DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 164 366 SO 011 137

AUTHOR Endo, Russell
TITLE Persistence of Ethnicity: The Japanese of Colorado.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at Symposium on Ethnicity on the Great Plains (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Acculturation; Asian Americans; Cultural Background; Culture Contact; Ethnic Groups; *Ethnicity; Immigrants; *Japanese; *Japanese Americans; Local History; *Social History; State History
IDENTIFIERS *Colorado

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an overview of the history of Japanese in Colorado. Japanese immigrants first came to Colorado between 1900 and 1910 as railroad laborers. Some became coal miners in southern Colorado; most others became farm laborers. Although the Japanese population during this period was small, communities developed in several locales. The largest was in Denver, and included some small businesses, ethnic churches, and a Japanese newspaper. During the period 1910-1940, the Japanese population in Colorado stabilized at about 2,000. Because they were prohibited from becoming naturalized citizens, the Japanese became self-sufficient within their own business and community organizations. However, they encouraged their children to become educated and to participate in non-Japanese institutions. The Buddhist church and several Japanese newspapers continued to be active in Denver. The period 1940-1970 began with an influx of more Japanese from the West Coast due to white hostility there caused by the outbreak of the war. Despite resistance of white Coloradans to Japanese resettlement in the state, the Denver community grew and many Japanese obtained more professional jobs. Toward the end of the period a third generation of Japanese Americans appeared in the population, and most of the ethnic associations in Denver served the second-generation Japanese instead of their immigrant parents. By the 1970s many Japanese had entered the middle class and were fairly well assimilated into the mainstream culture. Denver no longer has major residential concentrations of Japanese. (AV)

PERSISTENCE OF ETHNICITY: THE JAPANESE OF COLORADO

by

Russell Endo
Department of Sociology
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80309

PERSISTENCE OF ETHNICITY: THE JAPANESE OF COLORADO[1]

A significant body of scholarly literature now exists on Japanese settlement in the United States, partly because of the resurgence of interest in this group since the late 1960s.[2] However, little attention has been given to the Japanese in Colorado, perhaps because they comprise such a small proportion of the present Japanese population in America (7,831 out of 591,290 in 1970).[3] This is unfortunate for several reasons. Colorado was an important location for initial Japanese settlement. For example it ranked fourth in size after Hawaii, California, and Washington in 1909[4] just after the peak period of immigration, and it received a good deal of attention in the U.S. Immigration Commission study of that year.[5] The Colorado area was the easternmost point of early Japanese internal migration which in itself represented a departure from the usual east-to-west movement of immigrant groups. Despite only a short period of local antiJapanese agitation, the distance from major West Coast Japanese communities, and their small numbers, the Japanese of Colorado developed an important ethnic community in Denver, elements of which still exist. This paper represents a modest first attempt to overview the entire history of Japanese in Colorado. It concludes by discussing the contemporary Denver Japanese community and examining the persistence of ethnicity.

Early Growth: 1900-1910

Large scale Japanese immigration to the United States occurred from 1890 to 1924, primarily during the period 1901-1908. Immigrants were usually attracted for economic reasons and were mostly literate, ambitious individuals from rural farming areas in southern Japan. Large numbers went to Hawaii

while others migrated to California and eventually throughout the West. Japanese were often first employed as unskilled workers and later moved into a variety of occupations including farming, fishing, and small business ownership. Early migrants were primarily young, single men although a later influx of women lead to the formation of families. After years of anti-Japanese hostility, especially in California, immigration was curtailed through the 1924 National Origins Act. Because this period of immigratic was brief, the migrants comprised a relatively age-homogeneous cohort and came to be known as the Issei. Their children, born mostly between the two world wars, became the second generation or Nisei, and the postwar offspring of the Nisei are the Sansei. In Japanese communities, these generational names are associated with characteristic values, behaviors, and past experiences.[6]

At the turn of the century, Colorado was recovering from the panic of 1893 and the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act which had caused a decline in mining and general business activity. The recovery was aided by gold production from mines at Cripple Creek and by the development of agriculture which itself was helped by new dry land farming techniques and various Federal reclamation, irrigation, and conservation projects. With this economic recovery, the state was experiencing a need for unskilled labor.[7]

The Issei were preceeded in Colorado by another Asian group, the Chinese, who first appeared during the 1870s to work the mines around Nederland, Central City, and Leadville. Strong antiChinese agitation developed that culminated in a series of riots including one in Denver in 1880 which destroyed the small Chinatown. The Chinese gradually left the state

creating a further need for unskilled labor.[8]

The first Japanese arrival in Colorado may have been Tadaatsu Matsudaira.[9] He left Japan in 1872, earned an engineering degree from Rutgers, came to Colorado in 1879 to work for the Union Pacific Railroad, and was appointed assistant to Colorado's chief inspector of mines in 1886. Matsudaira died in 1888 and was buried in Denver's Riverside Cemetary where a monument in his memory was erected in 1952. Matsudaira did not have many Issei contemporaries. The 1890 Census counted only 10 Japanese in the state, and the 1900 Census reported 48. However many Issei entered during the next decade pushing the 1910 Census up to 2,300. These early census reports may have been inaccurate because of the transience of the Japanese population. For example, the 1909 Immigration Commission study estimated the population to be closer to 6,000.

