You Can't Go Home Again: Japanese Peruvian Immigrants and the Struggle for Integration and Identity in the Japanese Homeland

by

ROBERT STEVEN MOOREHEAD

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Committee in Charge:

Research Professor Lyn H. Lofland, Chair

Associate Professor Bruce Haynes

Professor John Lie (University of California, Berkeley)

Assistant Professor Ayumi Takenaka (Bryn Mawr College)

Abstract

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This dissertation explores the social and economic marginalization of Japanese Peruvian immigrants to Japan, and the impact of that marginalization on their incorporation into, and their sense of identity with, Japanese society. I draw on the complex and contradictory nature of Japanese Peruvians' ties to Japan and Peru, including their historical relationship with the Japanese state, and their racialization as foreigners in both Peru and Japan, as I analyze Peruvian parents' efforts to both permanently settle in Japan and to instill a Peruvian ethnic identity in their children. Through ethnographic study, I focus on a public elementary school in central Japan as an important site for the socialization for the 1.5 and second generation. I analyze how the school reproduces Peruvians' marginalized status by providing ineffective remedial language assistance for children, stereotyping Peruvian children and parents, questioning the parents' commitment to living in Japan, and challenging the parents to acculturate. I also examine Peruvians' efforts at incorporation into the local community, including their attempts to distance themselves from other foreigners as a way to deflect negative stereotypes of their group.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> When I was at school (in Peru), the kids would stare at me and ask their mothers why I had such tiny eyes. So I had a lot of shame, and they called me "*china*, *china*" (Chinese, Chinese), and I felt bad. Like being called "*gaijin*, *gaijin*" (foreigner, foreigner) … Everyone bothered me like that, in Peru, and I come here (to Japan), and everyone tells me I'm Peruvian. And there (in Peru), they tell me I'm not from there. *Pues, no tengo país* (So, I don't have a country).

Gabriela,[1] a Peruvian woman of Japanese descent, recounts these experiences as we sit in her family's small, two-bedroom apartment in an industrial city in central Japan. Gabriela and her husband migrated to Japan nearly 15 years ago, seeking employment and wealth in Gabriela's ancestral homeland. This situation was made possible in 1990 by a change in Japanese immigration policy that gave preferential treatment to foreign nationals of Japanese descent, or *Nikkei*.[2] Despite these ties, Gabriela and other Nikkei from Peru who have migrated to Japan find that native Japanese treat them not as Japanese descendants but as *gaijin* (foreigners or outsiders).[3] As Gabriela's comment indicates, Nikkei face similar treatment in Peru, where, more than 100 years after their initial migration, they remain marked as a racial and cultural other.

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[1] All names in this dissertation, including place names, are pseudonyms.

[2] "Nikkei" is the abbreviated version of the Japanese term "*Nikkeijin*," which refers to a person of Japanese descent. Literally, the *kanji* (Chinese characters) in "Nikkeijin" mean "person in the line of the sun," referring to Japan. The term refers broadly to all foreign nationals of Japanese descent, and includes people of Okinawan descent, many of whom claim cultural and linguistic distinctiveness from mainland Japanese. Most Nikkei in Peru are descendants from Okinawa prefecture (Japan International Cooperation Agency 1994; Morimoto 1991; Takenaka 2003a).

[3] "Gaijin" is an abbreviation of "*gaikokujin*" (foreigner), and its kanji mean "person from an outside country." In its abbreviated form, gaijin means "outsider" and refers to non-Japanese, often derogatorily.

In this dissertation, I examine this peculiar case of immigration, incorporation, and ethnic identity. The marginalization of Peruvian Nikkei in Peru, their natal homeland, and Japan, their ancestral homeland, complicates notions of home, leading Gabriela to proclaim that she does not have a country. This sense of exile, or "enforced homelessness" (Espiritu 2003:14), denies the Nikkei the powerful symbolic connection to a homeland (Lie 2008:80). Thus, in this case, there is no "unproblematic geographic location of home" for Peruvian Nikkei (Espiritu 2003:15). Analyzing this group's "homeless" state, I explore how the social and economic marginalization of Peruvian Nikkei as unskilled, foreign factory laborers living in public housing in Japan influences their incorporation into, and their sense of identity with, Japanese society. I also examine the impact of this marginalization on Peruvian Nikkei parents' plans for their children's future lives in Japan, or elsewhere. I analyze Peruvian Nikkei's responses to this state of geographic rootlessness, focusing on the reality of marginalization in both Peru and Japan—in both the natal and ancestral homelands.

The primary site for my analysis is Shiroyama Elementary School, a public school in the district of Shiroyama, which is located in a city of 75,000 in central Japan. Examining the school offers unique insight into immigrant socialization, for the school is an important site for the socialization of Peruvian children into Japanese culture. Because the children's parents have very tenuous ties to the Japanese social world, it is almost exclusively the local school that provides the children with opportunities for interactional incorporation into Japanese society. I analyze teachers' and administrators' efforts to integrate Peruvian and other foreign students into the school, including the

school's remedial Japanese language program. I also explore the relations between the teachers and the Peruvian parents, examining the tensions between the two sides. In this relationship, teachers question the parents' commitment to the local school, and, by extension, to living in Japan. Analyzing specific practices at the school sheds light on the school's role in the reproduction of inequality, revealing how teachers reinforce Peruvian parents' status as a gaijin other, and reproduce that status in the children. It also reveals the complex relationship between agency and structure in immigrant identity formation, as Peruvian parents attempt to instill Peruvian identities in their children, while the school pushes assimilation. Amid these dueling forces, Peruvian children sit at the nexus of what Ong (1996:738) terms the dual processes of "self-making and being made."

The secondary site for my analysis is the public housing complex in Shiroyama where many Peruvian Nikkei reside and where I explore the relations between Peruvian and Japanese residents, and between Peruvian and other foreign residents. This approach offers insight into Peruvians' efforts to integrate into the local neighborhood, and the barriers they face in doing so. As Peruvian residents participate in local neighborhood meetings and events, they also face stereotypes of foreign residents as troublemakers. I explore how Peruvians deflect those stereotypes by saying they apply not to them, but to other, "bad foreigners." Through this analysis, I invite the reader to explore how immigrants' reception influences their sense of belonging and identification with the host society.

Focusing on Peruvians' experiences of inclusion and exclusion, I address the stigmatization (Goffman 1963) of Peruvians as gaijin. This stigmatization is conveyed through the subtle violations (Espiritu 2003:9; Gordon 1997:206) they face on a regular basis at the elementary school, at work, and in the neighborhood, including questions of their allegiance to Japan, ineffective remedial language classes for their children, unintelligible translations sent home by the school, a lack of upward mobility in employment, and allegations of rule-breaking in the neighborhood. These negative experiences lead Peruvian parents to place great value on their children's education in Japan—despite the barriers to attainment at the local school— because, like many immigrants to the United States, the parents see education as the best chance the children have to gain economic mobility and escape their parents' marginal status (cf. Sue and Okazaki 1990).

It is estimated that roughly 70 percent of the Peruvian Nikkei population in Japan is entirely of Japanese descent, and 30 percent is of mixed Japanese and Peruvian ancestry (Japan International Cooperation Agency 1992). In Shiroyama, some Peruvian families can directly trace their Japanese ancestry back through several generations, with no family history of out-marriage. These Nikkei are phenotypically indistinguishable from native-born Japanese and can often pass as Japanese, however, when they speak, their non-native accents quickly reveal their gaijin status. In other families, the ties to Japan are weaker, with only one spouse having Japanese ancestry, at times through a single grandparent who was a Japanese citizen—the minimum degree of Japanese ancestry required for a long-term resident visa. It is also common for one spouse to

have no ancestral connection to Japan. It is estimated that as many as half of the nearly 60,000 Peruvians in Japan are not of Japanese descent, and entered Japan as spouses of Nikkei, as tourists, or as students. Some may also have entered by using black-market documents to falsely claim that they have Japanese ancestry (Masuda and Yanagida 1999; Takenaka 2003b). These Peruvians do not have Japanese phenotypic features, and cannot pass as Japanese. Most Peruvian parents in Shiroyama, Nikkei and non-Nikkei, have minimal to moderate Japanese-speaking skills, and are functionally illiterate in Japanese.[4] While some parents studied the Japanese language as children at Nikkei schools in Peru and can speak conversational Japanese fairly well, their ability to read and write the language remains limited.

HISTORY OF MIGRATION

To understand the current 'homelessness' of the Peruvian Nikkei, we need to understand their history of migration. In the following sections, I examine the history of migrations between Japan and Peru, including the role of the Japanese state and Nikkei ethnic associations in sustaining the notion of Japan as the ancestral homeland for the Nikkei. I also review the policy changes that enabled Peruvian Nikkei migration to Japan, and the influence of broad structural forces on that policy, including Japanese industry's

[4] Taylor and Taylor (1995:364) define functional literacy as the ability to read materials such as newspapers, to fill in forms, and to compose simple letters. They estimate that at least a junior high school education is necessary to achieve this level of literacy in Japanese. However, greater comprehension of newspaper content requires familiarity with *jōyō kanji*, the 1,945 kanji characters taught from elementary school through high school (Gottleib 2005). For non-native speakers, attaining functional literacy is complicated by the Japanese use of four different writing systems: the two phonetic syllabaries *hiragana* and *katakana*, the Chinese characters called *kanji*, and the Roman alphabet. While learning hiragana and katakana can occur fairly quickly, learning kanji requires extensive practice, including rote memorization, over a period of years.

need for low-wage labor, the political expediency of allowing the immigration of Nikkei into Japan, and Peruvian workers' needs to escape the social and economic turmoil of Peru in the early 1990s.

Japanese Migration to Peru

In 1899, the first contract laborers sent to Peru by the Japanese government arrived in the Peruvian port city of Callao to work in sugar cane plantations. This emigration was part of Japan's colonial project, as these workers were to send remittances back to Japan, build economic ties with other countries, secure resources, and potentially enable the expansion of Japan's territory (Takenaka 2004). This project also eliminated the potential of civil unrest by impoverished farmers in Japan during the country's industrialization, as nearly all of the 33,000 Japanese emigrants who left for Peru between 1899 and 1942 were farmers, mostly from southern Japan (Takenaka 2003a; Takenaka 2004).

Japanese workers later settled in the cities of Lima and Callao, where they gradually established barber shops, markets, and small stores (Takenaka 2004). Discrimination by Peruvians encouraged ethnic solidarity among Japanese immigrants. For self-protection, and with the assistance of the Japanese state, Japanese in Peru formed ethnic associations, which supported the community by distributing *tanomoshi* (rotating credit) and establishing ethnic schools. Peruvians, in turn, saw these acts as signs of disloyalty and increased their resistance, resulting in a cycle of hostility (Bonacich 1973; Takenaka 2004). The most traumatic period for the Nikkei in Peru occurred prior to and during World War II, when they suffered riots and numerous legal

restrictions, including, for some, the denial of Peruvian citizenship. Under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State, the Peruvian government forcibly deported 1,800 Nikkei, including Japanese and Peruvian citizens, to U.S. internment camps, where they were to be traded for American prisoners of war held by the Japanese military (Barnhart 1962; Connell 1995; Takenaka 2004).

In the years since World War II, as Japan has grown into an economic power, the popular image of the Nikkei in Peru has changed from a threatening other to a model minority (Masterson 2006; Takenaka 2008). Economic development in Japan ended Japanese emigration to Peru, and the cutoff of the influx of new immigrants sped the assimilation of Peruvian Nikkei (cf. Massey 1995; Waters and Jiménez 2005). With increasing intermarriage between Nikkei and other Peruvians, the Nikkei have become predominantly Catholic and Spanish-speaking, and have built ties with Peruvian society outside the enclave (Morimoto 1991; Takenaka 2004). In the present day, Nikkei in Peru remain racialized as "*chinos*" (Chinese),[5] and remain a minority in Peruvian society, marked more by their racial and cultural differences from their fellow Peruvians than by their similarities. Even the most prominent Peruvian Nikkei, former President Alberto Fujimori, is popularly referred to as "*el chino*" (the Chinaman).

In spite of the Nikkei's incorporation into Peruvian society, the Japanese government continues to play a key role in supporting the Nikkei by funding high quality facilities in Peru and scholarships for study and training in Japan (Takenaka 2008; White

[5] The fact that Chinese migration to Peru preceded Japanese migration by approximately 50 years, and the phenotypic similarities between Chinese and Japanese, may explain the racialization of Japanese as *chinos* (Hu-Dehart 1995).

2003). Peru's largest Nikkei ethnic association, *la Asociación Peruano Japonesa* (the Japanese Peruvian Association), is so strongly state-supported that Takenaka (2003a:479) describes it as the cultural organ of the Japanese state in Peru. Japanese policy also still draws on notions of Nikkei affinity with Japan, placing the Nikkei as key liaisons between the two nations, noting "Regardless of their ability to speak Japanese, or whether they hold Japanese nationality, overseas Nikkei are in a position to understand both their countries of residence and Japan and they can serve as 'bridges' between their countries of residence and Japan" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000).

Thus, from this viewpoint, Peru is merely a "country of residence" for the Nikkei, while Japan is the ancestral homeland to which the Nikkei remain connected. In Peru, the Nikkei are to act as "bridges," strengthening ties through positive depictions of Japan, including offering classes on Japanese language and cultural practices, thereby "allowing Japan and the Japanese people to be highly appraised internationally" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000). This metaphor of the Nikkei as bridges aptly positions the Nikkei as tools for the Japanese state. Just as physical bridges are positioned between two destinations, and in and of themselves are only liminal points of transition, the Nikkei are mere conduits for the Japanese state.

Nikkei ethnic associations in Peru provide an additional structure for sustaining ties to Japan and for defining and policing Nikkei group boundaries. By identifying elements of Japanese culture as key markers of Nikkei identity, these associations have defined the boundaries of Nikkei group membership. These elements of Japanese culture include the supposedly traditional Japanese norms of honesty, punctuality, hard

work, and perseverance—norms that are defined as "Nikkei values" (Takenaka 1999; Takenaka 2008). Association leaders are able to reinforce this depiction of Nikkei identity by providing their members a material incentive to comply, through rewarding them or denying them access to tanomoshi and social and business networks (Takenaka 1999; Takenaka 2003a).[6] The tightly knit nature of the ethnic associations and the broader Nikkei enclave facilitate this policing. Takenaka (2003a:476) notes of these efforts to define Nikkei identity:

> … cultural meanings are attached to 'us' and 'them' in a bifurcated manner. Good behaviour is interpreted as Japanese culture, and bad behaviour as Peruvian. Complying with rules is regarded as 'Japanese values', while the failure to meet expectations renders one too *criollo* (Peruvianised). Seriousness and hard work make you 'good Japanese'; otherwise, you are 'not Japanese enough'. When a theft occurred in a Japanese-Peruvian community organisation, its staff automatically suspected a 'Peruvian', agreeing on the need for stricter entrance requirements. Once cultural meanings are attached to groups, values are used to reinforce group boundaries.

Ethnic associations also host cultural events for young Nikkei, enabling them to explicitly perform their Japanese-ness through Japanese language courses, dances, and arts (cf. King-O'Riain 2006). These performances explicitly highlight the Nikkei's connections to Japan and frame these connections as something worth retaining.

Return Migration to Japan

In the late 1980s, life in Peru was marked by hyperinflation, terrorism, and political instability (Figueroa 1995; Stern 1998; Takenaka 1999). In contrast, the Japanese economy was booming and in search of a new supply of unskilled labor.

[6] In their study of Vietnamese immigrants in New Orleans, Zhou and Bankston (1998) similarly note the ability of a tightly knit ethnic community and ethnic associations to police coethnics' behavior and define the boundaries of group identity.

Decades of a declining birth rate limited Japan's pool of younger laborers, and the previous unskilled labor pool, migrants from the country's rural hinterlands, were eschewing factory work for white-collar employment (Higuchi and Tanno 2003). Filling this need for labor presented a problem for Japanese industry, as the Japanese government did not (and still does not) offer visas for unskilled labor. In response, lawmakers looked across the Japanese diaspora to South American Nikkei as a potential labor pool of hundreds of thousands of workers who, by virtue of their Japanese ancestry, could satisfy labor needs while minimizing challenges to the country's racial order (Sellek 1997; Yamanaka 1993).

The vehicle for this change was the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act of 1990, which allows Nikkei up to the third generation, and their spouses and children, to enter Japan not on work visas, but on renewable long-term resident visas, under the "special circumstances" of their ancestral connection to Japan (Japan Immigration Association 1990:7; Yamanaka 1993:76). This policy measures the Nikkei's Japanese-ness by the number of generations they are removed from Japan. Those of the second generation are eligible for three-year visas as "spouses or children of a Japanese national," and the third generation is eligible for a one-year "long-term resident" visa. This policy effectively admits Nikkei through the "back door" as unskilled labor, under the guise of reuniting them with their ancestral homeland (Sellek 1997; Yamanaka 1993).

The Japanese policy turn to Nikkei labor was also a turn away from more "foreign" labor in Asia and the Middle East, and was prompted by media attention and

public outcry over the presence of illegal foreign workers (Lie 2001; Sellek 1997; Yamanaka 1993). Over 11,000 illegal foreign workers were arrested in Japan in 1987, a number that rose to nearly 30,000 in 1990, and over 64,000 in 1993 (Sellek 1997:180-1). While in the late 1980s and early 1990s non-Japanese were only approximately one percent of the Japanese population, their growing presence represented both supposed threats to public safety and the novelty of ethnic diversity (Lie 2001:18). More importantly, they represented a "potential of heterogeneity" that could disrupt Japan's national myth of racial and ethnic homogeneity (Lie 2001:48).[7]

The discourse of "homogeneous Japan" took hold after World War II, uniting the nation following its defeat in the war and the collapse of its colonial empire. This discourse effaces the multiethnic nature of Japanese history, and instead defines Japanese identity in terms of its supposed pure, homogeneous, and monoethnic nature (Denoon, McCormack, and Morris-Suzuki 1996; Douglass and Roberts 2000; Lie 2001; Oguma 2002; Weiner 1997). Western understandings of race, ethnicity, and nationality tend to treat the three terms as distinct concepts. However, dominant understandings of Japanese identity combine the three terms into a singular "ethnoracial" (Hogan 2009) frame that depicts the Japanese as sharing a common genetic and cultural heritage, as well as a common nationality. This understanding minimizes the presence of non-

[7] Even with increased immigration over the past 20 years, the percentage of foreign nationals in Japan remains very low compared to other nations. The number of registered foreign nationals in Japan has roughly doubled since 1990, surpassing the two million mark for the first time in 2005. However, even at this high point, government statistics show non-citizens as only 1.57 percent of the Japanese population, and Peruvians as only 0.5 percent of the population (Statistical Research and Training Institute 2009). This number does not include visa overstayers or other undocumented residents of Japan.

Japanese in Japan, claiming that Japan's homogeneity defines the nation and makes it unique. This construction of Japanese identity means that non-Japanese, regardless of race or ethnicity, cannot become Japanese. Instead, foreign status is ascriptive and permanent, much like a racial status. This shapes the language available to Japanese to describe people from other countries, often erasing ethnic and racial distinctions within nations in favor of broad references by national origin (Lie 2001). Hence, all Peruvians in Japan—Nikkei, non-Nikkei, and those of mixed ancestry—fall into the same "Peruvian" category. A hybrid middle ground, such Japanese-Peruvian, is not an option, as the logic of Japanese ethnoracial categories leaves no space for multiple identities.

The racial and ethnic diversity of Peruvian immigrants challenges the clean simplicity of these categories. Sandra, a Peruvian mother whose spouse is Nikkei, describes having a Japanese shopkeeper question her child's ancestry: "What cute *hāfu* (half)[8]! No, wait, you're not hāfu. Can you speak Japanese? You don't look like a hāfu, you look like a gaijin. Surely your father isn't Japanese." Judith, a mother of mixed Peruvian and Japanese descent, recounts a similar encounter, in which a Japanese employer's puzzlement over her brother's phenotypic differences from other Peruvians:

> The *shachō* (boss) asked him why he (her brother) was one color, and the Peruvians have *otros rasgos* (other features), right. And my brother had to explain to him that he was *descendiente japonés* (of Japanese descent), and the others are more Peruvian, and that's why they look different. "Ah," he says. And some have Spanish descent. "Ah," he says again. And that's why the boss asked, because the majority of Peruvians are darker, right. And he asks "why are you that color?"

[8] The term hāfu refers to Japanese citizens of biracial (often white-Japanese) ancestry, and "signifies a bright image of a fashionable, foreign-looking Japanese who speaks fluent English" (Murphy-Shigematsu 2001:212). The term is not generally used to describe foreigners, who are instead referred to as gaijin or gaikokujin.

In these discussions of ancestry and phenotype, Japanese attempt to impose order by classifying mixed-race foreigners as gaijin. Just as the shopkeeper sees Sandra's child as "surely" gaijin, the employer questions Peruvians' diversity and sees the brother as solely Peruvian, even after he claims to be of Japanese descent. Moreover, within this identity discourse, when describing how Peruvians are different from Japanese, Japanese often focus on cultural, and not racial, differences, noting, for example, how Peruvian values toward education, work, and family supposedly differ from Japanese values.

Japanese citizenship laws further marginalize foreign nationals, particularly those born in Japan, as they grant citizenship only to those born to at least one citizen parent.[9] Thus many second and subsequent generation non-Japanese, who were born in Japan, lack Japanese citizenship and are officially resident aliens. Some second-generation Nikkei, including former president Alberto Fujimori, were born in Peru and received Japanese citizenship by their parents (who were Japanese citizens) registering the births with the Japanese embassy in Lima. However the vast majority of Peruvian Nikkei have only Peruvian citizenship.

RECEPTION IN THE HOMELAND

Since the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act took effect in 1990, the number of South Americans in Japan has risen from approximately 71,500 in 1990 to nearly 380,000 in 2005. (See Table 1.) However, upon arriving in Japan, the Nikkei have

[9] Prior to 1985, Japanese law granted citizenship only to those whose fathers were Japanese citizens. A 1985 change in nationality laws enabled both fathers and mothers to transmit citizenship to their children.

discovered the emptiness of Japanese policy claims of shared ancestry. Rather, the Nikkei's foreign nationality, their limited command of the Japanese language, and their lack of acculturation into present-day Japanese social norms and customs permanently mark them as gaijin. As Sofía, a mother of mixed Japanese and Peruvian ancestry, explains, "Here, it doesn't matter what your face looks like. If you're Nikkei, Latino, mestizo (mixed), or Brazilian, *no importa* (it doesn't matter). Here, *todos somos gaijin* (we're all gaijin)." This construction of Nikkei as foreigners is so hegemonic in Japan that it operates as common sense (cf. Omi and Winant 1994:59).

Immigration scholars note the impact of the context of reception on immigrants' efforts at settlement and integration in the host society (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1998). Immigrants' receptions vary from welcoming support to hostility and exclusion, and this range of receptions, in turn, shapes the possibilities for immigrants' assimilation. Portes and Rumbaut (1996, 2001) further identify several critical factors that shape the context for each immigrant group, including racial and ethnic discrimination, the match between the immigrants' human capital and the needs of the host economy, and the social networks from which immigrants are able to draw. For Peruvian Nikkei in Japan, their experiences of ethnic denial, stigmatization, and social and economic marginalization influence their efforts at home-building in Japan. The following sections explore the impact of these factors in shaping the context of reception for Peruvian Nikkei in Japan.

Ethnic Denial

The denial of Peruvian Nikkei's Japanese ancestry has shocked the Nikkei, who sustained their connection to Japan over the generations in Peru through ethnic associations and the ethnic enclave in Lima (Takenaka 1999). It also denies the Nikkei "recognition," a "complex of attributes—love, right, and esteem—that endow people with a sense of acceptance and acknowledgement" as full members of the nation-state (Lie 2008:80). Faced with marginalization as foreigners both in Peru and in Japan, Nikkei complain that they have no country, as Gabriela described at the beginning of this chapter. In the current age of nation-states and nationalism, a homeland affiliation nourishes one's sense of belonging and identity, as strongly as if it were "primary and primordial" (Lie 2008:59). Consequently, rejection in Peru and Japan constitutes a form of exile. As Lie (2008:98) notes:

> That questions of identity may be irresolvable may merely make them all the more urgent, and they are especially pressing for people whose place in society is challenged and whose belonging is unsettled. The soul frets in the shadow as it struggles to recognize itself and to be recognized by others. The self invokes collective categories and public discourses even if its ultimate task is to express the private. In the age of modern peoplehood—when membership in an ethnonational group is at once legally mandated and emotionally indispensable—it is not surprising that extant nations should be the principal predicates of identity claims.

Thus, the non-recognition of the Nikkei's ties to Peru and Japan not only stigmatizes them as foreigners, it also separates them from a powerful claim to identity.

While Tsuda (2003b:153) argues that home is "simply a place of residence that feels secure and familiar [and that] must not be conflated with homeland, which involves social belonging and feelings of emotional attachment to a country of origin," I

argue that the notions of home and homeland are intimately connected. Our physical homes are mobile and can be made and re-made anywhere, however only the connection between home and homeland brings the collective sense of belonging, identity, and recognition. Thus, "home is not only a physical place … but also a concept and a desire" (Espiritu 2003:10). For Peruvian Nikkei, their rejection in both their natal and ancestral homelands leaves this desire for the belonging and attachment of "home" unfulfilled.

The titles of recent ethnographic studies of Nikkei migration to Japan reflect the prevalence of the Nikkei's questions of home and belonging, including Linger's (2001) *No One Home*, Roth's (2002) *Brokered Homeland*, Lesser's (2003) *Searching for Home Abroad*, and Tsuda's (2003c) *Strangers in the Ethnic Homeland*. These works all focus on Brazilian Nikkei, and both Brazilian and Peruvian Nikkei share the experience of ethnic denial in Japan. However, while Brazilian Nikkei respond to their rejection in Japan by strengthening their identification with Brazil, Peruvian Nikkei's experience of greater marginalization and discrimination in Peru tempers their identification with Peru as a homeland (Tsuda 2003c).

For some Peruvians, the lumping of Nikkei and others into a singular gaijin category effaces boundaries between Nikkei and other Peruvians and enables new opportunities for unity, as Sofía noted earlier, "we're all gaijin." This "undifferentiated social equality," or *communitas*, is part of foreigners' liminal existence in Japan (Tsuda 2003b:127; Turner 1967). Previous status distinctions between or within the various

national groups become less significant, as these workers are performing the same jobs, wearing the same uniforms, and often living in the same housing (Tsuda 2003b:128).

However, even though the Japanese refer to the various groups with the same "gaijin" term, Japanese do make hierarchical distinctions among Japan's foreign population. At the top of the gaijin hierarchy are white professional expatriates from the United States and other Western nations, and at the bottom are East Asian workers on trainee (*kenshūsei*) visas[10] (Kanno 2008a; Kelsky 2001; Yamanaka 2008). Nikkei workers fall between these two categories, below the higher status of white expatriates, but possessing a legal visa status and earning higher wages than trainees.

The Stigmatization of a Gaijin Identity

In Japan, the Nikkei discover that being gaijin is a master status (Hughes 1945) that carries a stigma (Goffman 1963). This stigma connects being gaijin to popular Japanese stereotypes of foreigners as permanent outsiders who are largely unassimilable to Japanese social life. Peruvians and others from developing nations are further stereotyped as having a poor work ethic, and low cultural and educational status (De Carvalho 2003; Linger 2001; Roth 2002; Tsuda 2003a; Tsuda 2003c). This negative identity serves to clearly distinguish the Japanese from non-Japanese, and to lower the status of those labeled as gaijin (cf. Link and Phelan 2001). It also informs foreigners' expectations of how the Japanese will treat them, as foreigners are concerned that their

[10] The trainee program pays workers from developing nations minimal wages in exchange for occupational training, but it is widely derided in Japan as an abusive system that denies workers rights and a living wage and that encourages workers to overstay their visas and work illegally at the end of the trainee program (Oishi 1995; Tsuda and Cornelius 2004; Yamanaka 2008).

stigmatized status might influence their interactions with Japanese people, an example of stigma consciousness (Pinel 1999), and that their behavior might fulfill the stereotypes of their group, an example of stereotype threat (Steele and Aronson 1995). The National Police Agency, politicians, and mass media further stigmatize foreigners by depicting them as prone to criminal behavior (Shipper 2008; Yamamoto 2007). In addition, Peruvians' greater racial and ethnic diversity, compared to Nikkei from other countries, causes them to "carry a more negative image than other South Americans in Japan," an image that is more strongly tied to criminality (Takenaka 2003b:223).

The sexual assault and murder of a seven-year-old Japanese girl in Hiroshima in 2005 by a Peruvian migrant worker, José Manuel Torres Yagi, increased public scrutiny and fear of Peruvians and other foreigners in Japan. The killing led to increased, and often negative, Japanese media coverage of the alleged problem of foreigners committing crime.[11] It also contributed to the passing of new regulations that require applicants for long-term resident visas to produce documentation to show that they have no criminal history in their home country. Sara, a Peruvian mother, describes this presumption of criminality as existing years before Torres Yagi's crimes, saying that the police would frequently come to her public housing complex, where a third of the residents are foreign, to investigate the theft of motorcycles and cars. "And always here, or anywhere in Japan, when someone steals, foreigners (are blamed). But it's the Japanese. Japanese have been seen (doing it), but the blame is on (us), or if one

[11] For an analysis of the disparity between claims of foreign criminality and statistics on crime in Japan, see Shipper (2008).

(foreigner) did it, then, well they're all foreigners. For the actions of one, all of us (have to suffer)."

In addition to the stigma of being gaijin, Peruvians also confront individual and institutional discrimination (cf. Roth 2002; Tsuda 2003b; Yamanaka 1993). Tales of negative treatment by Japanese frequently pepper Peruvians' conversations, as they talk about Japanese landlords and rental agents not wanting to rent to foreigners, and about being followed by clerks in stores as potential thieves. They also complain that at work they feel pressured to work overtime and to produce more than their Japanese coworkers, while being paid less. As Angélica, a Nikkei mother, describes her experiences:

> We're in a country that still doesn't accept foreigners, *no los aceptan* (they don't accept them), and the old people are more racist than the people today. … I feel it in the factory, too. They don't say it, but I feel it. Sometimes, they don't say it to me, but they talk about other foreigners and if I'm a foreigner, you know, you understand, then I'm in the same sack, in the same situation as they're in, and even if they say, you know, that *eres diferente* (you're different). No, *yo soy* (*I am*) (a foreigner).

Peruvians also complain of discrimination at the local elementary school, accusing the school of dedicating insufficient resources to foreign students and of holding foreign students to lower standards. Chapters 3 and 4 explore the experiences of Peruvian children and parents at Shiroyama Elementary.

Social Marginalization

In addition to the stigma of their gaijin status in Japan, Peruvians face additional barriers to interacting with native Japanese. The factory workplace presents Peruvians with few opportunities to speak Japanese, and after working 10 to 12 hours a day, five

to six days a week, in alternating day and night shifts, Peruvians have little time for Japanese language classes. Unlike white-collar, "salary man" employment, where socializing after work is common and often expected, the factory workplace provides no occupational incentives for foreign workers to socialize with their Japanese coworkers. Lacking this pressure to socialize, Peruvians' social lives revolve solely around family and co-ethnics, with minimal ties to native Japanese (cf. Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau 2003; Lareau 2000:173).

These networks are poor sources of social capital,[12] as they make available few resources that might facilitate Peruvians' interactions with Japanese institutions. As I will discuss in detail in subsequent chapters, this lack of social capital impacts Peruvian parents as they interact with their children's Japanese school. Peruvians are ill-prepared to provide each other with information on Japan-specific school matters, such as how to manage interactions with a child's teacher, how to contest the judgments of school officials, and how to navigate the process of gaining admission to high schools.[13] In this sense, these networks do little to facilitate parents' efforts to affect their children's school experiences.

This marginalization also impacts Peruvians' relations with each other, as they attempt to overcome their stigmatized identity by differentiating themselves from co-

[12] My use of "social capital" focuses on the material and immaterial resources that individuals and families are able to access through their social ties. This use foregrounds social capital's role in the reproduction of inequality by noting how parents' social location determines the resources they are able to access (Delgado-Gaitan 2001; Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau 2003; Lin 2001; Portes 1998; Stanton-Salazar 1997).

[13] Students in Japan must apply to high schools and pass an entrance examination to gain admission. High school attendance is not compulsory, and students who do not pass the entrance examinations can be denied admission.

ethnics and other foreigners, in a process I call "ethnic othering" (cf. Pyke and Dang 2003; Schwalbe et al. 2000). In this process, Peruvians attempt to deflect their stigmatized gaijin identity by denigrating other foreigners from Peru and elsewhere as "bad foreigners" who resist acculturation and instead follow "bad Latino customs." In contrast, "good foreigners" represent the implied, unspoken identity that these Peruvians seek to claim. Chapter 5 explores these efforts by Peruvians, efforts that reproduce Japanese stereotypes of Peruvians and other Latinos.

Peruvians' social networks provide some utility by offering information on employers that offer higher wages or greater opportunities for overtime work (Takenoshita 2006). However, the impact of changing employers is limited, as Peruvian workers can only move laterally from one employer to another and thus can gain only a slight increase in wages. The predominant means for Nikkei workers to increase their earnings is through working overtime and nightshift hours, which each raise their hourly wage by 25 percent.

Economic Marginalization

Peruvians further find themselves restricted to low-status, unskilled employment in automotive parts and electronics factories, where they perform work Japanese deride as "3K": *kitanai, kiken, kitsui* (dirty, dangerous, and difficult). This economic position shapes Peruvians' incorporation into Japan, as their utility to Japanese society lies in their marginality (cf. Blauner 2001). Espiritu (2003:47) defines this pattern as differential inclusion, "the process whereby a group of people is deemed integral to the nation's economy, culture, identity, and power—but integral only or precisely because of their

designated subordinate standing." This reception influences Peruvians' efforts to incorporate themselves into Japanese society, including their efforts to establish an economic base and to build a sense of identity and belonging in Japan.

Concentrated in low-status, unskilled positions, Peruvian workers often assemble parts for companies that contract with Japan's larger manufacturers, such as Toyota and Honda Motors. Peruvians are employed in either relatively longer-term but lower-paid factory work, or in higher-paid but shorter-term positions designed to meet fluctuating "just-in-time" labor demands by manufacturers (Higuchi and Tanno 2003). While some small- and medium-sized factories employ foreign workers directly as *seishain* (regular employees), most Peruvians are employed as contract laborers through labor brokers (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Roth 2002). These brokered positions offer no paths to stable, long-term employment, and leave workers vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy. The global economic crisis that began in late 2008 has highlighted the disposability of this workforce, as contract workers were laid off en masse, constituting approximately 95 percent of the workers dismissed in Japan between October 2008 and February 2009 (Fackler 2009). Within this population, foreign workers have found themselves among the first fired and the last hired back (Coleman 2008; Fackler 2009; Johnston 2008). Even Peruvians who work as *seishain* have only slightly greater security and paths to long-term employment.

