Redefining Belonging: Memory and Place-Making for Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese Descent in the 21st Century

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2

ABSTRACT 3

INTRODUCTION 4

CHAPTER 1: TELLING FAMILY HISTORIES 21

CHAPTER 2: CLAIMING SPACE AND MAKING PLACE IN PERU 45

CHAPTER 3: WHITE SUPREMACY AT HOME AND ABROAD 74

CONCLUDING REMARKS 107

APPENDIX – PROFILES OF INTERVIEWEES 113

WORKS CITED 115

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Abstract

The first arrival of Chinese migrants to Peru was documented over 170 years ago; today, third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have carved a space for themselves in Peruvian society, celebrating both their Peruvian identity and Chinese or Japanese heritage. My thesis discusses the process of identity formation among third- and fourth-generation Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent through retellings of family histories and personal experiences living in Peru and abroad. I center my work on seven people, three who speak to their Japanese heritage and four to their Chinese heritage. I think through how events that play out on a national scale and physical manifestations of Chinese and Japanese presence push Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent to identify themselves, as well as how they, in turn, have shaped Peruvian culture. Using these historical and cultural touchpoints, I argue that, for my subjects, being Peruvian is not a negation of their Chinese or Japanese heritage, and acknowledging and resonating with Tusán, Nikkei, Chinese, or Japanese heritage does not diminish but rather enhances Peruvian identity. Finally, I look to how white supremacy and transnational migration beyond Peru has shaped Chinese and Japanese identity within a Peruvian racial hierarchy.

Introduction

On October 18, 2020, a few days after the celebration of the third anniversary of the creation of Tusanaje, an online platform dedicated to creating a social, cultural, and intellectual community among members of the Chinese diaspora within Peru and beyond, the collective posted this statement on their Facebook page:

> Tusanaje-秘从中来 serves as a space to share and find for ourselves the diversity of Tusán culture. We will not tolerate racism or discrimination, and we don't believe in gatekeeping who is and is not Tusán. Ideas around being "pure-blooded" Chinese, "looking" Chinese, or having Chinese last names are racist and are based in hateful rhetoric. Furthermore, it is clear that there is still much work to be done around internalized racism in our own community. We denounce Julio Pio Leung Castro's racist attack against one of the members of our group. We Tusanes are a diverse group of people, with a very diverse set of experiences. Tusán identity also intersects with many other identities: we are Indigenous, Afro-descendent, mestiz@s, women, LGBTQ, and more. We are proud of our diversity, and no one is more or less Tusán than anyone else. Tusanaje-秘从中来 will always be a place for us to celebrate our identity, our struggles, and our culture. We must clearly denounce this hateful language so that we can talk about these things openly in our community.[1]

[1] Tusanaje-秘从中来, 2020. "El colectivo Tusanaje-秘从中来 es un espacio para la difusión y recuperación de la cultura tusán en su plena diversidad." Facebook. October 18, 2020.
Translated from: El colectivo Tusanaje-秘从中来 es un espacio para la difusión y recuperación de la cultura tusán en su plena diversidad. Aquí no toleramos el racismo ni la discriminación. No creemos en definiciones rígidas sobre qué es ser tusán. Mucho menos nos dedicamos a decir quiénes son o no son tusanes. Las ideas de pureza de sangre, apariencia física, y apellidos son ideas extremadamente racistas, y ligadas a grupos de odio supremacistas. Lamentablemente, hay muchísimo por aprender si queremos destruir el racismo internalizado dentro de nuestra propia comunidad. Denunciamos el ataque racista y discriminatorio de Julio Pio Leung Castro en contra de uno de nuestros compañeros. Los y las tusanes vivimos experiencias y provenimos de historias muy distintas. Nuestra identidad tusán se intersecta con muchas otras identidades: aquí también somos indígenas, afro, mestiz@s, femeninas, LGBTQ, y más. Nuestra diversidad es un orgullo y no nos hace más o menos tusanes que otras personas. Tusanaje-秘从中来 es un lugar donde siempre celebraremos la tusanidad, nuestra herencia, nuestra lucha, y nuestra cultura. Es muy importante denunciar abiertamente este tipo de comentarios para comenzar un diálogo abierto dentro de nuestra comunidad.

The word Tusán comes from the Cantonese word 土生 (tusheng), roughly translated to "someone born and/or raised here," and was originally used to describe individuals with Chinese mothers and fathers. Over time, this designation has grown to be able to encompass all people who choose to identify with the Chinese diaspora and the Chinese diasporic community in Peru, though there continue to be disagreements among different communities of people with Chinese heritage.[2] As noted in the statement, members of the collective were responding to a post ridiculing and negating the Tusán identity of one of its founders, Rodrigo Campos, based purely on his physical characteristics and last name. The Facebook post is now filled with comments of support for Rodrigo, yet the damage remains, both in the screenshots of the original posts and in the painful reminder that the formation and reformation of Tusán identity remains tenuous.

Though largely seen as a *mestizo* nation—most typically known as a mix of Indigenous and white—Peru has been home to people of Chinese and Japanese descent for more than a century. For the descendants of that first wave of indentured laborers, now third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation Peruvians,[3] the process of recognizing, learning about, and claiming these roots requires the intentional uncovering of untold histories. These Tusanes and Nikkei, the names by which many—but not all—Chinese and Japanese Peruvians self-identify, respectively, are undeniably Peruvians; yet, many of them find ways to make space for their Chinese and Japanese identities. Some, like the contributors of Tusanaje and Nikkei organization Asociación Peruana

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[2] "Tusanaje | Ser Tusán," accessed December 10, 2020, http://www.tusanaje.org/; see Diálogos de Tusanidad | Sesión 1: ¿Qué es ser tusán?, June 7, 2020, 12:24-25:30; Isabelle Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (Tusheng) and the Changing Chinese Community in Peru," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 5.1 (March 1, 2009): 119. In my second chapter, I will explain how there is still tension between people of Chinese descent on who can and cannot be considered Tusán.

[3] I use third-generation Peruvian to indicate people who have at least one grandparents who was an immigrant to Peru, fourth-generation for those with at least one immigrant great-grandparent, etc.

Japonesa (APJ), have undertaken the task of insisting on the presence of Tusán and Nikkei people and culture in everyday Peruvian society.

The work of making visible the pasts and presents of Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent does not happen automatically with their presence in the country. Rather, the claiming of identity emerges from the conscious decisions of individuals to look into and embrace these histories and from the material work done by community groups to organize them into a narrative that speaks to some type of shared diasporic experience. This work, whether unintentional or not, calls into question the assumptions one makes around who does and does not belong in Peru, and who can and cannot call the country home. In embracing the very real and influential presence of Chinese and Japanese histories in Peru, how can we rethink what constitutes a "Peruvian identity?" On a broader level, how do Tusanes and Nikkei challenge our common understanding of multiculturalism and the use of racial separation in crafting a national identity?

Understanding Race and Ethnicity in Peru

Most people born and raised in Peru consider themselves Peruvian first, before any other racial or ethnic descriptor.[4] Furthermore, as with many countries in Latin America, the ideology of *mestizaje* exists as a dominant political imaginary of what the population looks like.[5] Unlike strategies used in the United States preventing miscegenation and creating more clear divides between racial groups (specifically Black and white), Latin American countries experienced, and at some points promoted, racial mixing between white (European) and Indigenous, and

[4] Fabiana Chiu, interview by author, 31:02; see Yuri Sakata, interview by author, 33:55; Fabiola Galindo, interview by author, 47:51; Juan Jhong Chung, interview by author, 14:52.
[5] See Edward Telles and Stanley Bailey, "Understanding Latin American Beliefs about Racial Inequality," *American Journal of Sociology* 118, no. 6 (2013): 1562-6.

sometimes Black, people to "whiten" their populations and create national unity. With this understanding, *mestizaje* can further be described as "a 'racial project'…that forced the assimilation of indigenous populations and the marginalization of all those who refused, and that ignored formerly enslaved Afrodescendents."[6] At first, between the 1910s and 1930s, this was not so much the case in Peru. At this time, *mestizos* were actually looked down upon by both European and Indigenous people, since purity was what was most valued. The separation was based mostly on geographic lines, between people in the cities and people in the rural areas of the country, though this also mapped onto racial separation, since Europeans were mainly found in the cities, and Indigenous *serranos* in the rural areas. However, the *serranos* actually used elite conceptions of intelligence and whiteness to surpass their brownness and become "honorary whites" through their level of education.[7] This changed in the 1930s when the *mestizo* became the image of "the real Peruvian," a project supported by various political sectors where the use of indigeneity as central to the American experience pushed against US imperial efforts that shaped a pan-Americanism in its image.[8] This allowed for a greater appeal towards racial unity among Peruvians, which later set the stage for a general negation of race and racism in exchange for educational and class differences. Nevertheless, the concept of *mestizaje* continued—and continues—to function in the political sphere for both leftist and conservative spaces, seeing race very much as a "cultural" and "spiritual" marker rather than one simply defined by skin color, making it easier to deny racism while still explaining difference in socioeconomic outcomes.[9]

[6] Ibid, 1563.
[7] Marisol de la Cadena, "Silent Racism and Intellectual Superiority in Peru," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17.2 (1998): 144-6.
[8] Ibid, 152.
[9] See Marisol de la Cadena, "Reconstructing Race: Racism, Culture and Mestizaje in Latin America," NACLA, September 25, 2007.

This is not to say, however, that people of non-dominant groups have simply accepted efforts to create a homogenous perception of the population and deny the existence of racism. One clear example of an effort to recognize difference in ethnic identity is the 2017 Peruvian national census. For the first time ever, the census included a question around "autopercepción étnica," or ethnic self-perception. While certainly an intentional move away from insisting on a homogenous population, it had individuals choose on their own a single ethnic identity with which they most identify, among which included Tusán, Nikkei, and *mestizo*.[10] Almost all Peruvians with Chinese and Japanese heritage whose families have lived in Peru since at least the beginning of the 20th century also have some European and Indigenous heritage. Therefore, though having Asian heritage is not included in the original definition of being *mestizo*, many can and do claim a *mestizo* identity. While government recognition does not absolutely determine how people see themselves, such a choice does force individuals to decide on the identity that is "most important" to them, influencing their how perceptions of self exist outside of how the government will see them.

As members of the two Asian ethnic groups most represented in Peru, Peruvians of Japanese and Chinese heritage do have a visibility in greater Peruvian society, specifically in cities where they are mostly located, and were therefore ethnic groups included in the 2017 census.[11] However, while the identifiers "Tusán" and "Nikkei" can be used to describe Peruvians of Japanese and Chinese heritage, they are not the only ones used, even for people who do strongly identify with their Chinese or Japanese heritage. Both "Tusán" and "Nikkei" must be consciously

[10] The 2017 census asked all people aged 12 and up about their "autopercepción étnica…por sus costumbres y sus antepasados"—how they perceive themselves ethnically based on customs and family lineage. The top four choices in 2017 were *mestizo,* Quechua (a particular Indigenous group), *blanco*, and *afrodecendiente*. The other choices were a number of other Indigenous groups, Tusán, Nikkei, and *otro*; see El Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, *Perú: Perfil Sociodemográfio, 2017*, 2018, 214.
[11] Ibid, 216.

chosen by each person. As previously mentioned, the group Tusanaje has sought to expand Tusán identity to all members of the Chinese diaspora in Peru (and even across the word, though this has not necessarily spread beyond members of the Peruvian diaspora and members of Tusanaje), but up until recently, was mostly only used within the community and among families. Older folks would also use terms such as *chino neto* or *injerto* to describe themselves, simply due to what was common during their childhoods.[12] "Nikkei," on the other hand, defined as "foreign nationals of Japanese descent,"[13] is a more universal term for members of the Japanese diaspora in all different countries, rather than just in Peru. Even with this more concrete definition, this does not mean that all people of Japanese heritage living in Peru automatically consider themselves Nikkei; this, too, must be a chosen identity. Ayumi Takenaka describes in her piece "Transnational Community and Its Ethnic Consequences" how choosing to live as Nikkei implies embracing a combination of cultures and "the negation of becoming completely Peruvian in Peru or Japanese in Japan or American in the United States;"[14] however, identity formation for Nikkei in Peru is even more complicated than that. I suggest that, rather than seeing Nikkei identity in Peru as a negation of embracing completely any identity, it is actually an assertion of being completely Peruvian, regardless of phenotypic traits, while still celebrating their Japanese heritage.[15] Any descriptor is both very specific and very broad—while each individual has in their mind what it means for them to be (or not be) Tusán or Nikkei, the ability to choose to adopt the label allows for people to collectively shape and adjust the definitions of a Tusán or Nikkei community.

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[12] Diálogos de Tusanidad | Sesión 1: ¿Qué es ser tusán?, 23:30.
[13] Ayumi Takenaka, "Transnational Community and Its Ethnic Consequences: The Return Migration and the Transformation of Ethnicity of Japanese Peruvians," *The American Behavioral Scientist; Thousand Oaks* 42.9 (July 1999): 1460.
[14] Ibid.
[15] See Sakata, 33:55; Galindo, 47:51.

Understanding Chinese and Japanese in Peru

The mainstream story of Asian migration to Peru begins in the mid-19th century, with the arrival of 100,000 Chinese coolie laborers to work on coastal plantations between 1847 and 1874, generally to escape war and poverty, though some argue that small contingents of Chinese and Japanese arrived in the early 1600s, often as domestic laborers.[16] In 1873, Japan and Peru signed a contract labor agreement, the first between Japan and any South American country, formalizing the process of sending Japanese laborers to Peru. This was at a time when new Japanese Meiji government was looking to open up to the global economy, encouraging emigration both to solve problems of a growing population and to gain capital through remittances.[17] Regardless of their reasons for arriving in Peru, these Chinese and Japanese laborers faced harsh working conditions, as this migration coincided with the phasing out of and abolition of slavery in Peru in the early 1850s, when plantation owners were searching for new sources of labor. While upper class Peruvians generally did not want non-European (nonwhite) migration to the country, the need for replacement labor ultimately outweighed this concern.[18] The suspicion of this racially distinct foreigner, however, also created new racial tensions, both between Indigenous, Afro, and Asian laborers and hostility from upper class Peruvians

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[16] Peter Blanchard, "Asian Immigrants in Perú, 1899-1923," *NS, NorthSouth* 4.7 (1979): 61; Watt Stewart, *Chinese Bondage in Peru: A History of the Chinese Coolie in Peru, 1849-1874* (Chicago, United States: Muriwai Books, 2018), 18; Doris Moromisato, *Crónicas de mujeres nikkei* (Lima: Asociación Peruano Japonesa, 2020*),* 28-9; Richard Chuhue, *Capón: El barrio chino de Lima* (Lima, Peru: Municipalidad de Lima, 2016), 13.

[17] Ayumi Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru: History of Immigration, Settlement, and Racialization," *Latin American Perspectives* 31.3 (2004): 78-81.

[18] Ignacio López-Calvo, "Immigration, Resistance, and the Emergence of a Tusán Discourse" in *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru*, ed. Ignacio López-Calvo and Eugenio Chang-Rodríguez (Tucson, United States: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 37; Isabelle Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Community(Ies)," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 7.1 (2011): 70; Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "Coolies, Shopkeepers, Pioneers: The Chinese of Mexico and Peru (1849–1930)," *Amerasia Journal* 15.2 (January 1989): 103-7; Blanchard, 60.

concerned about the racial purity of the country. This led to violence both against and from coolie laborers, renegotiations of treaties, and limits and prohibition of Chinese and Japanese migration to Peru.[19] While many of these laborers had hoped to complete their contract and then return to their home countries, most ended up staying due to the low wages and need to continue making money. This also meant that these mostly male migrants formed romantic relationships with Peruvian women, whether Indigenous, Afro, *mestizo*, or *mulatto* (a mix of Indigenous and Afrodescendent), establishing themselves and their children in Peru.[20]

As migrants continued to arrive to work on the plantations, others who served out their contracts began migrating to the cities, starting small businesses of all kinds. A community of Chinese migrants from both China and the US gathered in Lima, eventually forming what became the *barrio chino*, the Lima Chinatown, which remains a popular tourist and economic center. Both Chinese and Japanese communities found ways to support members of their communities, both in response to a poor Peruvian economy, exclusion by Peruvian lending institutions, and continued suspicion of this foreign population.[21] Though this community assistance helped these small businesses thrive, this also increased violence against Chinese and Japanese shopkeepers, especially as the economic downturn encouraged xenophobia, as Peruvian shopkeepers did not understand why migrants continued arriving from China and Japan and taking their jobs. This, in addition to an outbreak of the Bubonic Plague in largely Chinese neighborhoods in Lima, created this image of a dangerous, dirty Chinese invasion of the country, building on concerns from the elites around the need for racial purification of the country. The Chinese individual—and by association, all phenotypically East Asian people, including

[19] Blanchard, 61-5; Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 81-4.
[20] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (Tusheng)," 116.
[21] Ibid, 72-4; Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 94.

Japanese—was seen as unassimilable, forever a foreigner.[22] This resulted in a number of mob attacks against Chinese- and Japanese-owned stores by aggrieved Peruvians, and also forced the Peruvian government to once again revisit their migration agreements with China and Japan.[23] Nevertheless, by this time, second-generation Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent had established themselves as Peruvians, often having one non-Asian parent and only ever knowing living in Peru. Other more wealthy Chinese businessmen who opened commercial houses selling imported Chinese goods were financially successful in the country and had little incentive to leave.[24] The candidacy and election of Alberto Fujimori, the son of Japanese immigrants, to the Peruvian presidency in 1990 created a different visibility for both Chinese and Japanese communities. As the most famous *chino* (despite being Japanese, not Chinese) in the country, his position as president made clear the existence of Chinese and Japanese communities in the country, though his controversial presidency also worried these communities of potential backlash.[25] Large moments like Fujimori's presidency, however, define little of the lived experiences of Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, ones that include much less of a public display of Chinese and Japanese heritage but rather rely on shared family and individual memories and everyday traditions and practices.

As Fabiana, one of my interviewees, noted about her experience going to school in Peru, she did not remember learning much about Chinese presence in Peru beyond their arrival as coolie laborers in plantations.[26] Though academic scholarship has certainly progressed to studies

[22] Gonzalo Paroy Villafuerte, "'El peligro amarillo': Miedo y violencia en torno al inmigrante chino. Lima, 1891-1919," n.d., 10, 64-9.
[23] Blanchard, 66; Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 93.
[24] Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 73-4.
[25] Alberto Fujimori | Biography, Presidency, & Facts," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed March 9, 2021; "Alberto Keinya Fujimori," accessed March 9, 2021.
[26] Fabiana Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina" in *Re/collecting Early Asian America: Essays in Cultural History,* ed. Josephine Lee, Imogene L. Lim, and Yuko Matsukawa (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 175**.**

of how people of Chinese and Japanese descent have established themselves in Peru over the years since the first migrations, the focus has been on assimilation. Anthropologist Bernard Wong defines assimilation as "a process by which immigrants discard the culture traits of their land of origin and acquire the culture of their host society through intermarriage, participation in the institutions of the host society on primary group levels, internalization of the values of the larger society, and adoption of their behaviors and attitudes."[27] I argue, however, that the process for Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent lines up more closely to what historian Peter Burke describes as cultural hybridization, which has a focus on "a distinctive combination of similarity and difference, rather than in difference alone."[28] He encourages us to look at the results of immigration as exchanges and ways of finding similarities between cultures that individuals use to then form something new, a hybrid culture, rather than having one culture fully displacing another. This concept of cultural hybridization serves well to describe many of the processes described by my interviewees, many of which could not be pinpointed as "a Chinese or Japanese thing" nor as "a Peruvian thing"—often, they described these things simply as things their families did, without much initial thought as to where they originated from. In this sense, rather than focus on Chinese or Japanese contributions to Peruvian culture, or ways that efforts to assimilate into Peruvian culture caused an erasure of an individual's relationship to Chinese or Japanese culture, I seek to emphasize the unique Peruvian identities that individuals of Chinese and Japanese descent craft for themselves.

The production of scholarly work by Tusanes and Nikkei is just beginning; because of that, much of this work we have today has been done by either Peruvians not of Asian descent or

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[27] Bernard Wong, "A Comparative Study of the Assimilation of the Chinese in New York City and Lima, Peru," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20, no. 3 (1978): 33.
[28] Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 24.

by non-Peruvian Asians. While this is not a problem in and of itself, the topics of study reflect an interest in the historical facts of migration patterns of Asians to the country and what they did when they got there. Nevertheless, pieces produced by my interviewees such as Fabiana's "China Latina" and Yuri's "Nikkei limeña" exemplify the personal storytelling that is necessary to understanding the fullness of an identity belonging to individuals of Chinese and Japanese descent with deep emotional ties and roots in Peru. Just the titles of these pieces reflect this emphasis of both identifying as being from Peru (or Latin America or Lima) as well as having Chinese or Japanese descent. Words Without Borders' September 2020 issue, "Who Writes Peru: Asian Peruvian Writers" gives voice to individuals of Chinese and Japanese descent who have lived in Peru to reflect on their heritages and, as guest editor Jennifer Shyue writes, "complicate[s] the idea of 'home'—not just in writing, but also with their physical selves."[29] This thesis hopes to connect the micro level of the experiences and stories of my seven interviewees with a broader understanding of racial formation in Peru, specifically in the context of the emergence and assertion of Chinese and Japanese identity. A focus on third- and fourth-generation Peruvians and allowing them to speak for themselves pushes back against mainstream views of what it means to be Peruvian as well as against the idea of Chinese and Japanese individuals as foreigners in the Americas.

It is also important to recognize the influence of US-centric discourse around Asians in the Americas, not only due to the nature of this thesis being written by an Asian American in a US institution, but also because of outsized focus on and interest in contemporary migration to the US, and to some extent, Canada. Even with the increasing amount of work done on the presence of Chinese and Japanese people across the Americas, work around racial relations

[29] Jennifer Shyue, "A Slice of Writing by Nikkei and Tusán Peruvian Writers," Words Without Borders, accessed September 16, 2020, paragraph 5.

between groups of people has existed in a primarily US context.[30] As I have previously discussed, histories of miscegenation and the prevalence of *mestizaje* in Peru and other Latin American countries cannot map cleanly onto US-centric theories of race, although global white supremacy reveals many patterns that make these US-centric theories useful. However, viewing the experiences of Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent first without preconceptions of how they may see themselves based on how people of Chinese and Japanese descent in the US see themselves can help us better understand and rethink concepts of assimilation and belonging. Shyue also discusses the fraught nature of the term "American" in a context outside of the US. She asks, "Who gets to be American?," noting in how, while talking to Julia Wong Kcomt, a Peruvian of Chinese descent, Wong Kcomt rejected the idea of "las Américas," instead asserting the existence of simply "América."[31] While none of my interviewees and no literature points to Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent identifying themselves as either Asian or American when referring to their Peruvian identities (some who have moved to the US have subsequently adopted the labels popular in the US when interacting with individuals in the US), it does us well to keep in mind both how the United States and its discourse around race has influenced ways that people across the Americas see themselves but also how a decentering of this US-centric terminology and theory can help us see other possibilities in racial relations.

