

The Social Constructions of the Filipina *Japayuki* and *Hanayome* and Their Locations in Japanese Household and Society

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CONTEXT OF RACIAL AND GENDER PREJUDICE

Race and gender discriminations are problems that affect Asian women and other foreign nationals in Japanese society. Despite the demands of a developed economy and the need for foreign currencies in the weakening economies in Asia, necessitating the inflow of people from Asia as well as Latin America, the entry of migrants (including Latin Americans of Japanese descent) threatens Japanese conceptions of themselves as pure and superior. This creates enormous covert conflicts and contradictions that have marginalizing and isolating effects on migrants. In particular, the nature and extent of Japanese racism is reflected in pervasive stereotyping of Filipino and other non-Japanese Asian women, as well as in the blunderous representation of Filipinas as *Japayuki* and *hanayome* working and living in Japan. While they are viewed with derogatory repugnance of racialized and gendered

prejudices, however, they also become recipients of unsolicited sympathy and patronage.

One of the most pervasive constructions of Asian women in Japan is the *Japayuki* in the entertainment industry in towns and cities. Though many of them are also wives and mothers, they are popularly branded as cheap hostesses in pubs. Meanings ascribed to the *Japayuki* are "cunning whores from poor Asia," and "sex slaves."

Another construct is the *hanayome* which refers to docile brides from Asia. They are to be found in the agricultural sector in rural villages. The "bride famine" in the 1980s through the 1990s prompted Japan to allow the entry of recruited brides from the Philippines, Korea, and China. One Japanese observer notes they are commonly depicted as slave-dolls, "stripped from any power to think and act" (Suzuki forthcoming).

These simplistic class, gender, and racial biases have perpetuated the further marginalization of these women

in Japanese society. Derogatory depictions deny recognition of their potentials as active subjects capable of negotiation. The blunders in their representations also fail to recognize the active positions and contributions of these women in Japanese society as spouses and active participants in the local community, who contribute to the maintenance of the sagging marriage institution, the family system, the aging population, depopulation of rural societies, and their contribution to the local as well as national economy. The hanayome are to a certain extent gaining recognition for their role as "mothers," i.e., a double-standard recognition implying the sexualized position of women in society. As "baby-machines" these women are valued for their reproductive potentials. This recognition not only perpetuates the expectations and pressures in their respective localities/villages as well as the local government for these women to fulfill their expected obligation and presupposed function to reproduce and sustain the rural villages' patriarchal family system; it also devalues women who are unable to bear children.

Although there are various ways the Japayuki and hanayome are described, I focus my discussion mainly on depictions of the Japayuki as "sex slaves" and hanayome as "docile wives" vis-à-vis their position in the household and society.

LOCATION OF WOMEN WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF THE JAPANESE HOUSEHOLD

The *ie*, or household, derives meaning from the naturalistic assumptions about the roles of individuals within the household unit or within an extended family, locating women as inferior to men in a hierarchical society. This is a common reference in gender studies in Japan that often ignores historical and sociocultural core and origins of gender dichotomy. Nevertheless, for the sake of briefly cataloguing the historical chronicle that traverses a transition of gender dichotomy in the household system, I engage in such reference as a point of takeoff in situating the location of Filipino women in the traditional Japanese household.

There is partiality in the literature on the gender dichotomy as a naturalistic given. Despite the cultural variations in gender dichotomies, most dominant indeed is the stereotype assumption on women's inferior position in relation to men. The analysis of Japanese women's position in society often fits this categorization. Here, there is no denying of the empirical bases. But for purposes of understanding the complex processes in sociocultural and socioeconomic systems that locate women's position in social organizations, I take up the issue in this section.

The institutionalization of the *ie*, or household, implies the polity of control during the Meiji period as it was used by the state to insure the biological as well as social reproduction of Japanese society vis-à-vis women during the period of industrialization. Industrialization demanded men's full participation in economic activities that led to a drastic decline in their participation in social reproduction, leaving women confined to these roles (Suzuki 2000).

Hence, it can be argued that the change in the economic system, i.e., the shift from heavy reliance on agricultural production to industrial production effected changes in the social organization of society, dispossessing Japanese women of the relatively equal status with men in the agricultural sector. Although the case of women's dominance in the silk industry may be viewed as isolated and represents only a fragment of the overall industries that emerged in the latter years of industrial growth, it can be argued that this fragment of women's history serves as a disclaimer on the partiality of singular claims on Japanese men's hegemony over women. As Bernstein (1983, xi) says, "Throughout Japan's history, women have played an important role in agriculture," i.e., a fragment of history that requires the reinterpretation of Japanese women's place in society, hence, insightful in the analysis of Filipinas' location in traditional Japanese household as well.

LOCATIONS OF WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE SOCIETY

Ways of locating women in modern Japan varies. In this article, I employ the dichotomy paradigm, that is, women's roles during their lifecycle and the geographical dichotomy—the urban and rural. Spatial/geographical dichotomy views women according to their location in the society, i.e., the urban and the rural women, and their roles within the societies in which they are located. The rural-urban dichotomy is a characteristic of modernity and therefore relevant in the analysis of the changes in women's position in a given society. Women, within a life-cycle approach, are also viewed according to their social roles at certain stages (sometimes overlapping) as daughters/daughters-in-law, mothers/mothers-in-law, and/or grandmothers.

Rural Japan is depopulated as more men and women move to bigger cities in the industrial sector. Young rural women's movement to cities to find better paying and decent jobs left agricultural production to the hands of older women and men who are called weekend farmers as they also participate in certain sectors of industries and government service. In farming families, where the daughter-in-law does not work outside the home, farm work becomes one of their primary tasks (as in the case of some Filipinas married to Japanese men in rural farming villages).

Women in both rural and urban areas have similar tasks embedded in socially ascribed roles within the household and within their localities. Confining fixities of women's roles as daughters, and more strongly as wives and mothers, remain dominant features of modern Japan. Women's participation in productive labor in Japan is a must to fast track and maintain a developed country short on labor.

