



FUGITIVE KINSHIPS: Imperial Legacies, Wayward Acts, and Queer Bonds among Filipino Migrants in Japan

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The sun in the cloudless sky glared down on the crowd, etching their shadows into the ground. Hot air, loud music, and indistinct Taglish permeated the urban park, walled on all four sides by concrete buildings.¹ It was mid-afternoon on June 12, 2022, *Ang Araw ng Kalayaan*, or the Day of Freedom. Like their fellow Filipinos at home and abroad, several hundred had gathered to commemorate the Declaration of Independence from Spanish colonial rule in 1898, which makes for the celebration's textbook explanation. There are also newer, evolving meanings. This was Ikeda Park in Nagoya, Japan, the capital of Aichi Prefecture, home to the largest Filipino population in the country.² The all-day event publicly celebrated their diasporic identity with foods (*inasal*, *adobo*, *biko*),³ traditional bamboo dance (*tinikling*), and a host of pop music performances (including *Ikaw* by Yeng Constantino). A Japanese officer stepped out of the small police station called *kōban* on the edge of the park to impassively watch the open celebration. *We are here*, the crowd seemed to assert. It was a gathering of Filipinos by Filipinos for Filipinos in the middle of a Japanese city's downtown.⁴

I joined a couple I knew from a local Catholic church under their tent—a shady refuge from the scorching sun. Antonio Iketani was a third-generation Nikkei Filipino, or a Filipino of Japanese descent, who migrated to Japan some thirty years ago with his non-Nikkei wife.⁵ She took off her face mask to comment on the heat:⁶ “Kumusta ka ate, ang init! [How are you sis, it’s so hot!]” I quipped that it was probably hotter than Baguio, their mountainous hometown. Laughter and nods. Soon our conversation drifted to Antonio’s family. In fragments, he reminisced about his Japanese grandfather’s migration to the Philippines before the war, the marriage to his Filipina grandmother, their short-lived marital bliss before Japan’s invasion of the Philippines, his grandfather’s death after the return of the American forces, and the postwar reunion with his late grandfather’s kin in Tokushima, who helped him obtain an ancestry-based visa to Japan.

After an hour or so, I stood up to have another stroll around the park. Steps away, I ran into a Filipino acquaintance, who introduced the young man beside him as Satoshi, the son of our common Filipina friend. Satoshi, a slender lad in an aqua-blue business shirt, asked in Japanese if I was part Filipina. I shook my head and returned the same question, assuming he was mixed; I knew that his mother—a former hostess—had been married to a Japanese man. He faltered and then said, “I believed my whole life that I was *hahu* [mixed] but the other day I learned that my real father is Filipino.” An out-of-the-blue message from a strange man in the Philippines; a confession from his Filipina mother that that man was his biological father; an admission from his Japanese father that he had known all along; a newfound awe of his father, no longer dull, but gallant to have raised another man’s child as his own without a smidge of resentment. Satoshi quickly narrated all this before walking off to “learn more about [his] Filipino roots.”

Over the course of my fieldwork among the Filipino communities in Japan between 2019 and 2023,⁷ I was regularly taken aback by the prevalence of what I call *fugitive kinships*—bonds formed outside the narrow juridical definitions of family, typically without legitimate documents or state sanction, that sustain their vitality not through open defiance but by a quiet maneuvering of the existing system. Antonio’s migration to Japan on the ancestry-based visa was enabled by the kinship ties formed during the prewar period of Japan’s imperialist expansion. The material records of these ties were often lost or destroyed in the final battles of the Asia-Pacific War, which ended with the Japanese Empire’s defeat in 1945. Rather than contesting the Japanese state’s requirement for document

proof of Japanese ancestry, Antonio relied on his kin in Japan to salvage such records, thereby meeting the official demand for a lineage traceable to a proper “Japanese family.” Satoshi is one of the myriad offspring born from the intimate unions between Filipina women and Japanese men against the backdrop of Japan’s postwar economic domination in Southeast Asia since the 1970s—on paper, that is. Now he knows that his mother leveraged her marriage to a Japanese national to raise him as a mixed Japanese, thereby obscuring his “fully Filipino” roots even to himself. Despite the difference in historical circumstances across the prewar/postwar divide, both Antonio and Satoshi have experienced fugitive kinships—a plenitude of human relationalities that thrive outside, underneath, and at times in interaction with the lawful sphere of “proper family,” without necessarily challenging the order that excludes them.

Fugitive kinship arises whenever the state sanctions only a limited range of relationalities to create an aura of finiteness, cohesion, and permanence around the body politic. As such, it is not limited to transnational migrants and may also impact relatively immobile groups of people. A cursory look at Japan and the Philippines yields ample examples. The relatively well-known practice among queer couples in modern Japan where one partner adopts the other as their “son” or “daughter,” virtually the only feasible way for them to achieve legal family status on the national level in a country that has not legalized same-sex marriage (Dale 2020). The common sight of extralegal families in the Philippines, where the illegality of divorce upheld by the state and the Catholic Church forces those who cannot afford expensive annulment to remain married to their legal spouses on paper even after starting new lives with their next partners (Abalos 2017). Similar cases must abound in other parts of the world, especially among the groups of people who find themselves at a systemic disadvantage within the predominant political, ideological, and economic orders.

In its transnational iterations, fugitive kinships often emerge within the imperialist and capitalist forces that course through the globalizing world, as illustrated by the lives of Antonio and Satoshi. The political regimes that rendered the two men’s kinships fugitive seem quite different at first glance: the prewar colonial rivalry over territorial expansion between the United States and Japan, on the one hand, and the postwar economic competition over market domination between the two nations, on the other. As the Japanese historian Fujiwara Kiichi (2011, 5) argued, however, postwar Japan—defeated and occupied by the U.S.-led Allied Forces—adopted an American-style approach of “unofficial empire (*hiseishiki no teikoku*)” to its subsequent transnational projects. This

analytical emphasis on the continuity between official and unofficial imperialisms also proves critical to E. San Juan Jr. (1998, 4), a Filipino writer and activist. He insists on the historicity of the Filipino diaspora, one major driver of which is “the finesse and ferocity of the colonial violence we have suffered under U.S. white supremacist power.” Long after its official independence from the United States in 1946, the Philippines remains “a neocolonized dependency” with severe unemployment. Hence “Filipinos have to ‘sell’ themselves in the predatory globalized market” (San Juan 2009, xvi)—a trend backed by their own state that markets and brokers their labor to the world (Guevarra 2009; Rodriguez 2010). Japan has served many Filipinos as a major entryway into this global labor market since the 1980s, sometimes used merely as a steppingstone toward their ultimate dreamland called “America” or “the West.” Thus the fugitive kinships among Filipinos in Japan are a historical product of dual imperialisms in multiples senses—American and Japanese, official and unofficial, neocolonial and neoliberal.

