



RUNAWAY STORIES: The Underground Micromovements of Filipina *Oyomesan* in Rural Japan

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“It’s lonely, isn’t it?” Sharyn remarked. It was a gray afternoon, and we were sitting in the living room of her family’s large, empty house. Like most Filipina women married to Japanese men in Central Kiso, the region of mountain towns and villages in southwestern Nagano where I was conducting fieldwork, Sharyn had met her husband while working at a local Filipina hostess bar. She told me that she had been happy being a homemaker and was trying hard to be a good *oyomesan*, a traditional Japanese bride, until she learned that her husband was having an affair with another Filipina woman working at a nearby club. Since discovering her husband’s infidelity, Sharyn had grown increasingly distraught. Worried that Sharyn was close to a nervous breakdown, several other Filipina women we knew had encouraged me to keep her company during the day when her husband and mother-in-law went to work.

Sharyn explained that since she had confronted her husband about his affair their fights had become regular and mean spirited. He had taken to calling her fat and unattractive, and frequently accused her of marrying him for his money. His mother, with whom they lived during my fieldwork, seemed to think that Sharyn should overlook her son’s infidelity: Sharyn was her son’s third wife and another divorce would be embarrassing for the family. Sharyn was deeply affected by her husband’s accusations and found her situation at home unbearable. However, an observant Catholic, she was hesitant to get a divorce and create what she and others called a “broken family.” She was also attached to her husband, who was the

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shachō (i.e., the president) of a local construction firm. His occupation was much more lucrative and prestigious than those of other Filipina women's husbands who worked construction or in *pachinko* parlors or bars.¹ Sharyn told me a dramatic and romantic story about falling for her husband the moment he walked into the club where she had worked, and she proudly showed me photographs of the large home he had bought her family in Parañaque, a middle-class section of Metro Manila. She was clearly having a hard time facing the possible end of a marriage that at one time had seemed to promise an ideal life.

Suddenly, after a pause, Sharyn rose and walked over to the front window. She beckoned to me to join her, and pointed across the railroad tracks. She asked in Japanese, "See that house over there, in the not-so-far distance? I had a friend who lived there, a Filipina who I worked with at Club Fantasy." She told me that she and this woman used to look out their windows at each other during the day. They would wave to each other across the distance, and sometimes they would meet. Like Sharyn, the woman also had a little boy. But then two years ago the woman had, in Sharyn's words, "run away." This woman had problems with her husband or mother-in-law (Sharyn wasn't specific), and she had left to work in clubs in Tokyo, planning to overstay her temporary spousal visa and remain in Japan. Sharyn told me she didn't know where her friend was anymore. She hadn't spoken to this woman since she had run away. By the time her friend had left, Sharyn's relationship with her own husband had become strained, and Sharyn had wondered if she might also soon leave. With that, Sharyn ended her story, gazing out the window for a few moments before she turned back into the room.

Throughout the 23 months I spent conducting fieldwork in Central Kiso (September 1998–August 2000), stories about Filipina women who had married Japanese men in the region but who had "run away" from their Japanese husbands and families regularly surfaced in casual conversations among Filipina women I knew. The repeated mention of these women contrasted strikingly with a lack of discussion about those who had moved away because their husbands were transferred or had large gambling debts. In these latter cases, these women either maintained friendships with those who had left or never bothered to speak of them at all. However, I noticed that stories about Filipina women who had run away easily became the subject of reflection or gossip, even in cases when women had been gone for years.

I overheard conversations about these women when I visited with different Filipina women at home, work, and other social gatherings in Central Kiso, and

when Filipina women stopped by each other's homes and sat around the kitchen table chatting. Filipina women who had run away sometimes came up as Filipina friends and I drove together to shop at discount stores in regional cities about an hour's drive away, or during the breaks of the weekly government-sponsored Japanese class and cultural classes. They also came up at the Catholic prayer meetings and Masses, usually held between one and three times a month, when priests and nuns from the Philippines who were living in urban regions of Japan visited Central Kiso to lead religious services and counsel the women at women's homes or public spaces.

Over years, I had volunteered with a helpline in Tokyo that assists Filipina migrants in Japan (during the summers of 1995 and 1997 and the winter of 1996), I had heard or read stories about Filipina women who had run away from Japanese husbands throughout the country.² However, I had imagined that these were simply isolated cases in which individual women were pushed to desperate measures to deal with extreme problems in their marriages. I had not anticipated that running away would figure as prominently as it did in the lives and imaginations of so many Filipina women married to Japanese men in the region. As I paid increasing attention to the circulation of stories about Filipina women who had run away, I noticed that these narratives took different and sometimes conflicting forms. They figured as either models or threats, or, at different moments, both, depending on personal factors that assumed shifting relevance, including the political-economic stability of women's families in the Philippines, women's past and present relationships with their families in Central Kiso, and their desires for and investments in their marriages and futures in Japan. In some cases, such as Sharyn's, stories about Filipina women who had run away signaled the possibility of escaping the anxieties and limitations of married life in rural Nagano; in other cases, these stories became a locus of criticism, a means for disciplining Filipina women in the region to strategically perform the role of *oyomesan*.

Why did running away occupy such a significant place in these women's imaginations despite the fact that a limited number of them actually left their Japanese husbands? (When I left Central Kiso in 2000, seven of the 65 women who had married Japanese men had run away, and two of those who had left had actually returned to their husbands.) And why did running away figure so ambivalently for these women? At times it offered them a means for dealing with the problems they faced in their marriages, and even potentially transforming their lives. At other moments, it figured as a threat that encouraged women to accommodate their Japanese communities' expectations.

FILIPINA WOMEN IN JAPAN

Large-scale Filipina migration to Japan as entertainers developed through the convergence of several historical factors. It was part of a larger wave of overseas labor migration initiated by the Marcos administration to bring foreign currency into the country and thereby manage its growing external national debt. By 1980, the employment situation in the Philippines had grown severe, and the debt crisis had reached a critical point (Chant and McIlwaine 1995). The Japanese economy was booming, and people in the Philippines looked increasingly to Japan as an appealing destination for labor migration (see, e.g., Ventura 1992). Filipina and Japanese feminists also began openly protesting Japanese sex tours to the Philippines, and the numbers of Japanese men going on these tours began to decline. Managers, promotion agencies, and brokers in the Philippines began large-scale efforts to recruit women from urban and rural poor communities to work in hostess bars and other parts of the sex industry in Japan, while Japanese women were increasingly moving away from this work.

Filipina women who went to Japan with entertainer visas were often recruited under the pretense that they would be doing glamorous and exciting work as cultural dancers and singers (Esguerra 1994). However, because of a history of Japanese sex tourism to the Philippines, many in the Philippines also viewed going to Japan as an entertainer as risky and morally questionable (Faier 2007). Stories of the tragic fates of Filipina entertainers in Japan circulated in the Philippines alongside those of their financial gains. Many Filipina women who became entertainers in Japan during the 1980s and 1990s did not have postsecondary educations and thus the option of going abroad as nurses, caregivers, or domestic helpers. These jobs often required a higher level of education and thus attracted women from middle-class backgrounds (Constable 1997; Parreñas 2001). Instead, these women took a gamble, hoping that their experiences in Japan would end in success, not shame or tragedy.