I'll begin by discussing how Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent develop their understanding of and construct this part of their identity, both through personal family histories and more general migration stories. Here, I want to emphasize the difference between objectively

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[30] For example, the book *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century* (HoSang, Daniel Martinez, Oneka LaBennett, and Laura Pulido, eds. *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley; Los Angelese; London: University of California Press, 2012. Accessed April 18, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pn6cq.), although inclusionary of studies of race beyond US borders, the text itself builds off of the original text, *Racial Formation in the United States* and has many chapters solely focused on phenomena in the United States.
[31] Shyue, paragraph 6-7.

knowing that Chinese and Japanese people migrated to Peru and the experience of making personal connections to family migration histories. While the former often ends with the arrival of Chinese and Japanese as plantation laborers, the latter allows individuals to explore the ways that their ancestors and relatives have carved out a space for their identities as both Chinese or Japanese and Peruvian. In the second chapter, I explore this concept further and discuss the physical manifestations of these historical understandings of race and identity, from Lima's *barrio chino*, to both physical and online cultural organizations, to private family traditions drawn from, but not always recognized as a part of, Chinese or Japanese heritage. The development of identity around Chinese and Japanese heritage does not occur in a vacuum. Almost all third- and fourth-generation Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent are of mixed race heritage, and their daily lives as Peruvians interacting with Peruvians not of Chinese or Japanese descent shape not only their own identities but also expand what it means to be Peruvian. In my third and final chapter, I trace the historic tensions between racial groups as a result of white supremacist dominance, often first perpetuated as a way of controlling labor, and how they continue to manifest today. I also zoom out beyond Peruvian borders to see how Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have adjusted or have needed to adjust their understandings of their own identities after leaving Peru for the United States or Asia. Throughout this thesis, I seek to explore the reciprocal relationship between assimilation, adaptation, and embrace of Peru as a home country and Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent asserting their marginal identities to reconceptualize what it means to be Peruvian.

Notes on Language and Methods

This year I found myself in a unique position, as I have conducted all my research and produced all my writing during the COVID-19 pandemic. I had originally planned on traveling to Lima, Peru to work with government archives as well as explore the *barrio chino*, the Lima Chinatown, where I would have gotten to interact with various Chinese Peruvian and Japanese Peruvian cultural organizations and the many people who engage in those spaces. Naturally, the pandemic forced me into a position where I was unable to travel and had to reevaluate the types of primary sources I would be able to draw from. I am deeply grateful to have been put into contact with a number of Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, who graciously agreed to be interviewed for this project. Throughout my investigation, I interviewed seven individuals, two men who identify as Tusán; two women who identify with their Chinese heritage, one of whom identifies as Tusán; and three women of Japanese heritage, two of whom identify as Nikkei.[32] I met each of these individuals through personal connections—I was put into contact with a few people who were already connected with Peruvian scholars, who then got me in contact with other Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent. Rodrigo, who, as one of the founders of Tusanaje, welcomed me into the Tusanaje family and invited me to a number of their (online) events, made it possible for me to meet and interview others who identify as Tusán. This process, while successful in providing me with seven interviews that provided great insight into my interviewees' experiences, cannot be fully generalized into the experiences of all Peruvians of Chinese or Japanese descent. As my first interviews came through academic contacts, all my interviewees have undergraduate, and often postgraduate, degrees and have had the ability to travel abroad to the United States and to a number of countries in Asia. Furthermore, in agreeing

[32] For more detailed descriptions of each interviewee, please see Appendix B.

to speak to me for an hour or more, each of these individuals have demonstrated at least some level of investment in and understanding of their Chinese or Japanese heritage, something a few interviewees have expressed that even their own family members do not have. However, ultimately, in speaking about their personal experiences, my interviewees and their stories all contribute to a greater understanding of Peruvian heritage in the context of a very present Chinese and Japanese influence, both on the individual and societal levels, as seen by the presence of the *barrio chino, chifas* (Chinese Peruvian restaurants), and Japanese contributions to the creation of Peruvian memorials.

All my interviewees are also third- and fourth-generation Peruvians, meaning their grandparents or great-grandparents were the first ones to migrate from China or Japan to Peru. This is important to delineate because the nature of migration and experiences for these family members—mostly as laborers at or near rural plantations—is different than that of these newer migrants, specifically Chinese migrants, who mostly came directly to cities starting in the 1980s.[33] This is not to say these newer migrants had an easier time adjusting to life in Peru—many Chinese came to escape poverty, struggled paying off debts, and endured the economic and political crises occurring in Peru. Nevertheless, there is a divide between those seen as Chinese and those who claim a Tusán identity, both within the actual spaces they occupy and how they see themselves and each other in the context of greater Peruvian society.[34] While these newer generations who are seen as Chinese are either immigrants from China or have parents who are both Chinese immigrants, my interviewees all have parents and grandparents who do not identify as purely Chinese. Part of this contributes to the fraught discussion of who can and cannot be

[33] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (Tusheng)," 144-7.
[34] Ibid; see Rodrigo Campos, interview with author; Lok C. D. Siu, *Memories of a Future Home : Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005); Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina."

considered Tusán, as questions of "purity" still permeate discourse among people in Chinese heritage communities. While Nikkei communities have remained more tight-knit and more likely to marry interracially, all of my interviewees are of mixed ancestry and identify themselves more closely with a Peruvian identity than a Japanese one.

Unlike in the United States, where many people who can trace their lineages to an ancestor from Asia would choose to identify themselves as "Asian Americans," the concept of being "Asian Peruvian" does not exist.[35] Not only does no individual identify in this way, but neither formal institutions, such as Chinese and Japanese cultural centers, nor official government documents (like the census) group people of Chinese and Japanese descent together. Out in public, all people who look East Asian are called *chino/a*, but this is much more reflective of an outsider's perspective on individual's phenotypic traits than a sense of shared history or political struggle.[36] For this reason, in this paper, when describing the broadest swath of people who have Chinese or Japanese heritage, I will use the term "Peruvians of Chinese or Japanese heritage." Furthermore, because of the reasons outlined in the previous paragraphs, I also opt not to use "Chinese Peruvian" or "Japanese Peruvian," as most, if not all, of these individuals identify first and foremost as purely "Peruvian." Finally, I only use "Tusán" and "Nikkei" when describing individuals or communities that I have confirmed identify as such. Creating space for oneself includes having the ability to choose how one wants to be identified; therefore, it is imperative to me to give my subjects as much space as possible to fully define for themselves their identities without pre-imposed labels.

All my interviews were done and recorded on Zoom and lasted between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours. I conducted each interview in English, Spanish, or a mix of the two languages, based

[35] Shyue, paragraph 7.
[36] Ibid.

on what was most comfortable for the interviewee. I also drew from some sources written purely in Spanish. In the body of the paper, I translate all quotes in Spanish into English, but provide the original Spanish text in the footnotes, as to preserve the integrity of the interviewee's or author's voice.

Chapter 1: Telling Family Histories

"Every generation has a history keeper…And so I would say that for my family, the history keeper was my dad. Because I'm stuck here with all his documentation, and it's going to take me two lifetimes to go through it. Yeah, I spent a long time yesterday going through it. I was exhausted at the end, though, because it's emotional. Anyway, that was my dad. And I would say my generation, that would be me." – Fabiana Chiu[37]

While we are all born with the blood of our ancestors running through our veins, the ways that their memories, traditions, cultures, and practices manifest through us are much less concrete or guaranteed. For third- and fourth-generation Peruvians with Chinese and/or Japanese heritage, tracing, learning, and maintaining the histories and traditions of these Asian ancestors can be difficult, and almost always require an intentional effort to do. As the Facebook post printed in the opening clearly states, there are many ways of being Tusán, just as there are many ways of being Nikkei, or of being Peruvian with Chinese or Japanese heritage. Very few, if any, third- and fourth-generation Peruvians of Chinese or Japanese heritage have only Chinese or Japanese ancestors, and it would be extremely unlikely to find anyone who does not identify primarily as Peruvian. Nevertheless, as my interviewees show, some have done the work to know the migration stories of their Chinese or Japanese ancestors, whether as a way of understanding a missing piece of identity or a way to supplement and contextualize the family traditions they grew up with. Being third- or fourth-generation, my interviewees' first Chinese or Japanese ancestors arrived in Peru at a time when most Asian migrants came for work at or around *haciendas*, or plantations, in more rural regions of the country, most as single men who eventually married non-Asian Peruvian women.[38] While most likely having migrated with the

[37] Chiu, interview by author, 53:49.
[38] Hu-DeHart, 108-9; Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 80.

intention to return to their home countries, for some reason or another—likely due to low wages that made it too expensive to pay for a trip home[39]—they remained in Peru. From there, these histories become one of establishing a home and raising a family in this adopted country, making space for themselves while passing on traditions and memories of their home countries and paving the way for future generations of Peruvians like my interviewees to construct full Peruvian identities for themselves.

Each of my interview questions could be categorized into three sections: family histories shared by older family members, mostly about the process of migration and assimilation into Peruvian culture; personal memories bringing interviewees to their present understanding of their own identities; and family traditions passed down from previous generations that my interviewees have now adopted for themselves. Each of these sections contribute in different and important ways towards how interviewees construct their sense of self. It is important to differentiate between histories passed down through generations and personal memories, but also to recognize the ways in which they can blend together when forming a coherent narrative of self. As David Lowenthal writes in *The Past Is a Foreign Country–Revisited,* "what we read and hear and reiterate about even the remotest of times embeds them in our own memories as firmly as things directly experienced."[40] The stories that people receive from their grandparents and parents about experiences that are not their own nevertheless become a part of their stories, sometimes to the point where they can be told in ways that do feel like things directly experienced. On the other hand, personal memories also do not reflect events exactly how they were experienced in the moment; from the moment an event happens, subsequent recall and the

[39] Hu-DeHart, 106-7.
[40] David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country – Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 292.

shifting from short-term to long-term memory will distort how the event was initially stored, not to mention that there is never a fully objective version of any given event, as each person experiencing it will take note of certain aspects of that same event. One's personal memory of an event can also be shaped by how others remember it. Whether from repeated personal recall or a collective remembrance built through conversations with others, memories are ever-changing, reliant on how the storyteller felt both during the event and in the moment they are retelling it, as well as on how they relate the event to the context of the current moment.[41] Traditions, similarly, are not static, unchanging practices situated in the past. Conversely, they exist very much in the present and are "constituted through an always reshapable ensemble of stakes, concepts, practices, virtues, commitments, identities, desires, and aspirations."[42] Using this definition, traditions influence one's sense of self as much as one's sense of self influences the ways that traditions are carried out. This serves as a reminder that, although interviewees describe traditions they inherited from family members, these traditions are not direct replicas of what has been passed down, or even of how they existed for the same individual in a past moment. These three different ways of understanding ourselves—family histories, personal memories, and practiced traditions—all contribute to a fluid construction of identity as memories are created and reconfigured, as our emotional states and contexts change, and as we learn new stories from other people. Even as my interviewees shared with me coherent narratives of their families' migration stories and what they mean to them, interviews done with family members yet to be transcribed and questions of how they themselves plan to pass on these histories and traditions reflect the unstable—but still very valuable and valid—nature of the narratives. Seen in a

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[41] Ibid, 305-12; Linda Shopes, "What is Oral History?", History Matters: The U.S. Survey on the Web, June 11, 2020, http://historymatters.gmu.edu, 6.

[42] David Scott, *Refashioning Futures: Criticism after Postcoloniality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 10.

different light, the instability of this storytelling emphasize the active manner through which identity formation and placemaking occur.

Migration Stories

Many of my interviewees have specific knowledge about at least one of their first Asian ancestors to arrive in Peru—names, dates, locations, what specific *hacienda* they worked on, what work they performed. Some, like Juan and Yuri, even have their ancestors' passports, physical pieces of evidence that they traveled from China and Japan, respectively. With this information, Yuri did some more of her own digging, finding the names of the ships her great-grandparents arrived on through online database searches.[43] In her short piece, "Nikkei limeña," written for the website Discover Nikkei, it is fascinating to watch her draw out her family tree starting from two sets of great-grandparents and the years in which they arrived in Peru.[44] Rodrigo traces his family history in another way, through his last name, sharing how the Chinese last name "Kam" was converted into that of "Campos," the last name he himself carries.[45]

Beyond the more personal aspects of these histories, interviewees often incorporated the recorded "official" history around Chinese and Japanese migration to Peru into these family narratives. For example, Yuri cites scholar Mary Fukumoto in noting that the boat Duke of Fire that her great-grandfather Kotaro Sakata arrived on held 1,174 other migrants, situating him and the rest of her family among the Japanese diaspora.[46] Isabel also incorporated other historical facts into her narrative, sharing how her great-grandfather had signed a five-year contract,

[43] Sakata, interview by author, 4:27.
[44] Yuri Sakata Gonzáles, "Nikkei limeña," Discover Nikkei, accessed September 20, 2020, paragraph 5.
[45] Campos, 25:34. Many Asian immigrants were forced to change their last names when they migrated to Peru, either when they first arrived and were given last names that were easier for Spanish-speakers to spell, or when they were baptized, as Fabiola's great-grandfather did (Galindo, 8:38).
[46] Sakata Gonzáles, "Nikkei limeña," paragraph 6.

commonly known as *la contrata*, to work on a Peruvian plantation.[47] By combining the family history Isabel remembers with the academic research on these migration patterns, we can analyze how her great-grandfather's choices may or may not have diverged from that of other Chinese indentured laborers whose narratives made it into the history books. Isabel's great-grandfather worked as a carpenter and was paid more than a typical field hand, enabling him to save enough money to not get stuck in the cycle of exploitation and re-contracting that many other Chinese laborers faced and start a small restaurant after his first contract ended. Isabel also noted how it seemed that her great-grandfather's contract outlined a possibility of receiving a trip back to China at the end of the contract, though generally in this time period Chinese who came to Peru found themselves unable to return because it was too expensive.[48] It is hard to know whether Isabel's great-grandfather stayed for this reason, or if he had the opportunity to return to China—whether due to his contract or because he saved enough money to pay his own way back—and simply decided to make a life in Peru, having married a *mestiza* woman at a young age. Fabiana, on the other hand, actually relied on the knowledge found in academic scholarship to ascertain more information about her family's migration history. As she notes in her piece "China Latina," though she does not know for sure what work her great-grandfather performed when he first arrived in Peru, migration patterns at the time he arrived very likely point to him having worked on a plantation.[49] By mixing the knowledge provided by these various sources—family oral histories, archival documents, and academic work on Chinese and Japanese migration to Peru—interviewees have been able to form a fuller picture of their family members' travels and first years in Peru.

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[47] Isabel Blondet, interview by author, July 14, 2020, 7:12.

[48] Benjamín N Narváez, "Becoming Sino-Peruvian: Post-Indenture Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Peru," *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2016): 2-4.

[49] Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina," 175.

Just as the specificities of these histories contribute to how people choose to tell their family's migration histories, a lack of knowledge can similarly contribute to how a person understands their racial and ethnic identities. From the beginning of our interview, when I asked Fabiola about her family's migration history, she told me about her Japanese great-grandfather and later identified herself as "half native" and "half Japanese."[50] This is interesting because she is much more than that; as she herself told me, her grandmother is *mestiza* in the traditional sense—Indigenous and white. Additionally, near the end of interview, she off-handedly mentioned that her dad had a Chinese background: "But the other thing is that I'm really concentrating a lot on my mother's side because I never got the chance to see with my dad's side. But I know that my dad had a Chinese background, and I don't carry that last name because somehow he had to change it, but my great-grandfather on my father's side was Chinese, I don't know anything about it."[51] Having little to no information on her paternal history, Fabiola fashioned an identity based on the histories she did know, actively choosing to call herself "half Japanese" but not "part Chinese." However, she also later added on, "I think I don't identify as Asian, but I do talk about it because that's the part of my background in my history that I know the most."[52] Here, it is important to note how, although her Japanese identity is important to her, Fabiola does not identify with that broader category of "Asian," which does not exist as a racial category on official documents such as the census, nor is an identity any of my interviewees used to describe themselves. Like all my interviewees, Fabiola knows and sees herself as Peruvian first, with her Japanese background coming as a secondary identifier about which she can speak

[50] Galindo, 10:23.
[51] Ibid, 33:11.
[52] Ibid, 47:51.

authoritatively. Her identity instead becomes one built from both the stories passed down to her and personal experiences growing up in Peru, and later the United States.

In contrast to Fabiola, Karen knows the least about her Japanese heritage in relation to other family histories, yet this history is the one that has most affected her throughout her life. Her father passed away when she was four years old, leaving her non-Japanese mother to try to develop and maintain for her children a connection to the Nikkei community. As Karen described it, her mother had learned some Japanese-style cooking and continued to pass on culture that way, but their trips to Japanese Peruvian community events lessened as she got older and her mother did not have time to take her.[53] Speaking about her father was also difficult for her mother, so even when Karen did ask questions, she was often unwilling to answer them, or only responded with incomplete answers. Though Karen was able to distract herself with her studies while in college, after she graduated, she was once again confronted with questions about her heritage she could not ignore: "Finally, the moment came where kept asking myself the question—what is my paternal history?"[54] She had wanted to travel to Japan, following the path that many other Nikkei in the Japanese diaspora took in the late 20th and early 21st centuries during an economic downturn in Peru and an opening of immigration policy in Japan, but decided against it, citing both the economic, but more importantly emotional, costs of traveling.[55] She still hopes to one day travel to Yamagata, the region where her ancestors migrated from, and hopes to find more concrete answers, either from family members she may meet or documents confirming her family's existence in the region.

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[53] Karen Oba, interview by author, 19:05.
[54] Ibid, 5:34.
Translated from: "al final es que llegó un momento en el que me preguntaba siempre es ¿cuál es la situación de mi familia paterna?"
[55] Takenaka, "Transnational Community," 1460-1.

One historical moment of much importance for Nikkei and other Peruvians of Japanese descent, both on a community and individual level, was the deportation to the United States and internment of Japanese living in Peru during World War II. As with 1,800 other Japanese living in Peru, both first generation immigrants and their Peruvian-born children, my interviewees' family members were kidnapped by the Peruvian police and sent to Crystal City, Texas. Peru had intended to deport all 30,000 Japanese from the country, and though they did not fully succeed in that goal, the Japanese community in Peru suffered great losses and setbacks. Furthermore, as an ally of the US, Peru annulled all diplomatic ties with Japan starting in 1941, making Japan a de-facto enemy of the country and opening the door for legal anti-Japanese violence and restrictions on Japanese community gatherings.[56] Even after the war ended, the Japanese population in Peru was denied any opportunities of healing. Because Japan had been defeated and all people of Japanese descent were seen as enemies, the Peruvian government continued to shut down Japanese schools and confiscate property.[57] Those interned in Texas were also not permitted to return to Peru, preventing a physical reunification of family members.[58] Many returned to Japan, now separated from their children and the lives they had built in a country they had hoped to call home. As Doris Moromisato writes in *Crónicas de mujeres nikkei* in 2020*,* "this is still an open wound in regards to Japanese history in Peru, and only the Peruvian government would be able to ask forgiveness of the Japanese government and Japanese descendants living in Peru."[59] Deportation and internment, as well as a 1940 student-led riot destroying Japanese businesses and homes, both revealed to the Nikkei community a need to integrate more into Peruvian

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[56] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 92.
[57] Sakata Gonzáles, "Nikkei limeña," paragraph 15.
[58] Moromisato, 93.
[59] Ibid, 94.
Translated from: "esta es una herida aún abierta en la memoria de Perú y solo un Gobierno fue capaz de pedir perdón al Gobierno japonés y a sus descendientes en Perú."

society as to not be seen as a threat, but also to maintain intra-community solidarity as a way of protecting themselves. This fear of otherness carried over to the 1990s with the election of Alberto Fujimori into the presidency, when many individuals of Japanese descent who may have wanted to support him did not for fear of racial backlash.[60] Nevertheless, Japanese Peruvian businesses, community centers, and schools continue to make their mark on Peruvian space, something I will discuss more in the following chapter.

On the individual level, in addition to having an awareness of the harm done to their families during WWII, both Fabiola and Yuri have read the physical letters sent from the Texas internment camp back home to relatives in Peru. Their two narratives around their family members being captured, deported to Texas, and then sent to Japan at the end of the war more clearly than any other anecdotes shared by interviewees show how national and global events create patterns among these individual family histories. Fabiola's great-grandfather left behind the rest of his family when he was taken away, while Yuri's grandfather was one of the two children left behind when both his parents and two siblings were taken by the Peruvian police. When speaking about the letters, both Fabiola and Yuri noted the US government censorship that marred their family members' words. For Fabiola, there was a stamp from Immigration and Naturalization Services and marks that indicated that "they would cross whatever they would talk about bad things about the camp. So all [her great-grandfather] says in the letter is nice things."[61] For Yuri, it was the words "enemy mail examined" printed on the back of the letter written by her great-aunt Fujie, though in these letters she was able to express how much she missed Lima.[62] At the end of the war, all their family members were sent to Japan, a country that

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[60] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 93-4.
[61] Galindo, 20:59.
[62] Sakata Gonzáles, "Nikkei limeña," paragraph 16.

neither Yuri's great-aunt nor great-uncle had ever been. It was not until after a period of time that those who were deported were even allowed to return to Peru. Though Fabiola's great-grandfather never returned to Peru because of the way the country treated him, Yuri's great-aunt had expressed a great interest in returning to her country of birth. None of them, however, ever returned to Peru, leaving the family members still living there to rebuild a life without them.

The Burdens and Joys of Collecting Memories and Forming Narratives

The knowledge my interviewees have about their families is not a given, and is definitely not something necessarily common to all Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent. As third- and fourth-generation Peruvians with college educations and often postgraduate degrees, they are uniquely situated in a moment well-suited for this type of self-reflection and identity formation. Fabiana herself reflected on her own positionality during my interview with her. "There is not a lot going on between generations, so it was a luxury that I got to talk to my dad," she said, "there was really no time to reflect. That's for the fourth- and fifth-generations to do."[63] Though her father accumulated memories through the many photographs he took, Fabiana finds herself now tasked with the actual processing, archiving, and interpreting these histories.

Even with a potentially greater amount of time and resources available to these third- and fourth-generation Peruvians, there are still numerous barriers they face in constructing an accurate and full family history. Though an outlier among my interviewees, Isabel's story very likely reflects that of many other Peruvians with some amount of Chinese or Japanese ancestry stemming from a single Chinese or Japanese grandparent or great-grandparent. For her family, while this Chinese ancestry is recognized (though even the existence of a Chinese great-

[63] Chiu, interview by author, 6:20.

grandfather feels like more of a mythology for some of her cousins than a historical fact), Isabel does not feel that it has significantly affected how her cousins, or even aunts and uncles, see themselves. Isabel recounted a time when at school all students with Chinese ancestry were asked to go stand on the stage during a celebration of the Chinese community. Knowing about this Chinese great-grandfather, Isabel went up on stage. Her mother was shocked when she recounted this story, and when she told other members of the extended family, they reacted similarly, even making fun of her because she identified in some way as being Chinese.[64]

This anecdote presents two challenges in the exploration of this identity as third- or fourth-generation, especially for those whose parents and grandparents did not have strong ties to larger Chinese or Japanese community centers: one, an increasing detachment from identifying at all as Chinese or Japanese, and connectedly, a decreasing number of people available to pass down the knowledge of this heritage. As Isabel mentioned, even her mother—who knew and remembered best out of the members of her generation this great-grandfather and his stories of migrating from China to Peru—had been shocked that Isabel had felt compelled to put her Chinese ancestry on display at school. The fact that even she did not feel connected to this Chinese heritage would certainly make it harder for her daughter to know where to start looking. For Isabel's cousins, the task was even harder. Not only was Isabel's mom the eldest child and the one who best remembered the siblings' grandfather, but she was also the only one not embarrassed about her Chinese heritage.[65] As I will discuss in a later chapter, regardless of a feeling of a shared Peruvian identity, having East Asian phenotypic traits or an Asian-sounding last name still serves as a marker of otherness, of a reason why one does not fully belong in Peruvian society. Though not representative of the sentiments carried by my interviewees—

[64] Blondet, July 14, 2020, 26:08.
[65] Ibid, 1:04:14.

likely another bias of my interview population and who would be willing and interested in talking to me about Chinese or Japanese identity—it is certainly understandable why a family trying to more deeply integrate into Peruvian society would deny their Chinese heritage and encourage their children to do the same.

