

IMAGINED LANDSCAPES: The North American West

Japanese emigrants bound for the North American West in the late 19th and early 20th centuries went abroad for a wide range of reasons. Although economic and social concerns figured prominently among their goals, the ways in which they envisioned the landscape also factored into the thinking of at least some of those emigrants.

The wide, open skies and sparsely settled spaces of the imagined landscape of the North American West, in particular, seemed to embody the social ideals and personal independence both Canada and the United States represented at a time when the constraints of Meiji society still restricted the options available to many in Japan.

Whereas the narrow mountain valleys of Japan seemed confining, a former soldier returned from the Russo-Japanese war later told an interviewer, he believed that in the North American West he would be free to go where he wanted. Perceptions of the land as itself embodying personal liberty and equal opportunity for all were further reinforced when early western movies arrived in Japan. Another immigrant later reported, for example, that he decided that he wanted the “vast Western plains” where “one could see a thousand miles at a glance” to be his permanent home after he saw a movie called “Rodeo” in Okayama-shi in the early 1900s. The broad plains depicted in the movie, in his mind, were evidence not only of the vastness of the resource-rich plains and forests of the North American West, but of the “respect for freedom and equality” he believed that they embodied.¹ Privacy and the ability to move freely about, one elderly issei woman later told her son, were the two most important considerations in her decision to emigrate to Canada.²



イメージされた風景: 北アメリカの西部

19世紀末から20世紀初頭にかけて北アメリカ大陸西部を目指した日本人移民たちには様々な動機があった。当然経済的、社会的な向上が主な目標であったが、同時に脳裏に描いた新天地の風景、風土も移民たち多くの心を捉えていたに違いない。

明治時代の日本社会の様々な制約のため人生の選択が限られて大多数の人々にとり、特に脳裏に抱く広大な空と膨大な未開地が交わる北米西部の風景は、米国、カナダ両社会の理想と個人の独立を具現していたのだろう。

日本の狭い峡谷は窮屈な気がするがアメリカの西部なら自由にどこへでも行ける、とは日露戦争を体験した元帰還兵が後日ある研究者に語った言葉である。北米の国土そのものが、全国民の個人的自由と均等な機会を具現しているという見方は当時の日本にあらわれた西部劇初期の映画にも影響されてる。

これも移民のもう一人は1900年代始めに岡山市で『ロデオ』という映画を観て「一目で千マイルも見渡せる...広い西部の大平原」に住むのだと決心したと回顧している。スクリーン上の大平原は、彼にとり天然資源も豊かな北西部の平原や森林地帯の果てしない広さのみならず、それが具現する「自由と平等の尊重」の証しであった。^(注1)

また或る移民一世の女性は当時を振り返って、プライバシーと行動の自由、この二つがカナダ移住を決意した最大の理由だった、と息子に語っている。^(注2)

1 Kazuo Ito, *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America* (translated by Shinichiro Nakamura and Jean S. Gerard, Seattle, 1973), 37-8 (originally published as *Hokubei hyakunen zakura* (Tokyo: Hokubei Hyakunenzakura Jikk Inkai, 1969)). See also Eileen Sunada Sarasohn, *The Issei: Portrait of a Pioneer, An Oral History* (Palo Alto, California: Pacific Books, 1983), 44 (immigrant explaining that she wanted to go to a big country that was free). Wakatsuki explains that the first motion pictures reached Japan in 1897. Yasuo Wakatsuki, “Japanese Emigration to the United States, 1866-1924: A Monograph,” *Perspectives in American History* 12 (1979), 439.

2 Roy Kiyooka, *Mothertalk: Life Stories of Mary Kiyoshi Kiyooka*, ed. Daphne Marlatt (Edmonton, Alberta: NeWest Press, 1997), 128.

(注1) カズオ・イトウ「一世:北米日系移民史」(ナカムラ・シンイチロウ、Jean S. Gerard翻訳、シアトル、1973年)pp37-8 (原題「北米百年桜」東京、北米百年桜実行委員会、1969年)。さらに[自由のある大きな国へ行きたかったと説明する女性移民]に関しては:アイリーン・スナダ・サラゾーン「The Issei: Portrait of a Pioneer, An Oral History」(Palo Alto, California: Pacific Books, 1983) p44 活動写真が初めて日本で上映されたのは1887年とワカツキが説明。ヤスオ・ワカツキ専攻論文「米国への日本人移民、1866年—1924年」*Perspectives in American History* 12 (1979), p439

(注2) ロイ・キヨオカ、「母の言葉:メリー・キヨシ・キヨオカのライフ・ストーリー」Daphne Marlatt編纂(エドモントン州アルバータNeWest Press, 1997)p128

When Japanese immigrants arrived in the North American West, their initial impressions of its resource-rich landscapes often seemed to confirm the promise they had imagined it held. One young woman who arrived in Vancouver, B.C., in 1914, for example, later reported that she was certain that she had arrived in a “rich and modern country,” given the number of electric lights that dotted the city at night and the large piles of driftwood that lay on city beaches, a sign of plenty in her mind because there was so little wood to burn in the small village from which she came.³

A vision of the North American West as uncultivated and replete with possibility also found expression in a short story by Nagai Kafu, who first arrived in the United States in 1903 and lived in the city of Tacoma, Washington, for a time before moving east:

In Japan, where even in remote mountain villages land is almost everywhere cultivated, one feels the din and bustle of the world, but, as can be expected, in the vast American continent, everywhere there is such an uninhabited area just two miles outside a town; in addition, my own subjective sense of solitude in a foreign land gives me an inexplicable sense of pathos and beauty as I watch the luxuriant foliage, the flowing water, and the clouds sailing across the sky.⁴

3. JCNM, *Oral History Collection*. Winnie Nakano, interviewed by Suni Arinobu, Kelowna, B.C., 6 February 1996.
4. Nagai Kafu, “Sea and Sky,” *American Stories*, Mitsuko Iriye, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 179.

