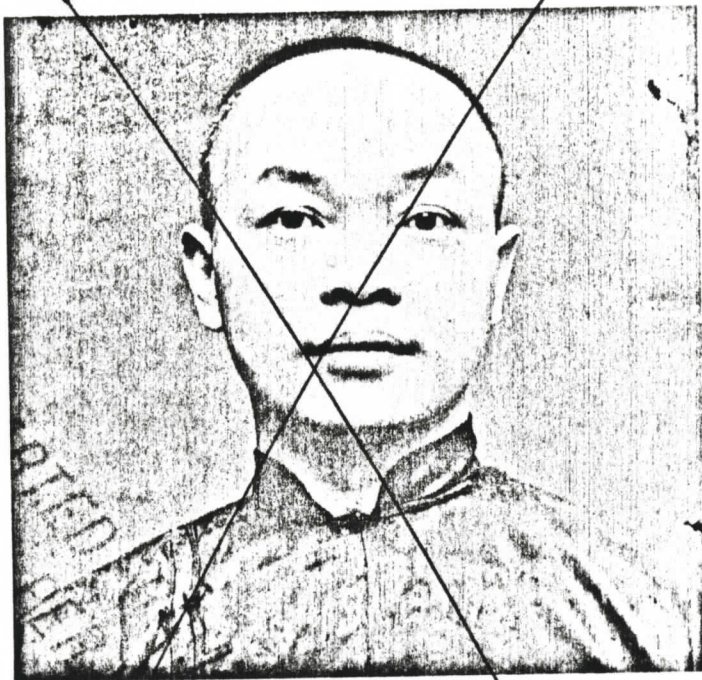


6. Wong Kim Ark, 1904



This is a photograph of Wong Kim Ark, an American-born Chinese who, given the ambiguities of American citizenship law in the late-nineteenth century, was refused entry into the United States after travelling to China. Immigration officials deemed that he was not a citizen and therefore was excluded under the Chinese Exclusion Act. Wong appealed to the courts to overturn the decision, arguing that the fourteenth amendment, which granted citizenship to the newly freed southern blacks, extended to members of the "Mongolian race" born on American soil. In 1898 the US Supreme Court agreed with Wong, enabling him to return to his native country. The decision was a crucial legal victory in a long line of Asian American legal defeats.

From The National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Region, San Francisco, Calif., Control Number NRHS-85-INSSFDEPCAS-12017 (42223)-1A; found through NARA's web-based searchable collections database (NAIL).

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7. Asiatic Exclusion League Argues for Excluding Japanese and Korean Immigration, 1908

The fruits of the various Chinese Restriction Acts were enjoyed by the people of the Pacific Coast for a very short time because, immediately following the decrease in the number of Chinese coolies another evil closely followed upon their retreating footsteps. This evil—the Japanese—crept in so easily, so gradually, so secretly, that its danger was not fully recognized by the people at large until after the year 1890. It is true that in the middle eighties, industrial strife had been precipitated by the employment of large numbers of Japanese in the Coast shipping and mines of British Columbia, and it was hoped that the defeat of the ship owners by the Coast Seamen's Union would cause the elimination of that class of labor from among us. The hope was vain. The daily press, from time to time, would call attention to the arrival of Japanese laborers, but they would quietly move to the farming districts where they attracted but little attention, until the white laborers who had been in the habit of obtaining employment throughout the interior, were confronted with, to them, an appalling condition—seeking employment and being refused the same, while gangs of Japanese were busily engaged performing the work which had formerly, and of right, been performed by the actual and prospective American citizen.

The receipt of information of this character from all parts of the State, coupled with the fact that every trans-Pacific and Victoria steamer arrived at San Francisco with its quota of "little brown men," led to a consideration of the question. No better evidence of the extent of the influx could be presented at that time—as now—than a walk through the residence districts of the City of San Francisco. It seemed that every industry had been invaded, the Japs being found in 64 various occupations, outside of the building industries, and at the present time (April 1, 1907), they are even engaged in construction from cellar to roof.

