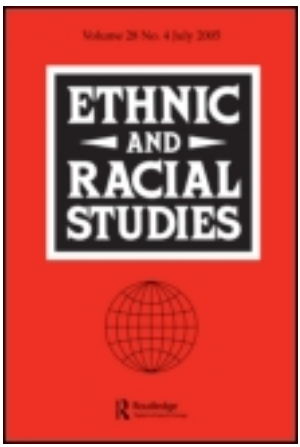

Ethnic and Racial Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rers20

Nepalese labour migration to Japan: from global warriors to global workers

Keiko Yamanaka

Available online: 07 Dec 2010

To cite this article: Keiko Yamanaka (2000): Nepalese labour migration to Japan: from global warriors to global workers, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 23:1, 62-93

To link to this article: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/014198700329132

Nepalese labour migration to Japan: from global warriors to global workers

Keiko Yamanaka

Abstract

This study of undocumented immigrant Nepalese workers in Japan analyses their ethnic history, demographics, migration strategies and work experiences. The majority belong to ethnic groups which the British designated 'martial races', whose tradition of foreign service as 'Gurkha' soldiers in the British and Indian Armies produced a culture of emigration and a remittance economy in rural Nepal. As a result, the present generation has been socialized to be familiar with international migration as an economic option, and has access to networks for its accomplishment. Japan's industrial structure and relative affluence have generated chronic shortages of workers to fill jobs shunned by Japanese in manufacturing and construction industries. This has elevated wages to levels which attract economically distressed foreign migrants such as those from Nepal. Despite the isolation and discrimination which they suffer, these Nepalese find the financial rewards to be sufficient to outweigh the hardships.

Keywords: Gurkha; migration networks; Japan; immigration policy; undocumented workers; industrial structure.

Introduction

From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, no less than 200,000 unskilled immigrant workers entered the Japanese labour force illegally. The majority of them came from neighbouring Asian countries to take jobs shunned by Japanese in the then labour-short economy. Most were able to enter the country by overstaying short-term visas issued for tourists and business personnel who remained less than ninety days. In July 1990 there were an officially estimated 107,000 unauthorized visa overstayers, doubling to 216,000 by November 1991 (Cornelius 1994, p. 384). Among them were a substantial number of South Asians including Nepalese, the subject of this study.

Ethnic and Racial Studies Volume 23 Number 1 January 2000 pp. 62–93
 ISSN 0141-9870 print/ISSN 1466-4356 online

In June 1990 the Japanese government implemented a revised immigration law which retained its principle of limiting foreign labour to skilled occupations, and instituted new criminal penalties for employers found to have hired illegal foreign workers. In an effort to maintain the flow of unskilled workers while stemming the flow of unskilled 'foreigners', the same law created a long-term, unrestricted residence, visa category exclusively for foreign descendants of Japanese emigrants (*Nikkeijin*). This resulted in an influx of more than 200,000 documented *Nikkeijin* workers from Latin America, mostly from Brazil, over the next five years. The new immigration policy has created a labour force rigidly stratified by such collective characteristics as legal status, ethnicity, nationality, gender and skill level.

In 1992 the Japanese economy entered a deep recession, which led to even tighter immigration controls and shrinking employment opportunities for foreign workers. Nevertheless, there continued to be a small but steady stream of unskilled, non-*Nikkeijin* foreign immigrants who had overstayed their temporary visas while employed in such labour-short industries as manufacturing, construction and services. By 1995 some 3,000 Nepalese were included in this overstayer population.

This study is based on 189 interviews and survey questionnaires collected from Nepalese workers in Japan and returnees in Nepal. It addresses two major questions. First, given the increasingly restrictive admission policy of the Japanese government in the early 1990s, how has this small, virtually unnoticed group from South Asia managed to continue to send unskilled migrant workers to Japan? Second, in view of increasing stratification in the Japanese labour force following the revised immigration law of 1990, under what kinds of employment conditions do undocumented Nepalese work and how do these conditions compare with those of documented *Nikkeijin* and Japanese?

In addressing the first question, this analysis reveals that the research population is made up predominantly of people of Tibeto-Burman-speaking ethnic groups in Nepal's western and eastern middle-hills – groups such as Gurung and Magar, from the west; Rai and Limbu, from the east. Men of these groups, identified by the British as 'martial races', were recruited by the British and Indian Armies as 'Gurkha' soldiers for some 180 years, serving throughout the world in times of peace and war.[1] Their earnings produced a remittance economy on which rural Nepal became increasingly dependent. In order to understand the enduring flow of Nepalese migrants to Japan it is necessary to examine the historical circumstances within which the tradition of foreign military service has created a 'culture of emigration' among these Himalayan communities which, in turn, has resulted in extensive transnational Nepalese networks in the Asia-Pacific region.

With reference to the second question to be addressed here, previous studies have found that unequal power relations between manufacturer

and subcontractor in Japanese factories leave many small-scale employers (those with fewer than thirty employees) with little choice but to rely on a labour force comprising temporary and sporadic workers such as women, the elderly and, recently, foreign migrants. This suggests that a key to understanding Nepalese employment in Japan lies in the analysis of local labour market structures that bring about chronic labour shortages among small-scale employers of unskilled labour, thereby creating employment opportunities for undocumented foreign workers. This study demonstrates that a very narrow range of industries and occupations are open to undocumented workers, but that their average wages are comparable to those of documented *Nikkeijin* and even to those of Japanese workers. These wages, reflecting the high value that Japanese small-scale employers place on undocumented workers, attract and sustain a steady inflow of undocumented foreigners, including the Nepalese, seeking employment and income levels unobtainable in their own countries.

Nepalese entry into Japan

Annual statistics on Nepalese entry into, and exit from, Japan from 1986 to 1995, are given in Table 1 (Japanese Ministry of Justice 1987–96). The annual number of entries tripled from 986 in 1986, to 2,964 in 1989, as shown in column [1]. This number dropped to 1,671 in 1990 but rose to 2,154 in 1991, after which it remained at an average of 2,200. These statistics reveal three important demographic changes accompanying the influx of the Nepalese in 1989.

First, the proportion of entrants who arrived with short-term visas permitting up to three months' stay had increased from about 70 per cent in 1986 to 83 per cent in 1989, the largest of the decade (column [2]). During the next year the percentage dropped to 65 per cent and reached its lowest point, 58 per cent, in 1995. Second, the sex ratio of Nepalese entrants had favoured males by a factor of 6 to 1 until 1988 (column [3]). This ratio reached 8 to 1 in 1989, the highest of the decade. In the following year male representation decreased sharply to 5 to 1, and by 1995 to 3.6 to 1. Third, the age distribution of male entrants indicates that those between 15 and 29 years of age had accounted for 40 per cent of the total males up to 1987 (column [4]). This proportion rose to 53 per cent in 1989, the largest of the decade. A close analysis of the age structure for Nepalese male entrants that year reveals further that from 1988 to 1989 the number of entrants nearly doubled in all five-year age brackets between 20 and 49, and tripled in the 15 to 19 bracket. In 1991 the proportion aged 15 to 29 shrank to 42 per cent and by 1995 had dropped to 27 per cent.

The large increase in 1989 was clearly a result of the large increase in working age males entering with short-term visas. In 1990, immediately

Table 1. *Nepalese entry in, and exit from, Japan: 1986–1995*

Year	Entries				Exits		Excess: entries over exits
	All [1]	% Short-term visa [2]*	Sex ratio [3]**	% of Males 15–29 Yrs [4]***	Voluntary exits [5]	Involuntary exits [6]	[7]****
1986	986	69.2	457	38.4	867	0	119
1987	1,292	69.4	595	40.4	1,089	1	202
1988	1,671	76.3	593	47.2	1,311	11	349
1989	2,964	83.0	818	52.9	2,020	37	907
1990	1,671	65.2	533	41.6	1,145	394	132
1991	2,154	66.4	492	42.3	1,127	93	934
1992	1,982	60.1	445	33.5	1,136	127	719
1993	1,837	59.4	420	28.8	1,178	209	450
1994	2,174	58.8	394	27.3	1,840	244	90
1995	2,686	58.3	355	26.7	2,025	269	392
Total	19,417	66.4	542	38.3	13,738	1,385	4,294

Source: Japanese Ministry of Justice (1987–96)
* [2] and [6] show percentages of short-term visas among all entries and exits for the year, respectively.
** [3] shows the numbers of males per 100 females each year.
*** [4] shows the proportion of males, 15–29 years of age, to the total number of male entrants each year.
**** [7]=[1]-[5]-[6].

after this influx, the Japanese Embassy in Kathmandu undertook rigorous enforcement of its restrictions on visa issuance to working age males seeking short-term visas – the category that upon entry had proved to be the most likely to overstay and work illegally.

Nepalese overstayers

The Japanese Bureau of Immigration Control [JBIC], under the Ministry of Justice, reports each year the number of unauthorized visa overstayers by country of origin. This is calculated by matching dates of individual entry and exit on entry visas. If an entrant is found not to have departed by the end of the valid period of stay, that foreigner is defined as a visa overstayer. The 1996 JBIC report lists individually eleven countries with more than 5,000 visa overstayers in Japan. The number from Nepal is less than 5,000, and is therefore lumped with other such countries in an 'other' category. The JBIC report therefore offers little assistance in determining the number of overstayers from Nepal. However, simple calculation of the annual excess of entries over exits provides an approximate number of overstayers each year. In Table 1, for example, there were 1,671 entries (column [1]) and 1,311 exits (column [5]) in 1988. The

excess of entrants over departures was therefore 349 (column [7]), excepting 11 involuntary exits (column [6]).