In this essay, I focus on running away as one means through which transnational migrants negotiate the disappointing gaps that emerge between their dreams and expectations for their lives abroad and the demands and constraints that they experience in them. Scholars have stressed that members of migrant and immigrant groups do not passively assimilate to their communities of settlement but actively negotiate the demands and promises of them (Basch et al. 1994; Constable 1997, 1999; Espiritu 2003; Gilroy 1993; Linger 2001; Manalansan 2003; Ong 2003; Parreñas 2001; Tsuda 2003). Yet most of these studies focus on the individual or collective actions migrants take as they deal with their ambivalences toward their lives abroad.³ Here, I am interested in the ways that some Filipina women's dissatisfactions with their lives in Central Kiso took on a kind of *runaway agency*, assuming a social momentum that exceeded any individual woman's decision to leave her Japanese family, and becoming an uncertain and thus unsettling social

force in the lives of other Filipina women in the region and, correspondingly, their Japanese communities. I argue that running away occupied an important but ambivalent place in the lives and imaginations of Filipina women in Central Kiso because it reflected at once the dreams and the instabilities of their lives and futures abroad. That is, running away was a preoccupation for these women, even though relatively few actually did it, because it resonated in ambivalent ways with features many women recognized in their lives: the possibility of finding something better in Japan for themselves and their families in the Philippines, and the awareness that their prospects for realizing such dreams were always uncertain and even dangerous.

In focusing on the ways that running away figured for Filipina women in Central Kiso, I am drawing attention to the frantic, unstable, and subterranean microrhythms of movement that follow from migrants' dissatisfactions with their lives abroad. Attending to these movements can help us see how these dissatisfactions shape transnational processes sometimes in unexpected ways. Anthropologists have demonstrated that although transnational processes are in some sense deterritorialized, they are still tied to everyday, located, territorialized, and historical practices (Bestor 2001; Clarke 2004; Espiritu 2003; Inda and Rosaldo 2002; Mahler and Pessar 2001; Manalansan 2003; Maurer 2000; Ong 1999; Tsuda 2003). Yet when characterizing the forms of movement that constitute transnationalisms, scholars still tend to rely on general, disembodied, and fluid metaphors like circulations and flows, or systemic metaphors of networks or scapes.

I think of running away as involving underground micromovements: disjointed and frantic patterns of small-scale movements made by individual migrants in an effort to maneuver around dominant social relations and legal structures they find abroad. I borrow the term *underground* from Filipino writer Rey Ventura (1992) who uses it to describe his life as an undocumented migrant in Japan during the 1980s. I use *micromovements* following Michel Foucault (1990), who has focused our attention on the "micro-" processes of power, that is, the ways that the seemingly microdimensions of people's everyday lives are imbricated in larger discourses of power. I also refer to running away as involving "micromovements" in reference to the limited number of Filipina women who run away from their Japanese husbands, the relatively short distances that many of these women travel when they do, and the discontinuous, segmented, and impulsive nature of their movements.⁴ Filipina women in Central Kiso told me that when Filipina women ran away from their Japanese husbands they moved to nearby urban regions of Japan and found work in hostess bars through friends or relatives from the Philippines or former employers.

They suggested that these women sometimes moved repeatedly from place to place, hiding their whereabouts from others in the region (and the police) and taking on jobs in different locations in an effort to support themselves and their families in the Philippines. Filipina women in Central Kiso also suggested that these women ran away spontaneously, for example, after a big fight or a traumatic event. Even if some women who ran away had previously contemplated leaving, their decisions seemed not to be rehearsed or self-consciously strategic but to some degree impulsive.

As underground micromovements, running away was significant for Filipina women in Central Kiso because it created senses of both identification and tension among these women and between them and their Japanese families. When these women circulated stories about those who had run away, they not only evoked running away as a strategic practice. They also used it chronotopically (Bakhtin 1981) to evoke a space–time that existed outside the constraints of both the home and the nation and that suggested at once the dream and uncertainty of finding alternative ways for building a life in Japan.⁵ Dangerous dreams of other worlds have long been part of Philippine history (Tadiar 2004; and see also Iletto 1997). Filipina women’s decisions to go abroad as migrant laborers are themselves one form such dreaming takes: a dreaming of the “‘creative’ potential of women gathering outside the home” (Tadiar 2004:114). For Filipina women in Central Kiso, stories about women who had run away reflected at once the risky dreams that initially inspired these women to leave their “homes” in the Philippines and go to Japan and the disappointing gaps that developed as these women, paradoxically, tried to realize these sometimes undomesticatable dreams through the domestic path of marriages to rural Japanese men.

In what follows, I explore both the practice of running away and the “social life” (Appadurai 1986) of narratives about it as they circulated among Filipina women in Central Kiso. Following Appadurai’s (1986) suggestion that an object’s meaning and significance are produced through its circulation and use (and Cruikshank’s [1998] extension of this idea to stories and narratives), my aim here is to demonstrate not only how the practice of running away transformed the lives of women who left, but also the ways that narratives about these women reverberated in the region and figured in the lives of those left behind.

I begin by offering some background about Filipina–Japanese marriages in Central Kiso. I then turn to three ways that running away figured in Filipina migrants’ transnational lives and those of their Japanese communities. I first consider how women who ran away created extradomestic spaces: underground spaces that

lay outside the domestic boundaries of these women's lives in rural Japan, and circumvented and challenged the legal boundaries of the Japanese nation. Second, I examine the ways that women who remained with their Japanese husbands circulated stories about other women who had or were planning to run away in *chismis*, or gossip (Tg.). Finally, I consider how running away became both an intended and unexpected leveraging tool through which some of these women negotiated the conditions of their domestic situations both to their advantage and to their peril.