Moreover, the centrality of the traditional household system is more constraining for rural women than for urban women (Imamura 1987). Rural women, especially in extended families, confront the pressures of conformity to tradition, but likewise, to a limited extent, are beneficiaries of the practice of an extended responsibility with childrearing, especially if the woman/mother participates or intends to partake in a wider range of social and economic activities. There are variations and levels of conformity to norms and local interpretations of tradition, in part, influenced by socio-political orientation of families and individual members. Nonfarming families tend to positively respond to changes in modern Japan that require and cater to women's active participation in economic as well as social activities outside the home. Farming families tend to remain in the opposite side of the continuum but may also allow for certain shifts or a breakaway from certain aspects of tradition. A readily observable practice is the

women's growing participation in economic activities outside the home—a direct result of higher education of women in rural areas and the much larger opportunities for them in cities.

One can argue that Japanese women in modern Japan are ambivalent. There is an emerging defiance of tradition and the tendency to preserve aspects of it—when it has pragmatic impact on women's lives. Obviously, Japanese women negotiate on their own terms. Perhaps this absurdity can attain clarity by looking at women's life cycle and the social relations that encapsulate them.

Throughout a woman's life cycle, whether in rural or urban Japan, traces of tradition survive in modernity. Tradition enforces itself as women shift from one role to another or combining some—where even social and economic relations in production have meager influence in changing the course of their lives more to their advantage, and in fact contrarily, may only reinforce a social reproduction of themselves in social organization and institutions.

The literature informs us that Japanese women's attempts to exercise power and assert subjectivity remain fragmented in modernity as it was historically. Or, their dominance in certain aspects of society is still a struggle with the obvious insistence on naturalistic assumptions on men's dominance over women in most, if not all, realms.

Given this background let us now begin to situate the location of Filipinas in both the household and Japanese society. It is misleading to accept that Filipinas are mere replacements of Japanese women who shun "low-paying" and "low-status" jobs such as entertainers. Despite the superficial visibility of modernity, and the high number of the "middle class" or the near absence of the virtually "poor," Japan remains highly stratified socially, culturally, economically, and politically. Japanese women continue to struggle for an equal place with men. By virtue of their citizenship, they are in a privileged position than Filipinas in job opportunities. This is where race becomes a crucial issue in Filipinas' migration to Japan, as the case studies further on show.

FILIPINAS AS WHORES OR WIVES

There are structures that control aspects of life of individuals or groups, and their locations within certain structures determine the present as well as the future possibilities for them. Following this logic, it cannot be overlooked that the influence of structures and structural constraints predispose migrants to race and gender prejudices. Concretely, among these already known instruments of control vis-à-vis structures that guarantee the confinement of Filipinas in their fixities are the Immigration Policy of Japan; the changes in Japan's economic structure and its

impact on men and women; and the inclusion of Japan in the global market. Eviota (2000) notes that the economic policies and Overseas Employment Policy of the Philippine government, the weakened Philippine economy and, on a broader scale, the global expansion of capitalism are also among these factors. Overall, these structural constraints locate women's subordinate position within Japanese household and society. These also serve as the fundamental bases for their stereotyped construction of Japayuki as whores and hanayome as docile wives.

"Cunning whores" or "subservient wives" are both social constructs. These constructions are basically anchored within the notion of sexuality and male domination, in which women are viewed as men's property (Richardson 1993). Though this notion can be used to analyze the Filipina Japayuki and hanayome, the impact of race and class, as potential sources of social and gender divisions, cannot be dismissed.

Japayuki, Whores

The infamous Japayuki dominate media coverage and portrayals.¹ The Japayuki has become a fixed construct of many, if not, all Filipino women in Japan. Even those women who do not formally work as entertainers in Japan are assumed to fall into the same category. The phenomenal Japayuki, its ill repute as well as its disparaging depiction, is not a

consequence of bad fate; rather, it is structurally determined. Japan's postwar development, particularly during the capitalist expansion of Japan in the 1970s, and through the economic boom in the 1990s, led to the participation of Japanese women in a wider range of economic activities which contributed to a shortage in labor for the entertainment industry and consequently catered to the demand for foreign women. Another contributory factor could be attributed to Japanese women's dislike for "night jobs" because of the risk factor, the low status ascribed to such jobs, and also because they have better chances in the labor market, by virtue of their birth right.

It should be noted that most of the dangerous, low-paid, low-skilled, low-status, undesirable jobs have been taken over by foreign workers such as Filipinos, Thais, Koreans, and Chinese; the men in the construction, ship building, factory, and other productive, heavy industries; the women in the sex/entertainment industry. Moreover, Filipinas and other foreign women are not mere replacements for Japanese women. Rather, a vacuum was created by the growth of the Japanese economy that paved the road for the entry of Filipinas to partake in economic production, for the sex industry as well as for the agricultural sector, and, for biological and social reproduction.

Disparaging imagery of Filipina Japayuki dominate media as well as

literary depictions of them. Accordingly, "assessment of Japayuki-san about their experiences seems to be balanced, positive," overriding in sum, all "minus" factors (Hosoda 1996, 173). Similarly, Porio (1999) notes, "disadvantaged women" (among others), have ways of appropriating their condition/s of "disadvantage" differently. A parallelism could be applied in the case of Japayuki who, despite the risks and odds in migration, see themselves "better off" working abroad, than when staying in the Philippines, jobless or employed, but earning less.

Entertainers stereotyped as Japayuki, paint the image of poor, pathetic, prostitutes, sex slaves, and scavengers from Asia. The term Japayuki is nearly synonymous to the renowned worldwide image of the Philippines as "Smokey Mountain" (read as dirty, scavengers, poor). Portrayed as sexual objects, their varied social roles as mothers, wives, workers, members of their respective communities, their subjectivity and the circumstances surrounding them are all undermined. The media are in part responsible for their derogatory, if not disparaging representations. What has laid the foundation of such representations are the structural bases for the massive inflow of entertainers and brides, such as globalization of markets, restrictions on Japan's immigration policy as well as the Philippine government's overseas employment policy, as earlier mentioned.

