

This collection is essential and provides tools for scholars seeking to understand not only the lives of Chinese railroad workers but also the U.S. West and any other groups that left behind few written sources. Specialists and lay readers alike are encouraged to read this engaging work.

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Distant Islands: The Japanese American Community in New York City, 1876–1930s. By Daniel H. Inouye. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2018. xxii, 363 pp. Cloth, \$49.00. Paper, 34.95.)

Japanese American historiography, far more than that of other Asian Americans, has remained largely rooted in the Pacific West. Yet, there have been sizeable Japanese American communities all over the United States. Daniel H. Inouye's *Distant Islands* is an important intervention as the first book on Japanese Americans in New York; it is also one of the few to venture east of the Mississippi.

Distant Islands is more than just a similar story in a different place, however. As Inouye shows, Japanese in New York tended to have more education, resources, income, and status—in both Japanese and white contexts—than the mostly working-class, rural laborers in the West, where anti-Japanese racism was born and institutionalized. This made for an entirely different community. Unlike in the West, Inouye argues, “there was no single, identifiable nikkei [Japanese diaspora] community in New York City” (p. 6). Instead, Japanese Americans organized into a “four-tiered class and status hierarchy” and separate student sphere, disconnected by social difference and geography (p. 7). Building on work about interethnic divisions by scholars including Ei-ichiro Azuma, Andrea Geiger, Yuji Ichioka, and Lon Kurashige, Inouye's book details this variegated community.

The first chapter investigates the initial Japanese American settlers in New York, elite participants in the late nineteenth-century U.S.-

Japanese commercial trade. Chapters 2–5 examine the different “tiers” of pre–World War II Japanese American society: the elites, who were migrant professionals or commercial importers with big multinational Japanese trading firms; the midsize businessmen and their families, who, through occupation, income, or clientele, fell into either the second or third tier; the working class; and students, distinct through their temporary and unsolidified position. The last two chapters detail the Buddhist and Protestant churches of New York Japanese America; these organizations, especially the latter, provided both ethnic and religious services that “*partially* countervailed the divisive effects of . . . status, class, and spatial factors” (p. 230, emphasis in original).

Inouye fleshes out these tiers and organizations through rich biographies of individuals and families. Although many of his subjects did not leave extensive archival records, he mines census records, published work, draft-registration materials, Japanese-language sources, and especially oral histories to illuminate details of daily life and social spheres. I wondered, however, about the social fabric that organized and cohered the community hierarchy. What were the cues, behaviors, and practices—the underlying social system—that mechanized hierarchical placement? For instance, I would have loved examples of the “condescending mentality” that divided tiers and “helped legitimize power relationships” (p. 153). This kind of attention might also have helped Inouye analyze and contextualize the intriguingly common occurrence of marriages between Japanese men and white women; something apparently accepted in New York, but the cause of scandal if not violence in the West. As a book that maps out miles of entirely new historiographical territory, *Distant Islands* unsurprisingly raises a few questions. Nonetheless, Inouye's study of Japanese American New York brings myriad new themes and perspectives to the field.

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