MINDING THE GAPS IN GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS

In the early 1980s, large numbers of Filipina women began entering Japan on government-issued "entertainer visas" (*kō gyō biza*), three- to six-month labor visas to perform as "cultural dancers" or "singers" in bars and clubs throughout the country.⁶ Entertainer visas were officially issued to Filipina women to perform skilled labor as "cultural performers."⁷ However, many bar owners in Japan expected these women to work part or full time as bar hostesses, serving drinks, flirting, slow dancing, and sometimes going on dates with male customers.⁸

On account of their jobs in hostess bars, Filipina entertainers have been stigmatized as prostitutes in both Japan and the Philippines, although many of these women do not directly exchange sex for money (Parreñas 2006).⁹ In Japan, negative perceptions of Filipina women have also been shaped by prevalent notions that the Philippines is a backward, inferior, and undeveloped country. Often tied to a sense of Japanese cultural and racial superiority, these notions have roots in evolutionary ideas about race introduced in 19th-century Japan, in histories of both Japanese and U.S. colonialism in the Philippines, and in Japan's postwar discourses of nationalism and Japan's economic growth and increasing presence in the Philippines.¹⁰

At the time of my primary fieldwork, 65 Filipina women had married Japanese men in Central Kiso.¹¹ Like many Filipina wives of Japanese men throughout Japan, the overwhelming majority of these women met their husbands while working in local Filipina hostess bars. Japanese residents in Central Kiso told me that local men had come to view Filipina women working in bars as appealing spouses out of desperation because the region was suffering from what they called a "bride shortage" (*yome busoku*). Over the past 40 years, rural areas in Japan have been marginalized by national projects that have focused on urbanization and industrialization. Many local residents complained of the lack of viable employment in the region since the decline, first, of the local timber economy and, later, of the domestic tourism

economy that temporarily replaced it. The national government also has increasingly cut funding for local public works projects that offered construction work to men and women in the area. As has become common throughout rural Japan, young Japanese men and women have increasingly left Central Kiso to find work in urban centers. Some Japanese men, particularly the eldest sons who traditionally inherited family homes and land and are responsible for caring for their parents, have remained behind. However, many young Japanese women do not want to join multigenerational rural families. (These women often describe these families as feudal and patriarchal.) They have increasingly opted to leave rural areas, to move to cities and marry white-collar workers, if they marry at all.¹²

A few Filipina women's husbands in Central Kiso owned family businesses (a green grocery, a soba restaurant, a construction company), but most of these men worked in construction, at pachinko parlors, or in bars. Many were ten to 25 years older than their Filipina wives, and past the *tekireiki*, the "suitable age for marriage" (Jpn.), when they met the women they married. Local residents told me that these men had few marriage prospects other than Filipina women. Local residents (and local government administrators) were also concerned that the decreasing numbers of children born in the region was insufficient as a labor force, and would not qualify the area for enough government funding to keep open local schools.

As a result, in recent years Japanese residents in Central Kiso have in qualified ways become open to marriages between local men and Filipina women. I say "in qualified ways" because Filipina women were accepted only insofar as they proved that they were, as one local resident put it, "different from ordinary Filipinos." This meant fulfilling their roles as *oyomesan* by actively participating in their communities and raising their children, who are Japanese nationals, as "Japanese."¹³ Many Japanese community members, including several Filipina women's husbands, also told me that Filipina women were attractive spouses because they came from a poor country and thus had the "good characteristics of traditional Japanese women."¹⁴ Such comments rehearsed widespread stereotypes in Japan that Filipina women are dependent, submissive, and supportive of their husbands (Satake and Da-anoy 2006; Suzuki 2003). A few men also described Filipina women as "exotic" or "cheerful," explaining that this made them more appealing than Japanese women. Some also expressed interest in the Philippines and cosmopolitan desires.¹⁵

Most Filipina women married to Japanese men in Central Kiso were instructed by their husbands and in-laws to behave as *ii oyomesan* ideal traditional rural Japanese brides. They were taught to prepare and eat Japanese foods (with chopsticks, not a fork and a spoon or one's hands, as food is commonly eaten in the Philippines) and to

speak, read, and write in Japanese. Often they were also expected to adopt a range of dispositions that Japanese residents identified as “*nihon no yarikata*” the Japanese way, and thus appropriate to being the bride and daughter-in-law in a “Japanese” family, such as greeting and assisting neighbors in prescribed manners and regularly participating in community activities. Many Filipina women’s Japanese families also restricted these women’s daily activities. For example, many of these women told me that they needed to ask their husbands or in-laws for permission before going out, particularly in the evening. A few of these women were discouraged from socializing with other Filipina women in the area, and at least one woman was for a time forbidden to return to the Philippines, even to attend a sibling’s funeral.

Despite the pressures and restrictions placed on them, these women’s desires for their lives in Japan, including their understandings of marriage, were in some ways compatible with their Japanese husbands’ and families’ expectations. To varying degrees, Filipina migrants in Central Kiso suggested that they found pleasures in their married lives and embraced their roles as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law in their Japanese communities (see Faier 2007, in press). These women expressed desires to be good, loving wives and mothers, citing passages from the Bible that a woman should “submit herself unto her husband as unto the Lord.” Such ideas resonated with cultural beliefs in Japan that a “traditional Japanese bride” defers to her husband.¹⁶ Moreover, by fulfilling their roles as *oyomesan*, Filipina migrants were granted a measure of legitimate social status in the region. As Catholics, many Filipina women were self-conscious about having worked bars, even though about 30 percent of these women continued such jobs after they were married (*usu*. to send money to the Philippines, in some cases to financially assist their Japanese families as well). By demonstrating that they were good wives, mothers, and daughter-in-laws, Filipina women challenged negative stereotypes attached to them based on their bar work. Caring for elderly in-laws was also an important dimension of Filipina women’s roles in their Japanese households in Central Kiso. Many of these women stressed that caring for the elderly was a value instilled in them growing up in the Philippines, and they took pride in how this reflected on them as “Filipina.”

Most Filipina women in Central Kiso came from urban or rural poor communities in the Philippines, and some had faced extreme economic hardship there. Many of these women took pleasure in those elements of their lives in rural Nagano that resonated with the dream of a modern middle-class life that had initially inspired them to go to Japan. They enjoyed decorating their homes, going out to dinner with their husbands, and shopping in large discount stores in regional cities.

They sometimes spoke with pride of their husband's ability to contribute to household expenses, even if the men's salaries were not large by Japanese standards. Many women also spoke of love for their husbands, and many shared romantic stories about their courtships in which the men took them out to restaurants and bought them expensive gifts.¹⁷ In this way, political economic inequalities between Japan and the Philippines shaped these women's perceptions of their husbands as desirable spouses.¹⁸ Many of these women participated in local taiko drum circles and the PTA at their children's schools, and worked in their families' businesses. They played active and material roles in reproducing meanings of Japanese culture and identity in the region.¹⁹

At the same time, however, these women's goals for their lives contrasted strikingly with those of their Japanese families. Most Filipina women in Central Kiso had come to Japan to financially support their families in the Philippines.²⁰ They spoke of putting family members in the Philippines through school, or of building homes for themselves and their parents there. Even after marriage, women's commitments to their families in the Philippines remained strong, and many women described this as an important concern. In some cases, Filipina women's Japanese families supported their commitments to their families in the Philippines, sometimes quite generously. In other cases, however, their Japanese husbands and in-laws did not have the desire or means to support the women's families there. They sometimes restricted the amount of money their Filipina wives and daughters-in-law sent home, placing these women in difficult emotional situations, particularly when medical or other emergencies developed.

