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Subverting Exclusion

TRANSPACIFIC ENCOUNTERS WITH RACE, CASTE, AND BORDERS, 1885–1928

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Introduction

AFTER LEARNING THAT THE UNITED STATES had passed legislation barring further labor immigration from Japan in 1924, an anonymous Japanese immigrant living "at the base of the Rockies" wrote:

> *Boku wa nihon ni oite wa shinheimin de aru.*
> *Amerika ni atte wa japu to iu shinheimin de aru.*
>
> In Japan, I am an outcaste.
> In America, I am an outcaste called "Jap."[1]

The author's equation of racial discrimination in North America with the caste-based prejudice he had experienced in Japan suggests the extent to which culturally specific perceptions of difference rooted in Japanese history provided an interpretive framework for the racial hostility he and other Japanese immigrants encountered in the West of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Like all immigrants, Japanese immigrants perceived and responded to the new environments they encountered in North America in terms of the social and cultural understandings they brought with them from their countries of origin. These included, in Japan, historical status and caste categories—*mibun* in Japanese—written into law to reinforce the status system of the Tokugawa period (1600–1867). Although these categories

were abolished early in the successive Meiji period (1868–1912), before most Japanese emigrants went abroad, social attitudes that were a product of that system persisted and served to frame their responses to the racial barriers they confronted in Canada and the United States. Their experience of white racism, in other words, was refracted through the lens of mibun. With this premise as a beginning point, I examine how social and cultural attitudes rooted in mibun factored into Japanese immigrant negotiations of race, class, and gender in the North American West and consider how people who structured their perceptions of social difference in terms of caste and mibun participated in shaping definitions of nation, race, and empire as they moved through and across the borders of Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

Written large, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japanese emigration to North America parallels that from Europe in significant ways, including underlying motivation and larger demographic pattern. As other historians have also pointed out, migration to North America from both Europe and Asia was integral to the expansion of a world capitalist system. The development of industrial capitalism in the North American West, in turn, created a growing demand for labor. Parallel processes that disrupted existing economic patterns in both Europe and Japan gave rise to new patterns of migration, first to urban centers and, in time, to destinations beyond what were often newly defined national borders. The willingness of increasing numbers of labor migrants to travel to faraway places to find work was itself partly a product of the extension of industrial capitalism to places like the United States and the Canadian West.[2] Capital development on an increasingly global scale also played a key role in shaping Western imperialist strategies in Asia during the nineteenth century, including the United States' interest in extending its commercial influence to Japan.[3] A great majority of the sweeping social, political, and economic changes that followed the Meiji Restoration in 1868, which instated a new government in Japan, were a direct result of Japan's determination to resist Western encroachments by meeting them head on. Japan's efforts to achieve industrial and economic parity with the West and to redefine itself as a modern and civilized nation in Western eyes, helped to create the conditions that led to the emigration of many thousands of Japanese laborers to other parts of the world—including the North American West—in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[4]

Although European and Asian migrants went abroad with similar objectives in mind, Japanese and other Asian migrants faced a range of race-based legal barriers in both the United States and Canada intended not only to limit their numbers but to direct those who did arrive toward particular industries. All immigrants encountered prejudice of one kind or another, but anti-Asian prejudice was written into law and integrated into the very structure of society to a degree that distinguished it from the challenges that others faced. Had ever more restrictive immigration laws not interfered, migrant streams from Japan and other parts of Asia might well have come to resemble more closely, in terms of relative numbers, those from Europe. Instead, European immigrants—roughly 23 million during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—far outnumbered the 270,000 Japanese who arrived in the United States and Canada during the same period.[5] Partly responsive to hostile immigration policies and attitudes in North America, however, the Meiji government's own approach to emigration also reflected cultural attitudes specific to Japan that were a product of its own historical experience, including a persistent concern with mibun.

