

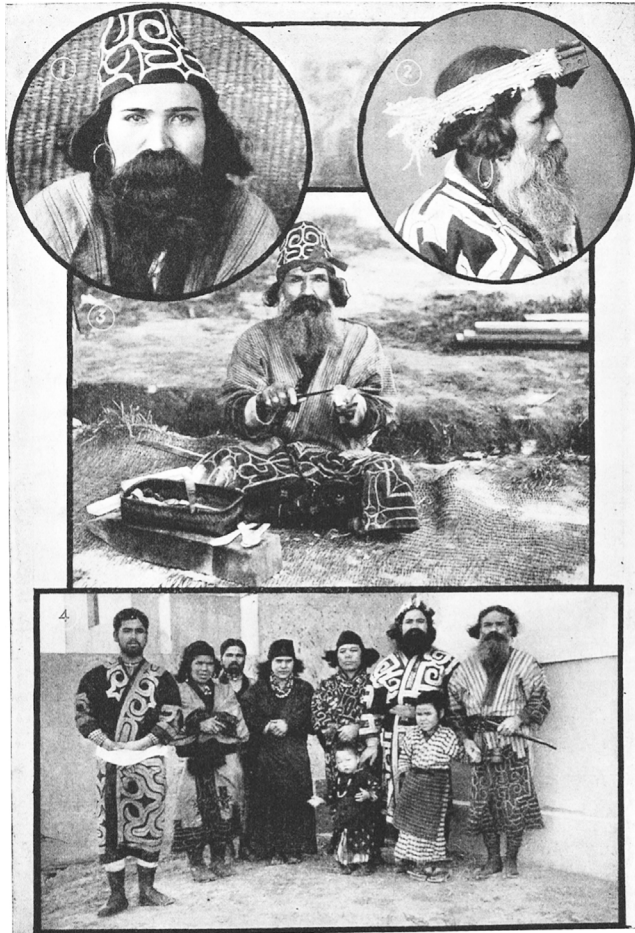
## Before the Sailing of the *Kasato Maru*

In 1904, four years before the *Kasato Maru* reached the shores of São Paulo, the United States hosted another World's Fair after the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Known as the last great international exposition before World War I, the World's Fair of 1904 took place in St. Louis, Missouri. The completion of westward continental expansion, the victory in the Mexican-American War, and the annexation of Hawai'i had turned the United States into a rising leader of modern empires; at the same time, the focus of international colonial competition had begun shifting to the Pacific Rim. The fair, designed to showcase U.S. greatness to the world, highlighted American achievements in material wealth, cultural progress, and cutting-edge technologies. Then U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt's multivolume epic, *The Winning of the West*, well documented the spirit of the moment. Completed at the beginning of the twentieth century, the book celebrated U.S. westward expansion as part of the dispersion of the English-speaking people across the "waste spaces" around the globe as the "most striking feature in world history" of the past few centuries.<sup>1</sup> This settler colonial logic was undergirded by a rigid global racial hierarchy that placed white Americans and Europeans at the top and Indigenous peoples at the bottom, justifying Anglo-American settler colonial expansion in the name of human progress. This concept is illustrated on the front cover of the fifth volume of the official guide to the St. Louis World's Fair.

Policy makers in both Japan and Brazil saw the World's Fair as an opportunity to demonstrate the progress their own nations had made on the way to becoming civilized powers by emulating Anglo-American settler colonialism. Both Tokyo and Rio dispatched delegations. To emphasize this progress, a main task of both delegations was to present the primitivity of their respective Indigenous peoples. With the assistance of Frederick Starr, a professor of anthropology at the



FIGURE 6. Titled *Types and Development of Man*, this picture served as the front cover for volume 5 of the official guide to the St. Louis World's Fair. It ranked human races based on a hierarchy of civilization. Its description read: "The photogravure herewith is from an excellent specially prepared drawing which very accurately illustrates, as nearly as the science of ethnology is able to do, the characteristic types of mankind in a progressive order of development from primitive or prehistoric man to the highest example of modern civilization. The two central figures are symbolical, representing Intelligence, with the torch of Enlightenment and book of Wisdom, invading the darksome cave in which Ignorance skulks in companionship with a bird of evil omen and superstition. It is aspiration lighting the dungeon of savagery and directing the race to better conditions, moral, intellectual, and social."



1. AN AINU YOUNG MAN. 3. AN AINU MAKING WOODEN SPOONS.  
2. AN AINU OLD MAN. 4. GROUP OF AINUS IN THEIR NATIVE COSTUMES.

FIGURE 7. Photos of the Ainu people of Japan on display at the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904. Source: *Louisiana and the Fair: An Exposition of the World, Its People and Their Achievements*, vol. 5 (1904), 1705.

University of Chicago, the Japanese delegates brought a group of Ainu people to be exhibited at the fair, together with Native peoples from North and South America, Africa, and the Philippines in the Pavilion of Anthropology.<sup>2</sup> By contrasting the “savageness” of the Hokkaido natives, the Japanese delegation aimed to underscore the stunning progress the Japanese had made to become civilized people themselves.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Hermann von Ihering, director of the State Museum of São Paulo, wrote an essay for the fair that described Brazil’s Indigenous people

as hopelessly backward.<sup>4</sup> As they were incapable of making any contribution to Brazil's progress in land colonization, Ihering argued, they were doomed to extinction.<sup>5</sup> The parallel in the Japanese and Brazilian delegations' presentation of their countries' Indigenous peoples at the fair revealed their continuing reproduction of Anglo-American settler colonialism.

