

Teacher's Guide
by Gary Mukai

THE FOUR IMMIGRANTS MANGA

A JAPANESE EXPERIENCE IN SAN FRANCISCO,
1904–1924

BY HENRY (YOSHITAKA) KIYAMA

TRANSLATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,
BY FREDERIK L. SCHODT

Introduction

The Four Immigrants Manga offers U.S. high school students a unique glimpse into early 20th century immigration to the United States from Japan. This teacher's guide was developed to provide teachers with four small group activities based on selected episodes from the book. The episodes were chosen based on the significance of the events in the history of U.S.–Japan relations. In addition, a brief background on Japanese immigration to the United States is provided in order to set a historical context for the various episodes depicted in this book.

Organizing Questions

- What types of experiences did Japanese immigrants have in the United States during the early 20th century?
- How did the Japanese immigrant experience in the United States affect U.S.–Japan relations?
- How are these immigration experiences similar to or different from the family immigration experiences of students?



Prior to using this teacher's guide, please familiarize yourself with *The Four Immigrants Manga* by reading Frederik L. Schodt's introduction, notes, and commentary. In addition, make copies of episodes 26, 40, 49, and 52. Stone Bridge Press, the publisher of the book, grants teachers permission to copy only these episodes for use in classrooms. Other inquiries should be sent directly to Stone Bridge Press, P.O. Box 8208, Berkeley, CA 94707; tel: 510-524-8732 or 800-947-7271; sbp@stonebridge.com; www.stonebridge.com.

In the four activities contained in this guide, the experiences of four Japanese immigrants in the early 20th century are introduced to students. Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama depicted these experiences in comic strip form and published them as a book in 1931. Each Japanese who has immigrated to the United States has a unique story. It is important to point out to students that although we cannot make generalizations about Japanese immigration experience in the United States solely based on Henry Kiyama's depictions, the depictions cover many significant episodes in early

teacher's guide

20th century Japanese immigration history and offer a unique glimpse into that history through comic strip form.

Connections to National History Standards

The Four Immigrants Manga is an excellent primary source document to offer high school students studying early 20th century immigration to the United States. Specific connections to the *National Standards for United States History*, National Center for History in the Schools, University of California, Los Angeles, include:

- Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870–1900)

Standard 2: Massive immigration after 1870 and how new social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity (see especially, “immigration restriction measures,” p. 147)

- Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890–1930)

Standard 2: The changing role of the United States in world affairs through World War I (see especially, “Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907,” p. 171; “West Coast hostility to Japanese immigration,” p. 172)

Standard 3: How the United States changed from the end of World War I to the eve of the Great Depression (see especially, “Immigration law of 1924,” p. 178)

Connections to State Frameworks

Specific connections can also be made between *The Four Immigrants Manga* and state history/social science frameworks. For example, the *California History-Social Science Framework*, Sacramento, California State Department of Education, recommends “ethnic studies” at the 9th grade level; also, the “significance of immigration in producing ethnic diversity” is a key theme in examining U.S. history and geography at the 11th grade level.

Objectives

knowledge

- to learn about early 20th century immigration experiences of Japanese in the United States

attitude

- to appreciate the experiences of people who have immigrated to the United States

skill

- to work effectively in small groups

Materials

- Handout: Japanese Immigration to the United States, one copy per small groups of four to five students

- Episodes 26, 40, 49, and 52 from *The Four Immigrants Manga*, one copy each
- Activity #1: A Crisis over Japanese School Children, one copy
- Activity #2: Picture Brides, one copy
- Activity #3: Alien Land Acts, one copy
- Activity #4: Immigration Act of 1924, one copy

Procedure



1. Point out to students that they will be examining early 20th century Japanese immigration experiences in the United States. During this examination, students will be encouraged to reflect upon their own families' immigration histories. Distribute the handout, *Japanese Immigration to the United States*, to groups of four to five students. Allow students 20 minutes to read through the handout and consider the questions at the beginning of the handout. Debrief these questions with the students as a class.
2. Distribute one of the activities, #1–#4, to each group as well as the corresponding comic strip episode. Allow students the rest of the class period and a subsequent class period to work on their activities and group tasks. Each group should select a group facilitator to share or facilitate the sharing of the group's work with the rest of the class. Refer to the following pages of *The Four Immigrants Manga* for explanations of episodes 26, 40, 49, and 52: episode 26 (pp. 140–141), episode 40 (p. 145), episode 49 (pp. 146–147), and episode 52 (p. 147).



