DREAMS OF A FAR AWAY LAND: JAPANESE IMMIGRATION TO PERU, 1899-1950

by

Cheyenne N. Haney

John E. Van Sant, Committee Chair
Colin J. Davis
Raymond A. Mohl

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DREAMS OF A FAR AWAY LAND: JAPANESE IMMIGRATION TO PERU, 1899-1950
CHEYENNE N. HANEY
HISTORY
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to address the Japanese immigration to Peru and Japanese cultural traditions within Peru. It is necessary to note the reasons for emigration and effects of the conditions in Peru. Through the use of various sources, I will study the transition of culture and history of the Japanese community in Peru.

Diplomatic relations between Japan and Peru began in 1872 after tensions surrounding the Maria Luz incident. It was not until 1899 that the two countries established a formal relationship. The Peruvians viewed the Japanese as a source of cheap labor. Ergo, an immigration policy, initially based upon contract labor, was developed.

After immigrating, the Japanese maintained a sense of their culture while creating a new identity in Peru. Women were primarily responsible for retaining this knowledge. Furthermore, the creation of Japanese newspapers, organizations, and schools fostered the Japanese identity which forced a separation between them and their Peruvian neighbors.

In addition, the control of immigration exerted by the Japanese government encouraged opinions that the Japanese had colonial expectations in Latin America. Although not true, it certainly led to ostracization and attacks on the Japanese community in Peru which intensified during World War II. The United States worked with the Peruvian government to intern approximately 1,800 Japanese-Peruvian citizens. Many of which were detained in the Crystal City Relocation Facility in Texas. After the war,
Japanese-Peruvians experienced more assimilation into the Peruvian culture but still maintained a unique identity.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 THE MEIJI RESTORATION, INITIAL RELATIONS, AND INSTABILITY IN GERU</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Contact with Peru</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 IMMIGRATION, 1899-1940</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Beginnings of a Japanese-Peruvian Community</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Immigrant Experience</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divisions in the Japanese Community</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 WORLD WAR II AND INTERNMENT</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the War: Japanese-Peruvians, 1945-1950</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFTERWORD</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

By the early seventeenth century, Japan developed relations with Western nations. Yet, many in the elite classes viewed this interaction as problematic. Beginning in 1636, the Japanese government forbade most citizens from travelling abroad and further expanded and enforced earlier edicts prohibiting Christianity.¹ With the exception of a small number of Dutch employees of the Dutch East India Company at Nagasaki, and Chinese merchants, the Japanese government expelled most foreigners and strictly regulated relations with the West.² Japan remained primarily “isolated” from the Western world until the mid-1800s.

In 1854, Commodore Matthew Perry and his “black ships” coerced the Japanese government to sign the Kanagawa Treaty with the United States.³ A little over a decade later, some Japanese citizens began to immigrate to the US and Hawaii for work or education. By the early twentieth century, groups of Japanese immigrated to Peru to work as contract laborers. Japanese immigrants in Peru took on certain aspects of Peruvian culture, such as religion and language, but maintained a unique Japanese identity. The first groups of Japanese immigrants created a system of networks that allowed them to maintain their homeland culture while creating a new identity within Peru.

² Ibid., 10-11.
³ The Kanagawa Treaty was signed in 1854 by Commodore Matthew Perry and the Tokugawa Shogunate. It offered protection for shipwrecked sailors, trade rights in Japanese ports, and the arrival of American diplomats in Japan
The creation of Japanese newspapers, organizations, and schools fostered Japanese identity, building a separation between them and their Peruvian neighbors. However, immigration controls imposed by the Japanese government encouraged opinions in Peru that the Japanese had colonial aspirations in Latin America. Although not true, it led to ostracization and attacks on the Japanese community in Peru that intensified during World War II. The United States government worked with the Peruvian government to intern approximately 1,800 Japanese-Peruvian citizens during World War II. Many were detained in the Crystal City Relocation Facility in Texas. After the war, Japanese-Peruvians experienced more assimilation into the Peruvian culture, but still maintained a unique identity. The Japanese community in Peru remains an important part of Peruvian society today.

The purpose of this research is to analyze Japanese immigration to Peru and the cultural traditions within the Japanese community from 1899-1950. Several scholars have addressed the Japanese migration throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work addresses Japanese immigration to Peru while depicting the unique culture created through cultural pluralism. This paper will also discuss the reasons for emigrating from Japan and how conditions in Peru affected Japanese after arrival in the country. Although for many immigrants Peru was not the rich paradise promised by emigration propaganda, the Japanese created strong, successful community in Peru. Furthermore, Japanese-Peruvians created a unique culture derived from an amalgamation of Peruvian and Japanese traditions and ideas, but they also maintained a specific Japanese identity.
CHAPTER 1
THE MEIJI RESTORATION, INITIAL RELATIONS, AND INSTABILITY IN PERU

The fall of the Tokugawa bakufu and restoration of the emperor as the political and spiritual leader of Japan in 1868 affected all aspects of the country, including immigration. For centuries Japan adapted many ideas from the Asian continent, but some Japanese resisted accepting Western ideas in the early Meiji Era (1868-1912). Japanese medical experts and scholars of Western science worked in Japan, especially in Kyoto, Edo, and Nagasaki, since the late 1700s. Yet, Western ideas barely penetrated the country at large. Some groups fought the transition to Western technological and medical knowledge. Nevertheless, “Dutch studies” (rangaku) grew in influence during the mid-1800s with the end of the Tokugawa bakufu. During Japan’s period of “isolation,” the Satsuma domain had connections to the outer regions through their de facto control of the Ryukyu Islands. Paradoxically, they were one of the major groups that stood against western ideas during the Civil War of the 1860s. Yet, Satsuma warriors used Western guns and methods to help overthrow the Tokugawa regime.

The restoration of the imperial family and Emperor Meiji’s ascension to the throne brought new ideas, including Bunmei Kaika (Civilization and Enlightenment). Japan quickly realized that many Western powers surrounded them through colonization

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6 Ibid., 169; For further reading see: Yukichi Fukuzawa, *The Autobiography of Yukichi Fukuzawa* for the story of Bunmei Kaika and the man most closely associated with this idea during the Meiji Era.
efforts in Asia. In order to protect their rule, the Japanese government combined Western science and learning with Japanese culture. It took less than 40 years for Japan to become an industrialized country. In addition to protecting themselves from Western colonization and re-negotiating “unequal treaties” signed with the United States, Britain, and a few other Western countries in the 1850s and 1860s, the Japanese government began a process of militarization designed to expand their global influence. Industrialization and militarization altered relations within Japan and facilitated the creation of new domestic policies. As the population grew, work became scarce in rural areas. Others looked to expand business or educational opportunities abroad. Thus, some viewed emigration as a solution to these issues.

Many Japanese looked to emigrate as a way of bettering their lives. During the early years of the Meiji Era, taxes adversely affected farmers. In 1873, the government passed Land Tax Reforms that required farmers to pay 3 percent of the legal value of their property as a tax. The constant percentage coupled with required currency payments, rather than agricultural goods, along with multiple bad harvests, proved disastrous for farmers and farm laborers. With a weakened farming structure, the loss of lands became inevitable for many small farmers. The government removed approximately 367,000 farmers from their lands due to non-payment of taxes. Combined with inflation and short growing seasons, the loss of their lands devastated many farmers, particularly in southern Japan.

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7 McClain, 207-208.
8 The policies of industrialization and militarization were often referred to with the phrase fukoku kyōhei, or “rich nation, strong army.”
10 Moriyama, 4-5.
The practice of *dekasegi*, or “leaving home for work” in a different area of Japan to supplement one’s income, evolved as a solution to the growing problem. The opening of Japan to ideas and markets of the West provided a chance for *dekasegi* to be extended to foreign lands. An average farmer could make about 17 yen in one month overseas; whereas, the common salary in Japan in 1885 was ten yen.\(^{11}\) Many emigrants maintained the intention of making their fortunes and returning to Japan. However, as they crossed the Pacific Ocean these dreams often crashed against a pleasant discovery or nightmarish lifestyle. Pressure by groups of unhappy farmers encouraged the Japanese government to sign immigration treaties with foreign powers. Nevertheless, the agricultural situation failed to provide the necessary pressure to change Japan’s foreign policy.

The Japanese government had three main reasons for establishing contracts with other nations. First, the Japanese countryside became exceedingly overpopulated, and farmers experienced great hardships. Second, plantation owners in the Americas experienced a labor deficit and pushed for a new supply of laborers from Japan. Finally, many countries also requested trade and labor from Japan.\(^{12}\) In *Exporting Japan: Politics of Emigration to Latin America*, Toake Endoh added another dynamic to this argument by stating that Japan wanted to develop emigration and foreign policies to help spread its influence and bolster the reputation of a rising power.\(^{13}\) In other words, political, economic, and social forces influenced Japanese emigration policies during the Meiji Era.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., 2.
First Contact with Peru

The Peruvian government quickly found itself in a negative position with Japan by 1872. In 1868, the Cayaltí (or Cayalte), a Chilean-owned ship, commandeered by a Peruvian crew under an American flag, arrived in Japan after a mutiny at sea. The lone survivors on board were Chinese laborers being transported to Latin America. While at sea, the Chinese mutinied, killing the entire Peruvian crew on board, except the captain and cook. Internal events during the Meiji Restoration prevented any action from being immediately taken.\textsuperscript{14} Little evidence remains as to the details of Japanese first impressions of the Peruvian government during the Cayaltí episode.

In 1872, the Japanese government had another unpleasant encounter with Peruvian coolie traders. The Maria Luz suffered incredible damage during a storm. The captain, Ricardo Herrera, asked permission to dock at a Japanese port to assess the damage. Mutsu Munemitsu, the governor of Kanagawa prefecture, granted Captain Herrera permission to dock at Yokohama to repair the ship on June 5, 1868. While under repair, a Chinese laborer escaped and notified sailors of the British navy that Chinese laborers aboard the Maria Luz were being mistreated. The sailors informed Robert Grant Watson, the British chargé d’affaires, who visited the ship on June 28. He then consulted with Charles O. Shepard, the United States chargé d’affaires. Watson forwarded a dispatch to Japanese Foreign Minister Soejima Taneomi. The British could not intervene directly because they had no connection to the incident and no jurisdiction in the area.