This chapter discusses the significance of the *Kasato Maru*, which transported the first official group of Japanese immigrants to Brazil in 1908, in this historical context. It should be noted that migration-related diplomatic contact between Japan and Brazil began as early as 1893, but fifteen years passed before any plans materialized. This chapter examines how a confluence of events during these years in Japan and Brazil, as well as other parts of the world, eventually led to the sailing of the *Kasato Maru*. It also explains why it took fifteen years for bilateral negotiations between the two migration states to come to fruition. A careful examination of these related events not only elucidates the historical contexts and political and intellectual origins of Japanese migration to Brazil but also sheds light on the close ties it had with the settler colonialism of both the Japanese empire and the First Republic.

The turn of the twentieth century was a critical phase in the history of Japan's migration-driven expansion. During these years, Japanese expansionists gradually reached a consensus that farmer migration and agricultural settlement would be a desirable form of overseas migration. This intellectual change determined the character of Japanese migration to Brazil from the start. While the vast majority of Japanese migrants carried by the *Kasato Maru* to Brazil were under labor contracts with coffee plantations in São Paulo, the intention of their recruiter, Mizuno Ryū, was to turn them into farming settlers who would establish the first Japanese colonies in Brazil.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the establishment of Japanese agricultural colonies was also the primary motivator for Tokyo to approve and support Mizuno's initiative.<sup>7</sup> How farmer migration and agriculture-centered colonialism became the dominant discourse of Japanese expansion at the turn of the twentieth century, accordingly, is another question this chapter seeks to answer.

This chapter locates its analysis in four geographic sites across the globe: the Japanese archipelago, southeastern Brazil, and the Pacific coast and Texas Gulf coast of the continental United States. First, it analyzes the fundamental changes in social relations and the political terrain in the Japanese archipelago between the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. It discusses the social changes in domestic Japan that led to the rise of agrarianism and the discourse of farmer migration. It then examines Japanese migration to Hawai'i, the U.S. West Coast, and Texas during this period. It explores the important ways these experiences had transformed Japanese settler colonialism and stimulated Japanese migration to Brazil. Finally, the chapter examines the important changes that took place in southeastern Brazil, including the rapid development of the coffee

economy and the rise of the state of São Paulo as Brazil's new economic and political center, which made it the most suitable destination for Japanese migrants.

FROM LABORERS TO FARMERS:  
THE TRANSFORMATION OF JAPAN'S  
MIGRATION-DRIVEN EXPANSION

The meeting between Japanese and Brazilian diplomats in San Francisco in 1893 seemingly heralded a bright future for Japanese emigration to Brazil. Four years later, the two governments established a formal diplomatic relationship, and it was none other than Chinda Sutemi, the Japanese consul in San Francisco, who arrived in Rio de Janeiro as the first Japanese minister plenipotentiary to Brazil.<sup>8</sup> One of his main tasks was to seal the emigration deal and oversee the process of Japanese migration and settlement in South America. Between 1893 and the sailing of the *Kasato Maru* in 1908, policy makers and migration companies in both Brazil and Japan made several attempts to bring Japanese migrants to Brazil, yet none succeeded.

The main reason for these failures was that neither side was the other's first choice. For the leaders of the First Republic, European immigrants were both plentiful and preferable to Japanese laborers. Starting in the late 1880s, the abolition of slavery and a series of new government policies ushered in the era of mass migration in Brazil. In the last decade of the nineteenth century alone, about 1.1 million European immigrants arrived in Brazil, nearly tripling the number of immigrants arriving in the previous decade.<sup>9</sup> This new wave of immigration was marked by a rapid increase in Italian immigrants, who made up about 60 percent of all immigrants to Brazil between 1890 and 1902.<sup>10</sup> As European immigrants poured into the republic in the 1890s, the Brazilian elites did not consider Japan as a source of immigrants with any sense of urgency. With the goal of whitening the nation's racial stock in mind, they saw Europeans as Brazil's top choice for immigration, and Brazilian migrant recruiters were not eager to offer attractive conditions to Japanese laborers. At times, they did not take their Japanese counterparts seriously, a prime example of which can be seen in the abrogation of the migration contract between Yoshisa Emigration Company of Japan and Prado Jordão & Company of Brazil.

The contract in question was the second one between the two companies. The first contract, signed only one year after the first meeting between Japanese and Brazilian diplomats in San Francisco, became void because a new regulation promulgated by the Japanese government that year banned the migration of Japanese subjects to countries without formal diplomatic relations with Japan. Anticipating that Japanese-Brazilian diplomatic relations would be established in 1897, the two companies made a second deal that sought to transport 1,500 to 2,000 Japanese

subjects to the state of São Paulo that year. The Japanese were supposed to work as laborers on local coffee plantations for five years. While Prado Jordão & Company was responsible for the migrants' round-trip transportation, the planters would offer them lodging, food, clothing, and other necessities, in addition to wages. However, Prado Jordão & Company backed out of this agreement four days before the migrants' scheduled departure, leaving its Japanese partner and the migrants themselves to deal with the fallout.<sup>11</sup>

There were a number of reasons for the unfortunate fate of this agreement. For one, the price of Brazilian coffee plummeted on the international market in 1897, losing more than a half of its value from the previous year; this meant that planters were unmotivated and financially ill prepared to recruit new laborers. At the same time, the First Republic was only able to suppress the Canudos Rebellion in Bahia after years of armed conflict. Known as the deadliest civil war in Brazilian history, it left the federal government less capable of providing financial support to immigration.<sup>12</sup> Race also played a role. The fact that Prado Jordão & Company only gave its Japanese partner last-minute notice demonstrated how insignificant the Japanese immigrants were in the minds of the Brazilian agents when European immigrants were easy to recruit.