Many Filipina women with whom I spoke in Central Kiso also said that they had gone abroad for personal empowerment and adventure, describing desires to travel abroad, live in a "modern" place, and be independent.²¹ All the women I knew who had met their husbands in local hostess bars had first been assigned to work in the region by their promoters in the Philippines. Many expressed surprise and disappointment to find themselves in a rural area that in no way approximated the modern, urban image that had first inspired them to go to Japan. Many of these women also told me that they had not planned to marry a Japanese man when they came to work in a hostess bar. They told me of boyfriends in the Philippines and plans to return home, offering reasons ranging from love to pregnancy to political economic considerations (and, usu., some combination of the three) to explain why they had decided to marry their Japanese husbands.²² However, even those women who told me that they loved their husbands and had developed good relationships

with their in-laws expressed at least some degree of ambivalence, reservation, or frustration about living in rural Nagano.

Thus, although many Filipina women in Central Kiso found pleasures in their marriages, many of these women also expressed frustration with the gaps that developed between the dream of a better life they had gone abroad to find and the everyday realities of their married lives in rural Nagano. Some of these women also faced serious and destructive problems in their marriages. Running away, and the circulation of stories about it, became important means through which these women managed various dissatisfactions as they endeavored to craft lives and selves abroad. To better illustrate how running away figured in this endeavor, and thus the runaway agency their dissatisfactions assumed, let me tell you a bit more about what happened to Sharyn and why, more generally, Filipina women in Central Kiso considered leaving.

A DISCOVERY PROMPTS A DEPARTURE

Sharyn ran away approximately five months after the day I spent at her house. She left in the middle of the night with her son and a few suitcases. During the weeks before her departure, Sharyn had become more and more distraught, unable to decide whether or not to file for divorce. I accompanied Sharyn to consult with a divorce lawyer in Matsumoto about her situation. I also put her in touch with a Filipina counselor at a helpline for Filipina migrants in Japan. Although both the lawyer and the counselor were willing to help Sharyn, both also cautioned her that divorce would not be an easy option.

First, they explained that she might have difficulty getting custody of her son, who was a Japanese national. They explained that in divorces between Filipina–Japanese couples, Japanese family courts tended to favor the parent who could give children the most economically stable and culturally normative (i.e., middle-class Japanese) upbringing. At the time, the courts had not been known to favor Filipina women who worked in bars, and Sharyn did not think she could find another job lucrative enough to support herself and her child.²³ Second, the lawyer and the counselor both explained that even if Sharyn were awarded custody, she would need to provide “material evidence” of her husband’s affair to win damages. Third, the helpline counselor warned Sharyn that because she did not yet have permanent residency, if she did not gain custody of her son she might have a problem receiving a visa to remain in Japan.

In Japan, spousal visas are temporary residence visas issued in periods of six months, one year, and three years. Renewals are dependent on the sponsorship of

one's Japanese spouse; they cannot be reissued if one gets a divorce. Since 1997, foreign nationals with children who are Japanese citizens have been eligible for renewable one-year (and occasionally three-year) visas as "parents of Japanese nationals" (Yomiuri Shinbun 1996). Filipina women who have children with Japanese men can apply for these visas if they get a divorce. However, a woman had to become her child's legal custodian and demonstrate that she was financially able to support herself and her child to receive this permit. Thus, if Sharyn did not gain custody of her child, and if she still wished to remain in Japan to work or remain close to him, she would have had no choice but to overstay her visa when it expired in a year.

Soon after her visit to the lawyer, Sharyn began to experience severe stomach pains and to hallucinate, seeing the walls and ceilings of her home moving away from her. She and some of our Filipina friends became convinced that she had been "bewitched" (*kinulam* in Tagalog) by her husband's mistress; these friends decided that Sharyn needed to return to the Philippines to see, what they called, a *kwak-kwak doktor* (healer or witchdoctor [Tg.]). Sharyn tied "scapulars" (small plastic charms with images of the Virgin Mary) around her waist. She contacted her mother in the Philippines, who visited a *kwak-kwak doktor* there on her behalf, and on the recommendation of the helpline counselor, Sharyn began psychiatric treatment at the local hospital, eventually receiving prescription sedatives. Although still unsure about whether or not she would file for divorce, around this time Sharyn also became obsessed with obtaining material evidence of her husband's infidelity. She started going through her husband's things, collecting receipts from gas stations and love hotels. The day Sharyn ran away, she had discovered a videotape of her husband and his girlfriend having sex. In a state of panic, she called Tessie. Later that night, Tessie and I picked up Sharyn and her son and brought them back to Tessie's. At Sharyn's request, Tessie called a former *mamasan* of hers in Nagoya.²⁴ Tessie's husband, Yoshimoto-san, arranged for Sharyn to work at this woman's bar. He also arranged for Sharyn and her son to live in the apartment provided for their employees. The next day, Tessie and I, sworn not to reveal Sharyn's whereabouts to other Filipina women in the region, drove her to the train station.

A HOPEFUL BUT CHANCY OPTION

In retrospect, I realized that the story Sharyn had told me several months earlier about her friend's departure had foreshadowed her own. But that day when she had relayed that story to me, neither Sharyn nor I could have known with any certainty how her life might unfold. Rather, Sharyn's story about her friend had

suggested that running away was a means that some Filipina women in the region used for dealing with their marital problems. Her friend offered an example that under certain circumstances—circumstances Sharyn hoped not to face—she might decide to follow.

Most Filipina women in Central Kiso recognized running away as a strategy for dealing with marital problems. Most also wondered if in the future they too might confront a situation that had driven another woman to leave or they recalled times in the past when they almost did. There were many reasons why a Filipina woman might want to leave her Japanese husband. These ranged from the pressure placed on them by their Japanese families to do things “the Japanese way,” to their Japanese families constantly criticizing them or not supporting their desire to send money to the Philippines. Some women complained of loneliness and geographic isolation or that their Japanese families treated them “like a maid.” Others, like Sharyn, were upset by their husbands’ lack of affection or infidelities. Still others faced verbal or physical abuse.²⁵

Yet the options available to Filipina women in Central Kiso for managing their marital problems were extremely limited. This is in part why running away figured so centrally as both a real option and an item of gossip. Some women—those who identified as the “lucky” ones—could openly talk to their husbands and in-laws about their needs and desires and expect support from them. However, if Filipina women’s Japanese families were not receptive to their requests, they had few resources for managing even serious grievances.

The local public health nurses had organized a support circle for foreign mothers in the area. However, this group offered only a place to share concerns, not a means for addressing them. Moreover, few job opportunities existed in Central Kiso for Filipina women to work full time and support themselves if they left their husbands and remained in the region. Spousal support and child support in Japan can be quite limited. For example, the lawyer whom Sharyn and I visited told us that even given Sharyn’s husband’s relatively large assets, her spousal support would likely be limited to one-time payment that would likely not exceed ¥3,000,000 (approximately \$28,000) and child support would likely hit a maximum of ¥50,000 (approximately \$476) a month. The small population in the area (under 2,000 people in Sharyn’s village; 7,000–8,000 in nearby towns) would also make it difficult for Sharyn to move on from her relationship and to escape gossip if she remained in the region.