The "dirty, dangerous, and difficult" nature of these positions present risks of workplace injury, through exposure to harmful chemicals or dangerous machinery. The combination of this work plus the workers' immigrant status—including their weak

command of the Japanese language and their limited understanding of the Japanese legal system—has left Peruvians and other foreign workers vulnerable to predatory employers, who have been accused of not enrolling workers in mandatory health insurance and pension programs, and of not properly treating work-related injuries (Roth 2002:Chapter 4; Yamanaka 1993). These work conditions are unlike those in the U.S. auto industry, where decades of union representation have brought U.S. auto workers higher salaries and benefits. Instead, they more closely resemble those found in U.S. meatpacking or poultry-processing industry, where immigrant Latino workers are increasingly replacing native-born workers and often labor in physically demanding conditions (cf. Gabriel 2008; Grey 1997; Murphy Blanchard and Hill 2001; Smith and Furuseth 2006; Stanley 1994).

Entering factory employment in Japan has been a downward movement for many Nikkei. In the Nikkei enclave in Lima, many were employed in clerical and managerial positions in small, family-owned businesses. Their new factory positions do not take advantage of the human capital (work experience, job skills, and years of education) they brought to Japan, or that they may have acquired after their arrival (Takenoshita 2006; Tsuda, Valdez, and Cornelius 2003).[14] In nations such as the United States, immigrants' human capital plays an important role in determining their incorporation into the workforce. In contrast, in Japan immigrant laborers find their

[14] Takenoshita (2006), and Tsuda et al. (2003) examine labor market outcomes for workers from Brazil, and not Peru. However, the structural constraints facing Brazilian workers are similar to those facing Peruvians, as Brazilian and Peruvian workers are similarly positioned within the Japanese labor market, often working for the same labor brokers in the same factories. Thus, the two groups likely possess similarly limited occupational mobility.

human capital irrelevant, and themselves restricted to "simple labor" (*tanjun rōdō*) occupations (Tsuda et al. 2003).

Prior to the global economic crisis, even the ability to speak, read, and write in Japanese, ostensibly the most essential form of human capital for immigrants to Japan, offered no advantages, as foreign workers who spoke Japanese earned the same wages as those who did not (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Takenoshita 2006; Tsuda et al. 2003).[15] Following the mass layoffs prompted by the economic crisis, Peruvian workers in Shiroyama report that employers have become more selective in their hiring, and for the first time are preferring to hire workers with Japanese language skills. To help co-ethnics improve their Japanese language skills and find employment, a newly formed Peruvian ethnic association in Shiroyama has recently begun holding weekly Japanese-language classes.

Even workers' years of experience have provided no return, as brokers pay senior workers the same hourly rate as newcomers (Tsuda et al. 2003). Amid the current economic crisis, employers have terminated workers without regard for their years of service. Female workers also find themselves battling gender discrimination, as employers often prefer to hire men—even stating the desired gender of employees when advertising positions. When men and women do work together, employers routinely pay men higher wages for the same work, claiming that male workers are more productive (Takenoshita 2006; Tsuda et al. 2003).

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[15] One exception to this pattern is that some Nikkei who possess strong Japanese language skills work as interpreters for labor brokers. However, relative to the number of factory positions, there are few interpreter positions available and these positions have limited opportunities for advancement (Tsuda et al. 2003).

The enclave economy is an alternative employment path that many immigrants to the United States have followed (cf. Lin 1998; Logan, Zhang, and Alba 2002; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Stepick 1994; Zhou 1992; Zhou and Bankston 1998). This route enables immigrant laborers to seek co-ethnic employment, and thereby bypass the broader labor market, where they may face penalties due to their limited human capital. However, in Japan, despite the residential concentration of foreign workers in industrial areas, limited opportunities for co-ethnic employment have appeared. This employment has predominantly been in niche businesses targeting the larger Brazilian population, such as in national chains of Brazilian supermarkets. For Peruvians in Japan, an enclave economy has not developed.

In the Shiroyama area, various Peruvian restaurants have operated over the years, and have gone out of business not long after opening. The only Peruvian businesses currently open are small and family-owned and operated: a Peruvian restaurant/video rental shop and a *bentō* (box lunch) delivery service. These owners describe the challenges of opening their businesses, including Japanese banks rejecting their loan applications and reluctant landlords refusing to lease to foreigners. They also describe years of conflict with nearby Japanese shop owners, who complain about foreigners congregating at the restaurant. To open their businesses, the owners have relied on their savings from years of factory employment, free labor from family members, tanomoshi from other Peruvians, and a line of credit from a local electronics store where they purchase all their goods for their video rental business. With so many

hurdles to the development of an enclave economy, the secondary labor market in Japanese factories remains the only path open to most Peruvian laborers in Shiroyama.

School as a Path to Incorporation

Well aware of their limited economic mobility in Japan, Peruvian parents respond by placing great importance on the second generation's educational attainment, in the hope that strong Japanese language skills and socialization into Japanese society will offer the children greater opportunities than those available to their parents (cf. Sue and Okazaki 1990). Judith, a Peruvian Nikkei mother of two girls, describes the opportunities she hopes Japan will offer her two daughters:

> Here … if you don't finish [school], if you leave junior high and start working, it'll be in the factory, and you going to be just like us, *como cualquier obrero* (like any worker), right. And then they're going to treat you badly, they'll treat you like that. On the other hand, if you finish *kōkō* (high school), you'll have a little higher level, and if it's a university, even better, right. Here, it seems like everything's set up according to your education level, you know. That's what I tell them, *esfuérzate* (work hard), that here, if all of a sudden, who knows, you want to open a business, maybe here you can, you know.

Sara, a Peruvian mother of two sons, similarly comments that migration to Japan will have been "*un sacrificio para nada*" (a sacrifice for nothing) if one of her sons goes to work as "*un simple obrero*" (a simple laborer) in a factory.

Thus, Peruvian parents often approach the school with expectations of academic success translating into economic opportunities, which serves to heighten their shock and disappointment at the challenges their children face in reaching their goals. These challenges include poor remedial language support at the school, automatic promotion of children to the next grade regardless of their level of academic achievement, and

tense relations between Japanese teachers and Peruvian parents. While it has been argued that immigrant parents' positive attitudes and expectations for success in the host society positively influence their children's academic performance (Boyd and Grieco 1998; Hao and Bonstead-Bruns 1998; Hirschman 2001; Kao and Tienda 1995; Louie 2004; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002), in this case, Peruvian parents' expectations are tempered by their experiences of social and economic marginalization and their frustrations with the Japanese school system. While Peruvian parents promote their children's academic achievement, they do so with guarded optimism and distrust. As noted earlier, Chapters 3 and 4 explore the challenges facing Peruvian children and parents at Shiroyama Elementary.

Conscious of the barriers they face in Japan, Peruvian parents also hedge their bets on their futures by giving their children both Japanese and Peruvian names, such as Hiroyuki Carlos and Kanako Miriam. These names reflect the children's diverse cultural heritage, and are also a backup plan in case the family later decides to leave Japan for Peru or elsewhere. Lupe, a mother of mixed Japanese and Peruvian ancestry, explains the names of her daughter, who was born in Japan:

> Megumi's middle name is Cristina. A neighbor … gave Megumi her name, using the name of a friend. *¿Y qué vamos a hacer si vamos a Perú, con un nombre como Megumi?* (And what will we do if we go to Peru, with a name like Megumi?) That's why we gave her the middle name Cristina. That way, if she goes to Peru, she can use the name Cristina, and if she prefers that name later, she can use it.

Thus the name Megumi Cristina reflects the barriers to integration that the Nikkei have faced both in Peru and in Japan, as each name facilitates integration in one country but generates resistance in another.[16]

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

Drawing on the work of Lisa Lowe (1996) and Yen Le Espiritu (2003), I deliberately describe my Peruvian informants' status in Japan as that of *immigrants*, and not of migrants, foreign residents, *dekasegi* (the Japanese term for migrant worker), or some other term. This usage of the term "immigrant" highlights the complexity of the relationship between Peru and Japan, and differs from the traditional sense of migrants engaging in a linear journey of leaving their home country for foreign shores, where they are remade as ethnic or racial others and gradually assimilate (cf. Alba and Nee 2003; Handlin 2002; Lie 2008:173). Rather, these immigrants are both "of" and "not of" Japan, both connected to and excluded from the national body. At least one parent in each Peruvian household is a descendant of Japanese emigrants to Peru. Yet, despite these ties, upon arrival in the ancestral homeland, they discover that the Japanese mark them as gaijin. Calling them immigrants calls attention to the extent to which these

[16] Outside of the home, the children almost always use their Japanese names. This usage becomes institutionalized at the local school, where teachers are accustomed to children having a single given name and a single surname, and not the multiple given names and surnames that Peruvian children possess. Teachers thus ask Peruvian parents to choose one given name and one surname for the school to use in addressing their children. While this system leaves the parents free to choose either the child's first or middle given name, and either the paternal or maternal surname, parents often opt for the names that are Japanese. Parents explain this choice not in terms of identity, but in terms of simplicity, noting that the Japanese sometimes struggle with pronouncing and writing Peruvian names. The children's Peruvian names are thus often dropped from use, or are reduced to nicknames that are occasionally used at home.

families' histories, identities, and decisions to migrate and to permanently settle, have been shaped by their historical relationship with Japan. It also calls attention to the contradictions in Japanese policies of sustaining ties to Nikkei organizations and granting the Nikkei preferential treatment in immigration, while on the ground in Japan the Nikkei are rejected as gaijin.

However, referring to this group as immigrants runs counter to the terminology used in most Japanese sociological research, which tends to refer to them as newcomers (*nyūkamā*),[17] foreigners (*gaikokujin*) or foreign residents (*gaikokujin jūmin*) (cf. Kojima 2006; Miyajima and Ōta 2005; Sakuma 2006; Shimizu 2006).[18] In using this terminology, Japanese scholars foreground these peoples' limited rights in Japan, their lack of easy access to naturalization, and the legal and social challenges that they face in integrating into Japanese society. However, this approach prioritizes Peruvian Nikkei's legal status as resident aliens in Japan over their lived experience as Nikkei. It also simplistically lumps all non-Japanese into a single category, and thus fails to capture the complicated nature of Peruvians' ties to Japan. My treatment of Peruvians as immigrants deliberately challenges this construction.

In terms of the word "foreigner," the school defines "foreign" students as students who have non-Japanese citizenship. I expand this definition to include students with Japanese citizenship whose parents are immigrants, as well as students who have

[17] The term "newcomer" refers to the current wave of migrants into Japan, and contrasts with "oldcomers," primarily Korean and Chinese residents who migrated to Japan during Japan's colonial era.

[18] Japanese sociologist Komai Hiroshi (2001:164) argues that the "special status" of Nikkei and other long-term foreign residents in Japan requires the special term "denizens," echoing the special status given to some foreigners by the British throne.

at least one immigrant parent. Regardless of their citizenship status, these students face linguistic and cultural challenges similar to those facing other non-native students, including having parents with limited command of the Japanese language and limited familiarity with Japanese school practices.

I follow the Japanese custom of referring to teachers by their surname, adding the suffix –*sensei* (teacher). For the sake of brevity, I do not append –*sensei* to the teachers' surnames every time I refer to them. Per Japanese custom, I also refer to the school principal and vice-principal not by their surnames, but by their titles, *Kōchō-sensei* and *Kyōtō-sensei*. I use the term Peruvian to refer broadly to the entire Peruvian population in Shiroyama, a population that includes Nikkei and non-Nikkei Peruvians. When necessary, I also distinguish Nikkei from non-Nikkei.

All translations in this dissertation are my own, unless otherwise noted. I use the Hepburn method in Romanizing Japanese words, except in cases where the Japanese names and words are already familiar to readers. This transliteration uses macrons to indicate the long vowels ā, ē, ō, and ū. I follow the Japanese custom of listing Japanese names with the surname first, with the exception of those scholars who publish principally in a Western language. I also use pseudonyms both for my informants and for my field site, Shiroyama.

CHAPTER REVIEW

Chapter 2 discusses my methodology in gaining entrée to Shiroyama Elementary School and the surrounding neighborhood, and building rapport with teachers and

parents. It also introduces readers to the setting of Shiroyama, including Shiroyama Elementary School and *kenjū*, Shiroyama's public housing complex.

Chapter 3 explores the key issues in the incorporation of Peruvian children into Shiroyama Elementary School, and of other foreign children into public schools across Japan. These issues include the impact of the Japanese teaching principle of egalitarianism, the tendency for teachers to treat the structural challenges facing foreign students as individual issues, and Shiroyama Elementary's ineffective remedial Japanese language program.

Chapter 4 analyzes parent-teacher interactions in more detail, focusing on teachers' questioning of parents' commitment to living in Japan, and some teachers' efforts to strengthen the ethnic boundary between Japanese and Peruvians. It also notes the impact of these interactions on parents' sense of belonging in the school and, more generally, in Japan.

Chapter 5 examines Peruvian parents' efforts at incorporation into their local neighborhood in Shiroyama. It focuses on the parents' relations with their Japanese and foreign neighbors in the local public housing complex, including the parents' efforts to distance themselves from negative stereotypes of foreign residents and to seek inclusion by participating in various community activities.

Chapter 6 summarizes the challenges facing Peruvian immigrants in Shiroyama, and examines their future prospects, particularly in the light of the global economic recession that began in late 2008.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS AND SETTING

I was first drawn to the topic of immigration in Japan as an English conversation instructor at the Nagoya, Japan, YMCA in the mid-1990s. In my classes, my adult students regularly told me that Japan was unique because it had no racial or ethnic diversity. Echoing the dominant discourse of homogeneous Japan, they argued that all Japanese shared the same race and ethnicity and that there were almost no foreigners in Japan. However, after class some students confided to me that they were passing as Japanese and were actually of Korean descent. Also, as I walked home from my classes each night, I would pass a Brazilian market and a night club staffed by Filipina hostesses. The contradiction between the dominant view of Japan and my lived experience startled me, and when I left Japan in 1997 I was determined to return to study Japan's changing population.

In this chapter, I detail my research methodology and my research setting. I discuss how I gained entrée to my research site, how I balanced my obligations to the school with my need to conduct my research, and how I also gathered data in the local community. I also describe how I managed my outsider status in Shiroyama, including the advantages I received as a result of my status as a white American graduate student, and I explore my relations with the Japanese teachers and the Peruvian parents. This chapter concludes with a description of the district of Shiroyama, including Shiroyama Elementary School and the public housing complex where many Peruvian families live.

METHODS

For my dissertation, I had initially planned to study the impact of the settlement of foreign workers on local place identity. I received funding from a Fulbright Graduate Research Fellowship from the U.S. State Department and a dissertation grant from the University of California Pacific Rim Research Program. With this funding, and accompanied by my wife and my two children, ages six and eight, I returned to central Japan, where I could draw on networks of friends and acquaintances from my initial sojourn ten years earlier. These networks assisted me and my family with tasks like finding housing and a car to lease, and with settling into our home.

I began my research by spending several months walking the streets of central Japan in search of an appropriate research site, visiting neighborhoods with concentrations of foreign residents, and building connections with local organizations serving various foreign communities. The Fulbright fellowship required that I have a local advisor who could assist me in performing my research, and whose university would sponsor me as a visiting research student. To locate an advisor, I researched Japanese scholars over the Internet, and prior to beginning my research, traveled to Japan to meet with a sociologist who studies foreign migrant workers and who agreed to serve as my local advisor. As part of my efforts to build "*kone*" (connections), my advisor introduced me to other researchers and aided me in locating and gaining entrée to a research site. Through these encounters, I was directed to Shiroyama Elementary School, a public school where I could provide much-needed Spanish-language assistance,

and through which I could build connections with foreign and Japanese residents in the neighborhood.

My ability to speak Spanish and Japanese was key to gaining entrée to the school, and to researching relations between Peruvian Nikkei and Japanese. My Spanish skills come from studying the language in high school and as an undergraduate, including a year at the University of Barcelona. I sustained my command of Spanish through routinely speaking the language in various jobs I held before attending graduate school. My Japanese skills came more recently, through private courses in Japan, and private and undergraduate courses in the United States, but predominantly through immersing myself in the language while living in Japan in the mid-1990's.

Getting In

To gain approval for my entrée into the school, my advisor and I wrote letters to school district administrators, the mayor, and a city council member, emphasizing my ability to provide Spanish language support and requesting permission for me to assist in the school and perform my research. Over the next month, we met with these various parties to discuss my plans before *Kōchō-sensei*, the school principal, granted me the final approval. In these meetings, the presence of my local advisor was key, as she served as a guarantor who vouched for me and my work. While gaining access to any setting can be difficult, in Japan getting in without a third-party introduction is nearly impossible—particularly for an otherwise unknown researcher from another country. Third-party introductions "involve the standard Japanese cultural practice of borrowing trust from other people in order to gain access to a new situation, which carries complex

obligations to act responsibly, and not misuse or damage the trust" (Bestor, Steinhoff, and Bestor 2003:14). Ever-conscious of my obligations to both the school and my advisor, and of the fact that any missteps could reflect badly on my advisor and her institution, I attempted to repay my debt to all parties by translating hundreds of school documents and providing the school with a digital collection of those documents, which it could then reuse each year with only minor alterations.

Kōchō-sensei carefully explained that I would enter the school as a as Robāto[19]-*sensei*, and not as Robāto-*san*. Calling me *sensei* (teacher) gave me the same title applied to other faculty and staff, and thus labeled me an insider—at least by name. Calling me Robāto–san would have brought a lower status, as teachers use "–san" to refer to people who are outsiders to the school, such as parents and former teachers. The conferring of a sensei status is not automatic, as Morita (2002) discovered when a Japanese school principal labeled her Morita-san while she performed fieldwork in an elementary school. Thus, receiving this status brought opportunities for access, and, as I note later, bound me in a "web of obligations" (Yano 2003:288) as a member of the school.

While the principal granted me access, the school's teachers had not necessarily consented to my presence. This meant that I had to build rapport with the teachers, and gain their consent to enter their classes and interact with their students. To accomplish this, I wore many hats at the school, meeting various needs as they appeared. In addition to translating school handouts, I also tutored two Peruvian students from the

[19] Robāto is the Japanized form of Robert.

school's special education class in basic mathematics in one-on-one lessons four times a week. I also assisted in remedial Japanese classes and in regular homeroom classes, interpreted during meetings with Peruvian parents, and handled phone calls with those same parents. Prior to my arrival, these language needs had been left largely unfulfilled, as Kitagawa-sensei, the school's language counselor, was frequently absent and, when at work, produced largely unintelligible translations. (I explore these issues with the school's language support in greater detail in Chapter 3.) Thus, simply by being in the school full-time and interpreting and translating competently, I met many of these needs. This provided me an opportunity to build rapport, as teachers were unable or unwilling to turn to Kitagawa for assistance, and gradually turned to me. My ability to speak Japanese and Spanish, neither of which is my native language, also intrigued teachers, and lead them to break the ice by asking me how and where I had learned the languages.

Upon my entrance into the school, the principal introduced me to the entire faculty, and then to the student body in a morning assembly. He also informed parents of my work by sending out letters that I had drafted in Japanese and Spanish. These introductions explained that I was a graduate student from the United States studying the community of Shiroyama for my dissertation, that I spoke Japanese, Spanish, and English, and that I was helping in the remedial Japanese class and in other classes. Soon after I arrived at the school, Peruvian parents started hearing from their children about "*un señor americano*" (an American man) who was helping at the school. For the parents, finding *el americano* was relatively easy, for I was the usually only white person

in the entire school, with the exception of the appearance every few months by the school's English teacher. As a six-foot-tall male with blond hair and other non-Japanese features, in a school filled with dark-haired Japanese and Latinos, I stood out dramatically. This difference facilitated building contacts, as parents could quickly figure out who I was, even if we had never met previously. Outside of the school, it was rare to see a white person walking the streets of Shiroyama or patronizing its shops, making my face easier to remember as I became a regular presence in the neighborhoods around the school.

Balancing Work with Research

The work I performed for the school was essential to fulfilling the terms of my entrée into the site. However, performing these tasks restricted the amount of observing I could perform. I soon discovered that there was almost no end to the number of documents that needed to be translated. I found saying no to these requests difficult, particularly since I was still a newcomer to the setting and was reliant upon the teachers for access to classroom observations and to the community outside the school. On several occasions, school administrators observed the number of requests Maeda-sensei, the remedial Japanese teacher, made of me and intervened, chiding her for asking too much of me, a volunteer. These encounters offered insight into the operations of the school, including the low status of Maeda and the other remedial language faculty, and the frustrations teachers felt at Kitagawa's frequent absences and poor language skills.

To balance my needs for observing and for typing up my fieldnotes, I attempted to alternate class periods between classroom participation and typing notes. At times, the school's schedule prevented me from achieving this balance, such as during parent-teacher conferences, when teachers tended to schedule nearly all their conferences over a period of two days. This clustering of conferences resulted in me literally running from one classroom to another to interpret. I attempted to instill some order into my interpreting scheduling by including a question on the conference scheduling handout asking parents if they would like an interpreter present for the meeting. I then recommended that the school prepare a written schedule for this interpreting, and that they allot those conferences more time to allow for the extra time needed to interpret parents' and teachers' comments. My efforts were only partially successful, as a written schedule was prepared, however teachers still packed conferences into two days of meetings and the principal rejected my request for extra time for the conferences, claiming it was unnecessary. Interpreting non-stop, at meeting after meeting, over several hours each day made producing detailed fieldnotes of each of these encounters nearly impossible. Thankfully, parents and teachers graciously allowed me to record the conferences on my digital voice recorder. With these audio recordings and my feverish note-taking during the conferences, I was able to capture more of these events than would have otherwise been possible.

Through my position at the school, the principal and vice-principal introduced me to various people in the surrounding neighborhood, including leaders of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), a senior citizens group, and the local social welfare

committee (*minsei iinkai*, a government committee that monitors services for local elderly and children). Moreover, the school connection provided me with a standing in the neighborhood, as I did not live in Shiroyama. Several months prior to starting my fieldwork in Shiroyama, I settled my family into a home in a neighboring city 10 miles away, and the high cost of Japanese housing deposits[20] made moving impractical. Also, at the time I started my fieldwork, my children had already started attending the local public elementary school in our neighborhood. Moving would have required changing schools and would have interrupted their efforts at settling in. Thus, as a non-resident of Shiroyama, I needed a standing within the district that explained my presence. Local residents understood much more readily that I was a teacher at the elementary school than my explanation that I was a graduate student researcher (*daigakuin kenkyūsei*) from the United States.

Web of Obligations

As noted previously, making connections through the school tied me into a "web of obligations" (Yano 2003:288) and limited my ability to make connections on my own. With the principal introducing me to local residents as someone looking to make connections in Shiroyama, refusing offers for community involvement became difficult for me and could have reflected badly on me and on the school. In one instance, I reluctantly accepted an offer from a member of the social welfare committee to give a 20-minute presentation to a seniors' luncheon on national Respect for the Aged Day

[20] In addition to my monthly rent of ¥100,000 ($900), I paid ¥500,000 ($4500) in various deposits and fees to move into my house. These deposits and fees are standard practice in Japan.

(*keirō no hi*, September 3). The assigned topic for my presentation was how Americans celebrate their seniors, a topic that is far from my area of expertise. Using various photographs of seniors I found on the Internet, I presented a slideshow and talk to an audience of more than one hundred local seniors, most of whom politely ignored much of my presentation.

My reliance on the school administrators also placed me in a dependent position. This position of "*amae*" had its advantages and disadvantages, both enabling me to make requests of the school administrators and holding me to the limitations of their assistance. As Yano (2003:291) notes:

> Using *amae* astutely (as many Japanese do within their own cultural positionings), I could gain favors to advance my research. By occupying and asserting a lower status in a hierarchy, one may *amaeru* (to depend on; act or be dependent) without compunction. Within *amae* I could be seen not as an aggressor, but as victim of my circumstances, seeking assistance to ameliorate my situation.

Thus, I could use *amae* to ask the principal and vice-principal for assistance in making contact with local actors and institutions, such as local schools, neighborhood associations, labor brokers, and employers. The administrators would comply within the best of their ability, understanding that with their acceptance of me into the school, they incurred the responsibility of offering me some assistance with my research.

One significant disadvantage to this situation was that, as de facto a representative of the school, I could only pursue contacts with local organizations through the school administration. Pursuing them individually risked offending the gatekeepers who granted me access to the school site. I presented the principal several lists of local contacts I wanted to make, and he assigned the vice-principal the task of

assisting me. I then patiently waited to see how many, if any, of those contacts the vice-principal was able to pursue. That the vice-principal was both over-worked and somewhat forgetful made waiting difficult, as I did not want to push the limits of *amae* by asking for too much or by seeming impatient.

In addition to attending meetings of the social welfare committee and the local seniors' group, I also attended the meetings of various local associations at a community center in Shiroyama. I visited an elementary school and junior high school in Shiroyama's school district, where I observed in the remedial Japanese classroom and spoke with students, teachers, and administrators. I also visited elementary schools in neighboring cities, and attended a meeting of one city's remedial Japanese teachers and counselors. The vice-principal assisted me in securing interviews with several employees of a local labor broker that serves the largest factory employer in the district. However, the factory management turned down our request for me to visit the factory, citing a no-visitor policy to protect industrial secrets. To my knowledge, the vice-principal contacted no neighborhood associations.

The Extended Place Method

Over time, as I repeatedly found myself in the middle of tense meetings between teachers and parents at the school, I switched my research focus from local place identity to the incorporation of Peruvian immigrants, with the school as the primary site for my research. I followed Duneier's "extended place method" (Duneier 1999:344-5) in acknowledging that much of what happens at the individual school is shaped by forces

external to it. Thus, in Duneier's logic, the school is also "located" in other places, such as city hall, the school board, the factory, the neighborhood, and other schools.

I endeavored to gather data beyond the immediate school site, and moved outward as broadly as my school ties allowed. This outward movement included the city hall, the school board, the local public housing complex, labor brokers, other schools, and community organizations. This method also enabled me to triangulate my findings by supplying me with observational and interview data from multiple sources. This approach also avoided what Steinberg refers to as the ethnographic fallacy, that is, focusing so strongly on what you see and hear on the ground that you fail to see the role of larger structural forces (Steinberg 1993, as quoted in Duneier and Carter 1999:343). In the case of cross-cultural work, the ethnographic fallacy often involves becoming so enmeshed in cultural details that "culture" itself takes on an overly deterministic role. Illuminating the role of structure required drawing on my varied data sources. I further checked my analyses by conferring with my local advisor, and with other sociologists and anthropologists in Japan and the United States.

Outsider Status

While I worked to build rapport within the school, nonetheless in many ways I remained an outsider. This outsider status took on many forms. As a non-Japanese, I was gaijin. I was also someone who was only somewhat familiar with the intimate operations of a Japanese school. While this status of "socially acceptable incompetent" imposed a steep learning curve, it also had its advantages in that it encouraged teachers to explain situations to me in greater detail (Lofland et al. 2006:69). It also enabled me

to ask general questions to which an insider would be presumed to know the answers (Bestor 2003; Lofland et al. 2006). For example, I asked teachers about the questions they posed to parents about the children's lives at home, including whether a family was having financial troubles and who, precisely, was living in the home. My questions surprised the teachers, as they saw their questions as falling fully within their professional purview. I explained that, from an American perspective, such questions are out of bounds for teachers, and discussing this difference in practices opened the door for teachers to discuss their views on their role in children's lives. Early in my fieldwork, teachers also attempted to bring me up to speed on what they saw as the challenges of working with foreign parents. Thus, my socialization to the setting provided teachers with a venue for cathartic venting of frustrations over foreign parents' limited Japanese skills, and harsher complaints that Peruvian parents tended to arrive late and to value work over education.

The Gaijin Advantage

While I was an outsider to the Japanese school setting, that was not the only element to my status at the school. More specifically, my status as a white American male graduate student on a Fulbright fellowship facilitated my entrée into the setting, opening some doors for me and positioning me (perhaps undeservedly) as a researcher of some acclaim. Kōchō-sensei frequently called me into his office to introduce me to school visitors, always presenting me as a trilingual graduate student from the University of California on a Fulbright fellowship. He made these introductions, in part, to show me some of the behind-the-scenes operations of the school. However, just as

my introduction to the school borrowed some of my local advisor's status to establish me as someone of merit, Kōchō-sensei was also borrowing some of my status to elevate the status of his school's efforts in assisting foreign students.

Despite the references to my Fulbright fellowship, not all teachers at the school were familiar with the Fulbright program, or even cared about my funding source or my graduate student status. Nonetheless, as Yano (2003:290) notes, white researchers have a "gaijin advantage" in the ease with which doors open for them by virtue of the "exotic prestige" they lend to a setting. As is the case with most privileges of whiteness, this privilege is often hard to detect. Racial *dis*advantages, such as being followed by store clerks to avoid shoplifting, are clear. However, less obvious is the extent to which being gaijin plays a part in being welcomed into a setting. It is difficult to say precisely how my research might have proceeded differently had I been Peruvian or Japanese. Teachers' frequent complaints about foreigners in general, or about Peruvians or Latinos in particular, indicated that they did not see me as a member of those groups—or, at least, that I was less foreign than non-white foreigners they were complaining about. This difference in treatment also creates opportunities for comparative analysis, as researchers can use themselves as a "kind of control group" (Duneier 1999:353) in comparing the treatment they receive with the treatment afforded others. Moreover, being Japanese is also not a guarantee of access, as some Japanese researchers report receiving numerous rejections and a low status once they gained access to a school site (Kanno 2008a; Morita 2002; Takato 2004).

Over time, teachers came to see me as an honorary insider, speaking to me only in Japanese, and commenting less on my ability to use chopsticks or eat Japanese school lunches—two topics that at first were such fodder for lunchroom conversation that I relished the days when lunch was served with a spork. Teachers only revealed their English skills when the school's English teacher appeared every few months for lessons with the children. The English teacher was a white, native English speaker from North America who spoke Japanese quite fluently. Nonetheless teachers used the occasion of his presence to practice English, amid embarrassed laughter from their colleagues. With me, teachers explained, they felt too self-conscious to speak English because, they claimed, I spoke Japanese so well. While teachers politely exaggerated my Japanese prowess, their treatment of me as someone whose presence eventually merited neither comment nor differential treatment indicates that I was able to attain the intimacy that ethnographic work requires.

Staying Neutral

As my rapport with teachers and parents grew stronger and I became aware of the tensions between them, I grew concerned that my efforts at building rapport would suffer if one side saw me as too closely allied with the other. Thus, I strove to maintain a neutral position by providing assistance to both sides. However, in practice, trying to maintain this neutrality was like trying to serve two masters. Each side saw me as an ally, with both parents and teachers seeking my counsel and complaining to me about the other. Meanwhile, a third master, my dissertation, continually called for me to avoid choosing sides and to keep taking notes. In his study of Brazilian Nikkei factory workers

in Japan, Roth (2003:349-50) notes similar challenges of working to gain entrée and build rapport when working with two sides that often are often in conflict:

> Most fieldwork situations require researchers to balance multiple responsibilities to various groups or people. At times for me these responsibilities came in conflict with each other and I had to choose sides. This was difficult to do after having spent months ingratiating myself with anyone who had anything to do with my research.

In parent-teacher conferences, my efforts at neutrality included adding in "the teacher says" or "the mother says" to my interpretations, to make it clear that the comments or questions did not come from me directly. I would also physically position myself between parents and teachers, as if to offer visual proof that I was allied with neither side. After witnessing teachers angrily complain to some parents about their children's misbehavior, reducing a Peruvian mother to tears on more than one occasion, I also wanted to avoid being the conduit through which this anger would pass. I also feared that teachers would eventually call on me to interpret for one of these meetings. This moment did come, as two teachers grew angry with a Peruvian mother for what they saw as her intransigence in not resolving her son's behavior problems. Tempers flared and the teachers' comments and questions implied that the boy's hyperactivity was somehow Peruvian in nature.

I avoided interpreting the teachers' increasingly harsh questions, and instead turned the questions back to the teachers, challenging them to explain how the boy's behavior, including spitting on children, could reflect Peruvian culture. This enabled me to avoid asking the questions of the mother, who was crying by the end of the meeting, and led the teachers to explain their reasoning, as they tried to convince me that they

were right. Eventually, the teachers grew frustrated with my repeated questions, and ended the meeting. How this event may have impacted my rapport with teachers, or with the mother, is difficult to say. However, I felt that I had an ethical responsibility to do no harm to my informants—and joining in the verbal assault on the mother would have crossed that line.

Building Rapport with Peruvian Parents

While I had numerous opportunities each day to work with the teachers, reaching out to the Peruvian parents required more effort. The higher quality of my translations for the school generated positive feedback from parents—within days of my arrival at the school, a Peruvian mother thanked her daughter's teacher for sending home a translation that was grammatically correct. Holding up the translated handout, the mother exclaimed in Japanese, "This one I can read!"

One month after my arrival in the school, I interpreted for parent-teacher conferences, providing me my first opportunity to meet many of the parents. During these conferences, the parents requested that I also lead Spanish classes for their children. I jumped on this request as an opportunity to build ties with the parents outside of the school setting. Thus, over 18 months, I taught 2 to 3 free Spanish classes a day, 3 Saturdays a month, to 10 to 20 Peruvian and Bolivian children from Shiroyama and neighboring districts. The school district agreed to support the classes by reserving the rooms at the local community center in the school's name, which enabled me to avoid the nominal reservation fee, and by granting me free use of the school's photocopy and risograph machines to prepare materials for the classes. Since my return

to the United States, the classes continue, now led by a Japanese woman who recently received a bachelor's degree in Spanish from a nearby university.

These classes enabled me to build stronger ties with the parents and children, as parents helped out in the classroom and chatted with me after class. The classes also provided insight into the linguistic challenges Peruvian parents and children face, as the children struggled to develop basic skills in Spanish, including reading and writing. The classes gradually became social events that the children looked forward to each week, with the children playing in the community center after classes had ended.