Consequently, they pushed the Japanese government to get involved for humanitarian reasons.\textsuperscript{15} Pressure from US and British officials proved to be insufficient to convince the Japanese government to unanimously agree to protect the rights of the Chinese. Ōto Shinpei, the Minister of Justice, and Soejima Taneomi believed “the incident could not be neglected for humanitarian reasons.”\textsuperscript{16} Yet, they argued that Japan did not need to become involved with issues regarding non-treaty nations. After the Kanegawa prefectural governor, Munemitsu, declined to follow the head of the Council of State, Sanjō Sanetomi’s orders to create an ad hoc court, Munemitsu resigned. Soejima then appointed Ōe Taku as governor of the Kanegawa prefecture.\textsuperscript{17}

On July 4, 1872, Ōe began his investigations by interrogating the Chinese laborers of the \textit{Maria Luz}. Ōe, accompanied by George Wales Hill, a United States advocate of the prefectural governor, and Russel Robertson, the British Consul in Yokohama, questioned Mu Qing, the first Chinese laborer to escape. Ōe began his interrogation of Captain Herrera on July 6. Ōe explained that he believed the Chinese were being treated cruelly and some were kidnapped. By July 8, the Japanese Navy received orders to keep the \textit{Maria Luz} in port. The ship docked and the Chinese came on shore on June 19, 1872. They remained on shore to receive proper treatment until a ruling was made in August.\textsuperscript{18}

Once the trial of the Peruvian captain began, Charles de Long, the American ambassador, acted as the presiding official. Diplomats from Britain, France, Portugal and


\textsuperscript{16} Saveliev, 76.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 77-78.
the United States all argued the issue. Captain Herrera appealed to the Portuguese for assistance since he contracted the Chinese in a Macao under Portuguese jurisdiction and hired the attorney, F. V. Dickins. The defense argued against Japan’s case of involvement on a humanitarian basis. Dickins stated that the Japanese entangled themselves in human traffic by forcing or selling girls into prostitution. Japanese officials explained that they were in process of developing a law to prohibit this. Further complicating the issue, during the deliberations, an election in Peru resulted in Manuel Prado becoming president on August 2, 1872.  

President Prado wanted to negotiate with the Japanese over the issue. He appointed Captain Aurelio Garcia y Garcia to head a diplomatic mission to Japan and China. Initially, Garcia was to travel aboard battleships. However, Prado wanted to lessen the militaristic nature of the mission in order to establish a treaty with Japan. Garcia and his Peruvian entourage arrived in Japan in early 1873 and were received by Emperor Meiji on March 3. At various functions, Ueno Kagenori, who worked to establish relations with Hawaii, acted as the Japanese representative and negotiator. These negotiations lasted three months. Both the Japanese and the Peruvians decided to sell the Maria Luz to cover the expenses of Captain Herrera through the trial. The ship brought in $7250. In order to finally decide the legitimacy of the case, Charles De Long solicited a decision from Czar Alexander II of Russia because he had no prior involvement in the issue. Alexander II announced his ruling after the Sakhalin-Kuril Islands Exchange.

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19 Ibid., 78.
20 Ibid., 79-80.
21 Ibid., 80.
Treaty between Russia and Japan was signed in 1875.\textsuperscript{22} He ruled in favor of the Japanese government, finally ending the international struggle over the \textit{Maria Luz}.

American and Peruvian correspondence and documentation regarding the \textit{Maria Luz} demonstrated that none of the involved parties meant malice to one another. Nevertheless, each government saw a chance to gain influence and establish diplomatic relations.\textsuperscript{23} The Peruvian government did not understand the implications of their actions on Japanese policy. As the British and American representatives pushed the Japanese to become involved, the Meiji government remained uncertain as to how much they should get entangled into this foreign affair. The Japanese government was trying to restore stability and institute progress after the tumultuous internal events of the 1850s-1860s. Eventually, Japanese officials recognized this episode as an opportunity to exert their influence. In correspondence towards the end of the incident, all parties appear to seek something.\textsuperscript{24} The United States strengthened relations with Japan and Peru; Japan gained influence in the Western world; Peru saw an opportunity for a new trading relationship with Japan; and Russia hoped to secure lands from Japan. Thus, the case ended without major problems, and all parties were satisfied with the results.

The importance of this event precedes Japanese immigration to the Americas as well as Japan’s rise as an international power. This incident set trade negotiations between Peru and Japan into motion, allowing Peru to become the first Latin American nation to establish relations with Japan. However, immigration failed to show an immediate result. Like other groups, the Peruvians vigorously tried to initiate a treaty

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 80-81.
\textsuperscript{23} FRUS 1872; \textit{Iniciación de las relaciones diplomáticas entre el Perú y el Japón, 1872-1874}, Sociedad Central Japonesa del Perú, 1981. Translated by Cheyenne Haney.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
with the Japanese. The incident also proved valuable in further solidifying American and Japanese diplomatic relations. The Americans offered valuable support to the Japanese and did not lend themselves to represent the coolie trade of Peru. Prior to this, the United States acted as an ally and representative for the Peruvian government in certain circumstances. Finally, it established Japan as a rising power. This was the first time in modern history that Japan exerted power or ruling over a non-treaty nation. Coupled with the emergence of the Meiji government, this result proved vital in the emigration process.

Diplomatic relations between Japan and Peru began in 1872 after tensions surrounding the Maria Luz incident subsided. It was not until 1899, however, the two countries established a formal immigration relationship. After the United States and Canada strictly limited Japanese immigration at the beginning of the twentieth century, Japan turned to Latin America as a place to send emigrants. The Peruvians viewed the Japanese as a source of cheap labor, so an immigration policy, initially based upon contract labor, was developed between the two countries. Peruvian landholders needed laborers to replace the prohibited slave and coolie systems in their country. The government sent delegates to Japan to request treaties and rights to trade. The primary reasons for this action were to create a market for goods and a source of labor for plantations and farming industries, such as cane fields and sugar production facilities. However, the War of the Pacific with Chile (1879-1883) and a civil war in Peru (1885) prevented the establishment of an immigration treaty until a later date.25

Within the first decade of the Meiji Era, immigration to Peru might have been established had Peru not been engulfed in war from 1879-1885, in addition to dealing

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with an unstable political system throughout much of the late 1800s. The War of the Pacific with Chile began in 1879 over a territorial dispute concerning the Atacama Desert and nitrate excavation.²⁶ Chileans felt that Bolivia and Peru violated treaties as they encroached on the desert and monopolized nitrate trades. As a result, the Chilean government declared war on Bolivia and Peru in 1879.²⁷ This event triggered a decline in the already weak Peruvian economic system. Labor shortages and declining prices for agricultural and manufactured goods initially led the Peruvian government to search for new business ventures. These characteristics of the government proved to be the downfall in the regime after the war. The reigning president, Mariano Ignacio Prado, a war hero from the 1866 war with Spain, travelled to Europe in hopes of gaining loans. While Prado was out of the country, Nicholás Piérola overthrew the government.²⁸ Coupled with the completely desolate economy, this coup set the impending civil war into motion. On October 20, 1883, the Treaty of Ancón ended the War of the Pacific.²⁹ After the treaty was signed, Peru suffered from a collapsing economy for another two years. Social unrest eventually led to a civil war in 1885.

The destruction in Peru from the War of the Pacific and subsequent economic decline opened the country to civil unrest. As trade diminished and the state’s income dropped significantly, the political cohesion in Peru unraveled. The fragility of the system stemmed from these economic problems as well as the infancy of the democratic state.³⁰

²⁷ Ibid., 186.
²⁸ Ibid., 189-190.
³⁰ Peru gained its independence from Spain in 1821. Yet, the fledgling democracy faced many problems and regime changes throughout the nineteenth century.
At the onset of the war, a “liberation” group from Chile entered Peru. After the “liberation” of Lima, mobs attacked Chinese sectors of the city.\textsuperscript{31} This marked a new point in the relations between Chinese migrants and the Peruvians. The negative Chinese stereotype held by Peruvians that led to this first anti-Asian attack also shaped negative feelings towards the Japanese. At this point during the civil war, the country divided into multiple factions.

Andres Cáceres mobilized the \textit{montoneras} to overthrow the Iglesias government and forced the Chilean “liberators” out of Peru. Because Iglesias allowed the Chileans to enter Peru, many Peruvians saw him as aiding the enemy. He was forced to resign and exiled from Peru in December 1885. Meanwhile, Cáceres formed the Constitutional Party and became the provisional president. He was easily elected to the presidency shortly after this victory. During the war, the \textit{Civilistas}, who initially supported Cáceres, transitioned to support Aurelo Denegri in the election; and Piérola and the Democratic Party refused to vote.\textsuperscript{32} Because of this division, Cáceres became the primary leader and president of Peru for over a decade. As president, he instituted the “Second Militarism” in hopes of quelling social unrest and establishing a stable government. He strengthened military and police forces, as well as governmental control, while limiting social freedoms in an attempt to construct political stability.\textsuperscript{33} Although his plan worked, many hated his ruling style. Throughout the twentieth century, Peru saw multiple periods of similar social unrest and political change. Nevertheless, the economy of Peru expanded

\textsuperscript{31} Klarén, 191-192.
\textsuperscript{32} The \textit{Civilistas} were Peru’s “first civilian-based political party to challenge the long reign of military rule in the country.” Manuel Pardo was the founder of the \textit{Civilista} Party. Klarén, 172.
\textsuperscript{33} Klarén, 192-194.
greatly until the Great Depression. Meanwhile, Peru quickly became an ideal destination for many Japanese immigrants seeking a better economic future.

The first large scale Japanese immigration into Peru occurred in 1899. Earlier, a group of 17 Japanese laborers were contracted by the Korekiyo Takahashi’s Japan-Peru Mining Company to work in the Peruvian silver mines in 1890. The project suddenly collapsed. At that time, private emigration companies, rather than the state government, controlled a majority of migration decisions.34 Emigration companies used propaganda to entice emigrants to leave Japan in search of a better life.35 Those who relied on the picturesque locations portrayed by the companies in recruiting brochures often found a different reality after leaving Japan and arriving in Peru. Because many of these immigrants did not have enough money to return to Japan, they did their best to create a better life for themselves in spite of the hardships of being strangers in Peru.

CHAPTER 2

IMMIGRATION, 1899-1940

In the 1898, Tekichi Tanaka, an official with the Morioka Company, arrived in Brazil to negotiate immigration contracts. Soon after Tanaka arrived in Brazil, Augusto B. Leguía, a wealthy sugar plantation owner and future president of Peru, requested that Tanaka come to Peru immediately. They negotiated a contract that provided for the emigration of Japanese men, ages 20-45, who wanted to participate in agricultural labor. Applicants signed a four-year contract and agreed to work ten-hour days in sugar cane fields, or twelve-hour days in the sugar mills. As compensation, the men received transportation across the Pacific in addition to a monthly salary. These agricultural labor contracts played a vital role in establishing a Japanese community in Peru. Unlike other immigrant groups in the Americas who remained deeply connected with Japan for only a short time, Japanese-Peruvians maintained their relations and distinct ties to Japan for decades and even generations. These groups often lobbied the Japanese government for assistance if mistreatment occurred and quickly sent money and other goods to family members back in Japan.

Many of the initial immigrants came as dekasegi, or laborers who planned to acquire a fortune and return to Japan. Yet, a majority ended up staying in Peru or migrating to the United States or throughout Latin America. Those who stayed wanted to provide their children with a traditional Japanese education and cultural knowledge.

36 Irie, 440-443; Masterson, 35.
Some Japanese-Peruvians, at least those who could afford it, sent their children to Japan for their secondary and college education. Later, they established Japanese schools in Peru to provide more children the opportunities of a customary secondary education. These moves unintentionally separated the Japanese from the Peruvian community. The Japanese maintained separate schools and community groups, triggering distrust from the Peruvians. Even today, the Japanese-Peruvian community continues to foster its Japanese ancestry in combination with their Peruvian heritage. However, the first immigrants were slow to embrace the lifestyle and culture in Peru, primarily because they planned to return to Japan.