Many Issei migrated as railroad laborers, and some came east to Colorado in this manner. Through the railroads, others entered coal mining and ended up in the fields of southern Colorado. With the expansion of agriculture, Issei became or were brought in as farm laborers; over time many became independent farmers. Japanese businesses grew up in Denver and a few other towns to provide needed goods and services; these became the core of new ethnic communities. Each of these areas will be described in more detail below.

By the early 1900s, most of the main rail lines in Colorado had been completed. Issei were brought in as maintenance workers, to construct branch lines, and to work on one major project, the line over the Continental Divide to Steamboat Springs and Craig. Over one hundred Japanese were brought to the state in 1904 to work on the latter project. The total number of Issei

railroad workers was never very large; in 1909 their numbers were estimated to be 400. However railroad companies liked to use Issei labor. The Issei had a reputation for hard work and were paid less than anyone else except the Chinese. In 1909 the five major railroad companies in the state paid Japanese section hands between $1.35 and $1.45 per day. Gang laborers were given $1.45 to $1.50, and foremen received $60.00 to $70.00 per month. Issei were also attractive because they were easy to secure. They were obtained through Japanese contractors who provided men and interpreters in return for various fees and the right to sell supplies to the men. Four contractors supplied most of the Issei railroad labor in Colorado, including the Shinsaburo Ban Company, a large employment firm based in Portland, which opened a Denver branch in 1906. After 1910, almost all the Issei left the railroads for farming or other occupations.

Issei involvement in Colorado mining was limited to coal fields in southern Colorado where large operators were strong and organized labor was weak. The Western Federation of Miners kept Japanese out of metal mining statewide, and the United Mine Workers prevented them from working in the northern coal fields. Issei were brought in primarily from Wyoming to work coal mines around Florence, Walsenburg, and Trinidad. The first contingent arrived in Florence in 1902 and was greeted by a miner boycott. During the major 1903-1904 labor strife in this region, Japanese and Mexicans were used as strikebreakers. Hostility toward the Issei was intense. Though their numbers may have once reached over 1,000, only 300 Issei were estimated to be in coal mining by 1909.

Issei were briefly part of Colorado's metal smelting industry on two occassions. Some also worked at the Colorado Fuel and Iron steel mill in

Pueblo beginning in 1904. By 1907, 500 were employed there earning from $1.90 to $2.50 a day, but by 1909 the number had gone down to 200.

Agriculture was the main economic endeavor of the early Issei. By 1909 the Immigration Commission estimated that there were 3,000 Japanese in the fields most of whom were working on sugar beet farms north and east of Denver in Adams, Weld, Morgan, Logan and Sedgwick Counties. The Commission estimated that two-thirds of the Issei in agriculture were working in this northern region and that statewide, Issei made up one-sixth of the labor force working with sugar beets, the remainder being primarily German-Russians and Mexicans. Most Issei began as laborers working for Japanese contractors but eventually some became independent farmers, first through tenancy and lease arrangements, and later through outright land ownership. By 1909, independent Issei farmers were working 14,000 acres in northern Colorado.

Starting in 1902, Issei began working along the Arkansas River in the southeast Colorado counties of Otero, Bent, and Prowers. Some came from the coal mines or the steel mill in Pueblo. Many of these Issei eventually became independent farmers and raised cantaloupes, alfalfa, and sugar beets. Through their efforts over the years, Colorado cantaloupes became widely known as Rocky Ford melons. A few Issei also went to western Colorado around Grand Junction and Delta. However white hostility kept the Japanese away and in 1909 there were only 25 in this region working in sugar beet fields.

Japanese were attracted to agriculture for a variety of reasons. Farm labor and farming paid better than most other available work. Also, many Issei had come from farm backgrounds in Japan. Farming was one way of getting ahead through individual initiative, it required less initial capital than many other businesses, and it allowed Issei some measure of control over

their lives. Finally, Colorado, unlike many Western states, had no prohibitions against Japanese ownership or leasing of land. In several farming towns, organizations sprang up to assist Issei farmers and also to regulate their competitive activities. These included the Japanese Association of Brighton, Lupton and Platteville, the Brighton Japanese Agricultural Association, and the Northern Colorado Contractors Union of Greeley.[10]

Japanese communities developed in several locales. The largest of these was in Denver centered first around Blake and Market Streets and later moving to Larimer Street. In 1903 this community had only four Japanese businesses but by 1909 the number had grown to 67 and included boarding houses, supply outfits, employment agencies, dry goods and grocery stores, and restaurants. Issei residents frequently lived above or behind these establishments. Most businesses were designed to serve the needs of rural farm workers as well as the local residents. One third were patronized only by Issei, and the others had primarily Japanese customers.