My daughter also routinely joined the classes, dutifully copying down Spanish vocabulary and playing with the Peruvian children after class was over. My family and I also accompanied Peruvian families on excursions to local parks, barbecue parties, and festivals in the community, and visited with them in their homes. My children especially enjoyed these outings because, in these settings, they could escape the fawning attention they often received as blonde-haired children in Japan. Normally, in trips to the supermarket or to local events, my children politely tolerated having Japanese cry out "*kawaii*" (cute) and caress their hair. Playing with the Peruvian children offered a welcome reprieve, as my children felt like they no longer stood out as foreigners.

In building rapport with the Peruvian parents, I also drew on our shared experiences as foreign parents of children attending Japanese elementary school. We commiserated over major issues, such as our children's efforts to learn Japanese, and minor issues, such as the challenges of reading the near-daily handouts that came from the schools, some of which were related to school affairs while others were

advertisements for programs unrelated to the school. Determining which handouts were important and which were not required translation, a laborious process that often demanded more energy than we could muster after a long day at work.

Nonetheless, even as I sought to connect with the Peruvian families separately from my professional role at the school, in the eyes of the parents and children my primary role remained that of teacher. They continually referred to me as "*profesor*" or Robāto-sensei, and always with the more formal "*usted*" and never with the more casual "*tú*." Thus, gaining entrée to the school structured my access to the people in that setting, defining my role and shaping how others treated me. Gradually, the parents came to recognize my outsider status, however the Peruvian children continued to see me as one of their teachers. The permanence of this status shaped how I interacted with the children, including limiting in the questions I could ask them about their school experiences. For example, children would openly share positive comments with me about their teachers, but were reluctant to make any negative comments in my presence. Attempting to step outside of my role as teacher to claim the role of researcher might have confused the children—just as children are often jarred by seeing their teacher outside of the school setting. Had I attempted to interview the children, they might also have felt reluctant to say no to me, and thus might have felt coerced to consent to the interview. Thus, in my relations with the children, I remained Robāto-sensei, their teacher, and focused my efforts on fulfilling the obligations of that role. I took notes on our interactions, but did not pursue informal or formal interviews with

them. This means that the voices of the children of Shiroyama Elementary are less present in this dissertation than if I had pursued a different role.

Setting Boundaries

Liebow (1967), Stack (1974), Duneier (Duneier 1999), and Roth (2003) discuss their concerns over being "exploited" by the people they studied, including how they started out wanting to build rapport and trust with their informants, and how those efforts made it difficult to say no to informants' requests. Similarly, in Shiroyama I became a resource who was constantly on-call for Peruvian parents, some of whom asked for my assistance in filling out government paperwork, or, more routinely, called me early in the morning on my cell phone to ask me to relay messages to the school. In these calls, parents would tell me that their children would be absent from school, or that after school they would be joining the walking group that headed to their home, and not the group that walks to the childcare center. At first, when I was working to build rapport, I relished these opportunities to assist. However, over time, I grew annoyed with the intrusions, particularly given that the school provides a mechanism for parents to relay messages to teachers, the *renrakuchō*, a daily notebook for communicating assignments and messages. Despite my repeated recommendation that the parents write the messages in Spanish or Japanese in the renrakuchō, I continued to receive these calls up until my departure from the school. Opening the door to Peruvian parents also yielded insight into how these parents deal with more difficult dilemmas, such as problems with classmates and teachers. In these cases, parents turned to me for

advice on how best to raise their concerns. I listened to their concerns, scheduled meetings with teachers, and interpreted in these meetings.

Despite the appreciation I gained for the challenges facing Peruvian parents, I also became aware that my relationship with Japan was far different from theirs. While I had previously lived in Japan for only two years when I started my fieldwork, compared to more than 15 years for many of the parents, I had a stronger command of the Japanese language. As some of the parents acknowledged, I also had more Japanese friends and seemed more immersed in the Japanese social world. The families had traveled in Japan, as reflected in the photo albums they showed me, but much of this travel had occurred within a few years of their arrival, before the birth of children and when the parents were still relative tourists in Japan. Over time, as parents have committed to permanently settling in Japan, they have traveled less, and when they have traveled as a family, they have visited child-oriented sites that have nothing to do with Japan per se, such as Universal Studios in Osaka and Tokyo Disneyland.

Ironically, this movement toward permanent settlement in Japan has seemed to involve less engagement with the Japanese people, as parents' social worlds have become narrowly defined around work, home, their children's school, and, for some families, a church. Thus, in interacting with parents, I had to "calibrate" my presentation of self (Hamabata 1990) to de-emphasize the extent of my Japanization and focus primarily on shared interests. When parents commented on how quickly I had learned Japanese while they struggled with the language, I explained that I had also studied it in the United States and that the language was still difficult for me. I also talked less about

attending various Japanese events, such as local festivals or baseball games, since the parents showed little interest in these events. While their Peruvian children had largely assimilated into the social world of Japanese children, the parents still seemed to be at arm's length from Japan.

This seeming disinterest in things Japanese may be related to the different receptions that Peruvians and I received in Japan. While, as an American, I shared a foreigner status with the Peruvians, Japanese have more positive images of Americans than of Peruvians. As Roth says of Japanese attitudes towards Americans and Brazilians, "Some Brazilians were sensitive to the fact that whereas most Japanese often viewed Americans as role models, political leaders, and pop cultural innovators, they dismissed Brazilians as members of a poor Third World country" (2003:345). Japanese attitudes toward Peruvians are similar, and Peruvian parents were as sensitive to this fact as Roth's Brazilian informants were, often couching their dismay in humor.

Interviews

In addition to taking detailed field notes of my encounters with parents and teachers, I also conducted intensive interviews with 29 Peruvian and 2 Bolivian parents, and informal interviews with 16 teachers and school administrators. I recorded the interviews on a digital voice recorder, and later transcribed them, with a research assistant performing the Japanese transcriptions. I used a general interview schedule and altered the order of the questions depending on the flow of the conversation. I also asked questions specific to the individual parent or teacher, to follow up on issues particular to that person.

I requested the interviews with parents by sending a personal note home from school with their child and then following up with a phone call or with an in-person chat. I had originally intended to interview husbands and wives separately. However, I soon realized that the demands of parents' long work schedules (60 to 70 hours per week, in rotating day and night shifts) meant that I needed to interview parents in whatever combinations they could make available to me. Thus, I completed most of my parent interviews with both husband and wife present. In three cases, I interviewed only the mother while the father was at work. Five of my parent interviews were with single parents, all of whom were women. A few parents declined my request for an interview, saying that they were too busy to accommodate me. While I built the strongest rapport with the parents whose children attended my Spanish classes, I also interviewed parents of children who did not attend the classes. The median number of years the parents had been in Japan was 16 years, and my interview population includes parents who had been in Japan as many as 18 years, and as few as 3 years.

I completed nearly all of the parent interviews in my informants' homes, with occasional interviews in the local community center or in a coffee shop. Most interviews lasted just under three hours, with the shortest lasting 70 minutes and the longest nearly four hours. We discussed parents' lives in Peru, their experiences getting settled in Japan, their thoughts on the school, and on their future plans, all while the parents insisted that I enjoy a meal of Peruvian cuisine.

At the school, I interviewed teachers during their free periods, which limited our interviews to roughly 45 minutes. I held the interviews in teachers' classrooms or in an

empty room at the school. I interviewed 12 homeroom teachers and one remedial language teacher. I also interviewed the vice-principal, the principal, and a district administrator in interviews that lasted between 40 and 70 minutes. I asked about teachers' experiences teaching foreign children, interacting with foreign parents, and their thoughts on the school's language support system and on the children's futures. In only one case did a teacher decline my request for an interview.

SETTING

Shiroyama is a mostly working class, residential district of a city of 75,000 people, located in central Japan's industrial heartland. Its narrow and winding streets are barely wide enough for residents' vans and SUVs to navigate, and hark back to an earlier era in Japanese history. Walking its streets offers glimpses into the lives of Shiroyama's residents, as smells of meals and sounds of television and conversations emanate from open windows often located mere feet from the street. A few four- and six-unit apartment buildings sit newly constructed, their small balconies filled with satellite dishes and laundry drying on clothes racks. One at a time, these buildings encroach onto the rice fields and vegetable gardens that once dominated the district.

In contrast to the peace and quiet of Shiroyama's side streets, the two main roads that divide the district are often teeming with truck and auto traffic. These two-lane roads carry traffic to local auto parts and electronics factories and to nearby cities. Diesel trucks plow these streets all day long, with the heavy stench of diesel exhaust hanging in the air long after the trucks have passed. In the fall, this toxic smell mixes with the smell of smoke from burning stacks of dried rice stalks in the fields. This smoke

lays low in the sky, producing a grey haze that blankets Shiroyama and blocks the view of the distant mountains. This poor air quality causes me to set the air in my car to re-circulate whenever I drive to the school, to stop the truck exhaust from filling the interior of my car.

Parts of Shiroyama look ready-made for tourist postcards, with rice fields topped in bright yellow, rows of rice stalks drying on racks, tiled roofs on black-painted houses, small shops, narrow streets, and rolling wooded mountains in the background. However, on closer inspection, much of the district looks forgotten. Its temples and shrines are off Japan's well-worn tourist path, and its few local businesses, mostly family-run markets and bars, cater to a small, local clientele. The elderly tend the shops and the rice fields, while younger workers and families head off to the local factories or into other cities for work. In empty fields, where rusted warehouses had recently stood, cement trucks pour foundations for new houses. Across the street, older homes are falling apart, their wood siding missing in places and the holes filled from the inside with patches of wood.

In the center of Shiroyama sits Furuya, a small, family-run grocery store that is the largest market in the neighborhood. The rusted sign in the front of the store advertises "food and luquors" in misspelled English, and the store's dusty shelves are half-filled with a limited range of fresh produce, meats, and dry goods. At the cash register an elderly man sits reading the newspaper with the aid of a magnifying glass. The man eschews the electronic cash register, instead calculating purchases on an old wooden abacus, its wood dark from years of use. Many of Furuya's customers are

elderly women who walk to the store, steadying themselves on small carts that double as seats when the women stop to rest. Local residents often drive out of the area for their shopping, bypassing local stores for larger supermarkets several miles away and only shopping locally for a few emergency items.

As the children make their way home from school each day, they file up and over pedestrian overpasses, in rows of two, crossing over the main roadways and past Japanese parents and grandparents, who don neon green "*gakkō patororu*" (school patrol) caps and supervise the children on their routes home. A parent and teacher also drive throughout the district monitoring the children in the "*ao pato*," a compact, two-passenger patrol car with a blue police light mounted on the roof. The children also pass Japanese mothers who stand with toddlers at their sides, chatting and waiting for their children to arrive home.

Shiroyama Elementary School

The worn look of Shiroyama Elementary School matches the rest of the district. The current school buildings were constructed in the 1960s and 1980s, on the same site where a small castle briefly stood four hundred years earlier and where a school has stood for more than 100 years. The school's four-story, grey concrete façade is cracking and worn. Repainted in patches to seal off a badly leaking roof, the buildings are in need of repair and a fresh coat of paint. In a courtyard outside of the building, near a rusted staircase that is no longer in use, students tend a neatly manicured flower garden and the pens for the school's pet rabbits and ducks. White (1987:67) notes that by American standards, Japanese schools are "spare," "physically unattractive," and "often [in] need

[of] plastering and paint," however compared to other schools in the region, Shiroyama Elementary appears especially neglected. The school's worn out appearance surprises many Peruvian parents, who expected Japanese schools to match the popular image of Japan: highly developed and with rich resources. More than one Peruvian parent comments to me their shock at the dilapidated look of the school. As one parent jokes, "We come from Peru, a third-world country, but when we saw the school, we felt bad for our kids."

The school serves more than 800 students, making it the largest elementary school in the city. Two parallel classroom buildings run east to west, with the northern building holding the first through third grades and the school gymnasium, while the southern building houses the fourth through sixth grades and the administrative offices. The southern building is brightly lit by sunlight that warms the rooms in the winter. Classrooms in the older, northern building are darker and colder, as the taller classroom building to the south blocks the sunlight. The walls of the classrooms and hallways proudly display the children's artwork, with drawings and paintings of key events in the children's lives at school. The sound of the children's musical rehearsals brightens the buildings, with recorder, *kenban hāmonika* (pianicas), and choral performances echoing throughout the halls.

This joy temporarily masks the buildings' dilapidated state. The once-white walls are now grey with dust and dirt. Brighter spots on the walls reveal where posters or pictures had hung, and where holes had been repaired. For cooling in the hot, humid summer, the classrooms have electric fans mounted on the walls, with the electrical

wires tacked along the walls and wrapping around the rooms, in a daisy-chain of extension cords, until they reach one of the few electric outlets. In the main office, extension cords snake around room, occasionally splitting into three-plug adaptors and then into more cords. Despite this worn appearance, the school is clean, as the children are responsible for cleaning the classroom buildings and the school grounds.

The school's remedial Japanese language room first opened in 2001. Like remedial language rooms at other schools in the region, the room is given not a Japanese name, but a name in the foreign students' native language. In this case, the room is given the Spanish name "Amigos" ("Friends" in English, written "*Amiigosu*" in katakana). The *Amiigosu Gakkyū*, or Amigos Room,[21] occupies a vacant classroom on the third floor of the school, and is staffed by one full-time teacher, Maeda-sensei, a veteran teacher with more than 30 years experience, with the part-time assistance of a music teacher, Tanabe-sensei. The large room is sparsely decorated with charts of *hiragana* and *kanji* characters, and faded tourist posters and maps of Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia. Maeda has also adorned several walls with inspirational poems in Japanese, written in large characters in Japanese calligraphic style and decorated with leaves and flowers cut from construction paper.

Despite these decorations, the room feels empty and unused. Other classrooms of the same size hold more than 30 students, while the Amigos Room has only ten desks

[21] I translate *Amiigosu Gakkyū* as the Amigos *Room*, and not the Amigos *Class*, to refect the lack of an effective curriculum for the school's remedial language program. *Gakkyū* conveys a sense of unity and organization, with teachers and students collectively engaging in an educational program. This sense of purpose is absent in Shiroyama Elementary's remedial language program, and to convey this absence, I refer to Amigos not as a *class*, but as simply a *room*.

and a few tables. The large shelves that line two walls hold only a few stacks of *kanji* worksheets. In the center of the room sit two metal room dividers, covered in construction paper, which Maeda uses to block views of her desk from the windows on the classroom doors. Other teachers have chided Maeda for hiding behind the dividers, complaining that they cannot see her from the windows and cannot find her when they need her. Maeda meekly apologizes, saying the children must have moved the dividers, however she continues to use them to shield herself from the rest of the school, much as the Amigos Room itself is largely disconnected from the the homeroom classes.

Kenjū[22] *Housing Complex*

Mirroring the faded look of Shiroyama Elementary, on the northern end of the district sits *kenjū*, the district's public housing complex. Built between the 1950s and the 1990s, the 450 small apartments in the 12 grey and weathered concrete blocks house over 1,200 people, one-third of whom are of foreign nationality. In contrast to the curved lines in the winding streets of Shiroyama's older neighborhoods, kenjū is divided by straight lines, and hard, right angles. The rectangular form of the apartment buildings recalls the unimaginative design of Eastern Europe's Soviet-era apartment blocks, albeit on a smaller scale. The buildings are surrounded by cement, open spaces, and worn-out swing sets and play structures for the children. Mandatory communal cleaning by kenjū residents keeps the complex clean, but the overgrown greenery in cement planter boxes and the weeds growing in cracks in the cement reflect the prefectural government's poor efforts at maintaining the complex. The only public parking for guests of the

[22] *Kenjū* is a common abbreviation of *ken'ei jūtaku* and refers to public housing managed by the prefectural government.

complex sits in a distant corner, amid broken down cars, some with shattered windows, others raised on blocks, hoods open, with body damage from accidents.

When Japanese and foreigners talk about kenjū, and other complexes with concentrations of foreign residents, they often refer to problems foreigners allegedly cause. These problems include making too much noise, playing music at high volume, and not sorting their garbage and recycling properly. These complaints have become part of the folklore of foreigners in Japan, repeated to me even by Japanese who have no experience living near foreign residents. Despite these claims, kenjū is routinely quiet and clean. (I analyze the impact of this discourse of complaint in Chapter 5.)

About 60 percent of the district's foreign residents live in these apartments, with the remaining 40 percent scattered around the district in private apartments and houses. Living in kenjū offers extremely low rent, with rent tied to resident income. Many residents pay only ¥17,500 ($160) in monthly rent, which is substantially lower than the ¥70,000 to ¥100,000 ($635 to $900) they might pay in the private market. This low rent comes at a cost, as the small, two-bedroom apartments offer little space for families, about 500 square feet for each apartment. Residents in the complex's two newer buildings, eight- and nine-story towers built in the early 1990s, enjoy such amenities as elevators and slightly larger apartments, while residents in the older, five-story buildings must climb the dark stairwells to their smaller apartments. Inside the apartments, the walls show years of wear and mold. Foreign residents often cover their old and damaged *tatami* (woven grass mat) flooring with carpets and mats, and stock

their apartments with used appliances and furniture obtained from friends, family, and *risaikuru shoppu* (second-hand stores) that cater to foreign workers.

Close inspection of the message boards for each apartment building reveals the organization of the complex. Metal tags hanging on hooks carry the name of each floor's leader and the name of the leaders of the building's administration. Kenjū residents hold these administrative positions, participating in committees that oversee tasks such as cleaning, parking, grounds keeping, and garbage. Participation in these committees is voluntary and officially part of the residents' communal responsibility to the complex. The message boards also reflect the diversity of the tenants. Notices to residents are printed in various forms and languages, depending on their audience, including Japanese, Japanese with *furigana* (phonetic characters printed above the kanji), Romanized Japanese, Spanish, and Portuguese. These notices remind tenants to cooperate in keeping the grounds clean, parking only in designated spaces, and paying their monthly fees. Japanese posters also advertise city cultural events, and Spanish and Portuguese flyers for local evangelical churches list information on church services and attempt to recruit new followers, asking in Spanish and Portuguese, "Are you depressed? Do you have family problems? Are you lonely?"

After school, the playgrounds and streets of kenjū become the territory of the complex's fourth- through sixth-grade children, who play outside while they wait for their parents to return home from work. When the weather is poor, these "*kagikko*" (latchkey kids) wait inside or at a friend's home. Children in first through third grades whose parents are working are able to attend the district's nearby public *jidō sentā*

(childcare center), where they are loosely supervised until 6:00 p.m. The childcare center is often filled to capacity, and children in the fourth grade and above must rely on friends or relatives to watch them.

In the next chapter, I address some of the key issues facing foreign children who attend Japanese schools, and focus on how those issues play out at Shiroyama Elementary.

CHAPTER 3: KEY ISSUES IN THE INCORPORATION OF PERUVIAN CHILDREN

Public schools play a key role in the education and socialization of a country's children, instilling language, culture, ideology, and occupational and social skills. For immigrant children, this process is especially important, as the children's parents have limited command of the host society's language and culture. Thus, the parents look to their children's education in the host society as providing the children with opportunities for economic mobility and incorporation (Sue and Okazaki 1990).

In this chapter, I examine Shiroyama Elementary's efforts to educate immigrant Peruvian children. I focus on the key principles that guide classroom instruction in Japan, and the impacts of those principles on foreign students. I also examine the impact of Japanese teachers' lack of training and experience in teaching foreign children, and the role of the Amigos Room and the school's language counselor, as key components to the school's efforts to educate Peruvian children. Lastly, I explore Peruvian parents' reactions to their children's experiences at Shiroyama Elementary. These reactions, imbedded within the parents' own experiences of stigmatization and social and economic marginalization, further weaken the parents' sense of belonging and identity with their ancestral homeland of Japan. As a result, parents question how well the school is preparing their children for life in Japan.

Parents and teachers confront these issues at a time of growing foreign student enrollment. At Shiroyama Elementary, the number of foreign students has increased steadily in recent years. During the period of my fieldwork, the numbers increased from

43 students in 2005 to 56 in 2007.[23] Of these, nearly 80 percent are Peruvian, with smaller numbers of Bolivians and Brazilians (See Table 2).[24] These students made up 5.4 percent of the total student body in 2005, and 6.5 percent in 2007—and 9.3 percent of 2007's first grade class. Most classes at Shiroyama have one or two foreign students, with only four of the school's 29 classrooms in 2006-07 academic year having no foreign students. According to the Japanese Ministry of Education,[25] or MEXT (2008a), nationwide 70,902 foreign students attended public schools in 2003,[26] a number that grew to 72,751 in 2007. The education of foreign children is also not compulsory in Japan. In Shiroyama, the school district is only aware of foreign children whose parents have registered them for public school or preschool, and it is unclear how many foreign children in the area are not attending school. Some Brazilian children attend a private Brazilian ethnic school in a nearby city, however the school district has no data on these or other children not attending public school.

In 2007, 25,411 students, more than one-third of the foreign students attending public schools in Japan, required remedial instruction in Japanese as a second language (JSL) (MEXT 2008b) (See Chart 1).[27] Portuguese and Spanish speakers make up 40.2 and

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[23] School officials report that they did not start officially tracking the number of foreign students until the 2005-06 academic year.

[24] Teachers also report having no "oldcomer" students, such as *Zainichi* Koreans, whose ancestors entered Japan during Japan's colonial era, however it is possible that some Zainichi are present in the school and have either naturalized or have concealed their non-citizen status.

[25] Officially, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

[26] 2003 is the first year for which the Ministry of Education has released statistics on the number of foreign children attending public schools in Japan.

[27] An additional 4,383 students with Japanese citizenship also required remedial language instruction. Of these, 1,728 are "returnees" (Japanese children who returned

13.7 percent, respectively, of these students (MEXT 2008b). These statistics likely underestimate the number of students who lack grade-level proficiency in Japanese, as they only include students who are attending public schools and who require JSL instruction. Students who have been mainstreamed into Japanese classrooms, but who may still lack grade-level proficiency in Japanese, are often excluded from these tallies (Kanno 2008a:13). Also excluded are students who attend private ethnic Brazilian or Peruvian schools, where the language of instruction is often Portuguese or Spanish. The Ministry of Education provides no guidelines on the level of Japanese proficiency necessary for students to be counted as requiring JSL instruction, and relies upon each local school to decide which students to report (Kawakami 2005). Similar to this lack of guidance, local schools are also unsure how to respond to the growing presence of foreign children in their classrooms, and call upon the key principles that guide Japanese education in attempt to meet these children's needs.

Insert Table 2 and Chart 1 Here.

PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

In this section, I analyze the impact of two key principles in Japanese education, egalitarianism and coordinated communalism, on teachers' efforts to instruct their Peruvian students. How teachers put these principles into practice in their classrooms impacts how teachers respond to the specific needs of their foreign students. These outcomes include the invisibility of Peruvian students' ethnic differences, the

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to Japan after studying overseas). Many of the remaining 2,595 students are likely to be immigrant Nikkei children, however the Ministry of Education has not released data on these students' ethnic backgrounds.

individualization of their academic and social problems, colorblindness by teachers, and an emphasis on assimilation and not multiculturalism.

Egalitarianism and Coordinated Communalism

The Japanese educational principle of *byōdōshugi* (egalitarianism) instructs teachers to treat all students equally. As part of this goal, teachers strive to instill the same desire to learn in all students, with the goal that students will become self-motivated learners (cf. Shimizu 1992; Shimizu 2001; Shimizu et al. 1999; Tsuneyoshi 1996; Tsuneyoshi 2001). Comments such as "If you try, you can do it" ("*Ganbareba, dekiru*") reflect this approach, framing a child's academic performance as an issue of individual desire and effort. This practice also leads teachers to focus more on the overall progress of the class than on individual students' particular challenges, as those challenges are to be addressed through students' individual efforts (Shimizu 2001; Shimizu et al. 1999).

The second principle is *issei kyōdōtai shugi* (coordinated communalism) (Tsuneyoshi 2001:44). This principle conceptualizes the *gakkyū* (classroom) as a single unit that operates as a self-completing, cooperative body (Cave 2007; Takato 2006; Tsuneyoshi 1996; Tsuneyoshi 2001).

> This communalism is at the foundation of the "Japanese school model." Coordinated communalism assumes a tight-knit, self-sufficient, and homogeneous type of classroom/school community, and places central importance on the sharing of communal experience, empathy, mutual interdependence, and other communal values … It dictates, moreover, … that everyone engage in the same kind of communal activity together. (Tsuneyoshi 2001:45)

Under this approach, all classes in each grade progress at the same rate, with students performing the same tasks at roughly the same time. From elementary school through junior high, schools automatically promote all students to the next grade, and offer no separate courses for "gifted" students and little remediation for students who are not performing at grade level.

The presence of Peruvian and other foreign children in Japanese classrooms challenges the presumed homogeneity of the *gakkyū*, as foreign children often have a weaker command of the Japanese language and are less familiar with the workings of Japanese schools. Foreign students are assigned to classes based on their age and not their command of the Japanese language, with the result that the students' limited language skills often hamper their ability to understand the content of lessons and to participate along with their classmates. To avoid the attention of their classmates and to save face (Goffman 1963), foreign students at Shiroyama Elementary often remain silent, quietly doodling or looking out the window, as the lesson continues on without them. When I approach these students in class, they explain that they are bored because they do not understand what is happening in class.

This dilemma plays itself out during a fifth-grade language arts lesson led by Ogawa-sensei. As Ogawa discusses a reading with the class, students respond energetically, following the discussion, looking toward the teacher, and raising their hands to volunteer answers. Meanwhile, Takashi, a fifth-grade boy who was born in Peru and has lived in Japan for three years, sits quietly at his desk at the back of the class. He raises his hand occasionally, not to volunteer answers but to vote along with

his classmates in response to questions like, "Who thinks Umeda (a person in the reading) is a boy? A girl?" At the beginning of the lesson, Takashi points to the text with his index finger and follows along as Ogawa reads the story to the class. After a few minutes, Takashi's mind wanders, and he starts coloring in his textbook, using a red pencil and the hole in the middle of his protractor to draw circles in his book. Standing behind Takashi, I gesture for him to pay attention to the teacher, but he begins soon staring out the window or around the class. He complies almost robotically when Ogawa gives instructions, such as to highlight a sentence in the textbook, or to turn to the next page, but Takashi understands little of the lesson and passively watches the rest of the class participate.

Even with the influence of the ideology of egalitarianism, teachers often recognize the need for changes to meet the needs of their Peruvian students. When possible, they make efforts to rein children like Takashi back into the lessons, usually by stopping at their desks and checking in with them. However, with 30 or more students in each class, teachers have limited opportunities to supervise the individual progress of their students. Teachers must also fit these changes within a system that, by design, leaves little space for alternate lesson plans, with all the classes in each grade following the same lesson plans at the same pace.

The emphasis on egalitarianism also influences parent-teacher conferences, as teachers routinely stree to parents that all students are being treated equally (*mattaku onaji yō ni shiteiru*), and that Peruvian students' foreign status plays no role at the school. When teachers note problems with Peruvian children's academic work, they

quickly add that Japanese students also experience similar problems. The defensiveness and ubiquity of these comments indicate that teachers may be guarding themselves against charges that they are mistreating Peruvian children because of the children's foreign status—a fear that many Peruvian parents have. Thus, in a parent-teacher conference, when a teacher tells a Peruvian mother that her son says he hates to study (*benkyō kirai*), the teacher quickly adds that there are other children who also say the same thing. In another conference, when a Peruvian student says that she does not understand her social studies lessons, the teacher comments that social studies are also difficult for Japanese students, ignoring the obvious role that the student's limited command of Japanese is playing in her lack of comprehension.

Invisibility, Individualization, and Colorblindness

Despite the obvious presence of more than 50 foreign children at the school, the foreign children's specific needs are less visible in the classroom than might be expected. After working with their students every day in the 200-day Japanese academic year, and building relationships with them, teachers tend to individualize (*kojinka suru*) children's academic or social problems as the result of particular learning styles or personalities, and not of children's struggles to adapt to a new cultural setting or a new language (Ōta 1996; Ōta 2005; Shimizu 2001; Shimizu 2002; Shimizu and Shimizu 2001; Shimizu et al. 1999; Tsuneyoshi 1996; Tsuneyoshi 2001). Moreover, teachers often make little effort to identify foreign students' cultural or class differences (*miyō to shinai*), focusing instead on treating all students the same (Shimizu and Shimizu 2001:Chapter 1).

This practice of ignoring difference, and the principle of egalitarianism that informs it, resemble colorblindness in the United States (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Frankenberg 1993; O'Brien 2000), in that the goal of treating all students equally discourages teachers from recognizing differences, or at least encourages them to act as if those differences do not exist. While Japan lacks the American historical context of deep racial and ethnic divisions that inform the U.S. practice of colorblindness, there is a historical precedent for the invisibility of ethnic difference in Japan. Since the end of World War II, passing as Japanese has been the dominant practice for many Koreans and Chinese in Japan, particularly those who have taken on Japanese names and/or Japanese citizenship (Lie 2001; Lie 2008). In order to have their ethnic difference recognized, members of these minorities have had to actively and repeatedly out themselves as foreigners. In so doing, they have had to battle not only the presumption of a Japanese identity, but also the absence of a common discourse about non-Japanese in everyday conversations.

These practices mask the structural disadvantages facing foreign students, preventing those students' needs from being met and perpetuating inequality, while providing teachers with the ideological cover of treating everyone the same. Within the school, teachers repeatedly claim that everyone receives equal treatment, and that Peruvian children's ethnic difference is not an issue for either the students or the teachers. As Hashimoto-sensei notes:

> In the children's world, it doesn't matter at all that someone is a foreigner. For the little children. For the sixth graders, well (she hesitates). For first, second, third graders, it doesn't matter at all. So, I don't see it like that either. I don't know how the mothers see it, but

> sometimes, not in my class, but sometimes they write a letter asking if a child is being bullied because he or she's a foreigner. But I don't think that children see things that way.

Thus, while Peruvian parents are routinely concerned about their children suffering ill treatment because of their foreign status, teachers argue that the Japanese-foreign distinction is more of an issue for the adults than for the children.

The challenges facing Moe reflect the unintentional consequences of these practices. Moe is a girl in the sixth grade who was born in Peru and moved to Japan eight years earlier. For two weeks, Moe has been coming home from school in tears, refusing to go back to school and complaining that she wants to die. To address this issue, Moe's mother, Carolina, meets with her daughter's teacher, Fujita-sensei, and in this heated meeting, accuses the teacher of ignoring Moe's particular needs as an immigrant student. Carolina explains in brief, simple Japanese phrases that she and her husband do not understand Japanese, and can only watch and encourage Moe as she completes her homework on her own. Fujita dismisses Carolina's concerns, speaking over her and interrupting her, saying that the work is hard for all the children, not just Moe, and that other children also cannot get help at home. Annoyed that her concerns are not being addressed, and in a peak of anger, Carolina pointedly asks if the teacher hates foreigners ("*Sensei, gaikokujin ga kirai desu ka?*"). Stunned by the accusation, Fujita replies that she treats all the students the same, and that, for good or ill, she sees Moe as a Japanese and not as a foreigner. This claim places Moe's parents in the uncomfortable position of being the ones who "play the race card" by inserting issues of Moe's ethnic difference and of discrimination into the conversation.

Fujita's comment that she does not see Moe as a foreigner both reflects a colorblind approach to teaching foreign children. It also raises the question of how Fujita imagines foreigners to look and act, and implyies that being a foreigner is something to be transcended or overcome. This "enlightened exceptionalism" (Wise 2009) allows Japanese to carve out exceptions for certain foreigners who overcome the handicap of their foreign status without challenging the negative stereotypes of foreigners that Japanese hold. This same approach allows white Americans to treat individual people of color as exceptions to the negative stereotypes of their groups. In Fujita's eyes, Moe does not fit the mold of a foreigner and seems Japanese, while the structural forces that shape Moe's academic performance still remain, including the fact that her Japanese language skills have far surpassed those of her parents and thus they cannot assist her with her studies.

Assimilation, not Multiculturalism

To counter the tendency of Japanese egalitarianism to conceal ethnic difference within the classroom, scholars have promoted multicultural education, often under the banner of *tabunka kyōsei* (multicultural coexistence) (i.e., Ōta 1996; Ōta 2005; Sakuma 2006; Satō 1998; Shimizu 2006). A national discourse in Japanese academic and political circles has emerged, attempting to address how Japan may more successfully incorporate its growing foreign population. This discourse has included plans to facilitate relations between foreigners and their Japanese neighbors, and to provide social services such as health insurance and pensions to foreign workers. Participating in this discourse are elected officials, government representatives, and academics, in fora

such as the Council for Cities with Foreign Residents (*Gaikokujin Shūjū Toshi Kaigi*), which currently represents 26 medium-sized cities, the Aichi Prefectural Committee for Creating a Multicultural Society (*Aichi-ken Tabunka Kyōsei Shakai Zukuri Suishin Kaigi*), and the Conference for Multicultural Coexistence (*Tabunka Kyōsei Suishin Kyōgikai*), which has the participation of seven prefectures in central Japan and the city of Nagoya. The national government has also presented its own Program for Multicultural Coexistence (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2006), and scholars have published numerous articles in Japanese research journals such as *The Annual Review of Multicultural Studies* (*Tabunka Kyōsei Kenkyū Nenpō*) and *Intercultural/Transcultural Education* (*Ibunkakan Kyōiku*).

The widespread use of the term *tabunka kyōsei* has not led to consensus as to its meaning, beyond notions of a society in which peoples of different cultural backgrounds coexist. The most inclusive notions depict Durkheimian notions of organic solidarity, while other usages of the term refer merely to a condition of diversity (Burgess 2008; Graburn and Ertl 2008). Moreover, despite the prominence of these discourses, the extent to which discussions of multiculturalism have filtered down to the local level is questionable. At Shiroyama Elementary, teachers never use the term *tabunka kyōsei* or make any reference to multiculturalism. The topic only came up when I inquired about it in interviews, and some teachers were unfamiliar with the term and asked me what I meant by a "multicultural school." Instead, the goal for teachers and administrators at Shiroyama Elementary and other schools across Japan is to produce children who are able to integrate into and contribute to Japanese society (Kanno 2008a; Sakuma 2006).

Thus, in terms of the school's foreign students, the focus is not on respecting and retaining the children's cultural differences, per se, but on assimilating those children into Japanese society. The school principal, Kōchō-sensei, notes the school's emphasis on socializing its students for future lives in Japan:

> The number of foreign students is still really small, and the vast majority is Japanese. We follow the current Japanese way of doing things, the "Japanese style" (said in English). And it's the style the foreigners are to assimilate to.
>
> In elementary school, junior high school, we're not [just] teaching the children, we're preparing them as people to live in society, as adults, without problems. It's the same for the Japanese children. We're not thinking, you're foreign, do this, you're Japanese, do that. In terms of the way we do things, the style, there's a link between the Japanese parents and the children ... the foreigners were raised differently, so there's some *iwakan* (sense of incongruity). But, like I said before, in Shiroyama we want to cooperate with the school, in raising the children, that's the kind of school we want, a school that's easy to assimilate into.

