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A Japanese Anomaly: Theodore Roosevelt and Japan's Racial Identity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

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Abstract: The nineteenth century saw the consolidation of a pattern: the high age of imperialism had divided the globe into two spheres, one for the colonizers and the other for the colonized. Various justifications were used to rationalize the colonial venture, one of these being the idea of racial superiority. Geopolitical and scientific developments gave birth to the idea of an unbreachable gulf between the superior "white race" and the inferior "colored races." While circumstances in the colonies seemed to confirm that idea, Japan had, through a process of modernization, reached the civilizational level of the Western powers, thereby becoming a racial anomaly. To cope with this anomaly, the nations in the West had to devise a negotiation zone, in which the Japanese were temporarily granted privileged racial status without upsetting the racial status quo.

Keywords: Japan, Race, Meiji, Japanese-American relations, Theodore Roosevelt

Escaping the Mold of Race

In 1869, the Meiji thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901) introduced the readers of his *Sekai kunizukushi* (World Geography) to a Western-inspired classification of mankind. The world was divided into five races: the "white race" from Europe, the "yellow race" from Asia, the "red race" from America, the "black race" from Africa, and the "brown race" from the Pacific islands.[1] Inspired by Western geography textbooks, Fukuzawa had compiled his work in order to, in his words, "teach women and children how the world is built."[2] He saw the concept of race as important and legitimate enough to include it in his own work. There is, however, a small detail that attracts the eye of the attentive reader of *Sekai kunizukushi*: in its detailed description of the different races, Japan is conspicuously absent. Among the "yellow race," where one would expect to find Japan, Fukuzawa lists only China, India, Persia and Turkey.[3] Fukuzawa had his own reasons for removing Japan from the category of the "yellow race,"[4] but unwillingly, he foretold a later development: a few decades after the publication of *Sekai kunizukushi*, Japan was escaping the otherwise clear-cut distinction between the races.

When Japan's gates were forcibly opened to the West in 1854, international relations had, as Paul Gordon Lauren suggested, long been interracial. The great age of exploration had brought adventurers from emerging European nations in contact with a plethora of new peoples. The geopolitical ramifications of such meetings are well known: a few generations after Columbus' arrival on the American continent, Native Americans were extinguished at rates peaking at 98 percent, leaving as many as 80 million dead.[5] The extermination and failed enslavement of Native Americans led European ships to raid the African coasts for slave labor. This experience of enslaving "nonwhites" propped up already widespread theories of white superiority and colored inferiority. Practice and theory mutually

reinforced each other and consolidated the allegedly natural order of the "white race" as rulers over the "nonwhite" peoples.[6]

Added to the human, economic, and political consequences, the meeting with "nonwhites" had enormous scientific implications: the cascade of information that came back from the various new worlds required a revision of mankind's classification. The Swedish botanist Carl von Linné (1707–1778), who, in 1735, published his *Systema Naturae*, took the first influential step in this direction. Linné's racial taxonomy comprised four races. However, more than the separation into different groups, it was Linné's ascription of inherent characteristics to each of the races that deserves critical attention: Africans were childlike and lazy, Asians greedy, Americans (i.e. Native Americans) hot-tempered, and Europeans civilized, intelligent, and governed by law.[7] This taxonomy was subsequently expanded and by the end of the nineteenth century, scientists and politicians had divided the world along a color line, thereby creating a strict dichotomy where the "white race" ruled over the "colored races." Western expansion further reinforced this fundamental idea. By 1914, less than one fifth of the world remained free of European or American domination.[8]

This clear-cut racial hierarchy worked well on paper and found footholds in most corners of the globe. Yet, with time, it became increasingly difficult to fit the Japanese into it. The civilizational developments in Japan brought about through the Meiji Restoration problematized the association of white skin color with higher civilization: by the beginning of the twentieth century, the theoretically yellow Japan was exhibiting less the alleged peculiarities of a "colored race," and instead, presenting all the attributes of a modern, white, Christian nation. Furthermore, the country was on the verge of becoming an imperial power. These attributes of modernity, often comprising the term "standard of civilization," entailed, amongst others, having a state ruled by a political bureaucracy that guaranteed certain basic rights to its people.[9] By 1905, Japan had not only evolved into such a state, but had also passed a second civilizational test in defeating both China and Russia in two separate wars.

