

## 6 Making the Migration State: Malthusian Expansionism and Agrarianism

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In August 1919, a few months after the League of Nations Commission rejected Japan's proposal to write the clause of racial equality to the Covenant of the League, in Shanghai Kita Ikki drafted one of his most influential books, *An Outline for the Reorganization of Japan* (*Nihon Kaizō Hōan Taikō*). Kita pointed out in the book that Japan's rapidly growing population and the racism of the Western empires made Japan the only righteous empire in the world, who was destined to overthrow the tyranny of Western imperialism and liberate all peoples of color through its own colonial expansion. With its population doubled every fifty years, Kita argued, acquiring more territories overseas was the only way of the empire to avoid chaos in the archipelago caused by overpopulation.<sup>1</sup> Due to the low population densities, Kita saw Australia and Siberia in particular the rightful targets of Japanese expansion. As the new rulers of these lands, Kita envisioned, the Japanese would be different from the racist white occupiers who reserved these vast and empty territories only for themselves by excluding others. The Japanese, instead, would open the borders by welcoming the Chinese and Indians in Australia and the Chinese and Koreans in Siberia and turning these lands into cosmopolitan paradises.<sup>2</sup>

Kita was later known as a doyen of Japanese fascism in the 1930s whose ideas had a central responsibility for the terrifying coup d'état on February 26, 1936, and the rise of Japanese militarism in the 1930s in general. However, he was hardly an anomaly among the educated Japanese in the 1920s to promote expansion as a solution to the crisis of overpopulation in the archipelago. The 1920s was a special era in the evolution of Japanese Malthusian expansionism. On the one hand, the influence of the overpopulation discourse expanded beyond the circles of political and social elites and reached at the grassroots level throughout

<sup>1</sup> Kita Ikki, *Nihon Kaizō Hōan Taikō* (Tokyo: Nishida Mitsugi, 1928), 3–4.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

the archipelago.<sup>3</sup> The anxiety over the “population problem” (*jinkō mondai*), as prominent scholar of colonial studies Yanaihara Tadao described in 1927, was spreading like a “wildfire” in the public discourse. Mass media engaged in nationwide debates on how to deal with overpopulation. On the other hand, the Japanese government was also undergoing a series of institutional changes in the decade to morph into what I call a migration state – a state that promoted and controlled overseas migration on an unprecedented scale backed by the logic of Malthusian expansionism.

After decades of preparation, Japan conducted its first national census in 1920. To encourage mass participation, the imperial government and public intellectuals alike went to great lengths to publicize the census’s importance in articles, books, and even popular ballads.<sup>4</sup> Their efforts, together with data from the first census, further stirred the common people’s national pride in the empire’s burgeoning population; at the same time, however, they also fanned the flames of overpopulation anxiety in the archipelago.<sup>5</sup>

A series of international and domestic events between the late 1910s and early 1930s were also directly responsible for the escalation of overpopulation anxiety in Japan’s public sphere. The most significant and large-scale rice riots broke out in 1918, bringing the issue of food shortage into the ongoing debate about Japan’s overpopulation crisis. The global wave of post–World War I disarmament led to substantial layoffs in munitions and commercial shipbuilding industries in Japan, exacerbating the unemployment problem that had plagued Japan since 1920, adding fuel to the flame of Malthusian crisis.<sup>6</sup> The devastating Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923 further amplified national anxiety over the ever-growing surplus population within the archipelago, while the passage of the Immigration Act in the United States one year later led many to believe that previous outlets for these surplus people were no longer viable. The Japanese government also established the Commission for the Investigation of

<sup>3</sup> Yanaihara Tadao observed in 1927 that though overpopulation anxiety had existed in Japan for a long time, ordinary Japanese had only recently begun to realize that the archipelago might be plagued by overcrowding due to the rapid growth of the Japanese population. Yanaihara Tadao, “Jiron Toshite no Jinkō Mondai,” *Chūō Kōron* 42, no. 7 (July 1927): 31–32.

<sup>4</sup> The Temporary Bureau of Census (Rinji Kokusei Chōsa Kyoku) that was in charge of conducting the census, for example, published a book of folk songs to advertise the census among the public in 1920. Rinji Kokusei Chōsa Kyoku, *Kokusei Chōsa Senden Kayōkyoku* (Tokyo: Tokyo Insatsu Kabushiki Gaisha, 1920).

<sup>5</sup> The book, Hayashi Shigeatsu, *Kokusei Chōsa ni Tsuite: Kokumin Hitsudoku* (Tokyo: Ginkōdō, 1920), aiming to encourage the mass participation in the first national census, both argued that the census would provide precise information on how fast the Japanese population grew and raised concern about the issue of overpopulation by restating the classic theory of Thomas Malthus.

<sup>6</sup> Nagai, *Nihon Jinkō Ron*, 170.

the Issues of Population and Food (Jinkō Shokuryō Mondai Chōsa Iinkai) directly under the cabinet.<sup>7</sup>

The escalation of nationwide anxiety regarding overpopulation was accompanied by an explosion of texts in the forms of books and articles in both public media and academic circles. Scholars, politicians, and social activists rushed to the fore, each of them offering different diagnoses and remedies. This chapter examines the changes in the discourse of Malthusian expansionism in the sociopolitical context of the 1920s and 1930s. It illustrates how the sudden outburst of nationwide overpopulation anxiety ushered in a new version of Japanese expansionism that radically differed from its predecessors. This new model of expansion not only disavowed white supremacy but also directly challenged the universal applicability of Western civilization. Thinkers and doers of migration began to seek homegrown justifications for Japan's expansion. To this end they looked to Japan's own culture, tradition, and history, though much of these were recent inventions just like their counterparts in the West.

While the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1924 in the United States had a huge impact on the transformation of Japan's Malthusian expansionism, rising sentiments of Japanese agrarianism also contributed to the development of Japan's own version of Manifest Destiny. The migration of Japanese farmers overseas was considered not only as a means to combat rural depression but also as a way for Japan to enlighten and guide other countries. The agrarian expansionists claimed that Japan was uniquely qualified as the harbinger of a new world order due to its distinct agrarian tradition, nonwhite cultural/racial identity, and marvelous success with modernization. These traits meant that Japan could lead the world to overthrow the triple tyranny of white racism, Western imperialism, and capitalism; and by doing so, it would bring true justice, peace, and freedom everywhere on earth.

The partnership of agrarianism and overseas expansion was reinforced by growing Japanese migration to Brazil since the beginning of the 1920s. The widening doors of Brazil to Japanese rural migrants and their success in becoming owner-farmers convinced the Japanese expansionists that farmer migration was indeed feasible. Driven by the promising future of Brazil-bound migration abroad and the intensified overpopulation anxiety at home, the Japanese government became increasingly involved in the migration scheme.