Often rhetorically, entertainers are linked to organized crime groups. Stereotyped depictions as helpless "victims" and as sexual objects are common. Philippine cinema has likewise made blockbuster hits out of the Japayuki, where stars like Aiko Melendez and Ruffa Gutierrez have played the role of the Japayuki in separate movies. Although these movies depict the afflictions and struggles of Japayuki, portrayals of this sort only perpetuate the derogatory prejudice on these women. Activists of various sorts, despite their efforts to support and put forward the morbid angle of the Japayuki phenomenon, have also utilized well such undeniable aspects of Filipina migration to Japan in articulating their politics. The Philippine government has paid least attention to Japayuki as "victimized" subjects, unlike the rhetorical diplomatic attention and attempts to resolve cases involving "domestic helpers" like Sarah Balabagan, Flor Contemplacion, and others. It can be deduced that such lack of similar attention is due to the prejudice against the Japayuki, even as virtual victims of sexual exploitation. Viewed as sexualized subjects or as cunning whores, those exploited among them are often reproached for their own condition.

Furthermore, this pervasive fixation on derogatory stereotypes is a manifestation of "Japanese voyeurism" which the network of Filipino women in Japan call keenly as "Paninilip," or voyeurism (*Pinay Ito*

1994).² One article in a Japanese publication analyses various forms of voyeurism evident in Japanese's excessive attention towards Filipinos in a general sense. Evidently, such excessive publicity (both in the Philippines and Japan) is not an attempt to understand their plight, the historical contexts, the structural constraints, and events surrounding their life, but for the marketability of the selected lurid tales about them.

Voyeurism also reaffirms their derogatory perceptions. In this complex process of voyeurism, the Filipino women become objects of indiscriminate scrutiny and constant surveillance. In a conversation with Go, a critic of Japanese racism and voyeurism on Filipino women diasporans,³ parallels voyeurism to stealing.³ The migrants' narratives and varied experiences are marketed through disparaging portrayals and depictions of them as "victims." Perhaps understated is the fact that for some of these women, Japan is their "haven."

The following illustrates the above stated contention. In search of her writing objects or subjects, an influential female Japanese journalist, active in women's issues, rang a Filipina missionary and asked whether the latter could provide her with "victims" for an interview. Outraged, the Filipina lay missionary replied, "We don't have 'victims' that you're talking about." Such examples of the presumptuous attitude among some Japanese are common.

In Japan (as in the Philippines) during the 1990s, movies and TV dramas portraying Filipino women also used the Japayuki as marketable subjects. A few examples are *Afureru Atsui Namida* (Swimming with Tears), and *Filipina o Aishita Otokotachi* (Men Who Love Filipino Women).⁴ These are also among the various media depictions of Filipino women illustrating voyeurism. On the one hand, these show the inadequate representations by the mass media of issues such as Filipino migration, as well as their lack of comprehension of the cultural and structural elements encompassing the life of Filipinas in Japan. On the other hand, these depictions are a self-portrayal of Japanese society's treatment of women as a norm. Although these movies/dramas are not among the first to depict themes on Filipino women migration to Japan, these are among those that caught wide public attention, including the Filipinas in Japan themselves attesting to the power of visual representations.

In late 1992, about 1,100 Filipino women from various places in Japan signed a protest letter calling *Filipina o Aishita Otokotachi* as a simplistic, and biased characterization of Filipino women in general. The protest letter dated 19 December 1992 was submitted to the Fuji Television production staff. It says, "We strongly protest the sexist and racist stereotypes of Filipino women." Such an event indicates the rising consciousness of these women about their marginal

position in Japanese society, raising voices of resistance. Protesters demanded from Fuji TV, "a more holistic portrayal of their own selves and lives," and "a socially responsible projection of Filipino women working/living in Japan, and the Philippines" (Da-anoy 1996).⁵

In an interview with *Japan Times* correspondent, a Filipina lay missionary and feminist, Liza Go said, "The Japanese say we should not complain because Japanese racism is not as terrible as German neo-Nazism or the anti-Korean riots in Los Angeles" (*The Japan Times Weekly*, 1994). There is gross denial that racism is not the issue surrounding discrimination against Filipino women in Japan.

Furthermore, in an attempt to gather diverse reactions, the television drama was shown to some university students in May 1993. More negative than positive perceptions turned out. Among the negative perceptions about the Philippines are the Philippines is dirty, dangerous, impoverished, desperate, miserable, and with a low standard of living. These refer to the Philippines, although part of the setting of the drama depicts Smokey Mountain, not the entire Philippines.⁶ Students generalized Smokey Mountain as a representation of the Philippines. Despite the lurid portrayal of Filipinas in the drama and its (unintended) impact in perpetuating racism, instantaneously this conjuncture ironically offered Filipinas the chance to fight their pervasive derogatory depiction, through the

protest they staged against Fuji Television.

Some observers dismiss the diligence and hard work of these women, reducing them to cunning, deceptive whores pushed to leave for Japan merely by the so-called culture of materialism and/or consumerism. As one author writes, "Another cause (of migration) that could be pinpointed is the pervasive culture of materialism and the constant search for the elusive pot of gold at the end of the rainbow." Although these are practices that cannot be denied, it urges us to reassess our own views and throw back the basic query: Who creates needs? Who creates demands? And perhaps more in depth, one should ask, Where has social inequality led these women?

Among Filipinas I encountered, there is no denying the fact that they come to Japan for the promise of relatively bigger income. The drive to earn as much money as possible and to help support the family back home is not tantamount to the irrational motif of consuming modernity. Bourdieu (1994) posits that social capital, as symbolic of the kind of relations of exchange, calculations, and expectations as in gift-giving/receiving, may in fact have deeper social as well as cultural implications. Whereas Filipinas, for example, insist on sending goods and financial support to their loved ones back home, (sometimes squeezed by filial obligation, and often voluntarily), this can be a form of social capital, an investment for future use.

This brings forth the necessity to analyze the Filipina migrants' consumption behavior along with changes in economic structures, i.e., the globalization of capitalist economies (Osteria 1994; Aguilar 1999). It is insightful to understand the meanings ascribed by migrants on commodities they try to acquire. The spending habits of the Japayuki cannot simply be reduced to mere wasteful consumption of goods as they are not driven by personal economic desires per se, but are also influenced by external social, cultural, and economic factors. This unsubstantial generalization that materialistic desires drove these women to migrate only perpetuates their derogatory representations. How migrants appropriate their earnings, why, for what purpose, for whom, and under whose influences are crucial to understanding the complexity of migration process in general, and the construction of the Japayuki as "cunning whores," in particular.