The proliferation of fugitive kinships amid dual imperialisms brings the double-edged nature of kinship into sharp relief. As the growing body of scholarship at the intersection of anthropology and migration studies shows, kinship nurtures solidarity but also breeds exploitation (Amrith and Coe 2022; Brettel 2017; Constable 2009; Ikeuchi 2019; Lan 2006; Wang 2016). It is a safe space of inclusion as well as “a domain where hierarchies and inequalities are fixed and standardized and intimate aggressions thrive” (Andrikopoulos and Duyvendak 2020, 301). As it turns out, Filipino migrants in Japan—roughly 70 percent of whom are female⁸—have long experienced this ambivalence. Lieba Faier (2009, 137–41) pointed out that the trope of *ii oyomesan* (good bride and daughter-in-law) disciplined Filipina wives in rural Japan as “kindred subjects” who deferred to their husbands and in-laws in a way that “privileged a notion of traditional Japanese-ness.” Along similar lines, Rhacel Parreñas (2011, 179) applied the term *sexual citizens* to the Filipina women who secured long-term residency in Japan by marrying or giving birth to Japanese nationals. Such case studies show that, within the context of dual imperialisms that restrict their freedom, Filipina migrants have frequently submitted to—or at least outwardly accepted—the patriarchal and heteronormative order calibrated to reproduce the racialized body politic called “the Japanese.”

Ironically, the rigidity of family regimes can invite creative expressions of fugitive kinship instead of stifling alternative ways of becoming kin. Inflexibility means predictability and, when fused with bureaucratic formality, can amount

to a virtual announcement of when, where, and how the state will be watching—or not. This knowledge then informs the performance of kinships by some resourceful migrants who conform to the official standards of family in the presence of the state while privately engaging in potentially subversive acts of alternative kin-making, like Satoshi’s mother who raised her son with a Filipino man as a child of her Japanese husband. This combination of public conformity and private waywardness—a duality characteristic of many fugitive kinships—can erode the common distinction between the performative and ontological models of kinship formation. As Janet Carsten (2020, 321; italics original) has observed, the more traditional framework in anthropology views kinship as “a stable or conservative repository of precepts and practices” and emphasizes “*being* over doing, *origins* over attainment, the past over the future.” The more open view, in contrast, stresses *becoming* over being, *nurture* over origins, and the future over the past, underscoring “the importance of processual and performative ways of becoming kin” (Carsten 2020, 321). These two models—the ontological “kinship as being” and the performative “kinship as becoming”—coexist within most migrants’ lives. This article will show that the duality of fugitive kinship can further synthesize the ontological and the performative frameworks of kin formations. In fugitive kinship, ontology and performance can form a sticky whole.

Below, I will elaborate on the parameters and trajectories of fugitive kinship by illustrating three of its myriad manifestations: (1) salvaged kinships, or kinships once fugitive now (re)integrated into a family regime; (2) transacted kinships, or relationships performed within a family regime that may anchor other fugitive kinships; and (3) queer kinships, or ties that depart from the dominant, often state-sanctioned, expressions of gender and/or sexuality. In its transnational iterations between Japan and the Philippines, fugitive kinship arose from the confluence of imperial ambition, labor migration, and global markets in the early twentieth century, which I turn to now.

SALVAGED KINSHIP

Nikkei Filipinos between Two Empires, 1900s–2022

It was American colonialism that precipitated the first wave of large-scale Japanese migration to the Philippines. Having just seized the island territory after victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the United States initiated one of its largest infrastructure projects in the new colony in 1901: Benguet Road, which connected Manila and Baguio (Hayase 1989, 47). Many of the Japanese

laborers who arrived in the thousands in 1903 and 1904 contributed to the road's construction.⁹ On its completion in 1905, many dispersed to other parts of the island colony, beginning the first chapter of modern Japanese diaspora in the Philippines.

Tarō Antonio Lopez Iketani does not know when exactly his Japanese grandfather, Iketani Sōtarō, migrated to Baguio. As his father was born in 1940 as Sōtarō's eldest child, he surmises that he must have arrived a few years before that. All he remembers from the reminiscences of his Filipina grandmother, Maria, is that they were married and living contently with two babies by the early 1940s—the eve of the Japanese Empire's invasion of the Philippines. At the heels of the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Japanese imperial army began their offensives in the Philippines. By May 1942, they drove out the American forces and trampled the Filipino resistance army. "I shall return," prophesied General Douglas MacArthur as he fled, leaving the Filipino people with yet another—this time Asian—colonizer. Suddenly, roughly 29,000 Japanese settlers like Iketani Sōtarō found themselves under co-ethnic imperial rule in the foreign land.¹⁰

"Sabi ng lola ko, mabait ang lolo ko [My grandma said my grandpa was kind]," Antonio recounted his grandparents' life during this period in Tagalog at a café in Aichi, Japan, in 2022. "My grandma was like a princess. . . . My grandpa didn't want [her] to work . . . just relax . . . and they had a maid back then. . . . This was already the wartime, but that's the story of my grandma, that there were always eggs on the table; never ran out of eggs." Maria's recollection of material comfort during the Japanese occupation portrays a well-off and protective foreign husband. This complacency under Japanese rule, however, would cost the family dearly after the fall of Japan's short-lived reign. After only two years in October 1944, General MacArthur indeed returned to the islands, leading the American military. The embattled Japanese imperial army started drafting the local Japanese settlers—who had not come to the Philippines as soldiers—and Iketani Sōtarō was among them. Chaos ensued. All Antonio knows today is that his grandfather must have died somewhere in northern Luzon as the Japanese imperial army suffered a spectacular defeat. It was a death of no news, no body, and no funeral. Sōtarō simply perished in the tropical jungle.

On the Japanese Empire's surrender, the victorious American forces ordered all surviving Japanese to repatriate to Japan while giving their local wives and mixed offspring the ultimate choice: to stay in the Philippines and face the now skyrocketing anti-Japanese sentiment among fellow Filipinos, or to "go

back” to Japan alongside the Japanese migrants, leaving behind the only homeland they had ever known. With her Nikkei children, now three and five, Maria made a desperate attempt to reach a “big ship” (*malaking barko*) rumored to be awaiting people like them at the coastline in the aftermath of the war. But they did not make it. Among the things Maria lost to the chaos were the identity papers proving her family’s kinship to Iketani Sōtarō. This loss was shared almost uniformly among the Nikkei Filipinos, but it was a blessing in disguise for the time being. Most hid their paternal ancestry to avoid the harsh stigma of being a child of Japanese in the immediate postwar years. For instance, Yōsuke Marcos Cruz Iketani—Maria’s eldest son and Antonio’s father—was just Marcos Cruz until the late 1960s, when he felt safe enough to start introducing himself as Yōsuke Iketani.

