

A RACIAL MINORITY POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

by

Tamotsu Shibutani

Mr. Kidner

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### Foreword

The purpose of this paper is not so much to present an addition to the field of knowledge but rather to put forward a broad and comprehensive, though unfortunately sketchy, outline of the nature of the problems which confront the Japanese minority population in California and to provide an analytical and historical background so that these problems may be more adequately understood. Not much original research is to be found in this paper, for it is largely nothing more than a gathering and systematizing of materials which are already available, although some of the material on the social organization of the Japanese population is new. There is a voluminous amount of literature in this broad field which has hardly been tapped for this essay; however, every effort has been made to gather material from the reputedly reliable sources.

Actually, this essay deals with four different, though closely related, problems which face the American-born Japanese at the present time--economic insecurity, marriage problems, social disorganization, and personality maladjustments. On the assumption that a problem can be better understood when one is blessed by a background, the situation relating to each problem has been analyzed, and a historical setting has been included to add perspective.

While this essay has not quite degenerated to the point of finding facts to fit ready-made conclusions, quite often, certain "frames of references" have been borrowed from various works in social theory and around these the available material has been organized.

The material submitted in this piece was drawn from books; articles in magazines, scientific journals, pamphlets, and dissertations; personal observations in central California and in the Bay Region; unpublished essays and research papers by various students in the field; and from conversations and correspondence with first and second generation Orientals during the past five years. I am also indebted to numerous students here at the University of California who have provided me with "leads" and ideas.

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A RACIAL MINORITY POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

(Outline)

Controlling purpose: The controlling purpose of this paper is to present a comprehensive outline of the nature of the problems which confront the Japanese minority population in California and to provide an analytical and historical background so that these problems may be more adequately understood.

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## A RACIAL MINORITY POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

### I. A PREFACE TO REFLECTION

Quite often these days the American-born Japanese is torn between those who plague them with half-baked and utopian solutions to their problems and those who morbidly caution them to be realistic and to face the dire facts. The forebodings of the ultra-realists, whether well-founded or otherwise, are demoralizing to say the least and if accepted at face value are not very conducive to sound mental health. On the other hand, beliefs based on wishful-thinking and upon the rantings of the inadequately informed may lead to consequences far more disastrous. A number of so-called "experts" wantonly throw out solutions without realizing the full implications of their suggestions. Unfortunately the world is too full of archair reformers whose dexterity in weaving pipedreams is matched only by their ability to preach the "true gospel."

What, then, can be done to alleviate this unhappy state of affairs? One thing of course, is the dissemination of more information. Another thing that might be done is defining the problem. Conflicting statements by various authorities can often be reduced to differences in what these individuals interpret to be the gist of the problem confronting the American-born Japanese. As the great philosopher John Dewey pointed out many years ago, one must define his problem before he can begin to think. How can anyone pose a solution to a problem unless he knows what the problem is?

The "Nisei problem,"<sup>1</sup> which many are trying to "solve," is not quite as

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1. This term, pronounced "nee-say," is widely used in referring to the American-born, second-generation Japanese. It is both singular and plural.

simple as some people seem to think. This essay is not an attempt to define the problem of the Nisei but rather a hopeful endeavor to clarify the nature of some of the difficulties which beset them.

Quite arbitrarily, the complications facing the Nisei can be centered about four focal points: economic, biological, cultural, and psychological.

On the economic level the problem of vocational insecurity is of major concern. Quite often the inability of the Nisei to find satisfactory economic status may well be the cause of many other difficulties. Often those with years of specialized training are forced to accept positions involving menial, unskilled labor from which there are virtually no hopes of advancement. The professions are overcrowded; semi-skilled jobs do not pay well; and even agriculture, the stronghold of the Japanese in California, does not offer too brilliant a future. In brief, a few jobs are available in the civil service; those of exceptional talent may find employment among Caucasians; but the rest may be condemned to a life working as migratory laborers, gardeners, or in laundries.

On what may roughly be called a biological level the Nisei face a serious marriage problem. It is generally believed that the ratio of marriageable women to men is three to one. Although it is questionable that the biological ratio is that high, if we take into consideration the fact that many men will not be able to find jobs with compensations adequate for supporting families, the social ratio may be higher. Since racial intermarriage is still taboo, this creates a serious problem for the women and in some cases has led to serious personality maladjustments.

Culturally, the Nisei face a problem of social disorganization. Whenever an individual is caught in a conflict of loyalties, he must conform with the standards of one or the other or else he must discard both norms of behavior. The Nisei is confronted by the culture of his parents and that which he learns in school, and quite often this conflict results in the breakdown of all standards.<sup>2</sup>

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2. Cf. W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, Boston, Badger, 1920, vol. Iv, 1-138.

Manifestations of this breakdown are appearing in central California where the migratory grape pickers are rapidly becoming the concern of all Japanese. Their drinking, gambling, frequenting the houses of prostitution, and street-fighting are indications of the breakdown of the traditional standards that once governed their lives. To be sure, this disorganization cannot be explained solely in terms of cultural conflicts since lack of better jobs undoubtedly did much to demoralize the group.<sup>3</sup>

On the psychological level there are numerous cases of maladjusted personalities among the Nisei. These disorders may be due to any of the other ills: economic insecurity, cultural conflicts, or difficulties in securing a mate.

Actually, there are few difficulties, if any, which face the Nisei that are peculiar to the Orientals alone. All minority groups--racial, religious, or otherwise--face prejudice, conflict, insecurity, and other maladjustments. However, in California, the Oriental minorities face these common problems with greater intensity largely because of the anti-Oriental heritage in California. Thus, really to understand any of the four aspects of the Nisei problem, one must keep in mind the general economic history of California and its relation to the Oriental.

Furthermore, at the present time, the crisis in the Pacific between Japan and the United States has placed the Nisei in a more precarious position and has in some cases intensified his difficulties. Thus, we must take into consideration not only general trends but also historical events that are relevant to the matter. Thus, this paper is really an analysis of the Japanese population in California organized around a historical treatment of the problems which confront them.