So early as 1895 it was found, upon inquiry among the hop, beet, fruit growers and packers that the employment of Japanese had become general, almost to the total exclusion of white labor. At the same time, numerous rumors of the wholesale importation of these people, under contract, in violation of the United States Alien Contract Labor Laws, were brought to the attention of the California State Bureau of Labor Statistics. . . .

While the Japanese are engaged in every occupation and almost every line of business, and solicit the patronage of the whites, they trade exclusively with themselves and their earnings and profits, except so much as is spent for absolute necessities, finds its way to Japan for investment. During November, 1905, the money order business of the San Francisco postoffice with Japan amounted to \$190,000, and many other postoffices in California, notably Vacaville, Sacramento, Watsonville, Fresno, Los Angeles and Stockton are doing similar business in proportion to their population. It has been estimated that since 1880 the Japanese have sent over \$200,000,000 to Japan for investment.

From *Proceedings of the Asiatic Exclusion League, 1907–1913* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 10, 16–19, 22–24.

Definite data respecting the actual number of Japanese engaged in farming in California is not available, but enough is known to convince us that the Chinese, Indians and Mexicans have been almost entirely displaced by them, and the total number must exceed 30,000. Respecting the employment of Japanese, their capacity for work and the desirability of maintaining them on the fruit orchards, we quote from the letters of a few ranch owners who, once ardent admirers of the "little brown men," are now awake to the danger confronting them, a danger brought upon themselves by their desire to obtain cheap and docile laborers. Let us hear what these gentlemen have to say: "If we have to pay \$1.50 to \$1.75 per day for this wretched Jap help, where is the supposed saving in allowing the Orientals to come here? Good white help will not come in and compete with the Japanese."

"I live in dread of the coming season. There is no questioning the fact that the Japanese are thoroughly organized and in complete control of the labor proposition."

"If a people were ever cursed with a class of labor more worthless, more rotten and less to be depended upon than California is with the Japanese, I have yet to find it in my travels from Alpine to the Golden Gate."

"It is my opinion that before another year has passed, the farmers and supporters of the Chinese Exclusion Act will understand what a great mistake was made in not also excluding the Japanese. Of the two evils, the Chinese is by far the least."

"It is a well known fact that in sections where fruit, beets and hops are the principle staple, the Japanese invasion is something astounding. They have almost a monopoly in the industries named. Why? Because they are so constituted that they will live on what the average white man will throw to his dog."

"One self-styled Japanese banker rents twelve ranches through his agents. Another controls no less than twenty through money loaned to the cultivators."

"The Jap spends some of his money, but he does not spend it at a white man's store. There is absolutely no business for the white merchant and the 800 Japs in this town bring nothing at all into the avenue of trade."

These admissions on the part of certain employers of the Japs are very amusing, especially to those who recollect through whose instrumentality the Jap was first induced to come here.

Possibilities and Probabilities

The possibilities of the Jap in agriculture are very great. The farmers of California being already in their clutches, they are seeking new fields to conquer. In a recent Consular report Mr. Gada, a Japanese of great wealth, is reported as saying: "I intend to colonize and cultivate about 49,000 acres of land in Texas. The price of the land is \$2.50 per acre. The area of the uncultivated land in Texas, where I have undertaken the farming scheme, is larger than Japan. The soil is very rich and will need no fertilizers for ten years to come. From a wage of \$15, a laborer should be able to save \$10 per month. I estimate that at the end of four years a profit of \$1,000,000 will be realized."

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that a race war between Negroes and Japs has already started in San Antonio, Texas.

A gentleman named Saiki, passing through San Francisco on his way to Florida, said: "I am on my way to Florida, where I expect to take up 6,000 acres of land. I expect thousands of people will come out to settle it."

At a Congregational meeting held in San Francisco two years ago, a Mr. Kozaki boasted that some of his countrymen had made \$1,000,000 by farming, and that many others had made over \$100,000, each in commercial pursuits. He further stated that he intended to establish a large industrial colony of Japanese on the shores of the Puget Sound.

A Mr. Kawakami, writing in the "Independent" some time since, stated that his countrymen owned and farmed some 98,000 acres of the best land in California.

Are these happenings to be considered trifles? Is it not time that others besides Californians awaken to the gravity of the situation on the Pacific Coast? Or shall California be permitted to fight her own battles while we look supinely on?