Meanwhile, for leaders of imperial Japan, Brazil was far from an ideal destination of Japanese emigration. A few weeks after the cancellation of the above-mentioned contract, Chinda Sutemi took office as Japan's first minister to Brazil. He quickly became pessimistic about the prospects of Japanese migration because the racism he observed in Brazil echoed his experiences in North America. Moreover, he realized that life on the Brazilian coffee plantations would be extremely challenging for Japanese migrants. Not only would they have to work in poor conditions with low wages for several years in order to pay off their debts to the planters, but there was also the matter of adjusting to a foreign culture, religion, and language.<sup>13</sup>

In a report to Tokyo in 1898, Chinda opined that the current plan for Japanese labor migration would have no future in Brazil. The only viable path, he argued, would be for the Japanese to follow the example of German immigrants in southern Brazil. That is, instead of working on coffee plantations as laborers, they should become independent farmers and build settler colonies. To do so would require a Japanese company to purchase land in Brazil and build self-sufficient settler colonies on it. In other words, the way to Japanese success in Brazil was to back up the migration with capital investment and create settler colonies, not to simply export plantation laborers.<sup>14</sup>

Chinda resigned in the same year due to illness but not before calling off two migration plans. One was a labor migration contract between the Japanese Emigration Company (Nihon Imin Gaisha) in Kobe and Fiorita & Company in Rio de Janeiro, and another was the Oriental Emigration Company's (Tōyō Imin



Gaisha's) plan to bring Japanese laborers to the Amazon Basin.<sup>15</sup> Ōkoshi Nari-nori, Chinda's successor, who took office in 1899, held a similar opinion. He also warned Tokyo and the prefectural governments against granting migration permits to Japanese subjects tempted by Brazilian recruiters' empty promises. This led to the cancellation of two more contracts signed by Japanese and Brazilian migration companies.<sup>16</sup>

An immediate reason for Chinda and Ōkoshi's opposition to labor migration to Brazil was the austere living and working conditions on the coffee plantations coupled with paltry benefits for the laborers. In a broader context, their pessimism also stemmed from the events that took place in Hawai'i and the U.S. mainland at the turn of the twentieth century. From the late 1880s to the end of the 1900s, these two locations were the most popular destinations for Japanese emigrants outside of Asia. Most of the migrants were the rural poor who decided to leave the archipelago in order to lift themselves out of poverty. To them, the U.S. mainland was particularly attractive due to its plentiful opportunities and relatively high wages for migrant laborers. As the number of Japanese labor migrants to the United States grew steadily, exporting migrants to Brazil where the working and living conditions were not as good appeared unnecessary.

The Japanese government's pessimism about Brazil-bound migration also reflected an ongoing intellectual shift in the debate surrounding colonial expansion within the empire. At the turn of the twentieth century, an increasing number of Japan's empire builders began to favor the emigration of farmers to that of laborers as a means of expansion. In their minds, farming was a better way to secure Japanese subjects' ownership of foreign land. In fact, Chinda's and Ōkoshi's calls for land acquisition and colonization in Brazil were echoed by their colleagues on the Korean Peninsula around the same time. Katō Masuo, Japanese minister to the Kingdom of Korea, made a similar proposal in 1901. Complaining that Japanese migrants in the United States and Hawai'i were nothing more than temporary laborers, Katō urged his fellow countrymen to focus their efforts on Northeast Asia instead. He argued that the Kingdom of Korea was the most ideal destination for Japanese migration because of its rich and abundant land, its obedient natives, and the colonial privileges that the Japanese enjoyed there. While Japanese migrants faced numerous difficulties in many locales around the world, on the Korean Peninsula they could easily acquire land and settle down as owner-farmers.<sup>17</sup>

Though Chinda and Ōkoshi would certainly disagree with Katō on where the Japanese subjects should migrate, all three singled out farming as the preferred occupation for the emigrants and envisioned land acquisition as the latter's ultimate mission. These diplomats' ideas were echoed by other Japanese expansionists both in and outside the government. As I explain below, their overall preference for farmer migration over laborer migration and the call for a shift

to the former was a result of the rise of agrarianism in Japan around the turn of the twentieth century. In the meantime, this change was also a direct response to white racism directed against Japanese migrant laborers on the U.S. mainland and in Hawai‘i.

### THE RISE OF JAPANESE AGRARIANISM

A direct reason for the boom of Japanese migration to the United States during the 1890s was the poverty that plagued the Japanese countryside. Agriculture did not occupy a central place in the Meiji leaders' blueprints for the empire. For both "enriching the nation and strengthening the army" (*fukoku kyōhei*) and "developing industry and trade" (*shokusan kōgyō*), two policy agendas central to Japan's rise during the Meiji period, agriculture was expected to be a contributor rather than a beneficiary. As a major sector of the national economy, agriculture served as the biggest source of government revenue during most of the Meiji era, yet the bulk of the government's budget was allocated to industrialization and military buildup.

In addition to the government's relative negligence toward agriculture, there was a rapid concentration of farmland ownership in the Japanese countryside following the promulgation of the Land Tax Law of 1873, which legitimized private landownership. This process substantially accelerated during the Matsukata Deflation, when 70 to 80 percent of Japanese farming households ran into debt due to a steep drop in the prices of silk and rice. As many small landowners were forced to sell their land to pay off debts, the population of owner-farmers declined sharply, while the number of tenant farmers as well as tenant disputes skyrocketed.

The First Sino-Japanese War in 1894–95 dealt yet another blow to Japanese agriculture. The war led to a boom in urban industries, which lured an increasing segment of the rural population out of the countryside. As a result, food production in the archipelago could no longer meet the demand of a rapidly expanding urban society. Rice, a staple food of the Japanese, began to flow into the archipelago from Taiwan and later the Korean Peninsula; by the late 1890s, Japan had turned from a rice exporter into a rice importer.