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3. Actually there can be no clash or conflict of "culture" since "culture" is not an entity. "Culture" refers to ways of doing things and the clash, if there is any, is in the mind of the individual prior to the time that he resolves his mental problem.

II. THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE IMMIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA  
 AND ITS  
 RELATION TO THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF THE STATE

Although immigration from Japan was legally prohibited until 1865, there is much evidence that Japanese were present in California prior to that time. Very early a few Japanese sailors had been shipwrecked on American shores, and some students had also ventured to this state. Moreover, accounts in the Sacramento Union and other California papers from 1869 indicate that a colony of a few score Japanese had settled as prospective silk growers at Gold Hill where they had been received with great favor. The Census of 1870, however, reported only 55 Japanese as residing in the United States, in 1880 the number was 148, and in 1890 it was only 2,039.<sup>4</sup> It was from this point that the immigration of Japanese in substantial numbers began.

The vast majority of the immigrants to America were from the farming classes, young men seeking new opportunities and advancement. They belonged to the lower classes of the Japanese community if not to the lowest of all. While they may have formed the real cornerstone of the nation, they were poor, conservative, uneducated, and totally ignorant of foreign conditions. Added to this group were a number of intelligent and ambitious elements in the middle class seeking to study or to avoid conscription into the army. Finally, there were the older men who had failed in Japan and who found staying there unattractive.<sup>5</sup>

Besides the desire for study and the relative lack of opportunities in Japan

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4. H.A. Millis, The Japanese Problem in the United States, New York, Macmillan, 1915, p. 2.

5. H.A. Millis, ibid., p. 5, estimates that over half the immigrants were under 25 years of age; while E.K. Strong, Japanese in California, Stanford University, Stanford University Press, 1934, p. 55, found in his survey, based on a directed sample of 10% of the Japanese in California that the average males spent only 20.9 years in Japan.

a strong factor inducing emigration was the presence of emigration companies and contractors seeking cheap farm labor. The few who had first gone to America and had foreseen the opportunities waiting for their exploitation returned to Japan to organize groups of youth to migrate and to seek their fortunes together.<sup>6</sup>

Before 1891 the number of the immigrants was small, never exceeding more than 1,000 in any single year, since the government sent out only students and was opposed to labor emigration on a large scale. However, learning from the experience of those who had gone to Hawaii, gradually more and more began their trek to America. Some had gone to Hawaii since 1884; these were the poorest and most ignorant of all and many of these laborers have since come to America.<sup>7</sup> The number increased and in the decade from 1890 to 1900 between twenty-five and thirty thousand came to the United States.<sup>8</sup> In the following decade some fifty thousands more followed.<sup>9</sup> The increasing number of Orientals led to riots and agitation, and after several uncomfortable incidents, the governments of the United States and Japan in 1907 made a "Gentlemen's Agreement" whereby the Japanese government would issue passports only to non-laborers and three classes

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6. Cf. W.L. McKenzie-King, Canadian Royal Commission on the Methods by which Orientals Laborers Have Been Induced to Come to Canada, Ottawa, Government Printing Office, 1908, p. 18.

7. One reason why the immigration figures to California were so high was that the Japanese contract laborers who had gone to Hawaii and therefore were no longer under the jurisdiction of the Japanese government remigrated to the mainland. The anti-Japanese agitators have completely ignored this fact.

8. According to the Imperial Statistical Annals of Japan, 32,529 passports were issued, while the Annual Reports of the United States Superintendent of Immigration shows that only 27,440 arrived. Cf. Y. Ichihashi, The Japanese in the United States, Stanford University, Stanford University Press, 1932, p. 55.

9. There is considerable discrepancy in the statistics of the immigration in the decade from 1900 to 1910. Dr. Romanzo Adams in the "Japanese Migration Statistics," Sociology and Social Research, 1929, p. 441, estimates that only 14,994 aliens came directly from Japan to the United States; while some agitators have placed the figure as high as 104,618. The United States Census for 1910 enumerates only 72,157 Japanese including 4,502 native born. Since many who did come to America returned after a few years, it is simple for the agitator to twist the figures to suit his argument. For a more detailed treatment vide Y. Ichihashi, op. cit., pp. 56 ff.

of workers: to former residents in America; to parents, wives, or children of residents; and to settled agriculturalists. Even though the Japanese government tightened on the requirements for passports, the number of immigrants continued to increase, for after Hawaii became a territory of the United States in 1900, the thousands of Orientals who had gone there previously were beyond the jurisprudence of the Japanese government and were free to come to the mainland. This increasing number added fuel to the already smouldering anti-Orientalism in California and finally resulted in the passage of drastic laws.

In order to understand the full significance of the opposition that the Japanese met when they arrived in California, we must consider briefly the nature and history of the agriculture of the state; for "from 1882 . . . until 1930, the history of farm labor in California has revolved around the cleverly manipulated exploitation, by the large growers, of a number of suppressed racial minority groups which were imported to work the fields."<sup>10</sup> The Japanese had stepped into the midst of a gigantic economic struggle.

Before 1850 California farming was largely pastoral, centering around the missions; however, after that time the agriculture of the state entered the world wheat market. There were several factors leading to the rise of the great wheat farms. There was a growing population in the state; prices were inflated because of the gold rush; there was a favorable climate; California wheat was able to stand long shipment to England; the farms of California were of immense size since they were continuations of the huge Mexican land grants; and finally, there was a scarcity of labor.<sup>11</sup>

The prosperity of the wheat farmers was short-lived, however, and after the depression of 1878 a great fruit industry arose to take away the spotlight. There were many factors involved in the rise of the fruit industry. Wheat prices

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10. C. McWilliams, Factories in the Fields, Boston, Little, Brown, and Co., 1939, p. 104.