Within this context, the school welcomes foreign children provided that they and their parents comply with the school's policies and practices. For Kōchō-sensei, foreign families' adaptation to Japanese schools is similar to that any Japanese would face upon moving to a new school. Only after acculturating to the new setting can they fully participate and make their voices heard.

> We want them to please understand about Japan, and then to please come here. That's how I really feel. … When you go to a new school and have learned in that new environment, then you can express your opinion. Foreign children are integrating into the school, into the school tasks and responsibilities, and within that frame they can express themselves. … So, naturally, we ask the parents to comply, to follow the Japanese style. If that's OK, then please come. That kind of thing.

This approach frames the children's integration into the school setting solely in terms of their acculturation to Japanese norms (Kanno 2008a; Kojima 2006; Vaipae 2001).

As with the case of Moe's mother, when Peruvian parents challenge teachers or raise questions about school practices, teachers respond by dismissing those concerns as a result of parents being foreigners and not adapting to life in Japan. This approach disempowers parents by rejecting the parents' concerns and by positioning teachers as the sole authority in this setting. This approach is also the opposite of the teachers' tendency to pay little heed to the students' foreign status. While the students' ethnic difference is relatively invisible, the parents' ethnic difference is inescapable. Already marginalized by their weak Japanese language skills and lack of familiarity with Japanese school practices, parents attempt to call on their last remaining resource—their authority as parents. Teachers recognize the positive impact of parental support and cooperation, however teachers ask for cooperation on their terms, and pay little heed to Peruvian parents' concerns.

ADDRESSING THE GROWING FOREIGN POPULATION

To address the growing number of foreign students in Japanese schools, in 1992 the Ministry of Education started allocating funding for extra teachers to serve in pullout JSL classes in schools with large number of foreign students (Kanno 2008a; Ōta 2002). Under this system, foreign students remain in their homeroom class for lessons on music, art, and physical education, and leave their homeroom for JSL classes when their classmates study more rigorous subjects, such as language arts, mathematics, or social studies. At Shiroyama Elementary, these JSL classes are held in the Amigos Room.

This pull-out approach puts much of foreign children's academic learning on hold until they have mastered a sufficient command of Japanese to rejoin their classes

(Kanno 2004; Kanno 2008b; Ōta 2000; Sakuma 2006; Satō 1995; Vaipae 2001). It also places foreign students between a rock and a hard place, as they "are either placed in the regular classroom where they do not understand the instruction, or pulled out for JSL instruction, in which they engage in cognitively undemanding, content-less language drills while their Japanese classmates march on with their academic learning" (Kanno 2008a:15). While their classmates learn new material and develop new skills, foreign students face the difficult task of trying to catch up to them. However, catching up academically is like chasing a moving target, as foreign students try to shorten the gap with classmates who themselves are continuing to move forward (Cummins 2000). Those students who eventually acquire the language skills necessary for them to remain in the regular classroom full-time often find themselves far behind academically.

The pull-out nature of the school's JSL lessons further challenges the homogeneity of the collective *gakkyū*. As children miss the lessons their classmates receive, they become lesser participants in the *gakkyū*, and when they return to class, they struggle to complete the lessons that their classmates had started during their absence. These pull-out classes are an obvious exception to the general principle of not offering separate courses for students. While teachers prefer to keep all their students together in their homeroom class, they justify the exception of a pull-out class as helping children who otherwise would not be able to participate. However, as I note later, the ineffectiveness of the pull-out JSL classes causes some teachers to choose to keep their foreign students in their homeroom classes, rather than send them to the Amigos Room.

The JSL classroom and its assigned teachers often operate in isolation from the broader school community (Ōta 2000; Vaipae 2001). At the center of school instruction are the homeroom classes, and homeroom teachers retain their authority over the JSL students, including deciding if and when the students may leave the homeroom class to attend JSL lessons (Gordon 2006). Thus the position of JSL teacher is subordinate to the homeroom teachers, and occupies a low status within the school. Grade levels are also important in the school hierarchy, as various school functions, including club activities and walking groups, are organized by grade, with upper-grade students occupying positions of leadership. At Shiroyama Elementary, Kōchō-sensei assigns teachers to the Amigos Room, at times against the teachers' wishes. These assignments lead to much grumbling, as Tanabe complains for the first two weeks of the school year that she is a music teacher, not a Japanese-language teacher.

Teachers' Lack of Training and Experience

Like the vast majority of teachers in Japan, the teachers at Shiroyama Elementary have no training in second language acquisition. Japanese teacher training programs include no training in cross-cultural communication or second-language acquisition, forcing teachers to learn to work with remedial language students on the job (Gordon 2006; Kanno 2008a; Okano and Tsuchiya 1999; Ōta 2002; Tsuneyoshi 2001; Vaipae 2001). Teachers also report that at prior schools they rarely had any foreign students.[28] This lack of training most directly impacts the teachers assigned to the

[28] Unlike public school teachers in the United States, many of whom spend their entire careers at only a few schools, often teaching the same grade, in Japan public school teachers and administrators are routinely transferred to other schools in the district,

Amigos Room, for their primary responsibility is to teach remedial language students. One of the teachers, Kitagawa-sensei, further lacks any teacher training, and instead is employed as a language counselor (*gogaku shidōin*), responsible for interpreting and translating, serving as a linguistic and cultural bridge to the foreign families, and teaching remedial Japanese.

The fact that the teachers at Shiroyama Elementary have little to no training or experience working with foreign children poses particular challenges when foreign children appear in their classes. Accustomed to working with parents and children who enter the school already familiar with Japanese school practices, teachers are unsure what role cultural differences play in their relations with parents, and how to address those differences. Hashimoto-sensei, a first-grade teacher, expresses frustration at the difficulty of figuring out what the Peruvian parents are thinking:

> I don't really know much about Peruvian culture. For our own sake, it would be good to find a Peruvian mother who could talk to us about Peruvian culture, and we should listen. Since I don't understand it, I feel lost.
>
> From my perspective as a teacher, my way of thinking, any child I’m working with, I’m talking to, if the parents and I work together, the child can grow and learn. But, I can’t talk to the foreign children’s mothers. So they might misunderstand our good, kind efforts to mean something else, and to be unwelcome. That’s a problem. For example, in Japan the kids come to school every day, of course, it’s common sense. But the Peruvian kids, it seems they don’t have to come when they don’t want to. When they don’t feel well, they leave and go home. I’ve had that happen. And, I can’t really understand what the parents are thinking, so that’s the number one hardship.

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approximately every five years, with teachers often changing the grade they are assigned to teach.

Without clear communication with the parents, teachers like Hashimoto are left to wonder why a child is absent, beyond vague references to the child simply not feeling well. However, Peruvian parents often lack the Japanese language skills to explain their child's absences, beyond simple terms like *byōki* (sick), *kaze* (cold), and *netsu* (fever).

Not all discussions of cultural differences are negative, as teachers note that some differences will gradually wane as the children acculturate, such as Peruvian children's reluctance to change into their gym clothes or bathing suits in front of their classmates, their habit of putting sugar in their milk, and the girls' practice of having their ears pierced.[29] However, cumulatively, these issues increase teachers' frustrations in interacting with Peruvian children and parents. Often teachers are less generous than Hashimoto and draw on stereotypes that parallel U.S. culture of poverty critiques of African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans (Coleman et al. 1966; Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Moynihan 1965; Villenas and Deyhle 1999) , as teachers complain that Peruvian parents are not involved in their children's lives or their schoolwork, and that they care more about earning money than about their children's education (Kojima 2006; Tsuneyoshi 2001:133).

These challenges in teaching foreign students inevitably impact teachers' attitudes towards teaching foreign children, despite the educational principle of egalitarianism. Nakamura, previously an Amigos instructor at the school, describes his frustration:

[29]Japanese schools do not allow children to have their ears pierced, or to wear earrings to school.

> (There's a) cultural gap. It's more fun for us to teach Japanese children, their grades go up, they can grow as a group, so you could really feel the gap (with the foreign children). So that diligence, that hard work (that the Japanese children have), you could feel the gap. With them (the foreign children), no matter how many times I told them, I couldn't make them do the work. It's work they should be doing on their own, but they didn't feel that, they're empty. It's things they need to learn to participate in society, but without that self-awareness, making them study is impossible, difficult, for the teacher, it's not easy to do. The outcome isn't very good, because of that gap.

In response to the challenges of teaching foreign children, Yoshida-sensei further notes that he lowers his expectations of those children:

> It's a goal, or an intention to treat them equally, but no matter what, the language (*kokugo*) is difficult, and in terms of the work they can't do, I can't make really strong demands of them, so I don't. I treat them equally, but in terms of what they can't do, but they work hard, make an effort, so I don't really ask much of them.

Thus, while teachers claim that their goal is to assimilate Peruvian children into Japanese society, some teachers see this goal as an ideal that is unreachable. This pattern of lowered expectations, based on views of Peruvian culture as deficient, virtually assures that few Peruvian students in these teachers' classes will be motivated to high academic achievement (cf. Valdés 1996), despite teachers' claims to treat the students equally. These lowered expectations frustrate other teachers, as seen in this critique by Hashimoto-sensei, who complains "I think that most of the teachers at this school think 'I can only ask for this much, so I'll stop.' But, I hate that, so I work hard to make the children study as much as possible." Hashimoto's comment reflects the presence of dissenting voices within the dominant school practices, and the fact that teachers respond to these challenges in a variety of ways. However, to date, this dissent has not led to changes in the school's approach to working with foreign children.

Further complicating teachers' lack of experience is the weakness of Shiroyama Elementary's ties to other schools in neighboring school districts that have similar, or greater numbers of foreign students. Shiroyama Elementary's ties are strongest with other schools within its own district, however most of these schools have few, if any, foreign students. This lack of connection with those with more experience teaching foreign children prevents teachers from sharing information and exchanging strategies on improving students' academic performance or interacting with parents. It also leaves teachers unaware of available resources, such as repositories of translated, bilingual school documents on various school district websites. Also, no teachers or administrators at the school participate in the various regional associations of scholars concerned about the education of foreign children, such as the Network for the Education and Human Rights of Foreign Children (*Gaikokujin No Kodomo No Kyōiku To Jinken Netowāku*). In this sense, the school operates like many other schools across Japan, navigating the task of educating its foreign students with little guidance on how to proceed (Ōta 2000). These issues are the most visible in the Amigos Room, the remedial Japanese language room created to meet the needs of foreign students.

The Amigos Room

At the start of the school year, Maeda prepares a schedule for the Amigos Room, noting the specific children who are to attend classes there each period. The work in nearly all of these class periods focuses on remedial Japanese, with a few students also completing remedial mathematics work. According to the schedule, in the 2006-07 school year, 28 of the school's 48 foreign students are to attend remedial lessons in the

Amigos Room, with each receiving an average of three lessons per week and each class containing one to five students. The number of lessons each student is scheduled to receive is subject to some debate between Maeda and the child's homeroom teacher, with Maeda often wanting the child to receive more lessons and the homeroom teacher wanting fewer. Maeda's lower status as the Amigos teacher encourages her to attempt to elevate the prominence of her position by increasing the number of students attending her classes and the frequency of those classes. However, teachers fear that foreign students will feel like *okyakusan* (guests) rather than full members of their classrooms if they are absent from class too often. Even after the Amigos schedule is printed, the homeroom teacher has the final decision as to if and when a child attends Amigos classes.

Homeroom teachers' questions about the quality of instruction in the Amigos Room further marginalize the Amigos teachers. Teachers complain that students are not progressing despite their time in the Amigos Room, or that they have sent students to the Amigos Room only to find out later the teachers were not there. Further supporting homeroom teachers' skepticism is the fact that the Peruvian students who are performing the best are the ones who have avoided attending Amigos classes. These children were often born in Japan, attended Japanese preschool prior to starting elementary school. Thus, they started school with a stronger command of the Japanese language and are able to perform relatively on par with their Japanese classmates, although not without great effort. In contrast, the Amigos students continue to struggle. Over the course of the school year, Amigos attendance gradually drops, as homeroom

teachers lose confidence in the quality of the Amigos lessons. The Amigos teachers are often not informed of these changes, and when students do not show up for their Amigos classes, the teachers sit and wait for them. As I write in my fieldnotes:

> Before the end of the period, I head to the Amigos Room, where Tanabe and Maeda are talking. No students are in the room, although five students are scheduled to be there during this class period. As I step into the room, Tanabe turns to me and gestures, her hands up high, palms up, expressing disbelief that no students came to the room. Maeda turns to me and says that Ogawa was very happy that I had been going into Takashi's class to help him. "You helped him a lot."

While Ogawa praises my assisting Takashi with his work in class, the Amigos teachers do not venture beyond their classroom to assist the children. Other teachers encourage the Amigos teachers to take this step, however the Amigos teachers resist, as doing so would lower their status to that of a teacher's aide in another teacher's classroom. Thus the teachers remain in the Amigos Room, waiting and complaining, while retaining the traditional authority of being in charge of their own classroom, albeit a classroom of lower status.

The frequency of teachers' complaints about the Amigos Room, the low status of the remedial position, and teachers' lack of training for it, all raise questions about the criteria upon which the principal selects teachers for the Amigos Room. One answer may be found in the social marginalization of past and present Amigos teachers within the social body of the school faculty. In an environment in which teachers frequently chat and share jokes during breaks in the main office, the Amigos teachers often work alone. They are also conspicuously absent from school social events, such as the parties at the end of the calendar and school years—events that are attended by nearly all of

the faculty. This pattern raises the possibility that the principal selected these teachers, in part, because of their marginality, although it would not be appropriate for the principal to openly admit to such a practice.

Warehousing Children in the Amigos Room

Much as the Amigos teachers are isolated from their colleagues, the work students perform in the Amigos Room is similarly isolated from the regular classroom curricula. The Amigos Room has only a vague curriculum that lists simple lessons for complete newcomers to the Japanese language, with lessons on topics such as saying your name, describing the weather, and telling time. Nearly all the foreign students come to Shiroyama Elementary already familiar with the Japanese language but many lack grade-level language skills. For these students, the Amigos classes follow an ad hoc course dictated by Maeda that focuses solely on basic reading and writing skills, ignoring students' need for academic literacy (Vaipae 2001). Students receive virtually no grammar instruction beyond the construction of simple sentences, and spend their time completing kanji worksheets, which focus on writing and memorizing kanji characters, while Maeda prepares for the calligraphy and math lessons she leads in other classes. Homeroom teachers admit that they know little of what happens in the Amigos Room, at times asking me what their students actually do there. Thus, the Amigos Room serves more as a site for the "educational warehousing" (LeTendre, Hofer, and Shimizu 2003:48) of Peruvian children than as a catalyst to bring the children up to grade level in Japanese. The disconnect between the Amigos Room and homeroom lessons also impacts parent-teacher conferences, as teachers explain that they cannot comment on

some children's language progress because the children complete those lessons in the Amigos Room, and the Amigos teachers do not attend parent-teacher conferences.

As a result of this poor instruction, many Amigos students fail to master even the kanji taught in the third grade of elementary school (Kanno 2004; Ōta 2000). Students' kanji acquisition is limited not just by the complexity of the characters or the number of characters that third graders have to learn, but the increasing cognitive complexity of the concepts underlying the characters (Ōta 2000). While the kanji for grades one and two refer to more concrete objects, the characters for grades three and up refer to more abstract concepts. Without the remedial language assistance to help them gain the requisite language skills to process more abstract concepts in Japanese, foreign students are left behind, automatically passed to the next grade without mastering the grade-level material.[30]

Rather than an academic focus, an oft-stated goal of the Amigos Room is to provide foreign students with a place where they can relax and lose the stress of sitting through lessons that they do not understand. In their regular classrooms, these children often possess an identity of lost and pitiful foreign children who are unable to complete their work; however, in the Amigos Room, they temporarily lose that identity and reclaim an identity as competent people (Kanno 2008b:239; Ōta 2005). When it comes time for the students to go to the Amigos Room, they perk up, quickly grabbing their materials and hurrying to the room, where they are reborn, smiling, laughing, and

[30] As noted in Chapter 1, attaining functional literacy in Japanese requires at least a junior high school education (Taylor and Taylor (1995:364), and greater comprehension requires familiarity with *jōyō kanji*, the 1,945 kanji characters taught from elementary school through high school (Gottleib 2005).

playing with their friends, in a mix of Spanish and Japanese. "When he goes to Amigos," Satō-sensei notes of Rafael, a Peruvian student in her fourth-grade class, "his attitude changes completely. When he goes to Amigos, he can relax and speak in Spanish. He can relax, talk to his friends, the atmosphere is completely different. And when he comes to class, he falls silent and doesn't say anything." Rarely speaking in his homeroom class, Rafael opens up in the Amigos Room, frequently inventing stories of monsters and boasting about his ability to speak three languages: Japanese, Spanish, and Portuguese, which he claims to have learned at the airport during a stop-over in Brazil. Thus, students "come to the Japanese Language classroom not so much to learn Japanese as to regain their sense of self," as that room is the only place where they can comfortably speak their native language (Ōta 2000:176, as quoted in Kanno 2004:318). Mori-sensei notes a similar relationship between the Amigos Room and his sixth-grade classroom:

> The work they can't do in the regular class, they can do it in the Amigos Room. But another point is "heart," the emotional aspect. For Ricardo and Taku (two Peruvian boys in Mori's class), it's not so much an issue, but for children who really can't speak Japanese, being in the classroom is painful, painful, difficult, difficult. But, if they go to Amigos, they can speak Portuguese or Spanish to the teacher, and they can relax. In that sense, Amigos is important. That's an important role for the Amigos Room to play. It's not just studies, but also the child's feelings, so the children can relax. A classroom where they can speak in their mother language with other children, and can communicate, that's good, I think.

Focusing on what he calls "heart support," Mori expresses concern for the children, but like other teachers, he does not describe a clear plan for the connection between his class and the Amigos Room beyond this emotional connection. While Mori say his students *can* complete the classwork they do not understand in the Amigos Room, in

practice they do not complete their regular coursework there. Instead, they complete kanji worksheets and play.

In this laughing, playing environment, the supposed need to relax serves as an excuse for the lack of academic rigor. With no lesson plan to guide her, Maeda gives students kanji worksheets almost haphazardly, assigning work that is often above or below a child's level. Also, each child's "Amigos File," a binder of notes on the child's daily work in the Amigos Room, provides homeroom teachers little information on the work completed in the Amigos Room each day, beyond vague references to "kanji review." Many homeroom teachers admit to not reading the file and to not using it to solicit specific lessons in the Amigos Room, even though the file has space for such requests. Absent a plan to help the children gain better language skills and teachers capable of delivering on that plan, the foreign children's academic progress suffers. Moreover, the children quickly learn that the Amigos Room is a place to play, and not to study, and they take advantage of Maeda's lack of supervision. As I write in my fieldnotes:

> I enter the Amigos Room partway through the period, and find Maeda asking the children questions about various words in Spanish, how do you say this or that in Spanish, and the children are correcting her.
>
> Yuka (a Brazilian girl in the sixth grade) is sitting at her desk folding papers. The papers have pre-printed drawings on them, drawings of a toilet, "*unchi* man" (poo man), and toilet paper. Yuka is folding the papers so that when you lift up the toilet seat, you see "*unchi* man" sitting in the bowl. She asks me to help her fold the toilet paper roll but I refuse.
>
> While the children play around, walking around the room and not studying, Maeda draws 4x6 portraits of the children, asking them to stand still for a minute while she sketches a basic outline of their faces.

> Below her finished drawings, she writes each child's first name, in cursive script.

In her lessons with the children, Maeda often quizzes the children on the Spanish translations of Japanese words, to the extent that the classes more closely resemble Spanish classes for the teacher than Japanese classes for the children. This strategy is deliberate, as Maeda is unsure precisely how to teach Japanese as a second language. Thus she focuses heavily on learning Spanish, thinking that she has to speak Spanish for her students to understand her—even though all of her students already speak conversational Japanese and for many Japanese is their dominant language. Prior to being assigned to the Amigos Room, Maeda spoke no Spanish, however during her two-year tenure in the room, her Spanish vocabulary expands significantly, and includes the translations of most of the kanji taught in first and second grade as well as basic Spanish grammar.

On occasion, Maeda also has students complete journal entries, in which they describe their activities over the weekend. When students complain that they do not know how to write the sentences in Japanese, she demurs and lets them complete the work in Spanish. This tactic lets the students avoid completing the work, as they then complain that they do not know how to spell the words in Spanish or to properly compose a sentence. By the end of the period, students have written only a few words in either language, and the assignment remains unfinished. In another instance, Maeda has a student spend a class period preparing a room decoration, with no lessons assigned:

> Maeda spends several minutes with Sylvia (a Bolivian girl in the second grade) at her desk, explaining to her how she wants her to glue some small paper flags (4" x 3") onto a large sheet of paper. At another table, Sylvia starts gluing the flags onto the paper, arranging them randomly on the page, with many of the flags placed upside down. In response to my questions, Sylvia says she did not know which flags are for which countries, nor if any of the flags are upside down. …
>
> Pablo and Rafael (Peruvian boys in the fourth grade) start playing games with their erasers, shooting them across the table in some kind of competition. At this point, no studying is going on in the room. The boys are laughing, playing, talking in Spanish. Sylvia has been speaking Japanese to the boys, switches to Spanish, and joins the laughing and playing. At times, Rafael is sitting at the table with nothing in front of him, no papers, no books. Maeda, meanwhile, is at her desk reading something. She does not look up or interact with the kids at all. The kids are happy, laughing, smiling, loud, playful.

With Maeda offering few instructions and ignoring Sylvia's progress with the flags, Sylvia ends up gluing most of the flags upside down, and Maeda throws away the decoration without displaying it in the classroom.

Even though the Amigos Room often only has one or two students in any given class period, Maeda lacks the skills to effectively manage the classroom and keep her students on task. She ignores the students for much of the class period, raising her head only occasionally to complain that the students are playing and not working—even when she has not assigned any work. Despite the prevalence of play in her classes, Maeda often chastises students for not taking her classes seriously. This scolding often makes reference to the children's foreign status, as in this case with David, a third-grade student from Peru, who has forgotten to bring his materials to class.

> Maeda chastises him, saying in Japanese "I told you a week ago to bring it. You need to take more responsibility. You can't keep saying "sensei, sensei" every time you need something. Asami brought her materials, and she's from Peru, right? You're getting bigger, going into fourth grade,

> fifth grade, sixth grade. You're not going to be special there. This is Japan. You live in Japan and you have to start doing things yourself." The boy stands silent in front of the teacher, dipping his head every few seconds.

Maeda's mentioning of David's foreign status reveals that, despite the professional norm of ignoring students' ethnic differences, teachers can call attention to those differences if they interpret them as negative or detracting from the children's assimilation (Kojima 2006; Tsuneyoshi 2001).

The Language Counselor

In addition to assigning two teachers to work in the Amigos Room, the school district also employs a full-time language counselor, Kitagawa, to serve Shiroyama Elementary and two other schools. Kitagawa, a middle-aged, native Japanese man, claims he can speak seven languages, including Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Mandarin. "*Zenbu dekimasu*" (I can do it all), he proudly declares to gatherings of teachers and parents. Despite Kitagawa's claims of linguistic prowess, parent-teacher relations are often stymied by his limited command of Spanish and Portuguese. When Kitagawa interprets for parent-teacher meetings, communication often breaks down, as he speaks in sentence fragments with incorrect grammar and nonwords in Spanish and Portuguese to produce a barely intelligible message for the parents. In one conference with a Brazilian mother, Kitagawa's poor command of Portuguese leads the mother to switch from Portuguese to Spanish in the hopes that his command of that language might be stronger. Kitagawa does not pick up on the mother's language switch, and continues to speak to her in mangled Portuguese, while she replies in Spanish.

In another instance, Kitagawa's poor Spanish leaves a Peruvian mother feeling helpless and confused. Toward the end of my fieldwork, Kitagawa talks with Angélica, a Peruvian Nikkei mother, about her daughter Naomi's upcoming transition to junior high school:

> As the parents wait in the gym for the children to leave their classrooms, I find Kitagawa talking to Angélica. Kitagawa's Spanish makes almost no sense at all, as he speaks in fractured sentences, with incorrect adjective-noun agreement and poorly conjugated verbs. The mother listens politely, her face looking as if she were concentrating hard trying to make sense of what Kitagawa is saying. Kitagawa tells her, "In junior high, important to prepare. For future. Time to prepare for future. Round important. Interview. With teacher. And me. Together. Meeting."
>
> Angélica is politely nodding, and after Kitagawa walks away, she tells me that she did not understand anything he said. "*No le entiendo nada*." She asks me if I will be at the junior high, knowing that I won't be there (because I am returning to the United States). "And you're not going to junior high? It's a shame that you're leaving, that you're abandoning us," she says somewhat jokingly … Her voice is desperate, her face anguished, as she refers back to her unintelligible conversation with Kitagawa and talks about how he will be the only one helping her and her daughter.

In this meeting and in others, Kitagawa's incoherence is accompanied by the strong odor of alcohol. Smelling the alcohol and straining to understand his speech, parents like Angélica often leave meetings feeling helpless, quietly complaining to me that they cannot understand anything Kitagawa says and are unsure how well he conveys their concerns. While teachers avoid discussing Kitagawa's drinking, it becomes a frequent topic of conversation and complaint among the parents. However, parents are reluctant to complain to the school about Kitagawa's drinking, arguing that it's likely that teachers have also noted the smell of alcohol on Kitagawa, but since Kitagawa has not been terminated from his position as language counselor, teachers would likely dismiss the

parents' complaints. During my fieldwork, parents strongly depend on me to bridge the language gap by providing more competent Spanish-Japanese interpreting and translation, however the end of my field work simply reminds them of the vulnerability of their position at the school, and more generally in Japan. Ever-conscious of this vulnerability, the parents frequently voice their critiques of life in Japan.

PARENT REACTIONS TO JAPANESE EDUCATION

In critiquing Japanese schools, Peruvian parents draw on recollections of life in their home country (cf. Ogbu 1990). Parents frequently note that in Peruvian schools, children must pass exams in order to be promoted to the next school grade, while in Japan students are automatically promoted to the next grade, all the way through junior high school. Parents also describe Peruvian schools as more strict and more demanding. Alejandra is a Peruvian Nikkei mother of two sons at Shiroyama Elementary, and explains:

> I prefer the teaching in Peru. It's more strict, and they have harder tests, and they give the kids more work to do. You can exaggerate, and it's not important that kids remember, for example, that Christopher Columbus arrived in America on October 12, 1492. It doesn't matter if they know the exact date. But in Japan, it's too easy, they have tests and tests, and if you do it or not, it doesn't matter. And they don't send notes to tell you if your child studied or didn't study, or what subjects they need to study more. And they just pass kids along. And in that sense, education in Peru is more strict. And they keep the parents more involved in the work, what's due when, what do they need to get from the books, what are the assignments. Exactly what doesn't happen here.

Alejandra also complains that the school needs to demand more of the children (*un poco más exigencia*). "The school doesn't push them enough. On the tests, sure, 'the kid is a foreigner,' that's what they say, so, they don't treat them the same."

Bolivian parents note a similar difference between schools in their home country and those in Japan. As one father explains, "It's really different here. We see it as a little strange because they don't test the kids, they don't repeat grades, while in Bolivia kids repeat grades. … The teachers don't say 'Take this book and read it,' or something, you know. In Bolivia it's a little more demanding." His spouse concurs, adding that in Bolivia, "the children have to apply themselves, because if they don't, they don't pass. Here, if they don't work, they pass all the same. …The truth is that I'm really unhappy with the teaching. I'm, as they say, hurting my son because if he were studying in Bolivia, he'd be better off."

This concern for the children's well-being extends to Japanese children, as Peruvian parents note their children's Japanese classmates who are also falling behind. Lucía, a Peruvian Nikkei mother of two sons, describes the Japanese educational system:

> The educational system in Japan—forgive me, Japanese people—is very neglected. I'm in Japan because I want to save money, but if I had my preference, I would be in Peru. I see that kids finish elementary school without knowing anything. There's a (Japanese) girl, Akiko, a third grader, who didn't know *hiragana* when she was in the second grade.[31] The girl has no father and the mother works nights, I think, and the girl spends all day outside, even playing in the garbage. How can the girl go from second grade to third grade if she doesn't know *hiragana* or *kanji*? Kazu (Lucía's son) says she didn't learn those things in school. The girl will have problems in junior high. Because the kids don't repeat grades in Japan, the kids don't learn.

With more of the educational responsibility placed in their hands than they would like, parents feel unprepared to help their children with their Japanese schooling. Parents say they know little about how Japanese schools work, what to expect from the teachers,

[31] Hiragana is the first syllabary that children are taught in the first grade of elementary school in Japan.

how to interact with the teachers, and what their children's particular needs are. These concerns are heightened by their incompatibility with the parents' hopes that Japanese schooling will provide upward mobility for their children. Instead, parents are concerned that the school is reproducing the parents' disadvantaged status by failing to give the children the skills they need.

Sense of Abandonment

Connecting parents' complaints is a broader sense of abandonment by the school. Angélica compares the support offered at Shiroyama with that of her child's prior school in a neighboring city:

> Naomi studied for one year in a school that cared quite a bit for the foreigners. When she started there, they had a translator … and they prepared everything and cared for Naomi quite a lot. Here, no. When she started at Shiroyama, I had to put in the effort myself to see how Naomi was doing, what she didn't know. … There isn't much concern for foreigners, I think, not like there (at the other school). It's more like, each person is on their own, worrying about your daughter, that she's not missing something, stuff like that. There's no communication, someone to help us. Here, the person who translates (she pauses dramatically and laughs slightly), nothing, it's better for you to do it on your own, right, no matter how badly you do it. And … the school hasn't been concerned about the foreigners, not at all.

María, a Peruvian mother of two sons including the aforementioned Takashi, complains "*Dejan todo a cargo de alumno* (They leave it all up to the student). The educational system here is very *jibun de* (on your own, in Japanese), it's all very *por tu cuenta, por tu cuenta* (on your own, in Spanish)," she explains. "If you studied, you studied. If you didn't study, you didn't study. So I tell him (her son Takashi), this is impossible, you have to put in more effort. Now you're going to Kumon." At Kumon, a private, afterschool study program that offers students assistance with their school assignments, Takashi

and several other Peruvian students receive weekly help with their homework. Several other parents hire a Japanese woman to come to their home once a week to tutor their children and help them with their homework. This woman is a recent university graduate and has been helping local Peruvian children for several years.

While parents would like to be more involved in their children's education, their lack of Japanese skills is a "disability," as María describes it, that prevents them from being able to properly guide their children. Unable to read much of their children's work, parents say they can only help with the math assignments. However even in math, which parents expected would be taught the same everywhere, parents find themselves unable to understand how the material is taught in Japan and often avoid participating, explaining "I don't want to confuse my child." With few community resources available, beyond paying for Kumon and private tutors, parents rely heavily on the school for the education of their children. In turn, teachers often interpret the parents' lack of direct participation as evidence of a hands-off approach to child-rearing and of a low cultural value placed on education (cf. Lareau 2000; Tsuneyoshi 2001:Chapter 6).

Peruvian parents measure the school's concern for the foreign children in part by the quality of the resources the school dedicates to them. The most prominent resource, and the most common topic of complaint, is the Amigos Room, specifically its lack of academic rigor and its practice of pulling students out of their homeroom classes. Parents complain that not only are their children missing out on academic content in their homeroom classes, but their Amigos classes are void of academic benefit. "They're making them fall behind when they take them out of class, and that's bad," Angélica

complains. Alejandra has two sons attending Shiroyama Elementary. Her older son, Ricardo, is in the sixth grade and has been attending Amigos classes since the family moved to Japan three years earlier. As Alejandra explains:

> I don't agree with the Amigos Room. Certainly, the school's intentions were good in making a class like Amigos for the foreign children, so they catch up on some of the kanji they're behind on. Because there are some children in fourth grade who don't know the kanji from the second grade. But they don't catch up, they play more. … In Ricardo's case, I see that he hasn't caught up at all. It hasn't helped him being in Amigos. I think it would have been better for him to not have lost all those hours in class … He lost that time by being in Amigos, and in Amigos he's just playing. … It's so bad that, well, Ricardo's in the sixth grade, and his kanji level is really low. Really, really low. But, on the other hand, in Amigos, he's free. He loses that fear, and he's free. That's really relaxing for him, it's less stressful, but he could benefit more from the class. The class could help him, and not hurt him.

Peruvian parents voice their concerns at the school's annual meetings for foreign parents. Complaining about the pull-out nature of the Amigos classes, parents ask that the classes be taught during the lunch break or after school so that the students do not miss any homeroom classes. Kitagawa resists the parents' concerns, replying in cryptic, barely intelligible Spanish that foreign children need to go to the Amigos Room because there they will learn "difficult vocabulary, because hiragana is pronunciation, pronunciation character. For example, *shi* (four), this is four, right. For example, right, Japanese. *Shi*. Four, and, death,[32] and, and. Many things, right? Many. So, for difficult vocabulary. So, I said, right, to help. Help." Kitagawa also challenges parents, asking

[32] Kitagawa is likely referring to the Asian superstition that the number four brings bad luck. In several Asian languages, the word *shi* (four) sounds the same as the word for death. This homonym has led to a superstition, similar to the Western avoidance of the number 13. Despite Kitagawa's claim that children need to supplement their math lessons with cultural lessons, during my fieldwork Amigos lessons never covered this material.

them rhetorically if children who do not speak Spanish could enroll in school in Peru, or if children who do not speak English could enroll in school in the United States.[33] When parents reply that they can, Kitagawa becomes offended, and states that remedial language rooms like Amigos do not exist in Peru or the United States. As I write in my notes:

> Smiling, with an air of superiority as if he were talking about some great service that exists only in Japan and not elsewhere, Kitagawa then says that the Amigos Room is "different. This doesn't exist Peru and Brazil. Doesn't exist. Can't study in school. In the United States also, doesn't exist." Kitagawa has previously made this same point, that Japanese schools are offering something that the parents' home countries do not offer, a claim of superiority.