On February 28, 1899, the first large group of immigrants sailed from Yokohama on the *Sakura Maru* of the Nippon Yussen shipping company. The vessel docked in Callao, Peru, on April 3, 1899. The 790 Japanese on board predominantly came from two prefectures in southern Japan, Hiroshima and Yamaguchi, and one in the central region, Niigata. As many as 143 of this original group died from disease during their initial four-year contract period. In addition, Peruvian plantation owners failed to uphold contracts in certain instances.\textsuperscript{37} This became a crucial point for Japanese emigration companies as well as for diplomatic relations between Japan and Peru. Peruvian planters never previously experienced working with a group that demanded their labor contracts be upheld. When the Japanese government and emigration companies intervened, an anti-Japanese sentiment began to grow in Peru.

The plantation Casa Blanca, associated with Augusto Leguía, employed the largest number of immigrants from the first group.\textsuperscript{38} This occurred in part because Leguía

\textsuperscript{37} Masterson, 35-36.
\textsuperscript{38} Irie, 444; Masterson, 36.
assisted in the negotiations of the treaty. In less than three months, Japanese laborers filed complaints with the Morioka Company and with the Japanese government about working conditions on Leguía’s plantation. Things became so bad that on June 21, 1899, Tanaka sent a telegram to Yoshibumi Murota, Japan’s ambassador to Mexico, requesting information on how to handle the situation.\textsuperscript{39} Situations like this infuriated Peruvian locals. When Japanese laborers deserted the plantations and returned to Callao, Peruvians began to cause problems by harassing the Japanese who fled to the cities. This incident led the Japanese to seek the involvement of the United States. Tanaka convinced the workers to return to the plantation. Yet, after a fourth incident on February 9, 1900, Tanaka sent a second message to Murota. Again, Tanaka convinced many to return to the plantations.\textsuperscript{40} Peruvians disliked the involvement of the Japanese government in their internal affairs. This distrust increased when Tanaka was replaced by Ryoji Noda, chancellor of the Japan diplomatic legation in Mexico. Ryoji recommended that all unhappy laborers be allowed to return to Japan.\textsuperscript{41} The Japanese government disregarded this suggestion, but pressured the Peruvian government to uphold the terms of the immigration contracts. The Peruvian government took little action to prevent interference from the Japanese. Like Japan, Peru needed a market for its goods and was trying to hold down labor costs.

The Beginnings of a Japanese-Peruvian Community

In 1900, the Morioka Company secured wages for Japanese laborers at 20 yen per month. The second group of 1,070 Japanese immigrants arrived in 1903. This group

\textsuperscript{39} Irie, 445.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 450-451.
\textsuperscript{41} Masterson, 37-38.
contained 108 women and 184 free laborers, making it different from the previous immigrant groups.\footnote{Ibid., 38.} The women generally came as called by male family members in Peru or as picture brides (\textit{shashin kekkon} 写真結婚). Occasionally, some women travelled as “comfort women” and prostitutes.\footnote{The comfort women referenced here are not to be confused with the “comfort women” during the occupation of Japan or with the “comfort women: forced in to prostitution during WWII and known in Japanese as \textit{ianfu}. All discussion of comfort women in this paper refer to female travellers who aided the men’s needs of cooking, cleaning and general duties thought to be female work.} By 1909, only 230 Japanese women had immigrated to Peru.\footnote{Masterson, 40.} Many of the men in these first groups remained unmarried unless they called a picture bride, or married a younger Nisei women. This group usually chose not to intermarry with Peruvians because of distinct cultural differences. Later, some Nisei and Sansei did intermarry with Peruvians, mostly because language and other cultural barriers were no longer an issue. Nevertheless, a distinct culture arose in the Japanese communities within Peru.

The expansion of the Japanese-Peruvian community, both in terms of population and social mobility, merited the creation of various occupational and prefectural associations. The Japanese Barbers’ Association of Lima in 1907 marked the first occupational or community organization for the Japanese-Peruvians.\footnote{Ibid., 39.} In less than a decade, Japanese immigrants established successful businesses and created organizations to better support their community.

The Nipponjin Kyokai (Japanese Association) formed in 1912, but split shortly after its creation. Wealthy Japanese ruled the association and did little to assist labor
immigrants. In 1917, the Japanese Association of Peru and the Japanese Society merged to create the Central Association of [Lima] Peru. The purposes of these organizations were the establishment of schools, control of immigration and potential Japanese immigrants called by family members in Peru, management of business development, settlement of disputes, and provision of loans for immigrants. Additionally, these groups provided social interaction and a sense of community for Japanese immigrants. By the 1920s, smaller Japanese immigrant associations were common throughout Peru.

Local leaders of these organizations worked with Japanese officials and, occasionally, with Peruvian authorities to manage immigrant communities. The Japanese Athletic Association of Peru provided immigrants with opportunities to participate in competitive sports, including baseball, and had ties to local organizations for team creation. Seiichi Higashide, a Japanese-Peruvian who later wrote his autobiography, explained that officers of the association were elected by the local Japanese community. Japanese-Peruvians in Icatha elected him to the presidency of their organization, which eventually led to the Peruvian government blacklisting him as a suspect enemy at the beginning of World War II. Prior to the war, he was able to use his position to increase solidarity and Japanese cultural awareness among the Japanese-Peruvian community.

Many studies indicate the success of these organizations, but also highlight the negative aspects as well. For example, Peruvians who pushed for internment of Japanese-

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47 Mischa Titiev, "The Japanese Colony in Peru," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1951), 230; Masterson, 66; The associations investigated immigrants being called from Japan and had the authority to reject any request.

48 Tbid., 237.

Peruvians during World War II and promoted anti-Japanese policies cited the actions of Japanese community groups as suspicious, particularly because they appeared to encourage a lack of assimilation. Nonetheless, these Japanese civic associations proved vital in the development of Japanese-Peruvian identity and community.

The publication of Japanese newspapers resulted from the creation of various organizations. The Jirutsu hit the press in 1911 but was a limited run similar to its 1909 predecessor, Nipponjin. These newsletters were published minimally and reached an exclusive audience. In 1913, the Andes Jiho emerged as the first major newspaper. The owners initially produced these periodicals only in Japanese language, but by 1940, some were being produced in Spanish to accommodate the growing Nikkei population and lessen suspicions of the loyalty of Japanese-Peruvians. The purpose of the immigrant newspapers was to connect the community with various ideas but also act as a forum to share knowledge regarding Japan and Japanese culture. The onset of World War II brought an end to the newspapers for over a decade. In spite of this rocky history, Japanese-Peruvians still publish their community newspapers today. Japanese associations and newspapers allowed many immigrants to gain an even greater sense of community but also maintain a connection to their homeland.

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51 Hirabayashi et. al., 80; Titiev 235
52 Masterson, 68; Sakuda, Part I.
The Immigrant Experience

Less than a decade after initial immigration, 80 percent of the original immigrants remained in Peru. Among the Japanese laborers of the first groups, 481 died, 414 returned to Japan, and 242 transmigrated throughout Latin America or to the United States. Soon, many workers migrated from the rural areas to urban landscapes and found jobs outside of the agricultural labor sector. As previously discussed, they created their own newspapers and community associations. Economically, many of these Japanese fared well in opening cafes, barbershops, and general stores.

Prior to emigration from Japan, candidates were thoroughly screened on many categories. Status of health and the ability to represent Japan were two main areas. At emigration stations, physical examinations eliminated many of those too unhealthy for travel. Reports from Japan’s port cities exemplified the tedious procedures taken to ensure good health. Emigrants were deloused prior to the ship disembarking, and luggage received a similar treatment for any potential infestation. If an emigrant was suspected of contamination, he or she could be examined at the next port. Nevertheless, these extensive health measures did not prevent the spread of disease in Japanese immigrant communities in Peru.

Harsh working conditions, coupled with a tropical climate, created a breeding ground for disease. The effects were more disastrous on the Issei than later generations,

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54 Masterson, 41.
55 Endoh, 22.
who developed immunity. Malaria, dysentery, and other sicknesses struck several immigrants. Many survived, but others, tired from strenuous labor, collapsed of their ailments. Available medical care remained inadequate throughout the early decades of immigration. As Japanese began to gain higher social status in Peru, they moved to better living quarters. Additionally, Japanese communities in Peru gained more access to local medical care. The experience with disease was a factor that shaped the different experiences of the immigrant community.

Beginning in the 1960s, many Japanese-Peruvians have offered insight into their lives in Peru. Some spoke with various organizations, others participated in collective oral history publications, such as A Fence Away From Freedom. Others discussed their experiences with descendants; and some, like Seiichi Higashide, wrote autobiographical manuscripts and articles. No matter the method of transmission, it is important to keep this history alive. Much remains to be discovered within the Japanese-Peruvian community. Documents can provide a strong historical record. Yet, first-hand accounts offer emotions, personal experiences, and exceptions to the “normal” state of events. Each person in the Japanese-Peruvian community experienced similar circumstances and opportunities. Nevertheless, prefectural associations, locations in Peru, socioeconomic status, and jobs all shaped different aspects of their experience and the community as a whole.

Seiichi Higashide was born to a farming family on the island of Hokkaido, Japan. Since he was not the eldest child who would inherit the family’s farm, he hoped to get an education to secure his future. His endeavors led him to leave his family to look

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57 Higashide, 59-60
58 Ibid., 7.
for work. Higashide went to night school to study engineering.\textsuperscript{59} After reading many books, he dreamed of immigrating to America. However, restrictions in the early twentieth century prevented him from travelling to the United States. In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese ambassador to the United States completed the Gentleman’s Agreement that limited Japanese emigration to the United States in hopes of lessening the tensions surrounding the Japanese-American community. This did not resolve the problems. In 1924, an immigration bill, including the Oriental Exclusion Act, was passed by the United States Congress and signed by President Calvin Coolidge. These legislative measures by the United States government severely limited Asian immigration to the country. Because of these restrictions, Higashide chose Peru because of the large Japanese immigrant population. Higashide began studying Spanish and getting his emigration documentation in order. He boarded the \textit{Heiyo Maru} on April 7, 1930, and arrived in Peru on May 13, 1930.\textsuperscript{60}

As soon as Higashide arrived in Peru, his dreams began to unravel. For many immigrants, propaganda depicting Peru as a place of wealth and a beautiful location proved to be largely fictitious. Without much money, Higashide quickly searched for work, but he soon realized that his engineering training was worthless because people in Peru built their own homes and businesses, rarely relying on trained engineers.\textsuperscript{61} After working various odd jobs as a laborer and being a school teacher, Higashide acquired his own business.\textsuperscript{62} Many poor immigrants in the initial decades found few job opportunities

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 27-29.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 36-44.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 47-49.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 74.
besides agricultural labor. Since Higashide arrived in Peru in the 1930s, the thriving Japanese community offered several jobs outside agricultural occupations.