In the mid-1970s, Yōsuke Iketani decided to write to a Japanese newspaper to find out more about his deceased Japanese father’s kin. The small ad contained the fundamentals: A child of Iketani Sōtarō, a Japanese national from Tokushima who migrated to the Philippines around 1938, is looking for his relatives in Japan. Yōsuke was luckier than most of the so-called left-behind orphans (*zanryū koji*) in the postwar Philippines. His late father’s brother, who never emigrated, came across the ad and sent an enthusiastic reply. At his uncle’s invitation, he visited Japan for the first time in 1978. The two-week stay was filled with tears and laughter. Yōsuke shared the few mementos his mother managed to keep, such as his Japanese father’s diary, and the uncle made sure his half-Filipino nephew had ready access to Japan’s family registry (*koseki*) as a son of Japanese. Kinship was thus salvaged from the ravage of the war.

In 1990, Japan introduced the long-term resident visa (*teijūsha biza*), available to the foreign nationals of Japanese descent up to the third generation. It requires the applicant to submit their Japanese ancestor’s family register (*koseki tōhon* or *joseki tōhon*) as a proof of kinship. The new visa promptly triggered the mass migration of Nikkei Brazilians, Peruvians, and Bolivians, but the same movement from the Philippines did not gain momentum until the 2000s. Unlike their counterparts in Latin America, Nikkei Filipinos suffered from the consequences of Japanese military invasion, wartime destruction, and postwar mandatory “repatriation” that attempted to expunge those with “the Japanese blood” from the Filipino soil. As a result, they could not preserve well the documents and memories pertaining to their Japanese ancestry. The Iketanis proved an exception; their Japanese kinship had already been salvaged years earlier. In August 1991, Antonio Iketani arrived at Narita International Airport on the

ancestry-based visa. He knew that Japan was his paternal grandfather's homeland, and he was excited to be there. At the same time, he came to work, save money, and send remittances back to his family. Salvaged kinship meant economic opportunity.

At the time of our interview in 2022, fifty-six-year-old Antonio had been working in Japan for thirty-one years. With his two adult children now independent in Tokyo, he seriously contemplated early retirement in his hometown. "In Japan, it's just work, work, work," Antonio sighed during one of our strolls through a mall after Sunday mass. "So it's better to retire in the Philippines." At the food court, Antonio and his wife decided to eat udon noodle topped with shrimp and pumpkin tempura. After the meal, they talked for two hours non-stop about their retirement plans, showing me on his iPhone numerous photos of the land they had bought and houses they had built with the hard-earned money from their factory labor in Japan. "Saging 'to, mangga 'to [This is banana, this is mango]," they chorused pointing at each tree in their lush garden in Baguio—the only place they called home.

This was the culmination of fugitive kinship for the time being. The Iketanis' kinship to their emigrant ancestor was first rendered fugitive by Sōtarō's death, before being obscured further by the mandatory repatriation and postwar anti-Japanese stigma. It was eventually salvaged by a fortuitous reunion with their Japanese kin in Tokushima, who never needed to run and hide like Sōtarō in wartime Luzon and maintained a firm grip on the official identity records. With the turning of the tide, what was once a curse transformed into "consanguineal capital" (Seiger 2017). The salvaged kinship allowed the Filipino descendants to return to their ancestral homeland, yes, but just as important, it enabled them to earn in yen and send remittances back to the Philippines to build a better future. Many Nikkei Filipinos are not as fortunate as the Iketanis, however. To this day, their Japanese lineages remain illegible and illegitimate to the Japanese state due to the lack of proper papers.

In 2023, there were 59,044 Filipinos on the ancestry-based long-term-resident visa in Japan.¹¹ But it is difficult to determine how many of them are people like Antonio, descendants of prewar and wartime Japanese emigrants called "old Nikkeis" (*kyū nikkeijin*).¹² As far as the official statistics on visa issuance go, they are indistinguishable from the other major segment of this population called "new Nikkeis" (*shin nikkeijin*), the offspring of postwar Japanese-Filipino unions born primarily since the 1980s. Although the new Nikkeis were born in peacetime, many still face the issue of fugitive kinship like the old Nikkeis. To explain

why, I must now bring in the figure of the Filipina entertainer amid Japan's post-war economic prosperity.

Filipina Entertainers and Their Offspring, 1980s–2022

It was 1994, and Aileen Gonzalez was on the run. She was a tangle of raw emotions—nervous, guilty, and excited. She had never done anything like this, having always been a responsible role model as the eldest of eight siblings. Yet here she was, less than a year after arriving in Japan, running away from her employer in Fukuoka for a better-paying gig in Chiba, officially becoming a fugitive from the Japanese state. As much as Aileen's heart ached with guilt, running away paid off, even if it made her an illegal overstayer of the entertainer visa (*kōgyō biza*). At the hot spring inn in Fukuoka, she made only 50,000 yen per month, or roughly \$500 USD. As a hostess at Club Paradise in Chiba, where she flirted with Japanese customers while singing karaoke and mixing their drinks, she could make 10,000 yen every night, which added up to around \$3,000 USD a month. Her first paycheck from the club bought her family in the Philippines an electric tricycle, so they could start a taxi business. Next, she bought her mother a convenience store to manage, followed by cash remittances to send her seven siblings all the way up to college. Soon, an even better job offer came from Nagoya. She ran away again—the only way she knew to exert some agency against a legal system that restricted her freedom (Faier 2008).

Little did she know that in Nagoya she would meet her husband, a Japanese customer who one night walked serendipitously through the door of Club Glamour. Mr. Matsumoto fell hard for Aileen, a petite Filipina of stunning beauty twelve years his junior. Every evening, Aileen recounted, he would take her out for a nice meal before her shift in addition to showering her with many gifts. Despite her reluctance, he continued to woo her for more than six months until she slowly lowered her guard. Thankfully, he did not hesitate when she divulged her overstayer status. He quickly married her, hired a lawyer, and got her a spousal visa that eventually turned into a permanent resident visa. Aileen Gonzales on the run became Aileen Matsumoto with legal papers. When I met her in 2022, the couple had been married for twenty-four years, and Aileen at fifty-four was a grandmother to two.