While Kitagawa's claims are inaccurate, he aims to dissuade parents from voicing complaints by depicting the Amigos Room as a form of charity that parents could only receive in Japan. Parents are taken aback by Kitagawa's claims, and one Peruvian father complains after the meeting, "They have it (remedial language help) all over the world, right? *Es una forma de racismo*. (It—Kitagawa's claim—is a form of racism.)" Gabriela also complains that Kitagawa does not interpret what they say into Japanese, that he's saying other things, and then he gets "*molesto*" (annoyed) when they ask for more information.

By framing parents concerns as caused by their lack of familiarity with Japanese customs, Kitagawa makes Peruvians' foreign status an a priori explanation of their concerns. This enables Kitagawa to dismiss those concerns, and to defend the status quo. Kitagawa and other teachers also frame their comments in the paternalistic

[33] Kitagawa's inclusion of the United States in these discussions is likely in response to my presence at the meetings. He also looks to me as he makes the comment.

language of benevolent concern for the welfare of the children. This "velvet glove" approach (Jackman 1994) expresses concern for the family's welfare and avoids conflict by discouraging parents from publicly voicing their concerns, or else they might appear ungrateful or resistant to assimilating to life in Japan.

Class, Immigration, and Cultural Capital

While the above complaints by teachers focus primarily on the role of culture in explaining alleged differences in behavior and attitudes, these complaints ignore the role of structure—in particular, the role of social class, the parents' immigrant status, and their lack of cultural capital. In studies of working-class parents' relationships with schools in the United States, Sennett and Cobb (1972) and Lareau (2000; 2003) note how, for working-class families, the academic realm of the school often exists independently of the private realm of the home. Working-class parents voice support for their children's academic pursuits, however they often feel out of place in the social world of teachers and the school. For Peruvian parents in Japan, this divide between school and home is widened by the families' immigrant status. Relative to native-born, working-class families, Peruvian parents face the additional burden of being social and cultural outsiders. Effectively intervening in the school requires them to acquire new social and cultural capital specific to the Japanese setting, however parents' social circles provide them with few resources which might facilitate their interactions with the school.

Moreover, Peruvian parents' interactions with teachers are often bumpy, fraught with miscommunication and distrust. However, Japanese teachers describe a desirable

family-school relationship as one that is based on trust, deference, partnership, and cooperation. From this perspective, the school is not a place for parents to openly criticize or question teachers (cf. Lareau and Horvat 1999). Teachers praise Peruvian parents who comply with this norm, expressing empathy with the difficulties these *majime* (dedicated) and *nesshin* (earnest) parents face in learning Japanese and living far from their home countries. When parents openly criticize teachers, teachers respond by rebuffing the parents' concerns, denying any criticisms and changing the subject of discussion. Teachers later cite those concerns as evidence that the parents have not yet adapted to life in Japan. For example, María has had several difficult meetings with teachers and the language counselor, at times including yelling that could be heard in classrooms down the hall. Since her last difficult meeting, when María contacts the school, teachers and staff often respond with rolled eyes and quiet comments about "*Perū no okāsan*" (Peruvian mothers) being *mendokusai* (troublesome) and *taihen* (difficult).

Teachers value trust, deference, and partnership from parents, however members of a minority group who are conscious of discrimination are more likely to approach the school with suspicion and criticism, particularly when problems arise (Lareau and Horvat 1999). In Japan, Japanese parents are members of the dominant group, and as such are able to develop relationships with the school without concerns about ethnic or racial discrimination. However, this is not the case for Peruvian parents, as they are concerned about whether their children are being treated poorly specifically because they are not Japanese. This expectation of stereotyping, or stigma

consciousness (Pinel 1999), is evident in parents' complaints about the school, as they inevitably ask if they are having problems because they are foreigners. Even in an instance in which a child has a history of no major problems with teachers or students, when she does have a problem, the parent asks "Is it because we're foreigners?" ("*¿Es porque somos extranjeros?*") In this sense, being Japanese serves as a form of cultural capital, in that being Japanese, much like being white in the United States, facilitates parents' interactions with the school by enabling them to interact unburdened by suspicions that they are being discriminated against on the basis of race or ethnicity (cf. Lareau and Horvat 1999). These suspicions run counter to teachers' expectations of trust, deference, and partnership, and thus inhibit foreign parents' ability to effectively interact with the institution.

Given the problems I have noted at the school, and parents' own experiences of discrimination in Japan, there is some validity to the parents' concerns. It is also hard for parents to avoid asking about discrimination, given the daily reminders they receive of their permanent foreign status, from the challenges they face in reading Japanese, to the looks of concern they report receiving from clerks when they enter a store, to the mistreatment they report receiving at work.

Building a Sense of Home

Peruvian parents interpret their experiences at Shiroyama Elementary as part and parcel of their overall marginalization in Japan. This experience, plus their reception not as Nikkei but as gaijin and their lack of economic mobility, hampers their efforts to build a sense of belonging and identity with Japan. Cognizant of this negative reception,

the parents look to the Japanese education of their children as the best chance the children will have at greater prosperity and integration into Japanese society (cf. Sue and Okazaki 1990). However, this hope is dimmed by parents' complaints that their children are being shortchanged by the Japanese school system. Parents question how well the school is preparing their children for life in Japan and encourage their children to perform well in school, despite the barriers they face.

Many of these parents left Peru during their college years, and those who completed college find their degrees offer them little utility in Japan. Nonetheless, parents hope that their children's academic futures may lead to greater opportunities. As Natalia, a Peruvian mother of three children, notes:

> I studied at the university, but I didn't finish, and now I regret not finishing, and I don't know how to do anything, other things. [To make my daughter think, I told her] "And you're going to be like your mom and work at a difficult job, you're going to work like that?" … I always tell my daughter, "Study, it's for your own good, study, so you can get a nice, easy job."

Despite the good intentions in the school's goal of treating all students equally, Peruvian parents complain that the school's efforts are placing their children at a greater disadvantage. As an immigrant minority, the parents are keenly aware of their ethnic difference and how that difference impacts their relations with the school. While the school aims to assimilate Peruvian children into the Japanese mainstream, parents worry that the children are instead being left behind.

When parents raise questions about school practices, they discover that their foreign status takes precedence over their status as parents, as teachers frame parent concerns in terms of the parents being foreigners and not adapting to life in Japan. This

approach positions teachers as the sole authority in this setting, and disempowers parents by taking away their last remaining school-related resource—their authority as parents.

In the next chapter, I further explore the school practices, focusing more narrowly on the relations between Peruvian parents and Japanese teachers.

CHAPTER 4: THE CYCLE OF HOSTILITY

In this chapter I explore specific practices at Shiroyama Elementary that reinforce Peruvian parents' status as gaijin. I examine teachers' relations with Peruvian parents, including teachers' expectations, their complaints, and their questions about Peruvians' commitment to living in Japan. I also examine some teachers' efforts to strengthen the boundary between Peruvians and Japanese by depicting Peruvians and Japanese as polar opposites, demanding the parents act more Japanese, and calling local employers and others in the community for support of their efforts.

I also analyze the impact of these practices on Peruvians' incorporation into Japanese society. Immigration scholars argue that a negative context of reception breeds distrust of the host society, which, in turn, negatively influences the second generation's path of assimilation (e.g., Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou and Bankston 1998). I explore the cycle of hostility (Bonacich 1973; Takenaka 2004), in which Peruvian parents, both Nikkei and non-Nikkei, respond to their marginalization in Japan by instilling Peruvian, and not Japanese, identities in their children, and drawing on diasporic ties to Peru. These efforts lead to more resentment and distrust by teachers, who view these ties as an act of betrayal. Teachers' resentment, in turn, further encourages parents to not think of Japan as "home."

PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONS

The structure of Japanese teachers' professional role informs their perceptions of parents' responsibilities to their children's education and overall development. Relative to their American counterparts, Japanese teachers have a greater responsibility for the overall welfare of their students. This responsibility extends beyond the school environment and outside of class hours, into the home and the community (Tsuneyoshi 2001). In the United States, the child's welfare outside of the classroom is ostensibly the parents' responsibility, and teachers must tread lightly when inquiring about a child's home environment to respect the parents' privacy and their role as the primary guardian of the children. In contrast, in Japan, teachers routinely go beyond commenting on students' academic performance to give child-rearing advice to both Japanese and foreign parents, including suggestions on homework completion, exercise, dietary habits, and monitoring children's television and computer time. Teachers further expect parents to provide detailed information on the child's home, including the names, ages, occupations, and places of employment of all the people living in the household. Teachers also ask foreign parents how long they intend to stay in Japan, their plans for visiting South America, and other details about their lives at home and at work. Teachers justify these intrusions into the private sphere of the family on the grounds that such details are related to the children's well-being, and thus fall under the teachers' purview.

In addition, Japanese teachers share "interlocking, overlapping, mutually reinforcing responsibilities" with the family, people in the local neighborhood, and local

employers in the socialization, education, and overall welfare of the children (White 1987:73). At Shiroyama Elementary, this collective responsibility manifests itself in calls to former Peruvian students who now work at a local labor broker that employs many of the foreign parents. Teachers call upon these helpers to relay messages, to explain school practices to the parents, and to help the parents request time off for school matters. Through these efforts, the school benefits from the helpers' familiarity with the challenges facing foreign parents and with the practices of Japanese schools and businesses. Importantly, the school is also "spreading involvement and invoking indebtedness" (White 1987:72) by calling upon a sense of collective responsibility in the raising of the children. As I note later, this act of calling in the community for assistance also opens the door to involving others in private matters, in violation of school policies, and limits parents' ability to challenge teachers.

Teachers' Expectations of Parent-Teacher Relations

As noted in Chapter 3, teachers at Shiroyama Elementary are often unfamiliar with the challenges facing foreign parents, particularly those parents who are new to the Japanese school system. Teacher tend to expect foreign parents to already know how the school operates, including knowing the array of items children must carry to school (including specific types of thermoses and umbrellas, one special-sized bag for library books, another for PE clothes, and a third for lunch utensils), the clothing items students may wear during the winter (i.e., no earmuffs or wool caps), and what to do with the various reading and music cards students bring home (parents are to sign the cards daily to indicate that their child read aloud or practiced a musical instrument).

While the school provides parents basic information on these practices through monthly class newsletters, teachers rarely request that this communication be translated into Spanish. During my fieldwork, I prepared the school's first bilingual information packet for parents whose children were entering the first grade, detailing the items children would need prior to starting school, however many other school communiqués are done only in Japanese.

Teachers' daily communication with parents is performed through a daily notebook (*renrakuchō*) that contains notes in Japanese handwritten by the children during class. These notes detail homework assignments, upcoming school events, and messages from teachers. Parents can also use the renrakuchō to convey messages to their child's teacher. While this practice provides a medium for keeping parents informed, Peruvian children's limited familiarity with the academic language in Japanese can lead them to copy down the teacher's instructions without understanding them (Ōta 2000). Back at home, the children are unable to explain their scribbling to their parents, leaving the parents unsure as to what assignments or materials the children are to bring the next day. As a result, Peruvian children often come to school lacking school supplies and completed homework. After repeated instances of some foreign children coming to class without the necessary materials for in-class activities, Japanese teachers and students alike have become less willing to locate and share materials, and instead often dismiss the students' problems as *muri* (impossible to solve). This leaves the foreign students sitting idle at their desks, while their classmates proceed with the activities.

Venting Complaints

In Chapter 3, I noted how the Japanese educational principle of egalitarianism and related professional norms encourage teachers to treat all children similarly, to not see differences between foreign and Japanese children, and to individualize the issues facing foreign children. However, the positive tone in that front stage performance (Goffman 1963) does not necessarily mean that teachers do not harbor complaints. In fact, teachers freely express their complaints in places where students and parents cannot overhear, most commonly in the main office (*shokuin shitsu*). This office holds the desks of all 40 teachers, plus five staff members, and four administrators, and serves as the main gathering point where teachers prepare for classes and share conversation. In this space, away from the eyes and ears of students and parents, teachers share views that they may not express more publicly. When complaining about the foreign parents, teachers often gather at a cluster of desks belonging to the school's remedial language faculty—a cluster that includes my desk.

The prevalence of these complaints makes the area around my desk a frequent site of tension, as Maeda-sensei and Tanabe-sensei, the Amigos teachers, share their frustrations, and other teachers venture over, renrakuchō in hand, to make requests and to complain about parents not understanding the teachers' handwritten Japanese notes. These requests lead Maeda and Tanabe to continue complaining about how *taihen* (difficult) and *mendokusai* (troublesome) the foreigners can be. often for weeks after an incident has occurred.

Frequently, teachers' complaints center on foreigners' stereotyped custom of arriving late. While teachers depict Japanese as always arriving ten minutes early, foreigners allegedly do not respect this custom. Instead, Peruvians operate on "*Perū taimu*" ("Peruvian time"), which runs late, and otherwise do not act *kichinto* (properly) even though they live in a very *kichinto shita* (proper) country. In one instance, minutes before a scheduled parent meeting, Maeda is not preparing for the meeting, and instead is arranging materials on her desk. She explains her lack of preparation by saying negatively, "*Gaikoku ni wa* (in other countries), when they say 2:00, they come at 3:00." Despite Maeda's prediction, the parent arrives on time for the meeting and has to wait as Maeda hurriedly prepares. Prior to another meeting, Takashi, a Peruvian boy in the fifth grade, waits in the main office for his mother to come to the school. Maeda teases him, saying that his mother would arrive late. At 4:55, five minutes before his conference was to start, Maeda chides Takashi, "Didn't your mother arrive 30 minutes late last year?" (The mother was actually on time for the previous year's conference.) Takashi does not reply, standing quietly and unmoving, clearly uncomfortable, with his gaze firmly on the desk in front of him. "*Hora peruana*" (Peruvian time), jokes Kitagawa-sensei in Spanish. "Your mother works until 5:00, doesn't she? So she'll be late," whines Maeda. As the teachers share jokes at the boy's expense, Takashi remains silent and his mother arrives on time for her conference.

Kitagawa, the school's language counselor, is also a common target of teachers' complaints, as teachers routinely vent frustrations over his frequent absences. For example, through jokes and sarcastic asides, teachers complain about Kitagawa's failure

to appear at a yearly informational meeting for foreign parents, an absence that made several teachers and nearly 20 Peruvian parents wait for over two hours. Teachers frame their complaints about Kitagawa as individual critiques of his work ethic and performance. However, in their complaints about foreign parents, teachers do not afford them the same the luxury of individuality. Rather, teachers often frame their complaints as broad critiques about foreigners, Peruvians, or Latinos. It is difficult to estimate how well these complaints represent the views of the teaching staff as a whole, as many teachers voice neither praise nor complaints. Several teachers also do not have any foreign students in their classes, and thus have no stories to tell. A few report having good relationships with parents, and occasionally share positive comments. However, such praise is rare, as the dominant discussion regarding Peruvian parents within the school is one of complaint.

At times, teachers' frustrations in dealing with Peruvian children and parents reach a boiling point, leading teachers to vent their concerns in notes in a child's renrakuchō or in meetings with parents. One such instance occurs when Hikaru, a Peruvian boy who attends classes in the school's special education class, brings *hierba* (Peruvian tea) to school in his thermos. School rules dictate that students may only bring water or unsweetened tea to school, however Hikaru's teacher, Sasaki-sensei, is unfamiliar with Peruvian tea and mistakes it for sweetened lemon tea, a drink that is not permitted at school. To reprimand Hikaru, Sasaki has him pour small cups of his tea to all his classmates, to his teacher, and to me. As Sasaki has me sample the tea, in front of the students, she grimaces and complains that the drink tastes strange and is not

allowed at school. After publicly scolding and embarrassing Hikaru, Sasaki handwrites a three-page note to his mother, in large, bold characters, admonishing her for supposedly violating school rules.

> I am writing you because, no matter how many times I ask you, you do not follow the rules. Today Hikaru had a drink in his thermos that tasted like lemon tea. Robāto-sensei also drank some and confirmed this. He also made a strange face when he drank it. As I told you before, please put only water or tea in his thermos. Please do not give him sweet drinks.

In a pique of annoyance, in the same note to the mother, Sasaki also reprimands her for paying her monthly school fees not by bank transfer, as Sasaki had previously requested, but by giving her son cash. Sasaki later dismisses the mother's replies that she does not know how to arrange for such transfers in Japanese, and, even if an interpreter were to accompany her to the bank, her lunch break from the factory does not allow enough time to travel to the one bank branch parents must use for the transfers.

Parents as Obstacles and Outsiders

While teachers treat Peruvian children as holding the potential to be Japanized, teachers depict the parents as if they were opposed to integrating into Japanese society and as obstacles to their own children's assimilation. In discussions of children and parents' acculturation (or lack of it), Kitagawa often recounts a tale of finding a foreign student crying at school because her father had said that he hates Japanese (*Nihonjin kirai*). The details of the story change each time Kitagawa tells it, with the student being either Peruvian or Brazilian and in either elementary or junior high school. However, the depiction of the father's supposed hatred for the Japanese remains constant, and positions the father as an obstacle to his daughter's assimilation.

These divergent depictions of the children and their parents reflect teachers' different relationships with the two groups. While teachers guide their students in learning, growing, and adapting at school, teachers do not have the same relationship with the parents. Compared to the children, the parents are finished products, already socialized, and thus less malleable. Thus, when parents do not meet teachers' expectations of how a (Japanese) parent should act, teachers respond negatively, often with criticisms that make reference to the parents' foreign status.

Peruvian parents have little exposure to the school setting, and at times their bodies reflect this lack of cultural capital, as the parents walk the halls of the school barefoot. Japanese school customs dictate that outdoor shoes are to be removed when entering the school. Slippers for guests are displayed prominently in the front entrance of the school, but are concealed in unmarked lockers at other entrances. For large gatherings such as parent-teacher conferences and other events, parents are to bring their own slippers to the school. For Peruvian parents, this custom is but another piece of the cultural puzzle that they have yet to solve. Unaware or forgetting that they need to bring their own slippers, or that slippers are stored in unmarked lockers, the parents walk the halls barefoot, their naked feet slapping the floor, in contrast to the smooth shuffling sound of Japanese parents' slippers. Walking the halls barefoot is a minor violation of school norms, however it foregrounds the parents' gaijin status. Keenly aware of their faux pas, parents shyly hide their feet under their chairs as teachers try to politely ignore the breach of protocol.

Blaming the parents for the faults of the children is certainly not unique to this case, nor is tension between teachers and parents. Back in 1932, Waller depicted teachers and parents as "natural enemies," due to the conflict between teachers' responsibility for their entire class, and parents' focus on their individual children (p. 67). Japanese teachers are no exception to this pattern, as they complain about the pressures some Japanese parents place on children to excel academically (White 1987; White 2002). However, given Peruvian parents' immigrant status and the barriers they face in acquiring Japanese cultural capital, having teachers treat them as obstacles to their children's Japanization positions the parents as permanent outsiders to the school and to Japan.

QUESTIONING PERUVIANS' COMMITMENT TO LIVING IN JAPAN

Teachers' general distrust of Peruvian parents further reveals itself in two recurring issues: the school's oath requirement for foreign parents, and teachers' repeated questioning of these parents' future migration plans. In these issues, teachers doubt not only the parents' plans for their children's education, but also the parents' motives and their commitment to living in Japan.

Loyalty Oaths

Teachers explain that in recent years, the school had frequent problems with Peruvian parents not calling when children were absent, not having their children walk to school in their assigned walking groups, and otherwise failing to follow the school rules. To address this problem, the school devised a written oath (*seiyakusho*) for foreign parents to sign. The oath lists 11 general school rules, including contacting the

school when children would be absent or late, having children walk in their assigned groups to and from school, and paying monthly school fees on time.[34] Every year, foreign parents sign the oath, affirming "To the principal of Shiroyama Elementary School, I want to enroll my child in the school. I affirm that I will respect the school rules, and in the event that I violate the rules, I will respect the school's decision." There is no Japanese version of this oath, because, Maeda claims, the Japanese parents already know to follow these rules—even though teachers have to call Japanese homes almost daily to check on a student's unexplained absence. In contrast, foreign parents, she argues, need to be told that they have to complete tasks like cooperate with the school and make their children study at home.

In meetings and interviews, the school's teachers and vice-principal share tales of complaints about working with foreign parents, and praise the supposed efficacy of the oath in changing foreign parents' behavior. Despite this praise, the causal impact of the oath is unclear, especially since parents have signed the oath without clearly understanding it. Prior to my translating the oath into correct Spanish and printing it on a computer, the oath was largely unintelligible, with numerous grammatical and spelling errors, and was handwritten by the school's language counselor. The school also has no Portuguese, Mandarin, or English versions of the oath, perhaps due to the predominance of Spanish speakers among the school's foreign population. This results in Chinese and Filipino parents not having to sign the oath, and some Brazilian parents

[34] Tsuneyoshi (2001:132) notes the use of a similar document in a 1991 guidebook for foreign parents at a public school where she performed her field research.

receiving Spanish-language oaths—while teachers claim inaccurately that the parents understand the Spanish version.

It is more likely that improvement in foreign parents' compliance with school rules is connected to the language support I offer at the school, as prior to my arrival the school's Spanish-language support was infrequent and of poor quality. My presence at the school provides a full-time, bilingual staff person to answer the telephone, field parent concerns, and accurately translate documents. This support facilitates communication between parents and teachers, enables parents to better understand requests from the school, and contributes to a more positive rapport between parents and school officials.[35]

Nonetheless, some teachers refer back to the oath when problems or misunderstandings occur, complaining that parents are not keeping their promises to follow the rules (*yakusoku wo mamotte kurenai*). When I relay a message that a Peruvian mother agreed to come to the school for a meeting, Maeda replies "*Yakusoku? Hontō ni? Yakusoku? Promesa*? Promise?" (Did she promise? Really? Promise? Promise (in Spanish)? Promise (in English)?). Maeda's trilingual efforts to convey her apprehension reveal the lack of trust teachers place in the foreign parents to stand behind their claims of commitment to the school, and thus, to Japan. Under this logic, parents who cannot be trusted to keep their word on relatively small matters, like arriving on time, cannot be trusted to commit to something larger, such as committing to permanent residence in Japan. As noted previously, the concern also reflects a

[35] For a discussion of the role of bilingual staff support in schools in the United States, see Harry (1992), and Ramirez (2003).

stereotype that foreigners, particularly Latinos, violate the Japanese norm of punctuality by habitually arriving late—despite parents' history of arriving at meetings at the scheduled time. The concern also depicts Peruvians as unable or unwilling to adapt to Japanese ways.

The use of an oath in the enrollment of foreign children in public school has a historical precedent in the postwar treatment of Korean residents of Japan. With the signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952, which officially ended the U.S. occupation of the Japanese mainland, Korean residents of Japan lost their Japanese citizenship and became resident aliens. Korean parents who then wished to enroll their children in Japanese public schools were required to sign an oath that read "Upon enrolling our child in this school, we will agree to abide by Japanese laws and never to burden the school with the cost of our child's education. If we breach this agreement, we will not object to our child's expulsion from the school" (Sakuma 2006, as quoted in Kanno 2008a:16). These oaths remind parents of their outsider status in Japan and reflect parents' tenuous relationship with the school (Kanno 2008a:17), including the fact that the education of foreign children is not compulsory in Japan.

Loyalty Tests

In addition to using loyalty oaths for foreign parents, teachers also question parents about their future migration plans. Nearly every parent-teacher conference starts with teachers asking whether the families are returning to Peru or staying in Japan. Similarly, at an informational event for families with children entering the first grade,

teachers quiz all foreign parents about whether they plan to go to Peru.[36] These questions serve as a test of the parents' commitment to living in Japan.

With few exceptions, parents consistently answer that they are planning to remain in Japan for the foreseeable future, if not permanently.[37] The only trips to Peru, parents explain, will be "*de visita*" (for a visit). The consistency in parents' replies has not led to consistent agreement among teachers and administrators. With quips like "They say they're not going back, but …," teachers often doubt the veracity of parents' statements. Kōchō-sensei recognizes that Peruvian parents in Shiroyama are planning to stay:

> … when I worked at the school district office, before coming to the school, people would come to the school for a year, and then go somewhere else, that kind of thing happened a lot with the foreign children. But here in Shiroyama, with the Spanish-speaking families, they talk a lot about staying permanently. The children go to preschool, and then to elementary school, junior high school, they graduate from junior high school, they go to high school, they work in Japan. There are a lot of families here like that, that's the image I have. I think there are a lot of foreign parents who, just like the Japanese parents, work hard to raise their children, to prepare them to live in society, to lead good lives, that kind of thing. So they do that just like we do. So, if we support them, their children will grow up just like the Japanese children will, I think.

This view is not shared by Ishii-sensei, a district administrator and former teacher and principal, who presumes that while the parents want to leave Japan, the Japan-born children want to stay:

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[36] The poor quality of the school's Spanish-language support leads to parents being simply asked "Are you going to Peru? (¿*Van a Perú*?)" without being clear if teachers are asking about families' travel plans before the school year or their future migration plans. Parents do not ask for clarification, and reply that they are not going to Peru.

[37] School attendance patterns support the parents' depictions, at least in the short term. During the 2005-08 academic years, 66 foreign students attended the school. Of these, 4 have left for South America and 62 remain in Japan.

> Looking comparatively at these children, speaking from my own experience, the father and mother want to someday return to their home country, they seem to strongly want to return to Peru. So, they make an effort to learn simple, daily Japanese, and their desire to live in Japan forever is, more or less, thin, isn't it.

This lack of agreement on just what the parents and children want appears repeatedly in teachers' frustrations and complaints. "What do they want to do? I don't know what problems they're having," complains Yoshida-sensei.

> First off is the language. Then, these South Americans, do they want to go back over there, do they want to stay here, there's no expression of their intentions, none at all. How should we teach them? For example, are they here temporarily to work and then they'll go back? Then it's not necessary to teach them the Japanese language or Japanese education. They can come to school and make friends with the Japanese kids, but no, if they're going to stay in Japan, then they have to study. And go to high school and a university. That path and thinking about the future, somehow, they only partially hear it. I haven't had a slow and careful conversation with them about it. How should we deal with it, what advice do we give, I don't know.

Other teachers share Yoshida's frustrations, complaining that they are unsure what to do with the Peruvian children, whether they are to try to assimilate them into Japanese society, including the complicated task of teaching them kanji, or, if the family is leaving Japan, to skip the language lessons and focus more on mathematics. Thus, in asking parents about their migration plans, teachers are seeking clarification of their role in teaching the children. However, the ubiquity of these questions, despite the clarity and consistency in parents' answers, indicates that teachers are also questioning parents' commitment to living in Japan.

In contrast to teachers' concerns about parents' future plans, parents worry that the school is reproducing their unequal gaijin status by tracking their children into less

rigorous work because teachers think the children will leave the country. Parents' migration plans have changed over the years, from initial plans to return to Peru to current plans to stay permanently. Parents fear that if, years earlier, they had told teachers that they would one day leave Japan, teachers would have made less effort in teaching their children. María, a Peruvian mother, complains that teachers have asked her if they are thinking of going back to Peru, and she fears that if parents say they are thinking of going back, "They [the teachers] leave them [the children] behind, they treat them like they're less important, well, they already treat them like they're less important." Armed with these concerns, parents do not discuss with teachers any uncertainty in their future plans and plead with teachers to teach their children more Japanese.

Travel to Peru

For teachers, the prime example of parents' lack of commitment to living in Japan is travel back to Peru. Each year several families travel to Peru during the school's winter break, with students missing school for two to three months. During these trips, parents visit relatives not seen for years, and children see their grandparents, sometimes for the first time. The high cost of these trips limits families to traveling at most every six to eight years, with some families having not traveled to Peru since arriving in Japan nearly 20 years ago. Round-trip airfare costs approximately $2,000 per person. Also, flights to Peru from Japan often have layovers in Los Angeles, thus

requiring Peruvians to obtain a U.S. transit or travel visas.[38] As hourly contract laborers, Peruvians do not accrue paid vacation time, thus they do not earn a salary while they are in Peru. This high cost encourages Peruvians to stay longer, in an attempt to get the most for their money.

Structural factors also influence the length of these trips, as staying in Peru for three months satisfies a legal requirement in converting foreign drivers licenses into Japanese licenses. In order to convert their licenses, Peruvians and other foreigners must have a current license, and must have been in the issuing country for at least three months after the license was issued. Thus, Peruvians in Japan who do not have a Japanese drivers license, and whose Peruvian license has expired, need to travel to Peru to renew their license and then wait three months before returning to Japan.[39] Otherwise, Peruvians wanting a Japanese license need to start from scratch, completing an extensive and costly driver training program in Japanese, and passing a more rigorous driving test. Thus, the relatively simple task of converting a *brevete* (Peruvian license) into a *menkyo* (Japanese license) encourages Peruvians to extend their stays in Peru to three months.

As with many immigrant groups traveling to the home country, parents see these trips to Peru as important opportunities to instill a Peruvian identity in their

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[38] Travel visas may require an interview at the U.S. Consulate in Osaka. Many parents travel to the interview by bus to save on travel expenses. This trip takes several hours each way, requiring parents to also miss a day of work.

[39] In one permutation of this complicated scenario, several parents had their Peruvian licenses issued one to two months before they arrived in Japan, not knowing that had they waited longer before leaving Peru, they could have converted their license to a Japanese license.

children, and thereby "vaccinate" them against Japanization (cf. Portes and Rumbaut 2001: 196). For many Peruvian children in Shiroyama, Peru is a place they have only seen in pictures, tasted in home-cooked meals, and heard about from their parents. The children express little desire to learn Spanish, and feel more closely connected to Japan, to the point of seeing themselves as Japanese. As Lucía, a Peruvian Nikkei mother, explains of her son:

> He always calls other kids, "*Perūjin*, *Perūjin*" ('Peruvian, Peruvian'). But I tell him, … "you're also *Perūjin*." But he, since he was a baby, he's seen his face in the mirror, and his last names, both his last names are Japanese, so he thought he was Japanese. But, "You're not Japanese," I tell him, "you're not "*Nihonjin*" ('Japanese').

Kazu's self-image as Japanese is encouraged by his family's Japanese ancestry, which has no history of out-marriage. However, his parents seek to instill a Peruvian identity in him to protect him from future disappointment when his claims to being Japanese or Nikkei are denied, and he is instead classified as gaijin.

Parents hope that family visits and immersion in Peru will strengthen the children's sense of being Peruvian, and will motivate them to improve their Spanish skills. Angélica, a Peruvian Nikkei mother of two Japan-born daughters, explains:

> I think about going someday, so they (her daughters) can get to know it, to take them to see some nice sites in Peru, you know. So they can say "Oh, yeah, Peru, I'm Peruvian," right. Because I've told her that she's *peruana* (Peruvian), no matter what, she's *peruana de algo así* (some kind of Peruvian). So she has to get to know Peru. So I'm thinking of taking her, because I haven't even been to Machu Picchu.

Denied in their efforts to draw on their diasporic ties to Japan, parents turn to maintaining diasporic ties to Peru. However, parents are also ambivalent about the strength of their ties to Peru because of the Nikkei's history of rejection as Japanese, or

chinos (Chinese), in Peru. Thus, Peruvian Nikkei parents are both "ambivalent Japanese" and "ambivalent Peruvians," both tied to and pushed away from their Japanese and Peruvian identities, much like discrimination in early twentieth century Los Angeles made Mexican Americans "ambivalent Americans" (Sánchez 1995).

Parents also hope that travel to Peru will counter the cultural and generational distance between them and their children, as their children acculturate to Japanese norms and Japanese becomes the children's primary language. However, immigrant parents' efforts to instill an ethnic identity in their children are not always successful, and could hasten the children's identification with the host society (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Many children enjoy their trips to Peru, and revel in the chance to perform their Japanese-ness for their Peruvian relatives by writing each family member's name in Japanese calligraphic style. However, in some cases, they return describing the country as a dangerous, crime-ridden, and scary place. Travel to Peru also exposes Nikkei children to Peruvian racial norms, which label the Nikkei as a racial other. Lucía and Juan's child, Kazu, was confused when Peruvian children called him "*chino*" (Chinese). Lucía laughs as she recalls Kazu's reaction, "Kazu had never heard that word before in Japan, so he told his dad, '*Papá, me dicen chino'* (Dad, they're calling me *chino*)." This reaction can mitigate the positive impact of travel to Peru, and can reinforce children's identification with Japan.

In public, teachers are generally supportive of families' trips to Peru, saying that family ties are important. However, in private, teachers react to the parents' plans as if they were a betrayal and represented a lack of commitment to living in Japan. As noted

in Chapter 1, in the 1930s Japanese in Peru faced a similar reaction when they attempted to sustain ties to Japan. For Peruvians, this represented "as an act of betrayal and a sign of anti-Peruvian militancy" (Takenaka 2004:87). Immigrants to the United States have faced similar nativist resentment to the maintenance of ethnic ties (e.g., Abelmann and Lie 1995; Espiritu 2003; Horton and Calderon 1995; Lin 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

This resentment can be seen in comments made by Watanabe-sensei, a third-grade teacher, who asks me why, earlier in the year, a student, Makoto, had left school for three months to travel to Peru. "What do they do when they go back? … Live regular lives? Are they playing?" I tell the teacher the story Makoto's mother, Sara, had shared with me, that they had not visited Peru for ten years, and that her father, whom Makoto had never met, was extremely ill and would not live much longer. Also, Makoto's older brother would soon start junior high school, and would be too old to purchase his airfare at the discounted children's rate. The transition to junior high represents a step toward adulthood in Japan, with significantly more academic demands placed on students. Leaving junior high to travel to Peru is not practical, as it could negatively impact students' grades and their performance on high school entrance exams. Thus, in many ways this was the family's last chance to visit Peru for many years, and their last chance to see their elderly grandfather.

While I feel I am telling a sad, moving story about long-distance family separation, Watanabe seems dissatisfied and unhappy that the families would go back to Peru.

> Is that so. The nationality for over there is something that's really important to them, isn't it. They came here to earn money. … I wonder what they're doing. I thought they were simply going back to their hometown, but somehow, to say it badly, they go there to play and then they come back, and then here they work, and then they go back there to play. That's a bad way of looking at that lifestyle. I don't really think that's very good. They have different reasons, but, that's what I think.

The tone of Watanabe's voice and the expression on his face further convey his disapproval of families' travel to Peru. He does not frame his concerns in terms of the extended absences impacting students' academic performance, as some teachers do, but rather describes a life of circular migration, with no more commitment to living in Japan than to make money to send back to Peru, where they will eventually return. However, that pattern does not describe the Peruvian families in Watanabe's class. Makoto is a strong student, outperforming some of his Japanese classmates, and his family has committed to permanently residing in Japan.