Through Higashide’s depiction of his early years in Peru, one can better understand the Japanese community. By the time of his arrival, Japanese-Peruvians had grown to a sizable population of over 20,000 and established many immigrant networks throughout Peru. Higashide’s memoirs allow readers to understand how this community functioned and how it accepted new immigrants. Initially, he was shocked by some Japanese-Peruvian ways. He expected formality in conversation with those he did not know. Yet, this was one Japanese characteristic that had been lost. He realized that “[w]ithin the Japanese community in Peru everyone was treated as if her were a family member and even derogatory names that normally would be unacceptable in Japan were taken as expressions of closeness.” Furthermore, his struggles to achieve success exemplified the camaraderie of the Japanese-Peruvians as well as a yearning for achievement in the journey.

Seiichi Higashide’s eldest daughter, Elsa Higashide, who aided in the translation of his autobiography, provided her own oral history for the project, *A Fence Away From Freedom*. Most of her recollections deal with internment during World War II and her family’s life in the United States after the war. However, she offered some details about her personal life in Peru and her family. In describing home life, Elsa Higashide explained they mostly spoke Spanish at home since her mother was a *Nisei* and it was her first language. Her parents never gave her any worries, even during the internment years, because they wanted the children to not be bitter in spite of all the adversity they

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63 Ibid., 50.
This sentiment is often apparent in the recollections of Japanese-Americans as well. Her father shared some of the same stories in his work. Yet, in discussing his own life, he attempted to diminish any grandeur of his immigrant experience that was present in her stories. Many of the things discussed by Elsa further depicted the character of her father, as well as the experiences and culture she gained as a *Nikkei* in Peru.

Some immigrants provided their histories to the Asociación Peruano Japonesa (APJ—Japanese Peruvian Association). Kamako Gabe shared her story, “50 Years in the Life of a Woman,” with a Japanese magazine in 1967. Her granddaughter gave the APJ permission to reproduce the article on their website. Kamako Gabe immigrated to Peru in 1914 with her husband, with whom their parents had arranged her marriage in 1913. Her father-in-law encouraged them to pursue new dreams outside of Japan. Thus, Gabe’s husband contacted the Morioka Company regarding immigration to Peru. She later explained the propaganda enticing young immigrants to Peru. The Morioka Company advertised Peru as having a beach area that saw no rain, a breeze that kept away intense heat, ideal locales, and friendly Peruvian locals. Furthermore, it publicized the ability to acquire wealth and the varied opportunities in the country. Like many immigrants, these dreams shattered as soon as the ship docked in Callao.

The land proved to offer beauty, but further examination revealed that it was not paradise. The immigrants Gabe encountered were dressed poorly. She and her husband lived in conditions that were nothing like those publicized by the Morioka Company and, to them, were barely fit for pigs. Gabe and her husband were forced to do hard

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65 Ibid., 106.
agricultural labor in harsh working conditions. She worked until her hands were swollen and blistered. Yet, she and her husband did not give up on their dreams. Even with poor conditions and her husband’s bouts with alcoholism, they strove for success in this new world.67

The most interesting depiction Gabe offered regarded medical care. From her discussion of malaria treatments of quinine to childbirth assisted by one midwife, one can understand the struggles to survive this new world.68 While in Japan, many dreamed of a far-away land with beauty and riches. After viewing the supposed golden paradise, many dreams were shattered. The Japanese-Peruvians carefully picked up the pieces of their lives to create their own paradise within this new world. This proved not to be one of gold or lack of hardships. Instead, the Japanese-Peruvians found victory in the creation of a community and a rise above poverty.

Like other immigrants, Gabe and her husband soon came to own their own business. She explained how the tanomoshi (Japanese loan associations) assisted them with the purchase of their home and business. She understood that Japanese associations, separate education, and lack of assimilation created tensions with the Peruvians. Nevertheless, they only wanted good lives and a thorough education for their children.69 During the World War II, all of these groups were prohibited, even their sports associations; financial assets were frozen; and Japanese teachers were sent back to Japan. In spite of all the tension, Gabe depicted no bitterness towards the Peruvians. She even began her article stating that she had a peaceful life in Peru.70

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
Most immigrants list similar reasons for leaving Japan. Hiyagon Kimi immigrated to Peru from Okinawa in 1933 after being called to Peru by her husband. They were poor farmers and, like many in Okinawa, experienced the brunt of the Depression. Goto Tsuryo left Fukushima to go to Peru in 1933 after being called by his uncles. Kiuchi Alberto arrived in Peru after leaving Yamanashi Prefecture in 1935. Azato Ushi arrived in Peru from Okinawa after being called by her fiancé in 1940. These examples, along with that of Higashide, depicted the Issei search for a better life. Yet, these interviews share another common thread. Unlike Gabe who arrived before the Japanese-Peruvian community was fully developed, these immigrants entered into the community in the 1930s during Japan’s military aggression in Asia. Each of these 1930’s immigrants explained a greater connection with Peru than Japan. Many who travelled to Japan after the war further explained that these visits greatly strengthened their sense of belonging in Peru. The destruction and devastation in Japan further separated the immigrants from their homeland. It remains important for researchers to further investigate why the traditional, nationalistic education in Japan affected these immigrants less than those who immigrated to Peru at an earlier time.

One reason may be that these later immigrants experienced greater poverty and disconnect in Japan in the late 1920s and early 1930s prior to their move to Peru. Most left poor, rural farm communities, and some had little formal education. Those who

immigrated earlier might not have experienced the same economic hardships or political effects of Japanese militarism and imperialism. The early immigrants’ views of Japan were often diluted through their strong, but malleable connection to Japan. Many saw the government as a protectorate in a patriarchal sense. However, as it became apparent during the 1930s and war years, the Japanese government was more interested in the spread of influence, expansion of trade relations, and prevention of embarrassment rather than the true happiness of immigrants. The lack of support remained masked behind unsubstantiated words and actions. Many who remained in Japan saw the immigrant as having better opportunities but also as the “imin wa kimin” or “kimin sei saku”—the abandoned people.  

The common theme in many of these immigrant stories, especially from the Issei, is their cultural connection to both Japan and Peru, and the establishment of their lives in Peru. Many could not choose which country was their cultural homeland. The comfort in Peru came from the fact that they resided there longer than in Japan. Many immigrants and their children had more familial and social connections in Peru than in Japan. Even those who intended to return to Japan in the pre-World War II era gave up that dream after 1941. Those who returned to Japan to visit after the war realized the horrors associated with war and the loss of their relatives and links in Japan. However, through community groups, tanomoshi, general business, and social gatherings, many aspects of an immigrant’s life remained attached to their Japanese identity. Although many learned Spanish and adopted particular Peruvian customs, the intense interconnectivity allowed the immigrants to create an amalgamation of the two cultures while retaining a specific Japanese identity.

75 Hirabayashi et. al., 10; Endoh, 155.
Major events, including Japanese military aggression in Asia and riots in Lima, altered the Japanese-Peruvian community by 1940. The riots of May 1940 and increased anti-Japanese sentiment forced the Japanese to examine their lifestyle choices. By this time, they attempted to be less visible as ethnic Japanese and assimilate into Peruvian life and culture, at least in the public sphere. It was too late. Anti-Japanese legislation had increased throughout the 1930s and proved to be even worse during World War II. The war brought new hardships and enveloped the Japanese-Peruvian community in fear.

Divisions in the Japanese Community

The biggest divisions in the Japanese community existed between the Ryukyuans, or people from Okinawa, and mainland Japanese. The Okinawans constituted one-third of all Japanese in Peru by 1941. Even in Japan, Okinawans did not receive complete acceptance. This tradition continued well into the establishment of the Japanese community in Peru. The division between Ryukyuans, specifically Okinawans, and mainland Japanese (Naichi-jin) stemmed from the annexation of the Ryukyu Islands into the Japanese empire. Historically, the Ryukyu Islands was nominally an independent kingdom with connections to China and Japan. Satsuma domain established de facto control over the islands for the Tokugawa shogunate in 1609. This chain of islands allowed the Satsuma clan to have certain access to goods from outside of Japan when the

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78 Okinawa is the largest of the Ryukyu Islands and according to the modern prefectural system the area of the islands is known as Okinawa prefecture.
Tokugawa government enacted laws in the 1630s to strongly regulate its borders. In spite of this reliance on and use of the Ryukyu Islands, the Japanese people and government never accepted Ryukyuans as “Japanese.” After the 1872 annexation of the islands, the Meiji government expected Ryukyu islanders to adopt traditional Japanese dress, language, names, and customs. Paradoxically, many Japanese believed that Ryukyuans were not able to assimilate into Japanese culture and were not worthy enough for certain Japanese traditions.\(^8^0\) Okinawa Prefecture remained the poorest in Japan (as it still is today). Thus, emigration from Okinawa opened as a way to alleviate the problems of economic hardships.\(^8^1\)

The division between mainland Japanese and Ryukyuans extended across the Pacific Ocean. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Peru.\(^8^2\) Interviews and studies reflect the ability of prefectural networks to extend into immigrant communities. Many in Peru tried to maintain ties with their homes in Japan. Thus, networks within the Japanese community in Peru allowed newcomers to settle easier and access a support group. Divisions situated on their regional origins and socioeconomic status.\(^8^3\) Immigrants from the Ryukyus were no different in this regard.

The first group of 36 Ryukyuans aboard the Itsukushima Maru entered the port at Callao in November 1906.\(^8^4\) As time progressed, more immigrants came to Peru from Okinawa prefecture. Mainland Japanese created various associations, and the Ryukyuans followed suit. These competing organizations often strove for the same goals and benefits,
but failed to establish social connections with each other. Intermarriage and business partnerships between Ryukyuans and Naichi-jin were rare.\textsuperscript{85} Like the Japanese Society (\textit{Nippon-jin Kyokai}) initiated in 1909 and founded in 1912, the Okinawans created their own organization, the Okinawa Young Men’s Association (\textit{Okinawa Sei Nen Kai}), in 1910.\textsuperscript{86} Both groups experienced changes from their inception until 1942. The Japanese Society became more inclusive in order to join the “gentlemen” and immigrants. After this merger in 1917, the association was renamed the Central Japanese Association of Peru (\textit{Peru Chūō Nihonjin-kai}). Simultaneously, the Okinawan Young Men’s Association joined with the Okinawa Overseas Association in Naha, Okinawa, to become the Okinawa Prefectural Association (\textit{Okinawa ken jin kai}) in 1924 after a visit from Kenwa Kanna, a retired military official.\textsuperscript{87} Overall, the trend of grouping based on home prefectures and social status continued until World War II.\textsuperscript{88} Each organization worked closely with Japanese diplomats and officials to achieve success in the immigrant communities in Peru. Nevertheless, their failure to work together created more problems than anticipated.

Competition and division within the Japanese community might display traits that would be construed as negative within Peru’s urban centers. Japanese in predominantly agricultural areas, like the \textit{montaña}, experienced less division because of lower populations of Japanese from either group. By failing to assimilate into Peruvian society and maintaining divisions within the immigrant community, the Japanese further inspired beliefs they were unable to assimilate. Although not entirely true, one can understand

\begin{footnotes}
\item[Ibid., 37.]
\item[Ibid., 35, 37.]
\item[Tigner, 35-37.]
\item[Masterson, 77.]
\end{footnotes}
why Peruvians felt threatened by these immigrant groups. Coupled with the relative successes of the immigrants and their children, these divisions proved to be the primary failing for the pre-World War II Japanese-Peruvian community.