Despite this seeming contradiction in migrants' consumption behavior and goals, it is a fact that consumer behavior is affected by globalization of media, technology, communications and transport, and culture shaping consumer migrants' needs and wants (Eviota 2000). Migrants' spending habits and their diligence overseas "is a manifestation of the life-conscious strategy of self-presentation vis-à-vis the commodity construction of identity" (Aguilar 1999, 127).

In my research trips to Taiwan and Hong Kong I observed these practices among Filipino migrants.⁷ In Taiwan, the central trainstation building symbolizes Filipinos' "imagined community," where it occurs, the practice of translating wages to commodities (cf. B. Anderson 1991). It is a place where migrants gather to meet friends, eat Filipino dishes, and shop for goods to use, to send, or to take home, particularly on Sundays, especially after pay day. The World-Wide Plaza building, located in a commercial district in Hong Kong also typifies various parallelisms.

These observations reveal that Filipino women remain determined, and the perceived obstacles surrounding their life are part of the initiation process to what they become or hope to be, the promise of migration to enhance their and their families' economic and social status. Evidently, migration is not the goal, but one of the means to their goals and aspirations in their attempts to respond to various structural economic constraints in their country of origin. As Aguilar (1999) notes, the acquisition of goods and migrants' consumption of what modernity offers, the migrants' self-image and status is affirmed in their locality.

Contrary to their stereotyped images, Filipinas in the entertainment industry are not a homogeneous entity of "whores," nor serial liars, equipped with deceptive schemes, whose main preoccupation is headhunting for potential "victims"

to deceive. They are mostly Filipinas with ordinary lives, who, for already known reasons, have become part of Japanese society technically through work and/or spouse visas. Literary as well as media depictions of Japayuki allow us to imagine them only as sexual, erotic subjects, in pubs and clubs, but not as individuals engaged in ordinary daily routines of doing house chores, raising a family, and attending to community obligations as responsible parent and spouse, as responsible member of a community, or as individuals embracing their own sets of religious or moral beliefs and practices. Their individual identity is reduced and serialized into sexual object, denying their multiple roles and contribution to both the economic and social welfare of Japanese society.

As members of their translocalities, these Filipinas have functions and obligations to perform, such as to strictly conform to the defined rules on garbage disposal, to join community clean ups, to attend meetings of the residential association, or participate in local women's associations. As mothers, they do not only take charge of home-functions and child-care but they also have obligations to join Parents-Teachers Association meetings and activities, take and fetch children to and from nursery school, join class observations and other related activities, including ceremonies for their children who are new entrants to school or are graduating. And, certainly as individuals possess-

ing a set of beliefs and practices, some of them who have access to church, bring their children or family to attend mass/service. Some Filipinas have had their children baptized in their respective churches. Interestingly, many of them also join their husbands in their visits to temples or shrines.

Failure in affective relationships characterizes many Japayuki. Despite this confinement, many have demonstrated their endurance for affectionate relationships. It is not always the case that their marriage to Japanese men is doomed to fail, as it is often depicted. Yet, for problematic marriages, divorce remains one common option.

Back home, though their status as Japayuki invite gossip, some of them enjoy the high regard as responsible and dependable persons bestowed on them by kin, neighbors, and family members. To some extent, as their social and economic status achieve relative mobility, they are also envied in their localities. Some of them are able to enhance their (as well as their families') social status by their contributions to church and other civic organizations.

For the most part, the Japayuki are heterogeneous subjects of women under varied conditions. Next, I shall illustrate two case studies among the diverse, complex situations of the Japayuki phenomenon.

Ana is known to friends and acquaintances as a tough woman, gentle mother, and a good provider of the family, both in the Philippines

and in Japan. Since she arrived in Japan in 1988, she has been working as a "talent" in Kagawa Prefecture.⁸ She is among the Filipinas, who, after marriage, continue to work in the entertainment industry.

She has two children, a boy and a girl, now in their teens. She recalls the times she brings them to and from the nursery school by bicycle as part of the normal life in Japan. Unlike some Filipinas, however, who have managed to secure and drive a car, Ana is unable to do so. Her economic standing does not allow her because there is limited parking space in her apartment, and she is the only one supporting her family.

Her husband worked at the onset of their marriage, but due to his ailing spine, he quit his job. Ana has long been the sole breadwinner in the family. Occasionally, she gets support from her mother-in-law. She practically raises her children by herself, and looks after her husband's needs. Her husband, insecure in his condition and of the fact that Ana works in a pub, habitually beats her. This has been part of Ana's everyday struggles. She refuses to divorce him, however, saying, "I don't want my children to grow up without a father"—a decision she is determined to adhere to.

Close friends would urge her to divorce, but she remains firm in her decision to hold on to her problematic marriage. She even criticizes her other friends whose marriages fall apart, one after another. In their gatherings she laughs off her pains when among

friends. She is often the subject of admiration for her enormous endurance to struggles. The lack of intent to divorce is her insecurity with her visa status.⁹ She thinks divorce will only ruin her life and worsen her economic condition.

Back home, in the Visayas, she regularly supports her family and kin. She seldom returns to the Philippines because her husband refuses and also because it is difficult to leave the children to his care. Her family in the Philippines also serves as a reminder that she has to work hard.

During my last meeting with Ana she said that she is getting old and will soon retire as a hostess. Aware of the limitations given her job, she admits to fast tracking income-generating schemes by dating her customers. Her acquaintances and friends say that Ana sells sex to customers, some of whom are Filipino seamen and contract workers who frequent the pub she works in. But they do not discredit Ana's diligence and dependability. Gossip and rumors do not bother her. She said that she does what the job requires and she could only learn to be calloused. Ana admits that prior to her entry to Japan as a talent, she worked in a pub in Ermita. Hence, she claims to know the trade.

For example, she says, dating customers augments income. She gets paid for the date, and also receives additional gifts, which she accumulates to bring or send to the

Philippines. Sometimes she encounters really generous customers who give her a monthly allowance ranging from twenty to thirty thousand yen, though this is mostly short-lived. She often wrestles with budget management, as she has to appropriate some money to her family in the Philippines.