In many ways, Aileen represents the waves of Filipina women who entered Japan between the mid-1980s and 2005, the year when the Japanese government restricted the issuance of entertainer visas. First, the majority of Filipina entertainers-turned-residents migrated to Japan during the peak years between the

1990s and 2004. As a result, the largest age group of Filipina women in Japan today, to which Aileen belongs, is between fifty and fifty-four years.¹³ Second, those on the entertainer visa who settled in Japan usually did so in much the same way as Aileen, by marrying Japanese customers and/or giving birth to Japanese citizens. Third, although her life in Japan had been limited by “indentured mobility” (Parreñas 2011), which impelled her to run away from restrictive contracts, she presented herself as a proud woman with the agency to make her own decisions, not as a powerless victim who fell prey to the nightlife industry. Like many other Filipinas who chose similar paths, she feels especially proud that she has provided for her family through hard work and sacrifice. Today, the Filipina women who initially came as entertainers and their offspring exert a strong influence within the Filipino community in Japan (Suzuki 2007).

Not all have managed to lead a life as stable as that of Aileen and her offspring, however. Many entertainer migrants had no option but to return to the Philippines, be deported, or live as runaways far longer than they would have liked when the kinship ties the state deemed appropriate failed to materialize. As a result, countless Japanese Filipino children born out of wedlock have struggled to gain paternity recognition, access to the *koseki* family registry, and/or the transnational mobility they covet. The story of Yolanda, who belongs to the generation of Aileen’s children, is pertinent here.

I met Yolanda Taniguchi at a caregiver training school in Nagoya. Petite, with a round face and rounder glasses, she looked younger than her twenty-seven years. Every Tuesday morning, she trudged into the classroom from a factory an hour away, where she worked a night shift. One day, a substitute teacher unaware of her job commented on the fat two-liter bottle of Coke on Yolanda’s desk. “Nemui kara [Because I’m sleepy],” she responded demurely in halting Japanese. Although Yolanda was born in Japan in 1996 to a Filipina mother and a Japanese father who had met at a pub, she could speak only basic Japanese at the time. She grew up in Las Piñas from age two onward, after her mother discovered that her father was still married to his Japanese wife and unable to marry her as he had promised with sugary words. Despite her initial fury, Yolanda’s mother kept seeing him whenever the man showed up on her doorstep. “I grew up in a broken family,” Yolanda said bitterly during our conversation at a coffee shop one day. But when she turned thirteen, her Japanese father proposed something totally unexpected: legally marrying her Filipina mother. He had finally divorced his Japanese wife. Now that he was willing to give her paternity recognition and record her in his *koseki* register, Yolanda qualified for both the

long-term resident visa and even Japanese nationality. At the age of twenty in 2016, she migrated to Japan—the strange land of her birth—to work and build a better future, retracing the path her mother had taken twenty-six years earlier. Thus it was her Japanese father—about whom she still spoke sourly in 2022—who rescued her Japanese kinship from obscurity and granted her the gift of transnational mobility.

But for thirteen years, Yolanda's kinship to her Japanese father had remained fugitive, like that of many Japanese Filipino children (known as JFCs) growing up fatherless in the Philippines after their mothers returned or were deported from Japan. According to [Itō Rieko \(1998\)](#) of the non-governmental organization JFC Support Network, many JFCs seek help to look for their fathers, ask for paternity recognition, request child support, obtain Japanese visas, and/or acquire Japanese nationality. In some cases, the located fathers refuse to acknowledge their paternity even in the face of glaring evidence for fear of offending their Japanese wives and families—who might be blissfully ignorant—or to dodge the potential child support and other financial requests.

If the old Nikkei have faced fugitive kinship due to the imperial geopolitics that once pitted Japan against the United States, the new Nikkei suffer from fugitive kinships under the patriarchal order amplified by Japan's economic might. Contrary to the pervasive discourse in Japan that the 1945 defeat precipitated an absolute prewar/postwar rupture in history, the intimate relations between Japan and the Philippines expose the continuity of unequal power relations between the two nations. It is merely that the official imperialism of territorial expansion has been replaced by the unofficial imperialism of economic domination, with patriarchy as the consistent undertone.

Indeed, this historical continuity between the two imperialisms has been mediated by a potent mechanism that has long controlled citizenship and mobility in modern Japan: *koseki*, or family registry, which records the marriages, divorces, births, deaths, and other family matters of every Japanese household. Existing in its modern form since 1871 to the present, Japan's *koseki* system has served varying political functions throughout the nation's imperial, colonial, and postwar periods. Despite the criticisms of its patriarchal and heteronormative nature, it continues to function today as an essential prerequisite for nationality, so much so that the citizenship principle in Japan may well be termed *jus koseki*, “an ordering principle where a larger social order emanates from a generally accepted administrative micro-level ordering of the population into administrative household units” ([Krogness 2014](#), 161). Under *jus koseki*, “the state allows the

household to be a *de facto* gateway to registered citizenship” (Krogness 2014, 152). Consequently, those whose parents failed to register them in *koseki* suffer virtual statelessness; they cannot own bank accounts, legally marry, receive inheritance, access national health insurance, or obtain Japanese passports, because all such activities require the submission of the *koseki* registers that they lack.¹⁴ Indeed, the current system only grants nationality to those who are *already* registered in *koseki*, as opposed to entering those confirmed as Japanese nationals into the *koseki* registry. Thus *koseki* is the sine qua non of Japanese nationality (Endō 2013).

As the backbone of the family regime in modern Japan, *jus koseki* also extends to transnational migrants such as Aileen and Yolanda, who obtained their visas by way of kinship recognition. Such migrants must rely on their Japanese kin—oftentimes male—to access *koseki* registers and legitimize their fugitive kinships in the state’s eye. Because the state virtually relegates the administration of citizenship to the intimate micropolitics of each family, many transnational migrants must seek the goodwill of their Japanese kin to reach their goals. Antonio had to rely on his Japanese granduncle to obtain the document proof of his ancestry, as did Yolanda on her Japanese father. Thus, salvaged kinships can be broadly defined as relationships once unsanctioned by the state that have achieved legal legitimacy by being subjected to the intimate discipline of the family regime.

Ironically, the strict requirement for official kinship records grants some migrants a space for creative maneuver. If *koseki* is sacrosanct in kinship recognition, they will find a way to buy it; if kinship to Japanese is essential, they will find a way to fake it; if heterosexual union is necessary, they will find a way to perform it.