Yet, the act of remembering and retelling does not fade so easily. Although Isabel remembers always having had some type of interest in her Chinese great-grandfather and her own Chinese identity, she credits her studying anthropology and doing a project on migration as the factor that led her to want to more deeply explore the details of her family's migration history vis-à-vis her great-grandfather. One of her cousins was compelled to learn about her own Chinese background when she learned that her son was going to marry a Chinese Peruvian girl.[66] While these motivations contribute strongly towards the carrying forward of these histories for future generations, things are lost when these revelations that require the younger generations to press older generations for these histories come later in life. As Isabel noted, "I regret that all of the uncles and aunts that were older than my grandmother and that lived longer I didn't get to interview them about my great-grandfather."[67] By waiting until members of the younger generation decide on their own to learn about their family histories, some of the people closest to the sought-after history will no longer be available to share their stories when that time comes. Furthermore, since her great-grandfather's family up until her mother lived in rural areas, any recorded documentation either does not exist or, like with her mother's birth certificate, is very difficult to acquire.[68] Again, this requires time, resources, and an active interest and commitment to finding these materials, something that individuals of earlier generations may not have had.

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[66] Ibid, 3:36. I use "Chinese Peruvian" here as a reflection of how Isabel described this girl.
[67] Ibid, 1:14:42.
[68] Ibid, 1:13:40.

Then, by the time someone in the family does have the ability and interest in doing this memorialization, the people and documents needed to piece together full histories may be inaccessible for a different reason.

The experience of piecing together these histories also comes with the possibility—or maybe the guarantee—that you will never get the full story. With the death of her father, Karen was denied that direct access to learning about her Japanese ancestry. In addition to simply wanting to feel more connected to her paternal side, the push to learn and preserve this history came from another family member—her son. Now eight years old, her son Kazuo has been asking questions about his grandfather and his own Japanese name: "He started to ask me: Mom, who was my grandfather? And why did you give me the name Kazuo? Why is it a Japanese name? Why didn't you give me a Spanish name?"[69] In order to be able to answer these questions, Karen realized that she herself needed to do some more searching. However, because both her father and his parents have already passed away, and because the city where she lives, Huancayo, is located more than eight hours away from where people who belong to her grandparents' Japanese community now live, the majority of the history she now knows comes from her mom, who does not have Japanese ancestry. Karen very clearly expressed the pain she felt in not knowing more about her family history on her father's side, the pain in knowing that she would likely never know the full story. "I still don't feel complete," she said, "I'm very aware, very complete on my mother's side, but it's all very unclear on my dad's side. And this has affected me a lot."[70]

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[69] Oba, 10:03.
Translated from: "Él me empieza a preguntar: Mami, quién era mi abuelo? Y por qué tú me has puesto Kazuo? Por qué Kazuo es un nombre japonés? No me he puesto un nombre en español?"
[70] Ibid, 12:04.
Translated from: Hasta ahorita yo no me siento tan completa. Es como que la mitad femenina materna está muy consciente, muy completa. Pero la mitad masculina y paterna es todavía muy difusa. Entonces, este me influye muchísimo."

For others who may physically have access to the people who could share stories of family history face yet another challenge, that of these family members' willingness to tell these stories. Though not necessarily part of her personal experience, Karen reflected on how older generations may hesitate to speak about the painful memories they hold. In her case, she learned from her mother that her father's parents had committed suicide as a result of the deep mistreatment of Japanese laborers, specifically ones coming from the region of Yamagata, where her grandparents migrated from.[71] The deep pain they must have felt to take their own lives represented for her the broader feelings of shame that would push people to actively refuse to remember or acknowledge the past. Just last year Fabiola was motivated to fly to Colorado to interview her great-aunt, who, as the oldest person in the family, had made very intentional efforts to get to know the younger members. During the interview she faced resistance to answering some questions, something Fabiola guessed was most likely because of some embarrassing or painful moments she may have not wanted to share. "I think that in a way [that] didn't allow her to tell her own stories of what it was like for her even though she lost her father to [the detention camps]," Fabiola lamented, not only because she was unable to access these memories, but also because she felt her great-aunt was restricted from being able to process her own pain. Even beyond that, stories of her great-aunt watching her father being taken away to be deported to the US was traumatic in it of itself: "You know, she told me about when she saw through the window when the army came to the house and they were pointing guns at her dad, and her dad just took a little paper bag with a shirt and an underwear."[72] However, it was through these conversations and her active interest that Fabiola got to see the letters written by her great-grandfather from the internment camps, the closest form of direct contact she could have with

[71] Ibid, 14:54; Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 84.
[72] Galindo, 20:09.

him. Fabiola also recorded the interviews, though has not yet gotten around to transcribing them, or even listening to them in full—yet another task that requires time as well as emotional labor.

Even for family members who want to tell their stories and make connections with their Peruvian relatives of younger generations, many face barriers of lost connections and physical distance. In her more concerted searches to find out more about her father's family, two years ago, Karen got in touch with a much older cousin and her daughter. She had visited them in person for a while, but with both the pandemic and her work schedule, those visits have turned into online WhatsApp conversations. "It's been hard," she lamented, "because there's a lack of trust too, no? Because it's been so many years."[73] While both sides are interested in building a relationship, circumstance and time has made it difficult to do so without considerable effort. Without a well-established foundation, the three women struggled to advance their relationship when it moved fully online. Fabiana, too, has had difficulties connecting with family members not living in her direct area. In her narrative "China Latina," published in 2002, she wrote about these letters her family received from a great-aunt living in China asking them to write back. At the time, she had still been unable to locate this family, since the letter was at least 60 years old, but at the time of our interview, she excitedly shared that, after over 10 years of searching, she had finally gotten in contact with the family. As she told it, "there could be a second chapter [of "China Latina"], although it's still being written as it happens, because the woman who wrote those letters, by the time we get there, she happened to die a few months before we went there, but she died knowing that we had reconnected and that we were there. And I think her response to the family was, 'what took you so long?' She had always wondered what had happened to the

[73] Oba, 16:20.
Translated from: "Este es resulta difícil…porque hay desconfianza también, no? Ya han pasado muchísimo años."

family."[74] Although the two families finally found each other, it took Fabiana 10 years of time and effort to do so, something that not everyone has the ability, persistence, or interest to do. Furthermore, this long saga again reminds us that making these connections and getting first-hand oral histories will always be a race against the clock. As Lowenthal notes, death so often succeeds in extinguishing private memories, rendering them completely inaccessible to anyone else.[75] Nevertheless, one can hope that this second chapter and transnational reconnection of two families thanks to Fabiana's persistence will facilitate sharing of old memories and a mutual creation of new ones to be passed down for future generations.

Yuri, on the other hand, had access to both sources of family history and culture as well as family members willing to share those things. In 2000, due to poor economic conditions in Peru, Yuri's parents left for Japan to find work, leaving Yuri and her brother in Lima with their paternal, Japanese grandparents. Her grandmother was actively involved with various Japanese organizations in the area, bringing her grandchildren to these gatherings and getting them acquainted to the Japanese community in Lima from a young age.[76] During our interview, Yuri also observed how oftentimes it is the women who are charged with passing on "the culture," most likely because of their role in taking care of the children. "Food is another way to pass on culture, and [my grandmother] was the one who cooked the food,"[77] Yuri added, revealing again the various ways that family history can be transmitted beyond oral or written narrative. Doris Moromisato, a second-generation Peruvian and self-identified Nikkei, also writes about the added role for Nikkei women as keepers of memory and tradition. The dedication in *Crónicas de*

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[74] Chiu, interview by author, 2:51.
[75] Lowenthal, 311.
[76] Sakata, interview by author, 16:09.
[77] Ibid, 17:07.
Translated from: "Entonces la comida que es uno de los vehículos de transmisión cultural, está pues en manos de ella."

mujeres nikkei is addressed to all Nikkei women, "because they carry on their shoulders / the memory and future of our Nikkei community."[78] While many of these women were able to work outside the home and break stereotypical gender roles, their experiences, especially those of immigrant women, were unique to those of men, as they were still charged with preserving Japanese culture within the household. This is not to say, of course, that men do not participate in this cultural sharing, but rather that women like Yuri's grandmother who do take on much of the childcare and homemaking have that increased responsibility of sharing cultural artefacts with their (grand)children. In taking on that responsibility and choosing to deeply immerse her grandchildren in Japanese culture at home and in the greater community, Yuri's grandmother cleared a path for Yuri herself to go on and discover further the oral and written narratives of her family's history.

For all my Tusán interviewees currently living in the US, this migration served as an important turning point in their understanding of what it means to be a Peruvian of Chinese descent. No matter where they live, they identify first and foremost as Peruvian; however, in the United States, most people have a specific image of what a Peruvian person looks like, an image incommensurate with Asian heritage. As Fabiana lamented, "you know, why is it that if you put beside me, you know, a person who appears to be white, and another person who appears to be Indigenous, and another person who appears to be Afro-descendent—so then why is it that the four of us, I may be picked as the one that is not from Peru?"[79] Though these Tusanes may have been singled out in various moments during their childhood, their Peruvian identities were rarely ever questioned; US racial categories, however, do not make space for one to identify as fully

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[78] Moromisato, *Crónicas de mujeres nikkei.*
Translated from: "porque sostienen sobre sus hombros / la memoria y el destino de nuestra comunidad nikkei."
[79] Chiu, interview by author, 41:05.

Peruvian while also having Chinese heritage. While this caused pain and a renegotiation of an already marginalized identity, the growing field of Asian American Studies present in the US encouraged Fabiana to more actively do academic work around her identity. As Fabiana recalled, during her childhood in Lima, the only mention of Chinese people in Peru in her history classes were as indentured labors. "There we were, frozen in time as indentured servants or 'coolies,'" she wrote in "China Latina," "and there I was, suffering from a seemingly communitywide amnesia, with no known connection to a history no one seemed to want."[80] This was even the case for Fabiana's school, Juan XXIII, a school co-founded by her grandfather with the intention of providing quality education to Tusán children.[81] Upon her arrival in Boston, however, where she worked in a museum organizing archives, she encountered an article by Mark Lai, a scholar known to be the father of Chinese American studies. She reflected, "for the first time, I see my people reflected in an article, in a scholarly article… I feel like, OK, I guess we're important enough to be part of his article."[82] This launched her towards work with other Asian American communities, where she ultimately applied for a fellowship to travel to Peru and interview her own family members to tell their stories.

A final piece of information that some of my interviewees noted in their journeys of understanding their racial heritage was DNA tests and the ways that they do and do not ultimately affect how they see themselves. Fabiola herself reflected during our interview on the difference between the information from her DNA test and the identities she most talks about, positing that her knowledge of her Japanese history, rather than genetic makeup, allowed her to talk more extensively about her Japanese background. "For some reason before a few years ago,

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[80] Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina," 175.
[81] Chiu, interview by author, 20:42.
[82] Ibid, 36:51. Here, Fabiana is referring to Him Mark Lai, a historian of Chinese America. More information can be found at https://himmarklai.org.

I was always trying to bring my Asian heritage into the mix, like I wanted to make it very clear, like, oh, yeah, but I have some Japanese in me," she said, "and then I realized, well, if I'm going to go by my DNA results, I should say I'm Indian and I am a native person, even though it's only forty nine percent or whatnot… I would like to know more about other parts. So, you know, my Iberic [side], what part of Spain was my family from? What was that story? And I don't know."[83] On the other hand, Isabel used DNA tests that indicated heritage from the south of China to confirm family history about how her great-grandfather had lived in Guangzhou, a city in the south. As she tells it, this supports her theory that her family had lived in the Siam Peninsula during the Taiping Rebellion in the 1850s and ultimately fled to Guangzhou before her great-grandfather migrated to Peru.[84] While still based in speculation, this DNA test not only added a piece of information to her understanding of her family history, but also allowed her to continue to refine a family history she could pass on to others.

Storytelling and Passing It into the Future

In bringing together all these various threads of information—Fabiola and Fabiana's interviews with family members, Fabiana's father's many photographs, letters from Fabiola's grandfather and Yuri's great-aunt, and Juan's grandfather's passport—in addition to their own and their living family members' embodied histories, these individuals have crafted and shaped a narrative around this part of their identity. Recalling the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, my interviewees serve as their generations' history keepers, giving them a certain type of authority over the migration story for generations to come. Both Fabiana and Yuri have published works detailing these family histories. These narratives have taken on a sort of

[83] Galindo, 47:12.
[84] Blondet, July 14, 2020, 4:41.

rehearsed nature, as though they have practiced telling their stories enough times that they know the exact order in which to share each detail, when to drop each name, and more generally how to tell a coherent narrative that a reader or listener can follow and maintain interest in. For example, in our interview, Yuri deftly told me of how her great-grandfather Kotaro Sakata arrived on the ship Duke of Fire, while another great-grandfather, Shiro Nakagawa, arrived on Anyo Maru, replicating exactly what she wrote in "Nikkei limeña."[85] Although Yuri, like everyone else, has more than two great-grandparents, these two and the specifics of their migration stories will be the ones memorialized in writing. Lowenthal writes about how "to communicate a coherent narrative, we not only reshape the old but create a new past," selecting out the pieces that fit into the narrative one is trying to shape.[86] This does not deny the credibility of any of these stories, but can actually further strengthen an individual's understanding of themself and the stories of the past that influence who they are in the present. In needing to choose what will create this "coherent narrative" of identity, my interviewees are creating a past that best helps define their identities. For Isabel, though she does not have any concrete, factual documents about her great-grandfather's life in China or migration to Peru, her trip to Guangzhou inspired her to write poetry and other creative writing around her great-grandfather. Here, the reimagination and recreation of her great-grandfather's experiences migrating at the age of 15 from his home to another country on the other side of the world are a reflection of her own identity and experiences as she puts her own voice into his narratives. These, too, while not a retelling based in names of ships or archival documents, exist as memorialized moments of ancestral migration stories, one that not only helps develop one's own sense of self but can also shape the narratives for future generations.

[85] Sakata, interview by author, 3:50; Sakata Gonzáles, "Nikkei limeña".
[86] Lowenthal, 323.

Of my interviewees, three have children, all of whom have different relationships with their now-one more step removed Chinese or Japanese background. For some of them, passing on the family history they worked so hard to uncover now presents a new challenge, as moving away from Peru adds another layer of diasporic identity for their children. This presents itself most clearly with Fabiana's children, both of whom were raised in New York. While they are aware of both their Chinese and Peruvian heritages, the Peruvian identity takes precedence, whether that be through speaking Spanish at home, eating at Peruvian restaurants in the city, or visiting Peru every five years or so.[87] This, of course, makes sense—Fabiana very much identifies first and foremost as Peruvian and has family and friends living in Peru, not China. The truth is that Fabiana, and most Tusanes, grew up speaking Spanish (and sometimes English), but not any dialect of Chinese, and that most "Chinese food" eaten in Peru came from *chifas*, Chinese Peruvian restaurants that combined the two cuisines, and not Chinese cuisine cooked by immigrants from China like one be more likely to find in New York City's Chinatown. The fact of the matter is that it simply would not make sense to overemphasize a Chinese heritage as something separate without creating a false narrative of what growing up as Tusán in Peru looks like. Nevertheless, Fabiana has implicitly passed on customs and traditions that come from having Chinese heritage, such as burning a candle every morning and praying to their ancestors or wearing a jade necklace.[88] In this sense, the passing on of tradition mirrors a lot of what my interviewees themselves experienced growing up. As Juan, who does not have children but shared from his own childhood, described, while some things may have to be passed on intentionally, others are naturally passed on without even being formally recognized as "Chinese things." Reflecting on one example, Juan said: "there are so many things sometimes that I just

[87] Chiu, interview by author, 45:01.
[88] Ibid, 49:07.

assume are like, oh, these are just like quotes from my family. And then I've made friends from Guangdong Province or from China and they told me like, oh, no, that's like a Chinese thing."[89] In looking at tradition as a dynamic practice that changes based on one's identities, values, contexts, and desires, it becomes much less important to pinpoint exactly from where each tradition comes instead of actively practicing it and keeping it alive. On the other hand, traveling to Japan taught Yuri that words and names she had seen as directly connected to Japan were actually antiquated and not reflective of modern Japanese customs at all, further evidence of how "tradition" is not and cannot be static. For example, she had learned that "otearai" was the word for bathroom, but it turned out that all Japanese now used a new word for that: "I was taught at home to say *otearai*…so I thought I knew Japanese and when I went to Japan and said *otearai* no one knew what that was!"[90] She continued, "it seems like some things have just been frozen time, and that's really interesting to me."[91]

Fabiana further emphasized the difference between customs and history and how just because one is passed on does not mean the other will naturally follow. While one does not need to know the background of the customs in order to practice them, the intentional sharing of stories and histories is a different undertaking altogether. For Fabiana, that looks like sneaking in some family history lessons when she can: "one of the things that I've done, cheeky me, is when I have an opportunity to do a presentation and there's a PowerPoint or something, I'll ask the younger one to edit it for me. I don't really need much help, but he's going through it is like, 'oh are there any typos, please, could you tell me?' And I think in hindsight, I think that he's picking

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[89] Jhong Chung, 44:16.
[90] Sakata, interview by author, 1:06:05.
Translated from: "a mí en casa me enseñaron a decir este *otearai*…Entonces yo pensaba que sabía japonés y luego fui a Japón y dije *otearai* y nadie sabía que era *otearai*!"
[91] Ibid, 1:07:14.
Translated from: "es como que hay algunas costumbres que se han quedado un poco congelaste del tiempo, creo. Y es interesante."

[it] up."[92] Through this effort, her son is actively reading the stories unique to his own family, something you cannot get from official history books or even general customs practiced on a daily basis. They can, however, be intertwined with the traditions already practiced and personal experiences growing up as someone with a Chinese background to enhance the understanding of Chinese identity her kids may or may not already have.

A more explicit passing on of heritage comes from naming. Last names, of course, are inherited and not necessarily chosen, but nevertheless are significant markers of a Chinese or Japanese heritage, even if one did not inherit many traditions or historical knowledge about their family's past. In a panel for Tusanaje, Jair Wong, who identifies as Afrotusán, talked about how questions from his classmates about his last name prompted him to dig deeper into his own family history. "It's easy to see that I'm of African descent just from looking at the mirror, but that isn't enough to know fully about someone's heritage," he said, reflecting on how before going to school it never occurred to him that his last name was unusual. He continued, "you hear a Chinese last name, and it doesn't match up with my physical appearance. So my interest in learning more came from my classmates asking me, 'well your last name is Chinese, but you're Black, how did that mix come about?'"[93] Karen's son Kazuo asked similar questions about his name, questions that led Karen to ask those more in-depth questions probing into her Japanese heritage. Giving her child a Japanese first name was a very intentional decision, one actually suggested by Kazuo's father in memory of Karen's father.[94] While this does not ensure that

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[92] Chiu, interview by author, 55:45.

[93] Diálogos de Tusanidad | Sesión 2: ¿Afrotusanes? Coincidencias y Tensiones de Dos Comunidades, 2020, 38:39. Translated from: "El ser descendiente afro bastaba con mirarme al espejo y ya no era suficiente para darse cuenta uno de dónde provenía o de dónde venía… puedes escuchar un apellido chino y no correspondía la apariencia física. Entonces a raíz de quizás alguna pregunta de los compañeros me decían, 'oye, tú apellido chino, eres negro, ¿de dónde viene esta mezcla?' y ahí es donde me surge esta curiosidad."

[94] Oba, 28:46.

Kazuo himself will carry on stories of how the Japanese side of his family made a life in Peru into his adulthood, his curiosity at such a young age based on the uniqueness of his name point to the many ways a parent can intentionally leave traces of one's heritage in every aspect of one's life.

Regardless of how they reached the point of knowledge about family history they now possess, the people quoted here have had both the interest and access to bring these histories to light and share them with me; even then, so much has been lost from generation to generation. Memories themselves can be altered, both intentionally and unintentionally, and are processed and reprocessed with every retelling.[95] Nevertheless, while one's narrative around their Chinese or Japanese heritage may not align with the exact facts of the event—though any memories told can never tell a full, objective story, no matter how closely to the actual event they are shared—simply having this narrative allows one to form an identity and find community around these stories. One simple example comes from Tusanaje's "Diálogos de Tusanidad," two installments from which I pull stories and reflections from the Tusán panelists. In these videos, the questions "where is your family from?" and "who is Tusán?" are welcomed and seen as opportunities to piece together a collective identity from the various pieces of family histories they have each accumulated on their own. Together, these narratives challenge the dominant recorded histories that place people of Chinese and Japanese heritage as agricultural workers, frozen in time and unable to make a full life for themselves in Peru. In the next chapter, I explore the very active ways in which Tusanes and Nikkei share cultural identity at home and in community spaces and how the spaces they create for themselves emphasize the notion that Chineseness and Japaneseness are fully commensurate, and even integral, to Peruvianness as a whole.

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[95] Lowenthal, 322.

Chapter 2: Claiming Space and Making Place in Peru

"I'm not first Asian then Peruvian. You know, I think I'm first Peruvian and then everything else that comes with it" – Fabiola Galindo[96]

"I knew that I was Nikkei, I knew what it meant to be Nikkei and that it was a point of pride because the Japanese cultural organizations presented it that way. We celebrated being Nikkei as a unique aspect of *peruanidad*." – Yuri Sakata[97]

Regardless of the terminology my interviewees used to describe their relationships to their Chinese or Japanese heritage, one identification remained the same: all identify strongly with being Peruvian. Having Chinese or Japanese heritage does not clash with being Peruvian; it simply enhances their Peruvian identity, and *peruanidad* as a whole. As we see with Yuri's quote, being Nikkei is essential to her being Peruvian—one is not separate from the other. With Asian presence in the country since the mid-1800s and consistent miscegenation starting from the first wave of migration—specifically between Chinese men and Peruvian women due to the largely-male first wave of Chinese immigration[98]—what is typically seen as traditional Chinese and Japanese culture has intermixed with the other cultures and traditions already present in the country. This recalls Peter Burke's definition of cultural hybridization, where it is not simply Chinese or Japanese culture existing alongside or assimilating into Peruvian culture, but rather folding into and contributing to the sense of *peruanidad* that Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have. On the other hand, Chinese and Japanese culture has not simply faded into the background; while schoolchildren may only hear about people of Asian descent as coolie

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[96] Galindo, 47:51.
[97] Sakata, 19:26.
Translated from: "Sabía que yo era Nikkei, sabía que era ser Nikkei y también comprendía que eso era un motivo de orgullo, porque las asociaciones [japonesas] nos lo presentaban de esa manera, celebrábamos nuestra particularidad dentro del espectro de lo que es la peruanidad"
[98] Benjamín N Narváez, "Becoming Sino-Peruvian: Post-Indenture Chinese in Nineteenth-Century Peru," *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies* 29.3 (2016): 19. Narváez states that "Chinese immigration during the coolie era was 99.9 percent male, meaning sexual relations and marriage for most Chinese had to be with non-Asians."

laborers, the existence of Chinese and Japanese cultural institutions and businesses, especially in cities like Lima, make clear how communities Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have created and maintained for themselves in present day. This chapter seeks to tell a story of the balance of—and the active work done by individuals of Chinese and Japanese descent to balance—the many identities they hold and the ways they express them.

