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Introduction. This paper explores gender relations in the Japanese Peruvian community during its first 45 years of existence, as well as analyzes gendered state policies of both Japan and Peru that affected the *Nikkei* community in Peru. The academic literature on gender issues in the Japanese Peruvian community is extremely limited, with the exception of articles by Doris Moromisato Miasato and Amelia Morimoto.¹ Consequently, I have relied primarily upon oral histories and published interviews, many of which were collected around the year 1999, the 100-year anniversary of Japanese immigration to Peru. I have teased gender out of the nearly hundred interviews and interview excerpts I reviewed, as gender was not a focus. Consequently, on certain issues, my data is limited and my conclusions more tentative. On other issues, however, such as the negotiated nature of migration decisions, the evidence is clear.

This study covers the period from 1899-1945 and focuses primarily on gender relations in the adult *Nikkei* community. Although *issei* (first generation Japanese immigrants) comprised the majority of this group, a minority of *nisei* (second generation Japanese immigrants) had also reached adulthood by World War II. Rather than framing the questions within restrictive dichotomies such as public vs. private, submission vs. dominance, etc., I have attempted to follow *Nikkei* men and women's own descriptions of their lives, which, not surprisingly, complicates categorization. Patterns, however, can be

¹ Moromisato Miasato's principal article on the topic is "I Woman, I Man, I *Nikkei*: Symbolic Construction of Femininity and Masculinity in the Japanese Community of Peru," in *New Worlds, New Lives: Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America*, ed. Lane Ryo Hirabayashi et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 187-204. Amelia Morimoto, "Las ausentes en las fotos: las mujeres *Nikkei* en el Perú," Discover *Nikkei* Website, March 8, 2007, <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2007/3/8/ausentes-en-las-fotos/>.

detected and related to the larger gendered historical processes occurring in Japan and Peru.

Although both Japan and Peru could be described as patriarchal societies in the early twentieth century, the cultural context of Peru had less influence on the issei community than the Japanese society that they left because the early Japanese immigrants were not highly integrated into Peruvian society during this period. The theoretical literature on gender and migration has recognized that values are portable and can be maintained in the host society, especially when reinforced by migrant social organizations.² Hence, I give much greater attention to the Japanese cultural norms and values of the period, while recognizing the aspects of Peruvian society that affected the Japanese community in Peru. Peruvian societal norms had a much greater effect on the Peruvian nisei community during the post-World War II period, particularly on the nisei who were educated in Peruvian schools.³

Gender in Japan: Meiji (1868-1912), Taisho (1912-1926), and early Showa (1926-1941) Eras. While the first Japanese migration to Peru in 1899 was comprised of 790 men brought in to labor in the sugar plantations, a small number of Japanese women began arriving as early as 1903, contracted along with their husbands to labor in the cane fields. With the advent of *yobiyose* (sponsored migration) in 1924, women began to migrate to Peru in more significant numbers; by 1940, one-third of the 17,598 Japanese

² Ulrike Schultz, "One day, we will return home': Turkana women migration and remigration," in Jacqueline Knorr and Barbara Meier, *Women and Migration: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), pp. 164-180.

³ "In their daughters [nisei], the rigid Japanese codes were reinforced by Catholic ideology, producing a Marian model (entailing strength, love, moral superiority, and a spirit of sacrifice) aspired to with greater devotion than by their Peruvian peers," writes Doris Moromisato Miasato in "I Woman," p. 199.

immigrants residing in Peru were women.⁴ The emigrants from Japan during that period left a Japan in flux as the nation sought to modernize its economy and its society, codifying gender roles to meet the needs of the developing nation.

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 ended Japan's feudal era and set the country on a course of modernization and industrialization.⁵ Government planners saw social reforms as essential to building a nation economically and militarily capable of defending against Western encroachments into Asia. With the promulgation of the Civil Code of 1898, women were legislated into a position subordinate to men. The male head of household was given broad powers and married women were "reduced...to legal incompetents."⁶ Patrilineal succession (to the first son) was codified, disallowing variations that had previously been practiced among wealthy merchants and farmers, i.e. adopting the husband of the eldest daughter as the head of household.⁷ Women were also barred from participating in political meetings or joining political parties, most likely to quell the activism they had demonstrated in the Meiji-era People's Rights Movement.⁸ At the same time the Meiji government extended universal education to girls, it concomitantly educated girls to become the "good wives and wise mothers" (*ryosai kenbo*) "so essential to the nation's strength, prosperity, and moral well-being."⁹ The Meiji government asserted that it was re-establishing traditional values of "filial daughters, obedient wives,

⁴ Perú, *Censo nacional de población y ocupación 1940*, 9 vols. (Lima: Imprenta Torres Aguirre, S.A., 1944).

⁵ Although the Meiji period has primarily been translated as the Meiji "Restoration," other scholars such as Lisa Yoneyama suggest Meiji "Revolution" is a more proper translation.

⁶ Sheldon Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds: The State in Everyday Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 115.

⁷ Chizuko Ueno, "The Position of Japanese Women Reconsidered," *Current Anthropology* 28, 4 (1987), p. 78.

⁸ Sharon H. Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, "Meiji State's Policy toward Women, 1890-1910," in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 155.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

and compliant mothers” like those contained in the *Onna-Daigaku* (A Discipline for Women) published between 1716 and 1736.¹⁰ In reality, the Civil Code of 1898 imposed upon all classes the household and family systems particular to the samurai class, the highest traditional class, in spite of the fact the samurai class had been formally dissolved by the Meiji Restoration.¹¹

Chizuko Ueno notes, however, that the social transformations wrought by the Meiji reforms did not take firm hold until the 1910s.¹² Prior to that period, Ueno argues that the bulk of the Japanese population, rural commoners, continued to live according to their village values. She writes that marriages were usually a function of a young woman becoming pregnant in a consensual relationship (virginity was not important) and that divorce was common and not stigmatized. While men were expected to represent the family outside the home, women heads of household (*shufu*) had a powerful position in the household during the pre-modern period (pre-1910), since they controlled the all-important distribution of rice.¹³ The shufus held their position by virtue of marriage to the first son destined to inherit the family patrimony.

The Japanese immigrants to Peru were largely from rural communities and therefore may not have experienced the full effects of the Meiji reforms. Nearly half hailed from the prefecture of Okinawa, followed by the prefectures of Kumamoto, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, and Yamaguchi – southwestern provinces that were the site of repeated rural protests during the first decades of the twentieth century.¹⁴ Japan, which

¹⁰ Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell, *The Women of Suye Mura* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. xvi.

¹¹ The samurai class accounted for 3% of the population prior to its elimination in 1868. From Ueno, p. 78.

¹² Ueno, p. 76.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

¹⁴ James L. Tigner, *The Okinawans in Latin America* (Washington, D.C.: Pacific Science Board, National Resource Council, 1954), p. 17; Toake Endoh, *Shedding the Unwanted: Japan's Emigration Policy in a*

had forcibly annexed Okinawa in 1879, treated Okinawa as a 'virtual colony,' heavily taxing the island nation and replacing subsistence agriculture with the large-scale cultivation of sugar. Faced with economic instability and population pressure, Okinawans migrated in record numbers such that by the mid-1940s, over one third of Okinawans lived abroad.¹⁵ In spite of annexation, George Kerr writes that Okinawa “drifted in the backwaters of [Japanese] national policy for fifteen years.”¹⁶

Robert J. Smith and Ella Lury Wiswell’s book based upon the 1930s study of the Japanese village of Suye Mura shows women and men in relatively egalitarian positions, their lives having little to do with family relations codified by the Meiji and subsequent governments.¹⁷ While there exists no comparable study on gender relations in rural Okinawa during this period, Okinawan Peruvians’ testimonies indicate that women farmed alongside men as well as taking on additional income-generating activities such as making and selling tofu, hats, prepared fish, etc. In the context of the economic hardships during the first decades of the twentieth century, family labor was essential to survival.¹⁸ Japanese and Okinawan villagers, however, were not outside the sphere of influence of the national government. Universal education was well established, with the proportion of Japanese girls attending elementary school doubling from 44 to 99 percent

Historical Perspective (UMI Dissertation Services, 2000), pp. 128, 198; Amelia Morimoto, *Los Japoneses y Sus Descendientes en el Perú* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 1999), pp. 75-76.

¹⁵ Ronald Y. Nakasone, “An Impossible Possibility,” in *Okinawan Diaspora* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), p. 17; Wesley Ueunten, “Japanese Latin American Internment from an Okinawan Perspective,” in *Okinawan Diaspora*, p. 95; Tigner, *Okinawans*, p. 12.

¹⁶ George Kerr, *Okinawa: The History of an Island People*, (Rutland, VT/Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1965), p. 393.

