Japanese immigration to Colombia: the quest for Eldorado?

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JAPANESE IMMIGRATION TO COLOMBIA: THE QUEST FOR *ELDORADO*?

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the
Department of East Asian Studies
University of Durham

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DECLARATION

The material contained in this thesis has never been submitted for a degree in this or any other university. It is based on the author's individual research and has not been published before.

Abstract

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This thesis is a cultural history of Japanese immigration to Colombia throughout the twentieth century. It looks at the circumstances under which Japanese migration was envisioned by Colombia and Japan and has three basic aims: first, to identify the expectations of Colombia regarding foreign immigration, and of the Japanese government in promoting emigration abroad; second, to explain the process of adaptation by the immigrants to the new social and physical environment, so different from their country of origin; and third, to discuss the significance of the 'U-turn *nikkei*' labour migration to Japan.

In this work, the activities of the emigration company *Kaigai Kôgyô Kabushiki Gaisha* are examined. This company, in association with the Overseas Cooperative of Fukuoka Prefecture, planned and conducted rural immigration to Colombia. In addition to a summary of the immigration legislation, an overview of all immigration plans is presented. Because of the role immigration played in shaping the relations between the two countries, early diplomatic and economic relationships are also considered. Special attention is given to the protection of the Panama Canal zone by the United States, a fact that deterred Japanese immigration to Colombia.

This thesis has involved the examination of a diverse range of sources, dispersed in several archives and libraries in Colombia, England, Japan, and the United States. Bibliographical research was combined with fieldwork, carried out among the Japanese immigrants and their descendants in Colombia as well as Japan. This work hopes to contribute to a better understanding of Japanese emigration abroad, adding a new perspective to the study of international immigration to Colombia.

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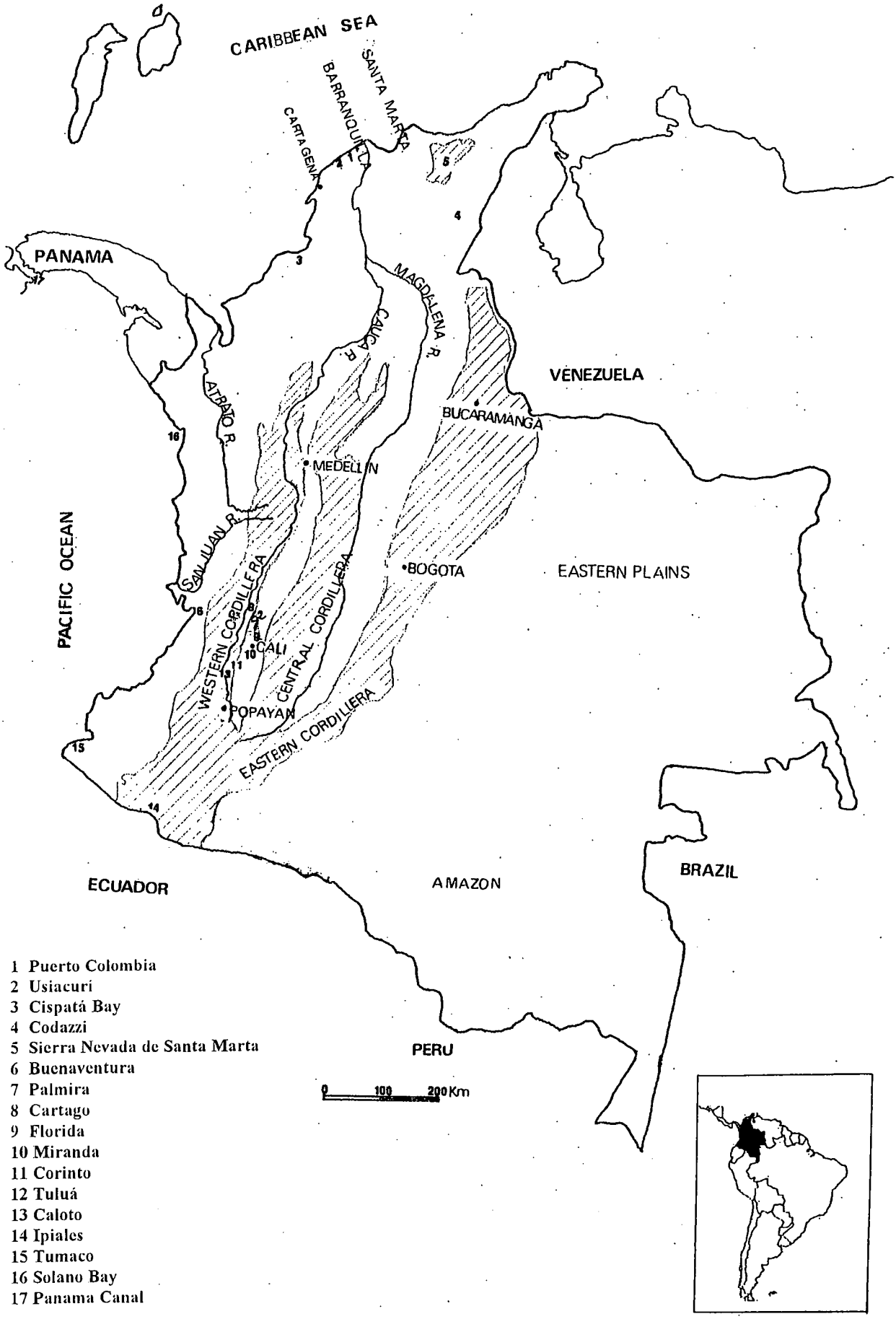
ABBREVIATIONS

ACET	Archive of the Colombian Embassy in Tokyo
AECJ	Archive of Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo
AEOH	Archivo Enrique Olaya Herrera
AJKD	Archive of José Kaoru Doku
ANC	Archivo Nacional de Colombia
BLAA	Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango
BMS	Biblioteca del Ministerio de Salud
DRO	Diplomatic Record Office (Gaimushô Gaikô Shiryôkan)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FO	Foreign Office
HAHR	*Hispanic American Historical Review*
ILR	*International Labour Review*
JICA	Japan International Cooperation (Kokusai Kyoryôku Jigyôdan
KKKK	Kaigai Kôgyô Kabushiki Gaisha (Overseas Development Company Ltd.)
MRE	Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores
NDL	National Diet Library (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan)
NAUS	National Archives of the United States
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PRO	Public Record Office
RG	Record Group
RNA	*Revista Nacional de Agricultura*
SAJA	Sociedad de Agricultores Japoneses



1 Puerto Colombia
2 Usiacuri
3 Cispatá Bay
4 Codazzi
5 Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
6 Buenaventura
7 Palmira
8 Cartago
9 Florida
10 Miranda
11 Corinto
12 Tuluá
13 Caloto
14 Ipiales
15 Tumaco
16 Solano Bay
17 Panama Canal

PREFACE

Japanese expansion abroad began in the early Meiji period, after the country changed its policy of isolation. Western power and influence in the world, achieved through expansion, colonization and emigration, was seen as a model to be emulated by Japanese in the process of opening the country to the outside world. From the beginning, then, expansion meant territorial acquisition by military or peaceful means. Yet expansionism was nothing new in Japan. Before the interval of voluntary seclusion of more than two centuries, that ended with the arrival of Commodore Perry's American squadron in 1853, Japan had fought its neighbours and enlarged its commerce abroad. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there had been a tradition of expansionism, when merchants, warriors and adventurers went as far as Southeast Asia and South America.

Through peaceful expansion across the ocean, Japan could open new markets, acquire raw materials, and find places for its growing population. Initially, emigration moved mainly in the direction of Hawaii and continental America. After the movement against Japanese immigration was initiated in California, culminating in the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, Japan turned its eyes to Latin America. Brazil, Mexico and Peru were the countries that received the greatest numbers of Japanese immigrants, at the same time that commercial

links began to develop. Although less significant numerically, with a few exceptions, most Latin American countries accepted some Japanese immigrants.

Emigration abroad was, from the beginning, controlled and sanctioned by the Japanese government. With the issue of the Emigrant Protection Law that took effect in 1897, the Japanese government defined what was legal in terms of overseas emigration, and how to regulate the emigration process. The central government and prefectural authorities were in charge of the control and organization of emigration. The creation of emigration companies and emigration societies in the prefectures helped to carry out the projects abroad. However, not all immigrants who travelled to Latin America went under emigration company programmes. Many travelled independently, without intervention from the companies, as happened with Argentina, the fourth most popular destination for Japanese immigrants. Others benefitted from government sponsorship; this was the case with projects to Brazil, Colombia and Paraguay before the Second World War. This, however, did not mean that the receiving country had responsibilities or obligations towards the immigrants. Their immigration to Colombia was a one-sided affair.

This work is concerned with Japanese immigration to Colombia. Independent travellers and those who were part of a project, are both included in this study. At the time the first group of people from Fukuoka Prefecture was ready to travel to Colombia, the Japanese government had changed to a new emigration policy. This policy meant a strategy of permanent settlements abroad. The bulk of immigrants to Brazil and Peru went initially as labourers for the plantation farms. After 1924, under the recommendations made by the Emigration Council of Japan, immigration to some countries became a

government organized enterprise. The coordination of immigration through the establishment of permanent agricultural colonies was handled by the emigration agents. Even in cases where immigrants were under contract to a company, they were not promised a return ticket. The three groups of colonists in the department of Cauca were under contract to an emigration company, under the sponsorship of the Overseas Cooperative Society of Fukuoka, and the central government. They were expected to engage in agriculture, and to become permanent settlers in Colombia.

This thesis attempts not only to examine the immigration process, but also to look at how it has influenced the lives of the immigrants. The present study is different from most others in that it explores the experiences of the people who migrated from the perspective of both the receiving and sending countries. A good number of studies of immigration focus mainly on the social and economic impact of the immigrants on the receiving country. However, it is not only the changes and developments they may bring to the host country that should be considered. The immigrants themselves also change as they are relocated to a new environment. Cultural incompatibility, hardship, broken homes, separation from a familiar life style, and the like, are aspects that cause alienation in the individual. But the immigrant is usually a strong survivor. Transplanted to a strange environment, they will adopt and adapt values and institutions, and find meaning to their new lives.

The emigrants develop certain mechanisms for economic and social survival. Some will try to disguise their foreignness, while others will take the path of preserving their ethnic identity. Individuals acting within a society are seen by others in a different way from how they see themselves. A person might

choose not to identify socially or ethnically with a group, but society puts the individual within fixed categories. As a survival strategy, a person may identify with more than one social category. The degree of identity will depend on how important it is for the individual to retain his or her own cultural identity. Considering that ethnic identity has an important affective dimension, it is always the individual who provides the starting point for discussion. The Japanese, like other ethnic groups, such as the Jews, have been very successful in maintaining their ethnic identity. Movements involving persistence of identity have occurred in the past. Interest in the revival of their cultural roots has flourished among immigrants and their descendants, especially in the United States and Latin America, following Japan's economic recovery from the defeat of the Pacific War. We are witnessing a current interest in recreating Japanese traditions, in learning the language, and in giving Japanese names to the newborn children among the *nikkei* population of Colombia. Since the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was revised in 1990, the government has permitted the Japanese descendants, up to the third generation, to enter and work in Japan. The possibility of immigration to one's ancestral homeland has given rise to a number of external manifestations of cultural identity, mainly in some South American countries, from where the influx of *nikkei* workers into Japan has become a prominent feature of the 1990s.

This thesis is the result of five years of investigation carried out in the archives and libraries of Colombia, England, Japan, and the United Sates of America. The research was completed with three fieldwork sessions in Colombia, done in 1995, 1997 and 1998. During that time I became acquainted with the Japanese immigrants and their descendants, who live on the northern Coast and in

the Southwest of Colombia. I also conducted research among Colombians of Japanese ancestry who are actually working in Japan. I want to thank all of them for allowing my intrusion into their private lives, and for entrusting me with the information they provided.

I was extremely lucky to have met Don Starr, when I was teaching Japanese students on the programme that Teikyo University established in Durham. I had been toying with the idea for some time of doing a serious study of the subject presented here, but it was only after we had a conversation about it that I had the courage to embark on this project. Without his support and valuable advice, this thesis would have not been possible. To my supervisor goes my deepest gratitude for his guidance in all phases of this work.

I am especially grateful to Dr Shoichi Okinaga, President of Teikyo University in Japan, for the research support and the generous monetary contributions provided to the teaching staff of the university.

Many colleagues, friends and family suggested reading material, shared books, articles and documents, and sent information through the internet. I have benefitted from their ideas and suggestions. Many thanks to Gustavo Andrade Lleras, Jaime Barrera Parra, Albert Bokma, María Cristina Dorado, Louise Fawcett, Elena Fernández, Yuji Kikuchi, Camila Loboguerrero, Brian McBeth, Toshihiko Miyaji, Eduardo Posada-Carbó, Felisa Rey Marcos, María Alejandra Reyes Sanmiguel, and Naotaro Shimizu. I am also grateful to Elvira Cuervo de Jaramillo for giving me access to the family letters of his late father, Consul Carlos Cuervo Borda. Toshiya Araki helped me by reading Japanese written sources. Bruce White read the manuscript and made useful observations. Pam Westwood

patiently corrected the grammar and style. For the shortcomings of this work I am, of course, solely responsible.

I am indebted to the following institutions for their research facilities and to the people working there for their enormous help: the National Archives in Washington, the National Archive in Bogotá, the Luis Angel Arango Library in Bogotá, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, the Durham University Library, and the Diplomatic Record Office in Tokyo. On the latter, I want to acknowledge in particular Fumio Kumamoto for the help provided in finding and reading documents.

My appreciation goes to Margarita Abello for her hospitality during my stay in Barranquilla. And also to Leonor Herrera, who offered the comfort of her home in Bogotá. During the last field research visit, the Sisters of the Annunciation kindly provided me with the peace and safety of their convent near Palmira.

After I had begun this work, sadly my dear teacher and mentor Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff from my college years in Colombia passed away. To his memory I dedicate this thesis with affection and endless gratitude.

I. THE HOST COUNTRY

1. Introduction

Colombia was not a place that attracted immigrants throughout the massive overseas displacement to Latin America, during the second half of the nineteenth century until the Great Depression. Argentina and Brazil, and to a lesser extent Uruguay, received the majority of the eleven million immigrants to Latin America between 1850 and 1930.[1] Smaller numbers moved to Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Peru, where the impact, in demographic and social terms, was as significant as in other countries. Colombia in contrast drew little immigration. The attempts made by the government were not adequate to develop the fields for professional enterprise nor to attract the humble settler.[2] Up to 1939, the number of foreign-born immigrants was quite low, not exceeding 0.35 of the national population.[3]

Japanese immigration to Latin America did not begin until the end of the nineteenth century. The first group of twenty-eight *colonos* and six free emigrants arrived in Puerto San Benito, Mexico, in 1897.[4] Two years later, the first contract labourers, consisting of 790 Japanese men brought to work in

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1 M. Mörner, *Adventurers and Proletarians: The Story of Migrants in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1985), p. 47.

2 See M. Deas, 'Colombia', in *South America, Central America and the Caribbean* (London, 1985), p. 216, and his 'La influencia inglesa y otras influencias en Colombia, 1880-1930' in A. Tirado Mejía (ed.), *Nueva Historia de Colombia* (Bogotá, 1984), Vol. 3, p. 162.

3 F. Bastos de Avila, *La inmigración en América Latina* (Washington, DC, 1964), p. 15.

4 M. E. Ota Mishima, *Siete migraciones japonesas en México, 1890-1978* (México [1982] 1985), p. 42.

plantation farms in South America, landed in Puerto Callao, Peru.[5] Since then, Japanese emigrants have gone to work and live in all Latin American countries. The FBI reported in 1943 that there were Japanese 'in every republic in Latin America, except Haiti.'[6] From the Meiji period until the year 1941, the number of passports issued by the Japanese government to travellers who applied as emigrants to Latin America totalled 244, 536. Up to then, the number of passports for people bound for Colombia was 229.[7] A comparison of these two figures shows how remarkably insignificant the number of travellers were to Colombia (see Table 2.1).

After Colombia and Japan signed the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation in 1908, there were no restrictions on either side regarding residents or visitors. They were granted the right to come freely, to trade, to remain and reside in all places or ports where citizens of other nations were permitted. Commercial and diplomatic relations started to develop. By the year 1918 the first Honorary Consuls had been appointed; one in Yokohama on behalf of Colombia, and a representative of Japanese interests in Bogotá.

The first written information on Japanese entering the country comes from Antonio Izquierdo, a Colombian civil servant. After a business trip, probably in 1908, he went back to his country bringing with him a gardener.[8] This person had worked as a gardener not only for the imperial house, but for Count Okuma as

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[5] C. H. Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru, 1873-1973* (Albuquerque, NM, 1975), 24.

[6] NAUS/0SS 894.20210/220, RG 59, 26 March 1943.

[7] Japan. Gaimushô (ed.), *Waga kokumin no kaigai hatten: ijû hyaku nen no ayumi [shiryô-hen]* (Tokyo, 1971), pp. 140-41.

[8] See A. Izquierdo, *Memorial sobre Agricultura, presentado por Antonio Izquierdo al Congreso de 1909* (Bogotá, 1909), p. 38, and his *Riqueza nacional: el caucho* (Bogotá, 1910), pp. 5, 75; *Nyûshoku sanju nen kinen: Koronbia nihonjin imin-shi* (Tokyo, 1964), p. 10; Japan. Gaimushô (ed.), *Waga kokumin no kaigai hatten: ijû hyaku nen no ajumi [hon pen]* (Tokyo, 1971), p. 176; T. Irie, *Hôjin kaigai hatten-shi* (Tokyo, 1938), Vol. 1, p. 352.

well. It seems to have been an act of friendship on the part of Okuma to have given away his skilful gardener. Izquierdo was the owner of an extensive woodland in the heart of Bogotá, where Tomohiro Kawaguchi[9] could put into practice his abilities and imagination. In 1910, to celebrate the centenary of what was the beginning of independence from Spain, one of the commemorative events was the Industrial Exhibition in Bogotá.[10] It took place on Izquierdo's land, which had been recently designed and planted with trees and flowers by the first known Japanese immigrant to Colombia. After the Exhibition was over, the land was expropriated by the government and converted into *Parque de la Independencia;*[11] the eastern urban area, adjacent to the park, is actually known as *Bosque Izquierdo.*

After 1915, and for the next fifteen years, a small number of Japanese men, all of them single, except for two families, arrived on the Atlantic Coast through the port of Barranquilla. They landed in Colombia, after having tried their luck first in other countries like Cuba, Panama or Peru. The newcomers settled in Barranquilla and Usiacurí, a small town 25 miles south of the former. Barranquilla was by then the country's second largest city, a major industrial and commercial centre, a successful place that attracted the largest number of

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Irie mentions that Izquierdo returned to Colombia in the company of two gardeners and a carpenter.

9 Throughout this work the convention on Japanese names is to put the given name first and the family name last, that is following normal western order, not following traditional Japanese order of family name first. This is because the Japanese immigrants in Colombia adopted the practice of first publishing their Spanish given name, then their Japanese given name, then their Japanese family name.

10 C. Niño Murcia, *Arquitectura y* estado: Contexto y significado de las construcciones del Ministerio de Obras Públicas, Colombia, 1905-1960 (Bogotá, 1991), p. 55; Irie, *Hôjin kaigai hatten-shi*, p. 352; *Nyûshoku sanju nen kinen*, p. 10.

11 Niño Murcia, *Arquitectura y estado*, p. 55.

immigrants.[12] Those who settled in Barranquilla and Usiacurí were few in numbers, and this could have been a good reason to keep them in close contact and communication. As a result of their social interaction, a small community was built up in Barranquilla, under study in this work. Nothing has been published on those people, except the impressions of the former Japanese Ambassador in Bogotá, after a short visit there.[13]

Another community, also studied here in the following chapters, settled initially in the Southwest of Colombia, in the vicinities of Corinto and Caloto. They arrived through Buenaventura in three groups, selected by the Japanese emigration agency, the Overseas Development Company Ltd. (KKKK), in the years 1929 to 1935. Buenaventura was the main port of entry on the Pacific Coast. During the 1920s some independent immigrants had already settled in the cities of Cali and Palmira. The people of the Valle del Cauca and those of Barranquilla, have gradually come to know each other through the existing Japanese associations. At the end of the twentieth century, some of the first generation immigrants in both places are still alive. Throughout these years, many of them and their offspring have strengthened their links at individual and family levels, bonded by the ties of a common experience.[14]

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[12] See L. L. Fawcett, 'Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians in Colombia', in A. Hourani and N. Shehadi (eds.), *The Lebanese in the World. A Century of Emigration* (London, 1992), pp. 361-3; E. Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean: A Regional History 1870-1950* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 188-92; L. Fawcett and E. Posada-Carbó, 'Arabs and Jews in the development of the Colombian Caribbean 1850-1950', in *Immigrants and Minorities* 16, nos. 1& 2 (March-July 1997), pp. 58-9; M. Rodríguez Becerra, and J. Restrepo Restrepo, 'Los empresarios extranjeros de Barranquilla, 1820-1900', in G. Bell Lemus (ed.), *El Caribe colombiano. Selección de textos históricos* (Barranquilla, 1988), p. 140.

[13] See C. Tsukada, 'Barankirya no nikkeijin', in *Gaiko Forum* (August 1991), pp. 86-90.

[14] Except for some scattered references, the only research work published with relation to Japanese immigration to Colombia has been C. H. Gardiner's article, 'Los japoneses y Colombia'(1972). The main sources of information are the commemorative books published by the association of Valle del Cauca, after thirty and fifty years of emigration. The association is preparing the commemorative edition of seventy years of their immigration.

It is not an easy task to be precise about the number and dates as to when Japanese people entered Colombia. There are no reliable records kept at the ports of their entry or departure. Not until 1923, by Decree 1786 of the 31st of December, did the government order the national registration of all foreigners.[15] Immigrants were required to register at the office of the *Policía Nacional*, or at the town hall of their local municipality. Unfortunately, even this data is incomplete, hard to come by and lacks a certain continuity. However, by piecing together the information provided in those registrations, one can see Colombia as part of a pattern involving the movement of immigrants in other countries.

Those who settled on the northern Coast, and the three groups in the southwest, accounts in total, for the highest number of Japanese immigrants. Less than twenty years had passed, when the people who were part of the Overseas Development Company Ltd. programme had totally abandoned the original place that had been chosen by the emigration company. They moved mainly up to the north of the Cauca Valley, where land was much more fertile for agricultural purposes.

At present, most of the first generation of immigrants and their descendants have established their residence in bigger cities. The largest numbers live in the cities of Cali and Palmira, with a few families established in the vicinities of Cartago, Florida, Miranda and Tuluá. Barranquilla contains the largest number on the Atlantic Coast. The capital city of Bogotá ranks fourth with a considerable number of Japanese or their descendants. There are also individuals or families, who have moved to live in other towns like Bucaramanga,

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[15] *Diario Oficial*, nos. 19426 to 19429, 8 January 1924.

Buenaventura, Cartagena, Medellín or Santa Marta. It is difficult to ascertain an exact figure, or to provide an accurate regional census. But by putting together sources provided by the three existing Colombo-Japanese associations, we can roughly calculate their number at the end of the twentieth century as two and a half thousand.

Most of the Japanese who came individually tended to settle down in major towns. Others started to arrive at the invitation of friends or relatives who had preceded them. Also, some women came to marry their arranged grooms, some men as students. In 1960, a group of seventeen single young Japanese men arrived under contract to work for a banana plantation project.[16] After three years this project failed, resulting in six of the members going back to Japan, while the rest remained. Most of those who stayed chose to live mainly in Cali and Palmira, where former colonists from Cauca had moved earlier.[17]

Only on three occasions, did three groups of immigrants enter Colombia brought by an emigration agency. Those three groups of 20 families, totalling 159 people,[18] are the only ones that enjoyed the sponsorship of an emigration company, in association with the Prefecture of Fukuoka. Until now, links with Fukuoka, the native land for most of them, have been maintained without interruption. In their passports, signed by Baron Shidehara, it was stated that they were proceeding to Colombia to engage in agriculture. However, for the host country, Japanese immigrants with the intention of settling as farmers were not and still are not accepted as such. '*Que no son inmigrantes ni se acogen ley*

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[16] See *Koronbia ijū-shi: goju nen no ayumi* (Tenri, 1981), p. 92.
[17] Conversation with Hernando Yoshiyuki Kubo, Cali, 14 August 1995.
[18] The official number of families was of twenty, but in reality they were twenty-four families.

colombiana inmigración' ('They are not registered as immigrants nor have they the right of recourse to Colombian immigration law'), the Minister of Foreign Affairs telexed the Colombian Consul in Yokohama, authorizing the issue of visas, just nine days before their departure.[19]

Accordingly, the Japanese were not admitted as immigrants, neither did they have the right of recourse to the immigration law. If they were not received as immigrants, under which category were they admitted? By law, those who enter the country hold the status of transients, temporary residents without intention to settle, or resident immigrants. The Colombian government was aware that the Japanese emigration company had obtained land for the future settlers. It was also known that whole families would emigrate aiming to work in agriculture. Even so, the government refused to accept the Japanese as farmer immigrants. In this way, the Colombian government could avoid giving the privileges offered to other immigrants with the purpose of dedicating themselves to agriculture. Since Colombia was very much in need of producing staple food, to attract farmer immigrants the government had passed Decree 496 of 1909, enforced by Law 114 of 1922, Law 74 of 1926, and Decree 839 of 1928.[20]

Japanese immigration to Colombia, seen within the general historical, political, economic, and social context of the host country, illustrates the need to promote it, but at the same time, the reasons for rejecting it. An empty country with most of the potentialities and physical resources to develop immigration,

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[19] Carlos Uribe to Carlos Cuervo Borda, 28 September 1929, MRE; Carlos Uribe to Zoji Amari, 28 September 1929, DRO/J.2.1.0.X1-CO1.

[20] *Diario Oficial,* nos. 13847, 26 November 1909, 18693 & 18694, 8 January 1923, 20361, 1 December 1926, and 20799, 22 May 1928 respectively; see also Policía Nacional, *Codificación de las leyes y disposiciones ejecutivas sobre extranjeros, ordenada por el Ministerio de Gobierno y aumentada con varios documentos de vital importancia*, S. Moreno Arango (ed.) (Bogotá, 1929).

limited, restricted and denied it, as illustrated in the case of the Japanese farmers. A brief introduction to the country, with emphasis on the first three decades of the twentieth century, followed by a presentation of Colombian immigration legislation, constitute a set of data that gives a better understanding of the general conditions that shaped the development of the immigration policy. This chapter seeks satisfactory answers to questions such as: What were the expectations of the Colombian government in promoting international immigration? How could these expectations be fulfilled? Why could, or could not, Japanese immigrants be suitable to fulfil such expectations? What were the main reasons for the failure, on both sides, of the projects to bring Japanese immigrants?

A few words must be said about the terminology that appears here. The term 'race' should be read and understood in the time and the circumstances in which it was used. Modern genetics avoids the tendency to talk about race, or even more, to divide humanity into four races. It was Carl Linné, in his 'Systema Naturae' who was the first to classify the Amerindian as a fourth race alongside the Negro, the white and the yellow. It is the marker of skin colour that has categorized mankind by a strictly racial division. Race as a concept has the function of dividing people into groups that are physically distinguishable from each other. Populations characterized by the frequency with which certain genes recur, such as the colour of the skin and eyes, blood group, the type of hair, and anthropometric features, are referred to as the same race. Geographical location, or physical isolation, have been factors contributing to the assignment of ethnic groups to one or another race. It does not mean that isolation necessarily contributes to making a group of persons 'pure', or genetically distinctive.

Environment and diet are factors that make the distinction of the physical appearance of certain human groups more visible.[21]

It is not only that modern genetics avoids the term race, but also that no racial classification is generally agreed upon. As argued by scientists, the existing racial differences are the result of mutation, general selection and genetic drift, which have been maintained by isolation. But, once geographic isolation has been broken, miscegenation has naturally followed. Interbreeding between humans all over the world has happened in such high proportions, that physical features do not follow well-defined boundaries. As argued by Magnus Mörner, in the remote past, miscegenation generally occurred between relative neighbours. It was only after the geographic discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and developments in navigation, that large-scale miscegenation between distant human groups was made possible.[22] Populations of the Caribbean zones and Latin America are the result of early miscegenation in large proportions between Whites, Mongoloids and Blacks.

How much biological effect has miscegenation had? Probably not much, for no basic genetic differences have yet been found among the races of modern man. What needs to be said here, is that pseudoscientific opinions expressed on race have had greater influence than those of serious scholars. For instance, during the nineteenth century, it was argued that the Egyptian culture was developed by the Caucasian rather than by any other race, given the scientific evidence that Blacks were biologically incapable of producing a high grade of

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[21] See M. Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston, MA, 1967), pp. 3-4, and T. H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London, 1993), pp. 4-6.

[22] Mörner, *Race Mixture*, p. 4.

civilization. These kinds of arguments that sustained theses of inherent biological inferiority were used to produce a scholarly justification for slavery. Likewise, theories of racial difference, claimed that the mixing of races brought about degeneration, infertility and barbarism in ancient Egypt. These theories fused with the atmosphere of the cultural pessimism of the late nineteenth century, affirming that the Western world was degenerating because of the mixing of races.[23]

Another topic for consideration is how positivism, as the predominant philosophy in Europe, influenced Latin American thought during and after the second half of the nineteenth century. Auguste Comte's positive principles characterized by the intimate and insoluble combination of order and progress were not only adopted but adapted in Latin America. Order and progress did not go together but alternated, according to which political party was in power: the Conservatives or the Liberals. The positivists claimed credit for reforming obsolete political institutions, for reforming penal codes, for bringing the industrial revolution, for reforming education, for destroying the traditional power of the Catholic Church, for expanding national frontiers, and for introducing international immigration. After gaining independence, Latin American countries faced the problem of having immense deserted areas. To populate became a priority. But with whom? 'Every European who comes to our shores brings us more civilization in his habits ... than many books of philosophy,' affirmed Juan B. Alberdi, one of the most influential Argentinean positivist followers. This is one of many examples that can be used to demonstrate that those influenced by the spread of the philosophy of positivism, were indeed convinced that White

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[23] R. Young, 'Egypt in America: Black Athena, racism and colonial discourse', in A. Rattansi and S. Westwood (eds.), *Racism, Modernity and Identity: On the Western Front* (Cambridge,

Europeans were the best candidates to populate Latin America because of their innate superiority. We can see in this example the impact of a racism derived from European positivism, and the extent to which it influenced Latin American thought.[24]

Once the Latin American countries enjoyed the freedom to regulate their own legislation, some of them formulated the desire to populate their land with White Europeans. In the immigration law of some countries, the desired race was stipulated. Such was the case of Venezuela, which prohibited the entry of all races but Europeans, as specified by the Immigration Law of 1894, Article 9.[25] This law was later reinforced by Article 5 of the Immigration and Colonization Law of 28 July 1936 that states which people may enter the country as immigrants, excluding from this category every one not of the white race.[26] In the case of Paraguay, Article 14 of the Immigration Law, contained a clause forbidding the consulates or immigration agencies to issue immigration certificates to all those of yellow or black race.[27] It is not intended to suggest that race was the predominant factor in allowing immigrants from abroad into Latin America. There are also other elements to be considered, such as commerce, nternal and external politics. But using the idea of race as an ethnic ideology, international

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1994), pp. 159-67.

[24] For a detailed and commented work on bibliography on several countries, the best source of information is R. L. Jr. Woodward (ed.), *Positivism in Latin America, 1850-1900: Are Order and Progress Reconcilable?* (Lexington, MA, 1971) pp. 127-130. His introduction is a valuable analysis of positivism in Latin America, pp. ix-xiv. See also J. C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley, CA, 1998), pp. 49-51, 358-9. For Colombia, the most useful work of reference is J. Jaramillo Uribe, *El Pensamiento Colombiano en el Siglo XIX* (Bogotá, 1964).

[25] DRO/ J.1.1.0.X1-VE1.

[26] 'Pan American Progress. New Legislation in Venezuela', *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, January 1937.

[27] *Recueil des Traités et Conventions entre le Japon et les Puissances Étrangères.* Traités bilatéraux, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (Tokyo, 1936), Vol. 1, p. 2,227.

pressure could be used in order to control entrance of certain nationalities.

It cannot be denied that racial boundaries have continued to exist in Latin American countries. On the other hand, these boundaries have had a certain flexibility, and more frequently have been related to social and economic class. Physical appearance does not necessarily categorize an individual into one specific race, and skin colour is not a unique factor in determining social or group membership. Hence skin colour is but one classificatory factor. Nevertheless, it does play a role in establishing relationships between individuals and groups. The point is that terms like race or ethnic group, and the fear of mixing even more the already mixed blood of the inhabitants, were one of the main considerations in the making of immigration policies. These concepts are important, as stressed by Eriksen, 'to the extent that they inform people's actions.'[28] Therefore these concepts, although biased and prejudiced, deserve attention and must be studied within the context they were applied.

Moreover, if the categories of four races can be described because of skin colour, this can become a factor to be negotiated. Such is the case of the so called Honorary Whites. 'I beg to confirm to your Excellency that the words "yellow race" of the said article, are not interpreted by the Paraguayan government to be applicable to any subject of the Empire of Japan,' replied the Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Japanese diplomat, after receiving notes of complaint with reference to the immigration law.[29] If the law was not modified, Japan would not ratify the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation with

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[28] *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 4.

[29] Rogelio Ibarra to Tatsuke Shichita, 29 November 1920, in *Recueil des Traités et Conventions entre le Japon et les Puissances Étrangères*, p. 2,224.

Paraguay, signed the year before between the two countries.[30] In this case, race does not reflect a racial reality. It is primarily a social means of classifying people. Finally, it seems what it is important in society is not necessarily skin colour or physical traits, but rather how to identify group membership and the relationships resulting from this identity.[31]

2. The People

What Colombia is today formed part of the Spanish Empire from early sixteenth century, until political separation came after 1819. Spain followed an exclusivist policy in its territories, controlling the entrance of other nationalities into its colonies. The foreigners who settled in Spanish America, illegally or with the permission of the Crown, were hardly enough to deserve demographic attention. Spanish emigration was voluntary and a matter of personal choice. It does not mean that all those living in the Kingdom of Spain were free to emigrate to the discovered territories. Restrictions were imposed on Jews and Moslems, gypsies, and those who had been condemned by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. In principle, subjects of the Kingdom of Aragon and Castile were allowed to emigrate without restrictions, but all foreigners, non-Christians, or even converted former Moslems were excluded.[32]

From its beginnings, the state regulated emigration to the newly discovered territories. At first, matters were handled by the House of Trade in

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[30] The treaty with Paraguay was signed on 17 November 1919, and ratified on 1 June 1921.

[31] See T. H. Eriksen, *Us and Them in Modern Societies: Ethnicity and Nationalism in Trinidad, Mauritius and Beyond* (Oslo, 1992), p. 33.

[32] Mörner, *Adventurers and Proletarians*, p. 10.

Seville. After 1546, the Council of the Indies in Madrid took over responsibility for these affairs. In spite of all the bureaucratic regulations, and the abundance of documents in the form of reports and licences granted to the emigrants, the information is insufficient to estimate the real movement to the New World. Non-Spanish wanting to travel to Spanish territories could do so, giving at their destination a payment called *composición*. Those immigrants were in a sense welcomed by the overseas authorities, because their entrance fee represented an income. From time to time, foreigners who were natives from enemy territories were expelled for safety reasons.[33]

If Spanish emigration to the new territories was unforced, this was not the case for the African Negroes. They went with the Spanish since the beginning of the new enterprise. They were named *ladinos*, who travelled as domestic servants recruited among slaves kept at the time in Spain. Some of them went as slaves to accompany their master. In the course of the Spanish dominion over its colonies, slaves were part of the human commercial traffic. Blacks, Indians and Spanish intermixed racially on a large scale, from the very beginning of the Spanish Conquest.

At the time slaves from Africa arrived in Spain, there were Moorish slaves, Jewish slaves, and even some native Spaniards who were treated legally as slaves. The Negro slave was conveyed into the Iberian peninsula as early as 1442. When he was brought an elaborate code existed in Spain, which comprised part of the *Siete Partidas*. This law, issued during the reign of Alfonso the Wise (1252-84), provided the slave with duties, rights, and regarded him as a human being. The

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[33] Ibid. pp. 6-13.

Negro brought from Africa to the discovered territories had both a legal personality and a moral status. They were converted to Christianity and the master had to see they attended the Church.[34] Manumission was quite frequent, and mulattos and *zambos*[35] were often freeborn rather than slaves.

In Colombia, the main port of slave traffic was Cartagena de Indias. It was not only an important distribution point for the area, but for many parts of the Spanish empire as well.[36] Negro slaves were used as a labour force to replace the Indians, or to work in plantation zones and mining, where the Indians could not cope. Those people settled best along the coastal lowlands, on the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts. Slaves came from different tribes in Africa. There was no common language they could use to communicate with each other. To survive, they had to be culturally receptive to Spanish culture. They had to acquire language, religion, food, and general habits quickly from the Spanish.[37] Slavery continued after the independence from Spain. It was abolished by law after the 1st of January of 1852, during the government of José Hilario López.

It would be wrong to consider the Spanish Conquest an exclusively male enterprise, albeit women did not participate at the beginning, and not many travelled during the subsequent years after the discovery. Lack of women gave rise to the rapid miscegenation between the aboriginal population and the invaders. Women were not always taken by force. In many cases, they were offered as evidence of tokens from the Indian *Caciques*. Another way of obtaining women was through the *encomienda*. This was the Spanish institution

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[34] See F. Tannenbaum, *Ten Keys to Latin America* (New York, NY, 1963), pp. 48-49.
[35] Spanish and Negro sire mulatto; Indian and Negro, or mulatto and Negro sire *zambo*.
[36] Deas, 'Colombia', in *South America, Central America and the Caribbean*, p. 215.
[37] Mörner, *Race Mixture*, pp. 16-19.

established in its colonies to provide the Conquerors with a tribute paid by the Indians. The Indians usually paid their tribute in days of work. But they also paid in slaves, who could be men or women. What makes the Spanish Conquest so characteristic is that from early times miscegenation of the so called tri-ethnic composition took place. Whether it was casual intercourse, concubinage or marriage, the consequence was a high degree of racial mixing. If the Iberians could not find their dreamed of gold, women could bring consolation to the frustration and solitude. 'However the Spaniard and the Portuguese of the early sixteenth century had obtained them, by force, purchase or gift, he lived surrounded by Indian women,'[38] as has been rightly pointed out.

Although the Spanish were the dominant immigrants to the colonies, it does not mean they formed a homogeneous ethnic group. There was already a mixture of the blood of Iberians, Celts, Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, Jews, Arabs, Berbers, Gypsies, and medieval slaves of different origins. Eight hundred years of the coexistence of Moslems and Christians until the fall of Granada in 1492, witnessed the mixing of races and cultures. When the Spaniards or their descendants are called whites, the term does not mean they are as white as Northern Europeans might be considered. White in Spanish America does not necessarily mean to have a white skin colour but to be of Spanish origin.

Certainly, there is no homogeneity in the Colombian population but a predominant *mestizo* of about, if not more than fifty per cent. It is difficult to ascertain figures on racial distribution because, since 1912, the national census

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[38] Ibid. p. 24.

does not indicate ethnic status or skin colour. Following a combination of physical, linguistic and socio-economic criteria, some have tried to provide statistics for the racial composition of the country.[39] Colombia does not have like Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico or Peru, a significant native indigenous population. According to Pablo Vila, by 1942, Indians counted for less than 2 per cent, while there were 26 per cent Whites, 46 per cent *mestizos*, 22 per cent mulattos, and 4 per cent Negroes.[40] These calculations are merely estimates. Ethnic groups, not only in Colombia but in other Latin American countries, are open to members of other ethnic groups. Therefore, an Indian who speaks fluent Spanish or who acquires the local *mestizo* culture, ceases to be regarded as an Indian.[41] Or, an individual with Caucasian physical characteristics is named as an Indian, if he occupies a low rank in the local social and economic scale.[42] Consequently, when one comes across data based on ethnic distribution, it does not necessarily reflect the reality of physical composition, but the degree of cultural assimilation as well.

Finally, although there is no official segregation, there is a racial discrimination that has become so institutionalized that it might be considered a social norm. During colonial times the class structure was of basically two main groups, the White Spanish and their descendants at the top, and the rest at the bottom, so that no middle class existed. 'No one is conscious of discrimination in

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[39] See P. Vila's comparative division of the population for the years 1852 and 1942 in his *Nueva geografia de Colombia: Aspectos politico, fisico, humano y económico* (Bogotá, 1945), p. 142; and T. L. Smith, Table 1, Population of Colombia by race, several years from 1778 to 1963, 'The racial composition of the population of Colombia', in Journal of Inter-American Studies 8, no. 2 (April 1966), p. 215.

[40] Vila, *Nueva geografia de Colombia*, p. 142.

[41] P. L. Van den Berghe, 'Ethnicity and class in highland Peru', in L. Despres (ed.), *Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies* (The Hague, 1975), pp. 78-80.

[42] G. and A. Reichel-Dolmatoff, *The People of Aritama: The Cultural Personality of a Colombian Mestizo Village* (London, 1961), pp. 132-3.

Colombia, provided he is white,' is a sharp observation of Vernon L. Fluharty. The rule of white predominance has remained unchanged since Humboldt's expedition to New Spain, when he exclaimed, 'the skin, more or less white, decides the place that a man will occupy in society.' And still, it is the white element that rules the nation and makes the important decisions in Colombia.[43]

3. The Land

Most of the South American continent lies within the Equatorial Zone, from a latitude 30° north of the Equator to 30° south. Colombia, lying between 12°30' north and 4°13' south of the Equator, is located in the extreme north-western section of the continent. It occupies an area of 440,000 square miles, equalling double the size of Germany, or the combined areas of France, Portugal and Spain. Nearly one-fourth of this immense territory consists of land in crops, pasturage and uncultivated land. The remainder is regarded as urban areas, inland waters, tropical plains and jungle. The great chain of the Andes dominates the western two-fifths of the country, where the main currents of life are channelled. The heavy concentration of population in the Andes has left three-fifths of the country still to be colonized.[44] The exuberant jungles and rugged mountains stretch from the Caribbean to the Amazon along the two coast lines, the Atlantic and the Pacific. It is the only South American country with a coast line on both oceans.

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[43] V. L. Fluharty, *Dance of the Millions: Military Rule and the Social Revolution in Colombia 1930-1956* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1957), pp. 21, 175. See also J. Gunther, *Inside Latin America* (London, 1941), p. 8, and A. von Humboldt (J. A. Ortega y Medina, ed.), *Ensayo politico sobre el Reino de la Nueva España* (México, 1966), p. 90.

[44] T. E. Weil et al., *Area Handbook for Colombia* (Washington, DC, 1970), p. 7.

The chief features of Colombia's topography are the three Cordilleras of the Andes. The mountain ranges divide the land into three main regions: the Andean region, the Eastern Plains and the Coastal Lowlands. Upon entering Colombia, the Andes lose their former unity. They run roughly parallel northwards, forming an extremely irregular and varied relief of the country. The Andean mountains are separated into three huge chains, the Western, Central and Eastern Cordilleras. Approximately parallel to them, lie the wide valleys of the Magdalena and Cauca rivers, crowned with snow peaks and towering volcanoes. These rivers, 'the true life-lines of the country, flow into the Caribbean shortly after the Cauca has joined the Magdalena on the wide flood-plains of the north.'[45]

Of the three great ranges, the Central Cordillera is the highest of the mountain system. Its crystalline rocks form a 500 mile long stretch of volcanoes covered with perpetual snow. The highest peak, the Nevado del Huila, reaches 18,865 feet above sea level, and no passes cross below 11,000 feet. Towards its northern end, the cordillera divides among several ranges that dip into the Caribbean Coast. In a relatively small basin is situated Medellín, the second largest city of Colombia, and a centre of bigger economic growth.[46]

The Eastern Cordillera is the longest and widest. With elevations between 8,000 and 9,000 feet, large and numerous small fertile basins provide suitable areas for settlement and intensive economic production, all due to its fertile soils. It also divides into two ranges, one of which continues towards the Caribbean, while the other extends north-eastwards through Venezuela. In the basin of Cundinamarca, one of the higher and more fertile areas, the Chibcha had settled, a

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[45] G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Colombia* (London, 1965), p. 29.
[46] Weil. *Area Handbook for Colombia*. p. 9.

local chiefdom of Indians that by the sixteenth century had achieved a relatively high degree of cultural development. In this place, at an elevation of 8,660 feet above sea level, the Conquerors founded Santa Fé (Bogotá).[47] Jiménez de Quesada, and his fellow men, reached the *Sabana* of Bogotá in search of the 'land of El Dorado, the "Gilded Man" - of emeralds and buried treasure, of gold at hand in mountains and lakes, and golden hoards hidden away in tombs.'[48]

The Western Cordillera is the lowest and shortest chain. It is separated from the Central Cordillera by a deep rift, the Cauca River Valley. Cali, the third largest city, is located in a pass at 5,000 feet above sea level. The low elevation of the cordillera permits dense vegetation, which on some parts of the western slopes becomes tropical.[49] There are other mountains that do not form part of the Andean chain, like the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in northern Colombia, Serranía del Darién at the Panamanian border, Serranía de la Macarena to the south of Bogotá, and some other minor ranges on the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts.[50]

East of the Andes lie the immense peripheral areas of the Eastern Plains and the Amazon forests, which comprise two thirds of the national territory. The Eastern Plains, called the *Llanos Orientales*, and the jungle, constitute an area of

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Reichel-Dolmatoff, Colombia, p. 18. The legend of *Eldorado* concerned a person - *el dorado*, the gilded man. At the appointment of a new *cacique* to one of the political divisions of the Chibcha territory, the coronation ceremony was performed at the Guatavita Lake, in the highlands of Boyacá. The new chieftain was stripped naked, anointed with resin and sprayed with gold dust. He was taken into the lake in a raft with gold and jewels on it. When the raft reached the centre, the golden chief dived into the lake, washing off the gold, and all the offerings were thrown into the water. The Spanish Conquerors, who heard from the natives the story, guided their spirit of adventure towards the Colombian highlands in search for its fabulous treasures. A gold raft, representing the coronation ceremony, is preserved in the archaeological collection in the Banco de la República's Museo del Oro, in Bogotá.

[49] Weil, *Area Handbook for Colombia*, p. 9.

[50] Reichel-Dolmatoff, Colombia, pp. 34-5.

scattered population that has never played a significant role in the economic or cultural development of the country. The plains of the northern part are green and appropriate for large herds of cattle. But the temperature is torrid, and the uplands infested with disease-bearing mosquitos, reducing the attractiveness of the region.[51] To the south of the Eastern Plains lies the Amazon jungle. The impenetrable and virtually unexplored areas, totally lacking communication routes with the interior of the country, except by air, have kept the Amazon far away from any colonization plan.

With the Cauca Valley on the west, and the long, rich valley of the Magdalena on the east, the great Central Cordillera has been fairly described as 'literally the backbone of Colombia.'[52] The Magdalena river was during colonial times the only line of communication with the interior of the country. The Spanish Conquerors reached the interior by following the course of the river. Developed communications and favourable climatic conditions are two very good reasons for the highest concentration of population being along these valleys. It is believed that in the basin of the Magdalena and in the Cauca Valley, and the *Sabana* of Bogotá, '98.2 per cent of Colombia's people are born, live and die.'[53] The remaining 1.8 per cent live in the larger area east of the Andes, although it consists of more than 60 per cent of the national territory. This great region of 270,500 square miles forms part of the basins of the Amazon and Orinoco rivers. Human concentration in the Eastern Plains is only .68 persons per square mile, in contrast to the high Andean region, where is 57.3 per square mile.[54]

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[51] Fluharty, *Dance of the Millions*, pp. 9-10.
[52] Ibid. p. 7.
[53] W. O. Galbraith, *Columbia, A General Survey* (London and New York, 1953), p. 9. Quoted in Fluharty, p.7; see also Weil, *Area Handbook of Colombia*, p. 7.
[54] Fluharty, *Dance of the Millions*, pp. 8-9.

4. The Climate

Colombia has a tropical climate, but as temperature depends on elevation, it is commonly referred to as a 'vertical phenomenon'. The country's proximity to the equator has the dual effect of widening the range of the temperature, from the entire scale of humid or dry tropics at sea level to the very cold Andean highlands. There are no seasonal climatic variations marked by major fluctuations of temperature, but there are rather those dictated by rainfall. When the rain comes it is 'winter', when it is dry it is 'summer'.