Nevertheless, some immigrants later told stories of communities where this racial division did not occur. In a short document produced decades later, Shigueru Julio Tsuha recalled his childhood in Peru. His grandparents emigrated in the early 1900s from Okinawa.89 Like many children born around the time of World War II, his family gave him a Spanish name that appeared on his birth certificate and a Japanese name to be used at home.90 This demonstrated the pattern that emerged with the oppression and deportation of Japanese during the war. Those who wished to maintain their Japanese identity also assumed a Peruvian personality. For over a decade after the war, Japanese community life remained discreet in order to portray the ability to assimilate. Shigeru explained that issues of being Asian rather than specifically Okinawan occurred. His small hometown of Lince, Peru, had a very small Japanese population. More sizable communities ostensibly experienced more division within the Japanese community between Okinawans and mainland Japanese. One of his only comments regarding racism referred to a jingle directed at Japanese by some Peruvians: “Chino, Japones, te apestan los pies,” or “Chinese, Japanese, your feet stink.”91 As a child he seemed unaffected by the racial tensions existing among the adults, especially in much larger cities. To be sure, other Okinawans experienced a much deeper social division and racial intolerance than did Shigueru.

89 A typo exists in the author’s original production. He stated that his family entered Peru in the early 19th century. He is referring to the early 1900s/20th century.
91 Ibid.
Another separation existed between late arriving Issei and the Nisei. Since second generation immigrants grew up speaking mostly Spanish, members of the Issei who were not part of the initial groups, experienced a slight language and cultural barrier. In Seiichi Higashide’s memoir, *Adios to Tears*, he detailed his experience in Peru and with culture. In his search for a Japanese bride, Higashide troubled himself to find someone of a like-mind. Many of the girls spoke little Japanese and disregarded certain aspects of the Confucian-based culture. Eventually he met a Nisei girl whose parents provided her a traditional Japanese education. This was not the only obstacle he faced in his time. Higashide graduated with an engineering certificate in Japan. However, he was relegated to teach elementary school, performing manual labor, and running a general store once in Peru rather than having an occupation in engineering.

Other immigrants, including Kiuchi Alberto and Azato Ushi, provided interviews to the Asociación Peruano Japonesa. This is an invaluable resource for understanding that main hub of the Japanese community in Peru were neighborhood and business associations. It also depicts the co-mingling of Japanese and Peruvian cultures and identities.

**Increasing Tensions**

With the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, anti-Japanese sentiment reached a peak in Peru. The United States was an ally of Peru and offered significant financial support to Peru during times of economic crisis. Although Japan offered an open market for goods from Peru, tensions surrounding World War II caused the Peruvian government to be more selective of their allies and trading partners. Peruvians

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92 Higashide, 75-81.
alleged that Japan was placing military men within Peru to attempt a take over the country. Although not the case, this belief combined with the Japanese sense of community and a separate cultural identity fueled even greater accusations. The Japanese began to publish some of their newspapers in Spanish and shift the educational curriculum to dispel some of the accusations. Previously, education focused on preparing children to go to Japan for a secondary education. After the attack on Pearl Harbor and the start of the Pacific War, none of these efforts made a difference. At the request of the United States government, the Peruvian government rounded up 1,771 Japanese-Peruvians and sent them to internment camps within the United States. Some went as families. While the Japanese community in Peru continued after the war, many Japanese-Peruvians who were interned never returned to Peru.

Peruvian hostilities and anti-Japanese sentiments markedly increased after World War I. Many historians addressed the variety of issues lending to this move. The most prominent reasons for this increase in hatred were two-fold: The Japanese were the largest non-European immigrant class, and they achieved great success. The structure of Peruvian society revolved around wealth and race. However, race existed as a malleable term. Throughout the colonial era and the initial years of the republic, “whiteness” could be purchased through social mobility and a monetary contribution to the government. However, this racial mobility was difficult, especially in the twentieth century and for Asian immigrants.

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93 Masterson, 65.  
94 Endoh, 26; Higashide, 150-155.  
95 Takenaka, 90.  
96 Klarén, 94.
During the twentieth century, a small class of white Europeans dominated all aspects of Peruvian politics and economics. The *mestizos* (mixed races), Africans, and *indios* (natives) fell to the bottom of the social hierarchy. Japanese immigrants fell somewhere in the middle, which further complicated matters.\(^{97}\) This new middle-class proved remarkably successful after the first decade of immigration. Even before success came to the Japanese, some Peruvians showed hostility from the onset of immigration.

Peruvian plantation owners had previously grown accustomed to slave labor. Thus, according to Toraji Irie, “they did not know how to deal with workers in a civilized way.”\(^{98}\) As previously discussed, many Japanese laborers suffered harsh working conditions, received less pay than initially offered in the contract, and faced the reality of their inability to return to Japan. Some aspired to leave plantation life with hopes of achieving success and returning to their homeland. These Japanese laborers either finished their contract or attempted to escape from their plantation contracts. Within the first two years of immigration, laborers on the Casa Blanca and other plantations went to Callao in protest of their mistreatment.\(^{99}\) After involving the Japanese government, they further ignited tensions between themselves and Peruvians. As suggested in interviews and other resources, many Peruvians transferred the negative stereotype of the Chinese coolie onto the Japanese. This could be seen in derogatory terms used against the Japanese. By 1903, anti-Japanese sentiments heated to the point that a bill entitled “Proposal of Elimination of Japanese Immigrants” was introduced in the Peruvian government. It was narrowly defeated.\(^{100}\)

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\(^{97}\) Ibid., 231.
\(^{98}\) Irie, 443.
\(^{99}\) Ibid., 448.
\(^{100}\) Endoh, 22.
The greatest resistance to the Japanese community appeared in the after World War I era. Japanese community groups and their failure to assimilate after two decades within Peru combined with their apparent success exacerbated problems. Leguía’s re-entry to the presidency stifled, or at the least muted, the anti-Japanese sentiment throughout most of the 1920s. The Great Depression beginning in 1929 led to more issues within Peru. With the declining world markets, Peruvian goods no longer held great value, and many experienced a loss of their finances causing a new group of impoverished citizens. The failing economic system, new political regime, and continued growth of the Japanese community created a stronger anti-Japanese sentiment entering into 1930. Combined with Japanese militarism in Asia, relations between the Japanese community and Peruvians continued to decline until around 1950. The legacy of laws enacted during the 1930s supported by the political ideals of Manuel Prado’s government characterized the feelings of the majority of Peruvians. But why was the hatred of the Japanese community so great?

Scholars provide a variety of reasons to explain Peruvian hostilities toward the Japanese immigrants, ranging from economic success and lack of assimilation to views of racial superiority. According to Tigner, Japanese immigrant concentration along the coast of Peru created a tense setting. These fears of a collective Japanese colony caused many problems because Peruvians feared the Japanese government’s imperialist tendencies.101 By acquiring land in fertile valleys for farming, specifically for cotton, expanding control over the cotton industry and many types of farming, and creating a slight monopoly on small businesses in the major urban centers, Japanese immigrants further raised

101 Tigner, 41-42.
suspicions among their Peruvian neighbors.\textsuperscript{102} Moreover, Japanese organizations made some Peruvians believe that Japanese immigrants were loyal only to Japan. Militarist actions by the Japanese army in Asia, or education did not spawn fears of militarism. Instead, the group’s reliance on Japan and obedience to Japanese leaders and national representatives led to many accusations of a disloyal “fifth column” in Peru.\textsuperscript{103} No evidence exists to show that any militarism within the Japanese community in Peru. There are no records of spies. Furthermore, those sent to the United States were found to not be a threat, leading to the demise of the Japanese-Peruvian internment system during World War II.\textsuperscript{104}

Steps taken to protect the Japanese community during immigration paradoxically became sources of friction later. Initial work by Japanese on plantations failed to create a formal Japanese organization, so they relied on informal prefectural networks and on the Japanese government to provide assistance and guidance. By 1910, many Japanese owned small businesses and created associations like the Barber’s Association (1907) and various other associations within the decade.\textsuperscript{105} The development of small businesses provided immigrants with the ability to return to Japan but also created ethnic solidarity. To open these businesses, they relied on \textit{tanomoshi} for loans because they distrusted the Peruvian banks.\textsuperscript{106} Peruvians began to perceive a threat to their resources and economy as well as their racial and national integration.\textsuperscript{107} Still, Japanese maintained a sense of community that isolated them from their Peruvian peers. Frequent social interaction was

\textsuperscript{102} Titiev, 229.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 240; Higashide, 103.
\textsuperscript{105} Masterson, 39.
\textsuperscript{106} Takenaka, 85.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 88-89.
necessary, but neither group completely understood the other. While Japanese made attempts to learn Spanish, primarily for business purposes, many of the Issei remained distant from their Peruvian neighbors because they planned to return to Japan and saw no reason for assimilation or attachment.

Several scholars cite the Japanese immigrant community’s lack of assimilation as being viewed as a potential threat by Peruvians. Others have addressed the divisions within the Japanese community. Yet, the links between divisions within the Japanese community and their lack of assimilation has not been discussed adequately by scholars. One could infer that Peruvians who noticed the divisions between Okinawans and Naichi-jin, particularly in the cities of Lima and Callao, could have used this as an example of their lack of cohesion with other Japanese groups as well. Although the Japanese annexed the Ryukyu Islands in the late nineteenth century, the Okinawans had not received full acceptance as “Japanese” by the 1940s. Many of the Peruvian’s arguments against the Japanese were flawed, but one can understand the fear and jealousy displayed by many Peruvians. The scenario was often repeated in immigrant communities throughout history, and continues today.

From the establishment of the 1936 immigration acts until 1940, tensions between Peruvians and the Japanese community greatly increased. A government decree on April 20, 1937, stated that Nisei born after June 26, 1936, were not allowed to gain Peruvian citizenship. This infuriated the Japanese community and opened the door for more anti-Japanese legislation. A dominant political group, led by Manuel Prado in the 1940s, brought more discrimination. Peruvian locals distrusted the Japanese, especially those
who were successful. Meanwhile, Japanese families continued to support their local organizations and send their children to traditional schools.

The spring and early summer of 1940 proved to be a tumultuous time for the Japanese community and for Peru as a whole. Fears that Japan wanted to take over the country fueled anti-Japanese demonstrations in Lima and Callao in May 1940. In these riots, Peruvians attacked and looted Japanese businesses and homes. This frightened the Japanese, leading several hundred families to seek shelter within the Nikko School in Lima.\(^{108}\) The Japanese hoped to resume a normal lifestyle as the riots came to an end. However, on May 24, 1940, disaster struck: a massive earthquake hit Peru. Although disastrous, it alleviated some of the tensions because of religious beliefs in both groups.\(^{109}\) This brief period of mutual peace did not last long. Negative attitudes and feelings of hatred re-emerged and grew as an underlying sentiment. In November 1940, the Peruvian government insulted the Japanese community by decreeing that any child who received an education in his or her parents’ home country would not be granted citizenship.\(^{110}\) Even without designating this as an act against the Japanese, one can understand the effects this had on the Japanese community. After this, some refused to send their children to Peruvian schools while others hoped to foster mutual respect and followed government rules.