The Japanese state has also not been particularly supportive of foreign women who want to leave their Japanese husbands. As Rhacel Parreñas (2001) tells us,

Filipina migrants live in the margins of a citizenship regime in which they are only partial citizens. There are a handful of shelters in urban parts of Japan where women can receive counseling and legal assistance to file for divorce. However, although I was in regular contact with staff in organizations in Tokyo and Nagano City that were part of these networks, I never heard from them that a Filipina woman from Central Kiso had gone to a shelter. When I worked at one of these shelters, I found that foreign women staying there were frustrated with both the limited financial support they received from the Japanese government and the restrictions on their movement. Many Filipina women in shelters were also discouraged by the limitations on their ability to work while they resided in a shelter; this made it difficult for them to send money to their families in the Philippines or plan for the future. As a result, even if women like Sharyn contacted shelter counselors before they ran away, some Filipina women who wanted to leave their Japanese husbands avoided entering them. Instead, these women ran away and relied on personal networks to find work in other parts of Japan.

For Filipina women married to Japanese men in Central Kiso, running away was a practical strategy for dealing with domestic problems for two reasons. First, running away enabled these women, the overwhelming majority of whom were Catholic, to avoid making the morally unsanctioned (and thus often emotionally difficult) decision to divorce their husbands. Second, it allowed them to defer—at least for a time—officially giving up their legal claims to remain and work in Japan as spouses of Japanese nationals (which would happen if they got a divorce). Filipina women who ran away technically violated the terms of their spousal visas and thus were vulnerable to deportation. In 2002, the Supreme Court of Japan ruled that foreign nationals do not satisfy the requirements of a spousal visa if their marriages do not have a tangible shared-living basis (Curtin 2002). Because running away kept open the possibility that a marriage could be mended, Filipina women who ran away could also hold on to the possibility of maintaining these visas and their identities as wives. These women also would not immediately lose their visas if their husbands did not send the police after them or they simply did not get caught. Running away to work in hostess bars in other parts of Japan became a chancy means for maintaining legal and social status and supporting one's family in the Philippines while extricating oneself, at least temporarily, from an unhappy or destructive marriage.²⁶

In the remainder of this essay, I turn to how the simultaneously hopeful and dangerous possibilities that running away offered Filipina women for managing marital problems created runaway social effects in these women's and their Japanese

communities' lives. To do so, I consider three ways that running away figured in Filipina women's everyday practices and the possibilities they imagined for their futures: (1) the creation of extradomestic spaces; (2) the circulation of chismis, or gossip; and (3) the development of negotiating strategies.

The Dangers and Possibilities of Extradomestic Spaces

First, running away enabled Filipina women to create alternative, *extradomestic spaces* in the interstices of marriage and immigration laws in Japan. Describing the worlds Filipina women inhabit when they run away as extradomestic spaces plays on the way that domestic can mean both "national" and "of the home," meanings shown by feminist scholars to be linked.²⁷ Extradomestic spaces are clandestine, underground worlds that Filipina migrants who run away create through personal networks to enable their day-to-day survival. They lie outside the gendered domestic space of the home that is legally permitted to foreign wives of Japanese nationals. As the object of police surveillance, they are also key sites through which the domestic (i.e., national) boundaries of the Japanese nation are asserted.

Extradomestic spaces are akin to what Susan Coutin calls "clandestine spaces," territorial gaps in a nation-state occupied by those who are physically within its borders yet legally considered outside of it (Coutin 2005). Clandestine spaces, like extradomestic spaces, are liminal spaces of hidden yet known social worlds. However, although Coutin focuses on clandestine spaces as sites of transit or passage through which Salvadoran migrants travel on their way to U.S. citizenship, for Filipina wives of Japanese men extradomestic spaces are alternative spaces where one might settle for a while and craft an underground life in Japan while supporting one's family in the Philippines.

Most Filipina women married to Japanese men in Central Kiso had worked in bars before their marriages, and when they ran away they often went to urban parts of Japan and found jobs in hostess bars through friends, relatives, or prior employers. Despite the stigma attached to these jobs, many women suggested that they enjoyed aspects of this work, describing it as a time when they felt independent, and sometimes glamorous, and enjoyed relatively large salaries.²⁸ When women ran away to extradomestic spaces, they enjoyed similar pleasures. They lived and worked in communities of Filipina women, freely sent money home to their families in the Philippines, and, unlike their married lives, did not have husbands or mothers-in-law telling them what to do.

However, as both Sharyn's story and other conversations I had with Filipina women in Central Kiso suggest, inhabiting an extradomestic space was also a

terrifying prospect. In the Philippines, running away from a foreign husband was stigmatizing, suggesting that a woman made a foolish choice, married for the wrong reasons, or was not upholding the sanctity of marriage. Moreover, running away could be dangerous. A woman could wind up with a bad boss or get unlucky with pushy, demanding, or even violent customers. Every Filipina woman I knew who had worked in a bar in Japan had stories about experiences with such customers from her days as an entertainer.

In addition, because Filipina women could not renew their spousal visas without the sponsorship of their Japanese husbands or families, women who ran away would eventually lose their visas if they remained underground. Filipino migrants in Japan sometimes refer to those working without documentation as *TNT*, an acronym for *tago ng tago*, literally in Tagalog, to be hiding and hiding. The term is a pun on the explosive TNT, suggesting that TNTs are in a dangerous situation.²⁹ It also suggests a frantic kind of movement—hiding and hiding—a sprinting here and there to find work and elude police. Stories about the tragic fates of Filipina migrants who are TNT in Japan—stories of arrest, rape, or sudden and unexplained death—circulate widely in both Japan and the Philippines. All Filipina women in Central Kiso were familiar with these stories. The very uncertainty of what one might find in extradomestic spaces meant that one could never quite be sure where running away would lead.

The Discipline of Chismis

If Filipina women who ran away from Japanese husbands in Central Kiso could create alternative, extradomestic spaces for living in Japan, their departures also affected Filipina women who remained with their Japanese husbands. A second way that running away figured in these women's transnational lives, then, is the way that stories about women who ran away circulated in chismis, or gossip. As a subject of gossip, these stories were a medium through which Filipina women who remained in Central Kiso negotiated among themselves what it meant to be "oyomesan"—what a woman should endure, and what were grounds for moving on. The very circulation of these stories influenced the ways that these women made sense of their lives and relationships in multiple and sometimes ambivalent ways.

Because stories about Filipina women who ran away were pervasive, women like Sharyn were aware before they got married that problems might develop with a Japanese husband. However, on account of romantic courtships, or for other practical reasons, women often decided to overlook these concerns. Similarly,

many Filipina women I met in Central Kiso said that one should endure marital problems, at least up to a certain point, both for moral reasons (to respect the sanctity of marriage) and for practical ones (to not rock an already fragile boat). These women knew that many Japanese community members did not completely trust them and that some Japanese residents believed that Filipina women only came to Japan to exploit Japanese people. One Filipina friend sometimes complained that “When [Japanese community members] see something that one Filipina has done, they think all Filipinas are like that.” Thus, Filipina women who planned to remain with their husbands worried that another Filipina woman’s departure might reflect negatively on all Filipina wives in the region and prompt their own Japanese family or community members to treat them harshly. These concerns often played out in *chismis*.