¹⁷ Smith and Wiswell, *The Women of Suye Mura*, 1982.

¹⁸ Moromisato, ed., *Okinawa Shi Kyoyukai del Perú: Testimonios de Vida y Homenaje al Vigésimo Aniversario de Vida Institucional (1979-1999)* (Lima: Fondo Editorial OKP, 1999). Cited henceforth as *OSKP*.

between 1895 and 1920.¹⁹ Young Japanese citizens were educated to serve their nation, with women charged with the particular responsibility to “produce and protect the coming generation.”²⁰ In Okinawa, education served as a focal point for the inculcation of Japanese codes of conduct and the denigration of Okinawan traditions. When the first schools opened in Okinawa in 1885, many peasants did not send their children to school out of distrust of the Japanese, and because they feared it would be too costly. By 1937, however, Okinawan primary schools counted 100,000 children. While both girls and boys attended school, schools for young women were a lower priority and fewer in number than middle schools for boys.²¹ Chiyo de Kuwae, who immigrated to Peru in 1934 at the age of twenty, remembers that boys and girls were educated separately in Okinawa and that girls were only taught “women’s things.”²²

The Taisho Era (1912-1926) was a period of social upheaval, characterized by movements for workers’ rights, universal suffrage, and women’s rights. Japan simultaneously industrialized and militarized, placing great strains on the economy and leading to spontaneous protests such as the national riots over rice shortages in 1918, in which women played a leading role. From the 1880s on, women made up approximately half of the work force in Japan.²³ Although men dominated formal unions, Patricia Tsurumi and Barbara Molony have presented significant evidence showing that women participated in labor disputes and organized their own strikes, the most famous being the 1930 Toyo Muslin Company strike in which women physically fought company thugs

¹⁹ Garon, *Molding Japanese Minds*, p. 122.

²⁰ Kobayashi, Audrey, “Migration as a Negotiation of Gender: Recent Japanese Immigrant Women in Canada,” in *New Worlds, New Lives*, p. 207.

²¹ Kerr, *Okinawa*, pp. 413-414; Ueunten, “Japanese Latin American Internment,” p. 102.

²² History of the Kuwae Family, *OSKP*, p. 232.

²³ Kobayashi, “Migration as a Negotiation of Gender,” p. 207.

attempting to break the strike.²⁴ Although some Japanese feminists such as Hiratsuka Raicho echoed the Taisho era's call of "good wife, wise mother" (*ryosai kenbo*) as the basis for granting political rights to women, other feminists like socialist Yamakawa Kikue considered this view elitist and inapplicable to working women.²⁵ By the mid-1920s, the Japanese state had effectively – and violently – suppressed or co-opted the bulk of these movements. While it is difficult to assess the degree to which these movements affected the villages and households of the Japanese who subsequently migrated to Peru, it is worth noting that the majority of women textile workers were rural migrants. In 1924, over 90 percent of Tokyo's cotton-spinning workers had been born in rural areas.²⁶ In fact, several Japanese Peruvian women whose interviews were reviewed for this paper relate that they had worked in textile companies in Japan prior to migrating to Peru. Additionally, a Peruvian nisei recounted that young Okinawan women were expected to migrate to work in the Japanese thread factories whereas young men "didn't leave because they were well taken care of."²⁷

As industrialization took hold and developed during the Taisho and early Showa periods, nuclear families with a wage-earning male became the norm. While the urban, middle class female head of household had less power relative to her husband than a peasant woman, she had class status as the wife of a wage earner and did not have to

²⁴ Barbara Molony, "Activism among Women in the Taisho Cotton Textile Industry," in *Recreating Japanese Women*, pp. 217-238; E. Patricia Tsurumi, *Factory Girls: Women in the Thread Mills of Meiji Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

²⁵ Mikiso Hane, *Reflections on the Way to the Gallows: Rebel Women in Pre-War Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press/Pantheon Books, 1988), p. 163.

²⁶ Tokyo-shi oyobi kinko ni okeru rodo tokei jitchi chosa (TRTJC), 1924, pp. 336-39; 1933, pp. 36-37 as cited in Andrew Gordon, *Labor and Imperial Democracy in Prewar Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), p. 213.

²⁷ Interview with J.F., Okinawa, 1991 as cited in Mary Fukumoto, *Hacia Un Nuevo Sol: Japoneses y Sus Descendientes en el Perú* (Lima: Asociación Peruano Japonesa del Perú, 1997), p. 162.

suffer the hard labor of a peasant woman.²⁸ Although what Audrey Kobayashi terms the 'cult of motherhood' – a woman deriving value primarily from her role as a mother – was launched by the Meiji regime, it took hold in the Taisho period.²⁹ As Japan started on its road to empire, it called upon its citizens to sacrifice for the nation, and frugality and self-abnegation were transformed into feminine virtues for all social classes.³⁰ During the 1920s and the 1930s (early Showa era), the Japanese state elevated the middle-class Japanese homemaker's role as household manager in order to aid Japan's war efforts. She, and the organizations to which she belonged, were included in national campaigns aimed at increasing savings rates (to provide more currency to the war-stretched state) and promoting frugality (to head off potentially explosive social situations).³¹

Gina Buij, in her book on women migrants, emphasizes the importance of distinguishing “between and status and roles at the level of ideology and status and roles in practice as the two do not always coincide...”³² Japanese Peruvian women were sometimes “filial daughters, obedient wives, and compliant mothers,” or aspired to be, but remembrances of the Nikkei community reveal a variety of patterns in family relations, including cooperation between husbands and wives as well as initiative on the part of daughters and wives over the wishes of fathers and husbands. The frequent contradiction between stated values and actions of the Japanese men and women who immigrated to Peru may be well be a function of both the way in which societal norms in

²⁸ Ueno, "Position," p. 79.

²⁹ Kobayashi, "Migration as a Negotiation of Gender," p. 207.

³⁰ Nolte and Hastings, "Meiji State's Policy."

³¹ Garon, *State and Labor*, pp. 115-145.

³² Gina Buijs, *Migrant Women: Crossing Boundaries and Changing Identities* (Oxford: Berg Press, 1993), p. 10.

their villages were changing at the time they were immigrating as well as how the immigrants reacted to new life circumstances in Peru.

Gender and Migration Patterns. While the Meiji Restoration's advances in health services decreased mortality rates, the onerous land taxes imposed to fund Japan's industrialization and integration into the world capitalist system resulted in numerous small farmers losing their land, thereby driving them to migrate. The first wave of Japanese immigration to the Americas began in 1885, initially to Hawaii as contract laborers on sugar plantations. Shortly thereafter, Japanese settled on the Pacific coast of the United States. After nativist activism secured the restriction of Japanese immigration to the United States in the form of the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-8, immigration was redirected to Latin America. Consequently, by the mid-1930s the Japanese population in Latin America equaled that of the United States and Hawaii. Brazil and Peru were the primary destinations in Latin America for Japanese immigrants, receiving 197,733 and 22,728, respectively, by 1937-1938.³³ Early Japanese immigrants to Brazil were initially contracted to work on coffee plantations but quickly made the transition to small independent farming status.³⁴ In Peru, sugar plantation owners contracted Japanese immigrants to address labor shortages in their burgeoning export industry. Plantation agriculture had historically depended upon African slave labor and Chinese coolies, neither of which was an option in the twentieth century.³⁵

³³ James L. Tigner, "Japanese Immigration into Latin America: A Survey," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 23, 14 (1981), pp. 458-459; Tigner, *Okinawans*, p. 10

³⁴ Daniel M. Masterson, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p. 75.

³⁵ Chinese officials halted Chinese immigration to Peru in 1874 due to inhumane conditions. Chinese workers were never employed in any significant numbers in Brazil in the nineteenth century, largely owing to Brazil's late abolition of slavery in 1888.

The 15,887 Japanese men and 2,145 women who traveled to Peru during the first 25 years of immigration were almost all contracted to work on Peruvian sugar plantations, with a minority directed to Amazonian rubber plantations.³⁶ Virtually all of the Japanese immigrants (male and female) whose interviews form the basis of this paper cite poverty or limited opportunities in Japan as a motivation for leaving. However, the cultural priority given to first sons also affected immigration patterns, prompting male and female siblings of first sons to migrate. A Japanese Peruvian man recalls that while he was not poor, he was not the oldest brother, which meant he would not inherit anything; it was therefore better to migrate.³⁷ The Japanese migrations to the Americas, moreover, represented a new pattern in what the Japanese termed *dekasegi* (temporary migrant workers), in that men far outnumbered women, especially in the years of contracted migration. Since 1773, Japanese women and girls had been the family's primary *dekasegi*, albeit within Japan, supplementing family income through remittances.³⁸ For a Peruvian *nisei* recalling the situation in Okinawa, daughters' secondary position relative to sons meant that girls were more likely to be *dekasegi*:

They [girls] worked in the thread factories and the girls were very badly treated. They came home with tuberculosis because they weren't given enough to eat. The young girls also worked as nannies. Before, people had a lot of children and the parents sold their daughters so they would have fewer mouths to feed.³⁹

Why did men dominate the migration flow to Peru? The structural changes in the Japanese rural economy, which transformed tenant farmers into peons, meant that the family patrimony might be no more than a house, a paltry inheritance for a first son, let

³⁶ Morimoto, *Los Japoneses*, p. 71. 226 children also immigrated to Peru.