Negotiating Japanese Racial Identity: The American Example

The developments described above make Japan an interesting exception in the history of Western imperialism. Even more interesting is the way that Western powers reacted to the Japanese anomaly: it is possible to argue that by the end of the nineteenth century, a negotiation zone had been created between the Western powers and Japan—a sort of racial middle ground—in which the latter could temporarily escape the subordinate status commonly reserved for "colored people" to receive preferential treatment. This not only enabled them to uphold the racial status quo, but also to cope with the anomaly of having a "colored race" equal to "whites."

This special status, however, did not mean that the Japanese were granted universal racial equality. Rather, their civilizational achievements enabled them to gain new relevance on the world stage, which simultaneously necessitated a reassessment of their relationship with the Western powers. This suggests that the negotiation zone was primarily a matter of diplomacy between nation states, one that could eventually, but not necessarily, grant Japanese individuals some sort of protection against abuses common for other "colored races." As will be explained in detail below, it is necessary to distinguish between Japan as a nation and Japanese individuals as members of a different race. The relationship between Japan and the United States at the turn of the twentieth century is illustrative of this need for distinction.[10]

As mentioned above, Japan had been victorious in two wars, the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). While these victories stirred up anxieties over the "yellow peril," i.e. the fear that the "yellow race" posed a threat to the "white race," the Western response to Japanese prowess in battle was overwhelmingly positive.[11] For the Japanese people, the victories gave them much needed confidence on the international stage. Believing that it had rightfully won a place amongst the civilized nations of the West, the island country also engaged in economic expansion and human migration. Among the destinations for emigration, the United States became quite popular: the number of Japanese people entering the country doubled between 1906 and 1907, from 14,243 to 30,842.[12]

Despite their relatively small numbers, the immigrants were soon accused of "flooding" the west coast of the United States, and of threatening the white labor market. The Japanese immigrants who came to California became victims not only of a long history of American racism, but also of a peculiar "west coast racism": before their arrival, the country's west coast had been the theatre of racial conflicts between settlers of European descent and respectively, Native Americans, Mexican and Chinese immigrants. The Japanese immigrants, upon arrival, were subjected to much of the same prejudices that had been directed at other "nonwhites," especially their Chinese counterparts. The latter, however, ceased to be an acute problem after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers. Despite the very limited scale of Japanese immigration, opposition to the arrival of Japanese laborers grew louder until the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League (later renamed Asiatic Exclusion League) was organized on May 7, 1905. The League's demands were as follows: (1) laws excluding the Chinese had to be extended to the Japanese and Koreans; (2) League members should not employ or patronize Japanese people, nor persons employing Japanese people, and should boycott products coming from firms employing Japanese people; (3) a campaign to get the attention of the President and the Congress had to be launched; and lastly, (4) the cause shall be supported by all labor and civic organizations.[13]

The California Crisis

The first real blow came in 1906. On October 11, the San Francisco Board of Education ordered all Japanese, Chinese and Korean children to go to separate Oriental public schools, effectively instituting school segregation for Asian pupils. What followed was a diplomatic wrestling match, known as the California Crisis, between the Japanese government, United States President Theodore Roosevelt, and the State of California. In this crisis, the question of Japan's racial alignment was of utmost importance.

Figure 1: Presidential portrait of Theodore Roosevelt by John Singer Sargent. Source: The White House Historical Association.

Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) was deeply upset by the case in San Francisco. His outrage came from a curious blend of geopolitical thinking, antipathy, but also genuine respect for the Japanese people, which in the end, led him to intervene on their behalf. With this, he not only became an active proponent for a racial negotiation zone to accommodate the Japanese people, but he also came, rather oddly, to personify the idea: while he saw "whites" as representing the pinnacle of the racial hierarchy, his pragmatism, fostered by the developments in Japan, led him to reassess the status of the Japanese people. To be sure, in matters of race, Roosevelt was most certainly a product of his time: through his education and intellectual exchange with scholars and friends, he became an ardent believer in the validity and relevance of a specific concept of race, so much that he primarily saw the issue of his days through this racial lens. In the words of Gary Gerstle, "If for Karl Marx history was the history of class conflict, for Roosevelt history was the history of race conflict: of the world's various races struggling against each other for supremacy and power."[14] Within this conflict, Roosevelt was certain that "whites," especially "English-speaking" ones, were superior. At the same time, he dreaded the possibility of the "white race" vanishing from a lack of means to reproduce itself, a phenomenon he labeled "race suicide."[15]

Figure 2: The Equestrian Statue of Theodore Roosevelt in front of the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Roosevelt, on horseback, is being flanked by a Native American and an African, both on foot. The meaning of the statue is open to interpretation but can be seen as representative of Roosevelt's ambivalence towards race. In light of the Black Lives Matter protests, the Museum announced on June 21, 2020, that the statue would be removed. (Source)

Despite these beliefs, Roosevelt demonstrated a certain tolerance towards "nonwhite peoples" and did not argue for their complete exclusion from the American political community because of their race, but because he believed that, at their current state––with the exceptions of individuals that proved him wrong–– they did not meet the necessary requirements of American citizenry.[16] This admittedly limited tolerance certainly extended to Japanese immigrants, although in hindsight, Roosevelt's positive inclination towards them was not surprising: as an admirer of masculine and militaristic virtues, he could not but admire Japan's martial image, and laud its recent victories in war. After the Battle of Tsushima (1905), where the Japanese defeated the Russian navy, he wrote that "even the battle of Trafalgar could not match this," and "I grew so excited that I myself became almost like a Japanese, and I could not attend to official duties."[17] He famously wrestled three times a week with Japanese opponents, and had avidly read Nitobe Inazō's *Bushido*.[18] In a letter of appreciation for several books sent to him by his friend from Harvard, Kaneko Kentarō (1853–1942), he wrote: "Perhaps I was most impressed by this little volume on Bushido. …It seems to me, my dear Baron, that Japan has much to teach to the nations of the Occident, just as she has something to learn from them. I have long felt that Japan's entrance into the circle of the great civilized powers was of good omen for all of the world."[19] "Certainly I myself," the letter went on, "hope that I have learned not a little from what I have read of the fine Samurai spirit, and from the way in which that spirit has been and is being transformed to meet the needs of modern life."[20]

The American president's interest in things Japanese went beyond the "samurai spirit," and also encompassed Japan's newly gained geopolitical importance. In a letter he wrote during the Russo-Japanese War, Roosevelt reported to his close friend (and best man for his second marriage), the British diplomat Cecil Spring Rice (1859–1918), that two Japanese envoys, the aforementioned Kaneko and Takahira Kogorō (1854–1926), had visited him. He had advised the Japanese envoys against getting "the big head" and "[entering] a general career of insolence and aggression."[21] At the same time, he did not envision that outcome because he was a "firm believer in the Japanese people," and "most earnestly hoped as well as believed that Japan would simply take her place from now on among the great civilized nations, with, like each of these nations, something to teach others as well as something to learn from them."[22] Not losing sight of geopolitics, he expressed his interest in the Japanese people: "The Japs interest me and I like them. I am perfectly well aware that if they win out it may possibly mean a struggle between them and us; but I hope not and I believe not."[23] For Roosevelt, race was not a relevant factor in the relationship between the United States and Japan: "I am not much affected by the statement that the Japanese are of an utterly different race from ourselves and that the Russians are of the same race," and he concluded that "I see nothing ruinous to civilization in the advent of the Japanese to

power among the great nations."[24]

