

Race File

THE STATUS OF JAPANESE
IMMIGRATION IN CALIFORNIA

Prepared by
YAMATO ICHIHASHI, A. M.

LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY.

Office of the President.

Stanford University, Cal., March 31, 1913.

To Whom It May Concern:—

Mr. Yamato Ichihashi is preparing a pamphlet on the Japanese question on the Pacific Coast. I wish to say in his behalf that he is entirely competent to give a just and thorough treatment of this subject. He is a graduate of Stanford University, where he was for a time assistant in the Department of Economics. He spent two years at Harvard University, where he was appointed Henry Broomfield Rogers Memorial Fellow. He has a very thorough knowledge of America and American conditions, as well as the purposes, ambitions and resources of his own country, and his essay should be of the greatest value in bringing about a better understanding where there is every reason for friendship and none whatever for suspicion and enmity.

Very truly yours,

DAVID STARR JORDAN.

THE STATUS OF JAPANESE IMMIGRATION IN CALIFORNIA

By YAMATO ICHIHASHI, A. M.

(Formerly a Special Agent of the United States Immigration Commission.)

In 1907 an "informal agreement" was entered into between the American and Japanese Governments, whereby immigration to this country of laborers directly from Japan, as well as migration of Japanese from Hawaii, Canada and Mexico, is prohibited. And, notwithstanding a most effective administration by Japan of the said agreement, agitation against Japanese has not ceased. It is as vigorous as ever, if not more so, than it was before the restriction was put in practice.

In view of such situation, it is deemed advisable that the intelligent Americans should be furnished with facts pertaining to Japanese immigration and its present status, so that they themselves can better judge the whole question rather than have it interpreted by the Asiatic Exclusion League and other interested persons. With such an end in view, I have undertaken to prepare the present study. It purposes to be no more than an unbiased statement of the more obvious facts concerning Japanese immigration and its status in this State of California.

As to the sources upon which the study is based, I may be permitted to say first of all that I have taken a keen but objective interest in the question ever since 1900, when it seemed to assume an acuteness. Added to this fact, I worked as a "special agent" for the United States Immigration Commission of 1907. The Commission made an exhaustive inquiry into the general question of immigration throughout the country. My particular function as its agent was to look into the Japanese immigration situation here in this State, and thus I had an ample opportunity to familiarize myself with the subject. The results of that investigation are now made public. In addition to this information, I have relied upon such sources as the annual report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration, the biennial report of the State Bureau of Labor, and, not least in importance, the facts gathered by a "special State investigation of 1909," which also made an extensive study of the "Japanese question."

According to the reports of the United States Superintendent,

and later of the United States Commissioner-General of Immigration, the number of Japanese immigrants and that of all immigrants who have entered the country was as follows, by decades:

Decade.	No. of Japanese Immigrants.	No. of Total Immigrants.
1861-1870	218	2,314,000
1871-1880	149	2,812,000
1881-1890	2,270	5,246,000
1891-1900	20,826	3,687,000
1901-1910	62,432	8,785,000
Total	85,985	22,846,000

The figures concerning Japanese immigration do not include those who migrated from Hawaii after its annexation. Thus it may be proper to add to the total of 85,985 15,000 more, or thereabouts, to cover the extent of that migration. Even on such a basis it is clearly manifest that Japanese immigration has formed but a negligibly insignificant portion of general immigration.

Next, a word may be said as to the extent of Japanese departure from this country. The immigration bureau made no record of returning aliens till very recently. Fortunately, however, the Japanese Government has been recording the returning immigrants. According to this authority, the number of Japanese who had annually returned from the United States and the percentage these formed of the number who had emigrated to the same since 1886 was as follows:

Year.	Number.	Percentage.	Year.	Number.	Percentage.
1886.....	70	36.0	1899.....	833	29.2
1887.....	65	28.3	1900.....	1006	15.2
1888.....	67	16.5	1901.....	866	17.5
1889.....	76	11.8	1902.....	1013	20.0
1890.....	73	10.5	1903.....	1028	14.8
1891.....	168	14.7	1904.....	922	12.0
1892.....	343	16.2	1905.....	1791	49.3
1893.....	356	21.6	1906.....	2881	33.3
1894.....	391	22.4	1907.....	1903	18.6
1895.....	347	72.2	1908.....	5493	57.7
1896.....	367	33.0	1909.....	4538	145.8
1897.....	388	25.4	1910.....	5101	187.5
1898.....	671	30.0			