³⁷ Interview with Y.S., Chiclayo, March 1990 as cited in Fukumoto, *Hacia un Nuevo Sol*, p. 166.

³⁸ Akira Hayami, "Rural Migration and Fertility in Tokugawa Japan: The Village of Nishijo, 1773-1868," in *Family and Population in East Asian History*, eds. Susan B. Hanley and Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 115.

³⁹ Interview with J.F., Okinawa, 1991 as cited in Fukumoto, *Hacia un Nuevo Sol*, p. 162.

alone sufficient to maintain an extended family of brothers and their wives. As their ties from the land were loosened, many men were thus encouraged to seek their fortunes outside Japan in countries like Peru where “money grew on trees,”⁴⁰ according to Japanese migration companies’ propaganda. The most likely explanation for the higher international migration⁴¹ of men than women, however, may be the gendered construction of the work, as the Peruvian plantation owners considered men’s manual labor more valuable than women’s.⁴² Although plantation owners early on provided incentives for Japanese men to bring a wife, in order to create “stable and hardworking” laborers, the Peruvian sugar barons’ interest was in halting Japanese men’s protests and flight from the oppressive haciendas rather than bringing in women workers.⁴³ Japanese women, however, did not emigrate in lesser numbers because they were restricted to the domestic sphere; as noted previously, single women had been migrant workers within Japan for over a hundred years.⁴⁴ Further evidence that the gendered nature of migrant labor shaped migration flows comes from the one occasion in the early 1920s when Japanese women were brought to Peru as workers to labor in an Arequipan textile factory

⁴⁰ Oral history of Jaime Muroy Sato by author, May 9, 2005.

⁴¹ Emigration from Japan was illegal until 1885.

⁴² *OSKP*, pp. 222, 252. Kamekichi Shimabuku recounts that men on sugar plantations in Cañete earned 1.20 soles per day in 1919, while women earned only 80 cents. Yasu Nakamatsu recalls that in the late 1920s, cotton plantation owners paid women 1.20 soles y men 1.80 soles.

⁴³ Toraji Irie, “History of the Japanese Migration to Peru” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 32, 1 (1952), p. 81.

⁴⁴ While it is true that the movements of single women in the textile factories were restricted, not only did young women organize against these restrictions, single women who migrated to the cities were settling there by the 1920s and becoming more independent according to Molony, “Activism among Women,” pp. 217-238 and Miriam Silverberg, “The Modern Girl as Militant,” pp. 239-266, both in *Recreating Japanese Women*.

that was attempting to break a strike by Peruvian workers.⁴⁵ Textile work in Japan and Peru was largely considered 'women's work.'⁴⁶

As Japan became increasingly belligerent in Asia during the first decades of the twentieth century, the nation also recruited more and more men into the Japanese armed forces. Migration to a foreign country like Peru provided a way to escape military service, a concern to both young Japanese men and their families. Japanese Peruvian Seiki Nakasato remembered the Japanese Ministry of War's recruiting officer arriving in Okinawa in 1932 to recruit young men for the war in Manchuria. The 19-year-old man "did not like the idea of killing people," and therefore decided to migrate to Peru, following in the footsteps of his father who had recently, and "successfully," returned from Peru.⁴⁷ Choei Yara, raised by his grandfather in Okinawa, was called to Peru by his father Kamakichi Yara in 1933 to avoid Choei being recruited into the Japanese war effort.⁴⁸ While women were not recruited as soldiers, the Japanese war in China caused economic suffering, and many Japanese feared further repercussions. When Ansei Moromisato Taira asked 18-year-old Uto Miasato Shikya to marry him in 1937, Miasato's mother, "without hesitating a single moment," advised her daughter

You should accept your new husband, because although he is much older than you and you don't know him, you should go to Peru because the war will soon arrive here and everything will be worse here, all of us in Uchina [Okinawa] will die.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Approximately 50 to 100 young Japanese women were brought to Peru, as recounted in David Chaplain, *The Peruvian Industrial Labor Force* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 251.

⁴⁶ Between 1919 and 1940, women jumped from 19.57% to 83.2% of the national textile work force in Peru, according to Walter Blake, *Relación entre Capital y Trabajo en la Industria Textil 1880 – 1975* (Lima: Taller de Estudios Urbana Industriales, 1975), pp. 7, 54.

⁴⁷ History of Seiki Nakasato, *OSKP*, p. 218.

⁴⁸ History of Choei Yara, *OSKP*, p. 238.

⁴⁹ History of the Moromisato Miasato family, *OSKP*, p. 204.

In addition to escaping poverty, both men and women left Japan, like many immigrants, to escape the drudgery of their lives. Many Japanese Peruvian immigrants recount being raised by a single parent or grandparents owing to the death of a parent. The household reorganization occasioned by such events was a source of discontent for daughters and especially sons. Tsunekichi Ooshige, a third son from Yamaguchi prefecture, lost his mother when he was 11 years old. Ooshige remembers hardly being able to finish elementary school as he was responsible for taking over household chores “that rightly belonged to women,” in addition to assisting his father in his candle factory. Anxious to escape his confining life and fulfill his dream of visiting foreign countries, he immigrated to Peru in 1899 at the age of 21.⁵⁰ A Japanese Peruvian woman with a similar desire for adventure recounts her excitement, albeit tempered by guilt, during her journey on the ship to Peru:

I was happy because I was coming to Peru to travel around. I didn't want to be with my family because I didn't have a mother and I had to do all the work. When the sea got rough and I got dizzy on the ship, I thought it was a punishment because I was leaving Japan and my family.⁵¹

Migration Decisions. Neo-classical migration theory has been taken to task for its portrayal of migration decisions as the domain of the individual, rational male migrant, to the almost complete exclusion of women in the household. Everett Lee wrote in 1966, “Indeed not all persons who migrate reach that decision themselves. Children are carried along by their parents, willy-nilly, and wives accompany their husbands though it tears

⁵⁰ "Vivencias: Tsunekichi Ooshige," in Comisión Conmemorativa del Centenario de la Inmigración Japonesa al Perú, Asociación Peruano Japonesa, Agencia de Cooperación Internacional del Japón, *Centenario de la Inmigración Japonesa al Perú, 1899-1999* (Lima: Asociación Peruano Japonesa, 2000), p. 391. Henceforth cited as CCCIJP.

⁵¹ Interview with A.S., Lima, May 1989 as cited in Fukumoto, *Hacia un Nuevo Sol*, p. 166.

them away from environments they love.”⁵² To correct this bias that favors the male migrant, subsequent scholars have proposed using the household as a unit of analysis.⁵³ Gender theorists, however, have called for caution when attributing migration decisions to the household, as households may be “informed by hierarchies of power along gender and generational lines.”⁵⁴ Alejandro Portes holds that analysis at the household (or community) level remains valid, and asserts, “Households can still act as units despite internal differences.”⁵⁵ As a final note, in some cultures a household may not consist of a nuclear family, but rather an extended family or lineage.⁵⁶

Among the Japanese couples that migrated to Peru in early 1900s, both men and women initiated and negotiated migration decisions. Angélica Shizuka de Higashide recounts that her mother Matusi Tsumo and her mother’s husband immigrated from Japan’s Kyushu province to Peru in the early 1900s because “my mother didn’t want to do farmer. So they heard about ... South America, so they say, ‘okay, let’s go to South America.’ They thought maybe gonna be easy...”⁵⁷ Even when men preceded their wives in migration, there exists anecdotal evidence from interviews with Japanese Peruvians that these decisions were largely cooperative.⁵⁸ Once in Peru, however, some Japanese Peruvian women who wanted to return to Japan felt trapped because they could not

⁵² Everett S. Lee, “A Theory of Migration,” *Demography* 3 (1966), p. 51.

⁵³ George J. Borjas and Stephen G. Bronars, “Immigration and the Family,” *Journal of Labor Economics*, 9, 2 (1991), p. 123; Jackeline Velazco, *La Migración Laboral Internacional Como Estrategia Familiar: El Caso de Los Peruanos en Italia* (Peru: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru, 1998), p. 20; Charles Wood, “Equilibrium and Historical-Structural Perspectives on Migration,” *International Migration Review* 16, 2 (1981), pp. 312-314.