When the school controversy started in 1906, however, it was not Roosevelt's admiration for Japan, but his pragmatism that forced him to intervene. Understanding that Japan was bound to be insulted if its children were segregated from white children in the schools, he sought to put racial concerns at the state level aside for national interests. Furious, he wrote to his son: "The infernal fools in California, especially in San Francisco, insult the Japanese recklessly and in the event of war it will be the Nation as a whole which will pay the consequences."[25] He would be ready to fight, but "I would loathe to see it [the American nation] forced into a war in which it was wrong."[26] His apprehension was shared inside governmental circles: the same day that the President wrote his letter, Secretary of State Elihu Root (1845–1937) warned that, "Owing to their recent admission to recognized equality with the other civilized nations, they [the Japanese] are particularly sensitive about everything which questions that equality; one-tenth of the insults which have been visited upon Chinese by the people of the United States would lead to immediate war."[27] War with Japan was not just an abstract fear, but was seen as a real, possible outcome in the two countries' shared futures: in 1906, Roosevelt and his military advisors designed War Plan ORANGE out of concern that Japan was a probable U.S. enemy in the Pacific that necessitated a strategic plan for a potential conflict.[28]

The American government's apprehensions, as well as the dilemma posed by the Japanese people, were perfectly summed up by the newspaper *Boston Daily Globe*:

> That the Japanese should officially take note of the color prejudices of the Caucasian is another interesting phase of the mild crisis now existing in the relations of Japan and the United States. We have drawn the color line with impunity on the Indian and the African; they have no governments to resent any indignity put upon them. We have drawn it sharply on the Chinaman, and his government has had neither the spirit nor the physical power to make us feel its displeasure. But a man of color with the laurels of Mukden and the Sea of Japan on his dusky brow, who refuses to be made a jim crow [*sic*] of,[29] gives us pause. Since the bronzed Saracen … there has been no one until now to challenge the white man's scorn.[30]

This was indeed the problem: different from other "colored races," Japan actually had the power to fight back. It was thus crucial to grant the Japanese people special racial status.

To this end, Roosevelt personally intervened for Japan in his yearly address before Congress and virulently criticized the segregation order: he complained that throughout most of the country, the Japanese people were treated as any other "stranger from any part of civilized Europe" (note the comparison with Europe), but some parts of the country showed unnecessary hostility towards them. San Francisco's decision to exclude Japanese children from its public schools was a "wicked absurdity." Americans had as much to learn from Japan as Japan had to learn from the United States. The president then requested "fair treatment for the Japanese as I would ask fair treatment for Germans or Englishmen, Frenchmen, Russians and Italians."[31] But it was what Roosevelt would state next that had the most important effect: "I recommend to Congress that an act be passed specifically providing for the naturalization of Japanese who come here intending to become American citizens."[32] He further assured that he would use every force available, "military and civil," to protect the rights of Japanese immigrants.[33]

Roosevelt's strong language deserves more than a passing comment, as it presents the peculiar situation of a U.S. president threatening one of his own states with military force, specifically to defend people of a different race and nation. This becomes even more surprising when one considers the societal and legal context of the time: the decision to segregate Japanese schoolchildren was undoubtedly morally questionable, but it was not illegal. The Californian School Law of 1860 had specifically ordered the segregation of children of black, Chinese and Indian descent.[34] After a certain span of time, during which children of "Mongolian" descent were barred from even segregated public schools, the "separate but equal" doctrine customized in the American South was also set in west coast law by the 1880s. The amended School Law thus read: "Trustees shall have the power to exclude children of filthy and vicious habits, or children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases… and also to establish separate schools for children of Mongolian or Chinese descent. When such separate schools are established, Chinese or Mongolian children must not be admitted into any other school."[35] The Oriental school in San Francisco was open to Japanese children as well. This was in no way peculiar: especially in the southern states, the segregation of African Americans, for example, was an accepted part of the societal order. The question then was, as a San Francisco newspaper asked: "If the Southern States can segregate the races in its schools, why may not the Californians do so?"[36]

As a matter of fact, Roosevelt's disregard for the domestic societal order did not conflict with Californians' views alone. In a rather cruel irony, the Japanese government itself, along with the Japanese elite that had already settled in the United States, mirrored, to a certain extent, the thoughts of many on the west coast. In a peculiar blend of racial and class prejudice, the Japanese elite dissociated itself from the class of unskilled Japanese immigrants. The latter group was associated with Chinese laborers, who were thought to have undesirable characteristics that made them unfit for assimilation into American society. The Japanese elite thus united in prejudice with white Californians.[37] As Eiichiro Azuma pointed out, this development "fabricated the dual cultural affinities between the elite Japanese and the white American middle-class, and between the lowly *gumin* [ignorant masses] and the excluded Chinese."[38] The Japanese government actively sought to counter the "Chinese" characteristics of unskilled Japanese immigrants in order to transform "ordinary *Issei* (first generation immigrants) from the "Sinified" Japanese to the "truly" Japanese fit for modern life."[39] Therefore, while the American president was arguing for Japanese immigrants' assimilation into American society, specifically on the basis that they were similar to whites, the Japanese government was actually concerned with the feasibility of this assimilation, thinking unskilled Japanese immigrants were too close to "colored" Chinese.