Ana is not a Japayuki (with all its disparaging, negative images) to her fellows. She participates in the daily undertakings of life, along with other Filipinas in her translocality, goes to the same church with them, joins the parties they host, engages in mutual consultation with them about the queries of practical relevance to living in Japan—e.g., school matters, hospitalization, shopping, and the like. She shares with them in mutual terms, ways of resolving and confronting their own contextual everyday realities. For the most part her everyday routine as well as her varied roles is as ordinary as that of other Filipinas in Japan. Likewise she is part of Japanese society as the others, engaging in roles and functions that guarantee that everyday life goes on despite the odds. The difference lies in the complex circumstances surrounding their marriages and work. Hence, Ana's case affirms in part an aspect of life of the stereotyped Japayuki as well as debunks its partial, singular claims.

Another case study illustrates a pattern where some Filipinas, former entertainers, engage in productive

work in the factory, convenience store, or supermarket.

Ester works for a plastic manufacturing company. During her first trip to Japan as a talent in 1989, where she worked in a pub as an entertainer, she faked her identity by using a different name and faked her civil status. She married her Japanese husband in the same year and they have a son, now nine years old. When her son was two years old, she decided to work in the said factory because she wanted economic independence.

Her husband endorses his income to his father-in-law, who wants to take control of her family. She is given thirty thousand yen a month for food allowance. She narrates that she cannot even get herself new underwears. Hence, she defied her husband and father in-law's desire to confine her in the house and searched for work, until she finally got it.

She keeps her own income. She was once married (and separated) in the Philippines, where she has an eighteen-year-old son by her Filipino husband. She spends for his son's college education as well as allocates some of her income to her ailing mother. It has been her goal to secure a home lot and build a house in the Philippines so she has been working hard. In fact, she already bought a 400 square meter homelot in Batangas, her province. She nourishes a kind of dream that resonates the dream of many migrants.

In the factory where she works, she is the only Filipina. Her female Japanese coworkers fondly associate with her and in fact empathize with her narratives of daily struggles with a Japanese husband. She says that she appreciates the supportive attitude of her Japanese coworkers toward her. Her straightforwardness and dedication to her work earned her the trust and respect of her coworkers. Such relationships, however, are not free from constraints. There were times when she was bullied, and she had to confront such situations by herself.

Her initiation in the company urged her to study the Japanese language. She said, "we must learn the tools for living in Japan." She went to the nearest language school in her early years and now speaks the Japanese language proficiently.

Japan is the third country she entered. She had been to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as a household worker. She said that she almost killed her employer after she was beaten once and sought to go back to the Philippines. But her earlier experience of abuse did not keep her from resuming her sojourn, until she settled in Japan.

She has been married for more than a decade now but the arrangement with her husband and his father concerning his earnings remains the same. Five years ago, Ester wanted to divorce her husband. However, her father-in-law said she either give him

her son or that she bears one more child so that they could split the children after divorce, the oldest son to her husband and father-in-law, and the second child to Ester. Outraged by this proposition of her father-in-law, she promised herself not to divorce her husband and not to have another child. She learned that the father-in-law is only after a grandson to inherit his property. Ester discovered this after she also learned that her husband had a first wife and had two daughters in her custody. Her father-in-law did not show interest in taking any of the daughters from the first wife, but wanted Ester's son. Ester said it no longer bothers her that she is not entrusted with her husband's income because she has her own. Besides, she thinks her father-in-law is saving her husband's income for her son.

Ester continues with her sojourn and negotiates in her own terms as most Filipinas in Japan do. She insists that Filipinas in Japan are diverse. Indeed, the plurality of Filipinas is entwined in their own contextual reality as well as in their varied responses to it.

Hanayome, as Docile Wives

In many societies, tradition imposes that brides are prized not grossly for their individual traits but for their biological fecundity and sexual utility. After the wedding, she becomes a wife, mother, sister-in-law, and a daughter-in-law. Her new role

and position are a mere extension of her previous roles as daughter to her parents and sister to her siblings. She is dispossessed of personhood, other than who she is to the men in her life. The hanayome remains linked with Japanese tradition, but Filipina brides have explored ways of negotiating and articulating their condition within local structures.

The history of the hanayome phenomenon can be traced back to the "bride famine" in the early 1960s and more clearly at around 1975. In rural areas, like Tokushima and Ehime in Shikoku, the entry of brides from the Philippines initially began in 1987. However, the Filipina brides are not among the first wave of migrants in Japan.¹⁰ The concept of hanayome though, with its subordinated image, has long been part of Japanese tradition, prevailing even in contemporary Japan. The concept was adopted and earned a phenomenal status at the height of the bride-scarcity and consequently, the "bride-importation."

To a limited extent, claims that Filipinas and other Asian women are mere replacements of Japanese women, who, in most of rural Japan, have been moving away from fulfilling traditional roles as wives, and brides, thus threatening the traditional family system, can be affirmed. The roles frowned upon by Japanese women called the attention of some local governments in rural Japan. The leading figures in these local governments strategized the rhetoric of internationalization in the hope of restoring/

maintaining the traditional agricultural production system and family system, vis-à-vis intermarriage. Even with the endorsement from local governments, this initiative to respond to the depopulation of rural villages has consequential effects. Socio-cultural problems go alongside the hanayome phenomenon as brides raise dissident voices on their diverse experiences of subordination, abuse, and discrimination.

In rural villages, although foreign women contribute to reproduction and consequently to productive work such as in agricultural production, their participation in their respective localities is still considered subordinate to men's primary role as head of the traditional household and as the primary breadwinner. In most cases, foreign women's participation in agricultural production is considered unpaid family labor.

Media disclosure of their initiation to the rural village as brides called wide public attention. There was a period when Filipina brides enjoyed positive portrayal as the good ones, contrary to the bad image of their urban counterpart, the Japayuki. This is linked to the fact that they did not come to work in the sex and entertainment industry, but to become "docile wives." This likewise implies the obvious categorization of Filipino women into binaries, according to their social position and the roles they play in their localities, either as subservient rural brides or as cunning urban whores.

There were earlier Filipina brides prior to the hanayome phenomenon. However, the class position of earlier brides privileged them, at least shielded them from the "ill repute" of latter entrants. Least known to most Japanese because of the lesser media attention and documentation about them, the first wave of Filipina brides, called, "pioneer wives" set foot on Japanese soil in the 1960s. They met their Japanese spouses in the Philippines in the late 1960s, when the latter were students, volunteers, businessmen, and/or employees of Japanese companies in the Philippines (Ballescás 1998). Their demographic and socioeconomic profiles reveal that they have higher educational attainment, and are either from the middle or upper classes, often affiliated with giant corporations, prestigious organizations, or universities. Among them are also those who married Japanese men on group tours, who have lower educational attainment and who belong to the lower class than the ones earlier mentioned.