⁵⁴ Patricia Pessar, “Engendering Migration Studies: The Case of New Immigrants in the United States,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 42, 4 (1991), p. 582.

⁵⁵ Alejandro Portes, “Immigration Theory for a New Century: Some Problems and Opportunities,” *International Migration Review* 31, 4 (1997), p. 816.

⁵⁶ Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 74-76.

⁵⁷ Oral history of Angélica Shizuka de Higashide, Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project (henceforth JPOHP), May 14, 1994. The interview was conducted in English, which is Ms. Shizuka’s third language.

⁵⁸ History of the Moromizato Oshiro Family, *OSKP*, p. 210.

convince their husbands to leave Peru. Rosa Takao Kasawa told her son Jorge Kasawa that she only agreed to leave her home province of Fukushima and go to Peru with her husband in 1915 because he said, “We’ll work two or three years, save some money, and we’ll go back to Japan.” Fifty years later, according to Takao Kasawa, she was still in Peru because she had been “fooled” by her husband.⁵⁹

In 1923, the contracted migrant labor agreement between Japan and Peruvian plantations ended, due to the fact that the salaries offered to Japanese were too low to attract them to the difficult work, as well as because the Peruvian plantations no longer needed immigrant labor as they had turned to the *enganche* system to force indigenous Peruvians to labor on the plantations.⁶⁰ *Yobiyose*, or 'family reunification,' characterized Japanese immigration to Peru from the end of the contract system in 1923 until 1941, when Japanese to Peru immigration was completely suspended after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The Japanese government required that the sponsor in Peru who requested a relative via *yobiyose* demonstrate financial solvency, although only modest wealth was required, judging by the stories of the *yobiyose*. While men represented the majority of sponsors, women also sponsored relatives. Women dominated the *yobiyose* flows, with women growing from 12% to 33% of the Japanese immigrant community between 1924 and 1940.⁶¹ While *shashin kekkon*, known as 'picture brides,' were prominent among the *yobiyose*, a variety of relatives – daughters, sons, nieces, nephews, brothers and sisters – were called over during this period. Adult *yobiyose* were generally anxious to join relatives and progress economically, whereas children had less say in the matter. The

⁵⁹ Oral history interview of Jorge Yukio Kasawa by author, June 2, 2005.

⁶⁰ Under President Augusto Leguía (1919-1930), the *enganche* system was re-activated.

⁶¹ Women numbered 2,145 and men 15,887 in 1923, according to Morimoto, *Los Japoneses*, p. 72. Women numbered 5,833 while men numbered 11,745 in 1940 according to Perú, *Censo de 1940* (Lima: Imprenta Torres Aguirre, S.A.: 1944), p. 526.

decision to send a child to Peru, however, was not necessarily solely in the hands of the father. Yasu Nakamatsu remembers that it was her mother who proposed that she emigrate from Okinawa to Peru when she was twelve years old to join her father and escape the oppressive poverty that characterized their lives. Until her mother's proposition, Nakamatsu had resigned herself to working dawn to nightfall, with the time out only to attend school, "because that is what all the girls did."⁶²

Toake Endoh estimates that 47% (8,000 out of 17,000) of the Japanese who immigrated to Latin America between 1923 and 1941 were *shashin kekkon* or already married to Japanese men in Latin America.⁶³ While most of the marriages of the Japanese men and women who came to Peru were 'arranged' in that they involved intermediaries, there was a great variety in the degree of choice exercised by the future husband and wife.⁶⁴ The idealized representation of the picture bride, submissive before her husband and conscientious in complying with her filial duty, is contained in the words penned by Yoshino Yabuki to her husband Saburo Endo who awaited her in Peru:

I will be a good spouse and in that way I will honor the person that has married us. You should treat me well, with affection, and I also beg of you to teach me with patience the things that I should do.⁶⁵

It is difficult to judge the degree to which Yabuki's formal diffidence reflected required ritualized communication versus true sentiment and behavior. Mikie Nagaoka de Fukushima's 1935 'picture bride' marriage to Otoichi Fukushima provides a more detailed picture of both the arrangement and the 21-year-old woman's feelings:

⁶² History of Mrs. Yasu Nakamatsu, *OSKP*, p. 220.

⁶³ Endoh, *Shedding the Unwanted*, p. 43.

⁶⁴ Japanese men who married Peruvian women who were not of Japanese descent did not have arranged marriages. Among the issei and the early nisei women, marriage to a Peruvian man not of Japanese descent was a rarity.

⁶⁵ José Watanabe, Amelia Morimoto, and Oscar Chambi, *La Memoria del Ojo: Cien Años de Presencia Japonesa en el Perú* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 1999), p. 140.

My husband was working in Trujillo [Peru], and I hadn't met him, but his sister lived near my house [in the province of Hiroshima]...and she liked my personality and recommended me to him in Peru. I had the idea of studying, I wanted to go to a foreign country, not just Japan, and for this reason I begged my father to let me go to Peru. So my father and mother told me, 'No, no, it's too far away, how are you going to go where you don't have any family and this man that's going to be your husband, you don't know him, and over there if you don't like it, what are you going to do without any family?' ... The wife of my husband came to my house, recommending and pleading and at last it was accepted. Then he [father] said, 'I give you permission then for ten years, after ten years you return.' ... My mother and father said, 'If after ten years you cannot return, even if it's just for a visit, because you cannot pay the return ticket, tell me so we can send you the money.' That's how they let me come [to Peru].⁶⁶

Chiyo de Kuwae, whose father's family were descendants of the samurai class, recalls her *shashin kekkon* occurring in a very different fashion:

Ever since I was a child, I was always busy, always working, always quiet, I couldn't ever say anything. I was always learning and respecting *gambate* [effort and endurance]. My father comes from a samurai family, and that's why he was very strict and even more so with me as I was the youngest of eight children.⁶⁷

In 1934, when Kuwae was twenty years old, her father arranged her marriage to Kame Kuwae, a tenant farmer in Peru. Kuwae's father informed her that she was getting married and would be moving to Peru. In spite of the fact she did not want to leave Okinawa, she recalls:

During that time period, that's the way it was. I had to obey, nothing else, and my father sent me to Peru as if I were a package.⁶⁸

Rosa Haruko Guima, a nisei, and Saburo Nakasone, an issei who arrived in 1935, expressed similar sentiments about their 1940 marriage, "Now you get married because you're in love; before, you were just forced into it."⁶⁹ Just the same, *shashin kekkon* was not necessarily an anonymous arrangement. In 1935, 21-year-old Nobu Ishikawa de

⁶⁶ Oral history of Mikie Nagaoka de Fukushima by author, June 1, 2005.

⁶⁷ History of the Kuwae Family, *OSKP*, p. 232.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ History of Saburo Nakasone and Haruko Guima, *OSKP*, p. 126.

Shimbukuro married her former neighbor from Okinawa who had since moved to Peru.⁷⁰

Men who returned to Japan to marry often chose mates, albeit with the intercession of relatives, setting their sights upon “the best-natured girl in town.”⁷¹

While there is no evidence that Japanese Peruvian women during the 1900-1941 period sought out particular men as their husbands, women did have motives for choosing Japanese men who had migrated to Peru. Some women saw Peru as a way to escape their provincial lives in Japan, marry a man with financial resources, or explore a new place. By participating in the *shashin kekkon* arrangements, families could also avoid the cost of paying a dowry, which was a common custom in some parts of Japan.⁷² As one of Mary Fukumoto’s interviewees relates, many women wanted to marry Japanese men in Peru because they could secure a 'better' marriage without the dowry normally required.

The father, or the eldest brother if you don’t have a father, has the responsibility to provide the dowry for the women. It can be money, land, or animals. If there are a lot of daughter in the houses, the savings disappear. A woman with a better dowry can get a better husband. With the *shashin kekkon*, they get a ticket [to travel], clothes, and they don’t need a dowry and that is why the women want to come.⁷³

Even if dowry was not an issue, many Japanese women saw Peru as an opportunity to make a better life for themselves. Tsuru Sonan was 20 years old when she became a 'picture bride' to Chotoku Yara, leaving Okinawa in 1928 to join her new husband. Both Sonan's parents were deceased and she lived with her

⁷⁰ History of Mrs. Nobu Ishikawa de Shimabukuro, *OSKP*, p. 230.

⁷¹ History of the Moromisato Miasato family, *OSKP*, p. 204; History of Fuichi Nakama and Ushi Moromisato, *OSKP*, p. 224. Both men, Fuichi Nakama and Ansei Moromisato, described their wives in these terms.