Except for the supply outfits and boarding houses, the Denver businesses did only a small volume of business and hired few employees. However they served the needs of the local Issei and, like independent farming, offered the chance for individual entreprenuership. Numerous organizations were established to promote or protect business interests or to regulate competition. Examples include the Japanese Association of Colorado, the Japanese Business Men's Association, the Japanese Restaurant Keepers Association, and the Japanese Boarding and Lodging House Keepers Association.

Several nonbusiness organizations were also started. A Japanese Methodist church was begun in 1907 and was followed in 1916 by a Buddhist Church. Two prefectural societies, the Fukushima Kenjinkai and the Fukuoka

Kenjinkai, organized and provided social, recreational, and welfare services.[11] Nonbusiness groups were slow to proliferate because the community was oriented around the needs of farm workers in outlying areas, offering supplies and services and also places to lodge and eat in the offseason. The 1910 Census recorded 585 Japanese in Denver but there were probably three times as many Issei in town during agricultural offseasons. Not until the 1950 Census did Denver have a permanent resident population that included a majority of the Japanese in the state; until the 1950 Census, the Denver Japanese population was smaller than even that of rural Weld County.

In the early years, nonbusiness groups were also slow to develop because of the relative absence of families. For instance, of the 526 Japanese in Denver recorded by the Immigration Commission in 1909, there were only 24 married women and 13 Nisei children. As might be expected, businessmen and labor contractors dominated community life. One prominent example was Naoichi Hokosano, a contractor who first came to Colorado in 1898, entered the contracting business in 1903, and supplied labor for farms, mines, and numerous major construction projects, among them, the Trail Ridge Road over Milner Pass in the Rockies. Hokosano was president of the Japanese Business Men's Association, helped start the Buddhist Church, and founded the Denver Shimpo, a Japanese newspaper. In 1977 a stained glass window depicting Hokosano was dedicated in the State Capitol building to honor his contributions.

During the 1900-1910 period there was a short but intense flurry of organized antiJapanese agitation. In 1901 the Rocky Mountain News of Denver began running antiJapanese stories and editorials. The Issei were pictured as a menace to labor and white self-preservation that would innundate the

state unless banned. The Cooks and Waiters Union boycotted suppliers that dealt with a Japanese-owned restaurant, and the Retail Clerks Union picketed Japanese dry goods establishments. Upset at the use of Issei strikebreakers in the southern coal fields, the state legislature passed an antiJapanese resolution in 1902. The Denver Post joined the News in running antiJapanese materials and in 1905 the Denver Trades and Labor Assembly advocated the exclusion of Issei laborers. In 1908 a Japanese and Korean Exclusion League was organized largely by members of the Colorado State Federation of Labor. Some of these actions were stimulated by the growing antiJapanese movement in California. Some may also have been motivated by the desire of emerging labor groups to gain greater visibility and influence. Several organizations such as the Denver Chamber of Commerce did come out in support of the Issei. Japanese community groups also responded to these attacks. Eventually the overt antiJapanese sentiment died down, possibly because of the small numbers of Issei in the state. This was fortunate as a large, well organized movement might have driven the Issei back to the West Coast like the Chinese before them.

Stablization: 1910-1940

The period from 1910 to 1940 was one of small population changes. From 2,300 in the "official" 1910 Census, the Japanese population grew to 2,464 and 3,213 respectively in 1920 and 1930, and then shrank to 2,734 in 1940. Net population losses were caused by migrations back to California or to points further east such as Chicago. During this period, the Japanese community in Denver also declined from 585 in 1910 to 324 in 1940.[12]

The personal lives of the Issei during this period were oriented around work and family life. Many saved money to buy land or to go into business,

and a few became very successful, such as Fusakichi Takamine who built up a major potato wholesaling business. Business activity, which had reached a peak by 1910, remained at a fairly high level until the Depression. In Denver, social activities revolved around the business groups, the churches, and the kenjinkai. Housing was generally modest but adequate. Though many Issei could read some English, most subscribed to Japanese newspapers. There was little Issei interest in city or state affairs, particularly politics, since Japanese aliens were prohibited from becoming naturalized citizens. The Issei felt relatively secure within the community. Familiar values, language and other cultural patterns were part of the environment. Businesses and community organizations made the Issei somewhat self-sufficient and provided alternatives for activities and experiences denied elsewhere such as the attainment of leadership roles. The extent of white prejudice and discrimination is hard to determine but Colorado appeared to provide a more benign racial climate for the Japanese when compared to states along the Pacific Coast. During the 1910-1940 period, most of the Nisei were born. Aspirations for this generation were very high. The Nisei were encouraged to get as much education as possible and to participate in nonJapanese institutions.[13]

The development of the Denver community can be characterized by examining two of its more prominent features. The Buddhist Church, founded in 1916, moved in 1917 and again in 1929 to the Market Street location of a former house of ill-repute once run by the infamous Mattie Silk. The church remained there until 1947 when a new building was constructed at its present site on Lawrence at a cost of $150,000. Church membership in 1917 was estimated to be 850 though it fluctuated over the years and was much less by 1940.