11. Ibid., p. 50.

were low; a transcontinental railroad was completed; advancements were made in horticulture and viticulture; the dried fruits industry began; and irrigation was introduced into the state.<sup>12</sup>

The introduction of orchards into the California economy, however, had many serious social consequences. Not only did it mean the beginnings of large-scale intensive agriculture, capitalization of farms because of the cost of irrigation, a diversification of crops, but, most important, of all, it led to a demand for cheap labor. If the fruit farmer, who needed a huge labor supply, was to compete against the wheat farmer, who could mechanize, he had to have his labor inexpensively. It is no accident, therefore, that the Chinese coolie labor began to flow into California in large numbers in 1871, coincident with the time when fruits became important in the state economy.

The fruit industry received a setback, however, in the late nineties; furthermore, the agitation against the Chinese was becoming intense, and in 1893 serious race riots broke out throughout the state. After the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Geary Act of 1892, which renewed the first act, the Chinese workers gradually left the fields and once again an acute shortage of cheap labor developed. It was at this point that the importation of Japanese began.

At first there was little opposition to the Japanese but as they began to come in large numbers the tom-toms began to beat once more. The Japanese were very useful, since most of them were experienced farmers and furthermore because they conveniently vanished at the end of the season.<sup>13</sup>

However, there were several factors which led to the rise of an anti-Japanese sentiment. They at first underbid all other farm-labor groups, and antagonized the small farmers who found it difficult to compete with the large-scale farms and also aroused the ill-will of the laboring class for lowering the wage rate. When the Japanese began to own land, they employed members of their own race to the

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12. Ibid., pp. 60 ff.

13. Ibid., p. 107.

exclusion of all others.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, when the Japanese began to monopolize farm labor, they demanded higher wages and thus incurred the wrath of the owners. Finally, when the Japanese began to be small owners, the shippers and large landowners were very antagonized.<sup>15</sup>

The action of the press, the Union Labor Party, and the Asiatic Exclusion League encouraged mobs to destroy houses, restaurants, and bath houses and commit other outrages. After the "Gentlemen's Agreement" in 1907, the laborers ceased to come in such large numbers directly from Japan, but since many came indirectly through Hawaii, the ranting went on unabated. The coming of women, some as "picture-brides," led to further agitation to the effect that the Japanese were immoral and were importing women for questionable purposes.

Thus, the Japanese, who had been imported largely to fill the demand created for cheap labor by the rise of the sugar beets industry, found themselves face to face with unanticipated trouble. In 1907, almost coincidentally with the height of the anti-Japanese agitation, Hindu workers began to flow into California fields. During the World War boom, when there was such a scarcity of labor that even women, delinquents and deaf-mutes were used, the agitation against the Orientals temporarily relaxed, but this relaxation was only ephemeral, for in 1919 the Alien Land Law of 1913 was reenacted. Filipinos came in large numbers to California in 1923, but with the passage of the Exclusion Act in 1924, all immigration from Asia came to a halt. The landowners were not to be outdone, however, and since 1924, they have been importing Mexican labor to work in their fields. And so we can see that " . . . the problem of the Japanese in California has been made the subject of political and private exploitation, and thereby rendered

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14. In 1900, the Japanese owned 29 farms of about 4,600 acres; by 1910, they had 1816 farms of about 99,000 acres; and by 1920 they controlled 6,600 farms totaling over 450,000 acres and employing 15,000 workers. T. Iyenaga and K. Sato, Japan and the California Problem, New York and London, Putnams, 1921, p. 122.

15. C. McWilliams, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

unnecessarily complicated and acute . . . .<sup>16</sup>

Since this time, Japanese agriculture in California has grown in leaps and bounds. The skill and industry of these farmers brought about great changes in California.<sup>17</sup> They made worthless land valuable; they reclaimed swamps; and the names of Ikuta (who introduced rice) and Shima (the "potato king") have almost become legendary.

In the early part of this century, the delta, or "tule" land, was among the most undesirable areas in California--mosquitoes, malaria, and typhoid being abundant among the myriad of swamps. Combustible peat land, blazing sun, and the unsanitary marshland challenged the newcomer. From 1857 to 1894 millions of dollars had been spent in an attempt to reclaim the land from swamps by building levees and pumping out the water, but it was not until the "potato king" arrived on the scene that the land became productive. "The early history of successful potato growing in the San Joaquin Valley centers around one man. The delta region near Stockton was considered worthless for agricultural purposes until George Shima, a Japanese contractor, made it the big potato field of California,"<sup>18</sup>

Thus, throughout the state, organized under Shima and other contractors, the Japanese congregated.<sup>19</sup> The peculiarities of thought, habit, diet, and forms of recreation tended to draw them into racial colonies. It seemed inevitable that immigrants of this type should indicate a tendency to segregate themselves in communities of their own people, where they could continue to use their old customs and language; but besides the desire to stay with their own group there were other factors forcing this solidarity. Economically it was necessary, for there were few other ways in which newcomers could seek employment other than through con-

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16. T. Iyenaga and K. Sato, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

17. Cf. K.K. Kawakami, The Real Japanese Question, New York, Macmillan, 1921, chap. III.

18. W. Smith, The Garden of the Sun, Los Angeles, Lymanhouse, 1939, p. 503.

19. According to an investigation made in 1909, 65% of the Japanese in California were engaged in agriculture, 15% in domestic service, 15% in business enterprises generally connected with supplying the wants of the Japanese communities, and 5% in other pursuits. S.L. Gulick, The American-Japanese Problem, New York, Scribner's, 1914, p. 322.

tractors of their own group. Furthermore, this natural tendency was accentuated by the strong race prejudice that existed. The outside pressure of a hostile environment as well as the inner compulsion of common interests forced them to live in segregated quarters. This living together intensified their old sentiments and made more persistent the traits which they had brought to America and caused their social organization to follow lines not dissimilar from those of the East.