In 1989, when the largest number arrived, the excess grew drastically to 907, the second largest growth in the decade 1986–1995 (following 934 in 1991). In 1990 immigration control was tightened, resulting in an unprecedented 394 forced exits. Over a period of ten years from 1986 to 1995, the accumulated excess amounted to a surprising 4,294. This figure includes, for 1995, an unknown number of undocumented visa overstayers as well as 1,314 documented residents, such as students and spouses of Japanese citizens (Japan Immigration Association 1996). Subtraction of the 1,314 documented residents from the total of 4,294 excess of arrivals over departures, thus provides an estimate of approximately 3,000 undocumented Nepalese visa overstayers in Japan at the end of 1995.

Sustaining flow

According to JBIC (1996), in May 1996 there were 284,500 undocumented visa overstayers in Japan from all over the world, nearly all of whom were illegally employed. The majority came from Asia, the highest number being 51,580 Koreans, followed by 41,997 Filipinos, 41,280 Thai and 39,140 Chinese.[2] The estimated 3,000 Nepalese overstayers are therefore but a drop in the ocean, posing little threat to Japan's immigration control. It is significant, however, that despite its small size, the population of Nepalese overstayers grew rapidly in the ten years following 1986. Prior to 1989, the accumulated excess of entries over exits remained at less than 1,000, but by 1995 it had grown to 3,000.

This pattern of Nepalese immigration growth contrasts sharply with that of the 14,500 Bangladeshi and 20,000 Pakistani arrivals in 1988. Bangladesh and Pakistan had each established mutual visa exemption agreements with Japan, and therefore their nationals were able to clear immigration checkpoints without difficulty. Upon entry, many of these arrivals overstayed their visas and engaged in undocumented employment (Mahmood 1994; Morita and Sassen 1994). The Japanese government reacted immediately, cancelling the visa exemption agreements with Bangladesh and Pakistan in January 1989. As a result, annual entries dropped drastically in 1990 to 3,400 for Bangladesh and 7,100 for Pakistan and have remained at the same or even lower levels since that time. According to the JBIC report (1996), seven years later in 1996, there were 6,500 Bangladeshi and 5,500 Pakistani undocumented overstayers in Japan, a significant degree of attrition in these populations between 1988 and 1996.

Unlike their South Asian predecessors, the Nepalese have never enjoyed the privilege of visa-exempted free entry into Japan. Nevertheless, despite all government efforts to control their entry, Nepalese have

sustained a steady flow of arrivals since 1989. This suggests the critical importance of understanding migrants' strategies, particularly the role of information networks and cultural values, in enabling such enduring migration patterns over time. A migration systems approach provides a useful framework with which to understand how macro-structural forces are linked to individual migrants.

Migration systems approach

International labour migration is a response to differentials in labour and wages across national borders (Borjas 1990). Literature on regional labour migration in Asia has thus emphasized economic and demographic factors as the most important causes and effects of migration (for example, Martin, Mason and Tsay 1995; OECD 1998). The rapidly developing and integrating economy of Asia since the 1960s has resulted in growing economic disparity between a few rich countries (that is, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand) and their many poorer neighbours in East, Southeast and South Asia. Such economic circumstances largely account for the rising waves of labour migration and the rapid emergence of integrated labour markets in the region (Yamanaka, in press). Although these economic forces pertain to conditions under which migration begins, they do not address the questions why and how migrants themselves choose to migrate and select the countries to which they migrate. Nor do they question the basis for migrants' assumption that others will be able to follow and that they themselves will be able to return home and remigrate.

Operating at the micro-structural level, a migration systems approach pays major attention to participation of migrants in the process of constructing their own systems for sustaining the flow of migrants between the two countries over time (Kritz and Zlotnik 1992; Castles and Miller 1993). While driven by push-pull factors specific to a particular historical-structural context, the migrants actively mobilize individual, family and community resources, all of which are under their control and beyond the reach of outside forces. A result is rapid development of extensive social and informational networks linking migrants in the receiving country with one another and with their kinsmen in the sending country (Boyd 1989).

Another critical force determining the direction and duration of an international migration flow is that of immigration policies of the receiving government. Portes (1978, p. 10) argues that the major problems facing a labour importing country are how to find, mobilize, release, transport and utilize a disposable labour force in a labour exporting country. Although labour importing countries of the world share common levels of industrialization, demographic composition and social class systems, they differ in the ways in which these problems are

approached and solved depending on historical events and cultural heritage (Portes and Böröcz 1989). Japan is often cited as an example of a country which does not regard labour importation as a viable option for solving an increasingly acute labour shortage. The maintenance of ethnic and class homogeneity is said to be the primary reason for the country to maintain its closed door to unskilled foreigners (for example, Kritz and Zlotnik 1992, p. 11).

The above discussions regarding historical and cultural contexts of emigration in the migrants' community of origin on the one hand, and the political and social contexts of the receiving country on the other, require two sets of information: (1) Nepal's ethnic politics which cause emigration of ethnic minorities over time; and (2) Japan's immigration policies which prohibit unskilled foreigners from being employed.

Politics of ethnic diversity in Nepal

Nepal is made up of many ethnic groups each with its distinctive history, language and religion (Berreman 1963; Himal 1992; Bista 1996). The 1991 national census lists sixty ethnic and caste groups comprising Nepal's 18.5 million population (Nepalese Central Bureau of Statistics 1996). This extraordinarily diverse population is usually described according to major linguistic differences as constituting two major subpopulations: (1) the Nepalese- (Indo-Aryan) speaking caste-divided, Hindu population called, by Gurung (1996, p. 2), 'Caucasoid' or Khasa, which reportedly accounts for 52 per cent of the Nepalese population; and (2) the Tibeto-Burman-speaking, multi-ethnic, Buddhist/'animist' population which Gurung calls 'Mongoloid' or Kirant, said to make up 35.5 per cent. In addition are a number of groups not classified by language, including Muslims, Sikhs and Bengalis.

Despite this extraordinary ethnic heterogeneity, the country's economic resources and political power have been historically monopolized by upper caste Hindu élites: Brahmans and Chhetris. These two élite castes, whose combined population accounts for 29 per cent of the Nepalese population, control 'about 70 to 90 per cent of the total key political, bureaucratic, military, and police positions' (Bhattachan and Pyakuryal 1996, p. 27). As ethnic minorities lacking political clout in national politics, the 'Mongol' groups, particularly those labelled 'martial races' by the British (that is, Gurungs, Magars, Rais and Limbus), have relied for economic survival on recruitment into 'Gurkha Brigades' of the British and Indian Armies. The Newars, a Tibeto-Burman speaking group indigenous to the Kathmandu Valley, are an exception whose prosperous agriculture and trade have afforded them a power-broker position shared with Brahmans and Chhetris.

Gurkha connection in the Asia-Pacific

The historical roles played by Gurkha Brigades in preserving Britain's colonial power in South and Southeast Asia have been amply documented elsewhere (Cross 1985; English 1985; Des Chene 1991, 1993; Pahari 1991; Banskota 1994). For the past 180 years, the tradition of service in the British Army has provided many Gurkha families and communities with a steady source of cash to supplement their subsistence economies based on terrace farming and cattle herding in precipitous Himalayan pastures. Over a period of years, soldiers' remittances and retirees' pensions were sufficient to enable their families to enjoy higher living standards than families without soldiers (Hitchcock 1966; Pignède 1966; Caplan 1967; Macfarlane 1976; Blaikie, Cameron and Seddon 1980). At the national level, remittances reached 20 per cent of Nepal's yearly foreign exchange (Kaylor 1982). At the transnational level, Gurkha recruitment established Nepal as a significant contributor to the regional economy as an exporter of inexpensive, unskilled labour (Des Chene 1993, p. 77).

Massive Gurkha recruitment ended in the early 1990s when Britain severely reduced its Gurkha Brigades, following the decision to return the sovereignty of Hong Kong (where most of the Gurkhas were stationed) to China in 1997 (Pahari 1991, p. 12). In the following years 'redundant' Gurkhas were prematurely discharged before reaching their entitlement to pension. In 1991 there were slightly more than 7,400 Gurkhas serving in the British Army in Hong Kong and Brunei, accompanied by about 4,800 dependants and 150 Nepali civilian employees (Collet 1994, p. 98), the majority of whom returned to Nepal when the British Army departed from Hong Kong in July 1997. Thereafter British Gurkha Brigades were reduced to 2,000 soldiers stationed in London and 1,000 in Brunei. While small in number, the legacy of the British Gurkha continues in the Asia-Pacific region. Some 2,200 ex-Gurkha soldiers serve as the Sultan's security guards in Brunei, 1,000 Gurkha policemen are on duty in Singapore and some 600 Gurkha retirees supply top security on contract to business organizations and private homes in Hong Kong (Aryal 1997; Nepal Ex-serviceman's Association 1997; Singapore Gurkha Pensioners' Association 1997).