3. Ask each of the groups to come to the front of the class to share its group's work.
4. After each group has shared, debrief this activity by asking the following questions:
 - How did the Japanese immigrant experience in the United States affect U.S.–Japan relations?
 - How is your family's immigration history similar to or different from the immigration experience of the Japanese in the United States?
 - Why is immigration important in your life?

Assessment

Students engaged in activities through multiple intelligences. Keep this in mind when assessing student outcomes.

- For Activities #1 and #3, you may want to consider craftsmanship, visual or sensory imagery, language use, and cohesive themes, as well as the students' general understanding of the specific immigrants' experience in your assessment of the poem(s) and letter(s).
- For Activity #2, you may want to consider craftsmanship, appropriate detail, themes, and symbolic meaning, as well as

the students' general understanding of the specific immigrants' experience in your assessment of the artwork and dialog.

- For Activity #4, you may want to consider the students' ability to synthesize information from the historical background and focus on key concepts and/or ideas, the appropriateness of the role-play format, and time management, as well as the students' general understanding of the specific immigrants' experience in your assessment of the role play.

Another suggested assessment approach to use with these activities is a reflective journal, in which students record their attitudes towards the concepts and information provided in the activities. Immigration may be a very sensitive area for some. You may consider having students identify certain sections of the journals for teacher and/or other students' comments.

Follow-up Activities

- Have students research their own families' immigration histories. The format can be of your or the students' choosing. Some possibilities could include short story, scrapbook, children's picture book, photo album with captions, and research-style report.
- Have students write a textbook entry on "Japanese Immigrant Experiences in the United States." Consider how well the information is synthesized and interpreted and how effectively historical documents or other primary sources are used.
- Have students assume the role of a newspaper editorial writer from the following hypothetical newspapers: *U.S. Daily News* and *Tokyo News Bulletin*. Have them choose a historical or current event from *The Four Immigrants Manga* and write an editorial. Use the editorials to determine how well students draw upon their newly acquired knowledge and perspectives related to immigration. How persuasive are their comments and/or points of view?
- Have students research the immigration history of a particular ethnic group in the United States, and examine the impact this has had on the U.S.'s relations with the ethnic group's country of origin.

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Keeping the following questions in mind, read the following handout.

- *How did the Japanese experience in the United States impact U.S.–Japan relations?*
- *How was the experience of the Japanese in the United States impacted by U.S.–Japan relations?*
- *How is the Japanese immigrant experience in the United States similar or different from your families' immigration experiences?*

The first Japanese came to North America the result of shipwrecks in the Pacific Ocean during the early- to mid-1800s. Emigration to the United States began in 1885. In the early 1880s, Japan was experiencing a depression and farmers, in particular, faced tremendous economic hardships. Many farmers lost their land. In 1885, the Japanese government passed laws that allowed Japanese to emigrate, and by 1890 the census indicated that 2039 Japanese were in the United States. By 1900, 24,326 Japanese were in the United States.

There were two main reasons for the large increase in numbers of Japanese immigrants. First, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act stopped immigration from China to the United States, resulting in a labor shortage in the western part of the United States. California farmers, for example, needed laborers to work in the fields. Thus, there was an increase in demand for Japanese immigrants who would work as farm laborers.

Second, the Emigrants Protection Law was passed by the Japanese government in 1896. This law required each Japanese emigrant to have someone responsible for his/her financial support in the country of destination. Through the Emigrants Protection Law, the Japanese government attempted to protect its people going abroad. As a result of this law, United States labor contractors began to work with emigration companies in Japan to ensure that the Japanese emigrant would have adequate financial

assistance and a guaranteed job in the United States. These emigration companies attracted many Japanese. Between 1899 and 1904, almost 60,000 Japanese came to the United States. Many were attracted by stories of wealth and comfort in the United States by people working for emigration company workers. These emigration companies were also supplying Japanese labor to Hawaii, which was at the time a territory of the United States.

For many Japanese immigrants, however, the stories they heard about the wealth and comfort of the United States were exaggerated. Most encountered tremendous hardships upon arriving in the United States. The types of employment found by the Japanese were primarily in farming, railways, factories, canneries, plant nurseries, housekeeping, and fisheries.

Most of the immigrants were young men. In the 1900 census, only 1000 of 24,326 Japanese in the United States were women. As a result of this, a practice that became known as “picture bride” marriage developed. Most young Japanese immigrant men couldn't afford to travel back to Japan for a bride, so requests were made to their parents, relatives, or friends in Japan to find prospective brides for them. Since these types of marriages often involved the exchange of pictures between the Japanese men in the United States and Japanese women in Japan, the practice was referred to by Americans as “picture bride” marriages. By 1919, there was

much U.S. resentment of the practice and the Japanese government stopped issuing passports to Japanese picture brides in 1920.