The Japanese, unlike the Chinese whom they replaced, organized into definite groups, the farmers dividing into "gangs" for work under a contractor. These contractors usually had full supervision and control over their men, not only paying their wages and overseeing their work but also in conducting the houses in which they lived. Arrangements were made for cooperative housekeeping and it was in these camps that the men worked until they had earned enough to return to Japan for a bride or could arrange for a "picture bride." Producers' associations, business associations, language schools, religious centers, and the Japanese Association of America tended to solidify the community.<sup>20</sup>

From this humble beginning, the Japanese have advanced rapidly and today hold an important part in the agriculture of California. Today, the Japanese who were at one time exploited by the Caucasians are in turn exploiting the Filipinos by working them at intolerably low wages.<sup>21</sup>

Many of the Japanese did not come into direct contact with the wanton recklessness of the early agitation but most of them have heard of the incidents, and this has had an important effect upon their attitudes and opinions toward Americans and their ways. Since the teachings of Oriental religion did not consist of training one to insist on his rights but rather to accept fate, and since the immigrant had been taught to be tolerant and conciliatory and to accommodate himself to things as they came, the bitter feelings were temporarily submerged and

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20. J. Steiner, The Japanese Invasion, McClurg Col, Chicago, 1917, chap.VIII.

21. J. Marshall, "White Peril," Colliers, XCVI (October 19, 1935), p. 66.

the newcomer as far as possible made the best of his existence as he found it.<sup>22</sup>

Because of the discrepancy of this condition from the illusion of heaven that they had contemplated when they had started from Japan, many, disillusioned, went back to their homeland; some remained, too ashamed to return defeated. But it was not all hell, and while only a few achieved the glory they sought, the majority contented themselves with the simple things in life and made their homes and reared their children in the hopes of justice and peace.

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22. K.S. Inui, Unsolved Problems of the Pacific, Kamakura, Japan, 1925, pp. 23-25.

III. A CROSS-SECTION ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
JAPANESE POPULATION IN CALIFORNIA

According to the United States Census for 1930 there were 138,834 Japanese (including those born in the United States) in the country. Of these 120,251 lived on the Pacific coast, 97,456 in California alone. Thus we can see that this state has more than its share of the Japanese.

According to the Census and other studies<sup>23</sup> the age-group of 17 to 23 (1940) was the largest; while in regard to sex composition, with one exception--the age-group from 40 to 45 (in 1940)--the males outnumbered the females. However, there is one significant point concerning the age and sex composition of the American-born Japanese. The modal point for both the male and female age-distributions is approximately the same. This, as we shall see, has caused a serious problem among the Nisei.

In regard to marital status, there are not as yet any adequate statistics on marriage among the second-generation Japanese, since most of them are very young and not yet in a position to marry. The majority of the immigrants, however, were married. According to a survey made with a directed sample, out of 2,205 males over 14 years of age, all but 335 were married, and among the women over 98 per cent were married.<sup>24</sup>

The fertility rate of the Japanese in California has been relatively high, but the birth rate, having reached its peak in 1921, has tapered off and since 1930 has dwindled considerably. The average first-generation Japanese male who has married has had 3.1 children and the average female has had 3.3 children.

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23. E.K. Strong, The Second-Generation Japanese Problem, Stanford University, Stanford University Press, 1934, p. 158.

24. E.K. Strong, The Japanese in California, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

In the peak year of 1921 the Japanese births constituted 7.3 per cent of all the births in the state. On the other hand, the mortality rate has not been so high. However, we must take into consideration the fact that migrants are usually young and in exceedingly good health. This factor probably accounts for the nature of the fertility and mortality rates among the Japanese in California.

The educational status of the Japanese population is fairly high in comparison to that of most other immigrant groups. Indeed the aspirations of the second-generation are much too lofty. One explanation of this phenomena is probably the fact that learned men command the most prestige in the Oriental nations. "The first-generation Japanese immigrants claim to have had about eight years of schooling in Japan. This seems high in terms of the educational facilities in Japan at the time they were children and in terms of what the average American of their age has secured."<sup>25</sup> It is generally believed that the women who came as "picture-brides" were much better educated than the men. There are no adequate up-to-date statistics on the education of the second-generation Japanese, although there have been several studies made. It is generally believed, however, that most Nisei attend high school and thousands are now attending colleges and universities.

In religious affiliation there is some difference between the first and second-generation Japanese. Most of the immigrants, 77 per cent according to Strong, are Buddhists. On the other hand, among the American-born group, 47 per cent of the males and 56 per cent of the females are Christians.<sup>26</sup> This situation is easily understandable when we consider the fact that the Nisei, who have attended American schools, have tastes and standards vastly different from those of their parents. The Nisei, living in the midst of a Christian culture, find it difficult to understand the subtle system of Buddhism.

In briefly analyzing the Japanese population in California, we have found that the age groups of both sexes center on one modal point. It has been found

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25. E.K. Strong, Second-Generation Japanese Problem, p. 207.

26. E.K. Strong, Japanese in California, pp. 168-69.

that the fertility rate has been very high, but that it has dropped considerably since the peak year of 1921; in mortality, the rate has been low, but we can reasonably expect the rate to rise in the immediate future since most of the first-generation Japanese are now growing old. In education, it is believed that women among the immigrants were better educated than the men; among the Nisei both sexes have a relatively high educational status. Religiously, the Nisei have not followed their parents, and many of them have become Christians. This in brief, characterizes the Japanese in California.