The long-standing tradition of foreign military service has nurtured a 'culture of emigration' among Nepal's 'Mongol' minorities in Himalayan villages. Boys grow up in the family's expectation that they will follow their forefathers' tradition of Gurkha service in foreign lands (Pignède 1966; Des Chene 1991). Girls are encouraged to marry affluent retired military 'pensioners', or soldiers who will be absent for nearly twenty years, remitting part of their pay, while their wives remain at home with their husbands' extended family, raising their children and attending to

household matters (Aryal 1991). Although recruitment of 'global warriors' decreased in the 1990s, this 'culture of emigration' continues today in these communities, producing massive numbers of 'global workers' in response to rising labour demands in Asia and the Middle East – a result of which Japan is currently witnessing.

The Gurkha tradition has also resulted in the construction of extensive information networks – often called 'the Gurkha Connection' (for example, Banskota 1994) – throughout the Asia-Pacific region where troops were stationed. The centre of these networks has been Hong Kong, once home to more than 10,000 Gurkhas and their families. Today the former British colony, with a new surge of Nepalese immigrants, continues to host the largest Nepalese diaspora in the Far East. In the 1980s the British government had granted Hong Kong citizenship to an estimated 7,000 children of Gurkha soldiers, of whom a substantial proportion has returned to the former colony to work as unskilled labourers (Nepal Ex-serviceman's Association 1997). The large and sustained presence of Nepalese in Hong Kong has served as an important source of information for Nepalese emigrants and a source of labour supply for Japanese employers. In the late 1980s Japan enjoyed an unprecedented period of economic growth which resulted in a demand for a massive unskilled labour force to be employed in jobs shunned by Japanese. Nepalese visitors and migrants to Japan before 1988 saw a golden opportunity for employment there, and sent the news to fellow Nepalis in Hong Kong and Nepal.

Japan's immigration policy and implementation

The influx of foreign workers, estimated at no less than 200,000 in the late 1980s, posed a complex dilemma for Japanese policy-makers (Yamanaka 1993, 1996; Cornelius 1994; Weiner and Hanami 1998). If they were to relax immigration policies, Japan might be able to satisfy its demand for labour by drawing on the large pool of unemployed and underemployed in neighbouring Asian countries. Yet they saw mounting evidence from Europe and North America that temporary foreign workers could create permanent immigrant communities that would be a source of political, economic and social tensions in the host country. Heated debates arose, polarizing discussants into two opposing camps: one urging that the unskilled labour market be opened; the other that Japan be closed to Third World workers in order to preserve 'racial' and class homogeneity (Yamanaka 1996).

The government chose an *ad hoc* policy that combined the two options: bringing in cheap foreign labour but limiting it to 'Japanese' people. The 1989 amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law (hereafter, Revised Immigration Law), which took effect in June 1990, permitted descendants of Japanese emigrants

(*Nikkeijin*, literally people of Japanese descent) up to the third generation, to enter the country legally, without restriction on their socio-economic activities. The law at the same time instituted criminal penalties for the recruitment and hiring of illegal unskilled foreign workers: three years imprisonment or a maximum fine of two million yen ($20,000.).

The Revised Immigration Law had an immediate effect on inflows of foreign workers and their employment opportunities. Encouraged by their legalized status, *Nikkeijin* began to arrive en masse, mostly from Brazil and Peru. The yearly admission of Brazilians increased four-fold from 19,000 in 1988 to 79,000 in 1990. By 1996 more than 200,000 *Nikkeijin* workers and their families had registered as residents in major manufacturing cities including Ota and Oizumi in Gunma Prefecture and Hamamatsu in Shizuoka Prefecture (Yamanaka 1997; 2000). Clearly the Revised Immigration Law opened a golden door of opportunity to ethnic Japanese from Latin America. The same law, however, closed the door to other unskilled workers, most of whom were Asians without Japanese ancestry. Many Japanese employers, threatened by criminal penalties, discharged undocumented workers and replaced them with *Nikkeijin*.

Research methods and data

The data upon which this study is based were collected in Japan and Nepal between November 1994 and February 1998. My initial contact occurred while living in Kathmandu for six months (January–June) in 1994. There I embarked on a study of Nepalese labour migration to Japan. Among my informants were two men who had recently returned after several years' sojourn in Japan and who provided me with contacts among workers remaining in Japan. Through these contacts I was able, during a month's research in November of the same year, to gain *entrée* into a community of undocumented workers in Hamamatsu, a city of half a million in western Shizuoka Prefecture, 257 km southwest of Tokyo. Hamamatsu and its satellite cities, Kosai and Iwata among others, are headquarters for several major automobile and motorcycle companies, including Suzuki, Yamaha and Honda, together with thousands of subcontractors which supply the parts assembled by the companies to become vehicles (Inagami *et al.* 1992). Contiguous and to the west of these cities lie Toyohashi, a city of 350,000 and its neighbours, Toyokawa, Toyota and others, in the eastern part of adjacent Aichi Prefecture. They host another giant car company, Toyota, and its thousands of subcontractors.

Immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented, find this area (referred to below as Tokai) attractive because of a chronic labour shortage among small-scale employers. In March 1998, for example, 10,100 Brazilians (of Japanese descent) registered as long-term residents

in Hamamatsu alone. The number of undocumented workers in Tokai is difficult to estimate, but substantial numbers, mostly from Asia, work there. Nepalese informants estimate about 500 Nepalese in the Tokai area. Following my November 1994 research there, and continuing until February 1998, I made repeated visits to the community, collecting a total of 149 questionnaires (130 men and 19 women).

On a second visit to Nepal, December 1996-January 1997, I interviewed forty Nepalese returnees from Japan (29 men and 11 women) in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Among these forty informants, ten had worked exclusively in the Greater Tokyo Metropolitan Area where more than 1,500 undocumented Nepalese constitute the largest Nepalese population in Japan.[3] The others worked primarily in the Tokai area, including those who had previously worked in the Tokyo area. Finally, from December 1997 to January 1998, I revisited Kathmandu and Pokhara (and, briefly, Hong Kong) to interview selected Nepalese who I knew were knowledgeable about foreign army service, ethnic/caste relations and international migration.

Demographic and socio-economic profiles

Age and marital status

My survey and interview data, hereafter referred to as *Nepalese Data*, include demographic and socio-economic profiles of the 189 Nepalese migrant workers (159 men and 30 women) who participated in this study. These men and women, whose average age was 32.7 and 30.6 years respectively, had entered Japan between 1985 and 1997, overstayed their short-term visas and worked illegally (Table 2). The majority, 70.4 per cent (112) of the men, and 76.7 per cent (23) of the women, were married, and had left their children (and in the case of men, their wives) in Nepal with their extended family.

Community of origin

Informants were of ten distinct ethnic/caste origins, reflecting the diverse ethnic/caste composition of the Nepalese population. The largest group among men was Gurung, accounting for 23.9 per cent (38), followed by Magar 13.2 per cent (21), Newar 10.7 per cent (17), Thakali 10.1 per cent (16) and Rai 6.9 per cent (11), all Tibeto-Burman speaking groups. With the addition of other, smaller, groups of Tibeto-Burman speakers (Chhantyal, Limbu, Tamang and Sherpa), and one identified as Buddhist, 77.9 per cent (124) of Nepalese male informants were of the Tibeto-Burman, 'Mongol' category. The remaining male informants comprised Brahman 7.5 per cent (12), Chhetri 8.2 per cent (13), and those identified as 'Hindu' 3.8 per cent (6), for a total of 19.5 per cent (31) in the

Nepalese- (Indo-Aryan) speaking 'Caucasoid' category. Among women, 'Mongol' groups – Gurung, Magar, Thakali and Newar – also comprised the majority, 86.7 per cent (26), while Brahman and Chhetri women comprised 13.3 per cent (4) of the total.

Places of origin for both sexes can be categorized according to locality of birth in three regions of Nepal: Western, Central and Eastern. The Western Region was responsible for sending the largest outflow, 66.1 per cent (125) of all informants. The Eastern Region sent 17.4 per cent (33), while the Central Region, where Kathmandu predominates as the largest city in Nepal and the nation's capital, sent 12.7 per cent (24) of the informants. The Western and Eastern Regions, where 83.5 per cent (158) originated, are known as the homelands of British Gurkha soldiers.

Socio-economic status

Nepalese migrants in Tokai, Japan, were found to be well educated. Table 2 shows that most informants of each sex had completed their high school education in Nepal. Seventy-five (74.8) per cent of men (119) and 80 per cent of women (24) had passed the School Leaving Certificate [SLC] which allowed them to advance to post-secondary education. The Nepalese national census reports that two thirds of the country's population, six years of age and over, have either no schooling or only primary school education (Nepalese Central Bureau of Statistics 1996, pp. 26–28). Among women, literacy is a luxury limited to one fourth of the population. Prior to arriving in Japan, these men and women had engaged in a variety of occupations. Among men, 30.2 per cent (48) were running businesses in retail, tourism or trade, 7.5 per cent (12) were professionals or public servants and 6.3 per cent (10) were teachers or social workers, 8.8 per cent (14) were ex-British Gurkha soldiers, 13.2 per cent farmers (21) and 23.9 per cent (38) students. Among women, 26.7 per cent (8) were teachers, social workers or nurses, while 23.3 per cent (7) and 33.3 per cent (10) were students or housewives. These statistics on the socio-economic status of the Nepalese migrants demonstrate the significant magnitude of unemployment or underemployment prevailing in Nepal, thus pushing 'out' those, particularly of ethnic minority origins, who are educated but lacking in job experience and personal connections with employers within the country (Spotlight 1996).