The formation of the migration state marked a turning point in the evolution of Japanese Malthusian expansionism. After the times of the *shizoku* and *heimin*, the imperial government devoted resources and power to catapult the most destitute and unprivileged class in the Japanese society, the rural masses,

<sup>7</sup> Yanaihara, "Jiron Toshite no Jinkō Mondai," 31–32.

onto the grand stage of overseas expansion. It was these landless farmers, the agrarian expansionists believed, who would spearhead the Japanese empire's ultimate mission by acquiring and farming land abroad. The centrality of the masses in Japanese overseas migration was well captured by contemporary writer Ishikawa Tatsuzō's 1932 novel *Sōbō*, which highlighted the misery of the rural Japanese during the entire process of migration to Brazil. The novel has been commonly known for its criticism of the imperial government for abandoning its own subjects through emigration;<sup>8</sup> its story, nevertheless, revealed that rural masses had become the backbone of Japan's overseas migration. The fact that the novel won Japan's first Akutagawa Prize in 1935 also confirmed the emergence of the rural masses as a dominating political force of the empire.

### **Overpopulation Anxiety and the Denunciation of White Racism**

A direct trigger of the overpopulation anxiety was the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 in the United States, the country that had received the largest number of Japanese migrants outside of Asia during the first two decades of the twentieth century. The shutting of the American doors to Japanese immigration immediately impacted the mind-sets of Japanese intellectuals and policymakers in diverse ways. Some took the Immigration Act as evidence of the overall failure of overseas migration as a way to relieve Japan's population pressure and urged the government to turn to more realistic solutions. They advocated measures such as increasing food production by introducing new crops with higher productivity, accelerating the process of industrialization, and expanding international trade.<sup>9</sup> Some previous migration promoters, like Abe Isoo, also joined the fledgling birth control and eugenics movement in order to solve the alleged population crisis.

While the birth control and eugenics movement gained momentum in Japan amid growing nationwide anxiety about overpopulation, nevertheless, apart from laborers' and women's rights activists the opinion leaders did not view population increase by itself in a negative light. Reducing the size of the population and reining in its growth rate through birth control remained unacceptable to the government of the day. Like most countries in the West, Japan did not legalize contraception until the latter half of the twentieth century. Instead of birth control, the main question that Japanese policymakers and intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s wrestled with was how to maintain

<sup>8</sup> Thus those who left Japan as migrants were also described as *kimin* (people abandoned by the nation). Kimura Kazuaki, *Shōwa Sakka no "Nan'yō Kō"* (Tokyo: Sekai Shisō Sha, 2004), 59–60.

<sup>9</sup> Hasegawa, "1920 Nendai Nihon no Imin Ron (3)," 94–96.

migration-driven expansion so that the Japanese population could continue to grow.

Other thinkers and doers of migration-based expansion saw the passage of the Immigration Act as a remarkable opportunity to further advance their migration agenda by describing Japan as a victim of the Western empires. They denounced Japanese exclusion campaigns in the United States and the European colonies across the Pacific as fundamentally unjust. Nasu Shiroshi, a University of Tokyo professor, was a highly influential figure in Japan's agricultural policies circle from the 1920s to the end of World War II. He presented Japan as a victim of the population crisis at home and white racism abroad. Japan not only had a population that grew as fast as the Western nations, Nasu argued, but also a small territory. While Japan's territory was no more than one-twentieth that of the United States, it had to feed a population that was more than half the United States populace.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, most of the land in the archipelago was covered by mountains and volcanoes; only 15.8 percent of it was arable – and this paltry figure was growing smaller each year because some of the land known as arable turned out to be arid.<sup>11</sup> Such an unbalanced ratio of population and arable land, Nasu claimed, was a breeding ground for social tensions. Japan's limited natural resources would soon fail to adequately provide for the archipelago's inhabitants, and it was only a matter of time before social unrest become a national plague. While the best way to solve Japan's current crisis was the migration of surplus population overseas, Nasu lamented, the Immigration Act had unfairly closed off this avenue for the Japanese.

Nasu spared no efforts to let his voice heard internationally. In 1927, the Institute of Pacific Relations held an international conference in Honolulu with the issue of population and food as one of its central themes. At that conference, Nasu pointed out that the Japanese people were confined to an isolated and overcrowded archipelago while the more fortunate nations not only occupied huge, unexplored lands but also had reserved them for their descendants by excluding other races. It was unfair, he contended, to confine the civilized Japanese race to the small archipelago and deprive them of expansion opportunities.<sup>12</sup>

According to Nasu, human history itself was a story of mass migrations of peoples. Contemporary national boundaries were only artificial constructs, and to stop peaceful transnational migrations was to go against the natural flow of people. In this sense, Nasu claimed, Japan's struggle for its right to survive and prosper through migration was also an effort to open up future possibilities for the entire world. Japan would demonstrate to the world how humankind could solve the inherent tension between population and food supply in a "reasonable

<sup>10</sup> Nasu, *Jinkō Shokuryō Mondai*, 105. <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 108–111. <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 86–87.

Table 6.1 *Comparison between the size of arable land and population among the countries of the world in 1924*

Country	Area in ten thousand hectares	Population in ten thousand persons	Population per 100 <i>chōbu</i> *
United States	13,820	11,200	79.6
British India	12,210	31,880	260.9
Russia	9,900	9,590	96.9
Canada	2,750	920	33.4
France	2,290	3,918	171.1
Argentina	2,130	950	44.7
Germany	2,020	6,260	309.6
Spain	1,600	2,170	135.7
Italy	1,320	3,960	299.4
Australia	870	564	64.8
Brazil	760	3,060	398.5
Japan	620	5,900	950.4
Czechoslovakia	590	1,360	230.4
Great Britain	570	4,370	761.4
Hungary	540	820	149.8
Sweden	380	600	158.5
Egypt	340	1,552	408.4
Denmark	260	330	128.7
Belgium	120	770	629.1
Netherlands	90	720	629.1
New Zealand	74	130	170.7

This chart was made by Nasu Shiroshi based on data provided by Yokoi Toshiyoki. It shows that Japan had the highest population density vis-à-vis arable land among the listed countries. Nasu Shiroshi, *Jinkō Shokuryō Mondai* (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1927), 107.