Accordingly, the distinction lies in the absence of commercialized circumstances in their marriage. Their presence in Japan is not as phenomenal as the entertainer or the hanayome in a village. Some of them do not experience discrimination (ibid). This contention, however, is disturbing because testimonies of other pioneer wives reveal experiences of discrimination even prior to the phenomenal Japayuki and hanayome's entry

to Japan. Ballescas (op. cit.) notes these women have the option either to work or stay home; have higher educational attainment; have support network; and associate with "whites," "intellectuals," and "elite." Also, the derogatory depictions associated with Japayukis came about along with the rapid growth of the sex industry in the 1970s through the 1990s, as well as the stagnation of the Philippine economy. The bubble burst for Filipino women in Japan. Consequently, Filipino women Japayukis who came after the "pioneer wives" were far more susceptible to discrimination than their predecessors.

Ballescas (op. cit.) contends that derogatory depictions of later entrants influenced negative sentiments among Japanese to include undifferentiated discrimination against most Japan-bound Filipino women from various social and economic classes and strata in the latter years. It should be noted, nevertheless, that a "denial" of the experience of discrimination by pioneer wives is an indication of the class and status differentiation between them and the later entrants. Analytically, such denial implies class and status division and a conscious (or unconscious) attitude among pioneer wives to dissociate themselves from the Japayuki and the hanayome to maintain their established social status and class position both in the Philippines and in Japan.

This attitude is implicit in a comment by a "pioneer wife" saying, "I'm sick of Filipinas in Japan," when

she was asked whether she is networking with other Filipinas in her area. This attitude also manifests the social inequality among migrants from the Philippines. Not surprisingly, such attitude is likewise shared by members of the privileged-class Filipinos in Australia and Hong Kong.¹¹ In Australia, some well-established professionals dissociate themselves from the derogatory constructs of Filipina "mail order brides" as "less educated" and those hailing from poor families and from the rural villages in the Philippines. In Hong Kong pioneer Filipinos, such as musicians and children of musicians who married Hong Kong citizens, dissociate themselves from latter entrants, e.g.,¹² household workers and caretakers. Filipina household workers' and caretakers' derogatory construction as low status and low class hurt pioneer migrants' "good image." From this observation can be drawn an argument that class divisions cut across gender and race. Filipinas/Filipinos among themselves are divided by social and class origins; but among Japanese or other nationals, they are seen as a unified community.

Some authors claim that the distinct feature of the hanayome is their commodification inferring from the marriage process via professional fixers, marriage agencies, and endorsements by local government (ibid.). This is not always the case as some Filipina brides make a counterclaim that they chose to marry their Japanese partners, and they can

refuse when they do not like the Japanese who have chosen them.

The process of "bride procurement" is designed using the rhetoric of the politics of internationalization, to reduce criticisms by conservative villagers (Yamazaki in *Ampo* 1998; *Mainichi Daily News*, 23 and 25 January 1990). International marriage was incorporated in the rhetoric of internationalization. The fact is that the social circumstances surrounding their influx relate to the depopulation of rural Japan and the threat to the collapse of the traditional system of household and the marriage institution due to the waning participation of Japanese women in maintaining tradition. Filipina brides were expected to hold a position in the traditional household parallel to the position held by a wife in the Edo period, where essentially she functions to nurture and protect the patrilineal household. Hence, as wives they are considered to be dispossessed of personhood (Imai 1994).

For some time intermarriage has been overshadowed by opposing views from its advocates and those who are against it. The advocates' justifications are meant to console rural villagers who are uneasy about their continued presence. Conversely, intermarriage is viewed as a potential threat to the deterioration of strongly held traditional values and beliefs as well as traditional structural patterns.

Moreover, the ideal goals of intermarriage between Filipina brides and rural Japanese men to some

extent failed. In part, this is because the process was initially confined to the procurement of human "goods," to maintain traditional social institutions such as marriage and family. An emic view reveals the growing empowerment of Filipina brides, who have stood up and recaptured their lives. The advocates of international marriage did not anticipate, and in fact undermined, possible forms of resistance by some Filipina brides. These forms of everyday resistance eventually effected significant changes in their own contextual reality. As cases of divorce, movements away from the rural villages by some Filipina brides, and refusal to live with the spouses' natal family indicate they are not as docile as they are perceived and portrayed. Even those who stayed defied tradition and explored diverse ways of making life better for themselves in their own contextual reality.

Indeed, as the international marriage agencies demanded that Filipina-would-be-brides should be educated, middle class, young, and inexperienced in Japan, they demonstrated in the course of their marriage their varied and enormous capacity to negotiate values and to become active agents, as the following case illustrates.

Teresita says, "I left Higashiyayama because I can't make a life out there. After almost ten years of living there, I knew it is not the place for me. My husband agreed with my proposal that we live separately.¹³ We both don't want to divorce. We love

each other, but I have a constricted life in the village. He thought he would not be able to cope with the pressures if he leaves the village especially that he's a chonan (eldest son).¹⁴ We never had a child and this is what the village called us for, to give sons, children to them. I thought I had better leave. After a few years, my husband followed to live with me in Nagoya. His sisters visited us once and asked for forgiveness for all the bad things they did and said about me."

Teresita is one of the first six Filipina brides brought to Tokushima, Shikoku Island, in 1987. She claims she is among the "lucky" ones chosen from among a big crowd of women from her province, Isabela, who packed a local stadium for the "selection" rite. She had high hopes and looked forward to see modern Japan, only to later find herself disillusioned as she and her potential husband trailed through the narrow mountain roads on the way to her future home, Tokushima, a thinly populated agricultural area. Her vivid recollection of her first sojourn to Japan reveals ambivalent feelings of disappointment and hope.

As a cosmetics entrepreneur, manicurist, and hairdresser prior to her entry to Japan, Teresita's possession of varied enterprising skills paved the way for her to explore beyond the confines of rural Japan, which secured her future after her decision to leave Tokushima and separate from her husband ten years after she married. She has established a network with

university professors, journalists, local officials, key workers in social organizations, and individuals. Through these networks she managed to study Japanese language and to participate in varied social activities. Enterprising indeed, she was able to maximize her networks for the sale of cosmetics products as an income-generating scheme.