The dichotomy between "whites" and "nonwhites" does not entirely explain the situation. The special racial status granted to Japanese immigrants would have enabled them to escape the usual treatment of "nonwhites" on American soil, in this particular case racial segregation. Japanese children in California were legally obliged to attend separate schools, despite opposition from Roosevelt and his administration. This clash of opinions stemmed from the fact that dissenters and supporters of Japanese immigrants were addressing the issue of Japanese racial identity from two different standpoints: supporters were concerned with geopolitical matters and tended to push the issue of race into the background, while dissenters were plagued by racial anxieties. Accordingly, both parties envisioned Japan differently: for Roosevelt and his followers, the problem was Japan as a nation and as a military power, while the Californians feared Japanese

people as individual members of a specific race. Dissenters against Japanese immigrants acknowledged the place that Japan held on the world stage, but they did not see it as reason enough to allow Japanese immigrants to enter the United States and mingle with the white population.

This point was clarified by California Senator Everis Anson Hayes (1855–1942). In a speech before Congress on March 13, 1906, he acknowledged the following:

> The valorous achievements of any nation have in all ages challenged the admiration of the world. And when a nation, making up for its lack of number by its energy, courage, and discipline, emerges from a contest with a nation numerically much stronger with the triumphant success which has recently attended the arms of Japan in its contest with Russia we, in common with the rest of the world, shout out our bravos to the plucky little island nation. … Their achievements, which are not small, are the common heritage of mankind, and for that reason I glory in them.[40]

However, the question that mattered, the senator went on, was if "it was better for this nation [the United States] that the Japanese people should be allowed to come and settle among us as we allow aliens of the Caucasian race to come, or is it better for the whole people of our country that they should be wholly or partly excluded?"[41] This question could not "be wisely answered by simply pointing to the great achievements of the Japanese people in war."[42] Or as another senator, this time from Oregon, put it without the cover of praise: "It must be admitted that, while the Japanese in the aggregate, as a nation, are admired for their wonderful pluck, energy and marvelous progress of late years, the individual Japanese, as we see and know him on the Pacific Coast, is not a favorite with our people."[43]

In hindsight, it is possible to say that there was one simple reason why the Japanese people were no "favorite" in California: they stubbornly refused to remain where the American racial system wanted them, i.e., at the bottom of the racial hierarchy with other "nonwhites." As the politician Chester H. Rowell, contributing to the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, put it:

> It must always be remembered that the white American's standard of judging strange peoples is personal and unobjective. The average southern white man, for instance, is most favorably disposed toward a type of Negro objectively inferior, the type, namely, which best fits the inferior status which the white man prefers the black man to occupy."[44]

This is why, despite calling for their exclusion, Chinese laborers had been preferred over Japanese: "We find the Chinese fitting much better than the Japanese into the status which the white American prefers them both to occupy--that of biped domestic animal in the white man's service."[45] The Japanese immigrants were different, quicker and brighter than their Chinese counterparts, but not as reliable because unlike the latter, they were not afraid to break a contract.[46]

For dissenters against Japanese immigrants, the very fact that the latter refused to subscribe to the American racial status quo was proof of their inability to assimilate into American society. While other racial minorities

more or less accepted the status quo, Japanese immigrants challenged it: "Hoodlums make assault upon other foreigners. But nothing is heard of them, but the Japanese insist upon converting every difficulty in which they become involved into an international affair."[47] The Japanese made their appeals because "they considered themselves as subjects of the Mikado, whom they have been led to believe exercises as much influence on this side of the Pacific as he does in his own empire."[48] Their ability to resist particularly chafed against those who called for their exclusion. A justice from California lamented that the city of San Francisco had established a school for Chinese children, which had been in operation for many years, and had received no complaints from Chinese parents. "But when a proposition is made to have Japanese attend so-called Oriental schools a storm is raised which causes extreme agitation in Tokyo and in Washington and column upon column of denunciation in the press of both countries."[49]