In my mind the table is not without omissions. But if it can be used to indicate the phenomenon, about 20 per cent of the emigrants has been annually returning to Japan. The higher percentage for 1895 and 1896 was due to non-immigration rather than to the actual number returning. The same situation for 1906, however, was partly caused by the large number returning and partly by the fall in the number emigrating. The curious situation that has obtained since 1908 was wholly due to the effective administration of the agreement

of 1907.

Having examined the extent of Japanese immigrating and departing, we will now direct our attention to their number residing in the country. According to the United States census, the number of Japanese residents was as follows:

Year.	Number.	Year.	Number.
1870	55	1900	24,326
1880	148	1910	71,722
1890	2039		

I have tried to estimate the probable number for the inter-censal years since 1890, which is shown below:

Year.	Number.	Year.	Number.
1890	2,039	1901	28,391
1891	2,907	1902	32,403
1892	4,162	1903	38,288
1893	5,454	1904	53,764
1894	6,802	1905	61,144
1895	7,935	1906	66,899
1896	8,678	1907	75,266
1897	9,816	1908	79,277
1898	11,375	1909	77,850
1899	13,386	1910	75,469
1900	24,326		

Thus, according to the census, there were only 55 Japanese residing in the whole country in 1870. That number increased to 148 in 1880. A decade later it reached 2039. During the next decade Japanese immigration was quite extensive, and consequently the number residing in the country increased also. In 1898 the number was no more than 11,400, but two years later that number jumped to 24,000. The growth during the last decade was more significant. There were as many as 75,000 Japanese in 1910. The largest number residing, however, was in 1908, it being nearly 80,000. So much, then, for the history and extent of Japanese immigration during the past fifty years.

OCCUPATIONS OF JAPANESE ADMITTED AND DEPARTED FISCAL YEARS 1908 TO 1911.

Compiled from reports of Commissioner-General of Immigration.

Occupation.	1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.	
	Ad- Ad- Ad- mitted. mitted. mitted.	De- De- De- parted. parted. parted.	Ad- Ad- Ad- mitted. mitted. mitted.	De- De- De- parted. parted. parted.	Ad- Ad- Ad- mitted. mitted. mitted.	De- De- De- parted. parted. parted.	Ad- Ad- Ad- mitted. mitted. mitted.	De- De- De- parted. parted. parted.
Actors	54	6	10	20	27	14	16	13
Clergy	37	18	14	25	21	18	20	24
Government officials	45	34	45	42	28	68	51	56
Teachers	50	16	24	15	24	41	56	41
Other professional.	70	143	65	94	162	83	101	151

Clerks	154	66	56	64	109	42	87	66
Farmers	518	698	69	492	95	551	388	669
Merchants	951	578	274	552	291	687	304	564
Restaurant and hotel keepers	130	70	64	67	68	116	52	145
Students	2018	153	255	239	288	260	....	....
No occupation, in- cluding women and children	1299	832	690	747	695	889	2400	1188
Not stated	177	119	153	684	85	48	75	21
Total non-laborers according to Rule 211	5503	2733	1719	3041	1893	2817	3550	2938
Barbers	28	11	9	12	9	18	22	24
Carpenters	27	21	12	25	7	17	19	35
Tailors	36	38	5	7	8	11	13	18
Other artisans	99	164	7	66	59	49	57	160
Cooks	96	69	60	148	77	161	....	....
Farm laborers	1031	60	206	246	260	612	281	994
Gardeners	18	10	6	13	5	5	13	12
Laborers	1153	1077	245	344	165	1156	208	1094
Servants	305	300	114	133	90	112	63	149
Not stated	1248	313	49	969	25	63	56	445
Total laborers, ac- cording to Rule 211	4041	2063	713	1963	705	2207	732	2931
Total	9544	4796	2432	5004	2598	5024	4282	5869