TRANSACTIONED KINSHIP: Filipina Entertainers and Their Japanese Husbands

Gina Rodriguez arrived in Japan as an entertainer in 1997, tired of her Filipino husband who would gamble away his meager income and determined to build a better future for their three little sons. Soon she eased into the typical migratory rhythm of popular entertainers on the six-month renewable visa: “six months Japan, one month Pinas, six months work, one month rest, repeat.” The money she earned as a frequent “Number One”—the most popular hostess at a club—granted her not only material wealth but also personal freedom. On top of several business ventures such as tricycle taxis for her family in the

Philippines, Gina could finally afford a lawyer to obtain an expensive annulment to legally separate from her husband. In 2002, she made her last trip to Japan as an entertainer and returned to her hometown Iligan City, Mindanao.

Good times never last, however. Bit by bit, the financial foundation that seemed rock solid started eroding, in no small part due to her own bad habit of betting on cockfighting (*sabong*). By 2008, she had to admit that she needed to emigrate again to earn more money. But Japan had already restricted the issuance of entertainer visas in 2005. So, when she heard about a new program to work in Japan as a caregiver, she jumped at the opportunity. After extensive training in Manila, she set foot in Japan again as a participant in the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement that sent Filipino nurses and caregivers to the country. Ever resourceful, Gina worked as a caregiver by day and secretly worked as a hostess again at night—the latter of which the terms of her visa prohibited. Time flew by. The expiration of her three-year visa came into sight, but she was nowhere near reaching her financial goal. She panicked, contacted a Japanese broker she knew from her entertainer days, and spilled all her worries. He had a simple response: “He decided for me: ‘Run away already.’ So I ran away [*Siya nag-decide, mō nigete. Dakara ako nigetano*].”

In hiding, Gina moved from one unfamiliar house to another, sometimes huddling with a dozen other Filipina runaways. She knew only one way out of this life in constant fear, something she had witnessed not infrequently as a hostess: imitation marriage (Parreñas 2011, 200–213). The same broker who floated the idea of running away gave her the contact of a Japanese man who was willing to provide the service in exchange for money. So in 2012, unbeknown to her family, Gina took the strange man’s surname and became Gina Suzuki. To her new boyfriend in the Philippines, she lied that she could not marry him because her visa in Japan was for single mothers. The kinship she considered real—her Filipino boyfriend—turned into a secret she must guard from the Japanese state. The true nature of her kinship to Suzuki-san, the Japanese man she barely knew, had to remain hidden as well.

After five years, Gina applied for permanent residency, which was promptly approved. Delighted, she immediately filed for divorce from Suzuki-san—which proved a mistake. The local immigration agency became suspicious of the timing and summoned both separately for a cross-examination interview. In her lively retelling in a mixture of Japanese, Tagalog, and English in 2022, the interview went like this: “[Our lives were] totally separate! So I didn’t know what color his bicycle was. ‘I’m sorry, I’m colorblind. In the past he had a different bike, so it

might have changed, too,' I said [to the immigration officers]. Later Suzuki-san told me, 'Right, right, it changed. It used to be white but now it's black, it changed.' Good relief!" Gina guffawed—she was not colorblind.

Her wit seemed to have done the trick, since her permanent residency was not revoked in the end. But just to make sure, she remarried Suzuki-san and stayed that way for a few more years until all her Filipino children moved to Japan with him as the guarantor. Then they divorced for good. In 2022, she remembered Suzuki-san fondly as a rare Japanese who was willing to go through all these troubles as long as she kept him content with allowances for *pachinko* gamble. She had no idea about his whereabouts, but hoped he was doing fine. All that was left of Suzuki-san was his last name, which she still used in her day-to-day life to assert her belonging in Japanese society, and her entire Filipino family securely in Japan living a comfortable, if not affluent, life.

Gina's story demonstrates that the rigidity of bureaucracy paradoxically opens up room for maneuver. When the state clearly lays out the qualifications for legally recognizable kinships, such information can end up serving as accessible guidelines for resourceful migrants and brokers who wish to game the system. She played well by the rules; her husband was male, Japanese, and registered in the nation's family registry, which perfectly aligned with the patriarchal order, heteronormativity, and traditional Japaneseness perpetuated by the nation's family regime. The legal status she procured through grit enabled her to take better care of her real kin, although she now had to hide some of them from the Japanese state. Thus transacted kinship can be defined as a usually temporary relational anchor within the legal realm whose quid pro quo nature and capacity to facilitate other fugitive kinships must be hidden from the state.

Despite Gina's vague gratitude toward Suzuki-san, their relationship remained business-like until the end. For other Filipina migrants, however, imitation marriage created unexpected possibilities for human relationality, blurring the line between fake and real.

QUEER KINSHIP: Same-Sex Relationships and Platonic Companionships

I met Jocelyn Tominaga, a fifty-five-year-old Filipina from Davao, Mindanao, for the first time in 2022 at a Catholic church in Aichi with a large Filipino congregation. Petit in frame and bubbly in spirit, she laughed boisterously in the quiet hallway, only to be shushed by other Filipino congregants who knew the father was having a meeting. Looking at her button-up shirt tucked into baggy

pants, short hair spiked up in gel, and lack of facial makeup, I thought to myself that she looked like a “tomboy,” a term Filipinos use to refer to a lesbian who assumes a stereotypically masculine role. So I was taken aback when she nonchalantly mentioned her spouse (*ang asawa ko*), for whom she used the English pronoun “he” as the group conversed in Taglish. I thought my first impression was just wrong until Jocelyn and I met for a long lunch a few months later.

Raised in a poor family with six other siblings, she managed to go to college by cobbling together various aids and scholarships, but she remained underemployed even after graduation. Having heard the stories of abuse against OFWs (Overseas Filipino Workers), she wanted to stay put in her own country. But her fate changed forever one day when she agreed to accompany her then girlfriend to an audition in Manila for the entertainer visa. A Japanese broker recruited her on the spot, despite the absence of an application form and her boyish looks. “I guess I was still pretty,” she chuckled. Her girlfriend, ironically, decided against going to Japan in the end, partly because her family opposed their relationship. So in 1995, she came to Japan alone as an entertainer and started working as a hostess. The separation broke her heart but, in retrospect, it was a blessing in disguise. Three months after her arrival, she met the love of her life—a fellow Filipina entertainer—and started dating her seriously. Over the next few years, they worked as hostesses in various Japanese cities, renewing their entertainer visas in the Philippines every six months.