In response to the significant decline of the farming population and Japan's loss of self-sufficiency in rice, Japanese intellectuals embraced a new school of thinking known as agrarianism (*nōhonshugi*). It emphasized the central role of agriculture in Japan's dual process of nation and empire building; moreover, it called on the government to protect farmers and facilitate economic growth in the countryside. The most influential advocate for agrarianism at the turn of the twentieth century was Nitobe Inazō, who was best known for his leadership in establishing and developing the discipline of Japanese colonial policy studies (*shokumin seisaku kenkyū*). Nitobe published a book-length study in 1898, aiming to analyze the



predicament of agriculture in the Japanese empire and provide a solution. Titled *Agriculture as the Foundation* (*Nōgyō honron*), the book portrayed agriculture as the very basis of Japanese society. Like most Meiji policy makers at the time, Nitobe had no doubt that Japan was destined to follow the path of the West and become an industrialized empire. However, he criticized the Meiji government's strategy of promoting industry at the expense of agriculture. A strong and self-sufficient agricultural sector, he argued, was essential for Japan's cultural progress, public health, industrialization, and urbanization.<sup>18</sup>

Nitobe's advocacy of agrarianism also demonstrated the profound connection between agriculture and colonialism and that between farming and expansion in Japanese colonial thinking. His interest in agriculture stemmed from his study at Sapporo Agricultural College in Hokkaido and his personal connection with Tsuda Sen, founder and editor of the *Hokkaido Development Journal*. Tsuda, an admirer of the U.S. model of expansion, was already calling for modernizing Japan's agriculture at the very beginning of the Meiji era. To this end, he established the Association for Studying Agriculture (*Gakunōsha*) to encourage and train the declassed samurai to become new farmers (*shinnō*) of the empire through Western learning. Modernized agriculture was also central to Tsuda's design for the Japanese colonization of Hokkaido, which would effectively extract natural wealth from the island.<sup>19</sup>

Having studied at the Agricultural School affiliated with Tsuda's Association for Studying Agriculture, Nitobe believed that the backbone of Japan's future empire was owner-farmers. Those who farmed, according to him, had superior physical conditions, which made them better soldiers. Farmers also had higher fertility rates and longer life spans, further making them ideal subjects of the empire. As the primary suppliers for food and manpower and the best source of soldiers, Nitobe contended, farmers should be protected by the government from losing their land, for otherwise they would fall into poverty and lose their vigor and strength due to excessive labor.<sup>20</sup>

Nitobe's thesis was well received among his peers. *Agriculture as the Foundation* was reprinted five times within ten years of its publication. In 1902, four years after the book's initial publication, Hiraoka Hikotarō published *Placing Agriculture at the Center in Japan* (*Nihon nōpon ron*). This book not only embraced Nitobe's main argument, which emphasized the centrality of agriculture in the national economy, but also delineated the connections between agriculture and colonial expansion. This 1902 book suggested several ways for policy makers to rescue the agricultural sector, including tax relief, protective tariffs, and the modernization of farming equipment and techniques.<sup>21</sup> More importantly, Hiraoka identified overpopulation as a reason for the decline in productivity and land shortage in Japanese agriculture. He believed that exporting and settling a certain number of farmers overseas would increase Japan's agricultural productivity, as it would free

up farmland and accelerate the process of agricultural mechanization. The expansion of Japanese overseas communities would further benefit Japan's agriculture by stimulating the exportation of Japanese farm goods.<sup>22</sup>

#### ANTI-JAPANESE CAMPAIGNS ON THE U.S. WEST COAST

As agrarianism became a popular political discourse in Japan and grew intertwined with overseas migration at the turn of the twentieth century, the Japanese community on the U.S. West Coast also went through a fundamental change. The rural poor replaced students and political dissidents as the main source of Japanese migrants to the United States. Most of them made a living through labor, and they soon became the targets of anti-Japanese campaigns on the West Coast. White exclusionists repeated their accusations against Chinese immigrants by labeling Japanese newcomers as lacking in social manners and education, greedy, and having no intention to contribute to the host society. Their campaigns were spurred by Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. In the exclusionists' rhetoric, the image of the Japanese as an uncivilized and inferior race overlapped with that of Japan as an aggressive empire, legitimizing their demand to keep the Japanese out of the white men's domain.

The anti-Japanese campaigns gained momentum in 1906, when the Board of Education in San Francisco ordered the exclusion of Japanese pupils from the city's public schools. The sentiment against the Japanese on the West Coast also received support from the national media. In September 1907, the *New York Times* published a lengthy article that described Japanese migration to the United States as "Japan's invasion to the White Man's World." The article pointed to the idea of overpopulation, the same one used by the Japanese leaders to justify the empire's expansion and emigration, to argue against allowing further Japanese immigration.<sup>23</sup> Having failed to export its surplus people to Hokkaido, Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, and Manchuria, the article warned, the Japanese were now raiding the United States, the territory of the "White Man." The Russo-Japanese War, it also argued, was damning evidence that the Japanese were not only inassimilable but also dangerous, and Japanese migrants were the vanguards of this aggressive empire.<sup>24</sup>

Such anti-Japanese sentiments became institutionalized by the Gentlemen's Agreement reached by the governments of Japan and the United States. In 1908, Tokyo stopped issuing passports to Japanese subjects who intended to migrate to the United States as laborers. In return, the United States reopened public schools in San Francisco to Japanese children and promised not to impose official restrictions on Japanese immigration.<sup>25</sup> The Gentlemen's Agreement marked a watershed in the history of Japanese migration to the United States by bringing an end to

labor migration. Based on the agreement, Tokyo enacted a strict ban on migration to the United States, the only exceptions being remigrants, family members of existing migrants, and U.S.-approved agricultural settlers.