For example, before Sharyn left, *chismis* circulated among Filipina women I knew about whether or not her emotional distress was justifiable. Some said that Sharyn’s husband had only married her because she had gotten pregnant. These women suggested that Sharyn needed to accept that her husband was a womanizer—in one woman’s words: “to understand the character of her husband”—and not to nag him about it. Gossip spread that Sharyn was profligate with her husband’s money, spending upward of tens-of-thousands of dollars on a recent trip to the Philippines, and that she was upset solely because her husband had started curtailing her extravagant spending.

Through this gossip, Filipina women in Central Kiso evaluated Sharyn’s domestic situation and debated what were legitimate and illegitimate reasons for her and other women to leave their spouses. Many (although not all) of these women agreed, if not advocated, that a woman should leave an abusive husband. However, these women took different positions regarding other women’s situations. Several of these women said that Sharyn was lucky because “her husband did not beat [her] and she [did] not have financial problems.” They speculated that Sharyn would not be able to manage supporting herself and her child alone. Few of these women thought that Sharyn would be justified in running away.

Feminist anthropologists have argued that gossip is a means through which women not only protect their interests but also wield power over their lives and local decisions in their communities (Harding 1975; Wolf 1972, 1974, 1985). In the Philippines and within the Philippine diaspora, gossip can both provide a basis for constructing a sense of national identity and reveal the fractures within it (Manalansan 2003; Parreñas 2001; Rafael 2000). Through *chismis*, Filipina women in Central Kiso used stories about those who had run away to discipline others by

establishing what a Filipina oyomesan should tolerate and what were grounds for moving on. Yet, as Vicente Rafael (2000) tells us, just as gossip is a powerful tool for imagining alternative events and identities, it is also epistemologically empty. Gossip is always an uncertain and uncontainable narrative form. As stories about Filipina women who had run away circulated, they took on a runaway agency, shaping how different Filipina women came to understand their situations and their relationships with others in the region in various and shifting ways. Running away, and gossip about it, became part of the very uncertain processes through which Filipina women defined their roles in their Japanese communities, their relationships with each other, and what it meant to be “Filipina” in Japan.

Unexpected Returns Sometimes Follow

The third way that running away—or the option of it—figured in Filipina women’s lives and those of their Japanese families is that it affected how some Filipina women’s Japanese families treated them. In some cases, Filipina women in Central Kiso ran away temporarily, returning after several months or a couple of years. These cases suggest that running away (or the threat of it) could become a negotiating tool that enabled some Filipina women in Central Kiso to transform what it meant to be a Filipina wife and mother in the region. Yet because these women could not anticipate how their Japanese families would respond if they returned, running away was not an easily manipulated or controlled negotiating tool, and, again, it could produce unpredictable, runaway effects.

Most Filipina women’s Japanese husbands and families depended on these women’s domestic, and in some cases also waged, labor. Some of these men cared for their wives, whether or not they communicated this to the women. Other men’s pride was injured when their wives left, and their families were embarrassed within the community. As a result, some Filipina women’s Japanese families worried these women might leave. They sometimes took steps to ensure that this would not happen, or, if it had happened once, that it would not happen again. In this way, just the prospect of running away could serve to encourage a Japanese husband or family to be more attentive to a wife’s needs, or more controlling of her movements.

For example, running away enabled Shayrn to negotiate the terms of her relationship with her husband in ways that fulfilled some of her dreams for her life abroad. The last time I saw Sharyn before I left Japan in 2000, she was driving a new powder blue Toyota Starlet, and she and her son Takefumi were sharing a compact but stylishly decorated one-bedroom apartment in Nagano City, where

she had later moved from Nagoya. Sharyn had gotten her husband to agree to pay for the car and apartment, provide her with a modest living allowance, and perhaps most importantly, sponsor her application for permanent residency, as long as she agreed not to file for divorce. Although Sharyn only kept in regular contact with one Filipina woman in Central Kiso, she was occasionally sighted in the area, driving her new car and wearing a fashionable outfit or new haircut. She told me that she suspected that her husband preferred to remain married, but to have his wife far enough away that he could meet other women as he pleased. Although divorce carries less social stigma in Japan today than it did in the past, a third divorce for him would push the limits of social acceptability in the rural region. Sharyn was not close with many of her neighbors in her village, and she explained that they might not have even realized that she was working in a bar in another city in Japan as opposed, for example, to visiting her mother in the Philippines. Sharyn also told me that she had not ruled out the possibility of moving back in with her husband, but that she was not yet ready to return full time to her life in the region. In the meantime, she was working at a hostess club, using her salary to supplement the stipend her husband gave her, and saving for the future . . . just in case.

When I saw Sharyn again in 2005, she had returned to her husband. She had convinced him to open a bar for her in a nearby regional city where she could work as a mamasan, long a dream of hers and of other Filipina women I knew. She told me that she was not sure if she would stay with her husband long term, but she had decided to overlook his infidelities for the time being.

Not all cases in which Filipina women ran away and then returned to their husbands had such favorable outcomes for the women involved. In another case in Central Kiso, a Filipina woman named Dely ran away and then suddenly returned after nearly nine months. Initially, I heard that Dely's in-laws were being careful not to upset her out of fear that she might leave again. Dely's Japanese family had a small grocery business, and they depended on her labor. A mutual friend (and the only person in Central Kiso to whom Dely had revealed her whereabouts) disclosed that Dely had been working in a bar in Nagoya because her Japanese family would not allow (and perhaps could not afford) for her to send much money to the Philippines. This friend explained that Dely was also tired of her in-laws' constant criticism and brother-in-law's verbal and physical abuse. Dely also had wanted to complete building a house for her parents in the Philippines, and she had remained away until she had saved enough to do so. However, even after Dely had returned to Central Kiso, she had hidden her actual whereabouts during her absence from her husband and in-laws. She told them instead that she had gone

back to the Philippines because she had been homesick, and her prolonged absence became a bargaining chip, a tool for negotiating the terms of her domestic situation. I heard too that on learning of Dely's absence, some other Filipina women's in-laws similarly became cautious in their treatment of their daughters-in-law. They did not want to do anything that might prompt the women to leave. But a few weeks later, I learned from a mutual friend that despite Dely's desires to the contrary (she had not ruled out leaving once more, possibly for good), her husband had decided that she should get pregnant again. This friend suggested that Dely's husband had been forcing himself on Dely, telling her that if she had another child to care for she would be less likely, or able, to leave again.