On the Caribbean coastal plain, north of latitude 8° N, there is a rainy season of about eight months, April to November, followed by a dry season of four months, December to March. To the south of this latitude the rainy season is interrupted by a short period of little rainfall in June and July. In the Pacific Lowlands, and more particularly in the northern part, there is hardly a dry season at all; this is a region of continuous rain throughout the whole year, with an annual precipitation as much as 10,000 mm. It is probably the wettest and most humid part of the American tropics. Its intense precipitation presents a marked contrast with the Guajira Peninsula in the north, which receives about 200 mm. of annual rainfall.[55]

The diversity of land configuration and meteorological features provide the country with unique environmental variety. Colombia is conventionally divided into *tierra caliente* or hot country (below 3,500 feet above sea-level),

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[55] Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Colombia*, p. 30.

tierra templada or temperate country (between 3,500 and 6,500 feet), and *tierra fría* or cold country (above 6,500 feet). Upwards, there begins the *páramo*, the barren tundra highlands, and the peaks covered with perpetual snow. It has been calculated that 40 per cent live in the hot or tropical humid region, 36 per cent in the temperate climates, and about 24 per cent in the cold climates. Settlement patterns and climate are two combined factors that have affected the economic activity of the country. While industry has concentrated above the hot, humid belts, agriculture prevails near the coastlines, and on the low plains.[56]

Some generalizations have explicitly related racial groups to settlement environment. 'On the coast from Quito to Popayán you alternate between cold, drizzly plateau stretches around ten to twelve thousand feet above sea level. The highlands are Indian, the lowlands negro,' Carlos Sauer wrote on the topographical contrasts and the inhabitants, travelling northwards along the Andean roads.[57] The Colombian Government Bureau of Information in New York, published in 1927 that 'on the coasts and on the river banks a great deal of intermixture of white and Negro blood is noticeable. In the high sections of the country the race is greatly improved ... The aristocratic families resided in cities, the climate of which is temperate, and always kept aloof from other races.' Or, this comment of Luis López de Mesa, who observed that 'a slightly wavy line drawn from Río Hacha on the shores of the Caribbean to Ipiales on the Ecuadorian frontier divides Colombia into two great racial zones. To the east of this line the *mestizo* type prevails, to the west of it the mulatto.'[58] Although these

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[56] See Fluharty, *Dance of the Millions*, p. 20.

[57] See R. C. West, (ed.), *Andean Reflections.* Letters from Carl O. Sauer while on a South American trip under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, 1942. Dellplain Latin American Studies, 11 (Boulder, CO, 1982), pp. 112-3.

[58] Both quoted in Smith, 'Racial composition of the population in Colombia', pp. 217, 218.

generalizations seem exaggerated, it is true that there is a correlation between geographical setting and certain ethnic groups, if not by choice, by force. Japanese immigrants showed their disappointment after their arrival at Buenaventura: 'We were so surprised to see so many Blacks in the port that we thought to have landed in Africa,' declares one of them.[59]

Whatever variety is to be found, in the topography, the climate, and the people themselves, the contrasts are striking. Kathleen Romoli, in her introduction to the country, notes that 'when one goes to Colombia, one goes to another world: a world of extremes and contradictions where mountains are higher and jungles thicker, summers colder and winters hotter, society more *raffiné* and peasants more medieval than in most parts of the globe ... an anthropologist could study almost the whole story of mankind without setting foot outside the frontier.'[60] We can see here, reflected in Romoli's observations, how Colombia presents us with a medley of extremes and contradictions.

5. Resources

The diversity of climate, elevation and soils have resulted in a great variety of flora, and consequently of rich fauna. There is an enormous variety of species of plants at different altitudes. In the lowlands, where the vegetation varies with soil and rainfall, there are the mangrove swamps of the coastal lowlands and the tropical rain forests. Forest trees include mahogany, pine, brazil-wood, walnut, oak, cedar, and a diversity of palms and orchids. Among the various tropical

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[59] *Koronbia Ijû-shi*, p. 64.
[60] K. Romoli, *Colombia: Gateway to South America* (New York, NY, 1941), p. 2.

forest reserves, these produce a number of medicinal roots and extracts, balsams, vanilla, rubber, gums, tanning materials like divi-divi, mangle bark and algarroba bean, and the seeds of the tagua palm, generally known as vegetable ivory.[61]

The vertical climates, together with the rich and varied soils, have made it possible to grow a large diversity of food plants; from bananas at sea level to wheat, hard grains, vegetables and fruits at high altitudes. Traditional agriculture dominates the domestic production of potatoes, maize, beans, cassava and fruits. During colonial times, except for precious metals and some cotton, no other products were produced for export.[62] By the 1920s Colombia had become the world's leading exporter of mild coffee. By then, two other products were also important for international trade: oil and bananas. The highest volumes of these three products were traded with the United States of America. After the strikes and labour disputes with the United Fruit Company in 1928, the banana industry ceased to be a leading exporter. As a result of this, the agricultural national economy was left dependent on one crop, coffee.[63]

In the national territory, both the land and subsoil are rich. Colombia has historic importance as a gold, silver, platinum and emerald producer. All of which are important for external trade. Petroleum and coal are found in good supply, although native coal is not suitable for high-grade metallurgical purposes. Deposits of limestone, salt, quartz crystal, sulphurs, tin, copper, and many other natural resources, put the country in an enviable position as a potential place for

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[61] See Weil, *Area Handbook for Colombia*, pp. 13-14, and J. Garnett Lomax (Department of Overseas Trade), *Republic of Colombia: Commercial Review and Handbook* (London, 1930), pp. 45-49.

[62] Deas, 'Colombia', in *South America, Central America and the Caribbean*, p. 215.

[63] See J. F. Rippy, *The Capitalists and Colombia* (New York, NY, 1931), pp. 29-31, 153; Fluharty, *Dance of the* Millions, p. 15; C. Abel, 'Colombia, 1930-58', in L. Bethell (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Latin America* (Cambridge, 1991), Vol. 8, pp. 589-91.

development.[64] Yet, in spite of all the existing mineral resources, the many rivers providing hydroelectric potential, and the variety of climates and hydrography favouring diverse and intensive agriculture, the balance is not a positive one. The heavy tropical rains that erode the soils, climate, disease, remoteness, and other environmental hazards render the greater part of Colombia uninhabitable.[65]

By 1930, mineral and energy resources had hardly been explored, and transport networks were still very much undeveloped.[66] It is mainly the lack of transport that has left the country divided into isolated enclaves or regions, and for the major part unpopulated. The Magdalena River was from colonial times up to 1950, the main artery of transport for people and trade. Communication between the Atlantic coast and the interior of the country remained dependent on the river, and the German-controlled airline Scadta, which was established in 1919.[67] Notwithstanding the fact that the country is a land of rich natural resources, enjoying the best diversified resource base in South America except for Brazil, the problem has been generally described as not the lack of resources, but as the difficulties in mobilizing the abundance of them.[68]

At the time of the Spaniards' arrival, there were only small chiefdoms scattered over the mountain flanks or on the coasts, and semi-nomadic or nomadic groups living in the most remote places.[69] Even the most politically developed Chibcha or Tairona chiefdoms did not attain centralized political or economic power, as was the case for Inca, Maya and Aztec groups in South and Central

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64 Fluharty, pp. 13-5; Weil, *Area Handbook for Colombia*, pp. 15-6.
65 Galbraith, *Columbia, A General Survey*, p. 89. Quoted in Fluharty, p. 14.
66 See A. López, *Problemas colombianos* (Paris, 1927), p. 187.
67 Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, p. 148.
68 Abel, 'Colombia, 1930-58', p. 590.
69 Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Colombia*, p. 17.

America. The dwellers in the mountains, on the coasts or in the forests, occupied isolated geographical areas, lacking a network of communications, except those naturally provided by rivers or minor roads. After the sixteenth century, the Crown did not develop commerce between the viceroyalties, nor a regional transport or economy in the smaller political divisions, the *capitanías*. With the introduction of the system of *encomienda*, and the subsequent division of the land into big farms or *haciendas*, developing transport communications was not a priority, leaving the regions greatly isolated during Spanish colonial times.

With the boom in coffee production, the need for adequate transportation became a priority. After the opening in 1914 of the Panama Canal, diverted coffee exports started to be channelled through the port of Buenaventura. The bulk of coffee exports that was still shipped in 1916 from the Caribbean ports (transported via the Magdalena River), by 1944 sixty per cent of exports had already reached Buenaventura.[70] Pedro Nel Ospina became President of Colombia in 1922. The most notable innovation under Ospina was the borrowing of heavy loans, mainly from American banks. The influx of considerable amounts of foreign capital, the revival of world markets, together with the indemnification of twenty-five million dollars paid after 1921 by the United States because of its intervention in the Panama Isthmus in 1903, provided the government with the cash and the opportunity to invest and to achieve material progress. Indeed some efforts were made for the development of agriculture, industry, commerce, education, public sanitation and public works.[71]

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[70] See Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, pp. 160-61, and his 'El puerto de Barranquilla: entre el auge exportador y el aislamiento, 1850-1950', in *C.M.H.L.B. Caravelle* no. 69 (Toulouse, 1997), pp. 120-2.

[71] See Fluharty, *Dance of the Millions*, pp. 30-2.

Since Colombia was so dependent on coffee production and its trade export, the greater part of the money was devoted to the improvement of national transportation. But not all Colombia was engaged in coffee plantations. Efforts were concentrated mainly on the western zone to get access to the Pacific Ocean. By 1930, the Pacific, Caldas and Antioquia Railways had formed a western network, linking the most important coffee-producing areas with the port of Buenaventura.[72] Thus, development of the transport system came to favour mainly the coffee area market, and its transportation via the Pacific route. It did not solve the appalling conditions of isolation in the rest of the country.

This general introduction to Colombia is far from complete, and the above summary has only highlighted main features of the first three decades of the twentieth century, the time when Japanese immigration was mainly an issue. The intention of such generalizations on Colombia is to provide a perspective of the host country on some of the crucial issues for future immigrants, such as its people, land, climate and natural resources. If people choose to abandon their native land it is because greater opportunities await them elsewhere; better conditions in the host country may increase their quality of life. However, emigrating from one's native land is not always an adventure to a land of golden pastures. Immigration laws are waiting to welcome immigrants, or expel them at any time. Moreover, they have been enacted to restrict immigration and to select people. They can be used to reaffirm political sovereignty, to follow internal or external political interests, and to establish ethnic or racial boundaries. As the case of Colombia will show, immigration laws were used as a way of selecting

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[72] Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, p. 160; R. P. Platt, 'Railroad progress in Colombia', in *Geographical Review* 16 (1926), p. 87; Deas, 'Colombia', in *South America,*

immigrants, seeking to gain racial improvement, and the consequent formation of a national type which would strengthen the cultural identity of the Colombians.

6. Immigration Law

Immigration to the newly invaded territories after the sixteenth century was not easy, and was always controlled by Spain and Portugal. With the achievement of independence in the Latin American countries, after three or more hundred years of submission, international immigration was welcomed in the belief that it would assist the economic development of the former colonies. Still, the civil wars that devastated Colombia throughout the nineteenth century kept the government busy dealing with internal affairs. Therefore, resolving domestic problems had to be given more priority than working for policies to encourage international immigration into the country.

Once political stability started to emerge, the government made several attempts to encourage immigration, and laws to this end were sanctioned by the Congress of the Republic in 1886, 1888, 1894, 1920, 1922, 1926, 1927, 1928 and 1931. In 1894, Congress allocated a sum of 150,000 Colombian pesos to be spent annually on immigration policies; in 1926 a special bureau was organized to deal with immigration and colonization, and in 1943, a National Department for Immigration and Aliens was set up. This Department was required to keep in close contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[73] However, the consequences of enacting so many laws and decrees did not necessarily mean effective

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Central America and the Caribbean, p. 216.

[73] *ILR*, 'Migration' (April-May 1944), p. 520.

encouragement of immigration. The number of the different policies adopted 'could be interpreted as ways of discouraging instead of encouraging immigration,' as concluded by Posada-Carbó. Although there was a budget assigned to further immigration policies, there was no money in reality, and restrictions against particular groups of immigrants were applied, and in some cases, the objections of the Colombians to financial assistance to immigrants made the immigration laws impractical and ineffective.[74]

After the Constitution Law of the Republic of Colombia was issued in 1886, the government offered by Law 145 of 1888[75] naturalization to all foreigners who required it, without discrimination over origin, race or religion. Regulations on immigration came with Decree 1258 of 1908, which one year later, was replaced by Decree 496 of 1909. Article 4 gives a definition of the word 'immigrant'. An immigrant is considered to be any foreigner under sixty or over ten years of age, who has entered Colombia to earn his/her livelihood. In the same article it is established that those who enter for the purpose of working but who do not want to be considered legally as immigrants, should state it at the port of entrance. This article also makes clear the difference between the free immigrant, and those who arrive under contract to work for the government or for a private company, and who are considered temporary workers.

From the nineteenth century, the government sanctioned a considerable number of laws to promote colonization. Laws enacted in 1845, 1847, 1870, 1871, 1872 and 1876 permitted the vast extensions of *baldíos* (public lands

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[74] See Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, pp. 181-2.
[75] *Diario Oficial*, no. 7619, 4 December 1888.

offered by the state) to be transferred to private ownership.[76] Furthermore, after 1909 the government seems to have redoubled its efforts to encourage international immigration. The main interest was in workers for agriculture, mining and public works. Awards were offered to the immigrants, and also to those who brought them. The government, eager to draw White European immigrants passed Law 74 of 1926. Article 46 of this law offered to the person or company that introduced every European immigrant to work in agriculture, the amount of 30 pesos for a man, and 15 pesos for the wife and each child. Article 9 of Decree 496 of 1909 entitled the colonist migrant and his family to enjoy free public transportation from the arrival port to the place of destination, tax exemptions, exclusion from compulsory military service, economic assistance and the allocation of *baldíos*, amongst other benefits. Through the updating of laws and decrees, the government continued to offer the immigrant (especially in the field of agriculture) attractive economic inducements and public lands, as can be noted in Article 12 of Law 114 of 1922, Article 46 of Law 74 of 1926, and Decree 839 of 1928.[77] Besides, a special mission for the study of colonization throughout the country was created by Decree 1357 of 1927.[78]

The aforementioned regulations give the impression of an outstanding effort on the part of the government to promote international immigration. However, such good intentions were only on paper, given the lack of financial resources available to fund these kind of projects. When, in 1931, the Colombian Minister of the Legation in Buenos Aires asked for information concerning

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[76] See M. Jimeno Santoyo, 'Los procesos de colonización. Siglo XIX', in A. Tirado Mejía (ed.), *Nueva Historia de Colombia* (Bogotá, 1984), Vol. 3, p. 373.

[77] Policía Nacional, *Codificación de las leyes y disposiciones ejecutivas sobre extranjeros*, pp. 34-35, 40, 58-66

[78] Ibid. p. 58

possible colonization by Austrian farmers, the Minister of Industries replied quoting all the current legislation, including the offer to provide the immigrants with public lands to colonize. Nevertheless, regarding any additional subsidies, the Minister wrote: 'It is not possible to grant them because the resources for that destination have been reduced by 50 per cent, with the other half already allocated.'[79]

The first *Departamento General de Inmigración* was created by Decree 496 of 1909 as an adjunct to the Ministry of Public Works. By 1922, immigration matters had been transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (Article 2, Law 114 of 1922), and in 1927, to the Ministry of Industries (Article 3, Law 89 of 1927). One year later, in Decree 2052 of 1928,[80] separate matters concerning immigrants were considered by three ministries: Government, Industries and Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Government (Article 3), was in charge of vigilance and expulsion of unwanted aliens; the Ministry of Industries (Article 1), was the general administrative immigration section, the office the consuls should always consult and keep informed, including approval for the issue of visas for immigrants; and, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Article 2), which was in charge of dealing with all foreigners entering the country, except those considered under the category of immigrants.

When the first group of Japanese immigrants applied for their visas, the consul in Yokohama turned them down. The refusal came under an order of the Ministry of Industries in Bogotá. The emigration company that had previously

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[79] *Oficio* 188 from the Ministry of Industries to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bogotá, 11 May 1931, MRE.

[80] *Diario Oficial*, no. 20946, 16 November 1928.

made all the arrangements in the two countries panicked at such an unexpected refusal, and looked for help from the former First Secretary of the Legation in Peru, Zoji Amari,[81] who was then back in Japan. Amari had met in Bogotá, on a recent visit, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and probably felt confident in sending him a cablegram explaining the seriousness of the situation, and the damage all sides would suffer.[82] These included the losses incurred from unused land in Colombia, and the immeasurable hardship of the Japanese families who had sold everything in their preparations to leave. The reply from the Colombian minister came the following day, resolving the problem in favour of the Japanese party.[83]

The consul in Yokohama was puzzled at such a contradictory attitude on the part of his government. Some weeks before, he had received from the Legation in Washington, via the consulate in New York, an order to refuse visas to Japanese citizens. He was asked to reject the applications with discretion, and to ask the applicants to keep this a secret. Later on, he received from the Ministry of Industries the order not to issue visas to the first group of immigrants. A few days later, he was instructed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to grant the visas.[84] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs could solve this problem if the immigrants were considered just ordinary travellers instead of immigrants. In this particular example, the flexibility of Colombian legislation deserves appreciation. But of course, the Japanese could not apply for the privileges offered to ordinary

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[81] Amari began his involvement in Latin America in 1898, when he travelled to Peru to negotiate the entry of the first group of Japanese immigrants into that country. He has been acknowledged as a 'devoted diplomat' to Latin America. See Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru*, pp. 24, 67.

[82] Zoji Amari to Carlos Uribe, 27 September 1929, DRO/J.2.1.0.X1-CO1.

[83] Telegram from Uribe to Amari, 28 September 1929, DRO/J.2.1.0.X1-C01; telegram from Uribe to consul in Yokohama, 28 September 1929, MRE.

[84] Letters from Carlos Cuervo Borda to his father, who was at that time Envoy Extraordinary and Minister of the Legation in Mexico; 12 & 30 September, 17 October 1929, AECJ.

immigrants, such as tax exemptions, subsidies and the granting of *baldíos*. 'Find enclosed the evidence I made them to sign that they will not have the right to apply for exemptions, nor will they request the favours offered by Colombian legislation to immigrants with the intention of settling in Colombia,' informed the consul to the minister on how he acted the day he endorsed the visas to the nineteen Japanese passengers.[85]

On the previous occasion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could challenge the Ministry of Industries. The consul would have to follow his immediate superior's instructions, as foreign officers were under the control of Foreign Affairs, not of Industries. As can be observed in several documents, the situation could be resolved only by changing the designation from immigrant to traveller. In case of trouble at the port of entry to the national territory, or abroad in the consulates, the Minister of Foreign Affairs would permit the admission of immigrants, just designating them travellers instead.[86] The terms under which foreigners were classified deserve clarification. Foreigners were considered to be transients, visitors or residents. Transient passengers were those who entered and left Colombia on the same voyage without stopovers, or those who were permitted to stay for a few days without permission of any kind. Visitors were those who entered the country for pleasure, recreation or study, and did not intend to engage in any class of work during their stay. They were required to apply for visas. Residents were those who arrived in the country in order to earn their livelihood from personal efforts, to start businesses, enterprises, industries,

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[85] Cuervo Borda to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 9 October 1929, MRE.

[86] Several documents found in the National Archive of Colombia verify that in 1928 and 1929, the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent telegrams to the governors at the ports of Barranquilla and Santa Marta giving permission to land to those to whom previously the Minister of

or to live off their income. Immigrants fell under the category of residents, and also had to apply for visas.

The quota system of immigration was introduced by Decree 2232 of 1931.[87] The government of Liberal President Olaya Herrera placed on a quota basis the immigration of all people of Bulgarian, Chinese, Greek, Hindu, Lebanese, Lithuanian, Palestinian, Polish, Rumanian, Russian, Syrian, Turkish, and Yugoslav origin. It was stated that the diplomatic and consular representatives of Colombia could only endorse the visas of people of these nationalities when authorized by the government. One year later, by Decree 2247 of the 27th of December, 1932, the quota for immigrants of these countries was limited to five or ten people. However, the quota system should not have applied to Japanese because of the existing treaty signed in 1908. According to the terms stipulated in the treaty, citizens of the two countries were allowed to emigrate and to settle freely. Nevertheless, the government would try various ways to stop Japanese entering Colombia down the years, even before the introduction of the quota by nationalities. For instance, in 1929, the consul in Yokohama received instructions from the Ministry of Industries asking him to refrain from authorizing visas to immigrants of the 'yellow race', as well as those of Russian, Syrian and Polish origin.[88] The consul asked for specific instructions with respect to Japanese people, in response to which Industries placed the Japanese under restriction. The consul then sent a cablegram to Foreign Affairs, considering the order of Industries to be against Article 3 of the treaty signed in 1908, currently in

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Industries had denied entry. The Minister instructed that their passports should be stamped as passengers, not as immigrants. ANC/MFN/0100.

[87] *Diario Oficial*, no. 21873, 23 December 1931.

[88] Cablegram from the Minister of Industries to the consul in Yokohama, 26 September 1929, MRE.

force. A couple of years later, in September 1931, the consul sent a similar cablegram asking for explicit instructions with respect to Chinese, Russians and Japanese. The reply said to proceed with Chinese and Russian applicants according to the law. As far as the Japanese were concerned, he was reminded of the Treaty of 1908, but recommended 'to refrain as far as possible' from issuing them with permission to enter.[89] One year after the entry of the third and last group to Cauca, the American Military Attaché reported that 'the Colombian Government is now apparently refusing the issue of immigration visas to Japanese for the purpose of colonization in the Cauca Valley.'[90] It meant for the immigrants living in Colombia that it would be difficult to summon relatives or friends to join them in their work.

Regulations on taxes were applied to the third group of immigrants in 1935. To avoid the disembarkation of undesirable poor passengers travelling the third-class ship fare, the government had issued Decree 1060 in 1933[91], in which a visitor had to pay the amount of 100 Colombian pesos at the port of entry. The money would be refunded at the time the person left the country. Those, who after one year, could prove they had settled in Colombia, also received a refund. The Japanese emigration company applied for the exemption of the entry taxes on the grounds that they were immigrants. But for Colombia, they were not considered as such and denied their request.[92] Because of the Colombian

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[89] Cablegrams from the consul in Yokohama to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, August 2 & 7, 1929, and September 23, 1931; *Oficio* no. 1819 from the minister to the consul in Yokohama, 26 September 1931, MRE.

[90] N. W. Campanole, Military Attaché, Costa Rica, report 3,390, 2 April 1936, NAUS/894.20221/136, RG 59.

[91] *Diario Oficial*, no. 22314, 17 June 1933.

[92] Cablegram dated on 28 May 1935 from KKKK asking for exemption of the entry port taxes in Colombia; and cablegram dated on 26 July 1935 from Hirota, Minister of Foreign Affairs

government refusal, added to unexpected delays in granting the visas in the consulate in Yokohama, the third group could not set sail in July as had been planned but in September, three months later.[93]

By the end of the second decade, restrictions were made manifest with the publication of Law 48 of 1920.[94] The following people shall be excluded from admission into Colombia: All suffering from contagious disease such as tuberculosis, leprosy or trachoma, all idiots, insane persons, and those who have been convicted of a felony or other crime or misconduct involving wretched deeds, the anarchists, the communists, and those involved in activities against the government. When the third group of 105 Japanese immigrants arrived in 1935, a family of five was denied entry to Colombia because the father was suffering from trachoma, an infection of the eyelids.[95] The action of the authorities at the port of Buenaventura in refusing entry was justified on the basis of the aforementioned law.

Not two years had passed before restrictions increased again. Law 114 of 1922 excluded those who racially were not suited to the development of the physical and moral conditions of the Colombians. Congress decreed in Article 1 that: 'For the purpose of promoting the economic and intellectual development of the country and the improvement of its ethnic conditions, physically as well as morally, the Executive Power will promote the immigration of individuals and families who by reason of their personal and racial characteristics may not, or

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in Japan to Ambassador Iwate in Bogotá, saying that the Japanese government accepts the payment of 100 pesos entry tax for each one of the immigrants. DRO/J.1.2.0.J2-17.

93 *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 26.

94 *Diario Oficial*, nos. 17392 & 17393, 3 November 1920.

95 A report sent from Callao to Foreign Affairs in Tokyo explained that one hundred of the emigrants landed in Buenaventura, but a family of five was denied entry because of

ought not to be, a cause for precautions (*motivo de precauciones*) as regards the social order of the circumstance just indicated, and who may come for the purpose of tilling the soil, establishing new industries or improving their existence, introducing and promoting science and art, and in general, who may be civilizing and progressive elements.' Article 11 reiterates the fact that the immigration agents shall not give a visa to any individuals who for ethnic reasons may be a cause for precautions. Also, it specifies that 'entry into the country remains prohibited to any elements who by their ethnic, organic or social qualities may be unsuitable for citizenship, and for the best development of the race.'[96]

Even though the law fails to specify any particular unwanted colour or ethnic group, it shows quite clearly what the expectations of the government were. First, it was the improvement of the race of *mestizo*, mulatto and native Colombians. Secondly, the necessity to attract people who would be dedicated to agriculture, the investors to develop business and industry, and finally, the promoters of science and art. Would the Japanese be able to fulfil these assumptions? How was it possible to invite immigrants to populate an empty country, very much in need of agricultural farmers, and at the same time to determine who would be 'racially suitable'? The Colombian elite very probably still believed, drawing on theories of European positivism and biological determinism that the *mestizo*, the Black and the natives were racially inferior.

A couple of years before the issue of law 114 of 1922, the proceedings of a Medical Congress in Cartagena, organized by the National Academy of

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trachoma. This family had to continue their trip, disembarking at the next stop in Puerto Callao, Peru. DRO/J.1.2.0.J2-17, 11 December 1935.

[96] *Diario Oficial*, nos. 18693 & 18694, 8 January 1923.

Medicine, were published. One can see from reading the papers presented at the meeting that it was firmly believed that the best way to improve the already degenerated Colombian mixed race was through a mixture with the white race. '*El más deseable para regenerar nuestra población es un producto ... [de] raza blanca*' ('It is the white race that is the most desirable one to regenerate our population'), is the conclusive declaration of the Colombian intellectuals.[97] During the meeting, sociologists and medical doctors tried to prove the inferiority of the black and yellow races, based on cultural and pathological reasons. The results of the Congress in Cartagena might have influenced the politicians over passing Law 114 of 1922 through Congress. It should be remembered that this kind of thought was nothing new in Latin American countries. Many of them had the expectation, since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, that the only road to progress was to use massive immigration from European countries as a substitute for local labour. Those immigrants would be the way of 'whitening' the already mixed society, with the hope that this process of miscegenation might bleach out racial deficiencies.[98]

For, as has been seen, Colombia was very much in need of immigrants and the laws passed by Congress looked reasonably favourable, especially for those in the field of agriculture. Still, limitations on certain nationalities and race restricted the opportunities of prospective migrants. Likewise, restrictions existed beyond

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[97] *Memorias presentadas al 3er. Congreso Médico Colombiano, Cartagena, 1920. Los problemas de la raza en Colombia* (Bogotá, 1920), p. 38. The influence of the racist position of the Academy of Medicine on selecting 'racially' immigrants for the country can be noticed in works published later. See e. g. M. Jiménez López, *La inmigración amarilla a la América* (Bogotá, 1935); L. Esguerra Camargo, *Introducción al estudio del problema inmigratorio en Colombia* (Bogotá, 1940), pp. 80-1; J. Arango Cano, *Inmigrantes para Colombia* (Bogotá, 1951), pp. 18-22, 25-8, 84, 87-91, 104-7, 121-2.

[98] S. J. Stein and B. H. Stein, *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America: Essays on Economic Dependence in Perspective* (New York, NY, 1970), p. 185.

those stipulated by law. For instance, although the quota system introduced in 1931 mentions only Chinese as being under restriction, in reality it meant the 'yellow race' or the Asiatic. Similarly, although the quota system does not mention Blacks, in reality they would not be welcome as immigrants, merely as temporary workers. The Colombian consul in Manaos, in a report sent to the government, acknowledged how much Colombia was yearning to improve its agriculture and the need for worker immigrants to achieve that aim. He accepted that for the tropical climate the yellow and black races would adapt easily. However, he insisted, 'under no circumstances must Colombia receive black immigration, because the offspring of mixed blood is marked by viciousness, criminality, and mental, and moral degeneration.'[99]

What needs to be emphasized, with the example above, is how much the consuls might have influenced the outline and direction of immigration policies. Decree 496 of 1909, reinforced later in Article 3 of Law 114 of 1922, made the consuls responsible for recommending and promoting emigration to Colombia. They were under an obligation to supply any information about the country, if required by prospective settlers. In some occasions, their personal opinion and intolerance against others not of a white race, predominated over the interests of the country they were representing. Their attitude, if biased and prejudiced, could stop or ruin any future immigration plans, as can be seen in the case of Japanese immigration to Colombia.

When the consul in Kobe received a joint request from a Colombian entrepreneur and a Japanese emigration company, with the intention of bringing

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[99] *RNA*, 'La emigración japonesa hacia el Brasil y su adaptación en Colombia' 19, nos. 257-8 (November-December 1925), pp. 132-4.

into Colombia a considerable number of Japanese workers, the consul ignored the case and did not reply. After more than half a year had passed, he was summoned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs because of his procrastination. His answer to the minister was that they had been very busy, and unable to provide the required information on time. Instead, he emphasized to the minister in his letter: 'Although I do not know well this inscrutable country, I do consider my duty to tell you that Japanese immigration is not at all favourable for Colombia.'[100] In his report to the minister, the consul did not provide any arguments to support his negative recommendation, but once back in Colombia he gave a journalistic interview, where he made his ideas public.

The former consul was asked about the issue, and seemed totally opposed to Japanese immigration to Colombia. Such an attitude had the support of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jorge Vélez, he claimed. 'As a general rule the Japanese is not honourable in his commercial relations, and is hypocritical, cunning, without energy and without initiative. He would never be able to acclimatize himself here. He has a mentality absolutely different and contrary to our own in race, religion, language and customs. Weak, sickly, plagued with atavistic blemishes, both physically and morally, we must stop that migratory wave. To mix our Indians and our *mestizos* with Japanese would produce a hybrid product of real disastrous consequences for all,'[101] Macías stated at the

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[100] *Oficio* 1589 from Minister of Foreign Affairs to Consul in Kobe, 24 September 1924; Consul to Minister, 2 December 1924, MRE.

[101] See interview with José Macías in *El Relator*, 'El alma enigmática del Japón', 8 December 1928; and *El Espectador*, 'La inmigración japonesa no conviene a nuestro país por potentes razones de costumbres, idioma, talento, raza', 21 January 1929. The interview has been preserved in the files of the National Archives in Washington, with an English translation of parts of it, and in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, with the whole version translated into Japanese.

interview.[102] If opposition to Japanese immigration, biased on racial prejudice was a personal belief or not, a despatch from the FBI, including a clipping of the interview, said that the remarks of the Colombian consul 'with respect to the undesirability of Japanese immigration into this country are believed to represent a large part of Colombian public opinion.'[103] The interview appeared in the local and national newspapers, with former consul Macías dressing up in a kimono costume, which is quite ironic after all the bitterness launched against the people and the country he had lived in before, when acting as a diplomat.

7. Immigration Plans

Japanese emigration abroad needed the approval of the government, and it was very much under its control. Japan would not promote emigration without the existence of a Treaty of Commerce and Amity, signed previously between the two nations. Furthermore, Japan would not confirm a treaty if the other country could legally impede free entry of its nationals, as happened with Venezuela.[104] External commerce and emigration were two complementary aims on the Japanese agenda. Colombia did not occupy a primary place in the development of Japanese interest in either commerce or immigration, as was the case with Brazil and Peru. Moreover, Colombia had little to offer for international trade. Despite low

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[102] The Japanese had been already stereotyped with negative expressions in the literature published in Spanish. For instance, in the description given by a Colombian traveller in Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Japanese were seen as 'lazy, indolent ... lavish spenders ... hypocritical, deceitful ... crafty, spiteful and vengeful.' See N. Tanco Armero, *Recuerdos de mis últimos viajes - Japón* (Madrid, 1888), pp. 174-5.

[103] Microfilm, NAUS, RG 59.

[104] See S. Noguchi, 'Historia de las relaciones económicas y sociales entre Venezuela y Japón antes de la segunda guerra mundial', M.A. thesis (Caracas, 1995), pp. 24-9.

interest on both sides, there were a few attempts to introduce Japanese workers and also to establish colonization programmes. None of these plans flourished except for the one set up by the Overseas Development Company (KKKK) in the department of Cauca.

For a better understanding of why Japanese immigration did not succeed in Colombia, a general overview of all the immigration projects developed on both sides will be examined. This includes preliminary plans, paying particular attention to the aims, motivations, and the reactions of the host country to the proposals. To see how the Colombian side responded to the most ambitious project, presented by Kenichi Tomita in 1928, will help to understand why any possible immigration plans were doomed to end in failure.

The first prospect of having Japanese workers in Colombia is mentioned by Toraji Irie, in the most voluminous work ever produced on overseas Japanese emigration. He says that after 1903, as a result of the take-over of the Panama Isthmus, Colombia felt threatened and needed to protect the frontier with the isthmus from further intervention by the United States. For that purpose, Japan was approached with the idea of bringing Japanese workers to place them on the border.[105] Unfortunately, Irie does not quote his sources of information, neither does he provide particular data, with the result that one can only speculate about these plans.

Irie may have taken his information from the comments found in the correspondence of the American diplomat in Bogotá, Alban Snyder, after the latter saw an article published in a Colombian newspaper.[106] The article proposed

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[105] See his *Hôjin kaigai hatten-shi*, Vol. 1, pp. 351-2.
[106] A. G. Snyder to E. Root, Bogotá, 15 November 1905, microfilm roll 63, NAUS.

to open relations with Japan, given the economic advantages it would bring to Colombia. It also mentioned the possibility of a construction by the Japanese of an inter-oceanic canal through the Atrato and Napipí rivers, as well as to encourage immigrants, amongst other projects.[107] The article put the United States on the alert, and since then probably started looking at Japan as a menace for the recovery of Panama by Colombia, and the security of the future Panama Canal.[108]

The second piece of information on bringing Japanese workers to Colombia comes from a primary source. At the time Japan and Colombia were close to signing the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation, Antonio Izquierdo visited several countries, including Japan, to survey economic possibilities and trade. Once back in Colombia, Izquierdo reported to Congress on his trip abroad. He says he contacted two of the emigration companies in Japan for the promotion of trade and emigration. He also mentions that contracts *ad referendum* for future immigrants were signed, for all those who would be contracted to work in agriculture, and also as railway workers. The only obstacle from going ahead with the contracts, according to Izquierdo, was that Japan should wait until the signing of the treaty, in order to send two commissioners to Colombia to check the suitability for emigration there.[109]

The treaty was concluded shortly after Izquierdo's visit to Japan, and signed by the two parties. In a final note added to his information to Congress for publication, it says that a person named 'Royinoda' was assigned to go to

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[107] See T. Salamanca, 'Colombia y Japón', in *El Mercurio*, 21 October 1905, p. 2.

[108] C. H. Gardiner, 'Los japoneses y Colombia', in *Boletín de la Academia de Historia del Valle del Cauca* [translated by C. Molina Ossa] 40, nos. 158-60 (August 1972), pp. 219-20.

[109] See Izquierdo, *Memorial sobre agricultura, presentado por Antonio Izquierdo al Congreso de 1909*, pp. 37-8, and his *Riqueza nacional*, pp. 9, 73-5.

Colombia to survey the country for future relations. Indeed, Rioji Noda visited Colombia and provided the Japanese government with general information on the country. Noda was not confident about immigration to Colombia, mainly because of the following reasons: the lack of direct navigation routes between Japan and Colombia, making the journey very long and expensive; the poor conditions of internal transportation in Colombia, making difficult for the immigrants to reach the interior of the country, and at the same time, difficult to get out; and finally the extensive land occupied by rugged mountains, and the lack of diversity of agricultural products.[110] The negative report from Noda, joined with two immediate crucial incidents, did not allow the early plans by Izquierdo to progress beyond talks. One is that the treaty was signed under the presidency of Rafael Reyes, who could not even finish his presidential period before he fled the country.[111] The other is the assassination of Izquierdo in Bogotá in the midst of political chaos,[112] before he had the time to go ahead with his original plans of bringing Japanese workers into Colombia.

There is no evidence of any interest shown in Japanese immigrants during the following decade, until 1920 when former President Reyes offered to go to Japan to look for workers for Colombia, and to prepare the job contracts himself.[113] While President Reyes had a higher opinion of Japan and its people, he was biased by racial prejudice against any immigrants of African, Hindu or

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[110] See R. Noda, *Imin chôsa hôkoku*, Gaimushô (ed.), (Tokyo [1910] 1986), Vol. 2, pp. 94-109. Noda worked as secretary for the consulates in Peru and Brazil, and was an expert in counselling the Japanese government on immigration matters to South America.

[111] J. M. Henao and G. Arrubla, *History of Colombia* [translated and edited and by J. F. Rippy] (Chapel Hill, NC [1938] 1972), Vol. 2, p. 526.

[112] Irie, *Hôjin kaigai hatten-shi*, p. 352.

[113] S. Galvis and A. Donadio, *Colombia nazi 1939-1945: Espionaje alemán. La cacería del FBI. Santos, López y los pactos secretos* (Bogotá, 1986), p. 258.

Chinese origin. For him, 'the mixture of this race (the Chinese) with the natives would produce an inferior one to those two, as it had already happened in other South American countries, where their immigration has been prohibited.'[114]

The background to the offer of Reyes to go to Japan to recruit workers had been a written request sent to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture and Commerce by the *Sociedad de Agricultores de Colombia*. In their request they brought up the problem of lack of workers for the harvesting of products, because of the increase in the number of Colombians dedicated to work on the railway. The *Sociedad* asked the government to send a mission to Japan to negotiate the matter, since 'Japanese immigration seems to be the most appropriate for Colombia.'[115] The mission never departed from Colombia, and the matter was dropped.[116]

At the end of the second decade, there was a serious concern showed by entrepreneurs over the lack of labourers for agriculture and industry. In 1919, Manuel Dávila Pumarejo called the attention of the *Sociedad de Agricultores* on the necessity to encourage immigration. He sent the Society a copy of his letter to the Colombian Minister in Italy. In it he advised that the minister (taking advantage of the large number of unemployment that a post-war situation might bring to Italy) should try to encourage immigrants from that country into Colombia. Dávila Pumarejo proposed that in exchange for helping Italy with the surplus idle population, the market there should be opened up to the Colombian coffee exports. It is not a coincidence to find in documents of different periods

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[114] See R. Reyes, *Escritos varios* (Bogotá, 1920), p. 159.

[115] *RNA*, 'Sobre inmigración' 14, no. 188 (February 1920), p. 250; *El Tiempo*, 'Trabajadores extranjeros para Colombia: La inmigración japonesa', 25 February 1920, microfilm, BLAA.

[116] Galvis and Donadio, *Colombia nazi*, p. 258.

the mention of opening facilities to immigrants in exchange for imports from Colombia. Fifteen years later, a British diplomat, informing his government about Japanese immigration to Colombia added: 'It would be quite possible for Japan to increase her imports from Colombia, particularly of coffee, ivory-nuts and hides. There is in Colombia plenty of land of the same nature as that already settled by Japanese in the Amazon Valley in Brazil.'[117] But the most noticeable part of Davila's request lies in his stress on the lack of population in such a big country as Colombia, and the economic troubles due to labour shortages, which were the cause of economic failures not only for the Atlantic Coast but for the rest of Colombia.[118] There is no doubt that efforts were made on behalf of capitalists to promote immigration, which came to nothing in most of the cases.

The next plan to recruit a Japanese labour force was a joint project in 1924 by Alvaro Uribe and the emigration company, Overseas Development Company Ltd. They were interested in getting about ten to fifteen thousand people to work on forest exploitation in the Lower Atrato River region. The two sides tried to do business through the Colombian consulate in Kobe with negative results. Firstly, the consul maintained that they had been very busy and were unable to supply the information requested by Uribe. And secondly, when the emigration company presented him with a general plan of the project, the consul objected to it on the grounds that the requirements were excessive. In defence of his negative answer, he claimed to have received inside information from the Brazilian consul, who knew more about the immigration of Japanese into his

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[117] Charles Dodd to Sir John Simon, 9 July 1934, PRO/F0/371/18194.

[118] *RNA*, 'Necesidad de fomentar la inmigración en Colombia. Conveniencia de abrir nuevos mercados al café colombiano' 13, no. 181 (July 1919), pp. 4-13. See also E. Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, p. 183.

country.[119] Consul José Macías took this opportunity to advise his government against accepting Japanese, since he considered their immigration undesirable.[120] As abovementioned, he was strongly opposed to Japanese immigration because of the disastrous, social, and biological consequences it would bring to the Colombians. There is no evidence to prove that his ideas were a decisive factor in the failure of the project. What is evident is his reluctance to provide information, and his disapproval of the project of the emigration company.

In 1925, there appeared to be a serious movement to relocate about twenty-five thousand Japanese residents of the United States to the Atlantic Coast of Colombia. Negotiations on the matter were carried on between Earl T. Jones of New York City and Diego Martínez of Cartagena. It is said that the former had a correspondent in Los Angeles, California, through whom the emigration programme would be arranged. No information on the reasons for the relocation is mentioned, but the hostility to Japanese living in the United States might have been a very good reason for such re-emigration plans.[121] At the time of the consideration of this project, Japanese emigration had come to an end in the United States, after Japan had agreed to restrict the issue of passports through the negotiation of the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1908, the Ladies' Agreement of 1921 that prohibited the emigration of picture brides, and finally, the total ban on

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[119] J. Macías to Alvaro Uribe, 2 December 1924, MRE.

[120] J. Macías to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2 December 1925, MRE. Unfortunately most of the documents, mainly those before the Legation was established in 1934, have vanished from the Colombian Embassy in Tokyo. For this reason, it was not possible to know in detail about this immigration project, and the objections presented by the consul.

[121] In 1913, the Alien Land of California banned land ownership by any foreigner ineligible for citizenship. In 1921 in Washington, in 1923 in Oregon and ten more States, resembling land laws were enacted. Even though the Japanese were not included in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which deprived Chinese people of naturalization, they had to appeal to lower federal courts to acquire citizenship. But this practice came to an end in 1906, by the U. S. Attorney General's decree to the federal courts, making Japanese applications for

Japanese emigration, approved by law in 1924. Consequently, it is not surprising to come across relocation projects such as the one for the Atlantic Coast of Colombia.

It was at first proposed to arrange for the settlement of the colony, along the seacoast in the vicinity of Cispatá Bay, about seventy-five miles Southwest of Cartagena. This location was abandoned because of the proximity to the Panama Canal. Instead, an area of 10,000 hectares of land was surveyed, lying north and east of Cartagena. The area was nearly without inhabitants, and it was expected that the introduction of several thousand Japanese farm labourers into the department of Bolívar would greatly improve the economic conditions on that area of the coast. The land was evaluated as fertile and capable of intensive cultivation for the growing of excellent crops of sugar cane, rice, cotton, vegetables and fruit. Diego Martínez, as an entrepreneur, had interest in the colonization and population of the coastal area, and this was an exceptional opportunity for business investment. He is reported to have been known as a wealthy cattle-owner, with extensive interests in and around Cartagena, and in the Sinú River region.

The American consul who wrote about the Cispatá Bay project could foresee the success of the colonization plan for the Coast, and how much the living conditions of the Colombians would improve, in a country with so much need of people and agricultural programmes. He also recognized that the presence of a large number of Japanese would doubtless bring about the appointment of a Japanese consul. As a result of the opening of diplomatic

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naturalization difficult to obtain. See R. T. Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston, MA, 1989), pp. 203-7.

relations, the development and increase in commerce between the two countries would be expected. Nevertheless of the benefits for Colombia that organized immigration would bring, 'the most important consideration would appear to be the possible menace to the security of the Panama Canal in time of war, which the existence of a colony of Japanese along this coast might offer,' the consul warned. Martínez seemed to have had a good knowledge of the political influence of the United States in Colombia, and the problems of security concerning the Canal. The consul mentioned that the original location had been abandoned 'on account of fear that objection to the project would be raised by the United States, on the grounds of the proximity of the location to the Panama Canal.' It also stated that Martínez would provide his assistance to the project, 'only in the event that the Government of the United States is of the opinion that the proposed colonization would not be prejudicial to its interests.'[122]

It is quite obvious that the political and economic interests of the United States, mainly for the protection and security of the Canal, would have priority over any programme for Colombia, bringing social inversion and prosperity to it. The United States, over the years, continued to be worried about the Cispatá Bay project. Thus, ten years later, the fear that the Japanese might settle along the Coast had still not vanished. It was said that the office of the American Legation at Bogotá contained numerous references to requests by the Japanese government for permission to colonize the northern Coast of Colombia, in the area of the valley east of Cartagena, and in the vicinity of Cispatá Bay. But these two

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[122] L. L. Schnare to Secretary of State. 'Colonization of the Japanese in Colombia', 7 May 1925, NAUS/821.52J.27, RG 59.

locations were considered 'dangerously close to the Panama Canal, being less than 250 miles east of the Atlantic entrance of the Canal.'[123]

The American government kept itself well informed of the repeated efforts made by the Japanese to establish colonies on the Coast, and were alarmed that if the immigration bars were removed, 'they will renew these requests and that their colonists will settle in that region.'[124] The United States seemed to have won its battle to protect the Canal, since no Japanese colonists were permitted near either coastal areas, and future colonization attempts failed. The concern for protection was reported by a British diplomat in Tokyo, with the mention of Japanese interest in certain islands belonging to Colombia, and the wish to have facilities there. The problem in ceding them to Japan lies in the fact that 'these islands are in an especially favourable position for dominating the Panama Canal, and for fear of displeasing the United States Government, if for no other reason, the Colombian Government are on their guard against any such designs.'[125]

In 1927 a commercial mission, sent by the Secretary of Industry and Commerce of the Japanese government, was appointed to visit some Central and South American countries to strengthen their mutual interests.[126] Takemaro Kobayashi headed the mission, visiting Colombia in November of that year. There are no reports indicating official arrangements for future immigrants. What it is known is that the head of the mission applied for the concession of *baldíos*. American correspondence confirms the Japanese interest in the acquisition of land, after the visit of the commercial mission. It reported the possibility 'of

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[123] N. W. Campanole, Military Attaché, Costa Rica, report 3,083, 5 October 1935, NAUS/894.20221/136, RG 59.
[124] Ibid., report 3,056, 25 September 1935.
[125] Charles Dodd to Sir John Simon, 9 July 1934, PRO/FO/371/18194.
[126] Cuervo Borda to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogotá, 15 September 1927, MRE.

obtaining a concession in the uplands of Colombia.'[127] Members of the American Legation in Bogotá would not pass up an opportunity to gather as much information as possible on the activities of the Japanese in Colombia. At this time, they confused the surname of the head of the mission, Kobayashi, with Shibasaki. As a result, any further enquiries were hindered by his name being incorrectly reported, and the names of the other two members being unknown to the American Legation.

Consul Cuervo Borda, through correspondence with his family, makes a reference to this request. 'The fact that Kobayashi had asked for the concession of *baldíos* in the Valle does not please me, and it is my hope that the government will deny his request. It is not good at all for us to mix with people who are physically and mentally inferior, with morals and behaviour so different from ours.'[128] There are two points of interest in his letter. One is his obvious mistrust of the Japanese, which is in accord with the thought of the Colombians of his political time. The other one is the place chosen by Kobayashi. The fertility of the Cauca Valley was well known in Japan, as it had been advertised in a newspaper as 'one of the richest valleys in the world,' several years before the visit of this commercial mission.[129] So, it is not mere coincidence that the Overseas Development Company Ltd. had chosen later, for its immigration plans, an area close to the Cauca Valley River.

If Cuervo Borda had special reasons to be against Japanese immigration to Colombia, it could have been personal bias against the 'yellow race'. When the

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[127] Charles Mac Veagh to Secretary of State, 11 November 1927, microfilm, NAUS, RG 59.
[128] Letter from Carlos Cuervo Borda to his father, 4 June 1928, AECJ.
[129] See *The Japan Gazette*, 'New Consul-General for Colombia', 18 December 1919, MRE.

Rakuyo Maru sailed from Yokohama bringing the first group of immigrants, he wrote: 'Finally, on the 9th, I did dispatch the vessel for Buenaventura with twenty-five *macacos*,[130] that will worsen the sad physical and moral conditions of our people.' When the second group sailed, he added: 'The second vessel will leave tomorrow for Buenaventura bringing more than thirty-five Japanese to work in the Valley. I think it would be difficult to find persons whose ugliness could be even worse.'[131] Even though the consul had his reservations over encouraging emigration to Colombia, he appreciated very much the benefits immigrants would bring. It is significant that he was cautious in recommending Japanese immigration to his government, not only because of racial and religious differences, but also because of the competition they would bring to the Colombians, given the strong capacity of the Japanese to work hard.

He returned to Colombia, after leaving his post in Yokohama in 1935, after the departure of the third and last group of immigrants. The plans of the head of the commercial mission of 1927 still seem not to have been abandoned in his mind, and on this occasion, the former consul took the initiative in arranging an immigration project in 1936 for the north of Colombia. He was to act as the mediator between the two countries. Manuel Dávila Pumarejo, former Governor of Magdalena, this time was not interested in Italian immigrants but in Japanese ones, and offered 14,588 hectares of land for sale, which were located in the western side of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The plot extended for a

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[130] Read it as 'ugly people'.
[131] Letters to his father, 17 October 1929 and 12 March 1930, AECJ.

distance of eighty miles from the capital city of Santa Marta to the mountainous area of the Sierra Nevada.[132]

He suggested in his letter to Kobayashi contacting the same emigration agency that had dealt in the past with the three groups of immigrants. That given the extent of the land and its excellent agricultural prospects, 'the emigration company that would buy it, could send numerous Japanese families to work there, and their products could easily be exported or traded internally,' assures Cuervo Borda. The land was highly recommended for the cultivation of cotton, rice and cacao. It was also appropriate for banana plantation. Support for the fertility of the land came enclosed together with the offer from former tenants, Cuyamel Fruit Co., and Atlantic Fruit & Shipping Co.