In the summer of 1998, Jocelyn and her girlfriend were back in Japan again after a month in the Philippines. This time, they were sent to a club in Sendai. They assumed the usual work routine: sitting next to male customers, fixing them drinks, singing karaoke songs, and entertaining them with flirtatious talks. The new club, however, told them that they needed to striptease *at least*. When they protested that this was not what the broker had told them, the manager simply declared that they had three days to practice. They felt they had no option but to run away. A Japanese customer Jocelyn knew from one of her previous hostessing stints—Tominaga-san—agreed to come all the way to Sendai on short notice to take them to Nagoya. So only three days after their arrival in Japan, they were on the run, huddled together on *shinkansen* seats in a mixture of fear and relief.

Jocelyn and her girlfriend lived together near Nagoya and worked in different Filipino pubs for several years, fearing arrest and deportation. Soon, living in constant terror became too much. Tominaga-san agreed to marry Jocelyn; her girlfriend found another willing Japanese customer. “And when we went to the

immigration office, my girlfriend was there, too! We went there on the same day, with different men! Funny!” Jocelyn laughed. After the interview, she said bye to Tominaga-san and went straight home to her girlfriend. The apartment he rented for their conjugal life sat empty “like a garage.” The immigration officers became suspicious. They started harassing her with calls and visits, interrogating why she rarely went home, to which she invariably responded that she slept over at her female friend’s home because her husband worked night shifts. “And that was true! [*Totoo iyan eh!*]” Jocelyn exclaimed. But she also understood that her queer relationship with her lover now became a fugitive kinship, something that must remain hidden from the authorities. After some close calls, a spousal visa came through, which eventually turned into a permanent resident visa. All the while, Jocelyn continued to live in the same-sex relationship until 2007, when they broke up due to her girlfriend’s drug issues. Heartbroken, Jocelyn started living with Tominaga-san, who quietly accepted her without any questions. Throughout the years, he never confronted her about her sexual orientation, although she was sure he had heard through the grapevine that she was a lesbian. At the time of our interview in 2022, Jocelyn and Tominaga-san had been married for twenty-one years.

“Why do you stay married to Tominaga-san?” I asked, remembering Jocelyn’s declaration earlier that the marriage was not for love but for a visa. “You can divorce now if you want.”

“Because I don’t want to [*kasi ayaw ko eh*],” Jocelyn answered without missing a beat and continued:

It’s my choice to stay married to him. He gave me life here in Japan with his [spousal] visa I have real respect for him, and yeah, of course, a lot of gratitude, yes. The visa he gave me, I cannot repay with money, I cannot pay him back. No visa, no me, no life, no land [in the Philippines] . . . I’m truly thankful because there are so few Japanese men like him, maybe only a handful in a thousand! Us, no sex, no intimacy, his bed there, my bed here. . . . Sometimes I look up to the sky and I ask: Do I deserve this? I’m happy thanks to what he did for me.

I nodded, taking in the sudden gush of emotions.

“Do you know how Tominaga-san feels? Why did he stay married to you all these years?”

“No clue [*Ewan ko*],” Jocelyn shrugged. “I wonder myself, but I never confronted him. I guess I’m scared. Probably in the beginning, he liked me, and then he pitied me. But after that . . . no idea. I just know that our life together now . . . it’s fine. It’s good.”

The fake marriage she entered into to protect her life in Japan with her long-term girlfriend transformed into something unexpected over the years. It would be difficult to label the current relationship between Jocelyn and Tomi-naga-san. Friendship? Fellowship? Even Jocelyn herself struggled to categorize it, much less name it. At minimum, it was a kind of companionship founded on mutual recognition and long-lasting familiarity, with an overwhelming sense of gratitude on Jocelyn’s part. Over the years, Tominaga-san changed from a generic man who could give her a visa to a special person whom she was unwilling to leave. The real queer kinship to her girlfriend ended after twelve years; the fake hetero kinship that initially functioned as a mere cover outlasted it. The line between real and fake thus became blurred.

In a sense, Jocelyn’s relationship to Tominaga-san also turned queer, as it troubles the expectation for marital sexuality that lies at the core of reproductive kinship, the institution of marriage, and—in the context of Japan—*jus koseki*.¹⁵ Instead of functioning as a procreative unit of nation-building, their platonic relationship entered an unlabeled territory of queerness, that is, the “alternative relationalities, intimacies, and solidarities forged outside of state-sanctioned heterosexuality and its ideological enforcement through familial discipline” (Ponce 2012, 25). Indeed, the asexuality of their now decades-long bond gestures toward a fertile terrain of “alternative modes of being with others” (Przybylo and Cooper 2014, 311)—modes mediated not by sex or romance but by queer-platonic mutuality. Here, asexual relationality is defined no longer by its lack of sex but rather by its expansive potential for kin-making (Kenney 2020; Przybylo 2011). It is no wonder that the line between fake and real marriages, often marked by sexual intimacy, becomes fuzzy in her story. For her, fake transformed into some kind of real.

Martin Manalansan (2006) pointed out that the literature on the feminization of migration—which often features Filipina migrants—has unwittingly naturalized heteronormativity by centering the figure of the wife and mother. As it turns out, Jocelyn’s queer kinships to her girlfriend and husband decenter not only heteronormativity but also marital sexuality, thus defying the expectation for reproductive kinship that serves as the handmaiden of nation-building. In the eye of the state, she remained another Filipina woman who married a Japanese

man to settle in Japan, an amenable subject of the family regime. Privately, however, she has forged queer kinships out of a series of wayward acts that can potentially elude—if only temporarily—the reach of familial discipline.

CONCLUSION

In November 2022, Gina Suzuki—who acquired permanent residency in Japan through the transacted marriage with a Japanese man named Suzuki-san—invited me to the birthday party of her granddaughter, Mari, who was turning four. As soon as I arrived at her home in an old *danchi* (subsidized housing complex), I was enveloped in the mouthwatering smell of sizzling pork wafting from the small kitchen. A tall man, Gina's eldest son and Mari's father, greeted me as he flipped pork legs. As I waited for the rest of Gina's family to arrive, I struck up a conversation with the two women sitting across from me, who turned out to be Mari's mother and maternal grandmother. The older woman stressed that she was Nikkei, not an entertainer. I nodded, wondering if she presumed me to be another Japanese with negative stereotypes about Filipina entertainers. Gina's family and relatives trickled in. The last to arrive was her youngest son, a willowy man in his twenties in a tight Lacoste T-shirt and skinny jeans, whom Gina once jokingly called a *kalahating babae* (half woman). Mari in a pink princess dress shrieked with joy and ran straight into the open arms of her favorite gay uncle. After he and his boyfriend greeted everyone in a mixture of English and Tagalog, they both sat down in front of the small mountain of gifts and started unwrapping them with Mari. "Now what is this? This one's not that big, is it? Let's open it, yeah?" "Yubiwa da, kawai! [It's a ring, so cute!]" The girl, born and raised in Japan, exclaimed in Japanese. The entire apartment full of kin watched over her with smiles.

