



Important Cultural Property of Japan

"MEIJI MARU"

She was built at Glasgow, Scotland in 1874 as both "Service and Patrol Ship for Lighthouse" and "Royal Yacht for Meiji Emperor". Since 1896, she was transferred to "Tokio Nautical School" and used as moord training ship for more then 50 years to give education and training for more than 5,000 students. She is now fixed on the ground in "Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology" as a national cultural heritage as the oldest surviving iron ship.

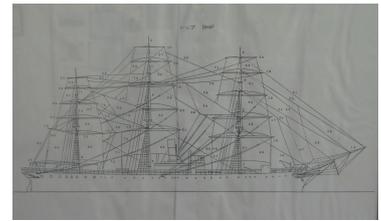
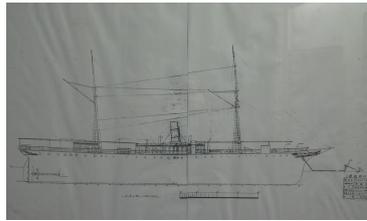
Painted by Mitsuo Matsuzaki

Summary of History



- 1873 March The Meiji Japanese Government ordered steam ship “MEIJI MARU” from “Robert Napier & Sons Shipyard” in Glasgow, Scotland, as a “Patrol and service ship for lighthouses” with twin screw propeller and rigged as “2- mast topsail schooner”.
- 1874 August The Meiji Japanese Government sent British Capt. A. R. Brown to England and asked to arrange adequate captain, crew and necessary supplies for “MEIJI MARU” in order to bring back the ship to Japan safely.
- 1874 November “MEIJI MARU” was launched in September, and completed in November
- 1875 February “MEIJI MARU” sailed for Japan from Glasgow in January under the command of British Captain R. H. Peters with crew of 52 foreigner (no Japanese crew on board), and arrived at Yokohama in February via Suez Canal.
- 1876 July 16th July, Emperor Meiji got on board “MEIJI MARU” from Aomori to Yokohama via Hakodate on the way back from the Imperial visit throughout the North-East district of Japan and arrived at Yokohama on 20th July. (in 1941, “20th July” was designated as a national holiday, “The Sea Memorial Day”, to commemorate his Majesty’s safe arrival)
- 1898 February “MEIJI MARU” was transferred to the “Tokyo Nautical College” in November 1897 and in February 1898 she was re-modeled to “moored training ship” rigged as “3- mast ship” from original “2- mast topsail schooner”.
- 1945 September Immediately after the W. W. II, U.S. Army (not Navy) occupied all premises of the college including “MEIJI MARU”.
- 1951 October Bilge water of “MEIJI MARU” gradually increased year by year and finally, on 24th July, 1951, she sunk suddenly with big whistle like sound and grounded on the bottom of the pond. “MEIJI MARU” was returned to the University on 18th October, 1951, but in sunken condition.
- 1964 March The mouth of mooring pond of “MEIJI MARU” was forced to close with 3- meters high embankment in 1962 and she was trapped in the dead water pond. In order to secure the “MEIJI MARU”, the reclamation works of the dead water pond started in 1963 and finished in 1964. Along with the reclamation works, the damaged sections of the “MEIJI MARU” were repaired and she was fixed to the ground at her present position in March 1964.
- 1978 May “MEIJI MARU“ was designated by the Japanese government as the “Important Cultural Property of Japan”.
- 1980 October Eight- year project was launched both for reinforcement of her foundation of “MEIJI MARU” and for maintenance and repairs of her hull and riggings as a joint undertaking by the “Agency for Cultural Affairs” of the Japanese government and the “Tokyo University of Mercantile Marine” and completed on 29th January, 1988.

Specification



	Original (Lloyd's Register at the delivery of the ship)	After converted to the moored training ship in 1898
Type of ship	2-mast Topsail Schooner	3-mast Ship
Gross tonnage	1,010.08 ton	1,037.2 ton
Length	223 feet (68.0m)	242 feet (73.8m)
Breadth	30 feet (9.1m)	29.25 feet (8.9m)
Depth	22 feet (6.7m)	21.5 feet (6.6m)
Number of deck	2 decks	2 decks
Main steam engine	2 Inverted Compound Reciprocating Engines	—
Output	1,100 hp	—
Trial speed	12.66 knots	—
Average speed	11.5 knots	—



MEIJI MARU Volunteer Club

Mitsuo Matsuzaki

(December 2008)



MEIJI MARU



“MEIJI MARU” is the oldest surviving “Iron Ship” (not “steel ship”) in Japan.

As the invaluable historical monument of the shipbuilding technology and the education of Japanese seamen, “MEIJI MARU” was designated by the Japanese government as the “Important Cultural Property of Japan” in 1978 to preserve her graceful figure forever.



March 1873, the Meiji Japanese Government ordered steam ship “MEIJI MARU” from “Robert Napier & Sons Shipyard” in Glasgow, Scotland, rigged as “2-mast topsail schooner” with twin screw propeller, mainly to use as a “Patrol and service ship for lighthouses” and, at the same time, use as a “Royal yacht” for Meiji Emperor and high officials of the Government.