Japanese and White Women

It has been declared by an authority on such matters—the State Labor Commissioner—that 5,000 white girls have been robbed of their employment as waitresses and domestic servants by the invasion of the Japanese. If this be so, and from present inquiry and investigation we believe Mr. Stafford's figures fall short of the actual number so engaged, the question naturally arises, what has become of the white girls who have lost their jobs as a result of the employment of these thousands of brown servants? Into what horrible calling have they gone? Investigation fails to discover any occupation which shows a sudden influx of white women. What has become of them?

From employment agencies making a specialty of furnishing female help, it is learned that the situation is nothing short of terrible; that hundreds of girls are out of employment who would be glad of any position by which their needs could be decently provided. The following quotations are from the remarks of agents furnishing domestic help:

"Any woman who will pay decent wages and treat her help like human beings can get all the girls she can possibly want."

"People have become so accustomed to Orientals that they forget an American girl cannot live like an Asiatic. They give the Japanese regular hours and nothing is allowed to interfere with their regular routine. But with a hired girl the entire system is changed; the family will remain at the table as long as they choose, and the girl must make no arrangements that will interfere or conflict with such arrangements."

"Many people hire Japanese for an hour or two at a time from any of the house-cleaning companies scattered throughout the city. Those who work in that manner are the 'Student Class,' and it is surprising how many girls are thus crowded out of employment."

"In most of the apartment houses there is a Jap on each floor besides those in the laundry, in the dining room and those engaged in window cleaning; in every instance, these Japs take the place formerly filled by white girls."

"The foregoing statements may be regarded as absolutely reliable. By many of our economic thinkers the elimination of our young women from domestic service is considered the most dangerous phase of the Japanese question, because, if the white girl is not afforded the opportunity of acquainting herself with the problems of domestic economy, how can she fit herself to become the companion and helpmeet of the American wage-earner?"

Men Suffer As Well As Women

The Japanese have been no laggards in breaking into other lines of business in San Francisco, as in other parts of the State. They are cutting into the business of the white steam laundries to a great extent by the use of improved machinery and improved methods, in conjunction with a 40 per cent reduction of prices. Restaurants run by Japanese are scattered throughout the city, chiefly in the districts frequented by the floating population, and their places furnish food at such ridiculously low figures—10 and 15 cents per meal—that it is a constant temptation for a man to forget his manhood and patronize the enemies of his race and civilization. Ninety per cent of the saloons employ Japanese as porters and lunch boys, because they are cheap and obsequious. Bakeries employ them in various capacities, and wholesale dealers, whose sole business is with the retailer who supplies the home of the working man with the necessities of life, are hiring Japanese in large numbers. The shoe repairing business, once profitable to the white cobbler, has been destroyed so far as the white worker is concerned. The Jap, by undercutting the price, has virtually driven the white man out of business. Restaurants, boarding houses, etc., are feeling the pinch caused by the competition of their people, and in many kinds of business the cry is of frequent occurrence, "No white man need apply"; yet, in the face of such aggravating conditions the workingman of California is self-contained and refuses to employ the boycott against his own countrymen, placing confidence in the promises of his representatives that they will finally obtain an Act of Congress for the exclusion of Japanese and Koreans as well as Chinese.

Japanese and Their Relations With Women

Some years ago one of the ablest English critics, Mr. Clement Scott, came to San Francisco after visiting Japan. Speaking of Japanese social life and the prevailing treatment of women in that country, he said: "There are scenes where the Japanese women are placed in positions that are a disgrace to the human race. Freedom and respect for women must blush at the mere aspect of the Yosh-i-wara of Tokio, the capital city of the Mikado. Every city in the civilized world has its soiled doves, but they are not compelled to sit in cages like wild beasts waiting to be chosen and sold to the passer-by."

Sir Henry Norman, in his "Real Japan," is even more severe in his strictures upon the social life in that country.