⁷² Fukumoto, *Hacia un Nuevo Sol*, p. 163.

⁷³ L.F., Arequipa, February 1990, in *ibid*, p. 163.

aunt and uncle. Much the same as countless Japanese men, Sonan recounts that she traveled to Peru “to make money.”⁷⁴

Finally, the problems occasioned by the nearly ten thousand miles that separated betrothed couples reveal that sexual desire and/or romance often trumped commitment. Alfredo Iwasaki recounts that while his co-worker Jorge Doig was awaiting the arrival of his picture bride, he became involved with a Peruvian woman. Iwasaki explains:

He had asked for photos... But the bride that he had asked for didn't come, he had been told that they were going to send her and she didn't come... he was going out with a Peruvian woman, and it ended up he had to marry the Peruvian woman [because she was pregnant]. Right after that, the picture bride arrived, so, what was he going to do? He couldn't return her, so he hooked up his younger brother who hadn't requested anything.⁷⁵

While Doig's non-marital sexual relationship with a woman was not outside of the sexual norms for Japanese men, at times women did not comply with arranged marriages and pursued other romantic relationships, supporting Ueno's description of early twentieth century sexual mores in rural Japan. Tsuru Miyasato recounts that she married her husband Soyei Chinen after Chinen's fiancé left him for another man, in spite of the fact he had left his fiancé in Okinawa “in the care of his mother.” Miyasato recalls:

His mother was crying. Wow, just like that, what an idiot he was. [She has] another boyfriend so can't send her. Because of that, I was called to Peru.⁷⁶

While this single story may be considered an aberration, Yuji Ichioka's study of Japanese immigrant women in the United States in the 1900-1924 period finds

⁷⁴ History of Mrs. Tsuru Sonan de Yara, *OSKP*, p. 202.

⁷⁵ Oral history of Alfredo Iwasaki by author, June 8, 2005.

⁷⁶ History of Tsuru Miyasato de Chinen, *OSKP*, p. 212.

that Japanese wives deserted their husbands (*kakeochi*) to be with other men with “surprising regularity.” Women who were caught were sent back to Japan, and therefore the absconding couples often attempted to escape from the Japanese community. The male-controlled Japanese associations acknowledged problems inherent in the *shashin kekkon* arrangements (i.e. men were often much older than their wives), but focused their efforts on attempting to reform women socially rather than addressing the institution or the men.⁷⁷

In Peru, widowed Japanese women found that skewed ratio of Japanese men to women not only allowed them to remarry easily, but also gave them a greater choice in the matter. Far from family who could interfere in their decisions, they could choose among multiple suitors. Such was the case of Matusi Tsumo, who soon after losing her husband to bubonic plague was pursued by two different men, including Kahei Yoshinaga whom she chose to marry.⁷⁸

Gender Roles and Status in the Peruvian Nikkei Community. Both Japanese men and women’s lives in Peru were characterized by productive labor, with women bearing the weight of reproductive labor in the home. In that respect, migration to Peruvian sugar plantations did not radically alter the organization of the household compared to village life in Japan. Migration from the sugar plantations to Peruvian cities, however, transformed Japanese immigrants from peons into small business owners. While the businesses were built upon family labor, men were generally responsible for the management. As family businesses

⁷⁷ Ichioka, Yuji, “*Amerika Nadeshiko: Japanese Immigrant Women in the United States, 1900-1924*,” *Pacific Historical Review* 49, May 1980, pp. 339-357, republished in *Ethnicity and Gender: The Immigrant Woman*, ed. George E. Pozzetta (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), pp. 107-112.

⁷⁸ Oral history of Shizuka de Higashide, JPOHP.

prospered, however, women took on more responsibility, and many women owned their own businesses, even if their husband was formally on the title. In spite of women's public role in business operations, they were effectively excluded from both Peruvian and Japanese immigrant business associations. Just as men were the public representatives of the family in their Japanese villages, so they were in Peru. Public activities and associations in Peru during this time period were considered a man's affair, with the only appropriate public activity for women being charity work.⁷⁹ Most Japanese women were tied to the home in their off-hours, taking care of children and household tasks. Even so, Nikkei women in Peru did not embrace the 'cult of motherhood' with the same vigor as did women in Japan during the same period. Finally, both Japanese men and women passed on Japanese values and language to their children, and the Japanese schools' adherence to the home country's curriculum meant that many nisei children were inculcated with gendered concepts such as 'good wife, wise mother.'

“My hobby was work and work.”⁸⁰ Although the Japanese men and women who migrated to Peru as contract laborers hoped for a better life, the Peruvian sugar plantations instead introduced them to rampant diseases, substandard pay for long hours under oppressive conditions, and abuse at the hands of plantation managers. Not surprisingly, given that women had shared farming responsibilities with men in Japan, Japanese women labored alongside

⁷⁹ Laura Miller, “La Mujer Obrera en Lima, 1900-1930,” in *Lima Obrera, 1900-1930, Tomo II*, ed. Steve Stein (Lima: Ediciones El Virrey, 1987), p. 46.

⁸⁰ Testimonial of Taira Makato in *20 Años* compiled by the *Asociación Femenina Okinawense del Perú*, (Lima, Shitsu: 1996), p. 85. The sentiment that life was all work is echoed repeatedly in other Okinawan women's testimonials in *20 Años*.

men in the sugar plantations, albeit for less pay. Japanese migrants frequently protested conditions and fled the plantations, but there is little information on the participation of women in those protests. What many men found most offensive, in any event, was being treated as inferior, both because of their position as peons on the plantation and because of their race. While many of the Japanese farm migrants had lived under a feudalistic system in Japan, they had rented their land rather than living as peons under the total domination of a *hacendado* (plantation owner). Juan Kuroki recalls that his father left the Casablanca sugar plantation in Cañete, in spite of the fact he had been promoted to overseer, “because he didn’t like the treatment he received compared to what he was in Japan.”⁸¹ Women of some means had similar complaints. Toko Uehara de Arakaki, who traveled to Peru after her marriage to her husband, lamented in 1934:

Why have I come here? To be someone else’s employee? There [in Okinawa] there was never a shortage of money.⁸²

By the early 1920s, the majority of Japanese immigrants had abandoned the sugar plantations and had become either *yanaconas* (tenant farmers) on cotton haciendas or small business owners. The *yanaconas* worked their *chacras* (small land parcels) as a family unit, with men, women, and children providing essential labor. By 1929, Peru counted 1,620 Japanese *yanaconas*.⁸³ Typical Japanese-owned stores, such as *bodegas* (dry goods store) and bazaars (variety stores), usually counted the entire family as the

⁸¹ Oral history of Juan Kuroki by author, February 8, 2005.

⁸² History of Mrs. Toko Uehara de Arakaki, *OSKP*, p. 208.

⁸³ Irie, "History," p. 74. Statistics compiled by the Japanese Overseas Ministry, *Peruvian Agriculture and the Japanese*.

store's staff. Already by 1920, there were 2,386 Japanese-owned establishments in Peru selling household goods and by 1924 the number had grown to 3,844.⁸⁴

The Japanese Peruvians' economic advancement rested largely upon a family labor model that was not strictly gendered, but that did follow certain gendered patterns. Women, for instance, frequently supplemented household income by taking in sewing. Husbands also brought wives into the business in order to expand, as was the case of Mikie Nagaoka whose husband taught her to work in his barbershop.⁸⁵ Business licenses were typically in the man's name, with the exception of those households with Peruvian-born wives who could avoid government restrictions on non-citizens by registering the business under the citizen wife's name. Only men were involved in the Japanese community's revolving credit associations (*tanomoshis*) and in Japanese and Peruvian business associations. So were women no more than their husbands' employees? Uchida Kama, arriving in 1931, relates:

As soon as I arrived in Lima, I went to Sto. Tomas Street where my husband had a sewing factory. My job was to put the tags on, pull off the fuzz and iron.⁸⁶

Although women frequently performed the same tasks as men in the stores, the management decisions were largely, although not exclusively, made by men. In Seiichi Higashide and Angelica Shizuka's high-end retail store in Ica, Shizuka was responsible not only for attending the clients but also for international purchasing.⁸⁷

Another common model found among Japanese Peruvians who had acquired some capital was husbands and wives dividing the responsibilities, giving each spouse managerial control over separate businesses owned by the household. When Jorge

⁸⁴ Morimoto, *Los Japoneses*, p. 92.

⁸⁵ Oral History of Nagaoka de Fukushima.

⁸⁶ *20 Años*, p. 82.

⁸⁷ Oral history of Shizuka de Higashide, JPOHP.