\* 1 *chōbu* is equal to approximately 0.99 hectares.

and constructive” way, thereby allowing mankind to overcome its eventual fate.<sup>13</sup>

While Nasu’s criticism of Japanese exclusion was comparatively mild and his blueprint for Japanese expansion rested on achieving reconciliation with the West, other expansionists had more radical takes on the issue by directly attacking Western imperialism and white racism. Kyoto University professor Yano Jin’ichi warned his readers that Western nations were hypocrites who only paid lip service to the principles of justice and equality. The current global inequality in land and resource distribution, he argued, was not a mere coincidence; instead it rose out of centuries-long European invasions and appropriation of other peoples’ ancestral lands. Even though the white settlers did not

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 162–163.

have enough people to utilize the land resource they had deprived of others, they reserved the land for their posterity by refusing entry to migrants from overpopulated countries. This behavior itself, Yano argued, violated the principles of justice and equality and was a threat to the world peace.<sup>14</sup>

Another scholar, Tazaki Masayoshi, echoed Yano's criticism of Western imperialism and attributed global inequality in land distribution to white racism. He wrote in 1924, "When one looks at the world's map, there is an abundance of spacious and sparsely populated lands in the Americas, Australia, and Africa. Those lands have been unjustly colonized by a handful of white empires, and now the white settlers are prohibiting other people from immigrating to those places simply because of their skin color. How could this be acceptable according to the international standards of morality?"<sup>15</sup> In order to bring justice to the world and break the monopolization of land resource by white men, Tazaki argued, the world's lands should be redistributed based on the actual need of nations according to their population sizes.<sup>16</sup>

Nasu, Yano, and Tazaki held different opinions about how Japan should deal with its current tension with the Western empires. However, their problems with Western imperialism were quite similar. For all three of them, what was unjust was *not* that the Western empires deprived other peoples of their land and property per se, but that they wouldn't *share* the spoils with people from other civilized nations like Japan. Nasu, Yano, and Tazaki also all embraced the logic of Malthusian expansionism: the crisis of overpopulation not only deeply plagued the Japanese society, but also justified Japan's demands for its right to conduct overseas migration. They saw Japan as a victim of both overpopulation at home and racial exclusion abroad, and they believed that such injustices established Japan as the natural and rightful leader of all peoples of color, poised to challenge the global hegemony of Western imperialism and racism.

While the overpopulation was further agitated and diffused in the 1920s, the overall increase of Japanese population continued to be celebrated as evidence that the empire was growing ever stronger. For Japanese expansionists, Japan's population growth appeared even more important than before, as the empire began to depart from the Western model and take on the mission of challenging Anglo-American world order. The most representative articulation of this belief was voiced by economist Takata Yasuma. In a 1926 article titled "Be Fruitful, and Multiply!" ("Umeyō! Fueyō!"), Takata argued that birth control would hold back population growth and lead to a decline of national strength, equaling national suicide. He believed that population was not the cause of trouble but the source of national power. Not only was a large population

<sup>14</sup> Hasegawa, "1920 Nendai Nihon no Imin Ron (3)," 99–101.

<sup>15</sup> Tazaki, "Yukizumareru Wa Ga Kuni no Jinkō Mondai," 46, cited from Hasegawa, "1920 Nendai Nihon no Imin Ron (3)," 102.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

needed for prosperity and expansion, Takata reminded his readers, it was also an essential weapon for the peoples of color in their fight against the white people.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, some intellectuals in the West echoed the Japanese expansionists' calls for free international migration and land redistribution on a global level. As the need for extra land to accommodate surplus population had served as a central justification for Anglo-American expansion in the recent past, a number of influential Anglophone scholars, in particular, shared the logic of Japanese Malthusian expansionists. Raymond Pearl, director of the Institute of Biological Research at Johns Hopkins University, validated the anxiety of overpopulation through scientific calculations. In a speech at the World Population Conference in Geneva in 1927, Pearl argued that a society's population density had to be kept below a certain degree, otherwise it would lead to a decrease in birth rate and an increase in mortality rate.<sup>18</sup> Also at the conference was Warren Thompson, director of the Scripps Foundation and one of the most influential sociologists in the English-speaking world. In 1929, Thompson would publish a book calling for global land redistribution as a way to avoid another world war. In this book, *Danger Spots in World Population*, Thompson pointed to regional overpopulation as an important cause of international wars. He urged the United Kingdom, Australia, and the Netherlands to concede their territories in New Guinea to Japan in order to forestall a possible Japanese invasion due to Japan's population explosion. The Philippines, Thompson argued, was similarly expendable for the United States if it meant keeping a desperate Japan at bay.<sup>19</sup>

### The Marriage of Population Crisis and Agrarianism

Japanese Malthusian expansionists' attack on white racism and Western imperialism was accompanied by a challenge against capitalist modernity. The criticism of Western capitalism reflected a surge of agrarianism in response to the continuous rural depression during the 1920s. The deterioration of the rural economy, growing rural-urban tensions, as well as mounting conflicts between different rural interest groups all added fuel to the spreading fire of population anxiety.

During the early twentieth century, except for a short period during World War I,<sup>20</sup> Japan's rural economy had suffered due to the accelerating processes

<sup>17</sup> Takata Yasuma, *Jinkō to Binbō* (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 1927), 93–95. As stated in this book, the article “Umeyō! Fueyō!” was originally published in the journal *Keizai Ōrai* (August 1926).

<sup>18</sup> Pearl's presentation was a summary of his book *The Biology of Population Growth*, initially published in 1925. Bashford, “Nation, Empire, Globe,” 180.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson, *Danger Spots in World Population*, 123–126.

<sup>20</sup> As Louise Young points out, the outbreak of World War I triggered a boom of urbanization throughout the archipelago. Louise Young, *Beyond the Metropolis: Second Cities and Modern Life in Interwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 15–33. The rapid



of urbanization and industrialization. Higher wages and upward mobility in urban industries drained the most productive labor pool from agricultural production, while villages had to shoulder the burden of urban industries by absorbing the laid-off returnees whenever there was an economic downturn.<sup>21</sup> As historian Louise Young convincingly shows, the interwar period witnessed a flourishing of cities throughout the archipelago.<sup>22</sup> For the countryside, however, it was a particularly difficult time. The end of World War I was immediately followed by a steep drop in the prices of rice and silk, the two pillars of Japan's rural economy in both international and domestic markets. The situation grew catastrophic at the turn of the 1930s: a global depression sent the prices of Japan's agricultural products into free fall, while countless laid-off factory workers had to return to their home villages. On top of it all, famines caused by natural disasters claimed almost half a million victims in Hokkaido and the Northeast.<sup>23</sup>

As a result of the continuing devastation of the rural economy, the average profit from paddy field leasing in Japan fell from 7.92 percent in 1919 to 5.67 percent in 1925, then to 3.69 percent in 1931.<sup>24</sup> The prolonged depression pushed tenant farmers to demand further rent reductions.<sup>25</sup> Such tensions led to an exponential increase in tenant disputes throughout Japan. Nationwide, rent dispute incidents rose from 256 in 1918 to 1,532 in 1924, then to 2,478 in 1930.<sup>26</sup> In addition to rent disputes, the number of land-related disputes also grew steadily beginning in the mid-1920s. The drop in profit left many small and midsize landlords bankrupt, as they could no longer live on tenant rents. They began to demand their land back from tenants, in many cases even before the lease had expired, because they wanted to farm the land on their own in order to make ends meet. The number of land-related disputes reached its peak in 1936.<sup>27</sup>

Influenced by the global trend of democratization and socialism in the years immediately after World War I,<sup>28</sup> a group of new bureaucrats who sympathized with the rural poor rose to power in the agriculture section of the imperial government. These bureaucrats gathered around the figure of Ishiguro Tadaatsu, who began his political career in 1919 as the head of the Department of Agricultural Policy in the Bureau of Agricultural Affairs. To protect the interest of tenant farmers in rampant rent disputes, Ishiguro ushered in the Tenant Mediation Law (*Kosaku Chōtei Hō*). Under this law, the

expansion of urban population and industry increased the demand for agricultural products, leading to a temporary boom in the rural economy.

