海軍にコネがあったため、日露戦争で大きな儲けを出します。

そして第一次大戦の折には、さらに巨額の富を手に入れます。

そして日本海運業における三大実業家の一人に数えられるようになりました。