Kasawa's father Juan Sangaro Kasawa decided to open another bodega, his mother Rosa Takao Kasawa took over the Trujillo-based store.⁸⁸ Juan Manuel Takeda Quispe recounts that his sister Rosa Eulogia managed a bodega while her husband farmed their chacra.⁸⁹ During the 1930s, Japanese Peruvians Masue Cristina Oshiba de Fukuda and her younger sister Miyoko Fukuda worked cooperatively in aviculture while their respective husbands (who were also brothers), Soosaku Carlos and Katsuo Fukuda Ichikawa, joined together to cultivate citrus fruits.⁹⁰

Women's work in family businesses, however, often went unrecognized and was obscured in census data. For instance, an October 1927 survey carried out by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that out of 12,742 total Japanese residents in Lima, only nine women were employed (4,226 women were dependents) and that of the 2,465 Japanese living outside of Lima, no women were working (731 were dependents).⁹¹ Such impossibly low figures indicate that census takers were often blind to the economic contributions of Japanese women.

While women's participation in the Peruvian-Japanese family business has to some degree been recognized in the academic literature, the presence of women-owned or women-managed businesses has generally gone unmentioned. Uechi Kame, the mother of seven children, recounts:

When I arrived in Peru, I went directly to the Hacienda Villa and we began to raise chickens and pigs...I moved to Miraflores and opened an ice cream shop, then I worked two years in my brother's store. I subsequently opened a bakery, closed it and converted it into a store selling chicken [*pollería*]...I also opened

⁸⁸ Oral History of Jorge Yukio Kasawa by author, June 2, 2005.

⁸⁹ Oral History of Juan Manuel Takeda Quispe by author, June 2, 2005.

⁹⁰ As related by Carlos Fukuda Fukuda, son of Soosaku and Masue, in Jesús Buitrón Vda. De Kafiti, *Centenario de la Inmigración Japonesa al Perú: Participación de los Inmigrantes Japoneses en la Agricultura de Huaral, 1899-1999* (Huaral: by the author, 1999), pp. 31-32.

⁹¹ C. Harvey Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru, 1873-1973* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), p. 37.

a public bathroom business where I worked for 5 years but since it didn't earn any money, I sold it and began working in the restaurant again...I myself am surprised by how many times I changed businesses...⁹²

Although the sheer number of Uechi Kame's businesses may make her unusual, a Japanese woman at the helm of a business was not out of the ordinary.⁹³

Among the thousands of Japanese-owned corner stores, a few Japanese (men) rose to prominence in the Peruvian business world. Seguma Kitsutani opened the Casa Kitsutani upon his arrival in Peru in 1901 with capital from his family's holding in Japan and soon expanded his financial empire, investing in sugar and cotton. Kitsutani was a descendant of the noble Morikoo dynasty family and had been raised according to the spiritual-philosophical tenets of *bushido* (way of the warrior), which emphasized men's moral leadership and service to society.⁹⁴ Kitsutani was president of the Central Japanese Society, the principal Japanese association in Peru, and closely associated with the Japanese consulate. In 1927, a crisis related to importation of silk led to the collapse of Kitsutani's businesses. Kitsutani decided to commit suicide in "accordance with his upbringing of that time...he first extended a white cloth in the main room of his house, as a symbol of purity, honor, and apology to those who resulted affected as a consequence of his economic disaster, and then he killed himself."⁹⁵ Kitsutani's suicide was an unusual event within the Japanese Peruvian society, a reflection of traditional samurai principles that were designed to guide men's lives but had little effect on the vast majority of

⁹² *20 Años*, p. 89.

⁹³ Examples of other women-owned businesses include: María Presentación Takeda Quispe owned a coffee shop, according to her brother Juan Manuel Takeda Quispe (*20 Años*, pp. 84-86); Kobashikawa Kamado, who arrived in 1913; and Kobashigawa Oto, a 1934 immigrant. Both of the latter went to work in Trujillo restaurants owned by their sister-in-laws.

⁹⁴ Conrad Schirokauer, *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1989), p. 363.

⁹⁵ "Viviencias: Seguma Kitsutani," CCCIJP, pp. 373-377.

Japanese Peruvian men who were not descendants of that class and did not live by such values, in spite of the respect they had for them.

By 1940, the Peruvian census revealed that "Business, Credit and Insurance" was the top economic activity for Japanese immigrants (439 women; 3236 men) followed by agriculture (195 women; 2272 men). "Independent Professions, Domestic Service and other Personal Services" employed 330 women and 2,508 men, while "Industrial Processing" provided employment for 107 Japanese women and 1467 men.⁹⁶ Japanese women's presence in the productive sector, even if underestimated, comes as little surprise given the prominence of women workers in Meiji- through Showa-era Japan, as well as the fact that Japanese rural women had traditionally shared responsibilities on the farm.⁹⁷

Migration to Peru had, however, changed professional patterns, both for Japanese men and women, and by the 1940s, a significant percentage had joined the small retail class, following in the footsteps of Chinese and Italian immigrants before them. Jorge Kasawa noted that there was little propensity in the Japanese community towards forming business partnerships; rather, "everyone wanted to be on their own."⁹⁸ Seemingly just as important as economic success was independence. Owning one's own business, or independently farming a plot of rented land, also had the advantage of providing some protection against the racial discrimination the Japanese faced as workers.

⁹⁶ Perú, *Censo*, p. 532.

⁹⁷ Smith and Wiswell, *The Women of Suye Mura*, 1982.

⁹⁸ Oral History of Kasawa by author.

Did women's participation in businesses, a labor activity different from their productive role in Japan, change the gender relations between Japanese men and women? First, women's productive labor and even wage earning was not new for Japanese households, and therefore did not necessarily represent a liberating change in Peru.⁹⁹ Second, the bulk of the evidence indicates that the Japanese community, especially the first generation of immigrants, turned inward for support. Patricia Pessar cautions against the wholesale acceptance of feminist literature's portrayal of migration as breaking patriarchy simply because women migrants have the opportunity to become economically self-sufficient. Rather, she posits, the racial discrimination experienced by migrants of color might make the family a refuge and a platform for struggling against racism. Therefore, maintaining the household intact, as well as pooling income for economic reasons, might be prioritized, rather than altering gender relations.¹⁰⁰ Distance from familial support networks, however, may have been an equally important element in Japanese women not challenging their husbands. Okinawan Toko Uehara de Arakaki married her husband, twelve years her senior, when she was 26 years old and traveled with him to Peru in 1934. Uehara recounts how she suffered during her first years in Peru, washing dishes and kimonos, crying every night and asking herself:

I wanted to return, but with whom? Husband didn't want to, so I had to get used to it, that's all.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ The feminist literature on gender and migration has generally argued that if a woman earns money, it leads to economic independence, which gives a woman greater power in gender relations.

¹⁰⁰ Patricia Pessar, "Sweatshop Workers and Domestic Ideologies: Dominican Women in New York's Apparel Industry," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 18, 1 (1994), pp. 127-142.

¹⁰¹ History of Mrs. Toko Uehara de Arakaki, *OSKP*, p. 208.

Nikkei Women's Reproductive Role. Among the Japanese immigrant families in Peru during the first half of the 1900s, women had primary responsibility for childrearing regardless of their participation in productive labor, which did not represent a change from women's role in Japan. When the children became too numerous, women would sometimes withdraw or reduce their productive labor to take care of the children. In the words of Doris Moromisato Miasato, the early Japanese women immigrants, "confronted a series of hardships alongside the male immigrants, and because of their sex, in addition to working in agriculture, worked double or triple shifts in their role of wife and mother to the first male and female nisei born on Peruvian soil."¹⁰² Kobashikawa Kamado recounts

When I arrived in Peru, everything was very difficult for me because I didn't know the country; every two or three years I had a child, I only had time to take care of them and educate them, I didn't have time for distractions and my hobby was simply work and work.¹⁰³

Issei men likewise recall working very hard in the family business or in the chacra, but they did not have responsibility for childcare, with the exception of widowers such as the father of Juan Manuel Takeda Quispe.¹⁰⁴ The high death rates among the early Japanese immigrants meant that children were often not raised by their parents.¹⁰⁵ When possible, the burden of raising children fell to other female family members, as was the case for Kama Chinen (Kochinda-Cho) who traveled from Okinawa to Peru when petitioned by

¹⁰² *20 Años*, p. 77.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁴ Oral History of Takeda Quispe by author.