The rise of anti-Japanese sentiments on the U.S. West Coast led to contrasting reactions in Japan. While hostility and anger were the general response in the mass media, Western-trained intellectuals sought to reconcile what was happening in the United States with their perception of the country as a righteous empire and a guide for Japan's own path. This was particularly true for students of Nitobe Inazō and his colleagues in Japanese colonial policy studies. Their intellectual origins can be traced to Sapporo Agricultural College, which was established by William Smith Clark and modeled after the Massachusetts Agricultural College. They faithfully accepted the logic of the U.S. exclusionists and saw labor migration as a failed model of Japanese expansion. They also connected the failure of Japanese labor migration to the United States with rising agrarianism in Japan and embraced farmer migration as a better model of expansion. For them, the migration of farmers overseas would serve as a perfect solution to the rapidly escalating tensions in Japan's countryside and as a way to pivot agriculture back to the center of Japan's national economy.

Two academic works on colonialism, both strongly influenced by Nitobe Inazō, came out in Japan at this time. One was *On Japanese Emigration* (*Nihon imin ron*), by Ōkawadaira Takamitsu, published in 1905; the other was *On Japanese Colonial Migration* (*Nihon shokumin ron*), by Tōgō Minoru, published in 1906. For both authors, anti-Japanese campaigns in the United States pointed to an urgent need for Japan to change its existing model of migration. The new model, they argued, should be agrarian: unlike the migration of laborers that would only stir up ill feelings against the Japanese due to the laborers' sojourning mind-set and refusal to assimilate, the migration of farmers would bring permanent benefits to the empire.

Tōgō divided the practices of expansion in human history into two categories, the nonproductive and the productive. The former was conducted via military conquest, while the latter was accomplished by the migration of farmers. Tōgō quoted the German historian Theodor Mommsen in the book's preface to explain the difference between the two: "That which is gained by war may be wrested from the grasp by war again, but it is not so with conquests made by the plough."<sup>26</sup> Military conquest may bring temporary profits, but only agricultural settlers could put down the roots of the empire in the newly acquired land. For Tōgō, this point was self-evident when one compared the different trajectories of Latin and Anglo-Saxon expansion in the Americas. As he argued, the Portuguese and Spanish colonizers only cared about how to obtain treasures from the new land, a mentality that ultimately led to the collapse of their transatlantic empires. The Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, came with plows and pruning hooks and farmed the new land as their own.<sup>27</sup> Their success could be seen in the prosperity of the United States today.

Ōkawadaira shared Tōgō's view and saw the emigration of farmers as a must for the empire. Both works demonstrated the convergence between agrarianism and settler colonialism for Japanese expansionists around the time of the Russo-Japanese War. It should be noted that for both Tōgō and Ōkawadaira, farmer migration was not only a means of successful expansion but also a solution to Japan's rural depression. They believed that the exportation of surplus population from the overcrowded countryside would increase the productivity of Japan's agriculture.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, Tōgō and Ōkawadaira did not agree on the ideal emigration destinations. Tōgō believed that the Korean Peninsula and southern Manchuria were the answer, as both regions were newly brought into Japan's sphere of influence as a result of the Russo-Japanese War. Ōkawadaira, however, urged Japanese farmers to venture beyond overpopulated Asia and secure their future in South America.<sup>29</sup> Both Tōgō and Ōkawadaira had supporters in policy-making circles; their agendas of expansion materialized between the second half of the 1900s and the early 1910s with the support of the government. Tōgō's proposal was carried out by the formation of the Oriental Colonial Company and its programs of farmer migration to the Korean Peninsula. Meanwhile, Ōkawadaira's call for South America-bound farmer migration was realized by the establishment of the Tokyo Syndicate and its land purchase in Brazil. However, it was in the U.S. state of Texas that the Japanese expansionists first experimented with farmer migration before replicating the experience in Northeast Asia and South America.

#### FARMER MIGRATION TO TEXAS AND THE ROOTS OF THE JAPANESE FARMING COMMUNITY IN BRAZIL

Though both Ōkawadaira and Tōgō were pessimistic about the future of Japanese migration to the United States, the experience of Japanese American immigrants continued to serve as a guide for the expansionists in Tokyo as the latter sought to turn the idea of farmer migration into reality. The Japanese community along the U.S. West Coast experienced rapid demographic growth at the turn of the twentieth century as waves of Japanese rural poor arrived in the area. Initially they simply filled the labor vacuum created by the Chinese Exclusion Act, but some gradually climbed up the ladder to become owner-farmers and even landlords.<sup>30</sup> By 1909, Japanese immigrants owned about twenty thousand acres in California.<sup>31</sup>

While Japanese immigrants' farming success further agitated the anti-Japanese sentiment that had already been swelling on the West Coast, their accomplishments also inspired Japanese expansionists to establish a Japanese farming presence elsewhere in the United States. Around the same time that Japanese diplomats in Brazil and Korea were envisioning Japanese farmer migration, their colleague Uchida Sadatsuchi, Japanese consul in New York, made a pitch to Tokyo in 1902 about exporting Japanese farmers to Texas. During an investigative trip to the American South, Uchida met with agricultural leaders in Texas who expressed interest in

attracting Japanese farmers to develop rice cultivation in the state. Uchida believed that an invitation from Texas would open a new path for the Japanese community in the United States by avoiding the racial hatred from white Americans on the West Coast.<sup>32</sup>

Uchida's report, widely circulated in the mass media, inspired hundreds of Japanese expansionists to migrate to Texas as rice farmers between 1903 and 1908. Compared to the rural poor who constituted the bulk of Japanese migrants on the West Coast, the majority of the initial settlers in Texas were relatively wealthy and educated. They purchased sizable plots of land, ranging from two hundred to six hundred acres, and started farming right away. These owner-farmers recruited help from both Japan and the existing Japanese migrants on the West Coast.