Japan’s aggression in the Pacific remained apparent to all neutral states in the West. The United States and Latin American countries were not immune. The FBI began investigating the Japanese in both the United States and in Peru in the late 1930s and

\(^{108}\) Hirabayashi et. al., 81.
\(^{109}\) Ibid., 82.
\(^{110}\) Masterson, 152-156
early 1940. No suspicious activity was reported. Additionally, each group believed a Japanese attack on Allied areas (US, British, Netherlands) in the Pacific was eminent. Yet, neither was prepared for what happened in December 1941. At the 1942 Conference of Foreign Ministers of the American Republics in Rio de Janerio, Brazil, the United States called for Latin American allies to support the Allied powers. At this meeting the parties resolved:

First. The American Republics declare that they regard these acts of aggression against one of the American Republics as acts of aggression against all of them and as an immediate threat to the liberty and independence of the Western hemisphere. Second. The American Republics reaffirm their complete unity and their determination to cooperate closely for their mutual protection until the existing menace has been totally destroyed. Third. They have determined that those non-American states at war with nations in the Western hemisphere have forfeited all right to treatment as nations with which friendly relations can be continued. Fourth. Consequently, they announce that by reason of their solidarity and for the purpose of protecting and preserving the freedom and integrity of the twenty-one Republics of the Americas, relations, whether political, commercial, or financial, can no longer be maintained by any of them with Germany, Italy, and Japan, and they likewise declare that with full respect for their respective sovereignty, they will individually or collectively take such further steps for the defense of the New World as may in each instance seem desirable and practicable.

These four resolutions formed the basis of governance within the American Republics during World War II. Eventually, the results of this meeting forced Peru to break relations with Japan, but also required the United States to aid in the internment of Japanese-Peruvian citizens.

111 Gardiner, 85.
CHAPTER 3
WORLD WAR II AND INTERNMENT

By 1941, anti-Japanese sentiment reached a peak in Peru. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese military attacks on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the Philippines, and other United States and Allied bases in the Pacific not only brought the United States into World War II but also altered the lives of many Japanese in North and South America. Japan’s military aggression alarmed many of the Allied powers. This further ignited fears about the Japanese immigrants living abroad. Peruvians believed the Japanese were placing military men, or a “fifth column,” within Peru to attempt a take over the country.\footnote{Masterson, 65.} Although not true, this belief, combined with the Japanese sense of community and culture, fueled even greater suspicion and accusation. To counter these fears Japanese immigrants began to publish their newspapers in Spanish and shifted the educational curriculum in Peru. Previously, education focused on preparing children to go to Japan for a secondary education. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, none of these conciliatory efforts in Peru made a difference. On December 24, 1941, newspapers in Lima issued “blacklists” of suspect individuals in the Japanese community.\footnote{Higashide, 114.} These were mostly business owners and community leaders. Although Peru waited until 1945 to formally declare war on Japan, they broke diplomatic relations and ousted the Japanese Chargé de Affairs on January 24, 1942, opening the door for further persecution of Japanese in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[113] Masterson, 65.
\item[114] Higashide, 114.
\end{footnotes}
By not officially declaring war on Japan, the Peruvian government did not have to provide large amounts of financial and military endorsements to the Allied cause. Furthermore, they broke diplomatic relations with Japan as a result of their strong financial ties to the United States rather than the actual actions of Japan against Peru.

The Conference of Foreign Ministers of the American Republics in Brazil in January 1942, produced multiple resolutions to protect the Americas from encroachments and threats from the Axis powers (Italy, Germany, and Japan). Resolution Twenty from the conference created a basis for the orders for internment of Japanese and Japanese immigrants, in addition to any suspect Germans and Italians. This motion developed the “criteria for dangerousness” and promoted a “comprehensive and vigorous program of detention of Axis nationals.” Under the advice of General John DeWitt, leader of United States Western Defense Command, and others, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, in the United States. Basically, the order stated that the United States government could arrest or detain any person suspected of espionage or treason. Executive Order 9066 also provided authority for the relocation and internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans—two-thirds of whom were American citizens—as well as some Germans and Italians, who were believed to be a threat and were often referred to as “enemy aliens.” Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, Peru appeared to favor the Axis powers. However, the United States increasingly applied pressure to this Latin American ally.Officials in Hawaii and on

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115 Masterson, 166.
116 Barnhart, 171.
118 Due to the downtrodden economic situation in Peru during the Depression, the US government offered some financial support the country. Thus, the US used this as a form of leverage in garnering support; FRUS, 1942.
the West Coast of the United States began detaining persons thought to be suspicious, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Through the backing of various officials, the United States initiated a program for the relocation and internment of “enemy aliens,” as well as the removal of suspicious persons from high security areas.\textsuperscript{119}

Executive Order 9066 established a precedent for Peru. Initially, President Manuel Prado and his government wanted to handle the internment of Japanese-Peruvians. Yet, the extreme expense and trouble in relocating individuals stifled this action. Working with the United States, the Peruvian government rounded up 1,771 Japanese-Peruvians to send to internment camps, primarily in Texas. Approximately half of those deported voluntarily left Peru to join family members who were interned.\textsuperscript{120} This was only a small fraction of approximately 29,000 Japanese-Peruvians in the population.\textsuperscript{121} The dissolution of Japanese community groups meant that all governance existed only under Peruvian law, and Peruvian officials handled any controversies within the Peruvian community. Prior to this, Japanese immigrant associations exerted control over their communities and businesses. These immigrants tried to handle all disputes and community measures without involving the Peruvian government. Therefore, the Peruvian government under the leadership of President Manuel Prado issued a variety of acts to freeze Japanese financial assets, end Japanese schools, and make Japanese associations illegal.\textsuperscript{122} Requiring \textit{Nisei} and \textit{Sansei} children to attended local public schools shaped individual attitudes and beliefs, but also the direction of cultural traditions.

\textsuperscript{120} Endoh, 26.
\textsuperscript{121} Tigner, 22.
\textsuperscript{122} Hirabayashi et. al., 83.
After the United States government initiated internment policies, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9102 on March 18, 1942, creating the War Relocation Authority (WRA). This association established and maintained ten internment camps as well as the various temporary assembly centers in the United States. A WRA pamphlet defined their role as to “assist in the relocation of any persons who may be required by the Army to move from their homes in the interest of military security.”

Many Japanese-Peruvian internees never experienced these internment camps. They were placed at separate camps operated by the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) in Crystal City, Kenedy, and Seagoville, Texas. The Texas camps also held some Italians and Germans, but predominantly housed Latin American detainees. The laws governing these sites and the reasons for their creation differed slightly from the WRA camps. Since the detainees at the Texas camps were classified as “enemy aliens” and prisoners of war, the United States could not force them to work without violating the Geneva Accords. As outlined by Seiichi Higashide in his memoirs, this allowed prisoners to become gainfully employed but only for meager wages. At Kenedy, Texas, men received twenty cents a day for jobs, no matter how difficult the work. Those in regular WRA camps received payment based upon the type of labor they chose to do.

124 Sites of Shame: About the Sites, online, access from: www.densho.org/sitesofshame/facilities.xml  
126 Higashide, 157, 158.  
127 Relocation of Japanese-Americans.
This difference existed because the men in the INS camps were classified as POWs, and those in the WRA camps retained their citizenship, although many rights were denied.  

Unlike some people and organizations in the United States (the Quaker church, for example), few Peruvian nationals argued for the civil rights of the Japanese. Some continued to support Japanese business or maintain amicable relations, but few Peruvians became outspoken advocates. In the United States, President Roosevelt received letters and comments regarding the violation of civil liberties and the unconstitutionality of Executive Order 9066. In one such letter, Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, wrote that internment was “clearly unconstitutional” because there was no “military necessity” to detain these individuals. He continued by stating, “The psychology of the Japanese Americans in the relocation centers becomes progressively worse.”129 Criticisms like this existed prior to, during, and after internment, but were unable to prevent the actions from occurring during World War II.

Ickes was not the only major figure to question the issue of detaining the Japanese. Two major artists offered their photography of the camp sites but also wrote about how they viewed the camps. Ansel Adams produced a book, entitled Born Free and Equal (1944), that outraged many supporters of internment. In this work, he documented daily life at the Manzanar Relocation Camp in California. The government censored his photography but failed to keep him from speaking and writing about the things he saw. Dorthea Lange produced many photographs, initially for the government, that depicted camp life. Her images were also censored but told the story of a group of civilians who

128 In 1988, the United States Government admitted the denial of rights to Japanese-Americans in the United States during World War II was unconstitutional. See also: 1943, US Supreme Court Decision Hirabayashi v. United States; 1944, US Supreme Court Decision Korematsu v. United States
129 Dwight Young, Letters to the Oval Office: From the Files of the National Archives (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2005), 82-83.
wrongly lost their civil liberties. She invested much of her time and effort in the photography depicting the true story of internment. Both Adams and Lange received significant criticism from United States officials and individuals throughout the country for their art and writing on the detainment of Japanese Americans. Of all of their works, these on Japanese-American internment are the least well-known by the majority of the American public.

Nothing of this nature emerged from Peru. The lack of camp sites or detention centers within the country prevented society from fully understanding the effects of internment. Also, the Japanese community in Peru was a smaller portion of the total population in comparison to Japanese-Americans in the United States. Whatever the reason, many Japanese-Peruvians were excluded from the arguments for civil liberties since they were, in fact, “illegally” in the United States, were classified as POWs, and lacked any support from Peruvian advocates.\footnote{This information comes from the analysis of a variety of sources. For more information on this topic, see: Impounded: Dorthea Lange and the Censored Images of Japanese Americans, Born Free and Equal, and The LOC files on Ansel Adams, accessible from: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/anseladams.}

The first group of Japanese-Peruvians to be interned by the United States government left the port of Callao aboard the *Etolin* in April 1942. It remains interesting to note that Callao was the initial port of entry for the majority of Japanese when they immigrated to Peru. Many travelled to Panama before entering port cities in the United States, such as New Orleans or San Francisco.\footnote{Masterson, 160.} Once these Japanese-Peruvians entered the United States, they faced individual hearings with the INS, declaring them as illegal immigrants.\footnote{Barnhart, 173.} This proved to be quite problematic at the end of the war. The “illegal
alien” status not only affected the detainees’ fates as the camps closed, but also in the struggle for redress decades later. Several of the Issei who were deported, saw Callao as their first and last visions of this world of supposed opportunity. Some gained the prosperity and life for which they hoped as they emigrated from Japan. Yet, most immigrants experienced hardship and found Peru less than their dreams led them to believe. For approximately 1,000 Japanese-Peruvians and their families, this dream abruptly ended. Some escaped detainment by hiding while others issued bribes to the officers. But those chosen for deportation to the United States often held positions of status within their community.