Nevertheless the church flourished. It organized numerous youth groups and auxiliaries, hosted conferences, supported a variety of community social and cultural activities, and created over a dozen major branch churches in smaller cities and towns.[14] The Denver community also supported a number of vernacular newspapers. The first was the Denver Shimpo, begun in 1908, which became the Santo Jiji in 1915 and the Colorado Times (or Kakushu Jiji) in 1918 after merger with another paper, the Colorado Shimbun. The Times greatly expanded its circulation over time and continued publication until the late 1960s. One other paper, the Rocky Shimpo, appeared from 1932 to 1951.[15]

Most of the outlying agricultural areas farmed by the Issei grew in population until 1930 and then decreased in size to 1940. One region that experienced significant growth during the 1920s was the San Luis Valley in south-central Colorado. From 1924 on, large numbers of Japanese came to the Valley from California and other parts of Colorado primarily through the recruitment efforts of Valley land companies anxious to sell real estate. By 1930 there were 235 Japanese in the area, most of whom were growing vegetables. In 1923, only 600 acres in the entire Valley were under vegetable cultivation; by 1925 the Japanese alone were working 4,000 acres.[13]

Rebirth: 1940-1970

The Japanese population of Colorado might have dwindled even more after 1940 had it not been for the wartime influx of Issei and Nisei from the Pacific Coast. Nearly 2,000 came as voluntary migrants who were encouraged by authorities to move inland early in 1942.[17] Another 8,000 were forcibly removed from their central and southern California homes later that year and brought to an internment center at Granada in southeast Colorado. The

Granada center, named Amache, was one of ten concentration camps into which 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were placed.[18]

By 1945 the Japanese population had grown to 11,700, with approximately 5,000 people in Denver and the rest in rural areas.[19] After 1945, most of these recent arrivals went back to California,[20] but enough remained to give the state a Japanese population of 5,412 in 1950, and Denver one of 2,578 (3,548 in the metropolitan area).[21] The return to California continued during the 1950s but was offset by the westward movement of Nisei and Sansei, a migration that continues today. The 1960 Census recorded 6,846 Japanese in Colorado and 3,049 in Denver (4,712 in the metropolitan area),[22] while the 1970 Census showed 7,831 and 2,676 (5,491 in the metropolitan area) respectively.[23] The years since 1940 have been marked by the upward mobility of the Nisei and the emergence of the Sansei generation. However a number of things characterize this period.

Just after the outbreak of the war, the Japanese in Colorado declared their loyalty to the United States, though some were resentful of past discrimination.[24] During the war, the Colorado Japanese were able to pursue their livelihoods even as others from California, were interned at Amache. Although relations between whites and Japanese had been relatively good prior to 1941, overt antiJapanese sentiment reemerged. Early in 1942 as plans were being made to move West Coast Japanese inland, white Coloradans reacted negatively to Japanese resettlement in this state. Among the opponents were farm and labor organizations, civic and nativist groups, city councils, prominent Denver officials, and U.S. Senator Edwin Johnson. Among those who spoke out against injustices to Japanese Americans and welcomed their relocation to Colorado was Governor Ralph Carr.

Anti-Japanese feeling continued throughout the war years. In particular, the Denver Post carried on a vicious campaign against the Amache internees and other Japanese. Hostility finally led to a 1944 attempt by the Colorado legislature to pass a constitutional amendment prohibiting Japanese aliens from owning land. This measure was passed by the Colorado House (48 to 15) but narrowly defeated by the Senate (12 to 15). The amendment's supporters then succeeded in placing a similar measure on the November general election ballot but were again turned back (by 48 to 52% of the votes cast). The Japanese did have supporters besides Governor Carr. The Rocky Mountain News printed many favorable editorials, and various businesses, professional groups, and churches lent public support and helped relocatees find jobs and housing.[25]

During the war, the Japanese community in Denver swelled in size. A 1944 study by the Denver Bureau of Public Welfare counted 2,310 Japanese, including 755 voluntary migrants and 1,158 from internment centers,[26] but the population reached a peak of 5,000 in 1945.[27] The number of Japanese businesses in the Larimer district increased from 46 in 1940 to 258 in 1946.[28] This business concentration along Larimer partly resulted from official pressures to keep the Japanese from locating elsewhere in the city. After the war, many relocatees returned to California but enough stayed so that the 1950 Denver Japanese population was eight times its prewar size.