There is no available documentation to discover how far the negotiations advanced. A brief mention found in one report from the American Military Attaché in Costa Rica might have a connection with the Sierra Nevada plans. 'It is rumored that additional Colonists are due to arrive from Japan this coming spring, but neither the location nor the number of Colonists is known at this time. As stated in previous reports, the Japanese desire to establish a colony in the fertile valley southwest of the port of Cartagena. There appears on the surface considerable opposition to steady Japanese immigrant labor.'[133] What could be added is that, even if the former Consul General could get away with the recommendations of the National Academy of Medicine against 'yellow immigration', he could not, for any possible reasons, challenge the United States

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[132] The total price for the land was evaluated as US$170,000. The plain field with a cost of 30 to 40 dollars per hectare, while the rugged terrain between 6 to 10 dollars per hectare. See Carlos Cuervo Borda to Takemaro Kobayashi, 23 March 1936, DRO/J1.2.0.J2-17.

[133] Military Attaché, 21 March 1936, NAUS/894.20221/60, RG 59.

in its interest in protecting the security of the Canal. And the land offered for sale, with prospects of settling Japanese immigrants, was too close to the Panama Canal for comfort.

On the 2nd of October, 1928, a contract was signed in Bogotá between Kenichi Tomita, an entrepreneur with commercial links to other South American countries, and José Antonio Montalvo, Minister of Industries.[134] The contract would be effected with the offer of 100,000 hectares of public lands, free of cost, as stipulated in Article 17 of Law 114 of 1922. The land was located in the Eastern Plains of the department of Meta, the areas of natural forest reserve being excluded. For the colonization project, Tomita would bring 2,000 colonists. They would arrive in groups of at least 200 per year. Rather surprisingly, in Clause 3 of the contract, it was established that all 2,000 immigrants would be Catholic. It is true that the Constitution of the Republic of Colombia of 1886 placed in the document the name of God, 'supreme source of all authority', and stipulated the Roman Catholic Church as that of the nation.[135] It never meant, of course, that immigrants to Colombia should be Catholic, or converted into that religion once in Colombia. In a country, where the majority are Christian, it is not unusual to find documents expressing a preference for Catholic immigrants. However, in this case, to include in a contract that all immigrants must be Catholic, constitutes an abuse of power.

Leaving out the unjust religious demand, the contract presented good points for both sides. Each family would be given up to 50 hectares, of which 4

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[134] Contract on Japanese immigration to the *Llanos Orientales* signed between Minister J. A. Montalvo and K. Tomita, 2 October 1928, MRE.

[135] As quoted in Henao and Arrubla, *History of Colombia*, Vol. 2, p. 506.

per cent at least, should be dedicated to permanent rice cultivation. Tomita, in coalition with the government, would aid the colonization area with technical assistance, a cooperative system, health services, roads to connect the isolated *Llanos Orientales* with the capital city, as well as telephone, telegraph, parcel and postal services. Even though the area chosen for this project was stated to be for a distance of about 18 miles from Bogotá, one of the greatest obstacles would be the lack of transport communications, and difficulties in getting parcels and mail, not only to isolated areas but even to Bogotá. To help to solve the latter, Tomita had in mind to negotiate with Japan to improve the existing international service, and with the airline company Scadta, to facilitate the conveyance of Japanese mail from the coastal ports to the interior of the country.

It was not only intended to develop rice growing on a large scale, but also the livestock industry; a combination of pastoral and agricultural activities, both suitable for the climatic conditions of the Eastern Plains. Looking at the terms stipulated in the contract, he seemed to have known well the possibilities of the success or failure of such colonization plans in isolated but promising areas. The experience of former settlers, like those in Brazil, could have been an inspiration in his designing and proposing of his plans to the Colombian government. After the contract was signed he continued his commercial trip to Peru, with the prospect of receiving soon a positive answer from Colombia, in order to introduce officially his plans to the Japanese government for approval. His activities were not ignored in Colombia, as his previous trip to the *Llanos* in search of the land,

and the mention of the contract in negotiations had been published in the national newspapers.[136]

Clause 30 stipulated that for the contract to be effective, it should receive a favourable response from the National Academy of Medicine of Bogotá. Once the Academy had decided that Japanese intake would not be 'inconvenient' for the better development of the race in Colombia, it would be passed to Congress and the President of the nation for final approval. In fact, five weeks after the contract was registered by public notary, Minister Montalvo, in fulfilment of Clause 30, sent an explanatory note of the project to the distinguished sociologists and medical doctors for their consideration. It took no less than seven months for the Academy to give a formal answer to the minister. Throughout the whole report, they repeated incessantly the same ideas in the same words, as the Academy had concluded nine years before in the Congress of Cartagena. Needless to say, that the Japanese, being of an inferior race, should not be accepted in large numbers, because their mixture with the already degenerated mixed Colombian race would aggravate the bad ethnic conditions of the country.[137] The conclusions of the members of the Academy received publicity in national and local newspapers, backing their opinion.[138] Interestingly enough, consul Takahiko Wakabayashi, in Panama, had received advance information that

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[136] See *El Espectador*, 'Está casi cerrado contrato para la inmigración de dos mil japoneses a los Llanos, para cultivos arroceros', 5 September 1928, microfilm, NAUS/821.52J.27, RG 59.

[137] Request from Minister of Industries to President of the National Academy of Medicine, 9 November 1928; evaluation on Japanese immigration to Colombia from the President and the Secretary of the Academy to the Minister of Industries, Bogotá, June 18 1929, MRE. The President of the National Academy of Medicine published six years later the evaluation on Japanese immigration to Colombia, previously presented to the Minister of Industries. See M. Jiménez López, *La Inmigración amarilla a la América*. [Estudio etnológico, cuyas conclusiones fueron presentadas por la Academia Nacional de Medicina, como informe oficial al gobierno de Colombia] (1935).

[138] See e. g. *El Tiempo*, 20 June 1929, and *Diario del Pacífico*, 30 November 1929.

the National Academy of Medicine would be against Japanese immigration to Colombia, and warned his government.[139]

The plans for a rice and livestock industry in the Eastern Plains came to an end after the negative reaction by the National Academy of Medicine. 'Probably, because the opinion of the Academy was adverse, the Ministry closed the file,'[140] explained Francisco José Chaux to the Minister of Foreign Affairs two years later, after a Japanese newspaper dedicated an article to the once projected immigration plans of Tomita.[141] The newspaper publication also caught the attention of British diplomats in Tokyo and Bogotá. The latter reported the fact that Tomita, after a tour of inspection in South America, 'reported the conclusion of an agreement with the Colombian government, whereby Japanese immigrants would be granted 100,000 acres of fertile marsh land free of rent.' And that he brought with him an agreement, which 'is now awaiting signature.' It is also mentioned that "there was little land now available in Chile and Peru, but that the Colombian Government would encourage emigration from Japan.'[142]

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[139] T. Wakabayashi to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 20 April 1929, DRO/J.1.2.0.X1-C01.

[140] Secretary of the Ministry of Industries to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 5 June 1931, MRE. Secretary Chaux also said that besides the written concept emitted by the Academy, the Ministry of Industries had received on June 1929, from Fabio Lozano T., a report on 'yellow immigration'. Lozanos's concept was probably a most influential factor for the Colombian government in rejecting Tomita's project, given his prestige as a writer. In addition to the concept of the Academy, a long essay (missing the name of its author) of 23 pages titled 'Sobre la inmigración amarilla', was found. Looking at its context, I would identify it as Lozano's, who concludes: 'The yellow element is unwanted in our America. Albeit to bring yellow arms is going to benefit us, it is not worth their introduction into our country after the biological damage (to the race) they would bring ... Nothing, absolutely nothing would justify Colombia beginning to experiment with Chinese and Japanese immigrants ... This and nothing else is the topic for this paper,' p. 22. AEOH, Sección 2/41/Ministerio de Industrias. Correspondence 1930-34. My gratitude goes to Eduardo Posada-Carbó for suggesting this document.

[141] *Jiji Shinpo*, 24 March 1931. The article gave information of events that took place two years ago as if they were happening at the moment; also, it incorrectly changed the measure of the land from hectares to acres.

[142] T. M. Snow to A. Henderson, 14 May 1931, PRO/FO/371/15519.

His Majesty's envoy to Tokyo provided his report with more detailed and updated information. He said that a contract truly existed between the two parties, but the matter never progressed beyond preliminary discussion, nor was submitted for the consideration of Congress. He emphasized that Colombians were against immigration by people of Mongoloid origin, whether of Chinese or of Japanese nationality. He pointed out that: 'It is evident that such immigrants might easily bring great economic advantages to the country, but the opinion held by a considerable group of cultured Colombians is that it would be unwise to introduce by immigration any new strain which might further adulterate the already very mixed Colombian stock. They consider that their aim should be to nurse the better elements of the present Colombian strain and to endeavour to build up a national Colombian type.' The sharp and witty words of the British diplomat in Tokyo could not be a better reflection of the reaction of the Colombian elite and the government to the above mentioned immigration project, illustrating at the same time the political and social beliefs of Colombians. Broadly speaking, he exposed the problems of living with an already degenerated race, the Colombian *mestizos*, and the worries over adulterating it even more with people considered racially inferior. 'However, as the above ideas are all somewhat vague and theoretical, the possibility of a practical project, such as that for introducing Japanese immigrants, being carried into effect in spite of their opposition is by no means precluded,'[143] the diplomat declared.

At the same time that discussions were being held between the Minister of Industries and Tomita for the Eastern Plains project, representatives of the

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[143] S. S. Dickson to A. Henderson, 10 August 1931, PRO/FO/371/15519.

Overseas Development Company Ltd. were searching for land in the Cauca Valley area. Less ambitious than Tomita, and not risking an application of public lands, they bought the modest amount of 128 hectares to set up the programme that would start with ten families of immigrants. I shall focus on the public reaction to the immigration, when the rumour spread that the third group was due to arrive in October of 1935.

University students knew that a vessel bringing Japanese immigrants would land in Buenaventura soon. Being aware that Japanese immigrants had not been recommended to the government because of pathological detriment to the national population, the students held a public demonstration in Bogotá to put pressure on the government to forbid their entry. The students proceeded to the House of Representatives, where a written petition was presented, requesting the government to oppose further immigration. It is rather significant that in their petition, firstly they supported the opinion of sociologists and medical doctors of the Academy, asserting 'the disastrous consequences which would result from the crossing of yellow elements with our Colombian manhood.' Then charging Japan as 'an aggressive imperialistic country, where opium, drug commerce and espionage are the outstanding characteristics of that inscrutable and malicious race.'[144] Their inflammatory demonstration, and the bewildering terms of the petition did not dissuade the Minister of Foreign Affairs who ignored their petition, ordering the authorities in Buenaventura to clear the entry for the immigrants. They landed less than three weeks after the mass demonstration in

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[144] Petition from students of the National University of Colombia in Bogotá to the President and members of the Chamber of Representatives, 7 October 1935, in Military Attaché, report 3,123, 30 October 1935, NAUS/894.221/136, RG 59. See also *El Tiempo*, 'Un mitin contra la posible inmigración de los japoneses'. 'Hoy se efectuará la manifestación contra la

the capital, and were advised to travel at night from Buenaventura to their destination without stopping in Cali to rest, but turning off in Yumbo, in order to avoid been noticed.[145]

How could we explain the abovementioned behaviour coming from university students? Did their behaviour reflect what they have been taught in the classrooms? Let us look at an example. A thesis submitted by a student in 1938 to the Law Department of the National University of Bogotá was honoured, and published in the national press, in spite of its racist remarks.[146] The Law student expressed that 'yellow immigration' should be excluded, following Miguel Jiménez López' thought on the negative biological consequences the Japanese would bring if mixed with Colombians.[147] If leaders of higher education considered the 'yellow race' as inferior, it is no wonder that university students would react in such a hostile way against Japanese immigration.

In spite of open opposition in Colombia to Japanese immigration, the mutual interest of the Japanese in purchasing land, and the Colombians in selling it, continued during the 1930s. This is how a person named Miróclets Durango sent letters, at least twice, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, offering Colombian land for sale. He felt confident he could negotiate one fifth of the national territory to help Japan to move one tenth of its population.[148] Ignoring this load of nonsense, there is the mention of one possible plan to permit

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inmigración amarilla', 'El Japón, la pereza y otras cosas', 3, 7 & 8 October 1935, respectively; *The New York Times*, 10 October 1935.

[145] Conversation with Javier Masao Omuku, Florida, 23 March 1997. See also *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 35.

[146] See the preface by Lozano y Lozano, in Esguerra Camargo's *Introducción al estudio del problema inmigratorio en Colombia*. Lozano acted as examiner for this thesis.

[147] Esguerra Camargo, pp. 80-1.

[148] Miróclets Durango to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 13 September 1930, DRO/J.1.1.0.XI-CO1.

colonization in the Valley of Putumayo,[149] another in the department of Santander,[150] and two further attempts for colonization on the Pacific Coast.[151]

On one of the occasions, in 1937, members of the Overseas Development Company Ltd. and the Mitsui Company of Tokyo, opened negotiations with attorney William Bylender, 'with a view for the possible purchase and colonization of the property by the Japanese Government.'[152] The land belonged to the Miller Ibáñez family, and comprised approximately 200,000 hectares, for a distance of 40 miles from the coast, and running along the banks of the San Juan River. On the other occasion, in the same year of 1937, Japanese representatives of the firm of Nagao and Company of Tokyo, endeavoured to obtain a large concession of land for a proposed banana plantation. The land was located at Solano Bay, about 200 miles south of Panama. It is said that the American vice-consul in Buenaventura was informed by a Colombian civil servant, that the Japanese proposal had been denied 'on the grounds that the presence and competition of Japanese planters would be discouraging to the native settlers who were laboring under most adverse conditions.'[153] In addition, Masaaki Tomiya was reported in 1940 to have employed two Colombian lawyers to assist him in to purchase oil crude, and obtaining leases on prospective oil and mineral lands along the Pacific Coast.[154] Except for the intelligence reports, no more data exists on

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[149] S. W. Washington, Chargé d' Affairs ad interim, to Secretary of State, Bogotá, 8 December 1934, NAUS/894.20210/68 ,RG 59.

[150] N. W. Campanole, Military Attaché in Costa Rica, report 3,083, 5 October 1935, NAUS/894.20221/136, RG 59.

[151] E. McKee, Military Attaché Report, 'Japanese Activities along the West Coast of Colombia 1935-1942', 13 January 1943, NAUS/894.20221/49, RG 165.

[152] Ibid. p. 1.

[153] Ibid. p. 4.

[154] Naval Attaché Report, 'Colombia - Japan', Bogotá, 2 September 1940, NAUS/894.20221/21, RG 59.

the subject, with the result that information is fragmented and the process of negotiation between the two countries goes undocumented.

The last reference on immigration, before Japan's involvement in the Second World War, comes from the Colombian government. After receiving a note in Bogotá from the Legation in Tokyo, with the mention that Japan was sending colonists to Manchuria, and that there was no need to send emigrants to South America, the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied emphatically to the Commercial Secretary of the Legation in Tokyo that 'Colombia is not interested in Japanese immigration.' In his reply, the minister made the declaration that Japanese immigration was not accredited in Colombia, as 'in the past, immigration matters have never reached the official level of negotiation between the two governments.'[155] This reply helps us to understand a previous conversation held between the Colombian Minister Plenipotentiary in Tokyo with a British diplomat. During it, the minister insisted that the Japanese families who had already settled in Cauca, 'were not regarded as immigrants under the Colombian immigration law, as they paid their own expenses and bought their land from their own resources.'[156] These two documents are quite important because they contain the official reason for arguing that Japanese immigration did not occur in Colombia, obscuring the truth as they do with a distortion of the category 'international immigrant'.

With the recovery of political stability after the end of the Pacific War, Japan and Colombia opened diplomatic relations again. In the late 1950s and

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[155] Commercial Secretary of Colombian Legation in Tokyo to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 14 March 1938; Minister to Commercial Secretary, Bogotá, 20 April 1938, MRE.

[156] Ch. Dodd to Sir John Simon, 9 July 1934, PRO/FO/371/18194.

early 1960s, the last two immigration plans were designed. A group of seventeen single and young workers were recruited to work on a banana plantation programme. The land, with an area of 2,000 hectares, was located near Tumaco, on the Pacific Coast. Poor results after three years of hard work came on top of the unbearable living conditions in the humid tropical weather. The project was totally abandoned. As a consequence, the people who formed part of it were dispersed. While some went back to Japan, others decided to try their luck elsewhere in Colombia. It is well known that the Japanese Ambassador in Bogotá was the main promoter of the programme, 'with the aim to open the way for future immigrants.'[157]

The last attempt was a programme for intensive cultivation of cotton. The plan was known as 'Codazzi project' because of its location. It was to be developed in the fertile lands of the department of Cesar, with the prospect of bringing a considerable number of Japanese immigrants to the location. However, after months of difficult negotiations because of foreseen increases in the price of the land, the director decided to cancel it for good.[158] With this last incident, a chapter of planned Japanese immigration to Colombia came to an end. Afterwards, the Japanese economic recovery meant that Japan did not need to sponsor any more emigration of its nationals abroad. On the other hand, the growing industry in Japan after the 1970s brought the problem of scarcity of

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[157] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 92-5.
[158] Conversation with Toshio Chiku, Bogotá, 18 February 1997.

labourers, necessity that began to be supplied with the national workers.[159]

8. Conclusion: America for the Americans

From the evidence so far presented it may help to summarize the circumstances under which Japanese immigration was envisioned by Colombia. The subject of international immigration to Colombia cannot be tackled from just one angle. The problem does not present a single reading, and elucidation is not a simple task. It has to be approached under the consideration of several facts, allowing each to inform the rest. To understand immigration, all the contributing factors have to be presented together, intertwining with one another, so that an interpretation can be reached.

'Colombia, despite its great size and resources, received relatively few Syro-Lebanese immigrants, or indeed immigrants of any origin,'[160] is a thoughtful appraisal, which casts light on the study of Japanese immigration. A country privileged with an exceptional tropical location, natural resources such as oil, coal, platinum, emeralds, the Eastern Plains, the Amazon, the Atlantic and Pacific seas on both coasts, the Andean mountains with their rich and fertile valleys, a great variety of climates for the development of the agricultural and livestock industry did not appeal to international immigrants. The country remained empty, in spite of favourable legislation, full of promises of help to potential immigrants.

Inasmuch as instability was one of the main reasons inhibiting immigration,

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[159] See H. Matsushita, 'La política japonesa hacia América Latina en la época de posguerra', in *Análisis Político*, no. 4 (1988), p. 99.

[160] Fawcett, 'Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians in Colombia', p. 362.

a first consideration is the political situation after independence from Spain. After the dissolution in 1830 of the Great Colombia, the country went through seventy devastating civil wars, and was governed by six different constitutions. The last of the civil wars, generally known as 'the One Thousand Days' War', lasted from 1899 to 1902. Many were killed not only fighting those fratricidal wars, but also because of the insalubrious conditions in the war zones. In the civil war of 1879, 80,000 men were killed, in the 1899-1902 war, nearly 100,000 perished.[161] At the turn of the century, the country had been left with a very low population after so many civil wars, isolated because of the lack of proper roads and railways, without industry, and with underdeveloped agriculture.

After the last fratricidal civil war, the country had a period of some decades of internal peace. It began to enjoy a period of political stability and economic growth. 'The 1920s were the first decade of optimism and relative prosperity that the country had enjoyed since the 1870s,' is how Malcolm Deas describes the decade.[162] It was precisely during the 'decade of peace and prosperity' that Japanese emigration companies became interested in Colombia to allocate future settlers. It was during the 1920s that the Cispatá Bay relocation project for the Atlantic Coast, the Tomita plan for the Eastern Plains, and the Overseas Development Company Ltd. programmes for the Lower Atrato river, and the departments of Cauca and Santander came under attention. It was also at that time that most of the immigrants on the Atlantic Coast started living in Barranquilla and the town of Usiacurí, and a handful in Cali and Palmira.

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[161] Rippy, *The Capitalists and Colombia*, p. 23.
[162] Deas, 'Colombia', in *South America, Central America and the Caribbean*, p. 216.

A second consideration is the size of the population and the tenancy of the land, factors that contributed to deter immigration. Colombia, up to the middle of the twentieth century, was an empty country considering its enormous size, with a population unevenly distributed, low technology, and very poor transport facilities with high costs. The size of the population, although low, underwent enormous growth between 1912 and 1929. It went from approximately 5,000,000 to almost 8,000,000. It may be considered a natural increase of 50 per cent, for there was almost no international immigration in those years.[163] Regardless of the low population, and the innumerable laws enacted to distribute the *baldíos*, the land did not belong to the majority peasant population, but remained in the hands of a few families. The laws favoured the dominant class that owned the land, leaving the Indian and the poor *mestizo* in the condition of labouring peons.[164] It has been estimated that in the period following the One Thousand Days' War, the government granted to a few privileged families more than ten million hectares of *baldíos*.[165] Upon the basis of these calculations, there was not much land left to offer to farmer immigrants. In this case, the legislation existed, offering public lands to potential immigrants, but in reality there was no arable land to be granted.

It could be argued that in Colombia the land is vast and rich, and that probably there is still a considerable amount left un-allotted. These arguments seem plausible. But, although the land in Colombia is vast in area, only part of it can be used for agriculture, presenting different levels of productivity. Moreover, it has been calculated that over half the land is forest, and about ten per cent

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[163] Rippy, *The Capitalists and Colombia*, p. 179.

[164] Fluharty, *Dance of the Millions*, p. 207.

[165] F. Posada, *Colombia: Violencia y* subdesarrollo (Bogotá, 1969), p. 30. Quoted in O. Fals Borda, *Historia de la cuestión agraria en Colombia* (Bogotá, 1975), p. 49; see also Jimeno Santoyo, 'Los procesos de colonización', p. 375.

consists of rivers, lakes, swamps and flooded land.[166] These estimations are important when considering immigration. It helps to understand some of the reasons why Colombia did not appeal to farmer immigrants, despite the country's great size, its climate, and the abundance of natural resources.

A third consideration is transportation. Physical geographical conditions, natural barriers, and an undeveloped communication system, were other factors that did not favour immigration. The country remained isolated in different regions or little pockets, lacking roads and public transport to smaller villages and towns. It is not surprising that the capital city of Bogotá has been described as 'the most inaccessible capital in the Americas' until the aeroplane came.[167] Transport costs added to the lack of appropriate communications. 'It is unbelievable, not to say ridiculous, that the trip from Stockholm to Puerto Colombia will cost the emigrants much less than from Barranquilla to Neiva,'[168] remarked the consul in Sweden, Manuel José Casas Manrique, in a note sent to his government.

A fourth main consideration is immigration law. It should not be forgotten that immigration is dependent on many factors. It is not as simple as having a host country with natural resources to be exploited, and people eager to move looking for better opportunities in life. In the case of Colombia, racial prejudice and immigration legislation controlled the entry of unwanted races. It was asserted that: 'Immigrants from all countries enjoy equal encouragement, rights, and privileges in Colombia with the exception of the Yellow Race who are

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[166] Fluharty, p. 13.
[167] Gunther, *Inside Latin America*, p. 161.
[168] *RNA* 18, nos. 239-40 (May-June 1924), p. 309.

extremely undesirable immigrants.'[169] As I suggested earlier, it was the educated elite who considered Japanese immigration as having disastrous biological consequences if mixed with the Colombians. Public opinion backed the legislation and the racist position of the National Academy of Medicine. Also the students of the National University of Colombia in Bogotá, supported in a public demonstration six years later the opinion of the Academy of Medicine against 'yellow immigration', and asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to stop the entry of immigrants, who were already on their way to Colombia.

In spite of this strong opposition, however, the Japanese immigrants were able to enter because of diplomatic and personal relations between Zoji Amari and Carlos Uribe. Amari, who had visited the Colombian consul in Lima before his trip to Bogotá, had been informed by the consul there that Japanese immigration was not welcomed in Colombia.[170] Amari probably knew well how things worked in Colombia through his individual contacts. Indeed, his brief acquaintance with the Minister in Bogotá made possible the entry of the immigrants a few months later. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on this occasion, concealing the immigration of the Japanese under the spurious category of passengers, gave them the opportunity to enter the country. This incident showed how things in Colombia work through individual relations, not through the national network, as would have been the case in Japan.

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[169] V. C. Devotie, Military Attaché, Colombia, report 216, 16 April 1930, NAUS/894.20221/86, RG 59.

[170] The minister in Bogotá is informed by the consul in Lima about the future visit to Colombia by Zoji Amari, during which Amari intended to carry out an economic and social survey. The consul also states that he has warned Amari how he personally feels 'against yellow immigration to Colombia.' From the Legation in Lima to Minister of Foreign Affairs in Bogotá, 7 May 1929, ANC/MFN/2047.

A fifth and final consideration, is the role played by the United States in Colombia's internal affairs. If the United States was apprehensive about Japanese immigration to Colombia it was due to the desire to protect their economic interests, and the security of the Panama Canal. Japanese immigration exemplifies the fact that Colombia was not alone in directing its immigration politics. The Monroe Doctrine of 'America for the Americans', haunted Colombia in pursuing its immigration policies. After the incident of 1903, Colombia not only lost the Panama Isthmus, and any possible benefit from constructing a trans-oceanic canal, but also lost its political independence in favour of the interests of the security of the Canal. A still unresolved question is why Japanese immigration did not occur in large numbers in any of the Central American countries, except Mexico.

The concern to protect the Panama Canal itself, and its existence as the only inter-oceanic route, made the United States fear a Japanese presence near the Canal. 'It is well to bear in mind, however, that Japanese colonization ports are usually studied and selected not only from an economic viewpoint, but as factors of military value as well ... It is clear that, when Japanese colonists become established (they) will constitute such a base and threaten the security of the Panama Canal,'[171] wrote the Military Attaché of one the Central American countries. What the officer ignored was that those Japanese he was referring to in his military report, the invisible enemy, were poor farmers who had moved abroad, looking for opportunities to make a decent life for themselves and their families.

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[171] N. W. Campanole, Military Attaché in Costa Rica, report 3,083, 5 October 1935, NAUS/894.20.221/136, RG 59.

As could be easily concluded, it is not only that political and social violence, a poorly populated country, rural peasantry, undeveloped intraregional communication, topographical physical features, tropical climatic conditions and disease, were among many factors that presented Colombia as not the first choice for someone wishing to emigrate. International political influence played a controlling role, and Colombians were conscious of the American political dominance in its internal matters of immigration. Hence, the editor of a national newspaper, probably knowing that the Tomita project was in the hands of the National Academy of Medicine waiting for a verdict, wrote: 'And looking at the question from another point of view we must state that it is not advisable for Colombia to admit immigrants who, for a thousand reasons would inevitably be hostile to the United States and who could entangle us in complications from which we would emerge the losers.'[172] The fear of the Colombian government over upsetting the United States was greater than its capacity to decide what the necessities of the country and its people were. In this case, to accept immigrants to work in agriculture that would not only help to populate an empty country but to produce staple food, to increase commercial trade, and to promote international relations with Japan. All of them, undoubtedly, would have been of benefit for Colombia.

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[172] *El Tiempo*, 12 February 1929, microfilm, NAUS, RG 59.

II. TOWARDS EXPANSION

1. Introduction

The government of the Tokugawa shogunate restricted the entry of foreigners and isolated Japan for more than two centuries. In 1612 Ieyasu issued a decree banning Christianity and set out to abolish the religion from the country. Two years later, he promulgated the edict to expel the Christian missionaries, declaring that: 'The Christian band have come to Japan ... longing to disseminate an evil law, to overthrow true doctrine, so that they may change the government of the country, and obtain possession of the land. This is the germ of great disaster, and must be crushed.' The Edict of Expulsion ordered all foreign priests to assemble in Nagasaki, and then to leave Japan for good. Ieyasu's ultimate mandate came at a time when there were about 300,000 Christians in Japan, out of a population of between fifteen and twenty million.[1]

It was during the sixteenth century that the first European explorers and Catholic missionaries arrived in Japan. The chief foreign influences were Portuguese and Dutch, and among the missionaries the Jesuits, who were led by Francis Xavier, after his arrival in 1549. The Portuguese Jesuits were joined years later by Spanish friars, mainly Franciscan and Dominican, from Manila. However, the efforts of the Jesuits resulted in more harm than good. Towards the end of the century, as central political unification took hold again, the presence of

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[1] See C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan* (Berkeley, 1953), pp. 318-21, and R. Storry,

Christianity was seen as a threat to the new social order, and the expulsion of the Christian missionaries was first ordered by Ieyasu's predecessor, Hideyoshi. This was the beginning of the eventual expulsion of all foreigners.[2] Except for the Dutch and the Chinese, confined to living in a small section in Nagasaki, all foreigners had been expelled by 1641. This climate of national seclusion was extended also to the Japanese people who were banned from travelling abroad. In 1637, it was decreed that no Japanese should leave the country under pain of death, and that capital punishment would be awaiting any Japanese who having left, should return.[3] Thus, the country entered a period of self-imposed isolation, or *sakoku*, until the expedition of Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853 carrying the American flag that forced Japan to open its doors.[4]

The shogunate was overthrown at the end of November 1867, bringing to an end the rule of the Tokugawa house. In January 1868, Emperor Mutsuhito was proclaimed as the ruler of the nation, and a new era of reformation started, known as the Meiji Restoration.[5] Efforts were concentrated on the creation of a new nation. A policy of opening-up-to-the-world played its role in bringing about the transformations which followed. Soon government officials, businessmen and students travelled overseas legally. The Japanese were eager to go abroad, learn, and return home bringing new knowledge with them. This 'turning to the West', to borrow the phrase from Sukehiro Hirakawa, had started in the 1860s when the

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A History of Modern Japan (London [1960] 1982), p. 62.

2 J. Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society* (London [1987] 1995), p. 14.

3 R. Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, p. 64.

4 Ibid. pp. 62, 64-5, 84-90; see also S. Oishi, 'The bakuhan system', in C. Nakane and S. Oishi (eds.), *Tokugawa Japan: The Social and Economic Antecedents of Modern Japan* [translation edited by C. Totman] (Tokyo, 1990), p. 27, and A. Waswo, *Modern Japanese Society 1868-1994* (Oxford, 1996), p. 11.

5 In Japan, time is divided by imperial reign. Since the Meiji Restoration there have been four eras: Meiji (1868-1912), Taishô (1912-26), Shôwa (1926-89), and Heisei (1989-).

government sent a series of missions to Europe. Mission followed mission, and a sixth was abroad at the time the shogunate ended.[6] Surprisingly enough, Japan had a pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1867.

If during the last years of the Tokugawa regime, it was mainly students who were sent overseas, soon after the new government of Meiji, the rulers went abroad themselves. In 1871 more than one hundred public officers and students left for two years to visit and tour the United States, Britain and the European continent. Those who travelled, or worked as representatives abroad during the early decades of the Meiji government examined Western science, technology and culture, then returned to Japan to plan its future, having in mind the most admired European and American models. Besotted with the West, some leaders suggested abandoning the Japanese script for the Roman language, or even, adopting the English language.[7] Other leaders advised in favour of a programme to encourage intermarriage with White Americans and Europeans in order to vitalize the Japanese gene pool. A reaction to all this western idealizing came in the late 1880s, when the Japanese gained more self-confidence. Expansion and invasion overseas were on the way, and a nationalist movement was to take over the

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[6] M. B. Jansen, 'The Meiji restoration', in M. B. Jansen (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, 1989), Vol. 5, p. 336; S. Hirakawa, 'Japan's turn to the West', in Jansen (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Vol. 5, pp. 432-35; A. Waswo, *Modern Japanese Society*, pp. 22-34.

[7] In May 21 of 1872, Arinori Mori, the Japanese Minister Plenipotentiary at Washington and later Minister of Education, sent a letter to Yale Professor William D. Whitney, asking for his opinion 'on a project I have in contemplation, connected with the introduction of the English language into the Japanese Empire ... (because) ... if we do not adopt a language like English ... the progress of civilization is evidently impossible.' Mori proposed a 'simplified English', banishing 'from the English language, for the use of the Japanese nation, all or most of the exceptions ... for example to substitute *seed* for saw ... *thinked* for thought ... and so on through the entire list of irregular verbs ... In spelling ... not only English speaking people, but the world at large, would be greatly benefited by a re-cast of English orthography, making the language actually what it claims to be, phonetic, instead of hieroglyphic on a phonetic basis.' Original letter published in T. Kawasami (ed.), *Shiryô nihon eigoku-shi: eigo kyôiku ronsô-shi* (Tokyo, 1978), Vol. 2, pp. 48-51. See also R. A. Miller, *Japan's Modern Myth: The Language and Beyond* (Tokyo, 1982), pp. 107-9.

country. However, as said previously by Spickard, 'Western culture had made its mark on Japan.'[8]

During the last days of the civil war of the Tokugawa regime, and during the early years of the newly established Meiji government, foreigners made several requests to have Japanese workers sent abroad. Before the end of the shogunate, an American diplomat, Eugene Van Reed, had requested authorization to obtain workers for sugar cane plantations in Hawaii. In 1868, after recruiting 141 men and 6 women off the streets in Yokohama, Van Reed sneaked them out of the country and sent them to work in Hawaiian plantations without the permission of the new government. They were badly treated and a considerable number of problems arose. Many of them had come from the urban areas of Tokyo and Yokohama, and lacked experience as farmers. When the Japanese government learned of the poor treatment of its nationals, the foreign minister wrote to the American consul in Japan complaining about the American activities and asking for the return of the workers. Those who returned felt very dissatisfied with their experience abroad in Hawaii.[9]

A second attempt to send workers overseas was made in 1868 by a German company. Forty-two workers were sent to farm on the island of Guam. This project did not succeed, and the Japanese survivors were brought back to Japan in 1871 by the government. A year later, in 1869, John Henry Schnell, a German merchant, who started a tea and silk colony in northern California,

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[8] P. R. Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformations of an Ethnic Group* (New York, NY, 1996), p. 9.

[9] Ibid. p. 10, and A. T. Moriyama, *Imingaisha: Japanese Emigration Companies and Hawaii 1894-1908* (Honolulu, 1985), pp. 1-2.

produced another failed venture. Schnell's workers came from Fukushima prefecture, people on the losing side of the conflicts of the civil war that ended in the Meiji reformation. Schnell tried to establish a tea and silk-farming operation on land owned by him and his brother. Apart from the memorial inscriptions on the cemetery headstones, very little is known about this group of workers. One of the headstones remembers *Okei*, the first Japanese woman immigrant to die in America, at the age of nineteen.[10]

What needs to be said regarding the three examples above is the reaction of the Japanese government to sending workers abroad, and the later consequences. Even though those groups can be seen as the precursors of later immigration, in the sense that they were the first to travel and work abroad in an organized manner, their actions were considered illegal. The Meiji government did not grant permission to the organizers to carry out the projects, nor were passports issued to any of the group of travellers. The Japanese government's response to people going abroad without its control, and to rumours of abuse and poor treatment of its citizens in Hawaii, was to suspend overseas immigration for the next sixteen years. Up until 1885, it was illegal for ordinary people to go abroad. During the 1868 to 1885 period the government received several requests for Japanese labourers, but all of them were denied. The only exception was when permission was granted in 1883 to a British citizen to recruit thirty-seven emigrants to work as pearl shellers and pearl divers on Thursday Island, north of the Australian continent. After 1885 the government permitted emigration to Hawaii for ten years but under strict controls.[11]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Moriyama, pp. xviii, 8-9.

The government started to regulate overseas emigration from 1894 with a set of rules issued as Imperial Ordinance Number 42. The ordinance became law in 1896, and took effect in June of 1897 as *Imin hogohô*, the Emigrant Protection Law. The basic provision of the law for the protection of Japanese emigrants was divided into seven parts: *imin*, *imin toriatsukainin*, security, emigrant ships, miscellaneous provisions, penal provisions, and supplementary provisions.[12] The law clearly defined what was legal in terms of overseas emigration, and how the government intended to regulate the emigration process. The control could be executed in three ways. First, through the promulgation of the emigration law that gave officials the authority to intervene and challenge the activities of private companies when they violated the law. Secondly, within the legal structure, allowing private companies to exercise individual initiative. And finally, relying on local prefecture authorities to enforce the provisions of the legal regulations.

The regulations for the protection of the immigrant deserve some explanation:

1. *Imin*. By law, the term *imin* applies to persons who emigrate to foreign countries (other than China and Korea) for the purpose of labouring. The nature of the labour should be determined by consultation between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Home Affairs. The government regulated the types of labour appropriate for emigrants, such as fishing, mining, manufacturing, construction work, agriculture and transportation.

A Japanese citizen was not allowed to go abroad to work without official permission. An emigrant then had two choices: either to obtain permission

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[12] Terms and definitions of the Emigrant Protection Law were taken from Moriyama, pp. 33-9, 189-94, and from documents in the archives of the Foreign Office in Tokyo, DRO/381.3.

through a private company, or to provide the names of two guarantors who were responsible for the worker if he/she became ill or was in distress. If the person had to be brought back to Japan at the expense of the government, the money should be reimbursed by the emigration company or by the guarantor. To achieve all the requirements of security and protection for the immigrant, the government defined legally what kind of people and companies could serve as immigration agents, and how they intended to regulate and control all the emigration procedures.

2. *Imin toriatsukainin*. Article 1 of the aforementioned law, defined how a corporation was legally involved in the emigration process. The term *imin toriatsukainin* applies to a Japanese person, or to a commercial company consisting of only Japanese shareholders, that under any pretext whatsoever, makes it their business to secure *imin*, or make arrangements for their emigration. The government clearly defined by law that emigration abroad of its citizens was based on private enterprise, and undertaken by those seeking financial gain. Article 13 stated that the *imin toriatsukainin*, in making arrangements for emigration, should enter into a written contract with the emigrant. Concerning the terms of the contract, Article 9 stated that the term of the contract should be fixed, also the fees for making arrangements for the emigration, and the methods of extending aid, or sending back home the person in case of illness or other adversity. Article 14 (added in 1901) established that the emigration company or its agents, could not receive fees from the applicant of any kind other than for making arrangements for emigration. This article was issued after complaints coming from the immigrants about extra commissions and illegal fees taken by the companies or the agents to facilitate the bureaucratic process.

3. *Security*. Article 16 and 17 required each company for a security deposit that should not be less than 10,000 yen. This deposit was used to bring emigrants back to Japan if the company in question did not accomplish its financial obligations as stipulated in the contract. At the beginning this money was deposited in the hands of local authorities, but after 1901 an ordinance stipulated that it should be deposited with the central government.

4. *Emigrant ships*. A vessel was considered to be *imin unsôsen* (emigrant ship) if it carried on board no less that fifty emigrants destined to disembark in the countries specified by ordinance. As was the case with the emigration companies, the navigation companies and their ships were subject to strict regulations. They had to obtain permission for the transport of emigrants. They also had to deposit an amount of money as security. The government retained the right to designate ports of departure, as well as ports of destination. At first, Yokohama and Kobe were the only ports of departure, joined years later by Nagasaki. The government also retained control of the amount charged for passage. In addition, according to Article 20, the captain of the ship, if so required by the administrative authorities, had to report on various matters relating to the immigrants on board.

5. *Miscellaneous provisions*. The articles of miscellaneous provisions were added later, in 1901, 1902 and 1907, when the law underwent several changes. It gave more control to the government over those who made arrangements before the embarkation of the emigrants over the boarding houses, and also over money-lenders. It meant that the boarding houses were subject to inspection, in regard to maintenance and charging of fees. Those involved in the final arrangements before the emigrants departed were also controlled. Thus, the money-lenders had to obtain official permission to fix the limits of interest taken on the loans.

6. *Penal provisions*. This part of the law basically dealt with private companies and the penalties for illegal activities. Only one article dealt with the emigrants.

7. *Supplementary provisions*. In 1907 and 1909 separate sets of regulations were issued to ensure government control over the emigration process. Fines were established for specific violations. For instance, Article 16 imposed a fine of not less than 2 yen, not more than 20 yen, to those who left the country without procuring a passport. The maximum penalty for an emigrant was 50 yen.

The emigration companies were also subject to penalties. Article 17 demanded a fine of not less than 50 yen, not more than 150 yen, of the emigration companies that violated the provisions of the law. The maximum penalty for an emigration company was 10,000 yen.

The central government reserved all legal rights over emigration abroad. It regulated the process through legislation. The Emigration Protection Law gave the government the right to start, restrict or end emigration abroad. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the officials of the ministry were responsible for emigration. The ministry was divided into several parts, separating the sections that dealt with political affairs, finance and records. It was not until 1918 that government divisions were assigned to specific geographic areas. And, not until 1929 that the Department of Emigration (*Takumushô*) was created. After 1885 emigration matters were handled by the trade and commerce section of the Foreign Office. In 1891 a specific emigration section was created within the trade and commerce department. An important task of this section was the protection of Japanese citizens' rights abroad. Diplomatic representatives had to report to this section in detail about people's activities, such as births, marriages, deaths, labour conditions, crimes, and complaints filed in their area. Also, all

correspondence coming from the prefectures, emigration companies or individuals, first went to this section. In countries where there was not an established legation or consulate, the nearest consulate would be the contact point for the immigrant. This was the case of Colombia until 1934, where the immigrants personally reported matters by mail to the Japanese consulates in Panama or Peru.

During the early years of emigration the central government alone was responsible for emigration affairs, and the welfare of the workers. But as the numbers of emigrants increased, the prefectural authorities became involved in the control and organization of the emigration process. 'No *imin* shall, without the permission of the administrative authorities, emigrate to a foreign country,' was stated in one of the articles issued for the enforcement of the law for the protection of the emigrant. It meant that the emigrant had to submit an application to the prefecture where the person belonged, or if living in another prefecture, to provide a certificate of residence there. The application had to include details of the purpose of the trip, the reason for leaving, place of destination, and planned length of stay abroad. If the individual had signed a contract, a copy of the contract also had to be submitted. No applications were accepted without the signature of an immigration company agent.

The prefectures that received applications to emigrate had to compile data monthly, and send reports to the ministry twice a year. The prefecture had to provide personal details about each immigrant, such as their place of birth, home address, occupation, status, and place of destination. But the prefectural officials' task did not end there. They were expected to keep track of the individual after the person had left Japan, and if a person failed to return, they had to investigate

the reasons and report them. This kind of information would help to resolve inheritance matters. Also, the prefecture had to inform the central government about money remitted to local banks. However, it was not only in relation to the emigrant that the prefecture had an important task. It played both, the role of intermediary between the central government and the emigration companies, and between the companies and the emigrants themselves. In addition, the local authorities had to control people going abroad without using an emigration company. Emigrants who did not join an emigration company would have to present the authorities with the names of two guarantors. Local authorities had to verify that the guarantors had enough money to bring back the person to Japan if necessary. For a person to be a guarantor he would have to prove that he was a proprietor of land, or at least, a tax payer.

All emigrants had to contact the local authorities of their own prefecture. All emigrants were required to provide the authorities with details of previous occupations, the address of their home in Japan, and details of their place of origin, in cases where they had migrated from another prefecture. The only exception to the requirement to report to a prefecture was for those who were residents of Tokyo and Yokohama. They were required to report to the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. The police department was a section of the Home Ministry, and would submit reports on emigrants from Tokyo and Yokohama to the Foreign Ministry.

In addition to the importance of legal aspects, the study of emigration makes it necessary to clarify two aspects: the intention of emigration, and the kind of emigrant. First, a distinction has to be made between colonizers of countries under the Japanese government control, and emigrants to countries

where Japan did not have any political authority. The guide book for immigration to Manchuria outlined one of the purposes for immigration there as to undertake national defence against Soviet Russia.[13] Soldiers sent to territories invaded by Japan worked in many cases in agriculture, which was not the case for agricultural peasants sent to countries under treaties of friendship and commerce.

Secondly, a distinction has to be made between workers who left under contract with the intention of returning, and ones who went with the intention of settling abroad. Another consideration is that not all emigrants left under a contract with an emigration agency. Many of them travelled as independent emigrants, some were invited by their relatives and friends, and others were those who went as students. The bulk of the emigrants to Colombia went under contract with the emigration agency, the Overseas Development Company Ltd., and the Overseas Cooperative Society of Fukuoka Prefecture. They did not leave with a contract requiring their return to Japan after a said period but expected to become permanent settlers. Therefore, the study of immigration to Colombia needs to be considered within the general frame work and organization provided by the Japanese government-sponsored emigration, intended for agricultural settlers. The role this kind of emigration played in the development of mutual relations between the two countries cannot be overlooked.

2. Organization of Japanese Emigration

Overseas emigration depended fundamentally on the organization and economic

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[13] See S. Araragi, 'Race Relations in Manchuria during World War II', in *Kumamoto daigaku bungakkai, Bungaku-bu Ronsô* 36 (Kumamoto, 1992), p. 60.

interests of the emigration companies.[14] They started to appear in small numbers after the first publication of the Emigration Ordinance in 1894. It was a business adventure for merchants, local politicians, businessmen, and descendants of former warriors to put their money into. Once an emigration company was established, it was important to have on the staff someone with political experience. Those with former political training, or having personal links with local authorities, could work within the network of the prefectural bureaucracy to facilitate the process. However, those who had their civil rights suspended, individuals who had been involved in bankruptcy, or had spent time in prison were not eligible for this work. The companies were established in the most important cities of Osaka, Sendai, Tokyo and Yokohama. Information on and possibilities for overseas emigration became available particularly in the prefectures in southern Honshu and northern Kyushu.

To run their business and to recruit emigrants, the emigration companies hired three types of employees: personnel to work in the company offices, recruiters to work in the rural areas of Japan, and agents to represent the company abroad. The staff of the main offices handled the paper work for the permits, passports, visas, and official documents required to emigrate. The recruiter had the important task of advertising and making people interested in the company programmes. The arrival of an agent in a village or town was usually advertised previously in the form of public notices. Lectures, films and posters were broadly used to provide more detailed information. The agents used public

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[14] The most complete work of reference on emigration companies is Moriyama's *Imingaisha*. Although the companies described by Moriyama had either been closed, or merged into one company by the time emigration took place in Colombia, the basic organization remained the same. His meticulous description is a valuable work of reference for the study of Japanese emigration abroad.

places like temples, theatres, or other public gathering places to conduct a preliminary examination of potential emigrants. Active recruiting involved going from house to house, village to village in rural areas. Village and family networks facilitated the recruiting process of the emigration agents.

Another task for the emigration companies was to negotiate the transportation of the emigrants with shipping companies. The companies could only use the lines, routes, embarkation and destination ports approved by the government. The transfer of emigrants to foreign ships for a final destination was not permitted. Therefore, the emigrants were to follow the commercial routes established by the Japanese steamship companies. The two chief companies that transported emigrants to South America were the *Nippon Yûsen Gaisha*, and the *Ôsaka Shôsen Gaisha*. Both belonged to the *shasen* group, which was under the special patronage of the government, in contrast to the *shagai-sen* group, which was unsubsidized or less subsidized. These lines divided the Latin American region in such a way that the *Nippon Yûsen* covered the Pacific and the *Ôsaka Shôsen* the Atlantic ports.[15]

Besides the emigration companies, the creation of the emigration societies became an important factor in stimulating emigration. In 1915 the *Kaigai Kyôkai* (Overseas Emigration Societies) were formed in Hiroshima and Kumamoto. They were followed by similar societies in other prefectures. Centralization took place after the issue of Law 25, promulgated on 29 March of 1927 to assist emigration overseas. This law provided for the creation of the *Kaigai Ijû Kumiai* (Overseas Emigration Associations). A further step towards centralization took place with

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[15] J. F. Normano and A. Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America: An Introductory Survey with Special Reference to Peru* (New York, NY, 1943), pp. 30-1.

the federation of these associations into the *Kaigai Ijû Kumiai Kengokai* (Association of Overseas Emigration Partnerships).[16]

The cooperative societies were organized on the lines of the old Japanese guilds. The aim of these guilds was to form groups in the prefectures for joint emigration, or to assist plans sent from abroad. The cooperatives of the prefectures extended assistance to the emigrants, or at least would make sure the emigrants would be provided with it. The assistance was also intended to people belonging to a member's family of the emigration society, who had the intention to emigrate. One of the plans received by the *Kaigai Ijû Kumiai* for its attention, stated the following: 'We contemplate a land development on a thirty thousand acre timber tract which we are acquiring in the Stann Creek district of British Honduras, Central America. We would like to secure five hundred families on this tract and would allot them certain acreage depending upon the specific crop which they would choose to raise ... The present Governor of British Honduras informed us that there would be no objection to any colonists which were secured - after the government approved our detailed plans for taking care of the colonists and their produce - keeping their native citizenship, maintaining their own school, retaining their own language and customs'.[17]

What this kind of correspondence tells us is that those who requested emigrants were acquainted with the fact that the Japanese government would require assurances about the general welfare of its citizens abroad. Welfare that,

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[16] Ibid. pp. 29-30.

[17] Edward Ewer, President of the Caribbean Company Ltd. to the Imperial Department of State for Foreign Affairs, 14 May 1928, DRO/J.1.2.0.J3-5.

in the case of the plan for British Honduras meant securing education for the children, and not forcing the emigrants into the customs, traditions and language of the host country.