UNDERGROUND MICROMOVEMENTS UNSETTLE TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS

Underground micromovements like running away are not simply anterior to or an add-on of transnational migration. By offering the prospect of extradomestic worlds, running away was both practically and figuratively one of the processes through which some Filipina women crafted lives in Japan and supported their families abroad. Filipina women who were planning to marry Japanese men knew that if things were unbearable in their marriages, running away was always an option, even if it was an uncertain and dangerous one. In this way, the possibility of running away from an unhappy marriage contributed to at least some women's decisions to marry Japanese men, just as it enabled women in unhappy marriages to continue to support their families in the Philippines while living apart from their husbands. And for those Filipina women who did not have the desire or the ability to leave their Japanese husbands, stories about women who run away became part of the processes through which they crafted identities as new citizen-subjects in Japan.

At the same time, running away was a terrifying and unstable—not-entirely predictable, but also not entirely unpatterned—means for these women to transform their lives. Filipina women in Central Kiso agonized over their decisions to leave, were sometimes suddenly prompted to do so, sometimes rethought their decisions and returned to their Japanese families, and in some cases simply decided to go back to the Philippines. Running away at once shaped the dynamics of recent transnational migration patterns and reveals how their contradictions and limits played out in women's lives. It shows us that transnational processes are not simply enabled by migrants' dreams for a better life; they are also shaped by the

dissatisfying gaps, instabilities, and uncertainties that Filipina women face in trying to realize these dreams in their encounters abroad.

I have suggested these gaps and instabilities took on a runaway agency, assuming a social force that created uncertain and sometimes unexpected effects in these women's lives and those of their communities. This runaway agency cannot be grasped simply in terms of the will or actions of an individual or collective subject. Rather, it is the agency of that "dialogic" (Bakhtin 1981) or "in-between" (Bhabha 1994) space that emerges from a complex calculus of political economic factors, personal histories, and the unequal dynamics of women's encounters abroad. By invoking the dangers and possibilities of extradomestic worlds, stories about women who ran away invoked the "dream acts" (Tadiar 2004:244) that initially brought these Filipina women to Japan. As women circulated these stories, they staked unsettling positions of faith or skepticism toward the possibilities and limits these worlds offer. These dreams of other worlds were both created and constrained by the material conditions of these women's lives in both Japan and the Philippines. They unsettlingly kept alive the possibility that women might find something better for their lives and thus assumed a kind of runaway agency that shaped the lives of Filipina migrants and their Japanese communities.

In this light, just as overseas migration can be read as a critique of the social and political economic situations at home that lead migrants to go abroad, running away offers a critique of transnational migration itself: of the strategies migrants have available to them to craft lives abroad and the forms that their migration can take—in this case the very domesticating limitations of the migration strategies available to many Filipina women in Japan. It also offers a critique of the very dreams that bring these women to Japan and keep them there. Despite their frustrations and, sometimes, the severe problems Filipina women in Central Kiso faced in their marriages, these women's hesitation to run away from their Japanese husbands, and their sense of vulnerability when other Filipina women did, suggests their awareness of the limitations of running away itself as an option.

Moreover, although many Filipina women who ran away from Central Kiso left their Japanese husbands in part so that they could better support their families in the Philippines, some Filipina women in the region also expressed frustration with the expectations of their families back home ("Until when?" some of these women would state with exasperation of their Filipino families' financial expectations.) In this regard, we can also read in Filipina women's decisions to run away (in some sense mirroring their decisions to leave the Philippines, which can sometimes also be interpreted as a form of "running away" [see Constable 1999; Parreñas 2005;

Suzuki 2002a)], a desire to leave the familiar (and familial) bonds of the domestic behind. Even if a Filipina woman initially leaves her Japanese family so that she can better support her family in the Philippines, once she has run away and gone underground, she can more easily avoid contact with her Filipino family, if she so chooses.

We might also, then, look to narratives about Filipina women's departures not as stories about women who "ran away" so much as stories about women who, in the face of uncertain, dangerous, or not completely satisfying options for transforming their lives, "ran" or "continued on"—or, as one Filipina woman in Central Kiso suggested of another who had left, "escaped"—as they looked for other dreams and possibilities. And by extension, rather than asking how we might make the world a safer home for migrants and other marginalized groups, we might think about what it would mean to create a world where it is easier to live undomesticated lives.

Many studies of migrants' resistance, and particularly studies of Filipina migrants, have stressed the limitations of their efforts in the face of hegemonic structures of nation states and global capitalism. By drawing attention to these limitations, scholars highlight the vulnerabilities migrants face in their lives abroad. Clearly, Filipina women in Central Kiso were vulnerable. The problems they faced in their lives in rural Nagano were shaped by their vulnerabilities within Japanese immigration law and histories of unequal political economic relations involving Japan, the Philippines, and the United States. Yet here I have chosen to highlight the both constraining and enabling ways that, in at least some cases, the dissatisfying gaps that emerged in women's lives abroad reflected unresolved and not-yet-satisfied desires for something and somewhere better. Running away suggested the uncertain possibility of someday finding that elsewhere and thereby exerted a runaway agency, becoming palpable and unsettling force in the lives of Filipina women and their Japanese communities.

ABSTRACT

During fieldwork among Filipina migrants married to Japanese men in rural Nagano, stories about Filipina women who had "run away" from Japanese husbands and families in the region regularly surfaced in casual conversations. This essay focuses on both running away and stories about it as interconnected means through which these women negotiated their dissatisfactions with their lives abroad. I suggest that through such practices, these women's dissatisfactions assumed a "runaway agency" that created unsettling and, sometimes, unexpected social effects. First, insofar as running away involved "underground micromovements," it enabled Filipina women to craft spaces in Japan outside the domestic boundaries of both the home and the nation. These

“extradomestic spaces” offered at once hopeful and dangerous possibilities for building alternative lives in Japan. Second, as Filipina women who remained in rural Nagano gossiped about those who had run away, they pressured some Filipina wives into staying while encouraging others to leave. Third, running away became an unexpected leveraging tool through which some Filipina women negotiated the conditions of their domestic situations to unpredictable effect.

Keywords: Filipina migrants, marriage, Japan, dissatisfaction, agency, transnationalism, global processes, running away

NOTES

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1. Pachinko is a form of gaming in between pinball and slot machines.
2. See Hisada 1989, Kawabata 1995, Kuwayama 1995, Suzuki 2003, and Satake and Da-anoy 2006 for Filipina women who have run away from Japanese husbands in other parts of rural Japan. Yea 2004 and Constable (1997, 2003) discuss Filipina women who run away from employers or husbands in, respectively, South Korea, and Hong Kong and the United States.
3. Strategies scholars have documented include participating in cultural and self-help groups (Suzuki 2002b); joining or soliciting the assistance of activist organizations (Kuwayama 1995; Nakamatsu 2003); producing art and poetry (Tadiar 2004); pursuing legal cases (Constable 1997); accumulating social capital (Burgess 2004); and making jokes, secretly circumventing household rules, or having romantic affairs (Constable 1997; Kuwayama 1995; Parreñas 2001; Suzuki 2003).
4. These small-scale and discontinuous movements contrast strikingly with the elastic modes of time-space “compression” (see Harvey 1989) and “distanciation” (see Giddens 1990) frequently used to characterize the “global.”
5. I thank Kamari Clarke for suggesting Bakhtin’s notion of the “chronotope” to evoke this dynamic.
6. Between 1980 and 2000, the number of entertainer visas issued to Philippine nationals jumped from 8,509 to 60,933. Most years during this period it ranged between 30,000–50,000 (JNATIP and F-GENS 2005:29).
7. The Japanese government only offers visas for what it classifies as “skilled labor.” See Faier 2007 and in press for a history of how “entertainer visas” came to be issued to Filipina women to work in hostess bars in Japan.
8. These job duties technically violated the women’s entry status. However, Japanese laws pertaining to such violations were rarely enforced (JNATIP and F-GENS 2005). For general descriptions of bar work involving Japanese women, see Allison 1994, Jackson 1976, and Mock 1996.