A picture of changes in the Japanese population through the 1950s and 1960s can be gotten through a comparison of some demographic data. Figures will be given for Denver only and have been drawn from a 1951 study by Ikuchi[29] and 1960 and 1970 Census material on the Denver metropolitan area;[30] unfortunately there are information gaps in these sources. The Japanese

population in the city of Denver increased slightly during the 1950s and then decreased in the 1960s. However throughout this period, major growth was occurring in suburban areas; by 1970 more than half of the metropolitan Denver Japanese population was living in the four counties adjacent to the city of Denver.

By the 1950s and 1960s significant upward social mobility had occurred, primarily for the Nisei. For example, eight percent of the Japanese were in professional occupations in 1951, and 13 percent in 1960 (16 percent for males only). Thirty-five percent of the Japanese had white collar jobs in 1951 and 44 percent in 1960 (39 percent for males only) while the percentage of laborers was 13 and nine percent (12 percent for males only) respectively. In 1960, Japanese in Denver were mainly in the following occupational areas: wholesale and retail trade, professional services, agriculture, personal services, and the manufacture of nondurable goods. In 1951, Ikuchi found 204 Japanese who owned their own businesses. More recent data is not available, but the relative percentage of Japanese who are self-employed (apart from independent professionals) has probably declined. One crude indicator of this has been the gradual disappearance of small Japanese-owned businesses from the Larimer Street area; by 1965 there were only a handful of such businesses and 20 Japanese families in the immediate vicinity.[31] In 1960, the Japanese in Denver had a median of 12.2 years of education; in 1970, 74 percent were reported to have at least 12 years of schooling. The unemployment rate among males and females was 3.0 and 2.7 percent respectively in 1960, and 2.1 and 2.0 percent in 1970. Median incomes for males and females in 1960 were $4,189 and $1,750 respectively, while in 1970, 62 percent of the families earned more than $10,000 (the

national median). In 1970, only six percent of the Japanese were classified as being in poverty, and ten percent of all households were female-headed (mostly among the elderly).

In terms of other social characteristics, the Denver Japanese population is almost evenly divided between males and females (50.4% and 49.6% respectively in 1960). The number of Issei has become very small (8.3% of the Japanese were over age 65 in 1970) although the Nisei are now beginning to enter the "over 65" category in large numbers. The postwar period has seen the birth of the Sansei, and their presence is indicated in census data. For instance, in 1960 39 percent of the Denver Japanese population was under 20 years of age; in 1970, 31 percent was under 18. Finally, the 1960 Census gives some idea of the extent of Japanese residential mobility. Fifty-five percent of the Japanese then living in the Denver area had moved since 1955. Most of those people had moved between homes within the Denver area with the largest number probably moving outward into the suburbs. A smaller percentage of those who had moved since 1955 came into Denver from outside the state (probably from the Pacific Coast) or from other (possibly more rural) counties in Colorado. These migrants from outside the state and elsewhere in Colorado, especially the former, are responsible for most of the recent growth of the Denver area Japanese population.

Ikuchi counted 34 Japanese groups and associations in Denver in 1952.[32] The more prominent ones were religious youth organizations and political/service groups such as the Japanese American Citizen League (JACL). Most were designed to serve the needs of the Nisei rather than the Issei, and many were all-Japanese versions of groups that exist throughout American society such as church youth groups, Boy and Girl Scout troops, an American

Legion Post, a gardeners club, a golf association, a bowling league, and fraternal orders. Most of these are now defunct while others have declined in size and in the scope of their activities. For example, the JACL grew in importance after 1945 as a civic organization. It had over 600 members in 1952,[33] but currently has only one-tenth that many. Even the Methodist and Buddhist churches, which remain the most active community institutions today, lost membership during the 1950s. The Denver community is still served by one Japanese newspaper, the Rocky Mountain Jiho, which began operation in 1960 as the Rocky Mountain Journal.

The individual stories of Japanese families would complete the postwar picture but space doesn't allow even a brief description. Some Nisei rose to prominence within their occupations (especially farming) or within the general Denver and Colorado community. Three examples will illustrate this point. Bill Hosokawa, an important local and national JACL leader and author, is presently editor of the Denver Post editorial page. Minoru Yasui, a lawyer and former editor of the Colorado Times and active JACL leader, is executive director of Denver's Commission on Community Relations. Seiji Horiuchi, past national vice president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, served in the Colorado House from 1962-1964 and was the first Nisei on the mainland to be elected to a state legislature.

Persistence of Ethnicity: The 1970s

Even casual observations of the present Japanese in Colorado would lead one to believe that they are on their way to total assimilation. Most have achieved a comfortable, middle class lifestyle. A large majority live in the Denver area, but there are no major residential concentrations of Japanese. Most are American-born Nisei or Sansei and all are descendants of

an immigrant group that first came to this country over seven decades ago. Though no data are available, the rate of interracial marriage among young Japanese is probably well over fifty percent. Unlike many Chinese communities, the Japanese community in Denver has not been revitalized by a major post-1965 influx of new immigrants. Finally, the Japanese are only a tiny minority of the total Colorado population.