Some of these Japanese farming settlers held global visions and linked their efforts in Texas to the empire's expansion in Asia and Latin America. A noteworthy example of this was Yoshimura Daijirō, who was among the first to answer Uchida's call. Only one year after Uchida's report was published, Yoshimura formed the Society of Friends of Overseas Enterprises (*Kaigai Kigyō Dōshikai*) in Osaka to facilitate farmer migration to Texas. With financial contributions from its members, the society was able to purchase 160 acres in League City next to the Gulf of Mexico, where it established a rice farm in 1904.<sup>33</sup>

Yoshimura was also a prolific writer and passionate advocate for expansion. His words and experience illustrated the confluence of agrarianism and expansionism and, more specifically, the connection between Japanese migration to Texas and Japanese expansion in Asia and South America. For Yoshimura, relocating Japanese farmers to Texas would not only rescue Japanese agriculture but also demonstrate to white Americans the superior aptitude of the Japanese for farming: while white Americans were good at commerce and industry, the Japanese, being world champions in agriculture, deserved a place in the land of the White Man.<sup>34</sup>

Yoshimura also considered the history of Texas itself as especially instructive to the Japanese because it demonstrated how migration to the land of another sovereign country could turn into territorial expansion. As he observed, the land of Texas had changed hands numerous times, first from Native Americans to Spanish colonists, then to Mexicans, and eventually to Anglo-Americans. This process revealed the fact that military conquest, exemplified by the Spanish Empire, was now being replaced by the new and peaceful way of expansion centered on migration, spearheaded by the United States. White Americans had initially moved to the Mexican land as farming settlers without military or governmental support back home, but through diligence and resolution, Yoshimura argued, they eventually made this foreign land their own.<sup>35</sup>

If the colonial history of Texas was a lesson for Japanese empire builders, the Japanese farmers' settlement in Texas, for Yoshimura, was a critical step in Japanese settler colonial expansion around the world. He envisioned that the success of Japanese rice farming in Texas would allow Japanese settlers to monopolize

rice production in the United States, thereby dominating a critical sector of its national economy. In Yoshimura's imagination, besting the White Man in agriculture would herald the success of Japanese expansion in Asia and South America in the following decades, where the Japanese would also need to compete with white colonists.<sup>36</sup>

However, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the fever of Japanese farmer migration to Texas had subsided. Most Japanese farms, including one owned by Yoshimura, had fallen into bankruptcy, and only a handful of them continued to operate. While the sudden drop in the global rice price was the direct reason for their failure, the crisis of the Japanese rice farmers was also a result of the shortage of Japanese laborers caused by the Gentlemen's Agreement.<sup>37</sup> Saibara Seitō's farm was among the small number of survivors. During the peak of the boom, it was one of the most successful farms, and Saibara was widely celebrated in Japanese mass media as a role model of the Japanese migrant farmer in Texas.<sup>38</sup> A former president of Doshisha University in Kyoto, Saibara came to the United States to study in 1902 but was persuaded by Uchida to start his farming career the next year. After purchasing three hundred acres in Webster, Texas, and establishing his own farm that year, he convinced his family members in Japan to migrate to Texas with him. Later he also recruited farmers from Kōchi, his native prefecture in Japan, to work on his farm.<sup>39</sup>

While Yoshimura articulated the intellectual link between Texas and Japan's colonial ambitions in Asia and South America, Saibara embodied this link by his deeds. Disappointed by institutionalized racism against the Japanese in the United States, Saibara entrusted his farm to his son and migrated to Brazil in 1918 and started a farm in the state of São Paulo. In 1928, he was employed by the then newly formed Japanese South American Colonization Company (Nanbei Takushoku Gaisha) and moved north to Pará to manage an experimental farm in the Amazon Basin.<sup>40</sup>

#### THE RISE OF SÃO PAULO AND A NEW MODE OF COFFEE ECONOMY

Saibara's re-migration was made possible by the prosperity of the Japanese community in Brazil. The initial formation and development of the Japanese community in Brazil took place in the context of a paradigm shift in Brazil's coffee economy and the rise of São Paulo as the new center of coffee cultivation. Since its first commercial cultivation in Rio de Janeiro in the late eighteenth century, coffee quickly became a major source of wealth for Brazil's export-centered economy. By the 1850s, coffee constituted half of Brazil's export income. Thanks to the sale of coffee, the Brazilian empire, for the first time since its independence, exported more than it imported in 1860.<sup>41</sup> The expansion of coffee cultivation also led to critical economic and political transformations in Brazil. For the first half of the



nineteenth century, Rio de Janeiro remained the center for coffee cultivation and the city of Rio was the primary port for coffee exportation. However, as coffee cultivation expanded southward into São Paulo and Minas Gerais, by the end of the nineteenth century the state of São Paulo became the new center of the coffee economy.

The rise of São Paulo in the coffee economy was accompanied by a new mode of coffee production. Rio's traditional coffee fazendas, like the sugar plantations before them, relied almost exclusively on slave labor. With the full abolition of slavery in Brazil gradually becoming a certainty, the newly formed coffee planters in São Paulo had to turn to immigration as an alternative source of labor. The development of this immigration-centered mode of coffee production was marked by the expansion of coffee cultivation in the state of São Paulo from its eastern coast into the western inland areas, which was made possible by the advancement of railways. After the formation of the São Paulo Railway Company in 1859, railroads began to link the state's western areas with the city of São Paulo and then to the Port of Santos, making possible the transportation of coffee and goods between the east coast and inland.<sup>42</sup>

The transition of Brazil from an empire into a republic in 1889 signaled the political ascendancy of the new coffee elites in southeastern Brazil. In the following several decades, all but two civilian presidents of the First Republic would come from the bastions of the new coffee elites: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Minas Gerais.<sup>43</sup> As the coffee industry became central to national policy making, this regime change was accompanied by an immigration boom. To compete with other Latin American countries such as Argentina and with the United States, the Brazilian government, at both the central and state levels, began to provide financial subsidies to attract immigrants.<sup>44</sup>

As Brazilian elites saw immigration as a crucial means to whiten the Brazilian racial stock, they had a clear preference for Europeans. In the 1890s, the decade that immediately followed the formation of the First Republic, over half of the immigrants that entered Brazil were Italians. Most of the rest were from Portugal, Spain, and Germany.<sup>45</sup> Though Brazil reopened its doors to Asian immigrants in 1893 due to a temporary shortage of European immigrants, for the most part, the Brazilian leaders saw Asian immigration as neither desirable nor necessary.