Rooted in a system of formal status and caste divisions reinforced by law for most of the preceding two and a half centuries of Tokugawa rule, hierarchical views of society and nation and traditional ways of understanding status and caste difference infused Meiji society. Not only were social tensions a major factor leading to the Meiji Restoration, but historical status categories were a major target of the reforms implemented by the Meiji oligarchs during the early decades of the Meiji period. An integral part of a larger effort to prove to Western nations that Japan was a modern nation deserving of recognition as an equal, the changes instituted by the new Meiji government reverberated throughout Japanese society, affecting all Tokugawa status groups in significant ways and leading, in the case of *samurai* and outcastes, to a complete redefinition of their roles. Embedded in the very framework of Japanese society for well over two centuries, however, mibun was at the core of the way in which people in Japan understood their place in the world, with the result that the perceptions of difference associated with the Tokugawa status system proved remarkably tenacious. Meiji-era Japanese emigrants, as a result, often carried these ideas and associated ways of viewing the world with them went they went abroad decades after the formal abolition of the

status system. Culturally distinct ways of understanding difference shaped not just the immigrants' responses to the race-based hostility they encountered in the North American West but also informed both the Meiji government's attitude toward its own emigrants and its responses to the legal barriers that its subjects encountered in the North American West.

Particularly revealing in this context is the idea of outcaste status. Although it was abolished as a matter of law together with other status categories at the beginning of the Meiji period, social taboos associated with outcaste status proved more difficult to eradicate. Because Meiji-era notions of race and caste difference came into sharp focus around the idea of outcaste status, it serves as an especially poignant example of the ways the consideration of status issues internal to particular immigrant groups can illuminate their strategies with respect to the dominant society in the countries to which they traveled. Mibun in general, and perceptions associated with outcaste status in particular, not only shaped relations among Japanese immigrants but mediated their responses to both constraints and opportunities in the North American West. Choices made by Meiji-era Japanese immigrants regarding potential livelihoods, for example, were a product of their own association of certain kinds of occupations with outcaste status, as well as a product of economic restrictions imposed by Canada and the United States. White racism, moreover, was offensive not only because it relegated Japanese to the bottom of the race-based labor hierarchies that ordered social relations in both the United States and the Canadian West but because it rendered all Japanese equivalent to outcastes within the context of North American societies and failed to recognize status and caste differences to which Japanese continued to ascribe meaning.

Because Japanese immigrants in all status categories equated their treatment by white racists with that meted out to outcastes in Tokugawa Japan, the idea of outcaste status figured prominently in strategies developed by Meiji diplomats and immigrants alike to challenge exclusionary measures. As a result, their efforts to respond to white racism cannot be fully understood without taking mibun generally and outcaste status in particular into account. Both the status system and outcaste status factored into arguments regarding the composition of Japanese immigrant communities: how race was to be defined and understood, who should be permitted access across national borders, what the relationship

of Japanese immigrant communities was to the larger nation-state, and what the contours of citizenship were. Though not always central to these debates, the idea of outcaste status emerges as a persistent theme in the rhetorical encounters between anti-Japanese exclusionists and the governments of Canada and the United States. It also intersects with the issue of illegality and sheds light on the internal dynamics of prewar immigrant communities. In that context, it enables us to challenge their depiction as homogeneous and devoid of the kinds of racist attitudes that plagued the dominant societies. Communities of Japanese living abroad, specifically, *nikkei* communities in North America, we come to realize, were always more complex and divided along various axes than Japanese community leaders, on the one hand, and white racists, on the other, found it expedient to admit.

A discussion of word usage is important here. Because the official terms used to refer to outcastes during the Tokugawa era were profoundly derogatory, efforts have been made since that time to find ways to discuss the historical experience of people in these categories without invoking the same pejorative connotations. Although the term *burakumin* is not universally accepted, it is the one most widely used by English-language scholars to refer to former outcastes and their descendants. *Burakumin,* a shortened form of *hisabetsu burakumin* (discriminated-against village people), has begun to assume negative connotations in Japan, however. To avoid these connotations, a new term has been coined that is gradually being adopted: *buraku jūmin* (village residents). Expressly intended to avoid labeling the person, it instead emphasizes ancestral links to particular places of residence.[6] For this reason, and because it highlights the centrality of place to the larger narrative here, I use the term *buraku jūmin* to refer both to people categorized as outcastes in Tokugawa Japan and to those who became the objects of prejudice at later times based on their descent from outcaste groups. To faithfully reflect original sources, I make an exception where a particular term appears in a direct quotation or is otherwise germane to the topic under discussion. Retaining the term used in the original situates it in historical context and serves to illustrate the vehement and irrational nature of the prejudice that people in this category faced. The associated imagery also brings into sharp focus the intensity of the immigrant reaction to white racism when, as in the brief poem that introduces this chapter, the two are equated.