The Forced Choice of Homeland

In addition to questioning parents as to when they will leave Japan, teachers also emphasize the incompatibility of committing to both Peru and Japan. In parent-teacher conferences, Kitagawa routinely counsels parents that they have to decide their child's *identidad* (identity). "*Peruano o japonés, importante decidir cual*" (Peruvian or Japanese, important to decide which), he tells parents in poor Spanish, presenting the identities as mutually exclusive. The counselor similarly advises parents that it is impossible for children to learn both Spanish and Japanese at the same time, and that the children's primary language should be Japanese. They can study Spanish later, he tells them, as he discourages parents from enrolling their children in distance learning courses from Peru.

Instead, Kitagawa says he will teach the children Spanish later, and he recounts a tale he tells many times, in which he claims to have taught Spanish to a Peruvian teenager who now works as an interpreter in a local factory. "I taught Maricela. You know Maricela? I am a language teacher. At the junior high school. Now she works [at] Mitsumoto."

Despite the counselor's repetition of the same advice and stories, parents remain skeptical, especially considering that the counselor tells of his language prowess in broken Spanish. Moreover, despite the counselor's use of the term "*identidad*," parents know that a Japanese identity is not so fluid that parents can simply choose it for their children. Rather, the choice of identity is a metaphor of the families' dilemmas over which country, Peru or Japan, if either, is "home." Thus in their forced choice of "identity," parents must either return to Peru, or commit themselves fully to their children's Japanization. Whether the children could later claim a Japanese ethnic identity is a separate question. The irony—that the parents who are being told that they must choose one identity are themselves Nikkei (Japanese and Peruvian)—is not lost on the parents, and serves as a yet another reminder of the limited utility of the Nikkei identities they brought with them to Japan.

ETHNIC BOUNDARY ENFORCERS

While teachers' frequently question Peruvian families' future migration plans and their commitment to living in Japan, some teachers' questioning of the parents goes further, as these teachers censure Peruvian parents for their alleged cultural deficiencies. The most vocal critics within this group are the teachers who have the most contact with the foreign students and their parents, including Maeda, the remedial

language teacher, and Kitagawa, the language counselor, both of whom are specifically charged with assisting the foreign families. Other teachers and the school's vice-principal are also in this group. These teachers act as "ethnic boundary enforcers" who strengthen the boundary between Japanese and Peruvians by framing school problems as being caused by Peruvian parents' foreign status and resistance to acculturating to life in Japan.

In enforcing the boundary between Japanese and Peruvians, teachers employ various strategies, including positioning Japanese and Peruvian as polar opposites, and defining particular behaviors as Japanese, such as cooperating with others and following the rules, and other behaviors as foreign, such as arriving late and roughhousing. Teachers also demand that the parents act more Japanese, and call in the community for support in monitoring the parents' behavior. These teachers' actions are connected to their professional interests within the school.

Peruvians and Japanese as Polar Opposites

Combining condescension with empathy, some teachers describe Peruvian parents as poor and unemployed in their home countries, and as less educated and less refined than Japanese (cf. Linger 2001; Roth 2002; Tsuda 1998; Tsuda 2003a; Tsuda 2003c). Some teachers go further in depicting Peruvians as shirking work, arriving late, immorally valuing work over their children's education, and generally living at odds with what the teachers identify as the properly strict and rule-based Japanese existence. This contrast foregrounds differences between Peruvians and Japanese, making the parents seem even more "foreign." It also expresses both disdain and affection for Peruvians by

depicting their lives in Japan as *kawaisō* (pitiful), *taihen* (difficult), and in desperate need of help from the teachers.

In meetings with parents, teachers who act as ethnic boundary enforcers often precede discussions of problems with elaborate praise for even the most meager attempts by parents to speak Japanese. This praise seeks to smooth relations between parents and teachers, while subtly reinforcing the fact that the parents are just beginning to master a language that the teachers natively speak. This approach also makes it difficult for parents to offer opposition to teachers' criticisms without appearing ungrateful or resistant to assimilation to life in Japan. Rather than resist, parents politely nod and thank the teachers for their concerns. By "befriending or at least emotionally disarming those whom they subordinate" (Jackman 1994:2), teachers are able to avoid conflict and to reinforce their dominant position. As noted in Chapter 3, this "velvet glove" approach (Jackman 1994) expresses concern for the family's welfare in ways that are "persuasive rather than alienating" (p. 364) and emphasizes the binding ties between Japanese and Peruvians. It also avoids the resistance that might come from more direct critiques, and softens the blow of parents' subordinate status.

Moreover, teachers explicitly define many school norms and customs as particularly Japanese. Some customs and events are not common to South American schools, such as *shūdan tōkō* (having the children walk to and from school in groups led by other children), *kyūshoku tōban* (having the children take turns serving lunch in the classroom), and the summer *undōkai* (sports festival) and fall *happyōkai* (performances). However, teachers also define the general school *seikatsu* (lifestyle) as particularly

Japanese, including norms such as collaborating with classmates and following the teacher's instructions. Teachers praise Peruvian students for following these norms, often describing the students as acting the exactly the same as the Japanese, "*mattaku onaji yō ni shiteiru*."

This praise fits with the school's emphasis on coordinated communalism, which dictates that students are to conform to the behavior of others in the classroom. It constructs an Orientalist dichotomy (Said 1978) which positions being or acting foreign as the opposite of good Japanese behavior. It also conflates school customs with Japanese ethnic identity, and frames Peruvians' positive traits as somehow Japanese, thereby denying them praise as Peruvians, per se. While teachers frequently praise Peruvian students as *atama ga ii* (intelligent), *akarui* (bright, cheerful), and *genki* (energetic, lively), this praise is individually tied to the specific student in question, and is disconnected from students' ethnic difference. Thus, being Peruvian is a topic of discussion only when it is framed as a problem.

This pattern can be seen in the ways in which Nakamura describes the behavior of a Peruvian girl and her mother. Using terms like *richigi* (honest), *majime* (serious), and *kinben* (diligent), Nakamura describes these Peruvians as resembling feudal Japanese of the late Meiji era[40] in their hard work and honesty:

> Second and third generation Japanese came from Peru carrying a sense of Meiji-era Japan. That is, when they immigrated, they transplanted a sense of the late Meiji era. Then they came back to Japan, back from Peru. They came back with the air of Meiji settlers, of feudal Japan's hierarchical social order. That kind of mother, *richigi* (honest), *majime*

[40] The Meiji era refers to the reign of the Meiji emperor, which began in 1868 and ended in 1912.

> (serious), *kinben* (diligent), that's what they're like. The children of that kind of mother are very serious, aren't they?

The positive effects, which Nakamura sees as Japanese, are limited by the family's Peruvian background. As he explains:

> But … these women are also part Peruvian, of course, but, it's not just that, the fathers are a little unrealistic, sort of "let's seek our fortunes in Japan," unrealistic families. The mothers also have that Peruvian influence. So, you wonder if the mothers finished elementary school. It's a little unclear, their educational level seems really low. The children of that kind of mother, that diligence, they can't make it in Japan's hierarchical society. So, in those kids, you can really feel the gap (between them and the Japanese children).

Nakamura further describes another Peruvian girl as lacking the honesty and diligence of feudal Japan, adding, "She just likes playing around and having fun, but I feel she lacks that (honest, diligent) sense about her." The gap between Japanese and Peruvian children that Nakamura refers to is exacerbated, he feels, by defects in Latino cultures. As he explains, "Do you know '*hasta mañana*' (until tomorrow)? Peruvians and Brazilians are Latino, so they don't work, and they don't value time. It's always *hasta mañana*. It's because they're Latino (*Ratenkei da kara*)."

Nakamura makes these comments in the Amigos Room, while several Peruvian and Bolivian students silently and uncomfortably listen to the conversation. In making these comments with foreign children present, Nakamura reinforces in the children's minds that in Japan being Peruvian or Latino is a problem. While parents tell their children they are Peruvian and not Japanese, and attempt to define being Peruvian as something positive, Nakamura and other ethnic boundary enforcers counter these efforts. This disconnect between the identities being instilled at home and at school

holds the potential for conflict, as foreign children are placed in the difficult position of sorting out contradictory information from their parents and teachers about their ethnic identities.

While the ethnic boundary enforcers are not representative of all teachers at Shiroyama Elementary, their actions still impact students across the school. This impact be seen in the case of Dylan, a third-grade student who was born in Peru and migrated to Japan three years earlier. Dylan was in Nakamura's class for the second grade, and struggled throughout the year, as Nakamura frequently chided him for being larger than the other students and being too physical in playing with other children, a trait Nakamura attributed to Latino masculinity. As part of the third grade's geography project, Dylan's class studies three countries, China, Kenya, and Peru. Katō-sensei, Dylan's third-grade teacher, selects Peru in the hopes of drawing the interest of Dylan and another Peruvian student, both of whom are struggling academically. However, Dylan resists, saying he has no interest in Peru and does not seem to welcome the reminder that he is not Japanese.

Defining Acting "Foreign" and Acting "Japanese"

Becker (1963) notes the entrepreneurial nature of the labeling of deviance, arguing that the labeling of particular acts as deviant is independent of the nature of the acts themselves, and emerges from their being labeled as such by a socially powerful group. In this case, Japanese teachers, in a position of authority within the Japanese school, are able to define and enforce notions of normative and deviant behavior. As noted in Chapter 3, teachers label some acts by foreign children as relatively minor

deviance and the result of cultural differences that will gradually dissipate as the children adapt to life in Japan (Kojima 2006; Tsuneyoshi 2001). However, they label other supposedly "foreign" behaviors, such as physical play and tardiness, as representing stronger threats to school norms. This, in turn, calls for instrumental enforcement to prevent future violations and an eventual erosion of the norm, especially in the face of growing numbers of foreign children (cf. Gusfield 1974:91). These instances reveal that while Japanese educational philosophies dictate that students should be treated equally, when students' deviant conduct causes problems in the classroom, teachers change their strategies and cite the children's ethnic difference as the reason behind the deviance. Kojima (2006) and Tsuneyoshi (2001) found similar behavior in their studies of Japanese schools, indicating that teachers at Shiroyama Elementary are not necessarily outliers when in terms of their treatment of Peruvian children and parents.

In one case, Hikaru, the aforementioned Peruvian boy in the special education class, has had repeated problems interacting with other children. Walking to school, on the playground, and at the afterschool childcare center, Hikaru often hangs on his teachers' legs, chases and grabs children, strongly embraces them, kisses them, and wrestles them to the ground. As the children protest with name-calling and physical responses, Hikaru counters with more physical behavior, at times spitting at the children. School tests indicate that he suffers from hyperactivity, however Hikaru has had no formal diagnosis of his developmental or social challenges and is placed in the special education class because of his problems interacting with other students. Sasaki

and other teachers who work with Hikaru dismiss clinical explanations of his behavior, and instead define it as the result of being raised according to Peruvian social norms, especially what teachers call "*hagu hagu*" (hugging), a decidedly non-Japanese cultural practice.

Teachers repeatedly describe Japan as a *kichinto shita* (proper or precise) country, where children are taught at an early age the importance of order and organization and of acting properly, including avoiding touching each other's bodies. While this particular definition of children's behavior is at odds with the common Japanese boys' game of grabbing and poking each others' genitals, as Hikaru has done, some teachers repeatedly insist on defining Hikaru's behavior as an example of *hagu hagu*. "It's a difference in customs," Kitagawa explains to me. Teachers also cite the fact that only Japanese mothers are complaining about Hikaru's behavior as evidence that the behavior must be foreign in nature.

This depiction of Japanese-ness as "proper" also serves as a form of racial code (Bonilla-Silva 2001; Omi and Winant 1994) that enables teachers to criticize Peruvians without any explicit references to the students' ethnic difference. Thus, instead of explicitly saying Peruvian children need to act Japanese, teachers tell the parents that their children need to act "properly." This restricts parents' ability to question teachers, as it frames the discussion not in terms being Japanese vs. being foreign, but in terms of proper vs. improper behavior in Japan—about which Japanese teachers could claim greater knowledge than foreign parents. Thus, as in the case of Moe's mother, Carolina, disagreeing with Fujita-sensei in Chapter 3, challenging teachers on this point would

place Peruvian parents in the awkward position of "playing the race card" by raising the issue of discrimination.

Demanding the Parents Act More Japanese

Teachers do not restrict their critiques to Peruvian children, as they also criticize the parents' behavior. In meetings with parents, teachers who act as ethnic boundary enforcers often claim that problems with Peruvian children's behavior are occurring because their parents lack Japanese-style customs. That is, unlike the *kichinto shiteiru* (proper) Japanese families, Peruvians are supposedly unaccustomed to completing homework or arriving on time. In cases of repeated problems, these teachers respond more aggressively, calling the parents to the school and sternly addressing them. With each successive meeting, the teachers challenge the parents more on their childrearing and their adherence to Japanese social norms, gradually dropping the "code" in favor of explicitly telling parents that they need to act more Japanese. Calling on parents to raise their children *kichinto*, the teachers frame their concerns in terms of the parents' outsider status to Japanese society

In the case of Hikaru, the boy continues to have problems throughout his first year of elementary school. As these problems refuse to abate, Sasaki and other teachers increasingly question his mother's childrearing and repeatedly call her to the school, for a total of six meetings during the school year. In private, they complain frequently that the relatively young single mother, Tomoko, who is in her mid-twenties and has lived in Japan for two years, is not acting like the *kichinto shiteiru* Japanese mothers and is not raising her child to fit into Japanese society. Instead, they claim that she is resisting

acculturating to life in Japan, and is teaching her son "*Perū no koto*" (about Peru). In meeting after meeting, the teachers increasingly chide her for the persistence of the problems. As the teachers demand faster compliance, they instruct her to discipline him, to teach him to behave more *kichinto*.

Repeatedly, the teachers preface their critiques with the phrase, "if you're going to stay in Japan," implying that the family's ability to stay in Japan depended on Hikaru's behavior improving. "Mother, are you hoping to permanently live in Japan, to live here forever," Maeda asks before starting an increasingly harsh critique of how much the child has been bothering the *kichinto shiteiru* Japanese children and parents who follow the rules. As Kyōtō-sensei, the school's vice-principal, tells Tomoko:

> If you're going to live in Japan, if you're going to stay in Japan, Hikaru absolutely cannot do these things. Hitting other people's bodies, grabbing them, of course kissing them, he cannot do these things, you have to be careful, I want you to understand this properly, you have to discipline him. By discipline I mean, make him really understand this. This is about Hikaru becoming a big problem, that's what I want you to understand.

Turning to me to interpret their comments, the teachers explain their views of Tomoko's seeming resistance to following Japanese social norms. As Tomoko sits in her factory uniform, having just left work to come to the school, Maeda refers to her attire:

> In Japan, when you meet someone, the first thing you do is take off your cap. But the mother seems to not yet understand this rule. She's not teaching this rule to Hikaru. These especially Japanese manners, this greeting. She doesn't have common sense. That's a cultural difference, isn't it? That kind of thing is a cultural difference, right? First, the mother has to teach these things to the child, but there are a lot of things the mother doesn't understand, she has to study about these things. About living in Japanese society, social rules, common sense.

The teachers further complain that Tomoko is not cooperating with the school's efforts to socialize and educate Hikaru, especially after the teachers took extra steps to help her, including having documents translated into Spanish. In making these references, teachers are "invoking indebtedness" (White 1987:72), attempting to impose a sense of responsibility in the mother to acquiesce to the teachers' demands. "I want her to cooperate more. She comes to a Japanese school …," Sasaki mutters to herself during the meeting, leaving the end of her sentence unspoken.

The teachers' barrage of pointed critiques and complaints cause Tomoko to physically retreat in her seat, with her faced turned downward, and eventually to cry. She later admits to feeling scared of her son's teacher, that she cannot discuss her son's problems with the teachers, and instead has to conceal information from them.

> With the teacher acting like that, it doesn't make feel that I, um, I can trust her, to tell her more, to talk more, as they say, um, about Hikaru's situation. What it does is it, it doesn't make me trust her, it made me, her way of acting, it makes me scared. *Esconder cosas* (hide things). *No decir nada* (don't say anything). *Vergüenza* (shame). That's how it makes me feel.

Tomoko attempts to back up her claims to have tried to improve Hikaru's behavior by saying that she has sought advice from friends and co-workers on how to manage her child's problems. Teachers dismiss this claim, both doubting the mother's truthfulness and seeing this resource as irrelevant to solving the problem of the boy's Peruvian upbringing.

As noted previously, the framing of teachers as benefactors justifies the teachers' treatment of the parents, including behavior such as yelling and complaining at them for acting "foreign" when their Japanese benefactor is trying to help them. In

one instance, a Bolivian father mistakenly thinks that a meeting with teachers has been cancelled because his son's return to Japan from Bolivia has been delayed. When the father does not appear at the school for the meeting, Kitagawa calls the father at work and loudly challenges him, yelling angrily in Spanish, "I am waiting at the school! … You, what's important, more important, school [or work]?" The question draws on teachers' often-stated complaint that foreign parents value work over school. Without asking why the father is not at the meeting, the counselor complains that the father's absence is a sign that the father, as a foreigner, does not value his child's education. The counselor demands the phone number of the father's employer, whom he then calls to complain further that the father has missed his appointment with the school and needs time off for a second appointment.

Calling in the Community

As in the above case, when parents do not comply with teachers' efforts, the task of addressing the matter falls to the language counselor and the remedial language teachers, who often resort to contacting others in the community to solicit their assistance in gathering information about families and in supervising families' behavior. As noted previously, contact between the school and an employer is not unusual, and school policies ostensibly prohibit teachers from sharing confidential information with third parties. However, the remedial teachers often violate these policies by discussing Peruvian families' private matters with employers, neighbors, and others in the community. In one instance, Kitagawa contacts Tomoko's employer to say that the

Hikaru had told his teacher that his mother was pregnant and to request that the employer look into this.

> The child, Hikaru, says his mother is pregnant. Now, the father isn't there, and Hikaru is a first-grade student, so this is a school matter. Is she getting married, is she getting divorced, that kind of thing, it has to do with the child. This is important, and I want information. Is it true, it has to do with the child, I don't understand it. Can I talk directly with the mother, can you check on that for me?

Based on Maeda's claim that Hikaru had told her he was hungry, the teachers also contact the employer to ask them to look into whether Tomoko is abusing her son by not feeding him. In another instance, a Peruvian girl's two-week absence from junior high school leads Kitagawa to call the girl's relatives, neighbors, and local business owners, to ask them to inquire as to the girl's status. Later, Kitagawa discovers that the girl has been absent to conceal her pregnancy.

Arguing "the neighborhood raises the child together [with the school]," teachers claim that they are acting in the best interest of the children and that they are involving the community so that others can help in raising the children. However, during my fieldwork, teachers took these steps only when dealing with foreign children. Hikaru's mother also describes these calls as becoming fodder for gossip within the factory, as staff members and co-workers share jokes over her son's struggles at school and her private life. "The things that reach the office, everyone in the factory knows them. Whatever happens, everyone knows about it," she explains.

Involving the community in these matters usurps Peruvian parents' authority over their children, and reinforces the teachers' position of power over the parents. The parents' options are further restricted by the fact that they cannot choose the public

school in which they enroll their children. Rather, their children can only attend the one school that serves the district of Shiroyama. Hemmed in by limited language skills, calls to their employers and neighbors, and the inability to change schools, parents often have little choice but to acquiesce to teachers' complaints. As Hikaru's mother explains:

> Here, I can't speak [Japanese], I don't even have the chance to say that I don't like the teacher, how she treats the kids, because I don't know the language, one, also because I can't change schools because I live in Shiroyama, so I have to take [my son] to that school. *Ni modo, no más, como se dice, hay que aguantar.* (There's nothing I can do about it. So, as they say, I have to put up with it.)

As noted previously, there have been several instances of parents challenging teachers, loudly calling into question the treatment of the foreign children and their parents. However, in the eyes of the teachers, these exchanges merely reinforce the parents' deviant gaijin status.

Connection to Teachers' Interests

Teachers' behavior in these exchanges with parents are also connected to the teachers' professional interests. Beyond the vested interest all teachers have in their students' welfare, the school's remedial language teacher and language counselor have an even greater interest in the foreign students' academic and social adjustment. With the creation of their positions coming in response to the growing presence of foreign students, these teachers gained a professional interest in framing the foreign students and their parents as problems which these teachers are uniquely positioned to solve. These interests, in turn, shape how the teachers interact with foreign parents and others (Becker 1963:162; Bustamante 1972:173).

As a result of the aforementioned problems with remedial language instruction and the language counselor's job performance, these teachers are eager to prove their worth to their colleagues, to school administrators, and to the broader local community. Labeling Peruvians' behavior as "foreign" not only defines the behavior as a problem, but it also places the responsibility for addressing that problem in the hands of the remedial language teachers and the language counselor. Thus, these teachers attempt to raise the low status of their positions within the school, and to gain the prestige of acting as kind benefactors to the Peruvian families. This framing combines the moral authority of that humanitarian frame with the authority already granted to teachers. In this process, the teachers "add to the power they derive from the legitimacy of their moral position the power they derive from their superior position in society" (Becker 1963:49).

In a self-introduction to a group of local business leaders, government representatives, and heads of schools, Maeda describes her experience in working with Peruvian families as a success, and refers to the challenges the school will face with growing enrollment.

> There are currently 45 [foreign] kids [at the school], and next year more than 50 are coming. ("Heh!" the audience responds.) That, well, everyday, well, the kids come to school very happy every day, and there are no children out of school. They say, "I love school!" "I love Shiroyama!" … Every year, we have several problems with the foreigners. … When I first came three years ago, well, the parents were not cooperating, um, to be honest, we were having problems like they weren't paying their school fees. And, well, regarding the rules, they didn't care, they didn't follow the rules, they showed up late for meetings, they didn't keep their appointments, those kind of problems. … Then, finally, now we're on track, the mother's … manners have

> become very good. … The mothers and fathers truly understand the school.

This depiction presents the teachers as motivating the foreign children and skillfully managing the parents' uncooperative ways, especially in the face of a growing foreign enrollment. Ingratiating herself with her audience, Maeda also credits the school's principal for this positive outcome, saying his support of her efforts have contributed to their success.

The actions of this select group of teachers do not necessarily represent the views or approaches of all the teachers at the school, however the predominance of complaints by teachers about the school's growing number of foreign students indicates, at best, mixed feelings about the challenges of working with this new minority population. In contrast to the efforts of the ethnic boundary enforcers, other teachers routinely make sincere efforts to socialize and instruct the foreign students and to effectively cooperate with the foreign parents. As noted in the previous chapter, the success of these efforts is often limited by school practices that focus on treating all students equally and on the growth of each class as a whole. In addition, the poor quality of the school's remedial language program and language support for teachers and parents impedes communication and further strengthens the boundary between Japanese and Peruvians. That the only resource for this language support is the school's language counselor adds to parents' feeling of helplessness and exclusion, as the counselor's episodic appearances at the school are punctuated by his poor Spanish and Portuguese skills and at times seeming intoxication.

CONCLUSION – IMPACTS ON HOME BUILDING IN JAPAN

In the eyes of many teachers within the school, the primary defining characteristic of the foreign students and their parents is their status as foreigners. This Japanese-foreign dichotomy is a wedge that maintains the boundary between teachers and foreign parents and influences parents' efforts at building a sense of identity and belonging in Japan that would make Japan feel like home. The permanence of Peruvians' gaijin status irks the parents, especially in the face of the constant reminders from teachers that they do not measure up to Japanese standards. "There's nothing you can do about it. You have to keep *gambateando* (fighting)," says Hikaru's mother in a creolized mix of Spanish and Japanese.

In addition to enduring teachers' questions about the parents' commitment to living in Japan, parents have concerns about the quality of instruction at the school, particularly the remedial Japanese language program, which largely fails to bring foreign children up to grade level. Conscious of the discrimination they face in Japan, Peruvian parents approach the school with suspicion and distrust, concerned that their children may be treated poorly because they are not Japanese. Amid these subtle violations (Espiritu 2003:9; Gordon 1997:206), parents often feel alone in their outsider status. In school, the children acculturate quickly, chat with classmates and friends, learn conversational (if not academic) Japanese, and adopt Japanese social norms. However, the parents' acculturation proceeds more slowly, as in the factory parents interact more with machines than with people, and have few opportunities to improve their Japanese skills.

Generational Dissonance

This difference in settings for Peruvian children and parents expands the distance between the two generations, as parents fail to gain the human and cultural capital necessary for them to keep pace with their children's acculturation. Parents sense this cultural distance when they attempt to share their concerns with their children, as the children increasingly see the school the way their Japanese classmates do. As Angélica explains:

> Comparing it to your own country, it's so different, and sometimes so ridiculous. I see things, and what can we do? We just have to adapt, because they [the children], it's not that they have to adapt, *ya son* (they already *are*) [Japanese]. We're the ones who have to adapt, the parents, because they're already there, they see things as if that's the way they really are. It's not adaptation for them … my daughter started [school] here in the first grade, so that's how things are for her, she doesn't see things as ridiculous. I tell her, hey, this *kaban* (bag, in Japanese) is, I see it as so, so heavy, but she tells me "No, *mamá*, I can carry it." So, what can I … I can't tell her a lot of things.

The children's declining Spanish skills are a part of this acculturative distance, further complicating parent-child communication. As parents talk to their children in Spanish, the children answer in Japanese, with the number of Spanish words peppering their speech decreasing the longer the families remain in Japan. While the parents rely on their children to serve as the family's interpreters, the children's subtractive bilingualism (Cummins 2000) increasingly complicates communication between them and their parents. In a parent-teacher conference, Carolina grows frustrated as her daughter, Moe, tries to interpret for her. As Moe starts a sentence in Spanish, and quickly switches to Japanese, Carolina complains, "This one, she's no help to me as an interpreter. She always switches to Japanese." This communication barrier worries Carolina, as she

pleads with Moe to speak Spanish and describes telling her, "Look, Moe, … you're going to be growing, and you'll become a young woman. There'll be some advice that I'll want to give you, and I won't be able to explain myself in Japanese, because I don't know how to speak perfect Japanese."

Parents attempt to sustain the children's Spanish by speaking to them in Spanish at home and sending them to the Spanish classes I held on Saturdays. Parents also hope that visiting family in Peru, where the children are immersed in Spanish, will spark the children's interest in learning the language. Parents also privately chide co-ethnics for speaking to their children in Japanese, while admitting that they sometimes slip into this habit. Speaking Spanish remains a fallback position (cf. Takaki 1993), just in case the parents' plans for life in Japan do not work out. However, the parents' situation is much like that of the fabled Dutch boy who attempted to hold back flood waters by plugging a dike with his finger (Dodge 1993). Surrounded by the Japanese language at school, in the neighborhood, and in the mass media, and with few opportunities for formal education in Spanish, the children's Spanish skills continue to decline, further distancing them from their parents.

This situation is familiar to some of the parents, who as children in Peru listened to their immigrant Japanese grandparents speak to them in Japanese. To the children's ears, Japanese was a strange language from a distant land, spoken by grandparents in private, never in public. Judith describes this, saying "They [the children] want to be like the Japanese, right. It's the same with us, when we were in Peru, we only spoke Spanish. Our grandmothers spoke to us in their language, and we still wouldn't answer them in

front of other people." Feeling shame at their grandparents' ethnic difference, and the threat it posed to their incorporation into Peruvian society, the third generation often learned only the most rudimentary Japanese. "And my grandmother always speaks Japanese at home, but we would laugh, right, and we didn't learn it," explains Lucía regretfully.

Just as the foreigner-related discourse by teachers is predominantly one of complaint, Peruvian parents also mainly talk about the school in negative terms. The parents' position as an outsider to their children's education, and their heavy reliance on the school for preparing their children for life in Japan are recurrent themes in parents' school-related discourse. Parents are distrustful of the school, unhappy with their child's progress, but also unsure how to raise their concerns or make changes. The people who are supposed to be helping them, Maeda and Kitagawa, are among the ethnic boundary enforcers. This discourages parents from accepting their children's subtractive bilingualism and concomitant Japanization.

Moreover, teachers' efforts to enforce the ethnic boundary, combined with the school's dysfunction, complicate the second generation's assimilation by creating an environment in which being Peruvian is seen as a problem (cf. Lewis 2003). Lareau (2000) notes that children observe their parents' interactions with teachers, and that these interactions teach children how to approach the social world. Peruvian children in Shiroyama observe their parents hesitate and struggle in their interactions with teachers and other Japanese authority figures. The children may be able to explain away some of this difficulty as being the result of the parents' immigrant status, since, clearly, a

stronger command of the Japanese language and culture would enable the parents to more effectively manage these interactions. The role reversal (Portes and Rumbaut 2001), in which parents have the children serve as the family's interpreters and translators, may instill in Peruvian children a sense of duty to assist their parents by learning Japanese and quickly acculturating. In this sense, acculturating to the Japanese setting is not necessarily incompatible with the children's Peruvian identities. Instead, Peruvian children, like immigrant children elsewhere, can learn to follow both their parents' and the host society's cultural scripts. This "second-generation advantage" (Kasinitz et al. 2008) enables the children of immigrants to develop multiple cultural toolkits that they can draw from in navigating various social contexts.

However, another possible outcome is that the combination of generational dissonance and the negative depiction of the parents' ethnic identities may encourage Peruvian children to reject their parents' ethnicity in favor of that of the host society (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). This can be seen as Peruvian children tell their parents that they are Japanese and not Peruvian, and the children call out other children as *Perūjin* (Peruvian), as Lucía's son Kazu did earlier in this chapter. These children also cringe when their Peruvian mothers address them in Spanish in public, and they plead with their parents to speak to them only in Japanese. In so doing, the children may be simply following their teachers' lead, as teachers question the parents' commitment to living in Japan and define being Peruvian as a problem.

And yet, being seen as Japanese requires more than learning the language and following Japanese social norms. Peruvian Nikkei children like Kazu, who have Japanese

phenotypic features and Japanese names, and who speak Japanese fluently, are often able to pass as native Japanese. However, children with Peruvian faces and names will continue to be marked as foreign even as they acculturate. Their fluency with the Japanese language and culture holds the potential to challenge dominant understandings of Japanese identity, which depict foreigners as unassimilable others. However, under the current ethnoracial order, these children remain gaijin. This ethnoracial order also prevents the children from claiming hybrid identities, such as Peruvian-Japanese, as the logic of Japanese racial and ethnic categories does not recognize hybridity.

In the next chapter, I examine the incorporation of Peruvian immigrants into the local neighborhood in Shiroyama, by analyzing their relations with Japanese and foreign residents in kenjū, the public housing complex where many Peruvian families reside.

CHAPTER 5: IDENTITY WORK IN KENJŪ

As part of the look at the incorporation of Peruvian Nikkei into Japanese society, in chapters 3 and 4 I focused on the various challenges Peruvian Nikkei face in incorporating themselves into Shiroyama Elementary School, and on the impacts of those challenges on the group's sense of belonging and identity with Japan. In this chapter, I examine the incorporation of Peruvian Nikkei in the local neighborhood in Shiroyama where they reside. In the neighborhood, as in the school, Peruvians face their stigmatization as gaijin, including negative stereotypes of their group and challenges in interacting with Japanese people. I examine the relations between Peruvian and Japanese residents in kenjū, the public housing complex where most foreigners in Shiroyama live, including the stereotype of foreign residents as rule-breakers who cause problems. I also analyze the impact of Peruvian Nikkei's master status (Hughes 1945) of gaijin on their ethnic identity, noting that their Nikkei identity is declining in significance and is being replaced by a Peruvian or foreign identity. Lastly, I explore the potential impact of Peruvians' efforts at incorporating themselves into the community by participating in local organizations and participating in local events.

PROBLEMS IN KENJŪ

Since Nikkei immigration to Japan took off in 1990, Peruvian and other Nikkei residents have concentrated in public housing complexes like kenjū, attracted by the low rent, the protection that public housing offers from discrimination in the private housing market, and by the growing presence of family and friends in the complex.

However, living in kenjū obligates residents to participate in a variety of communal activities, including following and enforcing the housing complex's rules. The element of social control in these rules leads to tension, as residents accuse each other of breaking them. This tension follows ethnic lines, as foreign residents complain that *other* foreigners' bad behavior is complicating the already-poor relations between Japanese and foreign residents. Lucía, a Peruvian Nikkei mother who has lived in kenjū for 10 years, describes the relations between Japanese and foreign residents:

> The main problem for foreigners is that they don't like to adapt to the Japanese system. That's the most serious problem. *Somos extranjeros* (we're foreigners), but sometimes when they say that a Peruvian is moving in, we're surprised and we talk about how now there will be problems, that the [Japanese] neighbors will be bothered.

Complaints about foreign residents causing problems, particularly in sorting their garbage and making noise, are commonplace in Japan (e.g., Matsumiya 2006; Matsumiya 2007; Roth 2002; Tsuda 2003a; Tsuda 2003c; Yamamoto 2006), to the extent that they are even repeated by Japanese who have no experience living near foreigners. Amid these accusations, Peruvians complain that Japanese residents unfairly blame them for the problems. As Judith, a Peruvian Nikkei mother and eight-year resident of kenjū notes:

> We used to have problems with people urinating in the elevator, or writing on the walls, or putting gum on the walls, or breaking the buttons. And it's not just the foreigners, it's also the Japanese, right. With kids, you have to be, you have to be telling the kids, don't do this, don't do that, don't play here …
>
> They [the Japanese] blame the foreigners. But … it's the Japanese, not the foreigners, I've seen it. They blame us, right. That's the problem. But some foreigners are also to blame, because they, sometimes, for the actions of one person, we all have to pay, right.

One Sunday a month, from 7:00 to 8:00 AM in the summer and 8:00 to 9:00 AM in the winter, adult residents are required to clean the grounds of the housing complex, or else pay a ¥1,000 ($9) fine. Residents also participate in administrative committees that oversee issues such as cleaning, parking, grounds keeping, and garbage. Rules for committee work vary from building to building, with participation in these committees mostly voluntary. Residents in each building take turns as the leader of their floor, responsible for disseminating information, managing cleaning, and other activities. After residents have completed their committee work, they are freed from having to participate in committees for a period of several years. Committees may also assign tasks to residents who do not volunteer, and residents who do not put their name in the annual drawing for committee positions are less likely to receive parking spaces close to their apartments and instead may have to park in a remote lot. As all committee work is completed in Japanese, some accommodations are made for residents whose command of Japanese is insufficient, including having them collect fines from other foreign residents. Peruvian residents also provide Spanish translations of the minutes of the monthly administrative committee meetings.