Chinese Community and the Making of Tusán Identity

The first and most obvious sign of a Chinese presence is the *barrio chino* in Lima, the third-oldest Chinatown in the Americas, after the ones in San Francisco, USA and Havana, Cuba.[99] Spanning several streets, its central street is Calle Capón, named after the slaughterhouses that held pigs and chickens. As more Chinese-owned businesses opened up on the street, Capón quickly became associated with Chinese occupation of the area.[100] Even in the earliest years of Chinese and Japanese migration to Peru, after completing their original contracts for agricultural labor, many Asian migrants moved to urban areas, filling a variety of occupations, but most importantly becoming small shopkeepers. In the 1850s, the Peruvian government established a central marketplace near Capón named *La Concepción,* attracting Chinese migrants as a place for them to both work and live.[101] A decade later, Chinese merchants from California moved to *La Concepción*, opening up commercial houses that imported and sold Chinese and North American goods, bringing both more Chinese people and products to the area. Though Chinese communities in Lima faced various waves of racism, including attacks in 1909

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[99] López-Calvo, 29.
[100] Chuhue, 18. "En ella había establecimientos donde "capaban" (quitaban las criadillas) a ciertos animales. Se capaba a los cerdos para engordarlos y luego venderlos junto con gallinas, pavos y patos." ("There were establishments that castrated ("capar" in Spanish) animals. They castrated pigs to fatten them up and later sold them with chicken, turkey, and duck."); Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 72.
[101] Blanchard, 65; Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 70-1.

and 1917, Capón remained a space for Chinese homes, businesses, restaurants, community centers, and theaters.[102] Despite this destruction, large import houses managed to prosper, using their success to establish the narrative of a modern, respectable Chinese subject living in Peru. Numbers of second- and third-generation Peruvians of mixed race descent also increased, altering the identity of the *barrio chino* to one more welcoming of non-Chinese individuals.[103] In the 1970s, however, wealthy Chinese began leaving the area, with the businessmen moving to the United States and Canada and younger folks moving to residential areas outside of the Chinese quarter, later exacerbating the nation-wide economic depression for those living in Capón. Over the next 20 years, Lima's *barrio chino* fell into disrepair, an area avoided by most Peruvians. However, in 1991, Lima's Centro Histórico, where the *barrio chino* is located, was named a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site, mandating the space to be protected and directing government and community resources to restoring it to its prior cultural significance. With this restoration project, the *barrio chino* was also converted into a tourist site, bringing much-needed sources of income to the area.[104] Today, the *barrio chino* remains a space for Peruvians both with and without Chinese heritage to enjoy popular Peruvian cuisine from *chifas*, buy Chinese ingredients for cooking and other goods, and otherwise engage in Chinese cultural activities.[105]

Starting in 1881 with the Sociedad Colonial de Beneficencia China (later to become Tonghuy Chongkoc, or the Chinese Charitable Society of Peru),[106] community centers have served as spaces for Peruvians of Chinese descent to gather and to generally promote Chinese

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[102] Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 74-7; Chuhue, 20-55.
[103] Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 76-7.
[104] Chuhue, 65-70.
[105] For a more in-depth discussion of the history of the Lima Chinatown, see Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru and the Changing Peruvian Chinese Community(Ies)."
[106] Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 73.

culture. As Rodrigo noted in our interview, there are more than 30 organizations in Lima dedicated to people of Chinese descent, though there is a separation between Chinese organizations and organizations for Peruvians with Chinese descent. The former caters much more towards more recent Chinese immigrants and often excludes Tusanes, though Rodrigo mentioned that to him some Tusán organizations and Tusán individuals "are so Peruvian that they approach Chinese as stereotypes," joining their Peruvian peers in seeing Chinese immigrants and second-generation Peruvians of Chinese descent as foreign and unassimilable.[107] Nevertheless, the Tonghuy Chongkoc remains a fixture in the Lima Chinatown, especially as new Chinese immigrants continue to arrive in Lima, providing them with books in various Chinese dialects, Chinese furniture, and even housing for low income immigrants.[108] For Tusanes, the Centro Cultural Peruano Chino (CCPCH) and the Asociación Peruano Chino (APCH) serve as the most recognizable organizations, though even then there are tensions between the two. Founded in 1981, the CCPCH was formed with the intention of creating a space for Peruvians of Chinese descent to be in community with each other while also "guarding and preserving ancient Chinese values."[109] Villa Tusán was established in 1988 on the outskirts of Lima, a country club-like space for families to relax, gather, and celebrate. Both those who identify more as Chinese and as Tusán or Peruvian visit Villa Tusán, though once again Rodrigo notes a physical separation between the spaces they occupy in the Villa Tusán.[110] APCH was founded in 1999 by Erasmo Wong, owner of a well-known chain of supermarkets "E. Wong," and other entrepreneurs, both as a space for Tusán youth excluded from the Tonghuy Chongkoc

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[107] Campos, 21:04.
[108] Chuhue, 31.
Translated from: "cautelando y conservando los valores heredados de la milenaria cultura China."
[109] "Historia," Centro Cultural Peruano Chino, accessed 18 January 2021, https://www.ccpch.com/nosotros/historia/.
[110] Campos, 24:27

and as part of the effort to revive the Chinatown by reviving it economically.[111] While they contributed much to the current look of the Lima Chinatown, such as the pedestrian-only walkway on Capón Street and traditional Chinese decoration, Rodrigo argues that the organization itself is made up of more conservative Tusanes, ones who fund alt-right political parties, and should not be seen as the spokesperson for all Chinese communities in Peru.[112] The heterogeneity of this "Chinese community"—even just among all these organizations committed to creating community spaces for people of Chinese descent located just in Lima—allows for both the flourishing of each organization while also creating tensions between them.

Another staple feature of the *barrio chino,* and in Peru more broadly, are *chifas*, Peruvian restaurants serving cuisine with Chinese influence. The first *chifas* began in small alleyway rooms, mostly hidden from the public, though all Peruvians quickly became aware of these restaurants due to their rapid service and the way they mixed their ingredients. Over time, these restaurants established themselves formally and were later formally given the name "chifa," a word based on the phrase "eat rice" in various Chinese dialects.[113] These days, foods like *arroz chaufa* and *lomo saltado*, using a mix of Peruvian and Chinese ingredients and cooking techniques, are Peruvian staples. As Richard Chuhue writes about *arroz chaufa* in his 2016 book, "there are many different ways to make it, and there isn't a single Peruvian household that doesn't know how to cook it."[114] More than just a Chinese restaurant transplanted into Peru, *chifas* and the food served in them are very much Peruvian, much like many third- and fourth-generation Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent. Also like these Peruvians, Chinese-

[111] Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 81; López-Calvo, 29.
[112] Campos, 23:58.
[113] Chuhue, 41-3. The words for "eat rice" in Cantonese, Hakka, and Mandarin are "sek fan," "sit fan," and "chifan," respectively.
[114] Ibid, 42.
Translated from: "existen diversas maneras de hacerlo y no hay ama de casa peruana que no sepa cómo prepararlo."

inspired Peruvian cuisine—also known simply as Peruvian cuisine—has moved out of the country and into Peruvian restaurants around the world. Fabiana can still find Chinese-infused dishes at Peruvian restaurants in New York, and mentioned in our interview how those dishes are also often the most popular.[115]

Another institution originating from within the Chinese Peruvian community that expanded to serve Peruvians of all races are Chinese schools, known as *colegios peruanos chinos*. Colegio Peruano Chino Juan XXIII, one of the more well-known of these schools, was co-founded by Fabiana's father. As she describes it, this school came from an "alliance made with the Catholic Church," when an Italian monsignor who had been imprisoned in China during WWII met with Pope John the XXIII and expressed his interest in serving the Chinese population in Peru.[116] With funding from the Vatican, combined with funding from individual families, Colegio Peruano Chino Juan XXIII was born.[117] While primarily dedicated to the needs of the Chinese Peruvian community, the school has always been open to students of all races and ethnicities, though, as a private school, this includes an admissions process and tuition fee. Nevertheless, Fabiana remembers having many classmates not of Chinese descent, as well as a large number of classmates of mixed Chinese and Japanese descent.[118] On speculating on why so many students of non-Chinese descent wanted to attend a Chinese school, Fabiana said, "one [reason] could be proximity to where they lived. Another one could be that they really believed in the educational goals that the school had. The school had positioned itself as the progressive,

[115] Chiu, interview by author, 45:22.
[116] The Catholic Church has, for many decades, assisted Chinese communities in Peru through financial support for things like education and preservation of organizations, as well as sponsorship for converts to Catholicism, with whom a close relationship sometimes assisted in the process of assimilation. (Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (Tusheng)," 146; Narváez, 121.)
[117] Chiu, interview by author, 20:42. For more information about the school today, you can visit their website at www.juan23.edu.pe.
[118] Ibid, 25:23.

as well as really good in math, science, and English."[119] From the founding of the school itself in partnership with an Italian priest and the Vatican Church, to the nuns from Ohio who worked at the school, to the students of various racial backgrounds, this entire schooling experience was a multicultural one. Even with this Chinese school, however, Fabiana noted how Chinese presence in Peru was still confined to discussion around coolie laborers and that, since learning Cantonese was only an elective, she was able to choose not to take that class.[120] Despite these limitations, Juan XXIII served—and still serves—as a space that not only allows for Chinese identity to be present in the everyday lives of these students, but also creates another tie to the greater community in an organic way.

Outside of the physical spaces of the *barrio chino*, Chinese and Tusán people and institutions have constantly figured and refigured Chineseness and *tusanidad*. Isabelle Lausent-Herrera's paper "Tusans (tusheng) and the Changing Chinese Community" documents the cultural journey of the first Chinese migrants and their descendants as they shift between assimilation as Peruvians and maintaining pure Chineseness—a tension that still exists between newer immigrants and more established Peruvians of Chinese descent, albeit in a different form than before. Though the first Peruvian-born generation of people of Chinese descent were almost all mixed race, young girls of this generation were highly desired for marriage to other mixed race Chinese men or Chinese migrants freed from their contracts, signaling the active effort to maintain a Chinese community in Peru.[121] The first tensions between Chinese migrants and Chinese born in Peru came with the second wave of migration, when wealthier Chinese who owned business enterprises established a hierarchy based on socioeconomic status, placing

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[119] Ibid, 23:43.
[120] Ibid, 7:39; Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina," 175.
[121] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (tusheng)," 118.

themselves at the top. This began to create a divide between those of Chinese descent slowly integrating into Peruvian society and the consolidation of a "Chinese community" with a hierarchy based essentially on how Chinese one was—the more Chinese the better.[122] Fabiana recounted how this played out in her father's life, explaining how his being born in Peru automatically served as a "demotion" in the *barrio chino* class structure. However, because he both spoke Cantonese well and assimilated well into the community of China-born Chinese, Fabiana's father managed to receive many of the benefits of being a part of that community, such as owning stocks of the company at which he worked.[123] This hierarchy flipped when Fabiana, who is fourth-generation, attended school primarily catering to Peruvians of Chinese descent rather than Chinese immigrants in the 60s and 70s, and the popular kids were the ones more assimilated to Peruvian culture.[124] Fabiana's experience, however, may still be more reflective of relationships between Peruvians of Chinese descent and greater Peruvian society rather than intra-community relationships. In a thesis focusing on young second-generation Chinese Peruvians—a population outside the scope of this thesis—Rebecca Mu Jie Chang describes how even today, within the Chinese community in Peru, some still maintain a limited view of what can and cannot be considered "Chinese" and value what is seen more as "authentic" Chinese from China, pushing Peruvians of Chinese descent without full Chinese background away from "the Chinese community," however non-monolithic it may actually be.[125] Just like how the relationships between generations and individuals of Chinese descent have been refigured multiple times over the 150 years of Chinese presence in Peru, current relationships will also

[122] Ibid, 119-20.
[123] Chiu, interview with author, 14:24.
[124] Ibid, 17:44.
[125] Rebecca Mu Jie Chang, "Searching for Belonging in Ethnic Identity: Young Second-Generation Chinese-Peruvians in Lima, Peru" (Thesis, 2019), 68-9.

shift as these communities continue to grapple with the implications of defining their identities in different ways.

Arguments trying to limit how Peruvians of Chinese descent can identify also appear in discourse around *tusanidad.* The use of the term Tusán outside of Tusán communities is still fairly new—Fabiana described how growing up the term felt like a secret within the Chinese Peruvian community, and even more specifically within the community living in Lima.[126] Nevertheless, debates around the term and its definition offer insight into the larger questions of how Peruvians of Chinese descent are understanding themselves and each other. The term *injerto,* or half-blood, was originally used to describe people with one Chinese and one Peruvian parent in contrast to Tusán, which was reserved for native-born Peruvians with two Chinese parents. However, starting in the 20th century, *injerto* became seen as more of a pejorative as it was picked up by the press and official papers, though individuals such as Fabiana's mother still use that term to describe themselves, as that was simply the term they used growing up.[127] Three of my interviewees—Juan, Rodrigo, and Fabiana—identify and have always strongly identified as Tusán and are also active participants in Tusanaje, the online group founded by Rodrigo. Tusanaje's website explains:

> Although historically "Tusán" was only used for children of a Chinese father and Chinese mother, today the term has moved past its original meaning and is used within the Chinese Peruvian (or Tusán) community and its publications to refer to all Peruvians of Chinese descent, whether they be ethnically fully Chinese or mixed-race."[128]

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[126] Tusanaje, "¿Qué es ser tusán?," 23:18. Fabiana left Peru in 1984, and since then, the option to choose "tusán" on the Peruvian census appeared for the first time in 2017. (El Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática)
[127] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (tusheng)," 118-20; Tusanaje, "¿Qué es ser tusán?," 24:14.
[128] "Tusanaje | Ser Tusán," accessed December 10, 2020, http://www.tusanaje.org/.
Translated from: "Aunque históricamente el término ha designado solo a hijos de padre y madre chinos, en la actualidad el uso del término se ha ampliado más allá de sus límites semánticos iniciales y es usado al interior de la comunidad peruano-china (o comunidad tusán) y sus publicaciones escritas para designar a todo peruano de ascendencia china, sea este étnicamente puro o mestizo."

This is reflected in the makeup of the members of Tusanaje: both of Fabiana's and Juan's parents identify as Tusán; Rodrigo's mother is Tusán while his father is *mestizo*; and Jair Wong, who was quoted in the first chapter, identifies as Afrotusán.[129] More generally, very few third- or fourth-generation Peruvians of Chinese descent would fall under that original definition either; being Tusán has far exceeded its original linguistic limits and now relies much more heavily on how one chooses to define themselves, regardless of their ethnic "purity." However, as seen from the October 18 incident on Tusanaje's Facebook page discussed in the introduction and increased immigration from China bringing more fully ethnically Chinese people to the country, some continue to argue for limits on the usage of the term Tusán.[130] Interestingly enough, Chang includes in their thesis a quote from a second-generation Chinese Peruvian who explicitly defines Tusán as someone who is mixed race rather than one who is fully ethnically Chinese. Others who were interviewed with two Chinese parents also identified as Tusán, reflecting the constantly changing nature and different understandings of the definition of Tusán.[131] Finally, Lausent-Herrera warns of the possibility that, even while there may be growing recognition of the term Tusán, Peruvians of Chinese descent may in the coming years or decades opt to identify as something completely different, emphasizing the constant fluidity of both self-identification and the terminology used to do it.[132]

Nikkei Presence and Emigration

[129] Campos, 24:08; Diálogos de Tusanidad: ¿Afrotusanes?.
[130] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (tusheng), 148.
[131] Chang, 68-70.
[132] Lausent-Herrera describes how some Tusanes are adopting the term Wah Joy or Huayi, especially in the journal *Oriental*. See Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (tusheng)," 148.

Nikkei have also carved out a space for themselves in Peruvian society, though they are known to remain a more closed, tight-knit community, with more intra-community marriage and stronger ties to Japan.[133] Similarly to Chinese immigrants, the Japanese faced discrimination and hostility upon their arrival, originally because of economic tensions over lack of jobs on plantations, though it soon found legitimacy beyond the economic sphere and into the cultural one. At first, the Japanese were seen as threatening to the project of national assimilation; anti-Japanese advocates pointed out how Japanese Peruvian children would learn Japanese and potentially spoke it better than Spanish, or how they only socialized and married within the Japanese community. This sense of alienation and hostility increased, of course, with the deportation and internment of Japanese and Nikkei during World War II. Furthermore, even before this traumatic experience, in 1940, a group of student-led protesters looted Japanese residences and businesses in downtown Lima—the first racially motivated riot targeting a specific population, naturally revealing to the Japanese community that they were not safe in Peru. As Ayumi Takenaka describes it, "the cycle was self-perpetuating; attachment to the homeland was enhanced by host [Peruvian] hostility and at the same time increased host hostility by being interpreted as a sign of disloyalty."[134] On the other hand, all of my interviewees of Japanese descent serve as examples of how Peruvians of Japanese descent have asserted themselves as Peruvians in their own right. For all of them, being Peruvian is essential to their

[133] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 77. On page 90, Takenaka writes, "According to Normano and Gerbi (1943), only 79 Chinese children were born of Chinese parents, as against 268 born of a Chinese father and a Peruvian mother. In contrast, out of 25 marriages involving Japanese men, 6 were to Japanese women and 19 were to 'Peruvian-born' Japanese."
[134] Ibid, 87-90.

identities, yet the knowledge of a Japanese heritage always remains, whether through individual stories and memories or through institutional displays.[135]

Nikkei across the country, but especially in Lima, have established spaces that assert the ways that Japanese presence in Peru has affected the country. The most well-known organization is the Asociación Peruana Japonesa (APJ).[136] APJ has a physical location in Lima, called the Centro Cultural Peruano Japonés, whose events Yuri remembers attending as a child. More recently, Yuri worked as an editor for their Fondo Editorial, which publishes work that promotes Nikkei culture.[137] As she describes, APJ as an institution and the events they hold are part of Lima society, again demonstrating the deep integration of Japanese presence in the city and the country in general. Furthermore, it encourages young Nikkei (and Nikkei of all ages) to take pride in their Nikkei identity: "I knew that I was Nikkei, I knew what it meant to be Nikkei and that it was a point of pride because the Japanese cultural organizations presented it that way. We celebrated being Nikkei as a unique aspect of *peruanidad*."[138] Fabiola recalled feeling this pride when she saw a picture of her great-grandfather in the gallery located at the Centro Cultural Peruano Japonés displaying the names and pictures of some of the first Japanese Peruvians.[139] For her, this institutionalized form of remembrance that allowed her to connect herself with the larger Japanese diaspora also helped her create a type of relationship with the Japanese Peruvian community that she may not have built simply by going to general events like Lunar New Year celebrations or living in a neighborhood where people of Japanese descent historically have lived. This act of drawing a direct connection down to the family name, and then having a

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[135] I will note, as I did in the introduction, that my interviewees are not meant to be representatives of the entire community of Peruvians of Japanese descent but rather are individuals who have helped me explore what it means to take family and individual memory and tradition to craft an identity.
[136] "APJ - Inicio," accessed February 26, 2021, https://www.apj.org.pe/.
[137] Sakata, 17:49.
[138] Ibid, 19:28. Original text in citation of epigraph at the beginning of Chapter 2.
[139] Galindo, 35:27.

picture to go along with it produces a much stronger affective effect beyond that of hearing orally histories of migration without having known the actual person who did the migrating—they become real, and therefore even more a part of you.

As much as these organizations have strived to bring a sense of pride to the Nikkei community, there has also been a history of exclusivity within its spaces, where "although anyone with Japanese blood…is welcomed to join major community associations—in reality, core members who actively participate in community affairs almost always have Japanese heritage from both parents as well as middle class backgrounds."[140] While not immediately apparent in the lives of my interviewees—none have two Japanese parents—that can explain why Yuri, who grew up with her Japanese grandparents, has the strongest connection with the established organizations for Japanese Peruvians. It similarly calls out the class distinction for this opportunity for identity building, again something that separates my interviewees from some other members of the Japanese diasporic community in Peru.

Beyond community events, for Karen, these expressions of Japanese or Nikkei culture were less blatant, though still very much apparent in tying her to her own Nikkei identity. Karen expressed similarly to Yuri and Fabiola how having an established association for Nikkei in her city of Huancayo has provided an opportunity to remain connected to Nikkei culture, though less through attending formal gatherings but rather through reminding her of a shared culture. She described how every November, the association would put paper flowers on the graves of Nikkei, an action even more meaningful to her because of the death of her father.[141] She also expressed how it wasn't necessarily possible to fully separate from Nikkei culture, since so many small things that may have originated from Japanese culture now appear in what is seen as the

[140] Takenaka, "Transnational Community," 1466-7.
[141] Oba, 1:13:44.

national culture: "I haven't lost all ties to the culture just because of [my father's] death, partially because there have always been things simply present in the national culture."[142] For Karen, she sees pieces of her Japanese heritage scattered across Huancayo, making it less of a search for official tellings of history, or even stories from relatives or other Nikkei, but rather something that provides this connection through her daily interactions, such as the new Japanese fusion restaurant that opened up near her home that her son Kazuo likes going to. As she describes it, the things passed onto Kazuo are much more apparent in the details, not necessarily through traditions of burning incense or drinking tea.[143]

Just like how Fabiana's father was able to acquire more privileges at his job because of his ability to assimilate more into the Chinese community in Peru, the Japanese community similarly engages in the practice of "taking care of their own." Fabiola recalled how, at one clinic her mother worked at that was owned by Peruvians of Japanese descent, all staff members were of Japanese descent: "I honestly think they gave her that job because she was Japanese. I mean, I don't want to take away my mother, but…everyone in that clinic was Peruvian Japanese from what I remember. I mean, even if you could see…they were mad *mestizo*, but they had some kind of Japanese."[144] This solidarity is rooted in a history of mutual support, often in response to racism from white and *mestizo* Peruvians. In the early 20th century, when the Japanese began opening small businesses, they also began *tanomoshi* groups, or small rotating-credit unions to help finance each other's businesses, because as immigrants they were often unfamiliar with or denied access to Peruvian banks. Their ties with Japan also allowed them access to Japanese

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[142] Ibid, 1:14:01.
Translated from: "No me desvinculó por completo de la cultura a pesar de la muerte, en parte porque siempre han habido esas cositas presente en la cultura nacional."
[143] Ibid, 20:47.
[144] Galindo, 36:07.

producers of low-cost goods.[145] While these forms of solidarity helped these immigrants achieve financial success, it also alienated them from the rest of the Peruvian population, as they were resented for being the middlemen profiting from selling cheap goods from elsewhere. Nevertheless, as Japanese immigrants ended their time as plantation laborers, these systems of support allowed them to succeed, and therefore remain, in their adopted country, and brought them more front-and-center into larger Peruvian society, coming to be known as *chinos de la esquina.*[146]

More formally, the Peruvian and Japanese governments have collaborated to recognize Japanese presence in Peru. In 2019, Japanese princess Mako visited Peru to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Japanese arrival in Peru, both meeting the Peruvian president and visiting Japanese communities in the country as per tradition of visiting every 10 years to commemorate this anniversary.[147] Yuri mentioned how the presidents of both the APJ and the Asociación Peruana Japonesa Femenina were also part of this ceremony, indicating the clear ties this type of event has to the community. This kind of friendship between the two governments and shared community celebration stands in opposition to the underlying tension between the two countries regarding Japanese deportation to and internment in the US, as outlined in *Crónicas de mujeres nikkei*.[148] However, their political and economic relationship extends beyond these points of emotional and familial harm; it also exists as a mix of Japanese economic interests in Peru in addition to a general national concern in Japan for Japanese immigrants abroad.[149] Just as any other situation related to global politics and discussions around who speaks for members of

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[145] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 86.
[146] Ibid. "Street-corner Chinese"
[147] Oba, 45:49; "Princess Mako Leaves for Peru and Bolivia to Mark Anniversary of Japanese Emigration to South America," The Japan Times, July 9, 2019.
[148] Moromisato, 94.
[149] Rubén Berríos, "Peru and Japan: An Uneasy Relationship," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Latino-Américaines et Caraïbes* 30, no. 59 (2005): 101.

diasporic communities, this relationship between Peru, Japan, and Nikkei in Peru continue to exist both in joyous and painful moments. Though maybe not always purely because of ethnic solidarity, efforts by the Japanese government and people to maintain a relationship with countries with large Nikkei populations strengthen Nikkei individuals' real or perceived relationship with the country of Japan.