Casual observations would also indicate that few community organizations or activities now exist although, given the conditions outlined in the previous paragraph, their persistance can also be interpreted as a sign of the tenacity of ethnicity. The JACL meets irregularly for social purposes or to participate in the concerns of the national organization (which, by contrast, is growing in size). Large numbers of Japanese get together only on a few occassions. One example is the annual community scholarship banquet attended by several hundred each June. Another example are the annual bazaars of the Methodist church and the Bon Odori (festival of the dead) of the Buddhist church which features a bazaar, Japanese foods, and street-dancing. Other infrequent events bring members of the community together, for instance conferences of various types, visits by important dignitaries, ceremonies like the 1977 dedication of the Hokosano stained glass window in the State Capitol, or "ethnic observances" like the 1978 week on the history and culture of Colorado Asian groups sponsored by the state historical society.

Observations of the Colorado Japanese also point to factors that may work against total assimilation. Large numbers of Japanese, particularly Sansei, are moving to Colorado and Denver from the West Coast. Both the increasing size of the Japanese population and the fact that many newcomers are from areas with major Japanese communities may hold the potential for

the revitalization of community groups or the formation of new ones. The recent renewal of interest in ethnicity among all Asian groups and the emergence of an Asian American movement have had some local impact. The Denver and Boulder campuses of the University of Colorado now support small Asian American studies and educational opportunity programs. Since 1972, a number of Asian American community service and research programs have been initiated. One of these is a local affiliate of the Pacific/Asian Coalition and the Asian American Mental Health Research Center, two federally-funded advocacy, service, and research organizations. Another group is made up of Asian American mental health professionals and is affiliated with the Park East Community Mental Health Center. All these efforts involve the Japanese community though they are panAsian in scope. Their development has been helped by the recent growth of local Pilipino, Korean, and Vietnamese populations and the creation of community groups within each.

One other potentially revitalizing influence has been the development of Sakura Square, a one-block complex of shops, housing, and a remodeled Buddhist Church between Larimer and Lawrence Streets which was opened in 1973.[34] At the center of this $4 million project is the Tamai Towers, a 204-unit low and moderate income apartment building which houses many Japanese. Although Sakura Square doesn't compare to the Japanese business district of earlier years, it is used extensively by local residents, it has a certain symbolic value, and in time it may stimulate the growth of other ethnic establishments nearby.

In order to gather more information on the possible persistence of ethnicity as well as other basic historical and socioeconomic data, a multi-faceted research project was begun in 1975.[35] One phase of the project

involved detailed interviews, with a carefully selected sample of 127 Colorado Issei, Nisei, and Sunsei in 1977. Interviews were used because standardized tests and questionnaires do not always accurately depict Japanese American values and behavior. The use of interviews also made it easier to interpret subject responses within their own social and cultural frame of reference. The interview material will only be briefly summarized here. A complete comprehension of Japanese assimilation processes requires some knowledge of traditional Japanese cultural elements, especially those of the Meiji era (1876-1912) which was the time most Issei emigrated. Good discussions of these can be found elsewhere.[36]

Most of the Colorado Issei resisted acculturation and lived within the values and norms of traditional Meiji culture. While there were exceptions, generally the Issei did not learn the elements which make up the core of American culture even with the passage of time. Today most can get along in English only with difficulty. Japanese community institutions were created in Denver as an alternative to those in the wider society. But the community was always small and could not possibly meet every need, hence a small degree of structural assimilation took place especially within the economic sphere. However most primary relationships were with other Japanese. Few Issei intermarried, and many remained staunchly Japanese in their identity.

The Colorado Nisei were raised in a traditional Japanese manner, but quickly learned the core American culture through school and activities outside the Japanese community. Under pressure from the outside, especially during the war, to become "more American," a few tried to repudiate their ethnic heritage. However Nisei retained many traditional Japanese values and behavior patterns because of their family socialization and because these

were needed in order to function in the world of their parents. Among the more traditional elements retained was the complex of norms called enryo, which emphasized deference, modesty, and behavioral self-denial. Again, individual Nisei differed from one another, and those raised around Denver often appeared more "Americanized" than their rural counterparts. However, even today, the Nisei as a group cannot be considered completely acculturated though they experience no difficulty functioning within any segment of American society. This "incomplete" acculturation is also reflected in only partial structural assimilation. The Nisei are well integrated into some core American institutions, especially economic ones, but they also participated in community institutions and groups that, while patterned after those in the wider society, were almost entirely Japanese in composition. Nisei friendship patterns are a mix of Japanese and nonJapanese. Some Nisei did marry nonJapanese. However many retain a Japanese, or rather Japanese American, form of identity.