<sup>21</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 324. <sup>22</sup> Young, *Beyond the Metropolis*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 324. <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>25</sup> Havens, *Farm and Nation*, 145.

<sup>26</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 324.

<sup>27</sup> Shōji Shunsaku, *Kingendai Nihon no Nōson: Nōsei no Genten o Saguru* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 130–136.

<sup>28</sup> Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan*, 9–10.

government assigned a tenant mediator (*kosakukan*) to each prefecture, putting him in charge of mediating the disputes.<sup>29</sup> However, such efforts did not stem the tide of growing rural tensions.

The burgeoning crisis in the Japanese countryside became a breeding ground for agrarianist ideologies and movements. When compared with the dominant discourse in Japanese agrarianism at the turn of the twentieth century, this new wave of agrarianism was, as a whole, markedly more critical of capitalism and industrialization. In 1927, when disputes over land and tenant rent had reached a crescendo, the doyen of Japanese agrarianism, Yokoi Tokiyoshi, published his final book, *A Study on Small Farmers* (*Shōnō ni Kansuru Kenkyū*). The book, a closing statement from a lifelong critic of capitalism, attributed the root of the ongoing rural crisis to the profit-driven capitalist economy. Yokoi argued that Japan's traditional small-scale farming would free its people from the yokes of capitalism because owner-farmers did not trade their labor for profit; they provided labor out of moral obligation, took pleasure in their work, and found happiness in "nurturing the growth of plants and animals" with consideration for the environment.<sup>30</sup>

Yokoi's rejection of capitalist economy and his glorification of small-scale farming became increasingly attractive to the majority of the Japanese rural dwellers who had lost their hope in the status quo amidst the waves of depression. These included small owner-farmers who could lose their land at any time, tenant farmers who decried their exploitive landlords, and small landlords who, under economic pressure, had to take their land back from tenant farmers in order to farm it on their own. For all of them, living in a society where everyone farmed their own land with no debt or exploitation was the solution to all the countryside's economic problems. Although Yokoi died shortly after the book's publication, his teaching inspired a new generation of agrarianists in the 1920s and 1930s, represented by men such as Tachibana Kōzaburō and Katō Kanji. They not only brought small-scale farming to the core of Japanese national identity but also put Yokoi's ideas into practice.

The teachings and doings of Tachibana and Katō also demonstrated that compared to the previous decades, the agrarian movement in the 1920s and 1930s targeted people on a more grassroots level. In their imaginations, the ideal Japanese society would be composed of owner-farmers. Yet as the majority of rural residents were in reality landless, they embarked on a mission to help these farmers to acquire land. Tachibana, for example, saw owner-farmers as the backbone of the Japanese nation-empire. He believed that Japanese owner-farmers were the only people immune from the corrupted system of Western capitalism, thus they alone were qualified to save the society

<sup>29</sup> Shōji, *Kingendai Nihon no Nōson*, 111–113.

<sup>30</sup> Vlastos, "Agrarianism without Tradition," 86–87.

from the abyss of depression. Fostering prosperous self-sufficient villages and self-governed communities of owner-farmers was regarded as the ultimate solution to the current crisis. A passionate activist, Tachibana founded the Village Loving Society (Aikyō Kai) in 1929, and it became the engine of his farm cooperative campaign to create and cultivate owner-farmers. The cooperative movement aimed not only to provide poor farmers with financial aid but also to nurture the spirit of “true brotherhood” among them by promoting “diligent labor” with a “pure heart.” They believed that by doing so, collective small-scale farming could achieve its goal of harmonizing the interest of self with that of others, thereby offering an effective remedy to a nation-empire that was suffering from both material and spiritual crises.<sup>31</sup>

While the call for supporting owner-farmers as the foundation of Japanese society continued to mount at the grassroots level, this agrarianist solution faced serious resistance from policymakers. As the government had no intention to alter the existing system of landownership, the competing interests of landlords and tenant farmers remained irreconcilable.<sup>32</sup> The most noteworthy action the imperial government took to cultivate owner-farmers in the 1920s was to provide long-term, low-interest loans to help them purchase the land they farmed. However, given that the land prices were far too high, few tenant farmers found these loans useful.<sup>33</sup>

Compared with calling for land redistribution in Japan, defining the entire archipelago as suffering from a shortage of land and demanding more land abroad were much more politically expedient, as they could avoid provoking the existing rural tensions and the unchallengeable power of the big landlords. The land shortage was ultimately attributed to the rapidly growing surplus population within the archipelago. In fact, overpopulation served as a tenable explanation for all the major problems that plagued Japanese society in the 1920s, such as farm land shortage, increased food costs, the growth of unemployment, economic stagnation, a shortage of natural resources, as well as deadlocked social progress.<sup>34</sup>

The thoughts and activities of Katō Kanji, another prominent leader of Japanese agrarianist movement, illustrated that agrarianism not only lent power to Malthusian expansionism but also became an ideological weapon for the empire to challenge Western imperialism and legitimize its own expansion. After investigation tours in Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the United States in 1922 and 1926, Katō concluded that the current distribution of land vis-à-vis population in the world was unfair, with a few Western powers

<sup>31</sup> Vlastos, “Agrarianism without Tradition,” 88–90; and Havens, *Farm and Nation*, 163–273.

<sup>32</sup> Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 334. <sup>33</sup> Havens, *Farm and Nation*, 147.

<sup>34</sup> For a summary of the leading opinions on how the overpopulation issue affected Japanese society in the 1920s, see Jinkō Shokuryō Mondai Chōsakai, *Jinkō Mondai ni Kansuru Yoron* (Tokyo: Jinkō Shokuryō Mondai Chōsakai, 1928), 1–35.

monopolizing the vast majority of land on the one hand and the starvation of the colored people due to land shortage on the other. Just as the United States claimed its sphere of influence in the two Americas under the Monroe Doctrine, Katō believed, Japan had to monopolize the land of the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, and Siberia.<sup>35</sup>

Katō further argued in a public speech in 1927 that among all the Asian nations, only the Japanese could save their brethren from the Western imperialism. The depression that plagued the Japanese countryside was not merely an issue for Japan but a crisis that had engulfed the entire Asia. Therefore, rescuing Japan from the rural crisis was to rescue Asia itself from the evil clutches of Western imperialism and white racism. Since the root of the problem was overpopulation in the countryside, merely reducing tenant rents would mean little. The real solution was to settle landless farmers overseas to acquire and work new land. The Korean Peninsula, in Katō's imagination, had abundant and fertile tracks of land waiting for Japanese farmers to work. Japanese farmer migration to the Korean Peninsula would not only save Japan from rural depression but also protect Korea from further American penetration.<sup>36</sup> To this end, Katō began to build schools that provided agricultural training to young Japanese students who would become empire builders in Northeast Asia.