Information networks

How, then, were these Nepalese men and women able to enter Japan in the early 1990s when the Japanese authorities had become increasingly restrictive in their issuance of visas and in their admission of working age males from Asian countries? A clue to understanding the arrival patterns lies in an analysis of information networks using the *Nepalese Data*. The

Table 2. *Socio-demographic characteristics of Nepalese workers in Tokai, Japan by sex*

Socio-demographic characteristics	Men [1]		Women [2]	
	Number	%	Number	%
Mean age (years)	32.7	–	30.6	–
Total	159	–	30	–
Marital status				
Unmarried	45	28.3	7	23.3
Married	112	70.4	23	76.7
No response	2	1.3	0	0.0
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0
Ethnicity/caste				
'Mongol' (Tibeto-Burman)				
Gurung	38	23.9	5	16.7
Magar	21	13.2	5	16.7
Limbu	6	3.8	0	0.0
Rai	11	6.9	2	6.7
Thakali	16	10.1	6	20.0
Chhantyal	7	4.4	1	3.3
Tamang	5	3.1	0	0.0
Sherpa	2	1.3	1	3.3
Newar	17	10.7	6	20.0
Buddhist	1	0.6	0	0.0
'Aryan' (Indo-Aryan)				
Brahman	12	7.5	1	3.3
Chhetri	13	8.2	3	10.0
Hindu	6	3.8	0	0.0
No response	4	2.5	0	0.0
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0
Place of origin (Zone)				
Western Region				
Dhaulagiri	49	30.8	12	40.0
Lumbini	12	7.5	1	3.3
Gandaki	43	27.0	8	26.7
Central Region				
Bagmati	18	11.3	1	3.3
Narayani	5	3.1	0	0.0
Eastern Region				
Janakpur	1	0.6	1	3.3
Sagarmatha	4	2.5	2	6.7
Koshi	14	8.8	3	10.0
Mechi	7	4.4	1	3.3
Overseas	1	0.6	1	3.3
No response	5	3.1	0	0.0
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0

Table 2. *continued*

Socio-demographic characteristics	Men [1]		Women [2]	
	Number	%	Number	%
Education				
Less than high school	11	6.9	3	10.0
High school	24	15.1	3	10.0
School Leaving Certificate	40	25.2	9	30.0
Some college/university	46	28.9	13	43.3
BA degree	25	15.7	2	6.7
Beyond BA degree	8	5.0	0	0.0
No response	5	3.1	0	0.0
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0
Occupation in Nepal				
Business/Travel Agency	48	30.2	1	3.3
Professional/Public Servant	12	7.5	1	3.3
Teacher/social worker/nurse	10	6.3	8	26.7
British/Indian Army service	14	8.8	0	0.0
Service/factory worker	4	2.5	2	6.7
Farmer	21	13.2	1	3.3
Student	38	23.9	7	23.3
Housewife/mother	0	0.0	10	33.3
Unemployed	7	4.4	0	0.0
No response	5	3.1	0	0.0
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0

Source: *The Nepalese Data*

analysis begins with the classification of the sample of both sexes into two categories: (1) the 'Gurkha Group' (n = 131), including members of the four 'martial races' and other Tibeto-Burman groups which have traditionally served as British Gurkhas; and (2) the 'Non-Gurkha Group' (n = 58), which includes Brahmans, Chhetris and Newars, who have historically not contributed importantly to the British Gurkhas. The two categories parallel Nepal's major social division by language, religion and political power, as described above.

Ethnic/caste patterns

Table 3 shows the results of this analysis. In the first panel, 33.6 per cent (44) of the Gurkha Group (column [1]), as compared to 22.4 per cent (13) of the Non-Gurkha Group (column [2]), reported previous service in the British/Indian Army, or employment in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific,

Europe or the United States. The difference does not reach statistical significance, clearly indicating that previous foreign employment is not a major factor differentiating the two groups. In the second panel, on the timing of arrival in Japan, the two groups are again not significantly different. Nevertheless, they exhibit discernible patterns characteristic of each group. Migrants of the Gurkha Group entered Japan early, even before 1988, and by 1995, 81.7 per cent (107) of this group were in the country. The Non-Gurkha Group began appearing in 1989, and continued to arrive throughout the early 1990s, but the largest inflow 32.8 per cent, (19) came in the most recent year of this research, 1996–97.

My interview data provide an explanation for this gap in the timing of arrival of the two groups. In the mid- to late-1980s, some members of the Gurkha Group had gone to Japan as students, businessmen, professionals or tourists, including a few British Army soldiers on vacation. They reported to their relatives and friends in Nepal, Hong Kong and elsewhere about Japan's high wages, labour shortage and relaxed immigration control. The information soon reached members of the Non-Gurkha Group in Nepal. In 1989, when Japan was about to reach the peak of its economic prosperity, a total of 2,964 Nepalese entered the country, including both Gurkhas and Non-Gurkhas. Among the Tokai Nepalese reported here, 16.8 per cent (22) of the Gurkha Group and 17.2 per cent (10) of the Non-Gurkha Group had arrived in 1989.

After the 1990 Revised Immigration Law established the illegality of hiring unskilled foreigners, the Japanese Embassy in Kathmandu tightened its visa issuance policy. Thereafter some visa applicants, in order to evade increased scrutiny there, travelled to countries where fewer questions would be asked. At that time, Germany did not require Nepalese visitors to have visas for short stays, so many Nepalese flew there to apply for Japanese visas. Other such 'intermediary' countries included England, the United States, Middle Eastern countries, Australia, Hong Kong and other Pacific-Asian countries. Table 3 shows that this practice was significantly more frequent among members of the Gurkha Group than of the Non-Gurkha Group. Forty-one per cent (54) of the Gurkha Group obtained visas in intermediary countries, whereas 24.1 per cent (14) of the Non-Gurkha members did so.

The Non-Gurkha Group has never had a tradition of emigration, yet after 1989 they frequently emigrated. The explanation for this can be found in the fact that, as offspring of élite Hindu castes, Non-Gurkha migrants in Tokai possess rich human capital that may have contributed to the rapid development of global information networks. This capital includes their youth and good education. According to the *Nepalese Data*, Non-Gurkha migrants in Tokai are heavily concentrated by people in the 25 to 34 age range, averaging 31.0 years. In contrast, Gurkha Group migrants range widely in age from their early twenties to early fifties, with an average age of 33.5 years. Despite the similarity between average ages of Non-Gurkha and Gurkha migrants, the differing ranges of age in the two groups are significant in that they partially explain why Non-Gurkhas

Table 3. *Labour migration process of Nepalese workers in Tokai, Japan: Gurkha and Non-Gurkha Group*

Migration characteristics	Gurkha Group		Non-Gurkha Group		Chi-square significance
	Traditional Gurkha Groups* [1]		Brahman, Chhetri & Newar [2]		
	Number	%	Number	%	
Previous foreign employment					
None (excluding India)	80	61.1	43	74.1	8.25
British/Indian Army	21	16.0	2	3.4	p<.08269
Middle East**	11	8.4	4	6.9	
Asia-Pacific***	9	6.9	5	8.6	
Europe/USA****	3	2.3	2	3.4	
No response	7	5.3	2	3.4	
Total	131	100.0	58	100.0	
Year of arrival					
Before 1988	6	4.6	0	0.0	8.76
1989	22	16.8	10	17.2	p<.11911
1990–1991	35	26.7	12	20.7	
1992–1993	27	20.6	11	19.0	
1994–1995	17	13.0	6	10.3	
1996–1997	24	18.3	19	32.8	
Total	131	100.0	58	100.0	
Place visa issued					
Nepal (including India)	73	55.7	43	74.1	15.91
Europe/USA****	32	24.4	10	17.2	p<.00314
Middle East**	5	3.8	0	0.0	
Asia-Pacific***	17	13.0	2	3.4	
Other	0	0.0	2	3.4	
No response	4	3.1	1	1.7	
Total	131	100.0	58	100.0	
Age					
24 and younger	13	9.9	3	5.2	11.22
25–34	68	51.9	41	70.7	p<.01058
35–44	38	29.0	14	24.1	
45 and older	10	7.6	0	0.0	
No response	2	1.5	0	0.0	
Total	131	100.0	58	100.0	
Mean, Std Dev	33.0	7.1	31.0	5.0	
Education					
Less than high school	13	9.9	1	1.7	25.61911
High school	25	19.1	2	3.4	p<.00011
School Leaving Certificate	37	28.2	12	20.7	
Some college/university	35	26.7	24	41.4	
BA degree	13	9.9	14	24.1	
Beyond BA degree	3	2.3	5	8.6	
No response	5	3.8	0	0.0	
Total	131	100.0	58	100.0	

Source: *The Nepalese Data*

* Traditional Gurkha Groups are: Gurungs, Magars, Thakalis, Chhantyals, Limbus, Rais, (Tamangs and Sherpas), i.e., groups which historically participated in the British Gurkhas.

** Countries in Middle East are: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

*** Countries in Asia-Pacific are: South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Australia.

**** Countries in Europe are: Germany, England and Holland.

are more highly educated than Gurkhas. The former, being younger, have had greater access to education.[4] Almost all members of the Non-Gurkha Group, 94.8 per cent (55), had passed the SLC of whom 78.2 per cent (43) attained post-secondary education. In contrast, of the Gurkha Group members 67.2 per cent (88) had passed the SLC of whom 58.0 per cent (51) advanced to post-secondary education.

