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Mr. Joe Ng

Acquisitions Editor (Social Sciences)

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Dear Mr. Joe Ng,

I am writing to express my interest in publishing my book with Cambridge University Press. I would be delighted if I could contribute to your expanding Asia-Pacific Studies series, along with some of your recent publications: *Immigrant Incorporation in East Asian Democracies* and *Immigration and Citizenship in Japan*, by Erin Aeran Chung (2020 and 2010, respectively), *Hate Speech in Japan: The Possibility of a Non-Regulatory Approach*, edited by Shinji Higaki and Yuji Nasu (2021), and *Chinese Diasporas: A Social History of Global Migration*, by Steven B. Miles (2020).

My book, tentatively entitled *Japan’s Diaspora Diplomacy: the trans-Pacific ties that shaped Japan and* Nikkei *communities abroad* is about Japan’s engagement with *Nikkeijin* (or *Nikkei*), as Japanese emigrants and their descendants are called, who mostly reside in the Americas (and some in Japan as return-migrants). Intended for scholars, students, and a general audience interested in global diasporas and Japanese emigration, immigration, and identities, the book narrates a history of Japan’s national development from a diasporic perspective. While most diaspora studies take a nation-centered approach, either from the sending or receiving perspective, I place the flows of people from both sides of the Pacific and global connections at the center of analysis. The diplomatic, economic and cultural links established between Japan and its diasporas have played a crucial role in shaping ideas of Japan as well as the development of *Nikkei* communities abroad.

As many countries increasingly court their diasporas, the Japanese government, too, has recently rekindled its interest in reaching out to *Nikkeijin*. Yet, most *Nikkeijin* are later-generation foreign nationals who no longer speak Japanese. I investigate why the Japanese state tries to engage them *now*— especially *in* South America— by tracing the history of emigration and empire-building through overseas communities from the late nineteenth century to the present. While scholarship on diaspora engagement has grown, most studies focus on high-migration countries, such as India, Mexico, and the Philippines, limiting their analysis to recent emigrants. the sisMoreover, what is often missing in the literature is a historical perspective. It is important to ask, therefore, what happens to these diasporic ties over generations, or why *some* ties persist while others diminish.

Drawing on historical documents and interviews across the Pacific (Japan, the United States, and various Latin American countries), in addition to my ethnographic research in Peru, where the Japanese government’s influence remains particularly salient, I examine various diaspora-making mechanisms (diaspora conventions, return-migration policy, and commercial and cultural activities) and their consequences. I argue that ties are cultivated and sustained through such mechanisms, but this process is highly selective and inconsistent, depending on how the state and immigrant communities see their position relative to others. During the early twentieth century, the Japanese state sent emigrants to South America to expand territorially beyond Asia, as immigration to the West was restricted. Japanese “colonies” were then established as “overseas footholds” to secure resources and catch up with Western imperial powers. Today, the government tries to cultivate these historical links to enhance the country’s soft power and seek commercial opportunities in competition with the world. The *Nikkei* communities in South America likewise seek to cultivate ties with their ancestral homeland to enhance their status within their country.

Now that diasporas are increasingly being celebrated as a tool for public diplomacy, economic development, and global business strategies, this book will make a timely contribution to policy discussions. As the number of migrants continues to grow in Japan and elsewhere, the book also sheds light on how diasporas are used as “return-migrants” in trying to manage immigration problems.

The manuscript is composed of six substantive chapters, in addition to an introduction and conclusion, and is altogether about 75,000 words in length, excluding notes, a bibliography, graphs and maps. Written in a narrative format with individual stories, this historical and ethnographic study can easily be adopted for undergraduate and graduate courses on migration and diasporas, trans-Pacific and global studies, and on modern and contemporary Japan. I have, in fact, written the book with the view to use it for my own courses on immigration, global diasporas, race and ethnicity, and multiculturalism. Most chapters are ready, although I am currently revising the introduction and Chapter 3.

Thank you very much for considering my manuscript. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ayumi Takenaka

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