Another point of connection unique to Peruvians of Japanese descent and not of Chinese descent is the flow of emigration back to Japan, especially in the 1990s during an economic downturn in Peru coupled with an economic boom in Japan. Under the Alan García presidency, unemployment and inflation skyrocketed and only continued with the implementation of Alberto Fujimori's neoliberal economic policies. Additionally, with the tightening of the US borders under the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 and further immigration laws through the rest of the decade and beyond, Peruvians began searching for other countries to immigrate to. Simultaneously, Japan, in addition to Italy and Spain, found a growing need for domestic and manufacturing laborers, pushing them to loosen immigration laws, opening their borders for Peruvians and other Latin Americans.[150] While open to migrants of all races, Japan also changed its immigration law to specifically welcome immigrants of Japanese descent, called *dekasegi,* by lessening visa restrictions for them and their spouses.[151] Both Yuri's parents and many of Fabiola's aunts and uncles took advantage of this opportunity and immigrated to Japan for some amount of time. While Yuri's mother is not of Japanese descent, both she and Yuri's father moved to Japan in 2000 to find work and lived there for seven years when Yuri was a child, leaving her and her brother to live with her paternal grandmother.[152] This push for *nissei* and

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[150] Karsten Paerregaard, "Peru:: Migration and Remittances," in *Return to Sender*, 1st ed., The Moral Economy of Peru's Migrant Remittances (University of California Press, 2014), 37-8.
[151] Ibid, 40; Berríos, 119.
[152] Sakata, 16:09.

sansei, second- and third-generation immigrants, respectively, to return to Japan, Takenaka argues, strengthened the connection between all Nikkei both with certain aspects of their Japanese heritage and with each other. Through this migration, *dekasegi* who returned to their birth countries carried what were then considered "Japanese values," such as responsibility and honesty, back with them when they returned to Peru.[153]

As much as the visa laws conveyed a sense of welcoming Nikkei "back" to their home country, other instances of alienation and estrangement remind us of the underlying economic factors that resulted in this migration pattern—Japan simply needed more laborers. *Dekasegi,* often unable to speak the Japanese language and treated as foreign contract laborers, reported not feeling at home in Japan as they thought they would. In contrast to the nostalgic stories they heard from their parents and grandparents, *dekasegi* found that many traditions and customs they expected to find in Japan were no longer being practiced. Because of these rifts, while return migration to Japan did foster a different shared understanding of certain community values, Takenaka also argues that Nikkei almost became a race of their own, separate from the Japanese in Japan.[154] Yuri visited her parents in Japan once in 2001, but mostly remained much more closely connected to her communities in Peru, both with other Nikkei and Peruvians not of Japanese descent.[155] In our interview, Fabiola specifically mentioned two uncles who moved to Japan to work, one who lived there for 30 years and established a family there yet still eventually returned to Peru, and another who only stayed for a year because he felt alienated as someone not of full Japanese ancestry.[156] Furthermore, a "return to the homeland" was likely not the only pull factor for Peruvians of Japanese descent. Unlike some of the other countries with high rates of

[153] Takenaka, "Transnational Community," 1469-71.
[154] Ibid, 1465-6.
[155] Sakata, 1:00:10.
[156] Galindo, 32:00.

Peruvian immigration, Japan is known as a haven for its relatively higher salaries. Because of this, and their immigration law favorable to people of Japanese descent, Japan has actually encountered cases of "false Nikkei," people who enter Japan with false documents saying they have Japanese heritage.[157] This certainly was not due to any aspiration to be culturally Japanese, but rather a calculated decision in the face of economic hardship.

Beyond simply economic reasons, various instances of anti-Japanese sentiment have pushed Peruvians of Japanese descent to return or migrate to Japan. Some scholars argue that, in addition to Japan's growing economy, fears of antagonism against all people of Japanese descent during Fujimori's candidacy and presidency in the 1990s may have also pushed Nikkei to immigrate to Japan.[158] Nikkei migration to Japan due to anti-Japanese sentiment first emerged, of course, with WWII and Peru's deportation of Japanese and Peruvians of Japanese descent. For Fabiola's great-grandfather and Yuri's great-aunts and uncles, after being deported from the US internment camp in Texas to Japan, they were either unable or unwilling to return to Peru, given the deep harm done to them and the continued anti-Japanese sentiment in Peru after the war.[159] While Yuri still has letters from her great-aunt expressing how much she missed Lima and hoped to return, both while in the internment camp and after she had been deported to Japan, Fabiola's great-grandfather was deeply disappointed in the country, voluntarily choosing to never return. Furthermore, he had his son, Fabiola's grandfather, who was born in Lima, move to Japan at two years old.[160] Though the reasoning was for him to study and attend college in Japan—he returned to Japan in his 20s and married Fabiola's grandmother, a *mestiza* woman of European and Indigenous descent—one could imagine the need for Fabiola's great-grandfather to protect his

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[157] Berríos, 119.
[158] Ibid, 118.
[159] Galindo, 5:05; Sakata Gonzales, paragraphs 13-16.
[160] Galindo, 4:27.

child from the harm inflicted on him by what had been his adopted country. However, Fabiola did add that her aunts and uncles, in addition to later living in Japan to work, visited Japan when they were young as a "rite of passage," something they wanted to do, rather than as something they were forced to do out of necessity.[161] Nevertheless, even these voluntary travels to Japan create a tie to the country as a type of "homeland" that does not appear for Peruvians of Chinese descent, especially not for third- or fourth-generation Peruvians.

The experiences of feeling discriminated against both in Peru and in Japan exemplify the difficulties in "claiming space and making place"—what space does one want to take, and how do they make place in a place that may not want them? For all of my interviewees, and seemingly for many of their older relatives as well, the identity they most claim is a Peruvian one. As Fabiola said, she's "first Peruvian and then everything else that comes with it."[162] This is reflected in my interviewees' relatives' wishes to return to Peru after living in Japan, including both Yuri's great-aunt who still expressed wanting to return to the country that collaborated in deporting her, as well as Yuri's parents, who returned after seven years of working in Japan. Even Fabiola's uncle who lived and worked in Japan for 30 years decided to return to Peru after he retired, even though his children live in Japan.[163] Beyond family ties and general comfortability in returning to the country of your birth, the concept of multiculturalism that emerged in Peru out of miscegenation and *mestizaje*, however rhetorical and potentially obscuring of racial hierarchies, fosters an environment much more conducive to place-making for people of mixed racial descent. Experiences in Japan such as that of Fabiola's uncle who returned after just one year, on the other hand, reveal that the idea of finding community in a

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[161] Ibid, 31:10.
[162] Ibid, 47:57.
[163] Ibid, 32:00.

Japanese "homeland" is much less tangible than many hope. In addition to language barriers and lack of active integration with the Japanese community, *dekasegi* are generally just treated as foreigners. Even the small amount of Japanese words and customs they had carried on from their Japanese ancestors often turn out to be outdated and provided no form of connection for the Peruvian migrants, similarly to how Yuri felt when she traveled to Japan.[164] *Dekasegi* are also pushed to feel that "if you're not one hundred [percent] Japanese, you're not one hundred [percent] Japanese. That's it."[165] This naturally leads to an alienation from Japan, especially for those who grew up with stories from their grandparents and great-grandparents of the wonders of the country.

It would not be possible to end a section on Japanese presence and integration into Peruvian society without talking about former president Alberto Fujimori, the most prominent Peruvian of Japanese descent to-date.[166] Elected in the wake of a collapsing Peruvian economy and a battle against Shining Path terrorism, Fujimori appealed to working-class and Indigenous communities as a nonwhite candidate campaigning on gradual reforms to the economy, but many Peruvians of Japanese descent held back on lending him their support, for fear of anti-Japanese backlash should he not succeed.[167] Of course, lack of support for Fujimori's candidacy and presidency were not due to identity politics alone, but it is impossible not to acknowledge how individuals of both Japanese and Chinese descent inherent the burden of representation for the first nonwhite Peruvian president: "Sometimes people don't know how to separate one person from the entire community and will immediately associate one bad element of the community

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[164] Takenaka, "Transnational Community," 1466.
[165] Galindo, 32:25.
[166] For more background on Fujimori, see "Alberto Fujimori | Biography, Presidency, & Facts"; "Alberto Keinya Fujimori."
[167] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 94; "Alberto Keinya Fujimori."

means the entire community is bad."[168] Yuri herself strongly identifies as *antifujimorista* and described how, when attending an anti-Fujimori protest, she worried that, as a woman with East Asian features, she would be attacked simply because someone would assume she was a Fujimori supporter.[169] Fujimori's fame shone a spotlight on Japanese and Chinese communities in Peru, drawing not only xenophobic ire—both through people questioning his "Peruvianness" and calls to "recover Peru for Peruvians"[170]—but also fostering a real sense of pride for many members of the Japanese Peruvian community. Karen acknowledges that, when he was first elected, "I felt really proud of being a part of the Japanese community because [Fujimori] was really seen as an outstanding person. He was smart, and someone who worked hard, you know?"[171] Just like all other parts of cultural visibility, the presidency of Alberto Fujimori both further established and legitimized Japanese presence in Peru, while also alienating and otherizing the (perceived) Japanese Peruvian community because of the failures of his corrupt political regime.

Tusán, Nikkei, Japanese, Chinese, Peruvian?: The Mixing of Cultural Boundaries

With more than a century of Chinese and Japanese presence, assimilation, and new cultural production in Peru, the delineation between what is Asian or Peruvian not often apparent or useful in understanding how all Peruvian individuals understand their cultural inheritance. In the opening of his book *Dragons in the Land of the Condor: Writing Tusán in Peru*, Ignacio

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[168] Sakata, 37:08.
Translated from: "A veces las personas no saben disociar al sujeto de la comunidad y de repente hacen extra este vínculo sujeto malo, comunidad mala."
[169] Ibid, 38:01.
[170] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 95.
[171] Oba, 48:17.
Translated from: "Me sentí muy bien de ser parte de este grupo [japonesa] porque [Fujimori] era como muy destacado. Era una persona estudiosa, una persona que se esforzaba mucho, no?"

López-Calvo makes the comparison between the official statistic of 3-5% of Peru's population identifying as having Asian descent, from a 2006 survey from the Instituto Nacional Estadística e Informática, and Humberto Rodríguez Pastor's assertion that 15-17% of the Peruvian population could have some Chinese blood.[172] While DNA is only one—and arguably one of the least impactful—way to gauge the "Chineseness" of a population, this statistic is often pulled out by Tusanes and those arguing for the impact on and deep connections with Peru that people of Chinese heritage have.[173] Rodríguez Pastor's quantitative assertion that there are more folks of Chinese heritage than it may seem is further strengthened by both Fabiola's and Isabel's stories. In our interview, Fabiola mentioned that, while her great-grandfather on her father's side was Chinese, she was focusing on her mother's (Japanese) side of the family simply because she had very little information about her father's side.[174] As she said jokingly in response to people calling her *china*, "I would never be like, I'm not from China, you know, I was just like, yeah, whatever. And then it turns out I have Chinese in me. Who am I to say I'm not from China, you know, we are all from everywhere."[175] Similarly, for Isabel's family members, while they acknowledge that a Chinese great-grandfather existed, this fact does not play a strong role in their daily identity formation: "All the members of my family think and feel we have been here forever. They don't feel that they have some ancestry from a foreign country, they just don't think about that…many of my cousins think that it's just the legend."[176] So, while objectively knowing that a fairly large percentage of Peruvians may have Chinese heritage is indeed a testament to the

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[172] López-Calvo, 19.
[173] Fabiana cites this same statistic at the beginning of her piece "China Latina," emphasizing the importance for her of noting the wide-reaching effects of Chinese migration on the Peruvian population. Richard Chuhue (9) cites a different number–2.5 million, or 10% of the Peruvian population with Chinese ancestry–though once again it is used as a way to emphasize Chinese presence in Peru.
[174] Galindo, 33:11.
[175] Ibid, 40:24.
[176] Blondet, July 14, 2020, 1:37.

deep connections that Chinese folks have with Peru and can represent the blurring boundaries of what it means to be Chinese in Peru, or more generally what it means to be Peruvian, there can be and still is a distinction between what it means to have Chinese heritage and to actively identify with Chinese community in Peru. The Japanese community is known to be more tightly-knit in Peru; nevertheless, individuals who actively identify as Nikkei or more generally with their Japanese heritage have often had the opportunity through their parents or grandparents to learn about their own family histories and maintain connections with the Nikkei community where they lived.

While Peruvian communities of Chinese and Japanese descent certainly have their distinct communities, the two do have points of interaction, through geographic proximity,[177] a similar original migration story, and, possibly most importantly, the shared experience of being *chino* in Peru. I will speak more about the function of white supremacy in grouping together people of Chinese and Japanese descent together by outside groups as a figure of the "perpetual foreigner" in the following chapter, but this label, however misrepresentative of the distinct cultures and histories of these two groups, does create a sense of community between them. As Fabiola described, "they definitely hang out because I think they had the same feeling of being immigrants at the end of the day, you know, and not just any immigrants…[their] social lives would be, oh, you're the *chino*? Ok let's hang out with the *chinos*."[178] Isabel herself remembers having both Chinese and Japanese classmates in her childhood and noted the similarities between the two communities, implicitly grouping them together based on ways they engaged with Chinese and Japanese spaces. She described how, on the weekends, her classmates of Chinese

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[177] As Yuri describes, she and many other Peruvians of Japanese descent live and work near the *barrio chino*, necessarily leading to interactions between the two communities. (Sakata, 52:34).
[178] Galindo, 39:35.

and Japanese descent—mostly first- and second-generation Peruvian—would attend Chinese or Japanese school, something Isabel did not participate in and saw as something kept private among individuals who did actively participate in those communities.[179] Even still, many of these "bonds" seem to come much more from imposed labels on communities who may have similar characteristics, rather than an effort on the part of Chinese and Japanese communities to build a sort of solidarity as "Asian Peruvians" or really anything more than what they are—communities who may have similar characteristics. Fabiana described the relationships as "informal," recalling having friends of Japanese descent or using the athletic facilities at the nearby Japanese school,[180] but again, this says little about a unique bond between Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent based on race outside of a perception that there should be a connection between these two communities.

These community spaces also extended beyond Japanese community members welcoming people of Chinese descent, and vice versa, to these spaces being ones where anyone from the Peruvian community could engage. Fabiola remembers her grandmother—who is of neither Chinese nor Japanese descent—attending Chinese social club events, simply because she is the wife of a Japanese man.[181] While most influenced through her husband, Fabiola's grandmother's participation in these spaces reveal both her active interest in engaging with Chinese culture as a Peruvian woman as well as those community members' willingness to create a welcoming space for her. On a macro level, the greatest example of this opening of culture to the greater Peruvian population would be the *barrio chino*. Already centrally located in the city of Lima, the *barrio chino* is necessarily a well-traveled area, not even specifically to

[179] Blondet, July 21, 2020, 6:32.
[180] Chiu, interview by autor, 24:59.
[181] Galindo, 39:21.

experience Chinese culture. As previously mentioned, the naming of Lima's Centro Histórico as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and subsequent plans to restore the entire Mercado Central naturally included the *barrio chino*, in recognition of the cultural importance of the space both for Peruvians of Chinese descent as well as for all Peruvians.[182] In addition to the integration of traditionally Chinese ingredients, *chifas,* and their cuisine that has been exported across the world as a representative of Peruvian cuisine, Chinese culture has permeated into Peruvian society in a multitude of ways. In Richard Chuhue's extensive yet still non-exhaustive list of Chinese contributions to Peruvian culture, he names: "seasoning, vegetables, other cuisine, martial arts, herbalism, the Chinese language, Chinese horoscopes, the lion dance and dragon dance, decorations and furniture in homes"[183] And this has not simply been a one-way infusion of Chinese culture into Peruvian society; as I have emphasized throughout, the thousands of people of Chinese descent are not just Chinese people assimilated or assimilating into Peru, they are Peruvians, and their Chineseness is just one aspect of who they are as individuals.

Just as some aspects of Chinese culture have been incorporated into the homes of Peruvians not of (acknowledged or known) Chinese descent, Tusanes and others of Chinese descent don't necessarily separate things they do in their families as Chinese or Peruvian. Throughout my interviews, when asked about pieces of Chinese culture they still practice in their own homes, many people would mention a number of practices, but with the caveat that they themselves never saw it as an explicitly "Chinese thing." Juan specifically remembered his parents drinking tea at home, something he assumed all Peruvian families did before realizing

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[182] Chuhue, 65.
[183] Ibid, 72.
Translated from: "Condimentos, verduras, comida, artes marciales, herbolaria, el idioma, su horóscopo de los 12 animales, la danza del león y el dragón, los adornos y menaje en las casas."

that coffee was the country's preferred drink.[184] Juan credits the *barrio chino* for the normalization of many of these traditions; being able to travel a short distance to Lima to purchase Chinese ingredients to make food in addition to statues and incense for the home made it much easier to integrate these traditions into what feels like the life of a typical Peruvian.[185] Fabiana reflected similarly, saying, "We did things because our parents did them and it wasn't always explained to me that we were doing certain things because they were Chinese, we were just doing things. So even to this day, I would say I'm not really sure [if we celebrated traditional Chinese holidays]."[186] These differentiations between what was Chinese and what was Peruvian simply did not serve a purpose; for these Tusán families, these traditions did not need to be intentional sites of remembrance or cultural transmission and would only be unearthed as such with intentional questioning and reflection.

This cultural mixing, of course, also extended to the Japanese community, both exerting Japanese influence into the Peruvian cultural sphere and creating a unique sense of what it means to be Nikkei in Peru. Food, once again, is the most apparent example of this mixing. Karen remembered, as a child, eating foods like sashimi and miso, things her father had introduced to her mother. More recently, a maki shop opened up near her home, giving her the opportunity to share these flavors with her son.[187] As Doris Moromisato argues, the Peruvianization of Japanese cuisine came simply through the availability of ingredients—some things found in traditional Japanese dishes could not be found in Peru, so Japanese immigrants adapted, creating wholly unique dishes. Moromisato also tells the story of Rosita Yimura, a second-generation Nikkei woman whose octopus dish, *pulpo al olivo,* mixes the Japanese use of seafood with Peruvian

[184] Jhong Chung, 30:02.
[185] Ibid, 32:59.
[186] Chiu, interview by author, 57:23.
[187] Oba, 20:07.

ingredients.[188] Another popular, well-known Peruvian dish is the *tiradito*, a raw fish dish resembling Japanese sashimi but covered in Peruvian ceviche sauce. We can also see the more formal connection between the Peruvian and Japanese governments finding its way into the everyday lives of all Peruvians, not just those of Japanese descent, through access of Japanese television to the general Peruvian population. Karen remembered watching TV shows aired from the Japanese station NHK as a child, remarking, "Japanese culture has always been present in Peru, not just through migration, but through other modes such as television."[189]

While certainly not the attitude of all people who identify with their Chinese or Japanese heritage, or even for all those who identify as Tusán or Nikkei, as the lines become more blurred, some folks such as my interviewees have been seeking to separate the threads. Tilsa Tsuchiya, a Nikkei artist who is also of Chinese descent, notes, as a point of pride, "if you look at Indigenous art pre-colonization, and then at Chinese and Japanese art, you'll see that at its base it's the same thing. Peru is oriental!"[190] For Tilsa, this cultural conversation extends much beyond points of migration—these similarities were apparent much before colonization, and most definitely before the arrival of Chinese and Japanese migrants in the 19th century, and working to separate what is Chinese, what is Japanese, and what is Peruvian, creates unnecessary delineations. Yuri describes this recognition of mutual exchange and infusion of culture beautifully in her piece "Nikkei limeña":

> For me, Japan was in the food that my grandma made, the made-up phrases and casual slang that she taught me, in the Buddhist songs she sang while putting incense in the *butsudan*. However, I also know that these flavors have Peruvian ingredients, that these phrases are

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[188] Moromisato, 109-12.
[189] Oba, 1:08:43.
Translated from: "La cultura japonesa en el Perú ha estado presente siempre. De algún otro modo, no sólo por la migración, sino por la televisión."
[190] Moromisato, 106.
Translated from: "si uno observa el arte precolombino, el chino, el japonés, verá que en el fondo son la misma cosa. ¡Pero si el Perú es oriental!"

> translated into Spanish, and that our *butsudan* is full of pictures of local saints.[191]

The food she eats, the language she uses, the traditions she still engages with are both Japanese and Peruvian at the same time. The Japan she knows is not the physical Japan located on the other side of the globe—it is located in Peru, in her home, in her communities of which she is a part, and it is essential to what it means for her as a Nikkei woman. Rodrigo echoes this sentiment in relation to the emergence of Tusán identity: "the question is no longer 'why don't I look like my Peruvian peers?' but rather, 'why don't I look like my Chinese parents or grandparents?'"[192] There is now a different kind of longing for reconnecting with their Chinese or Japanese heritage, not as a way to negate their Peruvianness, but rather to better fully embrace all the aspects of their identities.

Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have clearly established themselves within Peruvian society through the many aspects that define a culture; however, many are still fighting for recognition. In response to the question "what is needed in the future to strengthen Tusán identity and community?" in Tusanaje's panel discussion "¿Qué es ser tusán?" Rodrigo noted the need for more recognition of both Tusanes and Nikkei on the national, political level.[193] As he explains, while there is a branch of the government under the Ministry of Culture (called the Viceministerio de Interculturalidad) that studies issues of discrimination and human rights, it only specifies Afroperuvian and Indigenous communities, though he does acknowledge the more privileged position Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent occupy over Afro and Indigenous

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[191] Sakata Gonzáles, "Nikkei limeña," paragraph 26.
Translated from: "Para mí, Japón estaba en la comida que preparaba mi abuela, en las frases hechas que expresaban saberes cotidianos que ella se empeñaba en enseñarme, en los cánticos budistas que cantaba mientras dejaba incienso en el *butsudan*. Sin embargo, soy consciente de que esos sabores tenían ingredientes peruanos, que las frases me las traducía al español y que nuestro *butsudan* estaba lleno de estampitas de santos locales."
[192] Campos, 1:17:09.
[193] Tusanaje, "¿Qué es ser tusán?," 57:28.
Translated from: "¿Qué se necesita en el futuro para fortalecer la comunidad tusán o esta identidad?"

communities.[194] Nevertheless, it remains important to include these specific populations in national studies, as was done in the 2017 census, in order to fully understand the racial and ethnic landscape of the country. Furthermore, as Doris Moromisato wrote in *Crónicas de mujeres nikkei*, the Peruvian government has never formally apologized to Japan and Peruvians of Japanese descent for their role in Japanese internment during WWII—a wound that continues to haunt the Nikkei community in Peru.[195] On a more interpersonal and affective level, outside of Lima and other big cities, Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent are still seen as foreigners in their own country purely based on their physical traits, regardless of how many generations their families have lived in the country. The next chapter will dive deeper into this alienation that many Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent face, both within the country and beyond. I will explore the instances of racism present in Peru—and the ways that Chinese, Japanese, Tusán, and Nikkei identity is weaponized to promote white supremacy and oppress not only Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent but also Afroperuvian and Indigenous communities—as well as the global racial politics and hierarchies that follow my subjects past national borders.

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[194] Ibid, 58:20; "Viceministerio de Interculturalidad | Centro de Recursos Interculturales," accessed January 31, 2021, https://centroderecursos.cultura.pe/es/autor/viceministerio-de-interculturalidad. As you can see in the search sidebar, there is no explicit note of either tusán or Nikkei communities.

[195] Moromisato, 94.

Chapter 3: White Supremacy At Home and Abroad

"You know, when I introduced myself, I would say I'm Peruvian. People were like eh, and I said 'well, I'm Chinese Peruvian,' you know? And I feel, you know, nowadays I don't feel like explaining myself." – Fabiana Chiu[196]

"[In] both China and Korea, I don't know if it was necessarily because of my appearance, but I just felt like…invisible in a good way, like invisible in the sense that I didn't feel like people were staring at me or people were just like looking at me…I think that in China, when I was taking the Metro like, I don't know, I just felt like another person." – Juan Jhong Chung[197]

To be a Peruvian of Chinese or Japanese descent means a constant negotiation of identity, one that requires a balancing of—as well as a mixing of, building off of, and celebrating of—a number of identities. This was already difficult in Peru, but as Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have traveled and moved across the world, mainly to the US and Asia, even the process of negotiating identity has looked different depending on the racial politics of the region. On the other hand, it is impossible to deny the global forces of colonization and white supremacy that are ever-present—from the factors that brought my interviewees' ancestors to Peru, to the causes of both the discrimination and successes their families have experienced, to how they navigate and recenter their identities during their travels. People of Asian descent across the world often have experienced both oppression and relative privilege under white supremacy, a phenomenon that does not exclude Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent. In this chapter, I seek to understand this tenuous relationship and how being put in this role of a racial wedge has affected my interviewees' views of themselves—which parts of their identities they have gravitated towards, how they choose to express themselves, and how they have changed with a greater understanding of family and national history as well as with experiences in other

[196] Chiu, interview with author, 39:52.
[197] Jhong Chung, 25:33.

countries. I hope to emphasize the connections and patterns of how white supremacy operates globally while also highlighting the unique aspects of living in Peru as a person with Chinese or Japanese heritage. With half of my interviewees (and I) now living in the United States, I acknowledge that many of the perspectives shared will necessarily involve a US-centered lens. However, I hope to demonstrate that ideologies of colorism, creating model minorities, and nationalism in identity formation are very much apparent in both the US and Peru and have always influenced both the migration of and attitudes towards people of Chinese and Japanese descent in Peru since the first arrivals to the country. In the interconnected world we live in today, it is of utmost importance that we understand the relationships—or, as termed by Lisa Lowe, the intimacies[198]—between diasporic peoples, their ancestral homes, and their present realities. I will begin with an understanding of how racial difference was constructed mainly through economic tension, and then discuss how those tropes and stereotypes entrenched themselves and shifted to affect the experiences of third- and fourth-generation Peruvians today. I finish by zooming out to a global scale, with the experiences of my subjects in the US and Asia and the ways they shift their own understandings of their identities in these different contexts.

The history of Chinese and Japanese presence in Peru has always been deeply tied to and affected by constructions of racial difference, whether openly acknowledged or not. The migration of Chinese and Japanese "coolie" laborers to colonized and formerly colonized nations in the Americas itself was tied to the abolition of slavery, a clear act of replacing one form of nonwhite labor (Black enslaved peoples) with another (Chinese and Japanese contract workers).[199] There are many reports of the treatment of Chinese and Japanese laborers as similar to that of enslaved Africans—with, of course, the caveat that there was always an underlying

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[198] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).
[199] Ibid, 32-6; Blanchard, 62; López-Calvo, 37.

agreement (while not always fulfilled as originally contracted) that the coolie laborers would be paid and eventually freed at the end of their contract. On one hand, punishments for various offenses such as running away included whippings, chains, imprisonment, and food deprivation, causing Peruvian press to describe it as "another African slave trade."[200] On the other, the use of Chinese and Japanese laborers as a middle class between free and unfree, also mapped fairly cleanly onto newly contrived racial relation. As Evelyn Hu-DeHart and Kathleen López write, "white planters and officials perceived Asian migrants as more industrious…than Africans" and "hoped Asians would adopt Christianity and European values, thereby ensuring the continuation of the colonial enterprise by forming a class 'in-between' whites at the top and Africans and indigenous peoples at the bottom of society."[201] Furthermore, historian Peter Blanchard writes how Japanese laborers were better paid than Indigenous ones, sometimes even despite reports that Indigenous people were "infinitely better laborers."[202] These assumptions and baseless constructions of who was a better worker or deserved more pay served to separate these groups of laborers, both in the minds of the elites as well as among the laborers themselves. For the rest of this chapter, it is important to remember that these two things can hold true at the same time: Chinese and Japanese in Peru were brought to Peru as exploitable labor and strongly discriminated against, but this concept of using coolie labor as a "stepping stone" from slavery towards a population more rooted in European liberal values also set the scene for the racial hierarchies we see today. Nevertheless, we must remember that the original incorporation of all these nonwhite racial groups—Indigenous, African, and Asian peoples—by white European colonizers in the modern Peruvian state as laborers was in the service of white supremacy, and

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[200] Stewart, 80.

[201] Evelyn Hu-DeHart and Kathleen López, "Asian Diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean: An Historical Overview," *Afro-Hispanic Review* 27, no. 1 (2008): 16.

[202] Blanchard, 65.

that the subsequent racial inequalities created served specifically to prevent any form of solidarity.

Creating the Other: The Construction of Racial Difference and Its Complications

Often the conversation around the experiences of Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese heritage is that of belonging: Is their Chinese or Japanese side "Peruvian" enough? What parts of them are Chinese or Japanese, and what parts are Peruvian? Closely tied to these questions is the concept of assimilation. I suggest that assimilation for Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent is more generative than, for example Bernard Wong's definition that emphasizes much more the loss of culture and heritage rather than what is created from a mixing of cultures.[203] In his study comparing the experiences of people of Chinese heritage in New York City and Lima, Wong argues that Peruvians of Chinese heritage were much more successful in assimilating into Peruvian society than those in the US. He credits much of this to the many instances of anti-Chinese legislation in the US, both in regards to immigration as well as interracial marriage, as opposed to the more relaxed policies of the Peruvian government.[204] While it is true that intermarriage and participation in institutions of the host society were much more common in Peru, I would argue that individuals of Chinese and Japanese descent did not as a whole "discard the culture traits of their land of origin," as Wong included in his definition of assimilation. In fact, when I asked Fabiana if parents and grandparents intentionally did not teach their children and grandchildren Cantonese or any other Chinese language because they were ashamed, she strongly pushed back, insisting it certainly did not happen in her family and that she doubted it

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[203] Wong, 33.
[204] Ibid, 338-43.

happened in any other family.[205] Isabel did tell a different story, describing how family members of her mother's generation shied away from talking about her Chinese great-grandfather. However, the thriving *barrio chino*, appearance of Chinese-inspired dishes in Peruvian national cuisine, and continued private Chinese or Japanese traditions practiced by families seem to reflect the opposite or, as Humberto Rodríguez Pastor termed it, the *chinización* ("china-ization") of Peru.[206] Rather than looking at the assimilation or inclusion of people of Chinese and Japanese descent into Peruvian society as a loss or giving up of any culture or heritage—even as I explore the ways that Chinese, Japanese, and other nonwhite people have had their identities singled out as "other" in order to oppress them—we must also look at the many ways that this construction of racial difference has augmented Peruvians' understanding of what it means to be Peruvian.

One way that white supremacy manifests in Peru that we do not see in the US is the concept of *mestizaje*, which often contributes to a nationwide (mis)understanding around the impacts—or lack of impact—of race and racism in the country. As part of a country full of people of mixed racial backgrounds, individuals can often argue that markers of racial difference do not tangibly impact the daily experiences of nonwhite or non-lightskinned *mestizo* people. Magdalena Carrillo, an Afrotusán woman, explicitly said in Diálogos de Tusanidad that Peru is not a racist country and that any jokes or stereotypical labels placed on you based on your physical appearance are a result of youthful ignorance.[207] While not denying Magdalena's experiences and understanding of the intentions of people who make these jokes and comments, it is important to recognize the effects that these repeated remarks have on nonwhite or non-lightskinned *mestizo* people, both on an emotional level as well as one that produces tangible

[205] Chiu, interview by author, 11:27.
[206] Casalino Sen, 110.
[207] Diálogos de Tusanidad: ¿Afrotusanes?, 1:02:47.

effects on one's life. You can see this recognition throughout all my interviews, especially against Afro and Indigenous Peruvians. Fabiola remembers some incidents in school: "I remember kids in school being racist when I was probably 10…and I noticed like there was one Black girl in the classroom and they treated her horribly. And I think that some people, we—I include myself—would treat other kids weird because they were Andean looking."[208] One of her friends, who was Afroperuvian, actually transferred schools after being bullied and being referenced as a slave. She added that the lack of Afroperuvian people in her school, and in Lima in general, was due to segregation, another representation of how, even if not outwardly recognized, differences in skin color and racial background appear on a larger structural level.[209] Then, after arriving in the US, Fabiola remembers other Latin American kids making fun of her for her Indigenous heritage, something she herself did not feel targeted for when she lived in Peru. Fabiola's stories reveal the racial hierarchies embedded in society, whether or not they are recognized, with Afro and Indigenous Peruvians at the bottom. *Mestizaje* often treats Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent slightly differently—through the creation of "the foreigner," someone who will always be tied to the China or Japan and can never be fully Peruvian. As Ayumi Takenaka notes, many Peruvians of Japanese descent are asked about Japan and often impress people with their control of Spanish when traveling, since they are automatically assumed to be Japanese tourists.[210] I will touch on this more in the following section through a discussion of the term *chino* as a stark marker of difference—once again, not as something inherently only bad, but rather a label that pushes back against the idea that race cannot serve as a defining feature of identity. Though they appear differently for individuals of different racial

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[208] Galindo, 10:35.
[209] Ibid, 13:22.
[210] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 94.

backgrounds, these instances highlight both the affective and very real consequences of the idea that race does indeed exist in Peru.

While I do insist on recognizing and valuing the impact of race on identity formation, *mestizaje* can also actually allow for a different and possibly more fluid understanding of race, one where racial boundaries are blurred. This is reflective of how Rodrigo compares his experiences in Peru, where he feels that he can stand out by emphasizing his Chinese heritage, versus in China, where he is seen as Latin American.[211] He obviously has a clear understanding of his racial identities and how to assert them in different spaces and pushes sharply against the negation of the existence of race. Furthermore, as much as colonization and the emergence of *mestizaje* introduced the idea of creating a singular culture, which "appropriated important aspects of Indian culture…to give it 'authenticity' and roots, but European stock provided the guarantee that it would be modern and forward-looking,"[212] this promotion of cultural mixing and assimilation was also what created space for the insertion of Chinese and Japanese culture into the Peruvian mainstream. As it seems, the ideologies of *mestizaje* and multiculturalism as an absence of racism in Peru is too broad a generalization, and to see it that simply is likely an effect of US hegemony and US-centric understandings of race. A large swath of society does indeed recognize both racial disparities and, unlike in mainstream racial discourse in the US, structural rather than individual explanations for it.[213] However, while this multiraciality and multiculturalism clearly exists in Peru, there is much work to do to make clear both these racial differences and socioeconomic effects of these differences; on census documents individuals still

[211] Campos, 1:24:48.
[212] Telles and Bailey, 1563; Hu-DeHart and López, 17.
[213] Ibid, 1586-8.

must choose only one identity, very much obscuring the fact that many people in Peru identify with multiple racial identities.

From the early stages of Chinese immigration to Peru, close working conditions among Indigenous, Afro, and Chinese and Japanese workers—as well as intentional racial separation by the landowners—also created the conditions for tensions between the racial groups. There is no disputing that Peru (and other countries in the Americas) turned to Chinese and Japanese laborers due to a shortage of cheap labor after the abolition of slavery. These contract laborers were often seen as the third, middle group in between slavery and freedom; in reality, however, this separation was a bit more complicated. Many formerly enslaved people were rehired by plantation owners to serve as headmen and overseers, now managing coolie labor.[214] This power difference, of course, created tensions between the two communities, causing one person opposed to the coolie trade to note "the blacks under slavery suffered only the tyranny of the whites; the Chinese that of the whites and the blacks."[215] On the other hand, when Chinese joined forces with the Chileans during the war between Peru and Chile in the early 1880s as a way to avenge themselves against their employers, the descendants of enslaved Africans in the Cañete Valley also used this opportunity to attack those who they saw as their oppressors—some white landowners, but mainly Chinese communities who operated small stores around the plantations that sold many goods necessary for plantation life. Peter Blanchard similarly notes that, during WWI, while laborers won some wage increases, their success was hindered by accusations and physical attacks between Indigenous and Asian immigrant workers.[216]

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[214] Hu-DeHart, 106-8.
[215] Ibid, 108; Diálogos de Tusanidad: ¿Afrotusanes?, 21:18.
[216] Blanchard, 61.

However, while these tensions certainly did exist, the real cause of tensions between racial groups—all of whom, as Gonzalo Paroy Villafuerte asserts, are still part of the *plebe,* the lowest socioeconomic group[217]—were the intentional actions of those in the highest socioeconomic class, the landowners and other elites. As Luz E. Huertas documents in "Imagining Criminality," starting in the 1890s, Peruvian criminologists and thinkers influenced by European theories of crime prevention ascribed criminality to both biological and cultural traits. In Peru, Huertas argues, "the flexibility of the notion of race played an important role in the construction of 'othernesses,' which in turn conditioned the use of theories about crime."[218] Specifically, this mapped onto both Afro and Asian individuals as non-national subjects who could not be rehabilitated into positive ones, while Indigenous people could, but only through what these thinkers saw as cultural rehabilitation.[219] This non-assimilability of Asians was furthered through the work of hygienists, who saw the crowded living conditions and habits of smoking opium and gambling as contributing to the spread of disease and moral degeneracy. Huertas cited physician César Borja in saying that children born of Chinese fathers and Peruvian mothers inherited only the "ugly, weak, rachitic, and imperfect" traits of their fathers, harming Peru's "biological 'quality.'"[220] Though these beliefs around a "pure Peruvian race" have largely disappeared from the Peruvian national narrative, it would be ahistorical not to acknowledge this creation of racial difference through levels of assimilability, vestiges of which continue to influence ideas of who is and is not Peruvian. Blanchard does recount some instances of a recognition of shared oppression through a number of attempts at solidarity and resistance, most

[217] Diálogos de Tusanidad: ¿Afrotusanes?, 25:40.
[218] Huertas, 55.
[219] Ibid, 55-7.
[220] Ibid, 62.

often labor strikes, and landowners' responses to them.[221] In June of 1919, Japanese workers, with the involvement of Indigenous workers, in the Cañete Valley went on strike and won a small wage increase. While this show of solidarity did result in a win, it also pushed the company to establish a wage differential between Japanese and Indigenous workers. This intentional move not only served to keep white landowners at the top, but also aimed to prevent future acts of solidarity by further separating these groups along racial lines, maybe not as an explicit acknowledgement of racial difference but certainly as something that established precedence for this kind of separation.

This hierarchy adjusted as more Chinese and Japanese laborers served out their original contracts that brought them to Peru. Many recontracted for better pay and better conditions, while some Chinese even became contractors themselves who negotiated with landowners to contract out groups of other Chinese laborers or opened stores to feed these workers.[222] This was the beginning of the Chinese and Japanese establishing themselves as shopkeepers and small business owners. As they left the rural *haciendas* and moved into larger cities such as Lima, they began opening up their own cafés and shops there as well and were known to treat their Afroperuvian patrons badly.[223] Both in cities and in the countryside, the number of Chinese and Japanese small shopkeepers grew, and soon they were accused of monopolizing many industries and driving up prices. Furthermore, in many industries, from agriculture to bakeries, Chinese and Japanese workers refused to participate in strikes led by Peruvians of other races, further exacerbating tensions between the groups.[224] Under the impression that Chinese and Japanese workers would be hinderances to larger project of better treatment and wages for oppressed

[221] Blanchard, 61-4.
[222] Hu-DeHart, 110.
[223] Diálogos de Tusanidad: ¿Afrotusanes?, 24:20.
[224] Blanchard, 66.

workers, in addition to fear of the "other," non-Asian Peruvians worked to exclude Chinese and Japanese workers from their shops and more generally from their industries. This, again, just like with the tensions apparent among plantation workers, must include the role of Peruvian landowners, as well as the government. For example, in 1888, during an economic downturn in the country, Peruvians attacked Chinese- and Japanese-owned shops, accusing them of overcharging them for foodstuffs even as the Peruvian laborers faced unemployment and starvation. At the same time, the government was still importing more coolie laborers, both driving down wages and increasing unemployment.[225] Chinese and Japanese coolie laborers and shopkeepers were blamed for unemployment and unfair prices for foodstuffs, yet the larger problem was the government's acquiescence to landowners who called for continued import of coolie labor, even as Peruvian laborers were available to work these jobs. While Chinese and Japanese immigrants did utilize their positions as sought-after laborers to succeed, often at the expense of Indigenous and Afroperuvian laborers, a sole focus on tensions between these groups obscures the larger project of continuing dominance of wealthy landowners.

Another lasting legacy of the exploitation of all nonwhite workers and subsequent division of the efforts for better treatment was the creation of the myth that Chinese and Japanese laborers were simply harder workers, allowing them to have the relative social mobility they see today.[226] As we have already seen, landowners had complained about Japanese laborers being less efficient than Indigenous laborers, not to mention that Chinese and Japanese laborers did

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[225] Ibid, 70.

[226] Though a text based on and centered around observations of Asian Americans in the United States, Claire Jean Kim's analysis of racial triangulation and the model minority myth as a way of preserving white supremacy plays out in many ways very similarly to that of Peru. For example, even beginning with coolie labor being seen as the "middle ground" between slavery and freedom, places Asian (and in Peru, specifically Chinese and Japanese) people as a middle step between Black (and Indigenous) workers and white and light-skinned *mestizo* landowners. Furthermore, we see the creation of the Asian as the "perpetual foreigner" to assert that they can and will never reach the level of whites, another phenomenon we see over and over again with my interviewees' personal experiences with foreignness.

strike and violently revolt against their employers. The Chinese did seek to appeal themselves to the European and light-skinned *mestizo* upper class by highlighting their economic contributions to the country and supposed intellectual similarity to the elites through various publications. This concept achieved popular acceptance with the publication of Dora Mayer's book, *La China silenciosa y elocuente*, where Mayer—who is not of Chinese descent—highlights the cultural valor and, more importantly, economic contributions of the Chinese community in an attempt to appeal to the general Peruvian population.[227] In her book, Mayer also denigrates Afro and Indigenous Peruvians, stating that the Chinese can contribute culturally with their own language and traditions, completely ignoring the fact that enslaved Africans were stolen from their homes, while Indigenous people were massacred during colonization, with both groups being forced to work for European settlers without even the slightest pretense of free will. While it can be very much true that Chinese and Japanese laborers were hardworking and diligent with their money, the circumstances of their arrival to and later experiences with the Peruvian government and those in power opened up opportunities that Indigenous and Afroperuvians did not have. Not only did Chinese and Japanese laborers arrive under a contract that stated that they would both be paid during the length of that contract, as well as after when they became fully free laborers with the ability to contract for better wages, but they also maintained some form of relationship with their home country, something that African laborers certainly did not have.[228]

[227] López-Calvo, 31-7.

[228] Both Chinese and Japanese immigrants had varying support from their home countries and embassies. Both China and Japan signed treaties with the Peruvian government allowing for the trade of their people, allowing for stipulations on the treatment of those traded (Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 78; Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 70; Ana Maria Candela, "The Yangzi Meets the Amazon: Placing Peruvian Chinese Nationalism in the 1930s," *Yijiusanling niandai de zhongguo (China in the 1930s)* 2 (2006): 869-70.) and direct importations of Chinese and Japanese goods to Chinese- and Japanese-owned shops in Peru (Candela, 871; Takenaka, "Transnational Community," 1463.)

Unfortunately, this ideology continues to this day, both apparent in academic texts and in comments from my interviewees. Carlota Casalino Sen, in her description of how Chinese immigrants and their descendants assimilated into and succeeded in Peruvian society in her piece "De Cómo Los 'chinos' Se Transformaron y Nos Transformaron En Peruanos," cited the positive defense of Chinese work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit in texts written by people such as the aforementioned Dora Mayer and poet Juan de Arona.[229] What isn't mentioned is Mayer's derisive writing against Indigenous and Afroperuvians, as well as a furthering of tropes of early Chinese migrants as dirty and sinful (in contrast to the contemporary Chinese inhabitants), with the assertion that the next generations are much reformed.[230] She also mentions their "frugality and grand discipline"[231] as a reason for their success, again ignoring the fact that Chinese laborers were given wages upon arrival at the *haciendas* compared to the enslaved Africans. Isabel reflected similar sentiments in our interview when she reflected on her own upbringing and how her mother pushed her to achieve as much as she could: "I think that's very interesting because I don't find the same thing in other groups. And I feel that that's very Chinese, that immigrants want to push their children and grandchildren very hard."[232] It is interesting to note that both she and Fabiola singled out Chinese and Japanese folks as immigrants,[233] this time as a point of pride in carrying values that "typical Peruvians" do not have. Rodrigo built on this understanding, saying how "there wasn't less discrimination because the government did it, but because Asians worked hard for social mobility and were able to be more invisibilized."[234] This came to a head with the election of Alberto Fujimori as Peru's president as well, where, as Karen

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[229] Casalino Sen, 126.
[230] López-Calvo, 32.
[231] Casalino Sen, 127.
Translated from: "poca ganancia y gran disciplina"
[232] Blondet, July 14, 2020, 36:10.
[233] Galindo, 28:40.
[234] Campos, 47:29.

described it, people believed in Fujimori's abilities to improve the economy because of the perception that all Japanese are hardworking.[235] This assimilation simultaneously through invisibility and demonstrations of their economic contributions to the country serve to place people of Chinese and Japanese descent as just assimilated enough to succeed, but also willing to accept their place outside of mainstream society without causing a stir—almost a callback to moments when Japanese laborers refused to strike with the others. Once again, this is not to deny or lessen the sacrifices made and acts of resistance taken by Chinese and Japanese immigrants and their descendants, but rather to highlight how the myths perpetuated by Chinese and Japanese populations to protect themselves during a time of very violent manifestations of racism have shaped the way that Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent now tell their family histories. Having pride in one's identity and heritage, especially in a place where the long-lasting existence of people of that identity is often denied, is in and of itself a way of preserving history through memory and storytelling. Nevertheless, retellings without appropriate historical context do create a danger of strengthening white supremacist narratives that continue to create divides among nonwhite Peruvian communities.