According to the first table, during the first six years students numbered 1354, tradesmen 902 and laborers 1096, respectively. Legalization of emigration of laborers from Japan in 1885 did not evidently affect Japanese emigration to America. In fact, till we come to the year 1896, when the number of labor emigrants was over 1000, laborers did not contribute to Japanese immigration to this country. To make this fact plain I have given below the percentage of the emigrants by occupation for the entire period considered:

Occupation.	Percentage.
Merchants	21.5
Laborers	21.4
Students	21.1
Farmers and fishermen	14.1
Artisans	3.8
Others	18.1
Total	100.0

According to American statistics, we note that the number of labor immigrants had been greatly curtailed. Note at the same time, the large number of laborers departing from the country. The phenomena are the outcome of the agreement of 1907. Such, then, were the occupations of Japanese immigrants when they left Japan and when they were admitted into the country.

Next as to the sex distribution among Japanese immigrants. The following table gives the proportion of females among Japanese immigrants

Year.	Percentage.	Year.	Percentage.
1886	3.9	1899	5.8
1887	3.4	1900	3.8
1888	9.0	1901	6.4
1889	4.6	1902	8.2
1890	9.0	1903	6.6
1891	9.5	1904	6.2
1892	3.2	1905	17.7
1893	6.2	1906	13.6
1894	5.3	1907	15.2
1895	10.0	1908	17.7
1896	6.7	1909	55.3
1897	7.6	1911	69.2
1898	5.0		

Accordingly, females formed but a very small portion of Japanese immigrants. In more recent years, however, their percentage has been steadily gaining. The phenomenal situation since 1909 is partly accounted for by non-immigration of male laborers. The increasing number of women among the immigrants indicates, among other things, a greater tendency among them to settle.

The age distribution of Japanese immigrants according to the Commissioner-General of Immigration was as follows:

Year.	Under 14 Years.	14 to 44 Years.	45 Years and Over.
1902	4.3	94.6	0.9
1903	2.5	96.5	0.9
1904	1.3	96.1	2.5
1905	1.1	96.7	2.8
1906	1.0	97.3	1.2
1907	0.8	98.2	1.0
1908 .....	...	....	...
1909	4.5	92.4	2.1
1910 .....	...	....	...
1911	6.5	91.7	1.8

Although the situation has slightly changed after the agreement of 1907 went into effect, we note that over 90 per cent of Japanese immigrants when admitted into the country were between 14 and 44 years of age. This fact, together with the fact of small proportion of females, clearly indicates that Japanese here in America are in the

stage of greatest productivity. Because of their youthful age, Japanese immigrants have been less susceptible to sickness and have been peculiarly free from difficulties, pecuniary or otherwise, so commonly experienced by other immigrants that sought the American shores.

There has been a gradual increase in the per capita amount of money brought by immigrants. The table below shows the per capita amount of money brought by races:

Race.	1900.	1905.	1911.
Japanese	\$39.59	\$37.78	\$40.70
Italian (South) .. .	8.82	16.77	22.10
Italian (North) .. .	22.49	26.79	34.10
Irish .. .	14.50	26.19	42.70
Hebrew .. .	8.67	14.04	21.50
Polish	9.94	13.12	21.40
Scandinavian .. .	16.65	25.75	36.60
Slovak .. .	11.69	15.43	23.30
Magyer .. .	10.39	15.10	26.50
Croatian-Slavonian .. .	12.51	15.36	24.40
Russian .. .	14.94	36.65	26.60
English	38.90	57.65	59.80
German .. .	28.53	43.72	54.50

According to statistics, the number of illiterates among Japanese is smaller than that among the South and East Europeans. But I seriously doubt the accuracy of these statistics, at least so far as Japanese are concerned, on three positive grounds. First, a system of compulsory education has been in force in Japan during the past forty years, and we have already seen that the majority of Japanese immigrants are young men. Second, common laborers formed but 21.4 per cent of the total immigration during the entire period under consideration, and it is unthinkable, from what I know, that all these laborers should be illiterates. Third, the Immigration Commission found that the literacy among Japanese here in the West compares favorably with that among Europeans in whose nations exist the best systems of education.

The percentage of literacy among the foreign born whites in California is higher by 1.4 per cent as compared with that among the Japanese immigrants. Note also the composition of these foreign-born whites. By far the majority of Japanese are confined to the Western States, California containing the largest number. In 1910 the Japanese population in California was estimated at 55,000, made up approximately of 45,000 males, 6000 females and 4000 children.