Also important to understand are other less formal euphemisms or code words that have been used at various junctures. Code words give us access to gaps between apparent and intended meanings, which provide a basis for better understanding attitudes and subtexts not openly stated. Ambiguity is built into the very structure of the Japanese language. It is entirely possible, for example, to form complete sentences in Japanese without ever identifying the subject of the sentence. The added ambiguity offered by euphemism provides a way to communicate subtexts and hidden meanings while avoiding the discomfort associated with more direct language.[7] Subtexts also make it easier for speakers to deny any prejudice on their part. Euphemism is sometimes used to diffuse negative connotations, but it can also be used to perpetuate them. Meiji-era Japanese immigrants, for example, often used the phrase *saika no kyū,* generally translated into English as "lowest of the low," where reference to buraku jūmin or other outcaste groups was intended. While using the phrase avoided use of the derogatory *eta,* with which Meiji Japanese in North America tended to be most familiar, its intended meaning is clear.[8]

A very loud silence has muffled discussion of the buraku issue not only in Japan but also in the context of Japanese immigration to North America. That silence, I came to realize in the course of my research, obscures not just the presence of buraku jūmin among Japanese immigrants abroad but also the nuanced nature of their reaction to racial bias. Silence also contributes to the prejudice against buraku jūmin that persists to this day in some circles.[9] The abolition of outcaste status in Japan in 1871 has itself, ironically, reinforced the silence that surrounds this issue. There are some who argue that any discussion of outcaste status and its historical consequences only perpetuates a prejudice that would not otherwise continue to exist.[10] But silence is not the same as absence of discrimination. This was made clear to me when a classmate at a Japanese high school showed me a pejorative hand gesture used to signal the identity of others she identified as burakumin, even as she warned me to avoid them on the ground that they were purportedly dangerous.

The silence that surrounds the buraku issue also manifests itself in other ways. More than once I have opened a journal to the pages where an article on this subject was published and have found it cut out of the journal. This proved to be the case, for example, with an article in the

University of Washington's copy of volume 37 of the journal *Sociology and Social Research*. The article had clearly been scissored out, and a note in the margin indicates that the damage was noted by the library in June 1982. The article that was cut out was entitled "The Eta: Japan's Indigenous Minority."[11] It is hard to read such an act as anything but an effort to suppress knowledge about buraku jūmin. Whether it is an act of prejudice or an attempt to resist that prejudice is more difficult to discern. The stark reality of the missing pages, however, is graphic evidence of an effort on someone's part to deny the reader any knowledge of their content.

Silence is also a tool that those descended from people historically classified as outcastes have been able to use to obscure their identity in order to avoid the stigma that still continues to be associated with such status among at least some Japanese. Because the only sure way to identify an individual as buraku jūmin today is to link that person to an ancestral community in a particular geographical location, the ability to obscure ancestral ties to places where outcastes lived during historical times offers the possibility of "passing" and avoiding the prejudice that might otherwise be directed at their descendant. The need to resort to silence and to obscure one's own historical identity to live free of prejudice, however, has also allowed many of the old stereotypes to persist. For buraku jūmin to succeed even during the twentieth century has often been contingent on their ability to draw attention away from their buraku origins.[12] The myth that buraku jūmin were less capable than other Japanese thus goes unchallenged, and the evidence that would expose it as false remains hidden from those who embrace it.

The continuing power of negative stereotypes on both sides of the Pacific well into the twentieth century has made historians reluctant to raise the issue of outcaste status in Japanese emigration histories.[13] Some eight decades after it was abolished in Japan, for example, Robert B. Hall, Sr., reported that "ordinary people, in the parts of Japan where outcasts are numerous, are very much afraid of and repulsed by Buraku people."[14] Even after World War II, George De Vos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma reported in the 1960s, negative attitudes included the perception that buraku jūmin were dangerous, capable of inflicting bodily harm, contagious as bearers of disease, " 'vulgar,' 'dirty,' 'disgusting,' and 'quarrelsome.' "[15] The acute sensitivity that such stereotypes produce led the author of the