Garbage Sorting

Peruvian residents are the most vocal about the issue of sorting garbage, including the complicated rules and their enforcement. All kenjū residents, like other residents of Japan, must follow strict garbage sorting rules that require them to separate household garbage into recyclable, burnable, and unburnable types, each put out on different days in different transparent bags with color-coded labels. They must

also sort all recyclable materials by type into separate recycling bins. They are to wash, dry, cut, and flatten all milk cartons, rinse all plastic bottles and remove their labels and tops, and wash and dry all styrofoam trays. Also, residents are to neatly stack newspapers and cardboard and tie them up with twine. The city government provides multilingual posters with instructions on the rules for garbage sorting, and each building in the housing complex has bins for residents' garbage and recycling. Residents are also to follow a strict timetable, placing their garbage in the bins only during the morning of its collection.

Despite the city's efforts at informing residents of these rules, and perhaps because of the rules' complicated nature, residents complain that some dispose of their garbage improperly. As Judith notes:

> There are a lot of people who still don't follow the garbage rules, who leave the tops on the plastic bottles. You see it a lot, a lot. And they throw out containers that aren't washed out, that are dirty, mixed in with their garbage. That's not right. There are a lot of problems like that, and they take their garbage out at night, and there are cats [that will open the garbage bags]. It's prohibited, right.

Peruvian residents are very self-conscious about the act of disposing of garbage—in part, so that they remember to sort the items properly when throwing them away. However, they also make this mental effort as an avoidance mechanism (Goffman 1963), to get around having their Japanese neighbors complain to them about problems with their garbage. Lucía explains one such encounter she had with a neighbor:

> A [Japanese] neighbor came to me and asked if I had tossed out a PET (plastic) bottle, that it wasn't the day for putting out garbage. No, I say, I'm keeping the bottles until the right day. The neighbor thought it was us since we just moved in. No, I say, and I show her where my bottles were. I then went to see the bottle and saw that it was *ocha* (tea, in Japanese). I

> then went to the neighbor's door and knocked, and said "*Gomen* (Excuse me, in Japanese), but this bottle probably does not belong to a gaijin, because foreigners don't really drink *ocha*. We drink *gaseosas* (soft drinks, in Spanish)." After that, the neighbor never bothered me.
>
> Japanese also make mistakes with the garbage system, throwing out things like *nattō* (fermented soy beans), which foreigners don't eat. They (the Japanese) always think that foreigners are the ones not following the rules. When it's little cans of sake, foreigners aren't the ones doing that. The same with bottles of tea, or cigarettes. Foreigners smoke them until the end, and Japanese only halfway. So you know when [it's a foreigner or a Japanese]."

Miguel, Peruvian father and an eight-year kenjū resident, echoes these concerns:

> When we first started having to separate out our garbage, they (the Japanese) always accused the foreigners of not following the new rules. I did my time in the committee leadership, and I was in charge of the cleaning, and I had to speak. I said that it wasn't true, that there were bottles of things that Latinos don't drink, like sake and Japanese tea or green tea. Latinos drink beer and soda. So why blame us, when we don't use those things? So they stopped accusing. But [there's] always the tendency to say Latinos are more responsible [for the problems], and in part they're right.

To address problems with the sorting and disposal of garbage, administrative committees in some buildings in kenjū have instructed residents to write their names and addresses on their garbage bags. Those who do not follow the rule risk having neighbors and garbage committee members publicly call them out on this behavior. As Judith describes:

> Here, even among the Japanese, I've seen them getting called out on the garbage. I mean, here we're obligated to put our names on the garbage. I know that in other buildings they don't do it, but here, the Japanese themselves, I saw one time a woman from the second floor, a Japanese woman, right, and another from the third floor, because at that time I was on the garbage committee, right. And I saw them getting called out on it, that they have to put their names [on the bags]. And the person did it really strongly, calling her out for her name not being on the bag. And they had mixed their garbage [instead of sorting it]!

Some Japanese residents also take it upon themselves to monitor residents' trash disposal by standing watch over the collection bins on trash disposal days. Montse, a Peruvian grandmother, notes her experience with this surveillance:

> The *viejitos* (old men, in Spanish) go down and watch all morning when it's garbage day. They watch you when you take your bags down, and I worry about taking it out wrong. One day, I was getting my grandson to the bus, and I set my garbage bag down to get the child to hurry to the bus. An old man yelled at me, I didn't know what he was saying, but he yelled at me about the bag. I told him to *chotto matte* (wait a minute, in Japanese). He thought I had left the garbage.

This system of garbage sorting transforms the otherwise private act of disposing of garbage into a public performance. Instead of residents anonymously depositing their garbage in a collection site, or concealing it within garbage cans, residents place it in transparent bags that carry their names and addresses, while other residents watch. The different writing systems residents use in putting their names on the bags—kanji for Japanese names, and katakana[41] or Roman letters for foreign names—also provide a visual cue to the garbage owners' Japanese or foreign status. The public nature of this performance foregrounds Peruvians' foreign status. It also fuels the stereotype threat (Steele and Aronson 1995) that Peruvians face, as they are both aware of the stereotypes of their group and are self-conscious about avoiding fulfilling them through their behavior.

[41] Katakana is used for writing foreign words and names, scientific terms, and onomatopoeia.

Noise

Along with problems with the sorting of garbage, Japanese also complain about foreign residents making too much noise. The close quarters in which Japanese and foreign residents live, with thin walls separating their apartments, make this issue especially salient. Peruvian residents must adjust both to the close quarters and to Japanese norms regarding noise. "*Acá en Japón, todo es silencio, pues*" (Here, in Japan, it's all about silence), explains Hideo, a Peruvian Nikkei father and an eight-year resident of kenjū. Alejandra, a Peruvian Nikkei mother and an eight-year resident of kenjū, describes how city government officials inform Peruvians about the issue of noise before they move in:

> When you go to fill out the paperwork to move into the apartments, the officials tell you to not make noise, to be quiet during certain hours at night, and other norms that you have to respect. But when more foreigners moved in, and they bring the customs from their countries, and they listen to music at high volume, they have parties and make noise. The Japanese don't look kindly at that. The Japanese say, "those foreigners come here and they make noise." And because of one person, since we're all foreigners, they look down on you, right. It's xenophobia. Japanese don't like foreigners. There are some Japanese who are very open to meeting new people, but the majority are like that (xenophobic).

Despite comments from officials and neighbors about the issue of noise, Peruvians say the problem remains. Ana, a Peruvian Nikkei mother, notes:

> A lot of Peruvians listen to music loud and the Japanese don't put up with that. A car pulls up, all quiet, and the door opens and "*bwaaa*!" And the Japanese don't put up with that, you know. … At least in kenjū, you can sense that people are getting sick of it.

Because of the noise complaints, Peruvians have become very aware of how their children play in the home, and send their children outside to run, jump, and make noise.

They also privately threaten to file complaints of their own against their neighbors, as Luís says, "The Japanese [downstairs] has a dog, which is prohibited. If the Japanese complains, we will complain that he has a dog." As with accusations of violating the garbage sorting rules, Peruvians also complain that foreigners are also falsely accused of making noise. Lucía describes one encounter:

> Before, when Juan (her husband) was working nights, a downstairs neighbor came to the door and asked Juan to interpret because there was a Brazilian who was playing music loud until one or two in the morning. But the funniest thing was that it wasn't a Brazilian, it was a Japanese (she laughs slightly). The Brazilian asked, "How can I make noise until one or two in the morning when I have a small girl who's asleep?" It was a young Japanese, it was a boy who was 14 or 15 years old, but the first thing the neighbor thought was that it was the Brazilian.

Despite the ubiquity of complaints regarding foreign tenants, during my field work kenjū was always clean and quiet, with garbage neatly sorted by type in the bins. Fitting its rural-industrial location, the silence was broken only by the nearby factories' wailing of sirens and clanging of metal. Yamashita (2001:110) captures the seeming disconnect between the complaints and the reality of the setting in her description of Homi Danchi, a public housing complex of over 10,000 people, including 4,000 Latinos, in Aichi prefecture:

> A tour of Homi Danchi and its environs gives you a sense of an oppressive quiet—the sound of sleeping people who work the night shift, the sound of a silent majority who want very badly to be accepted, the sound of people trying very hard to be quiet. Even the children seem to play quietly. This is as quiet as Brazilians can possibly be. This is probably as *ruly* as it gets. (emphasis in original)

AVOIDING STIGMA

To avoid these complaints from Japanese residents, and to de-stigmatize their gaijin status, Peruvians argue that the stereotypes apply not to themselves, but to other foreigners, in particular to "*extranjeros malos*" (bad foreigners). This "ethnic othering"[42] reproduces rather than challenges these stereotypes, and pursues individual gain at the expense of other foreigners. Scholars have noted similar efforts by members of subordinate groups to manage their stigma, for example, homeless men who deride other homeless as "lazy bums" (Snow and Anderson 1987), and Irish immigrants who claim that other Irish fulfill the stereotype of the Irish as heavy drinkers (Field 1994). I this section, I examine Peruvians' ethnic othering, noting both its treatment of foreigners and of Japanese, as Peruvians also negatively depict elements of Japanese culture and practices that they claim they do not want their children to adopt.

Ethnic Othering

In claiming that "*extranjeros malos*" are the ones who supposedly violate the rules and who resist assimilating into Japanese society, Peruvians are resisting the stigmatized identity of gaijin by stating that it applies to others, but not to themselves. This adaptive response (Pyke and Dang 2003) is a form of moral boundary work (Lacy 2007; Lamont 2000) that attempts to deflect the stigma of being gaijin. Instead, Peruvians seek a more positive identity as "good foreigners" who follow the rules and get along with their neighbors. However, mimicking Japanese complaints about

[42] Other scholars have used similar terms, such as "defensive othering" (Schwalbe et al. 2000) and "intraethnic othering" (Pyke and Dang 2003).

foreigners legitimizes stereotypes of that group, and reproduces the same racial and ethnic order that "good" Peruvians are resisting.

These "bad foreigners" are not exclusively Peruvian, but perhaps due to the predominance of Latinos in Shiroyama's foreign population, critiques of foreigners are often framed as reflecting problems with Latinos in particular, as Hideo notes:

> The problem with Peruvians or Brazilians, of Latinos, Argentineans, Bolivians, is that they're not very fond of following certain rules that Japan imposes on everyone equally, foreigners, nationals, whatever. But Peruvians, Brazilians, in general, because we're a pretty big group here, we're deaf. We know it's prohibited, what's being done, but we do it. So, the Japanese interpret that as, not as a threat, but as disobedience, you know, to the rules. So, from that comes the resistance, because they don't want it like that.

Thus, this resistance to Japanese rules is explained in ethnic terms. As Miguel notes, "Japanese have a have a spirit of obeying, right. But Peruvians, more than anything, ask '*Pero, ¿por qué?*' (But, why?)." In addition to reproducing Japanese stereotypes of Peruvians and other Latinos, blaming Peruvian or Latino cultures for predisposing foreigners to violate Japanese rules blames subordinates for their own subordinate status, and precludes other explanations as to why some foreigners do not participate.

The difference in "spirit" between Peru and Japan that Miguel refers to partly reflects different orientations toward rules and the law found in the two countries. These orientations parallel those that Levitt (2001:112-124) found in her study of Dominican migrants to the United States. Levitt notes that notions of legality in the Dominican Republic are characterized by "rule-bending," bribery, and trying to find a way around the rules in an "against-the-law" orientation. In contrast, notions of legality in the United States are characterized by a supposedly more equal and impartial system

of justice, and a stricter adherence to the rules in a "before-the-law" orientation (2001:121). Peruvians' descriptions of rules and the law in Peru and Japan depict similar stances, as they note the prevalence of rule-bending, bribery, and corruption in Peru, and a more impartial and egalitarian system in Japan. This difference encouraged Miguel to immigrate to Japan, as he describes:

> After our son was born [in Peru], we … started a business, a restaurant. And the decision I made to go to Japan was because I was the victim of an assault. … when I went to report the crime to the police, either the police knew who the assailants were, or if the assailants were *militares* (soldiers) or *policías* (police officers). But I put in the *denuncia* (crime report), signed it, and the next day I went in and they told me that I hadn't reported any crime. I reported the license of the car the assailants used, and according to the police, that vehicle wasn't being used so it couldn't be. After I reported what the people looked like, the police brought people in and … they looked nothing like the descriptions I gave them. I was disappointed, and my nephew invited me to Japan.

Miguel contrasts this negative experience in Peru with what he sees as the equality of the application of the rules in Japan, even if he finds Japanese rules to be excessively detailed and pointless.

Some of those who criticize "bad foreigners" for breaking the rules admit that they, too, have violated the rules in Japan. Ana admits that she had previously signed up for a parking space in kenjū even though she did not have a car. Instead, she rented the space to a relative, who would visit her twice a month.

> But what happens? There's a lottery, and many Japanese have to park far away. And they would see this empty space almost the entire month. … others rent out their space [to other people] because it's cheap, 1500 yen ($13.50). All these bad customs that we bring from Peru. And now, when you want a parking space, you have to show your *menkyo* (driver's license) with an address in Shiroyama (laughs). Because of these kinds of problems, it keeps getting harder each time to get help. Each time the Japanese laws are *burladas* (flaunted), the laws get stricter and stricter,

> just like with the visas. *Porque el mismo peruano, como malogra las cosas, no.* (Because Peruvians really mess things up, you know.)

For Ana, these "*malas costumbres de Perú*" (bad Peruvian habits) are the result of Peruvian culture, and not the practices of bad individuals. However, it is up to each individual to abandon those habits and adapt to life in Japan, as Ana claims to have done.

Peruvians' depictions of a Peruvian, or Latino, predilection to disobey the rules also leave no space for other explanations as to why some Peruvians do not follow the rules. Some residents plead exhaustion, arguing that after working 60 to 70 hours per week in local factories, they prefer to pay the fine rather than wake up early on their one day off and clean. María has lived in kenjū for nine years, and pays the fine rather than clean, complaining that her Japanese neighbors spend more time talking than cleaning:

> They don't hardly do anything [but] stand around and smoke and talk, and they don't fill up their garbage bags or do anything, and we have to do it all. Because it's (the cleaning assignments are made) by floor, and if you're the only foreigner on your floor, then they don't try to talk to other people, so I don't go down.

From this perspective, not cleaning reflects María's limited Japanese language skills and her isolation from her neighbors, and is more an act of everyday resistance (Scott 1987) than an ethnic predilection to disobey the rules.

Other Peruvian residents have also described the monthly cleaning as a time when the majority of the people are going out to *conversar* (to talk). Miguel and Montse joke about the Japanese women who "have their plastic bag, and pick up one piece of paper, and then spend the rest of the hour *conversando* (chatting)." Thus, the

communal cleaning is a social event that provides residents an opportunity to chat and bond with friends and neighbors. However, Peruvians' weak ties with their Japanese neighbors and their limited command of the Japanese language hinders their ability to socialize during these events. Moreover, in cases like María's, in which Peruvians are assigned to work with Japanese regardless of the Peruvians' ability to speak the language, the cleaning is not an opportunity to socialize. Instead, it is just work, and Peruvians complain that they do not want to do all the work while the Japanese talk.

Overlapping Identities

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

In distancing themselves from "bad foreigners" and from Japanese, Peruvians attempt to selectively acculturate (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) by constructing an identity that falls between Peruvian and Japanese, overlapping the two identities (See Figure 1). While Peruvian parents want their children to integrate into Japanese society, they also want their children to retain their Peruvian identities and to selectively acculturate to Japanese social norms. In particular, parents do not want their children to follow some Japanese customs, particularly with regards to emotions and gender. Parents describe Japanese as "*fríos*" (cold), and they contrast this suppression of emotion with a supposed Latino tendency to openly show emotions and be very *sentimentales* (sentimental). Hideo describes what he sees as the difference between Japanese and Peruvian, or Latino, emotive styles:

> Japanese don't show their emotions, while Latinos, *americanos* [Americans], whatever you call them, we express our emotions. The Japanese keeps it inside. And they express it inside the home. That's why you don't know how the neighbors act, that's why the neighbor says that

> someone is "*otonashii*, *otonashii*" (quiet, quiet, in Japanese) because they don't know how *desgraciado* (vile, in Spanish) someone is in their home. That's why Japanese keep their emotions inside, don't let them loose. But, Peruvians, Brazilians, Americans, whatever, [we say] "Oh, how are you?" (very dramatically, in English). It's very different.

Thus, the performance of emotion becomes an ethnic performance, as parents define it as a marker of ethnic identity. Natalia, a Peruvian mother of three children, describes her efforts to sustain this emotive style in her children, as she instructs them to behave as she does:

> Latino kids are *muy sentimentales* (sentimental), *cariñosos* (loving). They're not like the Japanese kids, who are very cold. Or maybe it's because that's how their parents raised them, because you see a little hardness … But I've watched the *hoikuen* (preschool), and my sons … even though they go there every day, they're still not like the Japanese. … One day, when my daughter was going there, [I said to her] "Give me a kiss," like everyday, "give me a kiss." "No, *mamá*." "Why?" "Because it's embarrassing, they're watching." "No, you can't do that. You're Peruvian, and this is what Peruvians do. Nothing will change, Japanese are Japanese. So, are you going to give me a kiss or not, or do I yell and everyone will look?" "No, *mamá*," and she gives me a kiss, but just faking it.

Having witnessed their children's Japanese skills quickly replace their Spanish skills, Peruvian parents are concerned that their children's acculturation to Japanese social norms foretells the loss of their ties to Peruvian culture. While the parents encourage their children to adapt to life in Japan, they do not want this adaptation to come at the expense of the children's Peruvian identities.

In addition to expressing concerns over Japanese emotive styles, parents also deride Japanese gender norms. They describe these norms as having women be subservient and submissive, and men demanding and *machista* (sexist), in conflict with Peruvian gender norms, which parents describe as more egalitarian. Ana describes

seeing this behavior in the workplace, saying, "In the last factory (where I worked), a woman walks in and the *kachō* (manager) yells 'more *ocha*!' (tea!)," banging the table to simulate her boss's insistence. As Gabriela explains, parents also talk of seeing Japanese women speaking quietly, serving men, and walking behind their Japanese male partners:

> [Foreign] women have to get used to … being submissive, like the Japanese women are submissive, saying "*hai hai hai*" (yes, yes, yes), right? But, in our country, it's different. If you don't like something, you say "No, it's not OK, help me, do this," right. "I'm tired. Do something." But here, no. Here, "Bring me the *shinbun*!" (newspaper!) "*Ah, hai hai hai*" (in a quiet voice). … "*Surippa*!" (Slippers!) And they come running with the slippers … For me, that would be a shock. That women have to walk in back, with the man in front. And the woman is carrying all the packages, while the man walks alone.

International migration can impact both imagined opportunities for more equal gender relations (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991; Hirsch 1999), and actual opportunities for greater independence for women in employment and education (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Levitt 2001; Zhou and Bankston 1998). However, in the case of Peruvian migration to Japan, both women and men describe the host society's gender norms as decidedly less egalitarian than those in Peru, although this depiction is premised both on stereotypes of gender norms in Japan and an on idealized view of gender norms in Peru.

Peruvians' distancing from Japanese is not total, as Peruvians also describe elements of Japanese society that they would like their children to emulate. This includes the Japanese sense of honor, according to which money or other items found unattended will be turned in to the police rather than simply kept, while in Peru, parents say, the money would not be returned. Through these efforts to differentiate Peruvians from Japanese, parents construct moral boundaries that define being

Peruvian in a positive light, and operate amid broader circumstances that marginalize Peruvians in Japan (cf. Lacy 2007; Limón 1994; Roth 2002).

The Declining Significance of a Nikkei Identity

Conspicuously absent from the distancing of "good foreigners" from "bad foreigners" is any reference to foreigners being Nikkei. Given the salience of a Nikkei identity in Peru, scholars have argued that this identity will remain salient in Japan. Takenaka (2003b) argues that Peruvian Nikkei assert their Nikkei identities to challenge the Japanese tendency to lump all Peruvians, Nikkei and non-Nikkei, into the same group. Peruvians in Japan have also been depicted as using black market documents to falsely claim their Japanese ancestry. This stigma of illegality was fed by cases of forged documentation involving Peruvian migrants after the surge of Latino migration to Japan in the early 1990's (Fuchigami 1995; Tsuda and Cornelius 2004:458). This stigma encourages the Nikkei to distance themselves from other Peruvians claiming a distinct Nikkei identity and by denigrating other Peruvians as "*Nikkei falsos*" (fake Nikkei) (Takenaka 2003b). Nikkei ethnic associations further sustain this division by establishing themselves in Japan and offering co-ethnics exclusive access to networks and financial support (Takenaka 2003b). Tsuda and Cornelius (2004) also claim that some Japanese employers prefer Nikkei workers over non-Nikkei. These employers pay Nikkei higher wages than non-Nikkei, on the grounds that Nikkei workers are culturally more Japanese and thus fit in more readily in the workplace.

However, I question the continued salience of the distinction between Nikkei and other Peruvians in Japan. The claim of Peruvian illegality has weakened in the face

of tightened regulations and enforcement, which have restricted the flow of "fake Nikkei" and other illegal entrants into Japan. The number of unauthorized entrants to Japan has declined every year since its peak in 1993 (National Police Agency 2009:23), even as the number of foreign residents in Japan has roughly doubled (Statistical Research and Training Institute 2009: Table 2-14). Peruvians in Shiroyama also describe the issue of "fake Nikkei" as one that had occurred in the past and that is no longer relevant. Moreover, in Shiroyama there are no Nikkei ethnic associations, resulting in no institutional support to sustain a Nikkei identity in the face of the Japanese imposition of a single gaijin identity for all Peruvians. Instead, Japanese Peruvians in Shiroyama use the term Nikkei to describe their lives in Peru but not in Japan, as they note that in Peru some had attended Nikkei schools, belonged to Nikkei organizations, and worked for Nikkei businesses.

I also find no evidence to support the claim that employers pay Nikkei higher wages. Job advertisements in the Spanish- and Portuguese-language editions of the nationally distributed newspaper *International Press* do not list different wages for Nikkei and non-Nikkei workers (although they often do list different wages for men and women). Supervisors at a labor broker for Shiroyama's largest employer, where hundreds of Peruvians are employed, also indicate no preference for Nikkei workers. Peruvians often share information on wages with family and friends, and given the prevalence of intermarriage and friendships between Nikkei and non-Nikkei Peruvians in Shiroyama, it is likely that Peruvians would know if certain employers were privileging

Nikkei workers over non-Nikkei. Instead, they claim that their wages are based upon the work they complete and their gender, but not whether they are Nikkei.

Moreover, as I note in Chapter 4, as the second generation grows up in Japan and becomes increasingly "*japonizada*" (Japanized), their parents seek to reinforce a Peruvian, and not a Nikkei, identity in their children, telling them that they are Peruvian, and not Japanese. Nonetheless, parents also remain ambivalent Peruvians (cf. Sánchez 1995), as they recall their racialization as *chinos* (Chinese) in Peru, and their rejection as gaijin in Japan. As Judith explains, "We (Nikkei) don't have a space, we're like up there, in the air. Because there (in Peru), we're Japanese, and here (in Japan), we're foreigners, right. So, where are we? What are we?" This "condition of disrecognition" (Lie 2008:98) fuels not only existential questions of identity and belonging, but also efforts to construct a positive identity in Japan.

SEEKING INCLUSION

Amid this tension between Japanese and foreign residents in kenjū, Peruvian parents are also making efforts to integrate into the local community, by participating in local organizations such as sports teams, and by taking part in local events such as the elementary school's annual *undōkai* (sports festival). Through these various communal activities, Peruvians attempt to challenge their master status (Hughes 1945) as gaijin by establishing a new identity as local residents and parents. This new identity prioritizes qualities that Peruvians share with their Japanese neighbors—residence in Shiroyama and parental status, and de-emphasizes their immigration status. In this section, I explore these efforts and their potential impact on Peruvian identity in Shiroyama.

Joining "La Directiva" for Sports Teams

Peruvian children's participation in local soccer, baseball, and volleyball teams brings with it obligations for the parents (usually the mothers) to support the teams by handling responsibilities such as bringing tea and other drinks to team practices, setting up equipment, and transporting children. This ritualized role provides Peruvians with an opportunity to participate in the local setting in ways in which their foreign status might be less significant. Angélica volunteers for her daughter Naomi's local volleyball team, including preparing and selling food at a booth the team operates at community events in Shiroyama. "At first I was scared, because I didn't know Japanese," Angélica explains, "and I asked if I could help in whatever I could, and they said yes. … I also volunteer to teach Naomi, because if I don't do it, how can I tell her do things?" Sara's son, Taku, plays on a baseball team, and she participates in the team leadership. She describes being included in the team's activities:

> They (the parents) have helped me. I liked that they made me participate in *la directiva* (team leadership), knowing that I'm gaijin, that I don't know Japanese well, that I don't express myself well. But one way or another, they made me participate. They had meetings, and they told me where I could help, and they had me sit in front with *la directiva*, and in that sense I liked it, *porque no me dejaron al lado* (because they didn't leave me on the sidelines), right. … A woman, Suzuki, explained anything I didn't understand, any details, any papers I couldn't understand.

Despite the fact that Peruvians and Japanese live in such close quarters, the two groups have limited contact with each other. Peruvians report having few, if any, Japanese friends or acquaintances, and their contact with each other is often limited to simple greetings or to the formal setting of administrative committee work. Stronger ties with Japanese parents through the children's sports teams could facilitate Peruvian parents'

acquisition of social capital, as the Japanese are better sources of useful information on schools and other Japanese institutions than other Peruvians. However, the number of Peruvian children participating in these team is limited, in part, by the fact that the teams perform little outreach to Peruvian parents, and instead provide information in Japanese only and rely on children's social networks to recruit new players. Shiroyama Elementary also provides little information on local sports teams, as the teams are not affiliated with the school.

Participating in the School Undōkai

The most public event in which family members participate in Shiroyama is the annual school undōkai, an important event at elementary schools across Japan. Hundreds of family members fill the school grounds each summer to watch students compete in athletic events and perform dance and gymnastic routines. Teachers expect parents to attend the event, and parents also participate in various athletic competitions. Teachers and foreign parents describe previous years' undōkai as marred by miscommunication, as the school did not translate the event programs into Spanish, and parents had trouble understanding Kitagawa's Spanish announcements throughout the day. Kōchō-sensei, the school principal, says that Japanese parents also complained that the foreign parents were making noise, parking illegally, and leaving garbage at the event. To remedy these matters, Kōchō-sensei asks me to prepare a Spanish translation of the event program, including parking maps, and to announce events over the loudspeaker in Japanese and Spanish throughout the day. With these changes, the event proceeds smoothly, with Peruvian parents participating alongside Japanese

parents. After the event, Kōchō-sensei warmly praises the foreign parents' participation and welcomes the prospect that the parents will become more active participants in the community.

Since teachers expect parent to participate in these events, if Peruvian parents did not participate, their absence would be rather conspicuous and would reinforce their outsider position. However, participation also creates opportunities for the integration of Peruvians into the local Japanese community. Roth (2002) notes that Brazilian residents' participation in the local kite festival in Hamamatsu holds similar prospects for integration, as kite festival teams are determined along neighborhood lines in order to promote neighborhood solidarity. Matsumiya (2006; 2007) and Yamamoto (2006) argue that Japanese residents in Nishio, a city of more than 100,000 in Aichi prefecture with more than 3,000 Brazilian residents, initially reacted negatively to the growing presence of non-Japanese in the early 1990s. However, efforts by Japanese residents to include Brazilians in neighborhood activities, such as reorganizing the local *chōnaikai* (neighborhood associations), have contributed to Japanese in Nishio describing Brazilians less as a threat or nuisance, and more as members of the local community. Kenjū's administrative committees may serve a similar function, in that they provide Peruvians with an avenue to participating in local events and building ties with local Japanese.

Local vs. National Identity

However, overcoming the tensions between Japanese and Peruvian residents will likely require more work than simply translating event programs into Spanish and

participating in sporting events. Conflicts between Japanese teachers and Peruvian parents show that Peruvians' foreign status often serves as a master status (Hughes 1945), taking precedence over their other statuses of parent or local resident (cf. Lacy 2007). Similarly, claiming the identity of "local resident" (*chiiki no kata*) is difficult for Peruvians since Japanese often reserve the term for residents who are Japanese, referring instead to non-Japanese as "foreigners" (gaijin, or *gaikoku no kata*). Peruvians echo this terminology by referring to non-Japanese as *extranjeros* (foreigners). This language reduces non-Japanese to the status of guests, who should comply with the rules of their host, as opposed to locals, who have stake in shaping local rules and regulations. Claiming "it's not our country," Peruvians often cite the adage "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" to explain their obligation to adhere to local rules. However, this adage applies better to tourists and short-term guests than to immigrants who plan on permanently residing in Japan. Within this discourse, the term Nikkei, with its implied connection to Japan, is conspicuously absent, and replaced by the master status (Hughes 1945) of gaijin.

The presence of foreigners also alters how Japanese describe local practices, as they speak in terms of how things are done "in Japan," as if all practices were uniform across the country. For example, when teachers explain various local practices to me, they frame their descriptions in term of a shared, monolithic national culture. They describe Shiroyama's non-traditional and recent combining of the undōkai with the display of artwork by local residents not as a new, local variation, but as a reflection of

the great importance Japanese place on connections between the school and the local community.

Moreover, participation by Peruvians or other foreigners in local events does not necessarily guarantee their incorporation into the local community, but instead can highlight their differences from the Japanese. It is not unusual for local festivals in Japan to include foreign residents, although the residents at times are reduced to performing their "foreign-ness" through dressing in the traditional clothes of their home countries, or in kimono or other traditional Japanese garb (Robertson 1997). I participated in a similar fashion in my local city festival, by sitting in an "international booth" and speaking to curious Japanese in English. Even if the intent is inclusion, the dissonance of these performances highlight foreign residents' ethnic difference and present them as outsiders to the existing social order. [43]

CONCLUSION

Juggling resistance and compliance (Pyke and Dang 2003:169), "good foreigners" occupy an implied middle ground that is not explicitly labeled, but instead is defined by its opposition to the categories of "bad foreigner" and Japanese. In othering "bad foreigners," Peruvians are resisting the stigmatized identity of gaijin by stating that it applies to others, but not to them. In its stead, they carve out a positive identity that complies with enough Japanese norms to get along with their Japanese neighbors, while still claiming a positive Peruvian identity. As this boundary work (Lacy 2007; Lamont

[43] Robertson (1997) and Roth (2002) also note that the presence of foreign residents can also displace tensions between Japanese groups by replacing them with distinctions between Japanese and foreigners.

2000) attempts to deflect Japanese stereotypes of foreigners, it simultaneously reproduces them.

For some of my informants, their adaptation to life in Japan includes a weakening of their identity as Nikkei. In Peru, this Nikkei identity is the dominant identity for people of Japanese descent, and it is supported by an institutional structure that includes ethnic associations, schools, and cultural organizations (Takenaka 1999; Takenaka 2003a; Takenaka 2003b). In Shiroyama, this support structure does not exist, and thus it cannot challenge the Japanese lumping of all Peruvians, Nikkei and non-Nikkei, into the same category. The only time the term Nikkei is heard in Shiroyama is when Peruvian Nikkei refer to their lives in Peru, where they attended Nikkei schools and participated in Nikkei ethnic associations. Thus, an ethnic identity that was premised on claims of shared Japanese values and tradition, is declining in significance now that the Nikkei have migrated back to their ancestral homeland of Japan. While kenjū is Peruvians' current home, they are not *at home* there, as Peruvians battle negative stereotypes. This local tension mirrors the political and social tension over what role, if any, the Nikkei and other foreign workers should play in Japanese society.

One potential avenue for integrating the immigrant group into the local community is through participation in local organizations and in annual local events. In these settings, Peruvians attempt to replace their stigmatized gaijin identity with the positive identity of local resident or parent. While overcoming the stigma will prove a challenge, these efforts are an important step toward Peruvians' inclusion in the local community. Given Peruvians' limited contact with their Japanese neighbors, these

organizational ties hold the potential to broaden Peruvians’ network of contacts in Japan, and to provide them with more social capital than their network of non-Japanese. Through these efforts at inclusion, Peruvians are seeking to establish themselves in the local community and to make Shiroyama feel like home.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have examined the challenges Peruvian Nikkei face in overcoming their marginal status and incorporating themselves into Japanese society, by focusing on two sites in Shiroyama, the public elementary school and the public housing complex. The Nikkei's challenges foreground their differential inclusion (Espiritu 2003:47) in Japan, according to which they are allowed into the country but only as gaijin who provide Japanese industry with low-status, unskilled labor. They also highlight the disconnect between Japanese state policies on sustaining ties with South American Nikkei—including granting them a special visa to enter Japan—and the Nikkei's experience on the ground, at work, in the school, and in the neighborhood, where they face stigmatization as gaijin.

Since their arrival in Japan, the Nikkei have been employed almost exclusively by labor brokers as contract laborers. This employment status offers no security against economic downturns, as employers can terminate their contract workers more easily than their regular employees (*seishain*). Despite this vulnerability, employment opportunities were plentiful for the Nikkei—until the global economic recession that began in late 2008, which hit Japan hard by suddenly drying up demand for Japanese manufactured goods. In the last quarter of 2008, the Japanese gross domestic product shrank by the largest margin since 1974, with an annual decline of 12.7 percent (Tabuchi 2009). With reduced demand for manufactured goods, employers have started laying

off workers, highlighting a fourth quality in the Nikkei's performance of dangerous, dirty, and difficult labor in Japan: disposability.[44]

DISPOSABLE LABOR IN THE HOMELAND

Approximately 95 percent of the 131,000 workers dismissed in Japan between October 2008 and February 2009 were contract workers (Fackler 2009). With most Peruvians in Japan employed as contract workers, thousands have found themselves out of work. The national unemployment rate has risen to 5.4 percent (Kyodo News 2009), however this statistic fails to capture the dense concentration of unemployed foreign workers in Shiroyama and other districts in central Japan. Anecdotal reports in mainstream media (Coleman 2008; Fackler 2009; Johnston 2008; Masters 2009) and from parents in Shiroyama indicate widespread unemployment throughout Nikkei communities. Sofía explains via email:

> In reality, the crisis hit every corner of Japan. Contract workers like us are the most affected. We've been the first fired. Nobody imagined this wave of firings, without any consideration for the quality of your work, or how long you've been working for a company. They're treating all contract workers the same, they— literally—left us in the street. … The biggest problem for us is that the companies that have some openings save them for Japanese and prefer to say no! to foreigners. *Grrrrrr. Da rabia [la] impotencia* (this impotence makes me furious).