According to this, Japanese are scattered all over the State. However, Los Angeles county contained the largest number, which was 11,500, while San Francisco and Sacramento had the next largest number of Japanese. Alameda and San Joaquin contained little over 4000 each, while Santa Clara and Fresno had about 3000 each. Three counties, Yolo, Contra Costa and Placer, had about 1000 each. Their number gradually diminishes in the remaining counties. However,

the percentage they formed of the entire population in each county does not follow the same order of their actual number. Thus in Yolo county they formed 9 per cent, which was the highest, and in Sacramento and San Joaquin 8 per cent, which was the next highest. In Los Angeles they formed but 2.2 per cent, while in San Francisco 1.6 per cent. In no case, then, had they formed more than 9 per cent of the entire population, even by counties.

Of the Japanese in cities, Los Angeles contained the largest and San Francisco the next largest numbers, they being 7900 and 6900 respectively. Sacramento had little over 2400, but these formed 5.6 per cent of its entire population. The city of Alameda had only 700 Japanese, but these formed 3 per cent of its population. In spite of their large numbers, they formed only 2.5 per cent of the population of the city of Los Angeles, while 1.6 per cent of that of San Francisco.

Below is given an estimated occupational distribution of Japanese in California:

Occupation.	Number.	Occupation.	Number.
Officials, teachers, clergy	120	Railway employes....	1,500
Students	1,000	Factories and can-	
Farmers	4,500	neries	500
Farm hands	20,000	Salt field hands.....	300
Merchants	4,000	Others	3,580
Hired by merchants....	6,000	No occupation	8,500
Domestic servants	5,000		
		Total.....	55,000

Nearly 50 per cent of Japanese immigrants are engaged in horticultural and agricultural industries, either as farmers or as farmhands, the latter predominating in number.

The relation of the character of the crop to the employment of Japanese is well brought out in the following:

On the 2369 farms operated by white farmers the percentage of labor furnished by Japanese, according to the principal crops grown, was as follows:

	Per Cent.		Per Cent.
Berries	87.2	Citrus fruits	38.1
Sugar beets	66.3	Deciduous fruits	36.5
Nursery products	57.3	Hops	8.7
Grapes	51.3	Hay and grain.....	6.6
Vegetables	45.7	Miscellaneous	19.6

Speaking of the wages of Japanese farmhands, the report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of California says: "The average wage paid by white farmers to white help was \$1.38 per day with board and \$1.80 per day without board, and to the Japanese \$1.49 per day with board and \$1.54 per day without board. This, however, cannot be taken as the average earnings of the Japanese, for 49.2 per cent of the entire number employed were working by contract or piece work, under which condition the earnings of the Japanese are much

higher than those of the whites.”

The report further says: “The average wages for both Japanese and Chinese regularly employed and receiving board, \$1.396 and \$1.406, respectively, are higher than those for ‘miscellaneous white’ men, \$1.311 and Italians \$1.108. ‘Miscellaneous white’ men were paid \$1.889 per day without board, as against \$1.623 paid to Japanese * * *”

On the basis of 3650 Japanese farm laborers investigated, the same report states further: “Of the 863 regular employes not boarded, 86.4 per cent received between \$1.50 and \$1.75, and of the 2654 temporary men not boarded, 90.3 per cent received from \$1.50 to \$1.75, inclusive.”

The report concludes: “White employers nearly always prefer white men as teamsters and usually state that they would prefer reliable white men for all work, but the Japanese are better workers than the irregular white men usually available for hand work.”

Just when Japanese began to cultivate their own land is not known. But the State investigation of 1909 disclosed that the farm land owned by Japanese was 10,791 acres, which were divided into 199 farms. These farms were assessed at \$330,401 on land, and \$46,927 on improvements, making a total of \$397,298, and were mortgaged to the extent of \$173,584. In 1912 that acreage was increased to 12,726, which were assessed at \$609,605. There was an increase in the amount of 1935 acres, and in value of \$212,307. So much for Japanese who cultivate their own land.