Between Two Races

By acting on behalf of the Japanese immigrants, Theodore Roosevelt created a fundamental dissonance between how "nonwhite people" were supposed to be treated and how they were actually treated. More than considerations of biology, literacy, work ethic, or capability for assimilation, it was the national situation that differentiated Japanese immigrants from other "nonwhites" (and "white") immigrants. Unlike their African American, Native American, Chinese, or Eastern European counterparts, Japanese immigrants had a government that backed them, and that had the military capacity to defend them. On the other hand, dissenters against Japanese immigrants were more concerned with preserving the racial purity of their state. For them, accepting a few Japanese children into white schools was more than a simple compromise without consequences, but represented a threat to the very foundations of white supremacy in the United States. If the Japanese were first, the Chinese could come next, followed by even African Americans. Race mixing would jeopardize the racial integrity of the country: "History teaches us that it is impossible to make a homogeneous people by the juxtaposition upon the same soil of races differing in color," warned a senator from the state of Nevada, and "race tolerance, under such conditions, means race amalgamation, and this is undesirable."[50] Exclusion provided the only solution to this problem:

> The time has come, in my judgment, when the United States, as a matter of self-protection and self-preservation, must declare by statutory enactment that it will not tolerate further race complications upon our soil. Our country, by law to take effect upon the expiration of existing treaties, should prevent the immigration of all peoples other than those of the white race, except under restricted conditions relating to international commerce, travel, and education.[51]

In the end, Roosevelt created a zone of negotiation that yielded a compromise satisfying both parties: on February 24, 1907, Foreign Minister Hayashi Tadasu (1850–1913) wrote a note laying the basis for what became known as the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan. The Japanese schoolchildren could return to white schools, and in return, the Japanese government would limit emigration to non-laborers who were relatives of people already living in the United States, as well as laborers who owned property there. This agreement managed to simultaneously help the Japanese government save face (however temporarily) and uphold the American racial status quo. The events that led

to it, however, show how fragile Japan's newly gained status as a great power was. It took Roosevelt's intervention to guarantee that Japanese immigrants in the United States would be treated the same as immigrants from European nations. That this compromise did not survive long after his presidency only confirms the precarity of the racial status bestowed upon Japanese immigrants.

In 1913, only four years after Roosevelt ended his presidency, the Alien Land Law, which banned Japanese subjects from owning land in the United States, was promulgated under Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924). Where Roosevelt had been willing to compromise for the sake of diplomatic relations, Wilson was not, and the negotiation zone collapsed. Developments that followed this legislation further undermined Japanese-American relations, including the failed racial equality proposal that Japan submitted at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, as well as the Immigration Act of 1924 that effectively banned Japanese from entering the United States. The Washington Naval Treaty of 1922, which limited Japan's naval power, and was seen as demoting the country to the rank of second-rate nation, added insult to injury. This overall sentiment of not being accepted as a full-fledged member of the "club of civilized nations" would eventually lead Japan to leave the League of Nations and take the path to war. The Showa Emperor himself blamed the disastrous war against the United States on these acts of discrimination.[52] Attributing Japan's going to war solely to these anti-Japanese sentiments is surely farfetched. However, one is left to wonder what would have happened had Japan been able to preserve its elusive honorary status as a Western nation.