Other issues and events affecting Japanese immigrants in the United States also had profound effects on U.S.-Japan relations. Japanese and all other Asian immigrants were not allowed to become citizens of the United States; they were “aliens ineligible for citizenship.” This meant that Japanese in the United States could not vote or work in occupations requiring U.S. citizenship.

On October 11, 1906, the San Francisco School Board of Education ordered the segregation of 93 Japanese and Japanese-American school children. Many leading educators in California and throughout the United States protested this decision, including President Theodore Roosevelt. The Japanese government was also outraged by this decision. The decision was reversed in 1907.

In 1908, Japan, under pressure from the United States, voluntarily agreed to restrict further emigration. This was known as the Gentleman’s Agreement, which strictly limited the immigration of Japanese laborers into the United States. In 1913, the California legislature passed a law prohibiting aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning land. This law was called the Alien Land Law. A subsequent alien land law was passed in 1920 that made the leasing or sharecropping of land by aliens ineligible for citizenship illegal.

The Immigration Act of 1924, which was passed by Congress, provided for the total exclusion of aliens ineligible for U.S. citizenship. At that time only whites and blacks were eligible for citizenship. This decision greatly impacted U.S.-Japan relations. Japanese immigration to the United States stopped except for a few isolated cases of Japanese entering the United States for family or special occupational reasons.

A CRISIS OVER JAPANESE SCHOOL CHILDREN

“Episode 26: A Crisis over Japanese School Children,” was drawn by Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama for the hardcover comic book that he published in San Francisco in 1931. The comic book was translated by Frederik L. Schodt and republished in 1999 by Stone Bridge Press (Berkeley, California) with the title of *The Four Immigrants Manga*. It is one of the first original material comic books ever published in the United States. This episode is reprinted with permission from Stone Bridge Press. The following description was written by Frederik L. Schodt in order to help readers understand the context of the comic strip’s episode.

Concerning the school segregation of Japanese in San Francisco in 1906, Mr. Schodt writes:

Organized groups like the Asiatic Exclusion League, backed by labor unions and otherwise “progressive forces,” advocated the segregation of all Asian children in San Francisco schools. With newspapers conducting inflammatory anti-Japanese campaigns, after the 1906 earthquake there were boycotts waged against Japanese-owned restaurants and frequent attacks on Japanese individuals in the city. On October 11, 1906, the San Francisco Board of Education ordered all Japanese and Korean school children to join the Chinese, who were already segregated. This action caused an uproar in Japan and led to the unprecedented involvement of a U.S. president—Theodore Roosevelt—in local San Francisco politics. Roosevelt considered the anti-Asian California legislators and politicians “idiots” and was genuinely concerned that San Francisco’s inept handling of its Japanese school children might bring Japan (which had just defeated the Russians) and the U.S. to the brink of war. The problem was eventually resolved by a compromise known today as the 1907-8 “Gentlemen’s Agreement” with Japan. Japanese children were allowed to attend San Francisco schools (unless, according to one frequent complaint, they were overage, or had limited English ability); in February, Congress passed an immigration act that Roosevelt signed, ending further Japanese immigration via Hawaii, Mexico, or Canada; and Japan agreed to stop issuing visas to Japanese laborers going to the United States.¹

Group Task

After reading “Episode 26: A Crisis over Japanese School Children,” discuss the conflicts being expressed by the Japanese immigrant men. Imagine you are second-generation Japanese Americans in San Francisco in 1906 and are ordered to attend segregated schools. Write a poem that captures your feelings regarding this segregation.

¹ *The Four Immigrants Manga*, pp. 140–141.

PICTURE BRIDES

“Episode 40: Picture Brides,” was drawn by Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama for the hardcover comic book that he published in San Francisco in 1931. The comic book was translated by Frederik L. Schodt and republished in 1999 by Stone Bridge Press (Berkeley, California) with the title of *The Four Immigrants Manga*. It is one of the first original material comic books ever published in the United States. This episode is reprinted with permission from Stone Bridge Press.

As pointed out in the handout, “Japanese Immigration to the United States,” most of the early Japanese immigrants to the United States were men. According to the 1900 census, 24,326 Japanese lived in the United States. Of these, only 410 were married women. In 1910, there were 5,581 married women in a U.S. Japanese population of 72,157; and in 1920, there were 22,193 in a U.S. Japanese population of 111,010. It is very difficult to know how many of these married women came as “picture brides.” The Immigration Station in San Francisco on Angel Island, however, estimates the number of picture brides admitted for 1912–1919 as 5,273.