While Katō later emerged as a political leader and ideological advocate of Japanese mass migration to Manchuria, he did not gain prominence until the latter half of the 1930s. Japanese colonial privilege in leasing land in Manchuria met strong resistance from local Chinese residents. Due to their higher costs of living, Japanese farmers could not compete with local Chinese and Korean farmers either. For these reasons, Japanese agrarian migration in Manchuria remained unsuccessful in the 1920s. By 1931, only 308 of the 64,662 farm families living inside Japan's sphere of influence in Manchuria were Japanese.<sup>37</sup> The plan of the Oriental Development Company (Tōyō Takushoku Kabushiki Gaisha) to expand Japanese farming communities in the Korean Peninsula also proved to be a disappointment.<sup>38</sup>

### The Ascendancy of Brazilian Migration

Compared to Northeast Asia, from the 1920s to the mid-1930s, a locale that received a much more robust inflow of Japanese rural migrants was Brazil. Brazil

<sup>35</sup> Katō Kanji, "Nihon Nōson Kyōiku," in *Katō Kanji Zenshū*, vol. 1 (Uchihara-machi, Ibaraki-ken: Katō Kanji Zenshū Kankōkai, 1967), 84, cited from Hasegawa, "1920 Nendai Nihon no Imin Ron (3)," 102–103.

<sup>36</sup> Katō, "Nōson Mondai no Kanken," 229–232. <sup>37</sup> Havens, *Farm and Nation*, 287.

<sup>38</sup> By 1926, around twenty thousand Japanese farmers, many of whom were landlords, resided on the Korean Peninsula. See Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 316.

Table 6.2 *Comparison of Japanese migration to Brazil, the continental United States, and Hawai'i, 1906–1941*

Time period	Brazil	Continental US	Hawai'i
1906–1910	1, 714	7, 715	46, 650
1911–1915	13, 101	20, 773	17, 846
1916–1920	13, 576	30, 756	16, 655
1921–1925	11, 349	14, 849	10, 935
1926–1930	59, 564	1, 256	1, 546
1931–1935	72, 661	N/A	N/A
1936–1941	16, 750	N/A	N/A

This table compares the different dynamics of Japanese migration to Brazil, the continental United States, and Hawai'i – the three destinations with the highest average annual numbers of Japanese migrants between 1906 and 1941 outside of Asia. Based on data taken from Okabe Makio's *Umi wo Watatta Nihonjin* (Tokyo: Yamagawa Shuppansha, 2002), 14–15.

was an attractive destination for Japanese expansionists due to two reasons. First, Japanese exclusion in North America and an unfavorable outlook for agricultural migration in Northeast Asia left Japanese expansionists few alternatives to choose from. Second, not only did Brazil's door remain open to Japanese immigration, but Aoyagi Ikutarō's success in acquiring land and expanding Japanese farming communities in the state of São Paulo convinced the expansionists that Japanese agrarian settlement could in fact succeed there.

The steady growth of Japanese migration to Brazil throughout the 1920s constituted a crucial step in the fermentation of Japanese agrarian expansionism because it successfully put the combination of agrarianism and Malthusian expansionism into practice. The public media's growing enthusiasm for Brazil as a migration destination occurred at the same time when overpopulation anxiety intensified in the depressed Japanese countryside, and migration to Brazil seemed like a natural solution.

As one of the leading migration promotion journals in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s, *Shokumin* disseminated information about the prospects of migration to different areas of the world. It was founded by Kanda Hideo in 1921, after he returned from an investigative trip to Brazil. Kanda established the magazine as a response to the nationwide Rice Riots of 1918, providing a solution to the rural crisis by ways of overseas migration.<sup>39</sup> While *Shokumin* boasted a global scope, judging from the number of pages and articles devoted to Brazil, the journal's focus was undoubtedly this Amazonian country. Latin America in general also received more coverage than other parts of the world. The magazine's content

<sup>39</sup> "Zasshi Shokumin no Sōkan to Watashi," *Shokumin* 7, no. 11 (November 1928): 10.

mirrored the actual general public interests of the day. According to a survey conducted by *Shokumin* in 1925 about the most popular migration destination among its readers, Brazil was the overwhelming favorite, with 2,101 votes, far ahead of the South Seas (Nan'yō), which came in second with 409 votes; the rest were Manchuria (78 votes), Karafuto (9 votes), and Korea (3 votes). In fact, Brazil was so popular that in order to promote migration to the Korean Peninsula, a 1926 article in *Shokumin* had to showcase the similarities between Brazil and the northern Korean Peninsula: it labeled the latter as the “Brazil of the frigid zone” (*kantai Burajiru*) in the hopes of making the Korean Peninsula more attractive to the domestic readers.<sup>40</sup>

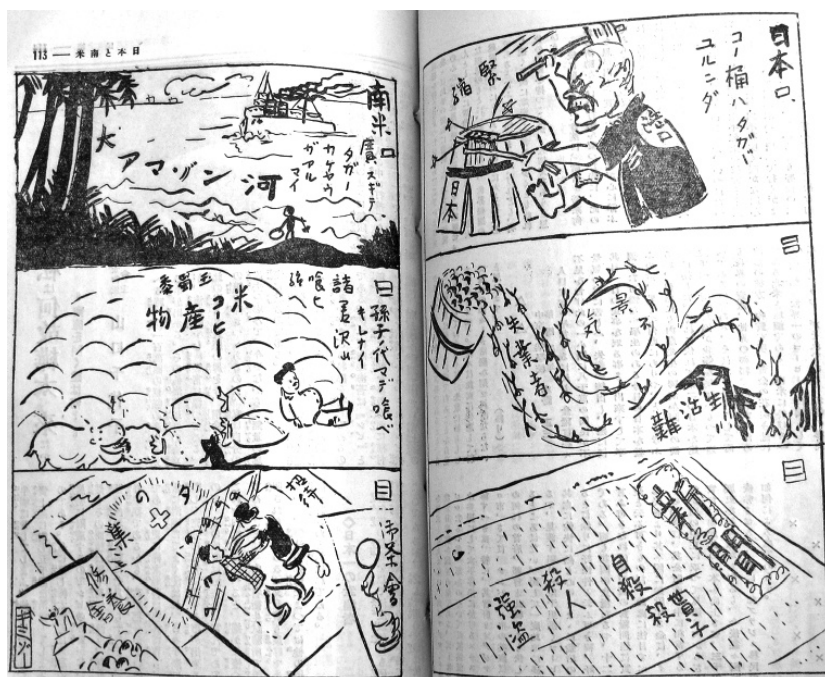


Figure 6.1 Set of cartoons published in *Shokumin* highlighting Brazil as the ideal place for surplus people in Japan by contrasting a spacious, wealthy, and prosperous South America with a crowded, impoverished, and troublesome Japan. *Shokumin* 9, no. 8 (August 1930): 112–113.