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Notes

[1] *Fukuzawa Yukichi Zenshū* [Complete Works of Fukuzawa Yukichi], ed. Keiō Gijuku [Keiō University] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1969−1971), 591.
[2] Ibid., 581.
[3] Ibid., 591–600. In the main source Fukuzawa used for his own work, Samuel Augustus Mitchell's *A System of World Geography*, Japan is explicitly mentioned as part of the "yellow race." See Samuel Augustus Mitchell, *A System of Modern Geography: Political, Physical and Descriptive* (Philadelphia: E.H. Butler and Co., 1865 [1840]), 33.
[4] For details about Fukuzawa Yukichi's adaptation of the concept of race, see: Akiko Uchiyama, "Translation as Representation: Fukuzawa Yukichi's Representation of the "Others," in *Agents of Translation*, ed. John Milton and Paul Brandia (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), 63−83; Yasuko Takezawa, "Translating and Transforming 'Race': Early Meiji Period Textbooks," *Japanese Studies* 35, no. 1 (2015): 5–21; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (New York: Sharpe, 1998), 85.
[5] Paul Gordon Lauren, *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).
[6] Georges M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study of American and South African History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 93.

[7] Michael L. Krenn, *The Color of Empire: Race and American Foreign Relations* (Dulles: Potomac Books, 2006), 4.
[8] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 70.
[9] The classic study on the standard of civilization remains Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984). For details about Gong's work, but also for a critique of its shortcomings, see the more recent: Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).
[10] I need to point out here that Joseph M. Henning has already made a similar argument regarding the special racial status of Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. In his words, "Japan's success … undermined the widespread American conception that modern civilization and progress were inseparable from Christianity and Anglo-Saxon ancestry." Henning focused his extensive study on the views of American missionaries in Japan, thereby (involuntarily) downplaying the geopolitical importance that Japan had gained in the Far East. More than anything, it was this importance that led to the renegotiation of Japanese racial identity, and also that which led to concrete results and gains. The distinction between Japan as a nation and the Japanese as individuals is also one aspect that he did not elaborate on. My research therefore explores further nuances and layers to Henning's approach. Nevertheless, readers interested in the topic are advised to consult his solid work: Joseph Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000). The above-quoted passage can be found on page 137.
[11] For details on the "Yellow Peril," see the classic study (in German): Heinz Gollwitzer, *Die Gelbe Gefahr: Geschichte eines Schlagworts, Studien zum imperialistischen Denken* [The Yellow Peril: History of a Keyword, Studies on Imperialist Thought] (Göttingen: Vondenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962). For an extensive and more recent study in Japanese, see Iikura Akira, *Ierō periru no shinwa: teikoku Nihon to kōka no gyakusetsu* [The Myth of the Yellow Peril: Imperial Japan and the Contradiction of the "Yellow Peril"] (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2004)
[12] Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 111.
[13] Motoko Tsuchida, "A History of Japanese Emigration from the 1860s to the 1990s," in *Temporary Workers or Future Citizens? Japanese and U.S. Migration policies*, ed. Myron Weiner and Tadashi Hanami (London: Macmillian Press, 1998), 93.
[14] Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 17. For Roosevelt's education, see Thomas G. Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980).
[15] Dyer, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Idea of Race*, 11–12 and 16–17.
[16] Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 45–46.
[17] As cited in Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japan Relations* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1997), 82.
[18] For Roosevelt and Japanese martial arts, see Christopher Benfey, *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics and the Opening of Old Japan* (New York: Random House, 2003), 239–64.