The purposes of the cooperatives created in the prefectures were the purchase of land abroad, and to assist the emigration of people who possessed some capital to invest in land. In addition, the cooperatives could make use of land and buildings to conduct schools, hospitals, warehouses, or other undertakings necessary for the emigration overseas of members of the association. For instance, the *Buraziru Takahoka Kumiai* was organized to operate in the acquisition of land in Brazil for the agricultural colonists.[18] Also it was the *Nippaku Takushoku* (Japan-Brazil Colonization Company), a semi-official organization founded in 1926. This company received contributions from the Japanese Government, Hyogo Prefecture, Kobe Municipality, and the *Nippon Yûsen*, and *Ôsaka Shôsen* steamship companies[19]. In Colombia, after the Overseas Development Company retreated from assisting the last group of emigrants in buying the land, it was the *Fukuoka Ken Kaigai Ijû Kumiai* (Overseas Cooperative Society of Fukuoka Prefecture) that saved the programme and provided the money.[20] Another example of assistance provided by a cooperative organization is the Japanese Emigration Association that in 1936 organized the emigration to Paraguay, and held a concession from the Paraguayan government of over 8,000 hectares.[21] The emigration societies and associations of the prefectures also joined the emigration companies in promoting

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[18] Normano and Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America*, p. 30.

[19] Memorandum from the Commercial Secretary at Tokyo to the Department of Overseas Trade, 25 January, 1927, PRO/FO 371/12523.

[20] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 26.

[21] See A. Bradley, *Trans-Pacific Relations of Latin America* (New York, NY, 1942), p. 66.

programmes, selecting the candidates, and providing some preliminary training. Some times the candidates were sent to training centres, or at least they would be offered the services of a former Japanese immigrant, who would help and guide the immigrants, as happened in *Colonia Jagual* in Colombia.

Emigrant training centres were established to prepare the emigrant before going abroad. Most of the emigrants had never left their villages, nor had they seen a foreigner before in real life. Probably all the information they had about the new country had been received through the recruiting campaigners of the emigration agencies. In Yokohama there existed a training school designed to provide basic language instruction, the use of foreign clothes, and house-keeping in the Western style. This centre was supported by the emigration companies. By Imperial Ordinance of 1927, a training centre was founded in Kobe, followed by another in Nagasaki. With the assistance of the centre the emigrant would receive, free of charge, language instruction, and general information on the manners, customs, religion, geography, and agricultural situation of the country concerned. It was not the case that all emigrants would receive training before their departure. Those going to Hawaii, the United States and Brazil, apparently made the best use of the training centres.[22]

The general information above shows how Japanese emigration abroad was not only firmly controlled but also organized as well. The result of this control and organization is of relevance to this work, as a factor that influenced the level of continuity in the ethnic identity of the emigrants. It was not always the case, but emigrants with a common destination usually came from the same

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[22] See E. F. Weil, 'Training Japanese for emigration', *Asia* 9, no. 17 (1917), pp. 725-6, and T. Ogishima, 'Japanese emigration', in *ILR* 5, no. 34 (1936), pp. 626-7.

prefecture. Even though the emigrants would not know each other before departing, they were familiar with the area, spoke the same dialect, and had experienced in one way or another, the adversities that forced them to abandon their native land. Belonging to the same area, where the local authorities played a role not only in organizing the emigration, but also in maintaining down the years an unbroken connection, was an essential factor in keeping the emigrants emotionally attached to their own prefecture.

3. The Overseas Emigration Company Ltd.

At the time that Japanese emigration to Latin America had begun to flourish, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the emigration companies were going down. In 1908 eighteen companies had folded, and only five remained in operation the following year. The emigration business went through peaks and troughs. Its history is filled with the mergers of several companies, new business affiliations, and of course, bankruptcies. Trying to survive, the companies changed their names, invited employees of rival companies to join, and invested more capital. To arrange for emigrants to move abroad was only a fraction of a large enterprise that included sea transportation, trade and commerce, and the development of industrial and agricultural projects across the Pacific Ocean.

The Overseas Development Company Ltd. was founded in 1917 on the initiative of the government, by merging most of the existing private emigration companies. The Ministry of Finance sponsored the fusion of several emigration companies into the *Kaigai Kôgyô Kabushiki Gaisha* with a capital of 9,000,000

yen. This company absorbed the private agencies into the new officially sponsored agency, and by 1920, the Morioka Immigration Company, its only competitor, had merged with its rival.[23] The amalgamation of existing companies into a semi-governmental one brought a period of more controlled and sponsored emigration by the official authorities. The newly created company committed itself not only to the enterprise of enabling Japanese to emigrate overseas, but also to the additional tasks of organizing and administrating settlements, to the carrying of infrastructure programmes, to developing, financing, and marketing the products derived from their established programmes, and to publishing books and journals of general interest.[24]

The emigration companies were free to expand their activities into the places of their preference. In some cases, the companies would be more progressive in some countries than others, and more engaged in specific activities. This is the case of the *Meiji Shôkumin,* the *Morioka*, the *Toyo*, and the *Kaigai Kôgyô Kabushiki Gaisha*, that throughout the period 1899-1923 transported all emigrants to Peru. The emigrants were engaged under contract with the emigration companies to work in the plantation farms. After November of 1923, by agreement between the landlords and the emigration company, the immigration of Japanese labourers ended. Former labourer immigrants had already started to move mainly to the commercial area, with the exception of those who remained tenants or had bought their own land. After 1924 new immigrants came to work

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[23] See T. Irie 'History of Japanese migration to Peru' - Part II, in *HAHR* (translated by W. Himel) 31, no. 4 (1951), p. 659; Moriyama, *Imingaisha*, pp. 155-6; Bradley, *Trans-Pacific Relations of Latin America*, p. 57; Normano and Gerbi, *The Japanese in South* America, p. 74; A. Morimoto, *Los Inmigrantes japoneses en el Perú* (Lima, 1979), p. 55; I. Lausent-Herrera, Pasado y presente de la comunidad japonesa en el Perú (Lima, 1991), p. 16.

[24] KKKK (ed.), *Actividades da Kaigai Kôgyô Kabushiki Kaisha em o Brasil: Aclimaçao dos emigrantes japonezes* (São Paulo, 1934), pp. 5-6.

with preference for commerce rather than agriculture.[25]

Emigrants to Brazil also went in larger numbers to work in the plantation farms. But, in contrast to Peru, where the immigrants went as labourers, the conditions in Brazil permitted the emigration companies to provide not only workers but also to get land for colonization plans. After the merging in 1917 of the former private enterprises into a government-sponsored company, the direction of emigration naturally started to change for the emigrants, from being farm workers to tenants and landowners. Soon the companies began to invest in industrial and agricultural plans in South America. The Overseas Emigration Company was more successful in Brazil in acquiring land for its projects than in any other place. In Peru, for instance, where the company obtained a considerable concession in the Amazon area of Huanuco Province, it was not for the colonization of people. Since its acquisition in 1917 until 1937, it was used for the exploitation of the natural resources of the forest, and some curative plants for the extraction of quinine and cocaine. In other countries like Colombia, the company could not get more than the initial amount of land bought in order to experiment with ten families of immigrants. Lausent-Herrera has rightly observed that the internal conditions in Peru, characterized by intolerance and violent reaction against Japanese immigration, did not allow the introduction of programmes of colonization with groups of people as took place in Brazil. Moreover, such programmes would have been against the economic interests of the big landlords, and serious conflicts would have occurred.[26] A similar interpretation could also be valid for Colombia.

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[25] See Morimoto, *Los inmigrantes japoneses en el Perú*, pp. 40-1, 51-7.
[26] See her *Pasado y presente de la comunidad japonesa en el Perú*, pp. 19-20, 22.

Why Japan turned its interest to Portuguese and Spanish America deserves a few words of explanation. It was after the movement against Japanese immigration initiated by California in 1906, which culminated with the Gentlemen's Agreement, that Japan turned its eyes to South America. The initiator of the movement to send emigrants to South America was Count Okuma, who did not seem to have in mind a country of preference but a vast area.[27] Okuma had expressed publicly his feelings against the anti-Japanese bills introduced in 1906 in the legislature of California.[28] However, it was not until the 1920s that Japan began to consider seriously promoting emigration to South America. The exclusion of Japanese to countries of preferred white emigration like Australia, Canada, and the United States, led Japan inevitably to find other territories for future emigrants. But it was not only exclusion for its citizens that made Japan go in the direction of the South American continent, it was also the necessity for opening new markets abroad.

A British government document contains information on the reasons the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Shidehara, gave to the Diet, when introducing the Overseas Emigration Associations Law of 1927. The Minister pointed out that not only did the government recognize the necessity to protect Japanese labourers in foreign countries, 'but that they also considered it was urgently necessary to devise means for assisting those Japanese who wished to emigrate in order to take up business enterprises abroad.' Shidehara added that the emigration of Japanese labourers to suitable countries was calculated not only to

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[27] Normano and Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America*, p. 26.

[28] K. K. Kawakami, *American-Japanese Relations: An Inside View of Japan's Policies and Purposes* (New York, NY, 1912), p. 16.

be of advantage to those countries from the point of view of the needs of the receiving country, but also 'to be of use to Japan from the point of view of the supply of raw materials for the country's industries.'[29]

The change to finding new territories for commercial expansion came after the First World War. Until the war, international commerce in Japan was under foreign control, mainly British. The selection, shipment and sale abroad of Japan's major items of export, tea and silk, were controlled by foreigners. The sanctions imposed by the British government, increasing the rates in Asia for commodities, forced Japan to expand their commercial activities in search of raw materials for its developing industry.[30] Several commercial missions were sent to Spanish and Portuguese America to investigate the possibilities for trade and emigration. As indicated by Normano and Gerbi, 'the Latin American newspapers of 1916-1919 are full of notes on Japanese visitors to Latin America.' Simultaneously, a number of trade-promoting organizations were established in Japan. For instance, the Japan-Chile Trade Association was formed in 1916, followed by other important associations such as the Latin American-Japanese Society, and the Japan-Mexico Society.[31]

Notwithstanding, it was not until the 1920s that Japan and some South American countries became engaged in a full range of commercial and immigration activities. The most active countries, until the end of 1941, were

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[29] Sir J. Tilley to Sir Austen Chamberlain, Tokyo, 11 October 1927, PRO/FO/371/12523.

[30] See Y. Yamochi, 'Imigraçâo japonesa: Ontem e hoje. O Exemplo dos japoneses da comunidade nikkei de Uraí (PR - Brasil)', in *Kenkyû Ronsô*, no. 5 (December 1992), p. 53; Normano and Gerbi, *The Japanese in South America*, p. 13; A. Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion 1897-1911* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), p. 13; Matsushita, 'La política japonesa hacia América Latina en la época de posguerra', in *Análisis Político*, p. 97.

[31] Normano and Gerbi, p. 27.

Brazil and Peru, followed by Argentina. The volume of immigration to Mexico was reduced after the Gentlemen's Agreement.[32] As shown in Table 2.1, in all other South American countries, Japanese immigration was insignificant statistically. Throughout the years, in spite of the opposition and resentment created in the 1930s from the nationalistic Brazilian writers, Brazil occupied the first place among all Latin American countries in its intake of Japanese immigrants.

A quick look at the main reasons for Brazil's need for labourers will help to explain why Japanese immigrants were required. After the anti-slavery law of 1871 Brazil lost a large source of labour. Salvador de Mendonça, then consul in the United States, was asked by his government to investigate the possibilities of Asian emigration to Brazil. With an enormous extent of land to colonize, and the urgent need for plantation labour, Brazil did not adopt the restrictive measures against immigration taken by several Spanish American countries after World War I. On the contrary, Brazil continued to encourage immigration, and welcomed Japanese immigrants right through. Brazil faced another problem after 1927 when it was deprived of Italian immigration with Mussolini's change of the Italian immigration policy. As a result, Japanese immigration to Brazil was supported by the host country, as it helped to overcome the weak points of the Brazilian economy: shortage of labour and underpopulation.[33]

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[32] See T. Yanaguida and M. D. Rodríguez del Alisal, *Japoneses en América* (Madrid, 1992), pp. 76, 156, and Ota Mishima, *Siete migraciones japonesas en México*, p. 17.

[33] See Normano and Gerbi, pp. 19-24.

Table 2.1 *Japanese Immigration to Latin American Countries*

Country	1897-1923	1924-1941	Total
Argentina	982	4,416	5,398
Bolivia	22	180	202
Brazil	31,414	157,572	188,986
Chile	304	215	519
Colombia	5	224	229
Cuba	179	507	686
Mexico	11,644	2,832	14,476
Panama	116	299	415
Paraguay	-	521	521
Peru	21,417	11,653	33,070
Uruguay	-	18	18
Venezuela	-	12	12
Others	-	8	8

Source: Statistics of the Imperial Government, in Japan. Gaimushô (ed.), *Waga kokumin no kaigai hatten: ijû hyaku nen no ayumi [shiryô hen]* (Tokyo, 1971), pp. 140-1.

The first decades of Japanese overseas emigration were directed towards English-speaking countries, followed by an increasing interest in Spanish-speaking countries, with 1924 marking a shift to Portuguese America. The background for this preference lies in the recommendation of the commercial missions sent to investigate the possibilities of economic opening of South America. In 1924, the Emigration Council of Japan, headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Baron Shidehara, sent a new mission to South America to investigate the prospects for trade and emigration. As a result of the recommendations of the mission, the Japanese government concentrated its efforts on Brazil to promote emigration on a large scale.[34] If in the 1910s former Prime Minister Okuma foresaw South

[34] Ibid. p. 27.

Moreover, after 1924, under the recommendations made by the Emigration Council of Japan, immigration to countries like Brazil became an enterprise almost entirely of governmental organization. The coordination and strategy of immigration settlements were handled by the emigration agents. One of the strategies was the establishment of permanent settlements, or *colonias*. It meant

[35] *The Trans-Pacific*, January 1930, pp. 11-12.

The agricultural settlement initiated in *Colonia Jagual* in 1929 followed the general organization of colonies in Brazil. Obviously, variations would be

[36] Telegram from the chief of the Immigration Division in Paraguay to the Japanese consulate announcing the arrival of the immigrants to *Colonia Colmena*, 19 September 1936, DRO/J.2.0.J2-25. See also Bradley, *Trans-Pacific Relations of Latin America*, p. 66, and N. Stewart, 'South America', in *Geographical Review* 51 (1961), p. 432.

[37] See Morimoto, *Los inmigrantes japoneses en el Perú*, pp. 60, 62.

America as a potential area for Japanese immigrants, it was later Shidehara who realized the idea concentrating on Brazil.

Shidehara considered Japanese emigration a way of investing in and helping the receiving country, as he expressed it in one of his statements: 'Our constant desire is to supply capital or labour to undeveloped regions of the world and to promote the welfare and prosperity, not only of the emigrants themselves and of their mother country, but also of those countries in which they choose to establish their homes. Toward this end we are prepared to extend our unremitting efforts.'[35] The words of the Minister of Foreign Affairs are important to consider because they are explicit in showing the attitude of the Japanese government to emigration overseas: the intention to extend protection to its citizens, and the political and economic goals of emigration. Thus, Japan began to appear in the world arena as a promoter of prosperity for undeveloped nations through its emigration policy.

What immigration to Brazil shows of interest is the orientation the Japanese government gave to its new policy of emigration. The final merging of all the emigration companies into a semi-private company provided the government with the opportunity to control further overseas emigration. Moreover, after 1924, under the recommendations made by the Emigration Council of Japan, immigration to countries like Brazil became an enterprise almost entirely of governmental organization. The coordination and strategy of immigration settlements were handled by the emigration agents. One of the strategies was the establishment of permanent settlements, or *colonias*. It meant

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[35] *The Trans-Pacific*, January 1930, pp. 11-12.

that the labourer emigrant would not receive any promise of payment for the return passage. Colonization programmes showed variations, depending on the availability of land. In some cases, the emigrant could hold the land from the beginning. In other cases, the emigrant would join an existing Japanese settlement, and after accumulating some savings, buy the land.

Once the Japanese government changed the orientation of emigration from farm labourers to agricultural colonists, the most suitable candidates were not individuals but families. They emigrated under a contract, and were expected to settle permanently. But not all the South American countries were receptive, or chosen by Japan to experiment with agricultural colonies. Up to Japan's involvement in World War II, besides Brazil, programmes of agricultural settlers were only established in two other countries. One was *Colonia Jagual* in Colombia, the other was *Colonia Colmena* in Paraguay. The chief of the Immigration Division informed the Japanese consulate in Asunción that 'up to now 256 arrived in 4 groups, representing 36 families and were received by the representatives of the Government at the port of landing ... The colony already had a basic area of about 8,300 hectares ...' and so on.[36] In other South American countries that continued receiving emigrants they became eventually engaged in agriculture, but not under Japanese government sponsorship. They did it on the own accord and personal initiative, as in the case of the Chancay Valley in Peru.[37]

The agricultural settlement initiated in *Colonia Jagual* in 1929 followed the general organization of colonies in Brazil. Obviously, variations would be

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[36] Telegram from the chief of the Immigration Division in Paraguay to the Japanese consulate announcing the arrival of the immigrants to *Colonia Colmena*, 19 September 1936, DRO/J.2.0.J2-25. See also Bradley, *Trans-Pacific Relations of Latin America*, p. 66, and N. Stewart, 'South America', in *Geographical Review* 51 (1961), p. 432.

[37] See Morimoto, *Los inmigrantes japoneses en el Perú*, pp. 60, 62.

experienced in each programme, but the general pattern of the acquisition of the land, and the control and management of the settlement under the emigration company, was applied in Colombia. The anticipated goal for the emigrant was to make him and the family land owners, and afterwards, independent from the company. The Japanese were not going to emigrate as labourers for the host country but as direct participants in programmes of agricultural development.

4. Japanese Government-sponsored Emigration to Colombia

In 1926, the *Kaigai Kôgyô Kabushiki Gaisha* commissioned two of its employees to travel to Colombia.[38] Their mission was to make a survey of the social and economic conditions of the country for establishing an immigration programme. One of the members was Yuzo Takeshima, who had been to Brazil before, working for the aforementioned emigration company. His years in Brazil, very probably, had provided him with the experience and confidence required to initiate a programme in such a strange place like Colombia for Japanese immigrants. Besides his knowledge of the Portuguese language, he was familiar with Spanish. When he was a student at the Foreign Languages School (*Tôkyô Gaikokugo Gakko*), it is said he translated into Japanese and published some chapters of the Colombian novel, *María*.[39]

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[38] Authorization given by Masaji Inoue, President of KKKK, to Takeshima and Makishima to travel to Colombia, 30 March 1926, DRO/J.1.2.0.J2-17.

[39] There has been no evidence of Takeshima's translation of the novel. In the memoirs published by the immigrants, it was two of them who said to have read Takeshima's translation in a magazine published in Tokyo, called '*Shin seinen*'. (See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 44, 61.) The author of this work checked the magazine, which was published from 1920 until 1950, but chapters of *María* translated into Japanese were unfortunately not found. *María* was published by Jorge Isaacs in 1866. Its main plot occurs in *Hacienda 'El Paraíso'*, located in the department of Valle del Cauca. Even though Isaacs' novel in Spanish is hardly

This early interest by Takeshima in literature is usually assumed to be the reason for his support given to emigration to Colombia. And, of course, for choosing the Valle del Cauca area for the immigrants.[40] However, it was Noda, who in his report to the Japanese government in 1910, had recommended this area in the departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, from Santander de Quilichao in the south to Cartago in the north, as a very promising region for future Japanese settlement. Although he provided his report with arguments against Japanese immigration to Colombia, Noda appreciated the land fertility along the Magdalena and Cauca rivers, but was aware of the dangers caused by floods. Therefore, he was not in favour of settlement by Japanese farmers to that area. In addition, Colombia lacked infrastructure, proper intraregional transportation, and direct communication to Japan, Noda stressed.[41]

The other person from Tokyo, commissioned to do the survey, was Tokuju Makishima, an expert in agriculture. The Japanese consul in Panama, Takahiko Wakabayashi, joined the two of them in exploring the country and looking for a good place to start the project. They travelled around Colombia, from the 21st of July until the 18th of September of 1926, visiting the Cauca Valley area, the Magdalena River area, Medellín, Barranquilla, Santa Marta,

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known by the immigrants, most of them have visited '*El Paraíso*'. It has been converted to a place of pilgrimage, and a point of reference for their immigration. The first complete version of the novel translated into Japanese was sponsored by the *Asociación Colombo-Japonesa*, as part of the commemorative programme of the 70th anniversary of their immigration. See J. Isaacs, *María* [translated by A. Hori] (Tokyo [1866] 1998).

[40] See e. g. G. Ramos Núnez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa de Corinto - Cauca, Colombia* (Palmira, 1974), pp. 31-2; *El Siglo*, 'La María atrajo japoneses al país', 2 October 1976; *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 150, 162; 'Los hijos de una novela de amor', in *Gente* (1989); Galvis and Donadio, *Colombia nazi*, p. 257; A. Y. Fujimoto, *Shirarezaru Koronbia* (Tokyo, 1988), p. 213; G. Patiño, 'El influjo de María. Relato sobre la inmigración japonesa y el desarrollo del capitalismo en la agricultura del Valle del Cauca', in *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico* [Banco de la República] 29, no. 29 (Bogotá, 1992), pp. 36-9.

[41] See his *Imin chôsa hôkoku*, pp. 101-3.

Bogotá, and some towns of the Sabana de Bogotá. Their report to the emigration company, which included a general overview of Colombian geography, the climate and resources, immigration law, the number of immigrants from different countries without mentioning the citizens from Japan, and a reference to Isaacs' novel, *María,* was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.[42] The Ministry asked Takeshima for a second report, with detailed information on the Cauca Valley area, where the project could be carried out. In his report, Takeshima focused on the economic advantages of setting-up the area for the immigration programme. He also emphasized the importance of bringing money to invest, otherwise the Japanese immigrants would end up working as labourers for the Colombians.[43] The emigration company favoured Colombia to establish a plan in the area recommended by Takeshima, and the project was presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its final approval.

The emigration agents visited towns and villages in Fukuoka promoting the plan for Colombia. In addition, posters depicting a tropical flavour were distributed, and articles were written in the news bulletin about emigration to Colombia. Even though the plan was conceived for a total number of twenty families, the approved scheme for Colombia was initiated with only ten families.[44] The slogan *'Kono yo no tengoku ga arutosureba, Koronbia ijûchi wo sasu'* ('if paradise exists, it is Colombia') did not persuade initially more than three families in the prefecture of Fukuoka. The recruiting campaign then moved to other

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[42] See Japan. Gaimushô (ed.) [Tsûshô kyoku], *Iminchi jijô: nanbei Koronbia koku ishôkumin jijô shisatsu hôkoku*, Vol. 14 (Tokyo, July 1927). This report was originally written by Takeshima and Makishima for the emigration company KKKK.

[43] See Japan. Gaimushô (ed.) [Tsûshô Kyoku], *Iminchi Jijô: Nanbei Koronbia koku ishôkumin jijô shisatsu hôkoku*, Vol. 20 (Tokyo, April 1929), p. 126. This report was written by Takeshima for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[44] Document signed by Inoue, president of KKKK, with reference to the plan to send twenty

prefectures, taking one family from Fukushima, and another from Yamaguchi prefectures. Finally, the first group of five families to begin the immigration programme in Colombia was ready by the autumn of 1929. The second group with another five families, all of them from Fukuoka, was sent the following year.[45]

It is not difficult to guess the reasons for the failure of a larger number of families to sign up for the introductory immigration plans. Obviously, because there was so little knowledge about Colombia in Japan, and nobody had returned yet to talk about their experience in that country, it would not be easy to find the first candidates. Once a village had been successful in sending emigrants, the tendency was to obtain more emigrants from the same place. Secondary sources of information, such as letters sent to family and friends, spread out news on the emigrants. 'Successful emigrants encouraged kinsmen, neighbours and friends at home to share their good fortune,' as Staniford has put it.[46] Brazil and Peru were better known than any other place for emigration. For instance, two of the families who emigrated to Colombia had previously lived in Peru.[47] And two of the emigrants to Colombia mentioned that they had wanted to emigrate to Brazil. One of them changed his mind after seeing the slogan that Colombia was a paradise. The other person said that one day, visiting the city of Tanushimaru, he saw information on Colombia, and then decided to change his original idea of going to Brazil.[48]

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families to Colombia, Tokyo, 3 August 1929, DRO/J.1.2.0.J2-17.

[45] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 24-5, 33.

[46] P. Staniford, *Pioneers in the Tropics: The Political Organization of Japanese in an Immigrant Community in Brazil* (London, 1973), p. 9.

[47] Conversation with Juan Shigetoshi Sakamoto, Cali, 23 August 1995, and Cristóbal Masaru Moribe, Cali, 27 August 1995.

[48] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 33.

It is of interest to mention that even the school teachers would encourage their students to leave Japan. The spouse of a family head remembered one of her teachers saying: 'You are quite ignorant, living like monkeys in the mountains. Japan is a small place. Go abroad to work if you get the chance.' This person also had frequently heard her elder brother's friends talking about plans for Brazil, and had been longing to go abroad. Remembering the words of the school teacher, and listening to other people's plans to emigrate, had made her eager to leave. One day she came across an article in the magazine '*Kaigai*', and resolved to join her family in the emigration plan advertised for Colombia.[49]

At the time that the emigration agents in Japan were striving to get families to enrol for Colombia, Yuzo Takeshima was dealing with the purchase of land. Takeshima bought from a local tenant, in the department of Cauca, the total amount of 220 *plazas*, or 128 hectares.[50] Out of that total, 96 hectares were intended for the programme, while the other 32 hectares were a personal purchase. Each family received about 7 hectares, after taking communal land for administration, and a farm to experiment with different crops. Takeshima sold his own land six years later to the Overseas Cooperative Society of Fukuoka. These 32 hectares, which were added to 70 hectares negotiated by him in the neighbouring area to the *colonia*, served to receive the third group of immigrants coming from Fukuoka.[51] A document was found by which the director of the cooperative of Fukuoka conferred on Takeshima legal powers to buy the land, and to represent the cooperative in Colombia over the administrative matters of

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[49] Ibid.

[50] A *plaza* is equivalent to 80 x 80 cm.

[51] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 23, 36, and Ramos Núnez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia Japonesa*, pp. 38, 59-60.

the immigration project of 1935.[52]

Unfortunately, Takeshima did not get the land in the most fertile zone of the Cauca Valley, but in an area to the south of the Desbaratado river of mediocre agricultural quality. The river does not only mark a geographical boundary between the departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, but also a socio-economic division. To the north, *mestizaje* of Spanish, Indians and Blacks is dominant, while to the south, the predominant white society of Caloto and Popayán, the Indian communities of Silvia and Tierradentro, and the coloured groups, characterize this region of the Desbaratado River with more cultural contrast than to the north of it.[53]

Colonia El Jagual was located in the proximity of the Jagual River, 3 miles Southwest of the town of Corinto, in the department of Cauca. Cali City, capital of the department of Valle del Cauca, was about 90 miles away north of the *colonia*. To reach Cali the road goes through Corinto, Miranda, Florida and Candelaria, or through Caloto, Puerto Tejada and Palmira. Crossing Miranda from the south, it comes to the area to the north of the Desbaratado River, where the immigrants moved years later in search of better land to cultivate. At the time the immigrants arrived, transport in the area was very poor. No public road was in service to get to their settlement. To reach the nearest towns of Caloto and Corinto they had to go on foot several miles, depending where their own land was located. During the years living in *Jagual*, they remained quite isolated from the rest of the inhabitants of the area.

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[52] On the 26th of July, 1935, Kenjiro Matsumoto, director of the *Fukuoka-ken Kaigai Ijû Kumiai*, visited the Colombian consulate in Yokohama to sign a document authorizing Yuzo Takeshima as his legal representative in Colombia. Correspondence 1935-39, ACET.

[53] See O. Almario G., *La configuración moderna del Valle del Cauca, Colombia, 1850-1940. Espacio, población, poder y cultura* (Cali, 1994), p. 87.

The emigration company had prepared for the immigrants a pamphlet with general instructions on the programme, which was approved for printing by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the spring of 1929.[54] The guide began with a look at the geographical location of the country, the weather that was highly appreciated, and a few sentences on the ethnic composition of the Colombians. After the few paragraphs on introduction to Colombia, firstly, it was said clearly that the accepted families should make the commitment to stay for good in Colombia. And secondly, that they would be engaged in an agricultural programme. The project was not open to other options, like commerce or individual business. All family heads were former tenants, or had owned a piece of land before emigrating, and had experienced a life of agricultural labour. Experience in agriculture by the family head was a mandatory pre-requisite. But there was also the case of a few who did not have any previous experience in agriculture. This was mainly the situation of some adults who joined a family group.

The candidates submitted their application to the prefecture where they were born. Those who were residents of other prefectures needed a certificate of residence of at least three months. Those who had migrated to another prefecture would have to present a witness to prove their new residence. For a person to be a witness, it would be necessary to be the owner of a property valued at 500 yen or over, or to be a tax payer to the state of more than 3 yen. An application fee of 5 yen was charged. Normally, this money would be returned in Yokohama the

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[54] KKKK (ed.), *'Koronbia koku: eru barye de kauka ken shiken nôjyô-iki. Imin annai'* (sanctioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 22 May 1929, Tokyo). Consul Cuervo Borda, who had prepared a complete translation of this guide into Spanish, submitted the original to Bogotá with the Spanish version, 'Guía de la emigración a Colombia'. In correspondence from the Consulate in Yokohama to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 19 June

day of departure, but if a cancellation occurred the money was not to be reimbursed.

The personal characteristics of the future immigrants were emphasized in the guide. After criticizing a lack of patience among immigrants abroad, serenity and calmness were recommended and expected from them. 'It's a defect in Japanese immigrants abroad, who are dedicated to agricultural work, this lack of patience ... To exploit the large country's natural resource would require a great deal of patience and calm,' stressed the guide. Patience *(gaman)* in the sense of bearing up, is an important value in Japanese society. To be patient and calm meant, in this case, accepting one's position and one's ability without question. Moreover, patience also involves obedience. The emigration company was firm in demanding blind obedience from the immigrants. It had not been stipulated in written terms in the contract that the first two groups, that arrived at the department of Cauca in 1929 and 1930, had to use the administration office to do all their business. It was clear to them from the outset that during the first three years, they could not sell their crops independently, but not that their personal shopping had to be done through the administrator of the settlement.

The administrator, appointed by the company, had travelled to Colombia independently several years before.[55] A native of Tokyo, during the six years preceding the arrival of the first immigrants, Samuel Kyoshi Shima was experienced in practical agriculture and administration in the vicinity of Palmira. His contacts with other Japanese and with the local Colombians were a reliable

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1929, MRE. Data about instructions on the programme was taken from the guide.

[55] For some details on the life of Samuel Kyoshi Shima see *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 44-5, and Ramos Núnez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa de Corinto*, pp. 11, 17-21.

resource for the initiation and development of the colony in Jagual. If the emigration company did not provide any training in Japan for the emigrants before their departure, Shima made up for that deficiency. His house, built inside the colony, was a 'training centre' as he instructed them on many aspects of Colombian geography, climate, religion and traditions; he was also their language teacher. Not having any electricity, and with the houses dispersed over a large area, only men attended the nocturnal classes.

There is no doubt that Shima, as he became an employee of the emigration company, would ensure its interests abroad. The immigrants would receive the land free of charge after three years, provided they had lived on a permanent basis in the colony, and had sold their crops only to the emigration company through the administration. However, the company agents had planned that it was not only agricultural products that they had to deal through the administration office, but also the products they consumed. Items required for personal consumption could not be acquired in local shops but at the office of the administrator. Shima used to go shopping to the nearest town of Corinto accompanied by his assistant, and the mules or horses to carry the things ordered in advance. The immigrants, during the time before the expiry of their three-year contract, were expected to follow the rules imposed for buying and selling.

That the emigration company had the right over their produce is understandable, but to force people to live in seclusion is unimaginable. It is extraordinary that the emigration company could expect that for three years the new immigrants would obey, and not do their own personal shopping by themselves. The town of Corinto was just a few hours walking distance, so it would not be a great adventure to get there by oneself, except for the fear of not

understanding Spanish. It happened that one of them had lived with his family in Peru, and could understand and speak the language. One day, this person escaped from the vigilance of the administrator to take a look at the town. Then, he realized that the administrator was overcharging on the prices of food and other things the immigrants had to buy through him. He spoke out about it, creating through his behaviour an unpleasant atmosphere for himself. After the fulfilment of his contract, this person transferred his land to another immigrant, and moved out with his family.[56]

The criticism against the administration for taking a commission on personal shopping, together with their request to receive the title to the land after the end of three years, divided the community into two irreconcilable groups for some time. It had not been explained to them in advance that the administrator would charge a commission on the commodities, and this was unacceptable for some of them. Three families backed the administration, but seven of them demanded freedom to do their shopping, as this subject had not been stipulated in the contract with the Overseas Development Company. The same seven families demanded the title to the promised seven hectares. Even if the immigrants got the former, for sure they would not get the latter. All the land had been bought under the name of the representative agent of the emigration company. This person seemed to have arranged an endowment mortgage for the communal land, and consequently the land could not be negotiated legally by any of the immigrants. *Colonia El Jagual* had disintegrated and was abandoned after the end of the Pacific War. By then, some had sold their land, not legally but verbally to other

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[56] Conversation with the son of Ciro Fukuemon Moribe, Cali, 27 August 1995.

immigrants. All land, where the colony had once existed, was bought by a local person, solving the problem of going into individual transactions. What is left today of the former colony is a sugar cane plantation (see Plate 3.1) with a *panela*[57] factory.

Willing submission to a higher authority was a characteristic of the Japanese society of that time. This submission was evident within the household organization. The head of the family would receive the obedience and loyalty of every member. Self-sacrifice by the rest of the family was commonly expected. In the same way, individuality was suppressed for the sake of household solidarity. If a person announced individualism, discord would appear. These are the conflicts between *giri* ('obligation') and *ninjô* ('human feelings or personal interest').[58] One can see this in the division caused among the first two groups of immigrants, reflected in the drama between the obligations to the emigration company and their own interests, between the expectation of action as a member of a group, and individuality. For those immigrants to challenge the authority of the administration was very risky as they were in a very weak position, starting a new life in a foreign country, depending on the emigration company to sell their crops.

Besides being obedient and calm, the guide advised that the immigrants should be healthy and physically strong. Families with illness such as mental disease, pulmonary tuberculosis or trachoma, would not be admitted because they would be denied entry into Colombia. Women over six months pregnant, or with small babies, were not allowed into the project because of the long sea journey.

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[57] Non-refined brown sugar loaf.

[58] See R. K. Beardsley *et al.*, *Village Japan* (Chicago, 1959), p. 7, and L. T. Doi, 'Giri-ninjô:

People with recent measles infection were not admitted either. The emigrant going overseas to start a new life in an agriculture programme had to be strong and fit for labour because of all the physical effort required. They were embarking on the adventure of going to a settlement without sanitary conditions, and where tropical diseases were awaiting. Very soon the immigrants began to suffer from malaria, infections of the skin and diarrhoea. In fact, some of them died of malaria. They did not have any hospital services in the area, except in the distant city of Cali. In the case of illness, or a newborn child, the immigrants did not have any assistance other than in their own family, or the help of a fellow colonist.

The physical work the immigrants had to endure was very hard. They had to begin constructing their own houses. Before building the house, the family had to make sure they would find underground water. The water was taken from pits dug outside the house. Naturally there were no sanitary facilities inside the house, except for a room for the *ofuro* or hot bath. Moreover, the land they received seemed to have been abandoned for a while. So, the initial work of cleaning and preparing it for cultivation was immensely exhausting. Throughout all the years, those who are still alive, remember with bitterness how much work they had to put in during the first years. All the family had to work hard from dawn to nightfall, including the children.

According to the terms stipulated in the guide, the family had to be composed of at least three adults: the couple, younger than fifty years of age, and another person, older than twelve. Couples without children or with young

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An interpretation', in R. P. Dore (ed.), *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 327-34.

children, could take other persons with them to complete the minimum requirement of three adults per family. These aggregated members could be their own father or mother, parents in law, adopted parents, grandparents, and adopted sons or daughters with their spouses. Brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, cousins, and all the members of the extended family could be included within a family group. Most of the families included additional family members or adoptive members. It did not matter how large or small a family was, the land was evenly divided, and only the head was entitled to the property. The third group had some difficulties sorting out the allocation of land because instead of ten families there were fourteen of them.

Emigrants were generally impoverished farmers or non-heirs. Before the land reform measures introduced during the American occupation of Japan, only one son, who was usually the eldest, could inherit the paternal farm. The position and land of the household family would be taken over by one son, not by two or more.[59] Couples without a son, usually adopted one to assure the continuity of the family name and the farm. Those who joined the emigration programme to Colombia were not the first son of the family, except in one case. The emigrants left free of household obligations, without carrying with them the family tablets with the names of the ancestors. Only one family carried to Colombia the *ihai* (family tablets), and constructed an altar inside the house to remember their departed members (see Plate 3.14). This family, of which the head was the first son, emigrated together with his parents, younger brothers and sisters, some of them married. As a general rule, the family heads were former tenants, without

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[59] See C. Nakane, *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan* (London, 1967), p. 5, and T. Fukutake, *Rural Society in Japan* [translated by the staff of the *Japan Interpreter*]

obligations in Japan, except for the few who left a child with grandparents. The emigration company would rather accept those relieved of the liabilities and responsibilities of sending money back to Japan.

Even though those who applied to go abroad mainly did it because of economic pressure at home, it did not mean they were penniless. To join the project for Colombia a family of four had to show they had savings over 1,690 yen. From this amount, 60 yen were needed to pay for the certificates of good conduct and health, civil records, passport and visa fees, photos and vaccinations. Expenses for the family abroad during the first seven months were calculated as 630 yen. A free capital of 1,000 yen was suggested to invest in Colombia. Besides the amount of 1,690 yen, other expenses should be added like local transport, food during the forty days of the sea journey, and all the items they would need to buy to start a new life. The government subsidized half of the national transport used in Japan, the sea transportation charge, and part of the local transport in Colombia. A person older than twelve received 190 yen, from seven to eleven, 85 yen, and for those between three and seven years, 42.50 yen each as transport subsidy. Their age was calculated by the day of their arrival at Buenaventura.

The guide recommended a few basic items to be taken. They were listed as Western clothes, underwear, shoes, cooking utensils, dishes, cups, blankets, towels, mosquito netting, umbrellas, waterproof coats, soap, dental paste, tooth brush, combs, hair oil, mirrors, pencils, paper, notebooks, needles, thread, knife sharpeners, vegetable seeds, and tools for carpentry and working in the field. The

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(Tokyo [1978] 1980), pp. 30-2.

guide considered it not essential for the men to bring neckties, nor hats for the women. It insinuated that the immigrants may like to dress up in nice and elegant clothes out of sheer vanity. However, they should be careful and not do it, because 'if you attracted the attention of the Colombians, this could be a reason for complaint that would cause us double losses.' The emigration company seemed to have been afraid of showing the existence of the Japanese in Colombia. It was not only that they should avoid their presence in the nearest towns to the colony, but also to dress in a humble way. That the Colombians might complain about or assault immigrants, regardless of their origin, because they were badly or well dressed, is doubtful.

A few items were listed as prohibited. For example pistols, rifles, swords or any other dangerous weapons were banned. Matches were also prohibited. Silk, soy paste and soy sauce could be taken only in small quantities because the customs in the port of Buenaventura would make a rigorous inspection. The luggage could not be packed in wood but in basket boxes, each basket not being heavier than forty seven kilograms. Part of the emigration company's business was the transportation of goods and emigrants to several countries on each of the trips. Therefore, they had to restrict the amount and size of the luggage taken by the passengers.

The third group also had to follow the instructions and recommendations of the guide approved by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1929. However, they were under different arrangements concerning payment for the land, and their produce. The emigration company, perhaps disappointed with the independence shown by the first two groups, and with the 20 per cent who had deserted the programme, did not offer the same kind of financial assistance as in the past. On

the other hand, given the poor quality of the cultivated land, the company might not have been satisfied with the low level of production. Yet the company permitted the new immigrants to enjoy the resources and facilities set up for the first two groups. When the third group arrived in 1935, the emigration company had ended the contract with the two senior members, Takeshima and Shima. Takeshima's last job was to negotiate land for the new arrivals.

Takeshima, acting on behalf of the Overseas Cooperative Society of Fukuoka Prefecture, purchased 102 hectares for the last group. The last group was officially composed of ten families, but being in reality fourteen, those with aggregated families got more than seven hectares to share - more than the approximate seven hectares received by most of them. Some land was added to the previous communal land to keep the tractors, to preserve pasture for the animals, to continue with the experimental farm, and to build a school. The Japanese government provided financial assistance for the construction of a school for the children, and the salary for a Japanese teacher to be hired locally. The third group received, as the two previous groups had done, a transport subsidy from the Japanese government, and sea transportation free of charge.

Although the first and second groups could get the land free of cost, the last group had to pay for it. They got a mortgage plan for nine years with the Fukuoka cooperative. Each of the ten family heads was charged 2,400 yen for their own piece of land, and 200 yen for the price of communal land and a registration fee. The total value of the loan for the ten families was for 26,000 yen. The immigrants received the mortgage free of repayment during the first two years, although an interest fee was charged. The cooperative expected that the immigrants would repay the debt within seven years in monthly payments. No

fines were declared in their contract in the case of failure to return the money.[60]

Time passed and they could not pay the money back to the cooperative for two main reasons. One reason was that during the first years the immigrants suffered financial setbacks. The land was of poor quality, inadequate for continuous production of bean crops, and consequently the profits were too low for them to start repayment of the loan. The last group, as in the case of the previous groups, had to bring money to survive during the first year, and 1,000 yen (or the equivalent in US American dollars) as capital to invest. As they did not have any obligation to reside within the colony, or any contract to sell crops to the emigration company, they started moving out quickly and renting land. They preferred to use any profit to get more land to cultivate rather than repay a loan for such poor land. The other reason, they argue, is that after Japan's involvement in the Second World War, the immigrants lost contact with their native country for several years. They explained that the debt had been forgotten until a member of the Communist Party in Japan found information about it in the archives and demanded an explanation. It is possible to imagine that this person having discovered the loan could not verify if the mortgage had been cancelled or not, and where the money had gone. When the immigrants planned their first visit as a group to Japan in 1979, a certain amount of money was given to the prefecture of Fukuoka to pay off their debt.[61]

To sum up, rural immigration to Colombia happened in the case of a small but significant number of people, and was part of the Japanese government's plans

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[60] The contract between the immigrants and the Overseas Cooperative Society of Fukuoka Prefecture is preserved in the archives of the Foreign Office in Tokyo. J.2.1.0.X1-C01.

[61] Conversation with Javier Manabu Shinchi, Cali, 19 August 1995.

to send people abroad. In contrast, urban immigration was independent from the intervention of an immigration company or the government of the prefectures of origin of the immigrants. As explained above, the emigration company and the cooperative of Fukuoka organized and helped to carry out the immigrations plans. Nevertheless, the expectations the organizers had, and the reactions of the immigrants were not as anticipated. The reality the immigrants encountered was different from what they had imagined. Their commitment to the environment was low. To survive they had to move out of the colony. Otherwise, opportunities would not come to improve their quality of life. Up to the present, remembering those early years, they still feel resentment, frustration and disillusionment. However, in the case of their immigration to Colombia, because of the involvement of the Japanese government in this kind of affair, it is not only the individual one has to consider. It is also the system of diplomacy and commerce that needs to be approached - how immigration played a part in shaping the relationship between Japan and Colombia.

5. Early Diplomatic and Economic Relations

'The establishment of treaty relations between Japan and the Latin American Republics is a subject which has occupied the attention of the Imperial Government for some time ... I trust that your government will agree that the negotiation of a treaty between Japan and Colombia is advisable, not only because treaties between friendly States are always in themselves desirable, but also because the growth of commercial ties between the most distant countries, which is such a marked feature of the world's progress at the present time, renders them

in some sense necessary,' wrote the Japanese Minister to the Colombian Charge of Affairs in Washington. In his letter, the Minister proposed the initiation of diplomatic relations between the two countries.[62]

At the end of the nineteenth century, Japan was taking the initiative to approach Latin American countries to agree on commercial and amity treaties. The first treaty was signed with Peru in 1873, followed by one with Mexico in 1888, and a third with Brazil in 1895. When the Japanese Minister sent the letter quoted above to his colleague in Washington, he mentioned that Japan was waiting to ratify the treaty with Argentina, and was negotiating a treaty with Chile. The Minister enclosed a draft of the treaty with Argentina, recently concluded, and proposed that the treaty with Colombia could be drawn up in similar terms to the treaty with Argentina. In a document annexe, a note was added saying that the Colombian government had not given any particular reason for a negative answer, but was not interested in signing a treaty with Japan.[63]

A decade had passed before the negotiations between the two countries were considered again. The old draft of the treaty was once more under consideration. During the Presidency of Rafael Reyes, the treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation was signed on May 25, 1908, and ratified on December 10 of the same year.[64] Japan was looking to agree treaties on an equal basis, or at least not unfavourable to its interests. 'As you are doubtless aware Japan's original treaties with the European Powers and the United States have all been revised in a comprehensive manner, and this fact taken in conjunction with

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[62] Toru Toshi, Minister Plenipotentiary, to Julio Rengifo, Chargé d'Affairs ad interim of Colombia, Washington, DC, 10 February 1898, DRO/251.42.

[63] Note dated March 17, 1898, DRO/251.42.

[64] See *Anales diplomáticos y consulares de Colombia*, A. J. Uribe (ed.) (Bogotá, 1920), Vol. 6, pp. 491-5.

the growth of Japanese industries and the extent of Japanese commerce, makes it especially desirable that advantage should be taken of the first favourable opportunity which offers to establish treaty relations upon a mutually advantageous basis with the countries of Central and South America,' was the view of the Minister expressed earlier in Washington.[65]

Japan, knowing the disadvantage of unequal treaties, had revised the original treaties with the United States and other European nations like Austria, Great Britain, France, Italy and Russia. The provisions that were unequal to Japan were the concession of extraterritorial jurisdiction, conventional tariffs, and the granting of the most favoured nation treatment. Extraterritoriality meant that foreigners resident in Japan were not subject to its judicial control. However, Japanese people abroad remained under the laws of the country concerned. Conventional tariffs imposed on imports and exports were not subject to Japanese approval. Most favoured nation status demanded that any privilege, immunity or advantage granted by one part to any other country be automatically extended to the other part. And Japan had not been granted most favoured nation status in the original treaties with the most powerful Western nations.

Japan was in the process of building its national sovereignty, and would not allow other nations to impose unfavourable clauses in international treaties. Notwithstanding, when Japan signed treaties with less powerful countries, unequal clauses were included. This was the case with Colombia, which was not granted most favoured nation status by Japan. Article 4 of the treaty agreed that: 'The two high contracting parties hereby agree that any favour, privilege or

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[65] Toshi to Rengifo, Washington, DC, 10 February 1898, DRO/2.5.1.42.

immunity whatever in matters relating to commerce, navigation, trade, occupation, travel through or residence in their territories or possessions which either contracting party has actually granted, or may hereafter grant to the subjects or citizens of any other European country or of the United States of America, exclusive of colonial subjects or Colombian citizens, shall be extended to the subjects or citizens of the other contracting party, gratuitously, if the concession in favour of that European country or the United States of America shall have been gratuitous, and on the same, or equivalent condition, if the concession shall have been conditional.'[66] The inclusion of the most favoured clause gave Colombia a reason to renounce the treaty with Japan in 1934.[67]

Here we should mention briefly the two incidents with Peruvian vessels that gave rise to the treaty with Peru, the *Cayalti* in 1868, and the *María Luz* in 1872. Both vessels were involved in carrying Chinese labourers, known as *coolies*, and both made forced stopovers in Japanese ports. The *Cayalti* in search of food and provisions, the *María Luz* in need of reparations. After the incident of the *Cayalti*, Peru and Japan agreed to the need for better communications. Japan accepted the request made on 15 March 1870 by the Peruvian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United States, to permit the Minister in Washington represent Peru in its negotiations with Japan. A few years later, the case of the *María Luz* ended with the signing of the first treaty between the two nations in 1873. Yet Japan and Peru continued dealing with their mutual affairs through their respective Ministers in Washington until the establishment of a consular

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[66] See Folio on Treaties, DRO/251.42, and *Anales diplomáticos y consulares de Colombia*, p. 492.

[67] See letter from the Colombian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Japanese Ambassador in Bogotá, 30 October, 1934, in *Tratados y Convenios de Colombia 1919-1938*, E. Guzmán Esponda (ed.) (Bogotá, 1939), pp. 878-9.

representation.[68]

Bad weather and the damage caused thereby forced the *María Luz* to stop in the port of Yokohama, on July 10, 1872. While waiting for repairs, one of the coolies swam to a British ship, where he begged for protection, alleging ill-treatment of himself and the Chinese passengers on board. With the intervention of the British and the Japanese authorities, the Peruvian Captain was detained with the ship and all the passengers. The case of mistreatment of the Chinese aboard was taken to court. The vessel was anchored in the port of Yokohama during the arbitration of the case, which lasted more than six weeks.

During the trial two persons were named, Captain Ricardo Herrera and Tanco Armero. The latter represented in absence by the former.[69] The Peruvian Captain of the ship had to appear in court under the accusation of inflicting physical punishment to the *coolies*, and transporting people in conditions of slavery. The *María Luz* had on board 225 *coolies* under contracts made for Tanco Armero, and a dozen minors under contract with Captain Herrera. The Colombian Nicolás Tanco Armero was the agent for Emilio Althaus of Lima, and at the time of the *María Luz* incident, Tanco was involved in the business of transporting Chinese workers from Macao and Hong Kong to Peru. After his first trip to China in 1855, he had become an agent for sending labourers for the sugar

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[68] For a description of the vessels incidents, see e.g. Gardiner, *The Japanese and Peru*, pp. 2-19; W. Stewart, *Chinese Bondage in Peru: A History of the Chinese Coolie in Peru, 1849-1874* (Westport, CO [1951] 1970), pp. 152-58; Lausent-Herrera, *Pasado y presente de la comunidad japonesa en el Perú*, pp. 11-12; Yanaguida and Rodríguez del Alisal, *Japoneses en América*, p. 61.