The economic organization of the Japanese population has been shaped largely by the unfriendly circumstances into which they first came. As we have already noted, in farming the Japanese occupy a fairly advantageous situation; in the urban regions, however, conditions are not as favorable.<sup>27</sup>

The urban Japanese in California have entered trades of two sorts: those catering to the American customers and those dealing largely with Japanese. The first occupations to develop were those which met the needs of their co-nationals, such as boarding houses, barber shops, bath-houses, and food and general merchandise stores. Upon the arrival of additional immigrants, however, the community expanded and places for amusement, newspapers, doctors and dentists came to the scene. Gradually the Japanese entered into general competition with Caucasians in the grocery stores, laundries, restaurants, and in Los Angeles especially, in fruit stands. The capital investment in these firms was very small and was individually conducted on a small scale.<sup>28</sup>

In San Francisco at the present time there are about a hundred different laundries, most of them owned and operated by separate families, dozens of curio shops, florists, restaurants and hotels. There are fourteen groceries catering only to the Japanese and dozens open for general trade. The barber shops in

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27. The material presented on the urban economic organization of the Japanese is taken from two studies, one on San Francisco by Charles Kikuchi and the other of Los Angeles by Rev. Uncura. The first study was made under the auspices of the California State Employment Office; the latter was made in the department of sociology at the University of Southern California.

28. Y. Ichihashi, op. cit., chap. IX.

San Francisco have to depend solely on Japanese patronage; recently beauty parlors have also been opened. Finally, there are a number of billiard halls operated by the Japanese which are frequented by the first and second generation alike and serve sometimes, unfortunately, as social centers.

In the professional and semi-professional fields in San Francisco, there are eleven dentists, five doctors, four attorneys, fifteen insurance men, eight architects, five optometrists and sixteen teachers (of Japanese culture). Furthermore, several large Japanese firms maintain branch offices, and there are two Japanese banks.

In Los Angeles, the businesses seem to be on a larger scale. A list of organizations in each of which more than five Japanese are employed includes 292 groceries, 221 hotels, apartments, and rooming houses, 203 fruit stands, 198 cafes and restaurants, 107 barber shops, and hundreds of other smaller trades.

Because the Caucasians have been hostile, the Japanese had been forced into their own shell. For a long time, they were unable to penetrate the walls of this shell, but as we can see, recently, especially with the second-generation coming of age, the Japanese are breaking out into the general competitive market. Gradually, the occupations are shifting from those which catered solely to the Japanese to those which are open to the general public.

This restricted economic organization has had some repercussions on some of the social institutions of this minority group. Since the Japanese were forced together, they have developed among themselves a peculiar culture, one that is neither Japanese nor entirely American, although it is much more similar to the latter.

Within the Japanese society itself we find a social stratification not unlike that found among Caucasians. These socio-economic factions, however, are not clean-cut and the bases on which they are formed are numerous. Various groups form among the Japanese on the basis of economic considerations, religion, in-

tellectual status, recreational interest, prefecture of origin in Japan, and among the young, on the "degree of toughness" of the individuals. The members of these factions intermingle; for example, a person in one economic faction may be in a different intellectual or recreational faction from most of his friends in the former group. There are, moreover, no set rules restricting the entry of members into these various groups, although some sort of conformity with the general interests of the members is expected.

The factions based upon differences in economic status are very much like those that we find in Caucasian society. The "white-collar" worker, regardless of his income comes at the top of the scale; then come the shopkeepers, farmers, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The groups are more or less spontaneous in their origin and have no definite organization structure. They do not meet in set meetings, but merely get together as friends to discuss common problems. The upper classes often adopt ways, individually, to preserve their ways and attempt to follow the niceties of society in order to be set off from the others in the public eye. The people of the lower classes tend to come together also but these meetings are generally for recreational purposes. So far as I know there is no "People's movement" among the poverty-stricken Japanese, although the upper classes often tend to erroneously indentify themselves and their interests with those of "big business." Perhaps this latter phenomenon is an attempt to compensate for their feeling of inferiority to their white competitors by putting on airs of superiority before the less fortunate people of their racial colony.

Perhaps the most significant cleavage in Japanese society comes from differences in religious affiliation. Among the immigrants we find largely Buddhists, Christians, free-thinkers, and those who are apathetic and have no interest. While these groups make no attempt to distinguish themselves from each other, except verbally, there are some distinct characteristics in in the behavior of the members of these factions. These factions, divided on a religious basis, perform several important functions. Religion is not only a means toward emotional outlet, a

means of rationalizing away our troubles, but it also provides especially young people with an opportunity for recreational fellowship. These groups, furthermore, provide a means of social control, for the individuals will conform with the ways of his group if other members of that faction are present. It further provides a medium for collective action to satisfy the needs of the members.

One of the most interesting factions in Japanese society is the intellectual group. Actually the term "intellectual" may be misleading, for there are very few real scholars in this group; however, most of these members are much better informed than their fellows and are usually college graduates or students. Among the members of this group are found all colors and shades of opinions; generally speaking, however, the liberal members tend to be much better read. These groups, much like the factions based on economic differences, are spontaneous and are generally formed to provide a means for collective action to satisfy the needs of various individuals. Small informal gatherings often provide a means of using leisure time. Many means are adopted to preserve the identity of the group; all members confine their conversation when among themselves to 'intellectual' topics and are very critical of the reasoning of the others. Generally, the members are rather cynical and skeptical. Quite often there is a disregarding of the ways of the "masses," the niceties of society, and the "conventions." If there ever arises a demand for a change in the social structure or a cry against the conditions of the Oriental minorities in America, it is a safe bet that the most vociferous objections will come from this faction.

Generally, the "intellectuals" are despised by the other members of the community as "reds," "radicals," and "dangerous" thinkers. While there may not be social ostracism, because of the tendency of the intellectual to stay in his own group, and the tendency of this group to be haughty, some degree of social isolation from the general community exists. Quite often these individuals develop "queer" personalities, become very seclusive or else become very sociable in an attempt to break into the general community.

Among the younger people and sometimes among the old, there is a division into factions on the basis of recreational interests. There are those whose interests center around athletics; others who are more interested in dancing and dates; while among the older folks, groups are formed to practice flower-arrangement and sometimes to play games and talk over old times. These recreational factions, of course, provide a means for collective action for satisfying the needs of certain individuals who have common interests. They also provide a means of spending leisure time, although in many instances recreation goes far beyond the confines of leisure time. These various groups also have ways of preserving their membership and indicating the fact that they belong to certain factions.