August 1874, the Meiji Japanese Government sent British Capt. A. R. Brown, who was employed by the government as a technical advisor for maritime affairs, to England and asked him to arrange adequate captain, crew and necessary supplies for “MEIJI MARU” in order to bring back the ship to Japan safely.

“MEIJI MARU” launched in September, completed in November 1874, sailed for Japan from Glasgow in January 1875 under the command of British Captain R. H. Peters with crew of 52 foreigner (no Japanese crew on board), and arrived at Yokohama in February via Suez Canal. (Ref. Suez Canal opened in 1869)

16th July, 1876, Emperor Meiji got on board “MEIJI MARU” from Aomori to Yokohama via Hakodate on the way back from the Imperial visit throughout the North-East district of Japan. Since Emperor Meiji arrived at Yokohama on 20th July, this date was designated as a national holiday, “The Sea Memorial Day”, in 1941 to commemorate his Majesty’s safe arrival.

“MEIJI MARU” also played timely and actively in sending the Imperial messenger and/or diplomats to Ogasawara Islands, Korea, Ryukyu (Okinawa) etc. besides her main works as a “Patrol and service ship for lighthouses”.

After 22-year's service as a "Patrol and service ship for lighthouses", in November 1897, "MEIJI MARU" was transferred to the "Tokyo Nautical College", the predecessor of the "Tokyo University of Mercantile Marine", and she was re-modeled to "moored training ship" in February 1898 rigged as "3-mast ship" from original "2-mast topsail schooner".

Since then, "MEIJI MARU" was used as a "moored training ship" for the education and training of seamanship to more than 5,000 students for more than 50 years.

After "MEIJI MARU" was moored in the pond of "Tokyo Nautical College", she was attacked by typhoon several times and suffered severe damage for hull and riggings every time, however, she was repaired and survived each time with the tremendous efforts of the staffs and students of the "Tokyo Nautical College".

1st September, 1923, the big earth quake attacked Tokyo area and most of the buildings and dormitories of the school were burnt out by the fire which broke out after the earth quake.

Fortunately, "MEIJI MARU" did not suffer any damage from that fire and saved about 600 life of sufferers evacuated from the neighboring towns on to the ship.

In 1927, two main steam engines and auxiliary machineries of "MEIJI MARU" were removed from her engine room and scraped.

20th September, 1945, immediately after the W. W. II, U.S. Army (not Navy) occupied all premises of the college including "MEIJI MARU".

Since U.S. Army used "MEIJI MARU" as officer's club, they converted inside of the ship as a night club and illuminated outside of the ship in the night time.

U.S. Army seemed as if they had not enough knowledge about the maintenance of the ship, unfortunately, the bilge water of "MEIJI MARU" gradually increased year by year and finally, on 24th July, 1951, she sunk suddenly with big whistle like sound and grounded on the bottom of the pond.

While other buildings etc. in the school premises still under control of the U.S. Army, only "MEIJI MARU" was returned to the school on 18th October, 1951, but in sunken condition.

In 1952, "Tokyo University of Mercantile Marine" (successor of the "Tokyo Nautical College") decided to refloat "MEIJI MARU" for surviving.

All the staffs of the university including students worked hardly to put wreck inside of the ship in order and dismantle the yards, gallant and top masts by their own hands before the large scale of refloat works started in July 1952 by the "Nippon Salvage Co." who was nominated by open tender.

7th July, 1952, "MEIJI MARU" was successively refloated and, since then, "Tokyo University of Mercantile Marine" was hardly trying to repair the ship in order to use her again as "moored training ship" as before.

However, in February 1954, after careful checking, the damage and deterioration of “MEIJI MARU”, not only to the hull but also of riggings, was so severe that the university finally decided to give up an idea to use her as “moored training ship” again.

Since then she had been used as if “floating stowage ship”.

Tokyo metropolitan government decided to construct tide embankment surrounding Tokyo Port area to protect that area from high tide caused by typhoon and tsunami.

As the result of such decision, the mouth of mooring pond of “MEIJI MARU” was forced to close with 3-meters high embankment in 1962 and she was trapped in the dead water pond.

In order to secure the “MEIJI MARU”, the reclamation works of the dead water pond started in 1963 and finished in 1964. Along with the reclamation works, the damaged sections of the “MEIJI MARU” were repaired and she was fixed to the ground at her present position in March 1964.

Since then, as the university endeavoured to do the necessary repair and maintenance works at all times, the condition of “MEIJI MARU” gradually improved year by year.

May 1978, “MEIJI MARU“ was designated as the “Important Cultural Property of Japan” by the Japanese government to preserve her graceful figure forever as the invaluable historical monument of the shipbuilding technology and the education of Japanese seamen.

October 1980, an eight-year project was launched both for reinforcement of foundation of “MEIJI MARU” and for maintenance, repair works of her hull and riggings as a joint undertaking by the “Agency for Cultural Affairs” of the Japanese government and the “Tokyo University of Mercantile Marine” and the project completed on 29th January, 1988.

She was opened to the public as a memorial ship from 16th May, 1989.

Already 20 years passed since the completion of the above “eight-year project”, whole condition of “MEIJI MARU” became so bad to open her to the public, a new “three-year project” for maintenance and repairs of the ship will start from January, 2009.



MEIJI MARU Volunteer Club

Mitsuo Matsuzaki

(December, 2008)