[69] DRO/363.12. In the documentation on the trial held in Kanagawa, Tanco Armero's name appeared as 'Señor Armero of Macao, Spanish subject.' In the newspapers his full name was slightly changed, as in 'The New York Tribune' of 26 November of 1872 that published an article on the incident, where he was called H. Famo Armero. His surname (without identifying his origin and forename) appeared rightly spelled by the first time in Watt's *Chinese Bondage in Peru*, p. 152. I owe my gratitude to Gustavo Andrade Lleras, of Tokyo, and Jaime Barrera Parra, of Bogotá, who provided me with data for the identification of

cane plantations in Cuba, the railways in Panama, and recollection of guano in Peru.[70]

There are two aspects of interest in the *María Luz* event. One was that it led to the conclusion of the first treaty between Japan and a Latin American country. The second is the role played by Japan during the incident. Japan could be seen as an international defender of human rights. It was also an occasion for Japan to try for a reconciliation with China. At the end of the trial, the passengers were given the choice of continuing their trip, or accepting the offer of the Japanese government to send them back to China. They gladly accepted the latter. There is no doubt that the experience with the *coolies* being sent to Peru in conditions of slavery put Japan on the alert. Japan always insisted, throughout the years of the emigration period, that it would never permit unjust treatment of its citizens abroad.

The outstanding result of the *María Luz* incident was that it became the origin of future treaties between Japan and the Latin American countries. Most of the time, it was Japan that showed interest in opening diplomatic relations because it would assure a place for its people and exports. However, the Latin American countries played the role of being the receiver more than the giver. The emigrants travelled from Japan to Latin America, not the other way. In the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, Japan had built up an infrastructure of

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Señor Armero and his connection with the *María Luz* affair.

[70] For biographical information on Nicolás Tanco Armero see *Colombia Ilustrada*, 'D. Nicolás Tanco Armero', 21 (31 January 1891), pp. 322-30; H. Rodríguez Plata, 'Viaje de un colombiano al Japón en el siglo XIX', in *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* 44, no. 718 (July-September 1977), pp. 381-91; G. Andrade Lleras, 'El primer colombiano en China y Japón', paper presented at the 7th meeting of the 'Federación Internacional de Estudios de América Latina', Taipei, 26 June 1995; J. Barrera Parra, 'Patrones de acercamiento: el viajero ilustrado', in *Texto y Contexto* 26 (January - April 1995a), pp. 36-66, and his 'De San Francisco a Yokohama en 1873', in *Boletín Informativo* 2 (1995b), pp. 21-4.

transpacific transport, developed its industry for commerce with the United States, some European and Asian countries, and was looking for an expansion of trade with Latin America. In addition, Japan needed raw material for its growing industry, for which Latin America could offer an opportunity for investment of capital and trade. Like the emigrants, the volume of manufactured products travelled mainly in one direction, from Japan to Latin America, not the other way. Comparative data for Japanese exports are normally calculated in millions of yen, in contrast to imports from Latin America, in thousands of yen.

Colombia had designated the first honorary consul by 1918. In 1919 it opened the first consulate in Yokohama, while Japan waited until 1934 to send the first diplomatic legation to Bogotá. Since 1918, until the establishment of the legation, the Colombian Luis Carlos Corral represented *ad honorem* the commercial interests of Japan in Colombia. His position did not involve any kind of diplomatic activities, just business representation on behalf of Japan. The first reliable data on trade and commerce between the two countries comes from the reports sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs by Consul Carlos Cuervo Borda.[71] The careful annotations to his correspondence sent to the Minister of Foreign affairs in Bogotá constitute the most valuable documentation in reconstructing the early period of relations between the two countries.

In 1928, an unpleasant diplomat affair happened to Cuervo Borda, after

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[71] Three consuls preceded Cuervo Borda. The first honorary consul was the Peruvian G. De Civrac de Borges, who received on April 26 1918, the agreement from the Emperor of Japan as consul of Colombia. He attended in his private office in Yokohama. The second consul was Eduardo Espinoza Guzmán, who became the first General Consul in Yokohama on June 1919. The third consul was José Macías, appointed on April 1923. He moved the consulate to Kobe after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Carlos Cuervo was designated on January 13 1927, and moved back the office to Yokohama. He was General Consul until November of 1935. On December 1 1935, Gregorio Armenta took charge of the consulate in Yokohama until the end of diplomatic relations, on December 1941.

Japan's refusal to accept his presence at the coronation of the Shôwa Emperor. It gave motive to the consul to send a missive to his government suggesting the termination of the treaty signed in 1908. He gave as the main reasons the fact that Japan had not offered Colombia most favoured nation status, and the one-sided uneven balance of trade benefit going only to Japan. He explained that imports to Japan would have to face the high level of tariffs Japan imposed on foreign imports, which ranged from 100 to 300 per cent of the real value, making a fair trade with imports from Colombia impossible.

Consul Cuervo Borda noted in his letter to the Minister that the amount of exports to Colombia in the first nine months of 1928 worked out to US$831,626.04; this was expected to increase during the following three months, and would exceed the amount of exports to other countries like Mexico, Chile and Peru. 'In return, Japan has not bought from Colombia even a cent's worth,' he said. But it was not only the current trade with Japan that worried the consul. 'Another important point to consider is that to offer mutual freedom to enter, live, and settle down as stipulated in the treaty, it could bring disastrous consequences in the future to the race in Colombia.' A further observation made by Cuervo Borda was the beginning in 1930 of direct navigation from Japan to the Colombian ports. He strongly recommended his government to renounce the treaty before 1930. Otherwise, commerce and Japanese immigration to Colombia would not be controlled because of the existing treaty, he claimed.[72] There is no evidence left of how much the worries of the consul caused the government to take direct action. Just a note of '*muy interesante*' ('very interesting'), probably

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[72] Consul Cuervo Borda to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, 26 September 1928, MRE.

the handwriting of the minister, was left on the first page of the original of his comments about the treaty, trade and immigration.

Japan was aware of the disappointment of the Latin American countries due to the imbalance of trade in favour of Japan. Economic missions would visit several countries in a trip designed to calm down the protests. The missions would go and study the market situation but nothing could be solved to satisfy the other nations. For Japan, Latin America was divided into areas of several countries. Each individual country that would like to get preference for its exports in the Japanese trade market, would find that the same products were being offered by its neighbours. So, Japan had to deal with the problem of making a balance of its imports, having the offer of similar products coming from different countries. As an example, the commercial visit to five countries in 1935 and 1936 could be mentioned. Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and Haiti received the visitors with the intention of adjusting the imbalance with Japan.[73] Going through the long reports and general correspondence left, it can be noticed that no immediate solutions could be found, because for Japan the deal was with an area, not with individual nations.

Given the reasons of the imbalance of trade, some countries retaliated by terminating the treaty. The Colombian government, feeling dissatisfied that Japan had not granted them most favoured nation status, and disillusioned with the growing commercial deficit ended the treaty. During the years between 1928 and 1934, the exports to Colombia totalled 9,144,401 Colombian pesos, while the imports from Colombia were only 27,635 Colombian pesos. The treaty was

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[73] DRO/K.2.1.0.4-1-3.

renounced on October 30 of 1934, shortly after the opening of the Japanese Legation in Bogotá. The two parties agreed on a *modus-vivendi* for half a year, beginning in May 1935. They agreed on a limit of 1,372,856 Colombian pesos for imports from Japan. This was the average taken of the exports from 1928 to 1934 inclusive. In November of 1935, the aforementioned commercial mission that visited several countries including Colombia, offered to correct the imbalance buying coffee, petroleum, platinum and salt. However, the mission left without providing exact details of future imports from Colombia, and after the termination of the *modus-vivendi* period, the trade with Japan came almost to an end.[74] See the figure below as an illustration of trade relations between the two countries up to the end of the diplomatic relations.

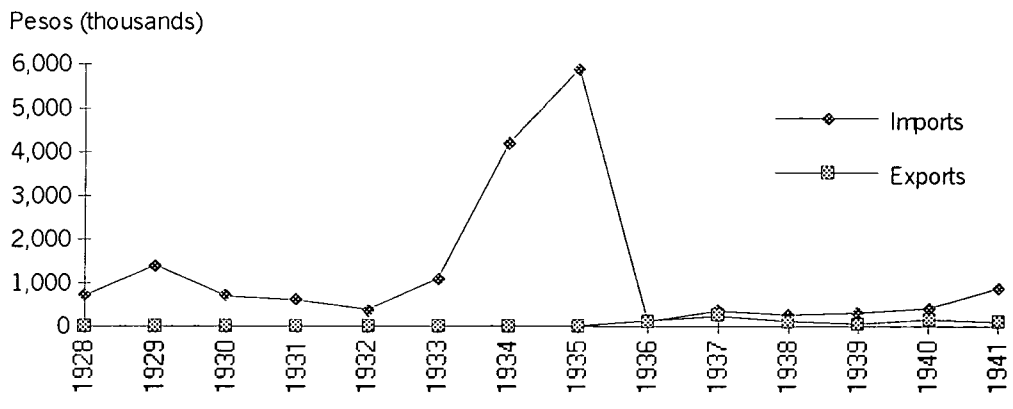

Figure 1.1 *Imports/Exports Colombia - Japan 1928-1941* (in Colombian pesos)
Sources: Several despatches from the consul in Yokohama, 1928-35, MRE; República de Colombia. Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, '*Memoria del Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores al Congreso de 1942* (Bogotá, 1942), pp. 290-1. See Appendix III.

After the intervention of Japan in the Second World War, there was an

[74] The Minister of Foreign Affairs to Leopoldo Borda Roldán, Commercial Secretary of the Legation in Tokyo. In Correspondence, Bogotá, 1937, MRE; *Tratados y Convenios de Colombia 1919-1938*, pp. 878-9; Gardiner, 'Los japoneses y Colombia', in *Boletín de la*

interruption in Colombia and Japan's diplomatic relations. The trade was by then almost non-existent, as was the immigration. The invasion of Manchuria probably had provided Japan with enough land to colonize, having at the same time a political purpose. With no treaty between Japan and Colombia since 1934, immigration could be denied at any time. The last group of immigrants who left Japan in 1935 had many difficulties in getting their visas. The trip that had been originally organized on the 31st of July, was initiated only on the 22nd of September.[75] And it is not a coincidence that during six years, between 1936 to 1941, only fourteen Japanese entered Colombia.[76] In 1954, nine years after the end of the Pacific War, the two countries restarted diplomatic relations. Soon the first embassies were established in Tokyo and Bogotá. The period after the reopening of relations is not included in this work, as Japanese immigration had virtually ended.

6. Conclusion: Pacific Invasion

What makes Japanese overseas emigration so distinctive and special is how it was, since the early years, controlled by the central government. Emigration was distinguished in the first place by the tight control and intervention of the government at all phases of its operation. When the number of emigrants increased, the central government delegated duties to the prefectural authorities, which began to play an important role in the emigration process. The creation of

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Academia de Historia del Valle del Cauca, pp. 224-27.

[75] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 26.

[76] Gardiner, 'Los japoneses y Colombia', p. 227.

the emigration companies, emigration societies and associations, was part of the general system of the central and local government to provide supervision and protection to the emigrant. From the point of view of the emigrants, they were especially privileged in enjoying social protection by the State. Struggling hard to achieve the status of a modern nation during the Meiji period, Japan was not willing to let its citizens be mistreated or be viewed as slaves. For instance, Article 3 of the Emigrant Protection Law required that passports may be refused to those who were about to emigrate to the territory of a country that has not concluded a treaty with Japan, or in violation of the laws of the country of destination. During all the years of Japanese emigration abroad, Japan held to the policy of not allowing or sending emigrants to any country in which they would not be well received.[77] In his speech before the Diet on January 21st, 1925, Baron Shidehara announced: 'It is not our policy to send emigrants to any country in which they are not welcomed.'[78]

That Japanese government took such control over emigration needs an interpretation. Since early Meiji, foreign trade and emigration became a vital part of the expansion to the West. Of all aspects of Western life and institutions, none impressed the Japanese more than expansion. In other words, the ability of the West to let its resources and energies go beyond the national boundaries and reach the far corners of the earth. For Japan, Western power and influence in the world were achieved through expansion, colonization and emigration. If the methods were pacific or militaristic it did not matter. After the period of

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[77] An analysis of the failure in not signing a treaty between Venezuela and Japón, and the obstacles to Japanese immigration, have been presented by Noguchi in 'Historia de las relaciones económicas y sociales entre Venezuela y Japón antes de la segunda guerra mundial', pp. 20-34.

[78] *The Trans-Pacific* (30 January, 1930), p. 11.

seclusion to follow expansionist patterns was nothing new for the Japanese government. There had been a tradition of expansionism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when merchants, warriors and adventurers went as far as Southeast Asia and even beyond.[79] In a census held in 1613 in Lima, 20 Japanese (9 men and 11 women) were registered living in the city.[80]

The industry of building ships illustrated this expansionist trend in Japan with the urgent necessity to control the export of commodities directly, without going through the hands of foreign merchants. In the 1880's, when commercial power in commerce was still in the hands of European and American merchants, the solution to regaining control over exports was to consolidate national power through the development of industry at home, and to trade abroad. To develop its industry Japan needed to obtain raw materials, and to compete in the trade it needed to improve the quality of its products. However, the former would not be concluded unless Japan was prepared to go abroad in search for them. As pointed out by Iriye, for the Japanese themselves, 'Japan's salvation lay in expansion, broadly defined.' Hence, it is necessary to understand that during the first decades of the Meiji period, forces converged to make Japan push forward, not necessarily in search of land to occupy, but as a part of necessary expansion.[81]

Expansion could be seen as the solution to the growing population problem. With the militaristic expansion to the neighbours in Asia, Japan could acquire colonies in which to settle a surplus population. With the pacific expansion far away, across the Ocean, Japan could not only open new markets,

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[79] Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, pp. 18-9.

[80] See M. Fukumoto, *Hacia un nuevo sol: Japoneses y sus descendientes en el Perú. Historia, cultura e identidad* (Lima, 1997), pp. 17, 109.

[81] Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, pp. 20-2.

but acquire more raw materials, and find places for its people. Initially, emigration across the Pacific moved mainly in the direction of Hawaii and continental America. After the movement against Japanese immigration initiated by California in 1906, which culminated with the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908, Japanese turned their eyes to Latin America.

A document sent by a British diplomat mentions that during a session held by the Diet in Tokyo on emigration abroad, Baron Shidehara was asked by a member of the Diet whether the Government had any particular countries in view to send emigrants. To this, the Minister replied that this was not the case, since the emigration associations were free to decide by themselves what countries would be more suitable to send emigrants, and there were many of them. However, he indicated towards South America, 'especially in the direction of Brazil, that the attention of the emigration associations will mainly be turned.'[82] His visionary political approach was correct, in the sense that Brazil proved to be the best country in South America to provide Japan with an enormous territory to accommodate the surplus of its population, and most importantly, with raw materials for its expanding industry.

[82] Sir J. Tilley to Sir Austen Chamberlain, Tokyo, 11 October, 1927, DRO/FO/371/12523.

III. IMMIGRANTS BEFORE THE PACIFIC WAR

1. Introduction

The fact that Japanese people emigrated to Colombia is unknown to many Colombians. It was not only its denial at the official level, but also the small number of immigrants, which added to the scant attention paid to the field of human behaviour studies that makes their existence unfamiliar. Striking and flashy, the neon lights advertising Japanese products have invaded bigger cities, and people have become used to driving Japanese cars, to seeing their homes full of commodities which, if not made in Japan, at least carry a Japanese brand name. For many to enjoy a fancy dinner in a Japanese restaurant is not unusual. Japanese businessmen and their families have moved to Colombia to live, and Bogotá even boasts a Japanese school. Hence, Japanese people and Japanese products are not foreign to Colombia. But what is hardly known is the existence of independent urban immigrants who travelled to Colombia during early decades of the twentieth century, and started a new life there.

Throughout the history of Japanese immigration to Colombia, different types of immigrants can be distinguished. The first group are *very early immigrants*, who arrived during the first three decades of the twentieth century. They were mainly individuals who travelled by making their own arrangements and without having an affiliation to an emigration company. Individuals in this group settled mainly on the Atlantic Coast in the north, and the Cauca Valley in

the south of the country. The second group, typically families, arrived between1929 and 1935, as part of a programme. They can be considered as *early rural immigrants*, who predominantly settled in the Cauca Valley region. They were affiliated to an emigration company that organized their immigration. *Early urban immigrants* who were already settled in this area assisted the emigration agents to set up the programme.

During the following decades, in the years before and after the Second World War, *late immigrants*, arrived in fewer numbers and settled in both urban and rural areas. It is important to note that none of these so called *late immigrants* had made arrangements through an emigration company. However, those who settled in the Cauca Valley region had contractual arrangements with *early rural immigrants*. They not only worked for them, but also married into their families. Additionally, *late immigrants* who settled in the urban areas established economic and social relationships with *early rural immigrants*.

The hostile, isolated and foggy capital city of Bogotá does not seem to have attracted many apart from two brothers who adventurously launched a restaurant, the *Mikado*, in the heart of the city centre, located behind the male penitentiary,[1] and a handful who worked in gardening or carpentry. No descendants are known of the first three Japanese workers brought by Antonio Izquierdo in 1908. Others may have tried business in the capital only to disappear without having had the time or interest to associate with other fellow compatriots. But those who went to the indicated regions, on the northern Coast and in the Southwest of Colombia, formed their own group. Nowadays, the links created in

[1] Conversation with Hiromasa Takahashi, Bogotá, 25 July 1995.

both areas still exist. Indeed, the significance of belonging to their ethnic group has been maintained and reinforced throughout the years.

Studies on immigrant groups have shown a similar pattern of adaptation to the culture of the host country. It is characteristic of the first generation to present a low level of acculturation, while the second generation integrates, and the third generation has a tendency towards total assimilation.[2] The Japanese do not seem to have been an exception to this theory of generational change and identity. Nevertheless, the Japanese, like other ethnic groups, such as the Jews, have been very successful in maintaining their ethnic identity.[3] In this work, it is not the generational acculturation or assimilation which is the point of discussion. Our interest focuses on understanding the degree of manifestation of ethnic identification, illustrated by the case of Japanese and their descendants in Colombia. We have witnessed the post-war wave of Japanese ethnic revival in most of the countries where they emigrated in the past. Racial persecution suffered during the Pacific War, as well as the extraordinary recovery of the Japanese economy after the war, are two very interesting factors which deserve to be mentioned in reference to Japanese living abroad, and the interest in the revival of their cultural roots.

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[2] On cultural assimilation and generation adjustment see e. g. N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Rican, Jews, Italian, and Irish of New York City* (Cambridge, MA [1963] 1970), and Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigration in Buenos Aires, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: CA, 1998).

[3] For different lines of approach on the study of Japanese generational change and persistence of identity, see e. g. S. M. Lyman, *The Asian in North America* (Santa Barbara, CA [1970] 1977); C. W. Kiefer, *Changing Cultures, Changing Lives: An Ethnographic Study of Three Generations of Japanese Americans* (San Francisco, CA, 1974); H. K. L. Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1969); G. N. Levine, and C. Rhodes, *The Japanese American Community: A Three Generation Study* (New York, NY, 1981); D. Montero, *Japanese Americans: Changing Patterns of Ethnic Affiliation over Three Generations* (Boulder, CO, 1980); S. S. Fugita, and D. J. O'Brian, *Japanese American Ethnicity: The Persistence of Community* (Seattle, 1991); Spickard, *Japanese Americans: The Formation and Transformations of an Ethnic Group* (1996).

There is a tendency to believe that movements of ethnic revitalization do not last long, and that it is obvious they tend to weaken after one or two generations have passed, unless they are supported by political interests. For some the study of ethnicity is seen essentially as a political phenomenon, involving a struggle for political power and defence of collective interests.[4] This kind of interpretation fails to consider that movements of revival or persistence of ethnic identity are not necessarily a rational strategic choice in political games. To give priority to the political dimension of movements of emergence of ethnic identity is unequivocal and would lead to one-sided interpretation. As Isajiw puts it, re-emergence of ethnic identification has 'very important affective dimensions, dimensions which cannot be explained on purely rational grounds.'[5] The phenomenon of ethnic revival is more complex, being subject to the wishes of the person involved in its orientation. For the individual, it means a positive desire to identify oneself as a member of a group and the rewards this involvement might bring.

In Colombia, as in other South, Central and North American countries, the post-war emergence of a Japanese ethnic identity has given way to several external manifestations of cultural identity. The descendants of Japanese people, feeling proud of their ancestors, give Japanese names to their children, attend private classes to learn Japanese language, flower arrangement, gardening or calligraphy, display at home ornaments brought from Japan or made by them in Colombia (see Plates 3.7 and 3.8), and have in their homes gardens designed in

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[4] See A. Cohen, 'Introduction: The lesson of ethnicity', in A. Cohen (ed.), *Urban Ethnicity* (London, 1974), pp. xv-xvi.

[5] W. W. Isajiw, 'Olga in Wonderland: Ethnicity in a technological society', in L. Driedger (ed.), *The Canadian Ethnic Mosaic: A Quest for Identity* (Toronto, 1978), p. 34.

the Japanese style (see Plates 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11).

After the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, the Japanese government has permitted the second and third generation of Japanese nationals born abroad to work in Japan for a limited time. With so many troubles at home, such as high rates of inflation, unemployment, and political instability, for the Latin American Japanese descendants working in Japan is very attractive, and their influx into Japan has become a prominent feature of the 1990s.[6] The possibility of immigration to the 'land of one's ancestors' has given rise to a search for new values, the negotiation of new identities, and reinforcement of ethnic solidarity. Looking at what the Japanese descendants are actually doing in Japan, reflects in many ways what their parents and grandparents did for social and economic survival in the past, when they left Japan in search of working opportunities.

The second half of this work introduces an empirical focus on Japanese immigration to Colombia, supplemented with a final section on the migration of Japanese descendants to Japan. The study of this specific topic is intended as a contribution to the interdisciplinary discussion of ethnic identity. In the process of adapting to and living in Colombia, the first generation of Japanese maintained a close association with their roots and native country. The emigrants, together with their descendants, are in a position to share a double cultural affiliation, creating permanent or temporary ethnic and cultural alliances, which vary and change according to the circumstances and personal necessities. Looking at the

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[6] See H. Mori, *Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan* (London, 1997), pp. 106-8; Y. Sellek, 'Illegal foreign migrant workers in Japan: Change and challenge in Japanese society', in J. M. Brown and R. Foot (eds.), *Migration: The Asian Experience* (Wiltshire, 1994), p. 189; Y. Sellek, '*Nikkeijin*. The phenomenon of return migration', in M. Weiner (ed.), *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity* (London, 1997), pp. 185, 192.

Japanese in Colombia through nearly a century of history, my study seeks to explore how the cultural differences between the emigrants, their offspring and those of the host society have shaped their cultural and ethnic identity not only through the ethnic background of the protagonists, but also through the contexts and situations in which they appear.

'Ethnicity seems to be a new term,' assert Glazer and Moynihan,[7] who emphasize that the word's earliest dictionary appearance is in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1972. The word 'ethnic', much older, is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, which originally meant heathen or pagan. Since the 1960s 'ethnic groups' and 'ethnicity' have become common words in socio-anthropological studies. In everyday language the word ethnicity has a connotation of 'minority issues' and 'race relations', but in social anthropology it refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive. Reviewing the studies on ethnicity, a number of different approaches can be seen, although most of them are closely related, they serve different analytical purposes. Yet all of them agree that ethnicity has something to do with the classification of people and group relationships.[8]

In social anthropology, ethnicity has been a main preoccupation since the

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[7] See their 'Introduction', in N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, (Cambridge MA, 1975), p. 1.

[8] See F. Barth, 'Introduction', in F. Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Oslo, 1969), pp. 9-38; A. Cohen, 'Introduction: The lesson of ethnicity', in A. Cohen (ed.), *Urban ethnicity*, pp. ix-xxiv; L. A. Despres, 'Ethnicity and resource competition in Guyanese society', in L. A. Despres (ed.), *Ethnicity and Resource Competition in Plural Societies* (The Hague, 1975), pp. 87-118; Glazer and Moynihan, 'Introduction', in Glazer and Moynihan (eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, pp. 1-26; and R. Cohen, '*Ethnicity*. Problem and focus in Anthropology', in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1978), pp. 379-403.

late 1960s, and it remains a central focus for research in the 1990s. Since ethnicity is considered an aspect of human relationships, studies on cultural groups are dependent on fieldwork. Fieldwork, of course, has the advantage of generating first-hand knowledge of how people behave and interact socially in everyday life. It also shows us how people think and talk about their own group as well as other groups, and how they cope with the needs and challenges of life. Making ethnicity a product of contact and not of isolation, field research provides the opportunity to explore the ways in which ethnic relations are being defined and perceived by people. Moreover, fieldwork attempts to understand the significance of ethnic membership and the different ways to exhibit it - to explore the circumstances where ethnicity is created and re-created.

To begin with, the study of the Japanese in Colombia has to be put into a context of understanding that the immigrants faced a situation totally alien to what they had experienced before in life. A strange language, religion, government, social values, customs, virtually everything was different. Living in the tropics is never the same as living in a place with changing seasons. The emigrant is trapped in a very vulnerable position. He starts not only a process of physical adaptation to another environment and climate, but also to a strange society, where he becomes a member of a minority in terms of numbers, socially, economically, as well as in political life.

Given that vulnerability, the emigrant develops certain mechanisms for economic and social survival. Some will try to disguise their foreignness, merging into the host society. Others, on the contrary, will take the path of preserving and maintaining their ethnic identity. Alternatively, as a survival strategy, they may identify with more than one social category. But individuals acting within a

society are probably seen by others in a different way from how they see themselves. A person might not choose to identify socially or ethnically with a group, but society puts the individual within fixed categories. The individual might face an ambiguous situation, where one can be labelled as 'neither-nor' or 'both-and'; the so called *ethnic anomalies*, by Eriksen.[9] The immigrant who moved when still quite young, and also the offspring of emigrants face an ambiguous situation where it is difficult to identify comfortably with any group. A first generation Japanese immigrant, *issei*, living in Colombia, referred to the second generation, the *nisei*, as 'being like a bat, neither a bird nor a mouse.'[10]

One can safely say that ethnic identity tends to strengthen among those who emigrate together with the family, or who later marry someone of the same ethnic background; it weakens among those who emigrate as single people, find a partner in the local society, and establish an independent family. Whatever the degree of identity is, it is obvious that there exists an ethnic continuity of identity among the Japanese and their descendants in Colombia today.

At this point, it is necessary to formulate a few questions. How can the members of the first generation of immigrants preserve their identity? Which elements of their own social structure do they tend to retain, and which ones tend to disappear in the new environment? How do they develop family relationships with the next generations? How do they cope and relate to other Japanese immigrants, either in an urban, or in a rural environment? How do they handle difficult situations when they enter into contact with people totally different from their own social and economic background? What is the role played by

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[9] *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, p. 62.

[10] Conversation with Nicolás Norihiro Takayama, Cali, 15 August 1995.

immigrants who go back and forth to their native land? Why does it become so important to retain one's own ethnic identity? To provide answers to these questions, I will examine the process of social and economic survival of the emigrant, having at the centre of the discussion the concept of identity as analyzed by E. H. Erikson (1951, 1959), and used by A. L. Epstein (1978, 1984, 1992). Concepts taken from psychoanalysis draw attention to the fact that although identity formation is always an interplay between endogenous and exogenous factors, it is the individual who provides the starting point for discussion. Epstein has guided the approach to the questions above by providing an analytical model to the study of ethnic identity. I owe my gratitude to him not only for his enlightening work, but also for opening a new and wider dimension in the direction of social studies, one which he has termed the *social anthropology of affect.*[11]

All emigrants, men and women, I have talked to while doing this research, agree on one point. They feel Japanese at heart, regardless of all the years that have passed since they emigrated. Let me illustrate the case with two examples. To answer the question if they consider themselves Colombians, I received these kinds of remarks: '*Yahari, watakushi wa nihonjin desu*'[12] or, '*Nihonjin io? Kokoro wa kawaranai.*'[13] 'Of course, I'm Japanese' or, 'The heart doesn't change,' are simple and clear answers with an enormous meaning. Erikson helps us to understand when he refers to the term 'inner identity' which not only 'points

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[11] A. L. Epstein, *Ethos and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity* (London, 1978); *The Experience of Shame in Melanesia: An Essay in the Anthropology of Affect* (London, 1984); *In the Midst of Life: Affect and Ideation in the World of the Tolai* (Berkeley, 1992).

[12] Conversation with Flora Sadae Nakamura, Palmira, 25 August 1995. This person arrived in Colombia in 1929, at the age of twenty-six.

[13] Conversation with Flora Yasuyo Tokunaga, Cali, 24 August 1995. This person arrived in Colombia in 1930, at the age of nineteen.

to an individual's link with the unique values, fostered by a unique history, of his people,' but also relates to the cornerstone which plays a central role in his own life. Following Erikson, one can understand what he means when he says that 'the term *identity* expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (selfsameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others.'[14]

Epstein offers a comparative analysis taken from three ethnographical profiles: the African labour migrants on the Copperbelt of Zambia, the Tolai in New Guinea, and the American Jews. He asks himself how such groups manage to survive as groups at all, and why they are so conscious of trying to retain their sense of group identity. His own interpretation focuses on the powerful emotional charge that appears to underline so much of ethnic behaviour.[15] It is precisely the study of the *how* and the *why* that makes his work so refreshing and inspiring. His approach by 'placing the concept of identity at the heart of the analysis,' using concepts taken from psychoanalysts, presents a remarkable insight not only into the study of the concept of identity but also offers a better understanding of the highly controversial problem of ethnicity.

I shall summarise the main points of ethnic identity when living in a polyethnic society. As stressed by Epstein: firstly, ethnic identity is not the only identity an individual refers to in life, but one among a number of possible forms of social identification. Secondly, concealing one's ethnic identity is a matter of

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[14] E. H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (London [1959] 1994), p. 109; see also his *Childhood and Society* (London [1951] 1995), p. 235.

[15] Epstein, *Ethos and Identity*, p. xi.

choice. This choice is subject to a number of social limitations, including unconscious elements of constraint which enter into the building of one's image of self. Thirdly, how important it is for the individual to be within a circle of his ethnic associates. Shared feelings of understanding, trust and appreciation, restore confidence and a sense of personal worthiness. The distress or happiness of other members becomes a matter of personal concern.[16] We could add another definition: ethnic identity involves elements of expectations, biased towards marks of reference, imaginary ones mostly, demarcating in this way the boundaries between *Us* and *Them*. The fulfilment of expectations on both sides, for the host society and the emigrant, culminates in the success or failure of the social and economic survival of the latter.

The data I rely on has been obtained through first hand observations, and a series of informal interviews, done in Colombia and Japan with the Japanese immigrants and their descendants.[17] A profile of the group interviewed is shown in Appendix IV. Other sources are the memoirs commemorating thirty and fifty years of immigration to the Cauca Valley, scarce published materials, and data found in the archives. The memoirs, originally published in Japanese, were written with the collaboration of the first generation.[18] Material found in these

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[16] Ibid. pp. xiv-xv.

[17] In 1987, Hideo Wadagami visited several countries in South America, on a project of recording personal lives for the collection of the National Diet Library of Tokyo. In Colombia he stayed in Cali, where he gathered material from the first generation immigrants. I took notes listening to the cassettes kept in the library. I also heard one cassette taped by a Japanese student, Naotaru Shimizu, in a visit he made to Barranquilla in 1993. He taped a conversation with the oldest surviving person of the early immigrants, who died before my first visit to Barranquilla, and some of the second generation descendants. I also watched a programme on immigrants, prepared for the Colombian television by Camila Loboguerrero in 1994, where one part is dedicated to the Japanese, and a documentary film by Antonio Dorado, done in the same year.

[18] *Nyûshoku sanju nen kinen: Koronbia nihonjin imin-shi* (to celebrate the 30th anniversary), and *Koronbia ijû-shi: goju nen no ayumi* (to celebrate the 50th anniversary). The latter has a Spanish translation, *Los pasos de 50 años: Historia de la inmigración japonesa a Colombia.*

books was discussed with them, and as a result some facts were expanded and better explained. These memoirs contain the 'official story', defined by the immigrants themselves. It is the story of how they want to be recognized. It indicates what has been chosen to be remembered, forgotten or even concealed.

Early immigrants and their families have not moved too far away from their original settlement, and it is relatively easy to follow and find them. However, since most of them had died by 1994 when this research began, first hand information has been scarce. Nevertheless, I was very fortunate to meet and talk to the surviving first generation immigrants, and also to those who were born in Colombia soon after their parents had emigrated. But the majority of the first generation, mainly male family heads in the departments of Atlántico, Valle del Cauca and Cauca, and those who had been in charge of the rural settlement affairs in Cauca had already passed away. Some female family heads are still alive, but their knowledge on certain economic aspects, especially those related to contracts of land or financial matters, was limited. Except for the information provided by the Japanese widows of the family heads of early immigrants, their own daughters, sons, and aggregated members of the family, observations on how Japanese started and developed a living in Colombian have been filtered through the perception of the Colombian widows of the first generation of immigrants, and from second and third generation descendants.

On each of the fieldwork sessions, I was able to go back to the same people for more information when it was needed, and also interview new people. To talk to the elders, of course, was a priority. Sadly, a few of them died during these last years. I always tried to get a balanced, impartial view, talking to people of all ages, including Colombian neighbours of Japanese. In the process of

listening to the interviews and going through the compiled materials, I saw myself more with a collection of personal lives, of more interest to a psychoanalyst than to a person working on a cultural history project. It is not an easy task to deal with all the data, as the information kindly provided by them is part of their private lives. The situation the researcher provokes, plunging people back into their past, stirring up their memories, sharing a stream of intimate details from the past and the present, is echoed by Paul Theroux in one of his novels:[19]

> 'It was said at the leprosarium that there were no secrets. No matter what happened in darkness, it was known; no matter how soft your whisper, it was heard. Then everyone knew. That was another aspect of the reality of the place. Nothing was hidden, everything known - no subtlety, no symbols.'

And it is precisely the existence of these 'secrets', shared by so many, that keeps alive a group, and gives sense to the meaning of community, no matter how far the physical distance that separates them. In other words, the continuous flow of information within a group means concern, never indifference.

2. Early Urban Life

Japanese immigration to Colombia happened either independently or in a group, the latter organized under the sponsorship of Japan. There are, however, important differences between these two kinds of emigrants. Those who emigrated individually settled in urban areas, while those who were part of organized immigration settled in rural places, and were dedicated to agricultural

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[19] P. Theroux, *My Other Life* (London, 1996), p. 73.

work. It was not uncommon for farmers to invite relatives and friends from Japan to join them to work in the fields. In some other cases, women travelled from Japan with the purpose of marrying. Following the lives of urban immigrants in the Atlántico and Valle del Cauca departments, and the rural immigrants, who settled originally in the Cauca department, I will investigate two different regions of Colombia, the Atlantic Coast in the north, and the Cauca Valley in the south of the country.

The first known Japanese immigrant to arrive on the Atlantic Coast was Enrique Kodiro Mizuno. Being young and single, he had abandoned his native Takehara, in Hiroshima Prefecture, to try his luck in Peru, where he worked for several years. Working in Peru he became sick from cholera, and decided to move to Panama. Still feeling unwell in Panama, he was recommended to go to Colombia to drink and bath in the Usiacurí springs, famous for their curative effects. Mizuno travelled in 1915, not knowing anybody in Colombia, just the name of the town with the magic waters. He did not only find in Usiacurí the cure to his troubles, but also a woman who provided him with a happy life and a family. Mizuno never left the area, and his world moved around Usiacurí and Barranquilla until his death in 1960, at the age of seventy-six.[20]

In 1913, the mineral springs of Usiacurí had been acknowledged by a medical doctor of Barranquilla, who had studied the different kind of mineral composition of the waters, relating each of the streams to the different illnesses they could cure. '*El Chorrito, Chacanitas, El Higuerón*, and *El Obispo* would have helped to relieve and cure a good number of people had they not been

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[20] Conversation with his daughter-in-law, Jacinta Haydar de Mizuno, Barranquilla, 9 August 1995.

located in such a remote place but in Europe ... where a crowd of sick travellers would have visited them looking for health and recreation,' stated the physician. He gave a description of Usiacurí as a 'village distant nine *leguas*[21] to the south of this city (Barranquilla), of indigenous origin, with three to four thousand inhabitants, built in the hills, with uneven streets.' People living there were seen as 'reserved' but 'good workers'. The area was dedicated to maize and yucca cultivation, cattle-raising, and the straw hat industry.[22]

The intention of Insignares, in writing his essay on the locality, was to get the government interested in constructing a road to get access to Usiacurí. At the time Mizuno went there, the distance from Barranquilla would be difficult to cover in just one day, as people had to go on foot, or riding a horse. The shallow streams of water that issued forth from the rocks came to an end in the 1970s under a local mayor of the municipality, who blended them in a new aqueduct. As a result, the water of the aqueduct one day came out black, another day yellow or green in colour, but lacked the original mineral curative power.[23] The house of the Colombian poet Julio Flórez has been left in Usiacurí as a symbol of the prosperity of a place (see Plate 3.6), once upon a time famous for its curative waters.[24]

Mizuno, who had lived previously in Panama, had probably learned his job there. Barber shops were numerous in Panama, and it was a popular activity for Japanese. Many of them had worked in Panama on the construction of the Canal.

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[21] *Legua* is a measure to calculate the distance between two points. One *legua* is equivalent to 5,572 metres.

[22] N. Insignares, 'Aguas minerales de Usiacurí', in *Revista Médica de Bogotá* 31, no. 368-78 (Bogotá, 1913), pp. 315-20, microfilm, BMS.

[23] Conversation with Rafael Márquez, Usiacurí, 11 August 1995.

[24] Julio Flórez was born in Chiquinquirá (Cundinamarca) in 1867. He spent his last years in Usiacurí, looking for relief for his illness at its mineral springs, where he died in 1923.

After it was finished in 1914, there was an opportunity to stay, and to try a new life there. The opening of the Canal provided easier connection between South America, the Caribbean Islands and Japan. Panama does not seem to have been a place where male Japanese immigrants married and established family lives with local women. It attracted the sojourner trying his luck in different countries. When the Pacific War broke out, only 335 Japanese men were officially recorded as living in Panama, and no women were registered. The majority had remained single, with just a few living with native women. Of their business activities, barber shops were prominent, and 'the center and unifying force in the Japanese colony was the Barber's Association to which most of the Japanese belonged,' according to a FBI report.[25] Probably, not only Mizuno but other Japanese who moved to live on the Atlantic Coast, may have trained as barbers in Panama.[26]

From the moment Mizuno recovered his health, he established a barber shop in Usiacurí. And we know that a cousin and a friend, both natives from the same village as Mizuno one day, out of the blue, arrived in Usiacurí riding a pair of donkeys. Rafael Toshio Adachi and Eduardo Toshio Doku were single, in their early twenties, and had left Japan for Panama with the hope of meeting Mizuno. They arrived at Panama in 1916, but Mizuno had already left. In June of 1918, Adachi and Doku sailed for Barranquilla in search of Mizuno. The unexpected visitors finally found him with his first newborn son. Hospitality was offered to them, and they joined Mizuno combining the work of being barbers with running a

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[25] 'Field notes on the Japanese in Latin America. Part IV, Panama', in NAUS/OSS/894.20210/220, RG 59, 26 March 1943.

[26] Information on immigrants of the Atlantic Coast comes from different sources: personal interviews, material found in the National Archives in Washington (NAUS) and Bogotá (ANC), in the private collection of José Kaoru Doku in Barranquilla (AJKD), in one article, C. Tsukada, 'Barankirya no nikkeijin' (1991), and in two unpublished articles, N. Shimizu, 'Los inmigrantes japoneses en Colombia' (1993), and J. K. Doku, 'Pioneros japoneses en el

grocery shop with a billiard table at the back. The three men moved some years later to Barranquilla, where they opened more barber shops. Mizuno and Adachi failed in the venture and returned to live in Usiacurí, where they continued working and living independently. Doku remained with his Usiacurenian wife in Barranquilla, where he opened a barber shop, and a bar with billiard tables.

During the following years, through the 1920s until 1930, twelve more men and three women arrived at Barranquilla. Also two girls and a boy, who had been born in Cuba, came with their parents. All travelled independently, and not directly from Japan, except a couple who accompanied a woman, promised in marriage to a former immigrant living in Barranquilla, and a man who was invited by his elder brother. The other two women came with their husbands, one of them dying shortly after her arrival. A man also died within the first few years. The majority of the immigrants settled in Barranquilla, a place where they found opportunities to start a new life. A common route for the immigrants was to leave Japan for Peru, move to Panama, and then Colombia. Another common route was from Cuba to Panama, and finally Colombia.

The new place offered them a friendly social and family environment. Some soon married, others rather waited for several years before finding a spouse. Having been wandering in other countries, some were in their late twenties or early thirties when they arrived in Colombia. They found amicable young women with whom to organize a family life. They had large families, as shown in the census held by the President of the Association of Barranquilla. By 1994, the descendants of ten of the early immigrants totalled 613 persons.[27] A few had

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litoral Caribe de Colombia' (1998).

[27] Census held by J. K. Doku on the immigrants who arrived on the Atlantic Coast between

probably left a family of their own in Japan, as they disappeared without warning, leaving another woman and children in Colombia. Those who stayed remained in Barranquilla or Usiacurí, and gradually integrated into the local society through their own business and family connections.

Little is known of the occupations and family backgrounds of the Atlantic Coast immigrants. They remained very uncommunicative with their Colombian families about their life and family left in Japan. Nor did they mention much about their activities abroad, before coming to Colombia. The emigrant, who is looking forward not back, probably wishes to remain private and is reticent to talk about the past. Registration records show them as natives of different areas in Japan. They came from Hiroshima, Ishikawa, Fukuoka, Kumamoto, Tottori and Yamaguchi Prefectures, Tokyo and Yokohama. Hiroshima, in particular, offered the highest number of individuals. Eight out of the total of eighteen came from this prefecture. A good number came from villages where they might have experienced agricultural life before. It was also possible to calculate that most of them were single, in their twenties, when they went abroad. Having lived in Spanish speaking countries, they had at least acquired a basic command of the Spanish language when they arrived at Barranquilla.

Some information was recorded about their previous lives. For example, one of them had left for Peru, leaving his wife and two children with his family in Japan. During the six years spent in Peru, he initially worked in a coca plantation farm. Later he moved to Lima, where he was an ice-water peddler. From Peru he travelled to Cuba, where he worked as a barber for plantation workers. A brother

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1915 to 1930 and their descendants, AJKD.

joined him there. His wife travelled to Cuba alone, leaving their daughter and son in Japan. Three more children were born in Cuba, where the whole family lived for about twelve years before they left for Colombia. Although the parents remitted money regularly for the education and welfare of the two children left behind, the family never had the opportunity to meeting again. Another was only fifteen years of age when he left for Peru. After eleven years of work in Peru, he took a vessel that left him in Buenaventura. He wandered around for a while in Cali, Manizales, Ibagué and Bogotá before arriving at Barranquilla in 1925. He never left that place. Another travelled back and forth from Cuba to Panama for seven years, probably trying different jobs. He and his brother had opened a restaurant in Cuba. After one brother went back to Japan, the other followed the route of moving to Panama, with Colombia as a final destination.

While those who had lived in Cuba, Panama, and Peru had experienced different kinds of activities in agriculture, commerce and barber shops, three immigrants had worked as sailors. One of the former sailors worked for several years for American, British and Norwegian companies, and had visited several countries in Europe, North and South America. Another sailor was a draft dodger. His widow heard from him that he was frightened of conscription, escaping after the conflict ended between Japan and Russia in 1904-1905. The Conscription Ordinance of 1873 had made all men liable to service in the national army. He was still a young adolescent when he stowed away in a ship to Europe. This person studied and lived in England, later working as a sailor on British ships for several years.[28]

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[28] Conversation with Isabel Tirado de Yamawaki, widow of José María Sakuhe Yamawaki, Barranquilla, 8 August 1995.

The two sailors, who had worked for the same shipping company, began to live in Panama. It was 1922. That was also a time of prosperity for the United Fruit Company in Colombia. Labourers were contracted from all over Colombia and also from abroad to work in the department of Magdalena, in the area around Aracataca, Ciénaga and Fundación that came to be known as the *Zona Bananera.*[29] Workers from abroad were mainly from Aruba and the British West Indies. Colombians were not pleased with the import of black labour from the Caribbean islands and tried to stop them from coming, as happened in 1908, when politicians of the department of Magdalena were opposed to the introduction of workers from Jamaica.[30] In spite of internal migration, scarcity of labour was an acute problem for the company, especially during the years of commercial expansion between 1900 and 1929.[31] To solve the problem of labour shortage the company had to import foreign labour to work on the plantations. A broker of the United Fruit Co., who was in Panama recruiting people for the *bananeras*, gave contracts to the former sailors. Working in the plantations they became ill, one with malaria, forcing them to quit their jobs. They did not go back to Panama but stayed first in Santa Marta, moving from there to Barranquilla.

The former sailors and labourers of the banana plantations joined other Japanese working as barbers. The people who arrived on the Atlantic Coast in the second half of the 1930s were mostly immigrants from the Cauca Valley area, engaged in a variety of activities. These were small businesses, such as planting vegetable gardens and selling their produce, a restaurant, and farm administration.

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[29] Posada-Carbó, *The Colombian Caribbean*, pp. 52, 58.

[30] See C. , 'Campesinos asalariados en la zona bananera de Santa Marta 1900-1935', in Bell Lemus (ed.), *El Caribe colombiano. Selección de textos históricos* (1988), p. 185.

[31] Ibid. pp. 184-5, and Posada-Carbó, p. 58.

But as for immigrants of the previous two decades, the barber's profession was the most common, and the economic activity in which the majority became engaged. This kind of occupation had the advantage of being able to receive training and employment from fellow countrymen, and getting initial experience while working as assistants.[32] Furthermore, this job allowed people to become independent, or to work in a partnership. It did not matter if the person had capital to start, as this kind of business did not require too much investment in tools or furniture. What this job required was cleanliness and manual dexterity, as the barber not only cuts the hair but shaves the face and throat of his clients. '*Manitos de seda*' ('little silky hands') was a nickname that associated them with their job.[33]

The Japanese barbers of Barranquilla and Usiacurí created the reputation of being clean, careful and gentle. A good number of the barbers remained in this kind of activity for most of their working lives. Some of them combined their work with other activities like commerce, market gardening, bars, and grocery stores. One moved into horticulture only after he began to have problems with his eyes. Only one person worked in a different activity, as a vendor of ice-water that he prepared by himself. Marcelo Higa has observed that the semantic universe associated with early Japanese immigrants in Argentina, although not exempt from discriminatory connotations, created a positive image that helped them to

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[32] The practice of living and receiving training in a master's house has a long tradition in Japan. Data is found in the Tokugawa period (1568-1867), when in any single town, there were large numbers of youths from nearby farming villages who were apprenticed to the town's merchants and artisans. Gradually, working their way up, after many years of training, they could establish their own shop with the employer's approval and assistance. See C. Nakane, 'Tokugawa society', in Nakane and Oishi (eds.), *Tokugawa Japan*, pp. 220-1.

[33] Tsukada, 'Barankirya no nikkeijin', p. 87, and N. Shimizu 'Los inmigrantes japoneses en Colombia' (unpublished article, 1993), p. 13, both mention the good reputation of the Japanese barbers, who had 'hands like silk.'

move from being salaried workers to initiating independent economic activities.[34]

While immigrants to the northern Coast were engaged in hair dressing work, those who settled in the interior of the country made a reputation in gardening and agriculture. A group of four friends, enthusiastic over the descriptions of the Cauca Valley they heard about, crossed the Pacific in 1923.[35] They landed in Buenaventura, from there continuing their trip to Cali. This city, like Barranquilla, offered the best working opportunities in the region to the immigrant. The four men, in their early twenties, met Koichi Tamura, the first Japanese known to have lived in Cali. Tamura had started his years abroad in Peru, working as a barber. By 1919 he was living in Panama, and from there he entered Colombia, via Buenaventura. He opened a grocery shop and a hotel, a place that became a shelter for future immigrants to the Cauca Valley.[36] His recommendation helped the four men to be hired at the sugar factory *La Manuelita*, located near the city of Palmira. One was from Hokkaido, the other three were born and bred in Tokyo. Evidently they lacked practical experience in agriculture. However, they were proficient in their new jobs. After some years, they began to occupy significant positions related to agriculture, as was the case of Nakamura and Shima. They created an image that helped the introduction of Japanese rural immigrants in the area, linking, ever since then, Japanese with agriculture in the minds of the Colombians.

Shima was appointed administrator to the colony *El Jagual*, when the first and second group of immigrants arrived. His knowledge of the area was an

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[34] See his 'Desarrollo histórico de la inmigración japonesa en la Argentina hasta la segunda guerra mundial', in *Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos* 10, no. 30 (1995), p. 488.