Slowly, the faint discomfort I felt as a non-kin guest morphed into quiet awe. I was witnessing an unlikely convergence of multiple fugitive kinships shaped by the transnational history of Japan and the Philippines—a moment of small culmination for all the aspirations that must have filled Mari's forebearers as they set out on their migratory journeys to reach a better future for themselves and their kin. Mari's mother grew up in Japan as the daughter of a Nikkei Filipina migrant, who obtained her ancestry-based visa by salvaging the legitimate *koseki* record of her Japanese ancestor who emigrated to the Philippines in the past century. Mari's father was brought to Japan as a dependent of a Filipina permanent resident, a legal status Gina achieved through the transacted kinship with a Japanese man named Suzuki-san. Mari's uncle—who was clearly accepted

as he was by his extended kin—doted on the little girl with his boyfriend by his side. Taken together, the birthday party was made possible by salvaged, transacted, and queer relationalities, making Mari a living meeting point of multiple fugitive kinships.

No one in Gina's extended family has openly challenged the dominant family regime in Japan, which has regulated the lives of so many transnational migrants like themselves. Instead, they have formed various fugitive kinships—bonds fostered while skirting or maneuvering the legal system that only sometimes result in official state sanction. Although a small number of Filipino migrants have defiantly sued the Japanese state to assert their legal rights,¹⁶ such individuals are in the minority, as most working-class migrants, including Gina's family, understandably resort to ordinary resilience in their busy day-to-day lives.

This article shed light on this quiet majority, or the migrants who may outwardly accept the status quo while inwardly embracing subversive emotions and alternative relations. Antonio Iketani, Yolanda Taniguchi, and Mari's maternal grandmother all secured their right to transnational mobility by way of salvaged kinships—the once-obscure relationships without official records that have successfully earned legal recognition by being subjected to the disciplinary power of the family regime. Gina Suzuki successfully transferred and rebuilt her kin network in Japan by capitalizing on her marriage to Suzuki-san, which was a transacted kinship—a lawful relationship secured in return for some kind of payment, often for the purpose of facilitating other fugitive kinships. Jocelyn Tominaga and Gina's youngest son have found themselves in fulfilling queer relationships—a type of fugitive kinship in the context of Japan, where heteronormativity and marital sexuality constitute the legal and ideological standards. Publicly, all the fugitive kinships listed above conform to or at least fall short of disrupting the dominant family regime. Privately, however, they often simmer with wayward sentiments, alternative relationalities, and erratic movements—the kind of unruliness the state bureaucracy suppresses in its attempt to control the national polity.

This duality of fugitive kinship—that is, the bifurcation between public acceptance and private subversion—reinforces the *institutional performativity* of family. As S. P. F. Dale (2020, 149) wrote regarding same-sex unions in Japan, the heteronormative patriarchy perpetuated by the *koseki* system creates an environment where “the individual is complying with (or feels compelled to comply with) social norms in order to gain social recognition and to ‘pass’ as a good

citizen who abides by social expectations. . . . Institutional performativity functions through this psychic regulation of individual lives and is further reinforced when relationships comply with it in legal form, though not necessarily in actual shape.” Fueled by the creative dissonance between “legal form” and “actual shape,” fugitive kinships can “serve to maintain the illusion of the hegemonic idea of the family, although in reality they also serve to undermine it” (Dale 2020, 149). Such subversive conformity inevitably leads to ambiguity, which different parties capitalize on for different purposes. As this article has demonstrated, many migrants draw on this gray zone to quietly and cleverly resist Japan’s restrictive immigration regime.

At the same time, the duality of fugitive kinship also benefits the state by allowing it to enjoy more leeway for two-faced engagements with those on the margins of citizenship. In any given political regime, there will be individuals who cannot or will not confine their lives within the realm of lawful kinships. By demanding public conformity from such people in legal twilight zones without exerting utter control over private practice, the state can continue to harness their labor power and reproductive vitality without compromising the performative cohesion of its polity. In this sense, fugitive kinships invigorate rather than destabilize the national body politic, even as the state endeavors to pathologize and obscure their existence. Whether it be foreign migrants, queer persons, or any other group of people suffering from social precarity because they lack “proper” papers, statecraft effectively corners them into quiet—not defiant—subversive acts to pragmatically exploit their capacities while formally disavowing their belonging in the nation.

The workings of fugitive kinship fuse the ontological and performative models of kin formation, especially in the process of nation-making. In modern Japan, where nationality and citizenship are granted primarily as a right of blood, an array of legal and ideological apparatuses have construed “Japanese blood” as a powerful ontological substance that inheres in the racialized body politic called *minzoku* (Robertson 2012, 99). The nation’s *koseki* regime annexes foreign migrants to this ontological unity by mandating official kinship ties to legally defined “Japanese families”—an attempt to maintain an image of ethno-national kinship in an era of intensifying transnational mobility. Some migrants meet this mandate by way of Japanese ancestry, like Antonio Iketani and Yolanda Taniguchi, while others find the way through marriage to Japanese citizens, like Gina Suzuki and Jocelyn Tominaga. Yet the aforementioned duality of fugitive kinship complicates the essentialist notion of Japaneseness. While most migrants publicly

conform to the family regime that reproduces the national polity as an ontological continuity, their private engagements in fugitive kinships—often errant, wayward, and transitory—affirm the performative aspects of kin formation. Indeed, fugitive kinship points to the performativity of ontology, entangling the state of being kin and the process of becoming kin into a hybrid whole.

Fugitive kinship matters because it captures messy human reality and, in the context of contemporary Japan, counters the dominant discourse of relationless society (*muen shakai*) that portrays the people as isolated, alone, and lonely (Allison 2013; Ozawa-de Silva 2021). Granted, conventional relations legible to the state—marriages, childbirths, multigenerational co-residence, and the like—may well be on the decline. But this trend says little about the formations of fugitive kinships, which may be proliferating and deepening as we speak, unbeknown to the authorities. After all, recorded kinships constitute only a tiny island in the vast ocean of ever-shifting relationalities, where most currents will always remain fugitive.