These analyses demonstrate the important role Gurkha networks in the Asia-Pacific have played in facilitating migration through the dissemination of information regarding employment opportunities and immigration regulations in other countries. The Gurkha Group's tradition of emigration enabled its members to arrive in Japan in the late 1980s, before Japan had reached its economic peak. Once they had opened the channel to immigration, the flow of Gurkha migrants increased, including many without a history of overseas service or employment. Even after Japanese visas became difficult to obtain in Kathmandu in the early 1990s, the flow was sustained by travelling via countries with more lenient consulates. Members of the Non-Gurkha Group, lacking a tradition of emigration but recognizing its promise, lost little time in following the routes pioneered by their Gurkha compatriots. It has been primarily the young and educated among them who, coming to the conclusion that there is little future for them in Nepal, have opted to take that bold step.

Gender patterns

Once a substantial population of Nepalese men had arrived in Japan, by 1989, a trickle of women followed. As shown in the second panel of column [2], Table 4, Nepalese women began arriving in small but steady numbers after 1990. Some accompanied their husbands to Japan, but most arrived later as wives (sometimes sisters) of earlier male arrivals who, having established employment and housing, had used savings to send for them. Unlike their men, these Nepalese women rarely reported previous foreign employment, but 40.0 per cent (12) of them had travelled to other countries in order to obtain visas for Japan. These data suggest that by the mid-1990s a new cycle of migration had begun comprising family members, usually graduating younger brothers and non-working wives. The increasing presence of women reflects a strategy to bring in additional wage earners, and in the process has generated new economic roles for Nepalese women as global migrants.

Roles of traffickers

The analysis of migration networks reveals a wide array of strategies by which Nepalese migrants gain legal entry into the country, and once there overstay their visas, thereby circumventing Japan's border controls. To

Table 4. *Labour migration process of Nepalese workers in Tokai, Japan by sex*

Migration characteristics	Men [1]		Women [2]		Chi-square significance
	Number	%	Number	%	
Previous foreign employment					
None (excluding India)	99	62.3	25	83.3	12.74
British/Indian Army	23	14.5	0	0.0	p<.01259
Middle East*	14	8.8	1	3.3	
Asia-Pacific**	11	6.9	3	10.0	
Europe/USA***	5	3.1	0	0.0	
No response	7	4.4	1	3.3	
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0	
Year of arrival					
Before 1988	6	3.8	0	0.0	11.33
1989	31	19.5	1	3.3	p<.04526
1990–1991	41	25.8	6	20.0	
1992–1993	30	18.9	8	26.7	
1994–1995	19	11.9	4	13.3	
1996–1997	32	20.1	11	36.7	
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0	
Place visa issued					
Nepal (incl. India)	98	61.6	18	60.0	2.08
Europe/USA	33	20.8	9	30.0	p<.72075
Middle East	4	2.5	1	3.3	
Asia-Pacific	17	10.7	2	6.7	
Other	2	1.3	0	0.0	
No response	5	3.1	0	0.0	
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0	

Source: *The Nepalese Data*

* Countries in Middle East are: Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

** Countries in Asia-Pacific are: South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Australia.

*** Countries in Europe are: Germany, England and Holland.

accomplish this requires procurement of scarce and hard-to-obtain travel documents, a process which may necessitate intermediaries. According to Lohrmann (1987, pp. 257–9), such practices are widespread in Southeast Asia. Clandestine activities frequently occur in the process of acquiring entry and identity cards, which are sold to migrants by brokers.

Tokai Nepalese report increasingly frequent use of such agents to assist in obtaining official documents. Their personal reports, and widespread rumours, refer to exorbitant agents' fees ranging from $4,000 in the early 1990s, to $15,000 in the mid-1990s. They also refer to examples of fraudulent agents making profits by deceiving visa applicants, and of migrants apprehended soon after their arrival – long before they were able to save enough money to pay off the debts they incurred to reach and enter

Japan. Migrants and their families are willing to bear the expensive fees and the high risks entailed in clandestine methods in anticipation of large returns on their investment once they reach Japan.

Industrial structure and labour shortage in Japan

Within three months of their arrival, Nepalese immigrants are reduced by immigration law from a population of diverse languages, ethnicities, classes and gender to a single category 'illegal foreign residents'. As such, they are absorbed informally into the workforce as inexpensive, temporary and tractable labourers working for the weakest, most unstable employers. Without protection of law, security of employment or medical insurance, they are the most exploited workers in the Japanese labour market. They are socially unrecognized aliens who remain invisible in the shadows of Japanese society.

Hierarchical industrial structure

During the period of this research, November 1994 to February 1998, the Tokai economy was suffering a deep recession that had begun in late 1991. Many shops and factories were forced to scale down or even close. Under these tightening market conditions, undocumented Nepalese had fewer job opportunities than before the recession. None the less, they were able to maintain employment in the two most labour-short industries: small-scale manufacturing and construction. The automobile-motorcycle industry which the Hamamatsu-Toyohashi area harbours is characterized by a well-defined division of labour comprising a pyramidal hierarchy of dependency between car manufacturers, such as Toyota, and numerous contractors and subcontractors. This relationship, often referred to as a 'dual industrial structure', is one in which car manufacturers supply materials for the making of parts to contractors who then, through a hierarchy of subcontractors, supply finished components to the makers for assembling in vehicles ready to be shipped to markets (Clark 1979, pp. 64–73; Kondo 1990, pp. 51–57).

There are several levels of size and complexity of subcontractors through which the parts move before the large and complex units are supplied by the contractor to the car manufacturers for final assembly. This pyramid of dependency is a result of subcontractors being dependent on those at higher levels – and ultimately on the car manufacturers – for both the purchase orders which provide their income, and the materials with which to supply the parts to fulfil the orders (Patrick and Rohlen 1987). The large number of subcontractors involved in the system creates intense competition, particularly among the small-scale ones. Ito (1993, p. 86), for example, cites one major car manufacturer which is supplied by 47,308 subcontractors comprising three layers of contractorships. At

the top is the manufacturer, which draws upon 168 'first-order' contractors, who draw upon 5,437 'second-order' subcontractors, who in turn depend upon 41,703 'third order' subcontractors.

According to the Hamamatsu Statistics Book, in 1990 there were 756 establishments in the transportation machinery industry, employing a total of 22,920 workers with, on average, thirty workers per establishment (Hamamatsu City 1991). Thirty five per cent of the establishments (267) employed less than 3 workers, 33 per cent (250) employed 4 to 9 workers, and 19 per cent (144) employed 10 to 29 workers. These small firms comprised 87 per cent of the entire industry and 20 per cent (4,623 employees) of its total workforce. At the opposite end of the scale, one per cent (9 establishments) employed more than 300 workers apiece, comprising 45 per cent (10,268 employees) of the industry's labour force. These statistics demonstrate that the smallest-scale subcontractors (those of the third- and even fourth-orders), while consisting of a majority of employers, occupy the weakest and most dependent position in the dual industrial structure.

The construction industry is similar in structure to the manufacturing industry, but differs in the even smaller average size of its establishments and even less attractive conditions of work. In 1991 Hamamatsu had 2,819 construction establishments, with 22,383 workers, with an average of 8 workers per establishment (Hamamatsu City 1992). An overwhelming 97 per cent (2,734) of the establishments employed less than thirty workers each, comprising 72 per cent (16,116) of the labour force. Jobs such as these, requiring hard and dangerous, outdoor physical labour, are avoided by Japanese workers, particularly the younger ones.

Labour shortage and foreign workers

Employment records of high school graduates in Hamamatsu (Hello Work Hamamatsu 1990–91) provide additional evidence of the struggle confronting small-scale employers. In 1989, when the economy was growing rapidly, such employers had difficulty securing workers. Firms with more than 300 employees had increased their hiring of new graduates by 20 to 50 per cent during the preceding year, whereas smaller firms' ability to attract young male graduates fell by 8 to 20 per cent, even though they were offered competitive wages. These statistics clearly reveal the inverse relationship between firm size and labour shortage operating in the labour market (c.f. Kondo 1990, p. 52). The anxiety of small-scale employers facing a chronic labour shortage was shown in the following interview with a personnel manager of a Suzuki subcontractor:

> These days, most families send their children to higher education. Japanese workers do not want to take jobs like those we offer. Women

prefer clerical jobs over manual jobs. The competition to hire new school recruits is so keen that we can hardly expect them to choose our company at all. Retired people are difficult to manage, because the wages we offer might be lower than those they received in previous jobs. Besides, their morale declines once they have retired. We do not want to hire the unemployed, because these people often have problems such as debts and gambling habits. So, after all, we hired Bangladeshi men. They worked very hard; much harder than *Nikkeijin* men we later hired to replace them after the law changed so that it became illegal to employ the Bangladeshis.

According to this manager, the labour shortage was caused not by a shortage of workers but by a lack of motivated and reliable workers. This shortage of desirable workers motivated him into hiring undocumented Bangladeshis who turned out to be superior to locally available workers. The manager's words inadvertently reveal the criteria which have emerged as the available labour force has changed from Japanese to undocumented foreigners (for example, Bangladeshis), and then to documented foreigners (that is, *Nikkeijin*). Following the new law establishing the illegality of hiring undocumented workers, his company (with more than 100 workers) reluctantly replaced Bangladeshis with *Nikkeijin*, because he feared legal sanctions and was under pressure from higher-order contractors to maintain his company's law-abiding image. A question remains as to what smaller or weaker firms than his would do in the face of a serious labour shortage. They might prefer to resort to undocumented Asians rather than documented *Nikkeijin*, since the latter are legally entitled to work, and can therefore command higher wages and better working conditions than illegals.