[35] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 44, 61, and Ramos Núñez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa de Corinto*, p. 11.

[36] See Koronbia ijû-shi, p. 46.

invaluable source of information for the agents of the emigration company. The government of Colombia, not being in favour of having Japanese immigrants enter the country, would not provide any help to the programme or the people. However, the programme was set up without difficulties. The experience accumulated after living in the area by early immigrants helped successfully to establish and continue the settlement. Nakamura, for example, who worked for the Experimental School of Agriculture in Palmira had learned how to operate tractors. His experience was essential when they began to introduce heavy machinery into the fields.[37]

Another example of achievement (in terms of the expectations of the host society) is illustrated by an immigrant who became a gardener after the failure of his commercial business. Jorge Ryoji Hoshino, who had arrived at Bogotá in 1921, opened a store for Japanese imports. Unfortunately, the devastating Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 forced him to close his newborn enterprise. According to published memoirs concerning the Japanese in Colombia, after the failure of his store he did not know what to do. This former businessman tried his luck at gardening, and was very successful. From his initial work of doing gardens for private houses, he moved into projects subsidized by the national government. He came to be in charge of ornamental plant projects, and designer of gardens for Bogotá, being later in life, appointed as instructor of fruit and vegetable gardens by the Ministry of Agriculture.[38]

Next to small businesses like barber's shops, gardening came to gain

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[37] See Nakamura, Adolfo, 'Un recuerdo de Jagual', and 'Un recuerdo de Corinto', in *Nikkei Colombia* 1, no. 9 (July 1983), p. 1, and no. 10 (August 1983), pp. 1-2.

[38] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 42.

importance as an occupation for urban immigrants. It was a job that could be done independently like barbering. Likewise, the person engaged in this activity did not need much capital to start. Ability and creativity were enough to perform the job. And, of course, being Japanese was also a great help. The few known gardeners were mainly hired in Bogotá. One of them worked in the 1930s in the houses of prominent politicians.[39] The Japanese gardeners enjoyed higher status than Colombians working in gardens. They were not seen as humble people who cut lawns and cleaned up gardens, but as individuals with the capability of creating something original. Having said this, however, the profession of barber and gardener faded away with the first generation. Only one person, the son of a barber, has continued the job of his late father.

The importance in establishing identification of activities with place of origin may be seen from two opposite perspectives. The negative part is the stigma put on persons coming from the same geographical area. On the other hand, fruitful results would offer immigrants the chance of creating positive images to work for their benefit. The expert and skilful gardener brought by Antonio Izquierdo, no doubt had provided the first association of being Japanese with being a creative gardener. It was an image that probably helped Hoshino when he embarked on the profession of gardener. Gardening and agriculture became images associated with Japanese in Bogotá and the Cauca Valley, while the barbers belonged to Barranquilla and Usiacurí. The examples above show how people could be more successful engaging in what can be named ethnic activities, even if they lacked previous training in such activities. Once they had

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[39] Conversation with Sofía Montoya de Suzuki, widow of Fernando Takashi Suzuki, Palmira, 19 March 1997.

created a particular image, with a favourable semantic world, working opportunities emerged assuring success, or at the very least, survival.

3. Early Rural Life

Organized and subsidized immigration to Colombia was directed only to rural activities. The Overseas Development Company Ltd. established a colony with ten families in 1929 and 1930, doubling the number of families five years later. Their number totals 159 individuals. Some families were larger than others. Only one family in the first group had the minimal number of three people. The first group had an average of five, while the second had seven. The third group that in reality was formed by fourteen families, also had an average of seven people. For the immigrants the order of arrival has deserved a particular calling. For them, that sequence is related to the grade of suffering. At that time, the journey from Japan to Colombia lasted forty days. The first group, *dai ikkai imin*, had to endure the most difficult time because the preparations to receive them were the most basic and elemental. The second group, *dai nikai imin*, suffered less, as preparations had improved. And the third group, *dai sankai imin*, profited from the experience gained by the previous groups. Although 17 per cent out of the total families deserted Colombia and returned to Japan because of hardships and disappointments, those who were part of the first and second groups completed their contract with the emigration agency before they left. The following tables show distribution by sex and age of the three groups:[40]

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[40] Sources: Ramos Núñez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa de Corinto*, pp. 41-3, 60-3; *Los pasos de 50 años*, 40-4.

Table 3.1 *First group of 25 immigrants who arrived in 1929*

Age	Single Male	Married Male	Single Female	Married Female	Total
1-7	3	-	1	-	4
8-14	4	-	3	-	7
15-21	2	1	-	2	5
22-35	-	3	-	3	6
36-50	-	2	-	1	3
	36%	24%	16%	24%	100%

Table 3.2 *Second group of 34 immigrants who arrived in 1930*

Age	Single Male	Married Male	Single Female	Married Female	Total
1-7	4	-	2	-	6
8-14	4	-	3	-	7
15-21	3	1	4	1	9
22-35	-	1	-	3	4
36-50	-	5	-	3	8
	32%	21%	26%	21%	100%

Table 3.3 *Third group of 100 immigrants who arrived in 1935*

Age	Single Male	Married Male	Single Female	Married Female	Total
1-7	10	-	9	-	19
8-14	9	-	8	-	17
15-21	11	1	11	1	24
22-35	3	10	1	10	24
36-50	-	7	-	7	14
65-75	-	1	-	1	2
	33%	19%	29%	19%	100%

Although the male population was higher than the female population, the Tables above show that there was not a disproportionate sex ratio. The arrival of the third group brought fresh blood and more possibilities of intermarriage within their own circle. Marriage, up to the present time, has been by preference

endogamous. Nevertheless, marriage out of the *colonia* has happened and will continue happening. This is not necessarily because of choice, but because the possibilities of finding a partner inside the Japanese community are narrowing more and more. Marriage outside has occurred most frequently with Colombians. Some women married other Japanese who emigrated to Colombia without links with the agricultural colony, but in most cases they ended up associating with people of the former colony. Only three men (an *issei* and two *nisei*) of Cauca have married three *nisei* from Barranquilla.

The emigration company ruled that the immigrants had to be agricultural farmers in order to apply for the Colombian agricultural programme. Although many came from poor families, their parents were not necessarily tenants but also included land owners. However, as most of the immigrants were not the first sons of the family, they were not entitled to receive land, and would be left without land to cultivate. According to the Civil Code, Book V on inheritance, promulgated and enforced in 1898, succession in the household went to the eldest son.[41] To emigrate was a possible alternative for impoverished families and for non-successors to farm their own land.[42] The majority of men and women had at least the equivalent of eighth-grade education. Some younger members of extended families had a higher level of education. The immigrants were quite well educated in comparison with the farmers of the host country, where all the poor peasant population was virtually illiterate.

The family heads had been born during the Meiji period when Japan experienced great economic and social turmoil, changing from a feudal system

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[41] T. Fukutake, *Rural Society in Japan*, p. 31.

[42] For information on the tenancy system, before the land reforms were issued after the

towards urbanization and industrialization. The rural Japan of the previous Tokugawa period had continued to be divided into fairly autonomous feudal baronies under the authority of local lords called *daimyo*. However, one of the distinguishing characteristics of Tokugawa policy was the clear-cut division between urban and rural populations. The headquarters of the state, where the *daimyo*'s castle and the military men were situated, developed in the course of time into towns, while the rural areas were occupied only by peasants. By 1700 most samurai had been removed from the land, and were compelled to live immediately outside the castle.[43] A strict division between the various classes of people was created. At the top of the hierarchy were the *samurai*, the so called knights of the *daimyo*, who formed the ruling military class, the administrative officers, and scholars. The rest was divided into farmers, artisans and merchants. There were others like priests and itinerant entertainers who remained outside the system. At the bottom of society there were the outcasts, the *eta*, those who were described and considered as non-human.[44]

Under the leadership of the *daimyo*, about 260 feudal baronies developed, enjoying village autonomy and security. Each village was a concentrated settlement representing an administrative unit, and was practically self-supporting. The farmers were obliged to provide the ruling class with rice, receiving in exchange protection. The peasants were supposed to dedicate to the cultivation of rice, on which the nation's economy and political system depended, and were not allowed to produce other crops beyond the authorized limit. Under the

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American occupation of Japan, see R. P. Dore, *Land Reform in Japan* (London, 1959), pp. 23-53.

[43] See Nakane, *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan*, pp. 44-6.

[44] Ibid. p. 46; Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society*, p. 15; G. De Vos and H. Wagatsuma, *Japan's Invisible Race: Caste in Culture and Personality* (Berkeley, CA, 1966), p. xx.

Tokugawa government the signs of a national culture and economy began gradually to emerge. The period of peace brought economic growth, in both agriculture and commerce, and as a combined result, an increase in population. The latter brought problems of land shortage, and economic competition among households of the same village. Soon a differentiation in peasant status became to emerge in the villages, resulting in the farmers who owned land and tenants who did not. A new economic class of wealthy landlords, between the feudal lords and the peasants appeared. At the same time, merchants began an expansive development of industries in the towns, and of commercial enterprises around the castles to satisfy the nascent urban consumer class.[45]

The social and economic conditions of the late Tokugawa period forced many peasants to sell their land, although it was legally prohibited. A serious problem of competition between households of the same village coerced peasants to sell, especially those with small plots, becoming tenants instead. To restrict the partition of land, in 1673 the government had issued a law that prohibited the subdivision of holdings of less than 10 *koku*, or 9.92 hectares.[46] The rural situation was worsened by famines in the latter part of the period, which led eventually into nation-wide peasant revolts.[47] Some chose to desert their own villages, emigrating to other places. This internal migration started to bring a

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[45] On the social and economic significance of this period, see e. g. Nakane, *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan*, p. 44-7; Nakane, 'Tokugawa society', pp. 213-6; A. Waswo, *Japanese Landlords: The Decline of a Rural Elite* (Berkeley, CA, 1977), pp. 12-20; Waswo, *Modern Japanese Society*, pp. 9-15; and T. Sato, 'Tokugawa villages and agriculture', in Nakane and Oishi (eds.), *Tokugawa Japan*, pp. 40-5, 50.

[46] 9.92 hectares was estimated to produce a harvest of about 10 *koku* of rice. One *koku* was the standard amount of one year's supply for an adult. This estimate varies, of course, depending on the average productivity of the land. See J. I. Nakamura, *Agricultural Production and the Economic Development of Japan 1873-1922* (Princeton, NJ, 1966), pp. 78-9.

[47] See Waswo, *Modern Japanese Society*, p. 15, and Sato, 'Tokugawa villages and agriculture', p. 56-9.

change in society, where the focus of life for the individual and their sense of identity had been until then local, or at most regional.[48]

The Meiji period that followed brought political consolidation to the nation. The major features of this consolidation were the diffusion of Neo-Confucianism values, the reforms that led to the abolition of the special status of the samurai class, the opening of the country that had remained isolated for more than two centuries, centralized universal education, and the industrial revolution. The samurai did not disappear but rose to leadership in the new government, bringing the legacy of the Confucian doctrine that had been promoted as the official ideology since early Tokugawa. The Neo-Confucianism, a twelfth century reformulation of classical Chinese Confucianism, came to the attention of the Japanese Buddhist monks and the rulers during early Tokugawa. Neo-Confucianism developed in Japan, although strongly influenced by the Chinese philosophy, differs from the original. In the Japanese military society, the supreme virtues of the individual, which were loyalty to one's ruler, one's lord and one's immediate superior, would take priority over filial piety, where the two virtues of loyalty and filial piety conflicted. In China the position was normally contrary; family and lineage took prevalence over duty to the ruler.[49]

The starting point of Confucianism was the ethic of filial piety which spoke of the goodness of the parents. This philosophy stressed obedience to the household and to the superiors, each person performing the functions according to the status received in the natural social hierarchy. The Meiji restoration put the Emperor at the centre of the nation, and to his figure divine origins were

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[48] Spickard, *Japanese Americans*, p. 7.

[49] See e. g. Hendry, *Japanese Society*, p. 126; J. E. Hunter, *The Emergence of Modern Japan:*

attributed. As a result, Japanese mythology was taught at schools, and Shinto was established as the national religion. Loyalty and service to the Emperor were demanded, and the government in his name received unconditional obedience from the people. The virtues that accompanied filial piety, magnified on a national scale in the family state, originated loyalty to the head of the nation. As said by Fukutake, the process of ideological indoctrination which linked the ruler-subject relation to the father-son relation was able to build on sentiments of national patriotism.[50]

That the Meiji emperor was only a fifteen-year-old when he was enthroned, made it easier for the leaders of the Restoration government to define his place in the new state. The imperial household was moved from Kyoto to Edo,[51] where he occupied the castle of the last Tokugawa shogun. The imperial house was provided with its own sources of wealth, so that it could afford a lifestyle in accordance with its dignified status, and with performing civil and religious ceremonies. The emperor received new clothes, Western-style military uniforms as well as fashionable suits to serve as visible symbols of the country's new direction. For the first time, an emperor travelled on tours throughout the country to make his person known to the common people. Both the emperor's birthday and imperial foundation day, on 11 February, were given pride of place as the national holidays. Imperial foundation day is said to be the date when the first emperor had descended from heaven in 660 BC. The result of assigning so much importance to the emperor was to strengthen the pursuit of the Confucian

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An Introductory History since 1853 (New York, NY, 1989), pp. 66-7; Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, pp. 80-2; Waswo, *Modern Japanese Society*, pp. 16-9.

[50] T. Fukutake, *The Japanese Social Structure: Its Evolution in the Modern Century* [translated by R. P. Dore] (Tokyo [1981] 1982), pp. 46-7.

[51] Edo was renamed Tokyo after 1869.

principles of loyalty and filial piety. The religious notions embodied in the Shinto religion also made the individual relate to the imperial line in the same way as to their ancestral family.[52]

A further step that promoted national identity during the Meiji period was the centralization of education. In 1879 enrolment was made compulsory for all boys and girls. The mandatory period of schooling was extended from sixteen months in 1879 to six years in 1890. The textbooks were chosen and prepared by the Ministry of Education. The Imperial Rescript on Education was issued in 1890, and directed at pupils and teachers in all the schools of the nation. They had to recite it every day before classes started.[53] The Rescript of Education functioned as a proclamation of ethical principles of loyalty and filial piety, and encouraged citizens to offer themselves to the State as:

> 'Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all ... advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise offer yourselves courageously to the State.'[54]

One of the most outstanding achievements during Meiji was the transformation of the nation into an industrial economy. People were recruited from rural areas to work in the factories. Since the former Tokugawa period, men and women would leave their villages to work in nearby towns, returning

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[52] See Waswo, *Modern Japanese Society*, p. 27; Hunter, *The Emergence of Modern Japan*, p. 189; L. T. Doi, 'Giri-ninjô, pp. 331-2; Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society*, p. 126; Fukutake, *The Japanese Social Structure*, p. 46; and J. F. Embree, *A Japanese Village: Suye Mura* (London [1939] 1946), p. 59.

[53] See H. Passin, *Society and Education in Japan* (New York, NY, 1965), pp. 62-80, 151-5.

[54] First published, Dairoru Kikuchi, *Japanese Education* (London, 1909), quoted in I. Reader *et al.*, *Japanese Religions: Past and Present* (Surrey, 1993), p. 171.

when planting or harvesting demanded their return. The wages earned by doing temporary work outside the village was a valuable supplement to the family's income. But during the Meiji period workers moved to live in urban cities, where they found jobs. Those who moved to work inside Japan or abroad brought great benefits to the rural families. It was not only the cash they sent to support their families, but they also left villages overcrowded with surplus population. Nevertheless, in spite of the modern changes in the nation's political and economic system through the process of accelerated industrialization, rural life in the village communities was not substantially changed. 'Japan's industrial revolution started without an agricultural revolution,' writes Chie Nakane. That is to say that industrialization in Japan was carried out without remoulding the existing rural economic and social structure. She also points to the fact that since industrialization was carried out on the initiative of the government, employing highly efficient techniques of production from the beginning, there was no need for a high proportion of the labour force.[55]

What needs to be said with regard to the summary above is that early immigrants to Colombia had been brought up in a country that had gone through extraordinary economic and social changes in a very short time. Moreover, this was in an epoch when national identity had been consolidated. The fact that they were born at a time when Japan was already a leading industrial nation does not mean that those who later became immigrants were enjoying the advantages of modernization in Japan. On the contrary, they were undergoing the consequences of industrialization because they could not afford to buy what aggressive

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[55] Nakane, *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan* pp. 51-2.

commerce was demanding they acquire. Furthermore, overpopulation in rural areas put people under pressure to move out. It has been calculated that between 1890 and 1900 Japan's population rose from forty million to about forty-four million. Between 1900 and 1910 it rose from forty-four to fifty million. What was more, the land seemed to be worked to capacity.[56] For poor peasants one solution was to emigrate to Hokkaido, the northern island of Japan. However, this place was too cold to hold real attraction. Another possibility was for the family to head for work in the city. But they would have to consider what to do with their own families, as no place of their own existed in the urban domicile. Hence, the best opportunity for the whole family to stay together came with the agricultural settlements offered abroad. To understand the immigrant's story objectively, it should be remembered that they were a product of Japan's past. To an important extent, they behaved according to the legacy of education, family values, work and discipline they had received in their native country.

All of the immigrants to *colonia El Jagual* in Colombia had to be members of the family units responsible in each group. Membership could be gained through kinship relations to the head or his spouse, by adoption or just as workers. To apply for the programme the couple had to be younger than fifty, and have another person older than twelve. They formed extended families (*kôsei kazoku*) that expanded from the nucleus of an elementary family to include relatives and non-relatives. Extended members could be single persons, or couples with their own children. The whole family lived together in the same house, under the rules imposed by the family head. In other words, what they

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[56] Storry, *A History of Modern Japan*, p. 155.

formed was a household with all the rights and duties that this primary unit of social organization offered and demanded.[57]

The family head was not necessarily the oldest person in each unit. It was the male head with whom the emigration company and the Prefecture of Fukuoka had made a written contract to achieve the goals of their emigration. He was a reliable person that the whole family would trust and follow. His authority was unquestionable and his leadership undisputed. All future contracts of land were his own decision. Business transactions were held in his name, with other members of the extended family having no right to intervene. In Colombia, as was the practice in Japan, the head of the household was served first at meals, and also allowed to take the first bath.

For a family of rural immigrants to adapt with success, the active cooperation of the spouse was absolutely necessary. She had to work in the fields, cook for the family, look after young children, and to contribute to the welfare of all members of the house. She required a strong character and a commitment to support her husband in all the affairs of the household. Of all the family units who emigrated to Cauca none was related by kinship. Therefore, the loyalty and dedication of the wife and the rest of the members fell on individual households. Prosperity would depend on the adjustment and eagerness of the wife to emigrate abroad. An unhappy, depressed and non-cooperative woman would make the whole family return home. Four families deserted the programme and went back to Japan. In one of the cases the man stayed while the spouse and

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[57] Studies on the family structure with reference to the duties performed by the family members of the household provide a better understanding on how the immigrants lived in their native land. See e. g. Embree, *A Japanese Village*, pp. 60-83, T. Fukutake, *Japanese Rural Society* [translated by R. P. Dore] (London [1964] 1967), pp. 39-59; Fukutake, *Rural Society in Japan*, pp. 27-70; Nakane, *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan*, pp. 1-40;

children returned. He remarried a Colombian woman. 'Since the entire household depends on the wife, its head cannot disregard her feelings without endangering the security of the whole group,' said Staniford of rural immigrants to Brazil.[58]

An outline of the daily labour of a woman would be as follows: wake up by three o'clock, walk a considerable distance to the communal land to fetch the horse, make a fire and prepare breakfast to be ready by six in the morning. After the rest of the working people had left, besides attending to the small children, animals and the vegetable garden, she washed the clothes, brought water into the house from the well, and cooked lunch to take to the field. After lunch she joined the rest working, and afterwards returned home to prepare food again to bring to the field. After bringing a light dinner, she joined again in the agricultural work. The whole family would work until it got dark. After returning home, she prepared the *ofuro*, cooked supper and started preparations for the next day, finishing at about ten o'clock at night. She was the first to get up, and the last to go to sleep. During the time of the harvest of beans her work continued for even longer hours. They had to select the grains for selling, and the whole family had to help. They worked at night, leaving just a few hours to rest.[59] Women living under the same roof were a substantial help in sharing in the duties.

Sons and daughters were of great value to the emigrant family. Children, like the rest of the family, had to endure hard work. When their help was required during the harvest, they stayed until midnight working. It did not matter that

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and Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society*, pp. 21-35.

[58] *Pioneers in the Tropics*, p. 58.

[59] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 37-8.

there was no electricity, as they worked by the light of oil lamps. Children in Cauca were given very risky jobs. For example, operating tractors, driving light trucks faking their age to receive a driving licence, and carrying crops on the animals to the market place for sale. Sometimes accidents happened, occasionally fatal. Children also had to endure loneliness and sad moments. A woman remembered when she was about seven, and had to stay all day alone in the house doing domestic jobs. Her father bought her a talking parrot to keep her company, that said things like: '*Patojita, buenos días. ¿Querés cacao?*' ('Little girl, good morning. Do you want [to drink] chocolate?'). In her old age, she could still not hold back her tears when she recalled the day one of the pigs killed her pet. Her father had remarried after the death of her mother, and she was missing her grandparents and only sister left in Fukuoka. The parrot was her only companion during the long day time hours.[60]

A very important household part of the labour force was extended family members. In some cases, aggregated members were a family, consanguineous to the main family; in a few cases, they were single unrelated women, but most of the aggregated members were young single men. They were listed as nephew, cousin or friend. Their number amounted to 32 per cent of the first group, 26 per cent of the second group, and 28 per cent of the last group. They travelled under a verbal contract with the family head. The expected length of service of an aggregated male was ten years. In exchange, he received in Japan the support to emigrate required by the emigration company and authorities in Fukuoka, including payment of all the bureaucratic expenses. In Colombia, he would have

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[60] Lola Shinobu Kuratomi. Audiovisual collection, NDL.

housing and food during all his years of work. A worker received, eventually, new clothes and shoes but not a penny in payment. The subsidy that the Japanese government gave for each individual once they arrived in Colombia was pocketed by the family heads. Even more, the salary paid when they worked as labourers for other Japanese was also received by the family heads.[61] For single women there was no such a fixed term of employment, although they worked for at least five years before moving to their new partner's house. They had to work for the family that brought them as hard as the men had to, and without payment.

Not all aggregated males worked for ten years. Some worked for six years. This was mainly the case of the individuals invited (*yobiyose imin*) after the main family had been established in Colombia. With the third group came men that lacked agricultural experience, and were not used to hard labour in the fields. During an interview, one person mentioned that it was never clear before he left Japan for how long he would have to work for the family head. A year passed and he was feeling tired and hopeless. He had heard from previous immigrants that the expected term of work was as long as ten years. He and other men of his generation rebelled against something they felt was an injustice and demanded payment for their work. They did not get any positive results from their rebellion. Then, one day at dawn, the interviewee escaped to Cali to lead his own life. Others waited several years more, until finally five of them and a family left for Barranquilla in search of a better life. They did not have the chance to stay longer there as the Pacific War broke out, and they were forced to return to the interior of the country.

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[61] That the income received by the members of a family unit as a result of working 'all went into the househead's pocket' was a normal practice in rural Japan, is recorded in Fukutake's

A male worker occasionally married a daughter of the family head. It did not bring any advantages for him except the reward of a woman. Only after ten years, he and his own family could move out. Nevertheless, workers received help from the head of the household to start an independent life. They helped with money to lease land to cultivate. The agreement was to pay back with future crops. Not many couples started a life together in the first years of the new colony. They remained single, probably because they had to satisfy an obligation with the family head that sponsored their immigration. If the aggregated male started a family life with a woman from another house, she would move to his place and they would work together until he became free of obligations. A woman described the day she moved to live with her future husband, after having worked five years for her sponsor. Her future brother-in-law, head of the family, went to Cali to buy new clothes for the couple. On that day only the family celebrated with a meal and a drink, and took the day off. The following day continued as a normal working day. Marriage was done through a verbal agreement, and after that the couple started living together. They formed stable and life-long family relationships.

Marriage in rural Japan was, as outlined by Embree, 'primarily a social and economic arrangement between two families;'[62] it did not happen in this way in the colony. Mediators who arranged couples had to consider that movement of one person would mean a loss for the family. Providing a bride or a groom would not mean consolidating relations between the families, as they did not carry out any kind of cooperative work or form social networks. What was important there

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Japanese Rural Society, p. 46.

[62] *A Japanese Village*, p. 151.

was the household living under the same roof, and working hard to maintain their social unity. In their rural colony what predominated was individualism as seen from the outside, but strong cooperation within the household.

Given the importance of team-work within the family, to arrange a marriage with a worker who was under an obligation for six or ten years was the ideal. In this case, the household would not lose any working person. These cases were frequent, and eventually a woman or a man was brought from Japan to marry inside the family. But women were not always happy when they met their future husbands. There were refusals. In one case, a young adolescent was invited by her uncle with the intention of giving her to the employer that had emigrated with the family. She had been brought up in the paternal uncle's house after the early death of her father, and was seen as a daughter. She was very disappointed to find what the intentions of the uncle were in sending for her, and decided to escape and go to live with a man she liked in another house. As she ran away one night in secrecy, her family was in great despair looking for her, until news came two days later where she was. Many years passed and the couple wanted a reconciliation with the uncle before he died, and visited him on his deathbed to ask for forgiveness. The uncle moved his head to the other side of the wall in silence as his only answer. We can see in this example, the importance that the head of the family gave to the values of filial piety and loyalty, so much emphasized in the Japanese society he knew, and that were taken for granted in the behaviour of family members.

Early rural life was filled with work. Labouring went on seven days a week, the only holiday was the First of January. Eventually, the immigrants would rest on Sunday afternoon. Colombians used to call them '*burros*' or

'animals' for not observing Sundays, and Catholic or national festivities as a day of rest. During the first years there were no social activities inside or outside the boundaries of the colony. The immigrants say that they hardly knew each other. Also, the only contact with Colombians occurred through work. The immigrants had brought money and could afford to pay for workers, who were mainly Blacks or Indians from the near municipalities of Corinto and Caloto.

After the third group arrived in 1935, the number of children increased making it necessary for them to have their own school. Children until then had attended the only school available within walking distance. It was a government school for all children of the rural area. The only teacher was a cruel man who inflicted corporal punishment on the pupils. One day he was almost killed by an angry Colombian grandmother and fled for good. The immigrants asked the Japanese government for financial help to build a school. They received it, and the money to pay for the salary of a Japanese teacher. By 1936 the school was ready, with an initial attendance of 21 boys and 20 girls. People worked together helping to organize the school. Those with carpentry skills made the tables and chairs. Emilio Solarte Ortiz was invited from Caloto as the Spanish teacher. Juan Tsuneo Hagino, the Japanese teacher, moved from Cali to live in *Jagual*. He was later replaced by Ignacio Keizo Ikeda. The school also made them reconcile past differences, and in 1937 they celebrated the first Sports Day or *undokai*.[63]

By the time the school was ready, they had already started to move out.

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[63] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 47-8. In this publication, pages 18-19, it is said that in 1931, 1934 and 1937 they celebrated their first, second and third *undokai*, which is a contradiction to what is said on p. 48, that it was after the school was built in 1937 when they had the first sports day. When I asked about it, the reaction was that it would have been unthinkable to have celebrated a sports day together in early years as the community was divided into two irreconcilable groups. They did not talk to each other for several years until the third group arrived, and began to consider having their own school. The reasons that led the community

Their commitment to the land of the colony was very low, the quality of the land being poor. The original idea was to plant rice but after two years they failed and changed to maize and beans, which were very successful. Two kinds of beans, *shirokintoki* and *azuki*, both seeds imported from Japan, were the most productive. They used horses to plough the land but also learned how to operate tractors. Although they were eager to work hard, the land did not produce a good crop continuously, making it necessary to leave it for some years to regenerate again. The best solution was to get out and lease land to cultivate. The areas where they could get land were not used for cultivation but had been converted into pasture. Moving out was also very hard work as they had to prepare a field to plant. The Colombians, who saw how the Japanese were converting their land, used to cancel their contracts after two or three years. In the end, it was the Japanese who were the winners because after successive harvests of beans and maize for three years the land was exhausted, and it was more favourable to move than to stay reaping a low yield.

Tenancy of the land was paid for in cash, without regard to the crop yield. Only immigrants of the first and second groups had to sell the beans to the administration office of the emigration company. After about five years, at the end of 1934, they had completed their contract and were free to sell independently.[64] They made individual transactions in the regional market. Two of the early urban immigrants in Cali, Koichi Tamura and Antonio Tokuji Nishikuni, helped them to make business contacts. They also bought beans and maize for their grocery stores. In the late 1930s, a few people tried to organize a

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to split up are explained in the previous chapter.

[64] The contract between the emigration company and the immigrants was prolonged from three

cooperative but failed. It was also at that time that four families bought a piece of land together. The land was located in Chococito, on both sides of the Desbaratado river, and extended to 120 *plazas*. Each family head bought 30 *plazas* at the price of 100 Colombian pesos per *plaza*. They did not share the land, nor did they help in community work or make arrangements for future profit and loss. It was just an opportunity they had to buy a large piece of land.[65]

In the late 1940s the immigrants were mainly leaseholders, but had also begun to buy if there was the chance. What was notable concerning the people of the colony was that their economy was based on the personal effort of each individual affiliated to his or her own household. The term community applied to the Japanese colony of Jagual has the meaning of a settlement limited by physical boundaries, not of mutual help. It was not until after the 1950s that social and economic networks started to flourish.

4. Ethnic Solidarity

Two features characterize early Japanese immigration to the Atlantic Coast. First, there was a concentration of the immigrants in the city of Barranquilla. Those who moved back to establish in Usiacurí were at a distance from the city. And secondly, they engaged in running barber shops. Thirteen out of fifteen individuals who arrived between 1915 and 1930 worked continuously as barbers. It helped that in this kind of occupation they could receive instruction and

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to five years because during the first two years the rice crops failed to produce.

[65] Conversation with Juan Shigetoshi Sakamoto, Cali, 23 August 1995.

employment from another Japanese, getting initial experience as an assistant. They also gained a favourable semantic association ('*manitos de seda*'), and were seen as careful and clean people. It was an advantage too that barbering only required a small capital to start up. A room with basic tools and furniture was enough to set up a barber shop. However, the fact that barbering was an apparently easy job to perform, and that it required only a small amount of capital was not sufficient to ensure success, or even to convince the individual to make a decision to stay. The support provided by previous immigrants in creating an atmosphere of solidarity, however, played an important role in welcoming new people.

Rural immigrants to Cauca brought capital that helped them to survive until they cultivated the first crops. This amount of money also helped them to invest in machinery, labour, seeds, fertilizers, and in getting more land. In addition to the cash they brought with them, the whole family had emigrated. Aggregated extended members and non-family members formed a working group for each of the family units. Urban immigrants were in a different situation, as most of them emigrated individually. The majority did not bring capital to invest in, or have a family to live and work together. To arrive in a new place brought great risks, especially for those without relatives or friends. Colombian towns were not large places, so finding another immigrant was not difficult. However, new arrivals did not meet others of Japanese origin looking for friends to socialize. Knowing other Japanese provided the opportunity to get a job, to learn a new profession, and to establish a partnership in business.

At the time of Japan's intervention in the Second World War, small businesses were the predominant economy of urban residents. The list of business

the *issei* concentrated on was narrow in scope: barbershops, poolrooms, grocery shops, hotels, restaurants, gardening, provision and supply of vegetables, horticulture, agricultural administration and poultry farming. Those employed by a business company were more the exception than the rule. Women did not emigrate independently but as part of a family, and those who worked were involved in the partnership activities with their husbands. There were few cases of people being employed by Colombians. These jobs were located in farms within easy urban access, or in residential urban gardens.

Although most urban immigrants arrived without capital, they did not need to look for poorly paid jobs within the host society. For instance, in Argentina the Japanese immigrants found their first jobs as waiters in coffee shops and restaurants, and as servants to local families.[66] This was not the case in Colombia. The newcomer, for one reason or another, associated with another Japanese that provided housing, support and jobs, and eventually a recommendation to work. This did not mean that from the beginning the Japanese working for other immigrants did not face hardship, or that they got a fair payment from their employer. But at least the initial time of adjustment and difficulties could be spent in the company of somebody who was familiar. It was a common practice among them, after years of working for the same person, to receive help from the employer to become independent, establishing their own businesses.

Whether or not the immigrants had the capacity and skills for the occupations they engaged in is another matter. Their first and constant problem was economic survival in a new environment. Successful adaptation to a new

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[66] Higa, 'Desarrollo histórico de la inmigración japonesa en la Argentina hasta la segunda guerra mundial', Table 3, p. 485.

place would depend on many factors. First, it depended on what kind of social and professional skills the immigrants brought with them, their ambitions, desires and values. But, it depended no less on conditions in the place they moved to, especially the structure of opportunities the immigrants found. Although Barranquilla was a town that attracted foreigners because of two important factors, 'economic opportunity and social mobility',[67] one wonders how well-equipped the Japanese immigrants were to move into a city that offered freedom of opportunities. In considering the situation of this tiny minority that did not die out but formed a community, a question of interest is to explore the kind of niche they built, and how they were able to adapt to their new environment.

Several sociological studies conducted on the Japanese of the West Coast of the United States have evaluated the conditions that provided success to immigrants. Miyamoto, in his research on the Seattle area emphasizes their 'predisposition toward efficient community organization.' His observation was made in areas of concentration where they built numerous little communities. He noticed that Japanese immigrants were seldom found adjusting to American life except in groups. Therefore, considering their problems without taking into account the backing of the community would distort the picture of their adjustment.[68]

To say, however, that Japanese immigrants could adjust to a new life but in groups is not entirely accurate. How much the immigrants could, or could not fit into the new environment, also depended on several other factors such as their

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[67] Fawcett and Posada-Carbó, 'Arabs and Jews in the Development of the Colombian Caribbean 1850-1950', p. 59.

[68] See S. F. Miyamoto, 'Social solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle', in *Bulletin University of Washington* 2, no 2 (December 1939), p. 57.

own personality and character. What is an undeniable fact is that urban immigrants were able to profit by the experiences gained by those who had preceded them. Bibliographic references reveal that such benefits occurred in every place where the Japanese emigrated. They did not live in groups but helped each other as members of the same ethnic group. Certainly, there was a tendency for those who came from the same prefecture to participate in the same occupational field. Miyamoto refers to the influence of prefectural groups, known as *ken-jin*, in the context of attracting group members, particularly noticeable in some trades. For example, the first Japanese barber in Seattle came from Yamaguchi Prefecture. After this person became established, he helped many others from the same prefecture with training and money, with the result that the barber population of Seattle was mostly from Yamaguchi. The same happened with other occupations. For example, in the restaurant business, the majority of people were from Ehime Prefecture. The person that first got into this activity went on to help people from his prefecture to follow his lead in establishing restaurants.[69]

The total number of Japanese living on the Caribbean Coast was too small to have allowed this prefectural connection. Community ties were not created by prefectural affiliations. What predominated there was the sense of belonging to the same nation. However, the way they provided mutual assistance to other fellow citizens was no different from other places, where the sense of belonging to the same prefecture was an important factor in receiving support. Kitano has described the success of their enterprises, either in agriculture, small shops or

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[69] Ibid. pp. 74-5.

businesses as being due to several factors, like the expanding economy of the West, and their traditional ambition to running their own businesses. But most important, as he rightly pointed out, 'was the cohesion within the Japanese group.'[70] The case of the barbers in Barranquilla has parallels with Kitano's account.

It is of great interest to observe the way the barbers provided the elements for their economic and social survival. They did not create a community in the sense that they resided in the same neighbourhood. They lived in different streets, in the zones close to the city centre. The barber shops of Barranquilla, however, were mostly located in the *Barrio Abajo*, in the vicinity of Montoya Station. This was the station, connecting by train the twelve miles that separated the city from Sabanilla and later Puerto Colombia, where people disembarked. Their customers were not only local residents but also sailors who would bring news from around the world, and told them if a Japanese vessel was in dock, or if one was due to arrive. The immigrants did not have access to short-wave radios or newspapers for information on Japan. Even contact with their families was almost lost. Consequently, the arrival of a ship was an occasion to gather news and to interchange presents. A person remembered, when he was eleven, his father taking for the vessel's captain a cage with fifty tropical parrots, and the bamboo ornaments the captain offered them in return.[71] Other people recalled their fathers taking back home Japanese food.

For the immigrant, ensuring food and housing are two main challenges when moving to a new place. Living in a city makes the former easier but the

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[70] Kitano, *Japanese Americans*, p. 19.
[71] Conversation with Inocente Masabe Yunaka, Barranquilla, 10 March 1997.

latter more difficult. In Barranquilla, those who had established their own family lived independently in a house, but the single people shared rooms. The unmarried immigrants, still in their training period, were offered a room in the house of their employers. A whole family was also provided by a barber with housing until they became economically stable. This kind of environment provided by the patron to his employees has been compared to typical family unit relationships. The family-type structure had the advantages and disadvantages of a typical family. In Kitano's words, 'it could mean economic exploitation and long hours of work, but it could also mean a sense of identity, belonging, security and comfort.'[72] Even though discontent and problems would be inevitable, this paternalistic form of employment was probably a better solution for the urban immigrant than living alone or renting a room with a local family, under negative and stressful conditions. Independent barbers or those working in partnership used to rent rooms in a house inhabited by Colombians. A front room was set aside for the barber's shop, while another in the back was the shared room in which to sleep.

To help with their incipient economy, the immigrants of Barranquilla put into practice a revolving credit system. The term is also known as rotating savings and credit associations to emphasize the fact that both, savings and credit, rotate among the members. The term refers to an unofficial financial system, common in Asia, Africa and Latin America.[73] Synonymous terms for this financial system are *hui* in Cantonese, *ke* in Korean, and *mujin* or *tanomoshi-ko* in Japanese. It was adopted in rural Japan since about early Tokugawa period from

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[72] *Japanese Americans*, p. 20.

[73] See P. J. Drake, 'Revolving credit systems', in P. Newman *et al.* (eds.), *The New Palgrave*

the Chinese scheme.[74] It was also probably introduced via Korea during different periods of contact.

The revolving credit associations are characterized by mutual trust. They do not involve the signing of papers or the backing of a guarantor, both common in a complex organization. The methods of borrowing are simple, rates of interest cheap or non-existent, and the credit is easily accessible to borrowers, making the economic advantages of the associations very attractive. The members usually have a common bond of friendship, belong to the same clan, or come from the same place of origin or employment. They meet regularly once a month to pay their contributions to the mutual fund. At each meeting, they gamble on a lottery to decide who is the winner of the lump sum of money. The person who obtains the first draw has an advantage over the rest because he has longer use of the money, free of interest. There are variations in the organization and complexities in the methods of receiving the credit, as well as in the emphasis given to the social aspect of the regular meetings. In some places like Java, social meetings and entertaining aspects matter very much. Other regions, like Korea and Singapore pay more attention to the administrative aspects.[75]

Ivan Light quotes an example, described by Kulp, which illustrates the basic principle of the Cantonese *hui*. A person in need of a lump sum of US$50 organized a group with ten more members, who gave him $5 each. The first lump sum was spent by the organizer as he pleased, and free of interest. Friends or relatives contributed $5 each at ten regular encounters. The organizer did not

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Dictionary of Money & Finance (London, [1992] 1994), Vol. 3, p. 349.

[74] I. H. Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America: Business and Welfare among Chinese, Japanese and Blacks* (Berkeley, CA, 1972), p. 27.

[75] Drake, 'Revolving credit systems', pp. 349-50.

contribute to the money pool. Instead, he held ten meals in his home. The ten meals, each of which was supposed to have cost him $5, was his payment. On each occasion the ten contributors put $5 into the common pool. A lottery determined which member would receive the lump sum. At the end of the tenth feast each member had contributed $55, receiving the interest-free use of $50 in advance, except for the last person, and ten 50-cent feasts. In addition to the credit received, all the participants enjoyed the company of the group at ten social occasions.[76]

Independent descriptions given of the rotating credit association by a Colombian widow of a first generation immigrant, and by a man who emigrated while young, are close to the principle of money rotation and festivity summarized above. Some differences may have existed, there is no one left to explain the details. Their memory clearly recalls that the men met together once a month to have a party. At this party each contributed a fixed quota to a common fund; the collected amount, free of interest, was given to one person on every occasion. The monthly saving system operated like a bank, avoiding asking local banks for a loan and receiving flat refusals. The total amount received would help improve the barber shops, and also help one who was in trouble, or in need of money. They probably practised this rotating credit for many years. The quota, which was originally of 5 Colombian pesos each, was raised in the 1930s to 10 pesos. A person remembered that in 1934, when the quota was 10 pesos, a haircut cost 0.20 cents. Another remembered that in 1929, when the quota was 5 pesos, a haircut cost 0.15 cents. To have received a lump sum of 50 or 100 Colombian

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[76] See Light, *Ethnic Enterprise in America*, p. 23-4.

pesos was a considerable amount of money. According to these figures, the number of participants can be calculated as ten people.

Another important feature of this economic scheme was its social function. The monthly meetings were usually held in the bar of Eduardo Toshio Doku. They gathered on Sundays, the day that was closed for customers. Pedro Sotô Nakamura, a former sailor, was an expert cook, in charge of preparing the food for their feasts. The favourite dish was *kamaboko* (boiled roll of minced fish) assorted with soy sauce and fresh vegetables. Drinking alcohol and playing cards were invariable accompaniments to the party. Most importantly, these meetings were the occasion to talk in Japanese, to eat food prepared in Japanese style, to share joys and failures, to gossip and relax. This sharing of food can be seen, borrowing Epstein's words, as 'the supreme symbol of love and amity,' and the giving of food as 'the chief expression of solidarity in social relations.'[77] It could be added that these social gatherings also gave immigrants the strength to carry on with life in the new country.

Apparently, by the end of the 1930s the mutual fund and credit system had disappeared. The reason seemed to have been the failure to repay by some members who repeatedly asked for the lump sum but did not pay it back. The rotating credit came to an end but not the monthly feasts. Some Japanese, who moved from the Cauca Valley region to Barranquilla in the late 1930s, remember having these parties. The gatherings continued as before, a social encounter created exclusively for men of the first generation of immigrants. Their spouses and Colombian families did not share or interfere in their social world. The

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[77] Epstein, *The Experience of Shame in Melanesia*, p. 45.

participants collected the money for drinks and food, always prepared by Nakamura, meeting once a month in one of their houses. They chose in preference a house with a backyard that had an open space. Their parties ended at the end of 1941 when the Pacific War began, and the meeting of three or more Japanese people was prohibited. After the war, their festivities were reduced to dining together on the 1st of January, and the 29th of April, the birthday of Shôwa Emperor.[78]

Urban immigrants to Cali and Palmira do not seem to have used the described credit system. Nor did they celebrate any social festivities together. Except for Tamura, who had a hotel and a grocery shop, the four men who lived in the nearby town of Palmira were salary earners, and probably did not have any need of credit as they were not involved in businesses of their own. What is well known about Tamura is his generosity and eagerness to help all other Japanese who arrived in the Cauca Valley, and who stopped in Cali.

In the memoirs published to celebrate Japanese immigration to Cauca, not enough credit has been given to the urban predecessors for choosing the area for the establishment of the agricultural programme. To decide the place for the future colony, the Japanese government had sent in 1926 three people to do a general survey throughout Colombia. The area selected was precisely the place where former immigrants were living. Obviously, many reasons could have worked in favour of the choice of the Cauca department, like the fertility of the land in the region, and the initial recommendation of the area provided by Noda in 1910. Nevertheless, what has been written with insistence is how the association

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[78] Conversation with Margot Tatekawa, Barranquilla, August 6, 1998.

with Isaacs' novel, *María*, played a part in selecting the area, stimulating the imagination with titles such as 'The offspring of a love story.'[79] One can maintain the enchanting interpretation of linking Japanese immigration in Cauca to a love story. But to be fair, more appreciation should be granted to the existence of former urban immigrants in Cali and Palmira. Their information on the area, and the infrastructure of relations they had created, is beyond doubt the factor that added weight to the decision regarding in which place to establish the future colony.

5. Conclusion: In search of *Eldorado*

Urban and rural immigrants to Colombia reveal different social behaviour in their adaptation to the new environment. While urban individuals relied on community aid, rural settlers relied on family support. Both types of immigrants were contemporary, in the sense that they were born during late Meiji, and had grown up under similar values of cultural identification to a nation that had achieved rapid modernization. A great difference between them is that rural families travelled together, while the urban settler usually came alone. Both depended upon their own circle, the former inside the family, the latter among his fellow citizens. Sharing interests in survival, they developed economic and social institutions that were based upon their own cultural roots.

A notable feature of the group in Barranquilla is how they developed the resources to help their own businesses. The rotating credit *tanomoshi-ko* was

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[79] See the one page article in *Gente* magazine, 'Los hijos de una novela de amor', 1989.

important in getting capital to open and maintain their barber shops. They were not large enterprises but provided them with a basic livelihood. Immigrants who ventured from one country to another did not have capital. And probably they did not have an interest in making money either. They were the type of adventurer who wanted to know the world, and were not in a hurry to settle down. Once in Barranquilla they created an ethnic niche that gave them the security to stay.

The value systems found in the Japanese culture of respect, politeness, cleanliness and honesty, made the immigrants welcome in the receiving country. In addition, the favourable semantic association, *'Manitos de seda'*, provided the basis for their adaptation and success. Probably because they were so few numerically, their existence could not be seen as a threat to local barbers. Their capacity to work hard, and the opportunities in a society more free of social conventions than others in the interior of the country, were factors that helped in their upward social and economic mobility.

The institution of *tanomoshi-ko* cannot be seen only from the perspective of economic advantage. Its social function offered greatest benefit to the individual. There were many aspects in life that these immigrants could have shared with their new families and local friends. However, two important factors that gave the individual so much identification with the group of origin could not be shared with the people of the new country. These were food and language. Their monthly festive meetings provided them with the opportunity to eat food prepared in their own style, yet adapted to what was available locally. Besides, they could express themselves in their own language, and communicate easily. It is said their Spanish was of a low level, as they had not studied it before. But sharing their native language and food became for them the most powerful

symbols of ethnic identity.

Rural immigrants faced situations and problems which were different from those of urban individuals. Firstly, they were part of an organized immigration plan. The rural families moved into an agricultural colony. Each family received its own piece of land, and was expected to lead an independent life. During the first years the agricultural programme was guided under the administration of the emigration company, and their crops were guaranteed a market by the administration. It had not been planned, and there was no need for cooperation between the families. There was just one occasion when labour was provided. The third group had difficulties in getting their visas, embarking two months later than the original date. When they arrived it was too late to plant their own fields. They worked for the first and second groups, and were paid for it.[80] Normally, labour was provided within the family, hiring Colombian workers when needed.

Secondly, they had the ability to become independent because they were former peasants and knew their job. Furthermore, the emigration company made it a pre-requisite to bring capital, as had been strongly recommended by Takeshima in his report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Japan. The initial capital, together with their own ability to work, and an emphasis on achievement, pushed them to concentrate their lives on work and nothing else. During the first years spent in the colony, the immigrants rarely socialized. It was only after they moved to live in Palmira that they created associations, and also when many of the men gambled away the money earned with so much effort and sacrifice by the whole family. We could not say that they did not cooperate or help each other

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[80] Men were paid 0.80 Colombian cents for a workday, while women and young people received 0.50 cents. See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 37.

when necessary. For example, when Eduardo Masao Tanaka invented a machine that increased agricultural output, he shared his invention with others.[81] However, as there were irreconcilable differences between the first ten families, people did not rely on community help but rather on their own recourses and family during the early years of the so called *El Jagual* colony.

The three rural groups lived within a territorial boundary. Undoubtedly, it was a physical and social space where social relations developed. It was a social space in the sense that they shared common interests and cultural values. Nevertheless, the existence of eventual mutual help and social relations does not imply an efficient development of ethnic solidarity. Living in the same area did not mean that they developed a tendency to act as a cooperative group.[82] Moreover, the competitive circumstances of producing the same crops, and looking for land to lease were factors more likely to create discord, dissatisfaction and conflict.

A further difference between rural and urban immigrant was the existence of the household in the former. It was a household adopted from rural Japan, distinguished by the presence of a nuclear family, where authority and hierarchy were firmly established, and where the family head was the holder of the land. It was a group of people, not necessarily directly related by kin relations, but functioning in the economy with the social unity of a family. For the immigrant

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[81] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 50, and Ramos Núñez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa de Corinto*, p. 67.

[82] The author was puzzled to read Nakata's B. A. thesis, in which she mentions 'the arduous communal work' of the Japanese living in what they themselves called *El Jagual Colony*. It is not necessary to idealize and create myths about a group of people, pretending they lived in harmony and without conflict, when in reality it was the contrary. This kind of distortion of facts is unacceptable when the author is a Japanese descendant of the colonists, and had the opportunity to get reliable first hand information. See M. A. Nakata Nikaido, 'Viviendo entre dos culturas. Los migrantes japoneses radicados en la ciudad de Palmira, Valle', B.A.

the main worry is how to survive. In the process of survival people are selective. Values and institutions are adopted, transformed, eliminated or continued. In adopting the household system, the immigrants chose an institution that gave them the security of continuing family traditions. Notwithstanding, it was the exploitation of family labour that assisted them in achieving success.