However, at the beginning of the twentieth century when Japanese migration to Texas was gaining momentum, the prospects of Japanese migration to Brazil began to improve. The Italian government, in response to numerous reports about the terrible treatment of Italian laborers at Brazilian coffee plantations, issued the Prinetti Decree of 1902 that banned subsidized Italian migration to Brazil. This led to a precipitous drop in the number of Italian immigrants, forcing Brazilian elites to seek alternative sources of immigrants. Japan, once again, emerged as an alternative migrant supplier. The empire's victory in the Russo-Japanese War three years later further consolidated the image of the Japanese as the "white people

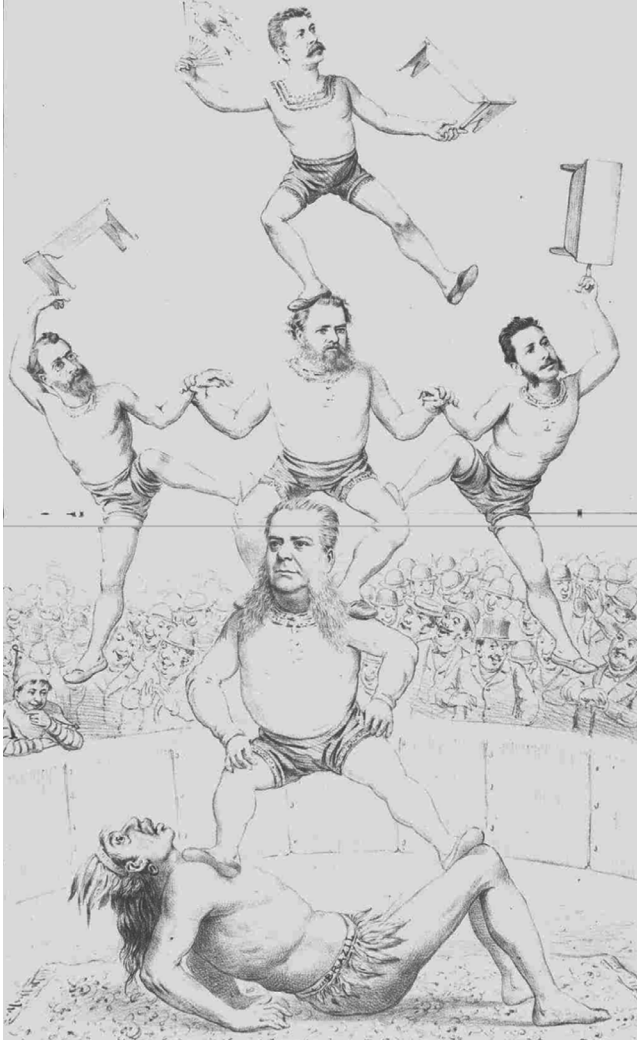


FIGURE 8. This image illustrates the settler colonial nature of the pro-immigration republican regime by showing how it managed its internal power balance while standing on the body of an Indigenous person. Source: *Revista Illustrada*, no. 564, 1889.

in Asia” in the minds of Brazilian policy makers. Federal Deputy Nestor Ascoli went as far as to argue that the result of the Russo-Japanese War demonstrated that the Japanese were now a better agent of progress and modernization than the Europeans. The introduction of Japanese blood into the Brazilian racial stock, Ascoli reasoned, would be a better choice than the immigration of any other non-white people.<sup>46</sup> The logic of white racism behind the Brazilian preference for the

Japanese is attested by the 1912 book, *Samurais e mandarins*, by the Brazilian diplomat Guimarães Filho. Filho argued for the “whiteness” of the Japanese by contrasting them with the Chinese, whom he believed would only lead to the degeneration of Brazilians due to their racial and cultural inferiority. The Japanese, he asserted instead, were progressive and civilized and would help whiten the Brazilian race.<sup>47</sup> After Brazilian leaders came to view the Japanese race in a more favorable light, they quickly removed legal barriers for the federal and state governments to subsidize immigration from Japan.

#### “HAPPY HOME AND BLESSED LAND”: THE START OF JAPANESE BRAZILIAN MIGRATION

At around this time, Sugimura Fukashi arrived in Brazil as the new top diplomat. At their first official meeting, Brazilian president Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves, a native of São Paulo, asked for Sugimura’s help jumpstarting Japanese migration to Brazil. Brazil’s finance minister, Leopoldo Bulhões, also reached out to Sugimura, requesting Tokyo’s help to populate Brazil’s territories and establish colonies through immigration. Shortly afterward, Sugimura embarked on a tour in São Paulo in the company of Brazilian officials. In his report to Tokyo right after the tour, Sugimura concluded that the state of São Paulo was a “happy home and blessed land” (*rakkyō fukudo*) given to the Japanese by the heavens, where Japanese migration was bound to succeed.<sup>48</sup>

Sugimura’s positive outlook, a marked turnaround from his predecessors such as Chinda and Ōkoshi, was not only due to solicitous gestures from the Brazilian side. He understood that Brazil’s newfound enthusiasm for Japanese immigration was a direct result of the decline in Italian immigration. Compared to the passion of the Brazilian leaders, he was more interested in what São Paulo could actually offer to the Japanese migrants: generous state government subsidies to fund their trips from Japan to Brazil, a pleasant climate for living and farming, developed transportation facilities, and a booming economy. However, what Sugimura considered more attractive still was the possibility for Japanese immigrants to settle down and become landowning farmers in São Paulo.<sup>49</sup>