Undocumented employment of Nepalese workers

Labour market characteristics

Table 5 comprises findings derived from the *Nepalese Data* regarding selected labour market characteristics of undocumented Nepalese workers by sex. The first row indicates that 71.1 per cent (113) of men and 66.7 per cent (20) of women work in factories (which manufacture primarily plastic and metal parts for automobiles). Twenty per cent (32) of men and 6.7 per cent (2) of women work in the construction industry (building mainly private houses and public roads). The remaining 3.1 per cent (5) of men and 13.3 per cent (4) of women work mostly in services (laundry shops, printing firms, restaurants and meat processing centres) in the Greater Tokyo Metropolitan Area. Thus, for the majority of the entire sample, 79.2 per cent (126) of men and 73.3 per cent (22) of women, work in establishments with less than fifty employees. Although the

Table 5. *Selected labour market characteristics of Nepalese workers in Tokai, Japan by sex*

Labour market characteristics	Men [1]		Women [2]	
	Number	%	Number	%
Industry				
Manufacturing	113	71.1	20	66.7
Construction	32	20.1	2	6.7
Service	5	3.1	4	13.3
No response	9	5.7	4	13.3
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0
Organizational size (N of employees)				
Less than 9	52	32.7	3	10.0
10 to 29	42	26.4	10	33.3
30 to 49	32	20.1	9	30.0
50 or more	18	11.3	3	10.0
No response	15	9.4	5	16.7
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0
Time spent in Japan	159	100.0	30	100.0
Mean in months	43.2	–	26.5	–
Std dev	27.4	–	21.4	–
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0
N of jobs held	148	93.1	26	86.7
Mean	4.1	–	2.6	–
Std dev	2.5	–	1.6	–
No response	11	6.9	4	13.3
Total	159	100.0	30	100.0

Source: *Nepalese Data*

remainder report jobs in larger companies, in fact they are usually in the employ of labour contractors who, in turn, dispatch them to work in those companies.

For undocumented workers employed in small-scale firms, irregular payment and job loss are serious risks. Employers, lacking capital and credit, frequently postpone paying salaries for months and sometimes go out of business without paying their employees. Undocumented workers have no recourse but to move to new employers. Many find their work too demanding or the wages unacceptably low. Verbal abuse and rude behaviour by employers are other characteristic forms of mistreatment. Because of such negative experiences in their initial years in Japan, Nepalese commonly change jobs repeatedly. By the time of this study, men had held an average of 4.1 jobs over a period of 43.2 months (3.6

years) of residence, while women had 2.6 jobs over 26.5 months (2.2 years) of residence.

Wages and wage determination

Although low wages, demanding tasks and abusive employers are common complaints of Nepalese workers in Tokai, they generally express high degrees of satisfaction with their employment since they earn wages far higher than those prevailing in Nepal. These data are subject to inaccuracy as informants may have had vested interests in misrepresenting or concealing them, and the passage of time and frequency of changes in employment may have led to misreporting. In recognition of this, however, every effort was made to minimize such pitfalls by establishing good rapport and cross-checking the information provided.

The analysis of wage data indicates that, on average, men earn 1,125 yen ($11.25 at 100 yen = $1) per hour (Table 6, column [1]) and women earn 835 yen (column [2]). It is because these wages are comparable to those of Japanese co-workers that the Nepalese tolerate their negative work experiences. In 1994 Nepal's GNP per capita was US$200, one of the lowest in the world. It must be understood, however, that Nepal's economy is overwhelmingly one of rural subsistence agriculture to which GNP is largely irrelevant. A better indicator is to be found in that in Kathmandu, the average monthly income for a government official or university professor is about 5,000 Nepal rupees ($100 at $1 = Rs 50). In Tokai, an undocumented male makes the same amount in one day. It is these extraordinarily high wages, by Nepalese standards, that attract hundreds of Nepalese workers to the country each year.

A breakdown of the hourly wage data further reveals that workers' human capital characteristics such as age, education and ethnicity/caste, bear little relationship to their wage levels. However, their labour market characteristics, such as industry and employment experience, systematically make small but statistically significant differences in their earnings (Table 6). For example, in construction, Nepalese men earn hourly wages that are 33.0 per cent (304 yen) more than those in services and 10.5 per cent (116 yen) more than those in manufacturing. Similarly, women in construction earn 17.8 per cent (138 yen) more than their counterparts in services and 8.8 per cent (74 yen) more than those in manufacturing. Although it might be expected that employers with small numbers of employees would pay lower wages than their larger competitors, in organizations employing fewer than fifty, the size of the workforce proves to be unrelated to wages.

Both the amount of time that workers had spent in Japan and the number of jobs that they had held were positively correlated with hourly wages earned. During the first four years of residence men's wages did not increase, but they rose by 9.8 per cent (105 yen) in the next two-year

Table 6. *Wages (Japanese Yen*) of Nepalese workers in Tokai, Japan by sex*

Labour market characteristics	Men [1]		Women [2]		Analysis of variance significance
	Yen	Number	Yen	Number	
Mean hourly wage	1,125	147	835	25	F=55.14
No response	–	12	–	5	p<.0000
Total	159	30			
By industry					
Manufacturing	1,108	112	839	19	F=12.71
Construction	1,224	30	913	2	p<.0000
Service	920	5	775	4	
Missing values	–	12	–	5	
Total	159	30			
By organizational size (N of employees)					
Less than 9	1,097	50	883	3	F=.822
10 to 29	1,124	41	835	10	p<.4835
30 to 49	1,124	32	809	8	
50 or more	1,186	17	867	3	
Missing values	–	19	–	6	
Total	159	30			
By time spent in Japan					
Less than 2 years	1,076	43	802	13	F=5.89
2 to 4 years	1,071	42	910	5	p<.0002
4 to 6 years	1,176	42	843	7	
6 to 8 years	1,250	16	–	–	
8 to 10 years	1,187	4	–	–	
Missing values	–	12	–	5	
Total	159	30			
By N of jobs held					
Less than 3 jobs	1,067	60	832	18	F=10.63
4 to 5 jobs	1,199	51	870	5	p<.0000
6 or more jobs	1,108	30	850	1	
Missing values	–	18	–	6	
Total	159	30			

Source: *Nepalese Data*
* 100 yen = 1 U.S. dollar.

period, and by 6.3 per cent (74 yen) in the following two years. Few had worked longer than that. Women's wages increased slightly but inconsistently over time, but their numbers are too few to allow for significant conclusions. For both men and women, the number of jobs held had a small but positive correlation with hourly wages. Men's wages rose by 12.4 per cent (132 yen) by the time they had moved to their fourth or fifth job. The wages of women who held that many jobs rose by only 4.6 per cent (38 yen). However, additional job changes did not necessarily result in increased wages for either sex.

These findings regarding Nepalese wages indicate that: (1) Japanese employers in the construction industry, regardless of the size of their

establishments, pay more than those in manufacturing or service industries. This suggests that employers with the least wanted jobs pay the highest wages, and it is those undocumented foreigners with the fewest choices who are attracted to such jobs. The fact that *Nikkeijin* rarely seek employment in the construction industry further substantiates this point. (2) As indicated above, workers' earnings tend to remain constant during the first four years of residence in Japan and to increase thereafter, while they tend to rise during the first four to five jobs held and remain constant thereafter. Although these two phenomena appear contradictory, both reflect experience (of residence and of movement in the job market, respectively), thus demonstrating that cumulative experience (including improved Japanese language and cultural competence) has a positive effect on workers' earnings. (3) Although ethnic and class divisions in Nepal become irrelevant to workers' wages in Japan, gender divides Nepalese immigrants, as it does the entire Japanese society, into two ranked categories of labourers according to the well-established patterns of wage and social discrimination against women (c.f. Brinton 1993). Nepalese women's wages are lower than men's by 34.7 per cent (290 yen) on average, and their wages increase less and more slowly, over time and by experience, than those of their male counterparts who perform similar manual tasks.

Wage comparison: undocumented, documented and Japanese

Nepalese wages indicate that Japanese employers place high value on Nepalese workers' willingness and physical capacity to engage in demanding unskilled labour in construction and manufacturing. How then do their wage levels compare with those of other unskilled workers, such as *Nikkeijin* and Japanese? Answers to this question must be sought in the market value of the labour offered by different ranks and categories of unskilled workers in the local labour market and the collective characteristics that have defined them as a result of the 1990 immigration reform. These include legal status (whether legal resident or not), ethnicity (whether of Japanese descent or not), and nationality (whether Japanese or not).

Table 7 shows the average hourly and monthly wages of Nepalese, *Nikkeijin* and Japanese workers by sex and by age, in the manufacturing industries in Tokai. The data for *Nikkeijin* are drawn from research on 172 Japanese Brazilian workers in the Hamamatsu-Toyohashi area of Tokai conducted in 1994 (Yamanaka 2000). Comparing the average wage of Nepalese with that of *Nikkeijin*, it is clear that neither the difference in legal or in ethnic status contributes to significant wage differentials. Nepalese men's average hourly wage of 1,108 yen, is slightly lower than *Nikkeijin* men's wages, which range from 1,100 to 1,450 yen. The wage gap between the two ethnicities is slightly greater for women: 839 yen for Nepalese and 900 to 1,000 yen for *Nikkeijin*.