<sup>40</sup> Kawamura, “Naisen Yūwa no Zentei Toshite Hōyoku Naru Hokusen o Kaitaku Seyo,” 45.

In the 1920s, even some of the most passionate supporters of Japanese expansion in Asia cast their gazes to Brazil. After spending five months in South America, Nanba Katsuji, who had been promoting Japanese migration to Manchuria for over ten years, gave up his earlier agenda and became a vocal supporter of migrant expansion to Brazil.<sup>41</sup> He authored the book *A Grand View of the Sources of Wealth in South America (Nanbei Fugen Taikan)* in 1923. Published in Dalian (*Dairen*), the political center of Japanese-occupied Southern Manchuria, this book aimed to encourage Japanese settlers in Northeast Asia to remigrate to Brazil.

*A Grand View* is representative of the enormous number of texts on Brazilian migration (in forms of books, articles, and pamphlets) that emerged in the 1920s, and it provides us with a valuable window into how Japanese Malthusian expansionists perceived Brazil during the age of agrarian expansion. Nanba began his book by lamenting Japan's social problems as a result of overpopulation, asserting the urgency of overseas migration as a solution. The bulk of the book was devoted to describing Brazil as an empty and rich land waiting for the Japanese to settle. In Nanba's imagination, unlike North America and Manchuria, which were either controlled by white racists or occupied by dangerous Chinese bandits, the natives of Brazil were not only few in number but also docile in nature. With a vast land that was four times Japan's size, Brazil was also blessed with countless natural resources like gold and diamonds. In addition, unlike Manchuria and Taiwan, Brazil possessed incredible agricultural potential because of its suitable climate.<sup>42</sup> No place on earth, concluded by Nanba, was better than Brazil for Japan's surplus population.<sup>43</sup>

### The Making of the Migration State

The nationwide "Brazil fever" and the growing flow of migration to South America could not have taken place without the imperial government's endorsement. The period from the 1920s to the mid-1930s was marked by a gradual but steady expansion of the government's power in migration-related affairs. The imperial government intervened in both promotion and management of overseas migration on an unprecedented scale. A series of institutional changes in the 1920s led to the birth of what I call "the migration state," one that continued to function in Japan until the end of World War II. Its formation occurred at both central and local levels.

<sup>41</sup> Nanba, *Nanbei Fugen Taikan*, preface, 6. <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 2–20. <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

*State Expansion at the Central Level*

The imperial government had been involved in migration management since the Meiji era, but the migration state that emerged in the 1920s marked a substantial departure from past practices. Overseas migration became an increasingly important method for the central government to deal with domestic social issues. While it was common practice for policymakers to use overseas migration to solve domestic problems, migration management had been historically separated from governmental institutions that handled domestic affairs. Colonial migration to Hokkaido was first monitored by the Hokkaido Development Agency and, after the said agency was abolished, managed by the authority of Hokkaido. Policies on colonial migration to Taiwan and the Korean Peninsula were decided through negotiations between the cabinet and local colonial authorities. Emigration to places beyond the imperial territories, such as the Americas, was primarily managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimushō). As such, migration was not institutionally tied to social management until 1920, when the Bureau of Social Affairs was established under the Ministry of Home Affairs (Naimushō). The bureau was assigned to both combat domestic unemployment and manage migration outside of the imperial territories.<sup>44</sup> Its creation signaled the government's official recognition of overseas emigration as a critical solution to domestic social problems.

The Japanese government further integrated overseas migration into the sphere of domestic affairs in 1927, when it established the Commission for the Investigation of the Issues of Population and Food. Aiming to provide solutions to the alleged population crisis, the commission was headed by the prime minister and counted key policymakers and intellectuals among its members. Overseas migration was one of the key solutions proposed by the commission. In 1929, the government further involved itself in migration affairs by establishing the Ministry of Colonial Affairs (Takumushō), bringing the management of migration and other affairs inside the empire with that of migration beyond the imperial territories under one roof. The Ministry of Culture and Education (Monbushō) also created three migrant training centers (takushoku kunren sho) that prepared prospective migrants both mentally and physically for their upcoming undertakings.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to these institutional changes, the government gradually increased its financial support for overseas migration by working with migration and transportation companies, as was discussed in the previous chapter. In 1920, with governmental endorsement, the Overseas Development Company

<sup>44</sup> Sakaguchi, "Daire Ga Imin wo Okuridashita no Ka," 55.

<sup>45</sup> Burajiru Nihon Imin 100-Shūnen Kinen Kyōkai Hyakunenshi Hensan Inkaï, *Burajiru Nihon Imin Hyakunenshi*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Fūkyōsha. 2008), 124.



(Kaikō) merged with the Morioka Migration Company to form Japan's sole migration company. In 1921, the government began to allocate funds to the Bureau of Social Affairs, which in turn provided funds for the Kaikō in order to subsidize emigration. From 1923 onward, the Kaikō received further financial assistance from the government and was able to waive the registration fees for all recruited migrants. Also starting in the same year, the government halved the railway fare for all migrants from their home villages to the ports of departure.<sup>46</sup>

The government spared no effort to promote Brazil-bound migration through media channels and public gatherings. Nearly every issue of *Shokumin* contained contributions from officials in the Ministries of Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs – articles that disseminated information about the government's overseas migration subsidies and the many opportunities abroad. The chorus of the government and public media for migration promotion in the 1920s reached a crescendo at the Conference for Overseas Colonial Migration (Kaigai Shokumin Taikai). This gathering was held in Tokyo in 1930, cohosted by the Colonial Migration Association (Shokumin Dōshi Kai) and the Tokyo Daily News Agency (Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shinbun Sha). Its aim was promoting Japanese migration to South America by presenting it as Japan's contribution to world peace and human progress.

The conference's three keynote speakers were the heads of the two hosting organizations and that of the Overseas Development Company. Their addresses were followed by speeches from the minister of colonial affairs, the emissary of the Vatican, the ambassador of Brazil, as well as the consulate generals of Argentina, Peru, and Mexico. The conference concluded with the screening of two films, one being an introduction to Brazil and the other a historical account of European colonial expedition in Africa.<sup>47</sup>

Above all else, the purpose of the migration state was to facilitate agrarian migration to Brazil. Growing amounts of government funds were being poured into the Kaikō and transportation companies in order to recruit the rural masses, especially tenant farmers, for migration. Even though they were identified as surplus population and ideal migration candidates, due to growing land disputes, most tenant farmers were unable to migrate due to sheer poverty. Whereas their predecessors – the shizoku migrants during the early Meiji period and the common youth at the turn of the twentieth century – possessed a certain capacity to finance their own attempts to move up in the world, these tenant farmers had neither the material means for social climbing nor the ambition for it. They were, as a whole, preoccupied by the fight for physical

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>47</sup> For the list of the programs at the conference, see "Shijō Mizōu no Kaigai Shokumin Daikai Tokushū no Ki," *Shokumin* 9, no. 3 (March 1930): 4.

survival and rent reduction. Therefore, convincing them to migrate overseas was a far more difficult task, demanding unprecedented undertakings. The growing government subsidies were intended to lift these most powerless people up and utilize them for overseas expansion by releasing them from financial burdens. If the overall poverty of the prospective migrants was an internal factor that contributed to the formation of the migration state, the state of São Paulo's suspension of its subsidy for Japanese migrants served as an external impetus for the Japanese government's increased financial aid to migrants.