Why did Peru choose deportation of some Japanese-Peruvians as the solution to their problems as well as supporting the United States in the Pacific War? Historian Daniel Masterson argued it was primarily motivated by racial tensions and jealousy. He explained that no arguments against internment based on necessity or humanistic ideas came from Peruvian officials; the Japanese were seen as threats both politically and socially; the Americans and Latin Americans believed that the deportees would be useful tools in prisoner exchanges with Japan; and local Peruvians gained Japanese property and businesses at little or no cost.133 Many of these reasons can be seen through writings and interviews at the time.

In July 1942, Henry Norweb, the United States Ambassador to Peru, explained to the State Department that “Peru would like to be sure that these Japanese would not be returned to Peru later on. The [Peruvian] President’s goal apparently is the substantial elimination of the Japanese colony in Peru.”134 Peruvian government officials supporting

133 Masterson, 120.
134 Levine, 95.
these policies backed local officials and police in their mistreatment and arrest of Japanese. Seiichi Higashide described the Arequipa chief of police, a man named Mr. Teran, as a racist who wanted to see all Japanese arrested. Such men caused fear in the heart of the Japanese community. Not all high-ranking Peruvians were out to have all Japanese arrested and/or deported. Higashide also described a local policeman who did not report him for hiding out in Icatha. Other Peruvians continued to support Japanese businesses that survived the onset of the war. By 1945, however, Peruvian officials created a bill to prevent the return of Japanese to Peru. An article in *Time* magazine cited the reason behind this as, “Strict discipline made sure that Peru-born Japlets grew up authentic Japs.” In other words, Japanese-Peruvians, like Japanese-Americans in the United States, were considered by some to be devoted to Japan more than to their adopted homelands.

The largest number of Japanese-Peruvians arrests and deportations occurred from the end of 1942 to the middle of 1943. Local officials initially arrested leaders of Japanese associations, those who had previous military experience, and successful shop owners. Some quickly transferred assets to a friend or *Nisei* family member who had Peruvian citizenship. Nevertheless, the effects of the war rocked the Japanese-Peruvian community. Those who were not deported often minimized their beliefs and cultural activities in public. Many chose to move from the city to less populated rural areas to avoid confrontations. With children placed in local schools, Japanese language began to fade away. Yet, the Japanese maintained a sense of their heritage and never fully

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136 Higashide, 128.
assimilated into Peruvian culture. Those who were deported experienced much different circumstances.

Upon arrival in the United States, trains transported internees to three main Texas camps. Kenedy existed for mostly single men or those who did not bring their families. Seagoville was predominantly for women and children. Crystal City, the largest of the three, was the family camp.\(^{137}\) As families volunteered to join their men, they were moved to the camp at Crystal City. Much of the internment process appeared to break down the traditional family and Japanese values. In certain circumstances, particularly for Japanese-Peruvians, these traditional values only increased.

Although Japanese-Peruvians were held in INS camps, the WRA issued pamphlets that highlighted information about camp life in general in addition to the differences between “residents of relocation centers” and “civilian internees.” One WRA pamphlet, entitled *Relocation of Japanese-Americans*, explained, “relocation centers, however, are NOT and never were intended to be internment camps or places of confinement.”\(^{138}\) Furthermore, this booklet defined the purposes of the camp as follows:

(1) To provide communities where evacuees might live and contribute, through work, to their own support pending their gradual reabsorption into private employment and normal American life, and (2) to serve as wartime homes for those evacuees who might be unable or unfit to relocate in ordinary American communities.\(^{139}\)

Almost all WRA publications highlighted the necessity of distinguishing between “enemy aliens” and civilians. As one can understand from letters to President Roosevelt, this did not occur. A Japanese-American internee wrote to the president and explained how he and others showed loyalty and requested that the government provide a statement

\(^{137}\) Sites of Shame.

\(^{138}\) *Relocation of Japanese-Americans*.

\(^{139}\) Ibid.
to enlighten the public to their innocence. Japanese-Peruvians waited until after the war to issue such statements because they assumed they would eventually return to Peru. Although the United States government offered a distinction between those at POW camps and those at relocation centers, to the public and many officials in the United States there was no difference. On close inspection, the likelihood of either WRA or INS camps holding a large population of “criminals” was highly unlikely. The United States government held German and Japanese military POWs in the United States but did not place them in WRA or INS camps.

For the most part, the INS camps and WRA facilities were physically similar. The United States government located both types in remote areas owned by the federal government. The Department of Justice located the Crystal City Internment Camp in a rural area on the site of a labor camp that held a population of 6,529. Most of these laborers were Hispanic and were forced to leave the property for the construction of the camp. One WRA leaflet, *Questions and Answers for Evacuation*, provided a detailed look at the basic living situation in many camps. The living quarters were approximately 20x25 feet and furnished with army cots, mattresses, electric lights, and, occasionally, an oil heater. Once the apartment was occupied, residents could purchase or bring their own furnishings, as standard furnishings were soon removed. Although similar in setup,

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differences remained in the treatment of residents, such as their occupational options and education.

Once in the camps, Japanese culture existed freely but also blended with the Peruvian and American cultures. At Crystal City Internment Camp, the residents were treated as Prisoners of War and prepared for return to Japan. Those in this camp were arrested on the basis of the Alien Enemy Act of 1798. Unlike those in relocation camps, the United States government prohibited anyone from leaving the internment camps, unless they were being returned to Japan. Children often attended a Japanese school with instructors selected from the group of internees. Unlike the WRA camps, leaders of the INS camps lobbied for the teaching of Japanese language and values in order to prepare members for repatriation to Japan. This helped to foster a sense of a triple homeland for many of those interned. Adults who had lived in Japan, Peru, and the United States acquired parts of each culture, creating an amalgamation and sense of community. Scout troops, plays, and sports brought many internees together. Since they could not be forced laborers, many had a great deal of free time outside of their occupations. They turned to extracurricular activities and hobbies as a form of release. Such activities brought many together and even encouraged some attention from American officials. In *A Fence Away From Freedom*, many of the interviewees detailed the “fun” activities they experienced in the camps, especially if they were young when interviewed. Furthermore, these histories detailed how Japanese culture was promoted.

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143 Unless stated, the term camp(s) refers to the INS camps in Texas rather than the WRA camps.
144 Gima.
145 *Questions and Answers for Evacuees: Information Regarding the Relocation Program.*
146 Levine, 104-107.
147 Ibid., 108-9.
148 Ibid.
Groups who avoided traditional cooking or arts while in Peru, often turned to Japanese cultural activities, such as origami, ikebana, traditional cooking, and tea ceremonies, as a hobby within the camp.

Many interviewees did not see the camps as a place of horror. However, conditions remained less than perfect. The Japanese complained of a lack of privacy, bad living conditions, poor medical care, and a non-traditional diet. In the *Grenada Pioneer*, the newspaper for the Granada Incarceration Camp in Colorado, a description of Crystal City prepared those leaving Colorado for Texas. The author described the houses as too small, partitioned with gypsum board, and with concrete floors. Each house was equipped with a kitchen and cold running water. Individuals could receive mail, but authorities censored letters and limited the number of pieces delivered. By the biggest problems with these conditions were the lack of sanitation, bland appearance, no access to a traditional bath (*sento*), and poor insulation to protect from the extreme heat and cold. The lack of adequate, insulated facilities meant that occupants experienced extreme conditions in both summer and winter. In Japanese culture, the bath held a traditional role. A person was to cleanse himself or herself before soaking. In certain areas, the tradition existed as a social arena in communal bath houses. As previously stated, the camps lacked these bath facilities. Traditional Japanese rituals lost much of their practice within the camps. But other aspects, such as culture, language (*Nihongo*), respect, and the arts, flourished.

Officials made traditional Japanese food stuffs available to the internees but also chose SPAM and wieners as typical accompaniments. Many internees had difficulty adjusting. However, many enjoyed these foods and created new recipes while also

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149 Sites of Shame.
embracing traditional Japanese dishes. One woman recalled her childhood in an internment camp, stating that many of the upper-class Nikkei women from Peru had never cooked because of their servants. These women quickly learned this task while in camp. Free time allowed them to develop this as a hobby but also a method of occupation. Kitchen workers found ways to secretly make traditional sake. With traditions, such as food, drink, and Japanese language, continuing in the camp, many gained a new sense of their traditional culture they would take with them to Japan or use to integrate into the United States after the war.

Several Japanese-Peruvian internees were children who went to be with their parents in the INS camps. These youths provided an interesting perspective on the situation. Many parents were protective, thus many children never truly understood what it meant to be a prisoner of war or an “enemy alien.” Many interviews have since revealed what children were thinking as they played behind the barbed wire at the camps in Texas. In an article for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin in 2002, Craig Gima discussed his family’s history of internment in the Crystal City facilities. He interviewed Kay Keneko who provided insight into the camps, “It was a unique place…I’ve got lots of memories of Crystal City. Some of them were lots of fun, and some are difficult to talk about.”

The general consensus among children, both from the United States and Peru, was that they did have fun and experienced a somewhat “normal” childhood despite the circumstances. However, some children lost any semblance of a “normal” childhood

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151 Levine, 103,104,107.
153 Gima.
because they spent their formative years in the unnatural environment of an internment camp.

Two articles, one from the August 10, 2008, issue of the *San Francisco Gate* and the other from the September 16, 2009, issue of the *Japan Times*, profiled a Peruvian man named Augusto Kage (or Kague), whose father was interned. All his life he dreamed of becoming a medical doctor. Yet, the internment of his father forced him to quit school and sell newspapers and juice on the street to earn a living. After losing the family business and moving in with an acquaintance of his mother, he lost the essence of his youth.  

His bitterness came from the fact that his father owned a Peruvian restaurant that served Peruvian food, his family spoke Spanish, and his mother was Peruvian. However, he explained that wealthy families often showed jealously towards successful Japanese. His father was one of the few allowed to return to Peru in October 1946. Since his father was 56 years old and without a job, this left the family in a difficult position. Kage found employment in a local restaurant to provide a good education for his brothers and sisters. Although the United States government offered $5000 settlements to Japanese-Latin Americans, some like Kage turned it down because there is more to the suffering than such a small payment can correct.

Another Japanese-Peruvian who experienced a loss of innocence because of internment was Alicia Nishimoto. Her father owned a cotton plantation but did not have Peruvian citizenship. After being deported to the Crystal City internment camp, they were refused re-entry to Peru. Like so many Japanese-Peruvian internees, they took what they

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saw as their only option and returned to her father’s hometown of Hiroshima just as the war ended. Once there, she no longer saw childhood as she had in Peru and the United States. She described the horrors that were the results of the atomic bomb dropped weeks before her family’s arrival. Many of the victims had maggots in their wounds or were horribly disfigured.\textsuperscript{156} Removing children, like Alicia Nishimoto, from their homeland and friends to place them in a war torn nation and destroyed city greatly affected their education and psychological development.