Any determination of assimilation or ethnic persistence will probably focus most on the Sansei and their children, the Yonsei. Colorado Sansei have assimilated structurally to a greater degree than their parents, some almost entirely. Most still retain some Japanese friends, date other Japanese on occasion, and may belong to the Japanese Methodist or Buddhist churches. The Sansei intermarriage rate is very high. Nevertheless many Sansei, like their Nisei parents, still retain some more traditional values and norms. Most still identify with their Japanese heritage, even many who are products of mixed Nisei-white marriages. This may be due in part to family socialization. It may also be reinforced by distinct physical features which make the Sansei easy to identify. Nisei and Issei sometimes

automatically behave toward Sansei as if they were Japanese while whites frequently act in terms of racial stereotypes that they hold.

One way to conceptualize incomplete acculturation is to view Japanese American culture as a constantly evolving mix of: 1) traditional elements (beliefs, values, norms etc.) some of which are retained or modified; 2) core American cultural elements some of which are accepted unchanged or modified; and 3) completely new elements that are products of the group's experience in American society. This culture would be more than a simple blend of traditional and core American elements. Nisei and Sansei can be seen as products of this culture which is unique but gradually becoming more like the core American culture. Another way to conceptualize this situation is to view Nisei and Sansei as products of a Japanese American culture that has resisted the incorporation of core American elements. Many Nisei and Sansei may only appear to be completely acculturated because, on the surface, traditional Meiji and core American cultural elements often appear similar or compatible. However these elements could have different underlying meanings. Even elements that are dissimilar, such as enryo, make Japanese look "good" and therefore don't hinder their structural or possible marital assimilation.

These are very tentative observations which will require additional investigation. However they suggest the need to revise more sociologically conventional notions of assimilation.[37] It may well be that the Colorado Sansei, their Yonsei children, and Japanese Americans everywhere are well on their way to total assimilation. Or they may continue to retain some sense of ethnicity and maintain their ethnic communities. Either outcome will be the product of an as yet unconceptualized historical and sociological process.

Footnotes

1. Revision of a paper prepared for presentation at the 1978 Symposium on Ethnicity on the Great Plains, Lincoln, Nebraska.

2. Russell Endo, "Social Science and Historical Materials on the Asian American Experience," in Russell Endo, Stanley Sue and Nathaniel Wagner (eds.), Asian Americans: Social and Psychological Perspectives (Palo Alto: Science and Behavior Books, 1979).

3. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Subject Reports: Japanese, Chinese, and Filipinos in the United States (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973).

4. U.S. Immigration Commission, Reports of the Immigration Commission, XXIII (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 21.

5. Ibid, pp. 52-60, 72-89, 307-311; Vol. XXIV, pp. 112-127, 136-139, 533-548; Vol. XXV, pp. 3-36, 163-164, 242-244, 257-270.

6. Russell Endo, "Japanese Americans: The 'Model Minority' in Perspective," in Rudolph Gomez et al. (eds.), The Social Reality of Ethnic America (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1974), pp. 190-193.

7. Robert Athearn; The Coloradans (Alburquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), pp. 189-238; Carol Abbott, Colorado (Boulder, Colo.: Colorado Associated University Press, 1976), pp. 142-166; Carl Ubbelohde et al., A Colorado History (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett, 1976), pp. 223-232, 257-268.

8. Patricia Ourada, "The Chinese in Colorado," Colorado Magazine (October 1952), pp. 273-284; Gerald Rudolph, "The Chinese in Colorado, 1869-1911," (Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1964).

9. The remainder of this section is drawn from Rokuhiko Suzuki et al. (eds.), Intermountain Doho Hattatsushi (The Development of the Intermountain

Japanese Colonies) (Denver: The Denver Shimposha, 1910), written in Japanese; U.S. Immigration Commission, Reports, XXIII, XXIV, XXIV; Fumio Ozawa, "Japanese in Colorado, 1900-1910" (Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1954), pp. 28-111; and interview data gathered from 127 Colorado Japanese in 1977. Also relevant is Eugene Parsons, "The Japanese in Colorado," The New Age (August 1912), pp. 153-158.

10. Examples of southern Colorado organizations started later around 1920 include the Japanese Association of Southern Colorado, the Agricultural Union of Southern Colorado, and the United Farmers Association of Southern Colorado. From interview data.

11. See Tsunegoro Hirota, Zai-Bei Fukuoka Kenjin to Jigyo (Japanese from Fukuoka Prefecture and Their Enterprises in America) (Los Angeles: Zaibei Fukuoka Kenjin to Jigyo Hensan Jimusho, 1936), written in Japanese.

12. Ozawa, "Japanese in Colorado," pp. 6, 56.

13. From interview data. Additional socioeconomic information is available from a survey conducted by the Japanese Association in 1919. See Zairyu Nihonjin Minsei Chosa Hokoku (Report on the Japanese Population in the Rocky Mountain Region) (Denver: Santo Nihonjinkai, 1919), written in Japanese. Also see Yukio Ikuchi, "Social Studies of the Japanese American Community in Denver" (Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1953), pp. 66-73.