Immigrants are in a sense failures. They have failed in their own society, or at least believe themselves to be so. They were unable to succeed because opportunities were adverse. For instance, children of rural poorer parents or non-successors were driven out to work in the cities, or to emigrate. Those who selected the latter needed a strong character as well as physical capability. They had the ambition and the dream of triumphing abroad and returning home. Japanese immigrants left thinking of going back in the future. They dreamed of roads paved with gold and treasures waiting to be dug. In their memories it can be seen how astonished they felt in Buenaventura when they saw gold coins shining in the hands of the Black rowers who were helping them to disembark.[83] Emigrants to Hawaii said that they would save four hundred yen in three years and return home clad in brocade (*sannen de yonhyakuen, kokyõ ni nishiki o kazaru*).[84] Emigrants to Colombia could not fulfil the dream of returning. They stayed in the land of opportunities that opened new horizons of success, and a better life than they would have had in the Japan of that time.

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thesis, Universidad del Valle (Cali, 1988), p. 110.

[83] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 35.

[84] Moriyama, *Imingaisha*, p. 204.

Plate 3.1 *The entrance to the former El Jagual colony. Javier Masao Omuku (left) and Alberto Masaru Tanaka (right)*

Plate 3.2 *Croquet players. Club El Bolo*

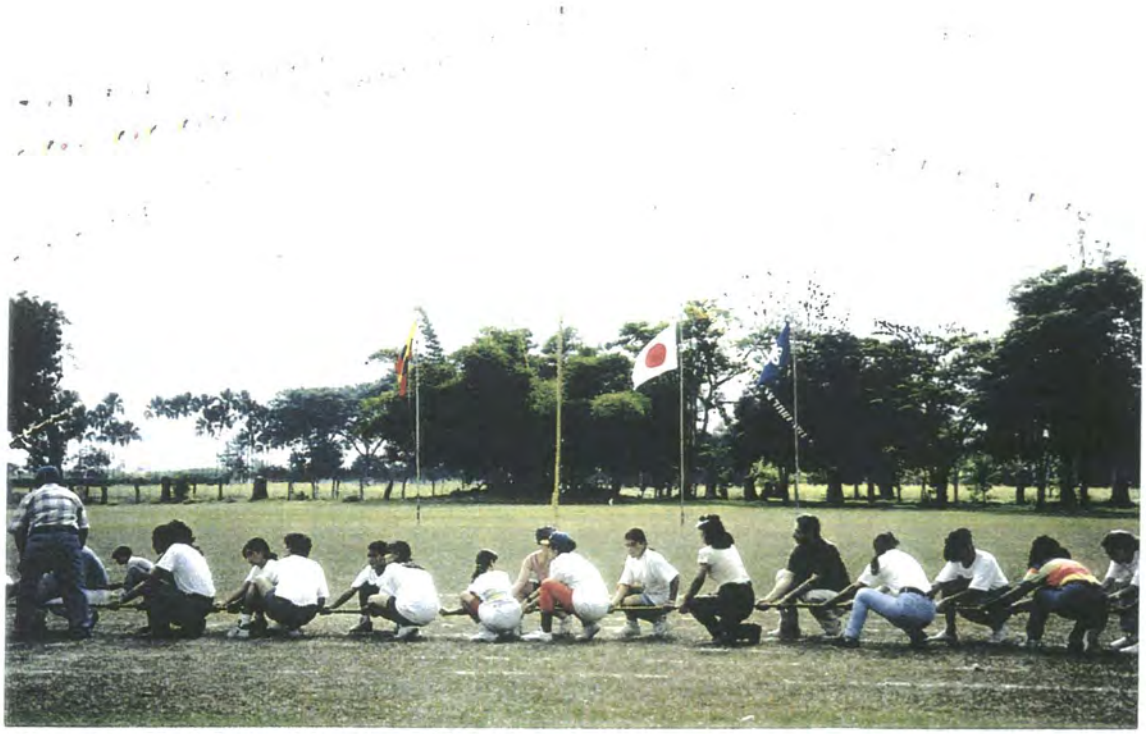

Plate 3.3 *Undokai celebration. Club El Bolo*

Plate 3.4 *Women helping with the undokai*

Plate 3.5 *Meeting old pals at a party in Club El Bolo*

Plate 3.6 *Three generations of Japanese descendants from Barranquilla. José Kaoru Doku Bermejo with his son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren*

Plate 3.7 *Flora Sadae Nakamura with her granddaughter Luz Angela Koga*

Plate 3.8 *Yumi Aparicio Kuroki at home in Cali*

Plate 3.9 *Outer garden of a house on the outskirts of Cali*

Plate 3.10 *Inner garden of a house on the outskirts of Cali*

Plate 3.11 *Pablo Kiyoshi Kuratomi in the garden of his house in Cali*

Plate 3.12 *Akira Tokunaga Tanaka harvesting cabbages from the vegetable garden of his grandparents' country house*

Plate 3.13 *Kamidana altar (replica of a Shinto shrine) to remember the departed inside the house*

Plate 3.14 *Butsudan altar (Buddhist) to remember the departed inside the house*

IV. THE WAR AND AFTERWARDS

1. Introduction

'There have been rumors to the effect that the Colombian Government plans to move the colony further south in the country, concentrating all of the Japanese nationals and providing them with more fertile soil on which to raise agricultural products,' says one of the reports by the FBI, after a search inspection was held by the Chief of the National Police to the colony on July of 1943.[1] It is difficult to say what the real intentions of the government were in regard to the Japanese working in agriculture, after the intervention of Japan in the Second World War. The idea of concentrating them in a reservation, as the Spanish in colonial times did to the indigenous population, looks bizarre and out of date. The FBI supplied both governments with very confusing reports, some cited in this section, which affected not only the life of the immigrants and their families, but also led to later misinterpretations.

The Japanese attack on the American fleet in Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, led to the beginning of the Pacific War. Colombia, which took the side of the Allies, had severed relations with the Axis since the war started in Europe. The day after the aggression, Colombia did not make a declaration of war but broke off diplomatic ties with the three Axis countries. The Swiss Embassy in

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[1] J. E. Hoover to A. A. Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, 'Japanese colony. Corinto, Colombia', 29 September 1943, p. 2, NAUS/894.20221/53, RG 59

Tokyo was asked to represent the interests of Colombia in Japan, while the Spanish Legation in Bogotá represented the interests of Japan in Colombia.[2] Germans, Italians and Japanese were ordered to leave the coastal areas, and the ports along the Magdalena River. Their names were included in the blacklist (formally termed the Proclaimed List of certain Blocked Nationals) as of July 17, 1942, the Banco de la República was nominated as the trustee of their properties, and men were concentrated in internment camps after the sinking of the Colombian schooner *Resolute* on June 23, 1942, by the Germans.[3]

In Colombia, the ending of diplomatic relations with Japan after the Pearl Harbour incident produced, in some places, a reaction of hatred and fear against the Japanese. In Barranquilla, for instance, their barber shops, a store and a restaurant were stoned, and people verbally abused. In Cauca, where the houses were scattered and isolated, it offered an excuse for looting. A woman, alone with her small children, who resisted the robbery was cowardly assassinated. In Barranquilla, an immigrant won the national lottery, but the prize was not paid to him on the grounds that he was a citizen of an enemy country. This was publicized in the national newspapers, which applauded that action.[4] The same person to whom the lottery prize was not paid, was cheated by a local man over the purchase of chairs for his barber shop. These deceptions upset him greatly, and he longed in later life to go back to Japan. Many years had passed since he had emigrated, and he had lost all contact with his relatives there. Not being able

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[2] República de Colombia. Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, *Memoria del Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores al Congreso de 1942*, pp. 288-9.

[3] Galvis and Donadio provide details on the sinking of the *Resolute* and its consequences. See *Colombia nazi*, pp. 105-9, 141-2, 216-8, 270-1.

[4] Conversation with Margot Tatekawa, Barranquilla, 11 August 1998. She read about this incident in one of the national newspapers at the time her father was seized in the internment camp of Fusagasugá. Many people in Barranquilla still remember the unpaid lottery prize.

to fulfil his desire to return home he committed suicide, drowning himself in the Magdalena River.

After the attack on Hawaii, many citizens from Germany, Italy and Japan were immediately arrested in the United States. Security areas were established along the Pacific Coast that required the removal of all of the Japanese, including those with as little as 1/8 Japanese blood. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the building of ten relocation camps, where more than 110,000 West Coast Japanese were relocated and interned.[5] The United States found in Latin America the political support needed at the executive level to deport the Japanese, based on the Alien Enemy Act of 1798. This Act permitted within the country the arrest and internment of nationals of states at war with the United Sates. In order to apply this eighteenth century law to Japanese living in Latin American countries, authorities would have to bring them within the scope of American legal authority. Thirteen countries, Colombia included, cooperated with the United States to seize and transport about two thousand of the so called enemies of the allied countries. They were not interned together with the Japanese Americans in the relocation camps, but in special facilities operated by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service.[6]

Colombia accepted the repatriation via the United States of officers of the Legation and residents as well. Thus, some Japanese living in Colombia travelled to the United States, being part of the deportation-internment programme. It was reported that 'at least 200 Axis Nationals in Colombia will depart to the United States aboard the steamship *Etolin*, which is carrying Axis deportees from Peru

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[5] See Kitano, *Japanese Americans*, pp. 30-3.

[6] See C. H. Gardiner, *Pawns in a Triangle of Hate: The Peruvian-Japanese and the United*

and Ecuador ... 160 are leaving voluntarily and forty are being deported, presumably because they are considered dangerous or for subversive activities.'[7] Concerning the diplomatic service, all Japanese nationals of the Legation departed from the port of Buenaventura on April 20, 1942, aboard the *Acadia*. A former immigrant of the rural settlement of Cauca, Ricaurte Kurao Tanaka, was among the sixteen people that left on that day. The *Acadia* spent several months collecting Japanese diplomats from other countries before arriving at their final destination in the United States. After a period of internment, they continued their trip to Japan.

Following the departure of the Japanese diplomats from Colombia any complaint was filed through the Spanish government. Their luggage had been searched during the railway journey between Cali and Buenaventura. One of the cases that contained a wireless transmitter was replaced with stones, leaving it weighing exactly the same as before. The Japanese were greatly surprised at such undiplomatic procedure. The former Minister of the Legation was informed later in the United States that the radio equipment was in the custody of the Colombian National Police. The departure of the Legation was viewed with suspicion by the authorities. The Japanese were suspected not only of taking a transmitter for future communications with Colombia but also of hiding documents under their clothes. A report says that a local employee of the Legation affirmed that 'all members wore rubber corsets next to their skin, in which were concealed tightly

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States, (Seattle, WA, 1981), p. viii.

[7] *The New York Times*, 6 August 1942.

compressed papers.'[8]

The mistrust towards Japanese people came after the separation of Panama from Colombia in 1903, leading to the fear that Japan would help Colombia not only to recover Panama, but also to intervene in the construction of an inter-oceanic canal. As noted in an earlier chapter, trouble began with the publication in the newspaper *El Mercurio* of an article that suggested starting diplomatic relations with Japan, having in mind immigration projects, and economic development in the Pacific area. One of the projects, the construction of a connecting canal through the Atrato River as an alternative to the Panama Canal, probably put the United States on the alert against Japan as a future danger in the zone where the Panama Canal was built later.

Some previous activities in the Pacific gave an excuse to regard Japanese movements in the zone of proximity to the canal as suspicious.[9] For example, a Military Intelligence report of 1943 went back to information taken in June of 1938. It was said that four Japanese engineers had been inspecting certain mining properties of the organization known as *Colombia Placera S. A.*, and had explored all the principal rivers north from the Ecuadorian border. They were seen in one of the planes of the German airline Scadta taking photographs, and it was presumed that the negatives had been sent to Japan for 'consideration'. When the four engineers moved to Tumaco, they were accused of spying under the guise of being geologists. It was said that they spent most of their time cruising along the coast in motor boats, taking soundings and mapping. At the

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[8] J. E. Hoover to W. J. Donovan, report 17105, 2 June 1942, NAUS/OSS, RG 226. I confirmed this version in a conversation with the late Ricaurte Kurao Tanaka, Cali, 20 March 1997.

[9] The following information was taken from the report issued on January 13, 1943 by the Intelligence Division Office of Chief Naval Operations, 'Japanese activities on the Pacific

same time, a similar group was seen engaged in the same kind of tasks on the northern coast of Ecuador.

It was suspected that the false 'geologists', who in many cases were believed to be military or naval officers, visited Colombia again in 1939, 1940, and the first part of 1941. Some were provided with diplomatic passports, whereas others travelled as tourists or commercial representatives. On one occasion a boat was seized in the lower waters of the San Juan River, and its occupants accused of mapping and photographing the area. On another occasion, a person who visited the coastal region including Barranquilla, Cartagena, Buenaventura, Cali, Medellín and Quibdó during 1940-1941 was, according to the Intelligence report, 'an undercover man endeavoring to establish secret outlets for essential war materials through contraband channels in the Chocó.' It was added that the Japanese had learned from the Cuna Indians living in the Panama-Colombian border in Chocó, the secret trails through the Darién jungle.

Since the breaking off of diplomatic relations by Colombia, the presence of Japanese submarines along the Pacific Coast was given credibility. They supposedly approached the coast in rubber life rafts which were inflated to make their landings, and were fully armed and equipped for guerrilla warfare. In another piece of misinformation, it was said that Japanese military supplies had been unloaded in Tumaco. These supplies were intended for an attack on the Panama Canal. The construction of two landing fields along the Dagua River, one in close proximity to the city of Buenaventura, and the other further inland were also falsely reported. The field plantations of the colony in Cauca were also

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Coast of Colombia (1935-1942)', NAUS/894.20221/49, RG 165.

considered to be suitable for aeroplane landings. Because the immigrants had bought by then a considerable number of tractors, it was believed that it would be easy and quick to harvest the beans and transform the plantation into an immense landing field. President Roosevelt's declaration - without proof - of the existence of secret landing fields in Colombia needed to be sustained.[10] Then, it was found that the Germans had potential airfields in four departments on the Atlantic Coast, while the Japanese had one in the Cauca department.

Japanese in Colombia were reported to be involved in a variety of actions to bolster Japan's image as a powerful enemy. Unrest was fanned by rumours that Japan had given military assistance to Peru during the border dispute over the Amazon area of Leticia in 1932-1933. The firm *Nikkio Bôeki Shôkai* of Barranquilla, engaged in business, was said to be a spying agency. Jorge Ryoji Hoshino, the designer of gardens and urban city plants, was rumoured to be working on the development of a bomb. The commercial missions were also accused of investigating prospects of buying raw materials such as hides, wood, gold, rubber, oil, platinum and scrap iron needed for making war equipment. The Japanese Legation was suspected of harbouring a secret wireless station. Rokuro Watanabe of Palmira was accused of acting as an agent for a Japanese broadcasting company. Jorge Yasujiro Kato was accused of bringing news to the anti-American newspaper *La Lucha* in Cali. Alberto Kenichi Nishi was accused of delivering in his truck small boxes containing arms and munitions, from Ecuador to German farms around Cali. The colony was said to be surrounded by a low voltage alarm fence and to be in possession of a radio transmitter, which

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[10] Galvis and Donadio, *Colombia nazi*, pp. 187-8.

communicated with other clandestine transmitters throughout the country. And the people of *El Jagual* of celebrating with a 'tumultuous bacchanal' following the fall of Singapore, were the butt of many other nonsensical fantastic accusations.

What the United States wanted through the Intelligence reports was to convince themselves, and the Colombian government as well, that all Japanese constituted a menace and should be controlled, and interned in camps. In their reports, they complained that the people of Cauca were not receiving effective supervision because 'the State Police (was) spending time dicing and drinking.' The reports claimed lack of control by the local authorities of the petrol and other fuel supplies. Moreover, the reports insisted that the agricultural colony 'has never been satisfactorily proved to be a genuine farming community.'

Soon after the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Intelligence Service travelled to the two areas with the highest number of Japanese residents, the Atlantic Coast and the Cauca Valley. All Japanese were interviewed and personal data taken during the first and later visits by the American Intelligence, carried out with the cooperation of the National Police of Colombia. The data was taken into account in the future choice of who were to be sent in 1944 to the internment camp in Fusagasugá, located 40 miles Southwest of Bogotá. There is no doubt, based on the list of those taken into custody, that there was a clear intention to destroy the businesses of the most successful people living on the coast and in the interior of the country. It is no coincidence that under the proviso that no Japanese would be allowed to live close to the two coasts, people who had not lived in Barranquilla long but were involved in business were deported to Japan

via the United States, while only the more wealthy of the early immigrants were forced to leave Barranquilla.

On September 28, 1943, Shigeki Tatekawa, a prosperous citizen, his Japanese spouse and five children left Barranquilla for Bucaramanga, 'under instructions received from the National Police of Bogotá,' reported the FBI. They were said to live very poorly in the new place, with Tatekawa looking after a small store located in the corner of his house, and his wife having a small sewing shop called '*La Modisteria*'. The other person ordered to move to the interior of the country was Toshio Doku. He had officially changed his name to Eduardo Duque but was asked to change back to his original name and surname. He and his family had to go to Bogotá to live in poverty, making candies, after being in 'good financial circumstances while he resided in Barranquilla,' said the FBI. The Banco de la República that took control of their properties and businesses, initially provided each family with the modest sum of 50 Colombian pesos monthly for their living expenses.[11] The immigrants living on the Atlantic Coast, including those from Usiacurí, had to report periodically to the office of the Police Station in Barranquilla. They would go in the morning to the Police, and would be left standing there for the whole day, wasting their time and waiting until the officers checked their names on the list.[12]

The Japanese living in the departments of Cauca and Valle del Cauca were also interrogated and their houses searched. The guns they had for hunting and for defence against thieves were confiscated. A national newspaper verified that '12 shotguns, 3 revolvers and 2 pistols had been taken by the National police

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[11] Conversation with Margot Tatekawa, Barranquilla, 12 August 1995.
[12] Conversation with Gladys Adachi, daughter of Rafael Toshio Adachi, Barranquilla, 9 March

on a raid on the houses of the colony.'[13] The local police knew well that the arms were needed for personal protection. It was said that 'the whole Corinto department is a center for bandits ... The Japanese never protest against raids by these bandits but let them take what they wish without resistance, especially since they are known to have the arms with which to do so.'[14] They were not permitted to move around without showing a safe-conduct pass, and the supply of petrol was under restriction. They had at least twenty five tractors operating on their farms, for which they needed petrol.

Searches inside the houses and interrogation of the Japanese farmers was first carried out in early 1942, and a second search took place on July 30, 1943. These searches have provided us with documentation that shows not only their physical dispersion over the area, but also data on the personal property of the families, and the amount of land owned and rented. The houses counted as a total of forty to fifty, and consisted of modest huts, with straw roofs, only four of which had been white-washed, having only the basic furniture and eventually a sewing machine, a bicycle, a radio, a pair of binoculars or a typewriter. They had started to move out from *Colonia Jagual* to different areas in the municipalities of Candelaria, Cerrito, Florida, Miranda, Palmira, Pradera and Santa Ana. After the empty houses in the colony were searched, the authorities noticed the constant movement of their inhabitants from one place to another: 'There are no electric lights, kerosene or gasoline lamps being used. It appears that the Japanese have the idea of permanently abandoning the place on order, leaving nothing of value ...

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[13] *El Liberal*, March 5, 1942.

[14] 'Colombia Despatch no. 728, September 4, 1942. Concerning Colonia Agrícola Japonesa, Corinto, Colombia, and Other Japanese Farm Colonies,' p. 8, NAUS/894.20221/47, RG 59.

no permanent construction has been undertaken during the existence of the colony.'[15]

By 1942, most of the family heads had begun to buy land, yet most were tenants. The chief product was beans, cultivated for commercial purposes, supplemented by maize and vegetables for personal consumption. The increase in the amount of land cultivated by the Japanese had not gone unnoticed by the Minister of the Legation in Tokyo who wrote: 'I have been told that those who settled in a hacienda in Corinto in the Cauca Valley started with 10 hectares and today have 100 hectares apiece, and furnish all Colombia with beans.'[16] This information, received before 1941, and the data collected during the visits made by the FBI and the National Police coincide, as both show that the immigrants had increased by about ten times the area of land under cultivation. This was an enormous achievement, as just one decade had passed since the arrival of the first group of agricultural colonists in Cauca.

After the *Resolute* incident, Colombia acceded to the pressure coming from the United States to intern a certain number of citizens of the Axis, in spite of lack of evidence that they had planned or committed acts of subversion or espionage. The FBI said the following, of one of the farmers who was taken into internment: 'His home was searched ... Nothing was found which would indicate that he had been engaged in espionage activities ... His name was among those presented by the U. S. Ambassador to the Colombian government as a dangerous

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[15] 'Field Notes on the Japanese in Latin America. Colombia', NAUS/OSS/894.20210/220, RG 59; A. A. Berle to J. E. Hoover, 'Japanese Colony. Corinto, Colombia,' NAUS/894.20221/53, RG 59.

[16] Alfredo Michelsen, Minister Plenipotentiary in Tokyo, to Luis López de Mesa, Minister of Foreign Affairs in Colombia. Original letter translated into English in J. E. Hoover to A. A. Berle, 26 May 1944, NAUS/894.20210/232, RG 59.

individual and one whose activities should be curtailed by internment in the United States or Colombia.'[17]

Some of the reasons given for taking a group of Japanese men to be interned until the end of the war are mentioned to show that these were no more than malicious fabrications. According to the FBI reports, until 1940 there were no contacts between the Germans and Japanese, but after that date the leader of the National Party on the coast had received instructions to set up a conspiracy between them. The reason for sending Tatekawa and Doku to Fusagasugá was to become acquainted with the German Otto Mangels, a 'known Nazi sympathizer.' Another charge against Doku was his association with Japanese businessmen in Barranquilla, who had been sent back to Japan. A further accusation against Tatekawa was that his name and address had been found in the address book of Nobuo Yato, who had been repatriated from Peru. The third person from Barranquilla, who was taken to the former *Sabaneta* hotel, was Shiro Kuramoto. He was accused of having a barber shop 'which was a gathering place for Japanese and Axis sympathizers.'

A family and six single men who had emigrated from the colony in Corinto to start a new life in Barranquilla were forced to leave the coast. They emigrated to the Eastern Plains to work in agriculture, but they were later expelled to return to Corinto. It was a personal embarrassment not only to go back, but also for them to return to a place where for some there were no relatives with whom to stay.[18] Two who refused to go back to Corinto were held in Fusagasugá. From

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[17] J. E. Hoover to F. B. Lyon, 'Escipión Kuratomi. Colombia,' 22 December 1944, NAUS/894.20221/12-22-44, RG 59.

[18] Conversation with Cristóbal Masaru Moribe, Cali, 27 August 1995.

Cali and the colony in Corinto, six more people were taken. Koichi Tamura was being held under suspicion for having attended a dinner at the invitation of the Japanese Minister, offered by the Spanish Minister for the Legation before their departure, and for having accompanied the Legation to Buenaventura. Yuzo Takeshima and Escipión Isoji Kuratomi were named as 'the leaders of the colony;' in addition Jorge Yasujiro Kato, a peasant, was named by the FBI as 'an engineer (who) understands a great deal about aviation and (whom) the other Japanese salute in military fashion.'[19] I use these observations to indicate how the government could have been easily deceived by the language used by the American Secret Service. If the Colombian government did not have the facilities to imprison the 162 Japanese officially known,[20] at least a few scapegoats would represent the rest. Most importantly, perhaps, was an impetus to ruin not only the most economically successful of the Japanese, but also the Germans and the Italians.

On May 30, 1944, eleven Japanese people were taken into custody at the former *Sabaneta* Hotel in Fusagasugá, joining the forty-four Germans who had arrived on the 23rd of March.[21] Women were not interned but allowed to live in Fusagasugá, from where they could visit their husbands during the day, and eventually the husband was able to stay overnight with his family. Life in the hotel was quiet but not necessarily a place for the development of social relations. As said by one of those interviewed by Galvis and Donadio, they belonged to different social and economic groups, with the Germans - the upper stratum of

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[19] 'Colombia Despatch no. 728, September 4, 1942. Concerning Colonia Agrícola Japonesa, Corinto, Colombia, and Other Japanese Farm Colonies', NAUS/894.20221/47, RG 59.

[20] 'Field Notes on the Japanese in Latin America. Colombia', NAUS/OSS/894.20210/220, RG 59.

[21] *El Espectador* and *El Siglo*, 24 March 1944.

Colombian society - looking down on the Japanese and the Italians, and the latter looking down on the Japanese.[22] On September 6, 1945, they were freed, after General Douglas MacArthur accepted the surrender of Japan on the 2nd of September. Expenses for board and lodging during the whole length of the stay were charged to every person, with payment in cash or by withdrawing the money directly from their bank accounts held in the Banco de la República.

In summary, for the Japanese living in Colombia, the war period brought sorrow, separation from their families and financial difficulties. It was unpleasant for them when they went shopping and people refused to sell to them. It was offensive to be shouted at on the streets of the coastal region, '*chino macaco fuma tabaco*' ('monkey Chinese smoke cigar'), or in the interior of the country, '*chino/-a cochino/-a*' ('pig Chinese'). It hit their business hard after bank transactions and credits were closed. Although a very hard time for the Japanese, the period did bring the realization that they were a vulnerable minority - that they were seen as different from the 'nationals' and could at any time be mistreated by the government or the local people. Their reaction, mainly in the Cauca Valley area, was of union and support among the Japanese of the former agriculture colony. They began to create associations where they felt comfortable, and where they could look back at their cultural roots with pride.

2. Associations

After the end of the war, as the immigrants of the former colony *El Jagual*

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[22] See their *Colombia nazi*, pp. 279-80.

became more geographically dispersed over the countryside, the education of their children became a primary concern.[23] The educational scene in Colombia had not changed or improved throughout most of the first half of the twentieth century, with an illiteracy rate of about 63 per cent among the people of school age. The few private and government subsidized schools that existed were located principally in the urban centres, and most educational provision was under the control of religious institutions.[24] As a strategy for sending the younger ones to school, they began to lease, and eventually to buy land, in places where they could cultivate their land while living at the same time in the city. An ideal place to settle down was Palmira, the second largest city in the area, where the Cauca Valley is surrounded with fertile land.[25] This was a small town that would provide them with good schools, recreation activities, a friendly cosmopolitan social environment, and commercial contacts for banking transactions. Palmira, distant 16 miles to the Northwest of the capital, was at that time a better choice than Cali, described in the late 1940s as a 'sleepy, provincial capital with a small

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[23] An accurate description on formal schooling in rural schools is given by Reichel-Dolmatoff's study on Atánquez, a small *mestizo* village located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Discipline was maintained by slaps or thrashings applied with a ruler or a rod, and a child who was made to kneel outside in the hot sun or locked into a dark room, or pilloried and put in stock, or forced to kneel on potsherds or pebbles while supporting a heavy stone on the head. It is also mentioned the low professional training of the teachers, the national curriculum adapted by them arbitrarily, instruction provided by one person in one-room class for all grades, and the notebooks that have been copied and recopied for years and used as teaching material. Children that were taught meaningless statements in natural sciences and Colombian history classes such as: 'How does the rabbit reproduce itself?' Answer: 'Directly.' 'How does the bee sleep?' Answer: 'Standing.' Or 'How did Bolívar die?' Answer: 'Naked, as he was born,' it is no wonder that the Japanese immigrants moved out of the rural settlement to provide their children with decent education. See G. and A. Reichel-Dolmatoff, *The People of Aritama*, pp. 115-25.

[24] See J. Jaramillo Uribe, 'La educación durante los gobiernos liberales 1930-1946', in A. Tirado Mejía (ed.), *Nueva Historia de Colombia* (Bogotá, 1989), Vol. 4, p. 87.

[25] In 1951 Palmira had 80,695 inhabitants, while Cali, the fourth largest city in the country, had 259,100. See E. J. Gómez, *Diccionario Geográfico de Colombia* (Bogotá, 1953).

downtown area and a few shops and offices.'[26] The number of Japanese families moving to live in the urban centres of Florida, Miranda and especially Palmira was growing, with none left living in the countryside. Being towns located within a relatively small area, it gave them the opportunity to establish economic and social associations, all of them centred on Palmira, until they moved the headquarters of the Colombian Japanese Association to Cali.[27]

2.1. *The Cooperative*

The first moves to organize a cooperative took place in the late 1930s. Some of the colonists established a bean store in the market section of Cali, with the help of former urban immigrant Antonio Tokuji Nishikuni, a resident of Cali.[28] Nishikuni was in charge of the distribution and selling of beans and maize, and of handling business with local firms over agricultural implements. The members established a common fund that was used for buying big machinery on credit. In this way, the firm Pradilla of Cali would deliver equipment immediately on receipt of order and one third of payment, with the second third to be paid in six months, and the last third one year from the date of delivery. Using this form of credit, they obtained five tractors with ploughs and harrows from Pradilla. During the war the firm refused to sell to them. Nevertheless, the cooperative started to deal

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[26] C. Blasier, 'Power and social change in Colombia: The Cauca Valley', in *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 8, no. 3 (July 1966), p. 395.

[27] Data about the associations was taken from personal interviews; also from *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 76-85, 106-12.

[28] For details on the life of Nishikuni, see Ramos Núnez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa*, pp. 26-7.

with the firm Helda that was able to secure shipment of tractors in spite of being blacklisted.[29]

The described intent of cooperative did not have many participants. Still feelings of distrust and resentment because of the division caused between the first two groups delayed union and the formation of a large cooperative. This is how a group of the three families, who were in disagreement with other seven families over the managment of their personal shopping by the administrator of the colony, formed their own society. These three families, with the help of two former urban immigrants residents in Cali established a common fund, got into debit future harvests of beans and maize, and using credit bought tractors that they used taking turns.[30]

The first cooperative did not last long, and the idea was abandoned until the end of 1951. Prosperity and an abundance of the crops, as well as instability of the market price of beans, led them to consider the creation of a solid organization, with the participation of almost all who were engaged in bean production. The *Sociedad de Agricultores Japoneses*, SAJA, was born as an economic association, bringing together the dispersed members of what had been known two decades before as *Colonia Jagual*. SAJA was, until it was forced to go into liquidation in 1990, the biggest and most important association the Japanese immigrants created in the Cauca Valley.

They elected a management body with a president for the purpose of establishing commercial links with the local and national market, providing credit

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[29] 'Japanese activities on the Pacific Coast of Colombia (1935-1942)', p. 14. NAUS/894.20221/49, RG 165; see also *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 39.

[30] Conversation with Pablo Kiyoshi Kuratomi, *El Bolo*, 23 August 1998.

for its members, and for the acquisition of fertilizers, seeds and heavy machinery for cultivating the land. They modified a few times the name of the cooperative according to the changing needs of their business.[31] To run the financial side of the business did not seem to have been an easy job, as they had to deal with the instability of the market due to changes in national policy, and competition from the Colombians that began to grow beans after seeing the success of the Japanese. With the apparent saturation of the national market, SAJA changed its target to the marketing of beans in Japan. In 1967 they imported from Japan three tons of *azuki* bean seeds, producing one year later two harvests that totalled eighty-one tons of grains to export. By the early 1970s, the annual amount they expected to export to Japan was five thousand tons of beans.[32]

As their produce was in demand in the national and international markets, they were in need of more land to cultivate. The landlords would willingly lease them land, as the Japanese were transforming the pasture into cultivated land. Moreover, the agrarian reforms promulgated under Law 135 of 1961 were a favourable measure for the Japanese to obtain more land to cultivate, either as tenants or landowners. Modern land reform had started to be adopted from the late twenties, leading to the introduction of the Land Law 200 of 1936, during the first period of Liberal President Alfonso López. This law attempted to bring security of tenure to squatters, reducing the number and intensity of discord in the countryside. One of the most serious difficulties in Colombia has been, since

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[31] The organization of the cooperative SAJA has been largely explained in *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 76-85, and in Ramos Núñez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa*, pp. 77-82.

[32] See G. Victoria González, 'La colonia japonesa. Cuatro decenios, cuatro ejemplos', in *Occidente*, 26 November 1969, p. 8.

colonial times, the uneven distribution of land, where most of the land has been claimed to be the private property of absentee landowners. From the beginning of the Conquest, the Spanish Crown took away land from the Indians, and made them continue working under the supervision of the new owners. As early as 1513, King Ferdinand the Catholic, concerned about large land grants that did not prove effective by way of occupation and agricultural production, made conditional the transfer from the Crown into private ownership on *morada y labor* (habitation and work) - conditions very much ignored both during colonial times, and even after the independence from Spain.[33]

The land, tax, and labour measures introduced by López gave hope for substantial reforms that would bring radical changes to the country, where the landlords and the peasantry paid little or nothing in land tax. Article 12 of Law 200 provided that farmers who occupied and cultivated owned lands could acquire legitimate title within five years. Article 6 stated that all privately owned lands that remained uncultivated for ten consecutive years were considered *baldíos*, and were to revert to the public domain. This law caused anxiety among the landowners of the Cauca Valley,[34] whose properties had been converted into huge expanses of open pasture to let their cattle freely wander. The *Vallecaucano* has been traditionally portrayed as a gentleman farmer, for whom the ideal way of life was represented by 'landowning, and particularly cattle raising.'[35]

The intention behind the introduction of land reform of 1936 was to bring pressure on landowners to cultivate the land, instead of leaving it totally

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[33] See A. O. Hirschman, *Journey Toward Progress: Studies of Economic Policy-making in Latin America* (Boulder, CO, 1973), p. 96-7.

[34] The most fertile area of the Cauca Valley includes the greater part of the valley of the Cauca River in the department of Valle del Cauca, and parts of Cauca and Caldas.

[35] C. Blasier, 'Power and social change in Colombia: The Cauca Valley', pp. 388, 396.

abandoned, or producing wild grass for the cattle. Nothing came about after the change to the Conservative government at the next general election, as noted thirteen years later by the mission headed by Lauchlin Currie. The report recalled the illogical land use patterns: 'The fertile level valleys are used mostly for grazing, while the steep mountainside slopes are cultivated ... the cattle fatten on the plains while the people often have to struggle for a bare existence in the hills.'[36] Hence, it is not surprising to come across data showing that in 1956 Colombia had to spend US$100 million, the equivalent to one sixth of her total import bill on agricultural food.[37] In the Cauca Valley, where the soil has been compared to the richest agricultural lands in the world, people failed to produce food in sufficient quantity and quality for its inhabitants. Conventionally, the rich lands of the valley held in large lots of more than fifty hectares were used for cattle breeding, while the rocky mountainous slopes covered with small lots of less than ten hectares, were used intensively for cultivation by subsistence farmers. Before the land reform of 1961, about 80 per cent of the land in the Cauca Valley was held in large lots by as few as 8 per cent of the owners, while only 10 per cent of the land consisted of small lots held by 70 per cent of the owners, with the rest of the land held as medium size holdings.[38]

At the time the Japanese immigrants began their geographical expansion into the Cauca Valley, the agrarian reform constituted an important national political issue. Law 200 of 1936 that permitted the legalization of private

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[36] International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Washington, DC, 1950), pp. 62-3. Quoted in Hirschman, *Journey Toward Progress*, p. 117.

[37] República de Colombia. Ministerio de Agricultura, *Memoria al Congreso Nacional 1957-58* (Bogotá, 1958), Vol. 1, p. 18.

[38] Large lots are those exceeding 50 hectares, small lots with less than 10 hectares, and medium size with more than 10 but less than 50 hectares. See Blasier, 'Power and social change in Colombia', pp. 387-90.

property taken by squatters, and Law 135 of 1961 that contemplated the breaking up of the latifundios, led to modifications of the land tenure system and way that land was exploited in the area, things which had remained unchanged for hundreds of years. The outcome of the application of the agrarian reform laws is not under consideration in this work. What I would like to mention is that just the threat that settlers and squatters could acquire possession of idle land, whose titles could not be legally proved by their owners, or the expropriation by the government of uncultivated lots and cultivated latifundios, created a situation that favoured the Japanese farmers, eager to get land to cultivate. Having tenants, landowners would avoid not only any possibility of squatters, but also the expropriation of uncultivated land. On the other hand, for the proprietors of large expanses of land, selling to the Japanese was more profitable than to the government, as the former paid higher prices for a land marketed at low prices since it was merely pasture.

The fertile valleys, two thirds still in pasture as late as 1959,[39] began to be transformed by the Japanese farmer immigrants into cultivated lots at a very high speed from about 1935. As early as 1955, the area of land cultivated by the Japanese had reached 13,000 hectares.[40] A rough calculation shows each family working on about 650 hectares.[41] If we compare this figure with the total of 198 hectares that the 20 family heads had received by 1935 when the last group arrived in Colombia, the effort they had put into agriculture and the achievements they had made in only twenty years were remarkable. The son of a landlord

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[39] Universidad del Valle (ed.), *Censo agropecuario del Valle del Cauca, 1959* (Cali, 1963), p. 21.

[40] *Koronbia ijû-shi*, p. 172.

[41] One of my interviewees mentioned the time when she prepared daily meals for one hundred peons, who worked in land rented and owned by her husband. Conversation with Berta

witnessed the enormous work done by the Japanese in the farms of Cauca and Valle del Cauca departments, and was very impressed by their maize and bean production, 'enormous in those times, ' Barney stated.[42] Although there are no reliable statistics available to discover how much land was transformed form pasture into arable land, judging only by the amount of five thousand tons of beans expected to be exported to Japan in the 1970s, one can imagine the immense amount of land used for agricultural work by quite a small number of Japanese immigrants.

The apathy of the local landlords who had abandoned the fertile valleys to become pasture for the cattle, the fear of squatters, and the land reform of 1961 worked in favour of the Japanese. The tenancy contract usually expired after three years, which was an advantage for the tenant. After three years of six successive bean harvests and maize, the land was exhausted, and it was an advantage to move out. The Japanese preference for tenancy rather than purchase had not passed unnoticed among the Colombians. A congressman for the department of Valle del Cauca proposed in a meeting of the National Congress on the law reform of 1961 the abolition of the tenancy of land, giving as an example the Japanese, 'who had made an enormous fortune as tenants, but as far as I know, have never bought an inch of land.'[43]

The Japanese farmers cultivated four varieties of beans: *shirokintoki, riñón rojo* and *sangretoro* for national consumption, and *azuki* for export. In smaller quantities they also produced cotton, maize, millet, soya and vegetables.

Kaneko Tanaka, Cali, March 17, 1997.

[42] See G. Barney Materón, 'Los japoneses en el Valle', in *Asocaña* (1989), p. 38.

[43] Quoted in Gardiner, 'Los japoneses y Colombia', p. 229.

Some people who originally worked in Tumaco on the failed banana project became main cultivators of flowers and orchids. Since the 1990s, sugar cane has gradually replaced the cultivation of other agricultural products, except in the flower industry. To move out after the contracts expired was an exhausting job, alleviated by the introduction of mechanization. The Japanese eventually started to buy land, being in the early 1970s proprietors of about 1,800 hectares.[44] The tax proposals of the reform law that gave protection against depreciation of the land and losses that could be claimed in cattle operations, encouraged investment in land ownership by the expanding middle class, of which the Japanese farmers had started to become part.

The prosperity in agriculture enabled the immigrants to achieve remarkable upward mobility in a few years. The organization of the cooperative SAJA produced fruitful economic results. Their honesty in doing business, and the fulfilment of their obligations as tenants opened the door for success. The Banco del Comercio, as well as other regional economic organizations, provided the cooperative and its members with credit for continuous investment in land and machinery.[45] However, an assessment of their contribution cannot be confined only to the economic aspect. They began to participate in other levels of society. Thus, the emergence and functions of their social associations that served as a gateway to enter other levels of the local society should also be considered.

2.2. *Javieres*

[44] Ramos Núñez, *Reseña histórica de la colonia japonesa de Corinto*, p. 74.
[45] Conversation with Guillermo Barney Materón, Palmira, August 22, 1998.

It is not uncommon in Colombian towns for people of different ages to organize groups with the purpose of working for both social and religious activities. This was the case of the *Javieres*, created in 1952 by José Javier Escalada, a Spanish Jesuit who had lived and studied in Japan. He named the association in memory of Saint Francis Xavier. The members were only single men. The group was formed after the visit to Palmira of the Jesuit to assist a Japanese Bishop, who went to perform the rite of confirmation in the Christian faith among the Japanese community. Creating the *Javieres* was a way to make the young Japanese, and the second generation born in Colombia actively involved in Catholicism.

The *Javieres* met regularly, organized social parties, and participated in the religious festivities celebrated in the parish church. As a group, they organized tours together with other Japanese or *nisei* single women, who had their own group as well. It also provided an opportunity to meet other young people in Palmira through their social events. Since their families were not members of a social club, they used the space and facilities of the *SAJA* cooperative for their social reunions, organizing dance parties. The group did not last long, as they lacked a leader to maintain their enthusiasm to meet regularly, and to do things together.

2.3. *Circle Feminine Sakura*

In 1953, one year after the organization of the *Javieres*, Samuel Kyoshi Shima initiated the equivalent with single women. His presence and leadership could be seen in the command he gave to the group since its beginning. They wore a uniform, a cherry flower-shape badge with Mount Fuji in the centre, composed

and sang a hymn in both languages, Japanese and Spanish, and established a code of membership with ten regulations. Amongst others, these included the stipulation that to gain membership they had to be of Japanese origin, between fourteen to twenty-five years of age, single, to attend the monthly meeting every first Sunday wearing the uniform, and 'to serve God, the country and the family with dedication and pride.'[46]

The *Sakura* group participated in shows dressing up in kimonos, and preparing Japanese food. The money collected was usually given to charity. This is how they travelled and contacted other charitable organizations in bigger cities like Bogotá, Cali, Pasto, Pereira and Popayán. They also helped to organize religious festivities in Palmira, paraded in the local carnival, and participated in public Christian processions. SAJA had presented the church of Palmira with a new wooden sepulchre, carved by an Ecuadorian artist. The *Javieres* and *Sakura* groups enjoyed the privilege on Good Friday of walking behind the sacred sepulchre of the procession. This occasion was not necessarily pleasant, as the locals would make fun of them, calling the participants in the procession '*chinos*', and laughing at the group of women, who went marching in their uniforms around the town.[47]

2.4. *Fujinbu*

After marriage, the former members of *Sakura* lost their membership of the

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[46] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 109-10.

[47] Conversation with Alicia Nakamura de Koga, former *Sakura* member, Palmira, August 14 1998.

group, and did not have another organization where they could continue with their social activities. By 1964, when women set up the *Koronbia Nippon Fujinkai* association, the *Sakura* group had faded, as their more active members had married or passed the age of twenty-five. The new group was open to all women of Japanese origin, without distinction of civil status or age. This association has been very active from its initiation up to the present time. Its importance can be seen not only because of its role in creating and reinforcing links among the Japanese community, but also for building bridges with regional society.

The language used during their meetings was mainly Japanese, making it difficult for some of them to communicate in a language they could understand but not express with natural fluency. As a result, after 1971, the group split into two. Those who wanted to keep Japanese in their meetings were part of Group A, while those who preferred to have the meetings in Spanish were part of Group B. They held similar social activities to the *Sakura* group, such as displays of Japanese clothing, food and hand-crafted products, bingo games and bazaars. The intention was to continue making money in order to contribute donations to charity, with a preference for Palmira. For instance, they were involved in giving Christmas presents to poor children, to street children, and to old people living in a nursing home looked after by the Sisters of the Poor. Donations also went to the Red Cross, to the parish church, and to the fire brigades. The two groups merged in 1994, leaving only Group B. Since then, the original name of *fujinkai* was changed to *fujinbu*. The association continues to keep the group of women in contact, though they have lost their interest in helping the local charities.

The two groups, A and B, carried out their own activities separately. But when they had a bigger celebration, they combined their work.[48] Events like the birthday of Shôwa Emperor, Respect the Aged Day (*keirokai*), and Sports Day (*undokai*), were celebrated by the two groups together. To date, the Sports Day, celebrated on the third Sunday of August, is the event of greatest social importance (see Plates 3.3 and 3.4). It was the idea of the women's association to celebrate sports day, as it required collaboration in the celebration of this annual festival. Its members do all the hard work to prepare for the day, wrap the presents for the participants, lead the dancing and singing of traditional Japanese songs, and maintain during the whole day the festive spirit of *undokai*. Colombian friends are invited to participate in the games and competitions - all except the marathon. As the Japanese Embassy gives the award to the winner of the marathon, they would rather have only Japanese or their descendants running for first place.

2.5. *The Fukuoka Prefecture Association*

Associations based on the provincial origins of the immigrants, *Kenjinkai*, developed abroad rather than in Japan where provincial ties did not influence their lives. Immigrants to the agricultural colony in Cauca came by preference from the Prefecture of Fukuoka. Out of the total, only two families were from different prefectures, an insignificant number to create an association of their own. Links established through marriage have bound all the families of the immigrants and

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[48] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 106-9.

their descendants to Fukuoka, making participation in the association possible for all of them.

The Fukuoka Prefecture Association was conceived in 1978. Emotional attachment to the prefecture of origin has been maintained throughout all the years since their immigration. It was not only the extended members of their families who lived in Fukuoka, but also the children left behind when their parents emigrated. Also, some boys, either born in Japan or in Colombia in the early period of immigration, were sent to Fukuoka to complete their education. The association has an elected president and a board of active members who help to organize the annual meeting. I was present during the celebration of the 20th anniversary, and could listen to their cheerful conversations, and witness the feelings of happiness at the meeting among old friends during this occasion (see Plate 3.5).

The prefecture of Fukuoka has a foreign affairs section, which provides financial help to projects carried out by associations in different countries. The association in Cali has benefitted from these contributions. The prefecture has also offered scholarships to study in Fukuoka. In this way, young people have enjoyed the opportunity to visit the land of their ancestors, to live there, and to learn the Japanese language. The prefecture has not forgotten the elders, who contributed so much in the past, remitting money and helping those who were left. Old people receive a golden cup (*kinpai*) gift sent from the prefecture on their 80th, 88th, 90th and 99th birthday anniversaries,[49] and those over seventy years of age receive 50 per cent subsidy for their air ticket if they wish to visit Japan.

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[49] The 60th birthday represents the culmination of a cycle in the life of a Japanese person. After completing five times the Chinese twelve animals calendar, a person is symbolically

2.6. *Colombian Japanese Associations*

Three associations exist in different parts of the country. The oldest is the association of the Valle del Cauca in Cali, followed by one in Bogotá, and finally the most recent in Barranquilla, created in 1985. All of them have a similar executive board composed of a president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a group of advisers. They receive their positions through election. It is voluntary work, without any payment. Invariably, in the three associations the male leadership of the first generation, *issei*, has predominated except in Barranquilla, where the association was founded by the second generation. All Japanese and their descendants are allowed membership, for which each family has to pay an annual fee. The association of Valle del Cauca has a central office that provides their members with a monthly bulletin, and affiliation to a Club in El Bolo, on the outskirts of Palmira. The other two associations, in comparison, are less active, lacking a place of their own, and a regular newsletter. Their function, in contrast to the association in Cali, is more one of social communication inside the group, without transcending on the borders of the ethnic community.

The association of Valle del Cauca has grown into a big organization that carries out business in several areas. Through the *Alianza Colombo-Japonesa*, they provide and promote during the year cultural activities, such as Japanese language classes, calligraphy, art, martial arts, conferences, cookery, flower

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born again. On this occasion a red hat or a red jacket is received, associating the colour with a newborn baby. The 70th, 77th, 80th, 88th, 90th and 99th anniversaries are also celebrated by friends or members of the family. For each of these years there is a separate Chinese character to depict its meaning. A purple coloured cushion is usually received on each of these birthdays.

arrangement, and visits to places of interest. The association also maintains close contact with the Japanese Embassy and the Consulate in Bogotá. Officers of the Japanese Consulate visit periodically the association of Cali to listen to requests by the Japanese and their descendants. What is going to be discussed or done during the visit of the consul is arranged through the association. Hence, the power of the association lies in its strong and good relationship with the consulate. This relationship has not been maintained with the associations of Bogotá or Barranquilla.

The Cali association has also been very active in pursuing links with the Japanese government, as well as with organizations that deal with programmes abroad like JICA (Japan International Cooperation). When the president and members of the executive board of the association in Cali make private trips to Japan, they usually take time to contact the central government in Tokyo and Fukuoka in order to keep up the interest in Colombia, and receive financial assistance for their projects. However, it would be unfair to present the association as always a receiver from Japan. When unfortunate calamities have occurred in Japan, they have sent money to help. In the same way, when big fires, floods or earthquakes have devastated Colombia, the association has generously made monetary contributions. To celebrate their 60th anniversary, with the support received by donations coming from the Japanese government, the association gave an ambulance to Corinto. To celebrate their 70th anniversary, one of the plans is to set up a health centre near Palmira, with the collaboration of the *nisei* and *sansei* medical doctors and dental surgeons, professions that count

with the highest number of the Japanese descendants born in the south of Colombia.[50]

All of the associations described above have functioned as any other association would do, to help the emigrant to adjust to a new environment. One cannot deny the social and economic advantages that membership to the associations may bring. However, although they are the result of the work of individuals, their existence is a clear manifestation of group cultural identity. They are the consequence of sharing the same culture and the same interests by the same group of individuals.[51] Their function is undeniable in helping to provide the person with a sense of ethnic identity. Achieving self identity depends on the feelings of every individual over the need to identify with or neglect ethnic and social values. The associations as an expression of ethnic identity will continue to exist as long as the individuals feel comfortable with them, and wish to assert their identity through them.