Equipped with charisma and leadership potential, in 1988 she urged a local social worker to provide them with a Japanese language teacher, which they had thereafter. She also expressed her desire to work, learning that she was brought to Japan at 1.7 million yen, appropriated to the persons involved in the arrangement of the marriage, including a tiny sum for her parents. She got employed in a textile factory in the locality. Disturbed by the remoteness of the village from the nearest central area, she struggled to convince her husband to allow her to learn to drive a car. Among her peers, she was one of the first Filipinas to defeat relative immobility. She drives to and from the rugged mountains of Higashi-iyayama-gun down to the nearest town, Ikeda. She leads her peers, takes them to the factory, to church, and to the shopping area.

The plight of Teresita as a "bride" is not peculiar compared to that of her fellow brides. Most of them have to perform tasks based on traditional norms and expectations, which Teresita did for ten years up until she left the village. She was able to serve

and care for the elderly in-laws, partake in village undertakings, and to be a "good wife." In fact, among her peers, she was among the last to leave Tokushima, with the exception of the two other Filipina brides who stayed on up to the present. But unlike her fellow Filipina brides, she has no children, and this is a greater pressure on her, now conscious that she was chosen, most of all, for fecundity. Although her husband loves her, he is also bound by tradition. He is the eldest son whose duty is to ensure the family line and maintain the patrilineal household.

Teresita's struggle reached its peak when her in-laws pressured her to adopt a seventeen-year-old nephew. She admits it is difficult to care for a person needing special attention but what she found more difficult to accept is the fact that she was almost forced to adopt a child to maintain a family line. Finally, Teresita decided to leave her husband and told his filial family that she is not interested in the inheritance and would rather be on her own. She first moved to Ikeda, worked in a pub as a hostess and in the daytime she ventured on selling cosmetics.

During her first year in Ikeda, she got sick and underwent surgery, when her husband visited her often. When her husband got ill, she also went back to Tokushima and took care of him until he recovered. These difficult times affirmed the mutual concern and affection they have for each other. After two years in Ikeda, while her

husband remained in the village to sort out his own dilemma with tradition he was brought up in, Teresita moved to Nagoya, set up her own network and continued her activities as a cosmetics dealer/agent. She later became one of the top ten agents of a cosmetics company in Japan. After a couple of years, her husband moved to Nagoya. Jobless in a new environment, she supported him for some time until he found a job as a truck driver. Defying tradition, he abandoned his property in Tokushima to reunite with Teresita. She was proud to recall, saying, "when my in-laws visited us in Nagoya, they bent their knees and heads in apology. They said they were wrong about me."

Teresita's case illustrates the rational and pragmatic response of some Filipinas to their own subjective reality. They map out their own course and lead their own sojourn. Many, like Teresita, demonstrate their capacity to redirect the course of their life. From her accounts, we can deduce that she influences changes in the life of others. In this case, her Japanese husband and in-laws, shows that crosscultural interaction among social actors is not static. Hence, the pervasive construct of Filipina brides as docile wives and helpless victims is debunked.

A quick glance at the life of the other five Filipinas in Teresita's batch also reveals the diversity among them as brides. Some brides opted for divorce rather than hang on to a problematic marriage. There are, in

fact, a number of divorce cases among Filipina brides in Tokushima resulting in a better living condition for them, better bargaining power, and happier life. In 1991–1993, four of my informants from the village in Miyoshi and Higashi Iyayama in Tokushima divorced. One left after her husband died in an accident and resumed her sojourn in Yokohama, along with her son. Another, who found domestic violence unbearable, divorced, but in the next few years, married another Japanese national. The breakdown of their first marriages did not discourage these Filipinas to move on, if not, reroute their journey. Although they had a choice to go back to the Philippines, they chose to remain in Japan, informed of the scarcity of work opportunities for them “back home.” Recognizing the practical benefits of staying in Japan as one of the primary motivating factors for remarriage, the women likewise assert their claims that there are Japanese men who fall for them. Hence, they remarry. Rebuked and berated, eventually, they left the rural village and moved to other towns and cities to recapture their hopes.

Interestingly, two of the original six who were brought to Tokushima remained in the village—they serve as showcases of the “bright side” of the hugely criticized hanayome phenomenon as well as contrarily, a disclaimer on the docile image of Filipina brides. As the case of Dorothy below reveals, she and another remaining hanayome are in their own ways

copied with village life and they have participated in the larger society as workers. Doubly burdened with housework and paid work, their continued presence earned them “acceptance” at various levels from the villagers, in-laws, and other kin of their husband. They wrestle with the daily task of meeting kin and village expectations to be good mothers and good wives. Those who left among them, including Teresita, are subjected to village criticisms and condemnation. The fact remains that the level of village acceptance of those who stayed on is closely linked with the women’s contribution to reproduction, agricultural production, and the maintenance and sustenance of both the marriage and family institutions—the patrilineal household system and other village’s traditional practices. Below is Dorothy’s case, perceived as a good wife, mother, and villager.

Dorothy was among the six brides brought to Tokushima in September 1987 along with Teresita. For nearly fifteen years now, she has remained part of the village of Higashi-iyayama. It is fair to say that she has passed the rite of passage to being a good mother and a good wife as well as a good member of the local community. Dorothy has fulfilled the promise of her price as a hanayome. She gave two sons and a daughter to her family. She appropriately performed her varied roles that earned her village and kin’s acceptance.

But Dorothy is not a docile woman as she was first thought to be. At the onset, she made one thing clear to her husband saying, "Hit me once and you won't see me anymore," a statement seriously and well taken by her husband. Like her batch mates, she expressed desire to work, whence she also got employed at the textile factory, sewing clothes and linens. In most of the early stages of her initiation to the new environment, she shared similar struggles with her fellow brides. She also has achieved her hopes for mobility, to learn to drive, trekking the rugged mountains to and from the nearest hospital, shopping center, church, and day-care center. In a place dubbed as one of the three paradises of Japan, mobility is crucial to practical and psychological survival. Dorothy topped the list of survivors among her fellow brides.