Although some Japanese-Peruvian citizens suffered because of internment, those who remained in Peru also experienced hostilities. Many lost their businesses and personal property while others lost their lives. An article published in \textit{Time} magazine in November 1944 detailed the murder of two Japanese-Peruvian families—two men, two women, and three children. A Lima police officer discovered their lifeless bodies with their “heads bashed in.”\textsuperscript{157} The police discovered that a servant of one of the families committed the murders but provided few details about his motivations. During the investigation, the police claimed to have found a large chest filled with secret documents and maps, suggesting the people were spies.\textsuperscript{158} This article provided the basic information about this act of violence based on ethnicity. Closer analysis revealed two more details: First, the journalist who produced the article was unsympathetic to the Japanese-Peruvian victims. This was the general consensus among some journalists during World War II; Second, if these victims were truly spies, why did the United States FBI investigation that ended Japanese-Peruvian deportation to the United States find no evidence of “enemy

\textsuperscript{156} Josephs.
\textsuperscript{157} “PERU: Black Dragon?,” \textit{Time}, November 20, 1944. Accessed via online archive: http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,796796,00.html
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
aliens” in Peru? The author of this article was not alone in his style or ideas. Journalists throughout the United States also spread rumors about an impending Japanese threat or a “fifth column.” Many of these rumors also included underlying racial hostilities that attempted to demonize the “other.”\textsuperscript{159}

Although the relocation and internment programs changed the lives of many, it failed to destroy the Japanese community in Peru. The closing of various schools, businesses, and community groups pushed the Japanese to adapt to and accept certain aspects of Peruvian society. Many assumed a lower profile, took different jobs, and sent their children to Peruvian public schools. Nevertheless, those who remained in Peru kept a distinct set of values and culture created from merging Japanese and Peruvian cultural nuances. Many learned Spanish and some converted to Catholicism. Yet, they continued to teach their children about their heritage and traditional Japanese values, particularly respect and hard work. The Japanese community in Peru continued after the war; however, many who were interned never returned to Peru. The Japanese’s lack of assimilation, success of Japanese businesses, and pressures from the United States government spawned fears leading to the relocation and internment of Japanese-Peruvians. This episode forever changed the direction of the Japanese community in Peru. Nevertheless, it failed to completely destroy Japanese-Peruvian culture or undermine the

\textsuperscript{159} For further examples, see Time magazine articles 1942-1946, Nashville Banner articles 1941-1945, San Francisco News and Chronicle articles 1941-1946, The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science articles 1940-1941, and the article: F. A. Rager, “Japanese Emigration and Japan’s “Population Pressure”,” Pacific Affairs, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Sep., 1941). Several of the journalists and scholars try to use facts to place Japan or Japanese immigrants in a negative light. The last example explained how Japan’s population was not the reason for emigration. Although this is a known fact today, the structure behind the author’s argument should garner some criticism for not being objective and placing demonizing qualities upon the Japanese.
successes of many individual Japanese-Peruvians. This amalgamation of cultures brought a sense of community within a community.

After World War II, most Japanese-Peruvians tried to assimilate more into the public sphere to prevent attacks or suspicions. Decades passed before the Japanese community publicly embraced their heritage. The 79 Japanese allowed to return to Peru from the United States after the war attempted to integrate into society and reunite with families. Those who remained in the United States predominantly worked at Seabrook Farms in New Jersey before petitioning for citizenship and building new lives in the United States. The effects of the relocation and internment not only affected the Japanese in Peru but also those who were unable to return to Peru and the societies that accepted those who were not allowed to return to Peru (Japan and the United States).

After the War: Japanese-Peruvians 1945-1950

In August 1945, the United States dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Joined with firebombing raids throughout most of 1945 and a crippled Japanese economy, these actions forced the Japanese government to surrender. Emperor Hirohito issued an Imperial Rescript ending the war on August 15, 1945. The formal surrender occurred on September 2, 1945. With the war ended, the WRA, Department of State, and Immigration Services were left to decide how to deal with the internee release. Of the 1,771 Japanese-Peruvians, 79 returned to Peru, 354 stayed in the United States, and the rest were repatriated to Japan during the war or after Japan’s surrender. The FBI removed those who stayed in the United States from the “enemy alien”
registry in 1946.\textsuperscript{160} Japanese-Peruvians who remained in the United States but had no ties to any citizens were sent to work at Seabrook Farms in New Jersey. Unlike some (but not many) Japanese Americans who were able to have someone guard their assets while they were interned, those from Peru were left with virtually nothing.

Deportation of Japanese Latin Americans to the United States ended abruptly in 1944 when the United States government investigated the threat of those held in custody. The study revealed that many of those in camps, in fact, held Peruvian citizenship and proved to be no danger. From 1944 to 1945, the US acceptance of “enemy aliens” from Latin America ended. However, in 1945, Resolution VII from inter-American conference on the problems of war and peace provided that the United States must handle all cases of “dangerous persons.” Those interned fought alongside the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to prevent deportation to Japan.\textsuperscript{161} Many wanted to return to Peru and resume their pre-war lives, while others wanted to stay in the United States. Returning to Japan did not appear as a viable option to many. The majority of those interned had spent little or no time in Japan. Much of the teaching within the camps was geared toward their repatriation to Japan. Yet, they were no longer Japanese alone. Instead, the ideology of multiple homelands caused them to relate to more than one area for a sense of culture and community.

Goto Tsuruyo, who arrived in Peru in 1933 from Fukushima prefecture, explained how Peru was more of a homeland to her than Japan ever could be. Even though she was not deported during the war, she returned to Japan years later and explained how she no longer felt secure in Japan. Goto developed friendships and bonds as a young woman in

\textsuperscript{160} Barnhart, 174-176.

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 173-174.
Peru. The relationships in and ideas of Japan were destroyed by the war. Much of the landscape in Japan was devastated, and several of her family and acquaintances were killed.\textsuperscript{162} Her story replicated what many felt at the time of the war. If they had spent only a fraction of their lives in Japan, any remnants of this life were destroyed or, at the least, complicated by the war. The sense of safety, security, and community offered in Peru and even in the INS camps risked disintegration if these Japanese-Peruvians were repatriated to Japan.

Still, the deportation argument proceeded. On June 25, 1946, San Francisco lawyer, Wayne M. Collins filed a habeas corpus action in the federal courts to prevent deportations of Japanese-Peruvians to Japan, or at least prolong the process. On March 4, 1949, the action was dismissed and the suspension of deportation was carried out under Public Law 863. By 1952, Public Law 414 amended the Immigration and Naturalization Act, allowing for the naturalization of Japanese-Peruvians as American citizens.\textsuperscript{163} This provided a new homeland for many Japanese-Peruvians and provided the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

The number of Japanese-Peruvians interned composed only a fraction of the total population of Japanese in Peru. Yet, the effects altered the Japanese-Peruvian community in Peru by stifling their cultural practices. At home, these groups maintained a sense of “Japanese-ness” while exhibiting a Peruvian persona in the public sphere. This created a new sense of Japanese-Peruvian culture as neither wholly Japanese nor Peruvian. This blending of cultures occurred prior to internment but received more encouragement during wartime. Individuals deported found themselves in one of three scenarios. Some

\textsuperscript{162} Tsuryo.
\textsuperscript{163} Barnhart, 174-5
returned to Japan to construct new lives in their homeland. Others remained in the United States creating a new group of people who blended Japanese, Peruvian, and American cultures and beliefs to create a distinct identity within the Nikkei community in the United States. The smaller group who returned to Peru hoped to resume their pre-war lives. Overall, each community exhibited characteristics produced by the experiences of internment. The fight for Japanese-American redress that began in the 1970s and 1980s sometimes excluded the Japanese-Peruvians. Yet, they still continue to embrace their heritage in Peru, Japan, and the United States by creating associations and oral histories projects to connect all aspects of their identity.
CONCLUSION

From 1899 to 1950, many Japanese immigrated to and established a large community in Peru. Although cultural assimilation occurred to varying degrees, the Japanese-Peruvian community created an amalgamation of both cultures while retaining a unique Japanese identity. Social and prefectural associations created within the first twenty years of immigration created a support network and a culture within a culture. The connection maintained with Japan and the Japanese government helped the immigrants to retain their Japanese identities. In spite of virulent anti-Japanese ideology and internment during World War II, the Japanese-Peruvian community survived and maintained a unique identity shaped by their experiences.

The early years under the contract labor system allowed many Japanese the opportunity to follow their dreams to Peru. When they realized Peru was not the dream land they were led to believe, Japanese immigrants refused to accept failure. Thus, many immigrants and their children worked hard and became successful. As the 1930s progressed, more Japanese entered the Nikkei community. The divisions that existed between the various Japanese groups did not cause enough of a problem to directly hinder their achievements. Anti-Japanese legislation and the internment of approximately 1,800 Japanese-Peruvians created a sense of fear and forced assimilation. Nevertheless, it failed to destroy their culture and identity or stifle their successes. Today, the Japanese-Peruvians are an integral part of Peru and make up the third largest Japanese descendent
population outside of Japan.\textsuperscript{164} No matter the struggles they faced, the Japanese-Peruvian community proved their ability to adapt and succeed without losing their identity in the process.

AFTERWORD

Until the mid-1950s, Japanese were not allowed re-entry into Peru. By that point, many refused to return because they had already started over in other areas. Nevertheless, the Japanese community in Peru persisted and grew in power throughout the years. The production of newspapers and creation of groups such as the Asociación Peruano Japonesa and the Japanese-Peruvian Oral History Project have made these histories available. Understandably, many of these people hold feelings of love for their home country of Peru but also respect their Japanese heritage. Surprisingly, most hold no feelings of contempt for their wartime internment or acts of discrimination against them. They do, however, hope to make others aware of their story.

One blemish on the Japanese community occurred in the 1990s. Even during the period of immigration, the Japanese pushed the idea of not embarrassing the country or group. Many classes taught them to blend into society but retain their traditional heritage. With Alberto Fujimori’s campaign for presidency in 1990, the Japanese realized their fears and hopes at the same time. The idea of blending into society coupled with their lingering fears from World War II created a skeptical attitude about Fujimori and his abilities.

Fujimori’s election in 1990, his success against the “shining path” guerilla movement, and reelection in 1995 were followed by corruption and scandal. Since World War II, many Japanese-Peruvian’s maintained a low profile, trying to prevent negative

165 Titiev, 232. Berrios.
166 Fujimori’s parents immigrated to Peru in the early 1930s.
attention to themselves. Some felt that Fujimori might bring shame or a resurgence of anti-Japanese sentiments to the community. The memories of the 1940 riots and anti-Japanese actions during the 1940s still burned many minds. Many felt that this could incite another riot or direct negative attention onto the Japanese-Peruvian community as a whole. Thus, he received less support than anticipated from the Japanese-Peruvian community during his election and re-election.

Alberto Fujimori is currently in Peruvian jail for crimes committed during his presidency. His daughter Keiko Fujimori ran for the presidency in 2011 with the hopes of clearing her father’s name. The election provided some insights on Peruvian relations with the Japanese-Peruvian community. Although she lost on June 3, 2011, two things can be gathered from the recent decades of Peruvian history and Alberto Fujimori’s election: The Japanese community is no longer viewed in a negative light. Yet, they continue to worry about their distinct culture causing problems for them in the future. As the years progress, more people will become aware of the outstanding history of the Japanese-Peruvian community.

168 For Further Reading, See Catherine M. Conaghan, Fujimori’s Peru: Deception in the Public Sphere (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).
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69