Table 7. *Hourly and monthly wages (Japanese Yen*) in manufacturing industries in* the *Tokai area, Japan for: Nepalese, Nikkeijin and Japanese workers, by sex and age*

Ethnicity	Age	Hourly wages	Monthly wages	Hours/month
Men [1]				
Nepalese	22–51	1,108	265,920	240
Nikkeijin	18–54	1,100–1,450	264,000–348,000	240
Japanese	30–34	–	291,690	195
Women [2]				
Nepalese	19–41	839	201,360	240
Nikkeijin	18–54	900–1,000	216,000–240,000	240
Japanese	25–29	–	173,739	181

Source: *Nepalese Data*; The *Nikkeijin* Data (Yamanaka 2000); Shizuoka Prefecture (1995)
* 100 yen = 1 U.S. dollar.

In comparing average wages between foreigners and Japanese, it should be noted that there are substantial differences in workers' treatment by seniority (age or experience), employment status (whether regular or temporary) and working hours (whether full time or part time). Regular Japanese workers are entitled to lifetime employment, social security (including pension, medical insurance and unemployment insurance), dependants' allowance, transportation allowance, annual bonuses and annual holidays. Japanese temporary workers (disproportionately women and the elderly) are denied many of these benefits. Most foreign workers are temporary and are usually excluded entirely from such benefits.

Table 7 also presents the average monthly earnings in 1994 for Japanese workers of all categories in the western part of Shizuoka Prefecture (Shizuoka Prefecture 1995). For comparative purposes, the monthly earnings for migrant workers are computed based on their average hourly wages and a hypothetical but typical 240 working hours ([8 working hours + 2 hours overtime] × 6 days × 4 weeks). A cursory glance at these average earnings generates the misleading impression that *Nikkeijin* workers earn more than Japanese workers. Male Japanese employees are paid monthly salaries averaging 291,690 yen ($2,917). *Nikkeijin* males are paid hourly or daily wages ranging from 264,000 to 348,000 yen ($2,640 to $3,480) per month. Nepalese are not far behind with wages averaging about 266,000 ($2,660) per month. Foreigners' working hours per month average considerably more than those of Japanese: 240 for foreigners; 195 for Japanese men and 181 for Japanese women. Thus, some foreigners surpass the monthly earnings of Japanese, but at the cost of significantly more working hours.

It must be emphasized that although foreign workers can earn incomes

equivalent to Japanese workers', they cost their employers significantly less because they do not receive the numerous expensive benefits, entitlements and job security that Japanese regular employees do. It is because of the relatively inexpensive and flexible labour which foreign, especially undocumented, workers offer that the employers are motivated to employ them at standard wages. For sojourning foreigners, the ultimate goal of migration is to save large amounts of money and return home as soon as possible. Japan is a 'heaven' for achieving this goal, according to one Nepalese migrant.

Inexpensive and flexible labour

These findings on wages confirm the importance of undocumented foreign labour to small-scale Japanese employers. First, undocumented workers fill essential jobs shunned by Japanese. Second, they provide much needed quality labour at relatively low wages. Third, they are usually unaccompanied by dependants, thus eliminating any employers' responsibility for dependants' support. Fourth, lacking legal protection they are subject to strict discipline. Finally, they make up a disposable labour pool, hired and fired according to changes in demand.

In summary, labour-short small-scale employers lose little and gain much by hiring undocumented workers. Although the criminal penalty for hiring unskilled foreigners has existed since June 1990, it is rarely enforced. Cornelius (1994, p. 391) reports that in each of the two years, 1991 and 1992, only about 350 Japanese employers were penalized for violations of the revised law. This suggests that although the law was implemented to stem an influx of undesirable foreigners, the government is reluctant to enforce it rigorously because employers need their labour. At the same time occasional, often publicized, incidents of enforcement are necessary to demonstrate to workers and employers alike, that immigration officers are alert to the situation and have it under control. The following statement from a February 1998 interview with a small-scale Japanese subcontractor (with less than thirty employees) illustrates the limited impact that the criminal code has made on his decision to employ undocumented workers, while demonstrating the gain he derives by doing so:

> My Nepalese workers are smart and dedicated to their jobs. They have learned everything very quickly. They arrive here early in the morning before anyone else and go home late in the evening after everyone has gone. They are much younger than my Japanese workers who are in their fifties and sixties. Their good eyesight is very helpful in inspecting the machine parts. Even though the law says I should not hire illegals, I see no reason to replace them. Because our products do not carry my company name, I do not have to worry about the company

image. If I were caught by the police, the local newspaper would report it in only one line. Nothing more than that.[5]

Conclusion

This analysis of surveys and interviews with 189 undocumented Nepalese labour migrants to Japan in the early 1990s, has focused on their migration history and current patterns, politics of ethnic diversity, and women's new economic roles. These topics were discussed in the context of Japan's immigration policies, industrial structure and emerging labour force stratification among foreign workers. The findings highlighted Nepalese-Japanese transnationalism through an examination of the sending and receiving nations and the dynamics of their social, economic and cultural interactions. Three major issues were addressed.

First, the heavy representation of 'Mongol' Nepalese minority groups in the migrant population in Japan's Tokai area points to the critical importance of Nepal's modern history and ethnic politics to achieving an understanding of the causes and processes of emigration and immigration. The long-standing tradition of British Gurkha army service throughout the world has created a remittance economy in the Himalayan villages from which these groups come. This has been accompanied by a distinctive 'culture of emigration' among them which has created and sustained transnational networks (the 'Gurkha Connection'), which in turn have facilitated contemporary Nepalese labour migration. However, the rapid transition from 'global warriors' to 'global workers' in response to prospering East Asian economies, can only be understood in the economic and political contexts of the receiving government's policy on unskilled foreign labour.

Japan's expanded role in global capitalism since the late 1980s has created a new chapter in its ethnic composition. Its industrial structure, stratified as it is into large-scale and small-scale companies, has long relied upon the weaker segments of the workforce to fill the needs of the latter. Recently women, elderly workers and now foreigners have filled those needs. As demonstrated by this study, small-scale employers depend upon the inexpensive and flexible labour provided by undocumented workers. Despite the threat of criminal penalty, these employers are willing to hire such workers at standard wages. The uninterrupted flow of Nepalese workers in the early 1990s is the result of this dependency on foreign labour among peripheral employers. This inflow is (in practice) facilitated by the fact that the Japanese government, despite its official rhetoric, does not strictly or consistently enforce the law prohibiting the hire of the undocumented. This ineffective implementation of the criminal code reveals dual, latent aims: (1) it keeps under control the inflow of illegal workers, while preventing them from settling permanently; and (2) it allows weaker employers the benefit of high quality,

inexpensive and tractable labour unavailable in the local labour market, at least for the present. This type of immigration policy, adopted by Japan (and Korea), is elsewhere termed a 'back door' policy (see Yamanaka, in press).

Third, the increasingly globalized economy which characterizes transnationalism has bridged historically and culturally separated nations. In this process national borders have become sites of contestation. These boundaries are challenged by transnational migrants and those who seek to employ them, and they are defended by the sovereign states they define (Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1995). Consequences of this historic change are significant to both national and international politics and culture. In Nepal the migrants' transnational experience cultivates cosmopolitan and egalitarian views while enhancing their national and ethnic identities. This leads to demands for an equitable redistribution of the historic concentration of economic and political power among ruling élites (for example, Höfer 1978; Fisher 1993).

In Japan the influx of diverse ethnicities and nationalities presents a major challenge to the nation. The progressive transnationalization within and outside its border engenders calls for humanitarian policies, universally applied, in order to meet the increasingly pervasive challenges of ethnicity, nationality and gender. To accomplish this would require that Japan acknowledge the increasingly heterogeneous nature of its population, including immigrant workers and refugees, as well as its own ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples (for example, Weiner 1997), and that it act accordingly to guarantee equal rights to all. This would require the recognition of its internal diversity as a valuable resource for the nation's cultural enrichment and political role in the progressively 'borderless' world.

Acknowledgement

This article was originally presented as a paper at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, San Francisco, 16–19 April. I thank Gerald Berreman, Karen Leonard, Evelyn Nakano Glenn and anonymous reviewers for their comments. Above all, I am indebted to many Nepalese friends in Japan and Nepal without whose cooperation this study would have been impossible, but who must remain anonymous.

Notes

1. 'Gurkha' is the term widely and officially used to refer to Nepalese troops in the British and Indian Armies. It is derived from 'Gorkha', the small kingdom in central Nepal whose army conquered the Kathmandu Valley in 1769, and from whose king the present Nepalese royal family is descended (Des Chene 1991, p. xvii).
2. In 1996, 74.4 per cent of the total 284,000 visa overstayers arrived with short-term

visas, 7.0 per cent with 'Japanese language students' visas, 4.5 per cent with 'entertainer' visas and 3.0 per cent with 'university student' visas (JBIC 1996).

3. Although the Tokyo area hosts the largest Nepalese migrant populations, the area's industrial and demographic structures are more complex than those of the Tokai area, and would therefore require a separate study.

4. This educational differential is primarily attributable to the socio-economic inequality deriving from historic ethnic stratification in Nepal. Brahmans, Chhetris and Newars, as upper castes and affluent communities, have achieved higher literacy rates than any other communities in the country.