only study to examine the issue of outcaste status in North America to use a pseudonym to disguise his identity.[16] Even today, the issue of outcaste status continues to create so much discomfort among some *nikkeijin* (people of Japanese ancestry) in Canada and the United States that I have at times been asked to avoid it as a subject of scholarly inquiry. While those who made this request denied any prejudice on their own part, they expressed concern that if the question were raised, people in Japan would think that all Japanese immigrants were buraku jūmin. Implied in their concern is the fear that this would cause Japanese to view all Japanese abroad in a more negative light. What such expressions of fear illustrate is the pervasive and continuing nature of these historical prejudices. As Edward Fowler has pointed out, however, we have an obligation as scholars not to allow such negative stereotypes to shape our own scholarship.[17] In my observation, it is not acknowledgment of the historical experience of buraku jūmin that gives rise to prejudice but the negative characterizations projected onto people in this category by those who do not understand that their prejudice is based not on objective fact but on historically constructed ideas. Like racial discrimination, caste prejudice tells us little of substance about the people against whom it is directed but a great deal about those who accept it.

Widely denied though it is, caste prejudice is still widespread enough to make it impossible to quantify or directly trace the migrations of buraku jūmin in definitive terms.[18] I focus instead on the role that the idea of outcaste status played in shaping the behavior and attitudes of Meiji-era immigrants to North America. Even in this context, the prejudices and negative perceptions associated with outcaste status can be difficult to pin down. In much the same way that popular discourse surrounding racism in post–civil rights America insists on its disappearance through official acts and silence even as it persists in everyday life, caste-based prejudice tends to be "hidden though tacitly practiced."[19] "Racism exists as an object of vehement denial but its positive existence is elusive," and so does prejudice against buraku jūmin. Like the study of race, the study of caste becomes the "study of a submerged phenomenon, consciously hidden and obliquely discussed."[20] Although direct evidence also exists, the oblique and submerged nature of caste-based distinctions makes it necessary to adopt an indirect approach in studying this way of understanding difference. Direct expressions of bias or animus also exist,

but to fully appreciate their significance as a force shaping the attitudes of Meiji-era Japanese immigrants in the North American West, it is necessary to construct what lawyers call a "but for" argument: but for the presence of a particular factor, a certain result could not have been obtained.[21] Much as an astronomer might infer the presence of unseen planets from variations in the orbits of those that are visible, I argue that some behaviors and strategies of Meiji Japanese can be fully explained only when the idea of outcaste status, and attitudes regarding mibun more generally, are taken into consideration.

Although I was repeatedly told that the submerged nature of caste-based prejudice made a study involving outcaste status in North America impossible, I realized that there were numerous, if brief, references to outcaste status in a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, from local Japanese-language newspapers to autobiographical accounts, guidebooks, oral histories, poems, and essays written to refute claims made by anti-Japanese exclusionists. Often no more than a few lines in length, these references are frequently worded in ways that made plain the power of the idea of outcaste status and the association with pollution and marginality embedded in it. Taken together, the many separate short references tell a larger story about how status- and caste-based ways of understanding difference contributed to shaping the lives of Meiji-era Japanese emigrants and mediated their attempts to negotiate the racial divides that ordered social relations in the North American West.

Like race, caste is a social and historical construction that lacks any meaningful biological basis.[22] Indeed, the idea of outcaste status is compelling, in part, precisely because those categorized as outcastes in Tokugawa Japan were effectively racialized through sumptuary laws that made social differences visible, even though there was no discernible physical difference between those denoted outcastes and others. Because race and caste are constructed categories, both depend on convoluted rationalizations to justify the differences they purport to describe. George De Vos observes that the rationalizations supporting race- and caste-based distinctions tend to be rooted in different mythological constructs. "Racism," he notes, "is usually based on a secularized pseudo-scientific biological mythology," whereas "caste is often based on a pseudo-historical religious mythology."[23] Given the absence of physical differences to which caste categories can be ascribed, Gerald D. Berreman

suggests that caste requires even more "physical and psychic energy" to maintain than does race.[24] Notwithstanding the differences between race and caste, the parallels are such that a closer examination of their intersections and overlaps in Japanese immigrant communities in the North American West has the potential to provide new insights into their deployment.[25] The intersection of race and caste also provides a framework for analyzing and understanding some of the complex ways in which race was experienced by immigrants who organized their own perceptions of difference in terms of caste and status distinctions. Although sociologists distinguish race and caste, the race-based hierarchies established in the U.S. and Canadian West, and the legal mechanisms used to enforce it, paralleled those of the caste system with which Meiji immigrants were more familiar.