In her narrative she recounts that her present condition is not free of constraints, but goes on to say, "People chose their own paths." She is not against those who left the village (though to some extent critical of some of them), but her decision to stay is driven by a desire to make the best of her condition as a hanayome, knowing she was brought to Japan by her husband who had a clear purpose of ensuring that the village population grows and tradition preserved.

In an interview by a Japanese scholar, Dorothy figuratively likens

herself to the "ilaw ng tahanan" (light of the house), saying that a house, even with its pillars, will be dark without light.¹⁵ Japanese society, patriarchal as it is, has room for a figurative speech as "daikoku bashira" (pillars of the house, personified by the male head of the family). But its supposed complimentary figurative speech, "ilaw ng tahanan" used in Philippine society has no such place. Moreover, Dorothy has well articulated the practical application of her own notion of being the light in the home she has chosen to build, nourished by years of struggle as well as negotiation with her Japanese husband and the community.

Dorothy was forced to quit her job at the factory when it was closed down. At one point she supported her family in Japan when her husband lost his job due to an illness. She engages in cosmetics sales and at the same time works as a cook in a nursing home in an adjacent town. Two years ago she started to run a door-to-door delivery business from Japan to the Philippines—indeed, a demonstration of agency.

She has earned village respect and acceptance, not by mere compliance nor subservience to village tradition, but by self-assertion. Her social orientation, i.e., her notions of a woman's position and role at home stand consistent with village expectations. Hence, withstanding constraints and conflicts, as well as unrestrained self-assertion, she reckons to build a haven

out of her situation. After Teresita left, Dorothy now leads the latter entrants of brides to the village.

CONCLUSION

The derogatory construction of Filipino women in Japan is attributed to widespread media attention on them as well as to the interplay of structural economic constraints both in the home and in the receiving country which bring about mass migration from the Philippines and an influx of a gender-specific labor force to Japan. Yet, aside from structural factors, it cannot be denied that some Filipino women (mostly those who have the means to secure the logistics for migration) also migrate on their own. The competitive nature of a global economy also placed Filipino women in Japan in specific subordinate position by their large participation in the service and sexualized labor sector, engaging in what is categorized as low-skilled, low-status jobs in the case of the Japayuki. Another is by Filipino women's participation in the reproduction of Japanese traditional household system in the case of the hanayome. The feminization of migration, crisscrossing global economic, social, and cultural structures, has perpetuated the pervasive subordination of and discrimination against Filipino women. Thus, the derogatory construction of Filipinas in Japan whether as Japayuki and/or hanayome is an inevitable

outcome of their gross marginalization and subordination as women, within a society where, historically, social and gender divisions are distinct.

The meanings of (em)power(ment) as well as negotiation are articulated in diverse ways vis-à-vis the personal attributes of dynamic subjects as well as the varied circumstances and relations they foster in society. The Japayuki and the hanayome are Filipinas whose social locations are marginalized within Japanese household and society. Their contribution to production is not seriously counted up for its sexualized nature. Yet, through the emic lenses, these women have been calculating their gains on top of the costs they have invested while in Japan. Clearly, Filipinas have articulated a growing consciousness among them to redress their derogatory stereotype construction. They resonate what some Japanese feminists think of Filipinas as, "their strong[er] Asian sisters," a self-admission of their backbreaking struggle for their own self-reconstruction.

Hence, the static, stereotyped construction of Filipino women living and working in Japan is challenged by their narratives and diverse experiences as well as by their ability to withstand singular claims about them. Although the lurid tales of migration often catch wide public attention, the rational and pragmatic responses of women to their contextual realities—the economic

constraints back home and the conditions in receiving countries — imply

a pattern that contradict most of these mis/representations.

NOTES

1. Japayuki (Japan-bound) is a Japanese word coined by a filmmaker, Yamatani Tetsuo (1985). Originally based on the word Karayuki, meaning China-bound Japanese women, it is now used to refer to Filipino and other Asian entertainers.

2. *Pinay Ito* [This is Filipino] is a quarterly publication written in English and Filipino by and for Filipinos in Japan. It came out as a result of the decision of the participants of the First National Gathering of Filipino Women in Japan on 15–17 May 1993, in Hiroshima, to initiate and encourage the sharing of the women's collective voices.

3. Liza Go, (first name followed by surname) worked as a lay missionary for the National Council of Churches, Hiroshima Peace and Human Rights Center. She worked with Filipino women migrants for ten years until 1997. She is one of the moving forces in the struggle of Filipino women migrants to move their representations from their stereotypes.

4. This drama was aired on Fuji TV on 11 December 1992.

5. The article in this citation is in Japanese. The original English version of the manuscript is unpublished.

6. Smokey Mountain got its name from the smoke emitted by the huge site of garbage in Manila. Some of the

negative images of the Philippines are derivatives of Smokey Mountain. The new dumpsite was developed during President Fidel Ramos's administration in Tondo.

7. Research trips in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Australia was conducted in July to September 2000 through the generous funding of the Ministry of Education of Japan.

8. Talent, is the term used by most Filipinas who work in the entertainment industry and is preferable, to the term "Japayuki."

9. It is not always the case that divorced Filipinas can secure a visa. The Japanese Immigration Law is not consistent on this matter. Visa applications are treated on a case to case basis.

10. "Hanayome" is a Japanese word for bride. Within the context of the crisis in the marriage institution in Japan in the 1980s through the 1990s and the bride famine particularly in rural Japan, the influx of brides from Asia was phenomenal; thereafter the term hanayome acquired derogatory meanings with reference to Asian brides.

11. The data were gathered in late July to September 2000. The research in Australia was made possible through the funding of Toyota Foundation, while the research in Hong Kong and Taiwan was funded

by the Ministry of Education of Japan.

12. Household workers are traditionally called "domestic helpers." In my/and the workers' attempt to redress their derogatory representation, I use household workers to refer to them, who work in "other" households and provide care and services.

13. In Japan, a system of separation, called *bekyo jotai* (living separately) is common. Unlike formal divorce, the couples either live in

separate roofs or in the same but different bedrooms.

14. In Japanese tradition, a *chonon* inherits property as well as family debts. Among his enormous filial responsibilities is to ensure that the patrilineal system is maintained through the birth of a male offspring.

15. Interview conducted by Professor Masaaki Satake with Dorothy (pseudonym) in November 1998.

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