Concerning these farmers and tenant farmers the report of the State investigation says: “1733 Japanese farms were visited, of which 132, containing 3876 acres, were operated by Japanese owners; 1170 farms containing 46,480 acres by Japanese cash lessees; and 431 farms, containing 33,028 acres, by Japanese share lessees. These farms produced crops valued at, approximately, over \$6,000,000. The most important crop grown was vegetables, which amounted to, approximately, \$2,500,000, the next being deciduous fruits, \$1,750,000, and berries, \$730,000.”

“That part of the investigation relating to the Japanese in business and activities other than agriculture is practically complete. Two thousand five hundred and forty-eight establishments were visited throughout the State. One thousand nine hundred and thirty-four were owned by individuals, 550 by partnerships, and 64 by corporations; 19.4 per cent have been in business less than one year; 24.2 per cent for one year; 17.2 per cent for two years, and 15.9 per cent for three years, making a total of 76.7 per cent of the total established since 1906. Only 58 establishments, or 2.3 per cent of the total, have been in existence for ten years or more. The capital invested in most instances was very small, 68.7 per cent of the total having a capital of less than \$1000. The total aggregate cash invested amounted to over \$4,000,000. The total annual transactions of these Japanese establishments amounted to \$16,114,407, of which \$5,938,012,

or 36.8 per cent, was with the white people. The total annual rent paid by these firms was over \$900,000. Six thousand five hundred and fifty-six persons were engaged in the conducting of these establishments, of which number 2546 males and 562 females (principally wives of owners), were employers, and 3214 males and 234 females employes. In addition there were employed by these Japanese firms 35 male and 20 female white persons. In 1782 establishments, or 69.9 per cent, the employes lodged at the place of work.

Of the remaining occupations, the most important is undoubtedly domestic service. It may be stated that before Japanese found work on ranches, they were exclusively confined to domestic work. There are now some 5000 of them engaged in this service, which embraces cooking, waiting on table, house cleaning, etc. Statistics show that the majority of the Orientals are earning somewhere between \$35 and \$45 per month, and therefore more than the female whites engaged in similar occupations.

As to the Japanese employed by railroad companies. We have no available data concerning Japanese railroad hands in this State. But we may learn their status indirectly through a knowledge of numerous Japanese employed by the Central Pacific, the Western Pacific and the Salt Lake and San Pedro in Nevada and Utah.

The report of the Immigration Commission says: "From 1895, when they were first employed, until 1901, the Japanese were most numerous of the races employed as laborers. They were then displaced by Greeks at a higher wage, but were later re-employed at a lower wage than that paid to the displaced race. In 1906 they numbered 1000; 1908, 900; at the beginning of 1909, 700. They are now paid \$1.40 per day, while the Italians, the other important racial element in maintenance of way work, are in some cases paid \$1.50. On the other two roads referred to, the Japanese are paid the same wages as all white men, \$1.45 per day, and in one case more than the Mexicans employed on the southern end of the route. They are also paid the same wages as Greeks, Italians and Slavs, and all white men employed on another road with its western terminus in Utah."

The report further says: "With few exceptions the Japanese are preferred to the Greeks, who are most invariably ranked as the least desirable section hands, because they are not industrious and are intractable and difficult to control. As between Japanese and Italians, opinion is fairly evenly divided. The same may be said of them and the Slavs. Though the Japanese are usually ranked below the Chinese and Mexicans, they compare favorably with the South and Eastern Europeans, who constitute a still larger percentage of the common laborers in maintenance of way work."

Professor Jenks and Dr. Lauck say: "The road masters and section foremen generally prefer the Japanese to either Italians, Greeks or Slavs as section hands. In railway shops they are given a higher rank than the Mexicans, Greeks, and at times than the Italians."

The Immigration Commission report says: "By way of summary,

it may be said that when compared with other races employed in similar kinds of labor in the same industry, the Japanese show relatively rapid progress in acquiring a speaking knowledge of English. Their advance has been much more rapid than that of the Chinese and the Mexicans, who show little interest in 'American' institutions. During their first years of residence a greater proportion have learned to speak English than of most of the South and East European races. However, among those who have been in this country for a longer period of time, a larger proportion of the South and East Europeans than of the Japanese speak English. The progress of the Japanese is due to their great eagerness to learn, which has overcome more obstacles than have been encountered by most of the other races, obstacles of race prejudice, or segregation, and of wide difference in language. The Chinese are self-satisfied and indifferent in this regard, whereas the Japanese are eager to learn the English language or anything pertaining to Western civilization.