Aside from the unfavorable outlook for Japanese migration to North America and agricultural expansion in Northeast Asia, the possibility for Japanese laborers in coffee plantations to become owner-farmers, as demonstrated by Aoyagi Ikutarō's Iguape communities, made Brazil especially attractive. The imperial government's subsidies through the Kaikō were decidedly generous for migrants to Brazil. In 1924, the Ministry of Home Affairs began to provide full coverage of steamship fare (two hundred yen per migrant) plus the handling fee (thirty-five yen); and beginning in 1932, it provided start-up funds for all Brazil-bound migrants.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to financial aid, the government also built facilities to provide temporary accommodations and training to migrants before their departure. Out of these centers, the establishment of Kobe Migrant Accommodation Center (Kobe Imin Shūyō Jo) in 1924 by the Ministry of Home Affairs was a milestone event.<sup>49</sup> Its functional priority was to serve Brazil-bound migrants, and it was open to migrants bound for other parts of the world only when it had extra space available. Migrants to Brazil could stay in the center gratis for up to eight days before their departure, during which time they would learn Portuguese, geography, custom, hygiene, religion, agriculture, and other information about Brazil.<sup>50</sup> The choice of location for the center also signified that Japan's primary departure port of overseas migrants had shifted from Yokohama to Kobe: the westbound sea route across the Indian and Atlantic oceans, one that eventually brought Japanese migrants to the Southeast coast of Brazil, had replaced the trans-Pacific route to the American West Coast as the primary route for Japanese emigration.

The expansion of Japanese government in migration promotion and management in the archipelago was further accompanied by the institutional growth of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil. A Japanese consulate was

<sup>48</sup> Tsuchida, "Japanese in Brazil," 177.

<sup>49</sup> After the Colonial Ministry was formed and took control of migration-related issues, the Kobe Migrant Accommodation Center also began to be managed by the Ministry of Colonial Affairs in 1932 and changed its title to the Kobe Migrant Education Center (Kobe Iminjū Kyōyō Jo).

<sup>50</sup> Burajiru Nihon Imin 100-shūnen Kinen Kyōkai Hyakunenshi Hensan Iinkai, *Burajiru Nihon Imin Hyakunenshi*, 124.

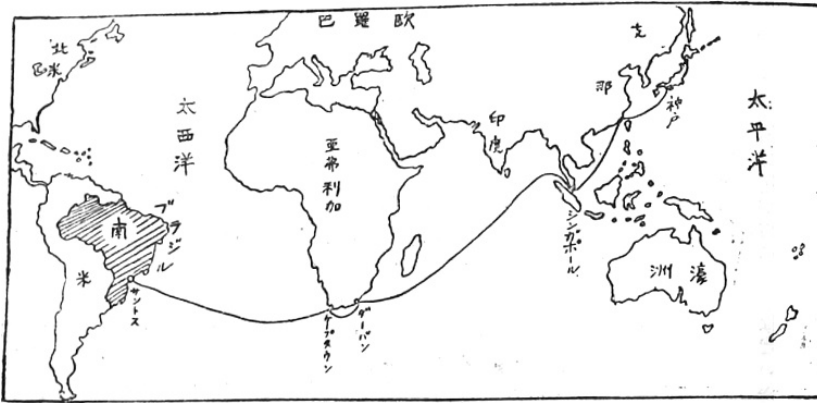


Figure 6.2 This map appeared in *Shokumin* and illustrated the standard sea route for Japanese migration to Brazil in the 1920s. *Shokumin* 3, no. 3 (March 1924): 45.

established in the state of São Paulo in 1915, and its branch was open in 1927 in Santos, the port where most of the Japanese migrants landed. The expansion of Japanese diplomatic branches in Brazil did not stop even after 1934, when the Getúlio Vargas regime restricted the number of annual Japanese immigrants to 2,849, 2 percent of the total Japanese immigrant population in Brazil that year. To support the growth of Japanese farming communities in northern and southern Brazil, two more Japanese consulates were established in the states of Amazonas in 1936 and Paraná in 1941.<sup>51</sup>

#### *State Expansion at the Local Level*

Another departure of the migration state from the previous model was the remarkable degree of initiative taken by local/prefectural governments and semigovernmental organizations in starting and managing migration campaigns. Prefectural governments had been involved in migration management as early as 1897. In that year, the central government transferred the responsibility of reviewing Japanese subjects' overseas travel applications (other than to Qing China and Joseon Korea) for labor migration and the power of granting passports to the government of each prefecture (*fu* and *ken*). During this early period, the prefectural governments' authority on migration-related matters was limited to deciding who could legally leave the archipelago and who could not. From the 1920s onward, however, the prefectural governments themselves

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 120–124.

became engines of migration promotion and migrant training. As the next chapter discusses in detail, some, such as Nagano and Kumamoto, even managed to establish prefecture-centered Japanese settler communities in South America and later in Manchuria.

As it was at the national level, the rapid growth of local governmental involvement in migration management during the 1920s was triggered by the boom of migration to Brazil; like Tokyo, the local governments had the direct aim of promoting Japanese settlement in Brazil. The specific ways in which the prefectural governments involved themselves in Brazil-bound migration, however, were quite different from those of Tokyo. Under the sponsorship of the central government, the primary goal of the Kaikō's migration project was to export contract laborers to São Paulo coffee plantations, expecting that these laborers would later become owner-farmers. The migration campaigns spearheaded by the local authorities, however, were aimed at resettling poor farmers from Japan to Brazil directly as owner-farmers. Their settlement in Brazil was organized by the administrative divisions in the migrants' home prefectures.