¹⁰⁵ According to Irie, "History," p. 652, by 1909, 230 Japanese women and 6,065 Japanese men had migrated to Peru to work on the sugar and rubber plantations and in the sugar mills. Of that group, 481 (8%) had died.

her brother in 1935. Upon arriving in Peru, Chinen recounts her “saddest memory”: her brother and sister-in-law had died, leaving seven children in her care.¹⁰⁶

Women were also responsible for household tasks, such as cooking and cleaning. Uchida Kama, who also worked in her husband’s sewing factory, recalls the difficulty of complying with this responsibility when she had only recently arrived in Peru:

I was also in charge of the daily tasks and when I went to the market there were many products I didn’t recognize because in Okinawa we only ate yams and so I didn’t know what to buy, and that’s why I only bought vegetables and fish, nothing else.¹⁰⁷

Although the Meiji, Taisho and early Showa governments promoted the ideal of 'good wife, wise mother' (*ryosai kenbo*), in Japan only middle- and upper-class women could devote their energies full-time to the home and children, because economic conditions required women of other classes to contribute to the household income. Indeed, in Japan, the idea of women of means dedicating themselves full time to children originated during the early twentieth century. Women of the samurai class in previous eras had relied upon nannies to care for their children. In Peru, although women bore the weight of childcare and were socially defined according to their reproductive role, there was no corollary 'cult of motherhood' as in Japan. Middle- and upper-class Peruvian women, instead, often relied upon poorly paid domestic servants to take care of children and household. In this regard, the Japanese Peruvian women who were at least middle class generally imitated the Peruvian model rather than the model promoted by the Japanese state during this period. Shortly after arriving in Peru, Mikie Nagaoka de Fukushima joined her husband Otoichi Fukushima in his successful barbershop. When her daughter Mary Tsuyako was

¹⁰⁶ *20 Años*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁷ *20 Años*, p. 82.

born in 1937, they hired two domestics: one to clean and cook and another to take care of their daughter.¹⁰⁸

Regardless of financial means, there is little to suggest that the first generation of Japanese women valued themselves only in their role as *ryosai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother). Women interviewed in the numerous remembrance books published at the time of the 100-year-anniversary of Japanese immigration to Peru (1999) were as likely to emphasize their work as their family. Men frequently listed their family as their greatest accomplishment, and differed from women's interviews primarily in their participation in Japanese associations. An occasional woman was even outspoken at her unhappiness in caring for so many children, such as 89-year-old Tsuru Miyasato de Chinen. She recounts that she had no desire to remarry after her 42-year-old husband died, leaving her with 7 children:

Marrying once, that was enough, no marrying again! Well, so many children, who takes care of them then! Got to be tough! No, I don't like it, just taking care of children, nothing else.¹⁰⁹

While the 'cult of motherhood' was promoted as early as the Meiji era, it was solidified during the 1930s when Japanese women and their organizations were mobilized in support of the war effort. Consequently, early Japanese women immigrants to Peru may not have been as steeped in this developing Japanese societal norm. Given the necessity of Japanese women's productive labor in Peru, the Peruvian model of reliance upon domestic servants for household tasks proved much more appealing.

Nikkei Men's Social Role. Although only a minority of Japanese men and women had abundant leisure time in the early immigration period, men took advantage of their

¹⁰⁸ Oral History of Nagaoka de Fukushima, by author.

¹⁰⁹ History of Tsuru Miyasato de Chinen, *OSKP*, p. 212.

non-work hours to socialize and participate in organizations. Doris Moromisato and Irene Okayawa write, “Women, for example, alone put the children to bed while their husbands attended endless meetings at night; or they took care of the business on their own while the men spent their time socializing.”¹¹⁰ Jorge Kasawa remembers his sociable father, Juan Sangaro Kasawa – who never turned down a drink – and the problems it caused with his mother at home:

I’ve told my children how he [my father] was very popular among the Japanese community in Trujillo. When they saw him coming down the sidewalk, they’d call out to him, “Don Juan, Don Juan, come here!” ... They all liked to drink beer. ... Afterwards he would arrive home, tipsy, and my mother would get angry, “What? I’m here working and working and you come home drunk?” He’d reply, “No, it’s that my friend here, my other friend there invited me over.” But that would get my mother mad. So...since he didn’t want to argue with my mother...he’d say to me, “Let’s go, let’s go, because your mother is furious.” And my mother stayed home, still angry.¹¹¹

In a 1999 interview, Shisei Toma, a leader in the Okinawan Shi Kyoyukai del Peru (Okinawan Peruvian Association), commented that instead of dedicating time to his family, he gave it to the association.¹¹² Recognizing the importance of his wife, Setsuko Inafuku similarly reflected that “on many occasions, my wife had to take care of our business on her own,” so that Inafuku could attend meetings.¹¹³ Scholar Takashi Maeyama argues that associations were an initial adaptive strategy, especially in the absence of kin, for Japanese immigrants.¹¹⁴ Japanese Peruvian immigrant Seiichi Higashide recounts his surprise at the closeness he found among the Japanese immigrants in Peru:

¹¹⁰ Doris Moromisato and Irene Oyakawa, “Las Mujeres Nikkei en el Perú: Cien Años de Historia y Discreción,” *Quehacer* 92 (1994), p. 57.

¹¹¹ Oral History of Kasawa by author.

¹¹² History of Shisei Toma, OSKP, p. 256.

¹¹³ “Vivencias: Setsuko Inafuku,” CCCIJP.

¹¹⁴ Takashi Maeyama, “Ethnicity, Secret Societies and Associations: The Japanese in Brazil,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, 4 (1979), pp. 589-591.

In time, I came to see that the Japanese in Peru shared other unique attitudes that could not be found in Japan. I was deeply impressed with the strong bond that linked the immigrants – they interacted with a closeness and intimacy that was even stronger than between brothers and sisters in Japan. Undoubtedly, this was the result of their having shared many common experiences...Knowing no one, they had often walked near the edge of survival before they were eventually able to build a secure base for their livelihood. Had they not drawn together, aided each other, and encouraged each other, they would not have survived. In doing so, a strong sense of connectedness was formed.¹¹⁵

Moromisato Miasato argues that women's exclusion from organizations and leadership positions in the ethnic community meant that Japanese immigrant women had less social status.¹¹⁶ These all-male organizations may also have assisted Japanese men in making up for loss in status occasioned by migration, a common theme in the gender and migration literature.¹¹⁷ While the associations affected gender roles by virtue of men's participation, taking them out of the home while leaving the women there, it is likely they also promulgated gendered roles in the community. Unfortunately, this very important issue has not been explored in the scholarly literature and was not addressed in the interviews upon which this paper relies.

Reproduction of Social Norms and Values. While Doris Moromisato and Irene Oyakawa describe Japanese Peruvian women's role as that of social reproducer – “in the woman rests the transmission of traditional values”¹¹⁸ – interviews with Japanese Peruvian men and women reveal that issei men were actively involved in this task during the period covered in this paper. Nisei Juan Kuroki recalls that both his parents passed on "Japanese values" to him, such as respect for authority. “At home, it is us, Mom and Dad; on the street, the police officer; at school, the teacher.' That's how they very nicely

¹¹⁵ Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, p. 51.

¹¹⁶ Moromisato Miasato, "I Woman," p. 192.

¹¹⁷ Michael Jones-Correa, "Different Paths: Gender, Immigration and Political Participation," *International Migration Review* 32, 2 (1998), pp. 326-49.

¹¹⁸ Moromisato and Oyakawa, "Las Mujeres," p. 58.

taught me.” They also both spoke Japanese to him at home and sent him to the Japanese language school in Ica, Peru, although he remembers that his fellow nisei peers did not study very hard. He credits his parents with pushing him to excel in Japanese school,

My dad, logically my dad. But my mother [encouraged me] with just a word. My father had a temper, he was ‘Japanese from Japan’...and he’d say, “Damn!” to me and other words in Japanese...my mother was the other side of the coin, very gentle.¹¹⁹

Both boys and girls attended the Japanese schools, which is not surprising given the establishment of universal education in Japan during the Meiji Era. In the case of Angélica Shizuka, a Peruvian nisei, her mother decided that the family should move to a larger town so that her three daughters could attend school. Shizuka remembers her mother telling her father:

You know, we have to think about the children. She has to go to school! We stay over here, she never have a chance to go to school... let’s go to San Vicente.¹²⁰

By 1924, 50 Japanese schools were operating in Peru, and it is estimated that 80% of nisei children prior to World War II were educated at Japanese schools.¹²¹ Many Japanese parents with sufficient resources also sent their children to Japan to be educated. While Japanese mothers and fathers generally agreed on this practice, Peruvian mothers married to Japanese immigrant men often protested. Martha Shizue Ikehara de Yamashiro recalls that in 1936, when Martha was just five years old, her issei father Francisco Shuei Ikehara wanted to send her and her three brothers on a ship to Japan for their education. Martha’s Peruvian mother, Dionisia Ramirez Algalobos, insisted they not be sent, and Martha’s father acquiesced. Martha remembers her mother saying after World War II,

¹¹⁹ Oral History of Kuroki by author.