As the protracted silence regarding the real experience of slavery in U.S. historiography reveals, nikkei histories are not alone in avoiding topics regarded as likely to undermine the image the community desires to project.[26] Community histories of all ethnic groups are subject to similar kinds of constraints. Like nikkei histories in both Canada and the United States, other ethnic histories are also often circumscribed by efforts to respond to unfair and stereotyped representations of their communities.[27] Standard ethnic histories, Rolf Knight and Maya Koizumi observe, are nothing more than "bowdlerized tales which while seeming to promote an appreciation for cultural diversity mainly tend to denigrate the real vitality and history of the people involved." The components of such histories, they argue, can be readily identified as "early settlers, initial hardships overcome by hard work and frugality, an invariable commitment to political quiescence and conservatism, eventual payoff in modest financial security, unique cultural values and an ethos never fully understandable to outsiders, warm and strong family ties, and the mention of a few Horatio Algers and 'contributions to [North American] culture.' " Most ethnic histories, they conclude, "are primarily reflective of the views and interests of political brokers or of certain elements of an ethnic bourgeoisie." Few topics are "more taboo than internal class division," with the result that most authentic ethnic histories are untranslated.[28]

This book is an attempt to challenge the taboo to which Knight and Koizumi refer as it pertains to Japanese immigration history, in order to

tell a larger story about the ways in which two culturally distinct ways of understanding difference—one focused on caste and mibun and the other on race—overlapped and intersected in the North American West. The inclusion of buraku jūmin in particular, and the consideration of outcaste status more generally, illuminates aspects of that history that are otherwise obscured and sheds new light on how Japanese immigrants understood and responded to white racism, infusing their efforts to position Japanese within the racial hierarchies of both the United States and Canada with new meaning. Acknowledging the presence of buraku jūmin among those who emigrated may also contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Japanese immigration history itself.

Buraku jūmin are important in their own right, as entitled to acknowledgment as any other human beings. Their presence in the story of immigration, as well, makes it possible to begin to raise questions regarding the extent to which Japanese emigrated to avoid social constraints that persisted in Meiji Japan. The fact that some Japanese emigrated for social reasons makes it possible, in turn, to challenge the convention that Meiji-era emigration was fundamentally different in character from European emigration. As Sucheng Chan and others have observed, there is a longstanding tendency in the literature "to dichotomize Asians and Europeans who have come to America as 'sojourners' and 'immigrants' respectively."[29] Although historians have increasingly recognized this distinction as false, characterizations of Japanese migrants as interested primarily in economic gain continue to go largely unchallenged and remain imbedded in the popular imagination, as they are in older immigration histories.

Place, space, and migration—and movement from place to place—are central to this narrative. Because ancestry, occupation, and geography combined to fix outcastes in social space, place was integral to the maintenance of outcaste status during the Tokugawa period, and knowledge of an individual's place of origin had the potential—even after the abolition of outcaste status—to reveal ancestral ties to locations where those categorized as outcastes had lived. By providing access to new social landscapes and distancing individuals from the places to which outcaste status was historically linked, migration offered the possibility of reconfigured social relationships.[30] It was because the Japanese "geographies of status" could not be exactly reproduced in North America that migration

had the potential to undermine social categories rooted in place.[31] To illuminate this dynamic, I begin by describing the social contexts in which Meiji emigrants lived and worked in Japan. I then follow them across the Pacific Ocean and across the borders of the United States, Canada, and Mexico to the various parts of the North American West to which they traveled.

Space, place, and movement are also important in the context of understanding conditions in the regions to which the emigrants traveled. Because the power of national governments is also bounded and linked to space, new geographies of status structured around racial categories written into law by each nation differed from place to place. For that reason, movement through and across the borders of the physical and jurisdictional spaces represented by the United States, Canada, and Mexico enabled emigrants to position themselves in different ways in relation to each nation and, in so doing, to rearticulate their legal status to reach their intended destinations.