Many early Japanese immigrant men had their photographs taken and sent them to Japan so that their parents or acquaintances in Japan could help to find them brides. The comic strip illustrates the anxiety brought about by such an experience. Please note that the comic strip adds a very humorous touch to the experience of exchanging photographs for the purpose of marriage. As is the case with marriage, it is important to keep in mind that this was in fact a very serious experience.

Group Task

After reading “Episode 40: Picture Brides,” use copies of the grid on the next page to illustrate scenes from the Japanese immigrant man’s future with his bride. Incorporate historical information from the handout, “Japanese Immigration to the United States,” as well.

PICTURE BRIDES

ALIEN LAND ACTS

“Episode 49: Alien Land Act,” was drawn by Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama for the hardcover comic book that he published in San Francisco in 1931. The comic book was translated by Frederik L. Schodt and republished in 1999 by Stone Bridge Press (Berkeley, California) with the title of *The Four Immigrants Manga*. It is one of the first original material comic books ever published in the United States. This episode is reprinted with permission from Stone Bridge Press.

As pointed out in the handout, “Japanese Immigration to the United States,” Japanese and other Asian immigrants in the United States were aliens ineligible for citizenship; this was the law until 1952. The Alien Land Acts passed by the state of California in 1913 and 1920 (as well as similar acts passed by other states) were efforts to stop the purchase of land for agriculture by Japanese immigrants. The “Alien” in “Alien Land Acts” referred to aliens ineligible for citizenship, that is, all Asian immigrants. The 1913 Alien Land Act made the purchase of land by aliens ineligible for citizenship illegal. There were two ways, however, to legally get around this act. One was to lease land; the other was to purchase land in the name of one’s U.S.-born children, who were U.S. citizens at birth. The 1920 Alien Land Act made leasing land by aliens ineligible for citizenship illegal.

These acts were declared unconstitutional in a state court decision in 1952. Also, a federal law was passed that same year and abolished the “aliens ineligible for citizenship” status.

Group Task

After reading “Episode 49: The Alien Land Act,” discuss some of the laws passed against immigrants from Japan. You may want to refer to the handout, “Japanese immigration to the United States,” as well. Note the following statistics: In 1909, Japanese farmers in California owned about 17,000 acres and leased or sharecropped nearly 140,000 acres. By 1919, after six years of the Alien Land Act, Japanese owned about 75,000 acres and leased or sharecropped nearly 385,000 more. This acreage represented less than 1 percent of the arable land in California, but the approximately 35,000 Japanese agriculturalists produced a crop worth \$67 million annually, about 10 percent of the market value of California’s produce.¹

Imagine you are an American or Japanese farmer in 1919, and there is discussion brewing about another alien land act that would make leasing and sharecropping by “aliens ineligible to citizenship” illegal. Take a position on this discussion and write a persuasive letter to your congressperson.

¹ “Alien Land Acts,” *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, volume one; Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983.

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1924

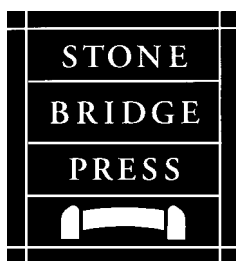
“Episode 52: Good Bye,” was drawn by Henry (Yoshitaka) Kiyama for the hardcover comic book that he published in San Francisco in 1931. The comic book was translated by Frederik L. Schodt and republished in 1999 by Stone Bridge Press (Berkeley, California) with the title of *The Four Immigrants Manga*. It is one of the first original material comic books ever published in the United States. This episode is reprinted with permission from Stone Bridge Press.

As pointed out in the handout, “Japanese Immigration to the United States,” the Immigration Act of 1924, which was passed by Congress, provided for the total exclusion of aliens ineligible for U.S. citizenship. At that time only whites and blacks were eligible for citizenship. This decision greatly impacted U.S.-Japan relations. Japanese immigration to the United States stopped except for a few isolated cases of Japanese entering the United States for family or special occupational reasons. This remained the case until the passage of the so-called McCarran-Walter Act of 1952.

Group Task

After reading “Episode 52: Good Bye,” discuss some of the conflicts the four immigrants felt while experiencing life in the United States. Using information from this discussion as well as information from the handout, “Japanese Immigration to the United States,” develop a five-minute role play. The scene should be in Japan at some date in the future. Imagine that the four immigrants are having a reunion and are reflecting back on their past experiences.

Gary Mukai specializes in the development of curriculum on Asia, U.S.-Asian relations, and the Asian-American experience.



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