Although there were many tensions between these racial communities, there were also many instances of interracial relationships and families. The historic understanding of *mestizaje* as that of racial mixing between white European and Indigenous (and, in some countries, Black) people and cultures not only served to assimilate nonwhite peoples into a dominant culture but also obscures relationships and families among these nonwhite people. One example of this erasure was of the link that Chinese migrants served both as cultural and economic guides in the Amazon between Indigenous communities and European settlers looking to trade with them.

[235] Oba, 49:48.

Evelyn Hu-DeHart argues that this erasure was intentional—that the story of 19th century Peru consisted purely of European pioneers bringing "civilization" to the jungle, something that should not include "dirty" Chinese immigrants.[236] Hu-DeHart also notes how many Chinese ended up settling in major towns in the Amazon, making themselves a permanent part of the community there. This erasure appears also in Casalino Sen's explanation of how the Chinese were able to assimilate (in opposition to Indigenous and Afroperuvians) when she notes Chinese men's willingness to marry "mujeres del país"—women of Peru—as a "strategy" to bring Chineseness into Peruvian society without specifying who these women were or explaining where these men were located and who they would most often be interacting with.[237] This very likely also contributes to the struggles to uncover Chinese heritage by self-identified Afrotusanes—people of Chinese and African heritage, among other things. In a webinar held by Tusanaje, all four Afrotusán panelists described how they often only learned about their Chinese heritage by accident, whether it be through questions about one of their last names or through an off-hand comment about a Chinese relative they had not yet before known about. This was also inscribed in law—in the 1878 official list of births by race, any reference to Asian heritage was completely absent.[238] In the push to recognize people of Chinese and Japanese heritage as simply "Peruvian," it is important also not to erase the fact that, as Magdalena Corrillo said in the webinar, "we Peruvians have a little bit of everything"[239]—that this mix of little bit of everything is essential to what it means to be Peruvian.

[236] Hu-DeHart, 111.
[237] Casalino Sen, 128.
[238] Diálogos de Tusanidad: ¿Afrotusanes?.
[239] Ibid, 47:23.
Translated from: "los Peruanos tenemos de todo un poco"

In the end, across the world but especially in a country such as Peru, where *mestizaje* and frequent instances of miscegenation have always made space for mixed race families, racial difference is neither a simple hierarchy nor one of automatic solidarity among all non-dominant groups. It is once again interesting to note how, although miscegenation was at some points promoted by upper-class whites to "whiten" the population, Chinese coolie laborers—almost exclusively men—much more frequently married *mestiza*, Indigenous, and Afroperuvian women than white European women.[240] In addition to refusing the efforts of the white population, these unions between nonwhite partners have from the beginning complicated the possibility of drawing clear lines of racial difference. While there of course continued to be community formation based on racial ties, individuals with these mixed heritages have both had labels attached to them based on phenotypic traits and been able to actively choose for themselves how they want to identify based on what they have learned about their family histories and traditions they participate in while growing up. Furthermore, Lisa Lowe reminds us that "the differentiations of 'race' or 'nation'…or the modernization discourse of stages of development—these are *traces* of liberal forgetting," that is, that what we so often see as inherent differences between people of different races is a construction to subjugate non-dominant, colonized peoples in service of white supremacy.[241] By obscuring these intimate connections between nonwhite groups, it becomes easier to separate them in retellings of history, also making it simpler to craft the narrative around a white or lightskinned "normal" Peruvian and the Indigenous, Afro, Chinese, or Japanese "other," who simply exist, but do not belong, in the country. Lowe also argues that the general "forgetting" of Chinese indentured labor must not only be attributed to indenture's ambiguous position between slavery and freedom, but also to an active political

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[240] Narváez, 19-20.
[241] Lowe, 39.

project dedicated to obscuring the ties between these various forms of subjugation—from the dispossession of Indigenous peoples; to the enslavement of Africans; to the current militarization, nationalism, and imperialism against all non-Western countries.[242] Without these connections, we cannot fully understand the current positioning of people of Chinese and Japanese descent in Peru and how that positioning has affected their conceptions of self.[243]

Racism Against Chinese and Japanese

The most prevalent labeling of racial difference of people of Chinese and Japanese heritage today is that of naming. Regardless of the various names that Chinese and Japanese people were called by the general Peruvian population, in both derogatory and more neutral ways, the one that has stuck is *chino/a*. Beyond a word that is simply used nonchalantly to refer to people of East Asian descent,[244] *chino* has been explicitly used as a racist slur; *chino cochino* refers to "filthy Chinese," calling back to histories of seeing Chinese Peruvian communities as dirty and disease-infested, while "No me chine-es*"* can be roughly translated to "Don't try to make a fool of me."[245] More recently, the term has generally moved away from these explicitly derogatory connotations and toward one more simply as a marker of difference. Isabel and Fabiola took the use of this nickname as a given, something that simply was: "Yeah, my

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[242] Ibid, 38.

[243] It is also interesting to think about these struggles on a global scale, not just within the microcosms of individual nation-states. Lowe (35-6) documents how 20th century anti-colonial and anti-slavery thinkers, including Frederick Douglass, Walter Rodney, and Cedric Robinson, did see the plights of coolie laborers as inherently tied to the struggle of liberation of all colonized peoples. While we may not have (yet) seen evidence of large-scale political consciousness among coolie laborers in the fight for decolonization, it is important to recognize that racialized identity has never been an apolitical identity and will necessarily affect the sociopolitical contexts in which these people exist, whether they recognize or take action because of it or not.

[244] There is a small Korean community in Peru, though the population is not large enough and has not been in Peru long enough to have a "Korean Peruvian" community. Nevertheless, because of their phenotypic traits, they are also grouped into those called "chinos" (Campos, 9:57; Chang, 65).

[245] Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina," 175.

nickname was *china*," Fabiola said, "and not that I ever liked it or dislike it, it was just what they used, right. *It's not up to you.*"[246] It is important to recognize that, regardless about their feelings towards being called *chino/a,* these people would not ever refer to themselves as *chinos* in conversations with others. The term has continuously been a nickname given to people with East Asian phenotypes by others, purely based on what they looked like with very little agency from the person actually being called a *chino/a.*

Furthermore, in contrast to the concept of a politically unified "Asian American" community in the US that has been taken on by many people with family histories from a number of Asian countries, a political community of "Asian Peruvians" does not seem to exist at all beyond the labels put on them from outsiders. Because of this, for Fabiana, in addition to having racist connotations, this nickname serves more as one that flattens her identity. She remembers occasionally being called *china* when walking down the street or even by friends. "Part of me was like, why can I just be Fabiana, why?" she asked, "Why does my being Chinese have anything to do with how you refer to me or how you think of me? Is that what you think of me first as being Chinese as opposed to being a person that you like?"[247] For Yuri, it went even further. Not only did she feel that the nickname *china* did not accurately reflect her full self and the complexities of her identity, but it actually would make her question her identity as a Peruvian, something that reminded her that her last name and appearance could and would be seen as strange to other Peruvians. She recalled one time riding public transport when a young boy pointed at her and said to his mom, "Una china!" She reflected on this moment: "This kind of thing catches your attention and also makes you question yourself. I wanted to say 'I'm Peruvian, I'm not a *china,'* but in this moment for something small like that you don't know how

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[246] Galindo, 24:34. Italics added for emphasis.
[247] Chiu, interview by author, 33:02.

to explain, how to respond to these questions, and then you just feel uncomfortable."[248] When Yuri mentions "these questions," she is referring to questions about belonging—is she allowed to consider herself fully Peruvian? Does she have a say in how she wants to identify herself when others may simply impose a label onto her? As Fabiana asked, why is it her responsibility to explain herself and her identity to other people? Regardless of the intent of this imposed nickname, it nevertheless acts as both a mark of difference—whether good, bad, or neutral—as a recognition that you have visible traits that are not "typically Peruvian," as well as something you cannot necessarily choose for yourself.

While problematic in many ways, the term *chino/a* has also been embraced by some and can also be paradoxically a reflection of how Chinese presence in Peru is becoming more and more normalized. In our interview, Isabel noted how *chino* could actually be used for people with "slanted eyes," regardless of if they were of Chinese or Japanese descent. According to her, people from Indigenous communities in the north of Peru have the similar cheekbone and eye structure to East Asian people and have subsequently been called *chinos* because of that.[249] Without erasing the fact that *chino* has been used and continues to be used as a derogatory term by some against people of Chinese and Japanese descent, the fact that it has for others simply become a word reflective of one's phenotypic features speaks to a shifting of language, and subsequently a shifting of culture. Though certainly not a marking of belonging for many individuals such as Fabiana and still generally referring to people with stereotypically East Asian features, the decoupling of the word from the singular definition of "person from China" (or

[248] Sakata, interview by author, 32:16.
Translated from: "que llamen tu atención así hacía que uno también se cuestione. Pues no, o sea, que quieras decirle yo soy peruana, no soy china, pero de repente uno tan pequeño tampoco sabe explicar, pues sabe dar respuesta a todas esas preguntas y se siente incómodo eso."
[249] Blondet, July 21, 2020, 15:19.

Japan) reminds us of the fluidity of both terminology and identity. This, however, can still be harmful to people of Chinese and Japanese descent who then feel that, when they are called *chino/a* by random people in public, they are simply having their physical traits pointed out for being different. On the other hand, Karen, who is of Japanese and not Chinese descent, described how she actually finds the nickname *china* endearing, but only when used by friends: "When my friends, the people who I trust and love, call me *china*, it feels really good, you know? When they call me *la chinita*…and they say it respectfully."[250] Among loved ones—whether of Asian descent or not—*chinita (china* with the Spanish diminutive "ita") becomes just like any other nickname, one that shifts with the context and who is using it. Similarly to the discussion around the lasting use of "Tusán" by some communities of Chinese descent, the uses and contexts in which *chino/a* is used can and will continue to shift, but what will ultimately be most important is the agency people of Chinese and Japanese descent have in dictating when and how it is used.

Former president Fujimori's candidacy in 1990 also played a role in increasing visibility for and normalization of Peruvians of not only Japanese, but also of Chinese, descent in public life, but also some racial divides not obviously acknowledged. As the first nonwhite presidential candidate, even poor Indigenous Peruvians, saw hope in his candidacy.[251] This, of course, is also a reflection of how race and class intersect. Even if there is "no racism" in Peru, the fact that the lighter-skinned people of the elite and middle class voted for Mario Vargas Llosa, Fujimori's conservative opponent, while darker-skinned people voted for Fujimori and his charges that Vargas Llosa's policies would burden poor and working class Peruvians, reveals the link between race and economic interests. This does not mean that nonwhite people automatically

[250] Oba, 39:26.
Translated from: "Cuando me dicen china, mis amigas, las personas de confianza y que yo quiero much, yo me siento muy bien, no? Cuando me llamaban la chinita…Y lo dicen con mucho respeto."
[251] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 94; "Alberto Keinya Fujimori," paragraph 9.

will serve the interests of nonwhite communities—clearly, once in office, Fujimori implemented many of the economic policies he had criticized Vargas Llosa for—but even the potential of a representative candidacy revealed racial divides in voting patterns. Also interesting was how, despite Fujimori's lack of formal connection to Japanese Peruvian community, he still became seen as a representative for all people of Japanese descent in Peru. Even Peruvians of Chinese descent were not spared from this automatic association; Fujimori was known as El Chino, the most famous *chino* in all of Peru, causing people like Fabiana to be ridiculed as Fujimori's cousin, daughter, niece, or other close relative.[252] Regardless of how any of these individuals, whether it be Alberto Fujimori or Fabiana Chiu, try to define themselves, in this country that purportedly does not acknowledge race, racial identities will be mapped onto them, based very superficially on phenotypic traits and their fundamental nonwhite-ness.

Due to the focus on phenotypic features as the defining trait of both Chinese and Japanese descent, many historical instances of stereotyping, racism, and discrimination against one of the two ethnic groups have necessarily affected treatment of both groups by outsiders to their communities—that is, the general Peruvian population. This negative perception beyond simply that of foreigners coming in, stealing jobs, and depressing wages came to a head in the first few years of the 20th century with the arrival of the bubonic plague to the Peruvian coast, where it spread throughout the crowded city of Lima. Because of the poor, crowded living conditions of Chinese communities in the city, the plague spread even more quickly through these communities, and they quickly became seen as the center of disease.[253] This, in addition to what was seen as their sinful habits of smoking opium, a habit developed only because rich merchants saw it profitable, both as a product and as a method of inhibiting collective resistance,

[252] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 94; Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina," 182.
[253] Paroy Villafuerte, 65.

to sell them at the *haciendas* where Chinese coolie laborers worked,[254] created a convenient target for ire in response to a deadly plague. As Carlota Casalino Sen puts it, "in response to the epidemic, they once again blamed the 'other' instead of the structural issues that allowed for these social conditions."[255] This scapegoating continued beyond simply blaming Chinese communities for how the bubonic plague ravaged Lima; the poor conditions around Capón (around which the current *barrio chino* is now located) caused by endemic poverty and discrimination were used as an excuse by elites to destroy the area in an attempt to expel the Chinese from it.[256] Then, not only could officials displace anger and frustration over this epidemic onto an already marginalized group and further push them towards that of not only an "other," but a dangerous other. While this incident revolving around the bubonic plague was located within the *barrio chino* and therefore more with Chinese migrants, the association of an East Asian face with this danger necessarily translated to an othering of both Chinese and Japanese communities.

Much of this anti-Asian sentiment came both from individuals who felt economically threatened by Chinese and Japanese workers, as well as from official government decrees and actions. The divisions created by and beneficial to elite Peruvians were only further exacerbated by what became codified exclusion of Chinese and Japanese people. In 1909, parliamentary candidate F. Cárceres pushed for better housing and education for working class Peruvians. Unfortunately, that included inciting demonstrators to attack the Chinese living in Lima and destroy the entire Chinese quarter as they demanded the Peruvian government to end the 1874

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[254] Carlota Casalino Sen, "De Cómo Los 'chinos' Se Transformaron y Nos Transformaron En Peruanos. La Experiencia de Los Inmigrantes y Su Inserción En La Sociedad Peruana, 1849-1930."," *Investigaciones Sociales* 9.15 (2005) (n.d.): 121; Hu-DeHart, 109.
[255] Ibid, 125.
Translated from: "frente a la epidemia, nuevamente se culpó al «otro» y no a las condiciones patológicas sociales que la propia urbe presentaba de manera estructural."
[256] Ibid, 122-4.

Treaty of Tientsin that allowed more free immigration of Chinese to Peru. Even with the limiting of Chinese immigration, in 1917, the anti-Asiatic league was formed, among whose founders were Peruvian anarchist workers.[257] Once again, we see the damage done by the homogenization of people of East Asian descent when, in 1940, a group of Peruvians from the anti-Asiatic league looted Japanese businesses and homes in the worst riot in Peruvian history.[258] Additionally, in 1932, the government passed the "80 Percent Law," which required at least 80 percent of workers in any business to be Peruvian, a clearly targeted move against Chinese and Japanese communities since they were only major immigrant group at the time.[259] In 1934, the import of Japanese textiles became heavily regulated, and some Japanese-owned businesses and lands were expropriated and transferred to Peruvians.[260] Although this legislation and violence seems based firstly in economic tensions, it is important to once again turn to the historical conditions that led to the import of Chinese and Japanese coolie workers in the first place—the cheapest replacement to the formerly enslaved people of African descent. The signing of the 1874 Treaty of Tientsin came out of a need for the Chinese government to intervene in the mistreatment of Chinese laborers, forcing the Peruvian government to allow for free immigration if they still wanted any Chinese laborers. Similarly, Takenaka argues that the Japanese opened small businesses upon moving to cities because the Peruvian government only allowed Europeans to own and develop major industries. Without the ability to enter into certain economic sectors, it was only natural that the Japanese would enter into others, such as barbershops and small grocery stores.[261] This later allowed for easy scapegoating of these small shopkeepers, as they

[257] Lausent-Herrera, "The Chinatown in Peru," 75-6.
[258] Takenaka, "The Japanese in Peru," 87-93.
[259] Blanchard, 60. While Peru had wanted to attract European immigration, when that was unsuccessful, they began importing coolie laborers in large numbers.
[260] Takenaka, 87.
[261] Ibid, 84-5.

could be accused of monopolizing these sectors, even though they had been given limited occupational options to choose from.

The rise of Japanese imperialism and WWII created tensions between Chinese and Japanese communities, pushing many Chinese to actually assist in the scapegoating of the Japanese in an attempt to protect themselves. Fears of Japanese colonization of Latin American countries, combined with Chinese hostility towards Japan starting with the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, gave the Chinese an opportunity to distance themselves from the Japanese in an attempt to turn Peruvian "yellow peril" fears against solely the Japanese. As Ana María Candela writes, Chinese "participated in Peruvian newspaper debates and anti-Japanese campaigns emphasizing their docile nature in contrast to the Japanese who were rebellious and dangerous."[262] This scapegoating was further exacerbated with the deportation of Japanese to the US during WWII. The US Foreign Service actually enlisted Jorgé Woo, an officer in the Chinese embassy in Peru, to go around the country visiting Chinese associations and asking them to provide any intelligence against Japanese Peruvians in an effort against the Japanese Empire. Though there is no evidence of collaboration in this effort, some local Chinese denounced Japanese business competitors to get them deported. Others hung Chinese flags on their doors and emphasized that they were Chinese and not Japanese, again to protect themselves from any anti-Asian violence.[263] Though today this hostility is not apparent between Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, especially not among my interviewees, these tensions highlight the lack of automatic unity of those racialized simply as an otherized *chino*.

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[262] Candela, 879-80.
[263] Ibid, 881-2.

A Different Kind of (Un)Belonging: Traveling Abroad

More than half of my interviewees now live in the United States, and the majority of them have at least visited the country. While this is certainly a reflection of the class status of the people I got in touch with and does not represent the experiences of all Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, the experience of immigrating to and living in the US shifted their understandings of their identity and what it means to be Peruvian, at least in the eyes of others. In the United States, they were forced to prove their Peruvianness and general Latin Americanness, something that most often was not called into question in Peru, while also not being recognized as Asian. This "double" or "twice" migrant experience,[264] however, seemed to further solidify their identifications with Peruvianness, or at least Latin Americanness—as Fabiola said, "no matter where you're from, [if you look *mestizo*] you're Mexican [in the US]."[265] In being pushed to fit themselves into categories that may not have existed outside Peru, where most residents automatically called themselves Peruvian, my interviewees did not necessarily have an option to choose how they identified, but were certainly challenged to think differently, or begin to think, about their racial identity. Fabiola, who arrived in the United States at 15-years-old, was immediately grouped with the other kids from Latin American countries in school during their English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. She also described the few weeks she stayed in Miami, where there is a large Latin American population, as a place where she "felt like 'I'm safe.'"[266] For her, it was the presence of this Latin American community that at first comforted her, and then later became more of an automatic label that was placed on her because of how she looked and who she associated with.

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[264] Jhong Chung, 17:25; Takenaka, "Transnational Community," 1460.
[265] Galindo, 45:13.
[266] Ibid, 44:12.

The first place Fabiana lived when she arrived in the US was rural Kentucky, where she was the only Spanish-speaker in her entire campus. The lack of other immigrants in the area gave her the ability to identify as Peruvian without pushback on what others thought a "typical Peruvian" should look like. It was not until she arrived in Boston that she was really pushed to think more deeply about her racial background:

> I end up in Boston, and that's when the questions begin to come, you know, fast and furious: "Wait, you're Peruvian? You don't look Peruvian." "Wait, wait, wait you speak Spanish, how come you speak Spanish so well?" At that moment, everything that I had learned in Peru about who I was was of no use to me. I was not prepared. I did not have the right tools and all I knew were three things: The Chinese came here as indentured servants and they worked in the guano islands. They built the railroads and they worked in the *haciendas,* in the plantations.[267]

She felt thoroughly unprepared to deal with the questioning of her racial identity, not because she didn't know who she was—she has always identified as Tusán, and Peruvian—but because she had never had to explain Chinese presence in Peru, and, if she did, certainly never had to go beyond the basic migration history that she learned in school. The rich history of Chinese presence and influence in Peru was already reflected through the stories her family shared, the photographs she is working on digitizing, and the traditions she carries on with her family in the US—but that wasn't enough for discerning people in the US who thought they knew and had the power to decide who was and was not Peruvian. Fabiana credits working at a multicultural archive at a museum, where she found an article detailing histories of the Chinese diaspora all across the Americas, as the moment where she was able to connect the larger patterns of migration with how her ancestors ended up in Peru.[268] Later, through the Museum of Chinese in America, she had the opportunity to return to Peru to produce oral histories of her family. While

[267] Chiu, interview by author, 35:03.
[268] Ibid, 36:12.

a great experience and way to preserve her family stories, it is interesting to note that, Fabiana only got the opportunity to do so after she left Peru and met Chinese Americans from the US. The histories she learned from these museums in New York were completely left out of the history textbooks in her Chinese Peruvian schools, never highlighted as something beyond the private sphere.[269]

After arriving in Boston at the age of 17, Juan was also pushed to consider more deeply his racial makeup. Though he had always identified as Peruvian and Tusán, in college he was forced to align with different labels, ones that separated Asian Americans and Latin Americans. Since there was no specific category for Tusán, the closest thing he could find to how he genuinely identified was "mixed race," though that was wholly inadequate to describe his identity of a Peruvian with Chinese descent who called himself Tusán.[270] "So there were times when I felt like I was not fully accepted in either community," he reflected, "oftentimes, I also felt like my identity was questioned, like how truly Chinese are you? How connected are you to your Chinese heritage? It was definitely a lot easier to prove that I was connected to my Peruvian heritage because I grew up in Peru and had a lot of connections there."[271] Still, no matter which space he was in, he felt that he had to serve as an ambassador for his identity, as "Tusán" felt most genuine to who he is, but there is no word for that in English. Even in Peru, as both he and Fabiana have said, "Tusán" is still a fairly intra-community term, where *chino* is the general term for anyone with East Asian phenotypes.[272] If anything, being in the US and trying to conform himself to the narrow boxes presented to him brought him closer to his Tusán identity, since nothing else could describe the fullness of being 100% Peruvian, having Chinese descent, and

[269] Ibid, 37:20.
[270] Jhong Chung, 15:04.
[271] Ibid, 16:40.
[272] Ibid, 21:59; Chiu, interview by author, 43:08.

being in community with other people who identified with this fullness and called themselves Tusán.