5. Shortly after this interview, three apartments in the neighbourhood of this employer's factory were raided by immigration officials. Six undocumented Nepalese were arrested and deported, two of whom were his employees. However, he was not cited, and following the arrests the three remaining undocumented Nepalese continued in his employ.

References

ARYAL, MANISHA 1991 'To marry a lahuray', *Himal*, July/August, pp. 18–9

——1997 'Gurkhas in the People's Republic', *Himal South Asia*, July/August, pp. 28–29

BANSKOTA, PURUSHOTTAM 1994 *The Gurkha Connection: A History of the Gurkha Recruitment in the British Indian Army*, Jaipur, India: Nirala Publications

BERREMAN, GERALD D. 1963 'Peoples and cultures of the Himalayas', *Asian Survey*, vol. 3, no. 6, pp. 289–304

BHATTACHAN, KRISHNA B. and PYAKURYAL, KAILASH N. 1996 'The issue of national integration in Nepal: an ethnoregional approach', *Occasional Papers in Sociology & Anthropology*, vol. 5, pp. 17–38

BISTA, DOR BAHADUR 1996 *People of Nepal*, Kathmandu: Bhotahity

BLAIKIE, PIERS, CAMERON, JOHN and SEDDON, DAVID 1980 *Nepal in Crisis: Growth and Stagnation at the Periphery*, Delhi: Oxford University Press

BORJAS, GEORGE J. 1990 *Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigration on the U.S. Economy*, New York: Basic Books

BOYD, MONICA 1989 'Family and personal networks in international migration: recent developments and new agendas', *International Migration Review*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 638–80

BRINTON, MARY C. 1993 *Women and the Economic Miracle: Gender and Work in Postwar Japan*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

CAPLAN, LIONEL 1967 *Land and Social Change in East Nepal*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

CASTLES, STEPHEN and MILLER, MARK J. 1993 *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, New York: Guilford Press

CLARK, RODNEY 1979 *The Japanese Company*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press

COLLET, NIGEL 1994 'The British Gurkha connection in the 1990s', in Michael Hutt (ed.), *Nepal in the Nineties: Versions of the Past, Visions of the Future*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 98–105

CORNELIUS, WAYNE A. 1994 'Japan: the illusion of immigration control', in W. A. Cornelius, P. L. Martin and J. F. Hollifield (eds), *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 375–410

CROSS, J. P. 1985 'Introduction', in Sandro Tucci, *Gurkhas*, London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd., pp. 8–34

DES CHENE, MARY 1991 'Relics of Empire: A Cultural History of the Gurkhas, 1815–1987', PhD dissertation, Stanford University, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan International

——1993 'Soldiers, sovereignty and silences: Gorkhas as diplomatic currency', *South Asia Bulletin*, vol. 13, nos 1 & 2, pp. 67–80

ENGLISH, RICHARD 1985 'Himalayan state formation and the impact of British rule in the nineteenth century', *Mountain Research and Development*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 61–78
FISHER, WILLIAM 1993 'Nationalism and the Janajati', *Himal*, March/April, pp. 11–4
GLICK SCHILLER, NINA, BASCH, LINDA and BLANC, CRISTINA SZANTON 1995 'From immigrant to transmigrant: theorizing transnational migration', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 68, no. 1, pp. 48–63
GURUNG, HARKA 1996 'Ethnic Demography of Nepal', Nepal Foundation Paper 5, Kathmandu: Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies (NEFAS)
HAMAMATSU CITY 1991 *Hamamatsu-shi Tokeisho, Heisei 3 nendo*. Hamamatsu: Hamamatsu City
——1992 *Hamamatsu-shi Tokeisho, Heisei 4 nendo*, Hamamatsu: Hamamatsu City
HELLO WORK HAMAMATSU 1990–1991 Published material from the Hello Work Hamamatsu
HIMAL 1992 'Ethnicity', *Himal*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 7–31
HITCHCOCK, JOHN T. 1966 *A Mountain Village in Nepal*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston
HÖFER, ANDRÀS 1978 'A new rural élite in central Nepal', in J. Fisher (ed.), *Himalayan Anthropology* , The Hague: Mouton, pp. 179–86
INAGAMI, TAKESHI, KUWAHARA, YASUO and GENERAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF PEOPLE'S FINANCE SAVINGS 1992 *Gaikokujin Rodosha wo Senryakuka suru Chusho Kigyo*, Tokyo: Chusho Kigyo Center
ITO, MOTOSHIGE 1993 'Nihonteki torihiki kanko: keizokuteki torihiki no kino to hyoka', in T. Itami, T. Kagono and M. Ito (eds), *Nihon no Kigyo Shisutemu*, Tokyo: Yuhikaku, pp. 74–94
JAPAN IMMIGRATION ASSOCIATION 1996 *Zairyu Gaikokujin Tokei*, Tokyo: Japan Immigration Association
JAPANESE BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION CONTROL 1996 'Honpo ni okeru fuho zanryusha no kazu ni tsuite', Tokyo: Japanese Bureau of Immigration Control
JAPANESE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE 1987–1996 *Annual Report of Statistics on Legal Migrants*, Tokyo: Japanese Ministry of Justice
KAYLOR, R. 1982 'Enduring tradition of the Gurkhas', *U.S. News & World Report*, 6 September, pp. 63–64
KONDO, DORINE K. 1990 *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press
KRITZ, MARY and ZLOTNIK, HANIA 1992 'Global interactions: migration systems, processes, and policies', in M. M. Kritz, L. L. Lim and H. Zlotnik (eds), *International Migration Systems: A Global Approach*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 1–16
LOHRMANN, R. 1987 'Irregular migration: a rising issue in developing countries', *International Migration*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 253–66
MACFARLANE, ALAN 1976 *Resources and Population: A Study of the Gurungs of Nepal*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
MAHMOOD, RAISUL AWAL 1994 'Adaptation to a new world experience of Bangladeshis in Japan', *International Migration*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 513–32
MARTIN, PHILIP, L., MASON, ANDREW and TSAY, CHING-LUNG 1995 'Overview', *ASEAN Economic Bulletin*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 117–24
MORITA, KIRIRO and SASSEN, SASKIA 1994 'The new illegal immigration in Japan 1980–1992', *International Migration Review*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 153–63
NEPALESE CENTRAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS 1996 *Statistical Pocket Book*, Kathmandu: His Majesty's Government National Planning Commission Secretariat, Central Bureau of Statistics
NEPAL EX-SERVICEMAN's ASSOCIATION 1997 Interview with Major Dipak Bahadur Gurung on 17 December 1997, Kathmandu
OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) 1998 *Migration and Regional Economic Integration in Asia*, OECD Proceedings, Paris: OECD

PAHARI, ANUP 1991 'Ties that bind: Gurkhas in history', *Himal*, July/August, pp. 6–12
PATRICK, HUGH and ROHLEN, THOMAS P. 1987 'Small-scale family enterprises', in Kozo Yamamura and Yasukichi Yasuba (eds), *The Political Economy of Japan*, vol. 1, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press
PIGNÈDE, BERNARD 1966 *The Gurungs: A Himalayan Population of Nepal*, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar [First published in 1966 by Mouton & Co, The Hague and École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris]
PORTES, ALEJANDRO 1978 'Migration and underdevelopment', *Politics and Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 1–48
PORTES, ALEJANDRO and BÖRÖCZ, JOZSEF 1989 'Contemporary immigration: theoretical perspectives on its determinants and modes of incorporation', *International Migration Review*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 606–30
SHIZUOKA PREFECTURE 1995 *Enshu Chiho ni okeru Chusho Kigyo no Chingin Jijo*, Shizuoka-ken Seibu Shoukou Rousei Jimusho
SINGAPORE GURKHA PENSIONERS' ASSOCIATION 1997 Interview with Tulsi Prasad Gurung, 18 December 1997, Kathmandu
SPOTLIGHT 1996 'Unemployment: time-bomb is ticking', Spotlight, 5 January, pp. 16–20
WEINER, MYRON and HANAMI, TADASHI (eds) 1998 *Temporary Workers or Future Citizens?* New York: New York University Press
WEINER, MICHAEL (ed.) 1997 *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity*, London: Routledge
YAMANAKA, KEIKO 1993 'New immigration policy and unskilled foreign workers in Japan', *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 66, no. 1, pp. 72–90
—— 1996 'Return migration of Japanese-Brazilians to Japan: the *Nikkeijin* as ethnic minority and political construct', *Diaspora*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 65–98
——1997 'Return migration of Japanese Brazilian women to Japan: household strategies and search for the "homeland" ', in R. Krulfeld and D. Baxter (eds), *Beyond Boundaries*, Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, pp. 11–34
——2000 ' "I will go home, but when?" Labour migration and circular diaspora formation by Japanese Brazilians in Japan', in C. M. Douglass and G. S. Roberts (eds), *Japan and Global Migration: Foreign Workers and the Advent of a Multicultural Society*, London: Routledge, pp. 123–52
——*in press* 'Illegal immigration in Asia: regional patterns and a case study of Nepalese workers in Japan', in D. W. Haines and K. E. Rosenblum (eds), *Illegal Immigration in America: A Reference Handbook*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press

KEIKO YAMANAKA is Lecturer in the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies and Research Affiliate at the Institute for the Study of Social Change, University of California, Berkeley.
ADDRESS: Institute for the Study of Social Change, 2420 Bowditch Street #5670, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-5670, USA.