As Sofía notes, foreign workers complain that they are the first ones to be fired and the last ones hired. Lucía describes the situation similarly:

> Unfortunately, the situation is really ugly in Japan, above all for foreigners. We have a lot of friends who are out of work, many are already going back (to Peru and Brazil), but there are people who don't even have money for the flight back, and they're living in their cars, or

[44] In Japanese, this type of labor is referred to as 3K, *kiken*, *kitanai*, *kitsui*, or dangerous, dirty, and difficult in English.

> others who have their whole family in Japan and they don't have anywhere to live in Peru or Brazil. This Christmas is very sad, thinking about all the people who are doing badly. Luckily Juan still has his job, although he has fewer overtime hours. They fired 70 percent of the workers … What bothers me the most is that a lot of my foreign friends thought that their lives in Japan would be OK, and they didn't bother learning Japanese. And now they realize [the problem], because now the few jobs that are available, they require more of you and they have the luxury of picking who they want. Because there's a lot of people for just a few positions. Right now, in my job, I'm the only foreigner, and I think the best thing is to learn more Japanese every day.

Prior to the economic downturn, factory employers did not require foreign workers to have Japanese language skills, and those who did speak Japanese earned the same wages as those who did not (Higuchi and Tanno 2003; Takenoshita 2006; Tsuda, Valdez, and Cornelius 2003). Restricted to "simple labor" (*tanjun rōdō*) pos2itions in which the only human capital required were functioning hands, arms, and eyes, and with no economic incentive to improve their command of the language, many foreign workers got by being functionally illiterate in Japanese. However, with demand for workers dropping, employers now find themselves with the "luxury," in Lucía's words, of being more selective in whom they hire.

To address the growing unemployment among Peruvian and Brazilian Nikkei, in December 2008 and February 2009, the Council for Cities with Foreign Residents (*Gaikokujin Shūjū Toshi Kaigi*), which represents 26 medium-sized cities, asked the national government to provide greater employment and educational assistance to unemployed foreign residents and their children (Gaikokujin Shūjū Toshi Kaigi 2008; Gaikokujin Shūjū Toshi Kaigi 2009). In March 2009, the national government responded with a plan to pay Nikkei to leave Japan for their home countries. Each Nikkei adult

would receive ¥300,000 ($3,000[45]), and each non-Nikkei spouse and each dependent would receive ¥200,000 ($2,000) for the purchase of a one-way ticket out of Japan (Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare 2009). Those who accept the payment must surrender their long-term resident visas—the same visa created for the Nikkei in 1990—and will be ineligible for new visas for an indefinite period of time (*tōbun no aida*). This change in visa eligibility would effectively limit the Nikkei to 90-day tourist visas if they wished to return to Japan.

The plan to pay Nikkei to leave and not return, or at least to stay away indefinitely, has prompted foreign residents to stage public protests and to complain loudly at government fora held to explain the new policy. These complaints have centered on the Japanese government's treatment of foreign residents as a disposable workforce (Mainichi Daily News 2009a; Mainichi Daily News 2009c; Masters 2009). The plan has also been depicted negatively in the foreign press, including the *New York Times* (Tabuchi 2009) and *Time* magazine (Masters 2009), which claim that the plan ignores foreign residents' needs for employment and security in Japan. In response, the national government later indicated that those who receive funds to leave Japan will be able to return after approximately three years, or sooner if economic conditions improve (Mainichi Daily News 2009b). For those who remain in Japan, the national government has announced a program to provide some of them free Japanese language courses to improve their ability to compete in the job market. However, few will benefit

[45] The yen-dollar exchange rate at the time of the policy announcement was approximately ¥100 to $1.

from the courses, as they are limited to only 5,000 people, out of the more than 376,000 South Americans in Japan (Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare 2009).

For many Peruvian Nikkei, being paid by the Japanese government to buy a one-way ticket back to Peru is just the latest battle in their struggle for a sense of belonging and identity with a homeland. As many explain, "*Los nikkei no tenemos país*" (We Nikkei don't have a country). Called Japanese or *chinos* in Peru, and Peruvian in Japan, they complain of rejection in both countries and claim that neither country, or any other country, is truly home. Their stigmatization as gaijin in Japan is especially trying, as the Nikkei had identified with Japan as their ancestral homeland. In Peru, Nikkei ethnic associations define a Nikkei identity as following traditional Japanese values, and the Japanese state has supported these associations and sustained its ties to its diasporic population in Peru. Japan also granted the Nikkei special access to long-term resident visas, claiming that the visas were to enable the Nikkei to reconnect with distant relatives in the Japanese homeland. However, the visas were really a backdoor immigration policy to meet Japanese industry's need for unskilled labor (Sellek 1997; Yamanaka 1993).

The prospect of returning to Peru might appeal to Peruvians who are less established in Japan, such as more recent arrivals, unmarried workers, or those with families in Peru. However, for Peruvians who are more established in Japan, such as the Peruvian families of Shiroyama, returning to Peru is more difficult. Over the past twenty years, waves of migration have brought Peruvian family members to Japan, with each wave helping the next settle in. Many parents report that they now have more family

members in Japan than in Peru, and many have relatives living in kenjū and in nearby cities. Moreover, the children in these families have acculturated to life in Japan, are illiterate in Spanish, and identify more with Japan than with Peru. These families are currently planning to stay in Japan and are hoping that their children will be able to integrate into Japanese society. However, the ineffective remedial language program at Shiroyama Elementary is a barrier to these families' integration.

Remedial Assistance or Warehousing?

As noted in Chapter 3, the school's remedial language program is so ill-prepared to meet the needs of Peruvian children that it seems designed to perpetuate their unequal status. The Amigos Room serves as a place for the "educational warehousing" (LeTendre, Hofer, and Shimizu 2003:48) of Peruvian children, as the children engage in playtime and cognitively undemanding drills led by teachers with no training in second-language acquisition. While the children pass the time in the Amigos Room, they miss out on the academic content of the lessons in their homerooms. Teachers assigned to the Amigos Room resent the low status afforded them in the school, and spend little time developing lessons plans or curricula. It is not surprising, then, that the Peruvian children who are performing best at the school are the ones who have avoided attending Amigos classes. These children were either born in Japan or arrived prior to starting elementary school, and started school with a stronger command of the Japanese language. In contrast, the Peruvian children in need of remedial language help have received little assistance, and remain far behind their Japanese classmates.

Some Peruvian parents respond to these challenges by hiring private tutors, or sending their children to Kumon for help with their homework. With the children's command of Japanese quickly surpassing that of their parents, parents are soon unable to help with schoolwork. Many children complete their work on their own, and call on older siblings, friends, and relatives to provide help when needed. Like immigrants to the United States, Peruvian parents continue to hope that, despite these hurdles, their children's educational achievement will translate into greater opportunities in the host society (cf. Sue and Okazaki 1990). Otherwise, as Sara noted, the journey to Japan will have been "*un sacrificio para nada*" (a sacrifice for nothing).

PREDICTING THE CHILDREN'S FUTURE

While Peruvian parents prepare their children for the challenges that they think await them in Japan, the children's teachers imagine various futures for them. Some predict positive outcomes, but others are less sanguine. Kōchō-sensei, the school principal, draws on the experiences of Peruvians attended school in Shiroyama and who now work as interpreters and translators for labor brokers in local factories, to optimistically predict that the children at Shiroyama Elementary will assimilate into Japanese society:

> If the children work hard, they can get into high school. They have to choose to go to high school, it's not compulsory, but the foreign children, like the Japanese children, can work hard and make the effort to get into high school. If they work hard, they can get in. The number of children getting in is going up. … If the parents want it, the opportunity for the kids to go to high school is there, I think. I think that, in turn, will have a ripple effect, [as the children become assimilated in greater numbers] they will have a role in Japanese society. In fact, I know of those who graduated from junior high school and went onto high school, and after high school, they came to take on a mediator role in their workplaces in

> the local communities. They've come to assume important jobs with lots of responsibilities, I would say. So I envision that because there are people like them, people who've paved the way, there are opportunities to be assimilated into local communities if they wish and they certainly have enough potential in them to do that.[46]

Despite Kōchō-sensei's optimism about the children's futures, he overstates the degree of responsibility in the "mediator" positions. As noted in Chapter 4, the school occasionally calls on these people to request time off on a parent's behalf, or to relay information to parents in the factory. In making these requests, the school is drawing on the mediators' familiarity with both Japanese and Peruvian cultures to bridge the gap between the two groups. However, these are also the same people whom the school asks to look into parents' private matters, such as alleged pregnancies and child abuse, and who, one mother claims, share this private information by gossiping with others in the factory. Moreover, like the Peruvian parents' factory positions, these mediator positions are extremely vulnerable to downturns in the Japanese economy, in that they are needed only as long as the foreign workers themselves are needed. With fewer foreign workers employed in factories, the labor brokers have less need for mediators to interpret and translate. Also, despite Kōchō-sensei's claim that these mediators all graduated from high school, some did not attend high school and started working after completing junior high. Because their only Japanese educational credentials are a junior high school or a high school diploma, they have few options in terms of other work they could obtain in Japan.

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[46] Thank you to Makiko Yamaguchi for assistance with this translation.

Kōchō-sensei is not alone in optimistically predicting that at least some Peruvian children will be able to integrate into Japanese society. Katō-sensei teaches third grade and notes the ability of Sara's son, Makoto, to out-perform Japanese children at the Japanese art of calligraphy. Katō argues that this shows that Peruvian children can perform well, if they have the desire:

> The third graders do calligraphy, and in another class, in class number 5, is García.[47] I think that's his name, and when I look at his calligraphy, it looks better than that done by Japanese children. So, he has been living in Japan since the first grade[48], and he can speak Japanese, and he can write kanji. Children like that, I don't think they'll have any problems. And just like with the Japanese children, there are children who have the desire to do well. And just like with the Japanese children, there are children who don't have that desire. And I don't know if they (Peruvians) have the custom of studying at home or not, but it's the same for the Japanese children, if they apply themselves, then they'll be OK, I think.

This quote illustrates the influence of Japanese teaching ideology, which instructs teachers to treat all children equally and which relies heavily on each students' desire to learn (cf. Fujita 2000; Gordon 2006; Shimizu 1992; Shimizu 2001; Shimizu et al. 1999; Tsuneyoshi 1996; Tsuneyoshi 2001). Three times Katō equates the challenges facing Peruvian children with those facing Japanese children, claiming that if the Peruvian children simply have the desire to do well, they will succeed. However, amid this praise, Katō wonders if the poor performance of many Peruvian students, including the two in her own class, is due to Peruvian culture, as she asks if Peruvians have the custom of studying at home.

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[47] Japanese teachers commonly refer to students by their surnames.
[48] Makoto was actually born in Japan.

In the eyes of teachers, the fact that some Peruvian children, particularly those who were born in Japan, are performing relatively on par with their Japanese classmates legitimizes the school's practices. Katō does not openly question whether the school is providing Peruvian students with a support system that meets their needs, however, following her logic, such a system is unnecessary as the key to the children's success is the desire to do well. This approach is also conducive to colorblindness, as the goal of treating all students equally discourages teachers from noting differences between children. With teachers neither recognizing or meeting the needs of many Peruvian children, the school is playing a key role in reproducing inequality.

Shared Concerns for the Future

Unlike Kōchō-sensei and Katō, other teachers are more critical of the barriers facing the children, and of the limited opportunities these children may have in the future. As Mori-sensei notes of a Peruvian child in his sixth-grade class, "Children like Ricardo work hard, but if they can't read Japanese, even if they try hard, they will have trouble living in Japan and will have few opportunities." Endō-sensei teaches fourth grade, and notes that Peruvian and Brazilian children are attempting to integrate into Japanese society at a time of public concern over growing inequality:

> Kitagawa-sensei (the school's language counselor) is working with the children at the junior high, and I heard him say that if the kids work hard, they can all get into high school, but I think Japan as a whole is becoming a more strict society, in terms of the economy. For example, NEET[49],

[49] NEET refers to an official Japanese statistical category of those who are "not in education, employment, or training." Since the Japanese economic recession of the early 1990s, Japanese researchers and mass media have focused on the issue of the unemployment and underemployment of young Japanese, to the extent that the words *niito* (NEET) and *furitā* (freeter, or someone who works a series of part-time jobs after

> they're working, but the pay is low. They're working for a month, but they earn only ¥150,000 ($1350[50]), and that's not enough to support a family. I think you need at least ¥200,000 ($1800). You would still have problems, like what kind of home could you live in. So, for people who are coming from Brazil to work, they're making some money, and they're sending some money to their home country, or they're saving money, they're really working hard, I think, but for their children to get into high school, I think they need a lot of money.[51] You need money even for public schools, right? Public high schools, universities, they cost money, but it's difficult to get in if you don't study. So, I think we're not supporting them enough to get the skills they need. They have really limited chances to get into a university. Thinking as a country, they need an opportunity to re-challenge, to re-try. When someone leaves one job for another, we say "re-challenge," but for foreign kids, it's not "re-" because they get only one chance.

With Peruvian children facing these challenges, their parents wonder what kind of high schools the children will be able to attend, if they pass the schools' entrance exams. Ishii-sensei, another fourth-grade teacher, explains:

> The children who are really smart go to these [good] schools, and the children whose levels are lower go to other places. There's a range of schools to go to. At the different-leveled schools, the textbooks are different, these children use these [good] books, and those children, well, they use books that are like elementary school books. They have high school content, but it's written for children of a low academic level, so they can understand it. They go to that kind of high school.

The varied performance of Peruvian children at Shiroyama Elementary likely foretells divergent future outcomes for the children. Those children who are performing on par with their Japanese classmates may find themselves on track to attend higher-

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completing school) have entered the Japanese lexicon (cf. Genda 2007; Honda and Hotta 2006; Kosugi 2005).

[50] The yen-dollar exchange rate at the time of my fieldwork was approximately ¥110 to $1.

[51] Japanese public and private high schools charge tuition (approximately ¥25,000 to ¥60,000 [$230 to $550] per month), and charge for school uniforms, books, and other expenses (approximately ¥250,000 [$2,300]).

ranked high schools and possibly some form of higher education. Other children are performing far below grade level and are making little, if any, progress toward closing the gap between them and their Japanese classmates. If these children attend high school, and many foreign youth in Japan do not (Sakuma 2006; Takenoshita 2005), they will likely be limited to attending a lower-level academic or vocational school, like the ones Ishii describes. At this early point in Peruvian immigration to Japan, the extent to which these educational credentials will enable the Peruvian 1.5 and second generation to overcome their gaijin status and incorporate into Japanese society is unclear, however it is likely that credentials from higher status institutions will more effectively Japanize the Peruvians who hold them, particularly given the stratification of Japanese educational institutions.

Barriers to Success

Despite some teachers' critiques of the school's treatment of Peruvian students, the barriers to the students' success remain. These barriers are made all too visible at an information meeting held for foreign parents, as Kitagawa dismisses nearly every concern parents raise, often in barely comprehensible Spanish. In this meeting a Peruvian mother raises concerns over her daughter leaving her first-grade homeroom classes to attend remedial Japanese classes in the Amigos Room. Kitagawa responds by telling parents, in broken Spanish, that their children's elementary school grades are not important. Instead, like Katō, he argues that the child's "desire for studying" is paramount. My fieldnotes capture the interaction between the mother and Kitagawa:

> Sachie's mother stands to express her concern that her daughter already speaks Japanese, and if they take her out of her class to go to Amigos,

> and then she has a test in her class ... Kitagawa interrupts the mother, saying "Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter. Very important thing is junior high. Junior high, yes. You know, right? Junior high, yes."
>
> The mother attempts to continue, saying that if Sachie falls behind in elementary school, then in junior high ... Kitagawa again talks over her, saying that in the third grade of junior high,[52] the children's grades matter. But in elementary school, "*muy importante cosa es deseo para estudiar*" (very important thing is desire for studying), he says.
>
> Sachie's mother stays on topic, asking Kitagawa if the parents don't want their kids to go to Amigos, do they have to go? Kitagawa tells her not to worry, because the "teachers will organize, will do organization, depending on the vocabularies of the children, in their classes. Each class is different, schedule, yes, so they, we should organize each class, each child. Don't worry, the class's tests don't matter, yes, we can say, yes."
>
> With the parents quietly trying to decipher Kitagawa's comments, Kitagawa says again that the most important thing is "*deseo, deseo para estudiar*" (desire, desire for studying). "'What do I want? I want to study. I want to live in Japan.' Very important. Why? For example, right, the children want to leave school.[53] Why? First, right, is stress. For the children, right. So, stress. Foreigners, Japanese, for the children, right. So, stress …
>
> "Another thing, the path after school. Junior high always prepares, right, until the second grade. For a year, the last grade, right. After the second grade, the teachers and students should look for their identities. Identity. Which one? Industrial, commercial, or normal, before, university, right. Very important, for child. In elementary and junior high, until the second grade of junior high, is preparation. Exams is not important. Very important thing is desire. Desire. They like it, identity. Very important thing is identity. How to live, how to study, manner of studying, very important. Until second grade of junior high. Last year of junior high, do grading, we should do grading. For *kōkō* (high school, in Japanese)."

Kitagawa's long speech leaves parents silent and confused as to just what he was trying to say. Sachie's mother sits with her questions largely going unanswered, and the

---

[52] Japanese junior high school consists of three grades, the equivalent of grades seven to nine in U.S. schools.

[53] Further confusing parents, Kitagawa intends to say that the children want to leave school (*salir del colegio*), but instead says they want to leave *for* school (*salir al colegio*).

parents grow increasingly frustrated over the lack of attention Kitagawa is paying to their concerns, and over his poor Spanish.

Kitagawa's depiction of the children deciding their "identity" in the third year of junior high school refers to students choosing the high school they would like to attend. Students apply for admission to high schools, and select schools based on students' academic achievement, and on the schools' prestige and academic foci. Students can apply to public and private academic high schools, and to lower-ranked vocational schools. Framing the decision in terms of the children's "identity" depicts the issue in stark terms for parents who worry that Shiroyama Elementary's inability to meet their children's needs is dramatically restricting their future career paths and thus imposing a particular identity, or label, on the children at a young age. Kitagawa works both at Shiroyama Elementary and at the local junior high school, and is the only member of the faculty responsible for counseling foreign students and parents through the transition to high school, a fact that heightens Peruvian parents' concerns.

Kitagawa also frames parents' concerns about the Amigos Room as the product of their lack of familiarity with the Japanese education system. Making Peruvians' foreign status as an a priori explanation for their concerns enables teachers to dismiss those concerns, and thus defends the status quo. Teachers' negative opinions on Peruvian culture, including allegations that Peruvians tend to arrive late, value work over education, and do not study at home, also contribute to teachers not seeing Peruvian parents as equals, and make it easier for teachers to dismiss parents' concerns. These negative depictions of Peruvians are also part of some teachers' efforts to enforce

the ethnic boundary between Japanese and Peruvians by defining problematic behavior as particularly Peruvian or foreign. Teachers further reinforce Peruvian parents' marginal position by routinely asking them to prove their commitment to living in Japan by affirming their plans to stay in the country and by signing an oath of allegiance to the school.

Kitagawa and other teachers also wrap their discussion in the paternalistic language of benevolent concern for the children. This "velvet glove" approach (Jackman 1994) expresses concern for the family's welfare in ways that emphasize the binding ties between Japanese and Peruvians. It also discourages parents from voicing concerns, as any parent who challenges teachers would appear ungrateful or resistant to assimilating to life in Japan. Thus, parents politely nod and thank Kitagawa for his concerns. By "befriending or at least emotionally disarming those whom they subordinate" (Jackman 1994:2), teachers like Kitagawa are able to avoid conflict and to reinforce their dominant position.

Parents' Hopes and Skepticism

Concerned about the prospects for their children's educational achievement in Japan and their ability to integrate into Japanese society, Peruvian parents pursue complementary strategies: they encourage their children to achieve in school and to learn the Japanese language and culture, and they prepare their children for the stigma of being gaijin by instilling a Peruvian, and not a Japanese, identity. This approach conveys both hope and skepticism, and reflects both selective acculturation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) and stigma consciousness (Pinel 1999). Parents hope that assimilation

will bring their children greater opportunity, but they doubt their children's prospects for avoiding discrimination. It also highlights the complex relationship between agency and structure in immigrant identity formation, as Peruvian parents and teachers attempt to instill different identities in the children. These dueling forces position Peruvian children at the nexus of the dual processes of "self-making and being made" (Ong 1996:738).

Parents' hopes are tinged with the skepticism brought on by 20 years' experience as gaijin in Japan. They hope that greater fluency in the Japanese language and culture will provide children the tools to surpass some teachers' low expectations, and will challenge stereotypes of Peruvians, and other foreigners, as unassimilable others. Parents also encourage their children to follow some Japanese cultural practices, such as cooperating with classmates in completing group work, respecting others' property, and maintaining the overall orderliness of Japanese society. However, parents' openly reject other elements of life in Japan, including gender norms they see as discriminating against women and the alleged "coldness" of Japanese emotional displays.

Parents also hope that helping their children construct a positive identity as Peruvian can provide the children with the coping skills to withstand the stigma of being gaijin in Japan. As part of this strategy, parents take their children to Peru so they can see the country and meet relatives, although the cost of the trip limits them to traveling at most every six to eight years. They also decorate their homes with trinkets and souvenirs of Peru, send their children to weekly Spanish classes, and help them with

their Spanish assignments. Having experienced the rejection of their Nikkei identities and the stigmatization of being gaijin, parents hope their children can avoid the disappointment that may come when the Japanese reject the children's claims to a Japanese identity and tell them instead that they are gaijin. Thus, Peruvian Nikkei parents tell their children that they are Peruvian and not Japanese—much like Brazilian Nikkei parents do in instilling Brazilian identities in their children (Tsuda 2003c). As Portes and Rumbaut (2001:187) note, "Groups subjected to extreme discrimination and derogation of their national origins are likely to embrace them ever more fiercely." This renationalization of Peruvian Nikkei's identities as Peruvians is tempered by the fact that they came to Japan as "ambivalent Peruvians" (cf. Sánchez 1995), already wary of their attachment to Peru because of their racialization there as *chinos*. Even with the parents' ambivalence, the resilience of their Peruvian identities highlights the fact that nationality remains one of the "the principal predicates of identity claims" (Lie 2008:98). Unfortunately, parents argue, these efforts to positively define a Peruvian identity in Japan are hampered by Peruvians and other foreigners who damage the group's reputation by acting as "bad foreigners," violating Japanese rules and resisting acculturating to Japanese norms.

In general, parents and children describe their trips to Peru warmly, noting that the children cry when it is time to say goodbye and to return to Japan. However, efforts to instill an ethnic identity in children are not always successful, and risk hastening the children's identification with Japan (cf. Kasinitz et al. 2008). Accustomed to life in Japan, some children describe Peru as a dangerous place where they are treated as a racial

other. These factors can mitigate the positive impact of travel to Peru, and can reinforce children's identification with Japan. Moreover, the combination of generational dissonance between children and parents, and the negative depiction of the parents' ethnic identity, may lead the children to see their ethnic difference as a deficit. Thus the children often insist that they are Japanese and not Peruvian, and they plead with their parents to not speak to them in Spanish in public.

However, integrating into Japanese society may be easier for some children than for others. Peruvian children who look Japanese and who have Japanese names are often able to pass as native Japanese. If these children become fluent in the Japanese language and culture, they may be able to integrate into Japanese society, however, given the current notions of racial and ethnic identity in Japan, they would run the risk of being "outed" as gaijin. Passing is not an option for children with Peruvian faces and names, and these children are unable to avoid the stigmatized label of gaijin.

In many ways the parents' efforts to hold back the tide of their children's assimilation by instilling elements of the home country are part of the classic immigration tale (cf. Alba and Nee 2003; Gordon 1964; Park 1950). Peruvian parents encourage their children to learn Japanese and to acculturate, and are instilling a minority identity in their children, in the hopes that this identity will prepare the children to battle the discrimination and stigmatization. Ideally, the children's adoption of a Japanese identity would complete the circle of Japanese emigration to Peru and return migration to Japan. However, parents believe that their children will not be

accepted as Japanese as they get older. Thus, while Japan is their current home, the Nikkei do not feel *at home* there.

When talking about their children's futures, many parents comment that their children should think about pursuing opportunities outside of Japan. This approach is a strong rejection of Japan as the homeland, coming as it does after several generations of ties linking Nikkei communities in Peru to Japan, and after the parents' own immigration to Japan. Angélica explains how she counsels her 12-year-old daughter, Naomi, about Naomi's desire to be an orthodontist:

> I tell my daughter to not only look here. I tell her, "You also need to look to other countries. If you want to be an orthodontist, then you can study in another country. You just need to learn the language of that country. That way, you're not always here [in Japan], there could be other doors, too, not just here," I tell her. … I always talk with Naomi about this, that she should feel good (in the future). I hope she doesn't tell me, "Oh, mom, I'm tired of being a foreigner." So I tell her, "Look at other places too," I tell her, "not just here. The thing is that, in other countries, even back in Peru, *te vas a sentir bien* (you're going to feel good)."

With global migration now the experience of several generations of Nikkei, parents encourage their children to think broadly about their futures, and to pursue opportunities wherever they may take them. Unsure about their children's futures, few parents mention the possibility of their children applying for Japanese citizenship when they become adults, as they question whether their children will ever fully integrate into Japanese society.

The Decline of a Nikkei Identity

Conspicuously absent from the discussion about whether the children are Peruvian or Japanese is any reference to the children being Nikkei. Takenaka (2003b)

argues that a Nikkei identity will remain salient in Japan, sustained by Nikkei ethnic associations and by its utility in helping "real Nikkei" distinguish themselves from "fake Nikkei," who falsely claim Japanese ancestry to gain access to the Japanese labor market. However, I question the continued salience of the distinction between Nikkei and other Peruvians in Japan. Tightened regulations and enforcement have reduced the number of illegal entrants into Japan, and, in Shiroyama, there are no Nikkei ethnic associations. Thus, there is no institutional support to sustain a Nikkei identity in the face of the Japanese imposition of a single gaijin identity for all Peruvians. Instead, in Shiroyama Japanese Peruvians use the term Nikkei to describe their lives in Peru but not in Japan.

While the term Nikkei is declining in use, use of the term "foreigner" is growing, as Peruvians describe some foreign residents as "bad foreigners" (*extranjeros malos*). In othering the "bad foreigners," Peruvians are resisting the stigmatized identity of gaijin by stating that it applies to others, but not to them. In contrast, they carve out a positive identity of "good foreigners" that complies with enough Japanese norms to get along with their Japanese neighbors, while still claiming to be Peruvian and not Japanese. This boundary work (Lacy 2007; Lamont 2000) is an adaptive response (Pyke and Dang 2003) to the Japanese racial and ethnic order, and to Peruvians' social and economic marginalization in Japan. However, echoing Japanese stereotypes about foreigners legitimizes and reproduces those stereotypes. It also blames subordinates for their own subordinate status, and precludes other explanations, including the possibility that their non-compliance is a form of everyday resistance (Scott 1987).

Paths to the Future

Amid the challenges they face in Japan, the Peruvian parents of Shiroyama continue working for a better future. Ironically, they claim that the hardship that motivated them to leave Peru has prepared them for the hard times they face in Japan. As Sofía explains:

> The good thing is that we're ready! Built to fight back, after all that we've been through in Peru. A coup d'état, martial law, … a shortage of food, a military government, agrarian reform where many lost their land …, hyperinflation … terrorism. All we can do is be patient and be grateful that we have our health and we're together with our families.

Armed with endurance and a desire for a sense of belonging and security in their ancestral homeland, the Peruvian Nikkei hope to remain in Japan.

Moreover, once the Japanese economy recovers from the global economic recession, Japan's need for foreign labor will also recover. The structural forces that drove Japan's turn to South American Nikkei labor—decades of a declining birth rate and a growing shortage of unskilled laborers—remain. The Japanese population is predicted to decline from its peak of 127 million in 2007 to 95 million in 2050 (Statistical Research and Training Institute 2009:Tables 2-1 and 2-2). With the number of elderly retirees rising dramatically, and the number of people in the workforce declining, debates over the role of foreign workers in expanding Japan's workforce will continue. However, Japanese politicians, like the teachers at Shiroyama Elementary, remain wary of a growing foreign presence (Yamanaka 2008). This tension between the reality of the settlement of immigrant families and the Japanese desire for homogeneity fuels

Peruvian Nikkei's distrust of their ancestral homeland, and their efforts to instill a minority identity in their children.

As numerous Japanese scholars have noted (i.e., Kanno 2008a; Ōta 1996; Ōta 2000; Ōta 2002; Ōta 2005; Sakuma 2006; Vaipae 2001), Japanese schools need to make dramatic efforts to better meet the needs of foreign students, including implementing a more effective remedial JSL program with detailed curricula to improve non-native speakers' command of the Japanese language. These curricula also need to be interwoven with the curricula in the students' homeroom classes so that students could seek assistance with homeroom assignments in the JSL classroom. Better language support for parents and teachers would also improve communication between the two parties, much as my full-time presence in the school facilitated this communication. This language support needs to include the translation of monthly class newsletters and other school documents, to inform parents of school activities and enable them to acquire school-specific cultural capital. Without these steps, the Peruvian children who are in need of remedial help will be left behind, and Peruvian parents will remain uninformed.

Future research needs to explore the continued efforts by Peruvian Nikkei to establish themselves in Japan. In particular, researchers should examine the ethnic identity formation of the second generation, and this generation's experiences of marginalization and/or incorporation. As this generation moves through the Japanese educational system and into the workforce, it is likely that the present pattern of divergent outcomes seen in their academic performance will persist and impact the

group’s social and economic incorporation into Japanese society. Some may be able to integrate into the Japanese workforce outside of the factory, while others join their parents on the factory assembly line. Moreover, the continued social and economic marginalization of Peruvians and other foreigners, combined with their struggles in education and their concentration in public housing, may lead to the strengthening of a minority identity among this population. This potential for the growth of a minority population is one that Japanese politicians are keen to avoid.

TABLES, CHARTS, AND FIGURES

Table 1. Registered foreign residents from South America (1985 to 2005)

	Brazil	Peru	Other	Total
1985	1,955	480	1,173	3,608
1990	56,429	10,279	4,787	71,495
1995	176,440	36,269	9,156	221,865
2000	254,394	46,171	12,356	312,921
2005	302,080	57,728	16,540	376,348

Data are based on foreign resident registrations at the end of each year.

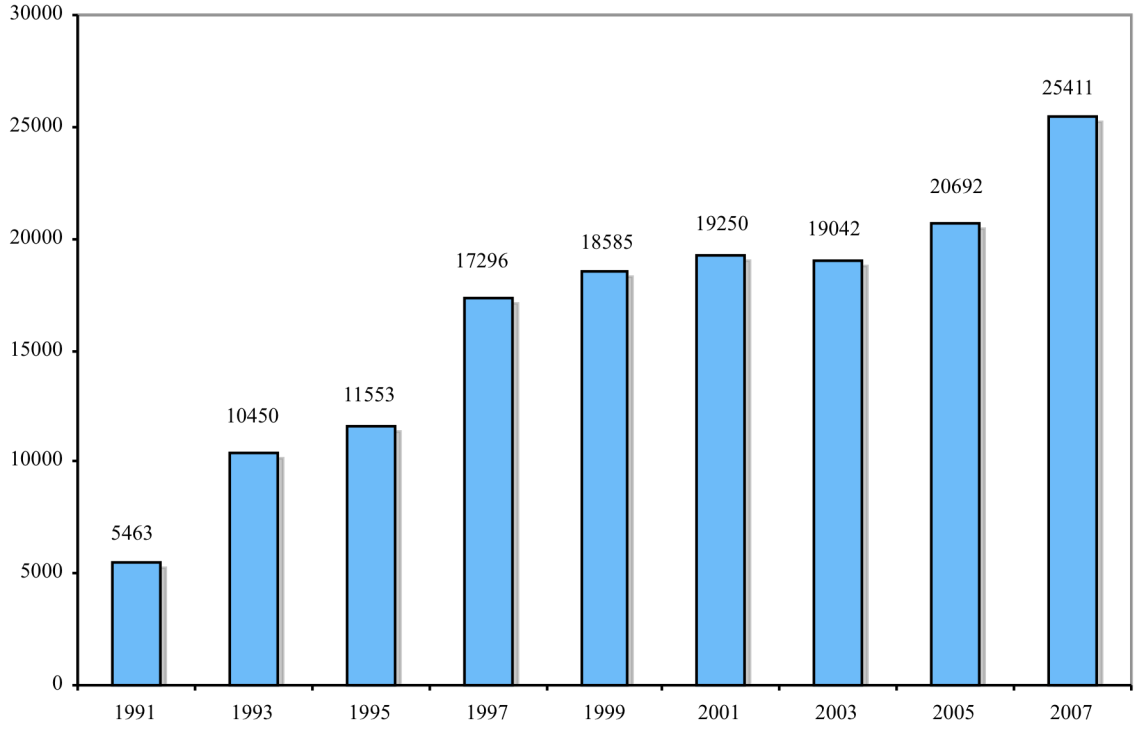
Sources: Statistical Research and Training Institute (2009, table 2:14)

Table 2. Japanese and Foreign children at Shiroyama Elementary School (2005-2007) by parents' countries of origin

Parents' Country of Origin	2005	2006	2007
Total Foreign	43	48	56
Peru	33	34	38
Bolivia	5	5	7
Brazil	3	5	5
Philippines [a]	2	1	4
China	0	3	2
Japan	749	772	804

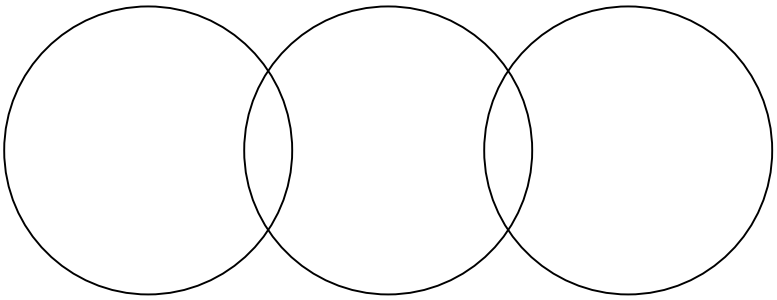
[a] These totals include two children who have one Filipino and one Japanese parent and who possess Japanese citizenship.

Chart 1. Number of Children Requiring Remedial JSL Instruction in Public Schools



Sources: Kanno 2008; MEXT 2008bs.

Figure 1. Constructing a “good foreigner” identity



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