3. Group Identity Symbols

Immigrants are locally perceived as having a distinctive culture. Their native language, habits, food, facial expressions when talking or laughing, and physical appearance are evidently different from those of the majority. The perception of these differences is what categorizes them as foreign immigrants, and as a minority. Second or third generation immigrants who fail to fit in the dominant categories face the situation of 'living in two cultures', where they do not clearly

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[50] Conversation with Patricia Tanaka, Cali, 21 August 1998.

[51] Spickard emphasizes the role played by ethnic institutions as binding agents that may keep

belong to either the category of their parents culture or to the local predominant culture. Although the children of immigrants generally identify themselves with the values of the host country, citizenship does not imply acceptance into the main stream of society. In their published memoirs, the children of the immigrants have left testimony to their suffering when they attended school. For instance, when they began schooling in Palmira, during the break, they were approached by other children who wanted to hear them to talk in Japanese, and who asked all sort of questions with the mischievous intention to mock them later. In the rural school at Jagual, on one occasion, a boy was eating his lunch up a tree because he could not stand any longer the curiosity of the teacher, who always wanted to taste his lunch prepared at home.[52]

That the immigrants and their offspring are looked upon differently and categorized by the locals as foreigners is something they resent. Their reaction in most cases, however, has been a positive one, leading them to reinforce their own values, and show external manifestations of their distinctiveness. However, it is not always the case that negative feelings over discrimination produce in the individual or in the ethnic group a desire to show identification with their own cultural group. The case of the Japanese and their offspring in Colombia exemplifies a situation where upward social and economic mobility have left immigrant families with the space and financial means to import and recreate elements that are characteristic of their native culture.

How and what the immigrants select as symbols of ethnic identity depends

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group identity alive, and as a place where shared culture is created and maintained by those who share similar interests. See his *Japanese Americans*, pp. 5-6, 159-60.

[52] See *Koronbia ijû-shi*, pp. 59, 108.

on internal and external factors. Such symbols are subject to individual preference, to the knowledge they have of what is 'typically Japanese', and also on what they can afford. Moreover, how a house is decorated depends on what is available to display. Immigrants of the first generation for example who did not return to Japan for a visit, or their offspring who have never been there, they may have little or nothing 'Japanese' that could be exhibited. On the other hand, there are individuals who travel back and forth to Japan bringing objects and ideas. In most cases, those who had not travelled to Japan benefitted from presents brought by the travellers. There are also people who have been to Japan to master gardening or flower arrangement, and others who have brought gifts for all to enjoy, like a croquet set. Little by little, their lives have become surrounded by Japanese objects. This has helped to reinforce a sense of belonging. Likewise, the role played by the leadership of individual members of institutions like the Tenri-kyo Church and the Colombian Japanese associations, have enriched enormously the way the Japanese immigrants and their descendants identify with their country of origin.

A visitor to one of their houses immediately feels the presence of Japanese objects, or in some the gardens in the backyard, that give a peculiarly Japanese atmosphere to the place. This does not mean, however, that any uniformity exists in what people have for display because such things ultimately depend on personal taste, and also on the economic possibilities. Regardless of socio-economic differences, in almost all the houses of Barranquilla and the Cauca Valley, there are some of the following: Japanese objects brought from Japan or made in Colombia by the Japanese immigrant community, such as paintings, dolls, fans (see Plates 3.7 and 3.8), folding screens and swords; gardens designed in the

Japanese style (see Plates 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11); and Buddhist and Shinto altars (see Plates 3.13 and 3.14) to commemorate the departed members of the family. Some people wear Western style Japanese clothing, which are not kimonos or traditional style, but a compromise for the sake of convenience, and eat with chopsticks Japanese food served in crockery brought from Japan. The first generation of immigrants normally communicate in Japanese with their spouses and parents-in-law, have books and magazines published in Japan on the book shelves, listen to Japanese music, watch videotapes recorded in Japan, and frequently follow the news and sports events broadcast from Japan. Many of them have vegetable gardens in the back of the house, planted with Japanese seeds, some for ornamentation but mostly for food (see Plate 3.12). In their spare time, they play Japanese cards with friends at home, and play croquet at their social club *El Bolo* (see Plate 3.2). It is evident that the *issei* have created an atmosphere and a paraphernalia of objects to be left to the *nisei* and future generations that constantly will remind them of their forefathers' land.

After the introduction of the Tenri-kyo Church in Cali, their founders and members have promoted the enjoyment of art and events characteristic of Japanese culture. In 1972, Tetsuzo Ota and his wife Satoru went to Colombia to set up a church there, where they worked for seventeen years. They built a church on the outskirts of south Cali, and established a monthly service on Sundays. Attendance does not imply membership of Tenri, or any kind of religious obligation. Former members of the failed banana plantation programme in Tumaco, who were all members of Tenri-kyo, have helped to organize the church and to keep alive interest in this organization. Although there is a small number of believers, a good number of the immigrants with their families attend

the service, apparently more for social reasons and the opportunity to meet others and enjoy a lunch together rather than out of religious conviction.[53]

In spite of their lack of commitment to this organization - or to any other religious organization - the immigrants to the Cauca Valley and their families have been motivated to learn more about Japan, especially after Tenri established a church in Cali. Under the leadership of the Otas, they started to learn, amongst others things, martial arts, origami, traditional doll making, painting, calligraphy, flower arranging, the art of bonsai, and the preparation of traditional Japanese food. Satoru Ota was a tireless lady, who shared unconditionally her artistic capacity. She taught them how a person can produce an original piece of art just using simple materials. Her presence can be seen in the objects that actually decorate their houses, the way they place the flowers in a vase, and how they prepare some Japanese dishes. It is quite possible that most of the objects they learned to make, including the food, were unknown by the *issei* before they immigrated. Whether or not Ota was conscious of what she was doing, she undoubtedly helped to fill a vacuum in their lives, dispelling the feeling of emptiness the immigrant has to endure when he or she is relocated in a strange place, where everything that prevails is unfamiliar.

However, the most enthusiastic participants in this recreational movement, or perhaps 'invention' of 'own culture',[54] have not only been the first generation immigrants, but also those who emigrated as children, or were born in Colombia. To emigrate, as described by Handlin, is an 'arduous transplantation'. The experience of leaving behind the cemetery where parents and other relatives are

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[53] Conversation with Enrique Izumi Shigematsu, Cali, 21 August, 1995.

[54] See E. Hobsbawm, and R. Terence, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 4, 6,

buried, the broken homes, separation from a familiar life and well-known surroundings, becoming a foreigner and ceasing to belong, 'are the aspects of alienation,' to borrow his expression. All the changes the immigrants are exposed to in living among strangers, looking for new meaning in their lives, working out new relationships, often occur under hostile and severe circumstances.[55] The uneasy feeling of living in two cultures experienced by the *nisei* is, in a way, a consequence of their parents being uprooted. I would never suggest that the immigrant is living in the past, or has to be tied to it. However, it is undeniable that human beings cannot easily part with their own past. Families, social relations and environment left behind are missed, and are irretrievable. On the other hand, objects that express ideas and represent symbols of ethnic identity may function as aids to the individuals to recreate their own world without conflicting with the reality that surrounds their present lives.

By this means, the ornamental gardens that some of the immigrants have at their homes deserve a special mention. They are of interest in this work as they represent symbols of group identity.[56] Although they cannot be seen from the outside, as they must be placed at the back of the house to be private and enclosed - as Japanese gardens are - they clearly show a difference in the design and the use of plants as compared with the gardens of their neighbours. The

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and J. Robertson, *Making and Remaking a Japanese City* (Berkeley, CA, 1991), pp. 179-80.

[55] See O. Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston, MA [1951] 1973), pp. 4-5.

[56] A study of 150 front yards in Hawaii in the houses of three neighbourhoods of similar socio-economic background reveals that they were distinctive of the way the three major ethnic groups living there (Caucasians, Chinese and Japanese) arrange their gardens, including the different selection of plants. For the author of the study, plant communities in residential gardens can be interpreted as an autograph of 'taste, ideals, and a symbol of an ethnic or socio-economic group.' See T. Ikagawa, 'Residential gardens in urban Honolulu, Hawai'i: Neighborhood, ethnicity, and ornamental plants', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1994, p. 7.

gardens have been mainly planned by specialists of the second generation, who have spent time in Japan learning the art of gardening. In some cases, *nisei* landscape architects have also worked in designing gardens and selecting the plants. Gardens in the Japanese style do not exist at the homes of the descendants who live on the Atlantic Coast; they are found mainly in the south of Colombia.[57]

Japanese gardens evoke nature.[58] They are the microcosmic creation of the natural scenery of the countryside that can be reconstructed in the style of landscape paintings. There are three distinct types of Japanese gardens: water gardens (*chisei-shiki teien*), dry gardens (*kare-sansui)* and tea-gardens (*roji*). The last type has not been introduced in Colombia. A Japanese garden includes visual elements to give the garden its particular character like lanterns, gravel and rocks. But is not the ornaments that typify a garden, 'for one cannot create a Japanese garden merely by placing a stone lantern in the garden,' as ironically remarked by Eliovson.[59] What makes a Japanese garden different from a Western garden is its atmosphere. Privacy, balanced asymmetry, a proportionate space and scale in its elements, and foliage and plants that offer tranquillity and relaxation. They are not for strolling, except those especially designed to occupy large spaces, but for viewing. They are, as described by Eliovson, a place one can appreciate looking from a room, at the same time that listening to the sound of a small waterfall, or the swish in the pond of a carp's tail, stimulating the imagination of the spectator.[60]

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[57] I am indebted to Germán Morimitsu for his enlightening conversation on how to create a garden in a Japanese style in the tropical climate. Cali, August 23, 1998.

[58] See A. Berque, *Le Sauvage et l'Artifice: Les Japonais devant la nature* (Paris, 1986), pp. 225-26.

[59] S. Eliovson, *Gardening the Japanese Way* (London [1958] 1971), p. 25.

[60] Ibid. pp. 23-4, 97-8.

To reproduce a Japanese garden in the tropical climate needs a lot of substitution and care in choosing the materials. First, the plants that are so peculiar to a Japanese garden, do not grow well in a climate without seasonal variations. Secondly, the four different seasons in Japan bring a different character to the garden in each cycle, an atmosphere that cannot be harmonized in a climate characterized by dry and rainy seasons. And finally, the spacial proportions and intervals that create a mood in a Japanese garden is hard to maintain in Colombia because the foliage grows wild in a very short period of time.

The Japanese garden tradition includes flowering and fruit trees, typical of each month of the year. Although most of them were brought from China and Korea during different periods, some plants are native to Japan. Each month of the year is typified by a tree or flower that has its own meaning. Pine (*matsu*) characterizes January, plum (*ume*) is February, peach (*momo*) and pear (*nashi*) is March, cherry (*sakura*) is April, tree-peony (*botan*), azalea (*tsutsuji*) and wisteria (*fuji*) is May, iris (*shôbu*) is June, morning-glory (*asagao*) is July, lotus (*hasu*) is August, the seven grasses of autumn (*hagi, susuki, kuzu, nadeshiko, ominaeshi, fuji-bakama* and *kikyo*) is September, chrysanthemum (*kiku*) is October, maple (*momiji*) is November, and camellia *(tsubaki*) is December. Trees and flowers are not in the garden just because they are favourite plants, but because they have a meaning. For instance, pine, being strong and evergreen during the winter, is the symbol of longevity. Cherry, the national and favourite flower of Japan, is the symbol of perfection. Morning-glory is the symbol of affection. And lotus is the

symbol of life as all its parts can be eaten.[61] To transplant a Japanese garden to a tropical climate, and be forced to use different plants for the recreation of visual effects and contrast, means it really ceases to be a Japanese garden. By comparison, dry gardens can be reproduced more faithfully.

Since the trees and plants in the south of Colombia are different from plants in Japan, the immigrants attempt to germinate imported seeds have met with poor results. Pine trees have grown very slowly, and plum trees have not produced fruits. Flowers like camellias bloomed only once and then died. As a consequence, they have been substituted with perennial local plants, after experiments with Japanese seeds failed. Luckily, in the tropics there is a wide range of plants to substitute for the traditional plants that cannot adapt to live in a climate without changing seasons. This is a great advantage because people have a lot of possibilities, which they can adjust to their individual taste. However, it cannot be denied that replacing the original plants means losing their significance in a Japanese garden. In a way, the gardens created in a Japanese style in Colombia have become just ornamental items, lacking a deeper significance.

A Japanese garden, if space allows, has a pond or a small stream. A favourite fish in a garden is the carp (*koi*), signifying strength and perseverance. They are used in a great variety of colourful paper versions for decoration on the 5th of May, Boy's Day. People who managed to transport carp from Japan have bred them very successfully. The immigrants have enjoyed, then, the opportunity to obtain carp of different varieties for their gardens. The ponds are actually adorned with golden, gray, and white carp mottled with black, blue or red

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[61] Ibid. pp. 86-8.

colours. Some people have shown a preference to mix the carp with certain species of local fish. One of them is *bailarina,* a graceful white fish, which makes the garden more attractive.

Occasionally, Colombians who live in the area have asked the Japanese or their descendants to design gardens for their houses in a Japanese style. A superficial comparison of the gardens shows that they are similar. But an observer who gets close notices the difference. Frequent requests from the Colombians are for order and symmetry. They wish to choose pebbles which are evenly shaped and to get them painted, they want flowers that would never be found in a Japanese garden, like roses, to be planted, and eventually a fountain to be installed. In this case, a Japanese garden that is 'distinguishable by its function, garden elements and plant materials'[62] does not exist as such. More important is the meaning of this difference. The presence of particular plants, and the preference for symmetry, and for the elements to look tidy and clean by the Colombians in their 'Japanese gardens', illustrates different values and attitudes in the two ethnic groups. The difference in the landscape aesthetics of their gardens can be interpreted not only as a measure of socio-economic status,[63] but also as symbol of group identity.[64]

Finally, I would like to mention how a Japanese gardener regarded the gardens of the Japanese and their descendants, living in Colombia. One day I decided to show the gardener of the residence where I live in Tokyo some pictures to get his reaction. At first, he was puzzled over the appearance of the

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[62] Ikagawa, 'Residential gardens in urban Honolulu', p. 43.

[63] J. Duncan, 'Landscape taste as a symbol of group identity', in *Geographical Review* 63, 1973, p. 334.

[64] Ikagawa, pp. 7, 132.

gardens because they looked Japanese in style but none of the plants could be identified by him. However, the use of lanterns, connecting bridges, stones, and the dragon shape visual effect in one of them did not pass unnoticed (see Plates 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11). He was very curious to know where I had taken the pictures. After I explained their origin, I asked if he would consider these gardens to be Japanese. Politely, he did not reply negatively but he would not admit they were Japanese either. Instead he pointed at the proportions and mix of the foliage, and the striking combinations of flowers, so similar to the spring azaleas in a Japanese garden in late spring (see Plates 3.9 and 3.11). He did not fail to observe on the walls around the garden some hanging pot plants, unthinkable in a Japanese garden, but common in a Colombian garden (see Plate 3.11).[65] It seems likely that the Japanese gardener, with just a glance, grasped the unconscious mentality of their owners. It is commonly believed that gardens serve as an extension to interior space. The gardens the immigrants and their offspring have created are not only a symbol of their group identity, but also show their individuality, an extension of themselves living in a modern culturally differentiated society.[66]

4. U-Turn *Nikkei* Labour Migration to Japan

This final section is concerned with the Colombians of Japanese ancestry who are actually working in Japan. Not only Colombians, but other Latin Americans of Japanese heritage have emigrated in considerable numbers to Japan during the 1990s after the immigration control law was revised. *Nikkei* or *nikkeijin* (the so-

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[65] Conversation with Kazuo Takeuchi, Tokyo, 27 November, 1998.

[66] See E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York, NY, 1959),

called people of Japanese descent born abroad)[67] who possessed dual nationality, and also the first generation of immigrants, started coming to Japan to participate in construction projects for the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. Years later, immigrants who were originally from Okinawa were employed on projects for the Expo in Okinawa in 1972.[68]

It was not until 1985 that *nikkeijin* were granted a special status that allowed them to work in Japan. With the government's new interpretation of the category 'spouse or child of a Japanese national', applicants were able to obtain this status if a relative in Japan within the fourth degree of consanguinity guaranteed the applicant's status. This status was previously granted only when both the parents and grandparents were Japanese. After the revision of the immigration law in 1990, the category of long-term resident status was created. This became available to the spouses of Japanese nationals, the children adopted by Japanese nationals, or those born as the children of Japanese nationals, the *nisei* generation. The status has also been granted to the third generation (*sansei*) and their spouses. The status of residence can also be obtained if a person with a relative in Japan, within the sixth grade of consanguinity, obtains a certificate of eligibility to support his or her application.[69]

Japan developed in the past a big industrialized economy without relying on foreign migrant workers. Rural internal migration maintained low dependency on foreign labour. However, the post-war economic growth, especially since the

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pp. 22-30.

[67] The proper meaning of the term '*nikkei*' or '*nikkeijin*' refers only to the second generation *nisei*; *sansei* and the following generations are considered in Japan as *gaikokujin* or foreigner. In this work, following other publications, the term includes all generations of Japanese descendants born outside Japan.

[68] Sellek, 'Nikkeijin: The phenomenon of return migration', p. 188.

[69] Ibid. pp. 188-9.

mid 1970s, has generated a strong demand for labour in the service industry, construction and manufacturing fields. This demand could not be met by the nationals for two reasons: one was that the number of jobs surpassed the number of applicants; the other was that Japanese people, coming from increasing highly educated backgrounds, did not want to take on difficult or unpleasant jobs. These are the jobs commonly described as belonging to the categories of being dirty (*kitanai*), demanding (*kitsui*) or dangerous (*kiken*). In addition, are those that are badly paid and with few vacations. Japan began to face the problem of a shortage of labour. Male workers from Asian and Middle East countries began to enter Japan looking for opportunities to earn money. These immigrants not only helped to fill in the demand for labour, but also took the unwanted jobs instead of the nationals, who preferred to move to jobs which were less arduous and better paid.

The demand for labour in Japan since the 1980s, added to the decline in economic conditions in some countries like Iran, and the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990, made the flow of world migration change from Europe and oil-rich countries in the Middle East, popular destinations during previous decades, to the Far East. People from Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand, were attracted by high wages compared with the low income earned at home. They could easily enter Japan because some were from countries with a visa-exempt status. And those who were not visa-exempt came for a three month tourist period. In both cases they overstayed illegally after the ninety days permitted had expired.[70]

Massive numbers of arrivals from the early 1980s of migrant workers from

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[70] See Sellek, 'Illegal foreign migrant workers in Japan', p. 172-4.

Asia and the Middle Eastern countries, together with the initial influx of *nikkei* of Japanese descent, led the government to carry out an immigration policy reform. This is how on December of 1989 the amendment to the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was promulgated, and was enforced on 1 June 1990. It has been pointed out that it was the accelerated influx from clandestine workers that forced the immigration control system to be reformed.[71] With the revision of the law, a penal code was enacted against brokers who found jobs for illegal workers, and employers who hired them. Penalties included imprisonment for up to three years and fines of up to 2 million yen (about US$16,000). Nevertheless, it has not stopped the clandestine visitors from staying on, as illegal workers are still in demand in the market of the late 1990s.

The Immigration Control Act, enacted in 1951, and made effective in 1952, provides that the government may only accept foreign workers who have special skills or training which nationals do not possess. Only foreigners who satisfy the specific conditions stipulated in the law are allowed entry with the intention to work, making it impossible for an 'unskilled' person to get legal working status. Japan, through the 1990 reform, did not change its policy of not allowing unskilled foreign workers. But with the reform of the law, and the introduction of the article that grants temporary residence to the *nikkei* or their spouses, they are granted permission to work in unspecified activities. This does not mean that the visa of status of 'long term resident' or 'spouse or child of a Japanese national' is by definition a working visa. However, since they are not restricted in their activities, it is legally permissible for the *nikkei* population in

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[71] See H. Mori, *Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan*, p. 2.

Japan to work in unskilled jobs.

Table 4.1 *Latin American Workers Employed in Factories in Japan in 1998*

Country	Male	Female	Total
Argentina	717	302	1,019
Bolivia	1,045	429	1,474
Brazil	87,384	50,048	137,432
Chile	66	40	106
Colombia	88	51	139
Ecuador	1	1	2
México	131	48	179
Paraguay	374	190	564
Peru	10,552	4,888	15,440
Uruguay	17	2	19
Venezuela	13	4	17
Others	11	2	13
Total	100,399	56,005	156,404

Source: Japan Immigration Association, *Zairyugai Kakujin Tôkei* (Tokyo, 1998), pp. 116-7.

It is true that the revised law broadened the scope for foreigners engaged in certain professional and skilled activities, giving the possibility to any person to apply for a job in Japan within certain legal limitations. However, with the relax action of restrictions on the *nikkei*, since it was not easy in Japan to find employment in a professional job without a good command of the language, factory jobs were the most suitable for workers of Japanese origin and their spouses. This does not necessarily mean that they were factory employees or construction workers in their country of origin. On the contrary, most of them were professionals and well-educated members of the middle class. However, the work opportunities for the *nikkei* in Japan have from the beginning been in 'unskilled' jobs. As rightly pointed out by Mori, 'although there are no

government interventions in labour placements, the new framework of immigration control functions effectively in allocating them to a particular segment of the labour market.'[72]

Table 4.2 *Latin American Residents Registered in Japan in 1998*

Country	Male	Female	Total
Argentina	1,813	1,487	3,300
Bolivia	1,969	1,368	3,337
Brazil	131,108	102,146	233,254
Chile	262	336	598
Colombia	627	1,208	1,835
Ecuador	64	68	132
Mexico	761	790	1,551
Paraguay	734	732	1,466
Peru	23,217	17,177	40,394
Uruguay	56	57	113
Venezuela	129	112	241
Others	223	244	467
Total	160,963	125,725	286,688

Source: Japan Immigration Association, *Zairyugai Kakujin Tôkei*, p. 44

Statistics in Japan provide data by country of origin, gender, age and occupation. The Latin American population calculated as of June 1998 was 286,688 (see Table 4.2). This figure (which includes people who are not working) compared with the total of 156,404 for the number of factory workers (see Table 4.1) still shows a considerable number of *nikkei* working in Japan. Even so, these numbers may be an underestimate. Not all of them are employed in unskilled jobs, some have moved into professional fields. According to official

[72] Ibid. p. 111.

figures, the number of *nikkeijin* living in Japan reached 175,118 in 1993, and is calculated as 200,000 in 1998. Taking updated registrations from Tokyo, Osaka and the twelve municipalities where the highest numbers of *nikkei* are actually working, Matsumoto estimates that for 1998, out of the total of approximately 200,000 Latin American workers registered, most of them were Japanese descendants.[73]

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 both show that after Brazil, Peru provides the highest number of Latin American residents in Japan, and also of *nikkei* employed in factories. The number of workers doing 'unskilled' jobs from Central America and the Caribbean countries - together listed as 'others' - is very low. With the Peruvians is difficult to obtain a reliable statistics on the numbers who are really of Japanese origin, even if they claim to be so. A good number of the total registered as *nisei* or *sansei* seem to have falsified their identification documents. These people entered Japan to work after buying Japanese family registers (*koseki*) in Peru. Some, it is believed, underwent facial plastic surgery to make them look Japanese.[74] The actual *nikkei* Latin American population is estimated to be around 1.4 million. Out of the total, about 12 to 15 per cent of those of Japanese ancestry can claim the status granted by the Japanese government and work in Japan. Considering that the number of *nikkei* Peruvians is about 85,000 people, including the first and fourth generations, the number of them who could apply to work and reside in Japan, including their spouses and children, should be

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[73] See J. A. Matsumoto, *Residencia permanente y naturalización* (Tokyo, 1998), p. 36.

[74] See Sellek, '*Nikkeijin*: The phenomenon of return migration', p. 203; Mori, *Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan*, pp. 100, 114; Fukumoto, *Hacia un nuevo sol*, p. 355, and M. Watkins, *Pasajeros de un sueño: Emigrantes latinoamericanos en Japón* (Tokyo, 1995), pp. 114-18.

between 17,000 and 22,000 and not the bloated figure of 40,000 that exceeds by more than 50 per cent the number of true descendants of the Japanese.[75]

After Japan's revision of the Immigration Law, a Japanese subcontractor, who was recruiting *nikkeijin* in other South American countries, visited Colombia in 1991 to look for contract workers. He approached the Barranquilla and Cali associations in order to make initial contacts. It was clear from the outset that it was mandatory to bring (or to find in Japan) a *koseki* to prove their identity. However, the employment system through subcontractors that would take a commission from their salaries was not explained. This resulted latter in problems and disappointments. The first two groups of forty people (slightly more men than women) went to Japan in the final months of 1991. At the beginning they arrived alone leaving their families in Colombia. These people were not required to have a visa because of the existing visa-exempt agreement between the two countries. Once in Japan, having the documentation required by the Minister of Justice, they could receive the status of 'spouse or child of a Japanese national' and engage in work. The *nisei*, after some period of work in Japan, usually receive visa of residence up to three years validity. For the *sansei* is difficult to obtain a duration period of three years; they tend to receive instead six months or one year. The *yonsei* (fourth generation) is allowed to work until the age of twenty, there after the person has to return to Colombia.

The subcontractor, who visited Colombia on two occasions, lent them money to cover their travel to Japan, arranged accommodation, distributed people between different companies, and provided documentation on employment as part

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[75] Matsumoto, *Residencia permanente*, pp. 34-5; see also Fukumoto, *Hacia un nuevo sol*, p. 362.

of the visa requirements. After short periods of work, the *nikkei* began changing jobs to companies that paid a little better, or because they were not satisfied with the job assigned, causing trouble when they abandoned their jobs unexpectedly.[76] But for the Colombians, most of them with a professional career, and without any experience of hard physical labour, it was difficult to adapt to the arduous tasks demanded of them. They were very naive about the jobs they would acquire in Japan. What was awaiting was low pay, hard work, and long overtime hours. They also felt very disappointed that their salaries were not paid directly by the companies but through a recruiting company, which took a commission directly from their pay.

The Colombians at first tried to find jobs by themselves, but soon realized that it was almost impossible to find employment except in small companies acting as subcontractors to the major manufacturing companies. It was not only the difficulty in finding a job but also the discrimination in housing that has forced them to continue to depend on brokers and subcontractors. Many real estate agencies assume that the landlords do not want to rent rooms or flats to foreign tenants because they ruin the place, and upset the neighbours with loud music and noises at night. For the *nikkei*, living in the accommodation provided by the company has the advantage of avoiding the various requirements placed on people renting directly. These obligations consist of the deposit money that must be paid to the landlord before moving in, and key money, which can total several months of rent. Most of the *nikkei* would have difficulty paying both of these in 'cash up

[76] Conversation with Masato Nakajima, subcontractor of a company, Tokyo, 27 January 1997.

front'.

The *nikkeijin* from Colombia work mainly on assembly lines in the manufactory and construction industries, and in fish-processing work. The latter is a very hard job, and one that they try by all possible means to avoid. They reside from preference in Aichi, Chiba, Gunma, Ibaraki, Osaka, Saitama, Shizuoka and Tochigi prefectures. By the end of 1998 they amounted to a total of 300 people, including family members who do not work. During the past seven years the number has varied from 300 to 500. It is hard to give an exact figure because they frequently enter, leave and re-enter.[77] The highest numbers are concentrated in Chiba and Osaka prefectures, followed by Saitama and Tochigi.[78] The number of 300 makes 12 per cent out of the total first generation and *nikkei* population of 2,500 estimated for Colombia.

For the *nikkeijin* a first priority is - as it was in the past for their parents and grandparents in Colombia - the welfare and education of their children. More and more the whole family that initially suffered long separation from their working parents, have moved to live in Japan. The majority of them are not affiliated to the national health service in Japan, and do not have rights to medical care, except by paying privately. They manage by bringing from Colombia medicine for minor injuries, such as infections or colds. Regarding schooling, the children have been enrolled in the neighbourhood Japanese schools. It has been very hard for the children without having any previous knowledge of the language. However, what has possibly been even harder for some of them is the

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[77] Conversation with Consul Luis Amadeo Hernández, Colombian Consulate, Tokyo, 10 November 1998.

[78] Colombian Consulate, 'Perfil de la comunidad colombiana en Japón', Tokyo, June 1997, p. 33; see also M. Castro Ganoza, 'Nikkeis, la otra cara de Colombia', in *International Press*, 18 May 1997, p. 10.

indifference of their Japanese classmates at school. My observation was that the immigrants could overcome relatively easily their personal problems and put up with the hard work, but they felt very vulnerable and sad when their children were mistreated.

Up to now such people have not wished to organize associations among their own group of Colombians. There are two factors that make it complicated for them to socialize. Firstly, they live in widely separated areas making it difficult to meet. And secondly, people who belong to different socio-economic strata might feel uncomfortable with each other. Their social life is usually spent with friends, who are *nikkei* in most cases, regardless their nationality. As the Brazilians are numerically superior, many Spanish speaking *nikkei* have learned to speak Portuguese. They use it frequently at work, when dealing with brokers and subcontractors, when going shopping at the Brazilian food stores, and even when contacting an office to book an international ticket. In some of their houses there are video tapes of sport events and soap operas, and music from Brazil. The Portuguese language is popular in television commercials, and is used in the subtitles for the Japanese language classes provided by the television network NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation.) Not only Colombians, but people from other Spanish speaking countries have adapted to the dominance of the Portuguese language, and are learning to speak it.

In the late 1990s, the number of Latin American workers in Japan has tended to decrease. The reason is the recession in the Japanese economy, which has faltered during the decade since the government reformed the immigration legislation. The problems caused during the economic recession, which has led to a high level of criminality, and homeless people sleeping in the stations or parks,

has been most notorious among the population of Brazilians and Peruvians.[79] All sorts of news that appear in the newspapers, for good or bad, normally fall on the shoulders of the *nikkei* from these two countries. Crimes committed by groups of young adolescents who play truant from school and spend the day wandering around carrying out robberies and other misdeeds, and other kinds of crimes perpetrated by adults are a frequent object of national publicity. It has also come to the attention of the Japanese media that when Peru has been in trouble because of natural disasters or political difficulties, the *nikkei* community in Japan has held public demonstrations, displaying in a procession an image of the Black Christ (*Cristo Morado*). *Nikkeijin* from Brazil are well known by the carnival and samba festivals organized every year in the city of Ôizumi, in Gunma Prefecture, and by their participation in the parade in the Asakusa festival held in Tokyo in the summer. These festivals are normally broadcast on television. Consequently there are good reasons why the image most Japanese people have of the South American *nikkeijin* at work in Japan is of people from Brazil and Peru.

To conclude, Japanese descendants from Latin American countries are involved in a particular political and social situation in Japan. As workers, they have been admitted under the immigration law reform, and have enjoyed privileged conditions offered by the Japanese government. As individuals, coming from different backgrounds, and geographical areas as well, they do not form a social or cultural entity. They look for the company and friendship of other Spanish or Portuguese speakers because they feel more comfortable in their company. It does not mean that they form a 'Latin cultural group' because the

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[79] See Watkins, *Pasajeros de un sueño*, pp. 89-90, 95-6, 108, 118-9

term itself is one that would be hard to explain, and has become an obsolete one in an era of world-wide communication.

5. Conclusion: Human Capital Investment

What makes more interesting the study of Japanese emigration abroad is how the first generation, including their offspring, have re-emigrated to Japan to work. The term 'reverse migration' has been used in publications to denote the migration of Japanese and their descendants to their country of origin. The first generation, and those with dual nationality, were the first to take advantage of working opportunities during the Olympic Games in Tokyo, and the Expo in Okinawa, to migrate temporarily to Japan. In this case, the term 'reverse migration' would be correct usage if the migrants were going back home after having achieved their objectives abroad, and had no intention of returning but intended to stay in Japan. However, this is not the case because they were, as the present reality indicates, temporary workers without a definite intention to settle down in Japan. I rather use the term 'U-turn migration' following Mori's definition, where it is used to indicate 'the migration flow of immigrants, including their descendants, to their country of origin for the purpose of employment.'[80]

Parallels and differences among the Japanese and their descendants are not difficult to find in this process of migration and its consequences. In the first place, both have migrated for economic reasons. The pioneer Japanese immigrants who went to Colombia, or their descendants who came to Japan, did

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[80] Mori, *Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan*, p. 106-7.

not suffer in the past any kind of political or religious persecution. It is known that many of the Japanese wanted to escape conscription and chose to emigrate abroad. In the same way, their grandchildren have been sent to Japan to avoid a pointless death in the mandatory military service of Colombia. In both cases they disagree with the system, and have chosen the path of leaving. It is undeniable that at the turn of the twentieth century Colombia is not a safe place, devastated by daily military and guerrilla actions, drug-traffickers, political corruption, and that there is an alarming level of violation of human rights. Notwithstanding the bad record Colombia has, the migration of the Japanese descendants is in search of economic opportunities, and to provide their families with a better education and a better future.

The immigrants have obviously profited from the opportunities they have received in their host countries. The appreciation of the Japanese currency has repaid them for the hard work they have endured in Japan. Monthly earnings can be estimated at about US$2,000. Some have returned home and established their own businesses, paid off debts, or have invested in property. Others, on the contrary, once back in Colombia, have lost or wasted their savings. The first generation of Japanese immigrants, of course, also benefitted from the relative economic bonanza Colombia enjoyed before the Second World War. At the time of their emigration, economic conditions in Colombia were considerably better than in Japan.

The next point I would like to emphasize is how the receiving countries have benefitted from the immigrants, and how the profits from the investment have returned to their country of origin, Japan. The immigrants to the south of

Colombia engaged in an agricultural programme that was initially set up and planned by an emigration company. As already discussed in this work, the Colombian government did not intervene in the organization of their agricultural settlement. It was a one-sided affair. Within a few years after their immigration, they had achieved tremendous economic progress. On the one hand, their discipline and experience in agriculture in Japan helped them to achieve this success. But they were also favoured by the agrarian reform laws in Colombia. They had the opportunity to rent and buy land of excellent quality in the Cauca and Valle del Cauca departments. The Japanese introduced for the first time intensive mechanization of the arable land in the south of Colombia, and transformed huge areas of grass land into cultivated land. The changes they initiated were without doubt revolutionary in agriculture. The government of the department of Valle del Cauca has, on several occasions, publicly acknowledged their contribution to the regional development with special awards. The Japanese immigrants to Colombia were the right people arriving at the right time. The benefits were, of course, mutual.

The farmers cultivated beans in large quantities to supply regional and national markets. Colombia, well known for its exports of coffee, has endured a long dependence on agricultural imports for food. The production of beans by the Japanese immigrants helped to alleviate the burden of food imports. In addition, they cultivated a diversity of agricultural products like cotton, maize, millet, soya, sugar cane, vegetables and flowers. However, it was not only Colombia which benefitted from their efforts and work in agriculture. In the past they exported considerable quantities of beans to Japan. In 1970, the year of peak bean production, they exported about five thousand tons of *azuki* beans.

Since the 1990 immigration law reform in Japan, the influx of workers of Japanese descent has provided the country with cheap labour, and workers willing to do the jobs that the nationals did not want to do. Without this massive level of foreign immigration, Japan's growing industry could never have reached the high production levels of the recent past. 'Foreign migrant workers stepped in to fill these undesirable positions and have started to become an indispensable part of the workforce which supports the basic structure of the Japanese economy, ' is an observation made by Sellek.[81] It would be fair to assert that the investment Japan made in the past by subsidizing programmes for emigration has been recovered in helping the Japanese society of today.

The reason for the demanding for foreign labour is found in the changing demographic structure of Japan. While life expectancy at birth in 1947 was 50 for men and 54 for women, in 1996 it reached 77 for men and 83 for women.[82] A high rate of life expectancy added to a decline in the national birthrate, estimated in 1998 as 1.38 births per woman, is causing Japanese society to age at a rapid rate. The baby boom that followed the end of the Second World War was repeated only once, when the baby boomers themselves produced children in the 1970s. Japan is facing the problem of an uneven age distribution, with the prospect of an increasingly declining working-age population sustaining an expanding elderly population.[83] The 'U' turn migration of Japanese descendants from Latin America is not only helping to fill in the industrial demand for workers but on a different level, as state taxpayers, it is helping society to deal with the

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[81] '*Nikkeijin*: The phenomenon of return migration', p. 183.
[82] World Bank, *World Development Report* (Oxford, 1998), p. 192.
[83] See Waswo, *Modern Japanese Society*, Table 3, age distribution, 1950-2010, p. 133.

problem of its ageing population.

A final word deserves to be said about the associations and symbols of ethnic identity previously discussed. The upward social and economic mobility of the first generation of Japanese immigrants to Colombia increased in them the desire to create symbols to identify with their native country. It was not only the first generation but also their offspring who have participated in movements to revitalize their cultural roots. If we try to understand the factors which have influenced them to revive their cultural links with Japan, at least three could be mentioned. In the first place, it is the vulnerability the Japanese felt abroad after the political commotion produced by Japan's intervention in the Second World War. It made them realize that they were a minority that could be mistreated at any time. Secondly, the extraordinary recovery of Japan after the Pacific War defeat gave the immigrants a good reason to feel proud of their native country. And finally, there is the emotional necessity for the individual to identify with something he or she considers valuable.

But why are the *nikkeijin* from Colombia, who are living in Japan, not interested in the creation of ethnic affiliation associations? A first consideration is that they live in different areas of Japan, and ethnic relations exist because they are the product of contact and not of isolation. Secondly, communication through the internet, telephone and fax services enables them easily to maintain personal contact with people left in Colombia. They can be back in less than one day, when in the past it took a long journey of forty days by sea. They do not feel the sense of distance and isolation their parents and grandparents experienced decades ago when they emigrated. The *nikkeijin* living in Japan have become more a part of an international community rather than anything else. It is obvious that 'they

are and will always be Colombians,' as was stated in a report prepared by the consulate on the working community in Japan.[84] The boundaries that exist in their relations with Japanese society would not be broken down through the creation of ethnic associations. The rules of the game have changed and what is important is to find the bridgeheads of global culture, that are influencing the homogenization of the national culture of the host country. As concluded by Eriksen in his studies in Trinidad and Mauritius, identities are negotiable, and having lost their innocence, humans actively negotiate for more flattering identities, more economically and politically beneficial ones, and more meaningful ones.[85]

The Japanese of the first generation who live in Colombia chose, as symbols of ethnic identification for their houses, objects such as handicrafts, paintings and gardens in the Japanese style. For the Colombian *nikkei* who emigrated to work in Japan, it is not so easy to find national elements of identification because Colombia is characterized by internal frontiers. Colombia is divided in several geographical and cultural areas. Consequently there is a rich variation of cultural manifestations, but one cannot refer to a national culture. It is nevertheless interesting that if there is something in their homes in Japan that recalls Colombia is the national flag. Many have flags in several sizes, and these are apparently just adornments fixed on the wall, or standing on top of a piece of a furniture. But when Colombia participates in an international football match, they get the chance to exhibit the flag on the balcony of the buildings where they live. This can be interpreted as a spontaneous display of ethnic identity, that

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[84] See 'Perfil de la comunidad colombiana en Japón', p. 35.
[85] Eriksen, *Us and Them in Modern Societies*, p. 190.

provides the person with an emotional sense of belonging, at the same time that feeling part of a larger community.

V. FINAL REMARK

Conclusions have been included in every chapter, and there is no need to repeat what has already been said. What I would like to point out as a final remark is the impact that foreign labour migration might have upon the Japanese society. This is a society which still harbours a belief that Japanese are of a unique, homogeneous race and cultural origin. How are the new-comers challenging a country where theories emphasizing the uniqueness of the Japanese have been unconditionally sustained? In order to have a broader understanding of what the new immigration policy towards the acceptance of *nikkeijin* workers means, some background on the Japanese perception of their own society may be appropriate.

Japanese people are enormously interested in discussing who they are in a cultural sense. Voluminous publications have appeared by a variety of academics, journalists and amateur writers, each with different theories or suggestions to explain why and how the Japanese are different from the rest of the world. Different opinions and an abundance of literature on the subject of Japanese identity seem to be what can be described as a national hobby, or in the words of Hendry, 'almost a national obsession.'[1] The discourse on this topic constitutes a recognized genre, with its own appellation of *Nihonjinron*. The 1970s and the 1980s were the era of the *Nihonjinron*, or the controversy about Japaneseness.

Since Japan entered into a period of modernization in the nineteenth century, social institutions have been re-evaluated, and institutions that are the

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[1] Hendry, *Understanding Japanese Society*, p. 5.

epitome of goodness at one time turn into disasters at another. Befu analyzes the causes for these reversals that are to be found in the geopolitical and international context in which Japan finds itself in its relations with its reference group. Of the five periods noted by Befu, in the 1930s, the 1970s and in the 1980s, the strongly positive *Nihonjinron* ideology became a tool of nationalism. This kind of literature on Japanese identity claims Japan's purity, homogeneity and uniqueness. Trying to demonstrate the superiority of Japanese culture over other cultures, through particular constructions of the customs, language and traditions, *Nihonjinron* writers have then fostered and supported nationalism.[2]

Japan, as a modern nation, consists of different ethnic groups. The supporters of *Nihonjinron*, through their allegation that the Japanese society is homogeneous, are trying to ignore the existence of people different to the dominant majority. Although minority groups total only about 4 per cent of the total population, it does not make them invisible in the society. The largest minority group are the former outcasts, Burakumin, comprising close to 3 million people. In addition, as a result from Japanese expansion into Okinawa, Korea and Taiwan, there are over a million Okinawans, and nearly a million Korean and Chinese descendants. There are also the remnants of the Ainu, an indigenous people who were pushed to live in the Northern island of Hokkaido during the early Japanese occupation of the Northeastern territories. Social outcasts have also been the offspring of American soldiers and Japanese women born during and

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[2] See H. Befu, 'Nationalism and *Nihonjinron*', in H. Befu (ed.), *Cultural Nationalism in East Asia: Representation and Identity* (Berkeley, CA, 1993), pp. 125-6.

after the post-war American occupation of Japan.[3] At the present time, the Latin American *nikkei* working population have arrived to enlarge the minorities in Japan. The politicians and the government, of course, are well aware of the existence of minorities in the country. Nevertheless, they use the ideas spread in *Nihonjinron* literature to promote the idea that Japan is a homogeneous society, rejecting the minorities. Former Primer Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone (1982-1987) can be quoted as an example. He attributed the United States economic decline to the poor performance of ethnic minorities, notably Blacks, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, while Japan's economic success was due to its homogeneity, denying the existence of minority groups in Japan.[4]

As noted above, there began from the 1980s a massive migration of workers into Japan. These people came mainly from Asian and Middle Eastern countries. The Japanese government, reforming the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, provided the opportunity to descendants of Japanese immigrants to work in Japan, granting them with a special status of residence. What motivated such a drastic change, when the qualifications and abilities of foreigners used to be called so much into question? The expanding industry of Japan needed an increased labour force, a demand that the nationals could not met because there was not enough population growth for it. The severe shortage of labour forced upon Japan to rethink the unavoidable necessity of dependency on foreign labour. I totally agree with the opinion that the government's plan in reforming the law was to replace unskilled and unwanted

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[3] Ibid. p. 129; see also G. De Vos and H. Wagatsuma, 'Cultural identity and minority status in Japan', in L. Romanucci-Ross and. G. De Vos (eds.), *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation* (Walnut Creek, CA, 1995), pp. 272-3.

[4] Befu, 'Nationalism and *Nihonjinron*', p. 121.

workers from Asian countries not by opening the front-door to unskilled workers, but intentionally by introducing through the side-door *nikkeijin* willing to perform unskilled work.[5]

In this connection, it may be considered how much the ideas promoted in the *Nihonjinron* literature could have influenced the attitude of the government in reforming the immigration law. According to Michael Weiner, the influx of migrant Asian workers into Japan during the last decades has been largely treated as a racial problem. Fears have been expressed of cultural and racial contamination, and the spectre of ethnic minority communities emerging in the future.[6] But *Nikkeijin*, being of Japanese descent, fall in the same category of those of Japanese blood. Although they would not have been considered as real Japanese-Japanese, but at least they were half-Japanese.

Japan grants citizenship according to the *jus sanguinis*, or the 'law of blood' principle, not the *jus soli*, the 'law of land' principle. As a result, a good number of *nisei* born in Colombia have been granted Japanese passports. Many of them are actually working in Japan, mainly in factory jobs. Nevertheless, as a group their situation, as measured by their quality of life, it is no different from others who have a temporary residence visa. The insecurity of having an hourly paid job, growing old without a pension for the future, the subcontracting companies that evade their health and accident insurance responsibility, the anxiety for those without Japanese passports that a visa will not be renewed and deportation will follow, just to name a few, put the *nikkei* community in the

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[5] See Mori, *Immigration Policy and Foreign Workers in Japan*, p. xi.

[6] M. Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London, 1994), pp. 4-5; see also H. Komai , *Migrant Workers in Japan* [translated by J. Wilkinson] (London [1993] 1995), pp. 231.

vulnerable situation of a minority group. When I asked Colombians how long they thought they would stay in Japan, they answered jokingly 'until the World Cup' (meaning the Football Championship), that will be co-hosted by Japan and South Korea in the year 2002. Reading between lines the meaning of this answer is that they do not feel confident of having a long-term future in Japan. This betrays the disappointment of having been used when needed and discharged when not. For the government and Japanese society the challenge is to treat with dignity the offspring of the immigrants, the cousins back in the land of their forefathers, who deserve to be offered equal rights with other Japanese citizens.

Appendix I

Japanese Exchange Rates (yen per dollar)

Year	Yen	Year	Yen
1896	1.89	1926	2.13
1897	2.02	1927	2.10
1898	2.03	1928	2.15
1899	2.00	1929	2.17
1900	2.02	1930	2.02
1901	2.02	1931	2.04
1902	2.00	1932	3.55
1903	2.00	1933	3.96
1904	2.03	1934	3.38
1905	2.02	1935	3.50
1906	2.02	1936	3.45
1907	2.01	1937	3.47
1908	2.02	1938	3.50
1909	2.01	1939	3.84
1910	2.01	1940	4.26
1911	2.02	1941	4.26
1912	2.01		
1913	2.02		
1914	2.03		
1915	2.04		
1916	1.99		
1917	1.97		
1918	1.94		
1919	1.97		
1920	2.01		
1921	2.08		
1922	2.08		
1923	2.04		
1924	2.38		
1925	2.45		

Source: Nihon ginkô hyakunen-shi (Tokyo [1971] 1995), pp. 366-7.

Appendix II

Colombian Exchange Rates (pesos per dollar)

Year	Pesos	Year	Pesos
1908	1.08	1936	1.75
1909	1.05	1937	1.76
1910	0.97	1938	1.78
1911	0.99	1939	1.75
1912	1.01	1940	1.75
1913	1.02	1941	1.75
1914	1.04		
1915	1.08		
1916	1.04		
1917	1.01		
1918	0.94		
1919	0.93		
1920	1.12		
1921	1.17		
1922	1.09		
1923	1.05		
1924	1.00		
1925	1.01		
1926	1.01		
1927	1.02		
1928	1.02		
1929	1.03		
1930	1.03		
1931	1.03		
1932	1.05		
1933	1.24		
1934	1.62		
1935	1.78		

Source: El Banco de la República. Antecedentes, evolución y estructura (Bogotá, 1990), pp. 122, 303-5, 402-3.

Appendix III

Imports/ Exports Colombia - Japan, 1928-1941
(in Colombian pesos)

Year	Imports	Exports
1928	710,657	30
1929	1,416,239	38
1930	704,735	400
1931	616,203	40
1932	391,334	167
1933	1,096,004	4,412
1934	4,209,229	22,548
1935	5,904,672	26,412
1936	132,212	134,749
1937	358,485	252,185
1938	269,914	125,160
1939	319,191	61,359
1940	413,732	169,351
1941	878,648	109,597
Deficit for Colombia		
1928	710,627	
1929	1,416,201	
1930	704,335	
1931	616,163	
1932	391,167	
1933	1,091,592	
1934	4,186,681	
1935	5,878,260	
1937	106,300	
1938	144,754	
1939	257,832	
1940	244,381	
1941	769,051	
Deficit for Japan		
1936	2,537	

Sources: Several despatches from the Consul in Yokohama, 1928-1935, MRE; República de Colombia. Memoria de Relaciones Exteriores, *Memoria del Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores al Congreso de 1942*, pp. 290-1.

Appendix IV

Profile of the Group Interviewed

Sex	Ethnic Origin	Age	Activity	Respondents
male	Japanese descendant	15 to 19	Student	1
male	Colombian spouses	20 to 39	Business	2
male	Japanese descendant	25 to 29	Employee	1
male	Colombian spouse	30 to 35	Employee	1
male	Japanese	30 to 49	Business	2
male	Japanese descendants	30 to 49	Employee	3
male	Japanese	50 to 69	Farmer	5
male	Japanese	50 to 69	Business	4
male	Colombian neighbours	60 to 65	Farmer	2
male	Colombian neighbour	60 to 65	Business	1
male	Japanese	over 70	Farmer	4
male	Japanese descendant	over 70	Business	1
female	Japanese descendants	10 to 19	Student	2
female	Japanese descendants	30 to 49	Housewife	5
female	Japanese descendants	30 to 49	Employee	2
female	Colombian spouses	30 to 49	Employee	3
female	Japanese descendants	50 to 69	Housewife	3
female	Colombian neighbour	55 to 60	Housewife	1
female	Japanese	over 70	Housewife	4
female	Colombian widows	over 70	Housewife	3

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