The regional focus of this study is broad. Like European emigrants, Japanese emigrants, more often than not, traveled to a series of linked regions and not to a single destination. Japanese emigrants settled throughout the North American West, from British Columbia to northern Mexico, including the Pacific coast and the intermountain regions on both sides of the international borders that transect North America. Here, then, "North American West" is broadly defined to include the United States west of the Mississippi River, western Canada, and northern Mexico. Although many Japanese emigrants traveled to North America through Hawaii, the primary focus here is on the mainland. The world in which the immigrants lived was nevertheless always also a transpacific world. For all immigrants, as Gunther Peck has explained, the "boundaries of local community" were always understood "in close connection with the imagined communities of race and nation."[32] Not only did Japanese and Europeans retain ties to the old country, but—in the case of Japanese—those ties were often reinforced by exclusionary laws to a degree that has not always been recognized. Both Japanese and Europeans made multiple crossings, with the result that distinctions between settler and sojourner remained fluid and unstable. Migrants who intended to stay returned to their home countries, and others who intended to return put down permanent roots. Japanese in North America, moreover, were

continuously in conversation with one another across the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico borders and with supporters and critics alike on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

Partly a work of transnational history that traces the persistence of Tokugawa status categories in new social and geographical contexts, this book is also a comparative study of the legal constraints faced by Japanese immigrants in both Canada and the United States. Although the international borders are largely irrelevant to a discussion of perceptions of social difference, the borders become crucial in comparing the various categories of exclusion imposed on immigrants by both nations. Differences in the constitutional structure of Canada and the United States forced each nation to adopt different kinds of legal mechanisms to give form to a shared anti-Japanese bias. Comparing the two illuminates parallels and differences in the ways the United States and Canada used law to establish and maintain racial boundaries. It also serves to isolate rhetorical strategies developed by Meiji diplomats to challenge exclusionary laws as specific to one nation or the other and makes clear the extent to which Japanese immigrants used their ability to migrate from one jurisdiction to another to facilitate the realization of their own individual goals.

Within the context of this larger discussion about the legal environment that Meiji-era immigrants confronted in the North American West, I argue for a more complicated understanding of illegality and what it represented in the context of Meiji immigrant society. Despite the persistent efforts of Meiji officials to discourage any activity that marked Japanese as illegal or undesirable, the determination of certain immigrants to subvert or avoid race-based legal constraints put them at odds not only with U.S. and Canadian officials but with their own government. Some believed that evading racially motivated entry requirements was a legitimate form of resistance to growing webs of exclusionary law in both countries that unfairly targeted Japanese. Their actions, however, raised for others fears that such challenges would serve only to render all Japanese subjects the functional equivalent of outcastes in U.S. and Canadian society. Illegality loomed as a particular threat because it appeared to tarnish the reputation not only of individuals who defied such laws but the reputation of Japan as a nation and nikkeijin as a whole, such that it could be used by exclusionists to justify the relegation of all nikkeijin to the lowest levels of society in both countries. Regardless of

migrants' own intentions, however, they were at times rendered illegal simply because they were caught between the different bodies of law generated by the nations to whose jurisdiction they were subject—the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Japan.

By the end of the nineteenth century, efforts to create the United States and Canada as racialized spaces had resulted in a complex, cross-Pacific dialogue about race, caste, status, and gender in which Meiji immigrants and diplomats, anti-Japanese exclusionists, and the governments of Japan, Canada, the United States, and Mexico all participated. The debates occurred both at the intersection of race and caste and at the intersection of nation and empire. While mibun retained its importance well into the early decades of the twentieth century, what defined social status was modified and complicated both by immigrant interaction with conditions in the North American West and by evolving understandings of identity and citizenship that were themselves a product of that interaction. Meiji-era Japanese immigrants were never simply victims of others' efforts to define them as outsiders. Rather, they contested and avoided the legal barriers erected by the governments of Canada and the United States, and they imposed exclusionary categories of their own in the process of defining who "belonged" within their own communities. In the North American West, two separate and distinct cultures of exclusion and ways of understanding difference—both in flux—overlapped, reinforcing or undermining one another to shape new kinds of Japanese identities. The result was a far more complex and dynamic process of negotiation and adaptation to conditions in North America than the simpler paradigms of heritage or assimilation that have framed so much of prior immigration history can comprehend.