Having settled down in the US, both Fabiana and Isabel have had the experience of raising children in the US, taking on the task of passing on not only stories and traditions representing Chinese heritage not commonly seen in the national sphere, but also sharing the entirety of a Peruvian identity. Because of this experience as a child of a Peruvian immigrant—or, for Isabel's children, as Peruvian immigrants themselves, that same concept of being "Peruvian first" plays out for this next generation as well. As Isabel described, in regards to her eldest son, "he feels Peruvian. So for him, that's the farthest he can go back and he doesn't think about Asian ancestors…he wants to look and to feel Peruvian, so they have that to deal with so they don't care about the Chinese ancestors."[273] For all her children, an interest in presenting themselves as Peruvian in the United States overrides any possible interest in digging deeper into their Chinese heritage beyond what Isabel proactively shares. This does also highlight the importance of what parents choose to share with their children. Fabiana's children, who were born and raised in the US, were taught Spanish and visited Peru once every five years or so, a reflection of how Fabiana herself understands her identity. She doesn't speak Cantonese, nor ever lived in China, so it only makes sense for her to share with her children what was most important to her growing up. This idea of focusing on navigating a Peruvian identity within the US and neglecting the Chinese heritage speaks to the easy erasure of some histories purely through a need to preserve another with limited time and resources. Fabiana also remembers instances of her children making fun of Chinese people in the presence of their classmates in the US, reflecting on how "kids do some really cruel things just to fit in, you know, some kids even

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[273] Blondet, July 21, 2021, 47:03.

at the detriment of their own people."[274] Nevertheless, she makes sure to show them the many pictures she has of her children's many relatives with Chinese features, have them read through some of the presentations she gives on Tusán identity, and practice some traditions such as honoring their ancestors every morning. As she reflected, "I'm just planting seeds, I don't know how all of this is going to play out."[275]

Beyond asserting and passing on what they already know about their identities, some Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have interest in returning to, or at least visiting, a familial homeland, less for work like the *dekasegi* and more for points of cultural connection. For many of my interviewees, higher education has been a push factor in emigration from Peru. Yuri and Rodrigo are both currently attending graduate school in Japan and China, respectively. Yuri received a scholarship to study at Ritsumeikan University in Osaka from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, an organization that serves to "carry out financial assistance to developing countries for socioeconomic development,"[276] once again demonstrating the formal economic relationship between Japan and Peru that leads to the movement of people.[277] This marks Yuri's first visit to Japan since her one trip to visit her parents when she was a child. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rodrigo, who had never been to China before attending graduate school, had spent the past four years in Shanghai while completing his master's degree at Fudan University.[278] During this time, he learned both English and Mandarin Chinese, and proudly showed off his language skills and the many facets of his identity in our interview as he deftly navigated between English, Spanish, and Mandarin. Isabel used professional opportunities

[274] Chiu, interview by author, 48:40.
[275] Ibid, 50:22.
[276] "About JICA," Japan International Cooperation Agency, accessed March 21, 2021.
[277] Sakata, interview by author, 1:00:31.
[278] Campos,14:19.

to travel to China. When her husband had a conference in Singapore, she insisted that they visit the city where her great-grandfather had come from, Guangzhou, for the day.[279] For her, this trip did bring her a sense of connection both to the land itself and to her great-grandfather. Spending time in the place where her great-grandfather had lived inspired her to think more about what life was like back then and what pushed him to take the trip to Peru, a history she will never know the concrete facts of but one where she can imagine its possibilities.

This sense of connection does not, however, magically form a new Chinese or Japanese identity that did not previously exist. Fabiana made one trip to China with her family but insists that, while it was a fun trip where she got to see the many facets of her family and community—the languages spoken on the trip included Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and English[280]—it was just that, a fun trip: “I've only been to China for ten days, right? I really can't speak for that. I can speak about being a Latina, but I cannot speak about being Chinese.”[281] Rodrigo explains another barrier for identifying with Chineseness for Peruvians of Chinese descent, describing himself as “brown passing,” meaning that in China he has been identified purely as Latin American, something he sees as giving him a leg up to other people of Chinese descent who grew up in the Americas. Similarly to how the Chinese in Lima’s *barrio chino* more highly regarded people who had more connections to China and Chinese culture, such as speaking the language, Rodrigo explained how Chinese people looked down on those from the Chinese diaspora, who have less connection to the country.[282] Since he was assumed to not have any Chinese background in China, he did not experience this kind of prejudice. Through his own experiences, he also noted that he found pleasure in what he calls “living in the margins”—in Peru he asserts his Tusán

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[279] Blondet, July 14, 2020, 27:37.
[280] Chiu, interview by author, 4:33.
[281] Ibid, 40:24.
[282] Campos, 1:23:09.

identity, while in China he more strongly asserts himself as Latin American.[283] Of course, not all people enjoy this type of visibility, but this concept of sticking out is a reminder of the various parts of their racial identities that my interviewees, and other Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, must hold, as well as the ways that understandings of their identities can change in different situations. Much like many of the family members of my interviewees of Japanese descent, China and Japan were never seen as and have not become "home," nor has that been a requisite for embracing one's identity. Instead, this balancing of how one presents themself, whether in Peru, the US, or China, is a practice Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent have learned to navigate.

Regardless of the connection (or lack of connection) Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent feel with the homeland of their ancestors, many of my interviewees expressed what Juan described as a "good invisibility" in Asia.[284] When visiting various Asian countries, many noted that they would actually be recognized as Asian, to the point where when Fabiola was traveling in Thailand a woman wouldn't believe her when she said she did not speak Thai.[285] Rather than seeing this as a kind of affirmation of identifying as Asian, these instances once again are a reflection of the many identities that Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent hold and the different ways that other people interpret these identities. While often not actively identifying as Asian, this automatic assumption of Asianness was just another label imposed on them by others. Reflecting on the idea of "good invisibility," however, that assumption can be a source of comfort for some. Comparing specifically to his experiences in the US, Juan said, "I think, a lot in the US, especially in areas that are very white, I definitely feel out of place or I feel like

[283] Ibid, 1:25:05.
[284] Jhong Chung, 25:53.
[285] Galindo, 24:52.

people are staring at me. I think that in China, when I was taking the Metro, I don't know, I just felt like another person."[286] Rather than an act of building a strong attachment to Asianness, this invisibility gives folks the ability to move through spaces without having to explain themselves.

This negotiation of Peruvian identity as a person of Chinese or Japanese descent, both in and outside of Peru, is one that contains many layers of global migration patterns, intercontinental relations, national economic ups and downs, and, of course, shared familial narratives and traditions. All my interviewees have had the privilege of being able to reflect on the intersections of their identities, both alone and through family and community engagement. Fabiana was pushed to learn more about the history of the larger Asian diaspora in the Americas through her work in the United States, something unfortunately not available to most Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent. However, this is in no way a necessary prerequisite to shaping and developing one's identity. As we have seen through many testimonies of Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, very often the most impactful instances of developing consciousness of their Chinese or Japanese heritage emerges from a label imposed on them from others, whether that be a questioning of why they look different or have a strange sounding last name,[287] or an instance of more blatant racism.[288] While often these labels of identity originate as an imposed label, such as that of *chino*, how Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent respond to and choose to adopt or not adopt certain labels speaks to the fluidity of racial categories. Even the term Tusán, which is currently embraced by many members of the Chinese diaspora in Peru, is not necessarily one that will last. As a newer wave of immigration and

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[286] Jhong Chung, 26:08.

[287] Yuri mentions occasionally wishing that her last names were put in reverse, so that her more typically Peruvian last name, Gonzáles, came first, in front of Sakata: "sí sentí en algún momento yo pensé cómo? Como no tengo el apellido al revés, primero Gonzáles y luego Sakata." (Sakata, interview by author, 31:52)

[288] Fabiana remembers an instance where, when on vacation in Ica, someone shouted at her family and called them all *chinos*, labeling them as foreigners who didn't belong in the country. (Chiu-Rinaldi, "China Latina," 183)

changes in global relations between Peru and China and Japan emerge, the makeup of the community, and labels used to self-identify, will continue to change.[289]

In order to understand the constantly shifting nature of self identity and community identity, it is increasingly important for individuals to ground themselves in this historical context as a method of drawing strength and hopefully as a guide for any community-building endeavors. Furthermore, as more Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent experience becoming "double migrants," the ideologies of global white supremacy and interconnectedness of racial sociopolitics across the world will weigh more heavily on the construction of identity and community relations. This also creates opportunities for greater global solidarity, as Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent bring their histories with them out of Peru and can challenge dominant conceptions of what the migration histories, experiences, and identities of people the Asian diaspora must look like. They must also be careful not to fall into the same traps of white supremacy that created divides between Indigenous, Afro, Chinese, and Japanese laborers in *haciendas.* However, just as their ancestors did when first arriving in Peru in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent will continue to carve out their place in the many geographic locations they inhabit and challenge stereotypical conceptions of national identity—using the fluidity of race and identity of assert themselves different ways in different settings.

[289] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (Tusheng)," 148-9; Chang, 68; Hu-DeHart and López, 15-6.

Concluding Remarks

As I have emphasized throughout, all my interviewees, and more generally Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, very much identify as Peruvian. I refer back to Ayumi Takenaka's definition of Nikkei as a negation of being fully anything—whether fully Peruvian in Peru, or fully Japanese in Japan, and assert contradictorily that Nikkei identity serves as a positive, additive, or even multiplicative effect (and, in this case, for Tusán identity as well) on individuals' overall view of their identities.[290] The experience of being Peruvian is deeply woven into their DNA, while the presence and integration of Chinese and Japanese heritage and culture is deeply woven into the DNA of Peru. In this sense, it can be impossible, and generally unproductive, to try to separate out the various pieces of one's identity into smaller pieces. Rather, my interviewees assert that they are all of the above, something some are pushing the Peruvian state to codify in official documents such as their national census.[291] In pushing for visibility in greater Peruvian society, especially as Peruvians migrate to the US and beyond, I make a call for Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent to reckon with the ways in which their communities have been targeted to uphold white supremacy. Through both the celebration and painful reckoning of the construction of a Peruvian identity as a person with Chinese or Japanese ancestry, individuals must choose for themselves with which identities and histories and in what ways they want to understand themselves and their lineages.

This thesis was a greatly inspired by Lisa Lowe's project "to inquire into the politics of knowledge with respect to connections between Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas that

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[290] Takenaka, "Transnational Community," 1460.

[291] As previously mentioned, the 2017 census was the first year that "Nikkei" and "Tusán" were included as options; however, respondents were only allowed to choose one category, forcing them to choose between these specific options and others such as "*mestizo*" or "Indigenous," with which they may *more,* but not solely, identify.

were critical to the imbrication of liberal freedom with the rise of a global capitalist system."[292] While I focused on the making of Chinese and Japanese Peruvian identity among white, *mestizo*, *mulatto*, Black, and Indigenous Peruvians, this leaves so much left to be explored about community created *between* these groups. We know that Chinese men and Indigenous and Afroperuvian women started families, mostly through their close proximity working on plantations and gendered dynamic of migration, but we know very little about the quotidian lives of these families, and if these relationships meant anything more for racial relationships between these groups. Tusanaje has begun this work through events like their webinar on Afrotusanes, though the work of taking these individualized stories and finding relational patterns still needs to be done. There has been much scholarship done around violence perpetuated against specific groups, and sometimes by a non-dominant group against another non-dominant group, as we saw with the Cañete Valley massacre or boycott of Chinese bakeries in Lima. Instances of mostly white landowners purposefully sabotaging efforts for worker solidarity, such as increasing the wages of Japanese workers in contrast to Indigenous workers, have made their way into these documented histories, but were there more instances of solidarity that threatened these landowners into taking these measures? I myself was unable to travel to Peru last summer, leaving unaddressed many state responses to the emergence of this new facet of racial discourse, whether that be through older census documents, memos on Peruvian relationships with the Chinese and Japanese states, or other ways the state chose to push or dissuade Peruvians towards racial animus against the Chinese and Japanese. Though state responses do not tell the whole story—and arguably obscure the more important community interactions and everyday relationships between individuals—these nation-wide policies do provide context for some of

[292] Lowe, 37.

these dynamics. Looking to a much more recent past, in the childhoods of my interviewees, many grew up in a multiracial, albeit still segregated, environment. Were there any tacit forms of relationships or solidarities there, and if not, why? And finally, what does this increasing shift to multiculturalism and institutional recognition of racial categories mean for those challenging white supremacy in Peru today?

The continued immigration of Chinese to Peru, as documented by Isabelle Lausent-Herrera and Rebecca Mu Jie Chang, have continued to fracture an already-heterogenous "Chinese Peruvian community"—if such a community does or has ever existed under such a name. Even starting with the emergence of the Asociación Peruano Chino for—albeit socioeconomically elite—Tusanes in response to a feeling of exclusion from other Chinese organizations such as the Tonghuy Chongkoc,[293] divisions between the various migration generations have always been apparent. Will the experiences of the descendants of current first- and second-generation Chinese replicate those of my interviewees in their embrace of their Chinese identity as a part of their Peruvian identity? If not, what will their place be in relation to new Chinese migrants (often colloquially known as "Chinese Chinese") and my Tusán interviewees and other Peruvians of Chinese descent? Lausent-Herrera makes some guesses in the conclusion of her piece "Tusans (Tusheng) and the Changing Chinese Community(ies),"[294] and more investigation into the histories of the relationships between both different migration generations and different racial groups can offer a roadmap for those actively crafting those identities.

Turning even further into the greater geopolitical forces at play, another factor to consider when looking at the makeup of people of Chinese descent in Peru are the political conflicts

[293] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (Tusheng)," 142.
[294] Ibid, 147-9.

between the Chinese Communist Party and Kuomingtang. In the struggle to claim recognition as the "legitimate Chinese government," diasporic Chinese have become a site of that conflict. We see this throughout Lok C. D. Siu's *Memories of a Future Home,* which discusses diasporic citizenship for Chinese in Panama and argues how the construction of Chinese identity in Panama is intimately connected to the conflict between the communist People's Republic of China and the exiled Republic of China.[295] Not only do the conflicts within China affect who emigrates from the country, but efforts to gain international support from both parties made their presence known in a number of countries with substantial Chinese populations, including both Panama and Peru. Lausent-Herrera once again addresses briefly these tensions in regards to General J. Velasco's 1968 coup d'état and recognition of the People's Republic of China, bringing to a head tensions between Chinese communities in Peru and pushing other Chinese to leave Peru altogether.[296] Both Siu's work and Ana María Candela's discussion of strategies of building Chinese nationalism in Chinese Peruvian communities in the 1930s against Japanese imperialism in her piece "The Yangzi Meets the Amazon" can serve as models for further work uncovering international efforts from Chinese actors to engage Chinese communities in Peru.

In addition to the importance of bringing forward and centering experiences of Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, an identity very rarely, if ever, made known in the US, this project has been especially meaningful to me because of my own identity. My mother was born in São Paolo, Brazil, something I had thought of growing up as an extremely unique circumstance, never considering the transnational politics that made Latin America a place where Asian communities established themselves. Though I was born and raised in the United States,

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[295] Lok C. D. Siu, *Memories of a Future Home : Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005), 2-3.
[296] Lausent-Herrera, "Tusans (Tusheng)," 135-6.

this added aspect of my family's migration history has been a source of fascination for me—almost like the mythology of a Chinese great-grandfather that Isabel has dedicated herself to uncovering. Furthermore, as a third-generation Chinese Taiwanese American, I found myself resonating with some of the stories and struggles of my interviewees despite our geographical differences. When Fabiana talked about choosing to stop studying Cantonese in the school her father helped start for children of Chinese descent because it was bringing down her GPA, I reflected on my mom's insistence that I attend Chinese classes for years even though I showed little interest or effort at the time.[297] Also similarly to my interviewees, visiting China or any other country in Asia feels much less like "returning home," as I have few family members living in China, and more like an experience of being treated like I *could* belong while simultaneously feeling like an outsider. In a country where the dominant narrative around Asian/Americans is one of migration and first- and second-generation experiences, I find myself constantly negotiating my identity as an Asian diasporic person who clearly situates her life in the US, but who wants to embrace her Chinese Taiwanese identity and is also treated by other (white) Americans as a foreigner. While the racial politics of Peru and the US are not exactly the same, seeing how Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent understand and celebrate all parts of their identities and interacting with community spaces such as Tusanaje, especially during this time of COVID-19 and a heightened othering of Asians, has provided me a source of comfort.

My interviewees have shown me the importance of embracing one's many identities, being unapologetic in asserting the fullness of oneself, and taking pride in wanting to learn more. So often family histories and traditions are confined to the private sphere, especially for non-dominant identities within the nation, obscuring their historical sociopolitical contexts. Through

[297] Chiu, interview by author, 7:37.

asking more questions and, for some, immigrating to other countries, my interviewees were pushed to further define what it meant to be a Peruvian with Chinese or Japanese heritage. Regardless of any individual's broader understanding of the contexts of why people of Chinese and Japanese descent have established themselves in Peru, these individuals from the beginning have built communities for themselves both as methods of survival during times of intense violence as well as places located in joy and celebration of identity and resilience. The continued telling of family and collective histories will continue to be a task for Peruvians of Chinese and Japanese descent, not only in service of crafting their own identities, but for all Peruvians to understand better their place in a multicultural Peru.

Appendix – Profiles of Interviewees

Isabel Blondet worked as a translator for the United Nations for 30 years and continues to collaborate with them at their headquarters in New York and Vienna. She studied anthropology in the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and did her postgraduate studies in applied linguistics in Moscow State Linguistic University and the Polytechnic School of Central London. Now retired, she occasionally does travel tours, specializing in the Silk Road. She has lived in Lima, Moscow, London, New York, and Geneva, can read in six languages, write in three, and enjoys cooking using YouTube tutorials. Her great-grandfather was a Chinese man who immigrated from Guanzhou at the age of 15.[298]

Rodrigo P. Campos is a communicator, artist, and curator. He has a Master's in Chinese Language and Culture from Fudan University and a Bachelor's Degree in Communications specializing in Performing Arts from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. He is a member of the Latin (and Hispanic) American Research Group on Chinese Studies at the Universidad de Costa Rica. He also serves as a cultural activist around the Peru-China relationship and is one of the most visible figures promoting Tusán culture, with connections in Peru, Cuba, Spain, and China. He is the director and founder of Tusanaje and is currently a contributor to the anthology compiled by Dr. Ignacio López Calvo, *Hojas sobre raíces: Antología literaria de tusanes peruanos.*[299]

Fabiana Chiu is an educator, photographer, writer, and arts administrator who lives and works in New York. She was born, raised, and educated in Lima, Peru within her family's photography business. Her work is informed by her family's multiple migrations to and from China, the Andes, Spain, Kentucky, Ohio, Georgia, Massachusetts, and NY. In an effort to continue to connect with artists and art, during the pandemic Fabiana launched a remote portrait series, has crafted masks out of her vintage fabric collection, and has shared her passion for the care and interpretation of photographic family archives, often creating new works informed by these. She can be found online at instagram.com/fabiana.chiu.

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[298] Translated and adapted from her profile in SinEDITOR (https://sineditor.com/columnistas/): Ha trabajado durante 30 años como traductora de las Naciones Unidas y sigue colaborando con esa organización en las sedes de Nueva York y Viena. Estudió en la Facultad de Antropología de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Hizo estudios de posgrado en lingüística aplicada en el Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Estatal de Moscú y el Polytechnic School of Central London. Reciclada como curadora de viajes y guía especializada en la Ruta de la Seda, títulos que ella misma se ha adjudicado, ha vivido entre uno y treinta años en las ciudades de Lima, Moscú, Londres, Nueva York y Ginebra. Lleva una vida itinerante, lee en seis idiomas, escribe en tres y cocina con tutoriales de YouTube.

[299] Translated and adapted from: Comunicador, artista y gestor cultural. Magíster (C) en Lengua y Cultura China por Fudan University -复旦大学. Graduado en Comunicaciones con mención en Artes Escénicas por la PUCP. Miembro de la Red Latina (e Hispano) Americanista sobre Estudios Sinológicos de la Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR). También se desempeña como activista cultural en temas concernientes a la relación Perú-China. Es uno de los más visibles promotores culturales y activistas comunitarios por la visibilización de la cultura tusán (cultura de los peruanos de ascendencia china), con ponencias en Perú, Cuba, España y China. Es director fundador del centro cultural digital Tusanaje-秘从中来. Actualmente es uno de los antologadores del libro *Hojas sobre raíces: Antología literaria de tusanes peruanos* junto con el Dr. Ignacio López Calvo (UC, Merced).

Fabiola Galindo is a national correspondent for Univision Network. She grew up in Lima, but moved to New Jersey at 15-years-old. Her great-grandfather was a Japanese immigrant who came to Peru but was later deported to the US during WWII. She also strongly identifies with her Indigenous *sierra* roots.

Juan Francisco Jhong Chung is a Tusán of Quechua Chanka and Chinese ancestry. He received a Master's Degree from the University of Michigan School of Environment and Sustainability, where he focused on climate change, biodiversity conservation, environmental justice, and food systems. He currently lives in Michigan and is an active member of Tusanaje.

Karen Reyna Oba Segama identifies as *Nikkei wanka*, meaning she was born in Huancayo, Peru, but is the daughter of Japanese immigrants on her father's side and of the Andean community from Yauli, La Oroya from her mother's side. She also has a 9-year-old son, Kazuo Ignacio, whose name means "man of peace." She works in the Centro Cultural de la Universidad Continental. She is passionate about issues around communication and development projects focusing on human rights and hopes to get a PhD in the social sciences in the future.[300]

Yuri Sakata identifies as *peruana limeña*. She is a descendent of Japanese immigrants from her father's side and *huaracino* migrants from her mother's side. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Literature from the Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal and Master's in Spanish Literature from Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. She was the editor at the Asociación Peruano Japonesa and is currently getting her PhD in Political Science at Ritsumeikan University in Japan thanks to a scholarship from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).[301] She recently moved to Osaka, Japan for her studies after much delay due to COVID-19.

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[300] Translated from Karen's own words: "Soy nikkei wanka. Es decir, nací en la Ciudad Incontrastable de Huancayo, pero, de parte de mi padre desciendo de inmigrantes japoneses y de parte de mi madre de la comunidad andina de Yauli, La Oroya. Soy madre de Kazuo Ignacio, mi hijo de 9 años cuyo nombre significa, Hombre de Paz. Actualmente laboro en el Centro Cultural de la Universidad Continental. Me apasiona la comunicación social y los proyectos de desarrollo con enfoque de derechos humanos y tengo muchas ganas de realizar un doctorado en Ciencias Sociales."

[301] Translated from Yuri's own words: "Peruana limeña, descendiente de inmigrantes japoneses por el lado paterno y descendiente de inmigrantes huaracinos por el lado materno. Soy bachiller en Literatura por la Universidad Nacional Federico Villarreal y magister en Literatura Hispanoamericana por la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Fui editora del Fondo Editorial de la Asociación Peruano Japonesa y actualmente curso el programa de doctorado en Ciencias Políticas de la universidad Ritsumeikan gracias a la beca que me otorgó la Cooperativa Internacional Japonesa JICA."

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