ABSTRACT

Like countless other immigrants in the Global North, many Filipinos in Japan have relied on kinship ties to citizens—descent and marriage—to become lawful residents. The hinging of mobility on family ties, however, has yielded a messy by-product: fugitive kinships—bonds formed outside the narrow juridical definitions of family, typically without legitimate documents or state sanction, that sustain their vitality not by open defiance of the exclusionary rules but by a quiet maneuver of the system in place. By tracing the transnational history of Japan and the Philippines that seeps out of the ethnographic portraits of contemporary migrants, this article elucidates three manifestations of fugitive kinship: salvaged kinship of Japanese Filipinos, transacted kinship between Japanese men and Filipina women, and queer kinship formed in gay, lesbian, and asexual relationships. In fugitive kinship, being and becoming—the two main modes of analyzing kin formation in anthropology—form a sticky whole. [diaspora; migration; kinship; queer; Japan; the Philippines]

要旨

国民との婚姻・血縁等の家族関係に基づいたビザは、資本先進国への移住民が技能レベルに関わらず正規のルートで定住できる数少ない手段であり、在日フィリピン人の間でもこの方法で定住者となった人々が多い。しかし在留資格が法的に証明可能な家族関係の有無に左右される時、移住民はしばしば理想と現実の隔たりに戸惑い、その結果様々な関係性が公の領域から排除され不可視化されることとなる。本論文では法的記録や証明書類

の提出が困難で正式な「家族」の基準を満たさないとされる一連の関係性を「fugitive kinship (不可視化された把握し難い関係性)」として捉え、このような法の外に置かれた家族関係を生きる人々がシステムに真っ向から立ち向かうのではなく規制の間隙を縫って立ち回ることのできるように生活の基盤を築いてきたのかを考察する。焦点となるのは日系フィリピン人の「回復された血縁関係 (salvaged kinship)」、フィリピン人女性と日本人男性の間の「取引された婚姻関係 (transacted kinship)」、そしてゲイ・レズビアン・アセクシュアルカップルの「クィアな家族関係 (queer kinship)」であり、この三つの関係性を通してグローバルな日本における正式・非正式な「家族」の射程を分析するのが狙いである。[移民;ディアスポラ;家族関係;クィア;日本;フィリピン]

NOTES

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1. Taglish refers to a mixture of English and Filipino used by many Filipinos.
2. As of June 2023, the Aichi Prefecture had 43,228 Filipino nationals, followed by 35,365 in Tokyo, and 25,385 in Kanagawa. These figures are based on the statistical data compiled by the Immigration Services Agency of the Japanese government in 2023 and accessible on the Portal Site of Official Statistics of Japan called “e-Stat.” See Table 23-06-03 titled “Shikuchōson betsu Kokuseki, Chiiki betsu Zairyū Gaikokujin [Foreigners in Japan by Nationality, Region, and Municipality]” on the linked page: <https://www.e-stat.go.jp/stat-search/files?page=1&layout=datalist&toukei=00250012&tstat=000001018034&cycle=1&year=20230&month=12040606&tclass1=000001060399&tclass2val=0>
3. *Inasal* is a Filipino-style grilled chicken. *Adobo* is meat with vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, and other ingredients. *Biko* is sticky rice cake with coconut milk and brown sugar.
4. Although I am aware of the term *Filipinx* and support its use in many contexts, in this article I choose to use *Filipino* and *Filipina* because those are the terms used by the people whom I write about. They also used the Tagalog equivalents such as *Pilipino*, *Pilipina*, *Pinoy*, *Pinay*.
5. All the names are pseudonyms. Filipino and American names appear in the order of given name and family name while Japanese names are in the order of family name and given name, following the conventions of these countries. Japanese persons often appear as their family names plus the suffix *-san*, which is a common way to address people.
6. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, most still wore facemasks in public in Japan in 2022, even in summer heat.
7. The fieldwork consisted of three stays in Japan: the summer of 2019, April to December 2022, and the summer of 2023. The research locations were primarily in Aichi and Tokyo. I conducted the research in a mixture of Tagalog, English, and Japanese, the three languages most long-term Filipino residents in Japan freely mixed. At the

- time, my Tagalog language ability was advanced; it had been certified by ACTFL as “Advanced Low” in August 2021. I am also a native speaker of Japanese, with professional proficiency in English.
8. In June 2023, of the 309,943 Filipino nationals registered in Japan, 210,224 were women and 99,719 men.” See Table 23-06-02 titled “Kokuseki, Chiiki Betsu Nenrei (5 sai Kaikyū), Seibetsu Zairyū Gaikokujin [Foreigners in Japan by Nationality, Area, Age (by 5 Years), and Sex]” on the linked page in footnote 2.
 9. In 1903, the number of Japanese migrants to the Philippines jumped to 2,215, from 77 in the previous year, and remained on the same level at 2,923 in 1904 before dropping to 427 in 1905 (Hayase 1989, 32).
 10. In 1940, the recorded number of Japanese in the Philippines was 28,731 (Hayase 2024, 7)
 11. See Table 23-06-02 titled “Kokuseki, Chiiki Betsu Nenrei (5 sai Kaikyū), Seibetsu Zairyū Gaikokujin [Foreigners in Japan by Nationality, Area, Age (by 5 Years), and Sex]” on the linked page in footnote 2.
 12. Many *teijasha* visa holders become permanent residents as soon as they can, so the number does not reflect the entire Nikkei Filipino population in Japan.
 13. See Table 23-06-02 titled “Kokuseki, Chiiki Betsu Nenrei (5 sai Kaikyū), Seibetsu Zairyū Gaikokujin [Foreigners in Japan by Nationality, Area, Age (by 5 Years), and Sex]” on the linked page in footnote 2.
 14. Japan has estimated 10,000 *mukosekiji*, or “children with no family registers” (Chapman 2019, 235).
 15. In postwar Japan, heteronormative marriage has long served as a unit of reproduction in ideology and practice, which explains the extremely low percentage of children born out of wedlock. The cultural emphasis on reproductive kinship inversely means that, after having children, many couples cease to have sexual intimacy, a pattern socially accepted as more or less normal (Alexy 2020, 48; Moriki 2017). Although the cultural norms have been diversifying since the 2000s, marital sexuality remains a general expectation, especially for younger couples without children.
 16. In the mid-2000s, a group of unmarried Filipina mothers and their children who received paternity recognition after birth sued the Japanese state to redress the JFC’s denied Japanese nationality. Given their victory in court, the Nationality Law was amended again in 2008 to include post-birth paternal recognition (*seigo ninchi*) as a legitimate means to obtain Japanese nationality (Suzuki 2010).

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