Prefecture-centered Brazilian migration campaign first appeared in Nagano, and it grew into a nationwide movement after the Imperial Diet enacted the Overseas Migration Cooperative Societies Law (Kaigai Ijū Kumiai Hō) in March 1927. The law facilitated the formation of an Overseas Migration Cooperative Society (Kaigai Ijū Kumiai) in each prefecture. These societies were open to anyone in the prefecture who purchased a certain number of shares. In turn, the societies offered loans, migration-related facilities, and access to land in Brazil to their members who planned to resettle in South America. August of the same year saw the birth of the Federation of Overseas Migration Cooperative Societies (Kaigai Ijū Kumiai Rengōkai), which oversaw the existing societies and assisted with the establishment of new societies at the prefectural level. The imperial government immediately granted the federation a 1.7-million-yen land acquisition loan, enabling it to provide the existing societies with land and facilities in Brazil to be distributed to individual migrant households.<sup>52</sup>

By the mid-1930s, forty-four out of Japan's forty-seven prefectures had established their own Overseas Migration Cooperative Societies. Soon after its formation, the federation created the Brazilian Colonization Company Limited (Burajiru Takushoku Kumiai, Burataku for short) as its agent to carry out land acquisition and community building in Brazil.<sup>53</sup> By the end of the 1930s, when the Japanese migration to Brazil was suspended, Burataku was managing four major Japanese settler communities, including Bastos, Tietê,

<sup>52</sup> Tsuchida, "Japanese in Brazil," 250–251.

<sup>53</sup> "Emigration Incentives as a Means of Solving Population and Unemployment Problems," in National Diet Library, Japan, *100 Years of Japanese Emigration to Brazil*.

and Aliança in the state of São Paulo as well as Tres Barras in the state of Paraná. In total, these communities had 537,668 acres of land and 18,317 Japanese residents. Most settlers were farmers, with the majority of agricultural households owning land, while other settlers pursued commerce and manufacturing.<sup>54</sup>

### Conclusion

In the history of Japanese colonial expansion, the 1920s was a crucial turning point despite the absence of military conflicts. On one hand, the empire substantially expanded its involvement in the establishment of the post-World War I war order and strengthened its ties with all of the major Western powers.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, in sharp contrast with the turbulent 1910s, the metropolis maintained relatively peaceful relationships with its Asian colonies and semicolonies. However, two important changes signaled that the empire's expansion was undergoing a radical transformation. The first was the growing divergence between Japanese and Western ideologies of migration. The second was the expansion of state power in the promotion and management of overseas migration.

As overpopulation anxiety quickly spread throughout the archipelago in the 1920s, Malthusian expansionism's appeal continued to grow. However, instead of emulating the models of British settler colonialism and American westward expansion, as the empire had done during the Meiji and early Taishō periods, the thinkers and doers of colonialism collectively turned to the newly invented tradition of Japanese agriculture as their source of legitimacy.<sup>56</sup> This ideological split was directly triggered by both the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 and the deterioration of Japanese rural economy since the early 1920s. The American ban on Japanese immigration created a strong backlash among Japanese intellectuals who became increasingly vociferous critics of white racism and Western imperialism. At the same time, the continuous depression in the countryside ushered in a surge of agrarianism that attributed the rural crisis to Japan's adoption of urban/industry-centered mode of development. The agrarianist thinkers contended that Japan needed to restore the centrality of owner-farmer-based agricultural production in the national economy and recapture the spirit of self-sufficiency in everyday life. Embracing Malthusian expansionism allowed this wave of agrarianism to gain increasing

<sup>54</sup> Tsuchida, "Japanese in Brazil," 269.

<sup>55</sup> Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan*, 40–42, 67–83.

<sup>56</sup> Stephen Vlastos's salient research demonstrates how Japanese intellectuals challenged Western capitalist modernity by collectively inventing an ideal past of Japanese agriculture as an alternative future to Japanese economic development in the early twentieth century. Vlastos, "Agrarianism without Tradition," 79–94.

popularity without exacerbating the existing tensions in the countryside. As it was politically unfeasible to redistribute land in the archipelago to create the much-vaunted owner-farmers, the agrarian expansionists called for sending the landless, thus “surplus,” farmers abroad to acquire more land. In addition to relieving population pressure and save the rural economy, agricultural migration would also create more owner-farmers on the frontiers of the empire.

While the paradigm shift of Japanese Malthusian expansionism toward farmer migration began with the campaign of rice farming in Texas around the time of the Russo-Japanese War, by the time the shift was complete in the 1920s, both the goal and practice of farmer migration had departed significantly from that of the Texas campaign. The Texas campaign had targeted Japanese rural elites who were financially prepared to migrate to the United States and become big farm owners. The promoters of farmer migration in the 1920s, however, appealed to more grassroots audiences in a much wider social stratum. Now the ideal recruits were either landless farmers or owner-farmers barely scraping by, and the ultimate goal of overseas migration was to turn these unfortunate rural subjects into owner-farmers by allowing them to acquire foreign land. Moreover, while the Texas migration campaign was ideologically patterned after the Anglo-American mode of expansion, the Japanese agrarian mode of expansion in the 1920s and 1930s was based on the time-honored Japanese agricultural tradition; and it was the vehicle through which Japan would fulfill its own manifest destiny as the liberator of the world’s colored races.

What made this agrarian version of expansionism convincing was the steady development of Japanese migration to Brazil. For the expansionists in Tokyo, the recent failure of Japanese migration projects in North America, Hawai‘i, and Australia proved the cruelty of white racism. At the same time, their attempts at creating Japanese owner-farmers in Northeast Asia and the South Seas were also unsuccessful. Brazil, however, was regarded as a shining beacon for the advocates of farmer migration and the Japanese public at large – its steady growth of migration inflow and the flourishing Japanese own-farmer communities seemed to prove that agrarian migration was more than just an enticing slogan.

The promising future in Brazil and the nationwide recognition of emigration as a solution to poverty drew an unprecedented level of involvement from the imperial government in the areas of migration promotion and management. The formation of the migration state and its financial and political aids, in turn, made the migration of the hundreds of thousands of rural poor possible. In collaboration with the Kaikō, the central government began providing full subsidies to any authorized Japanese subject who would like to pursue a future in Brazil. Some of the prefectural governments also came to the fore

and launched their own campaigns of land acquisition and settler migration. The birth of the migration state thus perpetuated the marriage between the grassroots agrarianism and Brazilian migration. It allowed the landless farmers, deemed by the Malthusian expansionists as the most desirable subjects for migration, to participate in Japan's migration-driven expansion in South America.

The formation of the migration state paved the way for Japan's state-led mass migration to Manchuria during the late 1930s in order to facilitate its total war in Asia. One cannot fully grasp this historical transformation without understanding how the Japanese government inserted itself into the Brazilian migration project in the 1920s. Due to intensive involvement by the prefectural governments, the tale of Japanese migration and settlement in Brazil in the 1920s and 1930s was also a rich collection of local histories. The next chapter delves into the migration campaigns led by the government of Nagano prefecture, one that was the most active and successful in promoting and managing migration to Brazil, to illustrate how Malthusian expansionism functioned at the local level. Not coincidentally, Nagano was also the prefecture that exported the greatest number of migrants to Manchuria between the late 1930s and 1945. The study of migration promotion and management in Nagano pinpoints the nexus between Japanese migration to Brazil and Manchuria from the 1920s to the end of World War II.