"It is evident that the standard of literacy shown by the Japanese, as indicated by their ability to read and write their native language, is far higher than that shown by the Chinese, the Mexicans, and most of the South and East European races, if comparison is limited to those who are employed in the same industries and at the same kind of work."

"As noted above with regard to their ability to speak English many Japanese immigrants have attended high schools in Japan, where they are given a foundation in English grammar * * * But a further aid in mastering the English language is found in the schools which are conducted in this country. Practically all of the few Japanese children of school age in the West attend the public schools, where they are found in all classes, from the primary grades through the entire elementary and secondary system."

"Numerous schools are maintained for the benefit of adult Japanese immigrants. No less than 33, the primary aim of which is to instruct adult Japanese in the English language, were reported by agents of the Commission in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento, Cal., and Seattle and Tacoma, Wash. Of these, several were designed primarily for the 'student class,' and embraced all subjects preparatory to high school, and in one or two cases for college work. The great majority, however, were conducted by the various religious missions and by private parties with the primary aim of imparting a knowledge of English to Japanese laborers."

At the end of 1912 the number of Japanese attending various public and private schools in California was as follows:

School.	Number.
Primary and grammar schools, public.....	1183
High school, public	139
Colleges and universities	105
Japanese kindergartens and primary schools, private.....	678

By way of summary, I wish to say:

1. Japanese immigration was insignificant till 1891, when 1000 of them immigrated for the first time. The number never exceeded 10,000 in any one year but once, and on the whole, formed but less than a drop in the bucket on the basis of general immigration. The agreement of 1907 “has been loyally and rigidly kept by the Japanese Foreign Office; too rigidly it may be, for even students from Japan bound for American universities, the best bond of peace between the two countries, find it increasingly hard to get their passports.” The Japanese population has slightly diminished since 1903, when it was estimated at 80,000. The census for 1910 says it was 71,000.

2. The “seums” of Japan never immigrated to the United States. Common laborers formed but 21.4 per cent of the total immigration between 1886 and 1903. “Beaten men of beaten races” could not be applied to the Japanese. To call them “coolies” is to deny facts. Females formed a small portion of the Japanese immigrants, though they formed a larger portion of immigration in more recent years. Ninety-five per cent of Japanese were between 14 and 44 years of age when admitted into the country. The per capita amount of money brought by them is not materially different from that brought by the most well-to-do European immigrants, viz.: English, German, Irish, etc. In California, the illiteracy among Japanese is smallest as compared with that among other foreign-born elements.

3. By far the great majority of Japanese immigrants are confined to the Western States, and in particular to California. But they do not congest. They are scattered all over the State, though the majority are found in rural districts.

4. Occupationally the most important for Japanese is agriculture. Here they are said to be now indispensable. Several thousands are employed by their own merchants and tradesmen. A slightly less number are found in domestic service. Some are employed by railroads. In none of the more important occupations do the Japanese now compete to the detriment of the general standard of living. When similarly occupied, on the whole, the Japanese are earning just as much as anybody else, if not more.

5. The current notion concerning Japanese farming in California is altogether too exaggerated. The farm land owned by them is no more than 12,726 acres, and the amount leased, 17,596. “Because of the circumstances under which they have engaged in farming an unusually large number of the Japanese have failed.”

6. Japanese city trades are, indeed, numerous. But most of these are very small-scale enterprises. The total capital invested in these is no more than \$4,000,000 and the total annual transactions, \$16,000,000.

7. In discussion of matters involving personal character one is apt to become “subjective,” but the purpose of this is an “objective”

study. Therefore, to carry out this purpose I have done no more than to quote at length, the various facts gathered by the Immigration Commission, and which are now made public in three massive volumes of over 2500 pages. According to this authority, the percentage of illiteracy among Japanese is exceedingly small. They are eager and make strenuous effort to learn of American institutions and to speak, read and write English. In fact, they "have made unusually good progress" in this regard. They impose no burden upon the community. The only objection raised is that the Japanese race does not belong to any branch of white races. Such then, are facts concerning the various aspects of Japanese immigration.