Another interesting basis for the formation of factions is the prefecture of the origin of the Japanese in Japan; that is, those from the various prefectures in Japan band together and enjoy their own customs and ways. These factions, of course, provide a means of preserving the old customs and the individuals are tied together by common interests.

Finally, there is a faction of so-called "tough-guys", who place a high value in their callousness to the conventions of society. The "gashouse" gang is usually composed of athletes, Kanakas (Hawaiian-Japanese), and agricultural laborers. These individuals band together probably for common interests and the faction provides a means of preserving the "tough" ways of the gang. Perhaps many of these individuals became this way as a result of compensation for some inferiority, be it physical difference or lack of social grace. Needless to say the "tough guys" and the "intellectuals" hold each other in mutual contempt and distrust.

And thus we find numerous factions among the Japanese immigrants in California. These factions are usually based upon differences in economic level, differences in religious belief, differences in taste for abstract and theoretical issues,

differences in recreational interests, origin in Japan, and the differences in the degree of conformity with the ways of the general community.

The ways and institutions of the second-generation Japanese are neither entirely Japanese nor American and constitute a peculiar combination of the two sets of ways, although considerable assimilation has taken place. Recently many drastic changes have occurred which are the cause of much concern to the immigrants. Among the factors leading to this change is the declining influence of the home upon the individual.

Unlike the stable system of Japan, the Nisei are living in an ever changing society. The stability of organization under which their parents lived is not theirs. Furthermore, there has been no standardized pattern of life for them to follow. Besides the traditional type of family discipline that their parents had attempted to inflict, they have learned of a different, more democratic procedure in the schools and from their friends. Some, by working in American homes, have experienced the different customs and relate them to their friends.<sup>29</sup>

The Nisei family has changed drastically from that of their parents and in many instances contain only the vestiges of the heritage of their parents. Marriage is no longer considered an affair of the family, but rather that of the individuals involved. Usually the Nisei picks his own mate, often with the approval of his parents, although some actually go against the wishes of the elders. No attempt is made to check the ancestry of the other family, as is the case in Japan, and love and occasionally rational thought serve as the bases for selecting mates instead of the perpetuation of the family name and honor. Thus we find that the underlying concept of the institution of marriage has changed completely from that of Japan; the family name is no longer important.

There is also much opposition to autocratic patriarchal control. The Nisei family, as a rule, is run on a more democratic basis, with the wife and children

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29. Excellent sources on the nature of the family in Japan are H. Byas, "The Family System of Japan," *Asia*, XXIV (April, 1924), pp. 290-94; J.F. Embree, *Suyemura*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1939, III; and L. Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, New York, Macmillan, 1904,

having more to say in the affairs of the group. While the remnants of familial sentiments remain, the reverence for ancestors is virtually non-existent. While family pride is not entirely lacking, it seems that the forces of political control are more and more the agents of control. The children spend much of their time outside, in schools and with their friends and are more influenced by their outer environment.

The basic concept of a family as a comprehensive unit and an end in itself is completely superseded by the idea of a family as a means to another end-- individual happiness. Couples no longer feel obligated to have children to perpetuate their family line, nor do they bother themselves with the care of ancestral tablets.

And thus, we find in analyzing the Japanese population in California, their institutions and their ways, that the Nisei are coming of age in a very peculiar environment. Economically, the Japanese have been restricted to themselves. This restriction, which also applies socially, has forced the Japanese to group together and to develop institutions and ways which are peculiar to themselves. The Japanese community is not entirely free of social stratification, and is thus divided into a number of socio-economic sites. This division and the fact that the Japanese family is now undergoing a drastic social change may account for some of the psychological and social peculiarities of the Nisei and may well explain some of the difficulties which they now face.

IV. MALADJUSTMENTS CONFRONTING THE  
AMERICAN-BORN JAPANESE

Today, with the United States and Japan sparring at each other in their war of nerves, one of the groups that have taken the brunt of the situation is the Japanese in California. Besides being drafted or being pushed into marriage to avoid the draft, the Nisei are facing a more serious problem of unemployment. Because of the crisis many employers are laying off Nisei that they had already hired and others are refusing to take on qualified workers even when there is a shortage of labor due to the boom. Furthermore, because of frozen assets, many Nisei who had been working for Japanese firms are now without work.<sup>30</sup>

The vocational problem is more serious in the urban areas. In San Francisco the outlook for a trained worker is very gloomy. In October, 1941, 95 per cent of the calls for work were for domestic services.<sup>31</sup> While jobs do exist, jobs such as those in the Grant Avenue novelty shops, laundries, transfer business, florists, and gardeners, they are not very remunerative, the hours are long, and the pay is low. In the Japanese community itself there are some jobs, but these seldom pay more than 50 or 60 dollars a month for work that requires about 10 hours a day. Thus it is easy to see why the American-born Japanese, especially college graduates who had been trained in an American standard of living, find it difficult to adjust themselves vocationally.

In the rural areas the outlook is far more optimistic, although those who have had no experience in farming will probably find this area barred to them. In California there are opportunities for the Nisei to take over about 300 farmers'

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30. T. Matsumoto, "New York Nisei Face Economic Dislocation as Result of Trade Suspension," Current Life, II (October, 1941), pp. 7-9, explains the situation on the Atlantic side; the same state of affairs is prevalent on the West.

31. Information taken from the files of the Oriental Division of the California State Employment Bureau in San Francisco.

cooperative associations which are still managed by the first-generation immigrants. Furthermore because of FSA loans there is a possibility of farm-ownership. The important thing is that the first-generation Japanese have already paved a way in the agricultural fields; thus the Nisei can follow in their footsteps. Even in agriculture, however, for a trained man, jobs such as plant pathologist, seed grower and soil chemist are restricted.