資源も豊富な新天地、アメリカ大陸北西部に着いた日本人移民たちの多くにとり、その風景の第一印象はまさにそこに潜むと思われた可能性を確信させたようである。1914年バンクーバーに着いた若い女性は、故郷の村では焚き木にも不自由していたので、夜景を彩る無数の電灯と海岸に打ち上げられて積み重なった流木を見て「豊かで近代的な国」に来たと確信したと後に回顧している。^(注3)

アメリカ大陸北西部が無尽蔵の可能性をはらむ未開地という見方は永井荷風の短編『あめりか物語』にも表れる。1903年に初めて渡米した荷風は、東部に向かう前にワシントン州タコマ市に一時期滞在した。荷風いわく

日本であると随分遠い山里に行っても、土地は多く開拓され盡して居るので、何となく浮世の風の通うて居る気がするけれども、さすがは新大陸の広漠たる、町から二哩出るならば、何処へ行っても此う云う無人の境が現れ、此れに異郷の寂寞と云う主観的の情趣を加味して見るので、樹木の茂り、水の流、空行く雲の有様は、凡て自分には一種云ひ難い悲愁の美を感じさせる。^(注4)

- (注3) JCNM口述史料コレクション、ウィニー・ナカノ取材者スニー・アリノブ、BC州ケローナ、1996年2月6日

- (注4) 「あめりか物語」(夏の海)『永井荷風集』改造社版昭和2年(1927年)



The landscape as Japanese immigrants encountered it was not the same landscape they imagined. Instead-notwithstanding its promise-the landscape as they encountered it embodied a far harsher reality. In both Canada and the United States, the opportunities that the resource-rich landscape and seemingly endless plains embodied were severely constrained by racist anti-Japanese legislation. In the United States, first generation Japanese immigrants were denied the right to become naturalized citizens and a number of western states denied them the ability to own the land they worked. In Canada, they were able to become naturalized citizens but both the immigrants and their children were denied the right to vote and the ability to pursue certain occupations.⁵

In 1909, the editors of the *Tairiku Nippo*, a Japanese-language newspaper in Vancouver, B.C., commented on that contradiction in an editorial in which they criticized anti-Japanese law and policy. Blessed with fertile plains and dense forests that stretched for thousands of miles, most of which had not yet been cultivated, the editors of the *Tairiku Nippo* wrote, the reluctance of both Canada and the United States to allow Japanese immigrants to share in these vast resources on equal terms was profoundly unfair.⁶

Despite the constraints they faced, many immigrants from Japan found ways to work around those barriers to realize at least part of some of the goals they had set for themselves. In that process, they made for themselves a place in the landscapes of the North American West equally as significant as that of any other immigrant.

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5 Kunio Hidaka, *Legal Status of the Japanese in Canada (c. 1940)* (unpublished paper in the possession of the University of British Columbia Special Collections and University Archives Division, Japanese Canadian Collection).

6 *Tairiku Nippo-sha (Continental News Company), n.d., 1909.*

移民たちを迎えた現実の風土・風景は予想とは異なっていた。期待に反して現実はずっと厳しかったのだ。カナダでも米国でも、天然資源豊か国土と果てしなく広がる大平原が秘めると思われた可能性は人種偏見主義的かつ反日的な法令により著しく制限されていたのだ。米国では日系移民

一世たちは市民権を取得する権利が認められず、西部幾つかの州では日系人は自ら耕作している土地の所有権が認められなかった。カナダでは市民権の取得こそ認められたもの、移民一世は二世と共に選挙投票権も幾つかの職種における就職権も認められなかった。^(注5)

1909年某日バンクーバーの邦字紙『大陸日報』の社説はこうした矛盾にふれて反日的な法規と政策を批判した。数千マイルも広がるほとんど未開地の豊饒な平原と深い森林に恵まれながら、日系移民にその膨大な天然資源を平等に分かち合う権利を認めながらないカナダ、米国両政府は甚だ不公平だと社説は論じた。^(注6)

社会的制約を受けながらも、日系移民の多くは何らかの対策を講じてその人生目標の幾つかを実現させ

た。その過程で他民族の移民たちに劣らない有意義な地位を北米西部の風土に確保したのである。

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(注5) クニオ・ヒダカ、「カナダにおける日系人の法的立場」、1940年 (ブリティッシュ・コロンビア大学史料部日系カナダ人コレクション)

(注6) 大陸日報社、日付不明、1909年