¹²⁰ Oral History of Shizuka de Higashide, JPOHP.

¹²¹ Fukumoto, *Hacia un Nuevo Sol*, pp. 210-212

“God has helped me, because if I would have sent them [to Japan], my children would have died.”¹²²

Mary Fukumoto emphasizes that the Japanese immigrants in Peru formed schools because they wanted to preserve Japanese values, customs, and language.¹²³ Just as the Japanese Associations were men only, so were the boards that managed the schools. In the Lima Japanese School, the teachers were sent directly from Japan; materials developed in Japan were also used in the Japanese schools throughout Peru. While there is little research on gendered practices in such Japanese schools, it is likely that girls were educated to fulfill domestic roles, as was the case in Japan. Doris Moromisato writes of the education of nisei women:

...as women were relegated to the domestic sphere, there was no sense in investing in their education, as there was no possibility of recovering the investment. The women who could overcome this worldview and manage to attain the status of professionals typically had feminine accomplices in their homes to support them.¹²⁴

Angelica Shizuka recalls that she and her husband Seiichi Higashide wanted her to go to commercial school so that she could manage their business, but a Japanese man who ran the store thwarted their plans.

He [Higashide] said at least you can go maybe to commercial school. So, I said, I was so glad, "I want to go to Lima." Then we went to Lima to this man's place named Kurotobi and he said, "No, what's the use of a girl going to a business school like that?" He said, "No, girls should go to a place for homemaking." So he said, "Go [to] Japanese home economics school." So I have to go to *kaseiko*. But I wanted to go to commercial school.¹²⁵

In the retail store later established by Higashide and Shizuka, Shizuka was responsible not only for attending to the clients, but also for the international purchasing. The

¹²² Oral History of Martha Shizue Ikehara de Yamashiro by author, February 11, 2005.

¹²³ Fukumoto, *Hacia un Nuevo Sol*, p. 210.

¹²⁴ Moromisato, "I Woman," pp. 193-194.

¹²⁵ Oral History of Shizuka de Higashide, JPOHP.

Japanese schoolmaster's attitude, however, reflected the Japanese education system's promulgation of gender roles in the early twentieth century. Although numerous higher education institutions for women were established at the turn of the century in Japan, women were to receive "enough education – but no more than necessary – to fulfill their duties within the home."¹²⁶

Epilogue. Between April 1942 and April 1945, approximately 1800 Japanese Peruvians were deported to the United States and interned in concentration camps. According to United States Immigration and Naturalization Service statistics, men comprised 52% of the internees, women 14%, and children 34%.¹²⁷ Japanese Peruvian men and sometimes entire families were taken against their will, arrested by the Peruvian police, and transported to the U.S. on ships under guard of the U.S. military – in spite of the fact there was no evidence of Japanese involvement in subversive activities in Peru. Women whose husbands were deported were left with the full responsibility for households, businesses, children, and yet another migration decision: remain in Peru – where their assets had been frozen or businesses confiscated – or join their husbands in the camps? Shizuka faced such a dilemma after receiving a telegram from her husband asking her to board the last ship bound for the United States internment camps.

So I didn't know what to do...It's better after all for all the children to be with papa, even if something happens, it's better to endure it together. Thinking in that way, I said, 'Yeah, okay, I've made up my mind. Let's go.'¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Nolte and Hastings, "Meiji State's Policy," p. 158.

¹²⁷ Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate*, p. 95. Note: These statistics specifying sex show only 1,393 total Japanese internees, a number about 400 people short of United States Department statistics on Japanese deportees from Peru.

¹²⁸ Oral History of Shizuka de Higashide, JPOHP.

Cristina Mazako Sato de Izumi recalled that many Japanese women preferred staying in Peru to joining their husbands in the United States internment camps. Sato, who eventually decided to join her husband, recalls his attempts to convince her

My husband has suffered. Every one, two months [he wrote]. No, I don't want to go [I said]. [He wrote] 'What are you doing staying in Peru? Isn't it better to be with your husband?'¹²⁹

Upon their arrival in the United States, Japanese Peruvians were incarcerated in concentration camps in the western United States. Between 1942 and 1943, the United States government traded approximately 500 of the Japanese Peruvians held in internment camps for its citizens being held in Japan. After the war ended, the United States declared the Japanese Peruvians 'illegal aliens,' in spite of the United States having brought them into the country against their will. The United States government moved to deport the Japanese Peruvians, and as Peru only allowed about 100 Japanese Peruvians to return, approximately 900 were shipped to war-torn Japan. Approximately 300, including Shizuka and her husband Higashide, fought to remain in the United States rather than accepting deportation to Japan.

Japanese Peruvian families were confronted, once again, with difficult migration decisions. Among the Japanese Peruvians, there existed a group who believed that Japan had won the war (*kachigumi*) and voluntarily returned to Japan in November and December of 1945. While there are no precise numbers, it seems that men dominated this group, although there were also female *kachigumi*. Lola Matsukawa de Monsalve, an orphan who was detained in camp with her older sister and brother-in-law, remembers

My brother-in-law wanted to go to Japan because they were saying '[Japan] has won the war,' but my sister said, 'What do you mean [Japan] won? They've lost,' because everyone was saying that [Japan] had won. Later, my sister convinced

¹²⁹ Oral History of Cristina Mazako Sato de Izumi by author, July 1, 1999.

him [brother-in-law] by telling him, ‘I’m not going. If you want to go, go. I’m not going, I’m going to Peru. That’s where my home and family are...My [brother-in-law] was finally convinced after hearing that two atomic bombs had been dropped.’¹³⁰

Naeko Tamashiro, Peruvian nisei, was a young girl at the time and accompanied her grandparents who accepted deportation to Japan because her grandmother wanted to rejoin family in Japan. She remembers:

At first, my grandfather absolutely refused to go back [to Japan]...and he planned to stay [in the U.S.]. But since my grandmother said she wanted to go, he decided to go.¹³¹

Tamashiro’s family returned to her grandparents’ home in Okinawa, then occupied by the United States military forces. Tamashiro recalls the irony of her situation as well as the fears of Okinawan women:

America did those things to us here [in Peru] and over there [in Okinawa]... it was America again...the feeling of despair was strong. After the war, when we got back to Okinawa, there were all kinds of things happening. Even at night, we couldn’t rest comfortably...at night, Americans and non-Americans – there were Filipinos among the soldiers – they would come out to our village for women to...violate...They would enter civilians’ houses. Nowadays, one can go to court, but back then all people could do was weep in silence. After the war, there were many such incidents. Many women, who are probably in their 70s and 80s [now], suffered.¹³²

Conclusion. Peruvian discrimination against the Japanese, as well as immigrants’ desire to maintain their culture, caused the early Nikkei community to largely look inward for support. However, there was no static and firm definition of what Japanese values actually guided the community, and there was at times discordance between stated norms and actual behavior. The Japanese men and women who traveled to Peru during the first

¹³⁰ Oral History of Lola Matsukawa de Monsalve by author, July 1, 1999.

¹³¹ Oral history of Naeko Tamashiro by JPOHP, March 25, 1999.

¹³² Ibid.

half of the twentieth century grew to adulthood in a Japanese society in flux, during Japan's era of modernization and attempts to codify gender roles as well as movements for democratic reforms, including women's rights. Hence, fathers and husbands were typically not the sole decision makers on such issues as migration, children's education, and even marriage. Instead, these decisions were generally negotiated between spouses, and even between daughters and parents.

While Japanese women's role in both productive and reproductive labor in Peru did not differ fundamentally from their roles in Japan, Japanese men's broad participation in associations was a new phenomenon. Although men were recognized as the representative of the family in the village, a notion codified during the Meiji era, rural Japan did not have the plethora of organizations that the immigrant men would form in Peru. Not only did more household and business responsibilities fall upon women in Peru, but only men were leaders of organizations, such as Japanese school boards, which had the power to promulgate gendered social norms within the community. Given the Japanese schools' reliance on the Japanese government for materials, education of the nisei likely promoted gender roles similar to those developing in Japan. All the same, Japanese Peruvian women escaped some of the gendered norms being promoted in Japan in the early twentieth century, instead valuing themselves in their multiple roles as mothers, businesswomen, workers, and farmers.¹³³

¹³³ Issei women were educated in Japan according to gendered norms, but most left Japan before the intense indoctrination of the late 1930s that was part of Japanese war effort. Doris Moromisato Miasato, ("I Woman"), however, has found evidence that the 'cult of motherhood' flourished in the nisei generation. This may indicate the role the Japanese schools played in Peru passing along gender values that were current in Japan at the time the nisei were being educated, in spite of the fact such values had not been as important for their issei mothers.

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