Mr. Lindell of Boston, who spent many years in Japan, said: "There is no social evil problem in Japan. Institutions for this heinous traffic are not only legalized, but legitimized by the State, and each community has its public house or Yosh-i-wara, where the surplus girls of a family are apprenticed when twelve or fourteen years of age for a term of three years, at the end of which time they are permitted to marry. Is it any wonder that when a Japanese young man is accused of sending obscene pictures and insulting propositions to American girls that he pleads the monstrous excuse that 'these things are not considered wrong in Japan.'"

With the status of Japanese women we have no concern. Japan's social customs are no business of ours, but we do voice a strenuous objection against the introduction of such status of American social life. Only those who closely study the problem of Japanese immigration know to what extent this is being done. Every few days

we read of "Marriages by Photograph," and of the arrival in San Francisco of women who claim to have been so married. This is, of course, the beginning of her career. Its extension may well be a matter of apprehension. The Police Department of San Francisco is well acquainted with these matters, even if the immigration officers deny knowledge of the same, and it is also well known to the police that in some localities it will soon be necessary for white women to arm themselves for protection against the insults of Japanese. Since the boost given to Japanese aggressiveness by the unwarranted utterances of the President and some of his advisers, conditions in some quarters are becoming unbearable. The question is: Shall we obtain the necessary relief from such conditions or shall we become compelled in defense of our womankind to adopt the measures of the Black Belt of our Southern States?

Asiatic exclusion, then, is a question which concerns the whole country and the Japanese Exclusion League is proceeding upon that understanding. The nations of Asia are nations apart from those of the West, nor do they wish to be otherwise. The Asiatic can never be other than an Asiatic, however much he may imitate the dress of the white man, nor will he ever have the slightest concern for our laws, except to evade them; nor with the Government, except to cajole and deceive it. The Japanese in California is just as intensely and essentially a Japanese as though he had never left the rice fields of his native country.

Industrial America is one and indivisible and the injury that is inflicted upon our State is inflicted upon them all. . . .

Pardee's Message to California Legislature, January, 1907

"It is safe to say that the President, when he penned that portion of his annual message in which he referred to the treatment of the Japanese in the San Francisco schools, was not aware of the conditions on this coast, especially in California. In common with the people of the East, who have had no experience with these unas-similable people of Japan and China, the President does not understand the racial differences between the Japanese and Chinese and people of Caucasian blood. Coming into contact only with a few educated individuals of these two races, the people of the eastern states do not understand that to permit the immigration of only a small fraction of the whole of these people means the monopolizing by them of such pursuits as they may engage in. This monopolization would not militate against the public good, were the monopolizers capable of being absorbed into the body politic and in this generation, or even the next, becoming integral parts of our cosmopolitan people.

Unfortunately, however, neither the Japanese nor the Chinese appear capable of absorption and assimilation into the mass of our people. Neither race has, apparently, any desire to renounce allegiance to its mother country, and become in the true sense of the word citizens of the United States. Our laws and customs regard intermarriage with them miscegenation. All their energies are bent towards acquiring a competency here to enable them to live in comfort and affluence in their own country. They collect in colonies, either in the cities or in the country, do only such business as necessity compels with any but those of their own people, and have no close relations of any kind with our people. Being able to live on a small fraction of what seems necessary to support Caucasian people and being, furthermore clannish

in the extreme and evincing neither desire nor ability to mingle with our people, the lower classes of these two nations are not in any sense of the word desirable immigrants to, much less citizens of, this country. There are Chinese and Japanese, especially the former, who have lived in this State many years, some of them a half century, and in no essential particulars have they acquired our manners or our customs. They are, practically speaking, as much foreigners in manners, customs, habits of thought and loyalty to their mother country as they were when they came here. The great mass of them make no investments in this country, have no interest in its institutions and no sympathy even with our civilization or modes of thought; they make no attempt to accommodate themselves, even in dress, modes of living or customs to those surrounding them, and, in fact, desire to gain sufficient to enable them to return to their own countries to live out the rest of their lives.