[19] Letter from *Theodore Roosevelt to Kaneko Kentarō*, April 23, 1904. Theodore Roosevelt Papers. Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University, [accessed August 11, 2019].
[20] Ibid. Benfey relativized Roosevelt's enthusiasm for the book *Bushido*, stating: "Roosevelt read *Bushido*, but he did not like it." Indeed, he asked a friend "whether that is really studied in Japan, and represents home Japanese philosophy, and not Japanese philosophy for export." Both quotes are from Benfey, *The Great Wave*, 246. Roosevelt's (justified) doubts about the nature of Nitobe's work can be seen as proof of his interest in Japanese matters as they actually were.
[21] *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Cecil Spring Rice*, June 13, 1904. Theodore Roosevelt Papers. Library of Congress Manuscript Division. . Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University, [accessed August 11, 2019].
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Letter from *Theodore Roosevelt to Kermit Roosevelt*, October 27, 1906. Theodore Roosevelt Papers. Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library. Dickinson State University, [accessed August 11, 2019].
[26] Ibid.
[27] As cited in Akira Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion, 1897–1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 157.
[28] See LaFeber, *The Clash*, 90 and Gomi Toshiki, "Anguro-saxonizumu to sen kyūyaku nijūyonen iminpō [Anglo-Saxonism and the Immigration Law of 1924]," in *Nichibei kiki no kigen to hainichi iminpō* [The Origins of the Japanese-American Crisis and Anti-Japanese Immigration Legislation], ed. Miwa Kimitada (Tokyo: Ronsōsha, 1997), 198.
[29] The journalist is here alluding to the laws regulating segregation in the American South, which were referred to as "Jim Crow" laws.
[30] *The Boston Daily Globe*, "Japan and the Color Line," October 28, 1906.
[31] The full text of Roosevelt's December address was reproduced in numerous newspapers. In this work, I used the one published in the *New York Times*. See *New York Times*, "President Demands Citizenship for Japanese," December 5, 1906. Interestingly, the Japanese government knew of the content of Roosevelt's text long before it was presented to Congress. On November 1, 1906, Ambassador to the United States Aoki Shūzō wrote to Foreign Minister Hayashi Tadasu that "when I…had an interview with the President, at which Mr. Root was present, he confidentially showed me some draft page of his message which is being prepared for presentation to Congress. …In those passages he refers eloquently to the achievements of Japan which entitle her people to the same treatment as the subjects of first class European Power [*sic*] and he earnestly recommends appropriate action of Congrss [*sic*] to permit acquisition of U.S. citizenship by Japanese through naturalization. This he authorized to telegraph to Imperial government secretly. The above is strictly confidential until presentation to Congress." Nihon Gaikō Monjo [Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy] (DJFP), Aoki to Hayashi (November 1, 1906), *Nihon ni oite honbō imin tokō seigen narabi Sōkō hainichi undō no ken*, 455.
[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.
[34] Joyce Kuo, "Excluded, Segregated and Forgotten: A Historical View of the Discrimination of Chinese Americans in Public Schools," *Asian American Law Journal* 5 (January, 1998): 190.
[35] Ibid., 198.
[36] *San Francisco Argonaut*, January 5, 1907. As cited in *Daniels*, *The Politics of Prejudice,* 31.
[37] As Ayu Majima aptly put it, the Japanese elite had to "differentiate to assimilate." See Ayu Majima, "Skin Color Melancholy in Modern Japan: Male Elites' Racial Experiences Abroad, 1880s–1950s," in *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia: Western and Eastern Constructions*, ed. Rotem Kowner and Walter Demel (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 393. For details on the Japanese elite's struggle against association with Chinese immigrants, see also Majima's work in Japanese: Majima Ayu, *Hadairo no yūutsu: kindai Nihon no jinshu taiken* [The Melancholy of Skin Color: The Racial Experience of Modern Japan] (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2014).
[38] Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 38.
[39] Ibid.
[40] The speech was reproduced and sent to the Japanese government. See DJFP, Hioki to Saionji (March 30, 1906), *Nihon ni oite honbō imin tokō seigen narabi Sōkō hainichi undō no ken*, 377–94. Quote on 378.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] C. W. Fulton, "American Schools and Japanese Pupils," *The North American Review* 183, no. 605 (December 1906): 1225.
[44] Chester H. Rowell, "Chinese and Japanese Immigrants – A Comparison," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 34, no. 2 (September 1909): 3.
[45] Ibid., 3–4.
[46] Ibid., 5.
[47] John P. Young, "The Support of the Anti-Oriental Movement," ibid., 17–18.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Albert G Burnett, "Misunderstanding of Eastern and Western States regarding Oriental Immigration," ibid., 41.
[50] Francis G. Newlands, "A Western View of the Race Question," ibid., 50.
[51] Ibid., 51.
[52] In a private recording from 1946, the Shōwa Emperor reflected that: "If we ask the reason for this war, it lies in the contents of the peace treaty signed at the end of the First World War. The racial equality proposal demanded by Japan was not accepted by the powers. The discriminatory sentiment between the white and the yellow remains as always. And the rejection of the immigrants in California. These were enough to anger the Japanese people." As cited in Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London: Routledge, 1998), 181.