Furthermore, the agricultural region is not without its ills. More and more, the farms are becoming the breeding places of disorganization. Among the Nisei there is an institution which may lead to the creation of a large mass of ill-fitted migratory workers. Most urban boys above the ages of 13 and 14 go en masse to the farms during the summer vacation and work in the fields. Actually there is nothing else for them to do since they can find no employment in town. This summer migration has become an institution and a boy who does not go to the farm during the summer is practically ostracized from his group. Once on the fields they come in contact with older workers who teach them, intentionally or otherwise, to drink, to gamble, and to frequent houses of prostitution. Many Nisei, after graduating from school find nothing to do and drift into agricultural labor as a permanent job and follow the crops. More and more, the behavior of these workers is becoming a sore thumb in the Japanese community.

Thus we can see that the Nisei, both in urban and rural areas face vocational problems. In the cities, the Nisei cannot work in Caucasian firms in large numbers; when they work in their own community, hours are long and wages are low. In the rural area, there are opportunities for those whose fathers already own farms, but the others are forced to be content at being agricultural workers-- usually migratory.

Finally, there is the problem of unionization. Since wages are low and hours are long, one might logically ask: why don't the Nisei organize? Several factors stand in the way. First of all, some unions will not take Orientals. Until the

C.I.O. came out with a policy of non-discrimination, it was very difficult for any Oriental to join a union. Furthermore, since much of the agitation against the Japanese had been instigated by unions such as the Workingman's Party of California, the Japanese are strongly prejudiced against unions.<sup>32</sup> Another factor was the fear of incurring the wrath of the majority, who seemed to be against unionization. Finally, the Nisei, being human like all other people, merely accepted blindly the ready-made stereotypes handed out by the organs of propaganda concerning unions. Thus, unionization of Oriental workers has been slow, and even when workers have been forced into unions, as was the case among Oakland laundry workers and the Los Angeles fruit stand workers, they have remained loyal to their employers and have "kicked back" part of the high wages paid by the owner to meet union requirements.

And so we can see that the Nisei face serious labor problems. They face unemployment, low wages and long hours and yet the one thing that can improve these conditions--unions--finds many barriers set before it.

This lack of vocational opportunity has led to another serious problem--the problem of marriage. Obviously, without a job or with a small income, the Nisei cannot afford to be married or to have a home. To add to this chaotic condition, the age and sex distribution of the Nisei is very unusual. Since the vast majority of the immigrant women arrived in America at about the same time, between 1915 and 1924, most of the children are of approximately the same age. Since girls reach a marriageable age before the boys and since the men are unable to get jobs which would enable them to support their wives, there is a serious shortage of eligible men. The common belief among the Japanese is that there are three times as many women of marriageable age as there are men, and while the

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32. Cf. H.H. Ingels, The History of the Workingmen's Party of California, thesis, (M.A.), University of California, 1919; and M.F. McKinney, Denis Kearney, Organizer of the Workingmen's Party of California, thesis (M.A.), University of California, 1939.

statistics do not substantiate such a contention, the conviction is so widespread that it has had a serious affect upon the attitudes and behavior of the Nisei and their anxious parents.<sup>33</sup> While the marriage problem is gradually becoming less acute, the older girls (those who are now over 25) face the dilemmatic choice of launching a career in some field , if an opportunity is available, or intermarriage, which is still taboo. Even among the younger people it seems likely that the wives will have to work at least part time to supplement her husband's earnings if the couple is to maintain an American standard of living.

Another serious problem facing the Nisei is that of social disorganization. There are many manifestations of the breakdown of the traditional codes of conduct. In Lodi, the center of the grape industry in Central California, and among the Nisei in Los Angeles, the delinquency of the young Japanese is notorious.<sup>34</sup> It is not so much the drinking, gambling, or the street-fighting alone that is significant; it is rather the fact that the traditional methods of social control no longer hold the Nisei in check. In a stable society, where the folkways have a hold on each individual, people do not think of doing things differently from the accepted, conventional way. However, in a changing society, when the individuals are exposed to different and conflicting ways of doing things, they are at a loss as to which way to follow, and quite often, they follow neither.

We have seen in connection with the Nisei family that the traditional Japanese customs have given way at the impact of American culture. In many other aspects of social behavior the ways of the Orient and those of the West are quite different. This difference can certainly be listed as one of the basic causes of the disorganization confronting the Nisei at the present time.

Finally, there are numerous cases of minor personality maladjustments among the Nisei. Roughly and arbitrarily I shall classify some of these difficulties

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33. In 1941, the biological ratio of potentially marriageable males (21-36) to marriageable females (16-26) seems to be roughly 11 to 13; however, if we take into consideration the economic factor, the difference would be greater than 1 to 3.

34. Murase, K., "Nemesis?" Current Life, II (October, 1941), pp. 3-4.

as "oppression psychosis," the "marginal" personality, and disillusionment.

The "oppression psychosis"<sup>35</sup> is characterized by attitudes of fear, hatred, resentment, jealousy, suspicion, and revenge. When the Nisei is in this state of mind, he interprets any action of the Caucasians as another injustice and feels very resentful. If, for example, a Nisei group is asked to leave a restaurant because of ill manners and boisterous shouting, the group immediately cries, "Race discrimination!" never stopping to think of other factors that might have led to their eviction.

Another unfortunate type of personality that has developed, especially among college graduates, is the "marginal" man.<sup>36</sup> The college graduate is trained in the ways of American culture, and having finished his education, he returns to his community only to find that his ways and his standards are quite different from those of his former friends. He finds it difficult to get along with the members of his community. On the other hand, he cannot break into the Caucasian society for which he has been trained because of his race. This loneliness from social isolation leads to marginality.

The most pathetic aspect of this problem is that many Nisei are finding things too "tough." They are either prematurely giving up hope or are blindly dashing their heads against stone walls, walls unlikely to be penetrated except by a few of exceptional talent. When this latter group realizes its error, it likewise adopts a melancholy outlook and relapses into a world of illusions and dreams. There is thus among the Nisei a widespread feeling of demoralization, disillusionment, and despair.