14. Matajiro Watada (ed.), A History of Fifty Years of the Tri-State Buddhist Church: 1916-1966 (Denver: Tri-State Buddhist Church, 1968), written in Japanese and English.

15. From interview data. Most of these newspapers are available in the Department of Special Collections, University of California Library, Los Angeles.

16. Morris Cohen, "The Development and History of the Japanese Settlement in the San Luis Valley" (Master's thesis, Adams State College, Colorado, 1968); Shirley Lucas, "Land Promotion Schemes and Early Japanese Migration to Colorado," paper presented at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the Western Conference of the Association for Asian Studies; Alvar Carlson, "Rural Settlement Patterns in the San Luis Valley: A Comparative Study," Colorado Magazine 44 (Spring 1967), pp. 125-128.

17. Western Defense Command and Fourth Army, Final Report: Japanese Evacuation From the West Coast, 1942 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 111.

18. M. Paul Holsinger, "Amache: The Story of Japanese Relocation in Colorado" (Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1960); M. Paul Holsinger, "Amache," Colorado Magazine 41 (Winter 1964), pp. 50-60. Other work dealing with Japanese relocation and resettlement in Colorado includes Peter Mitchell, "Japanese Relocation in Colorado, 1942-1945" (Master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1960); Robert George, "The Granada, Colorado Relocation Center Secondary School" (Master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1944); Lorraine Buckman, "A Study of Adult Japanese Relocated to Colorado During the First Half of 1945" (Master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1945); Dorothy Takeuchi, "The Nisei in Denver, Colorado: A Study in Personality Adjustment and Disorganization (Master's thesis, Fisk University, 1945); C. W. Jackson, A Study of the Japanese Population of the City and County of Denver (Denver: Denver Bureau of Public Welfare, 1944); Ikuchi, "Social Studies," pp. 36-64.

19. War Agency Liquidation Unit, People in Motion: The Postwar Adjustment of the Evacuated Japanese Americans (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, n.d.), pp. 72, 134.

20. During 1946 alone, about 5,500 Japanese left Colorado leaving about 3,000 in Denver and 3,200 elsewhere. Ibid, p. 72.

21. Ozawa, "Japanese in Colorado," pp. 6, 56.

22. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Characteristics of the Population. Part 7, Colorado. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 69-73.

23. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Subject Reports: Race of the Population by County: 1970 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 7-8.

24. Ikuchi, "Social Studies," pp. 36-40.

25. Holsinger, "Amache," pp. 22-35, 90-103; Mitchell, "Japanese Relocation," pp. 83-116.

26. Jackson, Japanese Population, p. 22.

27. War Agency Liquidation Unit, People in Motion, p. 127.

28. Ibid., pp. 134-135.

29. Ikuchi, "Social Studies," pp. 66-102.

30. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Subject Reports: Nonwhite Population by Race (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 214, 246; Office of Special Concerns, A Study of Selected Socio-Economic Characteristics of Ethnic Minorities Based on the 1970 Census, IV (Washington, D.C.: Office of Special Concerns, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1974), pp. 32-33.

31. Anthony Gorman, "A Disappearing Community: The Japanese in Skyline," Report #30 (Boulder: Bureau of Sociological Research, University of Colorado, 1965).

32. Ikuchi, "Social Studies," pp. 103-117.

33. Ibid., p. 110.

34. See "The Saga of Sakura Square," Denver Post Empire Magazine, May 6, 1973. Sakura Square is part of the Skyline Urban Renewal Project.

35. The Colorado Asian American Population Study, supported in part by funds from the National Institute of Mental Health and other sources.

36. For example see Harry Kitano, Japanese Americans, 2nd edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 120-142; Harry Kitano and Akemi Kikumura, "The Japanese American Family," in Charles Mindel and Robert Habenstein (eds.), Ethnic Families in America (New York: Elsevier, 1976), pp. 41-60.

37. For example Milton Gordon, Assimilation in American Life (New York: Oxford, 1964). Recent studies of aspects of Japanese ethnic persistence and/or assimilation include: Minoru Masuda et al., "The Ethnic Identity Questionnaire: A Comparison of Three Japanese Age Groups in Tachikawa, Japan, Honolulu, and Seattle," Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology 4 (June 1973), pp. 229-245; Christie Keifer, Changing Cultures, Changing Lives (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1974); John Conner, Acculturation and the Retention of an Ethnic Identity in Three Generations of Japanese Americans (San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1977); John Conner, Tradition and Change in Three Generations of Japanese Americans (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1977); Fumiko Hosokawa, The Sansei: Social Interaction and Ethnic Identification Among the Third Generation Japanese (San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1978); Darrel Montero, The Japanese American Community: A Study of Generational Changes in Ethnic Affiliation (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978).