9. Foreign women working as entertainers are not legally permitted to have sexual relationships with customers. However, in some cases, such relationships do develop.
10. For historical connections between ideas about race, national identity, and imperialism in Japan, see Ching 2001, Dower 1986, Lie 2001, Robertson 2002, Siddle 1996, and Weiner 1997. For legacies of imperialism in contemporary Japan, see Ryang 1997 and Yoneyama 1999. For contemporary notions of Japanese superiority based in discourses of Japanese cultural uniqueness, see Dale 1986 and Yoshino 1992. Although the legacies of racism that informed the forced recruitment of comfort women in the Philippines may in some ways inform contemporary attitudes toward Filipina women in Japan I never heard anyone in Central Kiso associate Filipina bar hostesses with comfort women, perhaps because this history has been suppressed in Japan. I also rarely heard them associated with geisha, who were viewed as figures of Japanese traditional arts. Rather, they were more likely to associate these Filipina women with low-class prostitutes.
11. "Central Kiso" is not an officially recognized region. I use this name to refer to several towns and villages in the central part of Kiso County. For a number of demographic and geographic reasons, nearly all Filipina women in the region were concentrated in this area. At the time of my initial fieldwork, the population of the two main, neighboring towns in this region was about 15,000. The outlying five or six villages had populations of under 2,000 each.
12. For discussions of rural Japanese marginality and rural Japanese men's corresponding problems finding brides, see Higurashi 1989; Knight 1994, 1995; Nigata Nippōsha Gakugeibu 1989; Sato 1989; and Tamanoi 1998. See also Bernstein 1983, Jolivet 1997, and Kelsky 2001 for discussions of Japanese women's desires to marry urban, white-collar men, or not marry at all.
13. By this, local residents meant teaching children exclusively to speak Japanese, to identify as "Japanese," and to generally do things "the Japanese way." Similar expectations have been placed on Filipina brides in other parts of rural Japan. See, for example, Kuwayama 1995, Shukuya 1988, and Suzuki 2003.
14. For a more extended discussion of such claims see Faier (in press).
15. These latter comments resonate with those made by Japanese men married to Filipina women in urban Japan that Suzuki (2003) documents.
16. Filipina women's Catholicism did not seem to concern their Japanese families, in part because they did not view religion as a central tenet of personhood so much as a set of rituals or customary practices.
17. See Faier 2007, and also Constable 2003, Law 1997, Piper 1997, Suzuki 2004, and Yea 2004 for discussions of the ways that love figures in the lives of Filipina migrants who date or marry U.S. or Japanese men.
18. See also Constable 2003 and Yea 2004 for related discussions of the appeal of American men as spouses for Filipina women.
19. In writing of "Japanese culture" or "Japanese identity," I refer not to fixed categories of identity but to contingent and relational formations of meaning and practice that are produced in cultural encounters between Filipina migrants and Central Kiso residents. Categories of cultural identity such as "Japanese" and "Filipina" are produced in relationships within and among members of these "groups," as I elaborate in Faier (in press).
20. For related discussions of Filipina women in other parts of Japan see Nakamatsu 2003, Burgess 2004, Piper 1997, Satake and Da-anoy 2006, and Suzuki 2003.
21. For discussions of migration as a means of empowerment for Filipina women in other parts of Japan and the world, see also Constable 2003; Nakamatsu 2003; Parreñas 2001; Pratt 2004; Suzuki 2002a; Tyner 1996, 2004; and Yea 2004.
22. Constable (2003) and Piper and Roces (2003) have explored the ways that emotional attachments and political economic considerations are intertwined in the lives of Filipina marriage migrants.
23. Some helpline and shelter staff told me that since the Domestic Violence Prevention Law took effect in 2001, some Filipina women have had more success getting custody of their children in part because they have been able to get social welfare assistance.
24. The mamasan is the manager or proprietress of the bar.

25. For discussions of domestic violence in Filipina–Japanese and Japanese–Japanese couples, see Babior 1993 and Piper 1997.
26. Although some parallels may exist in the reasons Filipina and Japanese women run away from their husbands, the similarities of their situations should not be overstated. Unlike Filipina women, Japanese women who want to leave their husbands do not risk losing spousal visas, and do not face the possibility of deportation and international separation from their children. Filipina women and Japanese women who want to leave their husbands face different religious, cultural, and familial pressures, all of which may inform or complicate their decisions; employment, educational, cultural, and language barriers are also different. Finally, Japanese women are not subject to the same racial discrimination that Filipina women often are, and are not obvious targets of racial profiling by police.
27. For discussions of the connections between gender, marriage, and nationalism, see Chatterjee 1989, Mankekar 1999, Tamanoi 1998, and Visweswaran 1994.
28. See also Law 1997 for a discussion of Filipina women’s ambivalence about bar work.
29. I thank Jody Blanco for drawing my attention to this pun.

Editor’s Note: *Cultural Anthropology* has published a range of essays on women, gender, and sexuality. These include Katherine Pratt Ewing’s “Between Cinema and Social Work: Diasporic Turkish Women and the (Dis)Pleasures of Hybridity” (2006); Aradhana Sharma’s “Crossbreeding Institutions, Breeding Struggle: Women’s Empowerment, Neoliberal Governmentality, and State (Re)Formation in India” (2006); and Nicole Constable’s “At Home but Not at Home: Filipina Narratives of Ambivalent Returns” (1999).

Cultural Anthropology has also published many essays on migrancy. See, for example, Didier Fassin’s “Compassion and Repression: The Moral Economy of Immigration Policies in France” (2005); Victoria Bernal’s “Eritrea Goes Global: Reflections on Nationalism in a Transnational Era” (2004); and David B. Coplan’s “Fictions that Save: Migrants’ Performance and Basotho National Culture” (1991).

Cultural Anthropology essays on Japan include Miyako Inoue’s “The Listening Subject of Japanese Modernity and His Auditory Double: Citing, Sighting, and Siting the Modern Japanese Woman” (2003); Karen Kelsky’s “Gender, Modernity, and Eroticized Internationalism in Japan” (1999); and Takie Sugiyama Lebra’s “The Socialization of Aristocratic Children by Commoners: Recalled Experiences of the Hereditary Elite in Modern Japan” (1990).

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