Sugimura’s report was soon released to the Japanese public and immediately inspired a number of individuals to migrate to Brazil.<sup>50</sup> The report also caught the eye of Mizuno Ryū, president of the Imperial Colonial Migration Company.<sup>51</sup> Between 1905 and 1908, Mizuno traveled back and forth between Tokyo and São Paulo several times to negotiate a migration contract. Though Sugimura died suddenly in 1906, the next Japanese minister to Brazil, Uchida Sadatsuchi, also supported Mizuno’s cause. Uchida, the architect of Japanese farmer migration to Texas, believed that São Paulo was another perfect migration destination for Japanese farmers.<sup>52</sup>

The result of these negotiations was a contract that allowed Mizuno to successfully bring the first official group of Japanese labor migrants to the Port of Santos in 1908. Based on these contracts, 60 percent of their steamship fares were jointly paid by the state of São Paulo and coffee planters in the form of a loan. The immigrants shouldered the remaining 40 percent themselves, an amount that exceeded an average Japanese farmer's three years' worth of income.<sup>53</sup> They were expected to repay their debts via wage deduction during their contract periods. The sailing of the *Kasato Maru* is widely known as the starting point of Japanese labor migration to Brazil, but what has been usually overlooked is the fact that the contract required the state government of São Paulo to establish a number of colonies for the Japanese migrants to settle after their contract terms ended. These colonies were expected to be located along the central railway lines, where the Japanese subjects would be able to purchase land at a low price.<sup>54</sup>

On June 18, the *Kasato Maru* reached the Port of Santos after sailing across the Indian and Atlantic Oceans for fifty-one days. The migrants onboard were brought to Hospedaria de Imigrantes in the city of São Paulo the next day, and there they confirmed their specific contracts with coffee planters. Shortly afterward, 772 migrants were transported by train to six coffee plantations in the state of São Paulo and started working as contract laborers.<sup>55</sup> Mizuno Ryū, Uchida Sadatuschi, and others behind the sailing of the *Kasato Maru* had envisioned that these migrants would put down permanent roots for the Japanese empire in Brazil. However, the majority were simply hoping for a way out of poverty. This gap between the expectations of the Japanese elites and those of the migrants themselves were further enlarged by misleading advertising that the Imperial Colonial Migration Company used: to recruit enough migrants to meet the contract's requirement, the company promised to give every recruit a generous subsidy to cover the cost of migration right after they arrived in Brazil, but it later failed to fulfill its promise.<sup>56</sup> During the recruitment, the company also idealized Brazil as a country where the Japanese migrants could make quick and easy money, yet the *Kasato Maru* migrants found themselves ill-prepared for the challenges waiting for them in Brazil; more than half of them eventually broke their contracts and left their initial plantations.<sup>57</sup> The failure of the *Kasato Maru* migrants led to the bankruptcy of the Imperial Colonial Migration Company.

. . .

This chapter explains how the sailing of the *Kasato Maru* was made possible in the contexts of both Japan's and Brazil's settler colonial expansion at the turn of the twentieth century. With the rise of agrarianism at home and the intensification of anti-Japanese campaigns in the United States, Japanese expansionists began to favor farmer migration over labor migration. At around the same time, the state of São Paulo emerged as the new center of the coffee economy and the primary

destination of immigrants in Brazil. The campaign of Japanese migration to Texas, though short-lived, not only marked the beginning of Japanese farmer migration overseas but also paved the way for the sailing of the *Kasato Maru*. Two central figures in the Texas campaign, Uchida Sadatsuchi and Saibara Seitō, became ardent supporters of and participants in Japanese collaborative settler colonialism in Brazil.

The chapter also highlights an important but often overlooked fact about the *Kasato Maru* migrants: though most of them arrived as contract laborers, both the recruiters and the Japanese government expected them to eventually become farming settlers who would put down their roots in South America permanently. It was no mere coincidence that two supervisors onboard the ship, Uetsuka Shūhei and Kōyama Rokurō, became the arms and mouthpieces of Japanese settlers in São Paulo in the following decades. Uetsuka founded one of the earliest Japanese settler colonies in São Paulo and became an influential leader of the Japanese immigrants in the state in the 1910s and 1920s. Kōyama established and edited *Seishū shinpō*, one of the three most widely circulated newspapers in the Japanese Brazilian community before World War II, which played a central role in fostering the formation of a collective identity among Japanese settlers in Brazil.<sup>58</sup>

Though disappointed by the outcome of the *Kasato Maru* migration, the Paulista government could not afford to suspend Japanese immigration given the shortage of coffee labor. It negotiated a new contract with Mizuno, who partnered with the Takemura Emigration Company (Takemura Imin Gaisha) to continue recruiting Japanese migrants and transporting them to São Paulo. With better preparation and more stable financial resources, the Japanese migrants who arrived in 1910 on the *Ryojun Maru* were more successful overall.<sup>59</sup> Unlike the *Kasato Maru* migrants, over half of whom broke their initial contracts within six months after arrival, 75 percent of the *Ryojun Maru* migrants remained in their contracts after nine months of stay.<sup>60</sup> However, the Paulista government's new contract reduced its subsidies for Japanese immigrants and withdrew its commitment to establish Japanese colonies.<sup>61</sup>

The waning of Brazilian support necessitated further involvement by the Japanese government and social groups in support of farmer migration to Brazil. The next chapter explains how the first Japanese settler colonies came into being in São Paulo in the 1910s as a result of the collaborative efforts of the Japanese government, business elites, and migration companies. It also discusses how these settler colonies developed and expanded in the context of the great social changes in both Japan and Brazil brought on by World War I.