The Causes in the Races Themselves

It is beside the question to say that they show these peculiarities because of the inhospitableness of our people. Were the racial differences in civilization, thought, manners and customs not inseparable between these Asiatics and Caucasians whatever inhospitableness our people might show toward them would insensibly disappear and there would be, in spite of all attempts to the contrary, signs of Americanization in the best sense of the term among them. The Chinese among us are still Chinese; they wear, for the most part, their national costumes and queues; they live strictly in quarters by themselves, and preserve their national customs inviolate. The Japanese also have made no attempts to dissociate themselves from their fellows and become individuals among us. They, like the Chinese, congregate together, not in quarters as the Chinese do, but still apart by themselves. They wear, it is true, American clothes, but they preserve the Japanese customs. And they, even more than the Chinese, refuse to do business when it is possible to avoid it, with Caucasians. It is useless to expect that people with such different racial characteristics and such different civilization can ever mix with our people and become absorbed into our body politic. They cannot become good American citizens; it is useless to attempt to make them such.

But, while the Caucasian cannot reconcile himself to the Asiatic, it must not be forgotten that the Asiatic cannot reconcile himself with the Caucasian. While the Caucasian looks askance at the Japanese and Chinese, both the latter have an equal or greater contempt for the Caucasian. To the Asiatic, the Caucasian is an inferior with whom it is little short of degrading to closely associate. This condition of affairs exists not only in this country but also in Japan and China. Both Europeans and Americans have lived for many years in both these countries, yet there is no mingling of the races even there, no intermarriage, no assuming our terms of equality, amity and unconscious friendliness, of the dress, manners, customs, mode of living or religion of these countries by Caucasians living there. There, as here, each race looks upon the other as inferior.

Reasons for Separate Schools

Under these circumstances it is not at all strange that there is an aversion to the mingling of the children of the two races. And, therefore, California has decreed that, whenever it is so desired, the local school authorities may provide separate

schools for the Chinese and Japanese children, in which they shall be taught as Caucasian children are, and by equally capable teachers. In the case of the Japanese this separation seems to be the more necessary, because many of the Japanese who desire to attend our schools are much older than the Caucasian children with whom, on account of their deficient learning, the Japanese must be enclashed. It is not at all desirable that youths, even Japanese youths, at eight, ten years or more of age, should be associated in the schools with children of tender ages. The reason, therefore, is sufficiently explained by its mere statement."

8. Spokane Labor Union Derides Anti-Japanese Prejudice, 1909

The Spokane division of the porters' union (A.F. of L.) held a meeting April 13 to talk over the invasion of the Japanese. According to the "Labor World" "vigorous efforts will be made to eradicate the brown men from industrial competition"—which efforts will have "the support of organized labor in general." The Industrial Workers of the World have the largest labor organization in Spokane or in any part of the country around. It must be understood that the I.W.W. will turn down any effort at discrimination against our Japanese fellow workers. Are we not correct when we say that the trades unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry; thereby helping to defeat one another? This is the same old game of "divide and conquer" on the part of employers and those labor unions which are influenced by prejudice on account of race, nation or language. If the workers controlled the U.S. government, or had at present anything to say as to whether the Japanese were "desirable citizens," it might be interesting for workmen to take up the study of comparative ethnology; but the Japanese are here in the United States by the will of the industrial masters; being here, the matter should be dealt with as is best for the working class. Now it is not supposed that the members of the porters' union, for instance, would exterminate the Japanese by murder outright, but would be more humane(?) by letting the Japanese starve to death—providing the Japanese could be so far educated into the A.F. of L. principles as to be willing tamely to starve to death. The Japanese are here, they will not starve to death, and they will work as long as the boss will hire them. This being the case, what does the A.F. of L. man expect to gain by antagonizing these men, the Japanese, who are, it will be admitted, not lacking in brains? From all appearances, the porters' union is not so strong as to refuse help—even from a Japanese! Will any man explain just why, as long as the Japanese are here, it would not be better to unite with them to fight the common enemy, the master, than to waste time, energy and strength in fighting another group of workers simply on account of their color—to the huge delight of the employer? If the porters' union were but half as class conscious as the average Japanese worker, there would be better wages and better conditions for the porter than the wretched ones they are now forced to submit to. The Labor Commissioner of California says that in his long

From "Silly Race Prejudice," editorial, *Industrial Worker*, April 22, 1909; reprinted in *Racism, Dissent, and Asian Americans from 1850 to the Present: A Documentary History*, ed. Philip S. Foner and Daniel Rosenberg (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993), 193-194.