And so we find, four major difficulties confronting the Nisei as he comes of age. He faces, first of all, a problem of finding and keeping his job. This difficulty is brought about quite often by the race prejudice caused by the anti-

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35. R.L. Sutherland and J.L. Woodward, Introductory Sociology, Chicago, Lippincott, 1937, chap. XIII.

36. E.V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man, New York, Scribner's, 1937, chap. IV.

Oriental heritage of California. Because of his inability to find satisfactory vocational adjustment, the Nisei also faces a serious marriage problem. In this case, however, there is another factor involved--the age and sex composition of the Nisei population.

Furthermore, the Nisei faces the problems of social disorganization and personality maladjustment. Social disorganization is largely caused by the differences in the culture of the immigrants and that of America. The personality maladjustments are due to supposed oppression, cultural misfit, and overambition. Furthermore, these latter maladjustments may also be due to inability to get jobs, inability to marry or to the disorganization of the Nisei social group.

## V. PROGRAMS OF SOCIAL ACTION

And so we can see that the pipedreams of paradise indulged in by many Nisei have been shattered by the impact of the cold, uncompromising touch of reality, a state of existence inconsistent with their hopes, ideals, and ambitions. Instead of their wished for haven, they find widespread demoralization, economic dependency to an appalling extent, a rising rate of delinquency and immorality, and increasing personality maladjustments. Since one of the characteristic frailties of human nature is to find a culprit for all things undesirable, blame for this unfortunate state of affairs has been cast upon, among other things, racial intolerance, the narrow-mindedness of the immigrants, the stupidity of Nisei leaders, and even upon the fragility of the Nisei themselves. Perhaps there is something to each one of these accusations, but it seems that the Nisei were born into an environment unfriendly to their welfare. It seems that they cannot really blame their parents for not knowing better; they cannot blame themselves; they cannot blame anyone for the misfortunes of the victims of circumstance.

Granted that the Nisei face an unwanted reality, the inevitable question arises: what can they do about it? Obviously when formulating any plan of action we must remain within the realm of reality and refrain from drawing up blueprints of a utopian unlikely to be blessed by realization. There are some things beyond the capacities of a single group; other things, fortunately, that can be done.

Numerous programs of social action have been proposed, some of them of a conflicting nature. The Japanese American Citizen League, the largest organization representing the Nisei, which unfortunately is in the control of men who are not too well-informed or well-trained, have instituted a "bickering" campaign. They are paying a travelling secretary to tour the country spreading propaganda for the Nisei cause and pointing out to the Caucasians the "injustices" the Nisei are forced to suffer.

Sharply contrasted to the J.A.C.L. policy is the plan of many 'intellectuals' within the community to do nothing and to "lay low" until the present international tension is alleviated. These men urge that if there is any complaining to do, the members of the majority group who are socially minded should be allowed to do it while the Nisei themselves devote their time to making friends and winning outsiders to the Nisei cause.

The "do nothing" policy has three aspects. The first, which we have just mentioned, is to allow the members of the majority group to do the complaining for the minority, since any bickering by the Nisei could be interpreted as whining. The second group that advocates such a policy is strongly imbued with a stoical Oriental philosophy--the philosophy of accepting an inevitable fate since nothing could have been done anyway. A third group is merely apathetic, not caring enough to put forth any effort. All in all, it seems that the majority of the Japanese in California fall into one of these three groups.

Another program of action that has been proposed, especially by the more energetic liberal and radical elements, is that of wholeheartedly supporting the labor movement--especially the C.I.O. The argument given begins on two assumptions: (1) the source of most Nisei ills is due to vocational inequality of opportunity, and (2) that inequality is due to race prejudice and discrimination. Beginning on these assumptions, the argument follows logically; the Nisei ought to support any group that is fighting against racial intolerance. Therefore, since the C.I.O. is opposed to discrimination, the Nisei ought to support the C.I.O. As we have already pointed out, however, the Japanese as a whole are strongly prejudiced against unions of any kind, and the chances of such a movement gaining much headway seem at the present to be very slim.

A fourth program of action advocated is that of cooperating in every way possible with agencies and individuals who are interested in bettering the welfare of the Oriental minorities. There are leaders in politics, religion, education, the press, social welfare work, and many other groups that are attempting to

reconstruct Nisei society. For example, a Congressional committee investigating unfair employment practices is now planning to study the discrimination of some trade unions against Orientals. The California State Employment Office has started an Oriental division, and numerous students and groups in the various religious circles and university campuses are studying the Nisei problem. By working through and with these agencies, many ills may be alleviated.

Most of the foregoing programs of action concerned things that the Nisei could do in a group; what can they do as individuals? One thing that has already been mentioned is that they could go on a backyard friendship campaign and make as many friends as possible. But far more important is the question: what can they do for themselves and their own happiness? There is among the Nisei a widespread feeling of defeatism which I think is largely due to a loss of perspective. It seems that what the Nisei need is a reorientation of their philosophy of life.

When asked what they want out of life, most Nisei answer that they want "happiness." Then, is happiness to be obtained only by the complete realization of their immature ambitions, ambitions which in many instances were instilled in them by hopeful friends and parents who were wholly unawares of the implications involved in their suggestions? Or is happiness to be attained more by the more simple things in life--security, mutual response, new experiences, and recognition in one's own small group? One need not launch an ambitious career in the so-called professions to attain these simple needs.

Thus, we find various and conflicting programs of action being proposed by the Nisei: the J.A.C.L. "bickering" campaign, the "do nothing" policy, the policy of joining the labor movement, the idea of cooperating with agencies of welfare, the plan of individuals going on friendship campaigns, and finally the plan of reorienting the Nisei's philosophy of life. What is the Nisei to do in the present crisis? Truly they are in a perplexing and awkward situation; truly they face a dilemma.

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